



INSCRIPTIONS

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea

Issue 16

April 2004

In this issue:

Barings Foundation Grant awarded to the Egypt Centre	1
<i>by Wendy Goodridge</i>	
Nile Cycle Thank-you Evening	2
<i>by Wendy Goodridge</i>	
Lights-Up Hands-On at The Egypt Centre	2
Editorial	3
<i>by Mike Mac Donagh</i>	
The Hidden Monuments of Karnak	3
<i>by Stuart Williams</i>	
A Sad Announcement	3
<i>by Stuart Williams</i>	
Almost Pharaoh...but not quite!	4
<i>by Stuart Williams</i>	
Scenes from the coffin of Iwesemhesetmwt	5
<i>by Carolyn Graves-Brown</i>	
Two Very Important Changes to Programme	6

Barings Foundation Grant awarded to the Egypt Centre

The Egypt Centre has been awarded a grant for an exciting project aimed at developing its already successful volunteer programme through widening participation.

The £15,000 grant, awarded by the Baring Foundation, will enable volunteers to take a more active role in the museum. Awards were given to only three British museums which Barings felt were particularly innovative in their volunteer programmes. So we are very excited and proud that we were chosen from so many other museums around the country!

We value our volunteers and they do a great job here at the museum. Without our volunteers, the Egypt Centre simply could not function. The museum currently has about 72 registered volunteers who help welcome visitors and school groups, answer enquiries, give guided tours and hands-on demonstrations, make props, pilot new activities and ensure that the gallery is safe and clean and that all equipment is working.

The new project, which will be launched in April, aims to enhance the volunteers' feeling of real involvement and ownership. Volunteers will be encouraged to give their own views on objects held by the museum and to help in selecting and interpreting objects for all visitors to see.

Special open storage display drawers will enable volunteers to display their chosen object, labels and information sheets. A display on a plasma screen in the museum's entrance is planned so that volunteers can 'talk about' the object of their choice.

Community presentations and travelling exhibitions on the work of the museum are planned. Classes, which the museum runs to enhance the volunteer programme, will be expanded so as to attract new people.

The needs of disabled groups are to be addressed with a view to producing large format or Braille information sheets and audiotape guides.

continued overleaf ...



Important!!!
Changes To Lecture Programme
See back page





Barings Foundation Grant (continued)

During the project a volunteer newsletter will be produced and volunteers' opinions sought through questionnaires and focus groups.

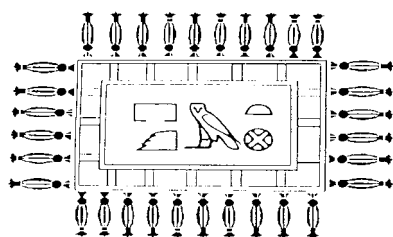
The project will form part of a study by Barings Group. The Egypt Centre, along with the other two British museums given an award, will form part of a research publication from which it is hoped other museums can learn.

Work has already started on the project and a project assistant (one of our volunteers) has been temporarily appointed to help other volunteers research, write information and make a visual presentation about their chosen object! So far over 28 volunteers have selected their object and had their first consultation.

We are very excited about the project and the Vice Chancellor has agreed to open the launch on **Monday April 26th**. Many of you who are volunteers will be invited!

If any of you are interested in volunteering please call in at the museum or give Stuart Williams a call on 01792 294961.

by Wendy Goodridge



Nile Cycle Thank-you Evening

On Sunday 15th February the Vice Chancellor, Richard Davies, welcomed guests to the Taliesin Arts Centre for a special thank-you for all the help and support given to our Nile Cycle Challenge. A number of businesses and individuals, many of them Friends, gave their time and money to make the challenge possible.

Five individuals from Egypt Centre, Taliesin and Business Services cycled along the banks of the Nile in October of last year. In five days over 200 miles were covered and on one day they cycled 77 miles through the desert. The aim was to raise money for the two causes: the Egypt Centre Out of School Workshops for children in Swansea and the Sunshine Home for abandoned children in Luxor.

The challenge raised over £8270 to be divided equally between the two causes. Although the individuals who cycled obviously helped, without the input of everyone who supported the event, success on this scale would not have been possible. Various individuals gave raffle prizes, baked cakes, helped in Fun Days or gave up their time for the Charity Egyptological Conference, which attracted visitors from all over the country. Others sponsored the cyclists, did sponsored swims and gave up their Sunday afternoons to show films at the Taliesin. The Friends Chairperson even had her head shaved!

