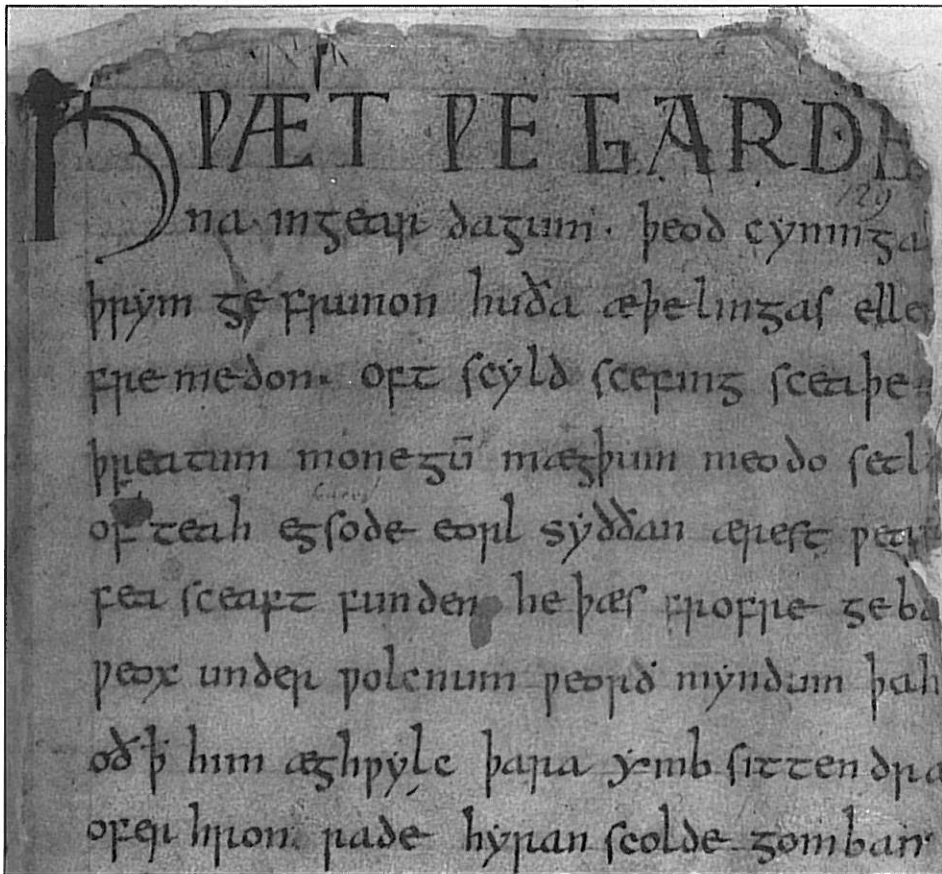




## BEOWULF AND SUTTON HOO by Sam Newton

This is a much-edited version of the lecture delivered to members and guests in March 1994. If you would like to follow the discussion of the subject in more detail, then you should read Sam's book *The Origins of 'Beowulf' and the pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (D. S. Brewer, 1993; reprinted 1994), or his paper 'Beowulf and the East Anglian Royal Pedigree' in *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, ed. Martin Carver (Boydell, 1992; reprinted 1994) pp.65-74. The translations within the text are the author's.



The first folio of the *Beowulf* manuscript (by permission of the British Library, BL Cotton Vitellius A. XV). It reads 'HWÆT WE GARDENA in geardagum þeodcýninga þrym gefrunon' ('Hwæt! We have heard of the fame of the spear-Danes, folk-kings in days of yore'.)

Although it is uncertain who first mentioned the old English epic *Beowulf* at Sutton Hoo, this first great work of English literature must have been evoked more than once as the full majesty of the Mound One ship-burial emerged to the light of the long hot summer days of 1939.

What *Beowulf* has to say about Anglo-Saxon burial rites seems to have had a major bearing on the evidence which archaeologists gave at the Coroner's court that August, evidence which led the jury to the unanimous verdict that the treasure was

buried without the intention of it ever being recovered, at least not by mortal hands. The unique ship-funeral account in *Beowulf*'s closing lines state this almost explicitly: 'No living man, neither wise men under the hall's roof, nor heroes under the heaven's, can truly know who(se hands) received that lading of treasure' (ll.50b-52)

Right from the start, then, *Beowulf* appears to have had implications for the interpretation of Sutton Hoo. Certainly Sutton Hoo has greatly amplified the understanding of *Beowulf*. Several of the splendid contents of

Mound One are closely complemented by passages in *Beowulf* - for example the helmet with its boar-emblems, or the golden-hilted, pattern-welded sword, or the lyre.

