**Who were the Anglo- Saxons and what was life like in Anglo-Saxon Britain?**

Around 1,600 years ago when the Romans left Britain to look after their own empire, a new era began. It was the time of the Anglo-Saxons, who ruled Britain from 410 to 1066 AD. These Anglo-Saxons were not one big group but many smaller tribes from places like Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands. They came to Britain and took control of different parts of the land. The biggest tribes among them were the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, which is why we call them the Anglo-Saxons.

They first came to Britain around 390 AD, invited by the Romans to help fight off the Scots and the Picts. But instead of leaving after the job was done, they stayed and became the rulers. They stayed because their own lands often got flooded, and they needed a new place to grow crops. The Anglo-Saxons were not just warriors; they were also skilled craftsmen who made things like tools, knives, and jewellery from metals like iron, gold, glass, bone, and gemstones as well as carvings from wood.

Life for the Anglo-Saxons was simple. They lived in wooden houses with just one room where they did everything—ate, slept, and spent time with friends. They grew crops, raised animals, and traded goods with other countries for things they could not make themselves. Children did not go to school like we do now. Boys learned skills from their fathers, like farming and hunting, while girls helped with household chores like cooking and weaving.

We know a lot about the Anglo-Saxons from things they left behind, like the treasures found in a burial mound called Sutton Hoo. These treasures, including a big ship and many valuable items, tell us about the lives of rich Anglo-Saxons. We also learn from writings by people who visited Britain at that time, such as monks who brought Christianity to the land – Saint Columba, Augustine, and Aiden.

In Anglo-Saxon times, justice worked differently. Instead of a formal court system, everyone in the village was responsible for keeping peace. If someone was seen committing a crime, then the witness could raise a hue and cry (shout for help). Everyone who heard it was expected to help chase and capture the suspect and bring them to Trial by Jury. Every man was in a tithing. This was a group of ten men who looked after each other and made sure the others followed the laws. If one of them broke the law, the other members of the tithing had to bring them to court as a jury. If they did not, they would all have to pay a fine. In court, the men in the tithing would listen to witnesses, the accused and the victim and decide who was telling the truth. If they could not decide by jury, they would turn to God. This was called trial by ordeal and would take place in a church. The accused would fast for three days and have mass before their trial by ordeal. A priest would be present. in trial by ordeal, the accused would be made to perform a task that caused injury. The trial by ordeal could include trial by hot iron, trial by hot water, trial by blessed bred, trial by cold water. If their wounds healed cleanly after 3 days, then they would be considered to be innocent in the eyes of God. Most people found guilty of crimes were punished with fines or punishments such as stoning, hanging, drowning, whipping, mutilation, branding, stocks, and exile dependant on how severe their crime was.

So, although the Anglo-Saxon rule in Britain was a long time ago, before the Vikings and then the Normans took control, and although parts of it is very different to life today, it is still possible to see some similarities to life in Britain today and how Anglo Saxons left their mark on Britain.