



# SAXON

## 'De Cingulis' — of belts and buckles in the early medieval period a résumé of the Spring Lecture, by Sonja Marzinic

The title of this short contribution is borrowed from Isidore, Bishop of Seville, who died in AD636. One topic he covered in his twenty-volume *Etymologies* was belts, their meanings and uses. The inspiration for this summary and the lecture it is based on is the focus of this summer's special exhibition *Patterns of Meaning* at the Sutton Hoo Visitor Centre: the great gold buckle from mound 1. This exhibition is the last under the current collaborative agreement between the British Museum and the National Trust. A new agreement is close to finalisation and we are looking forward to another five years of our partnership.

*Patterns of Meaning* is also the first of a new type of exhibition in the Treasury. It is slightly smaller-scale and built around one object from mound 1, the great gold buckle. In future years, larger exhibitions with over-arching topics, such as the very successful hanging bowls last year, will alternate with these smaller scale 'object in focus' shows.

We chose the great gold buckle as it is beautiful and evocative, but also mysterious. When it was discovered in 1939, the excavators were astonished. Not only were such wealth and craftsmanship unexpected, but also the gold had maintained its near-pristine condition. Basil Brown, who was on site the day the buckle was found, wrote in his diary: 'The treasure was to be taken up to the mansion ... Mrs Pretty said 'Let Brown carry it up' so I had the honour of carrying this priceless golden treasure with Mrs Pretty ... following ...'.

The great gold buckle was found together with the cloisonné purse lid. It appears that both were connected to a broad belt that was deposited in the grave. But the buckle seems to have been much more than a simple means to close a belt. Its box-shaped body can be opened by a concealed hinge. What was this cavity for? Was the Sutton Hoo buckle used as a relic container, like similar buckles known from France, southern Germany, Italy and the Byzantine empire? Rupert Bruce-Mitford was not convinced by this idea, but I believe it is worth considering.

As extraordinary as the Sutton Hoo buckle is, it still belongs to a widely-known type. A large number of similar pieces have been found



*The great gold buckle from mound 1. The image shows the gap between the plate and the back plate, where the buckle opened. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

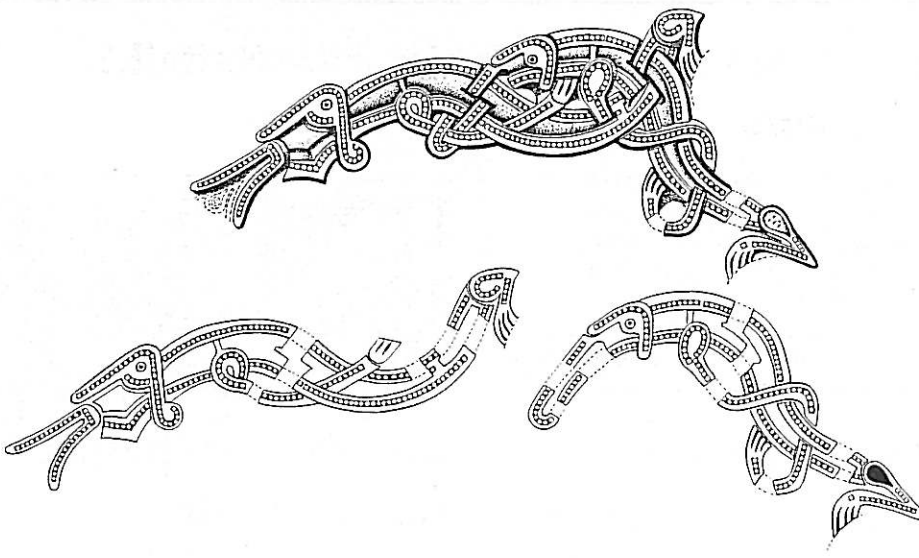
elsewhere. They come mainly from the Frankish areas on the Continent, for instance the Rhineland, northern France and Belgium, but are also found in Visigothic southwestern France. All share a substantial loop, elongated, tongue-shaped plate and large decorative rivets.

The best parallel to the Sutton Hoo buckle was discovered in the grave church of the Merovingian kings at St Denis, near or today rather in, Paris. Now on show at the National Antiquities Museum at St-Germain-en-Laye, it was originally discovered in the sarcophagus of a man. It is made from gilt silver with small garnet inlays and bears a striking similarity to the Sutton Hoo buckle. The overall form of the buckle, the round tongue shield, the large rivets and the lavish use of animal ornament and niello inlay link both buckles closely, even though the French buckle is not hollow and though they are different in detail.

