

## The Tall Baron

We've heard the tales || the hoards of fame:  
of Arthur the King, || Excalibur's wielder;  
the courage of Roland || the captain of Charlemagne;  
and Beowulf Brave, || the Bane of Grendel.  
But greater than these || is Gwydion baron.  
A tribute to virtue; || his talents are many,  
as skilled with hammerblows || as with sword strokes,  
a generous lord || beloved by his folk.  
But this Welshman wields || a weapon greater;  
he carries a strength || no king can best.  
Our lord, like a tree, || grows tall when watered!  
The golden trove, || glad work of bees,  
inspires Gwydion || to greater heights  
like draft of Ents || when draining mead.  
After long night's drinking || when dawn approaches  
all gaze in wonder || as Gwydion stands;  
his coronet-rack || crashes right through  
the hall's sturdy roof. || The rain pours in.  
If all the ale || that ever came  
to camps of war || to courage bring  
were given now || to Gwydion  
What army then || could overcome him?  
See him eager || armed for battle,  
striking, forward || each stride a league,  
arrows falling, || fell darts piercing,  
from archers balanced || on baron's shoulders.  
His shield brothers, || in the shade of their lord,  
would labor cool || carving the raven's feast.  
Never would those || neath his broad shield  
suffer cold rain || to rust their mail.  
Ere they face him || his foes would yield,  
beseech the victor || to step on them not.  
Now all give praise || to our honored lord,  
and toast the health || of the tall baron.

## Notes

**Anglo-Saxon style poetry** is alliterative style rather than a rhyming one; that is, the structure is based on repeating consonant sounds. Lines are divided into two half-lines separated by a slight pause (often shown either as an exaggerated space or two lines).

For more information, download the Anglo Saxon Poetry Guide located here:

<http://www.gemyndeseld.net/stories-by-the-hearth.html>

Written as a tongue-in-cheek praise poem for Baron Gwydion, the occasion warrants some explanation. His Excellency had confided that he could judge his state of inebriation by his perceived stature, which increased with each sheet blown by the wind.

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Gulf War, the warband of Bryn Madoc gathered to recreate the symbols of old, where tales were told, praise and gifts were handed out, and a great bowl of mead was judiciously passed around. The following year, the lords thought to hold the ceremony at Border Raids. This second gathering bore two striking differences which were not accounted for. First, the blistering heat of the day left the combatants rather dehydrated. Second, the great bowl had been replaced by individual cups, which increased the rate of consumption dramatically. At the end of the evening, the baron leapt to his feet, and swaying, pronounced that he was really, really tall.

The noble Gwydion was reminded of this event at the third symbol, with the recitation of this poem.