



Saxon, Norman, Celtic, and Viking Re-Enactment  
**The Vikings**

# Arena Handbook

Vol. 5

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## 1 Introduction

The Arena Handbook details all those activities that are needed within the arena in putting on a Society Event. The person in charge of this is the Battle Captain but there are several groups of support staff who help to coordinate this, namely:

- In the Arena: Marshals, First Aiders, Commentator.
- On the battlefield: Hersirs, Water Carriers and Youth Members.

This version of the Handbook has tried to extend the remit of the older versions to include every role around the arena, to create a “go-to” document that everyone can access. The largest part of the handbook still details the combat requirements as taken from the previous Hersir Handbook, including the Hersir structure together with their roles and responsibilities. In addition, it lists the manoeuvres commonly employed in our scripts to control action on the battlefield.

One convention used throughout the document when discussing a warrior is to use pronouns “he” as everyone on the battlefield (irrespective of gender) will be portraying a male warrior. For the sake of the one or two specific historical female figures portrayed by women, I have assumed an all-male army for ease of writing.

The Appendices have been created to store a selection of stories used within the Story Telling slot in our Shows. This is an on-going process to add more stories in.



## 2 The Arena

The arena is that area contained wholly within the outer ropes whilst the battlefield is that area contained wholly within the inner ropes. The arena is then the battlefield plus the inter-rope area. The arena is bounded by the audience and the battlefield contains the warriors. The region between them is there to minimise the risk of injury to the audience.

Arenas can be of any size and shape, but are typically rectangular. Many of the factors governing arena size and shape are out of our hands and lie with the client. However, we can tailor the battlefield sometimes to better suit our needs, specifically to have the optimum width for the expected number of warriors.

There are some generic requirements of all arenas which are discussed below:

### 2.1 Barriers

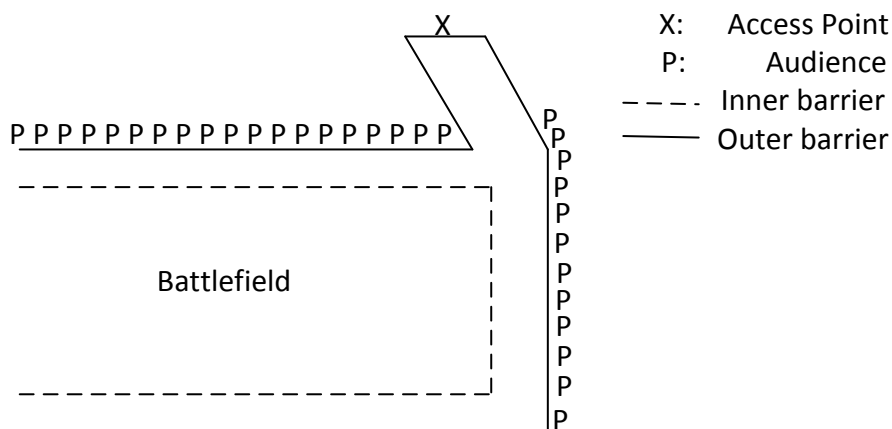
There must be two barriers separating the public from the warriors. These barriers must be at least 3 metres (10 feet) apart (or greater as required by the Health and Safety Thegn under special conditions).

Inner Barrier	This is to stop the warriors from encroaching on to the crowd line. Warriors need to treat this as a solid barrier. Warriors can stand against the barrier but no part of the warrior or their equipment should cross this line.
Outer Barrier	This is there to stop the crowd from encroaching on the fighting.
Between the Barriers	There must be signs warning the public of the danger of getting too close to the action.

### 2.2 Access points

There must be at least one point of access to the battlefield for the armies, preferably two, with one at each end of the battlefield. There must be a clear approach route for the armies at the time required for commencement of the battle. If these access points are not suitable for emergency vehicles, an additional access point must be made. Access points must be staffed by marshals at least fifteen minutes before the commencement of the battle and throughout the performance.

The main issue with access points is that, once closed, the public move across the area thus blocking the access points. To this end, we have a new design shown below



Where the access point is staggered outwards and at an angle so that the audience will not see the battlefield display if they stand across the access point. This way, hopefully, the access point will remain accessible to the warriors and emergency services.



## 2.3 Inter-ropo Area

This region separates the audience from the combatants, to reduce the likelihood of injury to the audience from being hit by a weapon directly or indirectly e.g. from a broken weapon flying off or from slivers of metal shearing from swords or even from a warrior slipping or falling into this area. To minimise harm to members of the Society who are helping with the Display, no one should be present in this region during the battle displays. However, saying that, if the marshals are to do their job then they will need to be present but everyone can minimise their own risk by not standing near the fighting or not standing directly behind a unit when it is being targeted by missiles etc. Common sense should apply!

The Chief Marshal should brief all those members of the Society required to be in this area during combat display, of the potential risks to themselves and how to minimise these risks.

There are a couple of requirements for signage within the arena. Firstly, there is a need for markers to allow the Hersirs to manage their units during scripted fights. Secondly, the requirement for warning signs that the public can read to help the Society comply with its Health and Safety protocols. These are discussed below:

### 2.3.1 Position Markers

Position Markers will be set up on the inner barrier. The start lines of each army will be marked by either red or blue linen pennants. These pennants will be sited fairly close to the ends of the battlefield, to give the armies the greatest separation possible, to therefore give the most movement possible to the armies. If missiles or cavalry are used, then these locations will have to be drawn towards the centre line to offer more space behind the armies.

The centre line of the battlefield will be marked by white linen pennants and indicates where the PA should be situated and hence where the parleys should take place. Hersirs must be aware of them especially when directing scripted action.

### 2.3.2 Audience Signs

There will be signs placed on the inner barriers facing the audience warning them not to encroach towards the battlefield: usually done by children sitting under the outer barrier. This is potentially dangerous because shards of metal do fly from weapons occasionally and with gravity acting, anyone sat on the floor is placed in more danger.

Appendix 2 stores the signage wording.

## 2.4 Battlefield Width

The battlefield width needs careful consideration by the Battle Captain to give optimum coverage by the shield wall whilst appeasing the Show Organiser who will want to fit as much audience around the arena as possible and then to maximise their view of the arena displays: several people deep and then those towards the back cannot see the display.

If the battlefield is:

Too wide	Then the warriors spread out and flanking becomes too easy, hence battles are over too quickly and there is a loss of enjoyment for the warriors and hence less of a spectacle for the audience.
Too narrow	Then the fighting becomes very intense and eventually the dead become a Health and Safety issue for those still alive, especially if an army is being pushed backwards over the dead.



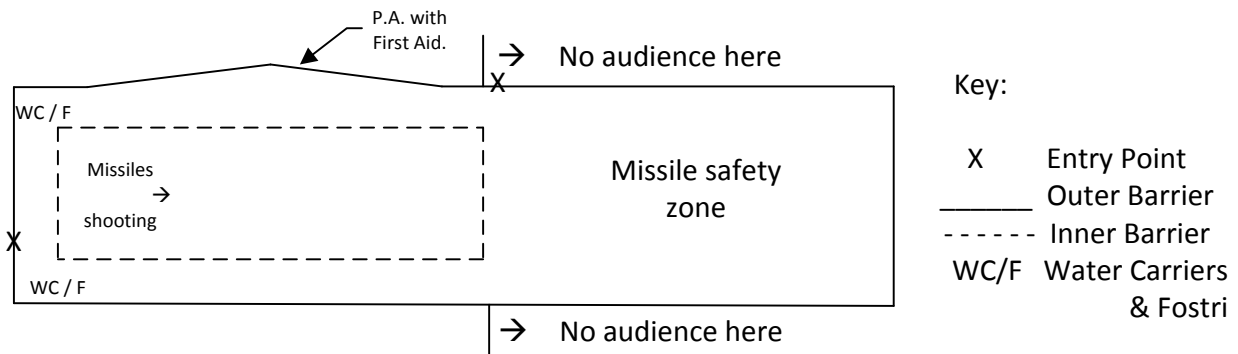
There is no rule of thumb to help here, purely experience of having fought in different sized arenas. The Battle Captain may well have other script considerations e.g. needing warriors in one or two ranks and possibly a Reserve unit. The needs of missiles and cavalry will have to be met too.

## 2.5 Battlefield Length

The length of the battlefield is important when considering missiles and cavalry. If the battlefield is longer than the range of the bows then archery may be used by both sides. The Battle Captain will consult the Missiles Thegn if there is any doubt, to co-ordinate this. In the case of a shorter field, the end(s) must be clear of audience to allow the archers to safely loose in that direction. This can be achieved by posting marshals at that end of the arena or, in extreme cases, by extending the arena length, see the diagram below:

### 2.5.1 Use of Missiles

If the audience is 3m behind an army who expect incoming missile weapons then the Hersirs should have moved the army forwards, away from the inner barrier to increase the distance to the audience to reduce any risk to the audience. The safe distance for the audience behind those warriors being targeted with lobbed arrows is dependent upon site and weather factors on the day. This will need to be discussed with the Archery Thegn.



Arena containing the Battlefield  
with added missile safety zone.

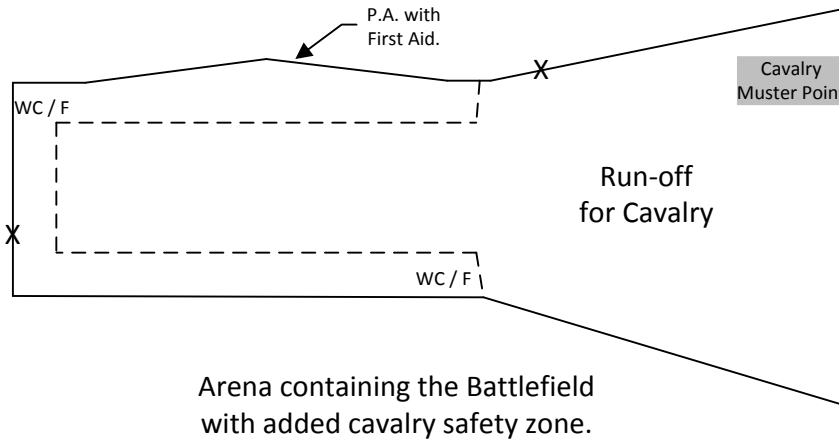
**Note:** Advanced archers can be allowed (with the clearance of the Archery Thegn) to shoot when archery is withdrawn due to arena size constraints but cannot shoot if the Health & Safety Thegn prohibits archery. This must be managed by the Archery Thegn as the Army Commander may not have enough expertise to make an informed decision. Hersirs will not know which archers are Advanced or not: the Army Commander should be informed at the Muster if any Advanced archer is likely to shoot so that the information can be passed down the chain of command.

