



painted onto the structure and its furniture, except for the gigantic aluminium copy hanging on the right-hand wall. This mammoth recreation of Xena's weapon, like most of the Tavern's props and set-dressings, had been pre-made long before it was needed for this latest incarnation. Not that Props Designer Roger Murray can actually recall the episode in which it was used. "We've made so much stuff," says Murray, who has been with *Xena* since the beginning, "I can't remember what it was for!"

When prompted, however, Murray's memory for episodes in which some of the other items have been used is slightly clearer. In a corner of the tavern, on a gallows-like version of a dressmaker's dummy, hangs a simpler, stylised version of Xena's original costume. The top half has the softer body armour that identifies it as part of a stunt costume used in earlier seasons. The lower half is made of a softer, much thinner material; certainly not the leather used in the 'real' costumes worn by Lucy Lawless and her doubles on the show.

"That's the play costume," remembers Murray, referring to the episode *The Play's the Thing*, where a stage play was mounted which dramatises the exploits of Xena. "When we did the play," Murray continues, "we made panto swords for it too."

The set itself is a "generic tavern", used for many episodes calling for scenes inside an inn, and nearly every piece of its memorabilia has been used several times before. Hung strategically at various places around the tavern are many well-known and recognisable 'Xena-

esque' items. For instance, there's the original Gabrielle outfit hanging on the back wall. Other familiar souvenirs include copies of the original and yin-yang chakrams, Xena's whip (once traded to the would-be warrior Minya in *A Day in the Life*), Gabrielle's staff and sais, and even a Xena doll.

Prominent place is also given to a display of Gabrielle's scrolls (like the ones uncovered in the 1940s episode *The Xena Scrolls*), revealing to the general populace (and at one pivotal moment, to Eve) the epic adventures of the Warrior Princess. The obvious question has to be asked: is the text quilled onto the parchment authentic ancient Greek? Unfortunately not, says Murray, who then goes on to explain the reasons why. "At the end of the day, Greek looks like Greek; this is fiction, so it's better to make up your own text."

Authentic texts or not, Joxer's Tavern makes a very impressive museum. Perhaps this could be the earliest example of the beginnings of a *Xena* fan club? It's very easy to suspend one's disbelief when standing amongst so much memorabilia, objects that are in their own way 'authentic' artefacts from *Xena's* history.

That is, of course, if you forget your initial walk through the *Xena* Propshop, passing half-painted swords and silicon moulds for frozen bodies. Still, it's no more disconcerting than seeing Hades (Stephen Lovatt) reclining in his trailer with a good book, waiting for his next scene, with a 'Xena Wardrobe' robe hanging loosely over his leathers. Just a little longer in Joxer's Tavern, please...? ■●

Opposite page: Xena squints in the glare from her polished weapons in Joxer's museum.

Above: Xena's new, extended family makes its way onward.

It's very easy to suspend one's disbelief when standing amongst so much memorabilia, objects which are, in their own way, 'authentic' artefacts from *Xena's* history.

Behind the scenes