

Chips

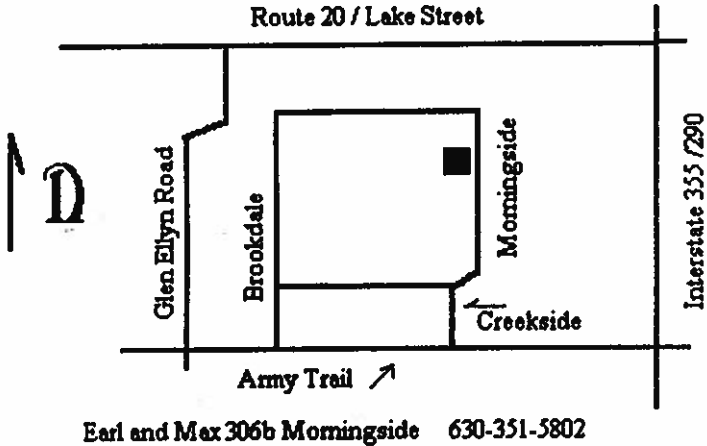
Enter the "Guess
the oracle" contest:
[http://users.aol.com/
vanishwood/welcome.htm](http://users.aol.com/vanishwood/welcome.htm)



July 1998

Next Shire Moot: (note date change!)

The next shire moot will be Sunday, July 12th at the home of Earl and Maxine Bless. Moot starts at 6:30pm. Call them at 630-351-5802 if you have questions.



from the Seneschal

Summer solstice greetings to you all! I trust everyone has recovered from their Jubilee (mis)adventures! The shire's stories are just now filtering in, and I believe you will find the first version within these very pages. You will note that the names have not been changed to protect those involved

I believe it is that time of year again that I should ask any officers who report on a quarterly basis to provide me with copies of their reports. My report is due this month, and I need yours to complete mine. You know who you are; please contact me at once.

Plans are still afoot regarding our fall shire celebration, as well as our Bristol trip. Please attend this month's moot for more details, or we will make plans without you. See you at the moot ...

Arwyn

From the Out-going Seneschal

As most of you (probably) know by now, I have stepped down as Seneschal, "official" as of July 1. In long standing Vanished Wood tradition, however, I have also immediately taken over a new office, in this case replacing our globe-trotting marshal.

I'd like to take this chance to thank everyone in the Shire who has helped me in various ways during my tenure as Seneschal. Specifically: Ashley and Katherine for planning (and executing) a wonderful event, those of my officers who turned all of their reports in on time (especially when I didn't), the Sewing Guild for donating their efforts in filling the Shire's coffers, all of the new folks who have come and lent their own voices and ideas on how the Shire should run, and most importantly, Arwyn, for being gracious enough to take up the mantle as my successor.

I had quite a few "grand ideas," when I took over the office, and unfortunately, mundane concerns kept me from focusing on many of them. On the positive, our ranks are growing, the shire's piggy-bank is solvent, we have recently thrown an excellent event, we have (in my not-so-humble-opinion) the premier SCA website, and some of our long-dormant guilds are stirring back to life.

The trick for any SCA group is not only how to attract new members, but then how to make them feel a part of the group, and want to stay a part of it. We've seen a lot of new faces over the last year, some of them fairly regularly. Hopefully this trend will continue. To all of those new folks out there, please let us "regulars" know what you like, what you don't, and how we can help you be a part of the shire.

Well, retirement calls, and I understand that an exciting new position awaits me....but you'll all have to check out the website to see what I'm talking about!

Vale,

Culwyn



from the Nursery

Congratulations to Talbot and Freydis on the birth of their son Charles Edward Strong on July 3rd. He weighed in at 9 pounds 7 ounces and, according to Talbot, "His massive 14 inch head was too big to fit through the pelvis and after 22 hours of labor he was taken by C-section".. Head? Head! Trousers! (watch "So I Married an Axe Murder....then you'll get it) Baby and mother are fine

Jubilee Event Review

(Or a Summer Solstice fantasy?)
Katherine von Schosserwald

Although it was one of the chilliest Jubilees on Record, the Vanished Wood Ghetto's population exploded with ancient and honorable members as well as neophytes. The most notable difference was location. The open field adjacent to the pavilion, usually inhabited by the fine people of Iliton was given over to Vanished Wood. This lovely arrangement was managed by Aline and Ashley, who arrived first.

