



Recent Work on the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at RAF Lakenheath *A resume of the Spring Lecture*



The Lakenheath warrior buried with his horse. The shield boss can be seen lying on his chest and the sword by his left side. The upper iron band and handle of a bucket can be seen near the horse's head.
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In 1997 archaeological evaluation and excavation in advance of a massive new dormitory complex at USAF airbase RAF Lakenheath on the eastern edge of the fens in north-west Suffolk led to the discovery of a previously unknown Early Saxon cemetery. The cemetery lies close to an earlier cemetery discovered during previous construction work and partially excavated in 1959. Subsequently, in 1999, excavation on a site about 80m south-east of the 1997 site uncovered a further 59 graves which probably relate to the 1959 discovery. Graves were also reputedly found during the digging of the base swimming pool in the 1960s. Archaeological monitoring two years ago discovered an Early Saxon settlement site, consisting of two huts, about 400m to the east of the cemetery area. Approximately half a mile to the north, centred around Caudle Head Mere, a natural spring, is a large Iron Age and Roman settlement.

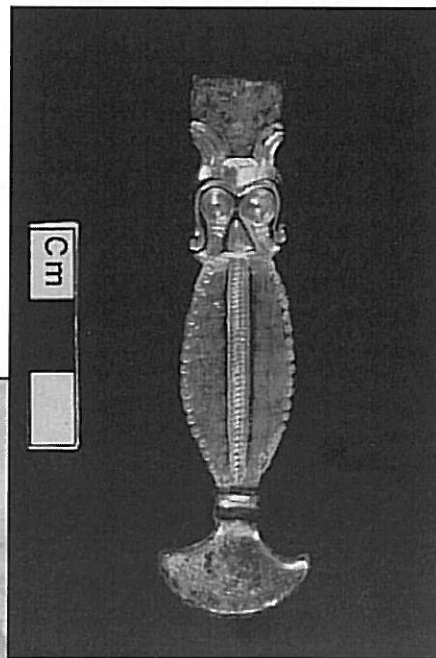
There are many factors which have served to make the 1997 excavation an important site. Evidence from the layout of the cemetery and other monitoring work demonstrates that the excavated area represents about 90-95% of the total cemetery. Another factor is that unlike many of the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in East Anglia there was some good bone preservation on the site because the chalk subsoil underlying the Breckland sand was very close to the surface. This means that the quality of information about the people themselves – diet, general health, stature, age at death, possible causes of death, signs of trauma – is very good and the completeness of the sample means that we can look at a cross-section of this community. The bodies are mostly supine and extended or slightly flexed and aligned W-E. Males, females and children are represented in roughly equal numbers across the entire area of the excavation.

The burials appear to date from the late 5th to early (mid?) 7th century demonstrating a continuity of burial from the 'migration period' to the 'final phase'. This is unusual and the number of apparently 'final phase' burials should allow some

detailed research into the nature of these burials to be undertaken. Preliminary work to refine some of the dating of the grave goods (in particular by John Hines and Birte Bruggman) has come up with some unexpected results. It looks as though there is a greater number (35 out of 121 dated burials) of 'final phase', 7th-century burials than was previously thought. This has enabled the first views on the development of the cemetery to be formulated, apparently showing that the earlier, 'migration period' burials are scattered across the entire site whereas the later burials, whilst appearing singly in all parts of the site are predominantly found in the north-eastern part of the cemetery. This coincides with a narrow band of intercutting graves which helps to support this distribution theory. There is obviously much more research to be done into this interesting aspect of the site analysis.

The most significant find of the excavation was the much publicised horse and warrior burial. This was the discovery of a man buried in a coffin accompanied by his spear, shield and sword, and his horse. Spectacular as this was, it was the presence of a bridle with highly decorated gilt bronze fittings in position on the horse's head, as it would have been worn, that was the truly remarkable find. Other finds within the grave were three cuts of lamb or mutton in the coffin and an iron bound bucket by the horse's head. The horse also had an iron girth buckle with attached mineralised wood, indicating the presence of a saddle. British Museum conservation staff were called in to lift the horse's head and then excavate the bridle in their laboratory. This led to the discovery of further fittings, fragments of the leather straps and small pieces of silver sheet

that had come adrift from the fittings. Assessment of the animal and human skeletal remains has been done by Terry O'Connor and Sue Anderson. This has shown the man to have been 5'10" tall and well-built with large muscle attachments on the bone. He was probably in his mid 30s when he died. The horse was 5-6 years old, male, 14 hands tall and of a stocky build, a modern comparison would be a Welsh cob or Dales pony. It had an arthritic condition in a hind leg which would have made it slightly lame. As well as the study of the artefacts much of the further work will concentrate on looking at the status of this man both within his settlement and in the wider Anglo-Saxon community. Angela Care-Evans who is studying the grave has pointed out that the quality of the bridle fittings is extraordinary within the context of this type of community cemetery where highly decorated and high status objects are rare and certainly none of the other grave goods in this grave (with the exception of the horse) are particularly special. She has suggested that the bridle may have been a gift or reward from an overlord for services rendered. The grave assemblage has been dated to mid 6th century.



