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## Royalty and commoners mingle at faire

Event fulfills owner's desire to re-create a Renaissance world.

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*News-Leader*

Hartville -- It was a bit of a drive to travel far into the past, but it was worth it, Caroline Worthley said as she watched an old ritual her mother talked about, but that she had never seen.

"I'm anxious to see how it goes," Worthley said as she and her husband sat on a rough-hewn bench in the shade, watching revelers at the White Hart Renaissance Faire prepare for a maypole dance.

A mixed crowd of people dressed for their parts in billowing skirts, tights and brocaded coats as they held multi-colored ribbons tenting from a tall pole. Visitors offered a contrast in their shorts and T-shirts.

"This is something my mother talked about," Worthley said. "She always talked about how they used to do the maypole dance on May Day. This is a bit of history I'm interested in."

And something with enough attraction to prompt a drive on twisty and hilly Missouri 38 from Marshfield almost to Hartville, she said.

"It's so far off the beaten track," she said, as a couple of hundred people attracted to the faire not only watched the maypole dance, but also took in falconry demonstrations, jousting, music and arts and crafts.

"But it's a good day," said her husband, Bob.

And it was a good day for "Ren-fest" veterans like "Cat," proprietress of The Smugglers Arms, a pub serving the likes of Guinness Stout.

"You have to see 21 winters or you can't have any," Cat joked before pouring a root beer for a youngster.

On the faire circuit since 1995, the woman from Independence goes by the name of Catherine Derry in modern life.

She said the White Hart Faire is small compared to events near large cities, but has potential.

"It's a cool faire," she said. "A lot of heart."

Faire owner Di Taylor knows the faire is small, but she has plans for the event she and her late husband created after moving from California.

There isn't any land in California that resembles Olde England, but she and her husband felt they could find it back home, the Missouri native said.

They settled on a farm on Wright County F west of Hartville that includes 40 acres of woods for a faire site and 60 acres of open land for parking.

"It takes some time to grow something like this," she said.

Even her husband's death last year won't stop her, Taylor said. "We're carrying on in his honor," she said. "This was his dream, to have a Renaissance faire."

Visitors drove along a road decorated with wildflowers and forded a small stream to get to the dirt path leading to White Hart. They found a settlement populated by people dressed in satins and brocades as royalty or in the rough cloth of itinerant craftspeople, urchins and country folk.

The air was thick with wood smoke, English accents and shouts of "Huzzah" when Queen Elizabeth I appeared.

It wasn't much of an act for woodworker Andrew Helton, who demonstrated what he does in the 21st century.

Using an iron froe, a stout wooden sledge and a lot of muscle, he wrested a piece of wood into a round spindle for a bench. Not much different than what he does while making traditional furniture in his shop in Aurora, Helton said.

"That's what 'bodging' is all about," he said while explaining the nearly dead craft involves making furniture parts in the woods where trees were cut.

Faires like the White Hart are good for showing off work, selling pieces and obtaining commissions, but there's more to it, Helton explained.

People who attend the event get to see how things now taken for granted once demanded a lot of time and effort to create.

"It's a completely different time scale," he said. "Of course, they lived on a completely different time scale."

And a completely different view of wildlife, at least when it comes to working with a hawk like Lady Val, "Sir Vinterhawk" told a crowd of onlookers who watched the falconer use bits of meat to tempt the Harris hawk to swoop to his hand.

No one owns a bird of prey, said Bob Aanonsen, the alter ego of the queen's falconer.

"This is bird-watching at its finest, except we get to participate," he said.

Being the queen's falconer doesn't include turning over a share of Lady Val's quarry to her highness, he said.

The bird's less-than-regal quarry includes rats, rabbits and snakes, he said.

Not quite a queen's feast, he said.

"I don't think she would ever demand that," he said.

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