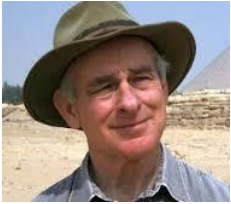


HOTEP

Issue 85:
December 2024

**Review of the Fundraising Meeting
Saturday 19 October 2024**

by Mark Lehner



In our first collaboration with the Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society (TVAES) we were thrilled to be able to host a return visit from **Mark Lehner**. This talk was an opportunity for both AE Societies to show their support for Mark's Ancient Egypt Research Associates (AERA).

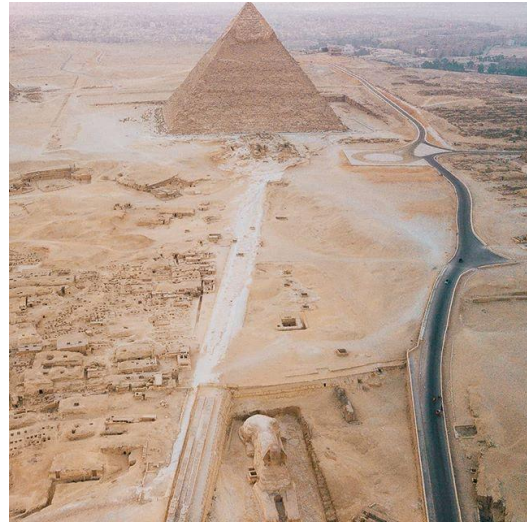
He started by explaining how his presentation on *'The Archaeology of the Sphinx'*, was a return to the subject which first drew him to the Giza plateau more than forty years ago. This was an opportunity to review his career and the developments in archaeology and Egyptology over those decades.

Mark reminisced about his early career, working with Rainer Stadelmann and the Giza Mapping Project and brought us up to date with his current projects in cooperation with Zahi Hawass. Throughout, he drew our attention to the work of the various expeditions which have tried, over the years, to make sense of the location and orientation of the Sphinx, especially in relation to the other buildings in the vicinity. These include the Sphinx Temple and the Khafre Valley Temple, both built to a similar plan. By careful analysis of the geological strata and by plotting the position of the blocks used in the temples' construction, Mark showed that the stone was quarried

The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society



from the Sphinx enclosure. This confirmed that the temples and the Sphinx itself were created at the same time during the reign of Khafre. ↓



Confirmation of the Old Kingdom date for the Sphinx came from the artefacts such as pottery and stone tools found in the infill of the corridor to the north of the enclosure. Mark described excavating a small trench across this passage and carefully drawing the objects in situ to show that the Old Kingdom layers were clearly contemporary with the Sphinx. He also described his dismay and frustration when he discovered that no artefacts from the later clearance of the whole corridor were retained and that those from his initial trench had been lost. His detailed drawings are the only remaining proof of the existence of this material.

Mark's work on the pyramid-builders' town of Heit el-Ghurab

demonstrated that Khafre's temples fronted the harbour basin where stone deliveries → were received. He described the topography of Giza showing clearly how the causeways and buildings were related and how a sacred landscape of temples developed around the Sphinx. These constructions illustrated the development of a solar cult which reached its height in the New Kingdom when temples were built by Thutmose IV, Amenhotep III and their successors, including Ramesses II.

Over the centuries, the fascination with the Sphinx has led to many searches for internal features, specifically the fabled 'Hall of Records'. Mark showed a map which records the multitude of holes which have been dug, and where scanning probes have been sunk, using some of the newer scientific methods of investigation. He described the shaft at what he called the Sphinx's 'rump' ← which was re-

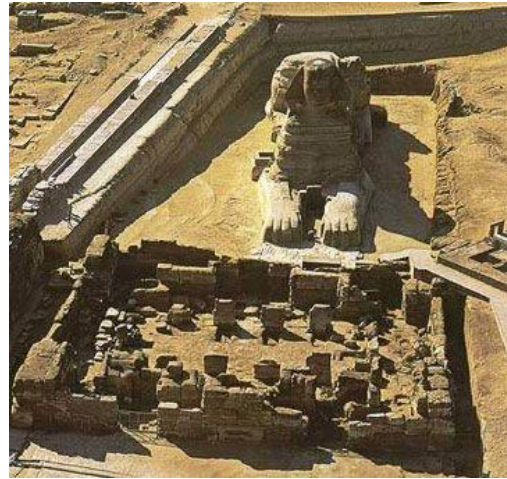


discovered largely thanks to the memory of a workman who had assisted in its original excavation.

