

THE FORUM

Newsletter of the Barony of the Cleftlands—Volume 7—Issue 2—July 2017

Northern Oaken War Maneuvers XXI—The Biggest NOWM ever!

By Claricia de la Mere, staff reporter

Every year, Northern Oaken War Maneuvers sneaks up on us with the start of summer and the promise of sunny days and fire-lit nights. NOWM XXI approached this year with more anticipation than usual, as it marked the ending of one Cleftlands chapter – and the beginning of an exciting new one.

Even the skies agreed, as the rain came down just enough on Friday to keep things cool, but not enough to stop the torchlight tourney or deter the record number of people who came through the gate (over 740!). On Saturday the sun shone bright, and not too hot, over all the best things the Society has to offer. It was a day of grand melees, unique archery shoots, stunning artistry, moving pageantry, and warm camaraderie.

Participants flocked to martial activities, and the lists were active across the board. About 50 archers tried their hands at the novelty shoots, which provided interesting and unique challenges for all skill levels. Almost two dozen people participated in thrown weapons, and were active all day! Around 65 fencers took the field, about eight of which did cut and thrust, to make their scenarios exciting. Armored fighters and archers stood next to their brothers and sisters in battle to show their prowess on bridges, gates, and melees. The skill of the Midrealm's martial combatants was on full display!

Artisans of all kinds showed their knowledge and abilities on Artisan's Row, in the merchant booths, and in the wide range of classes offered throughout the day. Attendees could watch lace being made, purchase cosmetics made from period recipes, learn SCA campfire songs, and more! The only trouble might have been seeing everything.

Long-standing NOWM traditions evoked laughter and delight all weekend long. The Baroness's Bocce Tournament



Sir Crispin and THL Gianna, fifth Baron and Baroness of the Cleftlands Photo by Lord Tarmach

drew fierce competitors to win the coveted golden elephant. Bocce involves bowling a grapefruit-sized ball across a lawn to get the closest to the target ball. Though the current form is different from the historical version, bocce has existed since even before period times. In addition, North Oaken Baronies and Shires selected bardic champi-

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INSIDE:

Caelndar, Brendan the Navigator, Dramatis Personae, more!

ons to compete for the NOBLE cup (see sidebar), with Eadoinn of Brendoken as this year's winner. After the sun went down, the Knotty Dragon tavern and House BloodJack's Hafla provided song, drink, and merriment for all.

Their Majesties William and Isolde, and their Royal Highnesses Cellach and Vukasin were all in attendance, and seemed to be everywhere at once! Their Majesties lived up to their promises to give out awards to many deserving members of the populace. Courts were held in the morning, on the battlefield, in the evening, and in some spontaneous settings as well. Dozens of awards were bestowed, including many to Cleftlanders. Your recommendations were certainly felt, and huge thanks go to everyone who helped create the beautiful scrolls that accompanied each award.

Of course, no look back on NOWM XXI would be complete without touching on the investiture of Their Excellencies Crispin al-Rumi and Gianna Vettori to become the fifth Baron and Baroness of the Cleftlands. Their Excellencies Calum MacDhaibhidh and Constanza de Mendoza served with grace and fervor for five years, but the time had come for them to step down. Members of the populace filled their ears with words of gratitude for their service, and gave gifts of banners, cards, and amazing leather boxes to hold their coronets (if you have not seen these, seek out the photos!).

"I approached NOWM feeling like my heart was breaking and I was losing something incredibly precious," Her Excellency Constanza said. "Instead, you all filled me to overflowing with love!"

Their Excellencies served the barony with enthusiasm, compassion, pride, and humility for these past years; and expressed that they were deeply grateful to the populace for their time in the position.

His Excellency Callum summed up their thoughts, "The love and support Cleftlands has given these five years (and a bit) has been truly amazing. The memories of my time as Baron are something I will hold dear for the rest of my life. Thank you all so much for everything!"

They left their position knowing that the Barony remained in good hands with the incoming Baron and Baroness, who knelt to accept the coronets with grace, all to much cheering. Baron Crispin and Baroness Gianna promise to continue the legacy of excellence the Cleftlands saw under the fourth Baron and Baroness, and add wonderful new things as well!

After the investiture, awards, and two elevations, evening court ended with a royal birthday celebration, which seemed a fitting cap to the day. A birthday, after all, is the ending of one age and the beginning of another; fresh and new with possibility.

What is the NOBLE Bardic Competition?