Above: One of the bridle fittings; a gilded bronze pendant with silver appliqué decoration.

Copyright: The British Museum

As well as the horse burial there are other less usual burials. Most notable of these are a man buried with a quiver of seven arrows (only the arrowheads survive, clustered together, level with his knee with points downwards), three separate child burials with weapons, and wealthy female burials. The apparent status conferred by these burial styles and the implications for the position of women and children within society is another aspect of the site requiring careful analysis.

Further analysis is also to be done on the textiles recovered from some of these graves. Initial assessment by Penelope Rogers has shown a paucity of fine fabrics but an unusually high number of coarse textiles. It will be interesting to examine whether the few fine textiles occur in the apparently wealthy graves and the general correlation between textile types and grave goods.

Excavation last summer on part of the other Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery nearby has initially produced interesting results showing some clear differences between the sites, the main one being a much more rigid order to the cemetery with graves which are almost exclusively aligned in rows and an apparent grouping of the graves with the wealthier burials at the west end of the site. The most striking comparison is the presence of another horse and rider burial, very similar in most respects but without the ornamented bridle. Further analysis will compare these two apparently contemporary cemeteries in the hopes of being able to understand something about the nature of the communities they serve.

Finally it will be interesting to see whether our assumptions about what is going on and preconceptions about the significance of burial styles, grave goods and so on can stand up to rigorous analysis!

Jo Caruth has been a project officer with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service for six years and directed the 1997 and 1999 cemetery excavations at RAF Lakenheath.

See also:

Jo Caruth and Sue Anderson 'RAF Lakenheath Saxon Cemetery' Current Archaeology 163 pp. 244 – 250

For information on current archaeological work in Suffolk visit the web site at:

www.suffolkcc.gov.uk/departments/e_and_t/archaeology

Left: The reconstruction painting showing the warrior with his weapons and the horse wearing its bridle, produced to illustrate the BBC television programme Meet The Ancestors.

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The Electronic Beowulf Project

by
Linda Cantara

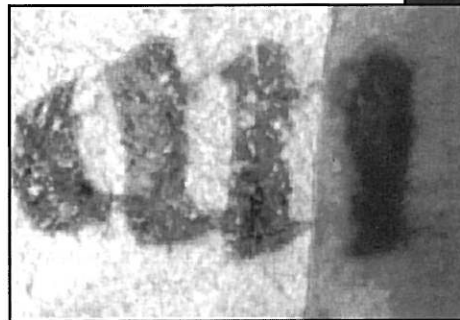
In 1993, under the auspices of the British Library's 'Initiatives for Access' programme, the Electronic Beowulf Project began to assemble an archive of full-colour digital facsimiles of BL MS Cotton Vitellius A. xv, more commonly known as the *Beowulf* manuscript. Under the academic directorship of Kevin Kiernan, professor of English at the University of Kentucky, the Electronic Beowulf Project has engaged the knowledge and skills of scholars, librarians, and computer scientists on both sides of the Atlantic. The culmination of this collaborative effort is the *Electronic Beowulf*, a 2 CD-ROM set published earlier this year by British Library Publications and, in North America, the University of Michigan Press.

The *Electronic Beowulf*, edited by Kevin Kiernan, is an image-based edition of the great Old English poem and an electronic collection of related resources for studying it. In addition to daylight images of the manuscript, also included are images captured with fibre-optic backlighting and ultraviolet fluorescence. Vitellius A. xv is one of many manuscripts in the British Library's Cottonian Library collection that was damaged by a great fire in 1731. The edges of the manuscript were badly burned and became extremely brittle. In the mid-19th century, the vellum leaves were inset in paper frames to prevent further crumbling of their edges. Unfortunately, the protective frames also covered hundreds of letters and parts of letters from view. To restore the readability of these letters, Kiernan and British Library conservator David French illuminated all the covered areas of the folios with fibre-optic backlighting and digitised the results. After image processing, the technique discloses whatever is hidden by the paper frames. Another technique developed by Kiernan combines ultraviolet fluorescence and digital imaging. Traditional ultraviolet photography requires long exposure times, subjecting manuscript, scholar, and camera operator to potentially harmful levels of radiation. Using ultraviolet fluorescence with a digital camera however, text invisible in ordinary light can be captured much more quickly.

