

Engineer's patron 'saint': the true story

By ANDY STEEVES

As you may or may not know, Lady Godiva is the patron 'Saint' of Engineers. Her form graces several Engineering crests and she has lent her name to the UNB Engineer's newspaper 'The Godivan'. Recognizing her importance to Engineering in general, and as a means of celebrating Engineering Week in particular, The Brunswickan's intrepid Engineering reporter set out to rip the covers away from the Lady Godiva story. So to speak. Here is his report:

Lady Godiva: Fact or fiction? This was the question I set out to answer as I searched my way through the reference section of the Harriet Irving Library. I was looking for some clue, some scrap of evidence, that the much beloved Godiva had indeed lived and, better still, performed that

immortal act of selfless sacrifice during that cool summer day. Thousands of questions filled my head: What was the horse's name? Was it indeed an Engineer who bought her the first glass of ale? What did the parish priest think of all the hubbub? Did she perform an encore? Did her husband lose his respect for her?

It was with jubilation that I discovered, that yes!, Lady Godiva did actually live. She lived from about 1040 to 1080, her lifetime spanning the Norman Conquest (and who was Norman, anyway?). She lived in Coventry the wife of a rich noble, Earl Leofric of Mercia. A generous person, she gave away half the land of Coventry including 24 lordships (who were they?) to the church, founding a monastery in 1043. She also donated funds to the monasteries of Ely and Evesham, which

indicated the depth of her religious beliefs.

It was with bated breath that I now searched for clues on her famous ride. Once again, pay dirt was struck for the famous ride was indeed mentioned. Unfortunately, however, its certainty is questionable; some chroniclers mention it, others do not. Throwing objective journalism to the winds I pressed ahead, determined to relate the story, convinced the half the chroniclers were right, certain that the public had a right to know. Now came the difficult part because there are many different versions of the famous ride through Coventry. What is now related is the most probable story.

Lady Godiva of Mercia was a great humanitarian: not only did she generously give land and money to monasteries, she also had a deep concern for the 'little man', repeatedly imploring her husband, Leofric, to reduce the taxes paid by the citizens of Coventry. This was her constant plea, ceaselessly repeated. Was Godiva a nagging wife? It depends on how you look at it. Evidently Leofric thought so because finally, likely in exasperation, he gave in. "Yes, I'll reduce the taxes", he said. "But on one condition" and here he must have smiled "And that is if you agree to ride naked through the market place."

Well, Coventry of 1060 was not Frederickton of 1976. A woman was not insured of quite the same standard of protection that they enjoy now. It was a rugged time more along the lines of 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail' than 'The Silver Chalice'. Coventry's market place would be a muddy, stinking mess, full of thieves and cutthroats. Of course, Lady Godiva was no playmate; there was likely more than a few teeth missing and baths were not in vogue. However, she still must have given the whole idea considerable thought before she agreed to it.

Lady Godiva was no fool. She took more than a few Precautions, after all not all of the 'little men' would fully appreciate the motive behind her ride. So here's what she did: first of all she made an agreement with the populace that they would remain inside and not look at her as she passed by. Secondly, she put her long tresses of hair (blond, brunette, we do not know) to work, skillfully arranging them so that they covered her, all except her legs. Finally, she enlisted a body guard of her husband's men (were they blindfolded?) to accompany her on the gallop. This bodyguard would be all around her making viewing all the more difficult.

So, with everything in readiness the fateful day arrived. It is assumed that it was a summer day because the market was still open. Also some chroniclers state that Godiva rode in the morning. Did she have a good sleep the night before? Did she want to get it over with? Was it raining? Was it windy? Did she go to the beach afterward? All of these pressing questions are forever unanswered. All we can guess is that early one summer morning, let's say in July, Godiva set out.

She left the Mercia Castle in a canter riding her horse (name unknown) surrounded by 6 (?) horsemen (blindfolded). After crossing the moat she turned left and headed towards Coventry.

Not a soul was on the road, in the fields, or milking the cows as she and the men galloped into the suburbs. Not a sound was heard except for the galloping of 7 (?) horses and a couple of roosters out on a haystack.

