



Gryphon's Keep News Letter

"The Beak & Talon"

Issue #5 (Aug - Oct 06)

Hail and well met Household of Gryphon's Keep. Things have picked up significantly for the Shire and the Household since the last news letter! Since things had become so busy we had opted to release the news letter every three months. Be sure to welcome back some of our returning members.

If you would like to contribute to next months news letter please e-mail me at armsofvalor@earthlink.net

Strength in Unity,

Thomas Alfred
Steward of Gryphon's Keep

What happened August through October?

Shire Fighter Practices in Crestview – the Shire of Phoenix Glade fighter practices have moved to Crestview and the attendance has really picked up with a solid showing of a good number of fighters occurring on a weekly basis. It has been a great experience fighting against all the different styles of fighters the Shire has to offer.

Welcome back! – **Geoffrey** and **Nicolas** have returned from their travels. Nicolas is still getting settled after his long absence and will soon become active. Geoffrey has jumped into the fray with both feet. He has been spreading the good name of the household by becoming very active within the Shire. He now holds the official title as the Shire Gold Key and has volunteered as the Autocrat for the first Shire event to be held in at least 3 – 4 years.

News from Larian – Larian has been offered the position of Seneschal for Warriors Gate Strong Hold. Who knows, maybe he will return as Lord Larian!

Household patches are available – they just arrived and the best way to show your household allegiance is to wear one on a black sash attached to your belt!

"As a member of the Household of Gryphon's Keep, you may want to display your Household Pride, but you already carry a crest or banner on your shield. Fear not, with Larian's help, we can create a patch for you to wear on your sash."



mercenary services to far off lands, he has found merchants that were able to make small devices for him to represent the household. Just contact Thomas if you would like one.” --Larian

Shire of Phoenix Glade Grub and Garb –



On October 8th the Shire of Phoenix Glade held a splendid grub and garb. Folks came from far and wide for the fighting and the feasting. The day was filled with battle and I personally did not stop fighting until it was nearly too dark to see. Arenal supported the shire and brought the Arenal Shire bus loaded with their good people. With their support we had over 40 people in attendance! This was a good day for the shire and really showed the progress we have made over the last few months.

Panhandle Skirmishes – I was the only household member to make it to the Skirmishes in Tallahassee on October 21st. One of the household mentors (Lord Brennan) was there to guide me and keep me out of trouble. It was my first major Melee event since returning to the SCA and I was not disappointed. At 0930 I went through authorization and was authorized to fight heavy list in the Kingdom of Trimaris. The first large scale melee must have started around 10 – 1030. I formed up in the shield wall next to Lord Brennan and his Squire Brothers on the side of Trimaris against our own Kingdom of Meridies (I will explain later). We marched across the field against the enemy with our shields locked and ready for battle. The first engagement found me dead within a few moments of the encounter a spear thrust to the forehead. Ok, good learning experience keep the basket of your sword in front of your face. We fought several battles fashion and with my situational awareness improving my life expectancy increase battle.



Now to explain my joining of the Trimaris army; Lord Brennan squire to Duke Mition von Weald of the kingdom Trimaris offered me the opportunity to become his Man-at-Arms. I accepted his offer and was belted at Panhandle. This in no way will affect the running of the household other than the fact that we have gained a strong mentor and ally.

After the first few initial full scale field battles Duke Mition his Squires and Man-at-Arms (now that I am a Man-at-Arms to Brennan I fall under Duke Mition) switched sides and fought for Meridies (to better balance the numbers Trimaris had roughly 80 fighters vs. 20 from Meridies). Also in attendance from our fair shire of Phoenix Glade was Peg, Nordyck, and Juliana (combat archer).

Some of the more memorable points (to me anyway) were during the bridge battle when I was in the second row of the shield wall with Peg right behind me. We charged across the bridge just over halfway and the front shield line dropped and the second shield line placed there shields over the front line. From this position and with my height I was able to attack very well and rain blows down on the heads of our enemies. I had at least 4 kills maybe more before a spear caught me from the side. Though I had died the press of fighters from behind held me in place so that I could not fall. Eventually someone died beside me so that I could move to the side and out of the mass. Later on I learned that when I moved it left Peg exposed and subsequently lead to his death. Sorry Peg.

