

SAXON

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SUTTON HOO SOCIETY

SPRING 1987

No.6

FREE TO MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

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				Jenny Glazebrook

ROYAL VISIT TO ROYAL SITE

The Sutton Hoo Society is proud to announce that its President, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh will be visiting the site on the morning of July 9th 1987. While there he will meet the many people involved in the project, and have a guided tour of the work in progress.



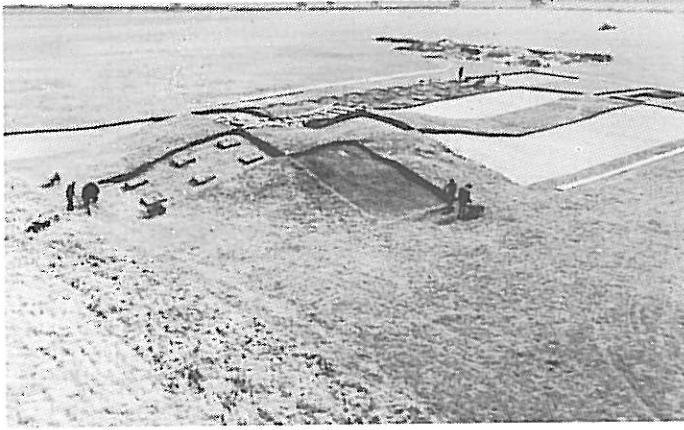
GUIDES GUIDES GUIDES

There is a really desperate shortage of people prepared to take guided tours, particularly at the weekends. There is no reason why anyone able to walk and speak clearly (and not even at the same time!) should not join the ranks of this exclusive profession. Everything to do with the Sutton Hoo Society assumes we have income from our visitors, and without guides, we cannot make a charge.

Please contact the Hon. Secretary (Woodbridge 3397) if you are able to help. All the information to be conveyed will be given to you, and the archaeologists on site are marvellously helpful when it comes to recent work. Don't be shy or modest: You can do it, and I know you will enjoy the experience. Please do help us in this way as we are very worried about the situation.

'THE WINTER WONDERLAND'

Excavation of the site has continued throughout the winter, with only two weeks work lost due to heavy snow in January. During the big freeze 2-3ft snow drifts blocked the tracks leading to the site, the water supply was frozen solid for days, and ice formed on the valves of the gas bottles so that they were unusable. But the team managed successfully to construct an igloo in true eskimo style, and one volunteer was able to come to work on skis. At the first sign of a thaw, we set to with shovels and cleared vast amounts of snow from the excavation to prevent damage by meltwater.



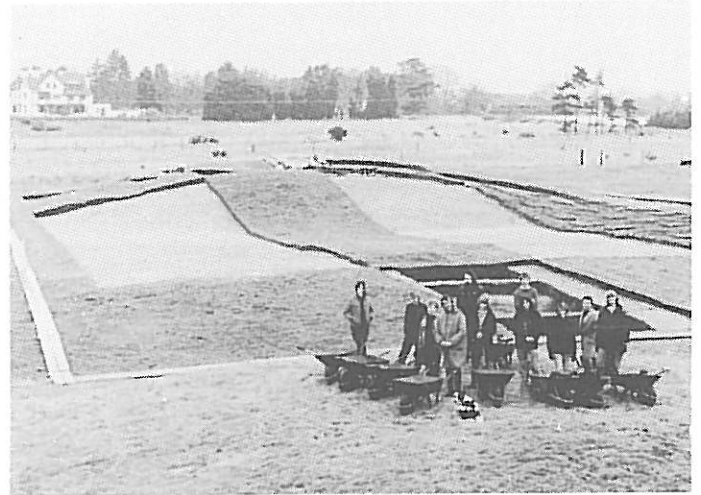
Already, over half the turf has been removed from sector 2, and the loose soil beneath has been shovelled away. The first "horizon" or archaeological layer underneath has been carefully cleaned and recorded. Mounds 2 and 5 are showing as heaps of patchy brown earth, with an evenly mixed ploughsoil recognisable in between. Basil Brown's trench in Mound 2 shows as an area of particularly colourful disturbed soil, and Ian Longworth's trench in Mound 5 (excavated in 1970) has been emptied once again, to reveal the box protecting the legs of a sandman - (half in and half out of the section). Patches of displaced natural sand can be seen in places around the base of Mound 2, and these may represent upcast from a ship-trench. Around Mound 5, a buried soil (the original ground surface covered by the mound), and a possible palisade trench are visible.

