

Stav's Recent History & Practices

The following is a series of answers to questions on Stav, and its recent History given by Ivar Hafskjold. Ivar Hafskjold is the 44th Herre of Haskjold in his family.

The title is what is called "Uradel" ancient nobility, and his family traces its decent back 44 generations to its legendary beginning through this title. Although Stav is intertwined with the Hafskjold family and its history, the title does not reflect the direct lineage of Stav. To give you an example, Ivar's Granduncle was the 42 Herre and taught Ivar Stav, his father was the 43rd, and according to Ivar, he has no knowledge of him training in Stav, but suspects he may have. Ivar's son will be the 45 Herre regardless of whether he trains in Stav or not. Stav's past history in the family is hard to trace, as being considered an oral tradition and the family being more interested in the practicality of the system than writing a history book on it, there is little written evidence. What we have today, are the passed down oral teachings of the system, based around the principles of the rune system known as "the Younger Futhark" and the tools to teach these, in particular the rune stances. How these have changed through the ages is open to speculation.

However Stav being a living tradition based around practicality and adaptation then change would have naturally occurred to meet the needs of the individual and the era it was used in.

It is the underlying rune principles of the Stav system that don't change, and what we have today is the result of the evolution of this system to this era, not something frozen in time and then passed down.

Anyone who takes the time to investigate Stav fully will soon realize that it is an intricate system, and at the same time a simple system, and more than the creation of one person or even a few generations of one family.

Q. The term "Stav" today is generally used to denote the whole system. How was the term viewed within your family and what did it denote?

Ivar: Anything that is based on the runes is Stav, and was/is called Stav by the family. That means the stances; the martial aspect, the whole philosophy, the god/esses etc. are all regarded as Stav. Galder, matt og megin are all Stav, while Seid is not, except when it is incorporated into the Stav philosophy For example when herbs are connected to a rune then teinseid becomes part of Stav. The fylgje exercise becomes Stav when we use a rune to enter, even if both of them are Seid. The crafts, ski-ing, falconry, horsemanship, tafl etc. are not generally regarded as Stav except when they are included on a bind-rune when they then become Stav. I know this sounds rather confusing, but the concept is fluid. Anything that involves the runes is Stav; anything else is not.

Q. In Scandinavia the nobility often take the family name from their coat of arms. Can you explain something of how this relates to your own family coat of arms?

Ivar: Skjold means shield so Hafskjold means Ocean (Haf) shield (skjold). The field of the shield is "Barry wavy of ten-argent & azul. The crest is a peacock feather proper issuing out of aducal coronet argent. In case you are not familiar with the formal description of arms this means the field of the shield has ten wavy lines alternating between silver and blue in colour which are used to be read as water (the ocean)

This is among what is known as ordinaries, which are the oldest coats of arm in existence, later the fields became more and more complicated as they became paper based instead of being a practical method of identification on the battlefield. The crest is attached to the helmet. It is then a silver crown with a peacock feather stuck into it; the use of a ducal coronet (though it is usually gold, not silver) in Denmark-Norway denotes that the family is what is called Ur-adel, that is the family is older than the kingdom and is not ennobled by patent, something like a clan-chief in Scotland.

Q. How was Stav knowledge imparted, and by which members of your family when you were growing up?

Ivar: Regarding a lot of the non-martial aspects of Stav it was just picked up through daily life, listening and observing. A lot of it I was so young when I learnt it, that I don't know who taught me first. As I have stated, it was just like learning to walk and talk. Archery and crossbow was actually taught to me by my father who used to make them in his spare time, though I have no knowledge of him training in Stav. (I suspect he did, actually). My grandfather's name was Karl, and from him I learnt mostly mythology. I learnt mostly from Granduncle Svend, it was my granduncle who taught me all the chant methods and breathing for the rune stances, as well as the staff and stick methods, which can be used to the teach the lines of any weapon. But you have to understand that it was not like a formal Asian Martial Arts school, it was just mostly, a few old men showing a young kid things, that we did in the family that we didn't generally talk about to anyone outside the family. There was no progression or systematic training; I generally had to ask for it, which of course made it valuable to me.

Q. Ivar your Stav training would have began in the early 1950's. As you mentioned those in your family that taught you were elderly at the time. When you say elderly, at around what age are we looking at?

Ivar: I would say around 70.

Q. Do you know much about the person or persons in your family who taught your Granduncle? I know often teachers tell stories of their own teacher/ teachers; did your Granduncle make references to his own teacher/ or teachers

of Stav and any methods they used?

Ivar: Not really, I always presumed my great grandfather and his brothers would have been dead by about the 1930's.

Q. In looking at what was passed down historical to you from your Granduncle, there were the 3 chant methods plus the konge breathing for the rune stances, all done in the konge sequence. There were also 19 god/goddess movements with the single stick and 19 god/goddess movements with the staff plus 5 class movements with the single stick and 5 class movements with the staff. And these were taught with a stick walking stick length and a staff, one representing the single handed weapon principles, the other, two - handed weapon principles.

Ivar: That's about covers it.

Q. The physical movements, the rune body shapes were these learnt off your Granduncle? Or by observing adults doing rune stance practice, and then trying to mimic them?

Ivar: To be honest I do not remember ever having been taught the stances by anyone; I always seem to have known them. It's the same with my son; he can't remember that I ever taught him the stances, nor can I remember that I ever did. I do believe it just comes down to him observing what I am doing.

Q. Do you know anything about the origins of the breathing/chant methods used in Stav or are they lost in the mist of time?

Ivar: Regarding the different breathing/chant methods the origin, has indeed been lost in the mist of time as you express it. The problem with Stav is that it is such a practical system; it works and no-one worries too much about the historical background, though I suspect that the breathing goes all the way back to the beginning of Stav together with the stances themselves. I have a feeling that originally Stav consisted of just the stances and breathing and that everything else has been added on through the centuries. How these have changed through time I don't know, I have today the rune stances and breathing/chant methods as passed on to me by my Granduncle and family. These are the core of the system today, and as I have stated I suspect this was so in the past.

Q. The Rune Stances are the core of your family's system of rune use, why do you think your family decided to use the body as an expression of the rune shapes? Do you think, it is because your family in the past was more martial based, and for example, if you hold a single handed weapon or double handed weapon and take up a rune stance, you have what is easy recognizable, as a weapon posture? Also looking in some of the old European martial manuscripts,

you can easily see what your family terms as "rune stances" as weapon postures.

Ivar: I would guess that when the stances were created the whole society was more martially minded.

Q. Looking at what is termed as "Rune Yoga", which came out of Germany circa 1930, which seems to be esoteric based, there seems little regard to alignment of the body when it comes to forming a rune body shape. However in Stav in forming a rune body posture, it is important the shape embodies the natural lines in the body, which in turn teaches you to find the natural lines in any thing, which can be applied to all the areas of Stav. Do you see this as the fundamental different between your family's system of rune body postures and other systems of rune body postures encountered so far?

