

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

The Newsletter of the Trayn'd Bandes of London

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'Ever But in Times of Need At Hand'

January 1996

THE TBL SOUTHWARK SPECIAL

The bulk of this issue is given to an in-depth account of Southwark in the late Elizabethan period. This text is the first fruits of an ongoing project to collect useful information on Southwark in this period. The ultimate goal will probably to produce some sort of booklet in the TBL Publications series, but for the time being the current text should be useful for people in constructing personas and flesh out our feeling of the setting. Obviously, it will be less directly applicable for the Westminsterians, but it may offer them some ideas as to information they might want to develop for their own neighbourhood. Check out the electronic version on the Web at:

<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jsingman/SouthwarkGuide.html>

One of the most noteworthy details unearthed by this research has been the fact that the Southwark Trained Bands ceased to exist as a distinct entity in 1595. This should be further incentive for us to develop the concept of the voluntary 'Martial Company' as the basic scenario for our activities--it will allow us to pursue precisely the same activities, portray the same characters, and even remain Southwark Trained Bandsmen, while giving us a good excuse for not actually reproducing the historical Trained Bands of Southwark.

Armed with this information, we should be able to develop our personas and setting more fully. Hopefully the next FDBBQ can include a full persona and background sheet for us to use in the 1996 season.

It is also to be hoped that the FDBBQ can now settle down to a regular publication schedule, as follows:

1 January: TBL
1 April: WTB
1 July: Gardeners

1 October: TIS

Each group should plan to have its issue of the newsletter out on that date, rather than 3 months after the previous issue--this will help prevent the 4th issue from being crowded out (as happened this year). Since the FDBBQ doesn't need to be particularly long (some issues have been only 2 pages), it should not be too hard keeping up with this schedule.

Upcoming Events

[Major Events are the most important ones in the calendar, and everyone is strongly encouraged to try to make it to as many of these as they reasonably can. Regional Events are smaller events which people are encouraged to attend if they are close enough to make it over a normal weekend (say, a 5-hour drive or less). Local Events are very small events which people are encouraged to attend only if the journey would take less than an hour.]

January 1996: Austin TX. WTB Elizabethan evenings resume (second and fourth Mondays of the month). Local. Contact: Maureen Martinez.

January 13, 1996: Austin TX. 12th Night celebration at the Royal Swan Tavern. The local musicians' guild has agreed to come and play for their dinner and drink. Bring your favorite game and a few coins, and we will celebrate the end of the Christmas season with much merriment. Regional. Contact: Maureen Martinez.

March 1996: Toronto ONT. Annual Tabard Inn Society Lenten feast. A convivial evening, with possible pike drill and fencing if weather is merciful. Regional. Contact TIS.

late March: Austin TX. WTB's Spring Muster. In addition to the usual drilling, dancing, and gaming, we hope to have a short concert of special works by the local musicians' guild. There is also a rumor that the actors are

working on puppet theater again. Contact: Maureen Martinez.

12-14 April 1996: Newmarket VA. The Raid On Mousehole. One of the TBL's largest annual events, Elizabethan setting. Major. Contact Gardener's.

20-21 April 1996: Shakespeare's Birthday, Stratford, Ontario. A public demonstration of Elizabethan activities. Regional. Contact TIS.

17-20 May 1996: Ethel ONT. Shapwick Whitsun Muster and Ale. An authentic (and therefore inevitably raucous) festival in the remote Oxfordshire village of Shapwick during the English Civil War. Major. Contact: TIS.

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

September - October 1996: Shapwick Michaelmas Fair and Muster, Ethel, Ontario. A harvest festival in the Oxfordshire village of Shapwick during the English Civil War. Major. Contact: TIS.

New Suppliers

Bel Vasaio Ltd, PO Box 189, East Orleans MA 02643-0189; (800) 962-7061. Carries fine Majolica-style ceramics, albeit expensive. Cottura. 2900 Rowena Ave, Los Angeles CA 90039-2042; (213) 662-2114. Carries fine Majolica-style ceramics; also rather expensive.

Recent Activities

The TIS held its annual Christmas evening in Toronto in December. Featured activities featured a sumptuous meal, excellent singing (including a few carols), and seasonable games (notably Hot Cockles and Hoodman Blind). Persona play was lively and extremely successful; quite a few people were even having a go at period dialect.

Book Review

Jeffrey L. Singman Patricia Finney, *Firedrake's Eye* (New York: St Martin's, 1992). US\$10.95 pbk. I have of late been making a point of picking up novels set in

Elizabethan England with an eye to finding some good reads which offer a good flavour of our period. So far, *Firedrake's Eye* has proved one of the best. In terms of readability, it is less challenging than George Garrett's very literary *Entered from the Sun*, but somewhat more so than Leonard Tournay's series of Matthew Stock mysteries; it is also much more full of the details of Elizabethan life than either. This doubtless has something to do with the fact that the author is an Elizabethan history buff; in fact, not only has she read voraciously, but she has taken part in the 16c. living history events which happen annually at Kentwell Hall in Suffolk. The experience has evidently left her with a vivid sense for the material realities of Elizabethan life. Not everything in the book can be called historically accurate, but the level of accuracy is quite impressive, in spite of the author's disclaimer that she has felt free to 'throw out evidence or alter what is known of the Elizabethans' for the sake of the story.

The novel is essentially a story of political intrigue, set in 1583 when Mary Queen of Scots was in captivity in England (specifically at the time of the Throgmorton Plot, which aimed to depose Elizabeth in Mary's favour). It combines glimpses of the court and government with the world of espionage and the London underworld. The story centres around a plot to assassinate the Queen, and is quite a compelling narrative; combined with the richness of historical detail, this makes *Firedrake's Eye* a book I would highly recommend to anyone in the Trayn'd Bandes.

Contacts

Trayn'd Bandes of London:

Aryk Nusbacher (Clerk)
544 Bagot Street, Kingston, ONT K7K 3C9
CANADA; nusbatche@hp.rmc.ca

Jeffrey L. Singman (Education Officer)
2004 Medford Rd. C223, Ann Arbor MI
48104 USA; (313) 677-1451;
jsingman@umich.edu

Tabard Inn Society:

Stephanie Diamant (Co-President) & Phil
Collman (Education Officer)
599 Delaware Ave, Toronto ONT M6H 2V3
CANADA; (416) 539-0704;
collman@camtwh.eric.on.ca;
sdiamant@interlog.com

Nancy Crozier (Co-President), 261 Vaughan
Rd. #307, Toronto ONT M6C 2N2
CANADA; (416) 652-5899;
aj651@torfree.on.ca

Gardeners Co, Southwark Trayn'd Bandes:

Jeff Morgan (Head/Education Officer)
1633 Stoney Creek Road, Charlottesville VA
22902 USA; (804) 984-0537;
thegambles@aol.com

Westminster Trayn'd Bandes:

David Martinez (Head) & Maureen Martinez
(Education Officer)
2001 Ploverville, Austin TX 78728 USA;
(512) 990-1186;
Maureen_Martinez@us.dell.com

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

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