



# INSCRIPTIONS

*The Newsletter of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea*

## Issue 11

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## Saturday Workshops

As you heard from Alison in the last issue of *Inscriptions*, the Saturday workshops are proving a great success. So much so, that we have now taken on a new Assistant to help Alison, Moodie and Sandra run the sessions. Rebecca has previously helped as a volunteer during workshop sessions and was a great asset helping children who needed more one-to-one attention.

The feedback from school-teachers, parents and the children themselves has been overwhelmingly positive. They are all backing our further bid for funding from the New Opportunities Fund and we have many schools on the waiting list. The application for next year's funding has been sent off so keep your fingers crossed! We will keep you posted.

*by Wendy Goodridge*



*Dressed to kill ... Workshop children dressed as ancient Egyptians*

## For exciting news of weekday workshops for adults in September, see Page 3!





# Funday!

Wendy and Stuart would like to say a big thank-you to everyone who supported the recent Funday held to raise funds for our Saturday workshops for children and for the Sunshine project International . The event raised over £2500. This surpassed our wildest hopes and the fund is still growing daily!

The Fun Day was opened by Emma Nehemiah, Out of School Learning Development Worker for New Opportunities Funding and Eve Lawton, Trustee and Outreach Officer for the Sunshine Project International (*see below*). They both immensely enjoyed the day, even if Emma was disappointed that she didn't win the tattoo raffle!



*Eve presents a certificate from Sunshine to Stuart and Wendy who accepted it on behalf of the Egypt Centre*



*Emma Nehemiah (left) and Eve Lawton (right) who opened the Funday*

Eve made a presentation of a framed certificate to the Egypt Centre in appreciation of our fund raising efforts for Sunshine (*see above*).

Lots of games and stalls were on offer and many came along, brought lots of goodies, helped run stalls and brought their families. We were supported by many businesses and restaurants who donated fantastic prizes for our raffle and auction.

Over a thousand visitors came to the Egypt Centre on the day, so, as well as raising lots of funds, we also helped break down barriers that hinder some visitors from entering a university museum.

*by Wendy Goodridge  
and Stuart Williams*



*Hunting for a bargain amongst the amazing high quality gifts*



*There was a long queue all day for face painting!*







## *The Egyptians beat me to it!*

### **- a study of Faience**

Faience was known to the Egyptians as *tjehenet*, which was derived from the root *tjehen*, to dazzle or gleam, which was associated with the sun, maybe giving a solar symbolism to the material.

The material could be moulded and thus modelled, and because it was not costly, it was ideal for the mass-production of such small items as statuettes, amulets, rings and ear studs.

The colour of the glaze which was applied to the items depended on additions to the basic mixture, and faience was often made to imitate, and substitute for, real gem-stones. When studying ceramics, we were taught that faience was associated with a place called Faenza in Italy, as that was where faience came from, mostly in the form of Majolica ware, for example, Umberto plates. Majolica is another word for faience. I have learned from the Egypt Centre books that there were several types of faience available to the ancient Egyptians, including a glass finish and a lead glaze, and that various colour effects could be achieved including blue, red and green.

