



# The Battle of Evesham 2015 Festival Costume Guide

By Howard Giles of *EventPlan Limited*, with additional material from Rebecca Ferguson of *The Household*.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this brief costume guide is to assist those who would like to dress up in C13th style costume when visiting, exhibiting, trading or otherwise participating (other than in the living history or arena displays/ battles)\* during the festival. It is not exhaustive (nor a guide to producing truly authentic clothing and kit – see below about that) but is intended to give you a basic idea of what you could wear. We do hope that you will be inspired and wish to have a go! See the bottom for further reading.

*\*Please note that if you wish to participate in any of the living history or arena displays, including the battles, then you will need to join one of the contracted groups taking part, meet the minimum kit guidelines issued (with authentic clothing and equipment typical of mid-13th century England, Wales or Northern France) and all their conditions of participation including adequate training/ safety, and have a willingness to follow orders. For details of the groups involved please see the festival web site or the Battle of Evesham page on [www.eventplan.co.uk](http://www.eventplan.co.uk). No individual "walk ons" will be permitted in the arena on the day, for safety reasons.*

### *Colours and cloth*

Bright colours eg. reds, blues, yellows, whites and greens are fine, indeed encouraged. Unlike as usually shown in films and TV, many medieval people loved to wear bright colours, and had the dyes to do so. And without any modern sense of colour coordination, you can "mix and match" quite crazily if wished. Any shade of brown or grey is fine, but avoid black or purple, rarely worn by ordinary people.

*Don't* wear "fur clothing" or leather garments. Medieval clothing was nothing like the "fantasy" costume so often seen in films or TV dramas.

### *Illustrations*

The pictures attached are from the illuminated medieval manuscripts *The Creation* and *The Story of David*, both produced during the C13th, and photos from re-enactments.

### *Authentic clothing and kit*

If you would like to go "all the way" and wear correct period clothing/kit, then please see the re-enactors' kit guide (available on request). This doesn't cover women's clothing but information on that is also available on request.

## 2. Women's clothing

This can be very simple but still look great!

Wear a plain coloured, long sleeved, loose fitting floor length dress preferably not in a thin material (eg. cotton). It should be round necked. Gather the dress at the waist with a thin,

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long leather belt or cord, a length looped so it dangles fashionably down the front of the dress to below the knee.

As the dress is so long you can wear pretty much whatever you want on your feet, but try to avoid trainers as they'll poke out when you walk and people will notice! Plain shoes or ankle length boots are far better.

A simple white shift was worn underneath, basically the same design.

Girls and unmarried women simply braided their hair in a long ponytail down their backs, often using a thin leather or silk cord. Please don't just tie it back in a modern ponytail and scrunchie.

However, head/hair coverings were always worn by married women, so for this look, use a simple plain piece of cloth, preferably white. Wrap it around your head to cover it, then under your chin and round the top of the head again so only your face shows. If you wish you can pin on a second simple white cloth on top of (or instead of) this, draped over the head and down to the shoulders (see photo).

Ladies often wore small leather purses on their waist belts, so something like this would look good...try to avoid big modern handbags though!

### *Nuns*

Nuns wore off white, grey or brown tunics\* (effectively long dresses, as above) with woollen belts under a "scapula," a plain work apron. They concealed their (cropped) hair beneath coifs/ hair covering concealing the neck and cheeks. A wooden cross was worn on a thong or thin piece of rope.

\*Evesham Abbey was a Benedictine establishment so the nuns probably wore undyed material in any of these colours in the C13th.

### **3. Men's clothing**

You don't need a hat but you can make a "coif", a simple cloth skull cap a bit like a flying helmet, covering the head (& down the back of the neck) and tied under the neck. Sometimes men wore simple straw hats (but if you do too, make sure it isn't of an obviously modern design).

Tunic and shirt: A simple long sleeved, open & round necked tunic can be worn to well below the knee, originally wool or linen so ideally try using some sort of "thickish" material rather than modern cotton. Underneath this a simple off white shirt (without collar) of the same basic shape was worn.

Gather the tunic at the waist with a thin leather belt or piece of cord.

A plain cloak can be worn over the top.

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Footwear: Simple short ankle length boots are ideal (especially if they don't have heels, as medieval shoes were generally flat), but not knee length or longer boots please.

Leg wear: Men wore long skin tight wool "hose", rather like thick woollen tights, in various colours (although rarely black). So thick, plain but coloured women's tights or leggings would be fine.

Men also wore "braes", ie medieval underpants, but you can wear boxers, swimming trunks or something similar as long as your tunic is long enough to cover them up!

If you would like to visibly support one side or the other during the battle, then tack a small red or white cross (depending on which side you are on...red for Edward, white for de Montfort) onto your tunic.