All of this effort enabled the Egypt Centre outreach programme of workshops to continue and to give support to abandoned children in Luxor, which is our way of giving something back to Egypt. You may not realize it but museums like Egypt Centre are sometimes criticized for taking a colonialist stance and only taking from other countries.

Sybil Crouch gave a very entertaining slide presentation about her memories of the challenge, which illustrated all the cyclists' gruelling hard work. Wendy and Stuart said a few words about the respective causes that gained from the challenge and were presented with cheques by the Vice Chancellor to accept on behalf of Sunshine and the Egypt Centre workshops.

Everyone was then offered wine, soft drinks and a beautiful buffet prepared by Debbie, which was delicious. It was lovely to see so many people who had helped us.

Once again thank-you to the cyclists and everyone who gave support.

by Wendy Goodridge

Lights-Up Hands-On at The Egypt Centre

On March 23rd the Egypt Centre hosted a special event which provided a unique chance for visually impaired visitors to handle real ancient Egyptian objects not normally on display with higher level of lighting than normally allowed. Plus our normal hands-on activities. The event was a great success. For more information contact The Egypt Centre on 01792 295960.





Editorial

Welcome to the 16th issue of *Inscriptions*.

Congratulations to the Egypt Centre for being one of the few museums to receive a Barings grant – see front page. This is a tremendous achievement.

Congratulations are also due to all of those who took part in any way whatsoever in support of the Nile Cycle Challenge which raised such a substantial sum to benefit both the Egypt Centre and the Sunshine project in Luxor.

To those of our readers who are students, good luck in your forthcoming examinations!

Contributions to the next issue of *Inscriptions* will be gratefully received and should be sent to the Egypt Centre, marked for the attention of Mike Mac Donagh.

by Mike Mac Donagh

The Hidden Monuments of Karnak

What a Treat!

Many, many thanks to Ken Griffin who stood in at the very last minute and gave us an enthralling talk on those 'Hidden Monuments' at Karnak. Ken was only given two days' notice, after Rosalind Janssen informed us she was unable to attend. Ken is an absolute expert on all of the hidden treasures at Karnak and his enthusiasm was plain to see.

Not only were we treated to some fabulous images of the temples of the Divine Adoratrices but also scenes from the Ptah Temple, the Temple of Osiris Hequadjat, the Khonsu Temple and the Opet Temple. Ken's knowledge of the buildings, who dedicated them and the dates was impressive and even though he has quite a broad Belfast accent we were all able to understand names such as Shepenwepet and Ankhnesneferibre! Ken constantly referred back to his original map of the complex so that we never ever got lost and were able to trace our footsteps around the mass of ruins and mounds of unexcavated rubble.

A wonderful evening was enjoyed by all. Thank you, Ken!

by Stuart Williams

A Sad Announcement

Many of you have been supporters of the Sunshine Project International for a number of years, and hopefully will continue to do so. Unfortunately we have received some devastating news from Luxor. Here are the words of Sue Bennett (Trustee):

I am writing the most sad and difficult letter I have ever written, to inform you that on Sunday 29th February 2004, Pearl Smith, our founder and Manager lost her battle with lung cancer and passed peacefully away at her daughter's home.

I am sure that like all of us you will be devastated by this news and I would urge you to bear with us through this sad and difficult time, we reassure you that the Project and the care of the children will continue.

Those of you who knew Pearl Smith will know that her greatest dream was to build a home for our children and we are committed to fulfilling her dream. Even though Pearl will not be there physically to see it, we know that her heart will always be with the children in Egypt.

Thank you for your kindness and support, we will keep you informed of future plans and arrangements.

If you would like more information about Sunshine and the new home please contact me at the Egypt Centre.

by Stuart Williams





Almost Pharaoh...but not quite!

At the Egypt Centre we have a shabti dating from the 26th Dynasty (664-525 BCE). Day after day, year after year, people wander past Mr Ankhwahibre and don't notice him, because he is lost among a row of nameless and often faceless shabtis. But Ankhwahibre was a very important man (as were the other nameless and faceless shabtis) and soon he will have his own label and stand proudly amongst the nameless shabtis.

So who was he? And why was he important?

