

Fox Tales

ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO ENGRAVE

AUGUST 1993

A.S. XXVIII

DISPUTE IN THE NORTH

MERIDIES AND THE MIDREALM FIGHT BORDER RAIDS!

During early- to mid- June, word reached this area of Meridies that forces of the Middle Kingdom were gathering just north of our border. Coming so closely on the heels of the assassination of King John, such a mustering of troops meant only one thing: invasion by force.

On June 26, the tension finally broke in the form of four battles fought in an area just north of the Meridian frontier. Yeomen and men-at-arms from all over both the Middle Kingdom and Meridies converged on the area with a will to do his duty to his King and Kingdom.

Details of the actual battles are quite sketchy, since few correspondents desired to wade into the fray. However, the respective Sovereigns acknowledged that three of the four battles were won by the skill of the Meridians.

According to one Meridian man-at-arms, the Middle Kingdom's forces could not maintain adequate discipline in the ranks. The resulting breaks in the battle-line of the Midrealm's army caused a disastrous splitting of their defenses. Reports indicate that combat archery, while effective on both sides, was not a deciding factor in the outcome of any battle.

As the armed forces of the two kingdoms battered each other, *citizens* decided to settle their differences in a more civilized fashion; there were contests in target archery and skills in the arts and sciences. Reports from the rangemaster and the A&S judges concluded the winner of each contest to be the Middle Kingdom - despite a respectable showing in the archery tournament by the Vulpine Reach

contingent and a tie for first place in the wine making contest by Lord James Toxophilus.

After the dust had settled on the battlefields, Their Royal Majesties Brian and Aeruín, accompanied by their "precious son" Boru, and His Royal Majesty, King of the Midrealm, accompanied by both Royal Heirs, held Court. In an act of courtesy to the Middle Kingdom, King Brian allowed the King of the Midrealm to hold his court first.

The Middle Kingdom's business took about ten minutes. There was a presentation of a table to His Majesty, a new shire's introduction to the Crown, and the opportunity for His land's populace to swear fealty. The Midrealm then presented a gift of hand-made trim to the Royals of Meridies.

Brian and Aeruín's Court lasted around forty-five minutes, with much business being conducted. The last piece of business in court was an unnamed man claiming to hail from our shire; he presented - with permission from Our Sovereigns - gifts of Vulpine Reach aphrodisiac unto the Heirs of the Midrealm, "in the interest of fostering peace between our two kingdoms."

Both Kings agreed that the day had contained, "The best fighting of any previous war." Due to the Meridian losses in target archery, the A&S contest, and one battle - and the wins of three of the battles, that the conflict officially be declared a tie.

Ultimately, the Kings of our two kingdoms agreed to be allies in the upcoming Pennsic War. May this new peace between our realms last - at least until next year!

FROM THE CHRONICLER

Greetings, gentles all. As you may have noticed, this issue is largely devoted to coverage of our kingdom's most recent encounter with the Middle Kingdom (who, at the moment, are having grave difficulties with flooding - our thoughts go out to them). By the way, if you read something in any of these articles and say to yourself, "That's not the way it happened....," please take the time to sit down and jot on paper the way *you* remember it. After all, a chronicler can't be everywhere all the time!

For example: on Saturday morning, all of us at Border Raids discovered that the campground we were using was adjacent to a radio-controlled model airplane club. Now, when you're in 13th century clothing, carrying a bow while walking around encampments formed by *period* tents and pavilions, the LAST thing you want is to be reminded that you really are in the 1990's - especially if it's the noise of a model airplane that does the reminding! There were any number of archers at the "butts" that would gladly have tried to shoot those annoying "dragons" down (they were "wyverns" to the Midrealm shooters - the Middle Kingdom **likes** dragons...). While I don't relish the image we'd build from such an incident, it *did* have its appeal!

Speaking of archery, elsewhere in this edition is an excerpt from an article published in Bowhunting World regarding wood shaft material. Port Orford cedar shafting has become hard to find for various reasons. Such a difficulty could hurt those involved in SCA tournament and combat archery.

However, this excerpt holds a certain amount of hope for those of us who shoot. My heartfelt thanks to Editor Tim Dehn of Bowhunting World for granting permission to reprint the excerpt in Fox Tales.

Also in this issue are summary outlines of our previous month's meetings. These outlines are especially good for those among us who have trouble in making it to meetings regularly. Be sure to thank Dorin Schwartzmitt if you find them helpful.

Gramercy, Gentles!



BEST BETS

- 8/14 Beggar's Rebellion, An Dun Theine (120 mi.) \$11 - *Peasant-themed event, bring your own feast, tenting.*
- 8/21 Magna-Faire, Iron Mt. (158 mi.) \$21 - *Combat, A&S contests, cabins-floorspace-tenting.*
- 8/28 Tourney of the Foxes, Vulpine Reach (10 mi.) \$14 - *Six-man melee tournament, live archery, vintning contest, cabins and tenting. You better be there!!!*

This is Fox Tales, published by and for the members of the Shire of Vulpine Reach of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. It is available from the publisher at 1305 La Brea Road, Chattanooga, TN, 37421. It is not a publication of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., and does not delineate SCA policies. Fox Tales is published monthly and is distributed at the first chapter meeting of the month. Submission deadlines are listed in the monthly calendar. WARTHAVEN comic strip is copyright 1993 by Mark Wallace; unauthorized duplication/reproduction is prohibited.

