

The Fencer's, Dancer's, and Bearbaiter's Quarterly

The Newsletter of the Southwark Trayn'd Bands

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'Ever But in Times of Need At Hand'

May 1994

Greetings again from the FDBBQ, internationally recognised as the finest Trained Bands newsletter in North America... As always, the Trayned Bands welcome any interested parties to get in touch with us. Principal contacts are:

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Upcoming Events

April 29-May 1 1994: The Raid on Mousehole, VA. An STB-hosted event commemorating the one time the Spaniards actually made it onto English soil.

June 4-5 1994: Siege of Shapwick, Ethel, Ontario (near Stratford). An English Civil War event in which the northern arm of the STB will be playing a prominent role. Call Jeffrey Singman for information.

July 2-3 1994: Battle of Marston Moor, England (350th anniversary re-enactment). At least one of us will be there, and take the opportunity to meet with our brethren of the Tower Hamlets Trained Bands in England, hopefully bringing back useful lore from across the Atlantic.

Mid-August 1994: Pennsic War. We are hoping to field an Elizabethan camp at this SCA event, with demonstrations of pike-and-musket drill and yet another Elizabethan Night. With luck, we may actually get all three wings of the Bands together for this. Call Jeff Morgan for information.

October 1994: St Mary's Muster, St Mary's City, MD. This is a major event for the 17c/ECW re-enacting crowd, and we are very interested in having a high-profile presence there in 1994. Call Jeff Morgan for information.

The Village of Shapwick (our affiliate site in Ethel Ontario) is continuing to develop the grounds; we have completed the foundation of the alehouse, and are working on the timber frame. Shapwick weekends take place on the last weekend of every month, and generally involve some time on working on the alehouse (which we do in costume, as a good opportunity to practise persona), a workshop on some period skill, and a festive meal and socialising. Call Jeffrey Singman for details.

The Siege of Gloucester—A Colonial Perspective...

[The following report from last year's Siege of Gloucester event comes from STB member Michael 'Mickey O'Myatt' Myatt:]

This past August, during England's bank holiday weekend, my wife Janice and I attended the re-enactment of the Siege of Gloucester by the Sealed Knot Society. We met up with Bill Craig and a few members of Lloyd's Blewe Regiment of Foot at Gloucester and I joined the ranks of the pikemen of Lords Saye and Sele's foot. Janice fell in with the camp followers.

For those of you who, like me, somehow missed this pivotal confrontation between King and Parliament in English History 205, let me supply a little background information.

During the summer of 1643, the Royalists had been fairly successful in subduing England's west country: one of the few

remaining Parliamentary outposts was Gloucester. By August Charles was in a position to attack that city and by the 10th he had brought 8000 horse and foot to besiege the place. Gloucester was garrisoned by only a few hundred musketeers and the result looked like a foregone conclusion. Oddsmakers had not reckoned with Charles' uncanny ability to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. His offer of clemency was rebuffed, the musketeers burned his artillery, the townspeople beat off his assaults; in short it was a pathetic showing by Charles. Towards the end of the siege the locals even walked their cattle through the theoretical siege lines, so unimpressed were they by this display of Royalist martial vigour. When, on September 4th, after having failed to undermine the town walls and hearing that the Earl of Essex was coming to relieve Gloucester, Charles pulled up stakes and withdrew. The residents attributed their unexpected victory to divine intervention.

This was the theme of bank holiday weekend in Gloucester in August 1993. Everywhere you went there were banners proclaiming, "Gloucester: The City Saved by God." The local museum was lined with schoolchildren's drawings of people from the English Civil War. Clearly, this was a bigger deal than I'd thought it would be.

The Sealed Knot encampment was nicely over-organized. Not only was it divided into "Royalist" and "Roundhead" sections but these were further subdivided. The Royalist camp was divided along the lines of its main regiments. The Parliamentary camp was divided into Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Associations, much as its armies had been divided in the early part of the Civil War. The cavalry and the Scots were, fortunately for the rest of us, encamped away from the main group.