### 2.5.2 Use of Cavalry

If cavalry is to be used, the battlefield must be long and wide enough to allow the horses to manoeuvre safely away from the infantry. The Battle Captain must co-ordinate with the Cavalry Thegn but in essence, there must be:

- A clear area on the battlefield behind both armies to allow the horses to run freely if spooked allowing the rider time to bring the horse back under control.
- An escape route from the battle field back towards the cavalry muster point (where the horse provider should be located), clear of all obstacles and audience, to allow loose horses a clear avenue of egress to their point of safety. See the diagram below:





Key:

- X Entry Point
- Outer Barrier
- Inner Barrier
- WC/F Water Carriers & Fostri

Arena containing the Battlefield with added cavalry safety zone.

**Note:** The Cavalry Handbook goes into greater detail on all matters relating to cavalry at shows.

## 2.6 Approach Route

The approach route to the battlefield must be:

- As clear of obstacles as possible.
- Normally wide enough to allow a minimum of three warriors to walk abreast.
- Marshalled for the safety of the warriors and the audience.

If the first two points are not achievable, then extra time must be allowed for the warriors to get from their Muster point. The Battle Captain should walk the approach route and note the time it takes. As a rule of thumb:

For each defile passed through	One minute must be added for every ten warriors.
For each obstacle climbed	Two minutes must be added for every ten warriors.

The Battle Captain must remember that their units are moved far enough along the route to allow everyone to pass the defile and then to reform the unit before moving off again: we do not want to stretch out the line of warriors as some move off whilst others are still in the defile. This all takes time to accomplish and manage.

## 2.7 Street Fighting

When fighting in streets, a risk assessment of the site must be done specifically looking at the terrain – cobbles, kerbs, bollards etc. A call for inauthentic footwear may be given based on Health and Safety.

A study of the possible damage by warriors to parked cars or other property needs to be considered perhaps by walking the route and photographing any obvious pre-existing damage prior to the Display.

When fighting in streets a double barrier of some form is still required. This is best provided by two sets of marshals who will be clearly distinguishable from one another and clearly identified to both warriors and audience. One set of marshals will control the audience as the outer barrier, whilst the other set will help control the warriors as the inner barrier. The audience behind both armies are potentially the ones who will be encroached on the most, by an army being pushed backwards. Every warrior should be fully aware of the dangers of the display and should be fighting accordingly.



More importantly, the warriors on the flanks of the opposing forces should act as an additional safety barrier to minimise the risk of injury to the marshals. The flank warriors should be 2H spearmen who are there to maintain the distance between the audience and the main fighting.

Based upon the dimensions of the streets to be fought in, the number of combatants may need to be reduced to avoid over-populating the display. If too many are present, then fighting in two ranks should be done with warriors rotating between the two ranks when possible.

The chief marshal must carry a whistle and if, in their opinion, the combat is unsafe they should blow the whistle and keep blowing it until combat has ceased. The warriors should break contact; the performance may continue but no fighting should take place until the chief marshal has given the all clear to the Battle Captain.



### 3 Non Combatant Roles

There are several roles executed by non-combatants whilst in the arena that may or may not be on the battlefield itself. Each role has important duties to perform to help the smooth and safe running of the scripted fights and also the wider envelope of the Show.

#### 3.1 Promotions

The Society is very keen on honouring anyone who helps to run Departments at Society-level events. The Head of any Department plus the High Council can nominate any member within the Society Ranking system e.g. to Silver Thegn for sustained work over a period of time. Please refer to the Society documentation on this.

#### 3.2 Marshals

We use Marshals to manage the audience, in the main. They should be easily identified by the Black Hoodies with the back print "Marshal", the orange high-vis vests or equivalent. They are organised by the Chief Marshal who has the responsibility of managing that Department. Their duties include:

Barriers	<p>The storage of the barrier poles and ropes when not at a Show plus their transportation to Shows.</p> <p>The erection, maintenance and dismantling of the barriers at each Society-run show. The positioning of these barriers will have to be decided upon with input from the client but also the Battle Captain and Health and Safety Thegn who should have discussed things with the Missile and Cavalry Thegns when needed.</p>
Audience Safety	<p>A need to explain to any audience member who encroaches under the outer barrier about its position for their own safety – typically children sat under it or adults with cameras looking for a better shot.</p> <p>No photography is allowed from within the inter-rope area by instruction from the Society Publicity Thegn.</p>
Access Point	<p>Each Access Point needs to be maintained by a marshal to allow the Army entry to and egress from the battlefield. A marshal should remain close to these points throughout the duration of the battle to allow for late participants, people leaving and possibly medical intervention if needed.</p>
"Lost Property"	<p>Warriors may need to drop equipment or hand in lost property. The marshal is an obvious person to ease that and property should be placed behind each army in a central position. The marshals should remind warriors of lost property at the end of each arena display.</p>

#### 3.3 Public Address

There are two aspects to this:

- The hardware consisting of the speakers, wiring and microphone.
- The commentator who will use the P.A. to communicate the action to the audience.



### 3.3.1 The Hardware

The Society Events team manage the storage and transportation of the Society's P.A. system. Any information on this should be requested from that team through normal avenues.

		The Events team will arrange for its transportation to the event through the Group Leader of the Group that currently have it. Once on site, the responsibility for the P.A. transfers to the person nominated in AdminDB for that event.
Society P.A. used		The marshals set up the Society P.A. when the arena barriers are erected and then dismantle it at the end of the show, handing it to the person nominated in AdminDB to store it until the next show.
		Any bad weather (rain or strong wind) needs to be managed on the day, with the P.A. being covered or stored safely as appropriate.
Client P.A. used		If the client supplies their own P.A. system then it will fall to the client to transport and set up and dismantle their own system on site and to maintain it during the event.

When we have input into the setup of the speaker locations, they would normally be placed at each corner of the arena or concentrated on those sides likely to have more audience and the commentator would then communicate to the audience to perhaps stay around them to better hear the commentary. The separation of the speakers from the microphone has to be great enough to avoid feedback. A battery operated microphone is most often used which can be muted when the commentator is not speaking.

### 3.3.2 The Commentator

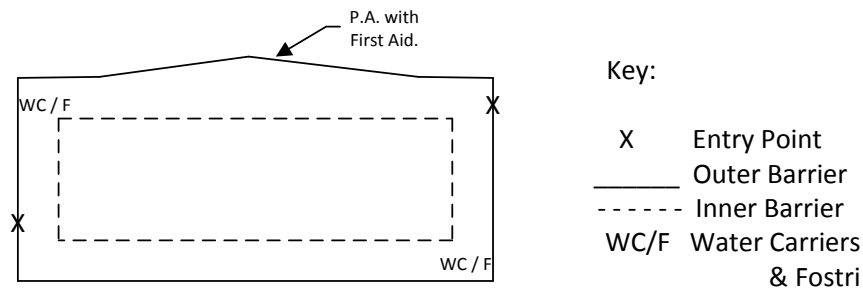
#### 3.3.2.1 Duties

Pre-Muster	Attend the Battle Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be given a script.</li> <li>• Be given a more in-depth description of the Timeline and specific characters involved.</li> </ul>
		Note the Battle Commanders and people allocated to play the main acting characters.
During the Show	Audience	To keep them involved and aware of the setting for the battle and specific action points as they happen.
		To introduce the armies and specific characters at the start of the Display.
		To introduce warriors during free-combat fighting where appropriate.
		Thanking the crowd for their attendance and inviting them back into the village and to speak to the warriors.
		To provide site-based information as requested by the Show Organisers.
		To assist with the organization of water carriers and arrow collectors when required and to encourage non-combatants to these roles when required by liaising with the chief marshal.



The commentator must be situated in a recess of the outer barrier in a position from which the commentator can see all the action. This position is normally at the centre of one long side (at the white pennants), see the diagram below, but only needs to be deep enough to contain the commentator comfortably. This design is to allow the commentator better vision of the wider battlefield whilst keeping the commentator at the “audience distance” from the fighting.

For their own safety, the commentator should remain in this area but may leave it on occasion, during safe periods of the battle, to communicate with the Battle Captain as required.



Arena containing the Battlefield

### 3.4 First Aid

#### 3.4.1 Prior to the Show

The Event Coordinator should plan the level of medical cover needed at the show based upon the Risk Assessment e.g. extra cover when cavalry is present. The information should be stored on AdminDB concerning who within the Society is managing First Aid at the event and whether the client (or the Society) have requested any external medical presence e.g. St. John's Ambulance, paramedics with or without an ambulance etc.

#### 3.4.2 During the Show

The first aid point in the arena must be in an easily identifiable position, normally next to the P.A. A qualified first aider, designated by the Health and Safety Thegn and with a full up-to-date first aid kit must be present during any and all arena displays. See the above diagram.

Any warrior requiring First Aid on the field should have access to a medic. In theory, a Hersir should be told of this requirement by combatants but the possible necessity for speed of action means that anyone could perform this task. It is up to the Hersirs to manage the fighting in the vicinity of the injured and if the Army Commander considers it too dangerous to continue (from input of the First Aider dealing with the injury), the combat will be delayed until it is deemed safe to re-start.

If First Aid is managed solely by the Society at an event and the First Aider thinks professional medics (i.e. an ambulance) needs to be called, then the First Aider will need to do that in liaison with the Show Organiser since both will be needed to give the following relevant details:

- Location and access routes to the site and to the arena specifically.
- Medical information on the injured party.



