

# The Swan Song

September 2000

Edition2

A Buckingham's Retinue Publication©

Another newsletter, the second of its kind takes entrance on the stage of re-enactment. Only we lucky few have the pleasure of wasting the time writing and reading this exclusive publication. As promised there are pictures this time for those who found the last issue hard going, along with what the groups been up to over the last few months. We also have a few interesting articles, including one on penance which **should not** be read by the young or faint hearted! May I also take this opportunity to say that the newsletter does not in any way reflect group policy, this is a purely fictitious work and bears no relation to actual persons or events. Contributions have flooded in from many members, including Paul Hadfield; Allan Harley; Andy Horsfield; Dave Hemsley; Catherine Wetton and Sam Kracke. Can I just say a big thank you to all those who have written something. For those who haven't yet, get writing. Some articles will have to be published in the next newsletter as there were too many to put into this one alone.

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## Barnard Castle – 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> July

After much searching, grovelling and begging no one has bent their will to the mercy of the newsletter and made a contribution for Barnard. Is this a reflection of the event? Could it be there is little to tell of, or does no one dare to put pen to paper and risk recalling the experience. This tale I will tell in brief for indeed there is little I wish to (can) recall. Our arrival and set-up ran smoothly, with the shock that each tent had literally only one man inside, after struggling to sleep everyone at Tewkesbury. Confused reports have surfaced concerning Master Harley dancing gaily around his tent poles, overwhelmed at having his tent to himself. The evening passed smoothly until an incredibly sloshed Master Clamp stumbled into the camp, muttered a few garbled sentences in vain and passed on to bed.

The next morning a rather cunningly disguised practice session took place in the

form of a typical fight, afterwards all felt much safer knowing they were already tired with just four more fights to go. To baffle even further, the rest of the fighting took place over a section of wall, boy was I glad we'd practiced line fighting in the bottom of the moat! Our luck seemed to be in when Guy Cuthbert, former captain of the York City Levy and old time member of the Knights of the Falchion, strayed into the camp. We soon found that as well as Dave Roberts we were also about to be graced with the addition of our latest member Master Cuthbert. Who proclaimed that 'Buckingham's Retinue is more like the Levy than the Levy is', we still let him join even after coming out with that. The fighting took place with us wearing the erroneous colours of *murrey* and *blue*, as Master Lane corrected us.

Stafford knots were hastily sewn onto liveries before anyone was allowed into action. After a serious bruising throughout the day, a small party was formed on the drinking banner and proceeded to take an even greater battering.

The next morning saw much of the same, the practice session was converted into a walk through town and the fighting took place as before. Miss Gilmore, our double agent was able to take the Gloucester flag in an assault when they carelessly left it behind. Our friend in the Clarence's, Willow, who had been giving

us problems all weekend was promptly thrown down the bank by myself. Good idea I thought, wrong! Dave Roberts had just gone down the bank before us and injured himself. Willow and I then followed locked together. The colour of my braes changed rapidly as I saw the Somerset's wooden mine frame directly below us on our way down. We hit with a mighty whack, thankfully the bloody thing didn't collapse and no one was inside ready to make it an impromptu coffin. The event ended quickly, leaving its mark on many, or at least their legs!

## Helmsley – 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> July

*A Medieval Whodunit.*

Armed with weather predictions and a day off, (due to the warning of "Get there early, we've got visitors in the evening"), Bucks Ret set off once again for the lovely ruins of Helmsley Castle in North Yorkshire. We were ready to brave the 1½ mile 1 in 4 climb of Sutton Bank with cars and vans loaded with kit and set up camp with lots of daylight left and ample time to get into kit if needs be.

That would be if we could ever get there! The usual 3-hour journey took over 5 hours from whichever direction was chosen. The last weekend of July seemed to coincide with the rest of the countries decision to head north! So much for getting there early to get the camp set up before the visitors! We made it there with only minutes to spare. The usual lazy tent erections were done within minutes and kit hoyed in without a second thought. By this point the visitors had arrived so, in our usual fluffy and friendly manner, we scarpered to the pub!

