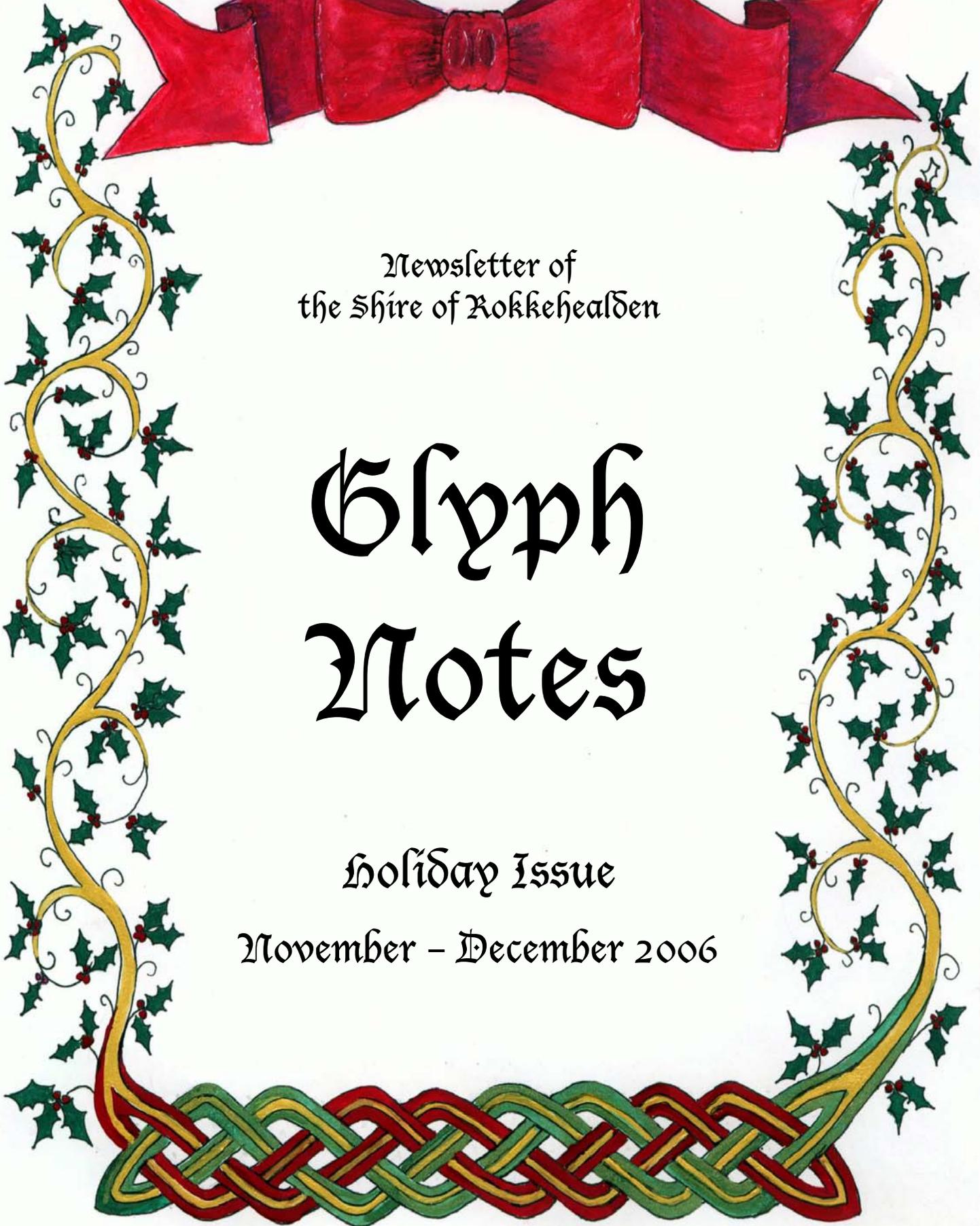


Newsletter of  
the Shire of Rokkehealden

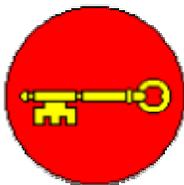
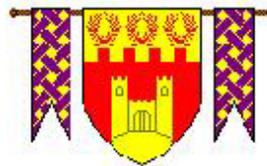
# Glyph Notes

