



Chairman's Report for 2000/1

During the past year, the Society has had probably its largest number of lectures yet, as well as two visits — one just up the M4, the other a little further away!

The season began with our President's lecture, 'Ancient Egyptian Models of Daily Life', which accompanied February's AGM (see left) The programme continued 'in house', with my April lecture, 'An Armchair Nile Cruise in Upper Egypt and Nubia', intended to provide a taster for those going with the ESB to Egypt in November, and to show some of the great sites to those who were not! In May, Chris Kirby tackled a colossal subject — the great statues erected by Amenemhat III at Biahmu in the Fayoum. Another giant figure, Ramesses II, was the subject of Professor Ken Kitchen, who provided an as-always excellent backdrop to the ESB Summer Party.



Xit Dyt, Servant
girl from Cairo
Museum

A few days before, it was very much a summer's day when the Society visited Eton College to view a special exhibition of the Myers' Collection, the magnificent group of artefacts gathered by an Old Etonian army officer who fell in the Boer War. The day was memorable

both for the college and the heat — leafy shelter was at a premium!

The autumn opened with Dr Jaromir Malek's glimpse into the archives of the Griffith Institute at Oxford, looking at some of the photographs taken for sale to tourists in the nineteenth century. The photographs were very attractive, and captured places and monuments now often changed out of all recognition. Shortly afterwards, Bristol was host to another distinguished Czech scholar, when Professor Miroslav Verner of Charles University, Prague, gave a gripping description of his team's discoveries at Abusir. The Amelia Edwards lecture series, of which this was one, is not actually an ESB event, but is run with the



Knigh of Senwosret I from the
Myers' Collection

close involvement of two of the Committee, and attended by many members.

The Memphite necropolis was also the subject of Dr Paul Nicholson, of the University of Cardiff, who spoke on 'The Sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqara' on the last day of October. However, the next month, Society members headed to the other end of Egypt, with our cruise to Upper Egypt and Nubia, and then, in December we heard about a man who spent much of his life travelling in Egypt, and especially its southern part, Arthur Weigall. Julie Hankey, his granddaughter and biographer, described his life and her talk included some of the key discoveries in the Valley of the Kings in which he participated.

'The Valley' was also the topic covered in the last lecture prior to the AGM, when Professor Geoffrey T. Martin, formerly of the Dept. of Egyptology, University College London, told us of the work of the Amarna Royal Tombs Project. The ESB had actually been on site during the tail end of the recent excavation season, and it was wonderful to be able to fully visualise the area which was being described.

Apart from its events, the ESB is involved in wider Egyptological activities. A donation of £40 was generated by the 2001 Winter Party raffle for the appeal to conserve volumes in University College London's Edwards Library — founded by Bristol's very own Amelia⁽¹⁾. Closer to home, money has been earmarked for the writing and publication of a new guidebook to the City Museum and Art Gallery's Egyptian collection. The start of work depends on reductions in the respective workloads of the Chairman and the Membership Secretary (*aka* the Curator of the collection), but we hope to make progress during 2001.



Amelia Ann
Blanford Edwards

Thus, I think that we can look back to a very good year. Attendance at lectures has been consistently good, with Professor Martin's talk resulting in standing room only! The new programme is now filled through to June 2002 and we hope that 2001/2 will be even better than 2000/1.

(1) See also Dr Stephen Quirke's article in this issue — Ed.

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The Egypt Society of Bristol
Audited accounts for the year ended 31st December 2000

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

		2000	1999
		£	£
INCOME			
Membership fees		995.00	897.50
Non members		12.00	7.00
Events:	Parties:	528.00	515.00
	Trips:	930.50	811.00
		1,458.50	
Merchandise		12.00	28.00
Miscellaneous	Raffle	62.99	13.53
Bank interest received		5.08	6.73
		2,545.57	2,278.76
EXPENDITURE			
Speakers' costs:		434.23	280.17
Events:	catering	704.16	492.81
	(NOTE 1) porterage	215.84	56.23
	transport	1,094.00	335.00
Mailings:		177.39	359.74
Amelia Edwards plaque restoration			122.38
Merchandise		1.00	52.17
Sundries		31.16	10.06
		2,657.78	1,708.56
NET INCOME	(NOTE 2)	£(112.21)	£ 570.20

Notes

1 Porterage was only payable from October 1999, when the society moved to the new Archaeology building

2 Net income figures are unbalanced because income for some trips came in during 1999, but payment for coaches, etc, was made in 2000.

LECTURE REPORT

*We are always interested to know what impressions you have of the lectures the Society has organised during the year. Please send us your comments and thoughts and what effect, if any, the speakers had on you. To start the process, our Treasurer **Dyan Hilton** (aka Mrs. Dodson) has given us her thoughts on the recent talks.*

3 October 2000: 'Capturing a Mirage: 19th Century Photographs of Egypt'

Dr Jaromir Malek, Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum Oxford

I will keep this report short as the subject matter really needed to be seen to be appreciated. Picture upon picture of sepia tinted visuals were what we experienced on the evening of Dr. Malek's talk.

Dr Malek's enthusiasm and knowledge — he is the guardian of the many thousands of images in the collection of the Griffith Institute of Oxford University — was something that set people at their ease and

brought even the most faded of photographs alive and made the history of Egyptology itself a more rounded discipline. We were treated to views no longer available to the modern visitor to Egypt as we went through the history of early Egyptian images. We saw how the sites of the country have changed, sometimes beyond recognition. All I could possibly add is that anyone finding Dr Malek speaking on this or any relating subject would be well advised to make a point of attending

31 October 2000. 'The sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqara'

Dr Paul Nicholson, University of Cardiff

On a miserable night in October where better than to spend an hour or so than Saqqara. To be precise the Sacred Animal Necropolis. First we were treated to a brief but important history of the site and how the mythology of the area allowed the whole catacomb to grow.

