

2003 Conference Report

By Stephen Wyley

The 2003 Conference was ran at holiday camp at Porepunka near Bright (three hours drive north east of Melbourne). The scars of the recent fires could be seen in the mountains to the south and the remains of a recent back burn flanked the site. The weather was fine and sunny during the day but very cold over night because of the lack of clouds.

The Conference was organised by group of dedicated people which mainly consisted of independents (those not a member of a recognised re-enactment group). From what the organisers have led us to believe the cost of the event was not covered by those attending and Rose Payton (who put up a considerable some of her own money) is lot poorer for the exercise. A number of factors can be attributed to this; the cost of hiring a site, the cost of food (and over supply) and catering itself, and that a competing event was run in Queensland. Conference can not afford to be run on this scale without proper costings and financial accountability. Note: From my discussions with the 2005 Conference committee the costs will be kept to a minimum, thus enabling more people to attend.



"Quarfmahal"

I did note the large number of period tentage on display; bells, double belled pavilions, Viking and Saxon Wedgies (Some of the Saxon Getalds for two men looked very easy to transport), not to mention the wall tents of the Romans and the Routiers. The "Quarfmahal" was very impressive, Angela Vanzella has done a brilliant job of producing one of the large bell tents based on the John Skylitzes Chronicle (12th c,

according to Ass. Prof. Roger Scott). The huge bell tent (in white and blue canvas) was topped by a characteristic golden cross on top of an orb. The only other tent to compare with was that of Craig Sitch, who opted for a replica from the Maciejowski Bible. Craig had gone for one of the decorated bell tents in alternative blue or red decoration on a white canvas, also topped by a golden orb apex.



Craig's replica bell tent from the Maciejowski



On Friday, we saw the drill of the Hoplites and the Romans, a very polished exhibition. The arms, armour and encampment of the Ancients have certainly come a long way. And I was kindly informed that if someone wants to join the Ancients it is not necessary to join the Routiers first.



Later on Friday, there were the Metal Weapons Workshops. These were well attended and much praised, especially those of : Andrew Brew (Stocata), Longsword, being able to cut and guard with the same weapon sound very appealing, the section on distance versus target was very revealing; and Stephen Hand (Stocata), Sword and Buckler, Sword and Shield, a show of how the buckler or shield can provide greater reach.



Duncan McHarg put on a revealing workshop of medieval shoe making, which has changed the way a lot of people look at making shoes in the future. The use of holes smaller than the thread that goes through them makes a very waterproof seal.

The Market on Saturday provided all the usual fair to those entering "traders lane". Jewellery, arms, armour, bows (long or recurve), arrow, darts, blunts for projectile combat, cloth, costume, books, and fire arms.

Saturday also the first mass combat for the event, sadly the number where down from past conferences but a good time was had by all. The combatants were split along group lines which enable the sides to practice their tactics in the larger field of combat. The NVG Inc. formed up with their allies against the Normans (Nordmannia) and the Ancient Arts Fellowship. Some of the worth manoeuvres that worked were; a flanking envelopment, a flying wedge and a skirmish double envelopment. The injuries were few and were the result of the living coming into contact with the dead on the ground; Mikko foot came into contact with his partners head, and Straffon fell on Kat.

'Viking as a Second Language' was run by Michael Henderson in the Marque. With a bit of coaching the words started to come out in a more conversational mode. "*Komdu Sæill ok blessaður*"

Archery was run in sunny, windless conditions and the archers had to loose their arrows at targets across the slope. Craig Sitch, who was competing in the Master Class won a gold coin for the first gold of the competition.

Master (Two six arrow rounds at 60, 40 and 20 paces at 4ft FITA 10 ring face). Thanks to Cheryllyn for assisting with the running of this part of the competition.

Craig Sitch (Antioch) 107
Roy Picton (Thessalonika) 104
Andrew Straffon (Vlachernai) 90
Jeremy Draper (Thessalonika) 122
Quarf (Miklagard) 106
Robert (Miklagard) 166
Sven (Vlachernai) 128
Alex Besek (Perky Kamarki) 163
Rick Fleming Stuart (Thessalonika) 146
Tarran of Gower (I Condoterri) 88
Lincoln Dunn (Nordmannia) 63
Mikko Sikstrom (Nordmannia) 74



For the "NVG Inc. Old Mug Competition" the first three were:

Robert (Miklagard) 166
Rick Fleming Stuart (Thessalonika) 146
Sven (Vlachernai) 128

Novice(Two six arrow rounds at 30, 20 and 10 paces at 4ft FITA 10 ring face). Thanks to Stuart (ex Islendiga) for running this part of the competition.