### 4. Soldiers & Knights

As the quality of the re-enactors present will be extremely high, we don't encourage adults to dress up as soldiers at this event, but if you would definitely like to, then please contact us directly.

### 5. Monks

For a basic outfit wear a long brown, black, grey or off white tunic\* (as per an ordinary man's clothing) to below the knee, with or without hood. Belt the tunic at the waist with a piece of rope. You can wear hose to match See mens' clothing above).

Wear simple sandals (or "slip on" leather shoes). Wear a medium sized (approx. 4" long) wooden cross round your neck on a thong or thin piece of rope.

Ideally wear an off white "coif", a cloth covering the head (to the back of the neck) and tied under the neck.

\*Evesham Abbey was a Benedictine establishment and the monks probably wore undyed material in any of these colours in the C13th.

### 6. Children

Children can basically wear mini versions of adult outfits above, but of course nobody minds them dressing up as fairy tale princesses, or knights or soldiers whether they wear "chain mail" or not – the festival is about them having fun!

Suppliers (below) can sell you toy swords, shields and outfits for children. At least two of them (*The Complete Knight* and *Tymecraft*) will be present at the battle re-enactment weekend.

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### 7. Clothing and kit suppliers

There are numerous excellent suppliers of authentic period clothing within the UK, but as they usually provide kit to living history standards the prices obviously reflect this (and they may well be busy with the event coming up). A few examples include:

*Ancient Battlecraft* – [www.ancientbattlecraft.co.uk](http://www.ancientbattlecraft.co.uk)

*Ana Period shoes* – [www.anaperiodshoes.co.uk](http://www.anaperiodshoes.co.uk)

*Deborah Lough Costumes* - [www.deborahloughcostumes.co.uk](http://www.deborahloughcostumes.co.uk).

*House of Freyja* - [www.houseoffreyja.co.uk](http://www.houseoffreyja.co.uk)

*Ravencrest* - [www.ravencrest.co.uk](http://www.ravencrest.co.uk)

There are lots of fancy dress suppliers advertising on the net, but please be aware they are often inaccurate, and/or based on post C13th fashion (or pure fantasy).

Plastic but extremely realistic looking & shiny, a “Knights helmet”, “Norman helmet” and “kettle helmet” are all available from *Tymecraft*. Although designed for children, we’ve seen adults wearing them too as even from a short distance away they look very convincing. Buy at the event or visit [www.tymecraft.co.uk](http://www.tymecraft.co.uk)

Complete childrens’ outfits including cardboard Great Helms are usually available from *The Complete Knight*. See them at the event or visit [www.completeknight.co.uk](http://www.completeknight.co.uk)

### 8. More information

#### Materials and shapes:

Ideally, linen and wool are the best materials for recreating 13th century clothing. Have a look in a haberdashery such as at John Lewis, or on the fabric stalls at many markets, such as the Birmingham and Nottingham indoor markets. Remember that medieval people expressed their wealth through copious amounts of fabric and bright, often contrasting, colours. The patterns for both men and women’s clothing were often not complicated, just a rectangle for the front and back of the body with tubes for the arms and triangular sections, often with “gores” (triangular pieces of fabric added to seams or slashes to add extra “body”)...all this would help the garment to hang nicely and create a very authentic looking costume.

#### On the net

The best online source for men and women’s clothing in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century [http://www.medievaltymes.com/courtyard/maciejowski\\_images.htm](http://www.medievaltymes.com/courtyard/maciejowski_images.htm)

You might also wish to have a look at :

<http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/docs/cadw/publications/Clothes.pdf>

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Mens' clothing with pictures and a simple pattern:

[http://www.sca.org.au/st\\_florians/university/library/articles-howtos/mens-clothing-c13th.htm](http://www.sca.org.au/st_florians/university/library/articles-howtos/mens-clothing-c13th.htm)

How to make a monk's robe: [http://www.ehow.co.uk/how\\_8724664\\_make-monks-habit.html](http://www.ehow.co.uk/how_8724664_make-monks-habit.html)

Some advice for ladies (albeit not just C13th, but up to C15th too so be careful) is at <http://abbeymedievalfestival.com/2012/06/will-my-medieval-dress-fit-me/>

### Books

*Old Testament Miniatures*, Sydney C. Cockbull, George Braziller, New York.

Long out of print and like gold dust for medievalists, but you might find a copy in a major library.

*English Medieval Knight 1200-1300* (particularly colour plates E to G), Christopher Gravett, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, 2002.

