

The National Routier

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The Pike & Musket Society of New South Wales*

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Crimes Against Humanity!

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Special "Survivors of Sokil" Issue

Sokil or Die!

-a conference report-

By Axel Laagerswein (also known as Alonzo)

"For God King and Parliament" we cried as the Burgundian pike block approached, the afternoon sun glinting on their armour. There I stood, my knuckles white on the pike shaft - sweat running down the inner face of my corslet. Seconds later, a blow to the chest sent me reeling into a tangle of weapons and bodies.

As the confusion fell away, there I was left in the dust of this martial field, to ponder the swift turn of events that would, had this been some skirmish of the Civil war, have seen me a casualty, and my fate in the hands of what medical help may follow.

Moments like these are pure gold, and why I pursue this damnable hobby!

Many times in the weeks prior to the Sokil conference I asked myself why I was again going through the endless rebuilding of kit, was it worth it? Could I afford it? Who's going to feed the bloody dogs? Can't I just stay home and sit on my arse and read a book or something? But something in the past (the memory of marching around the silly knights camp at Brisbane calling on mighty Satan, food fights, drunkenness et al) renewed my spirit and I laboured on to ensure my presence at the Ninth Australian Medieval Conference.

Once I was in the car and passing through the rain swept plains of Geelong, it was only then that I began to set aside those pre-conference stresses... At last, it's too late if I haven't made it...or if I've forgotten it...all that is to be done is get there and then your only responsibility is to have a huge time, and hopefully capture a few magic moments where the twentieth century fades and some other strange time seeps through into your existence - it's hard with the ever present gum trees and Blundstone boots, but allow me my fantasy.

My arrival was greeted by a gorilloid form leaping from the darkness to brutalise my ribcage with a hearty welcoming embrace, that fine friend and eminent poet Spike with our customary greeting!

Fleeting moments later, Helmet was selling me my first beer, I had eaten conference food (and had no desire to throw it at anyone), registration went off without a hitch, ahhh...all was right in the world again!

Beer

It amazing the power of a well run tavern, mornings started with a scratch ala balls, cold shower, and the ninety mile walk from I Condottieri's camp to breakfast. Every day without fail there was the New Magdeburg Tavern well stocked with the amber elixir, and courteous and friendly staff ready to service your every need (one had to be careful what you asked for lest ye receive). This fine establishment ensured that no damaged reveller must face the rigours of food at 9 am

without a comforting breakfast beer. In fact for me the conference consisted of a series of events which mostly failed to distract my attention from the more refined art of dipsomania. (I fear the reference to my liver fighting more battles than me may be true!) The unrelenting dedication of you my fellow comrades (and the odd Tory!), to the act of selling piss was a huge effort worthy of great merit...Well done Routiers all. I had various opportunity to serve the noble cause myself, very rewarding meeting like minded spirits who came in good faith to enjoy themselves...and ensuring they did not leave the tavern until they realised their full potential as customers (special thanks to Hospitality Officer Blohmfaaaarqtsz for the swift lesson in barmanship) And even when the fug of the days work descended, there was Uncle Satey on the dog watch, making sure all the little late night souls could get totally shitfaced.

Lectures?

I've a vague recollection of attending all sorts of topics - some academic talking about medieval fornication and its consequences (should have workshoped that one), Sue with her excellent women's view, for against the Norman conquest. Stan presented such a cunning lecture on violence and animals that would have caused the most dedicated cattle sodomiser to miss a stroke. (was this the same man who successfully encouraged me to eat a pigs trachea later that evening? and yes it was a bit like calamari!) And as per usual the regular rapier play by Captain Brew, Ensign Haaaande, Musketeer Green and friends was a big draw card.

