



Southampton Archaeology Society

July 2021 Newsletter

Dear members

I hope you're keeping well, and that many of you are enjoying the summer and our new freedom to socialise. The CBA Festival of Archaeology runs until Sunday 1st August, so there's still time for **Exploring Local Places** – the theme for 2021 (visit new.archaeologyuk.org to find events.)

At Southampton Archaeology Society's AGM in May 2021, our 60th anniversary, we received annual reports from 2020 and 2021, and some changes were made to the committee: John Langran (Hon Treasurer) and I (Chair) stood down, while Martyn Dowell was elected Chair and Sue Davies Hon Treasurer, John Langran was elected Vice-Chair and Sam Edwards joins us as a co-opted member. We approved a new Constitution for SAS, and we're in the process of finalising a Privacy Policy with regard to GDPR; those will be posted on the website www.southamptonarchaeology.uk, and we hope these changes will better equip SAS for the foreseeable future. Please see Sue Davies' note regarding 2021/22 subscriptions on page 6.

I'd like to thank Mandy Kesby for her article on **Butser Ancient Farm**, and summary of a talk about **Missing Vikings** in Southampton; and Sue Davies for reviewing Neil Price's book on the Vikings, **The Children of Ash and Elm**. Thanks to Martyn Dowell for his account of the Exodus from the U3A Old Testament Study Group. Our lecture programme begins on 14th September with Karen Wardley speaking on **If Walls Could Talk: recent discoveries from the Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project** (see back page); and we plan to take part in the **Peartree 400 Heritage Fayre** on 18th September (see peartreechurch1620@gmail.com for details). And then see below for great news about our Mayflower Study Day.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Sarah

Southampton Archaeology Society Study Day

Southampton & Hampshire at the time of the Mayflower

Saturday 25th September 2021 10.00am to 5.00pm

Southampton City Art Gallery Theatre, Civic Centre SO14 2LY

We are delighted to announce a new date for the Mayflower Study Day, delayed from 2020 - like so many other events such as the 'Euros' and the Olympic Games! Thanks to Matt Garner, all but one of the original speakers can be there on the day, but we'll miss Dr Cindy Wood's talk on **17th century Graffiti in Winchester Cathedral** - available at the Churches Conservation Trust <https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/what-s-on/online-lectures/previous-talks-and-lectures.html> (and see last page.)

Speakers: Dr Andy Russel (Southampton archaeology); Godfrey Collyer (Mayflower in Southampton); Toby Riley (ships of the era); Dr Rosalind Johnson (17th century protestant dissenters in Hampshire); Mary & Roger Harris (textiles, clothing: kilns and pottery); Jo Bailey (Southampton's Mayflower memorial).

Cost: members £18, non-members £22, f/t students/under-18s £12 (see attached booking form). Includes refreshments morning and afternoon; lunch not included.

www.southamptonarchaeology.uk

A Visit to Butser Ancient Farm

by Mandy Kesby

One extremely windy, grey, cold day in May, we decided to visit Butser Ancient Farm, Chalton situated in beautiful rolling hills between Portsmouth and Petersfield. Although a small site run by volunteers, it has Stone Age, Iron Age, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon areas, and currently a Bronze Age house is being started. This is being undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in conjunction with Operation Nightingale, a charity which encourages veteran military personnel to become involved with archaeological projects. The site is not only a reconstruction of historical buildings, but primarily an experimental archaeology project, so along with local materials, tools available during the era were tried and tested, although may not have been used throughout the build. Each house is loosely based on one known to have existed in a certain area, and the landscape is considered before choosing the materials to be used. For example, houses near rivers or swampy ground would have been thatched with reeds, whereas in drier areas, wheat straw would be more readily available; similarly certain different woods would be used according to local conditions.



Butser has a small herd of rare breed English goats (right) and Manx Laoghtan sheep (left), and in the summer they hope to have pigs on site. There is a small Roman potager style garden, mainly of herbs and plants used for medicines and cooking, together with another area growing a cereal crop, although there would obviously have been a degree of foraging for seasonal additions to their food.



