



*Frontispiece 1. 'Reflect, 2017' is part of SIGHT, an unprecedented exhibition by the artist Antony Gormley, on the Greek island of Delos in the Cyclades. Sponsored by NEON, a Greek non-profit organisation working to promote contemporary art, the installation embodies NEON's mission to engage with multiple spaces and contexts by placing Gormley's iron bodyforms within and around the archaeological site. The sculptures restore a human presence to the island, which has been largely abandoned since the first century BC. The exhibition runs from 2 May to 31 October 2019 (<https://neon.org.gr/en/exhibition/sight-antony-gormley-delos-island>). Photograph © Oak Taylor Smith. Courtesy of NEON; Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades and the artist.*



*Frontispiece 2. 'Marked Foundations'; oil pastel, watercolour and graphite; Rose Ferraby 2019. This artwork explores the process of interpreting geophysical signals at Aldborough Roman Town, North Yorkshire (UK). The accumulation of marks and tones reflect the long process of mapping data that brings to light invisible sub-surface features. The image forms the cover art for a forthcoming Society of Antiquaries monograph, 'Isurium Brigantum: an archaeological survey of Roman Aldborough' by Rose Ferraby and Martin Millett. Aldborough is also the focus of the new 'Soundmarks' project (<https://soundmarks.co.uk>), funded by Arts Council England. A collaboration between Rob St John and Rose, it explores the sub-surface landscape of the site with sound and visual art, and will culminate in an exhibition at Aldborough later this summer.*



# EDITORIAL

## Sutton Hoo at 80

📖 Eighty years ago, on the eve of the Second World War, the sandy heathland of south Suffolk was briefly the hub of British archaeology. The excavation of a burial mound by local archaeologist Basil Brown at the request of the landowner Edith Pretty quickly attracted the attention of the professional archaeological community and, soon after, the wider public as well. As a result, over the summer of 1939, one of the foundational chapters in the history of British archaeology was written. The story of the discoveries made beneath Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo has been told many times before: the personalities and politics, the rivalries and revelations. In the telling, and retelling, the narrative of how the site was excavated has come to be almost as famous as what was excavated. Recounted in multiple scholarly and popular volumes,<sup>1</sup> the story has also been transformed into a novel as *The Dig*,<sup>2</sup> and rumours of the Hollywood treatment have been circulating for several years. Sutton Hoo was no ordinary excavation.

News of Brown's discovery of the outline of the hull of a ship spread quickly during the early summer; within weeks, a cadre of archaeologists from around the country arrived to take charge of the work. Under the direction of Charles W. Phillips, a who's who of British archaeology assembled on site, including Graham Clark, W.F. Grimes, John Ward-Perkins, Peggy Guido and Stuart Piggott. The excavation of the central burial chamber took place over 17 days in July 1939. Armed (as always) with a camera, one of those present was O.G.S. Crawford, the founder of *Antiquity*. His archive of photographs captures the discovery of some of the most famous objects from the site and is an invaluable record of the people involved and field methods used. Crawford's involvement also led, in March 1940, to the publication of a whole issue of *Antiquity* dedicated to Sutton Hoo, featuring reports on the fieldwork and initial assessments of the key finds. The high status of many of the objects raised the possibility that Mound 1 was the resting place of Anglo-Saxon royalty. This added particular interest to the question of the precise date of the burial, which was key to the possibility of cross-referencing with textual sources such as Bede in order to identify the deceased's name. The final article in the *Antiquity* special issue, by the great Anglo-Saxonist H.M. Chadwick, was dedicated to this topic.<sup>3</sup> Chadwick, who finally arrived at Sutton Hoo several weeks after the archaeologists had dispersed, is said instantly to have recognised the ship-burial as that of Raedwald, king of East Anglia (reigned: c. 599–c. 625). His 1940 article provides the

<sup>1</sup> For a recent guide, see Carver, M.O.H. 2017. *The Sutton Hoo story: encounters with early England*. Woodbridge. Boydell.

<sup>2</sup> Preston, J. 2007. *The Dig*. London: Viking.

