

Chronicler's Handbook

**Kingdom of
Ealdormere**

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Introduction - So, you're going to be the Chronicler ...

The reasons for becoming a Chronicler are as varied as the newsletters themselves, but the one thing that most successful Chroniclers seem to have in common is that they love to read. This attribute can help in two ways. First, a love of reading will make the task of editing other people's work less onerous. Second, it gives the Chroniclers another source for filling up the pages because, let's face it, it's not easy to fill up all those pages when the deadlines roll around.

And so, I present to you a new edition of the Chronicler's Handbook for the Kingdom of Ealdormere. Any errors are purely my own.

Sincerely,
Anne le gris.

These policies cover all publications produced by and for members of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., (hereinafter referred to as "the Society" or "SCA, Inc."), and its subsidiary branches.

Chapter 1: Baronial Chroniclers

1. What is a newsletter?

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.

2. What does a Baronial Chronicler do?

A Chronicler is an officer^{1,2} and every Barony must have one. A shire or canton cannot be elevated to the status of Barony without a Chronicler.³

While every Barony 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 the smaller Baronies, 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 be a pretty thin newsletter.

Who can be a Baronial Chronicler?

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 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.”

³ Ealdormere laws, X-303.

The Chronicler must have

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 ..."

It would be nice if the Chronicler also has

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 access (With luck, most submissions will arrive by email. Not only does it save time on retyping, it also reduces the possibility for introducing errors where none existed before.)
- 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.

Other possible duties

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

Some other things to think about are:

- Is the Chronicler also the Archivist?
Often, this is the way things are done in Ealdormere, and a banker's box takes 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 will want to make other arrangements.
- Is the Chronicler also a warranted Exchequer?
 - It used to be the Chroniclers took care of the subscriptions and expenditures for their newsletter. Now it's all done through the Exchequer's office. More information under "Administration" below.
 - There is no rule that says Exchequers cannot also be Chroniclers, but both jobs are a lot of work.
 - The office of the Chronicler cannot have its own bank account.

How do I become a Chronicler?

Normally, there is a call for a replacement. This notice would be either announced at a meeting, sent down 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 Barony wants to go in the near future. Make sure you know when applications have to be in. Then write your letter.

Make sure that you include the following information:

1. State how you meet the requirements as listed by the Barony.
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.

3. Administration

I'm a Chronicler – what do I do first?

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 Baronial Seneschal first. If they have difficulty, ask the Baron or Baroness for advice or help. If all else fails, you'll be starting from scratch and may need to get back issues of the newsletter copied for your files.
3. Talk to the Exchequer about anticipated costs and how to get reimbursed for expenses.
4. Start planning the first issue -- and the fun begins!

How often must I publish?

Baronial newsletters must be published at least quarterly, although it can be published more often than that. Normally, the frequency of the publication is determined by the Baronial Executive.

Money matters

If there is a subscription fee for the newsletter, the Chroniclers must give all subscription money collected to the Exchequer. For all expenses incurred, the Chronicler must be reimbursed by the Exchequer.

For more information, see the Exchequer's Handbook for Ealdormere.

Reporting

As an officer, there need to be reports.⁴ The newsletter is the report for most of the year. The Domesday, however, is separate and must be sent to the Kingdom Chronicler by December 31.

To whom do I send the newsletter?

Aside from the subscribers, and according to SCA rules, the Baronial newsletter must go to:

- Society Archivist
- Kingdom Chronicler
- your Baronial Seneschal (or, in the case of the newsletter being put out by a Shire or Canton, to your local Seneschal)

The first two (Society Archivist and Kingdom Chronicler) **must be on paper**. 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 has a subscription, remember that this is their copy of your report for their files. The Seneschal's copy can be in whatever format agreed upon by the two of you. Just remember these things:

- viruses happen and, unless you are constantly updating your security or backing up your files, you can lose everything. I've seen it happen in the SCA more than once.
- what happened to the British Museum's electronic copy of the Domesday Book.⁵
- this is *your group's history*.

The newsletter must also go to:

⁴ Corpora states: "Local officers are responsible to a superior officer, and possibly Royalty, or a Territorial Baron and/or Baroness, depending on the particular administrative structure of that area." from: *VII Kingdom, Principality, and Local Officers*.

⁵ In the 1980's, the British Museum decided to digitise a copy of the Domesday Book. It took a number of years and, by the time they were done, the technology was so outmoded that (I have been told) they could not read the digitised version. The original, however, is still there and readable -- over 900 years later.