The **Stone Age** area features Mesolithic crude temporary shelters, one with hides covering the frame and another with thatching. The Neolithic is represented by three further buildings, one a large long house style house – based on the Horton house excavated in Berkshire and recently shown on TV (below, centre) - and two based on past excavations at Durrington Walls near Stonehenge. Experiments of this era included the construction of a log boat which would have been used for fishing and transport locally (below, right).



The **Iron Age** enclosure has six roundhouses based on excavations of similar houses from Danebury Hillfort, Hampshire and Glastonbury Lake Village. The enclosure is surrounded by a ditch and the houses are examples of differing forms of construction. The “settlement” also includes an Iron Age toilet, granary, a storage building and a storage pit (as illustrated below).



On to the **Roman era** and a reconstruction based on excavation of a villa at Sparsholt, near Winchester. From the foundations, it was thought this was probably a two-storey building but the small upstairs area here is used for storage and not open to the public. They have constructed a mezzanine area which can be seen from the lounging area and which indicates the possible layout for a bedroom. The reception room, although smaller, is very up-market with a tesserae floor which took about 1,000 man-hours to construct by volunteers. It is a replica of the floor found at Sparsholt, now displayed at Winchester Museum (above right). One room – laid out as a dining area – has a hypocaust beneath it, and the area where the fire would have been is shown in the picture (left), alongside a replica of an outside loo.



It is a replica of the floor found at Sparsholt, now displayed at Winchester Museum (above right). One room – laid out as a dining area – has a hypocaust beneath it, and the area where the fire would have been is shown in the picture (left), alongside a replica of an outside loo.



Reconstructed Roman villa, based on the excavation of Sparsholt Roman villa

Photo: Mandy/Graham Kesby

The final area is that of the **Anglo-Saxons** featuring a large house based on excavations at the nearby village of Chalton. Apparently a small settlement was found near the top of the hill above the village, presumably a defensive position, but the settlement later moved to the valley. This house was at the end of our circuit



and very welcome, as there was a gratefully received fire to thaw us out! It was constructed of wattle and daub with a thatched roof, while the one to the right has walls made with planks.

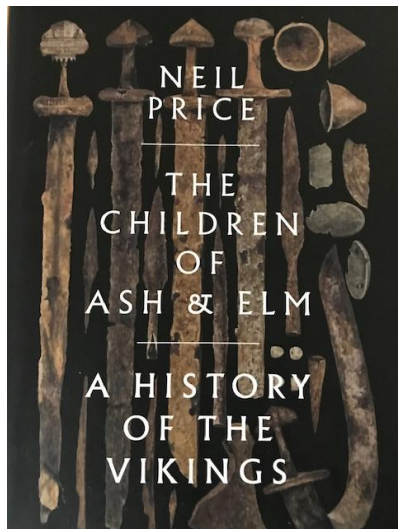
Reconstruction of an Anglo Saxon house, based on excavations at Chalton, Hampshire.

Photo: Mandy/Graham Kesby

Butser Ancient Farm holds workshops throughout the year for instance on the making of authentic textiles, pottery and other necessary crafts; and they welcome school children, mainly during the summer months. There is a shop/café (of sorts) on site, which offers ready-packed sandwiches, tea/coffee from a machine, crisps, soft drinks, etc with an outside seating area. However, a few minutes' drive away is the local pub offering excellent snacks or a full meal. To visit, you need to book a time slot, especially at the moment: please contact <https://www.butserancientfarm.co.uk>.

Festival of Archaeology events at Butser Ancient Farm continue during July.

The Children of Ash and Elm: a History of the Vikings by Neil Price



I have recently finished this fascinating book and can highly recommend it. I had not previously read a history of the Viking Age so others might not find it as original as I did. However, what impressed me most was the breadth of the work, including the attempt to provide an insight into the Viking mindset of this period, looking out from Scandinavia across the whole Viking diaspora.

I was intrigued from the start by a series of maps showing the full extent of the Viking raids and trading routes and by the Prologue, which includes a summary of the story of the creation of man and woman (“Ash and Elm”) from the legendary sagas. Price acknowledges throughout that the Vikings were a warlike people with ideologies underpinned by violence and that experiencing their raids would have been both terrifying and

horrific. However, he tries to put these within the wider context of their lives and the social and economic developments of their times.

