



Langdyke Trust



Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund

CROP GROWING AT TORPEL

SOWING THE SEEDS

The sower carried his seeds in a wicker basket with a cord round his neck and sowed the seeds by hand. The seed supply was in a sack, which a rook had already found.



BIRD SCARING

The bird scarer walked behind the sower carrying a sling and a supply of stones to hurl at the birds. He was followed by a harrow pulled by a horse which turned over the soil to bury the seeds and hide them from the birds.



This was the busiest time of the year and all the work was done by the villeins, both men and women. Sometimes, as well as doing their 2-3 days a week work service to the lord, they were paid to do boon work. The lord even paid for ale, cheese, meat and herrings for the villeins who did this extra work.

To cut the corn they used a sickle which was a hand tool with a curved blade. Other workers used twisted straw to tie it into bundles called sheaves. These were stood up like a tent to dry and then carted into the barn for threshing.

Their main crops were:

- Oats which were used for seed, making flour for pottage, fodder for animals.
- Wheat which was ground at Lolham Mill to make flour for bread.
- Barley which was used to brew ale.
- Dredge, a mixture of oats and barley, which was used for animal fodder.
- Peas which were eaten and were used for seed.



HARVEST