Food

Much praise was earned by our hosts for the sumptuous repast presented at this conference - I was never hungry and the quality and appropriateness of the food was excellent. Just one thing, what was that abundance of green stuff surrounding the meat dishes? some form of Viking refresher towel perhaps? Certainly its regular reappearance suggested we should do something with it but what? Also the incredible number of tarts that accumulated in the tavern? - not quite the type we had in mind...but I managed to get across one on Sunday night...explains why I awoke to a groin full of ants on Monday.

Shoes

It was hard to tell weather half the dark age participants where aspiring to re-enacting late 20th century military units and had only managed to get the boots or...? Honestly, I'd cop some beginners wearing that shit but I've seen members of some nameless Viking groups wear runners and GP's to events for years now. I felt that we of I Condottieri have the simple answer - if you can not provide a period item...do without. One event in bare feet (my first) was quite enough encouragement for me to make a set of accurate boots for the second event. I'd never made shoes in my life and this first pair are still going three years later, how hard can it be ? I'm making a personal pledge to harass modern shoe dickheads at the next conferention.

Sickness

What's a convention without a good bit of sickness, it seems to have taken two distinct strains at Sokil, I have categorised them thus:

Sokil throat

Raspy comments like "Talked, yelled, sang a little too much last night" was the first sign of this evil disease. As I can speak (couldn't at the time) with experience of this one I must compare its effects to a flu virus with nuclear capacity. Knocked me up for a week after the convention - felt like I'd been hit by a truck! Wasn't booze withdrawal honest!

The Re-enactor's Retch

Heard that many Ecce Normanni punters where hurling lunches better than the trebuchet tossed rocks, only actual evidence was a few lawn pizzas which lacked substance (mostly beer, what a waste some people don't deserve beer) But I believe this was a virulent little number too...hope all survived.

Still, there is something appropriate about coming home from such a military gathering with a camp disease (should I rephrase that Ed?) - yes, actually they all were good tough blokey diseases: no softcock shitte, OK!

The Death Of Satan

A scrawled note pinned to a post in the tavern proclaimed the summary execution of a miscreant for foul acts perpetrated while drunk. The news was that Mighty Satan, Lord of Darkness had been brought to trial and was receive his ration of justice.

Many were heard to ask "Who will perform such a task as to serve justice to the Lord of Darkness?" ...but there in the distance, the call of a single drum, the steady beat of men on the march, and before us appeared a terrible host...men foul with campaign...a steely eyed companie resolved to the terrible task before them.

The accused was brought forth, hands bound, a defiant smile and a glint in the eye that would engender pity and support from any unfortunate enough to encounter his stare...Dogs howled, a chill wind sprang up from nowhere, a darkness fell across the land...children and nervous persons where scattering before this grim host.

The charges were read, musketeers stood primed and ready, one so eager to fire he could not wait for the order - he missed.

The order sprang from the Captain's throat and was answered with a clatter of musketry - and there laid out in a parody of life was the crushed body which had until recently being the vessel for the evil one - "Satan is dead!", cried the crowd But no! He is just banished to search for another host! Beware!

But honestly folks this was possibly the finest bit of entertainment all weekend...I still feel it was a little rough on all the brewery workers of NSW to remove such a mainstay of their industry so suddenly. Ah but Uncle Satey, oops sorry the naughty imp, stood too and took his lead ration like a man (?) and still rose from the dead in time to urinate on anyone who would listen later that night.

Another victory to the forces of darkness! Ahhhh ha ha ha harrt!!!

Polar bears at Pearl Harbour?

If all this wasn't enough the Swedish Cultural Ensemble had another trump up its collective sleeve, Spike strapped on his Akira Kurosawa suit and "TORA! TORA! TORA!" was the cry as unsuspecting American Imperialist Pig Dogs were subjected to the mighty onslaught of the Imperial Japanese Navy... Who was more surprised I ask you, the American Fleet or the audience?!!!