Then Dr Nicholson gave us a brief overview of the history of the Egypt Exploration Society's work to date, this included photographs of past excavations that produced a few comments amongst those who knew the unwitting subjects. Dr Nicholson went on to explain about the history of the site from its earliest incarnation through to those EES excavations before he described the work he and his colleagues are presently doing at Saqqara. Work from the baboon catacomb were illustrated and described, the animal remains themselves but also the architecture. We learnt of the 'Bronze cache' that W.B. Emery had located and saw evidence of the mass of remains existing in the Ibis catacombs. The excavators first season had been in the hawk catacomb with its gallery niches and

small limestone sarcophagi which contained the special burials. These contained wooden coffins sealed with plaster.

Dr Nicholson's slides gave a clear impression of how the site was claustrophobic, with side galleries stacked full of birds in their pottery amphora coffins. Dr Nicholson delighted in the image he created of the excavation team having to 'mountaineer' over and through various areas to get a full picture of the site and the information available to them. To me one poignant picture was of the formerly sealed off gallery, with the floor covered with the debris of hundreds and thousands of birds, for some reason not placed in containers but just left ... and the door sealed!

The abiding impression of the evening however was the thought of Dr Nicholson, at Cairo airport explaining to a bemused official just why he was bringing a snow sledge into the sandy reaches of Saqqara (for anyone unable to attend this I'll leave that to your imagination).

12 December 2000. 'Arthur Weigall, enfant terrible of Egyptology'

Julie Hankey (granddaughter and biographer)

From a purely personal point of view this lecture I found absolutely fascinating, the main reason being that the speaker is the grandchild of her subject, deriving her information from letters from the man himself to his first wife Hortense.

In my mind Weigall had always been an unobtainable cardboard cut-out of a man, two dimensional unlike, say, Petrie whom we all know for his ability to eat three day old tinned food left out in the heat of Egypt. For the first time the books I kept, written by Weigall, became of more than historical value. I had not appreciated how much he had written and achieved, how he had escaped from the near destitution of his formative years thanks mainly to the perseverance of his widowed mother.

A breakthrough for the young man of twenty was when he became assistant to Petrie himself and soon found himself at Abydos in charge of fifty men. Petrie acted as a mentor, taught him the basics of archaeology and the use of a methodical approach. All would stand him in good

stead when at the age of 24 he became Inspector-General of Antiquities in Upper Egypt. This meant that he was supervising work in the Valley, in particular the discovery of the tomb of Yuya and Tjuiu, grandparents of Akhenaten; he must have had a strong character to keep the Theodore Davis, American financier of the work, in check with the help of the archaeologist Edward Ayrton.

The impression received from letters written at the time and later autobiographies, in particular that of Sir Alan Gardiner (1962) is that this young man, who was only 34 when he left Egyptian archaeology forever in 1914, was that of a well respected individual who could influence and enthuse those around him. As a family historian I feel that Mrs Hankey was incredibly lucky to be able to go through these items written by her grandfather: they are like gold dust! She brought the man alive and I look forward with relish to being able to read her book, which should be due out any time now.

ESB trip to Nubia – November - December 2000

The tale of the ESB odyssey to Egypt continues with an account by Roger Forse of the second week spent south of Luxor

The second week of our visit was to see Aswan and Lake Nasser's Egyptology. Our passage and accommodation for the first four days was aboard the well-appointed Nile Cruiser 'M/S Nubian Sea'. On the first day, after a flight from Luxor to Aswan, we were soon ensconced on board - a relaxing day; fine meals, and desert views, followed by music and dancers.

Day Two



Kalabsha. The temple of Kalabsha, Nubia's second most imposing monument, was built by the Romans. The site, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the Aswan

High Dam, was reached by tender. Our attention was drawn to some reliefs of elephants on dressed stones. At the nearby **Temple of Qertassi**, I was intrigued by the column heads dedicated

to Hathor, with the triangular shaped faces and cows ears, which made for interesting research later.



Now

back to cruising. My impressions of Lake Nasser (or the Nubian Sea) were so different from the lower Nile - little vegetation and no trees, no towns or villages of any size, no visible sign of communication except the occasional cruise boat. There was an eerie silence, not even punctured by the calls from the mosques - perhaps a blessing - during Ramadan. What was impressive were the dawns and sunsets, and especially the wonderfully clear starry nights

Day Three

A.M. Wadi el-Sebua, 87 miles (140 km) from Aswan. We realised that the sites are mainly rescued from the lower, flooded levels now the lake is complete. The sites, in groups, are situated along the lakeshore, well away from their original locations. We must be grateful to the countries that have provided the wherewithal to enable

these rescues. However, some partial or completed sites were lost to the lake. Archaeology aside, this loss must surely benefit Egypt long term. I understand that the water table has now risen in Egypt, and that the full benefit will not be felt for perhaps 50 years.

The **Temple of Sebua**, was built by Ramesses II and dedicated to Amun and the sun-God Re-Harakhty. In front of the temple was a picturesque, low-level stone gateway. This well-preserved temple has two courts and a fine pylon. After a welcome, but optional, camel ride, we reached the pylon of the **Temple of Dakka**. A downhill stroll took us to the tiny **Temple of Maharraqa**, dedicated to Serapis. This unfinished building's colonnades were quite impressive.

P.M. After a short lunchtime cruise, we were at Amada. 125 miles south of Aswan, the rock **Temple of Amada** was constructed in the reigns of Tuthmosis III and Amenhotep II is again dedicated to Amun and Re-Harakhty. The entrance is through squared stone columns, 3 on each side, into a hypostyle hall. Adjacent to the temple were two other monuments. The rock **Temple of Derr** which, having lost its pylon and court, now gives the appearance of a walled cave. The remaining visit here was to the rock **Tomb of Penniut** formerly a few miles away at Aniba.