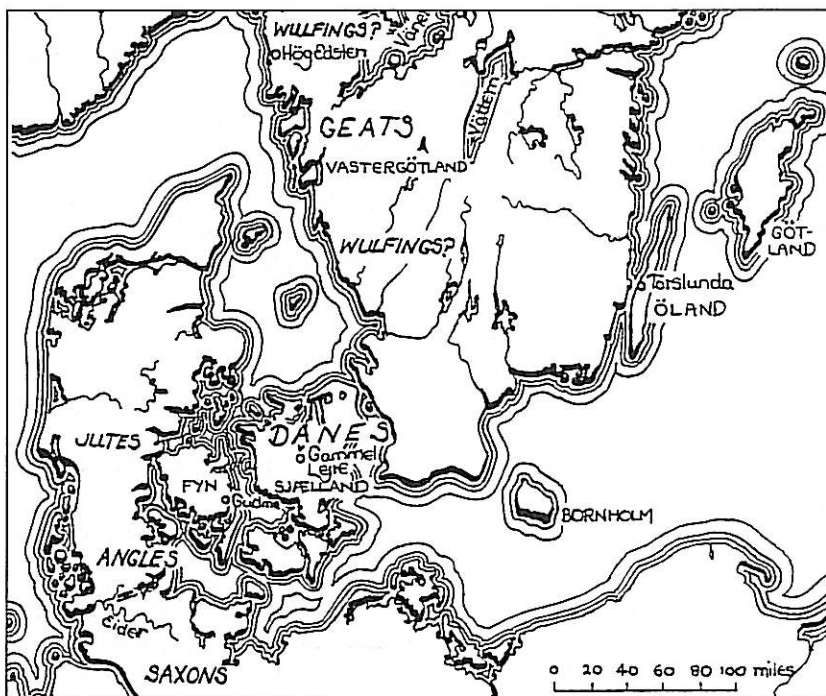
Of very special note in relation to the ceremony implied by the archaeological evidence is the similarity to the incomparable description in *Beowulf* of a royal funeral-ship stocked with war-gear and treasures. The account also enables us to see something of the ritual purpose of the pre-Christian ship-funeral rite - a symbolic passage out of the mortal world, bounded, in the Anglo-Saxon mind, by *garsecg* (l.49a), the encircling sea of Creation. The symbolic voyage also involves a return to the king's legendary place of origin, having first appeared from the sea as a baby asleep in a drifting boat, surrounded by treasures (ll.6b-7a, 43-46)

If the *Beowulf* account complements the ceremony implied by the contents of Mound One so closely, can we infer that the account was derived from the East Anglian practice of the royal rite of ship-funeral? And where in Anglo-Saxon England was the epic originally composed? This paper seeks to answer these questions.

### The background to the Epic of *Beowulf*

*Beowulf* is preserved on a manuscript written in southern England around the years 995-1005. It forms part of a book of Anglo-Saxon monster-tales which was probably kept in a monastic library throughout the Middle-ages until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the early 16th century; it is now housed in the British Library in the British Museum.

This unique manuscript is demonstrably a copy of another manuscript, now lost, which itself was probably a copy. Language, together with history and archaeology, collectively imply that *Beowulf* was originally composed in SE England between the late 7th and early 9th centuries. Its author



*Southern Scandinavia - possible homelands of the Geats and Wulfings*

appears to have been a literate Englishman who was widely versed in the inherited oral traditions of Old English alliterative poetry. His epic is structured around three great battles in which three man-killing monsters are defeated by the hero, Beowulf, a mortal prince of the Geats, a people related to the Goths living in what is now SW Sweden. He is presented as a model of heroism and nobility, in whom the pre-Christian ethos of fate and courage is balanced by some understanding of the gentler virtues of the new Christian wisdom.

Interwoven with *Beowulf's* tripartite story-structure are legends of the peoples and dynasties of the Scandinavian Heroic Age. Prominent are the legends of the royal families of the Geats (Hreðlings), Danes (Scyldings), and Swedes (Scylfings). These essentially genealogical legends provide the historical and geographical framework for the action of the epic, which is mainly set in southern Scandinavia during the first half of the 6th century.

### The Anglo-Scandinavian Background

The Northern dynastic traditions woven into *Beowulf* were probably brought by the migrating Anglo-Saxons from their northern homelands during the 6th century, probably surviving as part of the genealogical verse of an Old English royal family which claimed descent from one or more of these dynasties. The Wuffings of East Anglia could have fostered such tradition, for they are identifiable descendants of the Wulfings, the powerful neighbours of the Geats in *Beowulf*. Old English *Wuffingas* is a variant form of *Wulfingas*, 'the children of the wolf', and denotes a totemic affinity with the wolf.

Although the Wulfings are neighbours of the Geats in *Beowulf*, dwelling in what is now SW Sweden, they appear to be closely related to the Danish Scyldings, the most prominent of the Northern dynasties in

*Beowulf*. Their senior status is clear from its very first lines:

*'Hwæt! We have heard of the fame of the spear-Danes, folk-kings in days of yore, of how that noble kindred performed deeds of courage'* (ll.1-3).

The origin-legend of the Scyldings follows, ending with the account of the ship-funeral of Scyld Scefing (the Scylding king) (ll.4-52). Scyld's son succeeded him, and then he in turn was succeeded by his son, Healfdene (ll.56b-57a), who had three sons (Heorogar, Hroðgar and Halga), and a daughter (ll.59-63). Thus we are introduced to one of the poem's principal characters - King Hroðgar.

We are told of the success of Hroðgar's reign (ll.64-67a), and the building of his great high-gabled royal hall of *Heorot*, 'Hart (Hall)' (ll.67b-85). The hart or stag seems to have been a potent symbol of pagan kingship. It certainly seems to have been so for the Wuffings, as the magnificent stag on the ceremonial whetstone from Sutton Hoo shows.

In *Beowulf's* epic perspective, Hroðgar's Hart Hall becomes a focus for ancestral allegiance. The song sung in celebration of its completion, however, upsets the king's monstrous neighbours, which is how the hall comes to be haunted by the man-eating monster Grendel.

