
War of the Rams VII—Medieval Chivalry in Tyler County

TylerCountyBooster.com (11-22-2118), 1A & 4A
by Michael G. Maness, www.PreciousHeart.net

Banners from the Kingdoms of Ansteorra and Glenn Abhann flanked the banner of War of the Rams VII at the entrance to Jones Country, northeast of Colmesneil, which was transformed into a Middle Ages city of about 700 souls in hundreds of tents.

A colorful map with oversize illustrations like one might find at Disneyland provided an overview of the medieval countryside.

Artisans Row published a long list of activities and exhibitions including herbs, mead making, charter painting, history of court jesting, Norse and Viking dress, music of the era, pig-in-the-ground pit cooking, weaving, and northern pottages.

Escorted by the exquisite Her Excellency Melia de la Renaudiere, former Baroness of Bordermarch (aka, Melia Cobb), she introduced her daughter the current Baroness of Bordermarch Gabrielle de Lacy (aka, Krysten Smith) and Baron Meurick the Humble (aka, Bryan Smith) who are charged with the overseeing this extraordinary gathering.

Twenty “kingdoms” form the Society for Creative Anachronism grew out of the first gathering in 1966 at Berkeley University, California (SCA.org) into a worldwide group.

Mostly from the Fall of Rome to the Reformation, 450 to 1600 A.D., also known as the Middle Ages or Dark Ages, the SCA focus upon recreating historically authentic action and art.

Kingdom of Ansteorra (Ansteorra.org), Latin for “One Star,” covers most of Texas and Oklahoma, and the Kingdom of Glenn Abhann covers Mississippi, Louisiana, most of Arkansas and Tennessee (GleannAbhann.net).

From Thursday through Sunday, Nov. 15-18, the Ansteorran Barony of Bordermarch hosted the baronies from the two kingdoms.

Living the medieval life for the weekend, there was a peace and harmony as one might find in King Arthur’s Camelot.

Members research their choices. Clothing has a meaning. The emblem and colors from one’s kingdom, barony and house predominated. The color of a belt. The star on the crest. A crown here and



Archers practicing: Melia, Dave, Vivianna, Aefrich the Kestaell, Baron of Bordermarch Meurik the Humble, Baroness Gabrielle de Lacy.



Artisan Row showing medieval art, calligraphy, Rachel Little, Lisa Baumer, and Cindy Derrick



Scrolls by Sarah Belliam



In purple regalia Duchess Britta MacGregor

there.

A Medieval Cooking Class progressed under the watchful eye of Willoc MacNuiredaig, hosting a tasteful Traveler’s Pottage, Flummery with sauces, Chick Peas, and a pig-in-the-ground pit cooking that was still hours away from a delectable, juicy feast that would take place in the evening.

A Herald made announcements in a loud voice as he walked through the camp.

SCA has continually refined and added historical elements. Training on how to strike preceded certification for battle. The blunted swords, the caging over the face and neck, and every arrow meet SCA guidelines. Once shot, the arrow was disqualified for the remainder of the battle.

Resembling hollow bamboo, the heavy swords were made of solid rattan that will not splinter and approximates the weight of steel.

Even with heavy leather, chainmail, and armor, one could get seriously hurt.

On Friday they had the “First Blood Tourney” where rapiers met to test skills. Team melees. Siege weapons class. A torchlight ceremony.

On Saturday, more court formalities, armor inspection, children’s activities, and archery competitions mixed with craft persons of all kinds.

A bridge battle was followed by a “Get the Monks to Safety” rescue, where the task was to get the priests from the castle to a boat.

Serious about safety, the line between a bone-crushing blow and a violation was hard to see to a novice observer. To their credit, there are few injuries. There is that good in certifying people to fight.

Marshals moved around the main battle to keep a vigilant eye.

If something went awry, the marshal called out, “Hold!” Everything stopped, to assess the danger, correct a fighting violation, or to merely to clear the field of the dead.

The rapier battles resembled the Three Musketeers with speedy swashbuckling of steel instead of rattan, using the heavily screened face-covers seen in classic fencing.

Near the castle, dust rose as about 70 men and women clashed rattan swords, the air resounding with hundreds of heavy blows jabbing enemy armor.



Medieval Cooking Class in progress by Willoc MacNuiredaig with tasteful Traveler’s Pottage, Flummery with sauces, Chick Peas, and a pig-in-the-ground pit cooking



Fish in a Smoking Tent

Knights fell from “fatal” wounds honorably acknowledged.

The collision of warriors in armor fighting fiercely can be heard over a hundred yards away.

Queen Conal of Ansteorra (aka, Crystal Lemming) sat in regal splendor under a special tent, court courtesies extended. She was protected by Queen’s Guard, the huge Don Thorlund O’Shea (aka, Scott Cooper).

One got the feeling of lands of yore where chivalry lived by a code and legends came true.

Honor – all about honor. There was a special prohibition against bullying or harassment.

Code of the romantic Middle Ages was *lived* for this weekend, in creative anachronism, some not even using modern tents but opting to go rugged as one might actually camp in a German forest in A.D. 700.



Duke Lochlan Dunn, Countess Octavia de Verdan, and Count Daffydd Whitacre exchange pleasantries between melees

To officially join, one chose a name and persona related to one’s medieval profession or art. As simple as “Melissa the Mild,” “Richard the Lancer,” or as complicated as Anglo Saxon, Latin, German, or French may allow. Names are checked against a registry; one cannot assume an actual historical name or one previously used.



All pets had to be on lease, here are the striking German Shepherds (L-R) Hades, Posedion and Zeus. Lady Kalista Rostova and Lady Angelica Catolina Veronica de Granada escorting these fine canines, the latter noting that Zeus was also a Service Dog for her son who had seizures



Queen Conal of Ansteorra (aka, Crystal Lemming) is protected by Queen’s Guard, the huge Don Thorlund O’Shea (aka, Scott Cooper)

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This was a repose from 21st century technology. Only few cell phones were seen, not banned, but they seemed so inconvenient and out of place.

The evenings must be warmer, as exhausted warriors gathered around the camp fires, jesting over victories, perhaps even a tall tale or two.

Children actually played and talked to each other without iPads or that malicious distracting fantasy-making electronic babysitter moderns call television. The impression was that a TV here would be burned at the stake. Children had a whole village supervising, that is, when they were not themselves training in some art or martial skill.

Middle Age dancing and music filled the night air.

Food cooked over an open fire, fellowship between kingdoms, and new and old friends and families shared a respite from their respective and somewhat more barbarian cultures of modern work.

For a weekend, about 700 souls journeyed back in time to era of legend, lore, and lovely honor where beauty and brawn, art and archery, and a kindly court governed in chivalry.



Artisan Sarah Bellian designed the cover of this year's War of the Rams VII program



Metal Weaving of delicate necklaces and bracelets



Armored battle at castle from a distance



Warriors taking a break from battle include Ysfael Bryndu, Sir Henry le Hibow duBois, Michall Morison, Rosalinda da Salerno, Godric Daud, Sir Wilhelm von Buch



Weavers, seamstresses, and spinners exemplified their craft (L-R) Patty Randolph, Patsy Snyder, Charla Clark, Sabra Robinson, Kristen Mallett, Donna House, Katherine Watson, Joanne Murphy



Rapiers on the field



Cooks from several baronies provided era-specific dishes with modern lists of ingredients for diabetics and those with allergies



Official Court Jester Singe du Coffre (aka, Ty Brown), the *only* one allowed to “jest” a jab at the King and Queen, he gives a studious seminar on the history of the court jester



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Plastic medallion for all registered participants felt like a sandstone with carving of WotR for War of the Rams