



Society for Creative Anachronism



A Newcomers Guide to the SCA

April 2021

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Sources

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East Kingdom Newcomer guide <https://www.eastkingdom.org/newcomers-guide/>

Your Persona: Who you are in the SCA <https://caerthe-sca.org/content/your-persona-who-you-are-sca>

Forward into the the past <https://www.sca.org/forward-into-the-past/>

SCA Newcomer's Guide <https://www.sca.org/sca-newcomers-guide-updates/>

Map courtesy of Naomi bat Avraham, OL (Naomi A. Hampson, Ph.D.)

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About the SCA

Welcome to the Current Middle Ages

Imagine yourself standing on a field surrounded by colorful pavilions as banners flutter and snap overhead. Around you, richly dressed lords and ladies are watching knights in armor who battle with sword and shield. Music fills the air as minstrels play lutes and sing ballads of love and war. In the shadows of one especially grand tent, you see royalty conferring with their advisors.

Are you in a historical romance? No, it's the **Society for Creative Anachronism!** The SCA is an immersive history group where you, dressed in clothing of the period, can experience tournaments, royal courts, feasts, and dancing, and learn how to recreate crafts and skills of the pre-17th century world.

Unlike a Renaissance Fair, SCA activities aren't just something you come to watch, they're something you actively do. You'll learn about the clothing of the period by tailoring and wearing outfits. Learn about combat by putting on armor and competing against opponents. Learn about brewing by making (and sampling) your own meads and ales. And there are many more subjects to learn about, including armoring, archery, cooking, heraldry, metalwork, music, dance, calligraphy, woodworking, and fiber arts. If it was done in the Middle Ages or Renaissance, the odds are you'll find someone in the SCA interested in recreating it!

Our Mission

The Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) is an international non-profit volunteer educational organization. The SCA is devoted to the research and re-creation of pre-17th century skills, arts, combat, culture, and employing knowledge of world history to enrich the lives of participants through events, demonstrations, and other educational presentations and activities.

Our Values

In pursuing its mission, the SCA is committed to excellence in its programs, communications, and activities. The SCA expects that all its members and participants will conduct themselves in accordance with the SCA Core Values, to:

- Act in accordance with the chivalric virtues of honor and service in all interactions with SCA members and participants.
- Be a responsible steward of SCA resources.
- Deal fairly with others, and value and respect the worth and dignity of all individuals,
- Practice inclusiveness and respect diversity.
- Promote a safe and respectful environment for all SCA members and participants, Act with transparency, fairness, integrity, and honesty.
- Maintain a harassment-free environment in SCA spaces; and,

- Avoid behavior that reflects adversely on the SCA or other SCA members and participants.

The SCA provides an environment in which members can recreate various aspects of the cultures and technology of the period, as well as doing more traditional historical research. The SCA sponsors events, which may include tournaments, feasts, martial activities, classes, and other activities reflective of pre-17th century life. Members dress in pre-17th century clothing styles worn all over the world and participate in activities based on the civil and martial skills of the period. These activities recreate aspects of the life and culture, dress, pastimes, and above all the chivalric ideals of the period, unifying our events and activities. Members have free choice of what areas they will explore. The SCA is expressly welcoming to all people of any race, sex, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Our History

The SCA dates to May 1, 1966, when a few friends who were history buffs and science fiction/fantasy fans hosted an outdoor party in Berkeley, California. The invitation called for "all knights to defend in single combat the title of 'fairest' for their ladies." This event, now known as the First Tournament, was a big success, and when the participants wanted to hold a second event at a public park, they needed a group name to put on the application. The name "The Society for Creative Anachronism" was chosen on the spur-of-the-moment.

As people were introduced to the SCA by friends and at science fiction conventions, the group expanded across the United States. Over fifty years later, the SCA is now an international group with approximately 25,000 paid members and is incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit educational organization.

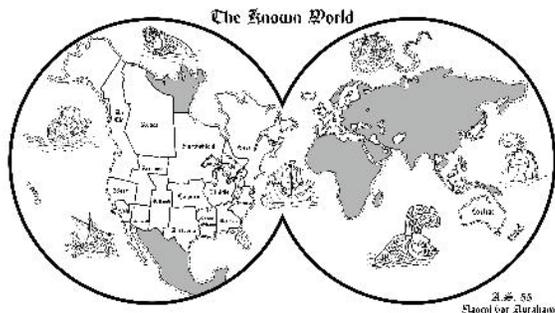
Join Us Today

We welcome you to come to our meetings and events! For events, we do ask that you make an attempt at pre-17th century clothing. We do offer loaner clothing if desired. While membership is available, you do not have to be a member of our group to participate.



A Newcomer's Guide to the SCA

Geography



The SCA currently has active branches in North America, Europe, Australasia, Asia, and Africa. This “Known World” is divided into Kingdoms. Each Kingdom has a Sovereign and Consort selected by tournament combat. Some of the Kingdoms include Principalities ruled by individuals also chosen by combat. These organizations are responsible for the smaller branches based in individual towns, cities, or counties. If you are unsure of where your local chapter is located, you can find it online at: http://sca.org/kingdom_lookup.html

Kingdoms

The West Kingdom (1966) - Northern California, most of Nevada, and Alaska, as well as Japan, Korea, Thailand, and the Pacific Rim (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

The East Kingdom (1968) - eastern Pennsylvania, eastern New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. In Canada, it covers Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland.

Midrealm (1969) - Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, lower Michigan, and parts of Kentucky, Iowa, and Ontario.