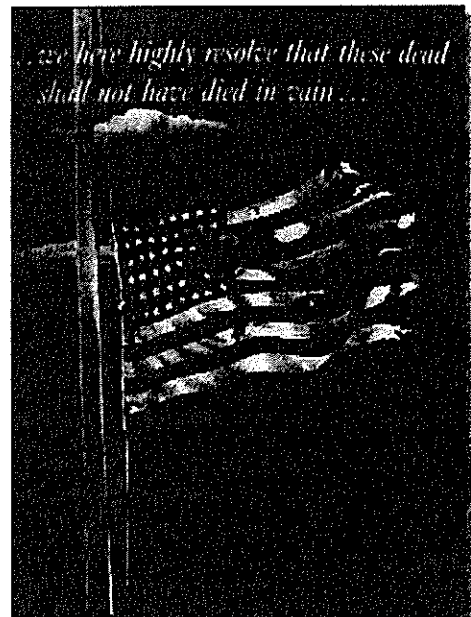
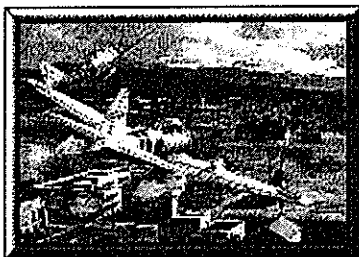
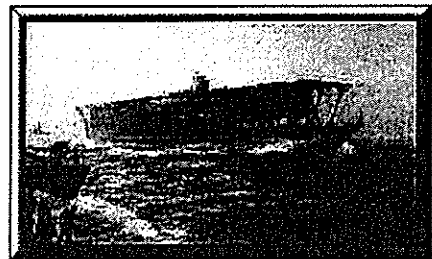
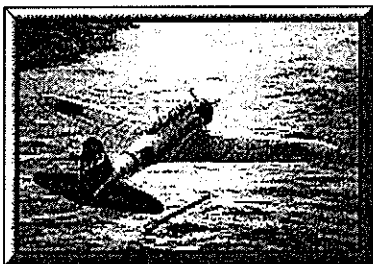
Mr Radvan's epic role as the "crash and burn" B-17 was indeed legendary, it will be remembered always, especially by the girlie whose cloak became an impromptu bit of tarmac.
Is there a fireman in the house?

Ad infinitum

Yes I could go on forever, those who know me can attest to this fact, suffice it to say I had more fun than a Nun at a candle factory. So many things left unsaid, who could forget; Xena warrior woman, those SCA codpieces, butt-fucking the pigs just prior to the main feast, the fine Routier assault on I Condottieri's encampment, the turd sculptures in the shitte houses when the tide was out... But for now - goodbye

I remain your humble drunkard,

✠ Alonzo ✠



Poster commemorating the attack, 1942

Recollections of the Ninth Australasian Medieval Conference
(being those recollections I can make sense of)

Um, where to begin? My conference experience didn't start at the Conference. I suppose it started on Tuesday when I awoke late, packed and then hopped on a plane. Lisa and I arrived at the Sokil camping ground on Thursday afternoon. This was the furthestmost south I've ever been. Melissa (of Islendinga) immediately put us to work cleaning the toilet blocks. Thankfully gloves were provided.

Memories of the first night are difficult to relate. We slept in the cabin. At some point in the night voices were heard. The cabin was being invaded by the Routiers: loud, rowdy, stupid, obstreperous and inconsiderate of those sleeping within. Eventually, one by one, they fell asleep (except Stanley whose voice seemed to reverberate around the room forever), only to begin snoring like vintage lawn mowers. But really I was quite pleased to see everyone the next morning, after I'd had my coffee.

Friday and Saturday are merged in my mind. The upshot of it was that Friday lasted forever but I missed out on Saturday. At breakfast the first morning I broke my cup. This was a disaster of catastrophic implications as, as would be obvious even to the most stupid of imbeciles, one cannot drink without a cup, unless one drinks straight from the jug, but lacking even a jug I could not resort to this. I embarked upon a quest to replace my shattered cup.

