



Southampton Archaeology Society

July 2023 Newsletter

Dear members

Following our AGM in May and Study Day in June, we took part in the St James Park Summer Festival (Shirley) on 24th June, where we made contact with many visitors, and groups such as Shirley Local History Society and Sholing Valleys Study Centre. Thanks to the members who set up and helped with the displays, on a very hot day.

This weekend sees the start of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) **Festival of Archaeology 2023** (15th to 30th July: visit www.archaeologyuk.org/festival/). The theme is 'Archaeology and Creativity' with events held nationwide and online. We'll be visiting excavations at the National Trust Ankerwycke site on 29th July (details on back page); and we've organised two Summer Walks for members in Southampton's Old Town, on 27th July and 11th August, both at 11.00am. Spaces are available for both dates (booking form attached).

At the SAS AGM in May we heard the sad news of the death of Sheila Thomson, former Southampton Archivist and Hon Secretary of the Society, and an active supporter for many years. Thanks to Martyn Dowell for his appreciation of Sheila's life. A short report of the AGM appears below, and John Langran presents the results of our Questionnaire from June 2023 with plans for activities later in the year: and we would welcome further responses from any member who would still like to contribute their views (the Questionnaire is attached below). Many thanks to John for his article on *The End of Roman Britain*, continuing a discussion from the last newsletter in April, with a number of interesting theories. Finally we feature a summary of the talks presented at our Study Day on **Slavery, Colonialism and Empire: a Southampton perspective**, with special thanks to Mandy Kesby for her detailed notes and photographs. Please see our website www.southamptonarchaeology.uk for a longer version of the talks.

The programme for our 2023/2024 lecture series is almost complete and a list of the speakers and topics is attached below. We're awaiting further information about the talks and speakers which will be available from September. The first two talks will be: **September 12** - Professor Michael Fulford of University of Reading on his long-running excavations at Silchester, Hampshire (recent work); and on **October 10** we welcome the new President of Southampton Archaeology Society, Professor Josh Pollard (University of Southampton) talking about the prehistoric landscape of Avebury, Wiltshire. Josh has excavated many sites around Avebury and we look forward to learning new insights from his work.

I hope you enjoy a great summer of archaeology, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Sarah

Report on Southampton Archaeology Society AGM 9th May 2023

The AGM was held at St Joseph's Hall with 38 members in attendance. John Langran, Chair, spoke about the Society's activities and future plans, and Sue Davies, Treasurer presented the accounts with a healthy balance at the end of the year. The committee was elected with no change among the officers, and one new member Brian de Lara. John thanked the three retiring committee members Rowan Bright, Karen Wardley and Sam Edwards. The formal meeting was followed by a glass of wine and nibbles, and the evening ended with a talk by Andy Russel about the Southampton City Archaeology Unit's recent work (a report is now available on the SAS website www.southamptonarchaeology.uk). For members who did not attend the meeting, the AGM papers are attached or enclosed with this newsletter.

Obituary for Sheila Thomson 11th September 1929 to 1st May 2023

We were sorry to hear in May that Sheila Thomson had died aged ninety four. Sheila was a very active member of the SAS (formerly SCMAS) committee for 42 years.

I first met Sheila Thomson in the 1970s, having recently joined SCMAS as it then was. She had already been City Archivist for some time, and was also Hon Secretary of the Society. Former member Bill White remembers that she regularly contributed to the Society's 'Bulletin' in those days, although she never was a practical archaeologist, preferring to keep her hands clean! Sheila remained Hon Secretary on and off, until she handed over to Anna Welch, who found her generous in time and advice to her successor.



Sheila Thomson and a SAS colleague taking part in a survey of earthworks at Lordshill, 1990s. Photo: A Russel

As Archivist she always welcomed us into her department and helped in our searches. Sheila also published learned articles, having 'a frighteningly huge knowledge of Southampton's history' (Anna's words). Memorable among these were a study of landowning women in the town in the medieval period; and the booklet *Southampton in 1620 and the Mayflower*, with accompanying map, produced for an exhibition in 1970 (350th Mayflower anniversary) and now displayed in the Mayflower Exhibition at Westgate. At one point Sheila was awarded an Honorary Doctorate for her efforts, although she was very modest about this, as few people knew about it! As well as academic contributions, Sheila took a leading role in catering for society events such as the Christmas party. She would spend hours cutting up ingredients for canapés based on Ritz biscuits and the like, making quite a show.

