

COCKATRICE

The Arts & Sciences Journal for the Kingdom of Lochac



Autumn AS 54 (2020)
Festival by Correspondence Edition

This is the Summer AS 54 (2020) edition of Cockatrice, a publication of the Kingdom of Lochac of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA, Inc.). Cockatrice is not a corporate publication of SCA, Inc., and does not delineate SCA, Inc. policies.

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We're looking for photos of completed or in progress works, as well as articles, documentation, or class notes!

Please send through anything you'd like to see featured in Cockatrice to editor@cockatrice.lochac.sca.org - **if you're excited about it, we're excited to help you share it!**

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COCKATRICE CALENDAR 2020

	Submission Deadline	Publication Date
Winter Edition	1st July 2020	1st August 2020
Spring Edition	1st October 2020	1st November 2020
Summer Edition	1st January 2021	1st February 2021

From the Editor

Lochac, you seem to leap from crisis to crisis with the reckless abandon of a much younger kingdom. From the catastrophic vine of bush-fires to the disastrous creeper of infectious disease, you hurdle onwards to the future, and, hopefully, to a gentle stop at the edge of the dark and dangerous jungle we find ourselves in, and not into something that stops us altogether more suddenly.

As I'm sure you've heard by now, Rowany Festival this year has been cancelled. It was a decision that was no doubt an extremely difficult one to make, even if it was a necessary one. The grace and cool heads of the event stewards and all those involved in this matter serve as a positive example to us all.

If you haven't heard that it was cancelled by now, you may be reading this issue in an empty field somewhere west of Wollongong, wondering where all the nice people are.

The good news is that even though the event itself is cancelled, you're able to join us for a very special Festival by Correspondence issue of Cockatrice. You'll experience all of the exciting and beautiful arts and sciences aspects of Rowany Festival from the comfort of your home. You'll be able to experience Rowany Festival as you've never experienced it before - warm, clean and with no pack up required!

Our second installment of the Known World Spotlight is an easy to follow guide on building log workbenches by Baron John Biggeheved from the Kingdom of Atlantia.

Lord Thomas Boardmakere joins us once again in this issue to shine a spotlight on the latest in fashion from the Late Middle Ages, the rope hat, in another thoughtful and well-written guide.

Former Cockatrice editor and recent event steward Lady Gwen verch David has graced this edition with two extremely useful articles, one regarding event stewarding and the other with some sage advice re-

garding scoring points in an A&S competition. They are both informative and provide great ways to get more involved in the society.

Master Járnulfr Þórólfsson shares some very good tips on creating six board chests, Mistress Portia Vincenzo pit fires some really lovely pottery, and Master Owen van Norden once again blows our collective socks off with a beautiful interpretation of the Scappi kitchen box.

Shinjo Takame shares a translation of The Crane Wife, Master Angus MacDougall has sent in some progress photos of a Viking sled, and Master Rurik Farserkr shares his recipe and process for brewing a hydromel.

Lady Symmone de la Croix has provided a guide on creating verdigris using only copper, vinegar, warmth and time. It's a really interesting process that I'm going to try myself in the next few weeks.

This issue's Hordweard progress update is from Lady Dagný Sveinsdóttir.

I'd also like to remind all of you that if you are running a local A&S competition and would like to have the results or progress tracked in Cockatrice, please send it through! If you're working on something you find interesting and want to share it, please email me! If you're excited about it, I'm excited to help you find a way to share it.

It's times like this that I'm glad, and proud, to be a member of a kingdom so full of compassion and perseverance. It's now, when things are tough, that we show the true value of who we are.

Be good to each other, and enjoy the issue.
Lord Bjorn Sæmundarson

BINRT

Known World Spotlight

Log Workbench

BY BARON JOHN BIGGEHEVED, KINGDOM OF ATLANTIA

I was bemoaning the lack of a woodworking bench and indoor workspace to my friend Sadb last month. She suggested that I use some of the various logs I have laying around to make an outdoor workbench with some mass to it that won't wobble or lean over when I am pushing a plane across long oak boards. I thought it was a grand idea, so I set about doing that.

I had a large Norway maple log and some chestnut oak around. I decided to use those to make the bench. The maple makes up the table and the oak is the legs.



I split the maple roughly in half and made notches with round mortises (1-1/2") to take the legs. But, I did two of the legs at a bad angle and had to plug and re-drill the mortises at a better angle.



Plugging the bad mortises.



Chiseling off the plug.



I took some oak splits from a previous project and cut them into some stout legs. The maple top weighs quite a bit, at least 200 lbs. That should resist kicking over when I push on it!



Using a draw knife and chisel, I carved the ends into round tenons (1-1/2") four inches long, to fit the table mortises tightly. I had to use the chisel during fit up of one of the legs, since it didn't quite fit the notch.

I glued the legs into place and let it dry for a week in the cool weather. Then, I flipped the table upright. That was no easy effort!



I set it on some concrete pavers to stop it from sinking into the lawn. Then I cut the feet square with a saw.



I used a boat maker's adze to remove a high spot. The axe for the rest.



I used a level to find the lowest corner of the surface and drew some lines to guide me.



I used an axe to hew notches into the surface for rough material removal.



I used the axe and chisel to remove the joggles.



I continued notching and joggling until roughly flat.

Then, I leaned over to the left and swung the axe sideways to hew the surface roughly flat. The table is too heavy to easily flip on it's side, which would have been better for that stage of hewing.



