

## ANCIENT EGYPT IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF BRISTOL

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Bristol was from the fourteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries the second or third largest town in England, now standing in sixth place (ninth in the United Kingdom as a whole), with a population of around 400,000. It became a County in its own right in 1373 and a City in 1542, a dual status it regained and retains after a short break from 1974 to 1996.

Like many cities around Europe, Bristolian interest in ancient Egypt began to develop during the first decades of the nineteenth century, with the opening up of Egypt to foreigners in the wake of the Napoleonic expedition and the subsequent assumption of power by Muhammed Ali. The first Egyptian antiquities came to Bristol as gifts to the Bristol Literary and Philosophical Society, founded in 1808. In 1820 work began on new premises at the bottom of Park Street, designed by Sir Charles Cockerell (1788-1863), who was later to complete the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and build St George's Hall, Liverpool. Completed in 1823, the building (now a Masonic hall) was also to be occupied by the Bristol Institution for the Advancement of Science and Art, founded that year. The Literary and Philosophical Society and the Institution shared many of their members and officers. The main focus of the Institution was on the natural sciences, reflected in the fact that most of the curators of its museum were from this discipline. However, from the very beginning, it was receiving archaeological material, including Egyptian items, albeit in small quantities: during the first ten years, only twelve out of about 1,250 donations were Egyptological – and three of those were books.<sup>1</sup>

The tenth item received was a 'fine Mummy' presented by John Webb of Leghorn, Italy, on March 1823. The eleventh donation was from a Reverend Morris of Leghorn, who gave '8 Egyptian Idols' and a mummy of a cat. The following year, Thomas Garrard (1789-1859), the City Chamberlain (senior financial official) of Bristol, gave a mummy, and in 1825 a Captain Buckham gave 'an Egyptian Monument'. A mummified crocodile nearly two metres long was given by George Annesley, Earl of Mountnorris (1769-1844), in 1827. A cast of the Rosetta Stone was presented in 1833. The Institution organized lectures for its members and the public. At one evening lecture in 1824, Dr James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848),<sup>2</sup> surgeon and physical anthropologist, spoke on Egyptian mummies and other antiquities before unwrapping the mummy from the 18th Dynasty 'white' coffin of Tay, presented to the Institution that year by Thomas Garrard.<sup>3</sup>

Ten years later, Dr Prichard returned to the Institution with a week-long series of lectures that began on 31 March 1834 with an unwrapping. The mummy again came from Thomas Garrard, who on this occasion gave a male and a female, the latter being the subject of Prichard's demonstration. A painting was made of the scene by the local watercolorist John Skinner Prout (1806-1874),<sup>4</sup> showing the newly unwrapped mummy, together with the

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<sup>1</sup> Key sources for its earlier history are K.-M. Walton, *75 years of Bristol Art Gallery* (Bristol, 1980) and M.D. Crane's unpublished manuscript, *The City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. A Present for the Past: an Illustrated History and Guide* (Museum and Art Gallery Geology Manuscript No. 99), supplemented by other archival material. See also Dodson and Giles, 'The Egyptian Collection of Bristol City Museum', in V. Solkin (ed.), *Ancient Egypt II: On the occasion of the 150th Birthday Anniversary of Vladimir S. Golenischev* (Moscow-St. Petersburg, 2006), 11–20.

<sup>2</sup> W.R. Dawson, E.P. Uphill and M.L. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 3rd edition (London, 1995), 343.

<sup>3</sup> A.B. Granville, 'An Essay on Egyptian Mummies', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 115 (1825), 291.

