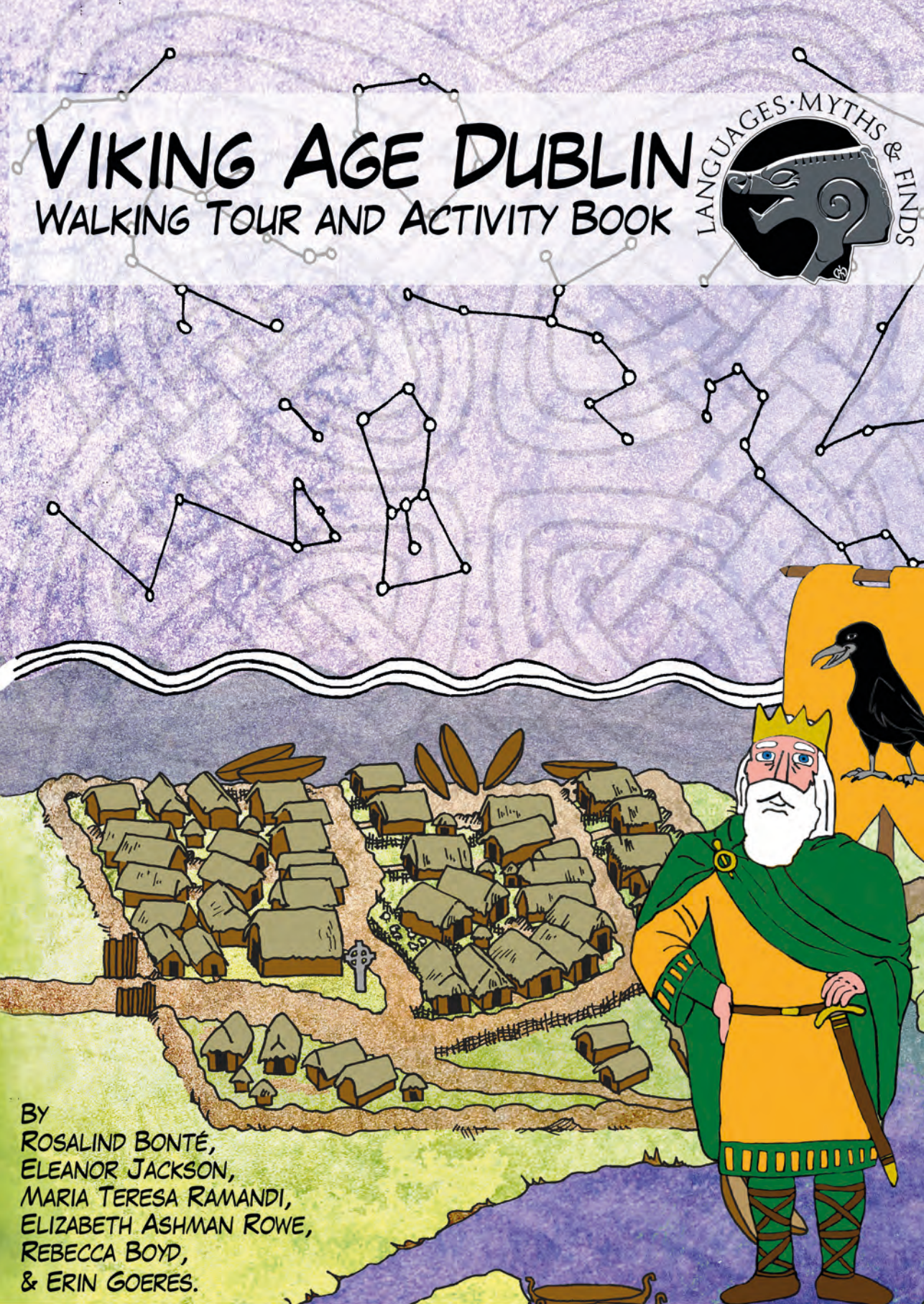


# VIKING AGE DUBLIN

## WALKING TOUR AND ACTIVITY BOOK



BY  
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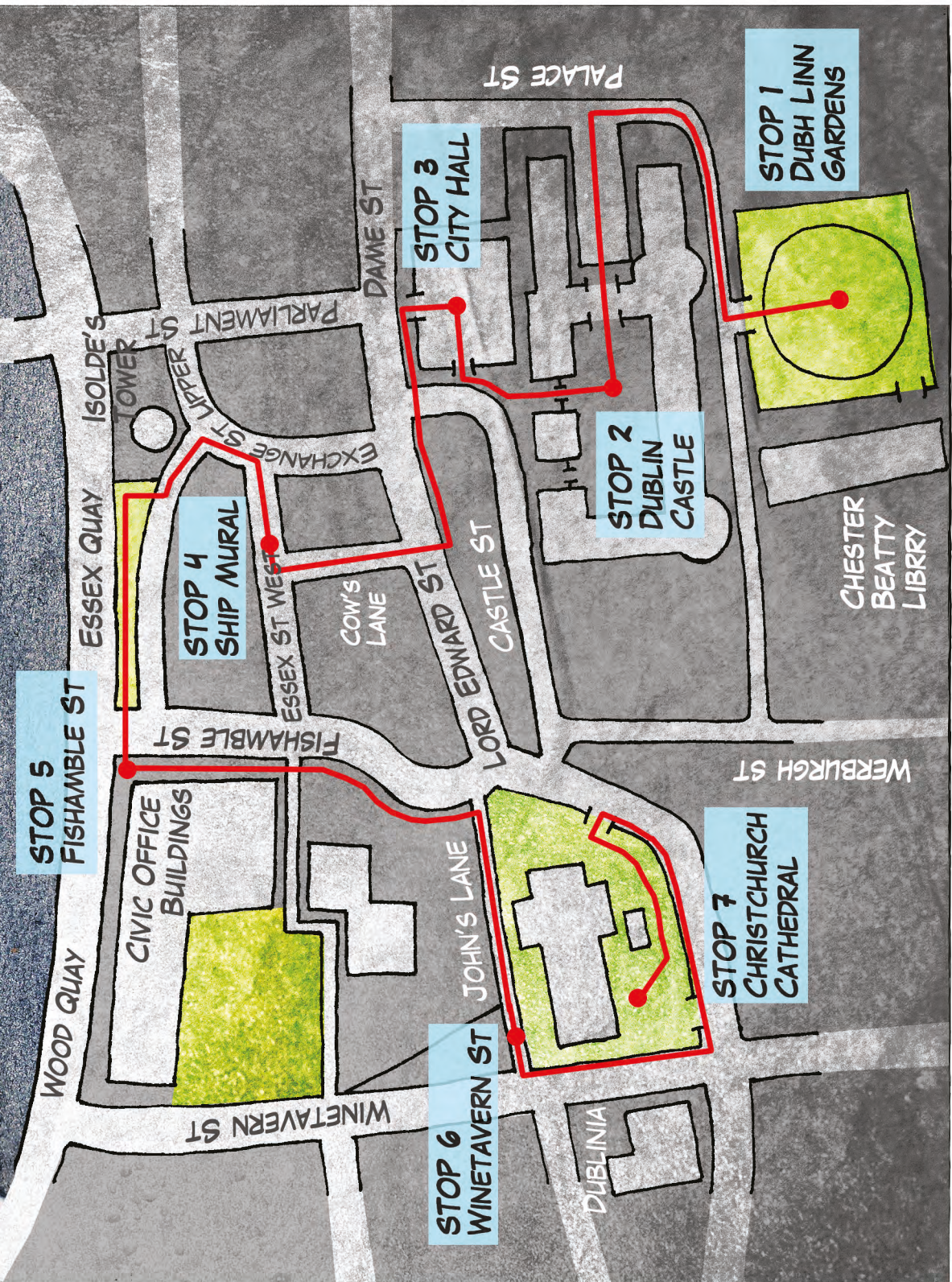
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*Cover images by Eleanor Jackson and Maria Teresa Ramandi*







# Welcome to Viking Dublin



Hi, I'm Aoife, and I'm an archaeologist working in Dublin. I'm interested in how people used to live in the past. I find out information by digging underneath the modern city where you're now standing. When I dig, I can discover the remains of people's houses, as well as their belongings. Looking at these helps me to answer questions about how people in the past lived.

Today, I want to take you on a tour of where the Vikings used to live in Dublin. It's not always easy to see where the Vikings were, because new buildings have been built on the same land. But if you know where to look, you can find out some interesting facts. So follow me, and together we're going to find out a little bit more about Dublin's Viking past! I'll ask you a few questions as we go round, and you can find the answers at the back of the booklet. We've given directions for your parents to follow as you move to each new stop.

