

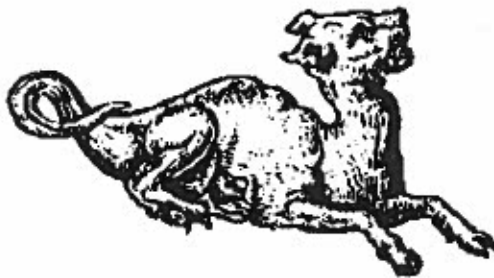
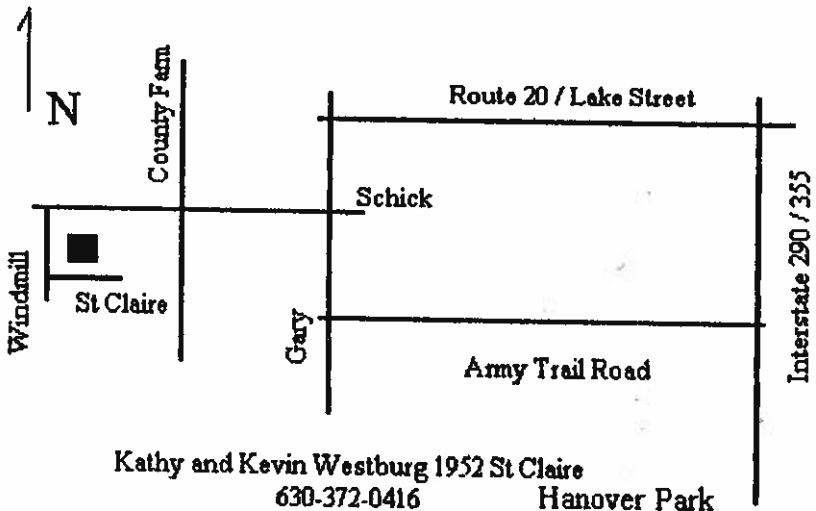
# Chips



February 1998

# Next Shire Moot

The next shire moot will be held on Sunday February 8th at the home of Kathy and Kevin Westburg, moot starts at 6:30pm.



# Shire News and Notes:

(Because, "Culwyn's Corner" just sounded plain stupid.)

1. Chris would like to step down as herald next quarter (March). If you are interested, please call Greg, 630-260-9233.

2. Dayle still has a few job openings for the shire event next month. Please call her at 630-378-5413 to volunteer.

3. We will need help the day before the event to help set up. We are able to get into the site at 7:00pm on Friday. Please call Dayle 630-378-5413 to tell her you will be there to help.

4. Kathy needs anyone with electronic cooking tools, e.g. Crock Pots, Woks, Roasters etc.. call her at 630-372-0416.

## Overheard at the Last Woot

"Does anyone have any idea for adult non fighting activities at the event?" (Wait, is there non fighting activities at events? Ed...)

"Hello my name is Sernik, your Polish cheesecake"

"I want your dumplings"

And the Immortal—

"The bone just plain sucks..."

# Electronic Pilgrim

Recently, having a hankering to finding websites that might be useful to early period personas, below is this months findings...As usual, you will find these sites somewhere on the shire's website <http://users.aol.com/vanishwood/welcome.htm>

## **y Gododdin: The Poetry of Aneirin**

<http://www.gwarnant.demon.co.uk/aneirin.htm>

A complete seventh century Welsh epic poem which was copied in the 13th century. It is the epic story of a battle between the north Britons and Picts.

## **Early British Kingdoms Web Site**

<http://freespace.virgin.net/david.ford2/>

[Early%20British%20Kingdoms.html](http://freespace.virgin.net/david.ford2/Early%20British%20Kingdoms.html)

Apparently the only web site dedicated to the early Celtic kingdoms of Britain. Over eleven different areas from the West Country to Pre-Roman Celtic Tribes and Kingdoms.

## **Bretagne**

<http://www.bretagne.com/eng.htm>

A website that Niniane would be interested in, includes information on towns, history literature and culture.

## **Celtic Twilight**

<http://www.celtic-twilight.com/>

A variety of sources including excerpts from early Celtic history and Middle and Late Arthurian works. Includes the Gododdin, the Mabinogion and Le Morte D' Arthur.

# The story of Vassilissa Golden Tress, Bareheaded Beauty

Just in case you were wondering how we came up with the background for this month's event, below is the full copy story of it.

