

the BATTERING RAM

JULY. 2001 AS XXXVI

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Submissions: We are currently seeking articles and artwork for future editions of *the Ram*. Articles of a maximum of 500 words should be submitted by email to editor@grasslandsonline.com, or may be typed, double-spaced and submitted to the Editor at any Shire meeting. Artwork should be black and white and, if possible, scanned at 200dpi in jpg format. Submissions deadline for the October issue will be September 21, 2001.

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Exchequer: Lord Fjall Ljotrsson (250) 554-2271
Acting Herald: Lord Frederik Von Zwickau (250) 314-1235
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Chronicler: Samantha MacDonald (250) 377-8818
Chatelaine: HL Casarea Von Zwickau (250) 314-1235



'TIS THE SEASON
FOR FAIRES AND FEASTING

Looking Towards the North

An Excerpt from The Northern Principality Committee Bulletin #11

8 June, AS XXXVI/2001, Crown Principality of The North, An Tir

Greetings to the Populace of the Crown Principality of the North.

The North has not been idle this past winter.; we are a Crown Principality, we are embarking on the polling for name and device for our fledgling branch, and we are forming the sub committees that will lead us to the finished product. Many thanks to those whose efforts and work have brought us to this point!

As we move closer to a polling, regarding a change in status, look forward to more bulletins with more info. As always, feel free to offer your services where you think your talents may best suit. You don't need to hold some high title or have a lot of time in the SCA to contribute. Your wisdom and enthusiasm are all we need. Contact information for the various Sub Committees follows.

The Principality Sub Committees

The Northern Principality committee is pleased to announce the following sub-

committees and their Chairpersons:

Ceremonial

HL James Llewellyn ap Gruffydd of Seagirt #306-55 Bay St., Victoria, BC V9A 6X9

(250) 381-9012

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1205 25th Ave, Vernon BC V1T 7L5

(250) 542-6988 ljotr@home.com

Regalia

Cometessa Morgaine Brigatia-Eisenmarche

12388 103A Ave. Surrey, BC.V3V 3G9

darius@dccnet.com

New Champions!!!

We had five well-attended and well-fought championships, and five new Champions to represent the best of the Crown Principality of the North. Please congratulate, follow, and encourage:

The Scorer of the North (Archery) - Eammon Ryan

The Scholar of the North (Arts and Sciences) - HL Thorin Olafsson

The Skald of the North (Bardic) - Anya Rozverdo

The Scourge of the North (Fully Armored Combat) - Jarl Sir Hwolf Einarsson

The Skewer of the North (Rapier Combat) - Don Diarmuid de Rosas

Three Cheers to Our Champions!

Close to Home

Known World Arts & Sciences Symposium

Barony of Madrone

October 26 to 28, 2001

The beautiful Barony of Madrone is proud to host the *2001 Known World Arts & Sciences Symposium (Kwas)*, October 26 to 28. This is the premier Arts & Sciences event for the Known World. Arts & Sciences classes, workshops, displays, and merchants from all over the world will be meeting to exchange ideas and learn in a medieval and Renaissance atmosphere.

We will be featuring six tracks of classes by instructors from all over the Known World. We also offer Crash space coordination for those gentles who do not wish to stay at the hotel, a Samhain Masque Ball on Saturday evening, a Hospitality suite, a display of Arts & Sciences pieces, a fashion show, and a Friday afternoon textiles tour of the Henry Art Gallery (space is limited).

The location is the Double Tree Inn Sea-Tac, located at 18740 Hwy 99/Int'l Blvd., Seattle, WA 98188. Hotel phone number is (206) 246-8600. Kwas attendees receive a discounted hotel rate so please be sure to inform the hotel when you make your reservations. Transportation to and from the Sea-Tac airport is provided 24 hours a day and leaves every 15 minutes from the airport.