Ivar: I would say that with the re-discovery of the stances in the 1930s the purpose and understanding had changed. My (admittedly limited) understanding is that the people involved in this wanted to show that Europe had a tradition going back as far as the Indian one, but that was about as far as it went. There does not seem to have been any great feeling of a practical purpose.

Q. How did your Granduncle view the use of the chant methods? What is your personal view of each of the chant methods, their uses and the regularity that they should be practiced? Are they just tools to learn how to breathe?

Ivar: I was told that the Karl breathing was to learn to breathe naturally (which would help in healing the body of many illnesses), the Herse breathing both to breathe naturally and to be able to breathe under stress and the Jarl breathing to help develop a meditative state (though they called it to learn to stop thinking). There are overlaps in effect and certain useful by-products, f. ex. The Herse breathing will develop a body that can take just about any punch without ill effect. Personally I use the Jarl breathing occasionally (maybe once a week), the Karl and Herse only when I am teaching. They are more than tools for learning, though, as they will give benefits even if you know how to breathe, but you have to decide what benefit you want; mind, spirit or body. (Or all three)

Q. There are 7 traditionally or 9 contemporary breaths taken at the start of the rune stances and at the end of the rune stances. Is each breath taken to represent one of the 7 / 9 Worlds symbolically?

Ivar: That is right. They are also basically seen as a means of preparing oneself for the stances at the beginning and again preparing for the real world at the end, or to say it in another way they make the move from world to world easier.

Q. Did your Granduncle make much use of the chants when you did the rune stances together? And what method did he use to teach you the chants?

Ivar: Usually when we did the stances together it was without the chants; though we rarely did them together anyway. Regarding the chants I were told to watch (and listen) a few times when the chants were performed, asked if I understood the principles and then told to get on with it by myself. I were checked and corrected a few times, but basically left to my own devices.

Q. Is the use of the stances as a signaling system in time of war, just something that was orally passed down and used in war in the distance past? Or was this aspect applied in the Second World War?

Ivar: I'm not sure whether the stances were used for signaling in the Second World War; they might have been as we had plenty of camps up in the mountains, which was a no-go area for the Germans. Theoretically the stances could be used just for signaling without having to learn any other application, but I really don't know. I know we used them during games when I was a kid, which suggests the grown-ups no longer took them serious for that purpose.

The signaling game we used was, just being able to communicate at a distance without any one else understanding what we were on about. The other children were my brother, sister and cousins, no one outside the family. I never had any contact with any one who was not family until I started school at the age of seven.

Q. Do any of these members of your family; your sister, brother and cousins continue to make "any use" of the rune stances today?

Ivar: As far as I know I was the only one who was interested enough to continue to work with the stances.

Q. Can you explain why you think the Staff & Stick was chosen, as the main focus of weapon training, and why there is no sparring in Stav?

Ivar: I presume that originally any weapon was used against any other weapon, but that the staff and the stick was used as training aids to avoid damaging expensive weapons. The staff represents any weapon that you hold in two hands, such as spear, battleaxe, two-handed sword etc., while the stick represents any one-handed weapon such as scramasax, sword, knife etc. It was then realized early on that they were both extremely efficient weapons in their own right. So the family taught 5 basics with the staff plus 19 movements dedicated to each of the rune god/esses and the same with the stick. As you can see, you then end up with 48 basics/movements, the same as the family uses to read the runes.

As for freeform sparring, I am positive that this was never used. If you understand the lines you cannot be defeated, there is no need to check. Sparring will always degenerate into competition with rules to avoid injuries and deaths

and you no longer have a realistic Martial Art. Just look at boxing, karate and kendo to mention a few.

Q. So is there a way to test a person understanding of the lines?

Ivar: Now testing your understanding of the line is rather easy; if the tip of the staff stops where the opponent's eye would have been if he (or she) had not unbalanced himself by moving the head you have the line; if the opponent is not unbalanced and in possession of both eyes you do not have the line.

Q. Why is the axe used as the attacking weapon in Stav to teach the lines, and not the staff and has it always been this way?

Ivar: The staff was never used for attacking, as the staff is comparatively long so it will take a long time for the tip to arrive in a downward or diagonal strike, which is all right for a counterattack, but not for an attack. The thrust is the main attack with the staff/spear, but defenses against a thrust don't show the line as clearly as defenses against a strike. The attacking weapon was always the axe as this was the most commonly carried weapon, even when I was a child it was not unusual to see people carrying an axe wherever they went. Now for training anything at hand that more or less gave the feel of an axe was used; a stick picked up off the forest floor, a knob headed walking stick turned round with the knob representing the axe head or often the flaying knives that we used when cutting up whales.

Q. Traditionally in Stav your family used the axe as the attacking weapon in showing the attacking line to the defending class movements. Was this / or is the attacker considered a Karl class person wielding the axe, considering the axe is linked to the Karl class?

Ivar: I don't really have an answer as it never came up (meaning I never asked), but my gut feeling is that it is supposed to be a Karl wielding the axe which is a typical Karl weapon, for a couple of reasons. First, the attacker is neither a Jarl (which wouldn't attack) nor a Konge (it would be over before it started) A Herse would be more inclined to control the situation, but a Karl basically would just try to stop the other person from entering his or her space. Secondly I think it is a subtle way of describing the society; a Karl would try to cut off the hand of a trell because a one handed man could still work, suitably chastened, the other classes would be completely outraged, and just kill him. But it is also a way of showing that a Karl as a free man would have the right to challenge a Herse, a Jarl or even a Konge if his case was just.

Q. Did your Granduncle teach you how to apply Stav to unarmed combat?

Ivar: We hardly ever did any unarmed stuff. I was told that if one understands the lines, how the body works and weak points on which to put pressure unarmed

combat is not a big deal. I did study aikido with Steve Seagal and aiki-jutsu with the Ikeda sensei, the headmaster of the Takeda-ryu in Japan, but I do tend to agree with Uncle Sven; unarmed combat is not a lot different from armed combat (though armed combat is very different from unarmed). What I mean is you can easily transfer your knowledge of armed to unarmed, but not visa versa. (As an aside I came back from Japan with techniques that were supposed to be impossible to resist and showed my father. I put him in a perfect kote-gaeshi, but his only reaction was "Interesting", before he put me on my bum. And he wasn't even supposed to be studying Stav, or so he always claimed.)

Q: Do you remember any occasions when you did unarmed combat stuff with your Granduncle Svend? Did your Granduncle favor certain rune stances for unarmed combat?

Ivar: The few occasions where I can remember any unarmed it hurt. Rei was used, and it is an effective stomp/kick (One of David's favorites, that figures), we did a bit of ryggtaek (wrestling) using the Ur-rune, but I was never any good at it as I am way too light. And that's about it; as I've said earlier unarmed was regarded as something you could do if needed, but not something you spent a lot of time practicing.

