



Chips

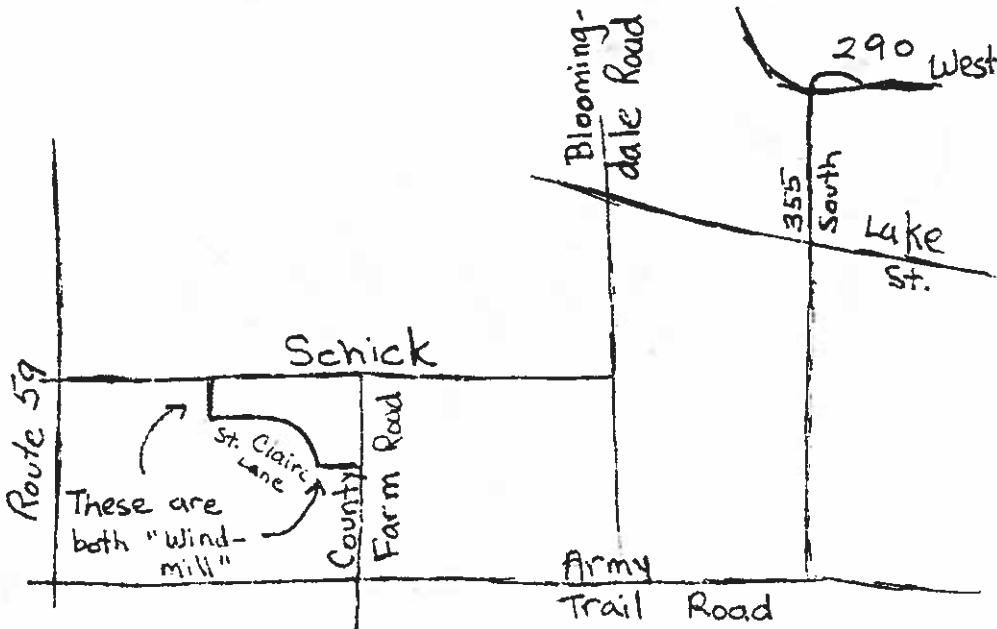
December A.S. XXVI

MOOT POINTS

The November moot was held at Melisande's home. We discussed various ways to ensure timely reminders of upcoming business meetings, among them the possibility of scheduling up to two months in advance so that the news has time to be published! In any event, the first moot of December was again at Melisande's and was devoted to planning our upcoming Shakespearean event. As she is the designated autocrat this year, one moot each month WILL be held at her house and focused on the Taming of the Shire.

The second moot of December will be our annual Christmas party, this year sponsored by Katherine and Gavin in their brand new home! Join us on December 21 at 8:00 pm for an Evening of Merrymaking, and *RUDE TALES AND GLORIOUS!!!*

1952 ST. CLAIRE LANE, HANOVER PARK



*****WASSAIL!*****

**FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN!
UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN!**

Vanished Wood is delighted to celebrate with Einar Haakonsson and Gwendolyn merch LLewellyn the birth of their first born son, Eric Christopher. Our congratulations to the new family. Eric was born on December 4th at 5:58pm. He weighed 8lbs 2¹/₄oz, was 21" long and looks a little like a little Einar! (If you can imagine that!) When asked if the father had a quotation for *Chips*, he said "I have no clue." We're not sure what that means, except that perhaps Einar was in need of some sleep. (Gwendolyn was in labor for 30 hours, and Einar helped!)

**MAY FLIGHTS OF ANGELS SING YOU TO YOUR REST,
AND MAY THE HEAVENS RAIN DOWN RADIANT JEWELS
AND SWEETMEATS UPON YOU!**



It Happened One Christmas

- 496** Clovis I, king of the Franks, and 3000 of his followers converted to Christianity and were baptised on Christmas day.
- 800** Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the Romans on Christmas day by Pope Leo III.
- 1066** William the Conqueror was crowned king of England in St Peter's church on Christmas day by Aldred Archbishop of York.
- 1158** King Henry II of England removed the crown from his head on Christmas day. He never put it on again, throughout the remainder of his reign, which ended in 1189.
- 1214** King John of England was presented with a list of demands by his barons. He ignored them. Six months later they spoke up a little louder on the field of Runnymede, and the Magna Carta was signed.
- 1358** Edward III of England graciously shared Christmas with his royal cousins, Jean II King of France and David King of Scotland, his captives as a result of failed military campaigns.

