

INSCRIPTIONS

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Egypt Centre, Swansea

Issue 2

December 1999

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Youth Challenge Awards

The Egypt Centre nominated three of its youngest volunteers for the Swansea Bay Youth Challenge Awards 1999.

We are thrilled to announce they were selected as finalists in the Youth in the Community Category. They were interviewed at the Sandfields Young Business Centre on Thursday 21st October 1999 and were invited to a lunch-time presentation of the Youth Challenge Awards at the Margam Orangery, Port Talbot on Wednesday 10th November where they were presented with a finalists' certificate by Mr Ian Spratling, Chairman of Swansea Bay Industry Week.

The three youngsters, 11-year-old Jodhi Taylor, 13-year-old Ben Mogford and 13-year-old Ross Davies, volunteer at the Egypt Centre on Saturdays and on weekdays during the holidays. During their time at the Egypt Centre they conduct tours, present demonstrations such as mummification and playing the board-game *Senet*, they help out with shop sales and welcome visitors. Our main objective in allowing young volunteers is to show that museums are a fun environment and to encourage more youngsters to visit them. We have had a marvellous response from visitors who appreciate the enthusiasm of our young volunteers.

Wendy Goodridge



Ross, Jodhi and Ben receiving their certificate



What have we been up to?

We have a volunteer who has travelled all the way from Japan! Junko Hoshino (*pictured right*) will be with us for six months and is returning to Japan for Christmas. She will be greatly missed, especially for 'Mummy unwrapping!' We all hope she had an enjoyable experience while she was at the Centre.

We had a marvellous response to our children's 'fun club' which was run for two weeks in the summer holidays. Stuart Williams (alias Rameses!), our chairman, had the formidable task of running the club. It was a great success and tribute must be paid to those volunteers who helped make the event such an enjoyable experience for the children.



Due to overwhelming demand we are now running a Saturday fun club from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The charge is £5 per child for the day's activities. The Saturday club is being run by Terry Brown, our newly appointed shop Sales Manager. If you are interested in helping out or want to book a place please contact Terry on 01792-295960.

Since the last newsletter we have seen many school parties and group visits. If you would like to book a group visit ring us on 295960 and ask for Carolyn, Wendy or Terry.

Wendy Goodridge



Children doing arts and crafts

Thank you

A big "Thank you" to Jim Jeferies who acted as membership secretary for many months. Jim played an active role in the setting up of the Friends group and along with his wife Wendy was a great help volunteering on Thursday afternoons at the Centre. Jim's place on the committee has been filled by Wendy Goodridge, who hopes to keep up Jim's good work! Good luck to Jim and Wendy.



Nicola helping children make offering-trays





Editorial

Welcome to the second issue of our Newsletter. We have been able to publish another issue so soon because of the number of contributions received. A big thank you to all our contributors. All contributions, serious or otherwise, and suggestions are most welcome. You will see that we have had a busy and successful time at the Centre since the first Newsletter was issued and look forward to building on that success in the coming Millennium.

Since this is the last issue of this millennium the staff of the Centre and the editor wish all our Friends a happy Festive Season and a happy and prosperous New Year.

All contributions, from interesting snippets to serious articles, are most welcome. Please send them to me at the Egypt Centre, marked F.A.O. Mike Mac Donagh.

Mike Mac Donagh

GALABIEH NIGHT ON THE NILE CRUISE

My friend Debbie from Llwynypia, Rhondda and her 9 months old son Alexander dressed up in galabieh outfits for the Galabieh Night on the 'Nile Crown' cruise in Egypt last February. Alexander enjoyed all the attention from the holidaymakers as well as the Egyptian waiters. They made such a great fuss of him as he was the only baby on board and called him Alexander the Great the Second.

Debbie's romance blossomed when she went to Egypt two years ago where she met her husband Paul initially on the Nile cruise. Hayes and Jarvis was the only holiday operator that allowed babies to go to Egypt (winter only).

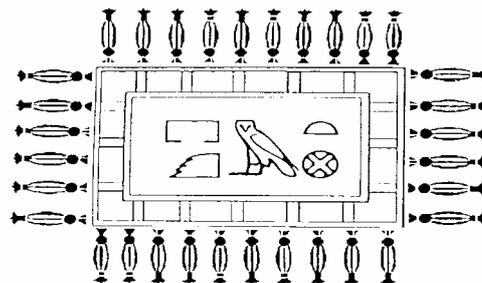


Margaret, Debbie's mum, looking on lovingly at her daughter and grandson Alexander at the Galabieh Night.

