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Media and Publication Policies

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Introduction

Events are one of the great things that happen in the SCA, because that's where we get to see lots of good things happening. Many people take photos of these good things and want to show them to other people. News media may be interested in reporting these good things to the world at large. This page is a collection of guidelines:

- how [news media people can contact the right SCA representative](#) ^[4] to visit an event.
- how [SCA representatives should handle requests from the media](#) ^[2].
- our [Publishing Policy](#) ^[3] sets out rules which should help you avoid accidentally breaking NZ privacy laws or upsetting people who may be in the photos you take, as well as other useful stuff.

A Quick Introduction to the SCA for Media People

([here's a printable version of this introduction](#) ^[5])

The Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) is an international historical research and recreation group which, in over 40 years of operating as a non-profit organisation, has gained some 50,000 members worldwide.

SCA members meet regularly to hold medieval or Renaissance-style tournaments, most commonly fighting in armour with sword and shield, as well as enjoying feasts, dancing and other events and activities that recreate "the better part of the Middle Ages".

Many historical recreation groups specialise in a particular time and place. However, the SCA covers a period from 600 to 1600CE in Europe. As part of this, members dress the part, so you may see Viking warriors rubbing shoulders with Italian knights, Elizabethan ladies embroidering next to Anglo-Saxon maidens.

Members are drawn from a broad range of ages and occupations, and it is not uncommon for them to become recognised experts in their chosen SCA field of endeavour, earning academic credentials, acting as technical advisors to the film industry and becoming published authors.

A number of branches have been established in New Zealand over the past 20 years, including groups in Auckland (known as the Barony of Ildhafn), Hamilton (the Canton of Cluain), Wellington (the Shire of Darton), Christchurch (the Barony of Southron Gaard).

These groups are part of the Kingdom of Lochac, which at present covers Australia and New Zealand. The name "Lochac" comes from a reference in the book of Marco Polo's travels to lands south of Indonesia.

Local groups are typically governed by a Baron and/or Baroness as representatives of the ruling King and Queen, with a Seneschal handling day-to-day operations, and a Chatelaine handling inquiries from the public. Media interviews are likely to be handled by one of these people.

Contacting the SCA in New Zealand

Here are [links to web sites of SCA groups in New Zealand](#) [6].

Please contact the Chatelaine of the local group as the first point of call, to set up an interview or when intending to attend an event. He/she is in charge of handling public inquiries and will be able to speak on behalf of the group or direct you to the designated media spokesperson. Here are links to the Chateleines for most of our New Zealand groups:

- Auckland ([Ildhafn](#) [7])
- Hamilton/Waikato/Rotorua ([Cluain](#) [8])
- Wellington ([Darton](#) [9]) - includes Wairarapa sub-group
- Christchurch ([Southron Gaard](#) [10]) - includes Nelson and Dunedin sub-groups

Media Opportunities

Most of the local groups have an on-line event calendar on their web sites which lists upcoming events, with contact details; some of these events occur weekly, some annually. Check these out to see what opportunities are available.

Public Event - eg a tournament in a public park

Please feel free to attend if you hear about such an event. If you haven't made contact beforehand, ask for the Chatelaine when you get there. They will be able to speak on behalf of the group or be able to introduce you to the designated media spokesperson who can provide an interview or organise photo/filming opportunities.

Non-Public Event - eg a feast in a hall or multi-day camping event

Please contact the Chatelaine beforehand to organise your attendance, and to arrange timing and interviews.

You will be required to wear some form of pre-1600 clothing (it intrudes on an event to have

people in modern clothes, and is not considered acceptable for anyone, even the King!).

The Chatelaine can arrange to provide you and any attending crew with suitable temporary garb for your visit, and everyone will appreciate your willingness to honour this requirement.

Other simple ways to blend in better are to wear plain dark trousers/jeans; plain coloured skivvies, collarless shirts, pirate shirts; sandals or boots; a blanket as a cloak (can be used to cover equipment when not in use). Your local SCA contact will be happy to provide ideas and assistance.

You will need to arrange a suitable designated time slot for filming, photography, recording or interviewing, and/or to stay within a designated area if attending a large scale event. This will enable you to get the material you want without unduly impinging on other attendees or causing safety or privacy concerns. The Chatelaine or designated media spokesperson will arrange this with you to best suit everyone's needs.

Tips for SCA people dealing with the Media

When contacted by a media representative, remember that how you deal with them affects how the SCA in general - and your part of it in particular - is perceived by them and, eventually, the broader public. So think of a media enquiry as an opportunity, not a threat.

Be positive and helpful as far as you can. Refer them on to the Chatelaine or your media spokesperson for your group; let the SCA folk know that a media contact is likely to come, and pass on any information you might have.

Things that the Chatelaine (or media spokesperson) should do are:

- ensure that you note the name of the reporter, who they are working for, their phone number and/or email, and any deadline information,
- follow up any contacts promptly, return calls/emails as soon as possible,
- work with the Seneschal and Event Steward, as appropriate, to identify a suitable time and/or location for interviews and recording/filming,
- send the reporter the SCA media briefing sheet (see above) beforehand and familiarise yourself with its information and requirements so you are ready to help,
- try to arrange a suitable interview area, e.g., have a banner or period pavilion as a backdrop for filming; allow radio people to record some typical SCA soundscapes, such as combat,
- consider setting up some activity specifically for filming or photography, e.g., combat, embroidery, dance. Tell your members about this so they can choose to be involved or not; you may want to ensure you have definite volunteers on hand!

However,

- don't expect that the story will automatically run. If it does get spiked, it will help if the reporter comes away with a positive impression as they may pick up the story some other time.
- don't expect to be able to check what's been written before it is published. You can try offering to run an eye over an item to check facts, but don't ever try to rewrite a story draft.

- don't complain over minor inaccuracies. You can ask for a correction or write a letter to the editor if there is an important major one (such as an incorrect URL citation).
- don't expect to be able to pre-approve the use of photographs. Instead ensure that people know that media photography or filming is going on. If they remain, consent for release can be assumed.
- don't charge media for an event. You could try asking for a donation if they are actually eating at a feast (stress the non-profit nature of the society), but treat them as complimentary guests if at all possible.
- don't be afraid to say no. Positive media coverage is nice, but sometimes it doesn't suit the time or place. You can always keep the reporter's contact information so you can proactively contact them should a more suitable opportunity arise later.

Publishing Policy

Here is the SCANZ Publication Policy approved in September 2008 ([HTML version](#) ^[11] and [PDF version](#) ^[12]). Our thanks to Vicki Hyde for her work in compiling it.

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