

Harald's Viking Quest Group Leader's Notes

These notes accompany
'Harald's Viking Quest' trail.

They include:

- Directions and pictures to help you find your way around.
- Answers to the challenges in the pupils' trail.
- Extra information about the Vikings.
- A map of the relevant galleries and exhibits.

It's a good idea for each adult to have a copy of the notes and to read through them in advance.

The trail begins by the lifts in the Early People Gallery, Level -1. It ends in Kingdom of the Scots on Level 1, at the Lewis chess pieces. You can choose which order you complete the trail in.

Gallery display cases look like this.

Each case has a theme, a title and a number.

Case theme

Case title

Case number



The Viking Age was the period from around AD800 and AD1100. All of the objects in the trail are from this period except the Lewis chess pieces which are slightly later.

This is Harald, he is going to guide your pupils round the galleries. Vikings like Harald came from Scandinavia (modern day Denmark, Norway and Sweden). Vikings travelled far and wide and often settled in places that they had raided. In Scotland Vikings settled in places such as Orkney and Shetland. All of the exhibits you will be looking at today were found in Scotland and show the way Vikings lived and travelled.



1 Viking Burials

Case W7: Dead and sometimes buried, A Viking grave

Case W14: Dead and sometimes buried, Viking high status burials



Where can I find it?

Take the stairs down to the Early People gallery on Level -1.

Walk down the 6 steps opposite the lifts, past the large figure sculptures.

Case W7 is on your left. Case W14 is behind, as shown in the pictures above.

Further information

- Case W7 contains items from a Viking grave found on Orkney. Case W14 contains items from two women's graves and one man's grave. Encourage the children to look at both cases to help complete the task.
- Grave possessions show the identity of those who were buried there.
- Graves represent people the way they wanted to be seen, at their best. They would contain a variety of objects to show the characteristics of the owner, for example a sword might show someone was a warrior and farming tools might show they were hard working.

- Grave possessions can also give clues as to whether the owner is male or female.
- In Scotland there are more rich female graves than anywhere else in the world.
- These graves show that people were warriors, farmers, rich and that they enjoyed leisure time.
- Graves would sometimes be left open for people to come and view the dead person before they were buried.
- People were only buried this way during the period AD800 – 950.

Things to think about:

- 1 Do you recognise all the objects from the graves? Is there anything that you've never seen before?
- 2 What are the differences between the male and female graves?

Task 1 answers

Exhibits that show bravery	Exhibits that show a Viking was rich	Exhibits that show a Viking had leisure time
Sword	Brooches	Hnefatafl game
Arrows	Beads	Needles
Shield boss	Silver cloak pin	Drink horn mounts
Axehead	Necklace	
Spearhead		



2 Viking Travel

Case P2: *Getting around, Ships and boats*



Where can I find it?

With case W14 on your left, walk forward then turn left, go past the spiral stairs on your left. Walk on until you find case P2 on your right.

Further information

- Object 7 is the stem of a Viking boat, the rest of the boat would have been built up from this point.
- The slate drawings (object 6) show what Viking boats looked like.
- Boats were extremely important to Vikings. They allowed them to travel – as far as Iceland, Italy, Bagdad and Newfoundland.
- Boats were at the heart of the Vikings' thriving import and export trade which allowed them to influence and to be influenced by other countries and cultures.

Things to think about:

- 1 What would life be like on a Viking boat?
- 2 Do you think you would enjoy sailing around the world seeing new countries?

3 Viking Homes

Case N1: *About the house, A safe home*



Where can I find it?

Stand with your back to P2, walk forward until you see case N1 on your right.

Further information

- Look for object 5, the Viking key in this case. It was found at Stenabreak on North Ronaldsay in Orkney. It was used sometime between AD850 and 1100.
- Builders of Viking period houses fitted lock and key mechanisms to doors and chests. Most of the surviving examples are made of metal, but occasionally different materials were used.

Task 3 answers

- 1 The key is made of bone.
- 2 Keys today are made of nickel silver which is extremely strong and prevents keys from breaking.

4 Viking Weapons

Case R10: *Bloodshed, weapons and heroes, Viking warfare*



Where can I find it?

Stand with case N1 on your left, walk back towards the Viking grave, but turn right before you get to the spiral stairs. Walk through the archway. You will see case R10 on your right.

Further information

- This case contains a selection of Viking weapons, which were an essential part of a Viking warrior's identity.
- The sword was a warrior's most prized possession. Viking swords were made of iron and usually double-edged.
- An axe was also an important weapon. Axes with long wooden handles were the most common weapon, also used for everyday tasks such as cutting wood and chopping trees.

