

With an amazing entry in the Ice Dragon Competition 2025, we catch up with Birna Hakadottir and ask what she plans to do next!

Lady Birna Hakadottir



My family currently lives in the Barony of the Endless Hills, but when my husband and I first got involved in the SCA in 2005 (dove right in with Pennsic as our first event and intro to the SCA), we lived in the Dominion of Myrkfaelinn. Of course, I didn't know that at the time, as we were naïve to the entire concept of how the Known World is divided. We had a lot to learn.

So, we did a bit of Kingdom touring, during which our SCA involvement went from very casual to much more involved. We started out in Æthelmearc. In 2008, we moved to the Shire of Blak Rose in the East Kingdom. We were not involved locally when we lived there. Missed opportunity! In 2011, we moved to the Shire of Roxbury Mill in Atlantia. We became more active locally and began to truly learn what the SCA can be and is for so many people. Our two children were born in the Shire of Roxbury Mill and spent their first years in the SCA there. In 2017, we left Roxbury Mill to return to fair Æthelmearc and settled in Endless Hills.

My first foray into the A&S world was with nalbinding. Mundanely, I knit and crochet, so learning about nalbinding seemed a logical step. In terms of competition projects, I have completed a recreation of the Coppergate Socks found in York, England, and an interpretation of the mittens found in Grave 1/1933 in Tuukkala, Finland. These projects won the Fiber Arts category at Ice Dragon in 2024 and 2025.





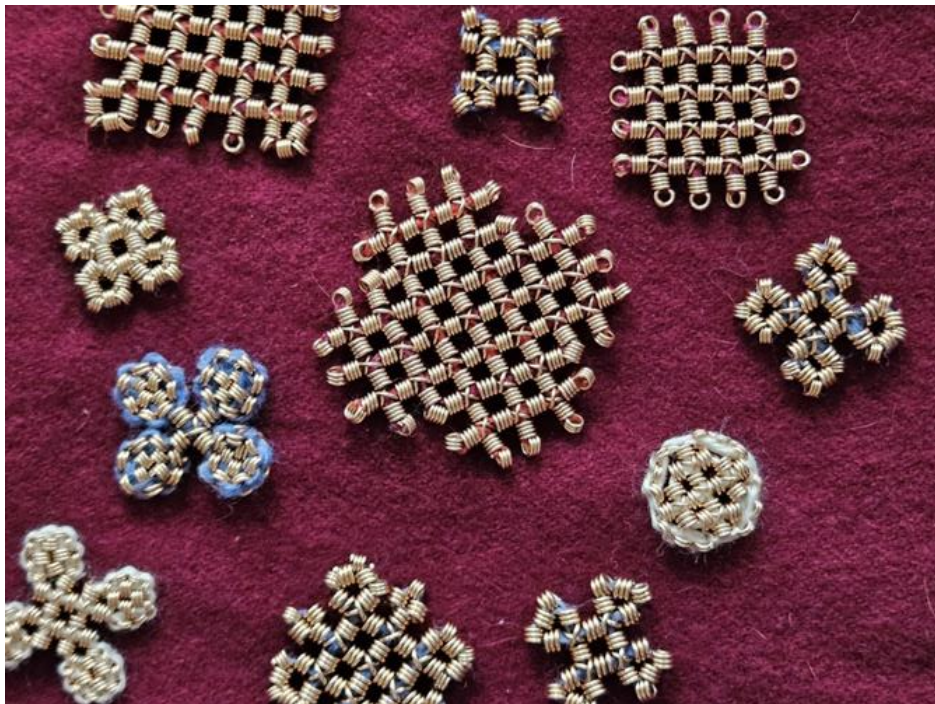
I enjoy nalbinding accessories for garb for myself and friends, including hats and mittens. I recently nalbound a matching hood-and-mitten set for myself using indigo-dyed wool and I am currently working on creating nalbound socks for the whole family.

I've been able to have some fun with nalbinding as well, such as creating small stuffies for the Kingdom toy chest. I love nalbinding because it's so portable and requires so few supplies. I can work on projects nearly anywhere (and often do)!



I entered the previously mentioned mittens along with four other projects in the Grand Pentathlon at this year's Festival of the Passing of the Ice Dragon. Along with my nalbinding, I entered: nalbinding needles carved from antler; a recreation of the bronze spiral temple ornaments from Grave 41/2016 in Ravattula, Finland; a selection of bronze spiral appliques recreations from three Finnish graves—Eura Grave 56, Ravattula Grave 41/2016, and Perniö Grave 6; and a recreation of the Skjoldehamn hood found in Norway. Diving into the world of Finnish bronze spiral ornamentation just made me want more and I look forward to working on additional projects featuring bronze spirals in the future.

