

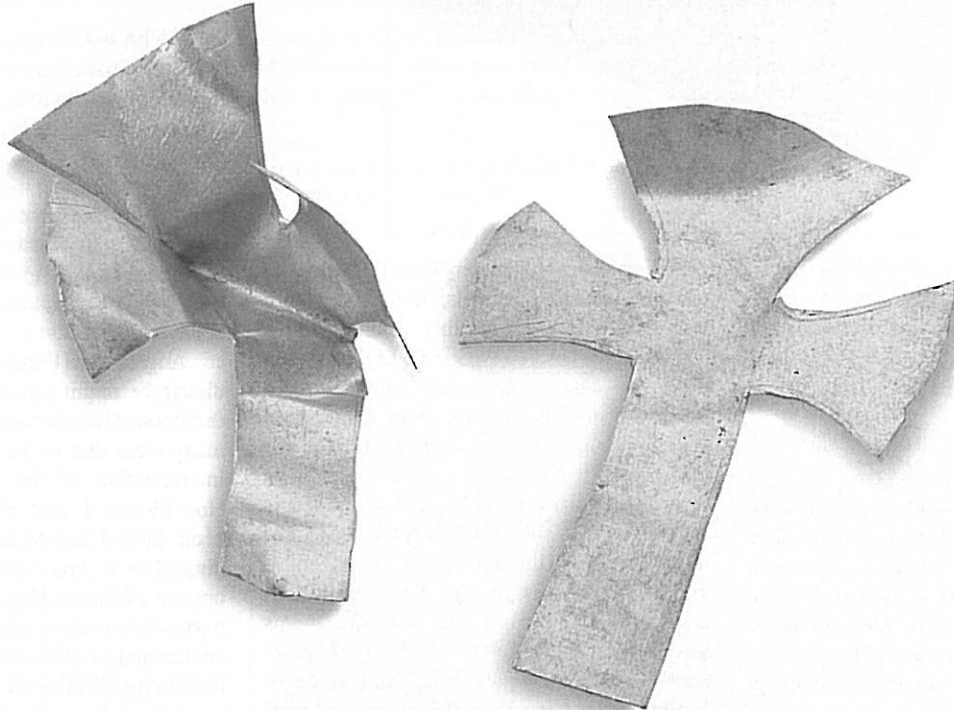


The Newsletter of the Sutton Hoo Society

SAXON

President: The Earl of Cranbrook

No. 40 / 2004



These two gold foil tiny Latin crosses (length 30mm) are the first to be found in England.

The Prittlewell Discovery

The spectacular discovery of a seventh century Saxon burial chamber at Prittlewell, Southend-on-Sea, has roused the archaeological world into a frenzy of excitement. Heralded as the most important Anglo-Saxon discovery since the 1939 excavations at Sutton Hoo, it came about when the Museum of London Archaeology Service was asked by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to carry out an evaluation ahead of a proposed road-widening scheme in late 2003. The surrounding area has thrown up archaeological finds in the past, most notably in the 1880s when evidence of a Saxon cemetery was discovered. Further excavations in 1923 revealed a number of Saxon 'warrior' graves, equipped with swords, shields and spears, and in 1930 more graves were found, this time mainly female, with ornate jewellery. With this in mind, it would not have come as a complete surprise to find more archaeology in the area. However, the latest discovery of an intact wood-lined burial chamber, hung with a rich collection of grave-goods, many in near perfect condition, was completely unexpected.

The Burial Chamber

Although the wood of the Prittlewell chamber and other organic material, including the body, have largely disappeared without trace in the acid soil, (as at Sutton Hoo), all the artefacts were found in their original positions.

Angela Care Evans (British Museum), says of the discovery 'Prittlewell is remarkable because it is the only modern excavation of an Anglo-Saxon burial chamber which is undisturbed and which has all the grave goods in situ'.

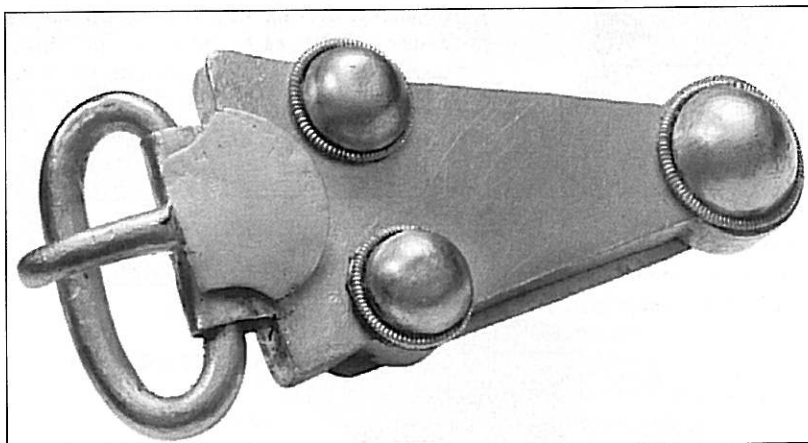
Senior Archaeologist Ian Blair (Museum of London Archaeological Service) who led the excavation said 'to find an intact chamber grave and a moment frozen in time is a once in a lifetime discovery. The fact that copper-alloy bowls were still hanging from hooks in the walls of the chamber, where they had been placed nearly 1,400 years ago, is a memory that I'm sure will remain with all of us forever.'

