



The Newsletter of the Sutton Hoo Society

SAXON

President: The Earl of Cranbrook

No. 48 / 2008

Possible dugout boat trawled from the sea near Covehithe by D. M. Goodburn



The dugout is lifted from a water tank at Bentwaters near Rendlesham, July 2006 (all photos for this article: Mike Argent)

History

Dugout timbers are a common feature of Anglo-Saxon woodworking. Woodworkers or 'treewrights' used a whole range of approaches to woodworking, different to those generally used today, one of which was carving hollow vessels out of logs or half logs. These vessels ranged in size from small bowls to larger items such as industrial troughs, mill chutes and, commonly, dugout boats. In fact, it may not be known to some readers that most of the dated 'dugout canoes' in English museums are not 'prehistoric' but from the Anglo-Saxon period. It is now clear that the typical small boats of

sheltered waters contemporary with the burial of the large Sutton Hoo ship were varied types of dugout boats between 2.5 and 6m long. Larger craft were built out of partially overlapping planks, clinker style like the larger Sutton Hoo ship. Some dugout boats were fairly light, rounded, boat-like craft such as those found as boat impressions at the Snape cemetery, whilst others were heavier trough-like craft such as those of the River Lea in London and Essex. Although regionally fairly uncommon, the Covehithe find is one of a large national corpus of dugout vessels of Anglo-Saxon date.

Circumstances of discovery

The following paragraph is taken from an account by J. Upton. On 17 June 1998, a local fisherman trawled up a timber 5m long from about one mile off Covehithe, Suffolk. Realising that the item might be of interest he contacted Stuart Bacon of the Suffolk Maritime Archaeology team who, in turn, contacted Valerie Fenwick, a leading nautical archaeologist. Both Bacon and Fenwick suggested that the find was 'an ancient dugout canoe' rather than some other form of hollow vessel. Records were made and samples taken for radiocarbon dating, which provided a date

range of 775–892 AD. Bacon and his team arranged for transport of the find to Dunwich where it was stored in a shallow lagoon. On 25 November 2002 it was removed to a passive conservation tank at Bentwaters Park near Rendlesham in Suffolk.

Background

In the early summer of 2006, following discussions with Lindsay Lee, Stuart Bacon and Julia Park; Damian Goodburn and his colleague John Minkin were invited by the Sutton Hoo Society to examine and record the dugout. The Society arranged for the dugout to be taken to Sutton Hoo for temporary public display at the Anglo-Saxon Festival. The vessel was carefully moved by Stuart Bacon and his team.

Recording of the vessel was principally by annotated scale drawing on gridded film. Photographs were also taken at various stages and form part of the record. During its three-day stay at Sutton Hoo, the dugout lay under a sprinkler system which prevented it drying out in the hot weather. Conservation advice and assistance was provided by Julia Park.

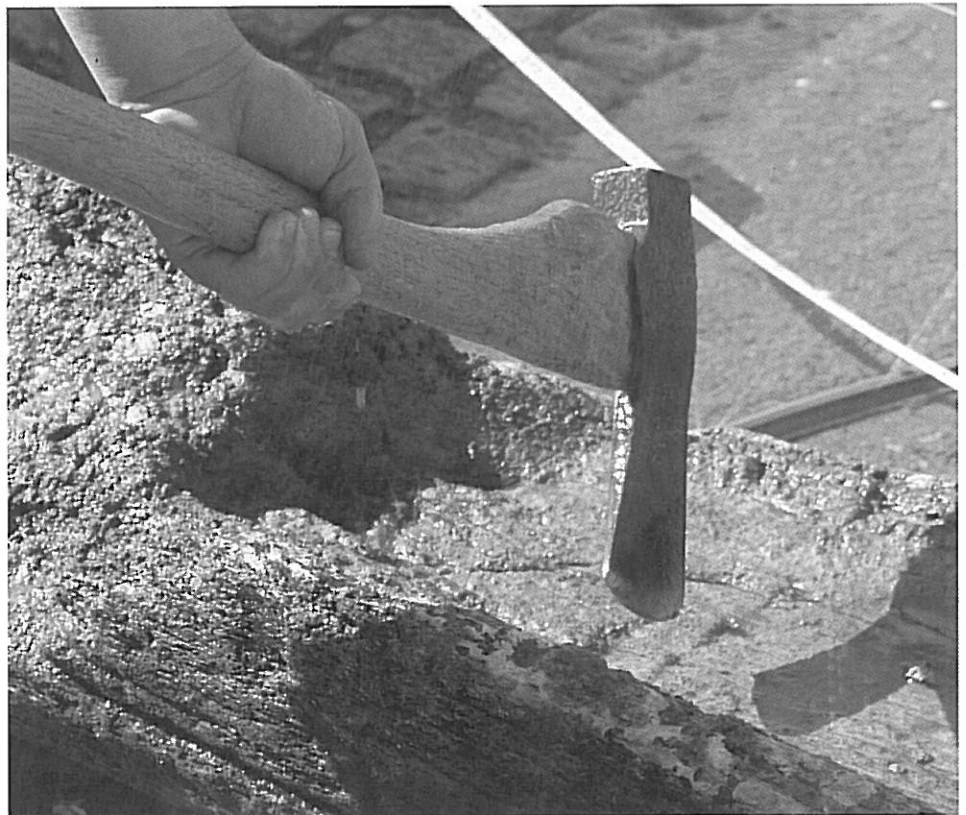
Much discussion and interesting ideas were mooted during this time. Julia Park suggested that the notorious changes in sea levels and coastal erosion along this part of the east coast could indicate that although the dugout was trawled up offshore, it may originally have been lying in some form of water-filled context, river or lagoon, further inland.



