

The King's Garb



It's that time of year again...
December 2004 (AS XXXIX)

Minutes- Curia Meeting November 25, 2004

- Attendance: TE Ferghail and Catriona, Gerhard-Seneschal, Hamish-Chatelaine, Guillemin-Rapier + Chronicler, Rebecca-Herald, Armatus-Deputy Herald, Kvigir-Master of Stables, Michel-Gold Key, Robert-Missile, Joseph-A & S
- Officer change forms were filled out for officers new to their positions (those being Guillemin, Robert and Kvigir)
- The issue of crowded Wednesday night fight practice was discussed. Concerns were raised about the amount of fighting people were getting in and possible safety hazards. The Chatelaine will be trying to locate a new location for Wednesday night practice
- There is now a location for baronial target archery practice. See Regular Event information below.
- Their Excellencies called for a volunteer to autocrat the Spring Champions event in April. Hamish MacCarraig volunteered.
- The Gold Key tubs have been enumerated and listed. There is a large surplus of Gold Key items, so it was decided that a Garb Sale will be held for newcomers at an upcoming tavern.
- A tournament will be held for newer fighters at the upcoming A & S Symposium (probably in January). Prize is TBA, but will probably be some type of armour.
- A competition has begun to decide the new baronial motto. See below in the message from TE Ferghail and Catriona.
- Due to the large number of fighters new to the barony, Armoured fight practices will be conducted in a more structured, educational fashion on Wednesdays. Different experienced fighters will teach their fighting style each week in the hopes of showing newer fighters all the different styles they can use. A similar process is being considered for rapier practices. Contact the Master of Stables for more information.

Editorial

The reign of literary terror is over...let a new reign of literary terror begin! I am your new Chronicler, L Guillemín de Rouen, and my job is to provide you with entertainment (and something to wipe your mouths with) at our monthly taverns. First of all I'd like to welcome all of our new members; it's a pleasure to see so much interest in our humble group. Secondly, what would you like to see happen to the King's Garb? What did you like? What, if anything, did you dislike? Personally, I'd like to see class announcements, demo announcements, event reports, updates on ongoing projects, and anything else relevant to our group (in addition to what we had before). This way, the Garb can be used to plan schedules ahead of time. I'll cook up a poll to post on the mailing list in the next week or so. Please, if you have any suggestions, questions, or comments, please feel free to contact me via e-mail (contact info on last page.)

Lastly, officers and champions, please check your mundane contact info on the final page of this issue to ensure that all is correct or to fill in anything missing.

Sincerely,

L Guillemín de Rouen



From the Baron & Baroness

Greetings Myrgan Wood,

What is our motto? When Shunzei and Gareth stepped up as Baron and Baroness, their motto, lossely translated, was "We don't like you either." Later, when Roxanne and Raoul became Baron and Baroness, the motto changed to *Resistere futilis est* ("Resistance is futile"). We, Ferghail and Catriona, would like the group to have a new motto, to bring us into the new era. This is where you, the populace, have a say and we can hold a contest. How to win? Come up with a clever, imaginative, and conscientious motto for our barony. The prize? Bragging rights, plus a bottle of wine courtesy Coryn of the Woods. Please also give the latin translation of your motto and send in all entries to bandbmw@gmail.com. Entries will be accepted until December 15th.

Congratulations to Their Excellencies Gunther and Eyoddi, the new heirs to the thrones of our great principality. We would also like to thank Lazarus Haubergier for accepting the position of Constable for our Barony. He is a great addition to a fine group of officers that keep this barony strong. We had a great Curia meeting recently that was very productive. Look for the minutes in this issue of the King's Garb.

Thank you for your time,
Ferghail and Catriona,
Baron and Baroness of Myrgan Wood

(Taken from *Fast and Feast* by Bridget Ann Henisch)

Medieval Christmas Traditions

The two longest and most important fasts of the year were Advent and Lent, which ushered in the greatest feasts of the years, Christmas & Easter. The season of Advent covers a span of about four weeks and always contains four Sundays. It begins on the first of these, Advent Sunday, and this day marks the start of the ecclesiastical year. It is a period of preparation for Christmas, a time when man tries to turn over a new leaf and start again. One fifteenth-century sermon writer points the parallel between the Church and the individual: just as the Church makes a fresh beginning on Advent Sunday, 'so owe ye to begynne and renewe youre lfy.''

The form of a fast varied very much from occasion to occasion. Indeed, the term fast scarcely applies to an ordinary Friday, for an ordinary layman. The amount eaten could be just as ample as usual, and the only change expected was a change in the main ingredient of the menu, from meat to fish.

In the fourteenth-century romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the hero arrives at a castle on Christmas Eve, the last day of the Advent fast. Officially, therefore, the dinner must be meatless; nevertheless, the cooks have contrived a dazzling prelude to the Christmas festivities, working their inspired variations on the theme of fish: fish baked, fish grilled, fish simmered, fish attended by a hundred subtle sauces. The host's apologies for 'this penance' are mere polite pretense, the modesty becoming a winner. Fast has been triumphantly metamorphosed into feast.

