

The Company of Saint George

Philosophy and Expressions



The Company of Saint George

An Introductory Booklet

Proposal Copy—October 1992

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Introduction

The Company of Saint George, inspired by the tournament societies and secular knightly orders of the 14th and 15th centuries, attempts to foster attitudes of chivalry through the tournament experience. Our methods are in keeping with elements of philosophy which link and identify members, and are chiefly through the example portrayed by our members.

Mindful that there is a danger of appearing to be a "super-chivalry" group, we have made the commitment to seek out new members who may not be formally knighted within the Society for Creative Anachronism. We are trying to bind our individual examples together into a single, fluid voice to communicate the chivalric ideal with greater volume. By seeking out candidates who are not members of the order of chivalry, we can reinforce that our ideals are a special subgroup and emphasize elements of appearance, attitude, and prowess in a slightly different way. In addition, period tourneying societies were often inclusive of squires or men at arms, especially as the expense of maintaining knighthood steadily rose.

The philosophy which identifies our companions does of necessity share certain elements. I have attempted to identify many of these attitudes in my Book of the Tournament, but points are open to discussion and should be thought about carefully by all members. To summarize these elements, members believe that the tournament, and indeed the fight, is more than a martial art arena; it is a testing ground in which virtues are chosen or abandoned and upon which the most important coin of the tourneyer is earned—the coin of renown.

Because by accumulating renown we can build an example which speaks to many people, by defining victory not by who was left standing but by the success of both combatants in conducting themselves in a knightly and chivalrous manner (including prowess and chivalry), everyone can emerge victorious from a given fight.

In addition, the company considers it crucial that members uphold a high level of authenticity. It is important to our successful communication with everyone involved with the fight and indicates sincerity in the effort. Without this form of integrity, our statements of chivalry would lack any context and would not achieve the same level of effectiveness. To this end, we actively encourage and promote field

appearance as an integral part of the tournament of chivalry.

Bearing these similarities in mind, the Company hopes to bring in new members throughout the known world who share the same values. With the help of new talent we can build an ever-growing example of our chivalric beliefs and intent, combining philosophy and appearance.

Charter

Composed by Gavin Danker
Modern English rendition by Brian R. Price

The Great Charter of the Company of Saint George

Modern English Version

May all know by this present charter that we the Company of Saint George do swear and declare before God our faithful obeisance unto the noble art of arms.

Whereas we declare that the true joy of combat proceeds not from the base spirit of pride, nor of vainly striving one against the other, but is only from honor.

We hereby proclaim that with God's grace this company shall endeavor to increase advance, and uphold the banner of chivalry as it was practiced by our noble ancestors, and swearing the same do we hereby ordain these maintainances:

❖ *That every companion shall strive through speech, manner, and appearance to present forth the very mirror and example of a gentleman of Christendom.*

❖ *Also that every companion shall revere such goodly arts and mysteries of past days omitting neither their practice nor their patronage.*

❖ *Also that every companion shall take such care of his arms harness and raiment and all appearances that be in accordance with his conviction that neither shame nor stain shall befall the company. And that he shall accept such guidance and counsel in regards to the above as seems meet unto the same.*

❖ Also that every companion shall endeavor to better himself in his use of arms all pursuits that belong to a gentleman.

❖ Also that any that may become a companion may be in some way known to the company that his merits and advantages are known unto all.

❖ Also that the companions shall gather no less than once per year for a special feast, with their consorts, to address the company and administer to the same, and to share agreement together, by custom being the feasts of St. Crispen and St. George.

❖ And also that companions be known by a red garter worn below the left knee, bearing the motto, "Honestas Supra Omnia" (Honor above all), and by a black cloak bearing a badge of the same garter worn upon the left breast.

May God serve us in our endeavor. Done this Feast of Epiphany in the year Nineteen Hundred and Ninety Two of our Salvation at Urbs Angellorum.



Conditions of Admission

It is our hope that our example will inspire others to desire membership within the company. In this effort we can steer some people closer to our ideals and discover those who really are of like mind but who we just don't know.

In order to be admitted to the order, I propose the following guideline, which is really just a formalization of our current standards:

1. The candidate must share the common beliefs concerning the purpose of the tournament, the general nature of chivalry, and of the importance of authentic and striking appearance and they must be recognized by the company for being "of like mind." (in the words of Sir Michael St. Sever).
2. The candidate must already be well known for the above traits, to the extent that they have an excellent reputation with the populace and within the company.

