

SCA EDUCATION LIVING IN THE SCA

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO

The SCA world v the Modern world

We live in a world in our day to day lives that seems to have no place for values like kindness and chivalry. Daily we are faced by competitive behaviours that promote selfishness. Some call it dehumanising. The SCA world is a place where the community of the group looms large as more important than singular self-serving attitudes. We try to create an atmosphere of a gentler world away from mundane attitudes and politics.

All are born as untitled Nobles, of a nation that is part of the Western or Eastern world that recognises a code of Chivalric conduct.

Combat is the cornerstone of SCA activity –all stems from the field that chooses the Crown by Right of Arms.

The Crown is the source of leadership, focus of our activities as a social group, and embodiment of the SCA ideals of Chivalry, Courtesy and Respect.

The Arts & Sciences are the source of enrichment of the SCA experience, adding to our culture by way of research, creativity, and craft skills.

Service is the ethos behind the culture of the Society, enabling us to have events run by volunteers, enabling the Society to function as a courteous and chivalrous society.

The Dream and what it may mean for you

This is about creating a space to get away from the rush and negativity of the daily grind. We have living heroes, we have ideals to live up to and strive for, we have each other to look out for, encourage, and value. The Dream is about a better world where behaviour that promotes Chivalry and courtesy is honoured and rewarded. We can be better people through our personas, we can give of our talents and be appreciated for them. We can create a fantasy world for ourselves by which we escape the Modern World's cares for a short while.

The Ideals and putting them into practise

Let the slain man say he is slain. Give the benefit of the doubt. Slow down to appreciate another person's achievements and be enriched by what is added to the community of the group.

Treat your lesser as your equals, your equals as your betters, and give due respect and honour to those who are entitled to it. This is more important to understand and put into practise, the more entitled you may be above others.

Be generous in your feelings about other people and be cheerful to be around

BOWING AND ADDRESSING (assumed in garb)

The act of bowing is a movement of Grace that is designed to give respect to someone or to compliment them.

WHY DO WE BOW?

The SCA ideals are represented and embodied in the Crown of Lochac. They are symbolised by the Crowns and Coronets, Banners, and reigning Monarchs and B&Bs. We pay due respect to these ideals when we bow.

Also when we bow, it is a chivalric act and it is seen by others to be a reflection of the subject's dedication to and respect for those ideals.

We acknowledge the service given to us as a populace by the Crown and Coronet, who serve as a source of power, leadership, Prowess and Grace, at all times seen to be accessible, giving good theatre to express the glory of the Kingdom. Living up to expectations, being on display, and acting the part of Leader can be very wearying for the Crown or Coronet and so we give Them some thanks in return by this outward show of respect. At this point it is worth noting that the K&Q and B&B have as their main responsibility, the welfare of their Kingdom or Barony, and that is an omnipresent concern whenever They are amongst their subjects, and so that has an impact on their daily lives, for which we give respect.

We also should recognize and give outward respect to Kingdom Officers who are acting in any official capacity, and especially to those people appointed to Royal Court as servants to the Crown, for they work hard behind the scenes making things easier for the Crown to function at Court.

Lastly, the physical act of bowing helps us to transform ourselves into our personas as the subjects of Lochac in the SCA World, away from our selfish modern-day identities. It helps us become a community that values others and values the Arthurian ideals of Chivalry, Courtesy, and Respect, which are the cornerstones of the SCA. We need all the help we can get!

When we meet as equals we may make a slight bow to each other, by a bend of knee that creates a bob, or a slight incline of the torso from the waist, or the hip with one foot forward and one foot back, as well as a slight incline of the head. We may take it in turns to do so, or bow simultaneously.

When we meet a person who is higher in rank, the lower rank may assume a more pronounced incline, whilst the higher ranked chooses a form that gives back respect but does not lower them in the presence of the other person. This is particular in Dance, when we bow at the beginning of a dance ("reverence"). The Lord may wish to bow lower than the lady as a mark of respect for her and to be more complimentary to her. The Subject may bow to the Sovereign more deeply and the Sovereign keep dignity with a less deep, but respectful, bow in return.

BOWING TO ROYALTY

When we approach the Royal Presence, we bow very respectfully at the beginning edge of the area denoted as the Royal Presence (usually a rug) and then await indication to go before the Royal thrones, take steps towards the cushions and kneel upon one cushion. Usually the lady is before the Queen or Baroness, and the Lord before the King or Baron. When leaving the Royal Presence (after being given leave), the subject will stand up from the cushions, step backwards to reach the edge of the Royal Presence, and then bow, and turn to walk away. The idea is that the Crown wish to see you before them whilst in striking distance of a sword from the Thrones.