Day Four

Our cruise had a pleasant and interesting view, unfortunately a visit in now impossible, of Qasr



Ibrim. This was once a lofty crag, which now appears as a small islet just offshore. It was first used around 900BC, and in the 16th Century by the Bosnians seeking control of Nubia for the Turkish Sultan.

Our last sailing now to **Abu Simbel**, 175 miles south of Aswan and 25 miles north of the Sudanese border at Wadi Halfa near the second cataract (as was). Lunch, then ashore, a mere 100 yards away, to view the epitome of artistry in Egyptology.

This, my second visit, was more leisurely than when arriving by air. There was more opportunity



and more time to appreciate the wonderful sights. Firstly the small temple, dedicated to Hathor (above), and built by Ramesses II. The façade simply has two large statues of Ramesses on either side of the entrance with a statue of Queen Nefertari between each pair plus the royal couple's children. Inside are tributes to Ramesses, Nefertari and the cow-eared goddess Hathor.

The great temple, dedicated to Amun-Re and Re-



Herakhty, leaves you speechless. The work involved to bring this edifice here, the construction of unseen concrete dome, and the meticulous replacing of the blocks has to be seen to be appreciated. Once passed the much-photographed façade, the wonders are still there. It took 22 years to carve the inside, and was constructed to mark 30 years of Ramesses' reign. 22 baboons welcome the rising sun, which reaches the sacred shrine – the Holy of Holies – twice a year. The hypostyle hall and side chambers are also most interesting. In the evening we were treated to the spectacular *son-et-lumiere*.

Day Five

We left Abu Simbel by air to arrive back in Aswan for lunch at the New Cataract Hotel. A leisurely afternoon was followed by a superb steak dinner.

Day Six

A.M. A motorboat trip to *Qubbet el-Hawa* (Tombs of the ancient governors). After a stiff climb, we

viewed many rock-hewn tombs from the Old and Middle kingdoms including Tomb N° 36 of Sarenput I, N° 34 of Harkhuf – an African explorer who brought back a dwarf, N° 25 Mekhu's tomb, and N° 31 of Sarenput II. For me, the latter is the best tomb in Aswan, with a wonderfully painted niche that everyone wanted to photograph – but no flash! (See coloured plate 13 in T.G.H. James 'Ancient Egypt')

P.M. Relaxing by the pool with an evening dinner at the riverside restaurant 'Aswan Moon'.

Day Seven

A.M. On a boat trip to *Elephantine Island*, we saw the **Nilometer**



before landing to visit the old museum. There is much evidence of early villages on the island and we also saw 3 Satat temples of Pepi I, Montuhotep II, and Sesostris I, the pyramid of Huni (or possibly Senefru), and a sanctuary of Heqa-1B. At the *Temple of Khnum* (above), Dr. Dodson met the head of the German Archaeological team with the news that they had just found a 1st Intermediate Period pillared hall. Its wooden pillars had been preserved by the baker's ash that had later been dumped in the abandoned hall.

P.M. The new *Nubia Museum* contains many fine artefacts and exhibits. We



rounded off the day with tea and cakes on the veranda of the Old Cataract Hotel (right)

Day Eight – Final Day

Back to Bristol *via* Cairo and Heathrow. A wonderful holiday thanks to Aidan's guidance and everyone's friendship.

Roger Forse

Footnote: My favourite Egyptian wine is 'Obelisque'. So, if anyone's going ...

(Photographs by the author and the editor)

Editor's Note:

At a recent committee meeting the subject of submissions to the Newsletter was raised. The Chairman stated his opinion, as he does, and everyone – bar your Editor – agreed that submissions would be accepted on any subject, and published at the Editor's discretion, *but anonymous work could not be included*. Submissions may be printed under a pseudonym (if requested), but the Committee felt they *must* know the identity of the authors. We are constitutionally a democratic Society so, despite my misgivings, this policy will operate from the next Newsletter.

The Newsletter is meant to inform and, hopefully, entertain so we would welcome reflections, travelogues, articles, photographs, news of events, and anything else you think the members may find interesting - even non-Egypt items. The membership of the ESB is very diverse, drawn together by a common thread, but each of us is interested in a different facet of Egyptian history. I, for example, am intrigued by Pre- and Proto-dynastic times with no curiosity about anything after the 20th Dynasty, but what interests you? What encouraged your interest? I am sure the members would like to know. Our addresses are on the first page, so please get writing (or typing or e-mailing) – *but don't forget to tell us your name!*

Things that make you go mmmmm.....(2)

Those of you who have gazed at the paintings on the tomb and temple walls of Kmt will appreciate the ancient passion for proportion and scale. A brief study will show that it was not only the artists who followed set rules, but also the architects. Consider Horus Khufu's pyramid. If you take its length, add it to its width (which in this case happens to be the same), and divide it by its height, you will obtain a number called, in mathematics, a ratio. It should come as no surprise to discover that if you perform the same calculations on the pyramid's King's chamber (length + width / height) and also on the sarcophagus it contained, you will obtain exactly the same ratio. What is that ratio? It works out to be 3.1605. An odd number, you might think.

Those of you who are mathematically minded will recognize that this ratio is close to the value of π (pi), the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter, discovered to be a universal constant by Greek mathematicians in Ptolemaic Alexandria. π cannot be expressed accurately as a decimal being one of a rare group of numbers known as transcendental; huge computers have calculated π to billions of decimal places, but it can be approximated as 3.14159..... (Despite years on indoctrination in school, π does NOT equal 22/7)

A little further research, however, draws us to a fascinating coincidence. If you believe in coincidence, that is. If you look at problem 48 in the Rhind mathematical papyrus, written around the time of the Hyksos invasion about 1600 BCE (approximately 900 years after Khufu), the scribe Ahmose tries to calculate the area of a circle by drawing squares and octagons. From his analysis, we can infer the earliest approximation of π . Can you guess? Yes, 3.1605, the ratio used in Khufu's pyramid. Did Ahmose start with Khufu's answer and fiddle his proof backwards? It is unlikely, but who knows? Do we

therefore infer that Khufu's architects got their sums wrong and they wanted to use π ? Ostensibly, yes... but then again... no.

