

THE TEN LESSONS

TAUGHT BY

MR. JOHN TAYLOR,

*Late Broad Sword Master to the Light Horse Volunteers
of London and Westminster.*

As printed in ‘The Art of Defence on Foot’
by C. Roworth (1804)

A COMPANION WORKBOOK

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Version 4

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INTRODUCTION

In 1798, Charles Roworth produced a treatise on the use of the Broadsword, sabre, and spadroon. (*The Art of Defence on Foot with Broadsword and Sabre...*). This formidable and detailed treatise for British military swordsmanship on foot provides an excellent insight into military swordsmanship in the Napoleonic era, before training methods were standardised under the teachings and publications of Henry Charles Angelo (Henry Angelo's son) in 1817 (for infantry).

Roworth's manual provides a lot of helpful information which is more than enough for a complete system of swordplay. However, in 1804 a new edition was published which included the ten lessons of John Taylor. Clearly Roworth saw these to be of great value, but sadly they can be difficult to interpret today as they are not illustrated, and many questions arise when trying to practice them. Such as what responses one party makes, the footwork throughout, and others. Taylor's ten lessons are covered in just four pages in Roworth's 1804 manual, and whilst their inclusion is appreciated, they cannot be understood or interpreted accurately in isolation.

Fortunately, Roworth was not the only one who held Taylor in high regard, nor the only one heavily influenced by his teachings. In 1799, Henry Angelo had two works published - '*The Guards and Lessons of the Highland Broadsword*' and '*Hungarian and Highland Broadsword*'. Both works were short on text, but were lavishly illustrated. These included folding posters showing the 'ten lessons' as taught by Angelo, and another poster with the text descriptions to pair with the diagrams. Angelo's poster declares that his lessons were first introduced by John Taylor. The same John Taylor whose lessons appear in the 1804 edition of Roworth.

Whilst the connection between Angelo, Roworth and Taylor is still not entirely clear, it is obvious that they were closely associated, as were their practices. The ten lessons as illustrated and described by Angelo are approximately 80% the same as the ten lessons written down in Roworth's manual, and therefore a lot of information can be extrapolated from them. Therefore in this workbook, the text descriptions on the right side of the page are as written in Roworth's manual, whereas the illustrations are from Angelo's poster.

Many of the lessons are identical, and therefore the illustrations are exactly as in Angelo's original poster, but where they differ, I have changed or edited the image to accurately fit with the lesson's in Roworth, a list of changes appears later in this workbook.

Why not just use Angelo's version in it's entirety? Well firstly because for those of us using Roworth as our core source material, we want to understand the material inside that manual, as it was written. But secondly. The ten lessons in Roworth's manual modify the original lessons to include a variety of thrust work, whereas the original

has none. This might be due to an increase in the use of the point in military fencing, or to counter the inevitable contact with French soldiers that a swordsman may expect to encounter (as the French favoured a lot of thrust work). It may of course been a revised and improed version. For whatever reason, I believe the ten lessons shown in Roworth are both more interesting to those of us practicing from that manual, and also prepare a swordsman for a greater range of scenarios than the earlier version shown by Angelo. This work book also serves as a useful companion to anyone practicing from Roworth.

However, if you would prefer to train from the 1799 Angelo version of the ten lessons, you will find the original posters at the end of this workbook. High quality restored scans are available, contact info@historicalfencing.co.uk.

This work book is intended specifically as a companion to understanding and the training of Taylor's lessons in Roworth's 1804 manual, as well as an overall useful guide to those who study and practice from Roworth's work.

PURPOSE OF THESE LESSONS

These lessons were created and taught at a time of increasing standardisation in training, equipment and tactics within the British armed forces. This would require training large bodies of troops in a regimented and disciplined fashion. The methods shown here were not just for officers, as some might assume, but for all those who carried swords. That would include cavalry, as they needed to know how to fight on foot as well as horseback, but it would also include infantry officers, Royal Navy crews, some light infantry, including rifleman, artillerymen, militia and more.

The ten lessons are a simple and effective way for large bodies of men to learn a great range of techniques, and simulate a range of realistic scenarios. It teaches a swordsman a full range of attacks and defences, feints and counters. It also builds a range of responses and instills an importance in defending the most important target – the head. In fact in the ten lessons shown in Roworth's manual are to be found the vast majority of the sabre and broadsword method of fight.

In essence, with regular practice of these ten lessons, you will have a well rounded understanding of military swordsmanship on foot. But there is always more to learn, and I would recommend you read further. Roworth's manual includes a great range of advice and further exercises and advice that may be useful and interesting. To begin the ten lessons, you need the basic fundamentals shown in the following pages.

It would also be very useful for you to accustom yourself with the six cut sequence as shown in the cutting diagram at the back of this workbook.

GRIP

Later styles of sabre use a grip where the thumb rests on the backstrap, or back of the grip, pointing up the length of the blade. Roworth tells us that this is not well suited to the heavy swords, and/or heavily curved blades commonly used in his day, except for the spadroon. Additionally, an enclosed Scottish broadsword (basket hilt) does not have the space for this. As a result, the sword for this system is held in what we call a 'hammer grip'. This is the instinctive way to hold the grip, just like you would a hammer. Do not grip too tightly though, remain supple with your grip.

STANCE

Nº 1.



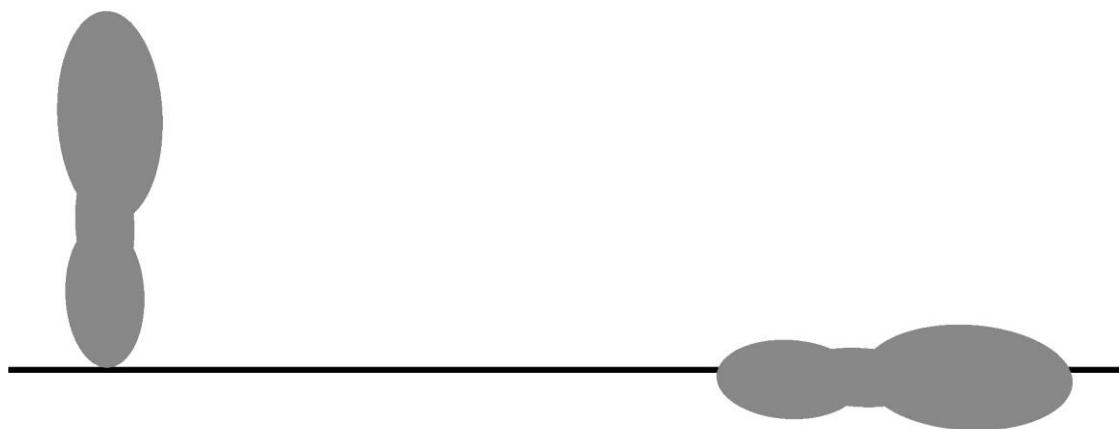
Outside C.

Both Roworth and Angelo show the same posture with the body throughout all guards. The feet should be roughly shoulder width apart (14-16 inches). The front foot should point straight towards your opponent, your rear foot should turn to the left, at roughly 90 degrees to the front foot (or pointing a little forward or back from here). The back knee should be bent in the direction of the back foot. Most of the bodyweight should be on the back foot, so that you can quickly lunge, or slip the front foot without having to adjust your weight.

The body should be well in line, so that

your right shoulder faces forward to your opponent, and your left shoulder is drawn well back.

The left hand should be placed on the left hip, behind the back, or held up to the left near your face if you want to use it as a method of counter balance.



GUARDS

The guard positions are both positions to stand in at wide measure, and also positions with which to parry your opponents attacks.

 <p>N° 7.</p> <p><i>Medium G.^d</i></p>		<p>Medium Guard</p> <p>The true edge points forward, the hilt is in the middle, dividing the body in two.</p> <p>Does not guard anything. Roworth does not like this guard much at all.</p>
 <p>N° 1.</p> <p><i>Outside G.^d</i></p>		<p>Outside Guard</p> <p>The true edge points to your right.</p> <p>Guards the right side face, shoulder and arm (outside)</p>

Nº 2.



Inside Guard

The true edge faces to the left side.

Guards the left side face, chest and arm (inside).

Shown with a more extended arm in Roworth, more like outside guard as above.

Nº 3



St George

The blade is held horizontally in front and just above the head, with the true edge facing up to the sky.

Guards the head from vertical cuts from high.

<p>Nº 4.</p> <p><i>Hanging G.^d</i></p>	<p>- N°</p> <p><i>Outside Half Hang</i></p>	<p>Hanging Guard</p> <p>(also called Ouside Hanging Guard, and Seconde Hanging Guard)</p> <p>The hilt is raised slightly above the head and the true edge faces up to the sky.</p> <p>Covers more parts of the body than any other. The strongest and most universal guard. Roworth also shows Prime hanging guard, for this move over to your left side, it looks like inside half hanger, but with the hilt raised higher to protect the head.</p>
	<p>- N°</p>	<p>Outside Half Hanger</p> <p>From the Hanging Guard, lower the hilt to shoulder height, and lower the tip slightly, the true edge should face to the right.</p> <p>Guards the ribs.</p>

Nº 6.



Inside Half Hanger

From the outside half hanger, twist the wrist and bring the hilt over to your left side, so that the true edge faces to the left.

Guards the belly.

Inside Half Hanger.

Nº 8.



Half Circle Guard

Use the motion of making cut 3. Ensure the hilt is high at the shoulder, and tip low.

Guards the wrist.

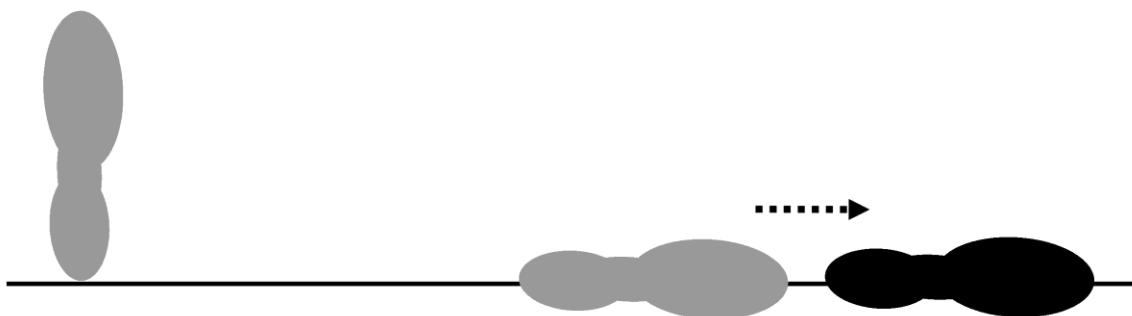
Half Circle

LUNGE



The lunge is an attack where you advance your front foot and use your whole body to reach for an attack, but without moving the rear foot. It is the standard method of attacking in Broadsword/Sabre. It can be a cut or thrust. Make sure to keep your right shoulder forward and left shoulder back. Move your front foot forward about a shoe to shoe and a half's length, and bend the front knee, and ensure the sword arm is extended in

whatever attack you are making. Always ensure the back foot stays firm and planted, and that the back leg straightens to give speed. The front foot is pointing forward towards your opponent just like it was in guard. Do not take too large a step. Do not reach too far with the body as would be typical of a lunge in rapier. An excessively long lunge is dangerous as it is too slow to recover from with the fast counter cutting in broadsword and sabre.



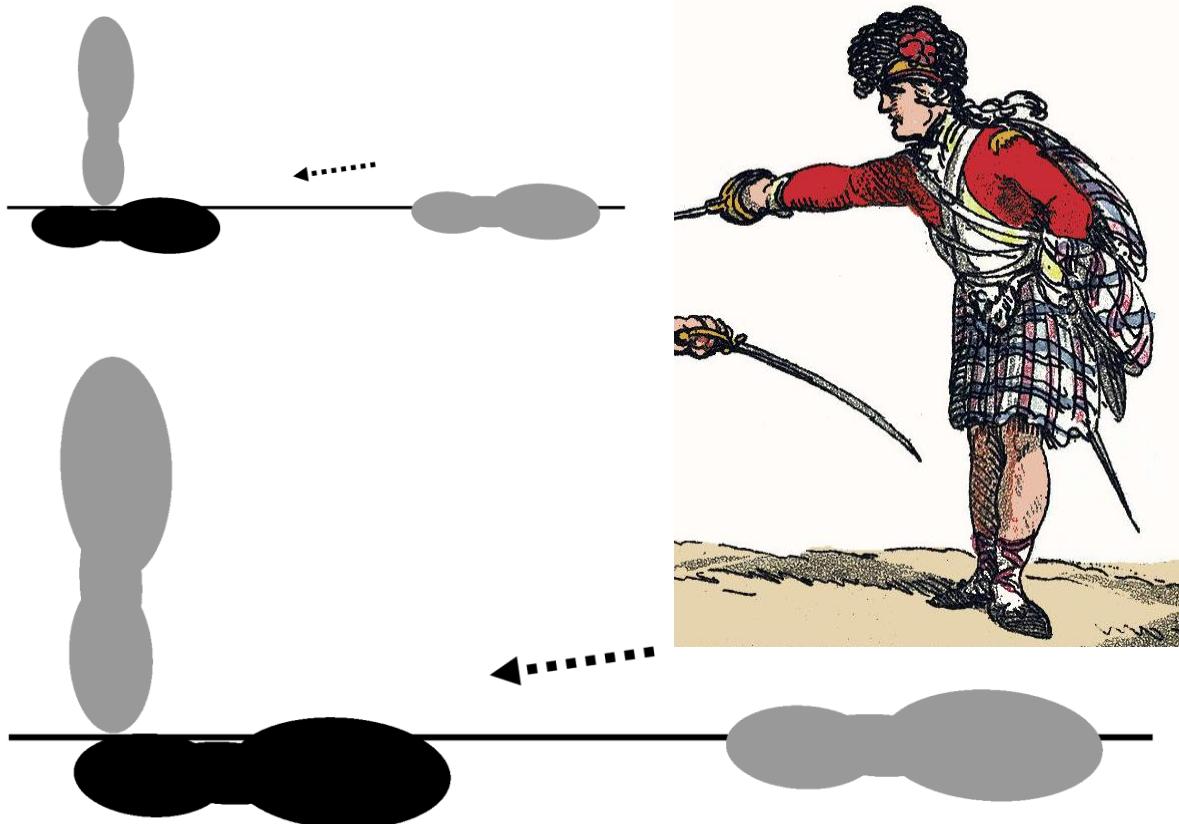
SLIP



Slipping the leg simply means to withdraw the lead foot back to the rear foot as the diagrams show. However a slip can also mean to withdraw that target which your opponent is aiming at, as to strike them in response without a parry. In Angelo's lessons, the leg is always slipped when a parry is made, unless there is a specific reason not to, such as staying in a lunge position after a feint in lesson 2. The leg is slipped no matter whether your opponent is aiming at your leg or anywhere else. This is because they can easily redirect, and/or feint to cut at the leg.

Roworth shows the slip of the leg position being a perpendicular angle, but illustrations from the Angelo work vary from being the same to having both feet pointing forwards. The important thing is that you withdraw the lead leg to where the rear leg was positioned. Roworth says to bring the middle of the lead foot back to the heel as in the first diagram below, other descriptions of this move have the heels being brought together in the second diagram.

middle of the lead foot back to the heel as in the first diagram below, other descriptions of this move have the heels being brought together in the second diagram.



START POSITION

Opponents should start at the correct distance between one another. That is the distance where a lunge is required to strike your opponent's head/body when they are in guard, this is commonly called wide measure. (Narrow measure being the distance at which you can strike your opponent without stepping).

