



#### THIS ISSUE

Myrtle Holt in  
the Community

On Being a Sheep Farmer  
Chapter 4

Viking Recipe:  
Fish Soup

Beaded Back Stitch Using  
A Stencil as a Template

Basic Armouring  
(A Series)

Viking Recipe:  
Smoked Cheese

Last Call

Looking Forward

Calendar

Officer List

## Myrtle Holt in the Community



Lady Brynhildr Smidsdottir and HL Uilliam (Liam) Mag Duibhfhinn speaking on the topic of the roles of women in medieval history.



HE Dame Jennet MacLachlan of Loch Fyne's beautiful floral arrangement at Myrtle Holt's Lord Edward "Slash" "Target-Cleaver" Tanner's Boy Scout Eagle Court of Honor.



# On Being a Sheep Farmer

## Chapter 4: When Sheep or Lambs Get Stuck

By HE Dame Jennet MacLachlan of Loch Fyne

Birthing time in the sheep shed is a very interesting and wonderful time for us in the spring. We have just survived the birth of 24 spring lambs, and we are not done. Watching the arrival of a new lamb is exciting and educating at the same time. Assisting in the birth of a new lamb, or two, is even more exciting. However, birthing, as in any species, has its problems.

Nature sometimes struggles a little bit. This chapter is dedicated to some of the stories around “getting stuck” and all the implications of that expression.

Let us start with the mother ewe. As we all know, “The grass is always greener on the other side.” Sheep are no different in this view of life’s good grasses. Many, many a day I have had to walk out into a field to free a ewe that has decided that the grass was greener on the other side. The sheep force their heads through the wire field fencing and keep shoving until they can reach as far as possible to get at that last little blade of grass because it simply has to be better than what is right under their feet. The problem is when they decide to bring their heads back. Since their ears, and their ear tags, can move backwards when proceeding through the fence, this is no problem. The problem is that ears, and subsequently the ear tags, cannot bend forward and their heads are too big to come back through the fence. They get stuck.

This is all well and good, and one would think that simply holding their ears down and pushing their heads back through the fence would be the solution, right? Wrong. The instinct of a sheep is to push against whatever decides to push against their heads. So you have this stupid ewe fighting you all the way and forcing her head against you while you are trying to push her head back into the right side of the fence. At this point, she has gone back and forth so much that her wool is now wrapped around the fence and she is “locked” into place. I have had bruises on my hands and arms from trying to free up a stuck ewe from the fence.



At times I have been so frustrated with them that I have honestly thought to myself, “Just leave her there... She’ll figure it out.” No, she won’t. One year we actually lost a ewe because she could not free herself and she died right there, stuck in the fence. The only thing that saved her baby until we found her was that he could still suckle on her and get his food until she stopped producing milk a few hours later. Dumb sheep. That was one of the most frustrating moments for us. We now regularly check even the farthest reaches of the fenced fields just to be sure that never happens again.

And, just as grown sheep get stuck, so do lambs. From the moment of their arrival, or attempted arrival, into this world, they get themselves stuck. Let me start by explaining a very interesting technique that I learnt about five years ago, quite by chance. We have a very useful book called *Sheep Farming for Dummies*. It just so happens that my husband was doing research on illnesses and problems during birthing and had left this book open on my kitchen table.



## When Sheep or Lambs Get Stuck (Continued)

I was walking by and noticed a rather strange title to one of the chapters. That title was, “Swinging a Lamb.” I decided to stop for a moment and read what on earth this was all about.

The book proceeded to explain that sometimes during a traumatic birthing, a lamb might not start breathing. In order to help that lamb you had to remove any excess fluid from its lungs so that it could start breathing. The way this is done is by grabbing the hind legs in one hand and holding on for dear life, and I really mean holding on because these little tykes are very slippery at this stage. You swing the lamb at your arm’s length in a full circle, making sure that you do not hit the ground or the walls or anything in the near vicinity. Well, there was a diagram and I looked at that and was totally intrigued and somewhat horrified by this whole description.



About a week later, on my husband’s birthday, I got to put this into practice. My husband was on the phone being wished well for his birthday by a family member. Since I was on morning duty for feeding the livestock, I went out to start my chores. I started my rounds at the “nunnery.” This is the shed where the neutered males and the females who are either too young or too old to be bred are kept to keep them away from the rams.

