



Medieval Herald

The Official Newsletter of Men of Iron



ULFBERHT

*The Most Famous Sword
You have Never Heard Of*

Winter 2023-24

Ulfberht Swords

Leadership of MOI

Men of Iron Tournament
The Javelin

Ancient Game of Quoits



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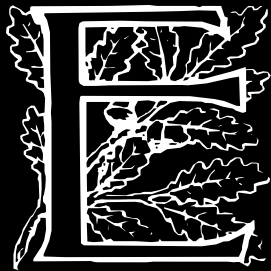
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ULFBERHT

The Most Famous Sword You have Never Heard Of



Excalibur, sword of King Arthur. Joyeuse, sword of Emperor Charlemagne. The Wallace sword, used by the freedom fighter Sir William Wallace of Scotland. Each of these swords have a history and a story all their own. Some are of legend and others are quite real and still on display for the world to view. But then there is one that stands above the rest, the Ulfberht Sword.

But what exactly is an Ulfberht sword? Simply put, it was a sword that was so far ahead of its time, nothing like it would be produced for at least another one

thousand years. The Ulfberht sword has been found in graves surrounding the Viking homelands and all of those swords found have dated to a period of around 800 to 1000 AD with one single identifying mark. Each

of these swords have been inscribed with a single word- "Ulfberht" marked with two crosses. Some believe that this mark is the identity of its maker. Others believe that it identifies the place it was made. This is perhaps the greatest mystery of the Ulfberht, as there are no historical references to anything that would even suggest an origin of these rare blades.

One of the most perplexing things about the Ulfberhts is the strength of the metal from which they were made. The material, known as "crucible steel", is so strong and pure that it seems inconceivable that any blacksmith of that time could have handled it. In fact, since the age of the Ulfberht, this quality of steel was not seen again in Europe for over a thousand years. However, at the time the Ulfberht swords were being forged, similar weapons were also being produced in the Middle East. The latter were made of so-called "Damascus steel", which comes from a raw material known as Wootz steel, and originates in Asia. Both Damascus steel and crucible steel have been found to contain unusually high amounts of carbon.

Recreating Ulfberht

In order to establish whether it would in fact have been possible to manufacture an Ulfberht sword, using only the metalworking knowledge that would have been available to sword makers of that time, a modern-day blacksmith, Richard Furrer, from Door County Forgeworks located in Northern Wisconsin was commissioned by National Geographic to try and recreate the Ulfberht using medieval techniques. Using an ancient Middle Eastern furnace made of clay and brick – a so-called crucible – Furrer started by melting iron with carbon to create steel. A basic pre-requisite for producing pure, high-quality steel is heat. In order to get the steel to separate from the impurities, called "slag", the furnace has to reach a temperature of 3,000 degrees or more. Crucible steel is difficult to work. It took 8 hours of hammering to pound the crucible steel ingot he created into a bar that could be worked and additional 11 hours of pounding for Furrer and his assistant to transform the bar into a blade. Once he had a blade shaped time was devoted to hammering the fuller into the length of the blade. Once he reached that point, the sword had to be branded with the word Ulfberht and two crosses, and then heat-treated to weld the symbols into place. After it cooled, it took several days to polish it up and give it the exclusive lustre of a real Ulfberht.

Where did steel come from?

The experiment was a success. However, although Furrer was satisfied that it would have been possible to build a sword of this quality in the Viking age, he remained puzzled as to how the Vikings acquired the steel. "The biggest mystery for us is where did they get this raw material," said Furrer. "We have no evidence of crucible steel production in Europe until 800 years later."



According to Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist, a researcher at Stockholm University, the answer may be quite simple. The existence of the Damascus swords prove that, while the expertise to create crucible steel did not yet exist in Europe, it was present in the Middle East. Meanwhile, artifacts found at archeological sites from the Viking era prove that the Medieval Norsemen traded with the East. We also know that they could travel by water – on rivers and lakes – all the way from Lake Mälaren outside modern-day Stockholm to northern Iran. The route was known as the Volga trade route.

“Most Ulfberht swords are dated from the exact same time that the Volga trade route was open,” Charpentier Ljungqvist told Nova. “I think it’s very likely that the steel found in Ulfberht swords originated in Iran. I would guess that you bought it from friendly trading connections in Iran, paid with furs or other Nordic commodities, and took it back on your small ships that you used on rivers.” Dr. Alan Williams of the Wallace Collection in London is one of the world’s leading experts on historic steel weaponry. Williams agrees with Charpentier Ljungqvist: “After the 11th century, the Volga trade route is closed and the manufacture of these Ulfberht swords stops, which to me is strong evidence that they were made out of an imported raw material,” he explained.

Another theory is that there was a transfer of knowledge of how to create the steel from the Middle East to blacksmiths in Europe. Metallurgical tests conducted on Ulfberht swords have shown that the chemical makeup of the swords metal has origins in Europe where they are found.

Still, the origins of the swords pure steel remain a mystery.

