

The North Wind

Newsletter of the
Barony of Lions Gate

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**Their Excellencies, Baron Griffin
and Baroness Caitrin**

Who Will Succeed Them?

The Baron's Column

Baron Griffin ap Bedwyr

Well it is now October and the end of our term draws closer. Soon we will know who will be Their Majesties choice to take over and run the greatest Barony in the known world. We already know who will be the next Prince and Princess of Tir Righ and our congratulations go out to Kheron and Kenna, Tanist and ban-Tanist of the Principality.

Continuing in my quest to introduce you to novelists who not only entertain, but give you a real sense and feel for the medieval period, I want to talk about Elizabeth Chadwick. I just finished reading her novel "The Scarlet Lion", which is the story of William Marshal. It is her second novel detailing his life, the first being "The Greatest Knight" and I enjoyed both of them. Ms. Chadwick is an excellent writer who not only gives an accurate view of the overall history of the time but also fills it with a detail that helps you to understand the people and get a real feel for the world they lived in. I think it is no coincidence that Ms. Chadwick is a member of an historical recreation group (as is



Robert Low, another fine author that I talked about last month) which gives her a deeper

understanding of how people actually lived in the middle ages, something I find missing in other books. Of course the fact that I am a big William Marshal fan and the story is set in my time period probably helps the book resonate with me but more than that it is just very well written.

In keeping with the theme of this column, Henry, eldest son of King John, was born on Oct. 1, 1207. Following the death of his father on Oct. 18 he was crowned Henry III on Oct. 28th at the age of 9. He was the first English king to be crowned as a child and was under the care of regents led by Sir William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke. William despite being in his seventies managed to put down a civil war and invasion led by Prince Louis of France and by the time he died in 1219 left the England stable enough to allow Henry to reign for 65 years.

Baronial Polling Candidates

His Lordship James Wolfden and Her Ladyship Margaret Hamilton of Stirlingshire

His Lordship Cyneric Bearson and Her Ladyship Arianna Freemont

Lord Caemgen mac Garbith ui Andrais and Her Ladyship Ceara inghean uí Mhadadháin of the Clan MacAndrew

Lord Jayson Haus von Werner and Lady Rahil Al'Zarqa Humaa

About the North Wind

This is the October 2010 issue of The North Wind, a publication of the **Barony of Lions Gate**, of the **Society for Creative Anachronism**, Inc. (SCA, Inc.) The North Wind is available from the Chronicler, James Welch (HL James Wolfden, OGGs), jameswolfden@yahoo.ca and is also available from the Barony's website <http://lionsgate.antir.sca.org/public/>. It is not a corporate publication of SCA, Inc. and does not delineate SCA, Inc. Policies.

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Council Highlights

September 2010

Finances Still Strong

The country might still be in an economic crisis but the Barony has pulled out of its crisis. The Exchequer report showed a bank account balance over \$10K again with expected expenses over the next quarter (and into the new year) at only \$3K.

The net income for September was over \$600.

Aside from practises, we have two more events left in the fiscal year – Baroness Birthday Tournament and Baronial Banquet.

Abs of Steel

There were no injuries at the Rapier practise on September 16th when the tip of a Hanwei Rapier snapped during a thrust to the abdomen.

A new fighter made a thrust just as the other fighter moved in. The blade was forced to bend significantly, and at the apex of its deflection, the last few inches near the tip broke off. Neither fighter was injured, and responded immediately to the hold called. The break was not a result of poor technique, but what some fighters present believed to be a heat-treating flaw in the manufacture of the blade.

Well, it might have been a flaw in the manufacture of the blade. I think it was that the blade was no match for our superbly trained fighters with their abs of steel.

Dance Practise Has Moved

It is official, the Dance practise has a new hall and a new drop-in fee.

The new site is the amenity room at 7028 17th Avenue in Burnaby. Buzz 76 for access.

The first practise will be October 7th. There is no drop-in fee but donations are accepted.

For more information on what was said at Council, check out the Council Minutes for May 2010 now posted at the Barony's website - <http://lionsgate.antir.sca.org/public/council.minutes.shtml>

Heavy Practise Moves Inside

With the winter monsoons almost upon us and daylight fading fast in the evening, the Cloverdale Heavy Practise will be moving indoors.

Archery will continue outside for October to allow archers to get their last Royal Rounds in for the season and then move indoors.

School Demo Hits 10th Anniversary

The Barony will perform its 10th annual demo for the Langley Fundamental School on February 15th, 2011.

Her Ladyship Ceara will coordinate this.

Tin is the traditional 10th Anniversary gift item.

Event Stewards Needed Apply Within

The Barony has five events planned in 2011 and all of them need people to come forward as Event Stewards.

The Winter Defenders Tourney on February 25 – 27 will feature both the A&S Defender Tournament and the Bardic Defender Tournament.

The Summer Defender featuring tournaments for Armoured Combat, Rapier, and Archery is scheduled for July 22-24 but this date may move as it is right before Tournament of Armies.

Tournament of Armies, SYGC, and the combined Baroness' Tourney and Baronial Banquet round out the year.

In addition to these events run by the Barony, there will be Sealion War in Seagirt and Warren War in Shittimwoode.



