

What was it like to live in Anglo-Saxon Lyminge?

A Canterbury Archaeological Trust curriculum pack
and product of the Lyminge Archaeological Project, 2007-2014



Andrew Macintosh

Acknowledgements and credits

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A short note about Tia the pony

We found Tia through a friend and colleague at CAT. Coincidentally Tia lives with her owner at Lyminge and amazingly the property is on the site of the Lyminge Anglo-Saxon cemetery! The 1950's mushroom shed is still there.

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction to the resource..... | 1 |
| Anglo-Saxon invasion and settlement – myth and evidence | 2 |
| What evidence do we have for life in Anglo-Saxon Lyminge? | 3 |
| The first Anglo-Saxon settlement at Lyminge..... | 8 |
| From rubbish to royalty, the discovery of the ‘great hall’ | 15 |
| From paganism to Christianity | 20 |
| Was Lyminge raided by Vikings? | 25 |
| The story of Anglo-Saxon Lyminge, a summary..... | 26 |
| Evidence for Lyminge before the Anglo-Saxons..... | 28 |
| | |
| Activities for the classroom: Teacher Notes..... | 32 |
| Activity 1: Looking at Objects | 33 |
| Activity 2: Looking at Buildings..... | 35 |
| Activity 3: The drama of King Edwin and Queen Ethelburgha | 36 |
| Activity 4: Looking at Bodies and Burials | 36 |

What was it like to live in Anglo-Saxon Lyminge?

Introduction to the resource

This resource has been designed with schools in mind to support Key Stage 2 History, 'Britain's settlement by Anglo-Saxons and Scots' and/or 'a local study' (The national curriculum in England, DfE, Sept 2013). As you will see there are also opportunities for cross-curricular work.

The pack is a product of the Lyminge Archaeological Project (2007-2014) led by Reading University and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and has been written by an archaeologist who was actively involved in the excavations at Lyminge and who delivers workshops on behalf of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT) Education Service. The Lyminge project was also supported by the Kent Archaeological Society and Canterbury Archaeological Trust.

We are lucky to have **historical documents** and **archaeological evidence** for the story of Lyminge. In summary, documents tell us that an Anglo-Saxon monastery stood in the village 1,300 years ago managed by a royal abbess and archaeology has shown that Lyminge was an important Anglo Saxon settlement even before this. We can say that most of our knowledge for Anglo-Saxon Lyminge is the result of archaeological investigations.

Overall, we think the Anglo-Saxon period for Lyminge lasted for at least 400 years, from the 5th century to the 9th century. Archaeologists have made some fascinating discoveries and our combined sources of information give us an insight into:

- daily life and work
- royalty
- belief and religion

Learning objectives

History in the Primary School curriculum

Your pupils will have opportunities to learn about:

- The work of archaeologists and how remains of buildings and 'finds' can help us build a picture of people's lives from the past
- Anglo-Saxon settlement and lifestyle
- Specialist vocabulary and terminology
- How we know about the Anglo-Saxons from the available evidence
- Nature and significance of the Anglo-Saxons on their local community
- Re-introduction of Christianity
- Evidence for the legacy of the Anglo-Saxons

How will the resource help children make progress in history?

- Learn about the significance of key individuals
- Change, continuity, progression and regression
- Knowledge related to Anglo-Saxon Britain at a local/regional level
- An understanding of the nature and use of evidence and how this might lead to differing interpretations.

And practise the skills of an archaeologist:

- Close observation
- Critical thinking
- Interpreting evidence ('best guessing')

Cross-curricular activities

As you will see, the suggested activities provide opportunities for cross-curricular work in English, Geography, Maths, Drama, Art – and Music if you feel inspired.

Anglo-Saxon invasion and settlement – myth and evidence

The history books tell us that the Romans officially left Britain in 410 AD and that the British were left to fend for themselves against neighbouring raids from war tribes from Scotland (the Picts) and Ireland (the Scots).

A myth emerged that in 449 AD King Vortigen of Kent asked for help from Germanic mercenaries to assist in his battles and that two brothers named Hengest and Horsa arrived on the Kent shore at Ebbsfleet with a band of warriors in three ships. These mercenaries are supposedly the first Anglo-Saxons and were successful in driving back the Picts and Scots. Following their success waves of migrant Angles, Jutes and Saxons then arrive in Britain to take land for themselves driving the indigenous British peoples North, West and into Brittany.

Although there may well be elements of truth in this story, it is too simplistic and does not give the full picture. Indeed this version of the origin of the people who came to live in Britain may have been constructed by later Anglo-Saxons - a created link back to mythical heroes with Scandinavian roots - rather than possibly a more accurate picture, that the Anglo-Saxons were a people of mixed origins.

The names Hengest and Horsa translate from Anglo-Saxon as 'stallion' and 'horse' respectively. The county of Kent uses the image of a white horse as part of its Invicta emblem.

We do not know exactly when and how many migrants arrived in Britain. There were probably several phases of migration with people



seeking new land to settle. We do not know to what extent they arrived as hostile invaders or how much resistance they met. It is likely that there would have been some conflict. But the migrating tribes we can collectively call the Anglo-Saxons probably gradually merged with the native Romano-British peoples and a new post-Roman culture was created. Recent research indicates that it was likely to be a combination of factors.

There are very few written records for the early Anglo-Saxon period in Britain and what we do have offer little in the way of accurate dates. It is no coincidence that the post-Roman period used to be called the 'Dark Ages' as we simply have very few facts from this time in history. However, archaeology is slowly adding to our knowledge of this period and challenging some of the preconceived theories and myths surrounding the early Anglo-Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxons of Kent developed their own distinctive culture that was as different from neighbouring kingdoms in Britain as it was from their supposed roots in **Jutland**. There is evidence to suggest that, in Kent, the Anglo-Saxons borrowed styles from numerous sources including the **Franks** from modern day France.

The archaeological results from recent excavations at Lyminge are throwing light onto settlement in the early to middle Anglo-Saxon period and looking at all the evidence, an interesting picture is starting to emerge.

What evidence do we have for life in Anglo-Saxon Lyminge?

What do the documentary sources tell us?

Documentary (or 'historical') sources are written and illustrated records of various kinds which have survived over time. These may be **primary sources** (the original document) or **secondary sources** (eg a copy or revision of an original).

For Lyminge we have sources that tell us about the period in its history when it was a monastic site.

In brief

A 'double' monastery - for both monks and nuns - was established in the 7th century and was ruled over by a royal abbess. It was part of a wider network of religious houses across Kent that were established following Saint Augustine's mission to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxons in 597 AD.

In more depth

Primary sources

We have **primary sources** in the form of **charters** (written documents that grant land to the church). Here are two examples:

- In 732 AD A coastal property Sandtun actively involved in salt production and marine fishing was granted to Lyminge by King Ethelberht II.
- In 804 AD Coenwulf, King of Mercia and Cuthred, King of Kent grant land in Canterbury to Abbess Selethryth and her family to serve as refuge. Some scholars think that the refuge mentioned in the charter is to offer protection for the 9th century minster's Abbess and her family from possible Viking attack.

Secondary sources

We have two **secondary sources** for key Anglo-Saxon personalities connected to Lyminge:

- **The Ecclesiastical History** written in 731 AD by **Bede**, a Northumbrian monk
- **The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle** believed to have been written (several authors) around 890 AD on the orders of King Alfred the Great of England.

From these we learn about the dramatic story of King Edwin and his wife Ethelburgha, believed to be the royal abbess who established the double minster at Lyminge.

Children can play out the story of 'King Edwin and Queen Ethelburgha – a marriage and attempted murder!'
See **Activities for the Classroom** section.

Place names

Many British towns and villages can trace the origin of their name back to an Anglo-Saxon name. Lyminge is no exception. Lyminge is named after the river Limen that flows into the Channel at Lympe and Hythe. The suffix *ge* indicates a place of Anglo-Saxon importance.

What does the archaeological evidence tell us?

Archaeological evidence is the excavated physical remains of buildings and other structures and the remains of things that people made, used and consumed.

Most of our knowledge for Anglo-Saxon Lyminge is the result of archaeological excavation.

From various investigations, we now have evidence for:

- The 'double' minster for monks and nuns
- A cemetery at the northern limit of the village

- Artefacts, from a large rubbish tip (but useful rubbish!) and from buildings
- Early Anglo-Saxon workshops or dwellings
- Timber hall houses
- Timber built feasting or 'great' halls
- Monastic buildings and dwellings

Who has excavated at Lyminge and what did they find?

19th century, Canon Jenkins - the first 'archaeologist' at Lyminge

In the Victorian period, Canon Jenkins, vicar of Lyminge, organised an excavation around the grounds of the current parish church of St Mary and St Ethelburgha. He discovered the foundations of buildings belonging to the 7th century Anglo-Saxon monastery.



1950's, human bones are found and a cemetery is excavated

Just to the north of the village a pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery was excavated by Kent Archaeological Society. A number of the graves contained artefacts that demonstrated Lyminge would have been an important place even before the monastery was established. A selection of the wonderful grave goods from that excavation can be seen on display in Maidstone Museum.

2005, Canterbury Archaeological Trust does some digging

The Canterbury Archaeological Trust had a small evaluation dig which revealed 8th to 9th century occupation in land immediately south of the current churchyard

2007 – 2014, Dr Gabor Thomas runs the Lyminge Excavation

The project involved professional archaeologists, student trainees and volunteers. At the time of writing, detailed research from the results of the dig is being undertaken by Reading University. We can already say that these excavations have added much to the picture of Anglo-Saxon Lyminge.

How did Gabor's archaeologists choose where to dig at Lyminge?

First, the archaeologists did a Desk Based Assessment. This involves looking at all the documentary sources available and results from previous digs and then, using all this information, deciding on the best place to dig to get results.

Using science and technology

Then with a clever machine to scan what lies beneath the ground surface (known as a mobile sensor platform) they produced a map of the geology and archaeology buried below the grass.

The machine works by measuring resistivity to an electrical current passed through the ground and showing this as a reading on a computer screen. An archaeologist took a reading at every metre over a very large area of ground.

A stone wall would have a stronger resistance to the current than a ditch and each would result in a different reading. The readings all together are translated into an image which may be hazy or clear depending on the conditions below ground.



The dig begins...

Once the archaeologists had decided where to excavate, a mechanical digger was used to remove the topsoil and modern subsoil. The archaeologists then carefully 'cleaned' the entire site using trowels. A trowel is probably an archaeologist's most useful tool.



As they trowelled, they took note of any changes in the colour of the soil and where shapes and lines appeared. These are often indications of where something has happened in the past. Archaeologists call these **features**. Examples of features are ancient pits dug for rubbish disposal or burials and post-holes made in building construction.

It is very important to make records and the archaeologists carefully drew a plan at a scale of 1:20 of every place the **features** were seen.



Once the location of every feature had been drawn the digging could start. Every archaeological feature was investigated and recorded, all the archaeological **finds** (animal bone, pottery, metal objects etc) were kept and examined to help date and understand what had happened at the site in its history. When the digging has finished all of the records and finds were taken away to examine thoroughly.

The first Anglo Saxon settlement at Lyminge (5th to 7th Century)

The archaeologists found evidence for an early Anglo-Saxon **settlement** in Lyminge. The remains of small workshops together with huts and timber halls that people would have lived in were all arranged in a cluster, typical of early Anglo-Saxon settlements.

So how did the archaeologists know that that they had found the remains of a building?



Charlotte and Ross start to dig the greyish brown rectangle of soil.

Firstly the archaeologists recognised a distinct rectangular shape of greyish brown soil that was darker than the surrounding clay.

Then they carefully excavated this **feature**, collecting any **finds** they came across.

Once the rectangular shape of soil was dug out, they noticed a pattern of several holes. These holes called **post-holes** show the archaeologists where timber posts once stood. The timber posts have long since rotted away becoming dark soil and this, filling the holes, is all that remains as a clue.



From this evidence in the ground the archaeologists can attempt to reconstruct what sort of building would once have stood there.

Also, by collecting **finds** from the remains of the building, they can suggest what sort of activities may have taken place in and around it and perhaps what materials were used to construct it.

