



Southampton Archaeology Society

April 2021 Newsletter

Dear members

I hope you're well and enjoying more freedom to meet outdoors, go shopping and even visit the pub (garden). We look forward to museums, galleries and Heritage events opening up soon, all being well.

Meanwhile the SAS lectures, and many others have continued online, and it's been great to welcome new members in the audience, and people joining from a distance. We've had excellent talks about Neolithic axe-heads in Britain; on the people who lived in the medieval town of Old Sarum; on the ancient dead of Hampshire and beyond; and about the recent excavation of a Bronze Age barrow in the New Forest. Reports of the talks up to March 2021 are available on our website southamptonarchaeology.uk, and a report on April's lecture will be posted as soon as possible. Thank you very much to Matt Garner who put the programme together for us. Matt has already completed the new series for 2021/22, which will be revealed at our Annual General Meeting next month. We cannot at present fix a date for the Mayflower Study Day but we hope to run it when/if public meetings are allowed, so we'll keep you posted.

For this issue I'm including a brief history of SAS (formerly SCMAS) and some information about the photographic project undertaken by SCMAS volunteers earlier this century. Thank you to Martyn Dowell for his review of the film **The Dig**, and the article on **Israel in Egypt** from the Old Testament Study Group; and to Martyn and John Langran for their account of recording a recently discovered WWII home-made bomb shelter in Southampton. Finally there's a short piece of news from Friends of Hamwic about repairs to be carried out on the Saxon Pillar in St Mary's.

Our Annual General Meeting comes up on 11th May, after which lectures will end until September. Since this year is our 60th anniversary year we'd normally have a celebration but this would be difficult with the AGM being held on Zoom, but we may manage a cake around Christmas. The AGM Notice/Agenda, forms for membership application and nominations to the SAS committee will be sent with this newsletter. Other papers including copies of the proposed new Constitution will be issued before the meeting, along with Zoom invitations to all current SAS members, and voting forms for anyone who is unable to be there.

We look forward to seeing you then.

With best wishes

Sarah

Arrangements for payment of SAS subscriptions 2021/2022

The Southampton Archaeology Society's financial year ends on 31st March each year and therefore annual subscriptions are due on 1st May 2021. Subscription rates are not changing and the current rates can be found on the enclosed membership subscription form, with details of different methods of payment. The Annual General Meeting this year be held on Zoom, and for those of you who are accustomed to pay by cash at the AGM itself we apologise for this inconvenience, but we hope you may be able to make use of another method until we're able to resume open meetings later this year.



Southampton Archaeology Society

60th Anniversary 1961 – 2021

This year marks sixty years since the launch of the Society, then known as Southampton Archaeological Society, by members of the Southampton Museum Volunteer Group. They had assisted at excavations as a sub-group of the Friends of Old Southampton, but were later organised and directed by a Museums Archaeological Officer, and became Southampton City Museums Archaeological Society. Many past SCMAS members helped on excavations within the City including Saxon Hamwic, Medieval sites such as St Michael's House (Bugle Street), Lower High Street, French Street and other vaults.



SCMAS members washing finds, 1960s.
Southampton Archaeology Unit

Nowadays the Society's main activity is focused on our Lecture Programme (September to April) and annual Study Days, with speakers on many fascinating sites, plus research in Archaeology and related topics. Members have undertaken projects such as a photographic survey of buildings in Southampton older than 1870 (2003 to 2012, see below); and our current project (now paused for COVID-19) recording graffiti from medieval (and later) buildings in and around Southampton.

The AGM on 11th May this year will be held on Zoom because of COVID-19 restrictions on indoor meetings, and we plan to have a talk about the Historic Buildings Project from Martyn Dowell. I'm planning a special issue of the newsletter later in the year, and we'd love to have photos and memories from any members who were involved in the 1960s and 70s – please send anything to me at sarahvhanna@hotmail.com.

Historic Buildings Survey

The notice below was recently posted on the SAS website www.southamptonarchaeology.uk/projects. Once the team have re-visited the archives we plan to add a selection of the photographs on the website.

In 2003 Southampton City Museums Archaeological Society (SCMAS) began a photographic survey of Southampton's historic buildings. The project involved photographing all the buildings on the first series Ordnance Survey 25" map (1867–1881) that were still standing. This was carried out by a team of volunteers from the society between 2003 and 2012, and eventually covered the entire modern city of Southampton. All the photographs were scanned and entered on the PortCities website, which has since been archived so the photos are no longer available there.

