



HOTEP

Issue 47: January 2020

The newsletter of The Southampton Ancient Egypt Society

Review of December Meeting

There was a change to the advertised talk for our December meeting due to illness. Fortunately, Hilary was able to step into the breach **with 'Age Cannot Wither Her: The Lasting Allure of Cleopatra'**. This looked at the persistent popular fascination with Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemies, a fascination that has led to her image being used to sell everything from cosmetics to cigarettes. Cleopatra has



been the subject of several films, the first dating from 1917 and the most famous being the 1963 film with Elizabeth Taylor in the title role. As Hilary said, there is no immediately recognisable contemporary portrait of Cleopatra equivalent to the

famous head of Nefertiti or Tutankhamun's gold mask. Indeed, coin portraits are less than flattering emphasising her prominent nose, so it is the image of Taylor as Cleopatra that usually comes to the public's mind when her name is mentioned – unless you are British and of a certain age and then it might be Amanda Barrie ↑ in *Carry on Cleo!*



Cleopatra has become a modern byword for feminine beauty, for how else could she have captivated two powerful Romans, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony? However, in the popular imagination she is



Katy Perry as Katypatra

an enigmatic and beautiful woman and each generation finds its own version with which to identify.

The talk was followed by the Christmas Social with a short quiz. The SAES team Quiz Trophy was won, again, by the team led by Mark Walker. In the future we might have to split that team up to share the knowledge around more fairly!



As you can see from the picture above, we asked people to wear Christmas jumpers to the meeting and make donations to the Hibs Appeal for Lupus. Annette, who is a lupus sufferer, explained how the incurable auto-immune condition affects her and the importance of the research funded by such appeals. We are proud to say that SAES raised £110 at this meeting for the Hibs Lupus charity. Annette will be pleased to accept further donations. A metaphorical prize for the best jumper goes to Norman Pease.

December Quiz Answers

The missing words are marked in **RED**

- 1: The Hyksos rulers of the Second Intermediate Period used to be called the **SHEPHERD** Kings
- 2: Imhotep and Amenhotep Son of Hapu were famous **WISE MEN** of ancient Egypt.
- 3: The goddess Sopdet or Sothis was the personification of a **STAR**.

Jane Brady sent this for our edification

Here's a little trivia quiz for you. When was a poem about Ancient Egypt last in the news? The answer is 31st March 2012. The Guardian reported that juvenilia written by Angela Carter in the 1950s has been re-discovered in her old school magazine. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/mar/31/angela-carter-teenage-poetry-found-school> It even made the BBC news I remember.

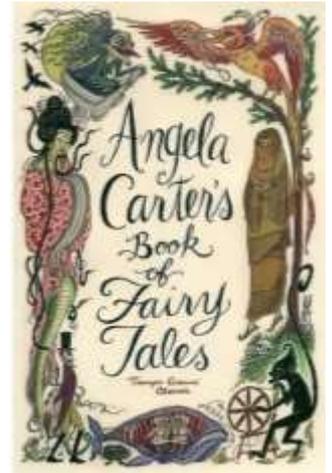
The priests in the temples
Chanted psalms and praises
"Amen-Ra! The voices cried
"Amen-Ra we thank you greatly
Another night has died!"...
...*Thebes is dead, its temples dead
No more do beggars crave
A little food, or money maybe
All is silent in the grave
In the tombs so far away
Ancient kings long vigil keep
'Til the last bright day is ended
And all the Earth shall sleep*

These are extracts from '**The Valley Of The Kings**' written by Angela Carter, aged 12, in 1952 when she was a pupil at Streatham Hill & Clapham High School, GPDST. ↓



Angela Carter (no relation to Howard Carter) wanted to be an Egyptologist. Instead, she became an author and re-wrote many European folk tales, such as '*The Company of Wolves*', a retelling of the Red Riding Hood story, starting a new literary fashion which continues today in films like Disney's '*Snow White and the Huntsman*.'

Ancient Egyptologists might well wonder what if Angela Carter had read '*The Tale Of Sinuhe*'? Would she have overturned centuries of classical tradition and written about not Cleopatra but Nefertiti?



Ancient Egypt is not as well represented in English Literature as one might think. You might have come across the novels of Joan Grant and Pauline Gedge and the American writers Lauren Haney and Elizabeth Peters, but, apart from Shelley's '*Ozymandias*', try finding enough poems about Ancient Egypt to make an anthology! A historian friend of mine puts this down to "our Euro-Centric culture." So much for Brexit then.

Scene from the 2019 staging of *Akhnaten*, at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.



Note. Nefertiti does star in the opera **Akhnaten** by American composer Philip Glass 1983. British set designer Phelim McDermott says he studied hieroglyphs then put them on stage in the most recent production. If you're not familiar with the Glass opera, do try googling. Tutankhamen has a walk on part at the end.

(additional material researched by Hilary Wilson)

Next Meeting

Saturday 15 February

Lee Young is making a welcome return visit to talk about the work of artist **Nina de Garis Davies**, who, with her husband Norman, ↓ was responsible for some of the



most famous and best facsimile versions of wall paintings and reliefs from ancient Egypt. Her detailed work was used to illustrate excavation memoirs and serve as accurate replicas of scenes, some of which have since been severely damaged or even destroyed.



By the nature of its subject matter, this talk promises to be a visual feast not to be missed.

Advance Notice



We are offering another 5-week informal evening class starting after Easter. This will be **Ramesses II: the Glory Years**, a study of the origins of the 19th Dynasty of pharaohs and the events of the first half of the family's most famous son, Ramesses II. The class will be held on Friday evenings 7.30 – 9.00 from 17 April to 22 May (with a break for the VE Day holiday on 8 May). In order for this to go ahead we really need to have people signed on and paid up in good time. Informal class fees are unchanged at £20 for SAES Members and £25 for non-members. Please speak to the Secretary for enrolment.

January Quiz

Egyptian Fiction

Who wrote each of these historical fiction novels set in ancient Egypt?

1: Death Comes as the End.

2: River God

3: Nefertiti: The Book of the Dead

4: The Son of the Light

Answers in the next issue of Hotep