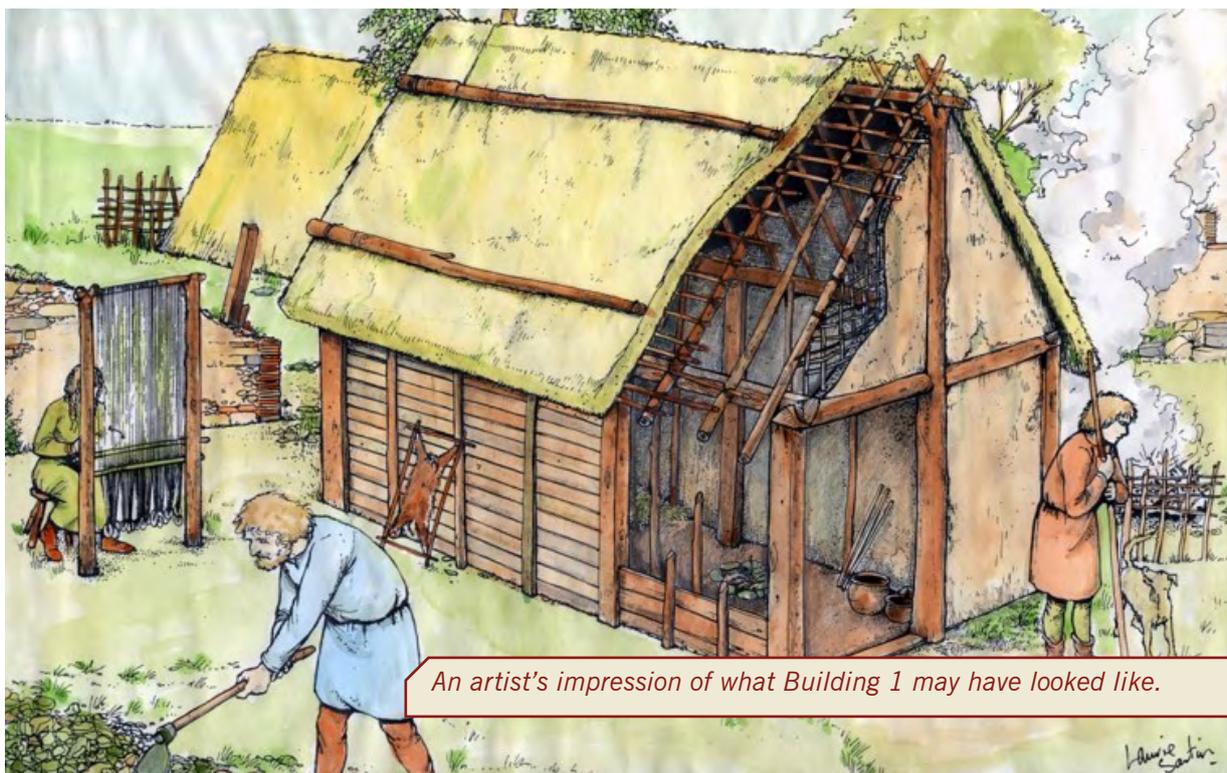
Workshops and huts

Building 1. A workshop or hut.

The archaeologists excavated the remains of a building which was nearly 5m long and 3.5m wide with 8 postholes at the base that would have supported upright timber posts. They did not know what the roof was made of as no evidence for this survived. But because this building was near a river, they think perhaps the roof was thatched using reeds from the river bank. They decided the walls were made on a woven wooden framework called **wattle** which was then covered in **daub**, wet clay mixed with cow dung, hair and straw. The daub was left to dry providing water proof and well insulated walls. The clues for this theory are the pieces of daub with wattle impressions found in the remains of the building.

The archaeologists think that this building was too small to live in and was probably a workshop or used for storage.

This type of timber building was built over a large rectangular pit and is often referred to as **sunken feature building (SFB)**. Some archaeologists believe the base of the pit was the building's floor, others think that a raised floor made of planks spanning the pit was more likely.



The archaeologists think that when the building went out of use, people dumped their rubbish in the rectangular pit. They found pieces of animal bone, pottery and oyster shells - useful to archaeologists as they tell us what sort of food the Anglo-Saxon people were eating and that they were making and using pottery.

Sometimes the bones of frogs or toads are found in the back-filled soil of these buildings and perhaps they were attracted to the damp and dark environment, foraging for insects. We don't think the Anglo-Saxons were eating them! But not all the finds were rubbish...

What can objects tell us about people?

Amongst the Anglo-Saxon rubbish, archaeologists found objects that would have been of value at the time and can tell us more about the type of people living in Lyminge. These finds included small fragments of coloured glass that tell the archaeologists that the people who lived here had a variety of drinking vessels. Glass was a difficult item to manufacture and was likely made in specialized places, possibly a considerable distance from the site. So it is surprising to find so many fragments.

The archaeologists think that finding so many glass fragments is good evidence that the people in Lyminge were wealthy and important.

Other items recovered included beautiful coloured glass beads, bone and copper pins and occasionally a brooch. All these finds help the archaeologist to put together an image of what an Anglo-Saxon in Lyminge was wearing.

Some objects seem to have been deliberately placed in the backfill of the building remains. We do not know why the Anglo-Saxons did this, but it was not uncommon to find a valuable object placed within building

rubble at Lyminge. At the bottom of our 'workshop' someone had placed an iron **plough coulter**. A coulter was a heavy blade that was mounted vertically and cut into the soil ahead of the plough share meaning that heavier soils like clay could be ploughed, thus increasing crop yield. Heavy ploughs were pulled by a team of eight oxen and in its day this would have been a valuable agricultural tool as it improved efficiency.

This is the first example of an Anglo-Saxon plough coulter to have been excavated in England. Prior to this discovery it had been assumed that this technology had been lost with the Romans, not to be rediscovered until medieval times. Today it is a useful clue to the activities of the Anglo-Saxons.

The scale in the picture is 30 cms.



Homes

Building 2. The timber hall house



The archaeologists also found a different type of building, less common than the ‘workshops’ and constructed with pairs of posts.

The overall floor plan was bigger than a ‘workshop’ measuring 12m long and 4.5m wide and the floor was not sunken but built at ground level. By looking carefully at the spaces between the post-holes, the archaeologists could see that on both the long sides of this building there was a gap wide enough to be a doorway. Unfortunately only the post-holes had survived so interpretation is difficult.

However archaeologists think this type of building was big enough to be a family home with everyone from babies to the elderly members living together. It isn’t difficult to see that such a place, perhaps with a central fire or hearth for heating and cooking, would have easily met basic needs of warmth and shelter.

What can we find out about early Anglo-Saxon people from examining their graves?

In December 1953, while building a shed for growing mushrooms, one of the workers was digging a post hole and struck some bones and a metal object. It looked as though he had come across a grave and the metal object seemed to be a spear!

An emergency excavation was carried out in terrible weather to determine if there were any other graves where the shed was being built. Eight graves were found and from examining the artefacts found in them, the archaeologists could date them to the 6th century. An Anglo-Saxon cemetery had been discovered!

The following summer in August 1954 a larger area was excavated with permission of the farmer, Arthur Hall, who owned the land. The archaeologists from Kent Archaeological Society found a further 36 graves within the area they were allowed to dig making a total of 44.

Many of the beautifully crafted finds recovered from the excavation can still be seen on display in Maidstone Museum.

*Find out about the graves of a man, woman and child in the **Activities for the Classroom** section*

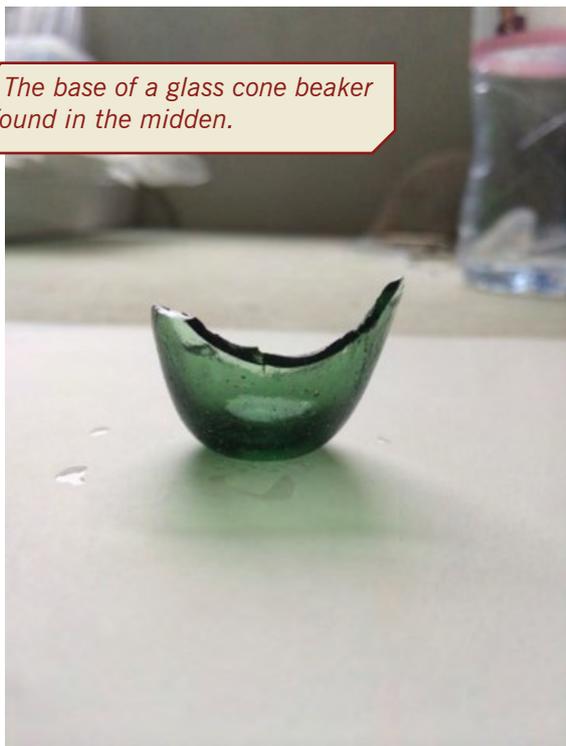
Useful Anglo-Saxon rubbish – introducing 'the blob'



As well as the building remains, the archaeologists uncovered a large, mysterious feature nick-named the 'blob'. This was a large area of dark grey soil containing a vast quantity of Anglo-Saxon rubbish and technically known as a **midden**.

As we have already found, rubbish can tell us a lot about people in the past. The midden didn't disappoint and had lots of interesting information. The pottery in it was from the 5th to 6th century and therefore contemporary with the workshops, houses and people buried in the cemetery. There were a lot of glass fragments and what looked like a piece of waste from glass manufacture; a clue maybe of glass production in Anglo-Saxon Lyminge? Some of the pieces were from a type of very fine drinking vessel known by archaeologists as a **cone beaker**. You can probably see why.

The base of a glass cone beaker found in the midden.



Replica glass cone beakers.

It soon became apparent that the midden was not just a layer of rubbish spread over the ground but was filling a large hole...

It was rare for the first Anglo-Saxons to dig pits specifically for rubbish so what more was there to the blob?

The archaeologists decided to cut a trench across the midden to find out how deep it was and what it was hiding.



A selection of the copper alloy scraps recovered from the midden.

At a depth of around 60cm, a **feature** like a **hearth** was revealed covered in a thick layer of black ash. The archaeologists started to find lots of **slag** (product of iron production) and pieces of furnace and hearth lining. It would seem that the midden was covering an Anglo-Saxon **smithing** site and what the archaeologists had found were the remains of a furnace for making metal objects. Discovering numerous **copper alloy** scraps and fragments of **clay moulds** within the midden confirmed their theory.

The archaeologists would like to go back and dig more of the **'blob'** to see what else they can find.



*Alex and Aiji recording the **hearth** underneath the **midden**.*

From rubbish to Royalty, the discovery of the 'great hall' (7th century)

Building 3. The 'great hall'

Anglo-Saxon buildings leave less of an impression in the earth than a Roman villa or a Norman castle. However this doesn't mean that as a people they were not capable craftsmen. We have only to look at the beautiful examples of their jewellery found in graves such as Sutton Hoo, the Staffordshire hoard or indeed the wonderful artefacts from Lyminge's own 6th century Anglo-Saxon cemetery to see evidence for highly skilled individuals.

It is becoming clearer, through archaeology supported by historical records, that although many of the Anglo-Saxon buildings were built from timber and therefore didn't last as long, they could have been just as impressive aesthetically as the masonry buildings that preceded and followed them.

With the available evidence and a degree of imagination we can try to reconstruct what must have been an impressive 'great hall' discovered by the archaeologists in Lyminge.

The Anglo-Saxon epic poem, *Beowulf*, gives a good description of such a hall serving as a palace for King Hroogar, a legendary Danish King. The great hall in the poem is given a name 'Heorot'.

***Then, as I have heard, the work of constructing a building
Was proclaimed to many a tribe throughout this middle earth.
In time—quickly, as such things happen among men—
It was all ready, the biggest of halls.
He whose word was law
Far and wide gave it the name "Heorot".***

*The men did not dally; they strode inland in a group
Until they were able to discern the timbered hall,
Splendid and ornamented with gold.
The building in which that powerful man held court
Was the foremost of halls under heaven;
Its radiance shone over many lands.*

In 2012, the archaeologists discovered the first of four timber halls when they opened a 30m by 30m trench on Tayne Field, a recreational area for Lyminge village.