### 3.5 Story Telling

There have been instances at Society Events of the telling of Sagas or Historical Stories to the public using a “skit-based” format with members of the Society acting out what the Story-Teller is saying. Specific Stories have included:

- The Battle of Maldon (991).
- Oswald and Oswiu and their dealing with Penda - for Mercia/Northumbria events.
- Ralph the Timid - for later period Welsh Marches events.

To make these stories work, the story-teller needs about 10 or more warrior helpers plus additional people sometimes: women and children, male-non-combatants etc. Generally, the more the merrier for the telling of the tale.

See Appendix 1 for a breakdown of the content of these stories.

### 3.6 Kiddie Vike

The Society involve the children of the public, of ages 11 and under (primary school children), in a training exercise where the Society supply small shields and fake weapons – a stick or piece of pipe insulation for example – for the children to be shown some drill commands. Warriors face these children with no weapons and act as patsies for the children as they attack.

To run the Kiddie Vike, the Society need a couple of warriors to manage the children, telling them the rules for hitting the adults etc. The more the warriors can play to the crowd, the better. The warriors in a shield wall should be run by someone, to coordinate the display. There should also be a member of the Society managing the queue of children waiting to get on to the field plus the distribution and collection of the weapons and shields to the children.

The Kiddie Vike organiser is in charge of the shields and fake weapons at all times and this person either stores the equipment when not at shows and then transports them to/from the show or they must get someone else to do this for them.

### 3.7 Water Carriers

Every effort will be made by the Battle Captain, through the hard work of the marshals, to get water on to the field at every Society Event through the voluntary help of members, either non-combatants, those warriors not fighting on the day or Youth Members. The Chief Marshal will coordinate the transportation of larger water containers to and from the arena for the water carriers.

However, sometimes it is not possible to meet the demand and it should be made clear to every Group that they should make some provision for their own warriors on the field.

Water carriers need to keep out of the way of the combat, between the barriers, but be close enough to the start lines to be able to get onto the field and distribute water during the parley phases. They will need protective head gear in case they are caught up in any unplanned action.

Water carriers should be wearing costume that is appropriate for the show’s authenticity guidelines. Where possible, non-combatant water carriers (for example women, children or clergy) are encouraged to wear head protection concealed under a hat, hood or wimple, rather than an obvious helmet.



### 3.8 Youth Members

Any child member between the ages of 13 and 17 years of age inclusive who have paid the additional membership fee.

Youth members wishing to participate in non-combat arena displays can do so with the relevant Thegn;s knowledge and the relevant paperwork completed by the Youth member's parents. These roles include such things as participating in Archery Displays or being water carriers or arrow collectors in the combat Displays. Each Youth member must report to their supervising adult at the relevant Muster.

Every Youth Member on the battlefield must be supervised by a dedicated adult at all times and their help in the show must be made known to all warriors at the Muster by the Army Commanders. See the above diagram.

### 3.9 Additional Displays

The Society is always looking for new pieces to include in the main Arena or a smaller one within the LHE: either to complement what is there already or to be instead of certain other displays. A few such items are:

- Kubb – the Scandinavian stick throwing game.
- Glima – Scandinavian wrestling.
- Spear Game.
- Combat Training – formal (in character) training.
- Skopa - Swinging a rope to avoid it.
- Skol – Two warriors touching a wooden chest whilst blindfolded and trying to hit each other with a bag of rags. One says “skol” and the other repeats it straightaway to help locate each other.
- Formation drill.
- Tug-of-war.
- Knattleikr – Scandinavian shinty.
- Sharp weapons demonstrations.
- Missile Displays.

If any Group or individual have suggestions, then please mention these to the Battle Captain or the Show Organisers who can then plan them into the Events Listings for a show.



## 4 Hersirs

### 4.1 Progression

Warriors who are interested in helping to run scripted battles can express that interest directly to the Battle Captain or through any other member of the Society (e.g. an existing Hersir or a Group Leader) at any time. We are approachable so please come for a chat.

It is expected that a Group's battle commander will be the natural person to volunteer to be a Hersir so those interested should have some idea of the Hersir role already having commanded of their own Group on the field (or if Provincial, then some equivalent action). These interested warriors can then shadow Hersirs for a few shows to see if they would actually enjoy the responsibility. They can also investigate the different Hersir roles and their responsibilities by reading this document in a more in-depth manner and if they are still interested, the warrior can officially become a trainee Hersir.

Every Hersir trainee should have put time into turning up to shows and improving their fighting and battlefield awareness: commanding others is always easier if you command a level of respect and that has to be earned by time spent at Society Shows. Once you are known, it is easier for others to take commands from you but also easier for you to give more experienced warriors a command. It is envisaged that all Hersirs should cut their teeth leading their Group on the field first before thinking about the Hersir role.

### 4.2 Promotions

Once the trainee has performed the different battlefield roles and helped in the wider Arena context for a minimum of a couple of seasons, the Battle Captain will elevate them to the Society rank of Hersir, which is equivalent to all other RTT (Combat, Missiles, Authenticity and Village) status. The rank of Hersir is not one for life and the Battle Captain will remove the rank if the warrior stops their Hersir involvement. Obviously, if the warrior wishes to take up the role again, the process should be a lot faster second time around (or even instantaneous in many cases).

The Hersirs are those warriors who have volunteered to help run the scripted phases of the combat. They have a proven ability over the full range of command tasks at the Society level and it is therefore an acknowledgement of considerable achievement. Once a warrior has actively performed the Hersir role for a minimum of two years, they become eligible to be promoted to Silver Hersir, which is equivalent to the Silver Thegn award. Please read the Society policies surrounding the Silver Thegn/Hersir awards.

### 4.3 Command Structure

All armies throughout history have had some sort of command structure, from the minimum of just a leader and followers.

During Society scripted battles, we also need to have some measure of management. This should be kept as small as possible due to issues of:

- Finding enough experienced people who want the role.
- Keeping the structure manageable.

For shows having above the average number of warriors participating then more Hersirs will need to be drafted in.

The Society representation of a Dark Age battle needs two types of people involved: those running the script and those who are the Figureheads to the crowd, so they look the part and act as the leaders. These two groups have been the same people in the past but need not be the same. In fact, having the figure head roles in the battle as non-Hersir is generally better all-round as they can concentrate on the acting side whilst the Hersirs concentrate on the script.





#### 4.3.1 The Show

Each Society Event must have one person, normally the Society Battle Captain, in charge of everything to do with the Arena during the Show. The Battle Captain has two nominated deputies (the Assistant Battle Captains) so that hopefully two of these three people attend every Society Major Muster, to run each army.

#### 4.3.2 The Armies

A Hersir runs each army (designated as the two Army Commanders). These two Hersirs are typically the Society Battle Captain and one of the two Assistants but some shows may need other Hersirs to step up to this role. The primary responsibility for these Army Commanders is to make sure that each arena display is planned for and managed on the day, either directly (in the case of the scripted fights) or delegated to another member of the Society (in the case of Kiddie Vike etc).

Due to the size of an army, each Army Commander may need Sub-Commanders to assist them. However, an Army Commander may be happier to relay orders directly to the units during the parley sections as this then removes a layer of "management" from which Chinese Whispers can develop whilst trying to convey commands and information.

#### 4.3.3 The Units

Each army is typically split into two or three units (usually Left, Right and Centre) depending upon numbers and script requirements with possibly a small Reserve unit too, if possible. Only for very large shows do we usually need to sub-divide the units further with the need for more Hersirs to manage these sub-units.

Each unit should have a 3-man command structure inherent to itself, comprising of:

Unit Leader	Who attends the Battle Captain meeting to be given the script and learn what their character needs to do during the battle. He is the Figurehead of the army, who the audience believes is in charge of the unit/army, who thus is heard shouting commands.
Sub-Leader	Who attends the Battle Captain meeting to be given the script. The Sub-Leader will be the one who actually primes the unit on the next phase of fighting and tells the Unit Leader on his return from the parley the command he needs to issue next. They will be the point of contact for the Army Commander.
Standard Bearer	A warrior with kit appropriate for higher status who attends the Unit Leader everywhere and echoes the commands given by the Unit Leader for the edification of the crowd and their unit.

It would be good for all three warriors in this command structure to be Hersirs i.e. warriors of experience who understand how our battles work and, more importantly, know how easily the scripts can go awry to then have the experience to manage these situations. However, the Unit Leader and the Standard Bearer need not be Hersirs – they are there primarily to fulfil the Figurehead roles of Leaders for the audience and as such do not need to physically run the unit from a script point of view: this is the role of the Sub-Leader who definitely does need to be a Hersir. This structure allows our more thespian members to take the strain of playing up to the crowd where some very good Hersirs are not happy to do this. Similarly, the more flamboyant warriors may not enjoy getting the nitty-gritty of the script correct.



#### 4.3.4 Duration of Command

Hersirs are in charge of running the scripted part of any Society battle. They take overall authority to make sure that every combatant is performing their role within the re-enactment of the script.

All Hersirs appointed to roles should be available to help the Army Commanders in a scripted sense throughout the day, from the Battle Captain's meeting on the morning of the first day until all standards are returned after the battle.

Any tactics used in a re-fight or free fight battle after a scripted part is technically not the remit of the Army Commanders to control. Yes, they still have ultimate authority on what occurs in the sense of time constraints but any other warrior who wishes to step up and command or offer tactical suggestions is free to do so, so long as they are aware that any error in judgement is not forgotten easily by the warriors.

#### 4.4 Duties and Roles

Each Hersir volunteering at a Society Event has specific duties that need to be performed to ensure the smooth running of the scripted battle. A small amount of effort on the part of every active Hersir will result in a successful battle that is enjoyable to as many participants and spectators as possible.

##### 4.4.1 Duties

Any combat issues i.e. safety or injury will be dealt with by the RTT(c/m/h)s thus leaving the continuation of the script to the Hersirs. The reason for this is twofold:

- There are more RTTs than Hersirs so they should be quicker to access by others and therefore respond quicker to any incident: most Groups have at least one RTT(c).
- The primary concern of the Hersirs is the need to manage the script and flow of the battle.

There are very obvious close and familiar relationships between RTT(c/m/h)s and Hersirs (indeed many warriors are part of both structures) so both sets of members should always be working together in every situation.

