



The North Wind

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Baron's Column



A hearty fire warms the room as the north winds blow outside. Trees shake, windows rattle; thankfully there's no snow yet. We expect it soon, here in the far northern reaches of the Barony, but for now it remains high on the mountains nearby. I sit near the fire and ponder the subject of winds.

The "winds of change" have certainly blown through the Barony of Lions Gate recently, and Caitrina and I find ourselves continuously awed by the love and support we've received since our names were announced as the successful candidates. When members of the populace were offered the chance to swear fealty to us, the roar of "I So Swear!" was truly breathtaking. I've heralded that ceremony many times, and I've sworn it many more, but to be on the receiving end was something I wasn't quite prepared for.

There are a couple of other changes coming as well. The more important of which is that we have – in consultation with the Seneschale, Council, and the Sergeantry of Lions Gate – moved the date for Lions Gate's Sergeantry Trials. The next event will be held on the weekend of July 26-27, 2014. This is the weekend prior to the Tournament of Armies V, and accomplishes several things; it moves the Sergeantry Trials away from the same weekend as Sport of Kings, it puts it on the same weekend as Seagirt's Sergeantry Trials, and – as we are also holding this event on the same site (the Grenewode) as ToA – gives us the opportunity to spend the week between on site. We currently anticipate practices and classes during this week, including a fair number of equestrian activities. (Caitrina *really* wants to brush a horse.)

During the time we spent talking to the populace prior to the polling, I mentioned that I'd like to see an expansion of the "Baronial Defenders". As you may know, Her Excellency the late Viscountess Amanda created the "Baroness' Champions" during her time as Baroness, to be a way of bringing to light people who inspired her in many ways. At that time, the Barony did not have "Championship" tournaments as other branches think of them, but we did have The Hero of Lions Gate. This changed in later years, as we began holding first the Heavy Tournament, then the Archery, followed by Rapier, Bardic, and A&S in the years following. We had a problem however; while other branches referred to these as "Champions", Lions Gate already had Champions, in the inspirations of Baroness Amanda. And so, our tournaments became "Defenders' Tourneys".

Baroness Margaret took the first step in this change, when she began naming her "Baroness' Inspirations", rather than champions. We are going to take the next step in this, and from now on our tournaments will be "Champions' Tourneys". We've talked to a lot of people on this subject, and – while some disagree – the majority were in favour. And so, March's Canterbury Faire will host the Bardic and A&S Champions' Tournaments.

But there's more! I've been thinking of this one for a long time prior to ever being in a position to do it; at Canterbury Faire will also be held the first tournament for the Games Champion of Lions Gate. More details on this will follow in the new year. My only regret is that I can't be It. We have been also discussing the possibility of a Combat Archery Champion, and will be consulting more in the coming months.

And so, in closing...

To Baron James; I can only hope to be as inspirational and entertaining as you were during your time under this coronet. You've left a legacy of "getting out there and doing" that I will try to follow. You've given me encouraging advice leading up to our investment, and I anticipate learning more from you as the years pass.



Baron's Column



To Baroness Margaret, Clan-sister; I have difficulty finding words worthy enough to express my love, pride, and admiration for you, and all that you've done in the past three years. The joy with which you've served the people of the Barony was evident from the moment you stepped up. The advice you've given Caitrina and myself remains invaluable, and I know that Caitrina feels more confident having you to talk with.

To the people of the Barony of Lions Gate; thank you. We will not squander the trust you've placed in us. We will do our best to represent all of the Barony to those of Nobility above us, and represent Them to you. We will lead this Barony with pride, and keep in our hearts the history of those who've sat the Baronial thrones before us. It is an honoured lineage.

And finally, as the calendar year comes to a close, Caitrina and I wish for everyone the very best of the season. May it find you joyous, surrounded by friends and family, good food and fine drink, memories of good times past, and hope for greater times to come. May you always have walls for the winds.

