



IVORY TOWER

shield me from the real world

MARCH, AS 42

WELCOME ABOARD —

AND WELCOME BACK!

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SOME WORDS FROM OUR LEADER

Greetings, fair readers. By the fact that you have this in your hands, we can assume that you've joined the College of St Ursula: and Her 11,000 Virgins and Martyrs – the Society of the Creative Anachronists, the SCA. I congratulate you on your choice.

The SCA isn't just Sydney University Students – it is a worldwide society, which can loosely be described as being devoted to recreating the Medieval Era. The SCA is what you make of it: socializing, combat, learning, making, drinking... But whatever you want to make of it, there will be people there to help you achieve – whether that be learning to fight with sword or bow, or create a Viking tunic, or brew the perfect mead – and then the new friend to drink it with – the SCA is full of people who want to help you.

And I challenge you to find a more welcoming group. If you let them, you have just joined a society of life-long mentors – and friends. It will all seem a bit weird at first, eccentric, wacky perhaps – but as someone who first stepped up to the SCA a year ago exactly, who stood as perhaps you stood, nervous about approaching these strange people in funny clothes, I can promise you that you will have no need to regret it. Whatever you hope to find, we want to help you find it. First and foremost, we are a society of friends. Welcome to our number.
- Ameline



AMELINE GIFFARD, SENESCHAL
seneschal@ursula.sca.org.au

So, YOU'RE NEW?

Then come to Newcomer's Feast! It's the first big feast of the year, and designed to give you an insight into what, exactly, our odd little group is all about. There'll be a heavy fighting tourney, as well - details will be announced on the list.

Date:

Saturday 24 March, 2007

Time:

6:00 pm - 11:00 pm Feel free to rock up a bit earlier and help out - it'll give you a good idea of what, exactly, goes on behind the scenes, and a chance to socialise with some cool people.

Place:

Imar Community Centre, Fitzroy St, Croydon. This is easily visible from the train station (around a 30sec walk)

Cost:

\$15 for new members and booked members, \$20 for booked non-members, \$5 surcharge for not booking (new members excepted).

Organizer:

Ameline Giffard (seneschal@ursula.sca.org.au) Let her know if you have any dietary requirements, or if you have any further questions.

MEET THE OFFICERS

MARSHAL (AND WEBMINISTER, CONSTABLE, CAPTAIN OF ARCHERS...)

Hail and well met. Welcome to the College of St Ursula. My name is Jan (pronounced 'yan') and I am the college's marshal, constable and web-minister.

I've only been involved for a relatively short while (only for the last two years), but I've enjoyed myself a fair bit and am quite involved in archery and combat activities. I was previously the college's Captain of Archers before I accepted the post of Marshal.

As college marshal, I'm here to provide you with information and resources on combat, archery and related activities in our glorious society. Whilst I do not know much about the art of fence, our captain of fence, Lijsbet van den Kerk, can assist where I cannot. I also keep and maintain the college's archery equipment and the college arrows (both combat and target).

As the college constable, I look after general safety and security at events, look after lost property, make sure people sign the required mundane paperwork and encourage people to prevent mundane life intruding into events.

As the web-minister, I maintain the College web-site where you can find the contact details for all the current officers, articles written by collegians, both past and present, and references to other materials which you may find of use in the SCA.

I hope to see you all enjoying your time with us in the College of St Ursula. I hope to see some of you getting involved in target archery or combat in the not to distant future.

- Jan.



JAN, MARSHAL
marshal@ursula.sca.org.au



A&S OFFICER (AND RAPIER MARSHAL, TOO!)

Hi, I'm Louise, officially known as Lijsbett van den Kerk, your friendly Arts and Sciences Officer. A&S covers just about every activity in the society that isn't fighting. This includes everything from making clothing and armour to cooking and brewing to singing, dancing, leatherwork, jewelry making... you get the idea. If it was done in the Middle Ages, you can find it here.

I'll be running weekly meetings on campus during semester for people to get together, chat and work on projects (the well renowned 'stitch and bitch') as well as organising classes on any area of A&S you may be interested in. Feel free to suggest anything you want to know more about, or ask me any questions you may have about Medieval arts and sciences, or the SCA in general. Stay tuned to the mailing list for classes on basic armouring, how to brew your own mead and beer, making shoes and pouches, clothing design and sewing, and many more.

Yours in Service

- Louise



LIJSBETT, A&S
artsci@ursula.sca.org.au

The Poor, Overworked Reeve

Welcome to the SCA!

I'm your Nameless Reeve, but I also respond to Yael (pronounced "ya-el," not "yale"). Hopefully the namelessness won't be for long. I keep the books. Anything to do with funding is my responsibility.

Since I have this dry and often thankless task, you probably won't see as much of me as some of the other officers, but feel free to chat to me when you do.

For any questions you can contact me on reeve@ursula.sca.org.au

- Yael



Yael, Reeve
reeve@ursula.sca.org.au

HAVE YOU JOINED OUR MAILING LIST?