The photographs can now be accessed temporarily via the following link:

<https://southampton.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRNGEN/WPAC/LOCAL?HOMEPRMS=LOCALPARAMS>

You can search for specific images (using "Topic" options on the left) on this page:

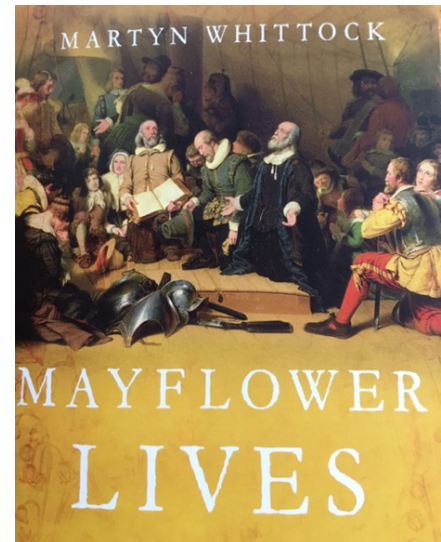
[https://southampton.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/ENQ/WPAC/BIBENQ?QRY=BS%3ASAS%20%2B%20BS%3A1870%20%2B%20\(BIBITM%3E%20ITMCOLX%3ADIGIMAGE\)&SORTS=HBT.SOVR&CF=LOCAL&QRYTEXT=SAS%20Images%20from%20the%20collection%20of%20all%20pre%201870%20buildings](https://southampton.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/ENQ/WPAC/BIBENQ?QRY=BS%3ASAS%20%2B%20BS%3A1870%20%2B%20(BIBITM%3E%20ITMCOLX%3ADIGIMAGE)&SORTS=HBT.SOVR&CF=LOCAL&QRYTEXT=SAS%20Images%20from%20the%20collection%20of%20all%20pre%201870%20buildings)

In the longer term, it is planned that the original written and photographic records held in the Southampton Reference Library should be checked by members of the SCMAS (now SAS) team once the Library re-opens. This is to ascertain the total number of written records and ensure that all details are copied online, and to decide whether it should be necessary to rescan any of the images in case of poor quality. We hope eventually to have the complete collection again available on the Southampton City council website.

March 2021

Mayflower Lives: pilgrims in a New World and the early American experience.

As promised, here is a review of Martyn Whittock's enthralling book, which the author spoke about to us in November 2020. He retells the history of Mayflower's voyage from Southampton to the New World in 1620, through the stories of some fourteen individuals whose lives were changed by this venture. The narrative is based on Martyn's extensive research, which includes details from 'pilgrim' William Bradford's hand-written account *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647*. Stories are told of the ship's Master, Christopher Jones; several of the 'Saints' (who sought religious freedom); servants; 'Strangers' (looking for 'a better life'); three women; and a member of the 'First Nation' who assisted the new immigrants. Inevitably perhaps the majority are men since so many of the women who set sail in 1620 died during the first winter, from sickness brought on by harsh conditions and poor diet.



Little is known for certain about the lives of many of the individuals before the voyage: among the 'Saints' were a number who had lived in Leiden, Holland for some years (fleeing religious persecution under King James I), while others joined from England. The 'Strangers' included an adventurer who had visited the New World earlier, whose life afterwards showed his independent spirit; among the servants were four unaccompanied young children, illegitimate offspring whose mother was divorced by her husband on grounds of adultery, and he sent her children away to be placed as servants with other families. The children were Ellen More 8, Jasper 7, Richard 6, and Mary four years old: only Richard More survived the first terrible winter, becoming a sea-captain and eventually the last of the 'pilgrims'. Tisquantum (or 'Squanto') was a member of the Wampanoag peoples as they became known; kidnapped by an English trader he ended up in London and learned to speak English. Later he returned to North America where his village had been wiped out by diseases introduced by Europeans and he came to live in the new community, which by chance was established on land formerly occupied by his own people. With Tisquantum's help the group survived early setbacks, forming an alliance with local natives, but it's perhaps understandable that he proved untrustworthy to both sides. He died in 1622, long before major conflicts arose that ended in the defeat of the native peoples.

These stories are all illuminating and bear witness to the various motives of those involved, which have become identified with American ideals such as freedom and independence. Comparisons and contrasts are drawn with later groups of settlers whose religious views were more extreme, concluding that the Mayflower Pilgrims achieved a community with greater tolerance of differences, which was maybe the secret of their success. I was disappointed with the absence of illustrations or maps in the book, but the breadth of research and empathic storytelling make this a valuable addition to the story of the Mayflower.

