

The Fencers, Dancers, and Bearbaiters Quarterly

The Newsletter of the Traynd Bandes in North America

Vol. VIII, No. 1

"Ever But in Times of Need At Hand"

December 2000

Greetings from the Trayn'd Bandes of London, a federation of living history groups for the period 1585-1645, distinguished by their pursuit of both civilian and military activities, cultivation of first-person interpretation, and fanatical devotion to historically accurate mayhem.

The constituent groups are Gardener's Companie (centered in Virginia-Maryland), the Tabard Inn Society (centered in Ontario), and the Westminster Trayn'd Bandes (centered in Texas),

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CONTACTS

Trayn'd Bandes of London:

Jeffrey L. Singman (Clerk/Education Officer)
7 Shaw Court, Plymouth, MA 02360 USA
jsingman@higgins.org

Tabard Inn Society:

Nancy Crozier (President)
276 Silver Branch Ave., Toronto ONT M4E 3L5 CANADA
nancyc@mssoc.ca

Phil Collman (Education Officer)

599 Delaware Ave., Toronto ONT M6H 2V3 CANADA
phil@sickkids.on.ca

Westminster Trayn'd Bandes:

Jennifer Davis & James Barnes
11612 Fast Horse Dr., Austin, TX 78759 USA
jbnjenny@io.com

Gardiners Companie:

Victoria Dye (President)
2260 Sparrow Lane,
Charlottesville, VA 22911 USA
fuzzycat@cstone.net

Jeff Morgan (Education Officer)

1663 Stoney Creek Road,
Charlottesville, VA 22902 USA
thegambles@aol.com



www.crosswinds.net/~gardiners/fdbbq

Greetings to all! It seems the fall newsletter has become the early spring newsletter, so I have a lot of recap. Last Pennsic was small but pleasant after a hard won land dispute that almost ended the whole event for us. Despite the small attendance, the muster was well attended and as always the Bandes persevered. This issue of our beloved Willow Point (20' land clearance of no camping around the lake) and the dwindling Pennsic encampment numbers, brought up the discussion of the future of the Bandes at Pennsic. Realistically, Gardiners is the only active group this past year or so. While we have a good solid group of people about half of our company has other SCA commitments and encampments at Pennsic. That leaves half the company with trying to hold together a period encampment (which is a lot of work with fewer numbers). Then there's the 20ft rule around the lake issue, we don't know if this will resurface in the future, if it does we lose virtually all usable land. Also, that area has become party central and very noisy. So unless we can get a large number of people to commit this year and the 20' rule doesn't come to haunt us we may need to move Gardiners encampment. Lochmere kindly offered to allow us to camp with them. This has many advantages as a lot of our group camps with or near Lochmere, so we essentially get them back and Lochmere has a nice period encampment section which we can add onto, giving us more atmosphere. Also, it is close to everything. So I fear we will say goodbye to our small lake view.

Mousehole followed hard on the heels of Pennsic and while this seemed a good idea at the time it's a little too much and we've moved it back to the Spring. Despite the marathon events and threatening storms from Florida, Mousehole was well attended. Sergeant Sharpe led the masses forth and the evil storms parted before our onslaught. (Well it sounded good). We had a new Barber-Surgeon this year, seen years past as an apprentice, so you were forewarned! A charming little circus with odd creatures and an angel. A kindly old wise woman with cures for most that ails. A rather harrowing visit by the magistrate with some interesting court cases. And of course fine fare from Mistress Hamilton. Fun was had by all and thanks to everyone for their help. This years Mousehole moves to a new and soon to be improved site east of Charlottesville. The Bedingfields found a lovely little plot of land with a charming cottage. There are plans for much improvement Elizabethan style!

Foods and Feasts was attended by the Bedingfields and said to be a lot of fun. Their help was greatly appreciated by the Jamestown crew.

Finally we come to Yule to close out the year and start a new one. A small cozy affair with wonderful friends and some pretty tasty desserts. So onward to a new year and I hope to see everyone soon.

EVENTS

March 16-17th Military through the ages, Jamestown, VA.
Contact Greg Glewwe if interested in attending.

May 11-13th Mousehole, Central VA. Contact Bob and Laura Mellin.

August 3-18 Pennsic, Slippery Rock, PA.

There will be additional Mousehole site prep work weekends in March and April, dates to be announced via email. Also, if you have an idea for a workshop and would like to host one please let me know.



