

## Evesham 1265 – Kit guide updated for the 2026 festival

### This is the official kit guide for the Battle of Evesham

**Please remember this is a mid 13<sup>th</sup> Century event and only period specific kit should be used.**

In the past we have unfortunately spotted metal breastplates, sallets and even Tudor items – these may be great for other events but they have no place at Evesham.

Group leaders / captains it is your job to call out inappropriate kit and make sure it is not on the field. This is not saying “I don’t like that piece of kit” or “it’s not great quality,” its about being period specific. If it’s obviously not 13<sup>th</sup> century we will not allow it on the field.

**This guide is the minimum standard and It is a contractual condition of participation and relates to English, lords, knights and foot soldiers.**

There are separate guidance documents for ladies and welsh foot. Welsh knights and professional soldiers would be indistinguishable from their English counterparts, however a very large part of De Montofts force would have been welsh conscripts rather than soldiers.

We do not discriminate, and ladies are perfectly welcome to take full part in the event including as archers and as combatants. However, to be historically accurate if ladies are taking part in the battle they should be dressed **as men** adhering to the kit guides. (Prince Edward did indeed have a lady in his ranks Margot or Margoth she was part of the raid on Kenilworth and I understand she was the spy that told Edward that the enemy were in the town not the castle – Margot dressed as a man.)

### Introduction

Henry ii issued an Assize of Arms in 1181 which required;

1. *Whoever possesses one knight's fee shall have a shirt of mail, a helmet, a shield, and a lance; and every knight shall have as many shirts of mail, helmets, shields, and lances as he possesses knight's fees in demesne.*
2. *Moreover, every free layman who possesses chattels or rents to the value of 16 marks shall have a shirt of mail, a helmet, a shield, and a lance;*
3. *Every free layman possessing chattels or rents to the value of 10 marks shall have a hauberk, an iron cap, and a lance.*
4. *All burgesses and the whole community of freemen shall have [each] a gambeson, an iron cap and a lance.*

Henry iii reissued the Assize of Arms in 1252 so this sets the minimum bench mark we expect for the English.

What follows is a basic guide to the soldiers present at Evesham in 1265.

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.

### **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 or felt 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. Colours should for most impressions be natural ideally brown's although for civilians dyed leather and decorated footwear is allowed.

No, boots above ankle height especially those secured with buckles.

All of the below are 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 below for braes and hose and images further down 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 shows a footed pair of hose attached to the Braes, the second image shows (although a later period painting) a stirrup 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. Maille over a tunic is not acceptable and results in a higher risk of injury. See safety rules.

In terms of style, it should be at least thigh length, forms of closure, colour and style are pretty open.

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 tables at the end of this document.



## 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, the Rebel/Baronial soldiers should wear small white crosses on their clothing and/or shields, and Royal troops red ones.

Ailettes were only just starting to make an appearance and should only be worn by high ranking nobles.

## Weapons - See safety rules

### Other armour/defences

Coats of plates were 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 surcoat. Plate armour should not be seen,

### Hand defences

It is mandatory for everyone to have adequate hand protection. whilst plate gauntlets are yet to appear any combination of padded maille and leather should be used. Gardening gloves are not sufficient.

Joint armour was also in its infancy, and I would suggest that knee cops etc are of the simple dish form attached to Gamboised cuisses.

### General

Think about your appearance visible tattoos hair colour T shirt showing etc ask yourself is this appropriate and if not cover up.

### 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: [reenactors@battleofevesham.co.uk](mailto:reenactors@battleofevesham.co.uk)

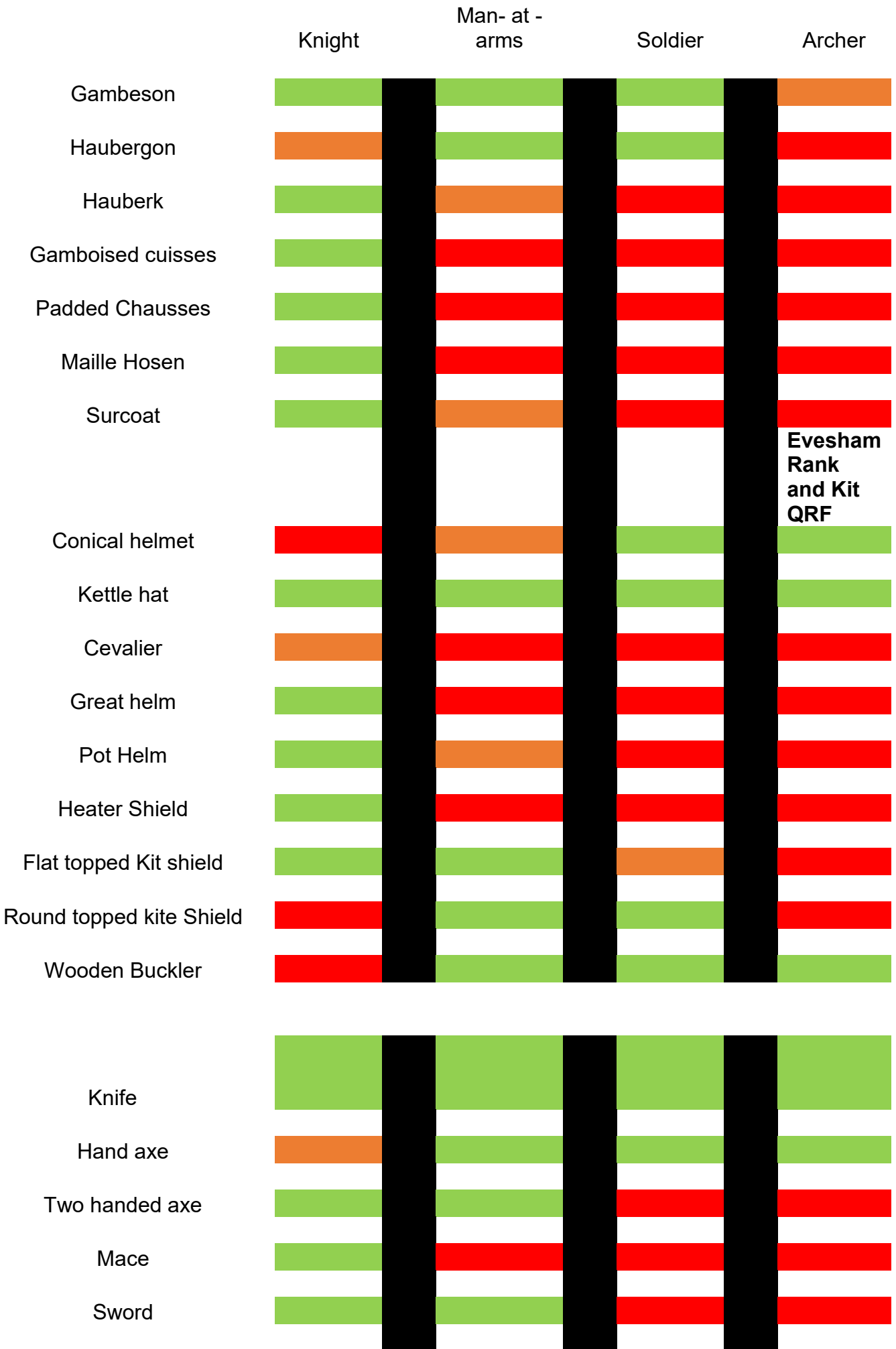
**Please Note:** It will be the responsibility of individual society group leaders to ensure that members adhere to this guide. In the unlikely event of a dispute the commander of each Battle/wing of each army (3 Battles/wings plus one of archers on each side) will arbitrate, with the re-enactment coordinator having the final say if necessary. We hope however that this kit guide won't present any problems. a

