

# The Crane's Call

Newsletter for the Shire of Caer Dun

December A.S. LVI



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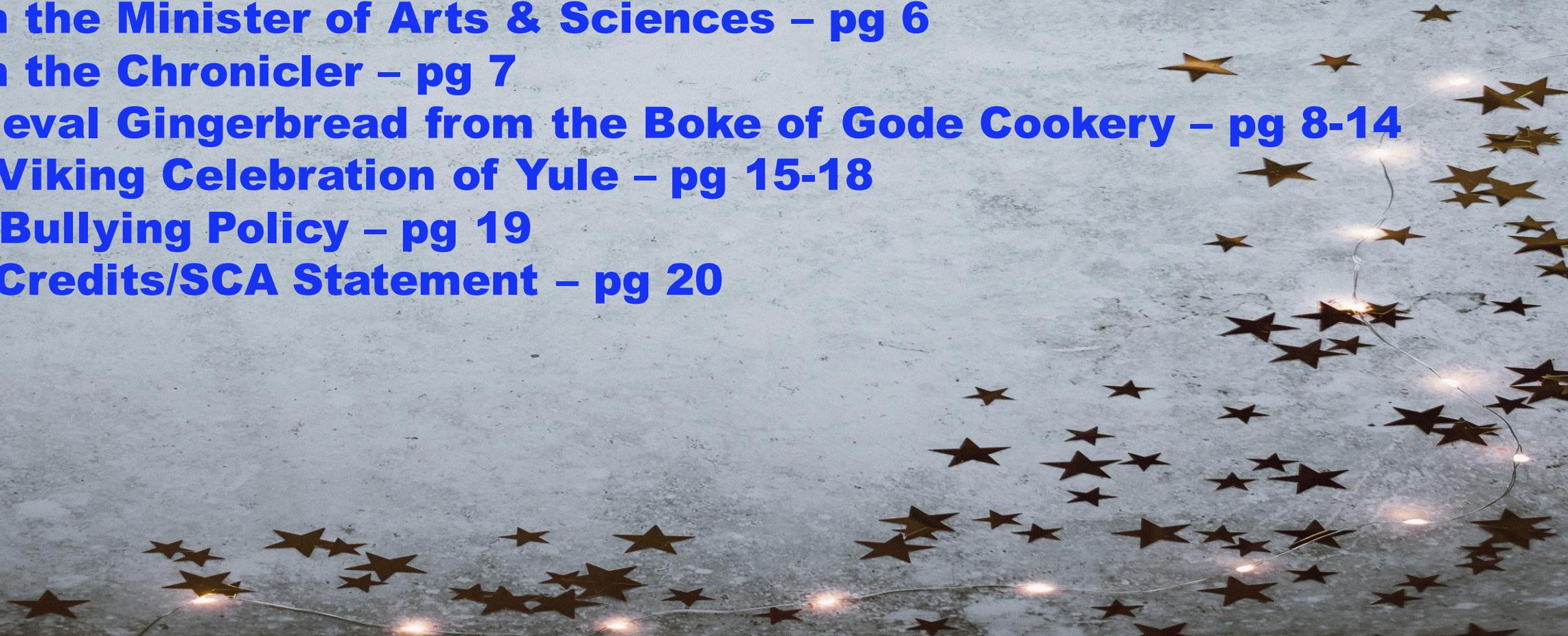
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# Regnum



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
			1 World AIDS Day	2	3	4 National Cookie Day
5	6 Hanukkah Begins At Sundown	7	8	9	10 International Animal Rights Day	11
12	13	14 Monkey Day!	15	16	17	18 Fighter practice 3pm Sandhill Ranch. Populace Meeting at Noon!
19	20	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day
26 Kwanzaa Begins	27	28	29	30	31 New Years Eve	

