



The Newsletter of the Sutton Hoo Society

SAXON

President: the Duke of Grafton KG

No. 22 / 1995

MAKING IT ALL COME TRUE getting Sutton Hoo published, by Martin Carver

At the end of every archaeological adventure is a publication, just as there is at the end of every voyage of exploration — how else are others going to share the experience? But the modern archaeological excavation, with its meticulous attention to detail, creates an enormous heap of data, not just the diary and sketchbook of a 19th century explorer or archaeologist. From ten years' study at Sutton Hoo, we have 36 notebooks, 257 ring binders of written records, 38,800 photographs (slides, colour print and monochrome), half a cubic metre of A1 drawings and 105,000 finds. All this material must be organised and analysed and synthesised. The objective is, firstly to make a good, well-documented story, and secondly to construct a solid, well-organised archive for the documentation, so that others in their time can write a story of their own.

THE ARCHIVE

The written, drawn and photographic records are all at York, where we have a small office and store in Micklegate House looking out over the City Wall. The office is occupied by Madeleine Hummler, who is writing up the prehistoric site, and Annette Roe (who dug the horse-burial in 1991), who is helping me write up the Anglo-Saxon cemetery.

Our first task was to prepare the **Field Reports**, scientific accounts of each of the 55 field operations (*interventions*) which have been undertaken by us or earlier field workers. These began with the excavations of Basil Brown in 1938 (INT 2, 3 and 4), and ended in 1992 with the excavation of INT 55, the area south of Mound 7. Actually we shall soon have one more intervention to add, the geophysical surveys being carried out this Easter in and around the site. This survey, sponsored by the Sutton Hoo Society, is to see if we can find the sites of some barrows north of Sutton Hoo House (forthcoming in *Saxon* 23). These **Field Reports** are now very nearly finished. Each one contains an account of the discoveries and how they were made. The biggest reports, running to 200 pages or so, were those which concern the main excavation sectors: INT 48, which contained Mounds 17 and 18, INT 55 which contained the



*Man-Yee Liu dissecting the bridle from Mound 17 in the British Museum
Photograph: M. O. H. Carver*

Beaker pits, INT 44 which contained Mounds 6 and 7, INT 50 which contained Mound 14, INT 32/39/52 which contained the bodies out on the eastern edge, and the monster INT 41 which contained Mound 2 and Mound 5.

In addition to the description of what was found and how, these reports contain *Selected Studies*, special interpretations of the most important findings. Examples of subjects for the *Selected Studies* are the Neolithic boundary ditches, the Beaker 'ritual pits', the Bronze Age cremations, the Iron Age enclosures, the Roman cultivation, all the Anglo-Saxon burials, and the 19th century excavations. When the **Field Reports** are ready, three copies will be made: one will be given to the British Museum, one to Suffolk County Council, one will stay at York. The original will be passed to the Society of Antiquaries of London who initiated the project, and this one will be accessible to the public who can read it and have copies made of the parts that interest them. So you see, that even if nothing else were to be written, and nothing published, the results from the Research campaign are already available in permanent and comprehensible form. However, the exciting part is only just beginning.

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE FINDS?

The prehistoric artefacts, some 75,000 of them, are all at York. They are mainly flint tools and pottery which are being studied and described by Madeleine Hummler, who has selected examples to be drawn for publication.

The Anglo-Saxon artefacts, of which there are less than 2,000, have all been sent to the British Museum. The first step was to conserve them, and this has been done in the British Museum Conservation Laboratory by Fleur Shearman assisted by Man-Yee Liu who has done the leather. Their most difficult task was the conservation and study of the Bridle Block from Mound 17 which was removed to the British Museum straight from the site in 1991 and excavated in its Basement. Now all the components of the bridle have been cleaned and some of them have gone on display. Angela Evans, of the Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, has the responsibility for making a complete descriptive inventory of all the Early Medieval finds from all the mounds, which will be included in the **Field Reports**. Meanwhile both myself and Angela have had a go at

reconstructing the bridle...with slightly different results!