- the King and Queen
- the Prince and Princess

If the King and Queen reside at the same address, only one copy of the newsletter needs to be sent. If they reside at different addresses, a copy goes to each of them. The same holds true for the Prince and Princess.

If the newsletter is available in electronic format, as well as paper, be sure to ask the Royalty which format they would prefer.

4. Format

There are a variety of formats available. Spend some time, before your first issue, figuring out how you would like your newsletter to look. Think about how much work it is for a booklet format, as opposed to an 8.5 x 11 corner stapled. If you have the software to do a booklet, that's great. Not everybody does, and can be a headache if the tools are not available.

Paper vs Electronic

Baronial newsletters can be offered in either hardcopy or electronic format.

If the Barony wants to offer both formats, this needs to be made clear when seeking a candidate for the office of Chronicler.

The prices for these can be the same, or they can differ. Some groups prefer to have the Barony sponsor the newsletter, with it going to any member of the Barony for free. Other groups prefer to have a small subscription price set, which may or may not cover the cost of production.

Price setting for newsletters is a decision normally made by the Baronial Council, on the recommendation of the Chronicler and the Exchequer.

5. Content

What must I include in the newsletter ...

The items that must be included are:

- name of the publication
- name of the group
- date (both common era and SCA)
- disclaimer
- where copies or subscriptions are available, and their cost (if any)
- list of officers and contact information (can be e-mail, if people don't want phone numbers or addresses published)

... and what should I put in?

The items that should be included (or, at least, it would be nice if they were)

- 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.

What else can I put into the newsletter ...

Articles, artwork, event reports, officer's reports, puzzles, cartoons, event flyers, etc. ...

... and what should I leave out

Rants, tirades, personal attacks, etc. ... In fact, if you are wondering whether or not you should include it, this could be a warning.

Care and feeding of writers and artists

There are people out there who love to get newsletters but who never submit anything. Of course, there are also those who seem to think that newsletters spring fully armed from the brow of Zeus, but this section isn't about them.

How do you go about persuading people to put things into your newsletter? Well, before this question can be addressed, we have to try to understand some of the reasons why people are reluctant to submit articles or artwork.

Reason	What you might offer
<p>Some people will tell you that they aren't very good writers.</p> <p>More people than you would think are actually nervous about putting something they've written into the hands of someone else. Think back to when you were in school – the compositions you handed in came back graded and (all too frequently) full of red marks.</p>	<p>Tell them that they don't have to be good writers. That's <i>your</i> job.</p> <p>Offer to help them write an article.</p>
<p>Another reason people are shy about putting their work into print is that they see the articles or artwork of someone else and think that their work will never measure up.</p>	<p>Reassure them that you think their work is worth including – after all, you wouldn't have approached them about it if you didn't think so.</p>
<p>Some people say that they don't know enough about the SCA, or what's going on, to be able to report it.</p>	<p>Ask them to write an event report -- who won the tournament, who cooked the feast and what dishes were offered, what happened at Court, etc. Hopefully, this will encourage them to go and ask questions and meet new people.</p>

One of the basic tenets of getting volunteers for any project is to make it look like fun. If someone appears to be having a good time, other people will naturally gravitate towards it and, eventually, want to take part. If members of the group still don't put in submissions, there are several possible steps to take:

1. Ask the Baron and Baroness for assistance. When they see people doing interesting things, they can help their newsletter by asking people to write about what they are doing -- then follow up. Or ask the Baron or Baroness for a letter for each issue.
2. Ask the Seneschal for similar assistance to that of the Baron and Baroness. Get a letter from the Seneschal -- and if it reminds people that, without a newsletter, the Barony will be in abeyance ... so much the better.
3. Remind all these people that, unless there are articles and artwork handed in, the newsletter will contain only the minimum requirements, then produce an issue of the newsletter that does contain the absolute minimum and, if anyone says anything, have paper and pencil handy to list what they would be willing to contribute to the next issue.

Don't forget that, when you do receive a contribution, acknowledge it. Otherwise the sender doesn't know if it ended up in your junk mail. I'm sure I don't need to remind anyone to say thank you.

Permissions

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.

A permission form has been included in the appendices of this document. It lists the information that you need to have for your files. 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 attached a file for use in the newsletter, it is understood that publication permission has been granted by the sender. Print out the message and keep it in your files.

As a point of courtesy, it is also important to ask the subjects of any photographs if they also give

permission for their likeness to be published in the newsletter. Answers may vary, depending on whether or not the newsletter is distributed in paper or electronic format.

A sample permissions form has been included in the Appendix.

