



The Newsletter of the Sutton Hoo Society

SAXON

President: the Duke of Grafton KG

No. 30 / 1999

**In the beginning....
by Michael Weaver**

WOODBIDGE FLORAL FETE

By kind permission of Colonel R. J.
CARTHEW, on the Grounds of

WOODBIDGE ABBEY,
To-day, Wednesday,

THE WORLD-RENOWNED
ST. HILDA'S BAND

Musical Director: John R. Bell, A.R.C.M.,
R.M.S.M.

EVENING CONCERT. COMIC CRICKET
MATCH. BOWLS TOURNAMENT.

BALLOON COMPETITION. FIREWORKS.

ADMISSION: 1s 6d for the day. From 5
p.m. 1s. (If purchased before the day 1s 3d
and 9d respectively). Tickets obtainable at
Shops in the Town.

STAMMARKET AND CENTRAL SUFFOLK

Woodbridge folklore tells of a chance meeting at the local Flower Show in 1937 between Edith Pretty, owner of the Sutton Hoo estate and Vincent Redstone, the highly respected Suffolk historian and antiquarian. We will never know the exact nature of the conversation that took place but it was sufficient to inspire Vincent Redstone's letter to Guy Maynard at the Ipswich Museum and to put in train the events that led to the great archaeological revelations of 1938 and 1939 and a continuing 60-year fascination with this royal Saxon burial site.

The suggestion in the letter (see page 2) is that Edith Pretty 'approached' Redstone. And who better to approach? Vincent Redstone had arrived in Woodbridge in 1880 as an enthusiastic young teacher at the Woodbridge Grammar School. He remained for 41 years, the longest serving assistant master in the school's history. History was his fascination and his pleasure was to investigate and transcribe medieval documents. It was not uncommon for Vincent Redstone to set his pupils a reading exercise in class while he worked on his latest find.

The results of his research were published in the school magazine, the *Woodbridgian*, which he himself helped to found in 1882, and later in a number of monographs, including *Bygone Woodbridge* and *Bygone Wickham Market*. He was a family man and his three daughters loyally embraced his interests. Lillian became a highly respected historian. Their intellectual base was the Seckford Library in Seckford Street which became a massive repository of local material. Daughter Elsie eventually became the librarian. Historians nationwide travelled to Woodbridge to conduct research and obtain advice from the Redstones. (It was from this academic source that excavator Basil Brown was able to learn more of the archaeology and practice of ship burial in Europe, and hence the significance of his finds).

Vincent retired from Woodbridge School in 1921 and enjoyed a further twenty years in the community, writing and researching his beloved subject. Little wonder then, that Edith Pretty turned to him in 1937, taking advantage

Advertisement for the Woodbridge Floral Fete from the East Anglian Daily Times, July 14 1937. An auspicious day for Sutton Hoo and for the future understanding of Anglo-Saxon culture and society.

(Reproduced by kind permission of the East Anglian Daily Times)

of his knowledge and his contacts in local society. In August 1939 **The Woodbridge Reporter** published one of his last articles, written in conjunction with daughter Lillian. It was entitled 'Was it King Redwald?' They pictured 'this notable kinglet celebrating his supremacy over neighbouring kingdoms at Rendlesham, where torchlight would gleam upon his gold trappings and on his silver bowls and dishes'.

Vincent Redstone and Edith Pretty died within a short time of each other. Their meeting and conversation at the Woodbridge flower show may now be seen as an event of considerable importance in English archaeology.

Right:

The letter sent by Vincent Redstone to Guy Maynard of Ipswich Museum following the conversation which probably took place at the Woodbridge Floral Fete in 1937.

(Courtesy Ipswich Borough Council Museums and Galleries)

Box to
Home & Grove Runch 1.15. Monday
3 Seckford Street
Woodbridge
I visited July 26th 1937
and quite a lot of
the ground around
Mr. Pretty's
house at
Sutton Hoo
Dear Mr. Maynard.
Without doubt you have knowledge of the
number of interesting Hoo's or Haughs which exist
on Sutton Heath. It seems probable that they are
burial mounds but the true character of the sites
has not to my knowledge ever yet been ascertained.
By appearance some of the mounds have been disturbed
but for or to what purpose has not been chronicled.
Mr. Pretty, of Sutton Haugh, has to day approached me
on the matter of making some such search among those of
the haughs of her estate. They are 5 or 6 in number. She
has invited me to luncheon to consider the subject. I
suggested that I should bring you with me as having
useful experience. Any day but Thursday would suit.
I hope you can find time to call on her with me. If so
what day would be convenient.
Mr. P. is a very pleasing intelligent S.P.
Kind regards -
Faithfully Yours
Vincent B. Redstone.

Below:

Vincent Redstone, one-time history master at Woodbridge School. The photograph was taken in the Seckford Library.

(Reprinted from Carol and Michael Weaver's 'History of the Seckford Foundation', with permission)



Michael Weaver is Head of History at Woodbridge School. As with his predecessor, history is also his fascination and pleasure, and his interest in Sutton Hoo extends back to his own arrival in Woodbridge as an enthusiastic young history teacher in 1969.

As a founder member and first Honorary Secretary of the Sutton Hoo Society Michael was largely responsible for establishing the guiding of visitors on the site in the early 1980s.

In Debt to the Amateurs: the photographs of Miss Lack ARPS and Miss Wagstaff ARPS by Angela Care Evans

Many excavations have stories to tell about people who come to visit a dig and stay on to play a major part in the excavations and the interpretation of the artefacts from it. Sutton Hoo 1939 is no exception, although the contribution of Mercie Lack and Barbara Wagstaff to the interpretation of the great burial ship is often overlooked. Miss Lack and Miss Wagstaff, two schoolmistresses, were holidaying in East Anglia in early August 1939. When visiting Woodbridge, they heard about the extraordinary finds from the excavation of the burial chamber. They made their way up to the site and were so bowled over by the sight of the ship being excavated that they asked if they could stay and record Commander Hutchison's project (surveying the ship impression) on a day to day basis. Permission was readily granted and from 9 - 24 August they were on site recording every detail of the ship as it was released from its skin of sand. Sadly, although they took copious notes, no personal records of their involvement in this extraordinary excavation survive apart from a handful of gently humorous letters to Charles Phillips during the autumn and winter of 1939/40.