A few drinks later, the few of us who hadn't returned to camp to see if the visitors had left yet, found that the dulcet tones of a Kareoke singer could be heard. This prompted a most excellent sing along to "Paradise By The Dashboard Light" (a classic Meatloaf track) with Paul Hadfield leading the boys, and Rachel, Ruth and myself battling for the girls! At this point the heavens opened (Surely our singing wasn't that bad!). On seeking shelter in the warm, smoky arms of the pub we discovered that the Kareoke list wasn't of the usual dire standard. In fact it was really quite good. The Bucks Ret singers dutifully churned out "Summer Nights", from "Grease", and an interesting rendition of "The Bad Touch" by the Bloodhound Gang. The Males among us (Men is too strong a term) gave us an interesting rendition of "Should I stay or should I go" by The Clash. We would have sung more but the pub turned us out! Well it was closing time.

Saturday morning we awoke to blazing sunshine and moans about wearing velvet in such heat! Then we found Guy Cuthbert cooking breakfast. Both the sausage and bacon had an interesting black tinge from where our enthusiastic chef had set the pan on fire whilst mumbling about how great it was to be allowed to cook, as his former group had never let him. We wonder why! While munching on our discoloured fair, Sam distributed our characters. To those unfamiliar with this kind of event, our author, Sam Kracke (with help from Andy Horsfield), had written another splendid medieval whodunit. The format is as follows - the general plot is known, but the re-actors have to figure out who's done it as well as the public. This leads to loads of snooping and the plot being expanded by the players a little as they really get into their characters.

Saturday evening found us once again in the pub, only to be disappointed to find no Kareoke! Having missed tea (Allan and I were only chatting, honest) the discovery of an excellent pizza parlour was most welcome (warning for any future patrons – it seems to shut around 10pm for take out – as Will and Ruth found out).

After retiring from the pub we gathered about the campfire in the old traditional manner. As the conversation died Guy took over, with a mummings tale told by just himself, which was really quite entertaining. To follow this he led the singing. Unfortunately we could remember all “A rovin’”, and “Come

Landlord” but not all of “Green Grow The Rushes O”. Why do we always forget the songbook! The highlight of the evening was definitely the resurrection of “Sunshine Mountain”.

Although the castle was quite there had been a concert on at Duncombe Park that evening (The fireworks were rather spectacular). The peace was disturbed by a few individuals who decided noise was good, but this seemed to peter out before we retired to bed. How wrong we were. On realising that the owl calls weren't owls and following the noise of glass and metal breaking, the camp was roused and the police called. The Howell family did a splendid job of taking Jessica and Scarf for a walk, which just happened to coincide with walking down to the cars and up the lane past the walled garden, where they met the very nice police officers. All was sorted and peace resumed.

It seems this year is the year for external and unwelcome visitors!

Sunday saw more plotting, double-dealing and the discovery of the murderer and plot extensions! At the end of the day everyone seemed to be running off with everybody else whether they were married or not!

Despite the weather – sunny with rain and thunderstorms, including one just as the tents had dried off and we had started to pack away, the event went extremely well. We had our best turnout of the year so far, with 26 people in attendance and three newbies. A big thank you to all who attended, and Chris – have you given the gate key back yet?

*Catherine Wetton*

## Dover Castle - 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> August

To truly understand the epic that was Dover it is necessary to consider the events that preceded it. Three of those attending, myself, Chris and Allan, and one hanger-on, Kathryn, decided to visit Rock City on Thursday night, for the '80s alternative night. Dance the night away and return to C&K's shortly after 3:30am. A good idea, one might imagine, at least until the next morning when the prospect of travelling to Dover in the Landrover, via Stafford to pick up the cannon was not a welcome one.

Still, the trip was made and the trio arrived at Dover castle just in time to meet Darren, who had given up waiting for us and was heading into town. The car was unloaded and the first priority was attended to, we put the cannon

together. Important business complete we put up the tent and, pausing only to return to Dover to pick up some food, introduced ourselves to the other groups, even the French horse artillery group. Midnight passed quietly by.

The next morning three zombies staggered out of bed and got Darren up, in time for breakfast at 8:30, and considered the programme. Two half hour slots at 11:30 and 3:00, to be shared with the Pastons. This decided, a trip was made to the local supermarket, after getting directions from a friendly security guard. 'Right, you go up the road, right. And there's a road on the left, right. You go right along that, right.' etc. In spite of this we did find the Co-op.

