



THE FIRST PEN GWYNNE WAR

SWANSONIA FIRM, NEW ZEALAND

4 6 DECEMBER A.S. XXVII, C.E. 1992

Artwork: Baron Thomas Putterthorn

The First Pen Gwynne War

December 5-6 AS XXVII

A monograph concerning the legendary Pen Gwynne War,
including rare manuscripts and fragments of song and poetry
never before collected in one place

Certain selected dispatches have fallen into the hands of our scribes and, in the interests of rightfully recording the true history of the First Pen Gwynne War, we have made careful study of these, preserving them complete with dried spittle, bloodstains and bite marks.

In order to aid understanding of those misty times, we have made some attempts to correct spelling and grammatical errors — any such remaining are a reflection of the high emotions and low intellects stirred by thoughts of War.

The true scholar will at once discern the often uneven nature of the discourse, no doubt a product of the many minds at work. Even more puzzling is the chronology of the events leading up to the war, as few involved appeared able to count sufficiently to render dating systems intelligible.

Note to the Second Edition, ASXXXIX

This original monograph was produced in ASXXVIII, not long after the incidents related in the collected letters and other literary material contained within. It is being republished at this later date as it appears that the history of this turbulent time has been forgotten and, with it, the rightful and long-standing claim that the Southern Reaches, now termed the Barony of Southron Géard, has long held, de jure et de belli, to the Great White Southern Land.

The War Unfolds

The first missile in the collection comes from the legendary Ulster Pen Swyrmz, about whom little is known beyond his leadership of the Antarctic Liberation Front and his staunch defense of the peoples of the Great White Southern Land.

He addresses the then rulers of the aggressor nation, the Principality of Lochac, to the West of the Southern Reaches, obviously commenting on rumours that had reached his latter's shores.

Unto Their Highnesses Geralt and Alisaundre of Lochac, and to Their Populace, Greetings!

It has come to our notice here in the noble, peaceful, freedom-loving lands of the Southern Reaches, that there have arisen certain misconceptions regarding the fair, fertile lands to the South. These misconceptions involve the rightful ownership of those lands known to some as Antarctica, and the protectorate of the freedom-loving, fish-eating populace of that land.

For some time we were blissfully unaware that certain peoples within the Principality of Lochac were sadly in the belief that they, in fact, were the rightful guardians of these aforementioned peoples.

But then strange rumours of atrocities began to filter up from our Southern Lands:

Of our fish-eating comrades being forced to carry their young about in pouches duct-taped onto them.

Of being forced to say "G'day mate" every morning to a life-sized portrait of someone named Crocodile Dundee.

Of being coerced into spreading Vegemite onto their fish before eating them.

Of being made to hop wherever they go.

Of being made to cover their usual attire with short T-tunics that carry such strange slogans as "We Luv Oz", "Penguins for Lochac" and "Gerald is a Prince of a Guy!".

There is much more, but in the interests of good taste these will go unmentioned. Declassé is too kind a term...

It is obvious that these peoples have an affinity for their brethren in the Southern Reaches and not Lochac, as certain of them have seen fit to make their homes here in our islands. They are always impeccably well dressed, and it is well known that Lochac males in particular cannot be made to dress well, even at the point of a crossbow.

Further evidence can be seen in the choice of colours they choose to wear - black and white, the colours of the College of Reannag Fhara right here in the Southern Reaches. Certainly none of them would be caught dead splashed out in garish and tasteless colours such as red, white and blue.

It must be said that, contrary to scurrilous rumour, talk of war did not originate here in the gentle, tasteful and peaceful Southern Reaches, but from certain crass war-mongering buffoons in Lochac. These same buffoons are so common as to make searching them out a waste of time.

Yet we know that as Their Highnesses of Lochac wisely wish to avoid the terrible consequences that would come from such a war, they will take all necessary steps to prevent the carnage that would surely ensue.

We realise that even the fighters of Lochac may have mothers and it is for them that we are concerned. We do not wish to be the cause of countless multitudes of mothers of Lochac fighters to go about with empty pouches.

