

# Maldon '89' by Natalie

Well! Where do I begin...

When dreams are made of fast cars and leotards, Wake-up!!! A dream that takes you to far places, where the air is fresh and soil untouched, close your eyes and drift...

The preparations of such...dreams we won't go into those who shared it don't need to be reminded!

So lets ride with the "Four Winds" and see where they take us...

The sounds in the distance of people unpacking and setting up. Excitement is spreading amongst the Varangian guard. People are talking of the newcomers, who are they ? Only time could tell and a good nights sleep would reveal sooner.

As the sun arose and set its beams on Maldon, I caught a glimpse of colours, where once lay dirt and dry grass. Looking down upon the new little village of tents, anticipation filled the air. People scurrying everywhere getting introduced, signing their names and getting familiar with the jumble of rocks and grags.

As the day went by more and more people arrived. The village grew bigger and bigger and now we could distinguish the different groups of people as they all went around in their traditional wear.

No time to waste, cooking must start immediately to cater for the growing hungry throng! The herald board showed a promising eventful day. From the few that rose early and read the daily program the word spread faster than we could herald: 'LUNCH TIME', Steve Nicol's voice struggled to reach the far boundries of the Kingdom. It is important to remember that our world ended at the boundaries of "Four Winds", outside that was infinite space!

The fighting fields soon filled with warriors ready to defend their folk. While the men slaughtered and bashed, events carried on in normal village life; women stood around waiting to quench the thirst of the fighters, while others joined hands and danced to traditional songs. The cooks and slaves prepared for the coming feast and other odd groups went around enjoying the fine day.

Nighttime falls - the fighting has ceased. A chill spread through the land as clouds revealed a starry sky.

There's silence in the village as everyone retreated to their tents to prepare for the first feast. It wasn't long before the feasting hall echoed with fun and frivolity. People shouted their hunger as cooks and slaves panicked in the kitchen, wary of the demanding banging of forks and knives on tressles. Soon everyone was satisfied with a variety of meats and vegetables to feed ten armies. This feast was a successful stimulant of all events to come.

Now, it becomes hard to recollect all the daily events, for the five days and four nights, which were a lifetime on their own.

Every day could not have been better and every night, although chilled to the bone, could not have shown a better display of the sky in full moon.

In the days to follow I saw everything flowm leading into more events like; archery contests, malees and workshops and lectures for weaving, dancing, calligraphy and history, all of which were successful.

The fort battles were an event in their own class! Everybody turned up in full battle kit, The Routtierres in their own dramatic fashion. The drummer boy kept the war beat going all through the battles as I watched months of hard work fall to pieces! All in good fun and rivalry the men poked and jabbed, finally bringing down the door of the fort only to find another waiting for them! I must say that the warriors exerted their full strength to finally take

The bridge served a great purpose in getting everybody over enthusiastic. What looked like a flimsy structure on the water held a vast amount of eager fighters that never seemed to die! Strange how everybody came back for more when they were already soaked to the bone from falling in the killer-yabbie and salmonella infested waters. I thought that it showed a clear indication of instant death! Not to mention Brett 'the Berserker' Kenworthy, being the next best instant death indication as he charged up and down the bridge dismembering the last survivors. Here we must congratulate Robert Burns for being the only one not to fall in the water and freeze as the sun went down! Everybody rushed to the showers only to find out that a couple of girls had soaked up most of the hot water!

All this in time for feasting and lots of drinking, I will personally receive andy thanks for the large quantities of mead purchased throughout the conference. The Dragon's Lair set a great pace for drinking, most of which encouraged approximately three bottles of mead from morning till night.

Getting back to the feasting, I could write another ten pages on the events that shaped every night, but some things are better remembered as they were and left to the individuals interpretation. I must comment though on some of the competitions, the Bardic for example which revealed the hidden 'talents' of the medieval societies. Then there's the weirdos who entered the 'most virulent curse' competition making our dinner somersault in our stomachs. let's pick a better time next time!!! We must thank 'Richard the Fire-eater' for showing us what not to do when drunk and the Bellydancers for having the nerve to perform in front of the 'hungry throng' ?! At this stage we must congratulate the throng for being so reserved!

I must have left out so much, but its so hard condensing the weekend into a couple of pages. To capture the mood you must simply close your eyes and dream you're in a different world in a different time; for me to put you there in writing may require a book and I don't wish to linger on the memory of the event so passionately, for I know it will only remind me more and more of how much I wanted it to go on and on I don't think anybody could bare the moment when, one by one, the village turned back into dry grass, the feasting hall into earth and we were once again woken from dreaming and trapped in reality. Watching the buses leave was saddening but spurred us on for more and better conferences yet, bigger and better forts, maybe even permanent feasting halls, the list goes on and on. The point is to remember that such dreams can always be found, if one's imagination becomes practical. So, with Maldon '89' gone our minds thrust forward to Maldon '93' where we will once again close our eyes and drift with the 'Four Winds'

P.S. Many thanks to the main instigators of Maldon '89' and those who spurred us all along, to those who worked so hard, to Margie for accommodation once again and last but not least to the cooks and slaves who spent many an hour cooking and serving through the feasts and lunch. Good effort everybody!

CONGRATULATIONS FOR A SUCCESSFULL MALDON EVERYONE!!!