

Raven's Wing

29th November 2002

To the Men and Women of the Raven, Greetings.

Hi all,

Now that the main season is over, there is not much for me to say. Thank you to all those who made the show at Devizes such a success – it sounds as though you had a great time. The next date in the diary is the Christmas party, on 14th December. See Dave's bit below.

I hope to see as many of you as possible there.

Roger.

Devizes Part 1 – The "Inside" Story

After driving to Devizes through the pouring rain, we arrived in bright sunshine – and early. A very nice lady let Neil and myself in and put the kettle on, just in time for the rest of the group to arrive. Fortified by coffee, tea and pink grapefruit squash, we headed back outside to unload, only to discover that it was raining again! And Roger wasn't even there!

Undeterred, we set up camp in the museum's lecture hall. How many Vikings does it take to put up an authenti-tent? Apparently all of them, and we still took two attempts to get it up right. As the doors opened, there were a few of us still half in and half out of kit, but fortunately Russell distracted the public by means of loud demonstrations of moneying downstairs, so that we were all decent by the time the first visitors reached us.

Every time the sun came out, Steve, Dave and Mo did sterling work with kiddie-Vike training outside in the car park. As no-one came back drenched, I assume that dramatic deaths in the growing puddles were not on the agenda! Dave's report on the outside stuff follows.

My day was made by one of the museum staff spotting my trepan and promptly appearing with some nearly-round discs of skull, presumably cut out with a flint knife, rather than a drill. So I'm warped. So what?

The audience numbers waxed and waned, though the only times that it ever got really quiet inside were when all the children were outside. Maybe it's the

advantage of being in a museum, but we seemed to get a more intelligent audience than is often the case. They were certainly asking more sensible questions... although one or two people did comment on the dead Viking in the tent (Neil having a nap).

We rounded off the day by collectively ooh-ing and aah-ing over the museum's collections of Saxon, Anglian, Viking and Roman artifacts. Kath was delighted to find a pouch that matched ones that she had been making, and Mo seemed to be captivated by a langseax with a built-in metal fitting for the top of the hilt. (Apparently this is unusual).

By the time we were ready to pack up, it was raining again, so the chain gangs swung back into action to get all the kit away in the minimum possible time and with the minimum of dampness. The pub beckoned, but alas weren't serving food for another couple of hours, so we all went our separate ways with the fortification of a quick drink and some of Kath's chocolate apiece (thanks, Kath!)

Special mention and thanks must go to Russell Scott, firstly for trekking down from Stoke after only a few hours' sleep, and secondly for the coins that he handed out to all present. Thanks also to Rebecca and the rest of the museum staff, who made us feel right at home. I think I can speak for us all when I say that their interest, help and a steady stream of refreshments were most welcome, and that we all had a very enjoyable day.

Bohn "Flick" Aelfricsson

Devizes Part 2 – The "Outside" Story

If there is one word that describes Devizes, it would have to be "wet".

Fortunately, we had a reasonably sized hall (upstairs via a slippery spiral fire escape stair!), which once a bit of furniture removal had been carried out, was just big enough to set up the living history. This comprised a dressed Viking frame tent, Maria's leech's stall, Mo and Neil with the sharp weapons, Kathy's food and textiles stuff and Stephanie's hnafataffl. Russell Scott was banished to a corner just off the museum entrance with his coin making display.

In both of the hour breaks between the rain, Steve and myself (with help from Mo) did combat displays and kiddie vike on the car-park. Steve broke yet another spear, and Mo's dane axe head departed from its shaft to be caught by Susie, bruising her leg. (Her teachers thought this is the best excuse for not doing PE they had come across in a while!) The footing was treacherous to say the least, authentic shoes and wet concrete definitely do not mix as Mo found to his cost. The kids loved it despite the wet, and parents asked some very good questions.

The museum were hoping to get 200 people through the door, and actually achieved 211; not bad for 4 hours on a wet Sunday afternoon, and were well pleased with our display, having nothing but praise for us. A very enjoyable show.

Sigurd "Drum"

Christmas Dinner - Bridge Inn, Sat 14-Dec-02 7:30 for 8pm

Thank you all who have responded, at the last count, there will be 25 of us including Thomas & Karin from the Cavalry.

Can you all please make sure that I have your menu choices by 7th December for passing onward.

The deposits have all been paid by the group, and the £8 /head balance will be due on the night. (Non Manaraefan members pay the full £15-95). See you there...

Thanks & all the best

Dave Hall

Sigurd Says... (The Authenticity Bit)

Sigurd Says... Why aren't you wearing a hat? We should in general, all be wearing headgear of some description at all times; more on this when I manage to dig out some more information.