

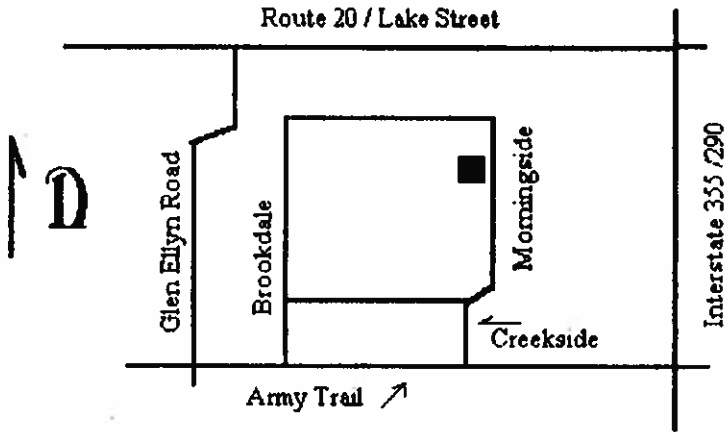
Chips



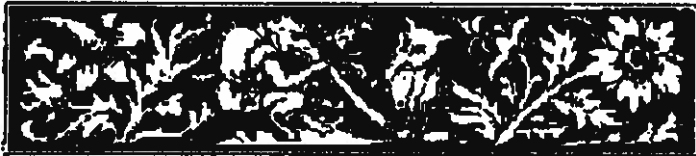
December 1997

Next Shire Moot and Christmas Party

The next shire moot and Christmas Party will be held on Saturday (note the day) December 20th at Ethelwulf and Arwyn's (Earl and Maxine Bless) starting at 7:30pm. The shire will provide the Italian beef, and Ethelwulf will break open his case of 1997 Beaujolais Nouveau.



Earl and Max 306b Morningside 630-351-5802

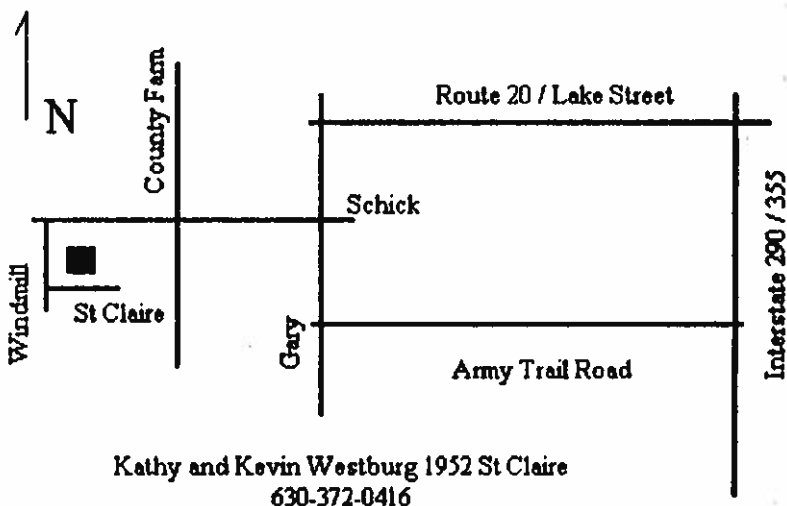


Brewers Guild

At the last brewers meeting those crazy, stout drinking fools made a nut brown ale (Gavin), a red Saki...red Saki? (Ethelwulf and Kris) and a batch of impulse Chablis. There will not be a brewers guild meeting in December. Please call Ethelwulf at 630-351-5802 to see when the January meeting will be since...well...we have not decided on a date as of Chips going to press.

Costumers Guild

The next costume guild meeting will held at the home of Katherine and Gavin (Kathy and Kevin Westburg) on Sunday, January 4th at 3:30pm. Discussion will revolve around Russian garb.



A Note to all Shire Officers from the Seneschal:

For those of us who serve as officers in an SCA group, December means more than just Christmas presents and New Year's parties. It means.....DOMESDAY's.

