



The newsletter of the Cleftlands, Vol. 4: Issue 33, February 2003

A Mid-Winter Hunt

The Bohemian hall was once again the site for our Regular Event, despite grumblings about the expense, we had a lovely, relaxed event. Snowden was the autocrat with Maria Vincente de Castille as her lovely assistant. The kitchen was headed by James le Hauke, aided and abetted by the usual suspects, including Ealdred heading up the lunch effort. Hauke dished up a remarkable hunt-themed feast with braised Rabbit, pan-seared duck, whitefish and venison stew as featured dishes. The expansive repast ended with a delicious bread pudding drizzled with hot raspberry sauce, there were many compliments and several gentles remarked it was the best feast they had ever attended. A tragic miss for those who missed it; this was a rarity in Cleftlands, a feast that did not sell out

Throughout the day there were classes, organized by Celeste and very well attended. A particular favorite was Sir Alaric's pewter casting class, which was standing-room only. There was a full schedule of children's activities, headed up by Peredur and Marsailli. Ser Nickolas ran a boffer list during the day and many eager young combatants took their shots at each other. An Heraldic scavenger hunt was organized by Lyonnete and won by Cornelius the Sage, who put forth an amazing effort when he saw the coveted prize: a poseble knight toy.

This was Ephraim and Madelaine's first event as Baron and Baronness, and the kitchen staff had the rare honor of washing Callum's dishes for him as he sat at high table.

During feast, Sir Alaric presented the new baron with a gift, a squire's belt. This met with some confusion from Ephraim, who asked if Alaric was planning on making him his squire. "Oh, my squire must have misplaced his belt. Stephan? Is this your belt?"

Stephan Von Lubek stood up and looked down at his waist. "No, that is not my belt."

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Dear Choppy

by Cornelius the Sage

The other gentles at court are showing me up with their fine belts and pouches, I'd like to make myself something but don't know what tools I'll need. Can you help?

-Leatherless in Ludworth

Accessories like belts, pouches, and knife sheaths are easy to make yourself, but even easier with the proper tools. Leatherworking is often revered as a craft that only those who've studied long and hard to master can perform. This is of course not the case.

Leatherworking can be arranged into some basic groups. These groups are preparation, assembly, embellishment, and finishing. Certain tools are needed depending on what you intend to do and not necessary for every aspect.

Preparation requires tools to cut the leather to size and into any pattern shapes you'll be using. Scissors and utility knives are sufficient here. There are additional specialized tools to get higher quality results, but these can be passed on by the beginner. (They include

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Our Officers

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Dear Choppy Cont.

stitching line groovers, a skiving knife, and edge bevelers.) Assembly tools are a little more exotic but still not difficult to acquire. Two-piece rivet sets are commonly used so you may need those. To go with riveting you need a hole punch. There are squeeze-handled versions and others than can be pounded like stamps to make holes.

I recommend hand stitching leather whenever possible. Waxed linen thread is used. Heavy needles can pierce the leather but I usually use a tool called a three-prong thonging chisel. It looks like a small fork with sharp wedge-shaped tips and is pounded into the leather to create cuts that can then be sewn through with blunt, safer needles. An awl is also very handy (a handle with a sharp spike for a tip) and the fid - a blunt version of the awl - is just as useful for widening stitch holes as the awl is for poking them.

Embellishment is where leather has picked up it's mystique as such an ancient and amazing art. Obviously, making wondrous pieces will need experience and practice. And the tools required for large amounts of stamping and carving become expensive and vast. These are things you'll desire to have once you get further along in the hobby. For basic embellishment though, you can actually use the fid by dampening the leather and pressing it into the surface to create patterns of lines or stippling. A swivel knife is a specialized leatherworker's blade that is used to carve higher relief detail into thicker leather. Usually it's use is accompanied with stamps and other modeling tools, but technically plenty can be done with that knife alone.

Finishing consists of coloring the leather with dye or paint. Depending on your choices (and your decoration) this can be a small or large amount of colors needed. Rubber gloves can help cut down the mess, and an apron (or slop clothes) would be recommended. There are also other applied chemicals for adding sheens, antiquing, or protective coats onto your work. Rags or wool-tipped applicators are needed to add these finishes.

Although instructions on leatherworking are beyond the scope of this article, it's very easy to find those in the SCA who can offer more detail. Leatherworking is a very documented craft and it's also easy to find books and articles online that are very informative. Don't be put off by what youve seen others accomplish. Just remember they were beginners too.

In Service,

Cornelius the Sage, aka Choppy

January Event Cont.

“Well, this must belong to another squire... let’s see... do I have any other squires here? Crispin, will you come forward?” While Alaric’s lady Noelle looked proudly on, he wrapped the belt around his man-at-arms Crispin’s waist and presented the Cleftlands with its newest squire.

Crispin of course helped wash dishes after feast. Squires chains are reportedly very good for taking the burned matter off the bottom of a pot. This reported by Stephan, who was also squired at a January event feast.

Captain Conrad Schwartzwolf organized the heavy weapons tournament. It was a pool tourney: fighters fought round-robin in pools of eight, with the highest win records moving on into the next pool. This allowed even the worst fighters to at least get eight bouts in. There were plenty of pick ups to be had before and after the tournament as well. In the end, Earl Sir Brannos was the victor. Edward FitzRanulf ran the fencing tournament.

Merchants galore were coordinated by Lady Alex who also took her first try at merchanting at the event.

Edward Brackenburye ran the Arts and Sciences competition, a scribal contest, centered on beasts and grotesqueries. There were four entries and six judges, all with at least a Willow in calligraphy and illumination. It was a close contest but in the end Ceinwen was the winner, with Robert de Cleftlands in second place. All entries were magnificent to view.

Special thanks to Matthew de Beaumont and Choppy for breaking down the merchants hall and cleaning up site during feast. This allowed us all to retire after feast to the merchants’ hall where there was much dancing. Even the dance mistress had enough!



Calendar

Local Happenings:

February 17th - Dance Guild Meeting at Euclid Public Library

February 12th - Archery Guild Meeting at Vashti's

February 11th - Scribal Symposium Meeting at Master Aiden's

Meetings:

Archery practice meets every Sunday at Lucus Archery

Armorer's guild meets Thursday nights at Ealdred and Clairiel's home

Dance Guild meets the third or second Monday of each month at the Euclid Public Library

Cook's Guild meets the Sunday before Dessert Revel at Ealdred and Clairiel's home

An unofficial drum circle and middle eastern dance practice meets on Thursday nights at The Gallery Coffee Shop on east 185th street. There is also a Middle Eastern Dance Exchange at the Coffee Shop on Monday Nights.

Selected Events:

February 1st - 2nd Candlemass in Dragonsmark (Lexington, KY)

February 8th - St. Valentine's Day Massacre (Kalamazoo, MI)

February 12th - 17th Estrella War XIX in Atenveldt (Dayton)

February 15th - Masque of Courtly Love in Alderford (Canton, OH)

February 9th - All Souls in Vanished Wood (Chicago, IL)

February 22nd - Winter's End in Fenix (Cincinnati, OH)

