



Southampton Archaeology Society

October 2020 Newsletter

Dear members

I hope that you are all well and keeping safe now the autumn weather is here. The value our health and the need to stay in contact with friends and families seem most vital while the future looks so uncertain.

Having launched our new lecture programme in September with a great talk from Helen Wallbridge about **D-Day: Stories from the Walls** (see report inside), we were disappointed to have to cancel our October AGM, and the SAS committee are working to deliver lectures on Zoom over the next few months, starting in November (see foot of page). We have to also announce a change to our December event, as Jigfoot have cancelled their performance this year due to illness, and of course we cannot consider our usual buffet and wine in present circumstances. In its place we have arranged a double bill with Michael O'Leary telling a seasonal tale, followed by Andy Russel talking about the Southampton Archaeology Unit's work this year, to be shown on Zoom. Please see the back page of the newsletter for details on joining the Zoom talks. The modified lecture list is attached, with advance notice of our Mayflower Study Day 2021, now re-scheduled to Saturday 24th April 2021 (but no tickets will be issued until nearer to the date).

You may like to know that Southampton Archaeology Society has been invited to take part in consultations for the City Council's bid for Southampton City of Culture 2025, a bold step for the City and we wish them well. Talks are starting next month so we'll report to back to you as they progress.

Many thanks to Martyn Dowell for his account of Abram's journey into Canaan, as the Old Testament study group continue their biblical adventures; and to Julian Porter for telling us about the exhibition on **Provisioning the Pilgrims**, from See Southampton guides. I hope members may have the opportunity to enjoy some of the activities mentioned below during the next few weeks, and we look forward and hope for better times next year.

Sarah

SAS Lecture 10th November 2020 7.00pm (on Zoom):

Mayflower Lives - building a New Jerusalem in the New World: speaker Martyn Whittock

In 1620, 102 ill-prepared asylum seekers landed two months later than planned, in the wrong place on the eastern coast of North America. By the next summer, half of them were dead. Yet, from this inauspicious beginning, the impact of the Mayflower settlement still resonates 400 years later. By examining the story of this little community we can explore key aspects of why this venture occurred; its significance within the English settlement of North America; the impact on Native American communities; and why the role of Plymouth Colony became central to the cultural DNA and mythology of the United States.

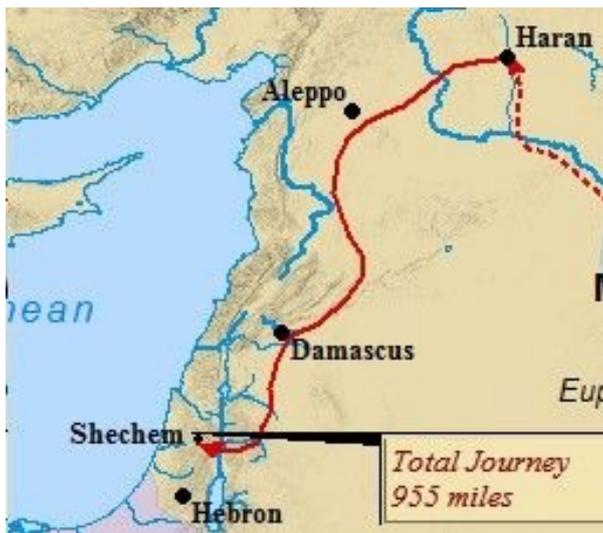


*Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor
by William Formby Halsall 1882.*

*Speaker: Martyn Whittock graduated in Politics from Bristol University in 1980, where his special study was in 17th century radical Christian politics and theology. After teaching history for 35 years he retired in 2016 to devote more time to writing. His books include both history textbooks and adult history books. He has returned to the Christian radicals in **When God Was King** (2018) and **Mayflower Lives** (2019), which explores stories of 14 men, women and children who were part of the Mayflower voyage and the settlement of New England.*

As I have said, we began with later narratives and moved backward as we acquired more knowledge and understanding. Eventually we felt able to tackle Genesis Chapter 12, where Abram's story begins. Two things must be kept in mind throughout. The narrative we have was composed from three separate sources, a Judean, an Israeli, and a 'priestly' account, all of which must post date Solomon's united empire, and none of which survive. These were combined and edited, it is believed, by Ezra, after the return from Babylon, around 500bc. When you realise that Abram's journey took place around 1800bc, you cannot expect the details or the attitudes of that remote time to be truly represented, although the outline of his achievements is no doubt reliable enough.