The cold weather was no match however, for the warm hospitality afforded by the state of Illinois. They not only saw to it that there was plenty of fresh running water, but had built three new bath houses complete with 6 flush toilets each and hot showers - each with it's own private changing vestibule.

Gueric and Ashley were surprised at the last minute with an offer to be the Royalty on Saturday afternoon. Sadly, they hadn't brought any decent garb along so they regretfully declined.

The fighting was fierce and cruel. Terrence of Tynedale, acting as Marshall, lost a toenail during the Melee. Twm, however, had the joyful honor of crowning his lady Princess of love and beauty at the fair.

Several traditions were shattered around the Saturday night campfire, or was it next to the campfire? For the first time in memory, there was no wet chemise contest. House Euphoria had had enough and no one picked up the option.

The Drinking Regiment made no appearance and the Hawaiian Vikings were noticeably absent. In its stead, a new organization emerged. The COFR - Crotchety Old Farts Regiment convened for the first time. The members include Gavin, Steph, Terrence, Aline, Aldred, Avelyn, Twm, Karen, Gregory and Katherine. There may be more, but . . . I can't seem . . . to remember. . . The purpose of this organization is to complain and moan about how things aren't like they used to be. The COFR motto: "Change is bad."

A culinary aside . . . Twm cooked no less than 17 lbs. of meat and distributed it throughout the encampment in celebration of his victory on the list.

Despite the fact that the night was quiet and peaceful, the morning parade was sparse. Faire goers were not disappointed at the afternoon show. Gavin, Katherine and Gregory provided a 12th century Garb Spectacle as King, Queen and Prince. Perhaps it was the heat, perhaps it was strong drink, but Gavin so enjoyed the experience, he borrowed armor from supportive shire members and authorized that day on the list field. (Oh I HAVE to see this!...Ed.)



Notes from the Brew Keg

Krystoff The Maifler

Atomic Cider

This is a quick and simple cider recipe that take very little skill to make and is good for a first-time cider maker/brewer. This batch turned out very dry almost wine-like, Next time I think I'll use a Premier-Cuvee or Pastuer-Champagne yeast to sweeten it up a little and lower the alcohol level a touch (this one came out around 18%).

The Recipe

5 Gallons store brand apple juice - you want one without preservatives. (I used Lady-Lee brand from Eagle)

2 pounds Brown sugar

1 pkg. Lalvin-1118 yeast - This yeast leads to the higher alcohol levels

The Procedure

Clean and sanitize a 6-1/2 gallon Carboy.

Put the brown sugar into the carboy first, this will help mix it into the juice easier.

Pour in the juice and mix until all the sugar is dissolved. Then sprinkle the yeast on top of the juice, and your fermentation lock and put in a dark location, around 70-75 deg. f . Check every couple of days or so. This should start fermenting in about 36 to 48 hours, if not add another packet of yeast. Special note: I always use a starter for my yeast but I didn't this time and it turn out pretty well. I would recommend using a yeast starter for all your brewing.

This will ferment for quit a while, I left it in the 6-1/2 gal.

carboy until it stopped fermenting (I think it was around 4 weeks) then I racked into a sterilized 5 gallon carboy for 1 week to clear then bottle.

Age in the bottle for at least a month open and enjoy.

Recipe variation: Prime the cider with a corn sugar/water solution before bottling for a sparkling cider.

The Cut and Thrust of Blade Combat

Culwyn Bleidd Caernarfon

Since another Pennsic is upon us, I thought an article on that most charming of topics – battle wounds, would get the juices flowing, so to speak. Probably since man first picked up blade, there has been an ongoing argument as to what is more effective – the point, or the edge. Modern fencing would, of course argue that the thrust, especially the lunge, is the most efficient and swift way to slay an opponent. On the other hand, fencing is derived from a system of civilian dueling, and the last form of sword to see service on Western battlefields was the heavy, brutal, cutting saber.

Bill McConnell, of the Australian Dark Ages group "The Grey Company," turns his background in Anatomy and medicine to look at exactly what the cut and thrust can, and cannot do. My thanks to Mr. McConnell for letting me run this article.

The macabre facts of combat are that the outcome usually requires a death or disability. This is of course outside the scope of our reenactment combat. However, knowing the realities can help us in our theatrical portrayal. It also makes good conversation with members of the public; especially the

squeamish ones.