Marine borer damage on upper parts of wider end of the dugout (all photos: Mike Argent)

Recording the dugout

The vessel was carved from a whole oak log and had a maximum surviving width of 670mm (2'3") and length of 5.0m (16'4"). The depth had clearly been reduced by ancient erosion and more recent activities of marine wood borers, (above) the latter much in evidence at the ends. The maximum surviving depth was 330mm externally and 220mm internally. The vessel was clearly originally deeper. The thickness of the bottom and sides varied considerably between



Author holding axe above incut marks

c.40mm and 90mm. The plan form can be described as a slightly tapered cylinder. The cross sectional shape is that of a cylinder internally having a slightly flattened base externally. The narrower end is c.350mm wide and slightly rounded (viewed from above and the side) but is essentially vertical. The wider end towards the butt of the 'parent tree' is tapered down a little to c.520mm wide and slopes slightly inward towards the centre of the vessel. Both ends had very worn axe facets from the original axe cross cutting of the parent tree. No clear evidence of surviving sapwood was seen.

Surviving tool marks

When examined in 2006, relatively few tool marks survived on the vessel, however, photographs taken earlier show the survival of many tool marks alongside some clearly modern marks and splits made during the initial recovery. There appear to be many abraded facets left by an adze with a hollow or gouge-like blade, used along the grain. In 2006, most of these tool marks were not seen except for some faint gouge adze facets found inside near the wider end, but marks left by the use of axes to cut grooves during the initial hollowing process were found (right). The examination of a number of dugout boats, drains, mill chutes and troughs as well as ethnographic sources and experiments in dugout boat building show that the bulk of the hollowing of dugout items was commonly carried out by splitting out waste between axe-cut grooves. In practice the cutting of the grooves or scores often leaves slight over-cut marks or 'incuts' in the finished work. These marks often survive abrasion and decay longer than facets created during the finishing of the surfaces. Faint lines of incuts from axe cut scores were visible running across the inside of the Covehithe vessel in the middle and especially

towards the narrower end. The best preserved of these marks was c.75mm wide and typical of incut marks left by a fairly narrow bladed Anglo-Saxon 'woodman's axe' (also known as a Mortimer Wheeler type 1 axe, see above).

The tree used to make the vessel

The oak log used to make the dugout vessel was large, around 0.8–0.9m in maximum diameter with the bark and sapwood included. The grain was somewhat spiralled and there were several medium sized knots indicating branches in the parent tree. The tree rings are moderately narrow at an average of c.2.5mm width which suggests



Many tool marks were visible, including modern marks and splits

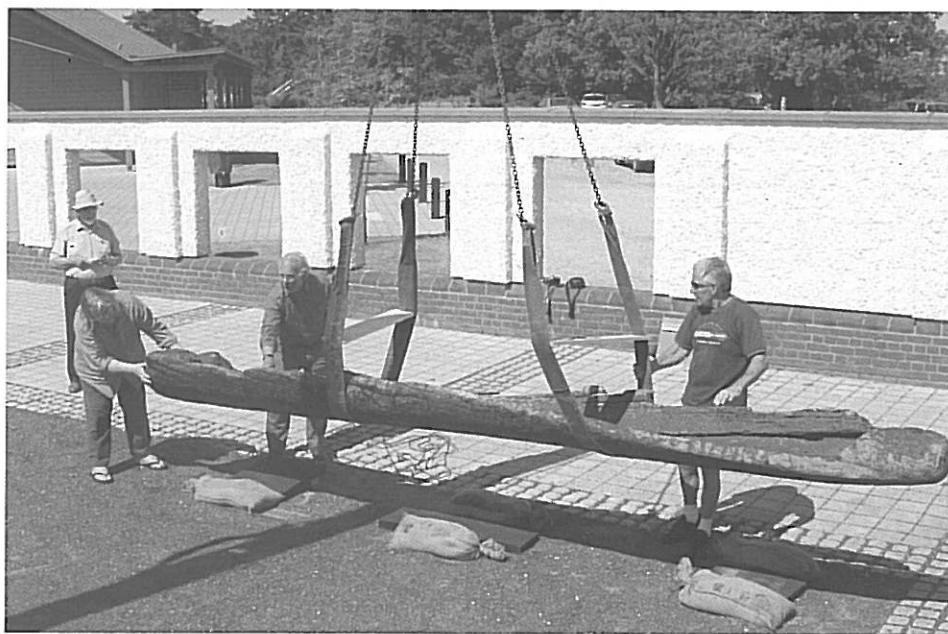
an age of over 200 years for the parent tree. The size and form of the log, together with the growth rate, suggest it came from a large, moderately tall oak that grew in fairly dark woodland, probably of wildwood type.

Was the Covehithe dugout a boat?

Various opinions were offered and questions raised as to whether the find was actually a boat or some other form of vessel. Looking at the surviving evidence my opinion is as follows:

- the find is easily wide and long enough to have functioned as a boat
- however, the cross section is extremely rounded and would have made the craft less stable than the vast majority of English dugout boat finds of early medieval date
- significantly, the ends of the vessel show little systematic shaping to allow them to pass through the water and over small waves. Indeed the shape of the ends would increase the height of wavelets making the vessel very unseaworthy
- the very variable thickness of the bottom and sides is also atypical of dugout boats, but not other forms of trough-like vessel.

With a certain amount of regret, I conclude that the evidence suggests that the find was probably a large industrial trough used in a now lost tidal inlet, though we cannot be certain. Several large troughs of Saxon and Norman date have been found in southern England in similar settings, such as recently discovered at Bristol



The dugout is lowered into position at Sutton Hoo

Broadmeads, and on the tidal River Fleet and Thames frontages in London. Likely uses for such troughs include the retting of materials such as bark, flax or nettles, fish processing, salt making, tanning or possibly they were incorporated in drainage systems as silt traps. Bark and flax retting are both said to proceed well in brackish water, according to the Viking Ship Museum's expert rope maker Ole Magnus;

such processes have a maritime flavour as they are key to making ropes and possibly sail cloth.

There is, finally, a slight possibility that the find was an abandoned unfinished dugout boat which was sunk to slow drying out and splitting during a break in the building process. This was clearly the case with the early medieval Loch Doon boat from Ayrshire. Curiously, the first experimental oak dugout boat built in recent times (1959) in Northern Ireland was sunk by its builders in a loch and then lost for many years until the water level fell unusually low. When it re-emerged it had been moved some distance by strong currents, into deeper water!