Q. Your family uses a method that adds up to 48 in the way it reads the runes, the same figure, which the movements for the staff and stick add up too. How does this method work? What is the traditional view of reading runes in your family?

Ivar: The use of runes in the Hafskjold tradition is as a teaching system to try to make one see reality, basically to learn to trust one's own intuition. This makes it galder based and mostly used by men. We always use 3 runes to read, never the tarot card spread that I have seen in several books on rune divination. We also use 24 wooden slips or stones with runes carved on both sides-3 times 16 so each rune is carved 3 times, a total of 48. It is therefore possible to get the same rune in all three positions. Rune reading was/is used at Yule to assess the possibilities of the New Year, as a device to get a patient talking during counseling/psychological treatment and to sharpen one's judgment of a difficult situation. It can of course be used as a parlor game for fun or to make money from gullible people, too, but this is not the real use of the runes, though I am afraid this is the only way most people use them today.

Q. Are the 19 movements of stick / staff that are dedicated to each of the gods/goddesses, based on the rune stance for that particular god /goddess, they are connected to?

Ivar: Yes. Each movement is based on the rune stance for that particular god/dess. The movements are designed to be practiced both solo and with a partner.

Q: So if you asked your Granduncle for some martial training, for example, would you be shown one or two movements with the staff or stick as a solo exercise, or was it always shown against an attack as a paired exercise? Would he check the next time you asked for some martial training, what he previous taught, or would he throw something new in, (in a sense maybe testing your understanding of line and not turning want you learnt into a technique)

Ivar: I was usually shown one or two movements with the staff, told to work on it and then tested, maybe next day, maybe next month. Also if you have talked to Ronayne he will probably have told you how I was teaching him, basically by going for long walks in the countryside, which is how I was taught.

Q: The long walks, then would have been a time, when other aspects of Stav were introduced, as well, myth/stories, runic practices, connections to nature and thus, looking at a interrelationship of a number Stav aspects in one lesson?

Ivar: That's right.

Q. Are there any other methods that were passed down to you as part of the martial training?

Ivar: Archery, crossbow, axe and knife throwing, knife and tein use, but again not something that anyone did seriously; the stick and the staff were the main focus. But also you have to remember that comparatively little time was spent with the martial aspect of Stav compared to the rest. (Healing, mythology, stances, always the stances)

Q: So here are you saying, that the martial aspect was in decline, and that the focus was shifting away from this area, or was the martial aspect always considered just a by product of the rest of the system?

Ivar: I believe that it was up to the individual whether the martial aspect of Stav was important or not; a Herse would of course concentrate on it; a Jarl might more or less ignore it. But it might be fair to say that as a martial art the system is probably stronger today than it was 50 years ago.

Q. Before you went to Japan did you have some sought of training program that you followed?

Ivar: Before I went to Japan I was doing the stances once a day; I never split them. Mostly my staff training was doing the basic cuts, sometime the stances

with a staff in my hand, but it was really not very organized. I had no one to train with; my granduncle died when I was in my early teens and to be honest I was doing a lot more training with pistols than with the staff. I believe what I learnt in Japan more than anything else was disciplined training. And after that my students forced me to analyze and concretize something that has evolved into modern Stav.

Q. So when your Granduncle died, did this mean that you then became the head teacher in your family, of Stav? And with your Granduncle's passing, he was the last of your grandfather's generation?

Ivar: There was a wide age gap in my grandfather's generation; my last grandaunt died just 2 years ago (though she was almost a hundred) while several of my father's cousins are younger than me; others are in their eighties. Again you must understand there was no concept of head teacher of Stav within the family, just certain knowledge that we had if anyone was interested. I was interested when I was very young; then the usual teen-age interests and formal education interrupted for the next 20 years or so. I'm sure there are other aspects of Stav retained by other members of my family, but I have hardly seen anyone for close to 30 years now. As an aside I see on the Internet that one of my second cousins (I think) has recently published a major book on herbs, which I have been intending of getting.

Q. What made you decide to go to Japan and study Japanese martial arts? Was it because the martial side of Stav, interested you and you wanted to test the Stav principles against other weapon systems. Or simply the martial side of Stav had prompted your interest in martial arts in general and Japan seemed to be good place to go and train? Had you encountered Japanese martial arts when you were in Norway?

Ivar: Well, the main reason was that my wife, who is Japanese, was expecting our first baby and as usual in Japan she went to stay with her mother before and after giving birth. We were supposed to stay there for 3 months, but ended up staying for 14 years. Having said that I had read about Judo somewhere and it sounded rather similar to what I was doing, so I was curious about checking it out. The only Oriental Martial Art practiced in Norway at that time was Judo, though some Tae-kwon-do and Karate was just starting to get established; in fact a Vietnamese friend of mine that I sponsored to get into the country was probably the first to teach TKD in Norway.

Q. I understand that when you trained in Japan, it was primary in the "Shinto Muso Ryu Jo-Jutsu system"

Ivar: That's right, though I also did some kendo, iai-do and aikido, and I have a teaching certificate in Takeda-ryu aiki-jutsu

Q. How much influence do you see the Jo training that you did in Japan has on the way people are taught/use the Stav staff today?

Ivar: I presume quite a bit, specially the concept of more formalized training in a class environment. The Jo has 2 ends, while the Stav staff has a head and a butt that is it is a spear or a bill so you don't slide your hand over the top where a blade would be. When I first started to teach Stav I used quite a few ideas from Jo-jutsu, but in the last 4-5 years I have gone more and more back to the original teaching that I learnt as a young man; mostly because I don't teach much these days, only practice by myself. Traditional Stav is rather boring which is not a problem for me, but it is for many younger people. I think gradually the Japanese influence is getting weaker and weaker, though for instance Ronayne still likes the double-ended staff and a more Jo-based usage. But Stav in the end is really a set of principles, once grasped that can be applied to any weapon, so people will work with whatever suits their personality.

Q. So the Stav - Staff as taught to you by your relatives retained the head and butt concept in line with its relation to the spear. So what length were your relatives using for their staff length, the length of a short spear or long spear?

Ivar: Just a common walking staff which was generally 5 feet long.

Q. You said Stav's Staff was 5 foot, so where was the grip for the butt end of the Stav staff in style as passed down from your Granduncle? Was it, a few inches forward of the butt or around the end of the butt without being in the palm? The butt in the palm is the way Ronayne taught it, which certainly lends itself to better control as you say, and I think it lends itself also to the smooth slicing action of a bladed weapon such as Japanese sword. The emphasis on the grip used by your family as passed down with the Stav staff would be because it was considered as thrusting weapon linked to the spear and this is its quickest form of attack?

