



INSCRIPTIONS

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea

Issue 15

December 2003

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Hello from the Chair

Welcome to another issue of *Inscriptions*. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Karen O'Flanagan, wife, mother of two sons, Civil Servant and student of Egyptology. I am lucky to have taken on a role that has so much support from other committee members, the Egypt Centre and the Friends.

Our aim this year will be to raise as much funding as we can for the Egypt Centre to allow them to continue their excellent work with the 'out of hours scheme'. In raising these funds we will have as much enjoyment as possible. I am sure you will agree that this year's lecture programme is excellent, and next year's programme is equally as exciting.

Thank you all for your continued support for the Friends and the Egypt Centre. A BIG welcome to any new members joining this year.

by Karen O'Flanagan

Announcements

- The **December 17th** talk by Stuart Williams will be followed by seasonal drinks and cakes in the 'shared area' of the Taliesin. The Egypt Centre is very kindly opening the galleries and the shop for the evening – any purchases made on that night will have 10% off, a good opportunity for last minute Christmas pressies. I would like to thank the Egypt Centre on behalf of the Friends for this.
- Annual Trip – a suggestion has been made for a trip to the Ashmolean Museum, sometime in Spring 2004. Costings and dates will be published after Christmas.
- ***Inscriptions*** articles – always welcome. You can hand it to me, mail it to me via e-mail – mcdonalds@ntlworld.com, or by post – 31 Cecil Road, Gowerton, Swansea, SA4 3DF. Alternatively drop the article into the Egypt Centre.

by Karen O'Flanagan





Friends AGM

There were disappointingly few members at the AGM of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea on Sept 24th.

Daniel Ogden, who was retiring as chairperson as he has taken up a post at Exeter University, gave a brief résumé of the talks we have had in the past year and thanked everyone for their help.

This was followed by the secretary's report, then the treasurer's report which is reprinted on the right. Ken Griffin, the retiring membership secretary, was unable to read the membership report as he had recently had an operation on his knee so this was read by Sheila Nowell. An excellent year was reported with quite a few donations.

The meeting adopted the accounts and elected officers for three vacancies. Those elected were:

- Chairperson,
Karen O'Flanagan
- Membership Secretary,
Wendy Goodridge
- Events Officer,
Stuart Williams

Following the AGM, Daniel Ogden gave a lecture on "the Sorcerer's Apprentice" which was most interesting and enjoyable and we all then adjourned for tea and coffee and some of Debbie's delicious cakes.

by Sheila Nowell

Treasurer's Report 2002-03

Welcome to the AGM of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea. I'm sure you have enjoyed the excellent programme of speakers and our thanks to Sandra Hawkins, our retiring events officer, for this and also sorting out the raffle. We were disappointed at having to cancel the trip this year due to lack of support and are having a rethink this year. We owe a debt of gratitude to Debbie Williams, our catering officer, who together with her grandmother Mrs Payne make the cakes and provide the ingredients. Thanks also to our honorary auditor Bruce Rees and to Mike and Daphne MacDonagh who edit *Inscriptions*. We are pleased to make a small presentation to them on your behalf. Our thanks are due also to the staff of the Egypt Centre for their help and support, and good luck in his new post to our retiring chairman Daniel Ogden.

Our accounts show a surplus of £233 for the year. But this is after the presentation to the Egypt Centre of the lion bed costing £884 so the surplus was over £1,100. I hope you will all go and see the bed in the House of Death. The pyramid box in the Egypt centre has been a great success with donations of over £400. Membership is continuing to flourish and we are receiving donations included with membership.

There is over £2,000 in the account at present as you can see from the balance sheet, taking into account the carry over from last year. Stationery expenditure is down as we bought in bulk through the Egypt Centre. It has been another good year, the only glitch being no income from the trip.

This year we are departing from the norm as there is no presentation cheque. As you know, the staff of the Egypt Centre run a Saturday club for disadvantaged local children. This has been a tremendous success not only for the children but also for the Egypt Centre as they have been awarded an educational prize. However this year some of their grant aid is no longer available so we are proposing to give them £1500, maybe more if our finances permit, to help enable this work to continue. When this money is needed it will be handed over in your name. Please come and support us this coming year when we once again have a really superb programme.