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the Sutton Hoo Society, particularly Lindsay Lee, for providing the funds to investigate this find. Thanks are also due to J. Minkin and members of the Sutton Hoo Society for helping with the investigation and recording. Any errors are the author's.

Selected further reading

Filmer-Sankey W. 1995, 'The Snape logboats: excavation, construction and performance', in Olsen O. *et al* (eds), *Shipshape, essays for Ole Crumlin-Pedersen*. (The Viking Ship Museum), 81–88
 Goodburn D. and Redknap, M. 1988 'Replicas and wrecks from the Thames area', *London Archaeologist* 6:1, 7–10 and 19–22 (includes account of first experimental reconstruction of a Saxon dugout boat)
 Marsden P. (ed.) 1989, 'A Late-Saxon logboat from Clapton, London Borough of Hackney', *Int. J. Nautical Archaeology* 18.2, 89–111
 McGrail S. 1978 *Logboats of England and Wales*, Brit. Archaeol. Rep. British Series 51



Dr D M Goodburn is an Ancient Woodwork Specialist who has studied the building of dugout craft for over 20 years. Museum and library-based research has been extended and tested by experiments in building and using full-scale reconstructions of British dugout boats, including four from the early medieval period.

John Minkin (left) and Damian Goodburn at work on the dugout

(all photos for this article: Mike Argent)

Medieval boat timbers from Sizewell

by Robert Atfield



Work in progress, showing timbers in the foreground and Sizewell power station in the background. All photos for this article: Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Circumstances of discovery

Archaeological excavations at Sizewell by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service revealed the remains of a small medieval coastal fishing vessel. Sections of boat planking were exceptionally well preserved as a result of the

waterlogged conditions. Like the great Sutton Hoo ship, the clinker built boat lay buried in the Suffolk sand, but rather than surviving merely as ghostly stains, the Sizewell boat remained remarkably tangible. The planks had been re-used to create the main components of a

substantial cistern or well, sometime during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

The excavations were carried out between May and July 2008 ahead of construction work to create the cable route and substation for The Greater Gabbard Offshore Windfarm. A full archaeological programme was commissioned and jointly funded by Greater Gabbard Offshore Winds Ltd and South East Electricity Substation Alliance, a partnership between National Grid and construction companies AREVA, Skanska and Mott MacDonald.

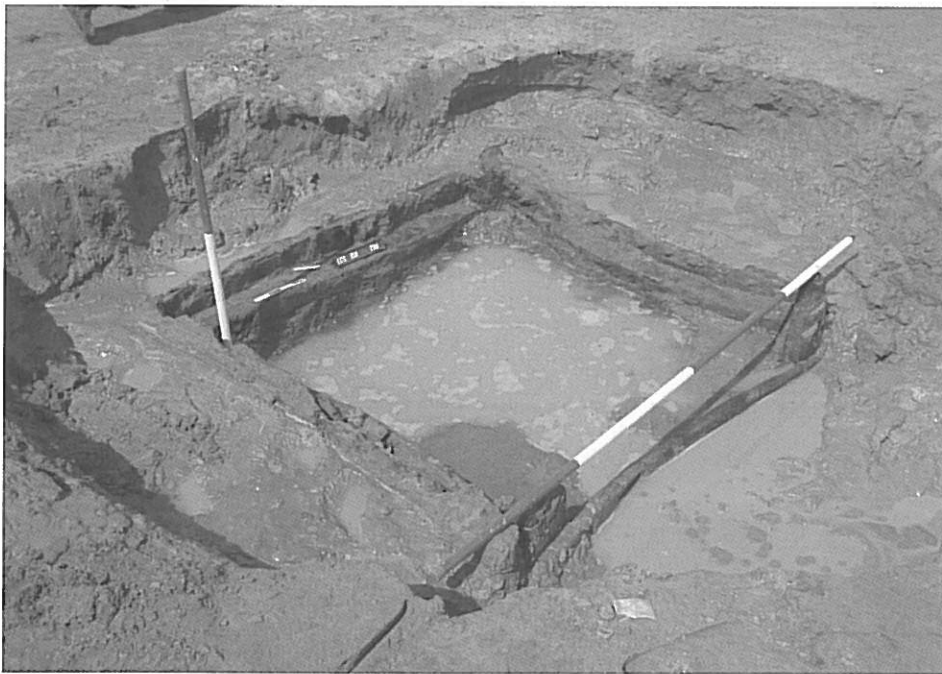
The site forms part of a once densely-populated medieval urban centre extending inland from the beach along the edge of a natural low-lying channel. The hillsides to the north and south of Sizewell Gap drain into an area of presently waterlogged farmland, which once, during a period of higher water levels, formed a freshwater lagoon and the focus for medieval industrial activity.

Medieval Sizewell

As part of the monastic estate of nearby Leiston Abbey, the hamlet or soke of Sizewell has long been subsidiary to the parish of Leiston. However, Sizewell was granted a market in 1237, some 75 years before Leiston, and continued to keep pace for another 300 years: 40 taxpayers are recorded for Sizewell in 1524 compared to 33 within the neighbouring parish. Sizewell then went into rapid decline, probably



Large section of intact boat planking (scale 10cm)



Medieval well or cistern, constructed with re-used boat timbers

largely as a result of coastal erosion and rising water levels. Only six inhabited houses are recorded for the year 1674. An exceptionally detailed and early group of documents have survived in relation to Sizewell and it is anticipated that analysis of these may provide additional detail of life along this part of the east coast as far back as the fourteenth century.



one of the carefully shaped wooden pegs or 'trenails' from the Sizewell boat

The excavations have located the edge of the deserted medieval settlement, with evidence of timber and clay walled buildings, hearths and large outdoor ovens. Wood-lined water pits (above, top) with complex systems of ditches and gullies are clustered along the edge of the channel. Industrial activities, including hemp retting for the manufacture of linen and rope, are known to have taken place in the area; this is a noxious process and there is documentary evidence of practitioners being fined for fouling the water. Artefactual material is equally significant and includes concentrations of pottery dating from the twelfth/fourteenth centuries (right), part of a finely turned wooden platter, a wooden cask or tub re-used as a well or pit lining, animal bones, fishing hooks and net weights accompanied by dense deposits of fish bones from some of the many rubbish pits. Personal items such as buckles, keys, clothing fasteners and some medieval coins have also been found.