It is reported that Abram came from Ur, 'the place where he was born', but it is pretty obvious he didn't. His family and his compatriots were living in and around Haran, in Iraq today, in ancient Mari. Rather difficult to be born hundreds of miles away from your parents! Furthermore he was an experienced pastoralist, not a city dweller. Surviving records found in the ruins of the Mari palace tell of the 'Benjamites' living a semi nomadic life in the north of their territory as a thorn in the side, always trampling farmers' crops and stealing their livestock. How could such a mistake arise? Perhaps some prophet, now forgotten, declared the next great leader would come from Ur, so Abram's origin was altered, but more likely it is an error in translation. You may know that ancient written Hebrew is like ancient Egyptian, composed only of consonants, more like a shorthand, and vowels have to be 'understood', so Ur would simply be written 'R'. So would places called Ar, Er, Ir, Or, and Ra, Re, Ri, Ro, Ru. His village may well have been called one of those.



Journey of Abram into Canaan, as told in Genesis Ch 12. (Map – Pinterest)

Abram decided to migrate with his family and go south, crossing 'The Flood' (the river Euphrates) on the way. Now you see how later narratives can throw light on the earlier ones! He may have been motivated by political change, as Hammurabi was extending his Babylonian empire at about that time, and may not have tolerated unruly Hebrew tribes. He enters Canaan, which seems to be occupied only by small sovereign fortified towns with their hinterlands of fields and farms. There is evidently much waste land, ideal for free travel and for use by semi nomadic pastoralists. It would seem he was later joined by more people, for the narrator tells us in Ch17 that the group was now so large that he would refer to them as

'Abraham', the plural. He also says Abram was 99 years old, and had lived in Canaan 23 years. I think we should assume he died at around this time, whatever his true age, and that we are now dealing with the tribe of Abraham as a whole. The stories seem still to be about an individual, and perhaps some are, but there is a habit in ancient Hebrew of referring to sovereign countries, for example, as 'he'.

Later we are told that Abraham died at 175 years old. This, I think, is when the tribal name Abraham died out. Meanwhile, Sarai had become Sarah, meaning 'princess', or more likely in this case, matriarch, another clue that Abram had died earlier. It is difficult to know if Isaac and perhaps others are tribal plurals or true individuals, but with Joseph it is hard to imagine him as anything but a real person, driven out of Canaan and ending up a servant to Potifar in Egypt, who soon noticed his abilities. But that's another story.

Bibliography

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

Stories from the Walls – American WW2 graffiti in Southampton: Helen Wallbridge

Helen Wallbridge was the speaker for our first lecture in September, attended by 25 members at St Joseph's Hall. Helen works with the Maritime Archaeology Trust as leader of a volunteer-based project funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, from April 2019 and now extended to April 2021. The aim was to fully record and where possible identify the names of individual American service personnel who left their names on the 'American Wall' (aka 'D-Day Wall'), and nearby brick walls in the Western Esplanade, Southampton. Helen explained the background to the project from the outbreak of WW2 in 1939, with the earliest evacuations and the despatch of the British Expeditionary Force to Europe late in 1939, and their return from Dunkirk after the fall of France in May 1940. Following the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, which hit Southampton hard and led to closure of the Docks, the USA joined hostilities in 1942 after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. Southampton's Docks re-opened with help from the USA, to receive military equipment under the 'lend-lease agreement' which continued to 1944. By 1943 the Allies were planning an invasion of Europe to take place in mid-1944, initially based at South Western House in Southampton.

South Hampshire became a centre for the manufacture of Mulberry Harbours, concrete jetties to be floated over to the invasion area to provide docks for the import of troops and equipment. Southampton was one of the main embarkation ports for troops to fight in Europe from June 1944 (and for the return of wounded men and prisoners of war). The US Navy established the '14th Major Port' at Hoglands Park, and there were huge numbers of troops and vehicles in the streets of Southampton in the build-up to D-Day (6th June 1944), with many having to embark three days before to await the signal. It is estimated that during 1944/5 about three and a half million men left from Southampton to fight in Europe.