Site fee: \$16 for adults, \$12 for persons over 12, persons under 12 free. Class fees are separate; please contact the Class coordinator for more information. For Merchant fees, contact the Merchant Coordinator.

Registration for classes is available both on-line and through the catalog. Class catalogs are available from Constance Davies, who can be contacted by snail mail: c/o Theresa Kelmer, 6725 19th Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98117, via telephone: (206)783-6235 - no calls after 9PM, or email: teresa-brent@msn.com. First catalog is free, additional or replacement catalogs are \$1 each. An online catalog is also available on the website at www.vertetsable.com/kwas.

Merchants may contact Angharad Albanes via snail mail: c/o Laura White, 13047 Westbrook Drive SW, Port Orchard, WA 98367, via telephone: (360) 874-7608 - no calls after 9 PM, or email: angharad@uswest.net.

Crash Space Coordinator: Meave d'Mass, via telephone: (206) 764-4894 or email: charding@nwlink.com

Fashion Show Coordinator: Anastasia Andreevna, via telephone: (206) 365-0413 - no calls after 9 PM, or email: stasi.wa@netzero.net.

Textiles Tour Coordinator: Merouda the True of Beaumaris, via telephone:(206) 522-0589 - no calls after 9 PM, or email: merouda@home.com.

Autocrat: For any other questions, please contact Laurellen de Brandevin via snail mail: c/o Tammie L. Dupuis, 2401 SW Holden #L-101, Seattle, WA 98106, via telephone: (206) 763-3369 - no calls after 9 P M , o r e m a i l : mrq_laurellen@hotmail.com.

For more information on Kwas, visit www.vertetsable.com/kwas.



In Search of Chaucer

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halve cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages);
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

An excerpt from the General Prologue to
The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer



Not so very long ago a movie graced the silver screen, a movie which touched the heart of all that we hold dear; chivalry, honour, getting dressed in armour and kicking ass. The movie I'm referring to is, of course, *A Knight's Tale*. And while the movie was great entertainment in its own Velveeta way, the best part of the story, for me, was the young writer named Geoff. He was smart and witty, he had a way with crowds and loan sharks... but was he truly Chaucer? Not really. So, who was this Chaucer guy anyway?

Very little is actually known about Geoffrey Chaucer. The few facts we do know are taken from official records and court transcripts. We know that he was born between 1340 and 1344, in London. His father, John, was a vintner, an importer of fine wines with a connection to the royal court. We know

that in 1357, Chaucer's name appears for the first time in the records of the Countess of Ulster. It is recorded that the Countess paid seven shillings for a cloak, pair of breeches and a pair of shoes for her retainer, one Geoffrey Chaucer. We know that Chaucer fought in the army of King Edward III, was captured at the Siege of Reims, and on March 1, 1360, King Edward paid a ransom of 16 pounds to free his loyal subject.

We know that in 1366, Chaucer married Philippa Roet, lady-in-waiting to the Queen. We know that in 1367, King Edward granted him an annuity for services as a vallerctus (a trusted messenger). We know that Chaucer traveled extensively on diplomatic missions to Europe and that he held several official positions, including comptroller of customs on furs, skins and hides for the Port of London, and clerk of

the King's works. We also know that the official date of his death is October 25, 1400, and that his grave is at Westminster Abbey.

But what of Chaucer the man, the poet? He is a lively presence in his own works, yet he tells us nothing of himself. He was described by his contemporaries as a "flower of eloquence", and his literary greatness is indisputable. With works like *The House of Fame*, *Parliament of Fowls* and *Troilus & Criseide*, it is obvious he was a man of great literary talents. But what was he like?

For the answer to that, we turn to perhaps his most famous work, *The Canterbury Tales*.

Perhaps there we may glean some clue to the man behind the quill.

Geoffrey Chaucer spent the last fourteen years of his life writing *The Canterbury Tales*, and when he died, they were less than 1/4 complete. *The Tales* include the *General Prologue* and twenty-four tales, two of which are incomplete. They also include some of the most widely quoted poetry in the English language.

