

Le Chronique d'Esperance

April 2001, Anno Adrianus 16

Issue Number 5 of 12

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Imperial Event Locations

By HIM Dame Elisabeth

Good Persons All,

The following is a brief update that is being posted to the BBS, in advance of the April Herald.

Elisabeth, Imperatrix

Banner War West 2001 Site:
in the Kingdom of Terre Neuve,
the Banner War West will be
held at Dos Picos County Park
in Ramona, CA.

July Estates Meeting 2001:

Holiday Inn
7859 Lake Worth Rd
Lake Worth, Florida 33467
(561)968-5000

*discounted room rates
\$63/single occupancy,
\$68/Poolside single occupancy

From Their Majesties

Greetings from your crowns,

We have been so busy working at the Crossroads fair site, that we do not have much to report this month. We have met many new members at the fair site and believe the Canton of Loch Lava and the County of Bastone have both added new households this month, Congratulations.

Countess Rosellen held a wonderful Collegium on March 31st. If you missed it, you missed lots of fun, food, and great information and teaching. Sir Jestar showed bobbin lace making and has some wonderful resource books there and he even had time to go outside and teach some juggling, his lovely Lady, Milisent, enthralled the group with her liqueur making and sampling.

Dame Margret Rose and Squire Alona Marie did tarot readings. After a 4 hour drive to get there Lady Razi bint Sabra sat all day and taught spinning, she brought 3 spinning wheels for us to try our hand at. Sir Conall showed individuals one-on-one how to do chain mail, but because of the number of things to do and time restrictions, he was unable to give a full class. So he has begged to do a class at one of our events.

Dame Xuxa of Sangreal had a wonderful class on period

clothing and patterns with lots of books and dresses to drool over. Sir Connor O'Riordain and his lady Evelyn brought a full supply of arrow making supplies and conducted Archery tourneys. And, of course, we had lots of combat. I hope we did not leave anyone out, Countess Rosellen ran around fussing and fretting making sure everyone was happy and things were going well and we were all had well fed hearts, souls, and stomachs.

Your queen was going to teach needlework, but had to make two emergency trips to fair site to get people gate listed. But she does have sampler learner kits for you to learn needlepoint, counted cross-stitch, embroidery, and jupunto on, you just have to let Her Majesty know in time so she can bring them to an event.

Reminder: the County of Bastone's May event is canceled because we will all be at the fair.

Also if you have not heard or read, Their Imperial Majesties have announced:

'Eisabeth, Imperatrix and Erik, Emperor state:
"We approved a new

"E-membership category for the members of the Empire at

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From Their Majesties

Continued from Page 1

the November Imperial Estates 2000 Meeting. The concept is relatively simple. Not printing and mailing your newsletter saves us money, and so. We pass the savings on to you." (\$10 discount for primary member) "You can sign-up for an E-membership and receive the discount at the time of your annual renewal." "You simply email adranherald@yahoo.com with "Request E-subscribe" in the subject line with your name and

subdivision in the body of the message (for verification purposes) to be included in the bulleted mailing: or you can log-on to the Adrian Empire web-site monthly and link up. The interim upload site for this month's edition is at: <http://home.att.net/~adrianherald>."

Your Royal Majesties,
Sir Cromar I and Dame Willow II
8th King and Queen of Esperance

The Poetry Corner

Contributed by Sir Jamie the Red

The Apparition

By John Donne

When by thy scorn, O murderess, I am dead,
And that thou think'st thee free
From all solicitation from me,
Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,
And thee, feigned vestal, in worse arms shall see;
Then thy sick taper will begin to wink
And he, whose thou art then, being tired before,

Will, if thou stir, or pinch to wake him, think
Thou call'st for more,
And in false sleep will from thee shrink,
And then poor aspen wretch, neglected thou
Bathed in a cold quicksilver sweat wilt lie
A verier ghost than I;
What I will say, I will not tell thee now,
Lest that preserve thee; and since my love is spent,
I had rather thou shouldst painfully repent,
Than by my threatenings rest still innocent.

