

Hints and Tips - 003

Step by Step - Celt Warband

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Wargames Factory figures painted by Mick Farnworth

Item	Colour	Vallejo Model Colour
Helmet	Bronze	GW Shining Gold 61.63
Helmet	Silver	Natural Steel 70.863 or GW Chainmail 61.56
Chainmail	Silver	Natural Steel 70.863 or GW Chainmail 61.56
Armour edges	Brown	Mahogany Brown 70.846 or GW Bestial Brown 61.13
Clothing	Various	(see notes)
Leather Belt	Brown	Mahogany Brown 70.846, Flat Brown 70.984
Shoes	Brown	Mahogany Brown 70.846, Flat Brown 70.984
Sword and Spear	Silver	Natural Steel 70.863 or GW Chainmail 61.56
Javelin Shaft	Sand	Vallejo Iraqi Sand 70.819 or GW Bleached Bone 61.17
Spear Shaft	Brown	Mahogany Brown 70.846 or GW Bestial Brown 61.13

Notes

Northern Celts had blonde, brown or red hair. Often warriors mixed lime into their hair to make a spiky white mane. British Celts often decorated their bodies with blue woad tattoos in swirling patterns.

Celtic clothing was frequently patterned. Tartan, striped, checked patterns were all used. Even plain cloaks and tunics often had a decorated border.

Wealthier warriors often wore very bright colours. Cloaks were often blue, black or burgundy. Tunics and trousers could be natural wool, yellow, purple, burgundy or brown. A large proportion of poorer warriors would have been dressed in earth tones - cream, brown, mossy green and grey.

Helmets were made in bronze and in iron although bronze was most common in this period. Bronze armbands and neck rings called torcs were often worn.

It is often easier to differentiate between spears and javelins if the spears are dark and javelins are light coloured. This simulates that javelins would be new freshly cut wood, whereas spears were kept for a long time and often stained.

Bases

It is worth deciding on the rules that you are going to use before you start to base and paint the figures. Mass battle games often specify multiple bases to represent regiments.

For Fields of Glory, in 28mm scale you should mount four figures on a 60mm x 20mm base although it is acceptable to base 3 figures on a 60mm x 20mm base.

For Warhammer Ancients Battles, Celts go on 20mm x 20mm squares or on 25mm x 25mm squares.

For skirmish games, most rules suggest individual bases. Some rules suggest 25mm diameter bases and some suggest 20mm diameter bases.

Plastic bases (e.g. Slottabases), wooden bases, washers or coins are all suitable. 20mm steel washers can be used with magnetic bases so that the figures can be adapted to many different sets of rules.

Step by Step

There are many ways to paint 28mm figures. Many people paint the clothing with a dark shade then the main colour and then a highlight colour. For wargaming, where you want to get reasonably good results quickly, it is easier to paint only the main colours and then add shade with a wash of dark transparent stain.

Here is a basic assembly and painting sequence for typical Celts. This method is designed for painting about 20 figures at a time. The painting sequence is designed so that minor mistakes can be corrected at the highlight stage. There is no need to correct minor mistakes as you go along.

It is a good idea to do a practice run on 10 figures first, using one of each type of sprue.

1. Remove the parts from the sprue using side cutters. Cut away the remaining sprue tab with a scalpel on a cutting mat.
2. Clean up any obvious mould lines either with a scalpel or with a needle file. Pay particular attention to the head, the neck, the spear shaft and the arms as any remaining sprue tabs will show up later. Sort out the parts into boxes of bodies, heads, right arms, shields and weapons.
3. Before you start to assemble the figures decide on whether you want to paint the shields on the figure or separately. If the shield is large and close to the body, painting the body is difficult.

TIP - With Celts, it is much easier to add the shields after you have painted the body. I glued on the shields and this made the addition of the transfers very difficult.

4. Glue the figure to a base. If you are going to use individual bases, this will be the final base. If you are going to use multiple bases, use a coin as temporary base so that you can hold the figure for painting. For plastic figures on plastic bases, use polystyrene cement. For plastic figures on metal bases use cyanacrylate adhesive (superglue). For temporary bases, use PVA glue, as it is easy to remove later.

5. Assemble the figures using a polystyrene cement. For best results use a brush on liquid adhesive such as Revel Contacta Liquid. Start with the torso. Next, add the right arm, then the head and lastly, the weapons.



TIP - There are 4 bare torsos and 4 with tunics. Four pairs of legs are made with the tunic showing under the belt. Be careful not to glue a bare torso to a shirted pair of legs. Similarly, there are bare arms and arms in sleeves.

TIP - When you add the head, it should usually be pointing slightly towards the left arm so that the figure looks logical when the shield is attached.

TIP - I did not like the look of the shields with javelins. I prefer javelins to be shorter than spears. I cut off the javelins at the edge of the shield and glued them into a new position so that they looked shorter. I added a little filler to correct the look from the back.

6. Prime and undercoat the figure. For plastic figures spray undercoat usually works well. A black undercoat is usually easiest as it also acts as the darkest shade. If you do the later steps neatly, it is not necessary to repaint the black items.

TIP - It can be difficult to get the spray paint on the under surfaces of the figure. A simple method is to lay the figures on their side on a paper and spray. When the paper has dried to matt black, turn the figures over and spray again. Then stand the figures upright and spray from all sides.

7. I sorted out the figures in chainmail armour and put them to one side. Next, I spray painted all of the rest in brown. This saves time later as you do the base, belts, hair, spears, scabbards, shoes and straps in one go.



8. Drybrush the chainmail, helmet, spear point and sword in a steel colour. This is done first so that you do not need to be careful about covering other areas.