One explanation given for this unique survival is that over time the mound soil had sifted through gaps in the roof timbers gradually and gently into the burial chamber,

filling and holding the whole structure together. This raises questions to why, compared to Prittlewell, objects within the Sutton Hoo Mound 1 ship burial chamber suffered such damage, the collapse was clearly a more violent affair. Perhaps the chamber, positioned within the ship, was subject to conditions and forces not present at Prittlewell? These questions, and many more, will no doubt be considered for some time to come.

Angus Wainwright, National Trust archaeologist, points out that, 'one of the main problems about reconstructing the mound 1 burial chamber at the Sutton Hoo exhibition was the fact that the whole structure had collapsed, scrambling the evidence and crushing objects. Added to this the speedy excavation in 1939 no doubt missed fragile evidence for wood and textile objects. Amazingly, at Prittlewell, objects still hung in position on the chamber walls just as we suppose was the case at Sutton Hoo, and micro excavation of soil blocks raised during the excavation will, in time, reveal the tiniest traces of organic material which will help us understand the way textiles and wooden

Below: This small gold buckle of a type most popular c.600 – 640 is in pristine condition and may have functioned as a reliquary. This is only the third example of a gold buckle from a burial of this date in England (the others are from Sutton Hoo and Taplow)



furniture were used in these high status burials. We should look forward to a revolution in our understanding of the Mound 1 chamber and, of course, a complete overhaul of the reconstruction in the exhibition at Sutton Hoo'.

The Burial Objects

So far, one hundred and ten identifiable objects from the chamber are known to have originated from various countries. Of those examined so far, the most exotic are a flagon and a bowl from the eastern Mediterranean. The cast bronze flagon has a slightly concave base and a lid, secured to an ornate handle by means of a chain. The lower part of the handle is secured to the flagon by means of an encircling bronze band, the central part of which has three embossed medallions of a figure, possibly a saint, riding a horse. Vessels of this type were made at an unknown Mediterranean workshop(s) between the sixth and ninth centuries, they were widely exported and similar finds are known from Persia, Turkestan, Tunisia, Germany and Sweden, the largest collection being from near Corinth in Greece. This is the first example of its type found in England.

A large undecorated bronze bowl also comes from the Mediterranean. Similar finds in England are distributed mainly in East Anglia and Kent, where they can be dated to the first half of the seventh century, similar bowls were found in the Mound 1 ship burial at Sutton Hoo. This is the first known example from Essex.

Two Merovingian gold tremissis (coins). One coin, probably early seventh century, shows a crude diademed bust (front) with an unusual cross design (back). The inscription on the front of a second coin shows it was issued in Paris, the front shows a diademed bust, and the back shows a cross amcrée, possibly over a globe, and belongs to a series of coins that were in use from c.570/580 – 670AD. More precise dating will depend on testing the purity of the gold.

The remains of a particularly unusual item, and the first known example from England, is the frame of a folding stool probably from either Italy or Asia Minor (modern day Slovakia/Hungary). Other finds are two cauldrons, one small and one

extremely large (diameter 75cm). Two pairs of coloured glass vessels, almost certainly made in England, possibly Kent, with a general dating of 580 – 630AD. Eight wooden drinking cups decorated with gilded 'vandyke' mounts, (similar to the maplewood vessels found in Mound 1). Buckets and the remains of a large casket which may have originally contained textiles, and what appears to be a sword, a shield and a standard. Most of the objects were lifted in blocks of soil, and it will be some time before the conservators complete their work on all the items discovered. The results may help to throw some light on the positioning and usage of similar objects found in the Mound 1 burial chamber at Sutton Hoo.

Arguably the most exciting items the archaeologists discovered are two tiny gold foil crosses. They were originally thought to have been attached to the man's clothing, but the absence of fittings suggest they may have been placed upon his body or his eyes.

When asked about the significance of the discovery, Professor Martin Carver, (University of York), replied:

'For me, the most exciting object is the folding chair, and that's because I associate much of Anglo-Saxon with camping and adventure, with horse, tent and boat. The folding chair is a perfect way of lending occasion to an outdoor meeting such as must have been commonplace around the sixth and early seventh centuries. The gold crosses are exciting too; unlike Ian Blair I don't regard

them as evidence of a Christian. Like the silver and spoons in Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo, I see them as evidence that the Essex aristocracy had 'captured' the symbolism of the Christians. For me each grave tells its own story, not just 'Christian' or 'Pagan', but what those people who composed the burial thought about the politics, the times and the individual person who had passed away. We are dealing with real people here with real ideas, not labels. It helps us realise what the true goals of archaeology are: to answer the questions why that, why there, and why then?'

Who was buried at Prittlewell?

The initial excitement appears to have sent a rush of blood to many heads. The media was quick to speculate Prittlewell to be the last resting place of a seventh century East Saxon King. Many months of careful work are still required to provide clues, if they exist, to the possible identity of the grave's occupant. As the dust clouds gradually settle we may hopefully look forward to a more considered approach!

Angela Care Evans, when asked for whom the grave might have been intended, makes the point "The discovery has brought to life many ideas that we had when working on the interpretation of the burial beneath Sutton Hoo Mound 1, and inevitably the grave has been dubbed that of an East Saxon prince or king. But if you look at Prittlewell in the context of Sutton Hoo Mound 1, the princely burials at Taplow and Broomfield and the continental parallels, I wonder if we should be considering Prittlewell in these terms at all?"