Hollow buckles with all manner of locking mechanisms were sometimes buried with their wearers in southern Germany, Switzerland, Italy or France. In some buckles cotton, beeswax from candles and plant remains have survived. These are interpreted as pilgrims' souvenirs. In the early Middle Ages, objects

could receive relic status, if they had been in contact with, for instance, a saint's tomb. Pilgrims would touch the tomb with pieces of cloth or candles, which would thus become so-called 'touch relics'. The buckles holding such remains are therefore interpreted as reliquary containers. Belt reliquaries are also found in the Byzantine empire and the connotation of belts and buckles as personal or official objects imbued with special powers can be traced in both late Roman and Germanic customs and in later, medieval traditions. Early medieval written sources from England, Ireland and the Continent contain numerous references to miraculous belts, often related to particular saints. Widely known is the belt reliquary found in a peat bog at Moylough, County Sligo, Ireland. It is unknown whose cult it was connected to, but perhaps significantly like the Sutton Hoo buckle it had a Continental connection in that it imitates a Frankish form of belt suite.

The construction of the Sutton Hoo buckle and its closing mechanism are highly complex, but also vulnerable. Although there is no visible damage, it appears that some minor structural additions were made to shore up the hinge. Any



Detail drawing of the large creatures along the edges of the buckle plate. The ornament is symmetrical along both long sides. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

pressure on the tiny pins of the closing sliders would have prevented them from functioning. Considering this, would it have been likely that the buckle could only be opened in order to exchange the belt strap, perhaps using different materials for different occasions, as suggested by Bruce-Mitford? To this author it seems more plausible that there was another reason why the inside of the buckle should have been accessible and a container function for a special object is certainly a possibility. Even if the inside did contain a wooden block to wedge in the belt, as suggested by Bruce-Mitford, the block might have had a cavity in which to preserve a relic of some sort.

The decoration of the Sutton Hoo buckle might hold clues as to its former contents, but it, too, is hard to interpret. Intricate stylised animals in Germanic Style II populate the plate of the great gold buckle. Along its edges, two large creatures are tangled. One animal has a long beak which seems to bite the body of the other beast. Their framed, staring eyes, fan-shaped feet and ribbon-like bodies are typical of Style II. The heads of another type of animal, due to the beak apparently a bird of prey, are visible on the shoulders of the buckle, curving around the large decorative rivets. The centre of the plate as well as the buckle loop and tongue shield writhes with intertwined snakes.

Derived from Mediterranean interlace motifs, these complex Germanic patterns interweave stylised animals. Their meaning is as yet unresolved. Some scholars think of Nordic mythology or an attempt to bind evil by literally tangling it up in knots. But Christian references to the beasts of the earth, sea and sky, as, for instance, mentioned in *Genesis* 1.30 and *Genesis* 9.2, have also been suggested. The openwork disc from Linons, Dept. Puy-de-Dôme, France, is the perfect example here, uniting Christian symbols and animal ornament. The ambiguous nature of the stylised animals allows for both — as well as other — interpretations and it fits well with the ambiguity of the buckle's meaning, which may

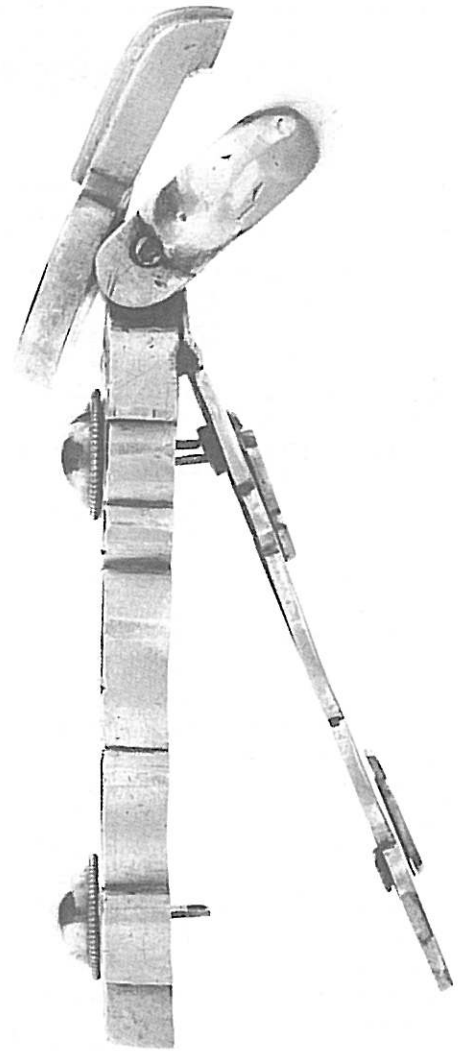
have been very different for its maker, wearer and beholders.

