

Kingdom of Northshield

Chatelaine Training Manual

This Training Manual supplements the Chatelaine Procedure Manual. Information is not duplicated across these manuals, so be sure to read the Chatelaine Procedure Manual as well.



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Introduction

This Training Manual supplements the Chatelaine Procedure Manual. Information is not duplicated across these manuals, so be sure to read the Chatelaine Procedure Manual as well.

Welcome to the Office of Chatelaine in the Kingdom of Northshield! By accepting this office, you are committing yourself to doing some of the most important work within the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA). You have agreed to become the face of the SCA for newcomers and a resource to those still new to our lands. Newcomers are of utmost importance to the SCA since they help our society to prosper and grow.

This handbook is intended to help you do your job as a Chatelaine in Northshield effectively. It offers advice and suggestions that you can adapt to meet your local group's needs. While this handbook attempts to cover all the common situations encountered by group chatelaines, it is impossible to cover all possible contingencies. If you have a question not answered by this handbook, please feel free to contact the Kingdom Chatelaine for guidance or to suggest new topics.

Depending on your experience in the SCA, you may or may not find it helpful to read the entire handbook. Of greatest importance to a new chatelaine are the sections entitled "Job Description," "Upon Becoming Chatelaine," and "Reporting." You are strongly encouraged to read those sections upon taking office. You may then read the other sections at your leisure or refer to them as needed.

Thank you for choosing to serve your group and your kingdom in this manner. Welcome to being a Chatelaine in the Kingdom of Northshield!

Reference: [SCA Chatelaine Resources](#)

Definition and Nomenclature

The word "Chatelaine" is used throughout this publication to refer to the SCA officer responsible for orienting newcomers. (Please note that "Chatelaine" is the feminine form of the title, while "Chatelain" is the masculine.) However, you may notice that other words are used to describe the same office and that the word chatelaine is also used in different contexts.

Some groups have chosen to call their newcomer officer the Hospitaller, Castellan, or Gold Key instead of Chatelaine. In most cases, regardless of the name used, the duties of the office remain similar to those described in this handbook. If you are in doubt about your specific duties, check with your local officers for clarification.

You may also hear the word "chatelaine" used in a historical sense. It comes from medieval French, where the chatelain(e) was the keeper of a household or castle. (In medieval English, this person was called the castellan, hence its synonymous usage in the SCA.) Another historical use of "chatelaine" is to describe a type of hook that was worn on the belt in order to keep small items close at hand. Often the keeper of a household would wear a chatelaine that held the keys to the house and today we use a gold key on a green background as the symbol of the chatelaine's office.

The Duties of a Chatelaine

Talking to Newcomers

When a newcomer first contacts the Chatelaine or arrives at an SCA function, they usually have many questions about the SCA and our activities. It is important that the newcomer be treated in a welcoming and courteous manner – this is the first impression the newcomer has of the SCA and it should be a positive experience! Nobody enters the SCA knowing our customs and conventions, and every newcomer will make mistakes or ask "silly" questions. Remember that we were all newcomers at one time! Patiently and courteously answer the newcomer's questions and tactfully, gently correct misunderstandings. Be helpful and supportive but not overwhelming. Try to tailor your level of involvement with the newcomer to their comfort level – some people are immediately excited and want to get as much information as possible while other people are interested in quietly observing our activities before asking questions. Provide information about your group's activities at the newcomer's pace and be careful to avoid overloading the newcomer with details.

When you introduce someone to the SCA, use three types of communication – verbal, written, and personal.

Communication Type	How to use it
Verbal	Talk to the newcomer, provide them with a brief verbal explanation of what is going on, and answer their questions.
Written	Give the newcomer a written handout that covers basic information about the SCA and provides contact information for the local group.
Personal	Introduce the newcomer to local members who share their interests.

This engages the newcomer on several levels by answering their immediate questions, giving them information to review or pursue later, and making them familiar with other members of the group in case they should attend a meeting where you are not available.

Taking the time to introduce newcomers to other members of the group is important because, especially in larger groups, established members may not realize that someone is a newcomer to the area or to the SCA. Often people are busy with their own activities and assume that the newcomer is just someone from a different guild or a member visiting from a neighboring group. The chatelaine can have an important role in motivating established members to become involved with welcoming new members. You can invite other established members of your group to help with newcomers' activities, or ask them for suggestions for recruitment activities.

Many chatelaines find it personally helpful to keep a small notebook to jot down notes. This is an excellent way to remember newcomers' names and interests, to record questions that still need to be answered, and to remind you of promises you have made to newcomers.

A special caution – whenever you are talking with a newcomer, it is very important that you not allow your personal opinions to bias what you say. Do not discourage a newcomer from

pursuing an activity because you are personally not interested in it or because you are not friends with someone in that activity. (If you honestly feel that a newcomer requires information that may appear to be biased against an activity or particular person, consult with the seneschal before sharing this information with the newcomer.) Some examples of information you may not want to share with newcomers include local politics and "sensitive" or easily misunderstood topics (such as the personal religious beliefs of group members, monetary aspects of the group, or activities that exist in the SCA but are not officially condoned, such as drinking alcohol, the "cloved fruit" game, or wet chemise contests).

Regarding a Gentle Entirely New to the SCA

If someone has never encountered the SCA before, begin with the basics about our purpose and goals. Keep your explanations brief and pause frequently to allow the newcomer to interject questions. However, newcomers often don't know what questions to ask, so you may want to involve them in the conversation by asking about their interests or hobbies, whether they have ever been to a Ren Fair or another reenactment group's activities, and what cultures or time periods interest them most. Inform them of the activities that most closely match their interests. Make sure you introduce them to some of the other local officers, nobility, guild heads and those gentles who share the same interests as the newcomer.