Ivar: Gripping a few inches forward of the butt is a thrusting grip, but not necessarily too good as a striking method as the weapon might slip through your backhand. You have much more control of the weapon when the butt is in your palm. This is something I learned in Japan that made a lot of sense to me and I do use it now. If I were to use a 9-foot quarterstaff it would not matter so much, because the strikes are different, but with a 2-handed sword or axe one would have much more control with the backhand on the pommel. Mostly my granduncle held the butt at the end, but not in the palm. This is because the walking staff is comparatively short. A longer staff would be held further up the haft for balance and to be able to easily shorten and lengthen it. The staff was considered to be a spear, but also a battleaxe, a two-handed sword and a hewing spear. With the three last ones the cut would be more important than the thrust. I think the palm hold just never occurred to Europeans.

Q. The grip with single stick length or walking cane in relation to Stav, what are your thoughts on the grip? Also was there a grip that was passed down by your Granduncle for the single stick?

Ivar: The single-handed stick in Stav is mainly teaching a cutting weapon, which means it is used with blows to vulnerable spots like the temple, hands, arms and legs, though the point is also used to the throat and solar plexus. Further it is also used for locks. The grip that Granduncle Svend used was something like a modified foil grip, though he had never fenced as far as I know. A hand guard is hardly necessary as Stav doesn't block, and the hand is generally not exposed.

Q. As you mentioned in your reply above the single stick was/is used for locks. Are you here talking primarily the use of locking, in the case of disarming your opponent as in the Konge class movement, or locking the opponent, entangling him and taking him out at the same time, as is seen in some European Martial Manuscripts? How did your Granduncle Svend view the use of locking in weapon training and what are your own thoughts on locking?

Ivar: Because the walking stick can't cut what would with a sword be an entangling cut is turned into a lock with the stick. In the Konge movement for example if it were used with a sword the arm would come off, and if it were a double-edged sword his entrails would fall out, too. "Locks are cuts without edges" according to Granduncle Svend; I believe he was right.

Q.: When you were training in Japan, did you discuss, your family system with any of your Japanese Teachers, and did they show any interest, or see similarities in what they were doing in their respective weapons training?

Ivar: Yes, I did discuss Stav with Sato Sensei, my Jo-Jutsu teacher. He was very interested and most helpful in working with my own understanding of Stav.

Q. Of the system, (Shinto Muso Ryu Jo-Jutsu), you wrote back in 1992".... on the other hand, as I get older, I have found that this hard style doesn't really work for me anymore, and I don't think it works for most people unless they are really big and strong, which I'm not. So speaking realistically I think it has to be soft". So does this mean you once practiced Stav in a much more vigorous external way, or those members of your family that taught you Stav, taught it in a much more vigorous way?

Ivar: Stav, like all martial systems will always be fairly hard and vigorous in the beginning. When you are young power and speed will be your strong points and you capitalize on that. 20 years ago I used to do 10,000 cuts a day, 200 push-ups and sit-ups every day, now I just do my stances once a day, plus 1,000 cuts. But Stav is neither inherently soft nor hard; it really comes down to personality (and of course age). Most Herse (warrior) will train much harder than I do. Coming from a military family most of my teachers were Herse and tended to

train very hard, and it took me some time to realize that it suited neither my body nor my temperament. Having said that I do think it is necessary to go through hard training when one is young. Many people seems to think that a soft, internal art is mostly mental and do not need vigorous training, but looking at the original Tai-Chi for instance you can see that it can be extremely hard at times; you need the hard to be able to do the soft.

Q. Did your Granduncle teach/do the stances in a much stronger and harder fashion than you have developed them into today, where they are often compared to Tai Chi in the way they are performed?

Ivar: The Konge stances were practiced with a lot more vigour, by my granduncle than the way I do them. The movements were slow, but the body was much more tense and the breathing out was more forced like the Herse breathing. I do the Konge like the Jarl stances should be done. I believe that each person will do the Konge sequence according to the class one belongs to, and Uncle Svend was very much a Herse personality. The Karl will (or should) fall somewhere between the Herse and the Jarl. One should ideally do the Konge 4 or 5 times a week and ones own class sequence once a week.

Q. Could you give a general run down on the healing aspects, and techniques used in Stav?

Ivar: Mott is the manipulation techniques. Megin stands for megin transference where you use your cupped hand to speed up recovery especially of sprains, fractures and bruises. Ljosgalder (Light galder) is a kind of hypnosis, especially to help people suffering from depression and stress. The folgie exercise is a form of ljosgalder. Myrkgalder (dark-galder) is the use of bindrunes and runic formula's to work on the sub-consciousness to combat diseases. There is a good example of this in Egil Skallagrims- Saga. Teinseid is the use of herbs and nutrition and midwifery. Lokkseid is the use of chanting to obtain a shamanistic trance to help with both diagnosis and cure.

Q. Do you remember who taught you the Mott (manipulation techniques) in your family and what was mott's main usage?

Ivar: The mott was well known by many in the family, and most of us learnt them. I'm not sure who taught me; probably no one especially, as I learnt a little here and a little there. My father treated me after I injured my back when I was around 20, and I have been fine ever since.

Inside the family there were several different ways of using mott, but they all adhered to the principles, the simplest being that if you don't use the full range of movement, you will gradually lose the ability to do so.

We use the mott for treating injuries (some in the family, including me, does this professionally), but there are also stretching exercises, similar to what one does to the patient, that one can do to oneself to keep the body flexible. Both were, in fact still are regarded as valuable.

Q. Some of the mott techniques work against the joints, stretching the joint against itself. Were some of these mott techniques considered having a martial application within your family? Here I am meaning as joint locks for example?

Ivar: Of course. If the joints are stretched beyond their natural limits you have either locks or breaks. In a few cases I was also taught how to kill in this way.

Q. What role do the Rune Stances play in the healing aspect, and are individual stances used for a particular injury/problem?

Ivar: The stances are the basis of all Stav knowledge including healing, and generally a full set of the stances is best, especially for treatment for quite a few problems, for example asthma, arthritis, back pain, depression Individual stance examples are, Ur can be used against a stitch and to treat certain stomach and breathing problems. Kreft is good to relieve the pain if you have a tennis elbow. Nod/Is/Ar is of use for frozen shoulders. Sol helps to strengthen the muscles of the knee if you have a Maids knee.

Q. What is the main role of Mythology in relation to practicing Stav?

Ivar: In Stav, mythology is not teaching the word from up high, but methods of getting people to use their brain to start seeing reality. In Stav individual interpretation of the myths can be just as valid as my interpretation, especially for one's own understanding. There is no right or wrong answer.

Q. As part of your Family's oral tradition you have a story/myth about your family's legendary founding. Could you please give details of the story?