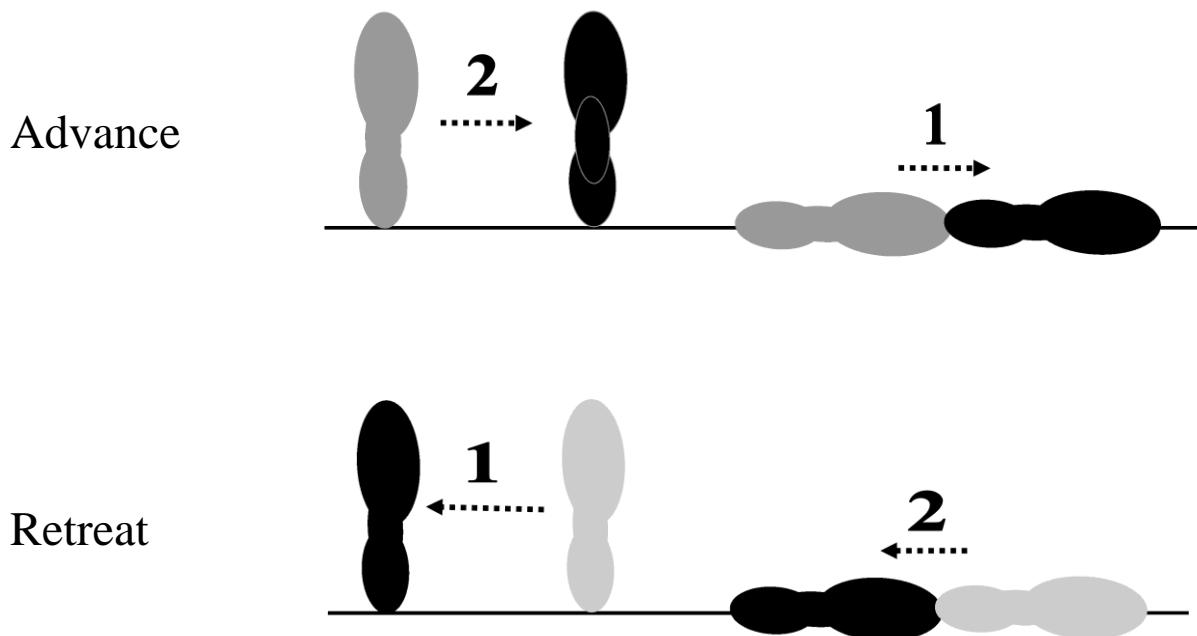
Angelo's lessons always begin in seconde hanging guard (outside hanging guard), unless otherwise stated. Roworth also begins many exercises from outside guard. Either is fine, but for the sake of discipline I'd be inclined to stick with Angelo's Hanging guard unless it says otherwise.

FOOTWORK

- Every attack is made with a lunge, unless mentioned in the notes.
- Every parry is made by withdrawing the lead foot (slip) so that it rests beside the rear foot, unless specifically mentioned.
- Only move one foot during each action. Moving both feet is slow.

ADVANCE AND RETREAT

The basic method of adjusting distance. To move forward extend the front foot and then bring the back foot up to return to guard. To retreat, move the back foot first, and then the front one follows.



ANGELO'S SOLO DRILL

Whilst this is not included in Roworth's manual, it is extremely useful. This solo drill is the first line of technique shown on Angelo's poster before he shows the ten lessons, as introduced by John Taylor. This solo drill includes all of your primary cuts and parries, as well as the core footwork of the system. It is an excellent drill to practice in class or at home. Note how each parry is the defence that would protect you from the previous cut that you made, and is therefore an excellent way to get into the right mindset.

The commands are below and should be called by an instructor if possible, and this same solo drill is pictured from Angelo's poster on the following page. Notice how once you are in guard, you always lunge, and follow it with a slip on the parry.

Slope Swords

Guard

Cut at Head

St George

Cut at Right Cheek

Outside Guard

Cut at Left Cheek

Inside Guard

Cut at Right side

Outside half Hanger

Cut at left side

Inside Half Hanger

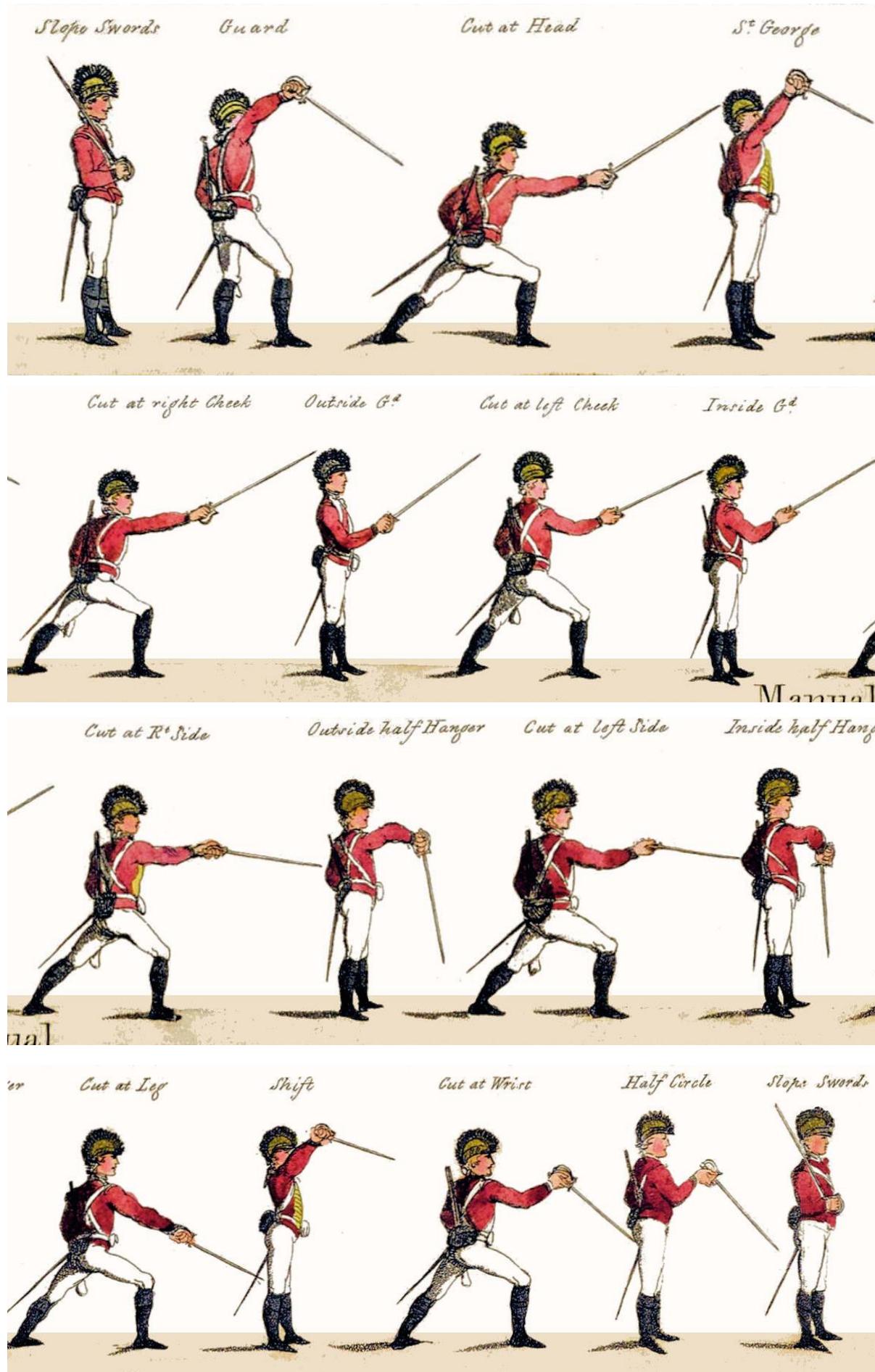
Cut at Leg

Shift

Cut at Wrist

Half Circle

Slope swords



LESSON I

Cut at Head

S^t. George



1.1

Cut at my head.

S^t. George

Cut at H^t d



1.2

Guard your own.

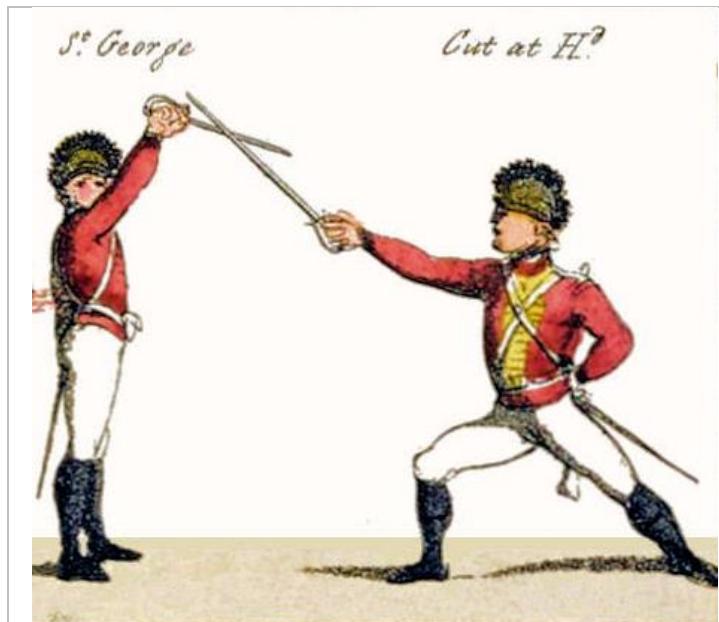
Cut at Leg

Shift



1.3

Cut at my leg outside.



1.4

Guard your head.

END OF LESSON

Notes –

Most people instinctively cut to the inside of their opponents leg, rather the outside as instructed. Be sure to correct this, the cut to the leg is always made to the outside in these ten lessons, and is explained more in the ‘Common Questions’ section.

LESSON II

Cut at H^d.

S^t. George

2.1

Cut at my head.

S^t. George

Cut at H^d.

2.2

Guard your own.

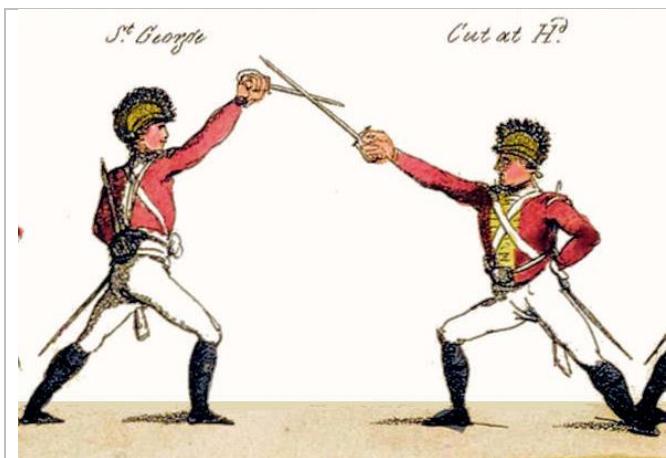
Feint at Leg

Shift

2.3

Feint at my leg.

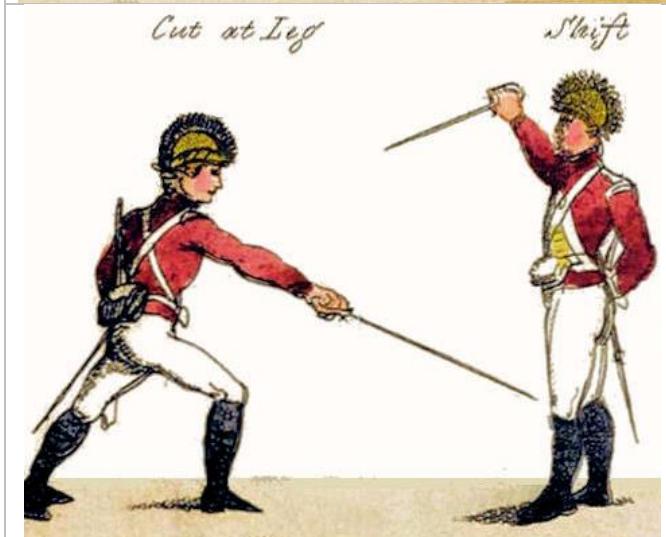
(Notice a lunge is made, but without full committal of the body)



2.4

Guard your head.

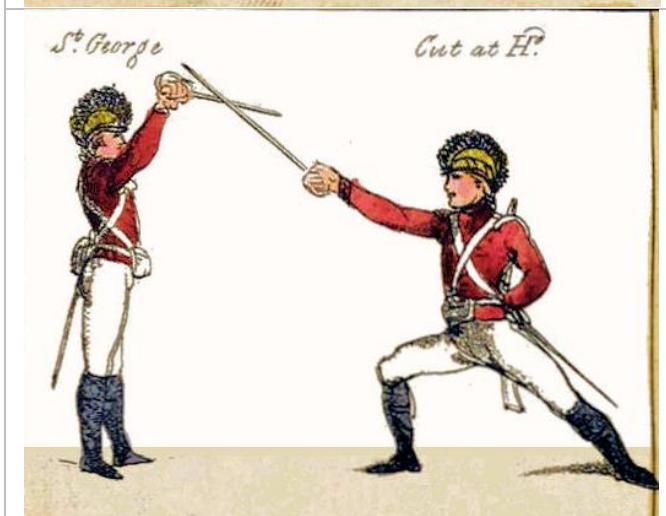
(Notice how no footwork is used when parrying, stay in the end of lunge position from previous technique)



2.5

Cut at my leg.

(No footwork is used to attack, as you are still in the lunge position from the last technique)



2.6

Guard your head.

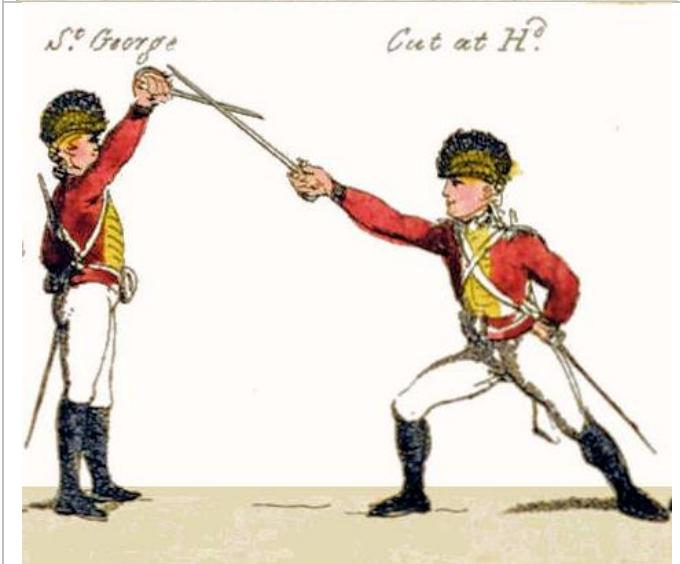
END OF LESSON

LESSON III



3.1

Cut at my head.



3.2

Guard your own.



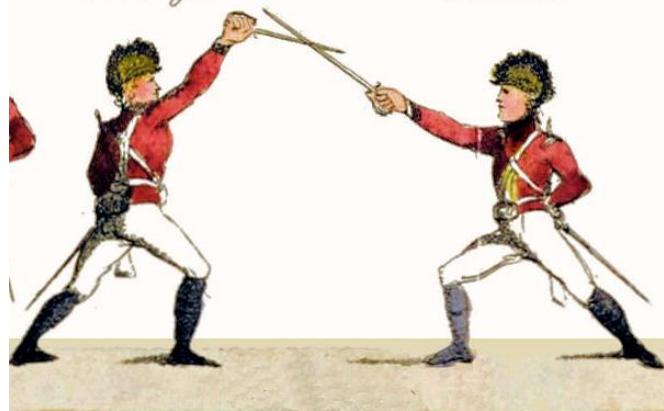
3.3

Feint at my leg.

(Notice that a lunge is made to ‘sell’ the feint, but without full committal of the body, in case he counters rather than covers.)

S^t. George.

Cut at H.^d.



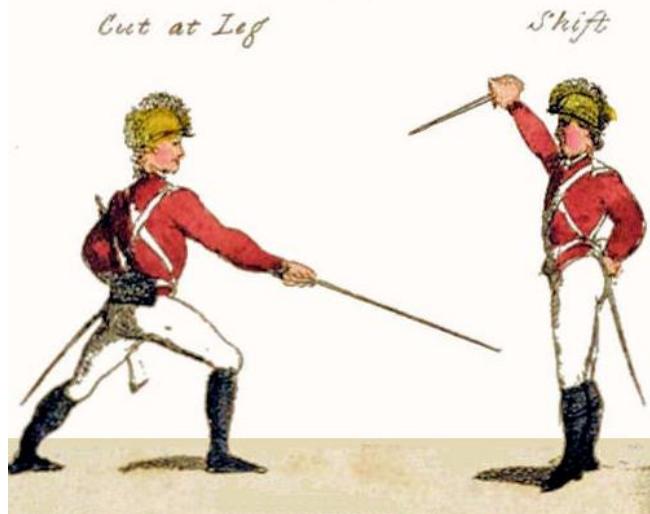
3.4

Guard your head.

(Stay in the lunge position from the feint, do not withdraw)

Cut at Leg

Shift



3.5

Cut at my leg.