Atenveldt (1971). - Arizona.

Meridies (1978) - Alabama; almost all of Georgia; all Middle and East Tennessee, plus a substantial portion of West Tennessee; a bit of the panhandle of Florida; and a small portion of Kentucky.

Caid (1978) - Southern California, the Las Vegas metropolitan area, and Hawaii.

Ansteorra (1979) - Oklahoma and most of Texas.

Atlantia (1981) - Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, as well as Augusta Georgia and the District of Columbia.

An Tir (1982) - Oregon, Washington, and the northern tips of Idaho, and part of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

Calontir (1984) - Kansas, Missouri, most of Iowa, Nebraska, and part of northwest Arkansas.

Trimaris (1985) - Majority of Florida; lays claim to Panama.

The Outlands (1986) - New Mexico and Colorado, parts of Wyoming, the Nebraska panhandle, El Paso County and Hudspeth County in Texas.

Drachenwald (1993) - All of Europe (including islands), Africa, and the Middle East.

Artemisia (1997) - Montana, southern Idaho, Utah, and southwestern Wyoming. **Æthelmearc** (1997)

Northeastern/central/western Pennsylvania, central/western New York, and West Virginia.

Ealdormere (1998) - most of the Canadian province of Ontario.

Lochac (2002) - Australia and New Zealand.

Northshield (2004) - North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the upper peninsula of Michigan. It also extends into Canada, encompassing Manitoba and northwestern Ontario.

Glenn Abhann (2005) - Mississippi, Louisiana, most of Arkansas, and the western edge of Tennessee including the Memphis area.

Avacal (2015) - Alberta, Saskatchewan, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and part of British Columbia

Types of Groups

Kingdom: area ruled by a pair of Monarchs.

Principality: area within a kingdom ruled by a pair of nobility titled Prince/ess.

Region: smaller area of a kingdom or principality, usually without a ceremonial representative.

Barony: area administered by a Baron and/or Baroness, the ceremonial representative(s) of the Crown.

Canton: local branch reporting through a barony.

Province: equivalent of barony without ceremonial representative.

Riding: local branch reporting through a province.

Shire: local branch reporting directly to a kingdom or principality.

College: institutional branch based at a school, research facility, etc.

Stronghold: institutional branch based at a military installation.

Port: institutional branch based at a military installation in situations where groups of members will be detached for long periods, as with ships at sea

Getting Started

Your Local Group

Your local group is where you will spend most of your time in the SCA. Most of your activities, practices, classes, revels, and meetings all take place here. Most participants refer to their home group when talking to others. Your local chatelaine can tell you what activities they offer.

This is where a person will usually begin making friends and serving in a variety of roles. For many, the SCA becomes a second family. Individuals participate with one another, and sometimes even participate together in activities outside of the SCA.

Each group and kingdom have an office dedicated to assisting newcomers to the Society. This officer, known as a Chatelaine or Hospitaler, will help introduce you to the SCA and match you with individuals with similar interests. All kingdoms and local groups have an online presence. This includes social media such as Facebook. There you can find contact information for the local group. Someone will answer your questions in a timely manner.

Attend an Activity.

Most local groups host a wide variety of activities throughout the month, which can include business meetings, arts and sciences workshops, combat practices, and weekend events. These are usually listed on the group's website. Most local activities do not require you to wear special clothing for the activity.

Once you find an activity that interests you, check with the Chatelaine or Seneschal to see if there are any requirements or costs to participate (such as materials fee or food cost). Then, visit! Then, have fun!

For the Youth

The Society has many activities geared not only toward children and youth, but also toward the family. Many events and gatherings offer children's activities for a variety of ages where children can learn more about the Middle Ages through lessons, hands-on arts and crafts, and games.

Just as the grown-ups get involved in combat activities, in many kingdoms youth combat starts as early as age six. Youth can also participate in archery and equestrian activities.

We encourage our youth participants to find ways to engage in service just as the adults do! As the children grow older, they will find opportunities to serve in important ways at events, from helping out in the kitchen to heralding on the field.

The SCA is great for me because there are so many different people that you always have a friend and there is always so much to do!

— Elinor Rose, Age 9

For Parents/Guardians

We are pleased to see families coming together through a shared love of the Middle Ages! Many of the earliest participants in the Society are now the parents of participants who themselves are bringing their children to the organization. We encourage parents and guardians to find ways to enjoy the Society together such as learning crafts that are fun for both kids and adults, sharing songs and stories together around the campfire, and serving together at events.

We place the safety of all our participants as our highest priority, not just the warriors in armor. Every kingdom has guidelines in place for monitoring children's activities by age, including ensuring that children too young to be unsupervised stay in reach of their parent or guardian. For activities such as classes and workshops that go on simultaneously with activities for the adults, we require two supervising, unrelated adults to be always present, and we have a background check system in place for all officers who supervise children



A Newcomer's Guide to the SCA

Persona and Heraldry

Personas are the identities participants take on in the SCA. They help make our events feel more medieval. Some people dedicate a lot of time and research into developing a very period identity while others simply choose a name. It is completely up to you. The only stipulation is that you may not claim to be an actual person who lived, and you may not claim any rank or titles which you did not earn in the SCA.

Choosing a name

Each person chooses a name that is unique to them. Many people when first starting will not have a specific name so they will refer to themselves as real name of local group (i.e., John of Bordermarch) until they find a name that suits their persona or personal tastes.

