

A Novices' Guide to Events:

A Survival Handbook for Attending Your First SCA Event

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Introduction

This sturdy little handbook is aimed at two types of newcomers coming to events held by the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA). The first group is people who are attending in the company of experienced event-goers or active SCA members (named henceforth as "SCAdians"). The second group is people who have encountered a reference to SCA events, and venture bravely forth on their own.

To minimize some of the confusion that goes with encountering new cultures, this guide attempts to provide some idea of what to expect, the kinds of people you will meet, what sort of etiquette you might strive for, and what you will need in terms of gear to get to and through your first events. This guide also incorporates a "field guide" to identifying different types of royalty, and a glossary of terms you're likely to encounter both before you go, and at the event itself.

This guide is prepared for novices encountering the SCA via the Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, branch of the Society, and therefore contains a number of references that are particular to our geographical area. We disseminate this information free of charge, with the intent of making every newcomer's first event experience as enjoyable as possible.

NOTE: *The Ealdormere website (<http://www.ealdormere.ca/>) links to a general SCA Primer for Novices (<http://www.pipcom.com/~thule/primer.html>); our guide attempts to focus more specifically on helping newcomers gear up for and survive their first event.*

Where to Find Information

You are going to your first event either because someone told you about it, or because you've joined a local group and have access to some

form of event calendar. In either case, there are a number of locations for important event information, such as location and directions, costs, schedules, and so on. You can find word of mouth and paper-based information such as flyers and newsletters, at local SCA meetings, or by contacting friends who are members of a local group.

Word of Mouth

When in doubt, ask someone in the local group for information. Chances are, they will either provide you with the information, or direct you to one of the other options listed below.

Event Flyer

Event flyers are paper mailing sent out by event organizers to other local SCA chapters. The local branch president (the seneschal) makes flyers available at local meetings for anyone wanting to copy the information.

Newsletter Advertisement

Event advertisements often appear in the kingdom newsletter, which goes to all paid SCA members within the Ontario Society. Since the seneschal must be a paid member, odds are good that or she will have a newsletter in the event there was no separate event flyer mailed out.

Website Advertisement

If you have access to the Internet, the Kingdom of Ealdormere has a page on it's web site just for listing upcoming events: <http://www.ealdormere.sca.org/calendar.html>. Many of these listing have links to local group pages, and/or pages just for event information. In the event there is no link from the Kingdom Calendar, you must go back to one of the methods above for information.

Word of Warning about "SCA Time": *The Society runs on volunteer-power, which sometimes means that real life takes priority, and that schedules sometimes slip to accomodate sudden changes in individual's priorities. Sometimes, people are just plain difficult to round up and get moving. This boils down to a very fluid approach to scheduling; in other words, don't expect things to run like Swiss clockwork, because in the SCA, they very rarely do. You'll often here jokes in reference to "SCA*

*Standard Time", which operates on the general rule that *everything* runs about a half hour behind the time posted. At Camping events, you'll also hear reference to a time of day known as "o'dark:thirty", translating loosely as "some time after the sun goes down". In short, don't be surprised to spend a portion of your day enjoying some unexpected browsing or socializing time, while waiting for a scheduled activity to commence!*

Getting To and From Events

Once you have the information for your first event, you can be intrepid and set out on your own, armed with the schedule and directions from a trusted information source. Or you can plan to travel with people who are also going to events.

Many local groups encourage either car-pooling or caravanning, which is many cars travelling together. Since many groups are based in university or college towns, there's a high number of people looking for rides to events. This makes it easier to find a ride if you don't have one of your own, or offer a seat to someone needing a lift.

Not every event is held in a major city, or even in a town located on convenient public transportation routes for trains or buses. If you don't have or can't arrange your own transportation, be sure to ask at a local meeting if anyone has space available. It's customary and polite to offer to split gas costs for the round trip.

Sometimes distant events in- or out-of-kingdom may require special arrangements for staying somewhere overnight. When making arrangements to travel with others, make sure you know what those arrangements entail in advance:

- Hotels/motels are common for people who want the most easy and convenience, and don't mind paying for the privacy.

