



Southampton Archaeology Society

October 2021 Newsletter

Dear members

We've been really excited to start our lecture programme with face-to-face meetings again, and the first two talks by Karen Wardley and Prof Josh Pollard were very well-attended. We hope to complete the first part of the series with the next two meetings up to Christmas, although more restrictions may be necessary with Covid infections still rising - we'll keep you posted about any changes.

The Mayflower Study Day in September was a triumph, and we were most grateful to be able to present the day at the Art Gallery Lecture Theatre, which is a wonderful venue. Sadly Andy Russel was taken ill and unable to give his talk, but the other speakers made up for this: a full report will be posted on the SAS website www.southamptonarchaeology.uk as soon as possible. We're glad to hear Andy has since been back at work. And then in early October we enjoyed the **Mayflower Walk** with Godfrey Collyer – a short report appears on the back page of the newsletter.

Many thanks to Karen Wardley for her report on a recent graffiti survey of the **Conduit House**, a vital part of Southampton's water supply for six centuries but now rather neglected – this was the team's first outing since March 2020 and we look forward to more (a report of Karen's September talk is in preparation). Thanks also to Mandy Kesby for her notes from Josh Pollard's talk on the **Living with Monuments** project; and to Martyn Dowell for his report from the Old Testament Studies group, following up from the **Exodus**, the final episode for now. And lastly, **A Short History of Southampton Archaeology Society** marks our 60th anniversary, thanks to Anna Welch for permission to adapt her talk from the 50th anniversary in 2011.

We're looking forward very much to our next lecture on Tuesday 9th November: Jo Bailey, Monuments and Memorials Officer with SCC, reflects on her first year in **2020 – a year to remember**, including restoration of two significant memorials in the city - the Mayflower 1620 Memorial (1913), and Bargate Lions (1743)! For our Christmas entertainment we shall welcome the folk music group **Jigfoot** and partners, featuring the music of an early 20th century group of local gypsies. (see below, and attached posters).

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Sarah



Southampton Archaeology Society

Christmas Social Tuesday 14th December 2021

7 – 9pm at St Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH

Members and Guests £5 pp (please book by 10.12.21)

The Hither Side of the Hedge

with Simon and Jo Harmer, Deb Lewis and Jigfoot

Buffet and drinks – be prompt or you'll miss the wine!

Graffiti Survey of Conduit House

by Karen Wardley



A graffiti survey of the Conduit House was carried out on 9th June 2021 by Matt Garner and Karen Wardley, from Southampton Archaeology Society graffiti team. The Conduit House was part of Southampton's medieval water supply system, originally set up by the Friars Minor in the early 14th century. Water was piped from a spring in the village of Hill (where the medieval stone Conduit Head still survives) to the Friary in the southeast corner of the town. The Friars handed over the system to the town in 1420 and Conduit House (pictured left) was probably built in 1434. The Steward's Book for that year records that over 60 tons of limestone were brought from the Isle of Wight along with the labourers, stone

masons, carpenters and plumbers employed to carry out the substantial works. Conduit House continued in use into the 19th century, with water from two sources to the northwest and northeast feeding into the large tank within the building and flowing out in one lead pipe to supply the town. The building is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, owned and maintained by Southampton City Council.

Graffiti summary and discussion

The surveyors were able to refer to plans and elevations showing the individual stones of the vaulted structure, made by Southampton Museums Archaeology Section Survey Team in 1986 and 1987. The location of graffiti and other markings were added to the drawing of the vault.

Exterior The outer stone surfaces are weathered so it was unlikely that much historical graffiti would survive. The only example found was an upward pointing arrow incised in the lintel over the eastern doorway.



Above: Arrow incised on lintel stone above eastern doorway.

Left: OS benchmark cut into cornerstone. Photos - K. Wardley



On the southeast corner of the building, intriguingly, is a block of stone with two Ordnance Survey (OS) benchmarks. That on the south face is the more usual type of cut mark. On the east face is an inverted cut mark, and what appeared to be a bronze disc set into the stone, with '50' incised on it. This implies that the stone was moved and inverted after the original benchmark was cut, making it unreliable as a surveying reference, so a new benchmark was made to replace it on the adjacent face. The bronze disc is actually a bolt head, part of an unusual "bolt" benchmark,

Right: Inverted cut benchmark, with bolt head. Photo - K Wardley



which is recorded as such on the 1:500 OS map from 1870 as Bolt 40.2 (the significance of the number 50 is open to speculation).



