



CHRONICLER'S WELCOME

Unto the worthy populace of Bordescros and to all of the friends of the Shire, Greetings.

Welcome home to all those who went to Festival last month and I have heard that everyone had a great time and there was much fighting, drinking and feast to be had.

Our new web site is up and running so everyone become a member you can access the site by going to <http://scabordescros.webs.com/> , there is still some bugs to work out and pages to be finished so be patient it will be finished soon but in the mean time it is usable.

We have a NEW HOME, read all about it in the minutes and on our web site about it. This Months Bash will be held at the new site on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> of May at the Sport Fishing Club on Borella Rd just before the Airport. Please come along and get to know our new home.

We need more articles for the Grapevine, so please send in your stories, recipes, craft patterns or any great web sites that you might have found.

Yours in service,  
**Arnora BloodAxe**

<u>CALENDAR</u>		
16 <sup>TH</sup> MAY		TOURNEY AND FEAST AT THE FISHING CLUB ON BORELLA RD
6 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE		LOCH ALBA'S TOURNEY AND FEAST
13 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE		WEST WARD DEMO: DENLIQUIN
14 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE		BORDESCROS FIGHTER TRAINING AND A&S



Seneschal's Address

Greetings All;

The Shire of Bordescros has moved the venue for its monthly Tourney and Feast and A&S and Fighter Practise.

The new venue is the Albury Wodonga Sport Fishing Club, Riverina Highway, Albury 2640 We will be using it from May Bash (that is Saturday 16th May 2009)

It is next to the airport (opposite Waterworks Rd). There is a bus stop about half a km away (next to Spotlight). It is only about 4km from the Albury post office and about 3 km from the train station. It is close to the hospital (just in case). There is an IGA supermarket and a pub with drive thru bottle shop about 1 km away (at Newmarket).

The venue has space for archery - a tourney field - and of course a feast hall. The AWSFC is going to build us our own storage room, we will have our own fridge and pantry. Until we can get a second stove, be aware there is only a small 'family' size oven and 4 hotplates, so we probably should cook in frying pans and slow cookers etc if we can.

AWSFC, ASR, ABDOMEN and now Bordescros are the four groups who will be using this venue. We can use all the facilities that are in place, ABDOMEN are OK with us using their electronic equipment, so if fighter practice falls on a rainy day you can play a Duke Brannos training DVD and then practise what you see in the back room, which doesn't have a false ceiling. At A&S we will have space for learning to dance, we can have cooking classes, etc.

**Times:**

**Second Sunday of each month:**

1:00 - 3:00 A&S - Group projects - classes and DIY projects

3:00 - 5:00 (or 6) fighter practice - heavy, rapier, archery

**NOTE:** If we just get our gear out of the hall and don't actually use the hall, we don't have to pay extra. So if folk want to practise weekly, we can do so.

**Third Saturday of each month:**

Commencing 1:00 pm - ?? up to midnight (curfew) Tourneys followed by business meeting followed by feast.

From now on, until further notice, we will be at this venue and we won't be moving all over town. Hopefully that means we will be easily found by wayfarers and if you miss a month, you won't be lost the following month.

**NOTE:** May fighter practise is still at JC King Park

**NOTE:** Also other Sundays A&S will still be at my place from about 3 pm - 6ish, stitch & bitch, drop in for a cuppa & chat etc.

Regards,  
Lowry



“May” from Les Tres Riche Heures de Duc de Berry



AT THE MARSHALL'S COMMAND

### **Fighter practice**

The Albury and Loch Alba Practice will be for heavy combat training and rapier training if sufficient authorised marshals are available for each discipline

ALBA LOCH	The last Sunday of each month between 2pm and 5pm. Please look for a Borderlist message from James Douglas to confirm it is on at at Glenfield Community Centre.
ALBURY	The 2nd Sunday of each month from 2pm until say 6pm (i.e. sunset if that keen!) at Bilson Park. This is located between David and MacAuley Streets, Perry and North Streets central Albury opposite the skate bowl and netball courts.

Remember there is always the opportunity to train at Bordescros monthly bash if time permits.

