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# Volunteer Newsletter

Jul-Sep 2021

## Museum of Egyptian Antiquities



"Nebamun hunting in the marshes." - The British Museum.



### Fowling in the Marshes

A detailed look at a gem of ancient Egyptian art.



### Looking Back...

A glance at the history of the "Wellcome Collection of Antiquities", as a milestone approaches.



### From Rats to Robber Flies

Pest Control in ancient Egypt.

[egypt.swan.ac.uk](http://egypt.swan.ac.uk)



# Welcome



**Syd  
Howells**

Editor in Chief

Hello all,

Another summer ends and we have still not returned to the museum. However, fear not, the first steps have been made with the bookable children's workshops which took place this August. These are the first steps towards us returning.

Once we receive the OK from the University, I will begin to get in touch with all current volunteers to let you know the plans going forward. We will of course ensure the safety of volunteers, staff, and visitors before we return. It looks as if we will initially be taking booked visits ensuring that the galleries aren't crowded, which is a sensible approach.

In the meantime, enjoy the latest edition of the Egypt Centre Volunteer Newsletter, as usual it is packed full of interesting stuff. Thank you to all contributors and the Newsletter team and remember we are always looking for contributions.

**Syd**



**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, if and when the Old World returns you can find me supervising the House of Life on Tuesdays & Thursdays; at the computer desk, lovingly crafting this treasured periodical; or skiving in Cupboard 8, taking one for the team in the unending war against biscuit surplus.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter or submit articles for consideration please contact:  
**[dulcie.engel@icloud.com](mailto:dulcie.engel@icloud.com)**

The Newsletter will be published every three months - Next issue due **Dec 2021**.





# Office News

Between the 15th and 17th September 2021, the Egypt Centre will be hosting an online conference to celebrate 50 years of the Wellcome Collection material arriving at Swansea. The event is free and will take place through the medium of Zoom. It is well worth signing up for it. For further details of the event and a list of the talks, please visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fifty-years-of-the-wellcome-collection-at-swansea-and-beyond-tickets-163698104437>

However, this will not be the only Zoom event celebrating the 50th anniversary.

**Ken Griffin** will be running a 10-week Zoom course (£70). **A History of Egypt through the Egypt Centre Collection.** Starting Sunday 19 September (6–8pm UK time) or Wednesday 22 September (10am–midday UK time). Each session will include a one-hour overview of the period under discussion followed by a one-hour presentation of the objects in the museum's collection, many of which are not on public display.

Registration link and details: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-history-of-egypt-through-the-egypt-centre-collection-tickets-167757008729>

**Friends of the Egypt Centre AGM and Lecture** (£3 for non-members) – Wednesday 22 September (6.30pm for AGM; 7.00pm for lecture, UK time). Alan Lloyd - Cleopatra VII: How Much Egyptian?

Registration link and details: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/friends-of-the-egypt-centre-agm-and-lecture-by-prof-alan-lloyd-on-cleopatra-tickets-167997572261>

10-week Zoom course (**free**) with Carolyn Graves-Brown: **Explore with Me: Textiles and Ancient Egypt.** Starting Thursday 23 September (3–5 pm UK time) This Zoom course will allow us to look closer at the methods and practices used to create pieces like those we can see in the Egypt Centre and other museum collections. We will experiment with the possibility of dyeing linen and explore the effectiveness of plant dyes, learn how flax was harvested, how ancient looms were set up, and even make thread without spinning.

Registration link and details: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/explore-with-me-textiles-and-ancient-egypt-tickets-167713891765>

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Finally, congratulations to our very own Ken Griffin on winning the "Research as Art" Prize, Swansea University 2021:

## Reflecting on the Past: The Display of Egyptian Mummies - OVERALL WINNER - Ken Griffin

*"The display of human remains has become an ever-increasing concern amongst museums and museum professionals for the past few decades.*

*Some take the view that human remains should be freely displayed, arguing that they can serve as a connection between the past and the present. On the other hand, some think that it is inappropriate to do so, regardless of the exhibit's scientific value. Who should decide on whether human remains are displayed in museums?*

*Reflecting on the past examines these questions. In discussing Egyptian mummies, it is important to take into account the views of the modern Egyptians, the direct ancestors of the pharaohs. Museums in Egypt have a policy of displaying human remains, usually in a dignified and tranquil setting. This image shows Mohamed Shabib – a Luxor resident - gazing into the face of the mummy of the pharaoh Ramesses I (c. 1292–1290 BC) at Luxor Museum for the first time."*

Collaborating Authors/Affiliations: Mohamed Shabib (Conservator for the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities), and The Egypt Centre at Swansea University.

The winning image can be viewed at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/swanseauniversity/51192429347/>



# Meet the Volunteer



# Egypt Centre Volunteer

**Kieran Davies**

**I come from:** Swansea.

**I started volunteering: 2016.**

**I chose to volunteer because:** I undertook my work experience placement here, and I enjoy researching things I don't know about.

**My Favourite artefact is:** I like the exhibit rooms, and ALL the Egyptian artefacts.

**My Interests Include:** Gaming on my PS4 and Xbox, watching films, swimming and Stand Up Paddle Boarding, dinosaurs, and creating quizzes for my family.



## Young Volunteer

## Benji Head

**I come from:** Swansea.

**I started volunteering: 2018.**

**I chose to volunteer because:**  
I love ancient Egypt and was interested in the ancient Egyptians.

**My Favourite artefact is:**

The sarcophagus, because I was impressed by the detail and its age.

**How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me:** I have enjoyed the social aspect of a working environment, having responsibilities of mentoring and showing people around.

I prefer working in the House of Death, because I enjoy mummifying Bob!



# Barbara Miles

## 1926-2021

It is with overwhelming sadness that I find myself writing this tribute.

Barbara had volunteered with the Egypt Centre for twenty years and during that time inspired countless volunteers, students, school groups and members of the public. Barbara loved the diversity of people visiting the museum and served as a mentor to so many volunteers over the years. She was very much a 'people' person, and proof, if it were needed, were the 31 years she spent volunteering for the Samaritans. Barbara cared.

