

Chips

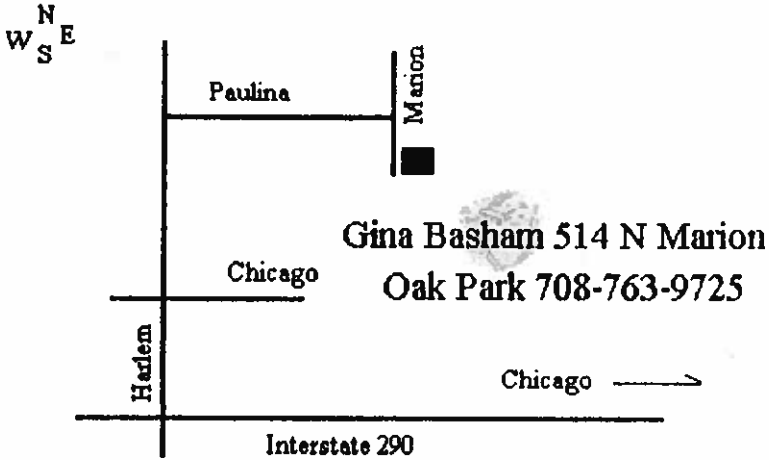
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March 1998

Next Shire Moot

The next shire moot will be held on Sunday March 15th at the home of Eugenia de Baysham, 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 now! If you are interested, please call Greg, 630-260-9233.
2. Thanks to Talbot, Freydis, Sahar, Seamus, Ethelwulf, Gueric and Jasmine who helped at the last demo for the Boy Scouts. We received a donation of \$100.



Message from the Event Steward

Well, it's the day after the event, and I'm walking and able to function (which is more than I can say for the plumbing in my house yet). All in all, it appears that the event was a smashing success. The only injuries I know of were minor—a bruised shoulder (via Einar I believe), two nasty-looking but not major armor bites, and one knife cut of kitchen crew member (sorry, Rebecca). I was a tad concerned from time to time as either Culwyn, myself, Baron Devon or the marshall at the Savage Serpent list had to throw ourselves in between the window and whichever opponent was attempting to almost run away from Duke Sir Conn—but the window and those of us in the path all escaped unscathed.

The fighters in general seemed happy—even after being soundly trounced by Master Einar or Duke Sir Conn. I received many a comment about how much fun fighters were having with that list, and watched both Einar and Sir Conn not only fight well (by the time both were too exhausted to continue they had a combined record of 50 wins and only 6 losses) but give encouragement and advice to relatively new fighters, as well. A benefit to being the “Baba Yaga” of their list field was having a chance to see some excellent fighting, an opportunity that I didn't expect given that I

was event steward. Funny, but most fighters didn't return to attempt to earn points after they had defeated the Savage Serpent(s)—wonder why that might be? Seriously, several fighters mentioned to both Gueric and myself that they had a great time at our event, and that they got all the fighting in that they could hope for, with a good deal of variety and testing of skill. Rebecca remarked that her list was also doing well for themselves, and I did overhear a couple of fighters saying that the three on one list was fairly challenging, as well.

The non-fighting attendees also had a good time. I was told that the number and variety of merchants was great. Despite Ethelwulf's dire predictions regarding space for merchants and attendees alike, Arwyn the space "queen" was able to figure things out relatively quickly Saturday morning. Conversations with two of the "larger" merchants resulted in comments to the effect that while things were a little cramped, they were workable, and at least four merchants made money, one of them being the Sewing Guild as we sold 3 chemises. Arwyn is a bit anxious, however, as one of the people responsible for garbing the guards at the Bristol Ren Faire was so taken with her Elizabethan box pleat chemises that she may now receive an order for several to be made by June or so (talk about your good news/bad news scenario—I see box pleats in my future).

I was also told by non-fighting attendants that the fighting was truly entertaining to behold. They also seemed to enjoy the variety of the lists, and the storyline went over well. Cudos to Gregory von Hanover and Adrienne for their "acting", and to Culwyn for designing a tournament enjoyed by all.

Feast was, well, amazing. Udo could only give the arm signal for touchdown when asked about feast, as he claimed that mere words could not describe it. Duke Sir Conn asked Udo to convey that not only was feast delicious, but that it was well and smoothly timed. I received many other wonderful comments, such as Terrance who blessed Katherine for serving an Eastern European feast, and Charles Oakley, who placed the feast as top in the last

year to two years. One person attending feast at a table other than mine asked me to tell the head cook that the feast was “a religious experience”. One complaint heard by Lhiannon was that the tea was “nasty”, but that that was the only part of the feast that wasn’t excellent (so I guess that was a backhanded compliment).