The slots themselves were extremely taxing. Allan volunteered to do the commentary, surprise, surprise. The Pastons did a bit of archery, followed by a shoot off between yours truly with the crossbow and a Paston with a longbow. The cannon was then wheeled up and set off a few times. Job done. As the first black powder weapon of the day, we followed the Romans, we set the expectation level for the rest of the guns. 'Well if that little gun can make that much noise, how loud will the bigger ones be...'. As they always say though, size isn't everything, and while most of the other guns were a little louder most of them used more powder per shot than we did during the entire weekend. Our strenuous arena display completed we returned to the camp to talk to the public/other re-enactors and lounge in the tent. Our second slot followed the plan of the first.

This then left plenty of time for further questions and a good deal of discussion between us and the other groups of the various pieces on display. Saturday night, of course, required a trip to the local curry house.

Followed by the consumption of alcoholic beverages, and another late night.

Sunday morning the quiet was shattered by a Frenchman (yes, a real one) with a bugle shortly after breakfast. Allan's first response was to grab a poleaxe and attempt to behead the unfortunate fool, who proceeded to worsen his situation by grabbing for his sabre. By the time he was ready for action Chris and myself, deciding that if anyone was going to beat up Allan it would be us, had formed up to make a line of three forcing a quick surrender. Even when reinforced with the rest of their group the French (well some of them were) had no stomach for a fight and backed down in the face of our determination. The rest of the day followed the pattern of Saturday.

We had a family of four and another individual woman (Wendy) asking about membership. This together with the diplomatic efforts of those attending portraying the Buckingham's as the 'fluffy and friendly' face of 15<sup>th</sup> C. re-enactment, enabled us to make some more friends with the other groups and made the event the success it was.

*Andy Horsfield*

## Burchard's Medieval Sexual Menu, 1012 *(not for the faint of heart!)*

A German bishop called Burchard of Worms wrote a Penitential, a guide to penance for sinners. This ran to twenty volumes in all, volume 19 ch.5 consists of an astoundingly varied menu of 194 sexual sins and the required penance. Burchard combines Teutonic toughness with vivid imagination, here are some examples:

1. Nuns – fornication with a nun gets you penance for forty days of bread and water
2. 'Retro Canino' – having sex with your wife or another women in imitation of animals gains you penance for 10 days of bread and water
3. Sunday – Sex on a Sunday; 4 days of bread and water
4. Sister-in-Law – if with your wife's consent, you are absolved. The adulterous sister must suffer the appropriate punishment and be deprived of a husband for all time
5. Stepdaughter – Penance unto death and your wife can remarry
6. Son's Fiancé – Penance unto death, and your son can take another wife
7. Mother – Fornication with your mother gets you 15 years of penance, if your mother was not consenting the decision for penance for her is up to the priest
8. Sodomy – If only once or twice, 10 years, as a habit 12 years. If with your brother 15 years
9. Masturbation – If on your own 20 days of bread and water. In company then 30 days
10. Using a Sex Aid – If for your enjoyment 20 days of bread and water
11. Kiss – If you kiss a woman due to foul desire 3 days of bread and water. If in church 20 days.
12. Bestiality – with horse, cow or donkey, if only once or twice and you have no wife so as to relieve your lust, penance 7 years. If you have a wife 10 years. If regularly 15 years, but if this occurred in your childhood bread and water for 100 days.
13. Lesbianism – Penance for 5 years
14. Mother and Son – The mother must do penance for 2 years
15. Swallowing – Because of your 'diabolical deed', seven years penance for weakening him