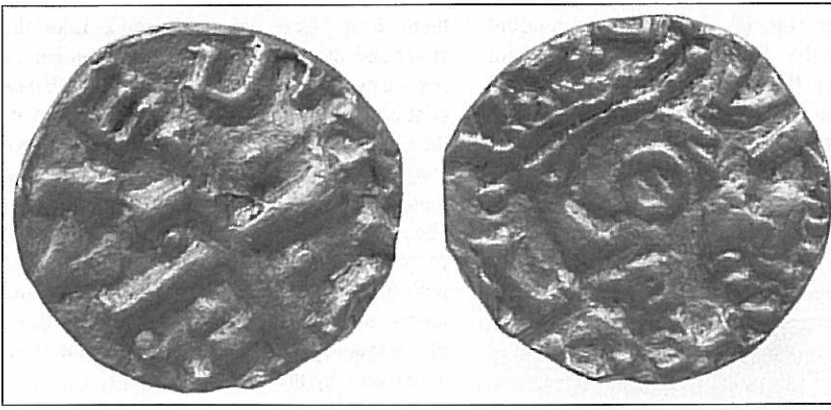
Although the furnished burial appears to be pagan, there are a number of objects associated with Christianity, the most obvious being the gold crosses. Furthermore, a very recent laboratory excavation of a soil-block has revealed an inscribed silver spoon, with two lines of characters below a cross, originally thought to be runic, now thought to be Roman.

According to Bede the first of the East Saxon Kings to be converted to Christianity was Saeberht in 604AD but, following his death in 616AD, his sons returned to paganism. It was not until 653AD that Sigeberht II accepted Christianity. The East Saxons were afterwards converted through the ministry of St Cedd, Bishop of the East Saxons.

Dr. Sam Newton argues "there seems to be a view that Prittlewell might not be that of a

Right and next page top left: Merovingian Gold Tremissis. Late sixth – early seventh century the inscription on the front of one coin tells us that it was issued in Paris.





than the Museum's opening day attendance, and we're still experiencing 10 times the normal visitor numbers. The strong local pride in the discovery is almost tangible, and the museum staff, the Friends of the museum and the local community are all working together. Hopefully, over the next year we will have a chance to step back and come up with a scheme to present the objects properly to the people of Southend. We are presently looking into Heritage funding to enable it to happen'.

king after all, on the grounds that it is not as rich as Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo. What I've argued is that Mound 1 might be the burial of no ordinary king, but that of a high king or overlord of Britain. If so, the comparison with a lesser Prittlewell does not necessarily imply that the latter is not that of an East Saxon king. It would be fantastic if this really was Saeberht, the first king of Essex to convert to Christianity. Most importantly, the transitional character of Prittlewell reinforces the view that Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo should be similarly regarded (rather than defiantly pagan), both burials have Christian artefacts mixed up with the paraphernalia of pagan rites."

both excited and daunted by the experience. In the first week of the finds being displayed, we had an average of 1,100 visitors a day, more

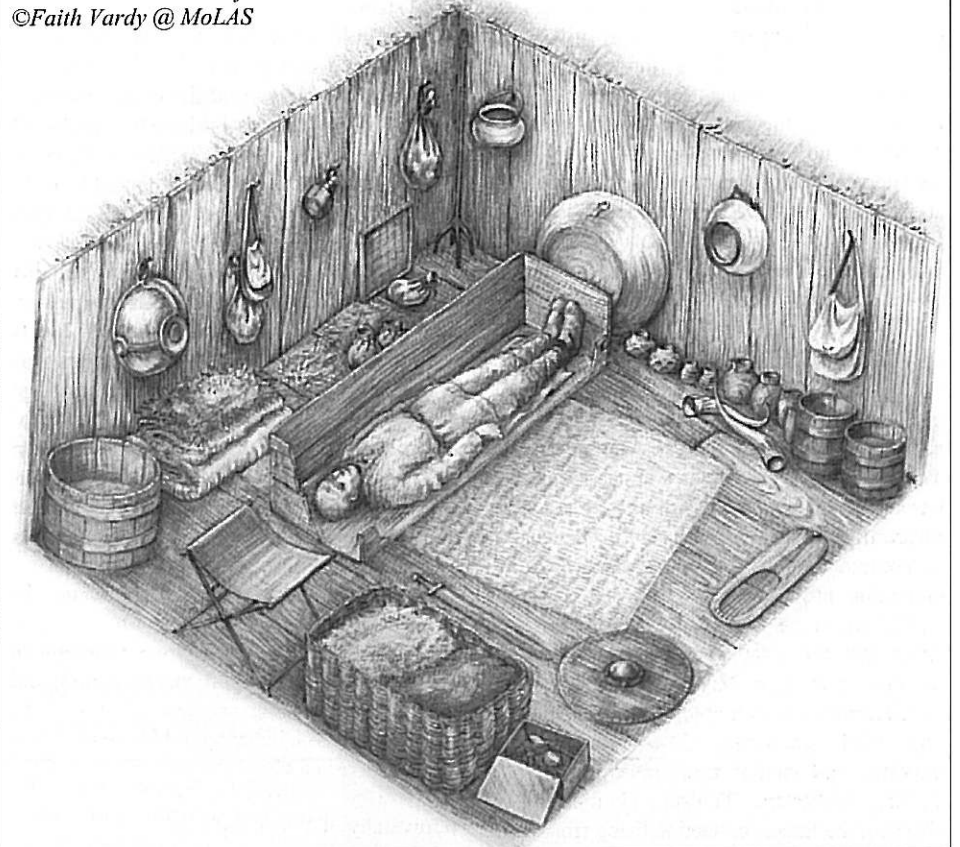
All photos: Andy Chopping @ Museum of London Archaeological Service © MoL.