I have a lot to plane off. I don't have a scrub plane or a large jack plane, just this regular smoothing plane.

Once it was nearly flat I started using the plane to smooth the surface flatter. I learned a bit about how the grain can make the plane "chatter" as it tries to dig into the rising grain. I watched a video by Paul Sellers that explained planes and what was going on there. Quite helpful.



I bored holes for stops and holdfasts.



Baron John Biggehedved is an artisan from the Kingdom of Atlantia. His blog, Biggehedved Boatyard, documents his efforts to make a Viking boat.

Website biggehedved.com

14th - 15th C German Rope Hat

BY LORD THOMAS BOARDMAKERE

The item I am submitting today will keep your head warm in two ways. Firstly, by providing a layer of thermo-insulating fibres between your head and the elements. Secondly, by offering a small amount of protection against sharp cuts and blunt impacts which might have otherwise lead to rapid and terminal cooling of the skull (death).

The Original

The original item is currently housed at The Met - accession number:14.25.609. It dates from the 14th or 15th century Germany. It is made from rope and what looks like linen thread.

It is described as a “Cervelière” which is a low profile helmet often worn under chain mail to protect the skull.



Construction

The hat is a coiled natural fibre rope stitched together to make a bowl.

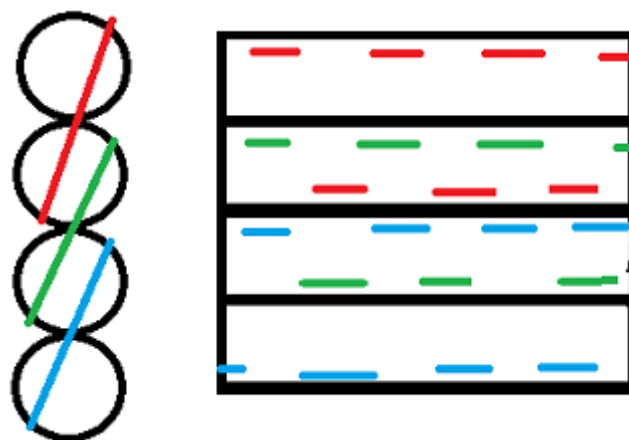
The most challenging part of the build was figuring out how to stitch the coils, for clues we have these photos.



We see horizontal stitches moving along the ropes and holes where stitches used to be.



I believe that each layer of rope has two sets of stitches, a row connecting it to the one above and a row of stitches connecting with the coil underneath. It took test run to figure out this stitch pattern.



I don't not have any information about what plant fibre the hat was made from. I chose to use 10mm sisal and linen thread to construct mine, as it was inexpensive, available in Australia and didn't drifting to far the original. The hat required just under 10 meters, this will vary on your head size.



As each coil is stitched into place, you have an amazing amount of control over the shape - and by simply moving the new row more vertically or horizontally you can build a curve. With frequent test fits to the head you can get a very custom fit.

It's also noteworthy that the hat is not symmetrical I decide which end would be the front and which the back, and built the back more vertically to conform to the shape of human head.



Conclusion and Ramblings

If I was to do this project again I would attempt to construct my own rope from a softer more period fibre. I now know how much is required for my head so I can plan to make a rope that long.

As to the object being referred to a Cervelière.

The art works from the Morgan bible depicting Cervelière are of iron with padding underneath.



The item I recreated doesn't have any form of chin strap or any marks of once having one, it's too stiff to be effective padding inside of a helmet rigid helmet. It may work as a ridged layer under chainmail, but the object also dates to at least 200 years after the Morgan bible was created.

Later art works woven basket helmets being much thicker and of a coiled basket technique. If I was to trust my life to a rope helmet I want it to be much, much thicker as well.



Thanks for reading and I'm hoping to see more rope hats about the place. Personally I think the object I recreated is just a heavy duty hat, they would off a small amount of protect from things like a frisky cow or bumping your head on a building site and is much better then nothing at all but again this is pure speculation.

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Thomas Boardmakere is an artisan and fighter from Mordenvale. He is currently building a period pole lathe as part of his entry into the Hordweard, among other projects.

Trial and Not Too Many Errors: Reflections of a New Steward

BY LADY GWEN VERCH DAVID

This February, I ran my first event as head steward - a low-key picnic lunch-and-tourney afternoon event to celebrate Valentine's Day. (Well, it started low-key; by the time the event began we had eighty attendees and the Crown.) This wasn't my first experience with event management, or even on a stewarding team - my training began with the birthday parties of my siblings, continued with organising A&S classes and a couple of choir concerts during uni, and since then I've been a deputy steward for a newcomer's event and co-steward for a tourney and feast. So I wasn't starting from scratch...but I wouldn't call myself *experienced*, either.

