

A MODULAR BANNER POLE
(Mark II, mod 5)
by Viscount Sir Morven of Carrick

Banners wafting gently on the breeze enhance the ambiance of any outdoor SCA event. If you have a banner, you will want to fly it. Here is a design for an inexpensive, lightweight pole that can be broken down for easy transportation.

Historical Note: In period, a banner was usually quadrilateral in shape. What most of us think of as banners are more accurately termed standards or perhaps guydons, pennons, pennoncelles, streamers, or gonfanons (but NOT gonfalons). This article uses the generic term "banner" throughout to mean any kind of supported wafty thing that is longer than it is wide.

This design assumes your banner is either rectangular or (right) triangular. A further assumption is that a portion of your banner will be supported horizontally. If you prefer to let your banner drape from the top of the pole, delete steps 6, 7, and 12, below.

What you will need:

- 1 - 1" x 10' EMT conduit
- 1 - ¾" x 10' EMT conduit
- 1 - ½" x 10' EMT conduit
- 1 - extra section of 2" EMT conduit (see Step 6 below)
- 2 - 8-32x1½" machine screw
- 2 - 8-32 nuts
- 3 - #8 toothed washers
- 6 - #8 flat washers
- 1 - 3/16"x1¾" eye bolt (with nut)
- 2 - #10 flat washers
- 1 - #10 toothed washer
- 1 - ½" EMT-to-EMT pull elbow connector
- 1 - 10-24x½" thumb screw

Parts cost will run to about \$25 - \$30

A word on height:

The pole should be tall enough so your banner does not touch the ground. To determine the minimum pole height, measure the overall length of the banner and subtract the length of any portion that will be supported horizontally. Your banner pole should be no shorter than this figure. This design will produce a pole 13' tall, which should be sufficient for most banners.

Construction:

- 1) Cut each of the 10' lengths of conduit in half. Depending on what you use to do the cutting, you may wish to deburr the cut ends with a file or some sandpaper.
- 2) Measure 12" down from one end of the ¾" and 1" conduit sections. Drill a 7/32" hole through each conduit.
- 3) Insert into each hole an 8-32x1½ machine screw, securing it with washers and a nut. These screws will act as the bases for the upper sections and will allow them to rotate.
- 4) Measure down the ½" conduit from one end a distance about three inches greater than the greatest vertical dimension of the banner (including the length of any horizontal tabs). Drill a 7/32" hole and insert the eye bolt, securing it with washers and a nut. This will serve as the tie-down for the bottom edge of your banner.
- 5) Align the conduit elbow connector with the eye bolt (the eye and the open end of the elbow connector should be on the same side of the conduit section) and attach it to the end of the ½" conduit by tightening the set screw. Replace the other set screw with the thumb screw. The crosspiece, if used, will be inserted into this connector.
- 6) Decide now if you are going to use the leftover pieces of conduit to make another banner pole. If you are, get a scrap piece of ½" conduit between 2' and 3' long. Use it for the next step.
- 7) Measure the width of the horizontally-supported section of your banner. Cut a section of ½" conduit equal to this length. This will be the crosspiece support for the banner field.

Finishing:

- 8) You may wish to trim the ends of the eyebolt and machine screws so they are less obtrusive.
- 9) The conduit sections may be painted with your favorite color. Be advised, however, that the paint may chip over time and use. Be prepared for occasional touchup.
- 10) Alternatively, you may wish to wrap the conduit sections with duct tape of an available color. If you opt for this approach, remove the eyebolt and machine screws from the conduit sections before taping. Do not tape that part of each conduit section that will be nested within another. This will give you a looser fit that will allow rotation of the pole sections when the wind shifts.

Assembly:

- 11) Thread the ½" conduit through the side tabs of your banner, being sure to position the end with the elbow connector at the top.
- 12) Thread the crosspiece through the top tabs of the banner, insert the crosspiece into the elbow connector, and tighten the thumbscrew.
- 12a) If you are not using a crosspiece, simply tie the upper corner of the banner to the set screw.
- 13) Tie down the bottom edge of the banner to the eyebolt.
- 14) I recommend using a long artificial hole* to support your banner pole. (Do NOT simply pound the lowest section into the ground! This will likely deform the upper rim, making it exceedingly difficult to insert the upper sections. Plus, a good wind gust will likely remove the pole from the ground.)
- 15) Implant the artificial hole as near-perpendicular as possible, then insert the 1" conduit into the artificial hole.

- 16) Insert the 1/2" conduit into the 3/4" conduit section and then insert the combined sections into the 1" conduit.
- 17) Step back.
- 18) Enjoy!
- 19) Go buy more hardware to make another pole from the remaining conduit sections.

ABOUT BANNER FABRIC:

While silk banners may be more period than far cheaper acrylic or nylon fabric, it is almost impossible to tell the difference when the banner is hanging some 12 feet in the air. Also, silk rots out in hot weather while synthetic fabric will last far longer. An added advantage of using synthetic fabric is that ordinary fabric paint (or artist's acrylics) can be used rather than more expensive and less sun-resistant silk paints.

FYI: Viscount Sir Morven does take orders to make them for folks, \$30 per pole. If you'd rather he did all this for you, feel free to contact Baroness Flavia baroness@sca-angels.org for his email.

***Appendix: An Artificial Hole for Banner Poles**

- 1) Procure a 4' length of 1" x 1" angle iron.
- 2) Using a hacksaw or some other Instrument of Cutting, form a point at one end. This will be the bottom.
- 3) Cut two 6"-long sections of pipe of sufficient diameter to accommodate the 1" conduit section. (A 1 1/2" OD chain link fence post will suffice.)
- 4) Position the pipe sections along the inside bend of the angle iron. One should be near (but not at) the top; the bottom of the other should be about 15" above the end of the point.
- 5) Weld the pipe sections to the angle iron.
- 6) Pound it into the ground (pointy end down).

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