Romano-British Settlement and Cemeteries at Mucking
Excavations by Margaret and Tom Jones, 1965–1978
By Sam Lucy and Christopher Evans

Key Features:
· Comprehensive account of the Romano-British archaeology of the Mucking landscape with detailed description and discussion of an extensive rural farming settlement and its industries in its landscape setting, including important implications for the transition from Roman occupation to Anglo-Saxon settlement

· Presents a detailed discussion of the hitherto little known series of cemeteries, their composition, chronology and relation to changing settlement activity

· Draws on archival material including site notebooks and personal accounts from key participants to enhance the reader's understanding of the process of the UK's largest ever excavation and post-excavation programme

Excavations at Mucking, Essex, between 1965 and 1978, revealed extensive evidence for a multi-phase rural Romano-British settlement, perhaps an estate centre, and five associated cemetery areas (170 burials) with different burial areas reserved for different groups within the settlement. The settlement demonstrated clear continuity from the preceding Iron Age occupation with unbroken sequences of artefacts and enclosures through the first century AD, followed by rapid and extensive remodelling, which included the laying out a Central Enclosure and an organised water supply with wells, accompanied by the start of large-scale pottery production. After the mid-second century AD the Central Enclosure was largely abandoned and settlement shifted its focus more to the Southern Enclosure system with a gradual decline though the 3rd and 4th centuries although continued burial, pottery and artefactual deposition indicate that a form of settlement continued, possibly with some low-level pottery production. Some of the latest Roman pottery was strongly associated with the earliest Anglo-Saxon style pottery suggesting the existence of a terminal Roman settlement phase that essentially involved an 'Anglo-Saxon' community. Given recent revisions of the chronology for the early Anglo-Saxon period, this casts an intriguing light on the transition, with radical implications for understandings of this period. Each of the cemetery areas was in use for a considerable length of time. Taken as a whole, Mucking was very much a componented place/complex; it was its respective parts that fostered its many cemeteries, whose diverse rites reflect the variability and roles of the settlement’s evidently varied inhabitants.

About the Author:
Christopher Evans is executive Director of the Cambridge Archaeological unit based in the Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge. He has worked in British Archaeology at a senior level for more than twenty-five years, specialising in British prehistory, and archaeological theory.