Holiday Issue

November - December 2006



Shire of Rokkehealden  
**OFFICER**  
**List**



**Seneschal**  
Johannes Machiavelli (630) 725-9288  
rokkehealden@yahoo.com



**Knights Marshal**  
HL Austin Chadwyck of Normandy  
chadwick@notwires.com



**Chatelaine**  
Philippa of Otterbourne  
pribando@gmail.com



**Archery Marshal**  
Ottokar von Erinfels  
smuth22664@aol.com



**Minister of A&S**  
Fiona O Caoindealbain  
svalentine\_98@yahoo.com



**Marshal of Fence**  
Vacant



**Pursuivant**  
AElfreda aet AEthelwealda  
awmweb@mindspring.com



**Web Minister**  
Akiko Catherine O'Brien  
pechadwick@notwires.com



**Exchequer**  
Margherita Alessia (Ghita)  
SuzanEarley@comcast.net

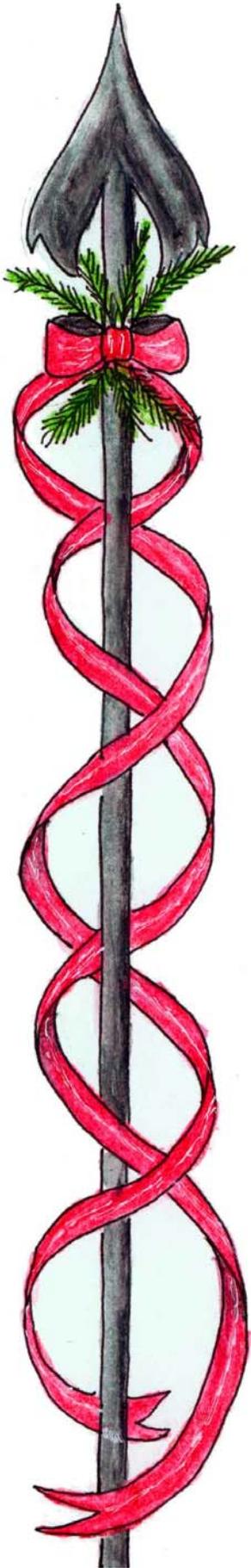


**Chronicler**  
Isabel of Kenniston  
xzeguian@yahoo.com



**Minister of Youth**  
Anna Rakel  
KCMalone3@aol.com

If you have any interest in any of the Officer positions, please contact that officer. The Officers are always looking for deputies to learn the position, so that they have some familiarity with it when they are ready to move up! All Officer positions require that the officer be a paid member of the SCA; Marshal positions require that the officer be a warranted marshal.



## Oyez! Oyez!

### Regularly Scheduled Shire Events

#### **Social Gathering/Monthly Moots/ A&S Nights**

The following dates in March through June have been reserved for the shire's social gatherings, A&S nights, and moots - All these dates are on Thursdays except where noted:

Thursday, January 4  
Thursday, January 25 (moot)  
Thursday, February 1  
Thursday, February 22

The room at the library is available for our use from 6:30-8:45 pm. Moots are now beginning at 7:30 pm. The library is located on Oak Brook Road (31st Street) between York Road and Route 83. Very easy to find!

**Oak Brook Library**  
600 Oak Brook Road  
Oak Brook, Illinois  
630-990-2222

#### **Fighter Practice**

*Fox Vale* - Tuesdays, 6:00 - 9:00 pm, Aurora Community Center  
*Ayretton* - sponsored by Grey Gargoyles, Sundays, 2:00 - 5:00 pm, Ida Noyes Hall, University of Chicago Campus (near the Museum of Science & Industry).

#### **Arts and Sciences / Calligraphy & Illumination**

First and fourth Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm, at the Oak Brook Library. See 'Weekly Shire Gatherings/Moots' above. Contact Fiona (svalentine-98@yahoo.com) for more information.

#### **Archery**

Archery has concluded for the season. It will resume in the spring.



