



The Egypt Society of Bristol

NEWS UPDATE

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Issue 18

March 2006

Chairman's Dig

The lighter evenings are now upon us, and hopefully this should make travelling to meetings a little less of an ordeal: the conditions on the nights of a couple of recent gatherings have certainly made one pine for the sunshine of Egypt!



Museum Island, Berlin

At least snow has been minimal – which certainly was not the case in Berlin, whence the Chairman and Treasurer journeyed recently to view the newly reinstated Egyptian collection. The Berlin collection has had a chequered history since the Second World War destroyed its long-time home, the Neues Museum, and dispersed its superb collections around Germany, some being then deported to Russia. Separate Egyptian Museums were later set up in West and East Berlin during the Cold War, to be administratively united in 1989. Then, in August last year, an interim combined display was opened in the Altes Museum on Berlin's Museum Island. It contains many of the collection's greatest masterpieces, including the world-famous head of Queen Nefertiti.

However, this show represents only a fragment of the whole collection, and excludes all the heavier items (the new display is on the top floor!). This is planned to be put right in 2009, when the Egyptian Museum is scheduled to return to the rebuilt Neues Museum building after over sixty years away.

Nevertheless, the display in the Altes Museum is well worth a trip – as are all the other stunning pieces on Museum Island. These include the reconstructed walls of Babylon and burial chamber of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria in the Pergamon Museum, to name but two. Berlin is now easily reached from Bristol, courtesy of easyJet, the

excellent public transport making the city a dream to visit.



Egyptian Museum, Berlin: Nefertiti

Slightly more recently, the Chairman was a speaker – along with Christopher Lee(!) and three French Egyptologists – at a film festival in Paris, contributing to a 'Night of the Mummy', with a documentary, dancers and a showing of the classic Hammer version of *The Mummy*. Good fun was had by all, the event fitting quite nicely with John Johnston's excellent lecture to the ESB last summer.

At the AGM (for which see further below), technical glitches prevented me from giving you the news of the new tomb in the Valley of the Kings. As you may recall, it is a shaft-tomb, with an intact chamber at the bottom holding five Eighteenth Dynasty coffins, and a series of large pottery jars. The very latest news is that there is only one mummy in the tomb, the other coffins and jars holding embalmers' refuse. Such caches are not uncommon, and reflect the sacred nature of the various 'left-overs' from the mummification process: in this case they may represent the debris from the preparation of the mummy of one of the latter part of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Work is

ongoing, and we hope to give a further update when the Chairman and Treasurer get back from the American Research Center in Egypt's annual meeting (in New York at the end of April), at which we should be meeting with some (and sharing a room with one!) of the excavation team.

The lecture programme for 2006/7 is now nearly complete, and it is intended that the gaps should be filled by the next Newsletter, scheduled for the Summer. You will see that we have listed a few non-ESB events in the programme – the plan is to include in future any gathering in the area that might be of interest to members: should anyone be aware of such events, please let us know.



Tales from the Treasury

This year sees the eighth anniversary of the founding of the ESB. During that period the basic subscription has been fixed at £10. Although we are still keeping financially healthy, there has been an inexorable rise in costs, in particular rail fares and other expenditure on speakers – who are of course the major reason for our existence. Therefore the Committee has decided that

subscription rates will be raised from next January, as follows:

	Cash/ cheque	Standing order
Individual:	£ 14.00	£ 13.00
Retired/unemployed:	£ 10.50	£ 9.75
Retired household	£ 17.50	£ 16.25
Household	£ 21.00	£ 19.50
Student (3 yrs)	£ 10.00	N/A
Non-members	£ 2.00 per meeting	

It is recognised that these are quite high in percentage terms, but they reflect the gradual erosion of the value of the subscription over the past few years – and also to avoid the need to make any further change until (*inshallah!*) the next decade.

As you see, we are offering a discount for those who pay by standing order, and as a further incentive, the new subscription will only apply from January 2008 for current Standing Order subscribers, and those who take out a Standing Order before the end of December this year. A Standing Order form will be enclosed in the next mailing.



