



A Quarterly Newsletter of the Cleftlands, Middle Kingdom

September 2026 (AS 61)

Greetings unto the Good People of the Cleftlands!

As a chess set is put away once the game has ended, so Pennsic 53 becomes a memory as, hopefully, all tents have been washed and carefully stowed, and any remaining gear has been checked and seen to its place of storage. This War had its highs and lows, as they all do. There were combats, celebrations and shenanigans, there was sun and storm, and there was a power outage. All in all, a complete event.

Now comes days of preparation for other things, for tending to fallen leaves, the many ways to cook zucchinis and pumpkins, and other pre-winter tasks. The Fall also brings another change, that of our Royal Family at Coronation at the end of September. Cleftlands will proudly be co-hosting the Fall Crown Tourney in October, in Norwalk, Ohio. More on that will be mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

And there is another change in the wind, as our Barone and Baronessa will be stepping down early next year, yielding Their Roles in Cleftlands to others. It is time to think carefully, if you wish to be considered as Their successors as the next leaders of this Barony. Petitions will be accepted by our Seneschal, Sir Crispin, through the end of this year.

In Joyous Service to Cleftlands and Midrealm,
Tarmach, Chronicler

Contents:

SCA News

Recent Awards

Midrealm News

Upcoming Events
and Demos

What Are You
Making?

Historical
Highlights

Cleftlands Officer
List & Regarding
Content

SCA News

The July 2026 report from Bao Pham, SCA Inc. President, contains the publishable summaries and commendation sections from each Corporate and Society Officers' reports. It also includes publishable summaries submitted by various Board committees. The report can be located here: [2026-7 After Board Meeting Report](#).

The Society Marshal and the Society Equestrian Deputy are pleased to make available for commentary the draft of the new Equestrian Handbook. Commentary will be accepted through November 23, 2026. The new online Equestrian Handbook and supporting material can be found at https://society-rules.fullmesh.co.nz/index.php/Society_handbooks. Please email all commentary to marshal@sca.org and equestrian@sca.org, and use the title "New EQ Handbook commentary" in the subject line. CC'ing your Kingdom Equestrian Officer is highly recommended.

The Society Communications team has developed a draft "Advertising Opportunities Menu" designed to help kingdoms explore potential advertising and promotional campaigns that support local and Society-wide goals. This menu and approach was approved at the recent BOD meeting. The draft outlines several potential approaches, including goals like:

- Member Acquisition Campaigns focused on attracting new participants
- Event Attendance Promotions for major kingdom, principality, and baronial events (among others)

Contact Sarah Chapman – Communications Officer at communications@sca.org if interested in participating.

Recent Awards

The following individuals were recognized at Midrealm Court, Pennsic 53. Huzzah!

Her Highness Ceinwen ferch Elidure O'Denbeigh – Dragon's Tooth

HE Mistress Milesent Vibert - Greenwood

Duke Sir EikBrandr Solgyafi – Gold Mace

Captain Tryggr Gillason – Won the Known World Baronial Armored Champions Tourney

Captain Kollin Rus – Dragon's Tooth

House Bork – Dragon's Flight

Lady Jocelin D'Eyncourt - Purple Fret

Lord Kirkpatrick of Nottinghamshire - Purple Fret

Bennett Weissenstein – Award of Arms, Red Company

Edwin of Cleftlands – Award of Arms

Aethelwulf – Award of Arms

Fergus MacPherson, OP, is the new Kingdom Earl Marshal.

Mistress Rhonwen merch Alun is the new Tournament of Arts Coordinator.

The Known World Commedia dell' Arte Symposium will be held in Pittsburgh, PA May 28-30, 2027. More information can be found at debatablelands.aethelmearc.org/kwcs.

The new Midrealm Financial Policy has been approved by the BoD and went into effect on September 1. While there are not many changes, the document was been rewritten extensively to remove conflicts and organizational flaws that have built up over many years of editing, and to delete sections that simply repeat language from Society policy. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, contact THL Dai Gerdwr, Exchequer of the Middle Kingdom, exchequer@midrealm.org.

