

# Kenning Points

JANUARY 2016

Anno Societatis L

## TWELFTH NIGHT WAES HAIL!

In 567, the Council of Tours "proclaimed the twelve days from Christmas to Epiphany as a sacred and festive season" [1] Twelfth Night is the evening before Epiphany (January 6), the twelfth day after Christmas, and is the festival that marks the end of the Christmastide season.

It was customary for family and friends to gather on Twelfth Night for a feast and then perform the ceremony of cutting the Twelfth Cake, a special cake baked with a pea and a bean hidden inside. In the Middle Ages, the cake was similar to an ordinary plum cake, but over the centuries the recipes evolved to what is now today a form of modern fruit cake.



Slices of Twelfth Cake were given to everyone in the household irrespective of their status. Whoever found the bean in his portion of cake was proclaimed King of the revel, while the person getting the pea was Queen. Immediately a mock court was established, and each of the guests was assigned to some different office and title of importance. (Communications, 2015)

The King and Queen of the Bean ruled over the celebrations included dances, homage to the Bean Court, eating sweetmeats, and drinking from Wassail bowls of "Lamb's Wool", an ale seasoned with sugar, nutmeg, ginger, the pulp of roasted apples. (Sidhu, 2013)

Below is a traditional recipe for Lamb's Wool which dates to 1633, just out of the SCA period. The full recipe can be found at <http://oakden.co.uk/lambswool/>

- 1.5 litres of traditional real ale or traditional cider
- 6 small cooking apples, cored
- 1 nutmeg freshly grated
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 150g brown sugar (demerara)



Core the apples, removing all seeds. Bake on a greased baking tray at 350F for about 1 hour until they become soft and pulpy and the skins are easy to peel away.

In a large, thick bottomed pot, warm enough ale or cider to cover the sugar, and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Keeping the pot on a gentle simmer, add the spices, then, slowly add in all the rest of the ale or cider. Leave the pot on low heat while you deal with the apples.

Take the baked apples out of the oven and let cool slightly (10 minutes). Scoop the pulp from the apples, and discard skins. Mash the apple pulp with a fork while it is still warm, making a smooth puree.

Whisk the apple puree into the liquid. Keep the Lamb's Wool on very gentle heat until ready to serve. Before serving, whisk again for a couple of minutes until the apple and light froth floats to the surface. Pour the drink into a communal bowl and sprinkle with grated nutmeg. Wassail!

By Baroness Molly Blythe

### Sources:

Communications, T. (2015). *Catholic Culture: Twelfth Cake*. Retrieved 12 17, 2015, from CatholicCulture.com: <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/recipes/view.cfm?id=1534>  
Hutton, R. (2001). *Stations of the Sun*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
Sidhu, R. D. (2013). *Holidays and Rituals of Jews and Christians*. Bloomington: Authorhouse.

## ARCHERS AND FUTURE ARCHERS !

Have you ever thought of trying your hand at archery, but didn't know where to start? Come on down to Trader Jan's, at 288 Plymouth Avenue in Fall River on a Friday night for the Baronial Archery Practice from 6-8 p.m.! Beginners are more than welcome, and there are archers to help you learn the art, along with loaner bows and arrows you can use even from Day 1. Please be aware that the owner of Trader Jan's collects an \$8 lane fee, but only from those who are shooting – first-time visitors are welcome to observe for free.

We hope that this year more people in the Barony try giving archery a shot (pun intended!) as Smoking Rocks once had over 30 archers competing in the East Kingdom Royal Rounds and we'd love to see that happening again! The Baronial practices at Trader Jan's are a good way to train for Royal Rounds.



Royal Rounds are an inter-kingdom competition used to rank the archers of the East. The archer shoots 4 sets of arrows, called ends from 20, 30, and 40 yards. A single Royal Round score can be submitted from each practice. The scorekeeper of the East keeps track of everyone's scores for an entire year, and averages your highest 3 scores.

The participants are divided into 5 categories based on their score averages: Archers (0-39), Marksmen (40-59), Bowmen (60-79), Master Bowmen (80-99), and Grand Master Bowmen (100 and up). Traditionally, attaining the ranks of Master Bowmen and Grand Master Bowmen are considered sufficiently difficult that the King and Queen prefer to present these awards.

Currently, there are 112 Eastern archers in the Royal Rounds Ranking list. The Barony of Smoking Rocks has had over 30 archers on the ranking list in the past but the moment, we have only 6 archers on the list and we would greatly like to raise these numbers.

