

EVIL CHILD SLAVER TRACKED DOWN

By our Pointless Correspondent

After an extensive and exhausting search through the seedy pubs of Tamworth, we report on an astonishing and scandalous trade in young children snatched from their loving parents and forced to fight for shadowy underworld bosses.

Our search started after a chance meeting at Nottingham Castle with the well-known Yorkist leader Richard "The Third" Plantagenet. Richard informed us that he had heard that a criminal mastermind, known only as "Tudor", had made contact



Child slave being trained at sword-point in one of Philip of Long Eaton's death camps.

with subversive forces at Milford Haven in South Wales. He also told us that he believed "Tudor" was carrying an illegal shipment of arms and armour and was planning to mount a challenge for the Crown of England.

This meant nothing to us, as our interest in Crown affairs had expired a year previously, until we heard rumours that a loyal associate of "Tudor", esconsed in Tamworth Castle, was planning to sell the castle guns to Tudor, along with a number of children believed held captive in the keep.

At this point we realised that this person could only be Philip of Long Eaton, an elusive figure long believed to be behind a number of child slavery scandals previously not reported here.

So our investigative reporter was dragged out of the Dog and Doublet, sobered up, put in a car, taken out of a car, put in a taxi, and sent to Tamworth.

We received the two photographs here by post the next day. We have not heard from our reporter.



Philip of Long Eaton refuses to answer questions. Pictured here with colleague, Helen of Breaston, wanted in three counties for stoat worrying.

What's in this issue?

A bit of a treat in store for you this month. "What?" I hear you say, "A whole page devoted to cheese and another to Allan?"

Well, no, not that. Despite hundreds of requests (well, two), the cheese special issue has been put on hold.

No, this month we have **two extra pages absolutely free.*** Indeed, once I'd let Duke Harry (page 2) and his good lady Katherine (page 6) have their say I didn't have a lot of room for everything else, so I just had to make this issue longer than normal. Whether it continues this size, or grows larger depends on you, and your enthusiasm for writing, drawing and being photographed doing silly things.

I have no room for a contents list now, so turn the page and find out ... thanks to Allan, Catherine, Chris, Darren, Holly, Kate and Marcus for contributing to this issue.

*Absolutely free of any talented writing that is.

DUKE HARRY'S DIARY

Who have we been beating up so far this season?

**The Wrecking
Crew at large**

**April and May
2002**

Tutbury:

The Storm!

Tamworth

plus

Spot-the-Stafford

“THE ONLY ONE
[QUOTE, THAT IS]
THAT SPRINGS TO
MIND WAS SAID BY
SOMEONE TO PAUL.
PAUL WAS STATING
HOW NICE THE
WEATHER HAD BEEN
IN WOLVERHAMPTON
AND SOME BRIGHT
SPARK SAID THAT
THE RAIN WAS TOO
SCARED TO FALL IN
WOLVERHAMPTON!”

Kate Russell

“FIGHTING THE
GLOUCESTERS WAS
EASY AFTER TRAIN-
ING” (WITH CHRIS,
SIMON, PHIL,
ALLAN,
RICHARD, DAVE,
ANDY & JOCK)

Adam Taylor

TUTBURY CASTLE 27-28 APRIL

**or The Winds Did Blow (And We
Shall Have Snow Tent Poles Left)**

The more it goes
Tiddly pom
The more it goes
Tiddly pom
The more it goes
Tiddly pom
On blowing

And nobody knows
Tiddly pom
How many tent poles
Tiddly pom
How many tent poles
Tiddly pom
Are going

(Thanks to Master A.A. Milne - furrier to King Edward IV - for that inspired poetry, and to his associates W.T. Pooh and C. Wetton for translating from the original latin. “*The winds were worse than the ones that blew down owl’s house*” - Master P. Iglot.)

