

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE STELLAR KINGDOM OF NORTHSHIELD  
AND THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM

# Hobby Horses

The recreation of Marginalia from MS Douce 118

**Lady Leah of Schattentor**  
**Anno Societatis XLVI**

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## Research

Crafted horses used for play and ceremony are various and span across region and culture – from the British Isles, across Europe, to Ancient Greece<sup>1</sup>. There are hobby horses that are sticks with carved heads that can be ridden, sticks with skulls outfitted with hinged jaws and with fabric attached to hide the carrier that are used in folk festivals, and horses that are worn so that the wearer appears to be a rider. The latter is depicted in the margins of MS Douce 118, fol. 034r (Figure 1) and will be the focus of this investigation for the purposes of recreation. The Bodelian Library's metadata for this item includes the following description:

Marginalia. Crowned female with hobby horse rings handbells, and youth, in jester's hood with bell, plays pipe and tabor.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1

<sup>1</sup> Agesilaus I, the sixth king of Sparta would make hobby horses out of reed for his children (Plutarch's Lives: Volume Four, J. and R. Tonson, 1758, p. 94.)

<sup>2</sup> Bodelian Library, University of Oxford, Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, LUNA viewer. [http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~38844~108178:Psalter-?sort=Shelfmark%2Csort\\_order&qvq=q:Shelfmark%3D%22MS.%2BDouce%2B118%22;sort:Shelfmark%2Csort\\_order;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=57&trs=225#](http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~38844~108178:Psalter-?sort=Shelfmark%2Csort_order&qvq=q:Shelfmark%3D%22MS.%2BDouce%2B118%22;sort:Shelfmark%2Csort_order;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=57&trs=225#)

Due to the varying types of items that can be referred to as hobby horse, it is essential to look at the definitions of the word as presented by both the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) and various folklorists and historians.

The second definition in the *OED* for *hobby horse* (after “A kind of horse”<sup>3</sup>) is as follows:

- a. In the morris-dance, and on the stage (in burlesques, pantomimes, etc.), a figure of a horse, made of wickerwork, or other light material, furnished with a deep housing, and fastened about the waist of one of the performers, who executed various antics in imitation of the movements of a skittish or spirited horse; also the name of this performer in a morris-dance.

The *OED* lists the earliest usage of this definition as 1557, from *Churchwardens’ Accts. St. Mary’s*: “130 Item, payed to the Mynstrels and the Hobbyhorse on May Day 3s.”<sup>4</sup>

E. C. Cawte recognizes this definition of *hobby horse* among several that pertain to ritualistic animal dress and toys. In his dissection of definitions, Cawte comments on the above definition (the source referred to in his text is the *NED*, but the text matches) as follows:

“2a is sometimes called a *tourney horse*, a framework draped with a cloth hanging to the ground (the footcloth), with a model horse’s head at one end and a tail at the other. The performer has it fastened at his waist, or more often round his chest, and pretends to be riding a real horse.”<sup>5</sup>

The *OED* definition of *hobby horse* mentions the “morris-dance,” which it defines (n.) as follows:

1. A lively traditional English dance performed in formation by a group of dancers in a distinctive costume (usually wearing bells and ribbons and carrying handkerchiefs or sticks, to emphasize the rhythm and movement), often accompanied by a character who generally represents a symbolic or legendary figure (as the Fool, Hobby Horse, Maid Marian, etc.); any of a repertoire of such dances. Hence: any mumming performance of which such dancing is an important feature (now *rare*).<sup>6</sup>

The *OED* then cites the *Will of Alice Wetenhale* from 1458 as the earliest use of the term: “Lego Caterine filie mee..ij ciphos argenti sculptos cum moreys daunce cum unico cooperculo ad eosdem.”

The noun *hobby* derives from the Middle English *hobyn* and *hoby* and is defined by the *OED* as being “a small or middle-sized horse; an ambling or pacing horse; a pony.” The *OED* also notes

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<sup>3</sup> “hobby horse.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 18 January 2012.

<sup>4</sup> C. Coates, *Hist. Reading* (1802).

