



The Clarion

Newsletter for the
Barony of Ben Dumfries



December 31, 2023 - AS 59

Events Calendar:

Events as listed on the Kingdom of Ealdormere Calendar from December 2023-March 2024:

Date: Saturday December 2, 2023
Event: Wassail
Location: Optimist Hall, Shakespeare, ON
Description: Our Year-End holiday extravaganza!
Hosted By: The Canton of Bryniau Tywynnog

Date: Saturday, January 6, 2024
Event: Feast at Lombardy
Location: Lombardy Agricultural Society, 6 Kelly Rd, Lombardy, ON
Description: The Feast at Lombardy is a "just a feast" event. There will be dancing, bardic opportunities, and games available, for the time between courses and before feast is served.
Hosted by: The Canton of Caldrithig

Date: January 20-21, 2024
Event: Blue Dragon Studium 3.5
Location: Woodview Community Centre, 151 Cadillac Ave N, Oshawa, ON
Description: A&S Classes galore!
Hosted by: The Canton of Ard Chreag

Date: Saturday January 27, 2024
Event: Masque by Moonlight
Location: Guelph Curling Club, 816 Woolwich St, Guelph, ON
Description: Come dance and revel with the Canton of Der Welfengau! Historical playing cards set the scene, with Suits vying for Their Majesties favour.
Hosted by: The Canton of Der Welfengau

Date: Saturday February 23, 2024
Event: Tournoi du Coeur de Glace
Location: Belleville Armouries, 187 Pinnacle St, Belleville, ON
Description: Fighting and Fencing Tournament for the Glory of Victory!
Hosted by: The Shire of Bastille du Lac

Date: Saturday February 24, 2024
Event: Practicum 2024: Back to Basics
Location: Rideau Park United Church, 2203 Alta Vista Dr, Ottawa, ON
Description: A day of classes on all manner of subjects hosted by the Canton of Caldrithig
Hosted by: The Canton of Caldrithig

Date: Saturday March 2, 2024
Event: Winter War XXV
Location: North Middlesex District High School, 100 Main Street, Parkhill, ON
Description: This year is the Twenty-Fifth Winter War! The event features Fighting, Fencing, Merchants, Bardic, Classes, Courts, an Elevation, and a Feast!
Hosted by: The Shire of Trinovantia Nova

Date: Saturday March 23, 2024
Event: Kingdom A&S
Location: Eden High School, 535 Lake St, St. Catharines, ON
Description: Come see the talent of our great kingdom!
Hosted by: The Barony of Rising Waters

Please refer to the Kingdom website www.ealdormere.ca for the most recent and updated information (including pricing and gate times) with regard to events and meetings.

Ben Dunfirth Business Meetings/Fight Practice for Winter/Spring 2024:
Mondays (starting January 8, 2024): Youth practice at 6pm, Baronial meeting at 7pm, Adult Fight/Fencing Practice from 8pm-9:30pm
Hamilton District Christian High, Cafeteria, 92 Glancaster Rd, Ancaster, ON
No Meetings on: February 19 (Family Day), March 1 (Easter Monday)

Year-End Musings

We have reached the end of 2023, and oh what a year we've had!

With big changes such as a new weekly business meeting/fight practice location as of January 2024 and a "new" venue for Murder Melee, we expect things to be a bit different this coming year, but we will get through these upheavals together as a Barony (even for those who don't like change).

With a full docket of local and Kingdom level events already on the Ealdormere calendar, none of us will lack for things to do and places to go. Now that everything is fully open again, I'm looking forward to seeing many Ben Dunfirthians at events doing all the fun things! And if you have any cool projects you have embarked upon this year, let the Chronicler know about it so it can be mentioned in the next issues of the Clarion!

Wishing you and yours a very Happy Holidays and a fantastic New Year; and we'll see you at the next event!

- *HE Meredith*, Ben Dunfirth Chronicler

Territories Claimed

Territories claimed by the far roving members of the Barony of Ben Dunfirth:

- Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
- High Commission in Skraeling Althing
- Several more of the 999 islands, Ontario/NYS
- Waimea Canyon, Hawaii
- Joshua Tree National Park's "Skull Rock", CA
- Palm Springs Air Museum, CA
- The Hague, Netherlands
- Holguin, Cuba
- Ben Braha, Prague, (Orloj)
- The Rock of Gibraltar, Drachenvald (Spain)
- The North East Fountain, Louisville, Kentucky
- Tekit Easy Island, Jamaica
- Rincón de la Vieja Volcano, Costa Rica
- The Hall of lights in the Laurel Caverns, PA
- Isla De Jocea, Cuba
- A newly declared Ben Dunfirth bar, the Bastion of An Tir, and a little land along the trail nearby
- The 3rd Red Rock on the Right, Denver CO
- Fumarole at NÁMAFJALL, Iceland
- Den of Evil, Blood Moor (Diablo)
- New Ben Dunfirth, Neo-Ealdormere (No Man's Sky)
- Mind Palace, Ealdormere proper
- Spooky Hallway, Gatineau, QC
- The Moon (in Lunar Eclipse only), Earth
- H62C (H-Block), Howard Springs Quarantine Facility, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- Steak & Shake, Erie PA
- Porcine Signpost, Elkhart Fairgrounds, IN
- Bacon Rock, Luray Caverns, VA
- Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
- Willemstad, Curacao
- Basseterre, St. Kitts
- Colorado Springs, Colorado



Photo by HE Augusta Weyfare

From Their Excellencies



Greetings to Ben Dunfirth from Your Benevolent Baroness and Baron

Now is the Winter of our Great Content...

What a great year we have had as a Barony! Our Murder Melee and Huntsman's Harvest events were as well-run and successful as ever; thank you all so much for your assistance and volunteerism to help these events run so well they seem to be effortless to the untrained eye.

We attended several local and Kingdom events across the far-flung lands of Ealdormere, and many of our people were celebrated and recognized for their amazing deeds.

Our own Count Evander prevailed over many other worthy opponents on the Crown Tournament battlefield in October (Wassail!), and we will happily see our Royal Highnesses ascend the Lupine Thrones in April 2024.

A hilarious and wacky local/kingdom event in Lindsay, Baldric and Breylla's Barroom Brawl, was by all accounts a successful day of fighting, fencing, and frovolity (and Boaris the Baronial Mascot was gifted his very own squeaky ducky, so everybody wins!)

We look forward to a fun and eventful 2024, and wish all of our Baronial subjects a festive and enjoyable holiday season!



Yours In Service,
Baron Jørgen and Baroness Meredyth
Baronials of Ben Dunfirth



Love in the Time of Coronavirus

by Emyr James of Town's End

(This article was originally the documentation of my Kingdom A&S project "Pandemic Embroidery: A Retrospective", and has been edited for clarity and length.)

In August of 2021 I was burnt out at my day job, surrounded by half-finished crochet and clothing alterations-in-progress, and adrift after wrapping my first and only professional theatre sound design gig since graduation. Desperately seeking a dopamine hit, I printed a page from a Johanna Basford colouring book onto tracing paper, pulled a piece of fabric out of the stash I inherited from my grandmother, and began to stitch. Three days later, I finished my first embroidered art piece.

At noon on August 26, 2022, I sat down in Theatre 5 at Fan Expo, pulled out the Eddie Munson fan-art I had been painstakingly stitching and re-stitching, and settled in to watch a panel called "Society for Creative Anachronism – Living History, Recreation, or LARP?" I was only intending to kill time before the LeVar Burton and Sean Astin panels, and to prove I cared about my best friend by showing an interest in her hobbies and finally finding out what this SCA business was all about.

By the end of the hour, I had entirely new set of intentions.

This is the story of how I joined Ben Dunfirth.

Flourishing Bird

Completed August 19, 2021

I was inspired to make this after slowly growing bored of my pandemic distraction staples, colouring books and pyrography. The line art for this piece comes from Johanna Basford's Flourish, a free colouring book she released in April of 2020. There was debate amongst fans over whether the bird looked more like a cardinal or a nunbird; I chose a nunbird, so the apples could stand out instead of competing with a second red element.



"Really wish Grandma could be here to see this, I think she'd be very proud of me."

"She doesn't need to be here for you to know how pleased she would be, but it sure would be nice if she was. Big hugs."

-text exchange between me and my mom after finishing the outline and beginning beadwork; Aug 17, 2021

I wanted the apples to look jewelled, inspired by those decorative artificial sugar beaded fruits you find in the floral aisle at the craft store. The dominant colour in the decades-old mason jar of seed beads that my mom brought home from up north in Schefferville before I was born was a perfect ruby red. I grew up surrounded by some beautiful Indigenous artwork my parents were gifted by the Naskapi during their time living in Schefferville, and my beadwork will always owe some of its inspiration to the indigenous peoples whose land we currently live, work, and play on.

Article Submission

I was pleased with the final result, but didn't see it as particularly worthy of display, especially seeing as I only spent three days on it. My mom urged me to frame it, so in the future I could show it off to my nieces and nephews and say "look, this was the first piece I ever finished."