Christmas was the very epitome of exuberant self-indulgence. Its various names were synonyms of the good life. Henryson's two mice, reveling in the larder, toast their luck with the shout: 'Haill, Yule! Haill!' (Yule used here with the meaning 'time of merrymaking.')

Christmas Day and the week that followed were given over to enjoyment; as one fifteenth-century sermon writer simply summed up the matter: '... in Christmase wyke ...then there is no tyme to faste.' In Ben Jonson's *Masque of Christmas* (1616), one character says to Christmas: 'Here's one o' Friday Street would come in,' and Christmas replies: 'By no means, nor out of neither of the Fish Streets admit not a man; they are not Christmas creatures; fish and fasting days, foh!'

In a contract drawn up for masons and carpenters in Calais, in 1474, feast days were graded according to their importance; the time at which work finished depended on the dignity of the day. Thus a minor feast, like New Year's Day, was not recognized as a holiday and work ended at the usual time, that is, five in the afternoon. On a more important feast, like St. Thomas of Canterbury's, work stopped at three in the afternoon, while on the greatest of all, like Christmas itself, tools were downed at eleven in the morning. Although this particular group of men was expected to work a few hours even on Christmas Day, it was the general custom to take a holiday lasting several days in the Christmas week. At York in 1327, all work stopped

from 24 December until the twenty-eighth, and at Westminster in 1331, the vacation lasted from 23 December to the thirtieth.



(edited from *The Art of Cookery in the Middle Ages* by Terence Scully)

Christmas and Related Feast Days

Feastdays in the late autumn and at the end of the year tended traditionally to see the serving of the meats of domestic animals and fowl that were difficult or costly to maintain over the winter months. Pork and goose became associated with Christmas meals. Wild pigs could be captured right across Europe and the Christmastide boar's head marked both the end of the hunting season and the time of courageous renewal in the Christian year.

St. Nicolas, the patron saint of children, was always perceived as a figure of generosity: for example, so that all girls might have an appropriate dowry to bring to a marriage, he used to distribute purses of gold coins to the homes of the poor. On (and about) December 6 households would serve up all the fresh fruits of the season, both local and exotic, along with the candies, nuts, sweetmeats, spiced cakes and other delicacies that St. Nicolas was supposed to have brought.

The prevalence of fruits at this time and the predilection they enjoyed lead to the incorporation of the sweeter varieties, especially figs, dates and raisins, into a mixture with sugar, spices and bland meats. This 'mincemeat' was merely an appetizing variety of dish whose basis was the ubiquitous groundmeat paste, but it, too, came to mark the Christmas season. Plum pudding was likewise a dish that became firmly established in the food habits of this time of year. Some cakes had a rich variety of fresh chopped fruits worked into their batter.

A major fast of the year, that preceding Christmas Day, was usually marked by a preparation of the more valued sea-foods: whitefish, sturgeon, eel and oysters. Even today finely sliced salmon and oysters remain favorite foods of this season. The feastday of St. John the Evangelist (December 27) was associated with wine because a legend held that by blessing a glass of wine that saint rendered the poison in it harmless.

Since the Feast of the Epiphany (January 6) commemorated the visit of the Wise Men or Magi (kings) to the Christ child, it became universally customary to prepare a cake in the shape of a royal crown for this celebration. Originally in antique times a mere wreath to symbolize power and victory, the crown had come as well to symbolize purity and consecration. As a food, the many versions of the 'King's Cake' testify to the broad popularity of this cake at this time in the ecclesiastical calendar. Certain traditions, involving the hiding of small articles in this cake, grew with its use: if a person eating it found a pea or bean in his piece, he was declared the

'king' or ruler over the Epiphany festivities; finding a ring presaged marriage in the coming year for the finder; finding a coin, wealth.



(borrowed from <http://www.godecookery.com/ginger/ginger.htm>)

PERIOD GINGERBREAD

1 lb. Honey - I prefer organic, or something made with a flavored flower blossom, etc., but feel free to use your favorite. Just remember that the final product is affected by the flavor of the honey you choose.

Bread Crumbs - up to a pound, maybe more, maybe less. These must be UNSEASONED bread crumbs, though either white or wheat, or a combination, is fine. Be sure that they are finely ground and not soft in any way.

ginger (optional!) - up to 1 Tbs.

cinnamon - up to 1 Tbs.

ground white pepper - up to ½ tsp.

pinch saffron, if desired, but not important here

few drops red food coloring (optional)

Bring the honey to a boil and skim off any scum. Keeping the pan over very low heat, add the spices, adjusting the quantities to suit your taste. Add the food coloring "if you will have it red." Then begin to slowly beat in the bread crumbs. Add just enough bread to achieve a thick, stiff, well-blended mass. Remove from the heat and turn the mixture into a container or bowl to cool. When cool, take a rolling pin & spread the gingerbread evenly out into a square shape, ½ to 1 inch thick. Trim the edges with a knife, then cut into small slices to serve. Decorate with small leaves (real or candy) attached to each piece with a clove.