In addition to digital facsimiles of the entire *Beowulf* manuscript, *Electronic Beowulf* includes two 18th-century transcriptions and two copies of the first edition with collations of the edition and the manuscript. The Thorkelin transcripts resulted from antiquarian Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin's discovery when researching Danish antiquities in the British Museum of an Anglo-Saxon poem erroneously referenced in a catalogue as the story of a Danish king named Beowulf. The copies of Thorkelin's *editio princeps* of the poem, published in 1815, include collations with the

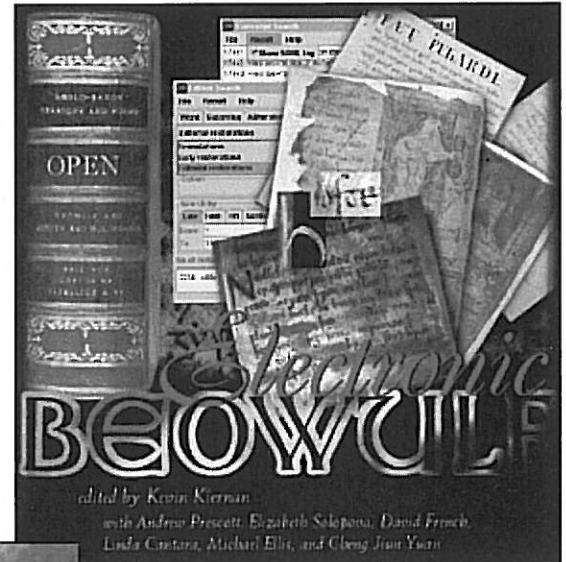
Right:
The opening image of the *Electronic Beowulf*

Below:
Beowulf: f.173v17:
The reading of the letter *n* in *geweorðen* is restored with fibre-optic backlighting now showing up the second stroke of the letter.



manuscript along with personal notes by their respective owners, Oxford scholar John Conybeare and Frederic Madden, who later became Keeper of Manuscripts of the British Museum. To study these materials simultaneously is, of course, impossible since they are held by the British Library in London, the Royal Library in Copenhagen, and the Houghton Library in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The *Electronic Beowulf* provides digital access to all these primary resources at once.

The *Electronic Beowulf* is, however, more than simply a collection of digital images. For example, each folio of *Beowulf* includes highlighted areas which, when clicked with a mouse, open sidebar notes concerning areas of special interest such as readings covered by binding frames but now revealed by fibre-optic backlighting, scribal erasures and corrections, or readings restored by the Thorkelin transcripts. Many of the sidebar notes also include images which, when clicked, open enlarged views of the areas of interest. After selecting either a left/right or top/bottom frame layout, a user can view the *Beowulf* images in one frame and the images of any other text in a second frame. One may view the images in 'sequential mode', that is like turning the pages of a book, or in 'collate mode'. Collate mode facilitates study of original gatherings by reconstructing sheets, starting with the outside sheet and proceeding sheet by sheet to the centre of each gathering.



A third browse mode called 'free' permits viewing any two images simultaneously in any order the user selects.

The *Electronic Beowulf* includes a new edition and transcript of the poem. The edition attempts to draw attention back to the manuscript, not to provide definitive solutions to problems that exist in the manuscript, while the transcript acts as a guide to studying details of the manuscript itself. Also included is a comprehensive glossarial index of every word in the poem. Clicking any letter on an alphabet sidebar on the right opens the glossary for that letter in a sidebar on the left. Clicking a headword in the glossary opens a second-level glossary with additional information including exhaustive references by folio-line and verse, links to related words and to vowel gradations of strong verbs, and notices of emendations and conjectural restorations in the edition. Both the electronic

Below:
Beowulf: f.166v10: Both Thorkelin transcripts (referenced as A and B) document this word as *sorh* but the *s* and *o* are now gone.



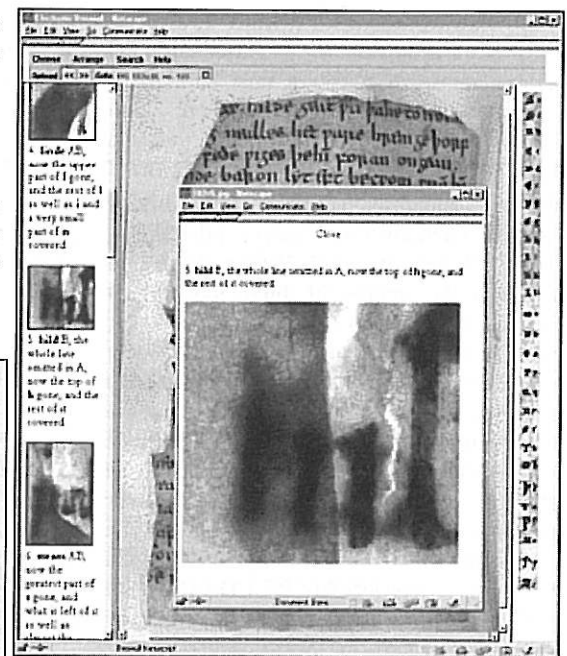
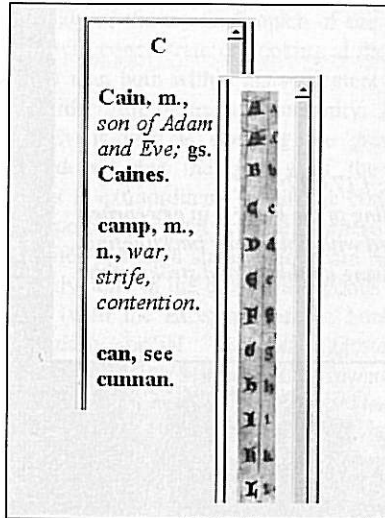
transcript and edition are encoded in SGML (Standard Generalised Markup Language) which facilitates extensive and varied searches of the manuscript. Using the search facilities, one may seek for and retrieve instances of specific words, substrings, or alliteration patterns, or detailed information such as scribal deletions and additions, letters restored by the Thorkelin transcripts or by ultraviolet fluorescence, or specific types of abbreviations used in the manuscript. Searches can be launched over the entire poem or may be narrowed to any fitt, folio or line of the manuscript.

