

HAMLETS: TO BE OR NOT TO BE A BRANCH?

What Is an SCA Hamlet?

At the 12 April 2025 Board of Directors' meeting a variance requested by the Society Seneschal was granted to extend and expand the hamlet experiment to include interested kingdoms on a case-by-case basis following the current guidance and requirements set forth by the Society Seneschal. This experiment would conclude July 31, 2027. At that time the Society Seneschal will deliver a report and recommendation as to whether to adopt hamlets as a new branch designation.

A Hamlet is a new type of branch in the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), designed for small or far-flung groups that need time and space to rest, rebuild, and remain connected to the SCA without the full administrative demands of a traditional branch.

This designation helps keep the SCA alive in rural areas or groups that have experienced burnout, offering a path to regroup and grow again at a sustainable pace.

How a Hamlet Is Formed

A Hamlet can be created from the remains of a dissolved group. Here's how the process works:

- **The original group must be officially dissolved** by the SCA Board of Directors.
- **Remaining members** in that territory may **petition the Kingdom** to form a Hamlet.
- The territory is then **assigned to a neighboring Shire or Barony**, who will act as the sponsoring branch.
- The **sponsoring branch must agree** to take on this responsibility and include the Hamlet in its oversight.
- Any funds or property from the old group must be turned over to the Kingdom or another recognized branch. Hamlets cannot hold their own funds or property.

Name and Heraldry

- The Hamlet may refer to itself as "The Hamlet of \[Former Group Name]".
- It may continue using the old group's registered arms, even those containing a laurel wreath. No new heraldic submissions can be made until the group regains full branch status.

What a Hamlet Can Do

- Host meetings, A&S gatherings, and fighter or archery practices (if a warranted marshal is present).
- Hold public demos, as long as at least **one paid SCA member is present** and designated as "person in charge." Demos should be approved by the sponsoring branch and placed on the Kingdom Calendar.
- Participate in the sponsoring group's activities.
- Maintain visibility and connection with the broader SCA.

Example: "The Barony of Stillaround will be holding a fighter practice in the Hamlet of Goneaway."

What a Hamlet Needs

- At least one paid member to act as a liaison between the Hamlet, the sponsoring group, and the Kingdom. This person is not a formal officer but helps keep the lines of communication open.
- A commitment to SCA values and policies.
- No formal officers, reports, or bank accounts required.

Why Choose Hamlet Status?

Hamlet designation is perfect for:

- Former groups with declining membership or high officer burnout.
- Rural communities that are too small to maintain full branch status.
- Groups who want to ****rest, regroup, and rebuild**** while staying connected.
- Maintaining SCA ****presence and identity**** in outlying areas.

Over time, and with renewed energy, a Hamlet can work toward full status again by following the incipient branch process.

Is This an Experiment?

Yes—but a thoughtful one! The SCA is tracking the following data to evaluate Hamlets as a long-term branch type:

- Number of members at time of dissolution and petition
- Presence of warranted marshals and frequency of practices
- Classes and local activities
- Participation with the sponsoring branch
- Growth in membership and engagement
- Frequency of informal “check-ins” or updates

The Hamlet experiment will run until 31 July 2027.