This made finding Saye and Sele's encampment something of a challenge, I had no idea which association it belonged to... and did they mean in period or was this a modern

devising? Fortunately, after a false start or two, Janice and I found some people who knew where we wanted to go.

The camp was a surprise. Almost no one made an attempt to do period camping. For those of you who are snorting, "Hmmp! Sounds like Pennsic war.", let me explain. Pennsic war IS period camping compared to this bunch. Almost no one wore costumes, there were NO period banners flying, not even regimental ones which every unit had (I won't comment on the Sealed Knot flag or the Jolly Roger which were in evidence) brought with them, one tent in a thousand was period. There was a period encampment for the paying spectators to see during the day but I don't know if anyone actually lived there.

Janice and I met up with the rest of Lloyd's and the pikemen practised push of pike for a few hours. We then went in search of the merchants. These were very good. People could walk into a Sealed Knot muster with their street clothes and a little (okay, a lot of) money and be ready to join in the fun in an hour. Clothes, armour and muskets were all there to be had. The only problem was none of these guys took Visa! Well, I probably still have a roof over my head because of that. A final note about the merchants: Osprey man-at-arms books were two pounds, the Elite series were three pounds, reason enough to move to England in my opinion.

However, all this other stuff was just window-dressing, I had come to get into a large English Civil War battle and I was not disappointed. First and foremost it was huge! More than 5000 people were actively participating in the battle. The army of Parliament marched in two ranks to the battlefield and this made for a spectacular sight: gone were the t-shirts and jeans of the day before, instead a beautifully uniformed group stretched hundreds of yards back and out of sight. It took more than an hour to get us all on the field and we were just the Roundheads.

Lords Saye and Sele's regiment of foot was the far left flank of the Parliamentary army. Unfortunately, we were outflanked by the Marquis of Newcastle's musketeers (my identification of regiments is admittedly tenuous. Nobody in Saye and Sele's knew who anybody else was so I based my guesses on the colour of people's uniforms and the size or their unit.) who opened the battle by pouring three volleys into us. My God, I thought, this is just the sort of stupid situation pikemen must have found themselves in all the time in period. After a few minutes of this, we'd had enough, Saye and Sele's levelled their pikes and chased the musketeers away. Then, my first surprise, facing us was a regiment of the Army of the Solemn League and Covenant, what were they doing here fighting for the king instead of besieging York for Parliament (I later concluded that all the Scottish regiments were in the Royalist army), with pikes still levelled we advanced to meet our quisling, erstwhile allies.

A Sealed Knot pike push begins with everyone trying to smack each other with their pikes. Nigel, our sergeant, had told me that if your opposite became too aggressive you could literally run up his pike to try and break it. Being a little over-enthusiastic I took his advice to heart. As soon as I saw a pike pointed my way I stepped on its head to knock it down and ran up it sideways. When it didn't break I jumped up and down on it whilst shouting something clever like, "Yarrgghh!" This action was not well received by anyone and I suggest that future colonial pikemen in Saye and Sele's regiment ignore Nigel's erroneous, if well-intentioned advice.

But the preliminaries were over, we raised our pikes and charged into each other. We smashed straight through them and formed up to do it again. This time the block of pike collapsed, mostly on top of me and another poor fellow from Lloyd's. Two more layers of men fell on top of us and I could hear cries of, "Man down! Man down!" from up above. This apparently meant something like, "Watch your

step or you'll trip over those wimps who fell down", because no one lifted a finger to help any of us. Instead, I could feel feet grinding into the fellow on top of me as the rest of the unit continued to push forward. I was getting a little fed up with all this when the block moved on and I was able to get up. I rose to find myself on the covenanter side of the pike-block and had to race around the jumbled mass, dragging my pike and re-adjusting my helmet, in order to get back into the fun.

