

What makes my dunes at Drigg so special? Let me tell you a secret... fresh from my burrow... I share my seaside home with mystical selkies, timid sea squirts, adder snakes and rare natterjacks, and the lost land of Kokoarrah is hidden just off shore!

Drigg, like a magnet, has attracted many visitors in the last few thousand years; the feathery kind, the furry kind and the human kind have all been drawn to this special place. Mighty mammoth, mythical mermaids and villainous Vikings have all called Drigg home.

I want to explore along this wild sandy beach with you now and share some of its secrets, from the stories of Deep Time to the magic of Drigg today.

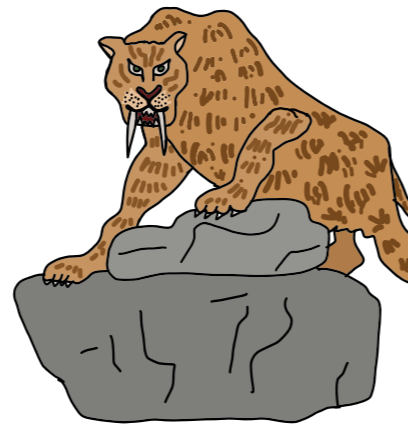


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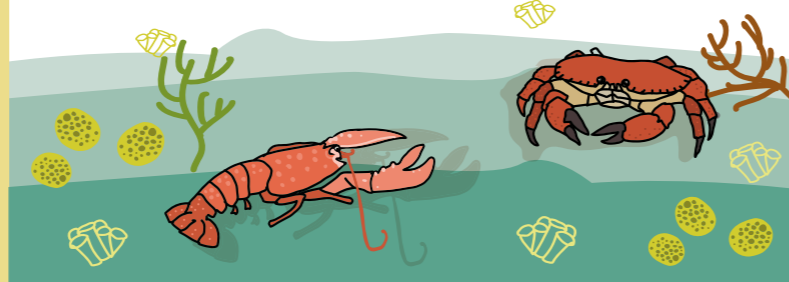
The Lost Lands of Kokoarrah and Barn Scar

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Kokoarrah (the rocky hill) is an ancient scar of stony land just off Drigg beach. But you can't always see it, as when the tide rushes in, Kokoarrah and all its seaweedy secrets are hidden. This mystical, lobster-shaped island only emerges from the sea at low tide!



If you'd stood here 8,000 years ago you might have spotted bigger creatures too, like mammoth, giant elk, bison and sabre-toothed cats. They wandered through the wild woodlands and grazed on the tundra plains that once surrounded here. Occasionally clues emerge out of the marine mud that tell a story of our past. Fancy some muddy mayhem?

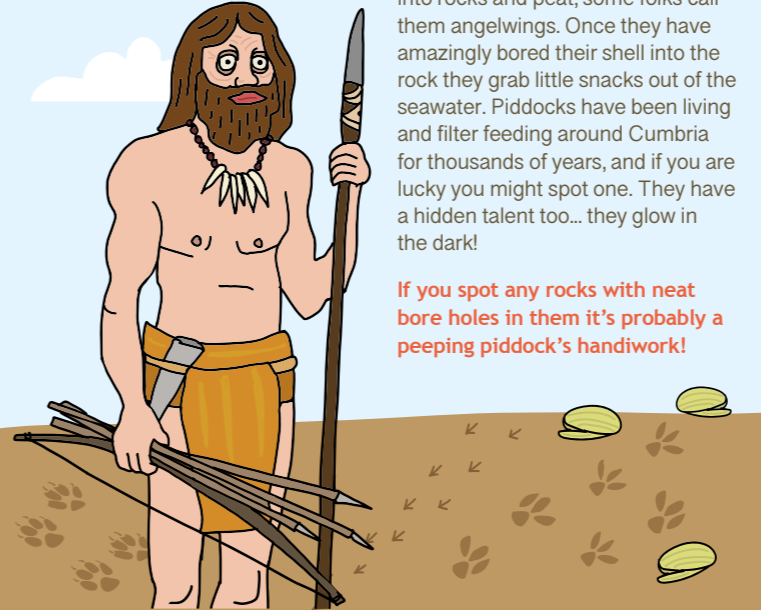


As the silty sands shift around our coastline, stories of the past can sometimes come to light. I once flew over the most extraordinary Solway sight... a submerged forest, tree trunks and twisted roots were sticking out of the sand! You see, Drigg wasn't always a sandy beach, it was once a marshy peatland, and the great thing about bogs and marshes is that they hold their secrets for thousands of years. Then when the sands shift, we get to see them once more.

