

INSCRIPTIONS

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea

Issue 26

May 2008

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A sad goodbye to Stuart Williams



Stuart Williams, Volunteer Manager, is leaving the Egypt Centre in June to live in Wolverhampton.

Stuart has done so much in his time at the Egypt Centre with his encouragement to volunteers, always being available to help and listen, putting in place training routines and giving Masterclasses. His work with children in the museum has set a benchmark for others to follow. He has also been instrumental in getting funding for volunteer projects.

I worked with Stuart on the steering committee to set up the Friends and when he was the Friends first chairperson. Some of you will remember the fascinating talks he gave us on his holidays in Egypt, where we had to spot his daughter's bear in the photos! Stuart's intellect, his teaching ability and his tremendous people skills helped to lay the foundation blocks of the Friends, so on behalf of us all I would like to say thank you and good luck.

by Sheila Nowell

AGM 2008

This year's Annual General Meeting of the Friends will be held on Wednesday September 24th 2008



Important: Programme Changes

Please note the following changes to our published programme for 2008:

- There is now **NO TALK ON 11 JUNE**
- **THE NEXT TALK IS ON 25 JUNE**, when Marleen DeMeyer of the Catholic University of Leuven will talk on the subject:

**Restoring Old Kingdom Tombs
in the 1st Intermediate Period:
the case of Dejhutinakht at Dayr el Barsha
and the tomb of Henu**

- This will be the **LAST** meeting of this season because
- **THE TALK ON 9 JULY HAS BEEN CANCELLED**
Sorry for any inconvenience caused!



Six days in a minibus

Cold morning of April 21st and we are all gathered at Gatwick airport for our long anticipated trip to Luxor. We are to be ably escorted by Ken and Stuart, with back-up from Meg and Darren. Evening saw us sitting outside "Sinbads", all eighteen of us watching the moon rise through the palm trees on a warm Egyptian night and listening to the haunting sound of the faithful being called to prayer.

Each morning we set off in two air-conditioned minibuses together with our supplies of water, sweets, crisps and fruit. We visited sites not on the usual tourist trails such as el-Kab, Armant, Gebelein, El-Tod, El-Mo'alla and many others, and passed through villages where time had stood still.

Sometimes hordes of beautiful children would escort our minibuses out of the village dancing and singing "how are you" over and over. At Malkata we got caught in a sandstorm and joked that at least the tourist police would be unable to find us! We were grateful to be back into the cool of the hotel in the afternoon for our rest and laze by the pool. The evening felucca trip turned into the booze cruise!

We visited a pottery where Janey bought a large terracotta donkey which amazingly arrived home intact though did require a lot of effort to pack. We decided against the camel ride and hot air balloon ride but those who went really enjoyed them. The toy camel - found by Meg - which does belly dancing is another story. Truly a holiday to remember so thanks to you all.

*by Sheila Nowell
photos by Tony Nowell*



Carolyn and Andrew search in vain for the fabled cartouche-stamped mud bricks at Gebelein



Our excellent local guide and fixer Ahmed convinces a guard that our group is allowed into the obscure bits of Karnak

Apologies for changes in programme

As you will have been aware, there have been a few changes in the programme this year. Because our speakers often have to be booked so far in advance, they sometimes change their dates or cancel nearer to the time. We do our best to make as many people as possible aware of the changes but inevitably some slip through the net, so for that we can only apologise. We will be having discussions as to how we can tighten this up even more, so again our apologies for any inconvenience caused. We are giving free tea/coffee at the next talk to say sorry for the confusion.





Editorial

Welcome to the twenty-sixth issue of *Inscriptions*. We've produced this small issue in a bit of a hurry to give everyone a reminder about the important—and sadly unavoidable—**changes to our published programme**. Please make sure you update your diaries! And don't forget our AGM on **24 September**.

