

Ealdormere Chronicler's Handbook



Creating a Baronial (or Local Newsletter) and Social
Media Presences for Groups in the Kingdom of
Ealdormere

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1. Chronicling in the Kingdom of Ealdormere

Thanks for joining the team!

In the seven years since the Kingdom of Ealdormere Chronicler's Handbook was last updated, we have seen massive change in the way news is distributed in our Kingdom and in the Society. Kingdom newsletters are now available electronically, almost all local newsletters have ceased printing paper copies and are now distributed by email or through websites, and social media has presented new challenges and opportunities for spreading the word about the SCA and getting news out to our members. We have excellent Society-level policies for both newsletters and social media that have eliminated the need for a policy manual at the Kingdom level. Accordingly, the approach and reasoning for this document has also changed. The handbook you see today is no longer designed to be printed out and saved, but to be a living document that will evolve as new technologies and techniques present themselves. If you have ideas or suggestions to share, please pass them on to the current Kingdom Chronicler.

Just as the means in which the Chronicler and the Chronicler's team of deputies create and share news has evolved, so too has the focus of the office. While in the past a Chronicler's duty was the crafting of a newsletter (more on that below), today's Chronicler is more of an Information Officer, who oversees (often in conjunction with a Webminister) a group's presence online through many possible outlets as well as potentially still publishing a newsletter or other publication. In fact, at the Kingdom level, the Social Media Deputy has moved from the Seneschal's office to the Chronicler's office.

To aid in this transition, the Kingdom Chronicler's office has founded the Chroniclers' College of Ealdormere. The College is a meeting place for past and present chroniclers, social media deputies, archivists and others dedicated to the sharing (and saving) of the exploits of our fellow Ealdormereans. (Please note that it is quite possible, and permissible, for a group to have a social media officer and no chronicler at all.)

2. Duties of a Chronicler

What is a newsletter? And what all does a chronicler do?

The Merriam Webster online dictionary states that a newsletter (noun) is "a small publication (as a leaflet or newspaper) containing news of interest chiefly to a special group".

Wikipedia's entry for newsletters is:

A newsletter is a regularly distributed publication generally about one main topic that is of interest to its subscribers. Many newsletters are published by clubs, societies, associations, and businesses, especially

companies, to provide information of interest to their members or employees. Some newsletters are created as money-making ventures and sold directly to subscribers.

By this definition it was the Fuggers, a notable Renaissance banking family of Germany, who published the first newsletter in order to keep their clients informed about the bank's investments and returns.

The office of Kingdom Chronicler is one of the eight Great Offices of State in the Kingdom of Ealdormere. The Chronicler has a counterpart at the Society level, and baronies are also required to have a Chronicler in order to attain Baronial status. Currently, the requirement in Ealdormere is that baronies produce a newsletter at least quarterly. Shires and cantons may also have Chroniclers, but there is no requirement or schedule for production of newsletters.

While every local group has a slightly different take on what the job of Chronicler should be, there are a few points that are likely to be the same: the Chronicler produces a newsletter for their group -- in a timely manner, with interesting content, and sent to the correct people.

The Chronicler is, to a certain extent, the historian of the group. To this end, it's important to have updated lists of the Baron and Baroness, as well as all the Baronial officers. In smaller groups, this may seem silly, especially if the Baronial website is up to date. But the website can change and, unless the web minister archives the site on a regular basis, it's not much use as an historical document.

The Chronicler is also, usually, the archivist for past copies of the newsletter. This relates to the previous point about the historian, and is no different from other offices in the SCA in that the previous issues are the officer's reports -- and every office should have their own collection of reports from previous holders of that office.

The Chronicler does not have to write the entire newsletter by themselves -- unless they choose to. It's a lot of work just to put out a newsletter. If members of the group don't send in articles and artwork, it will likely be a pretty thin newsletter.

Often in Ealdormere the Chronicler also serves as an Archivist, with a banker's box or a USB key to take care of the accoutrements of the office; at least, for a few years. If the Chronicler does not have the space to keep these, the executive of the group will want to make other arrangements.

3. Becoming a Chronicler

Who can be a Chronicler, and how do they become one?