Now they were at the very gates of Coventry itself. Did Godiva have any second thoughts? Did any of the men's blindfolds slip at all? The gates had been left open and they galloped into Coventry.

The deserted streets were very eerie as the little band people through town. Not a soul to be seen, just a couple of dogs barking at the horses. Godiva urged the horses on as she neared the busy market place. A few more yards and they would be through!

The muddy old market posed a few problems. Actually one of the horsemen, likely a forester, rolled his horse at this point and was forced to lie in the mud with his blindfold on until the band had left town. Another of the horsemen, a sociology major, took a wrong turn and galloped blindfolded down a dead end street. Both men were racked later.

However, Godiva and her crew

of four men (?) rode on without incident out of Coventry and doubled back to the castle.

There was much celebration. However, it was soon discovered that one man, a lawyer called 'Tom Foolery' had looked at Godiva. Apparently, or so he claimed, the sound of the falling forester made him so concerned that he looked and he had been struck blind for his efforts. This is where the expressions 'peeping tom' and 'justice is blind' come from.

Godiva's spouse, Leofric, was true to his word and Coventry had all of its taxes removed, except for the taxes on horses. Which makes sense.

We do not know if Leofric or Godiva lived happily ever after. However, if you look hard enough in the Harriet Irving Library you might just find out. Almost all the facts I've related here are found in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, along with this closing remark 'It has been suggested that the story really derived from the long continuation at Coventry of some pagan or semipagan fertility rite.'

Engineering week

Here is the schedule of events for Engineering Week '76. The times and events are correct as of press time. We recommend that you clip this out and keep it handy.

ENGINEERING WEEK

Monday, Nov. 1st - Opening Night Variety Show - 7:30 p.m. - HC-13

Tuesday, Nov. 2nd - Open House - 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.; Seminar - 2:30 - 4:30, HC-14; Coffee House with Folk music - 8:00 - 11:00 p.m. - STUD; Sports Night - 9:00 - 12:00 p.m. - West Gym.

Wednesday, Nov. 3rd - Chugging Contest - 3:30 p.m. - STUD; Irish Pub - SUB Ballroom - 9:00 - 1:00

Thursday, Nov. 4th - Ice Hockey Tournament - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Aitken Centre; Ball Hockey Tournament - 8:30 - 12:00 - West Gym; Godiva's Gallop Pub - Marshall d'Avray - 8:00 - 12:00

Friday, Nov. 5th - Great Canadian Coaster Derby - 11:00 a.m.

- Pub Sub Ballroom - 9:00 - 1:00
- Saturday - Woodlot Beer Rally; Engineer's Ball - 9:00 - 1:00, SUB Ballroom

Crossword answers

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DOWN
1. PLOT
2. PANTS
3. STAR
4. LOVE
5. RECT
6. RAIL
7. HER
8. RAIN
9. RAMP
10. MERTIS
11. RING
12. EVE
13. ASHOT
14. RORER
15. MACHINES
16. SOFT
17. RST
18. RARID
19. RARAN
20. SEM
21. RINES
22. RRE
23. STOPS
24. RERTS
25. ICE
26. SET
27. MARPATMS
28. POTHERB
29. RAISE
30. ARE
31. REDD
32. INTROS
33. SHAM
34. AGAIN
35. RAVE
36. SERA
37. TENSE
38. ALEX
39. EST
40. SPEED
41. END
    
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Little Records

TEAC SPECIALS

	Reg.	Sale	Save
A-400	450.00	369.95	80.05
A-2300S	750.00	629.95	120.05
A-3340S	1600.00	1350.00	250.00

From the Store With the Little Prices

Italian Day

SUB CAFETERIA

SPECIAL A LA CARTE MENU

LASAGNA DE ROMA	SALAD WITH ITALIAN DRESSING	GARLIC BREAD
RIGATONI		ANTIPASTO
SPAGHETTI		BREAD STICKS

NEOPOLITAN ICE CREAM



11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 4, 1976