Ivar: In short the story goes that around 1500 years ago a stranger that called himself Hos arrived at the house of the Earl of Moere (Moere is in Western Norway North of Bergen, South of Trondheim) and evidently gave a series of very wise advice (not specified) and after some time disappeared again as suddenly as he had appeared in the first place. Some time after this one of the earl's daughters gave birth to a boy, who was named Erling (meaning descendant of the Earl) a name that is still common in my family, both my father and my son were so named. Some years later Erling, his mother (whose name

has not come down to us) and a few old retainers went over the mountains in search for a place to settle after a dream where Hos had asked for them to find a place for sacrifices. After various adventures they settled in a place near the Drammensfjord and Erling buildt a hillfort that was called Hoskoll (The Hill of Hos) and initiated sacrifices to his father. The family still uses the name of Hos instead of Odin. Of course none of this can be proved, it is just an old family traditions, but the Hoskoll is still there and it has been dated to around year 500.

Q. Does the oral tradition told in your family about the creation of Stav, and the younger Futhark have dates mentioned?

Ivar: The oral tradition is not very clear on time frames, basically we have the story about the meeting where the younger futhark and Stav was developed, and then we have the statement that the family always feels that we have been doing Stav. Confusing, but I should think this is about par for the course regarding oral traditions. Look at the different Norse Creation myths, which often contradict each other. In fact if everything were laid out in a completely logical and chronological order it would be rather suspicious.

Q. Why does your family consider that Hos equates to Odin? The system of Stav seems to center more on Heimdall, couldn't Hos just as easily been Heimdall? The myth seems to have some similarities to the last part of the "Lay of Rig".

Ivar: I don't actually know why the family equates Hos with Odin, we just always have. We also equate Hos/Odin with Kare which is still a common name in the family (my father was named Erling Kare) Now according to what I remember being told as a child Heimdall's mothers (all 9 of them) were Aegir's daughters and his father (and grand-uncle) was Kare/Hos/Odin. It seems that there was from then on a constant intermingling within the 2 branches of the family until Erling left to go East over the mountains and start the Hosling line, and the Moere later went West over the sea to settle in Normandy and the Orkneys. The reason why Stav seems to centre on Heimdall instead of Hos I believe to be remnants of a matriarchal system (Erling being taught by his mother, not by his father) though this is just my impression.

Q. Stav uses five classes in its teachings, and Heimdall is the patron god that is central to the Stav system. In the myth "Rigsthula" in which Heimdall is credited with creating the classes, it only lists three classes, Trel, Karl and jarl. Why does Stav then use five classes?

Ivar: Simply Stav has 5 classes because that was how I was taught. But if you look at Rigsthula you see trel, karl and jarl. But there is also konger, which come through the marriage of herse's (daughter) and jarl, which probably is meant to explain that from which classes, a royal family could rise. So all the five classes are in the Rigsthula, but Heimdall did not teach the herse class.

Q. Why does Stav connect Heimdall to the Hagl rune?

Ivar: Stav connects Hagl to Heimdall because he is regarded as having taught the runes using the nine sticks that Odin had seen hanging on the tree.

Q. In the Stav system we have 5 classes and patron gods/goddesses for each class. In one's lifetime, do you work through the different classes? Do you change patron god/goddesses as you develop through the system?

Ivar: Generally you stay with one patron and class throughout your life. But having said that the Norse gods are so versatile that each of them covers the other classes even if the flavour of their own class is the strongest. As an example Frey is the archetypal Karl god. But he is also a warrior and a priest. And so it is with their clients. A Karl will (hopefully) develop as he/she matures into a kind of Superkarl, that can beat a less developed Herse or Jarl (or even Konge) at his or her own game, but he/she will still stay true to his/her class. And likewise of course for the Herse, Jarl and Konge. The true trell (different from someone who hasn't understood his/her own potential) is a special case as he/she is really a Konge with an inborn flaw that must be kept in check at all time, both for that individual's own sake and for society in general.

Q. I understand that you were taught a rhyme, as a way to remember the classes. Could you tell us what the rhyme was/is?

Ivar: Not a rhyme really, just the classes recited in a special rhythm.

Konge
Jarl
Herse
Karl
Trell

Jarl and Karl are rhyming, then a pause before trell.

Q In Stav we have an exercise to determine one's Fylgje (spirit animal), which in turn can be used to work out a person's class/ mindset. Can people have more than one Fylgje, or be intimately connected to more than one?

Ivar: One can have several fylgje, usually 2, one representing how you see yourself and the other how other people see you. Now for a few examples; if you are doing the fylgje exercise and let's say you come up with a deer. Now the deer belongs to Frey. Frey is also connected to the boar so that will also be your fylgje. Now Freya, Frey's twin sister is connected to the sow, cat and hawk so you will have a good relation with these too. Being connected to Frey means you are of the Karl class, and the horse is connected to the karls, so there is another fylgje. But generally you make a special relationship with one or two of these.

Q. What is the purpose of the Fylgje in healing is the Fylgje asked for guidance, or used for guidance in regards to patience's illness?

Ivar: Not usually guidance as such, but we would usually try to find out a patient's fylgje to help in the understanding of his or her personality, usually when treating mental problems.

Q. The fylgje in relation to combat, how do you see the projection of one's fylgje in combat occurring? The Saga's seem to indicate this occurrence, although some, what exaggerated.

Ivar: Regarding the projection of the fylgje this can take several forms from actually the opponent seeing the person change (this is rather unusual) to a sudden change of facial expression combined with a roar, shriek or what have you.

Q. In your experience in Stav, both within your family and the students you have taught throughout the years, have you found the person's fylgje plays a role in the way a person moves in combat?

Ivar: People do tend to move like their fylgje; if you ever see David Watkinson you'll see a pit bull, while Graham moves like a cat.

Q. Does your family follow any specific ceremonies in regards to Stav?

Ivar: Stav has until recently been a family thing; a lot of the things we do are done almost without conscious thought like for instance placing some food in a bowl on the altar when we have done our weekly shopping. But ceremonies are a personal thing that each person has to work out for him/herself; for me the stances are the main ceremony in Stav, an offering dedicated to the gods.

Q. In the contexts of Hafskjold family tradition is there any special celebrations/rites, and are any of these connected to the worship of individual gods/goddesses?

Ivar: I'm afraid that the family had very few rites, as we all tend to be rather agnostic apart from the festivals. Everything is done for a reason, to obtain a result. As the gods/goddesses are regarded as ancestors they are not worshipped, but approached more as equal partners. This seems to be somewhat difficult to get across, as most people tend to be influenced by the Middle East concept of divine superiority.

Q. Could you please explain the significance, in your family tradition of making a tein as a child and, is there any ceremony attached with making it?

Ivar: Mostly it is a sign that one has come of age. There is no special ceremony; and with my own children we just worked together making the tein when I thought they were ready for it, which both my children were several years ago.

Q. You mentioned that the tein your daughter made was rather more, nasty from a martial aspect, than your son's. Could you please describe it?

Ivar: My Daughter's tein is shaped like a Y with a sharpened spike at the bottom of the V. It fits into wrists and/or throats and of course the spike makes it quite nasty. The tein can be used as an easily carried weapon, but it is really a ritual tool, think of the traditional sorcerer's wand.