This version of the tale comes from a book called Fairy Tales of Eastern Europe retold by Neil Philip. He credits his version of this story as coming from Jeremiah Curtin's Myths and Folk-Tales of the Russians, Western Slavs, and Magyars, which was collected by a man named Bronnitski. Curtin notes that the name of Tsar Svaitozar means "light-shining" or "resplendent."

There once lived a Tsar Svaitozar. This Tsar had two sons and a beauty of a daughter. For twenty years she had lived in her bright chamber. The Tsar and Tsarina admired her, and so did the nurses and maidens; but not one of the princes and champions had seen her face. And this beauty was called Vassilissa Golden Tress.

She never left her chamber; she did not breathe the free air. She had many bright dresses and jewels, but was bored; it was dull for her in the chamber. Her robes were a burden, her thick golden silk hair, bound n a tress, was so long it fell to her feet, and people called her Vassilissa Golden Tress, Bare-headed Beauty. The kingdom was filled with her fame. Many Tsars heard of her and sent envoys to Tsar Svaitozar to beat the ground with their fore-

heads and ask for her hand in marriage.

The Tsar was in no hurry, but when the time came, he sent messengers to all lands with tidings that Vassilissa would choose a bridegroom; and inviting suitors to assemble and collect at his palace to feast, he himself went to the lofty chamber to tell Vassilissa the Beautiful. She was glad in her heart. Looking out of the sloping window from behind the golden lattice, she see the green garden, the flowery meadow, and she was eager to walk there; she asked him to let go out to the garden to play with the maidens. "My sovereign father," she said, "I have not seen God's world yet. I have not walked on the grass, or smelled the flowers; I have not seen your palace. Let me go with my nurses and maidens to walk in the garden."

The Tsar permitted it, and Vassilissa the Beautiful went down from the lofty chamber to the broad court. The plank gate was open, and she entered the green meadow. In front was a steep mountain; on that mountain stood windswept trees; on the meadow were beautiful flowers of many kinds. Vassilissa, picking blue flowers, stepped aside a little from her nurses; there was no caution in her young mind; her face was exposed, her beauty uncovered. Suddenly a mighty whirlwind rose, such as had not been seen, heard of, or remembered by old people; the whirlwind turned and twisted, and behold! It seized Vassilissa and carried her through the air.

The nurses screamed and shrieked; they ran and stumbled, threw themselves on every side; they saw nothing but how the whirlwind shot away with her.

And Vassilissa Golden Tress was borne over many lands, across deep rivers, through three kingdoms into the fourth, into the dominions of the Savage Serpent.

The nurses hurried to the palace, covering themselves with tears, and threw themselves at the feet of the Tsar. "Sovereign, it's not our fault. Please don't kill us, but let us speak. The whirlwind bore away our sun, Vassilissa Golden Tress, the Bareheaded Beauty, and we don't know where."

The Tsar was sad, he was angry; but despite his anger he pardoned the poor women.

Next morning the princes and kings' sons came to the Tsar's palace, and seeing the sadness and seriousness of the Tsar they asked him what had happened.

"There is a sin to my account," said the Tsar. "My dear daughter, Vassilissa Golden Tress, has been borne away by the whirlwind, I know not whither," and he told everything as it had happened.

Talk rose among the guests, and the princes and kings' sons thought and talked among themselves. "Perhaps the Tsar is refusing us. This may be a story to prevent us from seeing his daughter." They searched Vassilissa's chamber; but nowhere did they find her.

The Tsar gave presents to each one from his treasure. They mounted their steeds, he did them honor; the bright guests took their leave, and went to their own lands.

The two young Tsareviches, brave brothers of Vassilissa Golden Tress, seeing the tears of their father and mother, begged of their parents, "Let us go, our father-bless us, our mother-to find your daughter, our sister."

"My dear sons, my own children," said the Tsar, without joy, "where will you go?"

"We will go, Father, everywhere-where a road lies, where a bird flies, where our eyes lead us; maybe we shall find her."

The Tsar gave his blessing, the Tsaritsa prepared them for the journey; they wept, and they parted.

The two Tsareviches journeyed on. Whether the road would be near or far, long or short, they did not know. They traveled a year, they traveled two. They passed three kingdoms. Lofty, blue-tinged mountains could be seen; between these mountains were sandy plains: the land of the Savage Serpent. And the Tsareviches inquired of those whom they met had they not heard, had they not seen, where Vassilissa Golden Tress was. And from all the answer was the same: "We know not where she is, and we have not heard."

