

**Barony of Lochmere
Webminister's Report
December 2012**

Introduction

This month in the Lochmere Webministry, I have a volunteer for emergency deputy and I have done a major overhaul on the website. In the course of this report I will also discuss some of the new features and purposes of our website, our social media presence, and the beginnings of a plan for a social media initiative. My goal with the latter is to begin it in full in February when—reportedly—the Society hopes to release a social media policy.

Emergency Deputy

Frau Annalies Gabriels has volunteered to be my emergency deputy. If approved, her primary responsibilities would be related to the website itself and would not cover our social media platforms. At present, I have asked her to sharpen up her skills on HTML 5 and CSS 3 (etc.) as those are the two languages that have the most “day-to-day” use on our website.

Website Redesign

I have redesigned the website. This redesign should have little negative impact on your normal usage but significant positive impact. In particular, my goal was to make the website friendlier to newcomers and mobile devices.

New Features

The following changes are significant enough to qualify as new features: mobile-ready theme, Open Graph meta tags, redesigned front page, a ‘New to the SCA?’ page, a Research category, redesigned widget menus, and a redesigned navigation menu.

Mobile-Ready Theme. The site continues to use WordPress software for content management. I have changed to a new theme called ‘Lochmere 2013,’ which is a child of the WordPress ‘Twenty Twelve’ theme. This theme is mobile-ready. When viewed in a tablet browser, the background image should disappear but everything else remain relatively the same. When viewed in a smart phone browser, the layout will change to a single-column layout and the navigation menu will change to a button. No content is lost in the process.

Open Graph. I will avoid getting technical here and simply explain that when a link from our site is shared via Facebook or Google Plus, the link will display an image of the Lochmere arms with the word “Lochmere” in gold at the bottom, along with the title of site and page or post linked to. If the page has a description (work-in-progress), it will display the description of the page; if the post has an excerpt (all posts since 26 December), it will display the excerpt text. All post excerpts show up in one of the two widget menus as well.

I request that any officer posting to our Announcements on the website provide both text in the body of the post to describe what you are posting and an excerpt. An excerpt should be a brief, informative description of the content of the post. For examples, see the excerpts displayed on our page right now.



Figure 1 - Demonstration of the excerpt field on a post page and where it will display on a Facebook link and our website's widget menu.

Redesigned Front Page. The front page of our site now contains more ‘About’ information, along with a picture of Their Excellencies and links to our ‘New to the SCA?’ page and next event. Instead of a sidebar, the page has two widget menus on the bottom of the page with next 30 days in Lochmere on the left and with the three most recent announcements and five most recent research posts on the right. This layout was chosen to put the most important information up front and make it easy for newcomers and veterans alike to access the information they would need. The emphasis of this design is newcomers-first.

New to the SCA? The ‘New to the SCA?’ page contains most of the information that used to appear on the front page along with some new information and changed phrasing. I would like to refine it more over time.

Research Category. We now have two main categories of news feed posts: Announcements and Research. The Announcements feed will include all of the posts we have traditionally used the Post option for. The Research feed is meant to include content curation (like the articles currently on the page in this category) and actual research

articles written by Lochmere's artisans. As a result, I am looking for people to help in both of these categories.

Redesigned Widgets Menus. As mentioned before, the site's sidebar no longer appears on the front page, being replaced with two widgets menus at the bottom of the page. All other pages include the sidebar but it should still look quite different from before. Remaining are the "Follow Us" and Search functions. The calendar has been removed from the sidebar and will now only appear on the front page and the calendar page; the site management has been removed completely from the sidebar. The sidebar now includes the five most recent research posts, three most recent announcements, and a category archive list.

Redesigned Navigation Menu. The navigation menu is similar to its previous iteration except much prettier and limited to the top two levels. It has also been re-ordered slightly. The 'New to the SCA?' and 'Research' pages have been added and positioned close to the front. The 'The Dredgings' page has been renamed 'Newsletter' and made a top-level page instead of a child of 'Participate.' And the old 'Links' page has been renamed to 'Resources.' A Login/Logout link has also been added.

Minor Changes

The following minor changes have been made:

- Corrected the seneschal's e-mail address in the script.
- Created achievements of arms and persona pages for all individuals ranking below Lady Earnwynn van Zwaluwenburg in the Order of Precedence. The only exception to this is Lady Madeleine Rose de Cardeville, for whom I have not yet created an Achievement of Arms.
- Re-ordered the Populace > Order of March in conformance with Kingdom Law. There is now no distinction in precedence between Orders of Merit and Awards of Arms.
- Made numerous calendar updates up through the end of the year.
- Added the Proposed Officer Policy and Financial Policy to the Resources > Documents page.
- All dates are now in modern reckoning rather than Anno Societatis; *The Dredgings* volumes are still organized by AS, but the individual issues now say 'January 2013,' etc.
- The Events page is now ordered in ascending rather than descending order.

