

Clothes





Clothes

Braies

These linen 'underpants' were the innermost layer of clothing for men, worn under breeches or hose. They were held in place with a drawstring, tied around the waist, which also allowed the wearer to adjust the fabric to fit properly.



How do we know about braies?

Descriptions in Tudor documents, and from illuminated manuscript evidence. There are several illustrations in *The Great Book of Hours of Anne of Brittany*, c. 1500-1508 (BNF Lat 9474): June (fol. 9), September (fol. 12), *The Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* (fol. 117v), and *The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* (fol. 175v).



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Breeches/hose

These woollen men's leg coverings were made to measure for individual men. The fabric was cut on the cross or bias, which helped them fit closely. Breeches were also made from other fabrics, such as linen.

They were worn under long skirted jerkins in the first half of the Tudor period. As fashions changed, breeches/hose were lined with a different colour of linen or calico and the outer woollen layer was slashed above the knee so that the lining was visible. Some breeches or hose covered the whole leg, some covered some or all of the top half and were worn with knitted 'nether hose' (socks) which covered the bottom half of the leg. In Elizabethan times, they were called 'Venetians' and were around knee length with gathered fabric at the waist.



How do we know about breeches/hose?

Hose are referred to in Tudor household accounts and wills. A pair of linen hose, found at Kloster Alpirsbach in Germany, have been carbon dated to between 1490 and 1529. Paintings, including Lucas de Heere's 1572 *'Allegory of the Tudor Succession'*, and Nicholas Heere's 1587 *'Young Man Among Roses'*, show men wearing hose.



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Half leg hose

Made from silk, linen, or fine wool cloth, these leg coverings were an early version of modern long socks, and made to measure for individuals. The fabric was cut on the cross or bias, which helped them fit closely. Poorer people could only afford wool and/or linen hose, but rich people could also afford silk.

Hose were worn by men and women, and were held up by ribbon garters.

Knitted hose or socks were introduced in the Tudor period, initially for rich women and children. Knitted hose increased in popularity, because they were closer fitting and more comfortable to wear than cloth hose, and by the 1590s they were being worn by people from all classes of society, but most people still had cloth hose too.



How do we know about half leg hose?

Half leg hose are referred to in Tudor household accounts and wills. Palazzo Moroni's 1560 painting, *'The Gentleman in Pink'*, shows a man wearing half hose held up by garters. Museum of London online collection Image Number 009584 shows an original cloth hose from the 1500s.



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Stocking

Made from hand knitted silk, stockings like this were worn by very rich men.

The Spanish royal court gave King Henry VIII a gift of a pair of silk tights (stockings sewn onto linen underpants), in 1539.

Knitted stockings then became very fashionable, and were imported from Spain and Italy. Rich men wore silk stockings, and the richest men wore embroidered silk stockings. Poorer men wore stockings made from cheaper knitted linen.

In 1589, William Lee invented the knitting frame, and produced the first 'machine knit' stockings in England. Queen Elizabeth I refused to give him a patent for the machine as she thought it would harm the livelihood of people who knitted by hand.

It was a long time before the knitting frame began to be used widely, but its invention was the first step in the mechanisation of the textile industry in Britain.



How do we know about silk stockings?

Many Henry VIII portraits show him wearing silk stockings. Titian's 1551 *Portrait of Phillip II of Spain* (who married Queen Mary I and became King of England) shows him wearing long silk stockings. The museum of London has the foot of a silk stocking, ID number A13833.