GO TO [HTTP://WWW.SCA.ORG.AU/MAILMAN/LISTINFO/URSULANS/](http://www.sca.org.au/mailman/listinfo/ursulans/)

IT'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

(AND SOME THINGS YOU DON'T)

HOSPITALLER

Hi, I'm Lachlan, the college hospitaller. That's medieval-speak for "person who helps new members and deals with / distributes the college's spare stuff to those who need it". My job is to help you, and I should explain the two ways in which I do so.

First, if you need information about anything SCA-related, I'm your man. Whether it's about who we are, when we meet, what we do, or anything of the sort, chances are either I can fill you in, or, (for the more tricky questions) find someone who can on short notice. Of course, there are many helpful people in the SCA, but it's not their job, they're just really nice people. It *is* my job, so do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you might have. For preference, contact me by e-mail (hospit@ursula.sca.org.au).



LACHLAN, HOSPITALLER

hospit@ursula.sca.org.au

Second, when you decide our club sounds awesome and you want to go to an event, I'm your best friend, because if there's stuff you don't have, but need (for example, medieval clothes, a.k.a. "garb", for a feast), it's my job to try to get that stuff together out of the college's resources for you to borrow. This is not a guarantee that you can borrow anything and everything, but I'll try to get you what you need.

Incidentally, I've been in the college for 4 years now, and have, in that time, done rather a lot of heavy armoured fighting. Hence, though it's not strictly part of my job, I am also happy to help out with giving out information on / getting people into heavy armoured combat.

- Lachlan

CHRONICLER

Welcome to the College of St Ursula!

I'm your friendly college chronicler, and putting together Ivory Tower is my main job. If you ever have anything you'd like to get published (notices, events, articles, comics, puzzles...) I'm the person to speak to. If in your travels you find articles or photos that you think deserve to be published here, by all means, let me know! Otherwise, I'll have to pester people for them... I'd like to say thanks to Ameline and Lillith for helping put this issue together, and I'm looking forward to meeting lots of new faces (although you won't see me around much).

-Lyndsay

HAVE YOU BEEN TO OUR (BRAND SPANKIN' NEW) WEBSITE?

FIND IT AT [HTTP://URSULA.SCA.ORG.AU](http://ursula.sca.org.au)

SO, WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH ALL THE VIOLENCE? A FAQ

What exactly do you do? I've seen you guys hitting each other with sticks, playing with swords, and holding bows menacingly. How does it all work?

We have three main types of combat disciplines. Here's a brief run-down of each:

Heavy Infantry Fighting: Think *Braveheart*, or *A Knight's Tale*. Full contact martial sport using heavy armour (usually about 20kg) and rattan weapons (Rattan looks like bamboo but has solid core, also used for furniture and Kendo swords). Very popular, and has the added bonus of being the combat form that is used to determine who gets to be King/Queen. Both single combat and massed combat (even involving archers) are popular for heavies.



Light Fighting: Think *Robin Hood*, or *Henry V*. Archery (using 30 pound bows and arrows with rubber "blunts" on the business ends), axe- and javelin-throwing, non-contact fighting.

Lights participate in wars, shooting / throwing at heavies and each other. Less armour is needed than in Heavy fighting, because you will not be involved in melee fighting (you won't be hit with sticks, just shot at etc.). Lots of fun, easy to get involved in, and great if you don't want to be **too** close to the action while still getting in on the entertainment.

Rapier Fencing: Think *Three Musketeers*, or *Pirates of the Caribbean* Fighting with blunted steel swords. Think modern fencing but much more freeform: you can use two swords, rapier and dagger, cloak and dagger, etc., and you can move sideways around your opponent instead of just fighting in a straight line.

Isn't it dangerous?

Not really – we see less injuries than Football or Rugby. Because we are aware of the dangerous nature of



combat sports, we have very effective safety rules and procedures, and nobody can fight without first proving they are safe on the field.

How does it work? How do you know who wins, and how difficult is it?

All our fighting works on a simple but effective honour system, backed up by people called “marshals” who help adjudicate. When you are first trained to fight, you are taught “calibration”: how hard you have to be hit for that hit to count. If you are hit that hard in a “fatal” area (head, neck, torso), you “die” (shout out “good”, as in “good hit”, and fall over). If you are hit that hard in a non-fatal area (arm or leg), you forfeit the use of that limb (E.G. dropping to your knees or holding an arm behind your back).



If you don't think the hit was hard enough, your opponent will try to hit you progressively harder until you do – so cheating is really silly and tends to end in a painful experience for the cheat. For light infantry, because they cannot be “hit” by a heavy, they are killed either by being shot/hit with a missile weapon, or by having a heavy walk within 5 metres of them, show the light that they are holding a weapon, and loudly say, “My lord/lady, You are Slain!” or something very similar to the same effect.

Can people like me get involved?

Yes! The more the merrier! All our combat forms are unisex, and there are a number of good female fighters in every discipline. Don't think you have to be tall, strong, or co-ordinated to play, either: some of the best fighters are small, and you will learn how to be more co-ordinated as you go. Also, the SCA is an entirely non-denominational group: we won't preach at you, we're not a cult, and we have members from a very wide range of backgrounds.

Isn't it expensive, then?



