

HASTINGS 2006

ENGLISC WARRIOR COSTUME GUIDE



Written by The Vikings Authenticity Team

1. General Authenticity Rules

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1) The version of this document available at <http://hastings.vikingsonline.org.uk/H2006/> should be regarded as the official edition against which all testing and decision of who may participate will be made. Production of a version which has in any way been altered will not be seen as an acceptable reason for failing any of the testing or assessing procedures

1.2 RATIONALE. Although 'THE VIKINGS' is a primarily a 10th Cent. Viking re-enactment society, this guide has been written to help members of the society and their guests who wish to take part in the Battle of Hastings re-fight (14-15 October 2006) as Englisc warriors. This guide has been written specifically for the H2006 Hastings re-fight. Compromises have therefore been made with what is strictly authentic in order to maximise participation in this event.

1.3 WEAPONS & SAFETY EQUIPMENT. Any member or guest of the society who intends to take part in combat is classed as a warrior. As such they **MUST** have the correct safety equipment. Anyone who intends to engage in hand-to-hand combat must also have armguards and protected gloves. For men a protective 'Box' is strongly recommended, while women are equally strongly advised to wear Fencing Cups. ARCHERS are only required to have a helmet, but those who wish to put down their bow and engage hand-to-hand in the final attack, must have **all** of the equipment required.

1.4 COLOURS. All participants must remember that the colour of the clothes worn gives a good indication of a persons rank and status. Low ranks would only have access to pale coloured or even undyed cloth, while the wealthy would be able to afford rich reds, blues and greens. Whatever rank is being portrayed, clothing dyed black, white or purple should be avoided.

1.5 APPEARANCE. This is the premier re-enactment event in the UK with TV and press from all over Europe in attendance, and all participants must therefore make a reasonable attempt to look the part. Specifically modern hairstyles must be covered and all make-up, jewellery and visible piercings must be removed. In addition, in order to comply with the English

Heritage guidelines for such events, female warriors must dress entirely in male costume, and should make some attempt to hide the more obvious 'bumps'.

2 UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS.

The following is an (incomplete) list of items which will NOT be allowed onto the battlefield with the English army at Battle Abbey.

- a) Gjermundbu or Medieval 'Great' Helms.
- b) Live-role-play type weapons
- c) Plate armour of any sort
- d) Knitted 'String' mail
- e) Any weapon NOT in common use in NW Europe in the Mid 11th C
- f) Two Handed Frankish Battle-axes
- g) Maces
- h) Non-authentic or modern footwear
- i) Sharp weapons of any description
- j) Tartan or plaid of any description
- k) Furry jackets or any form of Berserker
- l) 'Rus' trousers
- m) Viking Hangeroks
- n) Body armour made of Horn, Bone, Wood or any form of sheet metal.
- o) Celts, Cymric, Brythons (see 1e above).
- p) Shields that are not round, oval or kite shaped, or any made of Hardboard or Fibreboard
- q) All body piercings must be removed and participants must ensure that all tattoos are covered by their costume or masking make-up.

2.1 Special Items

2.1a Pouches

We would like to remind our guests that, overseas practice notwithstanding, carved leather 'box' pouches style are definitely not authentic for our period. Other styles including the circular and semi-circular drawstring type, the soft leather 'kidney' pouch as well as the ever popular shoulder bags are only ones that we are certain are authentic for our period.

2.1b Amber

Amber is a well-known and popular semi precious gemstone and there have been grave finds from both this country and Scandinavia. As its popularity however we are beginning to see a few pieces of unworked or 'rough' amber being worn. **This is wrong.** Without exception all of

the pieces of amber from our period have been worked and polished into the form of beads or pendants. All of the unworked pieces that have been found pre-date our era by a minimum of **2000 - 3000 years**. If you are looking for alternatives, don't forget Jet (very popular in Northern England) and Carnelian (very popular everywhere). By the C10th, Amber was 'out of fashion' in Viking circles, and overwhelmingly more worked Carnelian is found than worked Amber. Amber was mainly worked into charms (such as gripping beasts, axeheads, or even birds of legs) or was worn in the shape of doughnuts or wedges. Such beads as were worn were mainly faceted, not rounded.