Both Miss Lack and Miss Wagstaff were serious amateur photographers and were well

equipped with Leica cameras. Miss Lack also had a cine-camera with which she took a short length of 16mm film showing Basil Brown shovelling sand from the midships section of the ship. Their stills were principally black and white — Miss Lack took 297 pictures and Miss Wagstaff 150 - but remarkably they had acquired a roll each of 35mm Agfa colour slide film which was briefly on sale in England before the outbreak of war in 1939. Towards the end of their stay, each took thirty-six slides of the ship, Miss Lack with slightly more success than Miss Wagstaff, capturing the huge hull in the cool Agfa tones which reflect the brilliant colours of the sand so successfully. The slides were a hidden asset which was not realised until the making of the first BBC **Chronicle** programme on Sutton Hoo in the mid-sixties, when for the first time the ship impression was seen in colour. The slides remain unfaded to this day, a tribute to the great care Miss Lack took of them during her long life. They and the film have been copied and, together with over 700 negatives taken by many different photographers during the spring and summer of 1939, are housed in the British Museum, where they are in constant demand for publication and documentary films.

When the excavation ended, Miss Lack and Miss Wagstaff returned to teaching. After the war they both submitted excellent photographic essays of their black and white negatives to the Royal Photographic Society for admission as Associates of the Society, in which they were successful. They were also tireless in providing prints for publication, particularly from 1948 onwards for Rupert Bruce-Mitford's Sutton Hoo research projects. Miss Lack and Miss Wagstaff cherished their photographs together with their brief involvement in archaeology and subsequently their longer relationship with the British Museum. A large debt is owed to them as their 'amateur' photographs are now the primary source for the reconstruction of the ship — all Commander Hutchison's field notes and plans are lost and the Science Museum, who provided a photographer with a magnificent large format plate camera to record the survey of the ship, took less than 25 photographs, many of them general views of the work in progress. Happily, one of these captured Miss Lack and Miss Wagstaff on either side of the hull — the only photograph to show them together, even if separated by the width of the ship impression!



Left: Miss Lack and Miss Wagstaff either side of the Sutton Hoo ship, photographed during August 1939 by the photographer from the Science Museum.

(Photograph: Courtesy The British Museum)

Angela Care Evans is Curator of the Sutton Hoo material in the Dept. of Medieval and Later Antiquities at the British Museum, editor of Volume 3 of 'The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial', and author of the book, 'The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial'.

We must acknowledge the generosity of Angela and the British Museum in providing information and photographic material for our publications.

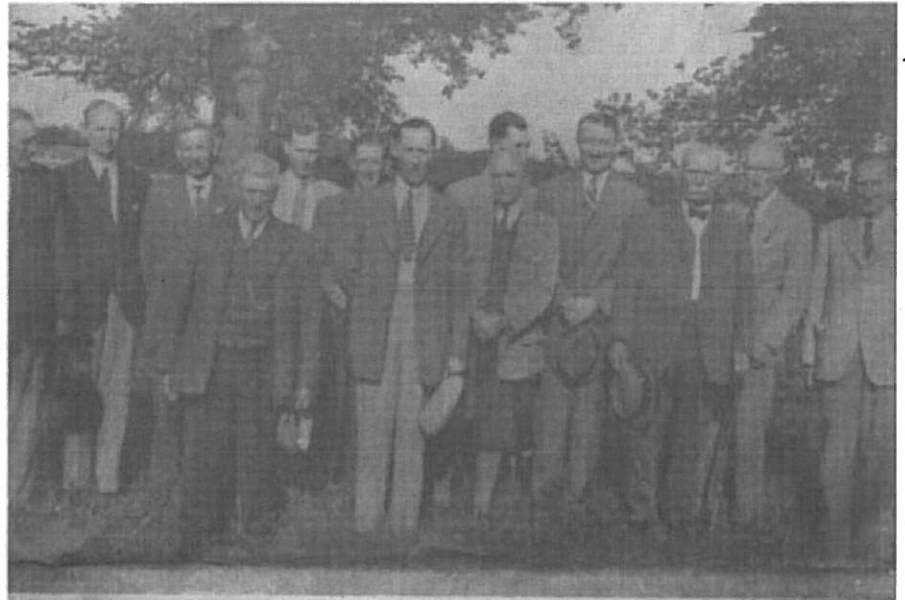
In Search of Memories of The Inquest

by Rosemary Hoppitt

The finds from the 1939 excavation at Sutton Hoo, being of gold and silver, necessitated the holding of a Coroner's Inquest in order to investigate the ownership, and to establish whether the find was 'Treasure Trove'. The inquest was held in the parish hall (now demolished) at Sutton on 14 August 1939, and was reported in the local and national press, and broadcast on the BBC radio news. Photographs of the event show the crowded village hall, with the main part of the treasure displayed in a glass case, guarded by the local constabulary (see **SAXON** 19). **The Daily Mail** produced the memorable headline 'Buried Ship's Treasure Goes to a Woman', following the verdict of 'fourteen country jurymen' who had been 'summoned by the village constable'.

In May last year, I spent a pleasant afternoon in the company of Mr and Mrs Frank Houchell, formerly of Sutton. Mr Houchell was one of the fourteen jurors, and we talked about his memories of Sutton Hoo and the inquest. Mr Houchell grew up in Sutton village, and as a boy recalled many visits to Sutton Hoo House with his friend, including being allowed to take fallen peaches from the glasshouses. In the days before the Pretty family he recalled the daughters of the house riding out with accompanying groom across the (then) surrounding heathland.

To us today the Sutton Hoo ship burial represents one of the most important archaeological finds of all time, and any news



Above: The Jury at the Sutton Hoo Treasure Trove Inquest, August 1939 (Photograph first published in the Woodbridge Reporter).

about Sutton Hoo eventually finds its way into the national press. However, these great events sometimes have less impact locally than we might believe.

Mr Houchell, then a young man, recalled that in 1939, the local people were 'aware of it' and it gave rise to a 'bit of a stir and excitement'; but despite being a member of the jury, Mr Houchell didn't then feel that he

was playing a part in a major historical event. The family's involvement on the day was not restricted just to the village hall. The inquest made a greater impact on the Houchell household — as one of the few owners of a telephone in the village, they were much in demand and journalists attending the inquest paid them £5 to be able to use it to telephone their copy through to their editors in London!

The Military move in.....

There are many apocryphal tales told of the events at Sutton Hoo in the period of the 1938/39 excavations and afterwards. Some of these relate to the damage done to the burial ground while the site was used from 1942 as a training ground by the army. The identity of the perpetrators and the extent of the damage varies with each story. Elements of the tale appeared in the **East Anglian Daily Times** of 20 February 1946 when the report of a meeting of the Suffolk Preservation Society's General Committee expressed disquiet at the revelation that:

During the war the great tumulus which yielded up its 13 centuries-old secret in 1939.... became the happy hunting ground of units of the British Army. They used the cavity where the ship burial was discovered as a tank-practising pit. When the obliteration was complete the site was duly fenced off and 'Out of Bounds' notices appeared.