We smashed the Scottish traitors three more times and I discovered that this game had left me rather tired. I stopped to be watered by the camp followers and took off my helmet and dropped my spear. Incidentally, camp followers stick to their unit like glue throughout a battle and follow them into the thick of the fighting. It was at this point that Saye and Sele's drummer started beating a different tune, it meant that we should form a hedgehog against cavalry. Yes, Prince Rupert of the Rhine and the King's Lifeguard of Horse had chosen the worst possible moment, from my own ability to defend myself standpoint, to show up. Moving as quickly as an exhausted couch potato could, I grabbed my pike and joined the block, shouting, "Come on you papist bastards!". Rupert was clearly intimidated for the cavalry chose that moment to draw off.

Saye and Sele's reformed against the covenanters yet again. I was getting a little bored with knocking them about but they wanted one more chance at us. We blew through them again and suddenly came face to face with the royalist artillery. We hadn't noticed them before because of the cloud of smoke between us and them. Now, however, I found myself staring down the barrel of a full sized culverin that was only ten yards away. Our officers decided that this was too close for safety and we were marched away from the enemy battery. I counted at least five cannon at that spot, and could hear more sounding off, still obscured by the smoke.

We then met up with Newcastle's pike, who outnumbered us two to one. To psych themselves up Saye and Sele's started screaming their war cry, which was, disappointingly enough, "Saye! Sele! Saye! Sele!". I decided that this was both dull and not period and so bellowed at the top of my lungs, "Come on boys, God is with us! God is our strength!". This outburst got me some odd looks but I persisted, much to the dismay of the fellow in front of me, until Newcastle's regiment rolled over us like a steamroller. Enthusiasm counted for nothing here. We were tired from our earlier pushes and badly outnumbered. I stopped to catch my breath for a moment and noticed some fellow being carted off the field with his right leg bent around the wrong way.

I decided that it obviously wasn't safe outside a pike block and ran to rejoin my own. We were being shoved back again but this time, as we were backpedalling the Tower Hamlet Trained Bands ran into our rear to give us a hand. This was easily the largest Parliamentary regiment that I had seen all day and they turned the tide in our favour. Unfortunately for me, I was caught in between a rock and a hard place. As I was being pushed backwards I caught the full impact of the Tower Hamlet's charge in my back. This spun me around, knocked my helmet askew, winded me and caused me to drop my pike all at the same time.

I'd had enough. I had given my all for God and Parliament for the better part of an afternoon and now I was wrung out. I found Janice, sat down and took a few pictures of the remainder of the battle. A few images remain in my mind: One of Cromwell's cavalymen cantering out of control in our direction; the musketeers laying into each other with the butt end of their muskets after they'd shot off all their powder (a word to any would be colonial musketeers, these boys and girls don't fool around, they really are cracking each other over their unprotected heads with musket-butts); dozens of parliamentary canon firing in

back of us; the battle didn't last much longer and I staggered into camp just ahead of my regiment. All in all it was a sight to behold and I'll be back at it at the re-enactment of Naseby in 1995 come hell or high water...

Southwark Nights

by A. J. S. Nusbacher

When Knox College was built, nobody had yet decided that buildings were machines for living, nor that form ought to follow function. No, when the elders of the Presbyterian Church of Canada sat down with their architect, they knew what a college ought to look like and by gosh they built one.

Knox is a great grey stone gothick heap that sits on King's College Circle beside a Georgian administrative building, and kitty-corner from University College, a romanesque brick-and-stone monstrosity that had the good fortune to be rebuilt in 1890, and therefore too useful to tear down in the 1950s and 60s. Both Knox and University colleges have provided venues for the Tabard Inn Society's re-creations; having the advantage of costing next to nothing (to a humble University group) and looking very much like they were built by people who were thinking of the 16th century.

Like the other colleges at U of T, Knox has common rooms and a quadrangle; and that was where the Tabard Inn Society held a re-creation this weekend past. Tabard Inn specialises in re-creating a very narrow slice of history: the culture of Southwark and the Bankside — London's entertainment district — in the 14th and 16th centuries. Last weekend's event was a re-creation of a March evening in 1593, in an inn made famous by Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, on Goat Street off Long Southwark; just across London Bridge from the respectable part of town.