Human beings are by nature very hard to kill or disable (except when they aren't). By very design we are extremely durable with many redundant systems that can prove surprisingly resilient. Although death may be the end result of many injuries; even horrific wounds can see an individual last a very long time. To kill or disable an opponent with an edged weapon you have a choice between damaging the mechanicals or the hydraulics. To damage the mechanicals you need to cut nerves, ligaments, muscles and tendons, break bones and joints. It also helps if you rattle the brain around. The hydraulics are damaged by making holes in the largest blood vessels or a large number of small ones. Blade weapons can deal this damage in either a thrust or cut. Where the cut is better for mechanical damage; the thrust is indeed better for upsetting the hydrodynamics of the opponent. Both are capable of causing death by later infection but this is inefficient by dueling standards. It is ironic that a fatal thrust through the body will often result in a more dangerous opponent; for a short period of time, and yet a cut can render them ineffective, without necessarily causing death. This point is mentioned several times in the works of George Silver from the early 17th century.



The Thrust:

I am always amused when I hear remarks about the superiority of the thrust over the cut in sword combat. Although it is true that a thrust will more often result in a mortal wound; death is rarely swift. Most penetrating wounds from a slim blade will not kill quickly and the most likely result is a dying opponent who will insist on taking their nemesis with them; since the already dying have nothing to lose. Damned inconvenient to say the least.

Most exponents of civilian weapon combat were overly fond of the thrust attack. De Grassi mentions, in his arguments, the fact that Romans used the thrust to great effect. This is of course true but a quick examination of the gladius and pugio (dagger) shows that these thrusting weapons are gifted with rather broad dimensions unlike the civilian weapons of the 16-17th centuries. Being stabbed in the stomach with a pugio would be rather like being disemboweled with a small shovel. A stab from a gladius would be similarly horrific. Of course we can wonder if the Italian 5 finger dagger (Cinqueda) of the Renaissance period wasn't a rediscovery of this fact.

If a slim weapon transfixes the human body there are in fact few areas which will guarantee rapid death. It would be analogous to think of a single shot from a small caliber firearm. A powerful (and lucky) swordsman with a sturdy blade may just be able to stab into the skull and damage the brain. In fact Capoferro shows several "through the head" thrusts; all of which I think are quite fanciful. The skull is extremely strong, especially in living people, and trying to ram a sword through would more likely result in a superficial cut, a lot of blood and an hysterical opponent. Of course, some may argue that a thrust through the eye socket, nose or mouth will guide the blade through a thinner piece of skull and "viola". Good luck to you I say; rather like trying to shoot a bird in flight. The bone behind the eye and part of the nose is in fact thinner. Thrusting up through the palate is unlikely (it's not thin at

all), although you might be lucky enough to go through the neck and take out something important.

The neck is in fact an excellent target for the thrust and most wounds should prove to be rapidly fatal; especially if the weapon is not drawn straight back but rather twisted or ripped sideways. However, thrusting through the neck in the full throes of combat would require a great deal of skill and an equal portion of luck. Since the thrust is a linear attack it is easy to dodge or ward and the "target area" in this case is fairly small. Also people don't like things being poked at the throat and are very good at putting other things (like hands) in the way. It is not uncommon for stabbing victims to have cuts all over the hands and forearms from warding blows.

One would imagine the heart is an excellent target for a thrust; and a dead cert for a kill too but... In fact the ribs are excellent protection and you are unlikely to thrust through a rib bone. Of course you could thrust between the ribs. This would mean rolling the sword over to present horizontal to the chest. In this case you would have less than a 50% chance of going between the ribs and then into the chest. Then all you have to do is find the heart or one of the main blood



vessels at least. This of course is pretty hard to do. Even if you managed to penetrate the chest the more likely outcome is a mortally wounded opponent who will insist on taking you along for the ride. I have seen some glorious forensic pictures of stabbing victims and the amazing thing is the number of glancing wounds to the chests and the horrific tears in the abdominal wall.

Stabbing up and under the ribs is pretty hard to with a sword unless your opponent is prone, on horseback, or you are a dwarf. This is of course easier to do with a dagger. The way to a man's heart is of course through his stomach. On the other side you will need to nick the liver en-passant so to speak. The great descending aorta which runs down the back of the abdominal wall is also an excellent target for a quick kill and death will occur in seconds if you can nick this large and highly pressurized artery. The problem is that it is very deep with lots of squishy stuff in front that will get messy at the passing of an edged weapon. The stomach muscles tend to bunch and writhe when they are cut so it is hard to stay on target too. I am also told that a forceful penetration of the stomach is accompanied by a rather distracting "popping" noise which might also spoil your aim; the first time anyway.