Whatever else it may have been, the Sutton Hoo buckle is also a fully-functional buckle. By the 7th century, the custom of wearing a buckled belt is apparently less widespread than before. This hints at a change in costume, in particular for women. A loose garment may now have been worn draped over the belt. Where buckles are found, they are often small but can still be exquisite. On the other hand, in a very few graves, people were buried with amazing pieces decorated with garnet inlay or gold filigree.

Plain straps or intricately braided leather strips were used. The latter provided thin but strong belts and again there is evidence for such belts from France. A braided belt may also resolve the question of how the heavy gold buckle could have been properly supported. Without a doubt, the buckle from Sutton Hoo mound 1 is outstanding, perhaps the finest buckle we know from the early Middle Ages.

## References

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The side of the box-like buckle plate  
Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum



Dr Sonja Marzinzik is curator of the Insular Collections at the British Museum

# Another Anglo-Saxon Horse and Rider Burial from Suffolk?

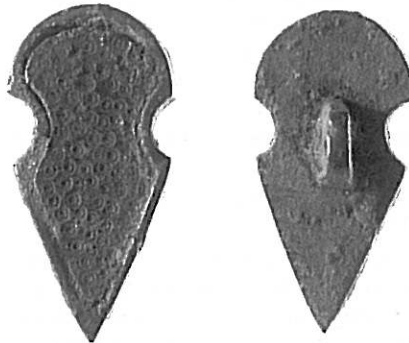
by John Newman

Archaeology, as with many other aspects of life, can be full of fortuitous coincidence. In September 2003, the local history recorder for Witnesham, Bob Farrow, wrote to Suffolk CC Archaeological Service with regard to some antiquarian records he had found relating to the discovery of a 'human skeleton....beside the skeleton of a horse in the parish.' Further antiquarian records from the late 18th and early 19th centuries outlined the discovery of evidence for 'a battle fought here' (Witnesham) as 'several human skeletons were found c.1818.... And various pieces of armour.'

Standing alone under the critical scrutiny of modern academic review these antiquarian records would, perhaps, carry little weight. However in October 2003, a group of important silver and copper alloy finds of 6th- and early 7th-century date were also reported to the Archaeological Service to be considered under the Treasure Act 1996. These finds had suffered the inevitable damage of several hundred years of agricultural attrition but they might indicate the presence of high status early Anglo-Saxon burials, as the fragments included parts of gilt silver square-headed brooches, a copper alloy florid cruciform brooch fragment and silver 'shoe' shaped decorative studs. Therefore, given our knowledge of early Anglo-Saxon 'horse and rider' burials as outlined in detail by Angela Care Evans and Chris Fern in the recently published Sutton Hoo report and other papers, perhaps one can suggest another important cemetery of 6th/7th-century date north of Ipswich. That is within the apparent Wuffing

power-base of southeast Suffolk alongside Rendlesham, the royal vill, the Snape and Sutton Hoo cemeteries and Ipswich as wic or commercial centre. From the two sources of information outlined above that came to light towards the end of 2003, potentially exceptional burials and definite artefacts of early Anglo-Saxon date have come from Witnesham in the Fynn valley north of Ipswich. What more can be said about these sources of evidence?

The antiquarian sources highlighted by Bob Farrow are particularly clear in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1828 (ii, p23) that includes the following entry:



*Rev. John King, rector of Witnesham for a great number of years, died about 5 years since, aged 84. He was a very able character, and informed me some 20 years since that he had several relics in his possession, proving that a battle had been fought at Witnesham. Charles Poppy, agriculturalist in the same parish, found upon his land a human skeleton with that of a horse beside it, Mr Poppy showed me several marks of military accoutrements, saddle, stirrups etc. The studs of the saddle were of silver.*

The same source also indicates that these discoveries were made 'within 6 feet of the surface.'

To research a little further into this antiquarian account, the tithe map from the 1840s for Witnesham held at the County Record Office was examined. This indicates that Charles Poppy occupied land on the western side of the parish and one of the fields he farmed is called 'Gravel Pit Field' — the name giving a good indication as to why remains were found 'within 6 feet of the surface.'

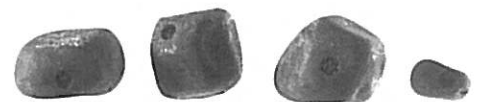
Turning to the more recent archaeological finds it must be admitted that we do not have horse harness gear that might secure the link between the two sources of evidence. However the metal finds, as noted above, do include parts of a particularly fine silver square-headed brooch in addition to silver spiral type wrist clasps, amber beads and an iron spearhead and knife.