Baron Uilliam





Editor's Letter



Issue #354 is my last issue as Chronicler, after a three year stint. You will notice that my very first issue, #340, bore the cover image of James and Margaret being sworn in as Baron and Baroness. This issue bears the cover image of Uilliam and Caitrina being sworn in as Baron and Baroness. Three years ago, I took over this position from James. Now, I pass it on back to James.

I have mixed feelings about leaving this post – a lot has happened in our barony over the past three years, and I have been privileged to chronicle some of it. But, I think it's time for a change – and, as much as pregnancy itself is mostly a waiting game, I'm sure what will come afterwards will keep me busy enough. (So I've been told).

There's not really much left to say, that I haven't already said before. Please enjoy this final issue with me as your editor, as you celebrate the holidays with your family and friends.

In Service,


- Wymarcha Hektanah Doiron















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Lions Gate Calendar of Events

January 2014			
Date		Branch	Event
Fri - Sun	10 - 12		An Tir 12th Night
Mon Thu			Archery Practice
Wed	22		Baronial Council
Thu	2, 9, 16, 23, 30		Cut and Thrust Practice
Mon	6, 20		Dance Practice
Sat Sun	no practices Jan		Equestrian Practice
Thu			Heavy Practice
Tue	unknown		Missile Combat / Thrown Weapons
Fri	3		Newcomer's Information Session
Tue Thu	7, 14, 21, 28 2, 9, 16, 23, 30		Rapier Practice
Sun	26		Scriptorium
Fri	24		Stitch and Bitch
Sun			North Wind Content Submission Deadline Issue
February 2014			
Date		Branch	Event
Sat	1		Lionsdale Winters Tourney
Fri - Sun	21 - 23		Tir Righ February Investiture
Mon	24		Langley Fundamental Middle School Demo
Mon Thu			Archery Practice
Wed	26		Baronial Council
Thu	6, 13, 20, 27		Cut and Thrust Practice
Mon	3, 17		Dance Practice
Sat Sun	9 24		Equestrian Practice
Thu			Heavy Practice
Tue	unknown		Missile Combat / Thrown Weapons
Fri	7		Newcomer's Information Session
Tue Thu	4, 11, 18, 25 6, 13, 20, 27		Rapier Practice
Sun	23		Scriptorium

Fri			Stitch and Bitch
March 2014			
Date		Branch	Event
Fri - Sun	7 - 9		Kingdom Arts & Sciences / Bardic Championships
Sat	29		Canterbury Fayre and Banquet
Mon Thu			Archery Practice
Wed	26		Baronial Council
Thu	6, 13, 20, 27		Cut and Thrust Practice
Mon			Dance Practice
Sat Sun	9 24		Equestrian Practice
Thu			Heavy Practice
Tue	unknown		Missile Combat / Thrown Weapons
Fri	7		Newcomer's Information Session
Tue Thu	4, 11, 18, 25 6, 13, 20, 27		Rapier Practice
Sun			Scriptorium
Fri			Stitch and Bitch

Upcoming Events

Our December scriptorium is planned for Sunday, 29th December with a change from our usual format.

Time change for this occasion only: Scriptorium will take place from 12 noon to approximately 5pm when the revel will begin.

Scriptorium - Noon to 5pm We will be working on designs for charters/scrolls for the new Baron and Baroness. New and experienced scribes are welcome to attend; we have charters and samplers for you to paint and some limited supplies if you don't have your own (brushes, paints, etc). If you are curious, please come and see what we do. We will probably have a short break early on for those who haven't had their noontime meal so bring a lunch to eat or a contribution to share (and your feast gear) as you so desire - this will probably just be a light meal as we will be feasting after the scriptorium. Tea and coffee will be available.

Revel - 5pm to ??? We will be celebrating the season with a Revel at which all are welcome; attendance at the scriptorium is not mandatory. The revel will be a potluck feast of sorts, depending on what participants bring to share.