## Pagan Influences on Holidays and the Calendar



### *From Saturnalia to Christmas, Hogmanay to New Years'*

Many of the holidays we celebrate today can trace their origins back to pre-Christian time.

**Merry Christmas?** No one knows the exact date that Jesus was born and Christmas was not always celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>. In fact, for the first few hundred years AD, there was no festival celebrating the birth of Christ. Some churches celebrated Jesus' birthday in the spring and some celebrated it on Epiphany, January 6<sup>th</sup>. Early in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century, the Roman Church decreed that December 25<sup>th</sup> would be recognized as the day Christ was born. The Eastern churches initially refused to accept this decree and some Eastern churches continued to celebrate Epiphany as the birth of Christ.

What was special about December 25<sup>th</sup>? It occurs about the time of the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year. With pagan beliefs bounded in nature, cycles and rebirths, the Winter Solstice was regarded as the point where the weakening sun was being reborn. The lengthening days after the Winter Solstice were an indication that the sun was getting stronger. This was the traditional time for many pagan religions to celebrate the birth of the sun (and their sun gods). The Winter Solstice brought the promise that warmth would return again. Celebrations of this fire festival meant that fires were burned to help the sun grow stronger.

The ancient Babylonians celebrated the "Victory of the Sun-God" festival on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Mithras was a Persian savior. Worship of Mithras became common throughout the Roman Empire and was especially popular within the Roman civil service and military. Mithraism competed with Christianity until the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Mithras was believed to have been born to a virgin on December 25<sup>th</sup> circa 500 BC. Saturnalia (The Festival of Saturn) was celebrated by the Romans beginning on December 17<sup>th</sup> and ending around December 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Romans exchanged gifts during Saturnalia. The Roman Emperor Aurelian combined Saturnalia with the birth celebrations of many other religions and formed one holy day: December 25<sup>th</sup>. The emerging Christian Church co-opted this date as Jesus' birthday. The Roman world was accustomed to celebrating the birth of a god on December 25<sup>th</sup> and the Christian church sought to divert their attention to Christ's birth. St. John Chrysostom, the Bishop of Constantinople, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century wrote:

"On this day also the Birthday of Christ was lately fixed at Rome in order that while the heathen were busy with their profane ceremonies, the Christians might perform their sacred rites undisturbed. They call this (December 25<sup>th</sup>), the Birthday of the Invincible One (Mithras); but who is so invincible as the Lord? They call it the Birthday of the Solar Disk, but Christ is the Sun of Righteousness."

**Happy New Year?** The new year begins on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The month of January was named for the Roman god, Janus. Janus was known for beginnings and endings and he is shown as having two faces, one in front, and the other at the back of his head. Could this have to do with bidding goodbye to the old year and ringing in the new?

In Scotland they celebrate Hogmanay, a unique New Year celebration that can trace its history back to pagan times, when the sun was venerated as a god. There are many theories as to where the word Hogmanay originated. The first written mentions of the holiday can be found in an English dictionary of 1680 which mentions Hogmynae-night as a festival. Some theorize that it comes from the Norse name for the festival of Yule - Hooggo-nott, hogenat, or Hogg-night. Some say it has Flemish roots in Hoog min Dag, a great day of affection in the Low Countries. More likely it can be traced back to the old Norman French term hoguinané.

With the rise to power of the Puritans and Oliver Cromwell, the Scottish church banned Christmas in 1651, forcing the winter festival celebrations to be held in secret until the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century. When Hogmanay resurfaced many of the rituals and the rationale behind the rites was forgotten, however the spirit of the celebrations remains. An important part of a traditional Hogmanay celebration is the custom of First Footing, which dates back to Viking days. According to tradition, the New Year will be a prosperous one if, at the stroke of midnight, a tall dark-haired stranger appears on your doorstep bearing gifts: Scottish whisky (uisge beatha "the water of life"), a lump of coal (warm wishes for the host), bread or a cake (for food for the year) and a coin (for good fortune). Since the Vikings were known to pillage Scotland from the 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is thought that the memory of these events caused fear of blond haired strangers and that is why first footers must be dark haired strangers.

What other holidays have the early pagans influenced? Stay tuned for more...

