

PREFACE

Before beginning class, people ask me where I, a male, learned to crochet. Many years ago, in my salad days, I was on a “Bus & Truck” tour across the country, with a show. A “Bus and Truck” show is one in which the scenery, costumes, sound and electricians are in the truck, and the actors ride a bus. Ours was not a true “Bus and Truck” in that our actors rode in 6 cars. I was assigned to the car with the 70 year old character actor who didn’t drive; the 70 year old character actress who didn’t drive; myself; and the “mad truck driver from Brooklyn.” How bad a driver was “the mad truck driver from Brooklyn?” We were in IOWA where the roads are flat and straight (surrounded by corn fields); we saw only one other car in an hour, and he nearly hit it. I could not look out the window; I was too nervous to sleep; and I got headaches. In Oshkosh, Wisconsin, I stopped in to a Woolworth’s store, and purchased a crochet hook, a skein of yarn, and instruction book. This solved my problem. By the end of the tour, every member of the cast and crew had a hand crocheted belt. I have been crocheting ever since. My wife is fully equipped for the SCA.

CROCHETING IN THE SCA

HISTORY OF CROCHET

Crochet and Knitting are fiber arts for which no documentable evidence exists prior to late period. We have paintings in period that show the work, but prior to the late 1500s, we have no extant first hand instructions or descriptions.

Why are there no existing patterns prior to the late 1500s? You must remember that we are dealing with an illiterate society. The concept of universal education is a 19th century concept. Until then, only the upper classes, the nobility, the priesthood, and the developing middle class, could read. The idea that reading was a necessary element of education began in the late Middle Ages, where in the education of an apprentice included the ability to read and write (for business purposes.) Thus in our period, mothers taught daughters, and grandmothers taught grand-daughters. There was no reason to write crochet patterns down as those who could read represented a minority of the population, who would buy clothing that others had made.

Many persons view items in paintings and attempt to determine how they were made. Many declare these items to be netting or tatting; but in reality, some of them are true crochet; or a viewing gives no hints as to how the items were made. In documents, crochet first appears as a method of lace making for ecclesiastical garments, ruffs, and cuffs in the late Elizabethan era. The first documentable examples of knitting are dated post-1400. At one of the recent “Bog” excavations (Approx. 1200A.D.), a tool was found that was labeled “Unknown Tool” by the scholars on the dig. A picture of this “Unknown Tool;” was recognized by a fiber artist, as a crochet hook.

As far as can be determined, crochet was an outgrowth of fish nets. As long as there have been fishnets, (which go back to the ancient Egyptians, Indians, Mesopotamians, and before recorded history) there has been a

hook-shaped tool used to repair and make the nets. As long as that tool existed, and long strings of fiber were available, there has been crochet. **No one can prove this statement, but no one can disprove it either.** The fact that it cannot be disproved is the wedge in the SCA door, and crocheting has entered the SCA world.

CROCHET IN THE SCA

The “authenticity police” would rather have you “tat” or “card weave” than have you crochet, because of the lack of documentation which “proves” that crochet is period.

Most modern crochet patterns are not suitable for SCA use as they are. It is the adaptation of these patterns for SCA use, which is the basis for most SCA crochet. One of the abilities most treasured in the SCA IS the ability to see something in the mundane world, and realize that it can be utilized for SCA use. (One needs to sing the praises of Constable Lord Thomas of Northpass in the Kingdom of the East, who brought the “Misting Tent” to Pennsic, and to the unknown visionary who brought home water filtering systems to the Pennsic water supply.)

ITEMS THAT LOOK AND FEEL “RIGHT” FOR THE SCA

SCA garb is visually oriented. For many SCAdians, if it looks right, it is acceptable, even if you used a sewing machine or surger; and the garment is made of polyester. When you come to fiber arts, garments, and accessories, the same is true: **It is the “look” that counts.** It is the difference between reality and the perception of reality. We want something that looks as though it were period, but not be fooled by other post period trends, such as: “Hippie Dress”

In the SCA, there are two areas that crocheting appears:

- 1- As authentic trim on documentable period garb;
- 2- As non-authentic accessories for use in living in the SCA.