Queen of the Materials Board, Barbara loved this activity more than any other and she was an expert at it. Some will recall she was less than keen on Senet (a preference which we both shared).

Barbara possessed an incredible sense of humour and many will have heard her funny stories of being a nurse during the Second World War, and her hilarious way of dealing with difficult patients; she had a lovely, understated way of telling the most outrageous true tales.

Many will remember her love of the volunteer Christmas parties and the chance to dance around to her favourite record, Tom Jones' *Delilah*.



We have video footage of her dancing to it from a few years back.

Barbara was an incredible person and I recall during a role chat several years ago her answer to the question 'comment on any changes in your volunteering at the Egypt Centre in the last year' was simply 'old age'.

Farewell then Barbara and condolences and warm regards to all your family and friends. We won't see your like again.

Written by: Syd Howells

As we went to print, sad news came of the passing of another much-loved volunteer, Merlys Gavin. A full tribute to Merlys will appear in the next issue.





# Other Collections

## A visit to Kingston Lacy, Dorset: Home of the Largest Private Egyptology Collection in the UK

In the 1660s, the Bankses family moved to **Kingston Lacy** following the destruction of their home at **Corfe Castle** in the English Civil War. The house was altered by various generations, and finally by **William Bankses** (1786-1855), who transformed it into an Italianate palazzo in the 1830s. The family bequeathed the house and vast estate to the *National Trust* in 1981.

Those of you who read my book review of a biography of William Bankses (The Exiled Collector by Anne Sebba; review in Oct-Dec 2017 Newsletter) will know that in 1841, he was forced into exile (to avoid the death penalty), after being caught in an intimate situation with a soldier. The house now flies the rainbow Pride flag in his honour.

William Bankses was a great collector of art and antiquities with which he filled his house: ceilings from Venetian palazzos, paintings by Spanish masters, marble carvings; and more importantly for us, Egyptian artefacts. These are to be found in the grounds and in the dedicated Egyptian Room.

The pink granite obelisk from **Philae** (2nd century BCE) was discovered by Bankses in 1815. He enlisted **Giovanni Belzoni** to help get the obelisk home. It took 7 years, and the last part of the journey was by gun carriage, organised by William's friend the Duke of Wellington, who laid the foundation stone in 1827. Nineteen horses were used to raise the column. The obelisk played a part in the decipherment of hieroglyphs: as a classicist, William was able to make out the cartouches of **Ptolemy** and **Cleopatra**. It stands on the south lawn. Not far from it, nestled among the trees, is the pink granite sarcophagus of **Amenemope** from **Thebes** (13th century BCE).

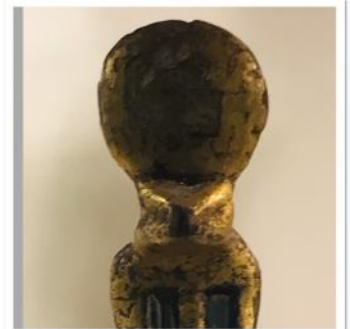


Back in the house, next to the Servants' Hall, we find the Egyptian Room (originally a Housekeeper's parlour, and then the Billiards Room: the billiards table remains & is used to hold cases!). This room holds but a fraction of the Egyptian items collected by Bankses on his travels along the Nile. The rest are all in storage at the house, but there is no suitable space for a larger display. His notebooks and drawings from Egypt are kept in the Dorset archives in **Dorchester**. The largest piece in the room is a life-size 3000 year-old sandstone figure of a male god with the features of

**Ramesses II**, which was discovered by the National Trust in undergrowth in the neglected garden!



There is an impressive collection of stelae, including one with beautiful relief and incised carving, showing offerings to **Horus**; one carved with six ears, dedicated to **Hathor** 'who listens to prayers', and a rare stela with a deep hole, which originally held a rounded flint to represent the sun. There are also sections of tomb paintings of musicians. Among the smaller items that caught my attention: a gilded sundisc, probably from a piece of ritual furniture; a wooden furniture piece showing a human head between the jaws of a lion; a small gilded cobra; royal shabtis of **Amenophis III**, **Settoss I** and **Ramesses VI**.



Written by: Dulcie Engel

## And I Quote...

"I cannot write chronologically of Egypt. Ancient Egypt. So-called ancient Egypt. In my history of the world - this realistic kaleidoscopic history - Egypt will have its proper place as the complacent indestructible force that has perpetuated itself in enough carved stone, painted plaster, papyri, granite, gold leaf, lapis lazuli, bits of pot and fragments of wood to fill the museums of the world."

Penelope Lively, 1987



# Looking Back at the Museum Collection...

This September, the Egypt Centre is holding a Zoom conference entitled *'Fifty Years of the Wellcome Collection at Swansea and Beyond'*, to celebrate the arrival in 1971 of 92 crates of objects in Swansea, the basis of our museum. It has also been announced that Swansea University will host the sixth *Egypt Exploration Society Congress* in 2022, the 140th anniversary of the EES. It seems appropriate therefore to publish this extract from the 1982 daybook of **Kate Bosse-Griffiths**, the first honorary curator of the collection. These notes about the EES centenary in 1982, and how the Wellcome objects came to Swansea, were written as an introduction to a *BBC Wales* radio talk she was asked to give:

*08-03-1982 This spring: special exhibition in British Museum to celebrate the centenary of the Egypt Exploration Society: Excavating in Egypt with a special book edited by the Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities in the British Museum, T.G.H. James - reports on the beginning of controlled excavations in Egypt – from these excavations and with the permission of the Egyptian authorities, many Egyptian antiquities reached the Museums in Great Britain, not only the big Museums in London, Oxford, Liverpool but also a good number of local Museums which had contributed to the fund which made the excavations possible.*

*A good number of objects from these excavations are also to be found in the Wellcome Museum of Antiquities (now The Egypt Centre) at University College Swansea (now Swansea University) ...but they reached Swansea rather in an indirect way – via a Collection which was originally purchased for Sir Henry Wellcome.*

*Sir Henry Wellcome himself was a manufacturing chemist, the founder of the History of Medicine Museum (now the Wellcome Collection) in London. He died in 1936.*

*The Egyptian objects were meant to form part of this Museum – but for diverse reasons they were dispersed among a number of Museums, especially the City Museum of Liverpool (now Liverpool World Museum) and Swansea University College.*

*The most attractive of these objects are now exhibited – but there is a great number of fragmentary objects which are important because of their inscriptions...*

(Kate Bosse-Griffiths, 1982 Daybook, pp 58 & 60)

Transcribed and Edited by: Dulcie Engel





# From Rats to Robber Flies

## Active Pest Control in Ancient Egypt

Pests ultimately shaped the growth and development of ancient civilisations, affecting every aspect of daily life. They were natural threats to ancient Egyptian households and granaries – sites of food storage – battled by the ancient Egyptians' use of traps, cats, fumigation, and calls to invoke divine intervention.