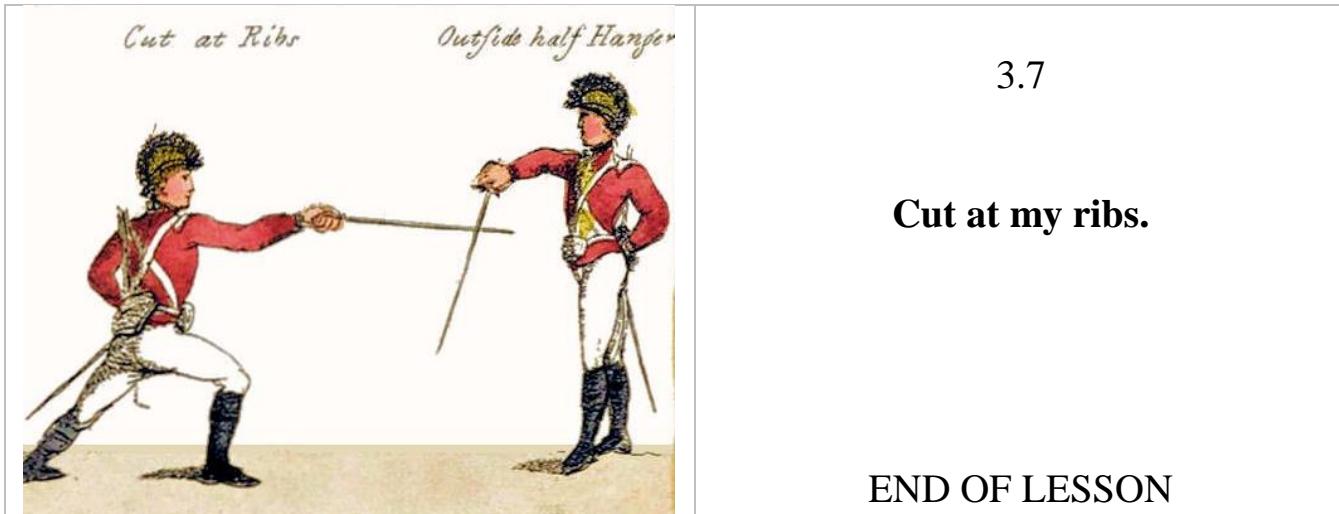
S^t. George

Cut at H.^d.



3.6

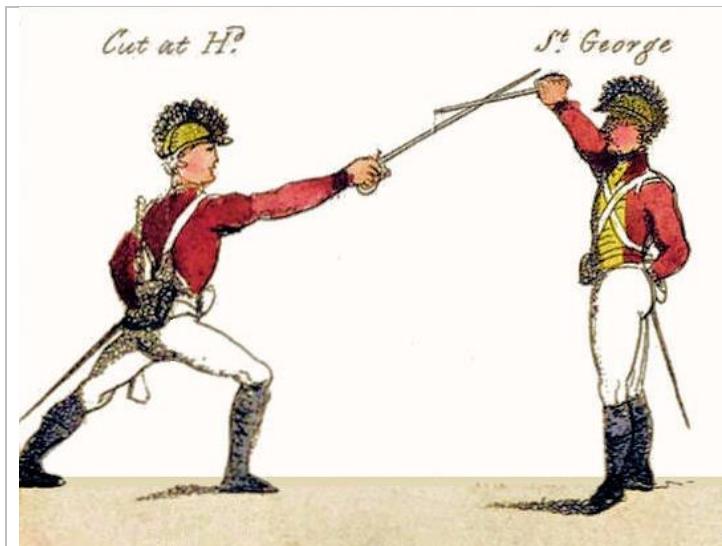
Guard your head.



Notes –

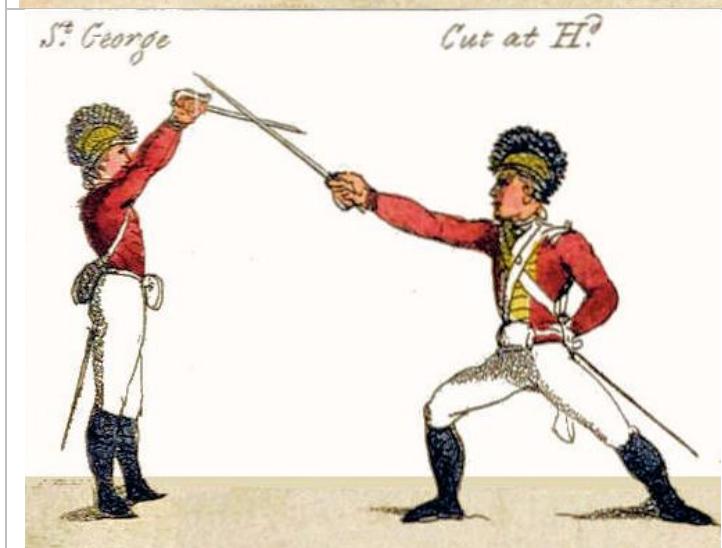
Staying in a lunge position when you parry a riposte is highly unusual, and must only be done with a correct setup. In this instance it is a counter time technique. You feint to the leg to draw out a predicted response. Knowing that your opponent will take the opportunity to cut to the head, you can stay in an advanced position when making your parry, and therefore be able to make a quick cut to his leg after your parry.

LESSON IV



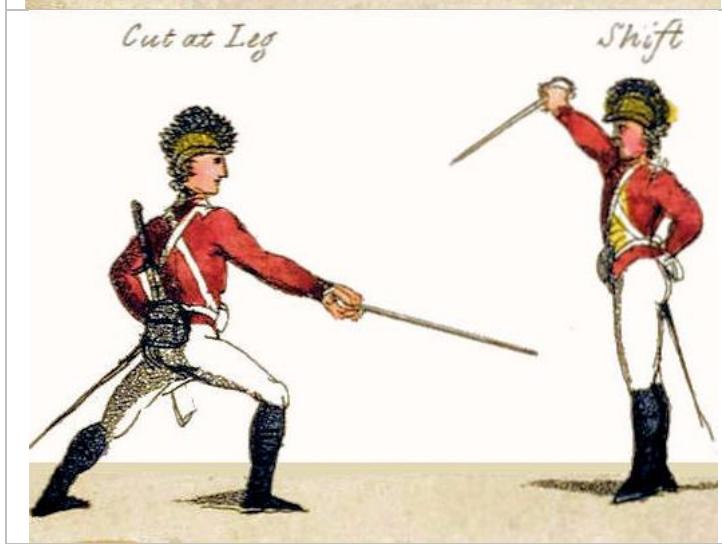
4.1

Cut at my head.



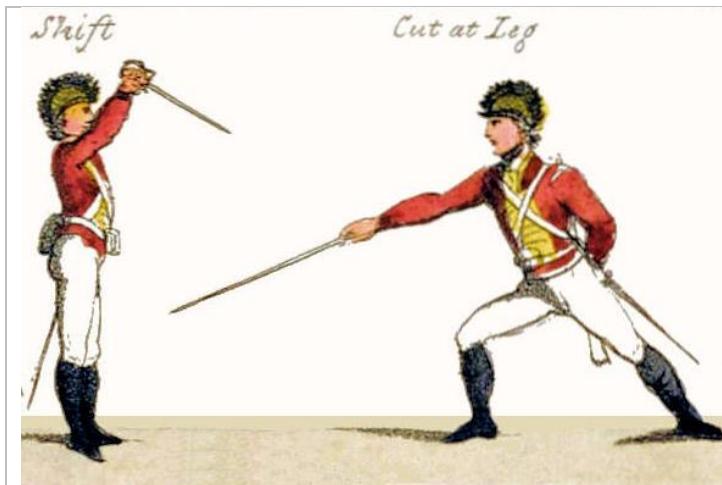
4.2

Guard your own.



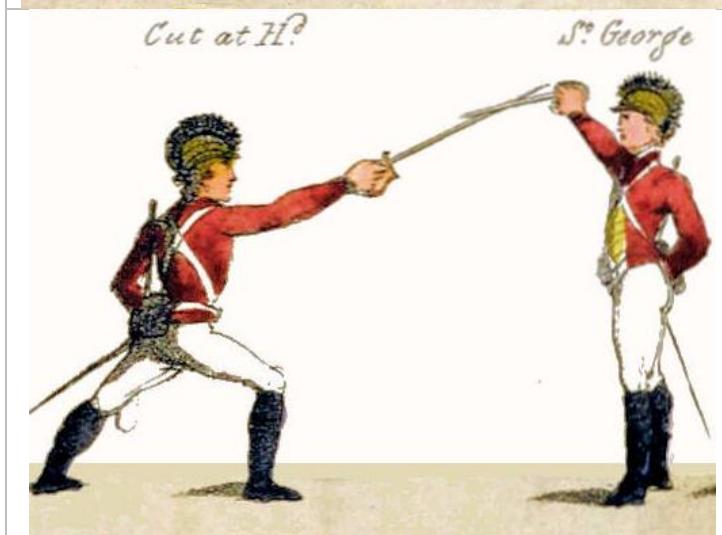
4.3

Cut at my leg.



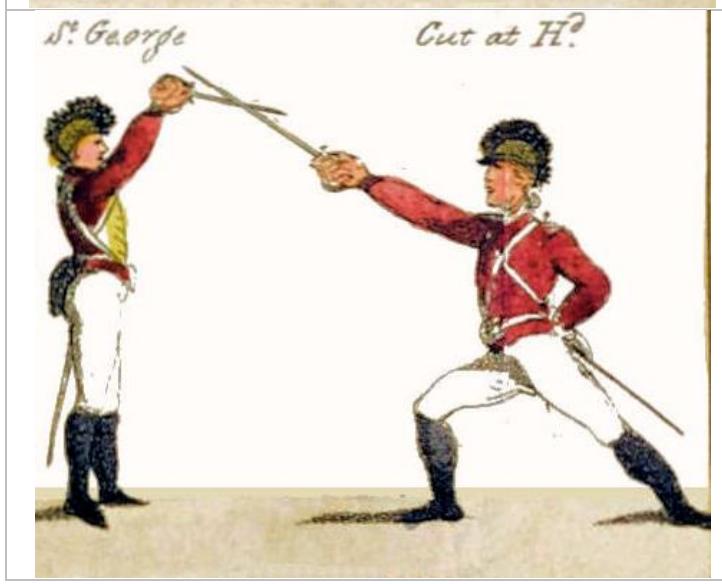
4.4

Shift your own.



4.5

Cut at my head.

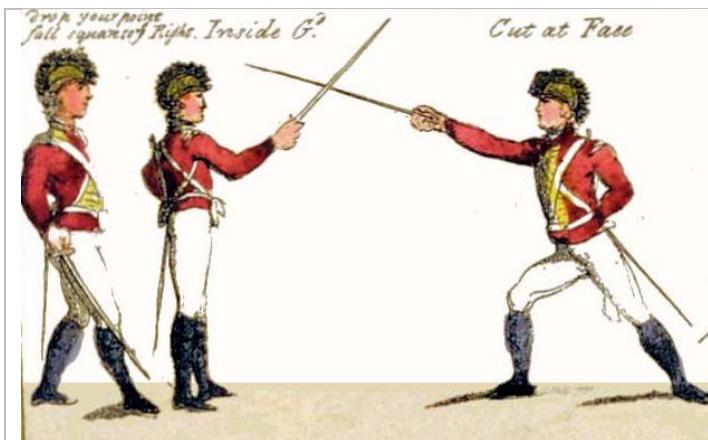


4.6

Guard your own.

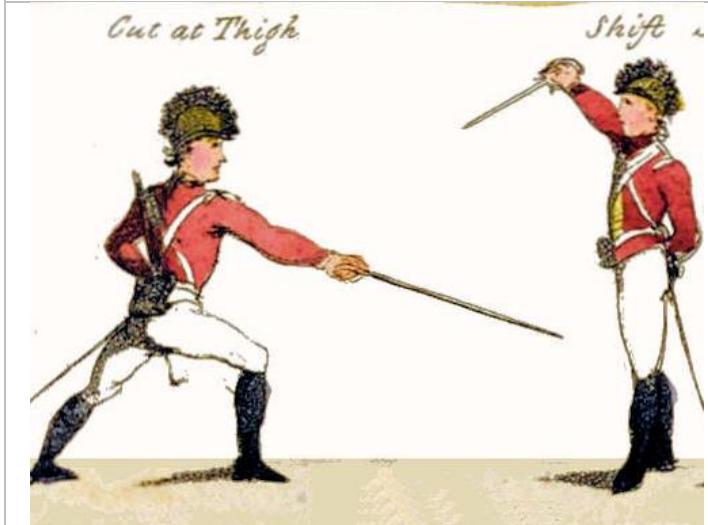
END OF LESSON

LESSON V



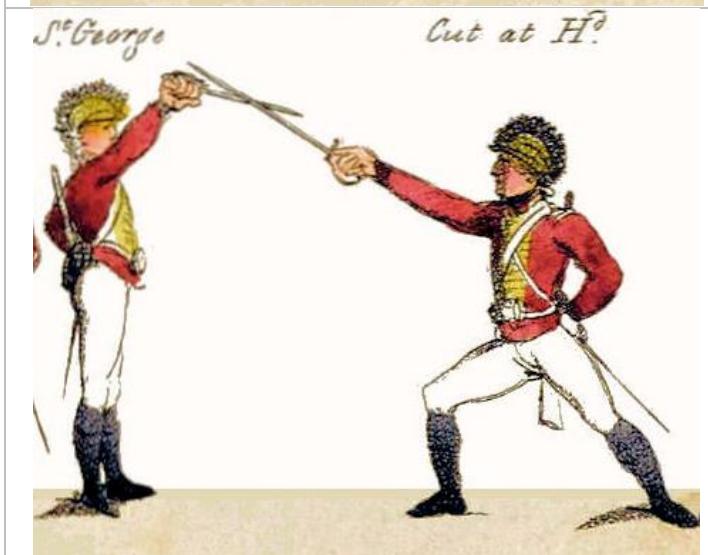
5.1

Stand on outside guard; drop your point to the right, turning the inside of your wrist upwards. Parry my cut at your face with a high inside guard.



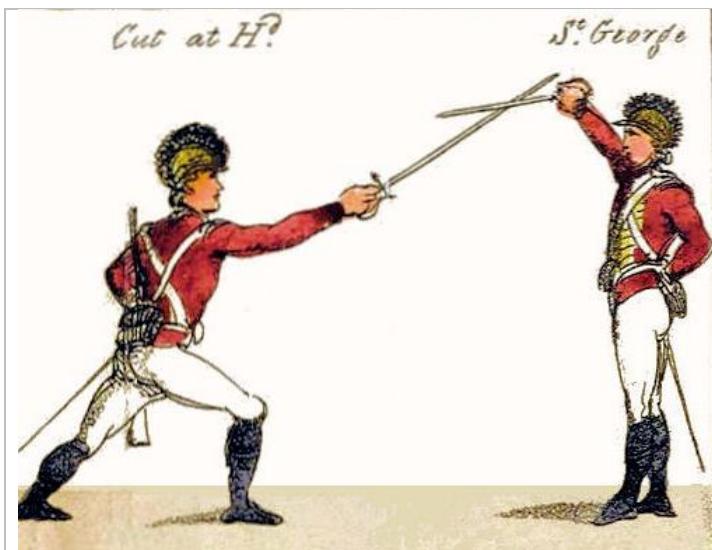
5.2

Cut at my thigh outside.



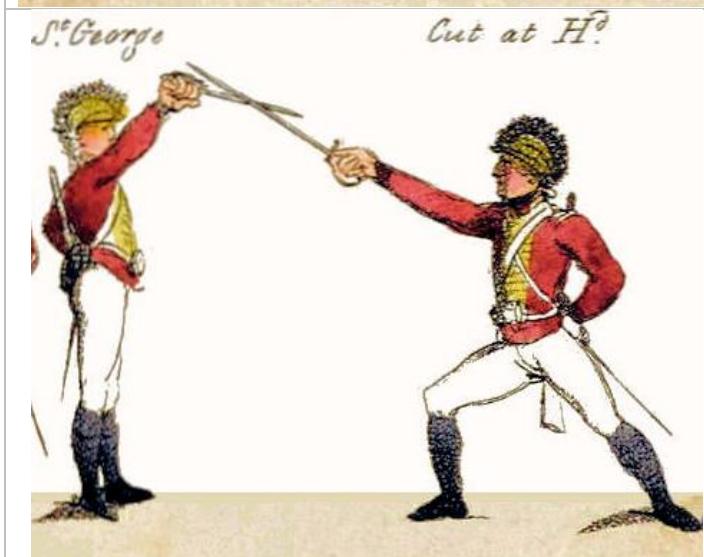
5.3

Guard your head.



5.4

Cut at my head.