When I started planning the event with my feast steward, I had some general principles in mind:

- Delegate as much as possible, to a broad range of people
- Make the majority of activities something people could drop in and out of, and accessible to as many people as possible
- Leave room to adapt to surprises

These all worked out pretty well for me, and I'm going to keep using them. Some examples of how they worked in practice:

Delegation

For a five-hour afternoon event, I had the following team:

- A feast steward with two assistants
- A bookings officer and someone running Gate
- An infrastructure deputy (more on that below), who recruited a helper and the Baronial Chandler
- An event marshal (focused on rapier), with two assistants who ran armoured combat
- Someone running an A&S activity aimed primarily at children (while I set up a fairly self-starting A&S activity aimed primarily at adults)

To sum up, an eighty-person event had a core team of six, and a total team of thirteen essential helpers (fourteen if you include the Hospitaller, who coordinated with newcomers to arrange gear for them). For those who are mathematically inclined, that works out to more than 15% of attendees being part of the team. And it was great! A couple of times during the event, people came up to me and said "Is there anything I can help with?" And I looked around, and could honestly answer, "Check if the water jugs need refilling when you go by the serving area, but otherwise, we're good."

Infrastructure Deputy is a role that I'm going to bring with me to every event I run from now on. It was *amazing*. A week before the event, I told Vidarr: "Here are the things we need to borrow from the Barony". And when set-up began, they turned up. I told him: "I want a shaded serving area over there, a shaded A&S area over there, a list field in the middle that the marshal is happy with, and areas for the pointy hats and populace to sit". And they happened. At the end of the event, he took charge again, and the borrowed equipment was packed down and into vehicles without me needing to manage a thing. I have absolute confidence that in a week or two, it will all have returned to Baronial storage without me having to do anything further about it.

And that's a big lesson to carry into the future as well: pick deputies you can trust to be competent, then let them be. Communicate your goals clearly, and trust them. Because truly, there is no greater joy than telling someone "Make it so" and knowing that they will.

During the event, I was called on several times to make decisions like "what will we charge people attending off-board?" and "what time are we serving things?" and "are we ready for Court yet?". But thanks to my abundance of amazing deputies, I was mostly responding to moments of particular uncertainty, not managing every step.

One final note on the long-term impact of delegation: large stewarding teams drawn from outside your immediate friendship group help spread stewarding experience throughout the SCA community. Each person you recruit to help you is someone who will be more experienced the next time an event comes up, and someone who can share that knowledge with others. If you reach out beyond your household and the people who always take on certain tasks, the knowledge spreads even further.

Integrated Asynchronous Activities

Our event was bookended with an opening court, a rapier melee, and at the other end, an armoured melee and a closing court. In between, everything happened at once, and was designed so people could switch from one to another at will.

Simultaneously, we had rapier and armoured challenge tourneys (i.e. find someone you want to fight and join the queue), flower-crown-making, heraldic biscuit-decorating,

a buffet of food available to graze as people chose, and a populace rose exchange (more on that later).

People could spend five minutes doing one thing, then move to something else for a while, then sit down and chat with friends, at whatever pace suited them best.

Having parallel drop-in activities like this meant that: fighters could fight without missing out on everything else; people could eat when they were hungry; parents could take time-out from activities to child-wrangle without missing things; and generally, everything felt fairly low-stress.

To help this happen, we served the food in two batches - not a first course and a second course so much as a replenishing of the buffet. If people wanted to eat early in the day, they could. If people wanted to eat later - after fighting, for example - they could do that too.

We also worked on the principle that activities should be open to as diverse a group of participants as possible. Our heraldic biscuit-decorating was aimed at children - but adults were welcome, and enjoyed it as well. Our flower-crown-making was aimed at adults - but children were welcome, and one nine-month-old spent some time happily playing in the basket of fake flowers. Both activities required little experience, knowledge, or skill to enjoy, and took relatively little time to do one 'unit'. I wandered away from my flower crown and back to it several times, but still finished it in well under an hour. These sorts of activities mean that children, adults, newcomers, old hands, and people of varied abilities can all participate together as part of the same community. It's low-stress, and it's fun!

Our populace rose exchange was based on the same idea. A Rose Tourney is a wonderful expression of chivalry, courtesy, and appreciation of others, and I have always found it my favourite type of tourney to watch. But as a non-combatant, I am restricted to the role of recipient - and it is proverbially good to give as well as receive. In our rose exchange, the price of a rose was not prowess on the field, but wordfame: tell the Baroness of a person worthy of admiration and praise, and receive a rose to bestow upon them. Over the course of the event, more than a hundred roses were given, by children, adults, newcomers, and old hands alike. (This also had the side effect of encouraging people to approach the pointy hats and talk to them, which is always good.)

Adaptability

Considering that myself and my feast steward were both fairly inexperienced, we knew we weren't going to be able to predict and plan for everything that could happen. Someday, perhaps, we will have been involved in enough events

that we won't get surprised anymore...but that day is not today. So instead of trying to plan for everything, we made plans that had room in them to adapt to changing circumstances.

We wanted to run an outdoor event. But this summer was full of extreme weather events, and even an ordinary summer can have uncomfortably hot or unpleasantly wet days. So we chose to book a cheap hall in a park, something that would give us a back-up option (as well as kitchen and bathroom facilities), and worked out what weather conditions would warrant moving things indoors. In the end, we *did* run the event outside...but considering we had thunderstorms and downpours the day before, the option was reassuring, and the kitchen was definitely useful.



Heraldic display along one edge of the event space.

When planning our budget, we suspected that we could probably cover our expenses with a \$15 gate fee...just. But we knew that there would be some non-paying attendees (children, as well as pointy hats and ourselves), and we weren't completely sure about our expenses, and frankly, we wanted some room for error. We charged \$20 per person for

adult members, giving us a \$10 per person food budget and \$2.30 per person for miscellaneous event supplies, and we were able to finish the event with a reasonably substantial profit.

