

Plate D (above): silver coins of Eadwald (top) and Coenwulf (bottom), 796-805

## Rendlesham coins for Ipswich Museum?

A long sequence of small finds, in an unbroken chronology from the Roman through to the late medieval period, is still emerging from the fields around Naunton Hall at Rendlesham. Discussions are under way that could see the collection housed at Ipswich Museum. At last year's AGM, JUDE PLOUVIEZ, Archaeological Officer with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) described the results of magnetometry survey and systematic metal detecting funded by the SHS on the land that Bede described as Raedwald's hall. At this year's AGM she summarised her interim conclusions from the latest investigations there.

Taking it chronologically, the earliest features seem to be the D-shaped enclosure, one or two ring ditches and parallel ditches in a field south of the hall. At 18m. in diameter, the clear ring ditch is small for the bronze age, but the area has yielded up one small gold item, only

a centimetre long, which judging from metal analysis probably is bronze age. The parallel ditches might indicate an even older prehistoric cursus – unless they are post medieval! Not even the specialists can always tell at a glance. The comparison in Jude's mind is the neolithic



**Plate A, top:** Visigothic tremissis probably copying a Byzantine tremissis of Justinian (c.527-565). **Bottom:** Merovingian tremissis, broadly dated to first half of 7th century



**Plate C, top:** gold Merovingian tremissis. **Bottom:** silver copy of a tremissis, pierced for suspension, both 7th century



**Plate E, right:** copper-alloy bird brooch, 11th century

cursum and causewayed enclosures at Fornham All Saints, probably constructed in the mid-4th millennium BC.

The D-shaped enclosure seems more similar to an iron age feature, like one visible on air photos near Felixstowe. The northern part of it produced Roman pottery, perhaps ploughed out from the upper fill of the surrounding ditch, but no Anglo-Saxon finds, “Or it could be a stock enclosure – at least, almost nothing Anglo-Saxon was dropped in it.”

Finds are always nice, even Roman ones. Jude reported from nearby, a scattered hoard of thirteen 1st and 2nd century silver denarii apparently deposited around 160 AD, a silver coin of Trajan and 1st century copper-alloy brooches, all of which suggest the wealth building up during the Roman period, not far from a known Roman small town at Hacheston, just north of Wickham Market. It is a salutary reminder of what was here before the Wuffings – as is John Fairclough’s new book (see p.3)

The Anglo-Saxon evidence continues to be exciting. One field yielded finds consistent with Anglo-Saxon burials – if in fact that is what it contained. There was a late 6th century Visigothic gold tremissis, copying a Byzantine one of the emperor Justinian (*plate A*) and a couple of Anglo-Saxon sceattas of the 8th century. There was a silver fragment of a radiate-headed brooch, comparable to one from Beauvais in France now in the Ashmolean in Oxford (*plate B, right*) and the foot of another, copper-alloy, brooch of the same type but this one paralleled strangely enough in late 6th century Ukraine (*plate B, left*).

Interestingly some items were grouped spatially: the uncommon imported radiate-headed brooches were found in one corner of the field and a cruciform brooch fragment was very close to the Visigothic gold coin and a Roman coin.

Here the geophysics were ‘enigmatic’, producing ‘a lot of spots’. But if you dig out soil for burials and then replace it, it does not produce clear magnetometry results. So Jude’s report will conclude that this could be an early Anglo-Saxon burial site.

Another field produced fifteen Anglo-Saxon period coins. These include a silver copy of a late 7th century tremissis, pierced to be worn as an ornament (*plate C*) early 8th century sceats and later pennies of Coenwulf (796-805) and Eadwald (796-8) (*plate D*). Other objects included part of a hanging bowl, fragments of gold jewellery and small bronze buckles. Crucially one of the buckles was unfinished, so it constitutes evidence of bronze working on the site. Four fragments of a silver finger ring of 9th to 10th century, and a beautiful 11th century bird brooch in copper alloy (*plate E*) take the finds in this field up to the Conquest.

A new area of finds included a 7th century copy of a tremissis, an 8th century ansate (handle-shaped) brooch and further buckles. It is worth remembering that Anglo-Saxon finds have also come from around Eyke Church to the south of Rendlesham.

The features most likely to be Anglo-Saxon on the magnetometry are rather indistinct short lengths of ditch forming rectilinear patterns, which are quite comparable to the excavated plan of the contemporary settlement at Brandon. “So the Rendlesham geophysics is probably showing up the Anglo-Saxon features beautifully – it is just that it is very scrappy.”

Listening to the lecture were the owners of Naunton Hall, Sir Michael and Lady Bunbury. Thanking Jude for her work and the SHS for its “generous grant”, Sir Michael confessed, “It is a world apart from anything I know and it has been an eye-opener to me.”



**Plate B, left:** copper alloy brooch foot fragment from a radiate-headed brooch of Ukrainian type. A radiate is a 3rd century Roman coin. **Right:** small gilded silver fragment from the top of a radiate-headed brooch.

All photos © Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service



# What did the Romans ever do for Raedwald?

This year marks the 1600th anniversary of the notional end of Roman authority in Britain. Here JOHN FAIRCLOUGH, the author of a new book on East Anglia's relations with Rome, considers how much of their presence remained to influence the world of the Wuffings.

When I came to writing about Rome's impact on East Anglia, I avoided stopping at AD 410 because I am convinced that year did not mark a clean break. In that year or close to, the Roman empire did indeed withdraw from Britain its paid soldiers and its administrative officials. Britain was no longer part of the empire that still ruled a large part of the known world. The Britons may have been told to arrange their own defences, but in any case, once the pay chests stopped arriving, any soldiers who did stay behind would have to look for local funding. The people of East Anglia had been part of the Roman Empire for almost four hundred years, so things cannot have changed totally overnight, and I believe we can still see the remnants of Roman influence two hundred and more years later.

## East Angles

Considerable lengths of Roman road are still in use today, so they must have remained open and usable through the so called Dark Ages. Significantly we lost all traces of the crossings over the River Stour, because I believe the East Angles took control more rapidly than the East Saxons where the truly Roman inhabitants of the veteran colony at Colchester probably kept a stronger hold. There are signs that the Roman forts on the East Anglian coast had garrisons who were ethnically German, but part of the Roman army well before 410. Probably little distinguished these Germans who were part of the Roman empire from their neighbours, the Angles. East Anglia was well placed for trade with the Rhine valley, so a communal link across the North Sea could explain the lack of any account of a specific Anglian invasion. We have the reports from Kent of Vortigern inviting Hengist and Horsa with dramatic results later in the 5th century. Northumbria might have been a bit later, as Alcuin of York writing in 800 says 'his people' had arrived three hundred and fifty years earlier. When Gildas wrote his account in good Latin, forty years after the battle of Badon fought in 500, the whole of eastern England was in the hands of 'the Saxons', but the west remained firmly British, although he disapproved of its rulers.

