



Meet at Community Centre
Prebendal Avenue
1.30 p.m. for Notices at 2.00 p.m.
Full Refreshments this Month
**Face Masks are recommended
except for Eating and Drinking
Sanitise at Door**
Speaker booked for 2.45 p.m.

Date	Speaker	Title
17 th November 2022	Eve Bacon	Spices and Medieval Society
Eve has a passion for spices that were used in the past. She explains where the Medieval person thought they came from and how they illustrated society		
15 th December 2022	Jonathan Jones	Christmas Cracker

Geoff Short – Chair

Welcome to the Newsletter for November and our monthly meeting. This month we welcome Eve Bacon of Live'n History who will be speaking about spices and Medieval society.

Those of you who use the website, will have noticed that it has been out of action for some weeks, except for the home page. David Mummery, who recently moved to Sussex has retained control of the website for the time being and has been able to get the site reconstituted. All is now working as it should be thanks to David. We do need someone to take over control of the website so anyone of you out there who has an interest in running websites, please contact me.

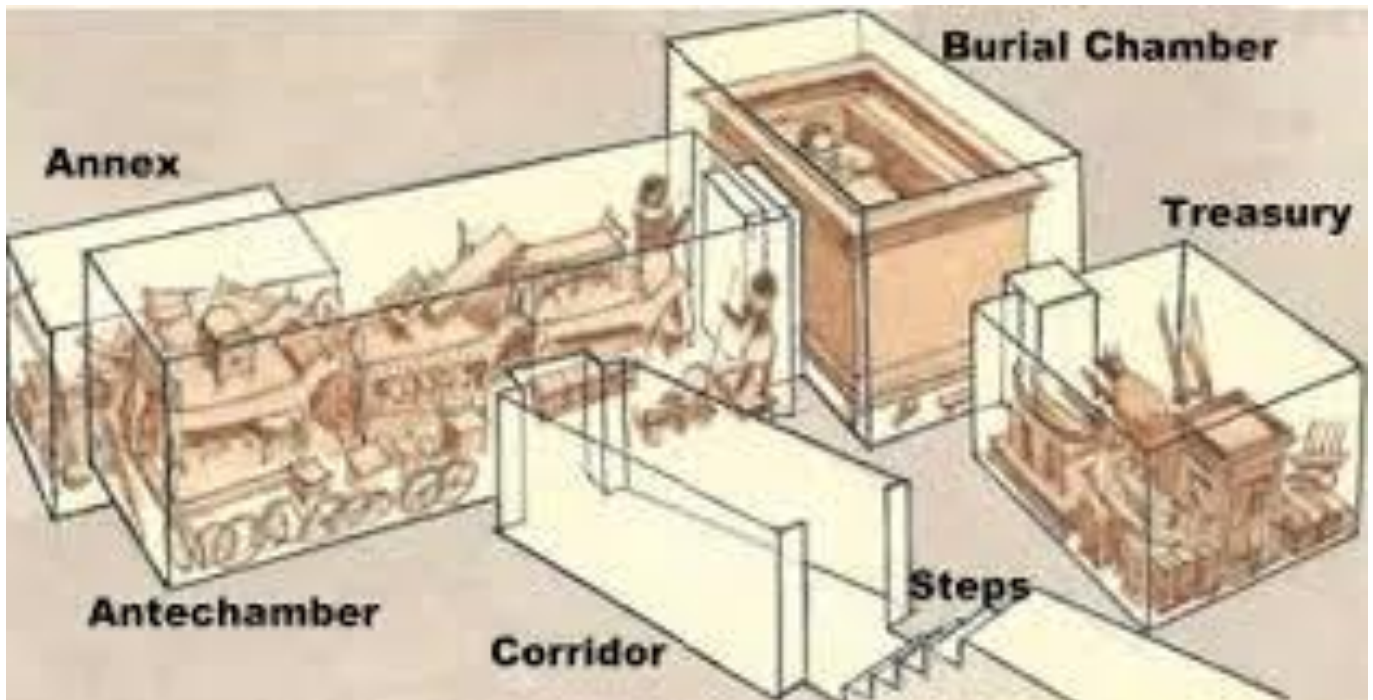
We were sorry to learn of the death of Marion Hewitt and send our condolences to David and his family. Both David and Marion have been long term members of this u3a group and also specific groups, especially Local History and Gardening.