Interior The most striking aspect of the interior of Conduit House is the large number of masons' marks visible on individual blocks. These were noted on a drawing made by Southampton Museums Archaeology Section Survey Team, drawing ref SCM 153, in 1987. However, this drawing only recorded 17 marks and at least 38 more were noted during the current survey. They were all of the same type: a cross with an additional arm, although the orientation varied. The proliferation of these identical marks suggests they may have been made to identify the blocks destined for the Conduit House building. The stone may have been transported to the nearby stone yard on Goswell Lane (now Water Lane) where it was marked up. Whether this represented the mark of a particular mason is not known. Four examples of a larger, more flattened cross shape were also found, which could be a different mason's mark, but more likely they are later marks made to indicate locations. These four flattened crosses were all on the south side of the vault.

Above: Example of masons' marks.

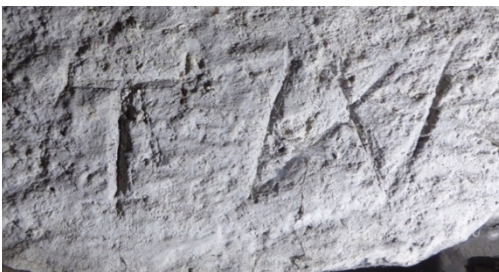
Right: 'R Biggs Plur 1850'. Photos – K Wardley

Graffiti made once the building was in use consists of names, initials and dates, left by visitors. The two most prominent examples are on the north side, one made by R. Biggs, a plumber who carefully incised his name, his occupation as 'Plur' (a shortened form of plumber) with the date, 1850.

An online search of Southampton directories and census records found several references to a Robert Charles Biggs. Born in St Mary's c1830 he was living at 2 Charlotte Place, Northam Street, as a plumber, painter and glazier in 1861 and 1863, and listed as a plumber and painter in 1871 and 1876, living at 2 & 3 Northam St. By 1881 he had moved to Watford Villa, Burgess St, Highfield, living with his wife, daughter-in-law and servant. There is no listing of him as a tradesman in 1887 but he appears as a retired plumber at 3 Fleming Place, Highfield in 1891, his last entry in the directory.



J Wedge (or JW Edge), who left his name in 1876, may well have been the plumber and gas fitter, James Wedge, who appears in the 1891 Winchester census, aged 46, living with his wife and eight children at 1 Jubilee Villas, St Faiths, Winchester. Further documentary research may tell us about the work these men were carrying out.

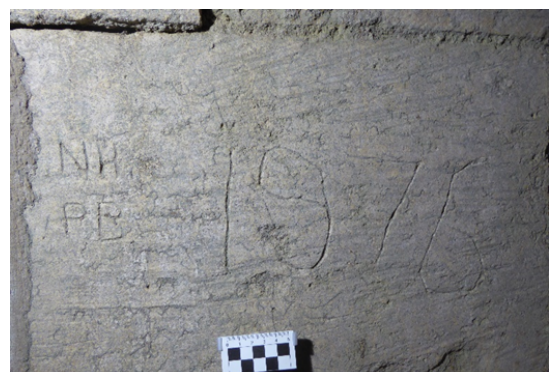


A number of sets of initials were found, including TW on the lintel over the east doorway. The form of the W suggests a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century date. The initials TH and IO occur next to each other on the south side (*not illustrated*). The form of the H also suggests a pre-modern date.

Above: 'TW' on interior lintel of east doorway.

Below: Initials 'NH' & 'PB' with date 1976. K Wardley

On the north side a pair of initials, NH and PB, have a date 1976 incised next to them, although these inscriptions may not be contemporary. Another inscription 'BLUE 2003', may have been made when the building was broken into and used by rough sleepers.



Besides incised graffiti, there were initials BC in white paint, overlying earlier traces of black paint which occurred in several other areas around the vault. This could be clearly identified as lettering in an area on the north-west part of the vault. However, although individual letters could be seen, no words or names could be deciphered. An elaborate W (part of a word?) seemed to be associated with a date, 1800.

From March 2020 the Graffiti project was paused under Covid-19 restrictions, and this was their first outing since the lockdown. The team would welcome new members, and if you're interested in taking part in the surveys, either in Hampshire or Southampton, Karen Wardley can be contacted via medieval-graffiti@hantsfieldclub.org.uk.

Sources

Effemey, June. *Conduit House, Southampton*. University of Oxford Historic building analysis and Recording Module for Postgraduate Certificate in Architectural History, 2015/16

Southampton Archaeology Unit reports on Conduit House excavations SOU 243, 269, 270 and 444, 1986/7

Russel, JI, 1993, *Excavations at Conduit House, Commercial Road, Southampton*, SOU 243, 269, 270 and 444. Southampton Archaeology Unit Report.