Sheila Nowell

New Style Membership Cards!

Dear Friends Members

You may have noticed the new style membership cards. Some of you have mentioned you prefer the old type and so I think you deserve an explanation for the change! We had to stop using papyrus because it caused damage to our colour printer and was damaging the new replacement printer.

We decided it would be easier and fairer to have a 12 month membership no matter what time of the year you joined rather than a yearly season of programmes as some

members who joined later on were not having the same benefits as others who joined earlier before their membership was due again. Now the cards do not have the year printed but the date joined. This also makes it easier for the membership secretary as you can imagine how manic it is trying to process everyone all at the same time every year! - Best wishes,

Wendy Goodridge
Membership Secretary





Editorial

Here's the 15th issue of *Inscriptions*. Please join me in welcoming the newly elected committee.

You'll notice from the treasurer's report that we've had another successful year. It is unfortunate that we had to cancel the trip to Birmingham due to lack of interest, but we hope to do better in the coming year. The coming talk by Stuart Williams on December 17 promises to be both interesting and entertaining, so don't miss it!

We wish all the Friends a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

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

10% off!

all items from the Egypt Centre shop

with this voucher

valid until 20/12/2003



Christmas and New Year opening times

The final day of opening of the Egypt Centre Shop will therefore be Saturday 20th December. Use your 10% off coupon!

Please note that the Egypt Centre will close on 23rd December 2003 and re-open on 6 January 2004.

THE TIMELESS TRAIPSINGS OF: RUSSEL THE SHRUB IN EGYPT

EPISODE FOUR: A NEW LIGHT SHINES IN AMARNA

IF YOU RECALL, RUSSEL HAD FOUND A STELA CONFIRMING DYNASTY **NEGATIVE ONE!** BUT IN THIS CACHE THERE WERE OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM A MUCH LATER DATE; PECULIAR AND INTRIGUING PAPYRUS WHICH SENT RUSSEL'S INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY TO NEW HEIGHTS!

BEING AN EXPERT IN ANCIENT TONGUES IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO DECIPHER THIS ONE RUSSEL KNEW WHAT IT SPELLED "TO AMARNA!" HE YELLED, "TO THE LAND OF THE ATEN SUN!"

SO, KITTED-OUT COMPLETELY LIKE A SHRUB SIR FLINDERS PETRIE (WHO HAD DUG THERE BEFORE, BUT HAD SOMEHOW IGNORED THE SHRUB-BUSTS OF NEFERTITI!)

RUSSEL SET OFF FOR AKHETATEN OTHER CONCERNS, FOR NOW FORGOTTEN "WHY AMARNA?" THAT WAS THE RUB "THE ONE GOD, THE ONE SHRUB?" RUSSEL HAD TO GET TO THE BOTTOM!

TO BE CONTINUED...

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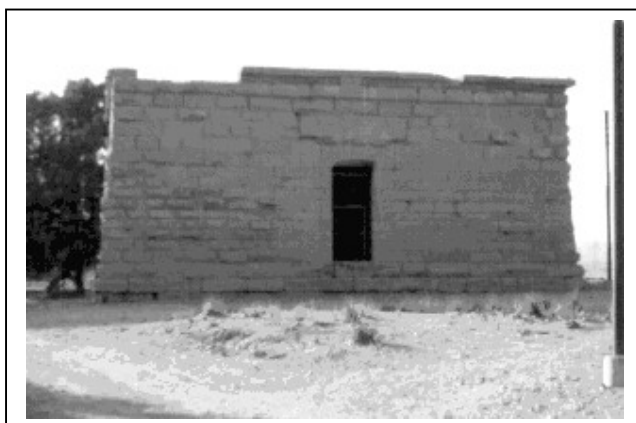


Our Day at Deir el-Shelwit

Deir el-Shelwit (pictured right) is a Temple of Isis on the West Bank of Luxor, about 3km southwest of Medinet Habu. Probably built in Augustan times, it is one of the last temples to have been built in Thebes. It was a small temple built inside an enclosure wall. Only the gateway to the east remains of the wall, but the temple structure itself remains virtually intact.

