



THE SOCIETY FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM AUSTRALIA

The Shire of
Bordescros
MILITIA GRUATORUM, CIVI ANACHRONIS

GRAPEVINE NOVEMBER



CHRONICLER'S WELCOME



Unto the worthy populace of Bordescros and to all of the friends of the Shire, Greetings.

The year has gone so quickly and we have seen many new comers to our Shire this year and they come along and enrich our live and our Shire. We hope that they continue to join us next year and bring many of their friends along too.

There are many stories in this months Grapevine, tales of Yule and journeys to far off lands. Permission has been granted for all articles that are not original, for mine on Yule in Orkney, you can find more information on their web site for all things to do with Orkney - <http://www.orkneyjar.com/index.html> .

We need more articles and ideas for theme that we can make the Grapevine, if you are having trouble getting the appropriate permissions just send it to me and I will look into it.

Yours in Service,
Arnora BloodAxe

CALENDAR	
5 TH DECEMBER	LOCH ALBA TOURNEY & FEAST
13 TH DECEMBER	BORDESCROS FIGHTER TRAINING AND A&S
19 TH DECEMBER	BORDESCROS TOURNEY AND FEAST
10 TH JANUARY	BORDESCROS FIGHTER TRAINING AND A&S
16 TH JANUARY	BORDESCROS TOURNEY AND FEAST

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AT THE MARSHALL'S COMMAND



Fighter practice

The Albury and Loch Alba Practice will be for heavy combat training and rapier training if sufficient authorised marshals are available for each discipline

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| ALBA LOCH | The last Sunday of each month between 2pm and 5pm.
Confirm with James Douglas as to where. |
| ALBURY | The 2nd Sunday of each month from 2pm until 6pm (i.e. sunset if that keen!) at The Albury Wodonga Sport fishing Club Riverina Hwy. |
| ARCHERY | Archery Training is at this present time at Thors Hof (Will's home) on the 3 rd Sunday of the month, until such time as we can set up the new location and then it will be held at the same time as Heavy fighter Practice. Please confirm with Lord William if you wish to train. |

Remember there is always the opportunity to train at Bordescros monthly bash if time permits.

*Don't forget to send in any articles
from Loch Alba for your page in the
Grapevine.*

-- Editor

Group News

Message from the King and Queen

Unto the Barony of Stormhold, and the Shires of Krae Glas, Arrowsreach and Bordescros does Gabriel and Constanzia, King and Queen of Lochac send greetings.

We wish to thank everyone who attended our visit on the weekend for the William Marshall Tournament and Feast. We had a wonderful time on the Saturday watching and participating in the 2 tournaments, and then enjoying the feast at night. The food was wonderful and it was inspiring to see the singing, dancing and music happening at the event.

Then on the Sunday we had 2 Fencing tournaments, and a fun time with the novelty Archery shoot. We were especially impressed by the effort that went into the targets for the archery and His Majesty had a wonderful time trying to hit the moving targets. Her Majesty wishes to thank all the people who sang and performed music on the Sunday with her.

We also wished to say that it made us very happy during our visit, to see that music and dancing is strong and vibrant in your groups. We must say that the enthusiasm that the populace have for it is very infectious!

Our congratulations to those people who received awards at the feast. It is one of the great pleasures of the Crown to be able to hand out awards, and we always enjoy the look on the faces of those people when they receive them.

Many thanks to the Steward of the event and his wonderful crew for all the work they did for the whole event. Also we wish to praise all those people helped run the event in many different ways, from the cooks, to the officers, the musicians and to all those that lent a hand when required.

We look forward to seeing you again.

Gabriel and Constanzia
Rex and Regina

Border War

We have a lot of work to get done in the next couple of months. We need all hands on deck to help build our fort wall and if anyone has any star pickets and wooden pallets at home that we could borrow for our wall we would be extremely grateful.

I need a list from all those organising sections of Border War, i.e.: war lord, A&S, Archery . So I can start preparing the timetable and brochure for BW XII

Armouring

I believe there is Armouring this weekend at Bears house, on Saturday from 1pm but contact Aylen for more details.

Notices

If any one has any notices they would like to put in the Grapevine you can use this section to do that. Anything from announcements to items for sale, remembering it must of a medieval nature, so anyone with armour or rattan etc for sale, garb or braid, can put an ad here, just send me the details and I will include it in the next Grapevine.

Or anyone with a special announcement can also use this section.

Reminder

This Sunday is A&S, Fighter Training and our monthly meeting. Come along we have a lot to discuss and do.

Positions Vacant

Greeting unto all members of the Shire:

My term of office officially ends on the 31st of this month. I had originally asked for an extension to my term as most of our members were already officers and most had only been in their new offices for about a year and were not due to changeover for 12 months. So I asked for an extension so I could match up and we could do the usual "officer's bransle" - you know what I mean - all offices vacated and we all step sideways into a new office. I also thought it would give me the chance to see the Deni group through to Incipient Group stage, with a name & officers etc.

HOWEVER, as often happens REAL LIFE has caught up with me - doing a double degree is way harder than just the one and way more time consuming, THEREFORE I hereby announce my intention of retiring from this position as soon as a replacement can be found.

THE POSITION: Seneschal is equivalent to President of a club. It is a position of service, those services include:

- legal representative for the group (liaise with Hall committee/Council etc)
- convenor & chair of meetings
- coordinator of group activities (events coordinator)
- reporting to the Kingdom Seneschal and Royalty

If deputy/minor offices are not filled you also are:

1. Hospitaller - advertising/ publicity/ care of newcomers/ manage care of Hospit garb & gear (in conjunction with Reeve who keeps Assets Register)
2. Historian - record group history
3. Keeper of Regalia - look after group banners, baldrics, etc... (in conjunction with Reeve who keeps Assets Register)

This looks like a huge list - but in reality it mean approx 4 to 8 hours a week work, depending on how organised you are. And of course you can always delegate: ask others to help with washing garb; ironing banners, etc. If someone in the group has mundane experience in advertising ask for their help with publicity, etc. [As we get more members we can also fill these minor offices.]

