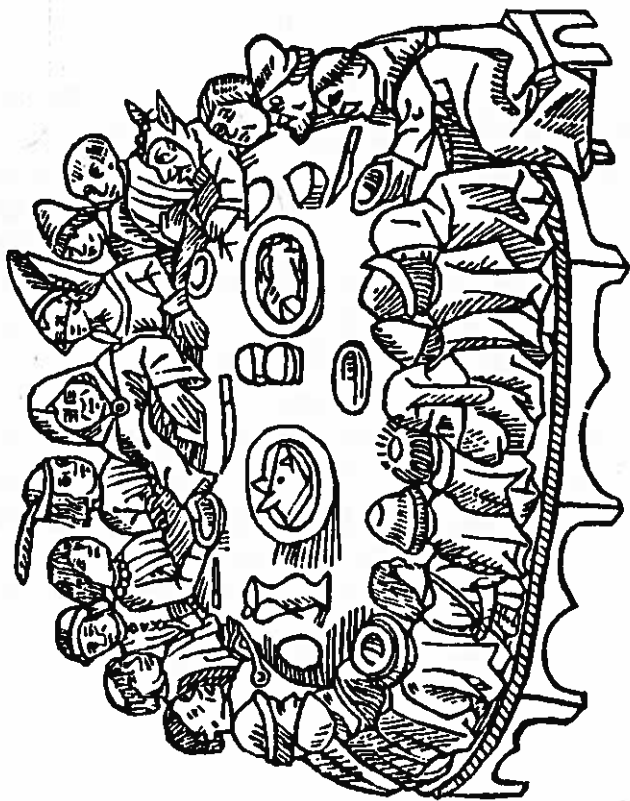


THE FEAST

November, 1993



Moot Points

Our October meeting was held the day after crown at Ethelwulf and Arwyn's house. The final tally for this year's event has been done: this year, we lost \$130.00! Yeah! Of course, we still seem to have plenty of it in the account, well over a thousand dollars, so we're still able to have delicious food at the Christmas party.

The exchequer would like to be replaced. Anyone who got a "C" or better in junior high math and owns a calculator, please contact Aline. *Please* contact Aline. Please. 985-0610.

The 25th Year of the Middle Kingdom is being celebrated with an event hosted jointly by the Chicago area groups. Vanished Wood is in charge of all things related to the tournament. Anyone interested in attending a planning meeting is welcome to do so. They are being held at the Downers Grove library; contact our seneschal for details.

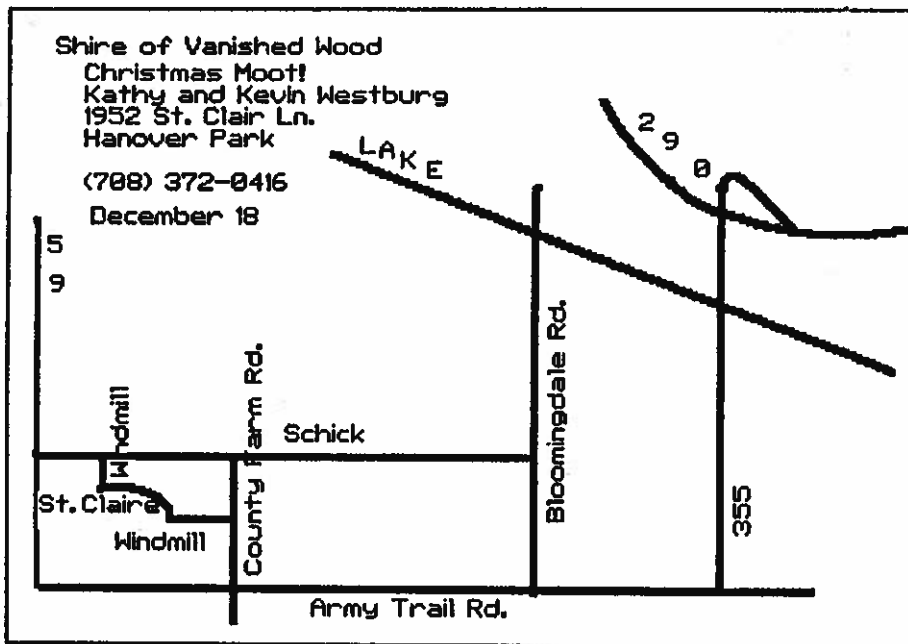
The Barnes and Noble demo has been set for November 20. The store will be showcasing their history department, and we will help them by modeling fashions and armour (no room for fighting in the store) and Avelyn and Rebecca are scheming to provide some delicious medieval cookie for curious patrons, though I don't think they will offer the exploding kind we served at feast. It was set for 2 pm, but I recently received information that it was moved to an evening appearance. I expect we'll find out at the moot tonight (I am really losing my timing with these, and I am very sorry!)