Pest control primarily focused on insects (beetles and moths) as they were the main source of damage to ancient Egyptian agriculture. Rodents also posed a persistent threat to food supplies, invading homes, granaries, and other storage facilities.

Rats and mice were seen doing the most damage - responsible for damage to architecture and a general loss of grains. However, insect infestations had several severe knock-on effects. For example, primary insects (insects that bore through the husks of grain) forged a path for larger infestations of secondary insects (those that are only able to feed on damaged grains) in granaries (*Panagiotakopulu*, 2001, 1238). Damage to grains, no matter how miniscule it might be, allowed the development of mould and disease. Moreover, grains with large infestations became entirely inedible – even to animals. Infested grains were often fed to horses and other animals, yet, if infestations were bad enough, this would have made the animals sick and therefore, made the entire grain store useless (*Panagiotakopulu*, 1999, 549). The environment of Egypt, however, suited these animals incredibly well – with appropriate microclimates, abundant food supplies, and reduced light and limited space in granaries paving the way for insect population explosions (*Waldbauer*, 2003, 198). This all meant that ridding ancient Egypt of the insect pest epidemic was a difficult task.

With this in mind, it is easy to see the necessity for immediate intervention in the form of traps, cats, fumigation, and divine methods.



Figure 1: UC16773 - an ancient Egyptian rat trap (The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, UCL (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0), 18/02/21).

The evidence of traps is limited, yet examples date from the early periods of Egyptian civilisations through to the Graeco-Roman period. The most well-known of which is UC16773 (*The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology*, UCL, see fig. 1 above). This Middle Kingdom example was found at **Lahun**, built to trap rodents (likely the Bandicoot rat) (*Petrie, Sayce, and Griffith*, 1891, 8 – 9., for more information of its design and use, see *Drummond, Janssen, and Janssen*, 1991, 91 - 98). Unfortunately, due to its composition and design, any other examples are likely to be fragmentary and, thus, overlooked. However, the architectural layout of storage structures would have aided the use of similar traps – funnelling rodents down corridors.

Water traps are also likely to have been used in ancient Egypt. This method was described by **Marcus Terentius Varro** in his writings on agriculture in the contexts of Greece and Rome (*Book 1: LXIII*). He describes their use, explaining that grain was laid out and exposed to the sun with water placed around the grains; pests were





then attracted to water, away from the dryness and heat, and would drown in water traps. Despite the classical contexts of his writings, it is likely that this method was also used in Egyptian contexts due to the interconnected nature of the Graeco-Roman world.

Another area of pest control which is lacking in the archaeological record is using mousers, where cats used their natural instinct to hunt rats and mice, in turn, protecting stored grain from rodent infestations. This often happened naturally, where cats attached themselves to villages, serving as mousers (Brewer, Clark, and Phillips, 2001, 1); however, they could have also been cared for, and seen as pets. For example, a cat is featured on the walls of the tomb of **Baqet III** (BH15) in its position of 'pest destroyer' (Malek, 1993, 50). This was likely one of the earliest and most common methods of limiting rodent populations throughout ancient Egyptian history.

Levinson and Levinson (1989) also discuss fumigation as a technique of pest control, although this is an area lacking in research. The *Ebers Papyrus* (trans. Ghalioungui, 1987) provides the earliest evidence of this, mixing frankincense, storax, and myrrh (all of which are insecticides) together to repel animals. House E at **Amarna** illustrates its use, with fumigation compounds infused with cinnamon bark – able to kill 98% of the Angoumois grain moth (Malleon, 2013, 6). This was confirmed by the research of Dibs and Kingauf (1983, 449 - 452), testing the effects of various fumes on insects. During this experimentation, they noted toxic damage to grains, reducing the likelihood and frequency that this method was used.

The role of religion in pest control must not be overlooked. Gods like **Renenutet**, **Anubis**, **Horus**, and **Khepri** were responsible for the safety of the general food supply (Levinson and Levinson, 1989, 481). This can be seen through textual records of prayers and mantras, including Ebers Papyrus number 848 (trans. Ghalioungui, 1987, 215), which lists a

prayer to Horus to protect the supply of grain. Moreover, pictorial evidence, such as an image of a priest spearing a beetle (noted by Levinson and Levinson, 1985) supports the notion that religion was tied with pest control in ancient Egypt.

Infestations in ancient Egypt were an epidemic in and of themselves – tackled by water traps and repellents, cats, as well as attempts to call upon the gods for divine intervention. In all cases of active pest control, the role of religion was present, directly seen within divine methods, and through priests taking part in pest control and the use of resins, often understood to be divine incense.

Written by: Catherine Bishop

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# Birds in Ancient Egyptian Mythology and Daily Life



Birds were an important feature of Ancient Egyptian religious beliefs, and daily life:

One hundred eighty-three bird species have so far been identified on the balance of probabilities from the mummies, bone remains, hieroglyphs, art, and artifacts of ancient Egypt. Just six of these appear to have been depicted only in Predynastic times (Wyatt, 2012 )

This is a brief guide to some of main birds, both real & mythological, with links to artefacts in the EC.