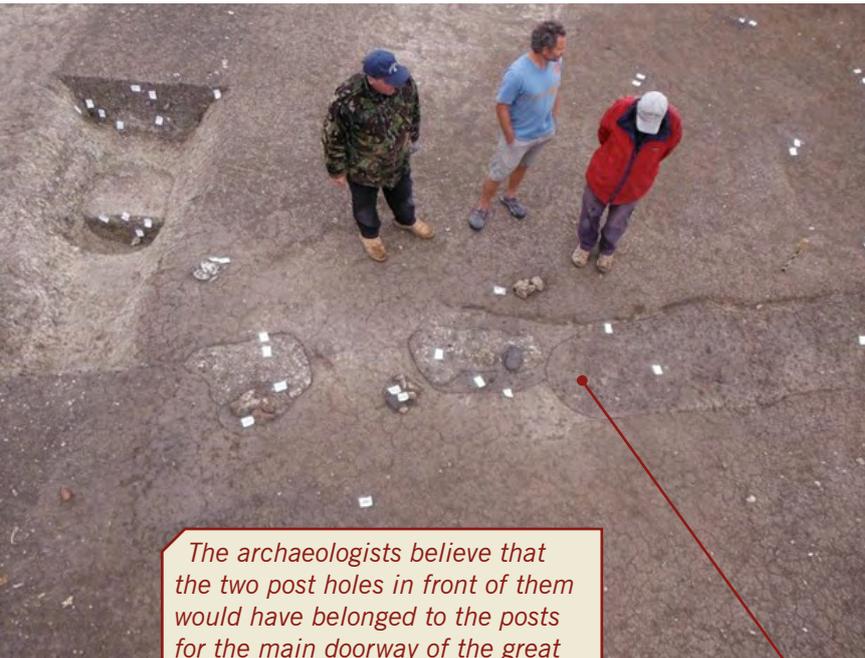
As luck would have it, inside the excavation boundary was the complete **footprint** of an enormous Anglo-Saxon building, 21m long and 8.5m wide. A pattern of small discoloured soil rectangles (where wood had rotted away and called **post ghosts**) showed that the outside walls were constructed using pairs of upright planks. The gaps in between the planks were likely filled with **wattle** and **daub** panels. Each of the long walls was cut by a pair of huge post pits indicating the position of upright posts for doorways



Huge post pits, marking the position of the door posts.

Post ghosts.

Using the evidence in the ground, archaeologists can reconstruct what the building may have looked like.



The archaeologists believe that the two post holes in front of them would have belonged to the posts for the main doorway of the great hall.



Lumps of *opus signinium* (a Roman building material made of crushed tile mixed with mortar) were found in the foundation trenches for the walls of the hall. It is believed that the great timber halls could have had a Roman style floor. Evidence in similar buildings has been found at Dover and on the Continent.

Who used these 'great halls'?

The archaeologists believe that these buildings would have been used by high status people, possibly even royalty.

At some point during the 6th to 7th century, Anglo-Saxon kings established important centres, called **royal villas**. Forming the focus of a settlement, a royal villa was a great hall where the king and his travelling household of lords and servants could live for a short period of time.

The king and his household would enjoy food brought in from the surrounding area - livestock on the hoof, goods by cart, barrels and sacks by boat. The king expected the local people to serve his needs and in return he would settle disputes and reward good deeds and service. When a royal villa could no longer support the king and his entourage with food etc., the household would move on to the next one.

The poem *Beowulf* captures wonderfully the grandeur and atmosphere of a great hall with its cast of characters. Are the great halls discovered in Lyminge similar to this? We might imagine royalty and their attendants, great feasts and epic tales told around a roaring fire!

Certainly the discovery of large, impressive buildings at Lyminge suggests that this was once one of these royal centres.



On the subject of feasting, what were the Anglo-Saxons eating and drinking?

The archaeologists could tell what the Anglo-Saxons were eating in the 6th to 7th century by examining the animal remains that they found. It would seem from the evidence that they were mainly enjoying pork. About 50% of all the animal bones collected were from pigs. We know from 7th century records, that a high percentage of pork meat in the people's diet is an indication of wealth.

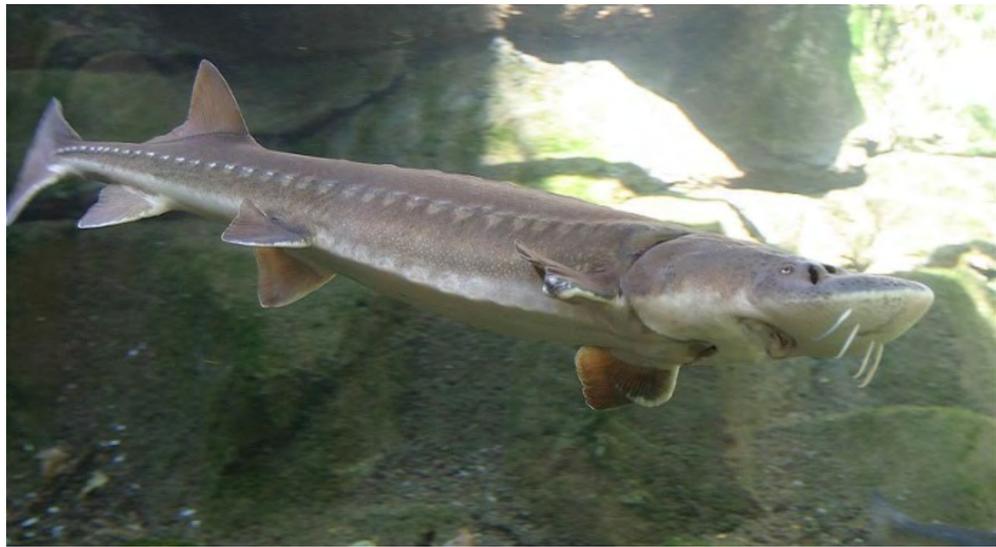


Boars would have been hunted to test a warrior's prowess. It would have taken great skill to track and kill a boar. They were quick, intelligent animals - and if threatened could charge and injure or kill hunting dog, horse and rider. It is little wonder that the Anglo-Saxons featured boars in their poetry and artwork.

In the poem *Beowulf* a warrior's helmet is described as **“wonderfully formed, beset with swine-forms so that it then no blade nor battle-swords to bite were able....”**

An Anglo-Saxon re-enactor with boar design on his shield.

A unique find from the backfill of one of the 'workshops' was a scaly bone plate from a type of fish called a sturgeon. In Anglo-Saxon times and to this day, the sturgeon was considered to be a royal fish! As such it is a protected species.



It is harder to say for certain what people were drinking, although sometimes small residues of liquid survive on glass fragments. In the poem *Beowulf* the warriors are drinking mead (an alcoholic drink made with honey and water). Whatever they were drinking it was from a variety of stylish glasses. We know because the archaeologists found the broken pieces!

Deliberate offering or accidentally lost?

Remember how the iron plough coulter seemed to have been deliberately placed in the small building at the end of its life? The same practice of leaving an object may have happened at the great hall... Two objects, of significant value, were found in its foundations.

The first find was a horse harness fragment, made of copper-alloy and coated with gold. There is evidence that in the 6th century important male Anglo-Saxon warriors were buried with a horse or horse head. Later on this practice was replaced by burying horse trappings instead of the animal.





The second find was an elaborate gaming counter made from a hollow cylinder of bone with a central rivet made of copper-alloy. This is a rare find, normally associated with **princely burials**.

Are the two items symbolic offerings after the great hall has gone out of use, perhaps a thank you to the pagan gods? Or were they accidentally lost? Perhaps we will never know, but one thing that is clear, these were not everyday objects and would have been highly prized possessions of a wealthy and elite class of people.

From paganism to Christianity and monastic life at Lyminge (7th–9th century)

In 597 AD Pope Gregory of Rome sent a monk, Augustine, on a mission to spread the word of Christianity to the pagan Anglo-Saxons. Augustine and his fellow missionaries arrived on the Isle of Thanet in Kent and King Ethelbert of Kent gave them a place to stay in Canterbury. Soon after, Ethelbert converted to Christianity, perhaps with a little persuasion from his Christian queen, Bertha.

It is thought that sometime during the 7th century more churches and monasteries were built, to accommodate the demand from Anglo-Saxons wanting to convert to the new religion.

A wonderfully evocative piece mentioned in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* (book II, chapter XIII) recalls the advice given to King Edwin of Northumbria regarding whether he should convert to Christianity.

“Another of the king’s chief men signified his agreement with this prudent argument, and went on to say:

‘Your Majesty, when we compare the present life of man on earth with that time of which we have no knowledge, it seems to me like the swift flight of a single sparrow through the banqueting-hall where you are sitting at dinner on a winter’s day with your thegns and counsellors. In the midst there is a comforting fire to warm the hall; outside, the storms of winter rain or snow are raging. This sparrow flies swiftly in through one door of the hall, and out through another. While he is inside, he is safe from the winter storms; but after a few moments of comfort, he vanishes from sight into the wintry world from which he came. Even so, man appears on earth for a little while; but of what went before this life or of what follows, we know nothing. Therefore, if this new teaching has

brought any more certain knowledge, it seems only right that we should follow it.'

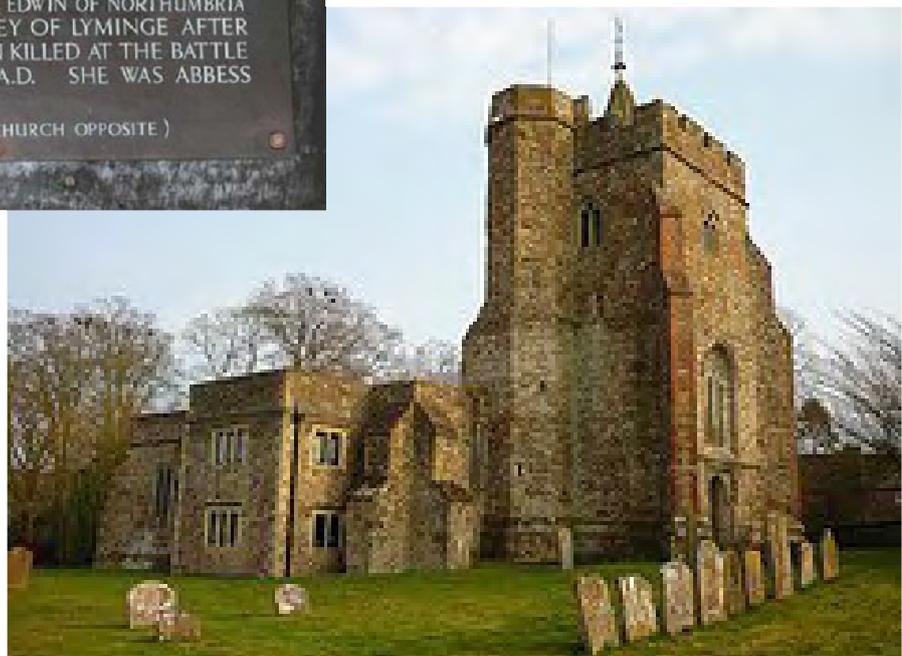
The other elders and counsellors of the king, under God's guidance, gave similar advice."

The sparrow in this text is being compared to the soul, its brief flight within the hall likened to man's time on earth, in through one door and out through another.

Ethelburgha and a double minster founded at Lyminge, 633 AD – or later?

It is now debateable whether it was King Edwin's queen, Elthelburgha, who founded the minster at Lyminge. The archaeological evidence, as recorded by Canon Jenkins, does however prove that a church was built in the 7th century and the foundations survive, partially beneath the current parish church dedicated to St Mary and St Ethelburga.

We also have documentary evidence in the form of **charters** that tell us there was a monastery active in Lyminge from the 7th to the 9th century. Based on the archaeological evidence it has now been proved that Lyminge was an important Anglo-Saxon centre before this time, perhaps even a royal villa.



So what did the most recent excavations reveal about Lyminge as a monastic settlement?

To what extent the royal villa and the monastery settlement coexisted is unclear, possibly not at all. However the focus for the settlement moves to the west onto higher ground. It was not uncommon that Christian monasteries were built on higher land to enjoy a symbolic importance.

As well as the monastic buildings near the church, the archaeological excavations of 2008 - 2010 demonstrated that there was a busy settlement associated with the monastery.