*European Clothing of the c12th and C13th*, T Dawson, Caliver Books. We haven't seen it ourselves but the author knows his stuff. On sale via <http://www.abebooks.co.uk/EUROPEAN-CLOTHING-C12th-C13th-Dawson-T/441116138/bdd>

*Medieval Costume in England and France* by Mary G Houston [http://www.amazon.co.uk/Medieval-Costume-England-France-Centuries/dp/0486290603/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1427549723&sr=8-1&keywords=medieval+costume+in+england+and+france](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Medieval-Costume-England-France-Centuries/dp/0486290603/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1427549723&sr=8-1&keywords=medieval+costume+in+england+and+france)

Medieval Costume and Fashion by Herbert Norris

[http://www.amazon.co.uk/Medieval-Costume-Fashion-Herbert-Norris/dp/0486404862/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1427549772&sr=8-1&keywords=medieval+costume+and+fashion](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Medieval-Costume-Fashion-Herbert-Norris/dp/0486404862/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1427549772&sr=8-1&keywords=medieval+costume+and+fashion)

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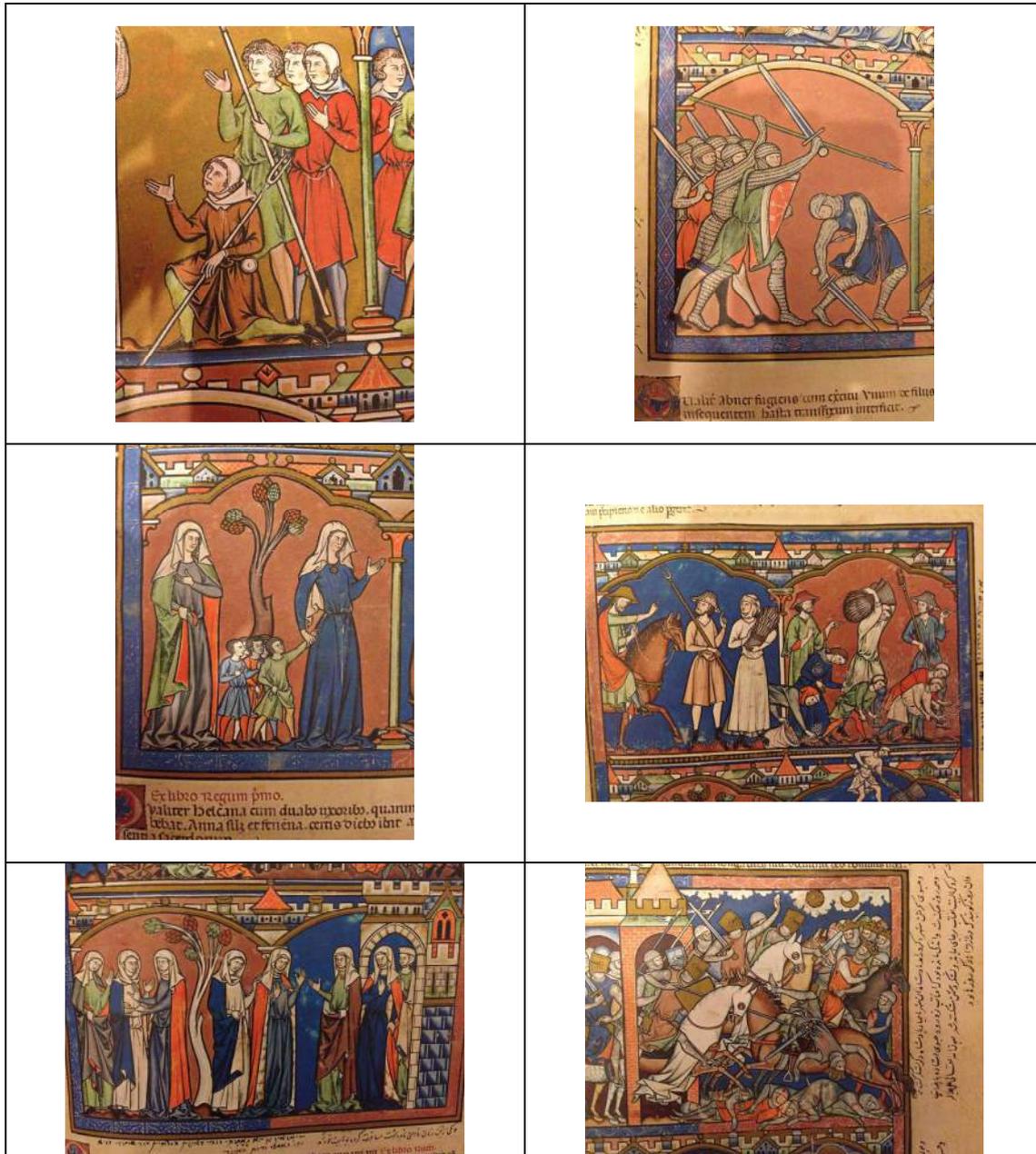
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