2.1c Naughty Photographs!

Living in the real world as we do, we make certain allowances to enable our members to participate at shows with the minimum of inconvenience. In exchange we ask that all guests please be aware of members of the public carrying cameras, and do their best to avoid being photographed in costume whilst carrying, wearing or consuming blatant 21st century items. If you suspect that someone is deliberately trying to take a picture that compromises these guidelines, please inform the nearest Society Officer or Marshal who will speak to the person concerned.

ENGLISC WARRIOR COSTUME GUIDE

1. MILITARY RANK AND OPTIONS

For the purposes of this event we recommend that participants choose one of three basic options.

1a. The first of these, the **Lesser Thegn** represent the poorer members of the Thegnly class. These men were semi-professional soldiers, required by law to train for warfare and serve in the Fyrd when the King summoned them. This was a duty owed by virtue of their landholding, and even the poorest were accorded the respect due to minor nobles. Normal equipment would be a spear, a shield and a seax. A Sword would be optional. A limited number of archers - but **NOT** Crossbows - will be allowed as part of the **Lesser Thegns**, but anyone wishing to take part in this capacity should obtain confirmation of their acceptance **IN ADVANCE**.

Please note that although clearly poorer members of society, **EVEN THE** Lesser Thegns would still have knee length tunics, turnshoes and as a combatant a helmet of some sort.

1b. The next class is the **Greater Thegn**, represents the richer members of the Thegnly class. Likewise they were also semi-professional foot soldier, but with more land and wealth, They were better armed and equipped. For this class, a sword is compulsory as is a ringshirt. He should have a Kite shield, and like all free men and warriors a spear.

1c. The last, the **Huscarls**, are the cutting edge of the Anglo-Saxon army. Professional soldiers, well armed, armoured and trained and equipped with the most fearsome infantry weapon of its day, the Dane-Axe.

All Huscarls should have a long ring-shirt, separate coif and a Conical Helmet, and in addition he should be armed with a sword (in decorated scabbard), and a seax.

It is our intention to provide illustrations for these four types of warrior in the near future. When these are placed on the web an announcement will be made via the lists which are linked at the bottom of this webpage.

1d. Non-Combatants. Given the nature of this event, anyone who wishes to portray a **Non-Combatant** (whether male or female) **MUST** be dressed as an Anglo-Saxon, as such individuals would not be found amongst the Normans at the time of the 1066 invasion. Men who wish to attend as Englisc but not fight, should dress as a one of the Thegnly class as described below. A separate guide is available for Female costume.

Anyone wishing to attend dressed as a member of the Church should register on the email lists linked at the bottom and then contact the Vikings Authenticity team to discuss the matter.

2. KIT & COSTUME GUIDE

Although the basic costume is similar for all social classes, dress must be consistent with the character being portrayed. The higher the rank, the better the quality of the garment and its decoration or ornamentation must be. Regardless of the rank being portrayed, all garments must be properly finished and hemmed. Serious inconsistencies like 'Sword-but-no-shoes' or

'Low-rank-with-lots-of jewellery' must be avoided. The main guide is presented here as a 'check-list' and it should give you a good idea of what goes with what.

	Lesser Thegn	Greater Thegn	Huscarl
Soft Kit			
Under tunic	C	C	C
Overtunic	C	C*	C*
Trousers	O	O	O
Hose & Braes	X	O	O
Cloak	O	O	C
Hat	O	O	O
Jewellery	O	C	C
Embroidery or Tablet Braid,	O	O	C
Metal or Bone Strap Ends	C	C	C

	Lesser Thegn	Greater Thegn	Huscarl
Armour			
Round Shield	O	X	X
Poached Egg Shield	O	O	X
Kite Shield	O	O	C
Coif and Arming cap	X	O	O
Byrnie	O	X	X
Hauberk	X	C	C
Gambeson	X	X	X
Aketon or Panzar	X	O	O
Elbow length sleeves for Hauberk	X	O	O
Gloves and Helmet #	C	C	C
Armguards #	O	O	O

	Lesser Thegn	Greater Thegn	Huscarl
Weapons			
Langseax or Sword	O	C	C
Seax or Knife	C	C	C
Hand Axe	O	X	X
Spear	O	O	X
Dane Axe	O	O	C
Bow and Arrows	O	X	X

KEY:

X - Not an option for this character.