## Key to following tables

**Green:** Ideal

**Amber:** Permitted

**Red:** NOT appropriate - please do not use





n.b. round top kite shield – heater shield with rounded top not a full “Norman” shield

### **Archers**

If you are only there as an archer a gambeson is recommended but not mandatory. A metal helmet is however compulsory.

**To be clear no one should be on the field without metal head protection which must be on your head at all times.**

The Battle of Evesham organising committee would like to express their thanks to Nigel Walton for producing this guide.

### **Ian Priest**

**Re-enactment Coordinator**

**Chair Battle of Evesham Ltd**

**Chair of trustees Battle of Evesham Truct CIO**

**For information, this is the Conquest traders list where they signpost their members.**

Piece of History Archery Equipment

Annie the Pedlar Good bits like hooks and eyes etc

Annots Potts

Back in the day Re-enactment Furniture

Bernie the Bolt Fabrics

Bohemia Beauty Glassware with care

Candles for all ages

Cap-à-pie Maille

Cowley's Fine food Approved Foooods

Debbie Lough Costumes Often has stock of appropriate clothing, arming caps and padded armour.

Gemmeus Historical Jewellery Jeweller

Get Dressed for battle Basic helmets etc.

Guild of Saynt Luke Writing and stuff

Hellequin Leather Belts and things  
Lancaster Armouries  
Merchant of Menace shoe supplier who knows his stuff.  
Mill Farm Wood crafts Plates etc  
Nels Notions Bits and Bobs  
Nicholas Checksfield Maille  
Pinchmill Leathers Leather  
Potter's Leatherwork Belts and things  
Quartermasterie & Chatelaine Silk and pottery Quartermaster Stores Many things.  
Sails of Merit Canvas stuff  
Select society Approved Many things.  
The Copper Pot Approved Foooods  
The Peddler Bling  
The Roving Apothecary Foooods  
The Tudor Tailor Often some interesting fabrics and bits

Andrew Kirkham Great Ironwork mostly bespoke Recommended  
Andy Burke Possibly shoes but check for heels.  
Anvil Art Commission good work  
Armour Class Basic swords  
Armour'd Up Armour and helmets  
Armour Services Historical Ash can do work from our period.  
Badger Historic Costumes Top End  
Barrhead Leather Good small selection of leather  
Black Raven Crafts Barry Linen etc Recommended.  
Bodgers Farm Pottery Good Pottery Recommended.  
Company of Artisans Kate does tiles.  
Crossman Crafts Nice stuff limited for us.  
Dave Budd Great Tools  
Dragan Art Wooden stuff Recommended.  
Fox blade Trading & Re-enactment Shoes Basic Shoes Recommended for these and water bottles.  
Glendon Forge Good ironwork.  
Herts Fabrics Ali has some good stuff but check.  
The Historic Games Shop  
Jackhammer Forge Stu so the top end of Good Recommended  
Lionheart Replicas Some stuff suitable for us  
Lucy the Tudor If its ok for us, then Lucy will know Tim makes good tables Recommended.  
Lyon Leathers Leather check the pieces but good UNROLL THEM TO CHECK  
Period Glasses If you need glasses for events talk to Tim.  
Reddog Forge Good ironwork.  
Rod Matless Great sharp knives Recommended.  
Spearman Supplies Sam so better shields etc Recommended.  
Tod's Workshop Basic knives etc recommended Gary works for him so if in doubt ask.  
Traders Invaders & Raiders Some suitable buckles etc  
Trinity Court Potteries Some pottery but not much

Victor James Tents Recommended  
Wieland Forge Jason so metal work