The short answer is: anyone who volunteers. However, there are requirements for the position and the requirements for a chronicler can generally be broken down into two types: the qualities they must have and the qualities that their group wants them to have.

1. According to the Corpora Glossary, an Officer is "A Society member serving in an appointed office as defined in Corpora, or as an appointed deputy in such an office, or in another office as may be

defined by Kingdom Law, at any level of the Society, or in the role of organizer of a Society event (commonly referred to as “Autocrat” or “Steward”), or as a Territorial Baron or Baroness, or as Crown or Coronet or heir to a Crown or Coronet.”

2. According to the Membership Requirements listed in Corpora, “Officers at all levels of the Society must be Society members as defined in the Glossary and must have immediate access to the corporate newsletter for their area received at their residence. (Alternate access arrangements may be made for members of affiliated organizations or on a case-by-case basis for people with post office boxes and for International Members.) This standard also applies to deputies designated as successors to officers subject to this provision, or assigned independent administrative duties. Deputies who only assist with specific tasks are exempt from the newsletter access requirement.

The only requirement for any officer (including Chronicler), that is mandated by the SCA Inc., is an SCA membership. As it states in Corpora: “Officers at all levels of the SCA must be members ...”

The wish list of the skills needed for your Chronicler could include (but is not limited to):

- A working telephone
- Regular access to a computer
- Reliable email and internet
- Balance and judgment in matters political
- Experience with writing or editing
- Printing or publishing experience

Note: This list is not meant to deter young or inexperienced applicants. After all, it takes time to accumulate experience. For an applicant to enjoy writing and editing is a good first step.

Your group's ‘other duties, as required’ list will probably differ slightly from those of the group next door. Be sure that you understand the requirements of the job in your group before applying.

Normally, when an opportunity to apply comes up there is a call for a replacement. This notice would be either announced at a meeting, sent out on an electronic list, or an item in the newsletter itself.

If you are interested, the first place to start is to ask the current Chronicler what is expected of them and where the group wants to go in the near future. Make sure you know when applications have to be in. Then, prepare your application.

Make sure that you include the following information:

1. State how you meet the requirements as listed by the group.
2. Say what you like about the newsletter you are applying to edit, and then offer some ideas for what direction you would like to go with the newsletter.

3. A couple of sentences outlining other offices held in the SCA or other organisations will make you a more credible candidate. This is especially true if the other offices have had deadlines that you had to meet.

4. Get the application letter in to the appropriate people by the required date.

Administration: Getting started

1. Take a copy of the Change of Officer form, which is available in the back of the Seneschal's Handbook, fill it out, and get the appropriate people to sign it. Then make two copies; one for your files and one for your Seneschal's files. Send the original to the Kingdom Chronicler.

2. Get the files from the previous Chronicler. If you have difficulty reaching your predecessor, talk to the Seneschal first. If all else fails, you'll be starting from scratch and may need to get back issues of the group's chronicle from other past chroniclers or archivists.

3. Start planning the first issue -- and the fun begins!

Formal requirements and policies for the office may be found the Society Chronicler's Policies at <http://sca.org/officers/chronicler/ChronPolicy.pdf>

4. Publishing

How often must I publish? How do I publish?

Baronial newsletters must be published at least quarterly, although they can be published more often than that. Normally, the frequency of the publication is determined by the Baronial Executive. If a local group (canton, shire, etc.) wishes to publish a newsletter, they are free to set whatever schedule they wish.

The manner in which the newsletter is shared is up to the chronicler and the group. While the kingdom chronicle must be available in print (see the Society Policies if you are interested in the matter), but baronies and other groups are free to offer their newsletters in any format they wish. They can be done as printed documents, as digital files (such as a pdf) or distributed via a webpage or blog. (Or any combination of those options!)

4.1 Format

How should my newsletter be set up?

This is up to you. Basic word processing software can produce a very credible newsletter. If you would like something a little more formatted, Microsoft Publisher has excellent newsletter templates you can use and adapt, or you can go to an advanced program such as InDesign if you enjoy the process of laying

out a professional-looking publication. Currently, all newsletters in the Kingdom are distributed electronically, generally in a format that allows them to be easily printed out for those who like to read a hardcopy newsletter.