If anyone had any doubts about the feast, the genuine applause that resounded throughout the hall when I introduced the kitchen staff should have overcome them. Sorry Katherine, I didn’t realize until later that I used your mundane last name instead of your SCA name — by then I was simply too exhausted to think, and my instinct called you by your mundane name. Hey, if that’s the biggest mistake I ever make, then I’ll be a happy camper.

Serving feast did have it’s hazards, however. Imagine being the only server to bring back one lone beef roll to a room filled with hungry servers. I did have the thought of putting down the platter and running. Balthazar, Gueric, Aldred and Kiyohara all came hungrily eyeing the beef roll, but out of nowhere came Avelina to claim the prize (she generously shared). Bringing back Sernik was almost as hazardous to my health, though others brought more back later (Yum, yum).

And now for the Thank Yous. Financially, it appears that this event will have been a roaring success. If I get the final tallies before Ethelwulf prints Chips, I will let you all know. But initial receipts look good. (Ed. we made a little under \$100) The site caretaker was very pleased with us, and said that as far as he was concerned, we could come back anytime. He thought what we did was interesting, and liked how we protected both the floors and the windows, as well as how well we cleaned up. He was amazed that we only blew two circuits the entire time (so were we, for that matter). And he said that everyone was very courteous and nice. With all this in mind, I wish to thank EVERYONE for helping and working so hard. A good event is a good event only when the work is done by many and not few, and this certainly applied in this case. Besides the enormous amount of gratitude I have for everyone, I do have a few specific people I want to point out to all.

Thanks to Derr for finding this site. While it didn't have much of a kitchen (ok, it didn't really have anything like a kitchen), it did have an ambiance that couldn't be denied. A summer event here would be awesome, and I have the name and number of the contact person for any would-be event steward (hint, hint).

Thanks to Katherine, my so-called partner in crime. While Katherine frequently amazes me as to how she can figure out how to make things work, she went way into the realm of unbelievable for this feast. With only a microwave, a fridge and a small 2 tub sink, she made magic happen. Not only did she pick a wonderful menu, but she also timed everything perfectly, and that's a talent few people have.

Thanks to those who came and helped with the cooking parties. Part of what made the feast do-able was being able to cook it ahead of time, so that only reheating was necessary. Arwyn proved that she was indeed a "meat goddess", and that no one of us could quite "beat" the meat like her (long story, ask one of us later). Along with this, thanks to those who baked the Semiks—yum, yum. (Hi— I'm Sernik, your polish cheesecake)

Thanks to the kitchen and serving crews—your jobs were well done. I was made to understand that Janet (sorry—I don't have your SCA name) had to be conned away from doing the dishes by Twm (aka whip me) as she was apparently the dishwashing queen, as well as performing other kitchen duties all day long (in pretty cool garb, I might add). Aline, Niniane, Benah, Elizabeth and Kambreda also deserve Thanks for their kitchen help. Unlike many feasts in other places, we actually had more servers than we technically needed, although all were pressed into service. Thanks go to Arwyn (which table did you want to serve again, Arwyn?), Guericc, Adrienne, Valerie, Talbot, Freydis, Balthazar, Kiyohara, Avelina, Lhiannon, Aldred, Culwyn, Beatrice, and Rebecca for their wonderful help (even if we did appear rather Pirahanna-like)

Thanks to Eugenia and Lhiannon for working the list table, and to

Avelina, Derr, Rebecca and Stephanie (Udo's friend) for working as Baba Yagas. With all your help, the list seemed to run smoothly. Thanks to Adrienne and Valerie for working with the children in the children's room. While not many made masks, those that did seemed to enjoy it immensely.

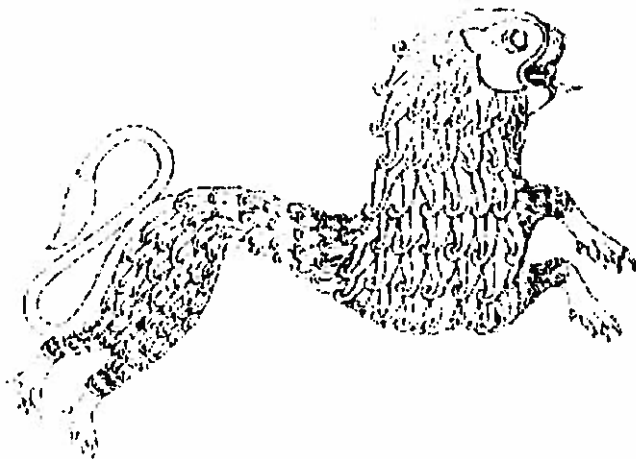
Finally, Thanks to the set-up and clean-up crews. You guys did a great job. This was especially evident when the caretaker took a look around in amazement at how quickly and efficiently we cleaned the whole place up. He even got to leave by 10 pm (2 whole hours early--hurray).