Developing Your Persona

Your persona is who you are in the society, what culture you came from. You can choose to be from any period, and any culture, as long as it was before the 17th century. Unless they choose otherwise everyone in the SCA is considered to be at least of the Gentry class, which means that at least your family had land, money, or a title of some sort. When portraying a persona, please ensure it is respectful of the culture you are portraying.

To select a persona for yourself, choose a country and a time. Research what life would have been like for a person living in that place and time. What things were going on there that this person might have been a part of? Decide if you are a warrior, or a craftsman, a member of a nobleman's house, or any other character who "could have lived" in that time and place.

Your persona story can be as short as "I'm an 8th century Norseman from Birka" up to very complicated stories about where you are from, where you have lived, what you have done, etc. Do the research, so if someone asks you, you can discuss your persona a little in-depth. It will help you find a name and design costumes and armor to fit your character.

Some people cannot decide, and "time travel", wearing the costumes of all the different places and periods, so one day they may be a 12th century Venetian, the next day they may be a 5th century Roman, or a 16th century Frenchman. Some individuals even have multiple personas.

Registering Your Name

You are not required to register a name, but it is encouraged. Your group's local herald can help you

choose and research a historically accurate name appropriate to your persona. The registration process does take some time. Once registered, your name will be uniquely yours. No one in the SCA may use your name. Any awards you may earn or heraldry you may register will be linked to your registered name.

Heraldry

You may have heard of "Coats of Arms". There is no family coat of arms. Arms are registered to a single person. In the SCA each person can register a device (arms) associated with their name. All names and devices are registered through the Herald's office. When registering items, many checks will be made to determine that the submitted item is accurate and that it does not conflict with any other member's heraldry or heraldry and persons outside of the society. The process does take some time to complete. Along with personal devices, individuals can register alternate names and badges, for both themselves and households. The same rules for registration apply. The SCA is filled with heraldry, from the kingdom names, arms, and badges to local groups. Even most of the awards given out are registered within the College of Heralds.

Using Your Heraldry

Once you have a registered name and device or badge, you may display your heraldic items at any event. Many people will use it to mark their pavilions, encampments, tables, camp gear, and much more. It is always recommended that you wait on creating items with your heraldry until the heraldry is finalized.

Heraldry is the visual, personal shout-out of the Middle Ages. It proclaims to everybody, "This is me!" "I am here!" "Rally 'round, my followers!" Use your heraldry at every chance you get to let your presence be known and to add color and pageantry to our events.

— *Freiherr Albrecht Waldfurster*



Combat and Martial Arts

Combat is probably one of the most visible aspects of the SCA. This activity attracts much attention and many new members have joined the Society after having seen a demonstration of period martial arts. There are two basic types of SCA fights: single combat and group or team combat, also known as melees. In general, combat is open to anyone who has reached a certain age. Most local groups offer some form of fighter training. While many groups will have loaner gear for new fighters, fighters are responsible for obtaining their own armor and weapons. Some people make most of their armor; others buy pieces, either new or used. Before making any armor, check with your local marshal for additional information, equipment requirements, and the safety standards and regulations.

SCA fighting is not staged or choreographed. All fights are "live"; the outcome of a list or battle is never pre-determined. The winner of the bout is decided when one opponent acknowledges that the blow landed by his opponent was of sufficient force to have caused death.

Marshals

All combat activities have a safety officer on the field to ensure that activities occur as safely as possible. These marshals watch for safety issues such as broken equipment. They may call "Hold" if such issue arises. All activity ceases when this occurs. All marshals must pass rigid training to be certified to operate on a field. Before fighters can enter their first list, they must be authorized and be sufficiently skilled so that they are not a danger to themselves or others. Such procedures are established to reduce the risk of injury to participants.

Armored Combat

Armored combat in the SCA resembles medieval foot tournaments. Combatants can face each other in single combat in tournaments or can take part in large melee battles with dozens or even hundreds of combatants on each side. SCA combatants wear real armor and use swords and spears made of rattan wrapped with duct tape. Like bamboo, but with a solid core, rattan is springy enough to absorb some of the force of the blow without snapping, and light enough to approximate the weight of a steel sword. Building armor is more complex – a complete suit has many parts, which can be made from hammered steel, rivets, leather, padded fabric, even rigid plastic.



Rapier Combat

SCA Rapier Combat is our attempt to recreate the style of unarmored combat that took place from the medieval period to 1600 A.D. Participants engage in this sport for fun and fitness! Many also study the extant manuals and theories of combat from that time, in order to more accurately recreate the style of pre-17th century sword fighting. This type of sword fighting has evolved into the modern sport of fencing, but unlike the modern sport, our participants use a wide variety of weapons considerably heavier than modern fencing swords – and they have freedom of movement in any direction.



Youth Combat

The SCA's Youth Martial program gives children from ages 6 through 17 the opportunity to participate in a kid-friendly version of adult armored and rapier combat. Boys and girls participate together, divided into three age brackets, Division 1: ages 6-9, Division 2: ages 10-13, and Division 3: ages 14-17. There are even tournaments to determine Youth Martial Champions, who serve as honor guards for their Baron and Baroness, Prince and Princess, or King and Queen.

Other Martial Arts

At other events, you may encounter equestrians on horseback jousting against each other and playing medieval training games, archers shooting at targets with longbows and crossbows, thrown weapons participants hurling axes and spears at wood targets, combat archers shooting tubular arrows at the opposing side, or siege engineers using ballista, catapults, and trebuchets to fling soft ammunition at advancing armies.