<sup>3</sup> Chadwick, H.M. 1940. The Sutton Hoo ship-burial. VIII: Who was he? *Antiquity* 14: 76–87. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00014812>



Figure 1. Sutton Hoo Mound 2, excavated in 1860, 1938 and 1986–1988, and reconstructed in 1992.


systematic analysis of the literary and historical evidence to support that identification, which 80 years later, remains the general consensus. Yet, in practice, the name of Raedwald is still only a probability not a certainty. The identification relies on a chain of reasoning based on the date and wealth of the burial; there is no convenient breast-plate or DNA evidence (indeed, no human bone was recovered, leading Chadwick to believe the mound to have been a cenotaph, although Piggott and others were convinced from the start that the sandy soil had destroyed all trace of the occupant).

Over the years, *Antiquity* has published many more articles and notes on Sutton Hoo, documenting Rupert Bruce-Mitford's excavations and reanalyses of some of the many finds, as well as reviews of the numerous site reports and other publications. There are also other connections with *Antiquity*. In the 1980s, Martin Carver—who would go on to edit the journal 25 years later—directed a new round of extensive investigations. These included the excavation of several mounds (Figure 1) and the identification of two groups of inhumations with bodies deposited in unexpected positions and displaying a variety of injuries. The outlines of these unfortunate individuals were preserved as no more than dark stains in the ground, the Sutton Hoo 'sand bodies'. These gruesome burials generated much fascination among professionals and public alike, and made quite an impression on one visiting schoolboy—the current editor. But it was only many years later that the full story of these individuals became clear, and even more interesting. In the final centuries of the first millennium AD, some time after the last

pagan burials, the royal cemetery was repurposed as the setting for judicial killings, with the condemned variously hanged, beheaded and mutilated before being dumped in their graves. From the burial ground of kings, interred with the most elaborate funerary arrangements, Sutton Hoo became a place for the execution and unceremonial disposal of the outcasts of Anglo-Saxon society; two such different ‘theatres of death’ could scarcely be imagined.

Today, the site of Sutton Hoo is owned by the National Trust and the eightieth anniversary of the excavations is the occasion for a variety of developments to be rolled out over the course of the year. These include a new art installation featuring a full-sized (27m-long) steel representation of the keel and ribs of the Mound 1 ship, giving a striking impression of the scale of the vessel and the effort required to manoeuvre it up from the river to its final resting place. The on-site museum has also been completely redesigned, and new loan arrangements have brought back to Sutton Hoo some of the finds donated by Edith Pretty to the British Museum (at the time, the largest such donation ever made). Meanwhile, close to Mound 1, a new observation tower is currently under construction, promising the visitor an elevated viewpoint and the opportunity to make sense of the barrow field and its wider landscape.

## The new KV62

 In his introduction to the Sutton Hoo *Antiquity* special issue, Crawford labels the Mound 1 ship burial as “the finest archaeological discovery ever made in Great Britain, perhaps in Europe”.<sup>4</sup> Crawford may have thought it peerless, but of course many other important archaeological discoveries have been made since—not the least of which date to the Anglo-Saxon period. Some have been spectacular—such as the Staffordshire Hoard—and others more mundane but no less important, such as Mucking and West Stow. Yet the myth and reality of Sutton Hoo have ensured its preeminent status for eight decades. But wait! Enter stage right the ‘Prittlewell Prince’! In 2003, a road-widening scheme in neighbouring Essex revealed another high-status Anglo-Saxon burial. After 15 years of research, the final publication of the site was announced with a blaze of media attention last month—replete with comparisons not to the discovery of Raedwald’s resting place, but with the tomb of Tutankhamun (aka KV62). Leapfrogging its northerly neighbour’s archaeological claim to fame, Essex declared its equal not in Suffolk’s Deben valley but in Egypt’s Valley of the Kings and Howard Carter’s ultimate story of archaeological discovery. The rivalry of the East Saxons and East Angles resonates down the centuries!