# Inkin' in Lincoln

Akiko Catherine O'Brien



now" in jealousy of other people's talents! Even their majesties appeared to have fun and enjoy themselves. The lunch was well received and so was the scribal tea.

Normally I don't do lists this way as I'm always afraid I missed someone. If I did, please believe me it wasn't on purpose.

Thank you to the following people:



- THL Austin Chadwyck of Normandy for teaching the scroll case class and helping the co-autocrat.
- Lord Johannes for being troll and packing site token bags into the wee hours.
- Lady Fiona for scribal yummys and taking care of the co-autocrat by giving her chocolate and tea.
- Lady Philippa and Lady Isabel for the scribal yummys and managing the tea details.
- Household Silken Petals and Rokkehealden Scriptorium for scribal tea and goodies.
- Lord Aedan for being our librarian and taking good care of the scribal books.
- Lord Mikhail for teaching the Intro to Knotwork class and doing the scribal challenge.
- Lady AElfreda for her support and joining in the project. Your painting skills are awesome.

- Lady Cecilia for bringing her friends and joining us.
- Lady Sibeal and her son for making period scribal yummys and going out of her way to deliver them to me. I really wish you could have attended.

- Lord Henry for his sense of humor and help.

(*\*\*\*The following are not members of our shire.\*\*\**)

- My co-autocrat: Dame Ellen of the Scholars.
- The Scolari cooks for providing an awesome lunch.
- Master Rory, the seneschal for Bali, for agreeing to co-sponsor us.
- Both shires for working together and getting along. It wasn't easy but it was fun.
- TRMs for encouraging all the scribes.
- Mistress Magdalena for teaching the Arabic calligraphy class.
- Ruth for becoming our resident drawing person for a special project.
- Lord Wilhelm for his calligraphy skills on this special project.
- Lady Isabel for her calligraphy skills on this special project.
- THL Peter the Goldsmith for teaching the impromptu class on quills and teaching the tree sap class.
- Ian the Green and Jocelyn for making and teaching how to make ink. I still want to get some.
- Mistress Angharad for teaching the parchment class.
- Everyone who took time out to show someone how to do something.
- Everyone who attended this event. It wouldn't have been possible without you.

The list above is not in any order. Again, if I forgot anyone, I deeply apologize.

Thank you again to everyone for making this venture a huge success. Akiko



Reflections on the event from AElfreda:

I spent the morning chatting with people, including some from Rokkehealden that I had not seen in a while, and browsing the book and project displays. I ended up eating lunch across the table from my immediate heraldic supervisor, although I did not realize it was him at the time. Hmm, maybe some "Hi, my name is" badges for next time, at least for any of the officers in attendance. Most of the classes were fairly advanced, so I ended up working on part of a group project to make thank-you cards for the MKAOD. I ended up painting two of the cards. There were other people working on the painting, including Their Royal Majesties Bardolph and Brigh. Other folks were drawing the designs, and doing the calligraphy on the inside. This turned out to be a great way to meet people from other groups, since the site was a bit crowded to allow easy mingling. It's a good thing that both lunch and tea time were provided, since there weren't any food places nearby. It would have been nice to have had dinner there as well, in order to have more time to meet and mingle; perhaps for the next gathering?

Mikhail worked on a "scroll in an hour" with a gentle from St. Fintan's Mor. He gave his class on introductory Celtic knotwork again, which was well received.

## November Shire Moot Notes

Moot called to order: 7:33 PM

### OLD BUSINESS:

*Inkin' in Lincoln:* Akiko said that the plans for the event Inkin' in Lincoln were going well. The event website had been updated with the class schedule. She is still looking for volunteers for cleanup and the tea. The point of the event is for scribes to socialize, network, ask questions about anything they are curious about, work on projects, and ask questions.

*RUM:* RUM is happening this weekend in Decatur. They are still updating classes and hoping to have more on offer.

*Youth Boffer:* At the last moot, there was a motion to table the vote regarding a shire donation for the Youth Boffer site. Kellee, the shire MOY said that currently donations are being collected and fundraising ideas are being planned but those have not yet happened. Some questions raised:

- Are other groups donating, as well since it is an Ayeton practice?