A large ditch was uncovered, full of domestic waste including lots of mussel shells, animal bones and fragments of pottery. We think this ditch was a boundary to the first phase of monastic settlement. Around the late 7th to late 8th century it was filled in so that the community could grow in size. We know this because the discarded pottery found in the bottom layers of the ditch is a type used at this time.

The larger, second phase of settlement would then appear to have been divided into separate areas: domestic and industrial.

The domestic area

The archaeologists found small clusters of post-holes and by making accurate scale drawings they could see that the clusters formed the floor plans of small single room buildings. Near these buildings was a ditch with post holes, probably where a wooden fence had been built to enclose them.

They also found lots of pits in this area full of animal bones and fossilised **cess**. By finding so much domestic rubbish close to the huts it is likely that these buildings would have been small dwellings and/or workshops. They certainly weren't big enough for a family and this may have been where the monks and nuns lived.

What do the artefacts found here show us?

People had small knives, for cutting food, wood, bone etc. Only the iron blades had survived as the handles were probably made of wood. The archaeologists also found some whetstones used for sharpening the knives.

Flat pieces of animal bone decorated with incised rings and dots were identified as **hair combs**.

Iron keys and **locks** found near the huts suggest that people wanted to keep their valuables locked away and secure.

Pieces of **pottery** found in the monastic settlement at Lyminge were of a finer quality than pottery from the pre-monastic settlement. A lot of the pottery was now being made using a potter's wheel (whereas before it was mainly handmade) and some was imported from elsewhere in the country and from France, Holland and Belgium.

Bun shaped **loom weights** and bone **pin beaters** are evidence that the monastic community was manufacturing textiles, weaving wool on looms set into the ground.



Some of the textiles would have been made into clothes and the **copper alloy** and **bone pins** found by the archaeologists give us some insight into how the Anglo-Saxons fastened them.

The archaeologists also found some 9th century **silver pennies**, one datable to the reign of Ecgberht of Wessex (828-839 AD). It was found in a pit, lying in a layer of cess ...you can imagine why whoever dropped that coin left it where it was!

The fragments of coloured **window glass** found in this area are unlikely to have come from the small huts; more likely they were from the monastic stone buildings or bigger timber ones and somehow found their way into this area.



What can we say about the diet of the monks and nuns?

Fish

There is a lot more evidence for marine fish in the monastic people's diet than for those people who lived in the pre-monastic settlement.

Large quantities of mussel shells and small fish bones were found, telling us that the Anglo-Saxons of the 8th to 9th century were enjoying a variety of seafood brought from the coast. Two examples of 8th century **charters** tell us that land rights given to Lyminge monastery allowed for an increased marine fish supply.

- In 732 AD A coastal property Sandtun actively involved in salt production and marine fishing was granted to Lyminge by King Ethelberht II
- In 741 AD King Ethelbert II grants fishing rights on the river Lymyne to the church of St Mary.

Meat

Around 50 % of all animal bones found in the rubbish pits and ditches were from sheep. It seems the Anglo-Saxon monastic settlement was a place that specialised in wool textile manufacture. No doubt the animals were kept for their meat as well as for their wool to make cloth.

There was far less evidence of pork consumption (not so many pig bones) compared to the pre-monastic settlement. Perhaps this is evidence of food regulations and fasting rules governed by the monastery?

The percentage of cattle bone collected from the monastic settlement and the pre-monastic settlement was about the same.

Fowl

Around 30% of the bird bone collected from the monastic settlement was from domestic birds, mainly chicken, geese and ducks. This compares with just 10% of domestic bird bone collected from the earlier settlement. The monks and nuns were clearly fond of having fresh eggs!

The industrial area

Outside of the domestic zone, the archaeologists found evidence for an area reserved for agriculture and industrial processes. So what was the evidence?

Agriculture

Building 4: the granary

The archaeologists discovered a large structure measuring 19m long and 6.5m wide. It had post holes along the lines of its outer walls showing it had been made of timber. A row of post holes running down the middle showed there had been an internal wall, creating two aisles. This constriction of the space suggests it is unlikely that people would have lived on the ground floor.

Being such a large building the archaeologists think it was probably a store for grain - a granary – and although none of it survived, it is likely that there was an upper floor where the grain was kept away from damp ground and vermin. Next to the granary the archaeologists found a large yard made of crushed flint and chalk. This is probably where the threshing took place, separating the grain from the chaff. Lots of **quern stone** fragments,

made from local stone were found in pits nearby. A quern was used to make flour. Grain was poured between two circular quern stones, with the top one rotating against the bottom one to grind grain into flour.

Industry

Smithing and smelting

One hundred and fifty metres north-west of the church the archaeologists found a layer of smithing and smelting slag (iron waste) and close by were pits containing ash and patches of burning. This together with a number of broken iron objects (mainly knife blades) was all evidence of ironworking.

All the tangible archaeological evidence taken together helps stimulate the imagination and bring the past to life. At Lyminge, the clues left behind help us to picture not only a scene of religious activities of monks and nuns at the heart of the monastery, but also the wider settlement, which must have been a bustling and lively place, accompanied by the sights, smells and sounds of animals, agriculture and industry!

Was Lyminge raided by Vikings? Late Anglo-Saxon period (9th – 11th century)

The late 8th century saw the earliest Viking raids on the British Isles. The first recorded attack on a monastery was at Lindisfarne in 793 AD. Lindisfarne was a monastery built on an island off the north-east Northumbrian coastline.

Christian monasteries were often located in secluded places so that monks and nuns could dwell in seclusion, devoted to worship. Unfortunately for them the Vikings saw these communities, often with great wealth and little or no defence, as easy rich pickings!

A gory story!

A 9th century chronicle records a dramatic Viking attack on a nunnery. The abbess of Coldingham Priory in south-east Scotland took a razor and cut off her nose to avoid the ill intent of Viking invaders. Her fellow nuns followed her example. Unfortunately, this action did not save them from death as the Vikings burnt the priory down with the nuns still inside. This story is believed to be the origin of the saying 'cutting off the nose to spite the face'.

What happened at Lyminge?

A royal charter written in 804 AD grants land in Canterbury to the then Royal Abbess of Lyminge, Selethryth and her family, to serve as a refuge. Was this to escape Viking raids?

Unfortunately we do not know for sure. There were possibly small scale raids on Kent in the late 8th century. The first recorded major Viking raid off the Kent coast was thirty one years later in 835, on the Isle of Sheppey.

Rather ominously, Lyminge as a monastery is last mentioned in a charter of 844...

The double monastery at Lyminge is thought to have been sacked by Vikings during the 9th century, possibly in 840, but with a community of monks surviving and staying on there. Certainly by the end of the 9th century very few early Anglo-Saxon monasteries were still in existence.

It is thought that the Vikings stayed over winter at the Isle of Sheppey in 835 and 855 and on the Isle of Thanet in 851 and 865. Much of Kent is thought to have been ravaged in 865, with major towns such as Canterbury, Rochester and possibly Dover providing refuge and defence within walled settlements against the Viking invaders.

After King Alfred the Great's victorious campaigns in the 890's, the Vikings were driven further north and Kent could start rebuilding its churches and towns, although Kent remained under threat of Viking raids.

The 10th and 11th centuries saw a recovery of monastic communities, with a new church at Lyminge being built in 965 immediately to the north of the old site (with the south wall of the new church covering the north *porticus* (entrance porch) of the previous church, the location of Queen Ethelburgha's relics (her bones). It is thought that the monks left Lyminge at this time and moved to Canterbury and Lyminge became a parish church.

By the second half of the 10th century the status of Lyminge as a religious centre was much reduced. The then King of Kent, Eadgar, donated many of its estates to Christ Church, Canterbury.

In 1085 Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, had Ethelburgha's bones moved to St Gregory's Priory, Canterbury and the remaining estates were given to Christ Church Cathedral.

The story of Anglo-Saxon Lyminge, a summary

The archaeological and historical evidence for the settlement at Lyminge has demonstrated that the now quintessential, quiet English village must have been a place of some stature in the Anglo-Saxon period, lasting probably for some centuries.

We have learnt from the excavations within the village that an important Anglo-Saxon settlement already existed prior to the documented foundation of a monastery. The quantity and quality of the archaeological evidence and exceptional artefacts from the cemetery north of the village show us that the early Anglo-Saxon people of Lyminge must have been a wealthy elite.

The skeletal remains and the associated grave objects help us to visualise the 6th century Anglo-Saxons. The male grave included in this pack as a classroom activity is suggestive of a warrior, with his shield and spear. The female grave is more enigmatic. Her crystal ball has connotations with magic and fortune telling. Lastly the child, who had a very short life (just five years), was surely loved, buried with such an array of coloured bead necklaces and brooches.

There are many artefacts which demonstrate the skills of the Anglo-Saxon craftsmen. The horse harness mount coated with gold, bone gaming piece, the variety of delicate colourful beads, the glass and brooches tell us of a people who had access to the finest craftsmanship available at the time; and the iron plough coulter, although not a glamorous object, does illustrate a technological capability thought to be lost at this time in history. Evidence is also starting to emerge that the Lyminge Anglo-Saxons were in the manufacturing business, as indicated by the metal work and clay moulds found on site.

Certain items such as amethyst beads and garnets are indicative of trade systems, as these would have come from thousands of miles away in the East.

From examining the mass of animal bone we can see that before the monastic settlement was established the locals had a rich diet of pork, a prestigious food in the 6th and 7th centuries.

However it is not just the objects and bones that convey the wealth and importance of Anglo-Saxon Lyminge. In some ways more impressive, was the discovery of the evidence for huge timber halls, surely evidence of royal or noble visitors! Archaeological remains like this provide tangible evidence of buildings like the great hall 'Heorot' described in the epic poem *Beowulf*.

The place name Lyminge as previously mentioned suggested that it was a place of Anglo-Saxon importance and this claim has certainly been supported by the wealth of archaeological discoveries!

At some point in the 7th century, possibly initially alongside the great halls, a new settlement began to emerge, in the form of a double monastery founded by a royal abbess. Christianity had been spreading as a new religion since Augustine's mission in 597 and a network of churches and monasteries were being established in southern Britain. Lyminge would have been part of this network.

Eventually the monastery became the focal point of the settlement and the timber halls went out of use. It seems that the whole community shifted a little to the west onto higher ground.

We know from reading historical charters and studying the archaeological discoveries that a thriving monastery existed at Lyminge from the late 7th to 9th century and think that the monastic community probably had a specialism for producing woollen textiles, given the amount of sheep bones and weaving equipment found.

Patterns of post holes (perhaps a mystery to the untrained eye!) have shown the archaeologists that a granary was built for surplus grain gathered from the fields, while others clustered together were perhaps clues for dwellings where the monks and nuns lived.

Fish bones and shells found nearby are clues about the monastic community's diet. More marine fish and molluscs were eaten at this time which raise interesting questions about religious dietary customs. We also discovered that it is likely that iron tools were being made on site.

The double minster survived for at least 150 years until it was sacked by Viking raiders in 840 AD.

We do not know to what extent the monastery at Lyminge suffered from Viking raids and was later subjected to Viking rule. Perhaps we will never know, but future archaeologists might just give us a glimpse.

It is unclear when the monastery at Lyminge began to decline in importance, but by 965 AD a new church was built adjacent to the site, it was no longer considered as such a place of importance, and became a standard parish church for the community. The remaining monks are thought to have moved to Canterbury.

We do know from the charters that by the end of the 11th century Queen Ethelburgha's bones had been moved to Canterbury and all the monastery estates donated to the Cathedral. The country at that time was under the rule of William the Conqueror and the Normans, but that's another story....

Evidence for Lyminge before the Anglo-Saxons

Stone Age Lyminge

A selection of flint tools found in great quantity close to the river show us that people were using flint tools in Lyminge way back in the Mesolithic period (10,000 – 5,000 BC)!



The Beaker people

A 'beaker burial' was excavated, the grave containing the skeleton of a person buried with a pottery beaker. This type of burial is believed to date to just before the Bronze Age, c 2500–1700 BC.



The excavated beaker burial.

Bronze Age Lyminge



The large circular ring in the photograph of trench 1 from the 2014 excavation shows evidence of a Bronze Age **barrow** ditch built at around c 1500 BC, the earthen mound that would have been on top has been ploughed away along time ago, but the ring ditch remained.