The story re-appeared in the **East Anglian Daily Times** on 12 September

1946, with slightly altered detail:

BURIAL SHIP DESTROYED BY U.S. TANKS

Mr George Bird, of Ipswich, addressing the Southwold Archaeological Society.... said that American tanks had destroyed the Sutton Hoo "burial ship".... Today, he said, only a hollow in the ground indicated the spot where the.... funeral ship of the seventh century was placed.

The news spread to the national press, and the **East Anglian Daily Times** of 17 September 1946 reported under the headline:

FALSE ALARM

Readers of the 'The Times' on Thursday last week must have had a shock when they read under the heading "Burial Ship' Destroyed by U.S. Tanks," the statement that American tanks had destroyed the Sutton Hoo 'burial ship' which was discovered in 1939. All the remains of the ship burial.... were carefully removed in the early Summer of

1939, and there had been no destruction, of course, of the burial ship.

It was due to the intervention of Lt Ted Wright, who before the war had been responsible for excavating the Bronze Age boats from Ferriby on the River Humber, that the British Museum was informed and further damage was prevented. Nevertheless, contrary to the reassurances of the **East Anglian Daily Times**, the results of the military activity left archaeologists with 'a much battered impression' of the ship when they came to re-excavate in the mid 1960s.

Other legacies that the army left included the anti-glider ditches that cross the site, slit trenches dug into various mounds, large quantities of expended shell cases and ammunition clips as well as live mortar bombs and grenades. The find of a cap badge of the South Wales Borderers adds further clues to the spread of nationalities who may have been involved in these war-time events!

.....followed by the Land Army

Archaeological activity at Sutton Hoo finished in August 1939, and on 3 September Britain declared war on Germany. Following the death of Mrs Pretty in December 1942, the house was used as a hostel for land girls. Lady Joan Stephens, one of our Society members, wrote telling of the time her mother, Evelyn Miles, spent there as Warden of the hostel from 1944-1946. She and her sister Margaret Whittuck recalled her mother's comments about the '...American troops stationed nearby, driving their tanks over the grass causing her so much concern about the damage being done; also a very noisy night with the soldiers letting off explosives very close to the house when Benjamin Britten was giving a piano recital to the girls, and his consequent anger at the disturbance...'

The photographs below show two groups of girls photographed with Evelyn Miles during her period of office. In addition the newspaper article from the **Woodbridge Reporter** shows the girls relaxing in the main hall 'fitted out as a lounge where they can play table tennis, have a tune on the piano, listen to the wireless or sit by the fire to read or do needlework.'

Right: Article from the Woodbridge Reporter and Wickham Market Gazette of Thursday 21 March 1946.



Above and Right: Evelyn Miles with groups of Land Army girls photographed in the main hall at Sutton Hoo House during the period 1944 - 1946.


(Photographs: Courtesy of Margaret Whittuck)



WOODBRIDGE REPORTER AN

SUTTON LAND ARMY HOSTEL

GIRLS "CARRY ON" IMPORTANT WORK



Sutton Hoo, the lovely residence of the late Mrs. Frank Pretty, J.P., and in the grounds of which lie the remains of the centuries-old Ship Burial, has been used by the Women's Land Army as a hostel for the past three years. The spacious rooms now resound in the evenings with the healthy laughter of some fifty or sixty young ladies.

To talk to these members of the W.L.A. is most interesting, as they represent a great variety of home towns, and held jobs in civilian life very different from those they now engage in. Some were machinists in the North of England, one was a telephone operator, some worked on munitions, one assisted in the manufacture of airmen's flying kits, and others helped to make khaki battle dress, and were shop assistants. Most of them are now engaged in gang work in the fields, and three or four of them are milkers, who rise daily at 5.15 a.m.

One striking characteristic of them all is the fact that they have such healthy appearances, the long and arduous duties in the open air seeming to contribute to their health.

Those who are not milking have week-ends free from duty, and after finishing work in the evenings, they are quite at liberty to use their spare time in any manner they think fit. The hostel is delightfully free from all disagreeable restrictions, but the girls are expected to be indoors by 10.30 nearly every evening, although twice a week extensions are allowed. They are also expected to make their own beds each morning, but otherwise are free from domestic duties in connection with the Hostel—incidentally some of the bedrooms are centrally heated.

The principal room of the house has been fitted out as a lounge for the girls, where they can play table tennis, have a tune on the piano, listen to the wireless, or sit by the fire to read or do needlework. Another room has been laid aside as a "Quiet Room" for letter writing.

(of the Hotel proprietor and

Childhood memories of Sutton Hoo by Penelope Phillips

When I was a child, in our bathroom there was a basket full of bathtime toys. Among them was a long, smoothly shaped piece of wood with tapered ends that curved slightly upwards. It floated, and it counted among the other toys as a boat. I was told that it was 'the Sutton Hoo ship'. It was my earliest encounter with the famous discovery in Suffolk with which my father had the great good fortune to become involved. The piece of wood was my father's attempt to recreate for his children the great ship that had left nothing but its ghost in the sand of the heath at Sutton Hoo.

I wish I still had that wooden sketch — I can still recall the pleasure of stroking its silky smoothness, and how the grain stood up in ridges. It disappeared long ago. When I think about it now, I see that it was the ship that caught our imagination at the time, rather than the treasure it contained. Goodness knows, the treasure was dazzling, but it was my father's desire to convey something of the ship itself that stuck in my childish mind. The ship was like a living thing caught in amber.

In due course we were taken to the British Museum to see the Sutton Hoo exhibit. It included a number of photographs of the excavation in 1939. Inevitably my father featured in some of them, mostly bent double and recognisable mainly by his size. Great was my childish pride in these pictures — none of my friends could boast of having pictures of their father on display in the British Museum! It was undoubtedly my father's personal connection with the discovery that meant most to me.

In those days it was the Romans who captured most our interest. Their roads, villas and posting stations were dotted over the Ordnance Survey maps that were my father's day-to-day preoccupation when we were children. Their way of life and the traces they left behind were easier to grasp than those of the Anglo-Saxons, who seemed that much more shadowy. This is changing now, as the story of Sutton Hoo unfolds. Soon this great site will become even more of a beacon, and I watch its new life with interest, in my father's name.

Penelope Phillips is the daughter of Charles Phillips who took over the direction of the 1939 Sutton Hoo excavation from Basil Brown when the importance of the burial became clear. We were delighted to be able to welcome Penny to Sutton Hoo in March for our Spring lecture. See also Pin Board on the back page under 'Thanks'.

