



Video transcript

What jobs did people do?

Sid: This is my village. It's called Stow, which is Saxon for "special place". Everybody joins in village life. Some people do useful jobs around the village, like chopping firewood, churning butter and grinding flour.

Aswynn is our main weaver. She weaves material for most of our clothes. Edric runs the metal forge and makes tools and jewellery. And Kedric is our master builder - he's working on a new village hall. We have to spend a lot of time repairing our buildings because they're made of wood, which slowly rots, especially after bad weather.

This is my wife, Sowyn, and two of my children, Aelfwyn and Aenwulf. Now, they don't get a lot of time to play, because there's usually too much to do.

Sid: Aenwulf, what have you been up to today?

Aenwulf: Been out, collecting firewood.

Sid: Good lad!

We use quite a lot of firewood. We have to keep the fires hot to cook our food on. But also we use the smoke, it helps to keep the insects out and also it helps us to preserve fish and meat. We hang it up there to smoke it.

Aelfwyn, what have you been up to?

Aelfwyn: I've been feeding the animals and picking plants.

Sid: Good girl! We use plants to make dye for our clothes and we grow them specially here in the village.

We have quite a lot of colours we can choose from. Wode makes blue. Madder makes red and weld makes yellow. And this green I am wearing is made from nettles.

Sowyn, what did you use for the colour of that dress you're wearing?

Sowyn: This colour is madder?

Sid: And did you dye it yourself?

Sowyn: I do the dyeing in the village sometimes, but I prefer weaving or actually making the clothes.

Sid: So you've been keeping busy then?

Sowyn: Busy! What with all the work round the farm... and your seven children...I should say so!

Sid: Our children all work in the village. We don't teach them to read or write because most Saxons can't.

We're all pagans here in Stow, which means, we believe in spells and lucky charms and worship several gods, like Woden, the divine father, and Thunor, the god of thunder.

These villagers are preparing a pagan grave. When you're a pagan, you're buried with your belongings, a bit like King Raedwald was at Sutton Hoo, but most Saxon graves are full of more ordinary things.