

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

The Newsletter of the Trayn'd Bandes of London

Vol. III, no. 3.

'Ever But in Times of Need At Hand'

November 1995

FIVE YEARS OLD

Yes, the TBL has actually passed the Five Year Mark this fall. For those of you who are relatively new to the group, or who were too drunk at the time to remember, here's how it happened:

It was Pennsic War, 1990, and *things* were afoot. The now-notorious Toronto Three (AJ 'Napoleon' Nusbacher, Jeremy 'Satan's Minion' Graham, and Jeffrey 'Dreamslayer' Singman) had shown up with BIG PLANS. These scheming cronies were plotting to bring evil and disaffected persons together in an organisation to be called The Order of St John Baptist, essentially a mutual support group for people in the SCA who were actually interested in the Middle Ages. The group held its first meeting at Pennsic--the turnout was small...

At the same time, equally diabolical schemes were being hatched by Jeff Morgan, who in one fell swoop succeeded in attaching himself and his friends to the camping arrangements of the aforementioned revolutionaries, and in securing once and for all the affections of the amiable but tragically misguided Laura Donelly. These two were already involved in a questionable medieval group called Medieval Enactment And Demonstration (MEAD), which held events set in the reign of Richard I.

Nothing came of the Order of St John, but the nefarious Toronto-Virginia axis had been formed. That September, the aforementioned Brethren of Sedition attempted to dupe the Toronto SCA group into establishing formal non-SCA structures which would allow it to operate outside of the rules of the SCA (for example, holding single-period events like MEAD). This thinly veiled bid for world supremacy was emphatically rejected.

As a result, those Torontonians who wanted to see what sort of living history one could do outside of the SCA formed the University Medieval and Renaissance

Association. Like MEAD, UMRA would hold single-period events. A number of periods were contemplated, especially Viking-Age York, the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, the late 14th century, and the Elizabethan period--the last two were chosen. As one of its first activities, UMRA organised a road trip to a MEAD event that December, thus strengthening the Unholy Alliance. The following February, UMRA held a 14c event, set in the Tabard Inn in 1391, at which Jeff and Laura learned what winter is really all about. In March, UMRA organised a field trip to New York City (with special presentations at the Cloisters and the Morgan Library) and Plimoth Plantation (a visit which strongly influenced the group). In June UMRA hosted its Elizabethan event, set again in the Tabard Inn, in 1591. This event was also attended by some of the Virginians (Jeff, Laura, Kirk, and Cindy), and it witnessed the first muster of the Trained Bands of Southwark. The following Pennsic the Bands had an encampment of their own, including people from both Toronto and Virginia.

The Bands were essentially a group of friends who like playing the same game--only later did it become at all formalised (we're still rather fuzzy on some of the details!). Since that time, UMRA was renamed the Tabard Inn Society, and came to include members across Ontario and in Michigan; the Virginia group has become somewhat more formalised as Gardener's Company of the Southwark Trayn'd Bands, and a new group in Texas has joined as the Westminster Trayn'd Bands. As a result, we have collectively become the Trayn'd Bandes of London. We can rightly consider ourselves one of the best amateur living history organisations in North America, and we are beginning to acquire something of a reputation overseas as well. Indeed, we have achieved so much in our first five years, it will be interesting to see what the next five will bring...

Upcoming Events

?December 1995: Annual Tabard Inn Society Christmas feast, Toronto or Stratford. Contact: Steph Diamant.

?March 1996: Annual Tabard Inn Society Lenten feast, Toronto. Contact: Steph Diamant.

Early April 1996: The Raid On Mousehole, Newmarket VA. Contact: Jeff Morgan.

Mid May 1996: Shapwick Whitsun Muster and Ale, Ethel, Ontario. Contact: Steph Diamant.

August 1996: Sixth annual Trained Bands Elizabethan encampment at the Pennsic Wars, PA. Contact: Jeff Morgan.

Recent Activities

The past few months since the last issue have been a fairly busy and productive period for the Bades. In August we held our Fifth Annual Trayn'd Bades Encampment at Pennsic; our traditional Elizabethan evening on the final Friday night was the most successful yet, being as fully attended as the campsite could handle, and a veritable hotbed of persona play and quality living history activities (songs, games, dances, etc.). Pennsic also witnessed the appearance of the first four titles in the TBL Publications series, which have been selling quite well.