One this remains certain though, to own an Ulfberht sword was not only prestigious, it provided a highest quality sword to the bearer and increased the owners chances to survive a battle.

Who or what was Ulfberht?

Having solved the mystery of the material, a key question remains: who – or what – is Ulfberht? Branding a sword is risky business. The cuts could damage the blade and only an expert craftsman would have had the skills required to brand the Ulfberht swords. The name and the two crosses must have held considerable value, as branding the swords also involved a great deal of extra effort. At first, it was thought that Ulfberht was the name of their maker but, as the swords were produced over a period of about 200 years, they could not possibly have been the work of one single person.

Symbolic or magic?

While Ulfberht is a Frankish name, the cross was a symbol typically only used by high-ranking members of the Roman Catholic Church, such as bishops or abbots. Although the Catholic Church was an enemy of the pagan Vikings, it was a major producer and dealer of arms. But if the swords were made by Catholics and smuggled North to their sworn enemies, how did the church get the steel? The theory that the Vikings



Drawing by Anders Lorange published in 1889 in a Norwegian archaeology journal; Lorange was the first to describe Ulfberht swords.

brought it from the Middle East would appear to make more sense. Dr. Williams believes there are many reasons why a Scandinavian might have used a foreign word and the cross. "It might have been magic, it might have been copying symbols from the disappeared Roman Empire, it might have been simply because someone thought they liked the name, like putting the name Apple on a computer."



Counterfiet Copies

Of the 44 Ulfberhts Williams has examined, 33 are engraved with "Cross – U L F B E R H T – Cross", while 11 are branded "Cross – U L F B E R H – Cross – T". According to Williams, only the latter 11 are made of high-carbon crucible steel. The remaining 33 are made of inferior steel, suggesting that they are probably copies. "They're

contemporary fakes, of course. They were made at the same time; by people trying to cash in on the reputation of Ulfberht. They were probably made by illiterate craftsmen, for illiterate customers. To the unsuspecting buyer, it appears to be a genuine Ulfberht but there is a much greater chance of it snapping, which is of course extremely embarrassing in battle," concluded Williams.

While the identity of Ulfberht is likely to remain a mystery, there is no doubt that the name carried a similar cachet to that of a modern-day accessory made by Gucci or Prada. Or, in the words of Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist, "It was the Rolls Royce of swords".

Ulfberht swords are forged from high-carbon, crucible steel. They are which vastly superior to any other weapon available in Europe during the medieval period. In that period, most swords were made from "bog iron." But the Vikings wielded swords containing steel that Western Europe wouldn't see again until the Industrial Revolution.

Because they were made from high-carbon steel, Ulfberht swords were lightweight and easy to wield in battle. They would have bent a little without breaking, and they would have stayed sharp longer than other blades available at the time. These qualities meant that Ulfberht swords would have easily prevailed in any medieval arms race. They could even be one reason the Vikings so easily conquered other kingdoms.

To make these swords, the Vikings would have had to understand how to make the crucible steel, a process that rids iron of the impurities that make it weak. Some folks theorize that some Viking — or someone in a nearby Frankish kingdom — somehow discovered a technology that was later lost. But these kinds of theories have been largely discredited. It's more likely that the Vikings acquired the steel or the technology from India, Persia, and Central Asia, where crucible steel was more common.

We may never know the true origins of this mysterious sword. What we can know about it is that the makers of this sword were far more skilled than we could have ever imagined. With each new discovery of an Ulfberht sword, the story widens and the mystery deepens.



Ulfberht Swords on display in Berlin, Germany.

Locations found L to R- Schwedt, Brandenburg, Germany; Awecken, Awajki, Woj. Ćmmland-Masuren, Poland; Berlin, Germany; Wiskiauten / Mochewoje, Obl. Kaliningrad, Russia; Peltomaa, Häme, Finland .



Represent Everywhere



You cant always wear armor.

Sometimes you have to wear regular clothes.

As great as it looks, armor is not the most practical for day to day activities.
Since you cant always wear your garb, represent everywhere you go wearing official
Men of Iron gear!



Men of Iron

Leadership

Serving the Realm with Excellence

There is a very famous quote that was coined by a leadership expert that gives us a clear understanding of the importance of quality leadership, He said "Everything rises and falls on leadership".

What does that mean? Is this a true statement?

It is absolutely true. The statement itself put another way tells us that if an organization has great leadership that is devoted to the success of the group, then that group will see success and progress in its endeavors. The opposite is also true. When organizations allow those who seek titles and prestige to serve in leadership roles, these self serving characteristics reveal a poor quality leadership. Leadership of this kind creates only hardship on the members and produces the catalyst for the death of the organization.

Every leader within an organization must be reminded from time to time of the mission of the organization that they lead and when necessary be re-aligned to the goals of the ministry. This strategy will help to recapture the zeal that they first experienced when those leaders were first entrusted with the success of their area of influence. Sometimes, leadership will drift too far and just can not re-align themselves with the original purpose for which they were selected. In this case, those leaders must be released to find other areas where they can thrive.