When I departed on Sunday afternoon, leaving my retinue to pack away, the tents were still standing (apart from the one that Master Hemsley had bravely “slain” when it cowardly attacked him from behind). Only moments later, however, a huge blast of wind came out of the Welsh marches, flattened a goodly part of the encampment, and carried away half the women of the camp. Now, I am not a person to give in to mean superstition, but is it any coincidence that Mistresses Mills and Gilmore were not present?

Whatever the cause, my heartfelt commiserations to the owners of the broken poles.



Not content with killing and eating young Master Simon, Rufus also stole his doublet.

You know I would personally help, but at the moment my coffers are a little stretched.

As for the training itself, I was pleased that my men acquitted themselves with style and skill, although I was concerned that many of them appeared just the tiniest bit out of condition, especially with the march on the Castle at Scarborough planned for just a few weeks time. I am sure it was just the coldness of the weather.



“Go on - tell Willow he’s a cowardly wuss.”

My compliments to Masters Harley and Howes, standing in for my injured captain, for the boldness of their command and the dignity with which they carried themselves. Master Harley threw himself into the role and the line with such enthusiasm it was at times difficult to work out where he was and who he was fighting - such was his energy.



I will make this report brief, for t’was but a training weekend, but must make special mention of the glorious soups dished up by Mistress Kracke, and extend a special Stafford greeting to Master Taylor, a new recruit from the County of Cheshire, fighting in my colours for the first time. I promise you that choosing my colours instead those of Stanley will prove to be a wise choice.

Duke Harry's Diary

TAMWORTH CASTLE 4-6 MAY



A photo diary by Harre Bokingham

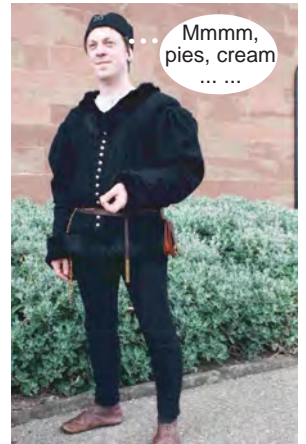
It was most encouraging to see my retinue in full swing at Tamworth, talking to the public and bring-

ing the magnificent castle alive.

Members of the group were giving talks on clothing and demonstrating aspects of everyday life

to the paying visitors, displaying a deep understanding about their subject.

Others were only too happy to pose for pho-



tographs or talk about their experiences as fifteenth century people, placing particular emphasis on telling the kind of stories that would have interested people in those times.

Others indulged in role-play around the scenario of bribing the gun crew to give the guns to

Henry Tudor, or spent their time pondering the deep philosophical questions of the age.



Inside, I found a team of knowledgeable experts ready and willing to guide visitors through many contemporary

battles, enlivening the depiction with realistic roleplay and inventive use of scale figures.



Looking around the Great Hall and the courtyard outside I noted with approval that the retinue's more recent and modern weapons were being demonstrated to a public eager to ask important questions and soak up the knowledge imparted by the enthusiastic re-enactors.

Safety was not forgotten either, with considerable care being exercised to ensure that members of the public were not injured by weapons.

Duke Harry's Diary

Later on in the afternoon I watched the group demonstrate simple dances, the proceedings being enlivened by good-natured competition between the dancers and the musicians over who would give in first.

Stafford musicians pride themselves on their skill, and today was no exception, with the selected tunes played accurately at brisk tempos.

After the dancing the visitors moved outside to watch the soldiers



... and we pray, O Lord, that we beat the musicians this time



Hope no-one notices I've got it upside down

She's got it upside down



Now which sleeve should I parry with?



Yeah?

Yeah yeah?

Ow! That's not fair. I wasn't ready!



Thanks for sparing my doublet, Paul

demonstrate their skills with various weapons. Especially exciting, I thought, was seeing a group of swordsmen perform synchronised clothing alterations, but the billmen also impressed with their pointy sticks and stunt pottery smashing.

