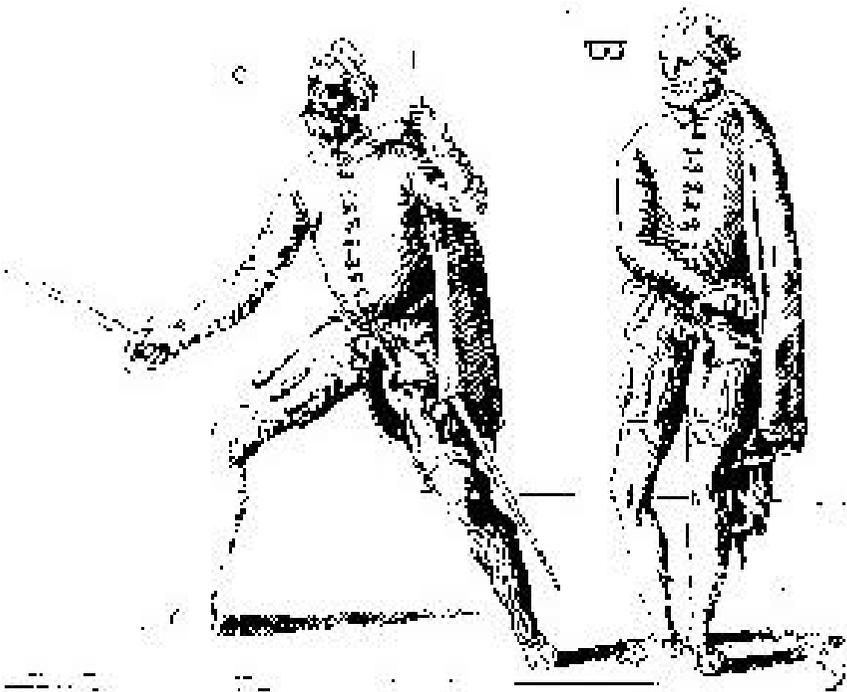


Punta Dritta

June/July AS XXXVI
Newsletter of The Royal Guild of Fence



This is not an official SCA publication, and does not in any way reflect SCA policy

Sender: Leonie Kirchmajer, 20 Montague St. Fairy Meadow NSW 2519

May be opened for inspection

Murray Bigg
PO Box 1586
Tuggeranong
ACT

2900

From the Editor

Greetings all,

Firstly my sincere apologies for yet another late issue. I've spent most of June preparing to run College War in Lochac. I must admit I was extremely pleased with the event and amazed at the number of College fencers in Lochac. I think the College of Blessed Herman the Cripple had about eight fencers in attendance. That's got to be some kind of record for Lochac colleges. Though I didn't get to witness the inaugural College War Sock-Puppet tourney, I'm told it was very entertaining. It also goes to show you can win part of a tourney by marshalling. Our group rapier marshal Aelfred made a "sock-marshal" to help marshal the sock-puppets in the tourney and it won the "best sock puppet" competition (had it's own little marshal's tabard and stripy pole—so cute!) If you are ever looking to make a fencing tourney a bit more entertaining, I can certainly recommend sock puppets.

Back to business, I have endeavored to include all the articles that people so kindly sent me over the last couple of months. When my old email account died it took most of my Punta Dritta submissions with it. Thank you to all those who kindly re-sent their submissions. Lots of interesting stuff in this issue which I hope everyone will enjoy.

As it is getting harder for me to find time to work on Punta Dritta, I am going to try making it a bi-monthly newsletter to give me a bit more time to get things running. I'm also looking for someone to take over the running of the newsletter in the near future as I will soon be taking on a Principality office and will most likely not have time to devote to Punta Dritta. Newsletters are easy to do and a great way of getting to meet people (through harassing them for articles and stuff)

Till next issue,

Artemisia da Quietto d'Arzenta

PS: All the pictures in this issue are illustrations from Agrippa demonstrating various techniques.