Men of Iron seeks those leaders of the highest caliber to serve the members of Men of Iron and to see its mission fulfilled. There are a number of leadership roles within Men of Iron that are key to the success of the overall ministry and its development that we will explore here.

The household

The leadership of each household in Men of Iron is lead by a Head of Household. The Head of Household is appointed by his pastor to oversee the health of his local household. His role is quite possibly the most important of all of the roles held in Men of Iron. He is assisted in his efforts in the Household by a Household Chaplain, Marshal, Herald, Clerk and Historian. These are all appointed by the Head of the Household as the need arises.

Complete information about households can be found in the Men of Iron Household Manual.

The head of the household is identified by the antique nickel Head of Household medallion that is worn around the neck. No coronet is worn as the Head of the Household.



The Barony

A Barony is a group of households in a geographical area that are lead by a Baron. The Baron has the responsibility of conducting the annual Quest for the Cross event, the Barons Tournament and Feast, and the Knights Ordeal and Knighting ceremony. He also leads the Barons Council within his Barony. Another key duty of the Baron is to assist households as needed. This could be starting new households, assisting with the household tournaments or household feasts. The Baron or a member of his staff could also be utilized to assist the household in any instruction at a household meeting.

The Barons Council will be comprised of the Baron and his Marshal, Herald and Clerk. The Heads of Household of each household within his barony will also serve as members of the Barons Council.

The Baron will wear a brass coronet made of a 1 inch wide band with 8- 3/4" pearls evenly spaced around the band and the bronze Barons chain of office. The Marshal, Herald and Clerk are appointed but do not hold any titles.



The Earldom

An Earldom is a grouping of Baronies in a geographical area that are lead by a Earl. The Earl will act as a liaison between the Barons and the Duke for the purpose of maintaining organizational connections from the Households to the Royal Council. The Earl and his staff will assist Barons as needed in conducting the annual events conducted in the Baronies. The Earl or a member of his staff could also be utilized to assist a household in any instruction or presentations at a household meeting.

The Earls Council will be comprised of the Earl and his Marshal, Herald, Clerk and a Master of the Guilds. The Barons of each Barony will also serve as members of the Earls Council.

The Earls Marshal, Herald, Clerk and Master of the Guilds will be granted the title of Viscount.

The Viscounts will wear a brass coronet made of a 1 1/2" inch wide band with 16- 3/4" pearls evenly spaced around the band and the Viscounts copper chain of office.



The Earl will wear a brass coronet made of a 1 1/2" wide band with 16- 2" points. On each point will alternate 8 strawberry leaves and 8- 3" spires topped with a 3/4" pearl and the Earls silver chain of office.

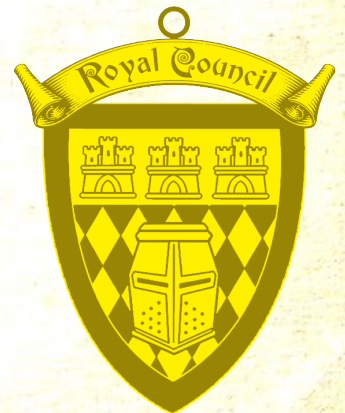
The Duchy

An Duchy is a grouping of Earldoms in a geographical area that are lead by a Duke. The Duke will be responsible for the health and success of the organization within his geographical area. The Duke and his staff are charged with ensuring that the standards of Men of Iron are upheld throughout the Earldoms, Baronies, and households within his Duchy. As a member of the Royal Council of the Realm he reports directly to the Crown Prince and the Archduke. As with all other positions, the Duke or a member of his staff could also be utilized to assist a household in any instruction or presentation at a household meeting or at any event conducted by the Barons. The Duke and his staff will also have responsibilities at each Tournament of the Realm as directed by the Royal Council.

The Duchy Council will be comprised of the Duke and his Marshal, Herald and Clerk. The Earls of each Earldom will also serve as members of the Dukes Council.

The Dukes Marshal, Herald and Clerk will be granted the title of Earl.

The Duke will wear a brass coronet made of a 2" inch wide band with 8 strawberry leaves evenly spaced around the band and the Royal Councils chain of office.



The Royal Council of the Realm

The Royal Council of the Realm is the top leadership body of Men of Iron. This group of men will serve all members of Men of Iron and oversee all aspects of the national Men of Iron organization. Members are all

considered to be Dukes with the exception of the Archduke and the Crown Prince. All members of the Royal Council will wear the Royal Council chain of office.

The Royal Council members are:

The Crown Prince– The director of Men of Iron and responsible for all operations and development.

The Archduke– The assistant to the Crown Prince in overseeing all operations of Men of Iron

The Marshal of the Realm (Duke) – Oversees and reviews all aspects of the tournaments and all items related to combat. He will also coordinate the Tournament of the Realm.

The Herald of the Realm (Duke) – Oversees and reviews all aspects of heraldry within the realm.

