

December Newsletter

Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!

May your winter be filled with joy!

Medieval Christmas Traditions:

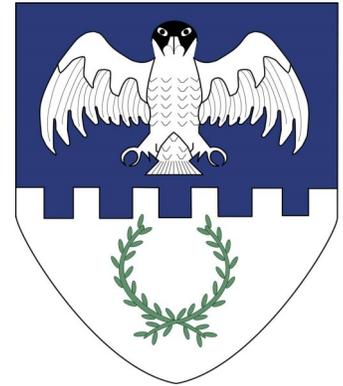
In the modern era, we start celebrating Christmas earlier and earlier, it seems. However, in the Middle Ages, Christmas did not begin until December 25; and then it lasted for twelve days. The rest of December was Advent, a period of fasting like Lent. People were not supposed to eat meat or dairy during Advent, but the rich would have spent a lot of money on fish and seafood like sturgeon, eels and oysters. Less affluent folks had to make due with bread and simple pottage, and likely have been limited to one or two meals per day. It is no surprise that there were songs bidding farewell to Advent.

There were several other holy days during the twelve days of Christmas: St. Stephen's Day on 26 December; Holy Innocents on 28 December (commemorating the day that King Herod massacred all the baby boys while looking for Jesus); the feast of St. Nicholas (Santa Claus) was on 6 December and already linked to gift giving; and the festival ended with Epiphany on the 6th of January which traditionally was the day when the three wise men came to visit Jesus. Twelfth night is also the traditional time to go wassailing.

There was also a Christmas tradition in many areas that wealthy lords would give a feast for their tenants and servants. For example: On Christmas Day 1547, Henry Willoughby, a wealthy gentleman from the Midlands, fed his tenants on beef, mutton, 10 geese, 9 pigs, 6 capons, a swan, 16 rabbits, 3 hens, 2 woodcocks and 16 venison pies.

Though the above list doesn't include them, turkeys were being raised in England by the 1540's. They were called turkey birds, because they were first brought to England by traders from the Turkish empire, and the English just assumed that they were from Turkey.

Other Christmas treats would have included forms of gingerbread and myriad sweet, spiced, breads, tarts, steamed puddings, etc. Note that in this time period, mincemeat pies still contained minced meat.



Our hearts soar on Falcon's wings!

UPCOMING MOOT & PRACTICES

Next. Moot: December 10, in the home of Lady Emelye and Lord Pedro.

Heavy Weapons and Fencing Practice, Please See the Shire Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/102651729820675/>

If you have anything you want to share, please contact Lady Anna at: hollyheise@gmail.com



Unknown (Master of the Female Half-Length Portraits) Three Ladies Making Music 1530-60

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THE CHRONICLER'S QUILL

Seasonal recipes:

1553: First, the Boar's Head.

From: *The Cookbook of Sabina Welserin*; 1553; version by [David Friedman](#)

How to cook a wild boar's head, also how to prepare a sauce for it.



A wild boar's head should be boiled well in water and, when it is done, laid on a grate and basted with wine, then it will be thought to have been cooked in wine. Afterwards make a black or yellow sauce with it.

First, when you would make a black sauce, you should heat up a little fat and brown a small spoonful of wheat flour in the fat and after that put good wine into it and good cherry syrup, so that it becomes black, and sugar, ginger, pepper, cloves and cinnamon, grapes, raisins and finely chopped almonds. And taste it, however it seems good to you, make it so.

If you would make a yellow sauce, Then make it in the same way as the black sauce, only take saffron instead of the syrup and put no cloves therein, so you will also have a good sauce.

1588: Minst Pyes, with rosewater.

From: *The good hous-wiues treasurie Beeing a verye necessarie booke instructing to the dressing of meates*; Anon. 1588

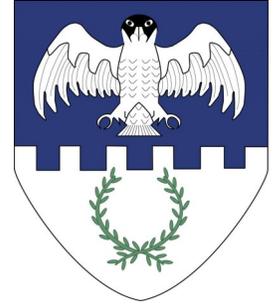
To make minst Pyes.

Take your Veale and perboyle it a little, or mutton, then set it a cooling; and when it is colde, take three pound of suit [suet] to a leg of mutton, or fower [four] pound to a fillet of Veale, and then mince them small by themselves, or together whether you will, then take to season them halfe an once [ounce] of Nutmegs, half an once of cloves and Mace, halfe an once of Sinamon, a little Pepper, as much Salt as you think will season them, either to the mutton or to the Veale, take viii [8] yolkes of Egges when they be hard, half a pinte of rosewater full measure, halfe an pund of Suger, then straine the Yolkes with the rosewayer and the Suger and mingle it with your meate, if ye have any Orenge or Lemmans you must take two of them, and take the pilles [peels] very thin and mince them very smalle, and put them in a pound of currans, six dates, half a pound of prunes laye Currans and Dates upon the top of your meate, you must taek tow or three Pomewaters or Wardens and mince with your meate, you maye make them woorsse [?] if you will, if you will make good crust put in three or foure yolkes of egges a litle Rosewater, and a good deale of suger.