As stated above, there are very few documentable items from our period; but using “The 10 Foot Rule” (If it looks authentic at 10 feet, it is acceptable) some crochet items (such as snoods and shawls) are included with period garb. Most SCA use of crochet comes in the second category – items that look and feel “period” for use in daily like.

WHY CROCHET YOUR OWN?

- 1- One of the basic premises of the SCA is to make it yourself.
- 2- Crocheting is an “old time” skill.
- 3- Crocheted items look, feel, and move “Right” for SCA use.
- 4- You can get a suitable match for your garb when you buy something, but you will only get a perfect match when you make it yourself. By making it yourself, you will make something exactly as you want it.
- 5- You can make something that will have an exact fit for a specific person.
- 6- You can, eventually, find an exact color match for existing garb.
- 7- Although time consuming and repetitive, Crochet is easy; relaxing, and requires no “hardware” (other than a hook). It is simpler than other authentic period skills; and is easy to learn.

- 8- There are modern instructions manuals from which you can teach yourself to crochet.
- 9- You can pick and choose your materials.
- 10- In the long run, making your own is cheaper. Accessories may be made from less length than a typical skein, and you have the rest for other projects
- 11- Inexpensive snoods on sale at events are usually mass produced in China or India using artificial yarns, which don't look period.
- 12- Having something for your hands to do will help get you through those long boring meetings, and courts, and you don't have to drag along looms

PERIOD FIBERS - What were the fibers in use varies according to your specific time, and location. In Europe during the medieval period through the Renaissance, the primary fibers use for fabric, were sheep and goat wool; linen, and some hemp cloth and flax. Cotton existed, but without Mr. Whitney's gin, it was expensive and imported from Egypt. Likewise, silk was present, but was very expensive due to the fact that it came along the "Silk Road" all the way from China. How fabrics were made and dyed, depended on the nature of the fiber: wool, cotton, and silk take dye very well; while goat hair doesn't take dye well. (There are some exceptions with goat such as Sashimi and Mohair.)

PERIOD FABRIC - We have all heard the term "Broadcloth." This is the simplest fabric using a simple over-under weave. In late period, velvets, twills, corduroys (literally the Cloth of Kings), and other weaves appeared. The weaves vary according to time and place. There are many classes offered on period fabric and is a subject for an entire class by itself. Check the PENNSIC University class schedule, or your local kingdom university.

COLOR – In period, garments were made of natural materials, colored with natural dyes, and simply done. Natural dyes, with certain exceptions, produce subdued colors. Black – true black – was very difficult to achieve, and only the super rich wore true black (See the Portraits of the Spanish Royal Family during the Reign of Phillip 11 and his predecessors.) Variations in color were done in the weaving process, with different colored threads making stripes quite common. "Tie dye" came in much later; the process of "tie dying" had not yet made it to Europe during period. (In the late period, variegated yarns were developed. If you held a "hank" of yarn in one hand; dipped one side in one color, and the other side in a second color; you ended up with 3 colors variegation.) Likewise, artificial dyes, such as "Aniline" had not then been developed. Thus "Hot" colors, and even multiple colors are not right for period Look. (Yes, using metallic mordents created some bright colors.) In period, most "color" was present in the form of "Trims" using metallic threads and "tablet" weaving. To have a garment look period, you should use blocks of solid color, which are subdued in intensity, with contrasting and colorful trim.

In those days, cloth and clothing were very expensive in terms of percentage of income. People wore their garments for years and years; (Members of the various Courts were more subject to fashion, but for the most part, they could afford new clothes.) The average person planned on wearing a given

garment indefinitely. Thus some of the subdued colors of period garb (and in dirty period paintings) were due to age and wear.