Marion's funeral will take place at the Bierton crematorium on Monday 21st November at 11.00am. Mourners are invited to wear whatever they like, so long as it's not black. Family flowers only, but donations are invited to The Royal Osteoporosis Society.

As we head for the middle of November, thoughts inevitably turn to Christmas. I'm pleased to let you know that Simon Reeks will be supplying his famed mince pies at the December meeting! We thank Simon for this. There may be a raffle but that will require some donations to be made as prizes. If you feel that you can provide a donation, please let me know as soon as possible. Proceeds go to a local hospice.

Dave Rogers – Editor

The Tomb of Gold



One hundred years ago, on 4th November 1922, the British archaeologist Howard Carter discovered the steps to Pharaoh Tutankhamen's tomb. Carter's discovery came after years of unsuccessful excavations in the "Valley of the Kings".



Howard Carter was born in 1874 in Suffolk – the son of an artist. At the age of 17, he went to Egypt to copy the wall paintings in excavated tombs. His research led him to the conclusion that one of the Pharaoh's tombs had not yet been discovered. In 1907, Lord Carnarvon employed him on his first expedition to Egypt to discover that missing tomb. It wasn't until after WW1, on his third expedition that Howard Carter was successful.

This map of "The Valley of the Kings" shows 62 tombs of which only 24 are royal burials. Prior to 1922, there would only have been 61 tombs at Thebes (Valley of the Kings) opposite Luxor. On studying that map, Howard Carter isolated a small triangle where the spoil from previous excavations had been dumped. He was convinced that nobody had thought of excavating that triangle next to the tomb of Ramses VI. Removing the workmen's huts and sand in that triangle resulted in Tutankhamen's tomb being found 13 feet underneath that of Rameses VI.

Excavation Timetable

Date	Activity
November 1 1922	Removal of workmen's huts and sand begins next to Rameses VI tomb.
November 4 1922	Strange rock found leading to a staircase of 16 steps – reburied to keep secret leaking out until Lord Carnarvon arrived for its opening.
November 23 1922	Lord Carnarvon & his daughter Lady Evelyn Herbert arrive in Luxor.
November 24 1922	Steps cleared to reveal first sealed door – photographs taken.
November 25 1922	First door opened to reveal corridor filled with limestone rubble
November 26 1922	Rubble cleared to reveal second sealed door to Antechamber – door opened to reveal a room cram full of household furniture . In the left corner was another sealed door that led to the Annexe at a lower dimension than the Antechamber. It contained the eating & cooking utensils required in the afterlife. On the right wall stood two statues of the pharaoh with another sealed door between them.
February 17 1923	It took seven weeks to clear the Antechamber before they could tackle the sealed door between the two statues into the Burial Chamber. Inside were four gilded shrines. Surrounding the shrines were various personal and religious objects. It is the only room with any painting or writing on the wall. On the right wall of the Burial Chamber was the entrance to the Treasury. The Treasury held the objects that were of religious importance – jars containing the embalmed liver, lungs, stomach & intestines of Tutankhamen.

In all, over 3000 items were removed from Tutankhamen's tomb by Howard Carter most of which are in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Death of Tutankhamen

Of all those items, the one that caught the attention of the general public most was the death mask of the young pharaoh. Unfortunately, during one of its many travels to exhibitions throughout the world in 1970's & 80's, the cobra beard snapped off and had to be re-affixed using epoxy glue!

How the young pharaoh died is still debated. There is a hole in his skull that suggested he had been murdered. However subsequent study of his body has suggested that this was caused by a chisel when they removed his death mask. A radiograph study of his mummy carried out in 2010 revealed an open blood poisoned fracture of the femur, traces of malaria and a mild club foot on his left foot. Thus, his death was due to a combination of all three.

A myth before that study propagated that Tutankhamen was killed in an accident when he fell from his chariot whilst hunting ostriches. The fact that there is only one painted wall in the Burial Chamber suggests that his death was unexpected so an existing tomb had to be quickly adapted for his final resting place. These same paintings always show a seated pharaoh so Tutankhamen was disabled in life as the x-rays in 2010 confirmed.



