

The Legend

*Newsletter for the
Canton of Charlesbury Crossing*



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Thoughts about SCA Favors

Written By: Lord Cyriac Grymsdale (Kevin C. Towery)

Edited by: Lady Lidia Lijovich de Ragusa (Lydia Leovic Towery)

At typical SCA events, you'll notice people walking around with square pieces of fabric looped through their belt with a heraldic design decoration. Typically called favors or tokens, these pieces of fabric have been gifted to the individuals generally by their significant others, their households, their barony, or their royalty. Favors may be given by any number of different persons, and for an equal number of varying reasons.

When viewing a favor, the reason the favor was gifted to the individual in the first place is probably not going to be obvious, especially to a newcomer. In the SCA favors have evolved over time to include uses of a person's livery and as a way for an individual to show their thanks, respect, and/or their love to the bearer.

Historically, favors took the form of jewels, scarves, sleeves, rings, or personal items that were gifted from a lady to a knight, esquire, or man-at-arms who was riding off to engage in a tournament or a war. The earliest example of bestowing a favor can be found in the mid-twelfth century romances written by Chretien de Troyes in *Les Roman de Chretien de Troyes*¹. In the romances, Chretien indicates that many an ensign bore a veil or sleeve as tokens of love. Another example is when in 1520 Francis I of France and his companions wore ladies' sleeves on their headpieces².

Though references to personal favors are rare in historical sources, it is more common to find references to gifts and largesse being given as a sign of respect and esteem instead of love, per se. For instance, the lover of Don Pero Nino sent him a horse, a helm and a letter for a pas d'armes, but no mention is made of a favor, as such³. Gifts or largesse tended to take the form of more practical items such as arms, helms, and horses.

At a SCA war, the Queen of a kingdom often gives favors to worthy fighters to bear into battle. The Queen rewards fighters in the kingdom by acknowledging their skills, and at the same time showing her respect for them. Some may consider this type of favor to be more or less a "loyalty" favor, where a lady of rank gifts their favor to fighters entering the field of honor in service to their kingdom, principality, or barony. This gesture may also simply be a general bestowal of thanks, but the context of how the favor was awarded should be taken into consideration. If a Queen is handing out favors to all fighters from her kingdom that she sees, then it is possible that she is showing them merely her thanks for having *traveled* to the war.

Favors in the SCA have evolved to the point where the typical, tea towel type, favors are not the equal of their historical counterpart. Though gifts and largesse are not quite feasible in the current times on an everyday budget as they were in the Middle Ages, attempts can still be made to try and recreate the historical nature of favors.

¹ Chretien de Troyes. *Les Roman de Chretien de Troyes*. Vol. 1, Erec et Enide. Mario Roques, ed. Paris: Librairie Honore Champion, 1970. English translation by W. W. Comfort, in *Arthur Romances*. London: Dent, 1914, reprinted 1970.

² Jocelyne G. Russell. *Field of Cloth of gold*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969.

³ Gutierre, Diaz de Gamez. *The Unconquered Knight: A Chronicle of the Deeds of Don Pero Nino*. Joan Evans, trans. And ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1928.

A scarf could just as easily be embroidered as a tea towel and wrapped around a belt or an arm. A balance could be struck between functionality and authenticity, with a nicely designed tea towel type favor for fighting and a more historically accurate favor for use in court and outside of fighting.

In any case, making favors, bestowing favors, and the favors themselves are enjoyable aspects of the period in time members of the SCA are recreating. The joy of the favors are not only limited to the fighters, but also to the artisans who created the favors by various means including weaving, sewing, and knitting. These artists not only can enjoy the satisfaction of having their handwork displayed throughout the populace, but can fondly remember the occasions that the favors were made for in the first place. If you admire the favor that someone is wearing, ask him or her for the story and meaning behind it.

Canton Business Meeting

Date & Time:
July 5th @ 7:00 p.m.

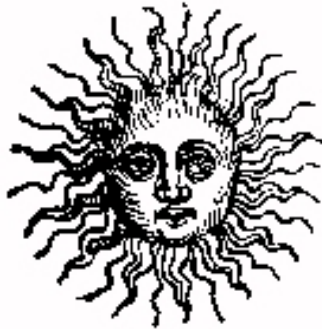
Location:
Rheinland Haus
2418 Park Rd
Charlotte, NC 28203

Baronial Meetings/Fighter Practice

Day & Time:
Third Sunday of the month

Location:
Odd Months: Salisbury, NC
Even Months: Hickory, NC

Directions:
Please visit
[http://sacredstone.atlantia.sca.org/Events
.htm](http://sacredstone.atlantia.sca.org/Events.htm) for directions to the baronial
meetings/fighter practices.

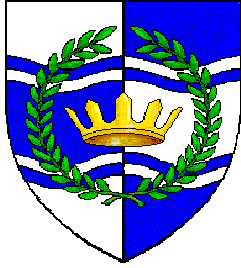


Happy Birthday to:

No birthdays this month!

Minutes from April 5th Business Meeting

Please contact Lady Alesia Gillefaly (Bonnie A. Harvey) alesiaglflyn@juno.com for the minutes of the April 5th business meeting.



Kingdom Calendar

June 2004


5	Summer University	Falcon Cree	Fountain Inn, SC
11-13	Highland River Melees	Highland Forde	Hagerstown, MD
11-13	Wastelands	Hindscroft	Pleasant Garden, NC
19	Spring in Hawkwood	Hawkwood	Asheville, NC
26-27	Tournament of Chivalry	Elvegast	Sanford, NC

July 2004

3	Battle for Jeffries Creek Demo	Misty Marsh	Florence, SC
9-11	King's Assessment	Black Diamond	Buena Vista, VA
10	Colossus of Rhondes	Crois Brigte	Winston-Salem, NC
17	Southern War Practice/A&S Symp.	Misty Marsh	Florence, SC

August 2004

6-22	Pennsic War XXXIII	K. of Aethelmearc	Slippery Rock, PA
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