Election to the Order

1. The first step of the election is becoming an associate companion. Anyone can become an associate by simply asking the company for admission. It is highly recommended that a beautiful time for this would be at Company sponsored gatherings, and that a measure of chivalric splendor accompany the request—tell us why you think the virtues we defend are important to you.
 2. The companions then get to know the candidate individually, become familiar with his ideas and with their practice, and recommend his candidacy to the other members. While this is in effect the associate wears a plain red garter below their left knee to signify their efforts and desire.
 3. If either party decides that the relationship is not working, it can be easily dissolved. A person might wear the garter of an associate for a long time or a short one, depending upon how well the company feels that their views address the ideals as put forth in the charter. Some might feel more comfortable being supporters ad infinitum.
 4. If both parties determine that the supporter should become a companion, then they are asked formally. Generally an informal company consensus is all that is required for membership.
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A time and a date is then set for the investiture, and as many companions should be present as possible. Within the order, agreement should be made in advance concerning who will be the two companions to bring the cloak and who will offer the garter.

Companions in new foreign areas

Since our goal is to extend our example as widely as possible, it has been our intent since the beginning to extend membership outside of the Western region and into areas where we already know individuals are ready for membership.

The Pennsic war is the most likely possibility for introducing the company's ideals and offering membership. Other wars, including West / An-Tir, Estrella, and West / Caid might also serve as excellent vehicles to introduce the ideals of our company to far-away persons known to us.

The Investiture Ceremony

Normally, the candidate has been notified by a pair of companions. These two are the same two who act as informal "sponsors" and place the cloak on the shoulders of the candidate.

Once the candidate is brought before the gathered companions, either the order's herald or a companion close to the candidate reads the following words:

" _____ ", include titles,

"Mindful of your prowess, chivalry, and dedication to the authentic field appearance, and recognizing within you a spark shared by these companions, you have been elected as a candidate to the Company of Saint George."

"Do you understand the purpose of the company, and what is expected of members?"

"Do you agree to continue to pursue the example you have set forth which has caused the notice and appreciation of the companions?"

"Is it your intention to accept membership in the Company of Saint George?"

If the answer to all of the above is in the affirmative, the ceremony continues.

"Then it is our pleasure to welcome you into our company, joining your voice with ours so that our combined example might cause others to strive for greater excellence."

The candidate is invested with a black cloak bearing the company's device, which they can wear until either they obtain their own or a new candidate is to be invested. The two companions who notified the candidate now place the mantle on the candidate's shoulders.

When they step back, a third member secures the garter while the following is read:

"Bear this garter with pride, but not with vanity, allowing it to remind both you and others of your continued commitment to the like-minded chivalry we all share."

Let it remind you always that the virtue of humility is all that will keep the Company alive, and that any one of us could destroy it with but a single action."

At this point, the Knight of Honor should pose the chivalric question to be answered at the next company function.

Sample Questions: *"How could a knight best show his chivalric beliefs in war?"*

"What are the three most important knightly virtues, and why?"

"If a knight finds his fealty to his king in conflict with his duties to his consort, what should he do?"

The companions greet the new members, and the ceremony is ended.

Rights and Responsibilities

All companions vow to bind themselves to the chivalric ideals as put forth in the company charter. The hope is that they are binding themselves to continuing what they have done so far, with a renewed responsibility to maintain a high standard of authenticity in conduct and appearance.

There are a variety of methods the company can use to illuminate its chivalric display and educate people in the values and the historical context. It is the companion's responsibility to seek to advance these values and this education while at the same time not falling to the sin of vainglory. The companion must:

- ❖ Maintain a high standard of field appearance
- ❖ Without fail, acting in accord with the chivalric code to the extent that the companion's renown is pure and pristine, holding the virtues of chivalry over the desire to win.

The companion must take no action that would bring the perception of stain unto his name, and should understand that there is a delicate balance between perceptions for which the companion bears the primary responsibility.

The virtue of humility cannot be emphasized enough for a companion—as we said before there is a very great danger of the company engendering hostile comment by appearing cliquish, elitist, or snobbish. The actions of a single companion could bring down the reputation of the entire company.

When things go wrong

Should the unhappy occasion arise when a companion has indeed brought stain unto the company by unthoughtful deed or phrase, then he should be strongly rebuked by the companions and severely warned. There must always be an attempt to secure the companion's point of view, yet it should not be forgotten that the primary responsibility for the perceptions of others rest firmly with the companion.

Should the event find repetition, then the companions should consider a more stern action, up to and including expulsion from the order.

Should the worse occasion arise and a companion intentionally breaks the chivalric intent, I suggest that their membership in the company be terminated or not according to a special meeting of the order. This should also be done with consensus.