<sup>4</sup> Given to the Museum and Art Gallery by Mr F. Newcombe in 1918.

principal Egyptian items then in Bristol. They included a number of stelae and a canopic jar,<sup>5</sup> plus the 1823 mummy, the 1824 coffin and the sets of coffins (inner and outer) that had come with each of the new mummies. These respectively belonged to the *waab*-Priest, Iyhat, and the Lady Tairy, and dated to the Twenty-fifth/sixth Dynasties. The outer coffins remained in Institution's collection, but the inner coffins were by the latter part of the nineteenth century at Cote Bank, a large house in the northern part of Bristol<sup>6</sup> owned by Thomas Pease (1916-1884), a collector who had made two trips to Egypt in the 1840s. In 1919, they were loaned to Plymouth City Museum & Art Gallery, where they remain to this day.<sup>7</sup>

A description of the Institution early in 1835<sup>8</sup> notes that '[i]n the *Lobby, Hall*, and upon the *Stair-case*, are models, casts, bas reliefs, and busts, together with several mummies and mummy cases, and the skeleton of a mummy' (the latter being the body unwrapped the previous spring, and also that '[t]he *Upper Room* ... contains ... Egyptian idols and scarabaei, and various urns from Deverill Barrow, etc.'

Few Egyptian items are known to have been acquired by the Institution in the immediately following years, although an impressive Egyptianising monument was acquired by the city when the Clifton Suspension Bridge was opened in 1864. The first major commission by the great engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806—1859), its original concept towers in the form of Egyptian pylons, adorned with winged sun-disks and sphinxes, with the lodges at either end also of pylon-form. Unfortunately, the project was dogged with difficulties, and suspended in 1843 with just the cores of the towers complete. However, work eventually restarted in 1862, and was finally completed five years after Brunel's death. The sphinxes and sun-disks had been long abandoned, but the lodges were still there and the stark beauty of the towers' shape leaves no doubt as to their original inspiration.

In April 1871 the Bristol Institution merged with the Bristol Library Society and on 1 April 1872 a new combined museum and library building in Venetian Gothic style was opened at the top of Park Street. The lease on the former Bishop's College building next door, which had been the Library Society's home since 1855, passed to the local army reserve unit, whose drill hall lay behind it; it became the Victoria (later Salisbury) Club and a restaurant. The old Institution building was sold to the Freemasons.

The displays in the new premises concentrated on geology and natural history, the antiquities collection being relegated to the attics, with the exception of some of the Egyptian material, which was displayed on the landing of the back staircase, the distinction presumably reflecting Egypt's perennial attraction for the public. At the time of the move, the Joint Secretary of Finance of the Association was Thomas Pease: it is possible that the aforementioned inner coffins of Iyhat and Tairy came into his possession at this point. An extension to the Museum, completed in 1877, included a lecture theater, laboratory, committee room, cloakrooms – and an extension to the Lower Museum Room for antiquities and anthropological specimens, including the Egyptian mummies and coffins.

One of Pease's friends and near neighbors in Westbury-on-Trym was the novelist Amelia Blandford Edwards (1821-1892), who had undertaken a Nile journey in 1873—4 and as a

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<sup>5</sup> The jar appears no longer to be in the collection, while only two of the four stelae are now identifiable.

<sup>6</sup> Not far from the home of Amelia Edwards, the founder of the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1882 and the chair of Egyptology at University College London in 1892.

<sup>7</sup> For the history of these objects, see Dodson, 'The Coffins of Iyhat and Tairy: A Tale of Two Cities', forthcoming.

<sup>8</sup> *West of England Journal of Science and Literature* 1 (1835).

consequence had been instrumental in setting up the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1882.<sup>9</sup> In 1884, the Museum began to subscribe to the Fund, doubtless at the urging of Miss Edwards, receiving a considerable number of objects over the next few years, from Defenna, Tanis and Naukratis in the Delta, beginning a series of donations that would continue for nearly a century. Miss Edwards died in nearby Weston-super-Mare in 1892 and was buried under an obelisk and *ankh* in the churchyard of the Bristol suburb of Henbury; her house was destroyed by Second World War bombing, but a plaque marks its location.

