

# Stories in the Stones

The Vikings believed that gods caused forces of nature, such as thunder and lightning. They would pray to their gods for protection and the things they needed to survive.

The Vikings made up fantastic stories about their gods. These stories or myths were filled with wonderful things such as magical swords, giants, creatures that changed their forms, and lots of treasure! The stories were not only good tales, they also showed us the things in life the Vikings thought important - having courage, strength, and being loyal to your friends. They showed the nastier sides of people too - murder, being greedy and sneaky. In the winter evenings on the Isle of Man all those years ago, the children lay in the flickering light of a fire and listened to the stories of the adults. When they grew up they retold the tales to their children, and so the stories were passed on.

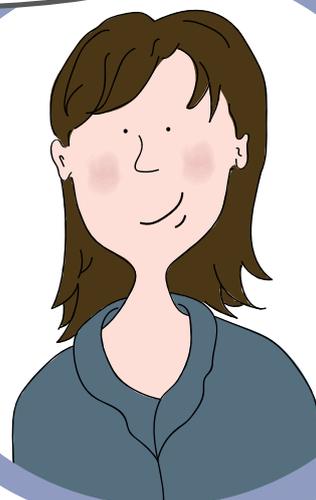
Two gods were favourites in these stories – Odin and Thor. The most powerful of the gods was Odin. He ruled over the other Gods and was cunning, selfish and very dangerous. He decided who was saved and who died in battle. He sent his women messengers called Valkyries, to battlefields where they chose only the very best of the warriors who had died in fighting. The Valkyries took them to a place called Valhalla. Here they fought by day and feasted by night. Because Valhalla was a magic place, the warriors never died. No matter how badly wounded they were in their fighting they were fit again the next day. Even the wild boar whose flesh they feasted on would come back to life!

The Vikings thought that by killing an animal and offering it to a God (sacrifice) good things might come to them. They believed that when people died they went to a magical place. They buried their dead with their possessions so they could use them again in the afterlife.

Thor was the god of thunder. He wore a magic belt around his waist that gave him his enormous strength. When he wore his gloves he could grasp and shatter rocks. He carried a gigantic hammer for smashing the heads of his enemies. Thor rode across the heavens on his chariot drawn by two enormous goats. Thor was strong, quick tempered and sometimes a little foolhardy!

Did you know that there were many Viking gods in Norse mythology?

Investigate more about Freya, Balder, Frigg, Tyr, Sif and Loki the trickster!



# Pagan Beliefs

## Thor's Hammer Necklace

This hammer is the symbol of the Norse God Thor, the God of thunder after whom Thursday takes its name. Thor's Hammer was called Mjolnir. Its magical powers meant that if it were thrown, it would always hit its target then return to the hand of its master. It could also flatten mountains. Many of the amulets discovered by archaeologists are miniature versions of everyday objects such as axes, sickles or fire strikers. Pendants in the shape of a cross, the symbol of Christianity, were also worn, showing how pagan religion and Christianity existed side by side in the early Viking age.

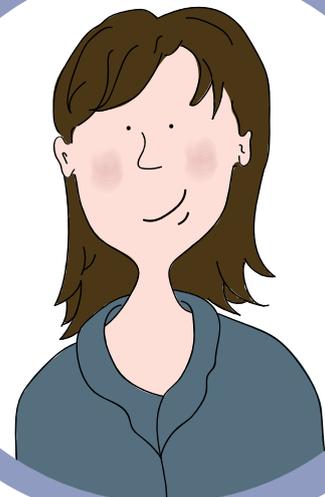


What shape does this pendant remind you of?

It was popular as an item of jewellery, as was the cross, the symbol of Christianity, which was also worn as a pendant in the period.

### Did You Know

Thor was very popular with peasants and farmers and featured in Viking stories called 'Sagas', where he battled against evil giants and monsters.



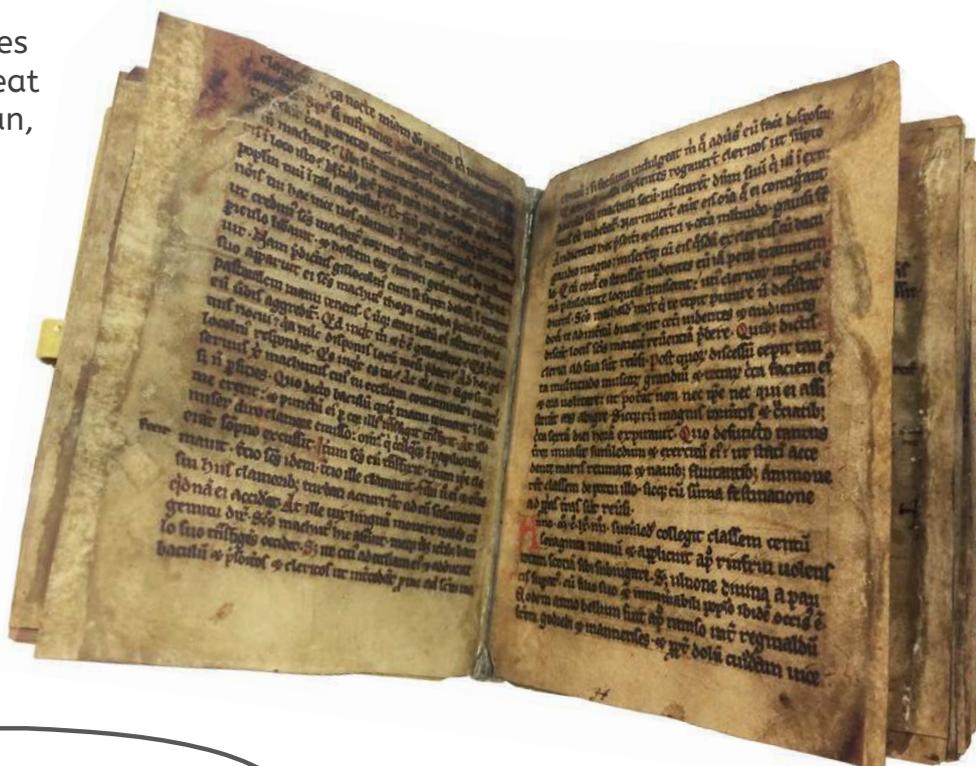
# Arrival of Christianity

## The Chronicles of Man

The Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles is a Medieval Latin manuscript, which tells some of the early history of the Isle of Man.

The main part of the manuscript is believed to have been written by 1262 AD at Rushen Abbey on the island. The Chronicles look back from 1016 AD, over significant events in Manx history. They record events from 1000 AD to 1316 AD and record the Island's place as the centre of the Kingdom of Man and the Isles.

For example, the Chronicles tell us that Olaf II, the great grandson of Godred Crovan, was buried at Rushen Abbey in 1237 AD. Entries for the earlier years are much shorter than those towards the end, as people could remember events closer to their own time in history and could write more detail about these.



Did you know that there are at least 10 different handwriting styles in the Chronicles, so we know that at least 10 different monks wrote it! If you look closely you may even see some of the monk's doodling!

Can you practice writing in 10 different styles?