Ankhwahibre sa Neith (his full name) was a general in the Egyptian army around 570 BCE. The period was a time of general chaos in Egypt. There was a mutiny in the garrison at Elephantine and the country was also aiding the Libyans with their war against the Dorian Greeks. The ruling pharaoh Apries was heavily defeated by the Dorians and on returning to Egypt civil war broke out between the Egyptian army and foreign mercenaries.

The army needed a strong leader and looked to a colleague of Ankhwahibre for inspiration. The general was called Amasis. He had considerable experience and had fought against the Nubians on several occasions.

Amasis and Apries met, head to head, at Memphis in 570 and a fierce battle commenced; perhaps our man was involved in the fighting. Apries was killed and given all the correct burial rites by the new pharaoh, Amasis. Amasis was to rule Egypt for another 44 years. He developed the city of Naukratis in the Delta, which was to become one of the most important trading places in Egypt.

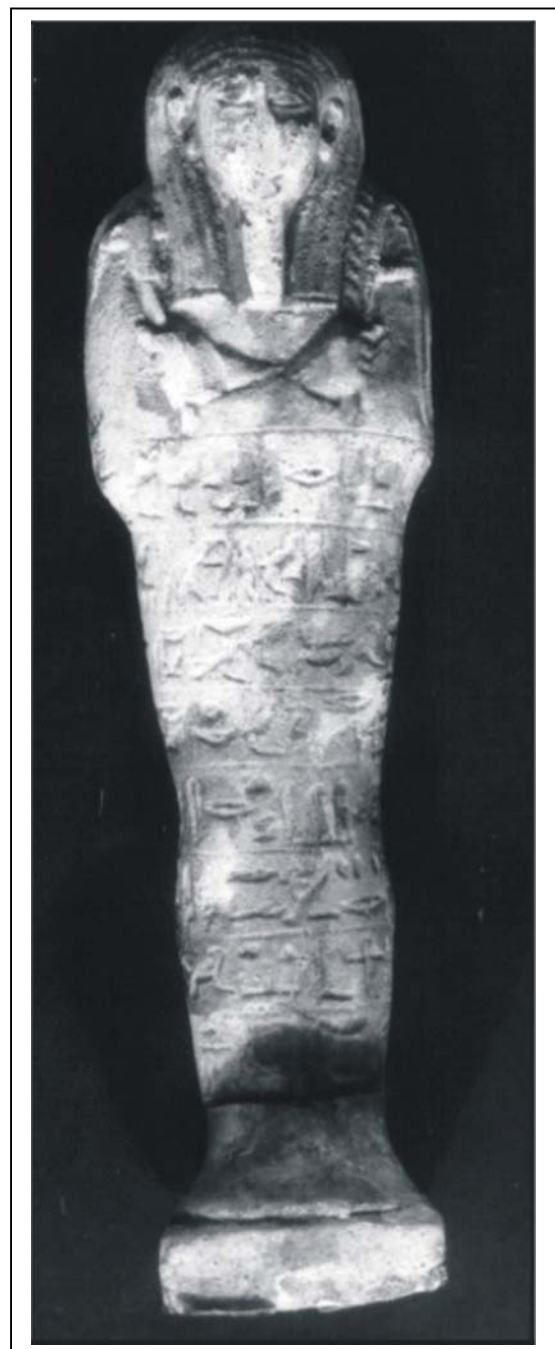
What if the army had turned to Ankhwahibre for leadership? Would he have become pharaoh? Perhaps he wouldn't have wanted to be! Whatever happened to him after the battle we will never know, as all we have is the remains of his tomb at Saqqara. There were 385 shabtis found in his tomb which is close to the monastery of Apa Jeremais. The shabtis are scattered amongst collections across the world. There were originally five of them in the British Museum, but thanks to

T.G.H. James we now have one of them. Dr James, the then keeper of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum, donated the shabti to our collection in 1977.

Next time you visit the galleries please take a longer look at our shabtis, especially our Ankhwahibre and think about him for a moment, the general who was so nearly pharaoh.

by Stuart Williams

Volunteer Liaison Officer





Scenes from the coffin of Iwesemhesetmwt

The scenes from the 21st Dynasty (1969-948 BC) coffin of Iwesemhesetmwt are, like others of their date, a mixture of various religious statements from the Book of the Dead but also present other mythological concepts. In other words, pictures are used to show complex religious ideas. The scenes on this Egypt Centre coffin have, of late, been of interest to me. Here I discuss my favourite scene, that of the celestial cow emerging from the Theban mountain (see illustration).

