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EGYPT
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Volunteer! Newsletter

Jan-Mar 2019

Museum of Egyptian Antiquities



Eton & Egypt: The Myers Collection

A British soldier's passion for Egyptian art.



Early Islamic Egypt

A look at some Islamic Artefacts in the Egypt Centre.



London's Pyramids?

"It would have been taller than St Paul's Cathedral, at 364ft, with 22 steps..."

egypt.swan.ac.uk



Welcome



Syd Howells
Editor in Chief

Hola and welcome to the latest Egypt Centre Volunteer Newsletter!

Since you last heard from us there have been a number of changes at the museum, some old friends have moved on and some new friends have entered the magical world of the Egypt Centre.

It's a fun packed and informative issue (as ever of course) and I hope that you learn something about our collection, the world of Egyptology in general, and our lovely volunteers whilst reading it.

Please remember that we are always looking for contributions for the newsletter and if you have already contributed, and I've forgotten to give you your newsletter badge, you have permission to remind me!



Dulcie Engel
Associate Editor

A former French and linguistics lecturer, I have volunteered at the Egypt Centre since April 2014. I am a gallery supervisor in both galleries, and author of the Egyptian Writing Trails. Apart from language, I am particularly interested in the history of collecting. I won the 2016 Volunteer of the Year award.



Rob Stradling
Technical Editor

A volunteer since 2012, you can find me supervising the House of Life on Tuesday & Thursday mornings; at the computer desk, contriving this "letter" from nuggets of pure news; or in Cupboard 8, where I constantly (and thanklessly) strive to rationalize the biscuit reserves to more manageable dimensions.



Rhodri Protheroe-Jones
Department Features Editor

I started volunteering 8 years ago at age 10 and for some reason management has kept me around. I can usually be found in the House of Life on a Saturday. I am particularly interested in shabtis, especially their progression from handcrafted, one-off and personal objects to mass-produced miniatures.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter or submit articles for consideration please contact:
dulcie.engel@icloud.com

The Newsletter will be published every three months—Next issue due **Jun 2019**

Sue Cane has resigned from the editorial board, and from volunteering at the EC. We would like to thank Sue for all her contributions to the Newsletter over the years, and wish her all the best for the future.

- the Editorial Team



Visitor Comments

"Amazing staff - lots of interesting facts. The children had great fun."

- Kath Jeremy, Maesteg.

"We loved the mummification; Frank really brought it to life!"

- Deri, Stockholm.

"Very good!"

- Milo Beynon (aged 4), Swansea.

"Very lovely exhibition, accommodating staff!"

Yulijana Dzakovsky, Kristianstad.

Visitor Figures

Dec `18: 754

Jan `19: 1198

Feb `19: 1969

Follow Dr. Ken!

Ken Griffin's blog is picking up new fans all the time. Become one at

egyptcentrecollectionblog.blogspot.com

Office News

FAREWELL TO LAUREN



Lauren arrived at the Egypt Centre 16 years ago after contacting the Egypt Centre for a work placement. Lauren became a young volunteer and was later employed to run the gift shop, which she did for almost 6 years.

'The Egypt Centre is so much more than my place of work. I have had a connection to the museum for half my life since I was 15, when I volunteered as a child. I studied my BA degree in Egyptology in Swansea so I could continue to volunteer and gain a career working in an Egyptology museum, and this led me to get my MA in museum studies.'

We wish Lauren all the best for a new chapter in her life as she starts a new career with BAROD, a substance misuse charity in Swansea.

Around 70 people came to wish Lauren well at her leaving do cream tea, which was enjoyed by all.

Written by: Wendy Goodridge

Volunteer of the Month

October 2018

Carolyn Harries

December 2018

Jac Matthews
Cathy Bishop



Meet the Volunteer



Egypt Centre Volunteer
Breda Regan

I come from: Wexford, Ireland

I started volunteering: ...Over 10 years ago!

I chose to volunteer because: I enjoy working with children.

My Favourite artefact is: The ivory magic wand.

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me: It keeps me in touch with teaching children and meeting the public.



Egypt Centre Volunteer
Tony Evans

I come from: Mumbles (returned 2y ago after 49y in English Midlands)

I started volunteering: Feb 2018

I chose to volunteer because: I'm interested in a civilization that is different from the European model, and made significant technological advances largely independent of other civilizations.

My Favourite artefact is: All items in the metallurgy case (HoL).

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me: Meeting people who are interested in Egyptology, and seeing how young people have the opportunity to experience and touch ancient objects that come from a civilization so different from our own.





International Volunteer
Alexia Berguno Sabay

I come from: Chile

I started volunteering: Oct 2018

I chose to volunteer because: I have always been interested in history, particularly Ancient Egypt.

My Favourite artefact is: The papyrus sheet showing a spell from the *Book of the Dead*.

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me: Volunteering helps me to manage my time wisely, while also allowing me to help others learn about Egyptian history.



Former Volunteer
Cat Lumb

I come from: Huddersfield originally, but now Stalybridge, Manchester

I started volunteering: When studying Egyptology and Anthropology.

I chose to volunteer because: I wanted to get closer to the artefacts and it seemed like a brilliant opportunity to learn more about a subject I was passionate about.

My Favourite artefact is: Pre/ Early Dynastic pottery: I fell in love with this period of ancient Egyptian history and find the objects so rich and beautiful from such an early time.