- Private crash space involves staying at the home of SCA members local to the event. Sometimes this may involve taking your own sleeping bag and pillow. For this kind of arrangement, it's advised to get details in advance, especially if you or someone travelling with you has allergies to pets or smoke. If you are crashing at someone's home, it isn't necessary to bring gifts (especially since you're not likely to know your hosts' preferences), but do remember to say thanks in the morning!

SCA Generalities

Overview

If you're planning to attend your first event, it's likely for one of two reasons. Either you harbour a personal interest in the "medieval era" and are interested in seeing what it is that we do, or you have been lured, coerced, or bribed out by someone you know who's interested, and you're just along for the ride.

Either way, it helps to know a little bit about how Society structure before you go, to give you some kind of loose frame of reference for what you are about to experience.

On the surface, the SCA is a feudal monarchy, where each of the kingdoms has a king and queen, prince and princess, and various other ranks of nobility. In the background, there is the bureaucratic structure that keeps the whole operation moving - the Board of Directors and Society Officers at different levels who handle the basic administration of such a large group.

The Monarchy

At the time of writing, there are 15 kingdoms through the world, and each kingdom acquires a new set of monarchs every 6 months or so, according to victory by combat. A fighter, male or female, enters a *Crown Tournament* to fight for the honour of crowning his or her consort. The victorious couple step up as *heirs* to the Kingdom, acting as *Crown Prince* and *Crown Princess* for 6 months before stepping up again as *King* and *Queen*. These are the people who serve the kingdom as royalty, feudal figureheads with the right to hand out awards of merit and recognition to the populace of their kingdom.

Aside from the reigning monarchs, there are other levels of reigning royalty. Within most kingdoms, the land is subdivided into *Principalities* (lands which someday may become kingdoms in their own right), or into *Baronies*. In a principality, there is a *Territorial Prince* and *Princess*, who hold the land for the King and Queen, but who won't step up to be King and Queen themselves. Like the Crown Prince and Princess, however, they come to the role by winning a *Coronet Tournament*.

Unlike Kings, Queens, Princes, and Princesses, *Barons* and *Baronesses* are typically voted in by the local baronial populace. They serve a fixed terms of between two and five years, and have the right to create and present baronial awards of merit and recognition. They also pledge loyalty to the reigning monarchs, and often supply the forces needed should a kingdom "go to war".

These are the basic land-holding noble ranks within the Society. Sometimes the individual may use another name for the rank, but most of the time these are the titles you will hear.

In addition to the land-holding nobility, there are also other ranks within the SCA feudal structure, outlined as follows:

- *Duke or Duchess*: someone who has been King or Queen two or more times
- *Count or Countess*: someone who has been King or Queen
- *Viscount or Viscountess*: someone who has been territorial prince or princess one or more times (although locally there is a humorous tradition of referring to people who won a Coronet Tourney three times - and there are a few - as "*Tricounts*".)
- *Court Baron or Baroness* - someone granted the title of *Baron* or *Baroness* but who does not hold territory for the King and Queen; this title is typically granted as a reward for exemplary service, and also to people who have served as territorial Baron and Baroness after they step down from the baronial thrones.

Peerages

We're including the "peerages" as a subset of royalty, because we often refer to peers by what at first sound like royal titles. A peerage is the highest award of recognition the Society has for the following three aspects of skill:

- *Knighthood*: offered for excellence in combative skills; address as "Sir" or "Dame"
- *Laurel*: offered for excellence in the study and recreation of a particular art or science; addressed as "Master" or "Mistress"

- Pelican: offered for excellence in service to the Kingdom; addressed as "Master" or "Mistress"

The "Field Guide" section of this handbook provides more information on how to identify these nobles.

The Bureaucrats

While it may be all well and good to be royalty, nothing gets done without the aide of good staff, and the SCA is no exception. Behind the scenes, there are numerous unpaid volunteers who work to make things happen from the local group level up to the Society level itself.

When planning to go to an event, if you are making connections through a local SCA chapter, or *canton*, the people you are most likely to deal with are:

- the *seneschal*: the branch president
- the *chatelaine*, or *minister of novices*: the person most often responsible for acting as liaison with new people

Either one or both of these people will likely be responsible for handing you this guide, arranging for costumes on loan, and providing you with anything else you might need to borrow, from dinnerware to a tour guide.