I'm not sure why this is my favourite scene. I think that it appeals on a 'semi-conscious' level and conjures up images of rejuvenation, of coming out of the darkness into the light. It doesn't make me think of death, but of fresh new life from an abyss of darkness. But, what did it mean to the ancient Egyptians?

The picture shows a sacred speckled cow with saddle-cloth, an ankh around her neck, and the atef crown on her head. She is coming out of the Western Mountain at Thebes. The goddess is said to be Hathor, though perhaps has overtones of Mehet-weret. The mountain is dotted with stone nodules and in front of it stands a pyramidion-capped tomb. A winged wadjet carrying the shen sign for eternity is shown above the cow goddess, and in front is a clump of papyri in a bowl. Wepwawet sits, dog-like, with the baton of the Opener of the Ways and another winged serpent appears above him. The baton is a kheryp sceptre with menats suspended from the handle.

In this scene Hathor perhaps takes on some of the aspects of Mehet-weret, with whom she is frequently connected, particularly

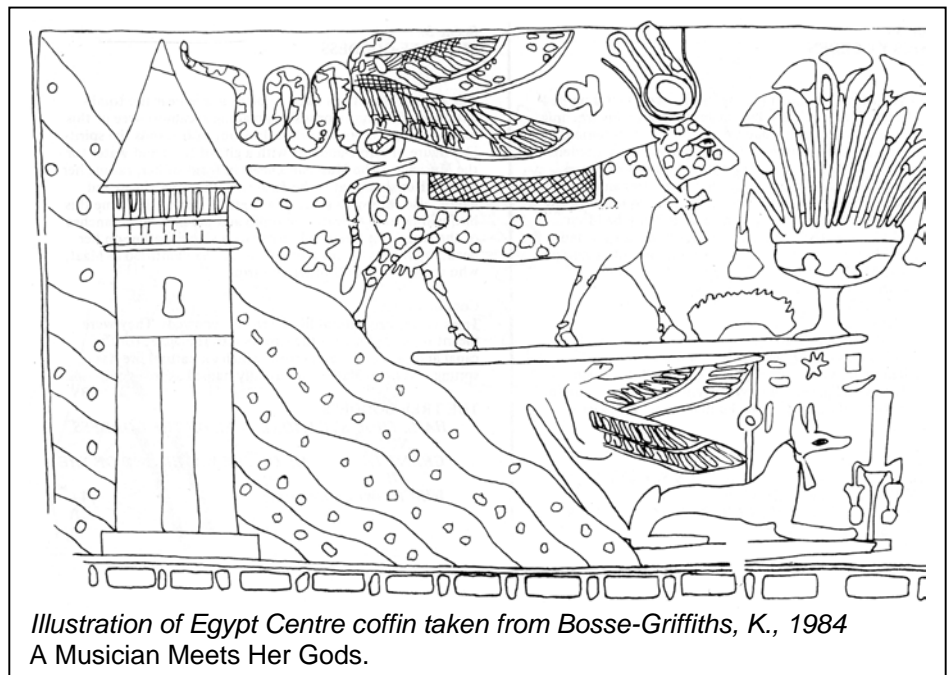


Illustration of Egypt Centre coffin taken from Bosse-Griffiths, K., 1984
A Musician Meets Her Gods.

in the 18th Dynasty. Desroches-Noblecourt and Kuentz (1968: 112-4) have argued that Hathor and Mehet-weret were often almost interchangeable. Pinch (1993: 175) draws attention to a recumbent cow on a shrine with text referring to her as Mehet-weret, but wearing a menat counterpoise inscribed 'Hathor Foremost of Thebes'. Additionally, in some vignettes of the Book of the Dead the cow in the western mountain is said to be Mehet-weret (Pinch 1993: 181).

Mehet-weret means 'Great Flood', linking her with the primeval waters of the Nun (which enhances the meaning of the papyrus clump). In the Old Kingdom she was believed to have helped the pharaoh and Re reach the sky by the underworld Nile. She was goddess of the yearly inundation and often has a menat necklace round her neck and carries a sceptre. In her sky aspect, like Nut, she swallowed the sun each evening and gave birth to it in the morning. Mehet-weret is also sometimes related to Nut or to Neith. Neith too may be shown as a

cow wearing a collar with an ankh around its neck.