SUPERSTITIONS AND SICKNESS

During a time of little scientific knowledge, rampant disease and short lifespans, people clung to whatever beliefs and superstitions they could to get them through. Day to day life, times of sickness, and times of drought or famine all offer their challenges both today and in ages past. During Elizabethan times, religion played a large part in fulfilling these needs but people also needed someone more immediately satisfying to run to with problems. These men or women were known by many names, 'cunning men', wise women', 'charmners', 'blessers', 'conjureres', 'sorcerers', 'witches', and 'magicians', to name a few. These people were sought after for many problems from sickness, to lose of items, to fortune telling. Treatments could be as simple as a short poem to set all right, to complicated recitations of prayers, preparing and imbibing special medicines and special objects used just so. Prayers such as the Paternoster, Aves and Creed, while catholic in origin, were still commonly used during the Protestant times due to their familiarity and often said in there traditional Latin. Medicines were often herbal concoctions some proven and some fanciful. Objects could be specially blessed items or something from the person seeking help. They were either worn, carried or placed in a particular area just so. Just like today some treatments were valid and worked, some worked just through a placebo effect and others just didn't. Many examples can be read about in the Superstitions article in this issue. So when something ails, is lost, love just won't come your way or your child is driving you crazy, remember the wise women and men. They are sure to be much kinder and gentler than the Barber-Surgeon with all his sharp point instruments of great pain!

Article sponsored by Mistress Pickering, fine purveyor of ointments, potions and mystical objects for all occasions.

Sources: Religion and the Decline of Magic, Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, Keith Thomas, 1999. Oxford University Press, New York.

Some History of Twelfth Night Activities

Sandy Toscano

To help prepare folks for our Yule event last year, I researched some of the activities surrounding the holiday. We then tried to incorporate these activities into what we can do now in our present-day circumstances.

After looking through three or four books on the subject, I have discovered that there are some variations on the theme of electing or selecting a "King" or "Lord" of the assembled crowd from whence all sorts of merriment is derived. Philip Stubbs in his "The Anatomy of Abuses" describes the hot-heads of the parish electing a Lord of Mis-rule and crowning him king. This king of misrule then selects several followers to wait upon him. He and his selected retinue "investeth with his liveries of green, yellow or some other light wanton colour; and as though that were not gaudie enough, I should say, they bedeck them selves with scarves, ribbons and laces hanged all over with gold rings, precious stones, and other jewels; this done, they tie about either leg twenty or thirty bells with rich handkerchiefs in their hands and sometimes laid a cross over their over their shoulders and necks borrowed for the most part of their pretty mopsies and loving bessies, for buffing them in the dark".

After garbing the king and his court as described above, they make a loud and noisy procession with drummers and pipers to the church. Stubbs also describes hobby-horses and dragons in the procession giving one the impression of a mardi-gras type of parade. Once at the church, they enter the church, regardless if there is a service in progress or not and dance about the church hall generally carrying-on in a loud and obnoxious manner. Afterwards they proceed from the church into the churchyard where banqueting houses have been set up and there they eat and drink into further insensibility.

Stubbs goes on to describe an interesting thing called the Lord of Mis-rules badges or cognizances. "They have also certain papers, wherein is painted some bablerie or other of imagery work and these they call 'my Lord of mis-rules badges': these they give to every one that will give money for them to maintain them in their heathenry, develry, whoredome, drunkenness, pride, and whatnot". He goes on to describe that some openly wear their badges in their hats or caps. Those that do not procure a badge are mocked and made fun of. Of course, Stubbs, being the puritan he was goes on the say that those who procured these badges will go straight to hell if they don't repent.

In "Popular and Popish Superstitions and Customs" by Thomas Kirchmaier (1553) he sets to prose a description of the activities of folk in Germany on holidays and other festival days. He describes the choosing a king by acclamation or by putting a penny in a cake and the man who gets the penny is the king. The king once selected is lifted up to the rafters to make crosses on the beams against spirits. A great feast is laid out "upon their bordes in order thick the dainty dishes stand / till they their purses emptie be, and creditors at hande". At night Frankincense is burned and everyone puts their faces in the smoke and passes it over them as protection in the coming

year against diseases. He also goes on to describe young men and girls dressing in their finest and going door-to-door singing with pipers. The householder generally handed out money that the young men and girls either keep or bestow upon the church. In some cities the wassail bowl is carried from door to door and the householder passes out food or money.

The traditional foods of the time are varied regionally. The most common theme seems to be a boar's head that was served in more noble circles. The lower classes would either do without or make a boar's head out of marzipan or dough. The serving of a boar's head seem to stem from the tradition of slaughtering some livestock at midwinter due to the lack of fodder.

