



PUNTA DRITTA

JULY 2003

The Newsletter of The Royal Guild of Defence of Lochac

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From the Lord Guildmaster of Defence

Welcome to the first Punta Dritta in a long time. This edition has been done by yours truly, so I apologise for the bare format, I'm just too damn busy. I'd like to thank Don Aylwin Greymane and Guildmaster Silfren the Singer for their contributions.

Firstly, I'm looking for someone to fill the position of Provost Secretary of the Guild. The position is open to all Provosts of the Guild. The Provost Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the register of Guild members and their ranks, as well as publishing the Guild's Chronicle every six months. It's not a difficult or arduous task, but an important one for the running of the Guild. As you can see from this issue of Punta Dritta, our expectations on format are fairly low.

Secondly I'm going to discuss running prizes. Our Charter states:

The sponsor for the candidate shall be responsible for informing the Lord Guildmaster, and the Provost Secretary of the results of the Prize, and providing a list of all those who presented as examiners. This notification must be delivered within 30

Subscription Information

Punta Dritta is the newsletter of the Royal Guild of Defence of Lochac. It is published every 6 months, to coincide with the 12th Night and Midwinter Coronation events. The contents remain the property of the respective authors. Please contact the editor if you wish to reproduce anything found in the newsletter.

Punta Dritta may be downloaded for free, either as html or pdf documents from www.sca.org.au/rapier/guild.htm.

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days of the Prize being played; otherwise the Playing of the Prize shall be declared unsuccessful by the Lord Guildmaster.

No Prize may be fought unless the Guild receives one full month's notice of intention to Play the Prize. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring Guild Master or Provost to ensure that sufficient notice is given. Notice of Intention shall be lodged with the Lord Guildmaster, and shall include sponsor and candidate name and contact details, candidate's current rank and rank sought, date and location for the Prize, as well as the candidate's nominated weapons forms. Upon receipt of the Notice of Intention, the Lord Guildmaster shall examine the details of the notice for completeness, and approve the Playing of the Prize if all is found to comply with this ordinance. Upon approval, the Lord Guildmaster shall direct the sponsor to publish the Notice of Intention, so those examiners may make themselves available.

This is something we all need to work on. The last couple have Prizes haven't been giving the required amount of notice. We have a bunch of people keen to help examine at Prizes, but they need advance warning to make arrangements to get there. It's a 2 step process. Firstly give the Lord Guildmaster the details, that way the administration know what's going on. Once the Lord Guildmaster gives approval, publish the notification on the Lochac Fencers List [fencers@sca.org.au]. The sponsor can then organise and run the prize playing, and make sure that the Lord Guildmaster is notified afterwards of the result. It is also customary for the sponsor to publish the results on the Fencers list.

Lastly, if you want to publish any articles in Punta Dritta, send them to me! This issue is pretty bare, but I'm hoping later issues will be better. Publication dates will coincide with Coronation events, ie 12th Night and Midwinter. If we get a good influx of material, I'll look at also publishing an issue at each Crown Tournament.

Have fun, and enjoy your fencing.

Guildmaster ibn Jelal

Lord Guildmaster of Defence.

Some Words from the Ancient Masters

Ein Zedel fechter ich mich rüm
Im Schwerd un Messer ungestüm
In stercke, schweche, kurtz und lang
Mein gegen man, ich thu bedrang
In des hab acht, versteh mich recht
Ihn triff, eh er sein Läger schlecht.

So hab ein anders ich darauff
Damit mein kunst, gar teur verkauff
Mein Arbeit treib ich nun bering
Am leib glatt einher, nach der kling
Zu schnid mach streych, stich, so widrub
Wilts lerne grüntlich. Zu mir komm.

A versed fencer I think myself
Unchecked with sword and blade
On the strong, weak, short and long
Mine against anyone's, I have prevailed
In this have respect, understand me right
Hit him, where his stance is incorrect

Thus I have overthrown others
With my art, so dearly bought
My force floats from me now to strive
Smooth from body, to the blade
To cut, make a strike, stab to conclude
To learn thoroughly, come to me.