Less than a month later we turned out a fair few for 'Naseby-in-the-Shenandoah'. This English Civil War event was the largest event for our period ever held in North America. The battle was quite exciting (once it got underway!), and a good chance to get a taste of large-unit operations (as well as the Sealed Knot's very hands-on style of combat). It also afforded more of us a chance to meet some of our brethren of the Tower Hamlets Trained Bands in England.

At the end of September the Tabard Inn Society offered a highly successful demonstration of Elizabethan popular song and dance for the annual Early Music Festival in Toronto. This performance focused on the role of music in the lives of everyday people,

which proved a good choice both from the point of view of audience engagement (they could even take part in some of the songs and dances), and in establishing a viable niche for a group of relatively ordinary musicians in a festival filled with professional and semi-professional performers.

The TIS has also resumed its schedule of weekly meetings and workshops in Toronto, and has continued work on the Shapwick site, as well as holding the annual Shapwick Michaelmas Fair and Muster on October 27-29.

Activities of the Westminster Trayn'd Bands

Maureen Martinez

Greetings from the Westminster Liberty Trayn'd Bands. In September, the Royal Swan Tavern was opened for our local Baronial Champions. The tavern hosted a number of the members of the WTB's as well as a few Westminster locals. During the heat of the day, we kept a close watch over the tavern and produced many wood shavings working on carpentry projects. We did venture out into the sun for a stroll around the list fields and a good game of Shuttlecock. We even tried a bit of trundling with two new hoops recently purchased in London. Nicholas and Will Smith made a good attempt at this new pastime.

In the evening, our good Sergeant Trent took us on a night watch through the camp. Many of the locals had never seen the Bades at the march, and were quite impressed with our skill (or lack thereof). By the time we made it back, we had quite a parade of locals at our heels. I think it was just a ploy of Nicholas' to get more business at the Swan!

We have continued our Elizabethan evenings with a slight increase in attendance. We recently finished *The Shoemaker's Holiday* by Thomas Dekker, and plan to start Ben Jonson's *Volpone* next month.

Our fall Muster, unfortunately, did not make it this year. Due to travel by David and I, and the work schedules of many of the

members, we could not get all the planning done to pull it off. We also have two couples in the group getting married in December. We are currently working on finding a date for at least an Elizabethan dinner sometime in early January. We just learned about a Tudor-style house on a local church campus that is available for rent that would work well for this.

News from Abroad

Jeffrey L. Singman

In the first half of October, Victoria and I spent two weeks in England visiting friends and family and even getting in the odd spot of work. We began by taking part in a garrison event at Lewes Castle, hosted by Essex's regiment, and attended by quite a few people from Tower Hamlets. Other highlights of the trip included a visit with the famed Bodger and Madeleine, who are currently converting a Norfolk barn into a medieval great hall, and an evening of conviviality with various Tower Hamleteers at the George Inn (the last of the inns of Southwark still standing). As usual, we were most generously hosted by people from Tower Hamlets and others of the Sealed Knot.

We strongly encourage people to think about broadening their contacts overseas. If you are ever in a position to travel to England, the experience will be immeasurably more rewarding. We are very fortunate to have fallen in with Tower Hamlets, a regiment of quite high quality and convivial character: we have always been made quite welcome during our visits, and have had quite wonderful experiences which would never have been possible for an ordinary tourist.

Also, it is very worthwhile obtaining equipment from England: supplies for our hobby tend to run 1/3 to 1/2 the price one would expect to pay over here for items of equivalent quality, and craftsmen tend to be much more prompt and reliable.

Many of us had a chance to get to know some of our English kindred during the recent Naseby event; for those who did not, I am happy to report that preparations are afoot in

England to come back again in two years' time. If you missed the first one, don't make the same mistake twice!

In addition to making enjoyable contact with the Earl of Essex's regiment while in England, we have had some contact with other units. Bagot's has been highly recommended, and the one member we have met is an outstanding practitioner of living history. I have also had opportunity to exchange newsletters with Devereux's, and been quite impressed. Devereux's is a regiment of the English Civil War Society, originally a splinter group from the Sealed Knot. At present the Knot and the ECWS will have nothing to do with each other, and there is some official animosity, although the rank and file of the two organisations tend to feel that the schism is unfortunate.

In a somewhat different direction, I have made contact with a rather colourful 17c. re-enactment group in Australia known as the Routiers, whose impressions include the London Trained Bands. Should anyone be interested in making contact, your man is:

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Hurstville
New South Wales
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Australia

TBL Armour in the Tower?