The motif of Hathor coming out of the mountain is a common vignette of the 21st Dynasty *Book of the Dead*, Spell 186 (Niwinski 1989: 140). The spell reads: *Hathor, lady of the West; She of the West; Lady of the Sacred land; Eye of Re which is on his forehead; kindly of countenance in the Bark of Millions of Years; a resting place for him who has done right within the boat of the blessed; who built the Great Bark of Osiris in order to cross the water of truth.*

Hathor was 'Lady of the Western Mountain' and particularly associated with the Valley of the Queens. A natural water basin there perhaps reinforces the meaning of the papyrus clump (papyrus needs a lot of water). Pinch (1993: 179) states that the 'cow and mountain' motif first appears at Deir el-Bahri on votive stelae and textiles from mid or late 18th Dynasty. It is common on votive and funerary stelae of 19th to 21st Dynasties from Thebes, is not found in temple reliefs or tombs of kings but does occur in tombs of some Rameside





queens. Additionally, although Hathor is shown in cow form in early 18th Dynasty tombs, the cow and mountain motif does not figure in tomb decoration until after the Amarna Period. It also occurs on shabti boxes and of course on Theban Third Intermediate Period coffins (like ours). It is rare outside this area.

Caves are frequently associated with Hathor, thus the cow may be emerging from a cave in the mountain. However, this depiction seems to suggest that she is emerging from the 'living' rock. The Qurn of the western mountain, the natural 'pyramid' above the Valley of the Kings and Queens, seems to have been considered, like the benben stone, to be a primeval mound which rose above the waters of chaos. It was thus full of life-giving force from which the gods could arise. (Alain Zivie recently uncovered a 19th Dynasty tomb at Saqqara showing Hathor emerging from a rock cut wall.)

I don't think it mattered which individual goddess was intended in this scene, as the Egyptians seemed to have mixed and matched ideas surrounding various deities. Hathor and Mehet-weret were both celestial goddesses who could take the form of a cow. In spell 168 of the *Book of the Dead* both are identified as the Wadjet Eye of

Horus. The Eye of Horus or Re (both may be confused in Egyptian ideology) symbolises certain goddesses as instruments of the sun god. Wadjet is also, appropriately for this scene, associated with the papyrus and forces of growth.

The container of papyrus perhaps looks a little odd. It is a common scene. For example, it appears on a similar coffin in Berman (1999: 318, 328). However, one might expect the reference to be to a naturally growing papyrus clump. In which case, why the artificial vase? Perhaps it represents a vase of offerings to Hathor.

The superstructure of the tomb depicted here ceased being built in the Rammesside period but continued to be depicted on coffins. It is a classic tomb structure of the village of Deir el-Medina.

And what of Wepwawet, the jackal god? I like his name, 'Opener of the Ways'. He is a guide for the dead, a means by which their way to the afterlife is opened, and also a protector of the dead. Wepwawet is often portrayed with a uraeus, a form of Wadjet. Indeed one inscription even states he was born in the sanctuary of the goddess Wadjet at Buto. However, the winged uraeus here may be Neith. She too was an 'Opener of Paths' and like Hathor could be portrayed

as a winged serpent, the Eye of Re. Additionally, el-Sayed (1982) hypothesizes that she should be seen as the feminine doublet of Wepwawet.

What this scene does seem to show is the importance of the feminine aspect in rebirth. The goddess, whether Hathor or Mehet-weret, and with the addition perhaps of Neith, are shown as forms emergent from the west. From death comes life.

by Carolyn Graves-Brown

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Two Very Important Changes to Programme

There are changes to the programme for **April 2004** & **June 2004**. This is due the fact that Rosalind Janssen was unable to attend in January.

Date: **14th April**

Speaker: Rosalind Janssen

Topic: Senior Citizens in Ancient Egypt

Venue: Callaghan Lecture Theatre

This is a change to your programme. Please don't come on the 22nd as there will be no lecture that evening.

Date: **23rd June**

Speaker: Marcel Maree

Topic: Tracing the Hand of the Artist

Venue: Esso Lecture Theatre

This is a change to your programme. Please don't come on the 16th as there will be no lecture that evening.