The Tsar's sons approached a great town. A decrepit old man stood on the road, crooked-eyed and lame, with a crutch and a bag, begging alms. The Tsareviches stopped, threw him a silver coin, and asked had he not seen, had he not heard of the Tsarevna Vassilissa Golden Tress, Bareheaded Beauty?

"Ah! My friend," said the old man, "it is clear that you are from a strange land. Our ruler, the Savage Serpent, has forbidden us strongly and sternly to speak with men from abroad. We are forbidden under penalty to tell or relate how a whirlwind bore the beautiful princess past the town."

Now the sons of the Tsar understood that their sister was near. They urged on their restive steeds and approached the castle of gold which stood on a single pillar of silver; over the castle was a curtain of diamonds; the stairways, mother-of-pearl, opened and closed like wings.

At this moment Vassilissa the Beautiful was looking in sadness through the golden lattice, and she cried out for joy. She knew her brothers from a distance, just as if her heart had told her. And Vassilissa went down in silence to meet them, to welcome them to the castle; the Savage Serpent was absent.

Vassilissa the Beautiful was wary; she feared the serpent might see them. They had barely entered when the silver pillar groaned, the stairways opened, all the roofs glittered; the whole castle began to turn and move. Vassilissa was frightened, and said to her brothers, "The serpent is coming, the serpent is coming; that's why the castle goes round! Hide, brothers!"

She had barely said this when the Savage Serpent flew in, whistled with a hero's whistle and cried with a thundering voice, "What living man is here?"

"We, Savage Serpent," answered the Tsar's sons, without fear; "from our birthplace we've come for our

sister.”

“Oh, the young men are here!” shouted the serpent, clapping his wings. “You should not have sought death from me, nor traveled so far your sister to free; you think yourselves champions, I can see, but your strengths are puny compared to me.” And the serpent caught one of them with his wing, struck him against his brother, whistled and shouted. The castle guard ran to him, took the dead Tsareviches, and threw them both down a deep ditch.

The Tsarsvna Vassilissa Golden Tress wept bitterly, took neither food nor drink, would not look on the world. Two days and three passed. But she did not choose to die; it was not time for that. She took pity on her beauty and took counsel of her hunger. On the third day she ate, and, thinking how to free herself from the serpent, began to gain knowledge by wheedling.

“Savage Serpent,” said she, “great is your power, mighty your flight; is it possible that you have no foe?”

“Not yet,” replied the serpent; “it was fated at my birth that my foe should be Ivan Goroh [John Pea]; and he will be born from a pea.”

The serpent said this in jest; he expected no foe. The strong one relied on his strength; but the jest came true.

The mother of Vassilissa Golden Tress was grieving because she had no news of her children after the Tsarevna and the Tsareviches were lost.

She went one day to walk in the garden with her ladies; the day was hot, she was thirsty. In that garden, from a foothill, spring water ran forth in a stream, and above it was a white marble well. They drew, with a golden cup, water pure as a tear. The Tsaritsa was eager to drink, and with the water she swallowed a pea. The pea burst, and the Tsaritsa became heavy; the pea increased and grew. In time the Tsaritsa became heavy; the pea increased and grew. In time the Tsaritsa gave birth to a son; they called him Ivan Goroh, and he grew, not by the year, but by the hour, smooth and plump; he became lively, laughed, jumped about, somersaulted on the sand, and his strength grew in him all the time, so that by the time he was ten years old he was a mighty champion. Then he asked the Tsar and Tsaritsa if he had had any brothers and sisters, and so he heard how the whirlwind had borne away his sister, it was not known where, and how his two brothers had begged to go in search of their sister, and were lost without tidings.

"Father, Mother," begged Ivan Goroh, "let me go too; give me your blessing to find my brothers and sister."

"What are you saying, my child?" asked the Tsar and Tsaritsa at once. "you are still green and young; your brothers went and were lost; if you go, you too will be lost."

"Perhaps I shall not be lost," said Ivan Goroh. "I want to find my brothers and sister."

The Tsar and Tsaritsa begged their dear son, but he

craved, cried and entreated. They prepared him for the road and let him go with tears.

