

# INSCRIPTIONS

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

## Issue 36

May 2013

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## Cheque presentation

Once again the Friends have had a successful year of fund-raising. Last June we were able to present a cheque for £1000 To Carolyn Graves-Brown, Curator of the Egypt Centre. For more details see the Treasurer's Report, Page 3.



Ken Griffin (Chairman of the Friends) presents a cheque to Carolyn Graves-Brown, Curator of the Egypt Centre



## Garden Party

Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea will hold a

### CAKES AND CAVA GARDEN PARTY



on Saturday 15th June

2.30 - 4.30

at 2 Caswell Avenue  
Caswell  
Swansea SA3 4RU

Ticket £5



to include glass of Cava (or juice), cakes, sandwiches, bring and buy stalls

Proceeds to help the Egypt Centre outreach programme for children.



# Rome Inscriptions

In March, eleven of us went to Rome to celebrate a friend's 50th birthday. I was looking forward to seeing the Sistine chapel as it had been closed the last time I was there. However, this was not to be, as the Pope had inconsiderately resigned and it was closed again!

But the magnificent Vatican museum was open so we had a chance to see the Egyptian collection. Some of its exhibits are pictured here.



Old Kingdom wall relief, 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty



Roman take on Anubis, complete with toga, 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.



Relief from the Temple of Montu at Ermant, 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty



Lovely little bronze of ichneumon or mongoose, undated

We were staying at a hotel on the Via Margutta, near the Spanish steps. Very atmospheric, there was even a painting of Michelangelo's God creating Adam on the ceiling in reception which almost made up for not seeing the original in the Sistine Chapel. For those who have seen the film *Roman Holiday*, Gregory Peck was living on the Via Margutta. I could quite see myself as Audrey Hepburn on the back of a Vespa scooter but had more trouble with Tony as Gregory Peck. However we threw our coins in the Trevi fountain, so when we return the Sistine chapel is bound to be open.

by Sheila Nowell

Photos by Tony Nowell





## Editorial

Welcome to Issue 36 of *Inscriptions*, and a big thank you to all who have contributed to this issue.

This is a rather brief issue as we haven't had many contributions, and the frequency of publication has declined for the same reason. We'd love to hear from anyone who's got anything to say, loosely connected with ancient Egypt—anything from amusing anecdotes to scholarly articles.

Please consider whether YOU can write something for the next issue of *Inscriptions*. You can send it in hard copy or electronic form. Please address it to the Egypt Centre and mark it for my attention.

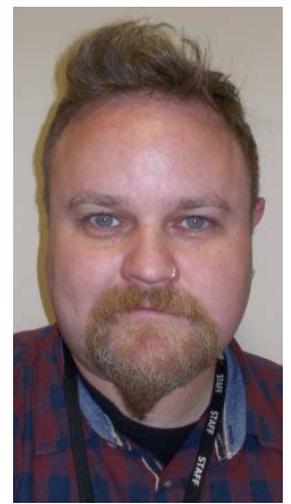
Mike Mac Donagh

## Our new Volunteer Manager

Hi, I'm Syd Howells, the new Volunteer Manager at the Egypt Centre. I've been involved with the Friends of the Egypt Centre since 2008 and have been writing for *Inscriptions* since then also. This is a quick paragraph to introduce myself as the point of contact should you wish to either volunteer at the Egypt Centre or apply for a Work Placement with us. The importance of our volunteers to us cannot be overestimated as they carry out the following essential and core jobs:

- Gallery supervision and maintenance
- Visitor and Customer Care and interaction
- Educational delivery

We have a variety of roles you can get involved in, all of which will have at least one element of the core functions. Positions include: Front of House Assistant; Gallery Assistant; Educational Assistant; Shop Assistant; Librarian; Admin Assistant and Youth Volunteer Programme Worker. There is also the potential to progress to roles such as Gallery Supervisor, Educational Leader and Assistant Education Officer. All of our positions have an element of visitor interaction. Unfortunately we do not offer any "behind the scenes curatorial work".



Syd Howells

If you're interested in volunteering at the Egypt Centre, either visit our website for further details: <http://www.egypt.swan.ac.uk/index.php/volunteering-and-work-placements> or contact me by phone 01792 606065 or by email [l.s.j.howells@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:l.s.j.howells@swansea.ac.uk)

by L. S. J. Howells

## Treasurer's Report 2011-2012

This year we have done slightly better with both income from membership and donations up. We are showing a deficit in the accounts because we gave £500 to the Egypt Centre and most of the expenses for the Griffiths Memorial Lecture are showing up, but not the income. Without these there was a surplus of around £130 on the year. Those of you who attended the Taliesin for the Griffiths Memorial Lecture will I am sure agree it was a very successful event. We would like to thank Sybil Crouch and the Taliesin staff for their help and generosity in donating the amount received on the door to the Friends. This came in too late to show in the year's accounts.

