

VIKINGS ARE COMING!

Longship to set sail for Mersey next month

by ROB PATTINSON

@rpattinson83

THE largest ever replica Viking longship will set sail for Merseyside in its maiden overseas voyage next month.

The 115ft Draken Harald Hårfagre, named after Norway's most famous Viking king, Harald the Fairhair, will be rowed into West Float, in Wallasey, three weeks after sailing out from Haugesund, on the west coast of Norway.

The voyage was originally due to take place last year, but was delayed for more testing.

The longship is now set to arrive in Wallasey on July 18 – at a time when the world's media and thousands of visitors will be flocking to Wirral for the Royal Open Championships at the Royal Liverpool club, in Hoylake.

It will be crewed by a hundred-strong "Viking Navy" of volunteers, many from Wirral, who travelled to Norway last year for a weekend of training sessions.

Merseyside Viking expert Professor Steve Harding, who helped secure the visit, said: "It's tremendous news for Wirral and Liverpool and very poignant concerning the huge Norse roots of the area.

"The West Float, on the Wallasey docks, is the site of the former Wallasey Pool and its highly likely there would have been longships here a millennium ago, and now, after this break, there will be one here again."

Liverpool Victoria Rowing Club, in Wallasey, will host the vessel until its departure on August 3, with around 70 of the oarsmen rowing it over either from or trained by the club.

The choice of the mooring it-



SETTING SAIL: The 115ft Viking longship, Draken Harald Hårfagre, will arrive in Wallasey next month



VIKING VILLAGE SET TO OPEN THIS SUMMER

THE first stage of Wirral's Viking village tourist attraction is set to open to the public later this summer.

Bromborough-based social enterprise Big Heritage has linked up with Claremont Farm to put together plans for an entire life-size Viking-age settlement on 10 acres of the farm's land in Bebington.

It is hoped the 10th-century replica village will become the North West's answer to York's world-famous Jorvik Centre.

Dean Paton, Big Heritage founder, said the group were hoping the first buildings in the settlement would be constructed by the end of August, at which point volunteers will be sought to get involved with the next stages of the carbon-neutral project, with plans for it to grow in size over the coming years.

Big Heritage has now linked up with Wirral-based salvage firm O'Grady's, which will be donating timber for the buildings and a Viking age cross for the village.

Mr Paton said: "We're hoping to have the first buildings up by the end of August and quite a few in place by the end of the year. It's great news about the longship's visit, it's going to be a real spectacle.

"Stephen Harding has done a great job to get it here."

MERSEYSIDE'S LASTING LEGACY FROM THE VIKINGS

MERSEYSIDE was picked for the longship's voyage because of its Viking links.

The Vikings arrived in the North West after their expulsion from Dublin in AD902. Their legacy can be seen in the

large number of place names in Merseyside ending with "by" – a Viking term meaning settlement or farmstead. In Wirral, Meols was originally Melr, meaning sandbank, while the name West Kirby is

from the old Norse for "settlement with the church". Toxteth, Formby and Crosby are of Norse origin while Tranmere Rovers is the only team in the football league with a Viking name.

MAN ACCUSED OF RAPE

A MAN has appeared in court accused of raping a woman in Southport.

Adam Riding, 24, was arrested after police were called to a churchyard close to Lord Street at around 5.05am on Saturday.

Riding, of no fixed address, is charged with three counts of rape and one of robbery.

He appeared at Liverpool Crown court via videolink yesterday.

A plea hearing was set for August 4 and November 10 was fixed for a possible week-long trial.

SEE IT NOW IN LIVERPOOL

Still good seats available this week

Visit thelionking.co.uk



PERSONAL INJURY?

ACCIDENT - NOT YOUR FAULT?

- Accidents at Work
- Road Traffic Accidents
- Slipping or Tripping Accidents

Please call Claire Banks on

0151 548 7370

or call your nearest Maxwell Hodge office

www.maxwellhodge.co.uk

LIVERPOOL (CITY) 0151 227 4545
FORMBY 01704 872 156

HUYTON 0151 489 6161
MAGHULL 0151 526 7131

AINTREE 0151 526 9321
HESWALL 0151 342 6447

KIRKBY 0151 548 7370
WEST KIRBY 0151 625 9154



NO WIN NO FEE