Corona Crossroads Fair

By HRM Willow II

The Crossroads fair in Corona is just around the corner, so We, your Crowns, thought We should give you some final information concerning the fair and our part in the fair.

General Information

Fair Dates: April 14th (Easter weekend) through May 28th Memorial Day.

Time: gates open to the public at 10am. Be there before 8:30am (the earlier you get there the closer you can park) We are expected to be ready 1/2 hour before opening. We had previously set the time for 9am, but Tom and Pat, the fair promoters, are holding their mandatory meeting for all fair autocrats at 9am. We will have a site meeting at 9:30am in our encampment everyday. You must leave by 7pm, if you don't have a camping pass (Tom and Pat don't

want any drunk drivers and feel this will cut down on that.)

Time period 1449 to 1599 European marketplace and Renaissance flavor, please dress appropriately, at present we have no dress/garb approval for this fair, but if we dress inappropriately it could happen. Remember wearing garb in the encampment is essential to maintain the look and feel of the time period.

All cars must be off site by 8:45am, only one car per site is allowed at a time. Please just drop off your stuff. Don't put it away, stand, talk, etc. because there may be 3, 4 or 5 cars waiting to drop off their stuff and are waiting on you to come back to the front gate. You will be given 10 minutes to unload. Think of others, we may be closer to the gate, but it is a long way to drag heavy stuff, like armor.

There will be a meeting in the

encampment every morning at 9:30am, introducing the Autocrat's for the day and setting down the ground rules.

NOTE: any Autocrat who misses this meeting on his/her day, will be replaced by a substitute autocrat. Sorry, but if you are not there on time, how can we start the day on the right foot and keep it going that way? There will be 2 autocrats each day, thus 2 autocrat points will be awarded per day. If an autocrat does not do their job, they will not get their point. If you want to Autocrat and have not signed up to do so, contact the crown and We will see what We can do for you.

There are no private areas or tents. There are several communal areas: There is a combatant's rest area, an arts area, an arts rest area, a kids play area, a dinning/ sitting/

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Corona Crossroads Fair

Continued from Page 2

game playing area, and a kitchen/cooking area.

Overnight camping: Small easy up/ pop up style tents can be placed around the encampment after fair closes, but must be down by 8am so people can move easily about the site and set it up for the day. There is also a tent city in the back of the Crossroads fair site.

Camping/passers must be cleared through Tom and Pat and your camping site fee paid.

All equipment not being used or that is not period-looking goes backstage. Reminder (for the backstage area): please bring your stuff in stackable plastic containers with your name clearly visible on the ends. We want everyone to be able to get to their stuff this year.

When you finish combat put your armor away. PLEASE, don't just throw it on the ground, we may have more room this year, BUT it looks bad, and is not safe. No one wants to look at your "mister happy". Combatants, remember to bring a cover for your non-period armor boxes if you are going to store them in the combat area. Please find an out of the way spot to store them.

When you are tired from fighting you don't want to crawl through someone else's stuff to find a place to sit or lie down.

Artisans remember you are responsible for your own stuff. Be sure to put it safely away or have someone designated to do so. We don't want anything lost, stolen, or ruined, the queen can not handle that guilt. We need Arts for our display shelves and clothing to hang. These things must be ok'ed and signed in with the queen (for their security and protection and so we don't have everything one weekend and nothing the next).

REMEMBER NO non-period stuff showing in the public site.

PICK UP YOUR TRASH, if you

see someone else's trash pick it up. PLEASE, there is a trash can on site, use it.

FOOD: The Queen has worked long had hard with Dame Margaret Rose and Sire Andrew to make sure we will have a variety of good food. But like last year this is a pot-luck affair what you bring is what we eat, share the load. We know some of you are like us and are on very limited budgets so bring what you can, big or small, all donations will be accepted gladly.