The same is true of injuries: the medics will manage the injury whilst the Hersirs manage the warriors and the script around the incident, if possible.

As a caveat to this, any Hersir who personally sees something that needs acting upon should try to respond as best as possible to minimise any risk. The quicker they can then pass the issue over to a RTT(c/m/h), the better.

Additional roles for any Hersir will include:

- Recommendation of any Group Commanders to the Battle Captain for consideration of elevation to Hersir, through training (where a Group Commander is that person who takes command of a Group whilst on the battlefield).
- Being prepared to take a command role at short notice, if needed.
- Advising the Battle Captain on matters concerning the management of musters and battles.

In the scripted phases of battles, Hersirs should be using those commanders of Groups to manage their own Group warriors. There should be mutual respect shown at all times but everyone must realise that the Hersir will always have final say in how the unit is run throughout these scripted phases.



#### 4.4.2 Battle staff

This constitutes the two Army Commanders. Their duties during the course of a scripted battle are the same but in general terms, they will be doing the following:

General	Point of Contact	Liaise with counterparts in other Societies for multi-Society shows.
	Training	Help prospective Hersir to develop the required skills.
Morning Meeting	Numbers	For the Group Commanders to hand over their fighting numbers for the day.
	Allocation	Of the larger Groups to armies/units. Be aware that no group should expect to always be on the same side or always fight in the same position or even always fight together as a coherent unit.
		Of Hersirs to armies/units.
	Script	Talk through the script with the Hersirs, Figureheads and PA.
	Standard	Hersirs collect the standards from the Battle Staff.
	Cribs	Only for the Battle Staff to reduce the number of people trying to "fix" errors.

Having all Group Commanders and Hersirs together in one place means we all get to know everyone else more quickly and this helps to strengthen communication on the field.

Prior to Muster	Meeting	Battle Staff to meet, in fighting kit ready for the Show. They can go over the script or anything else that crops up.
	Unit Updates	Quick collation of up-to-date numbers from each Unit to make sure the numbers are still in the correct balance for the script to run well: correct these as needed.
At Muster	Final Checks	Keep moving around and chatting to people. Keep checking with Unit Hersirs that everything is OK. Make sure checks for safety and authenticity have been done by the relevant people. Check with Marshals on time for moving off and entry to the field.
	Maintain...	The script as best you can. Only 2 people know the script so if it goes wrong, re-set at the next parley. Links with the sub-Leaders. Links with the opposition Battle Staff.
	Immortality	During this phase, the Battle Staff are needed and should remain alive. Please defend yourself so the audience do not see you being killed and ignoring the death. React to your first wound and then return to the fray.
Free-	P.A.	Check with the PA on timings and inform them on having



Fighting		a re-fight.
	Water	Make sure the warriors have time for water.
	Numbers	For re-fights – get the 2 armies formed up and re-jig the sides if needed to balance experience and numbers (as some people step out at this point).
	Step back	Allow others to command re-fights if they wish.
	If time allows	Have Re-fights/Circles/hunting groups to have as much fighting as possible.
	To finish	A crowd march – no running! We are showing the audience a shield wall.
After the Arena Display	March off	Get the units to reform and march off quickly and to move away from the Access Point to have a quick debrief.
	Debrief	Speak to Hersirs about the show – positives and negatives and get things sorted for the next day.
	Standards	Collect all standards used during the Show.

Any Sub-commander (if used) must:

- Assist their Army Commander in any situation.
- Understand the script in an overview sense.
- Transmit the orders of the commander to the units.
- Take command of a part of the army if needed.

#### 4.4.3 Unit Hersirs

The Unit Leader, the Sub-Leader and Standard Bearer constitute the Unit Hersirs. They should be working together to achieve the following duties:

General	Attitude	Be calm and good humoured in the role.
	Stress	Do not get stressed over the minutiae of the script.
	Loud Voice	Have a loud voice and use it.
	Group Experience	Gain experience within your own Group first before stepping up to the Hersir level. View it as an apprenticeship-served.
	Watch a Battle	It is very informative to sit out and watch a battle every now and again to see what happens on the field. We will have a super-critical eye but we can also listen to the crowd's reactions because what we think happens on the field and what actually is seen by the audience do not always match up.



	Different Groups	Command different Groups, to get used to communicating with warriors you are not used to.
Morning Meeting	Allocation	Of Hersirs to armies/units.
	Script	Talk through the script with the Battle Staff.
	Standard	Collect the standard from the Battle Staff.
Prior to Muster	Numbers Reported	The Unit is given the latest figures from each of their Group commanders.
	Unit Updates	Each Sub-leader attends the Battle Staff and gives any salient changes in numbers or other information.
	Standard	Standard Bearer to raise the unit standard for a visual beacon.
	Introductions	Introduce the Hersir to the unit.
	Script Discussion	<p>Explain any complicated aspect of the script to the unit (e.g. a feigned retreat, rout, rally or outflanking move).</p> <p>An idea of when these happen is also useful but avoid giving them enough information to feel they know the script – that way, they decide when something happens instead of you.</p>
The Muster	Safety Check	<p>Check if Groups have done a “weapons check”. Do anyone missed. This can be done by the Hersir or a delegated RTT.</p> <p>Show leadership and have your kit checked first.</p>
		<p>Hersir should do visual checks of everyone – look especially for sharps and dangerous equipment. Anything that is not fixable in the time remaining does not go on the field.</p> <p>If archers are part of your unit, ask the archery lead to check each archer’s equipment.</p>
	Metal File	Have access to a metal file to remove any burrs found on weapons. Use chainmail as a last resort!
	Authenticity	<p>Check that all warriors are wearing appropriate kit for the timeline. Hersirs are not supposed to pick up on every detail but spot the big problems... do not be the person who discovers that their unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brought a blow-up doll onto the field.</li> <li>• Have Fred Flintstone within its ranks.</li> </ul> <p>Both these have happened in the past: it is embarrassing. Remember this is <b>your</b> unit.</p>



	Personal Contact	For anyone you do not know, speak to them to make a connection and they are more likely to listen when you want them to do something.
	Final Headcount	Last chance to get numbers sorted before you go on. Adjust as necessary with Battle Staff.
	Youth Members	Advise warriors of the presence of these and their role in the Battle.
	Final Warning	Make sure everyone is ready to move. Do not expect people to leap up, grab the kit they have scattered around and move out in 5 seconds.
	Standard	To stay with the Unit Leader. The Bearer should defend the standard with his life.
	Check unit	Walk the line, check the positioning. Final scan of the unit for anything/one which should not be there
	Opposition headcount	Make sure you have some idea of what and who you are actually facing. Identify numbers issues and be creative if you have to be: go into two ranks if you outnumber the opposition too much or send some warriors out as a Reserve.
Scripted Battle	Visibility	The Battle Staff may need to find you, so make yourself visible. The unit leader should be out front marshalling their unit for the sake of the audience. The sub-Leader should be at the back telling the unit what is going to happen. The Banner Bearer should be with the unit Leader.
	Before each Phase	Brief the unit quickly and simply in small groups, repeating the instruction as you go along the line.
	After each Phase	Send out skirmishers if needed. Check for anyone who is injured and unresponsive. Anyone requiring First Aid must be seen by a qualified First Aider either on the field (or better off the field). Collect the wounded. Leave anyone who wants to stay dead. The unit leader and Standard may need to do the parley. The sub Leader is usually left to communicate with the Battle Staff on the commands for the next phase and then relate these to the unit



		quickly. Sub Leader will have to then tell the returning unit Leader what the next command is, to be ready when the Battle Staff give the signal. Remember to look after your warriors – chat and find water etc.
	Immortality	During this phase, the Unit Hersirs are needed and should remain alive. Please defend yourself so the audience do not see you being killed and ignoring the death. React to your first wound and then return to the fray.
	Ending	Tell warriors to “Take/Give kills from now” – it just means no more resurrections from that point. Open ended scripts – make sure your unit have some plan with contingencies. If you have defined Groups within your unit, use them to do specific tasks like holding the centre or flanking.
Free Fighting	Water	Remind unit to take on water.
	Banner	Rally the unit on the banner.
	Reform	Get the unit back in order, ready for a re-fight
	Commands	Quick discussion on tactics.
	To finish	A crowd march – no running! We are showing the audience a shield wall.
After the Arena Display	March off	Get your unit to reform and march off quickly and to move away from the Access Point to have a quick debrief, if needed.
	Debrief	Speak with Battle Staff about the show and how to fix any issues arising for tomorrow.
	Standard	Standard Bearer to return the standard at the end of the weekend.

#### 4.4.4 Group Commanders

	Numbers	To hand over their fighting numbers to the Battle Staff.
Morning Meeting	On Leaving	To know, in principle, the army they are fighting for.
		To know who is their Hersir.
		To know where to muster and when.
Absence		If you miss the meeting you will be found and berated in front of your Group!



	Headcount (again)	Get a reasonably accurate headcount of your own Group warriors i.e. those who are well enough and willing to fight - scratch off those who have taken the family to the beach for the afternoon.
	Report Numbers	Find your <b>unit sub-leader</b> and relay the figure, especially if it varies wildly from the figure quoted earlier in the meeting.
Prior to Muster	Water	Make sure water is drunk by your warriors especially on a hot day – it takes time for the water to take effect.  Taking on water as they enter the field is too late as it will only start to do them good later into the display.
	Safety Check	Get someone qualified to check your warriors' weapons, shields and general equipment.  <b>Note: Look out for sharps &amp; inauthentic or dangerous equipment.</b>
The Muster	Water Carriers	Attempt to generate water carriers for the Group or entuse warriors to buy leather bottles to supply themselves.
	Support Hersirs	As the Unit Hersirs prepare for the battle, help them by relaying information and getting your Group prepared etc.
	Help Unit Hersirs	Make sure that commands given by Hersirs are relayed to your warriors clearly and quickly.
Scripted Battle	Effective use of warriors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure your chain warriors are together.</li> <li>• Spears are doing a specific job with a shield man protecting them.</li> <li>• Left-handed warriors are used effectively.</li> <li>• New members of the Group are taught about staying alive rather than doing stupid things and dying quickly.</li> <li>• Have a reserve just in case.</li> </ul>
	Issues	Any problems: relay them back up the chain of command.
Free Fighting	Re-fights	Groups have freedom to control their own destiny here. Do well and think about the bigger picture.
	Circles	Get your warriors to fight well and with honour. Remember a good fair death is preferable to a dis-honourable win!