That depends on you. To start off, you can borrow equipment until you decide whether you want to continue with fighting. After that, you could get together a simple, but effective Heavy kit for around \$250-350 if you're willing to help make it (we'll teach you how to make it as well), or buy a set of beautiful full plate armour for \$2000+: it depends on your budget. For light, costs are considerably less, around \$100-200 at the cheapest, more if you want nice kit. For rapier, it varies, but it tends to be around the same as heavy, if not a bit less, for a very basic kit.

So, how do I get involved?

Contact your friendly college Marshal (Jan, email: marshal@ursula.sca.org.au), and we'll tell you all the details and give you a hand with anything you need. Alternately, you can always turn up at Rowany Fighter Practice (Burwood Cultural and Community Centre (aka the Double Hall, aka the old Masonic Hall) at Belmore Road, Burwood. Monday night, 7.30pm until late.)

LACHLAN DE HAMELDONE

SO, WHAT IS THIS SCA THING ANYWAY?

1. What is the SCA?

The SCA is the Society for Creative Anachronism. It is a recreational group focussed on recreating aspects of life before 1600.

For the most part, members research and construct clothing, weaponry and other items from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, with Europe being the centre of our attentions. For most of the Middle Ages, the Middle East and North Africa were such important trade partners with Europe (and everyone invaded everyone else so frequently) that there is no border drawn between modern Europe and these territories. Some members also dabble in Roman reconstruction, whereas others prefer Eastern (Chinese, Japanese, Mongolian).

We have a broad range of activities ranging from fighting with practice swords, through costuming, brewing, cooking, dancing, singing and music to textile, equestrian and academic research. Our official events are conducted in period clothing (called garb) and are a cross between a giant dress-up party and a huge game of Pretend.

The SCA was started by a group of medieval history students in Berkeley in 1966 and now has over 30,000 paying members world-wide, with an estimated 60,000 more participants. While the College of St Ursula is for Sydney Uni students, SCA members come from all walks of life and across all age groups, with a lot of family participants.



HELENE AND HROTHGAR,
YOUR BARONESS AND BARON

2. Hang on, I thought you were a Sydney University club?

Well, we are. The College of St Ursula is a registered SU club that is affiliated to the Australian and International SCA. Our fees are much cheaper and our first responsibilities are to the university, but aside from that we interact pretty freely with the local SCA branches, especially the Barony of Rowany (Sydney region).

3. Sounds a bit hippy, doesn't it?

Yeah, you've busted us. The founding crew were all a bunch of unreconstructed hippies who went on to do things like write best-selling fantasy novels and found IT companies. To this day there are an awful lot of caring Californianisms in the governing documents of the organisation.

But we've managed to survive over 40 years, so it's hippy mixed with practicality. We try not to talk about modern politics, and there is a Society-wide injunction against official religious positions (you can believe whatever you like, we just don't care).

4. So what do you actually do?

Medieval stuff. We dress up in period garb for official events and spend our time there doing everything from singing and feasting on medieval food to hitting each other in the (armoured) head with sticks. It's

totally up to you. “If they did it then, we try to do it now, except we don’t have the Plague, we do have equality and we like flushing toilets”.

At our (ungarbed) meetings, we sit around and plan cunning new things and projects and share research and tell tales of what we’ve been up to. Basically it’s a social-club meets craft-group meets martial art meets Lord of the Rings. And yeah, it will come as no surprise to learn that those Berkeley hippies were all Tolkien freaks, too. But you’re welcome to embrace whichever bits take your fancy and ignore the rest, just no elf ears or orc masks.

There are several camping events each year where people stay on site wearing garb the whole time. The biggest of these is Rowany Festival, which is held over the Easter holiday. Around 1000 people usually attend.

5. So would I be a serf?

No. The basic assumption is that everyone is of noble birth, and so the Society prides itself on treating everyone with courtesy. You’re free to dress up as a serf if you like, but you will be treated as a noble who is slumming it.

The nobility concept extends throughout the game. Local groups are usually headed up by Barons and Baronesses, and there are Kings and Queens for each Kingdom. In addition, there are many people who have contributed a great deal to the game over the years that we call peers, although it’s more common that members will hold a simple Award of Arms, known as armigers.



WHILE ELF EARS ARE FROWNED UPON, SILLY HATS ARE ENCOURAGED.



6. Royalty, peers, armigers – WTF?

Remember, Californian hippies. We didn’t make this shit up, we inherited it (long story, ask someone old over a glass of mead sometime). They wanted to have a system of titles and hierarchies that were appropriately medieval. Being American and it being the 60s, they skimmed somewhat on their research and got a lot of things backwards in those early days. Despite the fact that most people in the SCA (including the original set) do things to a much higher standard these days, we keep the early kookiness since most of those guys are still alive and just a little bit scary when it comes to traditions. On the whole, having the royalty and nobility structure adds to the fun of the game. Royalty can hand out awards to people who have added greatly to the Society, and the courts are often very good theatre. Plus it’s an easy way to identify people who have been around for a while and who know what they’re on about.

7. Does this all cost a lot?

Not necessarily. You can, of course, spend a small fortune, but there’s an emphasis on learning to make your own and being self-sufficient. Skills are freely taught and shared, with loaner gear available for newbies.

Hell, now we sound Amish ...

8. Does it take up a lot of time?

Like any hobby, you can spend as much or as little time on it as you feel you want to. We usually encourage students to keep their involvement reasonably low-key – uni costs too much to not pass everything first go – but the SCA provides an easy place to kick back and relax when it's all getting a bit stressful.