Travel forwards in time 3½ millennia. The decaying structure we call the Mir space station has been orbiting the Earth since 1986, and is soon to be crash-landed in the Pacific Ocean (hopefully!) During its stay in orbit, the two hundred cosmonauts who have manned the station have discovered much intriguing information. It



has been known since before the time of Columbus that the Earth is not a perfect sphere. Measurements by the early navigators of the horizon at sea level indicated that the Earth is slightly flattened at the poles - rather like a football if you sat on it (technically it's called an oblate spheroid). One of Mir's tasks was to

measure the Earth accurately. Not out of any Soviet altruism, but to more accurately aim their nuclear missiles at the USA. The results have only recently been released.

If you take the precise circumference of the Earth at sea level around the equator (as measured by Mir), and divide it by the precise distance from pole to pole through the centre of the Earth, you get a ratio. Guess what that ratio is ... 3.16048. That's close enough for me! Khufu wins again.

Mmmmm...

Museum Corner

Howard Carter and many other archaeologists have had the thrill of opening a tomb and being the first people to enter it in hundreds of years. Bristol Museum is offering visitors the opportunity to experience the excitement of seeing a complete, undisturbed burial for the first time.

Bristol school students have made the tomb and its burial goods as part of a project on Ancient Egypt. They have visited the Egyptology Gallery for inspiration, and made their part of the tomb back at school. It is being assembled in a corner of the

gallery, and will be ready by Easter. Visitors will not be able to enter the tomb, but like Howard Carter they will be able to look into the tomb and see 'wonderful things'.

The City Museum & Art Gallery is open every day, 10am - 5 pm. Entry is free. The Egyptian Gallery looks at the history of the European 'discovery' of Ancient Egypt, and at death and burial in Egypt. The new tomb is at the end of the entrance ramp

Sue Giles

Book Review

Ian Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 512pp; £24 ISBN 0-19-815034-2

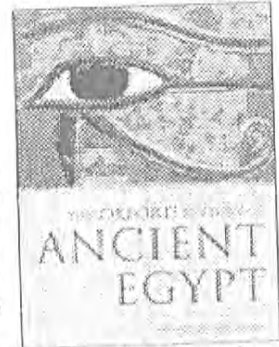
After the blizzard of lunatic-fringe books on Egyptology that have disfigured the archaeological shelves in recent past, the year 2000 has seen a number of 'real' books on the subject edging into the shops. One of the most important of these is the present volume, which aims to provide a new, up-to-date account of the development of the history and culture of the ancient civilization.

The book is the work of a number of authors, each an expert in a particular period of Egyptian history. Increasing specialisation within the subject unavoidably leads to a certain reduction in overall coherence — albeit not intrusively so.

An admirable trait of the book is that all periods are given similar levels of treatment, so that the Intermediate and Late Periods are not relegated to

an odd few pages, as was so often the case in older histories. It is also very well illustrated, partly with well-known images, but also some less-seen ones as well.

The volume concludes with a series of bibliographical essays to guide the reader through some of the specialist literature that underpins the basic narrative. There is also a comprehensive glossary and a chronological table of kings, albeit excluding some of the rulers of the Second Intermediate Period. The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt must be recommended as a fine basic history and a good starting point for further study



Aidan Dodson.

The Petrie Museum in the digital age

Stephen Quirke, Assistant Curator of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology at University College London, assesses the challenges that face the museum in the twenty-first century

The Petrie museum of Egyptian Archaeology remains one of London's best-kept secrets, hidden within the precincts of University College London (UCL). The contents of the museum which, like the EES, owes its existence to the zeal of **Amelia Edwards**, scarcely deserve this public oblivion. Amelia Edwards died in 1892 and her enlightened bequest to UCL created the country's first Chair in Egyptian Archaeology and Philology. She also left several hundred antiquities as a teaching resource. These included magnificent works such as the head of Amenhemhat III and the brightly-painted wooden stela of Neskheon, a woman with the title 'King's son of Kush'. Amelia chose London, rather than one of the older establishments, because UCL was then still the only place in England where women could

not only sit examinations but also receive qualifications.

The outstanding quality and scale of the Museum collection owe most to the energy of the first Edwards Professor, Amelia's favourite excavator, William Flinders Petrie. In those early days of excavation in Egypt, Petrie relied for funding upon private sponsorship. From 1882 until 1886 he had worked for the Egypt Exploration Fund (now the EES), and he was to work for them sporadically until as late as 1905, the date of his successful 'Researches in Sinai'. From 1887 to 1892 Petrie operated independently with the support of private sponsors. From 1893 with UCL as his official seat, he cultivated an astonishing array of public museums as contributors to his archaeological fund,

which he used both to excavate and, just as importantly, to publish the results of excavations. By agreement with the Egyptian Antiquities Service, a proportion of finds was exported at the end of each year for distribution amongst sponsoring institutions. Petrie perceived objects not as property but as concrete knowledge, and he was anxious that the primary evidence should remain in the public eye and be dispersed as widely as possible. He strove to use the distribution of typical finds from the different periods to bring Egypt to every corner of the globe. Material from Petrie's work may be found in about 150 museums around the world from Cape Town to Kyoto, from Philadelphia to Sydney.

