

Introduction to the project by R. Friel



Welcome to the first newsletter from the second season of excavations at the Við Kirkjugarð in the village of Sandur on Sandoy one of the Faroe Islands. The excavation is being undertaken in collaboration with Føroya Fornminnissavn (the National Museum of the Faroes) and will contribute to the ongoing "Heart of the Atlantic Project", a multi-disciplinary project exploring the changing cultural and natural landscapes of the island from first settlement to the present day. It is hoped that this newsletter will serve not only as an update on the progress of the archaeology but also a vehicle for the participating students to express their own views and experiences of living and working in a remote island environment. We the staff and students involved, hope that you find this document both interesting and informative and that it highlights the department's continued presence throughout the North Atlantic region.

Week one by A. Mustchin

The staff arrived on Sandoy on the Monday afternoon shortly followed by five University of Bradford placement students and Rannvá Sorensøn a student of Faroese archaeology. The site was inspected, equipment was dropped off then everyone settled into Ísansgarður, a rented hotel in the village of Sandur. That night the group was joined by Símun V Arge, the Faroese National Archaeologist, and Helgi Michelsen from Føroya Fornminnissavn (Historical Museum of the Faroe Islands). Schnapps accompanied introductions and conversation quickly turned to the season ahead.

Visitor Book

This week we have had 52 visitors from the Faroes, Denmark, Belgium and Germany. Here are some of their comments:

"We are very happy for this work you are doing here in Sandoy. It is very important for us here in Faroe Islands, that you come here. We appreciate it very much. Good luck from all of us!"



"Keep up this interesting work. Hope to one day see the 3D models of the viking age"



"Good luck with your archaeological work in this marvellous country!"



The first task to tackle was removing the protective backfill of sand, tyres, and Terram that had sheltered the site over the winter months. A machine was procured for the job and the trench was quickly emptied. Whilst on site the machine also removed an overburden of wind-blown sand that covered a previously unexcavated area, revealing a large mound of fire-cracked stones. Meanwhile, Símun took the Bradford students on a guided tour of local archaeological and historical sites. The shoring boards were later repaired where necessary and the by now extensive trench was readied for photo cleaning.

The excavation team was joined on Thursday by Suzy Blake, the HER Officer for Staffordshire County Council and University of Bradford graduate. Suzy had sacrificed her holiday to assist Julia Cussans with the fieldschool aspect of the excavation. Photo cleaning was quickly completed, despite a very un-Faroese heat wave, and the first site shots were taken on Friday afternoon. Newly exposed areas of the site were planned on Saturday and formal excavation began.



The student view

by C. Stoddart & J. France

Take Yorkshire and turn it into an island, add a spoonful of religion and some local lager to wash it down with, don't worry about the language, they speak funny here as well, and you'll have a pretty good idea what the Faroes are like. Suffice to say that working for the Heart of the Atlantic Project has brought us to a corner of the world that we might not have otherwise had the opportunity to visit.

Working on a small project is great fun; we're becoming a close-knit team and are able to work more closely with supervisors and visiting specialists. Having worked in Unst last summer it's also really interesting to visit another region of the Viking world. Símun Arge, the Faroese Archaeologist, gave us a great tour of the landscape surrounding Við Kirkjugarð. He made us all feel really welcome and gave us a good introduction to the project. We're looking forward to some outings too - it'll be good to appreciate our site within the broader context of Faroese archaeology.



Excavations are taking place this year in Sandur from the 22/06/09 to the 19/07/09. Please feel free to visit the site, we are there 9.00 to 17.30 Monday to Saturday and guided tours are provided.