## Ba-bird

In Egyptian iconography, a person's ba (that is, part of the soul most like our concept of personality) was represented as a human-headed bird:

The human head denotes an individual, and the bird's body depicts the freedom of movement of the deceased, able to leave the netherworld and soak up the sun's creative energies (Jackson 2018b)

The bird's body is usually depicted as that of a falcon, thus associating the deceased person with the god Horus (see under 'falcon'). The ba-bird is free to leave the tomb, but returns each night, just as the sun god Ra returns to the underworld before rebirth at dawn. Examples of ba bird statues appear in the New Kingdom, but are much more common in the mid-late 1st millennium BCE. Many have holes with broken dowel fragments in the base suggesting that they were attached to shrines, stelae or coffins.

In the EC:

There is a whole flock of ba-birds in the museum (10), such as:

EC236, EC237, W429 (Offerings case HoD)

## Duck, goose & waterfowl

In Egypt, ducks, geese and their eggs were an important food source, both farmed and wild.

Geb, the god of the earth/underworld, was often depicted as a white-fronted goose. **Amun** was also associated with the goose, and when the Pharaoh **Akhenaten** introduced his new religion, he ordered the destruction of many depictions of geese because of this association with the old creator god (see Jackson 2019). A famous wall painting, 'Meidum Geese' from the tomb of prince **Nefermaat I** and his wife **Itet** (now in Cairo's *Museum of Egyptian Antiquities*), is known for its realistic depictions of geese. Howard Carter also made watercolours of three varieties of geese depicted here: White-fronted, Greylag and Red-

breasted (see Malek et al n.d.). Recently **Anthony Romilio** (2021) has suggested that another, now extinct breed, the speckled goose, is shown on the painting. One of the wall paintings from **Nebamun's** tomb (see below) shows farmed geese, stored in baskets, presumably ready for market (see McKie 2009). Nebamun is inspecting the birds and his scribes are recording the number of geese.

'Fowling in the Marshes' is a fragment of a wall painting from the tomb chapel of Nebamun in Thebes dating back to c. 1350 BCE, and now in the *British Museum*. Nebamun was a wealthy official, and the paintings from his chapel reflect an idealised version of daily life at the time. In this scene, the tomb owner is shown hunting birds in a boat with his wife **Hatshepsut**, their daughter and their cat (see British Museum 2016): a hunt through reed beds that burst with creatures - shrike, wagtails and pintail ducks - easily identifiable still... That great hunt scene is more than a depiction of everyday life: the birds and cat are symbols of fertility and female sexuality, and Nebamun's expedition can also be seen as "*taking possession of the cycle of creations and rebirth*" (McKie 2009)

Furthermore: Waterfowl such as ducks and geese are linked to Egyptian origin stories, and so scenes like this, featuring abundance and fertility, help to guarantee the tomb owner's daily rebirth in the afterlife (Jackson 2019)

Fellow Volunteer **Bethany Saunders** has written an article on this scene from Nebamun's tomb for this issue of the Newsletter (Saunders 2021).

In The EC:

EA64830 (Amulets case HoD) Cornelian scaraboid duck amulet from the 19th Dynasty. W588 (Animals case HoD) A pale green wooden goose. W1021 (Body adornment case HoL) An ointment bowl in white stone in the shape of a trussed duck. W1022 (Animals case HoD) A dark stone ointment bowl is in the shape of a double duck. W1041 (Offerings case HoD) Wooden funerary stela from Ptolemaic Period. It calls upon various gods to ensure that the dead person received bread, beer, beef, geese, incense and 'all things sweet pure and good on which a god lives'. W2060 (Woodwork case, HoL) Leg from a folding stool terminating in a duck's head.

## The Falcon

The falcon was the iconic bird of ancient Egypt. It was associated with power, dominance, sky and heavenly bodies, and hence connected with several gods. Thus, the so-called '**Horus** falcon' belongs among the most







Ostrich feathers are those used most frequently in ancient Egypt's iconography. Ostrich feathers adorn the crowns of gods such as Amun and **Shu**, and were used in ceremonial fans (Jackson2018b)

Ostrich feathers are associated with the concept of *maat* (truth, justice, universal harmony), and the goddess of the same name, who wore an ostrich feather (see Jackson 2018b).

This feather is depicted on the scales in weighing of the heart scenes, balancing against the deceased's heart.

Ostrich eggshell fragments were made into beads for bracelets and necklaces. They have also been found in burials, as EC volunteer **Sam Powell** has investigated: *"...the fragments may have been included in the burial as unworked material. It is also possible that the eggs may represent food provisions for the deceased... The shells may have functioned as cups or bowls... particularly interesting is the idea that ostrich shell may have had some symbolic and/or ritual function, connecting to rebirth and regeneration."* (S. Powell 2019)

In the EC:

AR50/3444 (Predynastic case HoL) Ostrich eggshell fragments from a Predynastic burial at **Armant**.

W1376 (Body adornment case HoL) Limestone temple relief of **Nefurere** depicting part of an ostrich fan.

W1982 (HoD) Coffin of the Chantress of Amun, Iwesemhesetmut : the feather of Maat is depicted on the scales in the Weighing of the Heart scene.

## Owl

Representations of an Owl, most probably the Barn Owl, as a hieroglyph, where it represents the m sign (G 17 of Gardiner's sign-list), are very common but depictions in art are very rare... The ancient Egyptians depicted the Barn Owl in an unusual way, *en face*, most probably to show its characteristic facial features of the bird. (Malek et al n.d.)

Owls were associated with mourning and death. The ancient name for owl was *jmw* 'one who laments'. On the back of the Protodynastic 'Libyan palette' found at Abydos an owl within a fortified wall is depicted, representing a city. Later, owls were frequently shown on fishing and fowling wall paintings, such as those in the tomb of **Sennefer** (see Krgovic 2017).

In the EC:

We have no objects depicting owls, but you will easily find the hieroglyph on one of the inscriptions on display.

## Quail

Like ducks and geese, quails were also bred on farms, and considered a good source of protein: Depictions of the Common Quail are frequent in ancient Egyptian sources, both as the hieroglyphic signs w (G 43 of Gardiner's sign-list) and in art where they appear in their natural environment (e.g. in grain fields during the harvest) or among food-offerings (Malek et al n.d.)

In the EC:

We have no objects depicting quails, but you will easily find the quail hieroglyph on one of the many inscriptions on display.

