

Presidents Report 2014-15 (Professor Alan Lloyd)

We can once more look back with considerable pride over the current year's work of the Society. Membership and attendance continue to grow, illustrating the continued and growing capacity of Egyptology to attract professionals and amateurs alike. As usual, the lecture programme has been very full and has covered a wide range of Egyptological research, including fieldwork, literature, technology, social history, Nubian archaeology, and analysis of archives. It is particularly good to see Viv Davies' lecture on F.W. Green whose enormous volume of outstanding, and largely unpublished, work is only now being recognised and made available. The lecture on the *Eloquent Peasant* reveals how far we have come in developing a sophisticated approach to Egyptian literature in which Richard Parkinson of Oxford has played such an important role. The issue of radiocarbon dating and Egyptian chronology is also a most welcome topic since there have been recurrent, if low-key, doubts about the reliability of the canonical chronology of Ancient Egypt which we all know and love. How far that needs to be rejigged remains to be seen.

In the light of this exciting panorama of success it is gratifying to be able to record that our Donation Fund has been re-established and re-commenced donations this year. The importance of this aspect of the Society's work cannot be overestimated. It is true that we do not have large sums of money to allocate, but in the current financial climate, where mosaic funding for projects has become very much the norm, our contributions can make a real difference.

All these activities have been taking place against a background of growing insecurity in the Middle East. Even in Egypt this has led to the cancellation of archaeological work at some sites, though it still remains possible to conduct field research in many parts of the country, particularly Upper Egypt where important discoveries continue to be made. However, the activities of the unspeakable ISIS group in the destruction of ancient sites in Iraq and Syria serve as a stark warning of the dangers to which ancient sites in Egypt may yet fall victim. Whilst some aspects of the Sisi regime may not be palatable, we can only be grateful for the determination it has shown in trying to counter the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in the country. We have to accept that divisions within Egypt are so wide and deep that control by the armed forces is the only obstacle to the onset of rampant chaos which can be in no-one's best interest.

Chairman's Report 2014-15 (John Billman)

I am delighted to write that it has been another very successful year for the society with growing membership and increasing attendance at our monthly lectures. This success does not allow room for complacency, and in her first year in the role of Marketing and Publicity our committee member Francesca Jones is making real progress at increasing awareness of the society, a task towards which we can all contribute. At the same time as the lecture programme we have continued with our Hieroglyphs provision, enjoyed a wonderful Sunday Members Miscellany in July and we held a very successful South Asasif fund-raising study day in April. In parallel to all of this we continue to both foster and benefit from an ecosystem of third-party continuing education in our subject, and indeed more generally Reading

remains a bastion in cultural studies adult learning that few towns or cities its size can match or surpass.

I am writing this from Luxor at the end of another summer based in Egypt. In almost every way life and work here is running as normal, and once again I have felt very safe living here most of the summer. Activities far away in the Sinai, and the failed terrorist attempt closer to home at Karnak have resulted in increased security and a reversal of the recent modest increase in tourism. This in turn deprives the Ministry of Antiquities of funds it sorely needs, not to mention the hardship of the local populace. Nevertheless many foreign missions to continue to work in most areas (except the Western Desert) and our Donation Fund helps towards important archaeological work in the country.

As you will read in the next report, it was with sadness that I accepted the resignation of our Honorary Secretary Gill Woods recently. This was Gill's second period of office in the role and on both occasions Gill's conscientious and knowledgeable contributions have been a tremendous asset to the society. I would like to thank Gill on behalf of all of us for all her hard work during the past years.

Secretary's Report (Gill Woods)

The Society has had another extremely successful year. Membership has increased and as a result of that, and attracting more visitors, attendances at meetings were extremely good, with all the seats virtually taken at most of the talks.

Again, the Chairman arranged an eclectic programme covering a variety of subjects from the scientific on the transformation of images by the use of Reflectance Transformation Imaging and the development of a new chronology for ancient Egypt as a result of radiocarbon dating to those with a more geographical flavour: the journeys of Egyptologist F.W. Green in Kush; the identity of the Nubians and their relationship with Egypt and *vice-versa* and the investigation of archaeological remains in the Kharga Oasis. Other topics included the treasures of royal women of the Middle Kingdom, family matters in the late Old Kingdom-early Middle Kingdom, the position of the scribe in society, the exploration of the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant and understanding Howard Carter through his art.

Other activities during the year included the continuation of Hieroglyph classes. A very successful fund raising study day was held on 12th April for the South Asasif Project for which the Society made a generous donation. This year it was also possible to make five awards from the Donation Fund for work in the field. Details of the award are printed in the Newsletter. Thanks must go to Anette Olivier for organising a most enjoyable Members' Miscellany held on 12th July at the Novotel hotel in Reading and to those members who gave presentations.

Thanks must also be given to Beth Asbury for producing another excellent Newsletter, which contained a number of interesting articles written by members. I am sure Beth would welcome more contributions on any Egyptological topics.

Finally, I should mention that I am standing down from the Committee due to pressures not least of work. I would like to express my appreciation to members of the Committee for all

the work they put in to ensure events ran smoothly. As I have said before, however much work the Committee does, without you the members it would be for nothing. So may I thank you for your support throughout the year and may that support continue. Thank you.

Chairman's Outlook 2015-16 (John Billman)

Once again this year we can look forward to a full and varied lecture programme and the society is planning an Amarna fund-raising study day with Barry Kemp in the summer. We will be going forward into this season with a new Honorary Secretary supported by a strong and established team. While much remains the same it is natural that as a society we are constantly renewing. As we grow we face new challenges of success, ranging from how we welcome and embrace new members to how to best manage the coffee queue!

The popularity of ancient Egypt remains enduring. Our own provision is of course complemented by classes (online as well as local), television, museums, trips and much more. As our miscellany once again illustrated our own members have a tremendous level of expertise and enthusiasm in the subject, and I encourage everyone to consider how that can be channelled within both our society and the broader community. We may be facing the onset of cooler weather, but let's make the most of the study opportunities that the new season brings!