<sup>5</sup> Cawte, C. p.8

<sup>6</sup> “morris-dance.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 18 January 2012.

that *hobby* was a common name for a cart-horse and that the first written usage of *hobby* was from c. 1400 in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*:<sup>7</sup> “An Iyrysch man, Uppone his hoby.” The *OED* also notes the Old French word *hobin/hobi/haubby* which was adopted from the native English. This would imply that hobby horses were native to England and adopted by the French, who now call modern tourney horses *cheval-jupon* or “horse skirt.”

Admitting heavy reliance on Cawte, the *Oxford Dictionary of Folklore* provides the following definition for the tourney horse:

There are several types of hobby horse, with differences in construction, use, and historical development. Tourney Horses: the ‘rider’ wears a roughly oval-shaped wooden or basketwork frame around his waist or chest, usually suspended by straps from his shoulders. The frame has some sort of horse’s head at one end and a tail at the other, and a piece of cloth is fixed all the way round, hanging like a skirt to the ground and hiding the legs of the rider.<sup>8</sup>

The entry for hobby horse continues to describe the various other kinds of hobby horses, then points out that, “Historical records concerning hobby horses are almost exclusively concerned with tourney horses; although many of the early records do not stipulate the type of horse concerned, the cumulative evidence is overwhelmingly in the tourney horse’s favour.”<sup>9</sup>

Cawte’s earliest reference to hobby horses is not specific on type and limited to the British Isles; however, the description does lend itself toward the type discussed here. The source is by Gruffydd Gryg (c. 1340-1380)<sup>10</sup>, an Anglesey poet, that served as continued correspondence between himself and Daffyd ap Gwilym (c. 1330-1350).<sup>11</sup>

(Translation provided by Cawte:) The hobby-horse was once magnificent, faultless in its appearance, in everything. Come nearer: it is a miserable pair of lath legs, kicking stiffly. And now, assuredly, there never was a poorer enchantment wrought of flimsy woodwork.<sup>12</sup>

The reference to the hobby horse as being made of “flimsy woodwork” lends itself to the interpretation of the subject to be the tourney-style described above by both the *OED* and Cawte. It is the reference closest in date to MS Douce 118.

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<sup>7</sup> Wright, T., Halliwell, J. O. (1845), 2(23).

<sup>8</sup> Simpson, J. & Roud, S. (2000). “hobby horses.” *A dictionary of English folklore*. Oxford UP, Oxford. p.178.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Gruffydd, R. G. (2004). “Gruffydd Gryg.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online.

<sup>11</sup> Gruffydd, R. G. (2005). “Dafydd ap Gwilym.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Eds. Matthew, H. C. G, & Harrison, B. Online.

<sup>12</sup> Cawte, E. C. (1978). *Ritualistic animal disguise: a historical and geographical study of animal disguise in the British Isles*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, p. 11.

There is no exact date for the MS Douce 118 containing Figure 1– all that has been recorded by the Bodelian Library catalog is that the psalter dates from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, originates in Artois, France, and was produced for Joffroy d’Aspremont and his wife.<sup>13</sup> However, even if the manuscript dates from anywhere between 1270 and 1300, it is still at least a century before the bulk of linguistic or folkloric evidence appears.

While not all marginalia is reflective of the text it appears with, it should be noted that the text of fol. 033v-034r is Psalm 27 (28) and 29 (30), respectively. The eighth line of Psalm 27 can be picked out of 033v at the second initialed line.<sup>14</sup> The larger initial above the relevant figures of 034r begins the second line of Psalm 29, which reads, “Exaltabo te Domine quoniam suscepisti me nec delectasti inimicos meos super me,” which translates to “I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast upheld me: and hast not made my enemies to rejoice over me.”<sup>15,16</sup> Psalm 28, which would appear in the middle of these (beginning with the large initial “A” on 033v) concerns praising God’s power.

The context of the marginalia is only potentially relevant when looking at the history of the hobby horse’s use. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Folklore* (and further examined by Cawte), one of the uses of hobby horses in England was to collect money for the church.<sup>17</sup> So there is a link between ecclesiastical proceedings and the folk ritual of the hobby horse.