## Sokar hawk

Wooden **Ptah-Sokar-Osiris** figures combine the powers of the creator god Ptah, (represented as mummiform), Osiris, god of death, resurrection and fertility (represented by the two feathers of his crown), and Sokar, the hawk-headed god of the cemeteries (the bird), particularly associated with Saqqara. Larger Ptah-Osiris figures would usually be hollow with a removable back-piece, so that prayers for the dead could be placed inside the figure. Most figures are incomplete as the different sections making up the statue often became separated over time. In particular, Sokar hawks and Osiris crowns are often found detached from the statue base and the Ptah figure.

In the EC:

As with ba birds, we have quite a flock of Sokar hawks (14), such as:

EC229, EC230 (Coffins case, HoD), WK21 (Woodwork case HoL).

W2001 (Gods case HoD) is a complete Ptah-Sokar-Osiris figure.

## Vulture

Representations of the Egyptian Vulture occur frequently in Egyptian script, since the depiction of this bird was used to denote the 'aleph' hieroglyph (G1 of Gardiner's sign-list). Its attestations in Egyptian art are, however, extremely rare (Malek et al n.d.) The depiction of a vulture standing with its wings outstretched emphasised its protective function. A vulture was usually shown hovering over the head of the pharaoh, clutching a shen symbol in its claws. Vultures became important symbols for queens who sought protection from the vulture goddess **Nekhbet** by wearing the vulture crown. A standing vulture was used on amulets to be placed upon the mummy of the deceased (see Jackson 2017).

In the EC:

EA15597 (Amulets case HoD) Standing gold vulture amulet.

EC641 (Fakes/copies case HoL) plaster copy of predynastic Battlefield palette: one side shows vulture & lion (front shows giraffe & bird, probably northern ground hornbill).

W944 (Drawers HoL) Cartonnage coffin fragment showing goddess Nekhbet with the head of a vulture.

## HAPPY BIRD-SPOTTING!

Written by: Dulcie Engel



# Tomb Scene: EA37977 'Fowling in the Marshes'



Figure 1- Nebamun hunting in the marshes.  
EA37977. The British Museum. (2019).

**EA37977** is a fragment of polychrome plaster belonging to the tomb-chapel of **Nebamun**, and currently resides in the *British Museum*. It measures 98cm (height), 115cm (width), by 22cm (thickness), and was purchased in 1821 from British collector, **Henry Salt**.

**Nebamun** ("My Lord is Amun") is an elite official, with the epithets in this scene proclaiming him as 'Scribe and Grain-accountant in the Granary of Amun'. EA37977 dates to the 18th dynasty (c. 1350BC), during the reign of **Thutmose IV** to **Amenhotep III** according to stylistic features. The exact location of the tomb is unknown, but the British Museum (in light of the archaeological evidence) determine **Thebes** as the preferred burial place for members of the elite throughout the first half of the 18th Dynasty (1550-

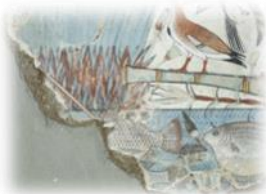


Figure 2- A close-up of the left hand corner of EA37977.

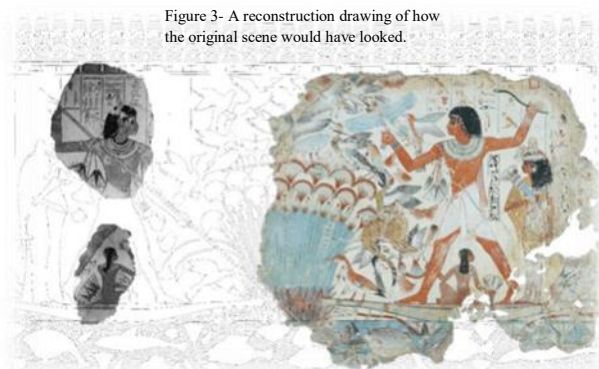


Figure 3- A reconstruction drawing of how the original scene would have looked.

1292 BC), when such agricultural scenes were common.

The fragment portrays a hunting scene with Nebamun, who is fishing and fowling with his family on the Nile alongside eight vertical registers of hieroglyphs. Nebamun stands on the wooden deck of a small reed boat brandishing a snake-headed throwstick in one hand, and grasping three decoy herons in the other. His wife, **Hatshepsut**, stands behind him in the fertile marshland, crowned with a perfume cone and floral garland, whilst holding lotus flowers to her chest and a golden sistrum associated with **Hathor** (carrying erotic overtones emphasising rebirth and female sexuality). His naked daughter sits beneath him with a side braid as a sign of youth, holding his leg and a lotus, while wearing a lotus pendant. A variety of aquatic imagery is depicted with fish by the papyrus in front of the boat and the broad-leaved lotus flowers growing to the right. This idealised image of Nebamun intended to depict him in the prime of health whilst 'taking enjoyment, seeing good things' with his family for eternity.



Figure 4- A view of Nebamun's clothing.  
The British Museum. (2019).

EA37977 is an incomplete scene, with missing elements including Nebamun spearing fish with his son. The remnant of a spear on the bottom left corner impales a tilapia fish; a reconstruction drawing by the British Museum shows how this would have originally looked. The rooms containing the individualised paintings would have been accessible to friends and family, functioning as the link between the living and dead, for





people to commemorate his life and admire his achievements with prayer and gifts.

Tombs were created within the limestone hills of western Thebes by cutting rooms, passages and grave shafts into the rock; the majority of New Kingdom tombs are therefore painted on heavily plastered walls due to the restriction of stone that could be carved and its poorer quality. EA37977 would have been made using Fresco Secco (with tempera for the painting medium), whereby pigments are mixed with an organic binder and applied onto dry plaster to make it adhere to the wall surface. This was the most common technique used to decorate New Kingdom Theban tombs during the 18th-20th Dynasties.

Walls were plastered with a thick layer of a coarse, organic substance made from mud and straw to cover major irregularities of the stone and limit the possibility of cracking when dry to support the intonaco. This was a thin layer of fine gesso plaster (a white paint mixture consisting of a binder mixed with chalk, gypsum or pigment), that made the surface smooth so it could be painted.