Arts and Sciences

SCA Arts & Sciences is the term for all the crafts, skills, and technologies practiced in the time and cultures that our studies cover. SCA participants learn and practice these skills, and then share them with others. You will see the results in use and on display at our events – the costumes worn, the armor used in combat, the illuminated scrolls presented in court, and the recipes used for a feast, just to name a few.

Static Arts z

The fine arts and more are also well represented in the SCA. Many Society members take up painting and drawing as their chosen pursuit and produce beautiful works of art from Renaissance-style portraits to triptychs portraying medieval life. Member's study-stained glass and glassblowing, sculpture, wirework, and more, as they recreate every aspect of the Middle Ages.

Performing Arts

Bards, minstrels, and musicians of the SCA perform a wide variety of music from the Middle Ages, from sprightly Renaissance dancing tunes to beautiful, medieval choral works and everything in between. Our performers also write and perform a great deal of original music composed in the spirit of the Middle Ages, ranging from marching anthems for their kingdoms, to bardic ballads about beloved figures.

Storytelling and Oration

The concept of the storyteller held a prominent role in both the entertainment and the education of people in the Middle Ages. The bards and skalds of old were the keepers of their cultures' histories and legends. In the SCA, many performers dedicate themselves to collecting the tales of both the historical Middle Ages and the Current Middle Ages and recounting them over feast and campfire.

Dance

Dance is one of the most popular pastimes in the Society. We are fortunate to have documents from the Middle Ages that not only give us the music for popular songs of the day but also steps to dance to them! The dances that we recreate have a wide variety of styles and levels of difficulty, ranging from simple circle dances with only a few steps, to rhythmic dances from the Middle East to complex Italian dances with dozens of steps.

Scribal Arts

The scribal arts are a common facet of Society life since most awards and honors given to recognize service and skill are accompanied by handcrafted scrolls which document and celebrate the honor.

Many special interest groups gather both online and locally to meet and share ideas. There are even multi kingdom groups. The Chatelaine's office can help direct you to artisans who can assist you with your interest.



- Agriculture
- Archery
- Armoring
- Bardic Recitation
- Basketry
- Book Binding
- Bow Making
- Brewing
- Calligraphy
- Candle Making
- Cooking
- Costuming & Accessories
- Dancing
- Drama & Comedy
- Drawing
- Dyeing
- Embroidery
- Falconry
- Fighting
- Gaming
- Glass Blowing
- Heraldry
- Herbalism
- Horn Working
- Horsemanship
- Horticulture
- Husbandry
- Illumination
- Instrumental Music
- Jewelry
- Juggling
- Lace making
- Lapidary
- Leather Working
- Languages
- Masonry
- Masquing & Mime
- Mathematics
- Medicine
- Merchunting
- Metal Working
- Musical
- Musical Composition
- Musical Instrument Making
- Needlework
- Newsletters & Publications
- Painting
- Paper Making
- Pavilion Making
- Period Fencing
- Philosophy
- Poetry Pottery
- Riddles
- Rug Making
- Scribing
- Sculpture
- Spinning
- Tanning
- Tool Making
- Toy Making
- Tumbling
- Vinting
- Vocal Music
- Weapon Smithing
- Weaving
- Woodworking

A Newcomer's Guide to the SCA

Service

Our Society is built on the ideals of chivalry and courtesy but runs by the concept of service. Without cooks, marshals, teachers, tent-raisers, hall-decorators, and so forth, no one would get to enjoy any of the activities we have come to know and love.

Group Service

As you begin to participate in the Society, you will quickly come to discover that the everyday, ongoing activities of the Society take planning, coordination, and execution by the members of its groups. Whether it be local fighter practices, business meetings, arts and sciences workshops, or any other gathering; someone usually must organize it, plan it, run it, and clean up after it. By serving in your local group or your kingdom, you help the Society to function daily.

Event Service

As the ongoing activities of the Society are maintained through its local groups and kingdoms, one of the most important parts of our organization are its events. Without a doubt, this weekend some group somewhere is hosting an event, probably in your kingdom, and possibly right down the road. Most local groups host anywhere from one to three events each year, so there may be a hundred or more opportunities to attend and serve at an event in your kingdom. For as many opportunities are there to serve in your local group, there are many more positions that need to be filled at any given event. A few common areas of service include: Set up, tear down, cooking, server at meals, and water bearing.

Why Do We Serve?

Service in the Society is a means to an end. Without someone running the tournament, there is no tournament. Without someone registering names, nobody gets a unique name. Without someone cooking the feast, nobody gets to eat. By volunteering at local events, you make it so that others can come and fight, feast, and have a good time. Then, when it is your turn, you'll hopefully find those others in their own kitchen or marshalling their own field so that you can play, too.

Officers

Event Steward – the person in charge of an event.

As individuals progress within the SCA they will eventually be recognized for their contributions to the society in the areas of martial prowess, arts and science, and service. There are many different awards throughout the local groups and kingdoms. Do not worry about trying to learn them all.

Chancellor Minor / Minister of Youth / Page School

Chancellor – officer in charge of children's activities.

Chamberlain / Quartermaster – officer in charge of inventorying/maintaining/storing a SCA chapter's property.

Chatelain(e) / Hospitaller – an officer who helps new members learn about the SCA.

Chronicler – the editor of a group's newsletter.

Constable – this office, which exists in some kingdoms, has varied responsibilities which might include making sure that the entry gate is manned, ensuring that SCA and modern laws are followed, or taking care of "Lost and Found".

