



Past Times



A trail of ancient
board games
and hobbies



museum
National Museum of Ireland
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Archaeology

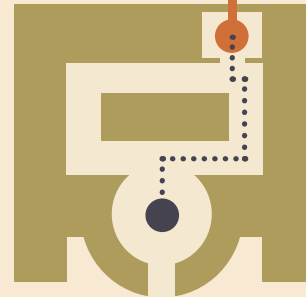
Follow this trail into the **Glendalough: Power, Prayer and Pilgrimage exhibition**, then up to the first floor to Viking Ireland, and into Medieval Ireland, and along the way, discover the games, hobbies, and pastimes that people had in the past.

To start the trail, find your way to the **Glendalough: Power, Prayer and Pilgrimage exhibition** on the ground floor.

Find the case with a **large cauldron**, and look for a **large stone slab**.

This piece of stone was used to make a gaming board to play **Nine Men's Morris**.

Glendalough: Power, Prayer and Pilgrimage



Ground Floor

What type of stone is it?

.....

Write your answer here



Nine Men's Morris

Here is the board game **Nine Men's Morris**. To play, people simply drew or etched the board onto a **piece of stone, or wood**, just like the one on display in this exhibition.

This one was found at the monastic site of **Glendalough, Co. Wicklow**, at the church at **Temple-na-Skellig**, and has a board scratched onto both sides of the stone.

To use counters, people could have used **pebbles, shells, pieces of sticks**, or anything that they had lying around.

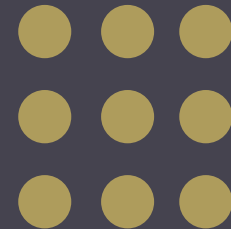
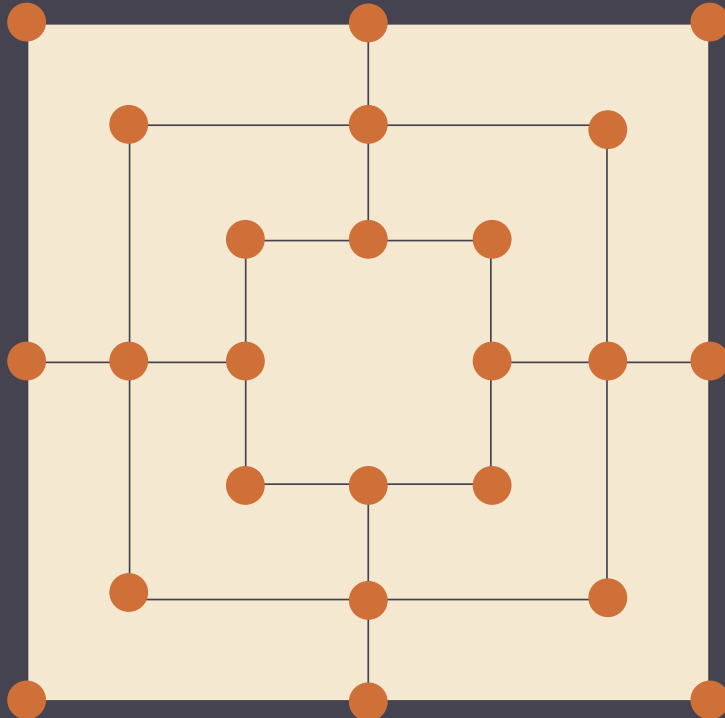
If you would like to play **Nine Men's Morris**, check out the Museum's website, www.museum.ie, and **download the Nine Men's Morris board game template and instructions**.

Who played what, when?

Nine Men's Morris was very popular at **monastic sites across Europe** and this board could have been carved and played by **two monks** who travelled to **Glendalough** in the **13th century**.

At Home Activity

Download from www.museum.ie



Turn around, and find the case called '**Fine Metalworking and Personal Ornaments – 9th and 10th century**'. Can you find the gaming pieces? These are **number 38** in the case.

Here, there are 6 gaming pieces. **Circle the two gaming pieces that look the same.**



These gaming pieces are from **Lough Swedy, Co. Westmeath**.