I was honored to receive second place overall in the Pentathlon as well as first in a few specific categories. The projects at Ice Dragon were beautiful and varied. There was so much impressive work on display and it was a privilege to be counted among them.



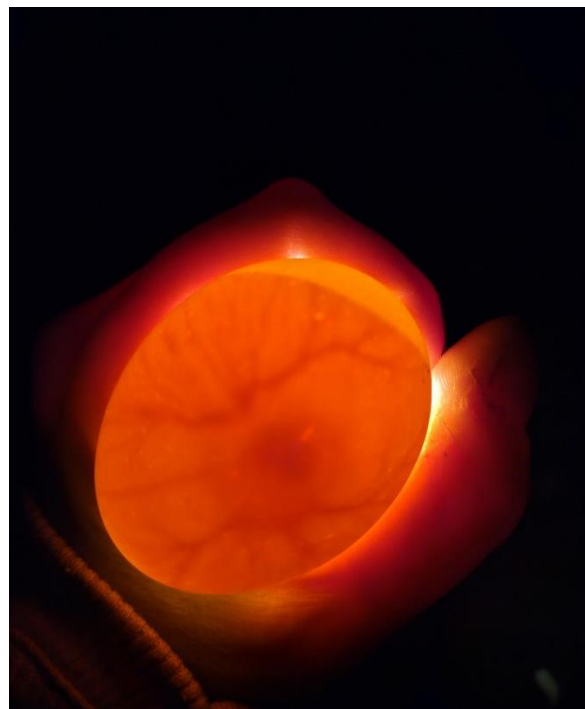
Moving forward, I plan to continue my education in nalbinding and Finnish bronze spirals, but I have also begun a project that veers slightly away from wearable arts. I am currently incubating a clutch of landnámshænan/Icelandic landrace chicken eggs. Or, rather, my hen, Annie, is incubating said eggs.



Annie takes her job very seriously.

Íslenska landnámshænan translates to Icelandic settlement hen or “hen of the settlers.” Landnámshænan are believed to be descended from the chickens the Viking settlers brought to Iceland in the 10th century. For thousands of years, these were the only chickens in Iceland. They were bred for specific traits—namely, hardiness, foraging ability, and mothering skills—and not specific looks. A British study in 2004 of Icelandic chicken blood samples found that 78% of the Icelandic DNA is unique and not found in any other chicken breed in the world. Commercial, capitalist chicken practices threatened the breed’s survival until conservation efforts were made in the 1970s. Currently, their status is threatened and there are only about 5,000 Icelandic chickens internationally.

I ordered Icelandic chicken hatching eggs from David Grote of Whippoorwill Farm in Wisconsin. I had considered Finnish landrace chickens for this project, but I couldn't find any U.S. breeders of the Finnish landrace. The eggs arrived nestled cozily in a bed of Icelandic wool. Will I be combing and spinning that wool and nabinding with it? You bet I will.



Normal egg development (veining) after 5 days of incubation.

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Grote began in 2006 with hatching eggs acquired from Lyle Behl, who had attended a seminar in Iceland in 2003 and imported Icelandic landrace chicken eggs from the Kolsstaðir farm in Iceland. Grote's farm is now home to all four lines of landnámshænan.

I received 18 eggs from Whippoorwill Farm. Thirteen appear to be fertilized and developing, and I should have chicks hatching around May 8, 2025.

I am currently researching Viking animal husbandry practices, particularly in Iceland, for this Icelandic chicken project, as well as woven chicken baskets in period to explore how I can share my love of chickens in the Society. I am excited by what is possible!



The Dragon and the Maid

By Willow Moon

There was a maid fierce and fair

Born of noble Blood

No sewing for she would much rather be out riding all covered in mud

The maiden's dread was blissful wed

Thus she ran away

And crept inside a dragon's cave

To wait the break of day

The cave was dark

But as sings the lark

Said she the beast must be at bay

I'll just rest here

No need to fear

For none shall come this way

So she's slept

Her care unkept

Till smoke her dreams disturbed

Up she did rise

To greet glowing eyes

of her fearsome Maison D'hotelier

**The Dragon spoke
I see ye've woke
Are ye not aware
You're made of meat
Which I tend to eat
So what brings ye to my lair**

**The maiden shook with dread
but bravely said
Madame I thought to hide
From a fate more mean
Than the meal of a Queen
When first I snuck inside**

**For ye I'll hunt, and cook and clean
If here I might remain unseen
And in your haven hide
My heart is firm
For foul suitors I cannot abide
Her words amused the dreadful wyrm
And so a deal was struck
Those pursuing her fair hand would find they had no luck**