- A spear was another important weapon and was often the Vikings' weapon of choice. Spears were used both in close combat and as throwing weapons.

Things to think about:

- 1 Do you think every Viking would have had a sword like object number 1? Why do you think that?
- 2 Why were axes were the most common weapon?

Task 4 answers



This weapon is too fancy to be used in battle.



This is a shield boss, which is the metal part in the middle of a round shield.



This is the head of an axe.



5 Viking Legacy

Case SD5: People in Scotland, The Norse



Where can I find it?

Stand with case R10 on your right, turn left and walk forwards through the archway towards the main part of the gallery. Leave the Early People gallery and go upstairs to Level 1 Kingdom of the Scots. Go through the archways and turn left. Case SD5 is in front of you. These cases are used for tasks 5 and 6.

Further information

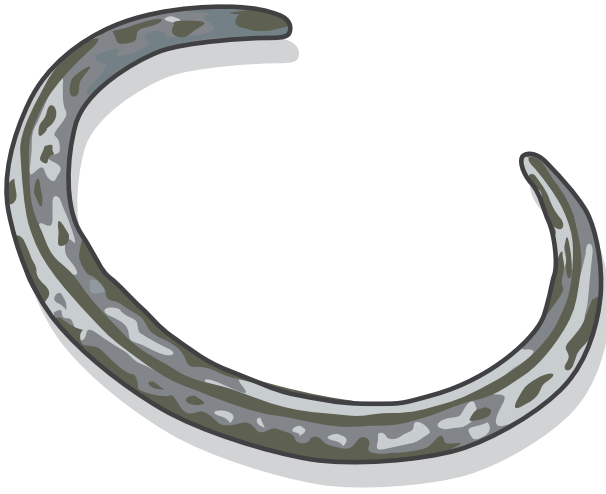
- In the case on the left there are various Viking items that would be used in daily life. These will help pupils complete Task 5.
- Bone pins are used as dress pins or hair pins.

- Tortoise brooches were worn in pairs, only by women. They were worn on either side of the chest to hold up a tunic, often connected by a string of beads.
- The comb is made of bone. Combs were a common possession during this time and are found in women's and men's graves.
- The silver armlet was worn as jewellery but could also be broken up and used as currency.

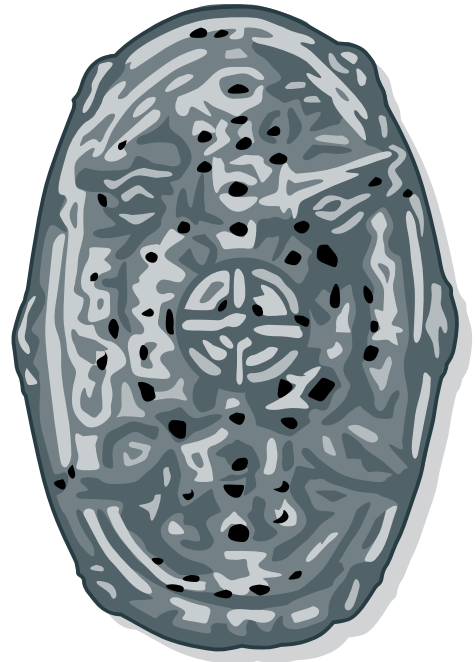
Things to think about

- 1 Who do you think owned these items?

Task 5 answers



Silver armlet



Tortoise brooch

6 Lewis chess pieces

Further information

- The Lewis chess pieces are in the case on the right-hand side, use these to complete Task 6.
- They were found in 1831 on a beach on Lewis.
- The Lewis chess pieces are thought to have been made during the late 12th century.
- They show a connection between the Viking period and later Scottish history because, at the time they were made, Lewis was still part of the Kingdom of Norway.
- The chess pieces are made of walrus ivory and decorated in a way that shows they may have been made in Norway.
- The chess pieces may have belonged to a merchant travelling from Norway to Ireland, and it seems likely that they were buried for safe keeping.
- The chess piece of a warrior biting his shield is thought to show a berserker warrior which was an old Scandinavian stereotype.

Task 6 answers

- 1 There are 5 crowns.
- 2 There are 5 swords. (The knight's sword is hidden behind his shield.)
- 3 The knight is riding a horse.

The last task asks the children to draw their own chess piece. They could draw a chess piece to show something they like doing.