The Clerk of the Realm (Duke) – Oversees all documents, communication and promotion for the realm.

The Historian of the Realm (Duke) – Documents and records all historical information of Men of Iron.

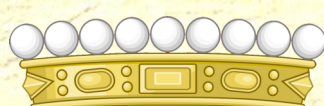
Grand Master of the Guilds (Duke)- Oversees all aspects of the guilds within the realm.

Royal Advisors (Duke) – Appointed by the Crown Prince to serve in various roles as needed.

The Dukes of the Duchies



Baron



Viscount



Earl



Duke

Organizational Flow Chart



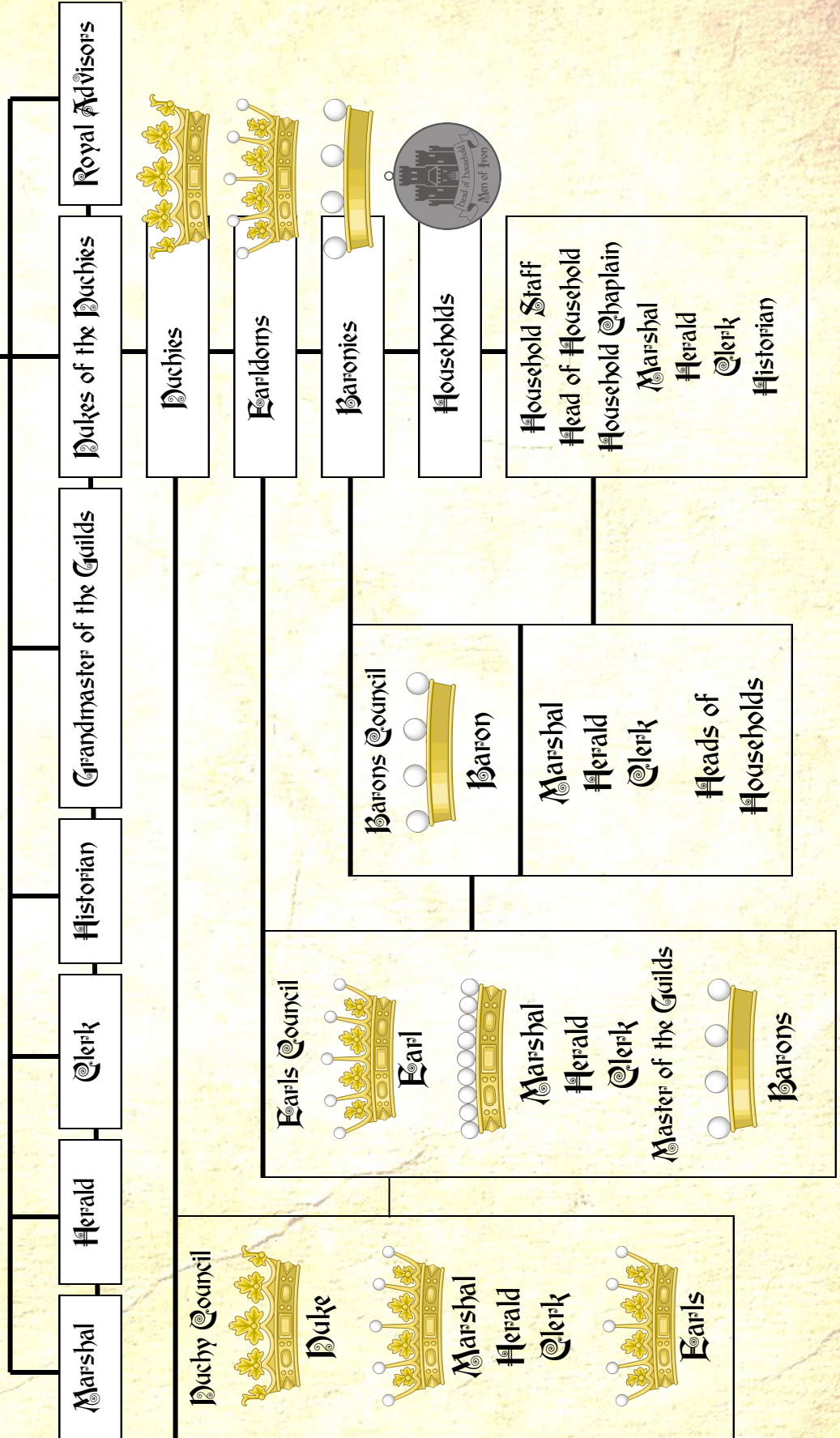
Crown Prince of the Realm



Archduke of the Realm



Royal Council



Men of Iron Tournament Events

Javelin Throwing

The Men of Iron Battle Javelin Throwing Tournament event is governed by the following guidelines taken from the Men of Iron Tournament Guidelines.

The Javelin

The javelin is one of the oldest weapons from antiquity. Also referred to as a light spear, the javelin can trace its origins to the earliest days of man. The Sumerians, Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans all utilized the javelin as a part of their arsenal.