Kellee replied that other groups are also considering donating but have not yet confirmed this.

- Is there a specific donation amount being requested of the shires?

Kellee replied that there is no specific amount being asked for, that the decision is being left to the individual groups. Johannes felt that a set amount would work better when requesting funding. Kellee reported that the church normally charges \$40 per session and we have 2 sessions there per month. That means we are there for 15 sessions per year as the rest of the youth boffer practices have been at Kellee's home. She would like us to keep in good standing with the church so that we can use it for future events. The church charges \$900 per day as a rental for events. A vote was taken and passed that the shire would like to move toward a decision on the Youth Boffer donation at a later date when a specified amount is requested. Kellee was asked to put together a proposal and donation amount.

*Vanished Wood Event Lunch:* Johannes reported that the profit for selling lunch at the All Soul's Event was just under \$170.00. Johannes would like to see us think about more fundraising ideas and pursue them.

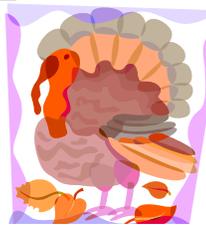
### NEW BUSINESS:

Finn's mother offered a site for fighter practice at her boarding site in Forest Park. The site is approximately 20'x 33' with restaurants nearby. We'd only be able to use it when her mother does not have animals boarded but she boards mostly on the weekends so it's available most week nights. It is street parking but people could drop off their equipment then park. We need a fight marshal to check out the space to make sure it's suitable. Austin said he can't look at it until February because of other commitments. It was suggested to see if we could have another marshal look at the space, maybe Janos. Johannes said he would put a notice out on the Fightinginthe neighborhood e-group and see if he could find a marshal to help out. One concern was that since the facility is used to board animals, that it might be a problem for people with allergies. Isabel made a motion to have the facilities inspected. Akiko seconded the motion and a vote was taken and passed.

### OFFICER REPORTS:

*A&S:* Fiona reported that there are currently no events going on other than RUM and Inkin' in Lincoln. No A&S reports are due at this time.

*Chatelaine:* Philippa introduced Henry of Exeter, who is a newcomer to the shire. Henry was active in Tree-Girl-Sea but has been out of the SCA for over 10 years. He is getting reinvolved and his lady Ysabeau will be moving



here from GA. She will be coming to meetings in January. Philippa announced the Chatelaine and Demo websites have been updated and are functioning again.

*Chronicler:* Isabel requested artwork and articles for Glyph

Notes and announced that the next issue would be out around Christmas and be holiday themed.

*Webministers:* Akiko mentioned that web updates have been a little behind due to a major attack of life. She mentioned that she has updated the MK scrolls site regularly despite everything going on because it is her responsibility as a Kingdom officer. The shire updates take longer because she has to resize all the pictures to post on the web. The MK scrolls pictures do not need resizing because they are hosted on her personal server so size is not an issue. Akiko requested that we keep sending her updates for the shire site, they are not being ignored, she will get to them when she can.

*MoY:* Kellee mentioned that her children and Sibeal's children were awarded Batons at the Youth Fighter Symposium. Congratulations to the kids! Kellee also reported that Youth Boffer practices are going on monthly.

*Archery Marshal:* Per Ottokar Archery is on hold for the winter.

*Pursuivant:* AElfreda reported that the youth had received Batons and Philippa received a Willow. An updated OP is on the shire yahoo egroup files. Johannes was presented with a backlog Purple Fret but it was read into court as a new award so she has to see about how to correct that as it shows he has 3 Purple Frets instead of 2.

*Knights Marshal:* Austin reported that no fighting has occurred in the shire. He is working on filing his Domesday Report.

*Exchequer:* Ghita reported that Rokkehealden has \$2739.64 in the shire account. Foxvale has \$1769.82. Ghita said she can email the Domesday Report to anyone who wants a copy and that she will try to get the completed Domesday Report to Johannes so he will have it in time to file his Domesday.