Calendar of Events

October 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Newcomer Info Session	2
3	4 Cloverdale Practice	5 Deadline for advanced polling forms	6	7 Rapier Archery	8 Baronial Opinion Poll at Bransle	9
10	11 Cloverdale Practice	12	13	14 Rapier Archery Dance	15	16
17	18 Cloverdale Practice	19	20 North Wind Deadline	21 Rapier Archery	22	23 Tir Righ A&S and Bardic Tourney 
24 Tir Righ A&S and Bardic Tourney 	25 Cloverdale Practice	26	27 North Wind Deadline	28 Rapier Archery Council*	29	30
31						

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 Rapier Dance	5 Newcomer Info Session	6 Baroness' Birthday Tournament
7	8 Cloverdale Practice	9	10	11 Rapier	12	13
14	15 Cloverdale Practice	16	17	18 Rapier Dance	19	20 Antioch Invitational
21	22 Cloverdale Practice	23	24 North Wind Deadline	25 Rapier	26	27
28	29 Cloverdale Practice	30				

***Lions Gate Baronial Council** is where the "business" side of the Barony is run. All members are encouraged to attend council. Council is held on the 4th Thursday of the month, 7:30pm at the Sapperton Pensioner's Hall, 318 Keary Street, New Westminster (across from Royal Columbian Hospital)

Bransle and Polling

Time: 7:00 PM, October 8, 2010

Polling: No charge

Stay for Bransle: \$5

Site: Masonic Hall

Polling for the new Baron & Baroness of Lions Gate will be done at the Lions Gate Bransle. Come make your voice heard in choosing who will help lead Lions Gate for the next 3 years. All Sergeants & Baronial Officers of Lions Gate, and persons living within the Barony's postal code area and having a valid membership, may be included in the polling.

BRING PROOF OF VALID MEMBERSHIP

If you cannot attend but still wish to join the poll, more information is available on the LG website...

http://www.lionsgate.antir.sca.org/public/barony_opinionpoll_2010.shtml

Those who play with LG but do not live within LG's postal code area can also write directly to the King & Queen at crown@antir.sca.org to make your opinions known. The more information they receive, the more they have to help make their decision.

For the Bransle please bring garb, a tankard, munchies to share, projects to work on, music/instruments, your dancing shoes... Pop/Tea/Cocoa available for purchase. Bring a tankard please. No cups available.

Bransle is pronounced just like "brawl". It is a french word that means "a side to side movement" as most of the steps in a traditional Bransle type dance (like Baron's Bransle) are side to side.

Tír Rígh A&S/Bardic Tournament

Hosted by the Shire of Ramsgaard

Event Steward: Duchess Adwen Wrenn

Time: October 23 – 24, 2010

Site: Kamloops Old Court House, 7 West Seymour Street, Kamloops, BC

Their Highnesses Alden and Katherine invite all to join Them as they choose Their champions of Arts & Sciences and Bardic.

This event will also host a wonderful selection of TUTOR classes, including fight training, armouring, cooking and lampworking tracks.

Baroness Birthday Tournament

Event Steward: HL Myrrim de Lancaster

Time: November 6th

Adults - SCA Member \$15, Minors 13 to 18 \$5, Minors 12 and under free, Family Cap: \$30, NMS Applies

Location: Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph Street, Vancouver, British Columbia

Witness history in the making, as we celebrate Baroness Caitrin's birthday with a Winter Tourney followed by the step down of their Excellencies, Baron Griffin and Baroness Caitrin and the elevation of their successors by their Royal Majesties. The Annual Unbelted Heavy Tourney will take place in the morning, followed by two Rapier Tournaments: Lion's Gate Defender and Gerhard's Riposte. The A&S competition at the event will be to produce a birthday gift for Baroness Caitrin.

Merchants will be in attendance to share their latest wares. The little ones will be able to enjoy Pied Piper. Shortly after court opens, the populace will have the opportunity to enjoy a Morris dance by HL Rhiannon's dance group.

NOTE: There will be no food or drink available on site; however, there will be a dessert buffet available during court. Donations for the buffet are very much appreciated.

Antioch Invitational

Event Steward: Desiree Chirastella

Time: November 20th

Location: Albion Fairgrounds, Maple Ridge

Site fee: \$5 (Non-member surcharge \$5)

Kids 12 yrs and under are free

You're Invited!

Come out to Showcase your skills at Martial Combat, Arts & Sciences and Archery! We would like to present the best of us to the world to display what it is that we do and how much fun we are having. Yes, it is a demo to the public and an event for the rest of us.

There will be Prize Tourneys for both Fully Armored Combat, Rapier Combat and Archery!! (Tourney formats and entry requirements will be published soon)

This is one day so come early and all activities will be INDOORS!



Ask Doctor Carus

Dear Dr. Carus:

It is 1347 AD and I have a headache. Do I have to just to suck it up until 1899 when Bayer introduces Aspirin to the world? Signed, No Head Shots Please

My Lord,

Ah, pain. The medium for many messages, all with the gist of "There's something chewing on your leg – you should do something about it."

Sucking-It-Up is most definitely Period, and in many situations the body will indeed rally with an "Alright already, I heard you the first time!" counter-message, by releasing "endorphins" to temporarily shut down distractions from lifesaving fight-or-flight. These neurochemicals are very potent, and some plants have found that producing mimic substances (including, those of eventual medical utility) is a very cheap way of messing up what's trying to eat them – thus, all drugs are poisons, and chemical warfare predates Man.

