



the
EGYPT
centre
y ganolfan
EIFFTAIDD

Volunteer Newsletter

Jul-Sep 2023

Museum of Egyptian Antiquities



From Ingredient to Goddess

The deification of the Hedgehog.



From Veneration to "Bin Chicken"

The humbling of the Ibis.



King of Kings

Discussing the mighty work of Percy Shelley.

egypt.swan.ac.uk



Welcome



**Syd
Howells**

Editor in
Chief



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.

Hello,

Welcome to the 24th issue of the relaunched Egypt Centre Volunteer Newsletter.

The Editorial Team are pleased to see the increase of contributions from both adult and young volunteers. Thank you all! It's your newsletter and the more we receive from you the more it reflects you and the museum. This issue as ever is packed full of news, fine articles on matters Egyptological, and introducing some old staff and new volunteers.

Next time, it's issue 25 – accidentally tying in neatly with 25 years of the Egypt Centre itself. Expect a bumper issue!*

Be seeing you,

Syd

* Dependent upon submissions... see below!

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 **Dec 2023**.



Rob Stradling
Technical Editor

A volunteer since 2012, currently serving my time off-site by producing this eagerly-awaited periodical. It means someone else has to eat all of Syd's chocolates; but I know that's a sacrifice you're all willing to make.

And | Quote...

Pendant tout un après-midi, à travers les galeries du Louvre je fis un grand voyage d'Assyrie en Egypte, d'Egypte en Grèce; je me retrouvai dans un soir mouillé de Paris.

(For a whole afternoon, through the galleries of the Louvre, I embarked on a great journey, travelling from Assyria to Egypt, from Egypt to Greece; then found myself back in a damp Paris evening.)

Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée (1958)

(Memoirs of a dutiful daughter)

Simone de Beauvoir (1908 - 1986): French philosopher, feminist, novelist.



Visitor Comments

"I liked everything, especially touching the objects and dressing up."

- **Ifza**, London.

"Awesome display!"

- **Kampanoth**, Bangkok, Thailand.

"Great museum and helpful volunteers."

- **Lea**, Belgium.

"Amazing exhibit! Knowledgeable staff!"

- **Andrea & Mike**, Toronto, Canada.

"Loved the interactive mummy, thank you!"

- **Beatrice Abbott**, Bath.

"Impressive - will come again."

- **Isla & Kirsty**, Bargoed.

"Very interesting! Thank you for all the information..."

- **Douchin** family, Brittany, France.

Office News

Congratulations to our Learning and Engagement Officer (and former volunteer) **Hannah Sweetapple**, who has been appointed as Museums Advisor to the Welsh Government. We wish her all the best in her new post, and we will miss her!

There are photos from her leaving do on the following page.

Changes on first floor landing: and it's not just the absence of Hannah... the formerly named 'Under fives play area' has been given more space and re-named simply as 'Play area' with a new sign. There have been additions to the play provision: a market stall with typical Egyptian produce, and a 'Junior library' book box.

Again, photos overleaf.

Also on the landing, 3 blank windows have been fitted with window blinds featuring watercolours of items collected in Egypt by **William Frankland Hood** (1825-1864). Via the Wellcome loan, the EC has over 90 items from the [Hood Collection](#), most of which were auctioned in 1924.

Photos... you know the drill.

The summer holiday workshops were in full swing in August: 4 weeks, 4 different topics (*Radical Romans*, *Fab Pharaohs*, *Pyramid Builders*, *Ancient Afterlife*), and very popular as they were free, thanks to funding from the UK Government.

Save the date! A 25th anniversary celebratory event will take place at the EC on Saturday 7th October. See details on page 19.

Engagement Figures

May 2023

20,066

June 2023

54,521

July 2023

17,710

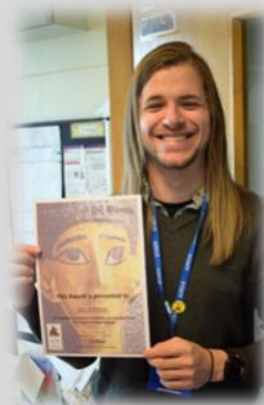
Volunteer of the Month

June

Dulcie Engel

July

Ben Andrews





Hannah's leaving party, 7/7/23



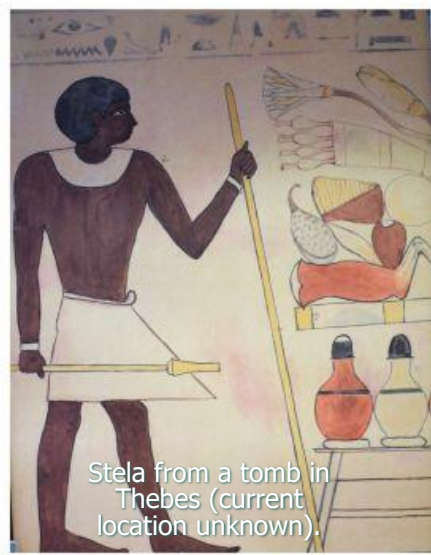
The new "Play Area"



Cartonnage breast piece (W889, HoD, Egypt Centre)



Ivory kohl container (Brooklyn Museum)



Stela from a tomb in Thebes (current location unknown).

All photos by: Syd Howells



Hedgehog... or Goddess?