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Leonie Kirchmajer

20 Montague Street

Fairy Meadow

NSW 2519

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Cheques payable to: David Ball

Send payment and details to:

David Ball

1305 Stockton Avenue

Modesto, CA

95358

The Royal Guild of Fence Directory

Lord Guildmaster of Fence

Francois Henri Guyon (Shayne Lynch)
PO Box 836 Woden, ACT 2606, Australia.
Ph: +61 2 6294 1609 E-mail: Lynchs@my-deja.com

Arenwald von Hagenburg (Arnold Pears)
Övre Slottsgatan 18C, 753 12 Uppsala, SWEDEN.
Email: arnoldp@docs.uu.se

Dameon Greybeard
Lochac (Politarhopolis)

Edmund the Lame (Paul Sawtell)
See Barony of Riverhaven Marshal

Sir Georg of Glacier's Edge
Oeartha (Eskalya)

Jan Kees Dudel d'Ende (Josh Eisenberg)
1435 Washington Street #3 San Francisco, CA 94109
Ph: 415-775-0557 Email: JanKeesDudel@yahoo.com

Brooke Racgozany
Cynagua (Woodland)

Jose Ramirez de Coronado (Doug Coronado)
959 Oregon Street Gridley, CA USA 95948
Email: zspaniard@yahoo.com

Sorcha de Careman
Oertha (Eskalya)

Xeno of the Blade
Now in Ansteorra

Michael of Castle Keep (Michael Jacobs)
See Kingdom Marshal

Justin Dickson
Now in Ansteorra

The Secret Blow

From the Lord Guildmaster of Fence

The secret blow has always been a part of the teaching of Civilian Combat. Certain blows used at the correct time that are unable to be parried, or parries that will destroy any attack. Men who purported to know such blows were treated as wizards of the secret science of fence.

Saviolo, in talking to Luke in this treatise, describes a stance and ward that a untrained combatant, unexpectedly in a duel, is best to set themselves in. Castle talks about masters having special parries and attacks reserved for their special students. Certainly renaissance thinking about sword-fighting was that it was a skill and, therefore, a perfectible activity. It is quite possible that people obtained copies of Saviolo's book to find information of the universal attack and parry.

I haven't found a universal parry yet, since even the windscreen washer parry has some limitations (i.e. it doesn't work). However I do seem to have found an attack that catches people quite often: a straight thrust immediately from the lay-on. Dameon Greybeard and I have been teaching this to our students over the past year with impressive results. Even people fighting for many years treat our novices with respect, and nobody considers our students an easy fight.

In social terms, too, a straight thrust has much to recommend it. A person who gives promises sparingly and with thought, who speaks the truth without dissembling, who carries through on their intentions, is often admired simply for that. Modern language even has a phrase for such people – a straight shooter.

I have heard tales of people who show open disdain for fencers, threaten them, even spit at them. It is unfortunate, crude and horrible, and it is not the SCA and as such we should ignore it as much as we can. The core SCA concept is one of respect, courtesy, dignity, chivalry, and the sort of polite behaviour that seems to be impossible to find in the real world. Such people are really poisoning their own SCA experience – we should try to prevent them from poisoning ours.

Let us, instead, be upright fencers – straight thrusters who delight in period arts and sciences, including fencing, and are often found working hard to support their Kingdom, be that as marshals, constables, churgeons, seneschals, or just the people who stay late to help clean up at the feast.

Francois Henri Guyon
Lord Guildmaster of Fence

Book Review

Submitted by Silfren the Singer

The Inner Game of Fencing - Excellence in Form, Technique, Strategy, and Spirit —By Nick Evangelista

Master's Press Chicago 2000
Paperback, \$US12.76 from Amazon

The Inner Game of Fencing is a book aimed at people who fence, and who are inclined to think there is more to fencing than scoring hits.

It is aimed at the modern fencer - it talks of modern weapons and modern techniques - but I think it has a lot to say to SCA fencers both novice and experienced.

This isn't a book about how to do. It's a book about how to think and how that affects your doing. It is a book of philosophy and attitude.

When he talks about form and why it is important, the examples are modern, but the SCA fencer can see the point. When he talks about the foil and right of way rules, an SCA fencer can see what he's getting at even though the rules don't apply. He does use a lot of modern French terminology, I had to refer to the glossary rather often, but the meat of the book isn't about the terms or the use of foil.

