



## **Presidents Report 2016-17 (Professor Alan Lloyd)**

The Society continues to prosper. I was delighted to hear that the membership has hit a new high of 153. Generally speaking, I find that membership of societies, Egyptological and otherwise, is declining at present, partly because of the uncertain economic climate and partly because the younger generation seem rather disinclined to join anything at all. Societies have to work very hard to bring in new blood, but, without that, they will gradually fade away. It is, therefore, very much to the credit of TVAES that it is managing to buck the trend.

In bringing in new members to societies Egyptology has a head start over many societies concerned with the Ancient World. The media, particularly the digital media, have an insatiable appetite for all things Egyptological. Much of it is rather silly and even out of date, but we have recently seen a conspicuous exception in the publicity given to the work of Mark Lehner on the Great Pyramid. The discovery of the papyri in Wadi al-Jarf has thrown a vivid light on the transport of blocks to the pyramid. It has long been recognised that they were brought by water, but Mark Lehner has been able to add a great deal of detail to the process. The work has also addressed the question, yet again, of the way in which the inner core of the pyramid was constructed and has come up with the idea that it is not constructed of cut blocks, as usually claimed, but may well have been filled with the vast quantity of debris created by the preparation of blocks for the construction. The jury is still out on this one, but the question as to where all the debris went is an intriguing one.

The pyramid work is only the most spectacular project now raging. It is good to see that the political difficulties in Egypt have not prevented a steady stream of fieldwork and other research taking place. This is reflected in the society's lecture programme for the coming year which includes coverage of the University of Memphis work at Thebes and the French Mission's discoveries at Deir el-Medina as well a discussion of cemeteries to the west of the Step Pyramid complex. All that has not precluded the usual wide range of lectures including the vexed issue of the origins of Egypt. Overall, when we consider the riches on offer, it is hardly surprising that the society continues to flourish and grow.

## **Chairman's Report 2016-17 (John Billman)**

We have again been fortunate to enjoy another strong year with good attendance at our annual lecture series, and as our President mentioned membership now exceeding 150. This kind of success is not to be taken from granted, this past year has seen the closure of Wessex

Ancient Egypt Society in Bournemouth and our national society in Egyptology the Egypt Exploration Society (EES) lose over 100 members. TVAES's relentless focus on strong events, welcoming visitors, low subscriptions, sourcing speakers for local groups, community marketing across the region and a local eco-system of extra-mural classes have all helped greatly. I would once again like to thank Francesca Jones, Anne Roberts and all committee and society members who have worked hard for the society.

Our strength both in members and visitor fees enabled the AGM in 2016 to make a further allocation to the Donation Fund, specific awards were made by the Donation Sub-Committee this spring and the first of these missions at the fascinating site of Gebel el-Silsila is already working in the field. Meanwhile in July we were able to add an additional free lecture to the programme, taking advantage of a visit to the UK by Dr Suzanne Onstine who reported on her work in the tomb of Panehsy which was supported by an earlier round of the TVAES Donation fund. This lecture was on a date that we had originally intended to hold a fund-raising study day for Hierakonpolis, changing field plans has meant that this study day has now been rescheduled for July 2018.

This last year also provided an opportunity to make a well-overdue visit to our local Egyptology collection at the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology (despite the name 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the collection is Egyptian!). This sell-out visit included a handling session and a short tour of the gallery and provided us an opportunity to contrast the material held locally with national collections that perhaps we know better. Our other trip saw us travel to continental Europe for the first time in over a decade with our trip to the Netherlands. With a new style of self-transportation but organized events we were able to visit the wonderful Queens of the Nile exhibition in Leiden, enjoy three guided visits to permanent galleries of Egyptology and a special lecture afternoon in conjunction with the local society Mehen.

## **Secretary's Report 2016-17 (Francesca Jones)**

I have enjoyed my first year as the Secretary to TVAES, but I must thank four people particularly. First, John Billman who has been very supportive of the role. Secondly, Anette Olivier who not only gave me a thorough grounding in what to do when, but has continued to provide help and advice throughout the year. As I still have the role of TVAES Publicity – which takes some time every month – Anette has generously continued the role of Bookings Secretary for the various event rooms, a role not without its excitements as venues change previously confirmed dates! Thirdly, Anne Roberts, who has taken over from the role of TVAES Publicity the tasks of promulgating the Society to other community groups such as Archaeological and Historical Societies, offering them Egyptology lectures and promoting to them publicity on our TVAES events. This has proved very fruitful, with several groups asking for lectures, a number which has been steadily increasing over the past couple of years. A small team of John, Anne, Anette, Beth and Nick have been providing this service, but we would welcome offers from other TVAES members who would like to offer such lectures. This tripartite split of the roles seems to be working very well. And Finally, I would like to thank Gerry Palmer, who has continued to design the excellent annual leaflet, the half-

yearly posters circulated to Libraries, Universities and Museums, and the monthly event posters for more local distribution.

Otherwise, the Society has had a very successful year, with a very good attendance at most lectures – even some of the more obscure-titled ones – and I have myself enjoyed them all (sadly missing the David Roberts lecture as I was in Egypt). Although there was no Study Day this year (as truncated excavation work meant that there was little new for the lecturer, Renee Friedman, to report on Hierakonpolis), John Billman managed to book in an extra lecture date in July by Dr. Susanne Onstine talking about Excavations at the Tomb of Panehsy at Thebes, which was especially interesting as the site is not currently open for visitors.

The Society held a local trip to the Reading University Ure Museum, which was fully booked; the displays were interesting but the two handling sessions were most enjoyed. John will probably talk about the TVAES arranged spring trip to Leiden, The Hague and Amsterdam, also much appreciated by attendees.

## **Chairman's Outlook 2017-18 (John Billman)**

Our lecture series for the year is already well underway, with a wonderful start in September from Sarah Griffiths on Mentuhotep II and a long-overdue return visit from Dr Nigel Strudwick in October to talk about Old Kingdom Texts including some new discoveries. The programme is once again a mix of some new faces bringing us the latest in Egyptological research combined with some of the most senior Egyptologists in the country.

Our challenge this year is to maintain and build upon the momentum that we have established in recent years. Once again we are supported by local classes from third party providers, ongoing press releases from Egypt on new discoveries and a new larger membership to spread the word. Please as always do take advantage of all the opportunities you can with events and classes in our area and enjoy another year of local Egyptology in the Thames Valley.