The Hall of the Hart remains a focal location for almost two-thirds of the epic and we hear much about the Danish royal family. Hroðgar's noble queen, the lady Wealhþeow, provides the crucial genealogical link in the epic's background. She is introduced as 'the lady of the Helmings' (l.620b). We know from the Old English catalogue-poem *Widsith* that *Helming* is synonymous with *Wulfing* and that she is identifiable as a former Wulfing princess and possible Wuffing successor. That the name *Helming* was known in Wuffing country is suggested by the Suffolk place-name *Helmingham*. The royal

marriage of the Helming lady Wealhþeow to King Hroðgar would have realised a close political and cultural affinity between Danish Scyldings and the Wulfings. Her status as Hroðgar's bride is understood to be important in the epic, for she is given the formal title, 'kindred pledge of peace between peoples' (l.2017a).

### The East Anglian Royal Genealogy

Although *Beowulf's* connections with royal dynasties (particularly those of Mercia and Wessex) have been examined before, its potential connection with East Anglian royal genealogy has not previously been closely considered.

A manuscript which was probably compiled in about 725 and copied in Mercia in the early 9th century preserves the pedigree of King Ælfwald of East Anglia. He appears to have reigned from about 713 until his death in 749, so his pedigree was actually written during his reign. It appears in the Anglian Collection of royal genealogies as follows:

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| (1) Ælfwald   | Alduulfing  |
| (2) Aldulf    | Eðilricing  |
| (3) Eðilric   | Ening       |
| (4) Eni       | Tyttling    |
| (5) Tyttla    | Wuffing     |
| (6) Wuffa     | Wehking     |
| (7) Wehha     | Wilhelming  |
| (8) Wilhelm   | Hryping     |
| (9) Hryp      | Hroðmunding |
| (10) Hroðmund | Trygling    |
| (11) Trygil   | Tyttmaning  |
| (12) Tyttman  | Casering    |
| (13) Caser    | Wodning     |
| (14) Woden    | ....        |

Ælfwald's lineage is presented in ascending order with patronymics (father's names) for each generation given in the right-hand column. Like others in the Anglian Collection, it appears to have been constructed originally on a biblical format, with fourteen generations from subject to royal progenitor, Woden, inclusive. That the content of the pedigree was almost certainly drawn from vernacular genealogical tradition maintained in verse is implied by the groups of alliterating names as well as by the conventions in stereotypical father-to-son succession e.g. the filiation of Caser, 'Caesar' to Woden. An explicit indication that Wuffing genealogy was maintained in verse is contained in the *Passion of St Athelbert*, the 12th-century account of the martyrdom of one of East Anglia's late 8th-century rulers., which refers to the performance of 'royal songs' concerning King Æpelbert's Wuffing lineage by two 'skilled in the art of song'.

The names of King Ælfwald's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather most probably represent historically consecutive generations, but prior names are perhaps best regarded as legendary or quasi-historical figures. Amongst these is the name of Hroðmund, which is exactly the same form as that borne by one of the sons of Wealhþeow and Hroðgar in *Beowulf*. Within the pedigree, Hroðmund is alliteratively paired with *Hryp*,



a characteristic form which suggests that its bearer was regarded as a figure associated with foundation-legend. Germanic founding heroes (e.g. Hengist and Horsa) have a tendency to appear as a pair with alliterating names.

### Hroðmund, Prince of Denmark and East Anglia

In *Beowulf*, as noted above, Hroðmund is a son of Wealhþeow, whose royal marriage to Hroðgar realises a special relationship between the Danes and Wulfings. Any children born of that marriage would greatly strengthen the kindred allegiance of Danes and Wulfings. Thus Hroðmund and his brother Hreðric are the foci of a special sympathy in the epic, particularly during the victory-feast held in Hart Hall to celebrate the defeat of Grendel (ll.991-1250), where they sit next to the hero Beowulf. The bright picture of this victory-feast is counterpointed by a grim irony which reveals within the Scylding dynasty a latent rivalry between the brothers and their cousin Hroþulf over the

question of Hroðgar's successor. This question of the succession is raised in a moving plea by Wealhþeow, who seems desperate to secure the future well-being of her two boys (as well as the continuity of the kindred allegiance between Danes and Wulfings). Yet tragically this leads to bloodshed when Hreðric is later killed by his cousin Hroþulf.

The fate of Hroðmund in all of this is not mentioned in any of the Northern sources, but his name is listed in the upper reaches of King Ælfwald's pedigree. As it occurs in no other early source, we could infer that this prince of Denmark avoided his brother's fate and came to be associated with the legendary roots of East Anglia, especially as the Wuffing ancestral status of his mother is independently identifiable.

All of this means that the genealogical traditions of the Wuffings may be the source of the Northern, especially Danish, dynastic concerns in the epic, which in turn would point to 8th-century East Anglia as the home of *Beowulf*; and further, the implication is that

the account of the royal ship-funeral probably did derive from the East Anglian burial-rite practised at Sutton Hoo. In the light of *Beowulf*, the ceremony implied by the evidence from Mound One can be seen to involve the enactment of a royal origin-legend, whereby the king returned to his ancestors on that far shore across the encircling sea no mortal can cross.