This latent network carries an enormously rich potential for disseminating our current understanding of Egyptian civilisation far beyond the traditional confines of Egyptology. As the distribution source, the Petrie Museum could play a leading role in providing a modern information system for teaching from objects, both for schools and university students and for other individuals with a general interest in Ancient Egypt. At the same time, the condition of the objects must be improved – conservation is a matter of urgency – and access to them made easier. These two tasks will lay the foundations for the future, but both require new premises for the collection.

In order to plan for this hoped-for move, we first need detailed statistics on the size of the collection as a whole and in its chronological and thematic sections. With invaluable assistance from numerous volunteers, museum curators have gradually allotted numbers in a single sequence to the individual objects, recorded in inventory books with all the relevant archaeological information. Most predynastic and dynastic finds have already been registered, leaving material with less precise contexts to be added, such as that from Hellenistic to early Islamic town sites and the Stone Age lithics. When these too have been registered, a great forgotten strength of the Petrie Museum will be highlighted: it possesses one of the largest collections of Egyptian and Sudanese antiquities outside Egypt, from the earliest traces of human activity to the modern age. In this and other aims we are enlisting the help of modern technology, as we are sure Petrie himself would have done, and plan to deliver the entire collection on the World Wide Web.

- Courtesy of Dr Stephen Quirke and the Egypt Exploration Society
- Dr. Quirke has recently informed us that as at December 2000, 34,000 articles have now been photographed
- Refer also to - <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/collections/petrie/museum.htm>

In 1998, the Museum succeeded in obtaining for the collection the status of Designated Museum. This label applies currently to only 50 other museums in the UK, and is designed to acknowledge their national standing. The special status enabled the Petrie Museum, to apply for special Designation Challenge Fund, and in July 1999, we received approval for our Digitisation Project. The grant pays for two photographers, a conservator, one post for text inputting, and a manager to see all 80,000 objects delivered over the Internet by March 2002. After only three months from starting the photography, using digital cameras, 12,000 objects have already been photographed, a remarkable achievement by Daniel Bell and Daniel King. At the same time the database system of Adlib, selected from among competitors during the past winter is being adopted to provide a new home for the information in the old registers.

In the first phase of our new digital age, we will provide one image per object and up to a dozen fields of the most essential information (material, date, dimensions, object name, reference number, etc.) In the third year of the project, 2001-2, we will be co-operating with the Manchester Museum to create a computerised exploration of the Middle Kingdom town and pyramid complex near modern el-Lahun. Upon completion, we will have an exact profile for the collections, enabling us to plan new exhibitions and conservation in detail. We can then discover and exploit its strengths to build the Petrie Museum for the benefit of future generations.

We have also sought funding for expanding our Web site, to include graphic reconstructions and short texts explaining what we know of ancient sites and technologies. This could become the cornerstone in a project to share ways of using Egyptian collections around the world for teaching the past. Another application for funds seeks a more precise understanding of the benefits of handling objects, to find out what we learn from an encounter with artefacts in the museum or classroom, and how this differs from learning from slides, or spoken, or printed words.

When Amelia Edwards left her collection to UCL, her foremost intention was to promote knowledge of Egypt. We like to think that she is smiling down on our endeavours to pioneer her London Museum as a place of learning.



Sir William Flinders Petrie at the Museum in 1923

Pharaohs of the Sun

Never let it be said that good things do not come in plain packages. 'The Pharaohs of the Sun' exhibition recently ended at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, in Leiden, Holland (That noise you may have heard was my spell-checker admitting defeat!). The museum façade - flat, dull, uninspiring, redbrick walls topped by fanciful gables, so representative of medieval Leiden - gave no hint to the treasures held inside. The exhibition, concentrating on the Amarna period royals - Akhenaten, Nefertiti, and Tutankhamun - drew exhibits from all over the world and by displaying them in four separate rooms, attempted to put the Amarna 'heresy' in context.

The first surprise on entering the museum gates (after queuing for nearly two hours - an official said there were 'at least three thousand' people waiting to get in) is a completely closed-in courtyard containing the small stone temple of Taffeh from the 1st century AD, lit to reflect the passing of the sun overhead. It was given by Egypt to the Dutch Government - on condition that no-one would be charged to see it - for their services to UNESCO in rescuing Nubian monuments when the new Aswan dam was built.

On entering the exhibition proper, after having your cameras taken away, you were presented with a device - a cross between a mobile telephone and a Star Trek Tricorder. However, this was exceptionally useful, as it gave a commentary - in English - of the main exhibits and allowed you to listen to further explanations and related items of the exhibition's key features.

Room 1 - Beginnings

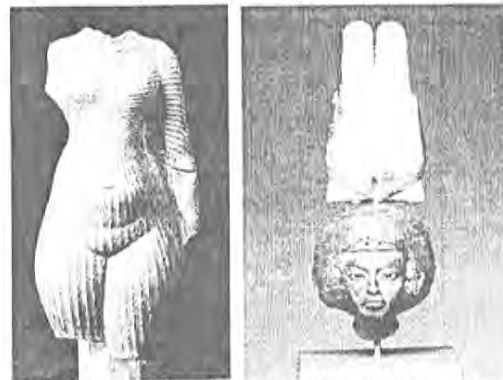
This room concentrated on the legacy of Amenhotep III, Akhenaten's father, (Akhenaten means 'useful for the Aten') showing how religious understanding and artistic style changed from the formal designs of the early New Kingdom to the almost caricature style adopted later. The emphasis was on the quality of the work - a small (about 4") Amenhotep III faience scarab was so intricately carved that it was placed behind a magnifying lens to enable the hieroglyphs to be seen. The star exhibits in the room were undoubtedly the stela of Wesi, with superb carvings depicting him presenting a table of offerings to an almost Amarna-like Amenhotep III, and a statue (see left) of Amenhotep wearing a solar diadem.