It is helpful to have written handouts that can be given to the newcomer, since it is difficult for newcomers to retain many details all at once. If they have a handout, they can refer to it later to refresh their memories or to get details that you did not specifically discuss. Ideally, you would have both basic handouts about the SCA in general as well as specific handouts for individual activities or a list of all the officers and guild heads with their contact information. Copies of the local newsletter are often very helpful, since they provide officer and guild information as well as an overview of what is happening in your group. You may want to have copies of the Known World Handbook available to borrow or to purchase since they are an excellent source of information for the newcomer.

You should also inform newcomers about newcomers' resources that are available in your area, such as the Gold Key, email lists, and upcoming newcomers' activities. Local general resources like group email lists, newsletters, and meetings can also be helpful to a newcomer. As the newcomer attends more activities, you can build on the information you have already provided

and introduce them to additional people. Remember to “reintroduce” them to people they have met on previous occasions as well – many of us have unusual names that can be very difficult to remember, so an occasional reminder can be helpful.

While it is important to give newcomers the information they need, it is also important to give newcomers resources for their future questions. Make sure newcomers learn about online resources such as the SCA web site (<http://www.sca.org>) and local SCA web pages where they can find quick answers to common questions. Also let them know what each of the officers does so they can feel comfortable going to the appropriate officer for information related to that office.

Regarding a Gentle Who Has Moved from Another Group

If someone has experience in the SCA in another group and is simply new to your area, they need a different sort of assistance. You should welcome them to the group and introduce them to some of the local officers. Ask the gentle what information they need and in most cases they will have enough experience in the SCA to be able to ask for what they need. Your function in this situation is to act as “directory assistance” and inform the gentle about local activities. In some cases, especially when a gentle moves in from another Kingdom, it is helpful to give them a short introduction to local SCA culture or to highlight potential differences (i.e. armor standards) that they may need to consider. If you are not sure about how specific inter-kingdom differences affect an activity, refer the new gentle to a knowledgeable local who is experienced in that activity.

Special populations

Children

Do not overlook children in your efforts as a chatelaine! Many people who join the SCA have children and many more would probably join if they were aware of how child-friendly the SCA can be! Sometimes children become interested in the SCA from a demo at school and drag their parents to SCA activities and sometimes the children are brought along with their parents or guardians who are interested in the SCA. In either case, you need to identify the needs and

interests of the children and their families and be able to direct them to the appropriate resources.

If your group has a Minister of Youth, introduce the family to the officer. If your group does not currently have a Minister of Youth, educate the parents about the opportunities and restrictions for children in the SCA. Provide them with the appropriate minor waivers for the events and activities they and their children are likely to attend. Remind them that while the SCA is generally a friendly, welcoming place they should still take precautions and monitor their children closely. Let them know that it is helpful to mark small children with some form of identification, so that if the child becomes lost or hurt the parents can be contacted quickly.

Be aware of the children's activities that are offered within your group as well as what sorts of children's activities will be available at local events. Emphasize that the children's activities offered at events are not a babysitting service and that a parent of children under 7 years of age may be required to stay with their children in the play area.

Know what options exist for children interested in youth combat, including the age ranges, armor regulations, waivers and required training, or refer the parents to your local youth marshal or Knight's Marshal to obtain this information.

It is also helpful to be aware of current kingdom and modern laws governing activities that involve children and teens. Due to modern legal concerns, it may be wise to discourage the one-on-one interaction between an adult member and a minor. Encourage activities for teenagers and children to be done in groups, preferably with multiple adults present. Be cautious about offering rides to minors. Be certain that the minor's parents have met you before you leave and that they are aware that you are taking their child with you. Make certain to give them details like where you are going, what times you expect to be gone, and where you will be staying if you will be out of town over night. Make sure you have the formal legal permission forms, including the form authorizing you to request medical attention for the minor. (Due to border-crossing difficulties, it is often wise even for the legal guardians of a minor to have some sort of proof of relationship when taking minors across the US-Canadian border!) It is important that the SCA be accommodating and welcoming to young people, but you should never break laws or official SCA rules just to keep someone interested in the SCA.

Teenagers

Teenagers are often too old for the standard “children’s activities,” but almost any activity within the SCA can be done by a teenager – assisting at events, helping run children’s activities, Arts and Sciences activities, waterbearing, archery, etc. Since divisions of armored combat and rapier activities for children and teenagers have been adopted in Northshield, even combat activities are open to minors. Encourage teens to investigate what they are interested in and to adapt those activities to be age-appropriate, if necessary. You may find it helpful to make special teen-oriented newcomer’s packets or, if your group has a lot of teenagers, to organize a “teen household.”

Since teens are still legally minors, make sure to have the appropriate minor waivers and permission forms on hand and make certain that the teen’s parents know which waivers are required for which activities. If you are unaware of the requirements for youth combat related activities, be able to refer teens to the local youth marshal or Knight’s Marshal for details.

Teenagers are one of the most challenging populations within the SCA, and the difficulties increase when their parents are not members of the SCA. If you have teens whose parents are worried about their involvement in the SCA, offer to talk with them about their concerns. Encourage parents to ask questions about our activities and meet the local people with whom their child will be interacting. Make it clear to the teen’s parents that they are always welcome at local activities if they want to see what is going on, even if they are not interested in personally joining the group. It is often helpful to stress the educational and service-oriented aspects of the SCA. If the parents would like some printed information, the SCA has a useful handout entitled “Your Teenager and the SCA Some answers for Parents” that provides a lot of reassuring information for parents. (See “Additional Resources,” page 31.)