At the event itself, the people you will most likely encounter or hear talk of are:

- the *autocrat*: the volunteer co-ordinator in charge of the event
- the *troll*, or *gatekeeper*, or *steward*: the person who handles event registration and entrance fee collection on the day of the event
- 0. the *feastocrat*: the head cook in charge of planning and preparing the event dinner

These are not the only officers the SCA, but they are the ones you are most likely going to deal with getting to, or spending time at, your first event.

Event Generalities

Single-day Event Formats

There is a standard format most SCA single-day events follow, comprised of three main activities:

The Tournament

In the tournament (which may itself take any one of a wide variety of formats), armoured combatants fight for the honour of a consort, for the honour of meeting a skilled opponent, for the chance of winning a really nifty prize. These are not "jousts", which are a form of matches done exclusively from horseback, but matches fought by combatants on foot only. There are a wide variety of weapons in use, from swords and shields to pole arms and spears.

Our weapons are not real, they are made from a bamboo-like substance called rattan, covered in duct tape, and hilted or padded in accordance with strict kingdom or Society laws. Combatants must train and pass an authorization test before they can legally enter any tournament anywhere in the SCA.

While combatants rely heavily on the honour system to determine whether a particular shot is a killing or wounding blow, there are also marshals on the field who keep an eye on the combat, keep an eye on the crowd, and generally make sure everything stays safe and chivalric.

The Feast

This is the event dinner. In many cases, the dishes served at feast are recreated according to medieval recipes, though often there are allowances for modern tastes and ingredient availability.

You need to bring your own table setting to feast. Feast gear usually consists of a plate and/or bowl, a drinking vessel, and at least a knife. Spoon and fork are advised, or you can brave the meal with fingers alone - bring your own napkin supply! Depending on the rules of the event site, you may want to bring a candle holder and candles as well, as our preference is usually to hold feast by candle-light, for effect.

Servers will bring the dishes to your table. Its fun to try a little bit of everything, but since there is usually a lot of food involved, a small sample of everything still amounts to a big meal in many cases. The food arrives in removes, where a remove may be a single dish, or it may be a series of dishes.

If you are sitting at feast, you are "*eating onboard*". You may hear reference to "*eating offboard*", where people eat in the feast hall or elsewhere on the site, but bring their own food; or to "*eating outboard*", which has nothing to do with boat motors and everything to do with going off the site for dinner, typically to some local restaurant.

If you are lucky, there can be some exceptional entertainment during feast, usually in the form of singers and musicians, occasionally other forms as well.

While most of the feasting populace eats at a particular set of arranged tables, the attending royalty sit at a designated head table. During feast, there may be presentations made to the royalty at head table, but given the poor acoustics of the average event site, you won't hear most of what is going on unless you're sitting right at the front.

Feast typically starts with select people toasting the local king and queen, the prince and princess, and perhaps other local royalty, if the baron and baroness are present, for example.

The Court

Court may take place in the morning, afternoon, or after feast, depending on event schedule and royal whim. The general format, however, is as follows. Event staff will set up chairs facing the royals thrones, typically up on a dais or stage (where available). The populace gathers accordingly. A royal herald proclaims the arrival of the king and queen or the ranked royal holding the court (it may be a prince/princess or a baron/baroness), and escorts them to the thrones. Court may also include the royal or territorial prince and princess, the local baron, or visiting royalty from other kingdoms.

The populace bows them past in respect, and waits for the signal from the royalty to be seated.

The royalty may make announcements, proclaim whims, announce any law changes pending approval. Then they present awards of merit and

recognition to such members of the populace as have come to their notice. Typically these are people local to the group hosting the event. These awards are most often in the form of scrolls done in some exquisite calligraphy and illumination, they may be in the form of some token presented by the king and queen (or other ranked royal conducting court).

There are many different types of awards granted by the royalty; to identify them all at all the likely levels of grant, is beyond the scope of this handbook. Appendix D provides a brief description of the Ealdormere- and Society-level awards only.

