

LEVEL

1 VIKING DUBLIN EXHIBITION

ROOM 1

WARRIORS AND RAIDERS

Bloodthirsty, violent, pagans and pirates are words often used to describe Vikings. However, the Norse people whom we know as Vikings also had a less violent side to them. They were artistic craftspeople, advanced in weapons technology and masters of shipbuilding. This exhibition explores a more complete story of Viking life in Dublin.

Olaf the White, first Viking king of Dublin stands at the door. Nearby a pagan Viking woman is praying to Viking Gods using sacrificial offerings. A ship reconstruction shows the cramped and exposed conditions on a Viking ship travelling from Norway to Dublin.

ROOM 2

VIKING CAMP

1200 years ago, the first Viking raids occurred along the coast of Ireland. Havoc, fear and destruction swiftly followed. Targeting well stocked monasteries, they stole valuable religious objects, animals and food. In 841AD they set up camp in Dublin.

The most common weapons they carried were spears and axes. Swords were an elite warriors' weapon and were given names such as 'Leg Biter' or 'Skull Splitter'. Horned helmets are actually a myth. Less skilled warriors had short careers but all were buried with their weapons as they believed they would use them in the afterlife.



Encourage your students to try on costumes at the tent.

ROOM 3

TRADERS AND CRAFTSMEN

Within a matter of years Viking houses filled the settlement. Families shopped on the quayside and attended communal gatherings. Perhaps wisely, the Vikings began to favour trading over the hazards of raiding.

One particularly distressing yet profitable trade was people. A healthy male was worth around €10,000 in modern currency. People were sold to slave markets as far away as Russia. This was large scale human trafficking. The practice, however, was not distinctive to the Vikings. Ireland's most famous saint, St Patrick, was captured by Irish raiders raiding in Wales long before the Vikings arrived.



Allow students to lift the slave chains.

LEVEL

1 VIKING DUBLIN EXHIBITION

ROOM 4

VIKING HOUSE

Viking houses were built without toilets and windows and were dark and smoky. Lice, woodworm and mites infested everywhere. Vikings only ate two meals a day and some of the food they ate for dinner is seen here.

Inside the home was a woman's responsibility. Laws were made to protect a women if her husband was violent or unfaithful. If he did not fulfil his marital duties she could even divorce him!



Students can blow into the horn trumpet hanging from the roof beam.



ROOM 5

THE BATTLE FOR DUBLIN

Dublinia staff are often asked what happened the Vikings. By gradually adopting Irish culture and becoming Christian, the Vikings became less Viking. Dublin's Viking king, Sitric Silkbeard, even spoke Gaelic and Norse.



Repeated battles, including the legendary Battle of Clontarf in 1014, continually diminished Viking power. The Viking Age in Ireland truly ended with the arrival of Anglo-Norman forces to Dublin in 1170.

Vikings, however, believed their end would happen in a more dramatic event called 'Ragnarok'. The Sagas tell of a great wolf that would swallow the sun and how the god Thor would battle a giant serpent and the air would be filled with poison until fire consumed the whole world.



Students can feel the weight of Viking weapons or take a photo beside Sitric Silkbeard.

LEVEL

2 MEDIEVAL DUBLIN EXHIBITION

PLEASE NOTE: bathrooms are located on this floor

ROOM 1

>START ON LEFT< MEDIEVAL HOUSE AND STREET

In the medieval era, Dublin looked just like an English town. King Henry II of England had allowed his army to take over the city. The new citizens brought an English culture, language and architecture that became part of Dublin life.

This house was owned by a medieval merchant named Peter Higley. He was a wealthy business man who lived in Dublin and died in 1476. His Will still survives in Dublin's archives and is shown on the wall to the left. The streets of medieval Dublin were dark, smelly and filthy. There was little drainage so wealthy Dubliners used unusual methods to keep clean. Pattens, like wooden clogs, protected expensive shoes from the mud.

ROOM 2

MEDIEVAL QUAYSIDE

Dangerous seas and ship wreck were not the only risks to medieval sailors working on ships. Pirates caused havoc by targeting heavily stocked ships and stealing cargo. Chartered ships had tight deadlines. If cargo didn't arrive on time then merchants and crewmen lost their investments.

Crewmen took an oath of loyalty to the captain and in return the ship's master kept plenty food and drink. Sailors risked fines or lashings if they broke the rules.



Ask your students to put their hands in the bales to identify what cargo is being unloaded.

CENTRAL HALL

SCALE MODEL DUBLIN C1500

The scale model shows how Dublin would have looked at the end of the Middle Ages. Rooms on the other side of the model explore other aspects of life in medieval Dublin. Visit the stalls in the medieval fair and play some medieval games or hear about sickness and mortality in the Death and Disease exhibition.



Students can listen to information in their own language on the phones at the central scale model.

ROOM 3

THE FAIR AND MEDIEVAL LAW

Dublin's annual fair was the social event of the year. People met, relationships formed and local taverns did a roaring trade. New fashion trends, armour, food and even religious pardons could be bought.

Those with tooth ache or pains might seek out the stall of a Barber-Surgeon. These were amateur surgeons trained in the use of knives. The stall was signposted using a red and white pole. These colours, somewhat alarmingly, represented the blood and bandages of their trade. This pole is still used today to advertise modern barbershops.