Old Testament Studies: After the Exodus

by Martyn Dowell

Last time I left the refugees settled at Mount Sinai. Surely that's clear enough? Well, no. The present Mount Sinai has only been known as such since the beginning of the Christian era. There are, I believe, thirteen credible candidates for the mountain referred to in the book of Exodus. Bearing in mind events to come, it would be convenient if Sinai was a volcano, and one or two have been suggested, though they are much further east, requiring the Hebrews to move back north to circumvent the eastern branch of the Red Sea.

On his arrival, Jethro 's first action was to tell the overworked Moses to delegate. This is an irrelevant but charming detail, so modern in feel, which ought to convince anyone that the core events and people here are real. Jethro's main purpose, though, must have been to set up a supply system for the refugees, which enabled their long-term stay. The following events involve Moses' climbing the mountain to supposedly communicate with God. Everyone sees the mountain smoking 'like a furnace', all hear noise and feel the earthquake. Moses, and perhaps also Aaron, ascend the mountain three times in the narrative we have, though I think there is some repetition here. Firstly, he communicates the ten commandments verbally, which is followed by a mass of lesser instructions evidently added by priests much later, which Moses is said to have written down. Then comes his second ascent, into the clouded mountain top where he remains for a long while, finally returning with the 'stone' tablets, written on both sides. (Inserted within this are more chapters of detailed priestly instructions).



Map of Sinai peninsula showing route of the Exodus.
Credit: Pamphlet – See The Good Land.

The refugees revolt in his absence and on his return Moses smashes the tablets. The golden calf incident is surely fictitious but reminds us that the Hebrew god was originally thought of as a bull, which the priests were at pains to suppress. Finally he ascends a third time, but this report comes from a different source, so may be another version of the second ascent. This time he takes up new tablets he has made, again stays for a long while alone, and returns with the ten commandments written on them. He does not realise his face is 'shining' when he returns. The commandments are then accepted, and the last three chapters of Exodus, added later by priests, tell of the building of the Ark in which the tablets were housed ever after.

The foregoing explains why a volcano seems likely. If Sinai was not a volcano, surely the writer of the account must have been familiar with one. The tablets too are intriguing. It is well known that the ten commandments closely follow the basic law code publicised by Hammurabi of Babylon during Abram's lifetime. Also obvious is that they would have been written in cuneiform on baked clay tablets, on both sides. Might two of these have been the items smashed by Moses, when they were rejected as foreign and totally unintelligible? If so, by what route did they reach Moses from Abram's original settlement in southern Canaan, if indeed Abram brought a copy with him from Haran? And did Moses make two new clay tablets to copy the commandments down in Hebrew, and then bake them in hot lava? That would explain his bright red face.

The story continues in Numbers. Everyone struck camp two years and two months after leaving Egypt, so they had been there just short of two years. Having done this there was no turning back, and the long march north begins, encountering many small city states on the way, until they establish themselves in Canaan, by then under the leadership of Joshua. This is where I came in on this personal interpretation of the events of most of the second millennium BC, as the Bible records it. Much more can of course be found in learned tomes, written by those with much more knowledge than I have.

Bibliography for O T 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 1975

Report on Living with Monuments: new work on the West Kennet Palisade enclosures

A lecture given by Professor Josh Pollard, 12th October 2021.

Josh referred to earlier fieldwork in Wiltshire around the West Kennet area. dating from the mid 17th century; and to the most recent investigations by the project Living with Monuments, which involved the Universities of Southampton, Leicester and other institutions. This is an area of chalk geology and the monuments are mainly from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, between 4000 – 1500 BC. The Avebury stone circle is one of the largest in the world, a ceremonial centre linked to stone and timber alignments nearby and to Silbury Hill, with many long barrows in the same area. Previous fieldwork had found very extensive worked flint scatters and pottery sherds in the plough soil. Despite this being a flint-rich area, analysis of the flint shows that much is non-local, with cores from as far away as East Anglia. In the 1970s an oil pipeline was cut through, which uncovered evidence of timber post holes containing animal bones from pig and cattle, and antlers. In parts of the area bones from the left sides of animals were found, while those from the right sides were in a different place (something known from other sites). Fieldwork looked at relationships between known monuments, at non-monumental archaeology such as agriculture, and at a Neolithic settlement near Avebury: an archaeological landscape about 1km square, revealing radial lines, circles and traces of trenches which would have held timber posts.