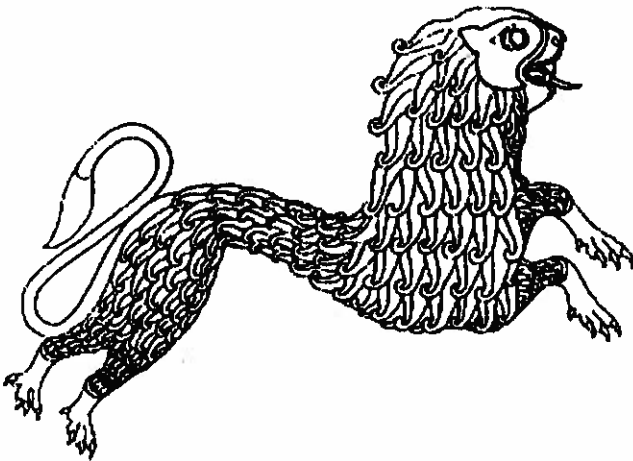
As the descending aorta branches to divert blood out to the kidneys and then the legs we are still able to kill swiftly if we can cut the blood vessels at this level. A thrust to the groin or back (just under the last ribs) might also take out a large vessel. The femoral (groin) and renal (kidney) arteries are fairly big but still not huge targets. Imagine trying to thrust at a piece of 3/4 inch rope swinging in mid air. The rope would be easier to hit than these large arteries. Also the piece of rope isn't trying to put 3 feet of steel into you as well.

Other large blood vessels in the upper arm, armpit, behind the knee, thigh etc are all good targets for thrusts but don't count on a rapid death. It's the same with large organs like the kidney, spleen, lungs etc. Although they do have large blood vessels and lots of little ones; wounds are unlikely to lose blood fast enough for the quick death. Most adult males need

to lose at least 1 liter of blood before shock sets in let alone unconsciousness. Adrenaline and sheer bloody-mindedness can be counted on the keep an opponent functioning long enough to do some damage; unless you can run faster than them.

The Cut:

Forget about trying to cut someone with a light civilian sword; it's just not reasonable, so stick with happily poking away. However if you do have a military weight blade you are better off hacking than poking for the most part. Although a cut is less likely to kill outright; your chances of doing enough mechanical damage to render the opponent harmless are pretty good. Cuts to the hands, arms, elbow and shoulder can finish a fight outright. The opponent might not be dead, but if they can't hold a sword, they can't fight. Cuts to the chest and abdomen are more likely to be superficial (and painful) unless you have a heavy (and sharp) blade. Cuts to the thigh, knee and lower leg will reduce mobility and once again, limit the opponents ability to continue the engagement. For a cut to render a swift death, blows to the head and neck are the



obvious choice. Those carrying heavier, sharper blades may opt for the cutting opponent in two maneuvers but this is probably best reserved for executions and not duels. You may well get poked a few times in your wind up anyway.

That a cut is much slower than a thrust can be argued to hell and back. Of course a lighter weapon can be moved faster but in a cut or a thrust invariably the hand is moved through the same distance and so the execution is similar in time for each maneuver. Also one must point out that since most combat begins with opponents a step or so out of range with each other, the blow delivered can never be faster than the step into combat anyway. This is what George Silver calls the time of the foot. It might be worth noting here that most peoples reaction time (when a decision needs to be made) is rarely better than about half a second. A sword blow (cut or thrust) can often be delivered in well under half a second. If two



opponents are already in range of each other, then the first to deliver a blow will most likely succeed. Mr Silver makes reference to this in saying that the hand is quicker than the eye. This is pretty obvious when you think about it; just look at Olympic fencing.

Armor:

When the opponent wears armor the whole approach to combat now has to change. In some cases a thrust may be the only way you can compromise the armor. Otherwise a heavy sword may still be able to break bones and joints if it can't cut through. Finally it might just be that you have to knock the opponent over and jump up and down on them with your hobnailed boots (see footnote). Armor changes everything; the combat style, the choice of weapons, the speed of combat and the outcome. Of course, secretly armored doublets and hats were around with the rise of the civilian weapon so I guess "if you can't beat them..... Cheat".

