

✘ Road To Agincourt are very excited about *Blood and Valour*, a brand new graphic novel featuring legendary Southampton hero: Sir Bevis of Hampton. The creation of the graphic novel is a joint project between Eastleigh Tec Hub members, Matt Beames and Marcus Pullen, and Eastleigh Borough Council's Culture Unit.

*Blood and Valour* has made fantastic progress over the last few months, so we caught up with Guy Stauber who has been working very closely with Matt and Marcus over the cover designs for the different editions of the graphic novel. Read on below to find out more about Guy and his part in the development of *Blood and Valour*:

CD: Hi Guy, thanks for answering our questions today. So, how did you come to be involved in this project?

GS: *Well, I'm a freelance graphic illustrator and I actually came to be involved with this through Cheryl Butler... I've done some graphic design for Eastleigh's The Sorting Office in the past, which works very closely with the Culture Unit of Eastleigh Borough Council. Cheryl had heard about some of my licensing work for the likes of Marvel and she asked if I'd be interested in being part of a new graphic novel.*

*I then met Matt Beames, where we talked about how I might contribute and now here we are!*

CD: That's great; we're really pleased to have you on board. How would you describe *Blood and Valour*?

GS: *I'm still reading Matt's script but it's definitely a tale of heroism, knights, fair maidens, foul villains, dragons, guts and glory... To name a few!*

CD: Sir Bevis is certainly a heroic character, but was it easy to transform a medieval figure into a graphic novel hero?

GS: *It's never easy to get a character right for a project like this, but I think Sir Bevis embodies the qualities and characteristics of many of our modern day comic book heroes. He's valiant, noble and unafraid to charge headlong into the breach! He also wields a mean*

*sword, so the building blocks were definitely there!*

CD: Tell us a bit about the process of bring a character to life. Was it an easy process?

GS: *After many discussions with Matt and Marcus we discovered that we have many of the same cultural reference points, so the ideas began to crystallise quite quickly. I began to cook up a stew mixing of the Kurgen from the Highlander with a dash of Aragorn, a pinch of King Arthur and a sprinkling of Game of Thrones.*

CD: Wow, we can't wait to see your designs on paper soon! What do you think *Blood and Valour* will bring to the graphic novel industry?

GS: *The great thing for us is that it's a local story. You don't see many graphic novels featuring heroes and tales from Southampton, so we need to tell this tale with local passion and pride! Also, there's not that many medieval comics out there so hopefully this one will be told from a fresh perspective.*

CD: Can you tell us a little bit about the next stage... What are you working on next?

GS: *The next stage for me is to set up a shoot day with a number of battle re-enactment guys in medieval costumer, for reference images. It's crucial for me to have accurate images from which to illustrate, and setting up a scenario yourself allows for maximum flexibility and control of the images. After that, we're off to the races!*