Folklorist A. Van Gennep refers to the hobby horse (frame with head worn at the waist) as *cheval-jupon*<sup>18</sup>. This term is used on several French and Belgium websites to describe costumes used in giants festivals, such as the Tarasque (established in 1474)<sup>19</sup> and Namur (with the “horse Godin” appearing in 1571)<sup>20</sup>. The *Oxford Dictionary of English Folklore* also recognizes this use of hobby horses.<sup>21</sup> Several examples of modern-day *cheval-jupon* are available (Figures 2-4)<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Bodelian Library, University of Oxford, Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, LUNA viewer. [http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~38844~108178:Psalter-?sort=Shelfmark%2Csort\\_order&qvq=q:Shelfmark%3D%22MS.%2BDouce%2B118%22;sort:Shelfmark%2Csort\\_order;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=57&trs=225#](http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/detail/ODLodl~1~1~38844~108178:Psalter-?sort=Shelfmark%2Csort_order&qvq=q:Shelfmark%3D%22MS.%2BDouce%2B118%22;sort:Shelfmark%2Csort_order;lc:ODLodl~29~29,ODLodl~7~7,ODLodl~6~6,ODLodl~14~14,ODLodl~8~8,ODLodl~23~23,ODLodl~1~1,ODLodl~24~24&mi=57&trs=225#)

<sup>14</sup> “Psalm 27 (28)” Parallel Latin/English Psalter, *Medievalist.net* <http://medievalist.net/psalmstxt/ps27.htm>

<sup>15</sup> “Psalm 29 (30).” Parallel Latin/English Psalter, *Medievalist.net*. <http://medievalist.net/psalmstxt/ps29.htm>

<sup>16</sup> It should also be noted that I had help from the fabulous Latin scholar Laura Gibbs, author of *Vulgate Verses* (2007), *Latin Via Proverbs* (2006), and *Aesop’s Fables in Latin* (2009), and more.

<sup>17</sup> Simpson, J. & Roud, S. (2000). “hobby horses.” *A dictionary of English folklore*. Oxford UP, Oxford. p.179.

<sup>18</sup> Gallop, R. (1947). “*Le Cheval-Jupon* by A. van Gennep.” *Folklore*, (58)1. p. 243

<sup>19</sup> City of Tarascon. “The festivals of Tarascon” (page translated from French using Google Translate). <http://www.tarascon.fr/tarascon-en-provence/visiter/festivites/fetes-de-la-tarasque.html>

<sup>20</sup> *Folknam: l’asbl du folklore namurois*. (page translated from French using Google Translate). “Horses Godin.” Namur, Belgium. [http://www.folknam.be/groupe\\_membres](http://www.folknam.be/groupe_membres)

<sup>21</sup> Simpson, J. & Roud, S. (2000). “hobby horses.” *A dictionary of English folklore*. Oxford UP, Oxford. p.179.

<sup>22</sup> *Folknam: l’asbl du folklore namurois*. (page translated from French using Google Translate). “Horses Godin.” Namur, Belgium. [http://www.folknam.be/groupe\\_membres](http://www.folknam.be/groupe_membres)



Figure 2



Figure 3





Figure 4

All of these examples of *cheval-jupon* have the shoulder suspenders and fabric skirting. They also have reins that look to be made of a thick cord. The horses themselves seem to be constructed out of fiberglass or papier-mâché and are painted in a semi-realistic manner that includes a bridle and saddle. While the hobby horse in Figure 1 does not appear to be saddled, there are lines that clearly depict a bridle, and perhaps the line at the base of the neck is meant to be a breastplate (that keeps the saddle from sliding) or a martingale (which helps control the horse's head) – the absence of a line between the bridle and the base of the neck favors the breastplate, but the position of the head may hide the connecting line. It should also be noted that while Figures 2-4 depict horses suspended from the shoulders, Figure 1 lacks this obvious rigging. The lines from the woman's waist to the top of the horse's housing may be folds in the fabric of her surcoat, but they may also be cords that suspend the horse from what is presumably a belt cinching and defining her waist.