Sonya Popp (Vlachernai) 130
Kaitlin Baker (Hodegon) 54
Drew (Du) Parker (Independant) 37
Jenny Baker (Hodegon) 79
Annie (Thessalonika) 147
David Lale (Nordmania) 183
Ameila Draper (Thessalonika) 143
Duncan (Independant) 169
Jaince Lale (Nordmania) 83
Georgie (Nordmania) 87



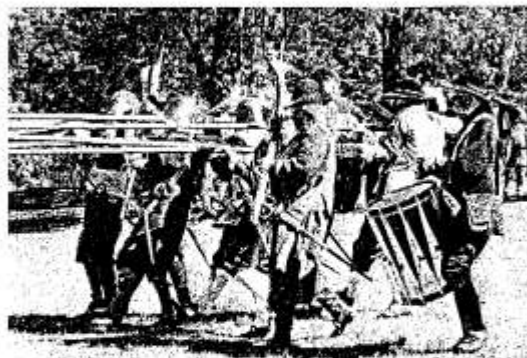
Congratulations to all involved. It was great to see all those new period bows, be they long or recurve. Note: David Lale will have to compete in a higher class next competition.

I did contact a member of the organizing committee in regard to the craft results but was rudely rebuffed so I can't inform you whom won what. I think Sonya Popp's mead did very well.

The Pike and Musket did their usual display, their volleys ringing round the mountains.

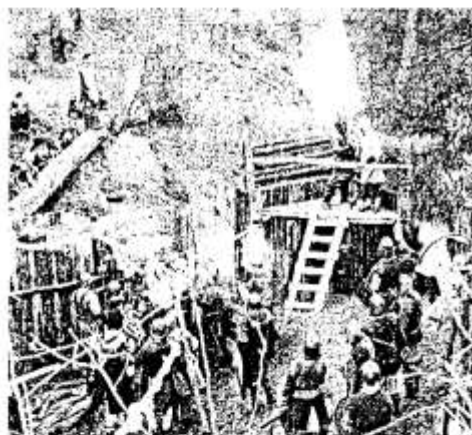


The Plate armour fight consisted of two combatants, Scott MacDonald and Glen Stokes. I am unaware of the details because I went off to lunch after a hard morning at the butts.

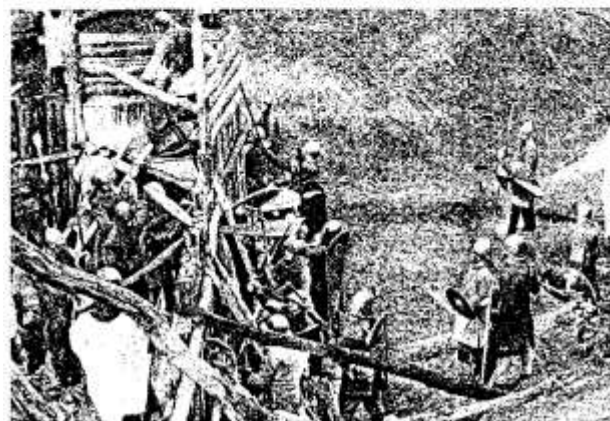


After lunch saw a 'State of the Movement Meeting' and I believe the I Condottieri volunteered to run the next conference. The members of the NVG Inc. executive and council had their meeting at the same time and discussed: the 1453 event, Combat Rule changes, rotation of the office bearers through out the 10 garrisons, and Kristen volunteered to take of the National Treasurer job.

The Fort battle was fought over one of the strongest constructed fort used at a Conference since 1985. Yes, it was placed in a pointless position for a real fort but the position aided crowd control and viewing ease. The triangular shaped palisaded fort was placed in a valley with steep sided backing on to a dam wall. At the point of the fort was a tower, on the east flank was a crenellated wall and the west flank was the gate flanked by high walls.



The only successful attack went through the gate. Two scaling ladders (thanks to the Perky crew for their construction) were mainly used on the east wall with little effect because of the defence put forth. Scott MacDonald in his plate armour made a valiant effort but became wedged in a crenel. Jo of Handakas also gave it a good try but ended up with a damaged shield from the blows from inside the fort.



The javelins of the Normans played a vital role in both attack and defence of the walls. And yes, Charles did a jig when his javelin struck a mortal blow on my chest through a crenel.

After the fort battle another 'State of the Movement' meeting was convened for combat matters. These dealt with body armour, groin armour and spear length see Wayne Robinson's web site for more details.

Monday saw Duncan at it again but this time with a pole lathe. An ingenious apparatus but things were brought to a halt when the line snapped and gave a stinging blow.

The fort was utilised again, this time for Projectile Combat. There were over twenty combatants with lots of newbies participating. In most cases, the reason for a fortifications were proved, a smaller force will survive an attack from a larger force if protected by adequate fortifications. The crossbows proved daunting and slowed the advances but crenellations in the tower would have made their lives easier. The best effort of the day was David Lale's as he single handedly raised the gate and charged the forces inside.

Overall, the conference was blessed with good weather, food and times. The appearance of over forty children certainly added to the atmosphere (eg. Kiddiecon), and I know my two boys had a great time. So I look forward to the next conference in 2005.