5.5

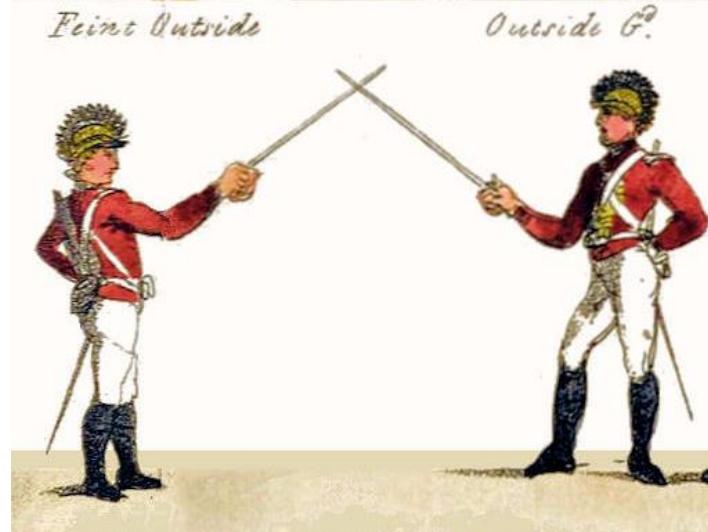
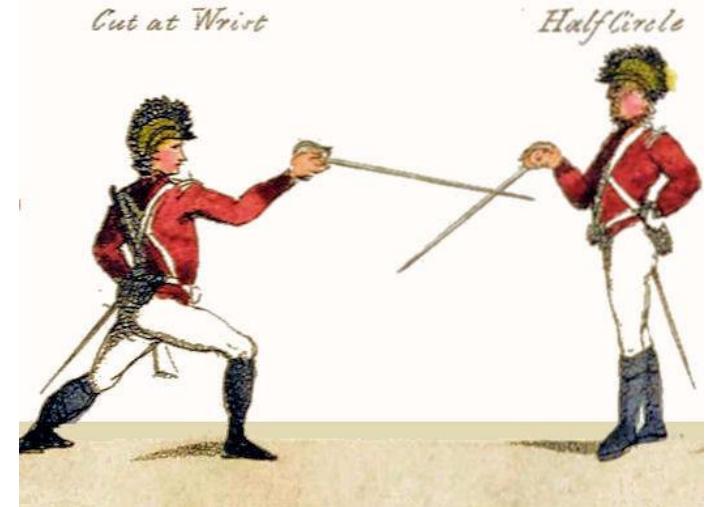
Guard your own.

END OF LESSON

Notes -

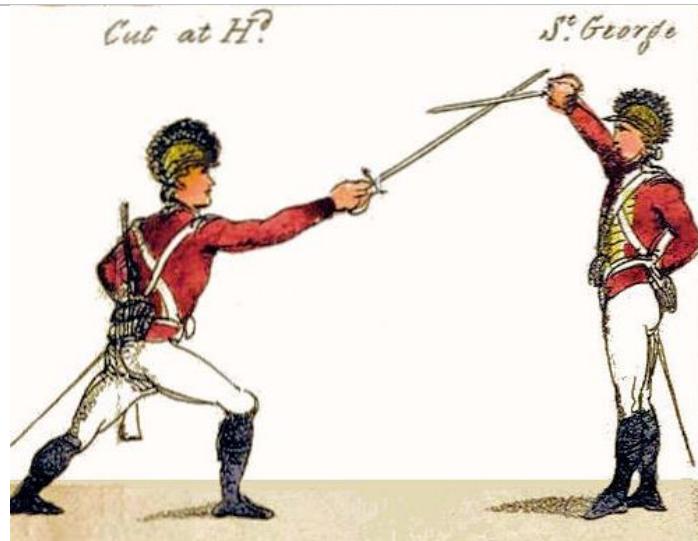
This lesson opens with an ‘invitation’. You lower your guard to provoke a response that you can capitalise on. Beware that just as with a feint, it is weak until you have moved on to the next action that follows it.

LESSON VI

 <p>Feint Outside Outside G.</p>	6.1
 <p>Cut at Wrist Half Circle</p>	6.2
 <p>Inside G. Thrust at face in carte</p>	6.3

Cut at H^o.

S^r. George

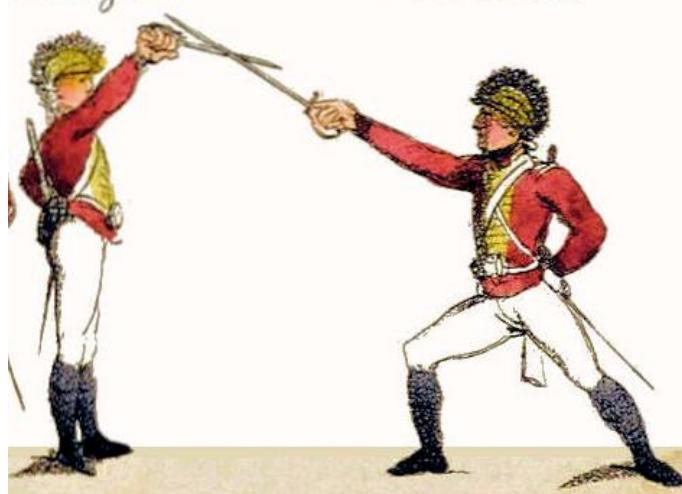


6.4

Cut at my head.

S^r. George

Cut at H^o.

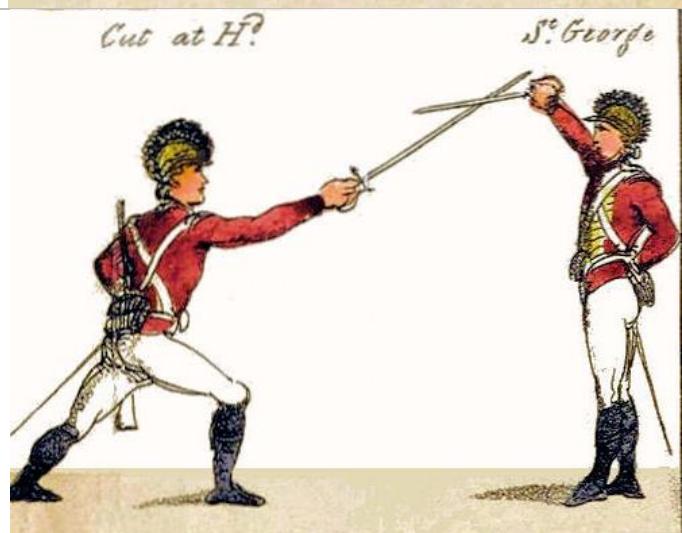


6.5

Guard your own.

Cut at H^o.

S^r. George



6.6

Cut at my head.

END OF LESSON

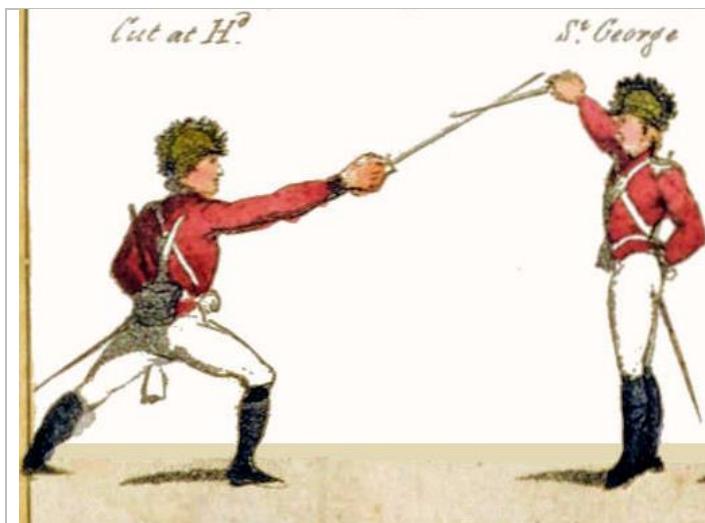
Notes -

Bringing the feet together is common place when parrying, but it is done so by withdrawing, or slipping the front leg. Angelo never says which foot moves at the start of this lesson when the feint is made, but it would seem logical that the front leg is withdrawn for the following reasons –

- Like in lesson 2 when the body is held back when lunging to protect it during the feint, here the leg is withdrawn to not leave it exposed when feinting.
- It may be done to create the illusion of attack/threat, to provoke a positive response to the feint.
- The system relies on you always being able to slip the leg to stop it being struck, but if you brought up the rear foot, both would be in your opponents range.
- If your started at lunge distance (as you should) and brought the rear leg up, and then lunged, you would be too close to your opponent.

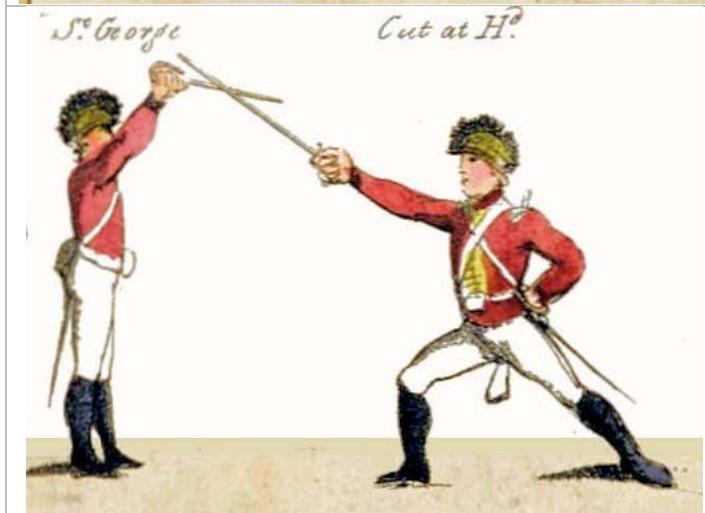
It is a military system practiced in lines. At no time does the back leg ever move, and to do so would completely mess up the formation of the practice. This is not a reason to do what you do, but an explanation as to re-enforce the previous two points. Additionally, the system relies on you always being able to slip the front leg to protect it, which you will not be able to do if you brought the rear leg up to meet it.

LESSON VII



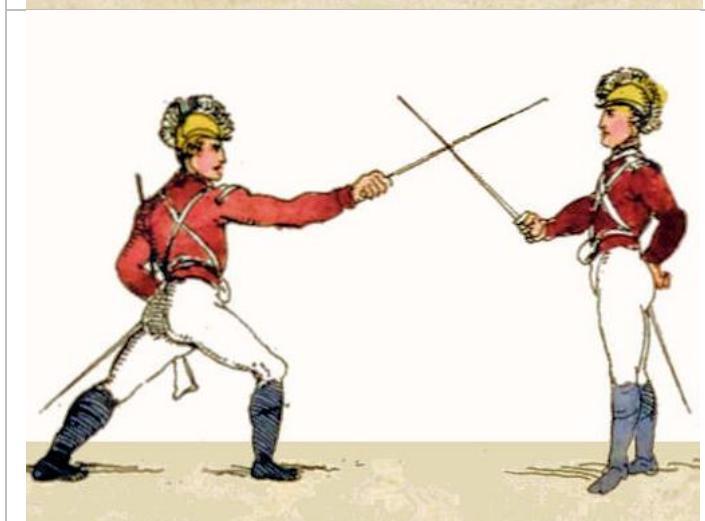
7.1

Cut at my head.



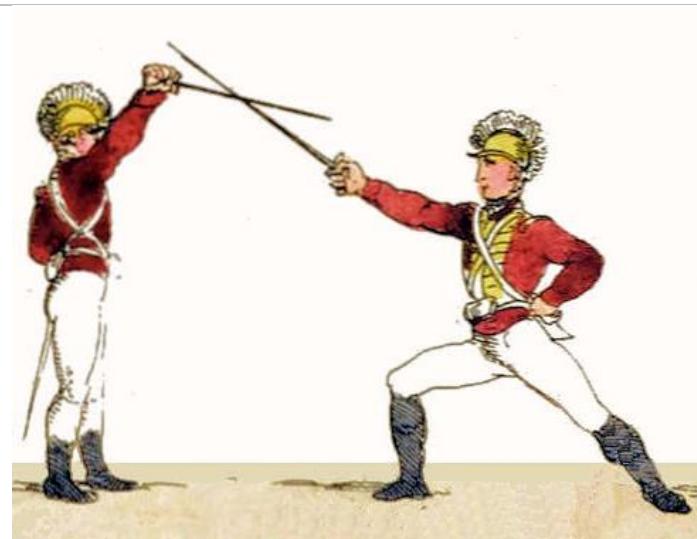
7.2

Guard your own.



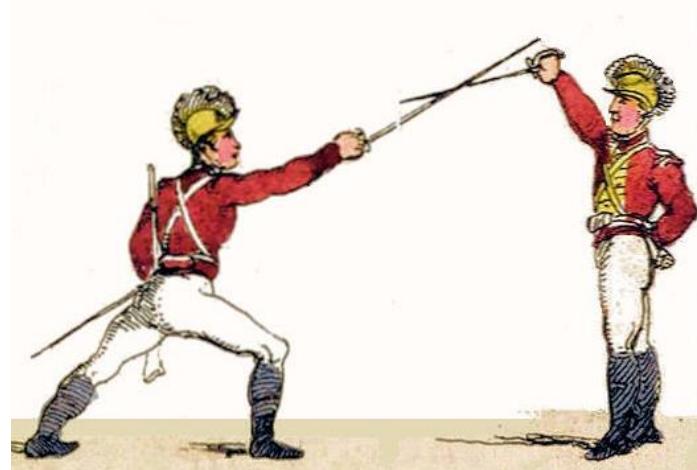
7.3

Cut at my arm outside.



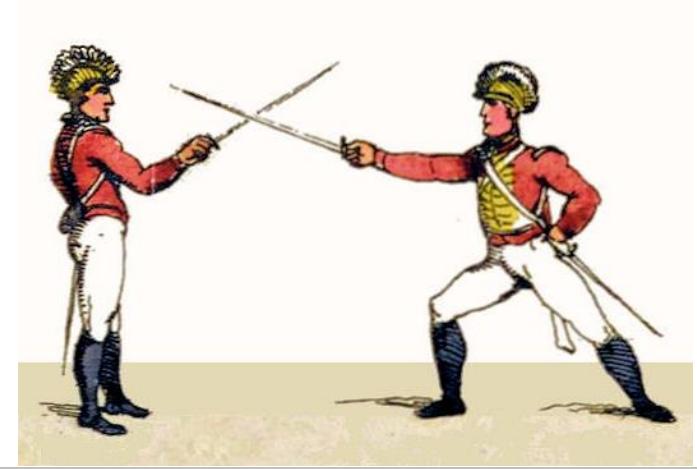
7.4

Guard your head.



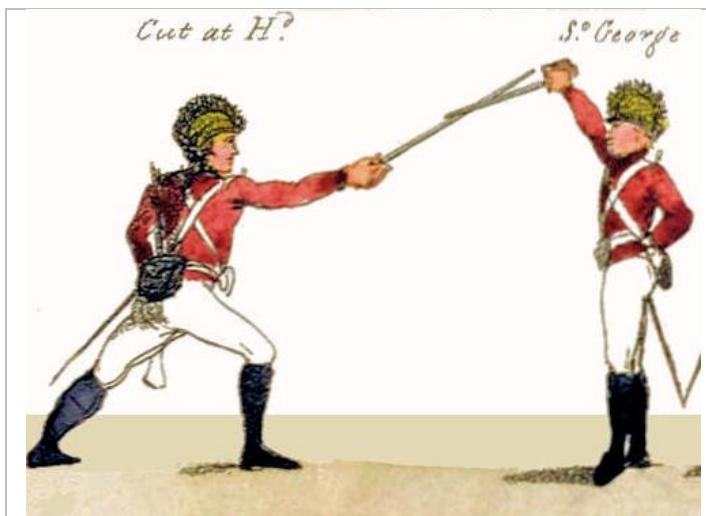
7.5

Cut at my head.



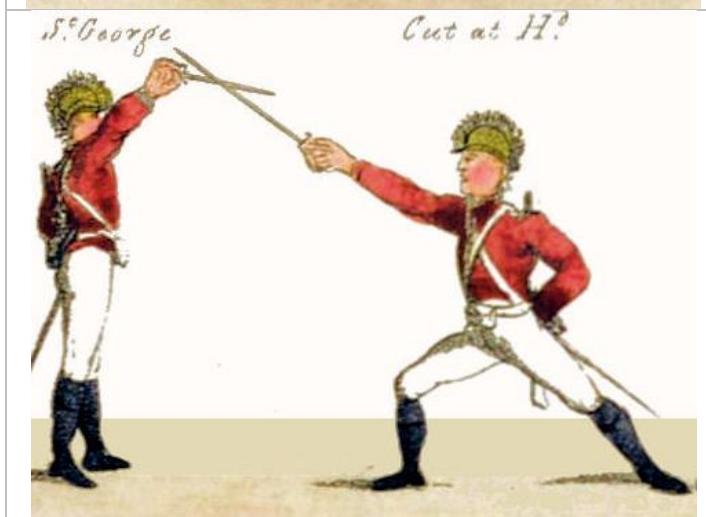
7.6

Guard your arm outside.