The overview of *the Tales* is simple; thirty pilgrims are on their way to Canterbury to pay homage to the memory of Archbishop Thomas a Becket, murdered there in 1170. The pilgrims meet at the Tabard Inn and agree to a contest of sorts. Each will tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two on the way back to London. The best story-teller will be treated to dinner by the rest of the group. They draw straws to see who will begin -the Knight pulls the short straw.

The tales range from the Knight's tale of chivalric love and warfare (interesting parallel there) to the ribald and rowdy stories of the Miller, the Wife of Bath and others. It becomes a game of one-upmanship, each tale a reaction to its predecessor, the ebb and flow dictated by the attitudes and individual psychologies of the characters.

Chaucer himself appears on the journey, and in his appearance, perhaps we may glimpse something of the man. The pilgrim Chaucer tells two tales. The first, the *Tale of Sir Thopas*, parodies the 12th Century French virtue of romance. The second tale,

entitled simply *Chaucer's Tale*, is so low and so poorly told that the pilgrim Chaucer is asked to hold his tongue. Could this be the author himself, making fun of his life's work?

The whole work wraps up with Chaucer's "Retraction", an apology to any he has offended, and a request for God's mercy. There is some controversy as to whether the aged Chaucer was sincere in his plea, or simply offering one last tongue-in-cheek poke at the higher institutions.

Now, getting back to that movie... Would Chaucer be pleased by this portrayal of him as a loud-mouth (albeit a well-spoken loud mouth) with a penchant for gambling too much? A man who makes his entry into the film as a naked backside on the road to who knows where? If the road leads to Canterbury, there can be no doubt, Chaucer would be well pleased.

- Samantha MacDonald



Close to Home

Serjent, Yeoman, and Gallant Trials!

Barony of Seagirt
July 13 to 15, 2001

Come one, come all to our trials. Watch! Learn! Have fun!

The site is on Young Lake Road in Sooke. From Victoria, head north through Colwood to Sooke, turn right at the light in Sooke (Otter Point Road), turn right on Young Lake road and you will soon be there. From up-island, take the Colwood exit just after the Malahat, turn right on Jacklin and then right on Sooke Road, the go to Sooke and follow as above.

Fees are \$10 for the weekend, \$5 for just the day, half price for under 14, free for under 6. Gate opens at 3pm Friday and closes on the 15th at 1pm. There is water on site but you may not be used to the taste. Pied Piper activities are being planned. The theme is a mini-serjents. Bring a sense of fun and a sense of humour. Help out our candidates with their endeavors and maybe learn something yourself.

Questions, queries or comments call:
Lady Ekatarina Borisovna Kievskaja,
wl835@victoria.tc.ca
(250) 920-7710 (ask for Heather Senkler)

Clinton Classes

Will you be at the War? Want to teach at Clinton?

We're looking for instructors now. Classes during the Work Week (July 30 - August 3) can be anything from 1 hour to 5 days long. Classes during the War Weekend (August 4 & 5) are limited to 2 hours. All classes must be able to be taught in a tent or out of doors.

For more information, please contact Baroness Amanda Kendal,
1192 Shavington Street,
North Vancouver BC V7L 1K9;

(604) 988-0304, kendal@lightspeed.ca

Forest War and Feast II

Coill Mhor
August 24 to 26, 2001

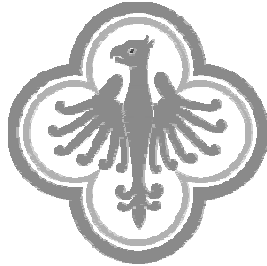
After admirably coming to the aide of the incipient Shire of Coill Mhor and her noble peoples when faced with invasion last autumn, the Wolf Pack has laid claim to these lands as their protectorate. The stink of aggression wafts across our lands once again! War scenarios will include a forested hill battle, field battle, and creek-side battle. This will be a camping event. Mixed lights and heavies battles will be fought in many

scenarios after allegiances are forged (or purchased).