The present inquiry into the humble hedgehog and its connection to ancient Egypt was sparked by the case of **EA4764**, which pertains to a hedgehog found in the House of Death.¹ According to the *Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)*, hedgehogs are characterized by their rounded body, which is covered in short, dark, yellow-tipped spines, and a short tail. Coarse hair covers their face and undersides, and they are widely distributed throughout mainland Britain.²

Despite their unassuming nature, hedgehogs held a special place in ancient Egyptian society, much like other animals that inhabited the desert and marshes. The ancient Egyptians admired the natural defensive qualities of hedgehogs, and their hardened spines were used as ingredients in medical and magical prescriptions.³ The ancient Egyptians were a people who relied on symbolism and representation of their religious beliefs in their environment. The sight of an animal effectively living out the rejuvenation process would have been significant to them and would have further reinforced their religious beliefs in the cyclical nature of life.⁴

The act of hedgehogs rolling themselves into a ball as a defence mechanism was seen by the ancient Egyptians as a symbol of protection, and the image was used in amulets and other protective symbols.⁵ During the Middle Kingdom, statues of hedgehogs were found in burials, and it is possible that they held a symbolic purpose, such as protecting the dead from any apotropaic occurrences.⁶ However, it was not until the discovery of a 26th Dynasty tomb of **Bannenitu**, a wealthy merchant in the **Bahariya** Oasis in 1938,⁷ that two painted scenes depicting the Hedgehog goddess **Abaset** were found. In one scene, she is shown next to one of the gods, possibly **Ra-Horakhty**, with her arms

EA4764



raised as a sign of protection. Within the pantheon of Egypt, Abaset was considered a protector,⁸ and this can be traced to the hypothesis that hedgehogs curl up into a ball as a sign of protection.

Written by: Donna Thomas

¹Egypt centre (2023) Abaset Collection.

<https://egyptcentre.abasetcollections.com/Objects/Details/1006>

²RSPB (2023).

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/other-garden-wildlife/mammals/hedgehog/>

³Rachel Frame, (2018) "The Symbolism of Hedgehogs on Aryballoi in Ancient Egypt," Ostraka.

⁴Erica M. Santana, Holly E. Jantz, Troy L. Best, (2018) "Atelerix Albiventris," 99–110.

^{5,8}Thurtle, Elliotte. "Hedgehogs and Hyenas: Peculiar Animals of Ancient Egypt." *Studia Antiqua* 20, no. 1 (2021): 38–46.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/studiaantiqua/vol20/iss1/4>

⁶Rachel Frame, "The Symbolism of Hedgehogs on Aryballoi in Ancient Egypt," Ostraka (2018).

⁷Hend Sherbiny, Hussein Bassir, "The Representation of the Hedgehog Goddess Abset at Bahariya Oasis," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 50 (2014): 171–190.



Meet the Volunteer



Egypt Centre Volunteer
Jess Evans

I come from: Swansea.

I started volunteering: July 2023.

I chose to volunteer because:

I want to learn more about the collection and help support my degree.

My Favourite artefact is:

The fragment of glass that may be from **Djoser's Step Pyramid** at **Saqqara (W234a)**.

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me:

It helps me build confidence and expand my knowledge about the artefacts. I also love feeling involved and a part of the museum!



Young Volunteer
Evie

I come from: Powys.

I started volunteering: July 2023.

I chose to volunteer because:

I wanted to learn more about ancient Egyptian culture.

My Favourite artefact is:

The mummified sacred animals in the House of Death.

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me:

I feel more confident with myself.





Egypt Centre Volunteer

Ben Andrews

I come from: Sunny Pembrokeshire!

I started volunteering: Feb 2023.

I chose to volunteer because:

I want to share my knowledge of ancient Egypt with the public, whilst furthering my own learning.

My Favourite artefact is:

the Coffin of **Iwesemhesetmwt**.

How volunteering at the Egypt Centre helps me:

I have become more confident engaging with the general public.



Former Volunteer

Tom Clarke

I come from: Llanelli.

I started volunteering: 2011.

I chose to volunteer because:

It gave me the chance to work in a museum, meeting like-minded people in the wonderful Egypt Centre family!

My Favourite artefact is:

In line with my current academic work; the 25th Dynasty anthropoid coffin fragment of **Huiru (EC365)** in the House of Death. Although just a fragment, its depicted imagery and colour scheme encapsulate a great deal of contemporaneous funerary belief. I am drawn to the serekh pattern (quite frequent in this period), and the representation of Isis mourning. On a more personal level, like many others, I have always held a soft spot for **W1283** - the Bes jar in the House of Death!

How volunteering helped me:

I felt more confident when speaking publicly and sharing my knowledge with visitors. It firmly cemented my wish to study ancient Egypt, and has led to me currently studying a Master's degree in Egyptology.



Book Review

'Empress of the Nile: The Daredevil Archaeologist Who Saved Egypt's Ancient Temples from Destruction'

by Lynne Olson (Scribe, 2023, 502 pp)

How many people reading this have heard of **Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt** (CDN) one of the most important figures in 20th century Egyptology? I admit I hadn't before I started transcribing the day books of our first honorary curator, **Kate Bosse-Griffiths**. Hers was one of the names which came up time and again with reference to conferences, publications and other Egyptological matters. She is also featured quite frequently in **Christina Riggs'** recent book **Treasured** (reviewed in Volunteer Newsletter, April-June 2022).