A comprehensive collection of primary evidence, *The Electronic Beowulf* encourages ongoing discussion and debate concerning the problems the *Beowulf* manuscript presents. The edition and its glossary draw attention to sources in the manuscript by providing citations to folios, folio-lines, and verse-lines. The ancillary texts provide early solutions to problems in the manuscript, and in many instances, supply text that has been lost to the manuscript since the early transcripts and collations were completed. The digital facsimiles provide visual access to the manuscript itself, allowing both student and scholar to examine the primary evidence, in many instances more effectively than if perusing the original manuscript in the reading room of the British Library. An application of 21st-century technology to the presentation of an 11th-century manuscript, the *Electronic Beowulf* offers the potential for new insights into the first great long poem of the English language.

To view the **Electronic Beowulf** web-site which provides an insight into the project, go to www.bl.uk/diglib/beowulf

Right: Clicking a sidebar image opens an enlarged view of the image and its annotation.

Below: Clicking a letter in the alphabet bar on the right opens the corresponding glossary in the left sidebar.



The Electronic Beowulf team includes editor Kevin Kiernan, Andrew Prescott, Elizabeth Solopova, Michael Ellis, David French, C. J. Yuan, and Linda Cantara. The images are from the Electronic Beowulf with permission of the British Library Board.

The **Electronic Beowulf** can be purchased as a pack of 2 CD-ROMS plus a book, **Beowulf and the Beowulf manuscript** (1997) by Professor Kevin Kiernan of the University of Kentucky.

ISBN: CD-ROMS: 0 7123 0494 0
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Sutton Hoo and The National Trust – Development Work Starts by John Newman

Planning consent was granted last year for developments by The National Trust for the visitor centre and associated buildings in the area in and around Tranmer House (ex Sutton Hoo House). A standard archaeological condition applied to the consent to cover archaeological excavation and recording and The National Trust has commissioned the Field Team at Suffolk County Council to carry out the work.

Archaeological assessment and evaluation of the wider development area by trial trenching in 1997 (see **SAXON** 26) indicated the high potential of the area in general. However archaeological deposits within the direct development area proved to be at a low density and possibly elusive to standard evaluation methodology. Therefore the Brief for Excavation calls for careful and controlled

soil stripping followed by hand investigation and detailed recording to reflect the potential and importance of the area.

Arguably the development area lies within what may be termed a 'ritual landscape' situated 500 metres to the north of the Sutton Hoo cemetery on an adjoining spur of ground overlooking the River Deben in an area which also has high potential for evidence of prehistoric settlement and funerary activity.

The importance of this area for early medieval studies cannot be overstated as the nearby barrow cemetery is the best preserved burial ground of an early royal dynasty in the North Sea littoral. With the recovery of the 'Bromeswell Bucket' (see photograph opposite) and associated finds from the ploughsoil close to Sutton Hoo House in 1986 and 1987, this adjoining spur of land also has a

proven chronological link to the early/mid 7th-century cemetery nearby making the concept of a 'ritual landscape' a reality rather than a term casually coined to reflect a close spatial proximity. In addition the recovery of Early Saxon pottery and sherds of Ipswich ware (produced c. 650-850AD) from the ploughsoil around the bucket findspot indicates a Middle Saxon phase of activity only paralleled chronologically in the main cemetery by some of the execution burials.

Finally the Sutton Hoo cemetery lies within an extensive area of prehistoric settlement and related activity. The light soils of the Sandlings show a high density of prehistoric activity in general and the Sutton Hoo cemetery site has preserved a good sample through the sealing of various areas under Anglo-Saxon barrows. In addition the

less intensive agricultural regime of this area, under sheep grazing until relatively recently, has aided preservation. Similar prehistoric archaeological deposits could be anticipated around Sutton Hoo House and the evaluation trenching confirmed this with evidence of a probable round structure and field system of Iron Age date north-west of the development area. However the evaluation did not reveal any evidence for activity of Anglo-Saxon date, which was surprising given the close proximity of some of the trenches to the 'Bromeswell Bucket' findspot and scatter of Early and Middle Saxon pottery sherds.

The major objective must be the 'ritual' aspect of the development area with regard to the Sutton Hoo cemetery and the context for the 'Bromeswell Bucket'. Can such a context be elucidated for the find? Are burials contemporary with Sutton Hoo present or do the unstratified finds come from another ritual area such as a pagan temple or a high status settlement? Or are they simply a cache of tomb robbers loot? These questions are fundamental and must be the driving force behind any approach to the development area.