Known Issues

I have received reports of office e-mail addresses not forwarding. I am looking into this issue, which ultimately originates with Gmail. Also certain lists which did not previously

have bullets in the old theme now have bullets. This is not desired, but I have not yet updated it at the time of this report.

Social Media

My social media focus in December has been primarily on the website. The redesign is meant to be more newcomer friendly. You will see that our About statement says, “We are an organization dedicated *to researching and recreating the history, martial arts, and arts & sciences of Medieval and Renaissance Europe*” (emphasis added). The website redesign and all future website updates should focus on *proving* this. Previously we had very little on our website related to research that was easily accessible to newcomers. My goal is to change this.

Facebook

As of this writing, we have 73 likes on Facebook, up from 66 last month. Our peak weekly reach—the number of unique individuals who saw posts from our page—was 449 between 29 December and 4 January. This was significantly aided by viral reach (*i.e.*, the populace liking and/or sharing our posts) that spiked first to 173 people and peaked at 426 people between 23 December and 4 January.

The most viewed posts were the Achievements for Lord Geoffrey de Cardeville and Lord Eshton Spearcrafter and our Happy New Year post. The most viewed posts that linked back to our website were the Research posts “The British Library Catalog of Illuminated Manuscripts” and “The Dead Sea Scrolls Online.” The most people talking about us on Facebook over a 7-day period was 22, which happened three times.

Twitter

As of this writing, we have 25 followers on Twitter, up from 16 last month, and are following 27, up from 20 last month. We were not re-tweeted at all this month.

Initiative

I am in the process of formulating our social media initiative as it relates to the different major platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Google Plus). My preference would be to use Facebook to celebrate our populace, Twitter for announcements and discussion of website posts, YouTube for advertisements, and Google Plus for more specialized discussion.

Based on my research into social media and into the SCA’s demographics, my suggestion is to focus our attention on college-educated individuals between the ages of 25 and 34

with an interest in Medieval and Renaissance history and martial arts. The reason for this is that the SCA's current demographic shows that the largest segment of our population is between the ages of 35 and 44, more than 53% have attained at least a bachelor's degree, 70% have an interest in history, and more than 50% have an interest in the martial arts. Please understand that stating these people should be our focus is not the same as saying we should ignore all others.

Conclusion

On the off chance you made it this far (hi honey), our web focus this month and going forward is gearing more strongly to newcomers. On the website, I hope to achieve this with a cleaner design, more news of interest, and more photos and artwork (I can dream); on Facebook, my goal is to celebrate our populace and, more importantly, encourage our populace to celebrate our populace; on Twitter, I hope to engage our followers and those we follow in discussion that can lead back to our website; on YouTube, I hope to point people to our website and our events with viral advertisements; and on Google Plus, I hope to encourage discussion of more specialized topics.

Having said all of that, I can only do so much by myself. This is especially true once the semester begins, assuming I am still employed. *I need volunteers.*

- Content curators to find items of interest to our target demographic and to make blog posts about them;
- Researchers to post their own "How To" guides, especially on topics that may not be easily researchable on the internet.
- Populace to comment on, like, and/or share our stories on the website, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Deputies to focus on each of the platforms.¹

This is not me asking people to take on more work (although, really commenting and/or sharing Facebook posts isn't really work); I am looking, ideally, for people who don't already have an office and want a way to get involved in the SCA. Social Media is a big push at the Kingdom and Society levels. Rewards will come to those who help.

Your Servant,

Señor Santiago Ruiz de Zaragoza
Webminister,
Barony of Lochmere

¹ Ideally, I would like at least one content curator deputy in charge of making three posts per week, a Facebook deputy, a Twitter deputy, a Google Plus deputy, and a YouTube deputy.

Appendix: Daily Log

For those of you who *really* like minutiae, here is a log of most of the updates on a daily basis.

Website Updates

- Sorted The Dredgings on its page – 4 December 2012
- Corrected an issue with the e-mail script for the seneschal pointing at a .com domain rather than a .org domain – 5 December 2012
- Created a Device Image and Achievement of Arms for Lord John Arghile (Arghille Buchanan), added a page for his information, and linked it to the relevant court reports and awards. – 5 December 2012
- Added Spring Coronation, Night Out of Town, Spring Crown Tournament, On Target, Pennsic, and Battle on the Bay to the calendar. On a side note, be advised that Pennsic is one week earlier and one day shorter this year. It closes on Saturday 3 August – 6 December 2012
- Sent an e-mail to Master Talorgen inquiring about acquiring the domain name <http://LochmereSCA.org/> for use with bit.ly to make shorter links available on flyers and such. The difference between <http://lochmere.atlantia.sca.org/participate/events/nott2013/> and <http://LochmereSCA.org/nott2013/> for ease of remembering should be fairly evident. – 6 December 2012
- Made a news post concerning and including the proposed officer policy, which I also uploaded and attached both in the post and on the Documents page. – 6 December 2012
- Scheduled a news post to the website reminding the populace about the closing of the commentary period. It was scheduled to post on 18 December at 0800. – 7 December 2012
- Added Avice, Christian, Bev, and Mary Agnes to the Officers ~~calendar~~ list.² – 7 December 2012
- Uploaded the financial policy to the Documents page and the Midwinters page. – 7 December 2012.
- Created an achievement of arms for Master Corun MacAnndra and created a page for his achievements in our OP. Also updated the Order of the Eagle's Feather to link to Master Corun's page. – 10 December 2012
- Added the deadline for commentary on the baronial policy to the calendar page. – 12 December 2012
- Updated the site to Wordpress 3.5 and created a backup. – 12 December 2012
- Updated Gabrell's achievement of arms, added it to his achievement page, and added the award listing as well. – 12 December 2012

