

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

The Newsletter of the Trayn'd Bandes of London

'Ever But in Times of Need At Hand'

Vol. IV, no. 4: November 1996

Greetings again from the FDBBQ, internationally recognized as the finest Trained Bands newsletter in North America. This issue coming from the Tabard Inn Society in Ontario.

As always, the TBL welcome any interested parties to get in touch with us.

The FDBBQ is published quarterly in hardcopy and electronic formats, each issue by one of the TBL's constituent groups:

1 January: TBL

1 April: WTB

1 July: Gardeners

1 October: TIS

Contacts

Trayn'd Bandes of London:

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; phil@sickkids.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-personal.umich.edu/~jsingman/bandes.html>

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.]

November 30th, 1996: Ascension Day celebration (and the anniversary of Robert Bedingfield's cousin Henry being pardoned by our gracious and forgiving Queen). The Gardiner's Company will be having a period evening at the College of Preachers on the grounds of The Washington Cathedral, Washington, D.C. The College is built in the style of a Tudor manor, and will provide the setting for a day of Elizabethan fun and frolic. It will be considered apart of the holdings of the Bishop of Winchester, and the Hosts will be Robert and Isobel Bedingfield. Robert is an attorney for the Bishop, and his wife Isobel helps him in his duties in addition to her own work for the Bishop's house. Information on the evening, and prices, accommodations and directions can be obtained by calling Bob Mellin or Laura Sams at (USA)410-267-0294.

November 30th, 1996: TIS evening of food and singing. Hosted by Charles Carter (Cary Timar).

?February 1997: TIS spring event proposed: watch this space for details. Contact: N. Crozier.

?April 1997: Annual Gardiner's Spring event, New Market VA: watch this space for details. Contact: J. Morgan.

August 1997: Annual Elizabethan Encampment at Pennsic, New Castle PA: watch this space for details. Contact: J. Morgan.

September 5-7 1997: Battle of Worcester, Staunton VA. Major. As with the Naseby event at the same time and place in 1995, this will be a huge English Civil War battle (by North American standards), attended by several hundred re-enactors from Great Britain as well as the fullest domestic attendance of any event in North America. If you want a chance to experience a pike-and-shot battle without having to go overseas, this is your best opportunity. B there or B square! Contact: J. Singman.

Activities of the Gardener's Company

J. Morgan

This August Gardners Company hosted our annual muster at the Pennsic War (Cooper lake camp ground). This was an especially auspicious year as not only was it our fifth

such encampment, but we had 16 period tents in camp and the Friday night Persona party was rated by all as the "best ever". Doubtless much of the evening success was due to the fine goose board commemorating the enchanting borough of South'rk which made its debut then. We were blessed with amazing good weather all week, with the exception (of course) of the evening we had set aside as open camp night/party. While not good, that evening was certainly memorable and the period tents proved themselves as the only casualties were their more modern cousins. For the final muster we had 24 in the band and caused quite a stir in the merchant area as we marched through driving all Spaniards before us.

Following Pennsic has been our traditional stand down and recover period. Our yearly business meeting will be held 16 November and will officially start our next season. Primary topics of discussion will be projects for next year, in particular improvements to the camp. In addition to the Business meeting we will be holding a workshop on making Brigantines and Jack coats.

April 26 will be our 4th annual Spring muster in honor of the Spanish raid on Mousehole. As usual we have planned a day full of martial and civil activity to delight all.
Activities of the Westminster Trayn'd Bands

D. & M. Martinez

Greetings from the Westminster Trayn'd Bandes. It has been a very hot spring and summer, with most of our activities better suited for cooler weather. However, the coming of Pennsic and more comfortable temperatures has once again encouraged us to venture outdoors. We are on a mission to expand our membership with quality individuals, where they like it or not! Part of the charter of the Westminster branch of the Trayn'd Bandes includes the changing of officers. This allows everyone the opportunity to both lead and follow. With this in mind, William Smith took over as Sergeant in early July, allowing Nicholas to spend more time at the Royal Swan. Oddly enough, there have been rumors to suggest that our ensign, Christopher Dawson, may have recommended William for the position to provide him with a more steady income. Nicholas, however, was finely rewarded for his tenure when our good Captain, William Fleetwood, bestowed a fine set of armor to Nicholas for his dedicated service in getting the WTB's off it's feet, and on the training grounds.