By the medieval period the javelin was still a mainstay of combat. Examples of the javelin can be found in the Norse Vikings and features prominently in the Bayeux tapestry that records the Norman invasion of England in 1066.

As an event of Men of Iron, members will continue to develop this skill and become as proficient as our ancestors were with this tool.

Setup and Safety Considerations

The javelin range can be as wide as you have targets for and at least 25 yards long with no activity behind the targets. An open flat area is ideal for the throwing range. It should be marked off by flagging tape to prevent individuals from accidentally walking through or behind the target area.

The range should be situated so that the end of the downrange area is free of any activities or foot traffic. Safety should be the largest concern when setting up a throwing range.

Participants who are throwing on a range with multiple throwers must wait until all throwers on the line are finished throwing and the range officer calls a cold range to retrieve their implements.

Equipment

The Javelin will be a minimum of 70" length, the maximum will be 74".

This measurement will include the point and staff.

Javelin points will not measure more than 10" in length.

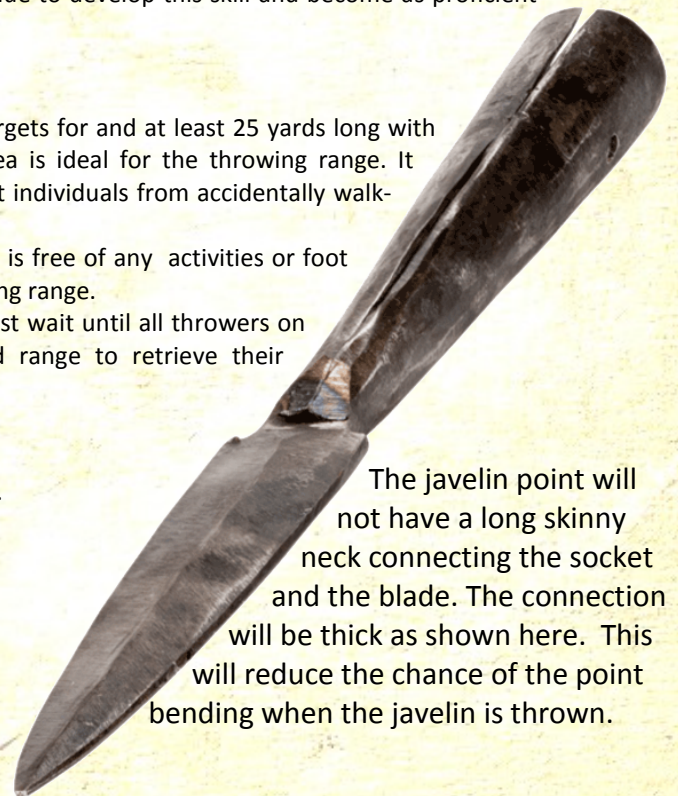
This measurement includes the socket and the point.

The maximum width of the point is 2".

The staff for the javelin may not be less than ¾" in diameter, no more than 1".

The javelin must have a forged javelin point with socket to attach to the shaft and fixed by pin to the shaft.

The Range officer will approve all javelins for safety and will have the



The javelin point will not have a long skinny neck connecting the socket and the blade. The connection will be thick as shown here. This will reduce the chance of the point bending when the javelin is thrown.

final say on all matters on the range.

Competition

Three stacked hay bales will be the backstop. A 24" woven grapevine wreath is staked to the straw bales as a target.

Three throws will be thrown for scoring.

No points will be awarded for sticking outside the wreath, 1 point for a stick on the wreath, 2 points for a stick inside the wreath.

Javelin must be thrown from a pre-marked throwing line.

The feet of the thrower must stay behind the throwing line.

The Javelin will be thrown at a distance of 10 yards.

The person with the highest accumulated score will be deemed the winner.

Scoring

Feet must be behind the throwing line when the javelin is released.

The javelin must stick by the point for the point to count.

The javelin must stick into the target and not fall out for the point to count.

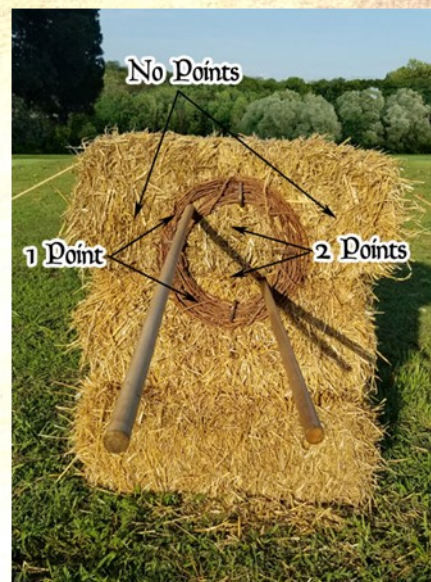
Scoring will be as follows-

- No points for any stick outside the wreath or missing the straw entirely.

- 1 point for a stick in the wreath

- 2 points for any stick within the wreath.

