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The Wirral Ship Fellowship – Wirral Vikings

# viking shield

Construction of the re-enactment Viking Shield  
to Regia Anglorum safety standards

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**This guide will show you the construction steps to make a re-enactment safe Viking shields to Regia Anglorums safety standards.**

This is not to show how a real viking shield was made in the past but describes the way we must construct our shields to be usable on the re-enactment battlefield.

## contents

**To make your shield you will need:**

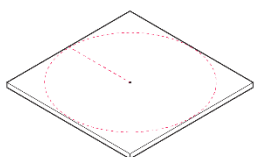
- 9mm thick minimum marine ply (approx 70 inch / 178cm)
- Linen or cotton sheet to cover shield (x3)
- PVA Glue
- Shield boss
- Brass rings
- Viking nails or rivets (For boss, handle and strap)
- Hardwood or metal handle
- Leather for rim, straps and attachments
- Square washers. (made from tin, old coins or washers filed square).

## shield components

**This is a breakdown of the elements you will need**

### wood

**The wood for the shield should be at least 9mm thick marine ply.**

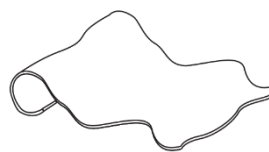


The usual advice we use for the shield size is from the tip of your fingers to their elbows plus 2 inches = the radius

Usually 30 - 35 inches depending how big you are.

## linen or cotton sheet

**You will need linen or cotton sheets to cover your shield**

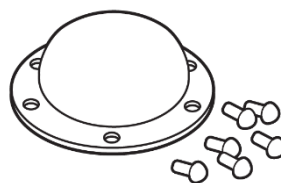


You will need 3 lengths of linen or cotton sheet to cover your shield.

2x for the front and 1x for the back.

## shield boss

**The shield boss sits in the centre of the shield and protects your hand.**



Shield bosses can be obtained in places such as Jackhammer forge.

(on their site it is classed as a Large

shield boss, The external diameter is 17cm and the size of the internal diameter is roughly 13.5cm)

Make sure the boss comes with the correct sized nails or rivets to attach it to the shield.

## brass rings

**Brass rings are used as attachment points for your carrying strap.**



They have two advantages.

1. The strap can be quickly adjusted if needed.
2. When fighting with a 2 handed spear the shield is more manoeuvrable.



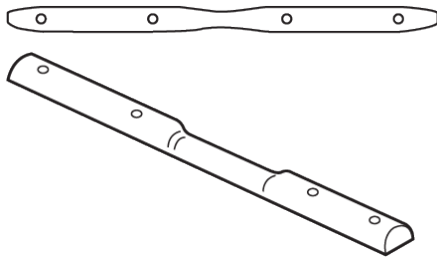
## viking nails or rivets

You will need the following numbers:

- 4 long nails for the handle
- 2 for the strap attachments
- 5/6 for the boss if you do not have them.

## handles

Handles have been found in both wood and metal.

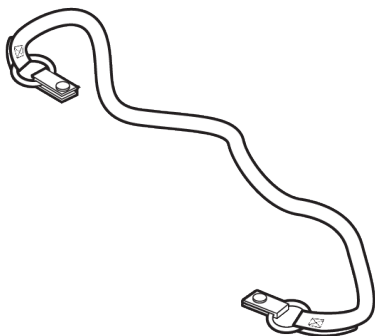


Some people prefer metal as it does not get in the way as much as a wooden handle does. Always sort out the grip before attaching the handle to the shield and if using wood make sure the back of the handle sits flush on the shield.

For a wooden handle you want 1.5-2 inches by just under the circumference of the shield.

## The strap

Always useful to include a strap so you can sling the shield over your shoulder.



The leather is 4mm thick and 7mm wide  
Additional leather will be required for the attachment loops.

## leather rim

The shield will be surrounded with a leather stitched rim.



This will be long enough to go about 1.5 inches down the front and back of the shield. It will be stitched with waxed linen cord onto the rim of the shield.

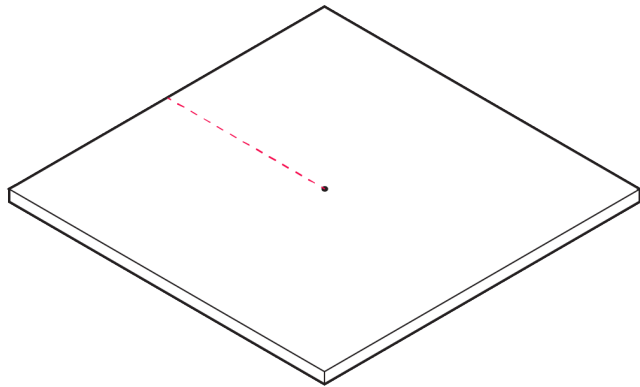
### One final thing...