Olson compares her to **Indiana Jones**, and what is even more remarkable, she was a resistance fighter before becoming famous with her campaign to save **Abu Simbel** from the waters in the 1960s.

CDN was born in **Paris** in 1913 to a left-wing middle-class family. She was encouraged to study and pursue her interests, which included Egyptology. She went on to study at the *Louvre* school and work with the Egyptology collection there, despite a real prejudice against female academics and archaeologists at that time in **France**. In 1937 she had the chance to work on her first dig in Egypt, at **Deir el-Medina**, under the auspices of **Bernard Bruyere**. She also worked at **Edfu**, where she discovered the tomb of **Lady Sechsehet**.

When the Second World War broke out, she returned to France and was one of the Louvre staff involved in moving artefacts from the museum to safer places further south. She became acting head of the Egyptology department, and almost immediately joined the Parisian museums resistance network. On one mission, she was hauled from a train and interrogated by the *Gestapo*. Amazingly, she was freed a few hours later, and they never found the secret message hidden inside her glove. She continued her resistance work throughout the war, and married **Andre Noblecourt** in 1942.

After the war she was involved with *UNESCO* attempts to set up an Egyptology research centre in Egypt, which she led. She initiated the campaign

to save **Nubia's** temples from flooding by the construction of the **Aswan** Dam planned by **Nasser**, although this was interrupted by the *Suez Crisis* in 1956. CDN was one of the few Westerners allowed back into Egypt afterwards, and her one-woman campaign to save Abu Simbel and other treasures became a massive international effort approved by *UNESCO* in 1960. The political and technical efforts used to save Abu-Simbel and other temples are described in great detail. CDN's next project was to write the text of what was to be a very influential book about **Tutankhamun**, complete with the first comprehensive set of photos of the treasures, published in 1963. On the back of this, CDN curated the first major Tutankhamun exhibition overseas, in Paris in 1967 (this was followed by other major ones in **London** (1972), the **USA**, **Japan**). CDN continued to work as head curator of Egyptology at the Louvre, as well as teaching courses for over 40 years, and leading missions to Egypt. She worked mainly at the **Valley of the Queens**, finding the tomb of Queen **Tuya**. She helped with the effort to bring the mummified remains of **Rameses II** to Paris for urgent preservation in 1976, and curated a large exhibition about him the same year. She was also involved in the work to save the temple of **Philae**. After retiring, she dedicated her time to writing books about Ancient Egypt. In 2009, just two years before her death, she was honoured by *UNESCO* for her contribution to Egyptology.

Olson writes in a lively fashion for the interested general reader, giving historical background to Ancient Egypt and twentieth century Egypt, France and the USA, supplemented by photographs. She does a great job of bringing the achievements of this remarkable woman to a wider English-speaking audience.



REFERENCES

McKie, R. (2023) 'Empress of the Nile by Lynne Olson review – the unsung heroine of Egyptology unearthed' *The Observer*, 02/04/2023

Riggs, C. (2021) *Treasured: How Tutankhamun shaped a century* (London: Atlantic Books)

Written by: Dulcie Engel



The Road to the Pyramids

Part II

During the February workshop, the theme was 'Pyramids'. The Education team trialled several different types of activities exploring pyramids and their creation (see issue Oct-Dec 2022). After lots of testing with input and feedback from staff and volunteers of all ages I am very pleased to announce the new school activity 'Pyramids'.

It will take place in the House of Life where for 15 minutes the class will learn a brief history of Pyramid building and then have to solve two pyramid 'mysteries'. These are two questions based on how pyramids were created.

'How did they move the blocks?'

Children must come up with their ideas on how the heavy pyramid blocks were moved so far through the desert from the quarries up to hundreds of miles away to where the pyramids were built.

'How did they stack them so high?'

Children must try to solve the mystery of how the ancient Egyptians were able to stack the heavy blocks so high when constructing pyramids.

The answers to both questions are given at the end, although some people might query the answers. It wouldn't be a mystery if there was a straightforward answer.

Then the class will be shown what is believed to be two faience tiles which were found inside the first pyramid ever built, the Step Pyramid of Djoser, **EC919** & **EC920**.

Finally, the class will be taken to the Learning Space (Shared Area), and they will be divided into teams. Then each group will

be given a box of plastic straws and connectors and will need to build the tallest structure within a time limit of 45 min. It will need to be stable as a large cube with be thrown at it after the time limit. If it falls down the group are eliminated from the task.

The whole activity will last 1 hour and includes tidy up time at the end of the activity. I am thrilled to see this in action and can't wait to see how everyone takes to it.

Written by: Luke Keenan



Meet The Staff

Firstly, we catch up here with Senior Education Leader LUKE, now back from parental leave:



My name is **Luke Keenan** and I am the Senior Education Leader at the Egypt Centre. My role is mainly based around managing and teaching school groups when they are on site. Also training volunteers up on the public activities and hopefully the school activities. If you're new, be warned I am always looking for new people to train up to help teach schools! I have my eye on you the second you walk through the door!

I started as a volunteer just before I turned 30 and have been here for seven years now. I have a lot to thank the Egypt Centre for, it gave me the drive and passion for teaching people about ancient Egypt. I love school groups and teaching people about the subject, couldn't imagine not doing it anymore.

