

## SAXON RENDLESHAM

### *Some preliminary considerations*

BY R. L. S. BRUCE-MITFORD, F.S.A.

#### ROYAL ASSOCIATIONS OF RENDLESHAM IN SAXON TIMES.

The discovery of the great ship-burial of the Saxon period at Sutton Hoo,<sup>1</sup> near Woodbridge, in 1939, has focussed archæological attention on the quiet, sparsely populated parish of Rendlesham. This parish lies, like the Sutton Hoo burial-ground, on the east bank of the River Deben, and is four miles to the North of the burial-ground. The river between Woodbridge and Rendlesham runs fairly straight. The distance by water is about four and a quarter miles.

Rendlesham has long been recognised as a place with early royal connections, and it has been constantly associated with Redwald, the greatest of the early East Anglian kings, and the only one to attain the eminence of Bretwalda, or overlord, over the other kingdoms of the Saxon heptarchy. Redwald seems to have died about A.D. 624-5.<sup>2</sup> The East Anglian Kings were known as the Uffingas (descendants of Uffa, or Wuffa).<sup>3</sup>

A typical illustration of this customary connecting of Rendlesham with Redwald is provided by Wodderspoon's *Historic Sites of Suffolk*:<sup>4</sup>

"At Rendlesham in this county it is recorded that Redwald, a King of the East Angles, built a magnificent palace for the residence of himself and court, and occupied the building as his seat of government."

John Weever, in his *Ancient Funeral Monuments*,<sup>5</sup> says of Rendlesham that "by supposition" Redwald, "as also Swidelme lye buried at this place."

<sup>1</sup> See *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*, a Provisional Guide. British Museum, 1947. (This is now out of print. A new edition is in preparation). *Antiquaries Journal*, XX, 1940. *Antiquity*, XIV, 1940. *British Museum Quarterly*, XIII, No. 4, Dec. 1939, etc.

<sup>2</sup> H. M. Chadwick, *Antiquity* XIV, 1940, 87.

<sup>3</sup> The family tree of the Uffingas is given by Chadwick, *loc.cit.* 78. He omits Egric and Sigeberht, whose positions in the table are uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> John Wodderspoon, *Historic Sites of Suffolk*, Ipswich, 1839 and 1841, p. 115. I am indebted to Mr. Leslie Dow for this reference.

<sup>5</sup> London 1631, p. 777. I am indebted to Miss Lilian Redstone, M.B.E., of Woodbridge, for this reference. In the Davy MSS. in the British Museum, referred to more fully below (p. 247), it is said that there was a local tradition to this effect, and that the then Rector, the Rev. Samuel Henley, D.D., F.S.A., "this eminently learned orientalist" as Davy calls him, conducted a search in the parish church for the supposed royal remains. The suspected tomb proved to be mediæval. Davy describes the episode as follows (*Add MS.* 19097, fol. 282r, 282v):—"Weever's authority and the prevailing tradition of the place, that two kings were buried here, induced Mr. Henley, the Rector to examine 1785 what appeared to have been the place of their interment. The spot was covered with two coarse flat stones, which being raised, proved to be slabs of two very fine figures of a Knight and his Lady . . . from the arms, which are Ufford and Valoines, I conceive this to be the monument of Robert de Ufford, 2nd of that name . . . He was knighted 31. E 1 . . . at a considerable depth under these slabs was found something like the dust of a human body."

Practically every Suffolk historian says something similar. Mr. W. G. Arnott, in his *Place names of the Deben Valley*, is the most recent writer to refer to "Redwald at Rendlesham".<sup>1</sup>

It seems that the ultimate source of all these writers must be Camden's *Britannia*, in the first edition of which (the octavo latin version of 1596), and in all the subsequent English versions, the following matter occurs:<sup>2</sup>

" . . . Rendelisham, ubi Redwaldus Orientalium Anglorum rex, primus ex sua gente Baptismatis fonte Christo renatus erat: qui tamen postea ab uxore seductus in eodem fano et altare, ut inquit Beda<sup>3</sup>, ad Christi religionem et arulam ad Daemoniorum victimas habuit".

This passage is rendered in Philemon Holland's translation of 1610, the first English translation of Camden, as follows:—"Rendelisham, where Redwald King of the East Saxons kept usually his court, who was the first of all his nation that was baptised, and received Christianity; but afterwards seduced by his wife, he had in the self-same church, as saith Beda, one altar for Christ's religion and another for sacrifices unto devils."<sup>4</sup>

The phrase "kept usually his court", to which the later English versions adhere, is presumably the translator's rendering of "erat".

Camden gives no evidence for the statement that Redwald "kept his court" in Rendlesham. In fact, I have not been able to discover any evidence for associating Redwald with Rendlesham at all.<sup>5</sup>

It would be surprising if no attempt had been made to derive the name Rendlesham from Redwald, and in fact this has been done. The Rev. Francis Blomefield, the Norfolk topographer, in his *Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*,<sup>6</sup> in discussing Redwald and his supposed palace at Rendlesham, says "which place" (Rendlesham) "if we may credit history, received its present name from him." Davy<sup>7</sup> quotes from the Hawes MS., pp. 555-560, "Rendlesham, or Redwalsham, so called from Redwald, a Saxon king of the E. Angles, who usually kept his court there." Bede, however, who wrote only a hundred years after Redwald's death, and who went to the trouble of explaining the name, paraphrases it, not as having any connection with Redwald (Redwaldus), but as "mansio. . . Rendili"—Rendil's stading. ("in vico regio qui dicitur Rendlaesham, id est mansio Rendili" viz. "in a royal residence called Rendlesham, that is, Rendil's stading").<sup>8</sup> Bede had already referred at some length to Redwald (Redwaldus) in four earlier chapters<sup>9</sup>, but he does not suggest that the name of this Royal residence, "Rendlesham", is connected with him. No reputable historian makes this claim, and in fact the derivation of Rendlesham from Redwald is philologically hardly

1 Ipswich, 1946, 1. Mr. Arnott's survey, unfortunately, stops short of Rendlesham.

2 Vol I, p. 258.

3 Bk. II, Ch. xv.

4 Camden does not say, any more than does Bede, that the temple of the two altars was at Rendlesham, though his words may perhaps have given rise to that impression.

5 Richard Gough, in Vol. II of his 1789 edition of *Britannia*, p. 86, realising the absence of any foundation for these statements, reduces the Rendlesham entry to one sentence: "At Rendlesham Suidhelm, King of the East Angles, was baptised by Cædca: but Bede nowhere says that Redwald kept his court here." (Suidhelm was in fact king of the East Saxons, not of the East Angles. Gough is here transmitting a mistake that occurs as early as Philemon Holland's translation).

6 1805 edition, Vol. II, p. 18. The first edition of this work, which was in five volumes, appeared between 1739 and 1775.

7 *loc. cit.* fol. 271r.

8 Bede, Bk. III, Ch. xxii.

9 Bede, Bk. II, Chs., v, xii, xv; Bk. III, ch. xviii.

possible<sup>1</sup>. Who then is the mysterious "Rendil"? Our knowledge of East Anglian personalities in the 7th century, in spite of comparatively numerous references in Bede, is very slight, and in the 6th century and the period of the first settlements, apart from the first few names in the genealogy of the Uffingas, nil. Bede was in all probability simply rendering the Anglo-Saxon name into Latin, without any actual knowledge of an individual of the name of Rendilus. The name may go back to a period of early settlement, before the association of the Uffingas with Rendlesham began.

Apart from the question of Redwald, however, the royal character of Rendlesham in the 7th century is clear from the one passage in Bede in which it is mentioned:—<sup>2</sup>

"Now there succeeded Sigbert in the Kingdom<sup>3</sup> Swidhelm, son to Sexbald, who was baptised by the self-same Cedd, in the province of the East Englishmen, in a town of the King's called Rendlesham, that is to say, Rendil's steading: and Ethelwald, brother to Anna, former King of the same, lifted him up as he was rising from the sacred font"<sup>4</sup>.

This passage tells us three things about Rendlesham: that Rendlesham was during Aethelwald's reign (655-664) a "vicus regius" of the East Anglian kings. Secondly, that there was most probably a church there at the time,<sup>5</sup>; and thirdly, that this was a "vicus regius" of some importance, if it included what must have been one of the earliest churches in East Anglia; since Bishop Cedd was operating there: and since the reception of the East Saxon king and the solemnization of his baptism took place there.

It seems, however, that Wodderspoon's "magnificent palace" must be reduced to Bede's non-committal expression "vicus regius", to which little more force can be given than "a royal residence" or "a royal seat"; nevertheless, it remains clear, from the passage quoted, that at the very time when the Sutton Hoo burial took place (viz. between 650 and 670 A.D.) Rendlesham was playing an active part as a royal residence of some importance.

*These words translate  
'villa'*

#### RENDLESHAM AND SUTTON HOO.

In the first sentence of this paper it is said that the discovery of the Sutton Hoo Ship-burial has focussed attention on Rendlesham. Why is this? The reason is that the great ship-burial is regarded as the grave or memorial of one of the East Anglian kings, and consequently the group

1 E. Ekwall, in his *Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names* (1936) has the following under *Rendlesham*—"*Rendel's HAM*": Rendel must be a short form of names in Rand—Such names are not well evidenced in O.E. but are common in Scandinavia and on the Continent."

2 Bede, Bk. III, Ch. xxii.

3 Essex.

4 "Successit autem Sigbercto in regnum Svidhelm, filius Sexbaldi, qui baptisatus est ab ipso Ceddain provincia Orientalium Anglorum, in vico regis qui dicitur Rendlesham, id est Mansio Rendilo; suscepitque eum ascendentem de fonte sancto Aedilvald, rex ipsius gentis Orientalium Anglorum, frater Anna regis corudem." In other words, the East Anglian King, Ethelwald acted as godfather to the King of Essex, in the same manner that Oswald of Northumbria had acted for Cynegils of Wessex at his baptism by Bishop Birinus at Dorchester.

The English translation of Bede used in this paper is that of Thomas Stapleton (published 1565) as adapted by Dr. J. E. King, *Beda's Opera Historica*, Vol. I (Heinemann, 1930: Loeb Library).

5 It is doubtful whether the words *suscepitque eum ascendentem de fonte sancto* can be held to imply the presence of a baptistry, or even of a font, which would in turn imply the presence of a church. The phrase may be no more than a conventional formula used by Bede to mean "stand godfather".

of eleven barrows at Sutton Hoo as the burial-place of the dynasty, corresponding in time with their known use of Rendlesham as a *vicus regius*. If this is correct, then Sutton Hoo, both the finds we know at present and the results of further exploration of the site, may throw valuable light on Rendlesham and on the Uffingas, and Rendlesham in turn may throw light on Sutton Hoo. Archæologically speaking, the Rendlesham *vicus regius* would be the "habitation site" corresponding to the Sutton Hoo burial-ground, and the location and excavation of the "palace" and other buildings there, should, with the further excavation of the grave-field, yield, in a unique way, a comprehensive picture of the life and progress of a Saxon dynasty in one of the most fascinating phases of our history. This should make a remarkable study, in many ways, were it ever to materialize, for, let us remember, the Sutton Hoo grave is not just any ordinary chieftain's tomb, but a phenomenon of the first magnitude, even against the European background. It has implications in many fields.