A shield is for fighting with not hiding behind. Make sure that it is not that large and heavy so you can't use it with one hand.



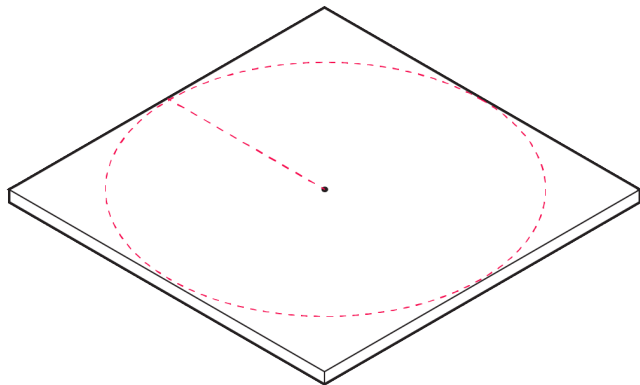
# shield construction

To make the shield you will need.

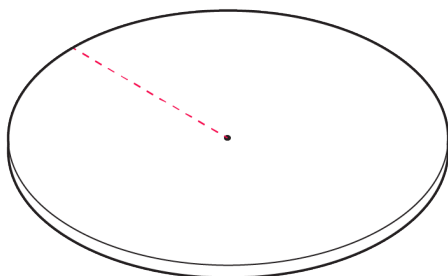


**The wood for the shield should be at least 9mm thick marine ply.**

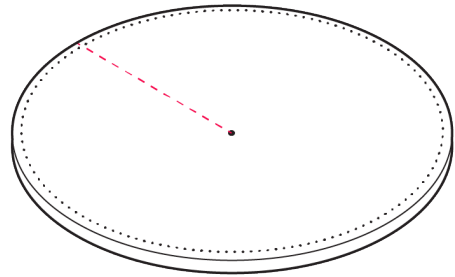
The usual advice we use for the shield size is from the tip of your fingers to their elbows plus 2 inches = the radius



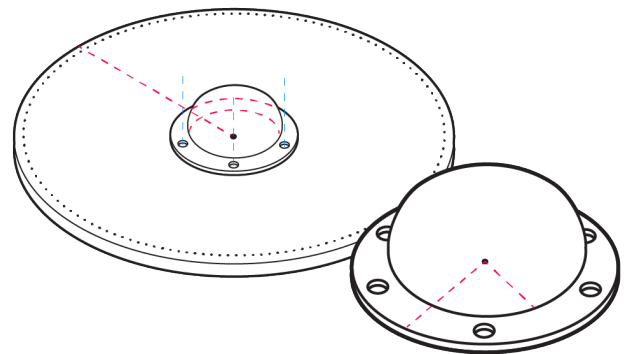
Measure out the circumference of the circle. (a pencil on a string works well with a pin in the centre).



Cut the board out and then measure out your outer rim holes. (see next illustration).

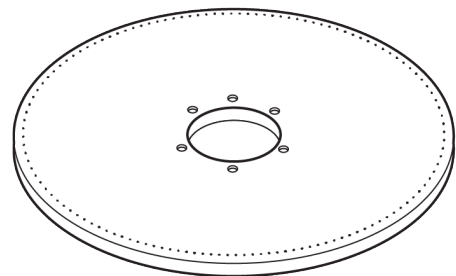


The holes will be approx. 2 cm from the outside rim and about 2cm away from each other. Cut the holes using a fine drill bit. (Big enough to get a needle through).



Measure the outer and inner rim of your shield boss. Position the boss in the centre of the shield. Draw round the outer rim and through the holes in the boss. Make sure two of the boss holes go at the top and bottom of the shield.

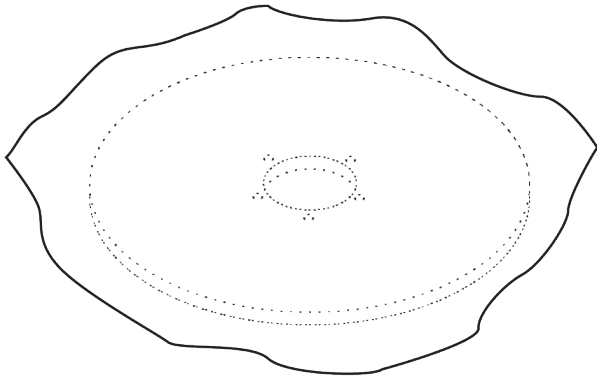
Draw the inside measurement of the boss on the shield. This is area to cut where you have will hold the handle.



Cut this central circle out of your shield and drill the boss holes. (Make sure they are drilled the same sized or slightly smaller than the rivets (nails) you are using for the shield).