	Crowd March	Get your Group together and remind them we are portraying a Shield Wall so stay together and do not run.
After the Arena Display	De-brief	If your Group warriors have any issues from the arena display, feed these back to your unit Hersirs to get them sorted officially.
	Fighting	Find someone to discuss techniques to improve your Group fighting especially the communication aspect.

#### 4.4.5 Safety Checks

Safety is of paramount importance to all members of the Society and particularly for the warriors. It is in every warrior's interest that weapons and equipment on the field are maintained to a high standard and are not a danger to themselves or others. To ensure that these standards are kept, the Hersirs (and RTTs and Authenticity Thegns) will make checks of equipment.

At the pre-battle muster the unit leaders (or their deputy) must check:

Safety Equipment	All warriors need Society specific safety gear as detailed in the RTT Rules for infantry, missile and cavalry warriors.
Weapons	All weapons need to conform to the Society specifications and are free from burrs.
Shields	The whole item is in a safe and authentic condition.
Sharps	No sharps worn.
Arrows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No sharps during combat.</li> <li>• No damaged flights, shafts or blunts.</li> <li>• At least 18" of fletching from 4 or more flights.</li> </ul>
Bows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No damage seen.</li> <li>• Draw weight of not more than 35lb at 28".</li> </ul>



## 5 Scripted Fighting

### 5.1 Introduction

The following description of how the Society would like to proceed with its scripted fighting is already being done by some Groups and individuals and it is the aim to keep developing this further to hopefully include more warriors to produce a more realistic and fun fighting style during the scripted phases but still stay within our combat rules.

Firstly, the older phrase “show fighting” needs to be avoided in preference for “scripted fighting”. This is a minor edit but is a major mental change because all fighting needs to be done properly throughout the display and no one should be switching off through two-thirds of any display. Some warriors did this during the “show fighting” phases since they perceived these to be unimportant: just the minimum effort to get to the “proper fighting” later on.

### 5.2 The Three-Phase Battle

The Society tends to write its scripts having three phases of combat, broken by parleys. It is expected that one side will be scripted to win at the end of the third clash with lots of deaths from that point. However, it is hoped that warriors should be fighting “**realistically**” throughout the scripted phases which means that every warrior needs to defend themselves because warriors should be looking to land wounding blows. Any warrior who is wounded **must** react to it by stepping out of the line. If they are not quick enough and are then hit again within the allotted time, they should take the kill and go to the ground. However, they are not permanently dead as they will be re-cycled during the next parley. Those warriors landing the blows – please do not fixate on landing the second blow but practice landing the first, wounding shot.

**NOTE: Every phase of fighting: scripted or free-fighting should have the same level of energy and contain lethal character.**

This “realistic” combat should help to develop a warrior’s (and more importantly perhaps, a unit’s) battlefield awareness much more quickly, in an environment where errors do not lose you a full battle: treat the scripted phases as a training exercise to practise shield wall fighting. Also, new members must be told of their responsibilities by their opponent if they have been wounded i.e. “react to it and step out” or “you are killed – so fall on the ground” but it should be done in a polite way please that does not carry to the audience.

It is hoped that warriors can practice landing the first blow without actively seeking the second, decisive shot during this phase of the fighting but anyone not defending themselves properly should be killed and they should act accordingly. Hersirs should be on the lookout for such warriors and have a gentle word with them explaining what is expected.

Warriors need to get away from not defending (which is rationalised in their head because they “are not supposed to die yet”) and then smiling and nodding at their opponent who has just hit them. Also, next to the crowd we have the flamboyant solo fighters (the long axe etc.) who are making even more of a show for the public but they need someone with them to defend them from the opposition: make it look good but more than that – make it look realistic. We do not want comments from the crowd like “Why is no-one stabbing that warrior” when he is 6 foot in front of his own line or even worse “Why is he not dying when he has been stabbed three times?”

There is huge variation in the scripted fighting we have already: one extreme is warriors who “go through slow motion swings and are not trying to fight” and the other extreme is those warriors who are “trying to kill everyone in front of them because they can”. **Everyone should be going on to the field with the expectation that if they are not careful they will be killed in the first or second clash (but re-cycled).**

Similarly, a unit should not try to decimate the opposition just because there is a wide ability gap: the experienced Group Commanders on both sides **must** take responsibility for their own warriors and then collectively, the Unit Hersirs **must** be held accountable for managing this in the unit overall:



- If your opponents are weaker than you, form a deeper second rank or move some of your men somewhere else, to get a better fight. They can always come back together in the next or final clash. Perhaps form a hunting party and have some fun with an opposite unit you see a little way down the line. Also, individual warriors should be quick to realise that their side is beginning to get the upper hand, so step back and act wounded etc. The Hersirs should be confident enough in the skill of their experienced warriors to have some flexibility and fun with the opposition during these scripted phases rather than having a static shield wall.
- If your unit is being over-powered in a scripted phase and the opposition do not seem to be relenting, then the Hersir needs to find support: the reserve from another unit perhaps or from the archers? Done properly, this real time reaction to spontaneous events are dynamic and exciting to watch and be in. Remember, anything that goes wrong can be fixed at the next parley by the Hersirs.

Every Group should take ownership of its part of the unit. This means having an in-built reserve of a few warriors who can plug a gap or be called upon to shore up a failing flank or another unit even. Let us get this working properly and have 3 clashes of good hard fighting with some deaths that are re-cycled which ends up with a good hard fought final phase and then a really awesome re-fight (or two) afterwards.

All this could lead to our warriors beginning to see the bigger picture, sooner: any gaps forming in their own wall are then closed or the gaps forming in the opposition wall are exploited. Communication with each other is important. One person in a unit shouting to everyone is very important. The younger, more lightly armed, warriors could be utilised as watchers behind the line who are scanning the wall for gaps or flankers, helping the Hersirs to do their job even more effectively. They then become a reactionary group to anything done by the enemy.

The more every Group develops these skills the more fun our battles will become because they will become much longer lasting: when we get it right, our re-fights can last 20-40 minutes and we leave the field feeling awesome. This is the objective for every show because then we will keep warriors for longer in the Society and hopefully regain some of those we have lost in the past.

### 5.3 Unit Missions

To better re-enact the mind-set of Viking and Anglo-Saxon warriors, we have included some detail here of how units and certain individuals would have behaved in certain situations. This is meant to be for guidance only.

#### 5.3.1 Battlefield Behaviour

During the Viking Age people did many things differently than we do today: this was true both on and off the battlefield. The Maldon poem gives good examples of what was considered responsible behaviour on an Anglo-Saxon battlefield and the Viking sagas are full of heroes and cowards alike. The Anglo-Saxon chronicle expresses the disgust of those authors at the actions of some Saxon ealdormen by indicating that their conduct was not what was expected of them.

The following sections are actions that should be carried out by warriors to give the scripted battle more of a Viking Age aspect and less of a modern feel. The principle of what follows is that a warrior who is an officer, or possesses chainmail, is of a higher social rank, where the expectation is to preserve name and dignity rather than follow the dictates of modern common sense.

The details below should be considered as the "default settings" of the warriors. If the script calls for a warrior to behave "out of character" then individuals will be appointed to play those roles by the script.

There are two aspects that all warriors should remember when performing during scripted battles:



- What would the individual do based upon the social class of his character?
- What would the unit do based upon the type of warrior we are portraying?

In the Viking Age warriors went to battle with the best equipment they could afford, this meant that there was a good deal of variety between them. Most units of an army represent a leader and followers: these followers could have a variety of weapons and equipment. It is not unusual to have lightly armed warriors in the same unit as heavily armed warriors. Archers and slingers may also be in the unit: Vikings particularly were known for their use of the bow. At present, the use of slingers (low status types) is constrained to the “home” army as marauding war bands would not have employed such a lowly weapon type: hence their use from within the Saxon army. Typically, the wealthier the leader was then the more heavy infantry were in his unit and ultimately, a king’s Hearth Troop would only have well-equipped warriors.

For more information on the clothing and look of both high status and low status warriors, look on the Authenticity page of the wiki. However, a combatants’ war-gear, clothing and behaviour on the battlefield should be consistent with their social status, as follows:

### 5.3.2 Higher Status Combatants

These will be warriors born into the aristocracy or serving in the military retinue of a great lord.

- They will be both dressed and armed well. Their clothing will be in relatively rich colours, with good decoration.
- They will carry swords, metal helmets and may well wear maille armour.
- They will have spent their lives hunting and training with weapons.
- They will have a highly-developed sense of personal honour and their reputation will be a matter of life and death.
- They should take the lead in forming the shield wall and defeating the enemy, taking an active in boosting the morale of their unit.
- They will not leave the battlefield unless their lord permits it.
- If their Unit Commander is killed, they should fight and die around his body.

### 5.3.3 Lower Status Combatants

These will be ‘armed civilians’ – estate workers, tenant farmers or labourers who have taken up arms to defend their homes. They

- They will be both dressed and armed simply. Their clothing will be in pale or washed out colours, with limited decoration. Clothing will be well cared-for and repaired if needed – fabric was expensive and had to be made to last.
- They should have a primary weapon that is cheap and keeps the enemy at a distance (preferably a spear, but a bow, javelins and a sling are all good alternatives) and a simple secondary weapon (langseax, hand axe, seax or no side-arm at all). Helmets should be concealed or else obviously old and battered.
- They should be the first to run when things go wrong: if their Unit Commander is killed or the shield wall breaks, they should try to flee the field.
- They will need to be motivated and rallied by their commanders and the better-equipped troops, all managed by the Hersirs.

### 5.3.4 Entry on to the battlefield

- A Hearth Troop should be in a column of twos on entering the arena. All other warriors can be in a looser order tending towards being in a ragged order. On reaching their position at the start line, Unit Leaders must call their warriors into line and bring order from the chaos.
- Where possible there should be no clear distinction between the units as they march on, only when they are formed up should this become clear.
- Verbal interactions should be developed more in our scripted phases. An army can chant as it moves into place and once in position they can taunt their opposition too.