I approached the shed with my usual enthusiasm and when I walked inside, I noticed that one ewe was lying down against the shed exterior door. I proceeded to feed all the others and then walked through the gate and past all the eating sheep; she was still lying against the shed door. I proceeded to open the door and she still did not move. Now this is a sure sign that something is very, very wrong. On closer inspection, I noticed that there was a half of a head of a lamb protruding from her and she was in severe distress. The rather large head was blue and extremely swollen and the ewe appeared to be lame.

I tried calling home, but of course the phone was busy. The next best thing was to call for help from my father who lives in his own house on the same property about 200 yards away. He arrived a couple of minutes later and informed me that, sure enough, the lamb was stuck. How on earth she was even expecting a lamb was beyond us since there were supposed to be no males anywhere near here and she was far too young to be getting pregnant.

“You will have to help her,” my father said. “You mean pull out the lamb?” I asked, horrified. Yes, he said that that was exactly what he meant. So, I proceeded to do as I was told. As luck would have it, I managed to free the lamb from the poor ewe and relieve her agony only to have this horribly swollen lamb in my hands. “You have to swing her, Jannie,” my dad said.

Ooooh, oooh, I know how to do that....so putting all my newly acquired knowledge into practice, I very tightly held onto the little legs and swung with all my might. To my utter amazement, the lamb started to breathe. He looked like Quasimodo from all the swelling but he actually survived. I had managed to save this little life and his mother, too. I was so proud of myself and looked at my dad for his approval. “I wondered if that would work,” he said. “I have only ever heard of it and never seen it before.” What? The reality was my father had never even done that and was totally shocked that I had not only known what to do and how to do it, but that I had actually succeeded. What an adrenalin rush I suffered after that!

Now we step forward about three years later for a story that still to this day embarrasses my husband and will probably make him mad that I am telling this tale.

## When Sheep or Lambs Get Stuck (Continued)

My son had started working for us and it was once again lambing season. We had a lot of very difficult births that year and all of our lambs seemed to be way too big for their moms. It turns out we had a ram that was throwing very large offspring and we had to stop breeding with him. My son was on morning livestock feed duty on this particular day. He called me and said that there was a mom in trouble. He had moved her to a birthing stall but we needed to come and help.

When we got there the lamb had been born and was in the main area and the mom was in her birthing stall, clearly still in distress. I took a look at the lamb and decided that it was deceased and moved on. My husband came in and after assisting the mom and being satisfied that the mom and second lamb were okay, proceeded to the first lamb. I looked over and there was my husband picking up the lamb by the hind legs, just as I had, and as he gave a nice big swing ... I heard, "Oops," and there went the lamb across the shed. My son had just asked, "Is it dead?" and immediately followed with, "Well I guess it is now".

My poor husband had no idea just how slippery those little suckers are right after they are born. To this day I giggle every time I remember the look on his face when he looked at his hand and the lamb was gone and then he looked over to see if we were looking. It was funny. The lamb was definitely never going to be resuscitated and there was no hope for it anyway, but this was so very funny. To this day, my husband has never again tried to "swing a lamb."



## Norse - Viking Recipes

Courtesy of Ribe VikingCenter, Denmark ([www.ribevikingcenter.dk](http://www.ribevikingcenter.dk))

### Fish Soup

5 carrots  
5 onions  
Butter  
Chervil  
Cress  
Finely chopped spring onion  
1 cup cream  
Salt  
1 kg trouts

Clean and dice the onions and carrots. Melt the butter in a cooking pot. Add the onions and carrots and cook for a couple of minutes. Add the water and bring to a boil. Leave to simmer until the vegetables are 'al dente'. It's now time to add the herbs, spring onions and the cream.



Cut the trouts into bite-sized pieces and add them to the soup. Let it simmer over low heat until the fish is tender. Season to taste and serve with bread.

## Beaded Back Stitch Using A Stencil as a Template

*By HL Rathyen de Bures of Acton*

Using a stencil as a pattern for beaded backstitch came about because I was frustrated with trying to get complicated patterns onto dark fabric, especially on projects that were going to take a long time to complete. I needed something that wouldn't rub off over time. I had used stencils for applique patterns, and loved working with them, so experimented with using them as beading patterns. It worked out great.