Exchequer (Chancellor of the Exchequer) – the officer serving as treasurer for a group or kingdom.

Herald – officer who helps participants come up with SCA names and armory; or, the official who makes announcements on the field, or is the Master of Ceremonies for court. Local group heralds are called Pursuivants.

Marshal – a specially trained person who oversees martial activities for safety purposes. A Knight Marshal holds this office in a local group. The Earl Marshal holds this office in a principality or kingdom. Marshals also run archery, youth combat, and other martial activities.

Minister of Arts and Science - the officer in charge of tracking and reporting arts and science activities within the local group.

Media Officer/Social Media- Officer in charge of media relations and social media conduct on SCA websites and social media platforms.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Officer committed to promoting the values of inclusion throughout the SCA.

Seneschal – the officer serving as "president" of a local group or kingdom. Acts as the group administrator and legal representative of the SCA.

Webminister - Officer in charge of group website

Baron/ess - Baronies have a representative of the crown selected by the reigning monarchs. Sometimes there is only a single individual instead of a pair.

The SCA is not simply about what I get out of it; much more it is about what I put into it. To serve at an event, behind the scenes, or in my day-to-day interactions and by doing so to lift others and honor their service is far more reward than any scroll I've ever received.

- Señor Santiago Ruiz de Zaragoza

Awards & Titles

Non-armigerous

Bestows neither title nor precedence. These are awarded for a specific reason in a specific field.

Armigerous

Bestows the title of Lord, Lady, Laird, Noble, or Armiger. The first tier of precedence-bearing awards. These are awarded for those who have started to progress in their

Patent

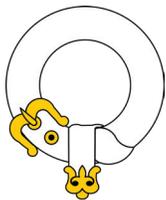
Patent of arms are granted for expertise in the various fields. These awards are Society-wide and are recognized throughout all the kingdoms.

In many kingdoms, the Order of the Rose is also a Peerage-level award, and it is likewise recognized across the kingdoms of the SCA. Roses are those who served their kingdom by ruling as Consort. In each kingdom, the Crown consults with their kingdom's members of the Order before creating a new Peer.

area of expertise. The most recognized is the **Award of Arms**.

Grant

Granted for those who have shown a high level of skill and competency in their area of expertise. Some kingdoms add the honorific "Honorable" to the form of address.



Order of Chivalry

Reason given: Chivalric combat.

Title: Sir or Dame

Insignia: White belt and unadorned chain

Order of Mastery of Arms

Reason given: Chivalric combat.

Title: Master/Mistress

Insignia: White baldric



Order of the Laurel

Reason given: Arts and Sciences.

Title: Master/Mistress

Insignia: Laurel wreath worn on the head and/or badge of the order worn as a medallion



Order of the Pelican

Reason given: Service.

Title: Master/Mistress. Laureate

Insignia: a cap of Maintenance and/or a badge of the order worn as a medallion



Order of Defense

Reason given: Rapier combat.

Title: Master/Mistress

Insignia: White livery collar usually bearing a badge of the order

Awards & Titles

Nobility

Title	Reason Given	Title	Insignia
Territorial Barony	Ceremonial head of a barony	Baron/ess or Your Excellency	Varies by Kingdom
Court Barony	Special service to the Kingdom and the Society. It is often granted to former Territorial Baron/esses	Baron/ess or Your Excellency	Varies by Kingdom
Viscounty	Former ceremonial head of a Principality	Viscount/ess or Your Excellency	Specific to the Kingdom
County	One reign as Sovereign or consort	Count /Countess or Your Excellency	Embattled Coronet.
Duchy	Two or more reigns as Sovereign or consort.	Duke/Duchess or Your Grace	Coronet with Strawberry leaves
Sovereign / Consort	King/Queen	Your Majesty	
Royal Heirs	Prince/Princess	Your Highness	

Each kingdom has established regulations for awards and insignia. A list of current alternate titles can be found at: <http://heraldry.sca.org/titles.html>



A Newcomer's Guide to the SCA

Attending Your First Event

As with any new hobby, no one expects you to have or know everything. You are getting started; everything will improve the longer you participate. If you need to borrow items, especially garb, from the Chatelaine, contact them in advance. They can assist you either beforehand or at the event.

Preparation

Finding an event

Your group's Chatelaine may tell you about an upcoming event. You may also find it listed in your group or kingdom's website. Events are always listed in the kingdom's newsletters. Many events will have a web page. This page will give information about the location, cost, activities, and site rules. They may also offer online registration for the event. Some events will offer alternatives to the meal or at least an ingredient list made available for those with restrictions.

Accessibility

Should you have accessibility needs, the event steward or your group's chatelaine can assist with addressing them. Some groups and kingdoms have an officer dedicated to this.

Garb

We request that all participants make "an attempt" at pre-17th-century clothing commonly referred to as "Garb". This can be simply:

- A large tunic style shirt.
- Plain pants preferably not jeans.
- Comfortable shoes. Attempt to avoid modern style shoes.
- A blanket to wear as a cloak to stay warm.
- A large wide-brimmed hat or cowl.

As you pick items, always remember to try not to make them "obtrusively modern". The Chatelaine can assist with loaner garb if needed.

Modern prosthetics and glasses are allowed. We would prefer you to enjoy yourself comfortably instead of trying to fit into a period aesthetic. Again, if you have accessibility issues direct them to the event steward or one of their deputies.

You may wish to bring several items to the event to make your day more enjoyable.