To cut down on waste this year we will be trying to set all fruit out on the tables so you can eat it at will. Autocrats are expected to bring some kind of main food/dish for their day. So far we know of ham, cubed beef and a pig that are being donated for fair days. Dame Kathryn McGuire has offered to make bread daily and Dame Gwennlian Derwen will be making butter.

All food to be shared with the group MUST BE signed in with Dame Margaret Rose first, this may seem hard, but we don't want waste this year and with a list of foodstuff on hand they will know what they have to work with and what we need. If you don't know what to bring talk to Dame Margaret Rose and then you can run to the store and get what is needed.

We will have hot water to wash dishes in. IF YOU USE IT, YOU WASH IT AND PUT IT AWAY. If you borrow it return it CLEAN.

No whips, all weapons are to be sheathed and peace tied except in the combat eric. No pets without prior approval from Tom and Pat. These are Fair rules not ours.

It is your responsibility to get your ID's passes done by March 31. If you did not get them on time YOU may purchase them for \$50 for run of fair or \$10 a day general admission. ID's will be processed Thursday through Sunday from 11am to 4pm. I know some of you had trouble with getting your passes the past Saturday,

though we had everything set up and clear that Friday, but as you know, Tom and Pat can be real changeable. They let the king gate list some in the morning and then changed their minds, and the queen had to leave Countess Rosellen's collegium to finish gate listing our populace. And we were aloud to gate list Sunday to make up for it. Tom and Pat do have free passes for April 14 and 15 if you want to stop by and get some, for more info. Call 1/800/320/4REN or www.renaissanceinfo.com

Autocrat Duties

10 things the Autocrats of the day must divide and do to get their point for the day:

1. Combat, Marshals and Combatants
2. Two people for the front gate for a 2 hour stint
3. Two people (minimum) for the parades with flags/banners
4. Make sure everyone has signed in
5. Gate Guard(s)
6. Artisans for the Arts area
7. Keep back stage neat and clean
8. Keep mundane stuff and trash out of the show area (our encampment)
9. Kitchen helpers
10. Make sure the site is neat and clean when you leave (you are the last one to leave)

Some of these rules may seem unfair or harsh, but they are to insure a good time for everyone, not just a few. We have had lots of help for numerous people and groups and we the Crown want to personally thank them for their support and help. When you see our finished site you will understand the tremendous amount of hard work that has been done for this project.

Your Royal Majesties,
Sir Cromar I and Dame Willow II
8th King and Queen of Esperance

Ministers' Reports

Ministers, I need your reports. Please get them to me by the first Saturday of the month. With faire coming up, we are all busy, I know. The reports don't have to be long, they just need to be there.

Minister of Joust and War

The minister of Joust and War did not send in a report this month.

Minister of Physicks

The Minister of Physicks did not send in a report this month.

Sovereign of Arms

The Sovereign of Arms did not send in a report this month.

Chancellor

The Chancellor did not send in a report this month.

Chronicler

You've got my report in your hands! Send me a request. Please send it to steve.eldredge@gateway.com.

If you have anything to submit, please submit it by the first Saturday of the month. If you can, e-mail it to me. However, I will accept anything in any format as long as it gets to me in time.

All submissions are subject to editing. I will not change the content without permission, but I will correct spelling, grammar, names, and similar items as I can.

Thank you,
Sir Jamie the Red

Minister of Archery

The Minister of Archery has nothing to report due to attending the Imperial Estates meeting in Aragon.

Side Note: For those who were not in attendance my arrows have been voted on and approved! The golf tube arrows will still usable until the end of closing court of Imperial War 2001, at that time they will be phased out.

Hospitaller

The Royal Hospitaller has nothing to report due to attending the Imperial Estates meeting in Aragon.

Minister of Arts and Sciences

Unto the Populace, Greetings

I am most happy to announce that the March event had an Arts tournament! We had four entries. All were very well done. The tourney was won by Her Majesty, however, the competition was very close. Thanks to all the artisans and judges.