The photos of the projects I have done are of mundane clothing. But you can see how this technique could be applied to period clothing such as tunics, bodices, doublets, purses, hats, etc.

The backstitch is one of the easiest stitches to learn. Any basic embroidery book, or YouTube video can show you how. Adding the bead as you go is also very easy. You just slip it over the beading needle and make the next stitch.

Caution. Beading needles are VERY sharp. I have made blood sacrifices to my work many times. Be careful. There are many types of beading needles, but over time I have mainly used a #10 straight. The higher the number, the smaller the eye, so for me, a #10 lets me thread it without cussing, and still works with small beads.

There are hundreds of stencil designs out there. I get mine from Michaels craft store, or JoAnns fabric/craft store. You can also order them on line. I recommend starting out with something simple at first then work up to more complicated designs. Warning....working with stencils can become addicting. Other than beading, you can use them as patterns for embroidery, leave the painted stencil design un-stitched, or you can stack stencils. Do one, let the paint dry then do another over the top of that one. Only caveat is, the thicker the paint layer, the harder it will be to push a needle through the layers if you decide to bead it.



As for stencil paint, I use basic fabric paint available at any craft store. Check the label on the paint and make sure it is not 3-D or puff-paint! Made that mistake just recently, didn't read the fine print, and had to keep wiping the paint smooth as I went, which was a real pain. You can have a lot of fun with the paint color. It can be close to the color of your fabric so that it does not distract from the beads, or you can use a contrasting color, a metallic, or one that shimmers. I use inexpensive makeup sponges for applying the paint.

For thread I use basic cotton sewing thread, strung through the needle and then doubled back and tied with knot. So far I have had no problem with it breaking. If you use larger beads, I would go to a larger needle and use quilting thread. Some beads are large enough that you can get a regular sewing needle through them, but test them while threaded. Some will let a bead over the eye just fine, but once you add the extra width of the thread, the bead gets stuck.

Beads, beads, beads, wonderful beads! They are shiny, they are matt, they are round, square, bone or glass, and anything in between. Since I also make jewelry, I have a ton of different beads. For beading on material I stick to the smaller seed beads or what they call rocaille beads.

## Beaded Back Stitch (Continued)

You can find beads at any craft store, or order them online. Firemountain Gems and Beads is a great place to find so many kinds of beads your head will explode. They will also have the needles if you can't find them locally.

One thing to remember when buying beads for a backstitch project is that beads get heavy. The more you add, the heavier the piece is going to be. I like that aspect, but it is something to keep in mind. Another thing to check is if the beads you are drooling over have sharp edges. Some glass beads can be so sharp on the ends that they will cut your thread. If you really, really love them, then I recommend putting a small round-edge bead on either side of the glass one, so over time your beads won't start falling off because the thread has been severed. You can string all three on your needle and just stitch the same as if you only had one bead on the needle.

Your choice of fabric is only limited by what kind of project you are going to make. I started out doing this on T-shirts and sweatshirts I bought at the Goodwill. I have also done this on denim and linen. Again, since the more beads you add, the heavier the piece is going to get, if your fabric is lightweight, and the design complicated, you might have to line the piece before starting to bead, so the fabric doesn't sag with the weight.

Design ideas are limitless, but here are a few to think about.

- ◆ Fabric, stencil, and beads all in the same basic color.
- ◆ Fabric and stencil in contrasting colors, with beads in gold, silver, or bronze.
- ◆ Fabric and stencil in same colors, with clear beads sewn with an accent color of thread.
- ◆ Use a long narrow stencil for making a pattern at a sleeve edge, or down either side of a jacket.
- ◆ Use a fabric that already has a pattern, paint the stencil over that, then bead in colors picked up from the fabric.
- ◆ Paint on your stencil, then combine embroidery with the beaded backstitch.
- ◆ Make the beaded stencil an applique or reverse applique and sew it to your fabric.



To start.

Once you have decided on a project and the fabric, paint and bead colors, the real fun begins. If you are using a pre-made garment, slide a piece of cardboard between the front and back, so paint does not seep through the top fabric and leave marks on the back. If using flat pieces of fabric, lay down cardboard, freezer paper, or butcher wrap, so again the paint doesn't seep through onto your workspace. The freezer and butcher paper also have a slick side, so the paint, while drying, doesn't stick to the paper. Put a dab of paint no larger than a silver dollar on a paper plate. You will add more paint to the plate as you go, but start out this way, because overall you will use less paint than you think. I wasted a lot of paint before this sunk in.