To minimise the risk of kitchen mishaps leaving people unfed, the food was all designed to be pre-prepared the day before the event, and only reheated and served at the venue. This turned out to be useful - like in many kitchens, there were some issues getting the oven and stove to cooperate. Having an approximate schedule for the second serving meant that I didn't even realise there had been mishaps and delays until I dropped by the kitchen to check in.

We closed bookings on a Monday night when the event was on Sunday, even though we could have let them go later. It gave us extra time to plan for the final numbers - which we ended up needing, because we went from expecting forty attendees on the Sunday before to expecting seventy-two when bookings closed, and there were several last-minute additions. I was astonished and somewhat intimidated to see so much enthusiasm for the event, but most people I mentioned the jump in numbers to commented that a large number of last-minute bookings is normal. Don't rely on them if your event is struggling, but be prepared for them. (One thing I wish I'd done in retrospect was work out an upper limit of what our event could support.)

Our marshal, too, adopted the principle of adaptability. We planned to begin the event with a melee spectacle based on sheep-stealing tourneys, and most of the parameters had been worked out in advance, but some were decided on the spot, in consultation with combatants. (For example, as we had an uneven number, one combatant was chosen to fight for neither team, but instead to cause entertaining chaos on the field.) The heavy fighting version of the melee needed some additional changes, due to the difficulty of heavy fighters getting a hand free to pick up the stuffed bee the teams were competing over. Sir Ysambart's suggestion of having a fighter set aside their weapons to serve as a human 'bee' was inspired, and brought great amusement to people on and off the field.

Our schedule was approximate, and we didn't hold ourselves to it strictly. The event opened at 12:30; we allowed half an hour for attendees to arrive, sign-in, and get settled before Opening Court. This was about as much time as most people needed - although Court was delayed a further fifteen minutes because the Crown had initially gone to a different scout hall up the road. Because we were planning for things to happen in sequence (court, then melee, then tournament) rather than to a schedule (court at 1pm, melee at 1:15, tournament at 1:30), this was something we could adapt to without stressing about it.



The Baronial Chandler, Jon Huslangr, and our Infrastructure Deputy, Vidarr Halftröll

One of the important lessons I learned from this event is that the right time to end an event is before people leave. It sounds obvious, I know, but it's easy to get too attached to your plan to acknowledge that people are ready to go home. We planned to run from 12:30-5:30, but by 4:00, the fighters had mostly cleared the field, and a few people had left early. We arranged to move Court to 4:30, and it finished at 5pm. What followed was the most astonishingly efficient pack-up I've ever seen. At five o'clock, the park held five shade tents, a large list field, fifteen banners in portable holes, half a dozen tables, dozens of chairs, groundcloths, and of course, attendee's personal things. By five thirty, the park was bare. By six o'clock, the kitchen was packed away and clean, and we were bumping out. This relied, of course, on the willingness of attendees to help - but I do genuinely believe that part of that willingness was pack-up beginning when they still had energy to do so.

Concluding Thoughts

I've written a great deal above about different things that contributed to the success of my event, in the hopes that concrete examples are useful to those of you planning to run your own. But it's also a lot of text, so here's the short version. What did I learn from running an event?

- Recruit a large, diverse team of helpers, and trust them to do their jobs
- An Infrastructure Deputy (managing collecting gear from the group, set up, pack up, and returning gear to where it lives) is a fantastic idea
- Parallel drop-in activities that are suited to a wide range of people make your event more accessible and less stressful for you and your attendees
- Given the choice between one gate price that is just enough and another five dollars that gives you more than you need...just charge the extra five
- Booking numbers may jump substantially in the last 24 hours before bookings close, so close bookings early enough that you can adapt your plans to those final numbers
- Include half an hour at the beginning of your event for

- people to arrive before any of the activities start
- Approximate schedules based on a sequence of activities rather than strict time-slots allow you to adapt smoothly to mishaps and delays
- If you start bringing the event to its conclusion when people are starting to leave, you'll have a much bigger team to help with pack-up

And finally...

- There is no better day of the year to hold a Rose Tourney than two days after Valentine's Day.

Gwen verch David is a frequent teacher, competition-entrant, former editor of Cockatrice and now a steward. More of her work can be found at www.rookwell.com/gwen

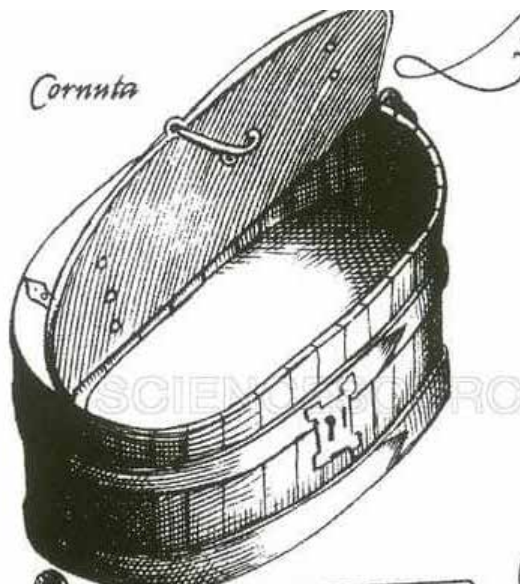
Pit Firing

BY MISTRESS PORTIA VINCENZO



Scappi Kitchen Box

BY MASTER OWEN VAN NORDEN



The Crane Wife

ADAPTED FROM A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE FOLKTALE BY SHINJO TAKAME

The Crane Wife is a traditional Japanese folk tale that has origins going as far back as the 8th Century. The story has similarities to western folk tales, especially with the motif of the swan maiden. However, the themes are more Buddhist in nature, such as impermanence.

