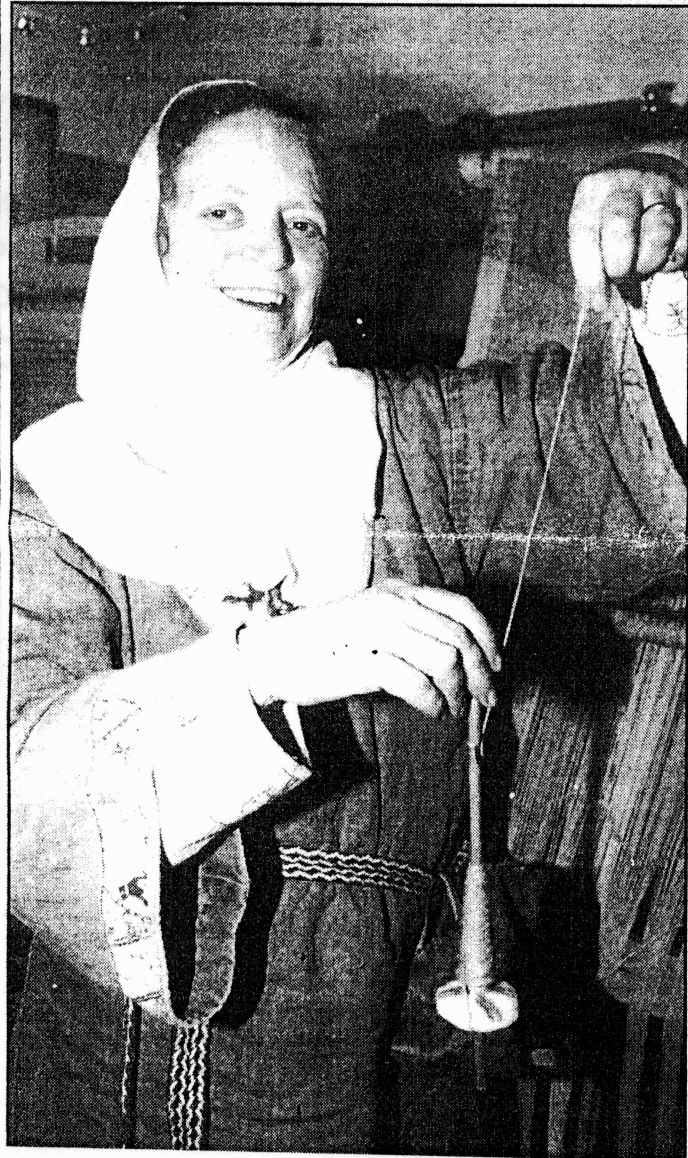


Back to the arrow-ing times of good old days



ANGLO-Saxon times came to Royston Museum on Saturday, when the building teemed with soldiers, weavers, armourers, and people authentically dressed to re-create long-lost days.

"We had an absolutely brilliant story-teller," said curator Jane Vincent. "At the end of one of his stories, I was crying."

Paul Allen, of Burns Road, Royston, told Saxon tales and Mrs Vincent said his listeners were "enthralled".

"He is someone everybody should hear," she said.

For those who wanted to see action - rather than just hear about it - they could watch "fighting" among warriors.

The skills needed for axe, sword, and spear combats were shown. Spectators were also shown how to protect themselves against a hail of arrows.

Mrs Vincent said the players tried to keep their action and dress authentic.

"Even at lunch time they kept it up," she said. "They ate home-made cheese and bread, with soup made from the sort of things the Anglo-Saxons used, such as peas and barley. It was really fantastic."

The gear worn and wielded by the fighters also came under scrutiny, as an

armourer helped visitors try on the weighty protection and explained how weapons were made and used.

"A suit of chain-mail for a soldier was the price of a farm," said Mrs Vincent. "It explained why most of the soldiers fought in quilted jackets."

A less aggressive item was the spinning and weaving, traditionally carried out by women.

And Gillian Warren took to her loom to change pieces of fleece into finished cloth.

"One little girl wanted a particular colour of headband and she stood for about two hours as the lady wove it for her," added the curator. "It was a wonderful day."



FIGHTING FIT: From left, storyteller Paul Allen in character as Edmund, Adrian Hudson as Bjarni and Derek Hunter as Bran.