By the time of **Thutmose II**, grid stratigraphy was well established for decoration of elite tombs and allowed artists to adhere to the canon of proportions for the standard uniformity of figures. A preliminary sketch was made by outlining the figures in red pigment, which is exposed on the weed under the prow of the boat due to the loss of green colouring, and by Nebamun's front knee when it was refined. The background was initially covered with a creamy white pigment mixed with binding agent, leaving the grid mostly hidden. The figures were filled, often by layering colours to create realistic details, as seen by Nebamun's short kilt layered with a semi-transparent overkilt. The process of applying colours is clearly distinguished from the marshland representation in the tomb of **Suemniwet** (TT92); the unfinished decoration shows the order in which colours that were applied to such scenes, as well as the visible grid lines. The last layer encompassed the finishing details:

contour of faces and body, nose, lips, Nebamun's belly button and details indicative of his status like the small rolls of fat (suggesting prosperity).

Colour became more diverse in the New Kingdom, with extended classifications of the basic palette allowing a greater degree of decorative attention in elite works, especially from 1400-1250 BC. Inorganic mineral pigments proved stable throughout time; however, Egyptian blue is ground more finely and becomes paler as more light is scattered, so lacks the intensity of mineral pigments with larger particles.

Colours also held symbolic associations as well as pictorial and aesthetic functions:

Colour	How obtained	Symbolic significance
Red and yellow	Ochre (mineral of clay that ranged from light yellow, brown or red)	Red = life, victory Yellow/ gold = everlasting, indestructible.
White	Gypsum (calcium sulphate), chalk (calcium carbonate)	Omnipotence, purity.
Blue	Azurite (carbonate of copper present in Sinai), lapis Egyptian blue (calcium copper silicate)	Sky, water (Nile), primeval flood (creation), rebirth, fertility.
Black	Soot (carbon)	Rebirth (fertile black soil that rejuvenated the land after the Nile overflowed).

Additionally, art functioned as a religious tool alluding to timeless order and stability, by striving to preserve the perfect state of the universe; marshland fishing and fowling scenes are allegorical representations that refer to this maintenance of order in the cosmos. Various birds emerging from the papyrus overlap to create an "elegantly crowded composition" to fill the space available. This deliberate distortion evokes Nebamun's triumph over chaotic forces,





Bryan, B. M. (2001). Painting techniques and artisan organization in the Tomb of Suemniwet, Theban Tomb 92. In W. V. Davies (Ed.), *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt* (pp. 63-71). London: British Museum Press.

Bryan, B. M. (2010). Pharaonic Painting Through the New Kingdom. In. A. B. Lloyd (Ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Egypt* (pp. 990-1007). Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World 2. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Miller, E. & Parkinson, R. B. (2001). Reflections on a gilded eye in 'Fowling in the Marshes' (British Museum, EA 37977). In W. V. Davies (Ed.), *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt* (pp. 49-51). London: British Museum Press.

Miller, E. (2008). Painterly Technique. In A. Middleton & K. Uprichard (Eds), *The Nebamun Wall Paintings: Conservation, Scientific Analysis and Display at the British Museum* (pp. 61-67). London: Archetype.

Parkinson, R. B. (2008). *The painted tomb-chapel of Nebamun*. London: British Museum Press.

Quirk, S. & Spencer, J. (Eds). (1992). The British Museum Book of Ancient Egypt. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Robins, G. (1997). *The Art of Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum Press.

## And I Quote...

Like anyone else, I knew Egypt before I ever went there... Past and present do not so much co-exist in the Nile valley as cease to have any meaning. What is buried under the sand is reflected above, not just in the souvenirs hawked by the descendants of the tomb robbers but in the eternal, deliberate cycle of the landscape – the sun rising from the desert of the east to sink into the desert of the west, the spring surge of the river, the regeneration of creatures – the egrets and herons and wildfowl, the beasts of burden, the enduring peasantry.

Penelope Lively, 1987

Figure 5- A close view of the cat's gilded eye. Colour Plate 11.3. Miller, E. & Parkinson, R. B. (2001).

The cat's unusual gilded eye evokes a mythological connection to the scene. As the only known example of gilding on wall paintings in Theban tomb decoration, it holds an iconographic role as the Sun-god hunting enemies of light and order to maintain the cosmos as the Solar Eye and Great Cat who slays **Apophis**. The gold leaf is clearly visible, but it has mostly fallen off due to shrinkage in the underlying adhesive layer.

Written by: Bethany Saunders

### Useful reading:

Baines, J. (2007). Colour Terminology and Colour Classification. In J. Baines (Ed.), *Visual & Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (pp. 240-262). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brewer, D. J. & Teeter, E. (2007). *Egypt and the Egyptians* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



# Friends of the Egypt Centre



Firstly, a thank you to all our members who have stuck by us during 2020-21. As the COVID-19 restrictions continue, our programme from September 2021 will continue to be delivered via Zoom.

We hope to welcome you back to Singleton Campus in 2022, and potentially offer "hybrid" (both online and in person) lectures, but will be putting provisions in place to offer this year's talks online if we are unable to meet in person.

If we do have to continue with online lectures, please check the Friends page of the Egypt Centre website for further details (link below).

Wed 22 Sept 2021

## **Cleopatra VII: How much Egyptian?**

Alan Lloyd

Abstract: With the possible exception of Nefertiti, Cleopatra VII is the most famous of all the ancient queens of Egypt, and there is no doubt that she has had considerably more coverage in film, television, and literature than her Eighteenth Dynasty predecessor. Within these formats, particularly film and television, there has been a marked tendency to present her in a distinctly pharaonic format, and the impression has been created that this is an image which she carefully nurtured. This impression is a serious distortion of the truth, and the present lecture will attempt to repair the damage it has done.

*This month's lecture will follow the Friends of the Egypt Centre AGM, which begins at 6.30pm. All Friends are welcome and are encouraged to attend.*

Wed 13 Oct 2021

## **The Artists and the Archaeologists.**

Carl Graves, Egypt Exploration Society.