Jackie Hanford

OBITUARY

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Wendy Doyle. Wendy was a Saturday Volunteer at the Centre who will be missed by her friends and colleagues here. We offer our sincere condolences to her family and friends.





A DAY TRIP TO CAIRO

*Yes, just one day, but from Cyprus, four intrepid travellers on the good ship *Romantica*, a kind of floating "Butlins" complete with 'mine jolly host' and ever-present photographers, who tended to make one look around carefully before doing anything!*

We sailed into Port Said at dawn and as we admired the sunrise I commented on the numerous polythene bags people had thrown into the harbour, only to be informed that they were giant jelly fish. As going ashore consisted of walking 100 yds or so along a wobbly, disjointed floating pontoon, I found this a very daunting prospect - what with the lurking jelly fish around - but the lure of the pyramids set me on my way.

We were the last coach, number 17, and were accompanied by jeeps containing armed men. We proceeded at breakneck speed to Cairo – there was a schedule to keep. At various points along the way we could see masts and funnels of ships using the Suez Canal which ran parallel with the road.

Our coach was new, comfortable and well-stocked with cold drinks – non-alcoholic of course. It even boasted a toilet which resembled a silver mummy case. It even had a window complete with lace curtains. As we bumped and bounced along, it was rather amusing to see one hand of an occupant emerge through the door and grope around to grasp the support rail outside – rather like the mummy depicted in the old black and white movies.

Cairo, at last, a city of contrasts. New Mercs and Jags giving way to little old men jogging along on donkeys, vehicles of all shapes, sizes and ages tooting and hooting. Ladies in the latest fashion to those in purdah all jostling along, a cacophony of noise, colour and smell. We were treated first to a tour of the city, mosques, churches, public buildings, hotels old and new; but most intriguing of all was the old cemetery, the City of the Dead with its house-like tombs, now inhabited by the living, with washing strewn from tomb to tomb, children playing happily and a forest of TV aerials raised to the sky.

We then travelled down a busy main road bordered by grand hotels, and suddenly the city ended, our coach drew to a halt, and there in front of us rose our prime objectives, where they had stood for thousands of years, the pyramids of Giza.

The pyramids towered over all else. The hustle and bustle of the city was still much in evidence here, with offers of camel rides, postcards, hats, scarves, models and toy camels all being touted by colourfully dressed locals. Everything seemed to be "Two for a pound".

Our trip into the pyramid was not as daunting as our trip ashore from the boat, although we were bent double most of the way in, the tunnels either sloping steeply upwards or downwards. Cheered on by our guide with "Pretty English Ladies quickly this way please!" - seemingly his total command of the language. At last we reached the main chamber with its massive stone sarcophagus and I found the experience far less claustrophobic than I had been led to believe. Retracing our steps we finally emerged into the sunshine to be greeted by our ship's photographers!

Continued...





Our coaches then drove us down to the Sphinx. I was a little disappointed by its size and battered appearance but, of course, when photographed with the pyramid behind, they appeared much smaller because of the distance. I was intrigued, however, by the theory that the Sphinx had been carved from a solid block of sandstone in situ.

Our next port of call was the museum which needs at least a week to look around properly. It is a huge building but sadly neglects its priceless content. Exhibits are reputedly more damaged by the 'restorers' than by time itself.

Our visit was mainly to the treasures of "King Tut". 'No photographs please' stated the notice, but £1 to a gallery assistant and he will bring you a stool to stand on. Everything was there from his Golden Mask to his golden flip-flops. "But where's his body?" enquired one of our party. That, it appears, is back in the Valley of the Kings.

Next, the papyrus factory with waving papyrus plants outside. We were treated to a demonstration of paper-making finally being shown by our guide – "here is one I made earlier". We were offered 20 camels for my blonde friend, but much to her chagrin it was the "two for a pound" variety of camel. Finally back to the ship via our hazardous floating pontoon walk, made even more unstable now with street sellers bouncing alongside offering everything at "two for a pound". At last, safely up the gang plank to be greeted by our intrepid photographers. We then unwound and contemplated our "Taste of Egypt" as we sailed off into the sunset – truly a day to remember.

