

GOOD GRIEF, What do they mean by that?

If you've just joined the Society, you may find conversations and event announcements hard to follow at first. SCA participants, chapters and offices all assume names with a historical flavor, and there's a whole vocabulary for everyday things as well. You'll get used to it quickly, but here are some of the most commonly used words to start with.

ABOUT PEOPLE

SCAdian (*SKAY-dee-an*) – a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism. Also used as an adjective to mean “of the SCA.”

Gentle – any person

Populace – the inhabitants of a kingdom or local group; the people present at an event.

Chivalry – Peers recognized for their great skill on the tourney field, as well as for qualities of courtesy and grace. Companions of the Chivalry are the *Knights*, who swear fealty to the Crown, and *Masters-of-Arms*, who do not.

Master of Defense – a Peer recognized for their great skill at rapier and/or cut-and-thrust combat, for qualities of courtesy and grace, for their willingness to teach others, and for service to the kingdom.

Laurel – a Peer recognized for mastery of an art or science as well as for qualities of courtesy and grace.

Pelican – a Peer recognized for great service to their Kingdom and the SCA as well as for qualities of courtesy and grace.

Squire – a student in a formal relationship with a Knight or Master of Arms.

Apprentice – a student in a formal relationship with a Master or Mistress of the Laurel.

Protégé – a student in a formal relationship with a Master or Mistress of the Pelican.

Peers – members of the Chivalry, MoD, Laurel, and Pelican.

Royal Peers – Viscounts, Viscountesses, Counts, Countesses, Dukes, and Duchesses. A Viscount/ess has served as Prince/ess of a Principality. A Count/ess has served as King/Queen of a kingdom once, and a Duke/Duchess has served more than once.

Minister – the gender-neutral version of Mistress/Master for office names.

Mistress/Master – title used by companions of the Orders of the Laurel, Pelican, Master of Defense, and Masters-of-Arms. Also part of some office names, i.e., “Mistress of the Lists”, “Master of Arts & Sciences”

Dame – an alternate title used by female Peers who do not wish to use the title “Mistress” or “Sir”.

OFFICERS

Autocrat / Event Steward – the person in charge of an event.

Chancellor Minor / Minister of Youth / Page School Chancellor – officer in charge of children’s activities.

Chamberlain – officer in charge of inventory/maintaining/storing a SCA chapter’s property.

Chatelain(e) / Hospitaller – an officer who helps new members learn about the SCA.

Chronicler – the editor of a group’s newsletter.

Constable – this office, which exists in some kingdoms, has varied responsibilities which might include making sure that the entry gate is manned, ensuring that SCA and modern laws are followed, or taking care of “Lost and Found”.

Exchequer (Chancellor of the Exchequer) – the officer serving as treasurer for a group or kingdom.

Herald – officer who helps participants come up with SCA names and armory; or, the official who makes announcements on the field, or is the Master of Ceremonies for court. Local group heralds are called *Pursuivants*.

Marshal – a specially trained person who oversees martial activities for safety purposes. A *Knight Marshal* holds this office in a local group. The *Earl Marshal* holds this office in a principality or kingdom. Marshals also run archery, youth combat, and other martial activities.

Seneschal – the officer serving as “president” of a local group or kingdom. Acts as the group administrator and legal representative of the SCA.

TYPES OF EVENTS

Coronation – the event where the Crown Prince and Princess, heirs to a kingdom, are crowned.

Crown Tournament – the tournament held to determine the next heirs to the kingdom.

Investiture – the event at which the new Prince and Princess of a principality (or the new Baron and Baroness of a barony) are installed.

Twelfth Night – an event celebrating the holiday of Epiphany (January 6), held at the beginning of January. Attendees wear their finest garb, and friends exchange gifts.

Schola / Collegium / University / Ithra – events where classes are taught on a variety of subjects.

War – a gathering at which the main activity is one or more battles for large groups of participants, involving the use of fields, woodlands, or other broken terrain. War events can also include other martial activities, along with classes, court, dancing, performances, and merchants.

GENERAL TERMS

Anno Societatis (abbreviated “A.S.”) – The dating system we use in the SCA (translates to “In the Year of the Society”). May 1, 1966 was the first day of the year **A.S. I**, and May 1st is ‘New Year’s Day’ for each Society year. The years are usually depicted in Roman numerals.

Arms (or device) – the heraldic emblem that identifies a person or entity.

Award of Arms – a Society-wide award given by the royalty. Recipients can use the title “Lord” or “Lady” before their names.

Arts and Sciences – crafts and skills of the Middle Ages/Renaissance which we research and practice in the SCA. Also referred to as “**A & S**”.

Authorization – the process that fighters and fencers go through to be allowed to participate in combat.

Barony/Shire – types of SCA local chapters. Baronies are generally larger in size, and have a Baron and/or Baroness as their ceremonial heads. Sub-groups within a Barony’s territory are known as Cantons, or in some areas, Ridings or Strongholds. All these groups are officially recognized in the SCA and are administered by a slate of officers.