Alford supposes that the hobby horse written about by a 13<sup>th</sup> Century Dominican “must have” been in the tourney, or *cheval-jupon*, style, describing the skull and pole version as primitive and given that the young men in the anecdote “knew the play and kept the horse ready to ride”<sup>23</sup>:

the young men on the Patronal feast were wont to ride on a wooden horse, to dress up and dance in the Churchyard and in the Church itself. A Missioner came to this village and of

<sup>23</sup> Alford, V. (1967). “The hobby horse and other animal masks.” *Folklore*, 79(2). p. 122-134.

course prohibited such pagan ways, so vigilantes of the parish watched in the church. Nevertheless a young man called to a friend to join him in the traditional play, mounted the wooden horse and went into the church. Immediately fire broke out at his feet and burnt him up, he and his horse.<sup>24</sup>

If this reference is indeed to a tourney-style hobby horse, the verb *mounted* must refer to the youths wearing the horse and appearing to be its “rider” rather than literally straddling the stick-like hobby horse. As the stick-like hobby horse is prevalent in illuminations and the use of the verb *mount*, it could easily be the stick rather than the tourney, “worn” type.

Another ritualistic folk dance that should be considered is the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. The village’s official website includes a description of the dance, which they say was first performed in August 1226<sup>25</sup>. Figure 5 depicts an “undressed” hobby horse from this dance from 1896<sup>26</sup>.

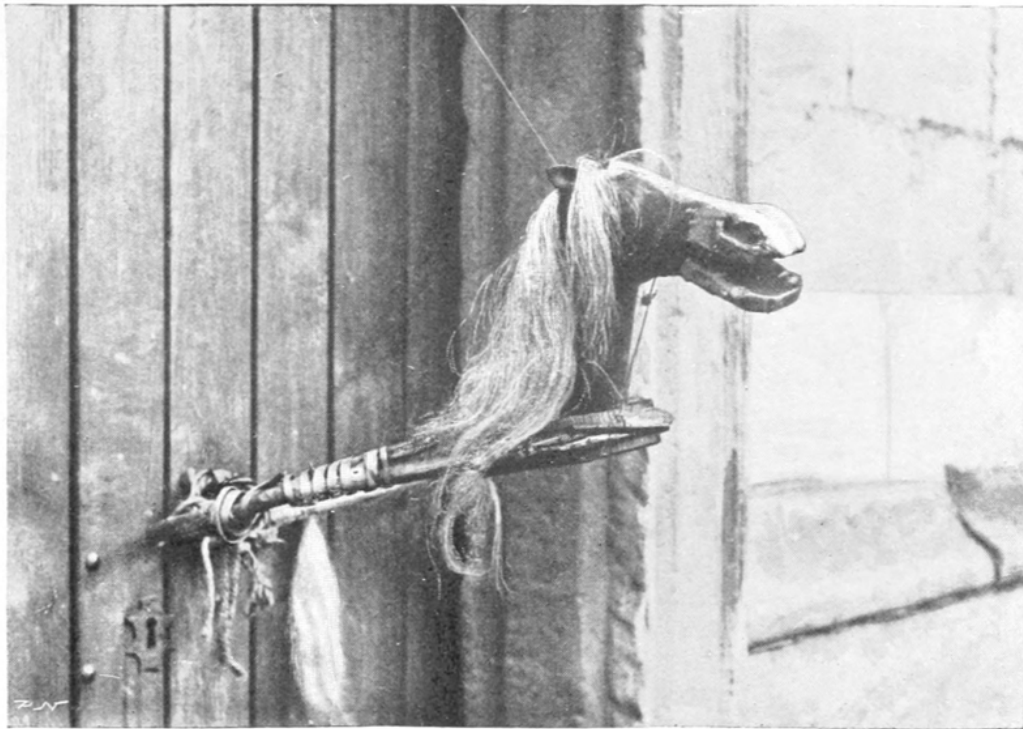


Figure 5

The head is crudely carved, and the mane and tail are fibrous, perhaps even made of real horse-hair. This appears to be an evolution compared to Figures 1-4, as they all appear to lack this separate decoration, apart from the visible/alleged tails of Figures 2-4. That is not to say that the hobby horse in Figure 1 does not have a fibrous mane and tail (the tail being potentially hidden

<sup>24</sup> de Bourbon, E. (1877). “Societe de l’Histoire de France.” *Anecdotes Historiques*. (quoted by Alford)

<sup>25</sup> “Abbots Bromley Horn Dance.” *Abbots Bromley*. [http://www.abbotsbromley.com/horn\\_dance](http://www.abbotsbromley.com/horn_dance)

<sup>26</sup> London Folk-lore Society. (1896). *Folk-Lore: A Quarterly Review of Myth, Tradition, Institution & Custom*. <http://www.archive.org/stream/folklore07folkuoft#page/n412/mode/1up>



by the lowered hand-bell). “Undressed” as it is, it is clear that the horse in Figure 6 does not have as bulky a structure as the *cheval-jupon* in Figures 2-4. The basket/wooden construction of the frame is also obvious, though the attachment of the head is less so.