## British towns

Some of the native British went west in

search of freedom and others departed for Brittany, but it is difficult to see most East Anglians deserting their farms, or even that the new rulers would have wished it. When we divide up historical periods we are in danger of creating the impression that the population changed dramatically. The people we call the Iron Age British became the inhabitants of Roman Britain, and many of their descendants doubtless became subjects of King Raedwald. The newcomers, be they Romans or Angles, took control of the land, but they needed the native British to work it for them, paying rents and taxes to sustain the army and the ruling class. They created their first settlements close to the British towns, as with West Stow beside Icklingham and Rendlesham not far from Hacheston. Even if they garrisoned the Roman fortress of Walton Castle, they presumably kept a substantial British population near Felixstowe, if Walton is the settlement of the Wealas, the Anglian term for British. I believe they even restored two pre-Roman administrative units that had been independent sub-kingdoms: the area of the Blyth valley, which became the medieval Blything Hundred, and The Wicklaw, which became the five and a half hundreds centred on Woodbridge, but originally included Ipswich. The Wicklaw became the heart of their new kingdom centred on Rendlesham.

## Ancestry

If we see the Wuffing family taking over from the Romans this already identifiable coastal unit of Blything and Wicklaw, with its population of British farmers, it is no surprise they traced their ancestry from Caesar, the Cassar who follows Woden in the royal genealogy. All Roman emperors claimed descent by adoption from Julius Caesar and included his name in their title. Julius himself was treated as a god after his death, so the chief god, in this case Woden, was clearly his adoptive father. Perhaps their name, Wuffing - suggesting an affinity with the wolf - encouraged them to favour the legend of the wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus in Rome's foundation myth. An important Anglian wore a 5th century gold pendant found at Undley, showing the wolf suckling Romulus and Remus below a Roman imperial bust with a text in runes. The wolf appears again in the 8th century on a coin of King



*John Fairclough with a reproduction by Gilbert Burroughes of a Samian ware bowl presented to him last year by the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History © SIAH (Bob Carr)*

Aethelbert, on which he uses the Roman title REX as king, while the moneyer Lul shows his own name in runic letters. This use of Roman and runic letters suggests a real merging of cultures.

## Roman emperor

The burial assemblage of Raedwald at Sutton Hoo suggests a Roman emperor in full military regalia but with northern decoration. The Greek inscriptions on the silver spoons have to be Christian and the crosses in other decorative features support this. We know from Bede that Raedwald set up a Christian altar beside those to other gods in his temple. Ancient religions generally welcomed additional gods, and Christians were exceptional in demanding total dedication. Many British had become Christians under the empire after Constantine made it his official religion early in the 4th century, so it made sense to include Christ. I doubt if many contemporaries were as concerned about the company he kept in that temple as Bede was in later years.

*Boudica to Raedwald, East Anglia's relations with Rome is available to SHS members at the special price of £25 (plus £5.50 p & p) from Malthouse Press, 17 Reade Road, Holbrook, Ipswich IP9 2QL.*

# A trip to the meadhall



Inside the meadhall. All photos © Nigel Maslin

Kim Siddorn, our host

On the edge of Blean Woods, between Canterbury and Herne Bay, is a late Saxon thegn's estate or manorial burh - built in the last decade by the living history society, REGIA ANGLORUM. It was the main destination for the SHS summer outing on 12 June.

The two-acre site is a clearing in a commercial pine wood next to Wildwood Discovery Park, which contains species familiar to Saxons and Normans, such as wild boar, wolves and red and roe deer. It is an ideal environment for an experiment in pre-Conquest living.

The focus of the Wychurst site is the great hall itself, sixty feet long, thirty feet wide and almost as high. It is the sort of hall that proclaimed a Saxon chieftain's power in the century before the Norman invasion, power that was strictly limited by the Danish raids. During the reign of Æthelred the Unready from 994-1016, armies that were thousands strong harried Saxon territory. The best defence

against their hit-and-run tactics was to build defended manor houses that could shelter the local people. Led by Swein Forkbeard, the Danes attacked forts and towns: London and Rochester in the 990s; Canterbury captured in 1012. In 1016 his son took the throne of England: his name was Cnut.

Wychurst's great hall is set in the middle of a defensive ditch-and-bank enclosure, or burh, (like Wallingford burh, see **Saxon 50**) an earth rampart topped with solid timber and entered through a gatehouse. Future plans foresee communal and domestic buildings rising within the burh: cookhouse and bakehouse, stables and forge, a chapel and a bower-house dormitory for retainers on the estate. Beyond the ramparts there will be cottages for essential craftspeople, like potters and woodworkers. The possibilities for development are endless, so they say they may never finish.

They have come a long way already. The site was purchased in 2000 and the meadhall is all but finished, the product of much fundraising and even more physical work by the re-enactors.

Practicality allowed period styles of construction, but modern means: local oak timbers sawn by chain saw and band saw, instead of pit sawn; the frame erected with a JCB and a forklift; a prefabricated roof lifted into position by crane, and daub for the walls prepared in a cement mixer. How else could you do it with weekend volunteer labour? But the aim is to have an authentic environment for recreating the turbulent life of the 10th century, and for conducting experimental archaeology.

As a society of re-enactors, Regia Anglorum promise 'the best historical recreations that can be seen anywhere in the world'. So as we wandered through a hive of pre-Conquest rural activity after our buffet lunch, the alarm sounded: the Vikings were attacking! Penned into an enclosure, we saw the Saxons running out of their hall and putting on their equipment, like firemen from a fire station...The defence of the realm is in safe hands.



The meadhall behind its ditch and palisade



In the thick of it: the battle for Wychurst

Regia Anglorum [www.regia.org](http://www.regia.org)  
Wychurst [www.wychurst.com](http://www.wychurst.com)



# A haunch for Hrothgar

Our president, Lord Cranbrook spotted the following article in *Deer*, the journal of the British Deer Society, last December. We reprint it here, without seasonal adjustment, by kind permission of the editor and of course the author, DR NAOMI SYKES, who lectures in zooarchaeology at the University of Nottingham. With funding from the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Dr Sykes directs the Fallow Deer Project. Its aim is to study the who, when and why of the spread across the continent of the so-called European fallow deer (*Dama dama dama*) from its ice age home in Anatolia, by combining zooarchaeological, stable isotope and DNA analysis. Here the focus is on what archaeological assemblages of butchered bones can tell us about social élites in middle Saxon times.