This artist's drawing illustrates a funeral for a Bronze Age man whose cremated remains would have been put in a pot and buried in the mound depicted in the background.

At Lyminge 5 pots containing cremated remains were found at the centre of the ring ditch.

Iron Age Lyminge

There has been hardly any evidence of Iron Age activity on the site at Lyminge. A type of coin called a *potin* from the Iron Age was found using a metal detector but not within an Iron Age feature.

Little sign of Roman occupation at Lyminge

No Roman archaeological features have been found at Lyminge; however people were probably living somewhere close by as we have found pieces of Roman pottery and tile in some of the Anglo-Saxon buildings, pits and post-holes. The fragment of tile shown in the photograph has the remains of the Roman potter's name stamped onto it.



Activities for the classroom

Teacher Notes

The suggested pupil activities are drawn from themes discussed in the story of Lyminge: Anglo-Saxon buildings, objects, burials and the tale of King Edwin and Queen Ethelburgha.

Below are the learning objectives for each activity, questions for children to consider with background information (answers) for you, as the teacher/facilitator. You could try out activities with pupils working on their own, in pairs or groups, adapting them to suit age and ability.

As you will see, there are opportunities for cross-curricular work in English, Geography, Maths, Drama, Art – and Music if you feel inspired.

More resources...

You will find further History and Archaeology materials to download and loans collections to borrow, all for your classroom needs at: www.canterburytrust.co.uk/learning/resources/



Activity 1 Looking at Objects

The focus is for pupils to describe and consider the function and value of objects.

They will need:

- Copies of image sheets for Objects A, B, C and D
- A few questions to encourage descriptive skills and interpretation (or 'best guessing')
 - What is it made of?
 - What was it used for and who would have used it?
 - Was it a valuable object?

The children could also make their own drawings reconstructing how they think the object would have been used or worn.

For teacher information

Object A. The plough coulter

Q. What is it made of?

The plough coulter is made of iron and weighed 6kg.

Q. What was it used for and who would have used it?

A coulter was a heavy blade mounted on a plough pulled by a team of oxen. The coulter could cut through heavy clay soil making the task of ploughing easier and more efficient.

Q. Was it a valuable object?

Yes, the coulter would have been a valued high-tech piece of equipment in Anglo-Saxon times, increasing the amount of land that could be ploughed, so more crops could be grown.

Object B. Beads

Q. What are they made of?

All the beads are made of glass.

Q. What were they used for and who would have used them?

The beads would have been strung together as a piece of jewellery and worn around the neck or wrist as a necklace or bracelet. The thread would usually be an organic material and would decay in the soil. They were probably worn by a woman or girl (when found in inhumation graves, beads tend to be found with females).

Q. Were they valuable objects?

Yes, the beads would have been worn as highly prized possessions. Some beads were very exotic and would have come from other countries.

Object C. Horse harness mount

Q. What is it made of?

Copper alloy and coated with gold.

Q. What was it used for and who would have used it?

It was part of an elaborate horse harness, worn by the animal to help the rider control it. Whoever this was is likely to have been an important and wealthy person.

Q. Was it a valuable object?

Yes, the harness mount must have required great skill and expense to make.

Object D. Bone gaming counter

Q. What is it made of?

Animal bone with a copper alloy pin through its middle. Sometimes archaeologists find animal bone waste from making small objects like this.

Q. What was it used for?

The counter would have been used as part of a game. We still use counters today in board games.

Q. Was it a valuable object?

Yes, making this would have been a skilled job. It was probably part of an expensive game set (counters are usually simpler than this one). Perhaps it belonged to a noble, certainly someone who had spare time to enjoy life's luxuries!

Activity 2 Looking at Buildings

The focus of this activity is to show how an archaeologist records and interprets clues in the ground to reconstruct what a building may have looked like. Children need to examine the clues and make simple deductions.

Children work with a collection of source materials for 2 buildings found at Lyminge: a **small hut or workshop** and a **'great hall'**.

They will need a collection of sources for the 2 buildings:

- **The 2 excavation photos sheets** showing archaeologists at work and the evidence for the buildings they discovered.
- **The 2 scale plans** that the archaeologists drew of the building remains. These show the foundations and post holes upon which the superstructures were built.
- **The 2 artist impressions** of what the buildings may have looked like when all the evidence is considered. Much of the original building in each case was made of wood and probably thatch, all of which has decayed. Sometimes archaeologists find lumps of clay daub from the walls. The 'great hall' drawing is based directly on evidence found at Lyminge.
- **The 2 written descriptions** of the evidence found for the buildings.

Working in pairs or groups, pupils are given all the sources, mixed up – so it isn't obvious which pictures/descriptions go together.

Their task is to consider all the sources and sort them into 2 sets – the sources for the **hut/workshop** and the sources for the **'great hall'**. The aim is to end up with 4 sheets for each of the 2 buildings (sheet of excavation photos, plan drawing, artist's impression, written description).

Children can be encouraged to look for clues, like the scale of a building, layout of postholes, shape of foundation etc. to help them match up the sources.

Extra task

Looking at the **aerial photograph of the whole Lyminge site**, can they identify the hut/workshop and great hall among all the other archaeological features?

The small hut/workshop is top left in the photo, a square shape close to the green grass of the site boundary, with a quarter still to be excavated.

The great hall stretches across the centre, with its shorter walls top and bottom of the photo.

Activity 3 The drama of King Edwin and Queen Ethelburgha – marriage and an attempted murder!

The activity allows for the class to act out a famous story from *The Ecclesiastical History* written in 731 AD by Bede, a Northumbrian monk. A full script could be created with major and minor characters based on the marriage, Christian conversion and attempted murder of the Anglo-Saxon king, Edwin. The activity could be expanded by including costume design and musical accompaniment!

Activity 4 Bodies and Burials

There are two parts to Activity 4. The focus of Part 1 is to encourage map reading skills by studying maps and old photographs associated with the Anglo-Saxon cemetery discovered at Lyminge. Part 2 goes on to examine the evidence from 3 graves in this cemetery and consider what the skeletal remains and personal objects tell us about the people buried there. While the 2 parts complement each other, either part could be done as a stand-alone activity.

Part 1

They will need:

- Village map and old photographs sheet
- The Jutish Cemetery at Lyminge map
- Old maps and photographs task sheet

Part 2

There are 3 graves: Grave No. 24, Grave No. 31 and Grave No. 44

For a single grave they will need:

- The grave picture sheet
- Information/task sheet for the grave
- The Jutish Cemetery at Lyminge map

For teacher information

Grave No. 24 contained the small skeleton of a child approximately 5 years of age. At this age, we cannot say for sure whether it was of a boy or girl. A decorated pot, beaded jewellery and brooches suggest the child was loved and from a relatively wealthy background. The jewellery also suggests this was a girl. No clothing was found. Any garments the child was wearing would have been made of natural materials which usually decay in the soil over time.

Grave No. 31 contained the skeleton of a man 40-45 years of age. It is possible that he may have been a warrior, certainly his grave contained a spear and shield. The wooden shaft of the spear and the large circular body of the shield have gradually rotted away, leaving behind the iron spear head, shield boss and associated circular plates and grip. No clothing was found. Any garments he was wearing would have been made of natural materials which usually decay in the soil over time.

Note

The skeleton in Grave 31 was in good condition but unfortunately there is no available photo of it in its complete state. A photo of another skeleton (from Canterbury) has been used for the Grave 31 pupil picture sheet.

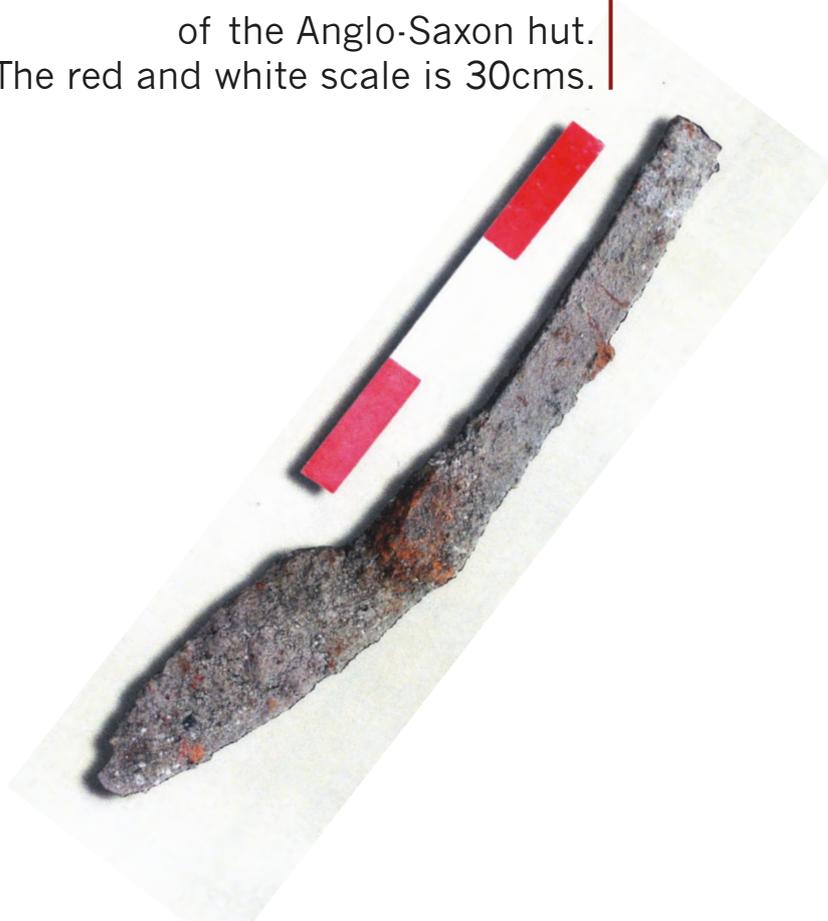
Grave No. 44 contained the skeleton of a woman 40–45 years of age. The brooches buried with her were of high quality workmanship, made in silver with inlaid garnets. Gold braid found around the skull suggests she was buried wearing fine quality clothing although, being made of natural materials, none of this had survived. The silver sieve spoon is thought to have been used for sieving wine. At that time people may have believed that the crystal ball had magical properties and was possibly used for fortune telling. It is likely that the woman was a very wealthy individual, an important person within society – perhaps even a noblewoman with connections to royalty.



© The British Library Board, Cotton Tiberius B.V part 1, f.3

Object A

This was found on the floor
of the Anglo-Saxon hut.
The red and white scale is 30cms.



Object B

These colourful objects were found inside the foundations of the Anglo-Saxon hut.

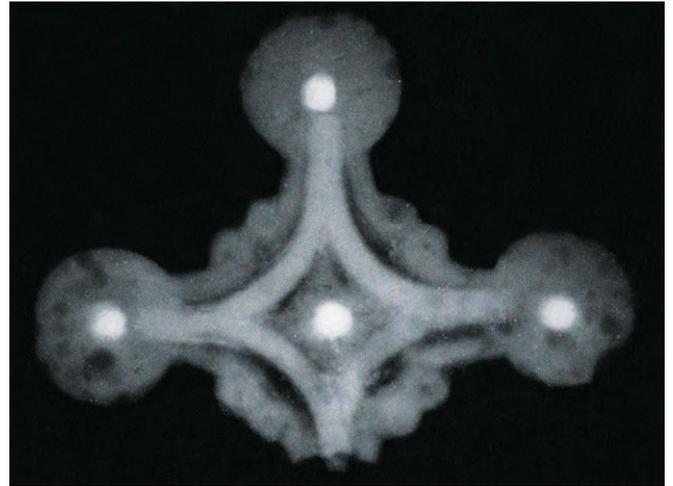


Object C

This was found inside the foundations of the Anglo-Saxon great hall.



The object when it was found.

