

The Funeral of Raedwald by Mia Lennard

In the year of 624AD there was a strong, bitter cold wind as the hoar grey sky faded to an evil, dark black. I held my coal stained rags tightly and grabbed my father's ice cold hand. As we slowly walked towards a field of wet grass, the sound of squelching grew louder as more heart broken folks arrived.

It was a miserable day; it was the burial of a great King by the name of Raedwald. He had accomplished what no ordinary Anglo-Saxon could have ever accomplished; such as uniting the Norfolk and Suffolk together in 'Angle-Land'. He was an incredible politician and a fact was spread that he was the first king of 'Angle-Land'. Five minutes had passed, and then suddenly there was silence. Slowly- on horses- arrived the Widow Queen and Raedwald's son Eorpwald. They were dressed in dark grey clothes and wore grey leather boots. The Queen tried to hide her emotions but I noticed a tear roll down her face, like a small waterfall.

When they had reached two oak wood chairs – in front of the crowd of people – I could hear a loud rolling sound like an earthquake. Suddenly a great wooden, 6 meter long ship was rolling up a hill on many oak tree logs. It was pushed by a thousand men, the strongest men in 'Angle Land' to be precise, as the ship weighed 12 tones. It was one of Raedwald's ships that had been brought from the River Deben. It had over a hundred oars and a towering red and white sail.

Finally when the ship reached the top of the hill, they placed it so that it faced the East (facing sunrise.) Raedwald's dead body was wearing a golden brooch and wore brown rags; it was carried into the longboat carefully. At this point many people became weak and began to cry. Once the body was laid down in the ship, over 236 of Raedwald's precious possessions were also carefully placed inside the grand ship. They surrounded the corpse beautifully, laid out on the floor in rows of brooches, swords, gold, and much more. How they glistened in the light was almost magical. I overheard someone mentioning his horse was slaughtered. Then placed inside the ship for Raedwald's afterlife, although I still don't know whether it was true, therefore it remains a mystery to me.

When the ceremony was close to ending, the Widow Queen stood up from her chair. She told everybody that Raedwald was brave and majestic, and how she would miss him very much. She couldn't help herself and another tear rolled down her face. Soon almost every woman (and some men) had tears in their eyes. It was really a miserable day; however it was also a celebration for Raedwald's after life.

One by one we walked towards the long ship – with our heads down – and loyally knelt before the dead King to show our respect.