By the 1890s the Museum and Library Association was struggling financially, and even unable to pay its curator, Edward Wilson (1848—1898). Negotiations with the city government culminated in the transfer of the whole organization and premises to Bristol city government on 31 May 1894. Wilson remained Curator until his death – only this time he was actually paid. Nevertheless, problems of space remained and in 1898 ‘the Museum Committee was informed of the unwillingness of the Committee of the Egypt Exploration Fund to make further grants of objects unless better provision were made for their display’.

However in June 1899 the site of the Salisbury Club was offered for sale to the city, the tobacco baron, Sir William Henry Wills (1830—1911, later Lord Winterstoke) offering £10,000 to help buy the site and build a new City Art Gallery on it. Started in 1901, the new building was opened in February 1905, and also incorporated a Museum of Antiquities, as it had been decided during the planning stage that Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities should be grouped with art in the new structure, rather than remaining with the natural history collections that remained in the old building. Interestingly, stone tools continued to reside with the geology collections within natural history. Yet more space became available to museum displays when the Library moved down the hill to College Green in 1906. The vacant rooms were reconstructed as invertebrate and biology galleries.

The antiquities were placed on the right of the ground floor of the Central Hall of the new building. Although no Egyptological expertise existed within the Museum during this period, this was available at the nearby University College Bristol in the shape of Ernest Sibree (1854-1927), who had in 1896 been appointed Lecturer in Oriental Languages (i.e. Egyptian and Akkadian).<sup>10</sup> In 1899 he completed a manuscript volume of copies, transliterations and translations of the Museum’s principal Egyptian texts.

Sibree taught a number of day- and evening classes in Egyptian and a number of other eastern languages (his portfolio included Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian) at University College (which became the University of Bristol in 1909). One of his Egyptian evening class students during 1900 was Gerald Avery Wainwright (1879–1964),<sup>11</sup> soon joined by Ernest Mackay (1880–1943).<sup>12</sup> Sibree was instrumental in facilitating Wainwright’s first visit to Egypt, through an introduction to a Bristolian collector of Egyptian antiquities, Alfred Edmund Hudd (1846-1920) of Clifton.<sup>13</sup> Both Wainwright and Mackay were to have significant careers in Egyptology, MacKay as one of Petrie’s assistants and Wainwright ultimately as Chief Inspector for Middle Egypt.

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<sup>9</sup> B. Moon, *More Usefully Employed: Amelia B Edwards, Writer, Traveller and Campaigner for Ancient Egypt* (London, 2006); see also Dodson, ‘125 & Still Counting: The Work of the Egypt Exploration Fund and Society 1882—2007’, *Kmt* 18/2 (2007), 32—44.

<sup>10</sup> For what is known of Sibree’s career, see Dodson, ‘Ernest Sibree: a forgotten pioneer and his milieu’, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 93 (2007).

<sup>11</sup> W.R. Dawson, E.P. Uphill and M.L. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 3rd Edition (London, 1995), 429.

<sup>12</sup> Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 268–9.

<sup>13</sup> G.A.D Tait, ‘G.A. Wainwright’, *JEA* 50 (1964), 174. Hudd’s collection, at his home, 94 Pembroke Road, Clifton, was given to Museum in 1921 by his widow, Adeline.

In 1900 a large collection of material deriving from Giovanni Belzoni's work in Egypt was presented to the Museum by the son of a cousin of Selina Belzoni Tucker, Belzoni's god-daughter, who had been the heir of Belzoni's widow, Sarah. The group included one of Sarah's notebooks, one of Giovanni's sketchbooks and, most importantly, pencil drawings and a large number of watercolors of the decoration of the tomb of Sethy I, plus two sketches of the Great Temple at Abu Simbel and a small number relating to other Egyptian sites.