It is not the desire of the peaceful peoples of Southern Reaches to see the Principality of

Let it be known by these presents that
the Shire of the Southron Gaard &
the Incipient College of Reannag Fhara

SENDS GREETINGS
UNTO

Their Majesties
AVERY and ARIELLE
King and Queen of Caia

May it please
Your Majesties
to know that on the Field
of Swannanon Glen on the
Fifth and Sixth Days
of December, AS XXVII,
an invading Army from the
Principality of Lochac did
experience swift and terrible
defeat by the Freedom-
loving Peoples of these your
furthest Southern Reaches.
Whereupon in token of their

Submission, the War Chief
of the Lochacian Army
did offer a much-prized War-
banner into our hands. We,
the People of Southern Reaches
humbly beseech Your Majes-
ties to accept this Trophy,
and in Good Will, return
it to their Overlord, the
King of the West, with all
due Courtesy, as well as a
stern Reminder that further
Incursions over Our Border
will result in a similar fate.

Given by our hand this 15th day of December, AS XXVII.



MATSUYAMA
YOSHITOSHI
Seijeschul,
Shire of the
Southron Gaard.

Edan of Lochac
VILDAN-EL-TAALABATUN
Seijeschul,
Incipient College of Reannag Fhara

And many's the song of bravery seen
And many's the poem for heroes who've been.
And the penguins remember the glorious sight
Of the heroes who fought for their right to wear white.

Black and White?

On Swannanoa Lea I saw one day
Brave fighters assembled from far and away
To fight a war over black versus white
And save the penguins from the oppressors' might.

All colours assembled to fight for the king
While death fans watched what a marvellous thing.

But the god in his heaven looked down on this fight

And said to himself, "This is not right!"
"To hack and hammer and maim and slay
"How does this help the penguins' affray?"

So after the blood of battle had bled
God waited till the living lay down like those dead.

Then raised all the fighters to a second chance gave

The living from sleep and the dead from the grave

So then on this morrow so glorious new
God's children assembled and once more they slew

Maimed, killed and slew till covered in gore
God's tearful eyes saw there was killing no more.

And all this was watched by the penguins who said

"Black versus white - ha! ha! - at least the wolves will be fed."

Now many's the child with a father no more
And many's the wife at least one husband

poor
And many's the warrior who ran to go fight
Who now sleeps with death forever in night
Never to hold child or woman any more
Covered by soil and love's tears that down pour.

The penguins don't care, they still live the same

And like Ozymandius - tell me, who remembers your name?

A blood-hacking madness one moment is all
And wasted forever both master and thrall

So remember, death worshippers, as into battle you run

We are only *pretending* that war is good fun

And while black and white were won with paint blood

It's actually no fun laying face down in the mud.

The last item remaining in our archives is a copy of the formal notice sent from Southern Reaches to Their Majesties Avern and Arielle, King and Queen of Caird.

Sadly, the original with its brilliant calligraphic work and illuminations has been lost across the seas, but we are fortunate that it has been signed by the master himself, Dafyd the Scribe. (See next page.)

In closing, this most innumble scribe does thank the support of the College of Reannag Phata in permitting access to their archives and for their patience during his drawn-out preparation of this monograph. Much gratitude is also extended to all those who assisted by providing seldom-seen material to swell these pages.

Lochar become an empty wasteland. We would gladly see it remain a full one.

There should be no mistake that we, and those we protect in the freedom-loving lands to the South, stand in solidarity. But now that this matter has been cleared up to the satisfaction of all, we are confident that His Highness of Lochar will properly chastise all offenders, and all will recognise the self-evident rights that we of Southern Reaches enjoy, and having had these errors corrected, will take steps to ensure that this does not occur again.

We trust that this closes the matter.

UTHER

Uther Pen Gwynne
Commander-in-Chief
Antarctic Liberation Front

The First Salvo from the West

What reply Uther received - if any - from Their Highnesses is not recorded. Certainly it appears that they did little to curb the aggressive posturings of their populace, if the following letter from a particularly savage subject is anything to go by:

Unto the Beknighted Populace of the Southern Reaches, does Robare the Rhos, Servant of the Prophet Margin; Grand Master, Citadel Vulgus; Defender of the Ancient and Antediluvian Eminence of the Barony River Haven, Principality Lochar; send his blessing and worshipful succour.

I am not offended that you suckling scum have the galling affront to cowardly declare

war against my Sovereign Principality of Lochar. You are nothing.

