

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.

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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 woman 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.

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2 MEDIEVAL DUBLIN EXHIBITION

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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.