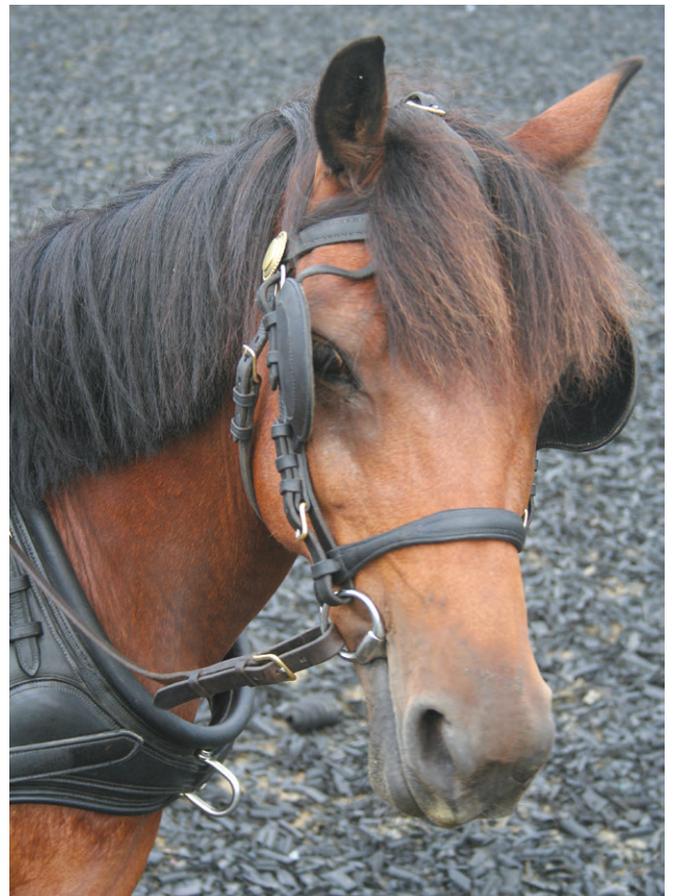


An X-ray shows the object in more detail.



The object after cleaning (conservation).

Clue: how archaeologists think the object was used.



Object D

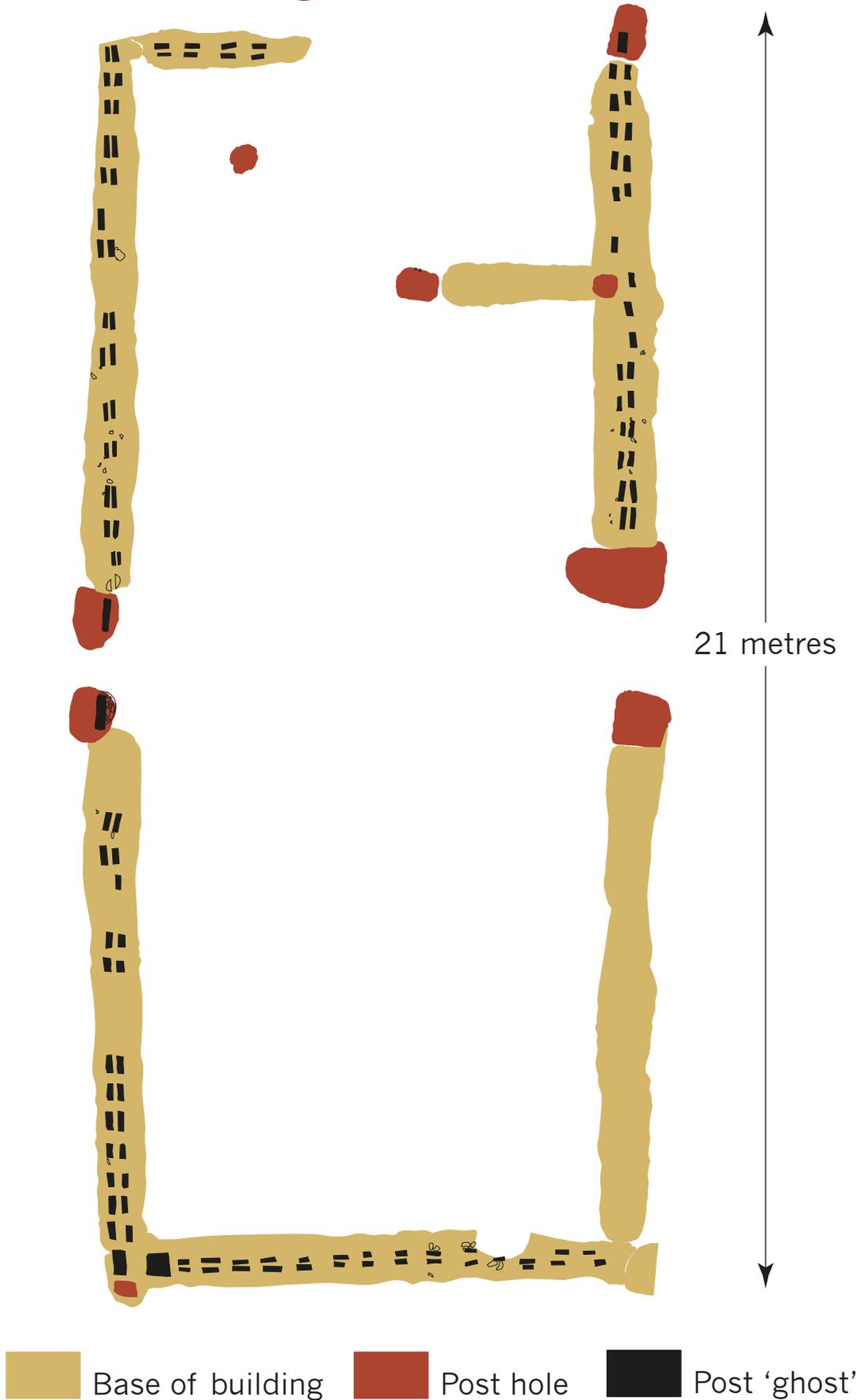
An archaeologist found this object inside the foundations of the Anglo-Saxon great hall.



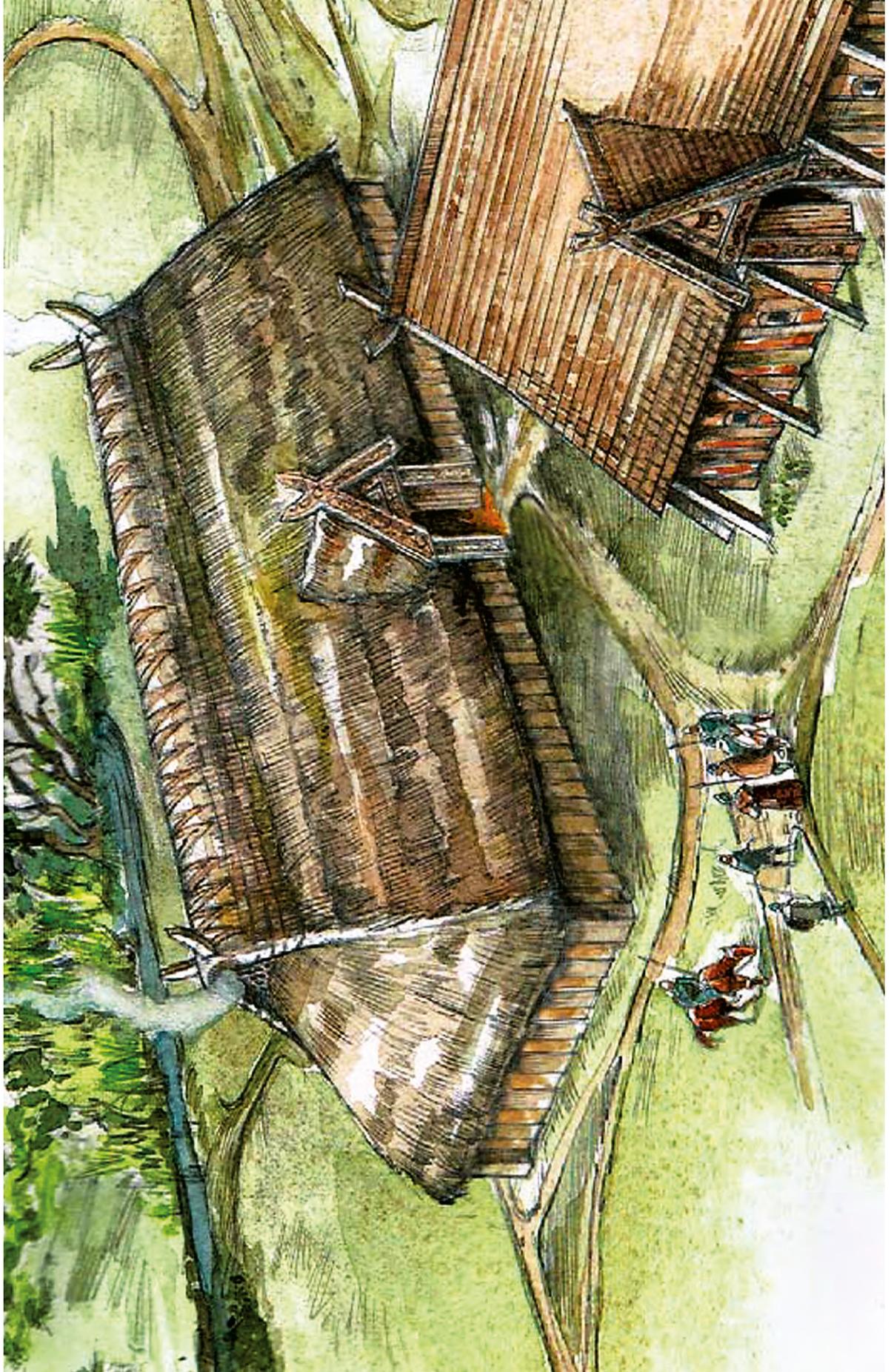
Excavation photos



Plan of a building



Artist's impression



The great hall

The complete foundation of an enormous Anglo-Saxon building was excavated. It was 21 metres long and 8.5 metres wide.

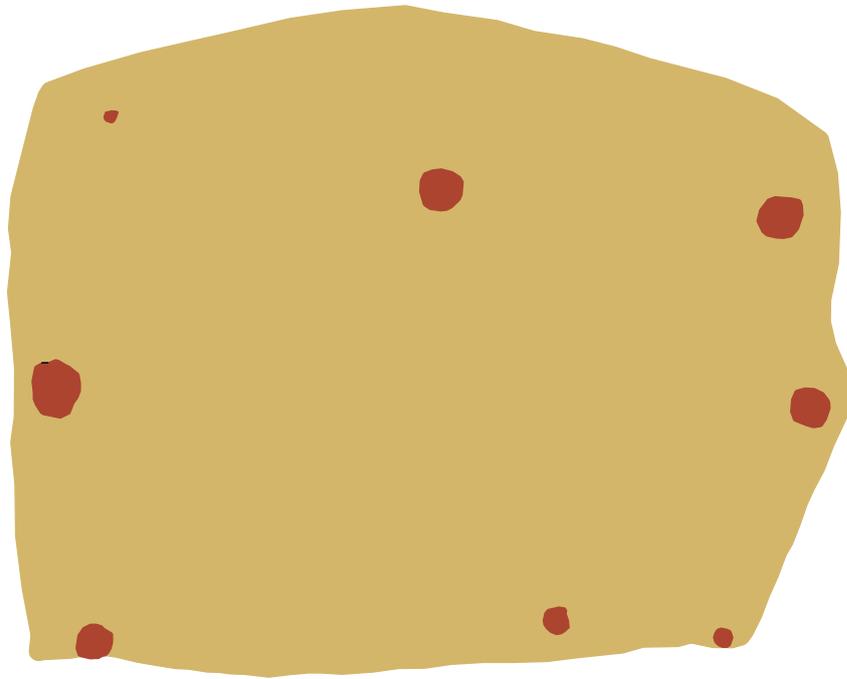
Pairs of small rectangular shapes were seen in the foundations. Archaeologists call these 'post ghosts'.

In the middle of the long walls were pairs of huge post holes showing where the upright posts stood for two doorways.

