

# A Day in Saxony

## Activities

*By Dame Aoife Finn of Ynos Mon*

### **Speak Old English**

Teach the kids to speak a few words in Old English. Especially find modern words that are simply spelled differently, such as Hail (Hal). See the site: [Hwæt! \(A Course in Old English pronunciation\)](#) for more information and pronunciation help (sound files available). They can easily master such phrases as "Hi, Dad!" ("Hal, fadir!").

### **Saxon Pottery**

Go to the [British Museum Website Compass](#) and search with the word "Saxon." Two of your hits will be Saxon Funerary jars. These jars appear to be huge pinch-type pots--or smoothed coil pots, and are decorated with stamps, combs, and plain old incising. Use self-hardening clay to make smaller replicas. See also the Kid's Compass, linked at the same page. One of these pots has swastikas!

**Bede's World** The website has a lot of ideas ripe for the plucking! Explore Saxon beasts (mythical or not) and make masks representing them. Or, plant a mini-herb garden like Bede's in a shoe-box.

### **Talk about Saxon burials**

Notable people were buried with all the goods they were likely to need in the afterworld (even ships!). Ask the kids what THEY would be buried with, both for SCA purposes, and for modern ones. What would future archaeologists make of those burials? Draw a picture of the burial site, with the items you want to include (gameboy? favorite shirt? Bat and Ball? etc...).

### **Talk about Bede.**

Bede is a historian who provided a lot about what we know about Saxons, but he was very prejudiced in his accounts. How would it affect history today if reporters were very prejudicial? How could you write a history (say, of the tournament that day) to be A) Impartial, or B) Biased in favor of one of the two finalists? What does this say about the honor of the person writing the report? Do winners always re-write history their way?

### **Writing Epics**

Listen to a passage from an epic (Beowulf or Voyage of Ohthere). How could you use the same sort of techniques to write a story (For instance, write this story--in pictograms if the kids re very young---as an epic: "I was so tired this morning, but I finally got out of bed and ate breakfast. Mom sent me on a trip to the store. Along the way I narrowly missed being bitten by a mean dog. When I got to the store, they were out of milk, so I bought chocolate milk instead. When I got home, Mom was really mad and she sent me to my room." Think of this in terms of great battles and huge trials, in extravagant language---Being sleepy could be a mystical spell cast on the writer. Perhaps the dog could become a fierce beast to be escaped by trickery. Mom can be the Queen who sends the kid on a quest, chocolate milk could be the mystic elixir of life rewarded to the hero because of bravery, etc.

### **Rune-writing (Futhark)**

Show the kids the runic characters from [Runes](#) and their modern equivalents. Allow them to spell their own names, their families names, etc.. in runic writing. Provide some sort of medium for making a pendant with the futhark of their own names written on it. Perhaps leather rounds sting on ribbon or thong, decorated with permanent markers or acrylic paint.

## **Saxon Food**

Find a simple recipe in Forme of Curye or Curye on Englisch. Help the kids translate it and then prepare it.

## **Books for Children**

- The Anglo-Saxons (Fact Finders Series) by Rowena Loverance (Paperback - October 1993)
- Readings on Beowulf (Greenhaven Press Literary Companion to British Literature) by Stephen P. Thompson (Editor)
- Anglo-Saxon Helmet by Museum Publication British (Paperback - September 1993)
- The Anglo-Saxons (Look into the Past) by Roger Coote
- The Saxons and the Normans by Ladybird Books
- The Shining Company by Rosemary Sutcliff
- The Anglo-Saxons Activity Book by John Reeve, et al (paperback)
- Beowulf: A Play Based on the Anglo-Saxon Epic Poem (Dramascripts Classic Texts) by David Calcutt (Editor) (Paperback - November 2001)
- Wordhoard: Anglo-Saxon Stories by Kevin Crossley-Holland, Jill Paton Walsh (Editions: Hardcover)
- Childhood in Anglo-Saxon England by Sally Crawford (Hardcover - January 2000)
- The Anglo-Saxon Household by Jean Ellenby (Author) (Editions: Paperback)
- What They Don't Tell You About Anglo-Saxons by Fowke (Paperback - June 1999)
- Anglo Saxon Village (What Happened Here) by Monica Stoppleman
- The Feudal Kingdom of England, 1042-1216 (History of England) by Frank Barlow (Paperback - September 1988)
- Life As a Peasant in Feudal Europe (Way People Live) by James Barter (Hardcover - November 2003)
- An Invitation to Old English and Anglo-Saxon England by Bruce Mitchell (Paperback - January 1995)

## **Adult books**

- Anglo-Saxon Weapons and Warfare -- by Richard Underwood; Paperback
- Looking for the Lost Gods of England -- by Kathleen Herbert; Paperback
- A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, 14) -- by John Richard Clark Hall, et al; Paperback
- Bloodfeud: Murder and Revenge in Anglo-Saxon England by Richard Fletcher (Hardcover - May 2003) (Editions: Hardcover)
- Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources (Penguin Classics) by John Asser, et al
- An Invitation to Old English and Anglo-Saxon England by Bruce Mitchell
- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle by Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. English, Michael Swanton (Editor)
- Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England by Barbara Yorke (Paperback)

The Beowulf Reader : Basic Readings (Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England, Volume 1) by Peter S. Baker (Editor)

Anglo-Saxon Thegn: 449-1066 Ad (Warrior, No 5) by Mark Harrison, Gerry Embleton (Illustrator) (Paperback - September 1998)

The Anglo-Saxon World: An Anthology (Oxford World's Classics (Oxford University Press).) by Kevin Crossley-Holland (Editor) (Paperback - June 1999)

The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England by N. J. Higham (Paperback - July 1997)

The Anglo-Saxon State by James Campbell (Author) (Hardcover - February 2003)

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