You are merely fleas in the ear of an elephant. You are currish dogs of war baying in the wind. Soon you shall fetch my stick, and the sheep you herd will be mine. Or cringe from the lack of my hoot.

So contemptuous am I of you bleating barbaric whelps that I will send an Advance Guard of hand-picked fighters and artisans to enlighten you cloddish dolts in the arts of war.

You will know my vast military and merchant empire spans the known world, and that I humbly serve the good and just Baron and Baroness River Haven, Master Everard de Brieuse and Mistress Johanna Wendover.

Further, you will know that I have arrogated and appropriated all islands east of the mainland of Lochar. Thus from these island fortresses my Military Arm has slowly but inexorably formed a protective yet envious mantle over your fair isles.

For some time past I have become vexed and waxed wroth at the oppressive yokes, contemptuous despises and the condescendingly roughshod familiarity with which you have extracted tribute from those you grind under your heel, sucklingly impoverishing the milk-white breast of hope, from which all must drink.

How heavily your scum bear your burden of shame. How quickly you will fall beneath my armies should you whimpering cowards decide to oppose me. Bend your knee in acknowledgment of your betters while you may, or attempt to die honourably if you can.

Unto the long-suffering and enslaved populace of Antarctica, weeping in your chains, your saviour - Robare the Rhos, servant of the Prophet Margin - extends the outstretched hand of deliverance.

Fear and languish no longer, my brave, misguided and long-suffering friends, for about me gather a goodly number of Warriors pledged to free the Populace of Antarctica from the servitude of your Masters. When we occupy your shores, the grasping tentacles of the Oppressors of the Populace of Antarctica will be severed.

Those traitorous criminals who oppose us will bleach in the sun, raised up on analspikes. Those who rally in our welcome will receive the warming balm of my patronage. You will receive instruction in armour and weapon smithing. We will demonstrate and pass on our skills in swordplay techniques so you may fight with renewed honour.

For myself I ask nothing, save a few trading and merchanting rights, lands, titles and treasure. For my companions I ask lodging, a little beer and women for warmth.

The moment is ripe, You must now act to break the oppressive chains of servitude. Let those of you who have the agates of courage rise up!

Brothers, Sisters, My Children - Share the Joy of the Prophet Margin. TRUST ME!

*Robare the Rhos
Grand Master Vulgar*

No identified signature of Robare the Rhos has come down to us, providing further evidence beyond the actual writings attributed to him that he was illiterate.

Utter Pen Gwynne was quick to attempt to appeal to the better nature of the greater populace of Lochac.

A Polite Rejoinder

Unto the Misguided, Warmongering, Ruthless Hordes of Lochac, the Peace-loving, Warm-hearted, Gentle Freedom Fighters of Southern Reaches send Greetings.

Some time ago we attempted to peacefully inform your cruel enslaving rulers of the rights of the Southern Reaches to the protection of the Freedom-Loving Peoples of our Territory of Antarctica.

We did this in the hope that the light of reason would guide them to see the wisdom of avoiding the carnage that would surely ensue, should the Principality of Lochac choose to attempt to follow up the atrocities which we spoke of in our last missive, with an invasion of our fair land aimed at extinguishing our struggle to keep these peoples free.

We cannot express enough our grief that this Light, or indeed any light, has not shone for them. Sad to say this perpetuation of hostilities will make it necessary for the Antarctic Liberation Front to prepare to destroy any and all forces who set foot on our soil.

We might say that this will be the Mother of All Battles, as the Mothers are surely coming here to die. We believe that the rightness of our cause will surely give each of our warriors the might of ten thousand heroes, and should any of the puny, puling, puking, putrid punks of Lochac manage to arrive on our noble shores without first soiling their hose, they will be cut down like the wheat at harvest.

We send you this warning so that you might avoid their fate.

Surely your warriors, as you call them, would be better off to stay at home with their embroidery and swap fairy tales as to their courage. It is better to stay at home and grow old, for surely all who come here shall not.

Little Lights

This song mentions the participation of elements of the Swift Flight Light Infantry Company in the Pen Gwynne War, in the typically jocular and irreverent fashion that appears characteristic of battle songs of that archer band. The song is set to the best-forgotten, but aptly named, tune "Little Arrows".