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helped me: Encouraged interaction with others, and taught me about conservation and the use of objects within learning. My experience at the Egypt Centre supported my application to Manchester Museum.

What I'm doing now: Secondary and Post-16 Learning Coordinator (Humanities & Arts) at Manchester Museum.





New Staff!

Several new members have joined the EC team in the past few months.

Angharad Gavin is a former volunteer who left us to work at the highly-regarded *Cardiff Story Museum*. We're delighted to welcome her back as our new **Gift Shop Manager...**



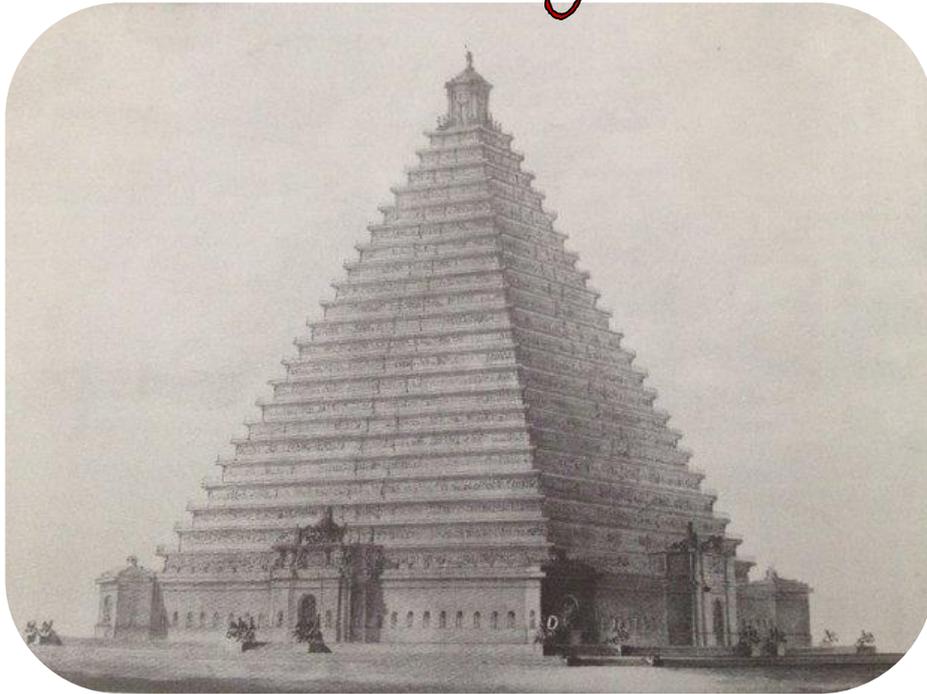
...Long-serving volunteer **Hannah Sweetapple** takes up the post of **Acting Education & Events Officer...**

...and University lecturer and EC stalwart **Dr. Ken Griffin** becomes **Collections Access Manager.**

Congratulations and welcome to our new staff. We hope to meet them all fully (via their own words) in the next issue!



London's Pyramids?



In the early 19th century, Sir Frederick William Trench, MP and soldier, had the idea to commemorate the recent defeat of the French at Trafalgar (1805) and the earlier Battle of the Nile (1798) with a stepped pyramid (or ziggurat) in what is now **Trafalgar Square**. It would have been taller than St Paul's Cathedral at 364ft, with 22 steps – one for each year of the Napoleonic Wars. Nelson's Column was installed instead. In 1817, a 205ft pyramid commemorating the British victory was proposed for **Shooter's Hill**.

Thomas Willson planned a pyramidal mausoleum to be erected around 1825 on **Primrose Hill**, to house the bodies of up to 5 million Londoners, as there was a great shortage of burial space. Although this plan never came to fruition, the garden cemeteries which were built instead used many Egyptian elements, both in their general design, as well as for individual tombs. Most famous is Highgate Cemetery, laid out in 1838. It features an Egyptian Avenue.

There was one other failed proposal; a 150ft pyramid was suggested in **Hyde Park**

roughly 80 years after Willson's pyramid, to house a mausoleum and sculpture gallery.

More recently, pyramidal elements can be seen in the design of the 310m **Shard**, designed by Renzo Piano, built in 2012 in **Southwark**. And a temporary bright pink **Mastaba**, designed by Christo and constructed out of 7000 oil barrels, was floated onto the Serpentine Lake in **Hyde Park** in Summer 2018.

At least we have a glass pyramid in Swansea: **Plantasia** (built in 1990)!

REFERENCE:

Elliott, C. 2012. [Egypt in England](#) (English Heritage)

Written by: Sue Cane
& Dulcie Engel



Young Volunteers

(Almost) Everything You Should Know About:

Headrests

Welcome back to my *(almost) everything you should know about:* series! In this issue I'll be discussing one of the items which takes the proud central place on the materials board. Almost every visitor who takes part in the materials board activity will learn about the headrest. Here's some extra information to show off your knowledge every time you're showing visitors around!

Headrests provided a number of functions; both practical and religious. They usually consist of a curved upper piece on which the head rests, mounted on a pillar set in a supporting base. They were the same basic shape throughout their long history and were mainly made of wood or stone. The headrest not only ensured a relatively comfortable position while sleeping, but also enabled air to circulate around the head; an advantage in a warm climate like Egypt.

The importance of the headrest is shown by the fact that even the poorest graves at Giza had a brick or rough stone block beneath the head of the dead person. They have been found in graves but also in the houses of workmen in *Deir el-Medina*. Many have been found with linen cloth wrapped around the upper piece, probably to ease discomfort.

