



The  
**Arcane  
 Bombardier**

Spring, 2003 A.D.  
 Volume 1 Number 1

**Arcane Bombardier Prints  
 First Issue  
 or  
 Graywolf's Gonne Totally**

Well, here goes...

I once ran a Newsletter for reenactors and period fans. It ran for twelve years and though it was no "New York Times", it kept folks informed.

The need to keep people informed and avoid rumors has always been a necessity in an environment where suggestions become facts faster than deeds. Don't get me wrong. This Electronic Birdcage Liner will report "Wars and Rumors of Wars" but don't expect to see "The Baron Wears Bicycle Shorts Under His Armour" type articles, often.

It will also NOT be limited to any single segment of Period endeavor. Though it will be geared toward a majority of readers who like to throw things at each other, literally and figuratively, room and forum will be given those who prefer for some reason to hang on to their nasty, close in, pointy or cudgesque devices. (They do have a point. Once you throw a weapon at someone, they are not likely to want

Continued on page 2

The departments within this periodical will be as follows:

Head line....(above).... The Lead Story

Intro/Editors Note.... First Column

The following will be in order of Priority  
 (My Choice per Issue!):

Wall Busters.....Heavy Engine News

Puncture Proof.....Armor and Fortifications

Long Distance.....Archer's News and Info

Behind the Smoke.....Latest Powder Stuff

The Sharp End.....Close Weapons News

More from Less.....Light Engine News

In the Air.....Other Missile Weapons  
 (Slings, Javelins, Atalatal, Etc.)

Nose Newts.....Local Events and Stuff

Beyond the Horizon.....Other Events

Comments.....Yours (Keep it, Short and  
 Clean)

From Page 1

to return it to you, at least not in a civil manner.) Space will also be devoted to that infamous, ugly, stepdaughter that speaks too loud, smokes, and smells bad, the Powder Gonne. All but the intentionally blind and ignorant admit that she coexisted with most of our Engines.

“Period” will be defined as 1200 to 1699. Engines in use before this time may be honored as an exception as Ancestors of our fine Engines. But the Line will be drawn at January 1, 1700. As of that time all our devices were basically obsolete. And No, I don’t want to hear about Burgoine’s request for Long Bows for the Saratoga Campaign. They didn’t come and they were not used. ‘Nuff Said!

Subjects in all areas are open to both Combat and Target articles, and all venues are welcome for Event postings.

As I don’t wish to write “War and Peace” every few months, please contribute. I will do very limited, if any, editing and will not censor your views. Just keep it clean or “PG” at least. You may Email me your submissions in, preferably “Word for Windows” format and may include (read as: welcomed) B&W images. Please understand that these will be released to the public and that any persons in the images must give you permission to be shown. Also, please be sure that what you send is not someone else’s work or you have a right to refer it for publication. I will include your name, mundane or SCA, and contact info if you wish as a Header to your Article. If there are many submissions, I will print what I feel are the best. Hand written Articles will be accepted for submission. Issue dates as of now, will be, March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15.

Deadlines will be the first of each month.

Advertising will be (for now) FREE but, keep it to 4 column Inches; B&W images are okay. Activity listing will ALWAYS be free but, be sure you include a contact person.

If there are no submissions to a department or I have no new info for that department in an issue it will still be given space but, will have a “Doesn’t Anybody Care?” note in it and after 3 issues will no longer be carried.

How do you subscribe, do you ask? If you are reading this you are. If you don’t want it drop me an Email and I will remove you. If you wish to forward this to a friend go ahead and if they want to subscribe just have them send me an Email asking to be included. They are welcome.

I can’t afford to send a bunch of Hard Copies out to the world. I will have some limited quantities with me at events. If you wish to have a Disc to copy and distribute/print copies from, just send me a Self Addressed Double Stamped Envelope (2 ounce mailing) and it is yours freely. Mailed submissions may also be sent to the following address. The address for this publication is:

Handgonnes Design Newsletter  
C/o Fred Miller III  
165 Hampden St.  
Indian Orchard, MA 01151-1503  
Or Email  
Graywolf@handgonnes.com

If this takes off, I am willing to make this a Bi-Monthly or even a Monthly.

On to the NEWS...

For this issue the order of departments will be as shown on Page 1, Column 2.

## Wall Busters

I don't have much in the way of News here. But, if some folks wish to contribute some News it will be welcomed.