The position of clerk is also changing hands due to the sudden departure of Jeffrey Tailor. Journeyman William Wood will be taking over the position just as soon as we can retrieve the company journal and this month's pay which also suddenly departed! Our spirits were lifted this week, though, with the return of Henry Ames just back from his commission in Ireland. We are glad to have him back, despite the strong smell of turf and sheep that seems to accompany him. As for our recent activities, we have been striving to further our studies of Elizabethan daily life, so several of our members participated in a local 'College' and taught classes. Jim Barnes and his wife Jennifer introduced us to the Elizabethan tailor by bringing us into the shop of Blayne atte Wood, journeyman tailor, and his apprentice, Robin Marlowe. Here, they discussed fabric and sewing techniques, and had many samples for the participants to examine, and even take

home. The display of materials, tools, and finished goods was quite impressive, and gave a excellent overview. David brought us into the shop of an apprentice shoemaker, Nicholas Trent (many years before he came into the Bandes, by the way). Nicholas had a good display of common shoes at every level of construction, and explained the basic process for assembling and stitching fine sturdy shoes. Additionally, he displayed other leather goods that he has created, including traveling bags, drum cases, and a map case. Finally, Maureen took the audience to the Royal Swan, where they were greeted by Jenny, Nicholas, and a host of characters who discussed their opinions of the theater. It began with our good friend and playwright, Thomas, who at the Swan working on his latest piece. He told of his experiences in the theater, and something of the life it gave him. The discussion was joined by the apprentice tailor, Robin, and by a local gentleman (and sometimes volunteer in the Bandes) Laurent. Unfortunately, Robin was soon chased out of the Swan by his master, Blayne, who, by the way, decided to stay and join the conversation telling of the elaborate costumes he provided for a local performance. Nicholas then delighted the audience with tales of a recent play he heard, and of all the special effects and grand fight scenes. Lastly, into the tavern, came a student who had authored a broadsheet, telling of the `evils' of plays, and the `wicked' playwrights. He and Thomas quickly got into a argument, and a riot ensued. Jenny finally chased the lot of them out into the street. Imagine that, a riot at the Royal Swan, and the plays had not even begun!

Activities of the TIS

N. Crozier

The annual Michaelmas fair and Muster was held at Shapwick on October 5-6. With the presence of new and distant members, we made a merry crowd. The weather was uncharacteristically dry and clear, if cold at night; after an excellent midday meal on Saturday, some feared a massacre had occurred, as the bodies of villagers lay strewn about the sunny meadow for some hours. As the afternoon drew to a close, Geoffrey Cade opened his trunks and displayed his wares to Shapwick's milkmaids, who were eager to spend the ha'pennies given them by their employer, John Hawkins. After the fair, Luke Knowlton led the firing of muskets. Andrew Bentley, John Hawkins and Colin Underwood won the continued admiration and appreciation of village women with their prowess. And the musket-firing wasn't bad, either.

After another fine meal, villagers did what we do best: sang, drank, jibed, drank and sang some more. The revelry was interrupted only by the burning of the finest Kern Molly seen at Shapwick since Gaffer Cade's time. Surely next year's harvest will be a bumper one.

Southwarke Trayned Bandes trip to Plimoth Plantation. September 1996.

P. Collman

Each year, Plimoth Plantation (in Plymouth, Mass.) holds a muster which recreates one of the training days that was required throughout all English settlements. The aim is to get the correct number of men that were known to be present in 1627, which was about 60. The plantation doesn't have that many male interpreters, so volunteers have traditionally been invited to take part; this year a group of the Southwarke Trayned Bande drawn from Toronto, Stratford and Ann Arbor made the trip to Massachusetts to swell the ranks.