Dr. Sam Newton completed his doctoral thesis *The Origins of Beowulf and the pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* in 1991. He currently teaches in adult education in Suffolk and Essex. He has been a committee member of the Society for some years, is a regular site guide, and for the past two years has master-minded the autumn Society visits to Anglo-Saxon and other related sites in the County. (see report of the 1994 visit below)

## SOCIETY REPORTS

### Slides Re-Kindle Sixties Memories by Peter Rooley

Among those who worked at Sutton Hoo in the late 1960's, re-examining the Mound One ship burial and sifting through the 1939 spoil heaps under the direction of the late Rupert Bruce-Mitford, Angela Evans and Paul Ashbee, were a number of West Yorkshire folk with excavating experience largely gained in the Pontefract/Leeds area - Eric and Joan Houlder, Ken and Peggy Wilson, Terry Carney and Don Lodge, to name but a few!

For many, Sutton Hoo took on a personal and very special significance, even though they could perhaps spend only a couple of weeks there each year. Don Lodge was certainly in this category, as the wide-ranging photographic record of his visits to the area clearly show. They include views of Mound One during the 60's re-excavation and some quite different shots taken after working hours in the Sorrell Horse at Shottisham, bringing back happy memories for those who made this



Don Lodge (standing) on site at Sutton Hoo c.1968 (Lodge Collection Ref. 5/22)

their 'local' whilst at Sutton Hoo.

Don re-visited the site in 1986 and apparently spoke of little else before his sad death from cancer only a few weeks later. Don's widow, Margaret, gathered together a selection of his slides, which have now been presented to the Society on her behalf by long-time friend and Society member, Eric Houlder. Eric brought them down to Suffolk in June when he came for the Sæ Wylfing weekend.

*We would like to extend the thanks of the Society to Margaret for her generosity, and to Eric for delivering the slides. Hopefully we shall be able to publish a selection of them in the near future - if any of the 60s contingent out there would like to contribute, we could put together an article on that period in Sutton Hoo's history (Ed.)*



Relaxing at the Sorrell Horse, Shottisham with landlord 'Tich' Markwell (far right with cap). Peter Rooley (centre in 'Yellow Submarine T-shirt') with wife Barbara, behind are Paul and Richmall Ashbee (Lodge Collection Ref. 7/21).

### Membership and Guiding by Andrew Lovejoy

The 1994 Season was evidently a happy one, enjoyed as much by the visitors as by the guides and helpers. We played host to 1,289 paying visitors, and took just under £1000 in sales of books, postcards etc. In 1993, we had 1,858 visitors, so this year was quieter, but those who visited were clearly genuine enthusiasts. We also had visits from a number of schools and university groups, and groups from the United States.

The excavation finished in April 1992, and visitors to the site cannot expect the excitement associated with the heady years between '83 and '92. It is up to the guides now to bring the site to life, and they do a marvellous job. Two new guides have joined this year, and we shall have two more in 1995. This has helped to reduce the workload, but we would still welcome more recruits, and if you would like to be a guide, then please contact me (address on the back page).

Membership of the Society is buoyant, with 177 Ordinary Members, 71 Life Members and 12 Overseas Members. Few members visited the site this summer; in its new state it is worth a visit and members are particularly welcome. Who-knows - time has passed by and a different guided tour from your last one may reveal facts and ideas about Sutton Hoo which could be of real interest and revelation to you! Remember, your entry is free of charge.



Under sail, approaching Woodbridge, with the Tide Mill in the distance (Photo: Peter Rooley)

Rowing near the Sutton Bank (Photo: Sue Banyard)

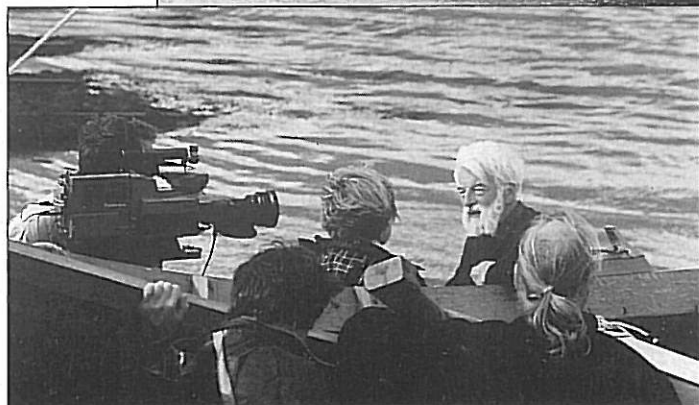
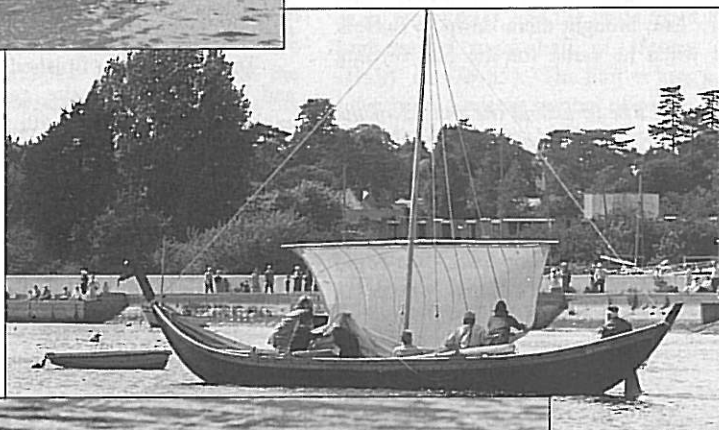