I am writing this on November 14. Let the record show that our November moot occurred on that day, at Cris

and Soren's and Samson's house.

Will Vanished Wood soon have its own choir? That's a pretty definite yes! We have a couple of music majors in our midst, and when they offered to put together a choral ensemble with sheet music and rehearsals and a piano and everything, I understand the response was favorable! (I'm holding out until we get matching pantsuits and a choreographer...). Thanks to Seamus for the courage to invite this group to sing!

Our December moot will be the annual Christmas bash at the home of Gavin, Katherine and Gregory on December 18. The party starts at 7:30. The shire will be providing the main meat dish, we ask everyone to bring whatever treat will make it a party for them. And the rumours are flying: will *Rude Tales* and *Glorious* be acted out this year!!!!?



Pilgrim's Medals

Talbot Mac Taggart

In the middle ages, pilgrimages were among the most popular of devotional activities. The wealthy would go on pilgrimages as a regular vacation. Pilgrimages were a status symbol. If you could afford to go on a long trip then you were either truly pious or rich. In either case this reflected well on the pilgrim. We can see through Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, that most people went on pilgrimage as a sort of vacation. It was a chance to go a long distance in an age when most people never traveled farther than they could see on a hazy day.

Not all pilgrims went on pilgrimages for such cynical reasons. Many pilgrims were deeply religious and they went to the shrine of a saint to pray for the future or to give thanks for the past. Chaucer tells us in the prologue to his *Canterbury Tales* that the shrine of St. Thomas of Becket, for example, was a common place to go after recovering from illness.

When people went on pilgrimage they usually brought back a token of their devotion, much in the way that people now bring back key chains and other souvenirs from their vacations. These tokens usually took one of two forms: a pilgrim's badge or a pilgrim's flask called an ampullae. The badge would be made of lead and would bear the likeness of the saint whose shrine the pilgrim had visited. This would usually be sewn to hat or hood. The ampullae were small lead flasks filled with holy water from the shrine. Both types of tokens were often brought back to family members and friends who were unable to make the pilgrimage themselves. These were often believed to have recuperative

and spiritual powers for the wearer and were among the most prized possessions of the pious. They were often buried with them.

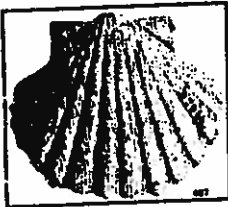
Pilgrim's badges and ampullae were also status symbols in and of themselves. If a person were covered in these badges it could not help but make them look more important for the aforementioned reasons - not unlike a bumper sticker covered Winnebago.

Common English pilgrimage sites were to Canterbury Cathedral to see the shrine of St. Thomas of Becket, whose badge was usually in the form of a bust of the saint in his archbishop's miter, and Westminster Abbey to the shrine of St. Edward the Confessor whose badge was typically in the form of a crown. Other popular pilgrimage sites included Compostella to see the shrine of St. James the Greater whose badge was in the form of a scallop shell, and in northern Europe to Kirkwall in the Orkneys to the shrine of St. Olaf, the only viking saint.

However, as the fashion of wearing pilgrimage badges took hold of Europe another fad took hold as well--naughty badges! Like modern people, our medieval ancestors loved a good joke and pornographic badges began to be produced in parody of religious badges. It was clear to the common person in the middle ages that not everyone who went on a pilgrimage was deeply religious. Consequently badges making humorous statements about the people who wore religious badges were fashioned and sold. Most of these badges were in the form of personified sexual organs. One example features a caricature of female genitalia wearing a pilgrim's hat, carrying a pilgrim's staff, and holding a rosary. Others were not for sale just anywhere but had to be acquired by making a "pilgrimage" to a specific "shrine". A notable Paris brothel sold a badge in the

form of a penis with legs and wings, wearing a crown and with a bell tied about its "neck." Other examples featured chickens copulating, a wildman urinating into a mortar and pestle and similar motifs.

If you are interested in learning more about, or would like to see artistic representations of, these naughty badges please see Talbot with two pieces of identification showing proof of age. (After all, this is a family publication!)



Death of a Pilgrim

Freydis

As any mother will tell you, it can be dangerous to travel through strange lands. While today we might worry about auto accidents and axe murderers, the medieval pilgrim had worries of his own. An important bit of history was affected by the following ill fated pilgrimage.

Aquitaine, in southern present day France, was a sunny and prosperous land. Led by its renowned troubadour, Duke William IX, the Aquitaine court became a cultural center, attracting the best poets and musicians in Europe. While his courts and feasts were wonderfully joyous and entertaining, and he himself was a frequent and talented participant in the festivities, William never lost sight of his duties as Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitou and his domains remained well governed, peaceful, and prosperous.