The future

A temporary exhibition of the Prittlewell finds was set up at Southend-on-Sea Central Museum (the Borough Council are the legal owners). John Skinner, Museums and Galleries manager describes the excavation site and what the discovery means to Southend :

'The small area of waste land, where the burial chamber was discovered, is sandwiched between the railway line and the main road — it's amazing enough that the chamber survived untouched for nearly 1400 years, but the complete absence of underground cables and pipes, or building on the site is almost unbelievable. Since the discovery the museum has been thrust into the limelight, and we are

*Artists reconstruction of the burial chamber :
©Faith Vardy @ MoLAS*



In response — the Prittlewell Chamber-Grave by Helen Geake

The new find at Prittlewell comes from a cemetery which has been known since the discovery of a spearhead in 1887. Bits and pieces have been excavated over the years, notably in 1923 and 1930, giving a picture of a cemetery in use during the very late sixth and seventh centuries. But nothing was found then which hinted at the presence of a chamber grave of such richness and sophistication.

How does Prittlewell compare to other early seventh century 'princely' burials? A quick way to assess this is to do a simple vessel count. The new chamber-grave at Prittlewell contains at least 18 vessels (of glass, horn, wood and copper alloy). This compares well with Taplow (between 18 and

20 vessels), hitherto the richest Anglo-Saxon burial apart from Sutton Hoo Mound 1. This total is far more than in other 'princely' graves, such as Broomfield in Essex (eleven), Asthall in Oxfordshire (at least eight), Sutton Hoo Mound 17 (five) or Benty Grange (two or three). None compare with Sutton Hoo Mound 1, which contained 43 vessels.

The work on the Prittlewell grave, and its associated cemetery, will continue for perhaps a decade. There may still be many objects embedded in the soil blocks which are currently being excavated in the Museum of London's laboratories. But we can already use the preliminary information to test our hypotheses about Sutton Hoo, and about rich early seventh-century burials in general.

A very important thing to establish at the outset is that Prittlewell joins Sutton Hoo Mounds 1 and 17 in surviving to be excavated in the modern era. In all other cases where we have enough evidence, we can say that there is a strong likelihood that the 'princely' burials were either robbed, probably between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, or were excavated with inadequate skill or record. I used to say that Sutton Hoo Mound 1 was probably only unique in that it was well excavated; Benty Grange, for example, might once have contained many wonderful things in the six-foot empty space which was found at the centre of the burial. Could Benty Grange, at least, once have been comparable to Mound 1? We had no good reason to say

no – until the discovery of Prittlewell.

So what does Prittlewell contribute to the study of these ‘princely’, if not royal, burials? Firstly, we might note that the person buried in the Prittlewell chamber-grave was not separated from the rest of the community in death, as was the case at Broomfield, Asthall, Benty Grange and Taplow. But, in fact, in most of these cases we simply do not know whether the rich grave was constructed in splendid isolation. A large area adjoining the Broomfield grave was stripped in the 1980s and showed no evidence for a surrounding cemetery, but the environs of the other ‘princely’ graves have not been investigated. Here, Prittlewell raises more questions than answers; it reinforces the need for research investigation around these famous burials.

Secondly, the intact survival of such a rich grave, its incredible preservation, and its leisurely and expert excavation, gives us masses of extra evidence for tantalisingly unanswered questions at Sutton Hoo. Comparison of the grave-goods is instructive. There is no elaborate gold and garnet jewellery; the fairly small gold buckle appears at first sight to have been soldered together from bits of sheet, and perhaps could never have held up a heavy sword-belt. There is a sword, still embedded in a soil block, and a shield; there are gaming pieces. There is one of those extraordinary Byzantine or ‘Coptic’ vessels unparalleled in England, just like Sutton Hoo Mound 3. In contrast to Sutton Hoo Mound 1 (and in common with nearly all other ‘princely’ burials) Prittlewell contains glass vessels. Remarkably, it also has an iron standard. This will need a great deal of conservation and study, but already it is clear that its design is different to the standard in

Mound 1. There is enigmatic ‘ironwork’ reported from some of the other ‘princely’ burials, notably Benty Grange, but no positive identifications of other standards.

Does the inclusion of a standard (one of the pieces in the SHSB volume entitled ‘Arms, Armour and Regalia’) make Prittlewell the burial of a king? Those who were unimpressed by Mike Parker Pearson’s argument that Saebert of Essex was buried in Mound 1 were quick to suggest that he was much more likely to have been buried at Prittlewell. But there is one interesting omission from the Prittlewell burial which I would expect to find in a royal grave – a helmet. Helmets are only known from Benty Grange and Sutton Hoo Mound 1; does the Prittlewell chamber-grave make it more, or less, likely that the helmet was an indicator of royal status?

The gulf between Sutton Hoo Mound 1, with its gold and garnet jewellery and vast quantities of objects, and the other ‘princely’ burials, is not perhaps bridged by Prittlewell any more than it was by Taplow. Were the Taplow and Prittlewell men thought of as kings during their lifetime? It is still an open question.