Of current interest, are the new SCA Regulations. As of the Dec. 2002, the new regs are limiting you to 1 shot per minute. That is if too many of you show up. They have not defined how many too many constitutes. For the really big Engines this really isn't a problem. It may even be an opportunity to accelerate your crews to higher Fire Rates. On the other hand, for those "Middlin" size pieces this may be limiting. These rules seem more "Knee Jerk" reactions than studied application. I strongly suggest you acquire a copy of the new Siege Regulations and read them carefully. Forward your opinions to both your Marshals and the Board. If rate limitations are to be set, let's be sure they are realistic and that there is a uniform application.

Again, your comments are encouraged and I will be happy to print them.

## Puncture Proof

Now here's something worth printing. In this area I will also include information on this like Armor, Structures, and Targets. There are several bits of news here.

SCA now requires ALL folk fielding for Combat wear at least minimum Armor

First, to those of us new to the "Wadda ya mean he's gonna hit me?" world and can't afford to blow a paycheck or 3 on fancy custom Metalwork, Oskar der Drachen auf Klaagenfurt, a fine Engineer and new Marshal has sent us some nice instructions.

It seems Oskar has been wearing light weight Plastic Armor for quite a while. He paints it to look like metal and even after some extended, abrasive combat it still looks good. You will still need a good Gorget, preferably of heavy leather. Plus, you'll need depending on Local Regs, Metal Knee and Elbow protection, etc. and, of course, a Combat Helm. The rest is simply made by his technique. The following is verbatim from his suggestions:

Materials: 1 expendable t-shirt, some sheets of cardboard and the barrels. Leather gloves or oven mitts. A sweatshirt and pants that can get wet, and another wet towel or two. Jigsaw, x-acto knife, heavy cord and a drill bit of the same diameter. A friend that does not enjoy causing you pain

Minimum standards. Helmet, Gorget (neck), shoulder, elbow and knee cops (do not have to be metal), Kidney protection, cup for jewels, gauntlets.

Optional. Chest, back and abdomen protection, shoulder and arm protection including vambraces (forearm). Thigh plates, greaves (shins and calves).

First, the expendable t-shirt for the torso armor. Draw the parts on the shirt that you want to cover and cut them out.

Lay the forms on the cardboard and cut out the templates, attempting to get the best symmetrical forms that you can for ease of duplication. Try to cut the parts bigger than you think they might have to be so you can cut them down later. Next work the cardboard forms so that they are somewhat flexible and will fit on the curve of the barrels.

Pierce the cardboard forms and lace them into the armor so that you can wear it. This is where most of the fitting adjustment takes place. If you can move in the cardboard suit, you should be able to in the plastic. Less is more here! A tip is try not to overlap the pieces, and if there is going to be a gap between plates, as opposed to being laced tightly together at the edges, make the gap at least 1/2 to 3/4 wide. If the gap is narrower than this, and you take a hit, you will get pinched!!

Another tip. Either cover you nipples completely, or leave them completely uncovered. Armor that might cover or uncover this portion depending on movement is bad, remind me to tell you the story of the Duke with three nipples....

The best place to put an opening in a coat of plates is under your left arm for a right-handed person. Put your laces or buckles here.

Lay the cardboard forms on the barrels and cut the armor shapes out of the barrels, attempting to fit the curve of the barrel to the way the armor will fit. Remember to mark the lacing holes!

An example would be the chest plate. You want the shape cut out of the plastic to mostly fit your belly and chest before you start shaping the final

fitting. The plastic will resist being taken out of its natural curvature.

Trying to shape the plastic against its natural curvature is difficult. ( Apologies for the repetition, I've flubbed this part a couple of times ) The easiest way to do this is to lay the templates on the barrel in the way they are to be finally assembled.

Once you have your forms you are ready to start the heating process.

Oven to between 210 to 225 depending on how thick the plastic is. Time between 10 to 15 minutes for the same reason. The proper flex when the plastic is ready is much like thick leather. Use your gloves or oven mitts! Put the wet sweatshirt on and have a friend take the hot armor section and hold it to the place where it is going to fit. If you have more than one friend helping you, you can fit more than one section of armor at a time.

When you have the hot armor piece fitted to you, swab the outside of the section with the wet towel to cool it down faster. Please do not try to be brave here! I knew of a guy that heated all of the armor sections at the same time and directed his friends to tape the sections to him over the wet sweatshirt. This was a bad idea. When the water turned to steam in the sweatshirt he had to try to figure out how to remove the taped on armor sections at high speed... Hosing him down would not have helped, plastic is a good waterproof insulator.