9. What's with the kooky names?

Er, yes. One of the things that some of us like to do is invent medieval personae who have real-sounding names, and then we use those names at events. Seriously, how many times do we have to mention the hip-pies? They were all a bunch of mad-keen role-players, too, but they were and are very sweet.

On the positive side, this is a really good way to launch into some serious medieval study as you look for a name and description that suits you and is authentic. Plus it makes it very easy to remember that you're at an event and not accidentally launch into a discussion on the recent current affairs.

10. Are you sure you're not just a bunch of rejects from Nerds FC?

Absolutely. In fact one of the recent presidents of the club is IN the current season. In all seriousness, we do have more than our fair share of transpotters and geeks, but that's because we provide a warm, interesting and supportive environment for everyone.

We also have actors, writers, lawyers, architects, accountants, illustrators, scientists and teachers abungo. Some of our members wonder what the hell they're doing here (the writer has never ONCE played D&D, yet has a comprehensive library of medieval textiles), but we all find areas that capture our interest and expand our knowledge of the world and our own abilities.

11. Do I have to be a wench? (I love this question!)

No. Women have access to all parts of SCA participation and all levels of power. So if you want to be an axe-wielding maniac who runs the treasury of the group, go wild. And if you want to wear a cleavage-enhancing frock, feel free, but be aware that you will drop crumbs down there until you get the hang of things. (I have two words for you – bodice burn.)

The SCA has policies on equality across all groups, so really, you're the only person who can limit your participation.

12. Will I meet girls/boys?

That we can promise you. Of all descriptions and persuasions if you head to one of the bigger events such as Rowany Festival. Whether you like any of them is another question entirely, but you will make friends. The biggest upside of this is that, as an international group, there is often a free sofa available when you travel overseas, just use the SCA connect-a-traveller network before you set off.

13. Is it all just a cover for 'adult activities'?

Every now and then you will meet someone who tries to convince you the SCA is all about getting your kit off. Take a close look at these people and ask yourself: does it seem likely that they regularly get any?



**JOINING NERDS, F.C.
IS OPTIONAL.**

While we're perfectly happy for you to get your kit off with whomever you may choose, that's your business.

14. Do I really have to talk like a Shakespearean actor? (God no!)

No. But we do ask that you not discuss modern (we call them mundane) topics at events. Most people spoke a fairly standard English in the Middle Ages, and it's the same in the SCA. If you speak perfect Middle or Elizabethan English, feel free to show it off, but be prepared for some blank glances. Oh, and the people who speak with accents in the group? They're actually foreign imports, we've got quite a few.

15. Are you all a little mad?

Yes, but if you can't be mad at Uni, when can you be? As for the older members, it's less mad than spending every Sunday at golf.

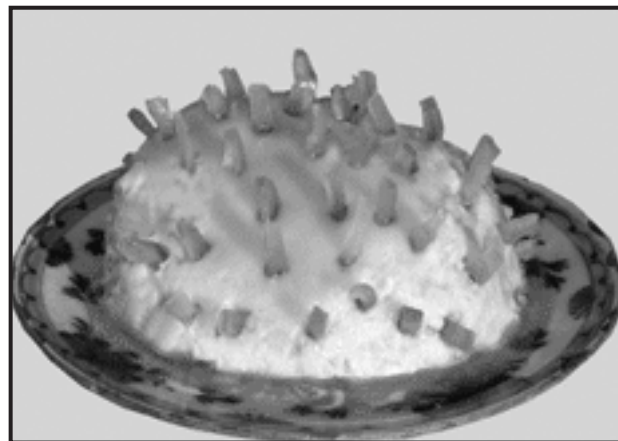
DUCHESS YOLANDE KESTEVEN

A KNIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

A QUAKING PUDDING

INGREDIENTS

3 egg yolks (or substitute with 1 whole egg)
1 cup light cream
2 Tbs. sugar
2 Tbs. rosewater
1/8 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1 cup bread crumbs (I used cubes; see note below)
2 Tbs. melted butter
2 Tbs. currants
6 dates chopped
1/2 cup walnuts



METHOD

Beat eggs and cream, add sugar, rosewater, salt, nutmeg, and bread mix until crumbs are soft. Stir in butter, currants, dates and walnuts. Cover and set aside three hours. Pour mix into a 1 litre oven proof baking dish and bake at 180° C for 45 minutes, or until golden. Serves 6 to 8.

The following sauce can be poured over the pudding:

3 Tbs. butter
2 Tbs. rosewater
2 Tbs. brown sugar (or substitute honey, which I prefer to use)

Melt butter and sugar or honey, mix in rose water. Pour over pudding and serve.

NOTES

Adapted from Dining with William Shakespeare by Madge Lorwin. Stolen shamelessly off Gode Cookery by Lillith, and converted to metric. The photo is actually of a quaking pudding - they were often studded with sliced almonds or orange chips, and are so named because they're so delicate they would shake like jelly - hence the name "shaking" or "quaking" pudding. Although, if you wanted to be properly Ursulan, you could stud it with carrots (It's a long story that needs to be explained over alcohol).