# From the Seneschal & Knight's Marshal

**Greetings Oh Great and Powerful Populace!,**

**I hope everyone had a wonderful Turkey Day! I spent half of mine in a coma I ate myself into! So, we had a very fun populace meeting this month. Anyone that missed it should be able to view the video on our Facebook page. Our December meeting will be on Sat Dec 18th at Sandhill Ranch, 13000 Mount Pleasant Rd, Vancleave MS 39565 at 12 noon. Fighter Practice will follow at the same location. There are several things we have in the mix right now to discuss so please make it if you can. Their Highnesses have requested we hold a Yeoman's Archery shoot at Spring Crown Lyst, so that's an added thing for the upcoming agenda. We will also be discussing some change up on dates and locations for the new year. We will have the grill lit for the lunch and Maiosara and I will feed y'all! Look forward to seeing everyone at Christmas Revel and the Meeting!**

**YIS,  
Ld Karsas Sarmatea called Talan  
Caer Dun Seneschal and Knight's Marshal**





# **Minister of Arts & Sciences**

**Greetings for a Happy Yule. If you have been in a creative mood, please take a moment to jot down what your project is. Send it to [caerdunaands@gmail.com](mailto:caerdunaands@gmail.com). I'm always interested in what you are making or creating. Heck, you might inspire me!**

**Wishing you all the happiest holiday seasons. May your hearts and homes be filled with love.**

**In Service to the Dream,  
THL Bailey Rose Marsh**



# From the Chronicler

**Howdy Shire folk! Well the end of the year is upon us and we have grown as a group. Huzzah! Crown List is looking good and I want to thank everyone for being so awesome! Happy Holidays to everyone. If you have anything for the January newsletter please send it with a release form if you do not have one on file.**

**While I am unable to attend meetings currently, please Officers keep everyone informed as much as possible. We are working on Crown 2022 and it is coming along great. All hands on deck for this please! WE NEED YOU!**

**Have A Holly Jolly Christmas! Happy Holidays! Merry Yule! Kool Kwanza!**

In Service to Crown and Kingdom,  
HE Devin Phelan ODonnabhain





*Molded, gilded, & colored gingerbread in the form of a Tudor Rose.  
Created by Tammy Crawford.*

# Medieval Gingerbread

By James L. Matterer

**The gingerbread being discussed in this article comes from recipes originally used in the 14th & 15th centuries, and isn't anything at all like our modern cake-like variety. It is in fact more like a candy or a confection; however, it's very good and quite a treat, and I can recommend it to anyone with a bit of a sweet tooth. I've made many versions of it and it is always well received. This type of gingerbread was among the many sweets brought to Chaucer's Sir Thopas in *Canterbury Tales* :**

***"They fette hym first the sweete wyn, and mede eek in a mazelyn, and roial spicerye of gyngebreed that was ful fyn, and lycorys, and eek comyn, with sugre that is trye."***

**The version I use most often comes from *Two 15th c. Cookery-Books* by Thomas Austin, 1888. This book is compiled from several period English manuscripts, most notably Harleian MS. 279 and Harleian MS. 4016, both circa 1425-1450:**

***"Gyngerbrede.—Take a quart of hony, & sethe it, & skeme it clene; take Safroun, pouder Pepir, & throw ther-on; take grayted Bred, & make it so chargeaunt that it wol be y-lechyd; then take pouder Canelle, & straw ther-on y-now; then make yt square, lyke as thou wolt leche yt; take when thou lechyst hyt, an caste Box leves a-bouyn, y-stykyd ther-on, on clowys. And if thou wolt haue it Red, coloure it with Saunderys y-now."***

**William Edward Mead in *The English Medieval Feast*, p. 65, calls this *"gingerbread without the ginger!"* and offers this translation:**

***"Take a quart of honey and seethe it and skim it clean. Take saffron, powdered pepper, and throw thereon. Take grated bread and make it so stiff that it will be leched (cut in slices). Then take cinnamon powder and strew thereon enough. Then make it square as though thou wouldst slice it. Take, when thou slicest it, and cast box leaves above, stuck thereon in cloves. And if thou will have it red, color it with saunders (sandalwood) enough."***