There may be gift presentations done in court as well, or there may be oaths of allegiance from the populace, ranking royalty, or peers. Sometimes there's fun stuff and practical jokes in court as well, and the locals refer to these more light-hearted presentations as "*schtick*".

At the end of court, the herald bids the populace rise, and proclaims the king and queen out of court.

Camping Event Formats

The typical camping event spans, on average, three days. The site opens sometime on a Thursday or Friday, and close sometime on the following Sunday. Event dates and hours of access may change to accommodate long holiday weekend schedules.

Note: *Trying to define the Pennsic War camping experience is another topic that is far beyond the scope of this guide; Pennsic camping requires a guide unto itself, slated for later in the summer 2000. There is a website dedicated to Pennsic, <http://www.pennsicwar.org>, but be warned this site assumes the reader is familiar with the event itself and the SCA in general.*

By its definition, camping events require camping equipment, unless you take the idea of "roughing it" in a medieval sense very seriously. At the very least, you need shelter, more garb, and food. For most people, this amounts to a nylon tent, a sleeping bag with an extra blanket, at least one change of garb per day, and a cooler of edibles.

At some camping events, you'll see people who camp with big *pavilions*, or period tents. No-one expects first-eventers to go to such lengths, but it is nice if you can hide the mundane aspects of your camp as much as possible, even if it's just a piece of fabric thrown over a modern chair or your cooler.

Camping events in Ontario occur during the warmer months only, a fact for which we are very grateful. For your first camping event, we advise camping with people you know, to guarantee there's always familiar faces close by when you need help.

Many sites permit you to take your car to your camping area only for as long as you need to unload and setup, then you must remove the car to some outlying parking area. You may receive a parking tag when you check in; hanging this on your mirror lets event staff know you've already paid to get in, and you won't have to pay again should you leave the site and come back at any time over the weekend. If someone is just dropping you off, and leaving site with the vehicle for the weekend, you don't need to pick up a parking tag for them.

Camping Event Activities

Like single-day events, camping events also tend to have combat-related activities and courts. These may be spread out across the weekend schedule, which you receive when you check in at the gate at the start of the weekend. The check in process is also the same, though you're paying for site only in most cases, since camping events don't typically provide a feast for reasons relating to logistics of cooking in the great outdoors.

After setting up your tent and whatnot, consult the information you should have received at troll to find out what the schedule is for the weekend. In many cases, the bulk of event activities happen on Saturday, but there may be classes or pick-up combat or access to archery ranges as of the opening day.

It would be foolish to deny that, at least in Ealdormere, the big attraction at most camping events are the evening parties. This may range from bardic performances around a campfire, to middle eastern drum-and-dance circles, to large, lubricated-by-alcohol encampment parties. It's up to parental discretion whether to send underaged attendees to such events on the Honour System, or with an adult chaperone.

Food Options for Camping Event

There are several ways to eat at camping events:

- take your own precooked or cook-free foods
- take your own foods and a camp stove
- plan to cook everything over an open fire
- have someone else do all your cooking onsite
- take advantage of onsite "taverns" if available
- go offsite for all your meals

Sometimes groups of event-goers who plan to camp together will put together some kind of *food plan*, into which everyone in the group pays money, and someone organizes the groceries, the food preparation, and the cleanup. When available, this is the best way of guaranteeing you eat reasonably well, even if it means taking your turn with prep help or cleanup chores.

Cooking for yourself, or eating ready-made, cook-free foods is the most common approach, and probably the easiest to plan for your first event. Take foods you like that require little to no effort to store and prepare in a cooler, and you're all set.

For most camping events, plan to take your own drinking water, because local water may not be safe to consume, or it may not be easily accessible.

Make sure you check site rules for disposing of food waste and used water (dish water, wash water, and so on). Where no rules are explicit, use common sense and don't dump close to where people camp, to avoid attracting unwanted pests.

Appendix B contains some suggestions for easy camp food.

General Camping Health Concerns

Be aware that camping events require a lot more space, therefore there's a lot more walking involved. This in turn usually means a lot more exposure: to the sun, to rain, to chilly night air.

