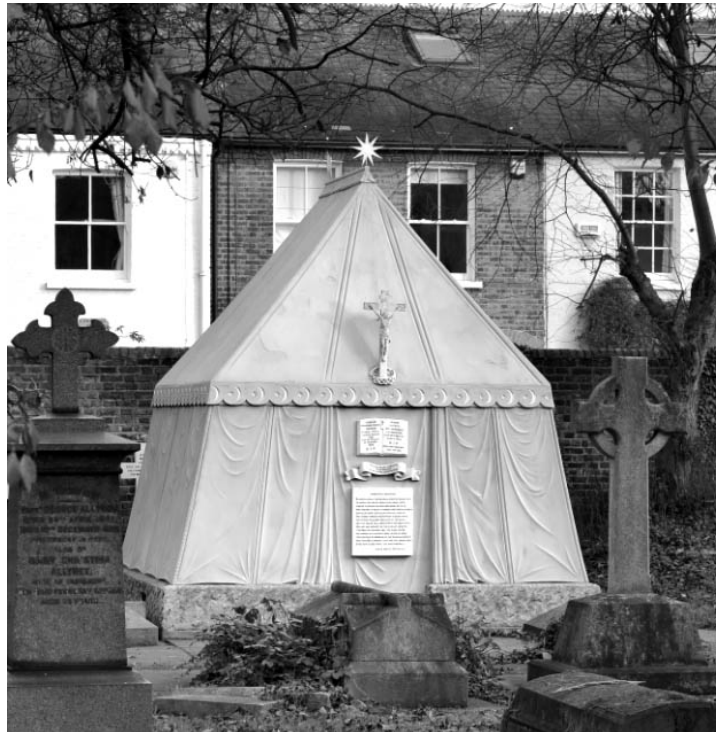


ASTENE

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF TRAVEL
IN EGYPT AND THE NEAR EAST

BULLETIN



NOTES AND QUERIES

Number 53: Autumn 2012

Bulletin : Notes and Queries

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Guest Editor: Robert Morkot

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Bulletin 54 Winter 2012

We welcome articles, queries, replies and other related matters from members and interested readers. The Editors of Bulletin 54 are Russell and Sheila McGuirk (bulletin@astene.org.uk). Please send contributions by 15 December 2012.

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Cover: The restored Burton Mausoleum © HOK courtesy Neil Cooke

ASTENE NEWS AND EVENTS

ASTENE AGM

The AGM took place on 14 July 2012 following the visit to Leighton House (see below).

Chairman's Report. Sheila McGuirk presented her Report, which had previously been circulated to members with *Bulletin* 52 and via email, and added some further remarks: The ASTENE archives have been catalogued by Patricia Usick and are presently stored at her home. They include a digital version of *Bulletins* 1–40 provided by Lisa French and a selection of Norman Lewis's papers donated by his daughter, Stella Embliss. After some problems with previous webmasters, Wiss has now been contracted to carry out work on the website under Janet Rady as editor. Our mass-emailing system, Mailchimp, is now up and running and will facilitate communication with members; Janet Rady and Neil Cooke were thanked for this. Some minor re-design is taking place on the *Bulletin*. Diane Fortenberry is finally being paid for her work on the *Bulletin* but we are also trying an outside provider. The Chairman again thanked Patricia Usick, Lucy Pollard, Karen Dorn and all Trustees and honorary presidents for all their hard work and support during the year. Special personal thanks were also due to Robert Morkot for his practical and moral support throughout. Malcolm Wagstaff thanked Sheila for steering ASTENE through a turbulent period.

The Financial Report is enclosed with the *Bulletin*.

ASTENE, The Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East, seeks an Honorary Treasurer.

ASTENE was founded in 1997

following two successful international conferences on travellers in Egypt and the Sudan, the Arabian Peninsula and northwards through Iraq to Turkey, Greece and the Ottoman Balkans, from the earliest times to the 20th century. We publish a quarterly *Bulletin*, hold biennial conferences and publish books of conference papers, as well as organising events, study-days, and tours to our region of interest. Our international 250-strong membership welcomes anyone with an interest in and knowledge of our area of study: academics, students and others.

Following the end of our Honorary Treasurer's term of office we are seeking someone to manage our finances and deal with our membership. Please look at the ASTENE website and contact Patricia Usick at events@astene.org.uk if you may be interested in joining us in this role.

A visit to Leighton House, home of Lord Frederic Leighton, on Saturday, 14 July 2012.

Braving yet another British Summer monsoon, a group of ASTENE members gathered at the home of the Victorian artist and traveller, Frederic Leighton (1830–1896) for a guided tour before our AGM. No wonder, we thought Leighton had travelled incessantly to the warmth of Mediterranean climes, as our guide explained.

The house has been meticulously restored since our last visit some years ago and there have been many changes. A short film upstairs chronicles the conservation process showing how the appearance of the house was researched from a combination of old photographs, archival documents and contemporary descriptions to re-

create, as far as possible, its original décor and furnishings, many of which were strikingly unusual. The wooden floors, formerly stripped, had been repainted in bright colours, one red, one blue, colours only discovered from the remains of paint drips beneath the boards. Furnishing fabrics were re-woven or replaced with modern reproductions of the original William Morris materials. The magnificent tiling of the 1877 Great Hall has been cleaned and restored and we were told how Richard Burton had rescued the exquisite 16th and 17th century tile panels and fretted woodwork for Leighton from houses being demolished in Damascus. Once in London, a team of artists from Leighton's circle, including the house's architect, George Aitchison, worked on fitting them into an ensemble, filling the odd missing area with newly created tiles and adding new mosaics and decorative features. Based on the palace of La Zisa in Palermo, Walter Crane created a mosaic frieze, column capitals were carved by Randolph Caldecott, and the ceramic artist William de Morgan continued the effect with peacock-blue tiling in the entrance hall. The cupola has been re-gilded, revealing the original stencilling patterns. A predominant feature of the restoration is to maintain the house as it would have looked to a contemporary visitor, using reproductions of Leighton's drawings and scattering tables and desks with facsimiles of his letters and papers which can be handled, thereby avoiding the use of museum cases except for a few antique pieces. A display of ceramic plates on the walls of the dining room has been recreated by modern artists. Leighton's magnificent studio on the first floor is packed with paintings and sculpture, including some beautiful small views from Egypt and the Near East, and a cast of part of

the Parthenon frieze. While Leighton was continuously embellishing the house until his death, the single, small and austere bedroom excused him from having to entertain house-guests.

The present exhibition (ending 23 September 2012) features masterworks of Pre-Raphaelite and 19th century art from the John Schaeffer Collection and includes J.W. Waterhouse's famous painting of 'Marianne leaving the Judgement seat of Herod', 1887, which incorporates many contemporary archaeological discoveries from the Near East to enhance the verisimilitude of the Biblical period. One large painting in the dining room, 'Chivalry' by Sir Frank Dicksee, was commissioned by the civil engineering contractor Sir John Aird, whose firm was famous for building the first Aswan Dam.

Even to a non-specialist, it is apparent how significant this Orientalist house must have been for a generation of artists and craftsmen, eventually extending its influence to popular taste.

Patricia Usick

An autumnal stroll round Kensal Green Cemetery, 22 September 2012

Kensal Green Cemetery on a sunny September afternoon was draped in the orange and gold of its magnificent chestnut trees, as Cathie Bryan led a group of Astene members through a maze of Egyptian-style tombs and mausolea, a tour organised by the indefatigable Trisha Usick. This notable garden cemetery was established in 1832, following a major cholera epidemic in 1831, and received its first burial a year later (there is still space for interested Astene members should

they so wish to join the cemetery's distinguished company). *Walk like an Egyptian* is the title of Cathie's excellent guide to the cemetery and thus we strolled in her company. Major features included obelisks (I especially liked that of Joseph Richardson, died 1855, 'inventor of the Instruments of the Rock, Ball and Steel Band' and of 'the Rock Harmonicum'); and lots of pyramids (one of the earliest that of Wyndham Lewis, died 1838). The 'battered' walls of Egyptian pylons were another feature, for instance in the distinguished tomb of Sir George Farrant (died 1844), that also included curved cornices, a winged sun disk and scrolls of papyrus. Andrew Ducrow, a celebrated horseman and impresario, also notorious for his foul language according to Cathie, had a 'Greco-Egyptian hybrid' for his tomb, guarded by suitably lugubrious sphinxes.

