



The Egypt Society of Bristol

NEWSLETTER

Number 7, January 2002

Chairman's Dig

After the recent bumper issues, a return to a rather shorter newsletter — not intentionally, but owing to a combination of circumstances that have led to this being put together in something of a hurry, with the Editor stuck in Sri Lanka and the 'proper' Newsletter stuck back in the Gordano Valley!

The new season is well underway with one minor hiccup in that our January speaker, Serena Love, was made an offer she couldn't refuse and dragged off to do fieldwork at Giza for January. However, we've managed to do a swap with our June speaker, so we will still be getting all our lectures — just in a slightly different order.

The Chairman and Treasurer's autumn has been somewhat manic. We started off with a trip to Leiden in the Netherlands to see the new Egyptian display in the National Museum of Antiquities. Those of you who take *KMT* magazine should be able to read our report later in the spring — but suffice it to say that it's well worth seeing, and that we may look into running an ESB trip there in 2003.

Go East Young Man ...

We then headed off to an international conference on 'Abusir and Saqqara in the year 2001' in Prague. Unfortunately, the tragic events of 11 September had reduced US participation to one person, with only one invited speaker from the UK (the Chairman!) also being present; in addition, Zahi Hawass also had to withdraw, but sent his good wishes via his colleague, Tarek el-Awadi. Nevertheless, the conference proved to be informative, stimulating — and also very enjoyable.

There were also speakers from the Czech republic, Poland, Germany and France (all — luckily — speaking in English), and a number revealed some very exciting new discoveries, including a new gallery in the Twenty-sixth Dynasty tomb of Iufaa at Abusir (discovered intact a few years ago), and a mysterious Old Kingdom deposit of animal bones associated with the god Seth west of the Step Pyramid. In addition, a convivial evening reception was provided by our Czech hosts, including a fascinating guided tour of the most ancient part of the Charles University. The conference participants were also taken to an excellent

largely-photographic exhibition concerning the work at Abusir at the Náprstk Museum, which included a video film of the opening of Iufaa's sarcophagus.

As we departed, everyone was impressed by the hospitality and efficient organisation of the gathering, much of which had been in the hands of the younger members of the Egyptology Department. It is hoped that the conference will become a regular event, providing Egyptologists with both an opportunity to investigate some of the most important sites in Egypt, and also to visit one of the world's most beautiful cities.

And then South-East ...

Next up was a tour of Middle Egypt; the area has been largely closed to tourists over the past few years, and thus when the offer of leading a tour there came up, I jumped at it. It was a fairly intensive wander up the Nile from Cairo, starting at Lisht — the necropolis of the kings of the early Twelfth Dynasty — then round most of the Fayoum, before site-crawling down to Tell el-Amarna, city of Akhenaten and Nefertiti, and back.

Amazingly, it all went very smoothly, in spite of the police vans that we had with us all the time. Three sites were completely new to even the Chairman — Deir el-Bersha, Zawiyet el-Maytein and Tihna el-Gebel. Bersha has the superb tomb of Djehutyhotpe (with the famous scene of workmen dragging a stone colossus), but is really spectacular scenery-wise as well; it also has a 1-in-1 or 2-in-1 slope that's 'fun' to get up, and even more so to come down (at least not head-first ...).

Scenery is also a feature of Tihna, with a couple of rock-cut temples; Zawiyet el-Maytein has a nice mini-step pyramid (probably built by Seneferu), plus the biggest Muslim cemetery I have ever seen, with (literally) square miles of domes. Another 'new' place was Medinet Maadi — a Twelfth Dynasty temple with some Roman additions now almost entirely swallowed up by the sand.

Amarna was of course great, although we did not have time to get to the Royal Tomb (even though we had a whole day there — so much else to do!).

At the end of the trip, the Chairman was dragged off by two TV crews to Luxor in order to film (two different!) documentaries on Tutankh-

©The Egypt Society of Bristol

c/o Department of Archaeology, University of Bristol

43 Woodland Road, BRISTOL BS8 1UU

Tel.: 0117-942 1957; e-mail: 100761.3075@compuserve.com

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Archaeology/html/research/egyptsoc.htm>