There's a light, an archer light
Shooting arrows in the blue
And he's aiming them at someone
But the question is at who?
Is it me? Is it you?
Hard to tell until you're hit
But you'll know it when they hit you
'Cos they hurt a little bit.

Here they come falling out of the blue
Little arrows for me and for you
Here comes Swift Flight again
Here comes Swift Flight again
Little arrows in your armour
Little arrows in your hair
When you're at war you'll find those little
arrows everywhere
Little arrows that will hit you once
And hit you once again
Little arrows that hit everybody every now
and then
Oh, oh, oh the pain...

Some folks run, others hide
There ain't nothing they can do
And some folks put on armour but the
arrows go straight through
So you see there's no escape
So why not face it and admit
That you love those little arrows though they
hurt a little bit.

White and Black?

This poem, and its counterpoem, is of a more philosophical nature, suggesting that it may have been written well after the high emotions of the war and its aftermath had cooled somewhat.

They were written by the Russian fur baron, Nikolai.

Oh Swannanoa Lea we saw one day
Brave fighters assembled from far and away
To fight a war over black versus white
And save the penguins from the oppressors' night.
And the gods looked down on this heroic fight
And said to themselves, "What a marvellous sight!"
"To hack and hammer and maim and slay
While giving penguins their freedom this day."

So after the blood of battle had bled
God waited till the living lay like the dead.
Then raised all the fighters - a second chance gave
Piped the living from sleep, the dead from the grave
So then on this morrow all glorious new
God's children assembled and once more they slew
Maimed, slew and killed till covered in gore
Victory came, there was killing no more.
We've saved cousin penguin - each man brave and stout
The invaders are beaten, twice taken rout.
The enemy vanquished, they've bent their knee
We've saved our small cousins from villainous tyranny.
The valkyries are happy, the ravens are fed
The heroes look down on their bodies now dead.

Where is the voice I held so dear
That sang me to my rest?
My mother's voice, low, sweet and clear
The voice that I loved best?
*O hush now child, be still, be still
That voice will sound no more
In lullaby or battle cry
For your mother's gone to war.*

Once A Mangy Mongol

This is the only humorous piece to come down to us from the Pen Gwynne War, being set to the well-known ballad commonly found in Lochac.

The origin of the tune has led some to speculate a connection between the alleged writers and Lochac, and there are suggestions that one of the writers – a Matsunama Yosinobu-sama – in fact originated from the land to the West of Southern Reaches. The other two songsters, Lady Madeline Ceris de Toulouse and Simon de Toulouse, were members of the aforementioned's household, but there are no recorded slights on their loyalty to their native land.

It is intriguing to note that the Southern Reaches apparently had allies amongst the Mongol hordes helping with the logistics of feeding the defending army.

Once a mangy Mongol set up his eating tent
Under the shade of a spreading pine tree
And he sang as he sat and waited for the customers
"Who'll come and stoke up the barbie with me?"

*Stoke up the barbie, stoke up the barbie,
Who'll come and stoke up the barbie with me?"
And he sang as he sat and waited for the*

*customers
"Who'll come and stoke up the barbie with me?"*
Up came a Provencal clothed all in bat wings,
"Give me a beer, quick my man," quoth he,
And the Mongol replied as he eyed the thirsty Provencal
"Aye! If you'll stoke up the barbie with me."

Chorus
Quick as a rugrat, young lord Simon darted in,
Hoping to stop for a brief look-see
Faster still the Mongol, grabbing Simon by the ear
"You'll come and stoke up the barbie with me."

Chorus
A clanking of armour was heard across the field of war
Up jumped the Mongol and rubbed his hands with glee
"Go forth, my hearties, and nobble that passing lord
Baron T will stoke up the barbie with me."

Chorus
Now the war is over and gone are all the arming tents
Gone the invaders back across the seas
But a ghostly voice is heard upon the field of Swannanoa Lea
"Who'll come and stoke up the barbie with me?"

Chorus

A Dubious Limerick

There once was a river named Sven
Who planned on some fighting but then
Discovered his cat
Had both thrown up and shat
On his breastplate, his greaves and his men.

Better to remain safe and warm at your hearth than to be crushed and broken to water our peace-loving flowers with your blood.

Surely that is the fate that shall befall anyone foolhardy enough to attempt to press your foolish leaders' vainglorious, star-crossed, bumbling efforts for power and glory at the expense of the meek and helpless.