With winter upon us, the idea of sitting down to a family meal of venison is becoming an increasingly attractive prospect, and the appeal of a game supper was not lost on our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Whilst hunting was rare in Anglo-Saxon England, as I mentioned in the last issue of *Deer*, it was probably the very infrequency of the activity that gave it a considerable social importance. Think of our Christmas turkey: it is not something we eat very often but this is part of the reason it is such an iconic festive food. Unfortunately, our ability to understand the meaning of hunting and game consumption in Anglo-Saxon England is restricted by a general lack of evidence, as there are few historical documents to shed light on the period, hence the term 'Dark Ages'. This is where archaeological investigations, especially the evidence from animal bones, become particularly important, because they can provide real insights into the methods by which game was procured, distributed and eaten.

Studies of archaeological animal bones demonstrate that in the very early Anglo-Saxon period (5th to mid-7th centuries AD) game contributed little to the diet, which is unsurprising at a time when most people were too preoccupied with farming to engage in hunting. Archaeological excavations of settlements of this date tend to produce large quantities of cattle, sheep and pig bones but the remains of deer and other wild animals are noticeably absent. Figure 1 shows that, on average, wild mammal bones make up just 0.4 percent of the total animal remains recovered from archaeological excavations. Because of their scarcity, it is difficult to be certain how these wild animals were captured or subsequently butchered. There is, however, just sufficient evidence for deer to demonstrate that, once caught, their carcasses were dressed in the field, with 'low utility' portions (heads and feet) being left at the kill-site and only the meat-bearing portions being brought back to the settlement (see Figure 2).

Given that the body part pattern for the high status, palatial complex at Wroxeter (shown by the purple bars in Figure 2) is almost identical to the patterns for standard Early Anglo-Saxon

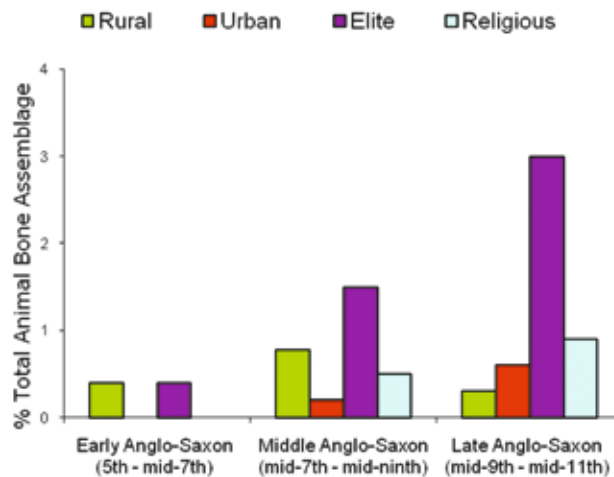


Figure 1: Graph showing how the representation of wild mammals varies by site type and date, shown as a percentage of total number of bones recovered from archaeological sites. Wild animals are never very abundant but their frequency increases through time, particularly on élite sites. I have included data for the Late Anglo-Saxon period for reference, but these are not discussed in this issue.

settlements (the green bars), it would seem that this method of field butchery was adopted by all sections of society. It suggests a logical, functional attitude to hunting and this, together with the general lack of evidence for wild animal exploitation, indicates that hunting may have been a simple, occasional subsistence activity, undertaken only in times of need. Certainly this idea finds support from the one documentary source that we do have for the period: Bede the Venerable's *History of the English People*, which was probably completed around AD 731. In this text, Bede suggested that the departure of the Romans resulted in social and economic collapse, with people resorting to hunting in order to avoid starvation. The scarcity of wild animal remains in the archaeological records suggest that Bede must have been exaggerating somewhat but even if deer were viewed as a famine food in this period, over the course of the following centuries the situation changed as hunting became more common and socially significant.

The Middle Anglo-Saxon period (the mid-7th to mid-9th centuries) saw broad shifts in the structure of society. No longer was everyone a farmer, although most still were, but some people were beginning to live in early versions of towns, known as wics or emporia. Others were creeping up the social ladder to form the new élite who began to take control of large estates. In addition, Christianity had come to Britain, bringing with it a host of ecclesiastics who occupied the many newly-built monasteries. The appearance of these

different social groups is reflected in the animal bone record; for instance, Figure 1 shows that the occupants of different sites (rural, urban, élite and religious houses) ate varying levels of game, the social élite seemingly consuming the most.

Interestingly, when we look in more detail at the animal bone evidence it becomes apparent that not only were the various social groups eating different quantities of venison, they were also eating different types of venison (Figure 3). For instance, assemblages from élite sites are dominated by heads (represented by the jaw bone, or 'mandible') but meat-bearing elements, particularly those from the hind-limb, are noticeably under-represented, as are foot bones (the metacarpal, metatarsal and phalanges). With this in mind, it is interesting to note that assemblages from religious sites show an abundance of meat-bearing bones from the fore-limb, a large number of foot bones but very few heads. Again, however, the haunches are poorly represented. Absence of bones from the upper hind limb (the pelvis and the femur) can be attributed to factors of preservation – these skeletal elements do not survive well archaeologically. Nevertheless, the lower hind limb bones (e.g. the tibia) are very robust and are normally present in high frequencies (eg. see Figure 2). Clues to the whereabouts of the haunches are provided by the skeletal evidence for rural settlements, which highlight the lower hind-limb as being the best represented parts of the body. Bones of the lower fore-limbs (notably the radius) are also

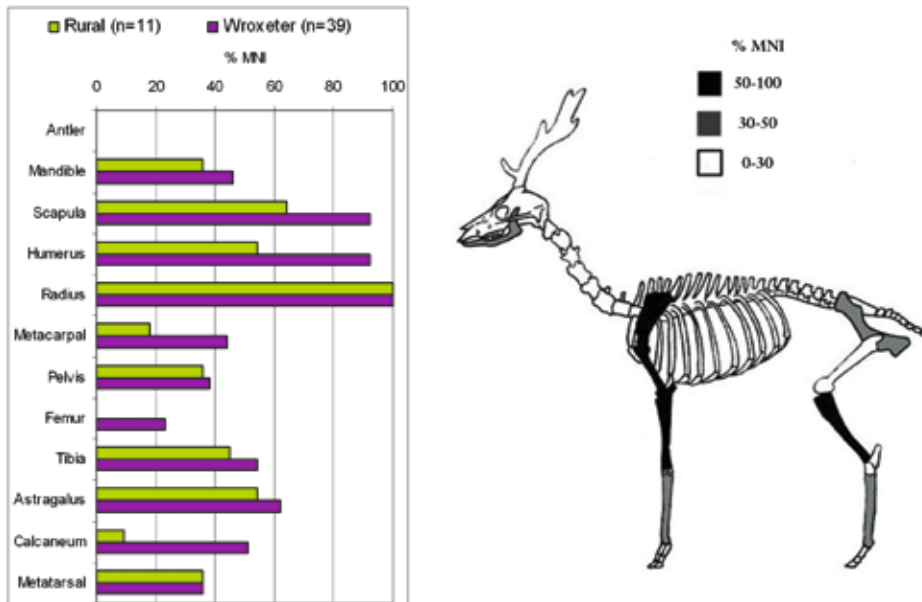


Figure 2: This figure shows which parts of the deer skeleton have been identified on early Anglo-Saxon settlements. The graph provides a more detailed breakdown of the evidence so you can see how well represented the different anatomical elements are on rural settlements (the green bars) compared to the recently studied assemblage from the Palatial Complex of Wroxeter. My thanks go to Dr Andy Hammon of English Heritage for providing the data for the Wroxeter deer – this evidence is so new it has not yet been published.

comparatively abundant.

