

Dreamstone Court, 1996

By Dyfn ap Meurig y pencerdd

What follows are a contemporary account from Dreamstone in 1996, where Hywel and Irena were invested as Baron and Baroness of Bryn Madoc. It was also a special court for me. Forgive any bad grammar, inaccuracies or spotty reporting -- this was quite a while ago!

It began during Baronial Court, when someone from Baroness Dominica's palazza arrived warning of all manner of trouble. She left, and Baron Galan with her, relinquishing their titles. Their Majesties, Bryce and Isabel, held court, and much was accomplished, including a tearful knighting of Theatyn [now Fiachna]. He wore the tunic of Sir Ædward; Ædward's sword and belt (sword in as scabbard made by Wilhelm von Plauen) and spurs were used in the ceremony. The chain of John the Bearkiller was put around his neck (someone said later that Peter broke down when he heard Bearkiller was giving him the chain). When Bryce gave him the last blow he should "ever receive unanswered" (a hard shove, in this case), he staggered back several feet. (Dee said HRM went light on him). I could tell that Ædward was near tears as his first squire to be knighted was dubbed with Æddie's own sword. After he gave his oath to the king, the Rex and Regina gave the reply, which was standard except for the last line: rather than rewarding "oathbreaking with vengeance," HRM said "oathbreaking with *excruciating death!*"

Other awards were given, including Currie's AoA. Several times throughout court (and before) I imagined what it would be like to be granted an Award of Arms, but knew the chances were slim. I was resigned to the idea of remaining m'lord, since after years of coming and going, the better part of the barony don't know me very well.

Then Master Dylan was called forth, and in his new and impressive cloak gave a spiel about needing another man-at-arms, seeing as how he was living in a borderland of the kingdom and needed more protection. Soren was called up, and I followed, dressed in my Kiev tunic, leggings, and tabard. I stood smartly and solemnly, and handed the new tabard to Dylan on cue. As the brief ceremony concluded and we prepared to leave, the king asked Dylan if he had a man-at-arms named Devon. It was at this point that my heart skipped a beat, my eyes grew wide, and blood drained from my face. It was also at this point that I realized my idle fantasy was coming true. The other two left the presence, and I knelt before them as they spoke about my working behind the scenes without fanfare or reward. The queen lowered the circlet on my head as the herald read my scroll, my first scroll. Queen Isabel raised me and embraced me; she whispered "Thank you," and I replied, "Thank *you*". The king shook my hand firmly, and I bowed out in a daze, to return trembling to my seat. When I took pictures of the knighting with Dee's camera, she was very insistent I leave a few shots on there, and now I know why. Most of the court was largely lost to me, as I just looked at the scroll and clapped when everyone else did.

There was one other piece of business I remember, though: Investiture.

During the court, a child walked up from the back of the hall, and said, "The throne of Bryn Madoc is Empty." Later, Dylan, cloak flowing impressively as he stomped up the hall, pointed at the vacant chairs and growled, "The throne of Bryn Madoc is *empty!*" Later still, a tall mailed figure, cloaked and hooded, strode quietly up the aisle. His quiet menace compelled the champion to step forward to defend the king. The figure's face was obscured save for a short black beard (it was James Gwynt (Jim Jones), but it looked and sounded like Leonard Nemo). He pointed at the throne and said "My throne stands empty!" As the other business ended, Lord Lionel and his lady approached and demanded that the Crown appoint a new baron. The entire barony was called up, and with some mock wrangling Irena and Hywel were declared for the position. With much ritual the coronets were placed on their heads, and they were taken (in Hywel's case, carried) to the thrones. Court adjourned.