### 5.3.5 The Hearth Troop

The Hearth Troop is there to:

- Keep their lord alive.
- To fight on around the body if their leader falls until the enemy is defeated or they are all killed in the attempt.

### 5.3.6 Front Rank

The front rank of the Shield Wall is there to:

- Act as a collective barrier against the enemy.
- To work offensively as a unit to defeat the enemy.

### 5.3.7 Second Rank

If a unit have a second rank of warriors, they are there to:

- Act as a pool of surplus warriors to give aid individually or collectively to the front rank when required. This is especially true where the combatant numbers exceed the width of the battlefield.
- Bolster the flanks of the unit if pressed by the enemy.
- Be moved by the Commander if required to bolster any other unit.

### 5.3.8 The Reserve Unit

The Reserve unit is there to:

- Strengthen any unit of the army, which is in danger of being broken.
- Counter any attempt by the enemy to flank the army.
- Make flank attacks upon the enemy when ordered.
- Replace routed, broken, or tired units or blocks within a unit.
- Skirmish with the enemy and delay their advance while the army rallies and or reforms after being broken.

The Reserve unit's mission is vital to the survivability of the army and as such should be entrusted to an experienced and combat-steady unit: they must respond to orders quickly and without question and its warriors must be fit and able to deploy quickly. Ultimately, it is the Reserve unit which is going to save the army from disaster or make the victory a triumph.

### 5.3.9 Skirmishers

The skirmishers are there to:

- Harass the enemy while the army deploys. Viking skirmishers can throw javelins at the enemy but nothing should fly over the wall due to Health and Safety considerations. The commentator can explain that this alludes to the pre-Christian Vikings claiming the enemy for Oðinn. Other racial types can of course throw javelins too.
- Spearhead major attacks by the army.
- Harass the enemy while the units of the army re-deploy.
- Stop the enemy engaging when the army is breaking contact.
- Engage and drive off the enemy skirmishers as they try to do their task.

### 5.3.10 Missile Warriors

The missile warriors (archers and slingers) are there to:

- Harass the enemy while the army deploys.
- Harass the enemy while the units of the army re-deploy.
- Harass the enemy as they advance.



- To work offensively with infantry units to defeat the opponent.
- Stop the enemy engaging when the army is breaking contact.
- Engage and drive off the enemy skirmishers.
- Engage and drive off the enemy missile warriors.
- Attempt to assassinate the opposition Leaders.
- **During cavalry display phases, no missiles are allowed and all missile warriors will be commanded to hold.**

#### 5.3.11 Crowd March

The crowd march is the final aspect of a Display at a Major Muster where the warriors line up as one shield wall (hopefully in their Groups so that shield designs are together). If possible, having a second rank with spears and long axes protruding over the front rank gives added depth to the look and does indicate to the audience what a shield wall really would look like.

The warriors should listen to the commands being given and react cohesively, remembering to shout as the shields lock and weapons come down.

Due to Health and Safety issues of having warriors or their weapons too close to the public and in uncontrolled ways and due to the fact that we are representing a shield wall:

**No warrior should break the formation to run forwards  
towards the barriers and the audience.**

The shield wall should remain locked, look impressive and stop at the inner barrier. This should give the audience plenty of opportunities for photographs.

The shield wall should then expect to be given the "About Turn" command, which is probably the only time they will use it on the field. Firstly, the second rank needs to advance through the front rank so that on the command, they are in the correct position for the march back across the field.

The commentator should inform the audience of the spectacle in terms of photography and inform those members of the audience on the sides where the shield wall will not march towards, to move to one of the sides where it is marching.

Every warrior in every Group should know how to perform shield wall commands and about turns and how to advance in a shield wall, locked.

### 5.4 Individual Missions

#### 5.4.1 Leader's performance

Unit Leaders must appear calm and heroic in the face of all adversity and set a good example to their warriors. They should stand firm in the centre of the shield wall and give orders in a loud clear voice. The Unit Leader must also be the calming influence in the unit, loved by their followers. If the script calls for a specific characterisation to oppose this, it will be written in (and explained by the PA to the audience).

#### 5.4.2 Sub-leader/Standard Bearer performance

These must **appear** energetic and more frightening to their own warriors than the enemy. They should suffer fools lightly and keep the warriors in the line and on task: their mother may love them but no one else does!





#### 5.4.3 Death of a Warrior

During scripted combat all warriors should be reacting to shots in the Two Hit Rule system so warriors should be reacting to wounds and taking a death if they are unlucky enough to be hit twice. That said, in a scripted phase, warriors should not be actively looking for the second killing blow. However, any warrior not defending themselves adequately should not be surprised if they are killed.

Wounded warriors should drop back out of the fighting line acting in accordance with the wound received. It would be really good for lower status warriors to fall back to the start line (in terror?) and to then be cajoled by higher status warriors there to get back in. Once safely behind the lines, the wounded warrior could wait to be attended to by suitably trained Youth Members or should bind the wound from a personal bandage stock, before being returned to the combat. Any realistic action behind the lines looks awesome to the audience as the spectacle moves away from a static linear fight.

Any dead (or wounded on the ground) will be recycled back into the line during the parley.

#### 5.4.4 Death of a Unit Leader

On the scripted death of their leader, Standard Bearers and any Hearth Troop (those nominated high status warriors at the Muster) should rally around their fallen leader's body and fight on to the death or victory. All other lower status warriors can rout from the field or flee to the other units if those leaders can gather the fleeing warriors in. This can give some good routing fighting if done correctly.

#### 5.4.5 Death of a Mailed Warrior

Any mailed warrior killed by a warrior of lower station should be looted if the body lies behind the killer's fighting line. This should be done only after discrete permission to do so has been given by the dead warrior as some warriors are not keen on this. The looter should be seen to attempt to take all the victim's weaponry and armour but in the interest of Safety the victim's helmet and shield should be left unless the fighting is over. Please do not walk off with someone's property: stay close and hand it back as the dead arise.

Non mailed warriors should always attempt to loot the dead, especially those mailed, at the end of the battle.

#### 5.4.6 Death of all one's followers

When a Leader is the sole survivor of a unit, an attempt to make a long speech should be made, in the hope that the enemy might get bored and wander off. If the enemy does not fatally interrupt or wander off, the leader should follow this by a desperate attempt to cut a way to freedom, or challenge for single combat and die heroically. **See "A Last Stand" below.**

#### 5.4.7 Loss of the Unit Standard

When a unit's standard is captured by the enemy then the Unit Leader and his Hearth Troop must attempt to recover it or die in the attempt.

Other warriors in the unit may or may not help to recover the standard as they please, or are ordered.

#### 5.4.8 Leader Runs Away

If a unit's leader runs away, the unit will break and every warrior in the unit will follow unless rallied by another unit leader.

#### 5.4.9 A Last Stand

Once there are a few warriors left on one side, please understand that you are there to die. Now this can be done in the far corner of the field where you feel safest with all your dead comrades at your feet. However, this looks particularly rubbish to those left and, more importantly, to the audience.



A better solution would be to come out of your thin line and take a last stand and be prepared to die quickly or even kill one or two opponents first. Please do it in front of the audience, with space in which to show off. Similarly, the winning army should realise that they outnumber the opposition by 50:3 and withdraw fully to allow the Last Stand scenario to unfurl. Everyone must remember we are putting on a show for the public in this phase and trying to do it in the best way we can to maximise our enjoyment too.

## 5.5 Script Manoeuvres

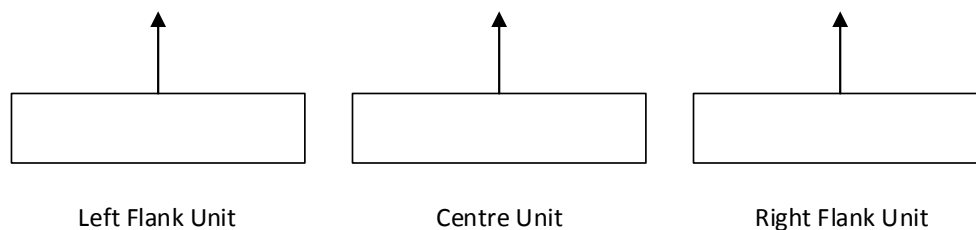
This section is written to be a repository of unit manoeuvres used when a Hersir is writing a script. The commands do not have to be spoken on the field but the Hersirs have to understand the manoeuvre and then give the appropriate commands to the individual units concerned.

Commanders can use these manoeuvres as part of unscripted fighting to communicate ideas quickly and effectively to their warriors.

It is hoped that we continue to both add to this dictionary and to edit the existing manoeuvres to best represent what is done on the battlefield currently.

### 5.5.1 Line Advance

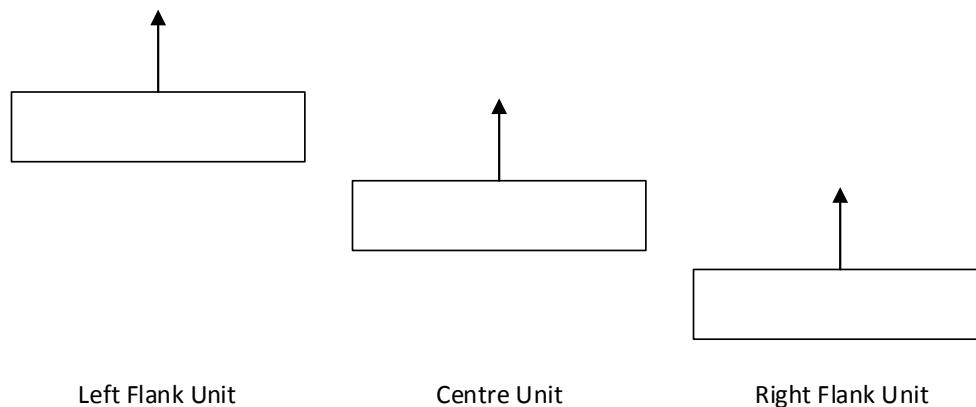
All units of the army advance in a single line towards the enemy. All units must ensure that no gaps are allowed to develop within the units. Gaps between units should be filled by skirmishers.