If you can't have the benefit of Cathie Bryan in person, her *Walk like an Egyptian* (obtainable from the Petrie Museum in UCL as well as at the cemetery office) is a valuable history of Egyptianising influences in funerary architecture that includes a crucial guide to the principal monuments. And Kensal Green in (briefly) sunny September almost took us to the banks of the Nile.

Sarah Searight

Walk Like an Egyptian in Kensal Green Cemetery is a ring-bound, guide to the Egyptianizing style of 19th-century funerary monuments, and some of the specific burials in Kensal Green with biographical details. It is attractively produced, with colour illustrations and a valuable plan of the cemetery. It has only just appeared, but will be available from: The Friends of Kensal Green Cemetery, c/o The General



Cathie Bryan explains the details and sources of the Farrant monument to an attentive audience. (Photo: RGM)

Cemetery Company, Harrow Road, London W10 4RA. The price will probably be £7.50, including postage: precise information will be available soon by e-mail at: fokg@hotmail.com.

Cathie drew attention to the importance of the Egyptian style to freemasons as well as travellers, an aspect she is currently researching. Amongst the notable travellers, Egyptian-style monuments, and others with notable associations to the ASTENE region are: -

Sir George Farrant c1770-1844, an imposing Egyptian-style monument that Cathie has shown relies heavily on the publications of Vivant Denon for its detailing. The family monument for Sir Marc Brunel (1769-1849) and Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859) is austere.

An imposing Egyptian chapel monument was erected for the Freemason Sir George David Harris (1827-1902): the very similar monument to Colonel Seton Guthrie (1805-1874) may have been its inspiration. Simpler but still grand Egyptian chapels were erected for: Rowland Ronald (1786-1869), Lt-Gen. Duncan Sim (c.1790-1865), John Ashbury (1806-1866). John Shae Perring (1813-1869) assisted Col. Vyse in measuring the pyramids and has one on his otherwise plain tomb.

Amongst the many others who are relevant to our researches but chose to have Classical or Gothic monuments are: the publisher John Murray; traveller and architect

Owen Jones; politician and friend of Byron, John Cam Hobhouse; and Eustace Meredyth Martin. (There were other Byron connections that the KGC Chief Guide, Henry Vyvyan-Neal entertained us with.)

The popularity of the cemetery was established with the burials of a son and daughter (Princess Sophia) of George III, and a grandson, the Duke of Cambridge. The son was the Duke of Sussex, who was a supporter of Belzoni and contributed several times to the fund for Sarah Belzoni.

Robert Morkot

The Tenth Biennial ASTENE Conference: Researches and Reflections to be held at Aston University, Birmingham, Friday 12–Monday 15 July 2013.

We invite papers for our next ASTENE conference. We will continue to explore the impact of their travels on travellers to Egypt and the Near East, Turkey, the Ottoman Balkans and Greece, from the earliest times to the twentieth century; and also the impact such travellers had on others.

Contributions are invited from a wide range of disciplines and interests. We welcome papers on individual travellers; scientific surveys; pilgrimage, the logistics of travel; the slave trade; artists, photographers and architects; diggers and dealers; government representatives and leisure travellers; authors and narratives; map-makers, guides and dragomans; naturalists; and more ...

Please send an abstract of no more than 100 words for a paper of no more than 25 minutes to Patricia Usick at events@astene.org.uk or by post to Patricia Usick, 32 Carlton Hill, London, NW8 0JY by 1 February 2013.

TRAVEL WRITING: FACT OR FICTION? A Plenary Session.

In addition to our usual mix of individual papers we shall be holding a plenary session and

workshop on Travel Writing: Fact or Fiction?

On his return, James Bruce's account of Ethiopia was not believed; others, which were believed, should not have been. What are the influences on travel writing and how far can it be trusted?

We invite 10-minute contributions for a discussion on this subject. If you wish to participate, please send a brief note on the subject with the abstract of your paper.

Aston University is at the heart of Birmingham, England's second city, and one of the most cosmopolitan in Europe. We shall be in a modern building, with excellent conference and hospitality facilities, built round a courtyard where we hope to enjoy a Barbecue one evening. Birmingham's museums and libraries hold many collections of interest to ASTENE, including the records of the Church Missionary Society; rare 19th century photographs of the Middle East; the travel journals of Neville Chamberlain, who visited Egypt with his father Joseph Chamberlain in 1889–90; the journal of Helen Caddick of Edgbaston, who travelled widely in the late 19th and early 20th century in Egypt and Palestine among other countries; and the renowned Mingana collection of Middle Eastern manuscripts. The Barber Institute of Fine Arts holds one of the finest small collections of European art in the UK and an outstanding Byzantine coin collection, while the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery has renowned Pre-Raphaelite paintings and the recently discovered 'Staffordshire Hoard'.

Conference registration forms will be in the Winter Bulletin.

CONFERENCE BURSARIES.

We will be awarding four bursaries for the 2013 conference which will cover the full conference costs (conference fee, accommodation, meals, but excluding travel costs). Potential recipients should offer a paper on historic travel in Egypt or the Near East and will have roles within the conference organization, for instance helping with the bookstall, supporting the audio-visual IT systems, and supporting the timetable. Those wishing to apply should send a 100-word abstract of the paper they propose, to Patricia Usick events@astene.org.uk, along with the Bursary application form which will be posted on the website shortly.

ASTENE in Jordan: 17–26 April 2013

The final booking for the ASTENE tour to Jordan is this month. If you would like to join us please contact Elisabeth Woodthorpe (elisabethwoodthorpe@ymail.com). Offers of short (20 minute) conference papers (without PowerPoint or slides) with abstract should be sent to Elisabeth Woodthorpe.

John Ruffle recalls the Prehistory of ASTENE

The Egyptian collection of the 4th Duke of Northumberland was purchased by the University of Durham in 1950 and became the basis of the Oriental Museum. When I became keeper of the museum in 1980, I began to follow up the early history of the collections. I contacted the Duke who was very encouraging and his archivist showed me what material was available. This consisted of a small shoebox containing the surviving notebooks from Lord Prudhoe's journeys in Egypt and the

Near East and a couple of albums of sketches by his companion Orlando Felix.

These did not reveal much about the history of the collections and some of the notebooks were missing with no prospect of their being found. Those which survived were interesting as part of a travel diary and I began to transcribe them with a view to editing them in due course. I paid several visits to Alnwick Castle to do this and made the acquaintance of the archivist Colin Shrimpton.

Colin passed my address to a certain Neil Cooke who wrote on 23rd January 1991 (addressing me as Dear Sir!), asking about any mention of James Burton in the Alnwick archive. I was able to help with this enquiry and we then began to discuss other questions relating to our travellers.

At the end of that year, on 13 December 1991, Colin sent me a copy of his reply to a query from Michel Azim of the CNRS who had written to Alnwick with a question about Prudhoe's visits to Luxor. Michel also wrote to me on 31st December 1992 and a three-way correspondence developed.

The questions were mainly about who was where, when, and whether our various travellers could have met as they claimed—or did some of them have a defective or over-imaginative memory. They were fairly simple questions and at one point I mentioned to Neil that if we could only meet we could probably solve them very quickly.

Early in 1993 the Museum had taken on Janet Starkey as a registrar and she shared our interest in these travellers. One day the arrival of another letter from Michel or Neil gave me the idea of bringing

together the few people who seemed also to share our interests. I mentioned it to Janet at coffee time and by lunch time we had the conference half-planned.

Janet pointed out that BRISMES was meeting in Durham in the summer of 1995, and we arranged our conference to follow directly upon that meeting, riding on the back of their publicity with surprising success. The credit for the successful publicity and the organisation of the conference is all due to Janet - and the surprising variety of fascinating experts who wanted to attend.

Neil played an important part in the initial discussions and his commitment and enthusiasm helped to make the first conference so successful.

Neil had first met Jason Thompson in the summer of 1990 when Jason was passing through England on his way back to the United States after a year in Egypt. In 1991 or thereabouts I met Art Goldschmidt of Pennsylvania State University when he was a visiting research fellow at Hatfield College, Durham. He introduced me to Jason who visited my home in Kirk Merrington in 1992 and again in 1994.

In those years we had proper summers and Jason remembers discussions in my garden about travellers in general and a conference in particular and he began to spread the word amongst his contacts in the U.S., Egypt and France. His efforts were crucial to the success of the Durham conference and later ASTENE developments. The contact with BRISMES had brought in several overseas scholars. There was a sizeable French contingent, including Professor Jean Yoyotte who had signed up as a refugee from the chaos of redecoration in his office!

Michel Azim was not able to come to the conference and recent attempts to contact him have been frustrated by the IT gremlins. It is a pity that many other of the French visitors who made a significant contribution to the first conference have also dropped out of sight.