Q. Were you taught martial uses for the tein of the wand variety? The tein of the wand variety is basically a short stick, was it used against pressure points, like those used in oriental systems?

Ivar: I did not learn any specific martial use of the tein apart from the fact that it was a shorter version of the staff/stick, with the tein representing a knife. There was a general knowledge of certain vulnerable points that the tein could be used against, (but nothing as sophisticated as the Indian or Chinese systems), concentrating on areas where nerves were close to bone, like the radial nerve against the ulna bone, or areas that could be crushed. like the temple or Adam's apple. It was also seen as the last training tool before unarmed combat was attempted. But generally this was just taught to me orally; I had to figure it out for myself.

Q. You have mentioned before that your family taught you some knife use, although the main instrument for teaching the principles was the single stick. But in the actual use of a knife, did your family make any use of the ice- pick grip or was it mainly the sabre type grip? I understand with the ice -pick grip it puts you into close range and also into the area of locking / hooking with the knife.

Ivar: I got very little instruction in knife work apart from using knives as tools, but the principles and the stances will still be useful. The typical Scandinavian knife is single-edged and uses to be carried by just about every-one, anywhere, though I presume that has changed now in these politically correct times. Anyway, I will try to answer your questions, but remember I'm pretty much a complete duffer. If you have questions about knife fighting, David Watkinson is your man.

We used both the saber and the ice pick grip, though the latter was more a case of laying the knife along the arm for cutting rather than for a downward thrust. As you say the saber grip is more for dueling where you start at a distance and then try to find openings, usually going for the opponent's weapon hand, while the ice pick grip, would more be used where the opponent is not necessarily armed with

a knife, and also if you have to cut from the draw. You should train to use both if the knife is your weapon.

Q. I understand that your father had a keen interest in archery and made crossbows. Could you explain how archery is/was used in your family, and what rune stances were used as part of it?

Ivar: As noted, my father was rather interested in archery though mostly from a craft point of view. What is quite interesting is that he used a release on his crossbows that predated the nut; he also used to make a crossbow you could shoot twice without having to draw the bow again, though he made these just as toys for us children.

As for longbow release and stances I was taught a standard 2-fingered Mediterranean release, with the earlobe as anchoring point and no conscious aiming, the arrow just goes once your finger touches the earlobe. I was also taught to hold the bow like the arm of the Hagl-rune, not the stem. that is at around a 45-degree angle. One could use either the Yr-stance or the Sol-stance; the latter was my father's favourite. You coordinated the draw with the breath just like in the stances, breathing in while drawing, out with the flight of the arrow. We used archery mainly for hunting.

Q. I understand the longbow can be used as a "shield" in some cases, which sounds a bit strange. Can you explain how this is done?

Ivar: It is one of the most effective defenses against a club or a staff and also useful against an axe if you get under the blade and work against the haft. You turn the bow around with the string against the weapon attacking you, which makes it bounce back. Try it, and it is quite obvious.

Q. In Stav Thor's Hammer is mentioned as a weapon, was its use taught to you and what was the design your family used?

Ivar: I was never taught the use of the hammer, nor did anyone in the family use it; it was just discussed round the fire. The hammer is part of the system, but no one has used it for hundreds of years. I do not know what the design looked like, as I have never seen any, nor had anyone else, in the family, but the general idea was floating around. Graham has a design built on one of the Thor's hammer amulets, but it is just his interpretation of it, though they all seem to follow similar lines.

Q. Your family at one stage, made use of weapon called a Staff-Sling, could you explain its use and the principle behind it?

Ivar: The Hafskjold family used it until comparatively recently by converting the Staff into a sling through the use of fired clay or lead balls with a hole in the

middle. These were thread onto the staff, which could then be used as a sling without having to use a leather attachment. When I was a child we used apples with the core taken out for training, and we used to cut a small diameter branch usually of willow for playing with the apples. As an example of the principle take a fairly whippy stick, impale an apple on it and cut down from overhead as you would an axe; you'll be surprised by the power and accuracy.

Q. The methods of Falconry that are used as part of your family's tradition are they different to way people train birds of prey today?

Ivar: Yes, we did train birds-of prey differently than is being done today. First, our area being heavily wooded we did not as a rule fly falcons, which requires open space. The 2 species being flown were goshawks and European eagle owls. Goshawks have always been flown in Europe, but not eagle owls until quite recently. And yet there are several old prints on Falconry where there is an eagle owl in the background. Also there was an analysis of bird bones in Vendel graves some time ago where the majority were goshawks and eagle owls, with a few gyrfalcons and peregrines.

The goshawks were kept in an enclosure after initial manning and just released to go hunting. The austringer would carry a wicker basket with a door on his back and the hawk was trained to fly into this, not to the hand. This required much shorter training time, and the bird could be flown naked without jesses. As there was, and still is lots of goshawks around our area they were easily caught and not much was lost if one didn't come back, nor was the hawk itself disadvantaged as it would be with jesses and bells.

The eagle owl was taken very young and imprinted. As they are not very bright they were used to hunt in one specific way. Food was put at a place, which could be observed from the house, and the owl released. Flying there every day (or every second day, as we don't feed them every day) kept the bird fit and didn't overtax its brain. When the frost came we would put lots of old fish out at this spot and pour water over it to anchor it to the ground. Foxes would find this at night, but could not carry the fish away and had to stay and eat. Especially on a moonlit night one could look out of the window, see a fox and just release the owl. A good owl could account for between 50 and 100 foxes during the season without damaging the fur too much.

Q. Ljos-galder (Light galder) is a kind of hypnosis, in which you use a breathing rhythm, which you get people to follow. The breathing method you employ, is it learnt by doing the stances? And what other uses do you use it for?

Ivar: Yes the breathing is an integral part of Stav and is learnt by doing the stances, and it is actually one of the main reasons for doing the stances. Once you master it you can then use it to send people into a trance or get them out of it. Generally I use the breathing to let people enter into a light trance when I do Ljos-galder and once some-one has entered a light trance that person can then

be sent into a deep trance by using words and/or touch. I also use it in the Martial aspect of Stav where I lock people into my breathing rhythm and then control the speed in which they move.

Q. In Stav we have the terms Galder & Seid. Can you explain in Stav terms what this terminology means?

Ivar: What we understand by galder in Stav is perhaps, different from most people's understanding. Basically it is the logical approach that can be taught, unlike the illogical approach of Seid, which is regarded as a gift (or a burden).

Q. What is Heimdall's role in Stav?

Ivar: Heimdall, in Stav, is very much a "teacher" figure. The main concept is that Heimdall was/is teaching the runes freely, and that all knowledge is embodied in them in a clear, accessible and logical system. Basically he is the special friend of the nobility, like Thor was regarded as the friend of the commonality.