Before linking Sutton Hoo with Rendlesham in this way, however, we must first be satisfied that the great ship-burial really is the grave, not of some lesser dignitary, or, as has been suggested, of a foreign adventurer<sup>1</sup>, but of an East Anglian king.

That the great ship-burial was the grave or monument of an East Anglian king was the conclusion of the late Professor Chadwick, who, shortly after the discovery, discussed at length the question, whose grave (or cenotaph) it was, in a masterly essay.<sup>2</sup> There is no point in repeating here his arguments which are convincing,<sup>3</sup> but anyone interested in this point should read his careful study with the closest attention.

It is, however worth adding some additional points which have emerged, since Chadwick wrote, and which seem to me to clinch the matter. Two of the objects in the grave are now recognised as in all probability symbols of authority such as can only at this period have been the attributes of a king. Both were placed in a position of dignity at what must have been, or (on the cenotaph view)<sup>4</sup> have been held to be, the dead man's head. The first is the unique wrought-iron "standard", [Plate 1(a)] 6 ft. 4 ins. in height, which, whatever may have been the exact use and purpose of its curious grille,<sup>5</sup> seems in its size and shape, its spike at the bottom and its animal crest, a Saxon translation of the late Roman *signum*.<sup>6</sup> Bede describes the use of what may be just such an object by a Saxon Bretwalda, Edwin of Northumbria, who died in 633:—

<sup>1</sup> See *Antiquity*, XX, 1946, 28, 30; *Fornvannen*, h. 2-3, 1948' "Sutton Hoo; en svensk kunga eller hövdinggrav?" by Birger Nerman (with English summary).

<sup>2</sup> *loc. cit.* 76-87.

<sup>3</sup> Except for his suggested identification of the burial with Redwald, which was based upon the insufficient knowledge available at the time of the coins found in the Sutton Hoo purse. Identification with Redwald is now known to be out of the question (*British Museum Provisional Guide*, 42). For arguments against the view that the burial is a foreigner see Chadwick, *loc. cit.* 77; also *British Museum Provisional Guide*, 42; "Sutton Hoo and Sweden" by R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, *Archæological News Letter*, Vol. 1, No. 2 March 1948, 5-7; and Sune Lindqvist, "Sutton Hoo and Beowulf", *Antiquity*, XXII, 1948.

<sup>4</sup> The complete absence of any trace of a body from the relevant area of the burial, and other factors, make it probable that no body was ever buried in the Sutton Hoo ship, and that the whole was a cenotaph for a man whose body was not recoverable (lost in battle, or drowned at sea?)

<sup>5</sup> Seen here in profile. See also *British Museum Provisional Guide*, Fig. 4 and pp. 13, 14.

<sup>6</sup> See Professor Margaret Deansely, "Roman traditionalist influence among the Anglo-Saxons", *English Historical Review*, LVIII, 1943, 129-146.

“ Moreover he had such excellency of glory in the Kingdóm that not only in battle were banners borne before him, but in time of peace also a standard bearer was accustomed to go before him whensoever he rode about the cities, townships or shires with his thanes; yea, even when he passed through the streets to any place, there was wont to be carried before him that kind of banner which the Romans call *Tufa*, but the English *Tuuf*.”<sup>1</sup>

Edwin's immediate predecessor as Bretwalda, or Overlord, was Redwald. It was Redwald who placed Edwin, then an exile, on his throne, after the Battle on the Idle (616 A.D.). Edwin's last years of exile were spent in Redwald's court in Suffolk. It would thus not be surprising to find that Edwin, who, so far as we know his history from Bede, was unacquainted with continental courts, had gleaned some of his ideas as to the kind of pomp with which a great king should surround himself from Redwald's ceremonial in Suffolk. The presence of such an object as a “ *tufa* ” or standard in the grave of one of the Uffinga kings of the mid-seventh century would not be at all surprising, and there can be little doubt that in this Sutton Hoo piece we have such an object.

The second object, also unique, is the great and elaborate whetstone two feet long and weighing over 6¼ lbs. (*Plate 1, (b), and (c)*). That this is a ceremonial piece there can be no doubt. Apart from a very gentle smoothing of its sharp edges, such as would result from handling, the stone is without the faintest trace of wear, and although in the form of a whetstone, has never been used to sharpen anything. Indeed, it is unpractical for use as a sharpener: it is too heavy to carry about, the painted knobs and fragile bronze saucer-fittings at either end would be not only superfluous to the operation of sharpening, but in the way; the saucer-fittings are too fragile either to be gripped with the strength necessary to wield so heavy and cumbersome an object, or even to bear its weight, if one end of it were to be rested on a support. The only way in which one could perhaps envisage the use of the whetstone for sharpening would be if it were lying flat on a table, but even in this position weight falls directly upon the bronze cages that clasp the knobs, and they could not have stood up to it for long. The object requires some kind of rest or support, and was probably kept, like a mace, or sceptre, in a specially constructed box and brought out and either held by its middle or placed on a cushion. As was said in the *British Museum Guide*,<sup>2</sup> “ it is an impressive, savage object, which seems to symbolise in a striking manner the pagan Saxon king in the rôle of a Weyland the Smith—the forger, giver and master of the swords of his following.” It is difficult to see this piece as anything other than a sceptre.

A third point is the richness of the burial. This alone led Professor Chadwick to conclude that it was royal. It is worth stressing here how far Sutton Hoo does stand apart, in elaboration and splendour, from any other Saxon grave. A simple comparison between its grave-inventories and that of the richest grave previously found, that of the chieftain Taepa

<sup>1</sup> Bede, Bk. II, ch. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> p. 16.

at Taplow in Bucks<sup>1</sup> would make this clear. Without going into detail over this comparison, which is very revealing, some outstanding differences are the presence at Sutton Hoo of symbols of authority, already mentioned; of the great sea-going ship, greater in length than the longest vessel yet known of the later Viking age; the elaborate gold "regalia" of supreme workmanship, set with over four thousand cut garnets; the large treasure of foreign silver and the regal sword, to which, with its baldric, most of the jewelled pieces belonged. The Sutton Hoo burial, moreover, strikingly agrees with the descriptions of the great royal funerals of Scyld and of Beowulf in the Beowulf epic,<sup>2</sup> and, in so far as royal burials, as distinct from those of chieftains, are known to archæology, we can at least say that the Sutton Hoo finds are strictly comparable with, if not superior to, what we know of the furnishings of the rich grave of Childeric Ist. (*d.* 481), King of the Franks and father of Clovis, or of the Swedish royal mounds at Old Uppsala.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, without attempting to argue the case for the royalty of the burial in the detail with which it could and must eventually be argued, there is the proximity to the Sutton Hoo burial ground of the Royal seat of the Uffingas at Rendlesham. There seem no grounds for doubting that the great Sutton Hoo burial is royal.

It may be thought that if the Uffingas lived at Rendlesham, they would have buried their kings there, and it is true that at Old Uppsala (*p.* 238 below) the royal burial mounds are close to the sites of what are thought to be the halls of the royal seat. However, in Beowulf, which may be equally relevant to Sutton Hoo,<sup>4</sup> Scyld's funeral boat was set adrift, and Beowulf himself was buried not near his Royal Hall, but on Whale's Point, where his barrow stood as a landmark, "a barrow on the steep, which was high and broad, far to be sighted by men who pass the wave". It would not be unnatural for the Uffingas to choose for their burial ground a spot more central than Rendlesham to the settlements in the Deben valley on a bare<sup>5</sup> ridge visible to the traffic moving up and down the water thoroughfare, and passed on the way up the estuary to Rendlesham itself.

All the foregoing considerations I believe enable us to accept the great mid-7th century Sutton Hoo grave with complete confidence as the burial of an important East Anglian<sup>6</sup> king, and so to associate directly the Sutton

<sup>1</sup> See *Victoria County History*, Buckinghamshire, Vol. I, pp. 199-204. N. Aberg, *The Anglo-Saxons in England*, (Uppsala, 1926) pp. 10, 11, *British Museum Guide to Anglo-Saxon Antiquities*, 1923, pp. 63-68. R. H. Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, I, Frontispiece; and Colourplate II (buckle).

<sup>2</sup> *British Museum Provisional Guide*, 40, 41; Lindqvist, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> No one doubts that these are royal burials, and they are particularly relevant to Sutton Hoo (*p.* 238 below). The grave goods must have been subjected to intense heat on the pyre, and hardly anything survives. Included in the fragments that do survive, however, are, from the West Mound, part of a gold cloisonné pyramid very similar to those found at Sutton Hoo, but smaller. (Sune Lindqvist, "Uppsala Högar och Ottarshögen", 179, *Fig.* 101); and from the East Mound, part apparently of a similar pyramid (*loc. cit.* 179, *Fig.* 87) and a fragment of thin bronze sheeting from a helmet, stamped with a figure holding two spears (*loc. cit.*, 171, *Fig.* 89a). The details of this latter are so similar to those of the identical scene on the Sutton Hoo helmet (*Provisional Guide*, *Fig.* 7, right) as to suggest, to judge from published illustrations, that the two may even have been struck from the same stamp.

<sup>4</sup> Lindqvist, *loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Professor F. E. Zeuner's soil analyses at the Sutton Hoo site showed that the area was probably open heathland at the time of the burial. The wood at the heads of the combes running up from the water was planted in 1881. (*Antiquaries Journal* XX, 1940, 201, 202 and 150).

<sup>6</sup> If it is accepted that the burial is royal, we need not doubt that the king in question belonged to the East Anglian dynasty. Bede's reference in connection with the baptism of Swidhelm, quoted above, makes it clear that the East bank of the Deben was East Anglian territory at the time. Chadwick (*loc. cit.* 77) has further arguments to support the view that the burial was that of one of the Uffingas; and this receives strong support, in ways which cannot be elaborated here, from the study of the burial itself.

Hoo burial ground with the *vicus regius* at Rendlesham. No doubt the funeral cortège, including the great boat laden with treasures, set out from Rendlesham by water, and moved down, at high tide, to the mouth of the coombe below the ridge at Sutton.

THE STATUS OF THE *Vicus Regius* AT RENDLESHAM.