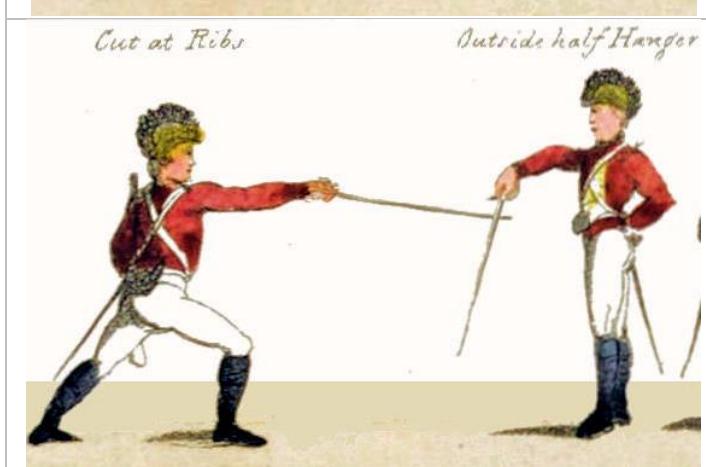
7.7

Cut at my head.



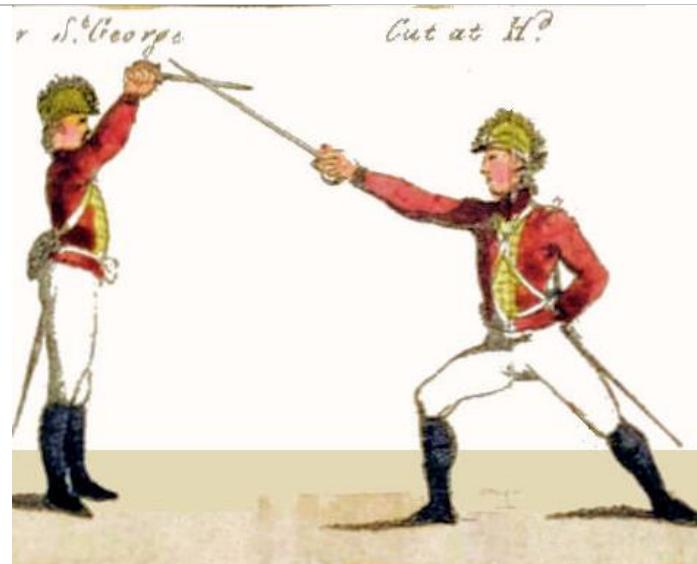
7.8

Guard your own.



7.9

Cut at my ribs.



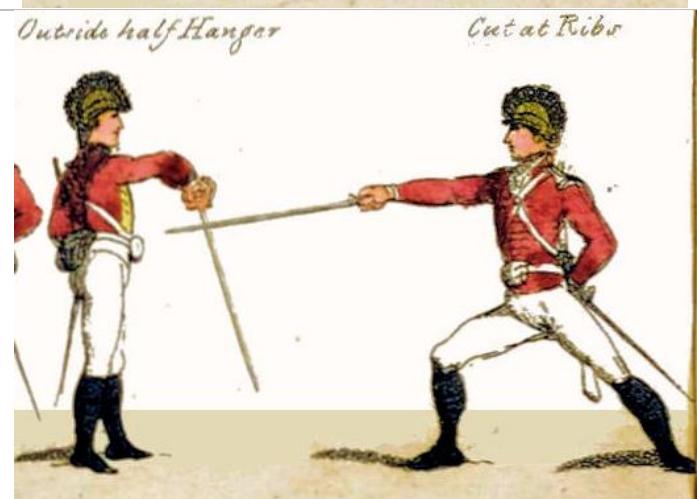
7.10

Guard your head.



7.11

Cut at my head.

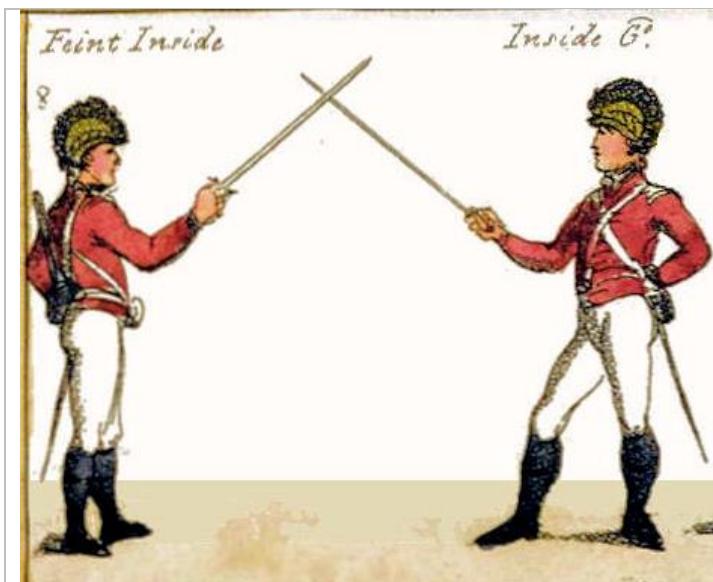


7.12

Guard your ribs.

END OF LESSON

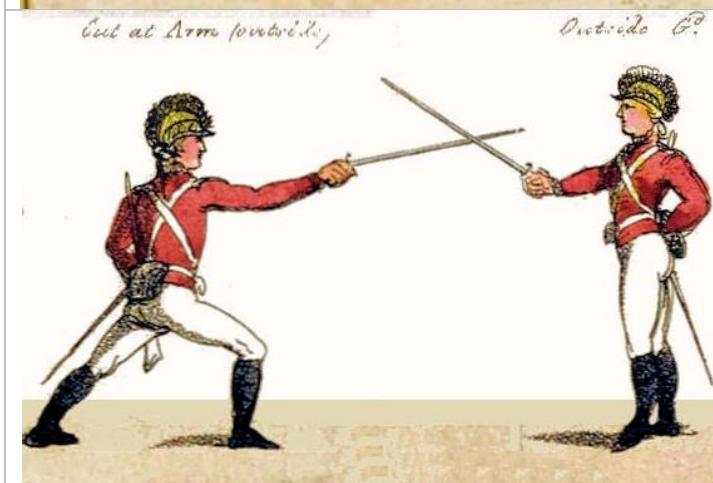
LESSON VIII



8.1

Stand on outside guard, feint at my face inside...

(Notice how the feet are brought together. This is a slip of the front foot)



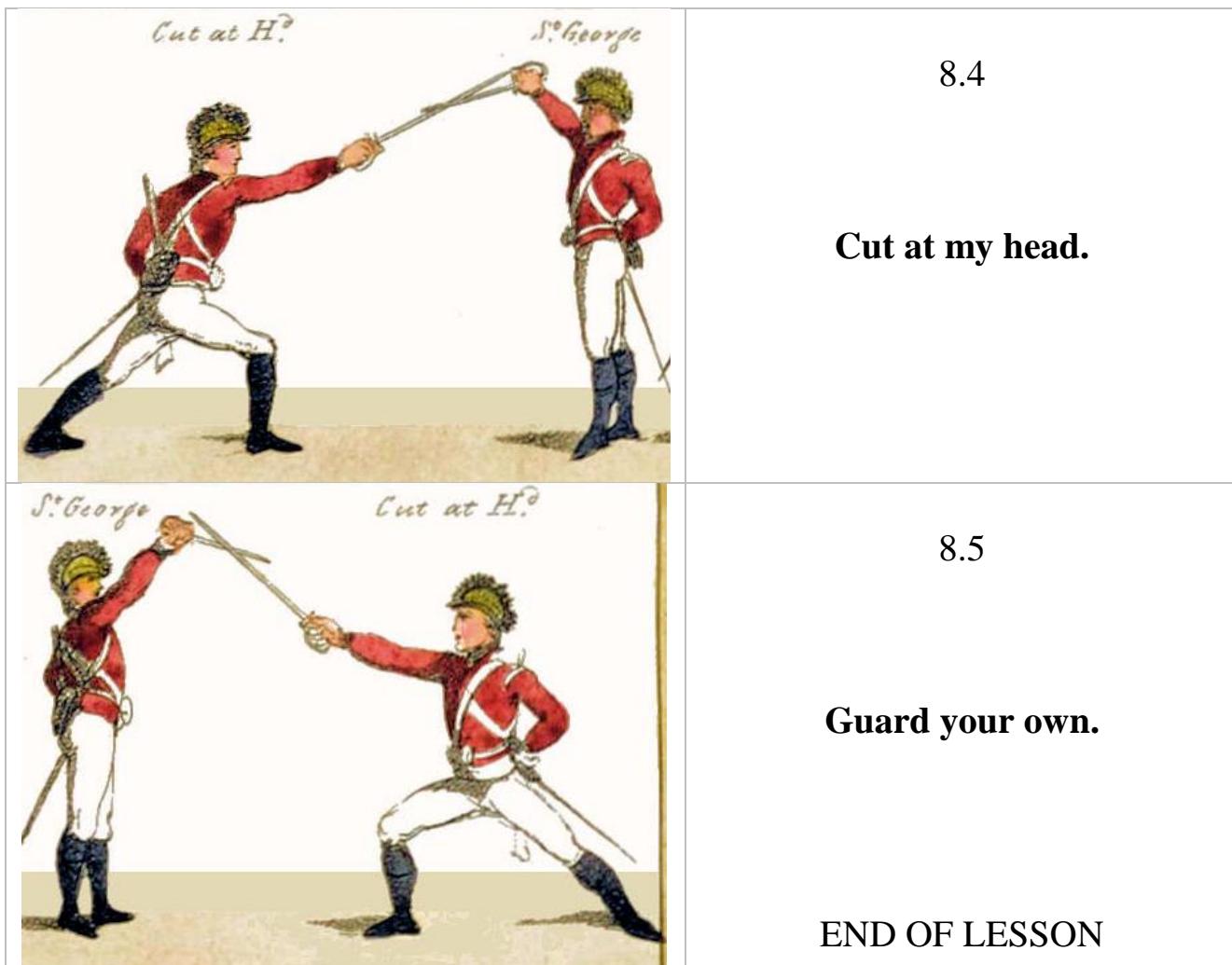
8.2

...and cut at my arm outside.



8.3

Guard your head.



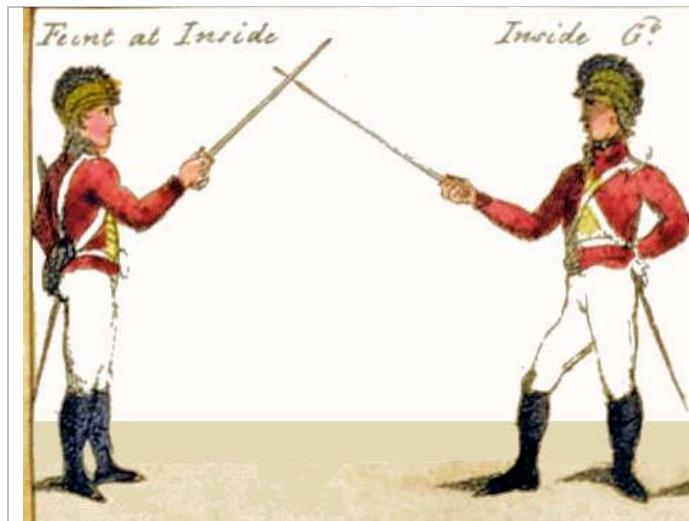
END OF LESSON

Notes -

Bringing the feet together is common place when parrying, but it is done so by withdrawing, or slipping the front leg. Angelo never says which foot moves at the start of this lesson, or division, but it would seem logical that the front leg is withdrawn for the following reasons –

- Like in lesson 2 when the body is held back when lunging to protect it during the feint, here the leg is withdrawn to not leave it exposed when feinting.
- It may be done to create the illusion of attack/threat, to provoke a positive response to the feint.
- It is a military system practicing in lines. At no time does the back leg every move, and to do so would completely mess up the formation of the practice. This is not a reason to do what you do, but an explanation as to re-enforce the previous two points.

LESSON IX



9.1

Stand on outside guard - Feint inside,...

(Notice how the feet are brought together. This is a slip of the front foot)



9.2

...and cut at my arm outside.

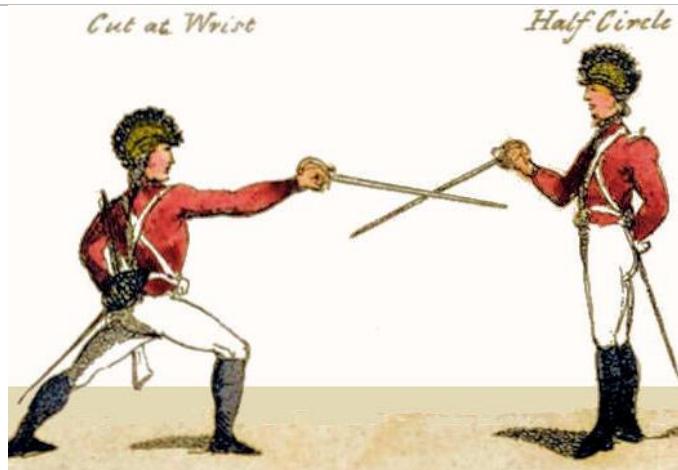


9.3

Guard your head.

Cut at Wrist

Half Circle

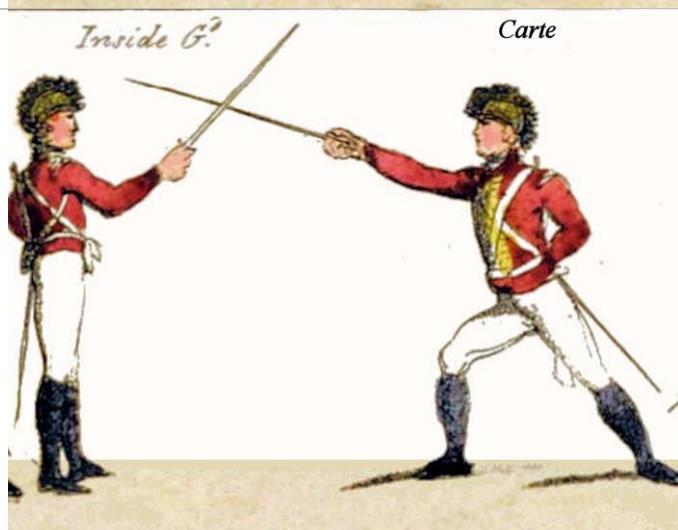


9.4

Cut III at my wrist...