How many gaming pieces can you see?

.....

Write your answer here

Who played what, when?

These gaming pieces were likely used on a gaming board, like the one found at **Ballinderry Crannóg**, and used to play **Hnefatafl**. This game was popular among **Vikings**, and could have been played by an **Irish chieftain** and his family at their **crannóg at Ballinderry** in the **9th-11th century**.

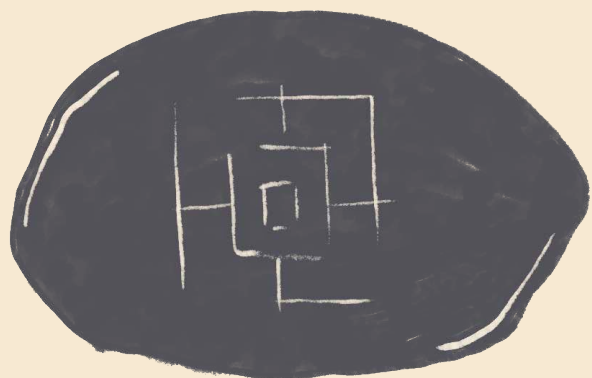
To find out how to play **Hnefatafl** check out **www.museum.ie** for instructions.

Walk further down the exhibition, and on your right, find the case called 'Dublin - Games and Pastimes'. There are a lot of gaming pieces in this case made out of a lot of **different materials**.

Can you name two materials used to make these gaming pieces?

1 2

Write your answers here



Look for a **stone gaming board**.

What game do you think this was used to play?

.....
Write your answer here. **Hint!** You may have seen a very similar one already....

On the second shelf, to the right-hand side, there are **two long pieces of bone from a horse**.

What were these objects used for?

.....
Write your answer here



Circle the toys in this case
found in Viking Dublin.



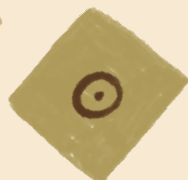
Boat



Playing Cards



Dice



Ball



Board Game



Sword

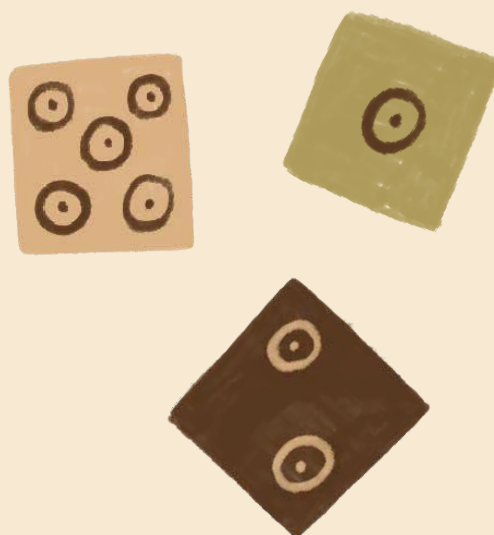


Doll

Who played what, when?

All of the **toys in this case**
were played by **children** in
Viking Dublin from the
9th-11th centuries.

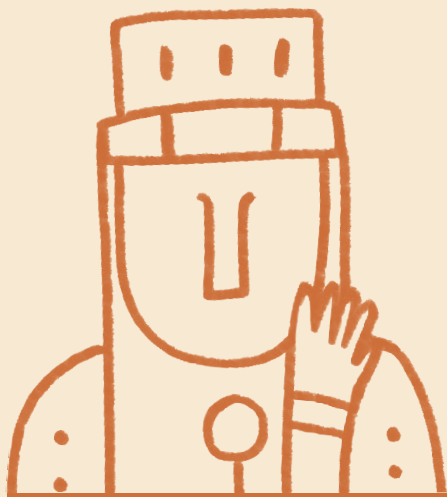
Go to the end of the exhibition, and take a right, which will bring you to the 'Power' section of the **Medieval Ireland exhibition**. Just to the left of the medieval warrior around the corner, find the case called '**Games and Hunting**'. In this case, there are **three small dice** made from **antler**.