CALENDAR

AUGUST

- 2 Dance Class/Distribution of August Fox Tales
- 7 Local Archery Practice
- 9 SCA interview on Channel 3's morning news show/Discussion of activities at Tourney of the Foxes
- 14 **EVENT- EZARET**
- EVENT- Beggar's Rebellion (An Dun Theine)**
- 15 Special Fighter Practice/Picnic at Warner Park, 2pm
- 16 Dance Class/Deadline for September Fox Tales
- 21 **EVENT-Magna Faire (Iron Mountain)**
- Local Archery Practice
- 23 *Final Local Meeting before Tourney of the Foxes!!!*
- 28 **EVENT-Tourney of the Foxes (Vulpine Reach)**
- EVENT- Meridian Lagniappe II (Wyrngeist)**
- 30 No meeting, no kidding!! (Recovery from Foxes)

SEPTEMBER

- 4 **EVENT- EZARET**
- EVENT- Grifphon's Pleasure V (Grifphon Shadow)**
- 6 **** LABOR DAY **** (No Meeting)
- 11 **EVENT- Diamond Wars (Small Gray Bear)**
- EVENT- Wine List VII (Glynn Rhe)**
- 13 Post-Mortem of Foxes/Deadline for October Fox Tales
- 15 **** ROSH HASHANAH BEGINS ****
- 18 **EVENT- Tavern Brawl V (Rising Stone)**
- EVENT- Red Tower XXI (South Downs)**
- EVENT- Buccaneer's Ball VIII (Seleone)**

Fighter practice is held on Sunday afternoons in Warner Park at 2 p.m. (weather permitting); chapter meetings are in room 116 at Holt Hall, UTC campus on Mondays at 8 p.m. Archery practices are held at Choo Choo Archery Lanes on Bonny Oaks Drive at 12 noon (as scheduled).

Regnum

- Seneschal Lady Rachele du Pied Leger
Rachel Lightfoot (706) 965-7947
- Knight Marshall Lord Forddwydd Meredydd, Esq.
Craig Rethwilm (615) 624-3458
- Herald THL Richard Fenwick
Ken Scott (615) 698-5007
- Arts & Sciences Lee Comyn
Lee Cummings (615) 855-0303
- Hospitaller Lady Diana Fiona O'Shera
Diane Walker (615) 875-5417
- Reeve Mistress Lijsbeth Tijz van Brugge
Leslie Dulin (615) 886-6256
- Historian Lady Madelena de Luna
Joy Day (615) 891-9410
- Chronicler Lord James Toxophilus
Jim Long (615) 894-6487
- Chancellor, Meridian College of Bards
Lady Egelina Rabbette
Rabbit Kadrich (615) 877-6299

THE FOX FILES: A PERSONNA HISTORY

G'day fair gentles. I am Laird Cailean michAlasdair A'Sinclair and this is my personal history as chronicled by Jason Tryon.

I was born in the winter of the year 1303 in the village of Glenn Thurso, the younger son of Alasdair michDonmhail A'Sinclair, the chief of clan A'Sinclair (Author's note: I do not claim to be a member or tanist of the actual Sinclair clan or family; mine is purely a mythical creation.)

I have been told that my birth and the survival of my mother during that harsh highland winter was something of a miracle, since it occurred shortly before Christmas and in the midst of a savage storm. The next morning, in the calm that often follows on the heels of such storms, my mother held me and named me "Cailean" ("dove" in the old tongue). The English and the French would have spelled it "Colin." The priest that wrote the name, however, spoke only Gaelic, thus the name is spelled in the old language. Besides, it is much more important that the name be that of the clan chief - and a highlander, besides - than any lowland appellations.

During the time of my childhood, the 13th century closed, with the following century to be marked with continued warfare with the English, the Black Plague, and sundry nastiness of lesser importance - at least to me.

As was customary at the time for younger sons, I was originally destined for the priesthood. My early childhood was spent in play with the other children of the clan. At age seven, I was sent to the cloister not far from home, there to begin the education that would lead me to the priesthood.

Fortunately (in my opinion), fate extended her hand to alter my young path. The spring of 1314 brought with it the promise of war. Robert the Bruce had roused the clans and in the summer met the English at Bannockburn. I had been at home when the summons came. I asked, and got, my father's permission to serve as a page for the coming campaign.

Bannockburn marked a change in my life. Although the English were driven back and Scotland was secured, the price for the clan was high; the chief's heir lay dead. Thus the path before me changed abruptly. Gone was the priesthood - the demands of the clan had to come first.