Southwark, more formally the Borough Ward Without, was the place where London kept its undesirable elements: Marlowe, Shakespeare and Kidd produced many of their

plays in the theatres on the Bankside; the Bishop of Winchester's stable of prostitutes (the "Winchester geese") worked in the inns and bath-houses— the "stews" — villains hid in the maze of slum streets called "the mint", and were imprisoned in the Bishop's private jail, "the clink". Southwark was the place to go for bear baiting, cockfights, and staying at arm's length from the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London.

Ordinary civil life happened in Southwark as well. Manufacturers, especially brewers, worked there; as well as immigrant glaziers and tanners. Nearby Bermondsey was growing as a home for industry, with cleaner water and less regulated trade than London. Southwark's own commercial dock, St. Mary Overie, enjoyed customs preferences; and contributed to a booming economy. Like other middle-class Englishmen, the people of Southwark participated in national institutions like the Trayned Bandes, the army reserve maintained against Spanish invasion; and useful for networking and making business contacts.

We started bringing this together months ago. Victoria Hadfield, a long-time participant and leader in the group; and Jef Singman, the well-known editor of the Elizabethan and Chaucerian handbooks, began to hold Sunday afternoon workshops in January; teaching people from other recreating and re-enacting environments about the culture and language of late Elizabethan England.

By last weekend, a group of about 20 was ready to start. We began in the afternoon with introductions to each other's personas for the evening. The list included actors, bawds, minstrels, and other socially marginal characters; as well as solid citizens: a stonemason and his wife; his apprentice; and other craftsmen and tradesmen from the neighbourhood. This portion of the recreation is important — it is hard to act the part of somebody's neighbour when you are unclear about his name and profession.

Next we sat down with every copy of *Bartholomew Fair* Victoria could lay hands on. Everybody taking parts, we read an act of the play together, with Jef Singman's insights as to which elements of this early 17th century urban comedy were applicable to a night in the Tabard Inn. This also gave us an opportunity to fall into the speech patterns of middle-class London — quite different from the lofty tones of the King James Bible, which was published at about the same time.

After breaking up to change clothes; we came together at Knox College for the evening. The men of the Trayned Bandes fell in with their pikes in the college quad; and in an environment not far from that of an urban inn-yard (including a big heap of something unidentifiable and biological), we practiced the skills that would make the fiendish Spaniard wet himself with funk. The less martially inclined took advantage of a splendid stone gallery to play at skittles; kegling and cheating in equal measure.

This period was not strict re-creation. This was a compression period designed to ease us into our personas for the evening; while still retaining our eyeglasses; and posing with our pikes in somebody's wedding pictures. A signal had been arranged earlier in the day: when we were invited inside to enjoy the entertainment, we would take the step into the 16th century. When the inn's tapster thanked us for coming to visit the inn, we would be able to slide out of our personas (and start cleaning up).

The evening's entertainment was charming — a jig (musical sketch) about a Spanish man working his wiles on an Englishwoman (at this point, the one fellow who had decided to come as a Spaniard was looking decidedly uncomfortable). For the rest of the evening, he would be unmercifully derided by the stout Englishmen and women, in a display of Elizabethan international relations.

The food was prepared by Katherine Budge of Stratford, Ontario. Katherine (Mrs. Kate) fed us on an impressive variety of middle-class food; while the tapster kept our tankards flowing with sweet cider (Presbyterian college — no alcohol); and the cards started to come out; and the dice started to roll. The prostitutes were largely off-duty, lounging in the back, playing with the children; but a career-minded widow was seeking the next step in her social advancement with an employee of the Bishop of Winchester (who worked in the prostitution department, which was headed by a man called "Francis Flapperarse" — one of the more picturesque nicknames bequeathed to us by History).

The music was unobtrusive and good, with occasional semi-spontaneous bouts of dancing (Elizabethan country dances), less than the usual measure of violence, and round abuse of the abovementioned Spaniard. A great deal of money was won and lost (and loaned and lost again), and cheerful (anti-Spanish) pub songs were sung (another round of "Brave Lord Willoughby", eh, Diego?)