The location of the grave may have a bearing on the problem. Why was this person, king or chieftain, buried at Prittlewell? It was a bit of a surprise to many to hear the news, as Essex already had its own ‘princely’ burial, at Broomfield (near Chelmsford in the centre of the county). The relationship between Broomfield and Prittlewell is as yet unclear. The location of Prittlewell, however, above the massive Thames estuary, sounds imposing. Perhaps the Society should take a field trip (both by land and by water) to

investigate the ‘feel’ of the landscapes of Broomfield and Prittlewell in the same way that we did at Taplow; no amount of map work can replace the actual experience of a landscape. Perhaps the location on the northern bank of the estuary was more important than the location in the kingdom of Essex itself.

There is another aspect to the location of the Prittlewell cemetery which may be important. Although the cemetery has by no means been fully excavated, it seems from current data that it began in the very late sixth century on the site of a Roman cemetery. My belief that the earliest Anglo-Saxon kings fostered a classical revival to legitimise their position, implying that they were the heirs to Roman rulers, is strengthened by this. Some of the Prittlewell grave-goods – the very Italianate folding stool, and the small gold foil crosses more characteristic of Lombardy – also give support to my theory.

The gold foil crosses, tiny as they are, are perhaps the most interesting grave-goods. Can they be seen as hard evidence of Christianity? At first sight I would think so. How might this affect an interpretation of Sutton Hoo as a theatre for ‘defiantly pagan’ acts? There was no ship, and as far as we can see no horse, at Prittlewell. Is this because it was a Christian grave? Or is such a question entirely the wrong thing to be asking? The questions will go on and on ...

Dr Helen Geake: Finds Adviser (Post – Roman Artefacts), Portable Antiquities Scheme, University of Cambridge.

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Projects 2003 – Interim summaries



Carlton Colville

Excavation work at St. Peters Road, Carlton Colville, near Lowestoft covered some 2,000 square metres. Areas immediately to the east of Carlton Hall and 70 metres north-east of the parish church, revealed good evidence for two widely separated periods of activity. Initial pottery dating indicates a significant phase of middle Neolithic activity with small pits and possible post-built structures. Nearby

cremation burials may be associated with this early phase or with a later prehistoric phase, radiocarbon dates may have to be relied on to securely place the burials in a chronological framework.

The second major period of activity on the site is represented by numerous fence and ditch boundary lines of late Saxon and medieval date. Thetford-type pottery of late Saxon to early medieval date was recovered from various features which is interesting as the site is close to Carlton Hall, a known Domesday Book period manorial centre. In addition, numerous archaeological investigations have now been undertaken in the area of Carlton Colville as this forms one of the major expansion zones for Lowestoft.

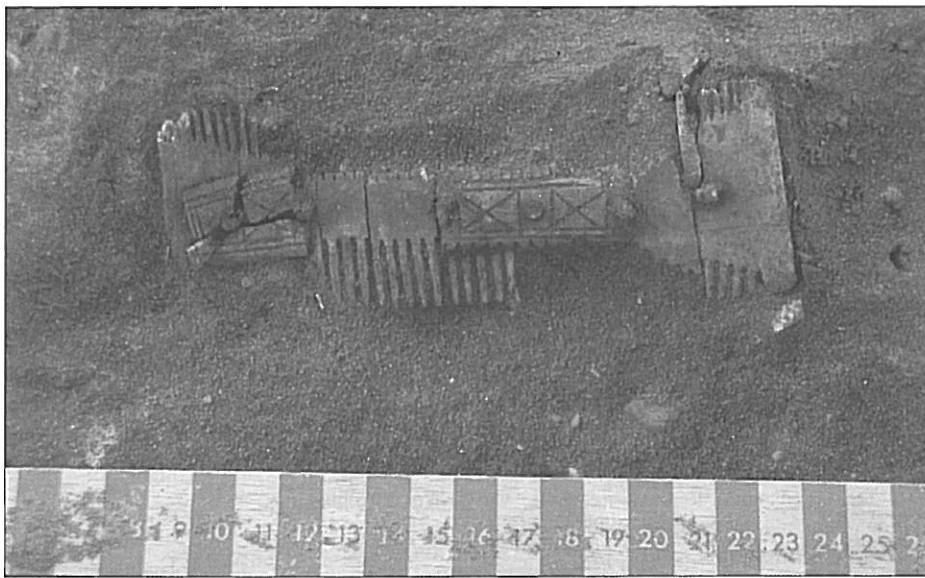
Archaeological information from any site is of interest to help build up a full picture of the post Roman settlement pattern, dominated

by the excavation of a major sixth/seventh century settlement at the base of Bloodmoor Hill by the Cambridge University Archaeological Unit. Other investigations across the parish have identified another hall type structure of probable early Saxon date on the Carlton Colville bypass some 950 metres north-west of the Bloodmoor Hill settlement, and have also located a pattern of later, medieval, green-edge settlement developing in the parish. The latter investigations around the former edges of both the Carlton and Whitton green areas, are indicative of the dispersed medieval settlement pattern that is characteristic of much of East Anglia.

Any archaeological work close to the parish church is of crucial importance, as one would expect the middle to late Saxon settlement nucleus to be in this area. However, an initial field walking survey immediately to the west of the church, has only revealed a

Left: Early Anglo Saxon (probably sixth C) post built hall under investigation

Photo: SCCAS



few Iron Age and medieval pottery sherds and no evidence of the hoped for later Saxon settlement, while areas immediately to the east and south of the church are already built-up.