Indoor

- Feast gear: a cup, bowl, plate, utensils, and maybe a candle will suffice.
- Pen and paper for any classes you may wish to take.
- Blankets or throws to cover modern items such as coolers and chairs.
- A small trash bag to carry off any trash or dirty dishes.

Outdoor

Extra water - Most events have water sources available, but it is recommended you at least provide your own cup.

Possibly a sunshade. If it is a modern looking pop-up pavilion you may be asked to hide it to maintain ambience. Many people will bring light fabrics to cover a modern looking pop-up.

A chair or blanket to sit upon.

Camping

Modern tents are allowed at our camping events. We sometimes ask those with modern tents to camp in specific areas. Always let the event or camp steward know what type of tent you are bringing. Unless specified we allow individuals to cook in their camps. Please follow all standard camping safety rules.

Children

Children must be accompanied by an authorized guardian. If you will be bringing a minor to the event who is not your own child, there are specific paperwork requirements. You should check with your local seneschal about what is required in your area.

Pets

While all sites allow service animals some sites will allow pets on site if kept on-leash. It is your responsibility to ensure the animal is current on all shots and vaccinations. If an incident occurs with the animal, you may be asked to leave the site.

Registration and Gate

Paid members receive a discount on event fees. Many events allow pre-registration. This is especially useful when registering for the feast for the event. If you are not a paid member you will need to sign a waiver before being allowed to participate. You will usually receive a "Site Token", which is a small bauble or trinket, when you register.

At the event

There are many activities you can view and participate in at an event. While at an event, it is encouraged to hide modern items as much as possible. Turn off or take cell phone conversations away from the main crowd, if possible.

Courtesies

Commonly, when at an event, you will address individuals by their title and name. If you are unsure of the correct form of address, a simple "good gentle" or milord/milady will suffice. It is common to offer a small curtsy or bow to those with coronets and crowns. Traditionally you stop and allow Kings and Queens to pass.

Pavilions and Heraldry

Individuals will put up large canvas pavilions throughout the site. You may often find them located around the list fields. Some of these pavilions may be open for you to

Attending Your First Event

sit in. Always ask before entering. It is the same as entering someone's home. Many individuals will post banners of their kingdom, group, and individual heraldry. It is common to see pennants and banners flapping in the breeze suspended from the pavilions. If you have your own heraldry you can display it.

Combat

Unless you are already authorized for combat you will usually be unable to participate. The combat area is usually roped off for safety. During combat, you may hear "**HOLD!**". This is a safety word when there is an issue on the field such as a broken piece of equipment. Everyone freezes in what they are doing and addresses the issue.

Classes

Classes are often offered at events. These will cover many different topics. Some classes are limited seating; others may have a class fee to cover materials and handouts. Many of the classes are hands-on. Many events will have a schedule of classes taking place.

Vigils and Circles

When someone is to be elevated to one of the peerage orders they will sometimes host a vigil. This is a time for friends to come together and give wishes to the candidate. Refreshments may be offered at these activities.

Private meetings and circles occur at some events. These meetings are usually isolated from the main event. Do not approach meetings in progress. If you need to speak to someone urgently, a message can be given to them.

Feast

Many events offer a feast. This is a very large fancy meal served in a series of courses. Some are served at the table and some a buffet-style. Between courses, you

may have other activities such as bardic performances, court business, dancing, etc. A series of toasts will usually occur with the feast.

Court

Court is a time of high pageantry. Typically, court will be a time to thank those who have put together the event. The Crown will give out awards and prizes for any competitions held during the event. Individuals will be called up for awards and recognition for their hard work. The herald will read any pertinent information. A cheer will be given. The exact wording of the cheer used in your kingdom may differ.

If you are called up, approach the thrones from the center of the room. You may have someone who offers to escort you. If this would cause an issue, or is unwanted, politely decline the offer. It is becoming more common practice that newcomers will be called up and given a small token thanking them for attending their first event

During court keep side conversations to a minimum. If you do need to carry on a conversation kindly move to the back of the hall to avoid disrupting those around, you who may have difficulty hearing.

After the Event

Return any equipment you may have borrowed. You may wish to join social media lists for various groups and friends you have made during the day. Your local group will be able to assist you in working on art, combat, or simply making garb for your next event. Hopefully, you had an enjoyable first event.



Terminology

You may find conversations and event announcements hard to follow at first. SCA participants, chapters and offices all assume names with a historical flavor, and there is a whole vocabulary for everyday things as well. You will get used to it quickly, but here are some of the most commonly used words to start with.

About People

SCAdian (SKAY-dee-an) - a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism. Also used as an adjective to mean of the SCA"

Gentle – any person

Populace – the inhabitants of a kingdom or local group; the people present at an event.

Chivalry – Peers recognized for their great skill on the tourney field, as well as for qualities of courtesy and grace. Companions of the Chivalry are the Knights, who swear fealty to the Crown, and Masters-of-Arms, who do not.

Master of Defense – a Peer recognized for their great skill at rapier and/or cut-and-thrust combat, for qualities of courtesy and grace, for their willingness to teach others, and for service to the kingdom.

Laurel – a Peer recognized for mastery of an art or science as well as for qualities of courtesy and grace.

Pelican – a Peer recognized for great service to their Kingdom and the SCA as well as for qualities of courtesy and grace.

Squire – a student in a formal relationship with a Knight or Master of Arms.

Apprentice – a student in a formal relationship with a Master or Mistress of the Laurel.