Location: 2518 Hastings Street, Vancouver BC 1 block east of Nanaimo. The Common Room and apartments are above VanCity Savings. Buzz 518.

YIS

Lady Marie de Cheriseye la foret

Ask The Sock Monkey



As Dr. Carus' article for Ask Our Alchemist was late this month, and we needed some filler; the North Wind has chosen to ask a question of another famous resident of the Barony, Somebody Monkey, Man (or Monkey) at Arms to Sir William of the Battered Helm, and social gad-about. He has been known to frequent many Kingdoms, and has been spotted reliably with at least three kings. We are doubtful of his knowledge of science, but he was available to write for us this month. We apologize in advance for the quality.

Thank you! I am so glad to be here, out of my box finally. I mean it's a nice box and all, it has pictures...well, not of me, but someone that could be mistaken for me. At night. If you were blind. And had never seen a monkey before. Keeps the rain off though.

What was the question you had?

Oh, where did Christmas Trees come from? Requested by Noel Evergreen? That's a bad pun...oh, right, it's supposed to be I cannot understand why this fascination with bad jokes in this Society. We are supposed to be a serious number of students of Medieval History (in capitals, no less), and there is simply no time for such frivolity, letting it interrupt us, and ruin perfectly good information transfers.

Once, when I was at Estrella with Square, I was chatting with His Majesty East, and He mentioned that...what? No, of course the story has nothing to do with Christmas Trees. Why would I tell a story about that?

Oh. Right then.

Christmas Trees are green leafy things, erected in the winter months by humans to celebrate Yule. It is well known that part of Yule is the burning of a huge log in a fire, with the intent of chasing away wood elves and other nasty forest creatures by burning (at least symbolically) their homes over a period of a fortnight. What you may not know, is that when you cut down a large tree, there is a certain amount of material left over that is not suitable for burning (for example, the roots). The roots are usually used to some effect in the kitchens for the feasting, but another portion that remains are the branches and top of the tree. If you carefully position the branches around the perimeter of your home, perhaps decorated, it will function as further warning to the sprites that they are not welcome here. You should especially place a garland over your doorway, and liberally cover it with mistletoe (a poison, and one known to strangle trees to death slowly to boot).

The top of the tree is kept alive by placing the cut portion in water, and it will remain alive yet not alive for quite some time in such a state – a zombie tree, bent to your will and purposes as it were. The leaves will not even fall off if in such a state. You can then decorate the tree with symbols of good luck and cheer for the season, such as strings of cooked corn, shiny objects (to represent wealth), and glass ornaments of items wished for. If you maintain said tree into the spring time as far as the equinox, those things are sure to come to you in plenty.

Under the tree, one places presents for friends and family, safe from the prying hands of the trickster elves; who usually stop at nothing to tear open wrapping paper, and damage gifts. This damage is often blamed on the cat or dog. There you go, all about Christmas Trees.

Please join me next issue, when I will discuss the Maypole, and its role in chicken fertility practices.

And thank you, Somebody. That was simply...dreadful. Just awful.

Ask Our Alchemist



Photo by: Ylas Anasdoter

Dear Dr. Carus,

Help! There's a tree sprouting in my hall! I've considered fleeing, but baby, it's cold outside.

Sincerely,
Evered Greene

My Lord Greene,

Fir not! This is normal for your clime at this time of year.

Such interior decoration is foreshadowed in classical mediterranean mythology (Odysseus had a tree growing in his bedroom), but to understand its later growth through the Middle Ages, you need to know all about the various roles of conifers in the everyday life of northern Europeans (or maybe you don't, but Dr. Carus will tell you anyway).

As elsewhere, people cut down trees and shaped them into timbers to build houses and barns, or into boards for furniture and ships. More than elsewhere, they also burned wood to keep warm, as well as for cooking and lighting. Hence the tradition of the Yule log, that was ceremonially slowly combusted in defiance of the longest and coldest night of the year, and in reassurance and celebration of the return of longer days. Though widely supposed a pagan holdover ¹, its use was first attested only around 1600 ².