Abstract: In 1888, the little-known Society for the Preservation of the Monuments of Ancient Egypt (SPMAE) was formed. Over the next 22 years it (sort

of) succeeded in drawing public attention to the need to protect Egypt's ancient remains and advocated for their better management under the British government. Attracting support from several circles of Victorian society - notably artists, engineers and designers - SPMAE distinguished itself from other organisations by focusing on preservation rather than excavation. This presentation will give an overview of SPMAE's formation, members, and achievements in the context of British philanthropy over the turn of the 19th century.

Wed 17 Nov 2021

## **The City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish – the work of the EES Graeco-Roman branch.**

Stephanie Boonstra, Egypt Exploration Society.

Abstract: From 1895 to 1907, the Egypt Exploration Society employed Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Surridge Hunt to act as the new 'Graeco-Roman Branch'. The Graeco-Roman branch was formed to explore the area of the Faiyum and in particular to discover ancient, Classical texts. Much of this decade was actually spent at The City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish, Oxyrhynchus, where they discovered half a million papyri fragments containing excerpts of well known and unknown Classical literature, administrative documents, and even some of the earliest New Testament fragments. EES Collections Manager Stephanie Boonstra will discuss the excavations of the EES Graeco-Roman Branch and some of their most outstanding discoveries. She will also discuss the cartonnage mummy masks and footcases collected by Grenfell and Hunt that are currently under conservation.

Written by: Sam Powell

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

[egypt.swan.ac.uk/about/friends-of-the-egypt-centre/](http://egypt.swan.ac.uk/about/friends-of-the-egypt-centre/)



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



# ***Upcoming Events...***

**8 Dec 2021**

**From Surviving to Thriving: The Egypt Centre During the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

Dr. Ken Griffin, TEC.

**19 Jan 2022**

**Egypt in Reading**

Jayne Holy, Ure Museum.

**16 Feb 2022**

**The Swansea - Brown Excavations on Uronati**

Christian Knoblauch, Swansea Uni.

**16 March 2022**

**"Yanni said he had never seen one of that form before" – Recording and Collecting Antiquities with Robert Hay 1824-1834.**

Gemma Renshaw.

**13 April 2022**

**A Stitch In Time**

Peter James, Cintec.

**18 May 2022**

**Student Mini Presentations**

Students from Swansea Uni.

**15 June 2022**

**Seeing Double: Wooden Ka Statues**

Sam Powell, TEC.





# Egyptology in The News



## World famous shoe designer supports archaeological mission

In an interview with the Financial Times (22/05/21), French shoe designer **Christian Louboutin** revealed his passion for Ancient Egypt. This love was nurtured in school and growing up in Paris, home to the Louvre museum, the Concorde obelisk, and echoes of Napoleon. A frequent visitor to Egypt from the age of 17, he has a house and boat at **Luxor** and is patron of the *Colossi of Memnon* mission. He only recently discovered that his birth father was Egyptian.

## Swansea to host next EES Congress

It has been announced that Swansea University will host the sixth Egypt Exploration Society Congress in 2022. The organisers are: TEC; the *Department of Classics, Ancient History, and Egyptology*; and the *Object and Landscape Centred Approaches to the Past* (OLCAP) research group, in collaboration with the EES.

## Stela of Apries found in Ismailia

A farmer has found an ancient sandstone stela on land he was preparing for cultivation. It measures 230x103x45 cm. It is engraved with 15 lines of hieroglyphs, and a cartouche of **Apries**, the fifth king of the 26th Dynasty.

## Searching for Egyptian artefacts in Saudi Arabia

A joint Egyptian-Saudi Arabian archaeological mission, to be led by **Dr Zahi Hawass**, has been announced for November 2021. The plan is to explore a long-distance ancient trade route between Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula, with excavations focussing on the archaeological site of **Tayma** (north-western Saudi Arabia). Evidence at the site suggests that Egyptian traders were dispatched to Tayma during the reign of Pharaoh **Ramses III** (20th Dynasty).

## New copper analysis suggests trade prospered in Third Intermediate Period

**Shirley Ben-Dor Evian**, a curator of Egyptian archaeology at the *Israel Museum* in **Jerusalem**, along with researchers from *Tel Aviv University* and the *Geological Survey of Israel*, carried out a materials analysis of four bronze ushabtis dating from the Third Intermediate Period. Lead isotope analysis of the copper content indicates its origin in the **Arabah** region of what is now southern Israel. This suggests that Ancient Egypt continued to prosper and trade during a period of upheaval and uncertainty. Furthermore, this predates **Shesonq I's** invasion of Arabah to secure a copper supply.

## Italian mummy scan

The 3000-year-old mummy of **Ankhekhonsu**, an ancient Egyptian priest residing in **Bergamo's Civic Archaeological Museum**, has recently had a CT scan. As well as shedding light on his life and the burial customs of the time, the scan may contribute to the study of ancient diseases and wounds, important for modern medical research.

## More Egyptian artefacts repatriated: from Britain, France, & Holland

In **London**, cooperation between the *British Museum* and the Egyptian Government stopped the auction of 3 artefacts, illegally excavated and smuggled out of Egypt; a Graeco-Roman alabaster statue (minus head and feet), and 2 sections from Pharaonic wooden coffins. Meanwhile, in **Paris**, 114 smuggled artefacts, dating from different periods, have been handed back to the Egyptian Prosecutor-General, following cooperation with the French judicial authorities. And in the **Netherlands**, an Old Kingdom statue of priest **Ni Kao Ptah** was returned with the help of Dutch authorities, after being offered for sale at the annual European exhibition of fine arts, *TEFAF Maastricht*.

## 'Kings of the Sun' exhibition in Prague extended

The Egyptian authorities have agreed to extend an exhibition of Ancient Egyptian treasures for the second time, following high demand by visitors, and an enforced short closure due to the pandemic. May 2020 saw the original opening of the first and largest exhibition of Egyptological antiquities in the city, celebrating 60 years of Czech archaeological missions in Egypt. It will now remain at the *National Museum* in **Prague** until 30 September 2021.

## Another Royal Parade... and a big announcement due in September!

According to Egypt's tourism and antiquities minister, **Khaled El-Anani**, before the end of this year, the opening of the 2,700-metre-long *Avenue of Sphinxes* in Luxor will be the occasion for Egypt's next parade, following the success of the Pharaoh's Golden Parade in **Cairo** in April. Furthermore, we can expect the announcement of a huge new archaeological discovery in September, which will be bigger than the discovery announced last November in **Saqqara**.