Protégé – a student in a formal relationship with a Master or Mistress of the Pelican.

Provost – a student in a formal relationship with a Master or Mistress of Defense.

Peers – members of the Chivalry, Masters of Defense, Laurel, and Pelican.

Royal Peers – Viscounts, Viscountesses, Counts, Countesses, Dukes, and Duchesses. A Viscount/ess has served as Prince/ess of a Principality. A Count/ess has served as King/Queen of a kingdom once, and a Duke/Duchess has served more than once.

Minister – the gender-neutral version of Mistress/Master for office names.

Mistress/Master – title used by companions of the Orders of the Laurel, Pelican, Master of Defense, and Masters-of-Arms. Also, part of some office names, i.e., "Mistress of the Lists", "Master of Arts & Sciences"

Dame – an alternate title used by female Peers who do not wish to use the title "Mistress" or "Sir".

Baron/Baroness - Armigerous title Territorial Baron/ess are those who ceremonial head of a Barony Court Baronies are titles granted by the crown. Addressed as Your Excellency

Lord/Lady/Laird - title used by individuals who have received an award of arms. In some kingdoms someone with a grant of arms would be addressed as Honorable Lord/Lady/

Officers

Autocrat / Event Steward – the person in charge of an event.

Chancellor Minor / Minister of Youth / Page School Chancellor – officer in charge of children's activities.

Chamberlain/Quartermaster – officer in charge of inventorying/maintaining/storing a SCA chapter's property.

Chatelain(e) / Hospitaller – an officer who helps new members learn about the SCA.

Chronicler – the editor of a group's newsletter.

Constable – this office, which exists in some kingdoms, has varied responsibilities which might include making sure that the entry gate is manned, ensuring that SCA and modern laws are followed, or taking care of "Lost and Found".

Exchequer (Chancellor of the Exchequer) – the officer serving as treasurer for a group or kingdom.

Herald – officer who helps participants come up with SCA names and armory; or, the official who makes announcements on the field, or is the Master of Ceremonies for court. Local group heralds are called Pursuivants.

Marshal – a specially trained person who oversees martial activities for safety purposes. A Marshal holds this office in a local group. The Earl Marshal holds this office in a principality or kingdom. Marshals also run archery, youth combat, and other martial activities.

Minister of Arts and Science - the officer in charge of tracking and reporting arts and science activities within the local group.

Media Officer/Social Media Officer - in charge of media relations and social media conduct on SCA websites and social media platforms.

Seneschal – the officer serving as "president" of a local group or kingdom. Acts as the group administrator and legal representative of the SCA.

Webminister - Officer in charge of group website

Types of Event

Coronation – the event where the Crown Prince and Princess, heirs to a kingdom, are crowned.

Crown Tournament – the tournament held to determine the next heirs to the kingdom.

Investiture – the event at which the new Prince and Princess of a principality (or the new Baron and Baroness of a barony) are installed.

Twelfth Night – an event celebrating the holiday of Epiphany (January 6), held at the beginning of January. Attendees wear their finest garb, and friends exchange gifts.

Schola / Collegium / University - events where classes are taught on a variety of subjects.

War – a gathering at which the main activity is one or more battles for large groups of participants, involving the use of fields, woodlands, or other broken terrain. War events can also include other martial activities, along with classes, court, dancing, performances, and merchants.

General Terms

Anno Societatis (abbreviated "A.S.") – The dating system we use in the SCA (translates to "In the Year of the Society"). May 1, 1966 was the first day of the year A.S. I, and May 1st is "New Year's Day" for each Society year. The years are usually depicted in Roman numerals.

Arms (or device) – the heraldic emblem that identifies a person or entity.

Award of Arms – a Society-wide award given by the royalty. Recipients can one of several titles before their names.

Arts and Sciences – crafts and skills of the Middle Ages/Renaissance which we research and practice in the SCA. Also referred to as "A & S".

Authorization – The process that martial participants go through to be allowed to participate in their respective activities.

Terminology

Barony/Shire – types of SCA local chapters. Baronies are generally larger in size and have a Baron and/or Baroness as their ceremonial heads. Sub-groups within a Barony's territory are known as Cantons, or in some areas, Ridings or Strongholds. All these groups are officially recognized in the SCA and are administered by a slate of officers.

Bardic Circle – an informal gathering for singing and storytelling. Anyone who attends is welcome to perform appropriate material, but you can just sit and listen if you prefer. A bard is a person who sings, tells stories, recites poetry, etc.

Blue Card – an SCA membership card printed on blue cardstock, indicating that the card holder has a signed waiver on file at the SCA offices.

Court – a gathering where the King and Queen of a kingdom make announcements and present awards. Rulers of principalities hold Principality courts, and landed Barons and Baronesses hold Baronial courts.

Crash Space – informal lodgings with members of the group holding an event.

Dayboard – lunch, served at some events.

Demo – a demonstration of the activities in the SCA. SCA participants will usually perform martial activities as well as arts and sciences for the public.

Dry/Damp/Wet Site – alcoholic beverage policies. Dry sites allow no alcohol. Damp sites permit wine, beer, and mead, but no hard liquor. Wet sites do not restrict alcohol. "Discreetly" damp or wet means that the site is normally dry, but the owners will permit alcohol if the labeled containers are kept out of sight and are removed at the end of the event. At any site, local laws and site rules regarding alcohol consumption must be followed.

Event – any Society gathering. You are welcome to attend any events listed on the kingdom calendar. You can take part in the activities, although some martial arts require special equipment, training, and authorization by a marshal.