NOBLE stands for Northern Oaken Bardic Lagnieppe of Excellence. Each Barony and/or shire in North Oaken may choose a champion to compete in the bardic arts for the prize of the NOBLE cup. The performer can be a single person or a group, and the piece can be their best-loved song, music, drama, dance, storytelling, poem, or other performance art.

Entries are judged based on a number of criteria, including skill, authenticity, and originality, before the award is given.

THL Juliane Bechaumpe, Mistress of Revels at this year's NOWM, has seen quite a few distinguished and distinct performances during her last eight years of organizing the event. Competitors have included Mistress Elizabeth Alles, Lord Kari Garanhirson, His Excellency Syr Ephraim, Lady Sally of Red Spears, and Lady Kateryn Miriam Draper y Torres of Connaught.

"As well as Aethilde of Rivenvale," Juliane added, "who held her own while a helicopter was landing on the battlefield!"

It seems that anything can happen at NOBLE. There was The

Great Shakesperean Puppet Smackdown of two years ago, held in the glow of the rapier torchlight tourney. Also, you may not know that it was a NOBLE performer who inaugurated the "high jinks" of the now beloved Knotty Dragon – Lord Robin Macauley.

If you didn't catch any performances this year, make sure to come out next year and see all the creative and amazing work of our local performance artists.



Court Report: Brawl at the Crooked Dragon Tavern

His Excellency Crispin had the honor of presiding at a Regency court for Their Majesties at Brawl at the Crooked Dragon Tavern, July 9th. There was one item of business: Gwyneth Cole received a Purple Fret for her service to the archery community.

Dramatis Personae—Æthelwynn Skerra Dimma

“Dramatis Personae” is a column which featured in past issues of The Forum, and we are pleased to bring it back. Each issue we will share an interview with a member of the cast of characters which makes this Barony so rich and vibrant! Our first victim is: Æthelwynn! Thank you, Lady Æthelwynn for agreeing to be interviewed for The Form.

Tell me how did you first hear about the SCA?

A group of friends and I were on our way to a medieval fare when we realized it had closed for the season. We searched for anything in the area medieval and it happened to be the day of the Mapleside demo. So we showed up in our silly inaccurate garb and have not been able to put it down since.

What was your first event? And what made you come back to your second event?

My first event was Nikolai and Serena’s Coronation. I couldn’t stop watching the fighting, and everyone was so nice to me even though I was new. I realized it was everything I was searching for. It felt like my “home” instantly.

What is the best thing about the Barony of the Cleftlands?

The Cleftlands has so many successful and varied members. It’s not a group of a single kind of Scadian. There is so much knowledge among us!

What is a new activity you’ve been wanting to explore in the SCA?

I have been dying to auth in Equestrian!
(Note: Æthelwynn authorized at Brawl at the Crooked Dragon, July 9th)

Do you have a fun fact about yourself that you’d like to share? Something your fellow Barony members may not know about you?

I have a degree in anthropology with a specialization in Mesoamerican archeology. I illustrated artifacts for IENA in Mexico and was even published in a few doctoral dissertations in Oaxaca Mexico.

I also grew up on an exotic animal farm and can ride horses and zebras and camels OH MY!



Photo by Dylan Diblik

Court Report - NOWM

Order of the Grove: I Verdi Confusi

King's Chalice: Kari Garanhirson

AOA - Vibius Ovidius Ursinus Lupinus, Portia de Castell, Margery Carter, Gaius Macro Calvinus, Bledlyn, Theodora Metalene, Monca MacCarrin, Kent of Rivenvale, Donnchadh mac Gile Moire, Artair of Brendoaken

Red Company: Edward BrackenBurye, Marcos de Ribera, Dirk Edward of Frisia

Cavandish Knot: Cynwrig ap Llewelyn

Dragon's Barb: Frokn mac Cannaig

Purple Fret: John Roslyn the Ox, Claricia de la Mere, Nadjehzea Eskilsdottir, Æsa of Cleftlands, Muldonny McVriw, Jao Veludo Alfonso d Albuquerque, Cynwrig ap Llew-

elyn, Brangwayn Snowden, Rannvaeig Orraarmr Eskilskona, Angela God-winsdottir, Wilhelm Wolfheart, Eadoin Ghormshuileach, Cadwgan Faber, Alays de la Salle, Brighid of Red Spears, Aurelia Brutii

Willow: Sergei the Jester, Katerin ferch Gwenllian, Bestia of Vito's Minions, Ulfr Forkbeard, Alessandra Brocioli, called Bruce, Terentia Faustina, Edborough Kellie, Christoph von Steinach