Room 2 - The Glory of the Sun

A scale model of Akhenaten's new capital, Akhetaten ('The horizon of the Aten'), dominated this, the major room of the exhibition. The extremely detailed plan, with full acknowledgement given to Dr. Barry Kemp and the work of the EES, showed the sheer size and scale of Akhenaten's vision. Around the edges of the plinth on which the model stood, a 3D computer-generated holographic display took you through the palaces and roofless temples (open to allow the sun in) in glorious colour. It makes one realise how much we are missing only being able to see the bare ruins of the ancient constructions.

The model, however, was not the main draw in this room. Along one wall were a number of showcases containing some of the greatest treasures



from the apex of Amarna art. Two in particular stood out: the headless torso possibly of Nefertiti (left, from the Louvre) and the head of Tiye, Amenhotep III's wife (right, from Berlin whilst it is closed for restoration). We have seen many pictures of both of these figures, but in the flesh (as it were) they surpassed all expectations.

Further into the room, were more delights: a pair of stela (from the MFA, Boston), not quite mirrored, of Akhenaten as a sphinx, was accompanied by a laser display giving a translation of his 'Hymn to the Sun' - in Dutch. However, the handsets had a full English translation. It is similar to the biblical 'Song of Solomon' I overheard someone say.

This room also tried to show the confusion that existed within Egypt. It was really only the King and the residents of Akhetaten who followed the new religion, but the old gods were still worshipped by many. A section was given over to the craftsmen of the time with special emphasis on Tuthmose, who created the superb bust of Nefertiti, which sadly was



not allowed to leave Berlin for this exhibition. On the wall as one left the room, was another icon of the Amarna period, a stela showing the King and Queen with their daughters (See previous page, bottom).

The fickleness of favouritism was also demonstrated by three figures that once represented Kiye, (an early wife of Akhenaten - and possibly Tutankhamun's mum) but were altered to Meritaten, Akhenaten's daughter, when Kiye vanished from history.

Room 3 – The Setting of the Sun God

This room contained cases of the smaller, everyday items used by the residents of Akhetaten. One case showed the diversity of sources for the exhibition, containing items from the museums of San Diego, the British Museum, New York, Oxford, Berlin, Cambridge, Leiden, and small spinning wheels from Bolton. These objects were used to show how Atenism declined when the King 'died'.

A corner was given over to a small temple from the Leiden Collection of Paatenemheb – "Aten in festivity" – a high court official, whose name itself was unusual containing the sign for the Aten. In these times, offerings were usually made to the King, being the only route to the new God, but as the chapel was built just after Akhenaten's demise,



Paatenemheb is shown offering to Osiris – a sign that the old ways were returning. Another wall of the temple showed a group of musicians with a harpist (left) – blind, as most harpists appear to be. Above the musicians is

a poem whose translation was given on the handset. Immediately, it could be recognised as the basis of Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, some of the verses of this twelfth century Persian poem are almost direct quotes.

At the far end of the room were two familiar objects. Firstly an alabaster canopic jar found in KV55, allegedly belonging to Kiye. However, the commentary steered clear of recent controversy by not giving ownership of KV55 or the jar to anyone. The second object was the well-known figure of Horemheb seated as a scribe, when he was still a general. Although he was the King who tried to rid Egypt of most of the Aten iconography and coined the term 'the criminal of Akhetaten', here he is depicted with wide hips and female breasts, in typically scribe-style exaggerated under Amarna fashion.

Room 4 – Counter Revolution

When Tutankhamun was placed on the throne - the exhibition made little mention of Smenkare, incidentally - the old religions made a fast comeback, the

city of Akhetaten was occupied for only a few years afterwards before being completely abandoned and ransacked. However, the artists seemed slow to forget their new style. A typically mixed-up example is Kenna's Book of the Dead. This guides the ka through the terrors of the underworld to peace in the lands of the West with the (old!) family of Gods.



However, all the figures are in typical Amarna style!

Several statue heads of the young King were on show, with one not having the usual familiar features (although there might just have been a family resemblance)

so one can only surmise that the artist either got it wrong (unlikely!) or the head originally belonged to someone else – but who?

Displayed on its own - and rightly so - was a wonderful faience situla vessel, about 9" tall, with its cartouche removed, and made from the deepest blue material one could imagine.

The major exhibits in this final room were statues of Maya, a treasury official, and his wife Meryt, (above) whose long-term home is Leiden so it is no surprise that they featured strongly. Nevertheless, they are truly beautiful, one could almost expect them to move, as they are so lifelike.



Last, but certainly not least, the final exhibit was the famous head of Akhenaten (right), being, surprisingly, the only exhibit from Cairo.

It was an exhausting day, taking nearly four hours from Amenhotep III to Horemheb, but was it worth it? Absolutely. The exhibits were well displayed and the explanations were usually just what you needed to know. The Dutch Apple Pie in the cafeteria was worth the trip on its own – if only the Europeans could learn to make tea! In the visitors book there was only one thing we could write – quoting from Howard Carter – "Wonderful things!"

(All photographs courtesy of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden)

Alan + Elaine Thomas

What's on elsewhere

If you aware of any events taking place that may be of interest to our members, please contact us on any of the addresses shown on page 1.