Distance covered by tour: Just over 1km

Approx time needed: 1hr — 1hr 30mins

Things to bring with you:

- Something to write with
- Colouring pencils
- Comfy walking shoes
- Lots of enthusiasm



# Who were the Vikings?

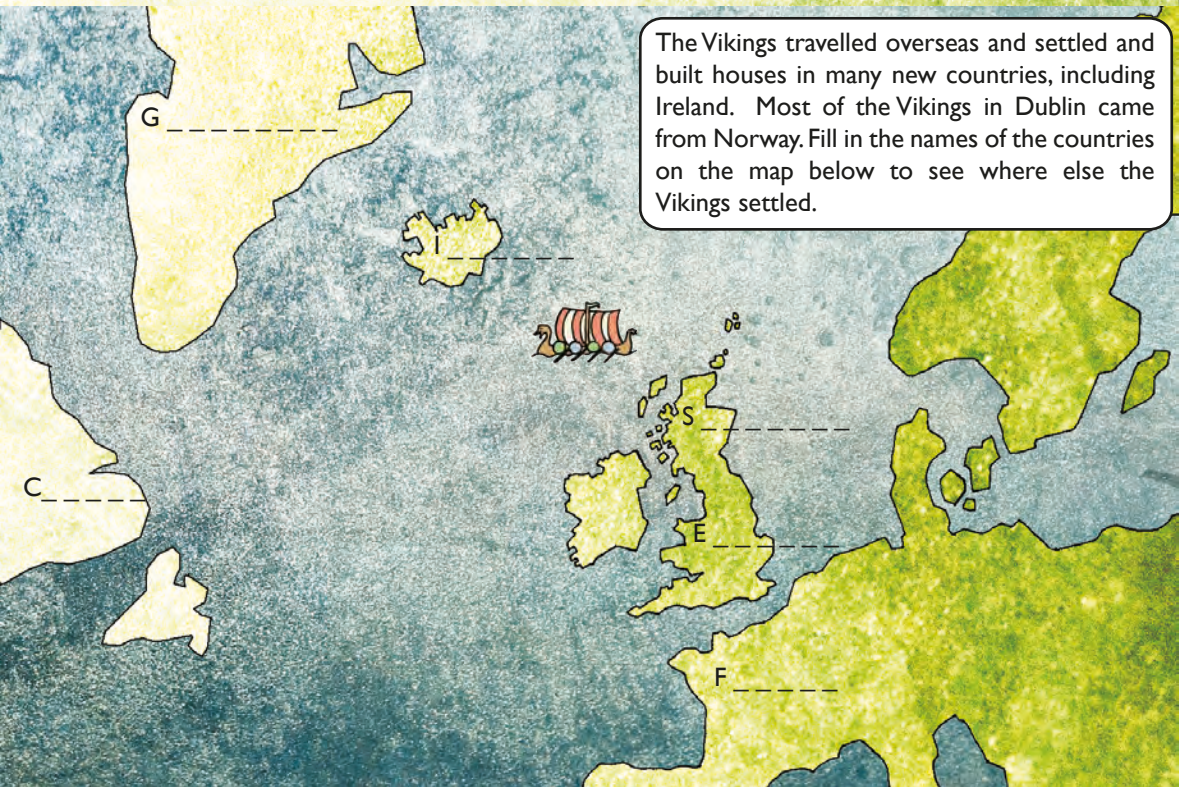
The Vikings came from Norway, Sweden and Denmark, in the area known today as Scandinavia. They were excellent warriors and very skilled at using boats. In 793, they sailed across the North Sea to England and raided a monastery, where many monks lived. This date is often used to mark the start of the Viking Age and it was the first of many similar raids. The Vikings often attacked monasteries because they were very rich.



## Did you know?

The Vikings used to speak a language called Old Norse. We still use lots of these words in modern English — words like freckle, egg, knife and window.

Strictly speaking, the word 'Viking' only refers to raiders and so not everybody from Scandinavia was a Viking. Many people were ordinary farmers, merchants or traders. But the term Viking is often used today to mean anyone from Scandinavia during this period in history.



The Vikings travelled overseas and settled and built houses in many new countries, including Ireland. Most of the Vikings in Dublin came from Norway. Fill in the names of the countries on the map below to see where else the Vikings settled.

Many Vikings had funny nicknames such as Ragnar shaggy-pants, Ketil flat-nose or Sigurd the fat. What do you think your Viking name would be? Write it down here: \_\_\_\_\_





THE RIVER LIFFEY

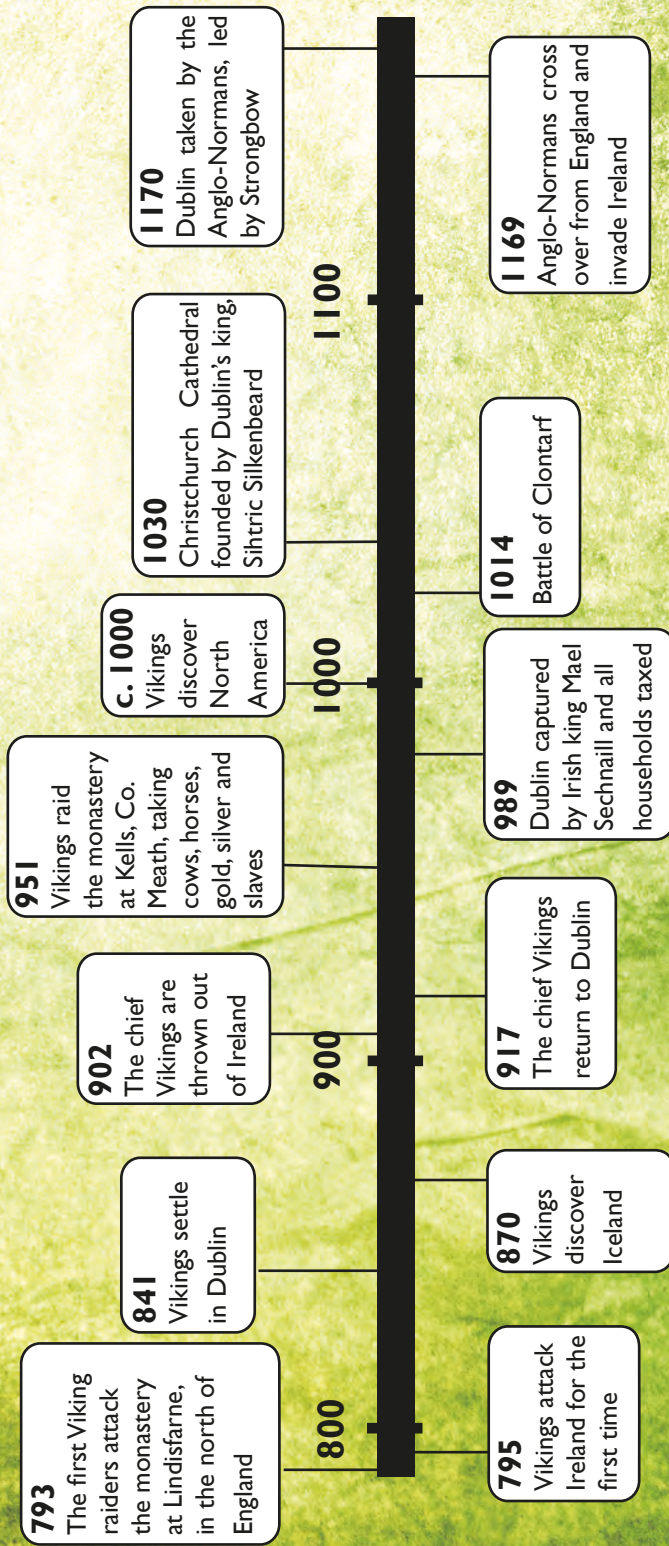
THE RIVER PODDLE

DUBH LINN  
(BLACK POOL)

VIKING AGE DUBLIN



# Viking Timeline





# Dublin before the Vikings

## The Dubh Linn Gardens

This tour starts at the **Dubh Linn Gardens**, the gardens behind **Dublin Castle**. To get here, you need to head along **Dame Street** and then turn into **Palace Street**. Walk across the **lower courtyard** of the castle and turn right onto the road that runs behind the castle. Walk along this road, and the entrance to the garden is on the left. The garden lies to the left, behind the wall and next to the **Chester Beatty Library**.

**1250 years ago, the place where you're standing now would have been underwater. At that time the River Poddle, which now runs through a channel underground, flowed through this area towards the River Liffey, forming a large, natural pool of water.**

Hello. I'm Brother Findan, and I live at the monastery of St Michael le Pole. The church is dedicated to St Michael, but le pole actually means 'of the pool' because we live right next to the black pool.

Ireland has now been a Christian country for about 350 years. I work in a monastery here at Dubh Linn, writing and illuminating beautiful manuscripts, which are large books made out of animal skin. These are kept in our monastery's library. A little further up the River Liffey from here, there's a small farming and fishing village, called Áth Cliath.



### Did you know?

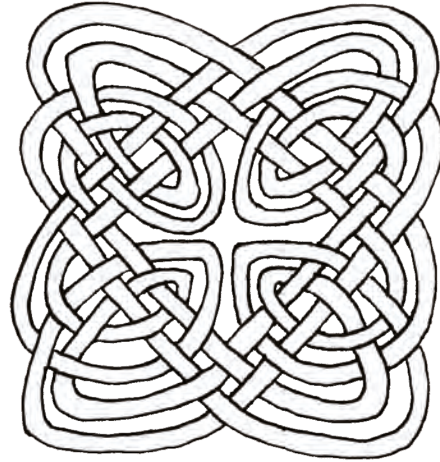
The water in this pool was affected by the tides at sea. At high tide, the pool would have been full of water. But at low tide, it would have left behind lots of thick black mud. This is probably why the site was called *dubh linn*, or black pool in Old Irish — from which we get the modern name Dublin.



Brother Findan often illustrates his manuscripts using a type of art called 'interlace'. Interlace is a pattern made up of lines crossing over each other to form a knot.

You can see a similar pattern in the brickwork on the grass in the centre of the garden. Walk along the brickwork. Can you see how the lines cross over and weave around each other?

Here's another interlace design. How many different lines are used in the design? \_\_\_\_\_  
Try colouring the lines in different colours so that you can see the pattern more clearly.



Now try drawing your own interlace design. It's not easy!