Silver Oak: Sean Dryw, Ivan Shishov, Angharad ferch Tangwystl

Gold Mace: Corvus Aurelius Corvinus, Dirk Edward of Frisia

Bronze Ring: Vladimir Grigorovich Dragoun

Greenwood Company: Caitlin inghean Neill, Uthan Laoch

Evergreen - Sorchu brecc igen Donncha (new name: Aurelia Rosetti), Llywelyn Glyndwr, Brenden o Corraidhe, Edward FitzRanulf, Angelique De LaRochelle, Isabel Muire

Dragon's Heart - Ursula the Widow, Edward BrackenBurye, Jolicia atte Northclyfe, Julianne Bechaumpe, Milesent Vibert, Dmitrii Zhiron

Court Baroness: Constanza de Mendoza, Sophia the Orange

Kingdom Augmentation - Alys Katharine Landed Baron and Baroness of the Cleftlands: Crispin al-Rumi (formerly de la Rochefoucauld) and Gianna Vettori

Midair MacCormaic - KSCA

Aine ingen Neill mec Lugdech - OP

ARTS & SCIENCES



The March Dessert Revel Calligraphy & Illumination display was the great idea of THLord Pietro and was a huge success with over 100 award scrolls on display. Photo by Lord Njall.

The Arts and Sciences remain a strong and active part of the Barony this quarter. Baroness Collette's teaching challenge resulted in a large number of classes taught at Baronial meetings at events.

Baroness Aldamoureis's A&S 100 challenge likewise is being well met with many Cleftlanders reporting that they are significantly through their 100 days of working on arts projects this year. At least two Cleftlanders have confided in this reporter in being complete with the challenge which is outstanding as we are just after the halfway mark for the year. Keep up the good work challengers!



Baron Ealdred taught a popular and well-received class on knife safety and handling in a kitchen April 5th, photo by Hely d'Isgny.

The Voyage of St. Brendan the Navigator

By THL Brendan O Corraidhe

St. Brendan the Navigator was an Irish monk and bishop born near the end of the 5th century in County Kerry. Brendan became a priest, and later, an abbot, founding a number of monasteries.

Along the rocky west coast of Ireland, travel was (and still is) often best accomplished by boat. As many of the monasteries that Brendan founded were on remote islands (Irish monks at the time would often isolate themselves on the most remote place they could find), he gained a reputation as a great traveler, and the nickname, "Brendan the Navigator."

But these were mere local trips along to the coast. Legend says that late in life, Brendan undertook an epic sea journey, sailing west across the Atlantic to the Land of Paradise with seventeen monks in a boat hulled with ox-hide. This was no three-hour tour. Their adventures would rival Sinbad's.

The idea of "sailing west" has deep roots in Western lore. The ancient Irish - centuries before Patrick - told tales of Tir Na Nog, the Land of Eternal Youth far to the west. It is no accident that Tolkien's Elves (with Bilbo and Frodo) sailed away from Middle-Earth into the West to the Undying Lands. The image of the movie cowboy riding into the sunset is so iconic it's nearly a self-parody. Even today, pilots speak of departed comrades as having "flown west."

The *Navigatio Brendani Sanctus Abbotti* (The Voyage of Saint Brendan the Abbot) relates that Brendan's voyage took many years. Brendan originally wanted to take fourteen other monks with him, fourteen being twice-seven, a sacred number. But at the last minute, three more monks showed up, begging to go along. Brendan allowed them to board but warned them that they would all die, two rather unpleasantly. (One was dragged down a volcano to Hell by demons.)

The voyaging monks encountered many strange islands, with mysteriously-supplied feast tables, gigantic sheep, talking birds, and angry smiths who threw fiery stones at them. One island turned out to be a whale named Jasconius who took issue when the monks built a cooking fire on his back. (The monks beat a hasty retreat back to the boat.) They encountered a floating mountain of crystal, a "clotted sea," and impenetrable fog. They eventually reached a wonderful land where they felt no hunger and time

seemed not to pass. They were warned by an angel not to try to cross the river that divided the land, and then returned home.

The story of Brendan's voyage, his life, and the many miracles attributed to him were extremely popular folk tales throughout the Middle Ages. The story of the Voyage was especially popular in Germany and Holland. Nearly 150 manuscripts and fragments exist with versions of The Voyage.

Fantasy, clearly. Or was it? Folklorists know that stories have to start *somewhere*.

From ancient times, the Irish have used flexible soft-hulled boats called *currachs* or *coracles*. They are traditionally made of a lashed-together wooden lattice covered with leather (today, waterproofed canvas). Coracles are fine vessels for the relatively calm waters of lakes, rivers, and even the ocean near the coast.