We have also asked Volunteer Manager/ Newsletter editor SYD to answer some probing questions!!



Hello Syd, our readers all know you as the Volunteer Manager, but maybe not much about your life before the EC, how long you have worked here... perhaps you could outline your career & relevant studies so far?

I first began volunteering at the age of 10 with the *Swansea Sound Landscape Project*, building paths, cutting vegetation etc. in the **Afan Valley**. After school, I volunteered with people with drug problems & homelessness, and later that became a paid role. I also volunteered at *Glastonbury Festival*, archaeological digs etc.; volunteering has been a central part of my life.

I did a *Certificate in Higher Education* in Egyptology and a *BA* in History at *Swansea University*, and an *MA* in Museum Studies at *Leicester University* via distance learning (I can confirm I have never set foot in Leicester University).

Since 2012 I have been the Museum Volunteer Manager at the Egypt Centre.

What does your current post encompass?

A lot more paperwork than I would like! I am the first point of call for anyone wishing to volunteer at the museum. I process applications, apply for references, DBS checks etc. and try to encourage new volunteers to learn from those who have been here a while. My role also includes training, organising work placements, making bad jokes at the pre-shift meetings, all manner of writing, helping teach the Practicum module at the museum, going out and giving talks, drawing up rotas – the usual stuff.



What are your stand-out memories from your time here?

So many! Highlights include when the animal mummies were scanned, as was the mummified foetus and the media fuss that followed that – it is not every day that I answer the office phone to a South American newspaper. Also, the volunteers winning the *Queens Award for Volunteering* – well deserved! Other great memories are of those volunteers who have achieved their potential or have moved on to other museums, universities etc. Though as we know, no one truly leaves the Egypt Centre!

A memory of the time a young seagull wandered through the Taliesin, onto the Egypt Centre landing, and spent a few minutes gazing into the mirror in the Under 5's area will take a long time to fade.

Do you have a favourite object (or objects)?

It must be the Reserve Head (W164) due to its rarity. I love that reserve heads have their own Wikipedia page which tells you where all thirty - seven known examples are located (Cairo, Berlin, Vienna, Boston...Swansea etc).

Though my head has been turned (apologies for the pun) by the Anubis Mask which is on loan from Harrogate Museums and can be seen in the Mummification Case in the House of Death and appears to be the only known cartonnage example.

What are your outside interests/hobbies?

Outside of the Egypt Centre I dabble in music and photography and a little bit of writing (mainly history).

What are your hopes for the EC going forward?

That we continue to inspire visitors to the museum with our wonderful brand of education and entertainment!

Do you have any special message for the volunteers?

Yes, thank you for volunteering with us and keep being epic!

Thank you Syd!

And | Quote...

Hail to thee, Nile!

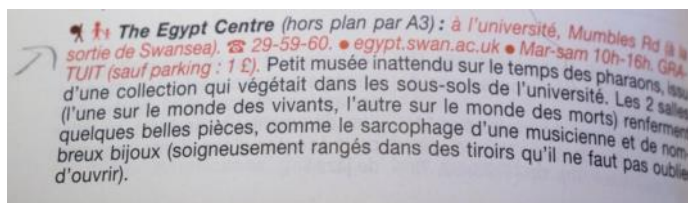
Who manifests thyself over this land

And comes to give life to Egypt!

(Hymn to the Nile)

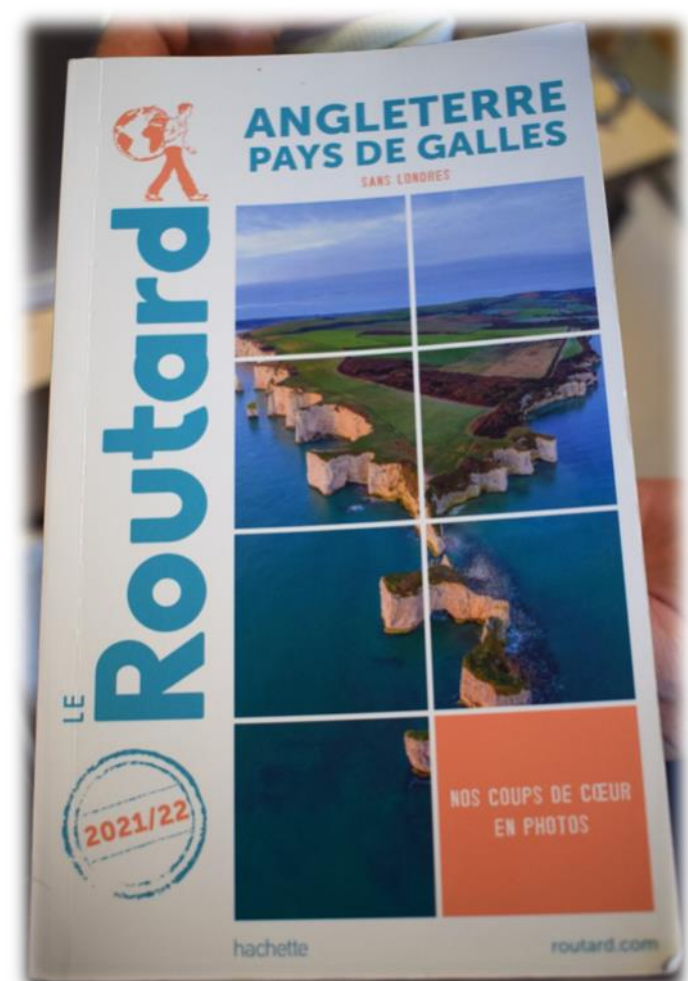
FAMOUS IN FRANCE!!