The Wall Whilst waiting to embark, around 100 men passed the time by inscribing their names and personal information on walls close to the docks near the Westgate: on the wall of a compound opposite and a row of terraced houses (now demolished but the marked bricks said to have been saved) near to the Arcades. The names are shown 'in situ' among photographs from Gill Child's collection of 'Old Southampton Photos', and the significance of the graffiti was recognised in the 1970s, after one of the named men (Walter Wells) was contacted following an appeal to a newspaper in his home town. The project's work to record the graffiti on the Wall began with a search of the local Heritage Environment Record (HER), contact with Southampton Archaeology Unit and its Heritage Collections, and local information from Southampton Archives and online.



"Eddie Meyer Illinois", within landing craft. Date 7/21/44. Photo S Hanna

An initial list of identifiable names was compiled and online searches undertaken using US military records, also local newspapers both here and in the US, and a breakthrough was made with one man, Curt Hodges, whose obituary was found and posted on Facebook. This prompted a reply from his daughter, and from this volunteers were able to identify seven other names belonging to the same unit (according to a Roster published online). They followed this group from being drafted from College in 1944, landing in the UK, to training in the Cotswolds until December when they embarked for France. On arrival there they could not disembark for four days but ended up in snow in the Ardennes. They were short of food and weapons in the midst of the Battle of the Bulge wearing only summer uniforms, resulting in some men suffering frostbite. The project also came across other Rosters such as eight men who left their names, from a QM Gasoline Supply company: they were all coloured soldiers and tracing them proved more difficult. There is a similar wall in Weymouth where many US units embarked for the D-Day invasion, and in several towns in Europe where American troops were fighting, and it seems to have become a tradition for them to leave their marks, which might be recognised by later units passing through during the invasion.

The survey was initially able to follow up the stories of 39 individual names in depth, but could find little information about many more, while other marks had become eroded or obscured over time. The visibility of the marks is affected by the weather, for instance names appear more clearly after rain, and by using

photogrammetry 58 more names were recorded, and a total of 60 now followed up. The project enlisted help from archaeologist James Miles of Archaeovision using an advanced technique of 'Reflectance Transformation Imaging' (RTI) which they hope will enable them to decipher more names.



Workshop demonstrating use of RTI at the American Wall, (Helen Wallbridge centre) 6th March 2020. Photo M Garner

The Wall can be visited at any time, situated almost opposite the Westgate with a smaller directly behind it, made up of marked bricks reclaimed from demolished buildings nearby. A digital archive has been created at maritimearchaeologytrust.org, with an updated version of Helen's talk, a 3-D model of the walls, with lists of names and images of the graffiti, photographs and documents. An outreach programme includes a free exhibition 'In the Footsteps of Pilgrims and Soldiers' displayed in the foyer of the De Vere Grand Hotel (who own the Wall); also Walking Tours (guided and self-guided) and School Education Packs, with 'geo-caching' to be added soon.

Sarah Hanna

Two exhibitions from Mayflower 400 programme:

Wampun Exhibition until Sunday 8th November at The Pavilion, SeaCity Museum, Southampton.

This wonderful exhibition tells the story of the Wampanoag people who lived in the place where Mayflower came to shore in November 1621, and who helped the 'Pilgrims' survive their first winter in the New World. This had been their home for 12,000 years, where they had evolved a rich culture based around the use of beads made from two types of shell, white beads from whelk and purple beads from quahog shells, which were woven into patterns telling the story of their people. Three films made by their descendants describe the manufacture of beads and the ways of weaving the patterns, with displays of the shells and examples of beads and the artefacts made from them.



Left: Examples of shells and beads, and a modern bow drill used to make the beads, which is a 6 stage process.

Right: The new wampun belt made for this exhibition, showing symbols such as the White Pine, the Eagle and Turtle as well as fish and animals hunted by the Wampanoag peoples.



When the exhibition closes in Southampton it will be touring to museums around the country, such as The Box in Plymouth, recently opened to celebrate the Mayflower 400 anniversary. SeaCity Museum is open daily 10.00am to 4.00pm and tickets for The Pavilion can be booked in advance on 023 8083 4536 (cost adults £3.50, concs £2.50). General tickets are available at seacitymuseum@southampton.org.