Middle Anglo-Saxon activity of 8th or early 9th-century date is indicated by the Ipswich ware finds. Does this represent settlement or related activity? The quantity recovered is comparable to scatters found round church sites in the Deben valley where a domestic origin is likely.

How extensive is the prehistoric activity? Can the field system be linked to the one around the barrow cemetery indicating an even more extensive planned, late prehistoric landscape? In addition can a coherent settlement plan be derived?

The development area has the potential to

contain well preserved heath-type soil profiles as it has not been under agriculture for nearly 100 years. These should therefore be sampled for preserved pollen and examined by a soil scientist to compare with results from the cemetery site. In addition bulk sampling of prehistoric and early medieval deposits has the potential to give information on past land use through the recovery of charred plant remains.

Recording the Edwardian Features

Sutton Hoo was established as a well equipped Edwardian residence and garden. The latter should be recorded prior to destruction as a social statement of this period. In addition 19th-century maps of the area show a sheepfold in what is now garden and excavation should locate and record this.

Over the Scheduled Ancient Monument at the barrow cemetery, ground disturbance will be restricted to 50mm on planned pathways. Here the main objective will be to record topsoil finds which may reflect underlying deposits and map visible features.

There are many questions to answer, hopefully this investigation will provide some answers and thereby throw more light on one of the major early medieval sites in north west Europe.

7th-century Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Coddendam near Ipswich

During the excavation of a known Iron Age site near Coddendam last year, a 7th-century cemetery was unexpectedly discovered. Out of some fifty excavated inhumation graves, three were notable due to their artefactual wealth. Of these three, two were probably

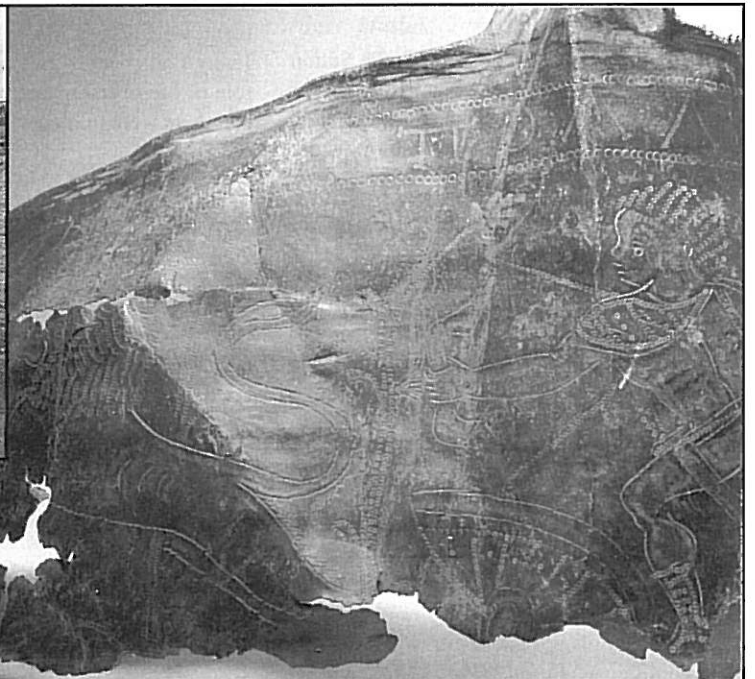
males with weapons (short swords, spears, shields) and Merovingian-derived copper alloy bowls while the third was probably a female in a 'bed-burial' with numerous iron fittings. As work on the grave goods has not started in any detail little more can be said about the artefacts recovered, though another grave did contain two coins which are probably late, base thrymsas or early sceattas (later 7th-century AD). The structure of the cemetery has also received little study yet but four ring ditches denoting barrows were recorded, of which two contained adult burials, one had no recognisable grave and the last was small (c. 4m diameter) and contained an infant's grave reminiscent of the adolescent's grave at Sutton Hoo (Mound 20). It is also possible that the graves in general were placed to respect the barrows.

While the 7th-century cemetery was a surprise on this particular site its location in Coddendam parish and this part of the lower Gipping Valley was not. Liaison with various responsible metal detector users over the last few years has seen the recording of numerous Early and Middle Saxon artefacts with clear evidence of high status settlement and metal working nearby. The Gipping Valley forms an obvious communication and trade corridor across Suffolk to the Lark Valley and Fen edge. An 'A14' trunk route for past ages. Work on the cemetery finds will therefore concentrate partly on these wider questions regarding the 7th century in Suffolk.

John Newman is the Field Officer for the project on behalf of the Field Team Archaeological Service for Suffolk County Council.



Above: The Excavation Team: from left to right Chris Topham Smith (Project Officer), Phil Camps, Tim Browne, Tony Fisher (Site supervisor), John Blow and Chris Moulis. (Photograph: Nigel MacBeth)



*Right: The Bromeswell Bucket found in 1987 north of the Sutton Hoo site; of Eastern Mediterranean origin, it is made from copper alloy decorated with a hunting scene, and bearing a Greek inscription. See *Antiquity* 63 (1989) pp. 295-311 (Photograph: R. Carr, Suffolk County Council) (It would be good to see this back in Suffolk as part of the new display: Editor)*

STOP PRESS: The results of this excavation indicate that a 6th/7th century cemetery of 'warrior-farmers' lay in this area, including inhumations with spears and shields, and cremations in pots and bowls. A notable find is a bronze hanging bowl. Details will be posted on the Sutton Hoo Society website (www.suttonhoo.org) and SAXON will carry a full account .

