

# **The Vikings are coming!**

## **A new Norse longboat in 1/600<sup>th</sup> scale**

**Review by Rob Morgan**

**T**he availability of what I suppose I might call 'early medieval warships' in any scale is limited, which is a great pity. Among the few regulars which have managed to crop up over the years is not surprisingly, the splendid Viking longship.

As far as my now-preferred 1/600<sup>th</sup> scale goes, well, I do have a couple of the relatively expensive AG14 models from the now troubled Triton, but ... their 'sail lowered' longship with the equivalent of a large tree trunk along its deck, has never really appealed to me. Now, however, Peter Pig has issued Range 9, 'Vikings' in 15mm scale, with a couple of very good naval add-ons. I suspect that this range of figures, which is extensive and up to the usual high Peter Pig standard will be reviewed by someone more likely to enjoy onshore battles than me!

So, back to the ocean, now first I must mention two larger models Pack 33 and Pack 34, two six-inch long vessels with oars in one case and sail in the other, nice looking, but BIG and, though ideal for the 15mm enthusiast for ship-to-shore use, not for naval campaigns or battles in any numbers.

The serious aspect of Viking war at sea is, I must say, superbly catered for by Pack 31 in the range, three- 1/600<sup>th</sup> Norse longboats 'for campaigns.' Standard pack price £2.80.

Well-crafted, eye-catching models and frankly at that price wonderful value for money.

The all-metal two part ship, is roughly 30mm long overall, with a set sail and mast separate - the sails nicely moulded too, not just the flat face of metal some other manufacturers provide! The ship's sea-based and in many ways 'super-detailed' in fact the photo on the



web-site doesn't do it justice. With mast fitted, the model stands just under 24mm high on the table top. Plenty of crew in groups fill the decks and clearly identifiable round shields line the sides, there's a nice high prow too. The only thing a maritime purist will miss is that this

Viking ship model does not have banks of oars. In 1/600<sup>th</sup> scale it doesn't cause much of a problem, in fact it's possible to add oar banks with a little effort, but I didn't bother -- after wargaming with the sails down, rather flat Triton AG 14's for a while, this sturdy, rugged looking Norse warship fills a critical gap in my early medieval fleet lists. You can add more fighting men of course, say from the Xyston 1/600<sup>th</sup> pack of warriors. This marvellous addition to the medieval scene at sea can be bolstered up by using one or two of the Tritons with an awning or a mast and sail added -- it will take the 'Pig's mast by the way, I did try to add the small 1/1200<sup>th</sup> Navwar job chopped about, but changed my mind.

There is, of course, some potential for conversion, one is the well known and frequently overlooked West Highland galley or 'Birlinn' which saw action throughout the medieval era right down to the Jacobite Rebellions, from Ireland to the Shetlands, down the Irish Sea to the coasts of Wales and Cornwall against all sorts of enemies. Not much effort required, trim the figurehead lower, and for later craft remove the side steering oar- they had rudders. A good reference is Andrew McDonald's 'The Kingdom of the Isles' (Scots Historical Monograph,

1997) for some splendid ideas, including the great Epiphany night battle off the coast of the Isle of Man c.1306. The Tumbling Dice 1/600<sup>th</sup> manned rowing boat model will without doubt, provide a very useful small follower for the Peter Pig model if used as a Birling and as a later longship.

I can see much more potential from this hull, maybe with the shields trimmed and basic castles added, as a Nef of the 1200s or, with less effort, the basis of William of Normandy's fleet. Not impossible to find a use as ships of the Carolingians or Franks. One thought I had was that the deck area would take one of the smaller Xyston 1/600<sup>th</sup> bolt throwers. It would of course be wonderful if Peter Pig complemented this single 1/600<sup>th</sup> medieval vessel with an oared companion, or developed the basic hull into another medieval ship -- little effort involved there, I think, and there's a vast blank page to be filled before the Cog.

This is a very useful model in a sensible wargaming scale, and provides a remarkably well-priced warship for the naval lone warrior, and those who only like to dip a toe in occasionally and indeed there are some good opportunities for table top gaming arising from the single hull.

Highly recommended!

[www.peterpig.co.uk](http://www.peterpig.co.uk)

I think Brookhurst Hobbies handle them in the Americas.