We were accommodated in Collingwood College and held our meetings in their new conference suite. The accommodation was fine but the new conference suite had heating that could not be switched off and windows that could not be opened. All those who attended will remember cooking gently in one of the hottest weeks of that summer but we had a very successful conference, (in other words, I found the answers to my questions) and, although it was not any part of my plans, it proved to be the basis of the repeat at Oxford two years later when the Society was formally set up.

Harry James, who later was president of ASTENE, was busy arranging a conference at Kingston

Lacey and was not involved in any way with the Durham meeting. I spoke to him soon after Janet and I had our initial conversation and

received his blessing and encouragement but no more. He may well have put Jason and Neil in touch with each other; my contact with them was, as I have described, through Art Goldschmidt and Colin Shrimpton.

When I first thought of the conference I had no inkling of the size of the response. I wondered at the beginning if we were not being unduly ambitious because I thought that we might draw at best half a dozen people and that we could probably all meet round our dining table at home. As Keeper of the Oriental Museum I was able to provide associated exhibitions on travel books, on Palestine and from the Thomas Cook archive. Our notice in fact brought in some 70 responses. And the rest is history...

John Ruffle



Morris Bierbrier, holding the new edition of *Who Was Who?* flanked by outgoing Chair, Sheila McGuirk, and Vice-President Malcolm Wagstaff. Photo: Russell McGuirk

OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS

Who Was Who in Egyptology

The fourth edition of *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, (published by the Egypt Exploration Society, 3 Doughty Mews—www.ees.ac.uk) was launched at the EES offices on July 12 with several ASTENE members attending. All the speakers, EES Director Chris Naunton, ASTENE founder member, Jason Thompson, and current editor, Morris Bierbrier, paid homage to Warren Dawson, the editor of the first compendium published in 1951. But it fell to the editor of the second edition, Eric Uphill, to expand on this. Warren Dawson was an insurance broker. When Eric was working on the second edition of the book which came out in 1969 he wondered if he should get in touch with Mr Dawson. To this Harry James replied, 'You won't want to do that—he's a terrible bore.'

Fortunately the launch at the EES was far from boring. In addition to the entertaining speeches there was a lively poster display put together by Rosalind Janssen's students and a video loop of photographs of some of the most famous subjects in the book, including five women. It is good to know that the EES has recently digitised and protected its voluminous photographic archives with funds from a special appeal and this edition of the book benefits from more illustrations than the first three. ASTENE members who attended the AGM had a chance to view a copy of the book which Morris kindly signed on the day.

Generous contributions for production of the book came from individual donors and it is reasonably priced at £35. But we are very pleased to advise that ASTENE members can benefit from a special offer price of £25, plus postage and packing of £6.50 (UK only) if they

cannot go to Doughty Mews in person.

To take advantage of this offer, please place your order by email to Rob Tamplin (rob.tamplin@ees.ac.uk) confirming that you are an ASTENE member. Postage costs outside of the UK will be different from that quoted above and will be advised at the time of the order. The EES can take payment via normal credit cards.

New Islamic Arts Galleries at the Louvre

One of the most significant events in the upcoming months is the opening on 22 September of the new Islamic galleries at the Louvre. Ten years after the announcement of the proposal, and four after the competition winners were named, the new gallery is ready to display some 3,000 of the 15,000 pieces owned by the Louvre and the 3,400 on permanent loan from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. The new gallery has been constructed in the Cour Visconti and is the first major architectural addition since the 'Grand Louvre' project with I.M. Pei's glass pyramid as its centrepiece: the architects are Rudy Ricciotti and Mario Bellini. The court's floor was dug out and consolidated and the one-level gallery inserted into it has a rippling glass roof. The new gallery also sees the creation of a new Department specifically for Islamic art. The range is geographically from Spain to India, and temporally seventh to nineteenth centuries, and attempts to place the artefacts contextually. To aid this, the new galleries are surrounded by a redesigned gallery space devoted to 'the East Mediterranean in the Roman Empire' that includes the Coptic Egyptian collections with other Late Antique material from Syria and

the Levant, enabling a contrast and continuity between collections.

Highlights of the collection will appear in *Cornucopia* 48, due in September.

Edward Lear at the Ashmolean Museum

The new exhibition 'Happy Birthday Edward Lear: 200 years of Nature and Nonsense' opened on 20 September and runs until 6 January 2013. The exhibition presents 100 of Lear's natural history illustrations, landscapes, nonsense drawings and verses from the museum's own collection, the Bodleian Library, and private collections. Included are sketches made during Lear's travels in Greece, Egypt and the Near East (as well as in 'non-ASTENE' lands). Lear's oil paintings are generally less well-known than his watercolours, but several large works resulted from his travels in the Near East, including the Ashmolean's own view of Jerusalem painted in 1865. This was exhibited in the Tate exhibition 'The Lure of the East' of 2008 along with oils of Beirut, Damascus, and the Dead Sea. There is a small admission charge of £4/£3 (concessions).

Cornucopia

The new *Cornucopia* website continues to evolve, and now offers The *Cornucopia* Blog for current events in Istanbul and beyond: <http://www.cornucopia.net/blog> ; and The Destination Guide for what to see, where to stay, eat and shop: <http://www.cornucopia.net/guide>

John Murray Archive

Jennifer Scarce tells us that the John Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland has recently purchased the Patrick Leigh Fermor

papers—excellent news which makes Edinburgh an even better research resource for ASTENE members.

Gertrude Bell on Film

Neil Cooke writes: 'Very occasionally an item in the newspaper leaps off the page and stops you mid-breakfast. It seems that two well-known film directors are making movies about Gertude Bell. One version by Werner Herzog of 'Aguirre Wrath of God' and 'Paris Texas' fame, is about to start filming in Jordan and England, with Naomi Watts playing Gertrude Bell and Robert Patterson as T. E. Lawrence. The other version by Ridley Scott of 'Titanic' and 'Gladiator' fame is apparently only at the script stage. Exactly when either movie will be coming to a cinema near you is anybody's guess. But if they are issued on DVD before the next ASTENE Conference perhaps they will be shown after dinner on consecutive nights.'

India Office Files to be Digitised

The British Library has announced a deal with Qatar whereby a huge quantity of English and Arabic documents will be made freely available online. A large part of the three-year project will concern half a million India Office records to do with British activities in the Gulf over 200 years. However, also to be made available will be some 25,000 pages of medieval Arabic manuscripts covering subjects such as science, mathematics and medicine. All the documents and manuscripts have until now only been available to researchers by visiting the British Library in person. Qatar is providing £8.7 million pounds to have it all digitised.

Russell McGuirk

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

ASTENE's Bulletin Reviews Editor is Myra Green. If you would like to suggest a book for review, or if you are interested in reviewing books for the Bulletin, please contact her at mg@myragreen.f9.co.uk.

***Westcar on the Nile—A Journey through Egypt in the 1820s*, by Heike C Schmidt. Wiesbaden, Reichert Verlag, 2012, 250pp. ISBN: 978-3-89500-852-8. £53.67 (on Amazon).**

Although Henry Westcar does not record how they became travel companions, he visited Egypt with Frederic Catherwood, Henry Parke and John Joseph Scoles and they journeyed along the river Nile during the years 1823-24. Like many travellers to Egypt before and since, Westcar recorded in a daily journal what he witnessed in Alexandria and Cairo, the visits to tombs and temples on both banks of the Nile, and their general day-to-day life. Westcar also records their meetings with Henry Salt, John Gardner Wilkinson, James Burton, Jon Madox, Osman Effendi, Yanni d'Athanasia, Giuseppe Passalacqua, Bernardino Drovetti, and others, including Egyptian officials, all of whom will be familiar names to many ASTENE members.

The original manuscript of Westcar's journal is in the library of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo and Schmidt's book begins with the story of how the journal may have come into the possession of the German archaeologist Ludwig Keimer who lived and worked in Cairo. Since the 1950s it has been possible to read a typed transcript of the journal at the British Museum. This was made by Warren R Dawson when he assisted Keimer in trying to decipher Westcar's handwriting and erratic spelling. Now, thanks to the hard

work of Heike Schmidt (a regular attendee at ASTENE Conferences) everyone can enjoy reading Westcar's text in this carefully researched, annotated and illustrated publication.

