

Sais, July 2011

This July a small team from Durham University, Dr Penelope Wilson & Sam Wilford, were joined by Ines Heide (Freie Universität, Berlin) to continue work cataloguing recent finds at Sa el-Hagar (Ancient Sais) found during the continuing installation of the Waste Water Project in the village.

The adventures, however, do not start within the pottery magazine but much earlier. At 4 am on July 3rd, with the skies ablaze with a blood red summers dawn over Newcastle Airport and the smell of breakfast Big Mac Burgers, two spritely archaeologists began their journey to the Land of Eternity (Cairo Terminal 2), only to find on arrival, that their luggage had decided to stay and enjoy the night life of Amsterdam. Work, however, was not delayed due to this setback and began on the 6th of July; the novelty of no clothes quickly wearing off- perhaps due to the smell.

Pottery, namely Saite and Ptolemaic local Nile Silt with some Greek imports, was recorded and diagnostic sherds drawn. Star finds include 3 stamped amphorae handles, a record at Sais, which included a fascinating Egyptian imitation stamp.

During our time at Sais we had the opportunity to visit Tell Timai (Thmuis) an impressive Roman citadel where a team from the University of Hawaii are currently working and we also took a well deserved weekend break in the Blackpool of Egypt- Alexandria.

In 3 weeks good progress was made in sorting through the pottery and, as always, was a fun and rewarding experience; dotted with tales of stray donkeys, stray children and lost luggage. I would like to thank Dr. Penelope Wilson and the North East Ancient Egypt Society for giving me the opportunity to return to Sais and provide me with a set of unforgettable memories and lost socks.

Sam Wilford



Visiting baby Donkey