Yours in service,  
James Douglas

*Don't forget to send in any articles from Loch Alba for your page in the Grapevine.  
Many thanks to Crimthann for last months article but we do need more.  
-- Editor*

### **Positions Vacant**

#### **Seneschal**

~~The position of Seneschal is to become vacant as of October this year and Lady Lowry would like any interested parties to apply now for the position so she has time to train the applicant to take over from her later in the year. Unfortunately I have no details for this position but please contact Lady Lowry for more information if you are interested in the position, 0417 412 450 [tfsawyer@yahoo.com.au](mailto:tfsawyer@yahoo.com.au).~~

Note: This position change has been temporarily withdrawn. Both of the other positions have been filled at this time but I am required to advertise them for 3 editions.

#### **Herald**

The position of Group Herald is Vacant and needs to be filled, this is a very important role within our group but unfortunately I have no details of the role, if you are interested please contact Lady Lowry on 0417 412 450 [tfsawyer@yahoo.com.au](mailto:tfsawyer@yahoo.com.au)

#### **A&S**

The position of A&S officer is Vacant and needs to be filled, unfortunately I have no details of the role but if you are interested please contact Lady Lowry on 0417 412 450 [tfsawyer@yahoo.com.au](mailto:tfsawyer@yahoo.com.au)

THE HOUSEHOLD OF RADBURNE

*Would like to invite One and All! To our Anniversary Feast and Tourney*

*Come and meet with old friends and make some new ones!  
There will be entertainments from a play to dancing*

*Feast ~*

*Where: 'Dragon Hill' 29L Gidgee Road Dubbo NSW*

*When: Saturday 16 May 2009*

*Site opens at midday with Target Archery (IKAC to commence at 2pm), with the Feast commencing at 6.00pm. (There will be the opportunity for pick ups for heavy fighters in the afternoon.)*

*Dancing and Bardic Circle until late! (Camping space available on site or accommodation available in Dubbo a short ten to fifteen minute drive from the site)*

*Tourney~*

*Where: 'Dragon Hill' 29L Gidgee Road Dubbo NSW*

*When: Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2009*

*Armour inspection at 9am with tourney to commence at 10am*

*A light lunch of soup and bread rolls will be provided at the end of the tourney after which the site will close.*

*Bookings are appreciated by 9 May 2009. (If you will not know until the last minute if you can attend, please contact the Steward.) Single \$20, Children (6-14): \$10, under 6 free. Families: POA. Price includes camp feast on Saturday evening and lunch on Sunday.*

*BYO Soft Drink & Alcohol – the site is discretely wet. Drinking water will be provided.*

*Booking forms and further information are available at: [www.sca.org.au/radburne](http://www.sca.org.au/radburne) or call Katrijn (Karen) on 0419 850067 or email on [katrijn.van.delden@gmail.com](mailto:katrijn.van.delden@gmail.com)*

*If you require clothing for the feast there will be a limited amount available. An attempt at pre-1600 clothing is required*

**Torlyon**

**May 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> 2009**

**King Salamander Camping Event – Torlyon**

**Where:** Crossroads Medieval Village Site, Sheldricks Lane, Yass.

Help us say goodbye to autumn and prepare for winter.

Feast will be based on wild game.

Tourneys – Rapier and Heavy (dependent on numbers)

Siege Weapon challenge

Archery

Collegia

Hand sewing leather

Tent making

How to dress a bird and cook it campfire style

Plus others TBA

Competitions:

Campfire cooked medieval recipe

Fire theme – Garb, Armour or “Thing”

There will also be an Iron Chef Style competition between 3 of Torlyon's best cooks.

**It will be cold** so bring plenty of warm clothing and bedding if camping.

**Cost:** \$30 for day only (\$35 non-member) set price.  
 \$70 for weekend (\$75 non-member); Friday night to Sunday afternoon - includes camping fee.  
 Pre-book and pay for weekend by May 15<sup>th</sup>: discount of \$10. After 15<sup>th</sup> til 28<sup>th</sup>: discount \$5

**Stewards:** Tosti Bell and Gaigin  
**Bookings:** Baron Bastian der Grosse 0431118699  
 For more information contact:  
 Lady Isabella de Bordeaux 02 62265543 or email lynisabella@swiftdsl.com.au  
 Site is dog-friendly BUT owners must be responsible!

\*



**Odin Rune**



**Freya Rune**



**Thor Rune**

The following article was sent to us from Lady Rosamunda and due to its size I have decide to split it up into its months and from my first impression it is very informative and those Vikings had more celebrations than we do now, but then again, any excuse to drink and be merry is the Viking Way.