You will need internet access to be in contact with the College of Seneschals, CoS list is quite active and other Seneschals are very helpful with advice and knowledge based on experience.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFICERS

(from the Procedures Manual of the Kingdom of Lochac)

"5.3 Appointing new officers is a tricky business. **The SCA is not a democracy**, [*emphasis their's*] and there are no provisions for election of officers...

There are general guidelines that should be used for all officer appointments, however:" The officer should:

- be a member of the SCA
- be over 18 years old
- be willing and capable of doing the job
- be acceptable to their Kingdom superior
- not have a criminal record in relation to the area relevant to the office
- have the support of a majority of the populace (*summarised*)

HOW TO APPLY:

(from the Procedures Manual of the Kingdom of Lochac)

The applicant should write an application for the position stating:

- Name and contact details (mundane)
- Name and group (SCA)
- The position being applied for
- Their real world and SCA experience relevant to the position
- That they are willing to take on the role (*summarised*)

Applications need to be sent to the Kingdom Seneschal and copied to me for our group files.

Yours in Service,

Positions Vacant

After discussions with the Kingdom Earl Marshal (KEM), my time as Bordescros Knight Marshal is nearly up, and it is time to advertise for a replacement.

Position Description:

Must be a member or willing to become a member of the SCA,

Must have email access and be willing to join the SCA Marshals email list,

Must be willing and able to report 6 times a year to the KEM, and monthly to the Seneschal,

Must be able to administer the combat operations within the Shire, including in the first 6 months qualify as a Marshal.

Note, you do not have to be currently authorised to be marshal, though it would help. To apply, please email your brief application to me, and if by chance I get more than 1, I will forward a recommendation to the KEM.

Also note, that as Knight Marshal, you will receive the support of other combatants within the Shire, and I will also be willing to be your deputy in the North Ward.

James Douglas,

Knight Marshal Bordescros

Positions Vacant

Constable

For more information about this position Please contact either Lowry or Einarr.

From a Distant Hearth...

A Pilgrimage unto the Shrine of William the Marshall...

As undertaken by TH Lady Lowry ferch Gwynwynwyn ap Llewelyn and Tzutzanna Zenez, and diverse other pilgrims, who shall enter and depart the tale as they wilt...

We pilgrims foregathered at the Knightshade Inn, under the sign of the sable cats, where, after a nights repose, we rose with the early dawn, saddled our trusty beasts, mounted up and set off on the last leg of our Pilgrimage. Lady Helouys and Lord Gunnar bestrode a flighty steed; the ladies Lowry and Tzutzanna mounted upon a solid draught horse, followed slowly behind. Our large heavy shire horse was left well behind in the dust, so as we plodded along, we beguiled the journey with tales and song.

Many hours passed, with occasional breaks for meals, until we arrived at some delightful shady gardens in the environs of Edinburgh, in the Baronage of Stormhold, wherein was held a tourney to honour the memory of William Marshall, a '*gentile, parfait knight*' renowned through the ages for chivalry and honour. Leaving our animal to rest in the shade, we joined the throngs of gentle folk, mingling with the crowd until we came across past acquaintances whom we greeted with much pleasure. Continuing our way through the crowd, we were much pleased to come up with fellow Shirelings, who had encamped not far from the Royal Pavilion.

Suddenly, above the hubbub of the crowd came the strident music of a shawm, and heralds announced the arrival of the Court. King Gabriel, tall, handsome and noble of bearing bore upon his arm his beautiful and graceful Queen, Constanzia, as they were welcomed to the lands of Stormhold by Baron Hanbal and Baroness Ute. The courtly niceties were dealt with briskly by Baron Hanbal, and the all-important tourney in honour of William Marshall commenced. Baron Hanbal spoke feelingly of William the Marshall and the reasons we were honouring him, and then at the King's command all fighters taking to the field introduced themselves to the populace and announced for whom they were fighting that day.

Thirty-one fighters, including His Most Gracious Majesty King Gabriel, took to the tourney field. Bout followed bout until the final death blow was struck by Duke Sir Siridean... who had vanquished the field. A short rest for the fighters followed and then commenced the Ransom Melee. Fighters challenged one another at will exchanging golden coins of the realm as they lost bouts, until once again Duke Sir Sheridan had amassed untold wealth by the ransom he had collected.

By this time, the heat of the day having passed and all the fighters well and truly exhausted, we withdrew into the shade of the feasting hall. Here tables, bedecked with cloths and aromatic herbs and laden with food, awaited us. Imagine with what pleasure we Shirelings gathered around the feast table, exchanging tales of our journey! Master Thorfinn, the event's steward, honoured us greatly by completing our table, whereat conversation waxed and waned covering such divers subjects as the arts of war and of music, the pleasures of dance and the toil of work and exercise. As we talked servants came and went bringing plate after plate of delicious dishes: chickens stuffed with prunes, garlic mushrooms, smoked fishes, vegetable pies, succulently flavoured lamb and veal, more

vegetables, and finally several varieties of sweet meats from all corners of the known world to complete the feast.

In the meantime, many entertainments were offered: John le Dauncer played sweet music; Master Dafydd and the St Bartholomew's choir sang songs and recounted poems in honour of both William the Marshall and Her Majesty the Queen; dancing from Pavannes to Almandes to country jigs were indulged in throughout the evening, between courses and Courts.

Two courts were held with many awards handed to the populace, our own Shirelings, Lord Einarr and Lady Arnora among them. Lady Arnora, overcome with heat and emotion, was helped into the cool evening air by two of the handsomest gentlemen present, where she shortly recovered, and was able to rejoin the festivities in time to hear the announcement of the winner of the Arts and Sciences competition. There were many fine entries of leatherwork, from book bindings, drums, vambraces, up to and including the winning entry, which was a very fine quiver. Also displayed was a most impressive heraldic crest, of a talbot with mantling, mounted upon a great helm.



The Shires newest Armigers

And so with laughter and conversation, pomp and circumstance, and much revelry, the evening drew toward its close; The next day, after reloading all of our possessions and replenishing our pilgrim's scrips with food for the journey, we retraced our steps...

the richer for our experiences in the wide world beyond our shire at a friendly, if distant, hearth.