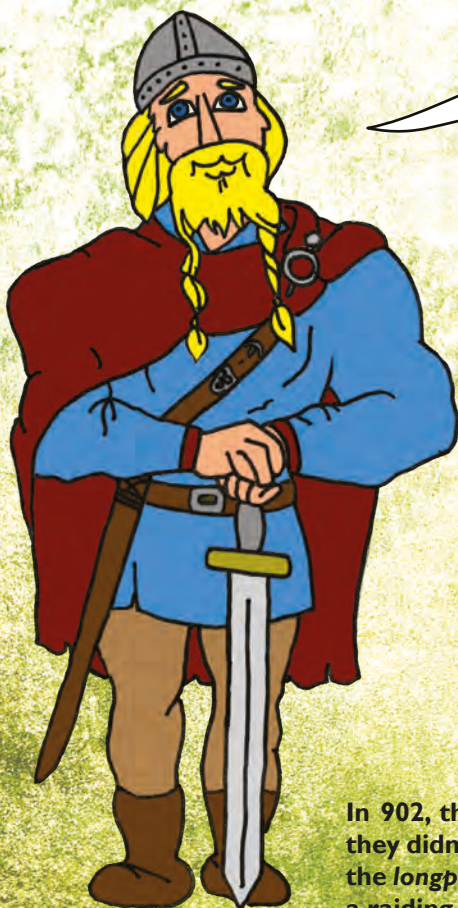
**Did you know?**

You can see illuminated manuscripts like Brother Findan might have made at the Book of Kells exhibition in Trinity College.



# The Vikings arrive

The Vikings attacked Ireland for the first time in 795. But in 841, they decided they had had enough of quick raids and wanted to stay somewhere permanently. So they built a defensive camp known as a *longphort*, or ship harbour, here at the black pool.



Hi, I'm Sigurd, and I've come to Ireland from Norway. It took me and my crew just a week to sail here. The pool makes a great natural harbour to keep my boat safe and secure.

Walk around the grass in the centre of the garden and imagine how it looked when it was a pool with boats in. Experts aren't sure how many boats you could fit in a pool this size, but a good guess seems to be somewhere between twenty and thirty. How many boats do you think could be kept here?

In 902, the Irish threw the Viking leaders out of Dublin, and they didn't come back again for 15 years. But during this time, the *longphort* continued to develop and it gradually grew from a raiding camp into a proper town.



## **Did you know?**

Nobody is actually sure where the first *longphort* in Dublin really was. It was probably here, by the black pool, but some people think it might have been further up the Liffey, at Kilmainham.



May 841

Dear Mother,

We've made it to Ireland okay. Crossing the North Sea was a bit rough though. Thorgrim kept on being sick. What a weakling! But we had a quick stop in Orkney on the way over. We're now in Dublin, and we've started to build ourselves a nice little *longphort*.

We've got the boat anchored in a lovely little harbour, although it gets very muddy when the tide goes out. Actually, I should probably warn you: I might have a lot of washing to bring home for you. Sorry!

A couple of the lads got killed in a skirmish with the locals the other night, so we had a bit of a ceremony and buried them with all their fighting equipment just behind the harbour. But the rest of us are doing okay. I think we're going to go monastery raiding tonight. I'll try and steal some gold for you, to make up for missing your birthday.

I'll write again soon.

Your loving son,

*Sigurd.*



**Did you know?**

Some of the oldest Viking graves in Dublin were found next to the black pool. This is one reason why many experts think this must have been the site of the *longphort*. You can find out more about Viking graves later on in this tour.



# Ruling Dublin

## Dublin Castle

Now we're going to leave the **Dubh Linn Gardens** and head back towards **Dublin Castle**. Walk out of the garden and turn right onto the road, returning back to the **lower courtyard** of the castle. As you walk around the back of the castle, have a look at the walls. Although the walls you can see were built after the time of the Vikings, they are built on top of the original defensive banks, made out of earth, which the Vikings created to defend their settlement. Cross the lower courtyard, walking past the **Record Tower** on the left, and go into the **upper courtyard**. If the upper courtyard is closed for a state function, you can simply stop in the lower courtyard, by the Record Tower.



Hi. I'm Olaf Cuaran, and I'm the king of Dublin. Dublin is still quite small, but it's growing all the time. My father was one of the Viking leaders who won Dublin back from the Irish in 917, and this is the site where the kings of Dublin have lived ever since. Like my father, I've also been king in York in England from time to time — but the English keep on throwing me out! It's not easy keeping control of two kingdoms.

Have a look around at the castle.

What are the buildings made from?

What are you standing on?

Dublin Castle probably wasn't a castle at all when the Vikings were here. Their houses were made from wood, rather than from stone. And the king would have lived in a hall — really a large house, where he could hold feasts for all his friends and family — rather than a castle or a palace.

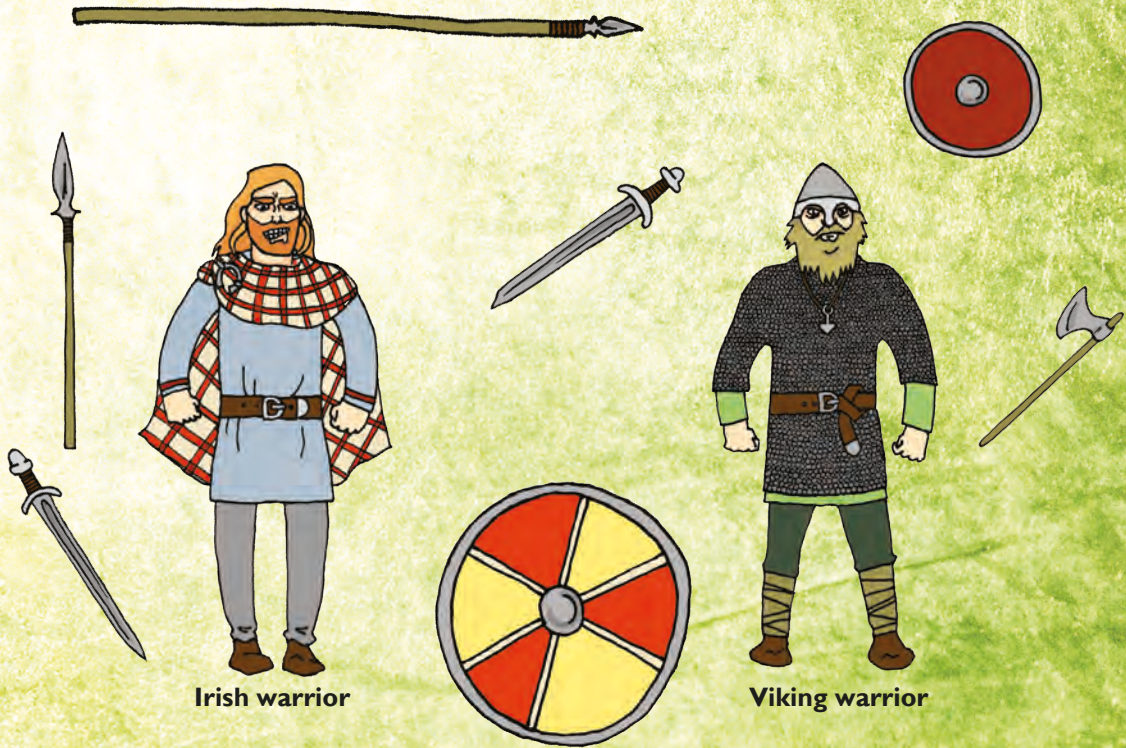


### Did you know?

Olaf's nickname, *cuaran*, means a kind of Irish shoe or sandal.



Along the right side of the courtyard, can you see two gateways? Each one has a stone figure on top. Can you see the weapon that each figure is holding? The figure on the left arch (who represents bravery) is holding a spear. This was a weapon that was often used by Irish people in battle. The figure on the right arch (who represents justice) is holding a sword. This was a weapon that the Vikings often used to fight with.



Irish warrior

Viking warrior

What other kind of things did the Irish and the Vikings use in battle?  
Draw lines connecting the right objects to the right warrior.



**Did you know?**

After the Anglo-Normans (the rulers of England) crossed over from England and invaded Ireland in 1169, Dublin Castle became even more important. The Anglo-Normans replaced the wooden defences and the old buildings with solid stone, and even added a moat and drawbridge to the castle.



# Halls and feasting

The king's hall wasn't just a centre of power — it was also a place of entertainment. The king would often hold feasts for his followers where people would eat, drink and have fun. These feasts were a chance for the king to reward his loyal followers.



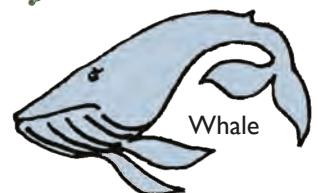
Hello. I'm Gormlaith, the queen of Olaf Cuaran. I'm Irish, the daughter of the king of Leinster, but I enjoy living in a Viking community. I have learned to speak Old Norse, and my husband also speaks Irish. I love attending feasts. It's a chance for us all to be together, and for me to dress up in my finest clothes and jewels!



## Did you know?

The Vikings might have had a fierce reputation — but they didn't always get the best deal when it came to trade. Because they didn't keep many animals in the city, they had to buy a lot of their food from nearby Irish farms. Archaeologists have discovered that the cows eaten by the Vikings were much smaller and older than the cows eaten elsewhere in Ireland. It looks like the Vikings were being sold cows that nobody else wanted!

The Vikings ate some of the same foods as us. But they also ate things that you probably wouldn't enjoy eating! Which of the following unusual foods do you think the Vikings actually ate?





# Riddle me this

Entertainment was also important at feasts. The Vikings didn't have televisions to watch, and movies hadn't been invented yet either. But what they could do was tell stories to one another about famous Vikings and their exciting deeds. These stories are known as sagas and it's because people started writing these stories down in the thirteenth century that we know so much about Vikings today.