Place your stencil on the fabric. If applicable, make sure it is centered. I use white soap for making little marks on the fabric to show where the center is. On light fabric, I use a watercolor pencil in the lightest color I can get away with. Both of these will wash out, or can be rubbed out with a damp cloth. If the stencil is small, I just hold it steady with my fingers, and dab the paint on with the makeup sponge.





## Beaded Back Stitch (Continued)

Do it lightly. Don't glop the paint on. If you do, the paint will bleed under the stencil and you will lose your design. It will be a mess. Dab lightly, with just enough paint to make the design clear. When finished, carefully lift the stencil away from the fabric and immediately wash the stencil before the paint dries on it. Some paints will stain the stencil anyway, but it is best to get them as clean as you can. Also, rinse out the sponge. Leave the piece to dry overnight.

If the stencil is large, along with my fingers, I hold it down with tuna or soup cans I pull from the cupboard. Unopened tuna cans work really well, but any kind of weight will do. You just need something to hold it steady. Dab the larger stencil the same way you would the smaller one. Work from the inside of the stencil outwards. Let dry overnight.

There are two ways to bead using a stencil. You can outline the design in beads, or you can fill in the whole thing. If you intend to fill in the pattern, I suggest outlining first then do the fill in. You can do that as you go...say, outline a leaf then fill it in. Make the stitches just a bit longer than the bead. If the stitch is too short, the bead won't lay flat. If the stitch is too long, it will leave gaps in the design. You can always go back and fill those in if they really bug you. Remember to put a bead on the needle! I can't tell you how many times I have forgotten to do that! Sounds really dumb, but it happens when you kinda go into a stitching trance, or are trying to talk to someone and bead at the same time.

I don't use an embroidery hoop or frame. I bead in hand. It is easier for me, and it doesn't stretch the fabric, or put crimps in the stencil. Again, if your material is light weight, line or back the area to be beaded before you start, so the weight of the beads won't cause the fabric to droop or sag.

This is a personal preference, but if I am making a garment, I bead the separate pieces first before sewing them together. It is just easier for me to handle, and it keeps me from having to wad up the fabric to get to the spot I am working on.

Work in a comfortable chair, in an area with good light.

As for washing beaded pieces, that depends on the size, the fabric, and the amount of beads. Smaller pieces can be washed by hand. Larger pieces, turned inside out, might be safe on the gently cycle, but I would tend to wash them by hand and lay flat to dry. Some could just be spot cleaned with a damp cloth.

I have washed sweatshirts turned inside out, that were worked with beaded stenciled appliques, and they came through just fine. However, if in doubt, hand wash.

For me, beading on fabric is like meditation. I click into Pandora on my computer and listen to music as I bead. I start to really enjoy the sensation as the piece gets heavier and heavier. I love the clicking sounds beaded material makes against my work table. And when the piece is done, I love wearing my beaded projects, knowing that I am not going to meet someone at the grocery store wearing the same shirt, sweatshirt, or jacket that I am. On period clothing beads are just fantastic, and lend so much class and jazz to a costume. Even those rough, tough Vikings liked beads.

So, start small, play around, experiment, and have fun!



## Basic Armouring Chapter 9: Head (Continued)

### *Basic Armouring—A Practical Introduction to Armour Making*

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The material provided in these articles are excerpts from Basic Armouring, a book by Paul Blackwell. The contents and images are used with permission and courtesy of Paul Thane-Clarke (Richard the Rampant) of Brighthelm.org