Very many thanks to those who have contributed items about this period of Sutton Hoo's history. I hope we shall be able to do a similar edition in the future relating to the 1960s. (Editor)



Above: Charles Phillips, Margaret his wife, and son John. The photograph, taken in 1944 shows Charles Phillips in battledress. He served in the RAF at Medmenham, where he worked on air photograph interpretation.

(By kind permission of Penelope Phillips)

Sutton Hoo: Winter of 1945/6



*Left:
The Mound 1 ship trench experiences the rigours of winter*

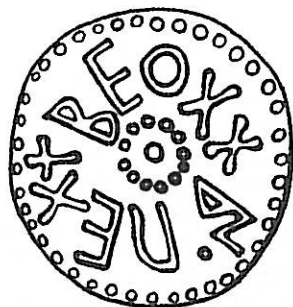
*(Photographs:
Courtesy of Margaret Whittuck)*

Right:

Sutton Hoo House from the south showing it in its original form with the upper storeys of the right hand wing before they were demolished.



1998 Sutton Hoo Society Conference: The Creation of East Anglia: Cultural identity in the Fifth to Ninth centuries



Saturday 14 November 1998 saw what we hope will be the first of the Sutton Hoo Society conferences. Held in Woodbridge the event attracted an audience of some 140 people, and interest from a larger number who, sadly, were unable to attend due to limitations on numbers.

The theme of the day was the Creation of East Anglia, with speakers from a number of related disciplines exploring the period of the 5th to 9th centuries to tease out some of the threads of the region's developing cultural

identity. As promised our speakers have provided résumés of their lectures for publication. They appear in the order in which they were presented at the conference. We would like to express our thank to the speakers and to the co-Chairmen on the day, Martin Carver and Angela Care Evans, for their contributions to a most successful first conference event.

Our next will be in autumn 2000 — see the Back Page, and Future Events section for details.

Business continues under new management? Agricultural changes in East Anglia AD33-AD900 by Peter Murphy and Patricia Wiltshire

A great deal of information about farming and the organisation of the landscape in East Anglia between the 4th and 10th centuries AD has been provided by biological evidence, and particularly through plant macrofossil analysis and palynology (the analysis of pollen, spores and other microfossils). Plant macrofossils are the remains of fruits, seeds, and other plant parts which are visible with the naked eye, and they are often preserved in waterlogged deposits such as peat and lake sediments, but can persist in any environment where microbial activity is inhibited. Archaeological features and buried old land surfaces often yield important palynological data.

Roman agriculture was based on the production of spelt wheat, some barley, other cereals, and pulses. In Britain, the very high densities from Roman sites of charred cereal remains, industrial-scale facilities for drying malt and grain, and numbers of large granaries all suggest that the earliest 'agribusiness' originated during the Roman-British period. By contrast, densities of charred cereals are very much lower at Early Anglo-Saxon sites. Crops so far identified comprise emmer, spelt, and bread wheats, barley, oats, rye, peas, and horsebeans. Records of spelt and emmer are thought to indicate some continuity of production in the same fields throughout the Roman period to the 5th century.

There are good reasons for thinking that Middle and Late Saxon agriculture was innovative and expanding. Farming was adapted to local conditions of soil and climate, and cultivation extended onto land which presented problems for crop production. The predominance of charred barley (with peas, beans and flax) at sites on the Norfolk silt fens was related to the cultivation of saline soils, even before the construction of the Fenland Sea Bank; rye-dominated samples from Brandon, Suffolk indicate tillage of the drought-ridden sandy soils of the Breckland; and samples from Springfield Lyons, Essex suggest an emphasis on oat cultivation on clay soils.

Roman sites in the region have produced abundant macrofossils of 'exotic' food (e.g. olive, pine-nut, and dates) but these have not been found in Early Anglo-Saxon sites. This could be a function of a dearth of suitably-aged, waterlogged deposits available for macrofossil analysis. But it could also be a consequence of the severing of long-distance trade links in the 5th century so that important 'exotic' foodstuffs ceased; or continued at a very low level. Furthermore, political instability would have discouraged long-term agricultural investment in, for example, fruit and nut orchards. The evidence from macrofossils for the re-introduction of foreign crops in the Middle Saxon period is sparse at

present, though walnut has been identified at Brandon.

There is a popular misconception that from the early 5th century, land was neglected and scrub and woodland encroached over wide areas of fertile soils in lowland England. This idea was based on palynological data from upland peat areas in the north and west of Britain where, indeed, there is evidence for woodland regeneration at this time. Quite different results have been obtained from eastern England.

Early palynological work at Old Buckenham Mere showed that the Roman landscape was largely cleared of woodland, and that there was extensive arable farming.



Map of East Anglia, showing sites mentioned in the Conference texts.

There was no break in agricultural activity in the post-Roman period, and there was a marked expansion of cereal-growing in Saxon times, with hemp and flax also being cultivated. Palynological analysis of Early Anglo-Saxon deposits at Micklemere, Suffolk has suggested that the area was dominated by a pastoral economy and that cereal production did not start until Middle Saxon times. Similar results have been obtained from peats at Lakenheath Air-Base. At Brandon, there was cereal production throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, with the cultivation of rye and hemp in Middle Saxon times. Results from Slough House Farm in Essex indicate a very open, almost treeless, landscape in the early 7th century, with associated cereal farming. By far the best dated palynological analysis in

East Anglia, however is that from Scole, on the Norfolk/Suffolk border, where an extensive series of radiocarbon dates was obtained. Here, the landscape has been largely cleared of trees during the Iron Age and Roman periods, and it remained open through the 5th century. Cereal production actually seems to have expanded at the site in early Anglo-Saxon times, and there is evidence for viticulture in the Middle Saxon period.

In summary, the results so far obtained show that the landscape was even more open in the Early Anglo-Saxon period than in Roman times; there is no evidence for widespread woodland expansion in the post-Roman period. Farming continued, with arable production at some sites and an emphasis on pastoral farming at others. The

Middle Saxon period was a time of agricultural expansion onto a wider range of soil types and there was also diversification involving the cultivation of fibre crops and, at Scole, viticulture.

Peter Murphy is an English Heritage contractor in environmental archaeology, based in the Centre for East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia. Pat Wiltshire is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Archaeology, University College, London where she studies the palynology (pollen) of archaeologically-relevant deposits.

Who needs a hypocaust anyway? by Judith Plouviez

This paper looked at archaeological evidence in the region for the 4th century in order to provide a framework for the very marked changes in material culture during the 5th century.