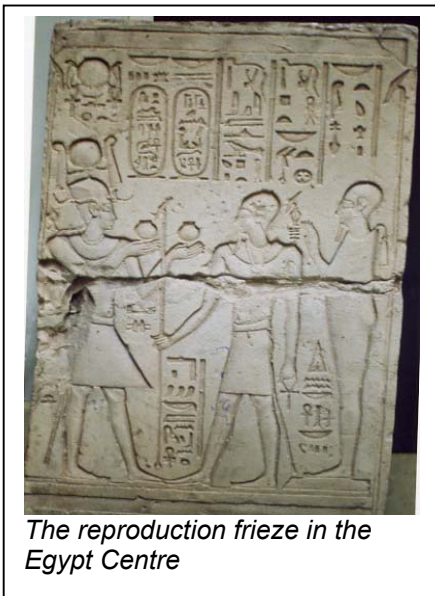
Many thanks to those who have sent in contributions to this issue. We'll produce another issue as soon as we have enough material. Please send your own "inscriptions" to the Egypt Centre, marked for the attention of Mike Mac Donagh.

Lastly, the Editor and his wife would like to join all the Friends and Staff of the Egypt Centre in sending our good wishes to Stuart Williams who will be leaving us shortly. Stuart has made a tremendous contribution to the Centre and to the Friends, and he will be greatly missed.

Mike Mac Donagh

The real frieze

In the upstairs landing in the Egypt Centre is a copy of frieze from the entrance of the temple of Ptah at Karnak. Here it is:



The reproduction frieze in the Egypt Centre

If you go to the Egypt Centre, or look on our web site, you will see lots of information on this frieze, but to summarize it shows Ptolemy III offering to Imhotep and Ptah. This plaster cast was made by Cairo Museum in the 1930s by putting a rubber mould over the relief, peeling it off and then using the rubber as a mould, which was then

filled with plaster of Paris. Swansea got the frieze in 1982 from the Wellcome Trustees.

A few weeks back a group of us were lucky enough to go to Egypt and among the many things we sought out there was the original frieze.

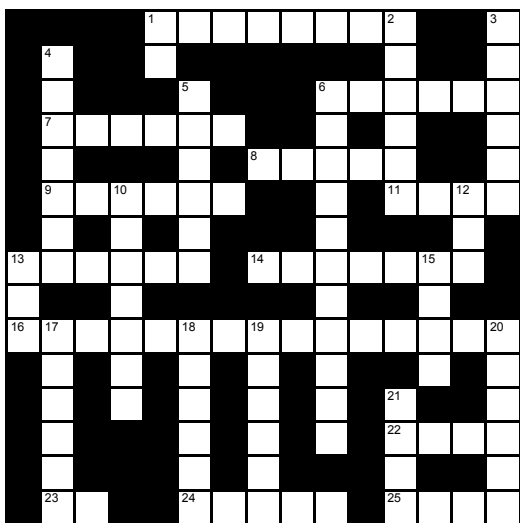
I thought members might like to see a picture of it in situ. So here it is:



The real thing in situ at the temple of Ptah in Karnak (towards the top of the picture)

by Carolyn Graves-Brown

Crossword



by Daphne MacDonagh

Across

- 1 Site of Osorkon's red granite hall (8)
- 6 Irrigation tool (6) (spelled without an O)
- 7 An Egyptian bureaucrat (6)
- 8 Country to the west of Egypt (5)
- 9 First ruler of 18th Dynasty (6)
- 11 Pyramid with a change of angle (4)
- 13 His palette paints a picture of proto-dynastic Egypt (6)
- 14 Sent by Ramesses XI to fetch cedar (7)
- 16 Downstairs in the Egypt Centre (3,5,2,5)
- 22 Sacred bull (4)
- 23 Successor to Tutankhamun (2)
- 24 Crocodile god (5)
- 25 White bird with long curved bill (4)

Down

- 1 Personality of the deceased often represented as a bird (2)
- 2 Amulets were made in the shape of this beetle (6)

- 3 Goddess of moisture, depicted as lips or a lioness (6)
- 4 Egyptian tomb shaped like bench (7)
- 5 Site of 5th dynasty pyramids (6)
- 6 Last queen of 12th Dynasty (11)
- 10 First capital of Egypt (7)
- 12 God of the primeval ocean (3)
- 13 Sky goddess (3)
- 15 5th Dynasty ruler with small pyramid (4)
- 17 1st Dynasty ruler known as "the fighter" (6)
- 18 Sacred cobra decorating the king's brow (6)
- 19 Site of temples to Nekhbet and Thoth in Upper Egypt (2,4)
- 20 People who overran Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period (6)
- 21 A dry valley (4)