A continuing stream of material came from the EEF, including in 1905 the early Twenty-first Dynasty coffin and mummy of Horemkeniset from Deir el-Bahari.<sup>14</sup> Further mummies and coffins were received from the British School of Archaeology in Egypt in 1909 (an early 22nd Dynasty example from Dra Abu'l-Naga) and 1910 (early Fourth Dynasty, Meidum), together with a range of smaller items. On the other hand, the mummy unwrapped in 1834 was 'destroyed' in 1906 – probably judged inappropriate for the Egyptian antiquities' new home in the Art Gallery.<sup>15</sup> A collection of mixed small antiquities came from the executors of Mr G.O. Stafford in March 1916, and from the collection of Mr C. Helyar came in 1917 the lid of the coffin of Pedihorpakhered. In 1913, a proper registration system had been introduced for the Bristol Egyptian collection, and in 1917 the old Bristol Institution coffins of Iyhat, Tay and Tairy were finally registered, together with the coffin of a certain Isetweret and a Twenty-second Dynasty cartonnage, donors and provenance unknown, but presumably acquired during the nineteenth century.

Bristol's overall Egyptological capabilities were further enhanced by the arrival at University College in 1908 of the Rev. De Lacy O'Leary (1872–1957). Although employed to teach Aramaic, Syriac, Syrian History and Hellenistic History, he was also deeply interested in Coptic, produced a number of editions of Coptic texts and works covering its grammar and provided the 'Bibliography of Christian Egypt' in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* between the two World Wars.<sup>16</sup> He and Sibree headed up a department that now covered a range of eastern languages, at one point even embracing Burmese and the Indian tongues, Hindustani and Marathi. University College became a fully-fledged university, able to award its own degrees in 1909, and expanded rapidly, and is now one of the UK's premier institutions of higher education.

In 1913, the Drill Hall, which now lay between the rear of the Art Gallery and the rapidly expanding University of Bristol, was purchased by the two institutions, three-fifths of the complex falling to the Museum and Art Gallery, the rest to the University.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, the outbreak of war in 1914 put paid to any plans for new building; indeed, the Upper Museum Room (geology) was cleared in 1916 to become a 'Soldiers Room' to entertain convalescents and the Egyptian Room 'served for reading and writing and for the delivery of special demonstrations' However, after being used for storage for over a decade, it proved possible to demolish the Drill Hall to permit a rearward extension of the Art Gallery.<sup>18</sup> This was funded by Sir George Wills (1854-1928, a cousin of Lord Winterstoke) and completed in 1930. The additional ground floor space allowed the Greek and Roman antiquities to be separated from the Egyptian, giving the latter their own display space for the first time, and to some degree alleviating the chronic shortage of space for the collection that had bedeviled its

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<sup>14</sup> D.P. Dawson, S. Giles and M.W. Ponsford, *Horemkenesi, May He Live Forever: The Bristol Mummy Project* (Bristol, 2002), 21-2.

<sup>15</sup> Nothing is known of the fate of the other 1834 mummy, nor that unwrapped in 1824; like the canopic jar and stela, they seemingly vanish without a trace: they did not find their way to the Pease collection, as did the inner coffins of Iyhat and Tairy.

<sup>16</sup> A study of O'Leary's career is in preparation by Dodson and M. Crossley Evans.

<sup>17</sup> After temporarily housing its Arts Library, it was demolished, along with the adjacent former Blind Asylum to make way for the monumental Wills Memorial Building, since 1925 the ceremonial heart of the University.

<sup>18</sup> The part on Queen's Road was acquired by Bristol University.

development since the very earliest days.<sup>19</sup> The Egyptian gallery was to survive largely unchanged until the 1970s: sadly, no images of it, nor the earlier incarnations of the Egyptian displays, seem to survive.

An Assistant Curator of Ethnology, Anthropology and Antiquities was appointed for the first time in 1921, L.W.G. Malcolm remaining in office until replaced by G.R. Stanton in 1926. Stanton was particularly active in the task of continuing the long-delayed registration of many of the objects in the collection, including in 1929 the Belzoni material.<sup>20</sup> Stanton also completed a manuscript catalogue of the coffins and some other major inscribed pieces in the collection during 1935-7.