A lovely French family visited us in August: and they decided to come to Swansea as part of their Welsh coast tour, specifically to visit the Egypt Centre after reading about it in their England & Wales guidebook!



Here's the translation of the entry (not fully accurate re provenance of collection or drawer contents!)

'Small, unexpected museum on the time of the Pharaohs, from a collection which was languishing in the university's basement. The two galleries (one on the world of the living, the other on the world of the dead) include some beautiful artefacts, such as the coffin of a female musician and many items of jewellery (carefully organised in drawers, which you mustn't forget to open).'



Written by: Dulcie Engel



Ozymandias

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

*I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said, "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.'"*



Ozymandias is the Greek name for the great pharaoh **Ramesses II**, who reigned during the New Kingdom period for 66 years from 1279 BCE. He was one of Egypt's most powerful rulers and a great warrior who won huge victories. We only have to view the [Great Temple](#) at **Abu Simbel** and be in awe of his most impressive structure to be reminded of this.

Percy Shelley's inspiration for this poem came from the ancient statue "[Younger Memnon](#)". The upper part of this statue was eventually brought to the *British Museum* in 1821, by the Italian explorer, **Giovanni "The Great" Belzoni**. The poem was originally published in the *Examiner* newspaper in January 1818. It was written as part of a competition between himself and **Horace Smith** who was a friend of Shelley's. Sadly by the time the statue arrived in England, Shelley had left for **Italy** where he permanently self-exiled. This is said to be Percy Shelley's most famous poem and

there's no denying its powerful and captivating word choice. Not bad considering this was released just under two weeks after the debut of his future wife **Mary Shelley's** novel "*Frankenstein*"...

Shelley's poem is powerful. We can feel the strength from this mighty ruler. Hear his roars! But the meaning of "Ozymandias" (a person once famous and respected who has since been utterly forgotten), does not ring so true today as it did then. He has become known as one of Ancient Egypt's most fascinating rulers. There is a mass of information to be found, and this is a rabbit-hole that I am happy to go down quicker than Alice to Wonderland!

This poem brings to light that power dies. Those grand, impressive towers fall to Nature. But history can be brought back to life!

Written by: Danielle Graham



Books about the EC collection: a brief guide

[Thirty Highlights](#) (chosen by volunteers & members of public)

[This link](#) also connects to publications by EC staff members.

[Booklets available to buy in the shop:](#)



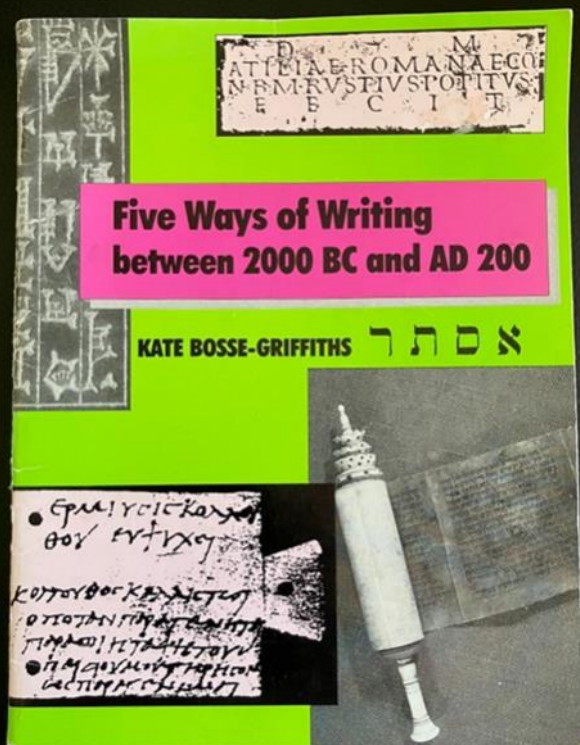
The Face of Egypt: £0.50



Beadworks: £0.50



Five ways of Writing: £0.50



Offerings from the British museum: £1



Written by: Dulcie Engel



Other Collections:

Ancient Egypt in Austria

Vienna

I visited the large Egyptian collection at the [Kunsthistorisches Museum](#) (Art History Museum):

The collection houses 17,000 objects covering c. 4500 years. Many of the items were gifts, in particular in the 19th century from **Anton Ritter von Laurin** (Austrian consul in **Alexandria**), Crown Prince **Rudolf**, and the collection of Emperor **Maximilian** of **Mexico**, plus early 20th century excavations funded by Austria.

The galleries are decorated in Egyptian style, and three original Ancient Egyptian 6m high columns are used to support the ceiling. They were gifted to Emperor **Franz Joseph I** in 1869:

Highlights for me included: a 4th dynasty reserve head from **Giza**;



the 5th dynasty tomb chapel of **Ka-ni-nisut** from Giza (excavated by an Austrian team in 1913); an 11th-12th dynasty blue faience hippopotamus statuette (similar to the one in the [Metropolitan Museum](#));



and a beautiful statue of **Thoth** as an ibis from 600BCE;



...among many other superb pieces.