Society Reports

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 25 February at Woodbridge School. Approximately fifty members were present. The Chairman began by thanking those who had contributed their time and effort to the running of the Society and hosting visitors to the site. A report on the year's activities was presented. During the year membership had dropped slightly from 342 to 339, but visitor numbers had risen to 3500 and the Society had had an income of some £10000 from ticket sales and sales of books on the site.

Members' activities included the Spring Lecture by Bob Markham and the September outing to Essex (see **SAXON** 31). Close liaison had continued with the National Trust and the proposed development for the Sutton Hoo burial site, visitor centre and estate through the Advisory Group; the Committee had also met with Merlin Waterson the National Trust Eastern Region's Director and Richard Hill, to discuss and clarify the continuing role of the Society within the Trust's plans.

Two issues of **SAXON** were published, the July issue carrying resumes from the 1998 Conference, and a series of short articles focusing on the war years at Sutton Hoo to commemorate the 60 years since the 1939 ship-burial excavation. The web-site continues to be well used, with regular and frequent requests for information about visiting the cemetery site and about Sutton Hoo and the Anglo-Saxons from teachers and students. In order to improve the service to teachers, we have now put our teachers' notes onto the web site itself.

The Society has given £2000 to the Sutton Hoo Research Project towards illustrations for the final Report, and £2500 is still being held pending the completion of radio-carbon dating

of the horse bones from Mound 17. The small guide book to the site was updated and reprinted.

Financial Report

Following the mandate given at the 1999 AGM, the Committee appointed Scrutton Bland, Chartered Accountants in Ipswich, to act as the Independent Examiner of the Society's financial statements for 1998/99.

Subsequently, after consultation with the Charity Commission and the Independent Examiner, the Committee resolved to extend the Society's financial reporting period by three months to 31 December 1999. This resulted in the presentation to the AGM on 25 February 2000 of a set of financial statements covering the 15 months from October 1998 to December 1999 inclusive.

The Committee felt that for the future a January – December reporting period would be more appropriate for the activities of the Society, covering in full the extended visitor season at the site. It would also allow income and expenditure arising out of any Autumn Conference or Members' activities to be fully reflected in the same accounting period.

Committee Changes

Committee changes included John Newman and Andrew Lovejoy leaving the Committee. Both have served the Society well, John in his role representing the County Archaeological Service and Andrew as a former Guiding Secretary and currently as Membership Secretary. Elected by the meeting to replace them were Trish Mulholland-Middleton and Jenny Cant. Jenny has agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary. The remaining members were re-elected *en bloc*.

Exhibition Design

The business meeting was followed by a presentation by Chris Hudson of Chris Hudson Designs, who has been appointed by the National Trust to design the exhibition for the new visitor centre. Through a scale model and plans of his ideas he demonstrated the main components of the exhibition. The centre-piece, a reconstruction of the burial chamber from Mound 1 'at the moment of burial' will be furnished with replicas of the grave goods. High quality replicas of certain objects are also being commissioned for the display and the National Trust is seeking separate funding for these. **The Society Committee has identified the sword, shield and spear from the Mound 17 'prince's burial' as our contribution, and would welcome financial contributions from members towards this.** You will find a separate notice about this with this issue of **SAXON**.

If you are interested in contributing independently towards other items then please contact **Richard Hill**, at **The National Trust, Blickling, Norwich NR11 6 NEF** for the list of items and their costs. They include, for example, the helmet and sword, the lyre and the gold buckle from Mound 1.

New President visits Sutton Hoo

At the invitation of the National Trust, the Earl of Cranbrook, the Sutton Hoo Society's new president, was given a conducted tour of the Sutton Hoo burial site by Merlin Waterson, Regional Director and Richard Hill the Project Manager. Lord Cranbrook was able to discuss the site plans and also view the excavation that is taking place ahead of the building programme (see p.4 above.)

A mixed bag of residents and visitors: Flora, fauna and religion

Spectacular flowering of scarce plant

On a visit to the site in the spring this year with a historical group from Lavenham in Suffolk, botanist Robin Ford spotted an unusual plant growing on Mound 2. Robin reported that the plant, Shepherd's Cress or *Teesdalia nudicaulis* used to be common on the sandy heaths of the Sandlings, but became scarce due to afforestation and encroaching agriculture. It is described as often occurring around rabbit burrows, growing in disturbed soil and thus it seems likely that it is the rebuilding of Mound 2 in 1992 that has brought about the spectacular flowering of this diminutive but elegant plant.

A return visit a few weeks later, found seed pods forming ready for next year's hopefully equally spectacular flowering.

