

Making Linen

By the seventeenth century linen making was becoming more capitalised. However, there is some evidence, particularly from inventories of the period, that the whole process of converting flax to linen was still occurring in villages. It was an elaborate procedure requiring many steps over many months starting with the mid-summer harvesting of the flax, when it was dried and combed. The flax was then 'retted', a process of rotting the adhesive substances that hold the fibres together. This was accomplished by placing bundles into a stagnant pond for about fourteen days, then hauling them out and spreading them across the fields, where the action of the dew, sunlight, air and rain completed the process of retting in about two weeks.⁴



Flax Flower



Pulling flax – stooking – ripling – bogging

From *A Short History of the English People*, Vol. 4, London, George Newnes, 1892.

⁴ *Linen Making*: www.theweaverscottage.com