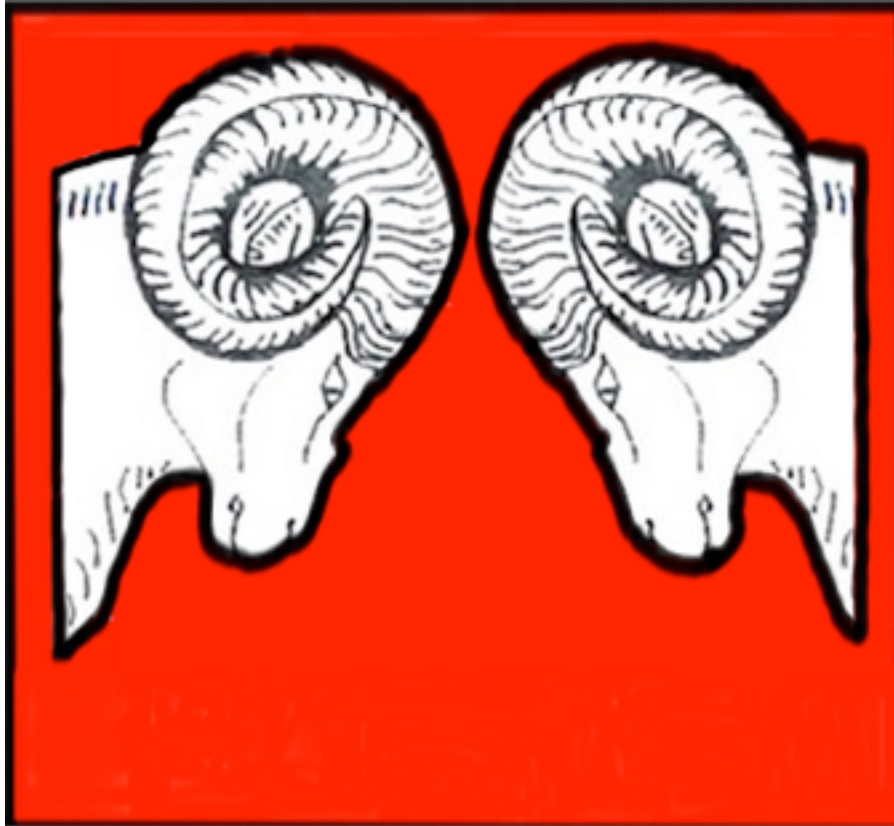


# *Ramshaven Herald*



*A.S. 1L Winter 2015*

*The Golden Key*



## Suck it up, Princess...

Many of you have heard me say this, jokingly, and then laugh. It might surprise some of you to know that this is something I say to myself on a regular basis. Yes, it's true! Although I would really enjoy my world being a little more perfect than it is, truth be known, it isn't. Thankfully, we are surrounded by an amazing group of people who continue to support our efforts to serve the Barony with a positive, fun, and encouraging populace. We enjoy seeing people grow in this wonderful game we call the SCA.

What am I getting at? Tabards. My "dream" was to have all of our Ramshaven fighters wearing "matching" tabards so we could easily be spotted on the battle field. We would have Populace Rams on the front, Ealdormere Trilliums on the back, none running red, and white, flashy, linen so the fighters would wear the tabards and not get too hot. Well, they are most of what I had hoped for. Since our time on the high seats there have been three different dye lots of red used, with the last lot not being as good a quality as I would like to have used. Because different linen lots were used, some of the sizing isn't the same which means some of the tabards have different embattlement sizing. That said, after writing this down, most other requirements have been met. Thankfully,

over the past two and a half years, we have had the support of all of our Cantons to assist in the creating of these tabards. And I have to say "Ramshaven, you look marvellous!" We are most definitely visible on the battlefield.

Another dream was to provide our Ramshaven people with "Ramifications." The fencers received Ramshaven Favours to wear on their shoulders. Small pouches have been sewn for our archers and sewers. There have even been a couple of bags made for our thrown weapons people (more need to be made). The dream is to have everyone in Ramshaven fitted with some sort of populace embellished item that is useful. With any luck, this will happen by the end of our term as it is proving to be quite the task. If we have missed you, please don't hesitate to come and see me about your "Ramification", and I will do my best to get you "Ramified." This is the year of the Ram, after all. A year of accomplishment. A year of plenty. A year of positive growth. We are hear for you, so please include us in your hopes and dreams of this wonderful medieval game we play.

Thankfully Yours,

Excellency Ramshaven, Sibylla of Glyndmere



# The Changing Calendar

Mid-winter has passed, but before we look forward to growing things and the celebrations marking the 50th year of the Society, our Society, we ought to look at the successes the past few months have wrought.

In November, Der Welfengau saw a smooth transition from Herr Rotgrun's able guidance to Lucia of Der Welfengau, eager and new to so many of us. Already, she has kept up with Arts and Science gatherings, and a very successful rapier mega-practice (28 combatants!). There are plans for more such gatherings in the fall. Wassail Lucia!

The Incipient Canton of Northgeatham has also been busy, spending time on creating a new set of baronial tabards, and growing its warriors into a fine cadre! Wassail to Northgeatham and its dedicated fighters!