The kids' drill was a good idea, and highlighted the inner child



Random Northern baps

of many of my retinue.

At night, after the last visitor had been driven out, the Great Hall came alive as many a weary re-enactor changed into or out of kit, and sat down to enjoy the odd bottle of wine or five. Mistresses Wetton and Atkinson deserve special mention for refusing to allow any lonely bottles to end the evening un-befriended.



There can be only one



Poor fool, in a moment I will break your back with a flick of my wrist

Mistress Kracke cooked a meaty food (except the one without meat) and others indulged in the usual horseplay or meditated on the meaning of life.

Mistress Atkinson was called upon quite early in the evening to massage some aching backs. Master Howes demonstrated to all how a perfect gentleman should behave by refusing to take off his hat.



The force is strong in this one



When I am king they shall all play this. Or die.



It's the new livery. Fettered Garfield a dormir.

A lively game of non-contact arm-wrestling was soon in full swing, Mistress Mills taking no

prisoners in her pursuit of the title. Having been knocked out in an early round, Master Hunt devised

a solo version. Then we all went to sleep under our authentic bedding.

Duke Harry's Diary



One more "cute" and you die

was taken to fit Master Connor with a suit of armour made specially for children, and kept in the castle for educational visits.

Although the fit of the helmet was a little tight, Master Harley generously loaned his and the Staffords' newest knight proved more than a match for Master Petz in some unscripted and spontaneous single combat.

All in all, and in all, this was a most enjoyable event in some historical surroundings, where members of the retinue were able to indulge in their twin delights of drinking, being daft and showing off. That's three. Their trio of delights of drinking, being daft, showing off and hitting each other with swords. That's four.

Forsooth, that gives me an idea.

We shall probably return.

Monday continued with the same plan as for Sunday: talks, drill, dancing and skill at arms. To inject some fun into the proceedings the opportunity



GRRRRR!

How cute!



... of course, the finest taffeta was made in Bromsgrove ...

Please help me



Grrr Grrr

Please help me

That's all for this issue's diary. All that remains is for me to commend you to

my good, well, my wife's own writings, which the editor has seen fit to include.

See you at Scarborough. I just hope you're all fit.
Harre Bokingham



SPOT- THE- STAFFORD

Pictures from the archives

Here is a photo taken one morning at Farleigh Hungerford in 1998(?) after Tony Roe was persuaded to take Heather and Bramble out for an early morning stroll in the mist.

My editor tells me he has loads of archive pictures he is willing to print here; for a small bribe he won't.

If you have any of your own you think the Retinue would like to see, send them to the editorial address on the back.

ORCHIDS & ONIONS

or Congratulations and Commiserations

by

Lady Katherine Stafford
(nee Woodville)

My 'beloved' husband has for far too long kept my good ladies and myself quiet. We do heartily feel that a little feminine charm is much needed in these dark times to kindle the hearts of my husband's Retinue. It is also a very good place to pass on news.

So if you have anything you'd like to share with everyone - news, achievements, new address, especially exciting new pet, anything - send it to the editorial address on the back and the good editor will pass it on to me next time he is in my husband's service.