Ivan Goroh was free. He went out into the open field, traveled one day, traveled another. Toward night he came to a dark forest; in that forest was a cabin on hen's legs, trembling and turning in the wind. Ivan spoke the old saying, from his nurse's tale. "Cabin, cabin," said he, "turn your back to the forest, your front to me," and the cabin turned around to Ivan. Out of the window an old woman was looking, and she asked, "Whom is God bringing?"

Ivan bowed, and hastened to ask, "Have you not seen, Grandmother, in what direction the passing whirlwind carries beautiful maidens?"

"Oh, young man," said she, coughing, and looking at Ivan, "that whirlwind has frightened me too, so that I have sat in this cabin a hundred and twenty years, and I never go out! He might fly up and sweep me away. That's not a whirlwind, but the Savage Serpent."

"How could I find him?" asked Ivan.

"What are you thinking of, my world? The serpent will swallow you."

"Maybe he will not swallow me."

"Watch out, champion, or you will not save your head. But if you should come back, give me your word to bring from the serpent's castle the water with which, if a man sprinkles himself, he will grow young," said

she, grinding her teeth.

"I will get it, Grandmother, I give you my word."

"I believe you, on your honor! Go straight to where the sun sets. In one year you will reach the bare mountain there; ask for the road to the serpent's kingdom."

"God save you, Grandmother!"

"There is no reason for thanks, Ivan Goroh."

Well, Ivan Goroh went to the land where the sun sets. A story is soon told, but a deed's not soon done. He passed three kingdoms, and went to the serpent's land; before the gates of the town he saw a beggar, a lame, blind old man with a crutch, and, giving him charity, he asked if the young Tsarevna Vassilissa Golden Tress was in that town.

"She is, but it is forbidden to say so," answered the beggar.

Ivan knew that his sister was there; the good, bold hero gathered his courage, and went to the palace. At that time Vassilissa Golden Tress was looking out of the window to see if the Savage Serpent was coming; and, seeing the young champion from afar and wishing to know about him, she sent quietly to learn from what land he had come, who he was, and if he came from her father or her mother.

Hearing that Ivan, her youngest brother, had come (for she did not know him by sight), Vassilissa ran to him and wet him with tears. "Run, brother, quickly!" cried

she. "The serpent will soon be here; he will see you and destroy you."

"My dear sister," answered Ivan, "whoever asked me to flee, I should not listen. I have no fear of the serpent, no fear of his strength."

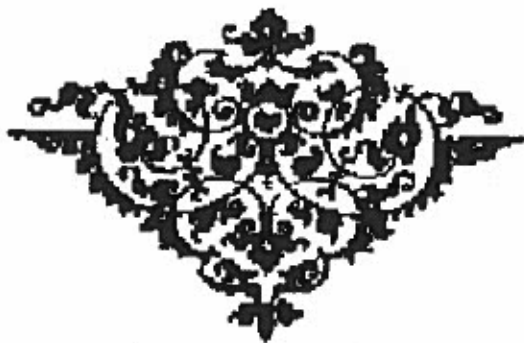
"But are you really Ivan Goroh?" asked Vassilissa Golden Tress. "Can you overcome him?"

"Wait, dear sister; first give me a drink. I have traveled in the heat, I am tired from the road; I want a drink."

"What will you drink, brother?"

"Three gallons of sweet mead, dear sister."

Vassilissa ordered a three-gallon measure of sweet mead, and Goroh drank it all at one breath. He asked for another; the Tsarevna looked at him in wonder, and ordered it.



**"Well, brother, I did not know you; but now I believe that you are Ivan Goroh!"**

**"Let me sit down a moment to rest from the road."**

**Vassilissa commanded her servants to bring a strong chair; but the chair broke under Ivan, flew into bits. They brought another all bound with iron, and that one cracked and bent. "Oh, brother," cried Vassilissa, "that is the chair of the Savage Serpent!"**

**"Now it is clear that I am heavier than he," said Goroh, laughing.**

**He rose and went down the street, from the castle to the forge; there he ordered the serpent's blacksmith to forge him an iron club of nine tons' weight. The blacksmith hurried to his work. They hammered the iron; night and day the hammers thundered, the sparks flying. In forty hours the work was done. Fifty men were barely able to carry the club; but Ivan Goroh, seizing it in one hand, hurled the club to the sky: it flew, roaring like a storm, and whirled above the clouds, out of sight. All the people ran trembling with terror, thinking if that club were to fall on the town, it would break the walls and crush the people; if it fell in the sea, it would raise the sea and flood the town. But Ivan Goroh went quietly to the castle, saying they should tell him when the club was coming. All the people looked out for the club. "Isn't the club coming?" They waited an hour, they waited two; on the third hour they ran to say that the club was coming. Goroh ran to the square, put forth his hand, and caught the club as it came; he did not bend, but the iron bent on**

the palm of his hand. Ivan took the club, pressed it against his knee, straightened it, and went to the castle.