The book is divided into three main sections. The first looks at Scandinavian culture, including a chapter on Norse mythology and beliefs, which explores how Vikings viewed the world and the various beings within it. This section also looks at ritual, the material culture of everyday life and the structures of power in society. It traces developments from the decline of the Western Roman Empire to the mid 9th century. The second part goes back to the early 8th century and looks at the major socio-political and demographic factors that combined to trigger the Viking phenomenon itself and the period of raids which escalated from isolated attacks to full-scale invasions. Price highlights the critical importance of trading networks and emphasises the simultaneous starting of the diaspora to the east, to the British Isles and ‘Western Europe’ and the opening up of the North Atlantic, moving to the early 10th century. Part three (through to the mid 11th century) considers how the Viking expansion also had an impact back in Scandinavia on its economy, urban and rural development and the consolidation of power. In the same way as Price argues that the start of the Viking Age cannot be pinned down to a precise date, he argues that this is also the case with its end, as the Viking presence/occupation was either rebuffed, integrated or abandoned across the diaspora.

Price is an archaeologist by background and makes use of archaeological records across Scandinavia and overseas, including material finds and more modern results from DNA and pollen analysis. This is combined with frequent references to written sources, including runestones, accounts from those who encountered the Vikings, the Sagas and Eddas. Throughout you feel you are in the company of an expert.

Sue Davies

Hardback published by Allen Lane, August 2020, price £30.00. Paperback to be published April 2022.

Southampton’s Missing Vikings

Summary of a talk given by Andy Skinner on 22.06.21

840AD to 1000AD was the golden age of the Vikings. Those we know as Vikings comprise Norwegian and Danish peoples, and the word ‘Viking’ means the act of attacking and plundering. It is well documented that Vikings raided Southampton but no evidence of Viking artefacts has been found, for they were raiding and taking things, rather than bringing items into the area. At the time Hamwic was a large Saxon town of around 100 acres and an important trading port, comparable to London, Ipswich and York. St Mary’s Church, founded in 534AD in Hamwic was possibly a target for plunder of its treasures.

The first Viking raid on Southampton was recorded in 840AD in the **Anglo Saxon Chronicles (ASC)**, involving 33 ships when Southampton defended itself well and won the day. There is archaeological evidence of localised destruction in Hamwic in the 9th century when five houses were burned, a significant event as only seven were found to have burned in the town over a 150 year period. When Hamwic declined after continued Viking raids some residents moved to Winchester, but they were not safe there: in 860AD this important town was sacked when Vikings sailed up the River Itchen to attack it. When they returned to their ships, Aldermen of Hampshire and Berkshire reportedly 'drove them off'.

No evidence of Viking ships in England has survived. They were sleek and beautifully built, holding about 32 oarsmen although they could be larger. They could travel at around 12 knots being rowed, but at the end of the 8th century, sails were added which gave increased speed. In the 10th century, many northern towns such as York, Nottingham and others were taken and settled by the Vikings. At this time, King Alfred defeated a Viking army and an uneasy truce was arranged with the Danelaw area in north eastern England, while Alfred remained as King of Wessex.

Hamwic had largely disappeared by this time, although the port was used to supply Winchester, where the court was based. King Alfred ordered longships to be built but they were no match for the Viking ships. He instituted a system of fortified *burhs* for protection, including Winchester and Southampton: the site of the *burh* may have been at Roman Clausentum on the River Itchen, but the the later Norman castle site is also possible. After King Alfred's death Viking raids continued and the ASC reports that in 994AD a Viking army had overwintered at Southampton, possibly at Woolston east of the Itchen, when the king Ethelred the Unready made a payment of £16,000 as 'Danegeld' for them to leave. In 1016, Cnut, son of Sweyne Forkbeard, defeated King Edmund Ironside, and on his death Cnut was proclaimed King in Southampton.