- **Onions** to all those unfortunates who followed my Husband to Tutbury Castle and lost tent poles and other items to the terrible wind (and for once it didn't come from Master Hadfield).
- **Onions** to Master Bravey on the destruction of his tent pole by Master Hemsley the Tent Slayer!
- **Onions** to Mistress Scratcherd for the damage to her thumb at Tutbury due to the rampant wind. The wind has tried to use her as a kite once before, so one would think maybe she'd realise that her 8-stone delicate slender form is no match for a flapping tent in a blustery gale. However on return to her croft she was heard to mention she thought her extra large boots would hold her down ... they didn't last time Mistress!
- **Onions** also to Mistress Hilary for the bruised cheek she sported after being in the aforementioned tent. But also **Orchids** on the valiant effort in protecting her little one, who is a credit to the retinue. He did an excellent job (he's only 3) helping load the van after Tamworth. (*"I'm getting bigger I am" - Ewart running down from the castle at Tamworth.*)
- **Onions** to all those at Tamworth Castle that came home a drinking vessel short of a guardian ...damn those tiled floors!
- **Onions** to Master Harley for managing to get a large hole in his brand new doublet after owning it for all of an hour and a half. Thankfully, his seamstress finds the whole thing highly amusing. Master Harley was fighting Master Hadfield at the time and really should have known better.
- **Orchids** (and our best wishes) to our gallant Captain Howell for the removal of the fearful (though excellently coloured in black and red) plaster after a nasty fracture. It is nice to see him back on his feet again.
- **Onions** to Master Potter, who while travelling on his bicycle was knocked off it by his employer. The poor unfortunate has broken his arm. We truly commiserate and wish you a speedy recovery. (*So you can get back in the Bill line as soon as possible - Harre Bokingham.*) (*We hope it's in red and black - SwanSong fashion correspondent.*)
- **Orchids** to Master Phillip Howell on the completion of his dissertation... many diligent hours of hard work we are sure has paid off.
- **Orchids** to Mistresses Gilmore and Beazley who can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel in regards to their respective University courses.
- Both **Orchids** and **Onions** to Master Lane and Mistress Wilson on their new arrival, a Rhodesian Ridgeback pup. Orchids as we're sure he's adorable and onions as the little thing is sure to chew, widdle and generally turn your lives upside down for at least the next six months!
- I have one that I am not too sure about ... Mistress Ribbins and Captain Howell have exchanged lodgers. Master Harley is moving next-door-but-one and Master Phillip Howell has moved to Long Eaton. Instead, Mistress Ribbons and Captain Howell are gaining the company of Mistress Wetton.
- **Orchids** to Mistress Empingham who has purchased a house in the Pye Bridge area and is soon to move in.
- **Orchids** to Master Hemsley and Mistress Scratcherd on their new home ... the Retinue based in the Alfreton area is most assuredly growing.
- **Onions** also to Master Petz, who recently stood in a local byelection and did not win. **Orchids** however as he managed to get over 100 votes. For a gentleman who was awarded a lifetime St. Dimpner we feel this is a great achievement
- **Orchids** and Good Luck to Mistress Wetton who has given up the status of employee to start her own business. She will be making 15th Century clothing, LARPing costume and alternative Goth and Rock clothes. We wish 'Buckingham's Wardrobe' every success. Mistress Wetton asks that if anyone can think of a more appropriate name for the business to let her know.

15th Century Fashion

I SEE A RED DOOR AND I WANT TO PAINT IT BLACK

By our fashion correspondent

The medieval period is reknowned for its love of bright clashing colours and with our group being predominantly middle class we can have a wider variety as well as depth and brightness of colour. So experiment! Make yourself a colour wheel and take it with you next time you go shopping for material. It doesn't matter if the colour clashes with another you want to use - in fact, that's the idea! It would be nice to see a wider range of colours being used within the group. We have a lot of black and red, not just in the livery, so why not try red with blue or green for a change. Instead of having a red linen lining on a black doublet, why not go for something just as noticable as yellow or orange.

If you look at pictures of the period (and as noted in Amanda's article in *SwanSong* 6), it's not just the artist's use of paint that's vibrant and clourful. Of course, not everybody wore yellow hose, but it is believed in some circles that bright yellow hose were favoured by the eligible bachelors of London during the War of the Roses (does that make Stan of the Brouchs an eligible bachelor ... should one ask his misus about this?).



Illustration from the *Schilling chronicles* of 1513, regarding the Swabian war of 1499. The illustration above shows Swabian troops (on the left) fighting other confederation soldiers outside neutral Basel. Note the yellow hose and doublets (light grey if you are reading this in black and white). Other colours are green, red, purpleish and white (the prone man).