THE RIGHT LOOK FOR THE SCA – For a crocheted garment to look period, it should be simple, a single subdued color with contrasting trim; not multicolored or using “fancy” stitches.

For those interested in period materials, dyes, and fabrics, check the Pennsic Class Guide (or your local kingdom university) as many classes on these subjects are offered. These classes are taught by people who really know their stuff. I have taken several, and learned wondrous things.

CROCHET IN USE IN THE SCA

Today, crocheting is found in the SCA in accessories (snoods, ruffs, cuffs, fireside wraps, hats, vests, shawls and scarves, tabards, ponchos, belts, pouches,) and other garments. Since there is no documentation for crochet garments, use them at the fireside.

CROCHET TO MEASURE

A large percentage of SCAdian crochet is easier than contemporary patterns. With only a few exceptions, Crochet for SCA use, is done to measurement. SCA acceptable garments consist of rectangles and circles that are used independently, or attached together to form garments and accessories, and the SCAdian crotchetier can happily ignore the basic requirements of contemporary crochet directions: yarn size, hook size, or even gage. There are some exceptions, but they are noted below.

CROCHETING TO MEASURE

In the directions below, you will be given instructions to make to measure. These measurements are to the body, not to the length of the starting chain. Yarns are elastic and stretch and pull. The specific stitch you use also affects the stretch of the piece. As I am offering general instructions, you need to modify them according to your project. As you will be choosing yarn, hook, and stitch, there is no general rule for determining the length of the starting chain. You need to crochet a sample in order to get an exact body measurement. The only way to figure this out is to crochet several rows (at least 6 inches long, and 6 inches wide) and then check the measurement. If there is a difference, you need to then go back to the starting chain and adjust.

For example: If the shoulder measurement required is 19 inches, you **cannot** just chain 19 inches and go on from there. Using the yarn, hook, and stitch you have chosen, make a 19 inch wide piece. Do several rows of your pattern stitch until you have a 6 inch wide piece, and then measure it. You will find that the piece will not measure 19 inches, but will most likely be shorter than the desired length. If a 19 inch chain works out to a 17 inch length at the 6” mark, you need to add two inches to the starting chain, (19 inches desired, minus 17 inches actual, equals 2 inches needed) Pull your work apart and start over making a 21 inch chain. (19 inches plus 2 inches) Make another 6x6 inch wide piece and check the measurement. If it is now the desired length, continue on. If the piece does not give you the desired

length: determine what modifications you need to make, pull the work apart, go back and start with the starting chain again. Keep doing this until you achieve the length you need.

You must use the same tension throughout, if you start with a “Tight” tension and then “loosen up” as you proceed, the piece may not come out right. This is most important when making several pieces that are sown together.

PLEASE NOTE: This method works very well on children or people with flat stomachs. If you are making a garment for a zaftig woman, or a man with a “beer gut” you may have to adjust. There are three methods of adjusting for the vagaries of the human body:

1 – Add additional inches to the width of the piece. If the measurement across the shoulder is 18 inches, make your measurement 23 or 24 inches, This means the garment may hang over the shoulders at the top, but it will get around the “vast tracks of land,” or the “beer belly.” (The “Beer Belly” is Period.)

2- Crochet additional rectangular pieces and sew at the side seams, between front and back. To do this, you should measure the actual body thickness for the width. Length will be the same as the front and back pieces, minus the 10 underarm allowance.

3- Crochet the additional side pieces in the form of trapezoids, narrow at the top, and getting wider as you go down the length. This is not as difficult as it may sound. When you measure the actual body thickness, measure it in 5 places: top, middle, bottom, half way between the top and middle, and halfway between the middle and the bottom. As you progress down the length, you simply add stitches to make the piece wider. The easiest way is to increase is at the ends and beginnings of rows. (Always be symmetrical) It may be a help to you, to cut out a piece of paper or fabric to the desired measurements, and crochet to match the shape of your cut out. If you use scrap fabric, be sure to use one that does not stretch

PLEASE NOTE: There are 2 measurements you must always keep in mind for “normal sized people:

1- Allow a minimum of 8 inches across the back of the neck.