The book consists of one and two page mini essays. Each one a thing

Principality of Oeartha (Alaska) Rapier Marshals

Oertha Principality Rapier Marshal
Lady Catherine of Birchfeld (April Carney)
PO BOX 873816, Wasilla, AK 99687
Ph: (907) 373-3715 Email: ladykat@alaska.com

Principality of Lochac (Australia) Rapier Marshals

Lochac Principality Rapier Marshal
Táriq ibn Jelal ibn Ziyadatallah al-Naysábúrí (Richard Cullinan)
16 Wentworth St., Croydon Park NSW 2133 Australia
Ph: (02) 9798 8751 Email: rcull@ozemail.com.au

Shire of Agaricus (SW Sydney & Illawarra)
Artemisia da Quietto d'Arzenta (Leonie Kirchmajer)
20 Montague St, Fairy Meadow NSW 2519
Ph: (02) 4285 9169 Email: artemisia@dingoblue.net.au

College of St. Malachy (Wollongong University)
Aelfred the Lef (Nicholas Sheppard)
2/26 Rann St. Fairy Meadow 1519
Ph: (02) 4285 9591 Email: nps@zeta.org.au

Barony of Innilgard/College of Blessed Herman the Cripple (Adelaide)
Aldwin Seguin (Stephen Hobson)
15 Hollidays Rd. Summertown SA 5141
Ph: (08) 8390 0283 Email: psychis_med@yahoo.com

Barony of Riverhaven (Brisbane)
Edmund the Lame (Paul Sawtell)
“Silverthorn” P.O. Box 929 Maleny QLD 4552
Ph: (07) 5429 6176 Email: rapier@powerup.com.au

West Kingdom Rapier Marshal Directory

Kingdom Rapier Marshal

Michael of Castle Keep (Michael Jacobs)
835/355 N. Wolfe Rd. Sunnyvale, CA 94085
Ph: 0011 408-732-4903 Email: mikej@netmagic.net

Marches Rapier Marshal

Doranna of St Brendans (Doranna Benker)
4142 Excelsior Rd #D2, Eureka ,CA 95503
Ph: 707-442-1956 (please don't call after 9pm) Email: doranna9@hotmail.com,

Principality of Cynagua (Northen Central California) Rapier Marshals

Cynagua Principality Rapier Marshal
Fergus (Sean Kiernan)
Email: kiernan@efortress.com

Golden Rivers Marshal
Nytshaed (Douglas Leonard)
2808 Honeysuckle Way, Sacramento, CA 95826
Email: dleonard@pcod2.intel.com

Principality of the Mists (Bay Area) Rapier Marshals

Mists Principality Rapier Marshal
Vacant—contact the KRM if you are interested in this position

College of St. Katherine
Jeffrey Scott
1155 King Court, El Cerrito, CA 94530
Ph: (510) 558-8617 Email: numinous@lmi.net

to think about. Form and Technique. Defensive Balance. Achieving Offensive Efficiency, What Do You Look At?, Patience in fencing, Practice: Vital vs Urgent. Developing Parries. And so on, there are about 100 of them.

Evangelista is trying to impart the idea that fencing isn't about winning, it's about fencing. It's about self control and discipline and learning and relaxation and patience and accuracy. He goes further, he says that until you understand this, and incorporate it, you won't be a fencer, just someone poking with a sword-like-object.

He speaks of the importance of form, of the need to understand why you do everything. Of how to build your strategy when you fence, how to feel out the opponent, how to construct an attack. How to approach practice, how to approach competitions, dealing with losing and with fear of hitting or being hit, what to watch, the importance of self-examination, and many other useful things.

All of them in the mind.

He spends time on bad fencing too. Mostly aimed at the modern sport fencer but the types are universal and I've met them in SCA fencing too! The "winning is everything" types, the macho types, the ones into intimidation or manipulation, the ones full of excuses about why that wasn't a good hit, the ones who just do the same thing over and over and never get anywhere.

I found the book very much in accordance with my own ideas. Not surprising, my fencing master is a classically trained man with very much the same views about fencing as an art and a discipline and a discovery.

What it did for me was to make me re-examine those ideas. And give me a guilt trip too! I know the concepts, but I haven't really been implementing them, I've been lazy.

Reading the book has inspired me, and given me things to think about, ideas to dwell on, maybe even some things to aim for.

True to the author's name, it gets a bit evangelical in spots, the man has seen the light and wants you to see it too. It's not overwhelming in that regard though, and a lot of what he says is useful, you can take it and think about it and use it. There is more than fine words, there's usable information.

Who should read the book? I think anyone who views SCA fencing as more than a bit of fun with swords, or different to a sporting competition.

Old farts who have lost some of the joy they used to have in it, and young students who are feeling a bit discouraged that they are not doing as well as some others. Anyone who is wanting to go that bit further, and isn't sure why it isn't happening. Teachers who want to inspire pupils and get them thinking about fencing rather than winning.