Hyperbole aside, the serendipitous discovery of an undisturbed, high-status early medieval burial at Prittlewell is an important new chapter in the story of early medieval England. The burial contained many of the same types of objects found in Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo—a sword, a gold belt buckle, a cauldron, a lyre—indicating the exceptional wealth and high, possibly royal, status of its occupant (Figure 2). As at Sutton Hoo, the discovery of the burial has also led to great interest in the precise identity of the deceased. Back in 2003, the burial was thought to be of a similar early seventh-century date to Sutton Hoo’s Mound 1, and possibly therefore the grave of the East Saxon king Saeberth (died *c.* AD 616). The subsequent 15 years of specialist work, deploying a battery of techniques unimaginable in 1939, has now shifted the

<sup>4</sup> Crawford, O.G.S. 1940. Editorial notes. *Antiquity* 14: 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00014733>

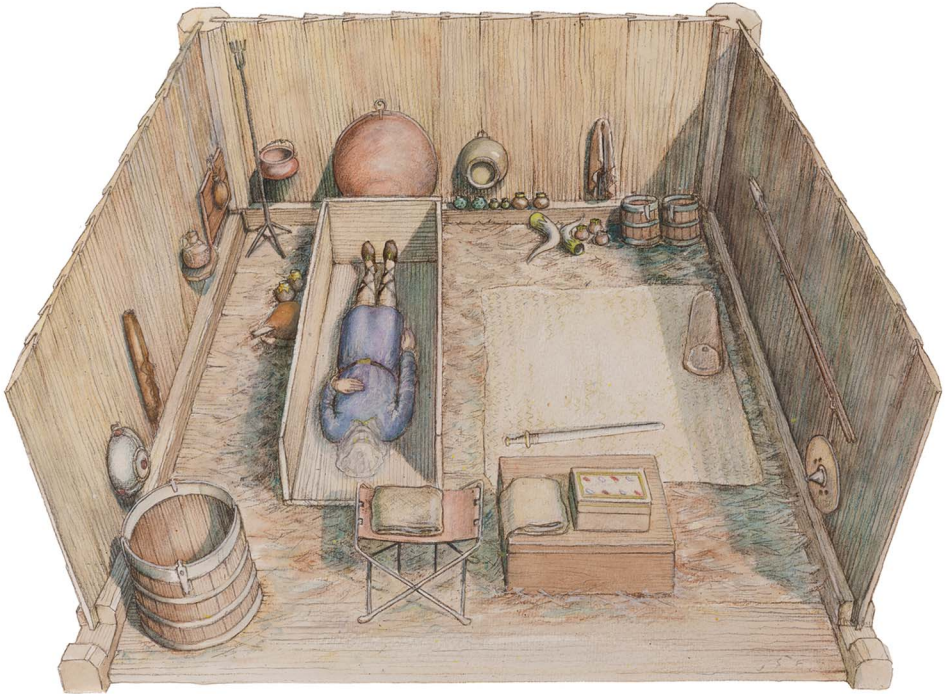


Figure 2. A reconstruction drawing of the Prittlewell princely burial chamber; (c) MOLA.

date of the burial, with implications for the identification of the occupant.<sup>5</sup> Pushed back into the late sixth century (c. AD 580–605), the new date rules out Saebert and one possibility now brought into play is that of his brother, Seaxa. But, as Stuart Piggott neatly observed at the Sutton Hoo Treasure Trove inquest in August 1940, the question of precisely who is buried in such graves is a matter for the historian not the archaeologist. Instead, therefore, we might focus on the presence of two gold-foil crosses positioned over the eyes of the deceased nobleman, suggesting his Christian faith. If he was indeed a follower, the conversion of the Prittlewell Prince quite possibly pre-dates the arrival in England in AD 597 of the missionary St Augustine and may suggest that Christianity had expanded beyond its foothold in Kent earlier than previously thought. In turn, the presence of Christian East Saxon nobles at the end of the sixth century provides a new context for understanding relations with the rival East Anglian pagan elite of Sutton Hoo only a short coastal journey to the north.