The book is divided into three sections. In the first section, chapters give the few facts known about Westcar's life and family before and after his time in Egypt followed by biographical details of the people he met there. Westcar is thought to have been a livestock farmer, and he may have chosen to visit Egypt for the purpose of buying Arabian horses in order to breed racing stock. In fact James Burton refers to him as the man to advise everyone about buying horses. It is clear from his journal that Westcar had visited Italy on his way to Egypt, as he compares what he sees with places in Rome and other cities. From the title of his projected book we also learn that his travels were to be more extensive with visits to Syria and Greece, but having purchased horses in Egypt he may simply have wanted to accompany them on their journey to England rather than visit the other countries. Indeed, he may have exhausted his available funds by buying the horses and could not then afford to travel further.

Section two gives us Westcar's journal from 1823-24, exactly as he wrote it, day by day, and with the pages referenced in case there is a need to refer to the original. This is where Heike Schmidt has helpfully devoted a considerable amount of her time, with carefully researched annotations identifying every person, place, and the lesser known contemporary English and Arabic words that Westcar uses. In addition, Schmidt has searched for and found illustrations of the people and places as they would have been

encountered by Westcar and his travelling companions. All of which enhance the text for they are included on the page where they occur in Westcar's journal.

In the third section Schmidt presents the reader with discussions focussed on a number of subjects. Were the diplomats and travellers in the 1820s merely souvenir hunters, or hoping to gain an understanding of the ancient Egyptians and their culture, or simply wanting to loot the tombs and temples for their own financial gain? Schmidt ends the book by considering the future and the likely challenges to be faced by the tombs and temples visited by Westcar, Scoles, Parke, Catherwood, Madox, Burton, Wilkinson and Salt, many of which were already disappearing in their lifetimes, and the remainder of which today are visited by thousands of tourists having little more than a passing interest. We should be thankful that the interest of a modern traveller might only be to 'tweet' their friends and point out where they have been rather than leave a graffiti carved into a temple wall as would have been normal practice two centuries ago.

This is a well-presented book, and from reading Westcar's journal you achieve a good understanding of the day-to-day events, successes and annoyances of travel in Egypt and along the river Nile when the pace of life was so much less hurried and when perhaps the biggest problem of the day was avoiding the plague. In fact Westcar gives a worrying account of visiting the manager of a rum factory. Having been encouraged to chat over a drink, their host calmly informed them that his entire family had died of the plague only the night before. Needless to say Westcar and his companions did not touch their

drinks and left immediately. Clearly a case of travel sharpening the mind!

Neil Cooke

***The Egyptian Expeditionary Force in World War I: A History of the British-Led Campaigns in Egypt, Palestine and Syria*, by Michael J. Mortlock. McFarland Publishing, 2010, 312pp. ISBN 978-0-7864-4871-5. \$38.00.**

Some reviewers call this work a military history but what it really is is a social history. The author follows the 54th (East Anglian) Division of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force while it was in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine during World War I. He does that by using their words. That is the first thing I like about this book. The author allows the narrative to unfold through the words of those who lived the event. In this instance his father, Private Jake Mortlock and his fellow soldiers.

The photos are the second thing I like about this book. They are significant and outstanding. Most of them are also from the dairies, journals, letters, and archives of the men who were involved. Looking into the eyes of a young soldier who had withstood the horrors of Gallipoli and would shortly die at Gaza or Beersheba is not only poignant, but moves one to tears. The views of Egypt, Palestine, and Syria as they were at the dawn of the 20th century are surprising and historically important. The only criticism I can find concerning the photographs (and the maps) is placement. Sometimes a photo has nothing to do with the text surrounding it, so it becomes a distraction as one tries to figure out why it is there.

Weaving the material into a narrative is almost more important than actually writing the narrative. In this

instance it is the flaw of the book. It works fairly well when dealing with the letters and journals where we get such fascinating tales of catching migrating quails for breakfast, but when quoting from military texts about the details of a battle it does not work: too many quotes, one immediately following the other, with little or no discussion.

The writer also assumes we know more than we do. The truth is we need more background. I'm confused as to why the Battle of Minden which took place on Aug 1, 1759 is not only included but quoted. What is the battle and what does it have to do with the Middle East in 1917? There are numerous appendices to help us, but I would have added one more: a timeline of the movements of 54th Division during the war so we can find our way through the narrative with more ease.

My hat is off to Michael Mortlock. This was a labour of love as so many books of this nature are. The significance of the photographs and the words of the soldiers far outweigh the lack of proper weaving. They are the strength of this book. They present war on the human level, not the military level, on the level of the average Joe, not the generals.

Cassandra Vivian

***Notes On A Century: Reflections of a Middle East Historian*, by Bernard Lewis and Buntzie Ellis Churchill. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2012. 386pp. ISBN: 978-0-2978-6702-9. £20.**

There will be few writers who can offer their memoirs some sixty-two years after the publication of a major historical study. Bernard Lewis wrote

The Arabs in History, a volume that is still available today, as a young lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. His early career as a scholar had already been interrupted by the Second World War during which he was assigned to work which, fortuitously, was sympathetic to the general direction of his interests. Now in his mid-nineties, and with the assistance of his companion Buntzie Ellis Churchill, he has produced a fascinating account of his distinguished academic career. It began at the S.O.A.S. with researches and publications based on the study of original archives in the Middle East which he assiduously sought to read in their original languages and continued in America, where he was offered a chair at Princeton University in 1974. His subsequent years have all been spent in the U.S.A. where his understanding of the Middle East has frequently been called upon to inform the political scene. Of some particular interest are the accounts of his disharmony with Edward Said regarding the thesis of *Orientalism* (1978 *et seq.*) and the less well known legal case resulting from his published views about the so-called Armenian Massacres. His many appointments and publications are comprehensively listed.

George Hutcheson

***Lady E.S. Drower's Scholarly Correspondence: An Intrepid English Autodidact in Iraq*, by Jorunn J. Buckley. Leiden: Brill, 2012, pp. 264. 105 euros.**

I still remember how I once discovered a bold handwritten letter from Lady Stefana Drower lying in a cupboard in my office in the Petrie Museum. Written from Baghdad in

1929 she sought to persuade Professor Flinders Petrie to accept her eighteen year old daughter Margaret onto his Egyptology programme at University College London (UCL). Margaret (Peggy) Drower was at that time my distinguished colleague. However, her mother, Lady Ethel Stefana Drower (1879–1972), a pioneer in Mandaean studies and the author of Middle Eastern novels and travel accounts, was merely a shadowy figure.

A wonderful anecdote which Peggy later told me about her mother does pass review in this splendid volume by Professor Jorunn Buckley. Related in the present tense, it acquires an immediacy which conjures up Drower's indomitable character. Having met her husband in Khartoum, the couple were from 1919 to 1946 based in Baghdad where Sir Edwin acted as a judicial advisor. During May 1941 the city was in turmoil when Nazi agents stirred up a revolt and the British women there were told to evacuate. Lady Stefana's metal card index for her long anticipated Mandaic dictionary—eventually published when she was eighty-four—was too heavy to be transported. 'But she refuses to be evacuated without it; indeed, she protests by sitting down on the box for a while.'

Back in 1923 this autodidact had first met the Baghdad Madaeans—the last living Gnostic Baptists—and the scholarly correspondence dealt with by Buckley, herself a specialist in Mandaicism, covers the period from 1938 to the mid-1960s. The ASTENE reader catches vivid glimpses of famous names from a bygone era: the scholars Max Mallowan and Sidney Smith (whose son Harry was by 1963 teaching alongside Peggy at UCL), the Maharaja Rajsahab of

Dhranghadhra, an acquaintance with whom Lady Stefana drinks tea, and her friends Freya Stark and Arthur Ransome.

The Second World War comes vividly to life through snippets that reveal Drower as an intrepid traveller, conscientious scholar, and devoted wife and mother. Thus, on 9 September 1939, she was in Berlin with her eldest son William 'Bill' (1915–2007): 'I had read my paper on the Madaeans ... but realized that the moment had come for a quick departure'. They arrived back in London having sat up all night—Drower was sixty at the time—and some fifteen hours later Sir Edwin left for Baghdad. 'I followed him the next day, twelve hours afterwards, having succeeded in getting the numerous visas, the ticket, packing, and everything else done in five hours exactly.'

She subsequently dedicated her 1956 *Water into Wine* 'to my son W.M.D.' explaining to her publisher John Murray that writing the book 'kept me going during the time when he was a prisoner in Japanese hands [on the Thailand-Burma railway], and I knew nothing of his fate. He also, when he came back, helped me to recast the book.'