In the event that the company fails in it's purpose, falling into vainglory and disrespect, the companions should meet and disband the company before further damage is done.



The Knight of Honor Proposal

Since it is the intent of the company to actively encourage chivalry within the company as well as outside of it, I propose the institution of a post known as the *Knight of Honor*.

The *Knight of Honor* need not be a formal SCA knight; just as a Knight Marshal need not be a member of the chivalry.

The *Knight of Honor* is a tool to recognize outstanding instances of chivalry within our own ranks. Since we have an event coming up in October, that would be a fine time to choose the first *Knight* from the Pas D'armes field.

The *Knight of Honor* should be responsible for naming his successor, by carefully observing the companions on the field and by taking the counsel of other members. When another companion goes far beyond the expectations of the members and succeeds in bringing great honor to himself, his consort and the Company, he (or she) should be recommended to the current *Knight*, who makes the final decision.

In addition the *Knight* should make themselves available at the Pas D'Armes to counsel the ladies observing the event and in the selection of the most impressive defenders and opponents.

They also pose a "chivalric question" of their own devising at the investiture ceremony, to be answered at the next Company function. Preferably, the question should be answered in essay format (so that we

can print it in the newsletter as a point of philosophy).

It would also be meet that the *Knight of Honor* bear a gold chain of office which will identify him at high court events and at times of great ceremony.

The *Knight's* tenure should last no longer than a single year.

Badges, Accouterment, Company items

The Garter and the Cloak

As the charter states, the only two elements of accouterment for companions are the garter and the cloak. Generally the garter is given by a current member of the company, but it is the responsibility of the companion to secure a black cloak that can bear the badge of the order. The badge is secured to the left breast of the cloak as shown:

Garters for Associates of the Order

The garters for the supporters can be found either with one of the companions or a garter can be made by the candidate himself. A good quality of red leather, 3/4" wide, should be used.

A chain or plaque belt for the Knight of Honor

I propose that the chain for the Knight of Honor be cast by hand and assembled in the style of the 15th century chain of maintenance. This should be carefully done to avoid conflict with SCA traditions and conventions. It should be possible to enamel the company's badge on the links. Alternatively, if the chain is found to be too divisive, then perhaps a plaque belt could be made.

Company of St. George Tokens of Valor and Chivalry

These are bronze pins etched with the badge of the company, and are designed to be work by companions and given to those not in the company who perform outstanding acts that further the cause of chivalry on the tournament field. It is meant to be both a personal and an company encouragement tool for giving positive gestures when we see something special. It should be given for a specific action and it would be a special mark of courtesy to include a written citation by the order for inclusion in the St. George's corner of *Chronique*.

The Great Charter

There are plans to make a calligraphed and illuminated version of the company charter, the old English version, that appears in Appendix 1 of this booklet. The English has been commented favorably upon by several individuals of note, and should make for a very nice piece of company accouterment. It should be displayed at Twelfth Nights and other arts events to increase the level of education concerning the company's intent.

King Rene Herald's Tabard

We would like to create a King Rene style herald's tabard for use at the Pas D'armes. Done in black and red wool, it bears five embroidered badges of the company on a quartered field.

The Book of the Tournament

Much of the philosophy that guides the company has been put forth in a book written by my hand, the so-called Book of the Tournament. In this book, I have attempted to isolate the elements philosophy and practice that bind the companions together.

I have circulated comment copies of the book widely and have received many excellent suggestions. It is my intent to publish this work over the summer of 1993, for release at Pennsic War.

Additionally, there are plans to illuminate and calligraph, on vellum, a copy of the book which will serve as another piece of accouterment available for companions. Although the patterns of syntax and much of the content in the book does not follow the format of existing tournament treatises, it was my intent to discuss the modern tournament and it's parameters in a fashion that would extend philosophy into every aspect of the tournament experience, emphasizing the critical importance of virtue over victory. The need for plain English and modern organization seemed to clearly communicate the ideals seemed to be strongly outweigh the gain that might be made by couching it in Middle English (ish) terms.

Newsletter

The company does not have a newsletter per se, but there will be a regular feature in *Chronique: The Journal of Chivalry* where company announcements and such can be made. Here too might be found accounts of events and deeds undertaken by companions and other chivalric exemplars. As a personal matter, I request that companions each make a written contribution to the journal to continue their education and to communicate their ideas to others.

Philosophy of Field Appearance

It is difficult to sum up and communicate the importance of maintaining an authentic, aesthetically pleasing field appearance. Companions take on a commitment to increase the value of their appearance, and to heed to views of the membership concerning elements of their appearance that could be made more authentic, striking, and coherent. However, all such comments must be made with the utmost of tact, respect, humility and diplomacy.