*Seneschal:* Johannes said that he will be filing his Domesday Report at the end of next month. Johannes also mentioned that there are a few people interested in fighting and armoring so he will be holding some armoring sessions at his home in December and January. Anyone who is interested is welcome to join in. Johannes also reminded everyone that the shire Christmas party is Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> at the Sabath home in Plainfield. The party will begin at 4:30pm. Garb is encouraged, the home is pet- and smoke-free. We'll have a pot luck meal and a white elephant (SCA related) gift exchange. The December moot will be held at the party. He will put directions on the shire e-group. Fiona will do a food list so we know what to bring.

Moot adjourned at 8:30 PM



### December Speed Moot (held 12/30/06 at the Shire Holiday Party)

Moot called to order at 7:30 pm. Motion to adjourn by Angus Frasier at 7:30:05 pm. Motion passed.

Auxiliary Moot called to order at 7:30:45 pm. Officers' Reports: Chronicler: Glyph Notes should be out at any time. Chatelaine: Nothing to report. Webministers: Website is up. Pursuivant: Domesday is in and Sibeal has volunteered to be AElfreda's deputy.

Archer & Fighters: Nothing to report. Seneschal: Ayreton Carnivale is March 24th. Lots of opportunities to help out.

New Business: Birgitta advises that Reenactor Fest 2007 is the first weekend in February at Arlington Park Sheraton. Good shopping and marketing opportunity. Show up in garb.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

## Medieval Christmas Traditions: *Some with Pagan Origins*

Many of the pagan customs from Winter Solstice celebrations were incorporated into Medieval Christmas celebrations. Some of these pagan and medieval customs are still in use today.



### *O CHRISTMAS TREE, O CHRISTMAS TREE...*

One of the most popular pagan traditions that has become part of Christmas is the Yule log. Yule celebrations started on the Winter Solstice. Modern traditions such as wreaths and Yule logs are holdovers stemming from the early pagan beliefs. Yule customs were found in many different cultures but they all shared the significance that the customs have to do with “jul” or the “wheel” of the year. Druids would bless a log and keep it burning for 12 days during the Winter Solstice and a part of the log was kept to relight the new Yule log the following year. The Vikings celebrated *Julfest* by carving runes representing unwanted traits that they wanted the gods to take from them; traits like ill fortune or poor honor.

Trees were important symbols in nearly every pagan culture. The oak tree was highly revered by the Druids. Ancient Romans thought that evergreens held special powers and so were used for decoration. Evergreens symbolized a promise; the return of life in the spring. They later came to symbolize eternal life for Christians. Fir and Ash trees were bedecked with war trophies by the Vikings in hopes of good luck. The origin of the Christmas tree could be related to the Germanic custom of sacrificing nine kinds of every living thing to One-Eyed Woden (Odin) by hanging them on a tree. In the Middle Ages, the Church decorated outdoor trees with apples on Christmas Eve. In Germany, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was customary to

decorate a fir tree with paper flowers and carry it through the streets to the town square on Christmas Eve. Afterwards, a celebration and huge feast was held including dancing around the tree while it was ceremonially burned.

### *THE HOLLY GREEN, THE IVY GREEN...WHILE CUDDLING UNDER THE MISTLETOE...*

You may be surprised to know that mistletoe was considered sacred in the Celtic world and valued by the Romans, or that the early Church did not allow ivy as a decoration. Mistletoe is an old Celtic symbol of regeneration and eternal life. The Romans valued mistletoe as a symbol of peace. Kissing under the mistletoe was a Roman custom since the Romans also regarded mistletoe as a symbol of fertility. Mistletoe is rarely seen inside a church. Its links with Druids and paganism are too strong. Early legend says that mistletoe was once a full sized tree but when it was used to construct Christ's cross it shrank with shame. Holly, ivy, and mistletoe were all important plants to the Druids. Druids believed that good spirits lived in the branches of the holly tree. Christian legend says that holly berries were white before they were turned red by Christ's blood when he was made to wear a crown of thorns. Initially the Church banned the use of ivy as a decoration because the vine was associated with the Roman god Bacchus. Later in the Middle Ages, superstition led to the belief that ivy could help recognize witches and protect against the plague so the Church lifted its ban on ivy.