On level ground, the subject would bow deeply to the Sovereign, less deep to a Coronet. This happens when They are in procession passing before the subject, or acknowledge the Subject in Their presence. When bowing to a Royal Procession, the subject should wait until the K&Q or B&B have passed by them before straightening up from the bow.

When passing in front of the High Table or the Thrones when the Crowns or Coronets have been placed there, a small bow to reverence the Crown is polite and should be always observed. Same for when Their Majesties or Their Excellencies are seated and crowned. In this circumstance we pay homage to the Ideals as represented by the Crown

and Coronet, and by the Royal Banners which should either accompany the Thrones or the High Table.

THE CONE OF SILENCE

It is impossible to go away from the public gaze in your group if you are a Crown or Coronet. You must be able to have a private conversation at an event, indoors or outdoors, whilst in the midst of the populace. You must also find personal space in a crowd of followers.

As a Subject of Lochac, you must give personal space to any ruler of a group. You must observe a general rule that if you are near the Crown or Coronet, that They have clear space between you and them of about two sword lengths, whether from the back, to the side, or in front. When you wish to have conversation with Them, you need to ask a Lady in Waiting who will then ask the Crown for you to approach, or catch the eye of the Crown/Coronet, and wait to be acknowledged and beckoned. Then inside the area, you should politely give a short bow or bob and speak. When They have finished your conversation, you should then thank them, politely bob or bow, and leave their area (unless required to stay by Their request). Be mindful that They wish to enjoy the event as you do, so try to keep your conversation to the point, and brief if They don't prolong the topic.

GET READY FOR THE EVENT

What's in your head? Get your mindset right. If you are a regular member, you will be able to get into the Zone quickly with putting on your garb, carefully appreciating its fabric and cut, your accessories, and put on some music that helps you tune in, like Renaissance Players or a dance tape. Sometimes tuning in with a movie set in your period (or a fantasy such as The Princess Bride) playing in the background while you are getting ready will help you get into the mood. Leave the Modern World as you leave your house for the event. Consider packing your feast basket the day or evening before the event and make your pot-luck dish the night before if you can.

Laying out the feast table

If the table is bare, it can be dressed with fresh herbs and edible flowers, table runners, a cloth, and candle sticks. As a feaster you will need something to drink from such as a goblet, or a pottery cup, or a wooden tankard. You will also need something to put your drink into, and at least one bowl. Two bowls and a small plate are very useful, as one vessel can act as a repository for your food scraps during a remove, and you may have two dishes, such as soup and roast meats, to keep separate during that remove. Take a set of plain white candles (cheap from the supermarket). Coloured ones are not period for the feast table, and their wax stains the table cloths, so no red or blue or black candles please! Take two candle holders or candle sticks if you can. Napkins are good but should be plain white cotton, with your badge or device on if you want.

How to hide mundanities, outdoors and indoors, and why do it.

Plastic bags sound modern even if you can't see them, so try not to use them at a picnic or a feast. Carry your feast gear in a basket if you can, or at the very least a cloth bag (a pillow slip works brilliantly). Even a carboard box is better than a plastic bag. Coles make good plain brown hessian shopping bags that are very useful.

If you can't get wooden bowls, and can't afford pottery ones, then you can use plastic faux-timber woven bowls that are very cheap to buy. For cutlery, a small eating dagger is period but it must have a scabbard and be peace-bonded (tied so it can't be drawn without untying it). A soup spoon is a must – an old fashioned round silver spoon is very good. Put

your name or some mark on all your gear so it won't get lost. If you find silver goblets, and you polish them, don't forget to wash them first before drinking out of them.

Hide mundane plastic bottles or beer bottles in a bag with a drawstring at the top. A plain colored sleeve cut from a tunic, with a drawstring added at the top, works very well. Blue or clear hand made glass bottles may not strictly be period ut look close enough to be acceptable on the table. Don't bring cans at all. Even the sound of a can opening is modern. If you must bring them, decant the contents straight away into a jug or your tankard and dispose the can completely out of sight. Better still don't bring cans into the feast hall at all.

If you are bringing a dish for a pot luck feast or picnic, try to bring something in period, and on a platter or in a bowl that would be acceptable for a feast table. Most convenience or fast foods for BBQs are not period, so try to avoid them and try to avoid plastic containers. If your food needs to be transported in a plastic container or bag, consider putting it in a bowl or platter out of sight, before you put it on the table.

(TABLE) MANNERS

When you arrive at an event, leave your mundane cares in the car, and turn your mobile to silent. Try to be cheerful and greet others as they greet you.

If you get changed on site, please leave your mundane clothes and bags away out of sight, preferably in your car, before you join in at the event.