Older Adults and Gentles with Physical Limitations

Sometimes, older adults or adults with disabilities see the active, physically demanding aspects of the SCA and assume that they will be out of place because they are unable to participate in those activities. Reassure these gentles that the physically demanding activities are optional and that there is a vast range of activities that are open to interested gentles of any age or ability. Also, inform them that most of our activities can be modified to accommodate specific concerns, and offer to introduce them to someone involved in the activity they are concerned about to see

how they can be accommodated. If possible, point out gentles in your group who have similar concerns and who may be willing to discuss them with the newcomer.

Involving the Newcomer in Your Group

Newcomers' Activities

Once a newcomer has become interested in the SCA, it is important that they learn enough about SCA culture to be comfortable attending local activities and events. There are several ways to teach newcomers what they need to know. In many cases, the method used is simply to talk to newcomers on a one-on-one basis and answer their questions as they go along. However, in places where there are a lot of newcomers at one time or where there is a steady influx of newcomers throughout the year, this method can be exhausting for the chatelaine. Other options include offering some sort of small newcomers' event, newcomers' classes, a sewing day, or an SCA open house. (These are only several suggestions and many other techniques have been tried. Feel free to innovate and see what works best in your group.) Remember! You do not need to do all the planning yourself! You should be the main coordinator for the activities, but feel free to delegate responsibilities to others. You can ask other people to serve as the site steward, feast steward, speakers, teachers, etc, which allows you to spend more time with the newcomers themselves.

When hosting newcomers' activities, try to hold them in a neutral public place, if at all possible. It is much less intimidating to a newcomer to come to the local library or community center than it is to come to a stranger's house. Try to choose a location that is central, well known, and easy to find.

A newcomers' mini-event or feast can be structured in a number of ways. You can structure the event so that new members get an idea of what they can expect at a real event, or you can structure it as an informal evening where they can find out information about the SCA. In the mini-event model, you can organize a "porter" or "troll" where the newcomers must register, classes that they can attend, a tourney they can watch, a simple feast they can eat, and a short court that they can observe. It is especially helpful if you have an "interpreter" available to announce to the newcomers what is happening, especially during tournaments and courts. In the newcomers' feast model, you can provide a simple feast-like dinner during which some basic

information about the SCA is shared. Then after dinner, have representatives from each of the guilds available to meet with newcomers who are interested in their activities. It is especially nice if they can each have a table to display items associated with their activities. It is usually best to have all the established SCA members come in garb so it is easy to tell who is a newcomer and who is an established member, and it gives the newcomers something about which to ask questions. However, the newcomers need not be in garb, depending on number of attendees you expect and the amount of loaner garb you have available.

If you choose to offer classes, either as part of a mini-event or as a series on a particular evening of the week, some suggested class topics include: the history of the SCA, going to your first event, local activities, meet your local officers, how to research a persona, how to research garb, how to make garb, local SCA customs, local SCA awards, the structure of the SCA, heraldry in the SCA, and interacting with peers and royalty.

Other ideas for newcomers' activities include hosting a sewing day or an A&S open house. The sewing day could be oriented toward making garb for the Gold Key or toward helping newcomers learn about making their own garb. A series of sewing days could be held where newcomers first learn about period garb and how to research the garb their persona would have worn, how to choose appropriate fabrics and patterns, and actual clothing construction. An A&S day could include short demonstrations from each of the guilds about what they do along with some hands-on activities for the newcomers to try out the different skills.

Other options for newcomers' activities include out-of-garb modern activities like pizza parties and bowling excursions. These informal situations can be less threatening to a newcomer and may result in the newcomers feeling more comfortable to ask questions and interact with the established members. However, try to incorporate information about the SCA or to include medieval-themed activities in these modern settings. Some groups use fostering or mentoring programs where an established member works one-on-one with a newcomer to help a newcomer understand the way the SCA works. The mentoring pairs can meet either at SCA functions or at a neutral place where the newcomer may feel more at ease asking "basic" questions.

Newcomers in Your Group and at Events

An important part of keeping newcomers interested in the SCA is getting them involved with local activities and events. However, it is equally important not to push a newcomer into something for which they are not ready. Help them get them involved with activities and help them choose responsibilities that are appropriate for them. Don't be tempted to steer a new person toward an office or position just because it is open – that sort of situation often leads to resentment, burn out, and an officer who may be unprepared to do the job.

When a newcomer is interested in going to events, offer to facilitate finding car rides and crash space, especially if you have many newcomers from a college campus. Always make sure that newcomers have appropriate garb and feast gear before the event so they don't feel out of place. Educate them about the loaner resources available in your group. If you are attending the same event, greet the newcomer when you see them on site and offer to give them a tour or to answer any questions they might have. It is often useful to introduce the newcomer to notable people from the area as well as to people from neighboring groups who share the newcomer's interests.

Demos

Demos are one of the most frequently used ways of introducing the public to the SCA. There are essentially three kinds of demos: recruiting, educational, and public relations.

Demo Type	Demo Purpose
Recruitment	Introduces potential new members to the SCA and to the activities it has to offer.
Educational	Teaches people about the Middle Ages.
Public Relations	Works to improve the public image of the SCA.

The requirements and limitations of each of these demos are different, so it is important to know what kind of demo you are having! Of course there will always be some overlap between these types, but usually if a general type can be identified it is easier to adequately prepare.