Sailing down-river (Photo: Sue Banyard)

Sæ Wylfing at Woodbridge Quay (Photo: Eric Houlder)



Dropping the sail as Sæ Wylfing is skilfully manoeuvred through moorings at Woodbridge (Photo: Peter Rooley)



Lindsay Brooke of Anglia TV interviews Edwin Gifford at Felixstowe Ferry (Photo: Peter Rooley)

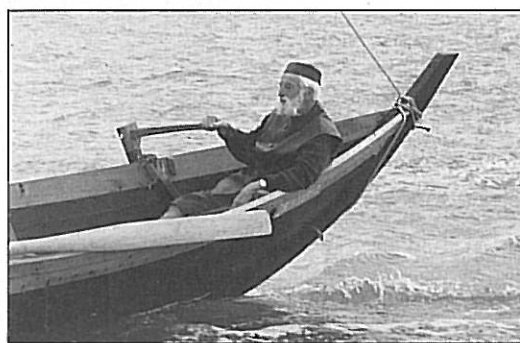
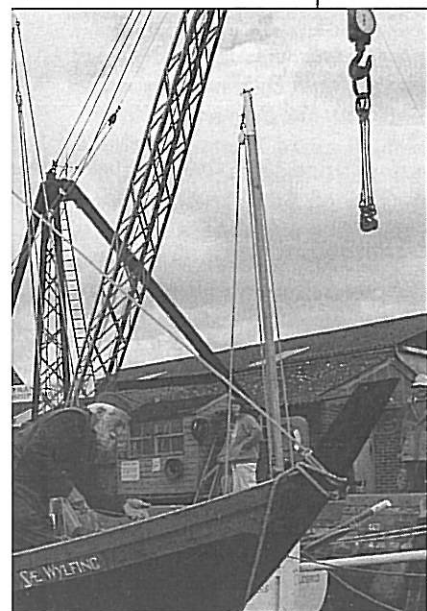
Woes þu, Eadwin, hi  
 BE THOU, EDWIN, HI  
 Sæ-craeftig helm,  
 SEA-WISE HELMSMAN,  
 Wundortlic is  
 WONDER-LIKE IS  
 Wudu wynsum,  
 WINSOME WOODED,  
 Ne hyrde ic cymlicot  
 I HAVE NOT HEARD OF A MORE COMELY  
 Ac-flota farnighals,  
 OAK-FLOATER, FOAMY NECKED,  
 Woes þu, Eadwin  
 BE THOU, EDWIN,

After 1300 years the Sutton Hoo Ship Sails Again! A little 'journalistic' licence perhaps, but that was how it felt when Sæ Wylfing slid into the water at Felixstowe Ferry on a blustery June afternoon with the tide just on the turn. As she and her crew set off up the Deben under the watchful care of Robert Simper in *Three Sisters* it felt like a home-coming. How more-so then, when on Saturday 11th June she sailed complete with 'Anglo-Saxons' up to Woodbridge. We owe an enormous debt of thanks to Edwin and Joyce Gifford, whose time, talent and vision have realised a project that has made us all look again at the significance of the ship remains. If you had thought the Sutton Hoo ship never sailed, then you must have questioned those thoughts when Sæ Wylfing now glided, now raced through the water; how easily she was rowed by her crew of eight, and how skilfully manoeuvred by her helmsman through the busy moorings at Woodbridge. Imagine then how much more efficient the full-scale ship would have been when crewed by real Anglo-Saxons with years of accumulated experience.

!!  
 !!  
 ðæ-Wulfinges hloford;  
 ðEA-WOLFING'S LOAF-LORD;  
 t wæg-hengest,  
 - WAVE-STEED,  
 ðe afýsed.  
 D DRIVEN.  
 ceol gegytwan;  
 HULLED KEEL;  
 æpelinga fæter.  
 NOBLES' FERRY.  
 hæel!  
 FALE!



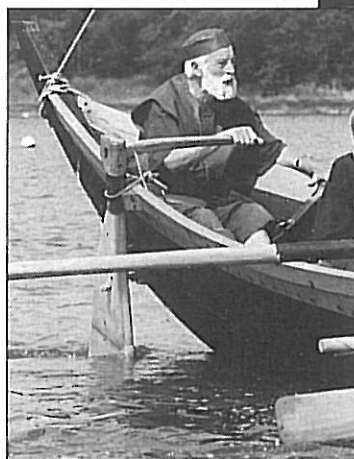
*SæWylfing at speed under sail towards Methersgate (Photo: C. Hoppitt)*



*Edwin at the helm (Photo: Sue Banyard)*



*Launching SæWylfing at Felixstowe Ferry (Photo: Peter Rooley)*



*Edwin at the helm, from the steer-board side (Photo: Peter Rooley)*

As well as Edwin and Joyce—without whom the event would never have taken place, the Society would also like to thank the Colchester Historic Enactment Society (CHES), who provided the authentic-looking Anglo-Saxon crews who rowed and sailed *SæWylfing* under Edwin's skilful hand. In addition, thanks must go to the Woodbridge Cruising Club who allowed us to use their clubhouse as a base on Saturday and Sunday. It was also the venue for supper on Saturday evening when we were delighted to be able to entertain as our honoured guests Edwin and Joyce Gifford, and Jeff Bird (who did much of the construction work on *SæWylfing*), along with members of CHES. Sam Newton composed a special toast to Edwin (printed above), delivered in Anglo-Saxon — with translation for those of us less-learned folk.