I state that it is 3km southwest of Medinet Habu, but they were a very long, sandy and hot 3km on foot!

The day began as always by crossing the Nile to the West Bank at about 6.30am. Our first port of call was Medinet Habu, the Mortuary Temple of Rameses III. I was awestruck at its size, enchanted by the throne dais and the temples for the Divine Adorotrices.



When we reached the palm trees I had been focussing on for quite some time, the disappointment on my face must have been obvious to Ezat who asked me what was wrong. There was no temple! He then promptly told me I had been focussing on the wrong palm trees; the ones he meant were on the horizon still some distance away. After appropriate cursing, drinking of much water and walking over a landfill site which contained a few goat skeletons we finally arrived at our destination.

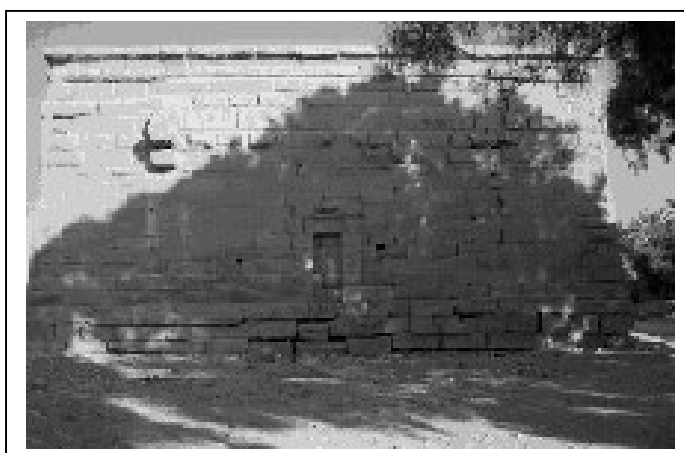
After being at Medinet Habu which is of colossal proportions, this temple looked positively dinky. We were not disappointed. The carvings and structure are still in fairly good order, unfortunately all that remains of the outer wall is the gate, but it still stands proud under the palms (the ones I should have been focussing on).

A dead snake greeted us on the front step of the temple, lying there like an offering. It didn't take long for a couple of local children to arrive, pick up the snake and chase one of our party around with it. They were quickly bribed with pens and balloons, and the snake was cast aside.



I was one of a party of five intrepid explorers on the day. From Medinet Habu we were met by our very good friend Ezat, who runs a shop in the market on the East Bank. He took us to his lovely home, which, from the top 'unfinished' floor overlooked Medinet Habu and Malqata, with the Theban hills as a backdrop. What a photo opportunity! He served us a veritable feast. We were also lucky enough to meet his family.

Ezat was to be our guide to Deir el-Shelwit. As we left his home and headed into the sand I asked how far the temple was, to this Ezat pointed out some palm trees on the horizon he said were close to the temple – it didn't look too far. You should bear in mind that this was about 2.30pm, rather hot and on a sand track between two sand banks that went forward on the horizon into infinity.



After taking the obligatory photos it was time to return. At this point Ezat explained that we could walk back on the road that runs alongside the track just behind the





sandbanks. Why didn't he tell us this on the outward journey? I suppose it wouldn't have been as memorable. After just 5 minutes of walking, call it divine intervention, a local bus arrived, its next stop was Malqata, the Palace of Amenhotep III. Needless to say, we all jumped on and hung on for dear life.



Malqata is a huge site, now only foundations and a few mounds remain, but it still holds a few little treasures. The gaffer on the site unearthed some painted plaster from a wall which had been buried under some ancient mud bricks for its protection. I will return to Malqata, I'm sure there is much more to see.