Hobbit Hole

Completed December 10, 2021

This piece was made as a Christmas present for my dad. JRR Tolkien's work is something we bonded over when I was a child; one of my strongest memories is being horribly ill for Christmas when I was eleven and watching the first Lord of the Rings movie. My mom didn't want me to watch the movies because she thought I was too young, but she agreed when my dad said I only could watch them if I read the books first (because she didn't believe I'd actually do it). Once I'd read and watched *The Fellowship of the Ring*, my dad successfully lobbied for me to see *Return of the King* later that week, because it was my last shot at seeing part of the trilogy in theatres.

Two major mistakes were made with the execution of this project. The first was using a horrible cheap embroidery hoop, which could not keep tension to save its life. The second was choosing a piece of scrap fabric with a mystery fibre content, which did not help with the tension issues. To compensate, I stuffed a layer of cotton batting between the finished work and the circle of foam core I was using for mounting. I also added a contrasting backdrop with the first line of the novel stitched on to make everything look more intentional.

My dad was extremely pleased with the gift, which in the end is what matters most. He kindly lent me back the piece for display in this exhibit.



Needle Painted Flower

Completed May 2022

This piece was constructed by following a Lolli and Grace Thread Painting Stitch Along. I took the thread colours as guidelines, substituting mostly scraps I'd had in my stash from making friendship bracelets as a camp counselor at Doe Lake. This is the piece I remember the least about. I vaguely remember I enjoyed doing the outline and the leaves on this project, but was bored by the time it came to filling in the flower. The turkey stitch for the centre was a nice new skill to learn.



Article Submission

Trans Rights are Human Rights (A Memorial for Bekett Noble)

Completed December 11, 2022

I traced this piece the previous Christmas; around the end of October, I pulled this out of the WIP pile because I really needed the hoop back. I decided to completely ignore the instructions in the pattern and use this as a scrap-busting project, filling in the letters with a thick satin stitch. Originally, I thought I would do sunset colours, but I changed my mind partway through and went with a rainbow colour scheme instead, capped off with the trans pride flag as the “d”.

In November of 2022 the university where I’m currently subcontracted lost a student to suicide, as a direct response to the transphobia they faced from the institution. Security presence on campus was heightened in December; I picked up extra shifts, and that gave me extra stitching time; this piece morphed from there into a memorial for Bekett Noble. Good things are ahead for us, my trans brothers and sisters, because they have to be. They freaking have to be.



The Story Ranger Tunic Badge

Completed January 29, 2023

This piece is the closest to period I have made, and was specifically created to become an applique on my first piece of SCA garb. The sleeves on that tunic were actually made from the same red cotton twill that I used as the backdrop for Hobbit Hole.

In period, the metallic detailing would have likely been done as couched goldwork. For both practical and financial reasons, I substituted DMC Diamante thread. I stitched a lot of this at the Blue Dragon and Masque by Moonlight events. It was really nice to pull out a craft during a lull in conversation and have nobody bat an eye at me for it.

After I finished stitching, I ironed on a backing patch for added security. This will help with durability and also ease my sensory issues around having weird textures too close to my skin, by adding in an extra layer to smooth over any lumps or knots.



Ruby Taylor Cat

Completed March 17, 2023

This was made by following PAT0523 Ruby Taylor x DMC – Cat, but with thread I already had in my stash that was close enough to the pattern instead of buying the exact DMC shades. I remember doing some of the outline of this at the unofficial 2022 Ben Dunfirth chili cook-off, and asking Nika her opinion on some information the pattern left out.

The final third of the long-and-short stitch was done on the Thursday before Kingdom A&S, while I watched all eight episodes of Shadow and Bone season two and procrastinated on finishing my documentation. It took almost the full 30m spool of black thread to fill in the entire cat.

The long-and-short stitch ended up much denser than I anticipated, which made the tension difficult to manage. I should probably have used a denser fabric, or added a stabilizer. There is a stubborn bit of puckering in the space between the cat's back and tail that won't seem to go away, but every other way of pulling the fabric results in multiple wonky areas, so this was the best outcome I could manage short of re-hooping onto the one I used to make it and sacrificing one of my expensive working hoops to archival purposes.



