

# The Fibre Guild of Lochac

## Issue Five, Newsletter Twelfth Night A.S. XXXIX

From the Editor

Hello everyone!

After a fit of vagueness in November when I accidentally FORGOT to send out the newsletter, we have a bumper issue for Twelfth Night!

We are continuing with our ongoing project of providing cords for award medallions. Lady Teffania is collecting these for Twelfth Night.

Also, the gifts of hanks of wool for Queen Serena and King Draco have been much appreciated, and I think that Their Majesties have enjoyed the ongoing gifts!

As everyone will probably know by now, our next Queen of Lochac is going to be our own Mistress Mathilde. Instead of a gift at the end of her and Stephen's reign, she has requested instead that the Fibre Guild assist her with the tokens for the Queen's Guard. These are going to be gloves knitted in the style of the Sture glove, which will make lovely and very authentic favours.

A whole bevy of wonderful volunteers answered my request for glove knitters, and the kits are wending their way to these volunteers right now! This batch of gloves will be needed for Rowany Festival, as some local knitters have already completed some gloves for Her Highness Mathilde's Coronation at Twelfth Night. Once again I am impressed with the generosity and skill of our guild members.

**Rohese**



An example of a glove  
for Her Majesty's  
Guard

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## Website review- Needles!

<http://www.jklneedles.com>

This shop stocks all sorts of specialty needles and other products, including products for knitting, lacemaking, tatting and others. Although they do have an actual shop, it is very easy to order their products over the internet.

I have only purchased knitting needles from them, and I was very pleased with their selection and service. They stock many brands and materials of needles, including extremely fine steel needles, wooden needles, different lengths, sizes and materials of double pointed needles.

They also stock various reference books and pattern books, although you could probably obtain the books from other sources.

Postage to Australia is quite reasonable if all of your order will fit into a certain sized parcel. As they use International priority mail, it also arrives quite quickly.



A woollen pouch produced using nalbinding, by Baroness Merewyn. This pouch and other similar pouches were among the gifts given to the Royalty of other kingdoms at Pennsic.

# Tablet Woven Seal Tag

By Lady Iseabail inghean Domhnall mhic Donnchaidh (Taryn East)

## \*\*\* How I came to decide to do this. \*\*\*

A Call went out on the scribes list that was echoed onto the fibreguild list, asking people to create a seal-tag, using aspects of the Lochac device to carry the kingdom pendant seal on important lochac documents.

A discussion ensued discussing differing seal tags, with the consensus being that there is a wide variety of seal tags covering various fibre arts such as fingerloop braiding, tablet-weaving and more. I liked the idea of doing a tablet-woven design as I was just then finishing a very difficult 3/1 twill pattern and had become enthused about this particular technique.

## \*\*\* "What exactly is a seal tag", you ask? \*\*\*

A seal is used to make sure a document has been officially "sanctioned" by the person doing the sealing... A pendant seal is one that hangs off the bottom of a document... being attached to said document by the seal tag A seal tag is thus either a braid, ribbon or bit of vellum upon which said seal is attached.

Generally, when a document has been written up, there is a bit of a gap at the bottom. This is often folded up to the point where the writing finished, and then sealed so that everyone can be certain that nothing was added to the bottom of the document once "done" (this is important for stuff like wills and deeds).

If sealed with a pendant seal, a slit was cut through all the requisite layers of the paper/vellum of the folded section, and the seal tag passed through the slit. The ends were gathered at the bottom and the pendant seal encased both ends so that it was certain that it was sealed together.

## \*\*\* My very small amount of research \*\*\*

I researched seal tags on the web (I'm a bit of a lazy researcher) but came across an article called "5 tablet woven seal tags" by Audrey Henshall, which seemed to fit my criteria. I read through it quickly and skipped to the pictures which were of some quite narrow bands with mini designs such as fylfots and other such things.

The tags were all made out of very fine silk and about 5mm wide. They were mainly done with double-turn, double-face, rather than 3/1 twill, but I figured it wasn't too much of a departure to use the alternative technique.