From the 5th millennium BCE, people were collecting the seed pods, and dried latex exuded from them, of *Papaver somniferum* – the Opium Poppy. Opium dulls pain, but also depresses other physiological activity, including consciousness, and eventually respiration, leading to death. Therefore the dose is critical. To better manage it, Paracelsus in the 16th century replaced reconstituted "poppy juice" by a "tincture" in alcohol that he called "laudanum" that provided a more controlled and stable potency. Friedrich Sertürner isolated the pure active ingredient, morphine, in 1804. Ether and chloroform, somewhat safer, eventually replaced morphine and alcohol that century for general anaesthesia. Local anaesthetics also came into use, such as from the New World *Erythroxylum coca* – cocaine. However, opium/morphine still remains the anaesthetic of last resort – though with many side-effects (including, addiction), so that Jesus, for example, faced with death by torture, refused a similar bitter concoction (*Mark 15: 23*; called "myrrh" or "gall", probably "labdanum" from the local *Cistus creticus* or Rock Rose, as harvested by combing its resin off goats), to keep a clear head and continue teaching to the very end.

For ordeals short of crucifixion, though, other plants can help somewhat, with fewer complications. Hippocrates in the 5th century BCE, and others of Egypt and Ur long before, knew that brewed bark of the Willow tree (*Salix alba*) could ease aches and also reduce fever and inflammation (others later saw it also slow down blood clotting and cure warts – an unusually wide spectrum of effects!), without sending you for a loop. From the bark extract, JA Buchner in 1826 isolated the active glycoside that he called "salicin"; R Piria in 1828 split that to give "salicylic acid". While more potent, it was also very hard on the digestive system; CF Gerhardt in 1853 added an acetyl group, and in 1897 F Hoffmann improved that manufacture from the herb Meadowsweet (old *Spiraea ulmaria*) for Bayer Inc, which two years later marketed this much more palatable derivative under the name Aspirin (for ACetylated-SPIRaea-IN; they also scored big with their diacetylated morphine derivative for cough syrup, "heroin"). And the rest is history (but even more Modern, so of less interest here).

FOR FURTHER READING:

Booth, M *Opium: A History*, 1996.

Diarmuid J *Aspirin : the Remarkable Story of a Wonder Drug*, 2005.

Duke JA *Duke's Handbook of Medicinal Plants of the Bible*, 2007, p 113-114.

Schwartz, J *Genie in the Bottle: Chemistry of Everyday Life*, 2001, p 69-73.

Let's bring pale skin back!

By Caitríná inghean Anðríasía



Throughout much of history pale skin has been an indicator of wealth. Peasants working outside could not avoid the sun. It is only in the 20th century that tan skin became popular in the Western world. In the United States by the early 20th century, tanned skin has been shown to be viewed both as more attractive and more healthy than pale skin. A belief that is still held by many today. I myself was under the misconception in my youth that sunscreen was only used to keep ones skin from burning. My skin always tanned and I did not easily burn, hence I rarely if ever used sunscreen. Oh how foolish I was.

Unprotected exposure to the sun equals accumulative sun damage to the skin. Be it burning OR tanning it's still damaging your skin, causing premature aging as well as increasing your risk of skin cancer. In my case it was aggressive malignant melanoma. The deadliest type of skin cancer. I was lucky that it was caught at stage two and was treatable. To put it into perspective, what separated me from stage 3 was ½ a millimeter in depth. For the rest of my life I have to be wary of sun exposure as well as be ever vigilant in catching signs of the cancer returning. In the SCA we spend a lot of time outdoors, under the hot sun on the war field, attending court, on the archery range or wherever our interests lie. As skin cancer is becoming more and more prevalent in teens and children, it is no longer considered an "old people's disease". I cannot stress enough the importance of sunscreen with a high SPF factor (and reapplication), a wide brimmed hat, and wherever possible sunglasses with SPF protection (yes you can get melanoma in your eyes too!). If you ever find yourself at an event and have forgotten your sunscreen seek me out. I always have a big bottle with me. My brother-in-law died of skin cancer 5 years ago and still I didn't learn. I'm learning now and hoping everyone will learn from my mistakes. For more information on how to get to know your skin, please visit http://www.dermatology.ca/sap/safety_resources/cancer/index.html

Slip, slop, slap in service, Caitríná – that Heraldry lady

From A Woodworkers Shop

During the many years of hobby woodcraft I have enjoyed, one of the most frustrating and heavily misconceived topics I have ever come across is the subject of tool sharpening. There have been more tools and projects permanently ruined by people not knowing how to hone an edge properly or using the wrong product to do it. Not only due to the lack of fundamental knowledge, but also to the lack of standardization between products. These days if I have any doubt about a product or technique I reach for what I have fondly come to refer to as my sharpening Bible:

The Complete Guide to Sharpening- (ISBN 978-1-56-158-125-2) The Taunton Press

This is the first and only book I have come across that gives the reader a complete understanding of the topic in plain English via 18 well laid out chapters. It steps you through all the background theory you will ever need to understand the products on the market. Then progresses through the theory and application of what makes a well-honed edged tool. The final 12 chapters are each dedicated to a specific class of tools from chisels to planes and knives right on through to power saw blades and drill bits.

Written by Leonard Lee, a woodworker and toolmaker (president of Veritas Tools and Lee Valley Tools) this book has yet to let me down when ever I need an answer on the how's and whys of sustaining edged tools in the two years I have owned it.

Scroll of the Month

This month's scroll was done by Her Ladyship Azure Mary MacGregor. The recipient was Mahala de Sorbonne who received a Court Barony from King Uther and Queen Kara of the West Kingdom.

Sadly, I saw the email from Baron Steffano that a Great Kabeelah had passed.

“With heavy heart I must tell you that Baroness Mahala, Cardinal de Sorbonne, went to her Rest last night surrounded by friends and family.