Final tips. If you have knee or elbow cops fit them to the cardboard forms to make sure they fit you. Use them when you fit the hot plastic armor.

Leather is good for filling an awkward gap.

Make sure you can move! Less is more.

Make sure you can get into and out of your armor by yourself.

This armor is being designed to be covered. Perforate the heck out of it so you have air circulation. Air circulation is a life saver in combat.

Work out what you want to use for padding as you are building your suit. I like two long sleeve t-shirts.

There you have it. You can get the Barrels from a local Recycling Center or dealer. They are not expensive and are very resilient. Blue should be your last choice. White is nice but like the Blue it requires Primer and Paint. Black is sweet and requires no paint and has virtually no upkeep to stay looking good. Just be sure to THOURGHLY CLEAN the Barrels before attempting this operation.

I'm sure Oskar would be glad to answer any questions. You can reach him at [Oscar@sfrcs-sabis.net](mailto:Oscar@sfrcs-sabis.net) .

Forts and Targets get the same column here, and there is much ado about Targets.

My "Tilt Targets" are acquiring quite a following. It seems that people are making them all across the New World Kingdoms. The basic design is suitable for all Combat Missile activities. It is also a lot easier to remove them from the field and leave a clean, neat area. No matter how you try those boring, unreactive Hay Bails just

seem to trail a mess behind them. They also don't tend to last to the next event. Put them in your Shed or Barn and you end up with Mickey and company building a Condo. Tilters are much simpler. A Tilter will cost about the same as 4 good Hay Bails.

Before I go any further, I admit this is a "Sales Pitch" but, I'm not trying to get you to BUY my Targets. I want you to MAKE these Targets. The intent on creation of this concept was to make Social Combat practice more interesting and fun. I consider the designs Common Domain. If I find anyone trying to reproduce them as a personal profit making endeavor, I'll be P\*ssed. Groups may freely make them for use in Activities, Demonstrations, etc.

I'm presenting the basic assembly instructions here but, not the detailed pictures. I will forward the pictures to anyone who asks for free if they wish to contact me at [Graywolf@handgonnes.com](mailto:Graywolf@handgonnes.com) . There are about 15 shots depicting all the assembly details and show them in action. Here's the basic building info.

I have come up with excellent practice targets for Combat. My three "Boys" work great at 30, 50, and 70 Yards. They are very close to the size of a crouching armored soldier. MOrtimer (a Norman), LARlencvs (a Legionare) and CURLIJOEowski (a Russ Viking) are made for their ranges. Mo is a dark simple target for close up. Larry is brighter colored and is cut a little different to stand out at 50 Yds. And of course Curly is wide tracked and a little weird but makes a slightly wider target for 70Yds.

The targets are designed to flip or tilt when hit and to self right. The images are 4' tall and 24" to 26" wide which determines the width of the spreaders. The plywood should be at least 1/2" and at least 5 ply. Any shaping is done to the top only and scrap 2x4 is screwed and Gorilla glued to the bottom for counter balance. The Cross bar

is mounted 24" up from the bottom. The cross bar is 1/2 steel and held loosely in place by 5 1/2 in conduit clamps (5/8 ID) bolted through with LARGE washers on the front side. The rod passes LOOSELY through the 30" 2x4 uprights in a 1" hole centered 2" down from the top. 1/2 ID washers with a 2" piece of 3/4 ID PVC keep the targets free and centered. The rod is retained by the same washers and though these are retained by Cotter pins at the moment they will soon have spring clips like the Axles on the Ballista.

The Uprights are lag bolted and Gorilla Glued to the 24" 4x4 heavy base. The spreaders are attached in the same way to the bottom of 4x4's. Reinforces can be added but I haven't found them necessary. The base pieces can be either inside or outside; I did mine inside to save space. The target should swing freely missing the base by about an inch.

Being loosely made they make a very loud BANG when hit even slightly. They will, with a good, hit flip completely around and the bolts drop straight to the ground at point of contact. Mo has taken over 240 hits at 20 to 30 yards and is holding up well. I tested all of them at 10. 15/32 5 ply Sheathing bursts a little at 10 but was easily repaired. At normal ranges they're like a Timex. All my tests were done a 450# draw Arbalest and 160# Silex Combat bolts. These will also work for Combat Bow and Combat Cross bow. Lighter versions will work easily for Bow and Crossbows with the same spectacular response.

