



The Clouded Issue

A Newsletter for the Barony of Grey Niche
Kingdom of Gleann Abhann

June, 2019

Published Quarterly

Baron & Baroness—Master Guillermo Berenguer de los Almogavars & Mistress Arielle de Brabazon
Seneschal—Fatimah Al-Naqidah
Herald—Brenna Froggie ODuynie
Reeve—Mistress Kendra Dey
Knight Marshall—Sir Lorccán hua Conchobair
Youth Marshall—Brenna Froggie ODuynie
Quartermaster - VACANT
Rapier Marshall—Master Damiano Elie Bellini
Arts and Sciences—Tische Wallace
Chatelaine—Lord Sindri Ivarsson
Historian—THL Rhiadain n'a Rind Ailue
Chronicler—Baron Ivan Alexovich
Sheriff—Lord Emmanuel Labour
Webminister—Baroness Teresa Berconi
Minister of Children—VACANT

Regnum of Officers

Sunday—Heavy, Light & Youth Fighter Practice
Audubon Park—corner of Southern and Goodlett
1:00 p.m. training, stretching and arming
2:00 p.m. fighting

Wednesday—Heavy Fighter Practice
Greenbrook Lake Park - Stateline rd, MS., between Airways and Greenbrook Pkwy.
5:30 p.m. training
6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. fighting
*in the event of inclement weather, making and repairing armor in the shop
at Sir Lorccann's house—1955 Mount Badon Lane, Cordova, TN 38016.

Monthly Thegn Tourney!
Check the Grey Niche Facebook page for updates

Martial Activities...



Noblesse Oblige
By Sir Thomas of Aylesbury

Noblesse Oblige: from the French – Nobility Obligates. “The primary obligation of a nobleman is generosity to those around him,” from Merriam Webster.

Many years ago, I had the honor to be squired to Sir John the Bearkiller. He taught me much of import and value, but he couldn't teach me how to fight as he did. The wankel shield style he fought with held mysteries that I could not fathom and never mastered. I kept searching for a system of sword and shield combat that would work for me. The internet as it is today did not exist in the 1980s and 90s. There were no YouTube vids of fighters explaining their techniques, no translations of medieval fighting manuals from Hans Tallhoffer and such. I haunted the bookstores and martial arts shops, looking for books on Japanese and Chinese swordsmanship, trying to read my way into mastery of sword fighting.

In the summer of 1991 we all went to Pennics. It was marvelous, amazing, and magical: 10,000 people camping out in one enormous tent city. A week of courtesy, chivalry, fighting, shopping, fighting, dancing, classes, and more hands on experience in fighting. I wandered merchant row enjoying the outlandishness of shopping in a medieval tented shopping mall. And of course, looking for books on fighting. Alas, I already owned most of the offerings the booksellers had for sale. But in a book store at the top of Merchant's row I found this slim blue bound volume: “Fundamentals of Oldcastle Sword and Shield” by Duke Gyrth Oldcastle of Ravenspur. 62 pages. Thumbing through it, I saw it covered attack and defense

and constituted a complete system of combat. I don't remember how much it cost, but at that point it was coming home with me if I had to sell my blood to pay for it.

I took the book back to the camp and started reading: book in one hand, sword in the other. I was a chapter into it and going "What?" Elbow in the ear? Hand down parallel to the spine? What? I had never seen anything like the fighting system this book described. Shield foot forward in a reverse fencer stance, and if you fall over backwards you are doing it right? Some of my squire brothers were laughing at me as I staggered around the camp like a drunk, but I was determined to learn. After all, the author was a Duke, and they don't give those little pointed hats to just anyone.

I kept working on Oldcastle style after I got home, practicing every day in the privacy of my apartment. After several months I finally tried it out at a fighter practice, and lo and behold it worked. I wasn't great, but I was much better. I kept practicing.