We are Less for having lost her, but Greater for having known her.” Baron Steffano

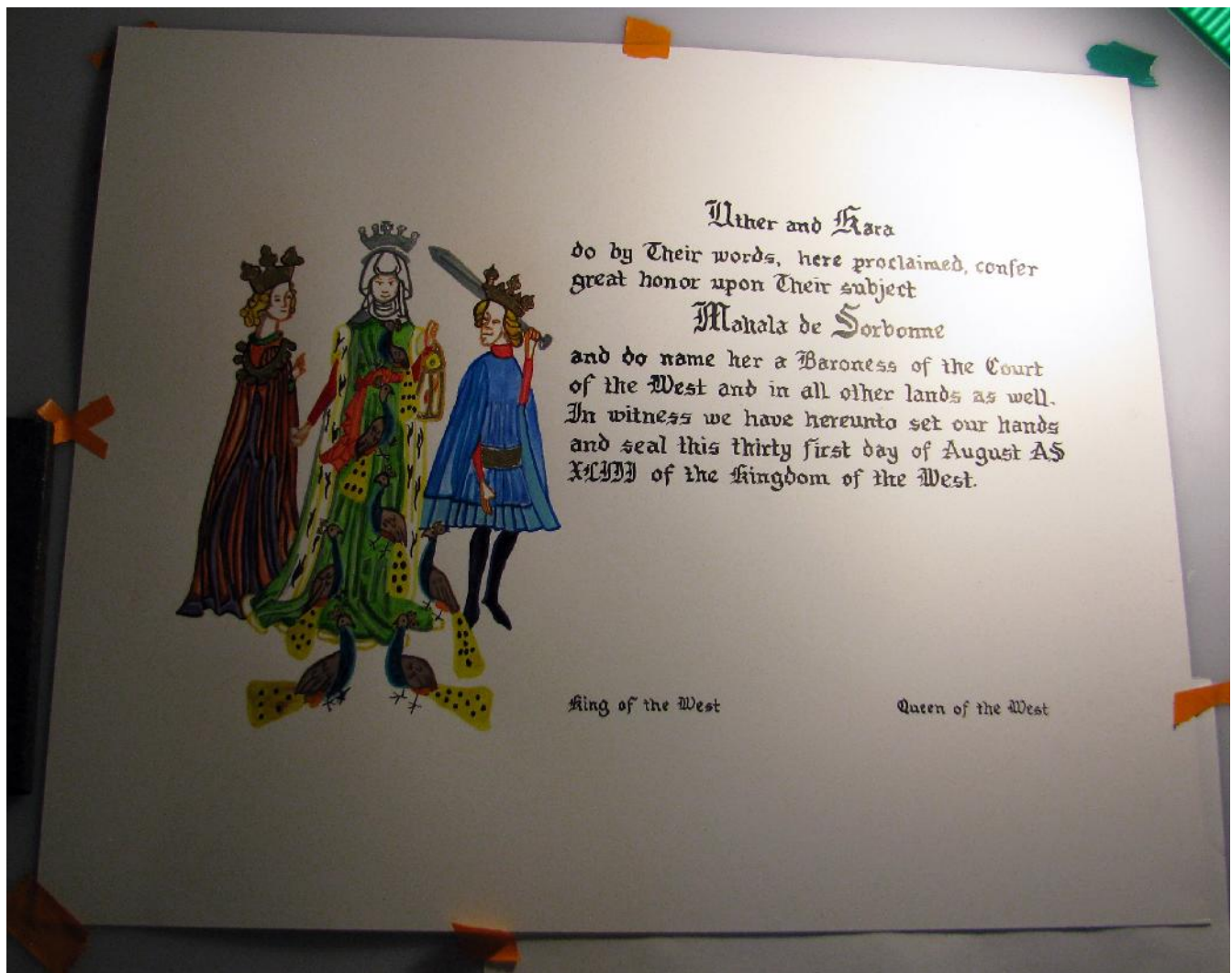


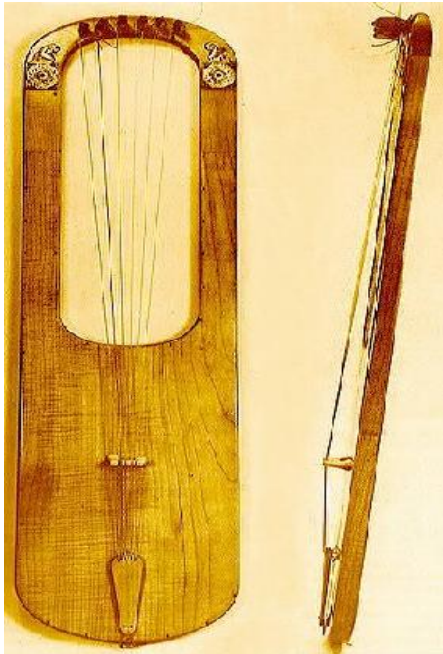
photo by Azure May MacGregor

Azure based the scroll on a 15th Century Manuscript illustration of the Goddess Iris. In the illustration, the Goddess appears to be clothed in seven peacocks.

Have you done or received a scroll that you would like to see printed. Send a photograph or scan to me at chronicler@lionsgate.antir.sca.org and let me know a little history of the scroll. If you are not the scribe, please ask their permission first! Of course, wait until after the scroll is presented.

A Brief Introduction to the Anglo-Saxon Lyre for Beginners

By HL Sionann in Ui Fhlaitbheartaig



1. A reconstruction of the Sutton Hoo Lyre currently in the British Museum*

I bought my first Lyre at 12th Night in 2008 and immediately fell in love. Within the following 6 months I then bought a King David Harp and ANOTHER bigger Lyre. My Mother said “ANOTHER instrument? Don’t you think you have enough now?”

