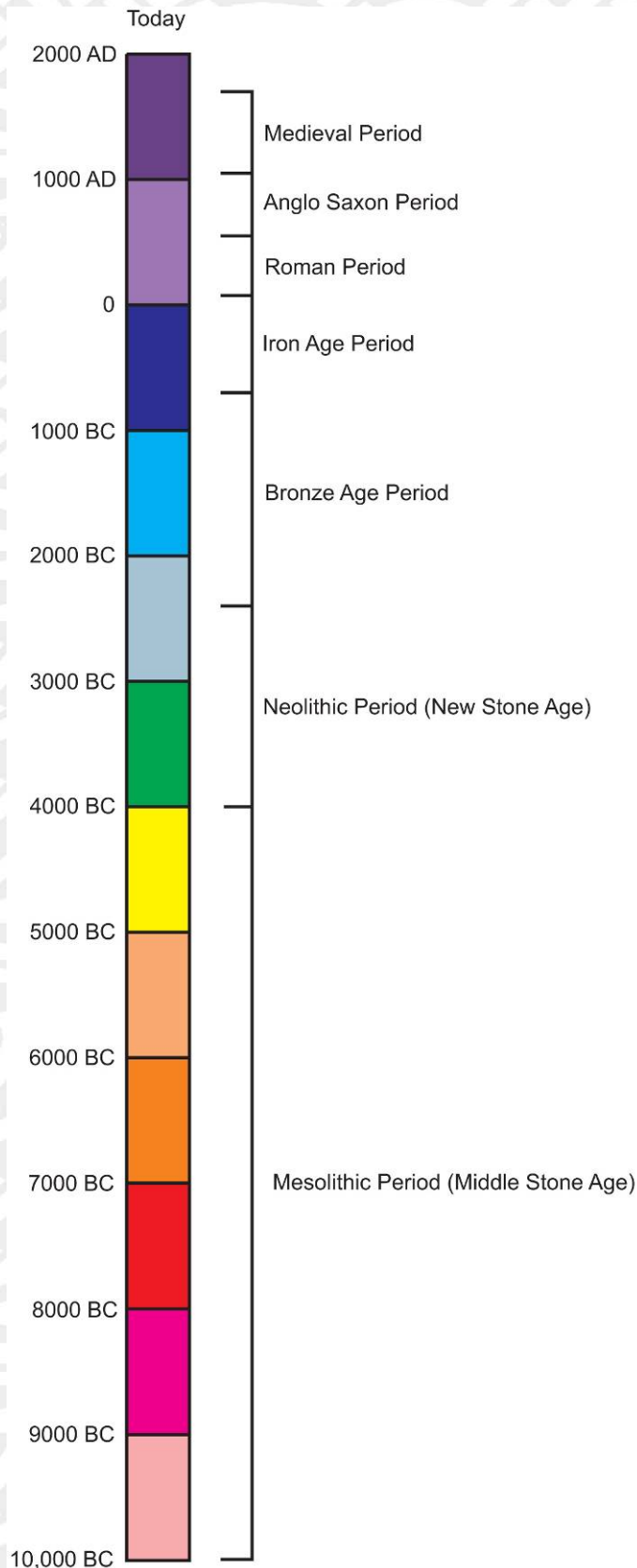




Factsheet: The Anglo-Saxon Period (550-1066AD)

What did people eat? What did people do? Where did people live?



- The Anglo-Saxon period started about 550 AD.
- The Anglo-Saxons came to Britain from areas of Denmark, West Germany, and Holland after the Romans left.
- These people were called 'Angles', 'Saxons' and 'Jutes'.
- The Anglo-Saxons built small villages and towns to live and work in.
- Most Anglo-Saxons were farmers or sailors.
- The Anglo-Saxons were very skilled at making jewellery and weapons.
- They made their own clothes from wool, leather and fur.

What did people eat?

- People in the Anglo-Saxon period ate lots of **cheese**, **milk** and **eggs**.
- They grew crops like **wheat** and **barley**. Wheat was ground into flour and then used to make **bread**. Barley was used for cooking but also for **brewing ale**.
- Poor Anglo-Saxons ate **chicken**, **bacon** and **sausages** but rich people ate **beef**.
- Fishermen caught **crabs**, **eels**, **lobster** and **salmon**.
- Anglo-Saxons ate vegetables like **leeks**, **onions**, **garlic**, **cabbages**, **turnips**, **beetroot**, **parsnips**, **carrots**, **peas** and **beans**. Fruit that they ate included **apples**, **pears**, **plums**, **cherries**, **blackberries**, **raspberries**, **strawberries** and **grapes**.
- There wasn't any sugar so people used **honey** to sweeten things.