In the summer of 1992 we went to Pennsics again. One day after a battle John called to me. I thought perhaps he wanted help carrying his armor back to his tent. Instead, he said "Thomas, I have someone I want you to meet. This is Sir Gyrth Oldcastle." Boom! I was like a Little League ball player getting to meet Babe Ruth. Barely managed to talk. Sir Gyrth said "Why don't you come over to my encampment this afternoon and I will work with you on some of the style." I don't know if my little puppy-dog face was showing or not but I couldn't agree fast enough. I went back to the tent and showered and dusted off my armor, and Brigid and I went in search of his camp. When we finally found it, Duke Gyrth was

sitting under a dining fly, taking his ease and talking with his Lady and some of his household. He greeted me and introduced me to the gentles around the table.

Now remember, this was August, and August in Pennsylvania is just about as miserably hot and humid as August in Grey Niche. Having fought all morning in the heat, he rose from his well-earned rest, and he spent an hour that afternoon under the hot Pennsylvania sun working with me on the particulars of Oldcastle Style. He was a Knight and a Duke, and I was Squire Nobody from some far off Kingdom who he would probably never see again, but he treated me as if I was a member of his household. And golly, could that older slightly plump Duke fight. Brigid still talks about how he turned from an elder statesman into a Tiger in the blink of an eye. I remember that he came at me so fast the first time that I didn't even see him move. He told me what I was doing right, he showed me what I was doing wrong, and he demonstrated the correct way to move. I learned much of Oldcastle style that afternoon. And I learned much of courtesy and chivalry as well.

Noblesse Oblige – the duty of the nobility. The last chapter in Sir Gyrth's book addresses this. He says that it is the duty of the nobility to make sure the populace is having a good time, not the duty of the populace to see that the nobility is having a good time. I will always remember a Duke getting up from his well-earned rest and teaching a squire from a foreign land how to fight better. I have always tried to follow his example. But more than that, I have before me the example of my Knight and his Lady. They have spent much of the last two decades serving the SCA as members of the BOD and as officers of the SCA, helping to ensure that

the rest of us Have an organized hobby to enjoy. And I think of all those other folks who labor in shadow, the many people who every year go to Gulf Wars and spend their entire week working so that the rest of us may enjoy our week of vacation.

Noblesse Oblige – it dwells in the corner of my sitting room, encouraging me to get out of my comfortable chair, and always strive to share my best with others.

(As always, my thanks to Mistress Brigid Mhor inghean Mhurichada for her input, her advice, and her considerable editorial skills.)

Meeting Calendar...

July

- 2 (Tu) - Business Meeting
- 9 (Tu) - A & S Class
- 21 (Su) - Business Meeting
- 23 (Tu) - Pre -Event Business Meeting

August

- 6 (Tu) - Business Meeting
- 13 (Tu) - A & S Class
- 18 (Su) - Business Meeting
- 27 (Tu) - A & S Class

September

- 3 (Tu) - Business Meeting
- 10 (Tu) - A & S Class
- 15 (Su) - Business Meeting
- 24 (Tu) - A & S Class

All meetings start at 7:00 pm
EXCEPT for Sunday Business Meetings, which start at 5:00 pm

All meetings are held at
1750 Madison, Suite 303

Seating is limited, it is recommended you bring a chair.

The following Baronial Officers need Deputies:

Reeve	Chatelaine
Knight Marshall	Historian
Rapier Marshall	Chronicler
Minister of Children	Quartermaster
Sheriff	Webminister

Please contact the officer or the Seneschal if you are interested in volunteering your time to serve as a deputy to an officer.

The following Baronial Offices Are VACANT, and need filling:

Minister of Children Quartermaster

Please contact the Seneschal if you are interested in volunteering your time to serve as an officer.

Every effort has been made to present correct information as a form of communication to the members of the Barony of Grey Niche. Please send all corrections, concerns and suggestions to Baron Ivan Alexovich: chronicler@greyniche.net.

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