Aerial photograph of the 2021 excavations.

University of Southampton.

The investigations involved soil sampling with augers, aerial photography, geophysical surveying and field walking, which revealed massive palisaded structures in the shadow of Silbury Hill, dating to the late Neolithic (also visible as crop marks). Palisades are known from areas of lowland Britain such as Dorset

and the Welsh Borders, but those discovered at West Kennet may be the most extensive yet discovered in the UK. The site relates to a series of pools and streams as well as springs: water is known to have been venerated, for instance Silbury Hill is situated at the source of the river. Excavations in 2019 and 2021 looked at the structural elements, with a series of targeted trenches to establish the form and extent of the structures. The radial lines were found to be contemporary with the main enclosures, indicating that these features would have been constructed at the same time.

A tank or pit 15m x 8m was found containing animal bones, burnt sarsen stone and charcoal which could indicate heating water, probably for feasting purposes; and a circular structure with a central smaller round feature was cut into by modern barns, but had obviously been used for feasting as it contained a lot of animal bone. The smaller inner ring had posts and a ditch which appeared to be an earlier enclosure that became a palisade. This feature was late Neolithic and within the structure, the postholes were around 3m deep and the timbers 10-15m high, perhaps replacing earlier posts which had rotted away. A posthole adjacent to this feature had a void which appeared during excavation, measuring 1.4m deep. It had been filled up with soil but the lower level had taken longer to fill and had capped the hole. This void also had a ramp to enable either construction, or dismantling of a rotted post, suggesting the structure must have been very large. Small antler picks were found in the post holes, which had been used and thrown into the packing of the post holes. It is hoped a radiocarbon date can be obtained from these picks (probably late Neolithic).

This structure could have been similar in style to a 'woodhenge' monument, but the form was rectangular with posts 3m apart, and smaller posts set in between on the diagonal. More investigation is needed, but could these have been free-standing timbers with lintels, or possibly a roofed structure? This type of structure mimics domestic architecture and could have been used as a dwelling, but was monumentalized, possibly in response to a threat of change. A large number of pits were found, later in date than the postholes, precisely dug with straight sides but containing only antlers. They appear to have been backfilled soon afterwards, and the positions of the palisade posts were marked by ditches. *In situ* sarsen boulders had been placed around the inner circuit.

Cut into the former postholes was a grave containing a double burial, a man and adolescent with a tanged arrow head. It is thought that one of them died from an arrow wound, and they were probably 'Beaker' people. The adolescent was found to have had back problems. After burial a large sarsen boulder had been placed on the grave as a marker, but this was a marshy area and the boulder collapsed into the ground around the post holes. The timber structures were late Neolithic, probably similar in scale to the outer circle at Durrington and to Woodhenge, near Amesbury; but these were rectangular and appear to be contemporary with Silbury Hill. These sites may represent an extensive phase of memorial building, leading from a dry valley to the south, possibly to a natural fording point on the river, and on to other local monuments and further afield.

Animals seem to have been driven here over great distances from Wales, Central and South West England, and the grooved ware pottery found here is different from that found around Stonehenge, more similar to a type made in Rudston, Yorkshire; while the arrow heads are distinctive and thought to have come from Lincolnshire or Bridlington, Yorkshire. Among the postholes evidence of non-local stone was found, fragments of grandiorite originating from the Cheviots in Northumberland – but were they purposely brought to the area or maybe washed down by glaciers? Possibly by human agency after the arrival of the Beaker people, from 4,400 BC. These people came to England from western and central Europe and initially they would have lived in self-contained groups, but they may have brought disease, as local communities were replaced by people with Beaker genes following their arrival.

Many questions remain to be answered on this site, and work at the West Kennet Palisades will continue in the coming summer 2022 – we hope to hear much more from Josh in future years.

Mandy Kesby

A Short History of Southampton Archaeology Society

After Anna Welch (2011)

During the 19th century investigations began at Roman Clausentum on the site of Bitterne Manor, but the archaeology of Southampton was only explored after WW2, when the town was heavily hit by bombing. Many historic buildings were damaged or destroyed, exposing archaeological features such as the vaults, often below street level. Post-war reconstruction was piece-meal and the museum curators started to explore, enlisting local enthusiasts and students to excavate sites uncovered by the Blitz. In 1957 the 'Friends of Old Southampton', formed by O G S Crawford were digging in Southampton, which continued after the appointment of Alan Aberg as Museum Curator in 1958.