Unfortunately, William IX was mortal. Upon his death, everything passed to his son, William X. This 27 year old had received a fine education and an appreciation for the culture the region was famous for, but unfortunately he had not inherited his father's intelligence, talent, or political sense. He was never able to measure up to the people's memories of his father. Within the first 4 years of his rule, the new duke had managed to let the grand duchy fall politically and economically behind the north. In the 4th year, both his wife and his only son died, leaving him with only 2 daughters, Eleanor and Petronilla.

From that time on, the conditions of William and Aquitaine went steadily downhill. He supported the antipope against Innocent II, aggravating the papal schism

and getting himself excommunicated, a sentence that caused a medieval mind to doubt a leader's authority. In an effort to straighten out his life, William decided to marry the recently widowed young Emma, hopefully to produce a male heir. As soon as the betrothal was announced, however, a secret meeting of the other southern lords was convened. Politically, William's marriage to Emma was dangerous to them. Emma was the possible coheir of Limoges, and if she bore William a son, the power of the Duke of Aquitaine would increase dramatically over any of theirs. After some weeks of scheming, it was decided that Emma must be kidnapped and forced to marry the bachelor Count of Angouleme. So she was, immediately.

William became increasingly depressed. Every attempt to involve himself in some new and exciting plan had failed. After a military campaign with a neighboring leader ended prematurely due to a foot wound to the other man, poor William even lost his desire to fight. This is a crippling disability for a medieval lord! Finally, in the winter of 1137, he decided to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint James at Santiago de Compostela in Spain, to cleanse his soul and ask for God's help in straightening out his life. Late in February, the beginning of Lent, he left his girls in Bordeaux and set out in a grey sackcloth cloak and pilgrim's hat, promising to return wearing a cockleshell badge. Then he would find the girls a new stepmother and create for them a baby brother. On foot, accompanied by a handful of knights and servants, he hoped to arrive at the shrine in time to celebrate Easter.

The group had a copy of the *Codex Calixtus*, the brand new guidebook written for pilgrims on the road to Compostela. From it they learned that the Gascons were hospitable, the Basques demanded excessive tolls, and much

other useful information. On the evening of April 8, 1137, William and his company camped beside a pleasant stream, looking forward to washing off some trail dust. William ordered fish and water be drawn from the stream so he could have some fresh food for dinner. His men warned him that the guidebook claimed the waters in this region were dangerous. A very hungry William scoffed at this, and ate his fresh fish dinner alone.

The next day, Good Friday, William awoke drenched in sweat, with a grey pallor to his skin and circles under his eyes. He insisted on resuming the walk - they were only 5 or 6 miles from Santiago. He walked until he collapsed. His frightened men laid him on the side of the road and watched as he grew swiftly worse. Soon even William realized that he would surely not recover. At this time, he whispered his last will and testament to his men:

To his beloved daughter Eleanor, his sole heir, he bequeathed his fief, the rich lands of Aquitaine.

To his overlord, the king of France, he bestowed his domains and his 15 year old daughter, hoping that Louis would guard both until he found a suitable husband for the new duchess.

Barely alive, William was carried to the great cathedral at Compostela, where he died after receiving Holy Communion. He was buried at the foot of the high altar, next to Saint James.

Of course, King Louis knew just the husband for Eleanor: his own son and heir. This union of fire and wet blanket soon irritated Eleanor to no end, ultimately resulting in this Queen of France dumping her husband in favor of the 18 year old son of the King of England. Had William not gone on pilgrimage, or at least paid heed to his guidebook, he might have remarried, had a male heir. In dying, he sealed the fate of history and that of his daughter, the only woman in history to sit the thrones of both France and England, the mother of England's greatest king, Richard the Lionhearted, and its worst, John Plantagenet.

Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims

Talbot Mac Taggart

At Nyght was come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felawshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
(23-27 CT)

The Canterbury Pilgrims

- I. The Knight
- II. The Squire
- III. The Yeoman
- IV. The Prioress
- V. The Nun
- VI. A Priest
- VII. Another Priest
- VIII. One more Priest
- IX. The Monk
- X. The Friar
- XI. The Merchant
- XII. The Clerk of Oxford
- XIII. The Sergeant of the Law
- XIV. The Franklin
- XV. The Habadasher
- XVI. The Weaver
- XVII. The Carpenter
- XVIII. The Dyer
- XIX. The Carpet Maker
- XX. The Cook
- XXI. The Sea Captain
- XXII. The Doctor
- XXIII. The Wife of Bath
- XXIV. The Parson

- XXV. The Plowman
- XXVI. The Reeve
- XXVII. The Miller
- XXVIII. The Manciple
- XXIX. The Pardoner
- XXX. The Summoner
- XXXI. The Host