(top right) fragments of brooches and clasp  
(centre) shoe-shaped stud (bottom left) knife  
(right) amber beads: scales in mm  
photos: Suffolk CC Archaeological Service

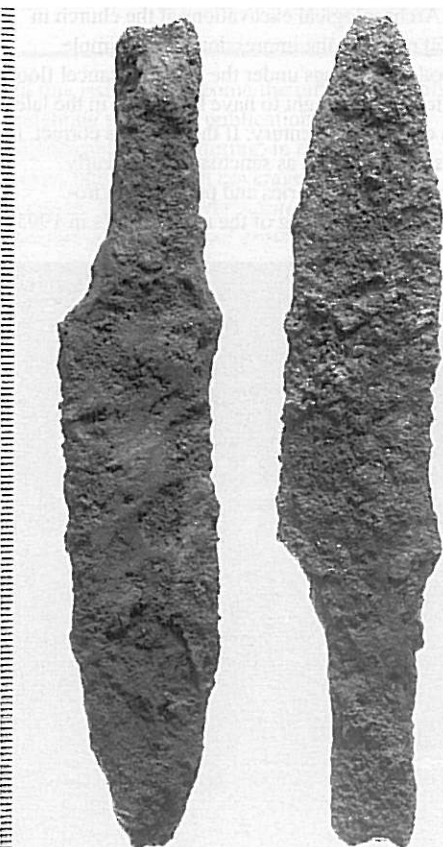


Taken together, such finds can best be interpreted as evidence for early Anglo-Saxon inhumation graves that have been heavily plough disturbed, or perhaps, graves that have been disturbed by agriculture and early 19th-century quarrying. Quite possibly this again is evidence for the landscape history that has affected 'Gravel Pit Field' over some 1,400 years.

Clearly, from the evidence available at present, one cannot be certain that the antiquarian horse and rider reference and the archaeological finds come from the same site. Similarly it cannot be confirmed that the c.1800 find of 'human skeleton and horse' is another Anglo-Saxon horse and rider find. However alternative interpretations in both cases seem less plausible. It is more likely that there is just one early Anglo-Saxon cemetery with high status burials (rather than two) in this area north of Ipswich and, of all periods that may be considered, an Anglo-Saxon date for a horse and rider burial is most likely. The coincidence that these two strands of archaeological evidence were reported at the same time is extraordinary, that they may lead to one early Anglo-Saxon cemetery of high status is perhaps less surprising. Increasingly the royal burial site at Sutton Hoo stands at less of a distance from what we know about the social and economic hierarchy that supported the kings and kingdom of East Anglia, as settlements and cemeteries across the range of contemporary society are found and examined. Hopefully more survives below 'Gravel Pit Field' to answer further questions about the Anglo-Saxon period.



John Newman is Field Projects Manager with Suffolk CC Archaeological Service



# Annual General Meeting 2006 — Chairman's Report

## Membership

At 31 December 2005 membership totalled 428, with 135 life members, 230 ordinary, 51 family and 12 students. The total is slightly up on the previous year of 420 with the lowest number of cancellations since 2001.

## Guiding

In 2005, the ratio of people on tours to site visitor numbers was 12%, compared to 15% in 2004, this was primarily because we gave fewer tours during the summer months, a decision prompted by fewer visitors.

The implication for the future is difficult to predict. Let us all hope the fall in visitor numbers has now stabilized.

We will continue to offer burial site tours by our guides who continue their magnificent work. Our training and updating programme is maintained with new guides regularly joining our forces.

## Lectures and Communications

Spring Lecture 2005: the event was well attended. Ian Blair, senior archaeologist for the Museum of London spoke about *The Prittlewell Discovery*.

*Saxon*: continues to bring news and articles to members and maintains an important link with those who live outside East Anglia and abroad.

Website: the influence of the website is ever-expanding and worldwide interest increases.

## Funding Projects

The second instalment of a phased three-year grant has been paid for a research project undertaken by Tom Williamson and Sarah Harrison of the University of East Anglia. Entitled *Sutton Hoo in Context: the site and its landscape*, the project is progressing well and in his latest report, Tom writes:

*We have collated a wide range of material — archaeological data from the Suffolk HER and John Newman's fieldwalking survey, historical information (especially from Domesday Book), soils, hydrology — and have placed most of this as a series of layers on a GIS (Geographical Information System) database. We have also finished transcribing the roads and field boundaries shown on the earliest available maps for the parishes in the study area onto a single map, showing the 'earliest known landscape features'. We have interpreted this, producing a 'landscape characterisation' map which shows, for example, areas in which the field boundaries indicate the former existence of open-field arable.*

*These maps have also been converted to GIS layers and we are now analysing the relationships between these different bodies of data. What, for example, is the relationship between soil types, open fields, and middle/late Saxon settlements? or between Roman and early Saxon sites?*

## Society Events

The Anglo-Saxon Festival held on 23 and 24 July 2005 was organised jointly with the National Trust. It proved to be a great success and fun for all. The sun shone on the Saturday, but on Sunday the skies opened in truly magnificent style which sent everyone scuttling for cover. Nevertheless, the final accounts put broad smiles on everyone's faces when we discovered the event had made a profit.