These site-specific skeletal patterns are very unusual, quite different to those seen for the earlier period. One compelling explanation is that they reflect meat redistribution, a practice whereby slaughtered animals are butchered and specific parts of their body are given to particular individuals or groups. Such traditions are common in modern pastoral societies, especially where the concept of meat retail is absent and so the easiest way to utilise the considerable amount of meat produced by a single carcass is to share it out, most often during a communal feasting event. The possibility that a similar tradition was established in Middle Anglo-Saxon England should come as no surprise given that the period's economy was based on the accumulation and redistribution food renders through different forms of 'hospitality'. The fine details of how the system operated are unclear but we know that landholders were paid in food for the use of their land, the concept of money having left Britain with the Romans. Portions of these food renders were then given over to kings and their court who toured their kingdoms eating up supplies. Kings could, in turn, transfer accrued provisions to religious institutions that, unlike the itinerant royal court, were stationary and depended on supplies gravitating towards them. Lower down the social scale, estate workers could expect to receive food payments in return for their services.

A set-up of this kind would certainly account for the deer body part patterns shown in Figure 3. The skeletal

distribution for religious houses suggests that ecclesiastics were taking receipt of pre-butchered joints of venison and it is feasible that these were gifted by the king or local nobles in return for pastoral care. The over-representation of heads on elite sites may seem bizarre as heads carry little meat and we might expect individuals of high status to demand the best cuts of meat; however, the archaeological evidence finds resonance with the practices of modern hunting and pastoral societies, where skulls are frequently conferred with special significance. Amongst the Ngarigo of Australia and NgTurkana of Kenya, for instance, crania are seen as representing the animal in its entirety, and are either claimed by the head of the community or returned to the individual who 'donated' the animal

for consumption. These anthropological studies also highlight that feast-time meat redistribution represents far more than the simple allocation of nutrition; the breaking of an animal's carcass and the sharing of its meat are acts laden with meaning. Communal consumption is an expression of group ideology and identity; however, because an animal's carcass comprises portions of varying (perceived) value, cuts of different (perceived) quality are frequently given to individuals as a meaty symbol of their social status. If, as it seems, heads were deemed to represent the elite, the lower limb bones recovered from rural sites may reflect the lower social position of these settlements and their occupants.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that the inhabitants of these rural sites had a position within a community, something that was of fundamental importance in Anglo-Saxon society: Old English literature is preoccupied with the concept of community and frequently uses the imagery of the feast hall to express ideas about the maintenance of social order and rule. The coming together in a hall to collectively consume the body of a single deer would have been an important occasion, binding the participants together whilst simultaneously defining their social position through the allotment of specific portions. It may be for this reason that in the story of Beowulf, king Hrothgar names his great feast hall 'Heorot', the hart. Few commentators have seized upon the significance of this name but the name Heorot would have carried real meaning, demarcating the hall as an arena for the cutting up and sharing of venison – rituals that would have been the food-based equivalent of the gift-giving that took place within the hall, whereby men pledged service to their lord or king in return for weapons and treasure. Generosity in gift-giving was deemed to be the mark

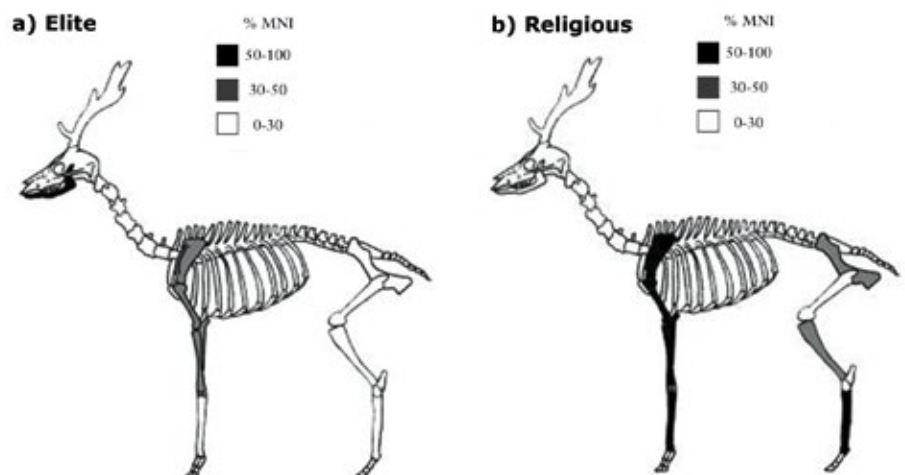


Figure 3

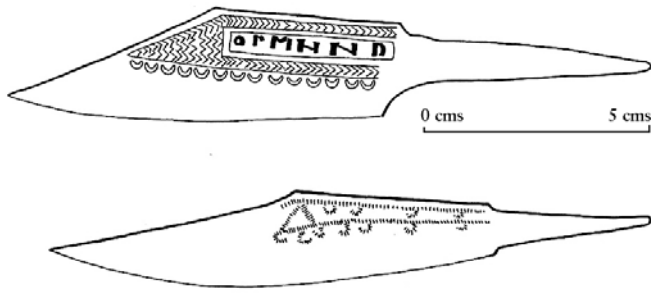


Figure 4: Examples of the Anglo-Saxon Seax (after Gale 1989)

of a good leader and it seems likely that open-handedness was desirable in terms of food as well as material goods. Indeed, the importance of the leader as a supplier of sustenance is indicated by the etymology of the word 'lord', which has been traced to 'hlafweard', meaning 'loaf-keeper'.