Each month the East Kingdom posts the results of archer's Royal Round scores (based on the average of an archer's top three scores for a Royal Round). Congrats to the 6 Smoking Rocks archers who made the November rankings! Let's get more people out there representing Smoking Rocks in 2016!

By Mistress Nest verch Tangwistel and Baroness Molly Blythe

### ***EAST KINGDOM ROYAL ROUND RANKINGS – DECEMBER 24, 2015***

Rank	Master Bowmen	SCA Group	Bows	Average
17	Godric fitz Edmond	Smoking Rocks	CCC	82.67
30	Elaina Howys of Morningthorpe	Smoking Rocks	RRR	77.67
56	Bronwyn of the Kings Field	Smoking Rocks	RRR	63.00
64	Cosimo de Venezia	Smoking Rocks	RRR	59.33
67	Friderich Weber	Smoking Rocks	RRR	55.33
105	Jennifer of Smoking Rocks	Smoking Rocks	RRR	41.67

## **ABOUT THE MEDLAR TREE: BY NAJA**

Although rarely seen today, the medlar (*Mespilus germanica*) was a familiar orchard fruit during the Middle Ages. A medlar tree appears twice in the wooded landscape of the Unicorn Tapestries: once in The Unicorn is found and again in The Unicorn Defends Itself. [1] The medlar is believed to have been cultivated for over 3000 years, introduced to Greece around 700 BC and to Rome about 200 BC. It is one of few fruits to ripen during the winter months making it popular for gardeners who wanted to have fruit all year round. [2]



The medlar is an attractive small tree, with white flowers appearing in late spring. It has few pest issues, and the fact that it is self-fertile makes it a perfect fit for a small backyard orchard. In the fall, the tree produces a reddish brown pome fruit. The fruit is high in tannins, which leave a bitter taste if eaten straight from the tree. The gardener must wait until after a light frost has occurred before harvesting. The fruit is then arranged on top of straw or similar absorbent material, placed in a cool space and left until the skin becomes wrinkled and the fruit is soft. This process is known as bletting.

The English verb *to blet* was coined by John Lindley, in his Introduction to Botany (1835). He derived it from the French *poire blette* meaning 'overripe pear'. "After the period of ripeness," he wrote, "most fleshy fruits undergo a new kind of alteration; their flesh either rots or blets." [3]



The taste of the bletted fruit has been described as similar to spiced applesauce, and at times as mulled wine, since the bletting process often leaves the fruit with a fermented taste. The fruit was often eaten out of hand, and is mentioned in Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* the eponymous hero and Sancho Panza "Stretch themselves out in the middle of a field and stuff themselves with acorns or medlars." [2]

Medlar Cheese, was a popular sweetmeat in medieval times, and is akin to quince or other fruit 'pastes'. The fruit is cooked until very soft then rubbed through a sieve to remove the pips and yield a rather unattractive sticky pulp. The pulp is then cooked down with sugar until it gels and becomes a near solid mass. [4]

A fruit which is rotten before it is ripe, the medlar is used figuratively in literature as a symbol of prostitution or premature destitution. For example, in the Prologue to *The Reeve's Tale*, Geoffrey Chaucer's character laments his old age, comparing himself to the medlar, which he names using the slang term "open-arse". In the 16th and 17th centuries, medlars were bawdily called "open-arses" because of the shape of the fruits, inspiring boisterous or humorously indecent puns in many Elizabethan and Jacobean plays. [2]

Medlars can sometimes be found at farmers markets if you are lucky enough to have a local orchard that produces the fruit. Growing your own may be your best bet, if you would like to taste this difficult to find delicacy. There are several online resources where you can source *Mespilus germanica*. Once planted, you should be able to eat your first bletted medlar within a two or three years. It may take several years before your tree is bountiful enough to share this rare treat.



### **Sources:**

<http://blog.metmuseum.org/cloistersgardens/2008/11/14/rotten-ripe-the-medlar-goes-soft/medlar-tree-unicorn-tapestries1/>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mespilus\\_germanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mespilus_germanica)  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bletting>  
<http://blogs.hht.net.au/cook/rotten-luck/>

## 2016 Smoking Rocks events at a glance:

### Ice Weasel "Elebensies"



**Event date:** February 13th, 2016 Hosted by [Barony of Smoking Rocks](#) - Swansea, MA

**Come one, come all to Ice Weasel Elebensies!** Brush the snow from your shoulders and come take tea with me, whilst I spin a tale so great, you may think me soft! Come celebrate the winter's blessings, and the journey toward spring's renewal! Come enjoy the company of friends long ago seen but never forgotten! Come test your mettle against the frost and cold as we Scour the Barony with our swords and shields, keeping eyes on the blue glow of our blades! Our very own Lord Haakon Ragnorson will cook us a meal fit for a Barrel-rider or two, so bring your courage, your strength, your guile, and your wit, so when you travel there and back again, you may sing a bard's song of your adventures!