Readers of the EC Collection blog will know that our curator **Ken** made a visit here in December 2022, and in blogs he discusses the stunning [coffin of Panehemisis](#) in Vienna, and some unusual [gilded Osiris figures](#).

The other Viennese collection of Egyptian significance is held in the [Papyrus Museum](#), housed in the *National Library*.

The museum displays around 400 of the 180,000 items in the collection (the largest in the world) and illustrates the history of writing from the 15th century BCE to the 16th century CE. Its foundation was the collection of Archduke **Rainer**, mainly acquired in Egypt by antiquities dealer **Theodor Graf**. There are a lot of Ancient Egyptian documents: from religious texts to personal correspondence, tax lists, and literary pieces. The current special exhibition is entitled: '*A Gift of the Nile. The Power of Water in Ancient Egypt*'. It showcases documents dealing with water management, agriculture, transportation, and bathhouses.

Apart from papyri, there are also writing implements, Greek wooden labels identifying the deceased, and some **Fayum** portraits.

A special room shows the remaining 6 metres of the 3000-year-old Book of the Dead of **Sesostris (S-en-weseret)**, found in **Thebes**. It is written in cursive hieroglyphs, and is the oldest object in the collection:



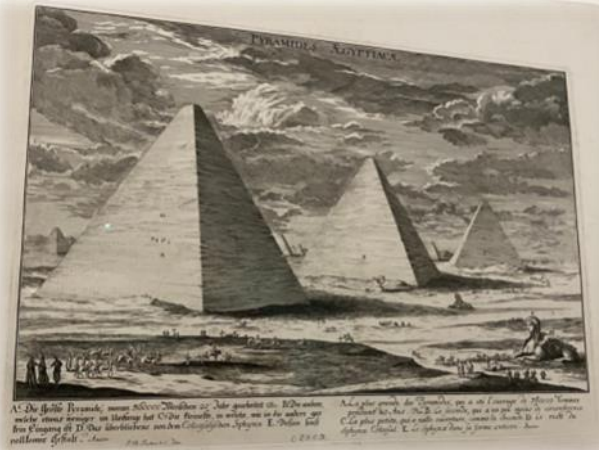
It also shows about 8 metres of the 2000 year old Book of the Dead of **Taruma**, a woman from Memphis:



Salzburg

I didn't expect to find Egyptian themes in the *Salzburg Museum*, but there was a special exhibition about a Baroque architect, **Fischer von Erlach** (1656-1723), responsible for many of the splendid buildings in Vienna and Salzburg, who was very much influenced by Ancient Egyptian architecture.

He published the first illustrated world history of architecture, and was drawn to Egyptian pyramids:



Furthermore, this year (2023) Austrian sculptor **Werner Feiersinger** produced a plaster copy of a statue of **Anubis** after the engraving in Fischer von Erlach's book (the statue belonged to FvE). It looks a little strange, but is faithful to the engraving:



Written by: Dulcie Engel
All photos by: Dulcie Engel



How Fallen Are The Mighty?

The Ibis: From Veneration to 'Bin Chicken'

Recently I had occasion to take part in a conversation with a charming visitor from **Australia**. During our chat, whilst examining the Animals Case, I happened to mention how important the ibis was to the Ancient Egyptians. She found it quite ironic that a creature could be held in such esteem in one culture, and almost reviled in another.

I asked her to expand, and she explained that the native Australian ibis was almost viewed as vermin. She further explained that in recent years, the natural habitat of the ibis had declined as a result of human interference in waterways. Forced to seek food sources elsewhere, ibises had started to migrate into urban areas, and feed on scraps left by the local human population. Thus the birds had earned the sobriquet 'bin chickens'.

Unable to control my innate flippancy, I suggested that they could possibly eat cane toads, thereby solving two problems: 1) reducing the invasive cane toad population; 2) providing a food source for the ibis not directly affecting the human population.

To my complete astonishment, she informed me that according to recent studies, the ibis has learnt that by striking a cane toad on its head sharply with its beak, the toad will go into survival mode, excreting its protective toxin through the skin. The ibis then rolls the toad in wet grass, washing away the toxins, and proceeds to have a hearty meal.

A wonderful example of evolution in action. Maybe our Ancient Egyptian friends were privy to more arcane knowledge which we have yet to discover!



Wooden Ibis Statue
(W1048)



Gilded plaster image of Thoth
with ibis head (for attachment
to a mummy band)
(EC2230)

Written by: Dick Williams



Copper Alloy Ibis
Head (W89)



Domestic Fowl in Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptians had a great reverence towards wild birds, particularly the sacred Ibis associated with the god **Thoth**. However, other birds were more important in a domestic sense, providing food for peasants and pharaohs alike.

The Nile Valley was home to many species of ducks and the ancient Egyptians distinguished 15 different species of duck. Attempts to domesticate many kinds of duck were common during the Old Kingdom and flocks of ducks were kept in poultry yards. The Northern Pintail duck was sometimes kept as a pet.

The ancient Egyptians bred several varieties of geese, including the Egyptian goose which is a common sight in the East of England today. Large flocks of geese were kept in yards, a decree of **Seti I** states that on a bird farm in **Abydos**: "their number is like the sand on the shore". It is recorded that **Ramesses III** offered over 680,000 geese to the temples.