In the end these are more easily transported than Bails. Maybe some innovative Archer could come up a surface or target that won't damage or be damaged by real Arrows.

My targets have Cartoonish figures painted on them but standard Bull's Eye's, "X blocks", Bright Spots, etc. will serve just as well. In the end, these targets just a little more expensive than a Hay Butt but have an extended life, portability, and are weather proof.

The Tilt Targets seem to have stirred interest in other active targets as

well. Jarnhauss, from the westward lands has spawned an idea for an active target based on Fair type Dunking Machines. This design when hit in the right spot could raise a flag or Bonus Target. A sideways turning design to present Covering Structures or Growth is also in development. This type of creative thinking is what makes events and practices fun.

## Long Distance

Here, I could use some help.

I am currently just an average Target Archer with Compound, Classic, and Crossbow. I do not have the background to give the best counsel here. Contributors will be very welcome.

What news of note I do have is of, I hope, serious interest. There is an effort afoot to create combined interactive events to include both Combat Archers and Siege Engines. The intent is to highlight and promote the powerful capabilities of these combined forces. The scoring is designed to give Engine Teams, Archers, and combined elements separate scores ending in awards for both single and teamed efforts.

The biggest problem is tying down a simple scoring system while keeping the variety of targets high enough to continually challenge the participants. It will also require some non-shooting volunteers and honesty (a given) from the Participants to note and transfer the scores for processing.

The basic event design will involve multiple targets at varied

ranges. The teams will shoot simultaneously from a single Firing Line and the competition will consist of 3 timed rounds with the targets repositioned between each round. There will be an Ammunition Limit and a time Handy Cap will be given to teams with slower, larger Engines. For obvious reasons of mobility the targets will be Tilt Targets and variations thereof.

Another thing of great assistance would be some reports by Combat Archers and Crossbowmen as to the real effective ranges they are capable of. Some have had erroneous thoughts that effective ranges were 20 yards or less. I believe this to be untrue but have no experience to prove otherwise. In order to design the range in a well balanced manor, we will need correct data. Your input will directly effect the generation of this interesting event.

Anyone wishing the details so far can get them Emailed by contacting me at [Graywolf@handgonnes.com](mailto:Graywolf@handgonnes.com).

Autocrats willing, it looks like this event first be run at "War of Roses" on the May 23<sup>rd</sup> Weekend near some strange foreign city named Albany, NY.

Submissions from you "Pros" out there will make this section what it is designed to be.

Need a good Ballista for  
those nasty Sieges?  
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## Behind the Smoke

Ah, we come to the most maligned group in Medieval Activities. Those Cowboys, and that's one of the nicer terms I've heard in company that did not know I was one, are far from the Devils they seem.

Those that know me know that I am an Ancient Powder advocate. I also fabricate Ancient Powder Arms. Anyone who thinks this makes me bias toward Powder Gones above any other interpretation is woefully wrong. My 20 years plus of interaction with Powder has taught me to carry a pretty hard line on activities.

Safety and application are the hardest things to deal with in the Powder Art. The people I have seen in the SCA are some of the safest I have ever seen. Their attention to Powder Control is far superior to most other era interpreters. Their courtesy and respect to others presentation and recreation is totally commendable. I have yet to see or hear any of them berate others choice of presentations.

So, let's get a few things straight. None of us that interacts with the 1600 limit SCA sees in any foreseeable future Guns on the battlefield. We don't envision Cannon mowing down multitudes of Armored fighters. (If you haven't seen the movie "The Patriot" please do. The famous Cannon Ball shot is realistic. A Cannon Ball fired at troops was a waste it got maybe 2 or 3 men for all the powder and effort. Shot was used close in AS A LAST RESORT! Gones/Guns fought

defenses and themselves, not men. Shot was used Ship to Ship, or if you were overrun, not as a standard. Rev. War reenactors figured that out and left the Artillery to fight its own kind first as was true from the beginning. What would it hurt to let Powder Artillery do the same while the battle is forming and the winner sound the Opening Gun. (It might even give our Leaders an extra few minutes to lay out their Troops and improve your battles.) This would not affect any of the activity on the field but, would serve to enhance the excitement of the coming battle. This would also be authentic.

Data shows use of the Powder Gonne at least as early as 1342. Its development runs parallel to a lot of our excepted weapons. I build Handgonnes and unless you can find 50 men on Horse who are both willing and skilled enough to do Studio grade falls, I don't want to ever see them on the Combat Field; and at that no where near the Foot Soldier. Things belong in their place, true, but censure is not a rational option.