William Marshall

I don't often get the opportunity to way fare but last weekend we were able to get down to William Marshall. I was not sure what to expect and didn't really know many people down there but I soon found out I was friends with most of them through the digital carrier pigeon call Face book.

This was also a Royal Visit and my only other experience with the Royals was at Border War X, where the crown were resolving their little dispute, I found Queen Bethan to be a most gracious person and very approachable. This King and Queen however were the most delightful people and very fun loving, with shouts from the royal pavilion of 'it is good to be the king'.

As I stood by the list field the King approach me and introduced himself and as I said my name he replied, 'ah yes from Bordescros', it was very nice that he knew who I was and where I came from.

Both the King & Queen and Baron & Baroness were very caring and mindful of others. When Einarr was having his armour looked at again and again by the marshals the King and the Baron both said 'just let

him play'. *Vig asked me to let you all know, they bounced one of his swords and his gauntlets need more coverage at the fingers. So he needs to more mindful of the rules as Vig found wayfaring can be frustrating to a Cranky Viking who just wants to thong the other fighters.*

For those of you wondering; In the Chivalric Tourney (No Florentine allowed- Sword and Shield only) Vig got through to the 4th Round. He fought Sir Brennan in the Melee, Sir Sheridan in the 3rd Round, and a Squire who's name he forgets in the 4th. Maybe it was Sheridan's hilt to the face that laid him flat out and stunned him)

As for the Baron & Baroness we were made to feel so welcome by them, both on the Saturday and the Sunday at Stormhold monthly bash.

On Sunday the king was telling us about something he had seen on YouTube and he is considering making it a royal proclamation that everyone must see this clip of the Muppets doing Bohemian Rhapsody. Here is the link and yes it is very funny

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgbNymZ7vqY> .

Sunday we attended Storm hold's monthly bash and due to all the heavy fighting the day before we had 2 bouts of rapier and 2 battles for the archers. I had never seen rapier before as an SCA event, the first bout was choose your weapons where the combatants had to select which weapons they would fight with before know who they would be fighting, here we saw many splendored deaths most of them from Gilligan but then he always does add

And yes as you have all heard I did have a little turn after receiving my AoA but the heat in the room we a little unbearable, even the Queen had to stop the court and go and get some fresh air. I could not believe how over whelmed I was at receiving my AoA does this mean I am official a tragic.

This will definitely be an event that we will strive to get to each year.

Arnora

Photos from Wangaratta Demo



Photos from William Marshall



Yes the Cranky Vikings new Helm and the King and others were most impressed.



Gilligan and his fancy new clothes to impress the Queen and it worked. He wasn't the only one with new clothes.



A great time was had by one and all, and we thank the Gods that it was not too hot for the fighters.

The Christmas carol, “Good King Wenceslas” was published in 1853 using a 13th century melody, “Tempus Adest Floridum” (trans. ‘Spring has unwrapped her flowers’), and words by lyricist John Mason Neale - (1818-1866), an Anglican author, historian and hymn-writer.¹ But who was King Wenceslas? This article², reprinted with the author’s permission, answers that question.

King Wenceslas of Bohemia

The Good King was assassinated for his Christian beliefs.

© William Silvester

Oct 5, 2008

To many, King Wenceslas is little more than a name in a Christmas Carol but in his day he was a well-known and much beloved monarch.



*“Good King Wenceslas looked out on the Feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even.”**

Early Life

Wenceslas was born around 907 in Stochov Castle near Prague, in what is now the Czech Republic, the eldest son of Prince Ratislav and his wife, Drahomira. Ratislav became king in 915 after the death of his father Borivoy. Preoccupied with matters of state, the king and queen left their son to be raised by Ludmila, his paternal grandmother.

Brought up at his grandmother’s castle, Wenceslas reveled in the outdoor life, helping with the harvest and preparing bread and wine for religious purposes, a task he enjoyed all his life. Ludmila was a fervent Christian and educated her grandson in the Christian faith much to the distress of his mother who was a closet pagan. In the following years Ratislav and Drahomira *[sic]* brought four daughters and a son, named Boleslav, into the world.

King Wenceslas

When Wenceslas was only thirteen his father died in battle and his mother became regent. It did not take long before Drahomira showed her true colors and reverted back to her pagan religion. The confusion resulting from Ratislav’s sudden death and the animosity between the old pagan and new Christian nobles, enabled Drahomira to consolidate her position. She began persecuting the Christian priests in the kingdom, attempted to reinstate her religion and had Ludmila strangled in her castle at Tetin in September 921.

¹ Accessed November 2009, url: http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Who_is_King_Wenceslas

² Accessed November 2009, url: http://christianmusic.suite101.com/article.cfm/the_roots_of_good_king_wenceslas

Drahomira now tried to undo what her mother-in-law had done and began including Wenceslas in her pagan ceremonies. The young prince, however, secretly continued with his private Christian services. He garnered support from the Christian nobles and when he turned 18 they rose in rebellion and deposed his mother.

Christian Beliefs

One of his first acts was to reinstate the Christian religion and end the persecution of the priests. The young king's Christian beliefs permeated his reign and he soon became renown for his acts of charity, especially the help he gave to the poor whom he sheltered and clothed.

All was not well within the king's domain, however, for many of his pagan nobles still resented the return to Christianity, amongst them was his brother Boleslav. The last straw was when Wenceslas, believing it was in the best interests of his people, swore fealty to King Henry I, the king of Germany and a Christian monarch. He felt that it was better to willingly recognize Henry than he forced to by conquest. His nobles were enraged at this, feeling that Bohemia should be a nation unto itself and not part of a foreign king's empire.

The Conspiracy

Meanwhile, brother Boleslav was becoming troublesome. He had been raised with pagan beliefs and had the support of the pagan nobility. The same nobles responsible for the murder of Ludmila now had influence over the young prince. The birth of Wenceslas' son, which pushed Boleslav down the line of succession, was used to convince the king's brother that if he did not act soon he would lose all chance to becoming king. They convinced Boleslav that he should join them in their plot against Wenceslas.