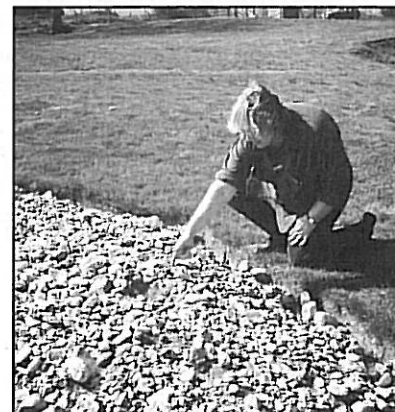
The plant was recorded during the early surveys of the site in the 1980s, and will be published in the Sutton Hoo Research Report (forthcoming).

Breeding on a Grave Site By Martin Atkinson, National Trust Senior Warden: Essex and Suffolk Borders

Have you noticed a pair of black and white birds, with long red bills, running a short distance away from the shingle marking the graves on and around Mound 5, then squatting down suddenly as if sitting on eggs? As you approach, the bird appears to be luring you on, crouching and running with wings half-spread and tail fanned. At other times the same two birds are on top of Mound 2, watching you carefully before taking to the air with loud

piping calls. The birds are Oystercatchers, and they are doing all they can to defend their nest against what they see as a potential attacker!

Below: Lindsay Lee points out one of the scrapes on the shingle grave-marker.



They breed mid-April to July, both sexes making small scrapes scantily lined with small pebbles and rabbit droppings, before one is selected by the female. They have chosen to make scrapes in the shingle which marks the graves (see picture bottom of page 6). Up to three light brown and speckled eggs are laid, and incubated for about 4 weeks, with the chicks leaving the nest almost immediately after hatching.

So if you are 'lured', or get a feeling you are being watched on this part of the burial site, don't linger too long, the Oystercatchers only want to get back to their nest!

Pagan meets Christian at Sutton Hoo By Lindsay Lee

A course on the Religious History of Ipswich run by the Suffolk Inter Faith Resource Centre at Suffolk College brought together a mixed group of individuals of different deeply-held beliefs, including an Anglican priest and a Pagan priest (see picture right). The fascinating and intellectually challenging story of Sutton Hoo led to some thought provoking questions and interpretations in the classroom, and eight weeks later, the visit to Sutton Hoo saw the bringing together of Paganism and Christianity on the burial site in the last days of the second millennium.



The group from SIFRE at Sutton Hoo

Society Events

Guides' Christmas get together

Guides once more gathered a couple of weeks before Christmas at the home of the chairman who hosted a convivial seasonal evening by way of thanks for the hard work undertaken during the 1999 season.

Guides' Study Day

On Saturday 11 March the Sutton Hoo Society guides spent the day together at Tranmer House to develop and improve our communication skills and to boost our knowledge of Sutton Hoo, and its current interpretation.

Mick Gill, from Leading to Excellence Ltd, led the initial session in which we reflected upon the purpose of presentations, the nature of our audiences and the ways we can communicate effectively with them. At Sutton Hoo on any weekend afternoon the public tours groups can include every level of interest from the family with babe in arms to a passing university academic. The challenge presented to guides therefore is to be able to

give a presentation and interpretation which sufficiently satisfies all needs and holds the audience's attention and interest. Together we were able to consider such things as clarity of presentation, interpretation of body language, both our own and our visitors', concepts of empathy with the audience and so on.

This was followed by intense academic input from Angela Care Evans on Sutton Hoo and its 7th-century national and international context, Dr Tom Plunkett on the local 7th-century context and Dr Sam Newton on the links between written sources and Sutton Hoo.

The day ended with a session which considered how we edit down the huge amount of information there is about Sutton Hoo to the bare necessity which will satisfy and please our varied types of visitors.

Hopefully, we shall all have benefited from the day; as an opportunity to reflect upon and improve our own performance as guides, to learn more about the background to Sutton Hoo, and to share and learn from many of our experiences on the site.

Thanks to all those who took part, and to Cliff Hoppitt for sterling work keeping us fed and watered through the day.

Guides' Consultation

The Sutton Hoo Guides met in May with Angus Wainwright at Tranmer House to discuss the role of guiding in the new framework for hosting visitors to the site, and to discuss and comment on the design and content of the exhibition. The National Trust is currently developing the model for visiting the site and the exhibition centre.

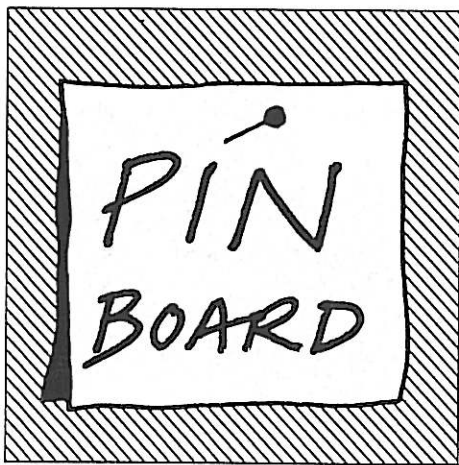
Below: A brief chance for speakers and guides to relax during the day's proceedings.