A “dressed” hobby horse, according to sources commented on by Cawte, would be quite elaborate. In the accounts of St. Giles Cripplegate for 1585 is a description of what would be needed to outfit hobby horses for London’s Midsummer Watch festivities:

12 propper boyes, on hobbye horses finely covered with some prettye colored thinge, as buckeram [course linen] or lynen [linen] paynted, the said boyes to be armed with kurets, poldrens, vanbraces, and burganettes, or hedpieces, made of pasteboorde, after some straunge and anticke maner, silvered over with leafe silver, and their baces of some buckeram or lynnen, paynted after the best devise; which said boyes to have everie one a little sqorde (I man foyles of iron to be verie lighte and bright) that after paruncinge, montinge, and fetchinge upp their horses alofte on all fower, they mayie at divers tymes in the wathe make combat [...] 6 against 6<sup>27</sup>.

Covering the hobby horse is in line with the cloth barding of medieval equestrianism, and also seems to align with Figure 1. It does not appear to be wooden, when compared with the wood of the accompanying jester’s tabor and flute, so it is either covered or painted, more likely the latter. As the “rider” is crowned (and therefore presumably of some status), it is safe to assume that the horse would be of a finer quality both in craftsmanship and appearance. The horse in Figure 1 does appear to be lacking additional covering apart from tack.

## Planning

With multiple references to the hobby horse being made of wicker or basketry, I purchased three different diameters of round reed: 7.5 mm, 4.25 mm, and 2.25 mm with the thought that the variety would give me flexibility in the creation of the hoop. cursory research into medieval basketweaving techniques revealed that “coiling” was a standard method that was used. Since I only needed to create the frame for the hobby horse, my plan was to bend the thicker reeds into an oval and then use the smaller ones to secure them together, similarly to what is evident in Figure 5.

Figure 1 appears to have some bulk to it that is lacking in Figure 5, so I attempted to find a middle road between Figure 5 and Figures 2-4. Many of the referenced descriptions of hobby horses speak to how lightweight they are. Given that the horse and fabric skirting is to be suspended from a belt, I decided to use linen fabric and polyester stuffing (I did not have any wool roving I was willing to use for stuffing) to make what would amount to a stuffed animal to attach to the basket ring. Using simple representative and geometric pieces would echo garment

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<sup>27</sup> Cawte, E. C. (1978). *Ritualistic animal disguise: a historical and geographical study of animal disguise in the British Isles*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, p. 25. I should note that the 1571-2 record of St. Giles Cripplegate is attributed to the British Library’s MS 1572.

construction techniques and should create an end result that mimics the hobby horse in Figure 1. Using this method would also give me the ability to “bulk up” the frame to achieve something close to a midpoint between Figure 5 and Figures 2-4, again mimicking Figure 1.



Figure 6: Implied joint structure of the hobby horse rider of Figure 1.

While the literature refers to the hobby horse as wooden, I do not believe that the horse depicted in Figure 1 is made of wood. For one, it is suspended by the wearer’s belt. A wooden structure of that size would be a considerable amount of weight to carry in such a fashion. Were it suspended using straps that went over the wearer’s shoulders, I would find wood to be a more likely material. Additionally, because the horse hangs to what can be approximated as just above the knee (Figure 6), a wooden structure has the potential to cause difficulties when moving. Descriptions of the hobby horse include the antics of the performer, so the horse in Figure 1 would need to be lifted to waist height (which, with the weight of a wooden horse head/sides, could cause strain over time) or else cause potential damage to the legs and knees of the wearer.



Figure 7: Statue of Saint George by Tilman Riemenschneider, c. 1490, out of limewood. Bode Museum, Berlin.