From previous experience, we knew that we would be allowed to sleep in the houses of the village, so we designated one house as an ordinary, where we would socialize and we would change and sleep in some of the other houses. We arrived in Plymouth on Thursday evening so that we could spend Friday looking around the site, and of course scoping out the gift shop for useful items! As always, there had been changes to the site since our last visit, with the Fuller house now completely finished, the Allerton house had been roofed and sided, and the Hopkins house had been demolished (ready to be rebuilt next year). This extensive building is part of Plimoth's living history strategy, whereby houses are allowed to stand for about ten years and are then taken down. The new house can then be rebuilt to incorporate whatever new research has surfaced, and no house will look too old (they're only supposed to be 7 years old).

Our "ordinary" worked well, and were able to have two very enjoyable evenings singing, drinking and eating, all in first person and with members of the interpretation staff joining in. We even managed a moonlit dance in the main street one evening, with music being provided by our friends from the 17th Century Educational Association, and rhythmic accompaniment from the original Puritan settlers spinning in their graves! The muster went pretty much as all the musters do at the Plantation, and indeed as they must have done during the period, being best described as organized chaos! The body was divided into four squadrons, as is known from period accounts, with each squadron representing a rallying point in the village. During the morning we alternated drilling in the field outside the palisade, or in the village itself - it's hard to think of a more appropriate setting for getting that feeling of "it must have been like this". Later in the morning Captain Standish inspected us and gave an appropriately lengthy and rambling speech, in true period style. Following a sumptuous dinner in the fort/meeting house we did some more drilling and then had a mock battle in what had previously been the corn field. For me, the best moment of the muster always comes when all form one body, because at that point we are approximately of true company size, so you get some idea of the maneuvering that was required to move that many men around. After the mock battle, our day was over and we retreated to beer and food, while we considered what to buy in the gift shop with our generous discount! In summary, we were privileged to take part in the muster at Plimoth Plantation and the weekend was mightily enhanced by us being allowed to stay in the village for two nights, and by the hospitality of the Plantation staff.

Virginia Militia Training Of The Last Generation

The following excerpt from Harper's New Monthly Magazine, while not actually of our place or period, may offer some insights into the conduct of militiamen across the centuries...

As a young and observant Yankee I was traveling in Western Virginia about the year 1835, and happened to be present at a May-day training, whose novelties much amused me. They far surpassed the then nearly defunct practices under the military system of my own State--Massachusetts--which were rapidly passing into the farcical and the burlesque. I can, at this late day, do little more than sketch the outline of the performances, leaving the thousand and one grotesque concomitants to the imagination of the reader. They were indescribably ludicrous.

The company had been warned to appear "duly armed and equipped as the law directs," and a little before one in the afternoon Captain Clodpole gave directions for forming the

line of parade. The orders were carried out by a big sergeant, whose lungs seemed to supply the service of the missing drum. This official stepped forth and began to cry, explosively, "All Captain Clodpole's company parade here! Come, gentlemen, parade here! parade here! And all you that hasn't guns, fall into the lower end!" The summons was obeyed by all who were just then at leisure. The others were engaged, either as parties or spectators, at a game of quoits, and could not heed it conveniently. However, in some fifteen or twenty minutes the game was finished, and the captain was enabled to form his company and proceed to the duties of the day.

Then came the order, "Look to the right and dress!" when, by the aid of the subaltern officers, the men were placed in a tolerably straightline; but as every man was anxious to see how the rest stood, those on the extremities of the line pressed forward for the purpose till it assumed the form of a crescent.

"Why, look at 'em!" said the captain. "Why, gentlemen, you are alla-crooking here at both eends, so that you will get on to me presently. Come, gentlemen, dress! dress!" After straightening the line somewhat the captain continued: "Now, gentlemen, I am going to carry you through the revolutions of the martial exercise, and I want you, gentlemen, if you please, to pay very particular attention to the word of command, just exactly as I give it out to you. I hope you will have a little patience, gentlemen, if you please, and I'll be as short as possible; and if I should be a-going wrong, I will be much obliged to any of you, gentlemen, to put me right again; for I mean all for the best; and hope you will excuse me, if you please. And one thing I must caution you against in particular, and that is this--not to make any mistakes if you can possibly help it; and the best way to do this will be to do all the motions right at first, and what will help us get on so much the faster, and I will try to have it over as soon as possible. Come, boys, now come to a shoulder.

"Poise arms! Cock arms! Very handsomely done.