Q. Can you tell me about Heimdall's Beach and the connection to your family?

Ivar: The family knows of a beach in Heimdall's ownership (which we can describe quite accurately) where we can contact each other (whether dead or alive) with Heimdall acting as a focus point (Heimdall as a telephone exchange operator, oh dear). I know this sounds weird, but I actually use to communicate with my daughter this way when she went to boarding school. (Saved on the phone bills from Japan to England) Then she got all scientific, after a while, and it broke down.

It is basically a variation of the fylgje exercise, in which we visualize the beach.

It is a real place where I used to swim as a young boy; though when we visualize it, it looks the way it must have done, long before there was any human influence there. The strange thing is it doesn't matter whether one has actually seen it in reality or not, we all describe it the same. It seems to only work if you are born into the family or I should rather say the clan that is if you are a descendant of Hos, marriage doesn't do you any good, but even for Hoslings the technique has to be taught. There are still people in the family with the ability.

Q. I understand when you were going to school in the 1950's, the runes in particular the "Younger Futhark" was a school subject. At what age were the runes taught in Norway as a school subject? Was there some practical use behind the "Younger Futhark" being taught in school as a subject?

Ivar: We just learnt to write using the Younger Futhark when I was about 14 years I think. It was part of learning Norse and Icelandic, so the Norse names of the runes were used together with the rune poems and the Norse mythology.

That's all, but this is the reason that I was so surprised when I came to Britain, and no one seemed to know anything about these subjects. I thought it would have been fairly common knowledge. I don't think learning the runes were regarded as having any practical use apart, from the fact that that we could read the inscriptions on rune-stones. As an aside, when the Kensington stone was discovered in America evidently most Scandinavians in the area could read it, which of course means any number of people could have written it, too.

Q. By the time your Granduncle died how long had you spent training with him on the martial aspect of Stav?

You did say he died when you were in your early teens so what I am looking at here is a starting age and a finishing age. So for example "started at 10 years old finished at 14years old which would be 4 years of direct training from your Granduncle before you were left to work it out for yourself."

Ivar: As far as I remember I started to train around 11 years old and until I finished elementary school at 14; I would say about 3 years, though I had been around it, listening and looking for as long as I can remember.

Q: After your Granduncle died was there any further instruction in Stav martially from anyone or suggestions on this aspect from any other family member?

Ivar: There was no further martial instruction after Uncle Svend was hospitalised and later died.

Q: Was there any further instruction at all, in any aspect of Stav after your Granduncle died?

Ivar: Not exactly instruction, just talk, really.

Q: In the 20 years that followed your Granduncle's death before you went to Japan, you mentioned some practices that you did to keep your practice of Stav going, which were solo practices. But did the occasion arise, or did you feel the need, or were you not curious, to test, what your Granduncle taught you worked before you actually ended up in Japan?

Ivar: I did the stances and the basics on my own; trained a bit with my father who as I have told you before never admitted to practicing Stav, but he had been taught Close Quarter Combat in the military, and he taught me a little; I also got involved quite heavily in Pistol Combat Shooting.

Q: There would have been some Asia martial systems floating around Norway in the 60's. Did you ever consider trying some of them out, or seeing if the Stav principles of combat worked against them?

Ivar: There was some Judo around, but until I got the uncle of my Vietnamese foster daughter over to Norway there was nothing else, really. He was pretty highly graded in Tae-Kwon-do; the Korean military was teaching some pretty hairy stuff over in 'Nam before the fall of Saigon; he offered to teach me, but I were not too keen on having my hands wrecked because of my pistol shooting, so nothing much came out of it.

Q: I am just curious how you managed to keep your practice going through the teenage/adolescents years and keep your interest going, when you were basically working in isolation with Stav. And with no one to gauge any progression against like your Granduncle or test for improvement.

Did you at some stage cease to practice for a while in this period before you went to Japan and then something re-kindled your interest again?

Ivar: I did in fact train very intermittently in Stav for a few years, sometimes just going through the motions; the hard training I went through in Japan kicked me back into gear, so to speak, and I was soon training for up to 8 hours a day.

Q: By the time you did the Harry Cook interview in 1992, you had already devised a structure, which was presented in the interview, which was designed to teach people outside your family.

Was this something you sat down and worked out in Japan before arriving to live in England?

Ivar: I did try to work out a structure for teaching Stav during my last year in Japan, as I was thinking of teaching it; though because I was not going to see my children much once we moved to England I also had to consider a way of teaching them that was different from the way I had been taught.

Q: Was the Vlad headband something you introduced as part of a intended grading system, that you were toying with at the start of teaching Stav to the public in the beginning?

Ivar: The vlad is a traditional Norse headgear, but there was of course no grading system involved with it, nor was it worn after the 16th Century I believe, so it was just something I thought could be used as a Norse

version of Japanese Belts; as it was it seems to have been quickly forgotten, though I still think it was a useful idea, really; at least kids seemed to want something like this; later of course, as one grows up it has no meaning.

Q: Although your father never admitted to practising Stav did he actually have a view on it use or how it fitted into your family's education, or any view about it at all, that you remember?

Did he make a comparison between what you were taught by your Granduncle as a fighting method and the Close Quarter Combat that he learned? Did he have a view of the fighting method that your Granduncle taught?

Ivar: My father never commented on Stav at all; in fact the only time he commented on anything martial was when I was visiting home after having spent 4-5 years in Japan and when I showed him "kote-gaeshi" from Aikido he just said: "Won't work", and slammed me down to the ground. I could never best my father in anything.

Q: When you say you trained a bit with your father was this solely in Close Quarter Combat? Or did he also act as a training partner in that he would deliver the axe cuts so you could defend using the lines? If this was the case, did he ever defend axe cuts/weapons cut using the lines with a weapon?

Ivar: I never trained with any weapons from Stav with my father; in fact we never really trained at all; he just occasionally showed me how to fight unarmed and also how to tie people up even not using a rope, just their own body. I have never seen anything like that until I came across Fairbairn's book "Get Tough" on the internet a few months ago. It was all there.

Q: Do you think your father was one of those unique individuals, who could see the lines and principles, without needing any of the usual exercise/ tools and therefore it was inherently there?

You have mentioned that some people need a lot of tools to grasp the principles/reality that Stav teaches while other, people need next to nothing.

Ivar: He probably could; my father was a unique character.

Q: The story is mentioned about your Grandfather being attacked while hobbling along using two sticks and the plight of the two attackers who made the mistake, of attacking the wrong elderly gentleman. Did you ever do any martial training with your Grandfather or see him in action? Could he have been approached to learn the martial side, or was this considered the role of your Granduncle Svend to teach family the fighting /application of Stav?

Ivar: I never trained with my Grandfather; no special reason, just never did; though he taught me a lot about shooting, fishing and sailing. We mostly spent our summer holidays on the island where he lived.