A clinker-built boat

The waterlogged conditions have preserved a collection of at least eleven oak boat planks, some very fragmentary but others complete, measuring up to 1.50m long. Initial analysis by Richard Darrah indicates that the boat was between five and seven metres long with a distinctively shallow profile. The flat bottom would have enabled good access to shallow waters and also allowed the vessel to be dragged onto a beach more easily. Such specific characteristics are rarely evidenced among the more fragmentary boat timbers found in England, but due to the fact that some adjacent planks remain joined it is possible to extrapolate many design and construction details. The largest section consists of an intact central plank with the remains of two more attached to each edge; this assembly reveals indications of both the longitudinal and transverse profiles of the

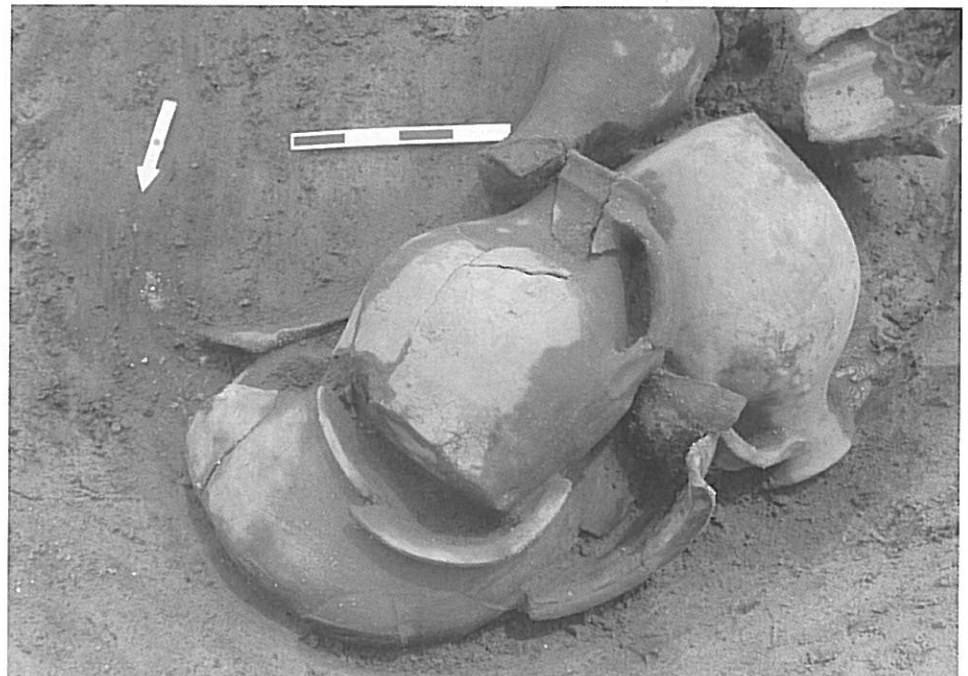
hull. Eventually, a reasonably close idea of the lines and dimensions of the vessel may be gained from such evidence (below, facing page).

Valuable details of construction methods can also be deduced from the boat timbers. The vessel was constructed with overlapping 'clinker' planking fastened together as a shell before the internal framing was fitted. The planks are joined with closely spaced iron nails and roves which tightly pull the joint together. In addition, a sealant layer known as 'luting' was placed between the planking joints during assembly, to assist in the waterproofing process. The luting from the Sizewell boat is very well preserved. It awaits detailed analysis but appears to consist of rolls of loosely twisted animal fibre impregnated with tar. The internal frame components of the boat were fixed to the planking using carefully shaped wooden pegs or 'trenails' with domed exterior heads (below left). The boat planks are all of high quality oak with very straight grain, each radially split or riven from large logs. It is hoped that dendrochronological analysis will indicate the source of the timber and a felling date.

A further fascinating aspect of the boat planks are the number of carefully executed repairs carried out to the hull of the vessel. Nearly half of the planks have neatly cut and inserted sections of high quality oak, spliced into the original planks with scarf joints and fixed with additional luting and rove nails. The vessel shows clear evidence of an extended working life and must have represented a considerable investment.

Although on a much more modest scale, the Sizewell boat evinces boatbuilding techniques very similar to those used to construct the great Sutton Hoo ship and provides useful details with which to contemplate this boat-building tradition.

Robert Atfield is a Project Officer with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service



Pottery dating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, as found on site at Sizewell.

Society Outing to Three Anglo-Saxon Churches

Brixworth, Earls Barton and Barnack, by Brenda Brown



Brixworth Church with 11th-century round stair turret. The stone spire is 15th-century

Our tour of the Anglo-Saxon churches in Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire included some of the most outstanding buildings in northern Europe. Brixworth church is perhaps the most imposing architectural memorial of the seventh century surviving north of the Alps (Sir Arthur Clapham), and John Julius Norwich calls it 'astonishing', with its interior a 'combination of grandeur and simplicity'. Simon Jenkins in his *England's Thousand Best Churches* describes Earls Barton tower as 'one of the principal

monuments of Anglo-Saxon architecture'. He says of Barnack church 'Most Saxon churches are celebrated more for being old than for being beautiful. Not so Barnack. Its Saxon tower and Early Gothic Spire form the most pleasing composition in the county'.

About 40 society members and their friends joined the outing in July, including a number of SHS guides who regularly explain to visitors the importance of wood to Anglo-Saxons. Travelling to see three Anglo-Saxon churches made of

stone was therefore somewhat challenging. The three churches were all connected to the abbey of Peterborough.