And it's not just trees that emerge; bog bodies have been found in the north-west as well. Archaeologists have even spotted ancient tattoos and bits of clothing on their skin from thousands of years ago... it's a bit gruesome but very cool too! It's unlikely there are any bog bodies here now but it's not unheard of to spot Stone Age footprints in the clay and mud, that reveal themselves after a storm, and lots of folk have spotted peeping piddocks!

Piddocks are ancient molluscs with long oval shells that burrow into rocks and peat; some folks call them angelwings. Once they have amazingly bored their shell into the rock they grab little snacks out of the seawater. Piddocks have been living and filter feeding around Cumbria for thousands of years, and if you are lucky you might spot one. They have a hidden talent too... they glow in the dark!

If you spot any rocks with neat bore holes in them it's probably a peeping piddock's handiwork!



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This trail is three of six developed with Copeland Borough Council and The Outdoor Partnership as part of the Find out more www.copeland.gov.uk
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Directions and Parking
 There is parking at Drigg Beach Car Park. The nearest postcode is CA19 1XL, the car park can be found at the end of the road.
Trail Safety Information
 This Tale Trail explores the coastal area between Seascale and the sand dunes around Drigg. The terrain is a mixture of beach, sand dune paths and quiet roads. It is part of the famous Cumbria Coastal Way. Please stick to the marked footpaths and avoid the unstable dune areas.
Extra explorations
 If you are interested in finding out more about the Vikings you can contact Terry Harvey-Chadwick at The Science Viking (www.scienceviking.com). Terry works with school groups and can organise educational visits and workshops for events. His Viking character Bjarni Thorvaldrson is definitely worth meeting!
 Want to learn more about Whitehaven's coastal craters and how sustainable fishing can help protect them? Visit www.livingseasaw.org.uk/my-local-catch for events, volunteering, and information about the seafood from our spectacular seabed!

Refreshments
 The Victoria pub and Spindle Craft in Drigg can be found next to the train station, and in Seascale you will find Mawson's ice cream parlour and a play area next to the car park.

Route Length
 The walk to Seascale from the car park at Drigg sand dunes is 3km north (approximately 1-2 hours with beachcombing). You can catch the train back to Drigg. Younger children can explore the nature reserve and sand dunes by heading south for 1km. Returning inland offers the chance to see the wildflowers on the heath.

The bit for grown ups....
 Drigg is located off the A595 between Whitehaven and Ravenglass. Once in the village continue for 2km to the coast, where you will find the car park.

Here come the Vikings!

Around 1200 years ago the Vikings came to Copeland. They called it Kaupa-land, meaning 'bought land' in Norse, which was the language they spoke. They weren't raging wild warriors with horned helmets that burned and looted the peaceful villages but an entirely different kind of Viking and not very villainous at all!

They arrived peacefully in longboats; families, fishing nets and farm animals. Drigg was a perfect spot to land, as the River Irft follows the coast for two miles and a boat could easily be dragged up onto the gravel beach. In fact that's where the name Drigg comes from... the Norse word for 'drag'!

These were Norwegian Vikings who had settled in Ireland and on the Isle of Man, and they didn't come to raid the Cumbrian coast but to settle here. They built wooden shelters by the sea called 'skali' and used land which was seen as barren by those already here.

Maybe the west coast reminded them of the coastal mountains back home... but they liked it here and they stayed put. There are lots of place names along the coast to remind us of our Viking ancestry, like Saer skali or Seascale, Ravenglass and Herding Neb... apparently this is the spot where the first Herdwick sheep swam ashore after their boat sank!



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Sea wives and sea serpents

You might have heard lots of tales about mermaids, but have you heard of selkies or sea wives? There aren't many mermaid sightings in these parts, but sea wives have been spotted and it's very important to be nice to them as they can cause total havoc if betrayed. Sea wives or selkies are beautiful ladies of the sea, in fact so astonishingly beautiful that just one look could put any mortal under their spell.

They pass between their own world and that of the land by using a magical cloak of seal skin. A local fisherman once fell in love with a selkie, but he betrayed her and his spirit can still be heard calling longingly for her off Kokoarrah



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Jenny Greenteeth is a particularly menacing creature who swims from the sea up rivers and into bogs. Her skin is green, her teeth are like needles and her long hair is entangled with weeds. She lurks under the surface of the water, waiting for children and elderly folk to stand by the water's edge, hoping to gobble them up for dinner!

