

THE  
BRITISH  
MUSEUM

# Anglo-Saxons

## Gallery Activities



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# Contents

## Gallery activities: notes for teachers

## When you visit the Museum

### Gallery activities

- Ship burials
- Beliefs about Life and Death
- The Sutton Hoo ship burial
- Old and New



Anglo-Saxon brooch, late 6<sup>th</sup> century AD

## Gallery activities: notes for teachers

- The activities help pupils to develop gallery skills and literacy skills in tandem. They encourage the pupils to scan the displays, select objects and then look at them and their labelling in detail. The activities help to focus the note taking and annotated drawings which many schools already undertake.
- The activities encourage pupils not to follow a fixed route around the exhibits. This means that the pupils are distributed across the gallery space, helping to avoid congestion in the crowded galleries.
- Select enough activities to fit the objectives of your visit, but do give the pupils enough time for thought and wonder.
- Use this pack in conjunction with the general *Museum Activities* booklet.
- We strongly recommend that you come on a preliminary visit to check the activities on site.
- This approach to visiting will help you use the galleries to their best effect, but it does require preparation before the visit and perhaps some changes to the way in which you might use helpers who come with you.
- Some of the activities fit with the schemes of work on The Anglo-Saxons issued by QCA.



The gold buckle from the Sutton Hoo ship burial, Anglo-Saxon, 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

## When you visit the museum

- Before you leave the Ford Centre for Young Visitors, remind the pupils what tasks you plan to undertake on return to school, and the importance of the quality of their research in the museum for completing the school based tasks.
- Remind the pupils that what they are looking at what has survived in the ground for over 1400 years.
- Tell the pupils that some objects which were made of more than one material have been reconstructed, but others, namely the wholly organic objects, e.g. the textiles, are a mystery.
- Supply your helpers with a couple of prompting questions to help keep pupils on task together with some extension questions for those who need it.



The Wilton Cross, Anglo-Saxon, 7<sup>th</sup> century AD

## Ship Burials

- ➡ Study the objects from the Sutton Hoo burial and the Taplow burial.
- ➡ Record up to 4 objects on display from both burials.
- ➡ Play close attention to: the shape, colour, possible use, materials the objects are made from and the decoration.
- ➡ Compare similarities and the differences between objects.

Record your 4 objects from the  
Taplow Burial

1
2
3
4

Use these boxes to compare  
similarities and differences.

1
2
3
4

Record your 4 objects from the  
Sutton Hoo Burial

1
2
3
4

Name:

Date:

## Beliefs about death



The Anglo-Saxons held beliefs about life after death.

Record an object from a burial which provides evidence for the statements on the right.

You will need to impress people with your wealth.

The strength and skills of a warrior are still important.

Life after death mirrors life before death: you keep your place in society.

Your time in the afterlife is spent with other people: there are feasts to go to.

Name:

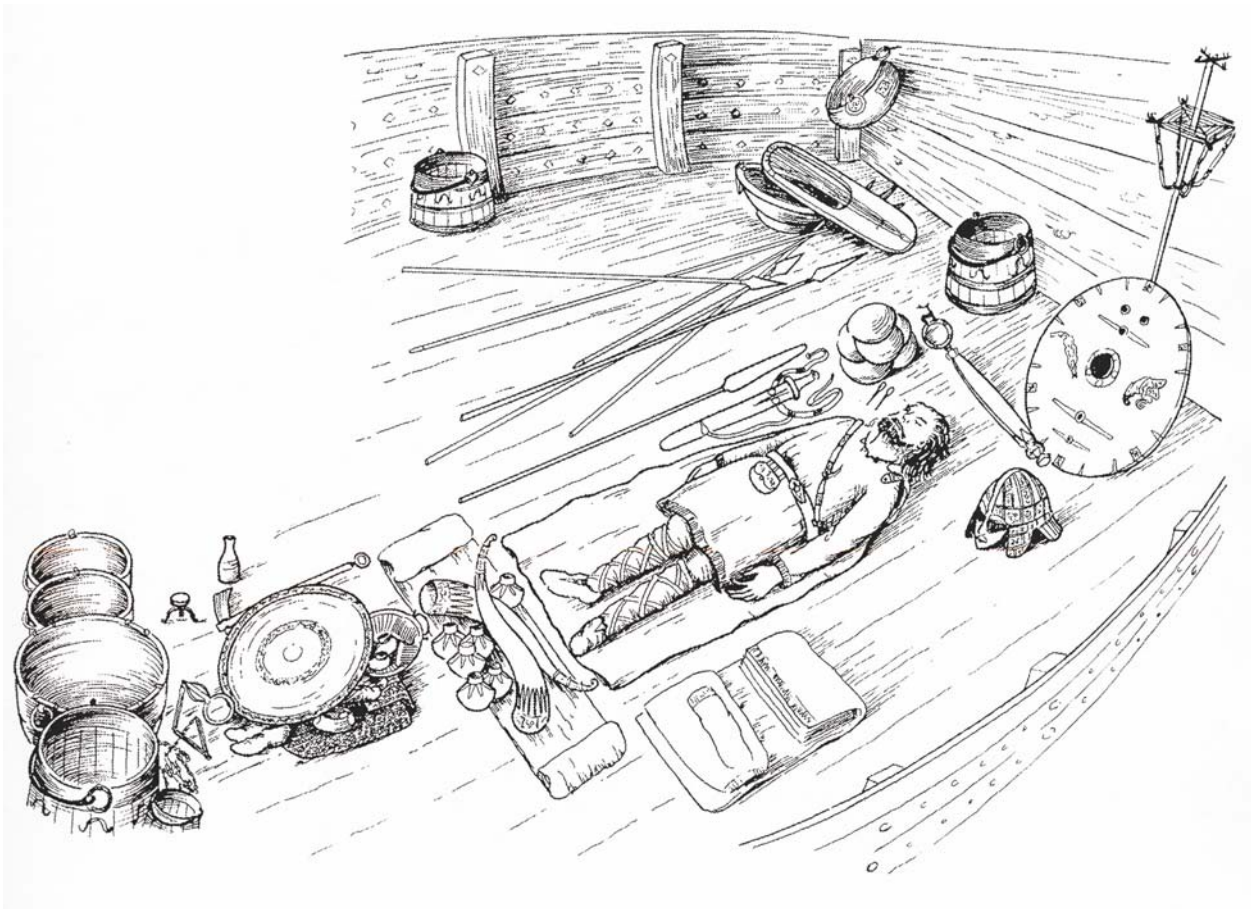
Date:

## The Sutton Hoo ship burial

- ➡ Here is an artist's impression of how the Sutton Hoo burial looked.
- ➡ Choose 5 objects from the drawing and circle them.
- ➡ Find the 5 objects in the gallery cases.

Record how they appear now.

Link you sketches and notes to the matching object in the picture.



- ➡ Which of the objects have not survived?
- ➡ Which materials have survived the best?

Name:

Date:



## Old and New

### Compare an original object and a reconstruction.

- ▶ The famous Sutton Hoo helmet was in poor condition when it was excavated in 139.
- ▶ Archaeologists studied it closely to work out the original shape and decoration.
- ▶ Drawings and models were made to show how the helmet may have looked.

▶ Pieces of the original helmet.



Use these boxes to make notes about similarities and differences.

Similarities

Differences

Archaeological reconstruction.



Name:

Date:



# Anglo-Saxon Bibliography

## Adult Interest

Black, J. 2000	A New History of England	Sutton Publishing
Bruce-Mitford, R.L.S. 1968	The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial: A Handbook	British Museum Press
Care Evans, A 1994	The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial *	British Museum Press
Carver, M. 1998	Sutton Hoo: Burial of Kings	British Museum Press
Carver, M. (ed) 1999	The Age of Sutton Hoo *	The Boydell Press
Clarke, H. 1984	The Archaeology of Medieval England	British Museum Press
Heaney, S. 1999	Beowulf	Faber and Faber
Hinton, D.A. 1990	Archaeology, Economy and Society: England from the fifth to the fifteenth century (Chapter 7 onwards)	Routledge
Lang, J. 1988	Anglo-Saxon Sculpture	Shire Archaeology
Page, R.I. 1987	Reading the Past: Runes	British Museum Press
Strong, R. 1998	The Story of Britain: A People's History	Pimlico
Wilson, E. 1998	Early Medieval Designs from Britain	British Museum Press

## Teaching Resources

East, K. 1982	A King's Treasure	Kestrel
Loverance, R. 1992	The Anglo-Saxons (Zig-Zag)	BBC Fact Finders
Mason, J. 1991	Sense of History: The Anglo Saxons	Longman
Reeve, J. & Chattington, J. 1999	The Anglo-Saxons Activity Book	British Museum Press
Sharman, M. 1995	Britain through the Ages: Anglo-Saxons	Evans

**\*recommended**

# Useful Web Addresses

Education Department homepage with full details for planning visits, resources and programmes and events.  
[www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/education](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/education)

Children's COMPASS: Take a virtual tour of Anglo-Saxon England based on the objects from the British Museum. Using the search facility to find out about different aspects of everyday life in Anglo-Saxon times.  
[www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/children'scompass](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/children'scompass)

COMPASS: The British Museum's collections on the web.  
[www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/)

Archaeology  
Council for British Archaeology website.  
[www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk)

Map of Anglo-Saxon England  
[www.georgetown.edu/cball/oe/oe-map.html](http://www.georgetown.edu/cball/oe/oe-map.html)

Information about English Heritage sites, resources and services, including those related to the Anglo-Saxons.  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

Anglo-Saxon Britain, the Viking raids and the Norman invasion. History and maps.  
[www.great-britain.co.uk/history/ang-sax.htm](http://www.great-britain.co.uk/history/ang-sax.htm)