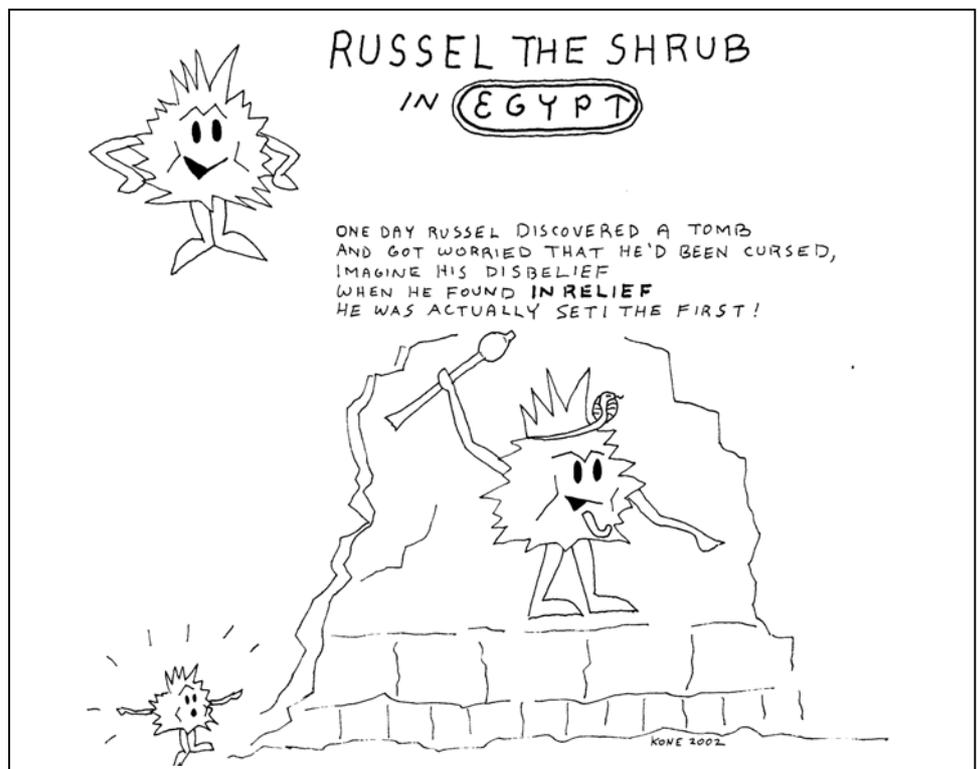
The Torquay potters of the West Country Pottery, which I have been studying for ten years, use the glassy type of faience on their Cottageware scenes. The faience shines and is more clearly defined, whereas a non-faience pot is dull in comparison. Only a small amount of faience need be added to a pot to make it more durable than an ordinary pot.

We are concentrating here on one example that the ancient Egyptians made, "blue faience". A lot of blue ware was made in Upper Egypt. Blue faience is a very limited matrix of glass and turquoise blue frits, in which the dominant phase (other than quartz) is a calcium silicate known as Wollastonite, which is crystallized from the copper-rich glass matrix. The frits can be subdivided into coarse and fine textures, the coarse normally representing the first stage of production, which can then be ground finer and moulded into artefacts such as pots.

The Egyptian invention of faience, though of much greater antiquity, is closely allied to glass. Its texture may be so fine that it is virtually indistinguishable from glass, especially if the latter is weathered. It is known by the Old Kingdom and undergoes gradual refinement, becoming increasingly glass-like by the early Roman period.

It was known to both the Greeks and the Romans, who believed it to have been invented at Alexandria.

*by Ian Jones*



## *Lecture time change notice*

As our chairman, David Birch, announced recently, it was decided it would be more convenient to start the lectures a half-hour earlier at 7.00pm for the next programme. This would give everyone more time to ask questions and relax, meet old and new friends and enjoy the refreshments! It certainly will help lessen the rush especially if the speaker has opted to being taken out for a meal after the lecture instead of a fee. Don't forget you are welcome to come along when the speaker is taken out for a meal. Our chairman will announce this at the meetings whenever the following month's speaker has made this option. If you fancy coming along you can put your name on the list at the Egypt Centre. We tend to limit numbers to 15 places so let us know A.S.A.P.!

*by Wendy Goodridge*





## *Egyptian pottery*

The function of Egyptian pottery can be grouped into three main categories: daily life (including festive activities), religious and funerary practices.

The potter was conscious of the function his products were to serve and this determined his selection of raw materials and his treatment of them: the surface applied and the detail of shapes. I have tried here to summarize the three categories.

### **Pots used in daily life**

This category includes water jars, household items and plates. Most surviving examples are from the New Kingdom. All are made of marl clay and were plain in style but coloured clay-brown etc. Over the years they lose their colouring due to age and wear.

More elaborate, decorated vessels such as those of the New Kingdom may have been reserved for use on festive occasions, and some examples from that period undoubtedly had an ornamental use as indicated by the presence of more complex decoration on one side than the other. Ornamental vases, to my mind, can be used in houses on mantelpieces. Did the Egyptians have mantelpieces?

### **Pots used for religious purposes**

Religious rituals were performed in temples and shrines throughout Egypt. Scenes in tombs and on stele show water libations being poured from chalices made from pottery, metal or faience in the shape of the blue lotus flower.

### **Pots used for funerary practices**

Most examples of vessels in this category were found in tombs. One or two can be macabre-looking, but others are striking vases to glorify the dead.

