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Proof copy of a major article with new three-dimensional reconstructions available. Published version available in *The Antiquaries Journal* 102 (2023).

SUTTON HOO PERSPECTIVE: RE-IMAGING THE SHIP AND THE BURIAL

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Abstract

Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, is a sixth-seventh century AD cemetery with a mixture of burials. Mound I, the largest, contained a ship-burial and is the subject of this paper. The grave is presumed to be of Raedwald, king of East Anglia from c. AD599-c.625. First excavated in 1939, work was curtailed by war. Despite subsequent re-excavation and a lengthy programme of research, questions remain. This paper correlates information dispersed in the definitive publication with some recent research.

Digital 3D imaging of every rivet fastening the buried ship's planking has reconciled anomalies between different recorded positions. It enables the curved lines of missing rivets to be superimposed on the original plan of the buried deposit. The ship is shown to have tilted soon after being covered by a tumulus. The subsequent mechanism of collapse of its contents is deduced from their positioning and damage, revealing a possible entrance. A cross-section shows the calculated height of the platform constructed to support the deposit.

Residues of phosphate, bitumen, tar and quantities of tape are reconsidered in the light of advances in forensic archaeology and the identification of embalming substances. A temporary coffin is proposed, together with a bed on which a heap of possessions was placed. It is suggested that delay in laying a king to rest in his flagship disrupted traditional procedure and his body putrefied.

[Link to proof version of article](#)

Three-dimensional images of the Mound 1 ship. On the left a painting by Alan Sorrell, flanked by Pat Tanner's reconstructions showing the burial chamber containing a dugout coffin and accessed by an entrance from the fore part of the ship. © Valerie Fenwick.

