

**L.I. To form and test hypotheses about what was found at Sutton Hoo**

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Hypothesis = An idea based on limited evidence.

A starting point for an investigation.

Not a fact. It can be a best guess.  
Your hypothesis may change once you have more evidence.



This is an area of land in England known as Sutton Hoo. These strange mounds of earth are in a field near a village and have been there as long as anyone can remember. The landowner thinks these mounds might be important and wants you to investigate what they are...

# What did they find at Sutton Hoo?



What do you think this is?

How do you think it got there?

What questions do you have about it?



Your team of archaeologists begin to excavate biggest mound...

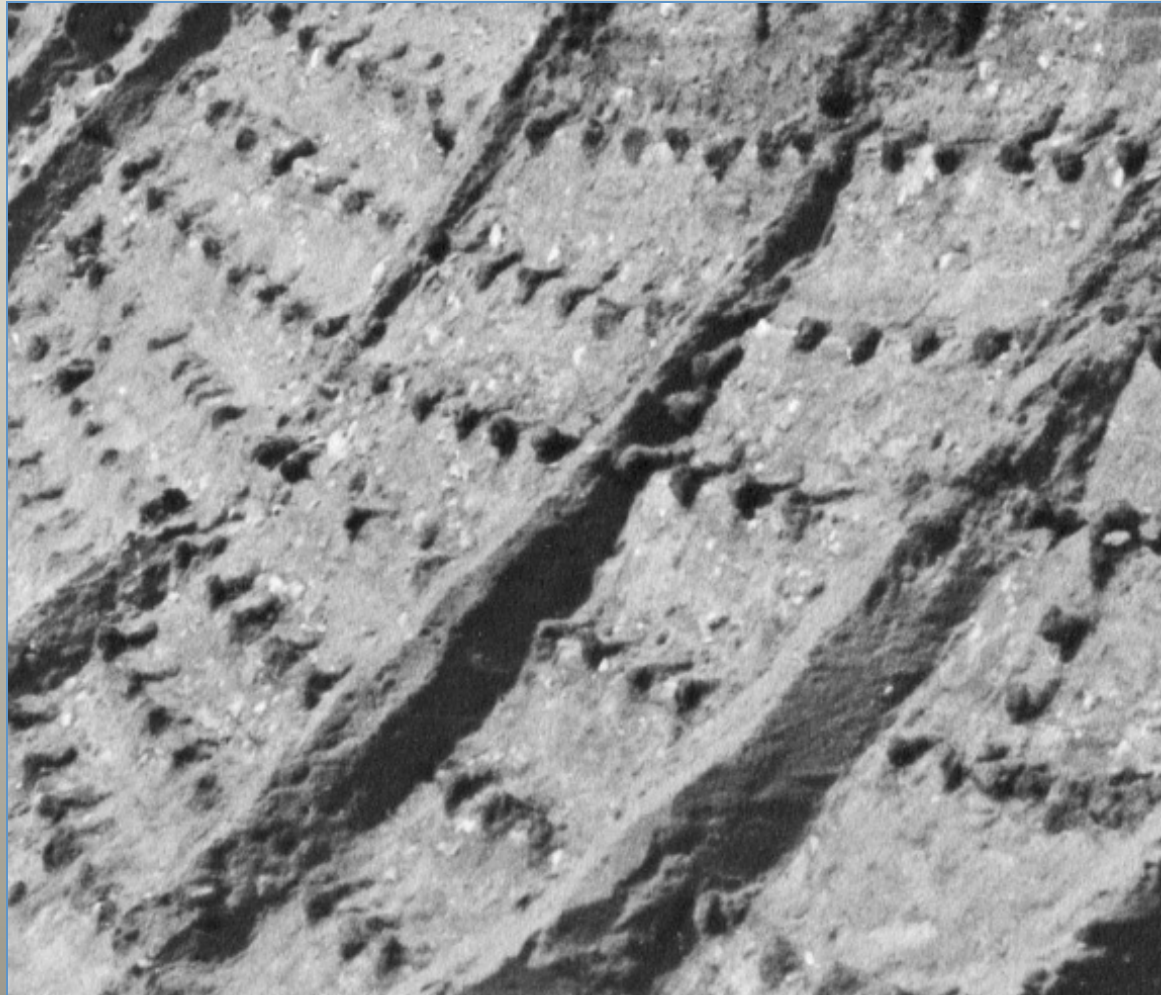


Archaeologists  
in 1939

Archaeologists  
today



# What have you found?



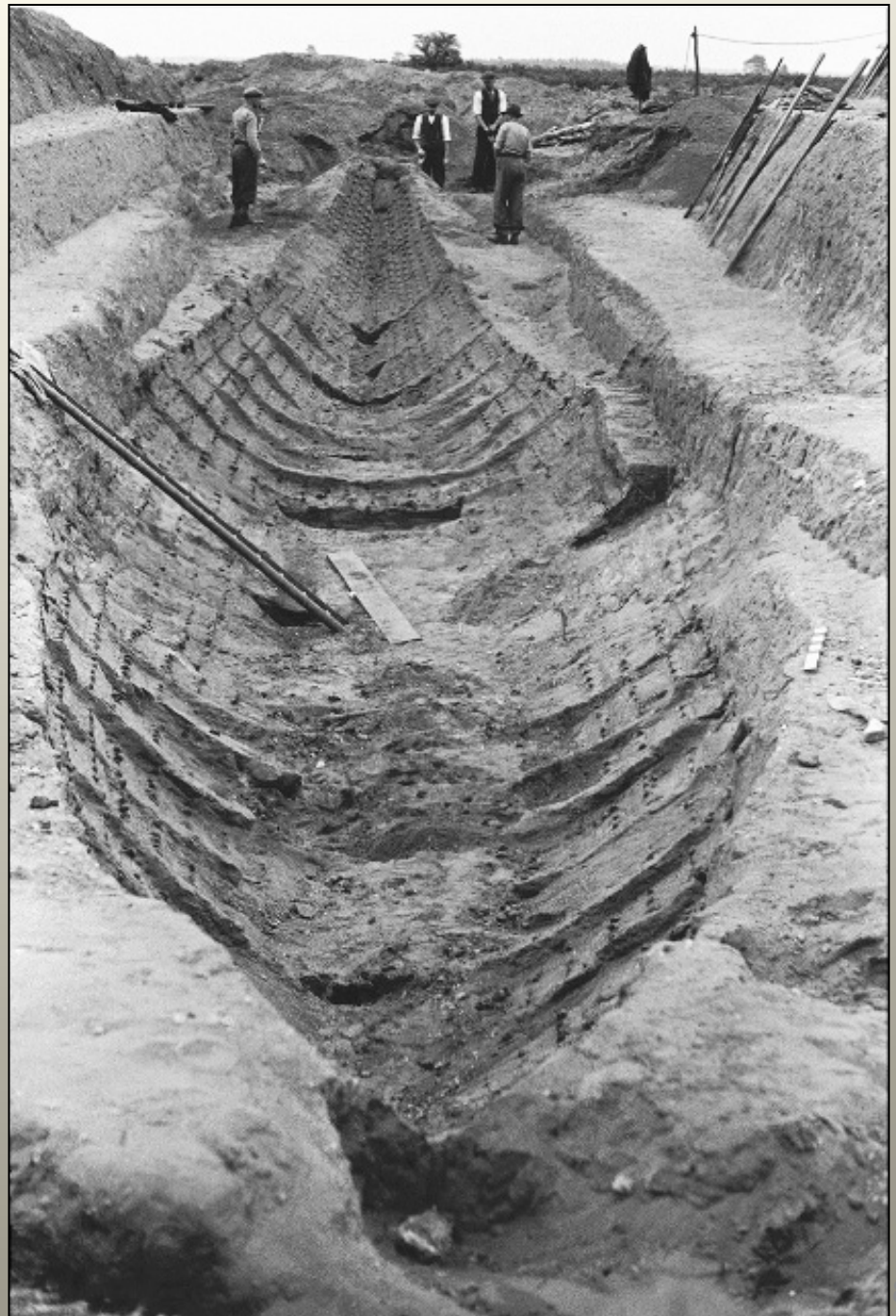


# Step back a bit ...



Clue A

Step further back



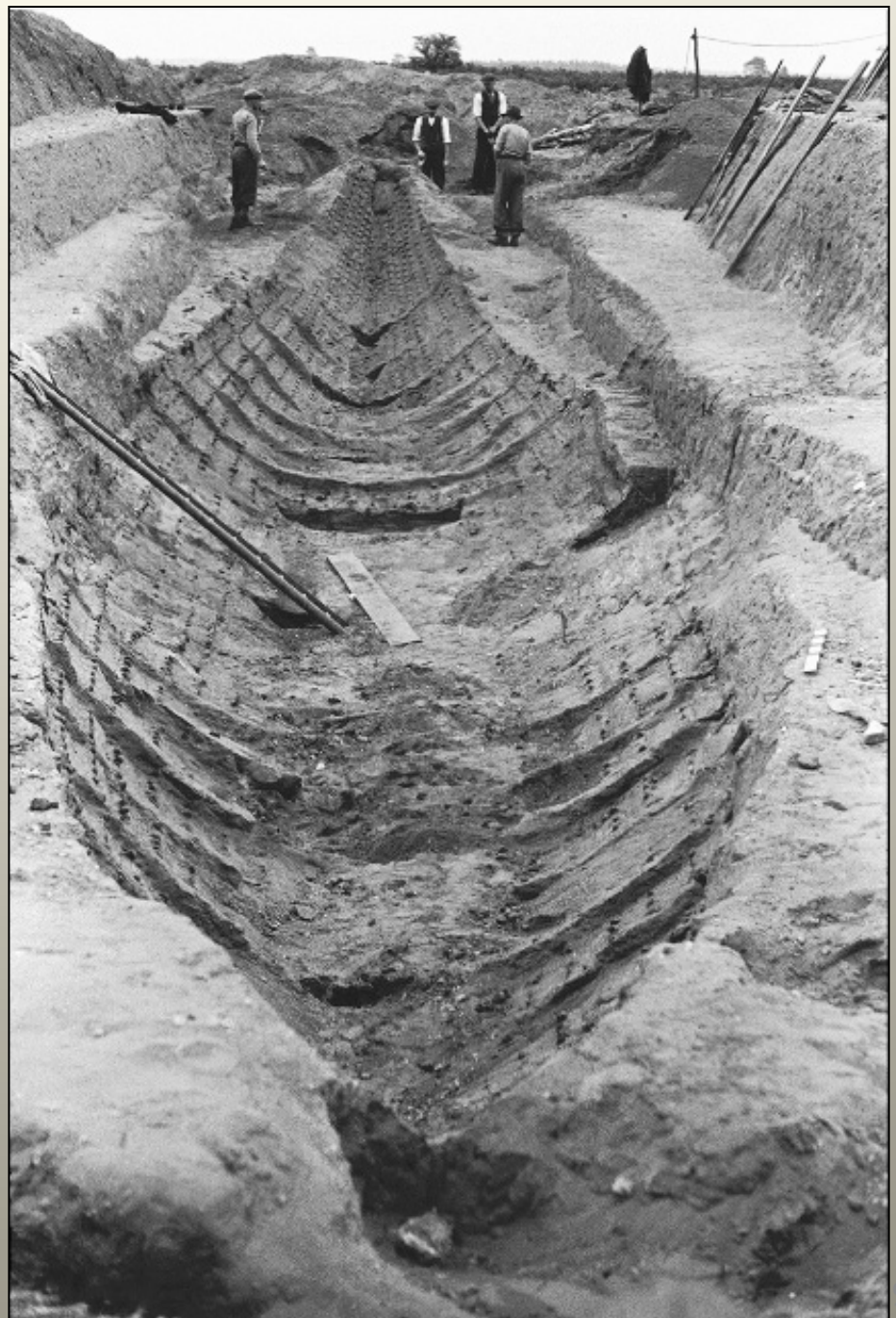


What do you think  
you have found?

Why do you think  
this?

How certain are you  
of your hypothesis?

What further  
questions do you  
have?