Starting in April we have the new Imperial rules. This means that we no longer must have four entries in order to judge. It also means that you can get a tourney win if your score meets the requirements no matter how many entries there are. And categories have been eliminated so you don't have to decide

how to enter you piece.

It is my hope that these changes will encourage everyone to give a little more time to the arts.

I look forward to seeing everyone who can get away from Faire for a few hours.

In Service to Esperance
Razi bint Sabra

Minister of Rolls and Lists

The Minister of Rolls and Lists did not send in a report this month. (She may be forgiven, she just got married!)

Steward

Receipts for
February(rained out)/March
\$228.00

\$100.00 donation received for
demo@the Buena Park Mall.

\$ 95.00 Memberships (2 new,
3 one yr.renewals, 2 6mo)

\$ 33.00 Site Fees

Welcome to new
members of the House of
Amber:

Charlene Andron
Angeleec Andron

Warden

The Warden did not send in a report this month.

Tourney Mistress

The Tourney Mistress did not send in a report this month.

A Thank You

Dear Wonderful Teachers and performers,

Thank you all for a wonderful Demo and Collegium. You all did so well that a DI will placed on the sign in form for each of you. Everyone had a wonderful time and we will probably be gaining members from this event. I really enjoyed putting this on and hope you had fun too.

Thank you for your help and Friendship
Lady Rosellen, Countess of Bastone

Mall Crawl'

By Sir Jamie the Red

You missed it!

Sir Coda ran a demonstration at the Buena Park Mall on March 16th. It was done on fairly short notice, but both the participants and the public loved it. We had a stage to work with and a microphone. We had all three forms of combat, a spinning demonstration, discussions of mail and needlework all mixed in. The arts table was well covered with examples and we had plenty of people come over to inquire about the arts. We even had three or four people get membership forms and contact numbers.

The crowd numbered about fifty people, including children and parents. The demo was orchestrated by the Mall as part of one of their community programs. The Mall's coordinator had to go get the audience and bring them over to the stage. Because of construction in the mall, they had moved the location of the demo, but that just gave us plenty of time to set up and prepare for the show. There were a few early arrivals, who got to take a closer look at some of the arts and combat equipment before the show started.

All-in-all it was a great show and a fun and productive demonstration. Special thanks go out to all of those who did make it. Your efforts are appreciated, especially if those who picked up membership forms fill them out and join our ranks!

Feast Days

April

April 1

The Veneralia, the festival of Venus, the Roman goddess of love and beauty.

April 5

Lady Luck Day, the festival Fortuna, the goddess of good fortune.

April 7-8

Easter, derived from the festival of Eastre (Ostara), the Saxon goddess of spring.

April 8

Hana-Matsuri, the festival of Shaka, the Silent Sage from Japanese Buddhism.

April 9

The Lumeria, the festival in honor of the Lemures, the spirits of dead family members who wander the earth on these three spring nights.

April 15

The Fordicidia, the festival of Tellus, the Roman earth goddess.

April 16

The feast day of St.

Bernadette.

April 19

The Cerealia, festival of Ceres, a Roman corn goddess.

April 21

The Palilia (Parilia), the festival of Pales, the Roman goddess of sheperds and flocks. This is also the legendary founding date of Rome.

April 23

Saint George's Day.

April 25

The Robigalia, the festival of Robigus, a Roman corn god.

April 28 - May 1

The Floralia, the festival of Flora, Roman goddess of fruitfulness and flowers.

April 30

Beltine, on this date Caileach Beara, a Celtic goddess, turns to stone. She is reborn on October 31, Samhain.

May Day Eve, Walpurgis Night, formerly the date of the pagan festival marking the beginning of summer.

May

May 1

The day of Saint Walburga (8th century AD).