There are factors that suggest that the south-eastern area of Suffolk roughly delimited by the valleys of the Deben and the Alde, may have been the political heart of the East Anglian kingdom. It is suitably remote from the troubled frontier with Mercia, and protected from the West by the North-South line of the Deben valley; it is separated from the frontiers of the East Saxons<sup>1</sup> by the successive barriers of the Stour, the Orwell and the Deben, and is itself fed by three estuaries (the Ore, the Deben and the Butley River). There is no indication here of dense and early settlement, such as can be inferred from the numerous urn-fields and cemeteries of North-west Suffolk (the area between Freckenham and Redgrave), or of a number of regions of Norfolk. Nor is the area central to the East Anglian kingdom. On the other hand, the Deben valley abounds in royal associations and in signs of activity and prosperity in the 7th century. Place-names such as Kingston and Ufford illustrate royal connections, and Melton, two miles downstream from Rendlesham, was ancient royal demesne, and was given, with Kingston, to Ely Cathedral by King Edgar.<sup>2</sup>

The highly distinctive and aristocratic custom of boat-burial is so far known in Saxon Britain from three instances only, (two at Sutton Hoo, one at Snape). All are from this corner of Suffolk, and one at least if the foregoing arguments are accepted, a royal burial. Above all, there is the testimony of this royal burial.

The extraordinary range of rich and exotic pieces in the great Sutton Hoo boat-grave was, however, we now see, to some extent already foreshadowed by earlier finds of Saxon antiquities in the Deben valley area. Mr. Reginald Smith has pointed out the concentration of early Saxon finds in the eight miles or so of the Deben valley that runs more or less parallel with the sea.<sup>3</sup> To the sites he mentions, from which Anglo-Saxon finds have come, others, such as Sutton Hoo, Rendlesham itself (*see below*, pp. 235, 247) Martlesham<sup>4</sup> and apparently Woodbridge<sup>5</sup>, can now be added.

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Chadwick, *loc. cit.*, pp. 77, 78: "There is no evidence that the Kingdom" (of Essex) "ever extended beyond the mouth of the Stour." It was certainly East Anglian territory in the 7th century, as Bede's reference, quoted above, and other historical factors, already discussed, make clear.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Miss Lilian Redstone for this reference to Melton.

<sup>3</sup> *Victoria County History*, Suffolk, Vol. I, p. 329.

<sup>4</sup> See "The removal of a tumulus on Martlesham Heath, Suffolk" by G. Maynard and H. E. P. Spencer: *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and Natural History* 1947, pp. 3-24. The group of mounds on Martlesham Heath belongs to the Saxon period. (See also Arnott, *op. cit.* X). The only feature found in the excavation described in this report might suggest this was the sand concretion reminiscent of the clay pans found at Sutton Hoo in 1939, and also apparently in 1938. (For the 1939 clay pan, see *Ant. J.* XX, p. 159 and *Plate xvii* (a)). One of this group of barrows was however earlier excavated by Mr. J. Reid Moir, F.R.S. This proved to be Saxon in date. It contained a bone comb and iron rivets. Three others were investigated at this time. All were apparently of pagan Saxon date. The occurrence of Bronze Age sherds in the make-up of the tumuli at Martlesham and Brightwell Heaths puts these sites into line with the mounds at Snape and Sutton Hoo, where the same thing occurred. I am indebted to Mr. Basil Brown of the Ipswich Museum for this information.

<sup>5</sup> W. G. Arnott, *op. cit.* X.

What is interesting about the finds mentioned by Reginald Smith is not so much their comparatively large number (considering that most are loose finds) but the evidence they afford, quite apart from the great Sutton Hoo boat-grave, of prosperity in this part of Suffolk and intercourse with the Continent. They include antiquities not normally associated with Anglian areas:—a circular gold cloisonné disc brooch<sup>1</sup>, remains of an imported blue glass vessel<sup>2</sup>, and a jewelled buckle of pure Kentish type,<sup>3</sup> with embossed gold foil covering the upper plate of the buckle. The silver gilt radiate brooch, set with garnets, described in the *Victoria County History* (Vol. I, p. 330), no doubt came from this part of Suffolk, and the discovery of a similar brooch from the Deben valley, now lost, has been reported to me. A "Coptic" bronze bowl, of Egyptian origin, has been found at Wickham Market, a little North of Rendlesham<sup>4</sup>.

If to all this we add the great discoveries at Sutton Hoo in 1939, it appears that the Deben valley became in the 6th and 7th centuries the gateway of Suffolk to trade and civilizing influences from the South. These considerations, together with its strategic advantages, make it a not unreasonable location for the political headquarters of East Anglia.

In this connection we must note the discovery in Rendlesham, about the year 1690, of a silver crown weighing 60 ounces. This is first mentioned, so far as I have been able to discover, in the 1722 edition of Camden's *Britannia* (Vol. I, Cols. 445, 446). In the course of a reference to Rendlesham in column 445, Bishop Gibson, the editor, inserts the following in parenthesis:—

"It is said that in digging here about thirty years since there was found an ancient crown weighing about 60 ounces, which was thought have belonged to Redwald, or some other king of the East Angles. But it was sold and melted down."

Gibson does not say, as later writers have done,<sup>5</sup> that the crown was of silver, but presumably, if it was sold and melted down, it was either of silver or of gold. "About thirty years since" would place the year of the discovery in the early 1690's.<sup>6</sup> It is only at the time of the Uffingas that we know of royal occupation of Rendlesham, and the crown may thus reinforce its royal associations in the period we are considering. Another context for the loss of the crown would be the troubles connected with the Danes in the 9th century. In this case, it would probably indicate continuity of the site as a royal centre to this period, which again would serve to emphasise its importance.

Discoveries of a considerable number of pieces of imported glass, and of Frankish and Kentish antiquities in the Ipswich cemetery,<sup>7</sup> on the Orwell estuary, and of a claw-beaker amongst the scanty remains from the Snape boat-burial on the Alde<sup>8</sup>, further emphasise the geographical advantages of the South-Eastern corner of Suffolk.

<sup>1</sup> *Victoria County History*, Suffolk, Vol. I, p. 330, Fig. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Sutton Hoo, 1938 excavations, now in the Ipswich Museum. *Ant. J.* XX, 1940, 152, 3. *British Museum Provisional Guide*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Illustrated in colour, *Victoria County History*, Suffolk, Vol. I frontispiece, Fig. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ipswich Museum. See N. Aberg, *The Anglo-Saxons in England*, Uppsala 1925, p. 103 and Table III, No. 118 (p. 207). A bowl of this class was also found at Sutton Hoo in 1939.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also Chadwick, *loc. cit.* 77.

<sup>6</sup> I have not been able to discover the evidence upon which Professor Chadwick based his precise statement, (*loc. cit.* 77) that the crown was dug up in 1687.

<sup>7</sup> *Victoria County History*, Suffolk, Vol. I, p. 332, frontispiece, and *Plate II*, (Figs. 2, 3 and 5).

<sup>8</sup> *Victoria County History*, *loc. cit.*, 327, 329.



All these considerations go to build up a picture of Rendlesham as a principle centre of the Uffingas, possibly even the principle one,<sup>1</sup> in the seventh century. It must have been considerably more than just one of the "country houses" of the Uffingas which happened to get a mention in Bede. If this is so, it no doubt had already begun to play this leading rôle back in the period of Redwald's High-Kingship, and it might well have been the place in which, on his return home from Kent, he set up his Christian altar in the pagan temple.

#### CHURCH AND TEMPLE AT RENDLESHAM.

It has been inferred from the passage in Bede already quoted, about the baptism of Suidhelm of Essex, that between 656<sup>2</sup> and the year 664 (when both Bishop Cedd and the East Anglian king Aethelwald died), and no doubt earlier, there were at Rendlesham the buildings of an important Royal seat or manor (*vicus regius*) and that these included a church.

We cannot be certain that the event described by Bede implies the presence of a church, but it is in the highest degree probable that there was one. By the time this royal baptism of a king from another Saxon kingdom took place at Rendlesham, East Anglia had been widely Christianised. It has been suggested that the Sutton Hoo ship-burial indicates a relapse into paganism by a member of the royal family, at the very time we are considering.<sup>3</sup> That would not alter the fact that the East Anglian kingdom had been substantially converted long before. Bishop Felix had set up his see at ~~Dunwich~~ <sup>Stow</sup>, monasteries had been founded.<sup>4</sup> The East Anglian King Sigeberht, who became a monk, and his successor Anna, who died in 654, were not merely devout, but active Christians. All Anna's daughters became nuns, and three of them Saints.<sup>5</sup> Aethelhere (d. 655), Anna's brother and successor, may himself have remained pagan,<sup>6</sup> but he married the sister of St. Hilda. In or before 647 she had become a nun.<sup>7</sup> This earlier establishment of Christianity amongst the members of the East Anglian royal house is clearly reflected in the Sutton Hoo burial (regarded as a royal burial), whether it be itself the burial of a pagan or not. It is seen particularly in the pair of silver spoons inscribed Saul and Paul, and the set of ten silver bowls inscribed with large crosses.

1 The Rev. Francis Blomefield, who was Rector of Fersfield in Norfolk, states that the capital of the Uffingas was at Thetford (*loc. cit.*, pp. 17, 18 and *History of Thetford*, 1739, p. 21). Thus (*Topographical History*) "Uffa took the Government of the East Angles, in 575, and settled at *Sitomagus*," (Thetford) "the prosperity and grandeur of which city is allowed by all authors to be owing to the Saxon Kings making it the metropolis of their kingdom." And later "Redwald, the greatest of the E. Anglian kings . . . made Thetford not only the seat of his government, but the metropolis of all the Saxon government." Blomefield's statement has from time to time been repeated by later writers. It appears to be totally without foundation. Blomefield gives no authority for it, and the most casual perusal of his books makes it clear that he freely used the most suspect sources quite uncritically to suit his own purposes. A little later he expresses his conviction that the Synod of 664 (the Synod of Whitby) was held in Thetford, again giving no authority. His main sources for this period seem to have been John Brame (first denounced by Sir Henry Spelman in the 17th century as a fabulous writer), Sammes (*Britania Antiqua*), Fabian and Holinshed.

2 Aethelhere, Aethelwald's predecessor, was killed on Nov. 15, 655, and it can be assumed that an international event such as Suidhelm's baptism would not have been arranged before the new year. (*British Museum Provisional Guide*, p. 43, note 5).

3 Chadwick, *loc. cit.* p. 84. "We must conclude, if the funeral took place after 640, that it was due to a deliberate reversion to heathenism." See also *British Museum Provisional Guide*, pp. 42, 43.

4 Bede, Bk. III, Ch. xviii.

5 Chadwick, *loc. cit.* p. 82.

6 *British Museum Provisional Guide*, *loc. cit.*

7 Chadwick, *loc. cit.* p. 82. She entered the convent at Chelles, near Paris.

These were both no doubt gifts of Pope or Bishop to converts in the East Anglian royal family, and were no doubt brought to Sutton Hoo from Rendlesham. When we consider further the probable status of this *vicus regius*, argued above; how the Augustinian mission concentrated first of all on kings and royal personages; and the importance attached to the early provision of churches, as illustrated by the letter to Mellitus (*see below*) and the comparatively numerous 7th century foundations in Kent and elsewhere, it seems likely that the days when a royal baptism must have had to take place in the river were past, and that the Rendlesham ceremony took place, as that at Dorchester no doubt did, (*p. 230 above, note 4*) in a church. Whether the actual ceremony took place in the river or not, however, it is hard to believe that a chief centre of a royal family that had already produced such exemplary christians, where yet another Uffinga king was standing godfather to the King of Essex in a ceremony performed by Bishop Cedd, could have been without a church of some kind at this date.