What do all the sides of the dice here add up to?

..... + + =

Write your answer here



Find the chess pieces. This piece is a **queen**, and her face has **faded over time**.

Can you finish the drawing of the face of this chess piece?

This **queen** is made from **ivory** that came from the **tusk of an elephant**. Can you find another **artefact close by** that is also made out of **ivory**?

Unscramble the letters to find the object name.

nrahert groahha avkn

K _ _ _ _ C _ _ _ _ H _ _ _

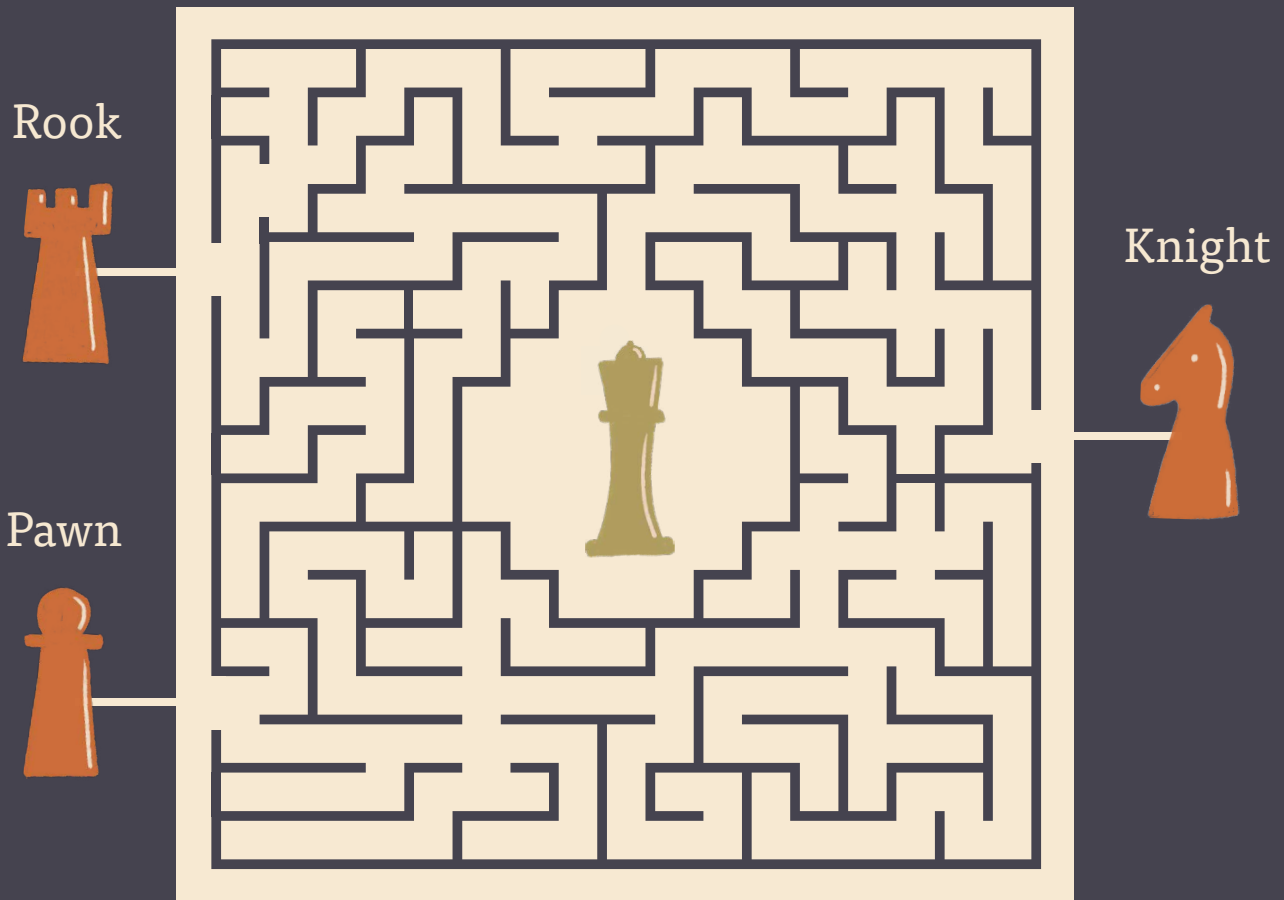
This was a **drinking horn**, used for **special ceremonies** and **celebrations**, in **Medieval Ireland**.