General Advice About Demos

Since a demo is often the first time someone from the general public is introduced to the SCA, it is important to make a good impression. Demos should focus on the best, most enjoyable aspects of the SCA or the historical details of the period we re-create. In order to make a good impression, demos should be well prepared and organized. Make sure that the demo coordinator or some other gentle is assigned to coordinate the activities so that no details are overlooked. You should also ensure that enough of the local members will be able to attend the demo before making a firm commitment. Promising to do a demo and then doing it poorly, or needing to cancel on short notice, is bad PR for the SCA. (If you are invited to do a large demo that your group cannot adequately staff, consider asking a nearby group to co-sponsor the demo. If enough people cannot commit, politely decline the invitation.)

Another aspect of making a good impression is the appearance and demeanor of SCA members at the demo. Almost every demo should be done in garb. Encourage the people to wear nice, colorful garb and make an effort to cover up modern items. If people would like to wear real edged weapons, make sure the site approves them first! (Do not take knives to schools!) If weapons are allowed, they must be securely peace bonded and closely monitored. Bring banners and pavilions, if the site allows, to decorate the demo space and add to the atmosphere. You should also do some research to ensure that anything you present as being historical is accurate. All demo attendees should be on their best behavior and you should avoid demonstrating or dwelling on things that could be perceived as "negative." If you have an A&S table, assign someone to attend the table at all times. This person can both answer questions about the items and monitor them to prevent breakage or theft. Avoid displaying very small or valuable items that would be difficult to monitor or that would be disastrous if lost.

Since all demos are performed to inform people, it is important that your audience can hear you. If possible, investigate the demo space in advance and try to plan accordingly. Don't schedule activities that are unable to be seen or heard, and make an effort to speak up if it seems that some of your audience is having difficulty hearing you.

Remember to tailor the demo both to the audience and to the demo's purpose. Keep in mind the age ranges you will be dealing with, especially at school demos where you might be making a presentation to small children. To help organize your presentation, it can be helpful to use small index cards marked with the topics to be covered and the different activities to be

demonstrated. You may want to also include some reminders of things to say as well as estimated time per topic - this keeps the demo organized and on time.

You may want to consider putting together a demo kit that you can then modify as needed to meet the needs of particular demos.

A large sign that announces you as "The Society for Creative Anachronism" (not "SCA") allows passers-by to recognize the group. It is also helpful for the sign to include a short explanation that we work to recreate the Middle Ages.

Basic handouts with some general information about the SCA as well as contact information for the local group. You should also have some more detailed handouts with local contact and activity information for particularly interested people. Specialized handouts with detailed information about a single activity are also useful, but not required.

- A photo album specifically made for demos. Make sure the photo album includes pictures of a wide variety of activities and types of people.
- SCA resources such as the Known World Handbook, Forward into the Past, etc.
- Books with information about the Middle Ages (i.e. calligraphy, costume, etc)
- A sign-up sheet for people who wish to be contacted later with more information.

Recruiting Demos

If the main purpose of your demo is to recruit new members for your group, try to hold your demo in a highly visible public area that is frequented by the type of people you are interested in recruiting. (A demo done at a mall will recruit a wide cross section of people, whereas a demo done at a school or university is likely to predominantly attract students.) If possible, get publicity in advance for public demos. Contact your local television and print media, hang up signs near the demo site, and get announcements published in local publications. Recognize that any activities your group does in public view (like fighters' practices in the park) can often turn into a de facto demo. Have at least a few handouts available at these activities in case you attract some local interest. If you are considering holding a demo in a public space, you may want to check in with the local police so they are aware of your activities and will not be alarmed.

In addition to the basic demo kit, be sure to bring along several clipboards and pens so you can collect the names and contact information of people who are interested in being contacted later with more information. You may also want to include on the clipboard an "interest inventory" or survey about what a particular person is most interested in learning about. That way, when you contact them after the demo you will be prepared with the information they are most interested in receiving.

Demos done for the public must be both informative and entertaining. Focus on activities that are visually interesting and exciting (like armored combat or dance) but don't forget to mention all the other activities that are available if not easily demonstrated on a large scale (like embroidery or calligraphy). If possible, involve the spectators in the activities, teach a dance, assign cheering sections for different fighters, have a show-and-tell table where people are allowed to pick things up, etc. Many people enjoy this sort of hands-on experience but be careful that you do not try to push someone into doing an activity that makes them uncomfortable.

You should assign one person to be the "announcer" who explains what is going on to the crowd. Other experienced members should mingle with the crowd and answer specific questions from bystanders. They can hand out general fliers and encourage people to leave contact information. Make sure that you have enough fliers for all interested passers-by. Encourage the group members to focus on answering newcomers' questions and not spend too much time chatting amongst themselves. When talking to newcomers in a demo situation, try to use "Middle Ages" not "medieval." Especially in busy or loud situations, some people will only hear the "evil" part and could be repelled before they understand what we do.

After the demo, be certain to thank your staff and to write thank you notes to the site or sponsors, if applicable. If you took down interested people's information during the demo, it is imperative that you make contact with them soon after the demo. You should provide them with the information they requested and personally invite them to upcoming local events and activities.

Educational demos

Educational demos can vary significantly depending on the setting and the age range of the students. If possible, spend some time talking with the teacher(s) of the class(es) you will be presenting to. Try to find out what the kids already know, what the teachers would like to have them learn, and what activities will be appropriate or allowed at this particular demo. In general, educational demos should focus on historical information, not information about the SCA. Try to have several topics prepared in advance that you can propose to the teacher(s) so they know what to expect.