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WEIRD CLOTHES WE WEAR

WHAT TO WEAR

(How do you lace this thing?)

A basic requirement for attending a Society event is that you wear appropriate costume. In general, this means clothing from Medieval or Renaissance Europe (i.e., pre 1600), although some other cultures such as Middle Eastern and Russian are also included, plus some exotics (e.g., Mongol, Hindu, African) as visitors. To begin with, you may be able to put something suitable together out of what you have in your wardrobe, or make a simple, inexpensive outfit if you know how to sew.

If you don't have anything suitable, you can borrow costumes (called garb) from the Hospitaller - a local person who helps newcomers (Lachlan, in your case). Ask if you need to get the garb you borrow cleaned and/or mended afterwards (though often the Hospitaller will do this). If you are asked to clean things, be careful - some fabrics or trims can be destroyed by machine washing and need hand washing or dry cleaning. Check first! (This applies if you borrow garb from a friend as well - they may not think to tell you not to machine-wash velvet...)

Some parts of people's costumes indicate rank or position and shouldn't be used by anyone else. For example, Royalty wear crowns or coronets as symbols of their rank. Anyone can wear a narrow fillet or metal headband, as this was common in some places in the Middle Ages, but it shouldn't have points like a crown. Knights wear a plain white belt as the major symbol of their knighthood, so you should not wear one. Peers may wear an open-linked chain as symbol of their peerage, so you should avoid this too. Many squires wear red belts and apprentices green belts, but these are not actually restricted. There are no restricted colours for other clothes. If you're not sure, ask an SCA member.

Where Do You Get Clothes?

Most SCA people make their own clothes, or get another member to make something for them. Unfortunately, you cannot just trot into DJs or K-Mart and ask for "Renaissance Italian, size 12, please".

Don't worry if you can't sew. We'll teach you! Many people around the Barony have patterns for basic clothes, and instructions for making a simple tunic ("T-tunic", so called because of its shape) are given in this booklet. Beginners' classes are usually held at the colleges near the start of the University year, and other sewing days may be held through the year on demand.

If you see someone wearing something you like, go up and ask them about it. If they made it themselves, they will probably be willing to help you make one too, or if not, they can point you at someone who can. You can often get someone to make a simple tunic in return for help on one of their projects or some similar service; several people in the Barony will make more complicated clothes for relatively modest fees.

Costuming is a highly flourishing branch of the SCA Arts & Sciences. Since the SCA covers a wide time range (from about 600 up to 1600) and all of Europe, plus visitors from elsewhere, there is a vast array of clothing styles to choose from, as simple or as fancy as you please. However, until you have had a chance to see what's available and settle on a style you like, you will need something to wear to your first few events



**OUR CURRENT KING,
JARL ALFAR. YOU, TOO,
CAN WEAR A POINTY HAT
WHEN YOU CAN BEAT
HIM IN A FAIR FIGHT.**

which doesn't look too modern. Below are some guidelines which will help you achieve a medieval look for your first garb; they are not intended to be a precise description of medieval clothes. The general style is an approximation of what was worn in England around the 1200s or earlier, though the basic women's garment with close-fitting sleeves remained as an underdress well into the 1400s through much of Europe. Of course, it's even better to find out what people actually wore, and the best way to do this is to look at paintings from the period or books about the Middle Ages, or the better books on history of costume. Many people in the Barony have excellent libraries and are happy (and eager!) to let you come over and browse.

Fabric and Colour

Fabric

Choose plain fabrics until you have looked at enough pictures to know what medieval patterns were like; they were different from many modern ones (any flower print, for example, will almost certainly look modern). Stick with cotton, linen, wool, or silk.

Cotton drill and head-cloth are cheap and reasonable approximations to the more common linen of the Middle Ages. Avoid knit fabrics - they were not known in the Middle Ages and always look modern. Some polyesters look quite like silk, but most of them do not, especially in large amounts.

Colour

Choose a strong colour and avoid pastels, dayglo orange, lime-green, and shocking pink. Rich crimson, golden yellow, royal blue, or forest green always look good. You can dress up your clothes by wearing layers (e.g., a long green underdress with a shorter red overdress), or by trimming them with simple embroidery around the neck and sleeves. A couple of simple embroidery suggestions are given later in this section.



Men's Garb

For men, a collarless tunic any length from ankle- to mid-thigh is suitable, with long or short sleeves (longer tunics tend to have longer sleeves). You can leave your legs bare or wear hose (opaque tights). If you prefer to wear pants, they should be dark in colour and baggy rather than tight (like sweat pants). Always wear your tunic over your pants, never tucked inside like a shirt.

Boots, sandals, or plain dark shoes are appropriate ("Kung-Fu" shoes from Chinatown are a reasonable, cheap, first approximation to medieval shoes). A leather belt, a pouch to hang from it, and maybe a dagger to stick through it are nice touches. For headgear, you can leave your head uncovered or wear something like a "Robin Hood" style hunting cap (see the pattern at the end of this section).