Head coverings and sunblock are highly advised. Something in which you can carry drinking water (which you may need to import to the site... never depend on "local water" being clean or easily accessible) also comes in handy. If it's hot and/or humid, be careful about over exerting, and if you imbibe alcoholic beverages, be careful of how this changes your reactions to heat and humidity.

Camping events also tend to rely on portable outhouses for sanitation, and these can get very ripe in very short order, especially in the heat. Bring a small container of water-free antibacterial hand wash to keep your hands sanitary; personal experience on the author's part has proven that keeping a box of moistened baby wipes in the tent helps with maintaining "general freshness" throughout the day.

Bring a warm sweater, tunic, or cloak, and a pair of warm woolly socks for your feet for the evenings, because wandering around after the dew has fallen can make it feel very cold. It's also a good idea to make sure you've got a change of dry clothes in a bag in the car, because sooner or later you'll get caught by a storm at a camping event, and even if it isn't **your** tent that gets blown over, it may be nice to loan a dry t-shirt to someone who's entire weekend garb supply is in puddles at the bottom of what used to be his tent!

As a final note on health concerns, if you have any kind of medical condition or take specific medications (anything from inhalers to insulin and beyond), we URGE you to make sure someone you camp with is aware of this, and knows who to contact offsite in the event of an emergency. If you are going to your first camping event without knowing a soul, then perhaps you should consider setting up a check-in procedure with an offsite contact, making sure they have a way to get ahold of someone at the site in case you miss a check in.

Other Event Formats and Activities

Before you ask, no, that isn't "all there is" to an event.

For one thing, there are often merchants, people selling wares you might find useful, such as feast gear or garb or armour, for example. There may be classes offered by volunteer teachers. Sometimes there is dancing and music, if the hall is big enough and enough people are interested.

There are often displays of local craftsmanship, and sometimes the populace is welcome to "judge" these displays by way of a friendly "bean

count". If you like a particular item on display, you can drop beans or other tokens into a cup to indicate your vote. At the end of the day, the item with the most beans wins.

Sometimes entire events are constructed around these displays, and the voting is more formal, conducted by selected judges. These arts and sciences competitions don't typically include a tournament, may not include a feast, often don't include a court either. They are, however, an excellent place to go to see the quality and talent of many local crafters.

In most cases, the average SCA event is an excellent place to go windowshopping, which we translate to mean "looking at people's garb, at their armour, at whatever they are doing that looks interesting". Most people are more than willing to chat about whatever they are doing, if approached politely and with an open mind. Be prepared to be inundated with information, for those who *are* willing to talk, usually have a great deal of information to share!

The People That You Meet

Before the Event

Unless you're just wandering in off the street, so to speak, chances are you're finding out about an event through some contact within the SCA. It may be a friend or family member, but chances are, it will be someone with previous exposure to the Society.

Something we recommend to novices, those who are newcomers to the SCA, is that you come out to a local meeting, or combat practice, or something, before attending your first event. This has the benefit of providing you with a selection of recognizable faces you can pick out of a crowd at the event. It lets you know who to talk to if you have questions, and it lets you know who to talk to about borrowing anything you might not have, prior to the event.

The seneschal and chatelaine are usually the people most likely to be of assistance prior to an event. Many local groups have something called a Gold Key (which may or may not be a local office itself) - the Gold Key is a collection of costume, or garb, and possibly even feast gear, available for loan. It may not be the nicest outfit you've ever worn, but it's good enough to get people to and through their first events (while you window-shop for fashions you *really* like!).

In some cases, the seneschal or chatelaine might even pair you up with more experienced SCAdians, to act as tour guides for your first event, or at least as dedicated resources you can go to if you have specific questions.

At the Event

At the event itself, the first person you almost always encounter is the troll or steward, who takes your site entrance fee and asks you to sign a waiver. This waiver is a statement that you understand and/or accept the risks of attending an event, and that you take responsibility for yourself, absolving the SCA of any responsibility in the event of a mishap. You must sign this waiver, even if it is your first event.

Once you are inside the event, there are all kinds of people at the event, from royalty to combatants to merchants, and so on. The royalty are **usually** the ones with the decorative metal crowns or circlets, but not all the royalty wear their respective crowns all the time, and sometimes members of the populace like to play with Society sumptuary laws, which dictate who can wear what according to which rank they hold. (A full description of these sumptuary laws is also outside the scope of this guide).