At first, such domestic fires were built on fireproofed hearths in the middle of a room, with a hole in the ceiling to let out the smoke; then from around the 12th C, under canopies or in fireplaces vented by chimneys; then in the 18th C, in ducted metal stoves (surely descended from the *athanor* of alchemists)³. In bonfires banked (partially covered) with earth, wood was also roasted into charcoal, needed to achieve the high temperatures for smelting and forging of metals, especially iron. Channels underneath such kilns would collect any melted and downward-distilled resin as tar (wood tar, that is, not modern petroleum-based asphalt), and run it into containers in nearby pits ⁴.

As anyone who's had to handle them knows, softwoods (spruce, fir, pine, cedar) are particularly rich in resin, a sticky water-repellant liquid which generally seals a plant's wounds and protects it against infection, predation, and dehydration in deserts or dry winters. Resin air-hardens into rosin, that can be anointed or burned for a pleasant smell: frankincense, myrrh and copal are famous examples from other kinds of plants. Under the right conditions, it hardens even further into clear amber (more specifically, yellow *ambre jaune*, to distinguish from gray *ambre gris* from sperm whales), that survives the burial and rotting of the tree, to eventually be released to float upon a sea and be cast up on its shore (especially in parts of the Baltic favoured by climate, geology, wind and current), for use as jewelery ⁵.

Heating tar converts it to pitch, which hardens upon cooling; the distillate from this process is turpentine. Since the time of Noah ⁶, wooden hulls were caulked with pitch to make them waterproof, then coated with tar to keep them from rotting (so were linen sails, and the shingle roofs of landlubbers); the turpentine dissolved wax for furniture polish, and was medicine against intestinal worms, just as tar treated external cuts and disorders (and was also used in cosmetics and candy)⁴. With all these applications, it's no wonder that forest products were the major export of medieval Scandinavia; loss of access to these resources contributed to the extinction of the early Norse colonies in Greenland ⁷.

Back to intact trees indoors. Pagans had long brought in evergreen boughs for winter festive & fertility purposes, as is known from a condemnation by 4th C St Gregory Nazianzen – reversed by 6th C Pope St Gregory the Great (of Gregorian Chant fame, and patron to Dr. Carus and other scholars of natural science)². A late and doubtful legend of 8th C St Boniface has him teaching German converts to exchange the local oak where they'd performed human sacrifice, for a small home fir and its gentle reminder of life triumphing amidst death ⁸. In another, Martin Luther is

credited with introducing, in the early 16th century, indoor “Christmas trees” bearing lit candles – which about fits where and when these were first historically attested⁹. Such decorated trees were combined with crèche or Nativity scenes that had been instituted by St Francis of Assisi around 1200¹⁰, so that the decorated tree would come to represent the sky over Bethlehem (recalling Yggdrasil of the ancient Norse, and a logical metaphor from Nature of a spiritual truth)¹², filled as it was with stars and clouds and birds and angels on that special night 2000 years ago.

From Brother and Doctor Carus, a very merry Christmas to all, and a happy & prosperous New Year!

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Dr. Carus (<http://medieval.GrahamJDarling.com/>) answers your questions on Medieval Science & Technology in every issue of the North Wind: email them to him at gjdATgrahamjdarlingDOTcom, or to the Chronicler.



Book Binding



Above: Aelana helps Jay, Right: Marie,
Bottom: Aelana and Ylas



Baronial Babies



Baroness' Tourney



Above: John Macandrew takes Miranda as Arcuarius, Bottom: Constance de Montbard becomes a Laurel.



Baroness' Tourney



Left: Dr. Carus' slush lamp. Right: Tamsyn receives her Lions Claw, Bottom: The Sergeantry of Lions Gate swear fealty to Baroness Caitrina.