The only reference to an actual building connected with the Uffingas is the passage in Bede which mentions Redwald's temple in which he erected the altar to Christ alongside another for sacrifices to devils (*Bede Bk. II. Ch. xv*):

"Now Edwin (of Northumbria) had such an earnest zeal towards the worship of the true faith that he also persuaded the King of the East English, Earpwald, son of Redwald, to leave off the superstitions of idols, and with his whole realm receive the faith and sacraments of Christ. And indeed his father Redwald had long since been instructed in Kent in the mysteries of the Christian faith, but in vain: for returning home again he was led away by his wife and certain false teachers, and being in such wise corrupted from the simplicity of the faith, his end was worse than his beginning; so much so that he seemed after the manner of the old Samaritans to serve both Christ and the gods he served before. And so in one temple, he had both an altar for the sacrifice of Christ and another little altar for offerings made to devils. The which temple, namely, Aldwulf, king of the same province, who lived in this our time, said that it endured so<sup>1</sup> unto his day, and witnessed that he saw it in his childhood."

The conversion of Earpwald and his kingdom must have taken place before Edwin's death in 633 and we know that this temple (*fanum*) survived for some considerable time the introduction of a general and more organised christianity, since Bede says that Aldwulf, who reigned from 664-713, remembered seeing it as a boy. This suggests that it may have remained more or less intact until about 650, or later. There is no evidence that this temple was at Rendlesham, nor do we know that it was a temple of any great importance. It is clear from Bede's words that it was the temple itself, and not the shrine or altar set up to Christ, that survived, and possibly this fact is suggestive.

Temples might be substantial, well-constructed buildings of some pretensions, and such edifices were not to be lightly cast away. The instructions received by St. Augustine's mission in this matter is made clear by Pope Gregory the Great's letter to Bishop Mellitus<sup>2</sup>:—

"When . . . Almighty God shall bring you unto our most reverend brother Augustine. . . tell him what I have long devised with myself . . . that is, to wit, that the temples of the idols in the said country ought not to be broken, but the idols alone which be in them;

<sup>1</sup> "Quod videlicet fanum . . . usque ad suum tempus perdurasse, et se in pueritia vidisse testabatur."

<sup>2</sup> Bede, Bk. I, ch. xxx.

that holy water be made and sprinkled about the said temples, altars builded, relics placed: for if the said temples be well built, it is needful that they be altered from the worshipping of devils into the service of the true God; that whiles the people doth not see these their said temples spoilt they may forsake their error of heart, and be moved with more readiness to haunt their wonted place—to the knowledge and honour of the true God. And for that they are wont to kill many oxen in sacrifices to the devils, some solemnity shall be granted also by way of exchange in this matter—as that in the dedication days or birthdays of holy martyrs of whom the relics be there placed, they make them bowers of branches of trees about the said churches which have been changed from temples, and hold solemn feasts together after a religious sort; and that they no more sacrifice animals to the devil but kill them to the refreshing of themselves . . . and render thanks to the Giver of all these things for their abundance.”

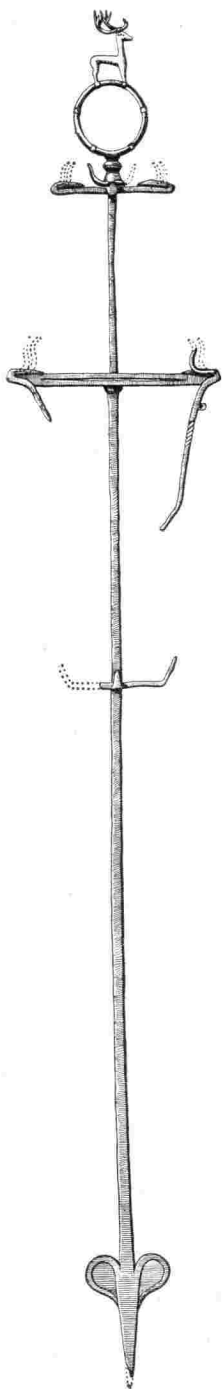
It may be that the reason why the fabric of Redwald's temple, the scene of so disgraceful a compromise, survived so late, was that it had been turned into a Christian church; and it is not impossible that, if the temple of Redwald were indeed in Rendlesham, Suidhelm's baptism might have taken place in it. If a church of specifically Christian character had replaced it, this would quite likely be on the same spot, or close by.

In this connection we may note the relationship that existed in the royal capital at Uppsala, in Sweden, between the temple, the royal halls and the first Christian church. This parallel may seem remote, but in the event it may prove to be the most relevant of all. There are indications in the Sutton Hoo ship-burial which suggest that the Uffingas may have come originally (about the middle of the 6th century) from Uppsala, and that they subsequently maintained these family connections.<sup>1</sup>

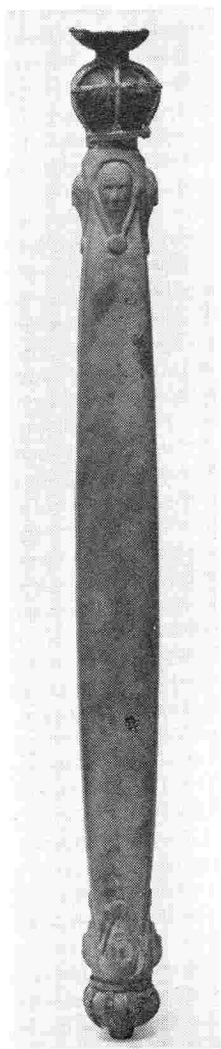
*Plate 2* shows the relevant part of the layout of the monuments at Old Uppsala<sup>2</sup> which was the religious as well as the political centre of the ancient Swedish kingdom. Just visible at the top right edge of the plate, marked with the letter *C*, is the flat-topped “domarhögen” or “Mound of Justice”, on which judgments were pronounced and councils held. Below this can be seen the contour lines of the northern edge of the great East Mound, one of the line of three great burial mounds erected over the remains of royal cremations between c.500-650 A.D. *P* and *Q*, which (surprisingly enough) have not yet been excavated, are built-up terraces, demonstrated by trial holes to be artificial. They are each about 160 feet in length. They are thought to be platforms built for the reception of large wooden halls of the Viking period. The area *N* towards the bottom of the plate is a similar artificial platform, but belonging to an earlier period, since burial mounds of Viking date were later erected, here and there, upon it. Soundings on this mound revealed a stone pavement, which was presumed to be the floor of a large building. This earlier hall was no doubt contemporary with the construction of the great mounds, i.e. it belonged to the period 6th to 7th century. The point to notice here, however, is the relationship between these halls and the temple, a famous shrine known throughout the North, and graphically described by Adam of Bremen. The rectangular ground

<sup>1</sup> See Professor Lindqvist, *op. cit.* This interpretation of the Swedish connection at Sutton Hoo had long been under consideration by English scholars when Professor Lindqvist wrote. At the present stage in our knowledge of the Sutton Hoo finds, it appears to fit our observations very well. See also “Sutton Hoo and Sweden”, by R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, *Archaeological News Letter*, Vol. 1, No. 2 March, 1948, pp. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> This illustration is taken from Professor Sune Lindqvist's great work on the monuments of Old Uppsala, *Uppsala Högar och Ottarshögen*, Stockholm, 1936, to which reference should be made for the full particular. (There is an exceptionally full summary in English).



(a)

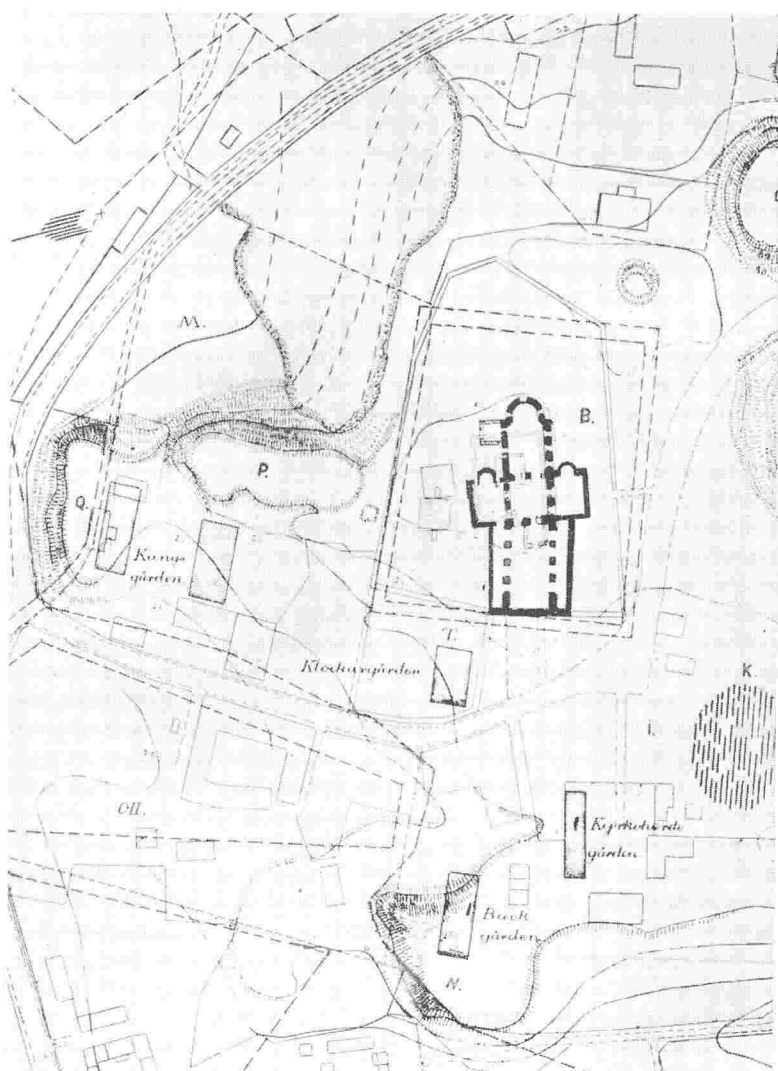


(b)



(c)

Royal Standard (a) and sceptre (b) and (c) from the Sutton Hoo ship-burial (pp, 231, 232).



After S. Lindqvist.

TEMPLE AND ROYAL HALL SITES AT OLD UPPSALA, SWEDEN.

P.Q.:—Artificial terraces, probably the sites of Royal Halls of the Viking Age.

N.:—Artificial terrace, probably the site of an earlier (Vendel period) Royal Hall.

The rectangular plan of the great pagan temple is to be seen faintly outlined beneath the Choir crossing and north transept of the Medieval Cathedral, within the 30 metre contour line.

