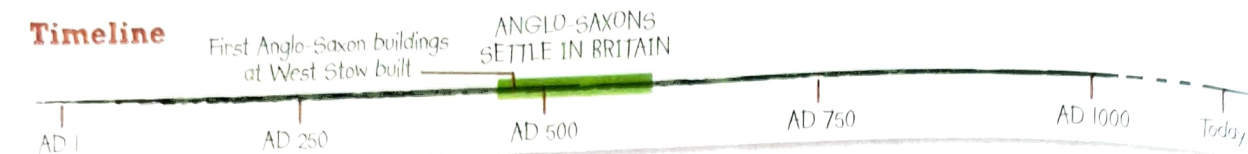


Daily Life for Anglo-Saxons

Timeline



Daily life for the Anglo-Saxons was very different to our daily life now.

Can you think of some things we have now that Anglo-Saxons might not have had? Out of these things, which ones would you find it difficult living without?

Back to basics



Anglo-Saxon settlements were usually built near rivers or streams. **West Stow** is very near the River Lark.

Can you think why?

There was no running water in Anglo-Saxon homes. You had to collect all the water you needed for washing, and cooking from rivers or streams (or from a well).

River water wasn't always very clean — so most people drank beer.

The Anglo-Saxons also used rivers to travel by boat and to power water mills.

Toilet troubles

Having no running water meant that toilets were usually pits dug in the ground, with a small hut over them. The contents were pretty smelly and every so often a new pit would have to be dug, and the hut moved!

This picture shows what a pit toilet might have looked like.



Heating houses

Anglo-Saxons heated their houses with an open fire.



Open fires in an enclosed space can be dangerous because they give off poisonous fumes.

Early Anglo-Saxon houses often had no chimneys and no windows, so houses could become very smokey. Open fires are also a fire-risk, especially in houses made of wood and straw.

People would also cook over an open fire. They used cooking pots like this one.

Eat up!

Food could be quite boring. Bread was made from barley or wheat. It was usually eaten with a thick soup or stew called pottage, made with ground-up peas and beans, as well as vegetables like leeks, onions and turnips. Farm animals provided a little meat, as well as milk and eggs.



Pottage

Hard work and no play

Anglo-Saxons would work every day doing the same set of tasks — for most of them, this was farming. There were some festivals throughout the year, but mostly, life was tough.

Anglo-Saxons generally didn't live very long. There was lots of illness and no real medical help. Women often died in childbirth, while some men died in battles. Today, people in Britain usually live longer.

Why do you think people in Britain today usually live longer than the Anglo-Saxons did?

Anglo-Saxon life was all about hard work and survival...

Anglo-Saxons had very few luxuries — their lives were very uncomfortable. Every day they worked hard to make sure they, and their families, had enough food to live.