Q: Did any of your other family members learn/try the Stav fighting method? In this I mean you were the only one to train seriously with your Granduncle. But did Granduncle Svend, ever state that he attempted to train other family members, but none of them took it seriously?

Ivar: Not to my knowledge; at least no-one of my generation, though I suppose it could have happened as there was no formal training time, and I have hardly seen any of my cousins for the last 40 years or so.

Q: Since your family only followed the sequence of rune stances known in modern Stav as the "Konge" sequence, was this also the name given to the sequence in your family?

Ivar: It was occasionally called the "Konge" sequence, but mostly it was just regarded as the way we did the stances.

Q: When you were at school you said they taught the reading/history of runes as part of the school curriculum. Did you ask your family why their sequence differed from what is seen as the common order of the Futhark Fe - Yr?

Ivar: I was told that Stav practitioners only used the "konge" sequence, as a spiritual form, while the common way of using the runes was for profane (is that the right word?) uses like writing. To be honest, I think that no one really understood why anymore.

Q: When did you decide to create the arrangement rune stance sequences "Trell" "Karl" "Herse" & "Jarl"? Did you create these rune stance sequences at the same time or were they created at different times as you were developing different ideas, around the use of the rune stances? What was the motivation and idea around creating these different sequences of rune stances?

Ivar: The use of the different sequences happened quite soon after I started to teach my first 4 students. The reason was at first to develop slightly different ways of looking at the runes with the idea of creating different lineages. As the family believed that Stav had once been widespread, I wanted to try to re-create what must once have been an art that would have had a lot more variation in its approach, so each of the students was taught quite differently in many ways. I believe this has created different ways of understanding Stav instead of having everyone just copy me. If you look at what is now taught in the 5 Houses the methods are quite varied, which will hopefully keep Stav alive through later cross-fertilization.

Q. From your Granduncle Svend you learnt the martial aspect of your family system, which you have stated before consisted of:

{“The staff represents any weapon that you hold in two hands, such as spear, battle axe, two-handed sword etc, while the stick represents any one-handed weapon such as scramasax, sword, knife etc. It was then realized early on that they were both extremely efficient weapons in their own right. So the family taught 5 basics with the staff plus 19 movements dedicated to each of the rune god/esses and the same with the stick.”}

When did you create 5 basic movements/defenses (classes) for the axe, bastard sword, scramasax, and spear?

What was the motivation and idea around creating these weapon movements, as your family had already developed highly efficient methods of teaching the lines (principles) and combat attitudes?

Both the staff & stick are also legal to carry.

Ivar: The basics for the axe, bastard sword, sax and spear just grew like Topsy, really. The principles of course remain the same, but as several of the early students were interested in trying out if what they had learned from the staff and the stick, really could easily transfer into other weapons, it was felt that it was worth trying, especially if they for whatever reason wanted to specialize in one of the said weapons anyway. But as you point out, the staff and the stick remain the core weapons in Stav, as they are the only legal ones that can be carried in most places in this day and age. The other weapons in some ways reduce the martial aspect of Stav to a hobby, (nothing wrong with that, in itself,) though they will also teach how to use the staff and the stick. Also, in the back of my mind, I also was thinking that if the different houses concentrated on a chosen specialist weapon, we would again have the possibility of cross-fertilization sometime in the future.

Q: In regards to the choice of weapons that were chosen to experiment with the Stav principles, the ones that were chosen were of historical and tradition design: the sword, spear scramasax. But in the case of the axe, a whaling axe design was used to experiment with.

What was the idea around using this rather than a traditional Viking axe design?

Ivar: The flaying tool used by whalers was chosen for a very simple reason; a lot of the family was whalers, and we used what was available.

Q: In regards to the chant methods, when your Granduncle Svend taught you the Herse and Jarl method chant the Hagl stance and Is stance position changes. The Hagl hand position/arm position (Herse open palm) (Jarl arms crossed palms open, in close to the body) for the Hagl stance and the " Is stance becomes static".

Did your Granduncle give you an explanation why the variance in these stances occurred for these particular chant methods?

Ivar: To be honest, I am not quite sure, but somehow in the back of my mind I believe I was told that the Herse Hagl position is supposed to be a lapel strangulation grab. This might have come about around the turn of the last century, as ju-jitsu was introduced to my hometown before the First World War, but this is just a hunch; I really don't know.

Regarding the Jarl Is and Hagl stances they have something to do with a deeper level of meditation as the breathing is somewhat more relaxed, but again I am not sure if I was told this, or I figured it out myself.

Why the Herse Is stance is also static I don't know, unless it was thought that it is in fact a more threatening stance, as it shows a high level of confidence.

Q: In the Jarl chant method originally you were taught to chant Hos instead of Odin for the As rune stance.

For the Sol rune stance, were you originally taught by your Granduncle to chant Balder for the first set and Forseti for the second set, rather than blending them together into one chant?

What the original way your Granduncle taught "The Urd Verdande Skuld" chant for The Nod rune stance as a single blended chant of the three names or as individual chants for each name?

Did your family use any other different names for the gods/goddesses in the Jarl chant method that are not used in modern Stav?

Ivar: Yes, I was taught to chant Balder in one side and Forsete in the next because of Balder being dead, but still existing, even if his son had taken on his functions for the time being.

The Urd-Verdande-Skuld chant was blended into one chant, as the Norns co-exist in time and place.

Hos is the only different name from the accepted ones chanted for a god or goddess.

Q: In writing "The Ur Rune" in your family, were you taught to write the third shorter stem (vertical line) as fully extending down, so the bottom of the stem was level with the first longer stem (vertical line)?

Or were you taught to make the third shorter stem (vertical line) only extend part of the way down and not end up level with the bottom of first longer stem (vertical line)?

Ivar: Only part down, but this was not seen as important, more as different people have different handwriting. However, the stance only goes partly down; one is not supposed to touch the ground.

Q. The transition stepping motion between stances (changing direction) is often termed "half-moon step".

Is this the name that was used in your family to describe the stepping motion/transition?

Was there an explanation given in your family why you step this way as a transition between stances?

Ivar: The name half-moon step (or in Norwegian halvmaaneskritt) was commonly used. It was used to teach how to change direction; during the stances it was rather a large step, but in a martial situation it could be contracted to just pivoting on either your heel or ball of your foot.

It was also pointed out that weight was not to be put on the moving leg until the movement was more or less finished in case of a kick to the front leg, which especially if you were standing on ice, would have sent you flying, not to mention that it would also be much easier for some-one to break your kneecap.

Q. The Combat Sol stance position, where one is kneeling down on the back leg with the front leg bent and the foot flat and the knee not extending beyond the toes. Is this stance part of traditional Stav?

Ivar: The "Combat Sol" stance was never used while doing the stances; it was just regarded as a more stable position during combat, while still being a recognizable Sol. I tended to use it some years ago when I had a knee injury, as I could get up easier from it.