The great mounds are to the right, portions of the flat-topped "Domarhög" (C) and of the East Mound being visible at the edge of the picture.

plan of what must, almost certainly, be this temple can be seen indicated in light shading beneath the choir and north transept of the early medieval cathedral, which was built about 1150. The choir of this early cathedral forms the present day parish church, and beneath the floor of this, Professor Lindqvist excavated in 1926 a number of the temple's post-holes.<sup>1</sup> The temple at Old Uppsala was thus immediately adjacent to the royal halls.

If the Uffingas eventually are shown, through the study of the 1939 Sutton Hoo excavation and the excavation of other barrows there, to be a branch of the Royal House of Uppsala, and Rendlesham their headquarters, then the general relationship of the royal buildings and the temple at Old Uppsala may be relevant to the lay-out of public buildings in Rendlesham.

#### THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE *Vicus Regius*.

The church and temple at Rendlesham are speculative, but we can be sure that the main building of an important *vicus regius* would be a large wooden hall.

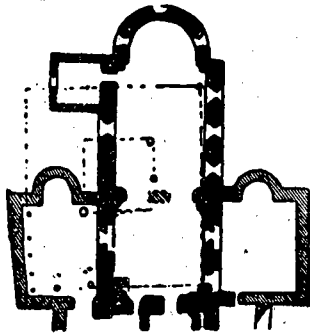
The features of a 7th century Saxon royal hall, so far as we know anything about them, which is almost entirely from the approximately contemporary descriptions in *Beowulf*, have been described by R. H. Hodgkin in his *History of the Anglo-Saxons*.<sup>2</sup> The hall of the Redwald, the Overlord, to judge by the degree of Royal dignity and sophistication revealed at Sutton Hoo, might well have been not unlike Heorot, Hrothgar's wonder-Hall, described in *Beowulf*. It would be a large timber construction, reminiscent of a great medieval barn, but no doubt hung with patterned textiles or cloth of gold, the walls decked with shields and weapons, the gables carved and decorated. In addition to the hall itself, there would be in all probability a withdrawing room or ladies' bower, and some lesser buildings.

Of Hrothgar's palace we read that "many a tribe through countries all" were ordered to deck the capital palace; that it was called Hart Hall, presumably because of the stags' heads fixed to the gables; that it "towered up steep, with gables wide": later on it is spoken of as "that antler-tipped palace, steep and golden". With regard to outbuildings or subsidiary rooms, we are told that, after the reception of *Beowulf* by Hrothgar . . . "the court rises" . . . Hrothgar gave *Beowulf* "good luck, and charge of the wine hall." . . . "have and hold this great hall of the Danes." But Hrothgar himself "went back with his troop out of the hall . . . to seek his wife, his Queen abed." The other buildings here implied may have been in this case *ad hoc* arrangements, since Grendel had for some years past rendered the hall untenable. When he is slain, "all slept in hall again, as in former years . . . but Hrothgar went within to rest in his own chamber". As for his troop, "bolsters and beds were spread on the benches" . . . "the Ring-Danes slept around the hall".

<sup>1</sup> See Sune Lindqvist, "Uppsala hednatempel", *Ord och Bild*, 1927, pp. 641-654.  
<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, 218-221, cf. *Plate* 33.

At the same time, however, "Beowulf was not at hand, for after the treasure-giving, other room was given to the famous Geat." Besides a withdrawing room, and one or two out-buildings of a reasonably dignified character, we might also expect at Rendlesham to have the workshops of royal craftsmen, perhaps of the goldsmith who made the Sutton Hoo jewellery, and of the royal armourer; and wooden outhouses and sheds for different purposes. To a great extent the building materials available locally would determine the size and character of such structures, but for a royal hall of this class special materials may have been procured from some distance. The general proportions of such a building may be inferred from the 160-foot platforms at Old Uppsala, or the great 10th century timber barrack-buildings of the Danish camp at Trelleborg.<sup>1</sup>

A vivid impression of size, and an indication of the ambitious character of an important temple, and of the potentialities of Dark Age timber structures, is given by the post-holes of the temple at Old Uppsala. The posts used in its construction were of various diameters, according to their position and function. Those in the central area attained 80 cms. in diameter (2 ft. 8 ins.), whilst the smallest, round the periphery of the temple area, were 40 cms. (1 ft. 4 ins.).<sup>2</sup>



After S. Lindqvist.

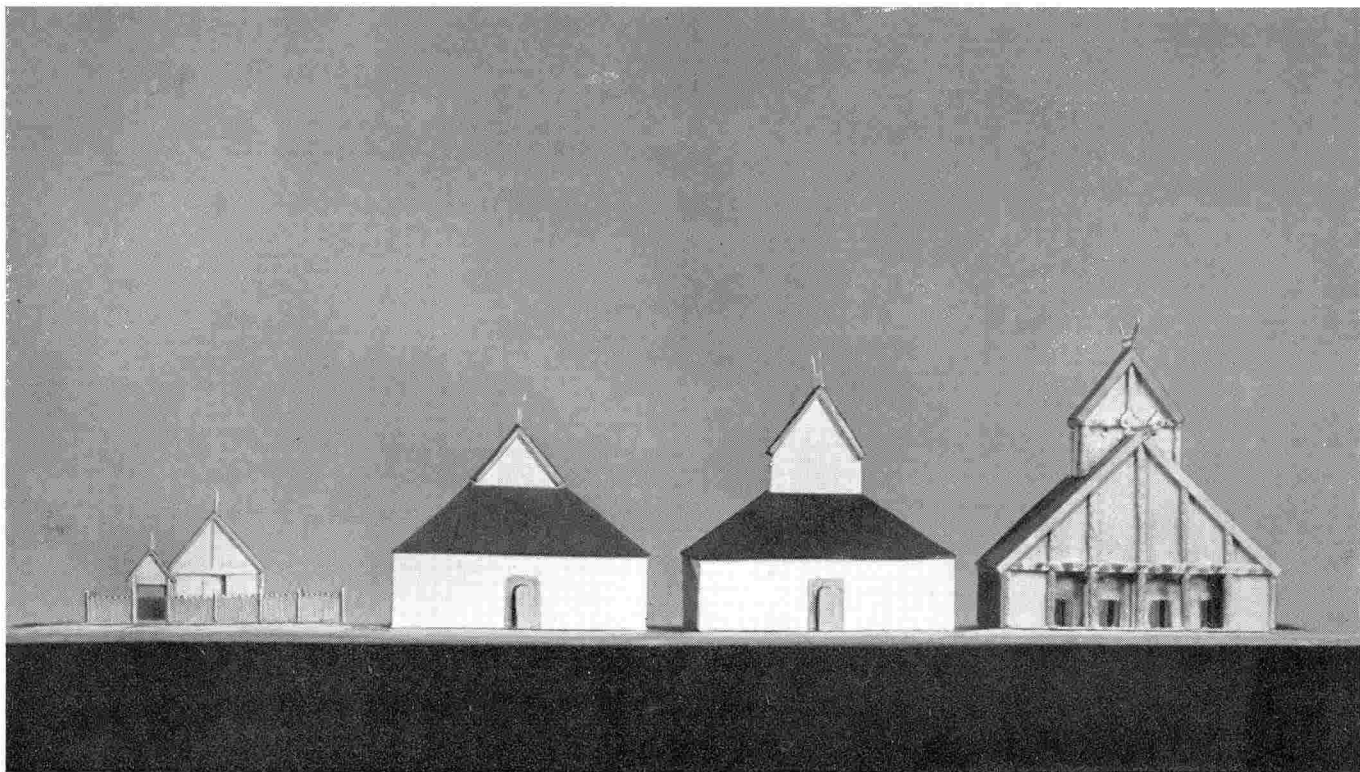
Fig. 1. Post holes and presumed ground plan of the great pagan temple at Gamla Uppsala, Sweden, as seen beneath the medieval church.

The great posts of the central area must have carried a superstructure of very considerable height. Fig. 1 illustrates the distribution of the excavated post holes, and Plate 3 shows four models built by Mr. Allan Fridell to test and illustrate attempts that have been made by different authorities at reconstructing the building.<sup>3</sup> That on the right illustrates the most recent interpretation of the post-holes indications, by the Uppsala University Museum, and reveals an elaborate and impressive structure. A pagan temple at Rendlesham, even if it were the most important in East Anglia, would hardly compare with the famous building at Uppsala, but it might be expected to be of somewhat similar character, and perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *Trelleborg*, by Poul Norlund, Copenhagen 1948.

<sup>2</sup> *Ord och Bild*, 1926, p.

<sup>3</sup> See Allan Fridell, "Rekonstruktioner av Uppsala hednatempel," *TOR*, (Meddelanden från Uppsala Universitets Museum för nordiska fornsaker, 1948) pp. 120-122. I am very grateful to Mr. Fridell for kindly supplying this photograph and allowing me to publish it.



*Photo: Allan Fridell.*

Models by Allan Fridell of four suggested reconstructions of the Uppsala temple. That on the right, by the Uppsala University Museum for Northern Antiquities, is the most recent version.



of some pretensions. The church, where Suidhelm was baptized, if not the same building, would have been a considerably smaller construction, no doubt also of timber, since building stone does not occur in the area, perhaps resembling the timber church at Greenstead, Essex, or the early churches of the 7th century missionaries.<sup>1</sup>

Any group of structures of the general character of those described should it be wholly or partly in arable land, and given favourable conditions of crops and subsoil, might be expected to respond well to aerial photography.

The discovery of the crown at Rendlesham is also suggestive. Crowns in the normal course of events are not lost by accident or buried. It suggests that the "palace" at Rendlesham was sacked or burnt. A habitation site put to an end in this way is more likely to yield small finds and general information than one which has been abandoned with deliberation.

#### THE GENERAL IMPORTANCE OF THE SITE.

It would be highly desirable, both in the interests of elucidating the problems of the Sutton Hoo burial ground, and in the interest of Saxon studies in general, to locate and excavate the royal buildings which we suppose may once have existed in Rendlesham. In connection with the wider implications of such a project, we may note Mr. J. N. L. Myres' remarks in the Council of British Archæology's recent publication, *A Survey and Policy of Field Research in the Archaeology of Great Britain*, Part I.<sup>2</sup>

"The poverty and architectural squalor of such pagan village sites as are at present known has already been mentioned . . . Such conditions were no doubt prevalent amongst the rank and file of the settlers for many generations. But it is hard to believe that they can have applied to the highest ranks of pagan societies. It is impossible to imagine a man of the type buried in the Taplow barrow having no more adequate domestic amenities in life than those provided by a wattled hut of the Sutton Courteney model. There must in fact have been "halls", no doubt mainly of timber like that of Hrothgar in *Beowulf*, at every royal or aristocratic centre, but no such structures have ever been located. The obvious sites on which to seek them would be those known from early literary evidence as *villae regales*, of which a considerable number are mentioned by Bede, or in early land-charters. Place names may also provide clues in this line of enquiry: for example, the numerous "Kingstons" (itself merely a translation in some instances of *villa regalis*) and other compounds with King, some of which, as Kingston-on-Soar (Notts) or Kingsdown (Kent) are the sites of pagan cemeteries."