Amarna sickle blades

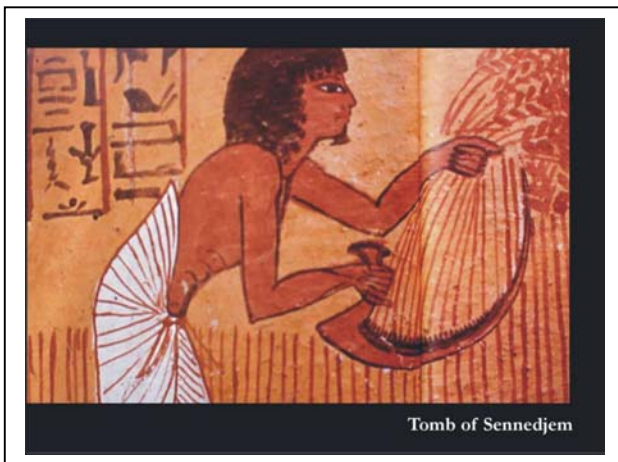
You may have noticed that we have a huge new case for stone artefacts in the upstairs gallery now. It's been there a few months. Among the many objects are a group of sickle blades from the royal site of Amarna.



Amarna sickle blades in the Egypt Centre

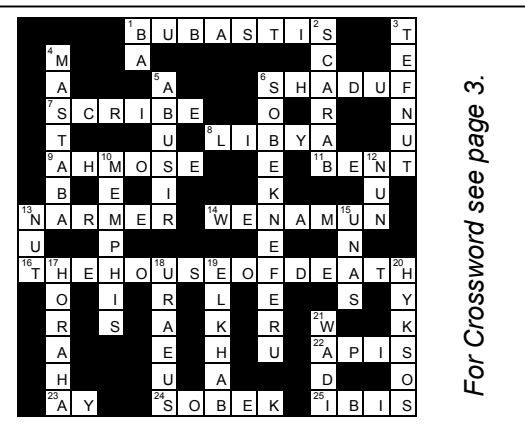
These blades are made from flint. The grey stuff on some of them is the 'mastic' or glue used to hold the blades in their wooden haft.

A complete example, with blades in the haft would look like this:



Tomb of Sennedjem

Crossword solution



For Crossword see page 3.



We don't know what the glue was made from. Spurrell (1894) believed it was made from wax though resins may have been used. Endlicher and Tillmann (1997) showed that lime plaster was used for hafting sickle blades at 18th Dynasty Tell el Daba.

Many hundreds of flint sickle blades have been found at Amarna. Flint was not a poor person's alternative to metal and flint and metal tools were found side by side in houses at Amarna. The fact that the type continued well into the New Kingdom suggests that copper alloy was not really a viable alternative. This could be because of the ready supply of flint compared to that of copper. It could also be because flint was in some ways superior. Steensberg (1943, 11-26) and Coles (1973, 34-39) demonstrated that flint sickles are better than copper ones and equal to bronze. It was only when iron was introduced after the New Kingdom (iron was used earlier but was not in common use until the Late Period) that flint had a functional competitor.

References

- Coles, J. (1973) *Archaeology by experiment*, Scribner's, New York.
- Endlicher, G. and Tillmann, A. 1997. Lime plaster as an adhesive for hafting Eighteenth-Dynasty flint sickles from Tell el Dab'a, Eastern Nile Delta (Egypt), *Archaeometry* 39(2), August 1997, 333-342.
- Spurrell, F.C.J. (1894) 'Flint Tools from Tell el Amarna'. *Tell el Amarna*. Petrie, W.H.F: London, 37-38.
- Steensberg, A. (1943) *Ancient harvesting implements*, Nationalmuseets skrifter, Copenhagen.

by Carolyn Graves-Brown

View from the chair

My sincere apologies to all of you who were inconvenienced by the mix-up in dates last month. Please note the further changes and the cancellation of Deborah Sweeney's talk. This is the first time we have had such problems, and I can only hope the gremlins will go away for next year! We shall do our very best to introduce a fail-safe system in future.



The departure of Stuart Williams from the Egypt Centre will indeed be a loss, not only in his professional capacity, but also as friend to all the volunteers and as someone who lent a ready ear to our troubles. He always had time for a chat and I shall miss his cheerfulness and good-hearted banter a great deal. Good luck in your new life, Stuart, and don't forget us. We certainly won't forget you.

by Claire Edwards