All at once a terrible whistling was heard. The Savage Serpent was racing on Whirlwind, his steed, flying like an arrow, breathing fire. The serpent had the body of a champion, but his head was the head of a serpent. When he flew, the whole castle quivered: when he approached, it began to whirl and dance. But now the castle was still: clearly someone was sitting inside. The serpent grew thoughtful, whistled, shouted; the whirlwind steed shook his dark mane, opened his broad wings, reared, and roared.

The serpent flew up to the castle, but the castle did not move. "Ho!" roared the Savage Serpent. "It is plain there is a foe. Is not Goroh at my house?" Out came the champion. "I'll put you on the palm of one hand, and slap you with the other, Ivan Goroh: they won't find your bones."

"We shall see," said Ivan Goroh.

The serpent cried from his whirlwind, "Prepare yourself."

"Prepare yourself, Savage Serpent," said Ivan, and raised his club.

The Savage Serpent flew up to strike Ivan, to pierce him with his spear, and missed. Goroh sprang to one side, and kept his balance.

**“Now I’ll finish you!” roared Goroh. Raising his club, he struck the serpent a blow that tore him to pieces, scattered him; the club went across the earth, went through two kingdoms into a third.**

**The people hurled up their caps and saluted Ivan as their Tsar. But Ivan, seeing the wise blacksmith, thought to reward him for having made the club quickly, so he called up the old man and said to the people, “Here is your Tsar; obey his good commands, as before you obeyed the Savage Serpent’s evil ones.”**

**Ivan also took the water of life and the water of death, and sprinkled his brothers; they rose up, rubbed their eyes and thought, “We slept long; God knows what has happened.”**

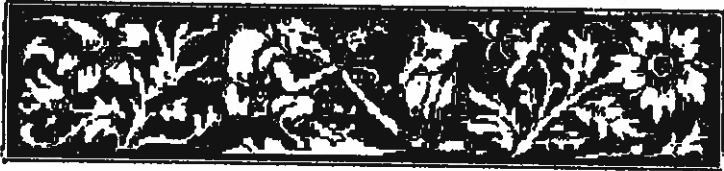
**“Without me you would have slept forever, my dear brothers,” said Ivan Goroh, pressing them to him.**

**He did not forget to take the serpent’s water; he made a ship, and sailed down the river with Vassilissa Golden Tress to his own land, through three kingdoms into the fourth. He did forget the old woman in the cabin; he let her wash in the serpent’s water. She turned into a young woman, began to sing and dance, ran out after Goroh, and showed him the road home.**

**His father and mother met him with joy and honor. They sent messengers to every land with tidings that their daughter Vassilissa had returned. In the town there was ringing, and in the ears triple ringing; trumpets sounded, drums were beaten, guns thundered.**

A bridegroom came to Vassilissa, and brides were found for Ivan Goroh and his two brothers; they had eight crowns made, and celebrated four weddings.

The grandfathers of our grandfathers were there; they drank the mead, but by the time it reached us, it only wet our mustaches, and there was none to drink. And Ivan, after the death of his father, received the crown, and ruled the land with renown; and age after age the name of Goroh was famous.



## Upcoming Events

February:

14 Ethel in Love, Springfield IL

21 Search for Ivan Goroth, Elgin IL (our event!!!!)

This is *Chips*, a publication of the Shire of Vanished Wood of the Society for Creative Anachronism Inc. *Chips* is not an official publication of the Society for Creative Anachronism, and does not delineate SCA policy, nor necessarily reflect the views of that organization at large. Subscriptions are \$5.00 for 12 issues US mail or 18 issues E-mail and may be obtained by contacting Earl Bless, 306 B. Morningside Drive, Bloomingdale, IL 60108. [Ebless@aol.com](mailto:Ebless@aol.com)

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