The book was issued in paperback in February 2021, published by Pegasus Books, price £12.99.

Sarah Hanna

Old Testament Studies V: Israel in Egypt

by Martyn Dowell

We looked at Exodus some time before turning to Genesis, but the stories are unconnected anyway. As it was some time ago, these thoughts are mine, not those of the study group. MD

The first few verses of the Book of Exodus state that a large Hebrew incursion had taken place, to the benefit of them and to Egypt, and over 430 years they flourished and dispersed so by the rich 18th Dynasty many had attained quite high offices, though the largest number seem to be involved in the great building projects of the time. Eventually, of course, the money ran out, when a certain amount of resentment of foreigners crept in. There is ongoing dispute as to exactly when this was, some think it was during the 18th Dynasty in the 15th century bc, but I feel more confident with the 19th dynasty, after the death of Rameses

II in 1224bc. This better fits the biblical details as we have them. As you know, this Pharaoh was arguably the greatest builder of them all, but towards the end of his long reign, he must have come to realise that both time and money were short.

Before examining what happened next, it's necessary to understand the workers' relationship with their masters. As older translations say, they were bondsmen, not slaves nor entirely free. This way of working is almost unknown in the western world today, the traditional apprenticeship being the last familiar example. One willingly contracted to come into the master's household and work for him and obey him, in return for bed, board, and instruction in his trade, for a fixed length of time. This is how the great monuments of Egypt were built. Excavations of workers' villages near the pyramids show that this had been the case for a thousand years already. At the time of the Exodus, we are told that the Hebrew workers had been building the store cities (trading posts) of Pithom and Ramses in the delta, with their supplies and personal needs catered for as usual. However the elderly Pharaoh realised that economies had to be made, and pressed for a full workload for the bondsmen, whilst limiting their supplies.

At this point we hear of Moses. Whether he really was a foundling brought up in the royal court we shall never know, but he was clearly a Hebrew in a privileged position, perhaps becoming a senior overseer. We are told that he saw an Egyptian overseer abusing a worker, and killed him in anger. Realising this had been seen, he fled east of the Red Sea to Midian, where he ingratiated himself into a priest's family, and eventually married a daughter of Jethro his host. Meanwhile the old Pharaoh died, to be succeeded by Meremptah who faced many problems at home and abroad. Moses risked returning at this point, meeting up with Aaron, a spokesman for the Hebrews, to petition him for a relaxation of the workers' conditions. The Pharaoh evidently wanted the work completed and was in no mood to offer concessions. Angrily he made further economies by famously dismissing those who supplied straw for the adobe bricks, so that the brickmakers had to collect it as well as providing their quota of bricks. Although the workers blamed Moses for interfering, this was probably a breach of contract on Pharaoh's part, and it led to an escalation of the dispute.

Now we enter the realms of fiction, where we have priests and magicians on both sides trying to perform better miracles than the next man, followed by the famous 'plagues' suffered by the Egyptians. It's easy to see how oral storytellers in succeeding generations could use these feats to add what my grandfather called "six penn'orth of Oooh" to the saga, and keep everyone's attention. That there is a fixed formula used to introduce every plague except the first shows that they were added one at a time. So can we tell what actually happened? Well, perhaps. At first the visits to the palace (not far away in Memphis) were probably pleas by various parties with seniority amongst the Hebrews which fell on deaf ears, but then, by chance, came the 'red river' incident. This used to happen occasionally before the building of the Aswan high dam, when flood waters encountered soft red sediments and brought them right down to the delta. It made the water undrinkable, and indeed we are told that everyone had to dig wells. Taking advantage of Egyptian superstitions, Moses may have claimed that his god did this, and threatened worse if he did not get what he wanted. Whatever the case, the Hebrew leaders used the disruption to secretly plot mass desertion, and did so with thoroughness. Everyone was told exactly what to take and what not to take, and even to plan their last meal properly. So, the next day, the adventure began.....



Bibliography for OT Studies

The Bible Any modern English translation (or the authorised version, it is still the most scholarly translation).