Introduction to the West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon Village. Living History Park.  
[www.stedmunds.co.uk/west\\_stow](http://www.stedmunds.co.uk/west_stow)

Recreations of the Sutton Hoo Ship.  
[www.natmus.min.dk/nmf/nb/8/english/art6.htm](http://www.natmus.min.dk/nmf/nb/8/english/art6.htm)

On line live tour of the Sutton Hoo cemetery by the Sutton Hoo Society.  
Visitor information and teacher's notes.  
[www.suttonhoo.org](http://www.suttonhoo.org)

BBC History website on the Anglo-Saxons.  
[www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/anglo\\_saxons/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/anglo_saxons/)

# Anglo – Saxon England Time Line

1 <sup>st</sup> century AD	43 The Roman Emperor, Claudius, invades Britain and incorporates it into the Empire. Colchester is set up as a centre of Roman administration.
2 <sup>nd</sup> century AD	122 The Roman Emperor, Hadrian, orders a wall to be built to separate the Romans from the barbarians in the Northern Britannia (notably the Caledonians)
3 <sup>rd</sup> century	270s-280s Saxon Shore Forts built to prevent Saxon invaders landing on the British Coastline.
4 <sup>th</sup> century	
5 <sup>th</sup> century	407-11 The Roman Emperor, Constantine III, takes the field army of Britain to the Continent to fight continental barbarians and to support his claim on the Empire. This leaves Britain with fewer troops, mostly on the frontiers. c. 410 After the barbarian raids on the Continent, Britain is cut off from Roman rule and the Roman administration and military organisation of the province collapses. c. 450 First Anglo-Saxon settlements in Kent; records of leadership from Hengist and Horsa.
6 <sup>th</sup> century	c. 500 At the Battle of Badon (probably in the West Country), the Romano-Britons defeat the incoming Anglo-Saxons and temporarily halt Anglo-Saxon expansion into western Britain. 567 St Augustine converts King Ethelbert of Kent to Christianity.
7 <sup>th</sup> century	600 Anglo- Saxons control most of central and western England. 625 the Ship Burial at Sutton Hoo, probably of King Redwald. 635 Aidan founds the monastery on Lindisfarne.
8 <sup>th</sup> century	760 Offa causes a dyke to be built between England and Wales. 793 The Vikings raid the monastery on Lindisfarne.
9 <sup>th</sup> century	850 Vikings make permanent settlements in Britain. 867 Vikings establish the Kingdom of York. 878 Guthrum and the Danes agree to leave Wessex after Alfred defeats them at the Battle of Eddington.
10 <sup>th</sup> century	991 Battle of Maldon, Essex, Vikings defeat the Anglo-Saxons. 994 Danish raids led by King Sweyn.
11 <sup>th</sup> century	1016 Canute the Dane becomes King of England. 1066 William of Normandy becomes King of England.

## Sutton Hoo Excavation Time Line

6 <sup>th</sup> century AD	800m north of the royal cemetery an early burial containing the graves of men and women from a local settlement; some men buried with swords and shields, possibly denoting warrior status.
c. 600	Foundation of royal cemetery; first graves.
c. 625	Mound 1 ship burial; Mound 2 chamber burial.
c. 640	Abandonment of cemetery by Christian rulers.
Mid-7 <sup>th</sup> century onwards	Judicial executions with burial of criminals in and adjacent to royal cemetery.
late 16 <sup>th</sup> century	Robber pit dug into Mound 1, just missing burial deposit.
17 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Mounds 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14 and 18 ransacked.
1938	June/July: Basil Brown opens 3 mounds: Mound 3, a cremation on a wooden platform, Mound 2, an inhumation in a burial chamber with a boat placed over the top, Mound 4, a cremation placed in a bronze bowl.
1939	May/June: Basil Brown begins to excavate Mound 1 and finds remains of large ship and an undisturbed burial chamber. July: small team excavates the contents of the burial chamber. August: the Science Museum records the ship. September: war breaks out in Europe.
1965/7	A British Museum team surveys the cemetery, opens ship trench and records remains of ship and ship trench.
1967/71	The remains of Mound 1 and the spoil heaps from 1939 are excavated. Mound 5 is examined and the first sand-bodies are excavated. Traces of the underlying Prehistoric landscape are recorded.
1973	Mound 1 rebuilt to its original profile and diameter.
1983/92	The Sutton Hoo Excavation Research Project excavates Mound 2, 5, 6, 7, 14, 17 and 18. All, with the exception of Mound 17, are robbed. Mound 2 established as a chamber grave with a boat placed over it. Prehistoric landscape revealed with mounds placed in association with it. Two groups of sand-bodies, one around the skirt of mound 5 and one on the eastern edge of the cemetery are excavated and interpreted as judicial killings associated perhaps with a gallows on the site.
2000	Excavations by the National Trust beneath the area of a new visitor centre 800m north of the royal cemetery reveal a burial ground (6 <sup>th</sup> century) which appears to have been for the graves of men and women from a local settlement.