

TO: Newcomers
FROM: Ciorstan Macamhlaidh
SUBJECT: Going to your first event

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There are many different kinds of SCA events, and going to your first event can be a bit scary. You might wonder what the event will be like and what things you will need to bring. In general, there are indoor events (Coronation/12th Night) and outdoor events (Tournaments). There are, of course, other events that don't fit these general categories (Game tourneys, picnics, The Festival of the Rose, etc.). Check the Newsletter for information about the day's activities; call the Autocrat if you have any questions.

Outdoor events:

Planning: Check the schedule for the event. Most SCA Tournaments last all day, from set-up in the morning to Closing Court in the (late) afternoon and on to a Revel in the evening. What do you need to plan for? Something to wear, a place to sit during the day, lunch and some activity that interests you. Something to wear-- the basic tenet of the SCA is that everyone makes an attempt to wear a medieval or renaissance costume. For a Tournament this can be as fancy or as simple as you wish. Clothing for outdoor events is often termed Field Costume or Field Garb. This means the outfit is easily washable but can range from a simple tunic through Elizabethan. Simple costumes for your first event can be obtained from Gold Key or you can construct your own. There are costuming articles in the Known World Handbook as well as in the Complete Anachronist pamphlet series.

A Place to Sit-- In some parks, all you need is a blanket to spread out under the trees; in others you will need some type of a sunshade and your own chair (a

director's chair is pretty standard). Find out if there are others going to the event who will let you share their sunshade or pavilion. If not, a simple sunshade with aluminum poles can be cheaply purchased. Eventually you will want to replace the poles with wood poles or replace the sunshade with a more period pavilion.

Lunch: occasionally there is food for sale at at Tournament but usually you will need to provide lunch for yourself. A satisfying lunch can be made from lunch meats, bread rolls, cheese, raw vegetables, dessert and something to drink. All of this can be purchased in a market and carried to the event in a small cooler or ice chest (Covered!-C). Of course, more elaborate meals can also be planned (see the Known World Handbook for articles) You will also need some basic utensils; a plate, goblet, bowl and eating utensils. These can be obtained at Cost Plus and other similar stores at a reasonable cost (C:- a local chain akin to Pier One Imports).

Activities- While you may be perfectly content at your first event to sit and watch, you may also want to bring something to do during slow moments. You may want to bring some type of needlework to work on or other type of handwork (leatherwork, macrame), a game board such as backgammon or chess, or a sketch pad. You may also want to get involved in the events going on. Volunteer to help the Mistress of Lists, learn Field Heraldry, be a Marshall in Training, offer to help the Autocrat.

Opening Court-- This is when the King and Queen (and/or Baron and Baroness) address the populace, announcements for the day are made, awards given out and presentations are done. Everyone should attend court and should be as quiet as possible out of respect for the Crown and in order to hear what's going on.

Lists-- this is a term you will see in the schedule for the day. It has several different (but connected) meanings. it is another term for the fighting

competition, as in 'fighting in lists' or 'the winner of the lists'. It also refers to signing up in order to fight in the competition as in "Lists will open at 9:00' and 'Lists are now closed'. Lastly, it refers also to the order of combat in the competition.

Fighting begins-- The fighting portion of the Tournament starts. Tourneys are generally double-eliminations (which means a fighter has two deaths before he or she is eliminated from the competition) and are held in rounds. Often there is an opening general melee in which all the fighters participate.

Closing court-- At the end of the day, after the final round of the fighting portion of the day, closing court is held. Again the King and Queen (and/or Baron and Baroness) address the populace, announcements are made, contest winners are named and generally the winner of the fighting is honored.

Revel-- this is an SCA-style party. It is usually held several hours after the end of a Tourney, giving people time to go out to dinner. The revel is often held at a separate site away from the Tourney location. There may be dancing, entertainment, contests, a bardic circle, and evening court and light refreshments. It's a wonderful time to meet new people, talk and relax.

Ciorstan here: more when my tired fingers permit.