Inside G.^d

Carte

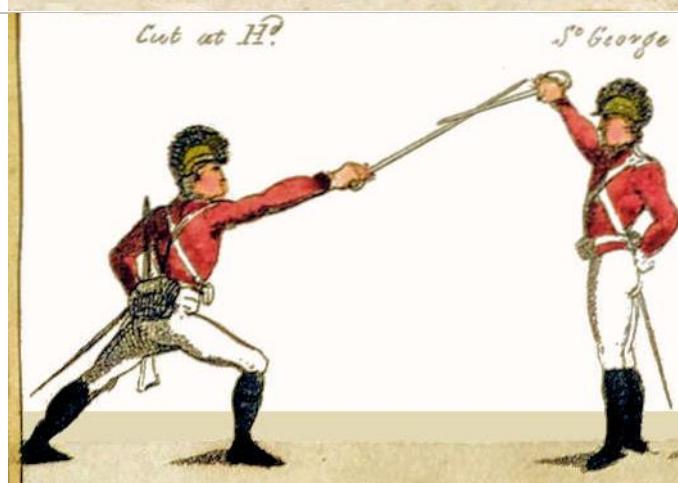


9.5

**...and parry carte
with inside guard**

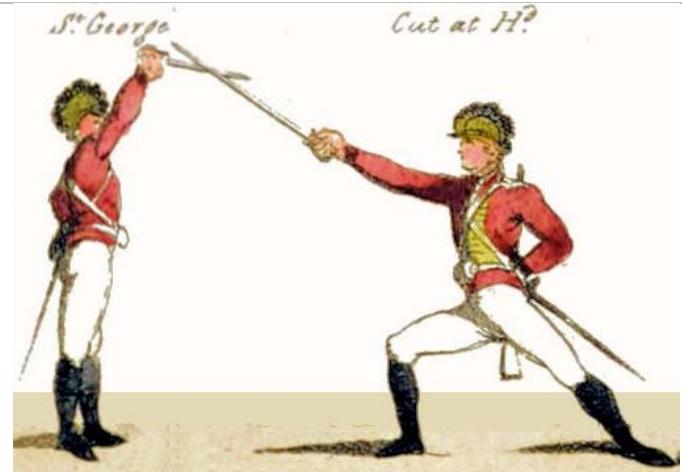
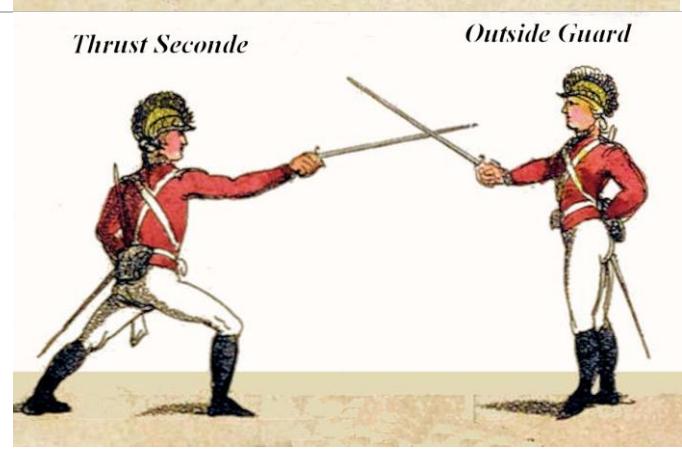
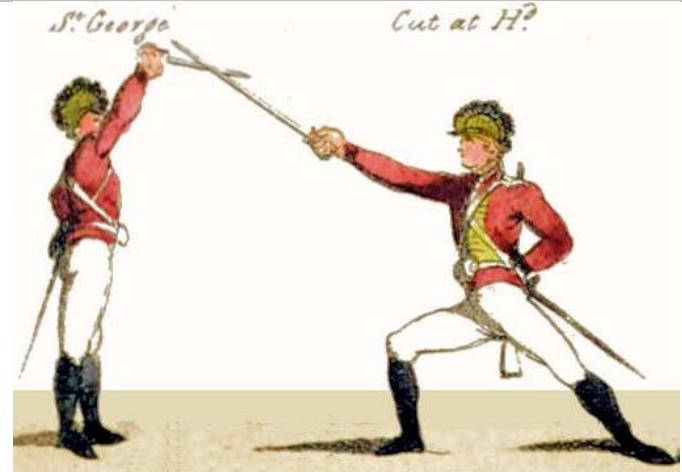
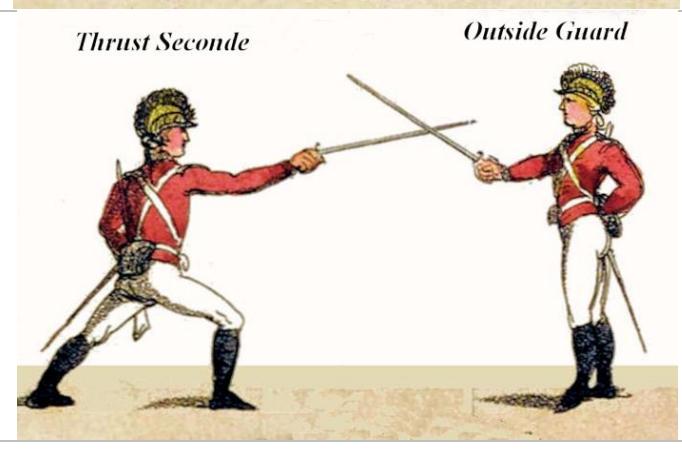
Cut at H.^d

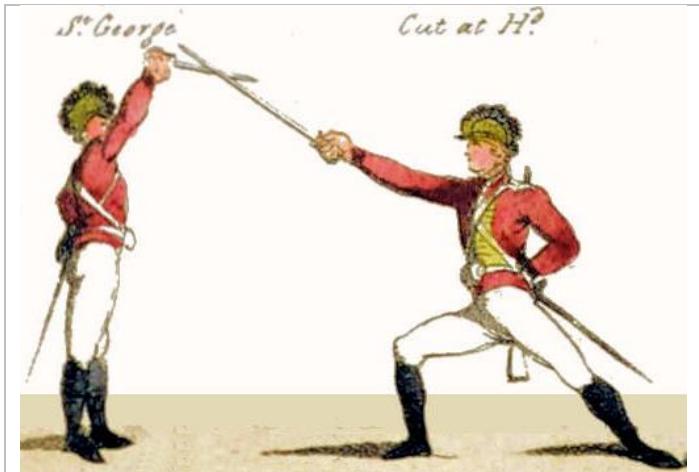
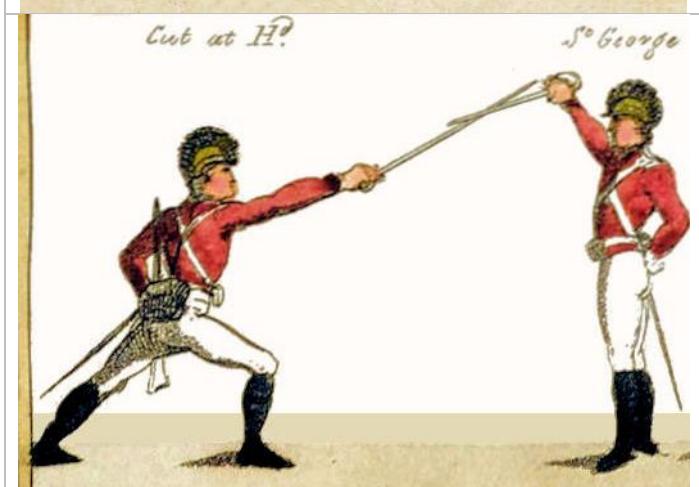
S^o George



9.6

Cut at my head.

	9.7 Guard your own.
	9.8 Thrust seconde.
	9.9 Guard your head.
	9.10 Thrust seconde again.

	<p>9.11</p> <p>Guard your head.</p>
	<p>9.12</p> <p>Cut at my head.</p>

END OF LESSON

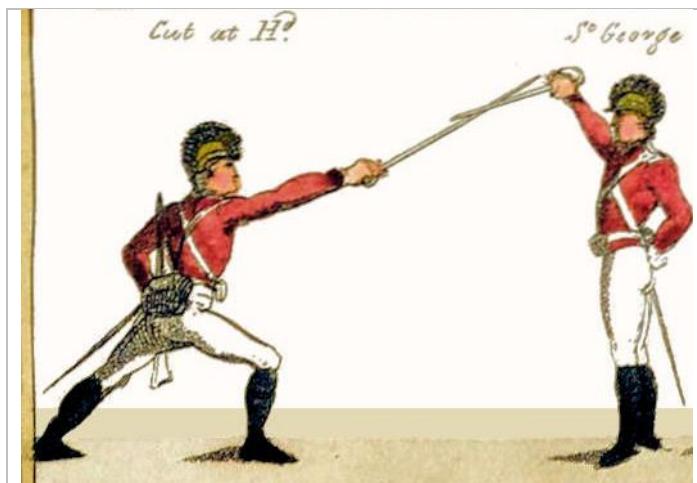
Notes -

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- Like in lesson 2 when the body is held back when lunging to protect it during the feint, here the leg is withdrawn so as to not leave it exposed when feinting.
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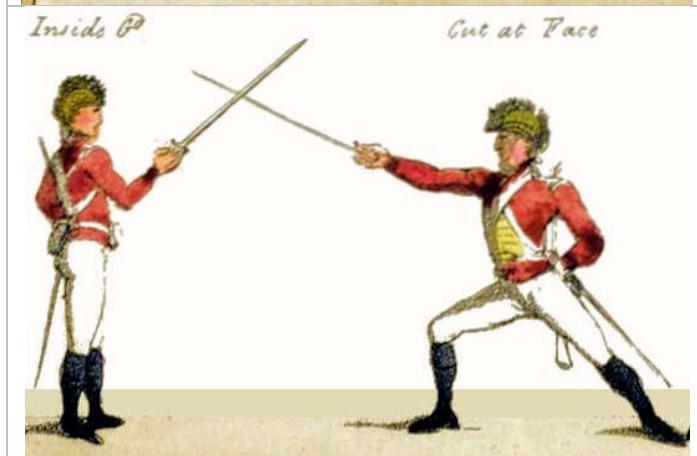
9.8 – As this is very different to the Angelo poster, which does no show thrusts, we do not know how it is parried in this drill. However, in Roworth's text he says the most usual method of parrying thrusts made above the wrist are using outside and inside guard. Typically with a beat, and with a slightly more bent arm and lowered guard.

LESSON X



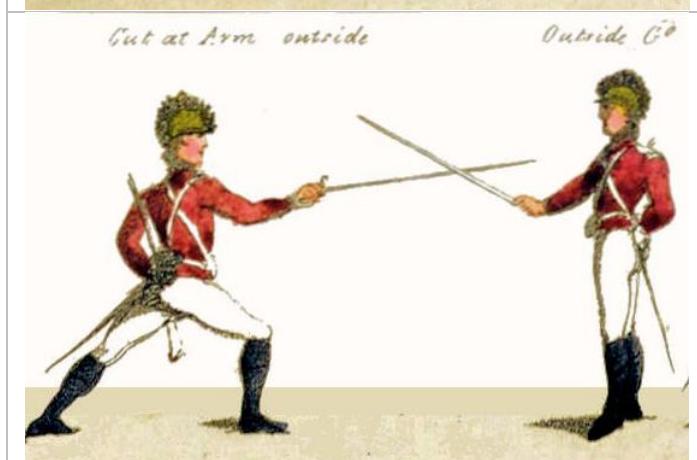
10.1

Cut at my head.



10.2

Guard your face.



10.3

Cut at my arm outside.

Inside half Hanger

Cut at Belly

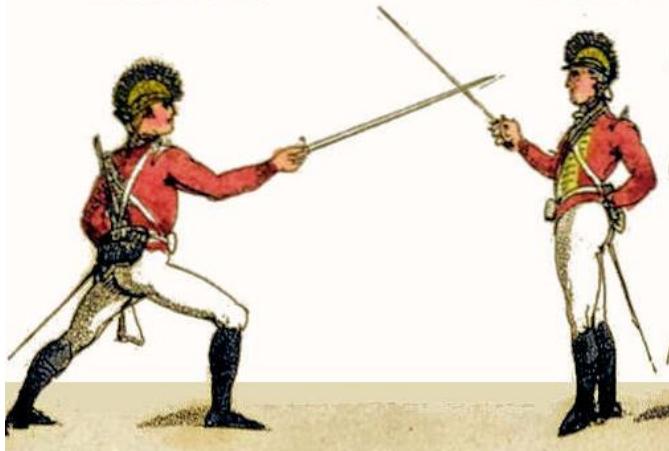


10.4

Guard your belly.

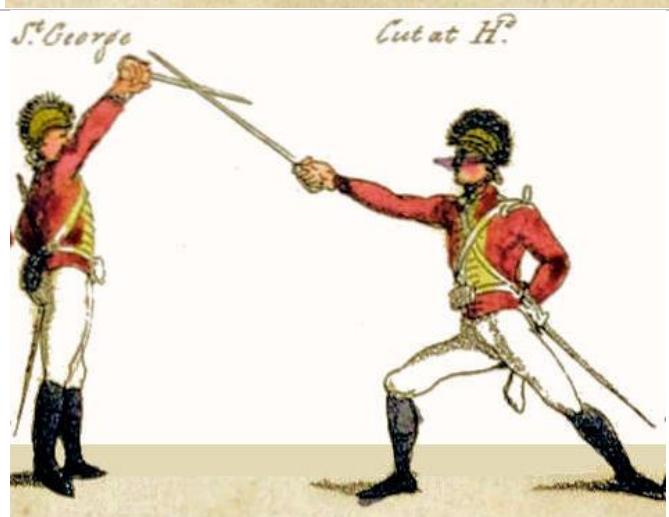
Cut at Face.

Inside G^o.



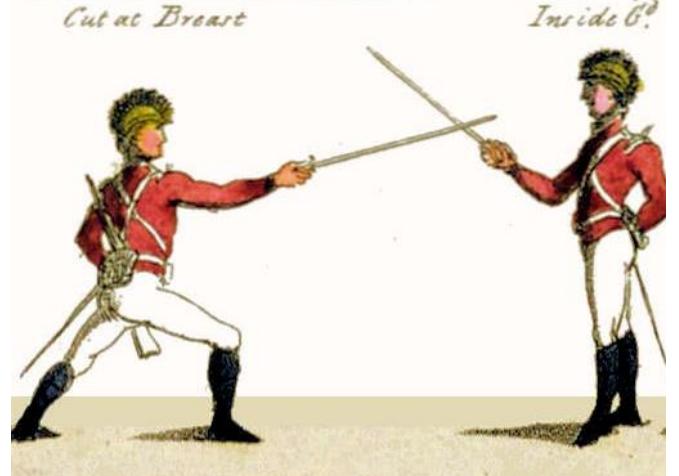
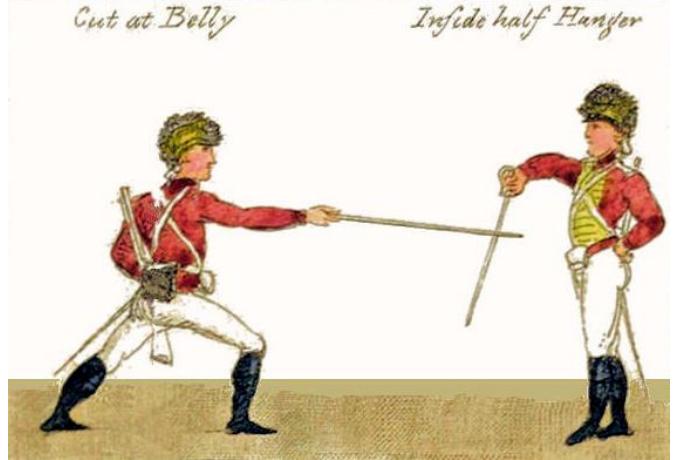
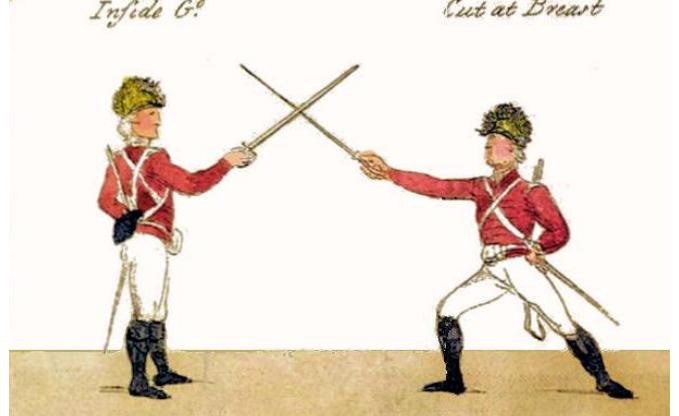
10.5

Cut at my face.



10.6

Guard your head.

	10.7	Cut at my breast.
	10.8	Guard your arm outside.
	10.9	Cut at my belly.
	10.10	Guard your breast.
		END OF LESSON

HOW ANGELO'S LESSONS DIFFER FROM ROWORTH

A direct comparison of the text from the ten lessons of each can be found on page 47, but here is a breakdown of how Angelo's ten lessons are different to Roworth's. As you can see, the only significant difference is the inclusion of thrust work in Roworth's edition, where you must both parry and launch thrusts yourself, as opposed to Angelo where there is no thrust work from either party.

V – Guard your own added at end as an additional action.

VI – First two actions are the same, but after the parry is made from your cut 3, go to outside guard, then feint inside to his face, before cutting to his ribs, A answers feint by coming to inside guard and then parrying rib cut with the outside half hanger.

IX – Differs radically after the first few actions due to the inclusion of thrust work in Roworth.

X – Overall the actions are the same, except some target zones aimed for are changed between face and breast.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Why always withdraw the lead leg?

Roworth never says to always slip the leg when parrying, except for certain parries, however the Angelo poster is far clearer on the subject. The slip of the leg is because you can easily be deceived when parrying through feints, or hit with a second redirected hit after you have made your parry. Even if you can make your counter attack and land a blow, you do not want to have been cut in the leg yourself. Always practicing the leg slip instils a strong defensive mind-set into a swordsman. We have also found that as a result it makes for a cleaner, safe fight, with far less risk of double hits, and also a fast twitch response. Overall it is an excellent way to develop good body mechanics.