Many towns show evidence of changes — recent research on Colchester shows that there were a diminishing number of smart town houses in the 4th century and less evidence of industrial activity. Although it has been suggested that wealth moved from the cities to the countryside, including the small towns, the pattern at Pakenham in Suffolk was also one of fewer buildings and less industry. At Hacheston in east Suffolk the excavated settlement area was abandoned during the second half of the 4th century. Coin evidence shows that a decline affects the whole of the east coast area of Suffolk, and probably also east and north Norfolk. We can only guess whether this results from the military garrison taking too much out of the hinterland of the Saxon shore forts, or whether the forts were failing to protect the coast against pirates or if there was some other combination of factors — but the result is a largely invisible or much

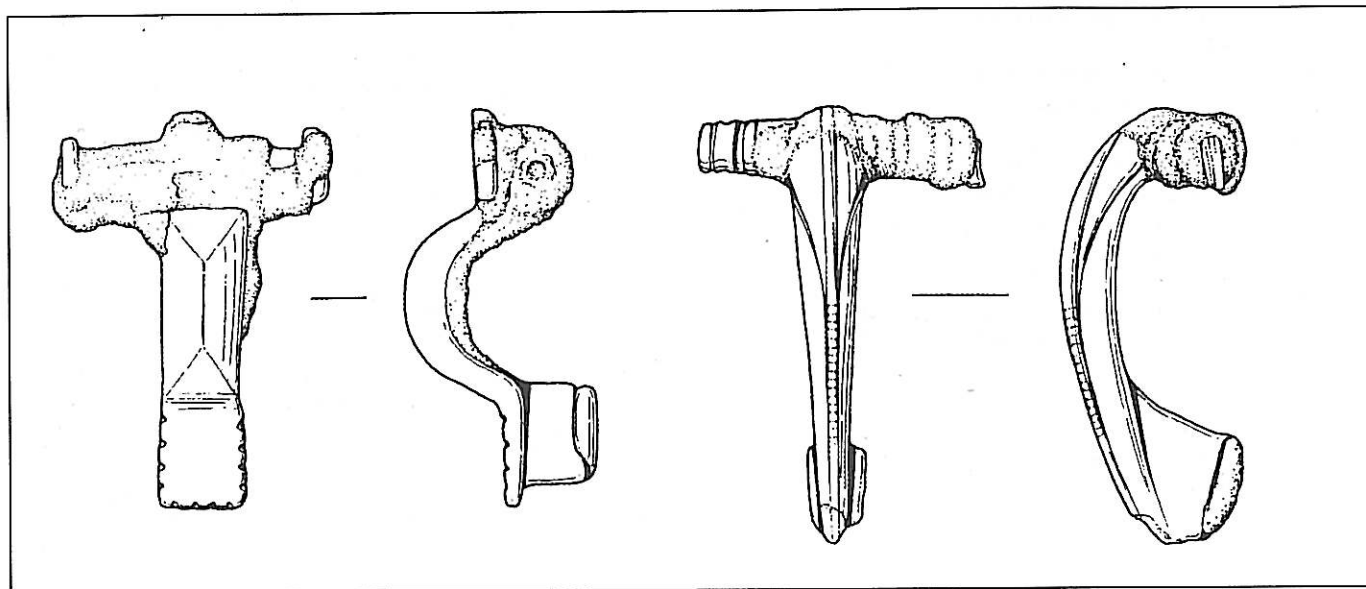
reduced population some 40 years before the same phenomenon affects the rest of the region. Typical villas with painted walls, tessellated floors and hypocausts form only a tiny proportion of the East Anglian rural sites and some areas lack them altogether. Some of the villas seem to grow more opulent at the expense of smaller farms nearby — this pattern is found in north Ipswich around the Castle Hill villa. Elsewhere in the county about two-thirds of the villas seem to be flourishing in the late Roman period, but only a small minority have produced evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity. It seems likely that most of the very rich elite do disappear around the time of the end of Roman rule in the early 5th century, perhaps evidenced by the number of hoards (some 20 recorded so far in Norfolk and Suffolk) deposited sometime after 408 and not recovered.

The ordinary rural sites are mostly known only from surface finds. Metal-detected coin groups from some allow us to identify which were active until the end of the 4th century (when bronze coin imports stopped) — this was a minority of settlements in the east of

Suffolk but about 75% of those to the west. Although a third of the latter also produce pieces of Anglo-Saxon metalwork the same is true of several eastern sites where Roman activity apparently ceased by the 360s. And the evidence from West Stow shows that the Anglo-Saxons were apparently collecting Roman coins and pottery sherds for their own kinds of re-use — a pattern difficult to detect from the surface evidence. The problems of defining identity in the 5th century are also illustrated by the distribution of 'supporting arm' brooches, a Germanic type which turns up on late Roman sites with no other indication of post-Roman activity as well as in Anglo-Saxon burials. An interesting recently excavated example was on a burial inserted into a late 4th-century pit at Scole — the woman also wore a late 1st-century hinged brooch, a string of beads and leather shoes.

Jude Plouviez has worked for the Suffolk County Archaeological Service for many years specialising in the archaeology of the Roman period. She has been involved in excavations at the Roman small towns of Hacheston, Pakenham, Icklingham, and does a great deal of work with detector users

Below: Late Roman brooch and early Saxon supporting-arm brooch from Scole, Norfolk



East Anglian identities by Kenneth Penn

Perceptions of early English identity are coloured by Bede's efforts to assert a single *gens Anglorum* from his 'three most formidable races of Germany... Angles, Saxons and Jutes', and by more modern terms, such as Anglo-Saxon and Migration Period.

In East Anglia migration seems evident in the very visible and identifiable material culture seen in graves, containing individuals whose burial (dressed) and costume (with wristclasps, girdlehangings and cruciform brooches) seem typically 'Anglian', and reinforces the notion of tides of migrants. A pity, then, that burial dressed, with grave-goods, was a 'Germanic' practice, and any surviving Romano-Britons hereabouts remained invisible or unrecognised, or adopted a 'Germanic' identity and way of burial.

At first, identity was arguably less concerned with territory than with peoples, who might be recorded in the *-ingas* names such as the Rodings, Sonning, Spalding, Clavinging and the Happings in Happisburgh. Some of these names may refer to peoples (and identities) already obscure by Bede's day; some may refer to people named in an early tribute list

(Tribal Hidage), which names the East Angles and minor groups such as the 'dwellers in...Elmet...Chilterns... Peak', and others with an independent existence and political identity, soon to be lost.