Coddenham

Excavations at Coddenham (as per BBC *Hidden Treasures* programme) followed up a wealth of sixth and, more notably, seventh century Anglo-Saxon artefacts and coins found by a local metal detector user. An evaluation by geophysical survey and trial trenching was commissioned by the BBC. While the geophysical survey was partially successful (considering the mixed nature of the chalk, sand and gravel) in identifying some 'targets', notably two possible sunken featured buildings and an eighteenth century cottage site, the trial trenching confirmed the site as a settlement of high status.

One major structure of seventh century date was located, planned and partially excavated. This structure was some 11 metres by 7 metres and was constructed using the post-in-trench method, which only begins to appear in the seventh century, with opposing entrances in the long sides. A hall type structure of this size is another good indicator of Coddenham's status which can already be

seen to be of the highest level in the seventh century with numerous Merovingian and early English gold coins, primary silver sceattas (coins), and gold and copper alloy artefacts. The metal working evidence from the site already hinted at by gold scrap ready for re-use, unfinished copper alloy items and off-cuts was further supported by the excavation of an iron smith's hearth base.

Above: seventh century bone (antler) comb in the fill of a probable AS cellared building

Right: Filming during the excavation of a seventh century cellared building

Photos: SCCAS



Handford Road, Ipswich

Over the final weeks of 2003 part of an important and complex area of Roman and Early Anglo-Saxon settlement was investigated on the western side of Ipswich. The Handford Road site is on a south-facing slope adjacent to the northern course of the River Gipping (now known as the Alderman Canal) and Bob Malster has argued that this watercourse may have an artificial origin. In view of the close proximity of an extensive Roman site perhaps the watercourse was modified at this date. It certainly existed by the tenth century when it formed part of the boundary between Ipswich and Stoke. The Roman activity on this site is characterised by numerous ditches of various phases with the most notable single feature being a pottery kiln. Some form of continuity in general land use, if not settlement, is a definite question for the post-excavation work as the excavation revealed part of a well-established Anglo-Saxon settlement with a well, various post-built structures and several sunken-featured buildings.

John Newman: Field Team, Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Sutton Hoo Society AGM

The Annual general meeting was held on Friday 6 February 2004 at Tranmer House. The society's president the Earl of Cranbrook chaired the meeting.

Chairman's Report

Thanks go to all members of the Committee. It is largely because of their hard work we have been able to strengthen our relationship with The National Trust staff and volunteers at Sutton Hoo, expand our guiding commitments, and at the same time promote the independent status and objectives of the Society.

Membership

At 31 December 2003 membership totalled 428, with 121 life, 237 ordinary, 55 family, 15 student and 21 overseas members. In 2003 the society website attracted 38 new members, with 37 joining at the Sutton Hoo reception desk. New members joining the society in Conference years have roughly doubled compared to non-Conference years, it will be interesting to see if this pattern continues.

Finance

The society Treasurer outlined the year's accounts. Tour fees realized £17,293 an

increase of £4,405 compared to the previous year. Books and other sales £3,741. The surplus for the year was £13,602. The balance at 31 December 2003 was £51,050.

Guiding

After the National Trust Visitor Centre's first season (2002) at Sutton Hoo, a drop in visitor numbers was expected. There were 205,000 visitors in 2002, compared to 127,500 in 2003. In 2002 Society Guides took 17,299 visitors on 497 tours – in 2003 the numbers increased to a staggering 20,158 people on 655 tours (an average of 31 per tour). Considering the drop in visitor numbers, how

was this achieved? Firstly, we aimed to offer public tours every day the site was open, this was made possible because of our Guides Training Programme resulting in an increased guide 'bank' from which to draw. We now have a total of 35 trained guides whose enthusiasm and dedication remains the 'backbone' of the Society. Secondly, we introduced an additional monthly calendar at the reception desk, where guides signed up for extra tours on an ad hoc basis, and thirdly, we offered winter tours with a group of volunteers willing to cover this heroic task! All resulting in increased efficiency and income.

It is interesting to note that although the numbers of pre-booked tours in 2003 were 50% less than in 2002, the demand for public tours continues unchecked.

Lectures, Communication and Publications

The 2003 Spring Lecture was given by Dr. Anna Gannon on the subject of 'The Anglo-Saxons: the not-so-Dark Ages'. We have continued to give slide lectures to local societies and interested groups. Two issues of the Society's newsletter *SAXON* have been published, continuing to bring articles and society information to our members, an important link to many living a considerable distance from Sutton Hoo. Sales of Bob Markham's *Sutton Hoo Through the Rear View Mirror* (published by the society) have totalled to date 464 copies (original stock

1000). The Society's website has been maintained and continues to generate new members, national and international enquiries and links.

Funding

One of the biggest challenges facing the executive committee is funding. Since March 2002 a much greater emphasis on Guiding at Sutton Hoo has resulted in a stable income, enabling us to respond to funding requests. We have introduced a 'Framework for the Financial Management of Grants' document. This gives the committee a structured policy for the consideration and management of funding projects. In considering the merits of both large and small financial requests, we can support major projects with a strong academic content, and remain an approachable society in tune with the local community. This has always been one of our strengths, and one that is difficult for larger or wholly academic bodies to sustain.

In 2003, we agreed to give additional money to support the final Sutton Hoo Research Report (British Museum Publications); continued to support The Intertidal Survey Project (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service); agreed to fund (phased over three years) a major Research Project at the Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia commencing in September 2004. It will be overseen by Dr. Tom Williamson. Finally, we agreed to give a donation to a volunteer group

activity 'Hadrian's Wall Walk' which will take place in June 2004 to raise money for the Build-A-Ship Project (The National Trust).