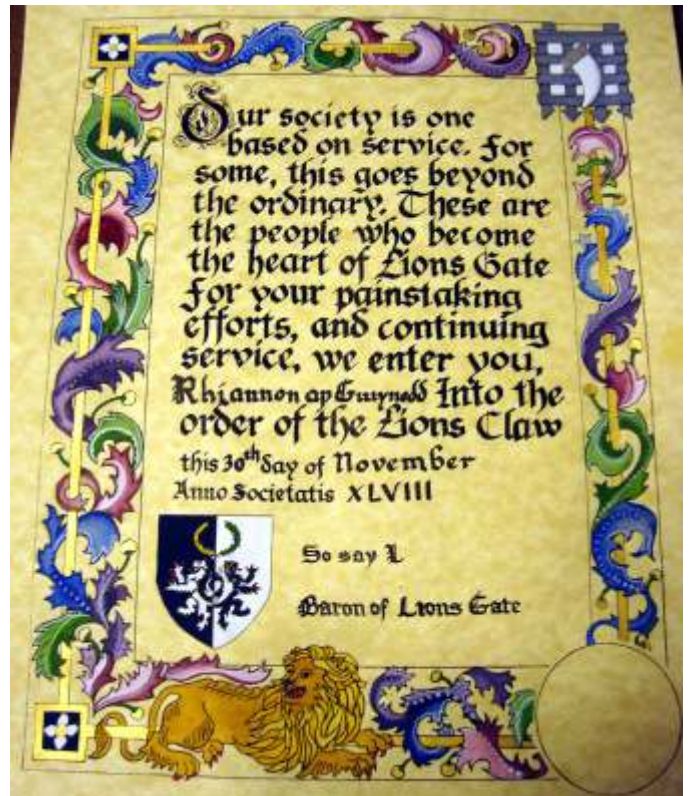
Baroness' Tourney



Above: Rhiannon getting her Lions Claw, Right: Gareth Doiron hugs Baroness Margaret, Bottom left: Baroness Margaret and Kenneth of Shaftsbury, Bottom right: Sean tells Santa Oak what he wants for Christmas.



Scrolls of the Month



Four Lions Claws were awarded at Baroness' Tourney. From top left, clockwise: Aldgudana, painted by HL Aelana Cordovera; Rhiannon, painted by Lady Tamsyn le Rous; Ylas and Tamsyn, painted by Lady Marie de Cheriseye la foret. Original charter designed by Dona Lasairiona inghean Uilliam na Seoltadh.



Crown & Council



Their Royal Majesties of An Tir - Ieuan Gower II & Gwyneth Gower II
(king@antir.sca.org, queen@antir.sca.org).



Their Highnesses of Tir Righ - Ulfgar & Juahara
(prince@tirrigh.org, princess@tirrigh.org).



Baron & Baroness of Lions Gate - Their Excellencies Uilliam mac Fearchair mhic Gille Andrias
& Caitrina inghean Aindriasa
(baron@lionsgate.tirrigh.org, baroness@lionsgate.tirrigh.org).

Baronial Council

Seneschale - Cassandra Wineday of Newingate, seneschal@lionsgate.tirrigh.org
Contingency Deputy - Brigitte die Arrogante
Watch - VACANT|

Chancellor of the Exchequer - Fiona the Archer, exchequer@lionsgate.tirrigh.org
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Dance - Vacant, dance@lionsgate.tirrigh.org
Games - Uilliam mac Fearchair mhic Gille Aindrias, games@lionsgate.tirrigh.org

Chatelaine - Tamsyn le Rous, chatelaine@lionsgate.tirrigh.org

Baronial Scribe - Marie de Cheriseye la foret, scribe@lionsgate.tirrigh.org
Deputy - Myrrim de Lancaster

Baronial Webminister - Solveig of Whitby
Deputy (Webspinner) - Dreng