We adapted the above by making a papier-mache boars head and set it on a table to be admired by all. We selected a King of Mis-rule by acclamation (Zeke) and had a fine yellow hat for him to wear. Green and yellow ribbons with bells were provided to the King so that he may select his Court. There was feasting, drinking, gaming, singing, and much merriment.



Patched, Scratched and Mis-matched: Secondhand clothes in Elizabethan London

Laura Mellin

“Insomuch that nothing in Englande is more constant than the inconstancie of attire.” Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583)

The last quarter of the sixteenth century in England saw a steady influx of people into London, not only from the surrounding counties, but also from the Continent. This increase in population furthered the cross-culturization of London, introducing languages, customs and styles from other countries, most notably France and Spain. Queen Elizabeth's famed love of personal adornment encouraged her Court to keep up with constantly changing fashions, leading to Puritan invective from contemporary moralists such as Stubbes. It also creating an enormous market for secondhand clothing.

Unlike their rural counterparts, London women did not have the space and resources, nor the time to weave their own cloth and sew clothes for themselves and their families. Those that could afford it had their clothes made by tailors, and bought their shirts and shifts ready-made from seamstresses; others employed servants to sew clothes from bought cloth. The rest of London supplemented their wardrobe by buying from the secondhand shops. There was a bias against secondhand shopping, much as there is with thrift stores today, but it was held by the upper classes, who required fashionable and expensive new clothes on a regular basis. For most of London, secondhand was simply an economical way to get needed clothes.

Clothes that could not be altered were given to servants or sold in Cheapside; first in the better shops on Burchin Lane, then a second or third time by “frippersers” in Houndsditch and Long Lane as the clothes became ragged or unfashionable. The ultimate destination of all clothes was either stuffing for cushions and pillows or to make linen paper.

Pawn shops also took clothes and re-sold them, usually stripping off any valuable trimming before selling. People who sold their clothes often did the same thing. Trimmings and buttons were usually the most valuable part of the outfit, and could be sold for their worth in metal (gold or silver) to the metalsmiths and jewelers in Cheapside. Some buyers could not afford to replace buttons and decorations, and wore the clothes with missing buttons and hanging threads.

Unlike today, where clothes are only a small part of a yearly budget, clothes in the Sixteenth Century were an investment. People needed their clothes to last, especially the lower classes, so the purchase of a complete outfit then was the equivalent of buying a car today. The secondhand clothing trade, therefore, could be compared to today's used car trade.

A wide variety of used garments were available for sale. It was possible for anyone with enough money to buy

clothes from all classes and professions. People in urban areas constantly tried to dress above their class; sumptuary laws were enacted but not enforced with any enthusiasm. Secondhand clothes were cheaper, if less fashionable, and sometimes shabby. The rag trade made it possible for even the lower middle and lower classes to wear fine materials, and when they could afford to, they did so. The lower down the social scale, the more patched and worn the clothes would appear. Even the fairly well-off might have discreet patches and alterations. For most people, clothes had to last more than a season, and in some cases needed to last several years or more. Because individual items were bought as they became available, the concept of matching clothes was not as important as today. As long as the clothes fit reasonably well, and were warm and pleasing to look at, they were acceptable.

The men and attendant women of the Trayn'd Banded would have taken full advantage of the used clothing trade. It was perfectly acceptable to have neatly patched clothes, especially for labor, but clothes would have been replaced as they became ragged. As Londoners (and neighbors of London), they would have been aware of the latest styles, but it is unlikely that anyone associated with the Banded would have the income to wear cutting-edge fashions.

While they would have had more than a couple of outfits, and at least one nice outfit for special occasions, updating garments frequently would be too extravagant.

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Susan North, Deputy Curator in Textiles and Dress, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Book Review: The Nicholas Bracewell Mysteries by Robert Marston

Greg Glewwe

Actually this is not one book, but an entire series of 10 books! Set in Elizabethan England, these books do in print what *Shakespeare In Love* did on the big screen. They give an excellent sense of Elizabethan culture, on a more daily life basis. Nicholas Bracewell, the protagonist of each story, is the book holder for an Elizabethan theater company called Lord Westfield's Men. In essence a stage manager, he oversees each production by the company and often helps guide it through the stormy political, social, and even legal troubles that threaten the players and their livelihood. In different stories they deal with the Guilds of London, plague, Protestant radicals, astrologers, physicians, royalty, and all manner of interesting things.