It isn't a book that will improve your fencing instantly, but it may well enable you to get more out of it.

Silfren

An Interesting Experiment in Draw Cuts **By Provost Fergus MacTighearnain**

Greetings everyone,

I would like to share with everyone the results of the cutting test I performed at Valhalla this weekend. The test cutting subject was a 40 lbs. room temperature pork hind quarter, which was then covered with one (1) layer of 100% cotton and two (2) layers of natural fiber brocade. The blade used was a sharpened 42" Del Tin rapier blade.

The first attack were tip cuts delivered from both mandritto tonda and reversa tonda. Attacks with brocade on the subject resulted in very little damage, no wounds at all. I then removed the brocade and left the cotton in place, then applied the same tip cuts. This time on the first cut,

Combat proceeded to the best of three touches for each Guildmaster in each weapon form (a total of forty-two bouts). At the conclusion, Queen Isa requested the candidate and Guildmaster Francois debate with dagger and wooden spoon for a further six touches. At the conclusion of the fighting, Michael of Castle Keep had fought some sixty bouts.

The four Provosts agreed that Michael surpassed them in skill, grace, and courtesy. The two Ancient Guildmasters agreed that Michael was a fit person in skill, courtesy, and service to the Kingdom to be considered of Guildmaster rank. Accordingly, Queen Isa tied the black sash about Michael of Castle Keep and confirmed him a Courtier. The debate being complete, the list field was then ceremonially re-sealed and struck.

Both the King and Queen were quite taken with all the rapier combat, the King noting the off-hand parries as a historical technique. The heralds are writing up the ceremony of the Guildmaster prize debate and will publish it in a forthcoming Punta Dritta.

Upcoming Prizes

Attention West Kingdom Fencers - it is my privilege to announce that David Ball will be playing his prize for Provost at June Crown. Maestro Brook Racgozany has sponsored him.

If you have any questions regarding this prize, please contact me (as his maestro) or Guild Master of Fence Racgozany (sponsoring GM).

John Carter - SCA Rank - Provost
Maestro, Crimson Rose Academie of Fence
Turlock

Recent Prizes

Provost Fergus MacTighearnain sponsored the following free scholars to play for journeyman at the Fendrake Marsh war:

Miguel de la Corazon Sagrado, Sylvia Hanora O'Conner, Gregor the Quiet, Rory MacNyall. They played their prizes in the most adverse of conditions - howling wind and down-pouring rain on the night they arrived - cold and blustery the day of the event. All were successful and now wear the green sash.

Provost Caleb Adolphus sponsored free Scholar Ælfred the Lef to play his Journeyman's Prize at Rowany Festival. Ælfred played against two journeymen under the eyes of two Guildmasters, using rapier and dagger, case of rapier, and rapier and baton. Ælfred was successful in his playing and was awarded the green sash.

Ancient Guildmaster Edmund the Lame sponsored Journeyman, Henry the Fox, to play his Provost's Prize at Rowany Festival with rapier, rapier and dagger, case of rapier, rapier and baton, and rapier and parrying gauntlet. Henry played against four Provosts and was generally found skilful with some small wants. His service to the Barony of Riverhaven was found to be excellent, his skill in costuming admirable. The journeymen recommended promoting Henry and he was duly awarded the blue sash.

Connor and Isa, King and Queen of the West, having pride in Michael of Castle Keep, gave him leave and let to play his Courtier's Prize at Rowany Festival, using rapier, rapier and dagger, case of rapier, rapier and cloak, rapier and baton, rapier and parrying gauntlet, and rapier and buckler. The prize was debated before Queen Isa by Ancient Guildmaster Francois Guyon and Ancient Guildmaster Dameon Greybeard.

The list field was ceremonially unsealed for the debate and Provost Tariq ibn Jelal was appointed to assist Michael with weapons and water, Provost Silfren the Singer devoting herself to explaining the conduct of the combat to the Queen's ladies in waiting (and thereby the Queen). Four Provosts first fought Michael to the best of three touches each.

I cut through a 5/8" diameter bone with a small cut following. The next cut I delivered to the reverse side resulted in a deep laceration approximately 9" long and 2" deep. This wound if delivered to the abdomen would have easily killed an opponent stopping a fight. At this time I decided that tip cuts on the bare flesh were not necessary.