In 1961 Southampton Archaeological Society was formed from the museum volunteers. The inaugural meeting on 20th April 1961 agreed a Constitution, with Mr Peberdy as Chair of the committee, which included representatives from the University and the local council. The Society was based in the Westgate using Tudor Merchants' Hall (now Westgate Hall) to process finds, and all aspects of archaeological work. Besides excavating they held social events, such as dinner dances. Amazingly – years before the Young Archaeologists' Club – Southampton Archaeological Society had a Junior Section meeting several times a week, where long term friendships were forged. One couple met on a dig and went on to marry!

From 1961 the Society began publishing site reports in their Bulletins (Woolhouse – SOU 108; High Street SOU 642; Canal Walk SOU 634), and they continued to dig under John Pallister when he took over as Curator (Quilters Vault, Raffo's Yard – SOU 100; Cuckoo Lane SOU 711). Things were done 'professionally', in fact members of the Society typically supervised excavations with curators visiting the sites daily, as described in Pallister's site diaries. The end of the 1960s saw Colin Platt's excavations of medieval Southampton with teams made up of students and volunteers. Members of the Archaeological Society continued to work on digs through the 1970s. By now they had become Southampton City Museums Archaeological Society (SCMAS) and a member, Alison Parsons, typed up the Bulletins so that we have digital versions. In the SCMAS archives are reports from the Echo that chart its formation and early years.

Southampton Archaeological Research Committee (SARC) had been set up early in the 1970s to direct archaeology in Southampton, made up of people from varied backgrounds, including from the BBC and local radio, which was pretty forward thinking. When Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit took over excavations in the 1980s volunteers were still involved, but this ended after the introduction of the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 16 in 1990 when there were fewer jobs, and more emphasis on Health & Safety and insurance. The Unit ran Community Digs with opportunities for the public to participate, and volunteer Finds Processing sessions on Monday evenings were started by Andy Russell (continuing until the COVID-19 lockdown was imposed in March 2020).

By then the membership of SCMAS had become older while the Junior Section had long since folded, and they concentrated on a winter lecture programme with summer outings. Members were still keen to take part in archaeology, for instance surveying projects at Lordswood and a Roman site at Fairthorne Manor, and a later project aimed to photograph all the city's historic buildings. In 2016 SCMAS members voted to change their name to Southampton Archaeology Society, and started a project to explore historic graffiti. The Young Archaeologists Club (YAC) in Southampton are a very active group – initially led by Matt Garner and Andy Russel with Anna Welch as Assistant, they are now led by a most enthusiastic and talented team with lots of volunteer helpers, many of whom have professional involvement in archaeology.

In the past volunteers were influential in uncovering some of Southampton's best archaeology in - in fact, without the volunteers of SAS/SCMAS and Friends of Old Southampton we'd have a far less detailed knowledge of Southampton's rich past. Southampton Archaeology Society members are still going strong after sixty years, and looking forward to another sixty!

Mayflower Walk – Friday 8th October

Following our Mayflower Study Day this event also had been postponed several times, but finally a group of 16 SAS members and friends met with our guide Godfrey Collyer for a tour of Southampton's Old Town. Starting from the Bargate Godfrey explained some of the background to the voyage and how Southampton was chosen as a safe harbour to prepare for departure to the New World. We proceeded to Holyrood Church for a dramatic tale of disputes over the contract and last-minute repairs to Speedwell, and over the high cost of provisions. The walk continued with a visit to Lankester's Vault and St Michael's Square: some of the Settlers may have worshipped there or in Holyrood, while others perhaps chose St Julien's Chapel, the French (Calvinist) church. We ended at the Westgate beside the former quay where the 'Pilgrims' embarked, and heard the inspiring words of Pastor John Robinson of Leiden, exhorting the group to work together in their new home, despite differences.

As the walk ended Godfrey and his colleague Peter Shawyer invited the party to visit the Exhibition about Mayflower, created by SeeSouthampton in Westgate Tower, which really brings the story to life.*



Above: Visiting Holyrood Church, the Sailor's church.

Left: Outside the Westgate. Photos – S Hanna

Thanks to Godfrey and Peter for a new insights into the story of Southampton.

*The exhibition is open each Sunday from 11am to 3pm, and free to visit.

Sarah Hanna

Website contact: southamptonarchaeology@gmail.com

Facebook group: Southampton Archaeology Society

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 current restrictions. We are not able to serve refreshments at present. Talks are free to paid-up SAS members, £3 to guests.

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.

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Family	£14.00

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.

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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.