2- Allow a minimum of 10 inches for arm holes.

Again – If you are making something for a child, a zaftig woman, or a beer bellied man, you may have to adjust these measurements

DO OVER

Don’t be afraid to pull something apart; and don’t get frustrated! Crochet is a repetitive mechanical action. You can put yourself into the Zen of crochet, or semi-automatic. You will make mistakes and errors. It comes with the territory. You will come to realize that some errors (skipped or doubled stitches) will have great effect further along in the project, while other errors will have negligible effects. You will quickly learn when a mistaken stitch can be ignored, and when you need to pull out the work, go back before the mistake and do over. Your own personal sense of perfection will affect this judgment. Above all, do not get frustrated! Fix the mistake – start over, if necessary - and go on.

VARIATIONS

You can try your own variations on the following items. The limitations are your imagination.

- 1- USE A DIFFERENT YARN – By using different yarns, very different effects can be achieved.
- 2- USE SEVERAL STRANDS OF YARN; EITHER THE SAME COLOR, OR DIFFERENT COLORS.
- 3- USE A DIFFERENT STICH PATTERN – There are modern books available showing (and providing instructions) on the many different stitch patterns. Most of my wraps have been half-double crochet through the back loops.
- 4- USED A DIFFERENT SIZE HOOK. – The same stitch and yarn, looks very different when a different size hook is used.
- 5- USE A “VARIGATED” YARN-. Although variegated Yarns are not early period, they look great!
- 6- USE A CONTRASTING COLOR EDGE
- 7- USE A FRINGE ON THE “BOTTOM EDGES” – There are books on different fringes and many different looks can be obtained.
- 8- USE DIFFERENT STITCHES ON THE DIFFERENT EDGES.
– On one wrap that I made, I used slip stitches on the center front edges; single crochet on the front & back bottoms, and a double crochet on the outer edges (over the arms).

I once made a Fireside Wrap to the sewing shoulders stage, when it was pointed out that the person I was making it for was very “Zaftig,” and that because of the “vast tracks of land” the wrap would not come to the waist of the lady in questions. To make the garment longer, without having to start from scratch, I crocheted several rows at the shoulders (both fronts and back) and then sewed them together. This solved the length problem. In later versions, I used a contrasting color for these extensions which matched the edging color, thus producing another variation.

THE FIRESIDE WRAP

This garment is a derivation of a modern pattern and can be used by both Lords and Ladies although primarily for Ladies. When sitting around the fire pit, the legs are warmed by the fire; but the upper body is cooled by breezes; and, being further away from the fire, it is much cooler than the feet. The Fireside wrap, solves this difference of temperature, by draping over the shoulders, and wrapping around the arms and upper body. The beauty of this garment is that the lack of sleeves means that it will comfortably go over the garb of any period; and still provide a great deal of warmth for the upper body. People wearing the Fireside wrap can put their arms under the wrap. and achieve significant warmth. Small children seem to love snuggling in someone’s lap, while wrapped up in a fireside wrap.

The “Fireside Wrap” consists of 3 rectangles that are sewn together. Each Rectangle is made to measurements, and thus is open to any stitch pattern, hook size, or fiber. The crotchetier can make any number of variations, using different stitch patters, finishings, and yarns.

For a medium size, the back is a basic rectangle 30” long and 36” wide. The two front sides are 30” long and 18” at the bottom, shaped to 14” at the top. This allows 8” to go around the back of the neck. For larger sizes, adjust the height and width, but always allow 8” for around the back of the neck. The starting chain can be at either the side of the panel, or at the bottom (or top). The stitch pattern you use will affect your choice of where

to start. If you are making this item for a friend, you can adjust the sizes to the specific measurements of that person. If your starting chain is at the side, you “shape” by simply not crocheting to the top of the row. You turn around and go back when you reach the desired height. You thus have two rows short of full measure; each pair of succeeding rows is then shorter than the previous pair. (Four pairs of rows, each row set 7 stitches shorter works well.) If you start at the bottom, shaping is more complex. The theory is the same – you simply don’t crochet the full width. The actual number of stitches will again vary by the yarn, hook and stitch you use. It will help, if you cut out a piece of fabric or paper to measure, and then crochet to match.