Annual General Meeting

The ESB AGM was held on 21 February 2006. The following elections were made:

<i>Chairman:</i>	<i>Aidan Dodson</i>	<i>Ordinary Member (Museum):</i>	<i>Sue Giles</i>
<i>Vice-Chairman:</i>	<i>Margaret Curtis</i>	<i>Ordinary Member (University):</i>	<i>Tamar Hodos</i>
<i>Hon Secretary:</i>	<i>Nikki Blake</i>	<i>Ordinary Member:</i>	<i>Liz Chapman</i>
<i>Hon Treasurer:</i>	<i>Dyan Hilton</i>	<i>Ordinary Member:</i>	<i>Simon Bleaken</i>
<i>Hon Membership Secretary:</i>	<i>Dyan Hilton</i>	<i>Ordinary Member:</i>	<i>Deidre McKay</i>
<i>Hon Social Secretary:</i>	<i>Sylvia East</i>	<i>Examiner of Accounts:</i>	<i>Neil Marshall</i>

The accounts for the 2005 Financial Year are given below:

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2005

	2005 £	2004 £
OPENING BALANCE	2,927.08	
INCOME		
Membership fees	1,152.50	1,215.00
Non members	20.00	24.00
Events:		
Meetings:		
Parties	420.00	397.00
Trips	0.00	0.00
Misc	5.95	100.04
	425.95	497.04
Miscellaneous		
- Raffle	77.00	100.04
	<u>1,675.45</u>	<u>1,836.08</u>

EXPENDITURE			
Speakers expenses:	travel and hospitality	359.50	373.13
Events:	catering	535.37	393.79
	portorage	172.05	242.42
	transport and entrance	0.00	0.00
	raffle prizes	11.40	7.49
Mailings:		135.47	209.82
Donations		1,500.00	0.00
Merchandise			0.00
Sundries			86.20
		2,713.79	1,312.85

NET INCOME		<u>-1,038.34</u>	<u>523.23</u>
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CLOSING BALANCE	1,888.74
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Lecture reports

By Margaret Curtis

15 November 2005

New Excavations at Tell Edfu – Dr Nadine Moeller

Nadine's lecture this evening covered the finds made during the 2005 season of excavations at Tell Edfu, situated in the town of Edfu, which was the capital of the second Upper Egyptian Nome.



The Ptolemaic temple at Edfu; Dr Moeller's work lies to the left of rear of the temple

The excavation is centred on the old town of Edfu, just west of the temple, the site most tourists know. The site is a Tell which is a mound made up of a layers of settlements built up over many years. Here the lowest layer is Old Kingdom and the top layer early Arabic. Much of the old mud brick has disappeared over the years, having been taken by the locals to use as fertilizer. Despite this, the central part is quite well preserved and was first excavated in 1921 by Henri Henne.

During this new excavation, mud brick walls of up to 5.6 m thick have been uncovered. These were built up in layers and added to over time and parts of the wall incorporates old mastaba tombs which can still be seen. During the First Intermediate Period the town appears to have expanded and despite this

being one of the darker times in Egyptian history, Edfu seems to have prospered.

The work carried out during the 2005 season looked at some of the previous excavations and some large stone blocks were found which had been discarded by previous digs. The tomb of Izi is still to be cleared. When first excavated in 1933 grave goods and a sarcophagus were still in place and 30 stela were found in the tomb. It appears Izi was a Governor of Edfu and was honoured as a god after his death.

During the 1922 dig a stone entrance was found under a large house of the Byzantine period. A small statue of Osiris was also found which seems to indicate this was a sanctuary. The walls have now been destroyed and it was thought there would be nothing left to discover, but a baboon statue was found as well as an offering table dating back to 1650 --1550 BC and part of a Ramisside statue dedicated to a royal scribe and overseer of the fleet of Upper Egypt. In a large heap of rubbish, ostraca were found written in Greek and Demotic.

Five very large grain silos dating from the Second Intermediate Period were uncovered in a lower layer. These were so large, they could not have belonged to a private dwelling. Ash a metre thick was found around the site indicating a bakery may have been situated here.