The Society Outing to Greensted Church, Verulamium Museum and St Albans Cathedral was a day packed full of things to do and see — full report below.

## Summary

The fascination and affection for Sutton Hoo remains constant, and the enthusiasm it inspires never ceases to amaze me. It is perhaps best summed up by a project completed by Cassie, a little girl aged eight who was escorted on a burial ground tour by Stewart Salmond in 1996. The project has been kept safely all these years, and her mother was recently moved to send a copy to the society with the accompanying letter:

*that visit in 1996 was truly inspirational for one eight year old and her parents, as after that day we joined the society.....this week we learned that Cassie has been given an unconditional offer at St John's College Cambridge to read Archaeology and Anthropology.*

## Society Outing, by Lindsay Lee

On a sunny September morning, thirty five society members arrived at Woodbridge to board the coach provided by Forget-Me-Not Travel Ltd (a very efficient service, incidentally) and we set off for *Greensted Church*, near Ongar, Essex. The name *Greensted* suggests that the Saxons who first settled here found a clearing or place (*stede*) in the vast forest of which Epping and Hainault Forests are only remnants.

The dedication of the church to St Andrew suggests a Celtic foundation, which ties in with the East Saxon conversion to Christianity in AD653. In that year, according to Bede, the East Saxons, who had apostatized from the faith under king Sigbert, were re-converted by the preaching of Cedd:

*...Cedd returned home to Lindisfarne for consultations with Bishop Finan. When the latter learned the great success of his preaching he invited two other bishops to assist him, and consecrated Cedd Bishop of the East Saxons. And when Cedd had been raised to the dignity of bishop, he returned to his province and used his increased authority to promote the work already begun there. He built churches in several places and ordained priests and deacons to assist in teaching the Faith and baptizing the people. (Bede iii ch. 22)*

Of interest to Sutton Hoo enthusiasts, Bede also informs us that in AD627, Sigbert was succeeded as king by Swidhelm, son of Sexbald, who had been baptized by Cedd in the province of the East Angles at the king's country seat of Rendlesham, that is, Rendil's House: his godfather was Ethelwald, king of the East Angles, brother of king Anna. (Bede ii Ch.15)

Archaeological excavations at the church in 1960 revealed the impression of two simple wooden buildings under the present chancel floor which were thought to have been built in the late 6th or early 7th century. If the dating is correct, it was possibly used as sanctuary by the early Christian missionaries and priests. Dendro-chronological dating of the nave timbers in 1995



indicated that the present nave was added c.AD1060, rather than a previously suggested date of AD845. This later dating doesn't change the assertion that it still remains the oldest known wooden church in the world, and the oldest standing wooden building in Europe.

The original Saxon nave would have been windowless, save for a few eye holes (*eag thyrel*), but the darkness would have been relieved by the glow of candles/lamps around the altar and perhaps in the nave itself, dark patches on some of the wall timbers may indicate scorch marks from candles. The original opening from sanctuary to nave would have been small. Tie beams probably crossed the building at the height of the eaves, and the log walls of the nave have flat, inner sides, smoothed with an adze. Adjacent to the original doorway is a niche, possibly for a holy water stoup, or a small window.

### Next stop: Verulamium Museum

The Roman town of Verulamium lies on the south bank of the River Ver and in a valley to the south-west of modern St Albans. It was the third largest town in Roman Britain and is one of the few not to have been built over. Although excavations have taken place since the 1840s much of the town remains unexplored. Its archaeological potential is therefore considerable. Excavations carried out in advance of a new museum extension in 1998 threw new light on the Basilica and Forum, and the buildings that surrounded them.

We arrived about thirty minutes before the museum opened, some of us took the opportunity to stretch our legs and investigate the Roman theatre, a short walk from the museum, and the hypocaust building, with its impressive mosaic floor.



(above) Greensted church (facing page, below) outside St Albans Cathedral  
photos Freida Argent

When the museum opened, we were welcomed by a volunteer who gave us background information about the site, and then went on to discover the delights of the museum exhibits, including a reconstruction of a wealthy merchant's house, Roman workshops and other displays based on archaeological evidence.