- 1398** Richard II of England sponsored the great Litchfield Tournament. This 14 day pageant was so spectacular that it has been singled out for greater glory as an article unto itself!
- 1418** Henry V broke the seige of Rouen on Christmas day to "(refresh) all the poore people with vittels, to their great comfort and his high praise." As he had been in the process of starving them into submission, this was a remarkable act of charity.
- 1492** On Christmas Eve, the Santa Maria ran aground on the shores of Hispaniola. Columbus left a colony of men on what he thought was Japan, and sailed for Spain in the Nina.
- 1518** Henry VIII dismissed his entourage and kept no Christmas for fear of plague!



Richard II's Christmas, 1377

One other show in the year 1377, made by the citizens for the disport of the young prince Richard, son to the Black Prince, in the feast of Christmas, in this manner:- On the Sunday before Candlemas, in the night, one hundred and thirty citizens, disguised and well horsed, in a mummerly, with sound of trumpets, sackbuts comets, shalmes, and other minstrels, and innumerable torch lights of wax, rode from Newgate through Cheape, over the bridge through Southwark, and so to Kensington beside Lambeth, where the young prince remained with his mother and the duke of Lancaster his uncle, the Earls of Cambridge, Hertford, Warwicke, and Suffolke with divers other lords. In the first rank did ride forty-eight in the likeness and habit of esquires, two and two together, clothed in red coats and gowns of say or sandal, with comely visors on their faces; after them came forty-eight Knights, in the same livery of color and stuff; then followed one richly arrayed like an Emperor; and after him some distance, one stately attired like a Pope, whom followed twenty-four Cardinals; and, after them, eight or ten with black visors, not amiable, as if they had been legates from some foreign princes. These maskers, after they had entered Kengsington, alighted from their horses, and entered the hall on foot; which done, the prince, his mother and the lords, came out of the chamber into the hall, whom the said mummers did salute, showing by a



pair of dice upon the table their desire to play with the prince, which they so handled, that the prince did always win when he cast them. The mummers set to the prince three jewels, one after the other, which were a bowl of gold, a cup of gold, and a ring of gold, which the prince won at three casts. Then they set to the prince's mother, the duke, the earls, and other lords, to every one a ring of gold, which they did also win. After which they were feasted, and the music sounded, the prince and lords danced on the one part with the mummers, which did also dance; which jollity being ended, they were again made to drink, and then departed in the order they came.

Extracted from: *A Right Merrie Christmasse*, by John Ashton. (pp. 11-12)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

The carol, or "carolle," was a popular, lively dance form enjoyed by our medieval forefathers. It is not at all surprising that special carols were written for the Christmas festivities, enabling the revelers to express their joy in song and dance. What is a bit more surprising, considering the opinions of the church concerning the "blasphemous" and exaggerated revelries of court and populace, is that eventually these carols began to be sung in church alongside the more serious liturgical music. This is due, in part, to the efforts of St. Francis, who attempted to bring the Christmas experience closer to the people by constructing the first manger scene, complete with live animals and statues of the Holy Family, in 1223 or 1224. The Christmas story was sung at the side of the creche, probably by setting new religious words to popular carols of the time.

The following is a sampling of "contemporary" carols that had their origins in the medieval period:

The Coventry Carol. This carol was performed by the shearmans' and tailors' guild of Coventry in the mystery play they staged for the town Christmas celebrations in 1534. Traditionally, each guild in town would perform one of the Christmas plays, the same play every year.