***Curye on English*, a collection of period cookbooks including *Forme of Cury*, gives this definition: "Gyngebred; not to be confused with the cake-like variety, made from breadcrumbs boiled in honey with spices: not the modern cake but more like it than the confection." The good ladies who are the authors of *Curye on English* (and of *Pleyn Delit*, a collection of period recipes transcribed for the modern cook), feel that the ginger has been mistakenly left out of this particular recipe by a forgetful scribe; however, I'm not sure I entirely agree. I have made this recipe many times without ginger, and the results were always delicious! As it is above, this is like a honey candy, and the ginger is neither needed nor missed. But here's what *Pleyn Delit* says: "Do not expect this gingerbread to resemble its modern spice-cake descendant. Both texture and flavor will be quite different, though equally delicious. But we must make up for the absent-mindedness of the scribe who neglected to tell us when to add ginger." Period recipes from other manuscripts such as *Goud Kokery* are similar to this but do contain the ginger, so there indeed were several different versions floating around during period. Certainly, don't be afraid to try the ginger-less version. It really is good.**

# Gingerbread

- **1 lb. Honey - I prefer organic, or something made with a flavored flower blossom, etc., but feel free to use your favorite. Just remember that the final product is affected by the flavor of the honey you choose.**
- **Bread Crumbs - up to a pound, maybe more, maybe less. These must be UNSEASONED bread crumbs, though either white or wheat, or a combination, is fine. Be sure that they are finely ground and not soft in any way.**
- **ginger (optional!) - up to 1 Tbs.**
- **cinnamon - up to 1 Tbs.**
- **ground white pepper - up to ½ tsp.**
- **pinch saffron, if desired, but not important here**
- **few drops red food coloring (optional)**

**Bring the honey to a boil and skim off any scum. Keeping the pan over very low heat, add the spices, adjusting the quantities to suit your taste. Add the food coloring "if you will have it red." Then begin to slowly beat in the bread crumbs. Add just enough bread to achieve a thick, stiff, well-blended mass. Remove from the heat and turn the mixture onto a lightly greased (cooking spray works fine) square or rectangular baking sheet or shallow pan, ½ to 1 inch thick. Take a rolling pin & spread the gingerbread evenly out into the pan. Turn the pan over onto wax paper or parchment paper, & tap gently until the gingerbread falls from the pan. Turn the gingerbread over once again, then cut into small squares to serve. (A diamond shape is also very nice.) Decorate with small leaves (real or candy) attached to each piece with a clove.**

**So, that's medieval gingerbread! One hint: on occasions when I've been rushed, I've simply taken the mixture, when cooled slightly, and rolled it into small balls. This works nearly as well, and can be easier & faster to make. Children also love to create their own designs with this playdough-like edible, and for a school or home project, they can be put in charge of molding the gingerbread into a variety of objects. I've seen children make snakes, animals, and even a little model airplane out of this recipe! And they always enjoy eating the final product afterwards.**

**The period recipe call for the gingerbread to be decorated with box leaves fastened to each piece with a clove. I usually use any attractive, small, non-poisonous leaf or a candy imitation, and either place one in each piece or just garnish the platter with several of the leaves. If you're using real leaves, please advise the diners to remove them first! Beware: on hot, sticky days the gingerbread may become soft and a little gooey, but it holds up very well in cool weather, and can be refrigerated for several weeks.**

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# **The Viking Celebration of Yule**

**by Elska á Fjárfelli, of the Dominion of Myrkfaelinn**

**Going down the rabbit hole can result in some interesting finds. During my digging into historic brewing techniques, I came across the following story. I thought it offered a nice peek behind the curtains into the life of the modern Viking — what is Christmas without a ghost story — which is why I am sharing it now with you.**

**Historians believe that the way of life of rural Scandinavians did not significantly change for hundreds of years, if not more, and that many of the traditions and techniques as found in the 19th and early 20th century could even go back as far as Viking times. The following account is called “Christmas preparations and Christmas” and is written by Norwegian Guro Hoftun Narum. The chapter is part of the book *Livet i en fjellbygd omkring århundreskiftet* (Life in a mountain village around the turn of the century), which was published in 1965.**