← which was re-

thanks to the memory of a workman who had assisted in its original excavation. In describing the 'boxes', sometimes described as shrines, which were built against the Sphinx to both sides, he mentioned the discovery of some statue fragments, probably dating to Ramesside time. Mark said these suggested that the box just behind the Sphinx's right shoulder was the plinth for a larger-than-life-size → statue of a king, but that there was no attempt to reconstruct the statue and some of its now badly eroded fragments still lie near the Khafre causeway. He referred to photos and drawings through the ages to explain the likelihood of another statue standing against the Sphinx's chest, below the beard.

Mark has a refreshingly common-sense approach to the various theories associated with the age of the Sphinx and



the identification of its creator. He politely stated his principle that any theory which is pure speculation without scientific or archaeological confirmation is not proper research because it leads nowhere. As an example, he cited the fact that no matter how often Atlantis has been mentioned in connection with the building of the Pyramids etc. no one has yet produced solid evidence to verify the existence of the Atlantean 'civilization'. The insight into Mark's own work, provided by this talk, showed how the facts are usually more interesting than the fiction. He hinted that, now he has been working at Giza for longer than George Reisner it might be time to write his own memoirs. We all eagerly look forward to that publication.

Hilary Wilson



Review of November meeting

On Saturday 16 November **Peter J Brand** Peter hosted a captivating Zoom lecture on **'The Buildings of Seti I'**, focusing on two of his most significant structures: the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak Temple and the Gurnah Temple on the West Bank of Luxor.

These ambitious construction projects were left unfinished at Seti's death, with his son, Rameses II, stepping in to complete them – often altering the designs to include his own cartouches. As a result, both temples lack the full decorative scheme Seti had intended, and only a small portion of the Gurnah temple remains intact today.

Peter began the talk by explaining the methods used to construct the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak. The builders raised massive stone blocks using infill materials, which were later removed as the stonework was refined. To facilitate decoration, wooden scaffolding was erected to reach the walls and columns. Peter also addressed the common misconception that wood was scarce in ancient Egypt, emphasising that the Egyptians had abundant access to various types of wood, including sycamore and acacia.



The lecture compared the two temples, with Karnak being dedicated to "Seti Beloved of Amun is Effective in the Estate of Amun", and the Gurnah temple having the additional title "On the West of Thebes". Both temples were constructed simultaneously, and Peter noted that different groups of workers were assigned to each site. The temple at Gurnah was



Source: Peter J. Brand, *The Monuments of Seti I; Epigraphic, Historical & Art Historical Analysis*. Leiden, E.J. Brill, (2000), plate 101.

named "She Before Her Lord", reflecting how the ancient Egyptians viewed the temple as a goddess in its own right.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the talk was the discussion of altered bas-reliefs. Peter highlighted a particular relief on a door jamb in Karnak where Seti's figure was originally depicted standing upright, but was later re-carved to show him bowing before the gods. This change was evident in the distorted proportions of the relief, notably with the ear appearing unusually high on his head and numerous attempts at re-carving gives him a triple chin and a disjointed arm! The exploration of these modifications provided fascinating insights into the evolving messages conveyed through the art.

For more information about the Karnak Great Hypostyle Hall Project see: <https://www.memphis.edu/hypostyle/>

To download a pdf copy of Peter's excellent work on the Monuments of Sety I, see: <https://archive.org/details/the-monuments-of-seti-i>

or

https://www.academia.edu/40610263/The_Monuments_of_Sety_I_Epigraphic_Historical_and_Art_Historical_Analysis_2000_Probleme_der_%C3%84gyptologie_16_Leiden_E_J_Brill

Peter Brand is a Canadian Egyptologist with particular interest in the history and culture of the New Kingdom, particularly the late 18th Dynasty and the Ramesside Periods.

Sara Arnold

The last Zoom meeting of 2024 will be on Saturday 14 December

'Forgotten objects, the public and the extraordinary – Ancient Egyptian objects from Cyfarthfa Castle Museum as tool to fascinate'



by Katharina Zinn

Museum-excavations – discovering unprovenanced or forgotten objects in museum storerooms – open new opportunities for engagement with the public and shed new light on the need to contextualise the discovered artefacts and to make sense of these "ordinary" finds. Developing strategies for unmasking the extraordinary within such neglected objects and the communication of these finds through imaginative activities for the wider public and the research community has been at the core of joint projects between Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil, Wales (UK) and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David Wales. Aiming at the literal and cultural (re-)discovery of ancient Egyptian artefacts, the project brings these objects back to life by different types of cultural representations via academic outputs, exhibitions, story-telling, a *Museum of Lies* and artwork inspired by the items in order to "unpack the collection".



