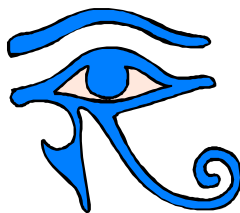


ESSEX
EGYPTOLOGY GROUP



Newsletter 75

December 2011/January 2012

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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|-----------------------|---|
| 4 th Dec | Fund raising event |
| 8 th Jan | The concept of 'Kemet'; Ancient Egypt in its African context – Dr. Sally Ann Ashton |
| 5 th Feb | Egypt in the Pyramid Age – George Hart |
| 4 th March | Misadventures of Mummies – Joyce Filer |
| 1 st April | Man in a Cretan Cloak: J.D.S. Pendlebury at Amarna – Rosalind Janssen |

THIS MONTH

This month is our Fund Raising Event – we will be holding a Crime and Punishment workshop, book auction, photo quiz, word search and anagram quiz, blind auction and 'guess the weight'. Food will be provided and small prizes will be awarded to winners. The event is being held to benefit the South Asasif Conservation Trust. [Voting was close with 17 votes to the EES and 19 to the Conservation Trust.]

NEXT MONTH

Next month we welcome Dr. Sally Ann Ashton, Senior Assistant Keeper at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge

LIVE LIKE AN EGYPTIAN – EXPERIENCE DAYS FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

I recently had the opportunity to run two day courses for students at the school where I normally teach English. I drew heavily on all the practical workshops we had organised at the Essex Egyptology group.

They started off with an artefacts quiz. I booked an artefacts box from the Essex Library service and students had to speculate about the use of various articles such as palettes, papyrus, stelae and statues. This produced a lot of thoughtful ideas such as the notion that the deep carvings suggested there were a lot of blind people in Egypt who had developed an early version of braille. The idea that papyrus was toilet paper was rather alarming!

They then went to market. The Ancient Egyptians did not have money but used a system of barter and exchange which relied on goods being given a certain value in weights of copper. Students were given an identity and some goods, a list of values and a shopping list. They then went to market to see if they could exchange their goods for the items they wanted on their shopping lists. This is difficult to do and required a lot of bargaining skills and flexibility. Some students managed to get what they wanted and some even found husbands or wives as well.

We examined pictures of different mummies showing the variety of patterns created by the wrapping. Students were given large supplies of loo rolls and amulets and experimented with wrapping a volunteer in different styles. I soon learn to ration the loo rolls....

After lunch we had a relaxing game of senet – the board game which is a kind of complicated ludo. Each player has 5 pieces and can play strategically to push his or her opponent's pieces back. Although plenty of sets survive from the past we do not have the ancient rules so these have been made up by archaeologists. I have revised a set of rules from the internet. I have two 'proper' sets made of wood and I have also made a number of cardboard sets. We had a senet tournament with prizes for the winners.

They had a go at linen pleating – tomb paintings from the New Kingdom show linen clothes with very complicated pleats. Following research by Rosalind Janssen on strange wooden boards found in tombs which she thinks might be pleating boards we tried putting pleats in lengths of white cotton.

For a relaxing end to the day we looked at the grid system which artists used to copy figures with the right proportions and then tried this out as well as copying some hieroglyphs.

I managed to refine the activities between the first and second days and have some more ideas to add if I get the chance to do this again. Many thanks to all the EEG members who gave me the ideas in the first place.

Alison Woollard

GODS IN BRIEF – SOBEEK



Sobek, the “lord of the winding waterway”, is usually depicted as a crocodile sitting on a shrine wearing a plumed crown, or a crocodile-headed human figure. Described as “the Raging One” in the Pyramid Texts, Sobek seems to be a personification of the dangers of the Nile, but also of its fecundity. He is emblematic of pharaonic power, which is expressed in the hieroglyphic spelling **ḥ** of the word for ‘sovereign’, as well as royal statuary showing Sobek and the king side by side.

His cult gains particular prominence in the Middle Kingdom as the many personal names compounded with Sobek show. He is associated with Horus and the Osirian myth and he is also syncretised with Re into Sobek-Re leading to his “promotion” to a creator god in the New Kingdom. He was worshipped at a number of sites, including Thebes, but his principal cult centres are Shedet in the Fayum, which is already attested from the Old Kingdom, and Kom Ombo in Upper Egypt. He is the child of the goddess Neith and at Kom Ombo he forms a triad with Hathor as his consort and Khonsu the divine child.

