

The Flame



FORTHCOMING FIREBIRDS EVENTS

September 2023

The event visiting City churches has been 'stood down' as it seemed very expensive. Diana Reese is currently exploring other options for our September outing.

November 2023

Zoom Tea
Date to be advised

December

Christmas Tea at Fenwick's
Date to be advised

FORTHCOMING PHOENIX EVENT

Tuesday
8th August 2023
2.00 pm

Croquet at Ealing Croquet Club, followed by supper and the nearby Rose and Crown.



Photo supplied by Sarah Mosse

Coronation Chairs for Charles III and Queen Camilla



DEAR FIREBIRDS,

I hope you are coping well with the current heat wave. I find that I am quite useless in the afternoons. So it has taken me a bit longer to finish this edition of the Flame.

Sarah Mosse has written about the Anointing Screen that was used for the Coronation and provided some lovely photos. Sally Douglas reported about the successful visit to the Postal Museum and Vicky Nugée covered the Phoenix Lunch at the Cavalry and Guards Club. Thank you.

If you go back to the Autumn/Winter 2020 edition of the Flame (www.firebirds.london), you will see an article by El Moss entitled Egypt Part 1. My article entitled Egypt Part 2 was to appear in the Spring 2021 Flame. I would like to assure El that I had written it and I apologize that my article has taken until now to appear. El stopped at Abydos and I am going from Cairo to Luxor and then to Aswan.

Please think of the Flame and contributions you may wish to make for the Winter edition, even though it seems a long way until then. I will remind you nearer the time.

Enjoy your summer and stay well.

Best wishes to you all.

Erika Gloyn (Masons)

Editor

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Arrival at
Nubian Village

Rhubarb and Orange Polenta Cake

Recipe Card picked up next to the till at the Seasalt shop in Aldeburgh. I have used the recipe a couple of times and, if you like rhubarb, the result is very good.

Ingredients:

- 150 g Margarine
- 200 g caster sugar
- 3 eggs
- Zest and juice of 1 large orange
- 150 g polenta
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 75 g ground almonds
- 400 g chopped Rhubarb
- 1 tbsps sugar

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 170°C and grease and base line cake tin.
2. Cream the butter, sugar and orange zest until pale and fluffy.
3. Beat in the eggs.
4. Fold in the polenta, baking powder and ground almonds.
5. Spoon half the mixture over the base of the tin.
6. Arrange the chopped rhubarb over the cake base and spoon the rest of the mixture over the top.
7. Bake at 170°C for 1 hour.
8. When baked, warm the juice of the orange and stir in 1 tbsps sugar.
9. Drizzle the mixture over your cake.
10. Decorate with flaked almonds and edible flowers if you have them.





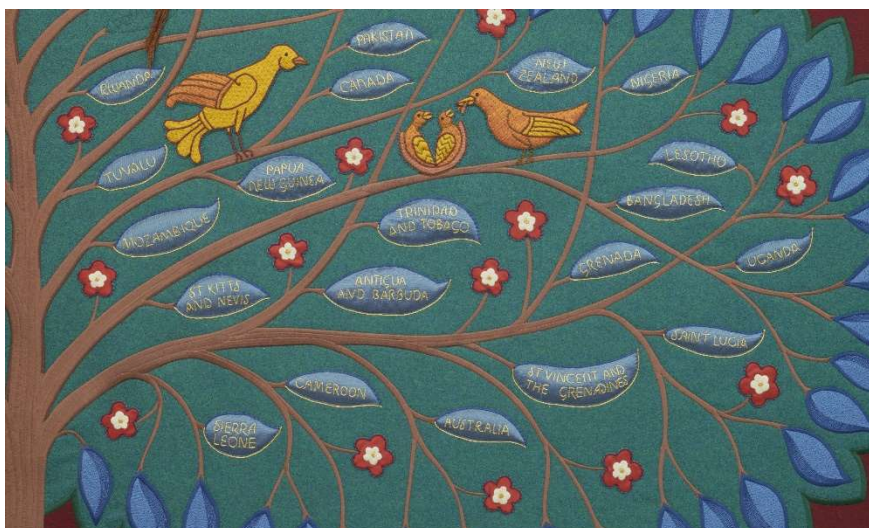
CORONATION ANOINTING SCREEN

THE SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE by Sarah Mosse (Broderers)

The Anointing Screen for King Charles's Coronation was a wonderful collaboration of many of the Livery Companies. It was worked on by 11 members of my company, the Broderers, and also members of the Drapers and the Weavers. It depicts a tree with the 56 countries of the Commonwealth as its leaves, as you can see in the close up picture. It has the King's Cypher at the foot of the tree showing he is the servant of all the countries on the leaves and their people.