We hope that sometime in the future we shall see *SæWylfing* return to the Deben, and in the next issue of **Saxon** we shall carry an account of some of the lessons learnt and improvements made to her as a result of these on-going trials (*Ed*).



*Off Woodbridge promenade (Photo: Peter Rooley)*



## SOCIETY EVENTS

### Society Visit to East Anglia's South-Western Approaches

by Sam Newton

The excursion began in excellent weather with a one-mile walk along part of the magnificent linear earthwork near Newmarket known as the Devil's Dyke. 'Devil's Dyke' is a medieval name for the longest of the series of strategic dykes which protected the East Anglian Kingdom's vulnerable south-western approaches, at the entry point of the ancient Icknield Way. It was regarded as a strategic defence line in the Anglo-Saxon period, for in the late 10th-century Passion of St Edmund, Abbo of Fleury tells us 'on the side where the sun sets, the region is in contact with the rest of the island [Britain] and on that account accessible; but as a bar to constant invasion by an enemy, a foss sunk in the earth is fortified by a rampart equivalent to a wall of great height'.

The dyke runs for almost seven miles, rising in places to 62ft from the bottom of a ditch 15ft deep. Its great height and length imply considerable skill in planning and building. The date of its construction is uncertain, but is possibly post-Roman. It runs straight for 5.5 of its 7.5 mile length, with slight deflections at either end. These deflected ends are out of sight of the central section, and would have had to be aligned by rule of thumb. This implies that the builders didn't know the Roman method of marking out straight lines between invisible points.

Setting out for the fenward end of the Dyke, we paused at Exning to look across the fields to the site of St Mindred's Well, whose waters are reputed to be good for ailments of the eyes. St Mindred was probably one of the saintly daughters of the 7th-century Mercian sub-king Merewald, father of St Mildred. Her relics, originally buried at March and subsequently translated to Ely, were carried by the monks in support of Edmund Ironside's army at the Battle of Assandun in 1016. However St Mindred proved no match for the powerful magic of Cnut's banner, bearing the woven image of a raven (the bird of Odin) and the battle — a major turning point in the history of Anglo-Saxon England — was lost.

Before lunch (at the aptly named 'Dykes End' inn), some of the party traversed the north western section of the Devil's Dyke, which is well preserved here.

After lunch we visited Fleam Dyke, six miles SW of Devil's Dyke. The main section runs in a 3-mile curve from near Balsham to Fulbourne Fen, and in places its rampart rises 55ft from the bottom of an 11ft ditch. We walked up to Mutlow Hill, so called because it was the Anglo-Saxon 'meeting mound' for the adjacent hundreds. Mutlow Hill itself is a large Bronze-Age barrow incorporated in the line of the Dyke.



*Watching out for invading Mercians - Society members on the Devil's Dyke near Newmarket  
(Photo: Sue Banyard)*



*Sam Newton (right) and Society members briefing themselves from the information board before tackling the heights of Bartlow Hills  
(Photo: Sue Banyard)*

Archaeologically Fleam Dyke appears to be post-Roman or early Anglo-Saxon in origin. The name, probably 7th-century, seems to be based on the Old English *fleama*, 'flight', and the Dyke was perhaps the line to which the East Anglian army retreated during Penda's attack in c.635AD.

On then to the delightful church of St Botolf at Hadstock, where we were met by the Chairman of the Hadstock Society, Mr. Donald Stewart. The church has been claimed as the site of St Botolf's minster of *Icanho*, recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as being founded in 654AD. The old name for Hadstock was *Cadenho*, which in the 12th-century Book of Ely is described as being 'consecrated to religion long ago by the holy Botolf, there at rest'. The first church could have been as early as the 7th century, but despite archaeological investigation, there is no compelling evidence for it being St Botolf's original minster. *Icanho* can confidently be located on the former island site at Iken, Suffolk, overlooking the River Alde.

There are strong indications that a period of rebuilding in the late Anglo-Saxon period may have been the work of King Cnut, who, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle established a minster of stone for the souls of those slain in his great victory

over Edmund Ironside at the Battle of Assandun (Hill of Ash Trees) in 1016. Hadstock stands on a spur of 'The Hill of Ash Trees', the name of which is preserved in the neighbouring parish, Ashdon. One interpretation of the name *Cadenho*, 'Hoo of the Fallen' could suggest that it derives from Cnut's kingdom-winning victory.

On the outside of the church we saw Anglo-Saxon corner masonry and high windows, and a magnificent late Anglo-Saxon stone-arched doorway. The great oak door itself has been dated by dendro-chronology to 1018AD, when work on Cnut's minster would have been underway.

The final visit of the day was to nearby Bartlow Hills, described as the 'finest group of Romano-British barrows in Britain'. Certainly their height and gradient surprised us as they came into view and as we climbed the steps to the top. Four out of an original eight mounds survive, the largest being 45ft high, making it the tallest burial mound in England. Early 19th-century excavation revealed 2nd-century AD cremation burials containing some fine bronzes. The mounds had been constructed using alternating layers of chalk and topsoil, and members speculated on possible reasons for this. It was suggested that it perhaps related to improving surface run-off, so reducing slumping and ensuring the longevity of the mounds.