Merlys Gavin



The Egypt Centre Gift Shop

We have stocking fillers under £5:-

- Postcards & Greetings Cards
- Egyptian jewellery
- Papyrus goods
- Craft kits
- Statues
- T-Shirts
- Dolls



Advert designed by Michelle Keep



The Sphinx before recent repair - Ed





A Brief History of Mummification

The evidence of mummification can be found in many ancient cultures around the globe. Most of these were due to natural, unintentional process, not caused by human intervention and mostly due to the heat or cold of the climate, the dryness of the sand in contact with the body, and the lack of air in the burial.

It is generally believed that the preservation of the body, that was so important for the dead to continue into the afterlife, became one of the primary aims of the Egyptian funerary practices from a very early period. In predynastic times most bodies were simply buried in shallow graves, sometimes being covered with animal skin or a woven mat. The body was naturally desiccated by the surrounding sand, in the hot dry climate. The natural preservation would soon have become evident due to the jackals that frequented the early cemeteries disturbing the graves. This incensed the early Egyptians as they often witnessed these creatures running off with the limbs of the recent dead. Some Egyptologists think that in an attempt to halt this, the early people deified the jackal and named him Anubis, delegating him the responsibility of guarding the very thing that he wanted. Anubis from then on became a God of the dead and was later known as the God of Mummification due to his connection with the Osiris myth.

Towards the end of the predynastic

period (c.3100 BC) the burials became more elaborate. From then on a chamber was provided, usually brick lined to house more grave objects that were to be needed in the afterlife, also in an effort to improve the conditions and protection of the dead. But, in fact, it only achieved the opposite: as the hot desiccating sand was no longer in contact with the body, a natural putrefaction took place. The Egyptians throughout their history did not like to revert back to the old ways on discovering that something was not working. Instead they soon began to look at other ways of preservation by artificial means. There is very little evidence surviving from the first three dynasties, although, discoveries of some remains tightly wrapped in linen has suggested that they may have thought that, if the body was carefully wrapped in this manner,

decomposition could be prevented. In reality, of course, the opposite occurred.

During the Pyramid age in the 4th dynasty (c. 2613 >2494 BC) evidence shows that the Egyptians began to remove the internal organs in order to prevent decomposition. In the tomb of the mother of King Cheops; Hetepheres, a calcite chest was found that still contained packages of the viscera soaking in a solution of natron, a naturally forming salt substance found along the banks of the Nile Delta. The periods of the Old and Middle Kingdoms show that no set method in the preparation of the bodies was in effect. In fact very few of the surviving remains from that era can actually be classed as 'mummies'. Some remains have had the internal organs removed, others the brain and in some cases the bodies have been artificially dehydrated. Some



Terry Brown demonstrating mummification with children from St Illtud's School





discoveries of what seemed to be a well-preserved corpse actually turned out to be large amount of linen wrappings and masks affording the image of the deceased.

The mummification process was much more understood by the time of the New Kingdom (c. 1567 BC) although it was still not perfected. It was basically a process of removing the internal organs and the brain before dehydrating the body. The actual word 'Mummy' comes from the Arabic word 'Mumiya' (of Persian origin), which means bitumen. However, bitumen was not usually used in the embalming process. Herodotus has provided some evidence of mummification from his works: he states that a period of 70 days was spent in the preparation of the deceased before interment, 40 days of which was dedicated to the drying of the body.

Immediately after death the corpse was handed over to the embalmers, who straight away proceeded to remove the parts of the body which would putrefy first, i.e. the intestines, liver, lungs, stomach and the brain. The internal organs were removed via an incision on the left side of the lower abdomen, and the brain, by inserting a copper hook up the left nostril and through the ethmoid bone. Once the internal organs had been removed, they would be treated in a solution of natron and stored safely away in a chest containing four Canopic Jars. The word 'Canopic' is in fact incorrect. It was a word used by early scholars who related it to the story by the writers of Canopus about the Pilot of

Menelous, who it was said had been buried at Canopus in Egypt and was worshipped by the locals as a jar with a human head and swollen body. Initially the jars had stoppers in the form of a human head, possibly intended to be in the likeness of the deceased. From the end of the 18th dynasty (c. 1320 BC) the stoppers ceased to be carved in the form of human heads but instead in the form of the four deities, the 'sons of Horus' that watched over the internal organs. Duamutef the jackal protected the stomach. Qebheseneuf the falcon protected the intestines. Imsety the human protected the liver and Hapy the baboon protected the lungs. The four jars were then identified with the four protector Goddesses: Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selkis. By the time of the 21st dynasty it was more common to return the internal organs to the body cavity, made up into packages each containing a wax image of the relevant son of Horus. However, a set of Canopic jars continued to be placed in the tomb as part of the funerary practice.