When the three rectangles (2 of which are shaped) are finished, starting at the outer edges of the back, sew them together at what will become the shoulder. Be sure that the shaped sides are to the center. You then crochet 3 rows around all edges.

THE TABBARD

The crocheted tabard can be worn around the campfire or as event garb. Like the “Fireside wrap”, it is made to measure and consists of two rectangles that are laced together at the sides. Do not wear a crocheted tabard over armour, as one whack can do serious damage to a piece of crochet.

To make a tabard: measure the distance between the “bumps” on the shoulders; and measure the distance from the shoulder to mid thigh. Make two rectangles to this size. The starting chain is across the bottom. When the two rectangles are complete, with a contrasting color, starting at the outer edges of the tops of both pieces, crochet together or sew, to within 4 inches of the center point of the panel. Turn, and crochet a total of 4 rows on both panels, on both sides of the center points, making sure to leave 8 inches of the panels clear, for the head hole, match the individual stitches of the crocheted contrasting sections, front section to back section; and sew them together using the same yarn and a tapestry needle., or crochet them together.

Underarm ties – Using the contrasting colors, make 2 chains approximately 30 inches long. This length may be shorter or longer, varying with the length from shoulder to mid thigh. Starting approximately 10” below the shoulder, (to allow for an arm hole) loosely lace the chained piece between the front side edge to the back side edge. You will have to experiment with this side lacing. The length of the laces and their placement on the side edges will vary according to the length of the tabard and the thickness of the arm. You may have to start the lace lower (or higher) than 10 inches below the shoulder. If you want a really strong tie, chain to the desired length, turn and slip stitch into each stitch across. Tie off or make a tassel.

Belt - Using the contrasting color, make a chain approximately 50 inches long. Turn and slip stitch in each stitch aback to the first chain. This is now a belt. Again, the length of this chained piece will vary according to the waist of the person wearing the garment. You may have to make it shorter, or longer: just be sure to allow enough extra length to make a bow, or knot, or whatever “closing” the wearer desires. If you so desire, you may use a different stitch rather than the slip stitch, which will make the belt wider.

Trim – If you so desire, you may use the contrasting color as a bottom edging of the front & Rear panels. Simply crochet a few rows to the bottom, or employ some other decorative stitch.

THE VEST

The vest consists of three panels made to measure, and sewn together. Measure the distance between the “bumps” on the shoulder, and from the shoulder bump to mid-calf. The starting chain is at the shoulder. Using the yarn, hook and stitches you choose, make one panel (the back) the full set of dimensions, and two panels (the fronts) that are the length from shoulder to mid-calf, but half the width. After making the pieces, the panels are sewn together at the shoulder. The two front panels (that are half width and not shaped) are sewn to the back panel, starting at the outer edge, but are sewn only approximately half way to the center, (you must leave at least eight inches for the back of the neck). The center halves of the front panels are allowed to fold back, and both sides are attached to the part of the sewn front panels with permanently sewn buttons. The side edges of the panels are sewn together, leaving a few inches at the bottom unsewn. There is no front closure on this vest. The wearer may use a belt to close the vest, but ordinarily, it is worn open.

In addition to your choice of yarn, hook, and stitch; you may vary this design by adjusting the length and width of the panels. The vest can end at the waist, or continue down the body any length you want. If you want to have the front panels overlap, make the front panels wider. If you want the vest to flair out at the bottom, add stitches as you proceed downwards. If you so desire, you may lace the center fronts closed, or use buttons as a closure. The length of the sides that are not sewn should vary with the length of the vest – the longer the vest, the longer the unsewn section at the bottom side should be. The sides can even be totally open for Equestrian activities. If so desired, the buttons at the top of the front panels can be practical, so the vest will button closed at the neck.