Lawbreakers in the medieval era suffered some curiously cruel punishments. Those found guilty of poor moral behaviour, committing adultery or fornicating in public were locked up in a pillory or stocks. Designed to humiliate, vengeful citizens would pelt rotten vegetables (or worse) at the guilty person.



Students can explore the interactivity at each stall and take a photo in the stocks.

ROOM 4

DEATH AND DISEASE

Dublin's worst nightmare was realised with the arrival of the Black Death Plague in 1348. It spread faster in Dublin's crowded streets than rural communities. Fever and headaches would consume a victim while black boils would break out on the body. Death came quickly, often within three days. One third of Dublin's population died in the space of a few years. Lack of basic hygiene such as hot water for washing encouraged sickness and disease. Medical treatment was non-scientific and based on a mixture of astrology, herbal cures and witchcraft.



Students can look through the herbs book to find cures for illnesses.



END OF THE MEDIEVAL ERA

The medieval history of Dublin ended with the ambitions of the King of Ireland and England, King Henry VIII. He changed the medieval personality of the city by closing down religious houses and monasteries. His new laws forbade the Catholic religion, altering powers of the church and marking a different or 'modern' era.

Escort Students to Level 3 by walking up the red stairs.

LEVEL

3 HISTORY HUNTERS EXHIBITION

AREA 1

IS ARCHAEOLOGY RUBBISH?

The rubbish bin at the entrance is no ordinary bin, it also contains secrets. With a closer look it shows what people wear, eat and how they travel. Modern archaeology works like this, but with rubbish that is a lot older.

In this exhibition you will visit an archaeologist's 'Site Hut' and 'Excavation Site' with real Viking and medieval artefacts. In 'The Library' are ancient documents that can be decoded to help understand our history. Specialist bone archaeologists in 'Bones and Bodies' reveal information learned by looking closely at human bone. In 'The Lab' you can see how tiny ancient organisms reveal incredible details about life in the past.



Please note: Photography is not permitted on Level 3

AREA 2

SITE HUT

This small hut is the central office of an archaeological site. Archaeologists store their site maps, artefacts and tools here, but it's also a warm place for tea breaks!

Archaeologists record where they dig and what they discover as fast as possible. If they find artefacts, they are photographed, recorded and then sent to the National Museum for safe keeping. Even bags of soil are taken from the site to be studied later in the science lab.



Students can try on the hard hats and yellow vests.



AREA 3

EXCAVATION SITE

The display case holds the remains of a young Viking warrior. Despite being buried over 1200 years ago archaeologists uncovered detailed facts about him. He was a tall man, 1.76m in height and only 17-25 years old when he died. He grew up in northern Norway and sailed here in the 9th century. A misshapen back bone and healed rib fracture shows he suffered pain. The tight-toothed comb he was buried with proves he suffered from lice.



LEVEL

3 HISTORY HUNTERS 3 EXHIBITION

AREA 4

THE LIBRARY

Historians and archaeologists also research old maps and documents. The map on the wall shows the site of Dublinia in 1756 when it was St Michael's church. When excavating Dublinia in 2008 archaeologists consulted this map. They knew, before putting a shovel in the ground, that they would find human remains; the strange rectangular shapes drawn on the map are gravestones.



Encourage students to listen to the old languages which may have originated from their homelands.

AREA 5

ARCHAEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT IN WOOD QUAY

Not everyone welcomes new archaeological discoveries. In the 1970s the largest Viking settlement in Europe was discovered just outside Dublinia. Dublin City Council had planned to build their offices on the site, but as more archaeology was uncovered the public protested to have the offices moved to a nearby site. Sadly, public marches and numerous legal battles failed to save the site and it was bulldozed.

Some of the rescued artefacts, tools, keys, shoes and pottery are on display here. Over 200 Viking houses were found dating back to the 10th century. Preservation was so good that grass was still green on some bedding areas inside the houses! Huge medieval walls extended across the site and parts of the wall still stand in Dublin today.

AREA 6

BONES AND BODIES

Detective shows on TV often use elaborate forensic science techniques to identify skeletons. The human remains in this display case belong to a medieval woman buried 800 years ago. Similar techniques were used to reconstruct her face which is displayed in the case beside her.

Bone analysis revealed tiny holes in her knee joints meaning she suffered from arthritis. Her jaw bone and teeth showed evidence she suffered from 8 abscesses in her mouth. We also know she was only 1.57m tall and was quite elderly, between 40 and 60 years old when she died.

LEVEL

3 HISTORY HUNTERS EXHIBITION

AREA 7

THE LAB

Scientists work with archaeologists to find out how old artefacts are. Depending on what the artefact is made from, different techniques are used. Wooden artefacts can be dated by tree-ring dating while bone artefacts are dated by Radio Carbon dating.

Scientists studying soil excavated from outside a Viking house discovered the microscopic detail of tiny beetle wings. These were matched to a type of beetle that feeds on human faeces. Archaeologists had discovered a 1000 year old toilet!



Students can use the microscope to see what type of grains were uncovered in Viking houses.

AREA 8



HISTORY TODAY...

Popular culture today is influenced by the past. From logos on the coffee cup you sip from each morning, the film you watch at night to the American football team you always follow. Many brands have been inspired by images from history.



Before you leave, encourage students to try and identify the unusual artefacts in the display case (like a real archaeologist) and explore the interactive games and quizzes.

EXIT

EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP AND OVER A FOOTBRIDGE INTO THE GROUNDS OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL.