Women's Garb

For women, dresses should be floor length or longer (not calf- or ankle-length) and have long sleeves. No lady showed her bare forearms in the Middle Ages - this would have been quite shocking! A pattern with a



scoop neck, no bust darts, and long flowing lines is good for first garb. You can make the sleeves close-fitting, or have them loose and flowing at the wrists. Simple clothes generally were fairly tightly-fitted around the bust, loose around the hips, and very wide at the hem. Belts tended to be worn around the hips rather than around the waist, though in the styles of the 1400s belts had moved up to just under the bust (see the illustrations of houpellandes and V-necked gowns at the end of this section).

Most medieval shoes did not have heels (until you get to Elizabethan times), so wear plain, flat shoes, preferably with pointed toes. “Kung-Fu” or folk dancing shoes are both reasonable approximations. For most of the Middle Ages, grown women covered their hair and only young maidens or harlots wore their hair loose. A white veil, held on with a band of braid, a simple circlet, or a padded roll is good basic head covering. If you’re into hats, there is a wonderful variety of head coverings available, depending on time and place.

If the insistence of covering up seems extreme, remember that not only was morality strict in the Middle Ages, but the climate of Europe is cold! If you were living in a manor with stone walls and no central heating, with a metre of snow on the ground outside, you’d be most grateful for long skirts, long sleeves, and headgear.

And Underneath...

Both men and women wore hose (stockings) on their legs. In earlier times these were fine wool or linen bias-cut to provide some stretch, and late in period they were knitted. Long plain cotton socks, opaque tights, or leggings are all good equivalents.

Well, no-one can see what you are wearing under your garb, so the following is mostly for interest, since it’s a subject you rarely see much information on (although, by the way, the medievalness of most women’s clothing is noticeably different depending on whether or not the lady is wearing a bra). Incidentally, a certain amount of casual nudity seems not to have been a big deal in the Middle Ages. You can find paintings of male peasants working in the fields in a shirt and nothing else, village lads swimming naked while noble pleasure parties ride by, or both sexes sitting by the fire holding up their tunics to the warmth, showing all they’ve got. Similarly, there are many paintings of men and women bathing together in outdoor tubs, or of noble ladies at their bath attended not only by their women, but by young men playing music or offering wine.

As underwear, early in period men wore an under-tunic of fine, soft, unbleached linen, which by later times had become a shirt with long full sleeves. In earlier times, when hose were short (around knee-length), men typically wore nothing or a loincloth - a long rectangle of soft linen simply wrapped a couple of times around the hips, tucked over and down through the band at the back, passed under the crotch from rear to front, and the end tucked in at the top. Alternatively, they wore very loose linen breeches like badly cut boxer shorts, held in place by a band around the top edge called a breechclout. As time progressed, the loincloth and breeches developed into a pair of low cut under-shorts with short legs and a drawstring fly. However, when hose became longer and nearly reached the top of the thighs, these under-shorts were



often omitted. (The tops of the hose were laced to the bottom of an undervest, or paltock). Since outer tunics were getting very short at this stage, this led to an outcry against the immodesty of these modern young men, and eventually hose began to be made a little longer and joined along the crotch. As a slit was left in the front seam, something was required to cover it when tunics got even shorter and stopped just below the waist, leading to the codpiece. This reached its greatest elaboration in Elizabethan times, with some quite amazing, er, erections.

Early in period women wore a long (ankle or mid-calf length) singlet of fine, soft linen. This developed into a very full long-sleeved chemise (shirt), though the singlet style might still be worn under a close-fitting underdress. The top edge of the chemise was visible in many clothing styles, and was often decorated. Puffs of the sheer, full chemise sleeves were pulled out through slits in the outer gown sleeves, or between sleeve sections, in some styles (e.g., early 1500s German, Italian Renaissance). As skirts got fuller, increasing numbers of petticoats were added to push them out, and eventually padded bumrolls and elaborately hooped constructions were created to achieve the conical Tudor and drum-like outline of Elizabethan skirts.

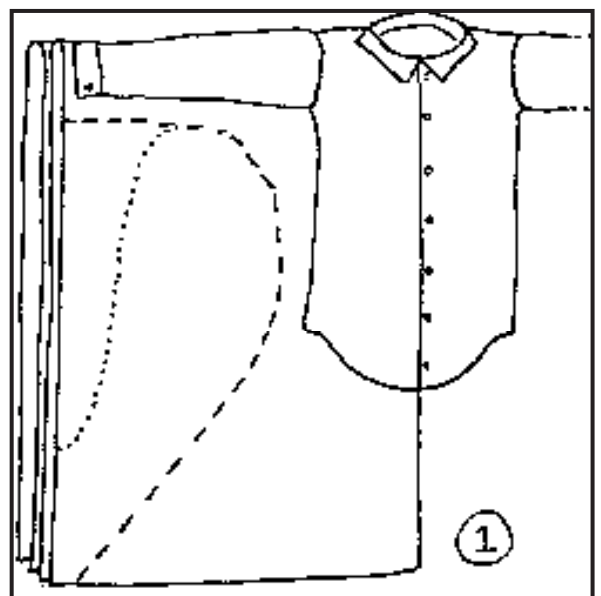


There was no direct equivalent of a bra for women; clothes were tightly laced around the bust, or designed with breastbands to provide support. Once you are used to having relatively tight clothing across your ribs, a breastband can be more comfortable than a modern bra (especially for generously endowed women), as there is no drag from narrow shoulder straps. Corsets started to be worn around the time the Tudor period began, and continued on up to modern times in one form or another. A well made corset is confining but not particularly uncomfortable, though most ladies with later personas say they are grateful to unlace theirs at the end of an event! Underpants for women are a quite modern invention; they were not worn at all in period.