The Vikings also enjoyed reciting poetry, exchanging jokes, and even telling riddles. Below are some genuine Viking riddles from one of the sagas. Can you crack them? To help you, we've completed the first one for you.

What is this amazing creature that I saw?  
It has eight legs and four eyes and its knees are above its belly.

Guess the riddle!

Answer: spider

Who are the group of sisters that travel together?  
Their hair is white and they wear white hoods.  
They wake up when the wind blows, and they are often unkind to sailors.

Guess the riddle!

What is the creature that is hit by swords and spears to protect a brave man in battle?  
It receives injuries itself to give life to others.  
It stands before the left hand of its lord.

Guess the riddle!



# Painting the past

## City Hall

Turn out of the **upper courtyard** through the **gateway** featuring the figure of **Justice**. Walk across the next **courtyard** and out through the **iron gate**. **City Hall** is the building on the **right**. There is an **entrance at the side** or, for easier access, there is an **entry with a ramp at the front** of the building, on **Dame Street**.

Entrance to City Hall is free. The building is open to the public Mon–Sat from 10:00–17:15.

Step into the centre of the hall, underneath the dome-shaped roof, and look up. What can you see? Around the bottom of the dome are twelve paintings showing scenes from Dublin's history. Some of these include Vikings.

Look carefully at the paintings and see if you can answer the questions below.

1) Four of the paintings show the coats of arms for the four provinces of Ireland. Can you name the provinces? Unscramble the letters below to find the answers.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Lnetesir)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Utelsr)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Msuentr)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Cnohncat)

2) Now you've rearranged the words above, have a look at how the province names are spelled. Which province seems to be the odd one out, and why?

3) Look at the first painting to the right of the clock. This shows the arrival of the Vikings in Ireland. How many boats can you see in the picture?

4) Look at the fourth painting to the right of the clock. It shows the Irish king Brian Boru on a white horse just before the Battle of Clontarf. What is he holding in his hand?





**Did you know?**

Can you spot the ravens on the sails of the Viking boats? Vikings are often linked to ravens because one of their gods, Odin, owned two ravens. They were called Hugin (thought) and Munin (memory), and they flew around the world to find out what was going on.

Hello. My name is Mael Sechnaill and I'm the High King of Ireland. Can you spot me in the second painting to the right of the clock? The painting shows the Vikings handing over control of Dublin to me in 989 after I attacked the town and cut them off from their fresh water supply. After the battle, I made every household in Dublin pay me one ounce of gold.



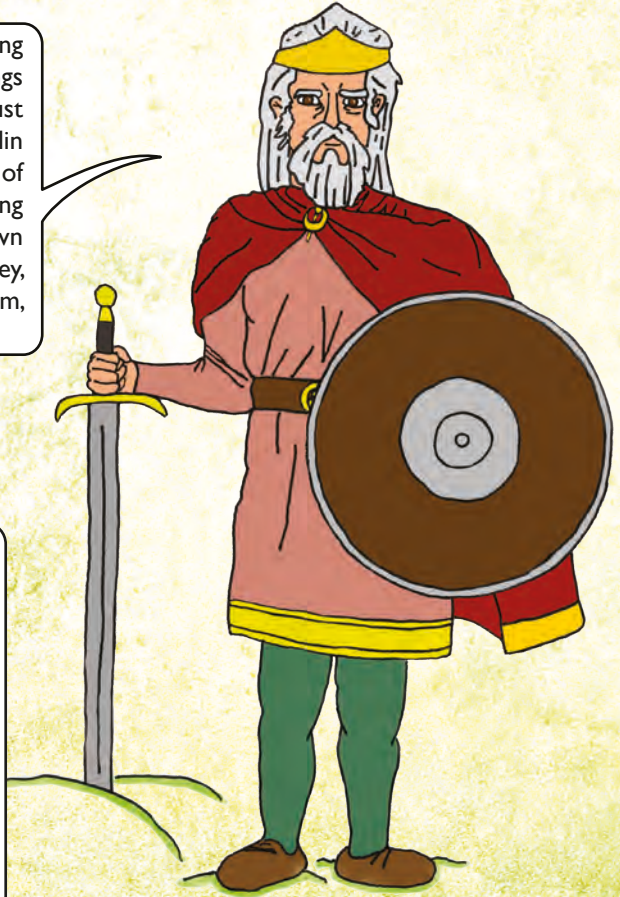
**Did you know?**

Some historians think that when Mael Sechnaill took control of Dublin, in 989, this was the year that Dublin became a proper town. But because some of our later historical writings are complicated, this date has been confused with 988. This is why Dublin celebrated 1000 years as a city in 1988!



# Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf

Hello, I'm Brian Boru, High King of the Irish. All of Ireland's kings have to obey me. But just recently, the Viking king of Dublin — my stepson — and the king of Leinster have been getting awkward. Dublin is a rich town and I don't want to lose money, so I'm prepared to fight them, even if I'm getting on in years.



## **Did you know?**

Although we often talk about the Vikings of Dublin, it's hard to say how Viking they really were. Most of the Vikings who came from Scandinavia were men, and they married local Irish women. Dublin was a very mixed town — which is why many experts refer to the people of Dublin as 'Hiberno (Irish)-Norse'.

The Battle of Clontarf is one of the most famous battles in Irish history. To find out what happened, fill in the blanks in the paragraph below using the words that are given underneath.

The Battle of Clontarf took place on Good Friday in the year \_\_\_\_\_. It's often been seen as a battle in which the \_\_\_\_\_ Irish, led by Brian Boru, threw the pagan \_\_\_\_\_ out of Ireland. But actually, it was more complicated than that! Vikings fought on both sides in the battle and many of them were Christian! The battle was really about who should control Dublin's \_\_\_\_\_. On one side of the battle was Brian Boru and on the other side was Sihtric \_\_\_\_\_, king of Dublin, as well as the king of Leinster and their friends from places as far away as the Isle of Man, \_\_\_\_\_ and Iceland. The battle was very close, but it was Brian's side that finally \_\_\_\_\_. Many people \_\_\_\_\_ on both sides during the battle, including Brian. Brian was an \_\_\_\_\_ man by this time and he wasn't strong enough to go onto the battle-field. He stayed in his \_\_\_\_\_ to pray for his troops, but somebody crept in and killed him.

wealth

1014

Vikings  
Silkenbeard

Orkney  
died

pray  
tent

Leinster  
won

old  
Christian



# Sigurd and the raven banner: a short story



One of Sihtric Silkenbeard's famous supporters at the Battle of Clontarf was Sigurd, the earl of Orkney. When he fought in battles, he took a banner with a raven on it, which suggests that he worshipped Odin. Read the short story to find out more:

"Sigurd, come here!" shouted Eidne.

"Mother," grumbled Sigurd. "I'm the ruler of Orkney. I'm busy. I've got a battle to prepare for!"

"And this will help you," said his mother. "Look what I've made for you. It's a banner with a raven on it."

"Yes, very nice," said Sigurd. "But I hardly see how —"

"It will help you in battle," said Eidne. "I've got magic skills for a reason, you know. Now, when you are in battle, have somebody carry this before you. Whoever is carrying the banner will be killed — but you will be guaranteed victory!"

"I don't really like witchcraft," said Sigurd. But he took the banner anyway. Eidne turned out to be right: thanks to the banner, Sigurd won all his battles in the years ahead, and he grew to be a strong and powerful chieftain.

Then one day, Sigurd's friend, Sihtric Silkenbeard from Dublin, came to visit.

"Sigurd, I have a problem," he said. "It looks like there's going to be a battle with King Brian in Ireland. He's threatening to take Dublin from me. Will you come and fight with me?"

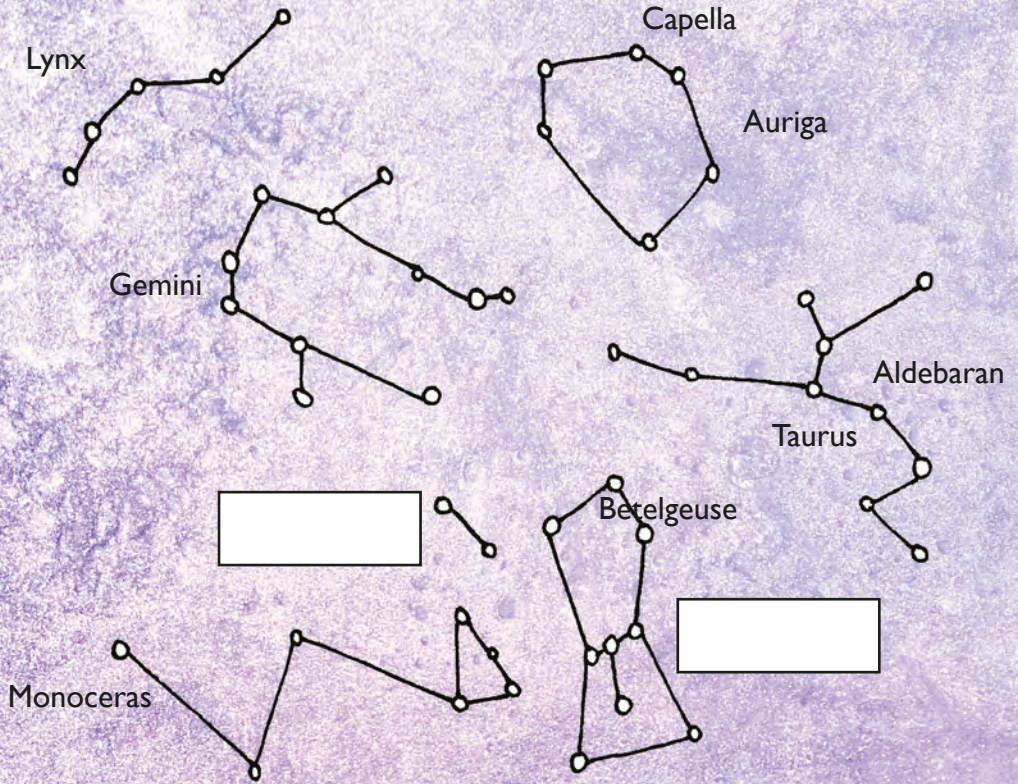
"Of course," said Sigurd. And he packed his trusty raven banner. But when he got to Clontarf, nobody would carry the banner for Sigurd. "Very well," he said. "I'll carry it myself!" And off he headed into battle.