The conspirators invited Wenceslas to attend a feast that was to be held in the chapel of Boleslav's castle. Though warned in advance that his life might be in danger, Wenceslas decided to ignore the warning and put his trust in God to see him safe. When the Liturgy was over, the king was preparing to return to his own castle when Boleslav invited him to remain and join him and his friends in a drink. Wenceslas agreed and stayed for the rest of the day. As darkness fell he accepted his brother's invitation to stay the night even though he had been warned of a plot against him.

Death of a King

The next morning, September 20, 929, he awoke, found himself still alive and set off for the chapel for his morning prayers. Boleslav and his henchman caught him alone and unarmed and stabbed him to death on the steps of the chapel.

Boleslav, who was now king, had his brother's body interred in the church of St. Vitus and the chapel of St. Wenceslas was constructed around his tomb. In time the good king, though he had reigned for only five years, became the patron saint of Czechoslovakia.

*The carol, "Good King Wenceslas" was written by John Mason Neale, a warden at Sackville College in England, and published in 1853.

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F. Merishman - *The Catholic Encyclopedia* - Robert Appleton Company. 1912

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END NOTES:

About the author: William Silvester



★ Historical

Biographies Feature Writer

Most of Bill's writing over the past few years has been for the philatelic press and consists primarily of columns and articles about the history of people and events depicted on stamps. He has had over 250 articles and columns published in his freelance career. His most recently published historical articles are *After the Trent Affair* published by Military Heritage, *Royalty of the World*, a monthly feature published by Global Stamp News, *Tracing the Canadian Roots of Armistice Day* published by Canadian Stamp News and *At the Movies: Walt Disney* published in Learning Through History Magazine. Bill is an ardent philatelist and Disney-phile as well as a freelance author and amateur historian. He just finished a book about Harry Potter Collectibles entitled *All Things Harry Potter* due to be published by Krause Publications in August 2010.³

Permission email from the author:

<snip>

You have my permission to reprint my article on King Wenceslas under the condition that it is properly credited and that a copy of the newsletter in which it appears is sent to me... A link to the Suite 101 article would also be appreciated.

Sincerely,
William Silvester
<end snip>

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³ Accessed November, 2009 from: <http://historicalbiographies.suite101.com/>

Yule - The Midwinter Festival



From the dawn of time, [the need to celebrate the winter solstice](#), and the subsequent 'rebirth' of the sun, was an absolute necessity.

An Orkney winter is long, cold and dark. It is a bleak time, when the weak, grey sun barely crawls above the horizon for a few hours each day.

Life goes on, but mostly in darkness.

Even today, the winter solstice remains significant to Orcadians, although, in most cases, subconsciously. Once the shortest day has passed, and although we know that the worst of the winter may yet come, it is comforting to know that the days are lengthening, once again, and that the light is returning.

The return of the light

By the winter solstice - the shortest day of year - the sun rises in Orkney well after 9am and is beginning to set again by 2pm. Assuming clear conditions, this leaves a mere six hours of weak daylight.

But the solstice marks a turning point.

The darkness has reached its zenith and soon the days will lengthen again. In this, the darkest time of the year, what better way to celebrate the return of light, and warmth, than to feast and make merry.

The midwinter traditions surrounding the festival of Yule were once strong in Orkney. So much so that even in the early years of the 20th century, in the more remote corners of the islands, the winter festivities were still referred to as Yule. It was rare indeed to hear folk speak of "Christmas".

Like the other festivals of the year, Yule was a great social occasion, relieving, if only for a brief time, the hardship and monotony of the islanders' subsistence living.

But Yule was not only about celebrating the return of the light...

The dead return...

Being the darkest time of the year, midwinter, and Yule in particular, was also a time when supernatural forces were able to cross to the realm of man, and the spirits of the dead would return to their families.

As such, most of the Yule customs we remember today were originally to protect the household against these paranormal influences.

Over the years, the pagan Yule traditions were overlaid with elements of Christianity, but, as is common in the islands, old traditions die-hard and some of the ancient customs persisted until the early 19th century.

Unfortunately, however, these are now all but forgotten, as practically no Orcadian Yule customs were recorded by early scholars.

But all is not lost.

We can at least get an inkling of what went on by referring to the documented customs found in Shetland, where the traditions of Yule were more extensively collected and documented.

What was Yule?

Yule, or Jol, was the name of the midwinter festival of the pagan Norse and Teutonic people of northern Europe.

From the 8th century onwards, as the Norwegians settled in Orkney and Shetland, they carried their Yule festival with them. And they were celebrated for centuries.

In the Northern Isles, Yule lasted about a month - a period referred to as "the Yules" or "atween the Yules".

Using our calendar, this began somewhere around December 20 and ended on January 13. The dates from the surviving sources vary, however.

In earlier days, for example, it is inferred that the Yule festivities started on the eve of December 12 - Maunsmass E'en, the eve of the feast day of [St Magnus](#).

Even the duration of the festivities varies according to recorded accounts, and which period they date from. One, for example, states that, although some people feasted for 12 days after Yule day, it was known for others to continue right up to the 24th night.

However long the celebrations lasted, we know that feasts and parties were commonplace throughout, with fiddling, dancing and drinking going on late into each night.

Within this section, I have separated various Yule traditions into manageable chunks, each dealing with individual elements of the festival.

Readers should remember that some of these traditions were not necessarily universal and may only have been found in certain localities. Along the same lines, there were undoubtedly other traditions that have long since been lost.

Bonfire celebrations

In Orkney, one of the few things we know with certainty is that Yule was one of the four great fire festivals of the year.

At Beltane, Midsummer, Hallowmass and Yule, massive communal fires were lit on hilltops across the islands. [Click here](#) for more details.

Yule greenery

A widespread Yule tradition, and one that persists in our Christmas festivities today, was the decoration of the house with greenery.

There are no surviving records of this taking place in Orkney and, given our lack of trees and suitable greenery, was probably left out. However, it may be that the tradition of dressing the house was so common that the early writers did not consider it 'remarkable' enough to record - but I doubt it.