Pottery jars were ritually broken at the entrance to the tomb. Some forms were made specifically for burial with the dead. Foremost amongst these were examples of pottery jars used to hold certain internal organs of a person whose body had been mummified. The organs were removed during the process of mummification and had to be buried long with the body. These vessels were called Canopic jars. Their lids took the form of human heads or representations of those of the guardian genii who protected the organs.

Jars of pottery were also used to hold small figures (shabtis) that would perform manual labour in the place of the deceased if he or she was called upon to do so.

Other vessels of pottery found in tombs were decorated in imitation of those made from stone. A class of crudely made miniature vessels called dummy vases, which are solid, are known from tombs.

It is possible that jars and handles from the New Kingdom with polychrome decoration were intended primarily for inclusion in the tomb. Some vessels which were blue painted before firing were probably originally for domestic use, but later received polychrome decoration and inscriptions signifying their conversion to a funerary use.

Magical practices also account for the occurrence of letters addressed to the dead, written in ink on pottery bowls. The so-called execration texts were also written on bowls; in these the enemy was vilified and the bowl was broken to symbolise defeat or destruction.

One final note: the only way a “daily life” domestic pot would get into a wealthy tomb would be to have decoration added. Plain pots stayed out of the tomb. The Egyptians made sure they were going to the afterlife in an idealized version of the way they lived here, especially the Pharaohs.

*by Ian Jones*

## *When in the pink, write with this ink!*

Ink pots are a common sight in collections and on sales tables alike, partly as they are generally inexpensive, easily form an attractive display in limited space and are found in sufficient variety of patterns and shapes to form a collection within a collection. It used to be thought that the story began around 3400 B.C., when writing was first used by the Sumerians who at first employed pictograms written on clay, where a symbol represents an object or notion. However, the latest evidence suggests that the Egyptian system is much older than the Sumerian. The ancient Egyptians also used a system of ideograms and in addition used representations of certain sounds of their language: phonetics. The writing that we use today is a system which some suggest may have been influenced by that of Minoan Crete, developed to an extent along the same pathways as modern Japanese, where symbols correspond with individual groups of sounds in the language: syllabic. *[The Japanese system is highly complex and uses a mixture of two syllabic systems and Chinese characters to write the language – Ed.]* In our writing system the development led to one sign for one sound: alphabetic. Naturally, to be able to write, tools are required, and the earliest pens were made by the Egyptians, who used sharpened reeds. Brushes, made from reeds, had been used earlier by them for writing.

*by Jill Griffin*





## Armless Gods and Flights of Fancy

The most recent copy of *The Journal Of Egyptian Archaeology* includes an article by John Baines and Christina Riggs comparing a Late Period or Ptolemaic royal statue with an Early Dynastic one. The interesting piece of the article was, from a personal point of view, the section on the enveloping cloaks which suggest an undifferentiated body form, a mummiform shape. The authors suggest that the ideal shape of the mummy was influenced by the statue shape. The mummy was, after all, intended to copy a godlike form and cloaked bodies appear to have been associated with the divine.

In the realms of imagination, one could imagine a ceremony of cloaking similar to some shamanistic rites, where the cloak functions as a protective factor against the dangerous powers of the otherworld, mirroring its everyday utilitarian aspects. The shaman, entering liminal areas would need this special protection. With the exception of plain cloaks, the two main types seem to be that of the panther or leopard skin and the feathered cloak. Perhaps the animal forms confer the characteristics of the other. The

protective powers of panthers and other felines has been shown by Malek in his popular book on cats, and the protection of birds seems to be implied by the manner in which figures of deities such as Isis and Horus are depicted shielding human forms, rather like a mother bird protecting her young.

The characters usually shown wearing cloaks include: kings taking part in the Sed Festival, the god hieroglyph, Middle Kingdom boat owner figures, the Sem priest, Bes, Seshet, Osiris, etc. Panther skins are shown on coffins up until the Middle Kingdom. All these groups, it could be argued, needed particular protection from otherworld forces and are associated with the liminal.

However, all this is conjecture and it could be argued that many other deities who wander between one world and another seem quite happy to go about uncloaked. But, conjecture is fun. Have you noticed how our Predynastic figurine is one of these armless figures?

*by Carolyn Brown*



*Pictured (left to right) Rebecca Shields and Wendy Goodridge of the Egypt Centre with Susan Williams and Gareth Thomas of The Range*

## Thanks to The Range

We were visited by Gareth Thomas and Sue Williams from The Range, Swansea during our social evening on Wednesday 12 June. The Range had very kindly offered to donate £500 towards our fundraising efforts for the NOF Children's workshops, and the Sunshine Home in Luxor, and we had invited them along for the evening. They brought with them a cheque to present to us for this amount. This donation has gone a long way towards helping us to reach our highest funday total ever, and it is with many thanks that we accept this donation.