Let's practice the Chivalry we claim to honor and give these men and their devices an honest place within our world. Respect the effort made by Powder Gonnors and let them add to your enjoyment.

Dissenting opinions will be published, if sent.

## The Sharp End

Alas, here again I will defer to those much more learned than I. Many years ago I was actually a descent Fencer (Foil). Today, well let's just say that a well presented profile would be bigger than if I faced my opponent face

forward and straddled the Track. My first Lunge would result in Three Point Stance, Knee (probably Sprained), Facemask, and Belly! Watching these skilled folks makes me feel like a Beached Whale.

The reason I wish to include this section is pure respect. Many of the gentles involved in this activity also share the thrill of good Engines. Their courtesy is being returned by this inclusion.

Once again, submitted articles will be the whole of this section. I'm sure there are a number of you out there that would like to attract more people to learn and test their skills. Please, help make this department informative and fun.

**What, Another  
Touch?**

**Time for better  
Equipment?**

**Better check**

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**More From Less**

Here we touch the Editor's true obsession. I currently own 4 Ballistas (Arbalests). Current SCA definitions still include these Spring Prod driven machines with the much more engineering intense Torque Engine



driven earlier designs. These Point Defense machines are amazingly entertaining. Did you realize an expert crew can launch almost 10 Missiles a minute from their Engine. Have you as a fighter ever bothered to count the number of swings, thrusts, hacks, etc., you do, or how far you can run in a minute? Did you know Gonnors on these machines will stop shooting, for your safety at 30 feet? Have you considered the "Air Time" it takes one of their very visible Javelins to get to you? How many of those big, ugly Bolts do you think a crew can carry and use on the field? Here again you may wish to think about the number of battle actions you do in a minute.

Picture if you will, 3 Armored individuals charging a machine from 100 yards. You can dodge; the Machine and crew can't. Okay, you're slowed by your Armor; so you can only run the distance in 25 or 30 seconds while dodging. That means that for 3 of you combined you get shot at maybe 4 times. Going Nose to Nose in the front line with the rest of the troops is much safer, no? Crews on an engine are at least 2 people. How many shots could 2 Archers take at you during that time? Arbalests are considered the fastest of the Light Siege Engines; they are viewed as period Machine Guns, Uh-Huh!

So what part of Dumb and Dumber did it take to require that a Light Siege Engine be allowed only launch 3 shots per Minute? How about a limit of one strike every 2 seconds on the Line; it's about as realistic. Would you feel a little "Pansy Assed"? Would you feel your "Right to Fight" was being usurped? Well? What we have here is a Rule without a Reason. Rant ended.

Oskar of the Freehold of Riverend, [Oscar@sfrcs-sabis.net](mailto:Oscar@sfrcs-sabis.net), has with gentle persuasion, diplomacy, and down right intimidation, managed to acquire a source for the Silex 160psi Pipe used for Ballista/Arbalest Javelins. He is excepting orders for this excellent base material. The cost is 58.5 per foot including Tax. Those making Ballista Bolts/Javelins will find this a Boon. It is shipped Factory Straight. It is nearly impossible to straighten the more common coiled material. Beware though, this material is heavier than Golf Tubes. When you make your Bolts be sure you keep them under or at 1 pound. Making a Safe Head with Society required components can sometimes raise the weight of the Bolt to an overage of about ½ ounce. The APD here is important and skimping could cause less than safe missiles. I would favor the Safety, rather than the minor weight infraction.

Oskar has also found an inexpensive source of quality, new, Tennis balls. At 55 cents apiece but, Limited Quantities, it's first come, first serve.

Everyone seems to have there own personal favorite material for the Vanes. As long as they are soft and follow the SCA's APD standards it's really up to you.

Don't forget to Yellow Stripe your bolts and mark them with you name, number, and Group.

Under the "Rumors of Wars" category, there is experimental work being done with the Large Pet Balls (6" Tennis balls found in Pet stores) as a viable Large Rock for Siege Engines. This work is still in the early stages and will be a while before its potential as a functional missile is proven. This item

would be very nice for smaller Onagers and Trebs. It would also be of a nice size for the famous Darius Archetectus Ballista. See it and others at:

[www.stormthewalls.dhs.org](http://www.stormthewalls.dhs.org)

Though there is much more that could be added here, I will save some for later. As always, more news is welcomed so please submit it.