### Our final destination: St Albans Cathedral

Around AD800 Offa of Mercia established a monastery close to the present cathedral which flourished as a centre of learning and artistic craftsmanship. The monastery grew in

importance and prestige throughout the Middle Ages and its abbots were held in high esteem by popes and ruling monarchs. The scriptorium produced many famous historians, particularly Matthew Paris, who wrote the *Chronica Majora* between AD1235 and 1259. Nicholas Breakespeare, the only Englishman ever to become Pope (Adrian IV), had close connections with the monastery.

After a comprehensive guided tour of the cathedral we returned to our coach, brains bursting with information, exhausted but in good humour, for our journey home.

## Recent books, by Robert Allen

In this issue we welcome the rare opportunity to celebrate the recent publication of two very significant books offering, in their different ways, broad and rich coverage of our area of interest. Martin Carver's *Sutton Hoo: a seventh-century princely burial ground and its context* (the report on the excavation in the 1980s) is truly magisterial and monumental. Steven Plunkett's *Suffolk in Anglo-Saxon Times* is a sensitive and comprehensive narrative of Suffolk affairs from the Anglo-Saxon migrations of the 5th century to the death of Edmund in 869.

### Sutton Hoo: a seventh-century princely burial ground and its context

Martin Carver, Professor of Archaeology at the University of York, has been Director of Research at Sutton Hoo since 1983. He led the extraordinarily extensive, detailed and thorough field surveys and excavations conducted between 1983 and 1992. This involvement with the site, the fruitfulness of his ideas, his ability to share them, and his contagious enthusiasm have all contributed to the continuing and ever-growing interest in Sutton Hoo. This report — which we have awaited for some time with

impatience — fully justifies the time and care which has gone into its production.

Martin Carver would be the first to acknowledge that both the excavations and the report represent a team effort, and it is good to see so many familiar names included in the record. Particularly, there is the substantial and authoritative chapter *Seventh-century assemblages* by Angela Care Evans, focusing particularly upon mound 17, which is typically detailed and scholarly — and fascinating.

Indeed, the approach of the whole volume is comprehensive and accurate, giving the closest attention to the smallest fragments of bone, glass, bronze or other materials. Illustrations abound, with contemporary photographs showing the progress of the excavations, and drawings of finds — often giving multiple dimensions — of very high quality. The text is closely descriptive at first, and then tightly analytical, leading to informed conclusions. These then take us to the wider historical context, introducing, reinforcing, and sometimes refuting existing claims and theories.

This is a great strength of this publication, and it is best seen in Martin Carver's final

chapter, *Sutton Hoo in context*. Here he does much more than take an overview or provide a summary of the foregoing report. He relates the discoveries in and around the site to their geographical, and historical situation, and he considers the various archaeological interventions — particularly his own — in a critical light. Even if we admit that hindsight may be a valid tool in analysis, it is, nevertheless, a fairly useless instrument in archaeology, whose strength is in care of approach and knowledge and imagination in interpretation and conclusion. This strength is amply illustrated in this extraordinarily valuable report.

*A seventh-century princely burial ground* is absolutely central to the study of early medieval England and its archaeology. It is a work of reference, a source of vast amount of exceptionally well ordered and supported information. In addition to this, while not a bedside book, it is still an enormously good read, and taken in digestible helpings it is a real banquet.

## Suffolk in Anglo-Saxon Times

This is a different kind of feast, still appetising, though of considerably less majestic proportions, and containing engaging insights into this still little understood period.

Steven Plunkett (known to many friends as Tom) was for ten years Keeper of Archaeology at Ipswich Museum. He is the author of the highly successful Sutton Hoo guidebook, currently a National Trust best-seller (even sold out at the time of writing). He is an authority on the early history of Ipswich, as anyone who has followed his Guided Trail to the Anglo-Saxon town can witness.

Steven Plunkett has brought a great wealth of knowledge to this book. What makes it exceptional is his personal involvement with his subject, which draws his readers in, so that they share his passion for both place and period. Robert Malster commends his 'stately prose', and it is certainly true that Steven's well-turned style makes the book enormously readable.

He tackles the enormous task of taking an overview of England's first few centuries with great vigour, opening with a highly efficient

summary of the end of Roman Suffolk and the post-Roman battle for Europe. He then moves on to a linear narrative starting with the Anglian migration and the 'posterity of Woden'. Writing about this period is fraught with problems, and Steven Plunkett tackles the problems of what he calls 'the discontinuity in written historical tradition' with courage and thoroughness.

Throughout, his story and his assertions are supported by a rich collection of illustrations in black and white and colour of objects gathered from a variety of sources. The most significant to many readers will be the pictures from local collections and those taken by the author himself.