Once the internal organs had been treated and stored away, the brain was discarded as it was believed to hold no value but to serve as simple packing for the head. It was believed that the most important organ in the body was the heart. This was always left in place as it was considered to be the seat of understanding. The next stage was then to dehydrate the body.

This was previously believed to have been done by soaking the corpse in a natron solution. However, later

evidence suggests the natron in fact was in a dry form. This practice desiccated the body and dissolved the body fats more efficiently, while still leaving the skin supple. All materials that were used in the desiccation process were then retained and buried in the vicinity of the tomb. A mixture of oils and spices were then massaged into the body. Next the cavity in the abdomen, from which the internal organs were removed, was packed with either linen, straw, mud, sawdust or packets of natron in an attempt to return the deceased to their former appearance. The incision in the abdomen was then sealed, sometimes with beeswax, and covered with a plaque made from perhaps leather or faience, displaying the wadjet eye (eye of Horus) which was believed to have healing powers and prevent evil entering the body. In some cases the eye sockets were also plugged with linen. However, in the case of Rameses III, small onions were used. Finally the body was ready to be wrapped, a process that would (depending on sources) take 15 or 17 days. During this time extreme care was taken as each individual finger was wrapped before the hands, each toe, before the foot. Then, while wrapping the body, small amulets were sewn in to various places of the wrappings to protect and facilitate the deceased on their journey to the after life, while the book of the dead was being recited over the body.

Terry Brown





PREDYNASTIC OBJECTS IN THE EGYPT CENTRE 2

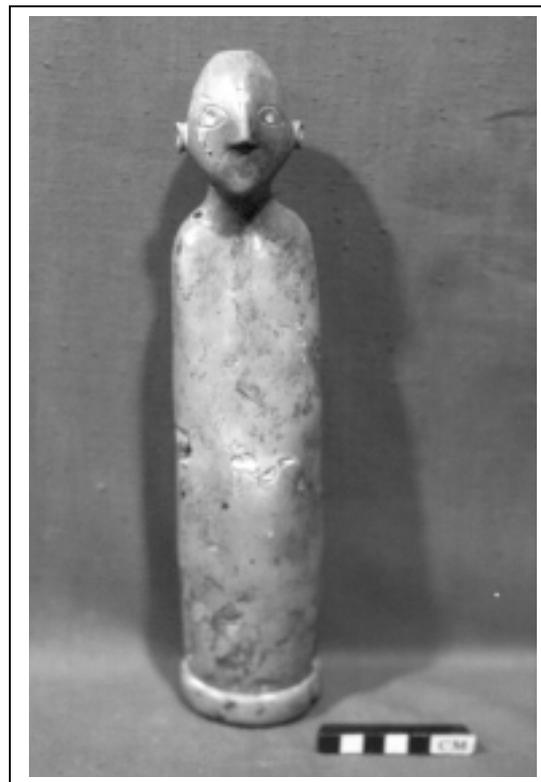
by Zoë Jackson

All the objects discussed here can be seen in the Upper Gallery, "The House Of Life" at the Egypt Centre, Swansea.

STONE FIGURE - CATALOGUE NUMBER: W150

This is an unusual figure whose age and purpose can only be guessed at. It is 29 cm high and is topped with a bald head with quite prominent ears. It is hollow up to a third of its length, which suggests it might have been placed on top of a staff or pole. Its eyes have drilled holes for pupils and might once have contained shell disks or beads. It also has a hole drilled into the top of its head, although all of this is not immediately apparent to the casual observer.

There is a similar figure in the Berlin museum made of ivory, except that on the top of its head it has a loop, which is perhaps what was once on top of our figure. Another figure of ivory was found in a woman's grave at el-Mahasna near Abydos, this one with blue beads as its eyes, and a similar shaped head, although this figure has arms and legs, whereas our stone figure does not. Pottery in this grave dates this figure to around 3600 BC, which means that our stone figure might be of a roughly similar date.