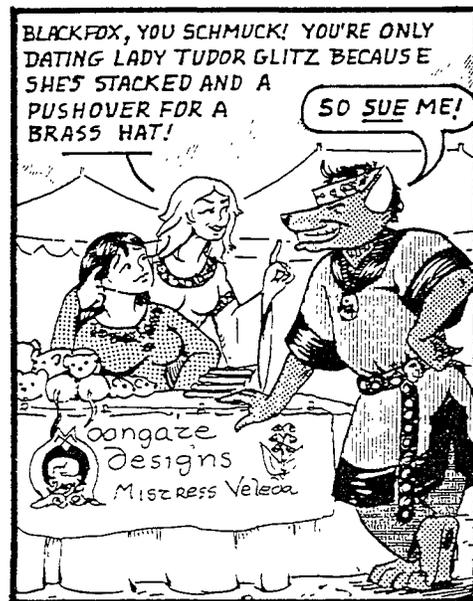
Currently, the year is 1320 and I am the clan chief in all but name. Age has taken a heavy toll on my father, so I must bear the burden of the day-to-day

work of being the clan chief. I am presently involved in negotiations with a clan near the Isle of Skie, with the intent of marrying a daughter of their house.

History will record that I was taken prisoner at the Battle of Halidon Hill in 1328. My clan ransomed me for a princely sum - which my clan is *still* trying to pay for. So if some of your sheep are missing, I don't know anything about it!

-Laird Cailean michAlasdair A'Sinclair

Warthaven TM **Cartoon Jam** featuring Lady Tudor Glitz



ASK 'OLD FOX'

Dear Old Fox,

I have run into an awkward situation recently. I am a newcomer to SCA activities and at an event I went to, an odd thing happened: a lovely lady wearing a crown made a pass at me.

How should I have handled this (aside from politely excusing myself and quickly leaving)??? Wouldn't *someone* get very mad if it was found out? Especially with me being lowly-born and she being obviously a high-born noble? What do you suggest?

Yours,
New-But-Virile

Dear New-But-Virile,

A crown or circlet doesn't mean they are actually married - and low-born or high-born, it really doesn't matter. Sometimes it is a challenge, but with practice it becomes second nature.

First: politely chat with the lovely and gracious lady. If interruptions are a problem, arrange a rendezvous for a later time, but not too much later!

Second: arrange a distraction for those who would require her attention; misdirection usually works very well and ale works wonders! A bardic circle usually can keep peoples' attention for quite some time.

Third: go and meet your lovely lady. Don't forget flowers, jewelry, or chocolate. Any gift would be nice. Oh, and don't forget to have fun!

Yours in trouble,
Old Fox

If you have a question about life in the SCA that you'd like an answer to, then write the question down on a piece of paper and give it to me, the chronicler, and I'll see that it gets to the Old Fox for consideration! Thanks for the questions.

Armor Items for Sale:

200 Waxed Leather Plates (1 1/2" x 4") for
Brigandine-style armor\$40
Waxed Leather Kidney Belt (6" wide) \$25
Waxed Leather Basket Hilts (pr.)..... \$30
Waxed Leather 1/2 Gauntlets (pr.)..... \$20

Contact Lord Forddwydd Meredydd at
(615) 624-3458

TRAVELS: SPECIAL 'BORDER RAIDS' REPORTS!

My horse, his hooves thudding softly on the forest loam of northern Meridies, wearily made his way into the camp of the Meridian host. Comrades welcomed me warmly, glad I had made my way through the enemy's patrols. The starlit night as welcome a blanket as the campfires that guide my way.

The Midrealm had come as thieves in the night, stealing cattle, razing the fertile farmlands, and frightening the population of that region of Meridies. The folk of the Shire of Rising Stone entreated His Majesty for aid. Thus, we gathered in the night just inside the Midrealm lands; there we would trap the thieving Middle Kingdom armies and send them cringing back to their pigsty dwellings, justly chastised for their insolence.

With the dawning, we gathered upon a nearby hill, there to stand against the Midrealm retreat. Into the vale marched the column of Midrealm troops.

Upon sighting us, they arrayed themselves across a wide expanse of land - thence did the Kings hold counsel. The King of the Middle did cast words of spite at our Just King, demanding to know why we had invaded their lands. With honor and dignity, King Brian leveled His gaze upon the Midrealm King and spoke - with a soft voice - the charges made by our border shires. The terrible vengeance that awaited caused the Middle Kingdom soldiers to quake and cringe doglike in their fear.

The Midrealm King, fearful of his life, beseeched our King to try to settle the matter with champions. Fair and Just, King Brian claimed the right of 'champion' for Himself. With but a single sound, a forest of gleaming swords leapt into the air and with but a single cry, the knights and men-at-arms of Meridies stood forward to defend King and Lands - His Highness Prince Boru foremost amongst them.

The Midrealm, fearful of the Meridian champions - but honorable in the last - stood the field. The Middle Kingdom armies joined to guard their King, and with a terrible clamor, the

forces crashed together. The ring of fine steel was a single shimmering sound.