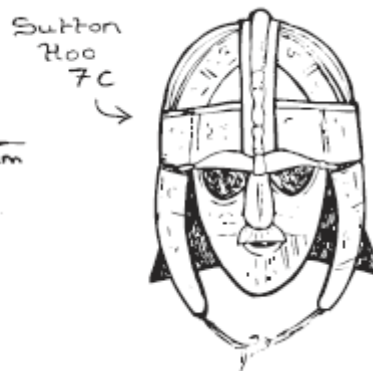
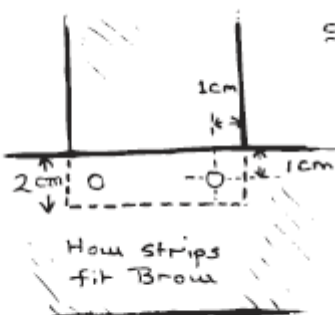
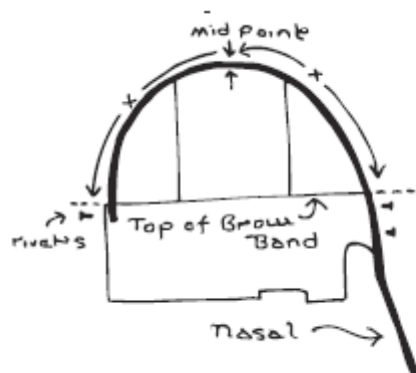
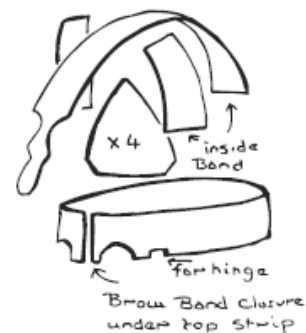
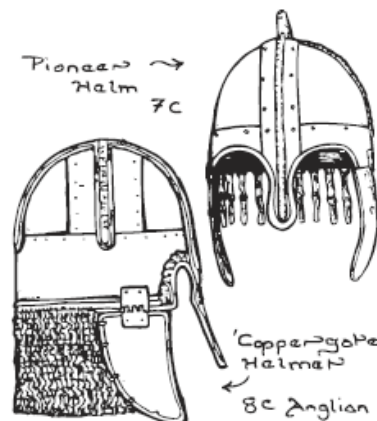
### Coppergate Style

This frame design has a deep brow band with eye holes cut into it, a single strip passing from front to back and two side strips which rivet under the front-back one.

Dome construction is the same as for the previous helm except:

1. Measure across the top of your head, and allowing for padding, cut a template for the top strip. Tape the top strip and brow band templates together then use this to work out the size of your sidepieces. Note that the *mid point*, where the side strips joint the top strip, is not in the middle of the top strip! This is because the front, especially if it has a nasal overlaps the brow band more than the back. If you mark the positions of the top of the brow band onto the top strip then the mid point is halfway between them.
2. The strips are wider on this design and so will need to be lightly dish/bend to shape.
3. The front of the top strip goes over the brow band; everything else goes under.

The original helm has some very ornate brass work over the top and on the nasal, hinged cheek plates and mail at the rear. If you wanted something less open you could add a face plate and neck guard in the Sutton Hoo style.





# Basic Armouring Chapter 9: Head (Continued)

*Basic Armouring—A Practical Introduction to Armour Making*

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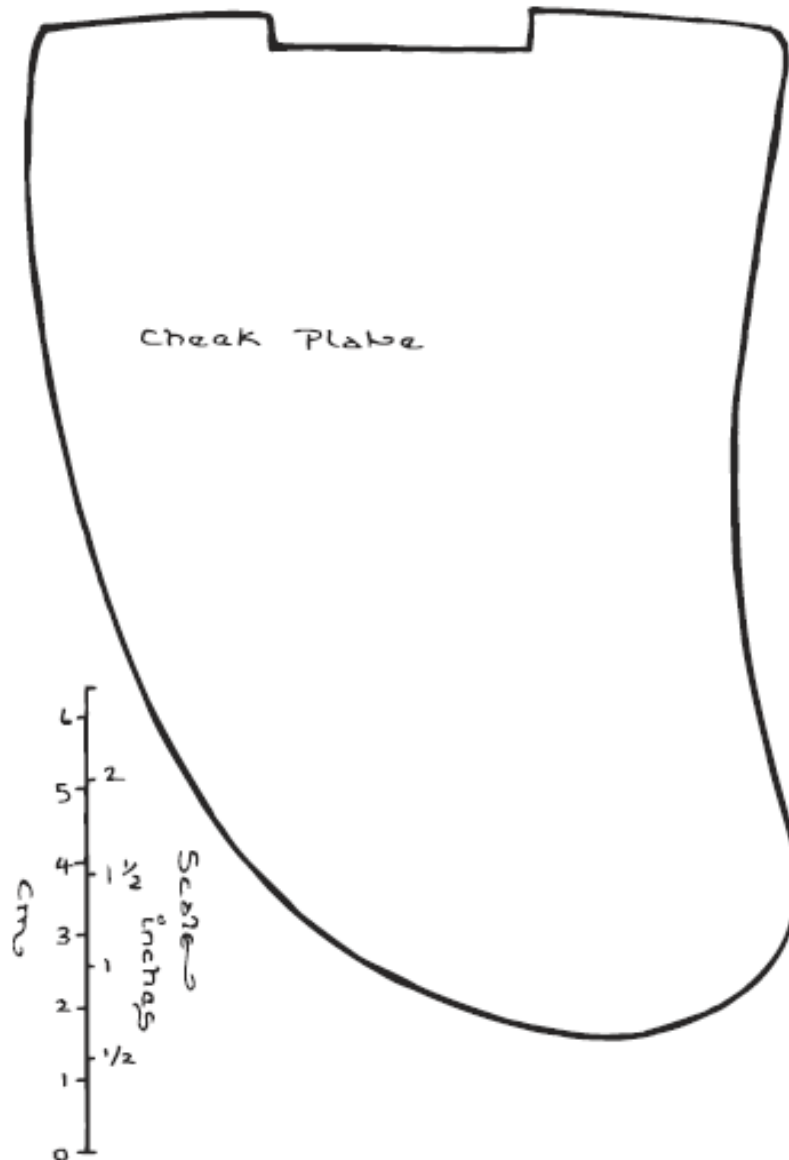


