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 History  World News

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Viking Longship Dug Up After 1000 Years

Who were the Vikings?

- The Vikings came from Scandinavia, modern-day Norway, Sweden and Denmark.
- Many of them raided land and stole from the local people, although some were peaceful traders and settlers.

Almost two years ago, archaeologists in Norway made a rare discovery. They found a Viking longship buried in a place called Gjellestad using radar.

They recently decided that, after more than 1000 years underground, it was time to dig it up.

After examining the ship with a small trial **excavation**, they saw that it was in poor condition.

They realised a fungus was eating away at the wooden remains. If they left it any longer, there might not be much of the ship left to study.

So, the Norwegian government has given more than £1 million to the project. It will take five months to dig up this rarity and hopefully it will be money and time well spent.

Even though Vikings came from Norway, finding longboats is very rare. This **artefact**, found in 2018, was only the fourth ever found in Norway. It was also the only one discovered for more than 100 years.

"With so few ships discovered, a new Viking ship will have a great impact on understanding the ships themselves," said Viking ship expert, Knut Paasche.

He also said the find will "provide valuable information to understand the **historical era** as a whole".

This is because the ship will have been



Illustration: A Viking longship.

dragged from the sea and buried as a coffin for someone important. That means other Viking artefacts and remains are likely to be found with it.

Once dug up, the wood will need to be sprayed with chemicals to **preserve** it. They will use the same stuff that has managed to save the famous Tudor warship the Mary Rose.

Let's hope that they win their race against time to recover and save this important piece of history.

Glossary

excavation	Digging carefully in order to find buried remains.
artefact	Objects made by a human being of historical interest.
historical era	A long and distinct period of history.
preserve	Maintain something in its original or existing state.

Retrieval

- 1) In which year did they spot the ship ?
- 2) What had the ship been used for ?

Words in context

- 3) In the paragraph beginning "So, the Norwegian government...", which word means 'having value because it is unusual'.
- 4) In the final paragraph, why do you think the author used the phrase 'race against time'?

Inference

- 5) How do you think archaeologists felt when they discovered the ship?