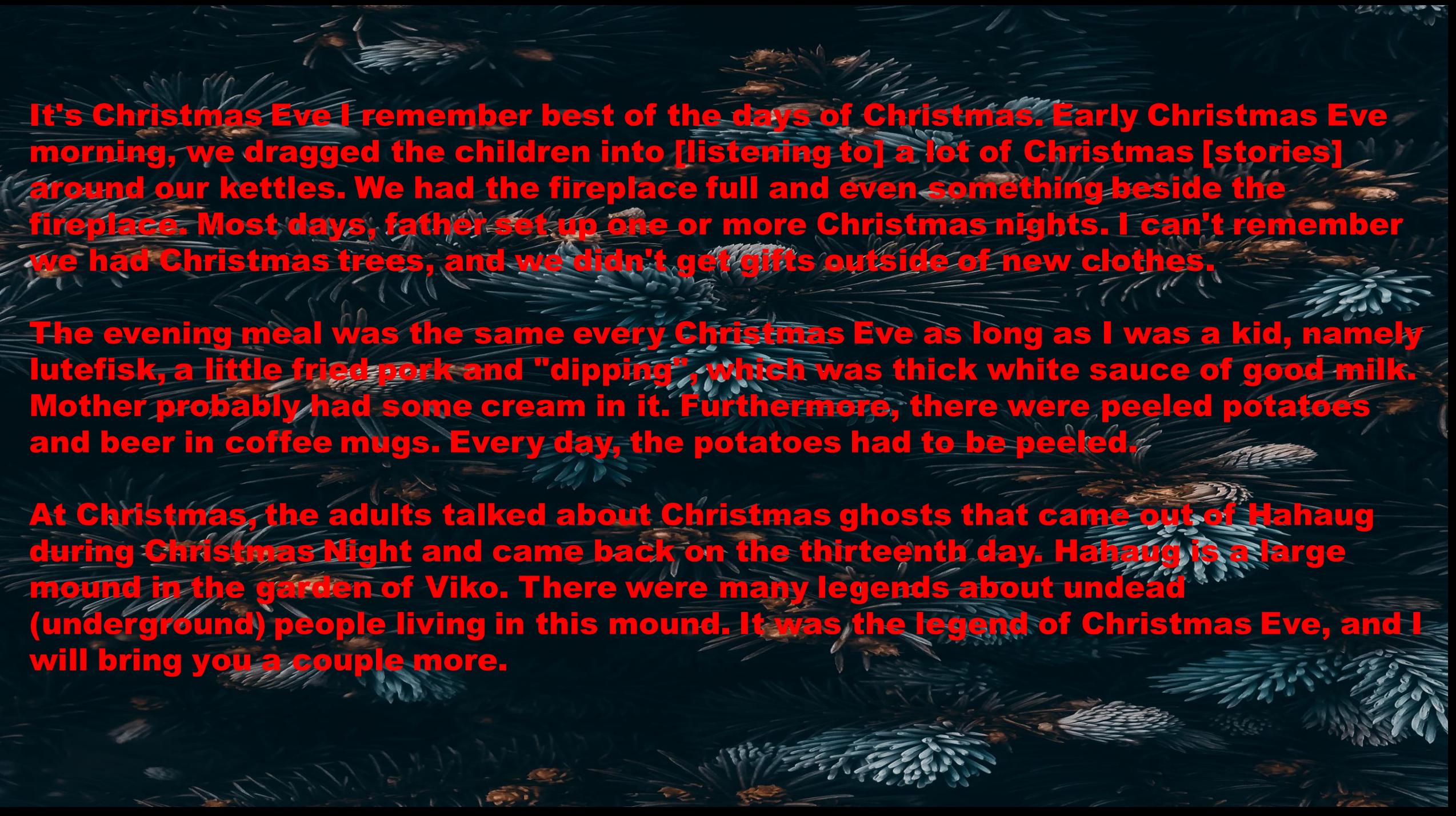
**In the good time before Christmas, the pigs were slaughtered. As a rule, it was the wife of the garden who cooked the cracklings and made pork stew and meat baskets (sausages). In part of the Christmas baking, they used pork dumplings.**

