

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

The Newsletter of the Trayn'd Bandes in North America

Vol. II, no. 4.

'Ever But in Times of Need At Hand'

November 1994

As always, the Trained Bands welcome any interested parties to get in touch with us. Principal contacts are:

Jeff Morgan (*Acting Quartermaster/Sergeant, Southwark Trained Bands*), 1633 Stoney Creek Road, Charlottesville VA 22902; (804) 984-0537

Jeffrey L. Singman (*Acting Clerk, Southwark Trained Bands*), 2244 St. Francis Drive Apt A107; Ann Arbor MI 48104; (313) 677-1451
Jeffrey_L._Singman @um.cc.umich.edu

David Martinez (*Westminster Trained Bands*), 2001 Ploverville, Austin TX 78728; (512) 990-1186;
Maureen_McLouth@ccmail.us.dell.com

Victoria Hadfield (*Tabard Inn Society*), 35 Major St., #2, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2K9; (416) 413-0739; hadfield@epas.utoronto.ca

Upcoming Events

28 January 1995: Workshop on Speaking Shakespeare's English, by Jeffrey Singman. Sponsored by the Tabard Inn Society, Toronto, Ontario. Contact: Victoria Hadfield.

4 March 1995: Evening at the Tabard Inn, Toronto, Ontario. Contact: Victoria Hadfield.

8-9 April 1995: The Raid On Mousehole, Newmarket VA. Contact: Jeff Morgan.

13-14 May 1995: Shapwick Whitsun Muster and Ale, Ethel, Ontario. Contact: Jeffrey Singman.

August 1995: Fifth annual Trained Bands Elizabethan encampment at the Pennsic Wars, PA. Contact: Jeff Morgan.

?30 Sept-1 October 1995: Shapwick Michaelmas Muster and Fair, Ethel, Ontario. Contact: Jeffrey Singman.

November 1995: Jamestown Fall Muster, Jamestown VA. Contact: Jeff Morgan.

Shapwick weekends will resume in the spring, on the last weekend of every month. We are building a living history site—we now have the timber for our alehouse. Call Jeffrey Singman for details.

A Look Back and Forwards

1994 has been an eventful year for the Trained Bands, a time of substantial growth and transition (including the weddings of two couples in the Bands, which in part accounts for the tardiness of this newsletter). It seems appropriate to take a moment to assess where we stand.

The Bands in Virginia have been flourishing, with many new faces, ongoing mini-events, and a successful Mousehole event in April. In Ontario, the Bands, with their University of Toronto affiliate the Tabard Inn Society, have also brought in new people, and have helped organise two ground-breaking events at the Shapwick site. In Texas a new affiliate group, the Westminster Trained Bands, has been formed, and has developed very impressively in a very short time. At Pennsic in August, all the various groups came together for their annual Elizabethan encampment, the largest and best-appointed ever.

With growth comes change. The Bands were initially a small, close-knit, and fairly homogenous group. Our increased size and geographic distances, and the greater self-sufficiency of the various sub-groups have subjected us to centrifugal forces. This is by no means a bad thing—from the start, the Bands were envisioned as a fairly loose organisation. Still, it is important for us to maintain communication and co-operation. Our community, indeed the whole concept of living history as we do it, is still quite small; by sharing ideas, research, and people, our sub-groups will strengthen one another. The

FDBBQ exists precisely to facilitate this kind of sharing. In the following I will outline my personal view of where we stand, and invite response from others.

Within our re-creation activities, the Bands exist to foster quality living history, and especially to foster first-person interpretation. Let us examine what this means:

Living History The Bands are not just a military re-enactment group. We practise living history, which means the full range of human activities, both civilian and military. We use the Trained Bands as a name and a theme, but we do not allow the military element to dominate everything we do.

Quality The Bands are committed to quality in their practice of living history. This does not mean so much a certain level of historical accuracy, but an ongoing dedication to do the best that our current information and resources will permit. Quality is not just a matter of authentic clothing and equipment: it also means that we try to re-create characters and settings which we can pull off with reasonable success, and that we are always trying to recreate a specific conceivable historical person or setting.

First Person Being in the Bands does not mean being 'in character' for the entirety of any given event. Some members hardly do it at all. However, we share a commitment to make first-person interpretation possible, both by structuring events to encourage and facilitate it, and by always respecting the efforts of others to be in character at events.

In addition to these event-related characteristics, there are certain organisational features of the Bands which define them. The first is that we make a distinction between our organisation within our historical world and our modern organisation. The person you choose to be at an event has no bearing on your status in the group (although people who do the group's organisational work generally have first dibs at positions of status in the historical context). The Bands are a democratic organisation, and try to remain as loosely structured as possible. In striving after

our living history goals as listed above, we try to rely on positive methods of organisation and education, rather than rules and prohibitions.

