

Banners, Standards and Heraldic Display

The first A&S competition in the new calendar, starting with June is for 'Banners'.

For those who are relatively new to the SCA, a banner is a fabric item designed to be hung on a wall or from a flag pole that depicts the 'device' that has been chosen (and preferably registered) by an individual, household or group.

It can be of any shape or size that fits with the particular time and place in history that you are endeavouring to recreate with your persona, or that fits with the particular event that it is being designed for.

There are many shapes that can be appropriate, although for internal display a shape that is just rectangular of about 75 cm x 90 cm (750 x 900 mm) is a good general size. Much of what we generally have as banners around feast halls etc are gonfalons. There is an excellent article on these at:

http://www.sca.org.au/st_florians/university/library/articles-howtos/heraldry/HeraldicGonfalons.htm

In addition there are pennants and standards which tend to be used more for outdoor display, such as around a tournament field or on the battle ground.

What materials you make your banners, standards, gonfalons etc. out of will depend on a number of things, including whether it is mainly for inside or outside display. If it is for outside display in a way that 'flies' then it needs to be made of something very light. If it is for inside display, or outside against a solid surface, then a heavier fabric may be ideal.

I have made banners in everything from bemsilk (silk like lining material) to heavy canvas. They can be made entirely by machine, by hand, or by machine and embroidered / couched by hand for a more hand-finished result. If it is going to be flying in the elements, then both the fabric and the construction methods need to be quite durable.

Standards are a very extravagant and showy form of heraldry, and well made can look quite spectacular. The dimensions can vary, but they are generally about 26 inches by about 8 feet long (or 66cm x 240cm). A really useful article on producing these within the SCA can be found at:

<http://www.angelfire.com/pa/allthat2/articles/standard.html>.

A cluster of these for the individuals within Bordescros, would make a wonderful display at Rowany Festival.

A much less showy method of display is the pennon, which appear to date from the 11th Century. Information on these can be found on Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennon>.

If you have an idea for what you would like to have as your 'device', please discuss these with Aylen who is the group Herald. The process to have one registered generally takes quite some time, but if you can sort out that what you would like to have meets the various rules of SCA Heraldry, and is not already being used by someone else, then you can submit the paperwork to make sure that it is reserved for you and you alone.

A good place to see what is already being used and has been registered in Lochac is to visit the Roll of Arms, which can be found via the Lochac website at <http://www.sca.org.au/herald/LRoA/Populaceindex.php>. This is also a great place to get ideas and see how the various elements can come together to provide something that is personal. Sometimes the easiest things to get approved are the simplest, and I know at one stage the College of Heraldry did have a few simple but unregistered devices available for the asking.

Cairistiona inghean Raghnaill, OP, OLM, AoA
Clan Scotia, Shire of Bordescros