As a person Sheila could seem a little forbidding, as she did not suffer fools gladly, but a few words of conversation easily broke the ice. She had a great love of reading and her house was packed with books, especially the cloakroom, a long narrow room lined on either side, leading to the toilet at the end! In earlier years, she went everywhere on her moped which was equipped with a large padded carrying box. Later she had a car in which she gave Anna lifts to meetings, an experience with no dull moments apparently! Anna's words sum all this up: Huge in intellect, knowledge and legacy.

Martyn Dowell

Several members of SAS attended Sheila's funeral on 23rd May, and thanks to members and others who sent their recollections of Sheila. As a tribute to her memory we have posted an article on the SAS website www.southamptonarchaeology.uk about Sheila's work on the 1620 exhibition, thanks to Godfrey Collyer. See Southampton's Westgate exhibition is open on Sundays 10.00am to 3.00pm,.

A Positive Response to our Membership Interests Survey

At the beginning of June this year we issued a short questionnaire to our members which aimed to identify interest from amongst SAS members in possible projects and activities that we might offer. Thank you to all those who submitted their views. The responses came from about 25% of our members, and although this is a minority the replies showed sufficient support for us to plan with a degree of confidence.

For example, our visit to Ankerwycke and Runnymede is coming up on the 29th July after 11 members expressed interest in their response to the questionnaire, and we hope others will join too (please see the notice below, on last page). Thank you to James Brown for facilitating this. We are aiming to get some activity underway at the Roman site of Curbridge, near Botley in the early Autumn. Also, Historic England's final approval for the Monitoring Scheduled Monuments Project is slightly delayed but that should be ready to go in the Autumn. It is hoped that we can approach this by forming a small self-sustaining group of volunteers, who can start work after a day of training on a specific site.

In the longer term we aim to set up a guided D-Day Walk in Southampton which will link to the 80th Anniversary of the landings in 2024. You were also interested in other projects such as the potential for test excavations on Southampton Common, and a small-scale excavation at St Denys Church. They are awaiting permissions but may take place next year.

The broad activity areas that you expressed interest in participating with include: Archive Research, Field Walking, Excavation and Geophysical Surveying. This will help us to identify further activities to attract support from amongst our membership. Members who responded to the survey will be approached when opportunities in their interest areas materialise, and other members of SAS will be able to join in.

We now can look forward to offering some really exciting projects for members over the next year or so. Thank you for your support.

John Langran

The End of Roman Britain

The transition from Roman Britain to Saxon England is a process which intrigues me. Archaeology is providing a version of history which contradicts what was I was taught at school. It seems that Saxon hordes did not invade and overwhelm the Romanised British and drive their remnants to the Celtic fringe. Modern DNA evidence shows that they remained amongst us. We have also struggled to find actual evidence of conflict. That raises the question of what really happened? We enjoyed the recent lecture by Richard Henry on *Fractured Britannia - material culture and the end of Roman Britain* (March 14th) which explored patterns in the archaeological finds from this period. I am also grateful to Martyn Dowell for his piece in our April 2023 newsletter which explores some of these themes.



Robin Fleming's book *Britain after Rome* memorably suggests that the Saxons arrived to discover abandoned towns with livestock grazing amongst the ruins. The question is why were the trappings of "Romanisation" abandoned so rapidly? In their book *UnRoman Britain* Miles Russell and Stuart Laycock argue that Britons were not very "Roman" in the first place. Within 25-30 years after AD410 the construction of Roman style buildings, manufacture of Roman style artefacts, occupation of towns and of largescale rural buildings on a significant scale, and possibly the widespread use of coinage had all but disappeared. Also manufacturing and trade declined, with little evidence of goods moving about the country. This was already going on by the time the Saxons appeared in significant numbers.