Excavation photos



Plan of a building



←—————→
5 metres

 Base of building  Post hole

Artist's impression

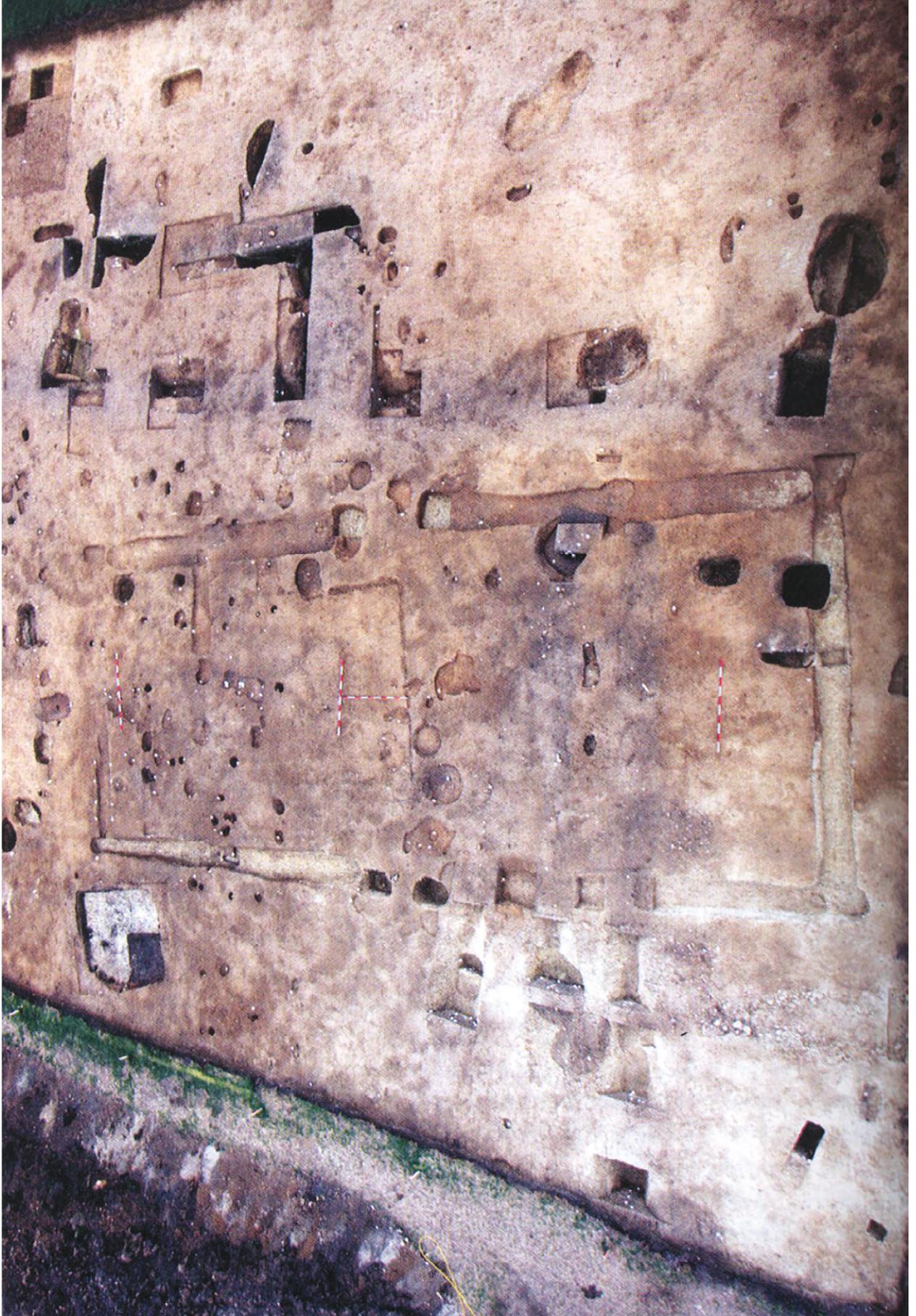


Hut or workshop

The archaeologists excavated the remains of a building which was nearly 5 metres long and 3.5 metres wide with 8 postholes at the base that would have supported upright timber posts.

The archaeologists think that this building was too small to live in and was probably a workshop or used for storage.

Aerial photo of the Lyminge excavation



The lead characters:

- Edwin of Northumbria, a pagan king
- Ethelburgha of Kent, a Christian princess
- Paulinus, an Italian bishop in the service of princess Ethelburgha
- Redwald, an ally/friend of Edwin's and King of the East Angles (thought to be the king in the Sutton Hoo ship burial)
- Ethelburgha's baby
- Cwichelm, king of the West Saxons
- Eamer, the assassin
- Eadbald, Ethelburgha's brother

Scene 1: The royal **Princess Ethelburgha** is to be married to **King Edwin** of Northumbria.

Ethelburgha is the daughter of King Ethelbert and Queen Bertha of Kent, the first pagan royals in Anglo-Saxon England to convert to Christianity.

Scene 2: Ethelburgha is a Christian and tells her bishop, **Paulinus**, to talk to Edwin and the people living in Northumbria about this religion and how good it is. She wants Edwin to become a Christian too.

One of the conditions of the marriage between Ethelburgha and Edwin was that Edwin would consider converting to Christianity.

Scene 3: King Edwin and Queen Ethelburgha get married in 624 AD

and Paulinus becomes a bishop to the Northumbrian people.

Scene 4: Two years after the marriage, on Easter Sunday 626 AD, an assassin called **Eamer** is sent by **Cwichelm** the king of the West Saxons to kill King Edwin with a knife coated with poison.

Scene 5: When Eamer tries to kill King Edwin, a **thane** (Saxon lord) called **Lilla** and a soldier tried to protect the king but they were killed. Edwin himself was wounded.

The drama of King Edwin and Queen Ethelburgha – a marriage and attempted murder!

Scene 6: Ethelburgha is heavily pregnant at the time and because of all the distress she goes into labour. Bishop Paulinus prayed that Ethelburgha and the baby would survive, which they did and Ethelburgha gave birth to a daughter.

Scene 7: King Edwin makes a promise to bishop Paulinus. He will have his daughter baptised a Christian if he recovers from his wound and defeats the enemy king who sent the assassin.

Scene 8: Edwin takes an army and attacks the West Saxons and defeats them, killing five kings and many men.

Scene 9: King Edwin's daughter is baptised on the eve of Whitsunday

Scene 10: A year later on Easter Sunday, King Edwin is baptised and converts to Christianity as do many of his people.

Scene 11: In AD 633 (7 years after his attempted murder) King Edwin is killed in battle fighting against the Mercians and Bishop Paulinus and Queen Elthelburgha flee by ship to Kent.

Scene 12: Historians think that Queen Elthelburgha is then given land (that was once a Roman villa) by her brother **Eadbald** to establish a royal **minster**.



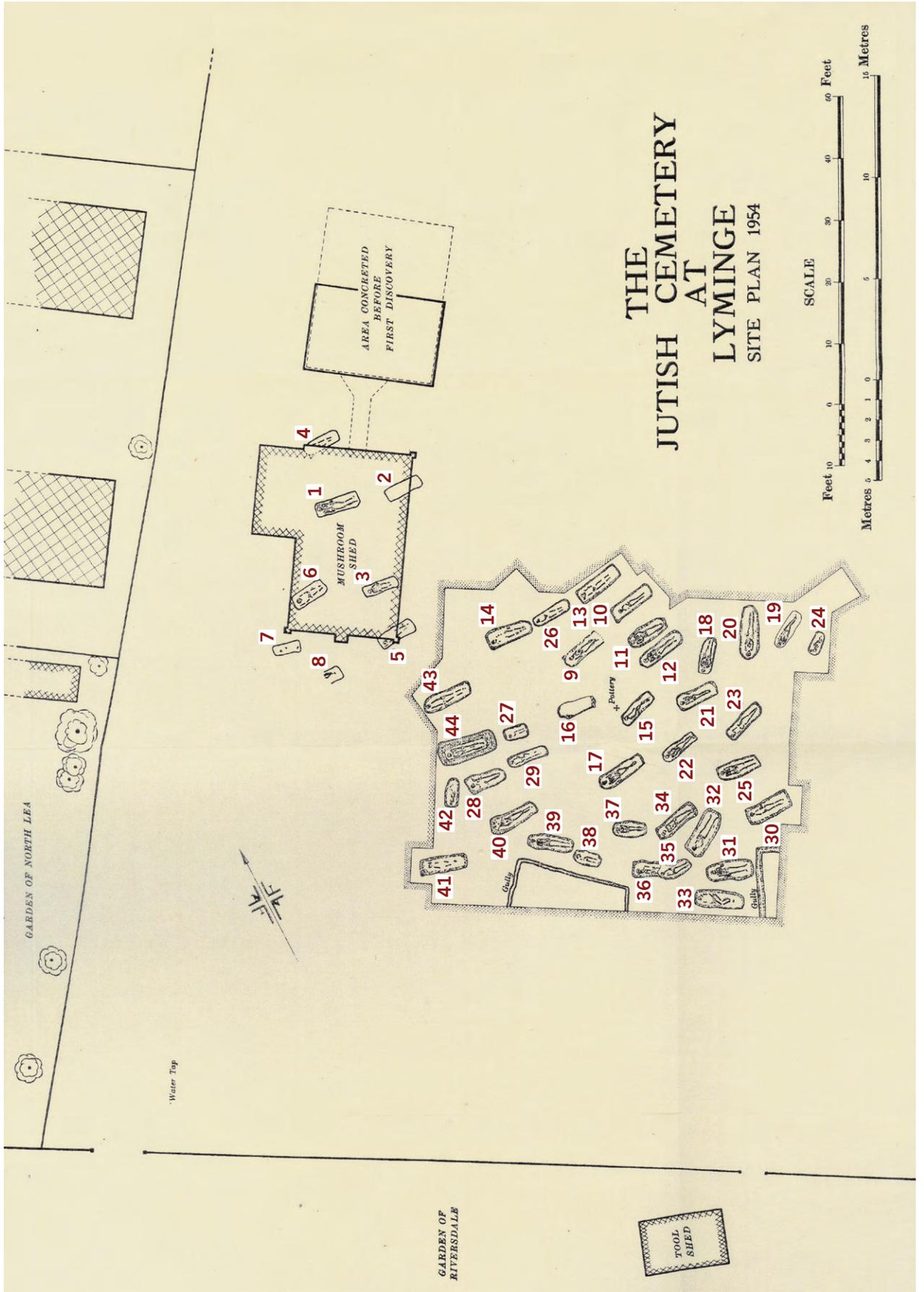
So this is the story of how an Anglo-Saxon monastic site at Lyminge came about.

However in a twist to the tale, modern scholars now believe it was **not** King Edwin's Ethelburgha who founded the double minster at Lyminge but another Ethelburgha who was a Queen of Kent at the end of the seventh century.

We have an example here of how historians' interpretations of past events may change over time. The story of Edwin, his queen and conversion to Anglo-Saxon paganism to Christianity remains a valid one.