Jeffrey L. Singman

During my recent visit in England, I stopped in at the Tower Armouries to do some research for the corslet order which a number of us are involved in. The collection is pretty decimated at present, presumably because the bulk of it is in the process of being moved to the new facility in Leeds, but there were a number of pieces of interest. Most particularly there were 4 peascod cuirasses dated 1590-1600 and roughly 20 morions dated to the 1580s. These pieces were of particular interest because they were obviously munitions grade foot-armours, and may even have been used by the London Trained Bands--it is said that some of the Civil War period armour in the Tower was used by the Trained Bands (this might conflict with the supposed fact that the London Bands purchased their own armour, but it is possible that some TBL armours were stored there or transferred there at some point). In any case, these pieces offer a good glimpse at English munitions-grade armour of the period.

The most striking fact about the cuirasses is that most were of the 'rough-from-the-hammer' finish which Robert MacPherson (our commissioned armourer) offered as his base form. They also seemed to have some sort of painted or blued finish (although I am not a very good judge of antique metallurgy, and in any case the finish might have been added later). The edges on most (but not all) were rolled, in some cases with a chiselled 'rope' pattern. Several had convex scalloping along the bottom edge of the backplate. It did not appear that any were fitted for tassets, although this was hard to judge; only one had the small notch at the base of the peascod which was common with tassetted corslets. Some were fitted with a mobile lame in the armhole.

The morions all had a small 'stem' at the apex, with brims decorated with chiselled edging and pointed fore and aft, many curving upwards fore and aft as well. All had a slight

ridge along the crest where the two sides met at an angle.

The Village of Shapwick

Jeffrey L. Singman

Enclosed in this issue of the FDBBQ is a copy of the first completed version of the Village of Shapwick description and persona list. Since this is an official document of a TBL group (the TIS), and could ultimately be published and made available on the TBL World Wide Web site, Education Officers of the TBL should vet it to ensure it meets our communal standards of living history.

Shapwick held its annual Michaelmas Fair and Muster on October 27-29, about a month later than usual because of the Early Music Festival in Toronto. The weekend was quite wet, which somewhat cramped our style. However, the event was also noteworthy for having *the best* first-person interaction I have ever seen outside of Plimoth Plantation. This happened principally because we had made a serious effort in the previous two months to develop our personas, and the concept of Shapwick as a historical place, in such a way as to give the setting cohesion and believability. I would therefore *strongly* encourage everyone to have a good look at the enclosed sheet: it has proven very effective in fostering first-person interaction, and may be a good source of ideas for other groups.

TBL Publications: Plans

Now that our first four titles are out, we are hoping to produce more books on a regular but less hectic schedule. The intent is to have at least one new title out every year in time for Pennsic. Our plan for 1996 is to produce a period-looking 'commonplace book' containing songs, dances, games, etc, for use at events when you can't quite remember the words to 'The Jolly Broom-Man', with an accompanying volume of historical notes on each of the songs, dances, etc. For 1997 we are planning an edition of selections from Randle Holme's 17c. encyclopedia *The Academy of Armory*, which is absolutely full

of useful information on period crafts and material culture. Contact Jeffrey Singman for further information.

Company Stores

Orders and inquiries regarding these items should be directed to your local TBL group. Prices are for paid-up members (bracketted prices are retail prices--membership has its privileges! In fact, the coins and tape aren't even for sale to outsiders).

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

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

TBL Publications 1. *The Englishe Breviat: A Concise Guide to Elizabethan and Stuart Living History*, Jeffrey L. Singman. This is our basic manual, and everyone should have a copy. \$3 (\$7.50); postage \$3.

TBL Publications 2. *The Elizabethan Trained Bands: An Introduction*, Jeff Morgan and Jeffrey L. Singman. We strongly advise obtaining a copy if you are involved in our military activities. \$2 (\$5); postage \$3.

TBL Publications 3. *Pious, Bibulous, and Rude: Rounds and Catches of the Elizabethan and Stuart Age*, Jeffrey L. Singman. \$3 (\$7.50); postage \$3.

TBL Publications 4. *The Tudor-Stuart Sourcebook*, ed. Jeffrey L. Singman. A collection of miscellaneous materials for living history. \$5 (\$10); postage \$3.

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If you have access to the World Wide Web,
don't miss our splendid site at:

<http://www.rmc.ca/~nusbache/bandes.html>