

Trade Like the Norse - Coins and Currency at the Althing

Although the Icelandic Althing was centred on legal matters, any time a lot of people gather together is a chance for other activities - trade among them. Although a certain amount of barter was still taking place, one of the aspects of the Viking Age was the increased use of silver based coinage as the means of exchange. Although the Anglo Saxon Silver Penny was closer to 1.5 gm total weight, the years of 'Danegeld' had lowered their silver content to closer to 50%.

The Norse system of measures is based on the following, (the values are converted to grams of pure silver):

1 penningar = about .78 gms silver

1 eyrir = 30 penningar
about 24 gms silver = cost of 6 ells (yards) of wadmál (wool cloth)

1 mark = 240 penningar or 8 eyrir
about 200 gms silver

Although the Anglo Saxon Silver Penny is closer to 1.5 gm total weight, the years of 'Danegeld' had lowered their silver content to closer to 50%.

In the spirit of the Althing, a set of trade tokens will be available as exchange at the Althing. These are backed by Master Sylard (and the Wareham Forge).

LEFT to RIGHT (life size)

Pewter Ingot - trade amount \$10 (45 gm)

Silver Pennies - trade amount \$5 (.75 gm = 1 penningar)

Pewter Token Bar - trade amount \$1 (15 gm = 1/2 eyrir)

The INGOT shows 'Wolves and Cattle' on a thick oval surrounded by line and dot pattern. It was intended to be used as a guard for a knife (cut a slot to fit the blade). No specific historic prototype, never released to the public.

The PENNIES are the two replica coins issued by the Wareham Forge, artifact sizes and weights, made of 99 % fine silver. Sometimes called 'Silver Sylards' - a detailed description at:

<http://www.warehamforge.ca/NORSE-REPRO/npenny.html>

The TOKEN is slightly modified from the event token used at the original Althing, years ago. Its shape is taken from a small whetstone, and has the figure of a Norseman - and original design.

HOW THIS WORKS

Modern currency can be converted into any of these trade tokens either at the Admittance Troll or at my demonstration of coin minting inside the DARC market encampment. You will in effect be PURCHASING these tokens.

At the end of the day I will happily REFUND the full purchase amount against any of the tokens returned to me for exchange.

Merchants may also 'buy in' by purchasing extra token to act as 'change'. These may also be exchanged for full refund at the end of the event.*

Rules:

1) I will make myself available for refund exchanges :

Saturday September 26 - until * 10 PM * (after that I'm likely to be in bed)

Sunday September 27 - from 9 AM to 12 Noon

2) The pewter INGOT and TOKEN have no refund value AFTER Sunday September 27.

3) The silver PENNIES remain the standard 'gift certificate' for the Wareham Forge. They may be returned against goods in to the future at their \$5 trade value.

4) Only full, unaltered tokens are returnable for refunds. (If you cut a token to make 'small change', the pieces can not be refunded.)

* 5) Merchants ONLY can make special arrangements to exchange collected tokens for a LIMITED PERIOD (two weeks) after the event. Please contact me directly (info@warehamforge.ca) to make arrangements.