The wooden poles of the framework were made from an oak tree blown down in the winter storms; it came from the Windsor estate and was originally planted by the Duke of Northumberland in 1765. The design was inspired by the Sanctuary Window in the Chapel Royal that was created for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002. The wool for the screen came from New Zealand and Australia and was woven in the UK.

The train for Queen Camilla is shown being worked on by The Gold and Silver experts from the Royal School of Needlework.





Experts from the Royal School of Needlework working on the Anointing Screen and Queen Camilla's Train.

All photos supplied by Sarah Mosse

VISIT TO POSTAL MUSEUM

by Sally Douglas (Joiners and Ceilers)

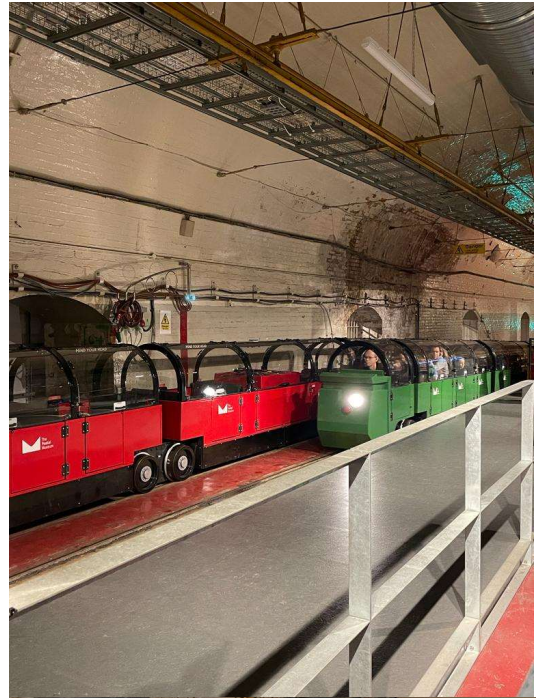
On Thursday 20th April the Firebirds headed for Phoenix Place (very apt!) to the Postal Museum.

We went down to the Post Office Railway, which opened in 1927 and operated until 2003. A 2ft narrow gauge, driverless underground railway built to transport mail between sorting offices.

In 1911 a plan was made to build an underground route to serve sorting offices as road congestion was causing unacceptable delays. Construction started in 1915. The main tube is at a depth of around 70 feet, it has a single nine foot diameter tube with two tracks which reduces to a single track seven foot diameter tunnel - not for those that suffer from claustrophobia. It was built for mail not people. Stations are at a shallower depth. It ran 6.5 miles from the Paddington Head District Sorting Office to Whitechapel, with eight stations, the largest underneath Mount Pleasant. The line became available for the Christmas parcel post in 1927 and letters from February 1928. The railway was closed in 2003. Tourist trains were installed in 2016 running a circular route beneath the depot at Mount Pleasant.

All aboard, said the conductor. We squeezed into our propagator-like carriages. The train set off at a fair pace, we were entertained by commentary, visual displays on the tunnel walls and an eerie couple of minutes of absolute darkness. Fifteen minutes later we arrived back for a wander around and play with interactive displays such as changing the points to ensure that trains didn't crash into each other, sorting the mail on a wobbling train carriage and dressing up, however not in our usual sartorial elegance!!! On to the museum where we were able to see the new design for Charles III stamp.

Lunch at Luce e Limoni was delicious, with lots of chat and laughter.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SHEILA HIGGS AND SALLY DOUGLAS



LUNCH WITH THE PHOENIX MASTERS

by Vicky Nugée (Weavers)

On the 8th June the Phoenix Masters invited the Firebirds to join them for lunch at the lovely Cavalry and Guards Club on Piccadilly – a bold but successful choice to be outside the City. We were in the Waterloo Room, so surrounded by military portraits and battle scenes, which perhaps served to underline the harmonious conviviality of the occasion.