"Take aim! Ram down cartridge! No, no--Fire! I now recollect that firing comes next after taking aim, according to Steuben; but, with your permission, gentlemen, I'll read the words of command exactly as they are printed in the book, and then I shall be sure to be in the right."

"Oh yes, read it!" exclaimed twenty voices; "that will save time." "'Tention the whole! then. Please to observe, gentlemen, that at the word 'fire,' you must fire--that is, if any of your guns are loadened you must not shoot in yeamest, but only make pretense, like; and all you gentlemen fellow-soldiers who's armed with nothing but sticks, riding-switches, and corn stalks needn't go through the firings, but stand as you are, and keep yourselves to yourselves.

"Half-cock arms! Very well done.

"S-h-u-t' (spelling)-'shet pan! That, too, would have been very handsomely done if you hadn't have handled cartridge instead of shetting pan; but I suppose you wasn't noticing. Now, 'tention, one and all, gentlemen, and do that motion again.

"Shet pan! Very good--very well indeed; you did that motion equal to any old soldiers. You improve astonishingly.

"Handle cartridge! Pretty well, considering you've done it wrong eendforemost, as if you took the cartridge out of your mouth, and bit off the twist with the cartridge-box.

"Draw rammer! Those who have no rammers to their guns need not draw, but only make the motion. It will do just as well, and save a great deal of time.

"Return rammer! Very well again; but you would have done it, I think, with greater expertness if you had performed the motion with a little more dexterity.

"S-h-o-u-l" (spelling)--yes. 'Shoulder arms! Very handsomely indeed. Put your guns on the other shoulder, gentlemen,

"Order arms!' Not quite so well, gentlemen; not quite all together. But perhaps I did not speak quite loud enough for you to hear me all at once. Try once more, if you please. I hope you will be patient, gentlemen.. We will soon be through.

"Order arms!' Handsomely done, gentlemen--very handsomely done; and all together too, except that a few of you were a leetle too soon and others a leetle too late.

"Now in laying down your guns, gentlemen, take care to lay the locks up, and the other side down. 'Tention the whole!

"Ground arms!' Very well.

"Charge bagnet!"

Some of the Men: "That can't be right, captain. Pray look again; for how can we charge bagnet without our guns?"

Captain: "I don't know as to that. But I know I'm right; for here it is printed in the book: 'c-h-a-r-' yes, 'charge bagnet'--that's right--that's the word, if I know how to read. Come, gentlemen, do, pray, charge bagnet. Charge! I say. Why don't you charge? Do you think I've lived to this time o' day and don't know what 'charge bagnet' is? Here--come here: you may see for yourselves.-- It's as plain as the noses on your fa- Stop! stay! no, halt! No, no--faith, I'm wrong - I turned over two leaves at once. But I beg your pardon, gentlemen. We will not stay out long, and we'll have something to drink as soon as we have done. Come, boys, got up off the stumps and logs, and take up your guns, and we'll soon be done. Excuse me, if you please.

"Fix bagnets!' 'Advance arms!' Very well done. Turn the cocks of your guns in front, gentlemen, and that will bring the barrels behind, and hold them straight up and down, if you please. Let go with your left hand, and take hold with your right just below the guard. Steuben says the gun must beheld 'p-e-r- perticular.' Yes, you must always mind and hold your guns very particular. Now, boys, 'tention the whole!

"Present arms!' Very handsomely done; only hold your guns over the other knee--the other hand up; turn your guns round a leetle, and raise them up higher. Draw the other foot back. Now you are nearly right. Very well done, gentlemen. You have improved vastly since I first saw you. What a charming thing it is to see men under good discipline! Now, gentlemen, we come to the revolutions. But, Lord! men, you have got all in a sort of snarl, as I may say. How came you all into such a higgledy-piggledy?' The fact was that the shade had moved considerably to the eastward during the forementioned operations, and had caused one wing of these veterans to a galling sunfire. They had followed the shade, little by little, and so had come at length to represent any figure but a straight line.

"Come, gentlemen," says the captain, "spread yourselves out again into a straight line, and we will get into ranks and wheelings presently.

