Viking Wirral and the Draken Harald Fairhair Viking Longship Project

Liverpool Victoria Rowing Club, January 2012

Stephen Harding
The Draken Harald Fairhair Project 2009 -
The *Draken Harald Fairhair*: aim to recreate a ship – the largest ever reconstruction with the superb seaworthiness that characterized the Viking age

- Excellent sailing characteristics of ocean going ships
- Warships usage of oars
- “25 sesse” – 25 pairs of oars, 2 men to an oar
- 35 metres long – half a football pitch – 8 metres wide
Many reconstructed vessels have been based on the Gokstad (~AD850) at the Oslo Skiphuset
The Viking, Chicago, 1893 – 2/3 replica crossed the Atlantic
Odin’s Raven - Manx Millenium, 1979
Magnus Magnusson
1929-2007
The Gaia, late 1980’s – also crossed the Atlantic
A recent project has also focused on a replica of the Oseberg ship (~AD800), also at the Skiphuset...
..Oseberg replica (2009)

..built by Per Bjørkum who wanted to show that the Oseberg ship was seaworthy!
..another was based on Skuldelev 2, a warship at Roskilde (dated to ~1050 and built in Dublin)
reconstructed in 2004 as the “Sea Stallion”
The Draken Harald Fairhair – largest ever reconstruction
Thingwall – Æingvollr

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~sczsteve/BBCRadio4_20May08.mp3
Stone ‘most vital’ find in 20 years
Professor gives talk on Bidston discovery

Roberts Steward

A news item in Metal Museum which read from the Bidston is related to the new most vital find, if not the most vital ever. The Bidston, a stone in the west of England, has been the subject of an ongoing archaeological survey for the past 20 years. The stone, which is carved with an image of a man and a woman, is still the subject of much discussion among archaeologists. Although it is still known that the stone was carved by an unknown artist, the identity of the carver remains a mystery.

The Bidston is a large stone, measuring 2.5 meters in length and weighing approximately 2.5 tons. It is thought to have been erected during the Roman period, around AD 200. Evidence suggests that the stone was used as a boundary marker or to mark a religious site.

Professor Robert Steward, who is giving a talk on the Bidston, stated: "The Bidston is a remarkable stone. It is not only an important archaeological find, but it also offers insights into the history of the region. The stone is a testament to the skill and craftsmanship of the Roman carvers, and it is a reminder of the importance of preserving our heritage.

The Bidston is a rare example of a carved stone that is still in its original location. It is a reminder of the importance of preserving our heritage, and it is a reminder of the skills and craftsmanship of the Roman carvers. The stone is a testament to the importance of preserving our heritage, and it is a reminder of the importance of understanding the history of the region."
Viking genes in Northern England project

- Part 2 - North Lancashire, Cumbria and N. Yorkshire (2008-2012)
We have also been testing in Scandinavia

Jakter på viking-gen

Forskorten Stephan Harding (c.v.), Turi King og Mark Jobling trenger hjelp av norske menn til DNA-undersøkelsen. Den kan fint gjen nomføres hjemme. En prøve av munnepitceller fra innisiden av kinnet med denne pinnen er det som skal til. (Foto: Torge Størksen)
Sigurd Aase, Haugesund
… also Patron of the Draken project!
Sigurd – and Marit Synnøve Vea: Project Leader
Terje Andreassen: another Project Leader
Turi, Mark, Marit, and Harald Løvvik
Heading off to Karmøy Viking Village
Harald Hårfagre – and Gyda
Hafsfjorden – site of the famous victory by Harald Hårfagre
June 2010: Sigurd agrees to the Draken coming to Wirral on its maiden voyage, 2013!
Hjortspring Boat ~ 300BC - suggested reconstruction
Nydam oak boat, Southern Jutland ~ 400 AD. Rowlocks for 30 oars on either side

(Schleswig-Holstein museum)
Gokstad ~ 850AD (Sandefjord)
Drawing of the Gokstad ship, bow to the left – Steering paddle at the stern on the starbord (styrbord) side
Askekärr boat ~ 1000AD (Gothenburg)
Magnussons and Åkerlunds reconstruction proposals.
Skuldelev 2 (~1055)
From drawings on stonework...

Hunninge Klinte stone, Gotland
From drawings on stonework...

Tjängvide stone, Gotland
From other old drawings...
From the sagas…

Men will quake with terror  
Ere the seventy sea-oars  
Gain their well-earned respite  
From the labours of the ocean.  
Norwegian arms are driving  
This iron-studded dragon  
Down the storm-tossed river  
Like an eagle with wings beating

Snorri Sturluson: King Harald’s Saga
Egil Skallagrimsson…
-Icelander who fought at Brunanburh

My mother once told me
She’d buy me a longship,
A handsome-oared vessel
To go sailing with Vikings:
To stand at the stern-post
And steer a fine warship,
Then head back for the harbour
And hew down some foemen.

Snorri Sturluson: Egil’s Saga
To a Viking, his ship was …

“an oar steed”

“horse of the breakers”

“surf dragon”

“fjord elk”

… and much more
Measuring up!
Terje finds the oak of his dreams…
Spring 2010 ...
Arne-Terje Saether – constructing the ribs of the boat
July 2011...
September 2011...
One or two missing pieces...
Boni Wiik – designer of the Draken head
Inspecting the finest silk for the 300m² sail
What happens now?

- **March/April**: Terje visits Wirral – site for mooring chosen
- **Spring 2012**: Training for oars-people steps up!
- **June 2012 – May 2013**: experiment with rigging, sailing, rowing
- **The maiden overseas voyage 2013**
- **Prepare for the arrival in Wirral**
## PLAN, VOYAGE 2013

Estimated average speed: 5 knots

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<th>Sailing (days)</th>
<th>Length of stay (days)</th>
<th>Estimated distance (nautical mil)</th>
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**Cruise Length** 100 days
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Cruise Length 100 days
Special thanks to!

• Jim Bibby and colleagues at Liverpool Victoria
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• Susan Hanley-Place and Geoff Hanley of the ZEBU
• Steve Gallimore at Peel Holdings
• Wirhalh Skip Felag & Friends of Meols Park
• All volunteer oarspeople!
Thanks to Andy Bonner & colleagues at Granada
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