Chickens were unknown in Egypt until the very end of the New Kingdom when they were imported from **Mesopotamia**. In ancient Egypt the chicken was considered very unusual and was called 'the bird that gives birth every day'.

Thutmose III received four chickens as tribute, and roosters, associated with the sun-God **Ra** were kept as pets by Pharaohs.

Ancient Egyptians incubated chicken eggs artificially by placing them on papyrus sheets over beds of hot coals.

The Egyptian Fayoumi breed of chicken may have some links to ancient Egyptian breeds of poultry, however there is limited evidence of this. The Fayoumi is recognised in the British Poultry Standard but not in the American Poultry Standard due to extensive crossbreeding with American poultry breeds in an effort to provide greater resistance to disease for American chickens.

Written by: Scarlett Murray

Bibliography

Domestic Plants and Animals: The Egyptian Origins – **Douglas J. Brewer**, **Donald B. Redford**, and **Susan Redford**. Aris & Phillips Ltd. 1994.



Copper Alloy Duck
(AR503492)



Duck Design Cosmetic
Palette (W1021)



Goose Statue
(W588)



Friends of the Egypt Centre



The Friends of the Egypt Centre support the Egypt Centre and organise an exciting programme of ten monthly lectures per year (September to June). These events run separately to the Egypt Centre's other online events such as Fundraising Lectures and Five Week Courses and are arranged to cater for all levels of understanding. You can choose to be a member of the Friends for an annual fee of as little as £10 or pay £3 per lecture (booking via Eventbrite).



Annual Programme

Friends programme 2023-2024 to be announced

Membership

Membership includes free entry into all Friends lectures and other offers given by the Egypt Centre. For further information, or to join please fill and return an application form.

Membership Application Form: ([Word Doc](#)) ([PDF](#))

Full Membership	£16.50 per year
Full family membership (2 adults and 2 children)	£26 per year
Concessionary individual	£10 per year
Concessionary family	£16 per year
Non-members are also welcome and can pay £3 per lecture.	



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



25th Anniversary Celebration Event

As many of you will know, this year the Egypt Centre marks twenty-five years since first opening its doors. While the official opening took place on the 28th September 1998, we will be hosting a celebration event on the 7th October. This hybrid event will celebrate the achievements of the Egypt Centre during the past twenty-five years with a series of presentations and unveilings. In particular, the opening of the first Harrogate collection exhibition entitled *Causing Their Names to Live*. The event is free, in keeping with the museum's remit of breaking down barriers. Note that the in-person event is limited to sixty participants, so will be restricted to presenters, staff, volunteers, and Swansea University students, so we encourage you to let us know ASAP if you want to attend. The Zoom event will be accessible to a global audience (up to 500 people), who are encouraged to join us in celebrating this milestone. The full programme of the day can be found below. Registration to the event is essential and Zoom reservations can be made [here](#).

Conference Programme

9:15 Webinar starts.

9:30–9:45 Welcome address.

9:45–11:15 The Evolution of the Egypt Centre.

Carolyn Graves-Brown (Former Egypt Centre Curator) - At last! Hopes, imaginations, and dreams come true.

Syd Howells (Egypt Centre Volunteer Manager) -
Egypt Centre volunteers: a history 1997–2023.

Dulcie Engel (Egypt Centre volunteer) - My volunteering journey.

Wendy Goodridge (Egypt Centre Museum Manager) - *Let the battle commence!*: breaking barriers to museum learning.

11:15–11:30 Break.

11:30–12:45 Collectors & Collections.

Meg Gundlach (Egypt Centre Collections Access Manager) - The Hood legacy: Swansea by chance, Swansea by choice.

Sam Powell (Egypt Centre volunteer and Abaset Director) - Abaset Collections: restoring ma'at to the Egypt Centre Online Collection.

Anna Garnet (Petrie Museum Curator) - To Malet Place and beyond: The Petrie Museum's role in the distribution of the Wellcome collection.

12:45–14:00 Lunch break.

14:00–15:10 The Egypt Centre & Swansea University.

Christian Knoblauch (Lecturer, Swansea University) - Teaching in the collection: object-centred learning at Swansea University.

Ersin Hussein (Senior Lecture, Swansea University) - Community perspectives: understanding and voicing Cypriot heritage in Wales.

Jess Evans (Swansea University student) - My student experience at the Egypt Centre.

15:10–15:25 Break.

15:25–16:35 Conservation & Innovation.

Phil Parkes (Reader in Conservation, Cardiff University) - Shared history: conservation of Egypt Centre objects at Cardiff University.

Courtney Lyons (Cardiff University conservation student) - Perspective of a conservation student: treatment of EC168, a Soter-style shroud.

Noura Seada (Assistant Lecturer at October 6 University, Cairo) - Online engagement at the Egypt Centre: a view from Egypt.

16:35–16:45 Break.

16:45–17:45 Keynote.

Ken Griffin (Egypt Centre Curator) -
Rediscovering Egypt: the Harrogate collection in
Swansea.

17:45–18:00 Summary and close.

