

## Birmingham Egyptology Launch Party

*Sarah Chapman and Sarah Wilkowski*

The event was time to celebrate the thriving Egyptological community at Birmingham, which is initiated and motivated by the enthusiasm and talent of the current postgraduates and alumni there, it was primarily an evening to make known their various initiatives: the Birmingham Egyptology Journal, their fortnightly forum, the TUT translation project, the new Tell Timai field school 'dig diary' blog and ultimately the launch of their new web platform for these.

This was, however, not just about Egyptologists, but was open to all Classical, Ancient Historical and Archaeological students, and all areas (including UGs, PGs, departmental staff and alumni) were represented at the launch, exemplifying the interdisciplinary, and inclusive nature of study of the ancient world at Birmingham, and the positive collaborative approach of Birmingham Egyptology.

Refreshments were provided; particularly impressive were some snazzy cupcakes in UoB colours! Each one was iced in bright blue and topped with a flag that included the BE scarab logo and a QR code to the new BE website. This display reflects both the attention of detail and innovative uses of technology that can be expected from BE in the future.



In attendance were department staff, alumni, postgrads, and undergrads. This event provided an excellent opportunity to meet people as well as catch up with friends and colleagues in a relaxing social atmosphere.

Welcome addresses were delivered by Steven Gregory, Carl Graves, and Professor Simon Esmonde-Cleary. Steven, a University of Birmingham alumnus, founded Birmingham Egyptology in 2003 as a social tool, and ran a regular newsletter

until 2012. The recent influx of dedicated postgraduate students welcomed Steven's proposals to develop BE even further. These new developments were introduced during Carl's address, a current PhD student at the University of Birmingham. He presented the current projects of BE, and officially launched the new web platform that will present the work to a global audience. It is impressive to see that the new journal includes both a dedicated postgraduate peer review panel and a supportive academic advisory panel consisting of notable Egyptologists including: Dr. Tony Leahy (UoB), Dr. Martin Bommas (UoB), Dr. Michela Luiselli (UoB), Dr. Carla Gallorini (UoB), Dr. Chris Naunton ([EES](#)), Dr. John Taylor (BM) and Prof. John Ray (University of Cambridge). Each one has/had connections with the University of Birmingham and exhibits another unique way that BE aims to maintain the social relationships inherent in its foundation back in 2003. Prof. Esmonde-Cleary (the Head of School for the [Department of Classics and Ancient History](#)) hailed this new initiative as an opportunity for both current and future postgraduates, as well as a means of connecting with, or maintaining connections with alumni socially and academically.

It was great to see the continued thread of Birmingham Egyptology from 2003, as a newsletter and social community, through to its more recent developments, greeting a resurgence and new era for Egyptology in Birmingham.

The excitement and enthusiasm of Birmingham Egyptology is infectious, and with their positive nature (both within Egyptology, but also in their approach to interdisciplinary inclusion) Birmingham Egyptology gives hope and a bright light to the future of the study of the ancient world at Birmingham.

The evening was a great success: a networking of both Egyptologists and other postgraduates of the IAA, and an opportunity to see the potential initiatives other disciplines could go on to emulate.