

The wireless warrior follows Harald Bluetooth



Thousands congregated in San Jose, California at the Bluetooth Developers Conference in early December to mark the 1,013th anniversary of the death of Harald Bluetooth, King of Denmark, who in 960 successfully completed the wireless connection of Denmark and Norway.



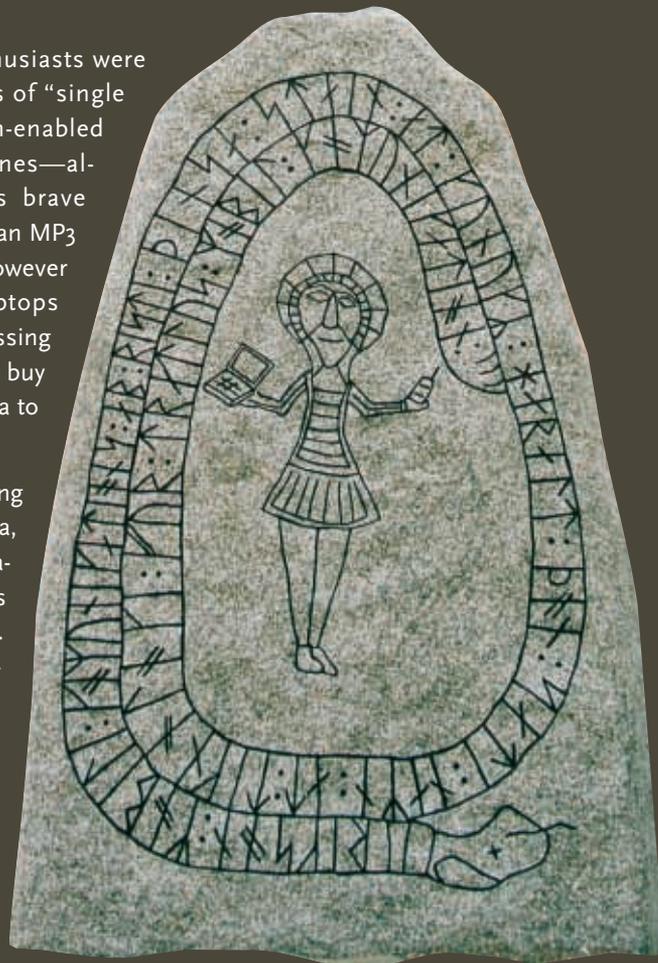
Dr Sven Mattisson demonstrates a Bluetooth-enabled wireless headset.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Harald's place in the history of technology development, he was born in 908, son of the esteemed Gorm "The Old" Hardeknudsson, also a King of Denmark, and Thyre "Danebod" (of Jutland) Haraldsdatter, the Queen. Although he died suddenly in 987 at the venerable age of 79 due to the effects of an arrow in the back (which was directly attributable to having just fought a fierce battle with his son, Sven Forkbeard, who detested him), he is now remembered both for his introduction of Christianity into Denmark, and for loaning his name to a wireless technology introduced in 1998 which enables the transfer of data via radio signals between devices within a diameter of 30 feet.

At the conference in San Jose, enthusiasts were treated to raucous demonstrations of "single point" products, such as Bluetooth-enabled wireless headsets and mobile phones—although no company present was brave enough to announce it would release an MP3 player with embedded Bluetooth wireless technology. However Parthus Technologies demonstrated two ferocious laptops streaming MP3 files through a 24-bit digital signal processing circuit. By the end of 2001, digital warriors will be able to buy "multi-point access" Bluetooth devices which can send data to up to seven other devices.

Bluetooth is controlled by a special interest group consisting of 3Com, Ericsson, IBM, Intel, Lucent, Microsoft, Motorola, Nokia and Toshiba. Current PC cards that add Bluetooth capability to a laptop cost around US\$100, but chipmakers have targeted a cost of under \$10 within the next few years. Cahners In-Stat Group predicts that 1.4 billion Bluetooth-enabled devices will be shipping annually by 2005.

You can pillage all the information you want about Bluetooth from www.bluetooth.com. ■



The official Harald Bluetooth Runic Stone