Tulya's E'en - the dead return

Despite the uncertainties of other accounts, Mrs Jessie Saxby, a 19th century Shetlander, had no doubts as to when Yule began. She declared that the festivities began on Tulya's E'en - a night seven days before Yule day.

But the date of Tulya's E'en, or even what it marked, remains unclear.

The Orkney folklorist Ernest Marwick suggested it may be a corruption of Tolyigi's E'en, itself a corruption of St Thorlak's Eve. St Thorlak was an Icelandic saint, whose feast day was celebrated on December 23.

The battle begins?

However, I wonder whether Tulya's E'en has more to do with the dialect word *tulye* or *tulyo*, meaning *a battle or struggle in combat*?

For this to make sense, we must remember that it was on Tulya's E'en that the trows were free to leave:

“the heart of the earth and dwell, if it so pleased them, above the ground.”

Tulya's E'en heralded the start of a period in which the supernatural spirits were let loose - free to continue their age-old struggle with man. So feared were these spirits that it was not considered safe to venture outside after dark. At least not without first taking some protective steps.

These precautions formed one of the most important of all the Yule traditions - the absolute necessity to protect life and property from the influence of [the trows](#). At one time, this was at the forefront of every superstitious islander's thoughts and was as much a part of Yule as the festivities, drinking and merry-making.

Yuletide precautions

The most effective way of protecting against the trows was *sainin'* - the act of making the sign of the cross. Both livestock and property had to be sained to prevent them becoming targets for the attention of the trows.

Other preventative measures included placing a cross, made from two pieces of "strae" (straw), outside the yard and plaiting a hair from the tail of each cow or "beast of burden". This platted hair was then hung over the byre door and ensured the protection of the animals within.

It seems likely that in Orkney, like in Norway, crosses were also put over food and ale and a sheaf of corn placed on the roof of the house to ensure protection from malevolent spirits.

Yule - a feast of the dead

Yule's strong association with mischievous creatures such as trows and hogboons, undoubtedly stems from its origin as a feast for the dead. Much like the Celtic Samhain, Yule was a festival for honouring the dead, who were thought to be vital for luck as well as the well being of the livestock and family.

Over time, the memories of these powerful ancestral spirits, who were permitted to leave their gravemounds at Yule to return to the realm of the living, degenerated into the creatures we know as trows today. For more on the connection to trows and the ancestor spirits, [click here](#).

But it was not only the trows who were rife over Yule. [Orkney's hogboon](#) also required special attention over the Yule period. It was imperative that the hogboon, a corruption of the Norse mound-dweller and practically identical to the Norwegian nisse, be brought offerings of food and drink at Yule.

Helya's Night - The night of the mother

Tulya's E'en was followed by Helya's Night.

This was the night that saw the children of each household committed into the protection of "Midder Mary", or Mother Mary.

On first glance, although this looks like a purely Christian ritual, the veneration of the Virgin Mary was a later addition to a pagan tradition.

Helya's night is undoubtedly the same as "Mother's Night" – a night that, wrote the 8th century monk Bede, coincided with Christmas Eve.

In his account of the pagan calendar in 725 AD, the Venerable Bede wrote:

"And the very night that is sacrosanct to us, these people call modranect, that is, the mothers' night, a name bestowed, I suspect, on account of the ceremonies which they performed while watching this night through."

The "mother" connection and the "watching" ceremonies of Mother's Night seem to indicate that Helya's Night was the same event, although overlaid with a Christian veneer.

On Helya's Night, just as the children had once been committed to the protection of a goddess, ancestor, or the female deities known as the Disir, the ceremony became Christianised and the "mother" was naturally equated with the Virgin Mary, Christ's mother.



But what was the ceremony?

An account written in the 19th century recounts the experience of one woman who remembered her grandmother carrying out the ritual. She explained that, once the children were in bed, the old woman rose from her place by the peat fire and made her way over to the cradle where the youngest lay.

Raising her hands over the slumbering infant, she spoke aloud:

"Mary Midder had de haund
Ower aboot for sleepin-baund
Had da lass an' had da wife,
Had da bairn a' its life.
Mary Midder had de haund.
Roond da infants o' wur land."

This procedure was repeated over all the children, while the grandfather sat raking the peats in the hearth. The old man was also thought to have been reciting something but, unfortunately, his softly spoken words were inaudible.

As to the name, Helya strikes me as a corruption of the Old Norse *heilagr*, meaning *holy* – Holy Night being an obvious later name for Christmas Eve.

Slaughtering the sacred boar?



One Yule tradition in the Northern Isles had distinct parallels with an ancient custom found in Norway.

On December 17, a day known locally as Sow Day, every family that kept swine would slaughter a sow for Yule.

Writing between 1791 and 1799, the author the *Old Statistical Account* stated there was no tradition as to the origin of this practice. He concluded that it could, therefore, have no significance, other than the fact it provided the meat for the Yule

feast.

However, it seems far too coincidental that this slaughter was part of Yule, especially considering the connections between the pig - or more specifically the boar - and Yuletide traditions found across Northern Europe.

Pork is a traditional Yule dish in Norway - probably a reminder of the time when the boar, an animal sacred to Freyr, the Norse god of Yule and fertility, was sacrificed at Yule and its flesh eaten as part of the feast.

Being the sacred animal of Freyr, the boar has always had a strong association with Yule and represented the spirit of abundance and prosperity. Its sacrifice at the darkest time of the year was thought to help to ensure bountiful crops the following harvest.

It is also possible that the boar represented the sun.

In Scandinavian myth, Freyr possessed a magical gold boar named *Gullinbursti* (Golden Bristles). This creature was able to run as fast as any steed and glowed with a golden light that could drive away shadow and turn night into day.

The solar attributes of this incredible beast, created by the dwarfs Brokk and Eitri, are clear. The midwinter sacrifice of a boar could also be seen to symbolise the death of the old sun, and the rebirth of the new.

The boar also had a role in the swearing of sacred oaths.

On Yule Eve, the best boar in the herd was brought into the hall where the assembled company laid their hands upon the animal and made their unbreakable oaths. Heard by the boar, these oaths were thought to go straight to the ears of Freyr himself.