Evidence from Lanton Quarry

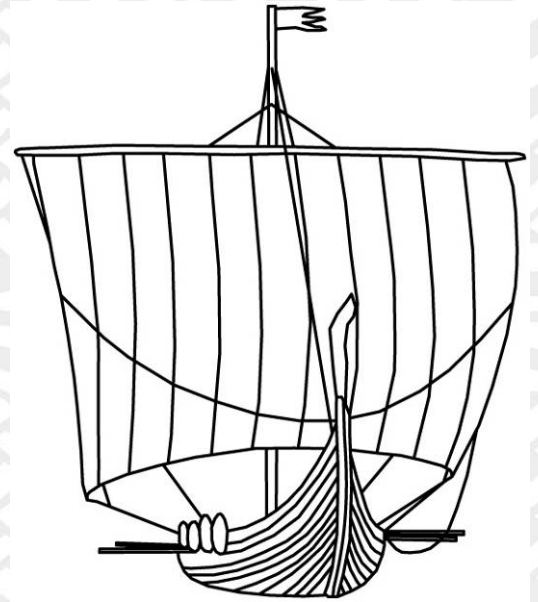
We can find out about what food people would have eaten in the Anglo-Saxon period from Anglo-Saxon texts and also from archaeological remains. Archaeologists at Lanton Quarry have found a broken quern stone. This was a large round stone that was used, along with another large stone, to grind grain into flour. This flour would have been used to make bread. Grains of wheat, barley and oats were found, as well as animal bones, so we know that the settlers at Lanton grew crops and kept livestock to eat.



These pictures show a knife that was excavated at Lanton Quarry. When it was dug out of the ground it was very rusty. The picture on the left shows an x-ray of the same knife. It would have been used for cooking and eating, hunting, or even as a weapon.

What did people do?

- In the Anglo-Saxon period most people worked on **farms** and lived with their families in **villages**.
- They built big wooden **ships** and used them to sail to new places and to **trade**.
- Children helped to herd the **sheep** with dogs. They had to keep a lookout for wolves.
- People with special skills made **metal tools** and **weapons**. **Woodcutters** made furniture, carts and wheels.
- **Jewellery** was very popular and jewellers made items from metal and glass.
- People worked in small **workshops** that were dug into the ground and had wooden posts holding the roof up.
- In the Anglo Saxon period boys learnt how to look after the **crops** and **animals**. They would also have **hunted** and learnt skills for **battle**. Only boys from rich families learnt to read. They spoke English, but used Latin for writing.
- Girls helped with the **cooking** and learnt how to make **clothes**, **jewellery** and other **craft objects**.



Evidence from Lanton Quarry

Materials like glass and metal last for quite a long time when they are buried in the ground, so we can dig them up many years later. At Lanton Quarry archaeologists found glass beads and metal knives. We also found evidence for clay loom weights which showed people were weaving wool into cloth on a loom. At Lanton Quarry we found seven small workshops. In some of these workshops we found evidence for the crafts that people were doing. In these workshops there were different types of objects which indicate that different crafts took place in each of the workshops.



These are two of the glass beads that were found in the workshops at Lanton Quarry. They would have been made into necklaces or hung from people's clothes. The beads may have been made by melting down old, broken pieces of glass. Coloured glass could be used to create different colours.

Below are some of the artefacts that archaeologists found while excavating the small workshops at Lanton Quarry. See if you can match up the artefact with the type of workshop that it was found in. Draw lines from left to right to connect up the answers.

**Metal knives, nails
and straps**

Potter's workshop

**Cereal grains and
grinding stones**

**Weaving shed and
clothes making**

**Broken pottery
vessels**

Butchers

**Clay loom weights
and glass beads**

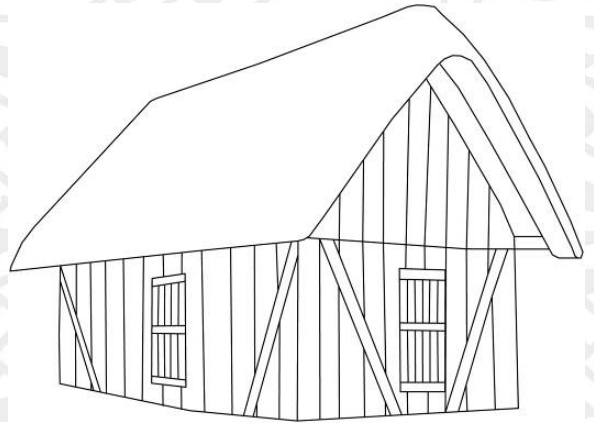
Milling and baking

Animal bones

Iron Smith

Where did people live?

- Houses in the Anglo-Saxon period were rectangular shaped and were built of **wood** with a thatched roof made of **straw**.
- In a village, everyone's houses were arranged around a **big village hall**.
- The houses only had **one room** where everyone slept and ate their meals.
- People would have slept on mattresses made of **feathers** or **straw**.



Evidence from Lanton Quarry

We can tell where there would have been a house by looking at the ground and looking for the holes left by the wooden posts. These show as dark marks which reveal where the wooden posts and walls would have been. At Lanton Quarry evidence of two houses has been found. Another two buildings had big doors at the front so that carts could go in and out. These buildings may have been used as barns with hay lofts for storage. This is one of the rectangular cart sheds at Lanton Quarry. Can you see the wide gap where the double door would have been for letting in the cart?



This is one of the rectangular Anglo Saxon houses at Lanton Quarry. The holes in the ground show where the wooden posts would have been. The ranging rods in the picture are 2m long to show how big the building would have been.



This picture shows what the wooden houses would have looked like. This house is a reconstruction of an Anglo-Saxon house that can be visited at the 'Maelmin Heritage Trail' in Milfield village, Northumberland.