The human bone from the Anglo-Saxon burials has been examined by Frances Lee, one of our excavators in 1985 and now a free-lance palaeopathologist. She found the occupant of Mound 17 to be a young man, as was the ploughman, and most of the 'victims' who could be identified. There were two young women in one of the burials around Mound 5, and the cremated person in Mound 5 was a mature male with a savage sword cut across his head. The cremations were particularly hard to assign to age and gender, and much of the material turned out to have come from animals which must have shared the funeral pyre. This was a nice surprise, since the animals of the Anglo-Saxons at Sutton Hoo are no less interesting than the people. Their cremated remains have now been sent to Julie Bond, an animal expert at Bradford University, for identification. Meanwhile Terry O'Connor, also at Bradford, has been working on the horse from Mound 17. We now know it was a rather thick-set male horse, of heavy muscular build, 1.44m (or about 14 hands) at the shoulder and aged about five or six at death. He is now working on the cow which was buried in one of the Mound 6 quarry pits.

HOW WILL SUTTON HOO BE PUBLISHED?

There are a number of publication projects afoot, the most important one is the that of the Research Report. The outline for this 500 page book has been approved by the Sutton Hoo Research Trust and prospective publishers are now being assessed. The authors of the book are myself and Madeleine Hummler with short contributions from the specialists involved with the finds.

I am also preparing a number of other publications for more popular consumption, including a children's book. Once the Research Report is published, British Museum specialists such as Angela Evans will probably wish to publish more comprehensive studies of such special things as the bridle.

All the finds — and all the field records — will be deposited in the British Museum in perpetuity. So whereas archaeologists like your Project Director will have their say and pass on to other adventures, the treasure from Sutton Hoo will remain there to be seen and studied again and again by generations to come. The Museum will also probably want to change its

Sutton Hoo display to incorporate the new discoveries. The British Museum have also taken charge of all the film-footage taken by the BBC; so they may some time in the future find the film-maker who will put together the final Sutton Hoo episode — the disappearance of which so frustrated our millions of viewers when the BBC brought their series prematurely to an end.

I also see the presentation of the site at Sutton Hoo as part of our publication programme — indeed, for a great many members of the public it is their only encounter with Sutton Hoo and its story. We hope the site will be visited by many thousands of children and adults, from home and abroad. We hope that many will be inspired by the display, by the moulded bodies and by the notice boards we are currently designing with the help of Victor Ambrus (of **Time Team** fame).

All these visitors, as well as our readers and viewers, young and old, will, we hope take away with them a precious memory and a renewed curiosity about the weird, wild, and wonderful events that took place at Sutton Hoo while the earliest English kingdoms were being made.

SOCIETY EVENTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held on 17th February at Woodbridge School, attended by approximately 40 members. During a short business meeting, it was announced that Malcolm Miles had decided to resign from the Committee. There were no further nominations, and the remaining Committee members were re-elected *en bloc*. The Treasurer reported a fall in revenue from the site due to a 30% reduction in numbers of visitors, coupled with a similar reduction in sales. Income from subscriptions remained about the same as last year. We had a surplus of £590 for the year, and the current balance was £5,105.23. The business meeting was followed with a lecture by Martin Carver on the subject of grave-robbing with particular reference to the Sutton Hoo site. A full account of the lecture will be included in the next edition of **SAXON**.

GUIDES GET-TOGETHER

Chairman Rosemary Hoppitt thanked guides and helpers for their work in the 1994 season at a convivial get-together in Woodbridge just before Christmas. We met again at Sutton Hoo before Easter, when Martin Carver was able to outline and explain current information from the excavation and interpretation of the site. We also discussed guiding problems, as well as ideas and plans for the future.



SPRING LECTURE

The lecture this Spring — **Pagans, Traders and Settlers of Anglo-Saxon Ipswich** — was given by Dr. Tom Plunkett, Keeper of Archaeology at Ipswich Museum. The lecture was well-attended, and members and guests were introduced to aspects of the archaeology of the lower Gipping valley during the period of the 6th - 7th century contemporary with events at Sutton Hoo. We hope to include a résumé of the lecture in the next edition of **SAXON**.

Mike Weaver (left) guiding on site in Summer 1994. He holds spellbound a group of visitors while explaining the finer points of the sandmen replicas.