### *A WASSAILING WE WILL GO...*

The term wassail comes from “waes hael,” an Old English term for be hale (be well) or good health. Wassail is a strong hot drink that was put in a large bowl. The drink was mixed with ale, honey, and spices. The host would lift the bowl and greet his company with “waes hael.” The company would reply “drinc hael” for drink and be well.

### *CHRISTMAS IS COMING THE GOOSE IS GETTING FAT...*

Splendid feasts were served at Christmas time and they included all sorts of food. The most popular main course was goose although you could find other meats, as well. Sometime around 1520 turkeys were first brought over to Europe from America. Turkeys were quick to fatten so they became another popular meat for Christmas dinner. Mince pies originally contained shredded (minced) meat and were baked in rectangular casings that were to represent Jesus' crib. Three important spices were added...cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg... to signify the gifts given to baby Jesus by the Three Wise Men. The pies were small and eating one pie on each of the twelve days of Christmas was said to bring good luck. Another Christmas food tradition was humble pie. The pie was made from the “humbles” of a deer. The humbles were the heart, liver, brains and other assorted parts of the deer. The aristocrats and nobles ate the premium cuts of meat, leaving the



servants to make due with the leftovers which they baked into a pie. We get the saying “to eat humble pie” from this dish. Oliver Cromwell and the Puritan government outlawed Humble Pie sometime before the 17<sup>th</sup> century even though it had become a trademark Christmas dish. The medieval dish of frumenty (a spicy, wheat-based dessert) is the forerunner of the Victorian and modern Christmas Pudding.

*HERE WE COME A CAROLING...*

Carol music was popular during the late Middle Ages and although it was first frowned on by the Church, the secular music persevered. Other holiday entertainments were the precursor to our Christmas Pageants. Liturgical dramas and mysteries were popular in the Middle Ages. Popular subjects included the Holy Family and in particular the Nativity. Pantomimes and mumming were very popular, as well. These were casual plays without words and usually consisted of dressing up as a member of the opposite gender and acting out comic stories. Christmas Pantomimes (or Pantos) are still very popular in England. While the plays now include words, they are often comedic versions of fairytales with the male and female roles reversed.

*HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!*



So what’s the difference between **ivy**, **holly**, and **mistletoe**??? We’ve all heard the Christmas carol “The Holly and the Ivy,” but which is which?

First of all, the “ivy” in the carol is really mistletoe, as opposed to true ivy. True ivy (*hedera*) has a black berry, not a white as in the song. Mistletoe also has small, rounded leaves. Most of the varieties of true ivy have leaves that tend to be sharper-edged and more spiky. Both are climbing plants and exist in symbiotic (or, according to some experts, parasitic) relationship with trees, so Medieval confusion was understandable.

Holly leaves are also very spiky – in fact, they’re downright prickly. And holly isn’t an ivy, or climbing plant – it’s a tree. The holly plant is the one with the red berries.

The tradition of combining the plants during Christmastide came from the belief that holly was masculine and “ivy” (mistletoe) was feminine. Both are evergreens, so they don’t die off during the winter, and thus represent eternal life, both to pagans and Christians. Pairing them off created balance. Both are also highly poisonous – the holly berries and every part of the mistletoe – especially the leaves!!



And, originally, it wasn’t mistletoe you kissed under – it was holly and its red berries.

English Ivy: *hedera helix*



**Ayreton Issue**  
Our January/February issue will focus on Ayreton – what it is, how it got started, and what are people’s expectations of it. This issue is in anticipation of Carnivale on March 24th, the first (hopefully) annual all-Ayreton event. As always, your humble Editor is requesting articles and artwork that reflect this issue’s topic. If you can provide any information or commentary about Ayreton, please send to [xzeguian@yahoo.com](mailto:xzeguian@yahoo.com). Thanks!!



**Thanks to...**  
Akiko, for her article on Inkín’ in Lincoln...  
AElfreda, for her commentary on the event...  
Philippa, for her articles on the origins and traditions of the holidays...  
and Mikhail for teaching the Knotwork class so the cover art could be perpetrated.  
Clipart from miscellaneous copyright-free sources.  
Photos of Inkín’ in Lincoln by the Dushy Purple Petal Photographer, Akiko.  
Cover and spears by your humble Editor. Sorry!!