We are confident that, as you now realise the tissue of follies your lunatic leaders of ludicrous kanings are leading you into, you will wisely stay at home and just say no. Most especially to that crazed megalomaniacal hound vainly baying in the wind, Robare the Rhos of River-haven, who has been desperately coercing old men, women and children to throw their lives away in this mad gamble.

Those of you who are sensible will avoid this madman, and thereby not cause your children to be orphans, your lords and ladies to be alone and destitute, your mothers and fathers to weep, wail and beat their breasts.

It is said that these doomed followers of this Robare like starving rats will meet our fair warriors on December 5th and 6th.

We hope that they will let us know their number quickly as there are many preparations to be made, pavilions to purchase, and coffins to construct.

We hope that any foolhardy enough to come here and die will let this viper in the bosom of Peace, Robare, know so that he may be aware of the magnitude of the destruction that awaits him and his followers, for soon we shall send him whimpering, tail between his legs, back to the kennel from whence he came.

In the name of reason and peace, but faithful to our comrades who call to us in their chains,

Other Pen Gwynne

This missive ends with a codicil that the mysterious Uther can be contacted through both Robare the Rhos and through the Southern Reaches war leader Baron Thomas Buttasthorn, suggesting that lines of communication had already been established to further the exchange of insults over the long months before the summer campaign.

An Appeal to the King and Queen

The bloodthirsty nature of the Lochac threats had caused some concern to the Southern Reaches war band, as the following letter to their overlords show.

Unto Their Benevolent, Puissant and Heroic Majesties, Timothy Rex and Trista Regina, Noble King and Queen of Caid, the Peaceful and Beleaguered peoples of Southern Reaches do raise their hands in supplication.

As all know, since time immemorial, the unobtrusive and humble peoples of Southern Reaches have been honoured to be the protectors of the gentle folk of the Southernmost fair and fertile lands of Caid, known to some as Antarctica. We have always quietly and humbly pursued this sacred vocation, and would gladly continue to do so.

But Your Majesties must be made aware that certain boisterous, barbaric and aggressive war-mongers from the Principality of Lochac to the West of us seek to dispute our rightful claim to these lands, doubtless with the goal of enslaving these same gentle folk.

As these warlike, crude, brutal and, worst of all, tasteless barbarians are known to be exceedingly ferocious, as well as more numerous as the stars in the sky, we, Your shy, retiring and sparse peoples ask a boon of

your Mighty, All-Powerful and Benevolent Majesties, if it might perhaps not be too bold to ask, knowing that Your Majesties have countless more important matters concerning them, and that we, Your meek, mild, timid, few in populace of the Southern Reaches are the smallest of the small.

This boon that we crave of Your Majesties, if it be not too far out of Your Path, is that perhaps you might send the ENTIRE CAIDAN ARMY to CRUSH, TRAMPLE, DISMEMBER, MAIM, SHRED and UTTERLY DESTROY these brutal invaders.

If this cannot be done due to other matters of more pressing moment, perhaps other assistance can be rendered. Gold for ratten is nice. Failing in that, perhaps some lowly scribe of Your Court could inform our mothers, as we all expect to die - if it is not too much trouble.

It is our hope that even though we are but as the mice in Your Stable that You might be kindly disposed as to grant this boon, or at least send flowers to our funeral, should any be left alive to bury us.

We have word that these rude, rabid, rapacious and ruthless raiders - having also discovered that we have, in these humble but fair lands, more than 60,000,000 sheep - intend to invade on the weekend of December 5th and 6th.

So if Your most kind, patient and forbearing Majesties can perhaps find a spare, unused second in Your busy schedule, that perhaps there may be time to grant this, our boon. Or at least send a kind thought our way, and have some minstrel or perhaps, if possible, some kitchen scullion, remember us in song or verse.

Please accept our thanks for allowing us to waste Your Time with our poor, miserable

bleating, and for perhaps finding them worthy of Your notice.

Loyal and humble thanks,

Uther Pen Gwynne

P. S. We have heard some rumour that these vast hordes of vandals, wastrels and despoilers of virtue, not content with their overwhelming numerical - but not moral - superiority, are seeking reinforcement from their even more numerous debauched and not very nice overlords. Hopefully there will be enough of our corpses left to bury. If they are not devoured. In any case, we are most confident that our King can beat up their King.