Upcoming Events and Demos

9/11-13 – **Vikings Come Home XXXIV** (Barony of Donnershafen), Boyne Falls, MI

<https://www.donnershafen.com/vikingscomehome>

9/12 -- **Pferdestadt Rapier Classic** (Canton of Pferdestadt), Caledonia, OH

<https://midrealm.org/events/pferdestadt-rapier-classic-2/>

9/13 -- **Demo** at the Cleveland Gaming Classic at the Huntington Convention Center. Only doing the demo on Sunday, as there are several SCA events also taking place on Saturday – armored and rapier are specifically requested. Looking for captains to manage each list. A sign-up sheet will be going out this weekend, which will ensure free entry to the event. For more information, contact Forester Cadfan or Lord Magnus.

9/18-20 – **Saxon Summer XXIII** (Shire of Rivenvale), Leavittsburg, OH

<https://rivenvale.org/activities/saxon-summer/>

9/26 – **Fall Coronation** (Barony of Illiton), Lincoln, IL

<https://illiton.midrealm.org/2026-fall-coronation/>

10/3 – **Red Dragon** (Marche of Tirnewydd), London, OH

<https://tirnewydd.midrealm.org/red-dragon/>

10/9-11 – **Rendezvous at the Bridge XXXVI** (Shire of Riviere Constelle), Lincoln City, IN

<https://riviereconstelle.com/rendezvous-at-the-bridge-xxxvi/>

Cleflands is co-hosting **Fall Crown Tournament** on October 17 at the Huron County Fairgrounds in Norwalk, OH, about a 1 ¼-hour drive to the west of the Barony. If you are interested in helping with the event, contact Sir Crispin, Forester Cadfan, or Mistress Snowden. <https://events.midrealm.org/crown/>

An **A&S Demo** is planned for the East Cuyahoga Genealogical Society in December. Details are forthcoming.

For the full list of Midrealm events, visit the kingdom calendar at <https://midrealm.org/events-calendar/>

What Are You Making?

Petur the Auntelhare (also called Peter of Cleftlands)

Please describe your current or most-recently completed SCA project?

My most recent project was my latest version of a late 12th century shield, adapted for SCA heavy combat. In particular I wanted to try and get this latest shield as close to historical specifications and handling characteristics as possible, but using modern methods and materials.

What prompted you to make this?

Well, firstly there was the fact that my other shields had reached the end of their service life and needed replacing.

But this was also part of my ongoing research and experimentation into period shields and their construction methods. Most reenactment shields of my era, both in and out of the SCA, are not built to historical specs, which makes them handle quite differently than a period shield would have. In my previous project I set out to research period construction methods, then build a shield that would replicate historical examples. Doing so gave me a much greater appreciation for how a historical shield would have felt and performed in combat, and also drove home how far off my earlier attempts were. Historical shields were much lighter and springier than most modern recreations, and typically much more deeply curved.

That shield, however, took months to make, and the lumber ended up being quite expensive. So my goal for this one was to try and get as close to the feel of a historical shield while still being cheap and easy to make. And hopefully lasting longer, since my historic shield only lasted a single war.

What skills did you already have that were useful on this project?

In addition to more period methods I learned in my previous project, I also have experience making shields using one of the more modern methods of making a shield that is popular in the SCA. This method involves taking two pieces of plywood, putting a thick layer of glue between them, and then ratcheting them down to a curved jig. When the glue dries, you have a curved piece of laminated plywood suitable for making a shield.



What Are You Making? (cont.)

*What skills did you learn in the process of working on this project?
From where did you learn these skills?*

For this particular iteration I used the pressed plywood method, then experimented with ways of lightening the overall weight of the shield while maintaining, or even increasing, the durability for SCA combat. To that end, I experimented with removing material from the back of the shield, which did significantly lighten the shield, though it was not as quick and easy as I had hoped.

Since the usual failure point of a plywood shield is the edges, I am experimenting with adding medical cast tape, typically used for making casts for broken bones, to the edges of the shield. This is a resin infused cloth material that can be extremely strong, and once I get the hang of it is fairly quick and easy to apply, though there is a learning curve to getting it to adhere to the wood. I'm still figuring that part out, but once I do it should be fairly simple. It also remains to be seen whether this added layer of edging adds significantly to the strength and longevity of the shield. I am early in the experimentation process



Would you make another (same or similar)? How would you do this differently?

My experiments are ongoing. I am shortly going to be making another, smaller shield to replace my worn-out tournament shield. For this one I intend to try the plywood method, but using lightweight birch instead of pine, and adding the cast tape edging. This is after I have done sufficient experimentation to figure out the best way of doing that.

Is this a project you would teach to others?