*Saxon Shore forts in northern and eastern England, including Arbeia:
image from Notitia Dignitatum. (Bodleian Library, Oxford University)*

There is some evidence of Saxon settlement from about AD420 but this only really accelerated in the second half of the century. Russell and Laycock suggest that Roman culture declined not only in areas raided by the Saxons, it did so in areas of central and western Britain as well. Yet in Gaul Roman culture didn't disappear in the same way – particularly in the South. They argue that there is evidence that the British elite did not engage in the same way and they retained that ambivalence towards Rome. They also argue that although Christianity was the official religion of the Roman Empire, in Britain the archaeological and historical evidence for this is relatively sparse. Another issue may be that Roman taxes could have caused of resentment especially when the army stopped providing adequate protection. Apparently there is evidence of resistance to taxation within the Empire and consequent willingness to transfer loyalties towards “barbarians”.

There have been other theories. One is that a catastrophe such as plague weakened the population and enabled invaders to take over territory. There is evidence of a plague in the Roman Empire in the mid-4th century but Russell and Laycock suggest that this would have been too late to influence matters. Climate change may have been another factor as temperatures were in long term gradual decline. However, the change would not have been so significant in the specific time period. They also offer another explanation: that the Romano-British identity itself was relatively shallow and that people continued to cleave more to their tribal identity. There is evidence of conflict between the re-emerging tribal identities during this period, and this fragmentation could be one of the factors in rapid de-Romanisation. By contrast in Gaul the integrating influence of the Church was greater and Roman identity was more embedded.

I have one further reflection on these arguments. The architects of the British Empire were heavily influenced by an understanding of Roman history. They saw themselves as reshaping the lives of their subjects into an enduring British model. The reality has proved more ephemeral with local cultures and identities reasserting themselves following independence. Perhaps that is the lesson for all Empires.

John Langran

Sources: Robin Fleming - *Britain after Rome: The Fall and Rise*. Penguin Books 2011

Miles Russell and Stuart Laycock - *UnRoman Britain: exposing the great myth of Britannia*. The History Press 2010

Study Day - Slavery, Colonialism and Empire: a Southampton perspective.



Our Study Day on Saturday 10th June attracted an audience of 53 members and others, who enjoyed enthralling lectures from academic, professional and local researchers. They explored the themes of slavery and colonialism from the 18th century to our own times, including issues such as the legacy of inequality and racism. Some lively discussions arose on the day, and much food for thought.

Display on Slavery and Southampton, via sugar processing and plantation owning families, to the Abolition movement.

Thanks to Mandy Kesby.

Introduction to Atlantic Slavery by Christer Petley

Christer set the scene for the world history of enslavement, from prehistoric times to the ancient Greeks and Romans, Anglo Saxons and European serfdom. The institution of slavery involves exploitation, social exclusion and possession, and depends on violence and arbitrary power; enslaved people live with the

constant threat of uncertainty. Atlantic slavery was the largest forced migration in history, with 12.5 million people transported from Africa to Brazil, the Caribbean and north America, from 1525 until the trade ceased in 1866. Beginning with Portugal and Spain, the Netherlands, England and France were all involved in the trade, with the English predominant from the late 17th century. In contrast to earlier times enslaved Africans were rarely able to gain their freedom, and children inherited their enslaved status through the female line. A 'Triangular Trade' in the North Atlantic developed with the exchange of European goods including metal and weapons, for enslaved Africans to be transported across the Atlantic for sale, while commodities such as sugar, cotton and tobacco were brought back for processing in Europe.

The movement for Abolition in Britain started in the 1780s and the slave trade was abolished here in 1807 (though countries such as the Netherlands did so earlier). But slavery in British territories did not end until 1838 after slave rebellions in Jamaica, and vast sums being paid in compensation – to the slave-owners!