Lady Stefana, like her equally remarkable contemporary the centenarian Margaret Murray, was still actively engaged in research in her nursing home in order 'to relieve the unspeakable tedium of this place'. Visiting her there in 1971, Buckley found the ninety-two year old in bed surrounded by books. 'She wore an old-fashioned librarian's green celluloid visor, as if ready for meticulous work.' A full biography now awaits Buckley's own pen.

Back in March, my initial review copy was stolen from Café Costa in

Tottenham Court Road, when a bold thief walked out with my entire rucksack. Nearby rubbish bins were frantically scoured and the crime duly reported, but all to no avail. Eventually I spoke to Mr. Maarten Friewijk, Editor of Religious Studies at Brill, who very kindly replaced the lost copy. As to the thief, I have often pictured him wearing my beloved Dutch beret as he saunters down the street reading the scholarly letters of Lady E.S. Drower. I only hope that Buckley's volume has afforded him as much pleasure as it has given me.

Rosalind Janssen

***A Labyrinth of Kingdoms: 10,000 Miles through Islamic Africa*, by Steve Kemper. W.W. Norton, hardback, July, 2012. 416pp. ISBN 978-0393-07966-1. £18.99.**

Any readers chary of casting their eyes much beyond the west bank of the Nile should suspend prejudice and read *A Labyrinth of Kingdoms* by Steve Kemper. Astonishingly, this is the first full-length biography in English of the life and journeys of Heinrich Barth, who this reviewer has always placed at the top of the pile of Victorian explorers of North Africa.

Barth's claim to greatness is based on the fact that his 5-volume, 3,500 page account of his nearly six-year exploration of the Sahara and Sahel is destined to remain a peerless source on the region in the nineteenth century before 'the Scramble'. He traversed the Great Desert from Tripoli to Lake Chad, via Murzuq, exploring the Kingdoms of Kanem, Bornu, Sokoto and Songhay, all en route to Timbuktu, where he spent seven months as a virtual prisoner, in constant fear for his life and used as a pawn between local leaders.

His account of his travels is notable for many reasons. Among these is his habit of writing about the people he met as individuals, not stereotypes, for praising those elements of the societies he thought better than were to be found in Europe, and for tempering any criticism with an explication of local circumstances. He also wrote extensively on the region's geography, botany, agricultural practices and possibilities, and local power politics.

In describing the market in Timbuktu, one finds Barth's typical thoroughness of purpose. After apologising to his readers for not being able to gather more detail, he writes 13-pages that detail everything one could buy, as well as the price and provenance of each item. Kemper's chapter dealing with the city is as entertaining as any, and especially poignant in view of the destruction currently being meted out in this ancient seat of learning.

The epic journey—neither word really suffices—that Barth undertook between 1850 and 1855 would have killed lesser men. Indeed, his two European companions died along the way: the rather feckless expedition leader, Richardson, and the keen young German, Overweg. Erroneous reports that Barth too had died meant he stopped receiving post from friends and family, and funds from London for the return journey.

Barth's account of his 10,000-mile wanderings—*Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*—is not always an easy read. The scientific observations Barth makes are—as all good science should be—careful and acute. Overall, however, the text is too long, dry and, at times, dense. His publishers also sensed this, limiting the first print run of volumes

4 and 5 to 1,000 copies, as opposed to 2,250 for each of the first three volumes.

As Kemper says, 'For Barth, pleasurable reading meant scholarly treatises and histories. High drama meant new scientific findings. He didn't understand that although the public valued scientific discoveries, it craved entertainment.' Livingstone's drama-laden account of his travels in southern African, also published in 1857, quickly sold 30,000 copies and remains in print 150 years later.

Kemper has written a book that will not only entertain readers but also go some way to restoring Barth's reputation. With a narrative thread that is taut without being unnecessarily dramatic, *A Labyrinth of Kingdoms* does what all good books should do: it reads well.

Eamonn Gearon

Dundee's Two Intrepid Ladies; a Tour round the World, by D.C. Thomson's Female Journalists in 1894, edited and introduced by Susan Kerracher, Abertay Historical Society, Publication No 52, Dundee, 2012, pp i-vi, 1-108, 10 B&W plates, line drawings in text. P/b. ISBN: 978-0-90-0019494. £7.50.

Elizabeth (Bessie) Maxwell (1871–1946) and Marie (Franziska) Imandt (1860–1945), two journalists who worked for the newspaper and magazine proprietor David Couper Thomson (1861–1954), publisher of the *Dundee Courier* and the *Dundee Weekly News*, left Dundee's Tay Bridge Station on 8 February 1894 to begin an ambitious world tour which ended a year later when they embarked on the Anchor Liner *Furnessia* on 13 April 1895 for their return voyage home.

Their tour was sponsored by D.C. Thomson who instructed them to mix with local people and file accurate reports on each country, particularly on the conditions of women both in their working and social lives for weekly publication in the *Dundee Courier*. Although Thomson organised first class travel and accommodation for them to ensure their protection, their journey was remarkable, however, as they travelled alone without any companions and relied on local introductions and services. After a few days in London, Paris, Genoa, Florence and Naples they sailed from Brindisi on 18 February for Port Said, which was their introduction to Egypt, and destinations further East—Bombay for four weeks in India, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Japan and finally San Francisco for a tour around America and Canada before departing from New York.

Dundee in the late 19th century offered a receptive environment for the ladies' tour. Dundee was a global city always cultivating contacts well beyond Scotland, particularly with India through the jute industry which created jobs and wealth. The jute mills of Calcutta and the cotton mills of Bombay, however, were serious competitors so that reports of their working conditions and wages were valuable. Related to Dundee's prosperity was the changing role of women in the workplace. There had always been female workers in the jute mills but women were increasingly working in offices and also entering the professions through access to university education. Here journalism offered a respectable career for women such as Marie and Bessie who had both studied languages—Marie at St Andrews University and Bessie at University College Dundee, which had been founded in 1881 by Mary Ann Baxter.

By 1894 they were journalists on the *Courier*, Marie as the chief lady correspondent and Bessie as a relatively new recruit both reporting on social events and also writing serious features. D. C. Thomson respected their professional competence and was also shrewdly aware of the publicity value of their tour for his newspapers as their reports would appeal to his female readers and also to managers of Dundee's industries. He was keenly interested in international affairs, widely travelled in Europe, America and Canada and a pioneer of investigative journalism.

After their return Marie and Bessie continued to write for the *Courier* and the *Weekly News* and gave a series of popular lectures on their travels to groups in Perthshire, Angus and Fife. Their achievements have now been revived for the public in a recently installed gallery 'Dundee and the World' at the McManus Art Gallery and Museum (see review, *Bulletin* 49, Autumn 2011, pp 21–22) curated by Susan Kerracher, who has also published a selection of their articles which is now in the collections of the Local History Centre of Dundee's Central Library (an online version of these papers is available). She has deftly and sympathetically edited their considerable output of articles published twice weekly into an account which combines reportage with their own interests and values and has also included an excellent introduction and notes throughout the text which do not interrupt the flow of the narrative. Chapter 2 deals with Egypt where Thomson had a personal interest. He had visited Egypt and was concerned that the mistaken ideas of Scottish people should be corrected through the serious journalism which he expected the ladies to produce. Egypt had long

been a favourite destination for Victorian travellers, whose every need was met, including a plentiful supply of guide books. Marie and Bessie had prepared well taking Karl Baedeker's *Egypt and the Sudan: Handbook for Travellers* with them especially for reference where Egyptological facts were required. They visited Port Said, Ismailia and Cairo each producing well-written copy which reveals a sound grasp of their subject plus the ability to present their own views. Marie's two reports, for example, of 31 March and 4 April respectively from Port Said and Ismailia, describe these ports including details of local dress which would appeal to her female readers in Dundee. She is careful, however, when describing veiled women to be objective and does not pass judgement. In Cairo her report of 2 May, when she visits the premises of the North American (United Presbyterian) Mission in Egypt to see local girls learning to read and write, is more critical of their poverty and the contrast with the comfortable luxury of the neighbouring house where she experiences the grace and culture of traditional hospitality. Bessie's report of a day at the Pyramids on 9 May is equally detailed but lightened by her irrepressible sense of humour as she attempts to ride a camel.

The selection of articles from their visit to Egypt should encourage ASTENE members to consult the complete archive. Meanwhile read the present book as a great narrative by two resourceful ladies, visit Dundee and explore the resources of the Abertay Historical Society (www.abertay.org.uk).

Jennifer Scarce

Travels in Tandem: The Writing of Women and Men Who

***Travelled Together*, by Susannah Hoe. Holo Books: the Women's History Press, April 2012. P/b, 247 pages, 34 illustrations, 10 maps. Also available as kindle and e-book. ISBN 978-0-9544056-9-4. £19.19.**

The idea of this book is splendid—bringing together experiences of women and men who travelled together—as it were, 'in tandem'.