## Clue B

# Where did this all happen?

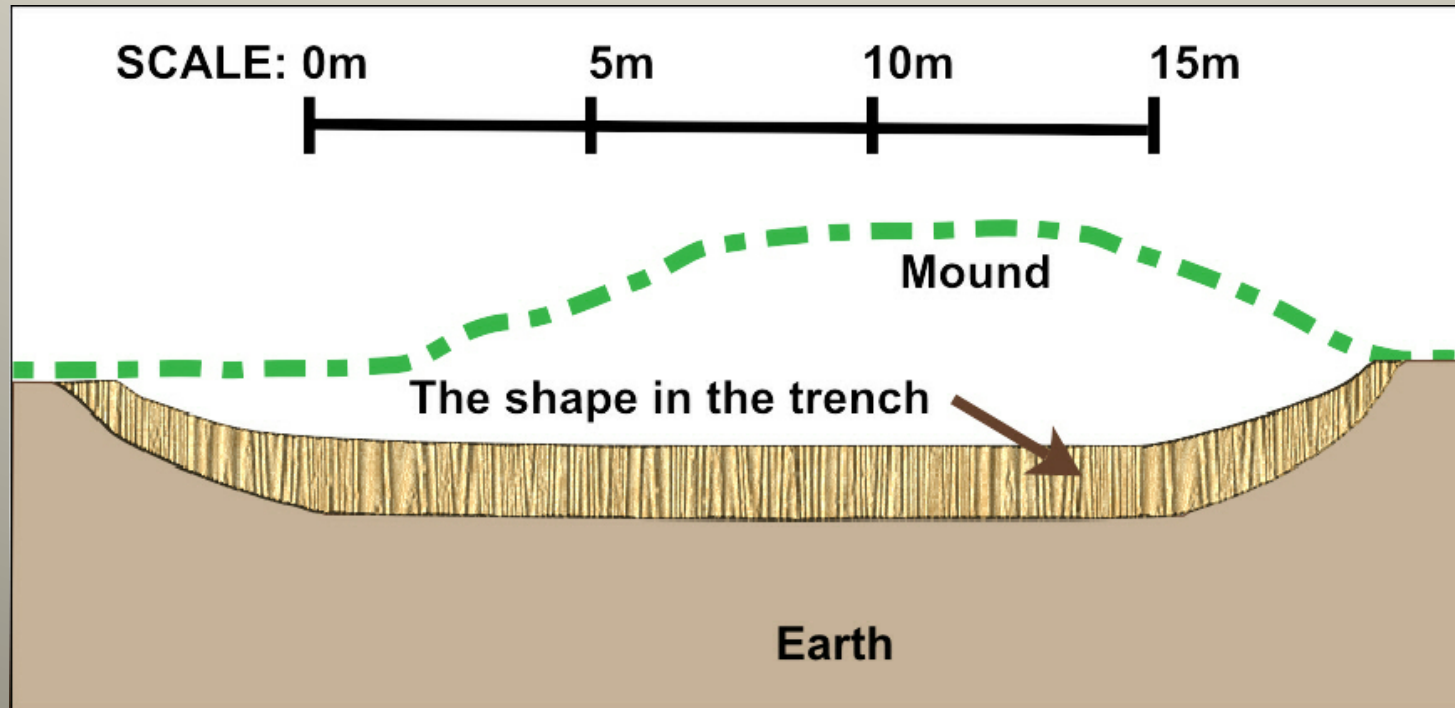
- This excavation took place over 70 years ago, in 1939.
- There was a large mound close to the River Deben at a place called Sutton Hoo in Suffolk.
- The archaeologists dug a long trench into the mound.



Clue B

# Inside the mound

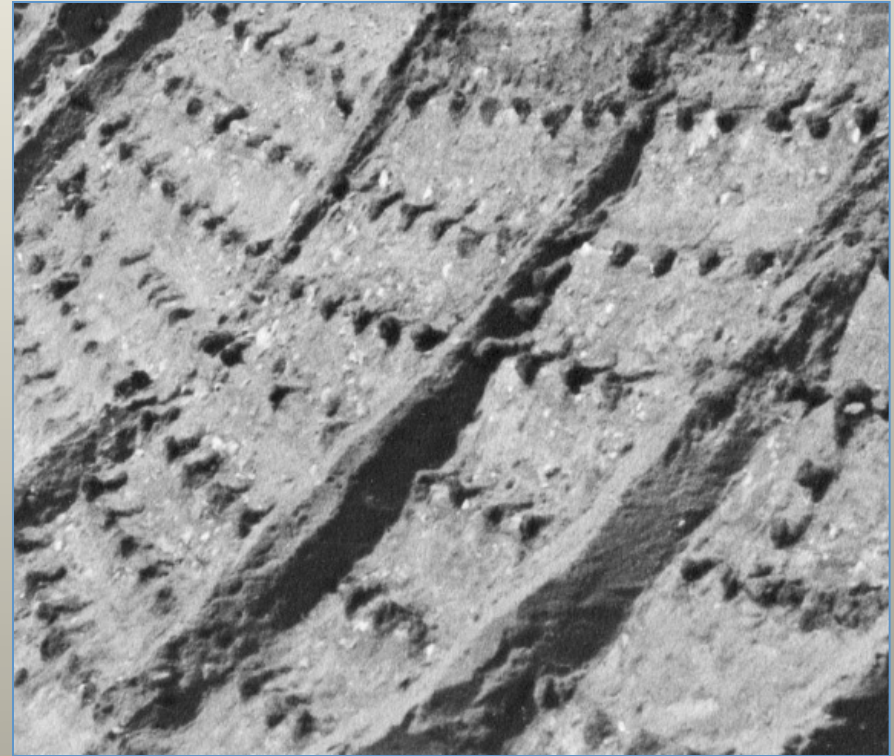
This is a lengthways section of the trench. What does the shape look like?



clue C

# The 'dots'

What could they be?