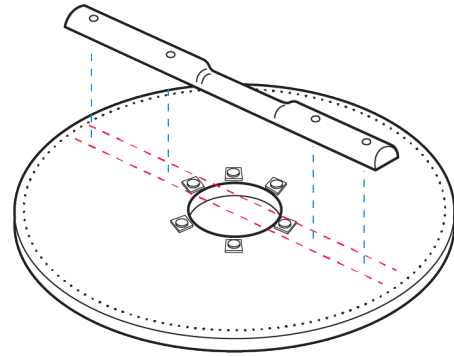






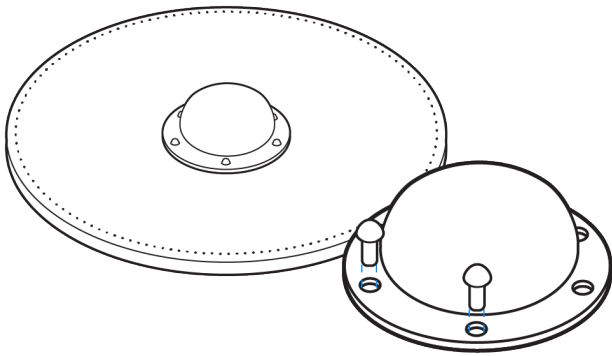
Cover the front of the shield with linen and cotton sheet. Use a 50 /50 water / PVA mixture.

Use clamps or pegs to hold the sheet tight until it is glued. (A small weight in the center boss area helps to keep the linen taut). Once dried add another sheet to the front and one on the back.

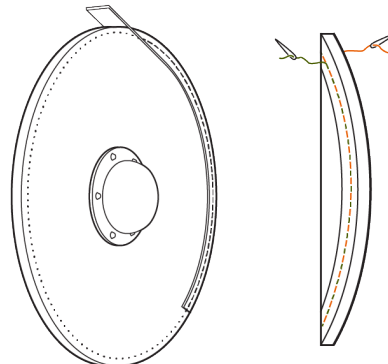


Some people will add the leather now. Some people will add the handle first. If your right handed the handle goes slightly to the right of centre. If left handed then slightly to the left. Make sure you have enough room to grasp your handle before riveting the handle.

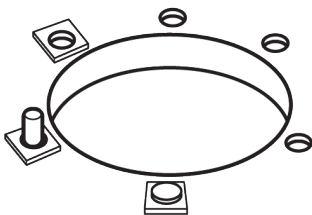
The handle is riveted in place with a longer rivet so the head is on the front of the shield, It goes through the shield and handle, a square washer and is then riveted in place.



Once dry you can paint your shield if you wish. (some do it now to protect the linen covering before attaching the boss but you can do it later).

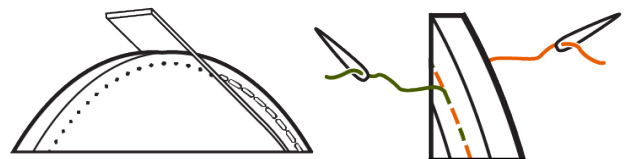


The leather should be placed in cold water for 10 minutes before you stretch it onto your shield and sew it in place.



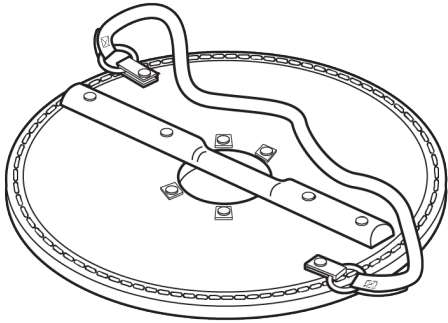
If you use two needles and waxed linen thread you can go in and out of the same hole with both needles as you go. (one from each side).

Cut the rivets so they just go through the shield, square washer and boss. Turn the shield over and hand rivet using a rounded hammer, working the edges of the rivet down to form a flat rivet. Repeat with all the others. The rivets should be flush with no sharp edges.

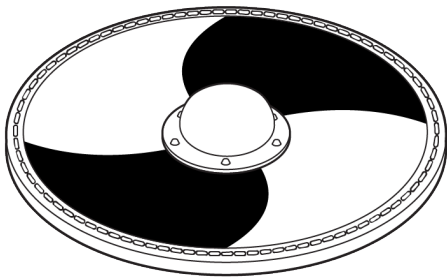




Some people find it easier to clamp the wet leather on and use nails to create a hole through the leather, through the shield hole and through the leather on the other side of the shield. By doing 5-10 of these at a time the leather can be held in place as you sew.



Attach the strap via the loops you have riveted to the shield or straight through the strap if you would prefer.



The shield is then decorated in black and white, right facing swirl design which is Wirhalh Skip Felagr's shield design.

Once a warrior has passed his spear test he can add a yellow line to his shield and then a red one when he passes his axe or sword test.