O - Optional.

C - Compulsory.

* - Item or sheath must be decorated.

- Gloves and Helmets are not authentic for all ranks, but as they are compulsory for combat they are expected and will be checked. Armguards are optional but highly recommended

3. COSTUME DESCRIPTIONS

3a) UNDERTUNIC. These should be made of linen (cotton is an acceptable substitute) and may be either side or front and rear split and must have long sleeves, tight fitting at the wrist but looser on the upper arm. It may also be edged in a contrasting colour around the wrists, cuffs, neck and around the splits. It should long enough to reach to the bottom edge of the knee, and may be either fully-skirted or split front and rear at the bottom hem. It should either have a round neckline or a squarer one with a small front split.

3b) OVERTUNIC. This was usually of wool and again had long sleeves, tight fitting at the wrist but looser on the upper arm. It must reach to just below the knee when belted and split front-and-rear. This must also be trimmed as described above and, for **HUSCARLS**, should be embroidered. As with the undertunic it should long enough to reach to the bottom edge of the knee, and as with the undertunic may be either fully-skirted or split front and rear at the bottom hem. It should either have a round neckline or a squarer one with a small front split.

3b.2) If armguards (see 5e below) are to be worn, they should be worn at least under the over tunic, and the sleeves must be loose enough to allow this.

3c) DECORATION & TABLET BRAID. Modern reconstructions depict our dark-age ancestors as fond of display, and as the rank of the individual being portrayed increases, the amount and quality of the decoration and jewellery (see 5l below) increases. **GREATER THEGNS** should have some sort of decoration (embroidery, inkle or tablet braid) on two out of hem, cuff and collar. **HUSCARLS** must have decoration on all three. **LEGWEAR.** All ranks have a choice of either **TROUSERS and WINNINGAS** or **HOSE and BRAES**.

3d) TROUSERS. Trousers should be straight legged down to the ankle. They were cut on the 'bias and while some were tight enough to resemble ski-pants others were looser.

3e) WINNINGAS. This is the name given to the leg windings worn by almost all Anglo-Saxon men. They are made from a piece of woollen cloth about 2 inches wide and long enough to cover the whole lower leg from ankle to knee with some overlap. **GREATER THEGNS** and **HUSCARLS** may make theirs out of tablet woven braid instead and instead of simply tying them at the end, they should be held in place by clothing hooks.

3f) HOSE. Hose (singular and plural) usually came as single leg garments and would have been worn with a pair of knee breeches (see above). Burial evidence suggests that while the hose may have been tied to the waistband, they were also fixed at the thigh with small pins or brooches. This pinning may have been to a pair of breeches, or may have connected the hose to the belt in a manner similar to modern suspenders. Some were open ended at the ankle and some had an integral foot.

3g) BRAES. Breeches are a pair of knee-length breeches or shorts with embroidery round the lower hem of each leg. They were tied with a drawstring, no examples have been found with belt loops. Whilst they were usually worn with HOSE (see below) they appear to have been worn on their own as well.

3h) BELTS & STRAP-ENDS. A leather belt completes the basic costume. It must be between 20 and 35mm wide and 150 to 250mm longer than your waist and have both an authentic buckle and strap ends. Although modern decorated belts are not acceptable, authentically decorated or painted sheaths, scabbards and belts are not only authentic but should be considered compulsory for **HUSCARLS**. Wide, extra-long belts with no buckle tongue or strap end are not acceptable.

3j) POUCHES. Pouches fall into two categories, authentic and modern. Authentic pouches, provenanced to the British Isles in the 10th -11th C should be worn over the tunic preferably on a belt dedicated to its use. Non-authentic or modern pouches (including those made from rigid thick leather with carved decoration) must be worn underneath the over tunic so that they do not detract from the overall appearance. As a separate item all **GREATER THEGNS** and **HUSCARLS** may also carry a small coin-pouch with a selection of reproduction coins. This may be highly elaborate and decorated or plain and simple. They appear to have been worn on a long drawstring around the neck, either over or under the tunic.