Each of the books stands very well on its own, but reading them in proper order will give the reader a closer tie to the characters and a better understanding of their motivations.

Each is a very engaging read and I found them difficult to put down. They tend to be just shy of 200 pages in the hardbound editions. I cannot recommend them highly enough, and must thank Sandy Toscano for putting me on to them by loaning me her copy of one of the later books. Thank you! The author of these fine tomes is Robert Marston, an Englishman who has received several awards in the UK for the excellent historical research that he puts into his writing. I have checked some of his geography of London against facsimiles of extant maps and he definitely has it down! The *Nicholas Bracewell Mysteries* are difficult to find in print, but I was fortunate in that our library had all but the first book which is available from Amazon in a trade paperback. I have listed the books in their chronological order below:

The Queen's Head
The Merry Devils
The Trip to Jerusalem
The Nine Giants
The Mad Courtesan
The Silent Woman
The Roaring Boy
The Laughing Hangman
The Fair Maid of Bohemia
The Wanton Angel

The publisher of *The Nicholas Bracewell Mysteries* is St. Martin's Press, New York 175 5th St. New York, NY 10010. Their phone number is 1-800-221-7945.

Mr. Marston has also authored a medieval mystery series, called *The Domesday Chronicles*, the first book (*The Wolves of Saversnake*) of which is proving difficult to locate.

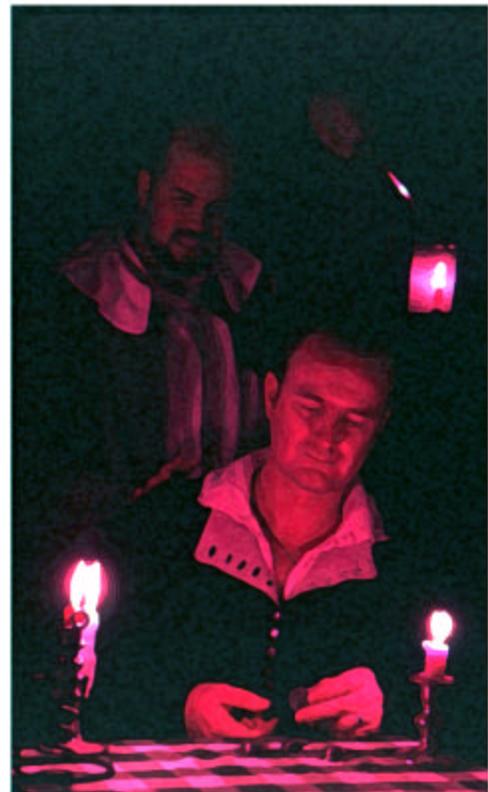
The Lady Appleton Mysteries by Kathy Lynn

Emerson is series not unlike the Marston books, but a bit drier.

The first book of the series is *Face Down in the Marrow Bone Pie*, followed by *Face Down Upon an Herbal* and *Face down Among the Winchester Geese* (yes, those Winchester Geese!).

There are a number of other titles that follow.

Good luck and good reading, I hope that you find them as inspiring as I did!



Elizabethan Gloves

Cathy Snell

Gloves and mittens have been used throughout history for protection and status. Gloves minimize wear on the hands from manual labor and protect hands from the wet and cold. By the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), gloves had also become a symbol of status. A great number of the portraits from this period feature a pair of gloves in the sitter's hands. From inventories from her reign, Elizabeth appears to have been fond of gloves. She is known to have received gloves as gifts on several occasions. This may account for some of the status attributed to gloves in this period. Mittens are not as popular in portraiture, but extant examples show them to be consistent in style with gloves and will be considered the same aside from the obvious difference in cut.

Gloves and mittens are known to have been constructed of primarily two different materials. Leather was perhaps the most common material. The weight of leather used in gloves varied from as little as 1 oz. for a pair of lady's gloves to as much as 10 oz. for work gloves such as Henry VIII's hawking gloves. From period portraiture, it appears that brown was the most common color for leather gloves until the end of Elizabeth I's reign. In the 1590's, white kid skin became more prevalent in portraiture and in extant examples. There is also some evidence of red becoming popular among the upper class most likely due to the discovery of a new red cordovan dye in Spain. One extant example of linen gloves from c. 1600 (*fig. 1*) are of similar construction to leather gloves and were probably used for summer wear.