4.2 Content

What should I include? What should I exclude? And how do I get content in the first place?!

The items that must be included in your newsletter are:

- name of the publication
- name of the group
- date (both common era and SCA)
- disclaimer
- Who to contact or where to go to obtain the newsletter
- list of officers and contact information (can be e-mail, if people don't want phone numbers or addresses published)

Items that are "Nice-to-haves" include:

- calendar - this can be a list of upcoming events or it can be a list of when and where the various activities of local groups occur.
- Articles, artwork, photographs, event reports, officer's reports, puzzles, cartoons, event information, etc.

You should not publish rants, tirades, personal attacks, etc. ... In fact, if you are wondering whether or not you should include it, this could be a warning bell. If in doubt, feel free to ask the Kingdom Chronicler their advice.

Getting content is probably the biggest challenge for any chronicler at any level. A few ideas you can pursue to get content include:

For **officer letters**, remind them a couple of weeks before the deadline. Remind them again a week before, a day before...and a day or two after.

For **articles**, try approaching people whose work or writing you have seen, offering a compliment, and then asking whether they might consent to having their work included in your newsletter. A great way of finding possible articles is to go to Arts and Sciences events and look at who has great documentation or research papers. For these people, the hard work of writing is already done.

For **photography**, there are a number of photographers within the Kingdom who have graciously allowed their photographs to be used in an SCA context. All you need do is contact them. They will often provide a blanket release for their work to be used.

If you are in a Barony, your Baron and/or Baroness may be great source of information for newsletters, by providing **news updates**, **recaps of Courts** (the Baronial Herald may also help with this), or **event reports**. In any group, your group's officers may have both letters and news to pass on about the group's activities.

Another possible item for publication is the **minutes** from group officer meetings, if your group regularly has such meetings.

5. Permissions

What proof do I need that I have permission to print someone's work?

The SCA is based on the ideals of chivalry and courtesy. In such an environment, it seems only logical to ensure that you have the permission of the author or artist to publish their work. Permission forms are included in the Society Chronicler's policies. Permissions can be done electronically (even by email) with the same information because an email address is deemed to be a signature.

When a Chronicler receives an email containing a note from the sender stating that they have included a file for use in the newsletter, it is understood that publication permission has been granted by the sender. Make sure to save a copy of the message for your archives.

6. Social Media

How does social media tie into chronicling?

In many groups, especially local groups, social media is fast becoming one of the primary methods for communication with both members and perspective members. Becoming your group's social media deputy is a wonderful way to continue your work as a Chronicler. (Note that the Chronicler, Webminister and the Social Media Deputy can be the same person, or up to three different people.) Become familiar with the Society's Social Media policy, and work with your group to determine which social media presences you wish to establish and/or maintain. Like a newsletter, social media outlets should do the following:

- Inform your members of upcoming meetings, practices, schedule changes, and the like
- Promote upcoming SCA events
- Present a positive, welcoming and open face to prospective members and other non-SCA parties

Commonly used social media outlets currently include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- YouTube

Exactly how social media is used will vary from group to group. For example, your group could have both a Page and a Group on Facebook. The Canton of Petrea Thule does this, using the Page as a way to advertise to the general public and the Group as a place for members of the canton (and their friends) to have discussions.

Please note that as the Social Media Deputy you do not have to write all your content yourself! You can get other people to write content for you, and (if you trust them) you can give them access to your online presences so they can do the updates themselves. For instance, the Kingdom Social Media Deputy has a team of updaters who have access to the official Kingdom of Ealdormere Facebook Page. Remember though, you will need to monitor all updates as it is your responsibility as the warranted officer to protect your group from potential problems.

Also note that for an online presence to be “official” at least two warranted officers of the branch must be full administrators of the account. Generally, these officers are a Social Media officer/Chronicler, Webminister or Seneschal. For instance, the “I Live in the Kingdom of Ealdormere” group on Facebook was originally created by a general member of the population of the kingdom, not a warranted officer, and was therefore not an official voice of the Kingdom. Now that we are getting our Social Media policies in place, the admin of that group has given control of it over to the Kingdom Social Media Deputy.