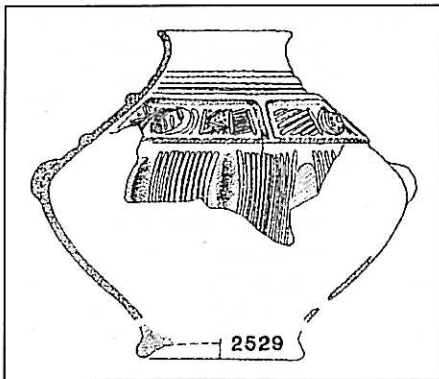
When can territory, power and lordship be equated with discrete and distinct identity? The East Anglians had kings from the mid-6th century, in a territory defined by dykes and the River Stour in the south. However, recent dating of Fleam Ditch (Phase 1) to the 'Late Roman/Early Saxon' period raises the possibility that 'East Anglia' was already defined by Romano-Britons or early 5th-century migrants (though hardly attested by material culture), with Fleam Ditch recut and Devils Dyke dug in an act of territorial continuity which came to define the kingdom. There is some evidence for large-scale directed emigration from the 5th century, seen in cremation cemeteries, containing pots with close matches in Angeln (see left), followed by migration from further north in the 6th century, in particular from west Norway to eastern England, establishing 'Anglian' identity and material culture.

Some support for an 'Anglian' territory already defined by the 6th century comes from the distribution of women's wristclasps, which are not found south of the River Stour (in 'Saxon' territory), and which begin to appear in the later 5th century.

The evidence suggests coherent groups of migrants, with social structures and rules for burial practice, common patterns of burial (dressed, weapons for adult males), but some local rules about the expression of identity. For example, children/juveniles were marked out by flexed burial (Westgarth Gardens), unflexed burial (Sleaford), or with the sole accompaniment of a pot (Morning Thorpe). Local rules might concern layout, strictly west-to-east or fairly haphazard in any cemetery, with rules about grave sizes (longer at Buckland, Dover than at Morning Thorpe, and much longer than those at West Heslerton (Yorks)). Rules about pots also varied between cemeteries, being deposited whole (Westgarth Gardens), or as sherds (Bergh Apton and Wakerley), with more decorative pots for adults.

Within England, whilst material or cultural links show that 'tribal' groups and kingdoms were not hermetically sealed from general influences (e.g. the wide distribution of pots from single sources), local practices point to discrete communities and identities, as the place-names hint. Material culture was used to express and even create identity, especially in the mortuary domain, reflecting various levels or sorts of identity, from 'ethnic' and 'tribal' to the natural identities of age and sex and individual status.

Kenneth Penn is an Anglo-Saxonist specialising in cemetery archaeology. He manages fieldwork for the Norfolk Archaeological Unit and is author of reports on the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Spong Hill, North Elmham and Harford Farm near Norwich



Left: Cremation urn from Spong Hill Anglo-Saxon cemetery

The Same only Different by Nick Higham

Issues surrounding ethnicity have been explored by scholars in a variety of disciplines in recent years. Some have focused on the biological determination of identities, others have investigated social construction while others again have concentrated on authorship as a factor which has conditioned attitudes towards ethnicity. In looking at early East Anglian identities from the privileged and very distance perspective of the late 20th century, all of these approaches have some bearing on the way in which we construct our own particular visions of the past and seek to investigate how identities were constructed and manipulated in that past.

The number of texts still extant from the period is very small and it seems clear that their authors have exercised an inordinate influence over the way in which we view the past. Bede's underlying model of historical writing was conditioned by the bible and the style of historical narrative typical of Late Antique Latin writers such as Rufinus and Orosius, within which the central driver of

history was the relationship between God and his people. Such a vision necessitated a robust vision of group identity, with little opportunity for individuals or groups passing from one ethnicity to another. To Bede, therefore, there was a profound distinction between the heretical and perverse Britons whom God had abandoned and placed under English control and the 'Angles or Saxons' whose control of Britain was in accordance with His rule, although he left us few clues as to how in practice contemporaries distinguished between them. Bede was far less interested in lesser group identities: all Britons were Britons *per se*, without local or regional identities being acknowledged. The Germanic peoples of Britain were distinguished as regards their origins but otherwise treated as local branches of a single, morally constructed whole, once that is the dynasties ruling over each had accepted Christianity and the guidance of bishops.

Politics, group identity and social intercourse were not remotely central to

Bede's purposes, yet his long and complex text does allow us some insight into interactions between local dynasties and the shift from hegemonal structures towards statehood or proto-statehood which coincided with, and of course largely depended on, the conversion of English courts to Christianity. This is visible, for example, in the interaction of several regional powers in the Fenland and in both Mercian and East Anglian interventions among the East Saxons.

A powerful weapon of the encroachment of larger ethnicities on their neighbours was the royal patronage of monasteries and regional cult centres. Although this was arguably not exclusively a Christian phenomenon, it is most visible under Christian kings. So, for example, the foundation of Ely under a daughter of the East Anglian King Anna effectively extended the dynasty's influence into a marginal area where it necessarily competed with Mercian control of Middle Anglia.

Mercian influence was spasmodically extended over East Anglia and the East Saxons under Penda and his sons but Bede drops hints that the Wuffingas sought to construct an enlarged regional identity, to include several fenland communities and perhaps the East Saxons, whose king Swithelm was baptised by Cedd (the Northumbria-originating bishop) at Rendlesham with King Aethelwold of the East Angles as sponsor. The Wuffings were, therefore, engaged in an unequal yet mutual relationship with the dominant Mercian kingship, asserting their claim to be the most powerful regional dynasty in east England between the fens and the Thames, yet acknowledging themselves to be within the orbit of a broader Mercian leadership.

Felix's *Life of Guthlac* reveals something of the positioning of the East Anglian court in the early 8th century. Felix featured the sanctity of a royal Mercian saint who was particularly favoured by Aethelbald of the Mercians, yet he himself wrote for King

Aelfwald of the East Angles. His vision of Guthlac is of a very well-connected figure with close connections with both elites and therefore to an extent serving as a bridge between them. He twice juxtaposed 'Mercian' and 'East Anglian' miracles in a way that implied that his purpose was to stress a shared ownership of this highly political cult. The East Anglian court was, therefore, buying into a single Anglian or Saxon identity under Mercian leadership in ways which must have been pleasing to King Aethelbald yet at the same time making statements about the regional significance of King Aelfwald and the East Anglian identity which he represented. There was, therefore, a careful balancing of local and supra-local identities which had some potential for the East Angles should Mercian interests in the future be less powerful or less interested in Crowland and its environs. Felix was careful to feature Aethelbald centrally in his work but the enduring picture was not of the present all-powerful king but of

a powerless exile *in extremis*. Implicit in the text, therefore, is an assumption that the East Angles retain an interest in the Fenland even as far west as Crowland in Middle Anglia. Group identity is often seen as most critical and also as most negotiable along territorial margins. There seems good reason to think that regional dynasties were conscious of those issues in the age of Bede and took steps to both extend and defend constructions of ethnicity which benefited their own ambitions and status.

