

The Newcomer's Guidebook

The Very Basics

A simple introduction to the SCA

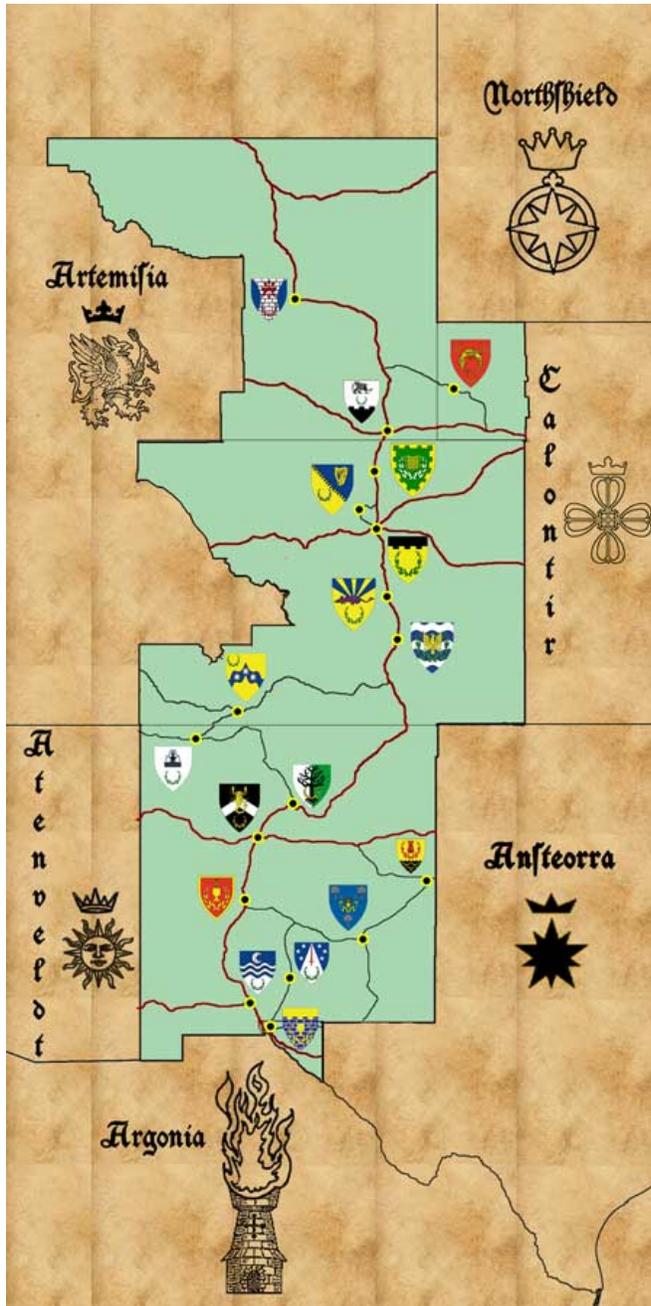


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The Knowne Realm





There are 20 Kingdoms in the Society for Creative Anachronism. (SCA)

We are located in the area referred to as the "Kingdom of the Outlands," the shield with the Stag on it.

Each Kingdom is defined by the area, not so much by what state you live in. If you ever move, and get lost as to where you are in the map, you can always check the website sca.org to match up your zipcode to the database.

A Kingdom is divided into different areas. Each shield denotes a different location. These areas are the Baronies, Shires, and Cantons of the Kingdom.

The Basics of Event Manners

So you're at your first event. Welcome! You're nervous, yet incredibly excited. "What should I do?" you ask yourself. "Who are all these people? Who am I?"

Well, to begin with, everyone starts as landed nobility. There are no servants, serfs, peasants, or slaves in the SCA, and anyone who tells you otherwise is sorely incorrect.

Always refer to someone you don't know as Milord or Milady. If you see someone with a crown, bow if you are in court, or a brief nod or bobbed curtsy outside of court gives respect. If you are a Lady, do not be surprised if a man kisses your hand. If you don't like it, be kind when informing them. It's a sign of curtesy and respect.