Discuss the teacher's expectations and the demo's program with all the demo attendees before the demo begins. This will reduce confusions about what topics are being covered and in what order. You should introduce yourselves as members of the Society for Creative Anachronism and give a very brief explanation of what we do before proceeding to the historical aspects of the demo.

If armored combat is demonstrated for the children, it is important to impress upon them the importance of our armor regulations and training. Stress that they should not just do this on their own with each other or their siblings, but that we do have children's divisions and that you can provide more information to anyone who wants it after the demo. Children especially enjoy hands-on activities, so plan to have a touch-and-feel A&S table or letting the kids examine the fighters' armor, with proper supervision. Teaching songs or dances is also very popular.

At the end of the demo, you should leave at least one flier with local contact information with the teacher(s) in case any students or faculty are interested in contacting the group later.

Public Relations Demos

Public relations demos are somewhat different from the other sorts of demos. They are meant to foster general community goodwill rather than teach people about the SCA or history. By hosting public relations demos, you increase the visibility of the SCA in the community and help the community understand what the SCA is and is not. A positive public perception of the SCA can be very helpful when your group attempts to rent a new site and recruit new members.

Ideas for public relations demos include: adopting a highway, serving at soup kitchens, volunteering at food pantries, sponsoring a food drive, walking in parades, sponsoring walk-a-thon teams, volunteering at local festivals, helping with madrigal dinners, and being involved in

any local activities with a medieval theme. These are only suggestions; you can investigate other options available in your community. In general, you should do these activities in garb and (if possible) either post a sign or carry a banner explaining who you are. Make sure you have some informational handouts that you can distribute to anyone you meet who may be interested in joining your group.

Suggested Demo Locations

Sometimes it is difficult to think of places to host a demo. Here are several suggestions to get you started, but think creatively about the activities and resources in your area. Consider any historical, educational, or cultural organizations that may be interested in learning more about the Middle Ages. Brainstorm with local members; many demo opportunities come from your local members, who can help set up a demo at their place of work or worship, their child's school, or other clubs or local committees.

Schools: elementary schools are often very interested in having the SCA come in and give demonstrations to classes that are studying the Middle Ages as part of the curriculum. Some will even arrange for your demo to take place during a school assembly. Be aware, however, that school demos often take place during the normal workday - be certain you have enough people who are available mid- day to support the demo. In addition, the demo may need to be planned well in advance in order to coincide with the appropriate history curriculum. Make certain that you know what age groups you will be addressing and tailor your information to their level of understanding. Colleges and Universities often have medieval studies departments you could contact to see about potential activities. College campuses also often sponsor student interest or student activity fairs where your SCA group could have a presence.

Libraries: libraries will sometimes have themed activities that could be enhanced by the presence of the SCA. Ask about summer reading programs, storytelling activities, or other events.

Scouting: Girl Scout and Boy Scout Troops are often very interested in sponsoring demos from the SCA. Sometimes it can be worked into a badge of some sort and sometimes is purely entertainment. Ask the Scoutmaster or Leader what they would like emphasized – chivalric attitudes, combat, arts and sciences, performing arts, etc.

Community events: Parades, fairs, and any public event that will draw a large crowd can also be good places for a demo. Consider contacting the organizer of the event and asking for a booth or area where you can display A&S materials, answer questions, or exhibit martial activities. Think about local 4th of July celebrations, county fairs, art fairs, and more and try to tailor the activities you present to the theme of the event.

Local groups with a related interest: Think about the other groups already active in your area. Is there a historical society? Another living history organization? Another fencing club?

Displays

Think of displays as a demo subset. They are a sort of static demo and can be done in places where traditional active demos are not appropriate, like busy sidewalk areas or in store windows or showcases. Many of the materials in the demo kit are appropriate for use with a display.

Attended displays are usually done over a short period of time in a high traffic area (at a town festival or student organization fair, for example). If you do not have room for any demo-type live activities, make sure your information table includes photos and interesting objects that will draw the attention of passers by. The table attendants should be dressed in colorful garb and you should play period music from a hidden tape player if music is allowed. Banners, armor pieces, shields, and illuminated scrolls are often an effective draw. Make sure you have a sign up sheet similar to that used for recruitment demos, as well as basic information handouts for all interested passers-by.

Window or showcase displays tend to be done over a longer span of time, but only need someone to be present to set up and dismantle the display. Window displays are most effective when they are placed somewhere that either gets a lot of general traffic (a downtown shop's front window during a street festival) or somewhere that is frequented by people with similar interests (a showcase in the local college's history department or at the local library). Include in the display a variety of items that are visually interesting and include note cards or small signs explaining what the objects are. These displays generally are not continuously monitored and therefore valuable objects and weapons should not be included. Photographs of SCA activities can also be effective items to use in a display if the activities depicted in the photos are adequately explained by captions. If the display is located in a place that caters to a specific

population (like an elementary school or a fencing academy), try to tailor your display to that population. If possible, place fliers about the SCA in close proximity to the display so that people who are interested can easily contact your group. Once the display has been dismantled, send a thank you to the display site for using their space.

Interacting with the Press

Officially, all interactions with the media should be handled by the seneschal. However, the chatelaine is a deputy of the seneschal and this duty is often delegated to the chatelaine. This does make sense, since the members of the press are “guests from strange lands” who require an orientation to what is going on. If you are ever asked to interact with the press in a formal capacity, make sure you work closely with your seneschal and that you agree in advance about what topics should be covered. If you and the seneschal would prefer not to be directly interviewed or if you will be unavailable when the press arrives, a “media guide” should be selected. This person should be an established member who is articulate, accurate, and willing to act in this capacity.