Yup, the time is upon us for 1997 Domesday reports. All officers need to report to their own regional/kingdom superiors and to ME by January 1, 1998. I am mailing my report out on January 3, so yes, it really, really, REALLY does have to be to me by then, and it must be a hard copy. Please remember that failure to give a copy to the seneschal by major offices such as the exchequer or marshal, even if sent to your kingdom superior, may lead to removal from office. (Hey! Quit clapping....)

All right, I'll quite pestering now. You know it's due, and you know when. I'll be waiting....

Colwyn



Shire News and Notes:

(Because, "Culwyn's Corner" just sounded plain stupid.)

First of all, just a reminder to old members, and a clarification for new members: the Shire Christmas party on Saturday, the 20th, *and* the December moot are one in the same event. So, there is no Sunday meeting this month. (We'll get the meeting out of the way quickly so everyone can have fun.) A couple people have asked, so I just want to make sure everyone's clear.

Secondly, an event update. The Shire's event is now only about 2 - 2 1/2 months away (!), and as it stands, it appears that the site will be Lord's Park in Elgin. While this would be a wonderful spring setting, I understand that

the autocrat staff has some concerns about its suitability in the winter. If you know of any potential, inexpensive sites, please let Ashley know immediately. Also, there will probably be a pre-event cooking party, and a lot of help needed the day of the event to make this site viable. We will discuss this in detail at the moot. Volunteer early and often.

I also understand from Ashley that the sewing guild now has some very useful information on period, Russian garb. So for those of you interested in having garb that matches the events theme, or for those of you just interested in doing something a little different, please contact Ashley or Katherine for details.

Finally, with the end of the year upon us, it's probably time for me to stop and reflecting upon the passing year, say something heartfelt, sappy, and profound. So first of all, my thanks my predecessor and co-chronicler, Ethelwulf, for turning over a Shire stable, solvent, and revitalized, not to mention designing the premier web site of the Middle Kingdom. It has made this year in office far easier than it would have been otherwise.

My thanks to all of our officers, who keep those

reports coming in, so smoothly that I have no clue who most of the other regional officers are.

A welcome and thank you to the many new faces that have begun to appear at meetings and events. Your enthusiasm is what helps keep an old group revitalized and energetic. To Eugenia, for recovering, and thereby ensuring that there is someone out there more vocal about their likes and dislikes than I am. Seriously, I can't express how happy I am to be able to tease you in this column.

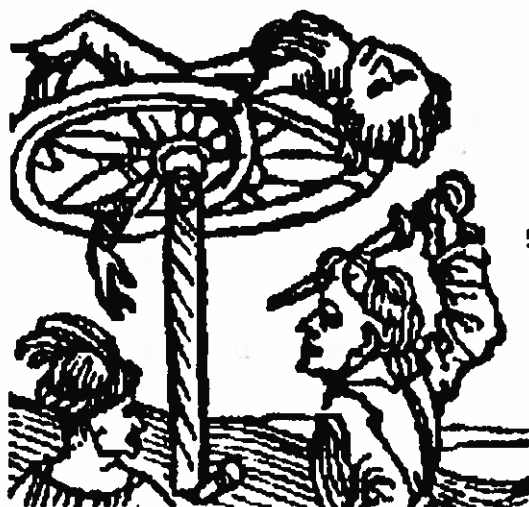
And having said all of that, my most profound and sincere holiday feelings to all in the Shire can best be said by:

Write articles for Chips, you bums!

Happy Holidays, everyone!

Vale,

Colwyn



Put em on the Rack!

*A Review of Renaissance Magazine, and
Hammerterz Forum*

This review is for two periodicals of interest to SCAdians that probably couldn't be less alike in terms of production, style, or quality. One is a bi-monthly magazine, boasting very high production values, full-color covers and some color artwork, and is now available in many Barnes & Noble bookstores, or by subscription. The other is a quarterly journal, not inexpensive, and only available by subscription, has about the same level of production value as a *TI*. One I was very impressed by, and at times was embarrassed for editors of the other.

