

Bags and shoes





Bags and shoes

Belt bag and pouch

These leather bags and pouches were worn by Tudor men and women, as clothes did not have pockets at this time. There were many styles of bags and pouches, some made of cowhide leather, some made of leather made from goatskin or pigskin.

This red leather pouch was of a commonly worn type, with a purse bar, and the brown leather pouch is another commonly worn type, known as a kidney pouch.

Men wore pouches or bags hanging from leather belts and women wore them hanging from girdles (narrow belts which sat on the hips). Leather pouches or bags attached to belts were in common use in Britain from the late 1100s until at least the 1500s.



How do we know about belt bags and pouches?

Paintings, manuscript descriptions, examples in museums and fragments found during archaeological excavations.

Domenico Ghirlandaio's 1488 painting, *Francesco Sassetti and His Son Teodoro*, shows a triangular belt bag, and *The Annunciation Triptych* (Merode Altarpiece) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's online collection, shows a kidney shaped bag, as does the *Les Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry Octobre*, in wiki commons.



Bags and shoes

Coin purse with coins

This brightly coloured leather purse, used by both men and women, was worn looped over a belt, or even a wrist. The drawstrings pulled it tightly closed to keep the contents secure. The glass beads and brass bells rang when the purse moves, so the owner could hear that it was still safely on their belt whilst wearing it.

The coins in the purse are the half penny, the half-groat (2 pence), and the silver groat (4 pence). Other coins in Elizabeth I's time included the silver farthing, three-farthings, three-halfpencepenny, sixpence, shilling, half crown, and the following gold coins: the half angel (5 shillings), the angel (10 shillings), the ryal (15 shillings), the pound (20 shillings) and the fine sovereign (30 shillings).



How do we know about coin purses and coins?

Paintings, manuscript descriptions, examples of coins and purse fragments found during archaeological excavations. There is an example of a soft leather coin purse in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's online collection, and many examples of Tudor coins in museums.



Bags and shoes

Falconer's bag

This leather falconer's bag was used to carry the falcon's lure and food.

Falconers were the servants responsible for training and caring for the hunting birds in high status households, and falconer's bags were part of the equipment they needed to do their jobs.

Hunting birds were expensive to buy and maintain. They needed special housing, in rows of cages in their own 'mews' building; the right kind of food to stay healthy; and training accessories such as hoods, jesses, bells, and lures.

Although men and women at most levels of society kept birds of prey in the 1500s, there were rules about who could keep what kind of bird.

The *Boke of St. Albans*, written in 1486, explains that keeping a falcon above one's station was a crime and an act of rebellion. People who kept birds above their social rank risked having their hands cut off.



How do we know about falconers bags?

From examples in museums and fragments found during archaeological excavations, and manuscript illustrations, such as *Hunting birds with falcons*, Kunz von Rosenheim, in the Codex Manesse 1305 – 1340, University of Heidelberg Library, Zurich.



Bags and shoes

Shoe

This leather 'bar shoe' was stitched together with linen thread, and fastened with a metal buckle. The upper parts of the shoe are soft leather, and the soles are made from thick hard leather. It has two soles, an inner sole and an outer sole, which could be replaced when it wore out.

This wide, square toed style of shoe was very fashionable and was worn by both men and women at all levels of society. Poor people wore black leather bar shoes, and richer people wore brighter coloured shoes.

Very rich people wore similar shoes which were lined with a contrasting colour of silk or velvet, and where the leather uppers had been slashed so that the fabric showed through.

The buckles were made from silver, or from pewter made with a lot of tin so that it looks like silver, depending on how rich the wearer was.



How do we know about Tudor shoes?

Paintings, manuscript descriptions, examples in museums and fragments found during archaeological excavations. There is an example of a slashed wide toed Tudor shoe in the V & A's online collection, and several examples in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's online collection.