It was time to go back to the East Bank for a well earned dip in the hotel pool. Whilst saying our goodbyes to Ezat and his family a member of our party spotted a rather large black scarab crossing our path – was this good luck? Some would think so, but it turned out to be my most expensive day in Egypt. I had not turned off my mobile phone after making a call to the Egypt Centre when their answering machine kicked in. Our journey to Deir el-Shelwit was recorded on the machine for posterity.

Phone bill - expensive, Memories – PRICELESS!

by Karen O'Flanagan



The Royal Mummies and the Deir Al Bahri cache

DB320 & KV5

A tidy view of the use of rock cut tombs was probably current in the late 19th Century. By 1880 twenty new tombs had been discovered in the Valley of the Kings and a few more in the Valley of the Queens and the Valley of the Nobles. This was in addition to twenty tombs that had been opened since antiquity.

The tidy orthodox view was that the contents of the tombs had not survived intact and still less the mummified bodies of pharaohs, because of tomb robbery, with just a few exceptions. This idea was turned upside down with the revelations that began in 1881 in Deir Al Bahri (on the other side of the Valley of the Kings).

Amelia B. Edwards, who had come to stay in Upper Egypt, wrote, around that time, these auspicious lines: "For the past 10 years or more it has been suspected that the Theban Arabs (who know and exploit the locations of the tombs) had found a royal sepulchre. Objects of great rarity and antiquity were being brought to Europe every season by travellers. I wrote of my suspicions to Gaston Maspero, Head of the Antiquities Service."

A wandering goat was included in the best related version of how DB320 was discovered. It dropped down a partially concealed tombshaft. Its owner was the infamous Abd Rassul Ahmed, a local foreman and tomb robber, who retrieved the goat and then discovered the entrance.

In this tomb were assembled the remains of burials and funerary equipment of more than 50 kings, queens, lesser royals and nobles, and among them such legendary figures as Thuthmosis III, Sethos I and Rameses II. Here, for the very first time, Egyptians and Egyptologists could look upon the face of pharaoh himself.

The Abd Rassul family lived comfortably on the proceeds of their tombs for some time until they began to sell funerary papyri. The trail led hotly back from Cairo to the Abd Al Rassul brothers. The local governor was empowered to summon them and interrogate them but they remained suspiciously silent. Seeing that threats were not the way forward, Maspero offered a 10% cut on the price of any future antiquities that came to light. The elder Mohammed Abd Rassul came forward to broker a deal. He travelled down to Quena (modern Deir Al Bahri), and told all.

Maspero was in France on leave in the summer of 1881 and his assistant Emile Brugsch was left in charge. On July 6th 1881 an amazed Brugsch was led into the tomb. He wrote a chapter in his memoirs on what he saw. Here are a few extracts: "Soon we came upon cases of porcelain funerary offerings, metal and alabaster vessels, draperies and trinkets, until, reaching the turn in the passage, a cluster of mummy cases came into view in such number as to stagger me."

...continued overleaf/





“Their gold coverings and their polished surfaces so plainly reflected my own excited visage that it seemed as though I was looking into the faces of my very own ancestors.”

Brugsch could not afford to daydream for long. Fearing hostility from the locals at Quena he directed his large workforce to clear the tomb with all possible haste. A week later all the afore-described contents were packed in sailcloth and matting and were on their way up the Nile to the museum at Bulaq. The clearance would be severely censured today as it completely flouts ideas of context and record, but the greater prize was intact.

Maspero on his return began a rough categorisation of the mummies and saw two distinct groups: firstly, a poorly coffined cache of the 2nd Intermediate Period and New Kingdom date and a second better equipped 3rd Intermediate Period cache.

However, a cache of 40 mummies (most presumed Royal) and accompanying 6,000 funerary objects aroused a storm of interest and a host of questions. Why were they all there? Why the battering and the opening of coffin lids? Why the absence of gold (only 1% of funerary objects had any gold content)?

Language and methodology were to provide the most pointed clues. Every mummy had a docket (made of wood) and these have been dated to the 22nd Dynasty. On the dockets, in late joined-up Egyptian writing known as Hieratic, was the deceased's name, but of course 21st Dynasty tomb and burial chambers had been used (evidently in a hurry) and contained the mummies of the noble family of Panidjem the second.