The publication of the final report on the Prittlewell burial coincides with the opening of a new permanent gallery at Southend Central Museum, to display, for the first time, finds from the site, including the gold belt buckle and gold-foil crosses, plus evidence for the wide contacts cultivated by the East Saxon elite, including a Byzantine copper-alloy flagon and

<sup>5</sup> Blackmore, L., I. Blair, S. Hirst & C. Scull. 2019. *The Prittlewell princely burial: excavations at Priory Crescent, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, 2003*. London: MOLA.



coloured glass vessels. Those unable to travel to the end of the A127 to visit the new ‘Valley of the Kings’ can explore the burial and its contents online ([www.prittlewellprincelyburial.org](http://www.prittlewellprincelyburial.org)).

## In this issue

 In the era of clickbait, journalistic comparisons with a small set of iconic sites and discoveries are ever more tempting (‘The new Richard III!’), even though they risk reinforcing narratives of bling and blueblood. But the runaway analogy of choice, by several lengths, is Pompeii. Archaeology long ago debunked the idea that the remains of the Roman city offer a snapshot of daily life, abruptly halted by the eruption of Vesuvius. The allure of the analogy, however, remains potent, and it was almost inevitable that the exceptionally well-preserved remains of a Late Bronze Age settlement at Must Farm in Cambridgeshire would be labelled ‘the Pompeii of the Fens’. For occupation of this recently excavated site was cut short by disaster and the evidence preserved by circumstance—first burnt by fire and then submerged in water. Yet in the first scholarly publication on the excavations, Knight *et al.* focus not on the moment of the site’s destruction but rather on the duration of the preceding occupation. That occupation is significant, both for its brevity—probably just a few months of activity—and for the abundance of everyday objects, offering a rare window on to the astonishing quantity and variety of ‘stuff’ that cluttered the round houses of Bronze Age Britain. The authors grapple with this rich new world of objects through the concept of ‘material intensity’.

Another article featured in this issue also focuses on the exceptional preservation offered by prehistoric sites at the water’s edge—in this case, crannogs, the well-known artificial islets of Scotland. Here, Garrow and Sturt report on their investigations, on land and underwater, at newly identified crannog sites in the Outer Hebrides. Widely assumed to be of Iron Age date, the new evidence they present indicates that the origins of this distinctive settlement form can be found a couple of millennia earlier, during the Neolithic, suggesting deep roots for concepts of settlement, monumentality and ritual deposition at the interface between land and water.

Elsewhere in this issue, we have a pair of papers on Old World urbanism of the first millennium AD. Hanson *et al.* use statistical techniques developed to assess contemporary urbanism to analyse the spatial organisation of Roman cities. The results demonstrate that, despite the great variation in urban planning and facilities attested across the Empire, there are strong correlations between population size and other urban indices, such as the provision of public spaces and street networks. Such statistical methods open the way for the systematic comparison of urban expressions across time and space, allowing the rich evidence of Roman archaeology to contribute to much wider historical questions. At the same, however, such broad-scale ‘Big data’ applications rely on detailed fieldwork at hundreds of individual sites. Henning *et al.* provide one such example. They report the results of recent geophysical investigation at the Visigothic foundation of Reccopolis in central Iberia. Their new site plan reveals the dense urban fabric of the settlement, featuring not only palaces and religious buildings, but also houses and workshops. This invites reconsideration of ideas about royal foundations and the nature of urbanism in the post-Roman Western Mediterranean.

Another pair of articles focuses on later medieval Europe, and castles in particular. Wiewióra *et al.* introduce the site of Unisław in western Poland, a previously unknown stronghold

of the Teutonic Order. Fieldwork has yielded evidence of a Slavic settlement, followed by a timber-and-earth fortress erected during the colonisation of the Prussian lands and, finally, a masonry castle. The relatively late construction of the stone-built phase questions any simple correlation between the architectural forms, dates and functions of these key control centres of the Teutonic State and, consequently, the means by which the Knights exerted authority over the landscape. Meanwhile, Karen Dempsey uses the scholarship on later medieval Britain and Ireland as a case study through which to examine the institutionalised patriarchal narratives of archaeology and the structural inequalities that they perpetuate. Despite three decades of feminist critique, Dempsey demonstrates that little has changed; so how, she asks, can we bring about a more inclusive archaeology that better reflects the lives and experiences of women and other marginalised groups of the past and, at the same time, engages with diverse contemporary audiences?