For sources, see entries 626 AD, 627 AD, 633 AD
<http://www.britannia.com/history/docs/601-44.html>

Cemetery map



Old maps and photographs

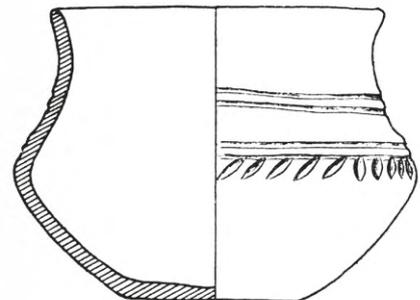
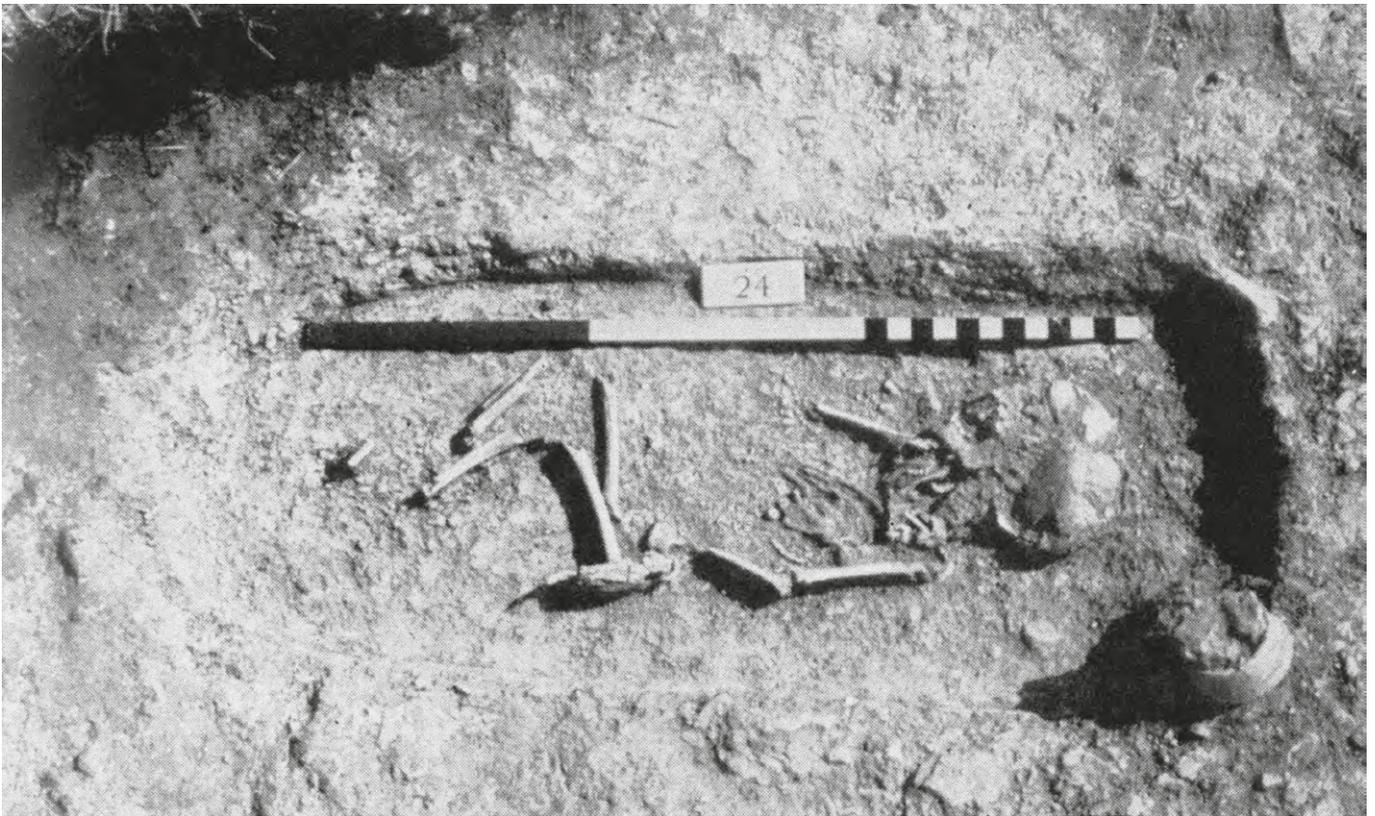
At Lyminge in December 1953, some work men were building a shed for growing mushrooms. One of them was digging a post hole and he struck some bones and a metal object. It looked like he had come across a grave and the metal object seemed to be a spear!

Tasks

1. Look at the **village map**. Can you find the Anglo-Saxon cemetery?
Clue: In the 1950s, archaeologists used to think that the Anglo-Saxons who arrived in Kent were a tribe called the Jutes (from Jutland in Denmark).
2. Now look at the **cemetery map**. Can you find the site of the **mushroom shed** where the first Anglo-Saxon grave was discovered?
3. Which **decade** were the graves excavated?
4. Find **Tayne field** on the **village map**. This was where the most recent archaeological digs took place, from 2012 to 2014.
5. On the **village map**, now colour in where **Tayne field** is located.
On the **cemetery map**, colour in where the **mushroom shed** is located.
This will help future archaeologists know where previous digs have taken place!

Grave No. 24

7 beads



Grave No. 24

This was a small grave containing a small skeleton. The skeleton was in poor condition. Experts believe he or she was about 5 years of age at death. The body had been laid on the right side with the legs drawn up.

Objects found in the grave

A **pot** was found in a corner of the grave, near the skull. It was decorated with lines and small dashes around its circumference. The colour of the clay was dark grey and buff.

A **bronze brooch** was found at each shoulder of the skeleton.

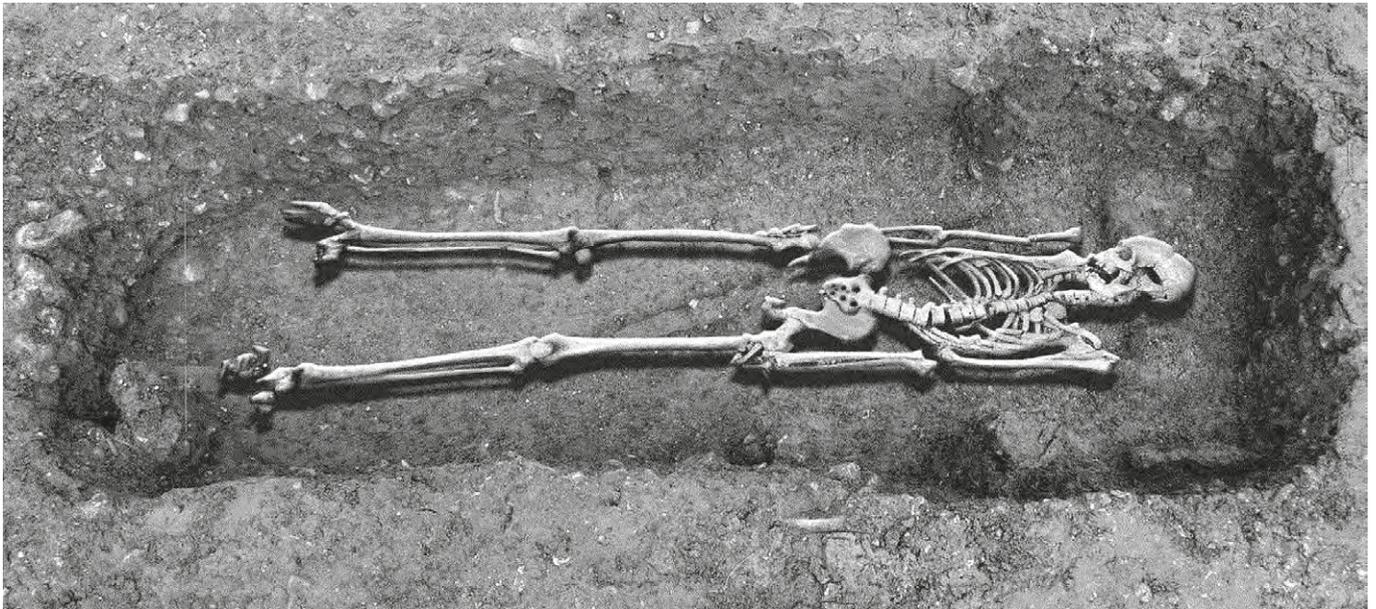
16 beads were found around the neck. They were made of blue and green glass, animal bone and baked clay.

7 beads were found lying on the chest. They were made of blue and green glass and baked clay.

Tasks

1. Can you find where this grave is on the **cemetery map**?
Clue: all the graves are numbered.
2. On **Grave 24 picture sheet**
Write the correct label for each object in its box. One has been done for you.
Draw a line from each object to where it was found in the grave.
3. Do you think this was a male or female? An adult or child?
4. What do these discoveries tell us about the kind of person this was?
Do you think this was a rich or poor person?
Are there any clues about what he or she did in life?

Grave No. 31



Iron shield grip



Grave No. 31

This grave contained a skeleton measuring 5 foot 7 inches long. It was in good condition. The body had been laid out on its back, full length, arms straight with the head pillowed between stones. Experts think this person was about 40–45 years of age when he or she died.

Objects found in the grave

An **iron spear head** was found in a corner of the grave, to the right of the skull.

A **bronze buckle** lay at the right side of the waist.

A **bronze brooch** also lay at the right side of the waist.

An **iron shield boss** was found at the left arm. The archaeologists thought the shield had been placed vertically in the grave.

An **iron shield grip** was found near the shield boss.

4 circular iron fittings were also found near the shield boss (only one is in the picture).

An **iron knife** lay near the left arm (not in the picture).

Tasks

1. Can you find where this grave is on the **cemetery map**?
Clue: all the graves are numbered.
2. On **Grave 31 picture sheet**
Write the correct label for each object in its box. One has been done for you.
Draw a line from each object to where it was found in the grave.
3. Do you think this was a male or female? An adult or child?
4. What do these discoveries tell us about the kind of person this was?
Do you think this was a rich or poor person?
Are there any clues about what he or she did in life?

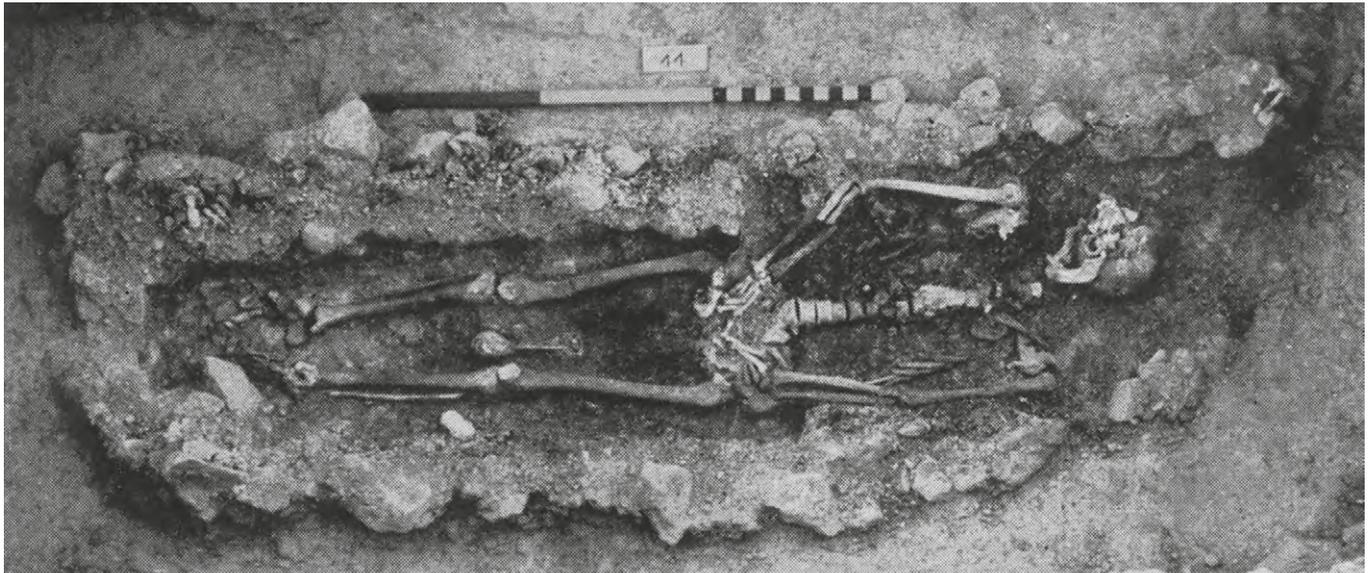
Grave No. 44

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[Empty label box]



Square headed brooch



[Empty label box]



[Empty label box]



[Empty label box]

Grave No. 44

This was a large deep grave with a skeleton measuring 5 foot and 1 inch long. The skeleton was in good condition but the skull had fallen backwards off the lower jaw. The person had been laid out on their back, full length, with arms across the pelvis. Experts think he or she was about 40-45 years of age at death.

Objects found in the grave

A **silver circular brooch** was found at the left side of the skull

An identical **circular brooch** with a piece of chain attached was found over the chest.

A **silver square headed brooch** decorated with garnets was found at the pelvis.

Another **square headed brooch** was found just below the other brooch.

A **silver sieve spoon** with animal decoration was found between the knees. The spoon was placed with bowl facing upwards.

A **crystal ball** of rock crystal in a silver fitting was found underneath the spoon.

17 fragments of **gold braid** (not in the picture) were found at the side of the skull and underneath it. They were probably part of a decorative headband.

Tasks

1. Can you find where this grave is on the **cemetery map**?
Clue: all the graves are numbered.
2. On **Grave 44 picture sheet**
Write the correct label for each object in its box. One has been done for you.
Draw a line from each object to where it was found in the grave.
3. Do you think this was a male or female? An adult or child?
4. What do these discoveries tell us about the kind of person this was? Do you think this was a rich or poor person? Are there any clues about what he or she did in life?

North Lyminge