But this was strenuously opposed by the soldiers. They objected to going into the proposed "revolutions" at all, inasmuch as the weather was very hot, and they had already been in the field three-fourths of an hour. They reminded the captain of his repeated promise to be as short as possible, and it was clear that he could dispense with all these more active manoeuvres if he chose. They were all very thirsty, and if he would not

dismiss them, they declared to go off sans permission and get something to drink. He might fine them, if that would do him any good: they were able to pay their fine, but could not go without drink to please any body; and they swore they would never vote for another captain who would be so rigorous.

The captain behaved with great spirit on this occasion, and a smart colloquy ensued during which he asserted that no soldiery ought to think hard of the orders of his officer, and he did not think that any gentleman on the ground had any just cause to be offended at him. The dispute was ended by the captain's sending for some grog for their present accommodation, agreeing to omit reading the late military act, as required to do, and also all the military manoeuvres except a few easy and simple ones which could be

performed under the shade. So, after drinking their grog, they "spread themselves," and were divided into platoons.

"Tention the whole! To the right, wheel!" And each man faced to the right about.

"Why, gentlemen, I didn't mean for every man to stand still and turn himself naturally right round; but when I told you to wheel to the right, I intended for you to wheel round to the right, as it were. Please to try that again, gentlemen. Every right-hand man must stand fast, and only the others turn round."

In a previous part of the exercise it had been necessary, for the purpose of sizing them, to denominate every second person a "right-hand man." A very natural consequence was that on the present occasion those right-hand men maintained their position, while all the intermediate ones faced about as before. "Why, look at 'em now!" exclaimed the captain, in extreme vexation. "I'll be darned if you can understand a word I say. Excuse me, gentlemen; but it really seems as if you could not come at it exactly. In wheeling to the right the right-hand end of the platoon stands fast, and the other comes round like a swingle-tree. Those on the outside must march faster than those on the inside, and those on the inside not near so fast as those on the outside. You certainly must understand me now, gentlemen: and now please to try once more." In this they were a little more successful.

"Very well, gentlemen. And now, gentlemen, at the word 'Wheel to the left,' you must mind to wheel to the left.

"Tention the whole! To the left--left--no, right--that is, the left--I mean the right left, wheel! March!"

He was strictly obeyed: some to the left, and some to the right left, or both ways.

"Stop! Halt! Let us try again. I could not, just then, tell my right hand from my left. You must excuse me, gentlemen, if you please. Experience makes perfect, as the saying is. Long as I have served, I find something new to learn every day; but all's one for that. Now, gentlemen, do that motion once more."

By the help of a non-commissioned officer in front of each platoon they wheeled this time with considerable regularity. "Now, boys, you must try to wheel by divisions; and there is one thing in particular which I have to request of you, gentlemen, and it is this--not to make any blunder in your wheeling. You must mind and keep at a wheeling distance, and not talk in the ranks. Don't get out of fix again, for I want you to do this motion well, and not 'make any blunder.

In doing this it seemed as though bedlam had broken loose. Every man took the command, with utterances like these: "Not so fast on the right!" "Slow now, slow!" "Haul down your umbrella!" "Faster on the left!" "Keep back a little in the middle there!"

"Don't crowd so!" "Hold up your gun, Sam!" "Go faster there, faster!" "Who trod on my hoofs?" "Dash your hoofs!" "Keep back!" "Stop us, captain, do stop us!" "I've lost my shoe!" "Get up again, Ned!" etc. "Halt, halt! Stop, gentlemen, stop! Stop, I say!"

This time I did not stop to hear the captain's remarks, nor learn how they recovered from their confusion; but I could easily see why it required three-fourths of an hour for the Virginia troops to form a hollow square around the gallows on which old John Brown was hanged

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New Suppliers

John A. Dauer Leather Co. Inc., 61 Elm St. PO Box 29, Hatfield, MA 01038(413)247-3141. This fellow makes the most accurate buff leather we have seen. Though pricy it is beautiful to behold!

Julia Smith, Historical Potter, 32 Churchill Ave., Arlington, MA 02174.(617) 648-2875. Julia Smith makes a variety of pottery in different styles. She makes wonderful delft pottery , some of which Plimoth Plantation uses and sells in their gift shop. She will also do custom orders.