Photograph: Sue Banyard

SÆ WYLFING - 1994: A SEASON UNDER SAIL

by Edwin and Joyce Gifford

Having been blessed with ideal weather for our most enjoyable first visit to Woodbridge last June, when stronger winds would have made sailing *Sæ Wylfing* through the crowded anchorage somewhat nerve-racking, we welcomed the opportunity of sailing in a stronger wind at Maldon the following weekend. Confidence was boosted by the presence of Pearl and Robert Simper in *Three Sisters* and the knowledge that in following them down-river to watch the start of the Barge Race we would be able to get a tow back to Maldon in the evening against an adverse wind.

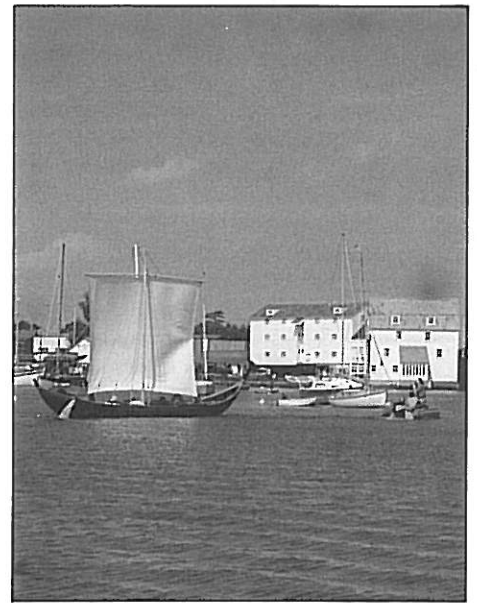
Six CHES members joined us for this exhilarating sail with the wind at the top of Force 4 (according to the Marconi Sailing Club). Off Osea Island we sailed amongst the sixteen barges waiting for the start, with our crew sitting low down on the bottom boards and keeping *Sæ Wylfing* level. We overtook all other craft and estimated our speed at times to be well over 7 knots. Next day one of the barge skippers made a point of coming to look at the boat ashore and commented 'You 'ad a good little blew around yesterday and don't she point well?' Such a compliment from an experienced sailor may be better evidence of *Sæ Wylfing's* capabilities than scientific measurement!

Two subsequent outings in Hampshire waters provided us with measurements as well as useful experience of dealing with a shipment of water and beaching. During August we sailed in Southampton Water with one reef in Force 5 and reached a maximum measured speed of 7 knots and averaged 4.4 knots over a period of 2 hours and 15 minutes, including rowing and three gybed turns (see sketch). Before hoisting sail we rowed with a scratch crew with six oars down the River Itchen against this fresh head wind, with the mast up, a distance of one nautical mile at 3.5 knots. In Southampton Water

there was a short chop and the usual powerboat washes, but these gave *Sæ Wylfing* no trouble. The only time we have shipped water so far was during this trip when a new crew member was a little slow in easing the sheet in a puff, but a few minutes of baling with buckets put this right.

On another day after some brisk sailing in the Solent with even stronger winds, we landed on Calshot shingle beach and found that four men could haul *Sæ Wylfing* almost clear of the water and subsequently relaunch her after the ebbing tide had left her dry. Such hauling and relaunching of the full-size ship would have been practical for its crew of about thirty. This beaching experience made us appreciate the value of the steeply curved sheer line at both bow and stern. It would have enabled this long ship to be landed safely on steep beaches in heavy surf without swamping by the stern. (After our many years experience of designing, building and handling large surf-beach fishing boats on the west coasts of Africa and India, we should have understood this sooner!). It was on this voyage that we made good use of the liftable side-rudder to enable us to take short-cuts over the sand and gravel bars of Calshot Spit without difficulty.