I liked the designs, but the call was to try to incorporate some items of the Lochac device. I played around with designs, but to find anything that fit the charges (and actually look like what they were meant to look like), I had to make the band a little wider (about 1cm wide eventually)... so as not to compromise my "artistic integrity" with boring designs ;)

**\*\*\* First false start \*\*\***

By now I had become quite enthused about all this and went down to Lincraft and bought myself some sewing-machine silk - very fine - in red, white and blue.

I had decided to try to incorporate all three colours in by trying to learn 6-hole weaving... surely there's some sort of 3/1 equivalent for 6-hole, I thought...

I had a bit of a go at experimenting with the cards to see what I could come up with. I was imagining that you could put 2 threads of each of the three colours in and swap between each colour at will (with card twists) and thus come out with any arrangement of the three.

You see, the Lochac device (if you squint real hard and pretend it's a pattern) has three colours down each vertical bit... you go from white-on-blue to white-on-red to plain white down one side, and similar on the other side... it would be nice to be able to effortlessly change between all three colours (dream, dream)...

It was a disaster. I found that for six-hole weaving, you need it to be 4/1 twill - otherwise you get horrible long-floats on either the back or the front, which span the entire length of the section that you are doing the twill over. This means that with 2x2x2 colours you can't have nice, smooth blocks of each colour as you'd always have intrusions by one of the other colours... thus the three-colours ideal was out the window.

**\*\*\* Back to four-hole \*\*\***

So I went back to the usual method that I was familiar with (and know how to make patterns for) and decided to have a go at hacking out the patterns.

I spent some time playing with the different elements of the device. The star was a bit tricky to get to look star-like, but I fairly quickly got a nice-looking crown done - even with the knobbly bits on top of the pointy-bits. The laurel took a few different goes and I redid the stars again when I realised they were 6-pointed mullets, not 5-pointed ones (don't know how I missed that).

Eventually I was happy and drew them up neatly on graph-paper (the tablet-weaver's friend) and did the two turning-patterns (one for if it started on the z-twist row, one for if it started on the s-twist row).

I loaded up the cards (which took forever, but everyone knows that's half the work in tablet-weaving). The pattern had ended up 31 cards wide to accommodate the laurel pattern - which needed to be that wide to make it actually look leafy and oval-shaped (instead of just a ragged-edged oval blob).

I decided to make the band red and white to match the centre-stripe of the lochac device where there are red stars/crown on white. I had decided that the laurel (while normally white on blue) would just have to serve as white on red - I was not able to do the three-colour stuff...

The edges carried the blue and I had made them checky so that they might feel like the blue/white quarters of the Lochac device.

### \*\*\* Life through a microscope \*\*\*

I decided that I would beat it fairly hard as I wanted it to be a really even consistency, and the only way I could ensure that was to make sure I beat everything as hard as I could. I began weaving.

To my horror I discovered that the designs were coming out *\*tiny\**. I had originally planned on making the design so that it would be: star-crown-star laurel and then repeat for the other side.

I quickly changed my mind and so the design became: star-crown-star laurel star-crown-star. I even did some swift "making up some room" stuff, some stripes on the ends (which would be covered by the seal itself) and in the fold-over bit (that would go through the slit in the page) - by adding some dodgy-looking chevrons, but it still looks a little bit shorter than I had expected.

However, the going was *\*very\** slow. The very fine thread coupled with hard beating meant that each row made only minuscule progress. The complexity of the pattern, coupled with the incredibly fine (and therefore difficult to work with) threads meant that any mistake in the pattern was very difficult to spot which meant that I'd often gone past it by an hour's worth of work before I noticed it... which meant an hour-and-a-half of undoing before going back and re-doing that original hour's work... before finally being able to go on with the pattern.

I'm sure you can understand that I gave up in frustration several times along the way and let it just sit there gathering dust for many weeks before finally gathering up enough strength to pick it up again.