Once the oaths had been sworn, the boar was sacrificed in the name of Freyr and the feast of boar flesh began.

The most commonly recognised remnants of the sacred boar traditions once common at Yule has to be the serving of the boar's head at later Christmas feasts.

Tammasmass E'en - the beginning of peace

Yule was a time of rest - a time when only the bare minimum of chores were carried out, around house and farm. This work-free spirit is one of the few Orcadian Yule traditions that made it onto the pages of an antiquarian's notebook.

Although this tradition was recorded as taking place on Westray, the author states that it was common throughout Orkney. He explains that, at Yule, servants were granted a few days off, during which time they were expected to enjoy themselves. In addition, at Yule, the master of the house was honour-bound to keep a well-stocked table for his servants

In Christian times, December 20, the eve of the feast of St Thomas, marked the beginning of this time of peace in Norse lands. In the Northern Isles, Tammasmass E'en was regarded as particularly holy.

As soon as the sun had slipped beneath the western horizon, no work of any kind was permitted and no festive amusements allowed. Woe betide those who broke this taboo, for bad luck was sure to follow.

"The very baby unborn,
cross oh dul! dul!
For the breaking o' Tammasmass nicht
five nicts afore Yule."

A Norwegian tradition that women should not spin, or card, wool was echoed in the islands, with one old account explaining that from the beginning of Yule until twelfth night, neither spinning nor carding would be permitted in the household of any man who owned sheep.

Knitting, however, as well as sewing, was permitted until Yule Eve, at which time they too became forbidden activities until Yule had passed.

Baking and brewing was also forbidden, a custom that meant preparations for the year's greatest ale feast had to be completed well before the festival. To the early Norse settlers, and their ancestors, ale was a sacred drink and the Yule ale was usually particularly strong.

The importance of Yule ale was such that penalties were imposed on those who refused to drink on Holy Night. One unfortunate teetotaler, who refused to drink at Yule on three successive years, was stripped of his possessions, down to his last penny!

Byanna's Sunday and the skull

Perhaps one of the intriguing customs surrounding Yule took place on the day known as Byanna's Sunday.

This was the name given to the Sunday immediately preceding Yule. It was marked by a special meal in which half a cow's head was boiled and eaten.

The fat was skimmed from the water and made into brose, while the animal's skull was carefully cleaned of all flesh and gristle.

A candle was then inserted into one of the vacant eye sockets and the skull carefully stowed away until it was required on Yule morning. It is unclear how widespread this custom was. It may be that it was found only in a small area to the far north of Shetland.

Yule Eve preparations - a festival of light

The night before Yule, just like our modern Christmas celebrations, was a time of great preparation.

After the bread for for the Yule feasts had been baked, a round oatcake was prepared for each of the children in the family.



Yule cakes

These cakes, decorated around the outside with pinchmarks, and with a hole cut into the centre, were known specifically as "Yule Cakes". These sun-shaped cakes undoubtedly symbolised the sun and celebrated its rebirth.

Cakes such as these were common throughout Northern Europe, where variants were also prepared at midsummer. The solar connection is obvious and the shape and decor of the cakes may also have something in common with the [protective dian-stanes](#) used by early ploughmen.

Welcoming the spirits

It was vitally important that Yule was greeted with the household clean and tidy. This urge for tidiness may have been connected to [the fact that the trows were rife at Yule](#).

These creatures despised untidiness in a house - undoubtedly harking back to [their original role as spirits of the dead](#). Just as the house had to be prepared for the arrival of mortal visitors, everything had to be in its place to satisfy, and tempt back, the spirits of the family's ancestors.

Yule Eve's connection with the trows is further evident when we read that each member of the household was required to wash themselves thoroughly on Yule Eve.

When their hands and feet were initially placed into the cleansing water;

"three living coals were dropped into the water, less the trows take the power o' the feet or hands".

Once each member of the household had washed, a clean, or if possible new, garment was laid out to be put on.

After the house-cleaning had been completed and all the dirty water safely thrown away, the locks were opened and an iron blade placed beside the door. Four more obvious preparations to appease, and protect against, any visiting spirit.

Then, before retiring for the night, the family would light a lamp or candle which was then left burning in the window throughout the long winter night.

Yule Day arrives . . .

Yule morning saw islanders rising before the sun - not as arduous a task as it sounds as the sun only crawls over the horizon well after 9am.

Often they might rise to the sound of travelling fiddlers who wandered each neighbourhood wakening the householders.

Once out of bed, the guidman would head to the byre to tend to his livestock. In some cases he carried with him the lamp or candle that had burned all night in the house, or, as detailed in one account, the [cow's skull with a lit candle stuck in the eye socket](#).

In the byre, the man would use the flame from his lamp to singe the hair of the animals within. This, it was believed, ensured that the animals would thrive over the coming year. They were then fed and watered, and being Yule, were generally provided with generous extra portions.

The chores out of the way, the man returned to his house where whisky was offered to all members of the household. This was for luck in the coming year so even the youngest child was required to at least taste the liquor.

Yuletide lights

Throughout the year the youngsters in every Orkney household gathered together and hoarded leftover bits of candle. One Yule morn these treasures were brought out and used to illuminate the room while the family ate their Yule breakfast. The Yule candles, like the Norse god Freyr's magical boar, transformed the darkness of a winter morning and no doubt celebrated the return of sunlight.

The Feast of the Dead

As well as eating pork, sheep were also slaughtered for Yule. The mutton was boiled and eaten on Yule morning. At this meal it was also customary for an extra place to be laid at the table. [As mentioned previously in this section](#), this custom harks back to Yule's ancient origins as a festival of the dead. At Yule the spirits of the ancestors were permitted to return to the land of the living. As such they were welcomed back into the home to visit their kin and partake of the food and drink.

[Yule bonfires](#) were lit on the highest hilltops in an effort to dispel the evil that was abroad and also to return fertility to the fields.

In Orkney and Shetland Yule also saw the young men of the townships participating in a rough kind of mass football game. These games were common throughout the islands with each area having its own game.

The only remnant of the tradition found today is in the form of [Kirkwall's Ba'](#).