The other common material for gloves is knitted wool. Knitted wool gloves would have been used primarily for warmth. Knitted gloves appear to have been made in any number of colors. Extant examples include blue, brown, and multicolored. One other material used for knit gloves is silk. There exists a surviving glove knitted in silk (*fig. 2*). From the inventories of Elizabeth's silkwoman, we know that the supplies to make such gloves

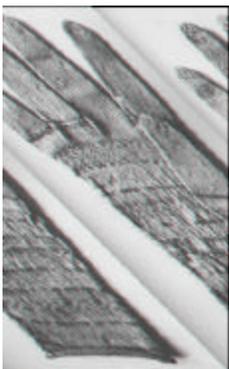


Figure 1 Linen gloves with black

were present in her court. Silk was much less common in gloves and would have mostly been used by the upper class.

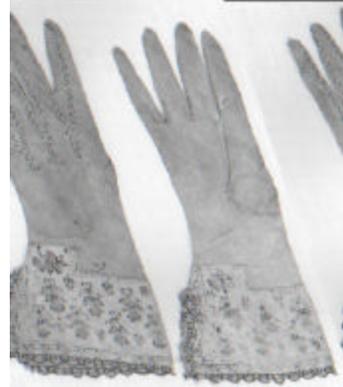
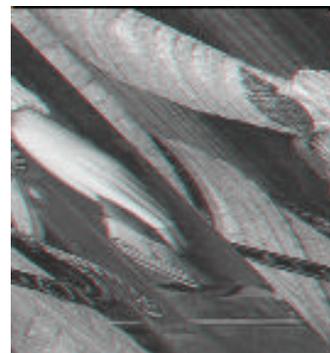


Figure 2 Silk knit glove in silk embroidery. English, c. 1600.

Pictorial Evidence

Over the 45 years of Elizabeth I's reign, there is a perceptual change in the style of gloves. Two main aspects of a glove attribute to the style: the cut of the hand and fingers, and the type of cuff. The cut of the hand and fingers was, in general, fitted at this time. The majority of change in style occurs in the cuff. The period from 1558 to the 1580's saw short picadilled or looped cuffs on gloves (*figs. 3, 4, 5, 6*). Often a decoration or jewel was placed around the cuff between each picadill. The cuffs appear to be made of a lighter contrasting color or of similar color to the hand of the glove. Of interesting note is the style of the wrist ruff during this time. Wrist ruffs tended to be large and ornate which would account for the short glove cuffs. A simpler version of the glove cuff during this time was a folded back cuff also of a shorter length (*fig. 3*).



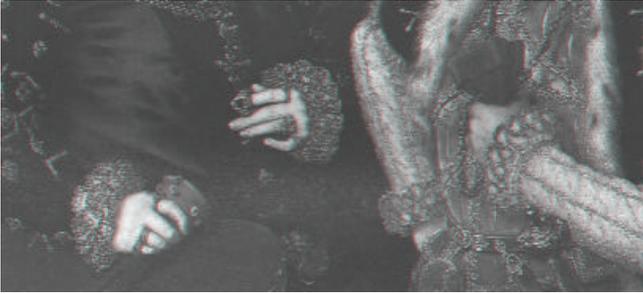


Figure 3 Lady Mary Neville and her son Gregory Fiennes, 10th Baron Dacre. English, 1564-9.

Figure 4 Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester. English, 1559.



Figure 5 Queen Elizabeth and the Three Godesses. English, 1573.

Figure 6 Elizabeth Cornwallis, Lady Kytson. English, 1569.



With the introduction of the turned back cuff of lace at the wrist and the use of smaller wrist ruffs, glove cuffs began to lengthen and widen (*figs. 7, 8, 9*). The use of picadills evolved into decorated tabs (*fig. 8*) and a wider, solid gauntlet type of

cuff (*fig. 9*). It is also around this time that the use of white kid skin became popular for the hand of the glove. With this change, the cuffs became more ornately colored and decorated. After Elizabeth's death in 1603, glove cuffs continued to widen and lengthen into the Cavalier style of gauntlet (*figs. 10, 11*).

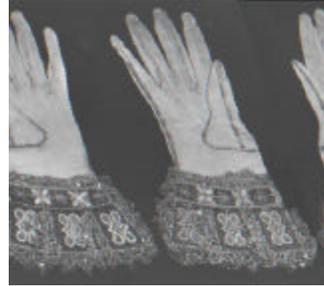


Figure 7 Elizabeth I. English, Leather gloves with embroidered cuffs. English?, c. 1600.



Figure 8 Embroidered Mittens. 1592.