If your dog does not behave well around people or other dogs, leave it at home. Many sites also have pet restrictions, so keep up on that as well. Keep in mind that children will be children, and babies will be babies. The corollary to this: Keep an eye on your children - no one is automatically volunteered to take care of them. This goes for pets as well. Also move your car out of sight as soon as you are done unpacking.

There are two codes to remember, and put into all of your future SCA practices. (These are also good for life)

The first is, "Helping Hands"

If you see something that needs to be done, just do it, don't wait for someone to ask. If someone is carrying in armloads of things, and your arms are free, offer to help. Remember though that you are doing this out of politeness. If they say no, respect it.

The second is a little longer.

"Always leave the site cleaner than you found it."

Sites are very important. They are hard to gain, but easy to lose. If you see trash on ground, pick it up. If something spills, clean it up. We have a very good reputation of excellence, and we desire to keep it that way.

General Layout of Events

This is a broad example of what can happen at an event. All times and activities are a representation only. Always check the website of the event to see what exactly to expect. Being a Member gives you a \$5 discount to events.

Site Opens at 9am

To sign into an event, look for the “Troll” table. This is where they will take your money, and give you a site token.

Opening Court at 10am

Heavy Weapons at 11am

Donation Lunch at 1pm

Not all events will have lunch! Check the event website to confirm, or make sure to pack/plan for a lunch on your own.

Archery at 1:30pm

Fencing at 2:30pm

Afternoon Court at 4pm

Feast at 6pm

Site closes at 8pm

Keep in mind that many events run on “SCA time.” This means that certain events can run longer, or shorter than they were originally planned for.



That SCA Lingo

Don't know the language people around you are speaking?

SCAdian (SKAY-dee-an) - as a noun: A member of the Society for Creative Anachronism

SCAer - Used as an adjective to mean, "Of the SCA"

Gentle - Any person, not gender-specific

Populace- The inhabitants of a kingdom or a local group; the people present and an event.

Chivalry - Fighters recognized by the King and Queen for their great skill on the tourney field. Companions of the Chivalry are the Knights, who swear fealty to the Crown, and Masters-of-Arms who do not.

Laurel - Someone recognized by the King and Queen for mastery of an art or science

Pelican - Someone recognized by the King and Queen for great service to their Kingdom and the SCA as a whole.

Squire - A student in a formal relationship with a Knight or MoA

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

Peers - Companions of the Chivalry, the Laurel, and the Pelican

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

Mistress/Master - Title used by companions of the orders of the Laurel and Pelican, and Masters of Arms. Also a part of some office names e.g. "Mistress of the Lists", "Master of Arts and Sciences"

Autocrat/Event Steward - The person in charge of an event. Sometimes you will see the suffix "-ocrat" added to other words to identify the person running the activity. e.g. Feastocrat, Merchantocrat."

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.

Seneschal - The officer serving as "President" of a local group or kingdom. Acts as the group administrator and legal representative of the SCA.

Blue Card - An SCA membership card printed on blue cardstock, indicating that the cardholder has signed a waiver on file for 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.

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 are no alcohol, damp sites permit wine, beer and mead but no hard liquor. Wet does not restrict alcohol.

“Discreetly” damp or wet means that the site is normally dry, but the owners will permit alcohol as long as the labeled containers are kept out of sight and removed at the end of the event. Of course, at any site, local laws regarding alcohol consumption MUST be followed.

Event - Any Society gathering. You’re welcome to go to any event. You are welcome to participate in any activity, although some (mainly martial arts) take special training and “authorization” to participate.

Garb - Clothing based on that worn in the Middle Ages, or Renaissance. Required at all events except meetings and some activities.

Tournament/Tourney - A competition in SCA fighting or fencing.

Waiver - A release of liability form signed when you purchase an SCA membership. Also must be signed by non-Members at events.

Belts - The Chivalry; the “belted fighters,” the Knights and MoAs

Brass Hat - Anyone entitled to wear a coronet or crown

Hat - The King, Queen, Duke, Prince, baron; Any crowned or coroneted person.