Fearful for the life of their King, a new and untrained column of soldiers broke from the enemy's ranks. Falling upon the battle, they released a tide that would become the Midrealm's downfall. A column of our own soldiers - strong, though untried - advanced onto the enemy line and wreaked bloody slaughter. Thence with a tempest of anger did King Brian call forth the Meridian army. The sound of hoof and boot echoed as thunder about the land!

Many true and valiant soldiers fell on both sides; the ground was slick with the blood of both friend and foe. On and on the battle raged, the dead and wounded of both sides growing in numbers. From field to bridge did we pursue the enemy in just repayment for the ills they had brought upon our northern shires.

The Middle Kingdom armies fell into a retreat which became a rout as they made to escape the advancing Meridians. King Brian, our Just, Fair, and Valiant Sovereign, called His forces to halt, to hold the bridges against the enemy's return with re-enforcement. We have not seen them since and do not expect them to brave the passes into our lands again!

Late into the night we celebrated - not exactly victory - but with the knowledge that the Middle Kingdom would think twice before raiding King Brian's lands again. Fair fellowship and good will falls upon the heels of bloody strife.

Next day, we wend our way back home to the familiar hills and mountains of Vulpine Reach and wait to once again guard our borders against any who would do harm - for we are Meridian soldiers!

-Laird Cailean michAlasdair A'Sinclair

I had heard tales of Middle Kingdom incursions into our lands but did not believe our northern neighbors to be so bold as to actively seek an encounter with our skilled and brave

TRAVELS: SPECIAL 'BORDER RAIDS' REPORTS (continued)

young army. As the chronicler for our shire, I felt a responsibility to see for myself and inform others of the plight - if indeed the tales were true. To that end, I packed and rigged the wagon while Lora Graymare harnessed and hitched the horses.

Aside from a slight rain on the way to the northern frontier, the journey was uneventful. We arrived near nightfall and found that people from the Shire of Rising Stone had found an area just within the Middle Kingdom suitable for a gathering of our men-at-arms.

Lora and I drove the wagon about the growing tent village, hoping to come across others of our shire to encamp with. Finding none, we found what we felt was a nice spot to spend the night and pitched the tent during a drizzling rain.

We then changed from our traveling clothes and walked around among the various encampments. To our surprise, we found an entire row of pavilions where merchants had wares for sale! Here we were, possibly on the eve of a great battle, and here were *merchants* hawking their goods! This was amazing, for through casual conversation, I discovered that a number of the merchants were from the Midrealm itself. Incredible.

We eventually found an encampment where Gaston (a friend from the northern shire of Glaedenfeld) was tending a fire. Seeing a familiar face was refreshing, although there was no sign of Lady Egelina Rabbette - one of Vulpine Reach's residents and a dear friend of Gaston. Gaston assured us that "Lady Rabbit" was surely on the way and would arrive during the night. We then returned to our own little encampment and turned in.

During the late night, Lora and I discovered that Lady Rabbit wasn't the only gentle to arrive during the night! All through the dark hours, there was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing of wagons, the pounding of stakes, and voices crying out to each other.

By the morning light, Lora and I discovered that we had been encircled by a large number of people - from the

Midrealm! Obviously, they felt they had nothing to fear from Meridians; they kept peace with all from our Kingdom - guessing, perhaps, that the political situation would be decided on the field of battle. Nervously, we breakfasted on fruit, cheese, and bread. Being the only Meridians in the area was somewhat unsettling.

Lora and I decided to pack up and move into the safety of the Vulpine Reach encampment. To our pleasant surprise, we discovered that the camp had grown during the night: it was now occupied by Lord Forddwydd Meredydd, Malcolm michAlasdair A'Sinchlair, Lord Tam Southart, Ekatarina, Culliden, Ulli Freihand, and of course, Lady Rabbit and her lovely daughter Bridjette.

With all of our goods secure with others of our shire, we felt free to wander about and look more closely at our surroundings. Both Lora and I were happy to see that we had not brought our bows in vain; there was an archery tournament being held for the entertainment of the populace (I also suspect that the Midrealm wanted to lure our better archers from the fray). We also toured the pavilions of the merchants once more. After all, they *were* there....

The archery tournament was unique. Rather than the usual circular target, our hosts had set up six different challenges for the shooters. There were likenesses of a wild boar, a buck deer, a ground hog (I believe), and a rabbit. Additionally, there were two false heads upon which an apple had been placed (the object being to hit the apple and not the head). All were at unknown distances.

We did well in the tournament, although exactly *how* well, I'm not sure. I waited for the score announcement to be made in court by the hosts, but they only mentioned that, because of overall scores, the Middle Kingdom had won the event.

I also took one of my wines to enter in the brewing and vintrning section of the Arts and Sciences contests. Although I tied for first, the Middle

Kingdom still won the event. I seriously hoped that our army was having better luck than *I* was!

It turns out that the Meridians had availed themselves quite well on the battlefield! Of four battles fought, our Kingdom succeeded in winning three. A fifth battle that was planned was not fought - due in part to the heat, I suspect.

Court was held by both Kingdoms' Royalty in the afternoon. As the topic of Court has been covered already, I won't mention more about it here (see front page).

