

To all Vikings and Medievals both near and far,
Events at the Museum of Foteviken and
The Cog Museum in Malmö, 2009

Outside it is dark, the wind is howling, mists shroud the heather, high waves break along the shoreline here at the Foteviken Viking Reserve. Winter has returned and with it, time for reflection.

It has become a tradition for Vikings to gather at the Viking Reserve in order to celebrate the Nordic Midsummer's Eve. More and more are taking part in this open event. On this day, the Viking Reserve is completely closed to the public, only the Vikings are allowed to take part.

In spite of the fact that we are self-critical, we consider that the Viking market, the Medieval Market and the Christmas Market were successful events in 2008. It is always stimulating to meet old and new friends alike under genial circumstances here on our site. Last year there were some 550 Vikings who gathered around the large, traditional banquet table on Saturday evening. For me personally, this was something particularly special as it took place on my 60th birthday. At this year's market it is chief judge Sven who will receive the honours as he too will then have reached 60.

At our Viking meetings at Foteviken we have a tradition where we remember our loved ones who are no longer with us. Eventide at Høla stones, our commemorative ship tumulus, is a poignant and beautiful experience where we demonstrate our respect for the living and the dead. Anyone who wishes to take part may do so, no one is excluded – the ceremony is religiously neutral.

By way of tradition, a number of competitions are also held at the Foteviken Viking Market including cod throwing, the fighting on the battlefield, the Viking race and more besides. It is extremely stimulating for both spectators and judges alike to see the Vikings in combat man (woman) to man (woman).

If you have visited Foteviken a few times you will be aware that the gods can be in strange moods where the weather is concerned. Last year, the gods were against us at the beginning of the Viking Week. However, they later became extremely generous and bestowed upon us much better weather. The reason is mere speculation. Perhaps, they become more sympathetic when they see all the Vikings gathered on the old Viking site on which the Museum of Foteviken is situated.

A great deal of work was carried out at the Viking Reserve during 2008 in maintaining the 24 Viking houses, however, some new work is also under way. Construction of the new long house has begun but it will take time before it can be used for any pleasant indoor gatherings. It measures 24 metres in length. A great job was also done last year fencing in all the land and crops in the Viking town. Several overnight volunteer Vikings from Denmark, Germany and England also lent a hand. We look forward to more volunteers taking part in 2009. As Vikings you are always welcome to free lodging up at our Viking House and, of course, the full use of our toilets, showers and other modern facilities. Simply send a mail telling us when you can come, how long you intend to stay and if you are willing to help us with any Viking Age work within the Viking town. Please send your mail to info@foteviken.se.

Other activities that were carried out during the year include the medieval days at the Cog Museum in Malmö, which took place a week after the Viking Week at Foteviken. This museum, which Foteviken is responsible for, increased its area of activities last year with the inclusion of medieval re-enactors. We often used our two sailing cogs and the large cog was taken out every other Saturday. Long tours with this ship were also made including one to Germany.

What is happening this year?

Vite Per has plans for some new events where the fighters and their very popular performances are concerned. Lars Enoksson would like us to introduce a championship in the old Viking sports. More information concerning this will be made available later.

Foteviken Museum is located in the centre of an historic and very interesting archaeological area. We are currently deeply involved in some special projects relating to the Viking era within our site. It would be of no surprise if, a little later this year, we were able to send information concerning the results of our new survey in the spring.

A new layout of our comprehensive website www.foteviken.se will be published in February. We have also begun sending out newsletters in order to give information on our activities on a more continuous basis. It is our hope that these will be appreciated.

In March, the application forms for this year's events will be available on our website and via newsletters to all of you who have already entered email addresses during previous visits to the Viking Reserve. Some important information is, however, already available:

Foteviken Museums opening hours:

April 27 – October 2: weekdays 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

June 1 to August 30: daily 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Closed Walpurgis Eve (April 30), May 1 and Midsummer Eve (June 19).

The Cog Museums opening hours:

April 14 – Sept: daily 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Closed Walpurgis Eve (April 30), May 1 and Midsummer Eve (June 19).

Special arrangements:

June 23 - June 28: The great Viking Week at Foteviken.

June 26 - June 28: Halör Market, Sweden's largest Viking market.

July 4 – July 5: "Gångedagarna". Medieval market at the Cog Museum in Malmö.

December 12: Winter Market and ancient Nordic sacrifice at Foteviken.

Soon spring will have returned and once again we can open up the gates for a new season.

Best regards from Björn and staff at the Museum of Foteviken and the Cog Museum