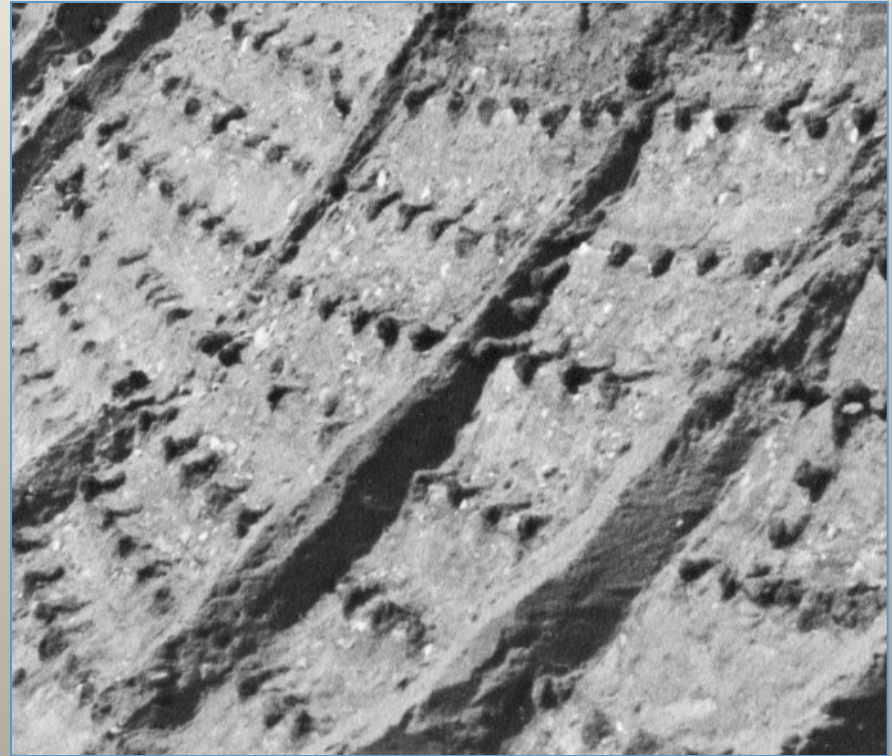


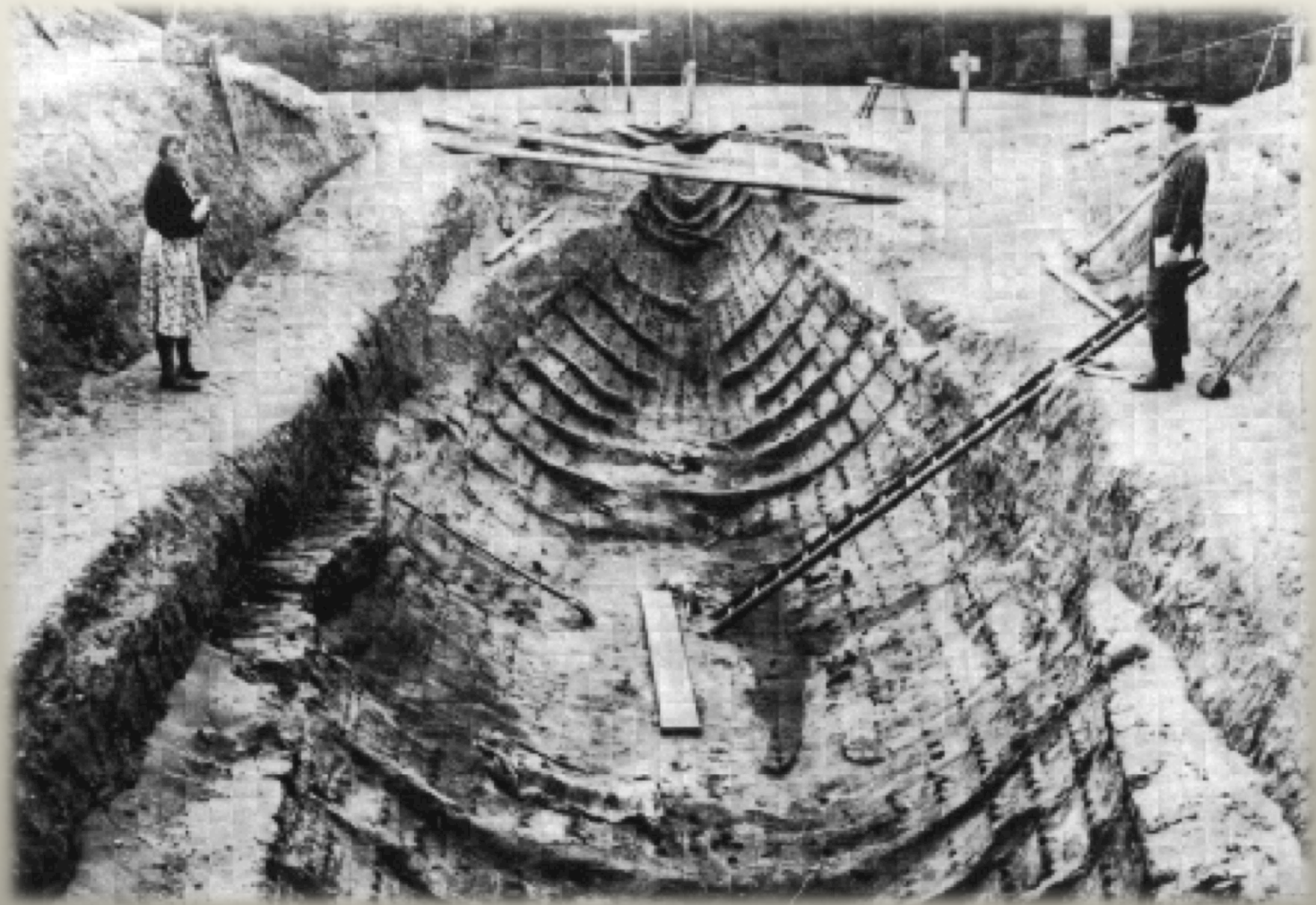


## Clue C

# The 'dots'

- The soil in the trench was a different colour from the surrounding soil because it contained rotted wood.
- The long rows of 'dots' you saw in Clue A were iron rivets (a kind of nail).





This was clearly a ship which had been buried underground... but why?





The ship would have been dragged from the river to where the mounds are - it was quite a distance and would have needed hundreds of men!

The ship was 89 feet long. This is the same as 15 tall men lying down!

Clue D