## Extra, Extra! A Report from the Field, on a Rare Engine!

Contributed by  
Oskar der Drachen auf  
Klaagenfurt

This will be an ongoing series. (Editor)

Building the Gastraphetes

Chapter 1

In this chapter I will give a brief outline of what I have done to date. I will include Bibliography references, pictures, drawings, and contact information in later chapters.

So you want to recreate an ancient weapon? My first question to you is: Do you really want to build it? Really Really? I ask what might seem to be a silly question for several reasons. It's going to be hard. You are going to invest your money, time, patience, and just a little bit of your sanity before you are finished. In the course of your research you are going to talk with a huge number of people, all of which are going to remember you and your project. If you don't carry the project through, they will remember that as well. Think hard and see how much you really want to do this before you start. The rewards at the end are

many, and if you do an excellent job there will be some minor fame in the circles you attend. You just might contribute knowledge and a clear glimpse into the history we all share. Your creation might just outlast you in a museum somewhere, and that is heady stuff. On with the Show!

The problem with ancient weapons is that no one really knows how to build them these days, but everyone is going to be willing to offer an opinion. Opinions have as many variations as there are people to express them. The only way to get a meaningful opinion close to the truth is to find someone who has done the same thing you are planning to do.

So the first point to mention is research. Try to find a picture of what you want to build, and then find three more, because unless you are extremely fortunate all the pictures you find are going to be different, see the previous paragraph. Find as many written passages as you can as well, because there is a problem with a photo that might be fuzzy, or from the wrong angle to see the trigger of the damn thing. A picture will rarely show you how a mechanism works, where a written description will be more than likely to. The reason for this is that any schmoe can take or draw a picture, but it takes a real interest in the subject matter to sit down and write out a book about it.

Some examples of my work so far in the research angle are as follows. I searched for pictures of the Gastraphetes as well as related weapons. More importantly I took note of the sources of the pictures, and the names of any books in bibliographies that were referenced along with the pictures. I noted that there were two contemporary authors who studied this weapon; Marsden in 1970 that wrote about it, and Schramm in 1918 who actually built one. There were issues with the Schramm weapon that I would find out about later. Both had books that I would get and read. Then I started to try to find people who might have built this weapon more recently. Much to my surprise the last time this weapon had been built seemed to be by Schramm in 1918!

By this point I had also learned quite a bit about the weapon itself. It was a one-man weapon, with a 150-200 pound draw, horizontally mounted, one-piece, composite recurved bow. The bow was made from wood, horn, sinew and possibly with bone tips. It appeared that Schramm in 1918 had cheated! He had used a two-piece steel bow, which while pretty, was inaccurate. Damn. Blast. Spit. Steel bows in this time and place are much easier to build than organic composites. The exact opposite of when the weapon was first built. Now we go on a search to find someone willing to build a bow that would be a one of a kind and largely useless to a professional bowyer. The last fact is an unfortunate one, because most professional bow builders like to be paid for the work they do. Taking into consideration that I am largely uninterested in paying someone to do the work, I was at an impasse. I started the mail campaign.

First I had to find a pool of people who would be able and interested. Search, do a lot of searching. Try some unusual combinations and several search engines. Join as many lists relating to the subject as will have you. Ask for references. Go to libraries. Don't be afraid to go off the continent to look. Several of my best contacts were from Eastern Europe, the Philippines, Canada, Wales, and one from Spain in Basque country. Seventy-four e-mail letters later I had most unanswered, and several rejections (one scurrilous). Four people were maybe interested in having a go of it provided I could supply the materials, and one professional artist and ancient weapons expert who said he would be happy to take on the project. Success! I also met several great people, and one who was attempting a reconstruction as well. He had also found a written description that I hadn't known about. We are going to pool resources.

That is as far as I have gotten to this point. I have a source of materials for the bow. After reading the books I find that I can do most of the construction. I have a person who is willing to tackle the bow, and another who is willing to make arrows. Real

beasts they are too, 3/8" to 1/2" in diameter and 36" to 48" long. More later! If you want to help, feel free to contact me at [oscar@sfrcs-sabis.net](mailto:oscar@sfrcs-sabis.net) All Welcome.