It is increasingly noticeable that the predominant colour for clothing within the group is black or grey. Granted, in the 15th century black was an expensive die, the cloth would only last for about six months because of rust and it's part of the livery colour, but it's beginning to seem that we are turning into a Goth group in as well as out of kit ... even the public has commented on it!



Allan at Tamworth in smart black doublet and hose.

Do you think we should we be looking to increase the variety and richness of colours used in the group?

Write to *SwanSong* and give your opinion. We'll publish all sensible responses (eventually!).

You might then point out that many of the people in the portraits of our period in the National Portrait Gallery are wearing black. Think on this for a second. You're about to be immortalised in a painting. You're going to pull out the best most expensive articles of clothing your wardrobe contains and wear your most expensive jewellery. Therefore, it's not surprising that most people are wearing black. However, it is most likely that their wardrobe contained clothes of other colours as well.

So get that colour wheel; if you've ever had your colours done, take the references with you. Decide what colours you like and what suits your skin tone and go for it! Most of the colours of the rainbow are available for use and, as ever, if you're not sure ... ask!

Catherine Wetton

Do you remember Amanda's article? Here is a summary. The full article can be found in *SwanSong* 6.

Paintings are not always a good source, as pigments used for painting were used for effect.

Heraldic colour combinations may have carried over into civilian wear. Remember that men liked to 'peacock' themselves and were not afraid to wear bright colours.

Black: supposed to symbolise humility, and was associated with the church. Also associated with darkness and death.

Grey: possibly a commoner version of black. Associated with monastic life and the clergy.

Red: a strong colour, frequently illustrated as a preferred colour of the richer sorts. Pinkish-red also fairly common as a dye.

Pink: a good candidate for 'poorer' colours, but flashy enough to be worn by the better sort of person. Men are often depicted wearing pink hose.

Green: regarded until quite recently as an 'unlucky' colour, symbolising post-death decay. Seems to have been popular as a contrast to red, instead of blue.

Blue: the most likely candidate for a 'rich' colour. The most expensive painting colour and blue dye from woad needed around nine months' processing. Used for the gown of the Madonna, and therefore seen as a 'virginal' colour.

Orange: neither illustrated nor talked about very often in mediæval sources, but could be made.

Russet: quite popular in many levels of society. A good contrast to blue.

Yellow: supposed to signify dignity.

White: may have been reserved for the better-off as there little point in wearing something white just to get it really scruffy.

Brown: could range from an uninspiring beige to a rich mid- or dark brown. Open to many classes of people. An interesting colour combination is brown and yellow - this appears in a number of illustrations, and appears to represent a medieval 'contrast'.

Purple: NO! Dusky violets, and lilac-greys would be possible to make from the basic red and blue dyes.

Songs

SOME AUTHENTIC SONGS

For those of you that enjoy a singsong during the day, and not just in the evening, here are the words.

Songsheets are being organised (with music) for later this season. If anyone within the group finds or knows the words and tune to any other medieval or Tudor songs please can you let us know as we would very much like to expand the repertoire. Should you wish to join in with the singing, please see either Mistress Kracke or Mistress Wetton. The gentlemen among you that can hold a tune are also more than welcome; this isn't just for the girls!

ROSE

Rose, Rose, Rose, Rose,
Will I ever see thee wed?
I will marry that I will sir,
When thy will.

ADAM LAY Y-BOUNDEN

Adam lay y-bounden, bounden in a bond,
Four thousand winters thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple, an apple that he took,
As learned men find written in their Book.

Had not the apple taken been, the apple taken been,
Then had never our lady had been Heaven's queen.

Blessed be the time that apple taken was,
Therefore we may sing 'Deo Gracias'

MY JOHNNY

My Johnny was a shoemaker and dearly he loved me
My Johnny was a shoemaker and now he's gone to sea.
With pitch and tar to soil his hands
He will sail across the sea, stormy sea,
He'll sail across the stormy sea.