Three couples are of especial interest to ASTENE and I concentrate on them. The other eight are of interest to anyone who enjoys travel writing as their authors experience Siberia (in the mid-1800s), the New Hebrides in the late 1800s, Chinese Turkestan in the 1920s and Liberia in 1935.

Of special interest to ASTENE are Florence and Samuel Baker (1871–3), Ella and Percy Sykes (just outside our area in 1894), and Doreen and Harold Ingrams in South Arabia in 1934. The final chapter brings all the travellers together and there is an excellent bibliography. Throughout the book, the voices of the travellers are clearly heard.

Florence and Samuel Baker are perhaps the most unlikely couple. He is said to have purchased her in a Bulgarian slave market in 1856 and, although they travelled together for six years, they did not marry until 1865. Shock! Victorian horror! Part of Samuel's purpose in his travels was to put down the slavery of Egypt. Their story was one of adventure and danger—as great as that experienced by any Victorian woman traveller.

Sister and brother, Ella and Percy Sykes, in Persia in 1894 and 1897, are beyond the perimeter of ASTENE. He is best known as the author of the first English history of Persia; she

writes more of the experiences of travel: descending steep heights, finding a jackal in her room...

Doreen and Harold Ingram were in South Arabia in 1934–44, just inside the fringes of ASTENE-land. Doreen answers some of the questions I have wondered about when reading women travellers' accounts: 'What did they do when...?', 'How did they cope when...?' Doreen learned the language and those of us who have not will admire and envy her. She was able to get far closer to the people—and especially to the women—than most other travellers. It is a memorable book that is well worth reading.

Deborah Manley



The Mausoleum of Sir George Farrant (c.1770-1844) in Kensal Green Cemetery. Although in the Egyptian style, the side panels carry large sculptured panels with Farrant's armorial bearing. Photo: RGM

QUERIES AND REPLIES

From Peta Rée: -

In *Bulletin* 46 there was a query about the sighting of Lord Carlisle and Mr Newman at Philae, 'making most careful and elaborate pictures ...' Lord Carlisle was George James Howard, 9th Earl of Carlisle (1843–1916), who was in Egypt at that time [about 1897]. He was keenly interested in art, friendly with the Pre-Raphaelite circle, especially Edward Burne Jones and William Morris, and left the running of his estate to his wife, devoting himself to painting. It seems likely that Mr Newman may have been his secretary. Many of the Earl's paintings hang at his Yorkshire mansion, Castle Howard.

Deborah Manley asks: -

When ASTENE visited St Catherine's Monastery at Sinai in 2005 we were able to read the Visitors' Book in which travellers entered their names and messages. In 1897 to the early 1900s there were a large number of American travellers. I wonder if anyone knows about these forebears:

Francis Kingsley-Ball of New York
Charles C. Cushing of New York
Professor Samuel J. Curtiss, Chicago
Reverend Alexander Sandstrom,
Butte, Montana
Horace C. Colman, Philadelphia
William F. Whitmore, Boston
George T. Little, Boden College,
Remington, Maine

From Roger de Keersmaecker: -

On the fifteenth of each coming month I am hoping to put photos and information (on the website below) of a number of early travellers: tombstone or graveyard/church plaque, genealogy, graffiti, etc. The following are in preparation – Captains Irby and Mangles; Thomas

Legh; William Jowett; Richard Robert Madden; Joseph Bonomi; and George Waddington.

<http://www.egypt-sudan-graffiti.be>—click on articles and look for the name.

In keeping with this funereal edition of the *Bulletin* Peta Rée tells us: -

Sir Moses Montefiore, banker and philanthropist, several times traveller in Egypt and Palestine, when he died in 1885, aged nearly 101, was buried in Ramsgate, Kent, in the mausoleum he had built in 1862 for his wife, Judith.



Miniature framed painting of Sir Richard Burton on a ribbon. No 41 in Neil Cooke's article.

ARTICLES

In *Bulletin 47*, Spring 2011, there was a short piece on the restoration of Sir Richard Burton's mausoleum, with some illustrations supplied by Neil Cooke. Neil now gives a much fuller account and details the contents of the mausoleum, largely untouched since the burial of Lady Burton.

'A VERITABLE CANVAS TENT PEGGED DOWN AMONGST THE PALM TREES'

Few have the opportunity to enter the unique 'tent' mausoleum of Sir Richard and Lady Isabel Burton which stands in the churchyard of St Mary Magdalen, Mortlake. Involvement in the recent conservation work offered me that rare chance.

This is how Lady Isabel described the mausoleum in the biography of her husband:-

The tent is sculptured in dark Forest of Dean stone and white Carrara marble. It is an Arab tent, twelve feet by twelve and eighteen feet high, surmounted by a gilt star of nine points. Over the flap door of the tent is a white marble crucifix. The fringe is composed of gilt cressets and stars. The flap door of the tent supports an open book of white marble, on which are inscribed Richard's name and the dates of his birth and decease. A blank page is left for 'Isabel, his wife'. Underneath is a ribbon with the words, 'This monument is erected to his memory by his loving countrymen.' Below, on a white marble tablet, is a beautiful sonnet written in a passion of grief by Justin Huntley McCarthy.

The interior is nearly all marble; the floor, of white and black marble, covers a base of Portland cement (concrete), so that no damp can arise from the ground. The coffin of

steel and gilt lies above ground on three marble trestles, with three trestles on the opposite side for me. At the foot of the coffin is a marble altar and tabernacle with candles and flowers, a window of coloured glass, with Richard's monogram, and the whole adorned with seven hanging and various other Oriental lamps. It is no small compliment to Messrs Dyke, that many people who come into the ground ask 'why the canvas cover is not taken off,' and are quite astonished when they touch the stone.

The Life of Captain Sir Richard F Burton, by his wife, Isabel Burton (1893)

To say the 'interior is nearly all marble' is something of an exaggeration. Only the floor, altar, tabernacle, and blocks raising the coffins six inches above the floor are of marble. The interior walls are in fact the reverse side of the originally externally and internally lime-washed Forest of Dean stone slabs. As was discovered, these had been painted internally to resemble the draped canvas of the tents carved into the exterior. At some time in the past paintings on canvas of Angel's faces were glued in the centre of sunbursts painted on the lime wash. What remained of this internal decoration was misinterpreted in the 1975 restoration and the draped canvas was re-painted to give the appearance of green and grey flowing ribbons and palm leaves falling towards earth.

I think I should like you to take my body out to sea in a boat, and throw me into the water. I don't like the ground, nor a vault, nor cremation. And I said, 'Oh, I could not do that; won't anything else do?' 'Yes,' he said 'I should like us both to lie in a tent side by side.'

The Life of Captain Sir Richard F Burton, by his wife, Isabel Burton (1893)

The idea for the tent mausoleum has to be credited to Sir Richard Burton but it was brought to reality by his wife Isabel with the help of the masons at Messrs Dyke's, memorial masons of 49 Highgate Road, London. Mr Dyke probably never designed or built anything so extraordinary ever again.

Over the decades the mausoleum has been variously described as being an Eastern, Arab or Bedouin tent. However, it is based on the structure of a tent the Burtons had used in Syria *at their civilised camp* and is closer in shape to a Persian or Indian tent. A clue to its Indian origin may have been provided by Lady Isabel. *I have asked Major J B Keith, in his Monograph on Indian Architecture, which will include tentage and tombs, to explain my meaning in his Great Tents of Antiquity better than I have done for myself.* The interior also resembles the draped canvas background in the photograph of *Burton in his tent in Africa* which is the frontispiece to Lady Isabel's biography of her husband.

As has often been described, the mausoleum is made from slabs of Forest of Dean stone set on a concrete and Portland Stone base. Constructing the tent must have been a challenge. It is imagined that a timber framework was erected on the concrete base, against which the main stone wall panels could be rested. The stone panels would have had a 'tongue' carved onto all four sides to form overlapping joints. The vertical tongues are carved to resemble the guy-ropes of a tent. The tongue at the base of each panel would have gone into a slot cut in the Portland Stone base, while the tongue at the top would have gone into a slot cut into a thick and wide

stone band forming the junction with the sloping roof slabs. This band is formed in lengths of stone that go over the joints between wall slabs and around the corners to hold all the walls in position and stop them being pushed outwards. Into this band on the outside are carved the stars and cressets and on the inside it is painted red as the background to a later added inscription: *Stay with us because it is towards evening and the day is not far spent;* words from Luke chapter 24, verse 29.