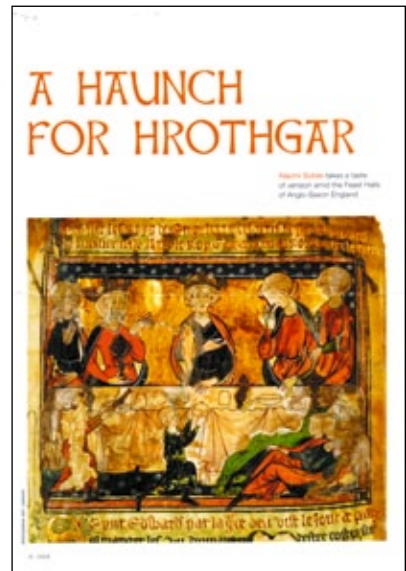
In a situation where the control and redistribution of foodstuffs were equated with power and authority, it stands to reason that the knives physically responsible for cutting up and sharing may have become iconic in their own right, symbolising the distribution process. Studies of Anglo-Saxon grave goods have shown that knives are the most common object found in 5th to 8th century burials. To some extent their ubiquity is to be expected since knives are utility tools and were presumably owned by all members of society, employed to assist with daily tasks and for use in dining. That said, there are age- and sex-based variation in knife size (only the burials of adult men were accompanied by knives with a blade in excess of 128mm) suggesting that these implements had more than a utilitarian function, perhaps playing a role in social display: this is corroborated by the prominent position in which they were worn, located on the belt where other display items were suspended.

The ownership and display of a large knife can be seen as a statement that the

owner possesses both resources and the power and generosity to divide and redistribute them. It may be no coincidence, therefore, that at the point we see the appearance of deer body part patterns indicative of venison redistribution, we also see the emergence of

a fashion for wearing particularly long knives: knives with a blade length in excess of 130mm are rare for much of the Early Anglo Saxon period but are found regularly in the seventh and eighth centuries. Links between large knives and hunting are provided by the seax – a single-edged knife or short sword, some of which exhibit highly decorated blades more suggestive of ceremonial than functional use (Figure 4). It has been argued that, rather than being a weapon of war, the seax was principally a hunting tool, employed for the ritual dispatch and unmaking of deer. Evidence from both anthropology and later medieval texts suggest that these ceremonial hunting tasks would have fallen to the highest-ranking individuals among the party; it is fitting therefore that, as grave goods, seaxes are found almost exclusively with élite males.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that although hunting was perhaps the 'last resort' in Early Anglo-Saxon England, by the Middle Anglo-Saxon period the cutting up and redistribution of venison had become exceptionally important. The communal consumption of deer served not only to unite communities but also to define an individual's social position. Think about that the next time you are at a dinner party and you are offered a shoulder cut – what is your host trying to tell you?



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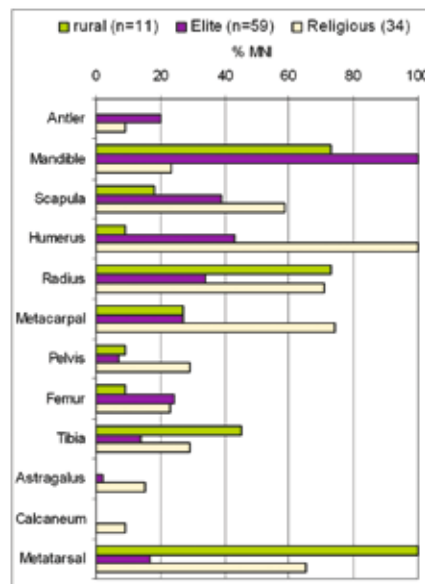
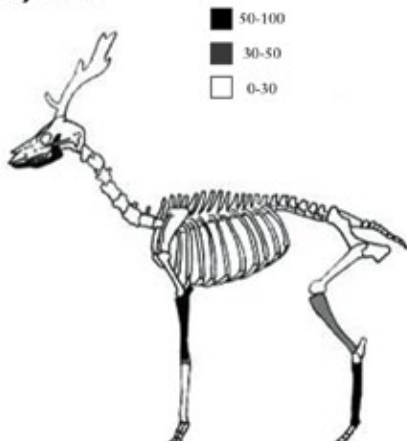
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www.nottingham.ac.uk/Archaeology/Research/projects/current/fallow-deer.aspx

The Spring 2010 issue of *Deer* contains Dr Sykes's next article on the changes in hunting and venison distribution in the later Saxon period, following the rise of the thegns. *Deer* can be ordered from the BDS website [www.bds.org.uk](http://www.bds.org.uk)

### C) Rural





# A friend to everyone and everyone's friend

Peter Berry 17 July 1928 – 30 May 2009



Peter mowing. All photos © Nigel Macbeth

It is more than a year since Peter Berry died, but old friends are keen to memorialise the man who seemed to build and maintain everything at Sutton Hoo for so many years, during Martin Carver's excavations and beyond. Here, site supervisor JENNY GLAZEBROOK, official photographer NIGEL MACBETH, finds manager LINDA PEACOCK and our past chairman LINDSAY LEE, explain why his friendship was such a joy to them.

Three or four years ago, Pete came to mend a troublesome leak in my gutter, remembers Jenny. We had been out to lunch at one of his favourite watering holes - the Buttery Bar at Seckford Hall perhaps - and I had sought his advice. "Soon fix that" he said, and he did. He turned up next day in his cap and blue overalls, bearing some bitumen in an old Fray Bentos pie tin, to which he had nailed a makeshift handle. He shinned up the ladder and had the gutter fixed by the time the kettle had boiled for tea. This was a minor episode in a long history of help and advice, problems to be solved, engineering challenges and baling people out.

Peter's supportive role in the Sutton Hoo site team, his practical skills and inventive genius, are well illustrated in **Saxon 15**, which opens with 'Eight years in service', a retrospective piece about his archaeological career. A few pages further on, Martin Carver's report on the final season of fieldwork, thanks 'the selfless and tireless Peter Berry, long the friend and often the inspiration of the project team'. Under 'Society Events', we find that Peter Berry and Rosemary Halliday 'provided a mouth-watering array of food' for a joint Society/Project Team bonfire and barbecue.

On the back page, a list of the Society's donations to the project that year includes a roof for the excavation of a mound (known on site as the Berry shelter), a 'suspension cradle' for the excavator (the Berry suspender), and a third site irrigator (Berry rainer). Peter not only engineered these devices but no doubt organised the funding as well.

I cannot think of Sutton Hoo without seeing Pete's cheery smile. Peter spoke of his time there as 'some of the best years', and his unique contribution helped to make the place special for so many people - excavators, visitors, Society members, small children and professors alike.

## Photographic frame

I got to know Peter well when I moved down to live in Suffolk in 1986, writes Nigel. The core team at Sutton Hoo - Andy Copp, Cathy Royle, Jenny Glazebrook and myself - relied heavily on Pete's ability to solve just about any problem. The two projects that come to mind, and there were many others, were the construction of a photographic 'A' frame and the erection of the CEGB site building.