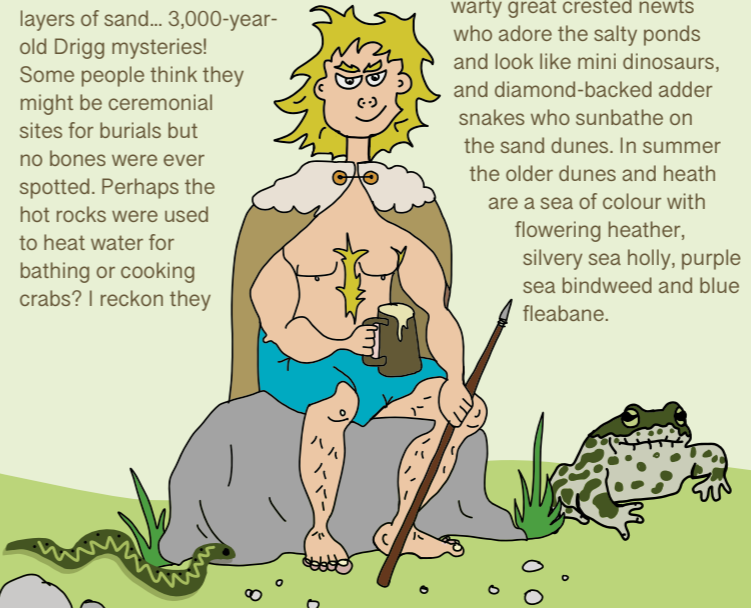
island. Apparently selkies only appear once every seven years, but if they are angered they have been known to steal children, ruin all the crops and wreck boats... we'd better stay on the right side of them!

All over the world there are tales of half-human, half-serpent beasts. Places where there is lots of water, like the sea, lakes and bogs, are usually linked to folklore.

The Hidden Dunescape

Little but mighty sand martins like me might be the smallest of the swallow family but we are super strong. We can dig one-metre-deep nesting burrows in the sand dunes, and every winter we fly all the way to Africa, then back again for spring. We come back every year... that's how special Drigg is to us. But our burrows aren't the only thing you might find in the dunes...

Bronze Age 'burnt mounds' are mysterious layers of charcoal, burnt wood and heat-shattered rocks sandwiched in between layers of sand... 3,000-year-old Drigg mysteries! Some people think they might be ceremonial sites for burials but no bones were ever spotted. Perhaps the hot rocks were used to heat water for bathing or cooking crabs? I reckon they



were used to brew Bronze Age beer! What do you think?

There was also a healing well nearby where a chalybeate spring bubbled out of the ground. The iron-rich waters were used for thousands of years to heal people and provide fresh water. The wind-blown sands have covered it now but 'X' marks the spot on the map.

There are also some really cool creatures hiding in the dunes; running toads called natterjacks who sing to each other in spring, warty great crested newts who adore the salty ponds and look like mini dinosaurs, and diamond-backed adder snakes who sunbathe on the sand dunes. In summer the older dunes and heath are a sea of colour with flowering heather, silvery sea holly, purple sea bindweed and blue fleabane.

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fun local story walks

for children and the young at heart

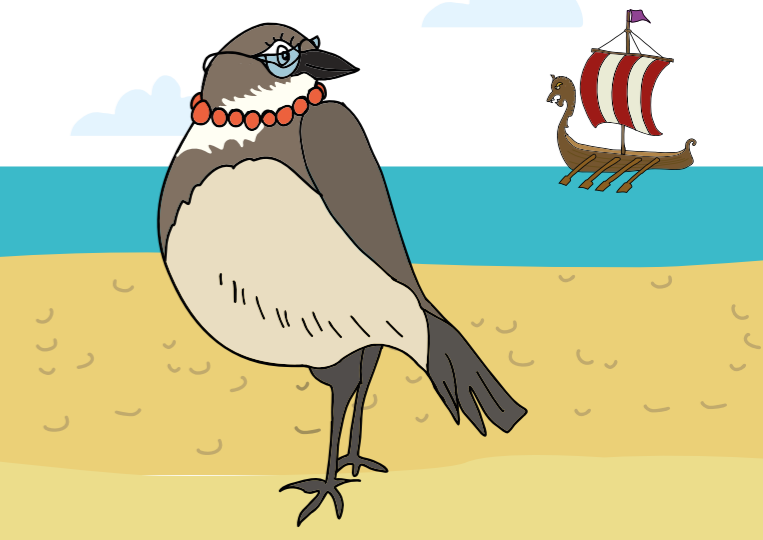
Walks around

The Lake District Coast

The Sand Martin's Tale

A story walk around Drigg & Seascale

By Anja Phoenix



Easy to follow Map & Story
 Explore, spot things & search for clues on the way