The next attacks were to be push/draw cuts, I reapplied the layers of material and applied a push cut. The first thing I found was that the tip has a tendency to catch in the material and deliver a puncture wound just below the skin. A draw cut had no effect what so ever on the material. I then removed the 2 layers of brocade, and proceeded again with the push/draw cuts. These had the same effects as before, I then removed all layers of cloth and applied a push/draw cut. To simulate skin I used plastic wrap as I felt that pig skin is too thick to accurately represent human skin. Both cuts resulted in cutting the skin and delivering an 1/8" wound. In my opinion these are ineffective cuts and are a wasted effort.

Percussion cuts were next, these were delivered with a slicing motion from the shoulder. After several tries the only effect was pushing the cloth approx. 1/2" into the meat. I then removed the brocade and proceeded with several more cuts, the results were the same, only the material was pushed into the meat 3/4" . I removed all the material and applied a cut to the skin only. This stressed the skin to break and pushed apart the meat but did not cut. This attack is also ineffective.

The last attack with the rapier was the thrust. Thrusts needed only minimal pressure to completely penetrate the subject. In the case of hitting bone, the tip was deflected and continued on its course, still completely penetrating the subject.

The next sword that I used was a one hand arming sword. Again I applied the cloth to the subject, with a straight down cutting motion I was unable to cut through the material. I tried a cutting motion combined with a slicing motion, and still I was unable to cut through the material. It should be noted that the material was pushed 1" into the subject. I then removed the brocade and repeated the process, and I received the same result. The only difference being the cotton was pushed in approx. 1 1/2". I now removed all material, and repeated the

same cutting motions. This time I was able to cleave almost completely through the subject. The 1 3/4" diameter bone offered no resistance and was sheared completely through.

This completed my cutting test and led to a very tasty feast. I will have pictures of this test on the net soon and will provide the site address when I have it up. Thanks for reading a rather lengthy post. This test was very educational for me and everyone that attended. I hope the results I have provided have dispelled any myths or reinforced any shaky facts that may be out there.

Yours In Service

Lord Fergus MacTighearnain

Provost Royal Guild of Fence Kingdom of the West

Cynagua Rapier Marshal

Golden Rivers Rapier Championship Tournament and Revel!

Hear Ye all that the Province of Golden Rivers shall host a Championship Rapier Tournament upon the 7th Day of July. On this day, there shall be crossing of steel, honor upon the field, reveling galore and the naming of the first Golden Rivers Rapier Champion!

Armor inspection will begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. List entry will close and the double elimination tournament will commence at 10:30 a.m. (Aye, the times are stiff to keep fighting away from the heat of the day - so be early). Bouts will be decided by first kill or concession; however, bouts may be decided at the drawing of first blood upon agreement of both rapier fighters.

After the finals, we encourage you to picnic in the shade and a barbecue will be fired up for you to grill whatever you wish to bring for your midday reveling pleasure. Pick up fights will be had for those undaunted by the sun. It will be hot, so please be aware of the heat and keep well hydrated throughout the day. Cool water and Gatorade will be provided by the province.

In the latter afternoon, the Golden Rivers Champion will be recognized and prizes for Honor, Chivalry, and Style/Beauty will be presented in the shade.

Date/time: 9:00 a.m. Saturday, July 7, 2001 and site fee will be two dollars, under 14 free.

Directions to Carmichael Park: From the North, take I-5 South to Sacramento and merge onto US-50 East. From the South, take either I-5 or Hwy 99 North to Sacramento and merge onto US-50. From the East, take US-50 West to Sacramento. From the West (the Mists), take I-80 East to Sacramento and merge onto US-50. Take the Watt Avenue North exit and continue on Watt over the river to Fair Oaks Boulevard. Turn Right onto Fair Oaks Boulevard and continue on past "the curve" as it takes you all the way to Carmichael Park on your left at the corner of Fair Oaks Boulevard and Grand Avenue. If you hit Manzanita where Fair Oaks makes a sharp right you're just a couple blocks too far. If you are coming to Sacramento via I-80 from the Northeast, take I-80 West toward Sacramento and exit at Madison Avenue to the left, in the a northeast direction. Continue on Madison until you take a right on Manzanita. Continue on Manzanita until it turns into Fair Oaks Boulevard. The Park will be on your right at the corner Fair Oaks and Grant Avenue.