*by Rebecca Shields*

## A Taste of Egypt

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June, the Egypt Centre held a 'Taste of Egypt' day in order to raise some much-needed funds for the centre's volunteers. For the event, some of the Egypt Centre staff and members of the Friends contributed either by providing ingredients or by making the mouthwatering Egyptian food on offer, which included Koubhari, Foul, Curry and Karkadi. Alongside the food, there was also a raffle, and a large selection of second-hand books on offer to those passing through. All in all, the day was very successful, and we raised just over £130 which we have used to increase the facilities for our highly valuable volunteers. On behalf of everyone at the Egypt Centre, I would like to thank everyone who gave their support.

*by Rebecca Shields*





## The Egyptian as a military force

The Pharaoh was the national war leader, as well as Egypt's ruler and an incarnated god. In foreign wars, he usually commanded the Egyptian troops in battle. When the battle was described on memorial walls and burial stones, the Pharaoh ensured that his own personal prowess and courage were emphasized. The most flagrant example of pharaonic self-publicity was Ramesses II's account of the battle of Kadesh against the Hittites.

To read the official Egyptian account recorded on a Ramesside wall is to learn that Ramesses II completely destroyed his enemies at Kadesh and that he thereby struck fear into the hearts of all nations. But to read the Hittite account of the same battle in the Hittite archives is to learn that Ramesses II fled from the battle field. His terrified troops broke in panic after being caught in a Hittite ambush. The pull back of Egyptian troops from further confrontation with the Hittites tends to confirm the Hittite side of the story, [*but the treaty, of which we have both texts, and subsequent history, imply that a stalemate or draw was the outcome – Ed.*]

In early days of the Old Kingdom there was no standing army on regular duty. If a campaign was to be launched against the Libyans to punish them for incursions into Egyptian territory, for instance, a limited draft would bring the needed troops together. After the completion of the campaign, the army would be disbanded. The civilian soldier returned to his farm and his trade. A very small royal guard remained on permanent duty, together with a few senior officers around whom an army could be built.

In time, a trained permanent military force came into being. Soldiering became a regular profession. By the Middle Kingdom, the military were highly regarded. Generals were important and influential court figures. Civilian peasants were trained during three-month low-river times as a kind of national militia, and were proud to be called to duty. (The situation was similar to that in present-day Switzerland, with its tiny regular army and broad-based militia.)

In the evenings, older farmers would sit on the doorsteps in the villages by the river, watching the setting sun and the quiet flow of the Nile, as they told war stories of the days of their youth. They were often buried with their arms besides them in their simple graves, for they wanted to serve the Pharaoh in the Western World as they had served him in this life.

By Middle Kingdom times, Nubian troops were hired as mercenaries. If it is surprising that the once feared Nubians now served in the Egyptian army, one need only recall the large numbers of Irish troops that served in the armies of Imperial Britain. The Nubians were especially fine bowmen. Egyptian soldiers normally carried spears and shields, the Nubians, bows and reed arrows.

The Hyksos introduced the wheeled car chariot and the war-horse during the Second Intermediate Period. The Hyksos chariot was a heavy four-spoked affair. After some experimentation, the Egyptians in Upper Egypt adapted the chariot to the desert conditions of Egypt, making it a lighter, faster, more mobile six-spoked chariot. They also developed effective battlefield tactics. Then they turned this weapon system (horse, chariot, driver, bowman, shield-bearer) against the Hyksos themselves. With this improved chariot, the Egyptians drove the Hyksos from Egypt in the war of liberation. The Egyptians' chariot teams were the dominant weapon in winning the empire of the New Kingdom. The chariot force considered itself the elite branch of the army. It was made up mostly of young aristocrats who eventually provided their own chariots and horses.

As the imperial New Kingdom grew to maturity, the military became a well-established class. Soldiers travelled abroad, drew garrison duty overseas in Asia or in Nubia and Kush, became wealthy through taking booty, acquired slaves and foreign women as part of the spoils of war, and received generous veterans' benefits in the form of food and land back in Egypt. The regular Egyptian army was augmented by elite groups of foreigners. There were corps

of Nubians, Palestinians, Syrians, Libyans and "Sea People" (possibly Minoans forced south by Greek expansion in the Aegean).