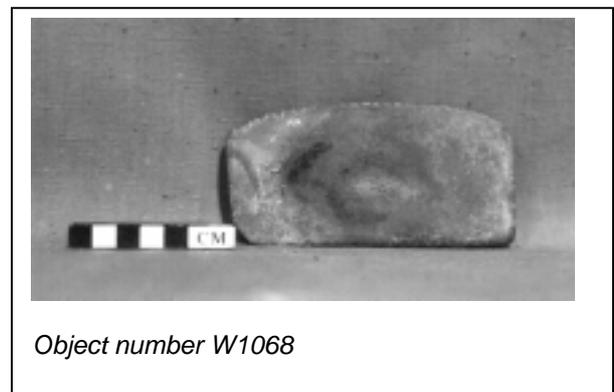
Many examples of figures have been found in predynastic graves and occasionally on settlement sites. These figures are usually female rather than male, but many male figures were found in a deposit at

Hierakonpolis, and therefore were probably offerings to the gods. Female figures found in graves, on the other hand, have been thought by some to be concubine substitutes but this is unlikely as many have been buried with women and children. There have also been suggestions that these are toys or servant figures. Many are small enough to be easily carried or hung around the neck or waist on thongs.

However, our figure does not fit any of these descriptions easily, and must have had another function. It is similar in shape to pairs of tusks of ivory found in early graves, one solid and one hollow, thought to represent male and female, and to have a magical function. So it is possible that our figure also has magical or religious connotations.

TWO PALETTES - CATALOGUE NOS. W1068 & AB76

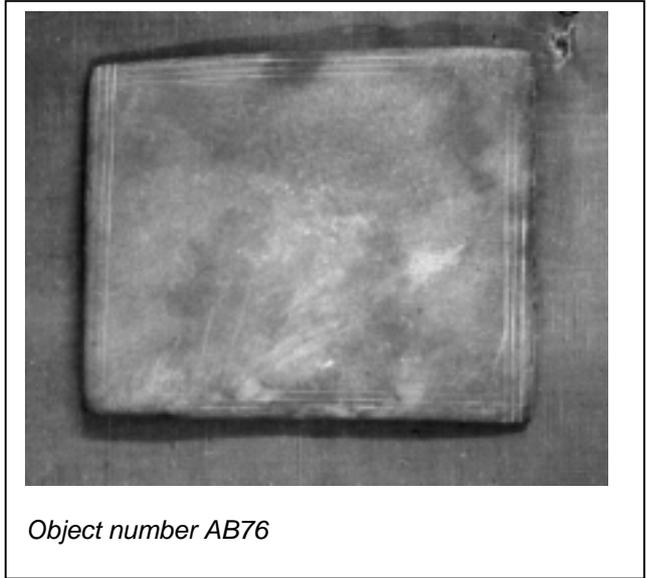
Both of these palettes are made of slate and date from the protodynastic period, before 3050 BC. The first of these palettes is 13 cm by 7 cm and has a zigzag decoration around its edge. The second is approximately 11 cm by 13 cm and has parallel lines carved around its edge. They were used to grind substances such as malachite (copper ore) and galena (lead ore) with which the Egyptians painted their eyes, partly for cosmetic reasons, perhaps to reduce the glare of the sun, and partly to ward off flies.





These palettes, and the stones used with them to grind the make-up, have been found in many graves from the Badarian period, 4500 - 4000 BC, onwards. Very early palettes are simple rectangles, but they were later carved in various forms, including bird-shapes, fish-shapes and shapes that appear to be boats. By the protodynastic period the palettes had become relatively simple once more, with the rectangle with the line border becoming most popular.