### \*\*\* Finishing touches \*\*\*

Anyway, I did eventually finish the lot and I was very glad once I had. I decided to try a new finishing-off-the-ends idea. Previously I had just done a knot in each card's-worth of threads, but due to the number of threads/cards in such close proximity, the knots all elbow each other for room and the end looks knobbly and bumpy and not really as nicely-finished as it could.

So I decided to try to make a 4-strand plait out of the threads for each card (just like brides from bobbin-lace) and this worked out quite well. It meant that the finishing-knot was away from the worked-edge of the piece and thus the knots didn't all bunch up together but actually spread out the tassle-ends slightly which I think made a nice fan-shape for the threads.. I cut the thread ends into the tassles and voila!

**\*\*\* Final thoughts \*\*\***

I think I don't like working with something so small - there is little sense of progress and it is much more finicky. It takes way too much time for me to try to repeat the effort with any frequency.

Even despite my best efforts, the beating seems to have been slightly different - evident in the fact that the "star-crown-star" sections all come out to different lengths, though it matches up in the end.

It's definitely wider than any of the piccies I've seen of tablet-woven braids - so that's artistic license rather than accuracy, but I hope the effect of the funky designs compensates for that.

Anyway, it took around 100 hours but it's done and I sigh that sigh of relief that everyone does when they finish a long, involved project :) ... til next time.

The beautiful seal tag in question...



## Controversy Corner- Grading & Ranking Guidelines

### Basic Guidelines for Rankings for Fibre Guild

After discussion between the guildmasters, we have come up with these basic guidelines for ranking items. However, we still need input from the members of the guild!

- These are guidelines only- an item may be ranked above or below what is given in the table, depending on the individual circumstances.
- Items for grading should be complete.
- Where possible items should be an actual object, not just a sample piece.
- Oral documentation will not be accepted for journeyman or above.
- Written documentation and patterns should be placed in the guild archives.

	<b>Novice</b>	<b>Journeyman</b>	<b>Master</b>
Spinning (differentiate between drop & wheel spinning)	Uneven consistency (slubs), uneven degree of twist, spinning from prepared roving or tops	Washes & cards own fibres, even consistency and twist	Spins a wide variety of fibres, excellent consistency over a range of thickness'
Weaving	Uneven selvages, simple weave such as tabby	Even selvages & packing of weft. Awareness of period techniques.	Applied knowledge of period weaving techniques, patterns and uses. Appropriate use of materials
Dying	Modern chemical dyes or modern natural dye	Awareness of period techniques, ingredients, colours and recipes. Appropriate reasoning when these are not used.	Researched recipe from period, consistent over several batches, tried on several different fibre types

	<b>Novice</b>	<b>Journeyman</b>	<b>Master</b>
Tablet weaving	Basic weave with threaded in patterning	Experimenting with different patterns & techniques (including double face), moving into using more cards and different threads. Good tensions and edges. Awareness of period techniques and materials	Complex brocaded pattern, working at a fine gauge with appropriate materials. 3/1 twill and pattern twining. Appropriate use of finished weaving
Cording	Simple lucet or fingerlooping, uneven tension	More complex pattern, two colours, even tension. Awareness of period styles	Appropriate use of techniques, materials and finished articles. Even more complex patterning (multi colours added bits etc)
Knitting	Simple unshaped item such as scoggers or a simple bag	More shaping, appropriate gauge and materials e.g. caps, mittens, simple stockings Simple fulled item e.g. acorn cap.	Devised own pattern, complex item, at a fine gauge. Use of period techniques. e.g. relic purse, Eleanora stockings More complex fulled item.
Nalbinding	Use of basic stitch, simple unshaped item.	Even tension, some shaping, finer gauge	Use of complex stitch, item requiring complex shaping, fine gauge.



