

IN THE NEWS

Viking find gets the kid glove treatment

In archaeological circles, it doesn't get much better than this. Last Monday afternoon, a routine excavation on a site in North Dublin yielded what has become one of the rarest Viking finds in this country for more than 100 years.

Alongside the skeletal remains of a woman - believed to be aged between 25 and 35 when she died - were found a rare oval-shaped Scandinavian brooch, an unusually long bone comb and other copper alloy ornaments.



The objects, which were put on display at the National Museum's conservation laboratory in Collins Barracks yesterday, were literally given

kid-glove treatment because, after being buried for close to 1,100 years, they are as fragile as an egg shell.

The artifacts were found by archaeologist John Kavanagh, the site manager at an excavation known as St. Patrick's Well near Finglas. While clearing the north end of the site, he noticed a skull; and at first thought he had stumbled on a Christian burial site. Painstakingly, the skeleton was uncovered and Mr Kavanagh became aware there was something special about it when he spotted the brooch and comb.

Pulses were set racing in the Museum in the days after the find when tests were conducted which revealed the brooch was definitely made in Scandinavia.



Osteo-archaeologist Denise Keating has already determined that the woman was aged between 25 and 35 - a good age for an adult of the time - and belonged to the "upper echelons" of her society.

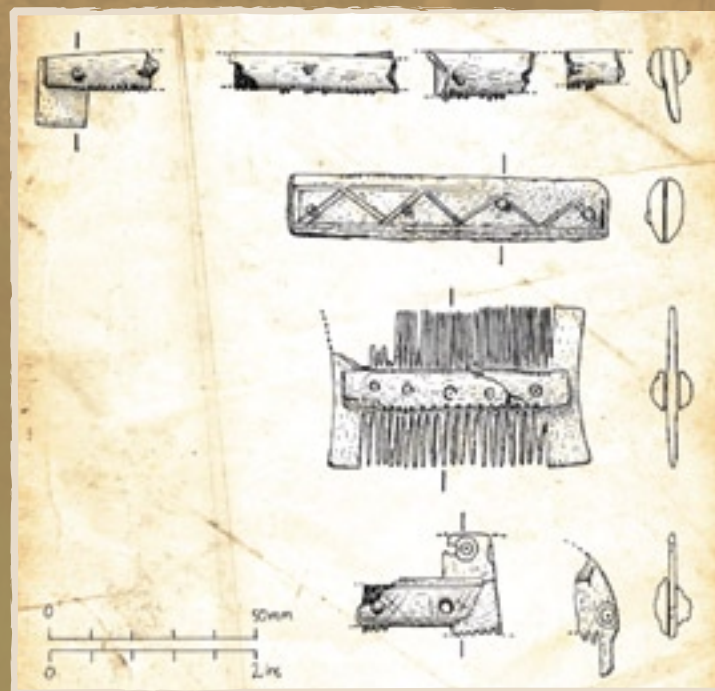
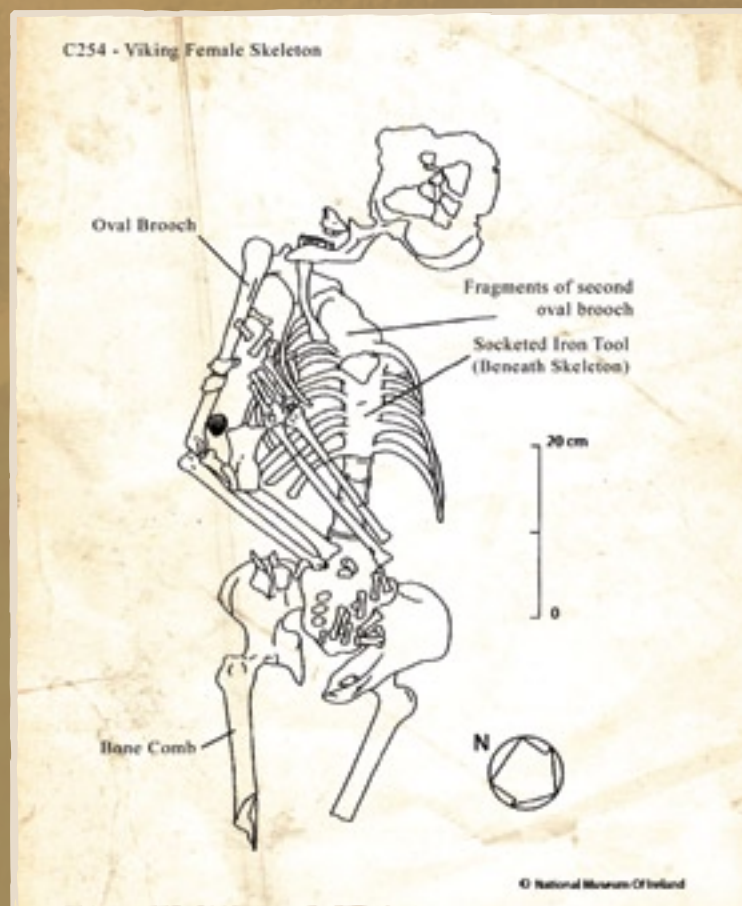
National Museum director Patrick Wallace said the woman was either a pure Scandinavian - a Viking - who came here, or she was an Irish woman "who mattered an awful lot to a wealthy Viking".