## In the Air

"...Whether tis nobler to suffer the Slings and Arrows...", Old Willy has a point and in this case a Bullet. Upon returning from Pennsic last year I dug out my old Sling and wrapped a few Tennis balls. After a certain amount of abuse both to my self and the balls, I found I could get reasonable amount of range and accuracy with little effort. I hadn't seen much evidence of Slingers at Pennsic. (Then, it was my first Pennsic and I was trying to be 20 places at once.) It occurs to me this would make a quick backup weapon to support crews. A bag of 5 or 6 balls/bullets and a Sling would give a little emergency fire support when needed. More than the above Ammo would be useless as by the time you needed more you should have been **RUNNING AWAY!** This is a nice "No Frills Weapon". It takes up almost no space, has little weight, and packs a punch. You needn't be strong to use it. If you are firing into a crowd, you don't need to be especially accurate either. It's cheap; just some soft leather and leather lace or twine. They are a little "Spacey". You wouldn't want it to be the weapon of choice in a crowd. And, you look real dumb if you tangle with the Slinger next to you. ("Marshal, Wadda ya mean we killed each other?") Anybody out there have any ideas on this concept?

Speaking of the stranger devices about, I hear there is some experimentation by some folks who breathe a lot of Salt Air with a Combat Atal-Atal. It's sorta like Javelin throwing with an extra Forearm. At least it's a good way to use up your Ammo when you Ballista is put out of action. The future of these devices is still in question but I'm sure Lots of folk would like to hear more about it (hint, HINT).

There is another slice of the slightly weird out there that may have some advocates, too. I'm not sure of the correct names but they have been referred to as a "Darter" and "Staffed Sling". The difference between the two is the Darter is literally a Halfbow and launches a Dart or Bolt with some assistance from the flexion of the bow via a string attached to the bows tip. It is a light weapon with I believe limited range. The Staffed Sling is just that. It is a Sling on the end of a full Staff. It is used like a one man Treb in which the man is base, fulcrum, and energy source. It was rumored to have a long range but limited accuracy.

Both of these machines use the "Extra Forearm" concept of the Atal-Atal. Does anyone have anymore information on these?

## Syke's Sutlery

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Be in the next Issue.

# Reports from the Known World

These are Rumors and Comments that have come the Editor's attention...

“The Baron wears Bicycle Shorts!” Rumor!

Confirmed Rumor, but with good reason. These form fitting breathable Undies aren't for Cutes. They were designed to make riding long distances with reasonably comfortable. They are Armor against Heat Rash. Nothing can spoil a weekend, or the duration of a Pennsic, more than walking like you rode there on Horseback. The best cure is to not let it get started. (Anonymous)

“Archers are Dumb,” by a Ren. Faire Patron.

This is absolutely not true. They not only speak but, can impart some first class wisdom. If you don't interrupt them while shooting, you may here something like this:

“Don't shoot your Ego; Shoot your Bow. An 80# draw Bow may impress the mundanes but, this is far too much for most Archers to handle. Your Bow is no good to you if you can't draw and hold it comfortably. A 30# or 40# Bow is going to impress many more people when you hit the Bull. If you want to work up to a massive Bow go ahead but, one in the target is worth a whole bunch in the Grass and Trees.” (Todd M., customer at “Hall's Archery”)

“Is that [Ballista] real?” asked in a Mikey D's Parking Lot by a much Pierced Male and his “Bud” can.

“No, it's just a substitute for sticking my Hand in the Garbage Disposal for entertainment!” (Graywolf, Sometimes I have no sense of Humor.)

“I wish I could do that!” Very Common

Don't let them get away! They rubbed the Lamp; Be the Djinni! Give this person QUALITY TIME. I thank those that did me this kindness. (Graywolf)

“What do you do out here without T.V., Radio, or your Phone for a whole Weekend?” by a visitor at a Showcase Encampment.

“Relax.” (in memory of Ellie McCorkle)

“Can I get a good Shot of your Cannons shooting from here?” by a Photographer on a *Police Boat* during a “Tall Ships” in NY.

“Yeah, But you probably won't survive it.” (The Gun Commander)

Got More?

# Nose Newts

I wish to thank the “Pikestaff” (The East Kingdom’s official Newsletter) and its fine Editor for her kind assistance in these listing due to the short notice.

Please look to the [www.sca.org](http://www.sca.org) site for further contact information, directions, and details. Normally, the information will be forwarded to me, not politely Pirated. Please also remember that these are SCA activities not Ren Faires. This means that a reasonable attempt at Period Wardrobe is required and there are specific Rules apply to the activity. Be sure to check with the host before going to ensure you are prepared and have a good time.

(Please note that, for now, Local is considered within 150 miles of Springfield, Massachusetts.)