What do you think happened next?

- a) Sihtric and his supporters won the Battle of Clontarf thanks to the raven banner — even though Sigurd, as the person carrying the banner, was killed.
- b) Because the banner belonged to Sigurd, he was able to carry it in battle without getting killed — but it also meant that he and Sihtric didn't win the battle.
- c) Sigurd was killed because he was carrying the banner AND Sihtric and his supporters lost the battle. The banner turned out to be useless!



# Sailing by starlight



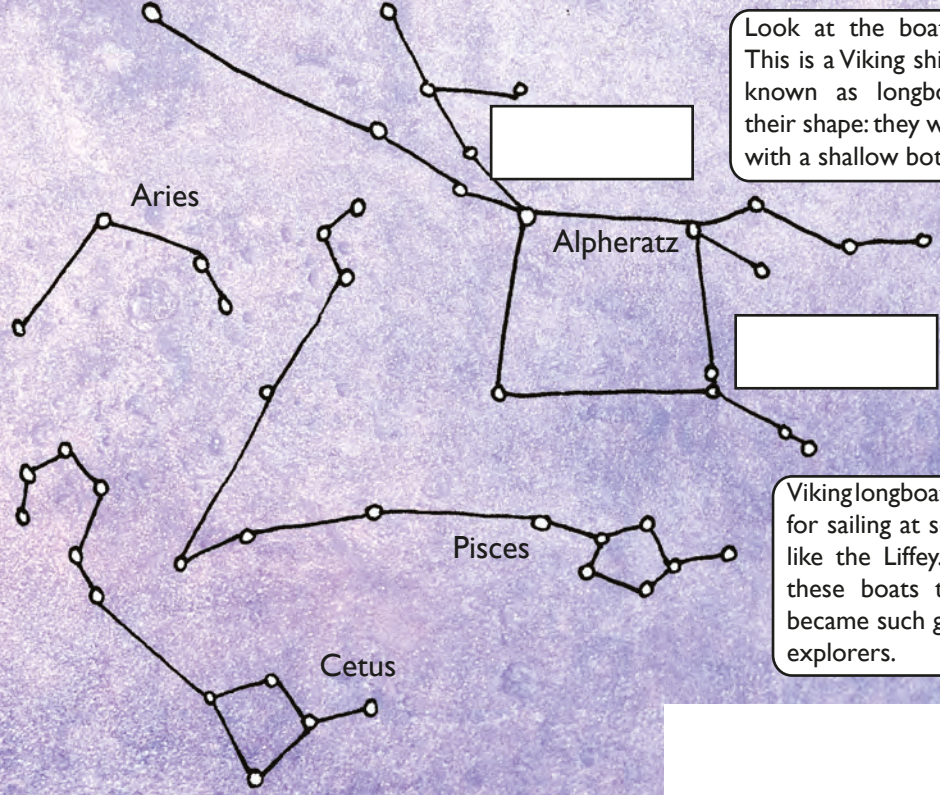
The Vikings didn't have modern maps or satellites to tell them which way to go. Instead, they had to work out which direction to travel in based on what they could see. When they were crossing the open ocean, they used the position of the sun during the day, and the stars at night. The most useful stars were those forming well-known shapes, or constellations. Can you spot the stars and constellations that appear on the mural?

Help the Vikings find their way from Norway to Dublin.  
Use the mural to fill in the missing constellation names on your picture.

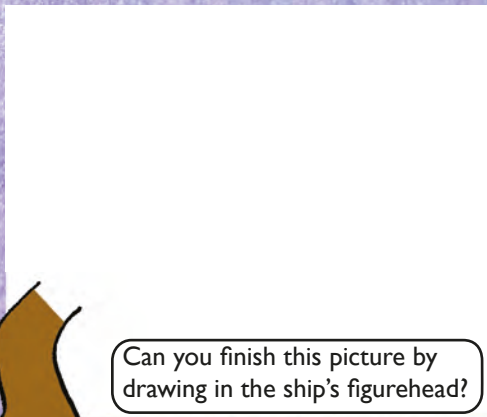


Leave the City Hall, and turn left onto **Lord Edward Street**. Walk up the hill and at the first crossing, **cross the road** and turn down **Cow's Lane**. Walk down Cow's Lane, and you will see our next stop — the large **mural of a Viking ship** right next to the **Smock Alley Theatre**.


Look at the boat in the picture. This is a Viking ship. They are often known as longboats because of their shape: they were long and thin with a shallow bottom.



Viking longboats were excellent for sailing at sea and up rivers like the Liffey. It is thanks to these boats that the Vikings became such good raiders and explorers.



Can you finish this picture by drawing in the ship's figurehead?

**Did you know?**  
The Vikings put dragon heads on their ships to scare their enemies!



# Writing in runes

Look at the mural again. Can you see some strange shapes on it?

Vikings didn't write using the letters that we do today. Instead, they wrote using shapes known as runes. The Vikings carved these runes into wood or stone. It was very difficult to carve curved lines, which is why runes are formed from straight lines.



### Did you know?

The Viking alphabet contained fewer letters than our modern alphabet. So some runes were used for more than one sound or letter. The letter 'þ', for example, was used for a 'th' sound.

The first letters in the Viking alphabet are f u th a r k, so it is often known as the futhark! The complete Viking alphabet looks like this:

f	u	th	a	r	k, c	g	w
h	n	i	j	æ	p	z	s
t	b	m	ð	ǫ	ǰ	ǫ	ǰ



Can you write your name using runes?

Runes have often been linked to magic, charms and curses. But many people also used runes for simple everyday things — for lists, for receipts and for exchanging messages. Can you decode the following message?

R A I D    8 7    1 H M  
A 8 7 8 9 1 M R I    1 F < M 3  
G 1 F < M    1 8 7 1 X H 1  
A M    A M M 1    F 1  
3 D 7 3 M 1

Look again at the picture. As well as runes, can you see some numbers? All of these numbers represent important historical dates. Can you identify in which years the following events took place?

\_\_\_\_\_ — the Vikings first settled in Dublin.

\_\_\_\_\_ — the year in which some people think the town of Dublin was founded.

\_\_\_\_\_ — the Battle of Clontarf was fought.



# Following in the footsteps of the Vikings

## Fishamble Street

For our next stop, turn right, away from the mural, and then take the first turn on the left down **Lower Exchange Street**. As you walk down here, you can see the remains of **Isolde's Tower** on your right. This tower was part of the Anglo-Norman stone wall. Traitors used to have their heads stuck on spikes in front of this tower!

As you carry on down **Lower Exchange Street**, look to your right. From here, you can see the **River Liffey**. You can also see a bus stop with a seating area shaped like a **Viking boat**. Cross over **Fishamble Street**, and stop outside the **Civic Offices** on **Wood Quay**.



Hi! My name is Unn, and I'm nine years old. I live on Fishamble Street with my mother and father, and five brothers and sisters. Fishamble Street is quite a different place to the big hall where our king lives. Trade is really important and we get merchants here from lots of different countries. You can buy everything here — spices and fruit, amber from the Baltic, and silk from Byzantium. Everybody round here works, and it's us that make the king rich.

**Fishamble Street is where a lot of Viking trade took place. Trade probably developed here when the Vikings reclaimed Dublin in 917. The shape of the street today, with its bend in the middle, is still the same shape as the original Viking street. So as you walk up here, you are actually following in the footsteps of the Vikings!**



### *Did you know?*

The area of Wood Quay was the heart of Viking Dublin and contained several hundred Viking houses. When Dublin city council decided they wanted to build their new offices here, in the 1980s, big protests were held. The council won, but the issue is still discussed today.



# Women's work

Now I'm nine, I do a lot to help out my mother around the house. I look after my younger brother and sister and I'm also learning other skills. My mother is teaching me to cook and I'm learning how to spin and weave. These days, I often join my mother and aunt and help them to make clothes. We weave fabric from wool and linen from a plant called flax.



**Viking women were very independent. Not only could a woman own her own property, but she also took care of the house and often, if her husband had to travel, she would take care of his business for him. A Viking woman could even divorce her husband if she wanted to.**



## ***Did you know?***

Weaving was a skill that all Viking women learned. In the run up to the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, one Viking was said to have had a vision of the battle ahead, when he saw the goddesses of fate weaving the fabric of the future from human intestines!



For this next activity, you need to start right at the bottom of Fishamble Street, in front of the Civic Offices. Can you see a bronze plaque on the pavement with some images on it? Bronze plaques have been placed around Viking Dublin to show you some of the things discovered by archaeologists when they were digging in this area.

The plaques on Fishamble Street are marked on your picture with red squares. Walk up the road and find all the plaques. Each plaque shows objects that archaeologists found nearby.



