

**James Randall Leader Essay Prize:** Selection committee member, Molly Martin, presented this year's Leader Prize to Kathleen Coyne Kelly. The citation read:

“This year's James Randall Leader Prize for best Arthurian essay goes to Kathleen Coyne Kelly, for her article ‘Arthurian Things,’ published in *Arthuriana* 25.4 (2015): 94–107. Competition for the prize was both strong and varied, but Kelly's article really stood out. ‘Arthurian Things’ emerged as the most exceptional due to its originality (in both topic and approach), due to its vast range (encompassing ideas, objects, and texts medieval and modern), and due to its absolutely delightful style.

As the article title suggests, Kelly is attuned to Arthurian things—especially, but not only, souvenirs. Kelly approaches these things and their ‘thinginess’ using an object-oriented ontology to uncover and tease out ‘novel relations’ with these objects. As she argues, ‘Attending to the object *qua* object can be exhilarating, dangerous, and liberatingly defamiliarizing.’ The analysis that follows bears this out, both for the stuffed dragons, Round Table coasters, the ‘A Knight to Remember’ Gothic Bath Tissue Holder, and so forth that Kelly examines, and for the article itself.

This article explores and indulges in both real and imaginary objects, in keeping with the long tradition of Arthurian things and our attachments to them. Kelly reaches back to the Arthurian objects of the Middle Ages, and to Caxton's ‘Preface’ to Malory's *Morte Darthur* and offers new ways for us to make sense of the desire to concretize the ephemerality of the legend. This article helps us understand the multivalence of Arthurian objects then and now, always both representations of this imagined past and materializations fraught with meaning today. In this way she strikes out on a path divergent from much object-oriented ontology and pioneers a new way Arthurian scholars can and should think about the legend that they study and perhaps fetishize.

It is this newness—artfully rooted in the centuries-long perseverance of the legend and its things—that makes this article so valuable to the field. But the enjoyment in this piece extends beyond its thoughtful and perceptive reading of objects. This article is refreshingly fun. It wittily gallops along at a quick pace, all the while enticing one to slow and pensive reading. ‘Arthurian Things,’ then must be praised for straddling the borders between the scholarly and the popular, and doing so without sacrificing either.”