

MA'AT TOURS EGYPT 2011!



Newsletter 1: February 2010

Hi Everyone,
We would like to pass on the following news:

2011 TOUR DATES AND ITINERARY

The dates for our 2011 Tour are 1st – 27th January 2011. With a departure on 1st Jan. Australian and North American participants will arrive in Cairo on the 2nd Jan.; and with an ex-Cairo date of 26th Jan. those from these areas should arrive home on 27th Jan. We have just drafted our 2011 tour itinerary and will post you a copy with your first information kit. In the meanwhile it is available at our website page: www.maat.com.au/tour.html

NEWS FROM OUR 2010 TOUR

Our 2010 tour was a wonderful success and feedback from our 18 participants has been most positive. The weather was unusually warm for winter and we had no rain at all!



Our 2010 Group at Giza

Sites

We were able to visit **all** the sites listed on our 2010 itinerary although parts of some were closed. For example, the area around the Menkhaure pyramid at Giza was fenced off so we were unable to do our usual walk from it to Khafre's; the northern end of the Djoser pyramid complex is closed due to repairs; and the Tomb of Horemheb in the Valley of the Kings re-closed after a brief period of access.

Late last year it was announced that the Tomb of Tutankhamun in the Royal Valley would undergo major restoration by a joint

Supreme Council of Antiquities and Getty Conservation Institute team. While dates for its closure are yet to be confirmed we fear that – unfortunately – it will not be open in 2011. Indeed there is a plan that the Tomb of Tutankhamun (and those of Seti I and Nefertari) will be copied in 'Replica Valley' nearby the Valley of the Kings and the real tombs permanently closed but for those, "...who pay a huge amount of money" (Dr Hawass). For more information see: www.drhawass.com/blog/tourist-regulations

Costs

On the ground costs for our 2010 tour were considerably less than those in 2009 thanks to a strong exchange rate and a restructuring of our land transportation accounts through a single office in Cairo. For estimated costs of the 2011 tour please see our webpage: www.maat.com.au/costs.html

Accommodation News

Hanan, owner of the Philae Hotel in Aswan, had her newly renovated 2nd floor rooms available for our 2010 group. The hotel now boasts not only great service, good food and the best Nile views in Egypt, but beautifully appointed rooms with elegant bathrooms and all mod cons!



A new room at the Philae Hotel

Jane and Mahmoud of Flats in Luxor welcomed us to their Goubli apartments for our 10-day stay. The staff did a great job servicing the rooms each day (the flats are usually let un-serviced) and at least two of our 2010 participants plan to bring Chef Gamal back to Australia to cook for them! On our last night Mahmoud organised a special feast with spit-roasted lamb, and a belly dancer, oud players and dervishes to entertain us.



Our final night in Luxor

“Who’s Guiding who?”

We had some wonderful ‘off the itinerary’ experiences with our Egyptian Guides (by law all tours must have an Egyptian Guide). Hanan (from the Philae Hotel) is studying at Guide School and joined us for our Philae & Kalabsha Day to learn more about the sites. Abdul, our Upper Egyptian Guide, had some interesting conversations with local officials trying to explain that we did *not* actually have two Guides with us! The situation was reversed later in the tour when Abdul decided to ‘become a tourist’ and joined us for our week in Cairo and surrounds to see sites he had not visited before. It then became the role of Hussam, our Lower Egyptian Guide, to explain the presence of two Guides!



Hussam (left) & Abdul (right)

While in Luxor we met up with Hent, a lovely young woman who we first met 6 years ago. Hent always escorts us around the Nobles Tombs and hopes to one day become a Guide herself. This year she led the group with our tour sign held above her head. It looks like Abdul had better watch out: Hent

may not wait for him to retire before she becomes our Upper Egyptian Guide!



Hent shows the way!

MIKE’S LATEST PUBLICATION

One of the little-known monuments on the West Bank at Aswan is an unfinished obelisk of Seti I, father of Ramesses II. Mike’s paper on the history of this piece and its recently revealed decorations – *The ‘Other’ Unfinished Obelisk* – is to be published in Vol. 22 of **Kmt** magazine (May 2010).



Mike explaining the iconography of the Seti I obelisk to 2010 Tour participants

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Website: We are regularly updating our website www.maat.com.au with news and information. Please remember to refresh your browser each time you visit us.

Information Kit I: Tour 2011 Information Kit I will be posted to registered participants in April.

Deposit: A \$500pp deposit will be requested with your confirmed booking sheet to be sent in Kit I. The deposit is fully refundable until 1st July 2010.

Remember, please contact us if you have **any** questions or concerns. With all good wishes,

Patricia & Mike