# What else did they find?

In your groups you will be given two / three of the artefacts that were found at the dig site.

- Decide what you think the object is.
- What materials do you think it is made from?
- Who might have owned something like this?
- Where would they have used it?
- How certain are you about your hypothesis?
- Do you have any questions about your artefact?

































Helmet



Gold coins



Belt buckle



Hanging bowl



Shield



Scepter



Silver bowls and spoons



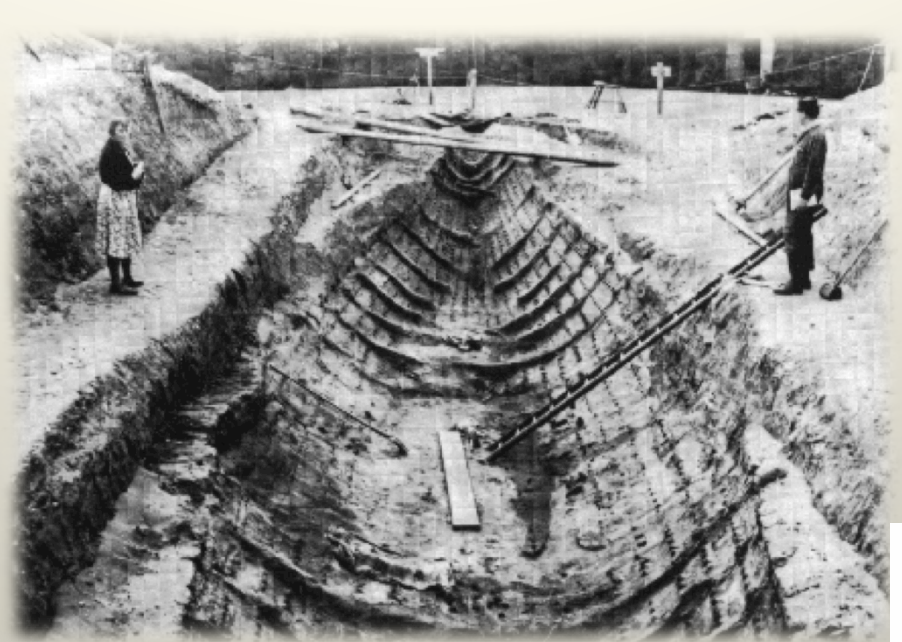
Shoulder clasps



Sword buckle







Question:

Why would anyone bury a ship full of treasures and personal possessions?