All Saints' Church, Brixworth

The church, thought to date from c.675AD, is set on high ground above a village of honey-coloured stone. The church too has examples of this Northampton Sand, but it is the sturdy height and the rich mix of building material from a much wider radius which impressed Diana Sutherland, who produced a paper for the Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee. She explored the sources of the building material — at least twelve different types of stone from five or more separate distant sources, identifiable in the first four metres of masonry. As this is not evidenced in local glacial drift deposits it is more likely it was re-used material of Roman origin, possibly from Roman Leicester and Towcester. Quantities of Roman brick and tile had been used for bonding and arches. Evidence of random burnt stone throughout the building indicates that re-used materials continued in successive phases of building. It seems likely that where walls were to be concealed by rendering, re-used stone was thought adequate, but where stone was to remain visible, such as the vaulting of the staircase, newly quarried stone was used.

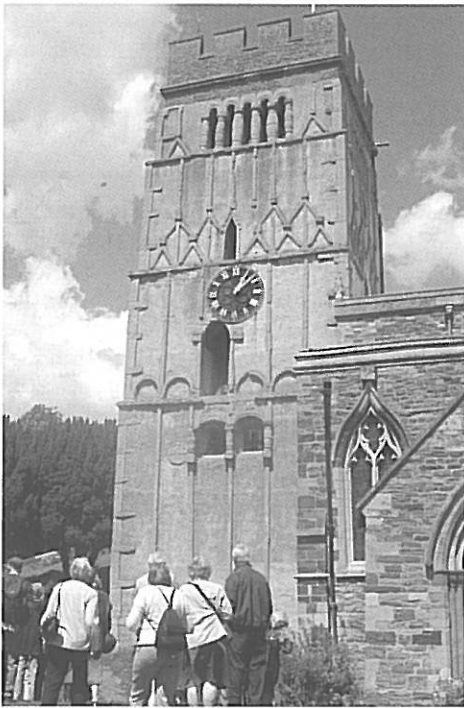
The interior of the church was flooded with light from the clerestory, emphasising its impressive height. The decorative features, including monuments, had been removed, leaving the rounded arches exposed and the rendered walls unadorned. One can only speculate about the original decorations. Archaeological evidence revealed an ambulatory around the apse which gives more weight to the view that this was probably a centre of pilgrimage, and that the east end of the building housed a reliquary, perhaps containing the bones of St Boniface.

All Saints' Church, Earls Barton

This church too is set on a mound with much of the village lying below, but it was the tower which we had come to see, the finest example of Anglo-Saxon *long and short* work (laying the quoin stones alternately vertically and horizontally) in Britain, if not in Europe. The tower rises in four stages, with belfry openings with decorative baluster shafts. The fourth stage probably had a tiled roof but was replaced in the fifteenth century by the incongruous brick battlements. The rest of the church is worthy of a visit in its own right with many fine examples of Norman and Early English features.

St John's Church at Barnack

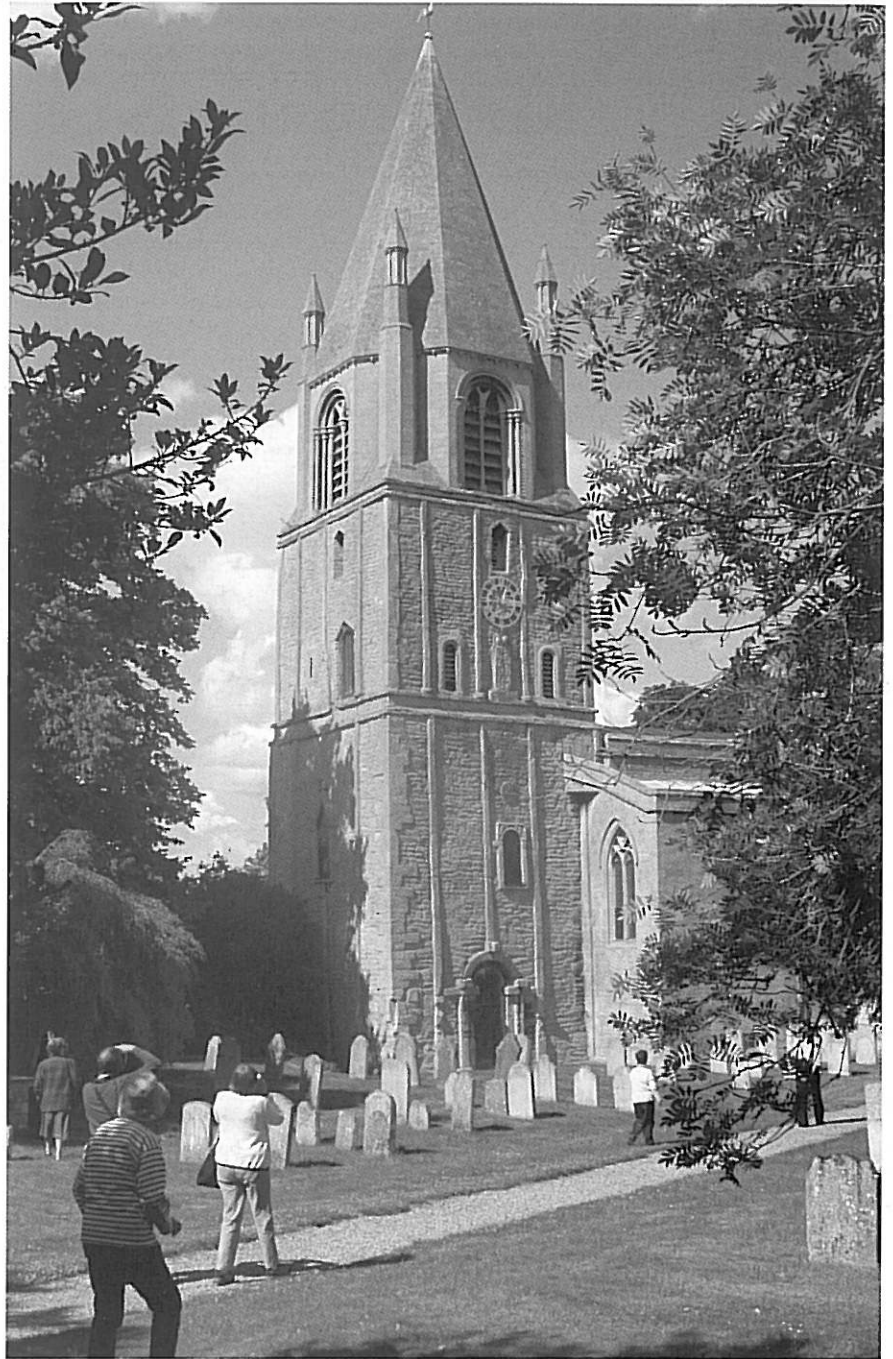
The tower was built in four stages, the lower two being entirely Saxon and divided vertically by the use of pilaster strips (the design at Earls Barton being the more complex of the two). Our guide suggested that some of the strips resembled wood joints rather than the stonemason's art, and some claim (though by no



