



Kingdom of Lochac

What is the SCA

Life in the Current Middle Ages

In 1965, a group of history majors at the University of California at Berkeley, held a costume party. Its theme was the Middle Ages. They made and wore Medieval clothing and addressed each other with titles and great courtesy. The fighters put on fencing masks and basketball pads, and took up broomstick swords to do battle for their ladies and their honour. Two important things happened—they learned something and they enjoyed themselves thoroughly. So, they got together again for another tourney, and another, and for banquets, and revels and. . . . thus was the Society for Creative Anachronism created for all such folk as do wish to learn about, and enjoy, the Age of Chivalry.

The armour is much better now and as authentic as the fighters can make it. The fighting too, is as real as can be made safe. The weapons are not metal but are made from rattan, (a kind of bamboo); and maces and axes are made from foam rubber, (most of us must return to the 21st Century on Monday). Combat is done under an honour system—if a fighter is struck, he knows whether the blow is hard enough, and well placed enough, to maim him or “kill” him, so he “dies” (perhaps theatrically). In most tournaments he gets to “die” several times before being put out of the competition.

So it is with all aspects of the Current Middle Ages—the Middle Ages as they ideally might have been, rather than as they actually were. We have the thrill of combat without death. We have sumptuous clothing, rich feasts, courtly dancing and beautiful objects made from many crafts. . . . all this without the squalor of the towns, or the serfs toiling in the fields. The end result is a miniature of the nobility of Medieval society, with a scholarly bent.

In the Kingdom of Lochac, (*Australia and New Zealand*) the King (and Queen) rule over all, and his word is law. He wins his throne by defeating, in combat, all other contenders. (They reign for a period of six months and the process to find the next King starts all over again). The prize is the power—and the responsibility—to go with this position. They are expected to preside over as many tournaments as possible within their Kingdom and They must set an example of courtesy for all Their subjects.

While many in the Society have titles, only Their Majesties may grant those titles. Titles and awards are granted to reward prowess on the tourney-field and in war, accomplishment in the Arts and Sciences, and for service to the Society. Their Majesties rely heavily upon recommendations from Their populace as to who is worthy of receiving an award. However, everyone in the Society is addressed as “my lord” or “my lady” as everyone is expected to be of the Nobility. (Should you want to be of lesser mein, you will need special dispensation from the King.)

Our Heralds, like their historical counterparts, make announcements at tournaments and ceremonies, keep records of all registered names, titles and devices. They help members design their own heraldic devices, (commonly called “a coat of arms”). All Heralds, (and only Heralds) wear a green tabard with crossed yellow trumpets on it. Should you have a question at an event, ask a Herald. If he cannot give you an answer, he can direct you to someone who can.

There are many other Officers who manage the business affairs of the many Groups which make up the Kingdom. They plan and co-ordinate events, organise the combat at tournaments and wars, help with historical research by members, teach skills and crafts of the period, produce the Kingdom’s many newsletters and do many other things to keep the Society functioning. You will encounter all of these, and several more, in the course of Society life.

There are now over 80,000 paid members in the Society, world-wide, and at least twice that many who regularly attend events. The members range from serious scholars, through to those who escape the pressures of daily life by spending their weekends in the Current Middle Ages, to those who come to local events just for the pleasure of “dressing-up” and being called “my lord” or “my lady” for the day.

A word about the name of the Society: an *anachronism* is something misplaced in time, like a wristwatch on an Elizabethan wrist, a Viking having lunch at McDonalds, or a tournament held at a shopping centre. In the Society, some are unavoidable, (like eskies and eye-glasses) but some are just careless (like visible zippers and sneakers). Interest in our past, with its fine craftsmanship and skilled artistry, its valour, honour and courtesy, (all the fine ideals our ancestors revered, even when they fell short of living them) is for us always proper and never untimely.

And so we continue to learn and enjoy ourselves and (we hope) to grow.