“Don’t be silly. You can never have too many instruments!” I replied.

I’ve found this may actually be true with the Lyre, like guitars (as every guitar player knows). Aside from obvious aspects like length, size, depth, pitch etc, I’ve found that each has some pretty unique properties in tone, playing style, response, over and under tones, and that “thing” that makes you fall in love with something about each one. I am certain there will be others joining the family, but I have 2 right now; one 22 inches in length and one 32 inches long both with nylon strings. Each has a completely different sound due partly to the size difference, different wood used and different tuning. I also originally had a 3rd Lyre (since gifted to one of my students) which didn’t have any sound holes which makes a huge difference to the sound and volume, and THAT becomes most important when playing in a larger venue.

Being a self-taught newbie, I can say without a doubt, the Lyre is one of the easiest and most enjoyable instruments I’ve ever encountered. I think anyone could enjoy playing a Lyre no matter their musical

expertise. It is popularly believed that in period, the Lyre or harp could be passed around the room and anyone could play it if they wished to. I’ve yet to meet an instrument as simple and “user-friendly” as the lovely Lyre.

This article is merely a very brief guide for beginners, by a beginner, written from personal experience and experimentation.

A Very Brief History of the Lyre

According to music scholars, the Lyre belongs to the “zither” family, which also includes lutes, guitars, harp, psaltery and kantele, though there is some argument over its classification. The concept of the Lyre (or “Harpa/Hearpa” from the AS/Norse/Germanic word meaning “to pluck”) is an ancient one. Rock drawings of Lyre-like instruments have been seen in France as early as 15,000 BC, and others versions can be found in nearly every ancient culture, particularly in the Middle East, Egypt and the Mediterranean region. According to the Greeks, the Lyre was invented by the god Hermes from a turtle shell and cow’s guts for strings. Divine inspiration aside, it is more widely believed the first “harp” may have been as simple as plucking a Bow (and arrow) string.

The Germanic style Lyre, which includes the Anglo-Saxon models, dates from about the 4th-10th Cen. and the Lyre/Hearpe is mentioned in the famous Anglo-Saxon poem, ‘Beowulf’. Remains of similar Lyres have been found in Frankish Germany & Saxon England, the most famous of which is the Sutton Hoo Lyre from Suffolk England, found in the Sutton Hoo ship burial and probably constructed in the 7th Cen. AD. Only fragments were found (as seen at right) but many extrapolated reconstructions have been made (both of my Lyres are of this type).



2. The remains of the Sutton Hoo Lyre currently in the British Museum.*



3. The Trossingen Lyre, Germany, 7th Cen.

A more recent archeological find, the Trossingen Lyre from Germany, probably constructed in about 600AD, was found very well preserved, whole and complete with bridge, tuning pegs, sound board, sound holes and intricate decoration.

In the 4th Century, the Lyre-Harp was one of the only instruments allowed in the church to accompany monks singing, and in Ireland in the 5th Century, the Papal Music School was established where the “Harp” was taught.

At some point in its history, the Lyre and the Harp became structurally different instruments and referred to separately.

Structure

The Anglo-Saxon or Germanic Lyre’s shape resembles a large pill capsule. It has a hollow body sound-chest/box, or resonator from which two raised arms extend and are joined at the top by a cross bar or “yoke”, closing in the capsule around the hand-hole. These arms are also mainly hollow the majority of their length, creating a larger resonator.

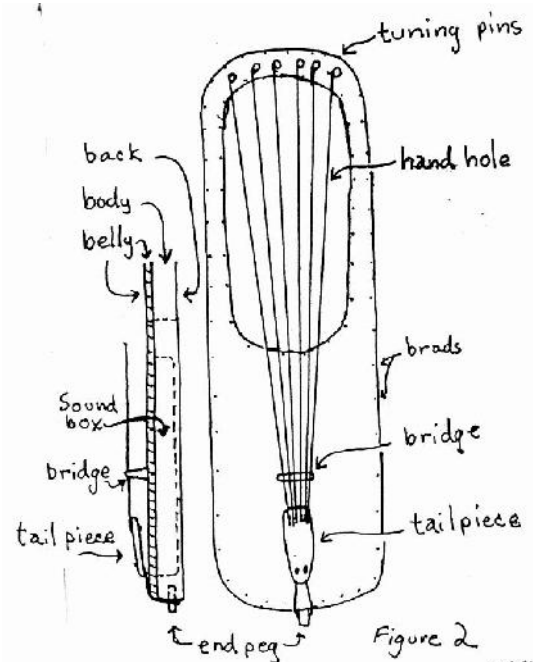
Strings are stretched over the resonator, from the tuning pegs at the top, down over the sound holes, over a floating (non-attached) bridge usually made of wood, bone or horn with grooves cut out to separate each string, placed roughly half-way between the bottom of the sound-hole (assuming it has one) and the bottom of the instrument. They are then tied to a flat tailpiece (a piece of wood/bone/horn with holes drilled to accept the strings) on the bottom end, and then attached via string/cord/thong/gut to the end-peg which juts out the bottom of the body.

There is debate whether the Lyre had sound holes at all, as period depictions typically don’t show any, but whether it is that they didn’t have sound holes, whether the artist left them out, or whether the player depicted is covering them is the question. The Sutton Hoo Lyre was only fragmentary, so it is impossible to say either way, but the Trossingen Lyre, also a Germanic style Lyre like the Sutton Hoo, does have sound holes, NINE of them in fact.