I certainly hope so. I have thoroughly enjoyed telling people about my historically made shield, as well as sharing the research that went into it. I am also hopeful that when I'm done I will also have a process for making "sport" shields that are both historical (or closer to historical) while still being cheap, easy to make, and are competitive in the SCA context.

Historical Highlights

Historical Notes- a sampling

From onthisday.com

September 15

1514 Thomas Wolsey appointed English Archbishop of York

1556 Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and Maria of Hungary return to Spain and retire to the Monastery of Yuste in Extremadura.

September 17

1156 Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa issues the "Privilegium Minus" decree, elevating Austria to a duchy

September 22

1499 Switzerland becomes an independent state

September 23

1122 Concordat of Worms is agreed between Pope Calixtus II and Holy Roman Emperor Henry V

September 31

1513 Cheddar armor introduced – found not to be as strong as Stilton

October 9

768 Charlemagne and his brother Carloman I are both crowned King of the Franks

1000 Leif Erikson reaches "Vinland" (possibly L'Anse aux Meadows, Canada), reputedly becoming the first European to reach North America.

October 10

732 The Battle of Tours: The Umayyad army, led by Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi, is defeated by the Frankish-Aquitainian force led by Charles Martel during the Umayyad invasion of Gaul.

October 13

1269 The new gothic style Westminster Abbey is consecrated by Henry III after the bones of Edward the Confessor are transferred to it. Construction began in 1220.

October 15

1520 King Henry VIII of England orders the installation of bowling lanes in his palace at Whitehall

Historical Highlights



Random Period Object

From the Cleveland Museum of Art

Jar with Lion-Head Handles

c. 1300s

China, Jiangxi Province,
Jingdezhen, Yuan dynasty

Porcelain with underglaze
painted decoration

Diameter of mouth: 15.6 cm (6
1/8 in.); Overall: 39.4 x 37.5 cm
(15 1/2 x 14 3/4 in.)

Credit: John L. Severance Fund
1962.154

Final words from the Middle Ages...

Quafftide

(Sixteenth C. English)

– The time for drinking alcohol

And finally, per the British TV show, “QI” --

“A piece of advice from ‘The Rules of Dancing’, a book from 1529 about dance etiquette: ‘Never fart when you are dancing: grit your teeth and compel your arse to hold back the fart.’”



Le Pape Formose et Étienne VI ("Pope Formosus and Stephen VI") by Jean-Paul Laurens, 1870

credit: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jean_Paul_Laurens_Le_Pape_Formose_et_Etienne_VI_1870.jpg

Unfortunate Historical Events

...a series...

The **Cadaver Synod**, also known as the Synodus Horrenda, was a bizarre trial held in Rome in 897 CE. Pope Stephen VI had his predecessor, Pope Formosus, exhumed nine months after his death to stand trial. Formosus's corpse was dressed in papal vestments and propped on a throne, with a deacon answering for the accused.

The late Pope Formosus was accused of violating canon law and perjury. The trial ultimately declared his papacy invalid, quashed his acts, and ordered his consecration fingers to be cut off. His body was then cast into the Tiber River.

This event was driven by intense political enmity between factions supporting Formosus and those aligned with the Spoleto ruling family. The synod's outcome led to an insurrection, resulting in Pope Stephen VI's imprisonment and strangulation. Pope Theodore II later vindicated Formosus, reburied his body, and condemned the Cadaver Synod.

Officers of the Cleftlands

Baron: Barone Pietro Nicolo da San Tebaldo; baron@cleftlands.org

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Seneschal: Sir Crispin de la Rochefoucauld, OP; seneschal@cleftlands.org

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Castellan (Chatelaine): Forester Cadfan of the Autumn Wood; chatelaine@cleftlands.org

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Regarding Content

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The image of the Jar with Lion-Head Handles is courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art. As of January 23, 2019, the Cleveland Museum of Art is an Open Access institution, using the Creative Commons Zero (CC0) designation for high-resolution images and data related to its collection. This means the public now has the ability to share, collaborate, remix, and reuse images of many as 30,000 public domain artworks from the CMA' world-renowned collection -- all without asking permission. In addition, portions of collections information (metadata) for more than 61,000 artworks, both in the public domain and those works with copyright or other restrictions, are now available.

Did you miss an issue? Want to review an old favorite? All copies of the newsletter are stored on the Cleftlands website. Find them here: <https://wiki.cleftlands.org/Publications> For suggestions and comments, please contact the editor at chronicler@cleftlands.org.