Earls Barton Church showing Anglo-Saxon long and short stonework on tower

means all) that this was the intention. The construction technique, *long and short* work, is the same here as at Earls Barton, but the walls of the latter are rendered, whilst those of Barnack are plain. The use of a door set on the second stage of both towers is not fully understood, in both instances it has been attributed to ceremonial use — providing an opportunity for discussion on how medieval churches were used by the people and priesthood.

Barnack, which gave its name to the stone quarried nearby and used throughout East Anglia, is also the home of one of the most significant pieces of Anglo-Saxon carving: a 'Christ in Majesty'. It was discovered under the floor in 1931, face down and little damaged, and is now displayed in the north aisle. The style and craftsmanship lead one to the conclusion that it represents a high point of the Saxon mason's art.



the two lower stages of Barnack Church tower are entirely Saxon



Jeyes' Emporium

A highlight of the tour was lunch at Jeyes' Emporium in Earls Barton, an extraordinary combination of Post Office, gift shop, tea shop, building society and village museum. It is based on the original village pharmacy and run by a descendant of the man who gave us Jeyes' Fluid.

Our visit to the three churches raised as many questions as it answered about church architecture and the medieval mind, but there was unanimous agreement that the day had been enormously worthwhile. Next time I travel north on the A1, I hope to have time to explore two other early churches at Brigstock and Wittering.

We are grateful to Robert Allen who organised the outing.

Earls Barton (left) — our group can't wait for a closer look!

all photos for this article: Mike Argent

Obituary

Barbara Grafton (Dr Ogden) 1935–2008

Barbara was a member of the Society and a Tour Guide at Sutton Hoo. She died on 27 August 2008 with her son Jerry at her side. With full understanding of the nature of her illness, she bravely fought to continue her life as normally as possible right to the end.

Mike Argent represented the SHS at a Service of Thanksgiving for her life held on Monday 8 September 2008 at St Mary's Church Withesham, one of the churches at which she was a Lay Reader.

Mike reported that 'at times like this one realizes you never really get to see the full picture of a person's life and the contributions they have made to their community until it is too late to appreciate it. The service for Barbara was a supreme example of just such a realization. Many knew that Barbara was a SHS Guide and a local GP, but the wider picture revealed a person of determination, compassion, and with a love of every person based on her deep Christian faith. Her ready smile, generous nature, distinctive gait, and her

knowledge of Sutton Hoo were things we all took for granted. Visitors at Sutton Hoo who were fortunate enough to have her as their tour guide, went away with a sense of wellbeing emanating from her warm personality'.

Barbara stood down from guiding when she decided she could no longer give of her best. She leaves behind very many warm memories amongst those of us who regularly walk the mounds. We send our condolences to her family and friends; we were privileged to have been part of her busy life and we shall miss her.

National Trust at Sutton Hoo by Jonathan White, Property Manager



Sutton Hoo Through the Ages 2008
All photos for this article: John Walton

On behalf of the staff at Sutton Hoo, I would like to thank the SHS guides for providing their mini-tours throughout the weekend. Feedback from our visitors proves that these were very popular. It is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

2009 Treasury Room Exhibition

Welcome to the Feast is the title for the Treasury Room Exhibition next year. It will explore the themes of food, drink, ceremony and entertainment in the Anglo-Saxon Hall. Hospitality, gift-giving, the role of women, celebration and bad behaviour will also be examined. The exhibition will compare and contrast Germanic warrior feasting with opulent Roman dining and draw parallels with contemporary Regimental and State banquets

Curator of the exhibition will be Leslie Webster, former Keeper of the Department of Prehistory and Europe at the British Museum. Items requested on loan from the British Museum include one of the Sutton Hoo Byzantine silver bowls (from the set of 10) and one of the Taplow drinking horns. We also hope to show various glass beakers, cups and sword hilts from Cambridge University



Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Ipswich Borough Museums and Saffron Walden Museum.

We hope to extend next year's exhibition into the main exhibition area with a replica gaming board for our visitors to try and a hands-on activity for children, which may be along the lines of setting a table for an Anglo-Saxon feast or discovering which feasting items would 'rot or not' during 1300 years buried in the ground. Dr Sam Newton will also be delivering a series of lecture lunches throughout next year based on the theme of feasting.

Sutton Hoo Through the Ages

The National Trust had another very successful *Sutton Hoo Through the Ages* this year. We welcomed 1872 visitors over the weekend, which was a couple of hundred up on the previous year and we received some excellent customer feedback. Catering, retail and member recruitment all had good results. This year the event continued to grow, with the notable inclusion of the Home Guard adding a touch of 'Dads Army' to the weekend and proving very popular with our visitors. Overnight storms on the Saturday threatened to blow away many of the re-enactors' tents and unfortunately destroyed the Sutton Hoo Society marquee during Saturday night, but everyone pulled together and the weekend was a great success.



The Vikings have Landed

by Robert Anderson

Hearing that the replica Viking ship *Sea Stallion* was moored up at Lowestoft, I thought it too good an opportunity to miss — the chance of boarding a vessel that is, in many ways, similar to the the great Sutton Hoo ship.