I had been instructed by the committee to keep money in reserve in case we needed to go back to the Faraday lecture theatre. We were upset that the University were proposing to charge so much for its hire that we began a search for another "home" and whilst this room [our current venue in Fulton House] is far from ideal, it is at least free, so I will be recommending to the committee

that we donate more money to the Egypt Centre.

I would like to thank Mike and Daphne MacDonagh for editing *Inscriptions*. They have again waived their presentation. Thanks to our chairperson Ken Griffin for arranging the programme. Next year's is equally as good. Thanks also to our vice chair Gareth Lucas who has stepped in in the absence of Ken in Egypt; our auditor Hazel Rees; the staff of the Egypt Centre, especially Wendy Goodridge who has been covering membership as well as their usual help. We are missing our marketing officer Rosalyn Thomas who has left to teach English in China and we thank her for all her hard work; nothing was too much trouble for Ros.

We are pleased to announce that the British Association of Friends of Museums will be holding its annual conference in Swansea in 2014. This should prove an exciting event and more on this at a later date.

Thank you all for your continued support.

by Sheila Nowell

## Course commencing in September 2013

**From the Desert Fathers to the Muslim Brotherhood: Two Thousand Years of Christianity in Egypt**

A ten week non-accredited course 10 sessions at 2 hours each.

Tutor: Howard Middleton-Jones

Further details to be announced.

Contact: [H.Middleton-Jones@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:H.Middleton-Jones@swansea.ac.uk)





## The Leiden Bowl Lutenist

Whilst researching for my dissertation I had the privilege of reading a journal article written by Kate Bosse-Griffiths entitled *Two Lute-Players of the Amarna Era*. The article discusses two artefacts, a lutenist as depicted on a ring bezel (which can be found in the Egypt Centre in the House of Life), and a lutenist as depicted on a faience bowl which is housed in the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden and will be briefly discussed below. I originally encountered the bowl during my first year at Swansea University when I read Kate Bosse-Griffiths' article. Despite being immediately enamoured with its beauty I did not view it again until my third year whilst I was studying for my dissertation. The bowl is a wonderful colour of blue, a little darker than turquoise, and portrays a female musician with a hip belt playing a duck-headed lute whilst in a seated position. She is seated on what appears to be a cushion, has a lotus draped on her arm, and is flanked by two lotus plants entwined with grape vines that form a canopy above her head. The lutenist also wears a lotus flower and perfume cone on her head, a necklace, has a Bes tattoo depicted on her thigh, and has a monkey behind her who seems to be playing with her hip belt.

There are many reasons why I am so smitten with this artefact. It is a striking example of Amarna art and a wonderful colour. Being a female guitarist I feel a somewhat tenuous connection with the woman depicted; however it is the hidden significance of this artefact that attracts me to it the most.

The obvious references in this scene are those of fertility and rebirth which, when compared with other scenes, has resulted in the female subject being described as a prostitute. This assertion has however been refuted and it is suggested that the female is more likely to be a princess or noblewoman.

As a general rule the kneeling position was reserved for the lower echelons of society, standing for royalty, and bowing for the elite; but kneeling can also be a representation of a humbling gesture. The perfume cone

can also be regarded as a representation of the liminal zone between the living and deceased or even a way of depicting that direct communication with a god or a goddess had been achieved. For the living to be able to communicate with the divine they had to be in the appropriate state, this being achieved through music, singing and dancing. I would suggest that the bowl depicts an act of offering with the lutenist being in direct communication with the divine, offering her lute instead of a traditional offering. With this in mind it could be quite possible



*Faience bowl depicting a female lutenist, 1400-1300 BC  
Photograph ©Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.  
Reproduced by kind permission. [Article catalogue number AD14, currently dated to the reign of Amenhotep III, father of Akhenaten—Ed.]*

that the Leiden bowl is a precursor of the personal piety evidenced during the Ramesside period.

*by Joanna Marie Hartup*

### Next Lecture

**Wednesday 12th June 2013**

**7.00 pm**

Carolyn Graves-Brown  
(Egypt Centre, Swansea)

#### **“Girl Power” in Amarna? Three ring bezels**

In 1933 Frankfort and Pendlebury published three faience ring bezels (decorative parts of a ring) from Amarna. These very same bezels are now in Swansea's Egypt Centre (W1150, W1151 and W1155a). One of the pieces is particularly difficult to decode: is it a centipede, a hedgehog, or a gazelle? Another is an unusual design—a lute player. A closer look at this particular object opens the debate on the social and religious significance of the female musician. The third is either the lower part of a monkey, or more likely a dancing Bes. As I will demonstrate, these three artefacts all plausibly and coincidentally allude to aspects of the female generative powers, an important aspect of Amarna religion.

### Annual General Meeting

**Wednesday 25th September 2013**

**6.30 pm**

*followed by September's lecture (7.00 pm)  
speaker and topic to be announced*