Traditionally, the Lyre had 6 strings, but can have as many as the size and shape allows. The strings are individually attached to the tuning pegs at the top, which can jut out from the topside, or be countersunk from the bottom side. Turning these allows a change of pitch on the string, often with the SLIGHTEST turn.

In period, strings would have been made of gut, stretched and dried. Strings in the modern age will be either nylon (classical guitar strings), Fluorocarbon (lute/ukulele strings), Nylgut (synthetic gut strings), or steel (guitar/harp strings). You can also find real gut strings as well if you wish to more authentically period, but they are quite expensive and hard to come by.

My preference is for Nylon (being readily available) because it has a pleasant, soft, warm sound, however they are quite quiet. Steel strings are MUCH louder, and have a much brighter sound. Bear in mind too that they put more stress on the structure of your instrument. I’ve never tried Fluorocarbon or Nylgut, but from what I



4. Parts of the Anglo-Saxon or Germanic Lyre*
MRP 91

understand, they are quite good. Really, it is up to you which you use depending on your playing preference and venue.

Tuning

Really you can tune a Lyre anyway you wish. The range of your Lyre depends on its size and number of strings. It is best to start tuning your Lyre from the outside strings, inwards. Start with the lowest, then the highest, then the next lowest etc. You will probably have to make adjustments as you go along as well. Lyre tuning is quite particular and the slightest turn of the key can make huge jumps in pitch.

There are some traditional tunings as instructed by the famous bard, Hucbald (840-930AD). The primary (and simplest) tuning intervals should be tone-tone-semitone-tone-tone. In modern notation, this would be (for example) G A B C D E (which is almost the whole G major scale). Of course this tuning structure can be adapted to any key.

There are other more complicate tunings used, particularly for Lyres with more strings, but in the beginning, I would suggest keeping it simple. This tuning, especially with the addition of the Voice, will allow a lot of versatility.

Currently my small Lyre is tuned this way: D E F# G A B so as to suit a number of particular songs I like to accompany. This tuning I feel gives me the greatest range and lends itself naturally to a number of chords. By adding your singing Voice to the Lyres fixed notes, you are able to form a number of other chords as well. The possibilities are nearly endless.

My large Lyre is tuned (essentially) F G A B C# D which lends itself to more melancholy songs in minor keys.

When restringing your Lyre, just like with any stringed instrument, it may take several days (or weeks) for the strings to stretch to their optimal playing point. During this time, they likely will not hold in tune well and you will have to adjust frequently. Be patient. Eventually, you will get them to the optimal point and barring large temperature and humidity jumps, they will stay fairly in tune pretty well.

Do not over tune your Lyre. Each size of Lyre has an optimal range. Over tuning may cause the strings to break under the tremendous pressure, and/or the Lyre to warp or bend or even snap at the arms or end-peg.

Playing Techniques

There are 3 traditional methods of playing the Lyre: bowing, “block and strum”, or finger picking.

I have never tried the bowing technique. Using a bow to play requires a bow of course and perhaps some slight modifications to the instruments bridge. Normally the Lyre’s bridge is flat across the top, which means you would only be able to successfully bow the first and last strings. A curved bridge would be needed to allow the bow clean access to all the strings, like that of a Violin. Otherwise it is played exactly as other stringed instruments like the Violin and Viola or their ancestor, the Rebec (which I’ll talk about in another article), and could also be combined with the other methods of playing as well.

The “block & strum” method (as seen in picture 5), the method which leads many to call the Lyre the “grandfather of the guitar”, involves both hands in playing. For this you will need to attach a “strap” around the arms of the Lyre, which you will thread your wrist into in order to support the Lyre, while freeing up both hands. Brace the Lyre on your lap or hip if you are standing. With the left hand (if you are right handed), place your finger-tips against the strings from the back of the Lyre. Somewhat like a guitar, you will use this hand and fingers to block the strings you do not wish to be heard by placing your finger tips very gently against the string only to dampen their sound. With the OTHER hand, using a “plectrum” (aka: pick... a light guitar pick works fine) or your fingers, strum the strings rather like a guitar. The strings you are blocking will not be heard (except for a quiet plucking sound),



5. King David playing an Anglo-Saxon Lyre using the “block & strum” method. – From Folio 30V of The Vespasian Psalter, English circa 750*

thus enabling you to isolate chords by changing which strings are blocked or unblocked. This is a much more rhythmic method of playing, where as the finger plucking is more melodic.

Finger-picking (just like with playing a harp or guitar) is the first, most obvious method of playing the Lyre. It can be plucked using the pads, tips, or even the nails of the hand, each creating a different sound and volume from soft and warm to loud and sharp. You can also use one or both hands (from both sides), which more resembles playing the harp. With only 6 strings, I find it is easiest to only pluck with one hand. You can also use a "plectrum", a small piece of wood, horn or bone (a light guitar pick works well), which creates a louder, sharper sound.

Also note, as the bridge is not attached to the body of the instrument, periodically it may fall over while you are playing (especially in the "block & strum" method) or tuning, producing a heart-stoppingly loud "THWANG" sound. Do not worry. You have not broken your Lyre. This is normal, if a little terrifying. I recommend drilling a small hole in the bridge and tying on a thin bit of cord or clear filament thread to the bridge, attached to the body somewhere (like the tailpiece) so that when it falls, it doesn't end up getting lost (as I've done).

Care and Feeding of your Lyre

Lyres, being made of wood, are very susceptible to changes of humidity and temperature, causing fluctuations in tuning (sometimes LARGE fluctuations) and in extreme cases, cracking of the wood or snapping of the arms or strings. I have broken several instruments simply from temperature and humidity shifts. Lyres are fair weather and mostly indoor instruments.