Experience of a different kind was provided when we took *Sæ Wylfing*, by road and ferry, to the Island of Tatihou, east of the Cherbourg peninsula in France, to an international conference of archaeologists. Weather was good but winds were light when we circumnavigated this small rocky island under oars and sail with a local crew. We made several landings and launchings on a sandy beach to take out some twenty or so members of many nationalities. It was as well that the wind was light as there was much confusion of language and rowing technique! But everyone seemed well pleased with the ship. At one time we had



Sæ Wylfing at Woodbridge, June 1994, being filmed by Mallory Maltby for the TV series *Sailaway* (see back page).
Photograph: C. E. Hoppitt

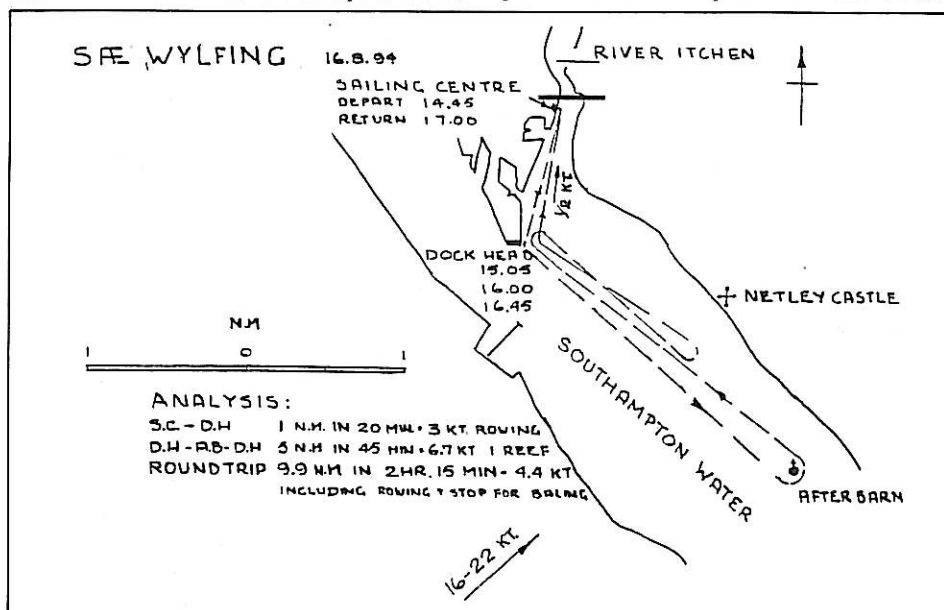
fifteen people on board, the equivalent of 120 in the full-size ship.

So our further work with *Sæ Wylfing* last season confirmed our prediction that the Sutton Hoo ship could head reach at 10 knots and, under favourable weather conditions, could average at least 150 miles in 24 hours. Very seaworthy and riding well to waves, her shape and side-rudder enabled her to sail safely in shallow waters, even over sand bars. These features would have allowed her to land and launch in surf on open beaches should the wind turn hard onshore, thus making her eminently suitable for sailing along the east coast of England which was to prove notoriously hazardous for deeper draught sailing vessels of later times.

We can conclude by saying that Rædwald (if it were he) had a ship that enabled him to cover the full length of his territory, and go from Northumbria to Kent and on to France, at great speed and with relatively safety. His ship was not just another evolutionary step, soon to be surpassed, but a well-developed vessel, ideal for the service for which she was built.

Edwin and Joyce Gifford brought their half-scale replica of the Sutton Hoo ship to the Deben in June 1994.

They will be returning for an informal visit again this year (see back page for details)



ANNUAL EXCURSION

The date is fixed for **Sunday 10th September**. We are planning, under the guidance of Sam Newton, to visit sites in Norfolk. For further information please contact Andrew Lovejoy (address below).

SÆ WYLFING

Edwin and Joyce Gifford will be returning to the Deben for an informal visit with *Sae Wylfing* the weekend of 24th June (weather permitting). Tides will mean that they will be up at Woodbridge about 10-11am, and if members would like to come along again — or for the first time — you will be more than welcome, and we look forward to seeing you there. For information nearer the time Tel. 01394 411273.

Last year's visit was filmed for the television programme *Sailaway*. The programme will be broadcast on **Anglia TV** as a series of six programmes starting on **Thursday June 1st at 10.40pm**. At the present we do not know

which of the programmes will carry the feature, so check in your programme schedules nearer the time.