	<b>Novice</b>	<b>Journeyman</b>	<b>Master</b>
Bobbin lace	First attempts using basic plaits. Many of the modern techniques are non period but there are some lovely edgings that are quite simple. Basically working with what may have been taught in a beginner's class	Awareness of period patterns, equipment, materials and techniques. Slightly more complex braids and plaits as well as well executed period-style laces	Use of complex period patterns. Appropriate use of period materials. Appropriate use of finished laces.
Felting	First attempt, lumpy and uneven	Somewhere in between!	Highly shaped item (such as a hat), even felting, even 'joins' between felted sections
Other			

Any other comments or suggestions: Send these to the email list, or to me & I can include them in the next newsletter.

## Knitted Gloves as Favours

By Meroe M. Cahill (Rohese de Fairhurst)

Figure 1



During the SCA period, favours were given as a token of esteem or patronage, and often took the form of a piece of clothing or jewellery; a personal item which could easily be removed from one's person and given to a favourite person. Favours used in period were often ribbons or sashes, sleeves from a dress, a glove, a handkerchief, a piece of jewellery, or very 'personal' items such as a shift or undertunic <sup>1</sup>.

Figure 1 shows a detail of a painting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Cumberland, painted in approximately 1590 by Hilliard, the premier miniaturist of Elizabeth's court. The miniature shows the Earl in his role as Queen's Champion of the Tilt, and it should be noted that he wears a glove pinned to the front of his hat as a favour <sup>2</sup>. This shows the suitability of gloves as favours for members of the Queen's Guard.

Queen Elizabeth was given many pairs of gloves as gifts, and was particularly fond of perfumed gloves <sup>3</sup>. The gloves could be presented with great ceremony, as part of a Royal progress, or as New Year gifts.

Another example of a glove used as a favour was a knitted glove belonging to Sten Svanseson Sture, who died in 1565, and whose relics were preserved in Uppsala cathedral. The intricately knitted glove was attached to his hat, and is very small, indicating that it was made for a girl, and has the words 'Frevchen Sofia' knitted across the palm of the hand, so it is assumed that the glove was from his fiancée, Sofia <sup>4</sup> (Figure 2).

The glove is made from silk, and has patterns in a beige background, and bands of light orange, pale green, white, yellow and maroon, as well as stripes of gold on the fingers, to imitate gold rings. The thumb is a 'peasant' style thumb, as it has no gores or shaping, and it is inserted into a single row of knitting. All of the fingers start at the same level, although they differ in circumference and length. The glove is quite small, measuring only 17cm in length and 7cm across the palm. It is knitted at a gauge of 9 stitches/cm (approximately 22 stitches/inch).

A much simpler 16<sup>th</sup> century knitted hand covering is a child's mitten, which is white with a simple black and white pattern around the wrist<sup>4</sup>. A photograph of it (and a child's stocking and shirt) can be seen at the Museum of London website <sup>5</sup>.

Figure 2



## References

1. Munro, Alianora. "A Survey of Tokens in the Middle Ages and Renaissance",  
<http://hometown.aol.com/noramunro/Tokens/index.htm>
2. Strong, Roy. "The English Renaissance Miniature", Thames & Hudson, 1984.
3. Arnold, Janet. "Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd", Maney, 1988.
4. Rutt, Richard. "A History of Handknitting", Interweave Press, 1980.
5.  
<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/MOLsite/piclib/pages/bigpicture.asp?id=144>

## Administrivia

### Local Wardens

The following members have volunteered to be the Warden for their group:

Politararchopolis - Lady Morag Freyser

Agaricus - Mistress Marit the Wanderer OP

St-Florian-de-la-Riviere - Mistress Leanore of Orkney OL

RiverHaven - Baroness Glynhyvar OP

Bordescros Lady Lowry

Ynys Fawr - Mistress Miriam d' Mont Noir OP

### Guild Masters

Mistress Margie of Glen More (Arrowreach)

Mistress Miriam Galbraith (Stormhold)

Mistress Rohese de Fairhurst (Politararchopolis)

Mistress Mathilde Adycote of Menhiot (Politararchopolis)

Mistress Leanore of the Orkneys (St Florain-de-la-riviere)

### Webmistress

Lady Gwennie

### Contacting the Chronicler:

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