The text is packed with details, and follows a historical line which shows the variety of influences which made early England, and in particular the highly complex familial and political relationships as they evolved. Here the reader would have appreciated genealogical tables or diagrams; as one reader remarked, 'I'm lost among so many Ælfs'. The problem is not helped by an incomplete index (how can it omit all references to Edmund?). Four useful maps are included, but so many places are

referred to — for example in northern Europe and all over Suffolk — that further visual support would have been welcome.

These are minor blemishes when set against the overall effect of this absorbing and informative book. It provides important illumination of the Dark Ages, and is recommended reading for expert and amateur alike. Perhaps, among the nuggets to be found, the most precious are the moments when the author's enthusiasm transcends his tale, and results in sensitive and poetical description — as when he describes his first visit to Sutton Hoo with his father, or at the end of the book in his account of the death of St Edmund.

*Sutton Hoo a seventh-century princely burial ground and its context*

Martin Carver (British Museum Press)  
ISBN 13: 978 0 7141 2322 6

*Suffolk in Anglo-Saxon Times*

Steven Plunkett (Tempus)  
ISBN 0 7524 3139 0

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## Phillips family visit to Sutton Hoo, by Mike Argent

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On Friday 7 October 2005, I joined members of the Phillips family as they finished their lunch in the restaurant at Sutton Hoo. I was introduced to Charles Phillips' niece Susan Newlove, and nephew Will Phillips, (children of H.J. Phillips). They had flown to the UK a few days earlier from opposite sides of Canada to visit relatives and friends, and to pay their first visit to Sutton Hoo. They were escorted by Veronica Phillips, the widow of John (son of Charles) who lives in south London.

Another member of the Canadian side of the family, Jeremy Gilbert, visited Sutton Hoo in 2000 (see *Saxon* 34). It had been arranged through Jeremy and our chairman that I should show them around the site which had played such a major part in the history of their family 66 years ago. They all had their memories and mementos of Charles, but this was the first time together they could see the site since the National Trust took over and developed the estate.

After some background chat in the restaurant we set out for Tranmer House, and a quick look around the lounge, a room that undoubtedly would have been familiar to Charles Phillips. The necessary photographs were taken by the front door and then we were off to the site itself. This was going to be a challenge for me. What do you tell people for whom Sutton Hoo had been part of their lives far longer than I had even been aware of the place?

After an introduction to the geography of the site, and some contextual historical detail, we made our way over to mound I. Here I outlined the role played by Charles in the excavations already undertaken by Basil Brown, and over which Phillips had been placed in charge.

At this point it seemed appropriate to let them wander with their thoughts and memories. Although the weather was not at its best, it was not raining, and we had the site to ourselves — probably the conditions under which it appears at its very best.

We finished our tour in the Exhibition Hall where I pointed out the major exhibits on display for them to consider at their leisure. Fortuitously, the book by Bob Markham — '*Sutton Hoo: Through the Rear View Mirror*' (published by the Society) was available at the steward's desk, and they were able to look at

the period photographs. Veronica found one of her father-in-law Charles whom she described as a 'rather large chap'. After reminding them of the potential benefits of the shop and restaurant, I took my leave, to allow them to reflect on the part played by Charles in the momentous discoveries of the summer of 1939. They were very complimentary, and approved of the work undertaken by the National Trust. They were also grateful to our Society for the role we continue to play in bringing the story that they are so familiar with to a wider public. I do hope they enjoyed their day.



Left to right Will Phillips, Veronica Phillips, Susan Newlove Photo: Mike Argent

THE NATIONAL TRUST AND THE SUTTON HOO SOCIETY

Reg Charity No. 205846

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Re-enactment Displays

Archaeology

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Hog Roast Beer Tent

Anglo-Saxon Treasure

Sae Wylfing

Ship-building skills

Childrens Activities

Music Crafts



# ANGLO-SAXON FESTIVAL

1st and 2nd July at Sutton Hoo  
10am – 5pm

Adult: £8.50 Child: £4.50 Family: £21.00

NT and SHS members' concessions apply

See The Covehithe Dugout on display for the first time

Meet the Experts

and find out about the king's ship grave and treasures

## SOCIETY EVENTS 2006

### Members' Outing

#### MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR: RENDLESHAM AND BEYOND

Saturday 24 September

This year's tour will be led by Dr Sam Newton. **Booking essential** (places are limited) £15.00 includes cold lunch — you will need your own transport. Booking acknowledgement and directions *etc.* will be sent out a month in advance.

Please make cheque payable to *The Sutton Hoo Society*, include an SAE and post to:  
Robert Allen  
White Gables, Thornley Drive, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 3LR  
Tel: 01473 728018

### Society Conference

#### PAGAN BELIEF: BURIAL AND BEYOND

Saturday 14 October 9am – 5pm  
at the Royal Hospital School  
Holbrook, near Ipswich

This conference will explore one of the fundamental aspects of the age of Sutton Hoo. What sort of evidence survives for pagan belief and how can it be interpreted? Here are some of the ideas to be discussed.