A large group of unprovenanced finds had been purchased in 1919 from the archaeologist Ernest Mackay, Sibree's former student, on his move from Egyptian into Palestinian archaeology. In 1922 J.F. Holloway gave the unusual Late Period coffin lid of Peditehuty; on the basis of the owner's titles, it probably comes from Meir, contrasting with the Theban provenance of most of the museum's coffins. In 1925 the collection of Canon Henry Parry Liddon (1829-1890),<sup>21</sup> gathered during his 1885/6 visit to Egypt, was given by his widow, while 1927 saw the accession of the residue of the Egyptian material collected by the Rev. Henry Stobart (1824-1895)<sup>22</sup> in 1854/5. Most of his collection had been sold back in 1857 to Joseph Mayer for his museum at Liverpool,<sup>23</sup> which formed the core of Liverpool City Museum's collections.

In the interim, however, the University had suffered the sudden death of Ernest Sibree in March 1927. Although he had formally retired in 1923 as Lecturer in Oriental Languages (and also as University Librarian, then regarded as a subsidiary task(!)), he had continued to work as part-time Lecturer in Comparative Philology. He was not replaced, and thus, although O'Leary continued to work on Coptic, the study of pharaonic Egypt at the University ceased for some seventy years.

The Bristol collection continued to grow during the 1930s. In 1935, a group of objects were transferred from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, including two complete Twenty-fifth/sixth Dynasty coffins, and part of the lid of a third. More funerary material came in 1938 with the collection formed by E. Sidney Hartland, sometime Recorder (senior part-time judge) of Gloucester with a deep interest in funerary customs and folklore. Among items given by his widow were the early Twenty-second Dynasty coffin and mummy board of Iytaumut, a Roman mummy portrait, a piece of a wall of the tomb of Sethy I and fragments of paintings from Theban private tombs.<sup>24</sup>

The 1872/1877 Museum building was gutted by fire following a bomb hit on the night of 24/25 November 1940, some 17,000 of the natural history specimens being lost.<sup>25</sup> The 1930 extension of the Art Gallery was also hit, but luckily escaped the conflagration, although

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<sup>19</sup> The former collection of Thomas Pease had been turned down at least in part for this very reason in 1918.

<sup>20</sup> For which see S. Mayes, *The Great Belzoni* (London, 1959), 333-4. A temporary exhibition of some of the drawings opened in Bristol in July 2007.

<sup>21</sup> Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 254.

<sup>22</sup> Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 405.

<sup>23</sup> These included the tomb robbery papyri Mayer A and B. On Mayer and his collection, see S. Nicholson and M. Warhurst, *Joseph Mayer 1803-1886* (Liverpool, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> Deriving from the Rustafjaell Collection sale of 1913 (cf. Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 368), their original locations have not yet been determined, while the authenticity of one is uncertain: see L. Manniche, *Lost Tombs: A Study of certain Eighteenth Dynasty Monuments in the Theban Necropolis* (London, 1988), 194[58], 196[73], 245 n.35.

<sup>25</sup> The former Bristol Institution building, now Freemasons' Hall, was also hit and burnt out the same night. It was rebuilt and extended in the late 1950s.

suffering badly from blast damage. Nevertheless, the Art Gallery partially reopened in February 1941, now also housing some of the Museum's surviving material on a 'temporary' basis. Although now housed in the same building, from April 1945, the Museum and Art Gallery were formally split into separate institutions with the lower floor becoming the Museum and the upper floors the Art Gallery. As part of this restructuring, the archaeology and anthropology collections, including the Egyptian antiquities, were transferred from the Art Gallery to the Museum, remaining in the charge of Stanton, who now became Curator of Archaeology and Anthropology.

In February 1947, the remains of the old Museum (with the exception of the undamaged lecture theatre) were sold to Bristol University: it was then rebuilt as its dining rooms.<sup>26</sup> The sale of the building in 1947 reflected the intention that new premises would soon be provided for the Museum and the Art Gallery; planning began in 1951, but then dragged on for the next twenty years, during which time the old buildings received minimal attention, other than the insertion of mezzanines to gain additional space.