Standing stones at Yule



An intriguing series of Yule traditions involved some of the islands' many standing stones. Remnants of these still survive, although most have been transplanted to New Year.

The most widespread of these beliefs involved certain standing stones which gained the power to move. These megaliths would usually walk to a nearby loch, where they dipped their heads into the water, or in some accounts, drink.

It was generally thought to be bad luck to see these walking stones, so locals would avoid the areas surrounding the stones until well after sunrise on New Year's Day.

For more on Orkney's roaming stones [click here](#).

But although the walking stones were avoided, other traditions actually involves the stones in the celebration of the New Year.

In [North Ronaldsay](#), the most northerly of Orkney's islands, New Year saw the locals travel to a solitary standing stone - known locally as [the Stan Stane](#) - where they would dance around the monolith to herald the New Year. This custom persists today.

At Orkney's best known group of megaliths - [The Standing Stones o' Stenness](#) - an old historical account tells us that during the five days of New Year feasting, lovers would visit the Standing Stones.

There, the woman would kneel and pray "to the god Wodden" that she and her partner might keep the oaths they were about to swear.

The couple would then make their way to the [Ring o' Brodgar](#) where the kneeling "ritual" was repeated by the man before their pact before the [Odin Stone](#).

Eclectica



Coke's Guilde & Receipts

By Lady Thomasina Freborn

Greetings all,

This month as we are celebrating Yule, I thought I'd give you a tasty pork dish to fill our bellies with.

YiS,
Lady Thomasina Freborn, Journeyman Laurel, AOA, OGT.

Cormarye

Cormarye. XX.II. XIII. Take Colyandre, Caraway smale grounden, Powdour of Peper and garlec ygrounde in rede wyne, medle alle þise togyder and salt it, take loynes of Pork rawe and fle of the skyn, and pryk it wel with a knyf and lay it in the sawse, roost þerof what þou wilt, & kepe þat þat fallith þerfro in the roasting and seeþ it in a possynet with faire broth, & serue it forth with þe roost anoon.

1.8 kg pork loin
1 1/2 tsp. coriander
1 1/2 tsp. caraway
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. salt
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups red wine
1 cup broth

Mix spices and garlic with wine and pour over pork in a roasting pan. Cover and bake at 350° until cooked through, basting regularly. Strain the drippings from the roasting pan into a saucepan, along with the broth. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 15 minutes. Serve sauce with pork.

Source- *Forme of Cury, XX.II. XIII*

A&S Calendar: Our A&S Officer is Banmaighster Cairistiona inghean Raghnaill

Shire A&S Competitions – June to November AS 44		
December	Brewing a Cordial	Yule
January	A piece of armour (may be hard or soft)	
February	Fighting tabard from any period Biscuits	Summer
March	Item for camping	Autumn
April	Toiletry item (soap, oral hygiene, scents etc)	
May	Household item	
June	Dessert or subtlety	Winter

Proposal for Guardian of Bordescros

Remember this is just a proposal yet to be discussed and altered where needed.

Introduction:

During May's meeting I proposed a Joint Championship for the various groups within Bordescros; and with particular emphasis on creating a friendly but competitive feeling within the group. Centred on the basic title of Shire Champion, it is my Hope to create within each group a Single champion – tentatively called Defenders of "ward/group name", and then have the Shires fighters fight off into one (1) combined Shire Championship tentatively called: Guardian of the Crossing.

Essentially it is to promote group identity, skill in arms and a better standard of fighting within the shire as a whole.

Inherent to this, is promoting the ability to fight multiple styles with multiple weapons. Not just sword and Board, Florentine or Glaive, but an amalgam of styles to provide a "True Defender or Guardian".

As with any proposal, these ideas are growing and the terms of Reference will, with any given situation change or be added to.

Common sense should be used at all time, not attitudes such as: "that's not medieval", or "that's how we have always done it" for example.

Like our Shire and Groups, this proposal is meant to grow as the shire does.

My vision for the "Guardian of the Crossing" is to create an event that is unique within the Kingdom of Lochac... Our own, if you will, "Crown Tourney Style event".

The basic idea behind this proposal is to encourage all within the shires boundaries to be active participants. Aspects of the Titles and the Mechanics are guides that I have envisaged has the overriding intent to improve aspects of our group by combining multiple areas of our SCA life into a central Event. Archery can be added as well, A&S and the addition of sharing the event between the groups can be seen as an attempt to share knowledge

Ultimately, I hope this proposal will inspire all Denizens of the Shire as a whole.

Making the Championship, a Special event in the Shire's Calendar.

These are suggestions and ideas to work on while we as a group make steps towards being a Barony/ Province, then this would become a Baronial / Provincial Championship... Hopefully?

Basic Concept and Rules.....

Defender of the Crossing / Western Marshes/ North -South Ward

1. All fighters shall be Paid Members of the Society.
2. Have a Current Fighters Authorisation Card.
3. Each Authorised Fighter within the Shire is eligible to fight for the title of Defender/Guardian.
4. Fighters from others groups within the shire are eligible to fight in other groups Monthly Tourney. (Wayfare)
5. Point are allocated as follows:
 - 5.1 3 points for 1st
 - 2 points for 2nd
 - 1 point for 3rd
 - 5.1.1 1 point to Fighters who enter Tourney
 - 5.2 N.B ---1 point automatically to any fighters Home group tally who wayfare.
 - 5.3 Where a Tourney has only 2 (two) fighters, points will be allocated for only the 2 positions.

(Where a group has less than < 2 fighters and a Designated Marshall, these fighters may choose another group to fight with, until such time as enough fighters are authorised and a tourney may take place in their Locale.) See Rule 11

6. Way faring fighters who win the Tournament will be acknowledged Winner, but points revert to the Home group's fighter, who is next best placed.