The Coronet - The Prince and Princess

The Crown - The King and Queen

Heavy Weapons - Combat done by armored fighters with rattan versions of swords, polearms and spears.

HOLD! - A cry meaning “STOP WHATEVER YOU ARE DOING and freeze in place until you see what the hazard is!” Normally used during combats, but can be extended to any form 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 Fighting - In some kingdoms refers to rapier combat. (fencing)

Lists/List Field - The roped-off area for combat. The List Table is the location where competitors sign in and where the Minister of Lists keeps track of the paperwork necessary to actually run the tournament.

Melee - Martial combat with many participants on each side.

Mundane - Used to mean “non-SCA”, “everyday”, “in real life”

On-Board - Attending an event and eating the feast provided by the sponsors. The “on-board” price includes the site fee. (Assume you’ll need to bring other meals unless the notice promises them)

Off-Board - Attending an event and bringing your own dinner. The “off-board” price includes the site fee, a seat at a table, and sometimes bread, butter, and some kind of beverage.

Period - Of the time period studied in the SCA; also, authentic

Persona - The Middle Ages/Renaissance person that you are posing as. Your persona can be detailed or simple - starting with the time period and country you are from, all the way to knowing the details of your persona’s place in society or your family history

Site - The place the event is being held

Site Fee - The cost of admission to an event. Does not usually include the cost of Feast.

Troll Booth - The place to check in, or buy at-the-door admission. Staffed by the “troll.” Also known as “Gate”



Court Manners

Court is something that is an inevitable part of events, as it is for thanking people for the event, coming to the event, and award time for some.

When Court starts, it is proper to stand. This is a show of respect. There are of course circumstances that make preclude your standing, such as any physical ailments.

Court may start in two ways:

- A Processional - When this happens, the Royalty (Or Barony) process in with their attendants, or other members of the court. Possibly the herald, possibly a bard, and so on. A Herald will usually announce the procession. When they reach within 10 feet of you, it is considered proper to bow. Once they have passed, you may straighten back up. If there are several sets of people, then you should bow for each one. Do not sit until you have been given leave. Normally the Herald will announce this early on as, "You have Their ____ leave to make yourselves comfortable."
- Royalty "in Place" - The heralds often call this "Teleporting," as the Royalty (Barony) are all in place as court starts. The Herald will cry something like, "All pay heed to the court of ____" - at which point it is proper to stand, again, and sit when you are given leave.

As a newcomer, it is wise to sit further back, and keep all questions quiet. You may also bring activities to keep yourself busy as long as they are quiet.

A couple of important and frequently heard terms:

Arms (or device) - The heraldic device that identifies a person or an entity.

Award of Arms - A Society-wide award given by the Royalty. Recipients then can use the title, "Lord" or "Lady" before their names.

What to do if called into Court

Proper respect is shown by bowing, or curtsying before the thrones (10 to 20 feet back). Come forward before the thrones, and kneel on the cushions - it's what they're there for.

Listen to Their Majesties (or Their Highnesses) as they talk, or the herald talks, politely. Usually if you're called into court, it is to receive an award. If you are male, it is considered proper to thank Their Majesties by shaking His Majesty's hand (if offered), and kissing Her Majesty's hand (if offered). If you are female, His Majesty may kiss your hand, and Her Majesty may offer a hug. This varies from one Royalty to another.

When you leave court, it is proper to bow or curtsey. (Remember that 10 to 20 feet)

Remove any hats, sunglasses, weapons, etc. There is usually someone to escort you up to the throne.

When awards are given, the recipients get cheered.
(For Lord/Lady, Hip Hip! Huzzah!)



Feasting

For the average feast, you will NEED a plate, a bowl, a goblet, silverware, cloth napkin, and plastic bag for unclean feastwear. You may also wish to bring your own beverages, extra goblets, extra bowl, salt cellar, table cloth, and (if allowed in the hall) candles, or candle lanterns. (Those LED tea lights are perfect.)