² That was a joke.

- Created a new achievement of arms image for Mischa and a page for his achievements, and added links to the relevant court reports and award orders. – 15 December 2012
- Made a minor change to the verbiage on the home page, changing the links for the e-mail list and site registration from “Click here” to “Join the E-mail List” and “Register for our website” respectively. This is for the purpose of Search Engine Optimization. – 16 December 2012
- Created pages for previously existing Achievements of Arms I had created in April—they were on the Facebook page, but not in our OP: Aeddán Ivor, Alanna of Volchevo Lesa, Caitilín inghean Uí Laoghair, Christiana Irina Chaikinaia, Hrosvitha von Celle, Ormswyn of Aclei, Quhinten de Rath, Theodore Billingsley of Kittredge, Tonwen ferch Morien, and Vels inn Viggladi . Also created an Achievement of Arms and page for Lord Walter Bowman. – 17 December 2012
- Frau Annalies Gabriels has volunteered to be my emergency deputy for the website. I have no quarrel with this and will submit her name to Master Talorgen for warranting if there are no objections. – 19 December 2012
- Upgraded the Lochmere website! Changes: moved The Dredgings back out from under Participate to its own link called Newsletter; renamed News to Announcements; renamed Links to Resources; moved the bulk of the newcomer info from the landing page to a prominent new New to the SCA? page. New features: mobile-ready, Author “About” sections to posts, different front page (feature page). – 20-21 December 2012 (40 hours so far)
- Deleted a number of unused/outdated plug-ins that are no longer necessary due to being built-in features of the new theme. – 24 December 2012
- Soft launch of the new site theme because I deleted the plugin that the previous navigation menu was built off. Made various updates to the CSS to try to make the old design of our pages look correct now. – 25 December 2012
- Sorted The Dredgings on the Newsletter page. – 26 December 2012
- Changed the dates on the Events page from AS to modern reckoning. I realized I was probably the only one who appreciated this novelty and I wasn’t really appreciating it anymore. – 27 December 2012
- Added Kingdom Twelfth Night as a Baronial Progress to the Calendar. Also corrected the time and added a link to the Midwinter’s entry on the Calendar. – 28 December 2012
- Re-ordered the Events page in ascending rather than descending order (i.e., 2012 is at the top of each group). – 28 December 2012
- Re-ordered the Order of March to conform with Kingdom law, removing precedential weight from Orders of Merit and Orders of High Merit. This had very little impact on the ordering of individuals holding a GoA, but shifted those with AoA-level awards significantly. This also required a change of dates in the list as many individuals whose date of precedence was more recent shifted back to an earlier precedence date (e.g., my date of precedence shifted from June 2009 to September 2006). Also changed “Armigerous Awards by Precedence” to “Armigerous Orders and Awards” for all individuals holding armigerous awards. Changed “Bestowed Peers/Peerages” to “Peers/Peerages.” Created the following pages in our Order of Precedence: Christian the Younger, Cadfael ap Madoc ap

Dafydd, Andrew of Lochmere, Sean Butterworth of Ridge Woods, Christian of Lochmere, Marcus Galmrson, Joseph of Lochmere, Dan of Lochmere, Lady Elaine Landers, Lady Erennach the Lost of Lochmere, Lady Symone de la Rochelle, and Lord Eshton Spearcrafter, for whom I also created an Achievement of Arms. The OP is now complete and correct for all holding only non-armigerous awards, awards of arms, and most of those holding grants of arms. – 28 December 2012

- Updated the copyright to 2013. – 1 January 2013
- Created a new category with subcategories for our News posts. Now anything that is an announcement goes into the Announcements category or its subcategories. The default is Baronial Updates. The new category is Research, which has its own page. Items posted to Research will not show up in the Announcements feed and vice versa. – 2 January 2013
- Set up a Facebook Open Graph profile so that when links are shared they will show a custom logo, the name of the site, name of the post/page, and a description based either on the Description (for pages) or the excerpt (for posts). – 2 January 2013

Social Media

- I have scheduled a number of tweets up through 1 May 2013 in order to ensure that we will have social media activity even if I am busy and unable to get social media assistance.
- I created a Follow Friday list for our Twitter account to recommend people (primarily SCA groups) en masse. – 12 December 2012