***If this is a tie then it shall be decided, By a Final Round best of 3**

7. Rules of the List are to be observed.
8. The Championship is to run from *May to November - December to April* in line with Kingdom Reporting.
9. In case of 2 fighters each having the same number of points in at the end of any given championship period, The 2 fighters can fight a tie breaking round Best of three fights immediately upon the result being verified or at the next Months Bash and Tourney.
10. The Title of "Defender is Held for 6 (Six) Months.
11. Unless there is a clear outright Winner, Each final should be decided by the best of 3.
12. Growing wards may be included when they reach the Mandatory requirement for fighter s to hold a tourney
13. The "Defender of the Crossing/ward", shall be rite of Arms be entitled to Wear a Special Insignia denoting his Status as "Defender" - **to be designed by popular vote.**
14. The reintroduction of the "Orbs of Granite" to the Shire of Bordescros and each ward can introduce their own version of the Orb's.
15. Updates of Championship Scoring for each ward can be includes in the Main web site and Monthly news letter.

*** Traditions of the Shire shall be documented and upheld with special emphasis on establishing The Shire of Bordescros and The Wards that make up Bordescros as a identity in this Kingdom called Lochac

******Defender of each Shire replaces the single Shire Championship.*

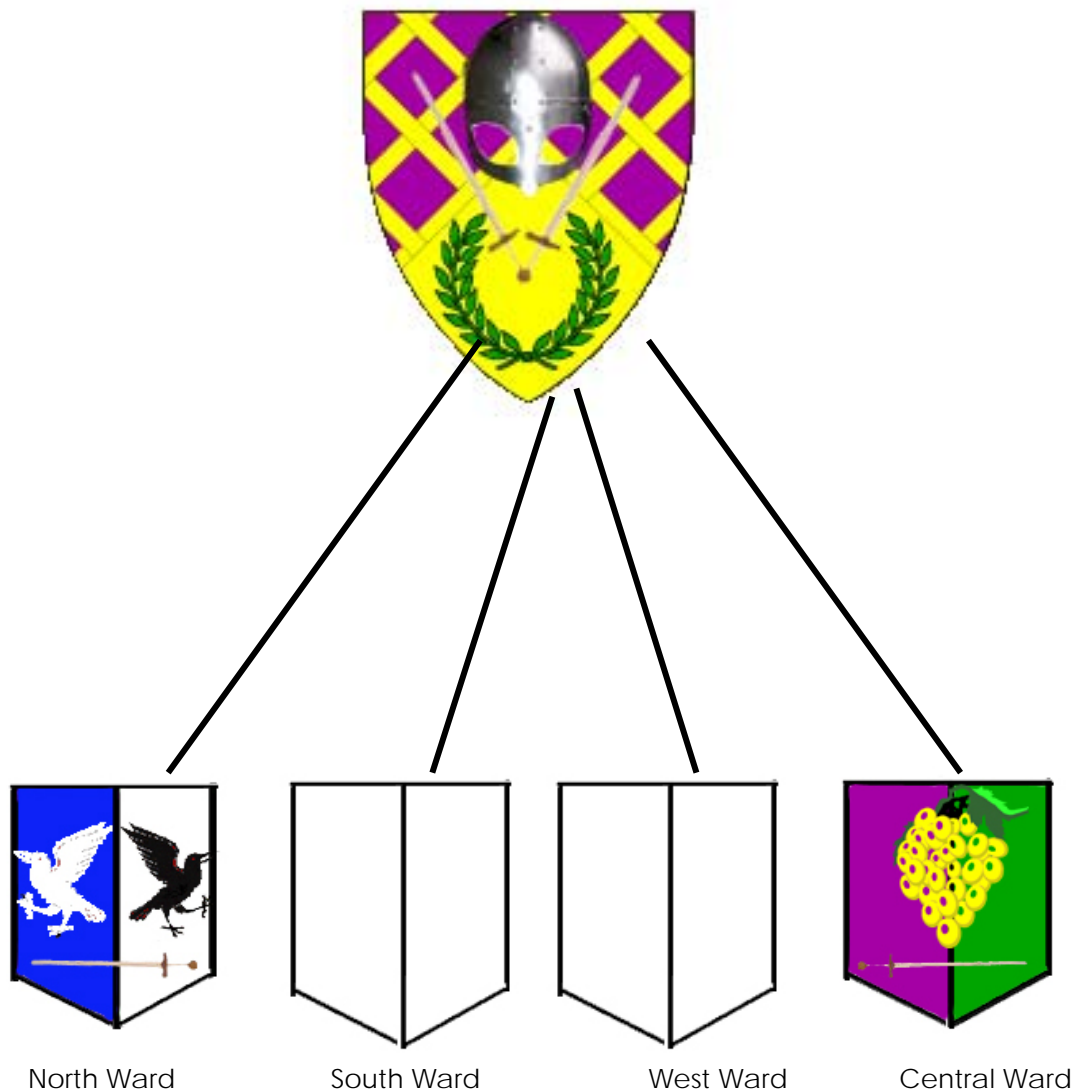
Rules for "Guardian" of "Bordescros"

1. Rules of the List take precedence.
2. Rules for Defender of the Crossing apply equally.
3. All Authorised fighters with the Shires Boundaries are eligible to participate.
4. Title of "The Guardian of the "Bordescros" is for 12 months. (October to October)
5. Each group within the Shire will take Turns to Host "Guardian of Bordescros Tournament" (This is meant to help each group learn how to host events on a small scale with the view to learning how to organise a larger event like Border War and what entails in organising a successful event. also to share the wayfaring between group's)
6. Host group will decide what style / format will be fought (e.g. Chivalric, Valhalla, Single Kill Double elimination)

7. The Guardian shall; by rite of Arms be entitled to wear a Special Tabard / Insignia denoting his Status as "Guardian".

With the Guardian and Defenders chosen by Rite of Arms, we will now have a Hierarchy for which to build the Army of the Crossing and institute War Training.

A Visual Idea of what is proposed



These are examples only.... Ideas I came up with; as with the designs something Visual to see.

Please Note this is a DRAFT Proposal.

As with any ideas this proposal is to be put before **All** members of the shire (Bordescros Central, North Ward, West Ward and South Ward?)

Discussion is welcome as long as it is constructive. If you have some thing negative, then come up with a solution and share both.

Thanks for taking the time to read.

Look forward to your comments

Lord Einarr Death Bringer Thorsgrimsson/John Drewe/Vig