Life of Tutankhamen



Because Tutankhamen's body was so well preserved, scientists have been able to learn a lot about him. He is believed to have been born in the city of Tel-Amarna in 1340 BC, a son of the pharaoh Amenhotep. DNA shows that the mummy found in "The Young Lady" tomb was a sister of pharaoh Amenhotep and probably Tutankhamen's mother. Marriage between relatives of pharaohs was common in order to keep the bloodline clean. His father died when he was seven (1333 BC) and he became pharaoh two years later when he married his sister. During his marriage, his wife gave birth to two stillborn daughters leaving no heirs – their mummified bodies were found in the Burial Chamber. He reigned for about 10 years (1333 BC to 1324 BC). Because he was so young most of his decisions were made by his viziers (advisors) Ay and Horemheb. At his death, Tutankhamen was 5feet 8 inches tall, slim but well nourished. Ay married Tutankhamen's wife to become the next pharaoh. Horemheb followed Ay as pharaoh and it is believed that it was Horemheb who proceeded to obliterate all records of Tutankhamen and Ay. Clearly, a disabled pharaoh was not a true example of a clean bloodline!

Tutankhamen's Curses

The Curse became famous when Lord Carnarvon died in Cairo seven weeks after the tomb was discovered from a mosquito bite on his cheek. When they removed the Death Mask, Tutankhamen had a chisel mark on the same spot of his cheek. When Lord Carnarvon died the lights went out all over the city of Cairo and his dog also dropped dead at the same time in England. On the other hand, Howard Carter, who had most contact with the tomb lived to an age of sixty-four and died in 1939!

It is also said that two trumpets found in the tomb had magical powers – in particular, the power to summon war. They were played for the first time in 1939 just prior to the outbreak of WW2. Subsequently, they played again before the Six-Day War in 1967, before the 1990 Gulf War and more recently before the Egyptian Revolution of 2011. From such stuff, legends are made!!!!

Jasmine & Simon Reeks – Local History Group

At the Methodist Church

Rupert's Review 24th November 11.00

Planning Meeting 26th January 11.00

At Southcourt Community Centre

23rd February 14.00 Buckinghamshire Workhouses with section on Aylesbury.

An illustrated talk by Julian Hunt

It would be most useful if you could please email us or sign up at the General meetings so we have a rough idea of numbers in advance of attendance at all three meetings.

Tony Vickers

The Severe Winter of 1947; looking back over 75 years

While somewhat rare, sustained and heavy snowfalls in Britain have been well recorded in archival sources (e.g., 1614-15, 1740) because of their spectacular and disruptive meteorological force. Our weather is variable and unpredictable, largely because we are situated in a battleground between maritime and continental air masses. Only 75 years ago, in 1947 and against all expectations, a particularly harsh European winter caused severe hardships and massive disruptions as the country struggled to recover from the ravages of the second World War. The Met Office described it “as a memorable and extremely trying spell of severe winter weather”. Such conditions added to the common description of 1947 as “the year of rationing and crises, in housing, clothing, food, fuel and balance of payments”.



Although January was initially relatively mild, there was no foretaste of what was to come. Bouts of severe cold weather began on 21st January, 1947, due to a high-pressure anticyclone sitting over Scandinavia; this brought strong easterly winds which soon progressed over the whole of Britain, driving powdery snow which drifted up to seven metres high in upland areas.

Almost a foot of snow fell on the Isles of Scilly and overnight temperatures fell to -21 degrees Centigrade. Overall, until 17th March, snow fell every day in the UK, creating blizzard conditions which in turn aggravated fuel and food shortages. Britain also experienced paralysing gales, pack ice and fogs at sea. Drifting snow caused widespread transport difficulties; over 300 main roads were out of action. It also brought what many considered unprecedented disruption of traffic on the newly created network of “British Railways”.



Ice on canals often reached one foot deep, with coal barges simply marooned. Villages became completely separated and remote farms were totally isolated. Over 30,000 cattle perished, and a large proportion of upland farmers abandoned their way of life. February was a month of dull, sunless days with bitter easterly winds and frost recorded every day. In all, records show some 72 days when temperatures fell below freezing.

A major issue in 1947 was that the UK was a largely “single fuel economy (coal)” and stocks were already dangerously low as production fell by 50%. Given the severe shortages of gas and electricity, people cooked on coal ranges and relied on coal fired boilers for hot water. Strict rationing meant people were unable to stockpile food or fuel. The snow bound railways were helpless as coal consumption exceeded production; over 750,000 railway coal wagons were trapped in storage depots where the coal simply froze solid. Almost all of Britain came to a standstill, shivering in an icy grip that has not been matched since then. Gas supplies failed on 24th February, blackouts increased and household power cuts were imposed for five hours each day. Street lighting was banned, the infant BBC television service was suspended, potato rationing came into effect, unused pianos were given out for firewood; production of new snow ploughs ceased as steel supplies dried up. In Enstone, 170 starving pigs were rescued when a military Dakota dropped bags of grain in a marked drop zone. Aylesbury recorded its coldest ever temperature; the Grand Union canal froze, leading to major disruption in supplies of wheat, timber and coal. In many northern towns, babies and the elderly collapsed in the biting cold. The fishing industry became crippled as vessels remained in ice bound harbours (North East).



