

# Courtesy and Etiquette in the SCA

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## *An Informal Chat with Baron Lachlahn Ioseph of Dunbar*

These are notes taken by Alana Bennet from a discussion at St Basil's training.

All opinions presented are just that, opinions. These are not rules, they are just what one person thinks it could be useful for College members and new people in general to know.

### Officers

**Constable** Responsible for safety, legal requirements, first aid, sign-in security. This also includes campfires, hiding mundanity as much as possible.

**Chatelaine** Deals with newcomers, maintains and makes available the loaner garb.

**Reeve** The finances. Just a fancy word for the treasurer.

**Listkeeper** Organises and publishes the records of combat and any tournaments.

**Chronicler** Publishes the newsletter, makes things public.

Others include Seneschal (President), Marshal (Combat Safety), Herald (Announcements/Name and Device consulting), etc.

### Mundanity

Anything and everything that is obviously non-medieval and against the atmosphere we are trying to create at events. Mundanity should be avoided when possible. As with everything, some people are really pedantic, some people are pretty slack.

Mundanity includes:

- Phones: Off or silent and in your bag/pouch is best. If you need to be on call for work or whatever, position yourself so as not to disturb everyone. Courtesy is key.
- Watches: In your pouch or bag, not on your arm. Can really break the medieval appearance.
- Names: Use medieval names. If you don't know someone's name, ask. If you don't have an SCA name, have a chat with the heralds for some ideas.
- Planes, power lines, nearby roads: Don't draw attention to them. Try not to notice them unless there is a way to actually remove the problem.
- Drinks: Cans and plastic bottles are very modern. You can get tankards and goblets really cheap from op shops, or make a little fabric sock to put your bottles in.

### Allergies

Current practice is to be responsible for your own allergies. Lists of dishes and ingredients are often published before feasts, so look or ask before booking and deciding to pay for food you may not be able to eat.

## Favours

Favours are something that is worn to represent some kind of relationship. The favour itself can be anything from a piece of braid or ribbon to an embroidered little token to a shield with a personal message. The relationship can be anything – household allegiances, consort for a day, friends, romantic type relationships, whatever. The important thing with favours is to treat them with respect and courtesy, and to agree on the intention of the favour. You may or may not get a favour back unless you actually say, “This is to show that I bought you in the fighter auction,” or, “We’re married, wear this dear.”

Don’t recycle unwanted favours. Very poor form.

## Consorts

In some tournaments, you will be required to have a consort, someone who inspires you to succeed and fight chivalrously and whom you represent on the field. Consorts can be a partner, friend, random you met on the day. Stick to male-female pairs except in exceptional circumstances, it’s just how it was done in period.

The Fighter:

- Generally asks someone to be their consort.
- Does not have to have a consort unless the tournament specifies as such.
- If called up in court, generally bring your consort. Feel free to ask the herald to clarify.
- Is representing the honour of their consort. Fight fairly and to the best of your ability.

The Consort:

- Is generally asked to be a consort.
- Does not have to accept if they don’t want to.
- Be prepared to go up in court if need be.
- Make yourself visible from the field for the salutes.
- If you feel your fighter has not represented you well in chivalry and respect, you can request a bout to be re-fought if it pleases the Royal presence, but try not to create massive amounts of work for listkeepers, etc. You can sometimes serve as the conscience of the fighter.

## Forms of Address

Default/people without other rank: My Lord/My Lady – Use this if you don’t know who someone is.

Nobles who have received an Award of Arms (or above): Lord/Lady

Baron and Baroness: Your (His/Her) Excellency

Pelican/Laurel: Master/Mistress

Knight: Sir/Dame in practically all cases.

King and Queen: Your (His/Her) Majesty

Crown Prince and Princess: Your (His/Her) Royal Highness

Prince and Princess: Your (His/Her) Highness

Count/Countess, Viscount/Viscountess: Your (His/Her) Excellency

Duke/Duchess: Your (His/Her) Grace

Anyone that looks important/pointy hat who you don't know: Your Excellency

## **Courtesy and Respect**

These are the foundations of the SCA. Without them, the SCA falls apart.

Golden Rule: Play to the extent you want to, without getting in the way of anyone else doing the same.

Be chivalrous. Open doors, carry stuff, help put up tents, etc. Especially for important people (Excellencies, Majesties, all that sort).

## **Court**

When court is announced, gather and draw nigh, i.e. close. Where whoever is holding the court can see you and address you without having to yell. Bring a chair/be mindful and considerate of older or disabled people. Turn off your phone! Leave an aisle in the centre of the group.

If you're the herald, you are the voice of the Crown and Their Excellencies. Don't be silly.

If you get called up, walk to the back of the aisle. Ladies wait to be escorted by a man (A sign of respect to the Lady). Approach within ~5m, bow, approach and kneel on one of the kneeling cushions provided. Listen to what they have to say, reply politely and concisely and wait for permission to leave.

Never surprise people in court, always talk to Their Excellencies and the herald if you have business. If you are given an award you already have, for example, talk to them later.

## **Households**

Don't feel pressured to join one. They are not a formal part of the SCA, strictly speaking, but they are another important community group within the society. They can offer a group of friends who can help you out with new skills, fun and a common resource pool, but they differ widely in their implementation. Know what you are getting into before agreeing to join a household, particularly if doing so as a Squire, Apprentice or Protégé. Don't join anything you won't feel comfortable leaving if you find it really isn't for you.

The other social groups in the SCA (Barony, Canton, College, miscellaneous) can provide the same sense of community.

## **Garb**

Make an attempt. If you're bringing guests/consort, make sure you bring/organise something for them too.

## **Mailing Lists**

If you want to know what's going on, join the mailing lists. For Baronial stuff, you want Populace. For St Basil's stuff, you want UWASCA. For St Lazarus stuff, you want to harass people to make one. If you need help finding/joining these, ask someone or check the relevant web sites.

Notes by Alana Bennet/Dylan Kerr