

Evesham 1265 – Kit guide for the 2019 festival

By Nigel Walton, Conquest

Introduction

What follows is a very basic guide to the soldiers present at Evesham in 1265. It is based on my own consideration of the evidence that I am aware of and is designed to allow an easy transition up or down in period of historical interest, (without needing to break the bank). Please note the word basic it does not go into the detail.

There were a number of military types present at Evesham and basically, they can be boiled down to Knights, Men-at-arms, Soldiers, Archers and The Welsh.

The Welsh provided a considerable number of the rebel infantry so merit a section on their own (as do ladies/female camp followers), but this guide is aimed at those wishing to achieve an English impression.

Basic clothing (all ranks excepting the Welsh).

All individuals portraying males should wear low ankle boots or shoes, single legged, single coloured hosen (in wool or linen), braes, a shirt or undertunic and a Tunic with the addition of a cloak and a separate hood for bad weather and a straw hat for the sunny days. In addition, any person who intends to portray a combatant Knight, Men-at-Arms or archer should have a Gambeson.

A good source to look at for images of the above is the Morgan Bible dated to 1266 so bang on for this event.

Boots and shoes

These should all be low ankle style boots ideally not toggled closed but laced or buckled, they may be coloured suitable to rank portrayed and should reflect the rest of the clothing worn. No rubber "grip" soles or boots above ankle height. Colours should for most impressions be natural ideally brown's although for civilians dyed leather and decorated footwear is allowed.

All of the below are acceptable styles based on archaeological finds.





Braes

These basically a large pair of linen shorts ideally knee length and worn either with a belt or (reinforced loops) to facilitate the attachment of the hose, (see fig 1 below for braes and hose and fig 3 for braes). Ideally and you will come to realise why you probably want at least two pairs of this garment.



Hose

Hose of the period are single legged and should be made to fit each leg, as your dominant leg will be larger than the other. Fabric used can be of linen wool or silk depending on the rank portrayed. They should either have a (reinforced) eye or a fitted cord to facilitate tying to a belt and can be footed, stop at the ankle or have stirrups and should be of one colour. It is also acceptable to wear two pairs one for example of wool rolled down over the finer lower pair to offer some protection against mud etc. (If intending to do this it would be wise to consider the fit of footwear).

Below figure 1 shows a footed pair of hose attached to the Braes, figure 2 (although a later period painting) a stirruped pair both styles are acceptable, the thing to note is the close fit achieved.





Shirt / Undertunic

Linen (ideally white or biscuit but can be coloured). A basic T shirt shape cut with tight wrists, generously cut in the body, length wise can be below waist length for a shirt, or knee length for an undertunic.

Tunic

Wool, Linen or Silk. Three basic styles are suitable either split at front and back, split down the left side or unsplit. Generally, those that are split would be used by those who would ride, the unsplit ones either for a situation where riding was not required or by those who did not ride. Tunics can be edged with a contrast colour and this in turn can be embroidered. Construction as per a shirt and undertunic please note I have yet to see any conclusive evidence for the contrasting gores in male clothing, please do not manufacture along these lines.

Gambeson

Nothing marks out an individual as one of the military levels as this piece of equipment and should be worn by all fighters if possible. But if you are not wearing one you should not be wearing maille.

In terms of style it should be at least thigh length and fully sleeved, forms of closure, colour and style are pretty open with the caveat that I have yet to see convincing evidence for an un-sleeved one as a primary defensive garment so please do not use.

I think that the illustration (below) from the Morgan Bible covers off a lot of the basics but for clarity and to save words and time I have condensed the basics into the below tables.



Heraldry, badges and shields

Whilst those entitled to did portray their arms on their surcotes, and banners please remember that the arms are unique so ONLY someone portraying a particular Knight should be displaying the full heraldry.

Men-at-arms/soldiers within a knight's retinue may display his coat of arms painted on their shields and may also wear simple plain surcotes (linen, silk or wool) of the dominant colour but without the knight's heraldry).

The use of badges by individual soldiers had yet to arise although we do know at around this time the English started wearing armbands displaying the cross of St George, or sewing crosses onto their clothing. For Evesham, ideally the Rebel/Baronial soldiers should wear small white crosses on their clothing and/or shields, and Royal troops red ones.

Weapons

Assuming that your society permits its use, that you have gained a level of skill with it and it is period correct there are no documented weapons that cannot be carried, with one exception - battle hammers should not be carried by anybody.

Other armour/defences

Coats of plates was coming into use at this time and there are several references to metal or leather torso armour called a cuirass. If worn these can only be worn by those portraying knights and must be under a Surcote.

Hand defences

Please make sure you have adequate hand defence whilst plate gauntlets are yet to appear any combination of maille and leather used will if passed by your societies AO be permitted.

Joint armour was also in its infancy and I would suggest that knee cops etc are only worn on the Gamboised cuisses as I am yet to be convinced regarding individual plate ones.

And finally...

I hope that this guide - which is not meant to teach anybody to suck eggs - is helpful and I will happily answer questions regarding its content. Email me on: conquestlh@yahoo.co.uk

Please Note: The Festival's Re-enactment Coordinator Howard Giles would like me to mention that it will be the responsibility of individual society AOs to ensure that members adhere to this guide. In the unlikely event of a dispute the commander of each Battle/wing of each army (3 Battles/wings plus one of archers on each side) will arbitrate, with the overall army commander having the final say if necessary. We hope however that this kit guide won't present any problems and like last year all will run extremely smoothly and happily!

Thanks

Nigel

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Key to following tables

Green: Ideal

Amber: Permitted

Red: NOT appropriate - please do not use



**Evesham
Rank
and Kit
QRF**