Three column bases were found in a layer under the granaries and two seal impressions which can be dated to the late 12th to mid 13th Dynasty. Ivory was also found which, at that time, was a luxury product indicating this may have been a governor's house and/or a temple before the silos and bakery were built on top.

So much was found during the 2005 season, it confirms a site is always worth another look and someone's pile of rubbish in 1921 can still yield interesting facts in 2005.

24 January 2006

Ancient Egyptian Coffins and Coffin Texts – Peter Robinson

In a hot climate like that of Egypt, a safe way of disposing of the dead was needed in order to prevent disease and contamination. Also, many societies believed the spirit of the deceased may return to trouble the living if the body was not disposed of in a permanent way.

In Predynastic times, the Egyptians buried their dead in the hot, drying sands of the desert where the body was mummified through the natural drying process of the sand and climate. The body was placed in the ground in the foetal position and this may reflect the belief that the individual was being reborn. Because of the dryness, very ancient bodies have survived almost intact, together with grave goods such as pots and food offerings to sustain the individual in the afterlife. Peter described a pot depicting a boat placed in a burial which may have been buried to provide clues to the deceased on how to navigate through the afterlife.

As in all things, if the deceased person was wealthy, then the quality of the grave goods reflected this. The items buried with a woman would differ from those of a man and were usually domestic, household items. Even in death, a woman's work is never done!

In Old Kingdom times, pyramids were the method of burial for Pharaohs. Individuals of high status had their highly decorated tombs gathered around the pyramids, the bodies being placed in stone sarcophagi. The poorer people were still laid to rest in the sand together with their modest pots.

In the Middle Kingdom, pyramids died out and better coffins were made which were influenced by the rise of the Osiris myth, although these were still made of wood. The myth tells that Seth gathered the Gods together and invited them to try a box for size. Not surprisingly, the box fitted Osiris and when he climbed in, Seth slammed the lid down and Osiris was trapped. Seth threw the box in the Nile and it floated away. Isis looked for the box and found it trapped in the roots of a cedar tree at Byblos. On opening the box, she finds the preserved body of Osiris. This could have led to the belief that the box, or coffin, would preserve the body and act as a vehicle to the afterlife.

The Middle Kingdom was a time of decline in the power of the King and the rise of great noble families who controlled areas of the country. These nobles built grand tombs and their coffins also improved and were highly decorated.

Lifelike, anthropoid coffins appeared in the New Kingdom which enabled the Ba bird to find his way to the correct deceased person. Tutankhamun's golden coffins were the pinnacle of the coffin maker's skill in this style.

In the 22nd Dynasty, cartonnage coffins appeared which were made of linen made hard with glues and highly decorating with scenes from the Book of the Dead. The body was placed inside the formed case and the cartonnage sealed, preventing the coffin being reused as removing the body would have destroyed the casing. In the Ptolemaic and Roman period, a portrait of the deceased person was fitted on the coffin, and some were also given realistic false hands. There are fine examples of these from the Roman period which can be dated by studying the costumes and the jewellery depicted in the mummy portraits.

Another aspect of the method of burial was writing and symbols decorating the coffin, known as the Coffin Texts. 1,185 have been identified and can vary depending on region. These are believed to have acted as a map or guide to enable the deceased person to find their way through the maze of the afterlife and to place them in the cosmos so they know where they are. They also provided good wishes to the person, food and comforts for a safe passage through all the dangers of their journey. Even a pair of sandals was painted at the foot of the coffin to make it easy for the deceased to wear them! The eyes in the side of the coffin would allow the person to see out and the false doors in the tombs would enable the spirit of the person to come and go and use the offerings left for them. Models of workshops, bakeries etc complete with workers would provide for the deceased with the model workers doing all the work. All this helped the person in the afterlife and made it less likely the spirit would return to trouble the living.

In the time allowed, Peter's lecture could only scratch the surface of the funeral rituals and texts, but certainly added to our understanding of them.

Egypt Society of Bristol Programme 2006/7

Tues 28 March 2006: Lecture, *The Drowned Land of Nubia and the Rescue of its Monuments*
Martin R. Davies, President ESB.