As the reader might imagine this text has been a very abridged version of cut and thrust injury. Should I have chosen to write a truly authoritative work you can rest assured the size would have been enormous. For those who may be wondering, my information is compiled from my training in anatomy, anecdotes from my hospital work environment, discussions with doctors experienced in trauma, and lots of reading. Since my own experiences in penetrating wounds is limited, you can take it as read that my conclusions are, for the most part, second hand (thank god).

(c) Bill McConnell 1997.
Webbed by Bill McConnell
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Electronic Pilgrim Ethelwulf Rildare

This months hodgepodge of links from my wandering around the web. Remember you can also recommend links to me at vanishwood@aol.com. These links eventually reach our shire webpage, <http://users.aol.com/vanishwood/welcome.htm>

The Templar Knights

<http://home.mem.net/~babech/TEMPLAR.htm>

A well done site on this knightly order including information on the history and mythos of the knights templar, information on the various grand masters and my favorite, Bernard Gui: Inquisitor's Technique ... perfect for those sticky business negotiations.

The Celts and Saxons Homepage

<http://www.primenet.com/~lconley/bookmarks.html>

Wow, never knew that we had our own home page, however, this page does have many links to archaeology, art, history, language, music, mythology and even tourism.

Images of Medieval Art and Architecture

<http://www1.pitt.edu/~medart/index.html>

Images from England and France. The host is also developing pages for Italy, Germany, Poland, Greece and Spain. The images are not copyright free but you can ask to use them.

Cyfarwydd

<http://snowcrash.cymru.net/~nwi/cfarwydd.htm>

Nice translation of various poems and stories from Wales. Currently there are three, Pwyll, Lord of Dyved The Changing of Llanfabon and The Green Lady of Caerphilly Castle.

Folklore and Mythology: Electronic Texts

<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>

Ok...nuff said that this page has tons of links to legends...abducted by aliens (elves and not the X-file type), Viking myths, tales on ancient alters etc...Many are period, some are not...



Summer Event Schedule:

18 July, Thunder in the Lost Woods, Lochmorrow (Augusta, IL)

This is the third annual border war between the Middle and Calontir. A scenic, but primitive site, with four battles, archery, and equestrian events. Augusta is near Macomb, IL.

24 -26 July, Simple Day in the Country, Sternfeld (Indianapolis, IN)

A new site, featuring a pool and showers. Melees, and more melees, pick-up single combat fighting, rapier tourney, and archery. (I haven't received a full flyer yet.)

2 - 16 August, Pennsic (Cooper's Lake, Slippery Rock, PA) 'Nuff said.

More on events can be found on the Midrealm website: <http://www.midrealm.org> navigate to the midrealm calendar.

Shire Activities

Tuesday: Fighter Practice at the Rokkehelden site, 6:30-9:00pm.
Call Earl Bless 630.351.5802 for directions

Thursday: Arts and Sciences at Kris and Michelle Southerland's from 6:30 pm until whenever they kick you out (Subject to confirmation – please call before coming and for directions). Phone 630.510.3468.

Brewers Guild: Meets on an as need basis, call either Earl Bless 630-351-5802 or Kris Southerland 630-510-3468 if you want to brew.

Sewing Guild: Meets on an as need basis, call Maxine Grief-Bless 630-351-5802 for time and place.

Submission Guidelines

We welcome all submissions. If the information is time sensitive please call the chronicler, to reserve space, but in general, submission deadlines are 7 days before the next moot. Submissions are best if they are in Word (Win95) format and can be either dropped off on disc or send via email to ebless@aol.com. If you can only provide a printed copy, please set your type style to Times Roman and font size to 14points (its easier to OCR that way). Art can be in any form, we have a scanner. The chronicler reserves the right to refuse or edit any submission.

This is Chips, a publication of the Shire of Vanished Wood of the Society for Creative Anachronism Inc. Chips is not an official publication of the Society for Creative Anachronism, and does not delineate SCA policy, nor necessarily reflect the views of that organization at large. Subscriptions are \$5.00 for 12 issues US mail or 18 issues E-mail and may be obtained by contacting Earl Bless, 306 B. Morningside Drive, Bloomingdale, IL 60108.
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Note: Shire policy dictates that officers change every two years unless there is no successor in line. If you are interested in a position, contact the Seneschal who will inform the current officer. Final decisions regarding officer changes is up to the current officer and the Seneschal.

Earl R. Bless
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