Several thousand finds have been recovered - mostly prehistoric flint flakes, burnt flints and fragments of pottery, apart from the rather more recent collection of ammunition. But we have also found nearly 100 ship rivets, including a concentration from weapons pits dug on the western slopes of Mound 2. These



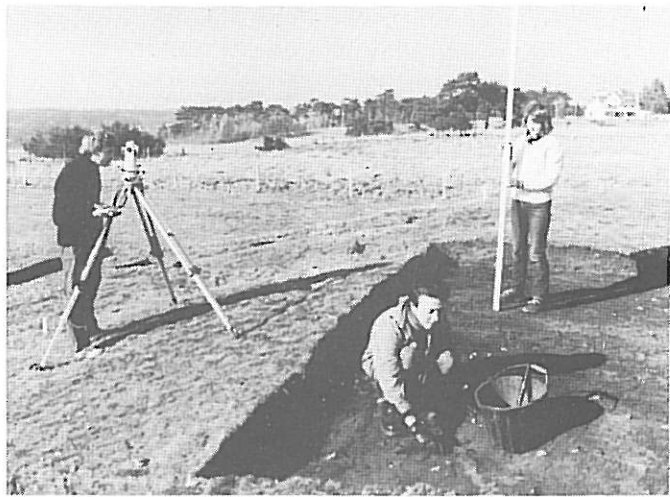
provide further indication that the traces of another large ship may lie beneath, instead of the small one suggested by Basil Brown.

We hope to have removed all the turf from Sector 2 by June 1st, and to have "horizon 1" completely cleaned and recorded. Once we can see Mound 2 isolated within the surrounding ploughsoil, we shall concentrate on recording all the secondary holes dug into the mound after it was constructed, and removing the mound itself layer by layer until the contents are revealed. We expect to be excavating whatever remains of the ship during August and September.



At present, the heavy work of deturfing is being shared by a second MSC team, who are waiting for their new site in Ipswich to become available. When they leave in July, we shall have a small number of students of archaeology with us for the training session, which is due to run throughout July and August. Martin Carver, Madeleine and the children will be here too, along with Angela Evans of the British Museum, Phil Bethell of the Leverhulme Project (researching soil chemistry and decay products), and Gillian Hutchinson of the National Maritime Museum, to name but a few. We also hope to see the return of the radar buggy with Mike Gorman of the Scott Polar Institute, to record transects across Mounds 6 and 7 before they are excavated in 1988 and 1989.

Earlier this year, Paul Reilly (a research fellow with IBM) visited the site with a colleague to try out new ways of recording data for creating computer graphics. In the sub-zero temperatures of mid-February, they set up their equipment outside and tried various ways of accurately reproducing one of the replica bodies on a screen, using a probe connected directly to the computer. Their research is in its early stages, but they hope to use data from the excavations at Sutton Hoo to create exciting computer graphics which



might, for instance, simulate the collapse of the Mound 1 burial chamber - illustrating ways in which the objects reached their final distribution.

Bulletin 5 is at present being edited for publication in May, and will contain articles on both the IBM computer graphics and Leverhume soil chemistry research.

The second BBC programme about the present campaign at Sutton Hoo, Sutton Hoo - the last of the Pagans, will be shown on April 23rd. The Million Pound Grave and Sutton Hoo - the search for the Kingdom are to be repeated during the two previous weeks. The new programme includes a wonderful sequence depicting the moulding of a body. There are now six replica bodies in all, including one of the ploughman which the British Museum have done, and the two from last season which were financed by the Sutton Hoo Society. They will all be interred in the show cemetery ready for site tours this summer.

We hope that the programmes will be enjoyed by members of the Sutton Hoo Society, and by all those who have supported the project over the years with the loan or gift of equipment, or by volunteering their services on site. Every contribution helps us in our exploration and understanding of this enigmatic monument.

Jenny Glazebrook
06.04.87

Photographs by Nigel Mac Beth
c Sutton Hoo Research Trust.

SUTTON HOO IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN

All over this country there are dedicated groups of people who devote evenings, weekends and sometimes whole holidays to looking after old buildings, steam engines, forests, footpaths and a score of other worthy links with our history. All of them dream of a TV crew arriving to film their particular object of devotion, if only for a 30 second shot on a holiday programme. The reason is clear: Not only does it make them feel their

work is recognized, but they benefit from an influx of paying visitors, drawn by the free advertisement offered. For years they can look back to the moment when they were famous.

Our own concern is in a class of its own. Not for us the fleeting glory of a spoken reference, or wide angle view followed by oblivion; we have had three 50 minute documentaries about us, on a national network, and with the promise of more to follow. We are fortunate indeed, and should now exploit our advantages. Anyone taking a guided tour of the site cannot fail but be struck by the power of television. Visitors who have never stood on the site before seem to know their way around, and are already familiar with the story. They have high expectations of what they will see, and I hope they are not disappointed. But we too have to justify their commitment. The Society is keenly aware that the future demands we provide a proper car park for the thousands we can expect when the news from the archaeologists includes tales of boats and who knows what being uncovered. There will have to be a shop able to stock and sell the many souvenirs and booklets which are part of a major tourist attraction. All are agreed that Sutton Hoo is one of the great sites currently being excavated in Europe - and at present we would be embarrassed, not to say overwhelmed, by the crowds we would love to welcome.