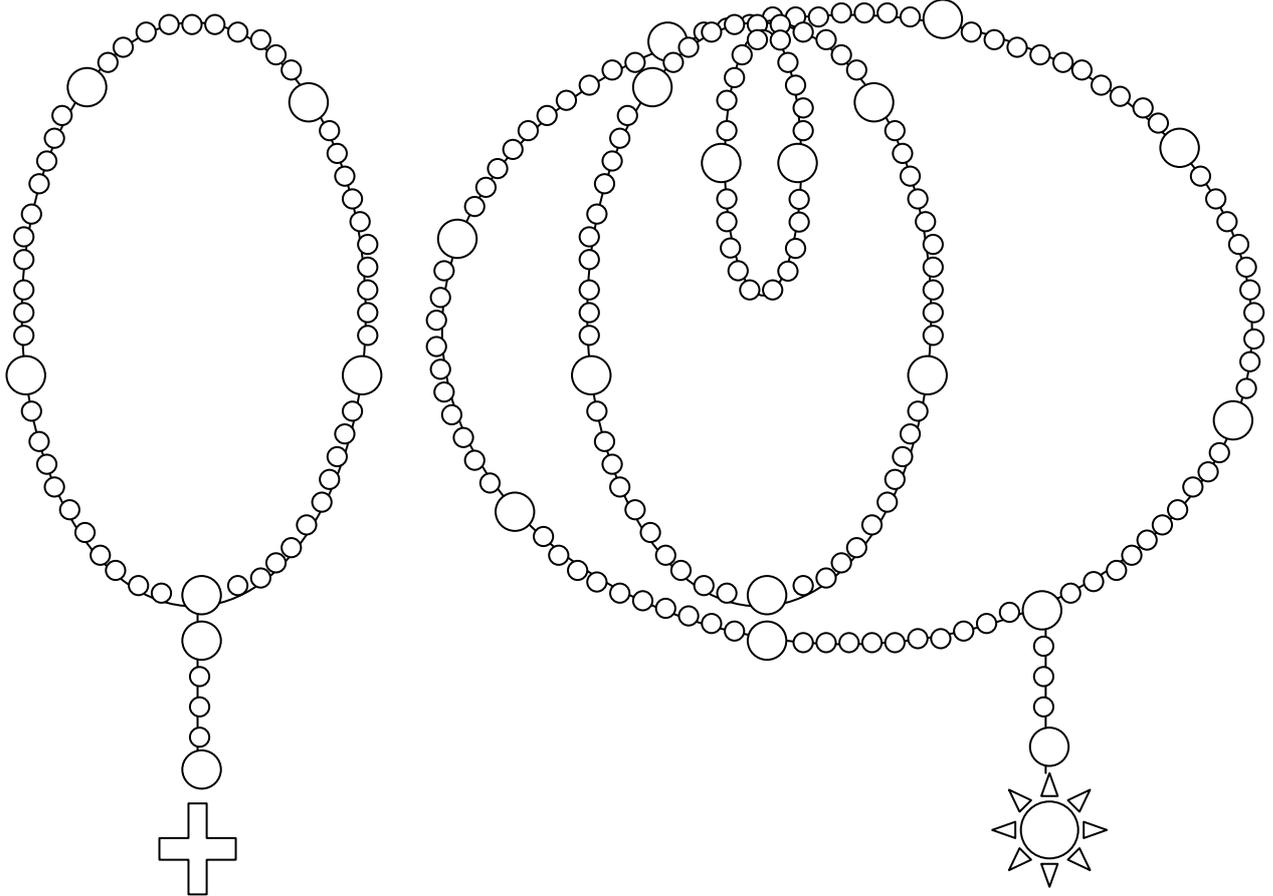
*Allan Harley*

# Rosary Making

A Rosary is a set of Catholic prayer beads, they are used to count prayers as they are being said. The pattern of beads is very specific, to represent the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries in prayer.

large bead followed by three smaller and another single large bead and a cross to finish. A medieval Rosary was very similar for the small form but may have had a variety of different religious

The modern Rosary is made up in this pattern: 5 sets of ten beads followed by a larger single bead made up into a loop. From one of the large beads hangs a set of beads consisting of a



symbols instead of a cross hanging from it. Another form of Rosary at the time was a full one for all three mysteries together, this is the pattern: 15 sets of ten beads followed by a larger single bead made up into a loop. From one of the large beads hangs a set of beads consisting of three smaller beads and a single large bead and a religious symbol to finish.

The three main prayers said are The Our Father (TOF), The Hail Mary (THM) and Glory Be To The Father (GBF). The large beads represent TOF at the beginning of a set of prayers and a GBF at the end of a set of prayers, the small beads each represent THM. You are supposed to meditate on one of the three sets of five mysteries while saying this sequence of prayers.

*Sam Kracke*

## Helmsley, just where did they all go?

For those who might be concerned as to the unknown fate of their alter egos, hard research has dug up some rather interesting facts. Just remember, you only have yourselves to blame!

**Lady Dempsey** (*Jane Ashton*) arranged a very advantageous marriage for her daughter and then decided to retire from the complications of political life by going to live with a widowed sister in York. She claimed this was in no way inspired by her daughter in-laws rearrangements of the household and her youngest sons interest in business.