And again (*page 119*):

"It has already been mentioned that no sites of pagan temples or ceremonial structures have hitherto been recognised, and practically nothing is known archæologically about the material surroundings of pagan worship. But literary and place-name evidence points to a number of localities where such structures seem to have existed . . . In some cases, names of heathen holy places are preserved in the boundary marks of Anglo-Saxon estates described in land-charters or have survived as medieval and later field names: this may make it possible to identify a site very closely. It is much to be hoped that by following such clues it may one day be possible to pinpoint and excavate an Anglo-Saxon temple."

<sup>1</sup> See A. W. Clapham, *English Romanesque Architecture*, 1930, Vol. I, Before the Conquest; Ch. II, ("Church building under the heptarchy.") For the Greenstead timber church, see Clapham, p. 106, and *Royal Comm. on Hist. Mons., Essex*, ii, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> London, 1948, sep. pp. 116-119.

Is there then any hope of locating on the ground the buildings of the Saxon *vicus regius* at Rendlesham?

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF RENDLESHAM. (*Figs. 2 AND 3*).

Let it be said at once that a preliminary reconnaissance of the parish on foot has shown that there are no surface indications of an obvious kind, and there is a total lack of local lore or of stray archaeological finds. There is no hope here of quick results.

The parish (*Fig. 2*) has never been extensively built on, and contains no village. It is largely arable land, and this year, for the first time, the greater part of the parkland of Rendlesham Hall (now a home for inebriates) has been ploughed. The area might thus be considered promising from the point of view of yielding its archaeological secrets to a systematic air survey. On the other hand, the subsoil is in general sand, which does not usually yield good crop-marks, and there are some areas of heath and woodland. The Saxon buildings may also have been, as some local historians have claimed, without giving any evidence, on the site of the Tudor and 19th century Rendlesham Halls, and have been obliterated in this way. There are also R.A.F. hut camps, erected in the recent war, and cavalry lines of the 1914-18 war, and small-scale gravel and marl workings.

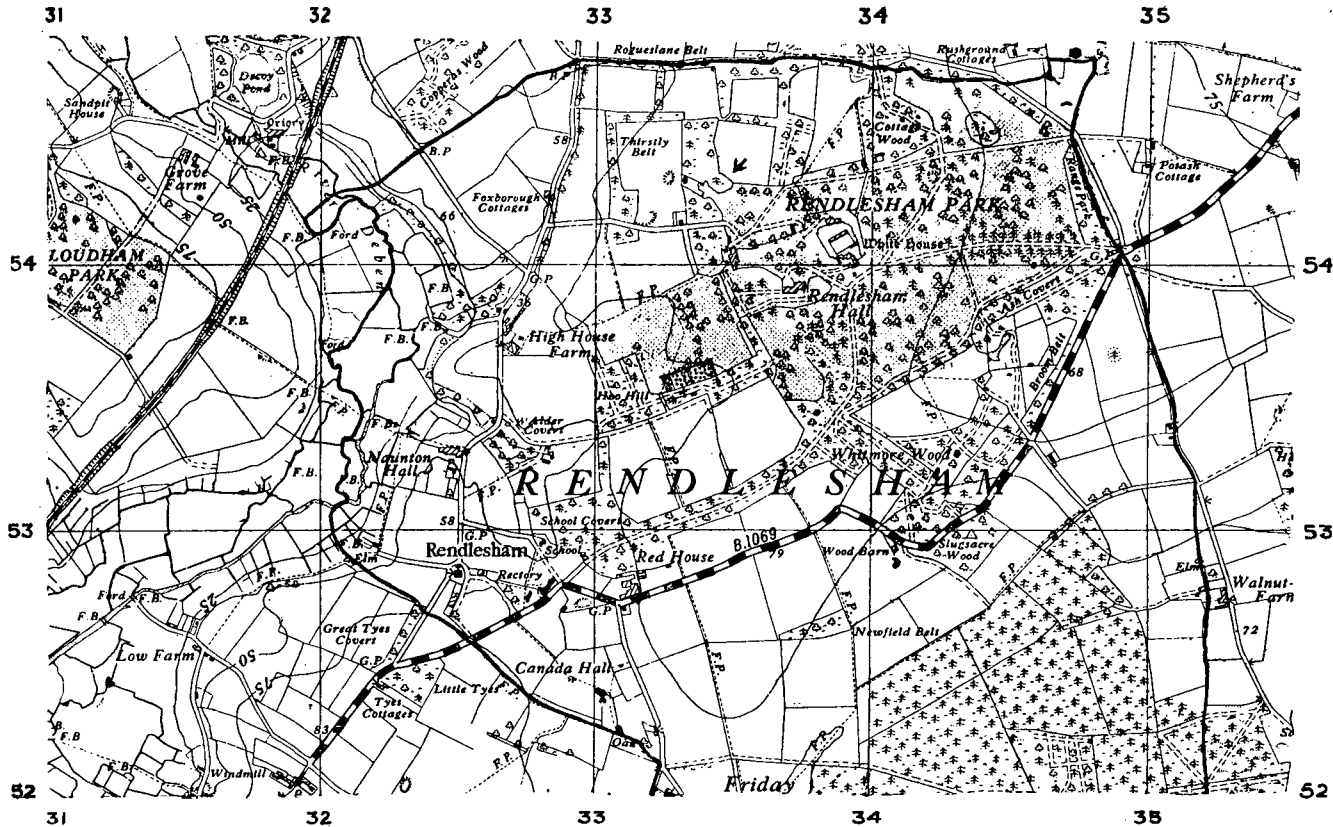
The present-day church has an early dedication (St. Gregory the Great) and there was an earlier church, presumably on this site, at the time of the Domesday Survey. No fragments of Norman or Saxon sculpture or masonry appear to be incorporated in the present church fabric, which dates from the 15th century. The site of the 7th century (wooden?) church, if we are right in interpreting the Rendlesham baptism described by Bede as implying the existence of such a building, as we almost certainly are, may be covered by the Saxon and medieval churches.

Since the name Rendlesham goes back at least to the early 8th century, the "ham" which gave the area its name has probably always been the nucleus of the development of the parish, and no doubt lies within its present-day boundaries. Bede describes the *vicus regius* as in this "ham".

There is nothing to indicate that there has ever been any revision of the parish boundary of Rendlesham,<sup>1</sup> nor does there seem any reason for such a change, since the region is so sparsely populated. We should thus be safe in looking for the *vicus regius* within the boundaries of the modern parish. On the other hand, the church now lies very close to the parish boundary, and the area immediately to the South and South-West of it, in Eyke parish, must also be scrutinised. The parish, with this extension is a formidable area. What can be done to reduce the field of search?

From the map (*Fig. 2*) it will be seen that the parish has a very short frontage, only  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a mile, on the Deben, whereas further east the parish measures more than two miles from North to South. The parish thus narrows in, from North and South, towards the river frontage.

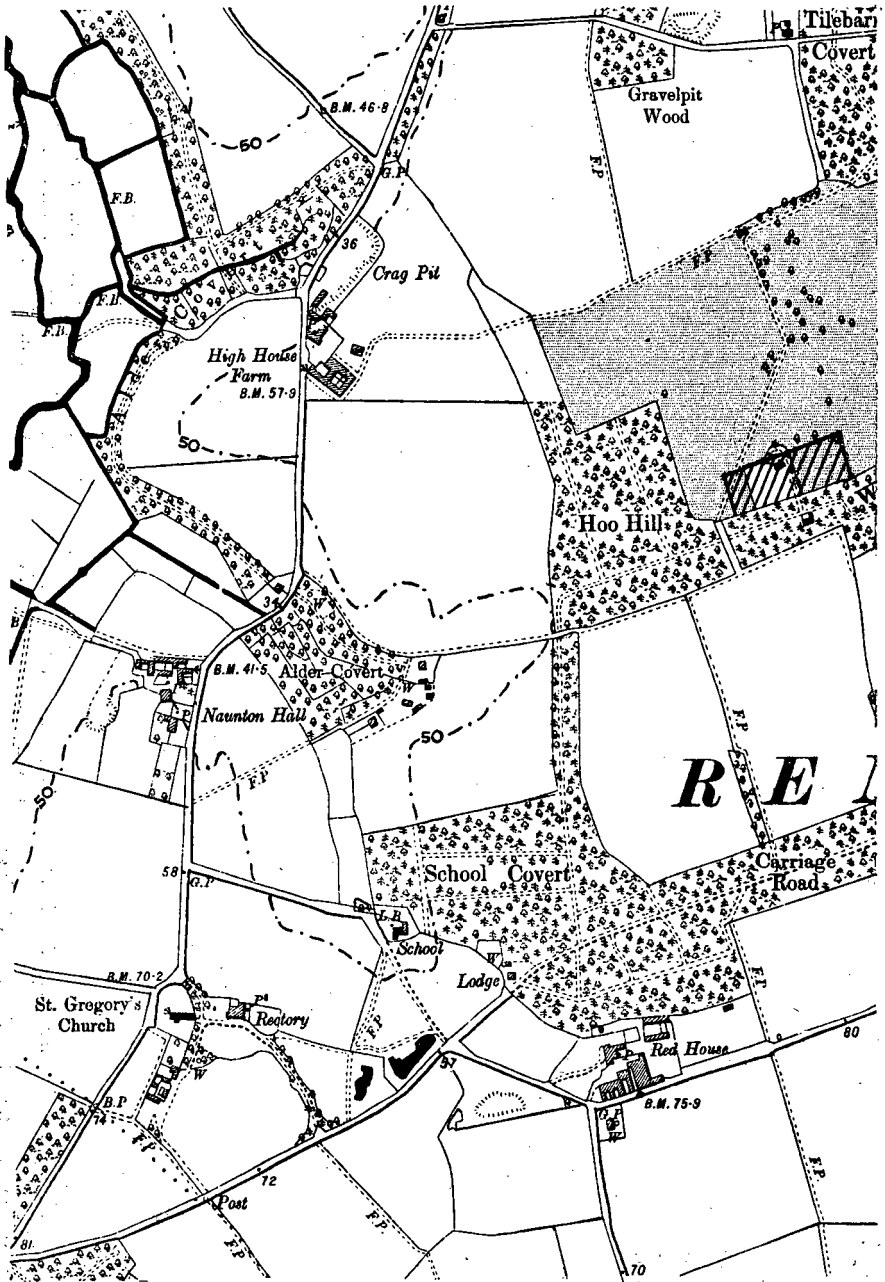
<sup>1</sup> I am grateful for Miss Redstone's advice on this point.



SAXON RENDLESHAM

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

Fig. 2. Rendlesham Parish on a scale of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ins. to the mile, showing the parish frontage on the river Deben. (Parish boundary is outlined in black). A belt about 600 yards in depth in the extreme south of the parish is not shown. The boundary runs East and West again a little below the limits of this map.



*Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map, with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.*

Fig. 3. Part of the parish frontage on the River Deben, showing Hoo Hill piece (the hatched area to the right of the printed name Hoo Hill).

Across the middle of the parish runs, from West to East, the road from Eyke to Tunstall. South of this road, except for a few cottages at Friday Street, the parish is virtually uninhabited, consisting to-day of arable land and heath. North of the road, the greater part of the area is occupied by the Rendlesham estate, comprising park lands, wooded belts and some arable fields. The old western limit of this estate is marked by the line of Silvestor's Belt (the line of trees along the East side of road that runs North from High House Farm past Foxborough Cottages (*Fig. 2*) and the fence that runs south-east from the road fork above Crag Pit past Hoo Hill towards Red House (*Fig. 3*).

To-day Rendlesham belongs to the line of hamlets along the east bank of the Deben (Bromeswell, Eyke, Campsey Ash), linked by the road that runs along the east bank of the river. Such village life as there is centres on the parish church, the manor house of Naunton Hall, and the school (*Fig. 3*). In medieval times this area was also clearly the focus of interest in the parish. To the finds of a "a large quantity of bones in different places" in an area which appears to lie between the Church and Naunton Hall, and was then an open green,<sup>1</sup> the Davy MSS.<sup>2</sup> in the British Museum add an illustration of a medieval jug from this same area.

That the settlement belonged equally to the Deben valley in early Saxon times is clear. The river was the great thoroughfare round which the pattern of early settlement took shape, and what has already been said of the royal sites and Saxon finds in the Deben Valley make it clear that the royal *vicus* would have been sited with relation to the river. It seems reasonable, therefore, to look in the area of the river frontage and its hinterland north of the Eyke-Tunstall road and as far East as Rendlesham Hall for the site of the early Saxon church and "palace".

We must now see what the lie of the land in this part of the parish has to tell us, which may help in closer definition of the area in which the site may lie.

It will be seen from *Fig. 2* that at Rendlesham the River Deben makes a sharp bend to the East. It is just this eastward bend which is covered by the short parish frontage to the river. The behaviour of the 50 foot contour line should next be studied in *Fig. 3*. It shows that here in the bend the river bank takes the form of three spurs, between which two flat-bottomed coombes run inland, (both marked Alder Covert on the map, *Fig. 3*). Of these, the southern coombe leads directly into the heart of the parish (*Fig. 2*). The northern coombe tends to run out of it. We may note that on the prominent southern spur stand the church of St. Gregory the Great, almost on the parish boundary, and the manor house of Naunton Hall. This southern coombe itself forks at its southern end. The northern arm of the fork develops into a gentle valley leading to Rendlesham Hall, and to the north of it runs high ground bearing the suggestive name, Hoo Hill.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by W. A. Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, Vol. II (1901), p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 247.

<sup>3</sup> Hoo generally indicates a tumulus or burial place. Both here and at Sutton Hoo the ground does not seem to be of sufficient prominence for the term to have arisen in its other sense, "spur of land."

To anyone approaching, as our Saxon forbears must be conceived as having approached, by water, the spurs at Rendlesham appear prominent, and the coombes lead invitingly between them into the hinterland. I think it can be assumed that in Saxon times, before the construction of the bridge and its causeways of approach at Melton, or development of the innumerable drainage dykes and banks that have turned the floor of the valley into pasture (*Fig. 2*), the Deben was here a broad tidal stream. It is said that the building stone for the present (15th century) church was brought by barge to the foot of the lane that runs steeply westward from the church into the valley bottom. Similarly, Mr. J. N. L. Myres and Mr. J. B. Ward Perkins uncovered at Butley Priory a medieval wharf, showing that the tide must formerly have run right up to the Priory, which now stands high and dry.<sup>1</sup> This being so, we may visualise these flat-bottomed coombes in Saxon times as providing sheltered bays into which at high-tide keels could be rowed.<sup>2</sup> On this reasoning one might expect the early settlement and royal Hall to be sited with relation to this approach, and this in turn suggests as a likely site either the spur on which the church is built, and round the back (or eastern side) of which the southern fork of this coombe runs; or the long elevated ridge of Hoo Hill, which along the north side of Alder Covert forms a steep bank above the coombe bed, and would have provided easy and dry access to the deepest water.

If, however, one considers the more exposed northern coombe, one might regard as likely sites the high ground to the north, lying in the fork of the roads, while to the south and east of this coombe once more lies the broad area of Hoo hill and the comparatively elevated flat ground where the successive Rendlesham Halls of more modern times were sited.

On the whole, the spur where the church now stands may be considered as perhaps too exposed and somewhat too confined a site for the royal "palace". The Hoo Hill region, in its broadest sense, including the area to the north of the position in which the name is printed, (*Fig. 3*) is more central to the area, and a little more sheltered from the river approaches and yet commands a fairly extensive prospect south over the coombe and towards the river valley.

#### THE SITE OF THE EARLY CHURCH; AND A PAGAN CEMETERY ON HOO HILL.

The first Christian missionaries concentrated their attention on the royal Courts, kings were the first converts, and the first churches are recorded as having been built for the use of royalty. It is thus likely that the early church, where Suidhelm was baptized, was close to, or at any rate in the same general area as, the Uffingas "palace". If it were possible to locate the site of this early church, this would help us to check

<sup>1</sup> The Butley River comes in from the east to rise at the south-east corner of Rendlesham parish. See J. B. Ward Perkins, "The Priory Wharf or Landing Stage"; "Butley Priory, Suffolk", by J. N. L. Myres, W. D. Caroe and J. B. Ward Perkins, *Archaeological Journal* XC, 1933, 260 *et seq.* Before the beginning of the 19th century, when the sea wall was built up the Butley River, the tide must have run right up to the Priory. In the Middle Ages, at Butley as elsewhere in East Anglia, there is evidence of great incursions of the sea . . . and the Priory Grounds then abutted straight upon tidal marshes" (p. 260).

<sup>2</sup> Sir Charles Bunbury, Bt., the owner of Naunton Hall, has observed a low but clearly defined causeway which crosses the southern angle of the meadow north-west of Naunton Hall, bounded on the west by the stream. This appears to run eastwards and to lead towards the mouth of the southernmost coombe. I have not had the opportunity of examining this construction, to which Sir Charles has kindly drawn my attention.

the general correctness of our topographical calculations, and very likely provide a clue to the whereabouts of the major site.

The site of the 7th century church is either that of the present church, or it is not. If it is, there is no prospect of discovering it at the present time; but the fact would reinforce our selection of the area of the parish towards the river as that of the early Saxon occupation. If, on the other hand, the site was somewhere else in the parish, how might this be detected? In reply to this question, Miss Lilian Redstone suggested that parish records should be scrutinized in order to find out whether there existed in the parish, but away from the present church and its glebe land, any outlying or isolated area of glebe. Such an outlying piece of glebe might be the site of an earlier church, which had consequently come down as ecclesiastical land from ancient times. Mr. W. G. Arnott of Woodbridge, in consequence of this suggestion, kindly examined a number of early records. From the tithe award of 1840, now in the custody of Messrs. Garrod and Turner at Ipswich, Mr. Arnott found that just such a piece of outlying glebe existed. The remaining glebe is neucleated round the church and parsonage. The isolated strip (measuring 2 acres 1 pole, 20 perches) was on Hoo Hill.

In the earlier part of the 19th century David Elisha Davy collected valuable material for a parish history of Suffolk. His manuscripts, bound into fifty large volumes, are now in the British Museum. Following upon Mr. Arnott's discovery I went through Davy's sections devoted to Rendlesham (*Add. MS.* 19097, folios 253-304). On folio 303r there is a drawing of a cinerary urn, (*Plate 4*), above which appears the following text:—

“ In a piece of glebe land of the parish, known by the name of How or Haw hill piece, containing about 2 acres, there have for several years past been dug up numerous pieces of Roman urns, but all so brittle that none were ever taken up whole, nor even nearly so, till the present year, 1837, when one with nothing broken-off but the rim of the mouth, was procured with great care, which I saw, July 7th, at the Parsonage House, in the possession of the Rector, Lord Thomas Hay; it is of a coarse brown earth, of good shape, and more than half filled with fragments of bones and ashes; the height of it, with the rim broken-off, is near eight inches and the breadth in the middle about 6. The following rough sketch was taken at the time and may give some idea of its make and shape.”

The urn is of course not Roman but Anglo-Saxon, and the urns indicate a cemetery of the pre-Christian period.

This discovery is an interesting one. If the urn-field is not the burial place or earlier settlers, of a period before the royal association with Rendlesham began, it is no doubt the burial place of the people of the *vicus regius*. In either case it confirms our supposition that the early Saxon settlement is likely to have been in this portion of the parish. The discovery also no doubt explains the name Hoo Hill. It is, furthermore, an interesting fact that this isolated strip of outlying glebe should mark the site of a pagan burial place. Can this be pure coincidence? It may be. On the other hand, it is possible that this piece of land may have been given to the Church in the earliest times because of its religious significance as the burial place of members of the settlement and forbears who had died before Christianity came to Rendlesham. Again, it may be that the

occurrence of cremation burials in the glebe strip is incidental, or accidental, and that the strip is glebe land because it was, as we had hoped it might be, the site of the first Christian church.

Early documents relating to the parish and the glebe lands do not, so far as I have yet been able to discover, throw any light on the origin of Hoo Hill Piece. The earliest reference to it known to me is a document copied by Davy<sup>1</sup>, entitled "A terrier of all the houses and landes belonging to the psonage of Rendlesham, xviii Meye 1633." The last entry in this is as follows:—

12. Item tooe acres of land lyinge in a close of Mr. Mawes called How Hill, the one end abuttinge upon a close of Mr. Robt. Spencers on the North, the other end on Mr. Mawe's on the South.

This document shows that Hoo Hill Piece was glebe in 1633.

We know nothing of the relationship between temples and burial-places in pagan Saxon times. At Old Uppsala, however, innumerable burials lie around the west end of the line of the three great mounds, and may be said to be in the vicinity of the temple, and we may perhaps also note that at Frilford in Berkshire the mixed Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon cemetery lay about 200 yards away from the Romano-Celtic temple.<sup>2</sup> If there were a temple at Rendlesham the location of the pagan cemetery may thus indicate its general whereabouts. Similarly, if the isolated glebe strip were, as has been suggested, the site of a 7th century church, this might also indicate that the temple was in this area. Continuity of sacred sites in prehistoric and early historic times is a well-known phenomenon. We have seen an instance at Uppsala, where the first cathedral in Sweden was built over the site of the famous pagan shrine. (Plate 2). We know that in England numbers of the earliest christian churches must have been purified temples (*pp.* 237/8 *above*), and we have noted the possibility that this may have applied to Redwald's temple, which quite possibly was at Rendlesham. The location of a cremation cemetery on Hoo Hill, and perhaps the presence there of this isolated strip of glebe, thus confirm in a general way the impression already formed as a result of the study of the local topography, that the 7th century *vicus regius* probably lies in the Hoo Hill area, or, at any rate, in that part of the parish between Rendlesham Hall and the river valley.