Tilly Burton

HARROGATE PUMP ROOM MUSEUM

On a recent visit to Harrogate I visited the Egyptian Exhibition at The Pump Room Museum. Two local men Benjamin Kent and a James Ogden donated the bulk of the items. Benjamin Kent was just 17 years old when friends (Flinders Petrie and Howard Carter) asked him to join an excavation. James Ogden was also friendly with a prominent archaeologist of the time. Many of the items are from Amarna. It is a small exhibition but modern and overseen by the York University, geared in a small part for children having an x-ray machine with x-rays to view of mummy parts to look at. There is a mummy in its sarcophagus in good condition – dated C1000 BC, a priest from Thebes, a very nice head of Anubis and then lots of small items of jewellery and faience.

Whilst I wouldn't go to Harrogate just for the exhibition, it is an interesting museum and the Egyptian Exhibits although only 4 cabinets are well presented and I believe they vary the contents as they say they have many pieces of jewellery. If you are in the area do take the opportunity to visit the museum as it is rather unusual setting and has other interesting exhibits.

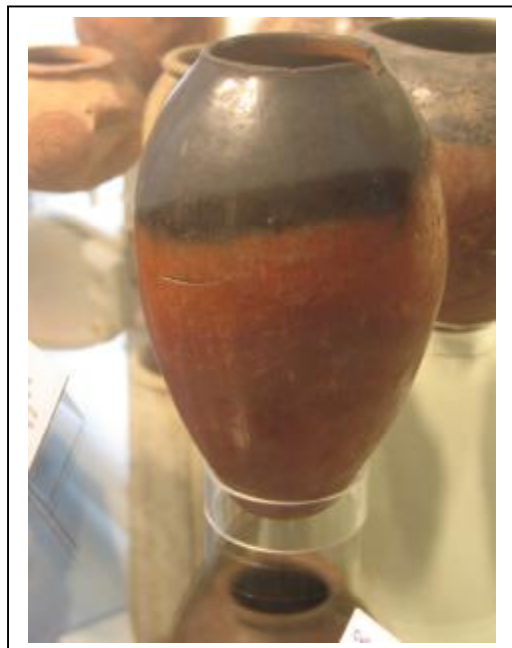
Jill Cockerill

EXHIBITION REVIEW

From Egypt's sands to northern hills: an exhibition of John Garstang's excavations in Egypt

Whilst on holiday in the Lake District we went into Kendal museum to see this exhibition. Small but very interesting it related the story of John Garstang (to my embarrassment I have to say I had never heard of him). Born in 1876 in Blackburn he was educated at Blackburn and Oxford studying mathematics but obviously preferring archaeology!

From 1899-1901 he worked for Flinders Petrie in Egypt, then he went independent, working at sites in Beni Hassan, Hierakonpolis, Esna and Abydos. His work was carried out for the Institute of Archaeology at Liverpool and financed by wealthy individuals who funded the digs in return for a share of the finds.



In 1904 his home was a tomb in Beni Hassan where he excavated 888 tombs, mostly Middle Kingdom. He was in Hierakonpolis (Nekhen) in 1905-06 excavating Naqada II and III graves, 188 of them, mostly unspoilt with the bodies in the fetal position and simple grave goods of food storage vessels, slate palettes and ceramic vessels – including my favourite Naqada II black topped red ware. He was in Esna in 1905 and Abydos for four seasons, 1906-09, excavating 1,130 tombs. In 1910 he moved and worked at Meroe, Sudan, and then Anatolia. Garstang became the first Professor of Archaeology at the University of Liverpool.

There were some lovely pieces in the exhibition, along with giant photographs of him in his tomb-home and at digs. Sadly it is an awfully long way to go, but if you ever hear his name, remember I counted 2,206 graves/tombs to his name.

Janet Brewer

BLOOMSBURY SUMMER SCHOOLS 2012

The Bloomsbury Summer Schools will be held slightly earlier next year to avoid a clash with the Olympics, 25 June-13 July. Details of courses to follow in due course.

This month thanks go to Janet Brewer, Tilly Burton, Jill Cockerill and Alison Woollard.

The Essex Egyptology Group Committee wish you all
a very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year

Clare Banks (Treasurer) – Janet Brewer (Secretary) – Eamonn Gray (Publicity)
Lesley Kelly (Membership) – Alison Woollard (Programme)

The Newsletter Editor, Janet Brewer, welcomes all articles, letters, reviews and quizzes.

All articles express the views and opinions of their authors

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