Society Events

The Society was represented at the Suffolk History Festival held at the Museum of East Anglia Life, Stowmarket on 12 and 13 July. Our stand was set up with a new eye-catching display panel. In August, Society guides were treated to an exclusive evening visit at West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon Village, and in September sixty one members and friends enjoyed a visit to Flag Fen and Ely Cathedral. Finally, the guides Xmas party was held at the Crown Hotel, Woodbridge.

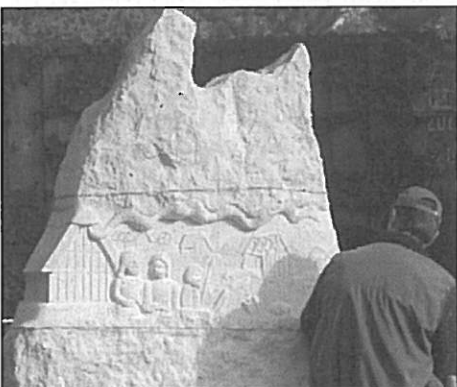
Summary

The Society is moving forward with imagination and energy. We must welcome new initiatives and build upon them, and not be afraid to support and co-operate with others who have similar aims and interests. In this way we can look forward to a successful and exciting future whilst continuing to keep faith with the original objectives of the Society: to advance the study and understanding of Sutton Hoo, and the wider context of Anglo-Saxon history and archaeology.

Lindsay Lee
Chairman

The West Stow Celebration Stone

Visitors to the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village have been able to see history being made before their eyes as an exciting project got under way to carve stone images from the past and present. A three ton limestone rock, known as the *West Stow Celebration Stone*, has been set into place. Expert stonemason and sculptor, Brian Ansell, assisted and directed the carving of images which depict a



variety of sixth century Anglo-Saxon scenes and modern day images.

The idea behind the project is a celebration of the past and present at West Stow. The stone carvings depict Anglo-Saxon settlers, archaeological excavations of the site

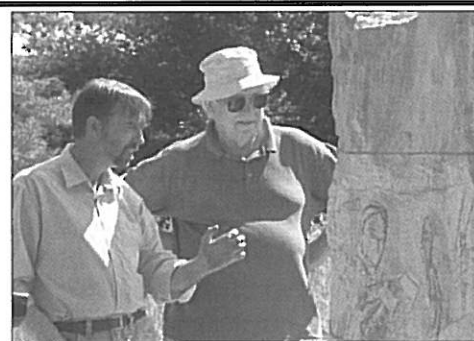
during the 1960s and the modern day Village reconstructions. There are also some key individuals included in the carvings. One person immortalised in this fashion is Dr. Stanley West, who directed the excavations. The exceptional weathering qualities of limestone rock mean that it should be enjoyed by visitors over the next 2000 years!

Roof goes on the New Hall

Another West Stow milestone is the near completion of the New Anglo-Saxon Hall. The New Hall has been a 'work in progress' project for almost two years — at long last, both gables have now been completed, ash rafters pegged into place and hazel batons attached.

The New Hall has been a useful opportunity to train some newer members of West Stow staff in valuable reconstruction techniques. It is estimated that since reconstructions began on site, over twenty staff and volunteers have received training in these techniques. Many of these skilled individuals have gone on to work on other reconstruction projects across the UK.

Of course, the Anglo-Saxons probably completed their building projects much faster than the team of skilled constructors that currently work at West Stow. However, it's



unlikely that Health and Safety regulations in the sixth century were as prescriptive as those in force today!

One of the key issues for today's constructors is the availability of specialist, authentic materials. Many of these must be sourced and ordered months or even years in advance and seasonal constraints, such as harvests, have to be considered.

Above: Brian Ansell sculptor, talking to Dr. Stanley West as the layout is planned.

Left: Brian working on village face of sculpture

Photos: West Stow Country Park

THE SUTTON HOO SOCIETY
PRESENTS AN

ANGLO-SAXON FESTIVAL

SUNDAY 4 JULY 2004 at SUTTON HOO

10am – 5pm

By kind permission of The National Trust

Entry charges on day: Adult £4.00 Children £2.00

National Trust and Sutton Hoo Society members free

Re-Enactment Displays

Archaeology

Hog Roast

Falconry

Theatre* *extra charge*

Burial Ground Tours £2.00 on day

Children's Activities

West Stow

History Societies

Beer Tent

Archery

Music

Beowulf* *extra charge*

Sæ Wylfing

Story Telling

*MEET MRS PRETTY IN THE MORNING AND BEOWULF IN THE AFTERNOON

MRS PRETTY IN PRIVATE

By Peppy Barlow with Rosemary McVie as
Mrs Pretty, the part she made her own in
'The Sutton Hoo Mob'

Mrs Pretty waited for over twenty years to marry her beloved Frank and then he died. Undaunted by their separation she found spiritualist friends to help her keep in contact and doubtless talked to him whenever she felt inclined.

We imagine her sitting down in the evening with a glass of sherry to impart the days proceedings. It is the summer of 1939. The excavations are in progress. Frank gets to hear it all.

Performances at Tranmer House 11.30 and 12.30am.

BEOWULF PRESENTATION

Dr. Sam Newton will present his detailed and passionate interpretations of the Old English poem, Beowulf.