One peculiar feature of our organisation is the existence of a number of closely related affiliate groups with largely overlapping membership. The Bands were originally (in part) formed by the University Medieval and Renaissance Association in Toronto (now called the Tabard Inn Society), with additional members in Virginia who have now formed an essentially self-supporting branch of the Bands. Meanwhile the Bands in the north and the Tabard Inn Society helped to found the Village of Shapwick, an amateur living history site and organisation in Ontario. Since that time, a new Trained Band organisation has formed in Texas.

The upshot is that there exist a number of effectively independent groups very similar in character, and in many cases overlapping in membership. As a result, we are talking of setting up a loose co-operative arrangement among the Southwark Trained Bands, Westminster Trained Bands, Tabard Inn Society, and Village of Shapwick. This would mean that an official member of one organisation would be extended the membership privileges of the other groups (eg. access to company stores at member's prices, but not actual voting rights). This newsletter will serve as a common newsletter for all four groups. Hopefully we could have each successive newsletter edited by a different group (allowing us to achieve 4 issues a year). Each group can contract with the editor to receive a certain number of copies of the newsletter, which the group can then distribute to its membership.

People are encouraged to offer their input on these ideas.

A current list of members of the STB is on the back page. If you're not there, but would like to be, contact Jeff Morgan or Jeffrey Singman. New members are admitted on the recommendation of prior members.

In the upcoming year, in addition to our events, there are a number of projects in which we encourage people to be involved. We are working to finalise our 15-20 page Introductions to Elizabethan and English Civil War living history (containing full information on assembling a beginner's kit to take part in an event). A military handbook on the Elizabethan Trained Bands is also in the works—contact Jeff Morgan if you are interested in being involved in this project. We will also be working on *The Tudor-Stuart Sourcebook*, a compilation of diverse information useful for living history for this period—anyone with an idea to contribute should contact Jeffrey Singman.

Pennsic 1995

At the end of last year's Pennsic encampment it was generally agreed that we should make some effort this year to outline ahead of time just what we envision for the next encampment. To start us thinking about it, I would like to offer the following suggestions:

—The basic setup of the camp will be as in previous years, with the common area of the camp authentic surrounded by Elizabethan tentage. We may find that the kitchen tent is getting a bit too cluttered, since a larger number of people are using it than have in the past—we should give some thought to the matter.

—People will not be expected to be Elizabethan for the entirety of the war, although this would remain a goal in future years if there were enough people who wanted to do this. Beginning some time Thursday, we would have the 'Elizabethan camp' proper, at which point residents of the camp would be expected to wear Elizabethan clothes while in the encampment. People would not be expected to be 'in character', but they should respect the efforts of those who are.

—The Elizabethan evening would be held as in previous years, and only people in clothes essentially of our period would be admitted (ie. 1550-1650). An invitation will be written

up for the evening, which will specify the setting and what is expected of guests (ie., basically not to do anything which would ruin the setting). A non-Elizabethan party could be held on Wednesday or earlier if people wanted, and certainly guests are welcome to visit the camp during the day.

These ideas are just a starting point for discussion—I hope others will contribute their views so that we can reach a workable consensus.

News From Abroad

The editor had a call lately from Alan Todd, of the Tower Hamlets Trained Bands in England. Alan and his wife Patricia are in America fairly often on business (mostly in Texas), and he is particularly interested in working to foster trans-Atlantic contacts, expressing a willingness to host any potential STB/WTB visitors to England. His address is 8 Orchard Close, Barton-upon-Humber, S. Humberside, DN18 6AT; tel. (011-44-652) 634-539.

The Tabard Inn Society

by Victoria Hadfield

The article "A Look Back and Forward" discusses setting up a loose co-operative arrangement between the Southwark Trained Bands, Westminster Trained Bands, Tabard Inn Society, and Village of Shapwick. In the interest of facilitating communication and exchanges of ideas between the groups, I would like to offer a description of the Tabard Inn Society and its goals, and would ask members of the other groups to do likewise in future issues of the FDBBQ, so that we can become more familiar with each other.

The Tabard Inn Society was formed in 1990 as the University Medieval and Renaissance Association of Toronto (UMRA). The group initially consisted of about ten core members, who were extremely active for about a year, putting on several large events and educational demonstrations for the public. Unfortunately, as several key members moved away or lost interest, the group lost its

momentum, and was largely inactive until last year.

This fall the group voted to begin holding weekly meetings, which have been more and more successful as time goes on. We coordinated with the Poculi Ludique Societas (University of Toronto's medieval and renaissance drama performance group), and attended a performance of two early 17th-century plays arranged for an entirely period audience. To prepare for this, one of our members presented a talk about how an Elizabethan audience would have behaved at the theatre.