Oh — if anyone is missing a white crock pot with blue cornflower-like flowers on it, please call me or Derr. He is taking temporary custody of it until it's rightful home can be found.

Once again, thanks and congratulations to everyone for a job well done.

Ashley Daralis

Event Steward



The Vanished Wood Oracle

"On a cold, wintry day, the sisters of the convent of the invisible joy were startled and amazed when, what was thought to be an abandoned room, issued forth strange moans and sighs. Looking thought a convenient hole in the masonry, the sisters could see nothing....but when they whispered questions through the portal, forth issued great wisdom.

Now and then, select sisters, who are deep in their love of the lord and assured in their piety, venture into the now sacred room, with the others witnessing her ingress through the convenient vision slit, bringing food and testing their piety through humiliation of the flesh."

Being a excerpt from the "Boke of Bal" found in the ruins of Chamburgh

Yes, we have yet another new feature to the Vanished Wood website, the Vanished Wood Oracle. Now you can ask the most wise your questions of love or money. Your questions will be answered via email, that is if you give us your address. Below are just some of the bits of wisdom recently received. Ask your own questions at <http://users.aol.com/vanishwood/main.htm>

Betony ferch Meilyr ap Emrys enquires, "Oh Great Oracle, my question is... Who will win this year's Spring Crown?"

A: Yo, Betony... you got a bet riding on this, or what??? Look... it's against the by-laws of the Oracle's Union to give obvious answers like names to questions like this... but, I can give you some pretty sure fire clues to help you in your quest...

Firstly, look for the person who loses the least number of fights ...secondly, look for a person wearing armor... they will more than likely have a weapon of some type and will have a reasonably aggressive personality during the tourney... oh, yea.... one last clue

that may help you in your search... I can, with absolute certainty tell you that the winner of this year's Spring Crown will be found on the 23rd and the 24th days of May to be physically located in the lands of Nordskogen...

Torquil MacAlpine writes: "Oh, Great Oracle... my question is: If mares eat oats and does eat oats, why do little lambs eat ivy?"

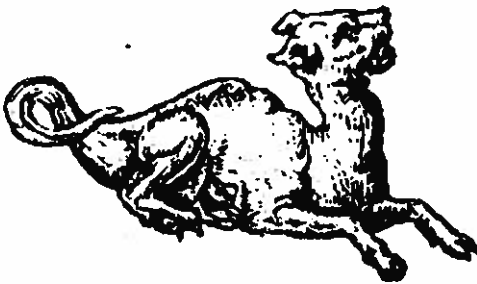
A: Good Torquil, exactly how long have you known this lamb and how serious is the relationship... and how is it you know so much about mares and does???

.... and finally, a sweet lady from Rokkehealdan writes, "Oh Great Oracle, my question is: A widow, recently 40 years of age is betrothed to a Scot of ill repute - a known rapier man. What is the proper attire for the nuptials?"

A: Whoa... Rosaline... ummm... let me see here....

A widow, long since gone to pot,
was betrothed to an ill-equipped Scot,
when she pondered her weeds
satisfied all her needs
with a sheep's skin coat and cravat.

... by the way.... do you know Torquil by any chance?



Words from a Happy Event Attendee

Unto Lady Ashley and Lord Gueric,
fair gentles of that most esteemed of Midrealm Shires known to
one and all as Vanished Wood does Lord Oakley and His Lady
Catherine write this 23rd day of February-

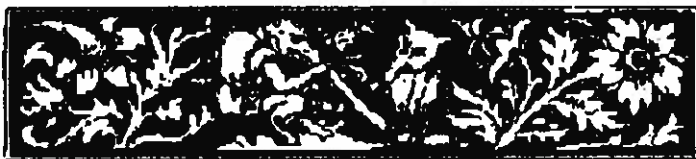
Fair friends, I send thee greetings! Through you and unto all of
your Shire who gave of themselves in the preparation and steward-
ship of your event this past weekend, I would send forth my
deepest appreciation to all of the good gentles of your Shire for the
depth of their generosity and the sweetness of their hospitality.

Unto the artisans that dwell within the kitchens, larders and pan-
tries of Vanished Wood go special thanks. It has been some time
since I have been treated to a feast in which each and every dish did
so well suit my palate. Every dish was most delicately prepared
and artfully served with all ceremony and circumstance well war-
ranted. The additional generosity of having copies of the recipes
available that we may take home the secrets of your labors and
thereby, perhaps, enjoy them again at some future date was like the
icing unto the cake.