From Lecküchner's Fechtbuch (also known as Egenolph's Fechtbuch). Compiled by Hans Lecküchner (aka Hans Lebkommer). Woodcut Published by Christian Egenolph, Franckfurt am Meyn, c. 1529-1531. Republished by the heirs of Egenolph, 1588

Recent Prizes

Innilgard

Be It Known To All That Profess Skill At Arms That:

On the 7th day of June AS 38 at the Innilgard Winter Collegium, Scholar Gregory Tortouse de Sloleye did play his Provost prize against Guildmasters Dameon Greybeard, Francois Henri Guyon and Silfren the Singer with these weapons, viz: single rapier, rapier and buckler, rapier and dagger, rapier and baton, case of rapier.

After long and intensive testing from the aforementioned Guildmasters, Gregory did carry away his Journeyman's Prize, with the permission of the Guildmasters that he may replay his Provost prize at any time in the future that his sponsor considers him ready.

On the 7th day of June AS 38 at the Innilgard Winter Collegium, Journeyman Cornelius von Becke did play his Provost prize against Guildmasters Dameon Greybeard, Francois Henri Guyon and Provost Aylwin Greymane with these weapons, viz: In standard rapier play, single rapier, rapier and buckler, rapier and dagger. In sidesword play, single rapier, rapier and dagger. In other weapon forms, long sword (hand & a half) in the german style of the 15th century.

After long and intensive testing from the aforementioned examiners, Cornelius did carry away his Provost's Prize.

Rowany

Be It Known to All That Profess Skill in Arms That:

On the 8th Day of July, at Midwinter Coronation, Scholar Raphael le Papillon, sponsored by Guildmaster ibn Jelal, did play his Free Scholars Prize in single sword against Free Scholar Owain Cantor ap Hugh, Journeyman Alfred le Lef, Provost Angus the Barbarian and Guildmaster Silfren the Singer. The body of examiners did agree that the scholar had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance him to the rank of Free Scholar.

On the 8th Day of July, at Midwinter Coronation, Free Scholar Owain Cantor ap Hugh, sponsored by Provost Diccon Shorthand, did play his Free Scholars Prize in single sword, sword and dagger and sword and buckler against Journeyman Alfred le Lef, Provost Angus the Barbarian and Guildmaster Silfren the Singer. The body of examiners did agree after much deliberation that the Free Scholar had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance him to the rank of Journeyman.

The successful candidates were then presented to Her Majesty, who presented them with their scarves.

Upcoming prizes

Innilgard

Be It Known To All That Profess Skill At Arms That:

We, Provost Aylwin Greymane, do give leave and licence to our Scholar, William Forester de Blacwode, to play his Free Scholar's Prize against all Free Scholars, Journeymen, Provosts and Masters in their subtle mystery at these weapons, viz: rapier and buckler.

And to our Scholar, Fionghuine MacCoinneach, to play his Free Scholar's Prize against all Free Scholars, Journeymen, Provosts and Masters in their subtle mystery at these weapons, viz: rapier and baton.

And to our Scholar, Marc de Montfault, to play his Free Scholar's Prize against all Free Scholars, Journeymen, Provosts and Masters in their subtle mystery at these weapons, viz: single rapier.

And to our Free Scholar, Bonnie of Blessed Herman, to play her Journeyman's Prize against all Journeymen, Provosts and Masters in their subtle mystery at these weapons, viz: rapier and baton, rapier and dagger, and rapier and buckler.

And to our Scholar, Tostig Atte Scelga, to play his Journeyman's Prize against all Journeymen, Provosts and Masters in their subtle mystery at these weapons, viz: single rapier, rapier and baton and rapier and buckler.

These are to give notice that our said Scholars and Free Scholars will be at the Innilgard Royal Guild of Defence day on Sunday afternoon the 20th of July AS XXXVIII from half past the hour of noon, to perform and do their utter most for the achievement and bearing away of the prizes.

GOD SAVE THE KING AND QUEEN OF LOCHAC!

Easy gorgets at home

By Don Aylwin Greymane, Provost of Defence

The biggest single problem we have faced to date in Innilgard has been a supply of gorgets. The major part of the problem has been getting access to anyone with a supply of suitable metal and tools to then work it with, who is in commuting distance for those who are short on transport.