Why cut to the outside leg rather than inside?

When you have parried in the Guard of St. George, you might find it more natural, and more powerful to cut to the inside of your opponent's leg, rather than the outside as is shown in every lesson. However, if during or after the cut you need to change what you are doing, or parry some kind of counter, you will have a much stronger defence when cutting outside than inside. When delivering a cut to the outside leg as either a determined attack, or a feint, you can return to Hanging guard or St George extremely quickly. But when cutting to the inside, the natural guard posture for defence is half circle guard, which is very weak when met with a heavy cut from high, and makes the hand very vulnerable. Another point that we have found is that when fighting in close order, as many battlefield fights would be, cutting to the inside leg of your opponent requires an awful lot of space. To do so can require cutting across, or interfering with the comrade to your right, but a cut to the outside is very self contained between you and your opponent.

Why use Guard of St George instead of Seconde hanging/Outside Hanging guard?

Because it is stronger, and Angelo teaches much the same. He says to use inside and outside guard to defend against cuts to the face (cut 1 & 2), but St George to defend against a powerful straight cut to the top of the head (cut 7). It is much harder to beat through St George, and also, against a straight cut, seconde hanging guard can endanger the lead hand as it brings the guard in line to the opponents cut.

Is it dangerous to cut to the leg under a high parry?

Yes, in fact attacking the legs is generally dangerous anyway. As you are cutting low you lose some reach, with what we call the 'false distance', because you are cutting from shoulder height and aiming low. Not only this but you cannot protect your head, and without the cover of a buckler or shield, you cannot cover whilst attacking. To make a leg cut safer, you need to set up the situation to make it safer. Examples of this are seen in Lesson 2, and lesson 5. Cutting to the leg and not being struck on your arm

or head is actually quite difficult, and often a dangerous task for even a well trained swordsman.

Is it all linear?

Everything in these lessons is practiced in lines, and the only movement is back and forth. However, yes there is some non-linear footwork in Roworth's system, but it is unusual. It is rare to ever use offline footwork, meaning some kind of circular, or sideways motions around your opponent, except in the case of negotiating difficult terrain or to move out of the irritation of sunlight etc. In essence, it is almost entirely a linear system, for the sake of efficiency, and limited room to manoeuvre in many military combat situations.

What about left handed fencers?

This is a military system that was taught to large numbers of troops according to set principals. You were not allowed to be left-handed! Everybody trained right-handed. In our club we are not so strict, as our members attend for fun, and not for pay or in defence of their country. Some of the partnered drills are confusing done left handed, but they can be understood with a little experimentation. If you want to learn the drills left handed, I suggest both partners go left handed initially so that you are a mirror of two right-handers.

Why keep the left hand behind the back?

The sabre and broadsword are very agile weapons, whilst being very powerful in their cuts as well. However they are typically not used with an offhand weapon in British military swordsmanship. The shoulders need to be kept in line with the offhand being back for reach, and to leave the hand out will only make it a target. The left hand should only come forward at that moment in time it is needed to cover an opponent's sword, to disarm, or to punch them in the face, should you get so close. That being said, Roworth says that the hand can be rested down or behind as seen in the Angelo text, or up beside the face to use as a counter balance should you wish to. But the most important thing is that it stays safe and out of the way.

Is Roworth really the author of ‘The Art of Defence on Foot’?

There has been some doubt by some as to whether C. Roworth is the author of the book, ‘The Art of Defence on Foot, with Broadsword and Sabre’. This is due to the fact that he is also the printer of the work. Some have attributed the work to John Taylor. However, there is now plenty of evidence to clear this up. Yes Roworth is the author of the book, and he is very clearly attributed as such as on the title page on the second edition of the work, published in the same year as the first, 1798.

Charles Roworth served in the London and Westminster Light Horse Volunteers, as did many merchants, bankers, and others who signed up in the many volunteer services in order to protect the country in the event of a French invasion. John Taylor

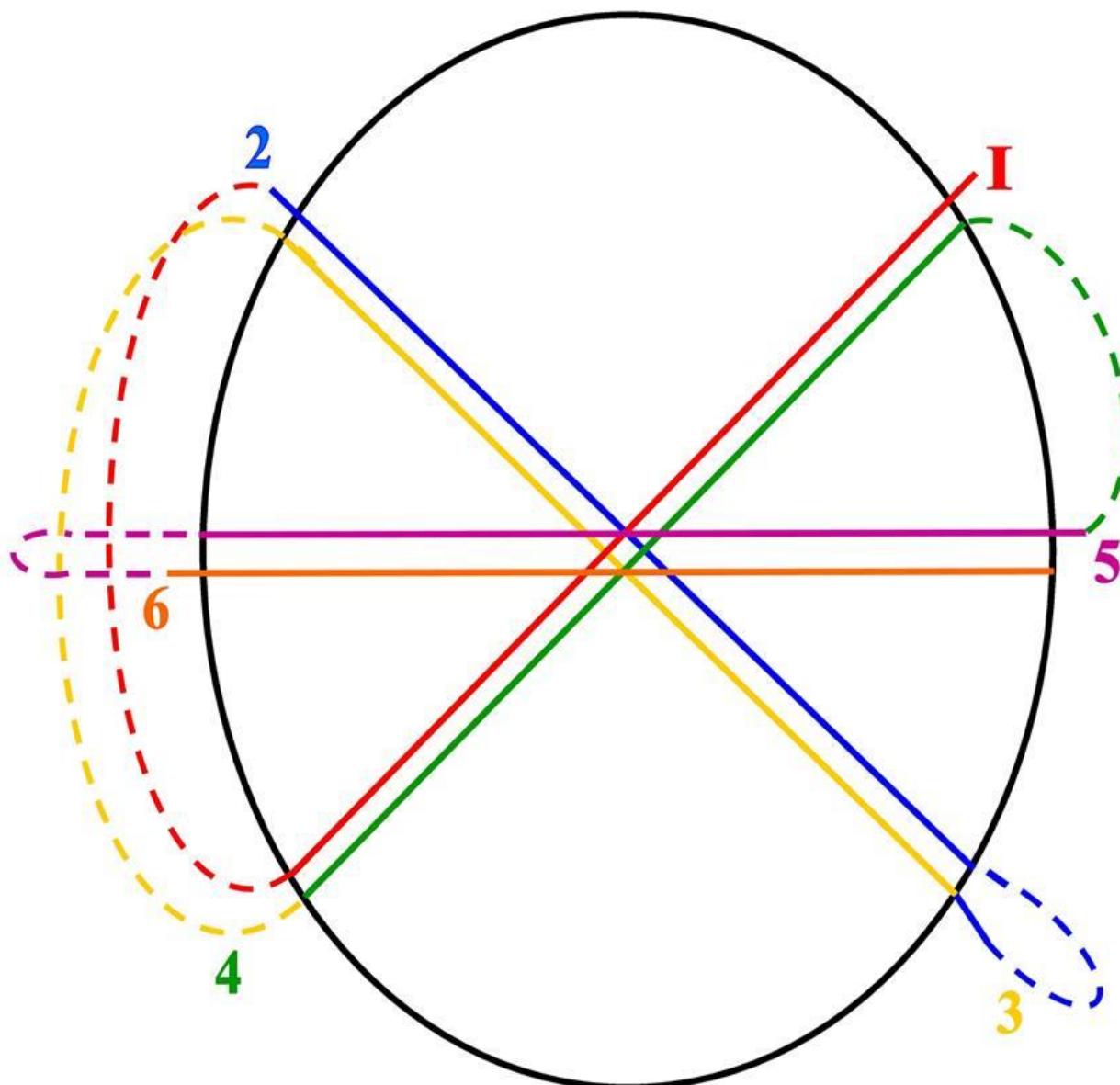
taught swordsmanship to this unit before Henry Angelo did. Angelo also taught the regulars, and many texts of the time recommend Roworth's work to officers who are not accustomed to the sabre and broadsword (as gentlemen of the time usually only learnt the smallsword in civilian life).

Why use Half Circle Guard?

This guard may feel both strange and weak, and in most instances it is. However, it is an excellent way to quickly parry snipes to the wrist made on the inside. In the first edition of Roworth, he taught what he called inside guard second and third position to in part deal with this. However in his second edition (1798) and 1804 edition, these were removed. This parry is especially useful when you are using a simple stirrup hilt sabre that does not have much hand protection, and therefore allows little margin for error if you attempt to parry with inside guard.

CUTTING DIAGRAM

The six cut diagram from Roworth, with the addition of colour coding. It will be useful as some of the text descriptions in Taylor's lessons refer to a cut number. Note that Angelo uses a very similar cutting diagram, but with the addition of a seventh cut, which is vertical, as if cutting down vertically to the head.



The Six Cuts.

COMPARISON OF THE LESSONS FROM ANGELO AND ROWORTH

(Scanned, not transcribed)

Angelo (1799)	Roworth (1804)
Lesson 1.	LESSON I.
<i>Cut at Antagonists Head.</i> <i>Guard your own.</i> <i>Cut at A.^r Leg.</i> <i>Guard your Head.</i>	Cut at my head—Guard your own. Cut at my leg outside—Guard your head.
2.	II.
<i>Cut at A.^r H.^d</i> <i>G.^d your own.</i> <i>Feint at A.^r Leg.</i> <i>G.^d your H.^d</i> <i>Cut at A.^r Leg.</i> <i>G.^d your H.^d</i>	Cut at my head—Guard your own. Feint at my leg—Guard your head. Cut at my leg—Guard your head.
3.	III.
<i>The same as the second, after which cut at A.^r Ribs.</i>	Cut at my head—Guard your own. Feint at my leg—Guard your head. Cut at my leg—Guard your head. Cut at my ribs.
4.	IV.
<i>Cut at A.^r H.^d</i> <i>G.^d your own.</i> <i>Cut at A.^r Leg.</i> <i>Shift your own.</i> <i>Cut at A.^r H.^d</i> <i>G.^d your own.</i>	Cut at my head—Guard your own. Cut at my leg—Shift your own. Cut at my head—Guard your own.

<p>5.</p> <p><i>Disengage from an outside Guard and drop your point falling square to the right.</i></p> <p><i>A.^t cuts at your Face</i> <i>Receive him upon an inside Guard, and cut at his thigh.</i></p> <p><i>G.^d your H.^d</i> <i>Cut at A.^t H.^d</i></p>	<p>V.</p> <p><i>Stand on outside guard; drop your point to the right, turning the inside of your wrist upwards—Parry my cut at your face with a high Inside guard.</i></p> <p><i>Cut at my thigh outside—Guard your head.</i> <i>Cut at my head—Guard your own.</i></p>
<p>6.</p> <p><i>Being upon an inside G.^d feint for the outside of A.^t arm & cut at his wrist (inside)</i> <i>A.^t answers the feint by coming to an outside G.^d & parrys by the half circle.</i></p> <p><i>Being upon an outside G.^d feint for the face & cut at A.^t Ribs.</i></p> <p><i>A.^t answers the feint by coming to an inside G.^d & parrys with the outside half hanger.</i></p>	<p>VI.</p> <p><i>Stand on inside guard—</i> <i>Feint outside at my face, and cut III. at my wrist.</i></p> <p><i>Parry the thrust in carte with inside guard.</i> <i>Cut at my head—Guard your own.</i> <i>Cut at my head.</i></p>
<p>7.</p> <p><i>Cut at A.^t H.^d</i> <i>G.^d your own.</i> <i>Cut at A.^t arm outside.</i></p> <p><i>G.^d your H.^d</i> <i>Cut at A.^t H.^d</i> <i>G.^d your arm outside .</i></p> <p><i>Cut at A.^t H.^d</i> <i>G.^d your own.</i> <i>Cut at A.^t Ribs.</i></p> <p><i>G.^d your H.^d</i> <i>Cut at A.^t H.^d</i> <i>G.^d your Ribs.</i></p>	<p>VII.</p> <p><i>Cut at my head—Guard your own.</i> <i>Cut at my arm outside—Guard your head.</i> <i>Cut at my head—Guard your arm outside.</i></p> <p><i>Cut at my head—Guard your own.</i> <i>Cut at my ribs—Guard your head.</i> <i>Cut at my head—Guard your ribs.</i></p>

<p>8.</p> <p><i>Being upon an outside G.^a feint for the face and cut at A.^a arm outside .</i></p> <p><i>A.^t answers the feint by coming to an inside G.^a and parrys with an outside G.^a then cuts at your H.^a</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your H.^a</i></p> <p><i>Cut at A.^aH.^a</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your own .</i></p>	<p>VIII.</p> <p>Stand on outside guard—</p> <p>Feint at my face inside, and cut at my arm out- side—Guard your head.</p> <p>Cut at my head—Guard your own.</p>
<p>9.</p> <p><i>Being upon an outside G.^a feint for the face & cut at A.^a arm outside</i></p> <p><i>A.^t G.^a himself & cuts at your H.^a</i></p> <p><i>Cut at A.^a wrist inside</i></p> <p><i>A.^t parrys with the half circle G.^a and cuts at your H.^a</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your H.^a</i></p> <p><i>Cut at A.^aH.^a</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your own .</i></p>	<p>IX.</p> <p>Stand on outside guard—</p> <p>Feint inside, and cut at my arm outside—Guard your head.</p> <p>Cut III. at my wrist—and parry carte with in- side guard.</p> <p>Cut at my head—Guard your own.</p> <p>Thrust seconde—Guard your head.</p> <p>Thrust seconde again—Guard your head.</p> <p>Cut at my head.</p>
<p>10.</p> <p><i>Cut at A.^aH.^a</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your face .</i></p> <p><i>Cut at A.^a arm outside .</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your Belly .</i></p> <p><i>Cut at A.^a Breast .</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your H.^a</i></p> <p><i>Cut at A.^a Face .</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your arm outside</i></p> <p><i>Cut at A.^a Belly .</i></p> <p><i>G.^a your Breast .</i></p>	<p>X.</p> <p>Cut at my head—Guard your face.</p> <p>Cut at my arm outside—Guard your belly.</p> <p>Cut at my face—Guard your head.</p> <p>Cut at my breast—Guard your arm outside.</p> <p>Cut at my belly—Guard your breast.</p>

SWORDS FOR WHICH THIS SYSTEM IS INTENDED

The Roworth manual is intended as a unified system for all swords that may be used in combat on foot. For dedicated infantry use that usually means the Scottish Broadsword (Basket hilt), the infantry sabre & the spadroon. Additionally it appears that Angelo's text shows the sword bayonets that were carried by the dismounted troops of the light horse volunteers. These were a form of light infantry intended to support the cavalry, and carried a sword bayonet. Sword bayonets and similar short swords were also carried by rifleman and the Royal Artillery.

Occasionally Roworth explains that certain techniques work better or worse for each of those swords, but overall it is a universal system intended for all. This method was also intended for teaching cavalryman to fight on foot, and therefore would also include light and heavy cavalry swords. Below are some examples of swords of which would be commonly used under a system such as Roworth or Angelo taught. Weights and Dimensions are typical or average for the type.

Sword Bayonet (Volunteer version)

The Westminster and London Light Horse Volunteer, Light infantry were equipped with sword bayonets such as this, and I believe it is the sword depicted in the Angelo poster. The Royal Artillery used a similar hanger, or short sword that was not intended as a bayonet. Rifleman also carried a slightly shorter version to use with the Baker rifle. The Royal Navy cutlass is also very similar to this sword, only with additional hand protection.



1796 Pattern Infantry Officer's Sword (Spadroon)

The standard officer and Sergeant's sword. It was a light bladed sword that was neither particularly good at cut or thrust. It is as heavy as many infantry sabres due to the weight of the hilt, which also means it balances further towards the hilt than most sabres. Many officers replaced these with sabres such as the 1803 pattern or non-regulation models. The Royal Navy officer's regulation sword has a similar blade but with stirrup hilt. 700-750 grams, 80cm blade. Point of balance 8cm.



1803 Pattern Infantry Officer's Sword

The standard sword for officers of the Grenadier and Light Companies (flank companies), Light Regiments, as well as Fusilier, Rifle and staff officers. It was also popular with other officers, including the Royal Navy. They were also used by officers of the East India Company. Blade shapes vary substantially in terms of length and curvature. The guard is of slotted hilt type, providing more protection than a stirrup hilt. The blades are often inspired by the 1796 light cavalry sword, but are slightly shorter and usually without flare in the blade profile. This gives them almost as much cutting power, whilst making them more agile for combat on foot. However they can be found with an almost absurd variety of blades, in terms of length, weight, curvature, fullering etc. A good average fighting example is shown below (81cm, 810 grams). The pattern varies from 75-83cm blade, 700-830 grams, point of balance is typically around 15cm.