His jacket was a deep sky blue and cranny was his hair
His jacket was a deep sky blue, it was I do declare.
For to reeve the top-sails up against the mast
And to sail across the sea, stormy sea
And sail across the stormy sea.

One day he'll be a Captain bold with a brave and gallant crew,

One day he'll be a Captain bold with a sword and spy-glass too.

And when he has his gallant captain's sword
He'll come home and marry me, marry me
He'll come home and marry me.

AND A NOT SO AUTHENTIC SONG ...

To be sung to the tune of "The Wild Rover" (thanks to Allan).

I've been a hard drinker for many a year
And I always fall over after ten pints of beer
So now when I'm drunk I sit on the floor
And I never risk falling over no more

Chorus:

And it's no nay never
No nay never no more
Will I drink and fall over
Nay never no more

I went to an alehouse I used to frequent
Despite having sworn that I'd give up for Lent
I asked for a cold beer, but the barmaid said, "nay!"
"You'll only fall over like you did yesterday"

Chorus

I pulled from my pocket two shiny gold pounds
And I managed to do it without falling down
The barmaid said, "Sir please choose from the list"
But I could not read it 'cos I was too pissed!

Chorus

I think that I'll stick now to stiff drinks and shorts
Like whisky and brandy and pernod and port
Cut down on the volume of all that I drink
Then at least when I throw up I won't block the sink

Chorus

I'll go back to my girlfriend, confess what I've done
And if she should hit me I won't turn and run
I'll promise to give up, but if I should fail
I'll see you next weekend for ten pints of ale

Chorus

Findyngs & Discoveryes

Department of the Environment

Days for Hoisting Flags on Government Buildings

From 8 am till sunset

6 February	Her Majesty's accession	
19 February	Birthday of the Duke of York	
1 March	St David's Day (in Wales only, see note 1)	Confirmed by CADW (Welsh office) 28/2/196
10 March	Birthday of the Prince Edward	
March	Commonwealth Day (second Monday)	
21 April	Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen	
23 April	St George's Day (in England only, see note 1)	
2 June	Coronation Day	
June	Official Celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday (see note 2)	
10 June	Birthday of the Duke of Edinburgh	21st June Prince William
4 August	Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother	DEAD
15 August	Birthday of the Princess Royal	
21 August	Birthday of the Princess Margaret	DEAD
15th SEPT	BIRTHDAY OF THE PRINCE HENRY	
November	Remembrance Day (second Sunday, see note 3)	
14 November	Birthday of the Prince of Wales	
20 November	Her Majesty's Wedding Day	
30 November	St Andrew's Day (in Scotland only, see note 1)	
Also	The day of the opening of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by Her Majesty (see note 4)	
And	The day of the prorogation of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by Her Majesty (see note 4)	

C.L.S.O. advised on 25/4/74 that we should disregard note 1. I can't flag St George's flag as that is what local people require

3rd September March and Army Day (W.A. JUSTER)

Notes

- Where a building has two or more flagpoles the appropriate National flag may be flown in addition to the Union Flag but not in a superior position
- Date to be notified
- Flags should be flown right up all day
- Flags should be flown on this day even if Her Majesty does not perform the ceremony in person. Flags should only be flown in the Greater London area
- The Royal Standard is never hoisted when Her Majesty is passing in procession. If the Queen is to be present in a building, you should get in touch with the Department of the Environment (PFCS Secretariat, London SW1P 3EB)



Here's someone who didn't quite make it to the feast I think. Taken from a catalogue of wang gear. Do you reckon it would be worth challenging her to a swordfight to see how sharp the edge on that sword through her belt is? With any luck ...

And has anyone else noticed how so much rubber fetish clothing these days is in red and black? Exit one editor to have cold shower.



Heard the one about the cat and the swan? Mistress Wetton was, methinks, a little foolish to introduce Holly's cat ("Cat") to the feathers; Cat hasn't stopped pulling them out to play with and eat ever since.