As unique as the poem itself, Sam's indomitable style will enchant his audience by bringing to life a vanished heroic age.

The presentation will be followed by a guided stroll on the sacred turf, where the world of the Wuffings will be evoked by the authentic sound of Beowulf and related Old English verse.

Presentation at Tranmer House 2.30pm
(tour included in ticket price)

Tickets for 'Pretty' and 'Beowulf' £5.00 (no concessions). Limited seats available so book early to avoid disappointment. Send SAE stating Pretty (and preferred time) and/or Beowulf and number of tickets required to M. Argent, 2 Meadowside, Wickham Market, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 0UD (please make cheque payable to Sutton Hoo Society)

Tickets also available at Sutton Hoo Reception



Sutton Hoo Opening Times 2004

March 20 to September 30

Open daily 10am to 5pm

October 1 to 31

Open Wednesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm

October

Half term 25—29

Open daily 10am to 5pm

November 1 to December 31

Open Friday to Sunday 10am to 4pm

(closed Christmas Day and Boxing Day)

Admission

Adult £4.00 Child £2.00 Group rate £3.50

For ALL information about site opening and visiting please contact the National Trust and NOT the Society:

National Trust Sutton Hoo:

Tel: 01394 389700

Fax: 01394 389702

Email: asoksx@smtp.ntrust.org.uk

Web site: www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Sutton Hoo Society Guides

If you are interested in training as a guide, please contact Lindsay Lee, Brambles, School Road, Tunstall, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 2JQ
Tel: 01728 688718 for more details.

Announcements

Society Members Entitlements

At the AGM held on Friday 6 February 2004, the Chairman was asked to verify society members entitlements. It was noticed that letters circulated to new members, and to existing members at the renewal of annual subscriptions in December 2003, required updating.

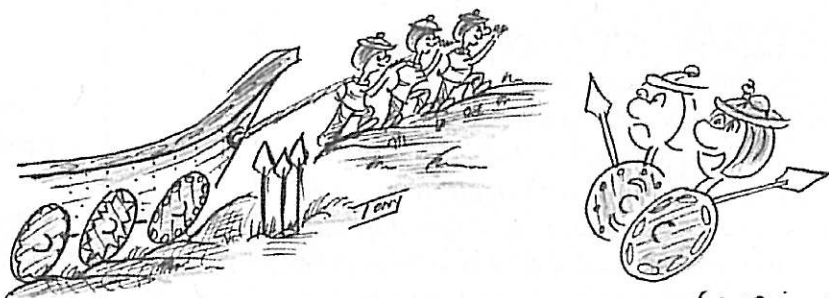
We can now report that successful re-negotiations have been made with the National Trust on this matter and all members are entitled to:

- Two free copies of *Saxon* per year
- The Annual General Meeting when a talk will be given by a guest speaker
- Free entry to an annual Spring Lecture
- The opportunity to attend an Autumn event e.g. field trip or Conference, (at subsidised price)
- One free entry per year to the National Trust Visitor Centre and exhibition at Sutton Hoo, including a burial ground guided tour (assuming the latter is available on the day)
- Free entry to Sutton Hoo on the occasion of a members' day event organised by the Society at the site.

New Season Treasury Exhibition

On view now until end October, *'Between Myth and Reality: Animals in Anglo-Saxon Art'*

MADWALD
THE EAST ANGLIAN SAXON



'WHY DIDN'T WE
THINK OF THAT?'

Contact Addresses

Jenny Cant, Membership Secretary, 258 The Pastures, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP13 5RS

Stewart Salmond, Guiding Secretary, Tailor's House, Bawdsey, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3AJ

Email: chairman@suttonhoo.org Web site: <http://www.suttonhoo.org>

Saxon: Email: publications@suttonhoo.org

Who's Who — Sutton Hoo Society Committee Members

Chairman: Lindsay Lee Hon. Treasurer: Mike Argent Research Director: Martin Carver

Membership Secretary: Jenny Cant Minutes Secretary: Brenda Brown Guiding Secretary: Stewart Salmond Publications: Robert Allen

Duncan Allen Sue Banyard Alison Booth Nigel Maslin

Trish Mulholland-Middleton Angus Wainwright Jane Wright

CREDITS

Saxon: Editor: Trish Mulholland-Middleton Sub-editor: Jenny Glazebrook Original Design: Nigel MacBeth

Discover what life was like for the early Anglo-Saxons at

WEST STOW ANGLO-SAXON VILLAGE



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View the objects found at the site during excavation

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(last admission at 4pm)

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For further information and special event dates:
tel: 01284 728718 email: weststow@stedshc.gov.uk
or visit: <http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/weststow.htm>



St. Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

West Stow Summer Events 2004

April 11 and 12 **Eostre Gathering**

April 17 and 18 **From Famine to Feast**

May 1 — 3 **A Visit From The Saxons**

May 8 **Workshop — Felt Making for**

Beginners

May 29 — 31 **Saxon Spindles, Dye pots and**

Looms

June 1 — 4 **At Home with the Saxons**

June 5 and 6 **Beowulf and the Saxons**

July 31 — Aug 6 **Summer 504AD:**

Saxon Living

Aug 1 **Butterflies and Dragonflies**

Aug 7 and 8 **Summer 504AD:**

A Visit from the Saxons

Aug 26 — 31 **Technology and Essential Skills**

of the Saxons

For more information, ring West Stow on

01284 728718