

Saturday 30 October 2021, 6.00pm

**Beowulf - An Anglo-Saxon Poem
in an Anglo-Saxon church**

(Starting in Arlington Village Hall and then in St Pancras Church)

No-one knows exactly when, after a day of hunting or fighting, at the end of a feast, a bard first stood up in a Saxon mead-hall and entertained the warriors with the story of how Beowulf, mighty leader of a band of brave warriors, crossed the sea to the land of the Scyldings and fought the ravening monster Grendel.

No one knows, either, exactly when the first place of worship was built on the spot where St Pancras Church now stands, but it is quite likely that the first building, remains of which were discovered under the floor during Victorian restorations, was built at the same time as that unknown bard first raised his voice over the din in that unknown mead-hall.

So it's entirely appropriate that the launch of the Friends of St Pancras Arlington's huge fundraising effort to make St Pancras secure and welcoming for our community and congregation for the next thousand years should start with a performance, in English (with occasional lines in Anglo-Saxon!) of "Beowulf" by Michael Bloom.

Michael is a semi-professional actor, having started his acting career with the National Youth Theatre and appearing in over a hundred plays and operas in the UK and abroad. Locally, he has supported fundraising through his acting talents, devising and performing his one-man show "Coleridge: the Man and the Mariner" at Arlington. He also performed in Berwick Church in "Boys Ellman" and at London's Royal Institution, and Berwick, in "Bloomsbury, Bloodshed and the Bible" to help raise funds for restoration of the Berwick murals.

Michael says: I first encountered "Beowulf" and Old English as a student of English and Drama and hope you enjoy this performance, which includes all the major events of the poem, but cut to about half the length of the original 3182 lines. This translation is mostly modelled on Michael Alexander (Penguin edition), further inspired by my wife Nicola and by Julian Glover's adaptation for his own celebrated "Beowulf" performances, plus some of my own translation. It includes a few short passages in Old English to give a flavour of the amazing power of the original language of this supreme poem. This performance features

replicas of several of the artefacts found in the Sutton Hoo burial mound including one of the iconic Sutton Hoo helmet.

The performance starts in the Village Hall at 6.00, where there will be a chance to take some refreshment and look at an exhibition about the poem and the finds at Sutton Hoo, and then cross to the church (a mead-hall for this occasion!) where the performance will start at 6.30. There will be a short interval at about 7.10, in the church, followed by the second half and then a hog roast (with vegetarian options – please let us know in advance) in the Village Hall car park at about 8.00. Please wrap up warmly and feel free to bring your own tankard or drinking horn!

Tickets available from trybooking www.trybooking.com/uk/BFGB, or go to trybooking.com and enter **Beowulf**

For queries, please contact Nicola Bloom at bloomnicola@yahoo.co.uk, or on 07787 928029 / 01273 487867