In addition to these research articles, we also have a debate feature on the Cerutti Mastodon site, in California. In 2017, on the basis of broken mastodon bones, the excavators of the site argued for the presence of hominins in North America *c.* 130 000 years ago, well over 100 000 years earlier than the conventionally accepted date. That announcement generated great interest, and a number of rebuttals have been published. In their contribution to the debate, Magnani *et al.* focus on the experimental archaeology procedures used in support of the identification of hominin activity, arguing for the need for further and more rigorous replication studies before the claims about the site are accepted into the narrative of the colonisation of the Americas. The excavators of the Cerutti site, Holen and colleagues, respond to Magnani *et al.*, along with other commentators who reflect on the evolving philosophy of experimental archaeology and on the potential for an early peopling of North America.

## **Antiquity 2019 prize winners**

Each year, the *Antiquity* Trust recognises the two best articles published in the previous year's volume through the award of the *Antiquity* Prize and the Ben Cullen Prize. As in previous years, a shortlist was drawn up by our editorial advisory board, and a panel of judges then selected the winners. Comparing articles that vary so much in their subject matter is an unenviable task, but a clear winner emerged in the shape of 'Elites and commoners at Great Zimbabwe: archaeological and ethnographic insights on social power' by Shadreck Chirikure, Robert Nyamushosho, Foreman Bandama and Collet Dandara.<sup>6</sup> The authors used a variety of evidence, including Shona ethnography and the results of new small-scale excavations, to demonstrate how unfounded assumptions about the spatial and temporal distribution of architecture and material culture at Great Zimbabwe have reinforced an inappropriate dichotomy of elite *vs* commoner. Their article shows how the example of southern Africa both differs from, and contributes to, the wider global archaeology of class and inequality.

In addition to the *Antiquity* Prize, the runner-up article is awarded the Ben Cullen Prize. This year the judges found themselves with an unprecedented three-way tiebreaker, and, in

<sup>6</sup> Chirikure, S., R. Nyamushosho, F. Bandama & C. Dandara. 2018. Elites and commoners at Great Zimbabwe: archaeological and ethnographic insights on social power. *Antiquity* 92: 1056–75. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2018.137>



recognition of the diverse periods and regions addressed in these articles, the Trust elected exceptionally to give three prizes. The winning articles—in no particular order—present research on violence in early medieval Scandinavia, changing agricultural production in response to climate change in Iron Age Mainland Southeast Asia, and Bronze Age state formation in China.

‘A moment frozen in time: evidence of a late fifth-century massacre at Sandby borg’, by Clara Alfsdotter, Ludvig Pappmehl-Dufay and Helena Victor, reports the results of recent excavations at a Migration-period ringfort on the Swedish island of Öland.<sup>7</sup> Osteological, contextual and artefactual evidence from recent excavations suggests that the inhabitants of the early medieval fort—men and women, young and old—were massacred in a brutal attack, their corpses left unburied and the site abandoned. The recovery of a variety of valuable objects suggests that the attackers may not have been motivated primarily by plunder, leading the authors to conceptualise this violence in the context of the political instability and social competition unleashed in the late fifth century as the Western Roman Empire broke down. This struggle for power would eventually lead, a century or so later, to the wider world of Raedwald and the Prittlewell Prince.

The second recipient of this year’s Ben Cullen Prize is the article on ‘Social responses to climate change in Iron Age north-east Thailand: new archaeobotanical evidence’ by Cristina Castillo, Charles Higham, Katie Miller, Nigel Chang, Katerina Douka, Thomas Higham and Dorian Fuller.<sup>8</sup> During the early first millennium AD, the climate of Mainland Southeast Asia became more arid as the monsoon weakened. Using archaeobotanical evidence from the site of Ban Non Wat in Thailand, the authors document the transition from dry to wet rice cultivation at this time, which they argue to be part of a broader societal response linking water management with the emergence of state societies.