3k) SHOULDER BAGS. Far more practical than a pouch is a shoulder bag. These are visible in a large number of period illustrations and can be carried on one shoulder, much like a modern item. Most useful of all, they are large enough to accomodate a range of items -even those which will not fit into a pouch.

3l) TURN SHOES. Anglo-Saxon footwear followed the pattern common to northern Europe and remained virtually unchanged from late Roman times until the 13th Cent. The majority was of a type known as 'Turnshoes' and had either a central upper seam, or a 'flap and toggle' arrangement. Anglo-Saxons should NOT wear boots.

3m) CLOAK. Most adults had a cloak of some sort. It varied from a simple blanket thrown over the shoulder, to a full-length, lined, fur-trimmed, embroidered garment that any one would be proud to own. The most common shape was the half-round type, probably for the simple reason that it doesn't drag on the ground. Although differing in quality, all were fixed, normally at the shoulder, by brooch, pin or ties.

3n) JEWELLERY. Contrary to popular belief, our dark-age ancestors did not wear vast amounts of jewellery. As Christians, may have worn a cross or pendant of some sort and this might have a couple of beads on the same string. Brooches, cloak pins and finger rings were also quite common, and the richer the person, the larger the item, but no Dark-Age Mr. T's please.

3o). HATS are not mandatory, but any worn must be authentic and are a useful addition to any costume.

4. WEAPONS.

This is not intended to be a definitive guide, merely a brief description of some of the items worn or carried by the Anglo-Saxons. Readers are strongly advised to consult one of the many suitable references to the period. A fuller list of technical weapon specs will be issued later.

4a) KNIFE or SAEX. For the purposes of this guide the terms Scram, Scramseax, (which are not authentic terms), Knife and Seax are interchangeable and all refer the single edged weapon/tool carried by free men and women. This combined the usefulness of a basic tool with the symbol of being a free man. It must be less than 14" (35cm) long and may be either a sharp working knife or a combat blunt. Seax's with a blade of more than 21" (53cm) are called Langseax's and are a primary combat weapon. Regardless of the length of the weapon it must be carried in an authentically shaped sheath or scabbard. While the sharp knife must NOT be carried on the battlefield, the sheath may be.

4b) SPEARS. Actually not that different from those used by both the Normans and the Vikings, they may be either plain or winged. In an ideal world ALL **Thegns** would be

equipped with a spear, but this may not be possible for reasons of safety. **4c) DANE-AXE.** The definitive weapon of the **Huscarl** and one, which even the Normans, accorded a sensible degree of respect. In an ideal world ALL **Huscarls** and maybe some **Thegns** would be equipped with one of these, but this may not be possible for reasons of safety.

4d) BOW AND ARROWS. Although this weapon was in widespread use for hunting in Anglo-Saxon England it is not often mentioned as a weapon of war, therefore numbers on the Anglo-Saxon side should be few and should be used as individual weapons, not in volleys. Specifications for both bow and arrows and archery rules will be issued later

5. ARMOUR

The field of armour research has moved on somewhat since 1998, and because of this the terminology used in this section has changed. A Byrnie refers to a short-sleeved mail shirt, which extends down to just below the groin, while a knee-length shirt is called a Hauberk. A fuller explanation of these items follows.

5a) GAMBESSON. For the purposes of this guide, the Gambeson (probably derived from the Byzantine 'Bambukion') describes a padded garment worn as an armour by itself, who's use spread to this country after the 1st Crusade. It must not be worn by any fighting in the Englisic army.

5b) PANZAR or AKETON. For this guide these terms are used for the padded garment worn under a ring-shirt. Evidence for its use in this country before the first crusade is tenuous, but for practical purposes it is allowed to be worn as a garment under mail by the **GREATER THEGN** or **HUSCARL**.

