

HASTINGS 2006



ENGLISC FEMALE COSTUME GUIDE

Written by The Vikings Authenticity Team

1. General Authenticity Rules

1. 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). This guide has been written specifically for the H2005 Hastings re-fight. Compromises have therefore been made with what is strictly authentic in order to maximise participation in this event.

1.3) 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. Unless the portrayal is that of a member of the Clerical or Monastic Orders, clothing dyed black, white or purple should be avoided.

1.4) 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.

1.5) FEMALE COMBATANTS. In order to comply with the English Heritage guidelines for such events, female warriors **must** dress as a warrior. Therefore the costume rules for women are exactly the same as those for men, and the appropriate costume guide must be consulted for details. If possible some attempt should also be made to hide the more obvious 'bumps'. **All** visible piercings must be removed and participants must ensure that all tattoos are covered by their costume or masking make-up.

2. UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS.

The following is an (incomplete) list of items which will NOT be allowed into the LH area at Battle Abbey.

- a) Gjermundbu or Medieval 'Great' Helms.
- b) Live-role-play type weapons or armour.
- 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 Dane-axes.
- g) Non-authentic or modern footwear.
- h) Sharp weapons of any description.
- i) Tartan or plaid of any description.
- j) Furry jackets or any form of Berserker.
- k) 'Rus' trousers
- l) Viking Hangeroks
- m) Body armour made of Horn, Bone, Wood or any form of sheet metal.
- n) Celts, Cymric, Brythons.
- o) Shields that are not round, oval or kite shaped, or any made of Hardboard or Fibreboard
- p) All body piercings must be removed and participants must ensure that all tattoos are covered by their costume or masking make-up.
- q) Items of costume or jewellery that are NOT suitable for mid-late 11th C Anglo-Saxon/Englisc re-enactment.

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. 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 a 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 FEMALE COSTUME GUIDE

1. FEMALE OPTIONS.

Historical records prove that the invading Norman army of 1066 was a purely military contingent and contained no women or other dependants. This means that the only suitable costumes for women who do not wish to dress as warriors, are Engisc. This even extends to the Norman camp where the only females present are likely to have been local Engisc pressed into servitude with the army. **Viking Hangeroks and tortoise or box brooches are not acceptable.** Therefore, for the purposes of this event we recommend that participants choose one of three basic options.

1a) The first of these is the **Lady**



A reasonably well dressed Anglo-Saxon **Lady** is shown here.

She is wearing a linen underdress with the characteristically long baggy sleeves and a woollen overdress. Both have been finished at the hem by a fancy stitch and both sleeve ends have been embroidered with a typical pattern.

She wears a woollen belt with an assortment of items hanging from it (see Picture 3 below) although only the sheath for the sharp knife is visible. On her head is a wimple (a bit like a scarf wrapped around the neck and head and pinned into place). Over that is a woollen hood, again edged with a pattern.

The overall picture also shows a variety of other living history items including a raised firebox, chests, and a table with an assortment of items on it and under it. Although you can't see it she is sitting on a three-legged stool.

1b) Next we have the **Thegns Wife**



Note though she still has the two dresses (the underdress with the long baggy sleeves) and the wimple.

Again she has a woven belt and this time you can see a key, a sharpening stone and a pouch hanging from it.

The wimple is easier to see here and is pinned into place covering the band of tablet-woven braid which is visible on her forehead. Notice again that all the hems are finished and edged with a pattern or a contrasting colour.

1c) Finally we have the **Ceorls Wife**



Although this woman is clearly of a lower rank, notice that even at the bottom of the social tree she is still wearing two dresses, and the underdress still has the long sleeves.

The underdress should have some sort of closure at the neck. Given her obvious lowly status a simple copper clothing hook or a hook-and-eye would be most appropriate.

She now wears a simple headscarf but her clothing is devoid of all ornamentation, apart from the coloured vents in the lower dress. She has a variety of tools hanging from her waist belt including a leather pouch bag which could contain things like her sewing kit.

This picture also shows her turnshoes.

2. KIT & COSTUME CHECKLIST

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.

	Ceorls Wife	Thegns Wife	Lady
Underdress & Shoes	O	C	C
Overdress	C	C	C*

Hose and Braes	X	O	O
Mantel	X	O	C
Cloak, Hat & Authentic Pouch	O	O	O
Jewellery	O	O	C
Wimple	C	C	C
Embroidery or Tablet Braid	O	O	C
Shoulder Bag	R	R	R

KEY

X - Not an option for this character.

O - Optional.

R - Recommended

C - Compulsory.

* - Item or sheath must be decorated.

3. COSTUME DESCRIPTIONS.

3a) UNDERDRESS. These should be made of linen (cotton is an acceptable substitute) or (for the **LADY**) silk. It may have long sleeves, tight fitting at the wrist but looser on the upper arm. It should also be edged in a contrasting colour around the wrists, cuffs, neck and around the splits. It must be ankle length, and have a round neckline with a small front split as an option.

3b) OVERDRESS. This was usually of wool and again had long sleeves, tight fitting at the wrist but looser on the upper arm. Again it must reach to the ankle when belted and split front-and-rear. It must also be trimmed as the undertunic and (for the **Lady**) **MUST** be embroidered. If a front split is worn it **MUST** have an appropriate, authentic fastening at the neck.

3c) DECORATION & BRAID. Modern reconstructions depict our dark-age ancestors as fond of showing off, and as the rank of the individual being portrayed increases, the amount and quality of the decoration and jewellery (see 5k below) must increase. The **THGNS Wife** should have some sort of decoration (embroidery, inkle or tablet braid) on two out of hem, cuff and collar, while the **LADY** must have decoration on all three.

3d) UNDERWEAR While evidence for early mediaeval underwear is extremely rare, there is good reason to believe that women may have worn **BRAES**. These are a pair of knee-length shorts often with embroidery round the lower hem of each leg. They were tied with a drawstring, and no examples have been found with belt loops. While they were usually worn with **HOSE** (see below) they also appear to have been worn on their own as well.

3f) HOSE. Hose sometimes had an integral foot, 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.

3g) BELTS & STRAP-ENDS. Based on the archaeology, we believe that the vast majority of women should be wearing a fabric belts of something similar to tablet braid tied in a knot on the front or side.

This belt will be between 15 and 35mm wide and maybe 100mm longer than your waist. It may have have both an authentic buckle and strap ends. Modern decorated belts are not acceptable

3h) TURN SHOES. Footwear followed the pattern common to northern Europe and remained virtually unchanged from late Roman times until the 13th Cent. The majority were of a type known as 'Turnshoes' and had either a central upper seam, or a 'flap and toggle' arrangement.

3j) 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 gown that any one would be proud to own. Although differing in quality, all were fixed, normally at the shoulder, by brooch, pin or ties.

3k) WIMPEL This is the standard word for a variety of headwear which seems to have been worn by all Christian women in England in the 11thC.

3l) 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.

3m) SHOULDER BAGS. Far more practical than a pouch is a shoulder bag and for practical purposes it is recommended that all women who need a bag or similar item make themselves 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 accommodate a range of items - even those which will not fit into a pouch.

4) WEAPONS

The only item suitable for a woman is a KNIFE or SAEX. For the purposes of this guide the terms Scram, Scramseax, (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 free. It must be less than 14" long and should be sharpened for everyday use. The knife must be carried in an authentically shaped sheath or scabbard.

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

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