Additional activities

There are lots of other Viking objects in the Early People gallery that you can investigate. Here are two more displays to discover.



A Viking Boat Burial – Case W15

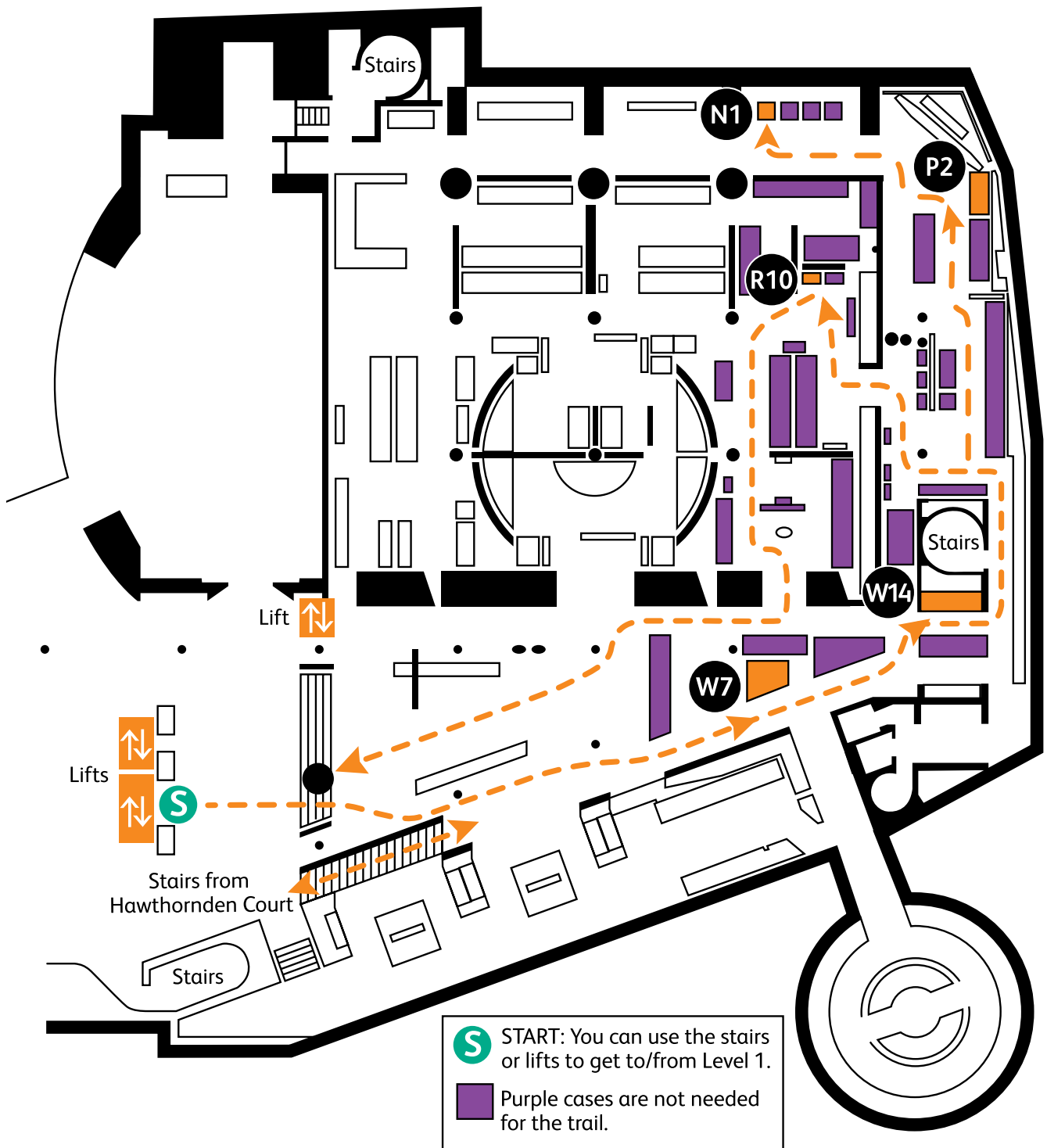


Viking Silver – Case U1



You can also find out more about our Viking collections and play our Viking games online. Visit www.nms.ac.uk/explore

Level -1 Early People



- 1 Viking high status burials, case W14.
- W14 Viking grave, case W7
- W7



- 2 Ships and boats, case P2
- P2



- 3 A safe home, case N1
- N1



- 4 Viking warfare, case R10
- R10

Level 1 Kingdom of the Scots



5 6 The Norse, case SD5
SD5