**One time before Christmas they bought a bunch of lutefisk, which had to lie [soak] in strong ash [potash lye] until it had swelled. New water had to be refreshed until the water was completely shiny and the fish was light and glossy as well.**

**Then the containers of Christmas beer were prepared. First, they sprout barley grain with some water. The grain grew, sprouted, then became lofty. They had it in a big wooden tray inside the living room, because it was warm. While the grain was growing, they sometimes touched [checked] it, and when it was fit, they dried it in the sauna. From the sauna they put it in the mill and got it roughly ground.**

**The women brewed beer from the malt. [...] The beer fermented a little in the barrel as well, and there was some yeast on the bottom of the barrel. When the beer was**

**drunk, they emptied the yeast into a dish and let it dry out, and when this yeast had dried out, they kept it until they had to make bread dough. Before it came from the cookers [could be purchased], baked fermented bread was preferred only for Christmas.**



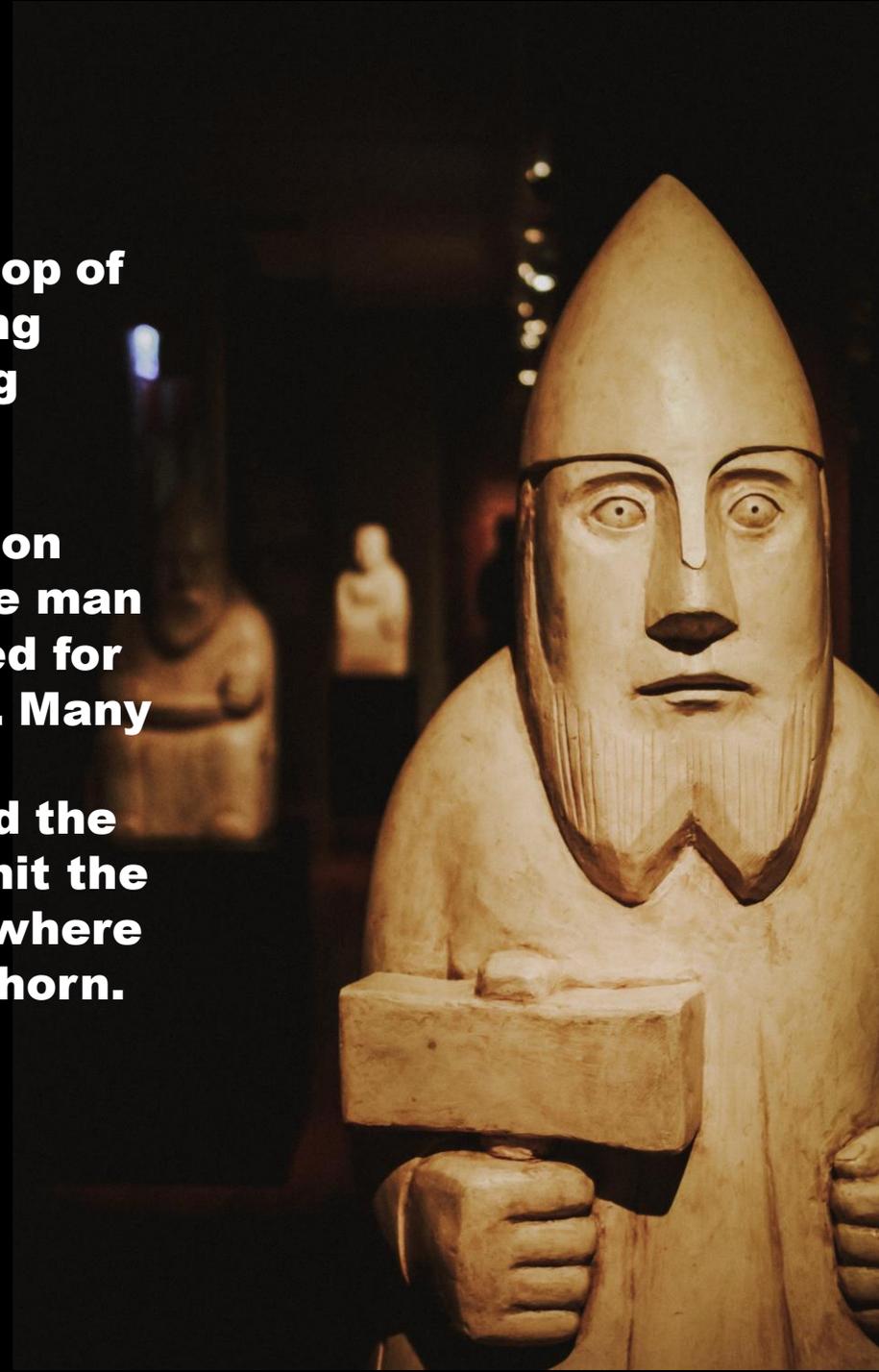
**It's Christmas Eve I remember best of the days of Christmas. Early Christmas Eve morning, we dragged the children into [listening to] a lot of Christmas [stories] around our kettles. We had the fireplace full and even something beside the fireplace. Most days, father set up one or more Christmas nights. I can't remember we had Christmas trees, and we didn't get gifts outside of new clothes.**