The make up of any given group of pilgrims was likely to be similar to the company created by Geoffrey Chaucer. The majority of the people going on pilgrimage were likely to be representatives of the religious orders and the newly emerging middle class. The first estate is represented only by two members who are at the bottom stratum of that class-- a poor knight and his son the squire. The peasant class is represented by two members though one is also in the religious orders--the Parson and the Plowman. You might ask yourself "Why is this? Didn't top and bottom classes go on pilgrimage?" The answer to that question is yes and no. The top half of upper class tended to travel separately from the "rabble" and the bottom half of the upper class and the peasant class had no money with which to go on pilgrimage. Pilgrimages were expensive! If you wanted to go on pilgrimage you had to get away from whatever you were doing. Peasants were tied to the land so only the most devout and those who were free-men (like the plowman) were able to get away. Those from any class who could get away still had to contend with a lack of money. The nobility did not have jobs *per se*. Many had to rely on meager incomes from what ever land they might own, if any. So the majority of people who were able to go on pilgrimages were wealthy members of the merchant class and those who, due to their religious orders were expected to go as part of their duties.

A breakdown of the pilgrims' rank.

Nobility

The Knight

The Squire

Religious orders

The Prioress

The Nun

A Priest

Another Priest

One More Priest

The Monk

The Friar

The Clerk of Oxford

The Parson (see also peasant class)

The Pardoner

The Summoner

Middle Class

The Yeoman

The Merchant

The Sergeant of the Law

The Franklin

The Habadasher

The Weaver

The Carpenter

The Dyer

The Carpet Maker

The Cook

The Sea Captain

The Doctor

The Wife of Bath

The Reeve

The Miller

The Manciple

The Host

Peasant Class

The Plowman

The Parson (see also religious orders)

The reasons that someone went on a pilgrimage were as varied as the people themselves. In the middle ages many people were devoutly religious, though not all of them were. There is a tendency to think that we, modern people, are more worldly than our medieval counterparts. This simply is not so. Our medieval ancestors had the same needs, desires, hopes and fears that we do, with only subtle temporal differences. Many of Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims were going on pilgrimage in order to fulfill social needs, like our modern vacations. Still others were going on pilgrimage to meet financial needs. Servants like the yeoman and the cook were brought along as part of their jobs and people like the pardoner and the summoner were going along because they saw devout religious pilgrims as easy marks for their sale of religious services and trinkets.

The pilgrims' reasons for going on pilgrimage.

Religious Reasons

The Knight

The Clerk of Oxford

The Parson

The Plowman

Social Reasons

The Squire

The Prioress

The Monk

The Friar (see also Illegitimate Financial Reasons)

The Merchant

The Sergeant of the Law

The Franklin

The Habdasher

The Weaver

The Carpenter
The Dyer
The Carpet Maker
The Sea Captain
The Doctor
The Wife of Bath
The Reeve
The Miller
The Manciple

Legitimate Financial Reasons

The Nun
A Priest
Another Priest
One More Priest
The Yeoman
The Cook
The Host

Illegitimate Financial Reasons

The Friar (see also Social Reasons)
The Pardoner
The Summoner

Many of Chaucer's company were what might be called "Professional pilgrims." Among these would be the Summoner and the Pardoner who sold fake saints' relics and false pardons to unsuspecting pilgrims. The Wife of Bath had been on pilgrimages most of her life (whenever she wasn't getting married.) She had been on pilgrimages to Jerusalem three times, as well as pilgrimages to Rome, Boulogne, Cologne, and to the Shrine of St. James de Compestella in Spain. The final professional pilgrim would be the Host. He ran the Tabard Inn in Southwark (London) and specialized in acting as a "tour guide" to the Shrine of St. Thomas a Becket in Canterbury Cathedral-- the most famous and popular pilgrimage site in all of England.

(It is possible that *your* persona might have had a

reason to go on a pilgrimage. It might be a fun day in the library to find some pilgrimage destinations for your alter ego to visit, and especially fun if some day you are lucky enough to be able to make that pilgrimage in real life! I know that both of us found our trips to Canterbury Cathedral especially memorable because we had studied the Canterbury Tales and the life and death of Thomas a Becket before going. To see the marble steps worn down by the knees of the devout, who approached the shrine as penitents, and the very spot Thomas was supposedly killed... an active imagination and knowledge of the real history of the place will bring chills to your spine and make you a part of long ago events. -ed.)



IT'S A GIRL!

Vanished Wood welcomes its youngest member, Caitlin Marie Harding. Caitlin made her debut on September 30, 1993 at 9:11 pm, weighing 7 lbs 7 oz and measuring 20 inches in length. One of our best members, as of this writing Caitlin has not missed a single monthly meeting since joining the group! Congratulations, parents Ashley (Dale) and Gueric (Jim)!

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