The unusually subversive tone of this letter has caused some scholars to doubt that it was penned by the redoubtable Uther. An attachment notes that the war leader's exact whereabouts at the time was unknown, but was thought to be in the hills of Southern Reaches drumming up resistance. It is possible that the letter was in fact written by Uther's battle companion, Baron Thomas Buttleshorn.

Gloves Off

The final letter from Robare the Rhos bears unusual marks and stains, and the cursive lines - and their calligraphic style and cravonmanship - indicates the strain under which the Lochac aggressor was now operating. It also demonstrates that Robare had gained a copy of the planned war disbursements, for he refers to notes concerning the state of the local byway (the mysterious-sounding "seal ends").

The Pen Gwynne War

One of the milder of the Pen Gwynne battle songs to survive the ages, these verses by Katherine Kerr of the Hermitage suggest that some form of accommodation was reached at the last. She names the major battle leaders of the invaders, adding to the tally provided by other songs. The tune is based on the ancient Welsh song "Men of Harlech".

Come listen ye all to my tale
Of battles that'd make thee quail
Clash of sword and clank of mail
In the Pen Gwynne War.

The peaceful folk of this fair isle
Heard a tale that raised their bile
Of penguins kept in durance vile
'Gainst all natural law.

Came we to assistance
Organised resistance
Took on the foe and dealt them blows
With enthusiasm, courage and persistence.
As we charged across the field
With sword and bow and spear and shield
We saw our foemen start to yield
In the Pen Gwynne War.

Invaders from across the seas
Ended up on bended knees
Crying out "Don't kill us please,
We'll surrender now."

Robare and Cristia came to fight
With Glynafar and her noble knight
Jacques and Brian added their might
But it weren't enow.

Hail to Southern Reaches!
Lochac has naught to teach us
Our heavies, lights and would-be knights

Had no problem rearranging all their features.
Victory for all intended
Western and Southern, all wounds are mended
And we all are best befriended
That's our final vow.

Dickon's Lament

This lament, first written as a poem and later set to original music, is in traditional Scottish call-and-answer form.

Written by Katherine Kerr of the Hermitage, it commemorates the death of the lady archer who followed her lord on to the Pen Gwynne battlefield a scant few weeks after bearing him a son. The poem/song is for two people, one in the part of the baby boy and one in the role of nurse.

It is said that the boy's father was the last fighter - albeit an archer - left standing on the field after the final battle.

Where are the arms that held me tight
And rocked me in my crib?
My mother's arms so warm and white
That held me 'neath her rib?

*O hush now child, be still, be still
Those arms will hold no more
They carried a bow against the foe
For your mother's gone to war.*

Where are the eyes that once held mine
With love and pride and joy?
My mother's eyes that brightly shone
To see her own wee boy?
*O hush now child, be still, be still
Those eyes will shine no more
Down arrow's length they've spent their strength
For your mother's gone to war.*

It is also one of only two to make reference to the actual battleground of Swannanoa, the second being the next song, "The Battle of Swannanoa Lea".

It is perhaps not surprising that this latter song contains explicit details of the battles of the Pen Gwynne War, as it is said to have been written by Southern Reaches war leader, the Honourable Baron Thomas Buttethorn. The tune is the same of that used in the chorus of "Variations on Greensleeves".

The Battle of Swannanoa Lea

*Wake from your slumber, rise from your bed,
For the armies are coming, of Robert the Red.
Gird on your armour, sharpen your steel
For danger is coming, the ringing bells peal.*

The Dragon Fleet of Robert came to cross the waves,
The Baron said "Man your ships, now men be brave.

Think of your ladies here on the shore,
Fight so the land will be free once more."

Although many ships were sunk in the fray
Robare the Robber at night slipped away.
On Swannanoa beach, he started to land,
His banner he plucked, defiling our sand.

The beacons burned brightly, all on the coast
Warning the land of the coming of the Rhos.
The valiant southern men, they took to the field
With courage in their hearts, these men would never yield.

The Southern Reaches warriors fought on the sand,
Slaying the Vikings on every hand.
With terror in their hearts, Robare's men tried to flee;

He left his men to die as he slipped back to the sea.