Friday morning I attended the seminar on swordsmanship given by the Captain Mr Brew, Mr Hand, Mr Green, Mr Radvan and assisted by Mr Earl. Then I had lunch. A large portion of that afternoon was spent at the market trying to push my way through the crowds. The words "must buy cup" were spinning round and round my head. But there were no cups for sale. Bowls, plates, spoons and knives, swords and clothing were all there, but no cups. Disappointed and cupless I emerged from the marquee and wandered away.

Friday night was great. Somehow at the end of the evening I was sitting at the back of the Tavern talking to Spike about experiences had with Russian (and other overseas) toilets and a strange but good tv series he once saw. It was now that I felt the incredible loss of my cup. Islendinga began giving out free mead. Spike proved a friend and allowed me to drink from his cup. His cigar was also offered - trying to corrupt me in the ways of nicotine addiction.

It was soon after that the horrible breaking of the new drum occurred. Bill and someone in a funny hat were dancing around providing very good entertainment for themselves and us. Thus it all began in innocent fun. I'm positive no ill-will or malice was owned by Gross toward the drum.

That night it was SO cold I hardly got any sleep.

Saturday morning. The Market! Once again I hit the stalls. No cups. Sigh. But wait, a gentleman has taken pity on me. He's going to sell me one of his very own cups. Hurrah! Joy! Pleasure! The gentleman cup seller disappears to fetch the said item. His friend engages me in small talk. Time passes. I browse through the new Routier Encyclopaedia and Spike displays his ribbon collection to a small crowd of three. I look this up in the encyclopaedia. More time passes. Pierre strolls in and then out again. The gentleman-cup-seller's friend assures me his friend will return. Nevertheless I begin to despair. Could my dreams of owning a cup fail after so nearly, tantalisingly becoming reality? But wait, the gentleman returns and he's holding a large yellow mug. Yes! I'm happy.

After lunch the Routiers, in splendid procession, marched into the marquee. Everyone followed them outside to watch Gross executed for his senseless breaking of the new drum. This was very funny and performed with typical Routier precision and attention to detail.

Saturday night - night of the 14 course feast. Mother Nature decided to turn the temperature down below the levels of human comfort. About three-quarters of the way through the night I was too cold to eat and although I now had a cup, I was too cold to drink. Guided by some strange force I wandered over to the kitchens. There, recently vacated by a dead pig, was a large fire. I sat down gratefully. Lisa found me and said I could keep the use of her cloak - an act of such unselfishness that I'll be eternally grateful. I knew I would not survive another night in the tent. Melissa kindly said I could sleep in the cabin. Too cold to even think of drinking and gambling the night away I retired.

Sunday. First thing I attended a lecture given by Sue on Anglo-Saxon women and the Norman Conquest, then hurried to the marquee to hear Stanley's "Violence & Animals" talk. That afternoon I watched Mr Radvan prove (with the help of He who is in charge of Divine Justice) that a certain knight was indeed a dandy and a fop (although this was quite obvious to any who cared to look). Mr Radvan cleaned the field with his opponent just in time for me to catch the beginning of the next lecture, on pagan gods.

Sunday night. The belly-dancing troupe entertained us and the slave auction was a hit. But questions remain: what did Gross do with Snorri the god-emperor?; and what depraved indignities did Stanley subject those three (or was it four?) beautiful maidens to? The meal over, serious gambling began. Hurrah to Spike who always seems ready to start and continue a game. Thanks also to Frances. I didn't get to bed until 6am. I awoke at about 9 feeling very pleased with myself that I wouldn't miss out on breakfast. When I got to the kitchens I found Spike had already eaten. Did he even go to bed?

It was now Monday. I attended the "state of the movement" discussion. Lisa and I then packed up, finishing just in time for lunch. Unfortunately I'd packed my eating gear, all except my wonderful cup which was large enough to be used as a small bowl. After lunch good-byes were said and we began the return trip.

The end.

