

Cutha's Chronicles

Anglo-Saxon Adventures

EALA! Hello!



Today, we have a special treat — we're off to the *WIC* with Uncle!
The *WIC* is a special place: it belongs to the King! People go there to buy and sell things. It's a long way to travel: we have to go on the ox-cart.

Uncle has piglets and corn and cloth to sell.
Most people will just *barter* — where they swop their stuff for ours — but some will pay us *money*!



The **WIC** is a busy place. There are a lot of people — far more than we see on our farm. There are so many of them, it's a bit scary!



But there are all sorts of things that we can't get at home:



... A comb for Cyne ...

... A knife for Cutha ...



... A new spear for Uncle...



... And a brooch for Auntie ...



There's lots and lots to see!
But we mustn't wander off!



Boys and girls get sold as *slaves* at the *WIC*!
If we go off by ourselves, the slavers might steal *us*, and sell us as well!



Our farm might not be the most exciting place to live — but it's good to get home!

Lots of places today have *markets*, where we can go to buy things, but in Anglo-Saxon times, they were few and far between. The **WIC** or market (sometimes also called a **PORT** or **EMPORIUM**) belonged to the King: his **GEREFA** or **REEVE** controlled all the trading that went on, and collected taxes every time anything was bought or sold. King Edward the Elder (^{AD}901-924) made it against the law for anyone to buy or sell anything without the **GEREFA** witnessing it: he said it was to stop people getting cheated — but do you think there might have been another reason?

Most trading in the **WIC** was by *barter*, where people 'swopped' one thing for another, but money was also coming into use during Anglo-Saxon times, and Saxon coins are sometimes found. We call the early coins **SCEATTAS** (say 'she-attas'), and the later ones **PENNIGAS** ('penni-yas') — the same as our word 'penny'.

In this story, the twins see boys and girls being sold as *slaves*. In Anglo-Saxon times, both children and grown ups could be made into slaves. A slave had no rights, and belonged completely to the person who had bought him/her — just like when someone today buys a pet! A slave could even be killed, if that is what his/her owner wanted to do! Some slaves were criminals, or people captured in wartime, but some were just poor people who couldn't afford to look after themselves, or to pay their debts. And some slaves were *really* stolen from their homes and families — just as Cutha and Cyne are afraid may happen to them!

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