Bardic Circle – an informal gathering for singing and storytelling. Anyone who attends is welcome to perform appropriate material, but you can just sit and listen if you prefer. A *bard* is a person who sings, tells stories, recites poetry, etc.

Blue Card – an SCA membership card printed on blue cardstock, indicating that the card holder has a signed waiver on file at the SCA offices.

Court – a gathering where the King and Queen of a kingdom make announcements and present awards. Rulers of principalities hold Principality courts, and landed Barons and Baronesses hold Baronial courts.

Crash Space – informal lodgings with members of the group holding an event.

Dayboard – lunch, served at some events.

Demo – a demonstration of the activities in the SCA. SCA participants will usually perform martial activities as well as arts and sciences for the public.

Dry/Damp/Wet Site – alcoholic beverage policies. Dry sites allow no alcohol. Damp sites permit wine, beer, and mead, but no hard liquor. Wet sites do not restrict alcohol. “*Discreetly*” damp or wet means that the site is normally dry, but the owners will permit alcohol as long as the labeled containers are kept out of sight and are removed at the end of the event. At any site, local laws regarding alcohol consumption must be followed.

Event – any Society gathering. You are welcome to attend any events listed on the kingdom calendar. You can take part in the activities, although some martial arts require special equipment, training, and authorization by a marshal.

Farspeaker – slang sometimes used for “telephone”.

Feast – an elaborate meal, usually served in the evening, sometimes accompanied by entertainment.

Feast Gear – a place setting for a feast: at least a plate, bowl, goblet, spoon and knife. You can also include a napkin, fork, tablecloth, candles, etc. Assume you’ll need to bring basic feast gear for any feast unless the announcement says they will be provided.

Garb – clothing approximating that worn pre-17th century. Required at all events except some local meetings and activities. Some groups have garb available for newcomers (see “Gold Key”).

Gate – the place to check in or buy at-the-door admission to an event.

Gold Key – a collection of garb and gear that newcomers can borrow. Contact the group’s Chatelain(e).

Halflings – children (or sometimes, “smalls”). These terms come from modern fictional works; using the word “Children” is fine.

Heavy Weapons – armored combat with rattan versions of swords, polearms, and spears.

HOLD! – a cry meaning “Stop whatever you are doing and freeze in place until you see where the hazard is!” Normally used during combat, but it’s been extended to cover all forms of activity.

Household – a voluntary association of friends or people with a common interest. Can be organized under whatever rules the members jointly accept. Households have no formal standing in the SCA.

Light Weapons – in some kingdoms, this refers to rapier combat (fencing).

Lists / List Field – the roped-off area for combat. Also called “the eric” in the West Kingdom. The *List Table* is the location where competitors sign in and where the *Minister of Lists* keeps track of the paperwork necessary to actually run the tournament.

Melee – martial combat with many participants on each side.

Mundane – used to mean “non-SCA”, “everyday”, “in real life”. We encourage the use of the word “modern” instead, as we’re aware that “mundane” can sound disrespectful.

Non-Member Registration (NMR) – an additional \$5 (US or Canadian) paid by adult event attendees who are not paid members of the SCA.

On-board – attending an event and eating the feast provided by the sponsors. The “on-board” price includes the site fee. (Assume you’ll need to bring other meals unless the notice promises them.)

Off-board – offered in some groups: attending an event and bringing your own dinner. The “off-board” price includes the site fee and a seat at a table

Oyez (OH-yay) – an attention-getting call, usually preceding an announcement, which means to stop talking and listen.

Period – of the time period studied in the SCA (pre-17th-century); also used to mean “authentic”

Persona – the person that you are acting as in the SCA. Your persona can be detailed or simple – starting with the time period and country you are from, all the way to knowing the details of your persona’s place in society or your family history.

Porta-castle/Privy – portable chemical toilets found at outdoor events.

Post-revel – a get-together after the event (“revel”), for socializing and unwinding, usually held in someone’s home. Save the D&D and computer talk for this time.

Proof of SCA Membership – a photocopy of your membership card or letter from the Member Portal (members.sca.org)

Regnum – in some kingdoms: a listing of Society branches or a listing of officers.

Removes – sometimes used as a synonym for “courses” at a feast. (“Remove” is actually a post-period term for a dish served during a course that is later removed and replaced by a new one.)

SCA Name – the name someone uses in the Society.

Site – the place the event is being held.

Site Fee – the cost of admission to an event. Does not usually include the cost of the feast.

Troll Booth – the place to check in or buy at-the-door admission to an event. Staffed by the “troll”.
Also see “Gate”.

Tournament/Tourney – a competition in SCA fighting or fencing. Some styles of tournaments are: *Pas d’Arms, Bearpit, Double-Elimination, Round-Robin, and Ransom tourneys*.

Waiver – a release of liability form signed when you purchase SCA membership. Non-members must sign waivers at events and martial practices.