The basic shape changed very little during its history, however there were styles that were particular to certain periods. During the Old Kingdom they typically had a

fluted stem, while headrests of the New Kingdom were more elaborate. These designs could include the head of the god Bes (which makes sense considering he was the protector of households), or they could be in a shape of a folding stool.

Perhaps one of the most famous and beautiful headrests was one belonging to Tutankhamun. The ivory headrest from his tomb has had its column replaced by a depiction of the god Shu, lifting up the head which was identified with the sun. Two lions are upon the base, said to guard the sun's passage across the sky; however, the lions on Tut's headrest have been identified as Aker, the personification of yesterday and today.

Symbolically, the headrest was connected with the sun, which like the head was lowered in the evening and rose in the day. The headrest represents the hieroglyph *akhet* sign for the sun on the horizon. The sun's journey concerned Ra and his role to sail across the heavens during the day in his boat called the "Barque of Millions of Years", and was reborn at dawn the very next day.

Written by: Rhodri Protheroe-Jones



Visitor Feedback

"Very interesting. I learnt some new things."

- Peter Sherlock, Dinas Powys.

"It was amazin'!"

- Libby Beynon, Swansea.

"Very good museum."

- Henry & Alex, Reading.

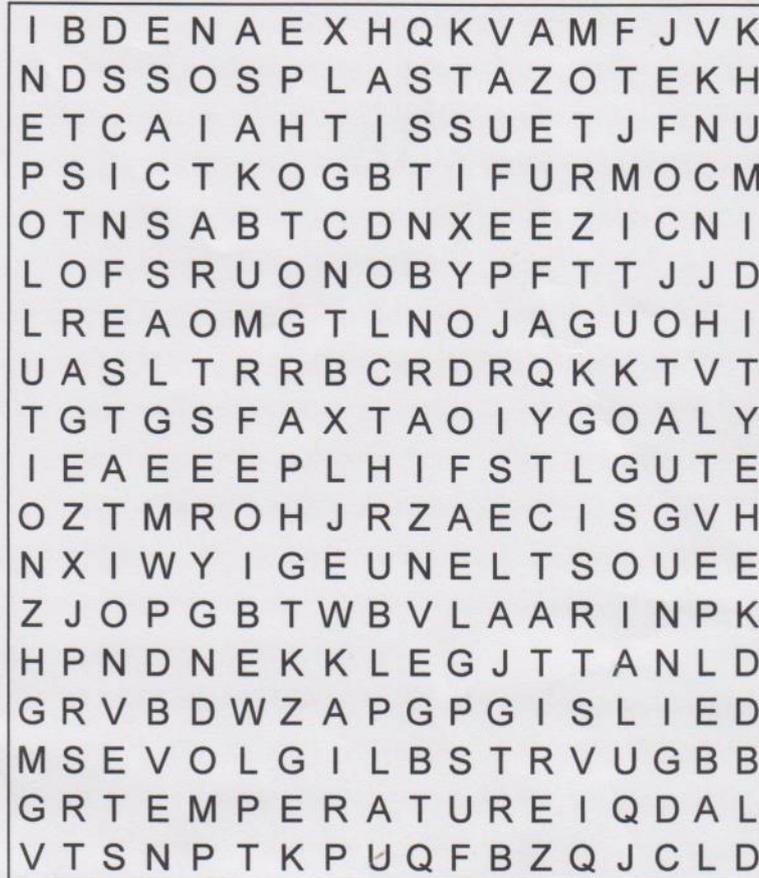
"Very informative, thank you!
Great fun!"

- Becki & Amanda, Swansea.

[COMPLETELY UNINTELLIGIBLE
SQUIGGLE]

- Linda Milne, Cold Spring, New York.

MUSEUM CONSERVATION Word Search



ARTEFACT
CONDITION
DETERIORATION
DUST
GLASSCASE
GLOVES
HUMIDITY
INFESTATION
LABEL
PELLCLOTH
PHOTOGRAPH
PLASTAZOTE
POLLUTION
REPORT
RESTORATION
STORAGE
TEMPERATURE
TISSUE

Words can appear horizontally, vertically and diagonally in any direction.

My name is **Lee Rayner** and before I became a volunteer I first discovered the Egypt Centre from a school trip. I really enjoyed the visit there and later I had the idea to do it for work experience.

I did a booklet at the Egypt Centre to get more knowledge of the Egyptians which helped me get badges for Senet, Materials Board and Mummification. My favourite bit of the booklet was drawing the weapons. I next had to meet visitors. At first I found it difficult but as the days went by I grew more determined to do it. This has boosted my confidence.

Because my of autism I struggle with being around a lot of people I don't know but thanks to the Egypt Centre my confidence has made big improvements. I was glad to see someone else with autism there. Also the staff members were nice and the manager was really friendly. The visitors were also very friendly. One even asked

me "what is your favourite object in the gallery?" I replied "the bronze knife." Doing work experience here led to me becoming a volunteer.



New Kingdom Goddess - Black Granite (HOL)
By Tom Clarke



Book Review

Ancient Egyptian Scribes:

A Cultural Exploration by Niv Allon & Hana Navratilova (Bloomsbury Egyptology Series)

London, 2017

This book examines the role and place in society of New Kingdom scribes through an examination of the lives of ten individuals. This approach allows the authors to show the diversity of tasks undertaken by scribes during a specific period of Ancient Egyptian history. The prologue discusses writing tools, and the three main categories of written artefacts in the New Kingdom: papyri (used for important texts), ostraca (used for notes and messages), and stuccoed writing boards (which could be re-used, so useful as training tools).