HATS

Tams and Berets

The most common form of hat used is the tam or beret. I went on the Internet and typed “tam” on a search engine. I printed out the responses. I then went back to the Internet, and typed in “beret.” I downloaded those responses. The patterns I received were exactly the same except for one thing: **the only difference between a tam and a beret is a pom-pom on the top.** This is one of those pieces that you must stay close to existing patterns, in order for the hat to work out O.K. You can still try many variations, but you must observe the general patterns.

To make a tam/beret: Chain 5 stitches and connect with a slip stitch. Put 6 to 8 single crochet stitches in the ring created, (the number of stitches will vary according to the yarn, hook, and stitch used hereafter.). I am sorry that there is no way to get an exact size / combination except by experimentation. Attach with a slip stitch and chain 2. Double crochet in the same stitch as the turning chain, and 2 double crochets in each single crochet around. Attach with a slip stitch to the turning chain and chain 2.

At this point, I offer a general caution to follow. The yarn, hook, and stitch you choose to use will affect the outcome so there can be no definitive exact steps. You must experiment to get it right.

On each succeeding row, start with a second stitch in the turning chain, and then put one stitch in the next stitch, followed by 2 stitches in the next stitch, (increase one stitch) and follow around. You are making two “Vs” of two stitches with one stitch in between. In the next row, you make “Vs” with 2 stitches in between; in the next row, you make “Vs” with three stitches in between. You continue on adding additional stitches between the “Vs” for each additional row, until the piece is approximately 10 inches across, the size of a dinner plate.

Due to variations caused by the yarn, hook and stitch; the piece may not come out correctly. You want the piece to come out flat.

If the piece comes out like a ruffle – you have added too many stitches in the rows. You can either pull out the work or repeat a row with fewer stitches; or you can try doing the next row with no additional stitches. Sometimes this will result in the piece flattening out.

If the piece starts curving up like a bag or cup, you have not added enough stitches. To correct this, you can either pull out the work or repeat a row with more stitches; or you can try doing the next row with more increased stitches. Sometimes this will result in the piece flattening out.

The most important aspect is that the piece is flat, not ruffled or baggie. When the piece has reached the desired width, crochet one row around with no increases, and then start decreasing.

There are two ways to decrease:

- 1- Mirror image the way you increased, that is, instead of making “Vs”, decrease one stitch for every “V”. For example, if you reach the size you want on the 20th increase row (“V” 20 stitches between, “V”) crochet the one row with no increases, then decrease one stitch, 20 stitches between, and decrease one stitch., (DECREASE, 20 stitches between, DECREASE) and on around. The next row would be decrease one stitch, 19 stitches between, decrease one stitch, and on around. Continue decreasing. This method gives you a gradual turn around.
- 2- Once you have made the row with no increases, decrease one stitch every 5 stitches in each of the next few rows. You will be decreasing 20% on each row; This method gives you a sharper turn around.

NOTE: As you are making the turn around, put the piece on your head, and look in a mirror. **The way it looks to the eye, is more important than mathematical precision.**

Keep trying the hat on as you decrease each row. When the leading row is comfortable on your head (snug but not tight), start to make the head band. The head band is done simply by doing rows with no increases or decreases; make several rows with the exact same number of stitches. Again – put the hat on your head and look in the mirror. You will see when the head band is in the correct proportion to the hat. Tie off, and weave in yarn ends with either a smaller hook, or a tapestry needle.

If you want a pom-pom or tassel, make and attach. Most craft & yarn shops will have a book with instructions for making them.

THE “BEANIE” - I dislike this name, but it is probably the best description. This is a variation of the Tam/Beret pattern.

Follow the directions for the Tam / Beret until the hat is the diameter of your head. Skip to the instructions for the head band. As you make this hat, be sure to keep trying it on and check for fit.