I Saw Three Ships. This legend dates back to 1162, when

three ships brought relics of the wise men to Cologne on Christmas day. (Adds my source: "It is typical of the simple faith of the Middle Ages that no one would raise objection to the image of the three ships sailing into little land-locked Bethlehem.")

The Holly and the Ivy. There is a whole series of English medieval carols on the subject of the rivalry between these two plants. Most of them generally portray them as representative of the male and the female, and the eternal battle of the sexes.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming. The words and music were first published in 1600 in Cologne, Germany, although the tune may date back to a century earlier. The harmonization in use today was first published in 1609.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. Although the tune was written in the 19th century, the words are actually 12th century Latin verses.

O Tannenbaum. The origins of this song are not at all clear, except that it did appear sometime in the Middle Ages, in Germany, of course.

The Twelve Days of Christmas. The counting song was very popular during the Middle Ages. This medieval carol is rather unique- its only message is that of receiving gifts!

What Child is This? Only the tune predates the 16th century. The earliest reference to "Greensleeves" was made in the year 1580, and the tune has been used variously through history as an English Civil War party song and as a prison lament in "The Beggar's Opera." The Christmas words we know were written in Victorian England.

Good Christian Men, Rejoice. Legend has it that this was written by 14th century German mystic Henry Suso after dreaming that he was invited by angels to join in a dance. The first manuscript copies date from about 1400; the first English translation, 1540.

Some iffy, but possibly medieval carols:

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen. Although not published until 1846, this carol was not composed within the confines of our modern concept of major and minor keys, but in the medieval form of modes. It probably dates to the 16th century or earlier.

Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly. This completely secular carol is of Welsh origin, but no one has ever been able to put a definite date on it. However, the repeated nonsense word was a very popular feature of medieval ballads and madrigals.



The Shire extends its deepest sympathy to Frothy and Elizabeth on the recent loss of Frothy's mother.

HEARTH AND KETTLE

LAMB'S WOOL

This is a traditional English wassail punch-hot, of course! The recipe is also attributed to "Old New England," and so, although I am unable to pin down any date of origin, I hypothesize that a drink traditional to both Old and New England might well be traced back to a time when there was only one England- pre-seventeenth century.

Roast 8 apples, mash them, and add one quart of old ale; press and strain; add ginger and nutmeg (grated). Sweeten to taste, heat and drink while warm. (Or until YOU'RE warm!)

Recipe from *Wines and Beers of Old New England, a How-To-Do-It History*, by Sanborn C. Brown



King Olaf and Norway's First Christmas

While this poem is not period, we thought that it would not be fair to make our viking shire members feel out of place in this Christmas season. In A.D. 995, King Olaf of Norway (later St. Olaf) celebrated the first royally sanctioned Christmas in his country. Therefore we present this humorous and somewhat cynical picture of what that first viking Christmas might have been like.

Olaf the King

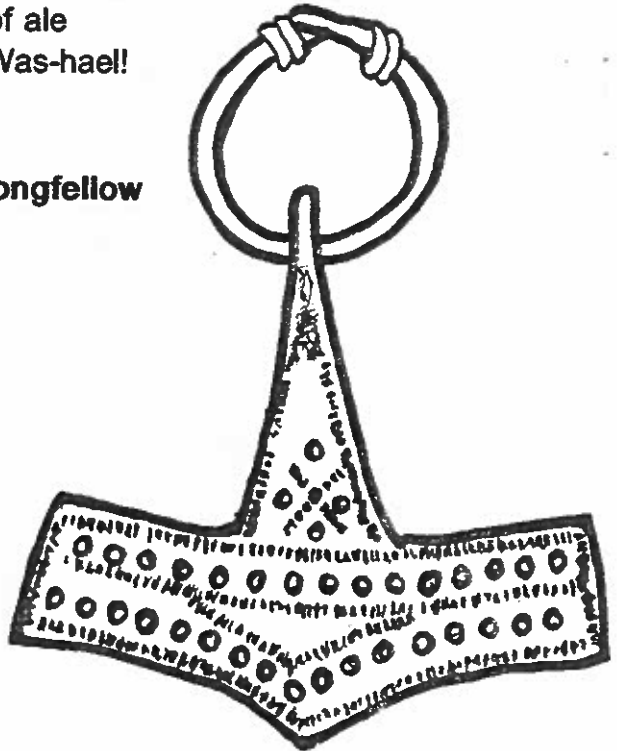
At Drondheim, Olaf the King
Heard the bells of Yule-tide ring,
 As he sat in his banquet hall,
Drinking the nut-brown ale,
With his Berserks hale
 And tall.