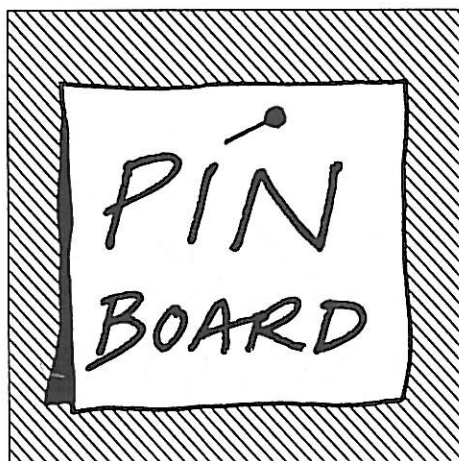
INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS

Teachers' Guides are available on request (cost 75p to cover copying and postage) from Andrew Lovejoy (address below). ALL Suffolk Schools should have received a copy through the County mailing system. Check with your Head of History or History Coordinator. Remember — there is more at Sutton Hoo than just Key Stage 2!

APPEALS

Our usual appeal for more GUIDES — YES! YOU CAN DO IT — it's not that difficult and is really quite enjoyable

Also we have a vacancy on the COMMITTEE; if you think you might be interested please make contact with any Committee member. Meetings are held in Woodbridge about 5 or 6 times a year.



DIARY

SUTTON HOO OPENING TIMES

Site tours begin at Easter and will continue on weekend afternoons at 2.00 and 3.00pm until 3rd September.

Chairman's Report 1994 — a résumé from the AGM in February

This year has been another in which the Society has, theoretically at least, been in something of a state of limbo — not knowing quite what the future holds, but still continuing our role of guiding on the site, and promoting interest in Sutton Hoo as a whole, which in 1994 involved the very successful visit of the replica ship *Sae Wylfing* (see **SAXON 21**). This year guides showed about 1300 visitors around the site, and thanks are due to them and Andrew Lovejoy for their dedication to this task.

We have played host to a number of school groups and archaeological societies, and would like to see more groups like this coming to the site. Every school in the County has been circulated with a pack of information, outlining the details of the site, its facilities and its value in teaching within the new National Curriculum history. A future publication for which we have received

external funding will be a leaflet aimed specifically at children.

Some changes have taken place on site, for which Peter Berry must be thanked. New edging and cobbles now mark the position of the sand-men's graves which lay around Mound 5, the display hut has been repaired and the display itself slightly altered, to include the prince's burial. We look forward to the appearance near the public footpath of the information board which has been designed and funded by the County Council.

In Spring 1995 we are funding a short survey programme north of the site which it is hoped will confirm the presence (or otherwise) of further burial mounds.

SAXON continues to be published twice a year. Members will have noticed a change in emphasis now that the project is no longer

producing regular copy for us, and we have begun to include short articles on Sutton Hoo and related Anglo-Saxon matters, in addition to keeping members informed of events. The inclusion of lecture résumés has been in response to a request from the membership, and we hope that all our members enjoy the opportunity to read them.

We were delighted to be able to help Ipswich Museum raise funds towards the successful purchase of the Boss Hall Anglo-Saxon jewellery (See **SAXON 14**) by donating copies of **SAXON 14** to the museum for purchase by visitors.

I look forward to another year working as part of a team — the Sutton Hoo Society, the Management Panel and the Sutton Hoo Project — whose combined aim is to secure the future of this important archaeological site.

Contact Addresses

Sutton Hoo Research Project, Dept. of Archaeology, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP
The Sutton Hoo Society, c/o NatWest Bank plc, Cumberland St., Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1JD
A. A. Lovejoy, Membership and Guides Secretary, 28, Pembroke Road, Framlingham, Suffolk IP13 9HA

Who's Who — Sutton Hoo Society Committee Members

Chairman: Rosemary Hoppitt Hon. Secretary: Jenny Glazebrook Hon. Treasurer: Colin Moore
Membership & Site Guides Secretary: Andrew Lovejoy Publicity: Peter Rooley Publications: Rosemary Hoppitt
Research Director: Martin Carver
Sue Banyard John Newman Sam Newton Pearl Simper Robert Simper

CREDITS

Saxon Editor: Rosemary Hoppitt Sub-editor Jenny Glazebrook Design: Nigel MacBeth