Figure 9-3: Cheek Piece Template

# Basic Armouring Chapter 9: Head (Continued)

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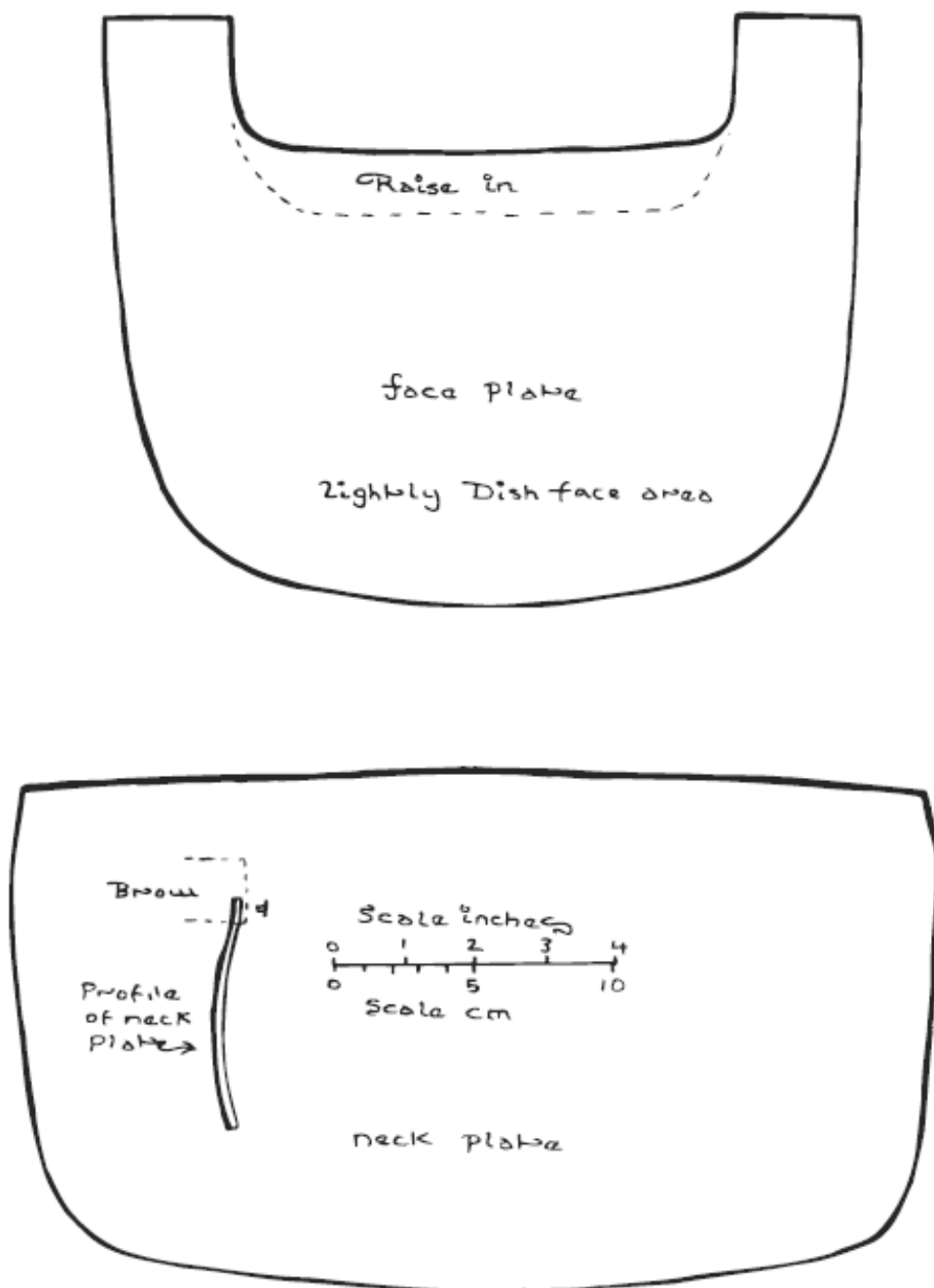