May 1

Beltane, the Celtic festival marking the beginning of summer, where the cattle were driven between purifying fires before they were let out to graze the meadows.

Also the festival of Belenus, the Celtic god of fire and the sun.

May 8

The festival of Mens, the Roman goddess of mind and consciousness.

May 15

The Mercuralia, the festival of Mercury, the Roman god of merchants and travellers.

June

June 1

The festival of Carna, the Roman goddess of bodily organs.

June 3

The festival of Bellona the Roman goddess of war.

Calendar of Events:

April (This is a busy month!)						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1 Daylight savings time April Fool's day	2	3	4 Demos: La Contenta Middle Sch & Joshua Springs Christian Sch	5	6	7 Aquitaine Event
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Crown Event Corona Faire
15 Corona Faire	16	17	18	19	20	21 Corona Faire Easter
22 Corona Faire	23	24	25	26	27	28 Loch Lava Event Corona Faire Devore Faire
29 Corona Faire Devore Faire	30					

Special Events for April

Demos, April 4th, La Contenta Middle School (7:45 am to 10:00 am) and Joshua Springs Christian School (Noon til it ends), both in Yucca Valley will be the sites of two demos on the same day. Contact the Vicereine of Loch Lava' for more information. (Note, as of publication, both of these demos were awaiting crown approval.)

Aquitaine Event, April 7th, this is the usual event with all of the usual fun. Come out and have a great time.

Crown Event, April 14th, this event will emphasize crafted in the arts, I believe. Please bring two arts entries to fill the lists. Come out for the usual merriment and possibly a little extra.

Corona Faire, April 14th thru May 28th, This is the big one folks and is rapidly becoming the centerpiece of the Esperance Year. We did an awesome job last year, let's do even better this year.

Canton of Loch Lava Event, April 28th, the canton of Loch Lava' is having their monthly event this day. Remember to contact the Viceroy of Loch Lava' for more information.

Devore Faire, April 28th thru June 17th, Okay, this is the really big one. We don't have an official presence here, but many members attend. It's on our calendar so no one forgets.

Special Events for May

Corona Faire, April 14th thru May 28th, This is the big one and it'll be in it's second month here. We need to maintain our momentum throughout the month despite burnout and all of the other activities planned for May.

Devore Faire, April 28th thru June 17th, Okay, this is the really big one. We don't have an official presence here, but many members attend. It's on our calendar so no one forgets.

Aquitaine Event, May 5th, All of the usual merriment, come on out and play.

Wedding: Sir Morgan MacCanna and Becca, May 5th,

Crown Event, May 12th, for the tourney, this month's arts emphasis is on bardic projects. Remember to bring two projects, one bardic and one of any other type. All of the usual merriment will occur.

Canton of Loch Lava' Event, May 26th, the canton of Loch Lava' is having their monthly event this day. Come on out for the fun! Contact the Viceroy of Loch Lava' for more information.

Continued on Page 7

Banner War, May 26th thru May 28th, We joined with Aragon and won the banner last year, lets keep it this year, or at least give a good account of ourselves! The war is in Aragon, stay tuned for details.

May (And we thought Last Month was Busy!)						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5 Aquitaine Event Faires Wedding
6 Faires	7	8	9	10	11	12 Crown Event Faires
13 Mother's Day Faires	14	15	16	17	18	19 Faires
20 Faires	21	22	23	24	25	26 Loch Lava Event Faires Banner War
27 Faires Banner War	28 Memorial Day Faires Banner War	29	30	31		

Special Events for June

Canton of Aquitaine/County of Bastone Event, June 2nd, Fairmont Park is at the 60 fwy and Market Street in the City of Riverside. Come on out and join the fun!

Crown Event, June 9th, the arts emphasis is on food and alchemy. Remember to bring two entries if you can, one food and one other so we can hold two lists. All of the other festivities will also be there, of course.

Wedding, June 10th, Sir Coda and Dame Joley are getting married this day!