Having heard many tales of Brisbane, it was with some apprehension that I set off with Ensign Haande and Dr Radvan to Sokil '97. After all, starving to death with one's fellow routiers is surely the ultimate bonding experience. Our departure was delayed as Mr Haande debated the merits of this outfit over another, only to have them all thrown in the banamobile anyway. (He needs one of those computerised wardrobes like that chick in Clueless) At last, we're off! True, except for a detour to Esta Clarkes where several shirts of the finest cambric were added to the groaning chassis. Finally we go! Interrupted only by tearing a chicken apart in the main drag at Yass, we arrived later that night at the inn in Wangaratta, meeting up with the Captayne, drummer Earl, and Jackie. Over several whiskeys we ended up talking about the genetic nature of mankind, as one does at 2 AM in Wangaratta. The next day, blissfully unaware of the semantic distinctions between lake, resevoir, dam, inland sea, Dead Sea scrolls, Roget, Roget, we arrived without incident at Sokil. The rustic gateway struck a disquiting note, reminiscent of the National Hitler-jugend Camps, so beloved in my youth (where the Physical meets the Cultural!)-a feeling that grew in intensity as one viewed the strange Jetson-like monument to the Comintern, the dank swimming pool, the parade ground-err oval-it looked like the assassins training camp in From Russia with Love with Lotte Lenya mit knuckle dusters hiding behind a eucalyptus.

On the first night under canvas, one woke to hearing a strong and satisfying surge of liquid, not unlike the spillway at Warragamba Dam. Hmm, how quaint, someone is using the tent as a pissoir, except they're *inside* the tent. This novel inversion aroused the ire of Kieran who on asking where he was to now put his feet, was curtly told to put them somewhere else. This experience proved so distressing, Kieran shortly afterwards took Holy orders, with a strange mist-shrouded abbey on the Spanish Road under the protection of the God-Emperor.

The combats generally lacked splendour, the shield walls of varying impressiveness, quickly giving way to much running around and fly-swatting at one another. Inappropriate gear later generated a bitter debate at the summing-up session-the foot up approach to reenactment being championed by Mr Haande. Of our own engagements, the Routiers fought bravely, but suffered generally at the lack of manners of some in the medieval movement. The wounded and bruised returned to the Tavern to be treated by the barber surgeon. As so frequently happens with those who selflessly treat plague victims, Tony himself fell victim to

contagion; and was last seen being bundled into a tumbril headed for Melbourne.

Banquet entertainment ranged from the sensuality of the harem, to Girls Night out. In the Best Bum contest, led by Glenda Robinson a group of terrifying mavens fell upon the innocent men-folk in a Dionysiac frenzy. While offering in this contest a complete continuum from buttless wonder to two VW's parked beside one another, we failed to win this prize. Who cares, we won the one's that count, including the Swedish Cultural Ensemble for its three versions of Young Man!

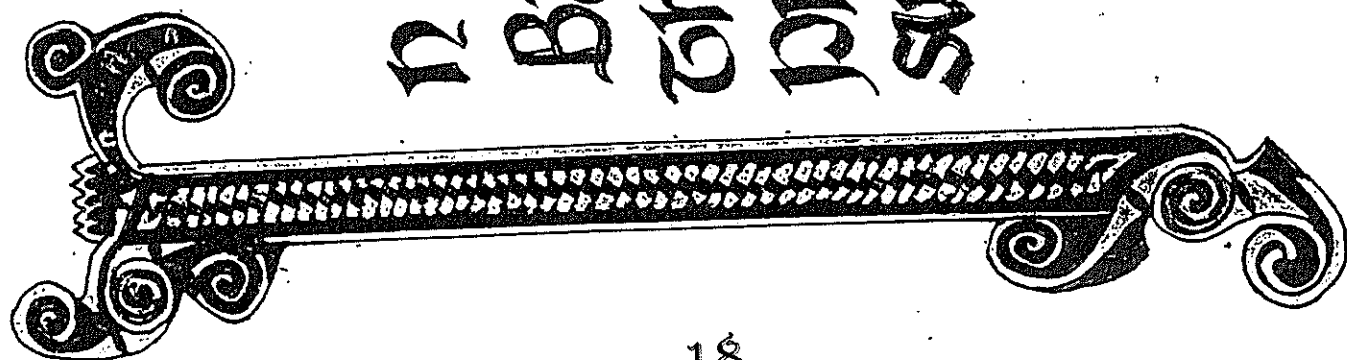
In the slave auction, Jackie with a wonderful display of maidenly resistance did fabulously, making Tony of I Condottieri pay up enough to fund 5000 ambulances, with petrol, for an entire year. The zenith of Routier fame was Spike's Cecil B de Mille scale reenactment of Pearl Harbour in five minutes, although with Dr D flaming -out, it threatened for a moment to be the fire-bombing of Dresden. Who knows what these people are capable of now? Future reenactments could include Lepanto, Barbarossa, and Napoleon crossing Helmet into Italy.