To Serve,

Anna Meyer

A Brief History of the Christmas Tree



Different cultures had used green foliage to decorate their homes for thousands of years. Romans, Egyptians, Chinese, and Scandinavians have accounts of using palm or fir (or other evergreen) branches to symbolize life in the midst of dead cold winter. Tree worship was common among the pagan Europeans and survived their conversion to Christianity in the form of Scandinavian customs of decorating the house and barn with evergreens at the New Year to scare away the Devil and of setting up a tree for the birds during Christmas time. It survived further in the custom, also observed in Germany, of placing a Yule tree at an entrance or inside the house during the midwinter holidays.

The Paradise Tree:

Adam and Eve had long been venerated by the Eastern Church, and this practice spread to the West around the tenth century. The practice was never officially sanctioned by the church of Rome, but neither was it condemned. Around the 12th century a custom began of celebrating the feast day of Adam and Eve on December 24 with “the Paradise Play”, popular in Germany, which depicted the story of the creation of Adam and Eve, their sin and their banishment. One of the few props in the play was a large evergreen tree called a Paradise Tree, its branches laden with apples. By the beginning of the 15th century, these public passion plays had fallen out of favor, but the custom of decorating trees just moved into the homes of Christians.

The first Christmas Trees:

Reports of decorated Christmas trees go as far back as 1419; a Fraternity of Bakers’ Apprentices appears to have seen a tree decorated with apples, wafers, gingerbread, and tinsel in the local Hospital of the Holy Spirit in the guilds of craftsmen, in Freiburg, Germany. A few decades later, tree felling must have become so prevalent that a Strasbourg town clerk found it necessary to forbid the custom of cutting off pine branches and bringing them home. In Estonia, the Tallinn Town Hall Square has had the tradition of celebrating Christmas festivities dating back to 1441, when the Brotherhood of the Blackheads are thought to have erected the world’s first town square Christmas tree. John Stow, who wrote a Survey of London in 1598, explains that he found an account from 1444 which reported that in one London neighborhood there was “a standard of tree being set up in the midst of the pavement fast in the ground, nailed full of holme (holly) and ivie (ivy), for disport of Christmas to the people.” The Latvian capital of Riga has long claimed to be home of the earliest Christmas Tree. In the year 1510 the Brotherhood of Blackheads – a guild of foreign merchants and shipowners living in the city – erected a tree in Riga’s main square for the winter solstice and decorated it with thread, straw and apples. Later it was burned on a bonfire.

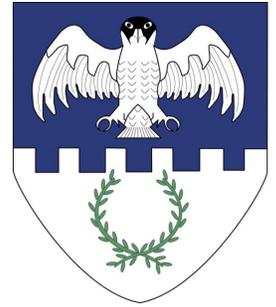
Religious reformer Martin Luther is credited by some with introducing the first Christmas tree lights, and possibly the first Christmas tree in the home, in Strasbourg in 1521 (all of the well documented Christmas trees prior to this were set up in public venues, like town squares, and guild halls). The story goes that Luther wired candles to the fir tree branches to simulate stars shining through the forest canopy.

Publishing Disclaimer

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Contact the Chronicler, Lady Anna Meyer (MKA Holly Heise), for further information, HollyHeise@gmail.com This publication will be available on the Falcon’s Keep webpage at www.falconskeep.org. If you require a paper copy, please contact the Chronicler. If you wish to make a contribution to defray mailing costs, please give it to the Exchequer of Falcon’s Keep.

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NORTHSHIELD EVENT CALENDAR

December, 2017

Northshield Princess Sleeve Tournament  
Saturday December 9, 2017 52 Shire of Silfren Mere (Byron MN)

January, 2018

Calontir's 12th Night  Saturday January 6, 2018 52
Kingdom of Calontir (Council Bluffs IA)

свята ніч (Ukrainian Christmas Eve) Saturday January 6,
2018 52 Barony of Castel Rouge (Winnipeg MB)

Twelfth Night on the Venetian Rialto: Were East meets West Saturday January 13, 2018 52
Kingdom of Middle (Chicago IL)

12th Night: An Italian Masked

Ball      Saturday January 13-14, 2018 52
Barony of Nordskogen (Ramsey MN)

Die Four the Sword Saturday January 27, 2018 52
Shire of Korsvåg (Moorhead MN)

Tacky Garb Ball: Bring back the 80s  
Saturday January 27, 2018 52
Barony of Jararvellir (Stoughton WI)

February, 2018

Fighting in the Shade   Saturday February 3, 2018 52
Barony of Jararvellir (Madison WI)

Brigid's Fyre Saturday February 3, 2018 52
Shire of Orlova Dolina (Solway MN)

Kingdom A&S Competition    Saturday February 10,
2018 52
Barony of Jararvellir (Waterloo WI)

A Savory Haire Affaire   Saturday February 17, 2018 52
Shire of Falcon's Keep (Auburndale WI)

Hertzkrieg XXIII  Saturday February 17, 2018 52
College of Svatý Sebesta (Vermillion SD)

Estrella Wars Tuesday February 20-26, 2018 52
Kingdom of Atenveldt (Queen Creek AZ)

Lupercalia    Saturday February 24, 2018 52
Shire of Rivenwood Tower (Garden City MN)



The Legend of the Northshield Calendar

-  His Majesty will attend
-  Her Majesty will attend
-  The Prince will attend
-  The Princess will attend