It is your responsibility to find out if there is something you are allergic to, or just plain will not eat at a feast.

Remember, dropping dead at an event is usually frowned upon and generally considered to be bad manners!

In many cases, the kitchen personnel will have an idea of what went into a recipe, and will be more than willing to ensure that you do not break out into hives as it can throw off the whole feast. ASK WELL IN ADVANCE. An hour before, or even the day of is not well in advance.

Important personages are often seated at the high table. This generally is the Royalty. Treat them with deference, and be polite. Please remember that they are working, and often cannot spend hours in conversation with you. Do not be offended, just keep it short; they will seek you out if they wish to continue the conversation.

The Autocrat may need help setting up tables, or cleaning up at feast. Ask if there is anything you can do to help. After all, you are being fed. Many locations do not have dishwashing facilities. Do NOT wash your dishes in the bathroom.

Servers are volunteers. Treat them with respect. Heralds command the same respect as they do at events as the voice of the Crown, so listen up! Try to not interrupt entertainers, and keep conversation to a minimum during performances. If you wish to get up and speak to people during a feast, try to not block the servers from performing their duties. Conversation should be kept to SCA-related, or medieval topics as people are often sitting close together and cannot help but overhear. It's also a good idea to refrain from gossip about anything you don't want the entire Kingdom to know.

Basics of Camping Events

Find out where your group is camping. Many campsites will have you divided by where you hail from. RSVP a space for your tent; many long time SCAers will know how big of a space you need by the size of your tent.

Always offer assistance when setting up a camp, especially if you are camping with someone.

Bring Extra trash bags, and clean up any trash you see.

Bring layers of clothing!

Bring extra pieces of the more intimate items.

Socks can get pretty gross pretty quick.

ALWAYS BE PREPARED. Weather can change pretty fast.

Campsite Etiquette:

Don't cut through a camp. If you're lost, just say so.

Keep dogs leashed at all times, and not in the middle of the camp

Do not leave pets, or children unattended, or in the hands of someone else for long periods of time without making prior arrangements first.

Keep the volume level down at night. Children and other people are probably asleep.

Don't throw trash into the campfire.

If you're walking through campsites, even on a common pathway, it is not a license to disturb all the camps you pass by.

NEVER leave the campfire unattended - not even for a minute.

Make sure your campfire is completely out before leaving it.

Try to not throw up in camp. If you do, bury it.

STAY HYDRATED

For those who are newer to camping, please go to this website to get an idea of what you will want to have ready for an event. This link is ONLY A GUIDE.

<http://estrellawar.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/you-forgot-what.pdf>

The Rules of Garb

There are a few rules you should follow in the SCA that applies to your garb. These are because they denote rank of one form or another. Here is what to avoid, and why:

White Belts, baldrics, white scarves and red scarves worn on the arms. The White Belt is reserved for Knights, the white baldric is reserved for Masters of Arms, and the White Scarf is the second highest order for Rapier Fighters. In the Middle Kingdom their second highest order wears a Bronze colored Scarf.

Red Belt = Squire

Blue Belt = Man/Woman at Arms

Green Belt = Apprentice

Yellow Belt = Protégé

In the Kingdom of the Outlands, metal circlets are for an Honorable Lord or Lady. Unless you are given a Grant of Arms, avoid wearing a metal circlet, or anything that could be mistaken as one. This goes for Crowns as well.

All of the statements in the section are tradition only.
The Kingdom of the Outlands has no sumptuary laws.

<http://tasha.gallowglass.org/sca/sumptuary.html>

Images used are from:

<http://www.online.outlands.org/map-outlands/>

http://outlands-sca.wikia.com/wiki/Kingdom_of_the_Outlands_Wiki

<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/564x/28/84/f8/2884f87c4d0da4227df9b80417e84c5c.jpg>

http://i.istockimg.com/file_thumbview_approve/12514006/6/stock-illustration-12514006-medieval-city-drawing.jpg

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<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2055338/Medieval-manuscripts-told-Englands-monarchs-king.html>