THE SNOOD - This can be made out of many different yarns and hook sizes. You must be careful when using different yarns and hooks. If the yarn is too heavy, you will wind up with a hat. If you start with too many initial “v”s, you can wind up with a “mop cap” and not a snood. With a snood, you must see the hair, but the hair must be contained by the snood, and not pop out. Don’t be afraid to experiment, or to take it apart and try a different method, yarn or hook. The following directions are for use with #10 Crochet Cotton, or a fine yarn.

Chain 4, attach with slip stitch to form ring.

Make 6 single crochet stitches, thru the hole in the center, attach with slip stitch.

Chain 2.

Double crochet in same space as chain2.

ROW 1 -Chain1, Double crochet in next stitch; chn 1, dble in same stitch, chain 1

Continue around, putting “v” into each stitch (Dble,chn1,Dble; chain 1) join with slip stitch, chain3.

ROW 2- Double crochet in same space as chain 3, chain 1. Put “v” in each V around, and 1 double crochet in each space between “v”s. Continue around, attach with slip stitch & Chain 3.

Continue rows until there are 5 spaces between “v”s. Attach with slip stitch & chain 4.

NEXT ROW – Using chain 1, triple crochet, chain1; crochet stitch into each space - In 3rd space put in a “v”. Continue around, attach with slip stitch, and chain 4.

Continue rows until you come to 5 spaces between “v”s. Using 3 ½ crochet (3 wraps around your hook) place stitch in each space; put a “v” into the 3rd space between “v”s.

Continue rows until piece is approximately 18’ across.

There are two ways to end off your snood:

- 1- Using a piece of stretch elastic of a complimentary color, single crochet through each 3 ½ crochet around the elastic. Continue around, attach with slip stitch; cut thread and weave in end.
- 2- When you attach with slip stitch, chain 3; double crochet in each 3 ½ crochet, chain 1, and repeat around, attach with slip stitch; cut thread and weave in end. Thread a ribbon or cord through the chain one spaces (in and out weave). If you want, make a chain 30” long and use it as your ribbon. If necessary, you can slip stitch back in each stitch, or use two strands of your thread.

BEADED SNOODS

You can also make a beaded snood. The only thing you have to be careful of, is that the holes in the beads are big enough to fit on your thread or yarn.

To make a beaded snood, thread the beads onto the thread (or yarn) before you start making the snood. Follow the above directions for a plain snood. After the first round, not the first ring, pull one bead up, and chain around the bead, then continue the pattern, putting in a bead on each chain between “Vs”. If you run out of beads, simply break the thread, feed more beads onto the thread (about 50 Beads), retie the thread to your work, and continue the pattern. You must be sure the knot will go through the bead and simply weave in the ends of the knots,

When done, weave the yarn ends into the snood with a smaller hook or tapestry needle.

SOME THOUGHTS ON STITCH, YARN AND PATTERNS

What is YARN”? According to the dictionary, yarn is: Any fiber that is spun into strands for weaving, knitting, crocheting, or making thread.

You must be prepared to experiment. I once purchased some acrylic yarn on a really good sale; I started a project using a single crochet stitch. The piece came out so stiff and harsh to the touch that I ended the project. I started over using the same yarn and hook, with a different stitch, through the back loop. It worked, and the piece turned out warm, flexible, and soft to the touch.

Experiment with acrylic yarns, “wool” yarns” metallic yarns, acrylic yarns and cotton yarns (it is more than string). Certain yarns are better for some projects than others. Some garments can be made with any yarn. You will learn by doing. By using different yarns, you can make garments for all seasons and weather conditions. (Dog hair makes excellent waterproof gloves and garments).

Beware of Modern dyes! I was once doing a project that required a mixture of different colored yarns, so I purchased the same yarn in different colors. As I was working on the project, everything was going fine until I came to one color that worked up differently. Where as all of the other colors worked up smooth, this one color worked up stiff and scratchy. All other factors were equal. It was the same yarn, the only thing different was the modern dye used. As I was using an acrylic yarn, I went back to the yarn store and was able to find a different brand of acrylic yarn of the proper color (and weight) that worked up as well as the others. Although I was unable to maintain the same brand of yarn throughout, I was able to make the whole project with the same type of yarn.

