

SCA Equestrian Activities for the New (or Non) Equestrian Baroness Eowyth þa Siðend

How to get involved with Equestrian Activities whether you're a horse-owner, horseless rider, or helpful supporter – these could be 3 separate classes unto themselves, but for now, we'll discuss how to become generally involved with SCA Equestrian Activities

Perhaps the hardest (but the most important) part of all – **INTRODUCE** yourself!

Perhaps the most intimidating part of joining any new activity is getting your foot in the door and becoming familiar with others in the same field. It's even harder when those involved in the activity seem to be so very busy and hard-pressed for time during the day (what with taking care of the horses, keeping the tourney field set up for each run, etc.) But it IS worth it to get to know those involved.

If people seem too busy, or if you're not quite up to engaging a conversation while the activity is in full swing, then take a seat in the gallery to watch the challenges and make a mental note to go up and introduce yourself later that evening. Maybe at feast or by the bardic fire. The best way to start a conversation? Compliment their steed - "I saw you earlier on the field; you and your [equine] competed admirably!" Complimenting a rider's steed is a surefire way to start a conversation with ANY equestrian. ☺

Another great place to start – Volunteer as ground crew

Equestrians ALWAYS need ground crew to help at events. Whether that is keeping time, writing down scores, resetting challenges, or making sure both mounts & riders are watered, Ground crew are ALWAYS appreciated and needed. This is the best way to become familiar with the games, as well as other equestrians. You don't have to ride to be ground crew, and we have several non-riders who regularly help us reset challenges, as well as keep track of our Lists and heralding (very similar to the Fighting List-Mistresses). At Gulf, there is even a "Best of the Ground Crew" challenge!

Have a horse and want to get involved?

Read and Understand the Equestrian Handbook. If you need clarification, the KEO is always willing to answer any questions you may have. You will have to go through an authorization process at an equestrian event or 'official' practice. This generally goes much smoother if you have been in contact with the Equestrian Marshal-in-Charge ahead of time, as well as other marshals. It is suggested that you help on the ground for an event (before bringing your horse) simply so that you know how the field runs and what is expected of a horse and rider.

Attend local official (and unofficial practices) to help you and your mount become more familiar with the games and equipment (as well as other equestrians).

Ride, but don't own a horse?

Get to know the equestrians who DO own horses. Communicate your level and experience of riding with the owner and express your interest in getting involved. BE HONEST. Offer to help with the care of the horse at an event, or even with the cost of attendance (it's expensive hauling a horse and trailer away from home...) Often, if the horse is gentle and well-trained, owners are more than willing to work with people in order to allow more inclusion into the equestrian activities. But don't assume that any and all owners will

allow you use of their mount on your 'word' that you know how to ride. Also, not all steeds are available for 'general' riders. There are often 'green' or sensitive mounts, which simply are not ready to be ridden by anyone other than the owner. Don't let this deter you! Continue to offer your help, and be sure to talk to other owners, who just may have a horse that will fit your level.

It's a very delicate and personal decision allowing people that the owners may (or may not) know to ride their steed. Be aware and stay respectful of their position and their final decision.

Don't really want to ride, but still interested in equestrian activities?

We still want YOU! Ground crew is, of course, one of the most useful ways to help out and be involved without actually riding or owning a horse. Other ways include setting up and breaking down (still part of the 'ground crew' aspect) before and after an event (or challenge). Heralds for the field are a precious commodity, as well.

Photography is also very appreciated. Often, equestrians are riding or working on the field, so rarely do we have time to take photos of our steeds in action. Often, one good photo of a rider cutting through a head of cabbage is worth months of praise from the rider. And can often be found proudly displayed online (if you've given permission).

Offers to help with research, new garb (or caparisons, which is garb for the mount), and new equipment will often be met with a resounding "Thank you!" While some equestrians are skilled at these things, others are not and any offer of assistance is likely to be met with a hearty hug or handshake.

I look forward to seeing you at the next equestrian event!

Ever in Service,

Baroness Eowyth þa Siðend
Huscarl & Cross of Calontir

Additional Credits

"Get Involved" - Middle Kingdom Equestrian College

"So you would like to come play on the equestrian field and don't have a horse" - Master Madoc Ap Llewellyn

"When you are Horseless" - Lady Doucette de Verdun

Calontir Online Resources

- SCA Equestrian Handbook: http://sca.org/officers/equestrian/pdf/equestrian_handbook.pdf
- Calontir Equestrian Handbook: <http://www.calontirequestrian.org/images/Calontir%20Kingdom%20Equestrian%20Handbook%2011-17-14.pdf>
- Calontir Equestrian Web Site: <http://www.calontirequestrian.org/>
- Unofficial Calontir Equestrian List: <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/calontirequine/info>