



VARNHEM

October 4, 2009

Connecting with our past

The Spanish philosopher George Santayana's most famous and frequently misquoted remark is "***Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it***" (called *Santayana's Law of Repetitive Consequences*).

But Mr. Santayana, what if we do remember our past and want to repeat it...?



Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani, Grand Priory of Sweden, take great pride in acting according the original Knight Templar Rules: ***La Règle du Temple***. It represents the Rule given to the Order of the Poor Knights of Temple of Solomon of Jerusalem by the Council of Troyes, 1129.

Allegedly one of the writers of *La Règle du Temple* was Bernard de Clairvaux (1090 - 1153), associated with the fast spread of the Order of Cistercians during the 12th century. The Cistercian brothers came to Varnhem in 1150. The fertile site on the western slope of the Billingen plateau was ideal with its access to timber, rock and fresh water. At the end of the 13th century the monastery church was the largest sacred building in Sweden and the operations flourished for several centuries more. The reformation, by King Gustav Vasa, in the 16th century closed the monastery and the church was abandoned. A hundred years later Count Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie paid for a restoration and it is thanks to him that the edifice is in good shape today. However, the monastery was left to decay until excavations began in the 1920s. The monastic life is well documented and the museum next to the church holds a number of interesting objects from the first excavations. The beautiful Varnhem Church is the burial church for the Erik royal family (12th and 13th century). Stockholm's founder, Regent Birger Jarl lies here, as do the church's "saviour", Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie and his wife, the Princess Maria Eufrosyne. So, the ***connection with our past*** is unmistakable.

October 3rd the Grand Priory of Sweden gathered for our annual Investiture this time in the Cistercian monastery church in Varnhem and hosted the Gala dinner in the nearby city of Skara. The Knights' and the public's interest for this special occasion was far beyond what the organisers the event (the Grand Priory's Convent) anticipated. Local television, official authorities and private individuals was present at the Investiture ceremony. Almost every seat in the church was occupied (see pictures on next page).

It is my honour to inform you that one of the Gala dinner's guests of honour was Anja Praesto. Anja is the, very successful, Project Manager for "Middle Ages tourism" in Skaraborg and Skaraborg is the county where the Knight Templar Arn Magnusson (fiction or not) lived and acted with, among others, the Cistercian brothers in Varnhem. We wish her the best of luck with her important and interesting mission and hope to see here in many future joint activities where history meet "today".



Knights Templar Grand Priory of Scandinavia

Grand Secretary General

The more I write the less space will be left for pictures. It was not easy to pick out the seven pictures out of the 500 taken that evening. I heard it spoken out loud: *“this is not the last time that the O.S.M.T.H. Grand Priory of Sweden/Scandinavia will be present in Skara/Varnhem”*.

Dear reader, I hope you enjoyed the reading and the pictures as much as I enjoyed writing and publishing this (to a certain extent) historical report.



Grand Prior, Brigadier General Owe Wagermark with his Guest of Honour, Anja Praesto.



Remark: Dear Brothers and Sisters, my apologies for the wide angle lens that did not allow all into the view... but we know you are there.



Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini Tuo da gloriam

Confraternal greeting

Björn Liszka
Björn Liszka, Commendator
Grand Secretary General



A Templar Knight is truly a fearless knight, and secure on every side, for his soul is protected by the armour of faith... /St Bernard

N.b. At the end of this news flash there is a passage about O.S.M.T.H. Grand Priory Sweden in Varnhem.
http://tv4play.se/nyheter/lokala_nyheter/skaraborg?videoid=1.1247295&renderingdepartment=2.40787