Southampton and the Transatlantic Slave Trade by *Maria Newbery*

Maria has studied trade patterns in Southampton from medieval times, and its situation on Southampton Water meant the port was never a hub for the Atlantic slave trade, unlike Bristol. There is evidence for a few journeys which may be linked with the slave trade in the late 1780/90s: in 1787 the ship 'Hero' (which had been used for slave trading) left for Africa; in 1789 she again sailed towards Africa but ran aground and was lost. In 1787 the ship 'John' (also formerly used in the slave trade) owned by a London shipping company, sailed under Captain Willoughby to Africa and on to Kingston, Jamaica, with 119 captives, of whom 110 survived. Another ship 'Kingston' sailed several times to Oporto and Brazil.

Residents of Southampton were involved with slave plantations in Barbados and Jamaica, including local MP Brian Edwards (owner of Polygon House) who also owned four plantations, and was a prominent anti-abolitionist. His story features in a current exhibition in Southampton Stories at SeaCity Museum, **Sugar Politics & Money**, which reveals how Southampton families and businesses benefitted from the labour of enslaved people and their products.

Southampton's Eighteenth Century Sugar House by *Andy Russel*

Andy told us his 7x great grandmother was born in St Kitts, enslaved by a brutal owner: she later married an abolitionist preacher and came to England. Southampton has a long history of involvement with sugar and records from 1477 indicate sugar loaves being sent to a London apothecary, for use to sweeten medicine which was often unpalatable. At that time sugar would have been imported from Madeira.

A sugar house was built in 1742 on the site of the Friary in Southampton (demolishing a grand Tudor mansion) by the Brissault family from London, to take advantage of muscovado sugar from Jamaica and also using the clean water supply created for the Friary in medieval times. The building was seven stories high to allow for the refining process from boiling sugar, draining it in large conical moulds and removing impurities repeatedly, until white sugar was obtained. It was dried slowly and wrapped in blue paper, to highlight the whiteness. But Brissaults went bankrupt after little more than thirty years and in 1775 the assets were auctioned at the Star Hotel in High Street. The buildings later had other uses such as a hospital and a furniture warehouse, but the sugar house itself was demolished after suffering bomb damage in WW 2. During excavations in 1984 large boulders from the Friary building were found used as foundations for the sugar house. Many fragments of sugar moulds were recovered, those for coarse sugar three feet tall, with fine sugar moulds about 15 inches tall: also found were drip bowls for molasses.

*Reconstructed large sugar mould (3' high).
Southampton City Council*



Stories of Slavery from Bevois Mount by *Ally Hayes and Wendy Stokes*

The novels of **Jane Austen**, a resident of Southampton in late 18th century, contain references connected with slavery, indicating this was not considered unusual at the time. Other residents of the town also owned slaves, made money from the labour of enslaved people, or had been enslaved.



John Langran introduces the afternoon session at Southampton City Art Gallery lecture theatre.

Photo: Mandy Kesby.

The **Jessop family** owned an estate in Barbados, and an inventory of 1736 lists the slaves, including skilled workers and their values. The estate later passed to **Job Ede** who owned plantations in Nevis also. In 1835 he moved his family to Southampton where he built **Clayfield Lodge** near The Avenue. Many of his later descendants benefitted from 'independent means'.

Portswood House was owned by Walter Taylor (maker of wooden blocks for sailing ships), and he commissioned a painting showing a New Year's Eve party at his house where a black person, Anthony Desource, and his young son were portrayed. Anthony worked for the Taylor family until Walter's mother Maria Taylor died.

Robert Sheddons had married the daughter of a Virginia plantation owner, with the idea of making money and going into public office. When the American Revolution started he moved to Bermuda, returning to London in 1783. In 1784 Sheddons purchased Stewart Castle Plantation and another estate, Paulerspury. His son inherited the plantations and the people, retired at the age of 33 and became Sheriff of Hampshire, buying **Brookfield House** on the banks of the Hamble river, and **Bevois Mount House** in Southampton. In the 1870s Rev. Thomas Pinckney and his wife Elizabeth lived in a terraced house in Avenue Road. They were a mixed-race couple, he a black man and she a white Englishwoman. He was born in Charleston Ca and ordained into the Episcopalian Church, and went to Liberia as a missionary to help freed slaves. He returned to the USA due to ill-health, but the couple suffered discrimination and moved to England. He died in 1887 and is buried with his wife at the Old Cemetery on Southampton Common.