### Asatru Calendar

#### Months

Religiously, Ásatrú Folk use the old, non-Roman names for the months, usually based on either the original names (usually Icelandic or Anglo-Saxon, depending on the tradition), or on the old folk names for the full moon.

Modern/Roman	Folk Names	Anglo-Saxon	Icelandic
<u>July</u>	Snowmoon	Æfter-Giuli	Thorri
<u>August</u>	Horning	Solmonath	Gói
<u>September</u>	Lenting	Hredhmonath	Einmanudhr
<u>October</u>	Seedmoon	Eostre	Gaukmanudhr/Saidtidh
<u>November</u>	Merrymoon	Thrimilemonath	Eggtidh
<u>December</u>	Meadmoon	Ærre-Lithe	Solmanudhr
<u>January</u>	Haymoon	Æfter-Lithe	Heyannir
<u>February</u>	Harvest	Weodmonath	Tvimanudhr
<u>March</u>	Shedding	Haligmonath	Hanstmanudhr
<u>April</u>	Hunting	Winterfyllith	Gormanudhr
<u>May</u>	Fogmoon	Blotmonath	Frermanudhr
<u>June</u>	Yule	Ærre-Giuli	Hrutmanudhr

Ásatrú Folk use the date "R.E."--"runic era"--as opposed to the Western "**AD**" or "**CE**" Instead, they begin their era in what the West dates 250 **BC/BCE**--so that for the year 2008 it is 2258 RE. This date is chosen, as it is thought to be the age of the earliest artefacts with runes carved on them.

**Fogmoon**

**May 9**

**DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR GUTHROTH.**

This Norwegian martyr spoke out against the tyranny of the Christian fanatic Tryggvason, and urged others to resist him. For this, the king had his tongue cut out. Call an Asa-friend today - use your tongue to participate in Asatru!

Remembrance for Gudrod of Gudbrandsdal, whose tongue was cut out by the Norwegian king 'St. Olaf' (not to be confused with Olaf Tryggvason despite the similarity of names and methods. St. Olaf, otherwise known as 'Olaf the Fat' or 'Olaf the Big-Mouthed', was canonized for his efforts to convert Norway by fear, murder and torture).

**Friggablott**

**May 27. HOLIDAY HONOURING FRIGGA, WIFE OF ODIN**



**Coke's Gilde & Receipts**

.Your Favourite Recipe could go here

**A&S Calendar:**

Our acting A&S Officer is Banmaighster Cairistiona.inghean Raghnaill

Shire A&S Competitions – June to November AS 44		
June	Banners	Any item with a 'WINTER' theme.
July -	Celtic Knotwork in any form e.g. embroidery, illumination, hangings	
August		
September		Any item with a 'SPRING' theme
October		
November		

Greetings unto the populace of Bordescros,

I am very pleased to be the new Arts and Sciences Officer for this great Shire, and to be acting in the capacity until this is confirmed. I look forward to seeing these activities flourish across our Shire in the coming years. Thank you to Magdalena for the work that she has done, and I hope that she has a full recovery soon. Emmy has very kindly agreed to be my active deputy.

There is some good information relating to A&S that is available on the Lochac website at <http://www.sca.org.au/artsandsciences> although a lot of it relates to Kingdom competitions etc.

There will be a return to regular monthly A&S competitions in the Shire, with an additional, more flexible 'seasonal' competition running to allow people to submit whatever project they are working on that fits in with the seasonal theme. In this way I hope that more people will be participating.

On the events that I don't make it to, Emmy will be taking care of the competition etc. so please offer your input as a judge if you have not made an entry for the competition. This is also a great way to learn. I have attached an entry form that needs to be completed for each entry, and submitted together with the entry and any relevant documentation. There is a separate article in this edition of Grapevine on 'What is Documentation?'

Electronic entries will also be submitted, providing they are received prior to 5 p.m. on the day before the competition is to take place. In this way I hope that people will participate even if they are unable to make the event itself, especially those from areas that are away from Central Bordescros such as Loch Alba and Denniliquin. Such entries should be sent to me at [clanscotia@hotmail.com](mailto:clanscotia@hotmail.com) until I can obtain a more generic email address for our A&S.

If outlying groups (proto-cantons) of the Shire would to have their own local competition, could you please contact me so that I can assist you in organising these so that these activities are recognised and counted towards the overall competition. I want to make sure all efforts in the areas of Arts and Sciences are acknowledged both inside and outside of the Shire.