Our thanks for the day are due to Malcolm, our coach driver; to Donald Stewart and Patricia Croxton-Smith for our Hadstock visit; to Brigadier Breitmeyer for providing convenient parking at Bartlow; to Charnwood Milling Co., Framlingham for photocopying facilities; to Andrew Lovejoy for intrepid feats of organisation, and not least to Sam, for the hours of research and reconnaissance.

## SUTTON HOO GOES PUBLIC by Mike Weaver

If the Sutton Hoo treasure was lifted with almost indecent haste in the midsummer of 1939, then the rush to publish reveals a corresponding indelicacy! Within days of the lifting of the gold items, a comprehensive portfolio of photographs appeared in local and national newspapers and press interest was intense in the days leading to the mid-August inquest. The enthusiasm of the excavators to publish reflects, of course, the immense public interest in 'a discovery so momentous as to be described as unique in the history of western Europe'.

Those were the words of Guy Maynard, Curator of the Ipswich Museum, introducing his article in the *East Anglian Magazine*, September 1939. He prefaces his remarks with an apology or warning — one echoed in almost all subsequent accounts of the ship burial. Inevitably Ipswich Museum occupies a central position in the excavation which was carried out 'with the aid of Mr Basil Brown ....under the direction of the curator'. Later, Charles Phillips 'consented to act as supervisor'. There was no praise, then, for the skill of the archaeologists, but Guy Maynard gives as full a description of the findings as space allowed. Pointing to the lack of a body he noted the positioning of the ornaments in the body space and commented that in Holland sand images of decayed bodies had been observed and photographed. A final hint that Redwald lived nearby linked the treasures to the Wuffings.

This would have come as no surprise to citizens of Woodbridge. As early as 10th August *The Woodbridge Reporter* had asked

'Was it Redwald?' and called upon Vincent and Lilian Redstone to outline the history of the Wuffings. A week earlier the newspaper had published a detailed account of the discovery in the form of an 'authentic statement' by Charles Phillips. He relegated the Ipswich Museum to 'assisting with advice when necessary', promoting Basil Brown to 'being in charge of the actual work on the ground'.

In December 1939 the *British Museum Quarterly* was devoted almost exclusively to the Sutton Hoo finds. T. D. Kendrick, who assisted Phillips on site on two occasions, described the discovery and commented on the gold ornaments. Ernst Kitzinger wrote a remarkable short survey on the silver objects and Derek Allen examined the coins. He placed the likely date of the burial at 670AD. This gently contradicted Kendrick who had earlier quoted Professor H. M. Chadwick's thesis that Bretwalda Redwald was the most likely candidate. The 40-page article abounds with bold assertions. 'It is the independent Golden Age of East Anglia, an archaeological glory illuminating and confirming the historical fact of a dawning political ascendancy'. The demands of scholars and the huge public interest could not be satisfied by this single academic study, even at time of war. They did not have long to wait.

The *Antiquaries Journal* Vol. XX No. 2 (April 1940), revealed that Charles Phillips had wasted no time in the Autumn but had prepared a detailed account of the dig, 'an objective report of what has come within (my) experience'. Remarkably, during this

time he also acted as an ARP warden in Cambridge! A full account of the excavation and description of the finds accompanied the first detailed description of the boat itself. The appendices include an inventory of the principal finds with notes on a timber fragment and analysis of a soil sample. Phillips' now familiar plan of the burial chamber makes its maiden appearance. The article is generously illustrated with photos and line drawings. Phillips is determined that the ship burial was a cenotaph; the absence of a finger ring and other smaller personal objects being cited as evidence. In fact he had announced this theory to the Society of Antiquaries in a much-reported lecture earlier in the year.

In February 1941 Phillips' research was re-hashed into more popular form for publication in the *National Geographic Magazine*. In fact the editors of this prestigious publication had first approached J. Reid Moir, Chairman of the Ipswich Museum Committee to carry out the task. he, in turn, approached Charles Phillips to help and the latter agreed, sharing the fee with the Ipswich man. This was a generous gesture as Phillips held Reid Moir in low regard but was aware that his personal circumstances were, at the time, less than favourable. Sub-editors had busily re-worked the text and supplied racy column headings—'Boat Bore the Dead to Eternity', and 'Horns for Quaffing Ale or Mead'. Phillips seems to settle for Redwald as the subject of the burial and in the spirit of the darker winter of 1940-1 sees the boat as 'the first English war vessel ....the ancestor of the British Navy ....an unshakeable defense of this island against the enemy'. Ah well, at least he did not describe them as successful Germanic invaders and conquerors of our island!

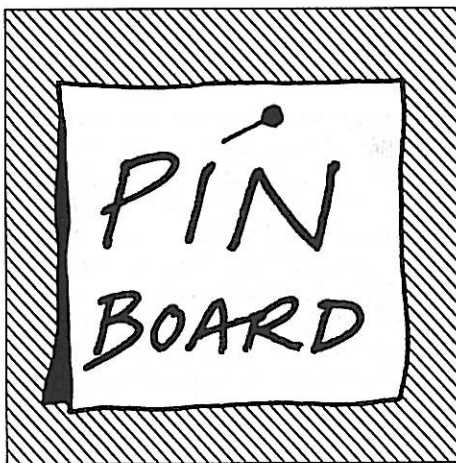
This concludes the first tranche of publications on Sutton Hoo. The end of the war allowed further detailed examination of the finds and in September 1946 Rupert Bruce-Mitford gave a second account of the excavation in the (recently restored) *East Anglian Magazine*. It was a title of his *Provisional Guide to the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*, published by the British Museum in 1947 and hinting at the greater things to come from a scholar who eventually brought together all the strands of this monumental discovery.