## Clue E

# Beowulf: the burial of a hero

'On a spot overlooking the sea, the lords of the people began to build Beowulf's funeral fire, hanging on it his helmets, battle-shields and shining armour. In the centre they laid Beowulf's body and all the time they were weeping at their hero's death.

Black wood smoke began rising from the fire and then the sound of roaring flames and weeping men.

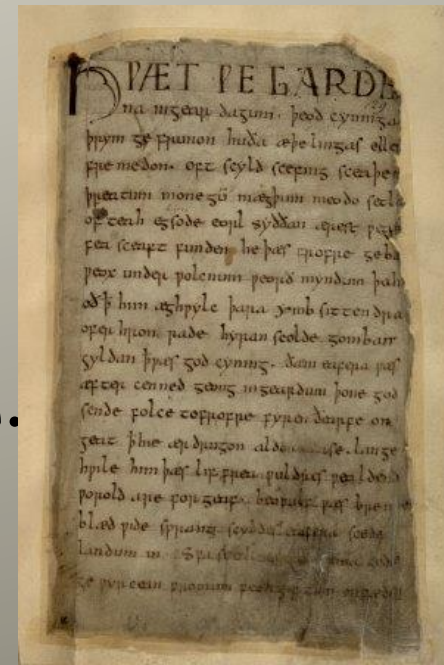
Then the lords built a burial mound, high and broad so it could be seen out at sea. It took ten days to finish this monument to their hero. Inside the mound they put rings and jewels and ornaments and all his gold and treasure.

Finally they rode round his grave mound, praising his greatness and all his brave deeds.'

## Clue E

# Beowulf: the burial of a hero

- Those lines come from a poem called 'Beowulf', a story written around 700-750AD.
- They describe the burial of Beowulf.
- This is a fictional story but the writer probably based this description on events he had seen.



Clue F

## Discoveries in Other Places

- In 1862 archaeologists found a ship buried under a mound at Snape, about ten miles north of Sutton Hoo.
- In the ship were spearheads, a gold ring, a glass beaker and coloured glass.
- These things were often buried with wealthy people but there was no body in this ship burial at Snape.



Clue F

# More Discoveries

- Then in 1904 a ship was found buried beneath a mound in Oseberg in Norway. It contained the bodies of two women. One may have been Asa, a Viking queen.



Clue E

# Oseberg Ship

- Alongside the bodies were many objects - beds, lamps, a cart, sledges and tapestries. Jewels and treasure had probably been buried too but they had been stolen sometime in the past.





Question:

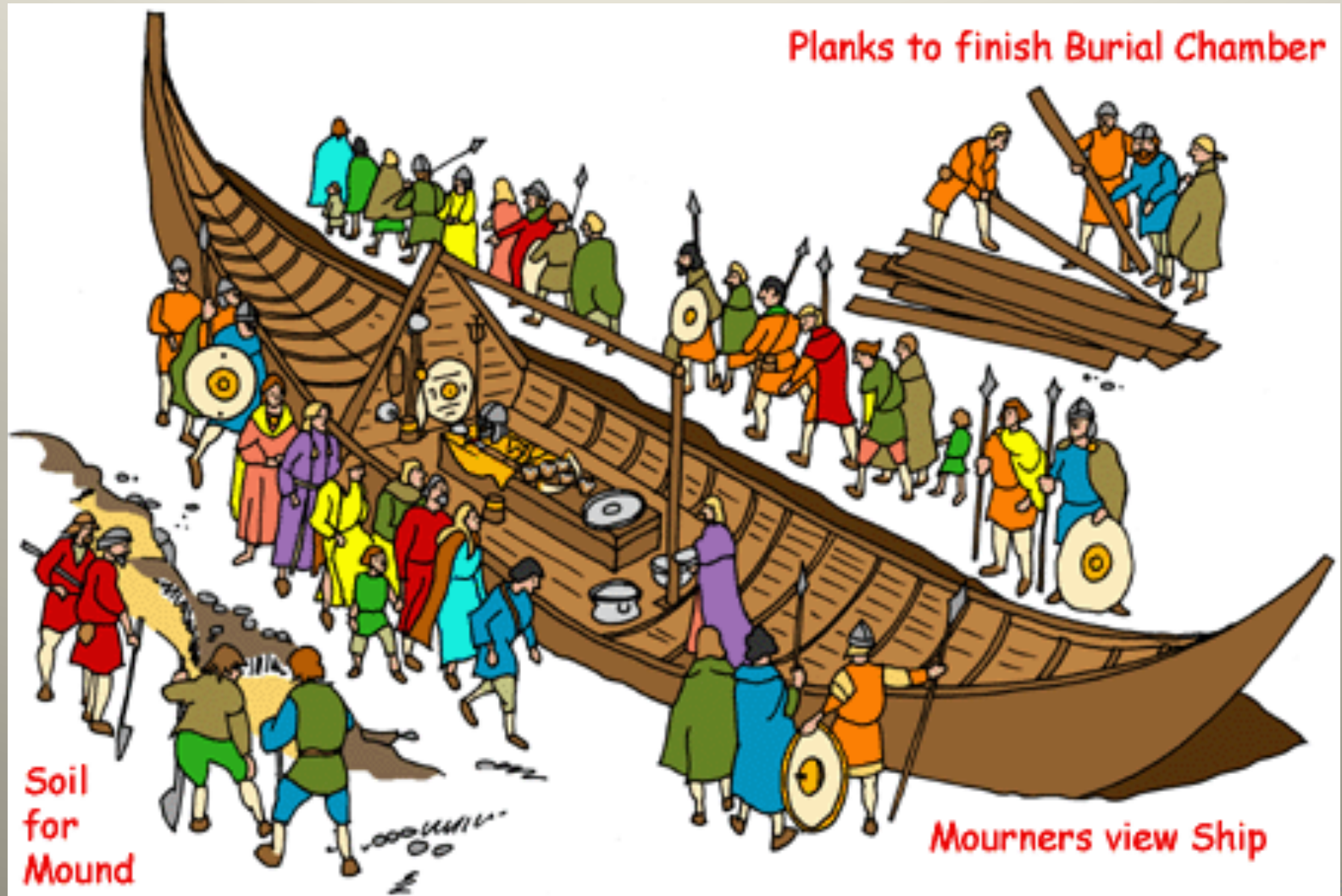
What does a burial of this kind tell us about the person's religion?





Clue G

The original burial might have looked like this.



Clue G

The original burial might have looked like this.



# L.I. To form a hypothesis about who was buried at Sutton Hoo

## Your Task:

Think about what each object tells you about the person who owned it.

Make notes on your ideas using the sheet provided.

Finally, decide what kind of Anglo-Saxon you think was buried at Sutton Hoo. This is your final hypothesis!



Clue H

# Did they find a body?

- The archaeologists did not find a body at Sutton Hoo.
- But later they did tests on the soil to find out if a body had been buried there.
- These tests showed there had been a body
- They found a chemical left behind after a body decays, even when no bones are left at all.

Clue 1

# The Coins

- How might the coins help archaeologists to learn more about the grave?



Clue 1

# The Coins

- The pictures and faces on the coins help archaeologists work out how old they are.
- They come from the early 600s AD, so must have been buried sometime between 610 and 635 AD.





# So who was buried there?

Here is some information about four kings of East Anglia, the Anglo-Saxon kingdom which included Sutton Hoo:



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## 1. **Raedwald:** king from 599 to 625 AD

- Raedwald was a very rich and powerful king. He was overlord of all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the most powerful king in England. He was a Pagan, but had also converted to Christianity.

## 2. **Eorpwold:** king from 625 to 627 or 628 AD

- Eorpwold was Raedwald's son. He only ruled for a very short time before he was murdered.

# So who was buried there?

## 3. **Sigebert:** king from about 630 to 637 AD

- Sigebert really wanted to be a monk and shared the kingship with Ecric, his cousin. Sigebert was probably buried near Ely, over 50 miles from Sutton Hoo.

## 4. **Ecric:** king from 634 to 637 AD

- Soon after Ecric became king East Anglia was attacked by other kings. Ecric and Sigebert were both killed in battle in 637.



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# Sutton Hoo Enquiry

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