There is a chance that it may have been made with a wood like lime/linden (also known as basswood) given that is a soft, lightweight wood that was used for carving in the fifteenth century (see Figure 7)<sup>28</sup>, but I lack the woodcarving skills to do this media justice. With practice, I may be able to produce a hobby horse using this method in the future.

I planned to use fabric from my first attempt at a surcoat – some embroidered silk – for the skirting. I would construct the mane from handspun wool yarn by laying loops over the back of the neck and stitching them down before cutting them apart. I would use the same yarn for the tail, but I planned to gather it together and use linen cord to tie a wrapped knot around one end, creating a sort of brush with the yarn. I'd then stitch it into the back seam of the horse so that the gather was hidden inside.

The reed soaked in lukewarm water for thirty minutes to make it pliable, and I used binder clips as impromptu clamps to keep the round reed in place.

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<sup>28</sup> Tilia. (2012, January 19). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 19:31, January 31, 2012, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tilia&oldid=472038838>

## Process

### *The Ring*

Using round reed that was approximately 7.5-8 millimeters in diameter and ½ inch flat reed, I wove together the ring that would serve as the basis of the hobby horse. The ring has a circumference of approximately 80 inches, which is large enough to fit around most people either at the waist or above the knee, as indicated by the manuscript.



Figure 8: One-third of the way through wrapping the first ring.

I wrapped the sides of the ring first, to create more stability as I was working with the material. I left the front of the ring, where the ends met and there were more “lines” of round reed to weave, for last.



Figure 9: Nearly finished with the first ring.





Figure 10: Detail of the weaving method.

### *The Horse*

Because the plan was to make two hobby horses, I wanted to make the colors of the horses both natural but also distinctly different. I settled on a light tan for one and black for the other. My first attempts at making the horse head for the tan horse did not go well – the head was too small for the body. The second head, slightly modified from the original pieces, was a much better fit than the first.



Figure 11: Head (v.1) pattern pieces.



Figure 12 (left): Head (v.2) partially stuffed and attached.

The body pieces were made of three strips of roughly 10" x 20" linen. I cut one of these in half so that I could have a back seam to both stuff from and place the tail. Each piece was sewn onto the ring, starting with the somewhat trapezoidal torso piece. I laid the piece out, then stitched the top seam using my machine. This resulted in a sort of "hobby horse-sewing machine yoga" that I did not care to repeat with the





second horse. Because the ends were open, I was able to pull the entire thing right-side out again. I used this method to add the other pieces of the horse, utilizing the back seam to turn them. The second head was stitched on by hand afterward. For the second horse, with the modified and proportional head (Figure 13), the head was stitched on and turned with the rest of the pieces. I also stitched the horse together and embroidered the face details before joining it with the ring (Figure 14). Before weaving the thicker reeds together, I simply slid the fabric horse onto the reed, similar to adding a key to a split ring. I then wove the ring, moving the fabric around so that I could secure the entire ring.

In the construction of both horses, I left openings at the seams along the ring in order to affix straps. The straps were made of leather thongs stitched together in pairs with cording looped through and attached to the wearer's belt (Figure 15). There were straps at the two, six, and ten o'clock positions.



Figure 13: (top) Pattern pieces for the black horse (head v. 3)

Figure 14: (bottom left) Black horse stitched on un-woven ring.

Figure 15: (bottom right) Brown horse finished and worn at mid-thigh height with straps hanging from belt (cord emphasized in red).

## *The Details*

The horse's face is shown to have detail in Figure 1, as well as in the other aforementioned examples. I decided to embroider these details onto the fabric.



The ears were made by sewing together leaf-shaped pieces of fabric, turning them, and then folding in the raw edge before pinching and attaching the ears to the head (Figure 16).

For the mane and tail, I spun wool and plied it together, choosing colors that would appear as natural. For the brown hobby horse, I wound the yarn loosely around the horse's neck, stacking it until I reached the ear. I then used black thread to couch the yarn. For the top of the head, I ran several lengths up to the ear and couched them, trying to simulate the way the mane falls on a horse.