Provisioning the Pilgrims, Westgate Tower, Western Esplanade, Southampton

In 2019 See Southampton guides organised a programme of public talks telling the story of the Mayflower and Speedwell in Southampton, which they supplemented with a booklet (reviewed by Sarah Hanna in the last SAS newsletter). The talks and booklet were further supported by a programme of city walks visiting various locations in the old town associated with the Mayflower and Speedwell. Twelve months ago See Southampton were granted the use of the Westgate Tower, located at the spot from where the Mayflower and Speedwell left for America, which they decided to use for an exhibition about provisioning the two ships in Southampton. The exhibition, which is free, opened a few weeks ago to excellent reviews. It is

open on Sundays from 10am to 3pm for pre-booked visits (info@seesouthampton.co.uk) to comply with Covid19 regulations. The size of the tower means that a limited number of people can visit at any one time. Further details on opening times and how to book can be found on See Southampton's Facebook page. It will also be open on Tuesday and Thursday of the autumn half term week from 10am to 3pm.

I visited the first week it was opened. The displays are excellent and I can thoroughly recommend it to all our members. Be aware however that the long flight of steps up to the Tower entrance may be an issue to some.



Mayflower model, with ropes and blocks, displayed in a window recess at Westgate Tower. Photo J Porter



Some of the items that could have been purchased by the pilgrims' party for the voyage. Photo J Porter

I'd like to thank Godfrey Collyer for the above information, and the team at See Southampton.

Julian Porter

An exhibition worth visiting:

Mystery Warrior: The North Berstead Man at The Novium Museum, Chichester

by Sarah Hanna

The Mystery Warrior was found in 2008 when Thames Valley Archaeological Services were excavating the site prior to house building: an Iron Age skeleton accompanied by the most elaborate equipment yet found in England, dating from about 50BC. This included a spectacular crested helmet, shield boss and a sword which had been bent double before burial. From the style of these artefacts and isotope analysis of the Warrior's teeth, his origins were from continental Europe, and it's speculated that he may have fled to Britain as a refugee who had perhaps fought in Gaul against Julius Caesar.



Top: Skeleton of the Mystery Warrior. Below: The sword in its scabbard. Photos D Hanna



Left: Model of the Warrior's helmet with crest. Photo D Hanna

The exhibition is extensive with superb displays on the Iron Age context, burial traditions, manufacture of the artefacts, and it includes an amazing life size model of the helmet and its distinctive decorations.



The displays feature contributions from Butser Ancient Farm, Hampshire Cultural Trust, Manchester Museum Service and other specialists, with funding from the National Heritage Lottery and Berkeley Homes. A series of lectures is associated with the exhibition, available online (details from the website as below). The Novium Museum, Tower Street. Chichester PO19 1QH opens Tuesday to Friday 10.00 – 15.00, and Saturday 11.00 – 16.00. Visits are free with advance booking, see thenovium.org for Chichester Box Office, or tel 01243 816525.

While in Chichester you may also like to visit Fishbourne Roman Palace nearby, which is now open at weekends 10.30 to 16.00, and during autumn half term. Famous for its mosaics and the reconstructed Roman garden, you can also explore the Collections Discovery Centre holding finds from many sites in West Sussex, with ample car parking and a café onsite. Fishbourne Roman Palace, Roman Way, Fishbourne PO19 3QR, Tel 01243 785859 (no booking required). Please see sussexpast.co.uk for details of prices.

SAS Lectures on Zoom

From November 2020 for the next few months we'll be holding our lectures on Zoom, as we've used it successfully for committee meetings since April this year. Lectures will be held on the second Tuesday each month at 7.00pm. In order to connect to Zoom you don't need to install the software on your own computer or device, as we'll send out invitations to join the meeting the day before. This will include a link which you click when you wish to join, and the host will then admit you as soon as possible. The meeting number and password is also given in case they may be needed, and the line will be open for half an hour before the start. We look forward to seeing you on screen!

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 the COVID-19 pandemic we shall be hosting the lectures on Zoom at 7.00pm. Talks are free to paid-up SAS members, who will receive invitations by email in advance.

2019-2020 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.

Subscription Rates 2020/21

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.

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