Now it is our burden to wait another year until such time as Van-
ished Wood shall again hold its revels and my Lady and I shall
again venture forth from the Riven Dale to see what further won-
ders you have wrought... Again we thank you for your labors and
your attentions -

Your obdn't servants and friends,

Ld. Chas. Oakley, Esq. and Lady Catherine Oakley





Some thoughts on SCA vs. Medieval Tournament Prizes

Having just hosted (survived?) another shire event, my mind turned to tournament prizes, which are often the least fretted upon part of an event. Anyone who's been a fighter in the Society for any length of time has either received or seen prizes given that range from the wondrous to the outright bizarre. I myself have come away from the lists at various times with rattan, cloisonné boxes, a golden apple, and three bars of soap. (Yeah, soap. Talk about subtle, huh?)

Period tournament prizes were usually gifts of either great financial, or, in later periods, symbolic worth. In the early, rough and tumble encounters of the 12th Century, the prize usually consisted of a purse of silver, a fine horse, or another item practical to the knightly profession. Of course, in these early tourneys, the collecting of individual ransoms was far more important than any prize. *The Life of William Marshal* (various translations) is an excellent source for the rewards to be had in 12th and early 13th Century melees

Most of our knowledge of tournaments, as the SCA usually thinks of them, comes from the pas d'arms, of the 14th and early 15th

Centuries, and the elaborate passages, jousts, and “feats or arms” of the early Renaissance. In these tournaments, the prizes became increasingly expensive and elaborate displays of the knightly virtue of *largesse*. Although the money-making nature of the early period contests was now gone, the prestige-making opportunities of the Late Middle Ages could carry even greater financial rewards to the single knight who most impressed his host — a single brooch or jewel often exceeding the average yearly income of a knight.

Although this list is by no means exhaustive, here are some ideas of the forms these gifts could take:

Arms, Armour, and Gifts of War

A new mail coat;

An elaborately burnished and gilded sword;

A pair of fine gauntlets;

A helmet mantled with an elaborate crest (This was very common, and the crest often far exceeded the worth of the helmet itself),

A fine leather covered shield, painted in gold leaf with the scene of St. George and the Dragon.

An armoured and saddled destrier

Animals and Gifts for the Hunt

Three alaunt hounds;

A falcon, elaborately hooded and girdled;

A horn embellished with gold,

A swift courser with fine trappings and a new saddle

Finery

A yard of fine silk;

A “fine sum” of velvet;

A “silken cote;”

A velvet cap

Jewels

A silver belt,

A golden belt;

Chains of gold, usually unadorned;

Gold Pendants or clasps in the forms of the letters “A, E,” or “M,”
adorned with some rubies or emeralds,
A “clasp worth 40 pounds,”
Gold rings, rods or batons;
Golden rings adorned with rubies or diamonds (Ladies, take note!)
A golden thorn;
A pendant in the form of either a silver leaf or a golden leaf, based
on the outcome of a joust

Obviously, I’m not saying that we need to start offering bigger, and more expensive prizes. Shire budgets do not allow for that, and often, when a large prize is offered, it is also publicized, leading many combatants to become tempted by greed while fighting in the lists. However, many of the rare and expensive gifts listed above, can have faux versions made relatively inexpensively. Fine linen, brocade or silk makes a fine gift, is —relative to armour or livestock — now inexpensive, and in period would have been generous indeed. A fine and original prize adds color and flair to a tournament, without having to bankrupt to hosting event.

Unconvinced? Then, in conclusion, here’s a perfectly period example of a reasonably inexpensive, unique, and useful tournament prize. In the 12th Century, William Marshal attended a tournament in which the Duke of Burgundy attracted the attention of a high born lady. This fine lady awarded her champion the prize of a fresh pike (as in, the fish, not the weapon). The Duke, a modest man, felt unworthy, and passed it on to a member of his household. Strangely enough, this gentleman also declined in favor of another. The noble fish passed from hand to hand until it at last came to William Marshal, who, being a poor knight, proudly took it home with him. (Well, the “proudly” is debatable, but he did take it.)

So you see, compared to a dead fish, how can a rattan stick hope to compete?

Bibliography

Barber, Richard and Barker, Juliet. Tournaments. Weidenfeld & Nicholson. New York, 1989.

Cripps-Day, F.H. The History of the Tournament. Dover Publications, 1992.

Duby, Georges. William Marshall. The Flower of Chivalry Pantheon Books. New York, 1985.

Gavrett, Phillip (ed.) Osprey Elite #17 : Knights at Tournament Osprey Publishing. London, 1987.

Upcoming Events:

March

28 Costume Accessories Collegium, Rokkehealden,
Naperville IL

28 Authenticity Policeman's Ball, White Waters,
South Bend IN

April

18 Coronation, Flaming Gryphon, Dayton OH

25 Sunday Bloody Sunday II, Rockwall, Beloit WI

25 Rites of Spring, Illiton, Peoria IL

Websites to these and other events can be found at
<http://www.midrealm.org>

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