Leslie Grinsell (1907-1995)<sup>27</sup> was appointed Curator of Archaeology and Anthropology in 1952 succession to Stanton. Although a British prehistorian by background, Grinsell had served in Egypt during 1941-45 during which time he had studied with various Egyptologists and undertaken the research that led to the publication of a study on the pyramids in 1947.<sup>28</sup> His later guidebook to the Egyptian collection<sup>29</sup> is an important source for its history.<sup>30</sup>

In 1956, a schoolmaster from Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, Charles Mapp, bequeathed his Egyptian collection to the Museum. Grinsell's lack of space resulted in him declining 'one or two exceptionally large items',<sup>31</sup> but a very considerable number of small antiquities, in particular shabtis, plus Egyptological books, was accepted. During 1959-61, he had the Belzoni drawings mounted, and also held an exhibition of some of them in the Museum. A further exhibition opened on 7 July 2007, and runs to 23 March 2008.

Unfortunately, the same period saw the destruction of a number of objects, mainly large and 'in poor condition', with woodworm damage or 'unsuitable for Museum use', reflecting both the lack of space and the poor standard of storage available at that time. In 1957 the outer coffins of Iyhat and Tairy and the lid<sup>32</sup> of Tay, together with the Twenty-second Dynasty cartonnage were destroyed on grounds of their poor condition and a lack of storage space. Then, in 1959, the Museum's mummified crocodile was destroyed, again on the grounds that it was 'in very poor condition, of little interest and occupying too much room'. On the credit side, in 1964 the collection received as a gift two royal portrait heads from Mrs L.C.R. Phillips of Bath – which had until recently been used by her as door stoppers! One dated to the Eleventh Dynasty, the other to late Thutmosid times.

In February 1966, the Museum received on long loan from the Bath Municipal Library some Egyptian antiquities formerly in the Museum of the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific

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<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, in 1992, the building became a commercial restaurant following the University's acquisition of the old Hawthorns Hotel, which became the new centre for its catering operations.

<sup>27</sup> Grinsell, *An Archaeological Autobiography* (Gloucester, 1989).

<sup>28</sup> Grinsell, *Egyptian Pyramids* (Gloucester, 1947); unfortunately, its publication coincided with I.E.S. Edwards' celebrated *Pyramids of Egypt* (Harmondsworth, 1947) – also researched while its author was doing war-work in Cairo! A pair of faience tiles picked up in the galleries below the Step Pyramid by Grinsell were presented by him to the Museum.

<sup>29</sup> Grinsell, *Guide Catalogue*.

<sup>30</sup> As is his *Autobiography*, 30-32, for details of his tenure of office.

<sup>31</sup> Grinsell, *Autobiography*, 30; he does not give further details, merely expressing the 'hope [that] these items were comparatively unimportant'.

<sup>32</sup> The trough was kept. Also retained was the face of Iyhat's lid.

Institution.<sup>33</sup> This included the so-called ‘Coronation Relief’ of Ramesses II,<sup>34</sup> part of a statue of Prince Khaemwaset B, a wooden sarcophagus, two coffins and a mummy. One coffin bore the name of Nesikhonsu, the sarcophagus and the other coffin (containing the mummy) belonging to one Djedkhonsuankh.<sup>35</sup> Although the RLSI had no records as to their provenance, these coffins and their contents are almost certainly the ‘Two Egyptian Mummies, a male and female ... brought to this country by Mr Belzoni’, which were shown at 10 New Bond Street, Bath in an exhibition that opened on 8 October 1822,<sup>36</sup> arranged by Belzoni’s wife, Sarah.

The following month the Museum acquired from Wells Museum a small group of antiquities originally purchased by a member of the Paget family of Cranmore, Somerset, also ultimately from the Belzoni exhibition in Bath, together with squeezes from the Theban tomb of Khaemhat (TT57). In 1968 a damaged granite head of the late Eighteenth Dynasty, found by Grinsell in the conservatory of the vicarage at Mere, Wiltshire, was purchased from representatives of the late Mrs Troyte-Bullock.