**Sir Edward** (*Andy 'Scandal' Horsfield*) moved the household from the De Ross family property on hearing of King Richards demise, and through the connections that his younger brother Peter had made at Court managed to keep the family fortunes intact. These same contacts made it possible for him to lay charges against Master Percival Crompton concerning certain illegal importation of goods. This in turn allowed seizure of the Crompton property by the court until redress had been made to the crown (which due to all the reshuffling going on at court never did find the paperwork).

**Lady Katherine** (*Sam Kracke*) used the move of the household to turn off certain servants of a negligent attitude, and helped arrange a suitable house and staff to look after her sister in-law. She later visited friends and family in London, and managed a very good marriage for Peter that was helped by the fact that she had persuaded her husband to make Peter's first son his heir (as long as no child was born to Sir Edward which was very unlikely).

**Rosalyn** (*Rachel Reeves*) married a member of the Bolyne family with connections in France, which more than made up for her lack of travel previously. She visited court, met many notables and even journey to northern France with her husband who she came to adore and produced many fine sons for.

**Richard** (*Phil Howell*) helped by his brother and wife gained control of Master Crompton's business and left over property after the court had settled things. During the time that things took to settle he was not much in the company of his wife but found her cousin and companion a most comforting person. Lady Katherine had arranged the household well and 3 years after marrying his wife he gained a papal divorce for her unsavoury activities with the grounds man. He felt sorry enough for her to gift her a small living and sent her to a nunnery. He later met and married a young widow of fortune whose business was tailoring, allowing that all his

children would always be clothed by their fortune.

**Master Brown** (*Darren Brown*) decided to stay on at Helmsley and did a very good job for the Ross family even managing a marriage with one of the nieces of the then Lord.

**The Steward and the Cook** (*Mark Hewitt and Jo Service*) parted ways, the steward staying on with the Dempsey family. The cook left for parts new and is rumoured to have found a new position much more to her liking.

**The Housemaid and Butler** (*Kathryn Ribbins and Guy Cuthbert*) the maid continued on with the Dempsey's becoming Katherine's companion. Her husband although not retained by the family came to live close by, working for a local tavern. He died a several years later, it was thought an accident as he had drowned in one of the vats he was partial to sampling. The maid was thought a little fast for marrying the stranger who came to work for the Dempsey some few months before (some sort of soldier they think he is).

**The Kitchen Maid** (*Zoe Service*) left to work at the White Hart, suppliers of the best Ale in the county.

**Master Percival Crompton** (*Master Harley*) became obsessed with finding his sons murderer. He avoided the clutches of the law concerning his various exploits, but this left him with only what he had managed to take from the coffers and his underworld friends. He had been doing quite well considering and had been tracking down some leads on Master John Willard when he just disappeared from contact with every one.

**Beth Crompton** (*Catherine Wetton*), had been doing very well with her husband and they had finally got control of her father's wealth, she was not too impressed that some land increased the Dempsey fortunes but these things happen. Her new household was everything she ever wanted and absolutely full of accommodating servants, and she fell for the grounds man. She was in love and even when she was put aside it did not matter, she could still afford him and even found ways of keeping up the relationship in the convent. Eventually they were married and lived the rest of their days happily on a small farm.

**The Crompton Guard** (*Paul Hadfield*), went to work for Sir Edward which was truly lucky, as soon after the new man servant went to work for the Dempsey's they were waylaid by a mad man. During the struggle Hadfield managed to slay the man trying to kill the new manservant, and was rewarded with a pension from anytime

that he would wish to retire from working for the household.

**John Willard** (*Chris Howell*), has been said to have been seen alive and well. Those closest to him say he is alive and well, and in happy circumstances.

**Master Smith and the Family** (*Keith Williams, Hillary Folkes and baby Ewart*) are doing well, the business has picked up and seems quite prosperous. This may have had something to do with Master Hadfield's long talks on business practices with Master Smith. Things were a little strange not long after Master Hadfield despatched the highwayman, Master Smith had several serious accidents and was short of ready cash, but he seems better now. His wife after the birth of their second son has taken a larger role in the business, especially anything to do with the Dempsey household.