Drawing on the WhatsApp comments, I'll let the Firebirds speak for themselves:

- *What a lovely lunch we had today! Great food and great company.*
 - *Hear, hear to lovely lunch. Great fun and good to see you all again.*
 - *A very enjoyable lunch and great company.*
 - *A wonderful lunch and super company.*
 - *A lovely lunch in a superb setting and great to meet up again with our livery friends!*
- Thanks as ever to the organisers and our host and we look forward to the next one.*
- *A big thank you to our Phoenix hosts for a wonderful lunch in a beautiful setting!*
- Lovely to meet all!*

It seems that the summer menu of vichyssoise, cold poached salmon and Eton mess was much enjoyed by all, and, as ever, we all had great fun meeting up with our Firebird and Phoenix friends.

Many thanks to the Phoenix organiser, John Nugée, for another wonderful event! (No partiality at all!)



PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY VICKY NUGÉE



STEP PYRAMID IN SAQQARA

EGYPT PART II

by Erika Gloyn - Photos Bill Gloyn (Masons)

Every time Bill and I wanted to visit Egypt, a political crisis or terrorist attack put a stop to our plans. However 2019 was our year and November the month (just in time before Covid).

We arrived in Cairo in the evening of 17th November and had to be ready for an 8 am start to meet our guide Ahmed and driver for the next two days. Our first stop was Saqqara and the step pyramid and temple, which was splendid with its walls and columns - 42 columns, each representing the bits of Osiris that Seth distributed round the country. Apparently a lot of things happen in 42s.

Saqqara meant a drive through Cairo from our hotel. It was mind-blowing. The streets were crowded with all kinds of vehicles. Carts drawn by donkeys, rusted old cars and luxurious new ones, bicycles, camels, all sorts of trucks and lorries and nobody taking any notice of lanes or oncoming traffic. Arriving in Saqqara seemed a miracle!

After Saqqara we went to Dahshur to visit the Red Pyramid. We started with a very steep climb to the pyramid entrance, which raised our pulses. A rest to recover was needed before entering and going down the steep stone steps to the bottom of the pyramid. The corridor wasn't very high and I did manage to bump my head a couple of times. At the bottom were two big chambers. In the second chamber there was a wooden staircase leading up to another level. Gathering our strength, we climbed up the stairs. This led us to the sarcophagus chamber. The smell there was terrible and we later found out that it was ammonia coming from the bats living there. We made a quick exit.



After a wonderful lunch we went to Giza to see the pyramids and the Sphinx. It was amazing. We saw the sun go down behind the Sphinx and the pyramids. Awesome, as my grandson would say. Giza was a lot busier than Saqqara and Dahshur, more camels, horses and carriages, tourist buses, vendors and donkeys.

Our second day in Cairo took us to the Coptic area, the Citadel, Castle and Mosque of Mohamed and the Egyptian Museum (the old one as the new museum won't be open until 20??). The Coptic

quarter was fascinating. Apparently, the Holy Family lived in this particular area for 3 months when they were on the flight from King Herod, and we loved the visit to the old Egyptian Museum.

The following day we flew from Cairo to Luxor, where we were met by the representative of our travel company. He shepherded us through customs and introduced us to the guide who would be with us for the next 7 days. We had time for another good lunch and then he took us round the very impressive Karnack and Luxor temples. It's all limestone, with huge and thick walls full of decorations. I felt the ancient history oozing from its stones.



OLD EGYPTIAN MUSEUM



AVENUE OF THE RAMS - KARNACK TEMPLE

After our temple visits it was time to join our cruise ship for dinner on board and belly dancing and a mind-blowing dervish dance show.

On day 4, get-up time was 6 am. This wasn't too bad as Bill and I had had a reasonable night's sleep. In fact, this was probably the best night's sleep for me since I arrived in Egypt. I had been suffering from terrible hay fever because of the extreme air pollution in Cairo. Our destination today was Hathor's temple in Dendera. This is a temple that was destroyed and rebuilt in the Egyptian Roman period in the Egyptian style and tradition. Hathor is the god for childbirth and the wellbeing of women. Therefore there are many references to Isis giving birth to Horus and Anubis and, of course, her husband Osiris's death and resurrection.

The Egyptians are doing a lot of restorative work and more excavations on the site and they have cleaned up huge colonnades, which had suffered from the bats and birds, bringing back to life the colours of the wall and ceiling paintings. Magnificent.



HATHOR'S TEMPLE IN DENDERA



ON THE WAY TO DENDERA

It was quite a long car journey to Dendera, but well worth it. The journey through the countryside was an experience in itself - men manoeuvring donkeys and carts with enormous loads, a truck transporting camels and cows, the houses, the people, beautifully kept fields. Seeing all this was worth the journey in itself.