Canton of Loch Lava' Event, June 23rd, the canton of Loch Lava' is having their monthly event this day. Remember to contact the Vicereine of Loch Lava' for more information.

June						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Aquitaine Event Devore Faire
3 Devore Faire	4	5	6	7	8	9 Crown Event Devore Faire
10 Wedding! Sir Coda and Dame Joley Devore Faire	11	12	13	14	15	16 Devore Faire
17 Devore Faire Closes Father's Day	18	19	20	21	22	23 Loch Lava Event
24 Agenda for Imperial Estates Meeting	25	26	27	28	29	30

Opening Day

By Dame Xuxa of Sangreal

Greetings one and all!

Faire is finally here and anyone who worked on the site last weekend knows how awesome we look! As one of the autocrats opening day I am going to inform you of things we need:

Please bring essential bulk food stuffs such as

Bread

Fruits

Cookies (hey, this keeps the kids happy and outta our hair)

potatoes

carrots

rice

Milk (small containers, please--they are easier to store)

WATER! Especially all you combatants!

ICE

Pasta Noodles (hey, the french were doing great things with sauces--so can we)

cheese

and anything else you feel will feed a bunch of hard working people.

Please bring your OWN feast gear. Mark it so

you get it back and most importantly, clean it yourself after you use it. We have someone in charge of the kitchen who is going to make sure we all stay healthy and tidy during this run of faire.

Unloading: if you have to unload a car/van/truck your time to do so will be strictly limited as there will be others who need to do the same. This first weekend will be a high stress weekend for us all, especially the autocrats--we get to find all the hitches first weekend--so please respect our tasks and help us to run cars in and out smoothly. There will be a sign-up sheet in camp for the pass on a first come first get basis but that doesn't mean we won't ask you to move FAST!

Oh, and if you have wee-ones please help us in getting period toys for them to play with: Rag dolls, wooden animals, blocks. Donations of bright poster paints and brushes are welcomed. They have their own area, all we have to do is make it a fun place to be and they will stay (at least part of the time!)

Can't wait to see you all Saturday!

Sincerely,

Dame Xuxa (aka Dame Isabeau who was sent to a monestary) Sangreal

Mountain Demo

By Sir Jamie the Red

Another very successful demonstration hosted by Sir Jehan. This one was a challenge for all participants because it took place at an instructional German Camp, where no one was supposed to speak English. Because Sir Jehan was an instructor at the camp and was the only Adrian present who speaks German fluently, he had to do all of the talking. The demonstration was intended to last for one hour, but continued on for a second with the entire audience in rapt attention throughout.

Highlights of the demonstration included a choreographed bit of swordplay between Sir Jehan and a friend of his who lives in the Big Bear area (the location of the demo)

and who both had the equipment and had done choreographed combat sequences before. Sir Coda arrived somewhat late (due to traffic) and provided a sideshow of how to don a suit of armor in less than five minutes. It was an impressive display. Sir Coda and Sir Jamie performed a full steel demo, then after a break in which more of the arts were discussed came back for a Renn demo afterwards.

Dame Katherine Marshal and Dame Maedb Hawkins of the Drakonja provided most of the arts display, including stained glass work, needlework, clothing from basic to Oh-my-god gorgeous, and many other items. One of the highlights of the evening, for both students and participants, was watching Dame

Maedb try to get across the concept of a tent stitch to Sir Jehan, who does not specialize in needlework, so that he could communicate it to the students -- all without Dame Maedb uttering a word.

Dame Maedb and Dame Katherine also carried several items around the crowd, allowing the students a closer look at the things we brought. Afterwards, the students were allowed to approach and ask questions in english, so we talked with them for a while longer, answering questions. One fun fact, it was the girls who approached the warriors and asked about the armor and weapons. It was the boys who approached the ladies with questions about the needlework and clothing!