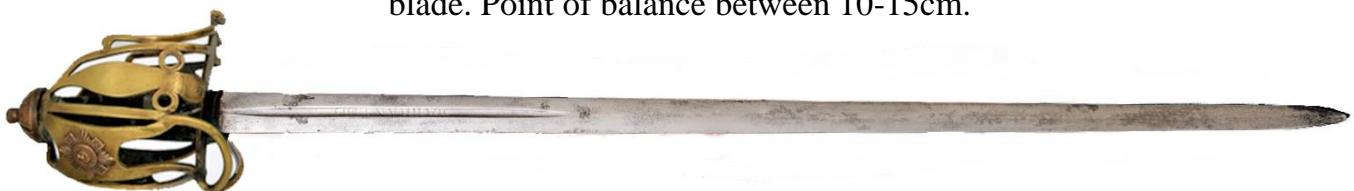
Regimental Pattern and Non-Regulation Infantry Officer's Swords.

Many Regiments, especially rifles, fusiliers and light infantry, had their own pattern for officer's sword, such as this Welsh Fusilier's Sword. Most are derivatives of the 1803 pattern. Some officers had swords made that were inspired by the 1796 Light Cavalry pattern both before and after the introduction of the 1803 pattern sabre. They typically have a simple stirrup hilt, blades vary greatly, found with and without fuller. 650-800 grams, 75-81cm blade, point of balance between 14-16cm.



1798 Pattern Scottish Infantry Officer's Sword

The (Northern) Scots continued with their tradition of using basket hilt swords, which Englishman had dropped earlier in the 18th century. Blades vary, but are typically straight and double edged. Substantial guards made of brass. 1.1-1.4kg, 81-84cm blade. Point of balance between 10-15cm.



1796 Light Cavalry Sword

Known as one of the greatest cutting swords of it's day, and of military swords in general. The light cavalry sword has a simple stirrup hilt and has a deeply curved blade, with a flare towards the end of the blade profile which helps it deliver immense power. It Is relatively short compared to many cavalry swords, but also surprisingly agile despite it's power. It was based on the hussar's sabres popular in Austria, Hungary and Poland. These become popular with light infantry officers who found the spadroon to be ineffective as a fighting sword, and led to the development of the 1803 pattern infantry sword. 900-930 grams, 83cm blade. Point of balance around 19cm.



1796 Heavy Cavalry Sword

The sword carried by Richard Sharpe. Notoriously heavy and unwieldy, but nevertheless used to deadly effect as is well recorded. It is the longest of the British pattern swords, and only surpassed in weight by the Scottish broadsword. It has a completely straight blade with hatchet tip (as below), though was often shortened slightly and reshaped to a spear point. It had a large 'dish' hilt that provided a lot of hand protection. This sword was based on the 1775 pattern Austrian 'pallasch'. 1.1kg, 89cm blade, point of balance 20cm.



GLOSSARY

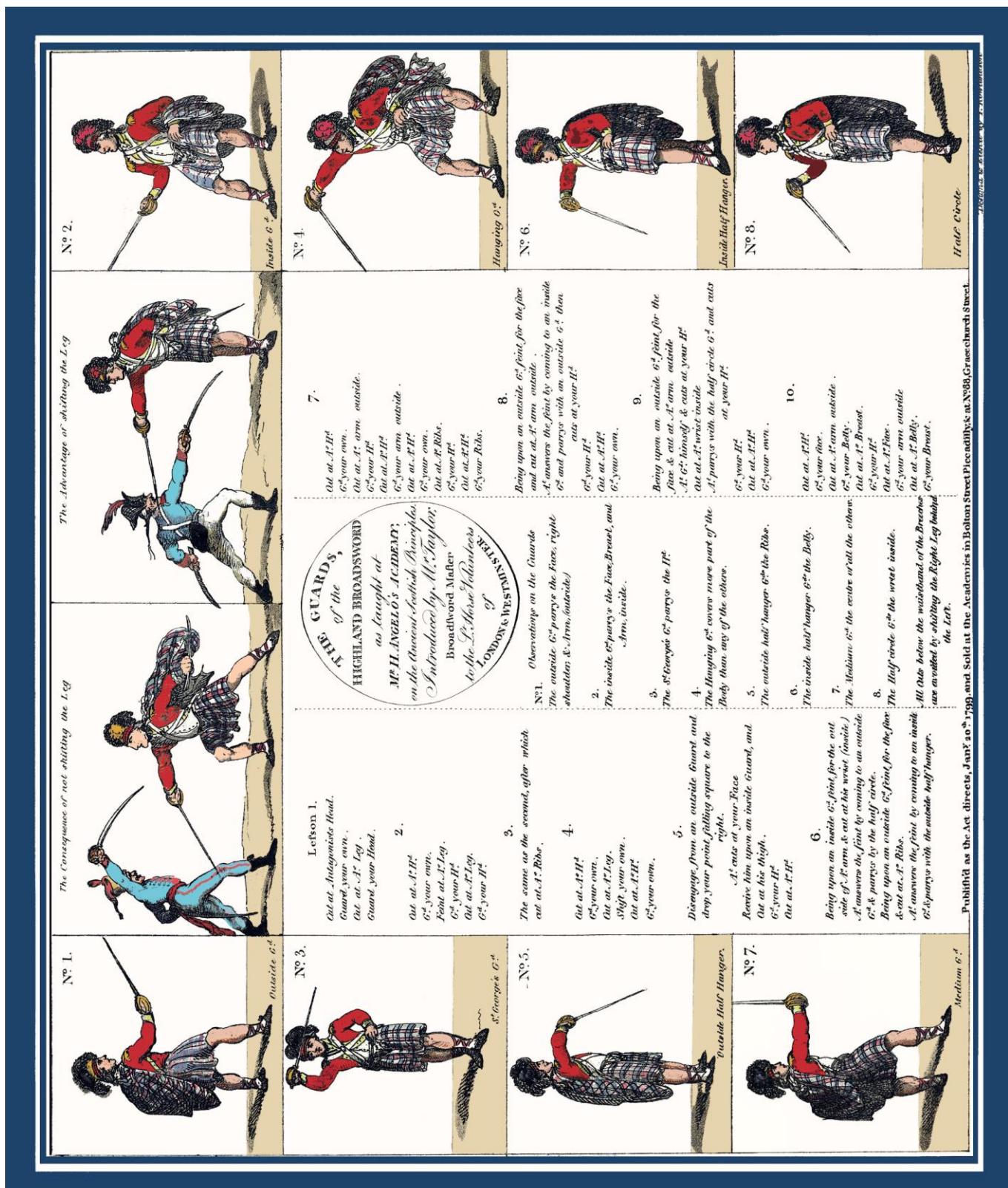
Broadsword	The Scottish basket hilt sword. The broadsword was the heaviest sword of all that would be used in this system, and also has the most protection to the hilt. It is typically double edged, though not always. It resembles, and is derived from, the backsword, or basket hilt of Elizabethan England. Occasionally in some period documentation the term broadsword appears to be used more universally for any broad bladed sword, such as the sabre, to differentiate them from the smallsword, or spadroon. It also seems to have been used for the unusually large sword bayonets used by the London and Westminster dismounted volunteers.
Carte	A thrust made on the inside line using inside guard.
Cutlass	A short sabre or broadsword. The term cutlass was usually, but not always, used in a Naval context. It is the Naval term for a hanger.
Disengage	To change line, i.e. From inside to outside line. Usually done by dropping the tip of your sword under your opponents and bringing it back up on the other side.
False Edge	The back edge of the sword. When you hold the sword out in front of you, the back edge faces towards you. Most swords used according to this system are only sharpened on the front, or true edge, being blunt on the back or false edge. However, some were sharpened at the last few inches of the back edge, close to the tip of the sword.
Feint	To fake an attack at a particular target in order to provoke a predicted response from your opponent. It is usually only half an attack, as to not get your blade entangled, and give time to transition in to the attack or parry that you intended to follow it, before your opponent can respond.
Foible	The half of your blade from it's middle to the point, with which you make your attacks.
Forte	The half of your blade from hilt to the centre of it's length, where you make your parries.
Fuller	The grooves running length wise down some blades. These are often mistakenly called 'blood grooves'. Their actual purpose is to lighten a blade whilst maintaining strength.
Hanger	A short sabre or broadsword, the army equivalent of a cutlass, and carried by some light infantry as a sidearm. Sword bayonets are hangers, just with the dual function of being able to attach to a rifle/musket to be used as a bayonet.
Inside	Imagining a line dividing your body vertically when you stand in guard, this is the side where your offhand and belly are.
Invitation	To deliberately expose a target zone, or multiple target zones to your opponent, in order to provoke an attack. It is the passive equivalent of a feint.
Guard	Your starting posture. Also any of the positions in which you parry.
Lunge	The extension of the front foot and entire body to reach forward to attack your opponent without moving the rear foot.
Outside	Imagining a line dividing your body vertically when you stand in guard, this is the side where your right ribs and back are.
Parry	To defend against an attack with your sword. Often called a 'block' today.
Pattern (of sword)	In the late 19 th century the British army introduced regulated patterns for each sword type. 'Sealed patterns' for these were kept for manufacturers

	<p>to study and copy. Officers swords tend to vary more from these patterns as they were commissioned and bought according to the individual officer's preferences, and budget, unlike the other ranks, who had their swords used from mass produced contracts.</p>
Point of balance	The centre of gravity of a sword. It is measured from the tang shoulder, or base of the blade, to the point at which the sword balances (well held on a finger for example)
Sabre	A curved blade, single edged sword, typically over 30" (76cm) in blade length. Typically used by the light cavalry and infantry officers.
Seconde (thrust)	A thrust under your opponents arm in outside guard.
Shift	Moving the lead foot back to the rear one, also called a slip.
Slip	To withdraw a part of your body from the opponents reach, typically the lead leg or sword arm.
Smallsword	The successor of the rapier. A very light sword that usually has no useful cutting edges and is only used for thrust work. It was the common civilian wear sword of the period. Triangular blade design is common, similar to the modern epee. Typical weight is around 400-500 grams (1lb), and blade length of around 76cm (30")
Spadroon	A straight and light, single edge sword that was regulation and common for infantry officers not using sabres. It is essentially a very light broadsword with a small guard that is comfortable and fashionable to wear. Typical weight is around 650-750 grams, blade length around 81cm (31"). It has little blade mass in the tip but much weight in the hilt. Almost always weak in cut, parry and thrust, though heavier bladed examples do exist.
Spontoon	The spear, or half pike that was carried by Sergeants' in the British army, and also used by Militias throughout the 18 th century.
Sword Bayonet	A shortsword that can be used independently as a sword, or fitted to a musket/rifle to use as a bayonet.
Sword Knot	A leather or fabric loop that is tied to the guard near the pommel. Typically, around 40-50cm long, it is not just for decorative purposes, but to protect from losing your sword. Before drawing the sword you put your hand through the loop and give a few twists.
Stance	Your entire posture when in guard.
Tierce	A thrust made over your opponents arm in outside guard position.
Traverse	A step that circles around your opponent, as opposed to the more typical linear footwork of Broadsword and Sabre.
True Edge	The front edge of your blade, where the knucklebow of your sword is. Most swords used in this form of military swordsmanship only have one sharp edge, being blunt on the back or false edge.
Ward Iron	An old term used by Roworth for what we would now call the knucklebow, the part of the sword hilt that protects the knuckles.

THE ORIGINAL ANGELO POSTERS

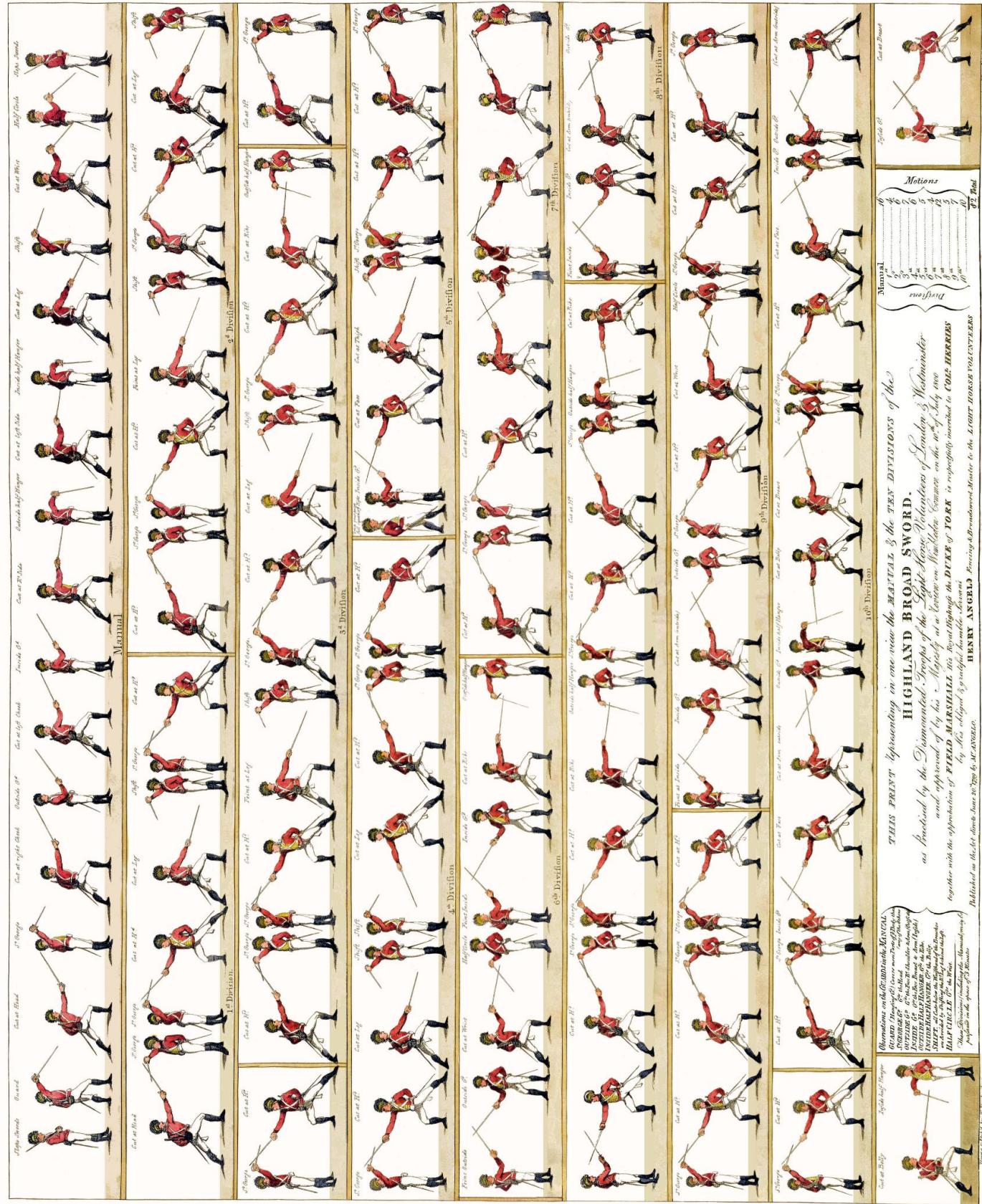
(Original Poster Format)

Full quality restored scans available from Nick Thomas.



Published as the Act directs, Jan¹ 1799 and sold at the Academies in Bolton Street Piccadilly & at No³⁸ Gracechurch Street.

AHF WORKBOOK FOR THE TEN LESSONS OF JOHN TAYLOR – FROM ROWORTH (1804)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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I am an instructor and co-founder of the Academy of Historical Fencing, which was founded in 2006 from a collective of sword enthusiasts which began researching and training in European swordsmanship in 1996. Initially I dedicated my study to the rapier and taught from Capo Ferro (1610). Despite continuing to teach the use of rapier and companion weapons, I have increasingly dedicated my time towards the practice of the sabre in recent years. I also regularly practice with longsword, and sword and buckler.

As a keen researcher and practitioner of the infantry sabre, I teach and fence with the sabre and associated weapons twice a week, but I am also a keen collector of original swords of the period from which these military forms of swordsmanship derive. I also run a YouTube channel devoted to European swordsmanship that includes many articles and lessons related to this work, under the name of our club, Academy of Historical Fencing. <http://www.youtube.com/c/AcademyofHistoricalFencing>

The AHF has two clubs in the UK, one either side of the Welsh-English border, in Newport, South Wales, and Bristol, UK.