The Canton of Bryniau Tywynnog's citizens have been industrious, indeed. Eyrny has now passed the Seneschal's torch to Dietrich von Sachsen. May he successfully burn several villages before being caught. Meanwhile, Repentance of Maine eagerly takes pictures and videos for sharing, and regularly attends Archery sessions while encouraging others to do the same (and at the same making an unofficial foothold on Ben Dunfirth land).



The Canton's end of year celebration, Wassail, was again one of many peaks. This year's theme was "Christkindl Markt", based on the medieval European tradition of holding artisanal markets before the holiday season. There were several levels of success in this event. First, we had 20 different merchants, all of whom we were more than pleased to host. Next, we had many friends in our Society from across the kingdom and beyond attend and celebrate the season with us. Finally, and not least, we had a great staff of volunteers ensuring the best event filled with fun and adventure for all! As autocrat for this event, I continue to feel honoured and blessed by you.



## Forward Into the Past (FITP)

Ragnar: It would be wonderful to add some more local/SCA speakers to FITP this year. Is anyone up for it? Everything from beginner's hands-on sessions through to detailed paper sessions are welcome. Drop me a message and



we'll talk. Many of the details are up on the call for speakers site.

<http://www.fitp.ca/call.php>

Adnar: Christiana de Montgomery will be heading up the charge for our annual display table. All help and contributions are more than welcome to give the Society a presence at this venerable educational venue. Many hands do indeed make light work, so save the date on your calendar: March 28, 2015!

## The Golden Key

A treatment on the concept of our "Gold Key"



Like all societies, there are terms and concepts bandied about that to a new

person can seem at first beyond comprehension. Our Society, peopled by a range of medieval enthusiasts, use terms with first and foremost a romantic view of the Middle Ages. Take, for example, the concept of our "Gold Key".

What is it?

As a first answer, "Gold Key" is the collection of odd bits and pieces for a new person to try on when they attend their first set of events. Often these items are "first or early attempts" by others, and are supposed to show on one hand how to begin, and on the other, subtly show other attendees where the new people are (and to help overcome the lost or overwhelmed feeling that can easily crop up in a new environment).

Interestingly, the concept of the Golden Key is a long-held idea that has stood the test of time. In keeping with establishing holy legitimacy for a church, Gregory of Tours had key-shaped reliquaries made for new parishes. These would contain filings from the chains of Saint Peter. The "keys of Saint Peter" were created and used even as late as the pontificate of Pope Gregory III (731-741)<sup>1</sup>.

Of course, there are other "keys" that represent more than simply locking up a treasure. Take as an example, and allow me to generalize, a Norse marriage practice of giving keys to the bride. It is certainly a great affirmation of a marriage-partnership.

While it is possible to point vaguely at some survivals of the concept of the "golden key", such as historians' focus on key concepts through the period, such as

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<sup>1</sup> Rome and Religion in the Medieval World: Studies in Honor of Thomas F.X. Noble, Garver and Phelan, eds., Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2014. p.192

*aequalitas* in legal definitions both Civil and Canon<sup>2</sup>, or in voluminous collections of literature as “golden keys” to a culture<sup>3</sup>, there is no more poignant and direct proof for this survival than that of a “concierge”. Borne out of 12th century France, the “Keepers of Keys” began as royal guards, with one person designated to take care of, well, everything. The role of concierge has changed little since then, as not only a venerable tradition, but also a highly trusted, and respectable one. There is even a Canadian chapter of *Les Clefs D’Or*, the international association for concierges. Here is a website link, for your perusal: <http://www.lesclefsdorcanada.org> .

Now as we sort through our bins of old gear, and perhaps look to renewing it to give our new people, guests, and friends the dignity and magic our Society has to offer, we know, surely, that our form of concierge is no less important, no less dignified, than the history we love to study and re-create.



Baron	Penda of Ramshaven
Baroness	Sibylla of Ramshaven
Seneschal	Evan Quicktongue
Armoured Marshall	Vanion
Exchequer	Kohl of Rokesburg
Chronicler	Adnar Dionadair (Erhard Kruger)
Arts & Sciences Minister	Brigit Larkin
Herald	Joffre
Kingdom of Ealdormere	<a href="http://www.ealdormere.ca">www.ealdormere.ca</a>
Barony of Ramshaven	<a href="http://www.ramshaven.com">www.ramshaven.com</a>
Canton of Bryniau Tywynnog	<a href="http://www.bryniau.ca">www.bryniau.ca</a>
Canton of Der Welfengau	<a href="http://www.derwelfengau.com">www.derwelfengau.com</a>
Incipient Canton of Northgaedham	<a href="http://www.ramshaven.com/northgeatham/">http://www.ramshaven.com/northgeatham/</a>
Email list	<a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SCA-Ramshaven">Http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SCA-Ramshaven</a>

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<sup>2</sup> A History of Balance, 1250-1375: The Emergence of a New Model of Equilibrium and its Impact on Thought, Joel Kaye, Cambridge University Press, 2014. pp 26-30

<sup>3</sup><http://www.baspress.com/book.php?l=e&id=85> This link leads to the “Golden Key of Classic Bulgarian Literature, Volume 1, issued in 2001. It is touted as a virtual collection for the masses, in order to preserve Bulgarian culture, under the auspices of UNESCO no less.