With a rather dispersed camp-site, and not much Tavern action, the conference atmosphere was low-key, coming alive only with the spontaneous combustions of Routier silliness! The food was good too, and so was Stanley's rendition of David Irving Berlin's Easter Parade!

Martin Chuzzlewit



Young Mr. Earl being Auctioned
as an "Agricultural Rent-Boy"



IN RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE IN
BARDIC - SILLY SONG
THE NINTH AUSTRALASIAN CONFERENCE
PRESENTS THIS AWARD TO
SWEEDISH CULTURAL ENSEMBLE

Of the Terrible Deed Of Paul Fisher and its Dire Consequences

By A. Witness

What man or beast present on that terrible night would not pale at the thought of the horrific events that unfolded? It was only a matter of time before the infernal drumming that was inside Paul Fishers' alcohol-soaked brayne was made manifest by the amount of demonic liquor he had consumed, and the unfortunate proximity of the new company drum. As if possessed by a strong spirit (for in truth he was), he grabbed the drum and some drumsticks, and started beating it like a madman, capering about in an infernal jig. Ignoring the cries of the good folk now frightened by his demoniac performance, he drummed and drummed, banging that poor vessel as if it were his long lost love now returned to him. Such was his leaping about like a demonic puppet in an unspeakable dance of the Devil, that there was none who could stop this dreadful reverie until it was too late! The drum, being constructed of mere mortal materials, capitulated with a bang, shedding its skin, and taking on a most mournful and broken sound.

But a soldiers lot is harsh, and few deeds (good or evil) go unpunished. And so, on the next morning, he was bound, paraded before the commonfolk, and the Captayne read the charges:

Paul Fisher, also known as Mighty Satan, or "Uncle Satey" to his intimates, is called to appear before this duly constituted court under Paragraph 83 of the Articles of War. He is charged with wilfully damaging Regimental property in a fit of drunken stupidity. The court will pass sentence as follows:

Item the First:

That he should be stripped of all privilege & rank. He will no longer be known as "Mighty Satan", but as "Naughty Imp".

Item the Second:

That his daily ration of beer - four cases of Toohey's Old - be stopped.

Item the Third:

He shall be fined from his pay eightpence-farthing for the damage to property.

Item the Fourth:

He shall be shot to death.

Witnesses noticed his appeals for clemency were limited to restoration of his beer ration, a cry for Legal Aid (or an Arts Grant, whichever was easier to get), and, in a rare moment of unselfishness, an appeal for the assemblage to render aid and assistance to the employees of Toohey's and their families, as the entire production of Toohey's Old would now have to be stopped, resulting in fiscal disaster.

He was subsequently shot to death to the great amusement of the crowd.

Little is permanent, however.

Later in the afternoon, Naughty Imp was seen tending the bar at The New Magdeberg Tavern, and playfully eating a bowl of maggots. Thus nature balances itself.