Cuir Bouilli: Part VI

Submitted by Sir Jamie the Red

Editor's Note: I have removed references to page numbers and images because they did not translate when I downloaded this information from the Internet. This is the fourth in what promises to be a long series of articles. Please be patient and they will all get printed as space permits.

Leather and the Warrior

An account of the importance of leather to the fighting man from the time of the ancient Greeks to World War II

*By John W. Waterer
RDI, FSA, FSIA, FIIC
President of The Museum of Leathercraft*

*Edited by Lysbeth Merrifield
The Museum of Leathercraft Northampton*

(c) Joyce T. Meade 1981

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CUIR BOUILLI (pp 62-76)

Continued from the March issue

All hides and skins must be prepared for the chosen process by which they are to be converted into leather. Usually, after an initial washing, the leather is soaked in a series of lime liquors of increasing strength which facilitate the removal of hair and bring the pelts into a receptive condition for the treatment that follows. Leather is made from the corium, the middle layer of the three of which animal skin is composed. Removal of hair and epidermis (the outer layer) discloses the natural upper surface of the corium, the compact 'grain' of which forms the natural surface of leather - that which can be colored and polished. But in chamoising, this grain surface is removed by 'frising' (scraping) in order that oil may freely enter the pelt from both sides and thus permeate the whole substance of the corium. The third and lowest layer (the adipose tissue or 'flesh' having been removed during the preparatory work); thus the corium is isolated. Then marine animal or fish oil, usually cod, is applied liberally, driven in by pummeling in the 'stocks', and the hides are then piled up and left until heat is generated. This process causes oxidation, the products of which combine with the collagen fibres of the corium and render them flexible and immune to putrefaction or decay. When the process is complete, the leather is washed to remove surplus oil, shrunk in a soda bath, dried, and is then ready for use, remaining pale yellow (buff) in color.

The use of leather for body armor is frequently referred to in 13th century records, sometime as cuir bouilli which is specific, and sometimes simply as

'leather' which has often been assumed to mean the same thing. But, as the author hopes to show, whilst in the early stages of the gradual build-up of plate body armor almost the only kind of leather used was cuir bouilli, as it had been in the case of additional joint protectors on mail. For certain purposes buff leather was almost certainly used. The effigies provide almost as many enigmas as the documents: however meticulous a sculptor has been, there are many cases where it has been impossible to indicate by a plain stone surface the difference between polished metal plate, cuir bouilli, buff leather, and even a finely woven fabric. And so, where no actual examples have been preserved, the truth is conjectural. Of two things there is certainty, first that the laces by which the small plates of metal or cuir bouilli were attached to mail were of buckskin. We do not know how it was dressed but most probably it was first tanned then chamoised and finally stuffed with 'dubbin'. Second, that the 'points' (small straps) by which the component parts of body armor were fastened together and made articulate, were of buff. Both of these matters are confirmed by extant examples in old armor. Modern armory curators are well aware of the fact that no other kind of leather, however good, will remain virtually free from stretch for long periods and that for their armor to keep its shape they must use buff. Both points and laces were the original wares of the guild of Leathersellers of London whose members appear to have seceded, as a group of specialists, from a more general group of leatherworkers, early in the 14th century. They were not incorporated until 1444 but already, as early as 1327, complaints were made to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City that 'foreigners' (workers not domiciled in the city) were conspiring 'with false workers of the City' to sell 'sheep-leather scraped on the back in counterfeit or roe-leather. 'Such false leather when used on plate armor or on plate gauntlets would not last two days if wetted', and powers were sought to control such counterfeiture which might lead to loss of life. Domestic sheep skin makes a soft leather with an open texture and poor tensile strength: it was worse than useless for armor straps or 'points'. Elsewhere emphasis is laid on the importance of using the skins of wild animals, which were judged to be naturally tougher than those of domesticated ones. Even today, laces made of 'helvetia' leather (a modern version of that described) are used where required to withstand prolonged exposure to all kinds of inclement weather.

To be continued

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