Buried in full dress, she wore an outer garment of tweed to which would have been attached, pinafore-like, at the two shoulders. The fabrics of the tweed could be seen attached to the back of the brooch, which the Museum will now restore to its former glory and put on display in time for St. Patrick's Day next year.

Dr Wallace said it was the first time since 1902 that a brooch of this kind had been found in Ireland. He said it was a one-off, made in Scandinavia and brought here. Made of copper alloy and gilded with gold and silver, it would once have turned heads.

Archaeologist John Kavanagh said they were lucky to find the remains at all as the woman lay between two sewerage drains, and the skeleton from the knees down was gone due to pipe digging and laying in recent years.

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COMPANY PROFILE

Icon Archaeology Ltd. was founded by Managing Director John Kavanagh MA and employs a dedicated team of highly experienced professionals with decades of combined experience in all archaeological disciplines.

The team has worked extensively in both the public and private sectors, and continue to undertake projects requiring high-quality management. The use of experienced and highly-trained staff is essential to ensure projects are carried out to the highest possible standards. Our site directors have been involved in some of the biggest infrastructure projects carried out to date in Ireland and have a proven track record.

The company is currently engaged in several major projects nationwide. Icon can provide a wide range of services including; Project Management, Environmental Impact Assessments, Excavations, Assessments, Excavations, Assessments and Test Excavations.

The skilled Icon team ensures that projects are delivered on time and within budget providing all the skill-sets necessary to conduct projects in a competitive and timely manner.



PROJECTS

Recent Excavations in Ashbourne, County Meath

On-going excavations in Ashbourne by Icon have uncovered a wealth of archaeological information. Recent discoveries include two well preserved burial sites from the Early Bronze Age. Pottery, flint objects and cremated bone were just some of the artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation.

Excavation at Killelland, County Meath

During the autumn of 2006 Icon uncovered a hitherto unknown ecclesiastical complex close to the 7th century site of St. Declan's Church. Souterrains, kilns, pits and evidence of metal working were all identified within the massive enclosure. The range and quality of artefacts safely recovered was equally impressive. Numerous bone combs, pins, bracelets and several copper and iron knives attest to the high level of craftsmanship employed.

Exciting Discoveries in Finglas, County Dublin

A significant burial was uncovered by Director John Kavanagh in August near the medieval church of Finglas in north Dublin. The extended skeleton of a 25- to 35- year-old Viking female was found associated with a complete oval brooch dated to the late ninth century. The broken remains of a long bone comb of Scandinavian origin lay on the right side of the skeleton and several fragments of cloth were found under the left hand. The artefacts are currently being conserved in the Conservation Department of the National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks and will go on display as soon as possible.

N8 Cashel-By-Pass, County Tipperary

In conjunction with the National Roads Authority and Tipperary County Council, Icon Archaeology is currently engaged in compiling the results of the excavations carried out as part of the new by-pass. This new archaeological information will provide an excellent overview of the pattern of settlement around historically significant town of Cashel.

A New Settlement in Ferns, County Wexford

A large scale test excavation undertaken in 2006 in the historically important town of Ferns, uncovered substantial remains of an Early Medieval settlement overlooking the 6th century monastery of St. Maedhog. A newly discovered Bronze Age cemetery was an unexpected find and offers a tantalizing glimpse into the lives of the people over 4,000 years ago.

A Skeleton in Adare, County Limerick

During the course of archaeological monitoring carried out on the grounds of Adare Manor a circular enclosure from the prehistoric period was found. An intact male skeleton was discovered at the base of the enclosing ditch which provided a rare insight into the burial practices of our distant ancestors.

Castle Street, Dalkey

Following the discovery of one of the "missing" fortified houses in the medieval port town of Dalkey an extensive catalogue of all the artefacts found is now nearing completion. The catalogue will include detailed descriptions, illustrations and analysis of a wide variety of artefacts from the late 12th century onwards.



SERVICES

Icon Archaeology Limited offers a comprehensive range of archaeological services nationwide including:

Project Management

Icon's dedicated management team has many years of knowledge and experience dealing with all aspects of pre-development archaeological resolution. Our skilled professionals have worked extensively in both the public and private sectors, and continue to undertake nationwide projects requiring high-quality management.

Environmental Impact Assessments

As an essential part of any major infrastructure project, the Icon team provide comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments. These extensive desk-based studies and field surveys require attention to detail, and substantial experience to ensure the best possible results.

Excavation

With years of experience carrying out archaeological excavations in both rural and urban settings, our team ensures that projects are delivered on time and within budget. Excavation is a key area often requiring several different disciplines, from Directors to Illustrators. Icon provides all the skill-sets necessary to conduct excavations in a competitive and timely manner.



Built Heritage Studies

Historical architecture and archaeology combine to produce a fascinating and insightful study into the development of buildings from the medieval period onwards. Where these studies are required Icon will efficiently provide the necessary information and documentation.

Assessments

As an important element of pre-development investigation, Icon's desk-based studies will highlight the archaeological potential of any project and provide clear and concise solutions.

Test Excavation

Test excavations seek to ascertain the nature and extent of archaeological remains and incorporate the findings into the overall project strategy. Icon has the reference library and personnel to efficiently conduct this integral part of the development process.

Monitoring

The use of experienced and highly-trained staff is essential to ensure that archaeological monitoring is carried out to the highest possible standards. Our Site Directors have been involved in some of the biggest infrastructure projects carried out to date in Ireland and have a proven track-record.

