



Steeped in Egyptology

When not digging in the desert Harry James has lived quietly on the Suburb for most of his professional life as Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum. But, type T G H James into Google and you will find 60,200 entries.

The first page details a dozen or so of his books as well as a life of lecturing in Europe, Australia and the US. Next month we have an opportunity to enjoy a series of lectures, Egyptology Talks, the first of four weekly talks, which starts on 10 November in St Judes.

Harry James was born in Neath, South Wales, read classics at Oxford and spent his entire professional life at the British Museum, where he was the Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities from 1974 to 1988.

"It was quite accidental really, I was encouraged to take up Egyptology at Oxford and that led to a life and career in which

no day has been repeated." The Museum in his day housed a collection of more than 65,000 antiquities. "It's the biggest collection outside Egypt, not of treasures, we don't consider their value, but of objects which are a resource for research." Harry was very much involved in the Tutankhamun exhibition which created enormous interest and made Egyptology all the rage in the seventies.

Harry hopes the lectures will raise money for the St Jude's centenary fund. "People attend my lectures for many reasons, interest in the subject, perhaps because they are planning a holiday on the Nile. One man told me he came because he thought it would help him in his work – he was an embalmer!"

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

See *Whats On* for details of lectures from 10 November

Wordsearch winner

Congratulations to Mrs Vivienne Prevezer of Kingsley Way, winner of the sweet-tooth competition. She has three children and has lived

on the Suburb for 20 years. After working in local government, she is now a volunteer at the Michael Sobell Centre in Golders Green.



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A lively 'Dream' in Little Wood

Francis Beckett wrote an article in the 'Independent' about his forthcoming production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' for the Garden Suburb Theatre, in which he said that the drama group lacked actors young enough to play the quartet of lovers. So, he wrote to the Heads of Drama at local schools and sixth form colleges and came up with Matthew Ali to play Lysander and Sarah Hajibagheri for Hermia. Our own Christian Radnedge and Camilla Collins played Demetris and Helena. He then made everything very difficult for them by making them run full-tilt around the arena and often speaking from the back hedge. Since the Little Oak Wood theatre is plagued by noise from the A1 and overhead aircraft, this meant that they were mostly inaudible. They looked young and attractive but Shakespeare's lines went for nothing as their

untrained voices could not cope with all that was demanded of them. This meant that the Fairies and the Players became very dominant. Indeed, both Mary Musker and Mark Overall were outstanding as Titania and Oberon. They looked good and moved and spoke well. Emma Solomons as Puck, at last had a role in which she could shine. It was a delightfully playful portrayal. All the Players were well taken. Slightly puzzling was the fact that both Flute (Natalie Adzic) and Snug (Linda Lewis) were played by women. Francis Flute was Thisbe (a joke lost) and seemed to be Nick Bottom's girlfriend. Robert Verrill made a lovely bombastic Bottom and his puzzlement on returning to human shape was endearing.

Rosie Nicchitta made a very threatening Hippolyta, dressed in battle fatigues and carrying a fearsome gun. One wondered

about the fate of Stephen Lanighan, O'Keefes' pale and weak Theseus. Tony Newton was a splendid Philostrate, Master of the Revels. It was an interesting idea to make the audience change places for the Court and Forest scenes. But why, when

Oberon and Titania bless the house, were they not on the terrace shimmering in the light but hidden on a platform in the back hedge? It made the wonderful close of this play visually disappointing.

LÉONIE STEPHEN

Henrietta Barnett - a new biography

'Henrietta Barnett in Whitechapel - Her First Fifty Years' is an insightful new biography by Micky Watkins.

Henrietta Barnett was born in 1851 to a wealthy South London business family. She was their eighth child in ten years and her mother, who originated from Germany, died shortly afterwards at the age of 32. Nowadays, Henrietta is best remembered as the founder of Hampstead Garden Suburb but, by the time the first cottages were built, she was 56 years old and had a successful career behind her. It is this period which is covered in Micky Watkins's new biography.

Although aspects of Henrietta's life have been covered in various publications, this is the first systematic biography. Micky Watkins paints a vivid picture of the East End and the way in which Henrietta came to leave her personal mark with institutions such as Toynbee Hall and Whitechapel Art Gallery which continue to this day. It is a highly informative and well-written book and puts the later development of the Suburb into context. Without Henrietta's drive and determination,

and her connections among the Great and the Good of the time, it is difficult to see how the Suburb could have come into existence.

Another great strength of this charming book is that Henrietta's character shines through her many achievements and, by the end, the reader has a real understanding of what she must have been like as a person.

Micky wears her scholarship lightly and, although she has consulted all available sources, the book is written in an entertaining and readable style. At £9 from the Garden Suburb Gallery, it is excellent value.

CHRIS KELLERMAN



Solomon at Alyth Gardens

Handel's great oratorio 'Solomon' with its mighty double choruses is the Alyth Choral Society's next concert. Remember the date, Sunday 11th December, because this oratorio is rarely performed and if you think you really don't know it, just remember the 'Arrival of the Queen of Sheba' used at weddings up and down the country. It was written in 1748 when Handel was at his compositional peak and the subtext is a paean of praise to King George II and peace.

Up and coming conductor, Jonathan Gale, will be wielding the baton fresh from conducting 'Madam Butterfly' and 'Rigoletto' with Co opera Ireland. He regularly works at the Royal Opera House and the Royal College of Music and studied conducting at the St

Petersburg State Conservatoire with Alexander Polischuk. Asked about the piece he says, "Solomon shows us the many facets to Handel's writing. He employs lavish forces with the economy of a master. The music is sometimes ceremonial and grandiose, sometimes lyrical and reflective and always dramatic."

The part of Solomon is being sung in this production by counter tenor Andrew Watts with Vivienne Bellos, soprano, and Mark Wilde, tenor, taking the other leading roles.

JUDY OBRART

7.30pm Sunday 11 December 2005
North West Reform Synagogue,
Alyth Gardens, £15, £10 (conc.)
020 8958 7641. For further
information, 020 8455 1732.

WORDSEARCH

In the box below are concealed 20 kinds of cars and an extra one highlighted to start you rolling. Names may be read in all directions, straight or diagonally. Entries should be listed on paper or a postcard and sent to Diana Woodfield, 5 Erskine Hill, NW11 6HA with your name, address and phone number. The closing date is 10 December. The sender of the first correct (or nearly correct) entry will win a £20 voucher from Joseph's Bookstore.

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SPRING WORDSEARCH ANSWER

The 20 names of different kinds of confectionery were: Bubblegum, Caramels, Chocolate, Crunchie, Curlywurly, Flake, Fudge, Gobstopper, Humbug, KitKat, Liquorice, Lollipop, Mars bar, Peardrops, Polo, Sherbet, Smarties, Toffee, Twix and Winegums.

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