Early on in the excavations, Martin Carver asked me how we could produce

vertical plan photographs of cleaned surfaces. The solution was to attach the camera to an A frame which was hoisted up using ropes. Pete knew where we could fabricate the components for a successful construction. Although the device worked well, it proved far too cumbersome to use on sensitive archaeological surfaces. I am sure Pete had a wry smile to himself as he watched us stagger around the site, trying not to drop my expensive camera. When Martin asked Jenny and me to get the 'flat packed' CEGB building set up on site, ready for the next season, Pete was there to give us help and support for an endeavour we both thought was mission impossible. We could not have done it without Pete's know-how and unfailing support.

After the excavations ended, Jenny & I used to see him socially, usually at his cosy home or at a suitable watering hole. When at his home, he would invite us to join him in his favourite lunch of roast chicken with all the trimmings, serving up extra large portions that only archaeologists know how to put away.

Towards the end of his life, Jenny & I would go over to have a cup of tea with him, sitting around the coal fire chatting about old times and looking at his photo albums. He was a remarkably kind and able man, who always thought of helping others less fortunate than himself; his volunteer work for St Mary's attests to this. He is sorely missed: I think his epitaph says it all - A friend to everyone and everyone's friend.



Nigel and Peter

## Desert rat showers

Linda recalls, I have many fond memories of Pete from my three years as finds manager at Sutton Hoo. He was the kind of person you were lucky to have in your team. Pete could make anything from anything. I have never met anyone as inventive or as resourceful as Pete. From 'desert rat' showers (a great source of entertainment in the shower queue), to



trailer extensions to steak and kidney pies, he could do anything and all of it was extremely good. It was always a pleasure to see his smiling, friendly face at the door and take a welcome break to chat with him, because he knew everyone for miles around and could tell some great stories. I think Pete really loved people and found them endlessly fascinating. He could make a friend from anyone: you did not even need to speak English. I remember one of our many international visitors helping him for a week, an Italian with not a word of English; you would have thought they had known each other all their lives, they worked so well together. It's been a long time since I left Sutton Hoo and my memory is a little faded, though not of Pete. His boundless energy, kindness and incredible generosity stand out clearly. I count myself a lucky person to have worked with and known him.

### Guardian

*Lindsay Lee remembers:* After the end of the 1983-92 excavations, Peter was one of a band of Society 'guardians' who kept vigil at the site in the interim before the National Trust arrived. He continued to mow the grass and fix anything that needed fixing, as he always had done. Nobody was surprised, because Peter loved Sutton Hoo and felt possessive towards the place that had been so much a part of his life. He would often show people around the site if anyone turned up during the week when it was officially closed (the public had to walk nearly a mile to get to the site in those days). As well as



*Peter with Jenny Glazebrook*

grass cutting, he continued to maintain the old finds and exhibition huts, regularly emptied the portaloos and for a number of years magically maintained the water and electricity supplies.

I say 'magically' because those who were at Sutton Hoo during the excavation years will remember when both water and electricity supplies regularly broke down: Peter would drop everything to 'fix it'. A petrol generator was eventually donated to ensure electricity at all times – in theory at least. I have an everlasting memory of inputting data on the computer when the tell-tale 'phut-phut' sound would resonate through the air as the generator ran out of juice, rapidly followed by a desperate cry of "SAVE!", followed by someone

(usually Andy Copp) galloping across the site to refill the generator, accompanied by (unprintable) exclamations.

Another lasting memory of Peter was when he drove to the site in a just purchased brand new car. He got out for a chat and whilst admiring the car there was a loud 'clunk'. The central locking device had automatically locked the car - with the keys still in the ignition. One might have expected cries of dismay, ringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, but not Peter: he quietly said "Mmm, we seem to have a fault here, don't we?"

That was Peter – a kind, generous, dependable man and someone good to be with in a crisis. He is remembered with great affection.

# Tapping the archive

Earlier this year, the BBC announced a major project called BBC Archive, which makes important, classic television programmes available online. Included in the first experimental batch is *Chronicle*, the series which for twenty-five years from the mid-1960s covered major British and international archaeological stories. The Maya, the Incas and the Minoans are there, with Constantinople, Stonehenge and Brunel's SS Great Britain. So too is the Silbury Hill dig from 1968 and one of Martin Carver's programmes about Sutton Hoo. First shown on BBC2 on 16 August 1989, it was the first of four explaining the techniques of his excavations, and includes earlier footage of Basil Brown and the original discovery.

Unfortunately missing from the list of available programmes is the very first programme about Sutton Hoo, *The Million Pound Grave*. Made by Paul Johnstone

in 1965, it is now a classic period piece, with the voices of the sixties sounding as outmoded as those of pre-war Suffolk describing the 1939 dig. There are interviews with Rupert Bruce-Mitford, who directed the re-excavation of the ship grave from 1965-7, and who fronted a revised version of the programme in 1985, when the monochrome footage of all the finds was replaced by new colour film.

Two or three years ago, the society asked the BBC what a licence to publish the 1985 version as a DVD would cost. The answer ran to four figures, so we left it. The problem is always copyright clearance: the cost of tracing those contributors (or their estates) with rights in the programme, and agreeing fees. We have suggested the programme to the BBC Archive project, but the editorial lead, Kate Wheeler, tells **Saxon**, "The *Chronicle* collection has certainly been very well received and

archaeology is definitely a subject which we would like to revisit in the future. We have, however, found that these programmes can be very difficult and expensive to clear. We put forward around forty *Chronicles* which were then whittled down by rights to the ones we have been able to publish on the site. Therefore, although I can definitely say that we will put this programme forward if we return to archaeology I can't be sure that we will be able to clear it for online use."



*Chronicle: Sutton Hoo (August 1989)*  
48 mins.

[www.bbc.co.uk/archive/chronicle/8622.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/chronicle/8622.shtml)

There is also a link on the home page of our website



## New light in dark places

The discovery of the Staffordshire hoard in a field near Lichfield one year ago is still dominating the Anglo-Saxon agenda. The purchase price of £3.3m has been raised, so the collection will go to the Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery and the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, but fund-raising continues in order to meet the £1.7m cost of conservation. With the total count of pieces now standing at 3,490 (though half of them weigh less than a gram) the Courtauld Institute of Art held its first conference on Anglo-Saxon art for twenty-five years.