Eddie “The Freak” Munson

Completed July 7, 2023

Eddie Munson bursts into Stranger Things S4 by dramatically reading aloud from a magazine article about the Satanic Panic, then jumping onto a table to denounce the narrowmindedness of his classmates, stealing the hearts of the fandom in the process. High school Emily would never have expected to relate so strongly to Munson, a two-time super senior army-crawling his way to a D in last class he needs to graduate. But to someone who got repeatedly punched in the face by university classes, needing three tries at several classes before ultimately changing their major and graduating in twice the time it took most of their peers, Munson was instantly relatable. It's embarrassing, and lonely, to keep showing up when all your friends keep graduating, and it would be so easy to just drop out, or to isolate, but Munson continues making friends, adopting the freshman who seem weird or out of place and giving them a safe harbour, much like how I collected a little crew of frosh every year at Queen's and tried my best to keep them from making the same mistakes I had.

Joseph Quinn, the actor behind Eddie Munson, was born one year before myself and is just now seeing true mainstream success. For a struggling theater professional who graduated into a pandemic, Quinn became a beacon of hope. I went to Toronto Fan Expo 2022 specifically for Quinn; Astin and Burton were just a bonus. If it weren't for that Friday afternoon panel it is possible I may never have joined the SCA, and brought my partner in with me.



Article Submission

Eddie “The Freak” Munson

Continued

I designed the pattern for this piece myself, by taking a screenshot from one of the character's most iconic scenes and vectorizing it with Inkscape, then cleaning things up in Affinity. The first draft of the pattern was made as a pyrography design. After doing a test burn onto a coaster I decided the image might work better as an embroidery design, and added the lettering. This piece included a lot of trial and error. I unpicked and re-stitched several sections, including the eyes, mouth, and bangs. Some of this piece was stitched on the floor of Fan Expo, waiting in line for Joseph Quinn's autograph. Once the hair got added, it all fell into place and felt right. It took almost a year, but I did finally finish it.



Conclusions

In submitting this seven-piece exhibit to the tournament, I also took the opportunity to set some intentions for myself going forward. I want to use period materials and techniques for SCA projects when feasible. However, I intend to follow the spirit of the period as well, such as using materials that are already in my stash when possible over buying new. Period craftspeople used what they had! I also intend to prioritize functionality; as a person with an autoimmune disorder, any items that are intended to be anything other than decorative need to be able to withstand being dropped, shaken, tripped over, or machine washed. Sometimes this may mean sacrificing accuracy by introducing modern materials, such as using nylon beading thread and iron-on stabilizers, but I think the trade off of increased longevity and accessibility will be worth it. There is no point spending hundreds of hours lovingly crafting an item only to have it ruined within five minutes of the first wear because I tripped and fell in the mud.

Baldric and Breyla's Barroom Brawl - Nov 25, 2023

On a chilly November day, a Brawl broke out in Lindsay, with several combatants from the fighting and fencing disciplines descending upon the unsuspecting populace and laying waste to the “finely crafted furniture” and each other.

Many combatants used unusual weapons and shields to defend their respective honour, and numerous squeaky toys were sacrificed upon the altar of ridiculousness that day.

A delicious luncheon was served by Their Excellencies Penn and Lucia of Ramshaven (with the assistance of none other than our Baron Jorgen), while the battles raged onwards into the late afternoon, while the fighters were pelted with “rotten tomatoes” (squishy balls) and various tiny squeaky ducks...as is right and proper. The feast that evening was primarily meat-based and by all accounts delicious.

Photos by HE Meredyth Llwellyn



Wassail - December 2, 2023

A fantastic time was had (as always) at this year's Wassail in Shakespeare, Ontario!

Festive costumes were on display, some well-deserving subjects were inducted into the Order of the Laurel and the Order of the Pelican, and others were put on vigil.

The early-Roman inspired feast was a triumph, and was well-enjoyed by many, with fun and silly "reindeer games" being played throughout the evening.

All photos by HE Meredyth



Call For Entries

Our Clarion editions of old are a perfect example of what can be done when we all contribute article ideas and A&S Project Show and Tells. Let's keep the participation flowing, as I'm always happy to include your suggestions in the next edition.

This is your invitation to share; please contact me about photos you may have taken at events, stories (new and old) you want to tell or be told, and other article ideas that involve Ben Dunfirth.

Please contact me (HE Meredyth Llwellyn) at bdchronicler@gmail.com and make sure to include your SCA name and contact info where I can best respond to your message.

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Although the SCA complies with all applicable laws to ensure the health and safety of our event participants, we cannot eliminate the risk of exposure to infectious diseases during in-person events. By participating in the in-person events of the SCA, you acknowledge and accept the potential risks. You agree to take any additional steps to protect your own health and safety and those under your control as you believe to be necessary.

The website is the most up to date source for announcements, dates and information.

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