Found in the staffroom at Tamworth Castle, this is a handy guide to which days what flags should be flown. Notice the rather practical way they note that certain days need not be honoured.

RETINUE PIN-UP OF THE MONTH



A pub near Blackbird Leys leisure centre. Remind anyone of someone?

Playful batchelor Ewart (3 ³/₄), of Coventry, is a member of re-enactment doyens Buckingham's retinue. His hobbies include "big guns, steel weapons and wearing thick woollen clothes on hot days".

Apparently he is single, girls, so start preparing for 2014 now!

Group News & Views

EVENTS LIST 2002

1st-4th June Scarborough (*L&M*)

Siege at an excellent venue with plenty to do!

23rd June Battle of Pilleth (*Some WangHeads*)

One day turn up and fight event, for the bloodthirsty.

6th-7th July Middleham Castle (*Buckingham's Retinue*)

Absolutely the last outing of Richard III by JW, at least until next time!

13th-14th July Battle of Tewkesbury (*Black Bear*)

The Usual.

27th-28th July Muchelney Abbey (*Buckingham's Retinue*)

Murder Mystery at a brand new site.

10th-11th August Kirby Hall (*L&M*)

Area display with market, mud and the usual beer tent.

17th-18th August Lincoln Bishop's Palace (*Buckingham's Retinue*)

Unveiling of our new Henry VIII as this year's foray into the 16th century. A chance to show off your kit, role-play, etc., etc.!

24th-26th August Old Sarum (*Buckingham's Retinue*)

Arena event with a couple of groups from other periods, a good time of year for this site and an excellent place to wind down.

September (TBA) Blore Heath (*Federation*)

As per previous years.

PLEASE HELP!

Mistress Wetton is appealing for knowledge as to the whereabouts of three of her shifts, missing presumed lent out. She would appreciate help in tracking down said garments as she plans to move house soon.

This is a good time to remind all members and new members especially that, should they need to borrow kit, particularly group kit, to ensure that it is returned at the end of the event, or as arranged, in good condition. Don't just drop wet kit on a tent floor and expect someone else to pick it up ... nag nag ... The better it's looked after, the longer we can keep using it.

TAMWORTH CASTLE
Buckingham's Retinue
15th century living history and knightly combat from the bloody wars of the roses
may 4th, 5th & 6th

OPENING TIMES:
Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th
12.00pm - 5.15pm
Bank Holiday Monday 6th
10.00am - 5.15pm
Last admissions 4.30pm

please call for further details
tel: 01827 709629
Tamworth Borough Council

Okay! Who has been moonlighting as ... um ... well here at SwanSong we're not too sure about this, but we reckon it is human. Maybe one of the biologically-trained Retinue members could shed some light on this? Tee? Holly?

The curator of Tamworth Castle was taking pictures of us through the weekend (I hope to show you a few when we see them), so next time we can be sure that he will take a long look at all the available pictures and ... select another picture of Allan. A-ha!

CAPTION COMPETITION



Please supply a caption for this photo (relatives of Steve and sandwiches need not apply).

Prize is a month luxury camping in the north of France with Henry IV's army.

Send contributions, complaints, bribes of abuse, offers of hamsters, to Dave Hemsley:

e-mail:
david@purpleardvark.freerve.co.uk

or by surface mail:

25 Sandringham Road, Nottingham NG2 4HH). Tel: 0115 950 5560.

Computer files as Word 2000 or less, or .txt/.rtf, picture files as jpeg (less than 200 KB please, size no more than about 800x600).

Next issue July.
Deadline 16 July (just after Tewkesbury then). Depends when I move house though!

Answer to last month's Body Parts Competitions was Sam's bum, Marcus's cleavage and Zoes's smile. Or something like that. The bottle of wine goes to Mistress Gilmore because she was the only person who entered. (And she got it right.)