Mandy Kesby

Old Testament Studies: Into the Desert

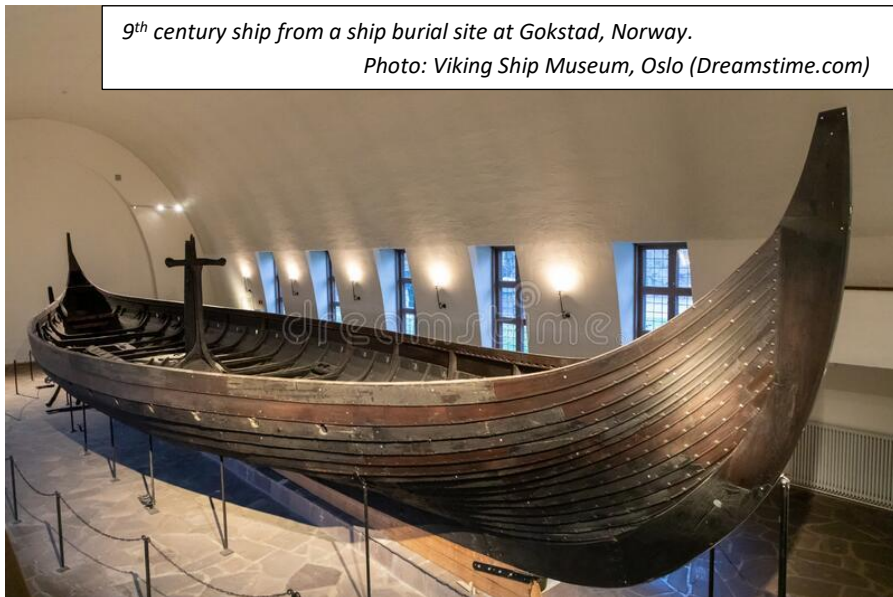
by Martyn Dowell

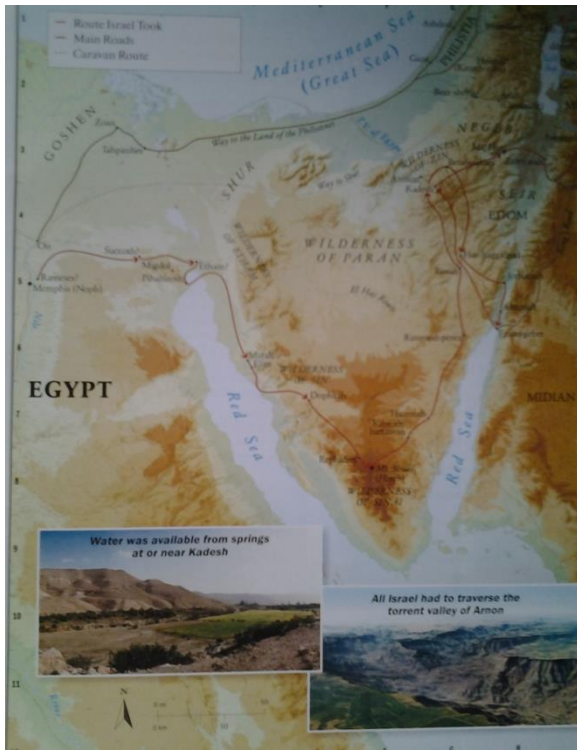
It seems that the whole of the delta Hebrew workforce, with perhaps some others, departed in one night, with their animals in tow. This would certainly have been wise, as any stragglers would have been at the mercy of the angry Egyptians. We are told they left well provisioned, armed, and carrying riches 'given' by (more likely stolen from) the Egyptians. Indeed, this may be why they were pursued by a hastily assembled army. Moses and Aaron wisely avoided the well-populated western route, going east toward the desert. On the more usual road, the Egyptians could have called on allies, and the refugees would not have been allowed to camp. Going east, they camped first in Etham, and then nearer the 'reed sea', the westernmost arm at the northern end of the Red Sea.

While there, they became aware of an Egyptian army pursuing them, complete with horses and chariots, when they are represented as wishing that Moses had never encouraged them to abandon their work. Now comes the event so beloved of Hollywood, although in fact Exodus Chapters 14 & 15 contain two intermixed accounts. Whilst one account has obviously been enhanced by much oral storytelling, the other is more prosaic and credible. This tells of the crossing of what was, in effect, marshland or bog.

9th century ship from a ship burial site at Gokstad, Norway.