Every time a companion, or indeed anyone else, takes to the tournament field, they bear their reputation (what I call renown), as the only important accouterment.

A combatant on the field of honor is a *Knight in Shining Armour* for all who bear witness to the fight, and as such a the combatant bears a

severe responsibility for advancing the causes of chivalry by maintaining an appearance that is compelling. If a sharp, crisp appearance can be made, then more attention is drawn to the combatant and the example of chivalric conduct is enhanced. Likewise, if he makes a mistake more will take note, and this pressure to perform chivalrically acts to keep him more in line with his perception of the chivalric virtues.

Authenticity is important to maintain the connection with our ancestors and to underscore the power of the chivalric model. Inaccurate elements of field appearance detract from both the educational goal and from the aesthetic power of period art.

Elements of harness should be bold in their execution, shying away from gaudiness and preferring instead an understated, simple beauty. The elements of the armour and accouterment should be of a single period, to the best of the companion's ability and knowledge, and

should fit together so that the companion avoids the "tin man" appearance so destructive to the powerful grace that should earmark knightly combat.

To the companion, an authentic field appearance should be one central theme in his continuing search to better his chivalric efforts, enhancing the pursuit of virtue and the avoidance of vainglory.

Company Events and Sponsoring tournaments

The first event held by the company was feast to celebrate the victory of King Henry V of England over the French at Agincourt, 1415. This event was held on the Feast of Saint Crispin, 1991, and has become the approximate date for our Pas D'Armes and annual feast.

At the feast, companions, guests and entertainers gather in a medieval hall, in either Northern or Southern California, to spend an evening together in the spirit of high chivalry. Companions often speak of ideals, virtues, or exploits, and the tone of the evening is one of magic that serves to rejuvenate the spirit of chivalry amongst the companions. For 1992 we are staging a Pas D'Armes in conjunction with the feast, at which will be chosen the Knight of Honor and several new members inducted into the order.

Other events might include brief ceremonies at events to celebrate the taking of a squire, the passing of an important saint's day, or other occasions yet to be suggested.

The Pas D'Armes

It is hoped that the company can get into the habit of sponsoring tournaments done in a more period style than what has been done in the SCA. The Pas D'Armes seems to lend itself well to enhancing the chivalric tone of our exchanges. If done in conjunction with other events, they can spread the flavor of our chivalric beliefs to the more mainstream populace.

Below is a copy of a sample Pas D'Armes announcement I proposed and which we might use as a template for future encounters:

**A CHALLENGE FROM THE COMPANY OF SAINT
GEORGE
UNTO ALL WHO WOULD MEET THEIR NUMBER
IN HONORABLE COMBAT**

A Pas D'Armes in the style of the 15th century

Desirous of testing themselves upon the field in prowess and chivalry, the Company of Saint George does hereby offer a challenge to all those who would meet them in honorable combat. The combat will take place on the grounds of either the Church of St. Clements in Berkeley or at a park in the same locality, on the morning of November 7, 1992.

Item: The combat is to be fought for honor only, and not for gain.

Item: A King of Armes shall be selected to cry the challenge throughout the camps in the weeks preceding the tournament, and shall announce combats as they occur. The King will draw the challengers together into a group, with their pennons, and introduce them to the company, and then the reverse.

Item: The members of the Company present, which may include any of the following, will at this time offer themselves for challenge: Duke Sir Hanno Von Halstern, Duke Sir Stephen of Beckenham, Earl Sir Brion Thornbird Ap Rhys, Viscount Sir Fabian Arnet, Viscount Sir Steven of Norham, Viscount Sir Drew Fortesque, Sir Michael St. Sever, Sir Wiglaf

Wilfridding, Lord Gavin Malcouer, Lord Chaedrych the Innocent, Lady Eichling Von Avrum, Lord Brion of Bellatrix and the Lord Kevin.

Item: All combatants must read the rules binding the encounter and swear their adherence to them.

Item: Each combatant must provide himself with a Pennant bearing his device, much in the same manner as it is for Crown Tournament in the West.

Item: There will be for the challenge a Tree of Shields; the shield sable for group encounters, with no limit on numbers; the shield purpur for equal numbers in group encounters; the shield azure for single combats at the barrier; and the shield argent for encounters with matching

weapons.

Item: In the group encounters there shall be no killing from behind and only single-handed swords are allowed. Shields may be used.

Item: At the barrier combats, there will be no striking below the waist and no blows thrown with excessive force.