## **March 22, 2003 Nova Schola II / Bergental / Holyoke, MA**

This is not a Hack and Slash Day!; It IS a great way to gently immerse yourself, and family, in the SCA Way. There are far too many helpful classes to list here, all intended to assist you in understanding and enjoying the SCA. This is a great first or 500<sup>th</sup> event. It’s FREE. There is a “Dayboard” (Buffet) that costs a whole \$2 if you wish; you won’t be sorry. As this is next week, you should make reservations if you can ASAP.

For more info and directions contact [Heathergray@Village.com](mailto:Heathergray@Village.com)  
Or check the latest “Pikestaff”

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## **April 5, 2003 Shakespeare and Supper/Aschehyrst/ Farmington, MA**

This sounds like real fun. “A Midsummer’s Night Dream,” by skilled Period Players, with “the Wit and Wisdom,” to stir the coldest Heart, followed by a fine Feast prepared by Master Luke Knowlton, a renowned period Chef. The Hack and Slash here is with a quick Tongue. Tickets are \$8 for the Play, Children under18 \$4. The Feast is \$8. Reserve early, for this one. Seating is limited. Don’t miss it.

For more Info contact and directions [pc-ac03@crowcastle.net](mailto:pc-ac03@crowcastle.net)  
Or the latest “Pikestaff”

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Nose Newts cont.

**April 19, 2003 – Balfar’s Challenge~RP / Dragonship Haven / Wallingford, CT**

Hack and Slash, and a whole lot more this should be a great action event. Take varied Teams, varied Weapons, and a whopping heap of imagination, mix it up into 3 member groups with limited Super Players and you get a rare Challenge like this. They’re even going to have a dayboard to help keep your strength up. The gentler folk will also have an Arts & Sciences competition as well. This event is still in development so check the “Pikestaff” or [www.SCA.org](http://www.SCA.org) , East Kingdom page, then Dragonship Haven for more details.

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**May 3, 2003 - Spring Equinox (SCA Time)/Anglespur / Schodak, NY**

These Folk like to play. This would be a fine place to shake off the final tatters of Cabin Fever from this torturous winter. Craziness is the bi-line here. Bring you sense of humor and some coin as there will be Merchants. There will be classes as well, and sideboard and/or Feast. Cost for Day w/ side board \$7 with Feast, too only \$10. Sorry, if you’re not an SCA member there is a \$3 surcharge. All in all it’s still a low price for great fun. Shodack is right near Albany.

For more info contact via SCA web as above.

Join the Fun.  
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The Society for Creative  
Anachronism.

Get more Info at:

**www.sca.org**

# Beyond the Horizon

Someday the Snow will melt and a Warrior's Eye will turn to the Field. The rush and flow of Battle and Tourney boils up in the Heart. He, who's Hands are not callused from the Hoe but the Sword will look about and see not the great Castle defending his house but, a rock Box that pens him in. From the battlements, he will scan the limits of his world for the signs of the challenge that forever calls him from beyond the Horizon.

The weekend of May 23<sup>rd</sup> Concorida will host its "War of the Roses". This exciting event will be even further enhanced by new competitions creatively combining both Siege and Heavy combat. There will be a new event combining Archers and Engines in teams to demonstrate the power of this battle technique. There will also be classes taught by artisans of the Bow, Crossbow, Arbalest, Onager, and possibly some other exciting Missile Weapons. This will be the effort of many. It is an example of how the Baronies, Shires, Freehold, and all can unite to the greater strength of the East Kingdom.

Notice the word, "UNITE," in that last sentence. We must be careful not to just enjoy the Flame and forget the Wood that feeds the Fire. For each of us with that fields there are many that don't. There is as much honor in the fine penned word, the carefully woven thread, the perfectly tuned string, or the final pinch of spice as there is in the hardest bitten clash. These Gentles create the home for which we fight. Take the time to appreciate their work. Take the time to visit a class or two. Take the time to enjoy the fact they are there.

Where is this going? It's simple. There has begun an excellent liaison between different groups in the Siege field. This is Trans Barony, Shire, etc. cooperation is now beginning to include Archers and other missile artisans. When other segments of our Kingdom added their strands to this Web, we will have the finest, toughest, and most coordinated Army to march against the Enemy that can be assembled. Add to this the energy of our good Gentles bolstered by the knowledge that their Warriors really appreciate them. You have a Kingdom that is unbeatable. Let's make it so.

On to Pennsic!

Graywolf