When the press arrives, you should be waiting to welcome them. Introduce yourself and give them some brief information about the history and purpose of the SCA. If the press is visiting during an event, offer to give them a tour of the site and explain the different activities that will be going on. Depending on the local culture and the tone of the event, you may want to ask that the press corps don tabards or otherwise cover up the worst of their modern appearance. Ask the press to be especially considerate about asking permission before taking photos, as some people may object. If the press is visiting during an event where royalty will be present, be certain you talk with the royalty in advance. Some royals are more than happy to talk to the press, while others consider it obtrusive modernity. It is also wise to talk to a few notable reliable gentles from your group and ask if they are willing to be interviewed. Then if the press wants some individuals’ comments you have some people already in mind whom you know will consent.

Throughout your interactions with the press, you should focus on the positive aspects of the SCA and avoid making overgeneralizations. Be cautious about what you say – try to avoid saying anything sarcastic or that could be misconstrued when taken out of context. Stress to them that we are a non-profit educational group dedicated to studying any aspects of the

Middle Ages and Renaissance. Make sure to mention arts and sciences as well as martial activities. Inform them that the fighting is “live,” not choreographed or planned, and all of our martial activities involve a lot of skill and training. Emphasize that safety is a major concern and that there are strict regulations about armor standards and fighting conduct. Explain the place that courtesy and honor have on the field and in the Society as a whole.

Make sure you provide the press with copies of written or printed information. At minimum this should include: the SCA name of the group, the modern city or county where the group is based, the current correct contact information for the group, the correct modern and SCA names for all people interviewed, and the local group’s web page address. Provide pronunciation keys when appropriate. Additional materials to consider giving them include specific handouts about the activities they witnessed, a copy of the local newsletter, and a copy of “Forward into the Past” (see page 31). Ask that the contact information for your group be included in the media report and be made available on the media’s web page, if possible. This will allow anyone who sees or reads the piece and is interested in your group to easily contact you for more information. As they are leaving, remember to thank the reporters for their time.

Handouts

Some of the most useful tools at a chatelaine’s disposal are handouts. By having a variety of handouts with different focuses, a chatelaine is able to quickly and accurately convey information to interested newcomers. The Chronicler can be a great resource for producing handouts and newcomers’ resources. You can also talk with your local seneschal or other people who have experience producing informational handouts. Any form of written communication will reinforce the information you verbally provide, but not all handouts are created equal. By following some general guidelines, you will be able to provide effective, informative, pleasing handouts to your newcomers

General Comments

- Keep the information simple, but provide ways for the reader to find additional information.
- Use only modern language or very clearly explain any SCA jargon you use.

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- Remember, your handouts are being given to newcomers who are not familiar with SCA culture and vocabulary.
 - Include multiple contacts, but be sure to get permission from the people you are listing before you publish the handout.
 - Include both modern and SCA names – it is scary for a newcomer to call someone whose name they cannot pronounce!
 - Always include telephone numbers – remember that while many people have email, not everyone does!
 - Refer to the SCA as a “non-profit, educational organization,” which clarifies our purpose.
 - Double-check all your information! It is frustrating and off-putting to a newcomer to be given erroneous information.
 - Follow your local group’s procedures for approving new handout content and expense reimbursement.
 - Keep a digital copy of the handouts you develop, whenever possible. This allows changes to be made quickly and easily while also keeping the handouts looking clean and professional. An electronic format allows a handout to be shared with other groups more easily, too. If you develop handouts you are interested in sharing, forward them to the Kingdom Chatelaine so that other groups can benefit from your labors!

Minimum Content

- The content of your handout will vary depending on its purpose, but there are several items that should be included on every handout.
- “Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA)” should appear somewhere near the beginning of the handout so that the reader will know what “SCA” stands for when they encounter it later.
- A brief explanation about the purpose of the SCA.
- The SCA and modern names for the city or county your group is based in.
- Current contact information, including SCA name, modern name, phone number and email address. Include your group’s web page, if applicable.

Basic Format

There are some basic rules of formatting a handout that will help you make a document that is visually pleasing and easy to read.

- Handout size: while it is tempting to try to save money by getting lots of information on one page or by getting lots of handouts on one page, in general you should never squeeze a handout onto less than 1/4 page!
- Fonts: do not use a font smaller than 10 points since handouts with tiny lettering are very difficult to read. "Medieval" fonts are a lot of fun, but you should restrict their use to decorative titles and use a normal font for the body of the handout. If you make it difficult to read, some newcomers won't be interested in or able to read it!
- Visual appearance: try to lay out the handout in a visually appealing way, including the use of bolding and underlining to emphasize specific elements as well as appropriate spacing to break up the text.

Artwork

If you want to include some sort of graphic in your publication, choose artwork or photos that will reproduce well. Black and white woodcuts are ideal and are available from copyright-free sources like Dover Books and online clipart databases. Be sure to double-check that any images you use are copyright free! If you choose to use a photo, make sure you have the written permission of all the people in the photo. Keep signed permission slips from any artists or photo subjects on file for future reference.

Specialized Handouts

It is very helpful to have separate handouts for specific situations. This allows you to tailor the information provided on the handout to the population you are serving. For example, you may want to have a 1/4 page handout for passing out at a demo that just gives the information listed under "minimum content," a full page handout with more detailed information about the local group for more interested gentles, a handout for school demos, and a specialty handout for each of the activities and guilds that are active in your area.

