

Invitation to Excursion on 10 August 2006 for the participants in the Information Technology and Egyptology (I&E) Conference in Oxford, 8-9 August 2006.

Please book your seat as soon as possible, and not later than Thursday 20 July 2006, via email to Dag Bergman (dag.ns01@ddbergman.f2s.com). Cost: £50 (see details below).

We are organizing a full day **excursion to Kingston Lacy**, with **additional stops** at **Salisbury Cathedral**, and **Stonehenge**, on **Thursday the 10th of August 2006**, the day after the actual conference. We would like the excursion to go to a place that would be of special interest for Egyptologists, and that they would not easily get to by themselves (<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-kingstonlacy.htm>).

Kingston Lacy, near Wimborne Minster in Dorset, a few miles North-West of Bournemouth on the English south coast, is the manor house, gardens, and parks that belonged to the eccentric **William John Bankes (1786 - 1855)**, a friend of Lord Byron, and who, in the early 19th century, hired artists to document sites and monuments in Egypt, and who also collected some Ancient Egyptian artefacts (see article about the Egyptian antiquities at Kingston Lacy by Harry James in KMT, volume 4, number 4, Winter 1993-4).

The most important object from an Egyptological perspective, and what makes this place so unique, is an **obelisk** from Philae, removed by Belzoni, with inscriptions that, complementing those on the Rosetta Stone, helped Champollion to decipher the hieroglyphs. The obelisk is standing, not far from a large red granite Egyptian sarcophagus, in the gardens, where there is also a newly restored Edwardian Japanese Garden.

The elegant 17th century manor house, altered in the 1830s by Sir Charles Barry (architect of the Houses of Parliament, and whom Bankes first met in 1819 at the temple of Ramesses at Abu Simbel), is worth seeing in its own right. It is equipped with an impressive marble staircase, and is decorated with beautiful furniture from the last 300 years. Some 6-10 of the documentary drawings commissioned by Bankes in Egypt are on display in the mansion, although most of the collection is presently in the British Museum (where it can be studied by appointment).

In addition to the collection of Ancient Egyptian objects, there is also a collection of western art masters, such as Van Dyck, Rubens, Titian, and Brueghel. Work by Spanish painters including Velázquez can be seen in the extraordinary Spanish Room with walls hung in magnificent gilded leather. The painting 'Night and Day' by Guido Reni is hung on the Library ceiling. Originally from a Bologna palazzo, this fresco was attached to a canvas in 1840 and has just been fully restored.

The schedule given below is estimated and flexible, but is given as a framework. We will start from Worcester College around 8:00-8:30 (exact time will be announced at the conference), and expect to arrive at Kingston Lacy at approximately 10:30-11:00. After seeing the gardens with the obelisk and the mansion with its art, we will have lunch in Kingston Lacy's Stables restaurant (hot lunch with either Kingston Lacy Cottage Pie with beef from their own herd, or Homity Pie - vegetarian, with cheese, potato, onion, garlic & parsley flan, followed by Fruit Crumble & Cream and Tea or Coffee).

Around 14:00, we intend to begin the return journey, but in order to make better use of the time, the bus and the stretch of the journey, we will make shorter or longer stops at interesting places that are on or near the direct route back to Oxford.

Our first short stop (or at least driving past) will be the large **Iron Age hillfort of Badbury Rings**, located within the estates of Kingston Lacy. A significant landmark, it is said to be a possible site for Arthur's Mount Badon (<http://www.britainexpress.com/counties/dorset/ancient/badbury.htm>).

Our first main additional stop (around 15:00) will be **Salisbury Cathedral**, built in the 13th century (AD1220-1258). This beautiful building is famous (among other things according to the Cathedral website, <http://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk>) for having "Britain's tallest spire (123m/404ft) (built between AD1310-1333), the best preserved of only four surviving original Magna Carta (AD1215) (on display in the Chapter House), a unique 13th century stone frieze of bible stories in the Chapter House, Europe's oldest working clock (AD1386) (now situated in the north nave aisle), and Britain's largest Cathedral Cloisters". The cathedral also has a restaurant and coffee shop called the Refectory Restaurant for those who need refreshments (not included).

We will try to arrange for guided tours for those who would like that. One and a half hours is normally considered enough time to see the cathedral at a relaxed pace. Accordingly, we will leave the cathedral around 16:30, and expect to arrive at our second main additional stop, **Stonehenge**, around 17:00.

For those who don't know about Stonehenge, the English Heritage's website (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/conProperty.313>) states: "The great and ancient stone circle of Stonehenge is one of the wonders of the world. What visitors see today are the substantial remnants of the last in a sequence of such monuments erected between circa 3000BC and 1600BC. Each monument was a circular structure, aligned with the rising of the sun at the midsummer solstice."

One to one and a half hours is normally also considered enough time to both view the monument (portable Audio Guide included) and have a snack in the outdoor coffee shop (not included). Accordingly, we plan to leave Stonehenge around 18:00 - 18:30. The rest of the journey back to Oxford should take approximately one and a half hours, so we expect to be back at Worcester College by 20:00 at the latest.

The price of 50 pounds Sterling for this excursion **includes** the **bus transfer** (business class with A/C and toilet), **entrance fees** to Kingston Lacy, Salisbury Cathedral, and Stonehenge, **and lunch** at Kingston Lacy (including coffee, extra for other beverages). Members of National Trust and English Heritage will be reimbursed at the sites of Kingston Lacy and Stonehenge respectively for fees they have been charged if they bring their membership cards to show at the entrances.

The price difference between the large, high standard bus, we have booked, and a minibus, or other smaller, less comfortable, buses is not very large, and the cost per person decreases quickly with increasing number of people. We therefore decided to go with the larger bus; especially as that bus company offers a higher degree of flexibility in terms of timing and choice of route compared to the competition. In case we manage to fill up more of the space in the bus than expected, we will lower the charge accordingly. To increase the possibility for that, we are inviting members of relevant local organisations, such as The Association for the Study of Travellers in Egypt and the Near East (ASTENE) and Oxford University Archaeological Society (OUAS) to participate using available, otherwise empty, seats. Some of the conference participants are also members of one or even both of these organisations, so we don't expect any clash of interests.

Conference participants will have priority to the seats, but we need to know as soon as possible how many seats we can offer to members of the local organisations, so again: **Please book your seat as soon as possible, and not later than 20 July 2006, via email to Dag Bergman** (dag.ns01@ddbergman.f2s.com). The fee for tour participants will be charged in cash when registering for the conference.