After a quick dip in a local swimming hole, we headed back to the encampment. There we partook of Lady Rabbit's delicious feast of "rat-on-a-stick" (sliced beef kabobs), ribs, chicken, stuffed turnips, green beans, honey-glazed carrots, bread and spiced butter, and Malcolm michAlasdair's wonderful cheesecake. During feast, Lady Rabbit - exercising her bardic skills - graced us with song.

Many of us then wandered down to the bardic circle to listen and sing. Meridian and Midrealmian alike reveled and enjoyed the evening together. There, Lora and I saw a demonstration of belly-dancing. We watched for a while and decided to return to camp and turn in. It had been a long, hot, but enjoyable, day.

Next morning, we had a small breakfast and began to pack. Once more we toured merchant's row (it was only courtesy, understand). There we found a spearpoint of a design that Lora needed for a ring-filting lance she was making. After a bit of haggling, we all went away happy; Lora had her point, the merchant had some Meridian currency. We finished packing and left just before noon. Wanting to retain a bit of the event for a little longer, we decided not to change back into our traveling clothes.

We stopped at a rather unique inn on the way home called, er, "The Biscuit Keg" or somesuch for lunch; *that* was an experience. I shall let Lora tell *that* tale!

All too soon, we arrived back in Vulpine Reach. We were exhausted, but happy to see our army do so well and to

TRAVELS: SPECIAL 'BORDER RAIDS' REPORTS (continued)

know that both of our Kingdoms could meet in courtesy and harmony - even in warfare!

-Lord James Toxophilus

Greetings Ladies and Gentles. The time for the famed Border Raids had come, and I was as uneasy as a cat in the Royal Kennels. This was to have been my first true Event, and though I'd been to 2 separate Demos, in my heart, I knew I could not count them as true Events.

Though the threat of rain was very imminent, the weekend promised to be a nearly magical experience. The Friday before the event, I left Chattanooga bound for Bowling Green, Kentucky with the company of a very interesting German gentle named Ullrich, or "Ullie" for short. We left around lunch time, and after a very uneventful four and one-half hour drive, we arrived in Bowling Green.

Upon reaching the encampment, we met my good friend Gaston, who had already arrived, and Trolled in. After Ullie and I had done likewise, the three of us soon found a campsite and proceeded to entrench ourselves for the weekend. At this point, the resourcefulness of Gaston proved to be again truly remarkable, as he knew how to put up the tent I had brought more so than I did. To Gaston I once again owe my thanks.

The next day brought the fighting, which was truly fierce. And though by day's end, the Border Raids had been called a tie, I believe that the Midrealmers as well as the Meridians both truly knew who the victors were. Truly, the Meridian fighters are amazing warriors.

No less interesting than the fighting was the merchants, and the various events that went on that afternoon. The merchants' wares captivated the eye, from the most regal lady, to the gruffest fighter. Being as this was my first Event, I had no concept of how and what merchants brought. Now that I know, I know how much coinage to bring next time!

Saturday's in-Shire feast proved to be fantastic, and I salute the Lady Rabette as being a most impressive chef, and an excellent bard as well. The songs she sang were entrancing, and in combination with the food, the candlelight, and the general atmosphere, it made for one of the most remarkable and fond memories of my experiences at the Border Raids.

The evening's events proved to be most remarkable indeed. I must congratulate Lord Forddwydd Meredydd for being a most remarkable "horse" at the Pool Party Saturday night. Then, as a celebration of Meridies' existence for 15 years, the Meridian 15th year party was held. Ladies and Gentles, to keep it brief, and to avoid putting any of those who went into the limelight, I will say that the Party proved to be more than merely a Party.

Sunday came, and with it the very unhappy realization that the Border Raids was drawing to an end. Ullie and I picked up our belongings, and after one last brief tour of the entire Border Raids encampment, we boarded, and made our way back to our home here in the Shire.

With no doubts, if this is even a small sign of what an Event can be like, you can bet that I'll be making plans to attend future Events!

-Culluden McGilroy

It was late morning when Lord James Toxophilus and I finished loading the wagon and turned the horses' heads to the road, leaving the site of the latest conflict with our northern neighbors of the Midrealm. Not a bad day for traveling, though a trifle warm, and we made good time. Traveling is, however, a tiring and appetite-building business. We decided to stop for a meal at what appeared to be a roadside inn approximately halfway through our trip. And an interesting meal it was, too!

Although it had the outward appearance of an inn, we discovered that there were no rooms to let - that they only served food. Most odd. The

"inn" was called the "Biscuit Bin" or something similar, and was a good-sized and well-attended establishment, judging by the number of wagons surrounding it. When we entered, we discovered just *how* well attended: despite the large size of the commons rooms, there was a wait before seating could be arranged for Lord James and me. Well, recognizing the need of our horses for a bit of rest (and not wishing to resume bouncing down the road too soon ourselves), we agreed to the wait.