The snow came in wild, intense bursts and furious blizzards, described as “climatic malevolence”. German PoW’s, awaiting repatriation, cleared snow from trapped trains and buses. Flame throwers fitted on the front of wartime tanks were put into action. Several coach parties taking people to pantomimes in Leeds were caught unawares and trapped as blizzards intensified.

Factory closures, falling productivity and lack of commercial credit all contributed to a steadily rising toll of unemployment. Animal herds in many areas either froze or starved to death; 4 million sheep were lost, with many suffering from snow blindness (unable to eat food or even find it). Hunger prevented fleece growth so that most sheep failed to produce anticipated wool targets. Weather delayed not only spring cultivation (oats, wheat and potatoes) but also affected the fertility of breeding stock of poultry (lack of sunlight hours and green food).



In 1947 flood forecasting and flood warning systems were rudimentary. Intense floods, caused by snow, ice and rain, arrived from mid-March as temperatures rose and snowmelt ran off frozen ground into rivers. Meltwater from the Welsh mountains poured into the Severn and Wye, flooding most of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. In all, over 700,000 acres of agricultural land flooded, affecting 31 Counties, with many areas under water for over two months. Prevention measures were started, including The Great Ouse Flood Scheme at an initial cost of £6.5M.



Its impact on domestic food production was immense; overall, industrial production fell by 10%. Crops were planted in defiance of the calendar. It was the wettest March for 300 years. One side effect of the hardships endured was a significant increase in people emigrating to Canada, Australia and New Zealand. All in all, a winter of extreme misery; yet it was followed by a gloriously warm summer.

Jim Wilding – Group Leader

History Of Transport

Our next meeting is on our new schedule at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday 16th November at 9 Millmead, Wendover.



Musical Appreciation

We meet at 2.30 on Tuesday 22nd November 25th 0at 9, Mill Mead, Wendover.



Simon Reeks – Gadget Group

My main activity this month has been doing system "MOTs" for members, a general check to make sure that everything is up to date and working properly. Two bits of information about broadband this month. Virgin Media has increased average speed this month for their standard M100 and M200 packages by about 25% to 125 and 250Mbps - if you haven't done so already, simply reboot your router (i.e. switch off / unplug from the mains for a few seconds then switch back on again). Although you will have to wait about 10 minutes for broadband to stabilise, it's worth it for a free 25% speed increase. Also, the Bucks Herald reported that a company called netomnia.com has announced that it will be bringing their fibre multi-gigabit broadband to 50,000 homes in Aylesbury - see shorturl.at/kosAE - a distinct competitor to the Virgin and BT networks.



I still have a few Dell PCs that I'm offering free to good homes (although you might want to make a donation to your favourite charity). If you need a PC, advice about the new Windows 11 or indeed any other (non-Apple) "gadget" subject, please contact me and I'll see what I can do, although I am now out of physical circulation until at least the end of November but should be contactable by phone / email on 01296 482735 or reeks@fangio.co.uk

Next Contribution Date Friday 9th December 2022

Contributions Welcome from ALL Members

Thames Valley Network

NAMIBIA – A PERSONAL VIEW

Wednesday, 30th November 2022

10.30 - 11.30 on Zoom

“Namibia is the country of my birth. My family lived there until the ‘seventies’...this is my, and their story,” so says [Fay Sinai](#), who will be speaking on Namibia and how this fantastic country shaped, and was shaped, by events. The event is free of charge as the speaker is a u3a member. Please book electronically by clicking on the ‘TICKETSOURCE’ icon immediately below the event on www.u3atvnetwork.org.uk This is by far the best and easiest option. You will receive an acknowledgement immediately and the Zoom link about 48 hours before the event. If you experience any difficulty, please email the organiser Fay Sinai at fay.sinai@icloud.com giving your name and the u3a to which you belong.

Closing date for applications is Sunday, 27th November