Nick Higham is Dean of Undergraduate Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Manchester. An archaeologist and historian specialising in Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons, he is renowned for in-depth analysis of late Roman and early medieval documents, particularly those of Gildas and Bede.

Filling in for Lost Sources: the East Anglian Kingdom seen through its Coins by Mark Blackburn

The Viking conquest of East Anglia in 869 in which King Eadmund was killed not only heralded an end to the independent kingdom of East Anglia, but it resulted in the loss of virtually all written records from the region. The few scraps of information that we have about the history of the East Anglian kingdom have to be gleaned from 'foreign' sources, such as Bede or the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and this is why for East Anglian history we have to rely so heavily on archaeological evidence and on the coinage.

Coins were struck in East Anglia from the 660s down to the death of Eadmund in 869 — and indeed beyond. The earliest coins do not carry the name of the king, but from the mid-8th century we have a plentiful and more-or-less uninterrupted run of coins that show who was ruling in East Anglia during the final 120 years. Here we find the names of five kings who had otherwise entirely dropped out of the historical record, and we can follow the course of the Mercian conquest, reconquest and eventual defeat by local forces.

Soon after the departure of the Roman army in 410, England more-or-less lapsed into coinlessness. The Anglo-Saxons had to learn about the use of money from their neighbours,

the Merovingians, a process which probably began in Kent in the second half of the 6th century. By the 7th century foreign gold coins were quite wide-spread in Eastern England, and regular local coin production began about 630 probably at London and Canterbury. The first East Anglian series, only recently recognised from its find distribution, was struck in the 660s or 670s. A specimen recently found at Billockby, near Great Yarmouth (below), has a runic inscription and very powerful imagery which has yet to be understood. In the 670s the gold coins in England and Francia were replaced by silver pennies (also erroneously termed 'sceattas'), which were produced on a much larger scale.

Minting in East Anglia recommenced c.715. There are two distinctive coinages that appear to emanate from different mints: Series R, with a crude bust and runic inscriptions, probably comes from Ipswich, while Series Q, which has a diverse range of animal and other designs, has a strong west-Norfolk focus to its distribution. These coinages were superseded in the mid-8th century by the first overtly regal issues, which carry the name of King Beonna. The number of known specimens has risen dramatically, from just six in 1975 to more

than 106 today. Another important recent discovery from excavations at Burrow Hill, Butley is a contemporary coin in the name of an 'Æthelbert', who can be identified as one of the two kings (Hun and Albert) who in 749 shared East Anglia with Beonna.

The sequence of royal coins document the changes in political control of East Anglia over the next 100 years. From this we can see that the Mercians dominated the region from Offa's conquest in the 760s or early 770s until Ludica's death in 827. However, their authority did not go unchallenged, for the period is interrupted by three brief reigns of local kings — another Æthelbert in the early 790s, Eadwald c.796-800, and Æthelstan c.821 — each of whom issued coins. After 827 a period of stability ensued under three successive East Anglian kings, Æthelstan, Æthelweard, and Eadmund. Edmund's death in 869 did not bring an end to the East Anglian royal line, as has been generally assumed. A few coins in the name of a King Æthelred and a King Oswulf — firmly linked to Edmund's coinage by a recent find from Kent — testify to a brief continuation of Anglian rule before the Vikings established their own government over the region.



Left: East Anglian runic gold shilling c 670

*Mark Blackburn is Keeper of Coins and Medals at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. He is a leading numismatist and one of a very small band of Anglo-Saxon coin specialists. He is author of numerous articles on the subject and editor of the *British Numismatic Journal*.*

Society Events

Guides Get-Together

Guides and helpers once more met for a social evening just before Christmas hosted by the Chairman. It is a good opportunity to meet, talk with and share the experiences of other guides, as well as providing the Society with a means of saying 'thank you' for the time and effort put in by all our volunteers.

The pre-season meeting held in March was a further opportunity to share experiences and meet with some of our new volunteers.

Spring Lecture

Our Spring Lecture this year was given by Bob Markham. Bob was formerly keeper of geology at Ipswich Museum, and to quote him 'knows nothing at all about archaeology'. However, after almost a lifetime's work at Ipswich he does have an intimate knowledge of the history of the Museum and the individuals associated with it. His subject 'What really happened in 1939', chronicled events which revolved around the excavation of the ship burial and its treasure in the summer of 1939. The archaeology is

fascinating, but equally fascinating is the story behind the archaeology — a story of personal and institutional rivalry told through the correspondence and diaries of the main players. Bob has spent a great deal of time sifting through the archives at Ipswich Museum and elsewhere to put together this intriguing account.

The talk initially formed the inspiration for the play, **The Sutton Hoo Mob** produced by the Eastern Angles Theatre Company. We hope that members will be pleased to hear that the Sutton Hoo Society is planning to publish Bob's account.

Society Reports

Annual General Meeting

The AGM took place at Woodbridge School on Friday 26 February, and was attended by approximately forty members. The Chairman reported on a most successful year.

We extended the 1998 visiting season with an extra five weekends on the calendar. The numbers of visitors during 1998 increased by 21% over 1997, with about 3400 visitors altogether, representing 178 public tours and 44 pre-booked tours. Together this has resulted in a substantial boost in income.

The Society has made a grant to the Sutton Hoo Research Project of up to £2500 towards the scientific dating of bone samples from the excavation. We have agreed with Professor Martin Carver that the £1000 bequest received from Mr Russel Hill of Clacton (see **SAXON** 25) will be used specifically to fund the dating of the 'Prince' and the horse, and this will be acknowledged in the Research Report.

Since the launch of our internet web site in 1997, we have had approximately 40,000 hits, proving that there is a lot of interest in Sutton Hoo out there in the rest of the world. We have been able to organise a number of visits through these contacts and answer an increasing number of enquiries for information from researchers of various levels — schoolchildren to academics. We have also heard from teachers seeking resource material for teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2. If you haven't yet visited us we are at www.suttonhoo.org.

We continue to maintain close contact with the National Trust, and through representation on the Sutton Hoo Advisory Group we have an input into the planning that has been taking place.

We are now entering into discussion with the National Trust to clarify the position and role of the Society within the new structure that will be put in place to run Sutton Hoo in the future. At present we are still undertaking responsibility for hosting visitors to the site, and will continue to do so for 1999 and 2000.

The Treasurer reported a healthy financial position, with a balance of £15,963 in hand at 30 September 1998, although £2000 of this is

Roskilde Ship Museum on the waterfront at Roskilde in Denmark (photographed during the National Trust exchange visit to Scandinavia).