In this maze, follow each of these chess pieces, a knight, a pawn, and a rook, to the centre and see which one will reach the queen.

Did you know that chess appears in Irish Myths and Legends? According to Irish Mythology, chess, or Fícheall, was invented by the god Lugh and it was played by the warrior Chú Chulainn and by the Fianna.

When you play chess, the goal is to trap the king so that there are no more legal moves he can make. This is called 'check-mate'.



Who played what, when?

In Medieval Ireland, chess was played by lords and ladies in their castles, at banquets and feasts.

Which piece made it to the centre of the maze?

Write your answer here

Go up the small stairs, turn right, and go into the 'Work' section of the Medieval Ireland exhibition. Turn left, and find the case called 'Bone and Antler Workers'.

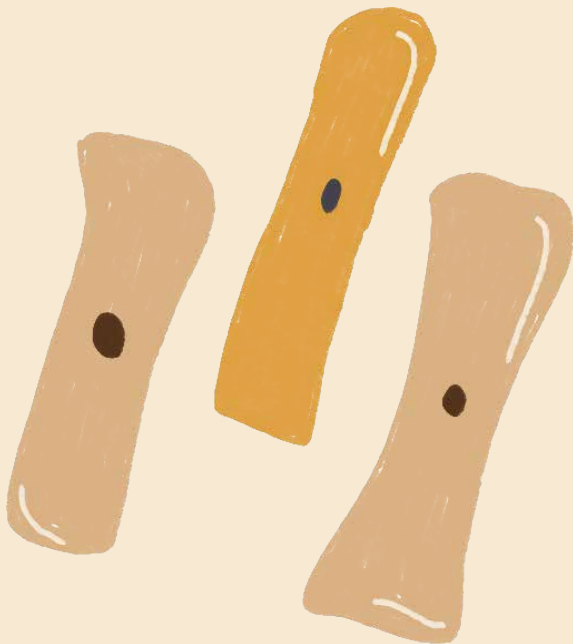
In Medieval Ireland, music was also very popular. Here, there are pieces of objects that would have been part of musical instruments.



Can you name two musical instruments that were played at this time?

1 2

Write your answers here



In this case, there are three **pig bones** with a hole in them. These are called **buzz bones**. These work by putting a string through the hole, tying it to create a loop, and then twisting the string. When you **let go**, it makes a **buzzing sound**.

What type of bone from a pig was used to make these?

.....

Write your answers here



Buzz Disc

Did you know that you can make your own **buzz bone using paper and string**?