Newcomers' Packets

Many newcomers find it helpful to receive a packet of information when they join the SCA. Because of its cost to produce, this is the sort of resource you would provide to a seriously interested newcomer, but not necessarily to someone seeing the SCA for the first time at a demo. You may want to consider developing a local newcomers' handbook with all the newcomer info in one place, or choose some of the items below to include in a packet that can be customized to match the newcomer's interests.

- Forward into the Past
- Current edition of your local newsletter
- List of the local officers and guild heads with their contact information
- Glossary of SCA terms and definitions
- Membership form
- Welcome letter from seneschal and/or chatelaine
- List of websites (local group, local members' websites, other websites of interest)
- List of SCA publications and how to obtain them
- Info on making basic garb and how to access the loaner gear
- Persona development handout (general or on specific time periods)
- Information on armored combat and other martial activities available in your area
- Specific handouts about the activities and guilds that are active in your area
- SCA appropriate merchants/local stores

Some of these newcomers' publications are available free to chatelaines from the SCA Stock Clerk's Office (<http://www.sca.org/members/marketplace.html>). Contact them to see which are currently available (see also page 31).

Gold Key

Many groups have loaner garb available for newcomers to use. In some groups, this is called the "Gold Key" and in other groups, it is simply referred to as the group's loaner garb. If your group does not have loaner garb available, you should seriously consider obtaining some. Needing to acquire new clothes for an activity they may not yet be certain they want to participate in can discourage newcomers. It is also easier for them to borrow clothing that is specifically made available to be borrowed than to borrow someone's personal clothing.

Starting a Gold Key

If you do not currently have a baner garb collection, there are several ways you can go about obtaining one. You can ask established members to donate garb they no longer wear, you can ask neighboring groups if they have any excess garb in their Gold Key they would be willing to donate, or you can make new garb. If you are making the garb new, try to choose washable fabrics made with natural fibers and in appropriate colors. If you take donations from other sources, inspect the garb before including it to make certain that it is in good repair and that it is appropriate for an SCA event. Many newcomers make garb very similar to the garb they wore to their first event, so try to include only appropriate garb items.

Because of the wide range of sizes of people, it is helpful to have several different sizes available. It is easy to produce several sizes of unisex T-tunics. Don't forget large people and children! Try to organize the garb into outfits – newcomers may not necessarily understand which items go together. Remember to include accessories like ties, belts, and pouches with each outfit. Label each item with the group's name.

While it might be difficult to come up with a lot of "nice" garb for a new Gold Key, do your best to acquire quality pieces. We want newcomers to feel welcome and wanted, not as if they are unimportant and only fit for misshapen or damaged cast-off clothing.

Maintaining the Gold Key

Once a Gold Key is established, you still need to work on maintaining the quality and condition of the garb. You may need to launder or repair items as they become soiled or damaged during use. Occasionally sort through the garb closet to weed out items that have become too worn or damaged to be of use.

If you do not already have a formal system in place, you should develop some form of check out procedure for the Gold Key garb. This helps prevent loss and gives you a way to remind people when it is time to return items they have borrowed. The checkout procedure should, at minimum, involve collecting the modern name and telephone number of the person borrowing the items. If you can, also get their SCA name and email address so you have other options for contacting them. You should also note which items are being lent to which gentle. If an outfit includes multiple pieces, it can be time consuming to write down each item and several options

exist. If the clothing is organized into outfits, each outfit can be assigned a number that can be used to quickly identify all the items in that outfit. Some groups keep a list of all the items associated with an outfit, while others keep a photo registry of their garb outfits. The photo album method has the advantage that you can simply show the newcomer the photos of the garb that is available, then bring the two or three outfits that are most likely to fit them rather than needing to transport the entire Gold Key.

Another issue related to the maintenance of the Gold Key is its storage. There are benefits and problems with nearly every option. Keeping the Gold Key hanging up in a closet keeps the clothing neat, but it is not very portable and not every Chatelaine or Gold Key has extra closet space! A mover's wardrobe box can be an acceptable alternative if your vehicle is large enough to accommodate a large box and if none of your Gold Key garb is excessively long. Packing the Gold Key into large boxes is often convenient because of its portability, but often results in the garb becoming disorganized and wrinkled. Putting individual outfits into bags keeps the outfits organized, but still can wrinkle the garb. You will need to decide which option seems most workable for you and your group.

Other Loaner Materials

While loaner garb is the most common item that groups have available for newcomers to use, there are several other items that might be useful to have available. Many newcomers attending their first event do not yet have their own feast gear, so loaner feast gear can be very helpful. Secondhand thrift stores are a good source of inexpensive, period-looking feast gear. The feast gear can be organized into sets and can use a check out procedure similar to the Gold Key garb.

Other activities within the SCA require a significant financial outlay before you can even begin to participate. Investigate what sorts of loaner materials are available in your group for newcomers who would like to try activities such as archery, rapier, and armored combat. Talk to the marshals of these activities about what materials are available, which are needed, and how newcomers can gain access to the loaner gear. Coordinate with the marshals so it is clear who is responsible for monitoring the use and condition of the loaner gear.

Being a Chatelaine in a Small Group

Being a chatelaine in a small group can be a challenging experience. A small group may not have established guilds, local peers, or many other resources that are available in larger groups. And since there are fewer local members and fewer mechanisms for integrating a newcomer into the group, a chatelaine in a small group tends to spend a lot more one-on-one time with a newcomer than a chatelaine in a big group. Successful chatelaining in a smaller group requires more creative thinking, but it can still be a rewarding and effective endeavor. Here are a few ideas to think about.