Mike Weaver is Head of the History Department at Woodbridge School. He is a founder member of the Society, and served as its first Hon. Secretary. He is a regular site guide, and has presented the site to the public for many years. His enthusiasm for Sutton Hoo has inspired a number of his students to join the dig, and to gain high honours for coursework on the subject presented as part of their examination work.



Lifting the iron stand in 1939. Front to back: on the left are Charles Phillips, Sir Thomas Kendrick and Basil Brown; on the right W. F. Grimes, Stuart Piggott and Sir John Forsdyke. (Photo: by kind permission of the British Museum)





## DIARY

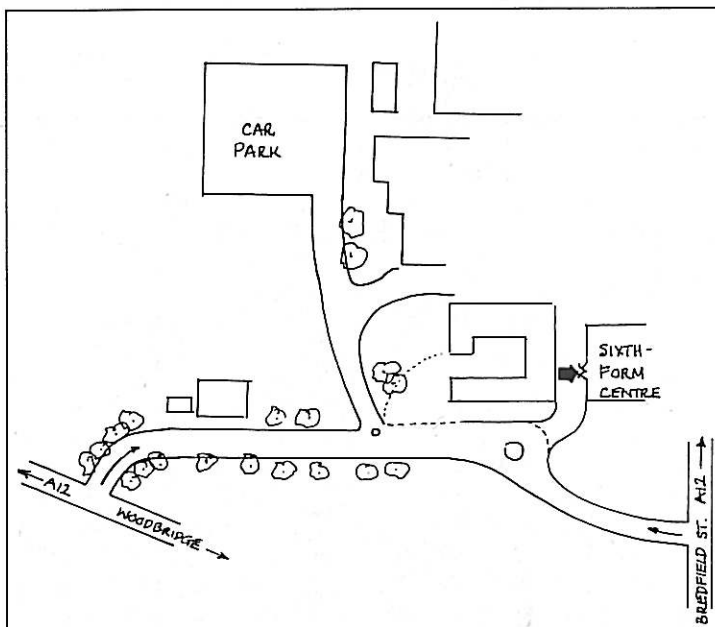
### SUTTON HOO SOCIETY AGM

The next **Annual General Meeting** will be held on **Friday 17 February 1995** at **7.30pm**, in the **Sixth Form Centre** at **Woodbridge School** (see location map).

Martin Carver will give an illustrated lecture on Mound Robbing.

### AGENDA

- Apologies
- Minutes of last AGM
- Report and Accounts
- Election of Auditors
- Election of Officers
- Committee Nominations



### COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

Nominations for new committee members should be sent to the Chairman of the Society at the address below. Nominees should be members, willing to stand for election, and able to attend four or five meetings a year. Please contact a member of the committee if you would like to stand for election.

### SPRING LECTURE

The annual lecture for Society members and friends is being planned for an evening in March (speaker and date to be confirmed). The lecture will take place at St John's Hall, Woodbridge.

### BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Congratulations to John Newman and his partner Julie on the arrival of their daughter, Esther Bridget, born on 2 October.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We cannot let the guides and helpers retire into winter hibernation without taking the opportunity to thank them once again for their services up at the site. It is good to know that new guides are swelling the ranks, and helping to tell the Sutton Hoo story.

Peter Berry's tireless efforts should not go unnoticed either. Due to his care and attention day after day throughout the year, the site looks better and better. It's quite an achievement — go and see for yourselves!

## RUPERT BRUCE-MITFORD

Over 200 people attended a memorial service for the late Rupert Bruce-Mitford at St George's, Bloomsbury, on Tuesday 14th June 1994 — the date of his 80th birthday.

Readings included translations of the ship-funeral account from the epic *Beowulf*, and the parable of the sparrow's flight from Bede's *Historia*.

Sydney Carter, poet and friend of Bruce-Mitford, read three of his own poems

including one entitled *British Museum*, and the poem 'In Western Lands' from Tolkien's *The Return of the King* was read by Rupert's grandson. The British Museum and Library Singers sang two of Mozart's sacred works, and the address was delivered by Martin Biddle of Hertford College, Oxford.

The service was followed by a reception in the Early Medieval Gallery at the British Museum, hosted by the family.

### SALES

**Bulletin of the Sutton Hoo Research Committee No 8** — the final interim report on the research project — is now available, price £4.00, from Madeleine Hummler at the Department of Archaeology, York University (address below).

Read all about the 'prince's grave', the pony burial, the prehistoric settlement and the East Anglian Kingdom Survey.

### Contact Addresses:

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The Sutton Hoo Society, c/o NatWest Bank plc, Cumberland Street, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1JD  
A A Lovejoy, Membership and Site Guides Secretary, 28 Pembroke Road, Framlingham, Suffolk IP13 9HA

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

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Membership and Site Guides Secretary: Andrew Lovejoy Research Director: Martin Carver Publicity: Peter Rooley  
Publications: Rosemary Hoppitt  
Sue Banyard Malcolm Miles John Newman Sam Newton Pearl Simper Robert Simper

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