**Did you know?**

The medieval city wall, which was built on top of the original Viking defences, runs underneath the Civic Offices. As you walk up Fishamble Street, you'll see a paved pathway running between two of the office blocks. Have a look at the pathway and see if you can spot the line of the wall, which is marked on the path.



Let's find out a bit more about Fishamble Street! As you walk, look at the bronze plaques and see if you can match each red square to the correct picture to find out where all of my friends and family live. Then have a go at answering the questions.



My father's friend lives in this house. What do you think he does for a living? \_\_\_\_\_  
It makes his house very smelly!







This is where I live. Can you guess what my father makes and sells? \_\_\_\_\_  
He uses animal bone, antler and sometimes even ivory in his work.  
He also made my little brother a toy boat for his birthday.



My aunt lives here. She's Irish, from the countryside. I'm not sure if she likes living on Fishamble Street. It's very loud and there's not much space. But she's good fun. Can you guess what she uses the tools in this house for? \_\_\_\_\_



This house is where my best friend Gudrun lives. Her father is a carpenter. Can you see what he's made for us to play with? \_\_\_\_\_  
I love visiting Gudrun's house!



Another of our friends lives here. He carves beautiful objects for people to buy. But his house is very messy because he's always trying out new ideas and dropping practice pieces on the floor. What material do you think he uses?  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Home time

## Winetavern Street

You're now standing at the top of **Fishamble Street** and next to **Christchurch Cathedral**. Turn right and follow the path behind the cathedral, walking towards **Winetavern Street**. Stop at the outlines of the Viking houses on the pavement.

On your way, you'll see two more bronze plaques. The first one shows part of a wicker panel, which might have been put down over a muddy road. The second one shows a whistle, a sword and a metal collar that might have been made for a child slave!



### *Did you know?*

The first bridge over the River Liffey was built sometime before the year 1014. Before this, when people wanted to cross the river, they had to wait for low tide. Wicker panels or hurdles, like the one you can see on the bronze plaque, were laid down on the mud to make it easier to cross. The modern Irish name for Dublin, Baile Átha Cliath, means 'town of the ford of the hurdles'.

Have a look at the pavement in front of you. Here you can see the outline of the type of Viking houses that stood in this area in the eleventh century. There is a picture nearby to show you what the house would have looked like.

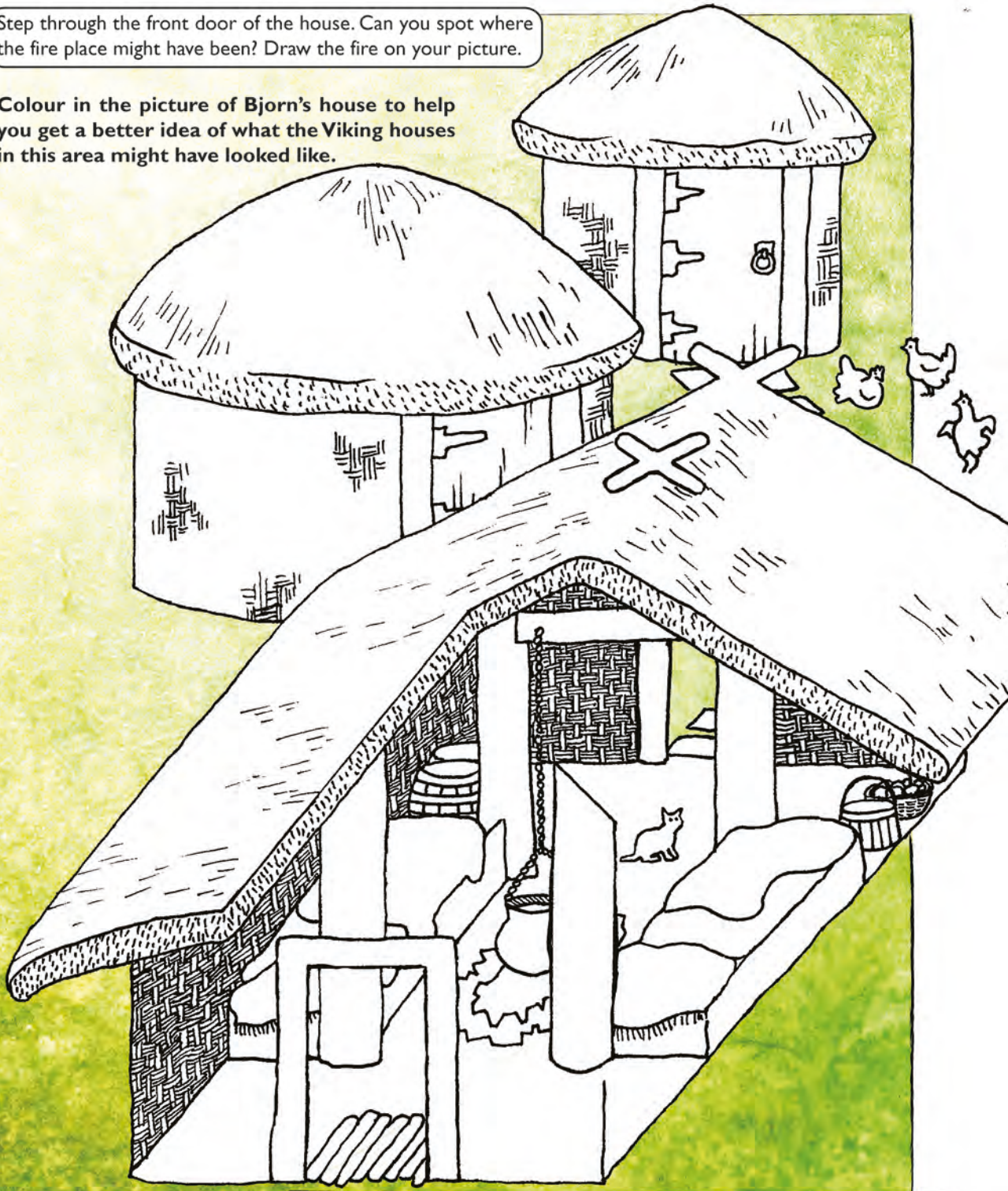


Hi, I'm Bjorn, and I live in this house with my family. Six of us live in here, so it's sometimes quite crowded. We don't get a lot of privacy! The framework of the house is made from wooden posts. Then we add walls that are woven out of wood, which we call 'wattle'. Our roof is thatched, and covered with reeds. Step into my house, and let me show you around!



Step through the front door of the house. Can you spot where the fire place might have been? Draw the fire on your picture.

Colour in the picture of Bjorn's house to help you get a better idea of what the Viking houses in this area might have looked like.



Have a look at the rest of the house. How is it different from the place where you live?  
People would have lived, worked, cooked, eaten and slept in this one small space! Can you identify the platforms where people sat during the day and slept at night?





**Did you know?**

Viking houses didn't have windows so they were often very dark inside. A fire would have been burning constantly inside the house. It was used for cooking, for keeping people warm, and for providing light inside the house. But it would also have made things very smoky.

The Vikings couldn't just go to the shops to buy things for their house. They needed to use natural materials that they could find from the land around them, or else buy from nearby farmers. But which materials were used for what? Link the following materials to the correct explanation in the list below:

- |              |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| reeds        | to keep the fire burning            |
| wooden posts | to use as toilet paper              |
| ash          | to keep warm at night               |
| peat         | to cover up smells                  |
| moss         | to make the roof                    |
| animal skins | to build the framework of the house |

**Walk through the back door of the house and follow the path to a second building. Archaeologists have uncovered many buildings like this, but can't agree on what they were used for. Perhaps they were separate bedrooms, or used as nurseries for babies. Or perhaps they kept animals in them. What do you think?**



**Did you know?**

The wattle walls of the house would have let in lots of draughts. Some experts think that to keep their houses warmer, the Vikings might have covered the walls of their house with mud, or daub, but others think there isn't enough evidence to be sure.



# Sold into slavery

Walk back to the bronze plaque with the slave collar on it and have another look. Does this collar look small to you? Not everybody is sure that this would have been worn by a slave — but if it was, it would have been a very small, young slave. Slavery was a nasty fact of life in the Viking Age. Men, women and children were captured during battles and then sold at slave markets. One of the biggest slave markets in Western Europe was held in Dublin.



Our family has a slave. He's called Cormac. He's only a few years older than me. He helps my father work as a blacksmith and he also does a lot of work around the house. Last week, our roof started leaking so he mended that for us. We don't pay Cormac, but he does make some money by doing some carpentry in his spare time. If he saves up enough money, he can buy his freedom from my father. Then we'll need a new slave to replace him!



## ***Did you know?***

Before slaves were sold, they might have been kept on Dalkey Island, just off Dublin Bay! Irish historical sources tell us that a captured abbot from an Irish monastery tried to escape from the island by swimming to the shore.

How would you feel if you were made a slave and weren't allowed to do what you wanted anymore? What things would you miss from your own life? It must have been hard to live in the Viking Age.



# Religions old...

## Christchurch Cathedral

Walk up **St. Michael's Hill** towards **Christchurch Cathedral**, passing **Dublinia** on your right as you go. Follow the path around to the **far side of the cathedral** and enter the cathedral grounds through the gate.

As you walk, you should be able to see more bronze plaques on the pavement showing things that archaeologists found in the area. Tick them off on this list as you spot them.

- Part of a woven basket
- A wooden spade and gold armrings
- Old leather shoes
- A leather scabbard for keeping a knife in and a pin
- Tools used by a metal worker

Hello! I'm King Sihtric Silkenbeard, and I ordered the building of Dublin's first cathedral. The building work started in 1030, after I came back from a pilgrimage to Rome.