Figure 9-4: Dome Topped Helm Templates

## Norse - Viking Recipes

Courtesy of Ribe VikingCenter, Denmark ([www.ribevikingcenter.dk](http://www.ribevikingcenter.dk))

### Smoked Cheese

1 jug cow's milk  
1 cup buttermilk  
A little salt  
A little cumin

Cultured milk: Mix 1 jug cow's milk with 1 cup of buttermilk. Leave the mixture to sour in an earthenware dish covered with a flax cloth somewhere warm, or slowly heat it up without stirring. Let it set for a few days depending on air temperature. Then it will become cultured milk.

Pour the cultured milk into a cheese strainer lined with a flax cloth and placed on top of a pot. Leave to drain until the cheese is very dry.

Add salt to the cheese and form a round cheese. Place it on a wooden grating or grill and now it is time to smoke the cheese. This may be done over a smoke oven or over a fire of rye straws or oat straws. Light the straws, and when there is a fire, quench it by putting a bunch of fresh stinging nettles on top. You need to avoid flames completely. A thick yellow smoke now develops and it is time to place the cheese on the grill over the smoke for 3-10 minutes. Depends on how smoky you like it.

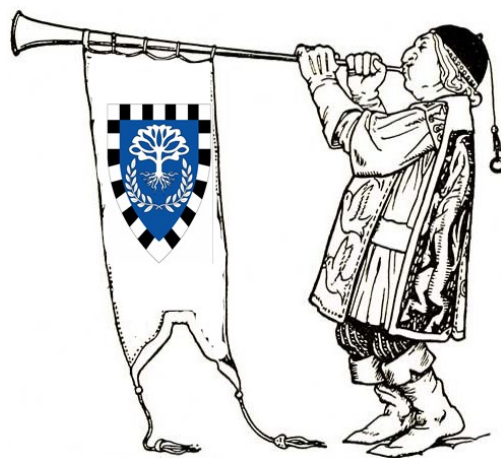
When the cheese has become a little brown in colour, turn it over onto a wooden plate. Sprinkle with cumin.

## Last Call

Check online for Fighter Practice schedules. A&S Meeting and Fighter Practice following the business meeting.

### Next Business Meeting

Riverside Park, Grants Pass  
SUNDAY, July 2 at 1pm



## Looking Forward



**ARC  
Outrider**

**July 28-30, 2017**

Event Steward: Lady Brynhildr Smidsdottir. Seeking shadow.

**Winter  
Investiture**

**December 9-10, 2017**

Event Steward: Visc. Vestia Antonia Aurelia  
Feastocrat Team of Bianco, Buchanan, Thorfasson & Toulon