Having had a quarter hide sitting in my shed for the last 4 or 5 years, I finally decided to put aside a day to try making a gorget from leather and testing it out. The leather was bark tanned and it was the minimum 4mm thickness required by the Lochac Rapier rules, but it was flexible leather, unlike the preferred 'masonite' leather, so I was a bit dubious about it.

The strips for the front and back of the neck were cut 8cm deep and roughly 17cm long to fit round my neck comfortably. Aviator-style tinsnips (\$10 or less from your local hardware store) cut the leather very easily, as did dressmakers scissors. The two pieces were attached to each other with a soft but thick leather hinge and split rivets, two per side, on one side, and a strap and buckle the other.

I then taped blue closed cell foam on both bits, strapped it on and experimented by getting poked gently with a fibreglass blade and then steel schlager and hanwei blades. The leather deformed quite a bit for all of the blades, even with being strapped on quite firmly and the hits by necessity being fairly soft. As it was, I certainly wasn't going to wear it into combat.

A bit more searching in the shed unearthed some galvanised iron, about 20 gauge since it was fractionally under a millimetre thick. It was a flat piece but the usual rippled stuff beaten flat with a hammer would also suffice. Possibly even better since galv will take a small amount of gentle work hardening. I cut two segments about a centimetre and a half less deep and about two centimetres less wide than the leather, again with the aviator snips which made easy work of the iron. These were then curved over a handy tree branch with bare hands, secured to that shape with a few hammer taps, then riveted to the gorget with split rivets, two per side. The closed cell foam was then glued on.

There was an immediately noticeable difference to the gorget's stiffness. If I bent it by hand unfastened, it would still deform but I now needed a lot more pressure from both hands to make it deform. I then strapped it on and had the poke test re-performed. It turned out the iron made all the difference when the gorget was strapped in place. I took a number of throat shots, including a few that would have had me screaming at the culprit in a combat situation, and came out very satisfied.

From observation, when strapped on the gorget does deform very slightly under a direct hard thrust from a steel blade but then springs back into the curve again. The combination of leather, iron and foam means the force of any throat hit gets spread across the neck instead of concentrated in one spot. As the wearer, I felt no discomfort from the shots and never felt I was in any danger of getting hurt.

I then put the necessary extra segments on to cover the throat hollow and the cervical vertebrae so that it was fully legal, dyed it blue for looks, and spent an hour or two fencing against my normal partner. He managed a shot or two into the gorget and it was no more noticeable than if I had been wearing my normal steel gorget.

End result was a useable and legal gorget that took me a couple of hours to make, could be created out of easily obtainable, cheap materials and could be made with the normal tools found around a home, without any need for the use of metalworking tools.

One caveat though; I wouldn't ever wear it in heavy combat. While very adequate in spreading the force of a direct thrust from a rapier, I think a crushing blow from an SCA sword or mace across the throat while wearing this style of gorget would cause massive deformation of the metal just from the power of the impact, and create subsequent possibly serious problems.

If anyone has any questions or comments, I can be contacted on (08) 8445 8350, or viscount@ozemail.com.au

In service

Don Aylwin Greymane - Provost of the Royal Guild of Defence

Cloak Basics - a few notes

By Guildmaster Silfren the Singer, from the teaching of Ancient Guildmaster Francois Henri Guyon

There are really two forms of "cloak" - the cloak and the cape. (Ignoring things like hats and handkerchiefs which are really only things you carry in your off hand as a distraction.)

The cloak is a long garment, It should reach from your shoulders to about your knees. The cape is shorter, hip or thigh length.

The cloak and the cape are both enveloping. They slow the opponent's weapon down by weighting it and surrounding it, making it difficult to move. They are not solid, so can't block a thrust, instead they slow it and perhaps move it off line a little. They are large, they cover a large area, so can be hard to move around when spread out.

To be most effective, both cloak and cape need to have some weight to them, and with cape you must learn how your particular one moves, so you can keep it close or fan it out as you please. A heavy cloak or cape can be tiring to use, and slow to move, so you don't want too heavy. A line of light rope at the bottom hem can help a cape to fan out, and add a bit of weight to make it more usable as a stick or buckler.