The evening ended around nine o'clock, with cleanup running until about ten. Afterwards, an effort was made to sink a few pints at the Duke of York; but proof of a good day's re-enactment was a certain weariness; and the group broke up by eleven.

[Editor's Note: This event was extremely successful, and was in particular marked by a degree of persona play I had never before seen. I would attribute this to three primary factors:

- 1) *The existence of a core of experienced participants.*
- 2) *An influx of new people with very useful skills, including several with musical or theatrical talents.*

3) *Prior preparation on personas. In particular, Victoria made a point of writing up a persona sheet with basic descriptions of several of the personas, and took a moment before the event for the participants to introduce themselves and the persona they would be portraying.]*

Request from the Clerk

As a follow-up to Victoria's cunning plan of distributing a persona-sheet for the Tabard Inn event, I am working to produce an expanded version which will list all of us. Members are encouraged to submit a brief persona description to me within the next 6 months (for distribution with the next newsletter). To get you started, here are two examples:

Master Geoffrey Gamble [Jeff Morgan], a builder's son from Leicester, is a master instrument-maker specialising in nautical equipment, a veteran of the wars in the Low Countries and of the Armada Campaign (as he is only too eager to remind everyone), and a sergeant in the Bands. He is married to Grace Gamble.

Geoffrey Cade [Jeffrey Singman] is a Londoner born and bred (if you can call that birth and breeding), tapster by trade at the Tabard Inn, and drummer with the Bands; also a distinguished participant in the rich cultural life of the metropolis, viz. swaggering, roystering, dicing, roaring.

Work in Progress

As usual, the Bands are working on a number of groundbreaking living history projects. The *Elizabethan Handbook* is being revised for commercial publication by Greenwood Press in Connecticut. The new version will be geared to a broader audience, while still retaining the crucial information for living history; once it is out, we will be able

to collect further information in supplementary handbooks privately published.

We are also working to assemble an Elizabethan military manual for the use of the Bands, including information on organisation and equipment.

For the Civil War period, we are trying to expedite a new publication of *The English Civil War Society of America Handbook*. Again, once this is out, it will be possible to supplement its contents with additional handbooks.

In order to provide a cheap and easy text for newcomers, articulating our standards of authenticity and providing the basic information one needs to take part in an event, we have drafted two 15-page introductions with instructions on how to assemble a complete kit. Hopefully these will be finished by the end of 1994.

On a more general level, we have completed the initial draft of an event plan. The idea is to put into writing our collected experience with living history events, so that future events can be organised more easily.

As well as these textual resources, we are hoping to have STB t-shirts out before Christmas; we also have an order for dies for Elizabethan pennies, which we anticipate receiving within the next couple of months.

—Elizabethan Halfpennies. Member's price: US\$.15 ea.

Orders and inquiries may be directed to Jeffrey Singman.

New Suppliers

Some additional purveyors of period goods:

Textile Reproductions, Box 48, West Chesterfield MA 01084; (413) 296-4437. An excellent source of sewing goods, including linen thread and wool batting suitable for quilts and mattresses.

Timefarer Footwear. Gorthleck, Inverness, IV1 2YS, Scotland; 0456 486 696. Carries several designs of Elizabethan and 17th-century shoes, cost about US\$150. Quality looks extremely good.

Istvan Kostka (Ted Fleming), Shoemaker. 1623 Lincoln 'A', Topeka KS 66604; (913) 233-8663. Does not appear to have any specifically Elizabethan shoes in his catalogue, but seems willing to do custom work.

Derek R. Cole, 35 Scotland Close, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 7BR, England. An armourer recommended to us by our bretheren in Tower Hamlets Trained Bands. Their references look good; helms run around US\$150, back and breastplates slightly more.

Company Stores

The regiment has available for its members a range of resources, including:

—*The Elizabethan Handbook. A Manual for Living History c1588-1603*. Member's price: US\$12, CDN\$14.

—*A Seventeenth-Century Book of Games*. Member's price: US\$5, CDN\$6.

—*The Tabard Inn Songbook and Tape* (a collection of 30 rousing 16th-17th century songs). Member's price: US\$4, CDN\$5.