Know the differences between yarns. This only comes with experience. I once crocheted a gift for a Laural whose specialty was period fiber arts. I would not insult her by using acrylic yarn; I used 100% wool.

What is the difference between “Woolen” and “Worsted”? When wool is combed, before it is spun into yarn, if all of the fibers go in the same direction, it is ‘wool’. If the fiber is folded back on itself so that half of the fibers go in one direction and the other half goes in the opposite direction, it is ‘Worsted.’. The combed fiber is then spun into yarn, “Wool” is warmer than “worsted”, but “worsted” is stronger than “wool.” In Scandinavia,

authorities recently dug up a Viking ship, complete with sails. Upon examination of the weave of the sails, it was discovered that the vertical yarn was “Worsted” but the horizontal yarn was “woolen.” It was some time after the discovery that the reason for this was realized. The custom of Viking sailors was to douse the sails with water to catch the most wind. Thus, there was a great weight on the sail; the sails were pulled downward with great force. As worsted is stronger than woolen, it was logical that the stronger fiber be used in the vertical direction. Unless you are making sails, for our needs, you need only remember that “woolens” are warmer, but “worsted” is stronger.

For the SCA “look” use only a few stitches. Multiple combinations of stitches that produce a pattern usually don’t look right. I have found that using only one stitch (irregardless of what stitch it is) produces results that look right. I sometimes use different stitches in succeeding rows, but only two different stitches. A row of double crochet alternating with a row of single crochet produces good looking results. I have also found that a half double crochet is outstanding for our uses.

Be aware that sometimes variegations in yarn color will make the intricacies of a stitch disappear. You must decide which is more important, the color variegation, or the stitch and chose yarn for your desires.

Beware of yarn that stretches! I once followed a modern pattern that gave measurements. The pattern called for sleeves that were 13” by 20” and I carefully made the pieces that size. After I “tubed” them, and sewed them to the main pieces, the sleeves measured 15” by 24”. I know of no tricks or hints to predict this. You must learn by doing.

Be aware that “Beading” will add weight to the piece. You must use light beads, if you are using a lot of beads. If you are using only a few beads, you can experiment with larger beads. On accessory pieces, you may have to line the item with fabric to prevent “sag.” You may have to sew the lining at several places. You have to experiment!

You must also pay attention to the width of the hole in the bead. With the introduction of “Plastic Fish Line” the sizes of holes on the market today, are designed to be used with “Plastic Fish Line”, not yarn for crochet. Beads are sold by the size of the outer size (diameter) of the bead, not the hole size. If you see a bead you like, check the hole size. Will the yarn you want to use go through? “Hole Reamers” may not work with all beads. You may end up with a handful of slivers.

Always remember that crocheted garment will stretch out. The Heavier the trim you use, the more the garment will stretch out. Like wise, if you end off by single crocheting across the bottom, you may end up with a garment that drags on the ground.

The basic rule of hook size is: the larger the yarn, the larger the hook. Experiment with hooks of different sizes. I once made a head band that came out too tight to wear. I pulled it apart, started over, and then increased the hook size on each succeeding head band row. The gradual enlargement of the stitch size was not noticeable, but the headband then fit. For the same reason, heavier yarns make hats, not snoods.

The main purpose of this class is to open up your mind to possibilities for SCA use. Too many people have been locked into the idea that crocheting is rigid, and you must use a pattern. Although consistency in tension and gage is necessary – that is all that is necessary. Open up your mind! Look in books that show the thousands of stitches that are available. Troll through yarn shops and department stores! Visualize how a specific yarn might be used on different garments. Look at pictures of knit items, and you can reproduce them in crochet. **Use your imagination and see the possibilities.**