Much emphasis is placed on the various fighting aspects of the SCA, but it is the Arts and Sciences that add to the overall presentation and enjoyment of what we do. A fighter without a banner, tabard and nice armour just doesn't pull the same interest as one that recreates the full scene along with his consort in pre-17th century attire, with all the other things that go with it.

If anyone has a particular area that they are interested in, and would either like to learn more about it or share the knowledge they already have, please let Emmy or me know so that we can work with you.

## WHAT IS DOCUMENTATION?

Sometimes the very word 'documentation' seems to strike fear into the heart of SCAdians who, but for it, would have entered an A&S Competition. This is my effort to demystify the word, and what is required.

Somewhere in between one of our citizens' first attempt at documentation, which was an oral presentation about an arrow which was described as 'a pointy stick to fly through the air' or something along those lines, and a 40 page 'book' about the subject entry into a competition, is a happy medium.

If you are making an entry into a competition, the odds are pretty good that somewhere along the road to its completion you will have done some research on the subject. That's great, so let us know what the research was, what it said, and where you found it. Please give us copies of any photographs etc if you are able to, and the details of the books and websites etc that you consulted.

The next step is to let us know how you used the information that you found. For example, you may be submitting a Venetian camica from the 16th century. The original item that you have based your design on may have been made out of silk, and embroidered in silk but for obvious reasons of cost you have done yours on cotton lawn and embroidered it with DMC embroidery cottons for about 10% of the cost of the more 'real' item.

Another example would be if you are doing an item of calligraphy/illumination and in its time period and place it would have been worked on handmade vellum with egg tempura paints and gold leaf. Now some SCAdians would do it that way, but many of us will just use the items that are easily available such as ordinary paper and acrylic paints. Just as acceptable, but of course you won't get as many marks for 'authenticity'. The second option is much better than not having a go at all, and can still produce something of beauty to be proud of.

If you found the design that you used for the embroidery in an item in a museum catalogue where you could actually see the original item, then that is a 'primary source'. If what you have used as your source is a painting that was done at the time, then that is a 'secondary source'. If you got the idea from a sketch that someone else has done from a painting that was contemporary with the object, then that is a 'tertiary source'.

Needless to say 'primary' sources are preferable, but reality dictates that in Australia these are going to be far and few between in terms of anything medieval.

Documentation is really about telling the story of the item that you are submitting:

- What is it,
- where does it come from,
- what was it used for,
- when was it used
- why you made it in the way that you did

### Why do we bother with the documentation?

The reason we do it is because from the outset the SCA was seen as an 'educational organisation' that was designed to encourage research and scholarship about the pre-17th century period in history, in a way that was fun and lets its members 'live' the times to the extent that they wish to.

If you don't want to take things that seriously it is up to you entirely, and you shouldn't feel intimidated by those who do. If you do want to work harder at it (and many people vary this over the years) then there is a framework in place to help, and the documentation shows the work that you have done.

There are lots of sources of information available. Some of the many Kingdom websites have great A&S sections, and many of the major museums such as the Victoria & Albert in London have extensive sections of their collections viewable on line. In coming months I will provide details of some of these as I come across them.

Yours in Service

**Cairistiona inghean Raghnaill**, OP, OLM, AoA



## **JUNE A&S COMPETITION**

### **Banners, Standards and Heraldic Display**

The first A&S competition in the new calendar, starting with June is for 'Banners'.

For those who are relatively new to the SCA, a banner is a fabric item designed to be hung on a wall or from a flag pole that depicts the 'device' that has been chosen (and preferably registered) by an individual, household or group.

It can be of any shape or size that fits with the particular time and place in history that you are endeavouring to recreate with your persona, or that fits with the particular event that it is being designed for.

There are many shapes that can be appropriate, although for internal display a shape that is just rectangular of about 75 cm x 90 cm (750 x 900 mm) is a good general size. Much of what we generally have as banners around feast halls etc are gonfalons. There is an excellent article on these at

[http://www.sca.org.au/st\\_florians/university/library/articles-howtos/heraldry/HeraldicGonfalons.htm](http://www.sca.org.au/st_florians/university/library/articles-howtos/heraldry/HeraldicGonfalons.htm)

In addition there are pennants and standards which tend to be used more for outdoor display, such as around a tournament field or on the battle ground.