*New Light in Dark Places: Recent Discoveries & New Directions in Anglo-Saxon Studies* took place at Somerset House in London on Saturday 8 May. **Professor Leslie Webster**, formerly of the British Museum, gave us 'a preliminary view' of the hoard, in which all the big questions remain: why was it assembled, why buried and why there? Was it a whole collection or just a part and was it meant to be recovered? Observation and deduction is still the best way to reveal clues. Most of the weapon fittings are missing, there are no shields or spears, and mere fragments from a helmet. Burials like Taplow, Broomfield and Prittlewell produced swords with no pommels, but if their pommels had been removed for re-use, that cannot apply to the Staffordshire hoard, whose pommels were cut off roughly. Their styles are elongated or 'tea cosy', ranging in age from the mid 6th to the second half of the 7th century. The earlier ones show no more wear than the later, so they were in use for no longer, but the wear is on the top of the pommels, showing that the swords



*A worn and soil-encrusted sword pommel from the Staffordshire hoard*  
© Portable Antiquities Scheme

were more often worn than used.

No metalwork style has yet been established for 7th century Mercia, so comparative analysis of the jewellery and metalwork might help the search for such regional styles and workshops. **Dr Tom Plunkett** reminded us that the age of the English conversion was also the age of the 7th century transition from the art of metalworking to that of illumination, and that pre-Christian paganism was also religious. He suggested how perception can penetrate the surface of a material object – especially the cloisonné work of a Sutton Hoo shoulder clasp, for instance - and take us beyond, so that the object does not

merely symbolise the transcendental, but imitates it.

As the day conference expanded further into Anglo-Saxon art and architecture, Society members would have recognised many of the venues discussed by the doyenne of Saxon church archaeology, **Professor Warwick Rodwell** of the University of Reading, who dealt authoritatively with the original appearance of the churches of Barnack, Earls Barton and Barton-upon-Humber, which we visited last summer (see **Saxon 50**).

The SHS held a special public lecture on Saturday 29 May, when **Dr Kevin Leahy**, the only man to have handled all of the Staffordshire hoard (while cataloguing it) entertained an audience of almost two hundred at the Riverside Theatre in Woodbridge with the thrilling story of its discovery. "We were scared stiff," he admitted, by a sense of awe and responsibility. Dr Leahy sees the collection as some sort of trophy hoard: "take a man's pommel and you've robbed him of his manhood". Nevertheless, he confirmed that "Sutton Hoo still stands alone", for "there is nothing as good in the Staffordshire hoard as the best from Sutton Hoo."

## Medieval Seminars

The Medieval Seminar run jointly by the British Museum and the Institute of Archaeology, and to which SHS members are now invited, continued its autumn and spring programme, held once a month on a Tuesday at the BM. The speaker on



*Dr Kevin Leahy and his wife at lunch at Sutton Hoo with SHS chairman Mike Argent (left) after Dr Leahy's lecture on the Staffordshire hoard* © Nigel Maslin



1 December was *Dr Naomi Sykes* of the University of Nottingham talking about ‘Hunting and poaching in the English landscape: the evidence from animal bones’. What those bones tell us about the early Saxon period you can read on pages 5-7 of this issue.

*Dr John Ljungkvist* of the University of Uppsala spoke on 19 January about ‘Sutton Hoo, Scandinavia and the boat graves of Middle Sweden’. Once again, most of the sites he considered would have been familiar to any Society members who joined our Scandinavian trip last September. His main thrust was to ask why the southern Swedish material from Gotland – such as the Broa helmet – had not been explicitly considered by Rupert Bruce-Mitford in his ’70s publication of the Sutton Hoo ship burial. Since the Society is organising a conference with a Scandinavian theme for September 2011, we might hope to hear more from John then.

*Dr Jacqui McKinley* of Wessex archaeology has been analysing the available data from Anglo-Saxon cremations and cremation burials. Borrowing a quote from Beowulf, her title on 11 May was, ‘Heaven swallowed the smoke’: similarities and variations in the Anglo-Saxon mortuary rite of cremation’. The mechanics have not changed since the bronze age: it is a matter of dehydration and oxidation. Dr McKinley has been able to use the results from modern crematoria to reconstruct how and how much bone could be recovered from an Anglo-Saxon cremation, and go on to discern variations in practices in southern England, compared with East Anglia and northern England.

## Archaeology in Suffolk

Closer to home, the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History (SIAH) organised a major two-day conference to mark sixty years of publishing Suffolk archaeology. It was held during the weekend of 27-28 March in the impressive new Waterfront Building of University Campus Suffolk on Neptune Quay in Ipswich. It covered all periods, from the first millennium BC to the second millennium AD, though its heart was medieval.

*Dr Jess Tipper* of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS) dealt with early Anglo-Saxon Suffolk. He concentrated on the cemetery, settlement and industrial site of Bloodmoor Hill at Carlton Colville, a possible early estate foundation that was published last year in the series *East Anglian Archaeology* (see **Saxon 49**). His introduction contained good news and bad news for the archaeology of the period. Since the last

edition of *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk* (ed. David Dymond and Edward Martin, 3rd edn., Ipswich 1999) six hundred new find spots have been recorded. On the other hand, the data set for the period remains poor, and only Ipswich has been fully researched. So thin is the evidence that a single find might indicate a site: deep ploughing has been very damaging and few sites are investigated.

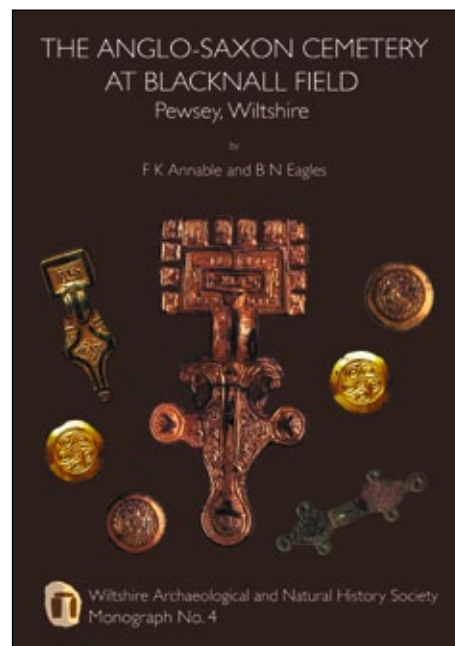
*Keith Wade*, archaeological services manager for SCCAS, reminded us how recent is our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon towns. SHS members who heard former county archaeologist Dr Stanley West’s lecture last autumn will know that there was no excavation even in Ipswich until the 1950s, when West himself, working with John Hurst, identified the two main pottery types for the period, the plain Ipswich ware of about 650-850, and the ringed Thetford ware of the following three centuries. Apart from Ipswich, the other two known Anglo-Saxon emporia were Southampton and London, with York later famed for its leather working and pottery.

Otherwise, even defining a Saxon town is difficult. Keith Wade took us on a brief tour of the candidates: Bury, of course, where Sigeberht founded a monastery sometime after 630; Dunwich, Sudbury, possibly Eye, Beccles and Clare, Blythburgh, Bungay, possibly others.