### 5.5.2 Staggered Advance

The units advance in a staggered formation, either starting on the left or the right as denoted by:

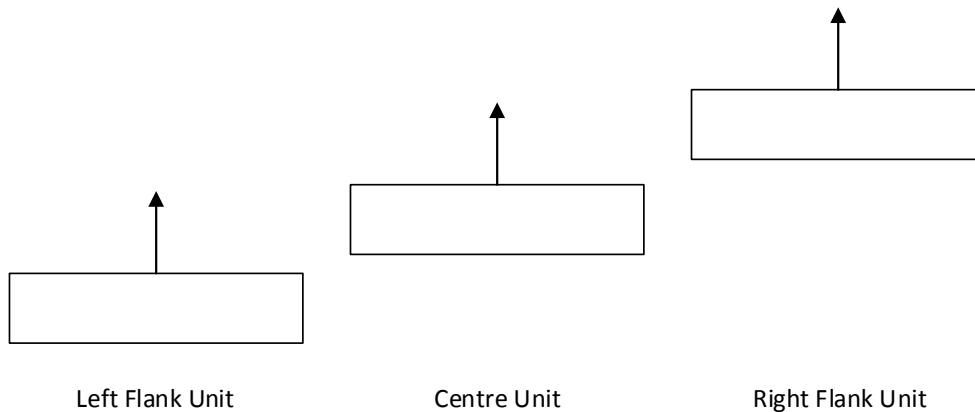
“on the left, Advance”







or “on the right, Advance”:



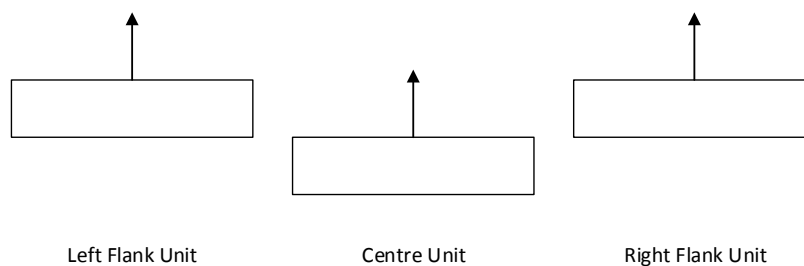
There should be enough of a lapse between the units advancing that the audience see this as a defined manoeuvre rather than a messy “Line Advance”.

Modern military terminology is “echelon advance” which comes from an Old French word for the rungs of a ladder – hence the Old English word “hlæderstæf”.

Skirmishers and archers will need to manage the gaps.

### 5.5.3 Flanks Advance

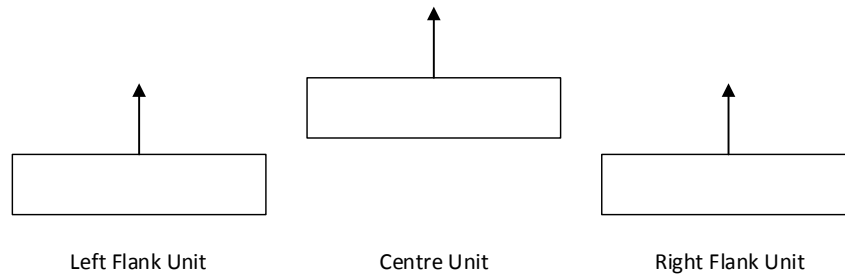
The flank units advance towards the enemy. When they have advanced ten-fifteen paces the centre unit advances. If the commander wants a greater or lesser gap between the units, the number of paces should be stated in the order.





### 5.5.4 Centre Advance

The centre unit advances towards the enemy. When it has advanced ten-fifteen paces the flank units advance. If the commander wants a greater or lesser gap between the units, the number of paces should be stated in the order.



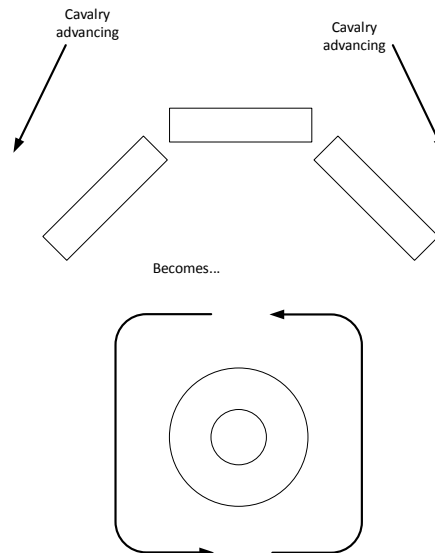
Left Flank Unit

Centre Unit

Right Flank Unit

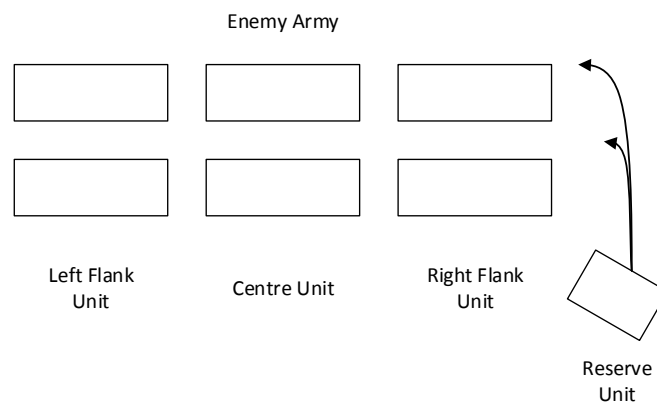
### 5.5.5 Defence against Cavalry

If the flanks of the army are threatened by cavalry, they should bend back until they are behind the centre thus forming a circle. The warriors should be in shield wall and all supernumeraries within the circle. Missile warriors are not allowed to engage with cavalry, so will either rout or take to the centre.



### 5.5.6 Left/Right Flank Attack

Whilst the enemy's shield wall is attacked, a designated unit moves around to try to flank the enemy.





### 5.5.7 Additional Formations

The manoeuvres detailed above are purely “Hersir-speak” to communicate effectively what the army (or its units) should be doing and is not for general dissemination to every warrior.

In addition to these manoeuvres, there are some specific unit formations e.g. “Boar Snout” or “Two Ranks” which are held within vol.2 of the Training Manual. These are part of the Basic Formation Assessment so the Training Thegns need to have access to that information directly.

### 5.5.8 Signals

Many of the orders issued by the commander require units to act in co-operation with each other, attacks have to be coordinated or they become disjointed and lead to disaster for the army.

As part of an order, the commander may issue a signal instruction. A signal instruction informs the unit leader of the signal which will initiate a tactical order.

Due to the lack of sophistication of Viking age technology these signals are restricted to visual and audible signals.

Audible signals are usually made with a musical instrument or a loud verbal cry. Horns are most likely to be heard. A verbal cry must be repeated by those in a command role if it is to be heard throughout the army

Visual signals are usually made with flags or banners, the waving in a particular way of the army banner could be a signal to attack.



## 6 Glossary

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Access Point	The gap in the barriers allowing the army onto the battlefield. It should be manned by a marshal at all times.
Approach Route	The path that the army needs to take to get to the arena from its Muster Point.
Arena	The land contained in its entirety by the outer barriers. <i>See "Battlefield"</i> .
Army	The whole warrior contingent of one side of the Battle. Usually split into Units.
Army Commander	The Hersir in charge of an army in a scripted battle. Usually the Battle Captain plus one of the Seconds.
Banner	The flag held by the Standard Bearer to focus attention upon the Unit Leader.
Barriers	The ropes that safely separate the warriors from the audience.
Battle Captain	The person in charge of the Arena for the whole of a Society Event.
Battle Staff	The two Army Commanders (plus any sub-commanders needed).
Battlefield	That part of the arena contained in its entirety by the inner barriers. <i>See "Arena"</i> .
Circle	A training exercise to show the public. It can be either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With honour – every warrior fights alone and no back-stabbing.</li><li>• Without honour – warriors can back stab. There should be no ganging up on others though but Group warriors do help each other.</li></ul> <i>See "Hunting Groups"</i> .
Crib	A cut down version of the script held by the Battle Staff whilst in the Display as an aide memoire.
Crowd March	The final part of the Battle Display where the two armies come together into one shield wall to march down the audience. No running or breaking rank!
Debrief	Brief meeting of the unit or armies to discuss the Display and to find if improvements/changes are necessary.
Defile	An obstacle for the army to get around/through.
Display	A specific segment of the Show within the arena such as "Weapons Display" or "Archery Display" for the public to watch.
Event	The whole of the weekend activities as organised by the Vikings on the site.
Figureheads	Those warriors who are taking command positions for the edification of the audience (not necessarily with a Hersir role attached).
Formations	Specific deployments of a Unit of warriors, as trained for by the RTT(c)s. <i>See "Manoeuvres."</i>
Free Fight	That battle element of the Display where there is no script or Hersirs controlling it. Also called a re-fight.

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Hearth Troop	Those heavily armed and chain-mailed warriors who protect the Unit Leader.
Hersir	Those warriors who manage the scripted battles at Society Events.
Hunting Groups	A specified number of warriors fighting together (usually 3 or 5), normally in a "circle without honour" situation.
Manoeuvres	Specific deployments of the whole army, as used by the Hersir to communicate their tactics easily to each other in scripts. See "Formations".
Muster	The call to arms of the warriors typically 15 minutes before the arena display starts.
Non-combatants	Those people allowed on the field who are not taking active part in the fighting.
P.A.	The public address system, having the commentator being the audience's point of contact on the activities in the arena.
Re-fight	See "Free Fight".
Reserve	Those warriors held back by the Group, unit or army to re-act to unplanned for circumstances.
RTT(c)	Recognised Training Thegn for Infantry Combat.
RTT(h)	Recognised Training Thegn for Cavalry Combat.
RTT(m)	Recognised Training Thegn for Missile Combat.
Script	The full explanation of the Show's main Battle display. The Battle Staff need to know it in detail. The Hersirs need to understand the gist of it. The PA should have a copy too for reference within their commentary.
Scripted Fight	That battle element of the Display where the Hersirs control the fighting through management of the script.
Show	The entire day's activities held within the arena, as put on by the Vikings. This is broken down into slots called arena displays.
Skirmishers	Those lightly armoured, mobile warriors who harry the opposition.
Unit	A sub-division of an army. There are usually 2 or 3 units in an army.
Unit Commanders	The Leader, Sub-Leader and Standard Bearer. The Sub-Leader is the only one who needs to be a Hersir.
Youth Member	Those 13-17 year olds allowed on the field under supervision under certain non-combatant activities.