Site is at 6122 Cheetah Road, Gateway, BC (10 minutes East of 100 Mile House) Site opens at 3pm on Friday and closes at 8pm on Sunday. Site is Discretely Damp. Pets welcome but must be leashed at all times. There will be a pot-luck feast on the Saturday night for everyone. Chicken and sausage will be provided. Please bring a dish to feed at least 10 ppl.

Site fees: \$10 adults \$5 children (age 6-12) under 6 is free (\$25 family cap) Site fee includes feast. Merchants welcome (Merchants requested to contribute to prize pool) There is water at site for washing and cooking but it is hard (Sulfur) and should be filtered for drinking (or bring bottled water) There will be filtered potable water available at the gate.

For directions or more information:
www.grt-net.com/CoillMhor/
Site Autocrat: Finlaech MacGillandrias
(250) 397-2151 finlaech@bcinternet.net
Co-Autocrat: HL Genevieve S.C.
Buchannon (250) 397-2079
chrismcann@bcinternet.net



SCA on the 'Net

Summer's here and we all know what that means.... camping events galore!! Whether

you are a newcomer or a long-time member of the SCA, we all travel as much as we can to attend events in the area and beyond. Especially with Clinton War just around the corner, I thought that this time I would focus on some of the best sites for camping advice... God only knows, we don't always remember everything and something always seems to go wrong in one way or another.

So, let's start at the beginning.... One of the first questions that most people ask about camping at events is "What should I bring?" There are many sites on the internet that contain sample packing lists for SCA events. The Barony of Iron Mountain's website, (www.bham.net/SCA/event-packing-list.html) lists great tips for camping and a fantastic example of a packing list. Also, take a look at sites that are strictly about basic camping and recreation. You'll find that some give ideas for things to bring that SCA packing lists may have missed.

Secondly, if you want to go more advanced in your camping at SCA events, you might consider making a period pavilion. Although this takes countless hours to accomplish, the finished result will be a spectacular addition to your encampment. I searched all over the internet for good pictures and descriptions of SCA pavilion styles and found a very interesting site. Two SCA members posted a site that showed a number of pavilions that they used at events (www.adelphi.edu/~sbloch/sca/tents/). You will find links to other sites that also have

designs, a bibliography of resources that they found helpful, and a taxonomy of pavilions page that lays out detailed information about materials needed for making pavilions. Also check out *Medieval Pavilion Resources*, (www.teleport.com/~tguptill/) for lots of detailed photos and information about pavilion making.

Thirdly, you can't get enough tips about basic camping. Who knows? We may all learn something we never thought of before. Now, you'll find lots of people post pages on the internet telling how to make camping easier and giving tips galore on how to make your encampment more comfortable for the long days at events. For a lot of basic tips on camping check out these sites; *Camping In The SCA*, (www.florilegium.org/files/CAMPING/idxcamping.html) and *Camping Tips* (www.teleport.com/~tguptill/CampingTips.htm).

A final note.... We all know how cold it can get at nighttime at events, and for those of us without our own bed-warmers *smile* it can be a very chilly time. That's why I why I liked the site *How To Stay Warm At Cold Camping Events*, (www.teleport.com/~tguptill/cold.html). It lists just what to pack and what to remember so that you can stay warm at night.

Well, that's it for this edition. I hope that you all have fun at your events this summer. And I want to pass on a little piece of advice that I recently found out at a rapier tournament. When it comes to competing in any kind of contest or tournament, it doesn't matter if you win or lose, the only thing that matters is if you learned anything from it. So, when you go to events, try learning at least one new thing. You'll find it makes a world of difference.

Melody of Ramsgaard,
Clan Member of the Red Tigers,
Marine Commander of the Ivory Queene