Once there was a peasant man, he lived in the mountains in a small house with his elderly mother where he made a living making charcoal.

One day, just before the first snows of winter were to fall, he went to the nearby village to buy a futon bed for his mother. As he approached the village, he saw a beautiful white crane struggling in the cage that held it. The man's heart was filled with pity and he tried to open the cage to free it.

The hunter that had caught the crane ran up to stop him. "What are you doing?" the hunter demanded.

"I am worry, but I was trying to free the crane from the cage," said the man. "Will you sell it to me?"

The hunter agreed and took the money. The man then freed the crane. The great white bird stretched its wings and took off into the sky.

The man returned home to his mother and explained what he had done. His mother just nodded sadly.

"I suppose there is nothing to be done," she said.

The next evening, snow began as the man and his mother ate their evening meal. There came a knock at the door. When the man opened it, a beautiful young woman was standing there. Her skin was pale but her hair was dark and her lips a deep red.

"You must be cold," said the man. "Come in and warm yourself."

He brought the woman inside and let her sit by the fire. He brought a blanket from his bed and covered her with it while his mother made her some tea. The woman said nothing at all.

"Do you live far from here?" The man asked her at last.

"No, not far," said the woman.

"Then you must stay with us," said the mother.

"Tomorrow, when the snow stops falling I will take you home," promised the man.

But the snow continued for three days and three nights. And in those three days and nights he was charmed by her kindness towards him and his mother and how complete she made his home.

After three days, with his mother's blessing, he asked the woman to be his wife. She agreed. And for a time they were happy. But as the winter continued, their meagre stores of food were stretched between the three of them. The man confessed to his wife that he feared they had not enough food to last the winter.

"Please, let me help, husband," she said, she went into the other room of the hut. "You must not come in until I have finished." And she closed the door.

For seven days the door remained closed, on the evening on the seventh day his wife emerged and in her arms she held a bolt of silken cloth of such radiant colours.

"Take this to town tomorrow and sell it for a good price," she said.

As the man took the bolt of cloth from her, he noticed that his wife looked frail and thin. "My wife, are you ill?"

But she did not answer him.

The next day, the man took the garment his wife had made to market and sold to and sold it to the local lord for an immense amount of money.

"And please," said the local lord. "If your wife were to weave another, I would buy it."

"I will ask her," said the man.

The man returned home and told his wife what the lord had said.

His wife once again retreated to the room and bid him to not look inside until she came out. And once again, seven days passed and she emerged again with a bolt of cloth even more splendid than the first. But was once again thin and sickly. And once again, he asked her why she looked so ill but his wife did not answer.

The man took the cloth to the local lord who paid him even more money and asked again is the man's wife could weave another.

Once again, his wife retreated into the room and bade him not to enter for seven days. But before the seven days was over, the man was worried about his wife and she appeared sick and thin when she made the cloth. So he opened the door.

There was a giant loom, but in front of it was a great white crane who was beating its beak against its breast, tearing off feathers and weaving them into cloth with its great wings. The crane gave a cry when it saw him, turning back into the form of his wife.

"Husband, you know my secret," she said, bursting into tears. "I was that crane you saved from the trap, and I do this for my love of you."

"But my wife," he said to her. "Love does not demand such sacrifice."

His wife shook her head. "I cannot stay with you," she said.

She once again assumed her crane form, raised her wings to fly. Thousands of cranes appeared and they all took to the skies together.

Winter passed into spring, the man now lived a rich and comfortable life in a fine house with many servants and his mother wanted for nothing. But all he wanted was to see his beloved wife again. So he began to travel the land searching for her.

One day, he rested on a sea shore where he saw an old man approaching in a boat from the open ocean. The man thought it strange, as he knew no islands lay out that way. So he approached the old man when he came ashore and asked where he had been.

"I have been to the Island of the Robe of Crane Feathers," said the old man.

"Please, can you take me there," said the man.

So the old man took him out into the open ocean, to a small island. On the beach he saw the great crane that had been his wife, surrounded by many other cranes for she was their queen.

His wife saw him and once again assumed the form of a human. They embraced. "I have come to take you home, my wife," he said to her.

His wife shook her head. "I cannot again leave this island," she said. "And you cannot stay."

So he stayed with her that evening, they talked all night and ate together. Then, when the sun began to rise over the great ocean, they embraced one last time, and the old man with the boat took him home.

Shinjo Takame is an artisan from Rowany, with a current focus on period Japanese clothing.

Six Board Chests

BY MASTER JÁRNULFR ÞÓRÓLFSSON

This is basically going to be a description of how to do the end panels, really. A six board chest is six rectangular panels, and you can get away with the base, front, back and top being rectangles of the same size, or close to it.

If working with modern sawn plank, you want your end-board to be the width of the plank high, plus around 10 to 12cm extra to make the leg. If you have a table saw, cut as shown in this photo - back and front panels cut-outs almost all the way down to the base with the table saw, leaving a bit of waste to finish the cut with a hand saw later. Then two shallow cuts that don't go all the way across the base to make the hidden rebate/dado joint into which the base board will socket.