Wild and free she roamed the land
As Artemis, Bow in hand
Having vowed a sapphic conviction
She hunted each day
Hear rent for to pay
To avoid a toothsome eviction

Til happened one day
That a knight made his way
To the door of their stoney abode
Then peering in
He saw with a grin
The maid was home quite alone

In he did swagger
And brandished a dagger
Come along little maid
For your father has paid
With your hand for soon we will wed
That being said I'll have you a bed
My heirs for to create
But since you're alone
as lust filled his tone
I wonder why I should wait

My Lord, stay your hand

I may not wed a man

Maternity is not my fate

Males do not attract me

But come sit and have tea

Philosophy may we debate

While pouring she did feign

With a dose of henbane

Into the cup of the wretch

Soon he did sleep

a slumber most deep

While a sharp kitchen knife did she fetch

She did not cry

as she carved out his eye

Never again to rise from his sleep

Then she did fry

Him into a pie

Originally meant to be sheep

The dragon did feast on men who were beasts

And the maiden her vows did uphold

Till one day came a knight dressed all in white

Who challenged the serpent most bold

So they did fight

for a day and night

Til the dragon nearly was felled

The maid filled with dread

For mercy she pled

The knights compassion compelled

If her life you will spare

I'll go into your care

This fiend is a friend not a foe

Though you'll have my hand

I cannot love a man

Despairing thus did she know

Do not cry little bird

For of your oath have I heard

The knight to her said

My hand may you take

and no vow will you break

Here removing the helm from their head

Should you come with me
You'll remain wild and free
For I too am of Artemis's clan
Then down on one knee
The truth did she see
For the knight was a woman, not man

It was love at first sight
Between the maid and the knight
A most auspicious match did they make
The dragon was saved
Their futures were paved
For their affection they would not forsake

Their fame being made
The maiden took up a trade
While she's known through the land
For baking by hand
Deserts of an abnormal size
Should you have a care
Just be aware
Unmanned are the meats of her pies

Now, I'm told they've grown old
And made their abode
In a cottage overlooking the sea
The cats they have had
though some think they are mad
Numbering Twenty and three.

Arts and Sciences Calendar

(Please go to the events page for more information: <https://aethelmearc.org/events/>)

May 10: Knights and Round Tables: Classes for the arts and martial skills, with a focus on teaching those looking to travel that path.

May 15 - May 18: Æthelmearc War Practice: There will be an unofficial Beverages Championships for Non-Brewed Alcoholic and/or Non-Alcoholic Beverages. There will be prizes.

The Scarlet Apron Championship will also be held at War Practice!

This competition is open to any and all who have a penchant for medieval culinary arts. Whether you are new to period cooking or a full fledged laurel, all are welcomed at the table!

This year's theme is Made to Last, any kind of food item that is designed to stand the test of time, smoked meats, jerky, pickles, cheese, any thing you can find that was made to preserve foods in a pre refrigerator period. Anyone wishing to participate should create an example of such food from anywhere in the SCA-period. This could be an interpretation of a subtlety that has been described in a coking text, or an original creation that can be considered "period plausible" based on its design, construction and the materials used to create it.

All contestants should follow these guidelines:

- 1. The entry should be made and assembled prior to judging. This is not a competition at which contestants must cook their final product on site.*
- 2. The use of period techniques is preferred and encouraged.*
- 3. Contestants should provide a recipe and overview of technique. The winning recipe will be added to the Scarlet Apron Cookbook and preserved for prosperity. A complete list of materials used and any references to historical record that are relevant.*

Entries have three potential categories to win: Youth (ages 5-12), Populace Choice, and Overall Winner. Cooks of all skill levels are encouraged to enter! Youth and Scarlet Apron Overall winners will be announced at court. The Overall winner will receive the Scarlet Apron (to be returned the following year), the ability to choose next year's theme and be a judge for 2026, and a scroll of recognition. All entrants will receive a one-of-a-kind pewter token specific to this year.

Any questions can be directed to the competition coordinator, Tara Bai, willowmoonmal@gmail.com, Willow Malbrough on Facebook. We are so excited to renew this competition and are looking forward to tasting all the wonderful entries.

May 30 - June 1: Academy of St. Clare of Assisi VII: Embroidery Sleepover: small specialized classes on single topics, long detailed “kit” classes on beloved styles, and a chance for embroiderers to spend time with others who love embroidery and its myriad possibilities.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

If you have an idea for a rabbit hole, please contact the A&S Minister’s Office at ans@aethelmearc.org. We would love to include your arts and sciences in a future edition of the Sylvan Signal.