It is HIGHLY recommended to have a lined** case for your Lyre, both to protect from temperature/humidity fluctuations as well to protect against jarring etc.

(** Be aware that at high temperatures, the finish on your Lyre, depending on what you use, may soften and adhere to your lining. Using "fuzzy" things like sheepskin is not recommended unless there is also another non-fuzzy layer between it and the Lyre. There is a reason why I had a Lyre named "Fuzzy". Sigh. Live and learn.)

In warmer, drier climes, it may be a good idea to invest in a guitar humidifier (they are usually pretty cheap) to help keep the wood from drying out and splitting. Too much moisture is bad for the instrument, but so is too little.

In colder, damper climes, it is best to try and keep the Lyre at a relative room temperature. If the Lyre has become cold (like from being outside) it is best to leave it in its case to warm up for 30-60mins, both to warm the wood and stabilize the tuning. As the Lyre warms up, or cools off, it will either go out of tune, or come back into tune, but will likely need adjustments.

Also exposing your Lyre to extreme temperature fluctuations (such as coming inside from freezing temps. outside and then immediately taking it out of the case) may also cause your finish to crackle, depending on what the finish is (wax finishes tend not to have this problem like heavy lacquered finishes). Leave it in the case to warm up/cool down until back to room temperature.

Depending on the finish of your Lyre you may wish to invest in some soft dusting cloths, or wax to maintain the appearance. DO NOT use furniture polish on your Lyre (or harp). If you use steel strings, and they become tarnished, use steel wool to "polish" them back. Do not use commercial chemical cleaners.

If you have further questions about the Lyre, or wish a crash course in playing from another beginner who is learning as she goes along, please feel free to email me at songstress1973@gmail.com. I hope this short introduction is useful and inspiring to you Lyrists (not sure that's a word, but if not, it should be). Happy playing :)

Purchasing a Lyre

If you are interested in purchasing a Lyre, there are several sources I recommend:

Locally (with the reach of Lions Gate), there is a gentleman on Vancouver Island, by the name of HL Aleyn of Wickington, an apprentice to Master Stephen of Hunmanby. He makes Lyres, Harps, Recorders, Rebecs, Bagpipes and various other instruments. His prices are VERY reasonable and he also takes commissions. I have purchased 3 Lyres, one King David Harp, and was gifted a Rebec, all made by Aleyn. I've also borrowed a Hornpipe and Bagpipes from him as well. I would suggest starting by talking with him and trying out the instruments to see what suits you best. If you see a guy with a bunch of instruments for sale or display at an

event, that's probably him. Otherwise contact me and I'll put you in touch. You can also see Aelyn with some of his instruments in this recent video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=CF38-cfhxAY

I can also suggest perusing Michael J. King's website as well. He is an instrument maker from the UK who makes and plays some beautiful instruments, but he is quite expensive. You can also see him playing some of his Lyre's etc on YouTube, where there are also video (by him and others) about playing, tuning, making Lyres, etc. Search for "Michael J King Lyre".

Online Resources and Further Research

Here are just a few great sites for more information on Anglo-Saxon Lyres (and Harps), including information for those you wishing to trying your hand at making your own Lyre...

Anglo_Saxon_Lyres Yahoo Group - http://launch.groups.yahoo.com/group/Anglo_Saxon_Lyres/ - A good place to "meet" other players, makers and enthusiasts, including Michael King (see below), for advice, tips, information, plans, music, history, ongoing experimental archeology, playing techniques etc.

<http://www.michaeljking.com/> - Maker of ancient and medieval stringed instruments and expert on Lyres and Harps of all kinds. Also a great player of said instruments. Check out his "making of" CD's, and videos on YouTube.

<http://crab.rutgers.edu/~pbutler/aslyre.html> - An Excellent site for anyone wanting to make their own Lyre, with pictures and instructions.

<http://www.bragod.com/> - A site for both Lyre and Crwth (a Welsh Lyre) with info on period tuning etc.

<http://saxonrabbit.com/LinksLyre.htm> - contains many links to other stuff about Lyre and Hearpa, including other musicians, books, CD's, websites etc.

<http://www.nogy.net/lyre/index.htm> - An impressive site from couple of SCA Laurels (and some friends of theirs) from Calontir (?). They've made many Lyres, Crwths and other stuff. My favourite is the Jouhikko, a Finnish Bowed Lyre, made entirely by a 9 year old and entered in their A&S competition. If a NINE year old can make one, I'm pretty sure I can too (granted, she probably has more woodworking skills than I do. :P)

Online Sources:

<http://www.cs.vassar.edu/~priestdo/lyre.html>

<http://crab.rutgers.edu/~pbutler/aslyre.html>

<http://www.regia.org/music.htm>

<http://www.vikinganswerlady.com/music.shtml>

<http://www.mandoisland.com/?p=944>

<http://saxonrabbit.com/LinksLyre.htm>

<http://www.alisonvardy.com/harp-info/early-harp-history.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lyre>

Illustrations found at:

1. <http://www.regia.org/music.htm>
2. http://cavender.myweb.uga.edu/harp_project/ - Providence of picture unknown
3. http://www.michaeljking.com/lyre_news.htm
4. <http://www.cs.vassar.edu/~priestdo/lyre.figs.html>
5. http://cavender.myweb.uga.edu/harp_project - Public Domain image courtesy of Wikipedia

(HL Sionann is an enthusiastic, if somewhat shy, Bard (or Skald) "specializing" in Medieval Scandinavian Folk Music and Elizabethan & Baroque vocal music. She plays a variety of instruments but especially loves her Lyres for their simplicity and beauty. She is a former Bardic Champion of Tir Righ, the current Bardic Officer of Tir Righ, Bardic Officer of Lions Gate and an Apprentice to Mistress Seiglynda of Elphinstone.)