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## 7 Appendix 1

### 7.1 The Battle of Maldon (991)

#### 7.1.1 Story-telling Requirements

	The Story-teller
	A minimum of six warriors to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warriors prepared to act the fool.</li> <li>Warriors that will just follow orders.</li> </ul>
People	Non-combatants (and possibly Youth Members) used to bulk out the numbers and to help them participate in the arena with warriors as there should be no serious combat in the story: in fact, the sillier the fighting, the better.
	Some females needed to play the wave maidens, sometimes called Miss/Mrs North Sea.
	At least one javelin or throwing spear (though it won't be thrown!)
Props	If possible, a couple of sheep skins and a skin that could pass as wolf skin.
	Plenty of water for the wave maidens in buckets, cups and horns.

#### 7.1.2 Introduction

The words of the narrator are contained within the boxes whilst any notes and comments on these are outside. What follows is a brief overview of the story to which each narrator should add their own delivery.

I am going to tell a story of a battle that was fought in England against the Vikings over 1,000 years ago in the year 991 at a place called Maldon.

But our story starts in Norway where a young warrior wanted to make himself king of Norway. Unfortunately, at that time Norway was part of the kingdom of Denmark and its king, Svein Forkbeard, might have something to say about the upstart but that's a story for another day. In the arena here, I have some of my friends who are going to help me tell the story and act it out for you.

To the warriors: First, I need a warrior to play the young, the brave, the mighty Olaf Trygvasson!

**Notes:** Emphasise the "young" and end up picking the more inappropriate the volunteer the better: old instead of young, or female instead of male.

Now Olaf needs two things to make himself king of Norway - a band of brave and fierce warriors and treasure, either gold or silver.

He has a band of brave warriors - see they stand before you!



At this point the warriors could turn round to see who the narrator is talking about. The narrator tells his helpers that it is them, which gives an opportunity for banter between the narrator and the actors. Do not let it drag on too long: if the narrator feels uncomfortable with the timing then so will the audience.

### 7.1.3 Scene 1

Olaf has a band of fierce warriors but he still needs treasure. Where can he get it?

The warriors or the audience might offer suggestions.

England of course...the richest state in Europe outside of the Byzantine Empire,  
with the finest tax collectors!

You can get topical here about the current tax situation but do not obviously lean towards one political view as that will annoy someone in the audience.

To the warriors: How they you going to get to England and which way is it?

Their answers should be "by ship" and "West". It is worth finding out which way West is as you can have fun getting them pointed the right way.

The warriors have to get into the ship. Some will know they row with their backs to the bow, some won't.

Stick Olaf at the bow, get one warrior to steer and, if possible, a warrior with a spear (or better still a standard) can represent the mast. Weapons can be used as oars.

Try to ensure that all those warriors with beards do not sit together on one side of the ship (a joke from Erik the Viking).

When ready the warriors row out of the fjord, as they do so they sing a rowing song.

The warriors start singing "Row, row, row your boat" etc.

They sail across the North Sea braving the storms and great waves

The wave maidens now start to throw water at the warriors. Olaf at the bow bears the brunt of the storm.

Eventually they struck land!

And the warriors all fall over.

In Scotland!



Now you can briefly discuss geography: weren't the Vikings supposed to be great navigators? They were, but if you sail due West from Oslo Fjord you get to Scotland.

Anyway, Olaf wants hard cash so sets off south for England.

More waves from the wave maidens.

Finally Olaf ordered his men to land on Northey Island, near Maldon in Essex and with the cry of "Once more onto the beach dear friends," Olaf lead his men ashore.

Those with knowledge of Shakespeare should groan at this point!

To the warriors: The island is very small, any warriors not part of a tight little circle will get their feet wet.

The wave maidens again throw water on the feet of those furthest from the huddle.

#### 7.1.4 Scene 2

Now we introduce some new characters from Maldon: First the ancient Byrhtnoth, He is wise in the ways of war, a veteran of many battles and enjoying retirement in Maldon. At the moment he and his warriors are in his hall enjoying themselves.

Byrhtnoth and his men are provided by taking some warriors from those who have just rowed across the sea, this works because it is the Vikings telling the story. There can be some argument about who is going to play the baddies (the English): the more they act like "kids playing cowboys and Indians", the better.

The shepherd boy should be drawn from the English side and the wolf from the Vikings (they were described as Sea Wolves). The sheep could be children from the audience or Youth Members but anyone will do.

There is a young shepherd boy protecting his flock from a wolf that is trying to attack the sheep. The boy chases him off, throwing stones.

But as the morning mist clears the shepherd boy sees the Vikings on Northey Island. What should he do? Stay and protect his flock from the wolf? Or should he go and warn his lord about the sea wolves?" Obviously he rushes to the hall to warn Byrhtnoth.

As soon as the shepherd boy leaves his flock, the wolf attacks and kills the sheep. Byrhtnoth calls out his warriors and they mount their horses to ride out to battle.

If there are any coconut halves or wooden bowls, Monty Python and the Holy Grail can be imitated as the warriors ride to battle.





### 7.1.5 Scene 3

To the warriors: The English warriors dismount and form a line facing the island, Byrhtnoth rides up and down giving advice to the warriors.

At first the warriors could not get at each other as they were separated by a narrow channel, all they could do was exchange missiles...

The warriors swap missiles, thanking each other, as if exchanging gifts.

... or say rude things to one another.

The warriors say: "Rude things!"

But Byrhtnoth knew that when the tide went out, a narrow causeway would link the island to the mainland.

Cloaks, spears or shields can be used to illustrate the causeway.

He sent his bravest warrior, Wulfstan, to defend it.

When the tide finally goes out the Vikings try to cross the causeway but they have to go in single file and each Viking that approaches Wulfstan is cut down... falling into the water.

... wave maidens again!

Once some Vikings are dead, they decide it is silly to keep being killed one at a time when it would be much better if they could all be killed at the same time! They send a messenger to Byrhtnoth, saying, "Noble lord, let us sea wolves cross over the causeway unmolested, let us draw up our two hosts without harm and let us decide the fate of men in fair and noble combat. If you do not let us cross unmolested," and here the Viking made the worst threat he could think of: "If you do not let us cross, we... will... go... away! Yes!"

Now Byrhtnoth knew that this was a dire threat as his problem was not fighting the Vikings (he had already fought them before in this very place and beaten them). No, his problem was finding them! There were no more than two million people in England at that time with bad roads and no phones. The Vikings could turn up anywhere and by the time the alarm was raised they would have departed with their plunder.

To ensure Byrhtnoth understood this threat, the Viking continued, "We will go away! But we will be back a day, or a week, or a month from now when you are asleep in your beds!"

Byrhtnoth, wise in the ways of war, agrees to move his army back, allowing the Vikings to cross.

The English army moves back and the Vikings cross the causeway. Wave maidens be ready!



## 7.1.6 Scene 4

The two armies line up ready for battle with the respective leaders in the centre of their lines.

Once the armies are ready a fierce battle ensues.

The warriors should fight in a pantomime way, calling out “Fierce battle cries!” and the wounded can “Scream!”

Byrhtnoth, though old, is in the thick of the fighting. Then he is wounded!

Call the warriors to stop fighting and move them apart leaving Byrhtnoth where the audience can see.

A brave and noble Viking hurls his javelin at Byrhtnoth, it strikes him in the side...

A warrior carries the javelin as if it is in flight and touches Byrhtnoth’s side with it, whereupon Byrhtnoth traps the javelin under his arm and the Viking steps a couple of paces back but stays in front of his shield wall.

The warrior to Byrhtnoth’s side pulls the javelin out and Byrhtnoth takes it and hurls it back at the brave and noble Viking, it strikes him in the neck and he falls dead.

The battle then continues.

Then Byrhtnoth is hit again.

Again the warriors separate (grumbling at the narrator).

A brave and noble Viking steps forward and with a mighty blow inflicts a mortal wound to Byrhtnoth.

Byrhtnoth is not dead yet. Before he falls he raises his sword and with a mighty blow removes the head of the Viking that struck him.

Then Byrhtnoth fall to the ground, but he is still not dead! He is a hero and like all heroes must make a speech before he dies, “Oh Lord hear my prayer. Give victory to your chosen people, deny the pagans victory, let true Christian men rule this fair land”.

And now he dies.

His bravest warriors gather round him but there was one who saw him fall and chose to deny his oath and instead flee. It was Godric that fled, leaping upon Byrhtnoth’s own horse to ride away.

Many of the English mistook Godric for Byrhtnoth and then they also fled.

Half the English army should flee and the remainder gather round their fallen lord.



Those English remaining stand around Byrhtnoth's body, as they had sworn to do, ready to defend him from the Vikings. The Vikings see that the remaining English are few in number but are brave and good men and offer to let them live if they will surrender. The English refuse and each in turn announces his name and lineage and makes a speech. The Vikings soon get fed up of listening to the English waffle and attack and kill them all.

### 7.1.7 Scene 5

Olaf orders his men to cut Byrhtnoth's head from his body and sticks it on a spear.

Use a helmet on a spear for the head.

Olaf and his men then go about the country showing the head to the cowardly English and demand Dane geld. The Bishop of Ely agrees to pay 10,000 pound in silver to Olaf if he would go away.

And that is how Olaf got his first instalment of cash to make himself king of Norway.

Though at the time of the battle he was a pagan he would later be the first king to bring Christianity to Norway and would one day be a saint.

And so ends my tale of Olaf Tryggvason. A big hand please for all my helpers.

## 7.2 The story of Oswald and Oswiu and their dealing with Penda

## 7.3 The story of Ralph the Timid

# For your own safety

please remain behind the outer  
barrier at all times.