*Dr David Parsons*, Director of the Institute for Place Name Studies at the University of Nottingham, showed us what place-name evidence can provide: a pre-Celtic river name, a Romano-British settlement perhaps, or the *ham* names of early Anglo-Saxon homesteads. Negative evidence is indicative too: pagan shrine names seem to stop at the Norfolk border. Also important are the *-ingas* place names, indicating ‘the followers of’, which spread evenly across Suffolk and were the subject of much debate in the 1960s and ’70s. Now once again they are seen as 6th century colonisers, but they are archaeologically invisible: why do they not have accompanied burials?

*Edward Martin*, chairman of the SIAH and one of the Archaeological Officers for Suffolk, showed us how different things can be north of the Gipping Valley compared to the south. Cemeteries and settlements are found north of the Gipping, while the Stour Valley, South Suffolk and Essex look more like each other in their comparative lack of such features. There are certainly people there, including the Roman period, but why do they not show up archaeologically? Why is there no West Stow in South Suffolk? “Go out and find it!” urged he. We can look forward to the eventual publication of the conference’s lectures and abstracts in the *Proceedings* of the Suffolk Institute.

## Blacknall Field published



The late Ken Annable excavated the early pre-Christian Saxon cemetery of Blacknall Field in the Vale of Pewsey between 1969 and 1976. Now Bruce Eagles, with twenty-two specialists, has published the 104 rich graves with their human remains, swords, spears and shields, brooches and pins, knives and pottery, putting the community and its social structure in a European context.

*F.K. Annable and B.N. Eagles, The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Blacknall Field, Pewsey, Wiltshire (Wiltshire Archaeological Society, 2010) 400pp., £40*

[www.oxbowbooks.com](http://www.oxbowbooks.com)

## SHS Publications

The Society is discontinuing its publications and discounting its stock. Members can now buy Bob Markham’s *Through the Rear-View Mirror* (his account of the 1939 dig) at £5 + p&ç; Edwin Gifford’s *Anglo-Saxon Sailing Ships* for £1 + p&ç; the CD of Peppy Barlow’s *Gold under the Bed* at £5 + p&ç; and copies of Professor Charles Phillips’s autobiography *My Life in Archaeology* very inexpensively. Details from Pauline Moore (publications): see back page for contacts.

# Events Diary

## \*Medieval Seminar

Convened jointly by Dr Andrew Reynolds of the Institute of Archaeology and Dr Sonja Marzinzik of the British Museum, SHS members are invited to attend. Lectures begin at 17.30 at the Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY, Room 612 (except for October 20, which is in Lecture Theatre G6). smarzinzik@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

## †Wuffing Education

These events are study days held at Tranmer House, National Trust Sutton Hoo. They cost £38 and booking is essential on 01394 386498. For more information visit [www.WuffingEducation.co.uk](http://www.WuffingEducation.co.uk)

## NTSH Summer Exhibition, now until 31 October

Pictures of the Past, featuring the work of Victor Ambrus, illustrator for Channel 4's Time Team, and Basil Brown's Sutton Hoo excavation notebook, on loan from the British Museum

## †Saturday July 10, 10.30-16.30 *Sutton Hoo and the Staffordshire Hoard*

Dr Angela Care Evans & Dr Noël Adams

## Monday 13 – Friday 17 September *Northumbrian journey:*

Sutton Hoo Society autumn excursion by coach to Durham, Bede's World at Jarrow, Alnwick and Hadrian's Wall, including Corbridge and Housesteads. Further details from Robert Allen (01473 728018)

## †Saturday 25 September, 10.30-16.30 *Battle of Stamford Bridge 1066*

Dr Sam Newton

## †Saturday 2 October, 10.30-16.30 *Livestock, power and territory in Anglo-Saxon England*

Dr Ros Faith and Dr Debby Banham

## †Saturday 9 October, 10.30-16.30 *Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Ipswich: Boss Hall and Buttermarket*

Chris Scull

## †Saturday 16 October, 10.30-16.30 *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: an appraisal of the view from Rome*

John Fairclough

## \*Wednesday 20 October, 17.30 *The archaeology of Æthelred the Unready*

Prof. Simon Keynes (the third Sir David Wilson Lecture in Medieval Studies)

## 1 November *Main copy deadline for the January issue of Saxon*

## \*Tuesday 9 November, 17.30 *Of towns and trinkets: metalwork in Viking-Age Lincoln*

Letty Ten Harkel

## †Saturday 13 November, 10.30-16.30 *Dream-ships of the Wuffings: Sutton Hoo and Snape*

Dr Sam Newton

## †Saturday 20 November, 10.30-16.30 *St Edmund and the last of the Wuffings*

Dr Sam Newton

## †Saturday 27 November, 10.30-16.30 *Late Roman and early Anglo-Saxon Essex*

Howard Brooks & Sam Newton

## \*Tuesday 30 November, 17.30 *How typical is Lyminge? Defining monastic settlements in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent*

Dr Gabor Thomas

## †Saturday 4 December, 10.30-16.30 *First steps in Old English*

Steve Pollington

## †Saturday 11 December, 10.30-16.30 *The archaeology of the East Anglian conversion*

Rik Hoggett

## NEXT YEAR

### Sunday 11 September 2011

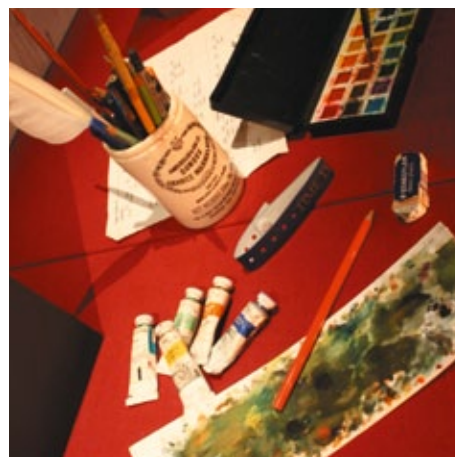
#### SHS Conference

#### *Sutton Hoo: a Scandinavian Perspective*

A one-day conference supported by the Swedish Academy and convened with the co-operation of Prof. Neil Price of the University of Aberdeen. Ipswich venue to be confirmed with all other details.

## Sutton Hoo Opening Times & Events

Go to our website, [www.suttonhoo.org](http://www.suttonhoo.org) and click on 'Online Resources' for links to the NTSH site



Victor Ambrus's paints in the summer exhibition at Sutton Hoo © Nigel Maslin

# The Sutton Hoo Society



Registered Charity No 293097

Sutton Hoo Society  
[www.suttonhoo.org](http://www.suttonhoo.org)

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