Thursday 6 April 2006: Stoke Lodge History & Archaeology Group (entry £1.00)

The Valley of the Kings and the Royal Mummies

Martin Davies, President, ESB

Friend's Meeting House, Hampton Road, Redland (opposite Clyde Arms pub), 1930-2130 hrs.

NB. This is an event organised by Stoke Lodge History & Archaeology Group, not the ESB, but all welcome!

Tues 9 May 2006: Lecture, *The Lost Tomb of Alexander the Great*
Andrew Chugg

Tues 27 June 2006

- Lecture, *British Painters and Egyptian Visions 1850-1900*
Donato Esposito, University of Plymouth
- Summer Party (at 1945)

Sunday 9 July 2006: Bristol Magpies Lectures (entry £5.00)

Egyptian History and Art

Aidan Dodson and Martin Davies, Chairman and President, ESB

Bristol's City Museum & Art Gallery, Queen's Road (Clifton Triangle), 1415 hrs.

NB. This is an event organised by the Bristol Magpies, the Museum friends' organisation, not the ESB. Contact: Mary Bailey, 22 Carnarvon Road, BS6 7DT, tel. 0117-942 1944.

ESB lectures are held in Lecture Room 1, Department of Archaeology, 43 Woodland Road, Clifton, at 1845. Doors open at 1815. Street parking available in the vicinity.
Entry free for members; £1 for non-members
Disabled access is available.

September 2006: Lecture, *date and title to be confirmed (postponed from May)*
Dr Christian Loeben, Kestner-Museum, Hanover, Germany

Monday 23 October 2006: University of Bristol Amelia Edwards Memorial Lecture (entry free)

The Taharqa Wall-Painting Rescue Project

David Singleton, Bristol's City Art Gallery & Museum

Reception Room, Will's Memorial Building, Queen's Road (Clifton Triangle), 1715 hrs.

NB. This is a University event, not an ESB one. However, all are welcome!

October 2006: TBA

Tues 14 November 2006: Lecture, *Egypt in the third dimension: Stereophotography in Egyptology and Archaeology* (this lecture will be in 3D!)
Dr Paul Nicholson, Archaeology Section, University of Cardiff

Tues 12 December 2006: Lecture, *Art and the Myth of Kingship in Ancient Egypt*
George Hart, lately of The British Museum

18 to 29 December 2006: Trip to some of the less-visited corners of Upper Egypt (as well as the less-visited bits of a couple of heavily visited ones!). Special price £1,499 per person. Please contact Chairman for further information.

Tues 16 January 2007: Lecture, *John Garstang and the Liverpool Institute of Archaeology*
Pat Winker, School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool

Tues 13 February 2007:

- Annual General Meeting (at 1830)
- Lecture: *The Tomb of Osiris at Abydos*
Dr Aidan Dodson, Department of Archaeology & Anthropology, University of Bristol
- Winter Party (at 1945)

Tues 6 March 2007: Lecture, *The Wall-Paintings from the Tomb of Nebamun at Thebes*
Dr Richard Parkinson, Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, The British Museum

18 March – 2 April 2007: Bristol Magpies tour of Egypt (approx £1,700)

Introductory visit to Egypt, including Saqqara, Giza, Islamic Cairo, Faiyum, Luxor, Western Thebes, Nile Cruise.

To be escorted by Aidan Dodson, Chairman ESB

NB. This is an event organised by the Bristol Magpies, the Museum friends' organisation, not the ESB. Contact: Mary Bailey, 22 Carnarvon Road, BS6 7DT, tel. 0117-942 1944.

Tues 8 May 2007: Lecture, *The Columns of Ancient Egypt*
Peter Phillips

June 2007: Lecture and Summer Party. *Details to be confirmed*

Accommodation for members from distant parts

A limited number of University rooms are available nearby, at a current B&B cost of £52 (single)/£65 (twin). Bookings may be made on 0117-954 5555 or Hawthorns-reception@bristol.ac.uk.

Also, our member Nigel Venner is generously offering ESB members a 25% discount on rooms at the Castle of Comfort Country House Hotel, Dodington, Nether Stowey, Bridgwater (01278 741264/reception@castle-of-comfort.co.uk: normal rates from £38 single and £95 double).