In 1971, the last major group of material was received from the Egypt Exploration Society, deriving from British archaeologist Bryan Emery’s work in the Early Dynastic and Sacred Animal Necropoleis at Saqqara in 1952-6 and 1971, followed by a smaller batch of items from the 1970/1 and 1971/2 seasons.

Meanwhile, various proposals had been made for new museum buildings in Castle Park, in the very centre of Bristol, overlooking the river Avon. However, spiraling costs and funding difficulties meant that in 1971 the plans were abandoned and a smaller amount of money was put into upgrading the existing building. Wholesale refurbishment was required, including rewiring, rearranging offices, creating laboratories and dividing up and furnishing the basement to provide proper storage for the reserve collections.

This work resulted in the closure of various galleries, including the Egyptian gallery as areas were emptied for building works and reserve collections moved from storerooms to temporary storage in gallery spaces. Some of the Egyptian collection was brought out in 1972 to form a temporary display occupying the Museum’s front hall, ‘The Gift of the Nile’. This was intended to coincide with the Tutankhamun exhibition at the British Museum in London, and was accompanied by a series of Egyptological lectures. The closure of the main gallery and the sorting of the collection during various moves resulted in certain items being ‘written off’ at the time, including some large-scale models of Meidum tombs made by Mackay.<sup>37</sup> The first phase of a set of new displays, covering the history of Egyptology and funerary archaeology was opened in 1982. These occupied only half the old space, the second phase never being carried out, the space in question being used for storage and temporary exhibitions, including one in 1996 of the results of the Bristol Mummy Project. The latter had been a result of the unusually hot summer of 1976, during which the mummy of Horemkeniset had begun to deteriorate. As a result, the mummy was unwrapped in 1981 and subjected to an intensive study, finally published in full in 2002.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (BRLSI) was founded in 1824 at Grand Parade, Bath, and was opened to members in 1825, providing a museum, library and reading room, lecture hall and botanical garden. The original building was demolished in 1932, the BRLSI moving to 16-18 Queen Square; this was requisitioned for defense purposes in 1940, and then passed into the hands of local government until 1993. The BRLSI was then re-launched: see <http://www.brlsi.org/>.

<sup>34</sup> A. W. Shorter, ‘Reliefs showing the coronation of Ramesses II’, *JEA* 20 (1934), 18-19.

<sup>35</sup> Dawson, Giles and Ponsford, *Horemkensesi*. pp. 22-3.

<sup>36</sup> This suggestion is owed to Dr John Taylor of the British Museum.

<sup>37</sup> Apparently those shown in W.M.F. Petrie, et al., *Meydum and Memphis* (III). (London, 1910), pl. XIV.

<sup>38</sup> Dawson, Giles and Ponsford, *Horemkenesi*. A summary had however been published by J.H. Taylor as *Unwrapping a Mummy* (London, 1995).

Grinsell had retired at the beginning of 1972 and been replaced by archaeologist Dr Joan Taylor. David Dawson, an archaeologist and local historian was appointed in 1974. He was followed in office from 1986 by Jennifer Stewart, a Middle Eastern archaeologist. Since 1991, the Egyptian collection has been the responsibility of ethnographer Sue Giles, as Curator of Ethnography and Foreign Archaeology.

The 1990s also saw the teaching of Egyptology restored at the University, initially from 1992 by Mark Horton, at that time the EES's Field Director at Qasr Ibrim in Nubia, and then from 1996 by Aidan Dodson. Evening-class teaching of the subject was also once again provided, at first by Dodson and Pip Jones, but now by Lucia Gahlin.