Left to our own devices in the outer room - which served as a shop of sorts as well - we looked around, both at the goods offered and at our fellow travelers. The shop contained an incredible variety of wares, from food (sweets, in particular) to clothing of unusual styles to items whose uses we could not fathom. I *cannot* imagine how one merchant came to deal in such a variety of goods. Perhaps they were given by other travelers in payment for a meal, although I find it unlikely that an individual having so many of these items in his possession could be lacking in gold.

But enough speculating. Our fellow travelers were a unique assortment as well; many were wearing similar outfits made up of short, form-fitting tunics and extremely short pants that barely met requirements for common decency (their *knees* actually showed), let alone good taste! I personally can't believe that such garments could be comfortable, with the continuous draft on the legs and all. It was Lord James' theory that the strangely attired ones might be from the Kingdom of Trimaris; he's heard some interesting stories about the practices down there....

After several minutes a serving girl - one of many - came to direct us to our seats. As soon as we sat down, a written list of meal choices was handed to us (we were obviously recognized as educated gentles). This great expenditure on writing materials and on an obviously well-studied scribe was astounding until we observed the variety of offerings. Clearly, if a serving

TRAVELS: SPECIAL 'BORDER RAIDS' REPORTS (continued)

girl had to commit it all to memory and list aloud to each customer, it would take forever. I would imagine they still must recite them for any illiterate wanderer, though perhaps they offer simpler fare under those circumstances.

As Lord James and I attempted to make a decision we had not anticipated, our server brought two *glass* containers of amazingly clear water, which, despite my misgivings, turned out to be quite clean and refreshing. More amazingly, though, both contained numerous small chunks of *ice*! Where the proprietor found ice in the middle of the summer is beyond me; the mountains in that region are not nearly tall enough to support year-round snow. Lord James suggested the possibility of ice caves in the area, but *where ever* it comes from must be a bountiful source; imagine, using ice *merely* to cool off drinking water! Furthermore, we noted that all the pieces of ice were the same size and shape. Does the owner of this inn have such an excess of servants that he can actually set many to so pointless a task as breaking ice into such precise pieces?

I have already given sufficient proof of the proprietor's obvious wealth and extravagant ways - and yet the tale isn't over! Upon each table (of which there were many) there was a large container full of salt and another of pepper! There was a king's ransom in spices in the common rooms alone and there was apparently more in the kitchen, for when the food came to our table, it was already well-seasoned. I imagine the servers are trained to watch like a hawk lest some less-honest guest slip a jar or two into a pouch for a tidy profit down the road.

The food itself was quite good - I had no need to use the offered selection of spices - and was hot when it reached our table. The inn actually provided eating utensils, one of which had so many points that you'd surely damage your mouth while using it, not to mention the large gaps in its bottom - prohibiting its use on anything not large and completely solid. Lord James and I

set these aside as being totally useless and made do with the spoons and pitifully dull knives provided. Someone *truly* needs to take to task the person responsible for the care of the inn's blades! They had absolutely no edge and the point was so worn down that the end was actually rounded. But then, perhaps they have fewer knives stolen if they are kept in such condition....

As I mentioned, the food was very good, if unusual. We never did determine exactly what the white, fluffy material with the consistency - but not the taste - of mashed turnips was. All in all, it was a very enjoyable and filling meal. It was also quite reasonably priced despite the obvious extravagances. Clearly, the inn's proprietor is not lacking for monetary support!

As we checked the harnesses and turned our horses and wagon back to the road home, one question remained unanswered in our minds: Are Their Majesties aware of this small pocket of wealth and hospitality in the middle of Their kingdom?

-Lora Graymare

FOR THE ARCHER

They are the bane of the heavy fighter and the nemesis of the little gold circle in the target. Clouds of them on the field of Agincourt turned the tide of the battle. Today, they are harder to find than "hen's teeth." Wood arrows today are an endangered species.

Until only a few years ago, wood was widely available. Then, due in part to environmental activism, and in part to an increased interest in traditional archery both here and abroad, the demand outstripped the supply.

The situation may soon change, as indicated in an article I came across recently. Knowing just how important archery is to the SCA, I contacted the editor of Bowhunting World in hopes that he would grant permission to reprint the appropriate excerpt here in Fox Tales. I am happy to say that he gladly approved my request. The following is an excerpt from Bowhunting World 1993 Equipment Guide, Vol.42, No.5 and is

reprinted here by permission of Tim Dehn, editor and author of the article, "New Nocks, Arrow Choices Reaching Today's Shooters."

Wood Arrows

Until recently, things had looked fairly bleak for the fans of wood arrows. Acme Wood Products of Myrtle Point, Oregon, the main supplier of wood shafts, had told our staff it might have to shut down entirely if a new source of supply was not found.

Arrows have traditionally been made of Port Orford cedar, and the best arrows come from logs that have been laying and aging for years. But loggers don't typically go hunting for fallen cedar -- they find it while scouting and cutting more valuable woods. And anyone who's heard about the spotted owl knows timbering has been drastically curtailed in the Pacific Northwest.

