# Archaeologists uncover new fragments of Sutton Hoo’s Bromeswell bucket revealing burial of important Anglo-Saxon figure



After more than 1,400 years, archaeologists have made significant strides in uncovering the history surrounding one of Sutton Hoo's notable treasures: the Bromeswell bucket. This remarkable copper alloy vessel, dating back to the sixth century, has captivated researchers since its initial discovery, notably due to its striking decoration featuring warriors in combat with lions and its intriguing Greek inscription, which translates as, “Use this in good health, Master Count, for many happy years.”

Recent excavations at this esteemed site in Suffolk, a locality synonymous with early Anglo-Saxon history, have yielded new fragments and have revealed that the bucket once contained the cremated remains of an ‘important person’ from the Sutton Hoo community. Angus Wainwright, an archaeologist with the National Trust, emphasised the rarity and significance of such an artefact, stating, “We knew that this bucket would have been a rare and prized possession back in Anglo-Saxon times, but it’s always been a mystery why it was buried.” This new understanding underscores the importance of the Bromeswell bucket not just as a crafted object but as a marker of social status and ritual significance in its time.

The excavation team, collaborating with FAS Heritage, discovered the bucket’s intact base along with several artefacts, including a burnt comb and portions of cremated human and animal bones. The animal remains have been identified as possibly those of a horse, an animal often associated with high status in Anglo-Saxon cremation practices. Human bone fragments, including parts of an ankle and skull, are now undergoing DNA analysis in hopes of revealing further details about the individual whose remains were interred.

Helen Geake, Time Team's Anglo-Saxon expert, noted that the bucket's previous uses make it the first known example of such an object being employed in a cremation burial. This unique blend of cultural influences—the classical elegance of a Byzantine artefact alongside Germanic burial traditions—accentuates the eclectic nature of Sutton Hoo, a site already renowned for its ship burials and mounded graves.

Details of the ongoing study into the bucket, part of a two-year research project with Time Team, are set to unfold in a forthcoming four-part documentary special. Sir Tony Robinson, the presenter of the series, shared his enthusiasm, declaring that the Bromeswell bucket ranks among his top archaeological finds.

The historical context of the bucket is notable; it reinforces the connections between early Anglo-Saxon societies and the wider world, particularly through trade. This artefact, likely made in the eastern Mediterranean before being transported to Britain, serves as a testament to the complex interplay of cultures during this period. X-ray fluorescence analysis confirmed that the newly found fragments are all parts of the same vessel, further deepening the narrative surrounding trade and craftsmanship in early medieval England.

The preservation of the bucket exemplifies exceptional craftsmanship, with its construction techniques employing ‘cold hammering’—a process indicative of advanced metallurgical skills. Archaeological findings at Sutton Hoo continue to enrich our understanding of the region’s past, inviting visitors and scholars alike to engage with a site that has become emblematic of Anglo-Saxon heritage.

As research continues and more fragments are discovered, both the Bromeswell bucket and Sutton Hoo promise to unveil further insights into the lives, beliefs, and practices of those who once inhabited this pivotal landscape. Interest in the site remains high, with reports indicating that more excavations are scheduled for future months, ensuring that Sutton Hoo remains a focal point for archaeological discovery and public intrigue.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-14730183/Sutton-Hoo-bucket-remains-important-person.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/missing-pieces-of-6th-century-byzantine-bucket-finally-found-at-sutton-hoo)
* Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/suffolk/sutton-hoo/time-team-announcement), [[4]](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/woodbridge/time-team-discovers-fragments-of-6th-century-byzantine-bucke-9372456/), [[5]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/suffolk/sutton-hoo/history-of-archaeology-at-sutton-hoo)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-14730183/Sutton-Hoo-bucket-remains-important-person.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cmj2n7nz6zjo)
* Paragraph 4: [[3]](https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/missing-pieces-of-6th-century-byzantine-bucket-finally-found-at-sutton-hoo), [[4]](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/woodbridge/time-team-discovers-fragments-of-6th-century-byzantine-bucke-9372456/), [[6]](https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2024-10-22/time-team-to-return-to-dig-at-sutton-hoo)
* Paragraph 5: [[5]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/suffolk/sutton-hoo/history-of-archaeology-at-sutton-hoo), [[6]](https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2024-10-22/time-team-to-return-to-dig-at-sutton-hoo)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-14730183/Sutton-Hoo-bucket-remains-important-person.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/missing-pieces-of-6th-century-byzantine-bucket-finally-found-at-sutton-hoo)
* Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-14730183/Sutton-Hoo-bucket-remains-important-person.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/suffolk/sutton-hoo/history-of-archaeology-at-sutton-hoo)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-14730183/Sutton-Hoo-bucket-remains-important-person.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/suffolk/sutton-hoo/time-team-announcement> - The National Trust has partnered with Time Team for a two-year research project at Sutton Hoo, aiming to explore the site's prehistoric and early medieval history. The project includes excavations and metal detecting, with a focus on uncovering more about the Bromeswell Bucket, a 6th-century Byzantine artifact. The first phase of the project took place in June 2024, and a second phase is scheduled for May 2025. The findings will be revealed in a four-part Time Team special, presented by Sir Tony Robinson.
3. <https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/missing-pieces-of-6th-century-byzantine-bucket-finally-found-at-sutton-hoo> - Archaeologists have discovered missing pieces of the Bromeswell Bucket, a 1,500-year-old copper bucket imported from Turkey, during excavations at Sutton Hoo. The bucket, which predates the famous ship burial by at least a century, features a North African hunting scene and a Greek inscription. The fragments were confirmed to be part of the same artifact through X-ray fluorescence analysis. The discovery provides insights into early medieval life and trade connections.
4. <https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/woodbridge/time-team-discovers-fragments-of-6th-century-byzantine-bucke-9372456/> - A month-long excavation at Sutton Hoo led to the discovery of fragments of a 6th-century Byzantine bucket. The Bromeswell Bucket, first uncovered in 1986 and with additional pieces found in 2012, was further reconstructed during this excavation. The findings will be revealed in a documentary special next year, presented by Sir Tony Robinson. The excavation was part of a two-year research project exploring the earlier history of Sutton Hoo.
5. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/suffolk/sutton-hoo/history-of-archaeology-at-sutton-hoo> - The National Trust provides a history of archaeological work at Sutton Hoo, detailing significant discoveries such as the Bromeswell Bucket. The bucket, made in the 6th century, was first discovered in 1986 and has been meticulously cleaned and reshaped. The Trust also highlights other finds, including Anglo-Saxon graves and artifacts, and discusses the ongoing research to understand the site's history and significance.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2024-10-22/time-team-to-return-to-dig-at-sutton-hoo> - Archaeologists from Time Team are set to return to Sutton Hoo for a second dig in May 2025, following the discovery of missing pieces of a 6th-century Byzantine bucket during a previous excavation. The initial four-week dig was conducted near the visitor centre at the Suffolk site, away from the famous Anglo-Saxon ship burial. The Bromeswell Bucket, a 1,400-year-old Greek-inscribed artifact, was first uncovered at Sutton Hoo in 1986, with further pieces found in 2012.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cmj2n7nz6zjo> - Missing pieces of a 6th-century Byzantine bucket have been uncovered at Sutton Hoo during a month-long excavation with archaeologists, conservators, and volunteers from Time Team. The Bromeswell Bucket, first discovered in 1986 and with more pieces found in 2012, was confirmed to be part of the same artifact through specialist technology. The excavation was part of a two-year research project exploring the earlier history of Sutton Hoo, famous for its Anglo-Saxon ship burial discovered in 1939.