



The Oxford Household

The roots of the MSS Oxford Household

By David Silverthorne

During the summer of 1988, Rod Smith joined The White Company, a War of the Roses re-enactment group. David Silverthorne joined him the following year. At that time White Company was split into households and after demonstrating superior archery and sword skill, they were both recruited into the Oxford household, the group containing the elite members. Shortly after, all the households merged into a single entity called "The White Company", although the Oxfords still remained, proud of their heritage.

Rod and Dave remained in the White Company for over a decade campaigning across the UK and into France until the company had a marked shift from military events to household, or craft events. Dragging equipment and armour to events where it was not going to be used deflated their youthful enthusiasm for re-enactment and the pair said a sad farewell to the company to which they had been members for so long around 1994-95.

In 2002 Rod heard of a group called The Medieval Siege Society (MSS) and joined up hoping to reignite his passion for the late 15th Century. His first event was at Pevensey Castle and he enjoyed it so much he invited David along to the next event at Battle Abbey. Sensing that the atmosphere at the events was similar to the early days of the Oxfords, both of them joined. They chose The De Cobham Household as they were the initial contact, plus they looked like decent enough chaps (except Martin, of whom they had a deep seated mistrust...)

After a year of fighting with the Yorkist De Cobhams and once again enjoying the weekends, in 2003 they decided to restart the an Oxford household to get back to their Lancastrian roots. Several new members were drafted in, including: Karen Scott-Jupp, who had joined the De Cobhams a year before, Grant Fettis who had been promising to join the MSS for a while, Squiff who was the heroic bride of the dreaded anti-Oxford and Simon Blackwell (the silent once who must be obeyed).

At the AGM 2002 Rod announced his intention to split from the De Cobhams and form the Oxford Household, and the rest is History!

Over the years, as age seeped into the bones for the Oxfords they lost the urge to use events as purely an excuse to fight and drink and started to expand into a more living history based household. This, due to great credit to the members of the Oxfords, has led to the award of two prestigious living history awards at Herstmonceux Medieval Festival (at time of wringing!) and the Household is more dedicated to authenticity, although we do still love a good scrap and beer!