Katharina Zinn is currently Associate

Professor in Egyptian Archaeology and Heritage at the University of Wales, Trinity St David (UWTSD). Her interests lie in the area of Egyptian material culture and the modern reception of the past as presented in museums. From 2020 to 2023, Katharina has been the Chair of the EES Collection Committee.

Register in advance for this meeting using the link below:

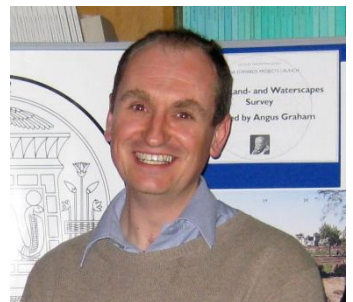
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8125283838?pwd=ZU9jUWJnd8rxUrrxPRPOjLRcXC7>

Registration is approved & the joining link sent on confirmation of payment of the meeting fee: SAES Member £3, Overseas Member £4, Guest £6

For payment details or to cheque your payment status, please contact the Secretary saesinfo55@gmail.com

Advance notice of Programme Change

We have just heard that **Jan Picton**, who many of you will know from her work with the Friends of the Petrie Museum, has suffered a stroke and will not now be able to give our Zoom talk in February next year. Following the advice of Sonia Zakrzewski at Southampton University, we approached her former colleague **Angus Graham** and we have been lucky enough to secure him as our speaker for the meeting on Saturday 15 February. Full details of his talk on **'Amenhotep III's Mansion of Millions of Years'** will be



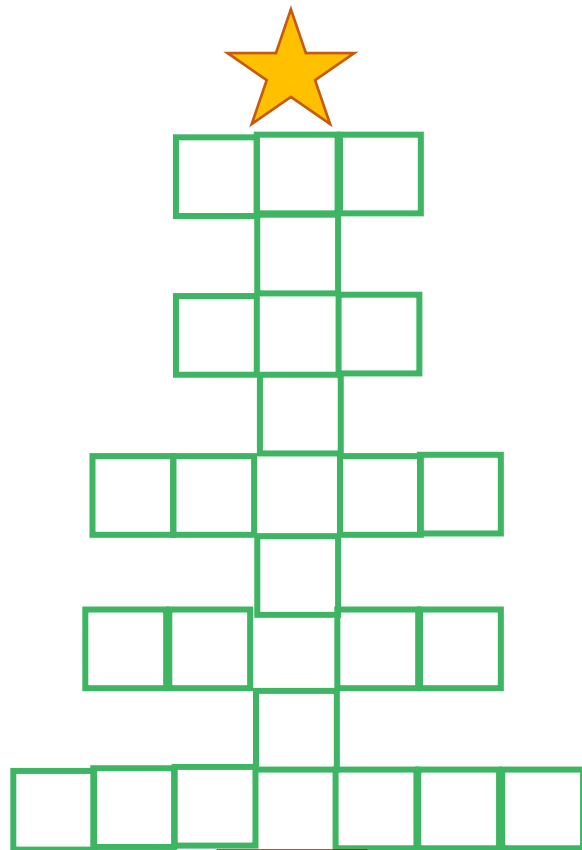
released in the New Year but we wanted to give advance notice that, to accommodate Angus' schedule we have agreed that we will open the meeting **later than usual at 15.30 for a start at 16.00 (GMT)**. Please amend your calendars to that effect. Meanwhile, we wish Jan all the best in her recovery.

**Please enjoy the return of our
Holiday Quiz**



**Christmas Tree
Crossword**

**Fill in the five
branches in the
Christmas tree grid
from top to bottom
from the following
clues.**



- 1:** The Eight of Hermopolis created this
- 2:** Father of Osiris
- 3:** Son of the First, father of the Second
- 4:** Play this board game at Christmas?
- 5:** Peret, Akhet and Shmu are the

**Now fill in the blanks in the trunk
for a final festive word**

Hint: follows clue 5

**Solution in the next edition of
Hotep.**



*Have a peaceful holiday.
See you in the New Year.*