Planing back the modern finish on the dressed planks, because I like a period surface texture.



Planed, and ready to cut away the waste section where the front and back boards will sit.



On what will be the inside, we have to now cut out the waste between the two shallow saw cuts that will make the recess for the base board to fit in.



Cutting away the last bit of the side board cut with a hand saw. Mark it in with a square first.



Cutting.



Cut, planed on the outside, ready to chisel the rebate/dado joint in the end board to take the base board.



Braced against a bench stop, ready to chisel.



Cutting out the rebate for the dado joint.



Smoothing out any high spots after removing most of the waste.



On more period accurate chests, the rebated joint for the base board may include a mortise for a tenon on the base board.



Finished recess for the base board.



Part finished - after rough chiseling out the waste, you'll have to carefully cut down all the lumps.



I don't like sanding my medievalish woodworking, as sandpaper is a really recent thing. I prefer to use a scraper on it after planing it.



The scraper is simply a flat plate of relatively soft iron, cut at a bevel, and you run that bevel across a grinder or a file to form a burr on the edge, which then provides a rough surface to smooth the wood. Finer file/grind, finer burr, finer finish, until you're essentially scraping it down with a fine knife edge for the final finish. Or, if it's got a nice smooth grain, and your plane is sharp, just leave the hand planed surface.



And a finished chest, as the end boards are the hard bit, and the other four are just rectangles, maybe with a bit of a stepped joint if you're doing some of the Norse versions (also, sloped trapezoids, but let's get to that later). The base board needs to be narrower than the end boards by the width of the two front and back boards, and slightly shorter (to fit the correspondingly slightly narrower length caused by the depth of the dado joint in the end boards it sits in). Correspondingly, the lid needs to be long enough to cover the two end boards at the top.



Nail them or peg them together. These ones are nailed, with modern jolt heads that I've put in a nail header to give a three hammer blow faceted flat head to. Hinges - buy them, make them, recycle them. Plain iron strap hinges are nice, these ones are forged from recycled from old 1880 era wrought strap iron from South Australia.

If you don't have nice medieval nails, just make them: Drill a hole the same diameter as the shank of a modern jolt head nail, in a block of steel (I used a bit of old rail iron bolted to a stump), chamfer the top edge a wee bit, then you oil the nail, drop it in the hole, hit the jolt head three times with a hammer, and it becomes the faceted rosette head seen on the left below. Unmodified jolt head to the right. If you want really big fancy heads, do it with soft iron horse shoe nails.



Hinges are attached by clench nailing - nails go through a pre-drilled hole, end is folded into a staple, and then hammered flat into the wood to hold the hinges in place.



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In Progress

A Viking Sled

Master Angus MacDougall





Cockatrice - Autumn AS 54 (2020)

If You Name a Source, You're Above Average:

A Guide to 'Good Enough' Documentation Based on the Lochac Kingdom A&S Competition Rubric

BY LADY GWEN VERCH DAVID

There are a *lot* of guides to documenting your projects out there, and a lot of advice on how to do it well. (Last time I looked, I quickly found more than forty different webpages.) This article is *not* about how to do it well. It's about how little you can do and still be 'good enough'.

What is documentation?

A lot of people I've asked this question say something along the lines of 'proving your project is period'. (Interestingly, the Laurels I've spoken to don't tend to agree.) Defined that way, documentation becomes an ever-expanding can of worms that I would defy *anyone* to open with confidence.

I prefer to think of documentation as 'the explanation of my project', covering what I did, how I did it, and why I did it that way. 'Why I did it that way' can include historical information (the kind of object I'm trying to copy, or the sources that helped me work out how), but also includes the reasoning behind my design decisions (e.g. linen is cheaper than wool).

Why document?

Showing Off: Writing about my project is an opportunity to point out the parts I did well that might not be obvious, or even visible.

Excusing Flaws: I can explain that I did some things imperfectly as a deliberate compromise (e.g. couldn't afford a more appropriate choice of materials), or that I couldn't figure out a better way, or that I made a mistake because I'm new to the technique.

Keeping a Record: If it's the sort of project I might do again, writing down the details (especially the information I was working from) gives me something to refer back to. Plus if someone else is curious, I can give them the documentation rather than having to figure it all out in retrospect.

Helping Me Think: Writing about my project and the research I did can help me consolidate my thought processes and spot where I might have missed something - which is really useful if I'm doing a lot of projects in that area.

Earning Points in Competitions: If I'm entering an A&S competition, written documentation usually gets me points. (I've actually won competitions before because my documentation gave me a leg up over someone else's more impressive project.)

BUT, I will be the first to say that documentation is *optional*. Even if you're entering competitions, almost none of them *require* it, they just give you points for doing it. The SCA is a hobby; we do it for fun. If documentation isn't fun for you, you don't need to feel guilty for skipping it. What you make is just as important a part of Arts & Sciences as what you know, and much more important than what you write. You are still a valid artisan if you don't write things down.

Introducing the Lochac Rubric

In Lochac, there is a standard judging rubric used for all Kingdom A&S Competitions (and often borrowed for local A&S competitions as well). Two of the five judging categories apply to documentation, and although this isn't a universal standard by any means, it's a convenient one to work with. My own abbreviated version of the two categories under discussion is in the appendix, or you can read the full thing at <http://artsandsciences.lochac.sca.org/judging-scheme/>.

