

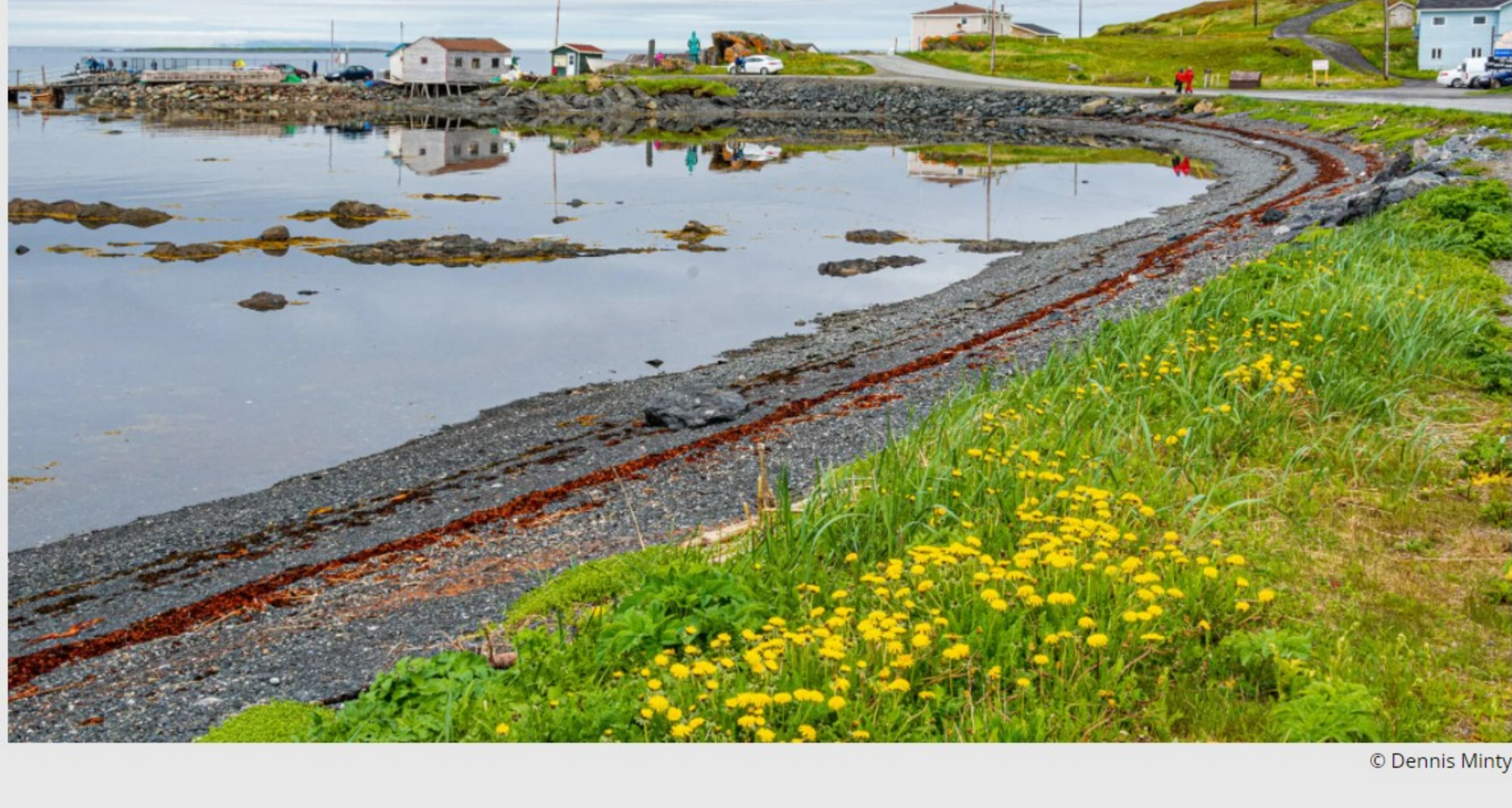
# A Visit to L'Anse aux Meadows UNESCO World Heritage Site

By Dennis Minty | December 03, 2020

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A visit to L'Anse aux Meadows is a highlight of any Adventure Canada expedition visiting Newfoundland and Labrador. In this photo story, Dennis Minty gives us a whirlwind tour of this fascinating part of call and UNESCO World Heritage Site.



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L'Anse aux Meadows was declared a National Historic site in 1977, and, in 1978, it was designated as one of the first UNESCO World Heritage Sites recognized for its "global significance in the history of human migration and discovery." A visit here with Adventure Canada is a highlight of their expeditions that visit Newfoundland and Labrador.



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The little town of L'Anse aux Meadows, with its twenty-eight residents and convenient wharf, is about a one-kilometre walk or five-minute bus ride from the official historic site. Weather permitting (as always on expedition!), Adventure Canada's Zodiacs land at the wharf where the bronze statue of Leif Erikson overlooks the comings and goings.



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The Visitor Centre is filled with wonderful interpretation displays, teaching you about [the history of the Norse settlement here](#). Just before entering, you pass by bronze busts of Anne Stine and Helge Ingstad, placed there in honour of their extraordinary work in the site's discovery. Within the Visitor Centre, you can see important Norse artifacts discovered here, including a bronze ring-headed cloak pin, as well as a beautiful scale model of what the site probably looked like in its heyday.



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From the Visitor Centre's hillside perch, you overlook the entire archaeological site. The meandering boardwalk eventually ends at the reconstructed replica of a Norse longhouse and other turf-built structures, meant to resurrect the life from about a thousand years earlier.



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Near the beginning of the walk, which winds through a grove of tuckamore (wind-stunted evergreen trees), you come to the striking sculpture called *The Meeting of Two Worlds* by Luben Boykov, a Newfoundland immigrant, and Richard Brixel, a Swede. The sculpture represents and celebrates the notion of closing the circle: when Europeans and Indigenous North Americans, both originally descendants from the first humans who migrated north out of Africa, met for the first time.



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Continuing along the boardwalk, you cross over Black Duck Brook to reach the main archaeological excavation site—now an open green where the dwelling houses, workshops, and related structures once stood. The first dig site you see is the smithy, where remains of a blacksmith's workshop were found. All of the original sites are now slightly raised sod outlines, having been covered over after the excavation to protect them from the elements.



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Finally, you reach the reconstructed long-house dwellings. Here you can observe and study the authentic Norse architectural style, with sod bricks, wooden door frames, and grassy roofs. Displays are set up inside and out to show you what Viking life was like.



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The resident Norse re-enactors do a fabulous job of helping you imagine the life that was once here. And, there is not a horned helmet in sight! The Viking, included in horned helmets originated with costume designer Carl Emil Doepler, who, in 1876, included them in the performance of Wagner's opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. That the Vikings wore them has been a persistent fallacy ever since.



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Along with the Norse re-enactors, you also visit with Adventure Canada experts, such as archaeologist and local Newfoundlander, Dr. Latonia Hartery. In an [interview](#), she said, "The site has both fascinating European and Indigenous history. L'Anse aux Meadows is probably one of the most fascinating stops that we have, in terms of understanding just how early Europeans—Norse—were here... It's a wonderful exercise for people to try to imagine how the site would have been working a thousand years ago."



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So, if you want to experience first-hand this epic, historic place in all its authenticity, you could not do any better than join an Adventure Canada expedition to Newfoundland. Just don't bring a horned helmet, unless you are prepared to sing opera!