Photo: Viking Ship Museum, Oslo (Dreamstime.com)





The combined effect of wind and tide had greatly reduced the quantity of standing water, so that the Hebrews could easily find safe crossing on foot. No losses are mentioned. When the Egyptian army came to cross, shallow surface water had returned making it difficult to see the way ahead, and of course the horses and chariots were immediately bogged down. The story talks of catastrophic losses, but this is probably overdone. There was likely little loss of human life, though horses and chariots may well have been irretrievable. More to the point is why the army gave up so easily, and to answer that we should remember that Egypt was going through hard times. Like the building workers, the army too was no doubt underpaid and under resourced, with correspondingly low morale. There was no will to proceed, and no spare resources to waste.

Map of Sinai peninsula showing route of the Hebrews' Exodus.

Credit: Pamphlet – See The Good Land.

Having crossed into the Sinai peninsula the Hebrews proceeded south beside the Red Sea, finding an oasis at Elim. Within two months, they moved on, and complaining of hunger, they were able to collect birds which had fallen out of the sky, and a sort of fungus which blossomed in the morning dew (referred to as 'Manna from heaven'). There is the possibility of truth in this, as migrating flocks of birds can die of exhaustion in flight over arid areas, and this fungus bloom has been seen, which, as recorded, shrivels in the sun. They continued south to Rephidim, where water was hard to find for them and their animals. There were attacks from Amalekites, nomads in the Sinai peninsula who regarded the oases as their own.

We now hear of Joshua as a young man for the first time. He is charged with raising a force to repel the attacks, which it seems was difficult but ultimately successful, so Moses made much of the celebrations. Three months after leaving Egypt, they had reached Mount Sinai, and had met up with Jethro, Moses' father-in-law from Midian. There they settled, forming a semi-permanent 'refugee camp'.

We looked at Exodus some time ago, and these thoughts are mine, not those of the U3A study group. Final instalment to follow. MD

Notice from our Hon Treasurer, Sue Davies

Many thanks to all those members who have renewed their membership for 2021/22, but we would like to remind everyone that subscriptions are due on 1st May each year. Please could those who have not yet done so, arrange for a bank transfer to the SAS account or send a cheque, payable to SAS, to Sue Davies, Hon Treasurer and Membership secretary. (Full details are on the attached membership form). If this could be done as soon as possible, we can then distribute 2021/22 membership cards at the meeting in September.

It has also become apparent that a small number of memberships paid by Standing Order are no longer paying the correct amount. Sue will be in contact with the individuals concerned to highlight this and agree payment but for anyone with a standing order paid on or after 1st May each year, please could you check that this is for the correct amount. Contact: suedavies64@btinternet.com



Southampton Archaeology Society

Lecture: Tuesday 14th September 2021 7.30pm

Venue: St Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH

If Walls Could Talk: recent discoveries from the Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project.

Speaker – Karen Wardley

Interest and appreciation of historical graffiti is growing both nationally and internationally. These enigmatic marks, previously overlooked and ignored by archaeologists and historians, are now being studied in depth and providing many new insights into the past. The Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project continues to record and interpret these finds in churches and historical buildings across the county. Our discoveries are revealing fascinating stories previously untold. This talk will demonstrate the range of our findings, including those made by the SAS graffiti team.

Karen Wardley was Southampton City Council's Arts and Heritage Collections Manager for many years. Karen is now Co-ordinator of the Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project.

Lectures are free to members and £3 for guests. Coffee/tea available from 7.00pm.

This will be the first lecture in our 2021/2022 programme and will take place subject to COVID guidelines current in September 2021, and with advice from our insurers. Masks should be worn while not seated.

[* Previous Talks and Lectures | The Churches Conservation Trust](#)

Enjoy watching and accessing all of our previous lectures from leading experts and academics, all completely free of charge – see www.visitchurches.org.uk

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; we hope to resume this, subject to current restrictions. Talks are free to paid-up SAS members, £3 to guests.

Subscription Rates 2021/22

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

Contact us

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2020-2021 SAS Committee

Chair – Martyn Dowell

Vice-Chair – John Langran

Hon Treasurer – Sue Davies

Hon Secretary – Mandy Kesby

General Committee Members – Rowan Bright, Chris Evans, Karen Wardley, Sarah Hanna, Matt Garner. Co-opted: Sam Edwards. Archaeology Advisor: Dr Andy Russel.

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

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.