Who wrote the Bible? Friedman ISBN 0-224-02573-2

Civilisations of the Holy Land Paul Johnson 1979

Review of The Dig film

by Martyn Dowell

This is the title of the recent Netflix film about the 1939 excavation of the Sutton Hoo boat burial. In fact it's not an attempt to portray actual events, but a dramatisation of a book on the subject, which contains fictional material to make a good story. Having said that, the principal characters and the progress of the dig itself follows the facts quite closely, and Ralph Fiennes eclipses all the others as Basil Brown, treading a fine line between pride and humility. Mrs Pretty was not as young and elegant as portrayed, the professional archaeologists not as old; and the nephew who seduces Peggy Piggott, pure fiction. A few points in particular took my interest. Basil's trousers were perfectly matched by colour and pattern, but nowhere near as baggy as the real plus-fours, nor combined with the wellies. I understand the Fiennes family are from Suffolk, which would explain Ralph's convincing accent. Pictures I have seen of Stuart Piggott show a tall lean man with very erect posture (and as I remember, no glasses), hardly accurately portrayed by Ben Chaplin, but his neglect of his wife was real enough, though she left him much later. Peggy was no foppish thing either, but also a dedicated archaeologist. In *Current Archaeology* (No 373, April 2021 p65) Chris Catling points out that the real home of Mrs Pretty was considered too plain, and a more attractive alternative used. Where is it, though?

I enjoyed the film, as I am sure you will, it is very entertaining and moves swiftly, as did the real dig, war being declared before it was completed.

PS. The DVD of the film 'The Dig' is still available for SAS members to borrow – please send me an email on sarahvhanna@hotmail.com, or phone on 023 8078 9172 if you're interested.

Recently discovered WWII bomb shelter in Southampton

from Martyn Dowell

On Thursday 22nd April John Langran and myself inspected what appeared to be a wartime bomb shelter in a private garden in Bassett, Southampton. It was evidently not government issue, and was probably designed and built by the householder. It consisted of poured concrete with a concrete slab (presumably



reinforced) topping it. A hole about 2.15m by 1.80m had been dug, extended upward by about 0.3m on average with shuttering all around. Shuttering had been built within, to produce walls about 15cm thick. There were two entrances, one in an extension to the north, and one on the south, largely bricked up. Some evidence of door fittings were visible. Within, the space was 2/3 filled with rubble, and no features could be seen. The owner of the property is proposing to demolish at least the upper part, and will let us know if anything comes to light inside the structure.

Left: View of the roof of the bomb shelter, with blocked opening and rubble visible.

Photo: John Langran

News from Friends of Hamwic (thanks to Matt Garner and Jack Wilson)



Saxon Pillar, St Mary's: Rachel Fenner.

Photo: Southampton Archaeology Unit

22.02.21 From Southampton Archaeological Unit: "Thanks to our colleagues in the City Council cleansing team, who have now got a hi-tec DOFF cleaning machine that can be used on listed buildings and scheduled monuments, we have a clean 'Saxon Pillar' in the heart of Hamwic again. Designed by Hampshire artist Rachel Fenner over 30 years ago, it drew inspiration from some of the archaeological finds from the area. The Saxon Pillar is at the south end of St Mary Street, but other examples of Hamwic public art can be seen in this area if you look around." (Sent by Matt Garner).

23.03.21 From Jack Wilson, See Southampton: "Things are going well with the Saxon Column. There is some superficial decorative repair, some cracking of the panels and movement away from the wall. Today we met with a contractor who is going to send a quote." On 15.04.21 Jack emailed with a quotation of £2550.00 for repairs, and added: "Jo Bailey, the Council's very helpful Monuments Officer who works with Andy Russel, is on the case, and will be looking at funding."

The City College have replied they would like to help with providing space for an exhibition, and that their students could be involved."

Website contact: southamptonarchaeology@gmail.com

Facebook group: Southampton Archaeology Society

Our lectures normally take place in St. Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH on the 2nd Tuesday of each month; but due to COVID-19 restrictions we shall be hosting the lectures on Zoom, from 7.00pm. Talks are free to paid-up SAS members, who will receive email invitations in advance.

2020-2021 SAS Committee

Chair – Sarah Hanna
Vice-Chair – Martyn Dowell
Hon Treasurer – John Langran
Hon Secretary – Mandy Kesby
General Committee Members – Rowan Bright, Chris Evans, Karen Wardley and Matt Garner. Archaeological Advisor: Dr Andy Russel. Co-opted: Sue Davies.

Subscription Rates 2021/22

Individuals	£10.00
Senior Citizens	£8.00
Juniors/Students	£8.00
Family	£14.00

If you or a friend wish to join SAS (or to renew your subscription) please ask the Hon Treasurer to send you an application form, or visit our website to print off a copy.

Contact us

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We would love to receive contributions to the Newsletter – by email to sarahvhanna@hotmail.com, or by post to Sarah Hanna, 346 Hill Lane SO15 7PH. We reserve the right to edit as necessary.