Another memorable point, not sure during which battle I found myself opposite the King of Trimaris. During the engagement our shield wall broke up and the King passed me on my right. As he passed I swung to the side and hit his arm. I am not sure if it took his arm or not as I was engaged heavily from the front, but it was one of those blows that stick in your mind. It is not too often that one gets to hit the King!

Enough about me, I hope that all of us can attend the next big event in force. Start getting some silver arrows ready as they will come in handy next spring for Gulf Wars! (Thomas)

Up and coming events:

Harvest Moon Nov 3 - 5

<http://thorngill.hostrocket.com/events/HM/flyer.htm>

Fighter's Collegium Nov 10 - 12

<http://www.baronyofironmountain.com/FC06.htm>

Historical Article

Ten Myths About Medieval Torture and Justice



From <http://livescience.com>

Here is a “Top Ten” list of several popular misconceptions of medieval times. I hope to be able to list other “Top Ten” lists in future newsletters to help you learn about history and the people who lived during those times.

10. Go directly to jail? Most medieval communities did have actually a judge and jury system, though hearings were much speedier than today’s lengthy, made-for-TV affairs, generally lasting less than a half-hour. If the judge so chose, he (and it was always ‘he’) could ask a few simple questions and deliver a verdict himself without ever consulting the jury.

9. The lawless middle age villages? Earlier medieval communities had much more social responsibility than today, in fact. If one member of a village claimed they’d [been](#) wronged, he or she would raise a “Hue and Cry” and every resident had to join in the hunt and persecution of the criminal or else they would all be held responsible as a whole.

8. Oh, those strict church types? The pious Middle Ages were serious about their religious offenses, and each town’s church generally ran its own kind of court to investigate everything from bad attendance to heresy. However, the church was also a place where criminals could avoid sentencing or punishment: the concept of sanctuary was well known in medieval times and let offenders hang out, and even escape the country, without fear of being followed.

7. Out of sight, out of mind? Criminals who committed lesser offenses were often subject to a policy of three strikes and you’re out—literally. Rather than killing them off or letting them clog up prisons, repeat offenders were often simply banished from a city and not allowed back. Humane and cost efficient? Yup—just don’t tell the next, unsuspecting town over.

6. Executions: Left, right, and center? Hollywood would have us believe that medieval evil-doers were killed on whim and often in public squares for everything from slapping a soldier to stealing the king’s chickens. In truth, capital punishment was sentenced only in the most serious of cases, which included murder, treason and arson. Perpetrators were most often hanged.

5. Royal Highnesses High above the law? Well, kind of. While medieval nobles did enjoy certain privileges when it came to bending laws or decreeing new ones to serve their purposes, most European countries had legislation preventing their kings and queens from completely running amok. England’s Magna Carta, which limited the monarchy’s financial powers among other things, is just one example.

4. Public Beheadings as a weekly spectacle? Beheading—swift and painless, as lo the axe was sharp—was considered a “privileged” way to die and was reserved mai



for members of nobility, rarely commoners. Treason was their crime of choice and the loppings usually took place inside private castle walls.

3. The Burning Times? Though a few pagan “witches”—as presumed by their persecutors—were certainly tried and burned at the stake during medieval times, it is only during the Reformation period (beginning in 1550, commonly) that this practice really took off and hit full stride. Still, even at the height of hysteria, witches in England were rarely burned. They were usually hanged instead.

2. Off with your ear? Mutilation, like the severing of an ear or hand, was occasionally used as a punishment against those who’d committed serious crimes, especially in larger jurisdictions like London. More often, though, medieval law enforcement simply used the prospect of losing bodily bits and pieces as an empty threat, rarely actually carrying out the deed (one wonders how long it took criminals to figure that out?).

1. Rack ‘em up? Immortalized in the film Braveheart and perhaps the most famous torture device of all time, the rack—which continually stretches its victim’s body in opposite directions—wasn’t likely ever used in England until the very end of the 15th-century and the medieval period. It was employed freely along with other devices beginning in the torturous heydays of the 1500s, when Queen Elizabeth I and other European monarchs began purging their countries of religious opponents.

To see past news letters please go to:

<http://www.gryphonskeep.org/page1002.html>