The first magazine I'm is *Renaissance Magazine*, a bi-monthly, flashy magazine available right off the rack of your local bookstore. The magazine deals with any and all topics connected with the later medieval and renaissance eras. (The editor is pretty vague as to what this means, but it seems to be basically the 13th - 17 centuries.) The articles our either general historical, speculative, or how-to, and basically are aimed at re-enactors, Ren Faire types, and the SCA.

I found this magazine while I was browsing the shelves on my lunch hour. As I indicated above, the production value of the magazine is very professional, and the full color portrait of Vlad the Impaler (who was one of the feature articles for that issue.) caught my eye.

I was impressed to see that John Michael Greer, who has written quite a few interesting works on Renaissance philosophy and alchemy, was a contributing editor, and when I saw that the previous issue, dealing exclusively with sword and Renaissance combat and dueling was on the shelf as well, I snatched both issues up immediately.

I became disillusioned very quickly. The contents page has biographical sketches of the editorial staff. Disturbingly, the editor-in-chief and the managing editor list their SCA/Faire name (they don't describe exactly how they are involved in re-enactment or recreation) followed by their real names. It didn't help that those pseudonyms were of the sort normally only found in the SCA or romance novels — Lady Ann Covington of Hidden Glen, and that sort.

OK....I thought....a little flaky, but we'll see how the articles stack up. I read John Greer's article on the Art of Memory first, and it was, as expected, well written and thorough. (For those of you who don't know what the Art of Memory was, it to say that it was a memorization and visualization trick developed by monks, that allowed them to memorize huge amounts of data by "organizing" their memory into the metaphor of a house.)

The cover article on Vlad and on Eastern Europe and the Turkish wars during the late 15th and 16th centuries was a decent overview, and included bibliographies for further reading. Otherwise, most of the articles were fairly

short and consisted of the same fare one might find in any issue of TI. The magazine was also filled with Ren Faire schedules around the country, and ads for suppliers of Renaissance and pseudo-Renaissance wares.

The issue on swordplay, however, was almost embarrassing to read. Besides an article by John Clements, author of the book, Renaissance Swordsmanship, there was not a single article that did not have some sort of ridiculous comment that any serious student of the sword, let alone an "expert" could easily refute. Here are some of the things I learned from this magazine:

1.) Plate armour weighed 100 pounds (or more) and greatly limited the knight's range of motion. Consequently, they were forced to resort to using unwieldy two-handed swords, axes and maces (?!?), and, if unhorsed, could quickly be defeated by a lightly armored swordsman, relying on a light, thrusting sword.

2.) There are many, many 15th, 16th, and 17th century manuals on rapier use, but only George Silver's work survives on the cut-and-thrust sword. (Wrong. There are nearly a dozen works in English from the 16th and 17th centuries that deal with the sword and buckler,

sword and dagger, or single sword, and many more than that in German, French, Italian, and Spanish. Many of these are readily available in print, if the seeker is willing to do a little footwork.)

3.) The rapier was not a battlefield weapon simply because the sword was no longer used on the field by anyone besides cavalry. (Wrong. The Spanish halbardiers, and later musketeers, were supported and defended by soldiers carrying swords and bucklers. These troops defeated the vaunted Swiss pikeman, and the German landsknechtes in quite a few pitched battles. The rapier was not used on the battlefield because it wasn't meant to be. It was a civilian weapon for personal defense.)

4.) Although the rapier was the superior weapon to the cutting sword, it could, unfortunately, be broken by the heavier weapon when fighting. (First of all, it really can't be said that one was superior to the other. They were designed for different purposes and involved different styles of combat. And even George Silver, arch-opponent of the rapier, never claimed that he could break the weapon with his sword.

Both of these myths are the legacy of early

20th century sport fencers, and it's amazing how prevalent they remain among people who are supposedly re-creating Renaissance combat.)

These sort of inaccuracies are embarrassing, and bring in to question the scrutiny of the editors in selecting submissions. All in all, despite its claims, *Renaissance Magazine* seems to be aimed at the sort of pseudo-medievalist Faire-goer or SCAdian who, when discussing the 16th century cannot discern the difference between "Excalibur" and "Le Mort d'Arthur," believes dance-tights really were worn with trunk hose, and still believes that, at the height of the Inquisition, every third rural woman was an openly practicing witch, drawing nothing more than a wink and nod from the surrounding population.