What materials you make your banners, standards, gonfalons etc. out of will depend on a number of things, including whether it is mainly for inside or outside display. If it is for outside display in a way that 'flies' then it needs to be made of something very light. If it is for inside display, or outside against a solid surface, then a heavier fabric may be ideal.

I have made banners in everything from bemsilk (silk like lining material) to heavy canvas. They can be made entirely by machine, by hand, or by machine and embroidered / couched by hand for a more hand-finished result. If it is going to be flying in the elements, then both the fabric and the construction methods need to be quite durable.

Standards are a very extravagant and showy form of heraldry, and well made can look quite spectacular. The dimensions can vary, but they are generally about 26 inches by about 8 feet long (or 66cm x 240cm). A really useful article on producing these within the SCA can be found at <http://www.angelfire.com/pa/allthat2/articles/standard.html>. A cluster of these for the individuals within Bordescros, would make a wonderful display at Rowany Festival.

A much less showy method of display is the pennon, which appear to date from the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. Information on these can be found on Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennon>

If you have an idea for what you would like to have as your 'device', please discuss these with Aylen who is the group Herald. The process to have one registered generally takes quite some time, but if you can sort out that what you would like to have meets the various rules of SCA Heraldry, and is not already being used by someone else, then you can submit the paperwork to make sure that it is reserved for you and you alone.

A good place to see what is already being used and has been registered in Lochac is to visit the Roll of Arms, which can be found via the Lochac website at <http://www.sca.org.au/herald/LRoA/Populaceindex.php>. This is also a great place to get ideas and see how the various elements can come together to provide something that is personal. Sometimes the easiest things to get approved are the simplest, and I know at one stage the College of Heraldry did have a few simple but unregistered devices available for the asking.

**Cairistiona inghean Raghnaill, OP, OLM, AoA**

**Clan Scotia**

**Shire of Bordescros**

**Bordescros A&S Competition Entry Form**  
(to be completed by the Entrant and retained by the Bordescros A&S Officer)

Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Competition: \_\_\_\_\_

SCA Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Entry No: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

(Address or Email) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Time Frame / Location in Period: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you included Documentation with your entry?

Yes  No

I agree to have a photo of this entry added to the Bordescros A&S Web Site:

Yes  No

I agree to have a photo of this entry and documentation published in  
Bordescros Grapevine:

Yes  No

**INFORMATION FOR JUDGES:**

Is this your first attempt at this type of item / skill ?

Yes  No

I would consider my experience level in this skill to be:

Beginner  Intermediate  Advanced  Professional

***(A&S Officer, please check the Entrant's skill level is noted on the A&S Competition Judging Form).***

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS WRITTEN BY JOHN HALSTED AND YOU CAN READ MORE OF THIS IN THE COMING MONTHS OR YOU CAN BUY HIS BOOKS. CHECK OUT HIS WEBSITE. JOHN HAS AN AUSSIE LINK IN THAT HIS FATHER WAS FROM SYDNEY AND HIS MOTHER WAS ENGLISH, JOHN COMES FROM ENGLAND. [WWW.VIKINGLEGEND.COM](http://WWW.VIKINGLEGEND.COM)



### **Who Were the first Ex-Pats - Article 2 - Medieval Ex-Pats**

Share 28 February 2009 at 17:52

by John Halsted Author: Legend of the Last Vikings

The descendents of current day Kalmykia, a former Soviet state situated on the West bank of the Volga just above Astrakhan and the Caspian Sea, migrated en masse in the 1600's from Mongolia. Thinking they had made a mistake they re-migrated to Mongolia and returned to finally settle once and for all in Kalmykia. Indeed the yurt, which is common amongst nomadic Mongolians can now freely be seen on mainland Europe. Kalmykia is now the only European country with Buddhism as its state religion, hence the cross-pollination effects of ex-pats is clearly demonstrated.

After the much acclaimed novel 1491, you may think the Chinese led the expat endeavour in the medieval world. But you would be mistaken. Two hundred years before this Marco Polo lived as a European ex-Pat in China and his adventures are well documented. There are also stories of other Europeans who did likewise before and after Marco Polo.

In about the year 800AD, after years of tribal fighting, a loose confederation of Russian tribes asked the Svear, or Swedish Vikings, to establish a system of government for them. This set in place the Rurik dynasty which after initially establishing itself at Novgorod, expanded its empire and later moved its capital to Kiev. This dynasty lasted almost four hundred years, until the late 1200's, when it was overrun by Genghis Khan and the Golden Hoarde.