Sunday 27 July was a warm and sunny day, ideal for a trip to the seaside. We made good time on the A12 from Ipswich, but received a shock on arrival at Lowestoft, where it appeared the crowds had come out to greet us! The streets around the harbour were lined with people but we could not see what was going on. The air show had been the previous week and there were no signs of a carnival or anything else that could draw the crowds in such large numbers. I had been told that we needed to turn right before the bridge in the town itself and come back along South Parade to park. However, all the car parks were closed off, so we ended up driving almost two miles before we could find a parking space in a residential area.

We walked back to the seafront and along the prom towards the lifeboat station where *Sea Stallion* was moored. It then dawned on us what the crowds had gathered for as we could see that all the car parks were full of motorcycles — an offshore speedboat racing event, sponsored by Honda, complimented by a motorcycle show. So we braved the crowds on the prom and made our way to the Viking vessel. It is a shame to recount that when we got there the poor little boat was not attracting anywhere near the attention of the more modern sea craft and motorbikes! Well, at least that meant more space for us.

The ship's crew was on hand to talk to visitors about the vessel and their voyage from Denmark. Expecting some hardy Dane to greet me aboard, I was surprised to be welcomed by a



Robert Anderson in conversation with crew member

somewhat diminutive Irishman by the name of Brian, who, as it turned out, is an archaeologist specialising in Iron Age metalworking and who had joined the *Sea Stallion* at Dublin. He was keen to know about Sutton Hoo and the comparisons between the ships and was happy to answer my questions about 'their' vessel.

What really struck me about the ship were the cramped conditions on deck: being so familiar with the 'skeleton' image of the Sutton Hoo ship, it is easy to forget that there must have originally

been a deck on that ship too. Brian explained a lot of fascinating practicalities that one doesn't necessarily think about, including the cooking and toilet arrangements, all of which, and much more, can be found at their website www.havhingsten.dk

Despite the drive and the trouble with parking, it was well worth the trip to stand on the deck of this truly wonderful replica ship. My imagination was fired with thoughts of having one of these of our own!



The replica Viking ship Sea Stallion moored at Lowestoft (photo: Robert Anderson)

Society Conference 2008

Arts and Crafts in the Mead Hall — the Roots of English Culture



Conference Chairman Martin Carver

One hundred and seventy delegates attended the Society Conference at the Seckford Theatre, Woodbridge School on 25 October. They were treated to exciting and stimulating lectures from five speakers, all experts in their field, who delivered a broad spectrum on the subject of the Anglo-Saxon Hall. It was enjoyable to have excellent Powerpoint presentations, without the

all too familiar technical hiccoughs! Chairmen Martin Carver and Angela Evans steered the day with customary engaging style.

The Society's first conference in 1998 was held in the old school hall, but it became clear that the seating capacity was not going to be adequate for future events. This all changed when the school's Seckford Theatre opened in 2006, a modern purpose-built theatre incorporating all the technical facilities required for staged performances and conferences.

It was ideal — comfortable and roomy, with foyer, dining room and bar. An adjoining room accommodated bookstalls and craft stands where delegates browsed and chatted during breaks.

Full résumés of the conference papers will feature in the next edition of *SAXON* and on our website in the New Year. Profiles of the speakers are given here.

Jenny Walker is a PhD student in her final year at the University of York. Recent research and published work has focused on the function and ideology of the Early Medieval Hall. She is presently completing further research that was

presented at the Early Medieval Northumbria Conference held in Newcastle.

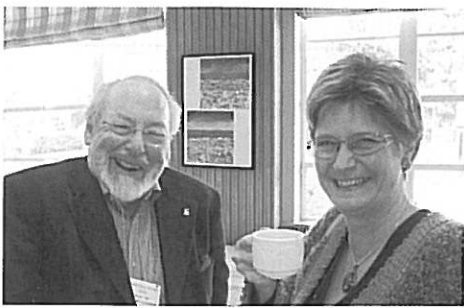
At the conference, Jenny discussed the organisation of space and activities within the Hall with an interpretation of its functional and ideological use. Through the presentation of case studies, she considered the meaning and ideology behind this spatial organisation and the architecture and construction of the Anglo-Saxon Hall itself.

Neil Price is currently Chair of Archaeology at the University of Aberdeen, having previously held the post of Reader in Archaeology at the University of Uppsala (Sweden). He has written extensively on the Viking Age and has conducted research projects in France, Iceland, Russia and Lapland.

Neil examined how, in the Iron Age Scandinavian world from which the early English took inspiration, the Hall was not only the seat of power and status but also a highly ritualised space. He moved on to review the archaeological and textual evidence for this, including discussions of sacrifice and ritual



(from left) Paul Mortimer, aka Raedwald, Stephen Pollington, Neil Price, Helen Geake, the Earl of Cranbrook (Society President), Angela Evans (Conference Chairman), Sam Newton and Jenny Walker (photos on this page: Nigel MacBeth)



dining, offering ceremonies to gods and supernatural beings, and the cultic overtones of hospitality. The concept of funerary halls was also considered, extending their metaphors into the afterlife.

Sam Newton is a freelance lecturer and tutor in Wuffing and Early Medieval Studies, running courses in and around East Anglia. In 2002 he co-founded Wuffing Education which runs study days at Sutton Hoo. He regularly contributes to radio and television, including Channel 4's Time Team.

Sam explored what Old English verse reveals about the significance of the Mead Hall in Anglo-Saxon culture. He explained current experimental work in Old English music and ended his talk in dramatic fashion with an extract from Beowulf, accompanied on his own replica Sutton Hoo lyre.

Helen Geake is currently Finds Adviser (post-Roman artefacts) for the Portable Antiquities Scheme. She is a familiar face on Channel 4's Time Team where she regularly appears.

Helen discussed how early Anglo-Saxons used costume to signal gender, age, status and 'ethnic' origin. She focused on the public arena of feasting in the Mead Hall, when women in particular may have been highly visible. She went on to explain that costume reconstructions have hitherto come from archaeological evidence of dead people in graves. How different, then, was the everyday dress of the living?