Rather than hold an event this fall, we decided to have several music workshops and then go carolling, but eventually decided that we didn't have enough outer wear to keep everyone in the group both warm and appropriately clothed, and that we also hadn't learned enough carols to last an entire evening. We decided instead to hold a potluck social evening at the house of two of our members, and on a week's notice, we held one of our most successful events to date. The house was decorated very convincingly as an early 17th century tavern, lit only by candles, and well supplied with copious amounts of food and ale, which various members brought with them. About a dozen of us enjoyed a wonderful meal around the long table, then retired to a second room, gathered around the fireplace, sang bawdy tunes and made merry until the wee hours.

We are planning to continue our weekly meetings this spring, with a talk about Elizabethan music, a demonstration of Turkey work, persona and handwriting workshops, among others. We are also sponsoring a workshop which will be open to the public, on "Speaking Shakespeare's English", by Dr. Jeffrey Singman, which will be followed by several meetings devoted to reading an Elizabethan play, in order to practice our new dialect skills. Another "Evening at the Tabard Inn" event is planned for March 4, and our members will doubtless also continue to assist

the Village of Shapwick build its alehouse as the weather gets warmer.

A perennial problem is the group's low membership, and the resulting requirement of those members who *are* active to spend large amounts of time and energy in order to make anything happen. Our goal this spring is to recruit enough new members to be able to distribute the organizational workload to forestall burn-out and disillusionment. We plan to have a booth at the campus "Clubs Day", and to post flyers on campus, at local bookstores and libraries, and to send information about the Tabard Inn Society to potentially interested community groups. In addition, I would be very interested in hearing from the other groups about how you have most successfully recruited new members.

The Tabard Inn Society has never charged a membership fee, but last fall we decided that we would begin doing so in 1995. The goal of this is to be able to give each new member a package of information which would familiarize them with the Tabard Inn Society's activities and provide them with some basic resources. The membership fee would cover the cost of producing the information package, which would include an introduction to the Tabard Inn Society, a pamphlet about assembling a first outfit of 16th or 17th century clothing, a copy of *The Tabard Inn Songbook* (with its accompanying tape), a bibliography of sources useful to the reenactor, and a list of suppliers.

As I mentioned above, I hope that the other groups will be willing to submit articles describing your current situation, future goals, and especially the problems you face in making the group work and solutions you have found to these problems. I am sure that as clubs who are all trying to do early modern living history, we probably share many of the same challenges, and hopefully we can also share some of our solutions.

Daniels, Cindy,
als3q@uva.pcmail.virginia.edu
Gisiner, Kirk & Cindy, Rte. 1 Box 302-G,
New Market VA 22844, (703) 740-3562
Graham, Jeremy, 55 Charles St W #203,
Toronto, ON M5S 2W9, (416) 323-0151m
Hadfield, Victoria, 35 Major St. #2, Toronto,
Ontario M5S 2K9 Canada, (416) 413-0739,
hadfield@epas.utoronto.ca
Hamm, Michael, PO Box 2495 Charlottesville
VA 22902, (809) 979-7012
Humphrey, Shona, 369 Ontario St., Toronto,
Ontario M5A 2V8, (416) 966-4402
Martinez, David & Maureen McLouth, 2001
Ploverville Austin TX 78728, (512) 990-
1186,
Maureen_McLouth@ccmail.us.dell.com
Mollenhauer, David
Morgan, Jeff & Laura, 1633 Stoney Creek Dr.
Charlottesville VA 22902, (804) 984-0537
Myatt, Mike, 5 Wembley Dr. Sudbury Ontario
CANADA P3E 1M5, (705) 674-7870,
jliedl@nickel.laurentian.ca
Nusbacher, A. J. Schoen
nusbache@hp.rmc.ca
Oxford, David, 2424 H3 Arlington Blvd.,
Charlottesville VA 22903, (804) 979-3792,
DMO2S@virginia.edu
Maldonado, Ernesto, 710 Shade Tree Dr.
Austin TX 78748, (512) 280-3591
Singman, Jeffrey, 2244 St Francis Drive Apt.
A107 Ann Arbor, MI, (313) 677-1451,
Jeffrey_L._Singman@um.cc.umich.edu
Talbot, Bob, RR4 Box 412 Charlottesville VA
22901, (804) 978-1057

Orders and inquiries may be directed to
Jeffrey Singman. Prices above are for
members of the Bands and allied groups.

Company Stores

—*The Tabard Inn Songbook and Tape*. A
collection of 30 rousing 16th-17th century
songs. Price: US\$6, CDN\$8; postage \$4.

—Elizabethan Coins. Halfpennies: US\$.15
ea., Pennies: \$.20.

The Elizabethan Handbook is now out of
print, but an expanded version will be
published by Greenwood Press in 1995 under
the title *Daily Life in Elizabethan England*.
The *English Civil War Society of America
Handbook* will also come available in 1995.