Few additions to the Museum collection have been made in more recent years, although pieces were received in 1982 from the distribution of the former collection of the chemist Sir Henry Wellcome (1853-1936);<sup>39</sup> the following year, a child's mummy was received on loan from the Bristol Royal Infirmary. In 1998, Mrs Lisbeth Conant offered her father-in-law's collection of some 300 amulets and small figurines; some additional EES items, from work at Qasr Ibrim, have also been received thanks to donations made on the Museum's behalf by its support group, the 'Bristol Magpies'.

In May 2005, the old Egyptian gallery was closed for rebuilding; after two years of work, previews began in May 2007, although the need to conserve material not displayed for many years has meant that the full population of the cases was not possible until later in the year. The new displays occupy the whole of the pre-1970s space, with a pair of plaster casts of major items from the British Museum flanking its restored entrance from the Front Hall of the Museum.

The aims of the new gallery are to look at the people of ancient Egypt rather than themes, to place Egypt in Africa, and to look at who the ancient Egyptians were and how they saw themselves. The gallery is intended to be accessible to all kinds of visitors, with layers of information available through text panels and a computer system, through which they can delve as deeply as they want to into the story behind the objects on display. Another aim is to get as much of the collection as possible on display, which is to be achieved through dense displays, although only 500 of the 10,000 items in the collection will be in the new gallery. Bristol has the best collection of Egyptian material in the south-west region of England, and the new displays now show it at its best.

### **About the Authors**

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<sup>39</sup> Dawson, Uphill and Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, 436—7.





Former Bristol Institution building, now Bristol Masonic Hall



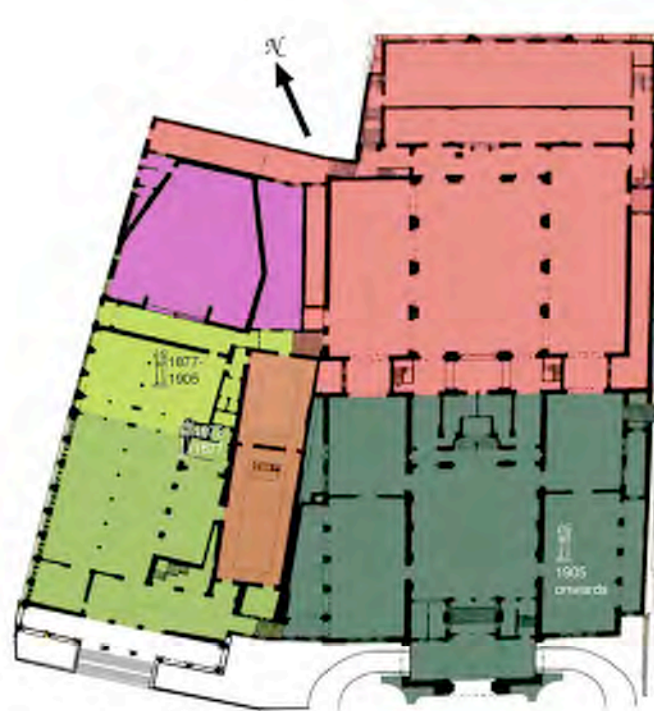
The 1834 mummy unwrapping



Bristol Museum 1898







Bristol Blind Asylum 1898



**City Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol**

**Key**

-  Locations of Egyptian displays (1872-1905 approximate only)
-  Museum 1872-1940
-  Library 1872-1906; Museum 1906-1940
-  Museum extension 1877-1940
-  Lecture theater 1877-1980; now workshops, stores, &c.
-  Art Gallery & Museum of Antiquities 1905-40; Museum and Art Gallery since 1941
-  Art Gallery extension 1900-40; Museum and Art Gallery since 1941.
-  Bristol Blind Asylum; occupied by University from 1911; demolished 1915 onwards
-  Bishop's College; Library 1855-1872; Victoria/Salisbury Club 1872-1899; demolished 1899
-  Drill Hall; divided between Art Gallery and University 1913; demolished 1920s
-  New entrance to Drill Hall; built 1899 onwards; demolished during building of Wills Memorial Building
-  Wills Memorial Building (Bristol University); built 1915-1925

