



## Evesham 1265 – Kit guide for the 2021 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 I am aware of and a detailed and sometimes vigorous discussion amongst a number of group leaders and Ao's following the 2019 event. It 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 so do not expect a detailed document. If you should so wish to delve further there is a supporting massively detailed document underlying this guide prepared by Josh Ralph of Conquest reflecting in detail the discussions and research carried out since the last event.

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 flowers), but this guide is aimed at those wishing to achieve an English impression.

Based on the previous events there are a few absolute yes and no's we have endeavoured to keep them to a minimum but the basic rule of if in doubt ask applies, as this avoids problems on the day.

The first rule is think does the whole outfit gel, so start with the rank you wish to portray and then decide if your kit works to convincingly portray it. Examples of bad practice are surcotes worn by non-armoured soldiers, heraldry being used by more than one person, helmets being worn that are not supported by the rest of the military equipment etc. If in doubt look down the list and portray lower well, rather than higher badly but to be clear the following are banned:

Tentage any non-period tentage, including scout tents etc

Weapons the following are banned Battle Hammers and Pole maces. In addition, please do not enter the field dripping in weapons, this is incorrect.

Garments manufactured from non-period fabrics (cotton, nylon Chenille etc etc), this is both incorrect and can pose a substantial risk to the wearer when around naked flames etc.

Long above ankle height boots

Surcotes worn without maille or worn with just helmets or maille sleeves to disguise the lack of torso armour.

Maille worn without a Gambeson

In addition to the above small, banned list the following is suggested:

All military combatants (non-combatant archers are not included) should at the very least wear padding in the form of a Gambeson. If purchasing a new one following tests carried out, we would suggest that these are sourced from a European manufacturer.

Weaponry there are a number of unique weapons displayed in the Morgan bible. Many of these are heavy weight weapons designed to defeat armour. We would ask that the field use of these weapons is limited especially the 2 handed ones.

**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 belts pouches and 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 soldier should have a Gambeson.

A good source to look at for images of the above is the Morgan Bible dated to 1260's so bang on for this event. I also recommend the line drawings in Ian Heaths WRG publication The armies of Feudal Europe.

**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.

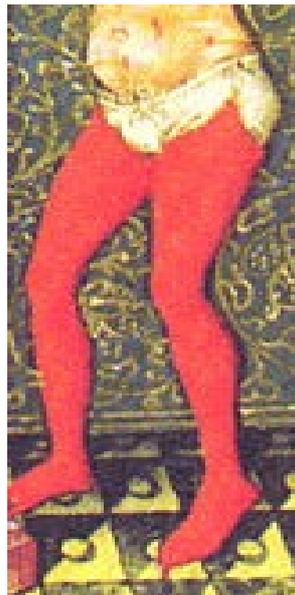


**Braes** These basically a large pair of linen shorts ideally knee length and worn either with a belt or (reinforced loops) to facilitate the attachment of the hose, (see fig 1 below for braes and hose and fig 3 for braes). Ideally and you will come to realise why you probably want at least two pairs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



**Hose** 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 it is recommended that due to the tempo of the battle one should be worn by all fighters. If wearing maille this is a mandatory secondary defence. Maille over a tunic is not permitted.

In terms of style, it should be at least thigh length and depending on the rank fully sleeved, forms of closure, colour and style are pretty open with the caveat that I have yet to see convincing evidence for either laced on or un-sleeved one's as a primary defensive garment so please if possible 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.

There is an event log of who is playing named figures so to avoid expense and disappointment it is wise to check with the event organiser prior to constructing a set of colours.

Men-at-arms within a knight's retinue may display his coat of arms painted on their shields and may also if armoured in metal armour 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, excepting those included in the banned list above.

**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. This is based on the Pershore effigy which I believe is the only English source showing this.

**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.

Greaves whilst shown on the Morgan bible I would suggest that they are extremely rare and should be avoided.

**Definitions of Ranks** A quick rundown of what is meant by the title headers in the charts.

**Knight:** There are many names (Prince, Earl, Baron etc) that have been lumped into this, for the purposes of Evesham it means an armoured man, in a Surcote, which depending on the portrayal should be heraldic or of a plain colour. The rest of your equipment should reflect this rank.

**Sergeant:** Also, an armoured man a step down socially from a knight, may wear a plain coloured Surcote and draw equipment from the correct column.

**Soldier.** Mainly unarmoured (as in no metal armour) although the odd Haubergon is permissible. As above should draw equipment from the correct column.

**Archer** is expected to be a non-combatant role. May use either a bow or crossbow. Will function on both sides as a unit, nb no skirmishing randomly shooting archers are permitted at this event. Bow weight is a max of 35lbs draw and cross bow max is 40lbs. May be completely unarmoured

**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

Item	Knight	Man-at-arms	Soldier	Archer
Gambeson	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal	
Haubergon		Ideal	Ideal	
Hauberk	Ideal	Ideal		
Gamboised cuisses	Ideal			
Padded Chausses	Ideal			
Maille Hosen	Ideal			
Heraldic Surcote	Ideal			
Surcoat	Ideal	Ideal		
Conical helmet				Ideal
Kettle hat	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal
Cevalier	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal	
Great helm	Ideal			
Pot Helm			Ideal	Ideal
Heater Shield	Ideal			
Flat topped Kit shield	Ideal	Ideal		
Round topped kite Shield			Ideal	Ideal
Wooden Buckler		Ideal	Ideal	Ideal
Knife	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal
Hand axe			Ideal	Ideal
Two handed axes	Ideal	Ideal		
Mace	Ideal			
Sword	Ideal	Ideal		
Proto Falchion	Ideal	Ideal		
Spear	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal	
Glaive	Ideal	Ideal	Ideal	