Two recent developments may mean supplies of shafting for wood arrows pick up again. The first was the Clinton administration's timber summit held the first week of April. It was a sign the federal government may intervene to find a compromise between loggers and environmentalists.

The second was the announcement that at least one viable alternative to Port Orford cedar had been found. Mike Cochran's Big Creek Archery in Chalmers, Indiana, is now distributing shafts made of ramin wood, the Malaysian wood typically used in dowels. Tough, dense and straight, it is somewhat heavier than cedar in equivalent spine weights. Cochran has said he'll have quantities of the shafts in 11/32 diameter, spined for bows drawing 60/65 to 75-80 in five-pound increments.

Demo Report: DuPont Elementary School

On June eighth the DuPont Elementary class of the Gifted held a school-wide Renaissance Faire and the SCA was there. We set up the shire pavilion in what was described as record time thanks to the crack Vulpine Reach Demo team. It was a very hot day and we were lucky enough to have some

DUPONT DEMO (continued)

shade offered by a large oak tree.

The children of the hosting class had set up booths around the field with various activities. These included a Nerf-bow target range, a chess champion, face-painting, and others. Several times during the day, some of the students and the teacher of that class put on performances, including sword swallowing, juggling, and bicycle jousting. A Court was also held and a feast was given in honor of the royalty.

Our own Lord James Toxophilus deserves a hearty thanks for bringing his bow and the shire target. He stood in the heat and fired arrows all day despite his aching shoulders caused by the 45-pound bow. Thanks James.

- Dorin Schwartzmitt

HOW TO PACK FOR AN EVENT

A class taught by Lady Egelina Rabbette, transcribed by Dorin Schwartzmitt.

First, the basics. How long will the event be? This will determine a great deal of things, like how much food and garb you will need. Then comes feast gear (plate, bowl, mug, spoon, fork, knife, cloth napkin, candle, a cloth for the table, and plastic bags), two cloaks (one for warm weather, one for cold), extra garb, necessary medications, waivers for minors (there are three pages), and site info with directions.

Lady Rabbit recommends camping whenever possible because it affords privacy and comfort; you *know* where you're going to sleep. If you camp, you will need a fire extinguisher. It must be in view in front of your tent. If you should see a tent on fire, you should knock the poles down on it since it is too late for that tent; you may save other tents nearby by helping to prevent the fire from spreading.

The *order* of packing is important, too. Let's start with the trunk.

First in should be garb, feast gear, and the fire extinguisher, since they are the last things you will need. (Editor's note: **Having been a victim of a car fire twice, I personally feel that the fire bottle should be easily accessible at all times while traveling.**)

Next, pack extra candles, since

oil fired lamps are dangerous. They have flammable fumes and can actually spread fire through spillage.

Throw in the bedrolls and floor coverings for the tent; old bedspreads work quite well for this. A word of warning: never let **anything** come into contact with the tent walls or roof, since it will then act as a sponge and suck water into the tent. Once this happens, nothing but drying the tent out thoroughly will stop it.

Take some comfortable shoes - period or not. If you have to walk a great deal, you will be very grateful. Always include a full set of clean, dry, mundane clothes in a plastic bag. These are for the drive back home, when the comfort will count. Last in the trunk should be the tent, poles, stakes, ropes, and a claw hammer.

Now, let's fill up the back seat. Put the ice chest and its cover in here; it won't get as warm inside the car as in the trunk. Next, put in a box of garbage bags. Plan on everything getting absolutely filthy and use the bags to keep the car, garb, and yourself clean. You can also use them for trash.

In the ice chest, use several two-liter bottles almost full of frozen water rather than loose ice. You also will have fresh ice water as the ice in the bottles melt. Don't put dry-goods like bread in the ice chest - it will be ruined. Put all the food in zip-lock bags to keep it dry. Keep extra zip-lock bags handy in case they

Rabbit's Way Bread Recipe

The Perfect Tourney Food!

- 2 loaves Hawaiian Bread
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound ground sausage
- 1 medium-sized onion
- 2 potatoes
- 2 eggs
- 1 pound frozen spinach (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Chop the onion and cook it with the ground beef and sausage, drain. Cube the potatoes. Cut top off of the bread and scoop out the bread in the middle, forming a bowl. Mix beef, sausage, onions, potatoes, eggs, spices, and spinach and pour into bread. Put top on loaves, cover with foil and bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Serve hot or cool - will last for weeks in the freezer.

are needed.

Always practice setting up your tent well in advance of the event so that you know how it goes up and can pitch it at "oh-dark-thirty" without help!

Be sure to carry at least one flashlight and spare batteries. You'll also need a good chair. Director's chairs are great, because they don't look *too* out-of-period, they're comfortable, and they fold up.

Other items you may want: a cloth shower bag (shaving kit to you men), shower shoes ("flip-flops"), toilet paper, soap tied in a stocking (with a loop to hang it from), other personal hygiene items, and facial tissue.

By the way, you fighters may want to bring your armor and weapons. Be sure to take toys for yourself (archery gear, projects you're working on, etc.), but don't get hooked up in working on them and miss out on meeting folks and having fun. If you can do something and talk, too, then by all means set up somewhere and you may notice other gentles gather around and join in, or perhaps just watch.

