

Part translation of an article in the major Norwegian newspaper "Adresseavisen" from the Trønder region "De fant Tors hammer", February 24, 2001. Courtesy of Stein Thue.

They found Thor's Hammer

A delegation from Trøndelag have retrieved Thor's hammer. The event took place not far from Liverpool where an entire community of Trønder origin existed 1100 years ago.

Yesterday evening¹ the English Scientist Stephen Harding presented material which goes to prove that a group of Vikings from Trøndelag² settled in the Wirral peninsula by the town Birkenhead which is not far from Liverpool. This happened in the 10th Century. The Vikings had been chased out of Ireland.

The Trønder Vikings had, according to Harding, established their own society in Wirral, with their own leader³, their own language⁴ and their own Government⁵ according to the same pattern as the Frosta-thing⁶. After the first arrivals had established the territory this then led to a mass migration into the area from the old land and together cultivated the land and lived a normal life as a general rule. According to research the Wirral vikings were not answerable to anybody else - English or Welsh - and were self-governing.

Harding's interest was fired whilst he was a student where he came across a book on Scandinavian England in his local (college) library. He had learnt previously about the legend of Thor's stone or hammer at Thurstaston⁷ from his grandfather.

Norse Names

The strong Scandinavian influence in the region is indicated by many Nordic names. For example, the football club in Birkenhead is the well-known Tranmere which derives from the expression tranemæl⁸. Elsewhere is Thingwall which is the old place of the Thing. And at St. Bridget's Church⁹ can be found the tombstone of a Christian Trønder Viking. Harding's work¹⁰, collected over 20 years, is now published in his book **Ingimund's Saga**.

Deputy Mayor Liv Sandven¹¹ and Director for Culture Gerhard Dalen¹² were - after a round trip through the old "Trønder" colony - present during the launch of the book yesterday evening. Visiting Thurstaston - or Thor's Hammer - was a highlight. Director Dalen expressed contentment vis-à-vis his hosts, after having seen the place where Thor laid his hammer down. "We are, however, not going to take the hammer back "home" with us," concluded Mr Dalen on behalf of Trondheim - regional capital of Trøndelag.

Picture: **Representatives** from Trøndelag, Liv Sandven and Gerhard Dalen, in front of Thor's hammer which they retrieved from the Wirral region in North(west) England. Wirral was a self-governing Trønder society 1100 years ago

¹ **Book launch of *Ingimund's Saga: Norwegian Wirral* by Stephen Harding (with foreword by Magnus Magnusson) and *Wirral and its Viking Heritage* by Stephen Harding with Paul Cavill and Judith Jesch at Birkenhead Town Hall**

² Trøndelag: region in middle Norway centering on Trondheim, the old capital in Viking times

³ Ingimund was the first leader

⁴ Old Norwegian

⁵ The Thing at Thingwall: Thingwall is old Norse for "Assembly Field" – where the Norsemen had their parliament. The particular meeting site is considered to be at Cross Hill

⁶ i.e. the Wirral Thing at Thingwall was rather like the "Frosta" Thing at Trøndelag

⁷ Thurstaston means "Thorsteinn's farmstead"

⁸ "Crane-bird sandbank". A famous 20th century Norwegian politician – Martin Tranmæl also had this name.

⁹ At West Kirby. St. Bridget is the patron saint of Ireland. The church is evidence that when the Vikings left Ireland they brought Christianity with them. The tombstone is the famous "hogback" which now resides inside the church

¹⁰ Left of picture

¹¹ Centre

¹² Right