O'er his drinking-horn, the sign
He made of the cross divine
 As he drank, and muttered his prayers,
But Berserks evermore
Made the sign of the Hammer of Thor
 Over theirs.

Then King Olaf raised the hilt
Of iron, cross-shaped and gilt,
 And said, " Do not refuse;
Count well the gain and the loss,
Thor's hammer or Christ's cross:
 Choose!"

On the shining wall a vast
And shadowy cross was cast
 From the hilt of the lifted sword,
And in foaming cups of ale
The Berserks drank "Was-hael!
 To the Lord!"

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



A Period Christmas Game

Snap-dragon, or flap-dragon as it was called by Shakespeare, was an important part of any English Christmas celebration. The object of the game is to snatch up raisins from a bowl and eat them. Whoever gets the most raisins wins. Sounds pretty simple huh? Well, the catch is that the raisins have been soaked in brandy and **are set ablaze!** Not only do you have to eat them, but you have to eat them without burning yourself (too badly!) Apparently the secret is to close your mouth as soon as the raisin is in it, thus extinguishing the flame! **What do you say? Want to try this one at the Christmas moot? Lots of fun (especially for those in the shire with facial hair to burn off!)**

"And Drinks of Candles' ends for flap-dragons."

Henry IV., part ii. Act ii. sc. 4

"Thou art easier swallowed than a flap-dragon."

Loves Labour's Lost, Act v. sc. 1

HONORS

Congratulations to Talbot MacTaggart, who has been asked to stand as Sciences Champion for His Majesty Comar. Kudos!

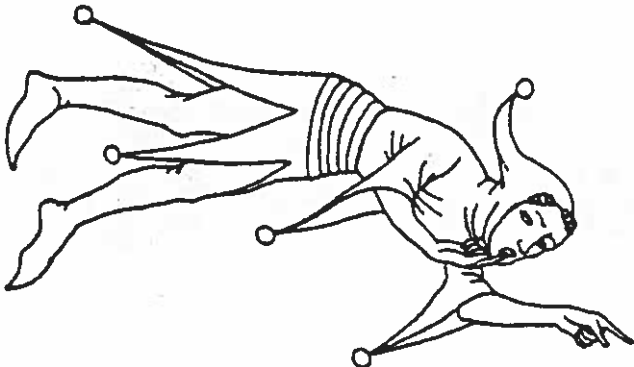


Little Jack Horner

**Little Jack Horner
Sat in a corner
Eating a Christmas Pie;
He put in his thumb
And pulled out a plumb
And said, "What a good boy am I!"**

The real story of Little Jack Horner is a tale of political intrigue at the court of King Henry VIII of England. During the dissolution of the monasteries beginning in 1529, Henry became (in the Church's opinion) too greedy for his own good. He was continually taking possession of the churches' lands. Thus, in order to appease him, a church official at Glastonbury named Richard Whiting, decided to send him a Christmas gift of a mince meat pie with the deeds to a dozen rich estates baked inside. The secret mission of delivering this pie to the king fell to Thomas Horner, one of Whiting's servants. However, while on the road, so the story goes, Thomas "put in his thumb and pulled out a plumb". That "plumb" was the deed to an estate which he kept for himself. Needless to say this is probably not the way he saw himself going down in history!

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