Hope this has been helpful.

- Lady Egelina Rabbette

- Dorin Schwartzmitt

Meeting Summaries

6/14 Business Meeting, although not much business was discussed. Started with a Q & A session for newcomers. Lady Rabbit discussed her plans for a traveler's feast at Border Raids. She also shared a recipe for Way Bread (left). Report on an armoring workshop held on previous Saturday, where one helm was completed, second nearly completed, work was done on several other armor projects. Aaron, Jeff, and Michael all won helmets for their hard work during workshop. Autocrat and Feastcrat for Foxes announced the need for grill chefs *who know what they're doing*, after-feast clean-up crew, and Trolls to man the sign-in booth. "If you're up to the challenge, join the FEW, the PROUD, the **VOLUNTEERS!**" Discussion on what an Award of Arms is and how to get one.

6/21 "Fabriholic's Anonymous" announced a shopping foray to Hancock's Fabrics on Highway 153 on 6/22. Autocrat of Foxes says, "Pre-register if you possibly can." July birthday meeting - excellent cake.

-Dorin Schwartzmitt

THE SHIRE OF VULPINE REACH
PROUDLY PRESENTS:
TOURNEY OF THE FOXES

AUGUST 27, 28, 29 A.S. XXVIII

Come join us as we celebrate the 15th year of our kingdom and our shire at TOURNEY OF THE FOXES! This will be our traditional six-man melee tournament, so be sure and bring a friend.

In addition to the fighting, we will have an archery competition, a brewing and vintning contest, a contest for the best heraldic display on a banner (to be judged at the feast), and a strolling bard competition. Ekatarina Mikailovna Yulibiepsa and Bridgett Areonda will be conducting activities for the goslings. We will have ample space in the air-conditioned hall for merchants to set up and offer their wares. Merchants, please contact the autocrats in advance. The "NOT READY FOR PEERAGE PLAYERS" are preparing a presentation for your delight and entertainment!

Mistress Lijsbeth will be preparing an Arabic feast for your enjoyment. Our feast will be served in and around an open air pavilion. If you wish to dine outside - but not on the ground - please bring your tables and chairs.

This year, TOURNEY OF THE FOXES will be held at Booker T. Washington State Park just north of Chattanooga, TN. There is bed space for 96 in rustic cabins and plenty of space for tenting. No campfires allowed. This site is VERY discreetly dry. Please, no original containers or empties. No pets.

DIRECTIONS:

Make your best way to I-75, just north of Chattanooga. Take the Chickamauga Dam/Airport exit (TN Highway 153). Stay on 153 until you reach the TN Highway 58/Harrison exit. Take the exit and go approximately 3 miles. The park entrance is on the left. SCA signs will be posted for your convenience.

Thanks to our hard-working reeve, we are able to offer the following prices:

\$14 Until August 14	\$18 Thereafter and at the door
\$10 Day trip with feast	\$5 Day trip without feast
Age five and under, free. Age five through twelve, half price.	
Families pay no more than the cost of three adult members.	
\$2 off with proof of membership.	

Please make checks payable to: SCA, Inc. / Shire of Vulpine Reach.

AUTOCRATS:

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mka
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No collect calls, no calls after 10 pm EDT. Send post cards for confirmation of bed space. Please indicate whether you intend to tent. Waivers required, available from your Seneschal or from the autocrats with an SASE. All calls returned collect. All inquiries should be directed to the reservation address.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the contributors to the
August issue:

Laird Cailean michAlasdair A'Sinclair

Baron William Blackfox

"The Old Fox"

Lord Forddwydd Meredydd

Culluden McGilroy

Lora Graymare

Mr. Timothy Dehn of Bowhunting World

Dorin Schwartzmitt

Lady Egelina Rabbette

Lord Tarn Southart

Lord Llywelyn ap Alawn

*And a special word of appreciation unto His Majesty,
King of the Midrealm and the Royal Heirs, and Their
Majesties King Brian and Queen Aeruin & Prince
Boru the Precious for your most gracious sense of
humor and good sportsmanship at Border Raids.*

LAST MINUTE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Please note that we are having a special fighter practice on August 15. This will probably be the last major opportunity for a good fighter practice before Foxes. It's an excellent chance to brush up on those tactics and techniques just before our melee tourney!

Due to the upcoming TOURNEY OF THE FOXES, there will be no meeting until the 13th of September. That means the deadline for the October issue will be the same meeting that the September issue will be distributed! If any of you have any ideas on how to handle this, I am open to suggestions.

This issue represents a great deal of work on the part of the contributors. If you enjoy the August edition, please thank the ones who in large part made it possible. I know *I* appreciated their hard work!

THE TAPES ARE IN!

Those of you who ordered the VHS videotape from the Waterhouse Pavilion Dance Demo can now get them from Greg Bean.

FOX TALES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SHIRE OF VULPINE REACH

C/O JIM LONG
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