On an 80cm target face, score by rings. Rings must be cut by the javelin to score the next higher ring.



Tournament Card Endorsement

To earn the Javelin endorsement for your Tournament Card you must complete the following:

Memorization- Memorize and quote the Projectile Range Rules.

Knowledge- Explain proper care and storage of a javelin.

Demonstration- Demonstrate how to safely rack, pass and carry a javelin.

Demonstration- Demonstrate proper throwing technique, use and safe handling of a javelin.

Proficiency - Must be able to stick the straw bale target at 10 yards once in three attempts.

These may be verified by the Household Marshal, Head of Household or a Knight assigned by the Marshal who holds a Tournament Card.



Talk to your Head of Household or your Household Marshal about completing the endorsements for the Javelin endorsements for your Tournament Card.





The Ancient Game of QUOITS

The History of Quoits

Quoits has existed in one form or another for so many centuries that a compilation of the complete history of the sport is not possible. Any references to ancient versions of quoits or other games played with quoit-like objects are derived from scattered documentation that only mentions these games, such as in historical writings.

The earliest mention of a quoit-like object was documented many centuries before the birth of Christ and was used as a weapon of war, by the early Romans and other ancient cultures. These objects had sharpened outside edges and were made to spin on an up-raised finger to throw at an enemy, specifically to inflict bodily harm.



The first references of a quoit being used in a sporting event occur at the Grecian Olympian Games, about the second century B.C. The sport of throwing a quoit, or discus, as long a distance as possible, became extremely popular and was one of the primary events in the early Olympics. The discus originally was a heavy, round, flat ring made of stone or metal. A leather strap was tied through the central hole to be used as the handle for throwing. The metal discs were made by pouring molten bronze, lead, or iron into a rough circular mould, and were somewhat costly to produce. Later versions of the discus eliminated the hole and the strap, resulting in a solid disk similar to that used today. The discus was so special to the ancient Grecians that it was considered itself a valuable item; the winner of the discus event was many times awarded the disc as the prize for the competition.

The discus throwers were the most popular athlete of their time, and many people made their own versions of the discus to entertain themselves and imitate their revered heroes. Wealthier noblemen and others of Grecian and Roman upper society were the only ones who could afford to have these quoits poured and fashioned from bronze or iron. In the Roman army, soldiers and camp followers



originated the idea of using the worn, discarded shoes from the war horses as an inexpensive alternative to casting a quoit. The horseshoes of that time were fairly heavy, perhaps as much as four pounds apiece, and were a readily available commodity. The soldiers would bend the discarded shoes into crude rings to imitate the shape of the discus.

It is important to note that up through this time in history, quoits were still being thrown competitively solely for distance, just as the discus was. Both the fancy, poured metal quoits and the crudely-formed army horseshoes were not pitched into a defined target area but were thrown for maximum distance as a show of strength and athleticism. The idea of using a wooden stake or metal pin driven into the ground, to use specifically as a target to throw at, totally redefined the pastime from a game of distance to a game of accuracy. At first only a single stake was used. Quoits made from the bent horseshoes became quite popular with the roaming armies as an entertaining pastime during the long treks between battles. But since it was rather difficult to form the shoes into rings without the proper tools, they eventually gave up bending the shoes into rings and began throwing them as they were. Thus, from simple, handmade quoits made from worn-out horseshoes arose the origins of the present-day game of horseshoe pitching.

As the Romans travelled throughout Europe on their conquests, the games spread to other cultures, and invading armies eventually brought the games to Britain around the beginning of the second century. It is here that quoits developed into the form having two pins set into clay pits, which can still be found to this day in Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. Quoits and horseshoes developed in parallel from this point, but in somewhat different forms.

In England, quoits became the preferred game and grew to become so popular that in 1361, King Edward III became worried that his subjects were using too much of their time to throw quoits rather than to practice shooting or using a bow to keep their skills of war honed. He issued a decree that outlawed quoits and other “useless and time-wasting” games, but quoits continued to be played discreetly and never died out. By the following century, quoits had again become legal and quite popular, enough so that it became a well-organized sport in Britain.

When colonists began to settle North America, the English brought both the games of quoits and horseshoes with them in the 1600’s.

Today this game is popular in Men of Iron households and is sold commercially as a rope ring toss. Now that you know the history of this game, go and build your own to play in your household! It will quickly become a favorite with your members.

Rules for Quoits

Each player has three rope rings.

The pins is placed 25 feet from a throwing line.

Players take turns throwing a quoit at the pin. When throwing the players foot may not step past the throwing line.

Points

The quoit nearest the pin gets one point.

If one player has two quoits nearer the pin than either of his opponent's quoits, he gets two points.

A quoit that encircles the pin (called a ringer) gets three points.



Build your own Quoits

The game of Quoits can be played by anyone! It is a simple game to construct and use in your household.