## Household News

### Fluffy and Friendly

Many of you may wonder at the institutionalised hugging in the group. How is it that no one can leave an event without being hugged by everybody, even when the next event is less than a week away? In the old days of re-enactment (when WWII re-enactment societies were just de-mopped units after some paid work), the group used to be seen as very insular and aloof. So to help cure this a policy code-named 'Fluffy and Friendly' was adopted. This involved making members feel more at ease with each other, part of which was done through hugging each other goodbye. There are many styles to which you may attempt whilst hugging. For those young people in the group Mistress Reeves is a shining example, hug everyone in sight at any opportunity and do so with a grin on your face. For those more taciturn members a sharp short grapple can be all that is expected. Being swept of your feet can always be a danger from those like Master Brown who have the strength to lift you up. The most many of us can hope for is a mouth full of facial hair from Master Hadfield. So all I have to say to those new members in the group is don't be afraid, 'just do it to them before they do it to you'!

### Kit for Sale

Many thanks to those of you who dug deep into your pockets and bought a piece of tat, ahem, history from James Wilson's closet at Kirby. Apologies to those who missed it, there are a few items left which some of you might be interested. These are:

Brand new Plantagenet shoes Size 4 - £40  
Small Women's Dress (green) - £20  
Ladies Under Hoop - £10  
Shift (long sleeved) - £5  
Shift (short sleeved) - £2  
Posh Doublet and Hat - £25  
Padded Jack - £20  
Pottery Jug - £5

Please contact me on 01773 528804 if you are interested in any of this kit. I am also currently making some people target arrows for use at events. If you are interested then please give me a call, a set of a dozen will cost you around £30.

## Reading List

For those of you who haven't heard of them, there is a small group of hedgehogs in Somerset that print historical publications collectively. They are known as Stuart Press and work out of a large brown bag, in order to keep costs down. They have produced a number of well-researched and interesting booklets on different aspects of our period. Such as 'The Art of the Dyer 1500 – 1700' at £5, 'Lust -1450-1660' at £2, 'The Mirror of Health: Food, diet and medical theory 1450-1660' at £5 etc. Their address is:

Historical Management Associates Ltd  
Stuart Press,  
117 Farleigh Road,  
Backwell,  
Bristol.  
BS48 3PG  
01275 463041  
Stuart@HMALTD.Freeserve.Co.UK

## Events for next year

At the end of every season comes the difficult task of planning and booking events for the next year. At the moment a number of possibilities are being considered, but nothing has yet been confirmed. If anyone has any comments on what they liked this year, or disliked, or what they'd like to see next year then please speak up. Pass any suggestions you have along to the committee as soon as possible so that they can be considered before any events are booked. We have also been invited to Tutbury Castle on October 1<sup>st</sup> as they are having an open day for re-enactment groups. The purpose of this is to see which, if any groups, they would like to book for events next year. If anyone is interested in going in kit just for a few hours then please contact Allan Harley on 01773 528804. The last time we went was in 1995 when the infamous suction

## What Next?

You'll all be glad that this letter has finally come to an end. Next year the newsletter will be taking on a slightly different format as it's revamped and my publishing skills improve. Thank you to those who have contributed articles and also to those who have read this far. If anyone would like to write articles about Kirby, Warwick and Blore Heath then please do so. Also any articles on other subjects would be welcome. Please send it all on to:

Phil Howell, 64/65 Main Rd, Pye Bridge, Alfreton, Derbyshire. DE55 4NY. Tel: 01773 528804 or phowell@caerleon2000.freeserve.co.uk

cannon made an appearance, blowing the castles gates outward from the outside! Tutbury is located in Staffordshire just off the A50 between Uttoxeter and Burton upon Trent.

## Group kit projects

Through the hard efforts of many members of the group last year the cannon was finally completed and several benches were made. This year a number of projects have already been discussed for development in the off-season. If anyone has any suggestions about what they feel the group should be spending it's money on then please let the committee know. We will be looking for people to help in a variety of projects, many of which don't involve power tools in any way, shape or form. This means that anyone with some spare time to give over the winter can get involved, be it sewing, computer programming, writing, organising or using power tools. This kind of work is just as important to the group as attending events and the more people that can join in then the better our equipment and shows next year.

## Feast

The success of the first ever Buckingham's Retinue feast earlier this year has led to Treowen being booked again for the next feast. This is to be held on the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> of February next year and there will be a fee for going comparable to last time, this is to pay for the food and the venue. Last years feast was fantastic and a big thanks to Mistress Ribbins and Service for their efforts in organizing it and preparing the meal. Anyone who has attended an event this year is welcome to come, though space is a little limited. Further details will be sent out later, for now just make sure you have the weekend booked off work!