If you arrive late, enter the event quietly so as not to draw attention away from the proceedings. Someone may be speaking to the group, or entertaining, so watch out for that. If Court is in session, try to enter without being noticed, or stay out of sight until Court is ended. Do not disrupt the proceedings or wave to anyone who has seen you, as you become a distraction and break the ambience.

Don't set your feasting gear, or any other or your possessions, on the High Table unless you have been invited to be seated there for the feast. Set your gear up where you intend to sit for the event, before the official start.

Don't sit on the Thrones at all, unless you are the Crown or Coronet.

Please don't clutter up your area so others can't get past you in the feast hall.

Wait until the Crowns or Coronets have their dishes full before you serve yourself at the community feast table if it's buffet style (such as pot luck feasts).

Watch that your sleeve doesn't end up in someone else's bowl or goblet as you reach across the table, and keep sleeves away from candles!

Try not to speak loudly about, or make obvious reference to, modern forms of entertainment when there are others within earshot. You don't have the right to spoil their experience of the event with modern concerns that break the magic of the escape.

Please ask if you want to sit where someone has vacated their seat, to make sure it is free for you to sit on. Don't go behind the High Table unless you are seated there, or have work to do there (serving).

Take small amounts of food that is on offer, as there will be lots more to come, and you may get too full. Being greedy is not period, it's just bad manners.

What to do at a Tournament

If you are a consort, be attentive to your partner if he or she is fighting that day. Make sure that there is water available to them, preferably in a bottle with a straw, and that the fighter knows where it is.

If you have a favour to give, then make a bit of ceremony when you give it and tie it to his/her armour at the belt or shoulder pouldron where it will not impede movement or get in the way.

If you are a spectator, try to refrain from footy cheers after any one fighter. Calling ‘Huzzah’ at the end of a fight is best. Do not judge the fighting unless that is your official role, and do not proclaim characteristics of judgement upon any one fighter lest they be unfairly labelled and shamed. Unless you are a Field Herald or a Marshall, don’t call out instructions to the populace, UNLESS there is an emergency, at which you should call “Hold!”.

If you hear a ‘Hold’ cry, stop whatever you are doing and pay attention until the trouble is identified and dealt with. That is a safety issue and very important that everyone acts properly.

IDEALS and Knightly Virtues

Chivalry

Let the slain man say he is slain.

Ability to be of charitable nature towards others.

Courtesy

An armed society is a polite society. How does a non-combatant know that an armed person is dangerous or protective towards them in attitude? Manners open doors, whilst courtesy closes them. It’s OK in the SCA to be kind and thoughtful and to display those attributes through behaviour (misunderstood to be sexist or condescending behaviour in the Modern world).

Courtly love is the display of regard. Romantic and heroic.

Prowess

Through heraldic display and pride in your armour, you establish the thought in others that you are confident in your abilities.

Giving our opponent the right to meet you at your best in any tournament you meet them. In this way you do them honour by offering the chance of good combat.

Nobless-oblige. Taking one’s rightful place.

Grace

In defeat or in victory, humility and quiet pride enriches the regard by others towards the fighter, and shows virtuosity.

Can best be described as glory without vanity.

ON THE FIELD

The challenge is to set aside or control feelings of personal aggrandisement or ego driven behaviour.

The ceremony of the Tournament with heraldic display, Marshal's commands (leadership), and courteous conduct help us to activate a chivalric mindset that helps to control the competitive nature of an athlete. Fighters are athletes, but must go beyond that level of thought to prepare for when the fighter wins a Crown Tournament and becomes a leader of the Kingdom, leading and inspiring people of all walks of life with diverse interests in every aspect of the Kingdom.

To prepare for Crown starts the first day you put on your gambeson/aquiton. It's not necessary for a fighter to be a Knight in order to be King, but it helps a fighter to be a good King (or Queen by Right of Arms), well loved, respected, obeyed, if they are educated in the ways of Chivalry and Courtly Graces.

COURTLY GRACES

How to address others

It's about how to act in front of others in the SCA. If you have sworn fealty, whether as a Coronet, squire, apprentice or Protégé, then everything you do and say in the SCA reflects on your Liege-lord/lady. Knowledge and observance of the Courtly Graces will help a person make a good and lasting impression on everyone, including the Crown.

Treat your lesser as your equals,

Treat your equals as your superiors,

Treat your superiors with the respect of their positions that they represent in the SCA.

If you behave in a courteous manner, to strangers, people you don't know, people you don't like, people who mean nothing to you, then you will be seen as the better person. All of your words and actions count to how people respect you.

Remember, we are in it together, and we impact on each other. The day is as good as you wish it to be.