Southampton and Anti-slavery by John Oldfield

Recent emphasis has shifted from the story of Abolition, to the true history of Britain's long involvement in the slave trade, before the campaign for abolition began in the late 1780s. Twelve men led by Thomas Clarkson formed a Society for Abolition, including both business men and reformers. Artefacts and literature were produced to advertise and provide funds for the movement, such as the Wedgewood cameo of a slave in manacles, also images and descriptions of slave ships. Petitioners bombarded the government and in 1792, some 500 petitions for abolition were presented to parliament. Further petitions were put forward across the country to MPs, altogether 5000 petitions signed by more than 1.5m people, and the trade was abolished in 1807 by Act of Parliament. But by 1823 the movement for the abolition of colonial slavery was stepped up, and petitions put forward together with financial reports and circulating literature. The movement centred on London and involved many women's groups. In Southampton in 1823, Clarkson set up an Anti-Slavery Society and a petition was presented successfully in 1828, despite opposition from the "West Indian" interest. Southampton provided a platform for black abolitionists in the 1850s, with former American slaves such as W Wells Brown and Samuel Ringold Ward speaking to large crowds in the town, and meetings were often repeated by popular demand.

The local Anti-Slavery Society joined with the national campaign and attended meetings of the world movement in London. The Boston Bazaar came into being where women supplied goods to be sold to raise funds for the cause, which continued into the American Civil War. Southampton was not a typical Abolition town, most of which were big industrial cities like Leeds.

Abel Rous Dottin MP: how sugar, politics and money changed Southampton by Liz Batten

Abel Rous Dottin lived at **Bugle Hall** in Southampton and became MP for the town (1826-31; 1835-41). He owned a Barbados plantation with 189 slaves, receiving compensation of £3,809 after emancipation (D Olusoga). He was involved in the expansion of railways in England, and arranged the sale of Bugle Hall to Manchester & Southampton Railway Company in 1841 for £4,500, which did not proceed. The property was later sold piecemeal for building materials, and only two gate posts remain in Cuckoo Lane.

Dottin was a founder of the Southampton & London Railway and the Dock Company and later he became a director of the London & South Western Railway, initiating the railway for Southampton and reclamation of

land for new docks here. He hoped to link the railway to the port and encourage ship passengers to disembark at Southampton and take the train on to London. Southampton Town Council sold the land where the docks now stand to the Docks & Harbour Company for £5,000. The face of Southampton began to change with gradual reclamation of the land beneath the walls and around the bay, where Central station was built. A number of industries moved into this area, being well served by the docks and the railway.

After Abolition: Britain and slavery in Africa in the nineteenth century by *Chris Prior*

One consequence of abolition of slavery was a change in England's relationship with Africa. The continent was still thought of as the "home of slaves" and during the 19th and 20th centuries attempts were made to enforce abolition there and throughout the world. A Naval blockade, the West Africa Squadron, was set up in 1808 to intercept ships as they left the African coast. After capture of slave trading vessels the captives were given clothes, food and drink and taken to Freetown in Sierra Leone - if returned to their homes, it was likely they would be recaptured by the slavers. During this period 1,635 ships were captured with around 160,000 African captives on board, though many more ships managed to evade the blockades. But with fewer slaves coming out of Africa, the price became inflated and Portuguese and Spanish traders moved south to Angola to avoid the blockade. Portugal eventually stopped trading in slaves, but the trade carried on.

The Victorian traveller and missionary, David Livingstone became a "hero", campaigning for "Christianity, civilisation and capitalism" to expand British trade in Africa. The British Geographical Society also helped to 'open up' areas of Africa for trade. On his death, Livingstone's body was brought to Southampton to start the journey to London by train for burial.