But to cross the North Atlantic? The very idea is preposterous! But in the mid-1970s, adventurer Tim Severin showed that such a voyage was *at least possible* by building a traditional Irish curragh and then sailing it from Ireland to Nova Scotia. The flexible boat was seaworthy and weatherly, carrying the crew though calm seas and gales.

It took Severin and his crew two sailing seasons, but they did it. Along the way, they confirmed what some scholars had long supposed - that many of the places recorded in the *Navigatio* corresponded to real-world locations. The islands of sheep and birds: the Faeroes. The islands of angry smiths and volcanoes: Iceland. The clotted sea: either the Sargasso kelp beds or Arctic sea ice. The floating crystal mountain: an iceberg. The fog: famous off the coast of Newfoundland. Perhaps the river that the monks were told not to cross was the St. Lawrence. Some native (a message-bearer, a herald, an angelos) might have warned them of warlike folk on the other side?

Regardless, Brendan and his monks had seen Paradise, and were satisfied. They sought no lands and no conquest, left no marks on the land. Did they truly walk on Western shores a thousand years before Columbus, five hundred years before Erickson? Or was it merely imagination? Does it matter? It's a great story!

Voyage of St. Brendan: Sources

O'Donoghue, Rev, Denis. "Brendaniana" Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 24 & 25 Nassau Street
Harvard College Library, FROM THE BEQUEST OF JOHN HARVEY TREAT OF LAWRENCE, MASS. CLASS OF 1862

BRENDANIANA: St. Brendan the Voyager in Story and Legend (Via Google Books)

A 19th-cent. compilation and English translation of The Voyage, the Life of Brendan, and various other Latin and Irish texts related to the saint.

O'Meara, John J. (translator and preface) "The Voyage of Brendan the Navigator". Dolmen Press, Mountath, Ireland 1978

The definitive scholarly English translation of Selmer's definitive scholarly Latin compiled text.

Selmer, Carl (editor and preface) "Navigatio Brendani Sancti Abbati", University of Notre Dame Press,

1959

The definitive scholarly version of the Latin text, compiled from the 18 best and most complete MSS spanning three countries and three centuries (out of 149 extant MSS and fragments).

Severin, Tim, "The Brendan Voyage: Sailing to America in a Leather Boat to Prove the Legend of the Irish Sailor Saints" McGraw-Hill, 1978

The story of a modern-day adventurer attempting to re-create St. Brendan's voyage in a leather boat.

"De Navigatio Tim SEVERIN : "THE BRENDAN VOYAGE" part 1 /5" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wB2EsZhVtE> retrieved 5/25/17

The documentary of Severin's re-creation of The Voyage.

*Coming to a puppet theater near you, Summer 2018, *si Deus vult*.

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CALENDAR

July 19th will be our last Baronial meeting until after Pennsic.
Meetings will resume August 23rd.

Pennsic Schedule:

Tuesday Aug 1—Pavillion set up on the battlefield 10 am
Saturday Aug 5—Opening Ceremonies 7pm
Sunday Aug 6—Archery muster 10 am
Sunday Aug 6—Known World Baronial Archery shoot—noon
Monday Aug 7—Armored Combat Muster 10 am
Monday Aug 7—Battle Unit Group photo 12:45pm
Tuesday Aug 8—Known World Baronial Armored Champions
Tournament 9 am
Tuesday Aug 8—Rapier Muster 10 am
Tuesday Aug 8—Rapier Unit Group photo 12:30 pm
Tuesday Aug 10—Known World Baronial Raiper Champions
Tourney 11 am
Friday Aug 11—Pavilion take down 11 am

Friday Aug 11—Closing Ceremonies 3pm

Upcoming Events:

July 15—Encampment XV
August 26—Bottega at Three Towers
September 2—Standard Bearer's
September 9—Harvest Days
September 15-17—Mapleside Demo
September 23—Fall Coronation

Guild Happenings:

Sunday Aug 27—Noodleworkerz meeting
Tuesday nights—Archery guild (weather permitting) Leather-
worker's guild. Needleworker's alternate Tuesdays
Thursday nights—Armorer's Guild, Woodworker's Guild
First Monday of the Month—Scribe's Guild



Five Generations of Cleftlands Barons and Baronesses, THL Gianna, Sir Crispin, Mistress Constanza, Sir Calum, Master Milesent, Forester Edward, THL Madelaine, Sir Ephraim and Duke Laurelen. Photo by Lord Tarmach

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