AKETONS must NOT be worn over a ring shirt. This is a much later development and is completely wrong for 1066

If it is worn, it must be at approx as long as the hauberk it is designed to go under (with a front split if the ring-shirt has one), and have sleeves which likewise match the ring-shirt. The neck should be round and quite close fitting. It may either be split full length at the rear and fixed with a series of leather ties, or of the one-piece type with no need for fastenings. These should be threaded through leather patches to avoid the material tearing or fraying. The last tie should be just below the wearer's bottom giving an effective rear split. To keep it light while still offering some protection it should be stuffed with cotton 'tow' (the stuff quilts are filled with). The outermost layer should be calico or something very similar as this appears to give both the correct look and feel, (it's also washable). Stitch work should be in the form of vertical lines, **NOT** diamond patterned.

5c) HAUBERK & BYRNIE. Hauberks worn by the Englisic warriors differ only in their length. Those worn by **GREATER THEGNS** should be short-sleeved and may be from thigh to knee-length. Those worn by **HUSCARLS** should all be knee-length, have half-sleeves at least and be split front-and-rear.

5d) HELMETS While we realise that not all warriors would have worn helmets, they are **required** for all those on the battlefield for safety reasons. There are four forms of acceptable helmet:

The first is the authentic, quarter-braced conical helm with nasal guard so often depicted in artworks. This is the version required for all **HUSCARLS** and may be worn by others. It must be made of steel and have no visible spinning marks. It may also have a mail 'ventail' at the back covering the top of the neck.

The second consists of a semi-spherical, spun dome covering the head down to about the ears. It is often worn as a 'hidden' helm completely hidden by a fabric or leather cap, often in the 'Phrygian' style, but many other versions are acceptable, however fur-trimmed 'Viking' hats will **NOT** be acceptable.

The third also uses the semi-spherical dome (with or without a nasal 'guard') as a helmet. The spinning marks must be removed and it must be lined with fur or heavy cloth to provide additional protection.

The final option is an all-leather helm. This should be made in 4 sections and then fixed with leather 'bands' in a manner very similar to the authentic metal version. The leather from which it is made should be at least 6mm thick.

NB types ii) & iv) are not acceptable for **GREATER THEGNS or HUSCARLES**.

'Rus' or 'Eastern' helmets with chimney pots or horse tails are NOT acceptable and wearers will be asked to leave the battlefield.

5e) GLOVES AND ARM GUARDS. As with helmets, we realise that these items are, for the most part, not authentic, but they are required for safety purposes. Gloves should be stout leather gardening-type gloves (but not black gauntlets or bright red or green in colour) with heavy leather reinforcing covering the whole of the back of the fingers and hand. Mail backing is allowed but discouraged since this does little to absorb the blow, merely transmitting it to the hand.

Armguards may be constructed in one of two ways: Firstly they may be made from a sheet of stout leather at least 6mm thick and then laced up the inside of the arm. Alternatively they may be made from rigid plastic drainpipe and then lined to absorb some of the blow. In both cases they must cover the area of the arm from the elbow to the wrist. Tunics should be made extra wide on the forearm and wrist in order to accommodate these items.

5f) SHIELDS. All those who expect to engage in hand-to-hand combat should have a shield. By 1066 round-topped Kite shields appear to have been standard for both professional and amateur warriors across Northern Europe. They are compulsory for professional warriors (Huscarls). Those who represent the wealthy Thengs should also regard Kite or Poach-egg shields as compulsory. Round shields are strongly discouraged and should only be carried by the poorest and most out-of-date warriors

All Round and Poached-egg shields must have a centrally mounted steel boss, which is both the location and protection for the handgrip. Bosses do appear on Kite shields, although this appears to be mostly decorative. All shields in all three shapes are acceptable either flat or 'lenticular' in section. Arm strapped Round or Poached Egg shields are not correct and are strongly discouraged. Kite shields with a strapping arrangement on the back are correct however and are encouraged. Further details on minimum standards for shield construction will be in the Weapons Specification guidelines.

FURTHER HELP AND YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

If you have any further questions on authenticity, or need help getting your gear together please go to the [Hastings 2006 List](#) and subscribe to the Yahoo mailing list set up for discussion ahead of the event.

Since the main list may generate a lot of emails, if you wish only to be kept informed of important announcements please go to the [Hastings 2006 Announcement List](#) here instead. This list will only carry postings by event Officers.

**Page last updated
25th July 2005**