By 1030, when work started on the cathedral, most people in Dublin were already Christian. In fact, it's likely that the Vikings became Christian soon after they arrived, when they started marrying local women. Most Christians wouldn't marry somebody who didn't share their beliefs. But a few Vikings held on to their old beliefs for much longer.



### Did you know?

The Vikings believed in lots of different gods and goddesses. All of them had different powers, so the Vikings would pray to different gods depending on what they needed.



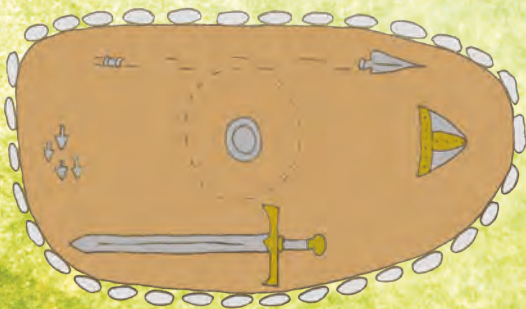


Three of the most famous Viking gods were called Odin, Thor and Freya. Odin was the god of wisdom. Thor was connected to strength and bravery. And Freya was the goddess of beauty and of love.

Many people who worshipped Thor wore small pendants shaped like his hammer, Mjolnir. You can see some of these on display at the National Museum of Archaeology. Odin and Freya were also linked to magic objects. Can you follow the interlaced lines in this diagram to work out which object belongs to which god?



When Vikings died, they were buried with important objects that people thought they might need in the afterlife. These included horses, boats, food and sometimes even slaves. What things can you see in the picture below? Can you guess what job the person had during his life by looking at the things that have been buried with him?



**Did you know?**

The biggest pagan Viking cemeteries in Dublin were in Kilmainham and Islandbridge. Almost all of the people buried there were men. This tells us that not many Viking women crossed over from Norway to Ireland.



## ... and religions new

At first, many Vikings were reluctant to give up believing in their old gods. So instead they worshipped the Christian God alongside all of their other gods. But belief in the Christian God won and by around 950, it is likely that many of Dublin's Vikings were Christian.



The first cathedral in Dublin was very different from the one you can see today. It was made of wood rather than stone. But it was still an important place for people in Dublin.

The Vikings might have been Christian — but that doesn't mean they were nice Christians! In 1030, Sihtric returned from pilgrimage and ordered work to start on his cathedral. In 1035, during a fight with an enemy Irish king, he raided a village. When all the innocent people ran into the church to hide, he had the door of the church locked and he burned the building down. He also captured 200 people to sell as slaves.



### *Did you know?*

Christchurch Cathedral wasn't made of stone until the 1180s, when the Anglo-Normans, led by Strongbow, paid for a replacement building.

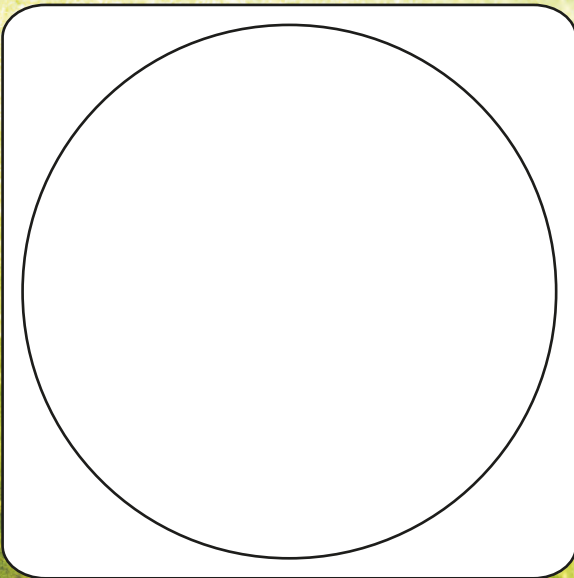


# Making money

As a king, I have introduced lots of new things to Dublin. I didn't just set up the first cathedral. I also established the first mint here. This is a place where people produce coins. There was no local money before I became king, so if people wanted to buy something, they had to pay in a different way. Sometimes they gave cows or sheep, or else they chopped up pieces of jewellery or used coins from other countries.



**Have a look at the notice board outside the cathedral. Can you find the picture of Sihtric Silkenbeard's first coin? How lifelike do you think his picture is?**



Imagine you were ruler of Dublin for the day. What would your picture look like on a coin? Draw your own Viking coin design here. Don't forget to include the Viking name that you chose at the start of the tour!



## Other sites to see



Well done! You've finished the tour of Viking Dublin. I hope you've enjoyed yourself. If you're interested in what you've looked at today, there's plenty more to see in Dublin. Why don't you visit one of these sites?

### **Dublinia, St. Michael's Hill, Christchurch**

Dublinia is an interactive, hands-on tour of Viking and medieval Dublin, with things to see, touch and hear.

Opening hours: 10.00am–6.30pm March to September;  
10:00am–5:30pm October to February.

Entrance fee applies. Family tickets available.

### **Replica Viking house in the Botanic Gardens**

To celebrate the Millennium of the Battle of Clontarf in Easter 2014, a full-scale replica of the type of Viking house commonly found on Fishamble Street, complete with Viking-style vegetable garden, was constructed in Dublin's beautiful Botanic Gardens.

Opening hours: 9:00am–5:00pm March to October (weekends and public holidays 10:00am–6:00pm); 9:00am–4:30pm October 27 to February (weekends and public holidays 10:00am–4:30pm).

Entrance free.

### **Viking Gallery, National Museum of Archaeology, Kildare Street**

The Viking Gallery at the National Museum has plenty of artefacts on display from Viking Age Dublin — and from the rest of the Viking world — including some of the items featured on the bronze plaques.

Opening hours: 10:00am–5:00pm (Sundays 2:00pm–5pm). Closed Mondays.

Entrance free.

### **Site of Norse graves, Kilmainham and Islandbridge**

Visit the War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge, where a number of pagan Viking graves were found.

### **Viking Long Stone, located at the junction of Pearse Street and College Street**

This is a modern copy of a stone that the Vikings are said to have put up in the ninth century to celebrate the fact that they controlled Dublin.

### **St. Audoen's Archway, Cook Street**

This is the last original archway surviving from the Anglo-Norman walls.



# Solutions

p. 3: **Fill in the names:** Scotland, England, France, Iceland, Greenland, Canada.

p. 8: **Interlace:** it is made from four lines.

p. 11: **Irish warrior** — long throwing spear, short stabbing spear, sword, small shield; **Viking warrior** — sword, axe, dagger, large shield.

p. 12: **Viking foods:** the Vikings actually ate ALL of these foods!

p. 13: **Riddles:** 1) Waves. 2) A shield.

p. 14: **Answers:** 1) Leinster, Ulster, Munster, Connacht. 2) Connacht is the odd one out. Leinster, Ulster and Munster all end in -ster, which is a word ending that was influenced by Old Norse. There were fewer Vikings living in Connacht, so the spelling of the province wasn't altered by the Old Norse language. 3) There are twelve boats in the picture. 4) A cross.

p. 16: **Correct word order for paragraph:** 1014, Christian, Vikings, wealth, Silkenbeard, Orkney, won, died, old, tent.

p. 17: **Answer:** c) Sigurd was killed because he was carrying the banner and Siftríc lost the battle.

p. 18–19: **Constellations:** (from left to right) Canis Minor, Orion, Andromeda, Pegasus.

p. 21: **The message reads:** Raid on the monastery takes place tonight. We meet at sunset; Correct years: 841, 988, 1014.

p. 23: **Answer:** He's a fisherman.

p. 24: **Answers:** (top left) combs; (bottom left) board games; (top right) weaving; (bottom right) bone.

p. 28: **Answers:** reeds — to make the roof

wooden poles — to build the framework of the house

ash — to cover up smells

peat — to keep the fire burning

moss — to use as toilet paper

animal skins — to keep warm at night

p. 31: **Match the god to the object:** Odin — ravens; Thor — hammer; Freya — necklace. Freya's necklace is called Brisngamen; **Answer:** the person in the grave was a warrior. He was buried with his helmet, a shield, a spear, arrows and a sword.



You stop at an Icelandic farmhouse to rest. You tell the family stories of your travels and they write a saga about you. Gain 1 point.

Orkney Islands. Stop at the court of the Earl of Orkney. You compose a poem in his honour and he rewards you with silver. Gain 2 points.

Reykjavik, a small settlement in Iceland. You make some great trading deals and get walrus ivory, rope and wool. Gain 3 points.

Start  
Dublin

York, the most important Viking city in England. You make some great trading deals and get some woollen cloth, weapons and jewellery. Gain 3 points.