6. *I'm ready to step down*

Well, if you've been doing the job, you probably don't need me to tell you what to look for. After all, you know the needs of your group far better than I do. However, you may want to ask the Baron and Baroness and Baronial Seneschal if they have ideas as to what to look for in a candidate. Being on the outside of an office, looking in, can sometimes provide a valuable insight.

One method of deciding on a successor

Normally, when an officer advertises for a successor, they have a list of qualifications that they are looking for. These qualifications can usually be divided into two lists:

- ❖ The first list is of qualities that a candidate **must** have in order to be considered for the job. Keep this list short, or you may find yourself without any candidates left to consider. For example, a candidate must be a member of the SCA Inc. You may also want to add that a candidate must reside within the geographic area of the Barony.
- ❖ The second list is of qualities that the group would **want** a candidate to have for the job -- like reliable internet access (to be able to receive files by email). If there are a lot of points in this section, designate each of the items as having a high, medium or low importance.

So, let's say that you've received three letters of application -- WOW! Lucky you! Now you (or the Baronial Executive -- if that's the way your group does these things) are ready to start the selection process:

- ❖ Do all candidates meet the "must" list? If one of the candidates doesn't, their name is removed from consideration. If none of the candidates meet all the "musts", you may need to reconsider that first list. Can any of them be moved down to "wants"?
- ❖ If more than one candidate passed the list of "musts", you can go on to the list of "wants" and note whether or not each candidate meets the requirements, starting with the ones of high importance and working your way down the list.

By the time you reach this point, it should be fairly clear.

7. *If there are problems ...*

Where do I go?

- ❖ The Baronial Seneschal may be able to help, or at least point you to a solution.
- ❖ The Baron and Baroness are also good sources of assistance.
- ❖ The Kingdom Chronicler

Chapter 2: Shire and Canton Chroniclers

Shires and Cantons (and other groups of a similar status, like Marches and Strongholds, etc.) are not required to have a Chronicler.

Some groups like to have one, and the benefits are twofold.

First, newsletters can help to record the history of your group. This may seem rather pointless when a group is still fairly new but, as you become more established, and have years of history behind you, you will have only your reports to fall back on. While well-written reports have their uses, newsletters can also include event reports (from the attendee's perspective), articles, songs, stories and poetry that are never included in reports.

Second, if your group decides to try to raise its status to that of a Barony, a newsletter will be mandatory when you apply for the new status. It can help to have a newsletter in place long before it becomes a requirement, because the level of work needed to produce a newsletter can come as a surprise to some people.

If you do decide to have a newsletter, follow the same rules as the Baronial Chroniclers. Where a reference is made to something Baronial (like a Baronial Seneschal) simply substitute "Canton" or "Shire", as appropriate.

Chapter 3: Kingdom Chroniclers

Rather than duplicate effort and run the risk of having this document out of step with the original, the Society Chronicler's Policies can be found at:

<http://sca.org/officers/chronicler/ChronPolicy.pdf>

If, for some reason this address does not work, go to the SCA website, and look for the Society Officers' page.

Appendix I - Reports and Forms

This section of the handbook contains a selection of reports and forms that are useful to Chroniclers.

Domesday Report (due December 31)

For most of the year, the newsletters are the reports.

There is, however, a Domesday Report and it is due to the Kingdom Chronicler by December 31. Copies also have to be made for

1. your Chronicler's files
2. your Seneschal -- if it's a baronial newsletter, it's the Baronial Seneschal; if it's a canton newsletter, it's the Canton Seneschal, etc.

Contact information for the Kingdom Chronicler is available in the Kingdom newsletter.

* * * * *

Chronicler's Domesday Report (Ealdormere)

SCA name of Chronicler:

Membership number and expiry date:

Name of newsletter:

Name of group for which the newsletter is published:

Legal name of Chronicler:

Address:

Phone number:

E-mail address(es):

Normal frequency of Publication:

Number of issues published in the past year:

Have you filed your quarterly reports with your Exchequer?

Questions and / or comments:

Permissions

Here is a sample permissions form that can be used.

Publication Permission Form

I, _____

being known within the Society for Creative Anachronism as:

do hereby grant permission for the (circle the submission type):

article / poem / picture / song / other (describe) _____

entitled: _____

to be used by the newsletter, <insert newsletter name>. I retain all copyright in my work and may grant permission to any other publication or entity to use my work.

I further certify that I am the sole creator of this work and have not substantially based it upon the work of any other person. If others have contributed to this work, or if I have based this upon the work of any person, their contact information is:

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