Figure 9 English, Late 16th century.



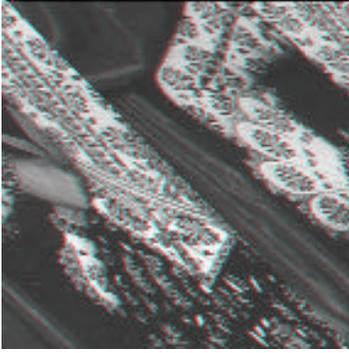


Figure 10 Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset. English, 1613.

Figure 11 William Style of Langley. English, 1636.

Throughout this period, the hand of the glove, while generally fitted, was cut differently than a modern

glove. The gussets between the fingers form deep triangles on the back of the glove (*figs. 1, 6*). This does not appear to apply to the palm of the glove (*fig. 8*). The thumbs are commonly cut separately and stitched on (*figs. 1, 8*). Knit gloves do not appear to have any similarity in construction and were most likely knit in one piece in the round. Judging from the number of gloves pictured in Elizabethan portraiture, gloves should be considered an important part of period fashion. Thus we have examined the materials, style, and decoration of gloves during this time.

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Pieter Aertsen, *Market Woman with Vegetable Stall*, 1567. Oil on wood. Museen, Berlin.

Superstitions

by Jeff Morgan

Ghosts

The popular view of Ghosts changed radically during the Protestant reformation. The Catholic view was that ghosts were the spirits of the deceased. Ghosts always had a message to deliver and a motive and their appearance was never random. Their motive could be revenge, or righting a wrong, etc.. The Protestant view was that ghosts, if they existed at all were the work of the Devil. A more likely case is that they were contrived by various self serving people, including Catholic Priests, to serve their own ends. Many ghosts could be explained by checking any turtles in the area for candle wax from a recently burned candle which might still be stuck to their shell. If they were the work of the Devil then they were up to no good. The fact that ghosts were reported more commonly in such places as Ireland could be explained that since the Irish lacked faith they were therefore more prone to attacks from the devil.

That the Catholic view continued to predominate is shown by the fact that until 1823 it was legally required in England that anyone who committed suicide be buried with a stake through the heart as this was a known cure for a restless spirit. Additionally, it was commonly believed that the Devil could take control of the spirit of anyone who died without absolving their sins. As late as the first World War it was common practice in Lincolnshire to bind the feet of the recently deceased to prevent this.

If a ghost was reported the incident was taken seriously and an investigation led by the church would take place. It was considered improper to attempt to contact the deceased and in many guilds it was against the rules for anyone on the night watch to amuse themselves by summoning up ghosts during the hours of darkness.

If a Catholic had a haunted house and wished to remove the spirit he would have a Priest exorcise the spirit. A Protestant would pray and fast. If either of these approaches failed a spayed bitch was a good defense. If no dog was available various Doctors and Wizards were available with conjurations, though this was frowned upon by the Church. Conjuration as a craft was taken seriously enough that one "Wizard" who had not been paid by a client for failing to make him better took the sick man to court for his unpaid fee, the sum of 20 shillings. The Wizard had claimed to be able to get rid of a spirit which had been haunting the fellow and had caused him to become ill. Unfortunately there is no record of the verdict. The difference between churchmen and magicians was less the effects they claimed to achieve than in their social position, and in the authority on which their respective claims rested.

General

The key to the church door was an effective cure against the bite of a mad dog. Alternatively pills made from the skull of someone who has been hanged will do the trick.

Against the biting of a scorpion whisper privately to an ass "I am bitten with a scorpion".

For a woman to insure an easy child birth she should run to a church and tie either her girdle or shoe laces around a bell and strike the bell three times.

To prevent headaches stick a needle in a church or shrine dedicated to St. Christopher. If this fails tie a noose around your head, preferably one from someone who has been hanged.

In order to have long blond hair girls should hang a lock of their hair in front of an image of St. Urbane
To prevent wine from turning to vineager write on its container "Gustale & videte, quoniam suavis est Dominus".

It is bad luck to

- Meet a cat or a hare when first going out in the morning.
- Stumble on your doorstep when first going out in the morning.
- Put your shirt on inside out.
- Put your left shoe on your right foot. No idea if it is good luck to put your right shoe on your left foot.
- Sneeze before you put your shoes on. Cured by going back to bed.
- If a child or any other living creature pass between two friends while they are walking together. This portends a division of the friendship.
- If a hunter meets with a member of the clergy while hunting.