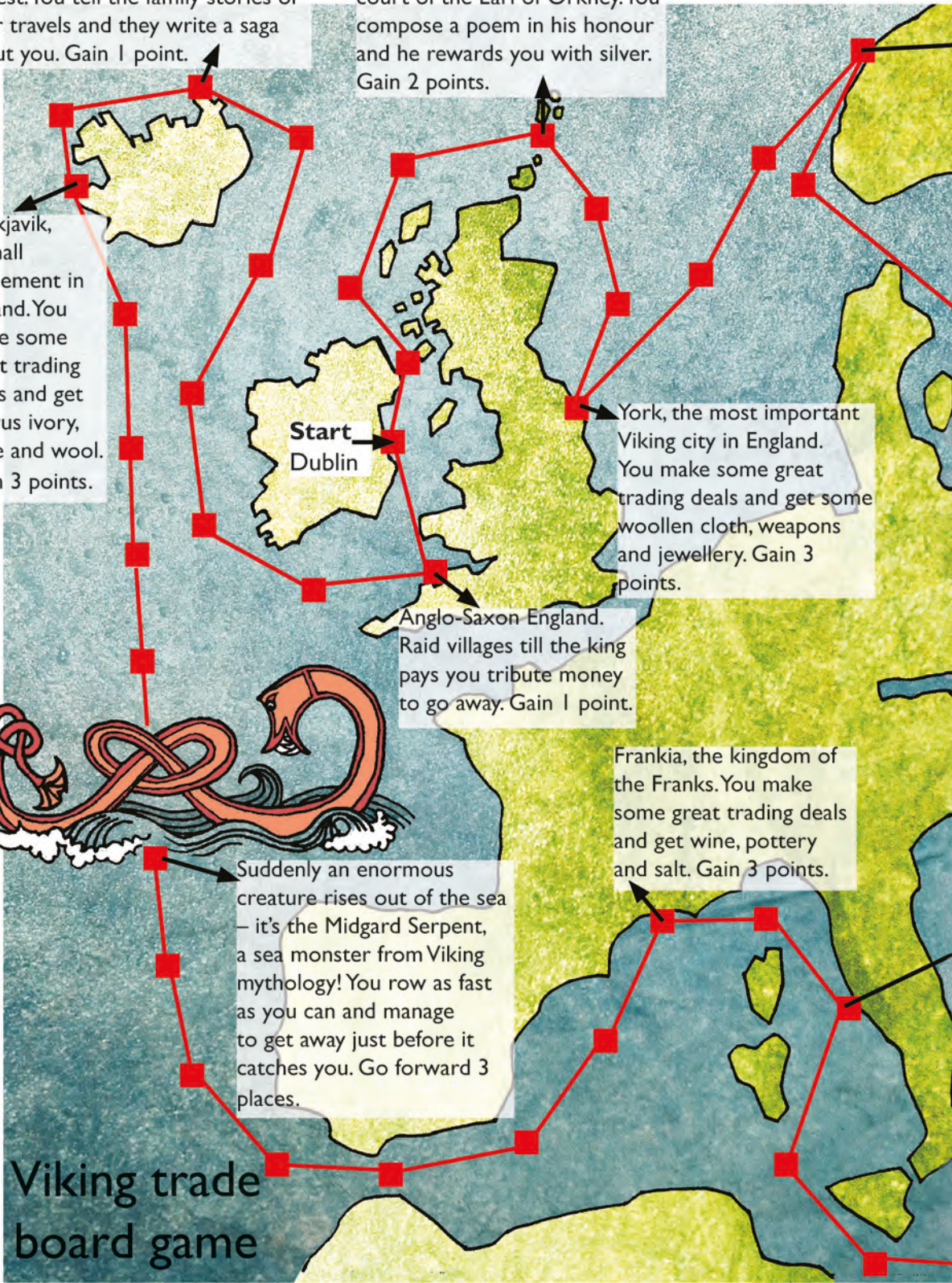
Anglo-Saxon England. Raid villages till the king pays you tribute money to go away. Gain 1 point.

Frankia, the kingdom of the Franks. You make some great trading deals and get wine, pottery and salt. Gain 3 points.

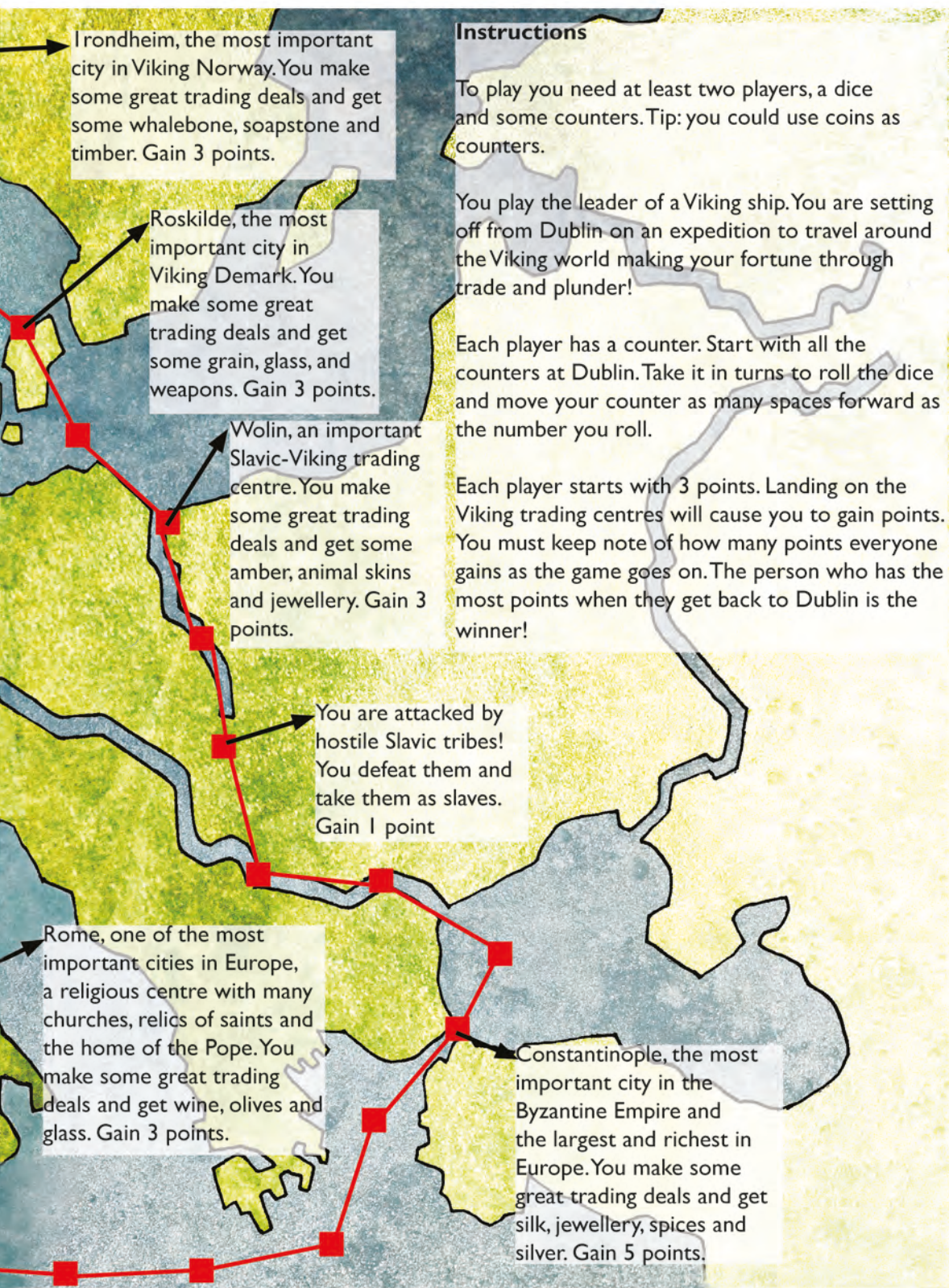
Suddenly an enormous creature rises out of the sea – it's the Midgard Serpent, a sea monster from Viking mythology! You row as fast as you can and manage to get away just before it catches you. Go forward 3 places.



# Viking trade board game







Irondheim, the most important city in Viking Norway. You make some great trading deals and get some whalebone, soapstone and timber. Gain 3 points.

Roskilde, the most important city in Viking Demark. You make some great trading deals and get some grain, glass, and weapons. Gain 3 points.

Wolin, an important Slavic-Viking trading centre. You make some great trading deals and get some amber, animal skins and jewellery. Gain 3 points.

You are attacked by hostile Slavic tribes! You defeat them and take them as slaves. Gain 1 point

Rome, one of the most important cities in Europe, a religious centre with many churches, relics of saints and the home of the Pope. You make some great trading deals and get wine, olives and glass. Gain 3 points.

Constantinople, the most important city in the Byzantine Empire and the largest and richest in Europe. You make some great trading deals and get silk, jewellery, spices and silver. Gain 5 points.

### Instructions

To play you need at least two players, a dice and some counters. Tip: you could use coins as counters.

You play the leader of a Viking ship. You are setting off from Dublin on an expedition to travel around the Viking world making your fortune through trade and plunder!

Each player has a counter. Start with all the counters at Dublin. Take it in turns to roll the dice and move your counter as many spaces forward as the number you roll.

Each player starts with 3 points. Landing on the Viking trading centres will cause you to gain points. You must keep note of how many points everyone gains as the game goes on. The person who has the most points when they get back to Dublin is the winner!



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## Languages, Myths and Finds Translating Norse and Viking Cultures for the Twenty-First Century

The Languages, Myths and Finds project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, ran in the years 2013-14, coinciding with the British Museum's international exhibition Vikings: Life and Legend. The aim of the project was to encourage conversations between specialist university academics and advanced research students in Old Norse and Viking Studies, and local communities around Britain and Ireland who were interested in knowing more about their Viking heritage. The communities chosen for the project were Cleveland, Dublin, Isle of Lewis, Isle of Man and Munster. Five small teams of academics and students were chosen to work with each community by developing and researching topics most suited to that locality, as identified in dialogue with the community. These booklets are the products of the research done by those teams together with the local partners, especially during field trips to the localities in the spring of 2014. The full set of five booklets can be viewed on the project website, <http://languagesmythsfinds.ac.uk>, where there is also further information about the project.

Professor Judith Jesch  
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