



# The *Mayflower*;

## 1620-2020

### Tracing voyages of discovery in Plymouth's past

**ABOVE** Overlooking the landscape at Plimoth Plantation, a living-history museum recreating Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts, which helps to tell the *Mayflower*'s story.

Four hundred years ago, the *Mayflower* carried around 100 would-be colonists across the Atlantic to found Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts. What can we learn of these voyagers, the city they left behind, and the impact they had on the indigenous people who were already living on the land where they settled? **Carly Hilts** reports.

**T**oday, Plymouth is home to the largest naval base in western Europe, but it boasts a much longer maritime history. For centuries it served as a gateway to new worlds, launching ambitious expeditions towards distant horizons – voyages that brought prosperity to Britain, but which frequently signalled

exploitation rather than exploration to the indigenous communities that they encountered. Francis Drake, Walter Raleigh, James Cook, and Charles Darwin all set sail from its port, and the city was the birthplace of another intrepid, if ill-fated adventurer: the polar explorer Robert Falcon Scott.

This year marks the 400th anniversary of another famous

journey that set out from Plymouth docks: the sailing of the *Mayflower* in 1620, which carried the 'Pilgrim Fathers' across the Atlantic to found a colony in the New World – a settlement that they named 'Plymouth Plantation'. This milestone is being marked by an exhibition, *Mayflower 400: Legend and Legacy*, at The Box, a new museum recently opened in