Paheri was a scribe in two different ways: he carried out important administrative work as a grain accountant, and showed his skill as an artist and draughtsman in his work on his grandfather's tomb. **Senenmut** is known to us as Steward in the royal household of Hatshepsut, and Royal Tutor to her daughter Princess Nefertiti. Despite leaving extensive written messages, and holding many titles, he is never referred to as a scribe. He exemplifies the use of literacy as part of broader cultural communication, a gateway to historical memory. **Tjanuni** was a military scribe under three kings, rising to Overseer of Military Scribes and General. He memorialised military achievements and victories, as well as carrying out administrative duties for the military machine. **Amenemhat** is known through the graffiti he left in a Saqqara chapel, venting his anger at the lack of skill of previous graffiti writers. Graffiti was not considered a subversive activity, and there is evidence for a certain graffiti 'etiquette' in the period. **Tutankhamun's** tomb leads to a discussion of royal literacy, and literacy of elite women. Despite the

abundance of writing equipment found (including an ivory palette belonging to his half-sister Princess Meritaten), neither he nor his sister were considered artists or scribes. **Haremhab** was an official with the title of Royal Scribe who became king. His scribal statue in the Metropolitan Museum (New York) leads to a discussion of this particular genre of sculpture. **Dedia** was Chief Draughtsman of Amun. With a team from Deir el Medina working under him, he was responsible for restoring damaged monuments in Thebes following the Amarna period, when references to Amun and other gods had been defaced. **Inena** was a copyist, whose name appears frequently on various Ramesside papyri. **Hori** features in a satirical and much copied fictional letter, which is an excellent example of Ancient Egyptian epistolary narrative. The letter compares good and bad practice in the writing and mathematical skills of two scribes. **Djehutimose Tjaroy** was a scribe for the community of royal workmen at Deir el Medina, whose responsibilities extended far beyond writing, and were quite dangerous at times.

This academic text is written in a clear and approachable fashion, with detailed references, a useful glossary, and illustrations throughout. It is of interest to anyone who wants to delve deeper into the subject of Ancient Egyptian writing and writers.

Written by: Dulcie Engel



Other Collections

Manchester Museum Outreach: Shabtis in Schools



Having met our former volunteer Cat Lumb earlier in this edition, we are very pleased that she has shared with us a press release and photos of an exciting outreach project from Manchester Museum, starting last November.

While the museum undergoes a major transformation, the Ancient Egyptian galleries will remain closed until 2021. It is therefore very important to engage with local schools during this period.

Shabtis from the collection have been sent out to schools in specially created

cases, with just one small label (photo 1). The idea is for pupils and teachers to lead their own learning, and curate their own display.

So far, the feedback from schools has been very positive. Perhaps the most creative output has been from pupils at Parrs Wood High School: the construction of an entire tomb for Seti I, with the Manchester shabti as the central focus (photo 2). The teachers see it as a way of breaking down curriculum walls, and enhancing pupils' experiences.

To keep up to date, follow the museum on Twitter @MM_Connects.



Written by: Dulcie Engel



Use of Weapons

Written by: Liam Thomas



This was in the Bronze Age, before the Iron Age. The colour has faded with age.

There are loads of arrows, which shows that there were many archers in the Egyptian army. The design of the arrowheads was the same throughout most of Egyptian history.



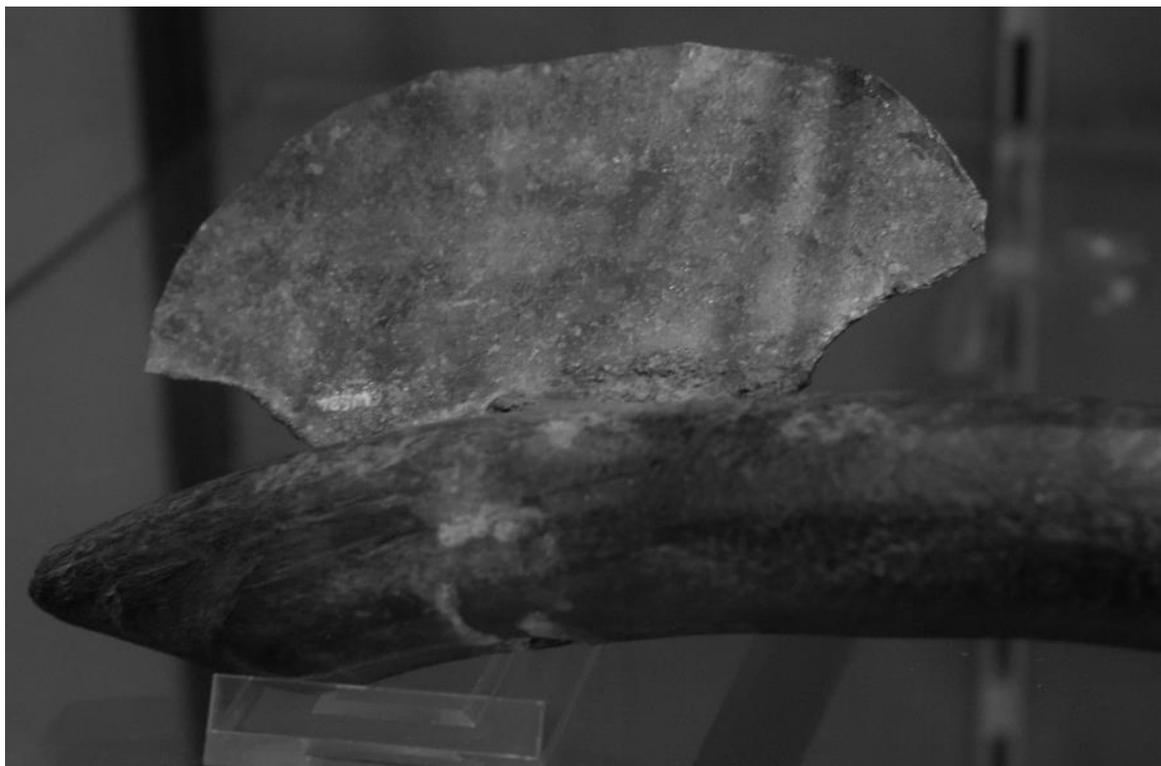
In the **House of Life**, my favourite case is the Weapons Case. I like it because the weapons are well-preserved.