Stephen Pollington has long been involved in the promotion of Old English studies and is the author of several books on the subject. As well as being a successful lecturer, he has appeared on radio and television and acted as a consultant for both.

Stephen demonstrated how the Mead Hall was one of the central institutions of Anglo-Saxon society, acting as a platform for religious, judicial and social activities. He

(above) delegates enjoying a break

argued that the most important function of the hall was the part it played in the imagination.

Paul Mortimer, alias 'Raedwald' (below), is not a member of the re-enactor groups that are sometimes seen at Sutton Hoo. A teacher by profession, he is regularly seen wandering over the Mounds, explaining his 'alter ego' to members of the public and discussing his costume and weaponry. Over the years Paul has amassed a tremendous knowledge of Anglo-Saxon weaponry and associated items. He has searched far and wide for specialist craftsmen to make the excellent (and costly) replica pieces, including sword, helmet, shield, purse, buckle and other items that make up the king's 'regalia'. Paul is particularly interested in the interpretation of how some of the artifacts from the Mound 1 ship burial might have been used in practice. Next time you see him at Sutton Hoo, stop and ask him some questions.



Paul Mortimer, alias 'Raedwald' (all photos on this page: Mike Argent)



**Sutton Hoo Society AGM
Friday 20 February 2009
at Tranmer House, Sutton Hoo**

Agenda

- Election of Chairman
- Apologies
- Minutes of the last AGM
- Reports and Accounts
- Election of Auditors
- Election of Treasurer
- Election of Committee

After the meeting, Jude Plouviez (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service) will give a talk about the Rendlesham Survey.

SHS Publications

We have the following books for sale (at members discount prices p&p inclusive)
My Life in Archaeology Charles Phillips £5.50
Sutton Hoo Through the Rear View Mirror Robert Markham £8.50
Anglo-Saxon Sailing Ships Edwin and Joyce Gifford £2.00
Gold Under the Bed (compact disc) Peppy Barlow £10.50
Apply to SHS Publications Officer, Mrs P Moore, 69 Barton Road, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1JH Tel 01394 382617
Cheques payable to the Sutton Hoo Society

Sutton Hoo Opening Times 2009

For opening times please contact the National Trust at Sutton Hoo. Tel: 01394 389700
Fax: 01394 389702

**Spring Lecture
25 March 2009 at 7.30pm
Tranmer House, Sutton Hoo**

To be announced; visit www.suttonhoo.org or phone Mike Argent 01728 747716

**70th Anniversary Lecture 1939–2009
June 2009**

To be announced; visit www.suttonhoo.org or phone Mike Argent 01728 747716

**Scandinavian Journey
16–25 September 2009**

Plans for the Society's journey to early medieval sites in Denmark and Sweden are well advanced, and already, at the time of writing (November 2008), about half the available places have been booked.

Transport will be by dedicated coach from Ipswich area via Harwich/Esbjerg travelling through Denmark and Sweden.

Visits will include: Roskilde Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde Cathedral, Ladby Viking Ship, and Old Uppsala and the burial grounds. There will be free days in Copenhagen and Stockholm. Cost: £1,100 inclusive of sea crossings, hotels (half board), and entrance fees.

For more information, please contact: Robert Allen, White Gables, Thornley Drive, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich IP4 3LR.
Tel: 01473 728018

**New Website launched!
www.suttonhoo.org**

Hopefully many of you will have visited the updated website which was finally launched in August.

If you have yet to visit the site please do have a look. It would be good to know what you think of it. If there are any items you would like to see there please let us know.

Although it is possible for current members to renew their membership online it is preferable for you to renew by cheque as the Society will then get more of the value of your subscription. This is because Paypal, who processes the online payments, makes a small charge on each one.

We would like to create a members e-mail database. Members e-mail addresses would only be used for Society purposes such as news of upcoming events or items of interest connected with Sutton Hoo.

If anyone wishes to be added to this e-mailing list please e-mail suttonhoo@ntlworld.com with your name(s) and preferred e-mail address.

NEW PUBLICATION

Sutton Hoo and its Landscape: The Context of Monuments by Tom Williamson

The location of the Anglo-Saxon burial ground at Sutton Hoo, on a ridge overlooking the estuary of the river Deben, has always appeared strange and challenging. This is not so much because the site is today an isolated and lonely one, but rather because it lies on the very periphery of the early medieval kingdom of East Anglia, whose rulers — the *Wuffingas* — were buried there. In this extended meditation on the geography of a very special and evocative place, Tom Williamson explores the meaning of the cemetery's location. This book is a masterly exploration of the context and meaning of an iconic set of monuments.

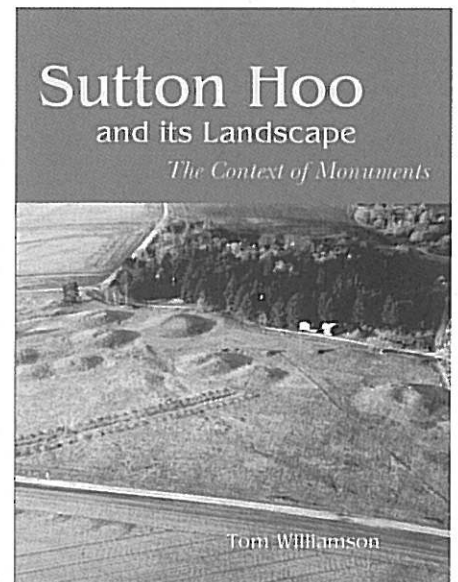
(*Windgather Press, an imprint of Oxbow Books*)
ISBN-13: 978-1-905119-25-7
ISBN-10: 1-905119-25-9

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Who's Who — Sutton Hoo Society Committee Members

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Membership Secretary: Jane Wright Minutes Secretary: Brenda Brown Guiding Co-ordinator: Robert Allen
Publicity: Robert Anderson Publications: Pauline Moore Sue Banyard Veronica Bennett Nigel Maslin Angus Wainwright

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