

In Memorium to Gerry East (Ragnar Bear Odinson)

This Eulogy was written and delivered by John Ham.

Gerry

Many of us here with Ragnar, were at the birth of what is now known as re-enactment. I don't know if we called it that then, it was bashing each other up for the entertainment of the public. And laughing a lot, don't forget laughing a lot. Although the numbers were few, there did seem to be an overwhelming number of characters and of course one of the largest of these was Gerry East - Ragnar.

Shortly after I met and joined the NfPS, Gerry became the leader. Ragnar was responsible for getting and arranging more and more shows for the Society as it grew. Exposure on radio and television and Television, being used by the BBC for the Vikings with Magnus Magnusson, and other high profile events, gave us more and more recruits. Gerry, with the help of Noreen and by dint of putting in a large amount of work, enabled the NfPS to become the largest Society of its kind in the world. As we cast off fibreglass helmets and crocodile blade swords, people showed their skills in making reproduction costume, studying the history and even making the food. This has now become a worldwide phenomenon, entertainment that helps inform and keep our history alive.

But thirty years ago was a time when strap hanging Vikings on the tube, on their way to a banquet, turned heads and even emptied carriages. When you could carry a sword on your hip or an axe on your shoulder as you went to a show, when a policeman could be persuaded to shoot arrows at their helmets and the only dark Knight that was frightening was Joe Rabone after a few beers. Our heroes were as much Kirk Douglas, Stuart Grainger and Errol Flynn as Harald Bluetooth, Eric the Red and Gunner Hamundarson. These were days that cannot be repeated. And I often remember that we laughed a lot, often loudest and longest in the company of Ragnar.

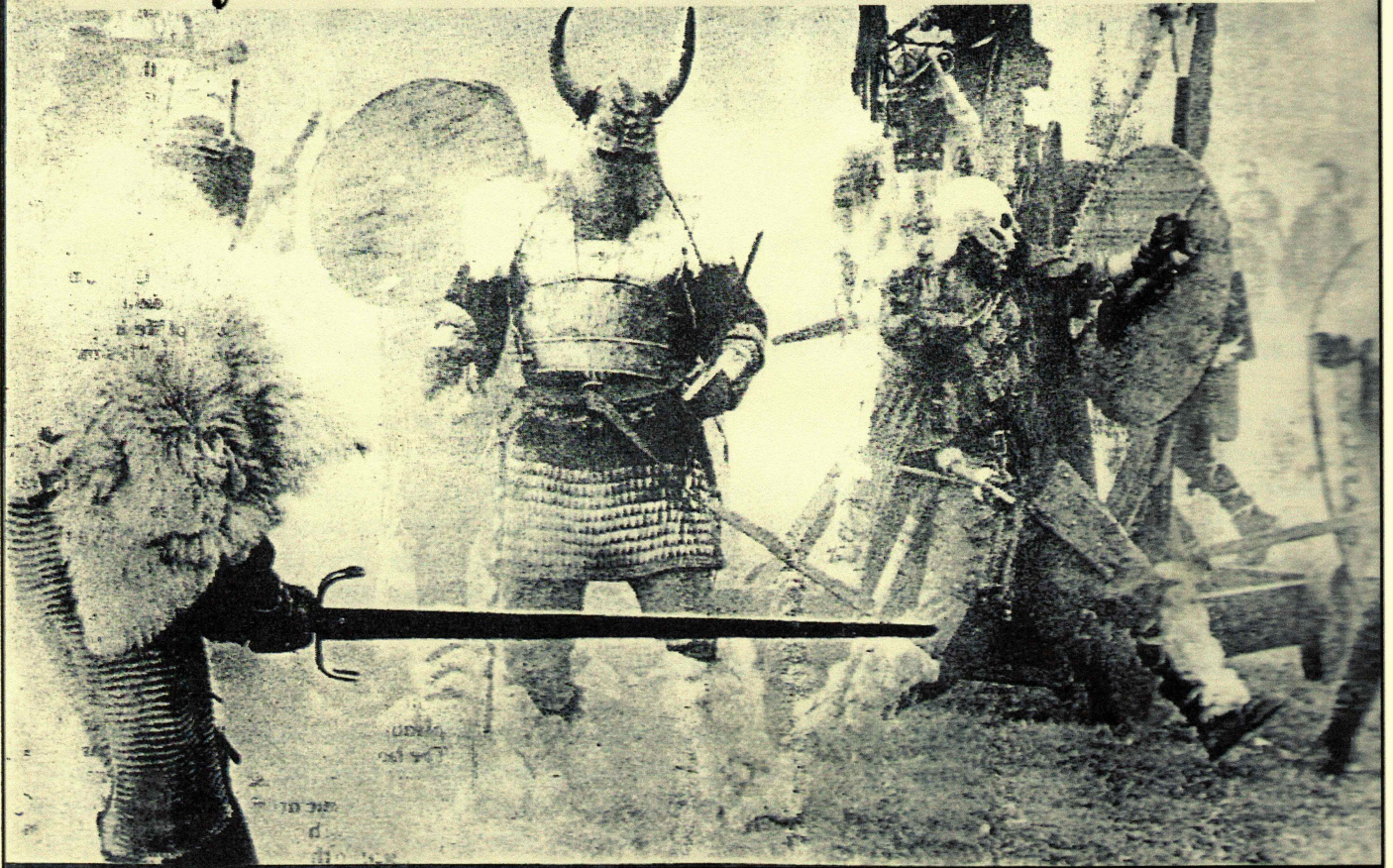
This is what I shall miss most about my old friend. The retelling of old stories, conjuring up old half forgotten characters and events. He was the past master of this and never failed to have me in stitches. This is how I will remember him.

So Ragnar our leader and friend, known for his strength, generosity, loyalty and humour, has in his own words gone 'to prepare the shore'.

farewell old friend.



Gerry East in 1979 Isle of Man Millenium



A
Montage
of
memories
Ragnar
Bear
Odinsson.

There can be
only one!

