

A VIKING FRIDAY

July 24, 2015 Allison Fox Community Archaeology, Curation, Education, Excavation, Explore Posts, Finds, Museum Archaeology, Public Archaeology, Viking Isle of Man, Museums, Vikings

Good afternoon (“fastyr mie” in our Manx language) from the Isle of Man.

We have had influences from lots of different people on our island over the millennia – not surprising really as we sit in the middle of the Irish Sea, so we’re a very handy stopping off point for travel and trade. The artefacts from this rich heritage are cared for here at the [Manx Museum](#) and part of my job as Curator of Archaeology is to bring them out of the stores and put them to work again to help explain what happened and why on the Isle of Man in the past. Today my thoughts are mostly with Vikings.

Not so much the battling and marauding type of Vikings, but with the type who settled here a thousand years ago and created a sea kingdom which stretched up through the west coast of Scotland and had direct links with Norway. The type of Vikings who had horses that wore things like this;



Viking horse bridle pendant c. AD 1100

And the type of Vikings who played board games with counters like this;



Shark vertebrae from Castle Rushen c. AD 1300

And the type of Vikings who left a fair bit of this sort of thing buried in the ground;



Viking coins and silver ingots deposited c.AD 1030

The period of the Kingdom of Man and the Isles was a really important and influential time for the Island and it's my pleasure to be rounding up artefacts from AD 1000 – 1300 to display them in a new gallery at another of our sites, the [House of Manannan](#), in the autumn. Some artefacts were found twenty years ago, some only a few months ago, and it's a great opportunity to show our visitors the variety of material from this forgotten kingdom.

Creating an exhibition is a long process from ideas to opening day and it involves colleagues from all corners of the organisation. It's also one of the most rewarding aspects of being a curator and a great excuse to get hands-on and up close to some fantastic artefacts.

If you're passing the Isle of Man, do call in see us – the Vikings did and seemed to like it!