**The evening meal was the same every Christmas Eve as long as I was a kid, namely lutefisk, a little fried pork and "dipping", which was thick white sauce of good milk. Mother probably had some cream in it. Furthermore, there were peeled potatoes and beer in coffee mugs. Every day, the potatoes had to be peeled.**

**At Christmas, the adults talked about Christmas ghosts that came out of Hahaug during Christmas Night and came back on the thirteenth day. Hahaug is a large mound in the garden of Viko. There were many legends about undead (underground) people living in this mound. It was the legend of Christmas Eve, and I will bring you a couple more.**

**When the undead people in Hahaug were visited by other undergrounders, they held feasts. The music-man sat on top of the mound and played, and the others danced a kind of ring dance around the mound. Some of the people kept burning torches in the room.**

**Another legend is about a man who rode away to Hahaug on Christmas Eve. He saw a light shine inside the mound. The man greeted and called out Merry Christmas, and then he asked for a Christmas story. "It's old custom and use here," he said. Many women and men came out of the mound, and one of them handed the man a silver-plated drinking horn. He accepted the horn, but sprinkled its contents behind him so some of it hit the horse, and the horse was scorched on both hair and skin where the contents hit it. He should not have taken the drinking horn.**



**Updated Statement of Core Values At the Board of Directors July 2018 meeting, the following policy was approved and is to be considered effective immediately: SCA Statement of Core Values In pursuing its mission, the SCA is committed to excellence in its programs, communications and activities and to**

- act in accordance with the chivalric virtues of honor and service;**
- value and respect the worth and dignity of all individuals;**
- practice inclusiveness and respect pluralism and diversity;**
- promote a safe and respectful environment for all SCA events;**
- act with transparency, fairness, integrity and honesty;**
- be a responsible steward of SCA resources; and,**
- be committed to maintaining the trust of its members and participants.**

**It is the expectation of the SCA that its members and participants, in all events and activities of the SCA, will conduct themselves in accordance with these tenets. Comments are strongly encouraged and can be sent to: SCA Inc. Box 360789 Milpitas, CA 95036 You may also email [comments@lists.sca.org](mailto:comments@lists.sca.org). This announcement is an official informational release by the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. Permission is granted to reproduce this announcement in its entirety in newsletters, websites and electronic mailing lists. Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion <https://www.sca.org/dei-office/> <https://www.sca.org/dei-office/dei-resources/> <https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/DEI-handbook.pdf> <https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/DEIMissionVision.pdf>**



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