We arrived back in Luxor in time to have an excellent lunch on board. The food was buffet style with a wide and varied selection and the chef had provided grilled chicken breast and grilled red mullet to accommodate my dietary requirements. I was impressed.

The afternoon we spent relaxing on the ship, watching the river Nile slide by. The following morning there were only two other couples for breakfast and we found out that we were the only passengers on board a ship that was designed for 80 people. It didn't worry us a bit and when we were joined by a big party after three days, it felt like an intrusion.

Now it was time to visit the Valley of the Kings and the tombs of Rameses III and IV and Tutankhamun, the Temple of Hatshepsut and a recently discovered workshop complex, where they trained children to be scribes and painters. It was a strange feeling to actually stand in Tutankhamun's tomb after having been to all the Tutankhamun exhibitions in London and reading the books and newspaper articles and watching films about Howard Carter and his discovery.



IN TUTANKHAMUN'S TOMB



HATSHEPSUT'S TEMPLE

The next day we set off to Aswan via Kom Ombo, where we stopped to explore the temple of Horus and Sobek, the evil crocodile god of the Nile. The site is still under extensive exploration, having been in use for some 1,500 years in various guises - although most of the current ruins only date back to 300BC to 300AD, after the Romans started to rule Egypt.

In the evening, the staff put on a show for the passengers, all 6 of us, and only 4 turned up. Us and an American couple, mother and daughter. It turned out that the entertainment was before dinner and consisted of the passengers dancing with the staff to Egyptian drums.

We had an 8 am start for our next explorations and our first stop was the Aswan Dam and Lake Nasser. Then to the Philean Temple which is beautifully situated on Agilkioa Island. We got there on a felucca, a traditional Egyptian sailing boat, and had the pleasure to be accompanied by a local trader, who was eager to sell me necklaces and bracelets. I resisted the necklaces, but came away with 4 bracelets – two I paid for and two were given to me as presents. I felt I got a bargain and I am sure that the trader felt the same way.



The temple was originally located on Philae Island and was regularly damaged by flooding after the dam was built. Therefore they moved it to Agilkioa Island, higher up. The alignments are not quite right, but as our guide said, saving 90% of the temple is better than losing it altogether.

PHILEAN TEMPLE

Afterwards we had time to view the quarry

where Hatshepsut's Obelisks came from. We saw what would have been the largest obelisk in Egypt, if only it hadn't cracked before they had finished extracting it! It still sits in the granite quarry. I wonder what the punishment for that error would have been.



Between our visits to the temple and the quarry, our guide persuaded us to visit a place where they produced 'very special' Egyptian oils which could cure all our ills; I bought some very expensive pure (I thought) eucalyptus oil. (It turned out not to be so pure when I opened it!)

Our next day started with a felucca ride across the Nile to the botanical gardens. However, as there was little wind and the island is upstream against the flow, we had to be pulled by a motor boat. The gardens were charming and well-kept with excellent signage about the plants.

BOATS ON THE NILE

The motor boat then took us through the strong currents and rocks that are known as the First Cataract. It would be impossible for a cruise boat to navigate through the currents and rocks. Our destination was a Nubian village. Many of the Nubians were the inhabitants of the upper river that was flooded when the Aswan dam was built. As we landed, we were greeted by many camels who were ready to give people rides into the desert. We visited a typical Nubian house instead. It had a special enclosure with a crocodile in it. Apparently every house or settlement used to keep a crocodile to ward off evil.



ARRIVING AT THE NUBIAN VILLAGE

On the way back we saw the Old Cataract Hotel, where Agatha Christie started writing 'Death on the Nile' during one of several holidays there.



OLD CATARACT HOTEL

On our last day in Aswan we spent time in the town and went to the Nubian museum that looks at the history of the nation to the south of Egypt. We also had the chance for a tour round the Coptic Christian Cathedral, where they have an immersive baptism tank, with the holy water coming directly from the Nile (so they say).

Then it was time to cruise back to Luxor. We said goodbye to the boat in Edfu and, early in the morning, went by car to Cairo to catch our flight back to London. This gave us another exciting journey through the countryside, with road checks, guards following (guarding) us for part of the way and watching well turned-out children with their satchels or backpacks going to school. Some travelled dangerously, with their legs dangling from the back of trucks.

Egypt was a tremendous experience and we can't wait to go back to visit the new Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo – when it is fully opened.



WOULD YOU TRUST THIS WOMAN TO STEER A BOAT?



WHO IS THE ODD ONE OUT?