Feast – an elaborate meal, usually served in the evening, sometimes accompanied by entertainment.

Feast Gear – a place setting for a feast: at least a plate, bowl, goblet, spoon, and knife. You can also include a napkin, fork, tablecloth, candles, etc. Assume you will need to bring basic feast gear for any feast unless the announcement says they will be provided.

Garb – clothing approximating that worn pre-17th century. Required at all events except some local meetings and activities. Some groups have garb available for newcomers (see "Gold Key").

Gate – the place to check in or buy at-the-door admission to an event.

Gold Key – a collection of garb and gear that newcomers can borrow. Contact the group's Chatelain(e).

Heavy Weapons – armored combat with rattan versions of swords, polearms, and spears.

HOLD! – a cry meaning "Stop whatever you are doing and freeze in place until you see where the hazard is!" Normally used during combat, but it has been extended to cover all forms of activity.

Household – a voluntary association of friends or people with a common interest. Can be organized under whatever rules the members jointly accept. Households have no formal standing in the SCA.

Light Weapons – in some kingdoms, this refers to rapier combat (fencing).

Lists / List Field – the roped-off area for combat. Also called "the eric" in the West Kingdom. The List Table is the location where

competitors sign in and where the Minister of Lists keeps track of the paperwork necessary to run the tournament.

Melee – martial combat with many participants on each side.

Mundane – used to mean "non-SCA", "everyday", "in real life". We encourage the use of the word "modern" instead, as we're aware that "mundane" can sound disrespectful.

On-board – Attending an event and eating the feast provided by the sponsors. Feast is usually a separate fee for events.

Off-board – Attending an event and not eating the feast provided by the sponsors. Participants will sometimes bring their own food to eat during a feast.

Period – of the time studied in the SCA (pre-17th-century); also used to mean "authentic."

Persona – the person that you are acting as in the SCA. Your persona can be detailed or simple – starting with the time and country you are from, all the way to knowing the details of your persona's place in society or your family history.

Porta-castle/Privy – portable chemical toilets found at outdoor events.

Post-revel – a get-together after the event ("revel"), for socializing and unwinding, usually held in someone's home. Save the D&D and computer talk for this time.

Proof of SCA Membership – a photocopy of your membership card or letter from the Member Portal (members.sca.org)

Regnum – in some kingdoms: a listing of Society branches or a listing of officers.

Removes – sometimes used as a synonym for "courses" at a feast. ("Remove" is a post-period term for a dish served during a course that is later removed and replaced by a new one.)

SCA Name – the name someone uses in the Society.

Site – the place the event is being held.

Site Fee – the cost of admission to an event. Does not usually include the cost of the feast.

Troll Booth – the place to check in or buy at-the-door admission to an event. Staffed by the "troll". Also see "Gate".

Tournament/Tourney – A competition in SCA. Typically applied to all the arts Martial, Static, and performance.

Waiver – a release of liability form signed when you purchase SCA membership. Non-members must sign waivers at events and martial practices.

Water Bearing – water and refreshments provided at an event to members of the populace



Come Share the Dream

Become a Member

You are not required to buy a membership before you start attending practices, meetings, and events; however, members do receive discounts on event entry fees. Paid membership is a requirement for holding an SCA office, and in some kingdoms, you must have a membership to take part in combat activities and to be eligible to receive awards.

Paid Members get these Benefits!

- Discounts on event admission fees
- Membership card – check in at events quickly by presenting your card
- Voting privileges in your local group – polls on local group matters are sent to those on the membership list
- SCA Publications – digital access to all monthly kingdom newsletters and the quarterly Board Minutes, along with the option to subscribe to Tournaments Illuminated (the quarterly magazine of the Society), the Compleat Anachronist series, and to paper versions of kingdom newsletters and the Board Minutes.

Additionally, your fees help support the SCA infrastructure, including worldwide liability coverage for our chapters, and the ability to maintain consistent rules and standards throughout the Society. <https://www.sca.org/join-us/>

Find Us Online

The SCA has a significant online presence. Besides our official websites, many kingdoms, groups, and individuals have social media accounts including, Facebook, Twitter, and Discord. Many of our classes and meetings occur online. There is a large selection of online tutorial videos and resources. We even host some virtual gatherings and events. To find more about us: Website: sca.org Facebook: [SocietyForCreativeAnachronism](https://www.facebook.com/SocietyForCreativeAnachronism) Twitter: [@SCASocial](https://twitter.com/SCASocial)

Publications



Known World Handbook

2010 edition - 222 pages and over 80 articles on subjects including: SCA History, Customs, Persona, Heraldry, Awards, Costuming, Events, Courts, Feasts, Camping, Arts & Sciences, Armouring, Chivalry, Rapier Arts, Tournaments & Service.

Tournaments Illuminated

Tournaments Illuminated is the SCA's quarterly magazine for its membership throughout the Known World. Issues feature articles of interest, and recurring columns on kingdom news, humor, war reports, museum exhibits, medieval destinations, book reviews, and listings of major SCA events. Articles cover research on pre-seventeenth-century culture, as well as life in the SCA.

The Compleat Anachronist

The Compleat Anachronist is published four times a year. Each issue features in-depth research on a topic relevant to the period 600 C.E. to 1600 C.E. In years past, The Compleat Anachronist has covered the knightly virtues, weaponry and armor, formal poetic structure, tavern songs, board games, and a host of other topics.

Order Online <https://members.sca.org/apps/#Store>