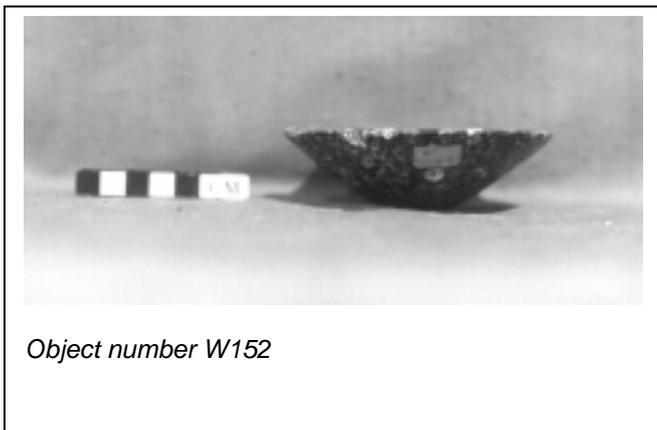
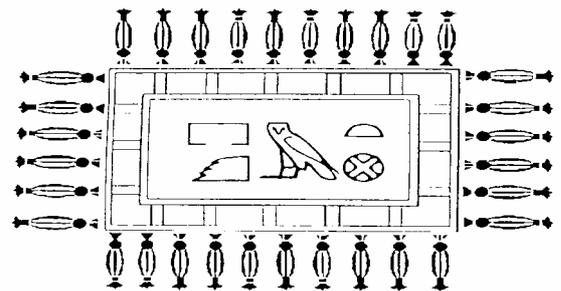
These palettes were for everyday use. During the period of the unification of Egypt under one king, approximately 3150 BC, much larger and elaborately carved palettes were made, inspired by these small ones, intended to commemorate certain events. These were then dedicated to temples. The most famous of these is the Narmer palette now in the Cairo museum, discovered intact at Hierakonpolis. It used to be believed that this depicted the conquest of the north by the south under the leadership of Narmer, identified by simple hieroglyphs. However, others say that the symbols depicted a symbolic defeat of enemies. Other large palettes have also been discovered, such as the "Two Dogs" palette in the Ashmolean museum, and the "Battlefield" palette in the British museum.



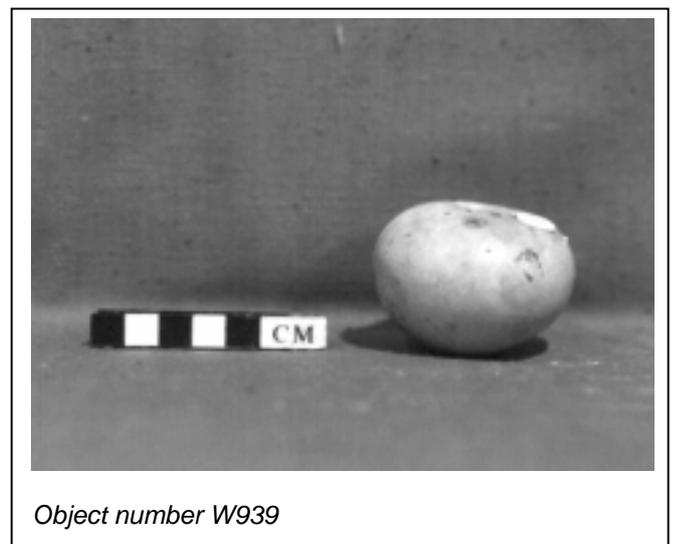
Object number AB76

TWO MACEHEADS - CATALOGUE NOS. W939 & W152

The first of these maceheads is ovoid in shape and made of cream coloured limestone. The second is disc-shaped and made of diorite. The disc-shaped macehead is earlier in date than the ovoid one, before 3500 BC, and was found at Mostegedda in 1929. Use of the disc-shaped macehead died out with the spread of the Naqada II culture in 3500 BC and was replaced by the ovoid or pear-shaped mace, a type which was currently in use in Sumerian lands.



Object number W152



Object number W939





THE PUZZLE!

WORDSEARCH

Find the names of the Kings and Queens of Egypt.

It can be across, backward, downward or upward.

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

Kings

Amenhotep
Sety
Rameses
Tutankhamun
Akhenaten
Thutmose

Queens

Hatchepsut
Nefertiti
Isis
Hathor
Cleopatra
Nefertari



Christmas and New year Holiday

The Egypt Centre will close
for the holiday on 18th
December 1999 and will re-
open on 4th January 2000.



Jackie Hanford

Forthcoming events

- On Wednesday, 26 January, there will be a talk by the Egypt Centre curator, Carolyn Graves-Brown, entitled "Women, museums and Egyptologists", in Room 152, North Arts building, commencing at 7.30 p.m.
- On Wednesday 23 February, there will be a talk by Gareth Lucas entitled "Rameses II: The Life and Times of", also in Room 152, North Arts building, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Lectures are free to members, 50p to non-members, and refreshments will be available.

April Alert! The students of Gorseinon College will be presenting drama with an Egyptian theme – details to follow.