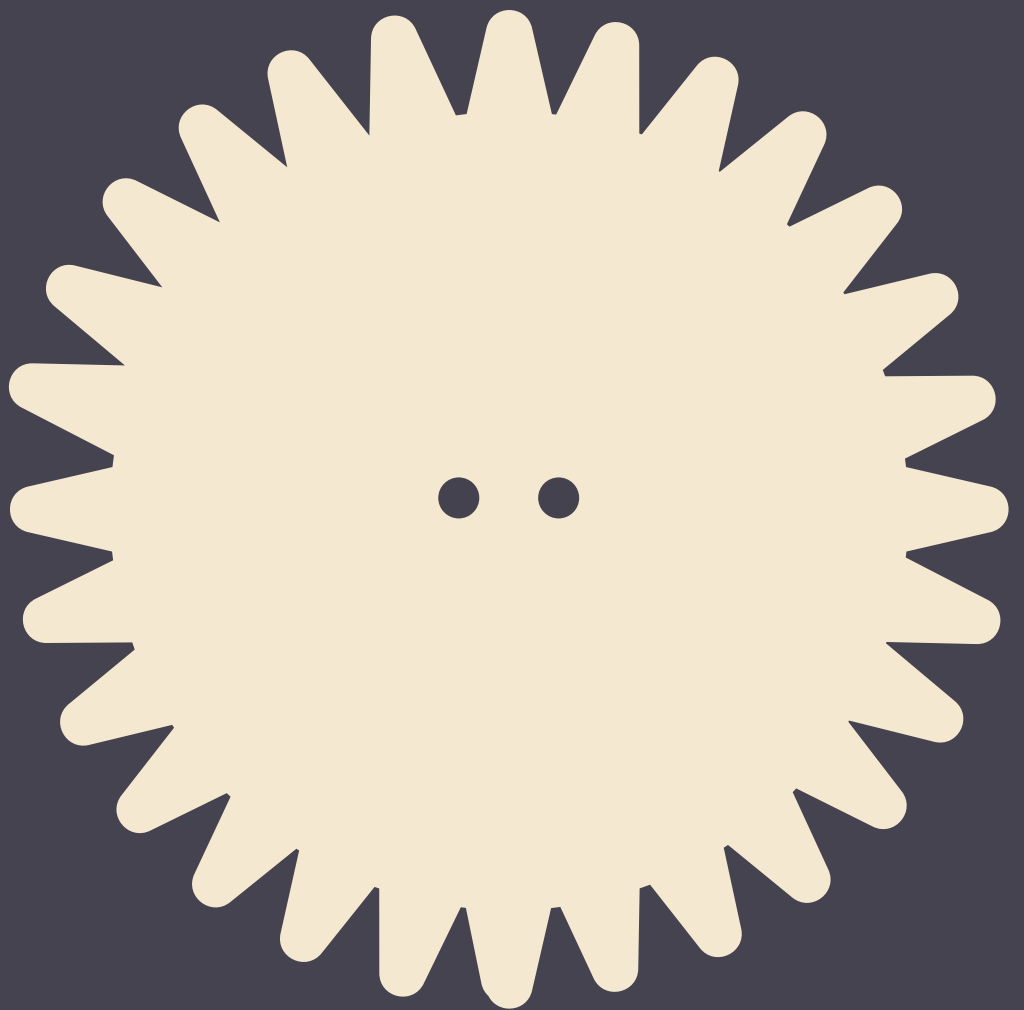
Trace the template below onto a **piece of paper**, or **cut it out** and use it as a **stencil**, to draw the shape onto a piece of **cardboard**. **Make two holes** at the centre using a **hole puncher**. Then, take a piece of **string** that is about **25-30cm** long, and **run it through** the **two holes** and **tie it**, so that is it **one big loop**.

To make your buzz disc work, **twist the string**, until **you can't twist any more**, and then let go! It will then make a **buzzing sound**.

You can also **colour** and **decorate** your **buzz disc** when you are done!

Who played what, when?

Today, people play a lot of different board games including chess! **Ficheall** are a **network of primary school teachers** who **teach and play chess in schools**. Check out www.ficheall.ie for more information.



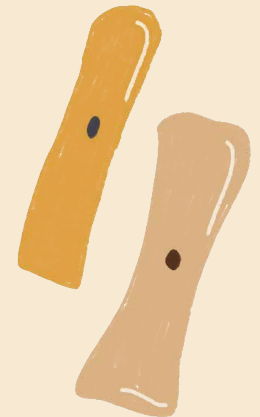
Did you enjoy this trail? You can find out the answers to this trail at www.museum.ie.

To discover more activity sheets and other resources contact **Education and Outreach Department, National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, D02 FH48.**

Phone: +353 1 677 7444

Website: www.museum.ie

Twitter: @NMIreland



This activity sheet was created in partnership with **Ficheall**, a network of primary school teachers who promote and teach chess in schools in Ireland. For more information please see www.ficheall.ie

Ficheall.ie

Primary Teachers Promoting Chess