MAKING A SIMPLE TUNIC

The following directions assume that you already have some sewing experience and have made yourself clothes before. If you haven't, you will need hands-on help from an experienced sewer.

For a simple tunic, see if you can find material 150cm wide rather than 110-115cm, as this will make it easier to do the sleeves. Buy twice the length you would like to have the tunic, plus a little bit for the hem. For example, if you are a lady 165cm tall and are going to make a floor-length underdress (as opposed to a mid-calf overdress), you will need twice your height from shoulder to floor plus 10cm or so for hems - say $2 \times 135 + 10$, which is 2.8m. Most women will be able to make a floor-length gown from 3m of fabric. On the other hand, if you are a lord and would like a tunic that comes just above the knee, 2m should suffice. If your material is narrow and you are going to make long sleeves, you may need to get an extra 0.5m to cut sleeve extensions from.



For your pattern, take a long-sleeved shirt or any garment you can get into without undoing. Fold your fabric in quarters and lay the shirt down on it as in Diagram 1. Draw a line around the outside of the shirt, leaving plenty of room under the armpit. Cut the bottom of the skirt out as least as wide as the sleeve width. You can make the sleeves straight or long and flowing; both cutting lines are shown in Diagram 1.

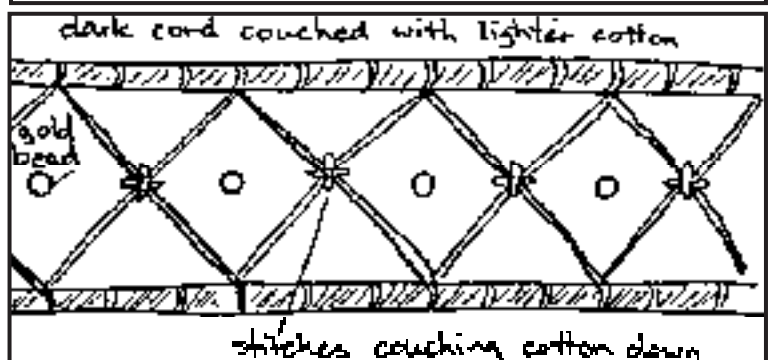
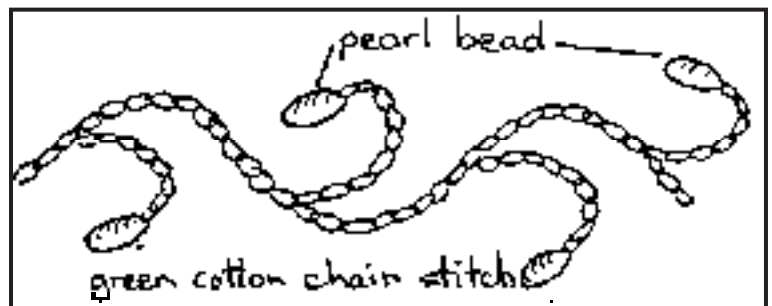
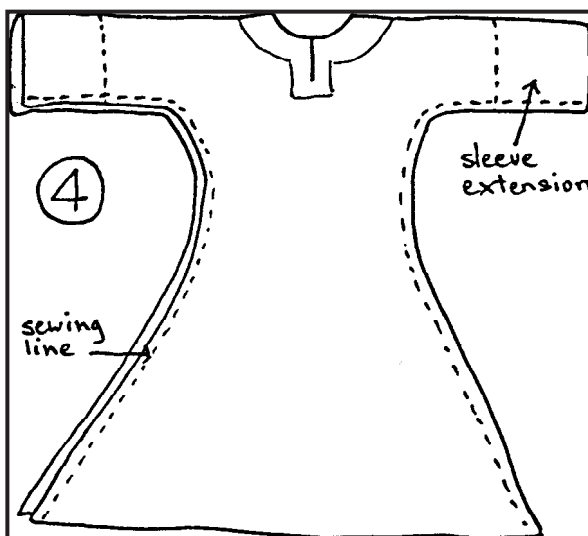
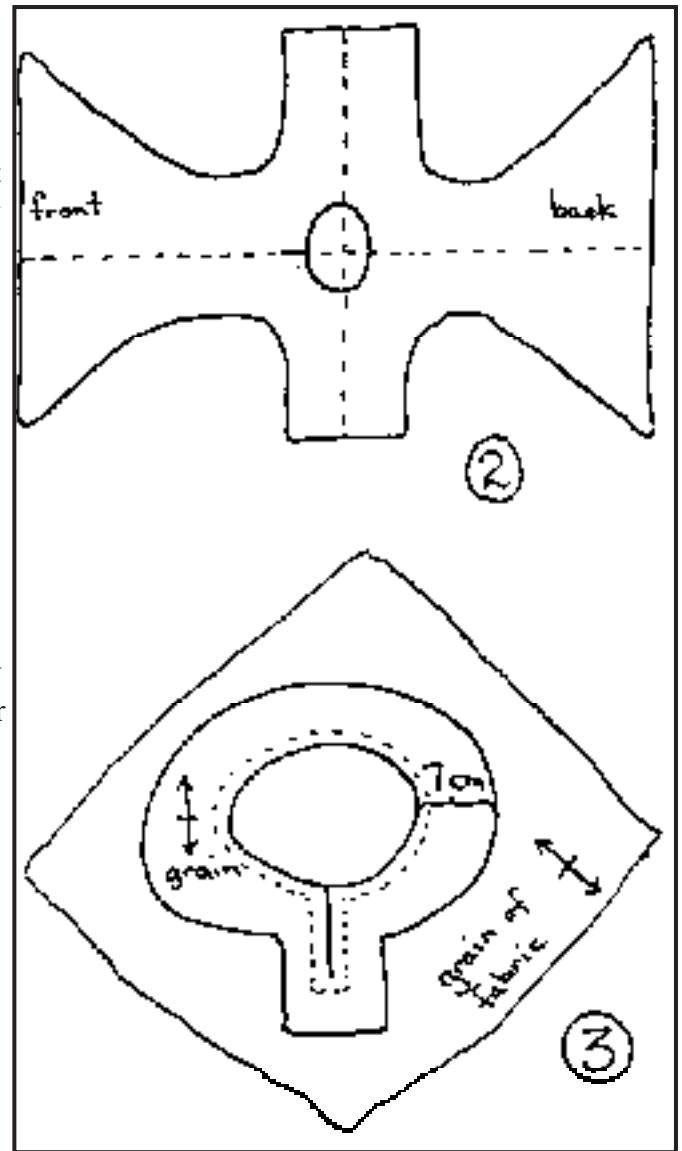
Mark the edges of the neck hole with pins, but don't cut it yet. Cut out around your outlines, spread the tunic out as in Diagram 2, and check the width of the neck opening. It's important not to make it too wide - it should not be any wider than your handspan from tip of little finger to tip of thumb. Draw a nice oval for the neck, a little deeper in front than at the back as in Diagram 2, and cut it out. Make a 6cm slit down the centre front, as shown.