Eventually, the army became so powerful that it could name one of its generals as the new Pharaoh. Such was the case shortly after the death of young Tutankhamun. Horemheb was commander-in-chief of the army. To head off political anarchy during the struggle for the succession, he administered the nation for a time. At the appropriate moment, he marched at the head of an army into Thebes and had himself proclaimed Pharaoh, the first of the Nineteenth Dynasty. Not surprisingly, Horemheb was a believer in strong central government.

Ships were used primarily to provide transport and supplies for the army. When the Sea People began to invade Egypt during the time of the Ramesside Period, Egypt developed fighting ships. One of the most dramatic battles recorded on Egyptians' wars was one on water and land by Ramesses III when the Sea People were decisively repulsed.

A census of every family in Egypt was recorded by royal scribes. Location of the home, names of the family, and occupations of all family members were carefully compiled. When a call-up for additional troops was issued, the names of individual men from these royal census records were selected to serve. Troops were drawn evenly from every district of the nation. Young men were no more willing to serve in unpopular wars than they are now, so police were often required to ensure that those selected were actually inducted into the army. The police were also used to track down draft evaders or deserters.

*by Mick Bardell*

### Acknowledgments

*Quest For The Past*, Readers Digest  
Quirke, Stephen And Spencer, Jeffery  
(Eds), *The British Museum Book Of  
Ancient Egypt*

Spencer A J., *Early Egypt: The Rise of  
Civilisation in the Nile Valley*

Wildung, D. (Ed), *Sudan: Ancient  
Kingdoms of the Nile*





# WORD SEARCH

The 45 words and phrases relating to ancient Egypt have all been hidden in the diagram. They have been printed across (backwards or forwards), or up or down, or diagonally, but always in a straight line without letters being skipped. You can use the letters in the diagram more than once. You will probably find it helpful to mark the words in the diagram and cross them off the list as you find them.

- ABU SIMBEL
- ABYDOS
- AKHENATON
- AMENHOTEP
- AMON
- ANKH
- ANUBIS
- APIS
- BAST
- CARTOUCHE
- CLEOPATRA
- DYNASTY
- GIZA
- HATHOR
- HATSHEPSUT
- HIEROGLYPHICS
- HORUS
- ISIS
- KADESH
- KARNAK
- KOHL
- LUXOR
- MEMPHIS
- MENES
- MUMMY
- NARMER
- NEFERTITI
- NILE
- OSIRIS
- PAPYRUS
- PHARAOH
- PTOLEMY
- PYRAMID
- RAMESES
- SAQQARA
- SCARAB
- SEUSERT
- SETEKH
- SPHINX
- TEMPLE
- THEBES
- THOTHMES
- TOMB
- TUTANKHAMUN
- VALLEY OF THE  
KINGS

D	Y	B	M	O	T	H	N	O	T	A	N	E	H	K	A
I	S	M	L	E	B	M	I	S	U	B	A	A	T	H	O
M	E	E	M	S	O	D	Y	B	A	D	Z	T	I	S	S
A	S	N	H	U	I	S	I	S	Y	I	P	E	K	E	G
R	E	E	X	A	M	U	T	N	G	E	R	N	O	T	N
Y	M	S	N	Y	T	C	A	R	T	O	U	C	H	E	I
P	A	S	I	R	I	S	O	O	G	S	S	B	L	K	K
T	R	R	H	S	T	P	H	L	M	E	U	A	P	H	E
U	Y	O	P	Y	H	N	Y	E	Y	N	R	R	A	A	H
T	M	H	S	A	E	P	M	H	P	U	O	A	P	R	T
A	E	T	R	M	H	P	T	N	S	S	H	C	Y	T	F
N	L	A	A	I	H	A	S	H	A	E	U	S	R	A	O
K	O	H	C	I	N	P	Y	I	O	R	D	T	U	P	Y
H	T	S	S	U	N	O	M	A	P	T	M	A	S	O	E
A	P	N	B	S	A	Q	Q	A	R	A	H	E	K	E	L
M	H	I	I	T	I	T	R	E	F	E	N	M	R	L	L
U	S	L	U	X	O	R	K	A	N	R	A	K	E	C	A
N	S	E	B	E	H	T	E	L	P	M	E	T	H	S	V