In the 600's AD, the Catholic Church held sway over most of Europe where innovation and free thought was decidedly frowned upon. Refuse and excrement was thrown into the streets to be drained (when it rained) by ad-hoc guttering which fed directly into rivers. The church forbade money lending which in turn meant the economy of Europe was, like the gutters, stagnant.

In 711AD Spain was invaded by the Umayyid Moslems, or Moors, who overran the crumbling Visigothic kingdom of Roderick. The Moors originated in North Africa, (Mauritania and Morocco) and crossed the Straits of Gibraltar. The bulk of their army was made up of Berber stock – more on the Berbers later. In effect the Moors became ex-pats bringing their

culture and customs with them.

Under the Emirate of Cordoba, the cities of southern Spain, Toledo, Cordoba, and Seville, speedily became centres of the new culture and were famed for their universities and architectural treasures like the Alhambra (made possible by the arch), luster glazing, delicate and lace-like wooden carvings, calligraphy, gold and silver smithing, the development of steel etc. etc. etc.

Not only were physical and ascetic changes introduced, but the Moors also introduced the social custom of chivalry, practiced across the Moslem world. Their impact was to last seven hundred years and was to have a significant part in leading medieval Europe out of the Dark Ages.

At about the same time the Moors invaded Spain, the Vikings started raiding from Northern climes, which was to last for three hundred years. The Viking era culminated in the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066, two weeks before the more famous Battle of Hastings. Less well known and acknowledged is where Vikings raided, Viking traders usually followed. Before my family launched off to the shores of the southern hemisphere's new world in the 1800's, we can trace our roots back to the Danelaw (or Danelagh) of North and East England and before that Denmark. It would seem that ex-pat living is in our blood.

In 1066 the Normans invaded England and won the throne implementing a Norman culture over a Viking-Anglo-Saxon culture. But where did the Normans come from?

In order to stop Viking raids in Northern France, the French King offered the Vikings tracts of land which have since become known as Normandy – home of the North or Norse men, in effect Viking ex-pats. It was these same Northmen, or Francophile-Vikings, that laid claim to the throne of England in 1066. In winning the throne of England a whole new range of Franco-Viking customs, laws and language was introduced to England. In order to supplant Anglo-Saxon culture with that of the Normans, the ruling class of Normandy almost decamped en masse to England effectively becoming ex-pats again. And the rest, as they say, is history. Only the effects are still being felt world-wide today.

Much has been written about Viking activities to the West of Scandinavia i.e. England, Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland and of course, the USA. But not much has been written about Viking activities to the East, coincidentally the subject of my book, Legend of the Last Vikings.

In 921AD on an embassy to the Bulgar Court on the middle Volga, Ibn Fadlan, the acclaimed Arab chronicler, recorded Viking traders as speaking as many as nine languages. Not exactly the Hollywood image of semi-barbaric illiterate raiders. Another aside, they DID NOT have horns on their helmets. This is another Hollywood fabrication which has crept into the modern image of Vikings.

The Vikings had two primary trade routes East. They were the Dniepr Route and the Volga Route. This involved sailing from the Atlantic through the Skaggerak and the Baltic Sea to the Gulf of Finland. They then rowed past St Petersburg into Lake Ladoga and turned south, rowing up the Volkhov river to Novgorod, their first major trading post. Thereafter they would row further inland to a point where the Ilmen, Dniepr, Volga and Dvina rivers have their sources within about a one hundred mile radius. Picking their boats up, they would then port them and their cargoes to the Dniepr or Volga, refloat and then sail and row down these rivers to the Caspian Sea or Black Sea, trading as they went. The point of this explanation is where the Vikings traded, they invariably established trading posts and usually ended up with de facto Viking settlements of Viking ex-pats. With this came the introduction of Viking customs and culture.

With links to Byzantium and the Caspian sea the Vikings most certainly would have heard of the fabled cities of Samarkhand, Bukhara, Kashgar, Hotan and Xi'an - to name a few; all on the world's first superhighway, the Silk Route. It is now an established fact that Vikings traded to ports along this network. Some even travelled portions of the route as did Yngvarr Vitfarne a Swedish Viking who disappeared in the area of Samarkhand in about the year 1040 - whom the characters in my book set off in search of.

Rest assured that wherever the medieval ex-pats ended up, getting there was never easy.