The stone roof slabs would have then been laid onto the upper part of the timber framework and again tongues at the bottom of each slab would have fitted into slots in the thick and wide stone band, and at the top into slots in the decorative stone ridge. Iron ties are fixed into the stone roof slabs and run across the mausoleum to act as ties and assist in preventing the weight of the roof pushing the walls over. Once the entire stone tent had been erected the timber frame would have been removed and the black and white marble floor tiles laid in place. It had been thought that the stone slabs are joined together by iron or bronze dowels, but a radar survey did not appear to show any sign of metal being used.

Originally, Lady Isabel and other visitors entered the mausoleum through a stone door on gun-metal hinges that was carved to resemble a canvas tent flap. In 1951 this was smashed by vandals who may have stolen a number of items. During the immediate restoration the opening was bricked up and the face rendered with cement to match the draped appearance of the canvas flap. This blocking was removed as part of the recent conservation work in the hope of finding evidence of the hinges and frame so the stone door could be reinstated. Sadly nothing had been kept. The opening has

been bricked-up again and faced with a carved stone panel. On the inside a mirror has been placed so visitors looking through the toughened glass viewing window at the back of the tent can have some sense of the interior as if they had entered through the original door.

Today, entry to the mausoleum is achieved by removing the viewing window. This replaced the original stained glass window, described as painted with Sir Richard's monogram and a dove with outspread wings descending from heaven. This was smashed beyond repair in 1951. While it is written that Sir Richard did not enjoy the dark, the window probably had another purpose, being there to provide daylight inside the mausoleum should either occupant have been buried alive and managed to escape their coffin. This was a common fear and the sight of daylight and trees would have confirmed to anyone they were still living in the real world. Having specified in her will that her heart should be pierced with a needle to confirm death, it is difficult to know how this would have benefitted Lady Isabel. The stained glass window has not been replaced because no photographs or drawings of the design have been found.

Once inside the tent it was noticeable that everything had a covering of fine white dust, some of it attached to the web trails of spiders that enter through the air vents. The dust was the accumulation over decades of tiny particles falling from the deteriorating lime wash painted onto the inside of the roof. The only smell noticeable was of a slight dampness from the long-term effects of rainwater slowly seeping through the stone roof and walls. As a result of the damp, many items inside had fallen to pieces, or rusted and collapsed. One or two of the Angels

faces had detached from the roof and fallen, fortuitously coming to rest atop the polished steel and gilded coffin containing Sir Richard Burton.

The remains had been placed in a leaden shell, with a glass over the face ; this was again closed in a very handsome coffin of steel and gilt. On this day it was put into a plain white deal case, two inches thick, dove-tailed, and secured with iron clamps and screws, and painted in black 'To the Rev. Canon Wenham, Catholic Church, Mortlake, S.W., Surrey, England.' The case was filled with sawdust, in which, according to Austrian law, a bottle of carbolic acid was poured, which has rather stained the coffin.

The Life of Captain Sir Richard F Burton, by his wife, Isabel Burton (1893)

The polished steel and gilt coffin had been acquired in Trieste and travelled from there to Liverpool on the Cunard steamer *Palmyra*. The steel is now discoloured with faint rust marks and has partly rusted through on the underside even though it stands on marble blocks to keep it above the floor and away from any source of moisture. The underside of the lead coffin can just be seen. Lady Isabel lies in a lead lined coffin of mahogany probably obtained in London. Over the decades the polished surface has gradually lost its sheen. During the recent conservation work it was decided not to disturb the coffins but to simply remove the dust.

As to what else is to be found, some clues are contained in a description of the mausoleum and its contents from the *Thames Valley Times* newspaper of 17 June 1891:-

It is a reproduction in stone of the semblance of an Arab tent. It stands on a bed of concrete, and above that a square of rough-hewn York-stone

some 12ft by 11ft. The 'tent' itself, sloping inwards a few degrees on all sides, is composed of Forest of Dean stone. Throughout, the slabs are carved to represent the natural irregularities of surface of a tent, and the joinings are made neatly at the places where ropes are represented as binding the whole to the ground. The design would not allow tent-pegs being introduced, but otherwise the appearance of a tent is well maintained. The door, also a solid slab of stone, is carved to represent a drop-curtain, and moves on flanges of gun-metal. From the top of the elevation other slabs of stone form a roof which meets at an apex above which is a gilt 'Star of Bethlehem'. Below, but at the top of the front elevation, is a well-executed crucifix, in white marble with 'INRI' at the head, and the crown of thorns at the foot. From the foot of the cross extend on each of the sides a row of gilt crescents. As originally designed the crescents would have been above cross and below the star, but the Catholic hierarchy placed a veto upon a Christian emblem occupying a subordinate relation to the most important of the Moslem insignia. It must be added also that from the standpoint of artistic effort the crescents look striking here as they could be made to do elsewhere. On the upper part of the stone door is a carved marble 'Book of Life' giving Burton's details. The mausoleum is lighted from the back by a small, wire-protected, stained glass window, with the single figure of a dove descending with outspread wings. Within, the Oriental style of the fabric is maintained by a number of beautiful lamps, brought over by Lady Burton from Trieste, suspended from the ceiling and shed a 'dim religious light' through jewel-shaped facets of coloured glass each no bigger than the Koh-i-Noor diamond.

Two Eastern lamps were also on the marble altar at the end, opposite the entrance door, the pillars being finely-moulded bronze serpents, and the shape, together with the suspended lamps that of one side of a pair of small beam scales. Huge candles of graduated heights, in massive silver sticks, were also here for the occasion. On a three-cornered marble shelf at the right-hand side was a curiously wrought vessel, with iron frame, to contain the holy water. The floor is of white Carrara marble, beautifully veined, and on each side are marble 'bearers' about 6 inches high, for the coffins of Sir Richard and eventually of Lady Burton.

Over a century later the following can now be found inside the mausoleum.

1. Wreath of unidentified flowers sealed inside a glass dome (on the floor)
2. Pierced metal lantern with glass inserts (on the floor)
 - a. Fragment of lantern [2] (on the floor)
 - b. Fragment of metal [2] (on the floor)
3. Small unknown fragment (beneath Lady Isabel's coffin)
4. Metal and glass jewel lantern (on floor)
5. Metal oil lamp with glass top (on floor)
6. Pierced metal lantern with glass inserts (on floor)
7. Pierced metal lantern shaped liked an 'onion dome' with 'tea-light' containers in base (on floor)
8. Painted metal and ceramic wreath with ribbon and card (on wall)

9. Wreath of blue 'forget-me-nots' sealed inside a glass dome (on the wall)
I knelt and kissed the coffin, and put my forget-me-nots on it, and then I got behind the door.
- The Life of Captain Sir Richard F Burton, by his wife, Isabel Burton (1893)*
10. White ceramic vase of leaves [pair with 14] (north east corner shelf)
 11. Glass oil lamp (north east corner shelf)
 12. Red glass bowl [pair with 16] (north east corner shelf)
 13. Metal lamp / candle holder in the shape of a serpent (north east corner shelf)
 14. White ceramic vase of leaves [pair with 10] (north east corner shelf)
 15. White glass spherical vase [pair with 19] (south east corner shelf)
 16. Red glass bowl [pair with 12] (south east corner shelf)
 17. Glass and metal oil lamp [parts missing] (south east corner shelf)
 18. Metal lamp / candle holder in the shape of a serpent (south east corner shelf)
 19. White glass spherical vase [pair with 15] (south east corner shelf)
 20. Glass bottle with stopper ?for holy water [pair with 21] (Altar south side)
 21. Glass bottle with stopper ?for holy water [pair with 20] (Altar south side)
 22. Metal lantern with glass inserts [similar to 27] (Altar south side)
 23. Metal lantern with glass inserts [incomplete, similar to 22] (Altar south side)
 24. Oval glass dish (Altar centre)
 25. Small Crucifix (Altar centre)
 26. Metal with rose bud candle holders [pair with 28] (Altar south side)
 27. Metal lantern with glass inserts [similar to 22] (Altar north side)
 28. Metal with rose bud candle holders [pair with 26] (Altar north side)
 29. Wooden Crucifix [horizontal arm detached] (Altar north side)
 30. Metal hook [probably held lamp from roof] (Altar)
 31. Fragment of cloth set into Altar top [possibly concealing relics or a dedication] (Altar)
 32. Marble Tabernacle (Altar)
 33. Small metal holder with pink glass bowl [similar to 35] (below Altar)
 34. Large metal holder with clear glass bowl in metal bowl (below Altar)
 35. Small metal holder with pink glass bowl [similar to 33] (below Altar)
 36. Small framed picture of Virgin Mary with baby Jesus (below Altar)
 37. Painted plaster figure of the Virgin Mary (below Altar)
 38. Small framed engraving of Christ [?from Trieste] (below Altar)
 39. Remains of engraving and frame [unidentified] (below Altar)
 40. Fragment of paper (below Altar)
 41. Miniature framed painting of Sir Richard Burton on a ribbon [?to