8.10-9.0

Sutton Hoo

The Last of the Pagans
The origins of the spectacularly rich royal burial found in Suffolk in 1939, have remained a mystery ever since its discovery. Who were the people who created this wealth, ruled over by the Raedwald, whose lavish and awesome regalia lay buried with his funeral ship? Where was the royal palace and where did its supporting population actually live - and where did these people really come from?
In the final programme Professor Martin Carver continues his new excavations at Sutton Hoo in search of archaeological answers to these problems, raised in the turbulent years of the coming of Christianity to England. The new discoveries of ritual excavations and strange contorted burials are utterly different from the great formal earth monuments to the king. They open a trail which leads Professor Carver to Sweden and Denmark to answer the question: was Sutton Hoo really a great memorial to the last of the pagans?
Film editor JEFF SHAW
Executive producer MELISSA NORMAN
Producer JAY SUTHERLAND



Professor Martin Carver and Peter Leach examine an ancient cross grave - inches from the surface of a ploughed field
BBC2, 8.10 pm Sutton Hoo

This is not, unfortunately, something the Society can easily remedy. We know our weaknesses, and we have a pretty good idea of how to correct them. Surprisingly, the solution is not even just shortage of money. For Sutton Hoo to develop along the lines many of us would like to see, permissions and rights are needed from a wide variety of people. Anyone who has ever tried to even put up a signpost knows how difficult that can be. Our site is an island surrounded by private land, and with no ordinary road access. The roads to the RAF bases are busy, and the police are as keen as we are to see us with our own car park, but problems remain.

Gradually we will win, and who knows, we may yet look back on the "mid 80s" and laugh about our primitive beginnings - perhaps from our splendid Headquarters in the Anglo-Saxon Experience Centre, Sutton Hoo, Woodbridge, Great Britain!

In the meantime we hope our readers will appreciate that while progress is slow, it does still carry us forward, and the BBC interest is vital to our well-being. The more people who pay admission to the site, the more chance there is that one day they will return to a truly memorable presentation of this no longer neglected portion of our history.

UNEXPECTED LINK ESTABLISHED

An unexpected link has been established between the Sutton Hoo site and the Seckford Foundation in Woodbridge. Michael Weaver, a member of the Society's Committee, and a guide of prolific expertise, has just had published his book "The Seckford Foundation", which he wrote with his wife Carol. Further links are confirmed, in that Mr. V.B. Redstone, late history master at Woodbridge School, (which itself is part of the Seckford Foundation) was the person who advised Mrs. Pretty to contact

the Ipswich Museum in 1937. No evidence has been found to suggest Thomas Seckford, Master of the Court of Requests to Queen Elizabeth 1, was responsible for the damage to Mounds 1 and 2 although it is thought to have been done during the 16th century

"The Seckford Foundation" by Carol and Michael Weaver is published by the Seckford Foundation and is available from bookshops or from The Seckford Office, Seckford Street, Woodbridge, price £5.50.

THE SUTTON HOO SOCIETY INFORMATION

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Dark Age Society Battle:
Woodbridge Abbey School
Sunday, June 28th - 2.30 pm

Site Open Day for Members
Sunday, September 6th

Season ends
Sunday September 27th

* * * * *

Many people have remarked that we do not appear to have a contact address for the Society. Our correct address is:

The Manager
Mr. John Aldridge
Sutton Hoo Society
c/o National Westminster Bank
Cumberland Street
Woodbridge

WOODBIDGE FERRY

The Woodbridge Ferry is run at weekends when the tide is high enough to operate the Ferry Boat SAXON CLOG. It runs from the Ferry Dock steps to Sutton Ferry Cliff. From here it takes about 20 minutes to walk to the famous SUTTON HOO ANGLO-SAXON SHIP BURIAL SITE.

Site tours are given on weekend and Bank Holiday afternoons.

For Site Information Phone 9933 3397
Ferry Information Phone 0394 411273

Approximate times the ferry will operate

SAT May 30	12.45-4.45	SUN May 31	1.15-5.15
SAT June 13	12.10-4.10	SUN June 14	1.00-5.00
SAT June 27	12.00-4.00	SUN June 28	12.30-4.30
SAT July 11	11.15am-3.00pm	SUN July 12	12.00-4.00
SAT July 25	11.00am-3.00	SUN July 26	11.45-3.45
SAT Aug 8	10.00am-2.00pm	SUN Aug 9	11.00am-3.00pm
SAT Aug 22	10.00am-2.00	SUN Aug 23	10.30am-2.30pm
SAT Aug 29	2.00-5.30	SUN Aug 30	2.30-5.30
		MON Aug 31	3.15-5.30
SAT Sept 12	2.00-5.30	SUN Sept 13	2.45-5.30
SAT Sept 26	1.00-5.00	SUN Sept 27	1.30-5.30

"SAXON" Edited by Mark Mitchels
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