Lectures

- **Archaeology in Nubia in 1818 and 2000** 5th May 2001 at 2.00 pm by Drs. Derek Welsby & Patricia Usick, University of Reading, Dept of Continuing Education ☎ 0118 987 2878
- **Cleopatra** – 11th-12th May 2001 2 day course at The British Museum Fee: £50 Details: Education Dept, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG ☎ 0207 323 8511/8854
- **Pyramids and Power: architecture and society in Old Kingdom Egypt** 12th May 2001 Day school at the Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon St., London WC1 Fee: £28 ☎ 0207 679 3622
- **Pharaohs of the Sun: Akhenaten & Nefertiti – the later years** 25-27th May 2001 Residential Weekend course at Wensum Lodge, Norwich ☎ 01603 666021
- **Epic Queen: Cleopatra on Film** 9th July 2001 Study Day at the British Museum Fee: £25 Details as Cleopatra above
- **Ancient Egyptian Records** 22nd Sept 2001 Christ's College Cambridge in aid of the Coptic Manuscripts Conservation Project. Contact Claire Glazebrook, Christ's College, Cambridge CB2 3BU ☎ 01223 334937 email: alumni@christs.cam.ac.uk
- **London** - A continuous series of lectures is held by **The Education & Cultural Bureau, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 4 Chesterfield Gardens, London W1Y 8BR**. A full programme is available on application by post, ☎ 0207 491 7720, or by e-mail on egypt.culture@ukonline.co.uk
- **Egypt Exploration Society** – Contact the EES at **3 Doughty Mews, London WC1N 2PG**, ☎: 0207 242 1880, Fax: 0207 404 6118, or e-mail eeslondon@talk21.com for their 2001 London/ Manchester programme.

Exhibitions

- **Ancient Cultures** - 9th Jan – 13th May. The Museum of Science and Industry, Castlefield, Manchester ☎ 0161 833 0027 — *Egyptian houses, costumes, and interactive games.*
- **Ancient Egypt: Digging for dreams** 16th March - 30th September 2001. ☎ 0141 287 2550 An interactive exhibition at the Burrell Collection in Glasgow
- **Reflections of Women in Ancient Egypt** to 28th April. Egypt Centre, University of Wales, Swansea ☎ 01792 29560 email: c.a.graves-brown@swansea.ac.uk
- **Tutankhamun Exhibition** – High West Street, Dorchester, Dorset. ☎ 01305 269571 "Experience the excitement of the world's greatest discovery of ancient treasure." 7 Days a week 9.30am - 5.30pm (summer from 21 March)
- **Tutankhamun's Wardrobe** 31st March – 1 July 2001 National Museums of Scotland, Chambers Street, Edinburgh ☎ 0131 225 7534 — *Replicas of garments found in the tomb of Tutankhamun*

Other

- **Correspondence Courses** are offered on hieroglyphs and ancient history. For details, contact PO Box 368, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 9SF
- **British Centre for Egyptian Studies**, Accredited distance-learning courses. Contact: BCES, Dillington House, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9DT ☎ 01460 55011 email: Christine@britishcentre.freemove.co.uk
- **Study Tour of Libya** 5-14th June 2001 Details: Dr. Clive Broadhurst, Centre for Lifelong Learning, Cardiff University, Senghennydd Road, Cardiff CF24 4AG
- **Under one Sky** 25-27th July 2001. A conference on Babylonian and Egyptian astronomy. British Museum. Details: Dept. of Ancient Near East, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG ☎ 0207 323 8382 Conference Web site : <http://star-www.dur.ac.uk/~jms/UOS/Preview/index.html>
- **Bloomsbury Summer Schools : Ancient Egypt and the Wider World – from the Nile to the Tigris** Two week-long courses every week during July 2001 ☎ 0207 679 3622
- **Egypt Revealed Symposium** – October 27th/ 28th – London. An opportunity to meet some of the most prominent Egyptologists of the century [*Their hyperbole!* – Ed]. Keynote speakers include Zahi Hawass, Kent Weeks, and Mark Lehner. For preliminary details visit www.sevenwonderstravel.com

PLEASE NOTE: These events are not organised or recommended by the ESB. We cannot accept liability should any loss or damage occur in attending or travelling to these events. Members are advised to confirm all details directly with the organisers



ESB Winter Party
6th February 2001

After our AGM on 6th February we enjoyed a splendid buffet supper followed by a fascinating display of Arabic dances from various regions of Egypt, authentically performed by the Alexandra Dance Troupe, led by Jan Metherell, with Christine, Kim, Lorraine, Lesley, and our own Hatshepsut (in Nemes head-dress) Heather York. They were joined by a peasant farmer, a fellah straight from the fields, in galabiyah and skull cap, bearing an uncanny resemblance to our distinguished Chairman – displaying terpsichorean skills.

The dances and costumes were so convincing that, with the accompanying Arabic music, it was easy to feel we had been transported magically back to Egypt for the evening, and as I beheld the damsels undulating in their seductive costumes during some of the more sinuous dances I bethought me of Herrick's lines :

"...when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave vibration each way free
Ah how that glittering taketh me ! "

Martin Davies – President

Photographs by Margaret Curtis



The Ancient Egyptian Calendar

The star-strewn Egyptian night sky not only stuns visitors to Egypt, but was also studied intensely in ancient times by temple priests who recognised that the appearance of a star they named Sepdet (which we now know as Sirius) was associated with the beginning of the Nile flood. This was the start of the world's first calendar, derived over 5000 years ago.

To develop a calendar, you need a regular event that is predictable. And what was more regular and important to the ancient Egyptians than the rise and fall of the River Nile? The waters started rising around the end of June, and the flood period (achet) lasted until October, covering the land with rich black mud and preparing it for the sowing and growing period (peret). Schemu, the harvest time, started at the end of February and ended with the new Nile flood. This regular, ongoing cycle defined the agricultural year.

However, there was a problem! The flood commenced within a range of 80 days – and with variable intensities... all in all, not very accurate timing.

Sirius, or Sothis as it was called by the New Kingdom Egyptians, the star who's heliacal rising was in early July 3000 years ago, but due to the wobble of the earth on its axis is now a few weeks later, turned out to be a very reliable predictor of the recurring flood and defined the exact length of the trip of the earth around the sun.

From their mythology, the Egyptians saw a connection between Sepdet's appearance and the beginning of the Nile flood. They believed the inundation was caused by the tears that Isis (the Great Mother of All Gods and Nature) shed after her husband Osiris was murdered by his brother Seth. The rising of Sepdet was interpreted to be the cosmic appearance of Isis.

