



# The Rundle Foundation for Egyptian Archaeology

NEWSLETTER NO. 56

April 1996



MEMBERS OF THE STUDY TOUR 1996 AT ABU SIMBEL

## A.C.E. STUDY TOUR TO EGYPT - JANUARY 1996

The twenty-six intrepid tourists/students who made up the first A.C.E. Study Tour since the Gulf War met Boyo Ockinga and his wife Susanne at the Nile Hilton in Cairo early - too early, some might say - on Sunday, January 7. It was a mixed group - singles, couples and families, the old and the young (very young in the case of the two ten year olds), the first-time-in-Egypt and the recidivists, the very knowledgeable in Egyptian history and the complete novices in the field, the garrulous and the reserved, the gregarious and the solitary, the solemn and the frivolous, the timid and the adventurous - which set off the next day on a three week odyssey - a journey filled, almost overfilled at times, with unforgettable experiences, of which the cultural extremes and the geographic peculiarities of this ancient land were by no means the least remarkable.

No first time visitor can fail to be surprised by the run-down, dingy, neglected state of most buildings in Cairo, astonished by the milling hordes

of people miraculously negotiating the strident traffic snarls of the capital, horrified by the lack of basic hygiene and the primitive squalor in the villages just outside the modern metropolis, worried by the inferior status (to western eyes, at least) of most women, and taken aback by the aggressively assertive sellers of goods and services and the constant demands for baksheesh, and confused by the need to bargain for absolutely every purchase, but also charmed by the evident friendliness and desire to please of the ordinary Egyptian.

Equally, no traveller can fail to be awed by the stark beauty of the endless desert and the barren majesty of the mountains rising steeply from the rock-strewn sands, by the omnipresence of the ancient Nile, by the peaceful serenity of a feluca ride across the river to Elephantine, by the abrupt delineation of the cultivated land and the desert.

It was a journey enlivened by memorable high spots, especially of course the historical ones (particularly for first-time-in-Egypt travellers): the domination of the landscape by the pyramids, the visit to Professor Geoffrey Martin's excavation where he spoke to the group about his work on the tomb of Horemheb and his continuing work on neighbouring tombs, the wonderfully restored tomb of Nefertari, the artefacts from the tomb of Tutankhamen in the Cairo Museum, the monumental size of some of the temples and statues, the delicate beauty and variety of subjects of so many reliefs (frogs, butterflies!), the strikingly displayed exhibits in the little Luxor Museum, the welcome lack of other tourists at sites like Abu Sir, Beit el Wali and Amada, and the indubitable romanticism of the changing light on the Abu Simbel temples, to name just a few.

There were, of course, the low spots: the culinary ones, like the continuing need to pick microscopic bits of parsley off almost everything, and the relentlessly reappearing cheese rolls in the rest tent at Saqqara and the Ramesseum Cafe; the personal ones as individuals succumbed to various, mostly minor, illnesses. But there were culinary and personal triumphs too: the various versions of lentil soup and Om Ali, and the wondrous Nubian coffee at the Nubian Restaurant in Aswan, the smugness of getting the cheapest T-shirts and other souvenirs, not to mention the bargain-priced but beautiful gold jewellery procured through the dynamic Nagla, Macquarie's devoted local guide.

An odyssey indeed! But unlike the original traveller we of the Macquarie group were preserved from serious harm (by Susanne's efficiency in dealing with practical matters), and, because of Boyo's skills as a teacher and boundless enthusiasm for his subject, learned enough to know how much we have still to learn.

## COURSES

*EGYPTIAN CURIOSITIES*: Ms Rodna Siebels will conduct an 8-weeks course from 7-9 pm each WEDNESDAY, commencing 1 May in E5A 207.  
Cost: \$70 (members \$65).

*AN INTRODUCTION TO EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHS*: Professor Naguib Kanawati will conduct an 8-weeks course from 7-9 pm each TUESDAY, commencing 23 July.  
Cost: \$70 (members \$65).

*ANCIENT EGYPTIAN LIVES: THE DAILY LIFE OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS*: Ms Rodna Siebels will conduct an 8-weeks course from 7-9 pm each WEDNESDAY, commencing 7 August.  
Cost: \$70 (members \$65).

## CONFERENCE

A two-day Conference will be held in Mason Theatre (E7B) Macquarie University from 10 am to 5 pm on SATURDAY 21 and SUNDAY 22 September.

The title of the Conference is *BURIED FOR ETERNITY* (includes *A DAY ON AN EGYPTIAN DIG*).

Cost: \$50 (Pensioners & Students \$40).

Refreshments will be available at a reasonable cost.

## ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

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| May       | Coach tour to Canberra - Turner Exhibition - Sat. 18 May.                               |
| July      | Market Day at University - Sale of T-shirts, sloppy joes, socks etc. - Tuesday 23 July. |
| August    | Visit to Nicholson Museum - Sunday 18 Aug. Details July Newsletter.                     |
| September | Conference - <i>BURIED FOR ETERNITY</i> - Sat. 21 and Sun. 22, 10 am to 5 pm.           |
| December  | Festival - Planned for Sunday 8 Dec.  |

**\*\* VOLUNTEER TO ASSIST JOAN BECK \*\***

Would any member(s) be prepared to volunteer a half-day per week to assist Joan Beck with the work of the Foundation/A.C.E.

If you are interested, please 'phone Joan (850.8848) between 8 am - 3pm, Mon.-Thurs. There is an answering service should she be out of the room. Please leave your name and 'phone number (it would be appreciated if you would repeat the number SLOWLY).

**STUDY TOUR OF EGYPT - JANUARY 1997**

The cost of the tour is \$6,300 and is calculated on expected prices for 1997. In the unlikely case of an unforeseeable price rise, the cost may have to be slightly adjusted. All bookings must be accompanied by a \$500 non-refundable deposit, cheques made payable to **A.C.E. TRAVEL ACCOUNT**, and must be received as soon as possible, but no later than Friday 31 May.

The proposed itinerary is available from Joan Beck, and includes some of the traditional sites in Egypt as well as a Nile cruise between Luxor and Aswan and a cruise on Lake Nasser visiting some interesting sites. The tour will be led by Dr Ockinga. (See article on 1996 tour above).

**PUBLICATIONS**

Copies of the Excavation Reports and Studies are available at \$40 per volume (members \$35 per volume) plus postage \$5 per volume within Australia, and \$9 per volume to members outside Australia.

Copies of the *A.C.E. Bulletin* Vols. 1-6 are also available at \$10 per volume (members \$8), plus postage \$3 per volume within Australia, \$5 per volume outside Australia.

Please make cheques payable to **MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY** and forward with your order to Joan Beck.

**CHANGES OF ADDRESS**

Would members proposing to change their address please inform Joan Beck of the new address and telephone number.

**ALL ENQUIRIES: MISS JOAN BECK - (02) 850 8848**