## Another ship sails into GEM...

An Egyptian-Japanese archaeological mission has announced the completion of the excavation of the second Khufu ship. Approximately 1,700 wooden pieces were extracted from 13 layers inside the pit, and are



being transferred to the *Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM)*. Once restoration is complete, the ship will be re-assembled and displayed next to the first, installed in June. This project has benefited from financial and technical support from the *Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)*.

### Egyptian Museum completes its largest restoration of sarcophagi

626 wooden sarcophagi have been restored and catalogued by a team of experts at the Egyptian Museum in **Tahrir Square**. The collection, which had been in storage, dates back to the Pharaonic, Greek and Roman eras, the oldest example being around 4,500 years old.

### A levitating pyramidion!

The 'Flyte' design team plans to create the world's largest magnetically levitating artwork, inspired by the lost pyramidion (capstone) of the Great Pyramid. Named *Py*, the sculpture will be at least 6m tall and will be exhibited at an art gallery and online in early 2022. Meanwhile, a much smaller *mini Py* lamp has been developed.

### Was Tutankhamun's mask made for Nefertiti?

**Professor Joann Fletcher** has recently claimed that the famous golden mask was not originally made for the young king, as it shows pierced ears. Earlier research has established that **Tutankhamun** did not wear earrings after his childhood. Furthermore, the gold on the face is different from that on the rest of the mask. She suggests that the mask may have been intended for another pharaoh, possibly **Nefertiti**.

### Piecing together a Book of the Dead

Two pieces of a mummy wrapping belonging to a man named **Petosiris** have been reunited digitally across the miles: from the *University of Canterbury* in **New Zealand's Tece Museum of Antiquities** and the *Getty Research Institute* in **Los Angeles**. They fit perfectly.

### Important discoveries at Thônis-Heracleion

A team from the European *Institute for Underwater Archaeology*, led by **Franck Goddio**, have discovered a rare military vessel in the submerged ancient Egyptian city. It is in the classical Greek style, with some Egyptian influences, just over 24 metres in length, and was probably sunk when the nearby Temple of **Amun** collapsed. Some 350 metres away, wicker baskets of fruit surviving from the 4th century BC, plus hundreds of ancient ceramic artefacts and bronze treasures, have been found in what appears to be a funerary site. Despite 20 years of excavations, Goddio estimates that only 3% of the area has been explored so far.

### Musée Champollion opens in France

A museum dedicated to the man who first deciphered hieroglyphs, **Jean-François Champollion**, has been re-opened in **Vif**, near **Grenoble**. It is housed in a

building originally owned by the Champollion family, and displays both personal items and Egyptological artefacts, including 82 on loan from the *Louvre*.

### Mummies from Amsterdam...

Researchers in the Netherlands have scanned 13 animal mummies (a crocodile, fish, cats, a mouse, birds and a scarab beetle) using a CT scanner at *Amsterdam University Medical Centre*. It is the first time they have been able to see inside the 2000-year-old wrappings.

### Female artist who copied temple scenes recognised

The recently published *An Artist in Abydos* by **Lee Young** is the first book to recognise **Myrtle Broome's** great contribution to the work done during the golden age of excavation in Upper Egypt. Broome (1888-1978) wrote vivid letters home, capturing every facet of her working life and living conditions in 1930s Egypt. Young gave a fascinating talk on this topic to the *Friends of the EC* in 2019.

### Queen Nefertari is noted

The new polymer L.E. 20 (20 Egyptian pounds) banknote features the main Royal Wife of **Ramses II**, known for her beautifully decorated tomb (QV66) in the *Valley of the Queens*, and her temple at **Abu Simbel**.

### From Wadi Natrun to Canterbury Cathedral via Ancient Rome...

Research on 12th century stained glass at the cathedral has revealed that parts of the oldest figures were made from re-melted ancient Roman glass, in particularly cobalt blue glass cubes from mosaics. Furthermore, the flux (glass-melting additive) originally used to make the cobalt was sodium carbonate, which the Romans imported from **Wadi Natrun** (i.e. natron salt).

### Coptic-Byzantine settlement excavated near Alexandria

Near the ancient Egyptian port of **Marea**, the Polish archaeological mission has discovered the buried ruins of an urban complex that was built during the Coptic era in Egypt, when it was part of the Byzantine Empire, during the sixth century CE.

### Egyptian amulets found in Spain

Archaeologists working in **Salamanca** have discovered ancient Egyptian amulets of the goddess **Hathor**, which reached the peninsula around 1000 BC. Such findings reflect trade routes in the early years of the Iron Age.

### Zoom in on the tip of the Great Pyramid!

Ukrainian travel photographer **Alexander Ladanivskyy** has recently collaborated with the *Egyptian Ministry of Tourism* to capture unique footage using a camera drone flown directly over the Great Pyramid of **Giza**. You can see the footage at 'Travel @ Ladanivskyy' on Instagram.

Compiled & Summarized by: Dulcie Engel



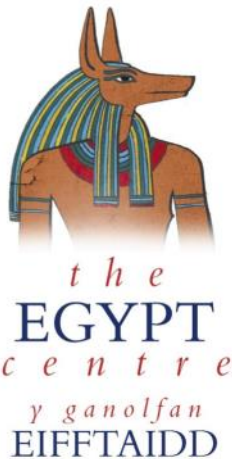


# Ancient Egyptian Birds Word Search

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

BA  
 DUCK  
 FALCON  
 GOOSE  
 HAWK  
 HERON  
 IBIS  
 LAPWING  
 OSTRICH  
 OWL  
 QUAIL  
 SHRIKE  
 SOKAR  
 VULTURE  
 WATERFOWL

Show / Hide Answers



# WE WANT YOU!

We need volunteers to help with transcribing documents and catalogues  
and facilitating our online Virtual School Visits

For further details email the Volunteer Manager on [l.s.j.howells@swansea.ac.uk](mailto:l.s.j.howells@swansea.ac.uk)