Last, but by no means least—and also on the theme of early states—is our final winner: ‘When peripheries were centres: a preliminary study of the Shimao-centred polity in the loess highland, China’ by Li Jaang, Zhouyong Sun, Jing Shao and Min Li.<sup>9</sup> Taking the recently discovered monumental Bronze Age site of Shimao as a starting point, the authors build on the growing evidence for social complexity and state formation outside, and earlier than, the traditional crucible of Chinese civilisation in the Central Plains during the later second millennium BC. As the archaeological data mount up, the dominant text-based narrative in which key elements of Chinese culture developed first on the Central Plains and then spread to the rest of China becomes harder to sustain. The reality—as also indicated by other sites recently reported in *Antiquity* such as Liangzhu and Erlitou—is a much more complex and interesting phenomenon of greater historical depth than previously appreciated. Our congratulations to all of this year’s winners. The prize-winning articles are available to read for free

<sup>7</sup> Alfsdotter, C., L. Pappmehl-Dufay & H. Victor. 2018. A moment frozen in time: evidence of a late fifth-century massacre at Sandby borg. *Antiquity* 92: 421–36. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2018.21>

<sup>8</sup> Castillo, C.C., C.F.W. Higham, K. Miller, N. Chang, K. Douka, T.F.G. Higham & D.Q. Fuller. 2018. Social responses to climate change in Iron Age north-east Thailand: new archaeobotanical evidence. *Antiquity* 92: 1274–91. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2018.198>

<sup>9</sup> Jaang, L., Z. Sun, J. Shao & M. Li. 2018. When peripheries were centres: a preliminary study of the Shimao-centred polity in the loess highland, China. *Antiquity* 92: 1008–22. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2018.31>

via our website ([www.antiquity.ac.uk/open/prizes](http://www.antiquity.ac.uk/open/prizes)), where you can also find all of the previous winners from the past quarter of a century.

## Wait, there is more!

🏆 The geographic spread of this year's prize-winning articles—Europe, Africa, East and Southeast Asia—speaks to *Antiquity's* global remit. Of these regions, however, it is archaeological work in China that has risen most prominently in profile in the pages of this journal over the past decade, and *Antiquity* is pleased to play a role in bringing this rich and important heritage to a global audience. The current issue is no exception. Indeed, it features two contrasting articles on Chinese archaeology. Picking up from Jaang *et al.* and their article on Shimao, in this issue, Zhang *et al.* chart the decline of the large Neolithic centres of the fourth and third millennia BC in the Yangtze and lower Yellow River Basins, and the rise, to the north of the Central Plains, of larger and more monumental centres, including Shimao. Underpinned by a new radiocarbon model, the authors identify an intriguing contrast between the radical geographic dislocation from south to north with the strong continuity of key cultural practices such as the use of symbolic jades. What, they ask, might this indicate? In contrast to the multi-millennia, interregional sweep of Zhang *et al.*, our other article from China focuses on a single, modest rural site of the Han period. While research on early China has given great attention to plant and animal domestication, work on later periods has tended to neglect the agrarian foundations of these states and empires, instead focusing on urbanisation and craft production. In this context, Qin *et al.* present important new evidence from the Western Han site of Sanyangzhuang, in Henan Province. In place of jades and bronzes, they deal with such mundane matters as crop cultivation, field-management practices and the use of farming implements. This village site, one of countless thousands that must have characterised the landscape of Han-period China, was home to a community of smallholders whose daily lives provide a new lens through which to view the great economic and political developments of that age.

Beyond China, readers will find a variety of other articles to explore. These include the identification of parasites in human coprolites from Çatalhöyük, and isotope analyses to assess the mobility of Bronze Age populations in northern Italy and the importation of grain to the maritime port of late antique Rome. In signing off, a reminder that we would love to hear about the results of your research over the coming summer—whether in the field, laboratory or library. Tag us in your social media posts, or email news to [assistant@antiquity.ac.uk](mailto:assistant@antiquity.ac.uk). If you plan to send us a paper, you can find all of the submission guidelines on our website: <http://antiquity.ac.uk/submit-paper>. We look forward to hearing from you!

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Durham 1 June 2019