**Site Opens:** 10am

**Site Closes:** 7pm

**Event Location:** Christ Church of Swansea, 57 Main Street. Swansea, MA 02777

**Site Fee :** Adults: \$6      *\*Note that there is a \$5 surcharge for those attending who are not SCA members and/or can not provide proof of membership when checking in at the event.*

**Feast:** Feast: \$12      *\*Seating is limited. Please reserve your place ahead of time!*

**Make Checks Payable to:** SCA MA Inc Barony of Smoking Rocks

**Event Steward:**

Serafima Medvednikova

AKA Katie Reilly

19 Oxford Road

East Sandwich, MA 02537

[Kareilly23@gmail.com](mailto:Kareilly23@gmail.com)

**Send Reservations to:**

Katie Reilly

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East Sandwich, MA 02537 (Please include your full mundane name and SCA name with your reservation fees)

### 40 TH BARONIAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

**Event Date:** April 23, 2016

**Event Location:** Stone Church-First Congregational Church of Raynham 785 S Main St. Raynham, MA 02767 US

*Come join the Barony of Smoking Rocks as we celebrate 40 years. This year's theme is Persian. There will a **Persian feast**, along with prizes and awards for people that put forth the best effort to join in the **Persian feel**.*

*The Baron and Baroness Smoking Rocks will be hosting our Baronial Heavy Combat and Period Rapier Tournaments on this day. We look forward to our next Championships.*

More details to follow.

**Event Steward:** Lady Sabina Luttrell MKA Linda Meyer 508-643-0150 [sabynluttrell@gmail.com](mailto:sabynluttrell@gmail.com)





## **ARTISAN SPOTLIGHT:** *Second in our series of profiles of SCA merchants*

This month we are interviewing LADY GUENDALINA FRANCESCA DI ANTONIO CRISTIANO, owner of Lady Guendalina's Closet.

Lady Guen, who was an active member in Carolingia during her college days before returning home to Smoking Rocks, began merchanting in 1997. She started out selling hats and trims. Why hats?



"I had been in the SCA since mid 1980s and one of the things that i was passionate about was getting ladies to cover/adorn their hair," she explains.

In the beginning, she had a vendor down in Texas who was willing to make them for her and she re-sold them for the SCA market. "I saw the market and tried making them myself and I found that I loved making them," she says.

"And that's when I began to experiment with different types of beads and different material threads. Most of the snoods made up to that point were made only with cotton bedspread crochet thread (the stuff you can get at places like Wal-Mart and Michael's) and not metallic's and silks and linens."

As she researched more about snoods, she discovered the metallic's and the silks were actually the most period, and now she creates hand-made snoods in various materials.

She eventually branched out into trims, notions, hair accessories, and corset boning. "Each item that i sell ends up being sold because there is a need. I listen to what people are looking for and I sell what I'm most passionate about. I liked finding sources for metal lacing rings, because I hated seeing people with gorgeous garb but with plastic rings. "

"Some of the other items I make are the Florentine silverware pieces which are based on pics from a dig in Florence dated to the early 16th century. I make a lot of my jewelry, mostly because it's fun and people like it. I love cameos, and so I've built a reputation for having a large selection of cameos, which I purchase from all over the world."

"One of my passions is learning and teaching. I love it when people ask me about how accurate or what time period an item in my shop is from. I think it's one of the things people don't realize about a lot of the merchants is that we do research, a lot of it. It's not just going online and finding things that we think are right. We go and search things out that we know are right and bring them to our friends in the SCA. Merchanting is a labor of love. It is a calling."



Lady Guen sells at various SCA events, including Birka, and also does business online via her website and Etsy store. To look at her catalog of items, visit: <http://www.ladyguen.com/shopping/> and <https://www.facebook.com/Lady-Guendalinas-Closet-261924075098/> and <https://www.etsy.com/shop/Ladyguen>



**MARKET DAY AT BIRKA  
JANUARY 29 TO 30, 2016  
RADISSON HOTEL MANCHESTER NEW HAMPSHIRE**

*Don't forget to visit the tables of our varied  
Smoking Rocks merchants !*

# REGNUM

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