They show how differently wars were fought a few thousand years ago, and how the Egyptian empire was expanded and defended from outside foes.

There are a few axes and knives in the case, showing how the Egyptian army was reliant on heavy infantry to win battles, especially axemen.

The majority of the weapons are made of bronze and are from the Middle Kingdom.

In conclusion, the reason the Weapons Case is so fascinating to me is that it shows how sophisticated the Egyptians were in this period of the Ancient World. They were able to have an efficient fighting force that would be able to expand their empire and make it last for thousands of years.



Eton & Egypt

The Myers Collection of Egyptian Antiquities

'...a collection of Egyptian antiquities bequeathed by Major William Joseph Myers...Many of the artefacts are priceless. None have been sold' (Verkaik 2018: 189, on the wealth of Eton College)

William Joseph Myers (1858-1899) was an old boy of Eton College, who became an army officer, rising to the rank of major before his death at the *Battle of Ladysmith* in the Boer War. He served in Egypt between 1882-1887, during which time he developed a serious interest in Egyptology, helped by his friendship with the German Egyptologist, Emile Brugsch, assistant curator of the **Bulag Museum** (forerunner of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo). Myers' diaries record his travels; archaeological discoveries of the time; and more personal entries, such as wandering Elephantine with a copy of Amelia Edwards' 1877 classic, *A Thousand Miles Up the Nile*, and crawling on his belly into a desert cave littered with mummified crocodiles! He made further visits to Egypt in 1894-7.

The emphasis of his collection was on aesthetics rather than archaeological significance. Colour and perfection were his guiding principles. The collection is particularly fine in faience from the 18th-22nd dynasties (ca 1500-900 BC), glazed steatite, and glass. There is an almost complete series of lotus design bowls from the 18th Dynasty onwards, and the lotus form chalices are considered among the finest ever found. As Reeves points out:

'It was Myers' good fortune to be in Egypt at a time when acquisition of objects on the antiquities market was legal and a wide variety of high-quality work was available' (in Spurr et al 1999: 5)

In 1895, Myers contributed to the **Burlington Fine Arts Club's 'Exhibition of the arts of ancient Egypt'**, and whenever he was on leave at Eton, he would love to show his treasures to pupils. On his death, he left his entire Egyptian collection of approximately 1300 artefacts to his old

school, expressing a wish that it be arranged as a teaching collection. This has since been augmented by other donations, and there are now over 2100 items in the collection.

The Myers collection has gained an international reputation, and items have been exhibited overseas, including at the **Metropolitan Museum** in New York in 2000-2001. Approximately 150 works of art crossed the Atlantic, including a series of stunning chalices and bowls of Egyptian faience, and an exceptionally rare pectoral ornament of electrum. The *Spurr et al 1999* book is an illustrated catalogue for that particular exhibition.

A significant part of the Egyptological collection is currently on loan to the **University of Birmingham** and **Johns Hopkins University** (Baltimore, USA) for a collaborative project to create an online catalogue. The loan agreement between Eton and the two universities dates from 2010 for 15 years.

Birmingham lists 543 objects in this loan, which are housed in the University Archaeology Museum. Johns Hopkins received 1900 artefacts from Eton, and approximately 200 objects are on display in the JH Archaeology Museum.

The Myers collection is now displayed at Eton College in the purpose-built **Jafar Gallery**. It is open to the public on Sunday afternoons, or by appointment. A selection of artefacts from the collection are taken into local primary schools as part of the college's outreach programme.

Written by: Dulcie Engel

With thanks to Ken Griffin and Marian Whitehead for their comments.