But landing again, under darkness of night,
With Black Sorcery, he hid from our sight,
He took to the field, and inland he turned,
He lit his wicked torch and our beacons he burned.

The Druids slew all who defiled the Henge,
And so did our Heroes seeking revenge.
The slayers by hundreds fell dead in the mud;
The battleground a mire, with the running of the blood.

The arrows of our archers shadowed the sun,
The swords of our warriors' work soon was done,
The songs of our blades rang out their fatal knell,
And to the Southern night, the men of Lochac fell.

Robert Robare at last broke to flee;
We hunted him down on Swannanoa Lea.
Encircled at last, our quarry came to tree,
And voices they were raised in the sound of victory.

So this is the tale of the Great Pen Gwynne War,
When the armies of Lochac came to our shore
And the fierce bravery of the Southern Reaches men,
With courage in our hearts should they return again.

*Wake from your slumber, rise from your bed
For the armies are coming of Robert the Red.
Gird on your armour, sharpen your steel,
For danger is coming, the ringing bells peal.*

No More Mr. Pleasant Person

*Onto the suckling swill of Southern Wretches does
Robare the Rhos, conqueror of the Southern Isles,
sufferingly consent to command.*

For some months past you have been a titish amusement, a pleasurable enough diversion, a gambolling merriment in the same way a cat toys with a stupid field mouse. But I tire of this liberty. My warriors pace like caged animals eager for blood spill.

The day is nigh when the sky will blacken with smoke and the gutters awash with blood. The wailing shriek of women and the vomit-smell of death attack the senses.

You would do well to turn your words upon yourselves than face the first wave of my berserk penguins.

Do you really think Caid will come to your aid? How pathetically stupid you Southern Wretches really are!

Do you think Caid would risk a war with the West over you? You are nothing!

In truth, my ambassadors are presently in council with the Court of Caid with a view to having Buttethorn and his War Lord, Uther Pen Gwynne, charged with high treason against all the Majesties of the Known World, the populace of Southern Reaches, the populace of the Rhos Dependency and being generally horrid.

When in custody, Buttethorn and Gwynne will be dealt several blows with a wet flipper. Should they survive this apocalypse of all tortures, they shall be made to eat several raw sardines garnished with castor oil.

As for the rest of you Southern Swill, you have made no offers or overtures of

cowering, cringing, grovelling, kowtowing to my person or my emissaries.

What sort of aside, back-sliding, servile lackeys are you?

It is customary that base-born - as you certainly are - should offer me, your suzerain - as I certainly am - gifts and treasures that I might treat you in a well enough way considering your station.

You claim to be of the Antarctic Liberation Front, yet you openly boast how you butcher seals by having a dumpingspot for "sealends". Further, you direct visitors to travel past this no doubt horrific spectacle. Will you beg for mercy as no doubt the seals begged under your raised axe? If this is how you treat your seals, one can only speculate what fate befalls your sheep or fluffy penguins!

It seems to me you liberate only the blood, sweat and coinage of the poor. But your contemptuous and dis-esteemly attitude to the oppressed will so end, for I champion them. I shall direct how their blood, sweat and coinage will be spent. These simple souls trust me. They will reap the rewards they deserve.

You should amass treasures to offer me and garlands of rose petals to carpet my triumphant passage through your lands. Should I deem your welcome worthy, I may spare you. Grovel while you may, you toady underlings, before I crush you.

*Robare the Rhos
Conqueror of the Southern Isles*

This note appears to have been the last straw as far as the defenders of Southern Reaches were concerned, and they responded in kind.

A Final Declaration

Onto the Bloodthirsty, Drunken Baboons of Lochac who seek the enslavement of the simple, sweet, serendipitous sons of Antarctica, Other Pen Gwynne of the Antarctic Liberation Front bids you prepare to die!

For some time now, we of the freedom-loving, forbearing, fair-minded fabled lands of Southern Reaches have patiently and gently tried to educate you bombastic, blithering bozos to the self-evident fact that we, and not you, are the rightful protectors of the sad, suffering scions of the fertile, fabulous fields of the Southernmost Lands.

We vainly tried to appeal to your reason and, finding none, attempted to appeal to your common humanity. But we have sadly learned that among marsupials there is none. No doubt the slaver's sayers of serenity among you thought it was in the bag.