One example of the success of religion in Africa is illustrated by the story of Samuel Ajayi Crowther, born in 1806 in Oyo, Western Nigeria. He was captured and transported by the Portuguese but his ship was intercepted, with 85 survivors being sent to Sierra Leone. Crowther was baptised and educated in the evangelical church and ordained as a priest with the Church Missionary Society, and he became the first African Bishop of the Anglican Church.

Edward Lugard was first Governor of Northern Nigeria and in the early 20th century he sought to eradicate slavery: this area was then the largest holder of slaves in the world. Rulers took many concubines in order to control the women and to increase their own power and wealth and the size of their households, making the Caliphate larger. Lugard tried to collaborate with the Caliphate but they argued that their concubines were married and not slaves (although not free to leave).

Change took place very slowly and people in Britain and Europe believed Africans had to be "saved from themselves", as they were thought "inferior" in intelligence – the basis of "scientific racism". Imperial Administration was established and consolidated in many parts of Africa between 1887 and 1897. The British preferred stable governments in their colonies which tended to be authoritarian, and the fight against slavery was used to support the status quo. Racist regimes developed in South Africa and Rhodesia; but in West Africa local farmers were encouraged to set up co-operatives and trained as capitalists, rather than using slave labour.

Mandy Kesby (edited).

A longer report of all the Study Day talks can be found on the SAS website www.southamptonarchaeology.uk.

SAS members' visit to Runnymede and Ankerwycke - Saturday 29th July

In January this year we enjoyed a Zoom lecture from James Brown, National Trust Regional Officer for Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex, about last year's excavations at Ankerwycke and Runnymede. We are organising a visit to this year's excavations under James' guidance. A summary of James' January Lecture **Ankerwycke Revealed, Part of the "Runnymede Explored Project** is available on our website, located in the [Events Archive](http://www.southamptonarchaeology.uk): <http://www.southamptonarchaeology.uk>. James is undertaking a second season of excavations at Ankerwycke Priory with volunteers from Berkshire and Surrey Archaeological Societies.

Our visit will take place on Saturday 29th July. The plan is for SAS members to travel independently (where possible sharing transport) to **Runnymede TW20 0AE (for Satnav)** at Egham, near Old Windsor, Surrey, where there is a National Trust carpark, and rendezvous at the Café on site for **11.00am** approx. It's called the Magna Carta Tearoom: <https://goo.gl/maps/TKHWbtMZEbJZb8kV9>. For more information please see nationaltrust.org.uk/Runnymede.

We will then head to Ankerwycke, sharing cars. The visit will be around two hours, and back to Runnymede at ~13:00 for lunch. A video of the 2023 dig can be viewed on the NT website at:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/members-area>



Right: Drone image of the 2022 excavation, Trench 2 with Ankerwycke Priory ruins (left centre). Photo: J Brown

There could be optional time to explore the Runnymede side of the river and various memorials, and the exhibition: **Uncovering Runnymede and Ankerwycke**, open daily until 9th October; also monuments such as Magna Carta and the Royal Air Force Memorial. The visit is expected to take three hours minimum, with journey times approximately 1 hour each way. More details will follow but in the meantime you can respond to me as soon as possible to express your interest. In the response please let us know whether:

- a) You can arrange own transport
- b) If so can you offer a lift to other members
- c) If you are looking for a lift

We will try to help to form Car Shares for the occasion. However, if members can form their own "friendship groups" to fill a car then that would be fine. We look forward to you joining us there.

Contact: John Langran at john.langran@hotmail.com or phone 07540 958614.

www.southamptonarchaeology.uk

 Southampton Archaeology Society



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Our lectures normally take place in St. Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH, 7.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, subject to Covid restrictions as current. Refreshments are available from 7.00pm. Talks are free to paid-up SAS members, £3 to guests.

Subscription Rates 2023/24

Individuals	£12.00
Senior Citizens	£10.00
Juniors/Students	£10.00
Family	£16.00

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2022-2023 SAS Committee

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Vice-Chair – Martyn Dowell

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Committee Members – Sarah Hanna, Matt Garner, James Brown, Brian de Lara.
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.