The 'Documentation' Category

Somewhat confusingly, one of the two categories that apply to documentation is, itself, called 'documentation'. This one assesses your explanation of the historical background for your project. There are five bands, with a maximum score of ten points.

1-2 points: “Identifies period and place relevant to the entry.”

‘It’s Tudor’

Yes, for the purposes of a Kingdom A&S Competition, naming a time and place is documentation.

3-4 points: “Places the entry in its historical context, describes some basis for creation of the entry.”

‘A white veil for a 13th century French woman. Women of all classes wore these veils, as shown in illuminated manuscripts from the time.’

5-6 points: “Uses some sources to begin discussion of the item and its creation.”

‘According to *La Menagier de Paris*, peas could be cooked with bacon on normal days, or with butter and salt on fast days.’

That’s right, naming a specific source brings you up to a 50% score on documentation. And this isn’t a pass/fail grade: any amount of points for documentation is a success.

7-8 points: “Uses a range of sources, both secondary and primary, to discuss the item in terms of its context and the evidence behind the creation of the entry.”

At this level, you need multiple sources, and you need to use them to offer some sort of evidence for what you did. Your analysis doesn’t have to be detailed, and you don’t need to justify everything - just draw the connections between your sources and your project.

9-10 points: “A scholarly level of analysis and discussion, using primary and secondary sources, with a detailed discussion and sustained argument providing the basis for the creation of the entry.”

This is the level where you begin to try to ‘prove your project is period’ - and as far as the Lochac Rubric is concerned, that takes the same amount of work as making something with ‘no discernable flaws, high level of technical skill and attention to detail and finish’ (which is what it takes to get 9-10 points in the ‘workmanship’ category). The reason why many people find this standard of documentation intimidating is because it’s a lot of work, and requires a fair amount of skill. It’s perfectly okay for you to not achieve that, and even for you to not aspire to achieving it.

Start simple. Start with: ‘It’s Tudor.’

The ‘Interpretation’ Category

The second category that applies to your documentation is called ‘interpretation’, and assesses your explanation of how you made your project, and why you made the design decisions you did.

1-2 points: “Provides minimal information about how the item was constructed and/or about the materials used, with no reference to sources.”

‘A tablet-woven belt’

It’s as simple as that. Just identify your method and/or materials, and you’re already earning points.

3-4 points: “Provides basic explanation of how the item was constructed and about the materials used. Some insight into their design choices, but without reference to sources.”

‘A pouch embroidered with chain-stitch. The pouch is wool, because that would have been used for brightly coloured items in period, but the embroidery thread is cotton because that was most easily available.’

5-6 points: “Provides basic explanation regarding how the item was made and about the materials used, with limited reference to the sources. Information about design decisions/ substitutions is incomplete or not adequately supported by the evidence provided.”

‘Scented water for washing hands, based on *La Menagier de Paris*. I boiled rosemary (one of the herbs mentioned in the text) and then strained it and let it cool.’

Just like with the ‘documentation’ category, referring to a specific source gets you into the 50-60% bracket. You don’t have to write detailed instructions, just describe what you did and connect it to your source in some way.

7-8 points: ‘Provides detailed explanation of why particular materials and methods were used, with more extensive reference to primary and secondary sources to justify design decisions/substitutions. Some aspects of the explanation or use of the evidence are missing/unclear.’

At this level, you’re more or less writing a how-to, but answering the question ‘why?’ alongside most steps of the process. You don’t have to be able to answer that question for everything you did, but most of the time you should have some sort of reason, and a source that backs up any assumptions you made about how things were done in period.

9-10 points: “Provides a clear, comprehensive and well-justified explanation of the method and materials used, and presents a fully-referenced argument in support of design decisions, including any substitutions made.”

Once again, this is the ‘prove your project is period’ level - or in this case, ‘prove your method is appropriate’. Note that you can make substitutions and still get full points for interpretation. You just need to give an explanation that is more complex than ‘it was cheaper’.

Final Thoughts

Documentation at a high level requires a significant investment of research, thought, and writing. It’s no wonder that most of us find the idea of doing so intimidating, particularly if it comes as an afterthought while preparing a competition entry. But you don’t have to document at a high level, any more than you have to bring a handmade elderflower cheesecake to a pot-luck. In fact, you don’t have to document at all. But if you want to give it a try, start with the basics. With ‘a Tudor linen cap’, if you like. And remember, if you name a specific source, according to the rubric, you’re above average!

Documentation Rubric

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies time and place |
| 3-4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describes historical context• Describes some basis for entry |
| 5-6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refers to some sources• Discusses entry in relation to sources |
| 7-8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refers to primary and secondary sources• Discusses historical context• Discusses evidence for design/methods |
| 9-10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyses primary and secondary sources• Discusses evidence for design/methods in detail• Justifies design/methods |

Interpretation Rubric

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partially describes method and/or materials |
| 3-4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explains method and materials• Describes design choices |
| 5-6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explains method and materials• Refers to some sources• Partially explains design choices |
| 7-8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explains method and materials in detail• Partially justifies design choices using primary and secondary sources |
| 9-10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehensively explains method and materials• Justifies design choices using primary and secondary sources |

Verdigris Bath

BY LADY SYMONNE DE LA CROIX



I used 99.9% copper which I sourced online, which I cut with kitchen scissors to fit in clean jar with a lid.