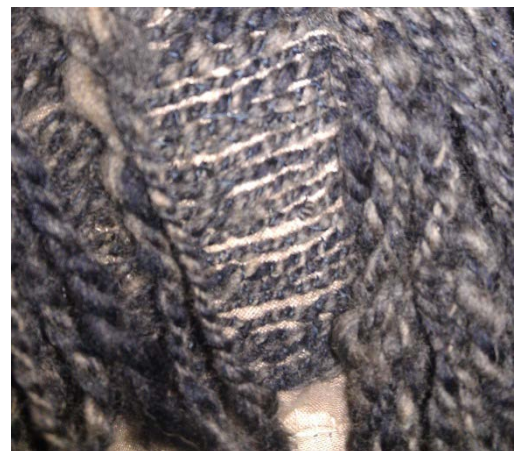


Figure 16: (top) Ear attachment on brown horse.

Figure 17: (middle left) Black, white, and gray wool spun for the black hobby horse.

Figure 18: (bottom left) Top of brown horse's head.

Figure 19: (bottom right) Couched yarn on the back of the brown horse's neck.



I was not pleased with the way the mane fell on the first horse (the brown one) so I made my couching narrower on the black horse. This narrower band made the mane fall more naturally. I made the tails by looping yarn over my hand and forearm and then securing one end with both the yarn itself and with linen thread. I then tucked this end into the seam at the back of the hobby horse and stitched it into the seam.

The last detail was the bridle and other tack. I made this by using thin satin ribbon and stitching it both together and to the horse at the points where, on a real horse, it would have been attached with metal findings.

### *The Skirting*

Because I was using a failed attempt at a surcoat to skirt the first horse, I already had a hemmed edge and a length that I thought would work. I trimmed the top of the garment off, made a rolled hem, and pinned it to the underside of the fabric encased ring. I hand stitched the skirting on. For the black horse, I did my best to approximate the same length of the blue horse's skirting by eye and followed the same process. Of course, this method is very inexact. I found that when I moved the strapping to the shoulders, the skirt did not need to be lifted/the horse did not need to be tilted in order to walk with ease.

### **Results**

The first rendition of the hobby horse strapped so that it hung at mid-thigh worked, but it was not a very reasonable apparatus in regard to putting it on, taking it off, and moving in it. Lords Gregor and Aiden Tarrachson were kind enough to test the first two hobby horses at Bardic Madness XXII in the Shire of Rokeclif. They were able to tilt at one another with foam noodles, but needed help both getting into and out of the horses. They also held the horses so that they could run with more ease.

Based on this and the other pieces of research describing hobby horses, I decided to adjust the straps so that they hung at the shoulder. I used commercial cotton webbing found at the fabric store and looped the ends over the woven ring. I sewed the webbing to itself to secure this loop, and when re-stitching the seam on the horse, stitched the webbing as well. These straps were attached at the eleven, one, five, and seven o'clock positions, approximately, and crossed in order to simulate modern suspenders and provide stability. In order to help balance the weight of the head, I had someone try on the horses and see where the straps crossed. I secured and marked this point with a pin and then stitched it. The resulting horses, sitting at the waist, were easily wearable by various adults. They were able to move and maneuver at a jog in order to run a ring course at the 2012 Quest for Camelot. Two of the horses were auctioned off, and now belong to The Evil Baroness Bridget ni Cathasaigh and Mistress Margaret Malise "Mysie" de Kyrkyntolaghe.



In the future, I would like to try to find a way to carve a head out of basswood and attach it to the woven ring, for a potentially more period horse. At the same time, a fabric horse is arguably period, as all the materials (or their equivalencies) and construction techniques would have been available. I would also like to make horses sized for children so that they could take part in “pseudo-equestrian” games and activities.

## Gallery

In closing, I offer up a series of photographs from the 2012 Quest for Camelot, taken by Viscountess Elshava bas Riva, of the finished horses in action.



Figure 20: (left) Countess Lusche and me wearing the first two horses.

Figure 21: (bottom) From left to right, Illano Del Aquilla, Mistress Orlaith, and The Evil Baroness Bridget get ready to ride the ring course. Illano Del Aquilla is wearing a third horse made for the event that had not been hemmed yet, hence the hasty “pinning up”







Figure 22: (top) Countess Lusche on the ring course.

Figure 23: (bottom) Master Caradoc on the ring course.