The presence of a cremation cemetery at Rendlesham is a matter of some interest, since apart from the mixed cemetery at Ipswich where about 160 burials were examined,<sup>3</sup> and scattered groups of tumuli, such as those at Martlesham, Sutton Hoo and Snape, a solitary urn, now in the British Museum, from Waldringfield,<sup>4</sup> and another from Kesgrave,<sup>5</sup> no cemetery has come to light and no early Saxon pottery exists in this area of Suffolk to offset the mass of finds and the numerous cemeteries of the north-west of the County.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore the area within which the

<sup>1</sup> *Loc. cit.* fol. 294r. Davy copied it from "An old book communicated by the Rev. Cuthbert Henley, Rector" in 1818. In this terrier the areas of the glebe lands are given to the nearest acre.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. J. S. P. Bradford and R. G. Goodchild, "Excavations at Frilford, Berks.," *Oxoniensia* IV, 1939, pp. 1-71.

<sup>3</sup> By Miss Nina Layard. The finds are in the Ipswich Museum. *Archaeologia*, IX, 325-352; *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, XXI, 241 and 242-7. See also *Victoria County History*, Suffolk, Vol. I, 330-4. *Proc. Suff. Inst. Arch.*, XIII, 1-19.

<sup>4</sup> *East Anglian, Notes and Queries*, I, p. 347.

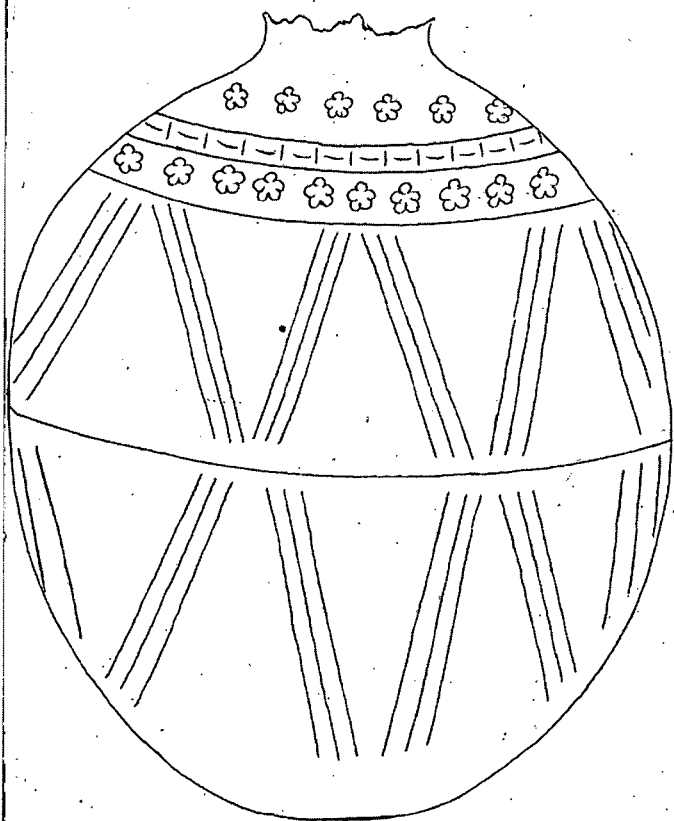
<sup>5</sup> *Collectanea Antiqua*, II, p. 233, Pl. XIV, Fig. 4 (now in the Ipswich Museum).

<sup>6</sup> See Collingwood and Myres, *Roman Britain and the Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, Map. VII.



# Rendlesham.

In a piece of the Gible Land of the parish, known by the name of the How, or How Hill Piece, containing about 2 acres, there have for several years been dug up numerous pieces of Roman ware, but all so brittle, that none were ever taken up whole, nor even nearly so, till the present year 1837, when one with nothing broken off but the rim of the mouth, was procured with great care, which I saw, July 7<sup>th</sup> 1837 at the Parsonage House, in the possession of the Doctor, Lord Howe's Boy; it is of a coarse brown earth, of good shape, & more than half filled with fragments of bones & ashes: the height of it, with the rim broken off is near 6 inches, & the breadth in the middle about 6. The following rough sketch was taken at the time, I may give some idea of its make & shape.



By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Saxon cremation-urn from Rendlesham. (Davy Mss.)



cremation urns were found in the 1820's and 30's is specified. They were from within the glebe strip, and the boundaries of this can be fixed with complete accuracy (*Fig. 3*). They are shown, and their positions fixed by measurements, in a number of documents relating to the Rendlesham glebe and park lands. Unfortunately, a number of trial holes dug this June in various parts of Hoo Hill Piece have failed to produce a single sherd of Saxon pottery or fragment of burnt bone, and it may be that the whole of the urn-field has been swept away by surface workings for sand, gravel or marl. Traces of such workings are visible in various places on Hoo Hill Piece. Nevertheless, the entry in the *Davy MSS.* is sufficiently precise to be accepted without hesitation. It is certain that there was a cremation cemetery of the pagan Saxon period either co-terminous with Hoo Hill Piece, or impinging on it.

Advertisements in the East Anglian press, and a note in the *Archæological News Letter*<sup>1</sup> and enquiries at the Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds Museums, have failed to bring to light any pottery or other finds from Rendlesham, and it may be that no more pottery from the site will come to light.

A trace from the drawing in the *Davy MSS.* was submitted to Mr. J. N. L. Myres, F.S.A., who is preparing a corpus of pagan Saxon pottery, and his comments (16.1.49) are as follows:—

“ I am afraid I have not been able to find the original of your drawing of the A.S. pot from Rendlesham. But it is rather interesting that the closest parallel to it known to me is an urn in the Acton Collection at Bury St. Edmunds Museum, from an unknown site, presumably in Suffolk. This is also globular, with a narrow neck,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, with the same sort of “ two decker ” linear ornament separated by a group of horizontal lines on the maximum diameter. . . . It has no stamps, is in brown, gritty, smooth ware, and the linear ornament is very lightly drawn. The parallel is not exact, but this kind of thing is sufficiently uncommon to make it an interesting coincidence. I wonder if there is any chance of discovering where the pots in the Acton Collection came from. Apart from this, the nearest parallels to this variety of “ two decker ” ornament that I know come from Sancton, Yorks, now at Hull. One is fairly close, a very much restored pot . . . . It has two stamps, filling some of the triangles made by the groups of chevrons. . . . ”

The Rendlesham urn, to judge by Davy's careful drawing (*Plate 4*) has in addition to two zones of chevron ornament of lightly incised lines on the body and a band of incised ornament on the neck, two lines of stamps in the form of a small five-lobed rosette. The pot is unusual, as Mr. Myres makes clear, but it does not seem to possess any obviously very early features, and may be dated to the 6th century or the beginning of the 7th.

#### CONCLUSION

It has, I think, been found possible to concentrate the search for the *vicus regius* into a fairly well-defined and manageable area, which consists largely of arable, and which it should not be impracticable to keep under archæological scrutiny from the air. In spite of the unfavourable subsoil, a complex of structures such as we have visualised, if it was in the arable areas, could hardly fail, given suitable conditions, to yield some sort of indication to air observation. A programme of air survey spread

over three years, so that each field could be studied under a suitable crop, might well reveal the site. If it did not, the negative evidence from the fields should serve to concentrate the ground search to the comparatively few and small plausible areas of woodland, heath and pasture. The worst prospect is that the site has been lost under the later halls and their gardens. It seems unlikely that such a group of structures as one might expect in the *vicus regius* would have been destroyed in any of the comparatively recent gravel workings, which have not been on a large scale, without some record having survived.

Documentary sources may also yield more information. It might for instance prove possible to relate the discovery of the silver crown about the year 1690 with some record of constructional work that was being carried out at that time, and so to discover where the crown was found.

#### TAILPIECE.

On *Fig. 2* may be seen some distance to the north of Hoo Hill Piece, the printed name Thirstly Belt. To the East of this is a wood, at the south-east corner of which is a curious, roughly circular projection of trees into the arable and pasture, indicated by an arrow on the map. The wood is called Bush Covert. To the east of Bush Covert is a field. To the east of this field again is a small wood which bears the name of Hall Walls. Anyone studying the modern Ordnance Survey 6 in. map would naturally associate this name with the successive Rendlesham Halls that lie a little to the south. The name, however, seems to have a different origin. There exists a sketch map of Rendlesham Park, entitled "Park Lands, 1828."<sup>1</sup> This map, Miss Redstone says, "looks like the work of Isaac Johnson of Woodbridge, one of the best-known of our 18/19th century surveyors in Suffolk." A detail of this map is reproduced on *Plate 5*. This shows that the old name of Bush Covert was Woodenhall Grove. The field to the east of it was called Great Woodenhalls. The wood to the east of this again, (Hall Walls on the Ordnance map) is divided into Further Hall Wall and Middle Hall Wall, and a field to the north is called Great Hall Wall. A piece of pasture to the South is called Little Woodenhall. These names seem to centre about the projecting circle of trees at the south-east corner of Bush Covert. It has been remarked above (*p. 241*) how names indicating, for example, Saxon heathen holy places can survive as medieval or later field names, "sometimes preserved in the boundary marks of estates described in land charters." When one reflects that a great wooden hall, and possibly a smaller one, is what we hoped to find in our *vicus regius* and that the memory of a great Hall fit to match the Sutton Hoo burial might well be expected to linger, this cluster of lost field names, in a likely place, seems an odd coincidence. It is difficult to see how these names could have arisen in connection with the Tudor or later Halls, which were of brick or stone, or how they could very well have been applied to anything like a barn. The manorial history of Rendlesham<sup>2</sup> gives no suggestion that this was the site of a medieval

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Miss Lilian Redstone for kindly bringing this map to my attention.  
<sup>2</sup> W. A. Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, 1909, Vol. IV.

manor house. The name might also possibly derive from Woden and have a pagan significance.

The probability is of course that the names are recent corruptions and no more than an instance of popular etymology. I have not so far been able to trace any earlier versions of them. All the same this area and the projecting circle of trees (detached from Bush Covert in the 1828 map), should not be overlooked in any field work or air survey of the area. The ring is defined by a shallow ditch, and another shallow ditch divides it centrally, along its east-west axis, into two parts. It may prove to be nothing more than an ornamental ring of trees such as exist elsewhere in the park land. It is, however, at the back of the later halls, close to the cultivated areas of the estate, and the map shows that in 1828 it was not then a detached ring, but a development at the end of a belt of trees that joined it to what is now Hall Walls. The names may prove not to have any significance for our purposes, but at least they serve to make the point, at the conclusion of this survey, that apart from survey from the air, the best hope of finding the site, there is more investigation to be done both amongst documents and in the field.