#### A well-urned burial

Howard Williams will look at the practice of cremating the dead and burying the ashes in urns within communal burial grounds. Can this be seen as evidence of pre-Christian belief and practice in early Anglo-Saxon East Anglia?

A healthy scepticism is necessary when making inferences of religious belief because of the partial nature of the available data, and because while cremation may be partly explained in this way, burning the dead and burying the ashes could also be influenced by pragmatic considerations, and by strategies of commemorating the dead.

Nevertheless, the archaeology of cremation can be seen as a context within which attitudes towards the body, society, the cosmos and the past were demonstrated, and we can begin to perceive a 'logic' to the practices involved in urn burial.

#### Chambers of Dreams: the Sutton Hoo burials and where they may take us

If all humans dream, interpreters of dreams have probably been active as religious leaders since the palaeolithic. Martin Carver asks whether the pagan Anglo-Saxons had spiritual specialists too. What was their job? Is it true they were mainly women? And what happened to them when England became Christian?

#### The beast within? Breaching human-animal boundaries

Certain species, notably dogs, horses and a range of wild animals, were employed in the construction and visual expression of human identity within pagan Anglo-Saxon society. The active use of animals in this way breached the boundaries between species; a 'zoocentric' worldview that was also found in other parts of northern Europe. In England, the acceptance of Christianity resulted in the abandonment of a 'zoocentric' in favour of an 'anthropocentric' world-view, and the boundary separating humans from other animals began to harden. Aleksander Pluskowski will explore the conceptual paths that may have been taken and the impact of religious conversion on the very definition of 'human'.

#### Speakers

Martin Carver  
Tania Dickinson  
Aleksander Pluskowski  
Sarah Semple  
Howard Williams  
Chairman: Angela Care Evans

#### Ticket prices (lunch, coffee and tea included)

Members	£20.00
Non-members	£25.00
Students (full-time)	£15.00

#### Booking essential

Please make cheque payable to *The Sutton Hoo Society*, include an A4 SAE and post to:  
Mike Argent, Sutton Hoo Society Treasurer  
2 Meadowside, Wickham Market, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 0UD, Tel: 01728 747716

### Contact Addresses

Robert Allen, Guiding Co-ordinator, White Gables, Thornley Drive, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich IP4 3LR  
Mike Argent, Treasurer, 2 Meadowside, Wickham Market, Woodbridge IP13 0UD  
Jane Wright, Membership Secretary, 32 Mariners Way, Aldeburgh, Suffolk IP15 5QH  
email: [chairman@suttonhoo.org](mailto:chairman@suttonhoo.org) web site: <http://www.suttonhoo.org>  
Saxon email: [publications@suttonhoo.org](mailto:publications@suttonhoo.org)

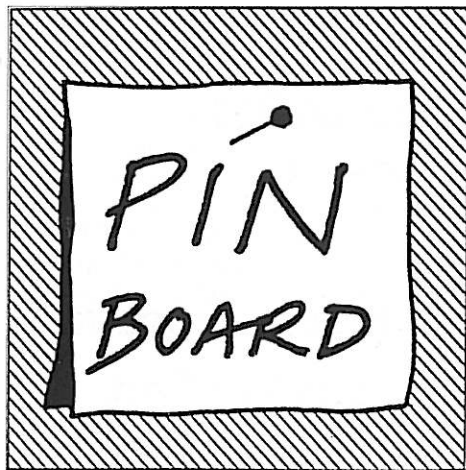
### Who's Who — Sutton Hoo Society Committee Members

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### CREDITS

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### DIARY

#### Sutton Hoo Opening Times 2006

11am – 5pm July until 3 Sept every day  
6 Sept – 29 Oct closed Mon/Tue  
4 Nov – 17 Dec open Sat/Sun only  
27 – 31 Dec open Wed/Thur/Fri/Sat/Sun

*(open daily half-term holidays  
and BH Mondays)*

For all information, bookings and visits please contact the National Trust at Sutton Hoo  
Tel: 01394 389700  
Fax: 01394 389702  
email: [suttonhoo@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:suttonhoo@nationaltrust.org.uk)

#### Sutton Hoo Summer Exhibition

*The Great Gold Buckle* organised by the British Museum and the National Trust focuses on one of the most fascinating and intricate finds from the mound 1 ship burial. Gazing down at such a magnificent and glittering object, one is immediately reminded of the description of Beowulf's burial

*.....they left the hero's treasure to be held by  
the earth, gold among the dust. Now it still  
remains there, useless to men, as it ever was.*