The Cloak

The cloak is mostly a passive defence, it protects by just being there, or with a bit of help. It is seldom if ever used as an active defence to attack a blade that isn't coming at you.

It is used wrapped around the arm, wrapped so it hangs on the outside of the arm. To wrap it, hold the middle of the neck in your off hand, then sweep the length of it up and to your inside, and over the arm. Wrap a couple of times, to make sure it's secure. It should cover all of your forearm, but no more of the arm than that.

Important considerations:

- As it's not solid, and it is rather slow, it's important to use your feet, to step around the cloak as you use it so as to remove your body from the line of attack.
- You should mostly defend attacks between the nipples and the hips. That uses the most effective part of the cloak.
- You can defend the head with your cloak-wrapped arm, but you must be careful not to blind yourself, so you must move the arm out to clear the cloak and blade from your face, and step away from the blade. It isn't at all easy to defend a high thrust safely, better to use your blade or to get your head out of the way.
- The cloak is too big and heavy to throw or flick well. More trouble than it's worth. It can be dropped onto an incoming sword, if you haven't wrapped it around your arm, but it is a slow thing to move, and that can be hard to do.

To defend a cut:

- Use the wrapped portion of the arm. (Guildmaster Francois assures me that it protects from cuts.) Remember that the upper arm is not protected. You can get the arm inbetween your body and the blade, and move the blade offline, not needing to worry about the slice.

To defend a thrust:

- Catch the point with the folds of the cloak *below* your arm, moving the arm away from your body and stepping away from the point at the same time. It works best if the point is less than 20-30cm below the arm. The arm motion is similar to that used for a normal offhand parry.
- The cloak being heavy and soft, it will slow the point and control the blade, but you must have the cloak well in front of the body or completely clear of it. A point touch through the cloak is a valid touch, and you can't be sure as it comes in how hard it is coming in. So always move the arm and step away.

- You can try to collect your opponent's blade with the cloak as you step in to them as part of an attack, but it will always be slower than the sword, so you must use the speed of your feet to get there quickly, and step to their side with the cloak between you and them. Don't blind yourself trying to catch the sword.

The Cape

The cape is shorter and lighter than the cloak, so requires more active use - it can't stop thrusts or slow blades well just by its own weight.

Hold it by the middle of the neck, or a little to one side of the middle, which ever makes it easier for you to control the movement of the cape.

It can be used in several ways:

Like a soft stick

You can hold the cape so it hangs together like a roll, and use it like a soft stick. This can take practice to stop it fanning out, try not to twist your wrist as you move the cape. You want the cape to be as close and compact as possible.

Then you use it like a soft stick, to sweep the opponent's weapon away, aiming for the beginning of the last 3rd of the sword - far enough from the hilt to get leverage, close enough to it to make disengaging difficult.

- For a low attack, sweep from high to low, inside to outside.
- For a high attack, sweep low to high, up and out.
- You can also sweep the opponent's sword as part of your preparation to attack them. Be very certain you have the weapon controlled and they haven't disengaged.

Like a soft buckler

You can use a cape in a similar way to a cloak, using the weight of the cape to envelop and slow the sword either by catching the point, or by dropping the weight of the cape onto the blade. As for cloak, step aside from the thrust at the same time.

You can also drop the cape onto the opponent's sword, either as an answer to an attack, or as preparation for your own attack. You want to slow the sword and make it hard for them to counter you. It should be done as part of your advance, rather than before moving, speed is important.

Fanning and throwing

Don't keep your cape hand still, it makes a very large target.

You can twist your wrist and fan the cape out to distract your opponent and hide your sword's movement from them. You can flick it to do the same thing, to draw their eye and distract them. The human eye is caught by sudden movements, and the bigger the movement, the bigger the response. So a large sudden cape movement will draw attention.

Don't make the fan so big that you blind yourself, or that you envelop or slow your own sword! Except in one case - you can fan the cape onto your sword, fling the cape at your opponent using the sword for leverage, then follow it with a fast attack from high ward where your sword is after being used in such a way.

If you throw it, aim for your opponent's sword or face. Even if it doesn't get to their face, it can cause them to blink or jerk back. You must instantly take advantage though, you have just thrown away half your arsenal, don't stand about waiting to see what happens, but follow up instantly.