Islamic Items in The Egypt Centre

The Early Islamic Period in Egypt

In the fourth and fifth centuries CE, the western (Latin speaking) and eastern (Greek speaking) halves of the Roman Empire became more and more separate. The eastern empire was ruled from Constantinople, and was more successful economically than the western empire, which fell into decline. Rome was sacked by the Visigoths in 410 CE. The Byzantine (eastern) empire lasted throughout the Middle Ages, until the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453. But Egypt had already been lost to Arab conquests from 639-642 CE. The final blow came in 641, when Alexandria, the capital, was besieged, and then attacked. The Arabs moved the capital inland to Fustat (now part of Cairo). This took place under the caliphate of Umar. Arabic came to be the dominant language of Egypt, and Islam the dominant religion. Islam originated in what is now Saudi Arabia at the start of the seventh century CE, when the Quran was revealed to Muhammad. In the early Islamic period in Egypt, freedom of religion was respected, but non-Muslims had to pay poll and property taxes (*jizya*); during later Umayyad rule (661-750), higher taxes were imposed. The next Arab dynasty was the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258; 1261-1517), which controlled Egypt from 750-935. However, Egypt was part of the Tulunid dynasty from 868-935; the Ikshidid dynasty from 935-969; and the Fatimid caliphate from 969. This dynasty was tolerant to non-Muslims in Egypt, and did not convert many Egyptians to their particular sect. The Fatimid state was incorporated into the Abbasid caliphate after Saladin's invasion of 1171. He was the founder of the Ayyubid Sultanate, which centred on Egypt. From 1250, Egypt was controlled by the Mamluk Sultanate based in Cairo. This lasted until the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517.

Islamic art

Islamic art is characterised by its use of repetition and pattern: geometric and floral designs, decorative Arabic calligraphy; plus the swirling repetitive arabesque, which is supposed to symbolise the transcendent and infinite nature of God. Depictions of people are not so common, as it is considered idolatry to portray the human figure, although they are depicted in secular miniatures. Animals are also found on secular pieces.

The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo is the largest specialist collection of Islamic art in the world, with 100,000 artefacts, and the website has wonderful pictures of the collection.

Egypt Centre artefacts

In the Egypt Centre catalogue, 102 items are listed as Islamic (9 of which are also listed separately as 'Islamic?'), and 31 items are listed as 'Arab?'

The artefacts include shards of pottery, glass fragments, textiles, and small items of iron such as nails and arrowheads, plus two copper alloy duck figurines, and a silver amulet. Many of the finds are from an unpublished excavation carried out at Armant (AR indicates this origin) in the 1930s by Robert Mond and Oliver Myers, who collaborated on various excavations. Whereas many excavations would focus only on earlier Egyptian artefacts, these excavations also preserved finds from later periods.

There are a variety of Islamic items on display in the House of Life, including:

WRITING CASE: AR50/3540 Metal bound miniature book with sections of Quran from Armant



This miniature book is often cited as a favourite item by volunteers and visitors alike, just because it is so small, measuring 46mm(W) across when open (23mm when closed) by 25mm(H) by 7-8mm (D), with pages 15mm (W) by 20mm (H).

It consists of a hinged metal cover containing 13 pages held in place by the metal spine. The book cover has been embossed with geometric patterns including triangles, circles, stars, and lines. The pages are printed on both sides. Printed Arabic texts have been found in Egypt dating from the Fatimid period (10th century, i.e. 600 years after printing started in China, and 500 years before it developed in Europe). Multiple copies of texts of Quranic extracts, prayers and incantations were printed on paper strips to meet the huge demand for amulets and charms containing these texts. The strips were often rolled up and enclosed in a locket. This is of course reminiscent of ancient inscribed Egyptian amulets, and the mezuzah (a decorative case containing a scroll of parchment with verses from the Torah attached to a doorpost), used by religious Jews. Late examples Quranic amulets date from the 15th century. In the EC copy, at the margin of each page is



the sign that refers to 'حزب hazb' which is a part of the Quran, half the length of a 'juz'. Each 'hazb' is made up of four quarters, known as 'rubu3'.

Next to the book is a slightly larger set of handwritten Quranic texts from Armant (AR50/3539) used as a charm, in the form of folded pieces of paper stored in a leather case.

MATHS CASE: AR50/3493- 3500, 3534-3538 Glass Arabic Weights from Armant



Glass weights were used to measure metals. Some weights have inscriptions with the name of the local governor or official in charge of measures. The type we have in the museum are coin weights, which corresponded with the weights of the different dominations, and could be used to check the quality of coins tendered, and ensure against counterfeit

coins. They may also have been used as currency. According to Carpenter (1951), Umayyad coin weights developed from the Coptic *exagia* (bronze coin weights) which the Arabs found in use in Egypt.

BODY ADORNMENT CASE: EC 1155-1181 Glass bracelet fragments

During the Islamic period, women would often wear many bracelets at a time, both metal and glass. Fragments of glass bracelets are often found on domestic sites. Although glass bracelets were known earlier in Egypt, they were most common between 1100 and 1500CE.



The technique used to make these seamless bracelets involved piercing a blob of molten glass with a metal rod, and rotating it to increase the circumference. The fragments on display show a use of different colours and patterns, including stripes, raised dots and flowers (which would have been applied at a later stage).

These are just a few of the many Islamic glass bracelet fragments listed in the catalogue.

POTTERY CASE: W1077a & W1078 Pottery cones/grenades (?)



These items are made from hard fired pottery (stoneware), with a pattern resembling a bunch of grapes. They were found at Armant by the Egypt Exploration Society in their excavations of 1929-1931. A very early Egypt Centre card catalogue entry identified them as grenades used in the 'Nubian war' of the nineteenth

century, but they may date from the second half of the twelfth century to the end of the fourteenth century. These objects have been found at various excavation sites in Islamic Egypt. The function of the 'grenades' is unclear, and they may have been used as containers for mercury or a flammable substance.