Written by: Ken Griffin



Egyptology in The News



Coffin lid CT scans help understand construction techniques

Two coffin lids from the *Israel Museum* in **Jerusalem** have been scanned. One dates to 950 BCE and belonged to **Jed-Mot**, Chantress of **Amun**; the other, from the 7th-4th century BCE, belonged to **Ptah-Hotep**, a nobleman. The lids revealed cavities in the wood filled with plaster prior to decoration, sections made solely from plaster, plus tree rings in cross-section.

Dutch museum hosts controversial "Afrocentric" Egyptian exhibition

The *National Museum of Antiquities* in **Leiden** is currently showing '*Kemet: Egypt in Hip-Hop, Jazz, Soul & Funk*' which showcases the influence of Ancient Egypt and **Nubia** on many musicians of African descent. There has been uproar in Egypt, following a similar debate over the *Netflix* '*Cleopatra*' production (see news in last issue). Furthermore, Egyptian authorities have now banned the museum's archaeologists from excavating at **Saqqara**, where they had been working for years. In other developments, US rapper **Travis Scott**'s scheduled July show at the **Giza** pyramids has been banned by the *Egyptian Musician's Syndicate* for being against Egyptian traditions. This follows an online campaign against the concert which focussed on Scott's alleged Afrocentrism.

Chinese virtual tour 'Horizon of Khufu'

An exhibition hall in **Shanghai** is hosting a virtual reality and interactive show which takes the audience on a virtual exploration of the Great Pyramid at Giza. The visitors are given a VR backpack and augmented reality headphones for the experience, including a climb to the top. This exhibition premiered in Paris last year, attracting over 50,000 visitors.

Tutankhamun exhibitions in Yorkshire, Russia

Record numbers of almost 60,000 visitors came to *Barnsley Museum* during the five month run of '*Tut22: The Life Of Tutankhamun*', curated by Egyptologist **Joann Fletcher**. Meanwhile, **Moscow** is organising a '*Treasures from Tutankhamun's Tomb*' exhibition, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. 100 artefacts will be shown, including replicas of items from the tomb.

More wonderful Saqqara finds announced

An Egyptian archaeological mission has excavated two large embalming workshops (one for the mummification of humans and the other for animals) at **Bubasiton**, which date back to the end of the 30th Dynasty and the start of the Ptolemaic era. They also found two tombs from the Old and New Kingdoms, and a number of artefacts.

Highways threaten Giza pyramids, but tourist facilities improved

At least three new roads have recently been constructed in the **Memphis** necropolis, where the Great Pyramid is situated. Egyptologists and conservationists are very alarmed at this threat to a world heritage site, with possibly more unexplored treasures below the concrete, as well as the

corrosive effect of vehicle pollution. The Giza development plan includes the construction of better tourist facilities and walkways between the pyramids and the *Grand Egyptian Museum*.

Old Kingdom silver bracelets reveal new information on trade networks

Analysis of bracelets found in 1925 in the tomb of Queen **Hetepheres**, wife of **Sneferu** and mother of **Khufu**, have now been analysed with modern metallurgical techniques by an international team. Lead isotope measurements are consistent with silver ores extracted from mines in the **Cyclades** (Greek Aegean islands).

Tutankhamun news 1: Is this the most realistic facial reconstruction?

Scientists from **Australia**, **Brazil** and **Italy** have used digital models and pre-recorded measurements to recreate the young pharaoh's face. Statistical studies based on CT scans of living individuals enabled projections to be made regarding measurements and position of different facial elements.

Tutankhamun news 2: victim of chariot crash while drunk?

Biomedical Egyptologist **Sofia Aziz** disputes the accepted view of the young king as weak and sickly: she believes he was 'a typical teenager, drinking and probably driving the chariot too fast', which could be the cause of his death. She points out the large amount of white wine found in his tomb.

Tutankhamun news 3: portrait in maize!

An image of the pharaoh in his death mask has been cut from a six-hectare field of maize to create a maze near **York**. It is the largest maze in the UK, created with more than one million plants, and standing more than 150m high.

Fighting in Sudan threatens archaeological heritage of Nubia

Thousands of historical artefacts at the *National Museum* in the capital **Khartoum** are under threat as fighting continues, including embalmed mummified bodies dating from 2500 BCE. There is also fighting around **Merroe** in the north, an archaeologically important site on the east bank of the Nile known for its pyramids, and a temple of Amun. Nubia was conquered by **Thutmose I** around 1500 BCE and ruled by Egypt for 400 years; later the Kingdom of **Kush** (part of Nubia) conquered Egypt in the 8th century BCE, and ruled as the 25th Dynasty for a century.

More Egyptian artefacts repatriated from across Europe

An Egyptian delegation collected two 6th Dynasty murals in Paris, which had been stolen from an excavation at Saqqara in 2001. They were originally exhibited in a museum in **Budapest** and other items put up for auction in Paris. One of the main suspects is a Parisian antiquities dealer. In addition, 14 antiquities from **Cyprus** that were stolen and smuggled in the late 1980s have been handed over,



ANCIENT EGYPT BEGINNING WITH E

Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other.

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

EYE
 EGYPT
 ESTHER
 EGYPTOLOGIST
 EGRET
 ESNA
 EAR
 EUERGETES
 EDFU
 EXPLORATION
 EGYPTOMANIA
 ELEPHANTINE
 ELKAB
 EGG



**Gallery & Education
Volunteers required**

**For further details
contact Syd Howells on
l.s.j.howells@swansea.ac.uk**