SCA Publications as resources: Especially in small groups where you do not have a lot of “experts” around, it is helpful to have as many printed resources as possible. Try to keep a group library of back issues of *Tournaments Illuminated*, the *Compleat Anachronist*, local and regional newsletters, and other publications. The *Known World Handbook* is an excellent resource to have available for newcomers to purchase or borrow. It provides a basic introduction to a wide range of topics and is a fun read. If you can, obtain books that cover common SCA-related topics and time periods and make these available to newcomers.

Local members: Even if you do not have a formal guild structure, the members of your local group are a great resource. Get to know what topics your local members are knowledgeable about and ask them if they would be willing to talk to an interested newcomer about those topics. Think creatively! People who are knowledgeable about a specific topic often have some related, if less specific, knowledge about similar topics. For example, your local Viking may be able to at least offer some suggestions to a newcomer interested in Ireland or your local cook may have some information for a gentle interested in brewing.

Neighboring groups: Just because an activity is not available in your group does not mean that it is not available anywhere nearby. Investigate to see what the other groups in your vicinity have to offer. Do they offer the activity? Is there someone nearby who is also interested in this particular topic? Are they willing to travel to your group to teach a class? Will any upcoming events be offering the activity or related classes? You may also want to see if there are other, non-SCA resources that can be utilized – does your town have an archery range? A fencing club? A sewing circle?

Events: Events are a great opportunity for a new member to meet more people and to connect with gentles with similar interests. Newcomers’ events or events offering newcomers’ classes

and activities are particularly helpful. When a newcomer is going to their first event, try to check in with them to make sure they have everything they need. Offer to try to arrange a ride or crash space, if they need it. If you can, meet with the newcomer at the event and give them a tour of the site and an explanation about what is going on in each activity. Explain things that the newcomer has questions about and introduce them to people you think they may like to know. You don't need to stay with the newcomer all day, unless they desire it. However, make sure to check in with the newcomer at least once during the day to find out if they have any more questions or need any help. If there will be court in the evening, offer to sit with the newcomer and quietly "interpret" the proceedings.

The electronic community: If an activity is not available nearby, chances are that there are web pages and email lists about it. A query to a search engine will usually turn up several web pages on a topic, but be careful - not all information on the internet is accurate or complete! Try to verify information you find online with information from other sources. You can also ask for information or for contact people on a general email list like the Northshield Hall. Once others with the same or similar interests are identified, they are usually more than happy to correspond with an interested newcomer or to meet with them at an event.

The local library: Develop a list of good resource books that are available at the local public library. If possible, group the books on the list by topic so it is easy for newcomers to find the information they want. Find out how to go about requesting books via inter-library loan, if possible in your area. If you have a local college or university, you may want to investigate their holdings as well. Your local library can also serve as a way to reach out to the local community. Consider donating a copy of the Known World Handbook to the library or donating subscriptions to Tournaments Illuminated or the Compleat Anachronist. (Talk with the local librarian first, however, and find out what policies they have about materials donations!) Most libraries won't let you put your group's information in the books, but they may have a community directory in which you can be listed.

Additional resources

Useful publications

SCA Corpora and By-Laws – the conventions and laws of the SCA. All you ever wanted to know about the governance of the SCA, Inc. Usually your local seneschal should have a copy or they are available online off www.sca.org. SCA Corpora - Appendix A: Suggested Channels for Complaint and Appeal is particularly useful should you find yourself in a dispute with another member or officer.

The following titles are available either from the SCA Marketplace or the SCA Stock Clerk, both of which can be contacted off the SCA web page or by calling

(800) 789-7486. Some of these titles are available at no cost or reduced cost to Chatelaines and some are also available electronically on the SCA web page.

- Forward into the Past Known World Handbook
- Your Teenager and the SCA: A Guide for Parents Advice for Established Members
- For Site Owners

Electronic Resources

SCA, Inc. <http://www.sca.org/welcome.html>

This is the main page of SCA, Inc and includes a vast number of very helpful links to a wide variety of web pages that are useful to newcomers, chatelaines, and every other member of the SCA. See this page for official laws, forms, waivers, etc.

Resources and Information for Newcomers

<http://www.sca.org/newcomers.html>

This is a page off the official SCA home page and is aimed at helping newcomers find out more about the SCA.

Conclusion

Hopefully, you have found this handbook helpful. As mentioned before, feel free to contact the Kingdom Chatelaine if you have any further questions or if you have suggestions about additional content.

Enjoy your new role in the SCA - interacting with newcomers can be challenging, but it also can be a very rewarding experience. It is a very special thing to watch a gentle find the SCA, discover new interests, make new friends, and grow to fill a special place in our world. Thank you for choosing to serve the newcomers of the SCA and Welcome to being a Chatelaine!

Credits & Disclaimer

Please remember that this Handbook is only a guide. It is impossible for this document to cover all possible groups and situations. Please feel free to expand on these ideas and customize them to meet your group's needs. This handbook is a printed document and so is possible that this edition is out of date – please check with the Northshield web page or the Kingdom Chatelaine for updates or corrections. Also, remember to check on your group's policies regarding activities such as planning events or producing handouts and adhere to those specific policies. If you ever have questions about your position, remember to use the resources you have in your local and regional officers! Please feel free to contact the Kingdom Chatelaine with questions or suggestions for additions, clarifications, or corrections to this handbook.

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This handbook was updated by THL Kate de Mallow in AS LII

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