**Hogmanay**

**December 2017**

Event Steward: Needed  
Feastocrat Team of Bianco, Buchanan, Thorfasson & Toulon



# Calendar

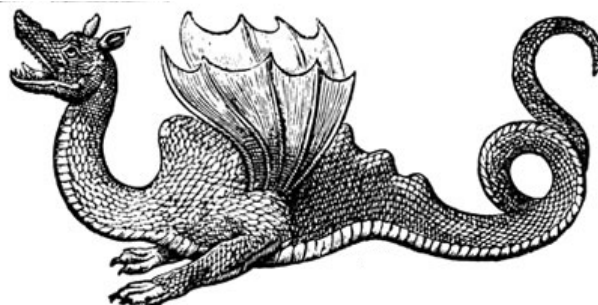
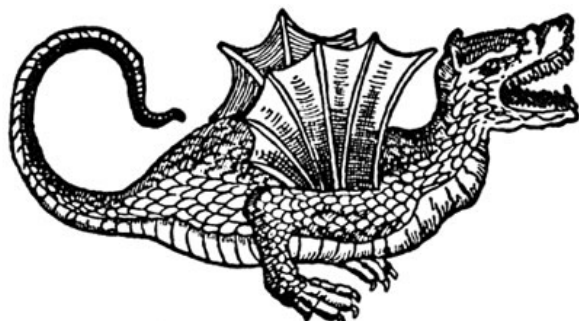
Find These Events at: <http://antir.sca.org/Upcoming/index.php>

## June-2017

Dates	Event	<u><a href="#">Branch Locations</a></u>
16- 18	<u><a href="#">Summits Summer Investiture</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Corvaria</a></u>
17	<u><a href="#">Dragon's Mist and Three Mountains Championship</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Barony of Dragon's Mist</a></u>
17	<u><a href="#">Lionsdale Champs</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Lionsdale</a></u>
23-25	<u><a href="#">Ducal War North</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Coill Mhor</a></u>
24	<u><a href="#">Midhaven Revelry</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Midhaven</a></u>
30-02	<u><a href="#">Fields of Gold</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Tir Bannog</a></u>
30-02	<u><a href="#">Pendale Champions Tournament</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Pendale</a></u>
30-02	<u><a href="#">Seagirt Summer Tourney</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Barony of Seagirt</a></u>

## July-2017

Dates	Event	<u><a href="#">Branch Locations</a></u>
01	<u><a href="#">Peasants'□Revel</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Barony of Madrone</a></u>
04-09	<u><a href="#">An Tir/West War</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Kingdom of An Tir</a></u>
07-09	<u><a href="#">Stranded Mermaid Tourney</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of False Isle</a></u>
14-16	<u><a href="#">July Coronation</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Danescombe</a></u>
21-23	<u><a href="#">A Game of Thrones and Stormgods</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Barony of Stromgard</a></u>
21-23	<u><a href="#">Tain Bo</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Glyn Dwfn</a></u>
21	<u><a href="#">Wealdsmere Sergeants Trials</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Barony of Wealdsmere</a></u>
22	<u><a href="#">Picnic in the Park</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Canton of Porte de l'Eau</a></u>
28-30	<u><a href="#">Ancestral Remembrance Celebration</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Myrtle Holt</a></u>
28-30	<u><a href="#">Avacal Tir Righ War</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Principality of Tir Righ</a></u>
28-30	<u><a href="#">Honey War</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Barony of Glymm Mere</a></u>
29	<u><a href="#">Tolkien Days Demo</a></u>	<u><a href="#">Shire of Pendale</a></u>



# Myrtle Holt Officers



## SENESCHAL

HL Keara Rylyn Buchanan  
(Loree Day)



## ARTS & SCIENCES

HL Monique de Toulon  
(Laura Dollarhide)



## GOLD KEY

HL Uilliam (Liam) Mag Duibhfhinn  
(Morris Givens)



## SCRIBE

(Vacant)



## HERALD

Lady Brynhildr Smidsdottir  
(Megan Blattel)



## HEAVY MARSHAL

Lord Bowen Doyle  
(Albert Wessels)



## WEBMINISTER

Lord Thorlof Anarson  
(Josh Plater)



## EXCCEQUER

Visc. Vestia Antonia Aurelia  
(Barbara van Look)



## CHRONICLER

HL Nim  
(Sarah Givens)



## DEPUTY GOLD KEY

Alina MacMurrich  
(Amanda C. Cowin)



## CHATELAINE

HL Uilliam (Liam) Mag Duibhfhinn  
(Morris Givens)



## HERALD IN TRAINING

Eric Liefson  
(Glenn Allen)



## TARGET ARCHERY MARSHAL

HL Uilliam (Liam) Mag Duibhfhinn  
(Morris Givens)



## EQUESTRIAN MARSHAL

(Vacant)

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