We, then, in monumental, merciful magnanimity thought: that perhaps we could at least warn the few of you with the sense to come out of the rain, of the descending doleful doom that even now is about to lash the life from you paltry, pitiful, putrid souls.

It is plain to us now that if you ever had any sense, it was long ago beat from you by your bumbling, brain-dead, brigand bosses who blithely brainwash you - which obviously requires only a light rinse.

But all of our eager, extraordinary efforts have proved ineffective to prevent the calamitous catastrophic crushing of any craven cubs who set paw in our land.

So when you furry, flatulent fools find our forces too ferocious and fiery, we can only furnish one phrase:

WE TOLD YOU SO.

So anyone stultifyingly stupored as to set shoe on our soil soon shall see the size of his sheer stupidity.

We shall mercilessly mow mightily any menace manfully.

We shall fervently flay fifty-five, for each five fallen, into fecund fertiliser, feeding our fragrant flowers.

We shall swing shining steel swords, slicing sections of your seldom-seen, under-used private parts, hacking your hairy heinies, blasting your baked-bean brains, orchestrate overkill on your oozing organs, making them into old, overcooked oatmeal. Buffet your bewildered, bewhiskered, blistered baboon brains and gallantly gash and grind your gooey gizzards.

In short:

NO MORE MR NICE GUY!

See you, Your Friend,

Other Pen Gwynne

This is the last official missive held in our archives to deal with the exchange of words prior to the First Pen Gwynne War.

A Final Comment

Little is known about the actual battles of the Pen Gwynne War. We do know that Caid heeded the plea for aid and sent a Queen's Guard, Lord Duncan, to assist the defenders.

We do know that there were a number of battles, with fierce fights at sea on board ships of invaders and defender alike, sallies across bridges, in the open field and around castles, and many examples of heroic individual combat.

A Sparse Literary Tradition

Most of what we do know is from the literary tradition that has grown up around the battles of the Heroic Defense, as some have termed it.

Only scraps of story and a few songs and poems dealing with those desperate times remain.

Few surviving eyewitness accounts are available, hardly surprisingly given the carnage of the last battle which saw only a handful of archers and sorely wounded fighters survive the slaughter.

Given our attention to the development of the Literary Muse in the Southern Reaches, it is not completely impossible that fragments of poem, story and song exist within archives held in Lochac.

As yet, no such fragments have come to the attention of this author, but any finding such are urged to make contact so that we can extend our knowledge of those times.

The following stirring ballad was obviously written as a clarion call to battle for fighters of the Southern Reaches and, as such, appears to predate the actual battle, while foretelling of the victory.

It was penned by the Gaelic bard Lughaid "Cnuachd-Daraich" Mac Cenguis-Duibh.

The melody is taken from "Follow Me Up to Carlaw", which in turn is based on the pipe-march of the MacHughs, played as they advanced on Carlaw to defeat the English at the Battle of Glenmahair, in 1580.

Follow Me to Swannanoa

From the West there came a scurvy band
To lay claim to the icy land
And crush it 'neath a tyrant's hand
Such was their black intention
Nothing less their dreadful aim
Than to snuff our sweet Freedom's Flame
All this in haughty Lochac's name
When was there such pretension?

*Curse and swear, Lord Robare
You and your crew will quake with fear
You'll rue the day that you came here
'Ere the fightin's o'er
Sword will sing, mace will fly
Arrows rain down from the sky
Other Pen Gwynne has raised the cry
"Follow me to Swannanoa".*

Black clouds gather overhead
Valkyries wait to choose the Dead
Green grass will glisten ghastly red
After Battles' Thunder
Southron fighters raise the edge
Make you now a steely budge
Repent Sir Aggro of his pledge
To grind our Nation under.

Chorus

Stand you strong upon the field
Goodly now the great sword wield
Who would think now here to yield
And wear a Lochac Halter?
Scenting War upon the breeze
Lord Duncan's come from Western Seas
With bonny allies such as these
How could our cause now falter?

Chorus

The song makes reference to two of the Lochac aggressors - Robare the Rhos and Sir Aggro Aggrozzi - as well as to the appearance of an ally, Lord Duncan Mackay, the Queen's Guard sent by the rulers of Caid.