Here is what you will need:

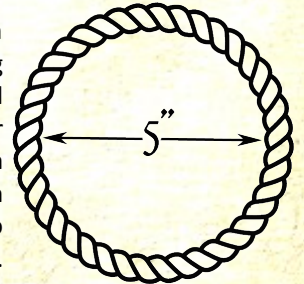
12 feet of 5/8" or 3/4" three strand laid natural fiber rope. This will be cut into six 24" lengths to create the six throwing rings.

Waxed or unwaxed cotton whipping cord

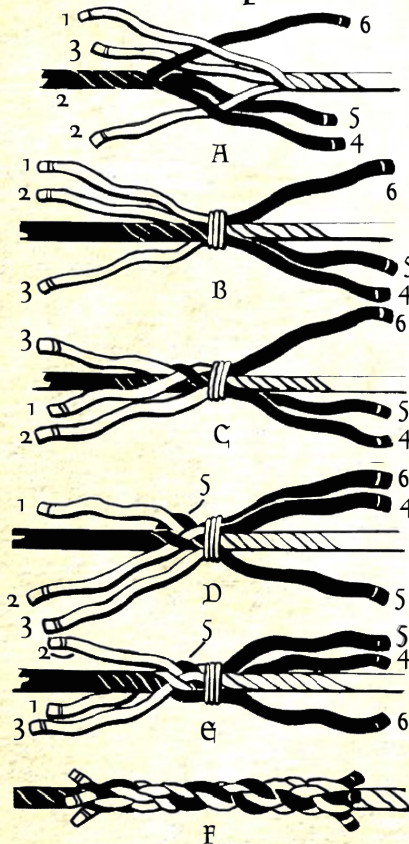
18" length of 2"x8" pine board

8" of 1 1/4" round stock

The first step is to create the six throwing rings. These finished rings should be approximately 5" in diameter, 18" in circumference. To make the rings, begin with one 24" length of rope. Start unlaying (untwisting) the ropes a few turns. Use a small piece of tape to secure each of the unlayed ends. This will make splicing the rope much easier too. To create the proper size ring, measure the ring until you have the correct size, then intertwine the three strands on each end and tape or tie with whipping cord at the center of the joint and begin splicing. To splice the ends together, follow the instructions below.



Short Splice



To create the proper size ring, measure the ring until you have the correct size, then intertwine the three strands on each end and tape or tie with whipping cord at the center of the joint and begin splicing. To splice the ends together, follow the instructions below.

How to Short Splice a Rope

- Alternate the strands of the two ropes.
- Tie strands down to prevent more unlaying.
- Tuck strand 1 over an opposing strand and under the next strand.
- Tuck of strand 2 goes over strand 5, under the second, and out between these second and third.
- Repeat operation with strands 1 and 3 from same rope end.
- Remove tie and repeat operation on other rope end. Make two or more tucks for each strand. Then roll the tucks and cut off ends.

After both sides are spliced, whip the ends of both sides to secure with cotton cord.

Repeat for all six rings.

How to Whip the Rope

For each ring, you will need to "whip" the loose ends of the splice. To do this you will need the cotton cord. Cut approximately 24" of cord and pull a small bight in the cord (A) then make a

Tightly

wrap around the rope.

wrap the cord around the bight and the rope you have only a small loop left exposed.

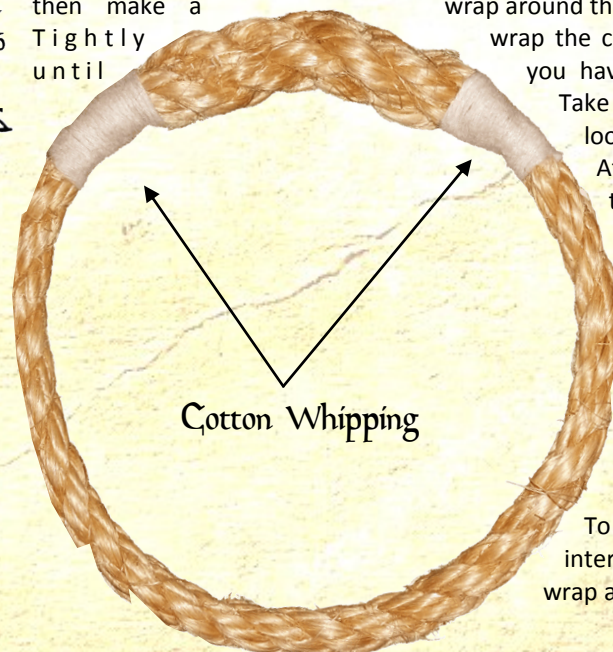
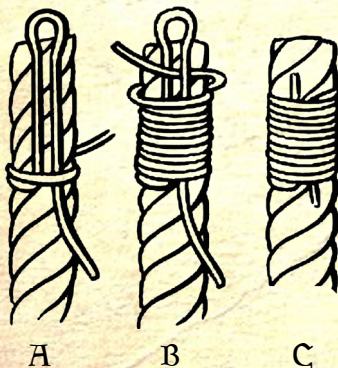
Take the end and pass it through the loop keeping the cord tight. (B).