From left to right:

Nigel Maslin, Tom Plunkett, Sue Banyard, Trish Mulholland-Middleton, Amy Barnes, Angela Evans and Alison Booth



Left: Dr Sam Newton (left) and Dr Tom Plunkett about to make their getaway from Tranmer House



DIARY

Sutton Hoo Opening Times

The site opened to visitors on Easter Saturday, 22 April, and will continue to be open on weekend and Bank Holiday afternoons up to and including Sunday 29 October. Guided tours begin at 2pm and 3pm. Allow 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.

Groups can visit at any reasonable time throughout the year. Contact Stewart Salmond for party bookings (address below).

Details of how to get to the site are on our web site.

Disabled visitors should arrange access 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 carry farm vehicles all week, and as a matter of courtesy and safety we need to inform the occupiers in advance of unexpected vehicles, and give drivers directions. If you, or someone you know who is disabled, wish to visit the site, please contact the Visits and Guiding Secretary at least a week in advance of your visit so that arrangements can be made. Once the National Trust car park and the new access is complete, your visit will be more straightforward.

Sutton Hoo Society Conference

We shall be holding our second conference, **North Sea Communities: Evidence for Dark Age Trade and Communication** on **Saturday 28 October** in the superb **John Bray Lecture Theatre, BT Adastral Park, Martlesham Heath near IPSWICH**. Members will be circulated with details and booking forms by the end of July. The details will also be posted on the website (address below). Non-members can register an interest to receive the information by emailing the Society on conference@suttonhoo.org, or by sending a **stamped addressed envelope** to **Sutton Hoo Conference, Tailor's House, Bawdsey, WOODBRIDGE Suffolk IP12 3AJ**. When booking begins, please book in good time to avoid disappointment, remember that the last conference was fully booked a month before the day.

Other Events

West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village

- 15 – 16 July: Englisc Ham* (home life and crafts)
22 – 28 July: Anglo-Saxon family*
5 – 7 August: The Living House* (preparing for the winter)
19 – 27 August: Meet the Saxons*
28 August: Anglo-Saxon Activity Day* try out activities yourself
2 September: Anglo-Saxon wood-work course (book in advance: fee £15/concession £10)

* costumed events by specialist re-creation groups *Angelcynn, Axholmr* and *Theod*

For details of these and further autumn events contact: **West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon Village, West Stow, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP28 6HG. Tel. 01284 728718.**

Courses

In **Suffolk, Dr Sam Newton** is running courses on Wuffing and related studies for the Cambridge Board of Continuing Education and others at various venues across East Anglia. Locations include Orford, Norwich, Belstead (Ipswich), Hadleigh, and Woolpit. For further details and links, see the courses' section of his website at www.wuffings.co.uk.

In **Norfolk John Chatwin** runs courses on Anglo-Saxon themes at various venues; contact him at 32 Henby Way, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0LD for more details.

PUBLICATIONS

In 1997 we gave support to the Eastern Angles' Theatre Company's production of **The Wuffings** by **Kevin Crossley-Holland** and **Ivan Cutting**. The play has now been published by Runetree Press, and is available, cost £7.99 from **PO Box 1035, LONDON W2 6ZX**. Credit card sales: **Shaun Tyas at Paul Watkins Publishing, 18 Adelaide Street, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 2EN. Tel. 01780 756793.**

THANKS

Two Committee members have stepped down this year, **John Newman** and **Andrew Lovejoy**. John represented the County Council Archaeological Service on the Committee and has contributed to **SAXON** on a number of occasions – including this issue. Andrew became Membership Secretary in 1989, and during his period of office was also Guiding Secretary for four years. As such, the hours devoted to the Society have been considerable. We would like to take the opportunity of conveying our thanks to them both for their service to the Society.

APPEALS

Can you communicate the story of Sutton Hoo with enthusiasm and interest to our varied groups of visitors? If you feel you can, then get in touch. You do not have to be an Anglo-Saxon expert! 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.

Contact Stewart Salmond at the address below, or email chairman@suttonhoo.org.

Replicas

If you would like to contribute to the Mound 17 replica sword, shield and spear see the insert with this **SAXON** or contact any of the Committee addresses below.

Contact Addresses

Jenny Cant, Membership Secretary, 7 Wixfield Park, Great Bricett, IPSWICH IP7 7DW
Stewart Salmond, Visits and Guiding Secretary, Tailor's House, Bawdsey, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3AJ
Email: chairman@suttonhoo.org Website: <http://www.suttonhoo.org>
Sutton Hoo Research Project, Dept. of Archaeology, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP
SAXON: Email: publications@suttonhoo.org

Who's Who — Sutton Hoo Society Committee Members

Chairman: Rosemary Hoppitt Hon. Secretary: Sue Banyard Hon. Treasurer: Peter Rooley Research Director: Martin Carver
Membership Secretary: Jenny Cant Visits & Guiding Secretary: Stewart Salmond Publicity: Lindsay Lee
Publications: Rosemary Hoppitt
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