Compendium



* Their Royal Majesties of An Tir – King Tiernan Mor Dal Cais and Queen Miranda Faoltiarna (king@antir.sca.org, queen@antir.sca.org).



* **Their Highnesses of Tir Righ** – Prince Alden ap Owain and Princess Katherine atte Moure (prince@tirrigh.org, princess@tirrigh.org).

* **Baron & Baroness of Lions Gate** - TE Griffin Ap Bedwyr and Caitrin ni Cingeadh (griffcait@shaw.ca). 12159 – 222 St. Maple Ridge, V2X 5W4.

Baronial Council

Acting Seneschal

Lord Callen Drakkar

seneschal@lionsgate.antir.sca.org.

Contingency Deputy - Her Ladyship Ceara inghean ui Mhadadhain

Watch - Lord Garet Doiron

Chancellor of the Exchequer

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Deputy Exchequer - Lady Ylas Anasdoter,

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Deputy Chamberlain - HL Edrik,

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Sable Loat Pursuivant (Herald)

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Deputy - HL Aelana Cordovera

Baronial Webminister

Lady Malie Rennick of Lions Gate

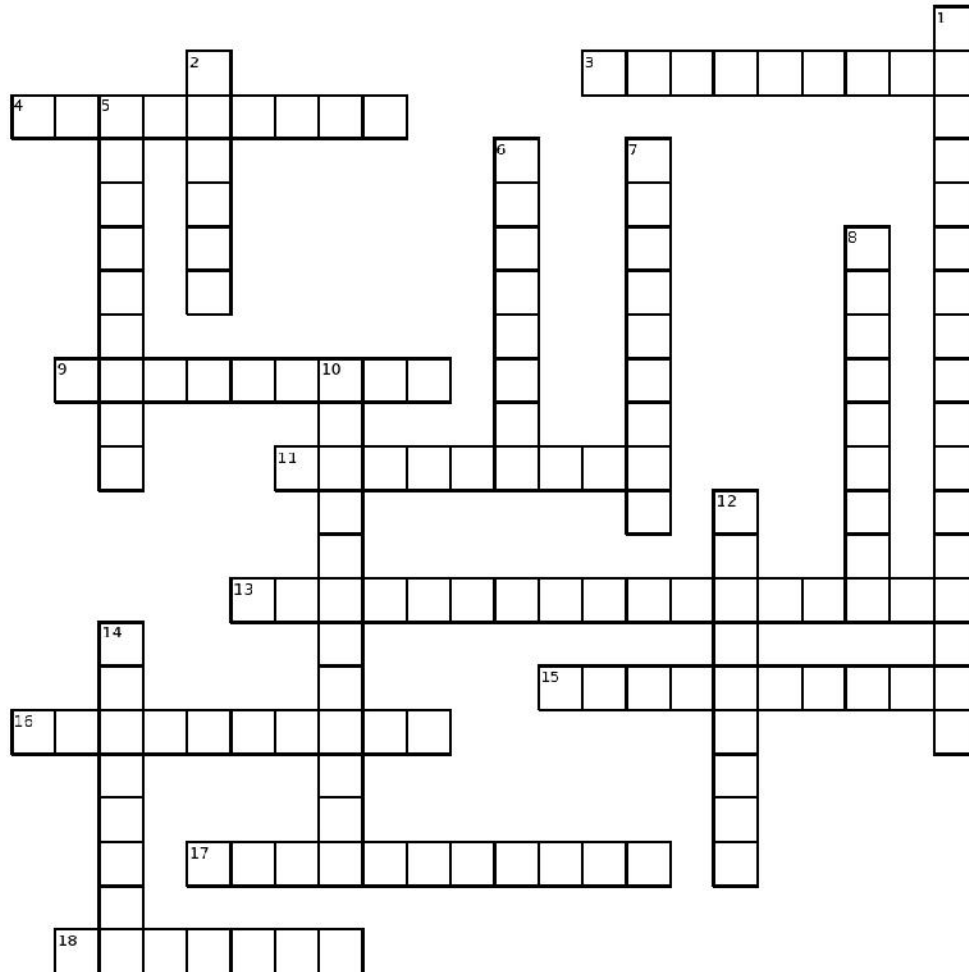
webminister@lionsgate.antir.sca.org

Deputy (Webspinner) - Lord Rothgar

webspinner@lionsgate.antir.sca.org

They'll know we are Tir Righ by our star!

Do you best to remember the branch name for the related mundane area! (Hint: Don't use spaces!)



- | Across | | Down | |
|--------|-----------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| 3 | 110 Mile House, BC | 1 | CFB Esquimalt, BC |
| 4 | Smithers, BC | 2 | Terrace & Kitimat, BC |
| 9 | Powell River, BC | 5 | Kamloops, BC |
| 11 | Chilliwack & Abbotsford, BC | 6 | Nanaimo, BC |
| 13 | University of Victoria, BC | 7 | Port Alberni, BC |
| 15 | Kelowna & Penticton, BC | 8 | Okanagan Valley, BC |
| 16 | Vernon, BC | 10 | Bellingham, WA |
| 17 | Coquitlam (et al), BC | 12 | Vancouver (et al), BC |
| 18 | Victoria, BC | 14 | Courtenay, BC |

Puzzle by Lady Aibinn Lochart of the clan McBieghn