A group of school children learn about their Viking maritime heritage through hands-on experience with reconstructed boats.

(Photograph: Angus Wainwright)



ear-marked to pay for illustrations in the Research Report, and a further £2500 for radiocarbon dating costs. The balance sheet for the November 1998 Conference was also presented, indicating a surplus of £750 (including £450 of direct sponsorship), which is to be carried forward to the Conference in Autumn 2000.

At the request of the Treasurer these accounts indicated separately the income and expenditure associated with (a) members' subscriptions and services and (b) site maintenance, sales, publicity and guiding. This had been done to enable the Society to see clearly where its present income and expenditure arises, ahead of possible changes in the management of the site by the National Trust.

The Treasurer reported to the meeting that communications difficulties with the existing accountants had led to many hours of extra work. The meeting gave a mandate to the Committee to appoint alternative accountants for the current financial year. In addition it was noted that the increased business of the past year had taken the Society into a different category under Charities' legislation, requiring the production of a written Annual Report to the Charity Commissioners. The Committee proposes to publish this on the Society's web site.

Dr Sam Newton has decided to resign from the committee. Nigel Maslin, one of the Society's guides was elected by the meeting to replace him. Nigel's links with Sutton Hoo go back to the 1968 campaign of excavation. The rest of the Committee was re-elected *en bloc*.

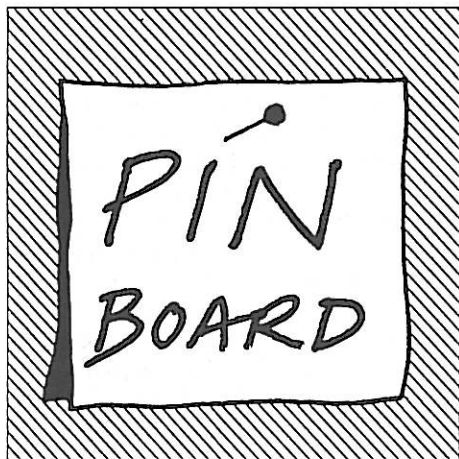
Following the business meeting, Angus Wainwright, the National Trust Regional Archaeologist presented an illustrated account of the trip made by members of the Trust to a variety of Scandinavian archaeological sites. Some of the ideas gleaned from these will be fed into the Trust's plans for Sutton Hoo.

Site visits

Although the visiting season runs from Easter to the end of October, we still continue to receive visitors right through the year. Between 1 November 1997 and March 1998, we hosted over 300 visitors, taking over £1000 in entrance fees and sales.

Field Excursion & Conference

In **September 1999** we shall be running another field excursion, and in **Autumn 2000** another Conference — see the back page for more details.



DIARY

SUTTON HOO OPENING TIMES

The site opened to visitors on Easter Saturday, 3 April, and will continue to be open on weekend and Bank Holiday afternoons up to and including Sunday 31 October. Guided tours begin at approximately 2pm and 3pm. A reminder that if you come by car you need to allow yourself 20 minutes to walk along the track to the site. Entrance charges are £2 for adults, £1 for 10-18 year-olds, under 10s are free. For Sutton Hoo Society members entrance is also free (on production of your current membership card). National Trust members are currently required to pay the entrance fee.

If you want to visit the site with a party or group of people, you can book a visit at any reasonable time throughout the year. Contact Stewart Salmond for party bookings (address below).

It is possible to visit the site if you are disabled, but we ask that you arrange in advance with the Visits and Guiding Secretary. This is because vehicular access to the site involves the use of a private driveway and farm tracks which are in use by farm vehicles all week, and as a matter of courtesy and safety we need inform the occupiers in

advance of unexpected vehicles, and give drivers directions. Thus if you, or someone you know who is disabled, wish to visit the site, please contact the Visits and Guiding Secretary well in advance of your visit (at least a week) so that arrangements can be made. Once the National Trust car park and the new access is complete access will be more straightforward.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Autumn Excursion

Year 991 in the **Anglo-Saxon Chronicle** records a reference to the Battle of Maldon:

In this year Anlaf came with ninety-three ships to Folkestone and ravaged the neighbourhood, went on to Sandwich, and thence to Ipswich, and overran the whole area, and so on to Maldon. And there Ealdorman Bryhtnoth and his fyrd came to meet him, and fought with him....

Come and join us to retrace some of the steps of Anlaf and his army on the Society's autumn excursion on **Sunday 26 September 1999**. The destination will be SE Essex; details are still being confirmed but all being well, we shall be re-visiting the site of the Battle of Maldon and the 7th-century church of St Peter on the Wall at Bradwell. Dr Sam Newton has once more agreed to lead the outing. Details will be circulated to members; if you have not received a booking form **please contact Andrew Lovejoy** at the address below.

Conference

Following the success of the conference held in 1998, we intend to run another in **Autumn 2000**. In the feedback from the conference it was clear that the most popular theme would be one relating to the North Sea, trade and ships. Thus that will be theme of the 2000 conference, and we are now beginning to plan for the event. A reminder that we were over-subscribed for the 1998 conference, with the

conference fully booked a month before the day — so ensure your place by returning your booking form (when you get it) promptly!

THANKS

The Committee wishes to express thanks to Penny Phillips, daughter of the late C W Phillips who excavated the Sutton Hoo ship-burial in 1939. Having answered our appeal for a contribution for **SAXON** Penny journeyed to Woodbridge in March to attend the Spring lecture at which Bob Markham gave his account of the events of summer 1939. She brought along with her, and generously donated for sale for the benefit of the Society, 28 copies of her father's autobiography **My Life in Archaeology**. We were delighted to be able to welcome her to the Sutton Hoo site, where she spent a perfect Sutton Hoo day — still air, blue sky, skylarks singing. Both the morning and afternoon were fully occupied; firstly observing the activities of children from Eyke primary school led by guides Jenny Cant and Lindsay Lee, and then a more 'adult' experience of a group of visiting Americans from Newark, New Jersey.

APPEALS

Our usual appeal for guides — if you would like to become one of the team, please get in touch with us. You do not have to be an Anglo-Saxon expert — more important that you can communicate the story of Sutton Hoo with enthusiasm and interest to our varied groups of visitors. Any ex-teachers out there who would like to take school parties round — we would love to hear from you too! Remember also the web site, and the teachers' notes to help with teaching at Key Stage 2.

If you would be interested in helping through selling tickets, books, postcards etc., in the ticket hut at the site we would also be pleased to hear from you.

Get in touch for any of these by contacting Stewart Salmond at the address below, or email the Society at chairman@suttonhoo.org.

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