The merchants are those who have goods for sale on display on tables. Terms of sale are typically cash or cheque, while those who also vend professionally might be set up to handle credit cards.

Combatants and marshals are the only ones permitted inside the list field, an area of the site marked out by short poles and ropes. It's hard to miss the combatants - they're the ones in the armour. The marshals will be the brave souls inside the list field **without** armour, acting as spotters and referees.

Who's Who on the Stage?

The most important place where you want to know who's who is during court. There are a lot of people up there around the thrones, and it might be a help to know who fills what role.

The king and queen are easy - they are the couple in the middle with the big gold crowns. They are the figurative rulers of the kingdom.

The person proclaiming them into and out of court is the *herald*. Heralds often wear a garment called a *tabard*, which fits over their regular garb, and is green with two crossed gold horns, which is essentially the uniform of their office. This is the person who presents the royal processions and reads the scrolls to the assembly, hopefully in a voice that everyone can hear even at the back of the hall.

Standing behind the king, often holding a sword or other impressive weapon, is the king's champion, the person who fights for the king in the event of a challenge. This is, in essence, the king's personal body guard. Likewise, there is often a champion for the queen as well.

Standing next to the herald is a seneschal - usually, this will be the kingdom seneschal, but in his or her absence, a baronial or local branch seneschal may stand in. It is the responsibility of the seneschal to ensure that everything happening during court happens in accordance with the kingdom laws.

Also standing behind the king and queen are retainers, people to take care of everything from handing drinks or fans to the royalty, to taking care of putting away any gifts received during court. Depending on the amount of space on the dais, there may be several retainers.

You may also see other types of champions - a fencing champion, an archery champion, an equestrian champion... it all depends on the personal preferences of the current king and queen.

If the crown or territorial prince and princess is attending, they will join the king and queen on the dais, possibly with a retainer or two. Likewise, the local baron and baroness may also be invited to join the king and queen for court.

In smaller courts, you may find the seats of honour held by those other than the king and queen. For an example, if the king and queen are not present, the baron and baroness may hold a court of their own. Sometimes, they may conduct business in their local courts on behalf of the absent king and queen, such as handing out certain awards of merit.

In front of the dais, there will often be guards carrying some sort of tall weapon, such as a spear. While in theory they are present to protect the person of the king, mostly they are there for show.

General Event Etiquette

How to Behave When You Get There

The Society assumes all of its members to be "of noble birth", regardless of persona, SCA experience, mundane status. This assumption means each of us is accorded, and therefore should accord, honour, courtesy, and respect to all we meet.

In practice, this means polite forms of address, assistance where needed, and a certain adherence to the concepts of chivalry.

Even if you don't know a person's Society status, you can address everyone you meet as "My lord", or "My lady". No one should be offended by politeness. Be aware there is a difference between referring to someone as "milord" or "milady" and "Lord Verence" or "Lady Millicent". The first is a general polite form of address, the second is a proper title, as granted by the Crown.

When in doubt, opening a statement or request for help with "Noble lord..." will get you far.

Everyone attending an event has a responsibility to make the medieval atmosphere "happen". To achieve this, it is expected that you change into your garb as soon as you arrive on site (in the case of camping events, you may want to set up your tent first, so you have a place to change in!). It also helps if you keep mundane items out of site as much as possible - most SCAdians would prefer to see you use the world's ugliest beer stein or tankard, than leave a modern pop can on the table.

Please try to keep modern topics of conversation to a minimum. Sadly, this is the hardest habit to break, since for modern SCAdians, much of our information exchange takes place on electronic forums, thereby peppering conversation with references to electronic mail and lists, and related hardware or software issues.

There are ways to couch conversations in medieval jargon, but even for long-term SCAdians, it's a lot of work to think that way - we certainly don't expect novices to master a skill we don't employ regularly ourselves (though sometimes it motivates us to improve...).