The first new moon following the reappearance of Sirius after it disappeared under the horizon for 70 days was established as the first day of the New Year (Egypt: wepet senet) and of the achet (flood) period – even if the Nile had not yet started to rise.

The priests also observed there were four moon periods that fit into each of the three seasons – or rather didn't quite fit! The lunar month has $29 \frac{1}{2}$ days, resulting in "short" or "long" years of 12 or 13 new moons. It didn't really matter because the appearance of Sirius and the next New Year put the calendar back to baseline.

But, as in our times, this calendar was not accurate enough for the central administration; taxes and other things have to be paid on time. So in the Old Kingdom, a standard calendar with 12 months of 30 days each was introduced. Each

month was divided into decans of 10 days.

Because this public calendar with 360 days was too short to coordinate with the agricultural and lunar calendar, five extra days called the heriu renpet were added at the end of the year (supposedly the result of a game of chance amongst the Gods!) and celebrated with religious



The Dendara Zodiac as drawn in the *Description d'Egypt*

festivities.

With this last calendar reform before Roman times, the ancient Egyptians missed the true length of the solar year by only $\frac{1}{4}$ day. But the missing days added up and the gap between the lunar calendar and the public calendar increased by one day every four years. So, in 1460 years the calendar slipped through a whole year, meaning that in between, according to one calendar, it could be harvest time, although in reality the floodwaters were just receding! This problem wasn't solved until Augustus introduced the 'leap year' in Egypt around 30 B.C.

Throughout the winter months, Sirius, in the constellation of Orion, stands low in the southeast and is the brightest star in the northern sky – follow Orion's belt, you can't miss it! It is still high in March, and at present, its brightness is only challenged by that of Venus. On a clear night, if you watch the skies, you can imagine the Egyptian priests doing the same thing 5000 years ago.

The following item was received anonymously via e-mail. It is reproduced exactly as received, no factual errors in the source have been corrected. The views expressed are not necessarily those shared by the Committee.

Bring out your dead

Recently, on the National Geographic Channel 'The Mystery Mummy of Abusir' was presented by the supervisor of the Giza Plateau, Dr, Zahi Hawass who, should he ever give up Archaeology, would become a great entertainer.

A team at Abusir from the Czech Institute of Egyptology has discovered an almost intact Late Period shaft tomb belonging to an official called Iufaa, containing a massive stone sarcophagus. The program documented the efforts to lift the sarcophagus lid to reach the mummy underneath. Unfortunately, over the millennia, moisture had entered the tomb, badly decaying the mummy, so it was removed to the Giza Laboratories for x-ray analysis where, in the heat and humidity, it began to fall apart, halting the investigation. The program was not really up to National Geographic's usually high standard, but was saved in the last five minutes when Dr. Hawass reminded everyone that the mummy was not a just an object of scientific curiosity, but a human being, interred in his grave in the manner that his beliefs required. The excavators were therefore duty bound to return the mummy to its burial chamber and to seal it up again

Let me indulge in a little fantasy. An Egypt Air cargo plane lands at Lutsgate. A fleet of windowless vans dashes up the A38, through Bristol, to the Arnos Vale Cemetery where the group's leader orders his colleagues to dig up 40 graves. He then selects the best 10 coffins, bundles them into the vans, and is off back to Egypt before you can say 'Menkheper-enre Djhutymes'. Ten days later, one of the coffins is opened and the body displayed on prime time Egyptian television to almost universal academic acclaim. Six others are sent to Cairo teaching hospitals for intrusive surgical mutilation to investigate the Western diseases like Asthma, Eczema, and Bulimia. The rest are sent to the local museums for children to gawp at. Horrific? Certainly. A little far-fetched?

Maybe, but is this not what we, in Europe, have done to the dead of Egypt since Napoleonic times? It is sometimes forgotten that these mummies, regarded as inanimate treasures by collectors, are *dead human beings*. They may not have had the same beliefs as us, but does that warrant their removal from their resting place to flatter the morbid interests of 'so-called' civilized academia and to amuse bored children?

It is possible that findings about disease and climate change may be discovered by examining bodies buried thousands of years ago, but the fact of their age does not give us permission to be disrespectful. Today's non-invasive examination techniques have removed most of the need to hack the bodies to pieces, so when we have learned all we can, why not return the bodies to Egypt for a proper re-burial? I would like to ask the Museum Keepers, who are so proud of their glass-encased mummy collections, would you be pleased if, after your death, your wishes were treated as disrespectfully as you treat those in your care? It is also regrettable that body snatching is not confined to the West. How many New Kingdom Pharaohs lie in the Cairo museum rather than in their tombs in the Valley of the Kings? I only know of one that is



Rameses the not-so-Great-any-longer

not, Tutankhamun, although I suspect that we do not really know what lies in KV55, and as for KV5...?

The Egyptians used to believe that a person consisted of seven facets including the body, its shadow, its name, its *ka* (which you may regard as the soul), and its *ba*. The *ba* took the form of a frightening bird with the head of the deceased whose task was to ensure that the dead person's body was not being forgotten or mistreated. If on a dark, stormy night you hear your windows rattling, it will probably be the wind, but if you have been discourteous to a mummy, it might, just possibly, be the bird returning to remind you of a few basic truths. Hitchcock, where are you?



Editor's Note: Those who attended the Amelia Edwards lecture in autumn 2000 will have heard an intriguing lecture by Dr. Miroslav Verner (from the Czech Institute mentioned above) on the discovery and preservation of Iufaa's tomb. A more detailed article by Dr. Verner is available in Volume 10, issue 1 of KMT. For the Web enabled, try <http://www.ff.cuni.cz/~krejci/iufaaeng.html>.

If you agree or disagree with Thoth, please contact us using the addresses on page 1. We will publish any non-libellous responses