After passing the working end through the loop and pulling tight, pull the opposite loose end from (A) and the loop will pull under the wraps. Only pull to the center of the wraps and then trim the excess cord.

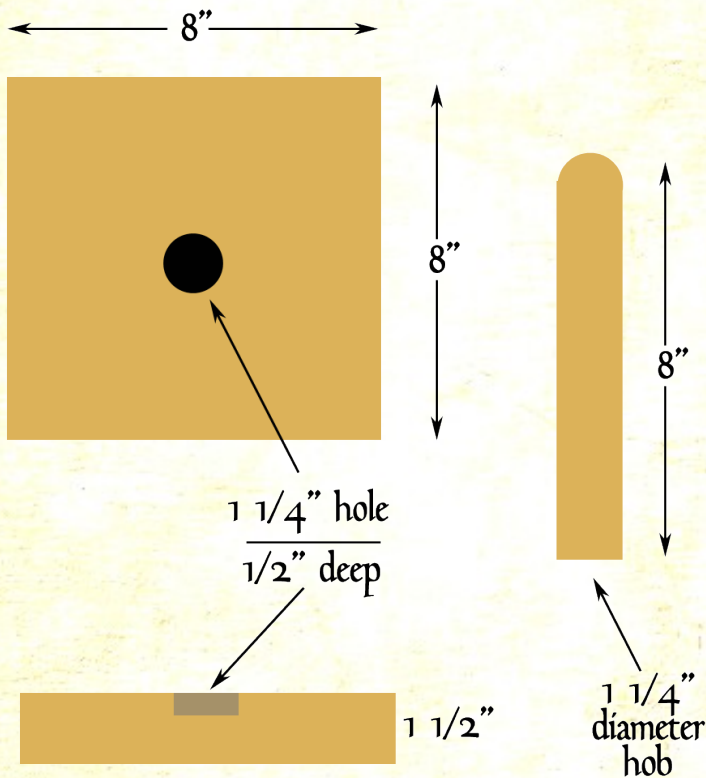
Repeat on the opposite side. Whip all six rings.

To add color to make two sets of rings, intertwine a small colored ribbon and wrap around the entire ring.

Whipping



Build your own Quoits



Cut a 2x8 the exact length of the width of the board. Dimensional lumber is always smaller than the listed size.

Mark the exact center of the base and drill a 1 1/4" hole 1/2" deep hole for the hob. This can be drilled with a forstner or paddle bit.

Smooth the edges by using a router with a round over profile or a sander to sand off the sharp edges. Sand the entire base.

Making the Hob

The hob is the pin that sticks up from the base. Cut a 1 1/4" round stock 8" long. Round over the top using a rasp, file or disc sander.

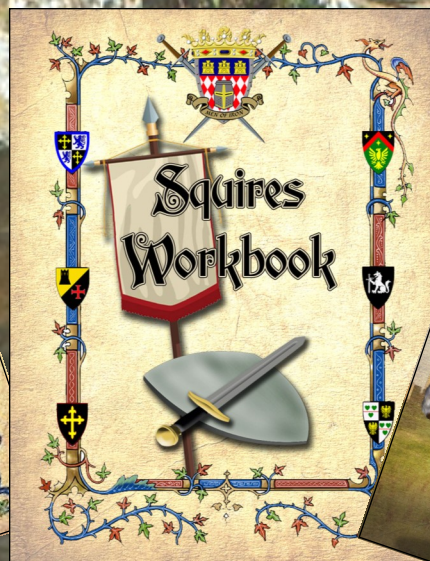
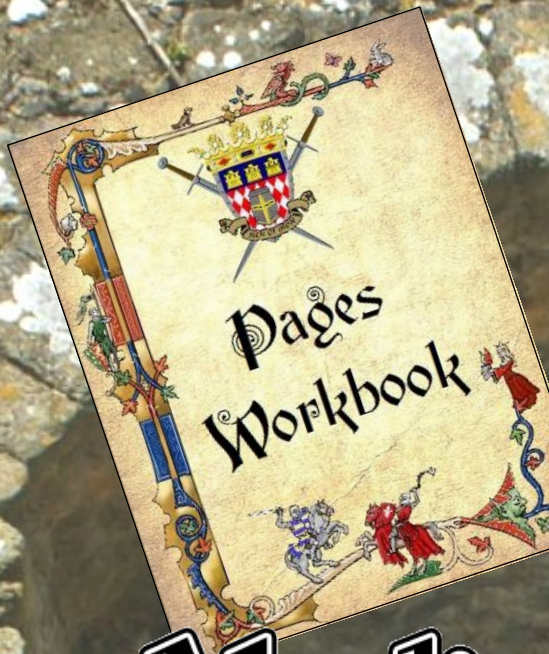
Fit the hob onto the base to ensure a good fit.

Glue the hob in place and apply a stain or varnish.



Quoits is an excellent game of skill that can become quite competitive. This game is one of the Noble Tournament events for Men of Iron.





Medieval How To

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