TIP - use a cocktail stick to smear a small amount of paint onto a piece of cardboard. Brush the paint out using a largish brush (I use a no 6 brush with fairly stiff bristles.) so that there is a very small amount of paint on the brush. Then brush in several directions across the figure.

9. Paint the helmet, torc, belt buckle and shield boss with a bright gold colour (e.g. GW Shining Gold 61.63).
10. Paint the hands and face with a basic flesh colour (GW Dwarf Flesh is a good base coat for flesh). Highlight with a quick damp brush of a lighter flesh tone (e.g. GW Elf Flesh).



11. With irregular armies such as Celts, a variety of clothing colours looks best. To do this task quickly - sort out the figures into groups before painting. Then paint the groups in a sequence - e.g. group A gets blue trousers, group B gets grey trousers, group c gets green trousers and group D gets red trousers. Next, sort the figures into new groups and do the same again for the vests or tunics.

TIP - Decide on a colour scheme before you start. I chose Turquoise, Light Green, Blue, Burgundy and Light Brown for Celt Warband. For the better armoured troops, I also added Purple. I avoided red as the Romans are a predominantly Red army.



12. For the chainmail armoured troops - Paint the boots, chainmail edges, spear shaft, scabbard, shield rib, shield back and belt in brown. Remember to leave the scabbard trims and belt buckle in silver. Paint the base in brown.
13. Paint on contrasting stripes and check patterns. There is no need to go over the top. If one warrior in five has stripes, the effect is usually enough. This is often easier to do with a pen and ink rather actually painting.

14. Shade the whole figure a dark wash applied with a brush (Army Painter Strong Tone or Vallejo Transparent Smoke 70.939 or GW Devlan Mud Wash).

TIP - Army Painter Strong Tone worked very well. Be careful not to let it pool too much or they look like they have had a mud bath. I prefer the result from a brush as the results from a dip is rather dark. Dipping is also very messy. Note that Army Painter is an oil-based gloss varnish and needs at least 24 hours to dry.



TIP - For a more sophisticated result, use different coloured washes in different areas. (GW Devlan Mud on the bronze parts, GW Sepia Wash on the flesh and wood and GW Badab Black Wash on the silver).

15. Using a fine brush and dilute paint, paint the eyes as a horizontal white dash.
 16. Dot the eyes with black or dark blue. A cocktail stick can be used instead of a brush.
 17. The transfers can be applied to unpainted plastic. However, if you have any “off target” silver and brown paint from painting the boss and spine, paint the shield front. Make sure that the paint is flat and even.
 18. Apply the shield transfers. To prepare the transfer, cut out a rectangle for the boss and a short slot above and below for the spine. Next cut round the transfer leaving a wider border on one side to use as a handle. Line up the cross shaped hole with the boss and the spine. Now press down on the transfer. It will stick immediately to the shield. Rub over the whole transfer so that it sticks evenly. This takes a little practice to do neatly. Do not worry if you make a few mistakes. The box comes with 32 transfers so you do have some spare.
- TIP** - Some of the shields with javelins attached are a little too big for the transfers to fit neatly. I suggest you leave these in plain colours.
19. Paint the back of the shield brown. Try to leave the dimple unpainted.
 20. Glue on the shield. To ensure a good bond, scrape the paint off the hand where it is glued to the shield dimple. Where there are javelins behind the shield, cut away some of the javelin shaft so that the hand fits close against the shield.
 21. Touch up any mistakes and add highlights as desired.
 22. Varnish with a spray of gloss varnish to protect the figure. This is not necessary if you have used Army Painter Strong Tone. After this has dried overspray with matt varnish.
 23. Decorate the base. The easiest way is to paint on PVA glue and dip the base in sand. I glued on the sand in two stages. The first time, I covered the upper surface of the base with PVA and dipped it in sand. Once the first stage was dry, I added more glue and sand to make sure that

the step left by the plastic base was hidden. Once the glue is dry, shade the base with a brown wash mixed with a little PVA glue. This also fixes the sand.

24. Highlight with a pale sand colour (GW Bleached Bone 61.17) lightly dry-brushed onto the sand.

Here are units made from one Celt Warband box of 32 figures.



Wargames Factory Celt Warband can be used to make the following units:-



Warband



Close order Warband



Javelins



Slings

The Celt Army



Here is the infantry section of the army. There are 125 figures - 64 are Wargames Factory and 59 are Warlord. The druid and Witch are from Steve Saleh's Artizan collection.

Further Reading

Books

Osprey books are also very good but there are thirty five which cover the Roman period, so it is difficult to recommend one item.

General Military Series. Rome and Her Enemies Edited by Jane Penrose 2008 edition
If you are only going to buy one Osprey book about the Romans, then this is the one. It is essentially a summary of thirty five Osprey books.

Men-at-Arms 158 Rome's Enemies (2) Gallic & British Celts - Peter Wilcox & Angus McBride

Warrior 30 Celtic Warrior: 300 BC-AD 100

The Armies and Enemies of Imperial Rome by Phil Barker and Ian Heath 4th Edition 1981 Wargames Research Group.

In the early 1980s, Phil Barker and Ian Heath of Wargames Research Group published a series of books covering armies throughout history. These remain a valuable reference source today, so much so that some of the books sell for ridiculous prices. Luckily, the 4th edition of Armies and Enemies of Imperial Rome is still available from www.wrg.me.uk.

Early Celts are covered in

Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars. By Duncan Head and Ian Heath. 1982 Wargames Research Group.

Ancient Celts -- Tim Newark & Angus McBride