Until recently, however, it was believed that the tomb was that of Queen Ahmose-Inhapi because the dockets of several Royal mummies had this tomb inscribed as their destination.

Imagine the responsibility and weight of the plan overseen by a royal high priest in the 22nd Dynasty charged with relocating the remains of pharaohs gathered from say 20 separate tombs. Everybody was sworn to secrecy, under pain of execution, and in case security had been broken and the destination on a docket had been read, a diversionary plan had been executed.

Evidently it had worked. They had lain in their second resting place for 3,000 years.

The diversionary plan had also wreaked havoc with interpretations of Egyptologists in the 20th Century. It is easy to blame Brugsch and Maspero but it served as an object lesson for the next discovery in 1898 in the tomb of Amenophis II KV35.

The second royal cache would be brought to light by the French Egyptologist Victor Lloret in 1898. He first of all stumbled on the tomb of Amenophis II which was in itself a most significant find. He probed its defences, bridged a well shaft and descended into a substantial burial hall. He saw at the end of the hall the sarcophagus of Amenophis II. Noting the fantastic decorations of the hall, he then realised he had also located Webensenu, the son of Amenophis II. What he was not prepared for was a side room where there were three cadavers and a further chamber with nine more. The intrusion was dated to the 21st Dynasty and this salvage party (if that is who they were) had partially desecrated Amenophis' tomb in the hope of reconsecrating twelve older mummies.

What confronted Lloret was daunting. His first duty was to map, record and contextualise the intact burial of Amenophis II and that of his family. The tomb was architecturally stunning and innovative, the wall reliefs containing hitherto unseen scenes, as well as an undisturbed coffin.

At first Lloret thought that the other cadavers were somehow related to Amenophis II, but the first three cadavers showed evidence of violence. Lloret was mindful of Maspero's hurried clearance of DB320 and took his time. An inevitable conclusion, however, that formed in Lloret's mind as he worked: the reflected glory lay in expanding on what was there, related to Amenophis II, and contracting on what bodies lay in the side chambers.

He bricked up the two side chambers after a year and declared that the new sciences of x-ray and investigative pathology would reveal their secrets. He was partially correct. In 1905, the required scientist, Grafton Elliot Smith had arrived at Bulaq with

a formidable team. In 1907, he unbricked both side tombs and was authorised to send the first nine mummies (which had died of natural causes) back to Bulaq. Their docket information caused a sensation as there were nine identifiable pharaohs of the New Kingdom. The promised x-rays were delivered and caused an equal sensation.

The fate of the three desecrated mummies was not straightforward. They had no dockets and they did not fit in any known pharaonic family.

Another bricking up took place until 1975 when the three mummies were re-examined. This time the hairstyles of two of the mummies were noted as being 18th Dynasty which was the Amarna Dynasty, but there was no family troika that was deemed to fit. Once more the mummies were bricked up, until for the umpteenth time a question was asked about what was in the bricked-up side chamber. Enter stage left Egyptologists and geneticists, stage right portable x-ray machines with their operatives and the production company called Discovery Channel. In early 2004, the results will form the basis of a TV programme which will hint that one mummy may be that of Nefertiti, the famous Amarna Queen.

The explanation of their relocation from Amarna to the Valley of the Kings (note, not the Valley of the Queens) was the subsequent hatred for Akhenaten's reign. They were moved to Thebes first and then there was a reuniting of Queen Tye and Queen Nefertiti and her nephew Prince Thutmosis. The 1975 investigation had wrongly determined the age at which they died. The advent of DNA tissue sample testing determined that they were close relatives and reassessed the generational questions within the three corpses.

If you are interested in complex details of who's who in DB320 and in KV35, or perhaps the deciphering of dockets, I recommend you read Reeves & Wilkinson, *The Complete Valley of the Kings*, pp 194-207, which contains invaluable lists. Better still, visit Cairo Museum and the Valley of the Kings where you will gaze on the faces of Pharaohs.

by Moody Khaldi