- wear around the neck] (now placed on her coffin)
42. Camel bells on beaded rope (now placed on his coffin)
 43. Metal hanging lamp with glass jewel inserts (hanging from tie bar over Lady Isabel's coffin)
 44. Remains of metal chain from a broken lamp on the floor (hanging from tie bar over Sir Richard's coffin)
 45. Pierced metal lantern with glass inserts [matching 46] (hanging from a hook over Sir Richard's coffin)
 46. Pierced metal lantern with glass inserts [matching 45] (hanging from hook over Lady Isabel's coffin)
 47. Hanging chain for missing lantern (hanging from hook in the centre of the roof to which the strings of camel bells are attached)
 48. Strings of camel bells [attached to a battery operated mechanism that caused them to jingle when the door was opened] (hanging from the roof)
 49. Framed picture of the Crucifixion (on the wall beside Sir Richard's coffin)
 50. Framed picture of Christ comforting a man (north east corner shelf)
 51. Framed picture of St John Baptist carrying baby Jesus (south east corner shelf)
 52. Framed picture of Christ comforting a woman (on the wall beside Lady Isabel's coffin)
 53. Brass memorial plate to Elizabeth Mary Regis Fitzgerald [died 1902] (set in floor)
 54. Wooden box containing a glass wet battery [no longer functioning]
 55. Dynamo to recharge the battery [this is connected through the roof to a barely noticeable small metal wind-mill] (on the floor).

With my earnings I am embellishing his mausoleum, and am putting up in honour of his poem Kasidah, festoons of camel bells from the desert, in the roof of the tent where he lies, so that when I open or shut the door... the tinkling of the camel bells will sound as it does in the desert. On the 22nd January I am going to pass the day in it as it is my thirty-third wedding day and the bells will ring for the first time.

The Life of Captain Sir Richard F Burton, by his wife, Isabel Burton (1893)

During the recent conservation work all the contents were carefully cleaned and repairs made when appropriate. After extensive conservation work to the mausoleum itself, the objects were all returned to the positions in which they were found. Sadly one item was not there when the mausoleum was entered. This is a pair of photographs of Sir Richard and Lady Isabel that can be seen in photographs taken as late as 1996. But what has been discovered instead is a miniature portrait of Sir Richard Burton wearing uniform. This was found on the floor under his steel and gilded coffin. Whether Lady Isabel wore this on a ribbon around her neck is not known. It is not mentioned in her writings, nor does it appear in the few photographs of her, and it may have been placed in the mausoleum after her own death.

As anyone who has visited the 'tent' can understand, balancing on the

metal steps at the rear and peering through the toughened glass window into a room containing two coffins is one thing. Climbing down and standing between the two coffins knowing the lives of the occupants and what they looked like is another. Few people in the past century have been only inches away from the man who travelled the Middle East and with John Speke discovered the source of the river Nile.

Lady Isabel neatly summed up what it felt like for her to visit and enter this unique building: -

He and I had our peculiar ideas, and I was determined, if I could, to carry them out. He hated darkness so much that he never would have the

blind down, lest he might lose a glimpse of light from twilight to dawn. He has got the very thing he wanted, only of stone and marble instead of canvas to be buried in a tent above ground; to have sun, and light, and air, trees, birds, and flowers; and he has love, tears, prayers, and companionship even in the grave. His tent is the only one in the world, and it is by far the most beautiful, most romantic, most undeathlike resting-place in the wide world.

The Life of Captain Sir Richard F Burton, by his wife, Isabel Burton (1893)

It would be very difficult to disagree.

Neil Cooke ©July 2012



The interior of the Burton Mausoleum. © Alexa Bailey

Building in Siwa, then and now

In 2008 my partner and I took the unusual step of buying a plot of land in Siwa Oasis. Over the course of four years we have slowly but surely built a house with traditional materials and techniques. Observing the local workers and their daily tasks has enabled us a glimpse into the oasis' past and to appreciate the harmony between its inhabitants and the natural surroundings that has existed for centuries.

Siwa, the most northerly of Egypt's western desert oases, is the picture book definition of an oasis: a splash of green on an otherwise sand-coloured canvas. 300km from the Mediterranean coast and some 60km from the modern Libyan/Egyptian border, the oasis has long been a source of fascination, displaying a unique culture that continues today.

Just as the Romans referred to Alexandria as *Alexandria ad Aegyptum* (Alexandria by Egypt) due to its distinct character, the same could be said of Siwa today; language and traditions continue to set it apart from the rest of Egypt.

However with the introduction of established transport routes to the oasis, daily life for Siwans has been revolutionised—mobile phones have replaced daily house visits, Chinese motorcycles and tuc-tucs now outnumber traditional donkey carts and boys increasingly spend more of their free time on the internet than in the fields. The method of building houses has also dramatically changed. Access to quicker and less labour intensive materials such as concrete and white brick have seen a marked increase in more modern structures appearing throughout the oasis. This increase has been at the expense of the eye catching traditional architecture of the town

that many travellers, be they pilgrims, merchants or military men, commented on as they passed through (the most famous, of course, being Alexander the Great).

The traditional architecture of Siwa is characterised by the use of a mixture of mud and salt called *kashif*. The salt blocks, irregular in shape and mined directly from the crust of the salt lakes on the environs of the oasis, are assembled in layers of approximately 50cm in width and surrounded by a rich mud mortar. The mason follows the outline of the building, placing layer upon layer until the desired height is reached. Once set, the walls must be left to dry for no less than 3 months during which time an incredibly strong connection is established between the salt blocks and the mortar.

The versatility, sustainability and strength of this somewhat primitive technique make it highly likely that the use of *kashif* has remained largely the same since settlement began. Given that all the materials, even the mud, are recyclable, the archaeological record is unsurprisingly limited. When an old house is abandoned or collapses, it is not uncommon for one to see a line forming to claim the timbers or *kashif* salt blocks leaving no trace of a former structure.

As one would expect building with mud and salt is not without its perils. Heavy rains do occasionally occur in Siwa and every few years rain causes widespread damage, and in severe examples, even the destruction of some buildings. The most visible example of the effects of wet weather is the magnificent ruin of the main town, Shali, its current state being the result of a downpour in the 1930s where the entire town was

forced to relocate due to the damage incurred.

Of the European travellers that have visited Siwa, perhaps the most detailed and intriguing account is that of C. Dalrymple Belgrave in his excellent book *Siwa, the Oasis of Jupiter Ammon* which was written during his post as commander of the Frontier Districts Administration Camel Corps between 1920–21:

The houses are built of mud, mixed with salt, with occasional large blocks of stone from temples let into the walls. The builder works without a line, gradually adding to the wall, sitting astride the part which he has

completed, so few of the walls are straight.

Dalrymple Belgrave's description written some 90 years ago is as true now as it was then and although the use of temple blocks may have ceased and the number of houses in *kashif* are visibly fewer, the Siwan mason still uses nothing but instinct in estimating dimensions and levels. Placing your faith in a builder with no spirit level, no tools except for a hammer to break the larger salt blocks and nothing but his hands to shape the walls has been both an exhilarating and very rewarding experience!

Edward Lewis



Traditional *kashif* houses in Siwa. Photo: Edward Lewis.

FOOTPRINTS

Cassandra Vivian sent the following excerpt by American poet and travel writer Bayard Taylor (1825–1878):

'The Nile is the Paradise of Travel. I thought I had already fathomed all the depths of enjoyment which the traveller's restless life could reach—enjoyment more varied and exciting, but far less serene and enduring than that of a quiet home—but here I have reached a fountain too pure and powerful to be exhausted. I never

before experienced such a thorough deliverance from all the petty annoyances of travel in other lands, such perfect contentment of spirit, such entire abandonment to the best influences of nature. Every day opens with a *jubilate*, and closes with a thanksgiving. If such a balm and blessing as this life has been to me, thus far, can be felt twice in one's existence, there must be another Nile somewhere in the world.



Edward Lewis's house in Siwa. (Looks just about right for an ASTENE Group!)
Photo: Edward Lewis

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