

Meet the Vikings

(at the National Museum of Scotland)

The stereotypical Viking of popular culture is a marauding raider in a horned helmet, but the archaeological record provides a much more nuanced view.

Vikings! is a touring exhibition drawing on the collections of the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm. It explores some of these ideas, showing the inhabitants of Medieval Scandinavia, not just as warriors, but as merchants, explorers, and skilled craftsmen.

Over 500 artifacts, many of which have never been exhibited abroad before, shed light on domestic life and funerary rituals. Visitors can also learn about the Vikings' religious beliefs, with jewelry and figurines depicting the pagan gods, as well as Scandinavia's earliest crucifix — found on Björkö, Sweden, and dated to the 10th century. Textiles, metalwork, and objects made from glass, bone, and amber highlight the creative powers of the Vikings; among these objects are finely wrought brooches and pendants decorated with animal and human imagery.

Combining these artifacts with new research and interactive displays, the exhibition presents a complete picture of who the Vikings were, and how they lived, a thousand years ago.

All Photos: Swedish History Museum

Vikings! runs from January 18, through May 12, 2013.

National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh: www.nms.ac.uk

—from *Current World Archaeology*, #56



Not just raiders: Objects such as this exquisite box brooch, **at left**, and penannular brooch decorated with animal heads, **below**, highlight the Vikings' abilities as skilled craftsmen.



ABOVE The exhibition includes stunning pieces of jewelry such as this pendant fishtail segments.

FRONT PAGE, TOP Found in a grave on Björkö, this 10th-century silver pendant is Scandinavia's earliest known crucifix.



LEFT a silver and gilded pendant, possibly depicting Frigg, queen of the gods.

RIGHT An ithyphallic Bronze figurine thought to represent the Norse fertility god, Freyr.



Norway Goat Cheese Fire Closes Tunnel

A truckload (27 tons) of caramelized brown goat cheese, a Norwegian delicacy known as **Brunost**, caught fire on January 22 as it was being driven through the 3km Brattli Tunnel at Tysfjord, in northern Norway, not far from **Narvik**.

The truck driver had noticed the fire in his trailer and abandoned it about 300m (1,000ft) from the southern entrance.

The fire raged for nearly five days, with smoldering toxic gases in the tunnel, which was said to be badly damaged, and will likely remain closed for several weeks, officials said.

It burns "almost like petrol if it gets hot enough," said police officer Viggo Berg of the high concentration of fat and sugar in the Brunost cheese.

Kjell Bjoern Vinje, of the Norwegian Public Roads Administration, said it was the first time he could remember cheese catching fire on Norwegian roads. "I didn't know that brown cheese burns so well," he said.

The cheese, truck, and lining in the tunnel burned so hot that the entire truck was reduced to an unrecognizable small pile of ash and steel.

No-one was hurt.

—from www.bbc.co.uk



Sweden's Royals Set Princess' Wedding

STOCKHOLM — Sweden's royal family says Princess Madeleine's wedding will be June 8, at the Royal Palace chapel in Stockholm.

King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia's youngest daughter is engaged to U.S.-British boyfriend Christopher O'Neill, 38, a New York banker. Princess Madeleine, 30, is fourth in line to the Swedish throne.

—The Blade, Jan. 2013.