Cut a keyhole-shaped facing on the bias from your left-over fabric as in Diagram 3, finish the outside edges to prevent fraying, and face the neck. Clip the curves and the bottom of the front opening, cut off the top corners at the front opening, and turn the facing to the inside. If you are confident, you might like to make the facing in a contrasting colour, turn it to the outside instead of the inside, and sew it down neatly. This will give you a very pleasing neck accent. A band of the same contrast colour around the bottom of the tunic looks good, too.

Zigzag all the side seams of your tunic, fold it over as shown in Diagram 4, and stitch the side seams 1.5cm in from the edges. Iron the seams out flat. Hem the bottom and seams out flat. Hem the bottom and the sleeves, and you're done.

If your fabric was too narrow for long sleeves and you are a lord, you can just leave your sleeves short. If you are a lady, however, you really need longer sleeves. You will have to cut sleeve extensions from your spare material, and join them to the ends of the tunic sleeves before you sew the side seams. See if you can cut the extensions so that the selvages will be together, so you needn't finish the raw edges.

You may like to run some embroidery around the neck to keep the facing down, or around the arms to hide any sleeve extension seams. A couple of simple patterns are shown below.



MISTRESS ROWAN & LADY YSEULT

For full text and further images, please go to <http://sca.org.au/rowany> then About Rowany --> Newcomer's Book

WHAT'S ON?

THIS WEEK

Wednesday:

Fighting Demo: 2:00-2:30 pm, Main Stage. Exactly what it sounds like. There'll be a demonstration of heavy fighting, as well as a session of Hit the Heavy.

After Pack-up Drinks: Landsdowne Hotel, sometime around 6pm, feel free to meet us at the stall around 5ish and walk with us. Come hang out with us when we're not being all medieval, and with the people who couldn't make it during the day.

NEXT WEEK

Monday:

Meet and Greet: 5pm, Botany Lawns. Come meet other members, old and new, and decide the times for the regular lunch chats and A&S meetings. From here, we'll go in convoy with anyone interested to:

Fighter Practice: 7:30 Till Late. Heavies and Rapier people train here - there's also A&S and plenty of socialising. If combat archery is your thing, this is where you get in touch with the people who run those practices. *This is on every week.*

Friday:

Dance Practice: 7-9 pm, Forest Lodge Primary School, corner of Bridge Rd and Ross St. Like the name suggests, this is where you go to learn period dances, or how to play them on period instruments (it's recommended you already know how to play the instrument before bringing it). *This is on every second week.*

AFTER THAT...

9th - 11th March:

Stowe Fayre III: A fun, catered event in Western Sydney, with markets, collegia (classes on cool stuff), and fighting. See the website, http://www.sca.org.au/stow/Stowe_Faire3.html for more details.

24 March:

Newcomer's Feast: Come to the first major feast of the year at Imar Community Centre, Croydon. See inside for details.

April 5-10:

Rowany Festival: The largest SCA event in Australia, this 6-day long camping event is not to be missed. You'll be hearing all about it in the next few weeks. See the Rowany website <http://sca.org.au/rowany> for more details.