Our second entry couldn't be much different. *Hammerterz Forum* is an international journal aimed at providing intelligent discussion, research, and speculation on historical and classical fencing. By "historical fencing" I mean the use of the various forms of the sword throughout history, and "classical fencing" more or less means the sport of fencing as it was represented before the introduction of the ultra-light Italian saber, pistol grips, and vari-

ous other “innovations” that have made the sport virtually irrelevant as a martial art.

As I said above, the *Forum* is a 40+ page, stapled, black & white booklet, similar in size and production to *TI*. What it perhaps lacks in flash, it more than makes up for in content. There are all of the features you’d expect in a journal of this sort — book reviews, a marketplace for rare, out of print, or historical works, letters to the editor, but it is the quality and breadth of the articles that impressed me.

Since the stated purpose of the magazine is the discussion and study of historical fencing, that is what the articles stick to, though in a variety of ways.

The complimentary issue I was sent had an article on the history and (d) evolution of the foil from a blunted small sword to the nearly harmless sporting variety of today; a study of the fatality of sword-wounds, based on analyzing recorded duels and battles; an article discussing the age-old (and tired) argument of which is more deadly, thrust or cut; part one of an annotated translation of Vincent Saviolo’s “His Practice. In Two Bookes,” an article on the prize- playing of the Renaissance Masters of Defense, and an article discussing what

equipment is necessary to recreate rapier combat.

Not bad, for 44 pages.

All in all, I can as strongly recommend reading *Hammerterz Forum*, as I can recommend **not** reading *Renaissance Magazine*. The former is available from Hammerterz Verlag, P.O. Box 13448, Baltimore, MD 21203, at a subscription rate of \$35/year (4 issues). Pricey, but good, and it also comes with a 100% back money guarantee. For more information, email the editor, Christophe Amberger at Zoergiebel@aol.com. *Renaissance Magazine* costs \$5.95 an issue, bookstand price, and I am not sure of its subscription rates.

Colwyn



Electronic Pilgrim

World View Christmas

<http://christmas.com>

Although a modern website. There are a variety of resources for those interested in the early history of Christmas. This site includes information on the origin of Christmas and the various names and histories of the man in red across the globe.

Why is the Celebration of Christmas Considered to be Controversial in some Churches?

<http://www.netministries.org/churches/ch01404/chur67.htm>

Ok ok... this site is the house organ for various ministry groups but this page has some good information on the early background of Christmas. Take some of the conclusions with care however.

Spice Guide

<http://www.spiceguide.com>

A great site with information on the histories of various spices, a great encyclopedia, usage tips and more.

Pennsic XXVI Costume Exposition

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/4417/penflash97.html>

A very interesting site for those interested in garb ideas. Includes photos from the Pennsic fashion show as well from other events. Also includes background information, period and costume details.

And as usual, send your suggestions for web sites to me at ebless@aol.com and make sure you visit the Vanished Wood web site at: <http://users.aol.com/vanishwood/welcome.htm>

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Upcoming Events

January:

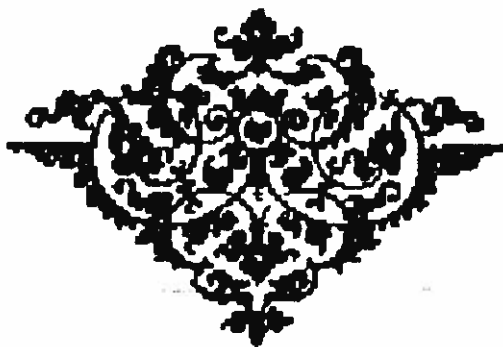
17 12th Night, Chicago IL

24 Festival of Maidens, Champaign IL

February:

14 Ethel in Love, Springfield IL

21 Search for Ivan Goroth, Elgin IL (our event!!!!)



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