Item: The companions will observe the challengers to see who best supports the chivalric virtues as understood by the company, and will choose from amongst the challengers those who earn especial praise. Their praises should be told at the feast following. The companions wish also that the challengers might observe the companions for the same virtues, and comment on the same.

Item: The combat shall end by the hour of four. A closing ceremony will formally end the tournament proceedings, at which point the companions and guests should retire to prepare of the feast.



Appendix 1

The Great Charter of the Company of Saint George

"May all know by Yis present chartere Yt we Ye Companie of Seint George do swere and declare bifore Godde ower feithfull obeissaunce unto Ye noble arte of armes and wheras we declare Ye trewe joye of combatte procedeth not from Ye base speryt of pryde ne of vanely stryving the one against the tother, but isseweth onlie from honour, humilitie and other sich virtues as preceden from trew chivalrie. We hereby proclaym Yt wt Godde gode grace Ys companie shal endeveour to tincrease, advaunce and upholde Ye baner of chevalrie as was practised by ower nobel auncestres. And swerynge Ye same we do herby ordeyn these maintainaunces.

- ❖ *Yt every companion shal stryve through speche, mannere, and aperiaunce to present forthe Ye very mirror and ensaumple of a gentimanne of Christendome.*
 - ❖ *Also Yt every companion shal reveraunce sich goodly artes and mysteries of past days omityng not theyr practise ne patronage.*
 - ❖ *Also Yt every companion shal take sich care as to hys armes, herneis and rainment and all appurtenaunces Yt shall be Yn accordanse wyth hys condition Yt ne shame nor stayne may befalle Ye companie. And Yt he shal accept sich guydaunce and counccille yn regardes to Ye above as seemeth meete unto Ye same.*
 - ❖ *Also Yt everie companion shall ever strive to beter hym yn his use of armes and alle persewtes Yt longeth to a gentilmanne.*
 - ❖ *Also Yt any Yt now becom a companion may in summe wise be knowne unto Ye companie Yt Yr merits and advauntages may be maunifest to alle.*
 - ❖ *Also Yt Ye companions shalle gader ne lesse than once yn a yere for an especial feste Yr wyth Yr consorts, for tadresse Ye companie admynyster to Ye afayres of Ye same, and to shar agreemaunt togidere, by custom beyng the feestdayts of Seint Crispin and Seint George.*
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- ❖ *And also Ys companions shal be knownen by a redde garter worne bilowe Ye lefte knee Ye which shal bear Ye motto Honestas Supra Omnia, and by a blacke cloke beryng a badge of Yt same garter worn ypon ye lefte breste.*

Godde thryve us yn Ys ower endeavour. Doone Ys feeste of Epifanie yn Ye ninteenn hunnert ninty seconde yere of ower Salvacion at Urbs Angellorum."



Roster--10/92

- Duke Sir Stephen of Beckenham, OL** 1/92
Steve Beck-Kingdom of the West
126 La Mesa Dr., Salinas, CA 93901
(408)-753-1133
- Lady Eichling Von Avrum** 2/92
Janet Chennault-Kingdom of Caid
15538 Cobalt Street, Sylmar, CA 91342
(818)-364-7904
- Lord Gavin Malcoeur** 2/91
Gavin Danker-Kingdom of Caid
5056 Tujunga Avenue #20, North Hollywood, CA 91601
(818)-505-8832
- Duke Sir Hanno Von Halstern** 2/91
James Elliot-Kingdom of Caid
3800 S. Flower Street #M, Santa Ana, CA 92707
(714)-432-8814
- Lord Chaedrych the Innocent (sp?)** 2/91
Ilan Mitchel-Smith-Kingdom of Caid
- Sir Michael St. Sever** 2/91
Michael Plotts-West Kingdom
19305 Old Friend Road, Canyon Country, 91351
(805)-251-2379
- Lord Brion of Bellatrix** 6/92
Brion Porter-West Kingdom
recent address change
- Earl Sir Brion Thronbird Ap Rhys, OL** 2/91
Brian R. Price-West Kingdom
1134 Tamalpais Place, Hayward, CA 94542
(510)-888-1405
- Sir Wiglaf Wilfridding** 1/92
Steve Rossu-West Kingdom
1050 Lake Boulevard, Davis, CA 95616
(916)-747-7845
- Viscount Sir Fabian Arnet** 1/92
Steven Shroeder-West Kingdom
1134 Tamalpais Place, Hayward, CA 94542
(510)-888-1405
- Viscount Sir Drew Fortesque, OL, OP** 6/92
Doyle Slack-West Kingdom
2942 Old Bewcastle Ct, San Jose, CA 95132
(408)-259-6841
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