TEXTILES CASE: EC1257 Textile piece from the early Islamic Period.



This is a decorative strip of purple and brown wool on undyed linen. Many early textiles were found in Egypt as they were relatively well preserved: 'Knowledge about textiles from the early days of Islam comes mainly from Egypt, where fragile materials, including linen, cotton, wool, and silk have been preserved in the dry soil as burial shrouds' (hali.com). Furthermore, 'the fragments that have survived are... often dyed vivid colors. They demonstrate a well-developed textile technology notable for its use of complicated and richly colored designs' (lacma.org).

We have a piece of patterned Islamic textile (EC1260), and various Islamic caps (such as W525), to be found in drawers in the gallery. We also have a lead spindle whorl (EC1182) from the period, displayed in the technology case.

Written by: Dulcie Engel

NOTE: many thanks to Carolyn Graves-Brown and Ken Griffin for their help, comments and photographs.

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Friends of the Egypt Centre



Deir el Medina 2.0

Cédric Gobeil, Director, Egypt Exploration Society

16th January 2019

This was Dr Gobeil's first lecture for the Egypt Centre, and his first visit to Wales. He began work at *Deir el Medina* (a workmen's village which served as home to those working on sites such as the Valley of the Kings and Queens, and a common stop on the Luxor tourist trail) in 2011. The site has proven to continue to reveal many new secrets with the help of technological advances.

The talk particularly highlighted the damage to the site since its initial excavation which Dr Gobeil estimates to be between 15-20% of walls falling into disrepair. In light of this, one of the key aims of his work was to create a sustainable site management programme for the area, as well as better information for visitors. Work focused on the houses, votive chapels and tombs, and although the main aim of work was restoration and preservation, thousands of objects missed or overlooked by the original excavations have been unearthed. In addition, through the use of software such as D-Stretch (which uses digital decorrelation manipulation to enhance images) previously unseen inscriptions and decorative details have been recovered. GPS mapping (satellite-based navigation) has been used to more accurately record the archaeology. Additionally, 3D rendering with the inclusion of photogrammetry has also enabled a virtual record of the site.

Dr Gobeil was a very engaging speaker, and it was fascinating to see the additional information that can be gleaned from a

Upcoming...

17th April 2019 - Dulcie Engel (TEC)

Henry Wellcome's Egyptian Legacy

15th May 2019 - Swansea Uni Students

(Mini presentations)

12th June 2019 - Dr. Anna Garnett (Petrie Museum)

A Potted History of Petrie

Events start at 7pm at **Taliesin Create, Mall Room** unless otherwise stated.

Check the Friends' website for further information, and more dates:

egypt.swan.ac.uk/about/friends-of-the-egypt-centre/

previously excavated site, whilst also preserving it for future generations. The implementation of technological advances with some excellent examples, including ostraca, tombs and human remains with tattoos was absolutely fascinating, and an excellent start to our 2019 programme of Friends events.

Written by: Sam Powell



For further information or to become a member please contact:
Membership Secretary Wendy Goodridge:
01792 295960 w.r.goodridge@swansea.ac.uk



Book Review

Collecting the World: The Life and Curiosity of Hans Sloane

James Delbourgo

(Penguin, 2018)



Sir Hans Sloane. Mezzotint by J. Faber, junior, 1729, after Sir G. Kneller, 1716. (Wellcome Collection gallery)

Sir Hans Sloane also a collector of other people's collections: many were sold or bequeathed to him, or bought at auction. His priorities were preservation and documentation through thorough cataloguing and labelling, rather than his own research.

was born in Ulster in 1660, and died in London in 1753. He became an extremely rich man through his work as a society physician, plus income from Jamaican slave plantations, rent from land in London, and salaries from public offices held. He was President of both the

Royal Society and the Royal College of Physicians. Much of his fortune went into collecting; indeed he probably held the largest collection assembled by just one person in the eighteenth century. His collections were housed in his Chelsea home, and following his wishes, were purchased by Parliament after his death. The artefacts were moved to Bloomsbury and became the foundations of the British Museum, which opened in 1759 as the world's first free national public museum (as desired by Sloane in his will). His objects also became the core collections of the Natural History Museum (opened in 1881) and the British Library (opened as a separate entity in 1973).

His collection was very much of his time: an eclectic mixture of natural and artificial objects, often referred to as "*curiosities*", plus books and paintings. As a young physician, he worked for the governor of Jamaica, and it was there that he started to collect primarily plant specimens. He recorded these and other plants in his *Herbarium*, one of the most spectacular scientific works of the time. When he returned to London, he used his connections in society, trade, and the colonies to increase the collection. He was

A visit to Sloane's Chelsea home by the Swedish naturalist Per Kalm in 1748 gives a flavour of the amazing quantity and variety: 'a cup fashioned from tortoiseshell, snails and nests, corals gleaming through the doors of a glass cabinet, human skeletons and an Egyptian mummy... a stuffed striped donkey from the Cape of Good Hope and wooden boats from the West Indies'.

The current British Museum differs somewhat from the original: the building was demolished and replaced by a larger one in the 1840s, as the collection had expanded greatly, with acquisitions from archaeological expeditions to Egypt, Greece, Rome and Assyria for example. From a very large cabinet of curiosities, it became an encyclopaedic museum, and Sloane's collection was divided up and re-housed in the appropriate departments of the museum.