Don't be afraid to open conversations with people, but remember you're likely to have a better response by making polite inquiries than by making directed statements. For example, asking "Pardon milady, what kind of needlework are you doing?" will stand you in much higher regard with the artisan than "Hey, cool, nice needlepoint"... especially if what the artisan is doing *isn't* needlepoint.

Be aware that some people at events play their persona very seriously. This may make them seem more challenging to talk to, especially if some of them clue into the fact that you're new and decide to make sport with you. If you find dealing with someone's persona isn't to your liking, don't take it as a measure of the Society in general - the friendly people are out here and willing to talk to you. This is one of the best reasons for attending your first event with someone who has some SCA experience, as it can make introductions and integration that much smoother.

A basic rule of etiquette that will help you in most event situations is simply: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do"... and no, this doesn't mean racing chariots around the feast hall and setting lions on Christians. It means watching what other people around you are doing, and determining your own actions accordingly.

Appendix A: A Field Guide to Recognizing Royalty

Title	Recognize By	Address As	Additional Notes
King/Queen	highly ornamental gold crowns	Your Majesty, Their Royal Majesties, Lupine Majesties (Ealdormere only)	
Crown Prince/ Princess	highly ornamental gold crowns	Your Highness, Their Royal Highnesses, Lupine Highness (Ealdormere only)	
Territorial Prince/ Princess	highly ornamental silver crowns	Your Highness, Their Royal Highnesses	
Territorial Baron/ Baroness	gold circlets, 6 raised pearls or spheres above upper edge or	Your Excellency, Their Excellencies [name of barony]	

	on band		
Duke/Duchess	gold circlet adorned with a pattern of strawberry leaves	Your Grace	Dukes will usually have white belt and gold chain of <i>KNIGHTHOOD</i> as well*
Count/Countess	gold embattled coronets (square blocky cutouts along upper edge)	Your Excellency	Counts may have white belt and gold chain of <i>KNIGHTHOOD</i> as well*
Viscount/ Viscountess	silver embattled coronets	Your Excellency	
Court Baron/ Baroness	silver circlets, 6 raised pearls or spheres above upper edge or on band	Your Excellency	
Peer: Knight	white belt, unadorned gold chain, gold spurs	Sir** or Dame**	rarely ever spotted without the regalia
Peer: Laurel	symbol of a laurel wreath on medallion, or sewn somewhere on garb - Peerage cloaks are common	Master** or Mistress**	can be hard to spot in event situations if not wearing regalia
Peer: Pelican	Symbol of a pelican feeding chicks on medallion, or sewn somewhere on garb – Peerage cloaks are common	Master** or Mistress**	can be hard to spot in event situations if not wearing regalia

* The note about knighthood pertains to the fact that people who win Crown Tournaments, especially repeatedly, are likely to have been acknowledged for their prowess by being granted a Knight's rank within the Society. The note also refers to Duke and Count specifically for the sole reason that there are only a handful of female knights across the entire Society.

** These forms of address have a long list of alternates. Actually, most of the titled ranks have certain acceptable alternate titles, geared towards certain personas. This guide focuses only on the basic or most common forms.

Some other non-royal ranks you will likely see:

Squires: in service to a particular knight; traditionally wears red belt, unadorned silver chain, silver spurs

Apprentices: in service to a particular Laurel, traditionally wears green belt

Protégés: in service to a particular Pelican; traditionally wears a yellow belt.

***Note:** People who have relationships with each of the Peerages, and who therefore sport one of each belt, are referred to as "traffic lights"!*

A Warning about Ealdormerean Royalty

To confuse the issue of spotting royalty in their natural settings, many Ealdormerean royals and peers simply don't wear their regalia (this does not apply to knights, who NEVER appear in public unadorned). These people are referred to as "stealth peers". Those who don't wear their regalia of rank also don't typically take offense when you don't address them by their title – if you can't identify them, it's their own darned fault!

Appendix B: Basic Survival Gear

The following is a short list of the essentials you need to attend the typical SCA event.

Typical Indoor Events

Garb - some attempt at a costume suitable to pre-17th century Europe, or anywhere known to have had contact with Europe during that time (this includes northern Africa, the Middle and Far East, and yes, for the very end of that time period, North, Central, and South America). Garb may be something as simple as a tabard or tunic thrown over a pair of jeans and a collarless shirt, or it may be something as decadent as an Elizabethan court gown rented from Malabar in Toronto. Most likely, it will be something in between on loan from a friendly SCAdian or the local Gold Key.