Then I poured in about a cup of double strength vinegar. The vapours (fumes) will be what reacts with the copper to make the verdigris.



I put on the lid then put container on a warm place (would have been in a dung pile in period).

EQUIPMENT

- Copper plates
- Vinegar (I used Fehlberrgs double strength white vinegar which is extra concentrated)
- Container (I used a glass Moccona jar)
- Safety blade





After only 24hrs!! Working very rapidly. I then left it for a month.



I used a safety blade to scrape the verdigris away. It came off quite easily.

Gloves and face mask is recommended for this part of the process.



I removed copper from the verdigris bath and allowed it to dry.



I am happy with the outcome so far. It yielded a lot more pigment than I realised.

Interesting that the verdigris only occurred on the parts that were not submerged in the vinegar.



The vinegar was a pretty blue colour. I am going to reuse it and the copper after it is scraped.

Next step is mulling the pigment and trialling it in different mediums.

I added the copper back into the original vinegar bath to see if there will be any further reactions. I tried to keep more of the copper out of the liquid this time.

Alchemy is fun.

My 'Lord Hollis' Hydromel

BY MASTER RURIK FARSEKR

In the lead up to Rowany Festival 2014, there was a lot of talk about having a case swap. This was my contribution to the swap. I chose this recipe for two reasons. The first was timing, as when I brewed it it was about twelve months to Festival and the recipe calls for that amount of ageing. The second was it is a nice simple mead with a few additions of easily accessible spices making it a great starting point for the new mead maker. This recipe also gives a few options to customise it, which I will try at another time.



Recipe from “The Closet of Sir Kenelm Digby”

In four parts of Springwater dissolve one part of honey, or so much as the Liquor will bear an Egge to the breadth of a Groat. Then boil it very well, and that all the scum be taken away. He addeth nothing to it but a small proportion of Ginger sliced: of which He putteth half to boil in the Liquor, after all the scum is gone; and the other half He putteth into a bag, and hangeth in the bung, when it is tunned. The Ginger must be very little, not so much as to make the Liquor taste strongly of it, but to quicken it. I should like to adde a little proportion of Rosemary, and a greater of Sweet-bryar leaves, in the boiling. As also, to put into the barrel a tost of white bread with mustard, to make it work. He puts nothing to it; but his own strength in time makes it work of it self. It is good to drink after a year.

My Redaction

Ingredients for a 5l batch.

- 1 l or 1.3 kg (approx.) honey
- 4 l of Water
- 10 g of fresh ginger
- 2 g of Wyeast yeast nutrient
- 2 ml of lactic acid
- 5 g of Vintner's Harvest VR21

Method

1. Take 4 l of water and place into pot on the stove.
2. Add honey and stir through as it comes to the boil.
3. Once the scum from the honey comes to the top scrape it off. This will help produce clear mead.
4. After the scum has finished rising add in the ginger.
5. Cool.
6. Move into sanitised fermenter.
7. Pitch yeast.
8. When the yeast has finished working, rack.
9. After one month rack again.
10. Age for ten months then bottle & drink.

The honey I chose was a generic blend, because the only single origin honey that I can find is from Australian native plants (unsurprising on this big island, really) and I felt that any particular flavours they imparted would be out of place in recreation brewing. The water for this mead was sourced from my local water supply (the tap in my kitchen). For the ginger I used *Zingiber officinale* which is the common ginger that is found in supermarkets. This form of ginger has been known in Western Europe since Roman times and was one of the most commonly traded spices during the middle ages.

In Digby's notes the bread and mustard are effectively the medium and nutrient for the yeast respectively. Preferring bread and mustard with my ham, rather than in my mead, I replaced them with a single strain English country wine yeast and yeast nutrient because this is more sanitary. Better sanitation will result in a beverage that is palatable to the modern taste – we would describe Digby's mead as 'off'.

The second last line of Digby's notes indicates what we would now call "Wild Fermentation" which meant he wouldn't have intentionally put yeast into this must: he would have unknowingly let wild yeast find its way in (yeast is everywhere, like air). As two of the most common wild yeasts are *Brettanomyces* and *Lactobacillus*, it is likely this is what would have landed in his tun of mead. Both of these yeasts have a souring effect on the must by lowering its pH, and much like the bread/mustard combination too much of this in the resulting beverage is not nice to drink. (Think of it like salt – a little makes the food taste good but too much ruins the meal.) A lower pH in the must also means that the yeast will ferment more efficiently. So, since I haven't used wild yeast, but I want a lower pH and a little bit of sourness, I included a small amount of lactic acid* which will have the same effect.

It would be an interesting and challenging taste-wise if a person was to ferment this mead with wild fermentation. I have chosen not to in this case because I am hoping to share the product with the brewing community, some of whom may not be ready to try something that far out of the box! As a future experiment I will try this in summer when there is plenty of wild yeast in the air, as the boiling process will kill any that are in the raw ingredients.

*This is not needed, I used it because I have some for other purposes.

Master Rurik Farsekr is a brewing laurel who currently resides in Politarchopolis, where he spends his time trying to perfect a machine that turns gold into beer. He has had some promising results but says more experiments are necessary. He has excellent taste in all things, but particularly in apprentices.

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Hordweard Progress

Dagný Sveinsdóttir