More information and resources for social media in Ealdormere are available on the Kingdom’s website.

7. Problem Resolution

*Help! There is conflict in my group concerning my position as Chronicler!
What do I do?*

You will hopefully find that most issues can be resolved informally. Your first step should always be a discussion with the person involved in the issue. If that does not work out, who you go to next depends on the nature of the issue:

- For Interpersonal issues, issues with other officers you should go to your Seneschal (and Baron/Baroness, if in a Barony)
- For newsletter-related issues, such as copyright, permissions, etc. you should go to the Kingdom Chronicler

Remember that the Kingdom Chronicler is your superior officer. You have a responsibility to report to them, but in exchange they have a responsibility to support you if you are doing your job correctly.

If you are a member of a group and having an issue with the Chronicler, the same approach applies. Always try to resolve the issue through discussion with the person first. If that does not work, the next step is either the Baron/Baroness or group seneschal, or the Kingdom Chronicler. If a Chronicler is not doing their job by publishing the newsletter, the Kingdom Chronicler is the appropriate escalation point.

8. Reporting

How often do I report? And what do my reports need to contain?

As an officer, there need to be reports. For chroniclers, your newsletter is your report for most of the year.

When you publish you should send a copy of your newsletter to the following list.

- Aside from the subscribers, and according to SCA rules, the newsletter must go to:
- Kingdom Chronicler
- your group Seneschal
- For a Baronial newsletter, the Baron and/or Baroness
- The King and Queen, and the Prince and Princess
- (Optional) Society Archivist

Report copies may be in electronic or paper form. The Society Archivist prefers hardcopy. These copies are not only for the Society and Kingdom archives, they are also your reports to your Kingdom officer. This is not negotiable.

Even if the Seneschal is on your distribution list, remember that this is their copy of your report for their files.

If you are a social media deputy, you should report to the Kingdom Social Media Deputy on December 1st. The Kingdom Social Media Deputy reports to the Kingdom Chronicler on January 15th. You can submit your reports through the kingdom website.

9. Warrants

Do I need to be warranted?

All chroniclers and social media officers in Ealdormere should be warranted officers. This protects not only the kingdom, but you as an officer. Warrants are signed at the beginning of each new reign by the King, Queen and Kingdom Chronicler. If you are unsure if you are on the warrant roster, contact the

Kingdom Chronicler. (Please note, if you are a social media officer, but are already warranted as a webminister or a chronicler, you do not have to be warranted again for this position. But you can be if you want to.)

10. Succession planning

How do I find a successor?

If you'd like to step down, the general approach is to notify the group seneschal (and the Baron and/or Baroness if in a Barony). The list of requirements for Chroniclers listed earlier should be your guiding principals. A couple of other items to note include:

Officers must be paid members of the SCA, Inc. for purposes of falling under our liability insurance. While you do not need to be a member to apply, you do need to be one to serve. There is no requirement for the type of membership--associate or family memberships are just as valid as sustaining or international memberships.

The office of Chronicler does require adherence to deadlines, at least at the Baronial level. You must publish at least quarterly. Please make sure your successor understands this.

There is no residency requirement. If a member considers themselves an active member of your group, they may serve as Chronicler, regardless of where they physically reside.

Appendix 1: Useful Links

Release forms (author):

<http://sca.org/docs/pdf/ReleaseCreativeFillable.pdf>

Model release form (for the subjects of portrait-style or close-up photographs):

<http://sca.org/docs/pdf/ReleaseModelFillable.pdf>

Photographer release form (for the person taking photos):

<http://sca.org/docs/pdf/ReleasePhotographerFillable.pdf>

Social Media Policy:

<http://sca.org/docs/pdf/SCASocialMediaPolicy.pdf>

Twitter tip sheet:

<http://sca.org/docs/pdf/TwitterTipsheet.pdf>

Facebook event publicization:

<http://sca.org/docs/pdf/FacebookTipsheetPromotingEvents.pdf>

How to liveblog an event:

<http://sca.org/docs/pdf/FacebookTipsheetLiveblogginganEvent.pdf>

Chroniclers' College of Ealdormere:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/301479780037543/>

Appendix 2: Structure of the Chroniclers' College of Ealdormere