Delbourgo paints a picture of the man and the times, addressing the issues of the day, in particular the reliance on a slave economy and on colonial possessions. It is an enjoyable read, illustrated with plates showing many of Sloane's artefacts, plus examples of his catalogues, labels, and cases.

Written by: Dulcie Engel



Egyptology In The News

Modern usage discovered for Ancient Egyptian blue pigment

The 4000 year old brilliant blue pigment (calcium copper silicate) invented by the Egyptians has been found to have unique qualities which could reduce energy consumption in buildings, and increase solar energy output. This is linked to its ability to emit as many photons as it absorbs.

3000 year old female mummy may have been a magician

Recent studies of an intricately tattooed mummy which was discovered in *Deir el Medina* in 2014 now suggest that the young woman may have been linked to divine ritual, possibly a respected 'wise woman' or magician. The tattoos on her torso include lotus and baboon designs, and numerous wadjet eyes.

Celebration 'booth' of Ramses the Great uncovered in Cairo

The booth where Ramses II sat for celebrations such as his crowning festival and the Sed (jubilee) festival has been found by archaeologists working in the eastern *Matariya* district of Cairo.

Evidence of ramp at quarry used to build Great Pyramid

Remains of a 4,500 year old ramp system have been discovered at *Hatnub*, an ancient quarry site in the Eastern Desert. It includes staircases with postholes. Large stone blocks would have been pulled along the ramp on a sledge, attached with ropes to wooden posts.

New technology reveals more about Aberdeen University mummy

Ta-Kheru was born around 750BC, and her mummy has been in Aberdeen for 200 years. Researchers have used CAT scans and visualisation techniques to create a

hologram of her body, and facial reconstruction techniques have been used to gain an impression of her appearance.

Bring back the Rosetta Stone to Egypt!

Dr Tarek Tawfik, director-general of the new Grand Egyptian Museum has said that the British Museum should return the Rosetta Stone to Egypt. He suggested that the BM could show a virtual reality replica. The BM says it has not had an approach from Dr Tawfik. The Rosetta Stone is one of the most iconic artefacts on display at the museum, and amongst the most popular.

Cat and scarab mummies found in sarcophagi near Saqqara

In a 5th Dynasty tomb near the Giza pyramids, sarcophagi were found containing dozens of mummified cats, plus miniature sarcophagi containing rare mummified scarabs. There were also 100 wooden gilded cat statues, plus other animal statues, amulets and canopic jars.

Clues to maternal mortality in Ancient Egypt

The discovery of a 3,700 year old grave near *Aswan* containing the remains of a woman pregnant with a near term baby has been announced. Finding a foetus still inside a woman from this period is very rare. There are signs that the woman's pelvis was misaligned (a possible sign of childhood malnutrition or trauma), which could explain her death.

Tomb unveiled by French team at Al-Assassif

The 18th Dynasty tomb near *Luxor* contains two sarcophagi in perfect condition. One was opened in front of international media, and contains the mummy of a woman called Thuya. Statues and approximately



one thousand shabtis have also been found at the site.

More burials found, this time in Dahshur!

Egyptian archaeologists working in *Dahshur* Necropolis near Cairo have uncovered eight limestone sarcophagi dating from around 300BC, containing mummies covered with painted cartonnage.

A catwalk show with an Ancient Egyptian theme



Chanel's lead designer Karl Lagerfeld has showcased his latest collection at the Temple of Dendur in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. The clothes included jewelled collar necklaces, and were adorned with lotus flower, scarab and ankh

prints. Gold was much in evidence. The models wore Egyptian style eye make-up and carried pyramid-shaped evening bags!

'One of a kind' tomb discovered at Saqqara

The tomb of a high priest, untouched for 4,400 years has been found. It is filled with stunning wall paintings and statues, and it is in an exceptional state of preservation. Archaeologists hope to find the sarcophagus of the priest.

A flooded mass grave uncovered in desert quarry

At *Gebel El-Silsila* in Upper Egypt, archaeologists have found a 'soup' of human remains in the 18th Dynasty quarry, which has gradually filled with water from a natural spring. The water must be pumped out, and the mud sifted for bones and artefacts.

Underground fortress at Red Sea Roman city yields interesting discoveries

Excavations at the ruins of *Berenike Trogodytika* have revealed many objects over the years, including an elephant skull. Now, archaeologists have discovered teeth in an underground bunker, plus a large well area, which suggests that the climate in the Hellenistic period was more humid than today, making large-scale water collection worthwhile.

The Museum of Scotland and the Great Pyramid casing stone row

The Egyptian authorities have cast doubt over the authenticity and the documentation for a limestone block at the centre of a new exhibition in Edinburgh. The museum says it was brought back by a British engineer in 1872, with full permission at the time. Furthermore they say that casing stones on the pyramid were of limestone. and not of granite, as suggested by the Egyptian authorities.

Rare family shrine revealed in New Kingdom villa

The villa is sited at *Tell Edfu* and dates to 1500-1450 BCE. It houses one of the earliest examples of an ancestral shrine, and the first example discovered for 80 years. It includes a small fireplace and offering table, two small pedestals, several stelae, a rare bust of a female ancestor, and a statuette of a seated scribe.

Egypt recovers smuggled artefact discovered in London auction

The stone relief showing the cartouche of Amenhotep I was stolen from an open air museum at *Karnak* in 1988, and put up for sale a few months ago.

Compiled & Summarized by: Dulcie Engel





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