Drinking vessel - a goblet or mug. In Ontario, most events have a cash bar, at which you can purchase pop, juice, beer, hard cider, and so on. Since the bars often do not provide cups, you need to bring your own. Use metal goblets at your own risk, as they often taint the taste of whatever they contain. We don't advise drinking horns for the inexperienced, unless you can afford the dry cleaning bills that go with learning how to "sip with caution"!

Feast gear - minimally a plate or bowl and a knife. Also strongly advised, spoon and fork, candle holder and candles, napkin, and a plastic bag to take dirty dishes home in (not all sites provide rinse or wash facilities for after feast). You might also want to bring something to cover the bare table with, just for effect. Matches, lighter, and a cork screw could make you everyone's favourite person at some feasts!

Belt, pouch - most garb doesn't have pockets, so a pouch of some sort and a belt on which to wear it will come in extremely handy as a place to put keys and wallet, for instance. Women might substitute a basket as a carryall instead.

Directions and event information - everything you need to know about how to get to the event, and the schedule of what happens there. Event flyers are often available online at SCA websites, in SCA local or kingdom publications, or through the local seneschal.

Typical Camping Events

All of the above, plus:

Camping gear - a tent and bedding at the very least, unless you take the idea of "roughing it" very seriously. We also recommend ground and cover tarps, an air mattress and pump, and perhaps a lantern for outside your tent to light your way back from the port-a-johns at night. You might also consider something to mark out your tent's guidelines (if any) so no-one trips on them in the dark. Cooking equipment is advisable for those who want hot foods, but don't have experience cooking over open flame.

Head covering - a hat, a scarf, anything to keep the sun off your head. Trust us on this one.

Sturdy footwear - invest in a good pair of sandals with an ankle strap. They may not be the most historically authentic thing out there, but for the amount of walking you do at an average camping event, you'll thank us for good arch support and something that doesn't slide around on your feet with every step.

Cloak or wrap - something to keep you warm during cool evenings; alternately doubles as extra blankets on the camp bedding list. Something like a heavy wool or melton wool has the advantage of being water-repellent as well, making it a preferred material for anything that might get wet.

Cooler and food (cooking facilities optional) - most camping events do not provide a feast, though some might provide a lunch tavern. This is a good thing to check before going. If you're not planning to cook over the weekend, take food that keeps well with minimal or inconsistent refrigeration, as you are dependent upon the efficiency of your cooler and the ice block supply. Smoked meats and pre-cooked canned foods work admirably well in these cases - don't forget to pack a can opener!

Drinking water - often the safest course of action. Bring it in quantity, especially if it promises to be a hot weekend.

BYOB - if you imbibe, bring you own. Use discretion if required, and remember that not all camping sites permit alcohol.

Flashlight or candle lantern - something to light your way to the bathroom or just around the site and inside your tent after dark.

Emergency first aid kit - this goes without saying at any camping event. You might also want to add things like antibacterial hand wash, insect repellent, moist baby wipes, spare tissues, and sunscreen.

Suggestions for "Camp Food"

flat breads (pita or soft tortilla shells) - take up little space
small buns crackers or rice cakes
cheese (F) apples, oranges carrot sticks or baby carrots
prepared meats (sandwich slices, etc). (F) smoked meats
(F) dried meats (jerky, dried fish) pre-cooked rice/beans
"energy bars" "dippable" foods, like Arabic hummus or baba ganouj (F) peanut butter
frozen pre-cooked chili/stew/soup - also serves as ice block in cooler, can thaw over the weekend
pickled foods (F) hardboiled eggs (F) cookies or other non-melting quick sugar treats
dried fruits, nuts granola-type cereals bottled juice (F) or water bottled pop instant

coffee or tea, or percolator coffee/espresso (H) instant dried soup mixes
(H) canned pastas (H)

(F) - these foods require refrigeration, or ice in a cooler

(H) -these foods require heating to prepare