So, that's medieval gingerbread! One hint: I've found rolling it out and cutting into squares a little time-consuming, so on occasions when I've been rushed, I've simply taken the mixture, when cooled slightly, and rolled it into small balls. This works nearly as well, and is easier & faster to make. Another variation is to roll out on a smooth surface that has been "floured" with a cinnamon and/or ginger & sugar mixture and cut the gingerbread into fanciful shapes with a knife or cookie cutters. Be sure to turn the spiced side up for presentation. Children also love to create their own designs with this playdough-like edible, and for a school or home project, they can be put in charge of molding the gingerbread into a variety of objects. I've seen children make snakes, animals, and even a little model airplane out of this recipe! And they always enjoy eating the final product afterwards.



Upcoming event-Yule Feast in Borealis

Shire of Borealis

December 4, 2004 Edmonton, AB

The Shire of Borealis invites all gentles to join them in our celebration of Yule. The events will include the dancing, musical entertainment, and a fabulous feast. Please bring your dancing shoes, musical instruments and period games.

Autocrat: Lady Freja of House Isormr (mka Cheryl Richardson), #27-4707-126 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5A 4K4, (780) 456 - 2845, torgga@shawbiz.ca

Feastocrat: Lady Coryn of the Woods (mka Corry VanderZee), Edmonton, Alberta, (780) 474 - 6892, coryn@shades-of-night.com

Site Info: The event will be held at Kilkenny Community Hall, 14910-72nd Street, Edmonton, Alberta (no postal code available). The site opens at 5:00 PM and closes at 12:00 AM. Feast begins at 6:00 PM.

Fees:

Feast & site: \$15.00 with membership, \$19.00 for non-members (includes \$4 non-member surcharge), \$7.50 for children 6 - 12 and free for children 5 and under. Off Board: \$5 with membership, \$9 for non-members (includes \$4 non-member surcharge), \$3 for children. Membership card must be shown Make cheque payable to ASCA Canton of Aquilon. Please note: For pre-registration contact the autocrat

Directions: From the north, west, or east, take the Yellowhead Trail (Highway 16) to 66th Street, then turn north (left if coming from the west, right if coming from the east). Continue north to 149th Avenue, then turn west (left). Follow 149th Avenue to 72nd Street, then turn north (right). Go 100 meters, and then turn left into the parking lot.

From the south, take Highway 2 north to Edmonton. This will become Gateway Boulevard. Turn east (right) at 63rd Avenue. This will shortly bend northeast and become Argyll Road. Turn north (left) at 75th Street (this is about a 45 degree corner). Follow 75th Street north; it will become Wayne Gretzky Drive (formerly known as the Capilano Freeway). Continue across the river until you get to the signs for Fort Road. Get on to Fort Road going northeast. At 66th Street, turn north (left, this is another 45 degree corner), then follow 66th Street north and follow directions above.

For more information and to pre register, please contact the autocrat. Pre-register is preferred. For any, food concerns, please contact feastocrat.



Upcoming Events

- Saturday December 4th : **Yule Feast, Borealis** (Edmonton, AB)
- January 7th - 9th : **An Tir 12th Night Coronation** (Ferndale, WA)
- Saturday January 15th: **Montengarde 12th Night** (Calgary, AB)
- January 21st - 23rd : **Ursulmas, Aquaterra** (Monroe, WA)
- Saturday February 5th: **Feast of the Evergreens, Bordergate** (Cold Lake, AB)
- Saturday February 26th : **Avacal Investiture, Montengarde** (Calgary, AB)

Please see the An Tir Calendar @ <http://www.antir.sca.org/Upcoming/> for more events

Regular Events

Monthly Tavern is currently held on the first Wednesday of every month at the Off-Broadway Dinner Theatre (639 Main St). Contact the Chatelaine for more information.

Fighting Practice for both Rapier and Armoured Combat is held (Winter hours):

-every Sunday at 2pm on the UofS campus in the Education Lounge

-every Wednesday (except the first of every month) at 7pm, at City Park Collegiate (820 9th Ave N). Enter through the side door in the parking lot and up both sets of stairs. Follow the crashing noises. Don't be afraid. Contact the Master of Stables for more info.

Target Archery Practice is currently held at the Kyoro Archery Range at 220 20th St. W

Contact the Missile Marshal for more information.

Arts and Science Classes are held roughly biweekly subject to availability of instructors and space. See mailing list or contact Arts and Sciences Minister for more information.

Web Links

The SCA Corporate Homepage: <http://www.sca.org/>

The Kingdom of An Tir's Homepage: <http://www.antir.sca.org/>

The Principality of Avacal's Homepage: <http://avacal.antir.sca.org>

Myrgan Wood's Homepage: <http://www.chainmailstore.com/mw/>

Incipient Shire of Rhuddglyn: <http://www.codexpublishing.ca/rhuddglyn>

The Avantgarde-Avacal's Newsletter: <http://www.codexpublishing.ca/Avantgarde>

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