

On the trail of Viking history

By LORNA HUGHES

THE quest for a trail celebrating Wirral's Viking past is gathering pace with the unveiling of a themed history board in Meols at the weekend.

The Friends of Meols Park worked with Wirral Council and Wirral Viking expert Professor Stephen Harding on the project to give visitors an insight into the area's history as a Viking trading port.

It is hoped the idea will be taken up by other groups across Wirral – and there are also plans for a Viking statue if funds can be found.

The finished board was unveiled by Esther McVey on Saturday, in her first official engagement as Wirral West MP.

Other Viking-themed celebrations included a re-enact-



● Esther McVey MP and some Viking visitors explore Meols' Viking past

Code: PH150510D-4

ment in front of St John the Baptist Church.

Professor Harding, of Nottingham University, has been instrumental in raising awareness of Wirral's Viking ancestry.

He said: "We hope that these boards going up will see the start now of a Wirral Viking trail and the next job is to raise the money for a statue."

Vikings are thought to have

arrived in North West England over a millennium ago.

After their expulsion from Dublin in AD902 the Wirral Vikings, initially led by the Norwegian Viking Ingimund, would have landed in their boats along the North Wirral coastline.

Some historians believe a Viking boat is buried under the car park of the Railway Inn in Meols.

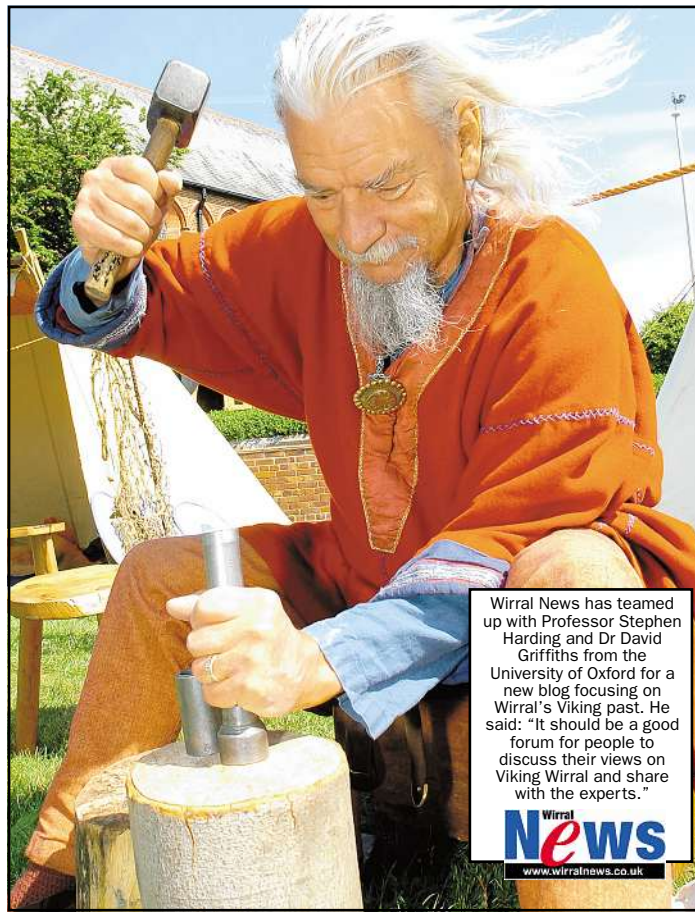
Viking experts are gearing up for the 1075th anniversary of the Battle of Brunanburh, which most historians agree took place in Bromborough, in 1025.

Professor Harding said: "It was a huge battle that formed the whole of Britain. If you speak to people like the English Place Name Society, they're virtually 100% sure it took place in Wirral."

"The Wirral Archaeology group are planning to start a systematic study of Storeton and Brimstage and our feeling is that it's likely that the bulk of fighting took place there."

"There's something down there, I'm pretty sure, but it's just a question of finding it!"

Roy Shuttleworth, secretary of the Friends of Meols Park, said: "The next thing we want is to get a statue of Ingimund – that's the vision."



● Group Leader of Wirralh Skip Felag Sonnie Raee stamps coins at the Viking fun day in Meols Park

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Wirral News has teamed up with Professor Stephen Harding and Dr David Griffiths from the University of Oxford for a new blog focusing on Wirral's Viking past. He said: "It should be a good forum for people to discuss their views on Viking Wirral and share with the experts."



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Council boss raises rainbow flag to mark IDAHO day

WIRRAL Council's Chief Executive Steve Maddox joined members of the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) Staff Forum to raise the rainbow flag at Wallasey Town Hall.

The event was held to mark IDAHO day – the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia – which takes place around the world on May 17 every year.

The rainbow flag is an internationally recognised symbol of LGB pride and was flown from key council buildings for the first time.

Ian Coleman, the Council's chief officer equality champion for LGB issues, said: "Raising the Rainbow flag at the Town Hall and other council



● Steve Maddox raises the rainbow flag outside Wallasey Town Hall

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buildings has a dual purpose. It recognises and celebrates the contribution made by LGB staff in all parts of the Council as well as that made by our many LGB residents.

"It also reminds us that homophobia and transphobia are

shameful and must be tackled wherever they arise."

May 17 was chosen as IDAHO day because homosexuality was removed from the World Health Organisation's International Classification of Diseases on that day in 1992.

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