

# April 2024 – Egypt

**11<sup>th</sup> April**

We left a damp and cold Manchester airport and after a 6 hour stop in Heathrow, we arrived at Cairo airport at about midnight. We were met by the traveline man who drove us to the Sheraton hotel in Cairo. A large, but mostly empty hotel next to the Nile.



*This is the view from our balcony, the Nile visible snaking through, the rather enormous, city.*

After a short sleep we were met in the lobby by our guide, Nahed, who took us to the pyramids and the Sphinx over the Nile into the city of Giza. Interestingly, on the 8 lane motorway going into Giza, they have humps in the road to slow the traffic – with no warning, it was most disconcerting for the flow of traffic to slow to a crawl every few miles. Anyway, we eventually arrived and they were just as fabulous as you could imagine.



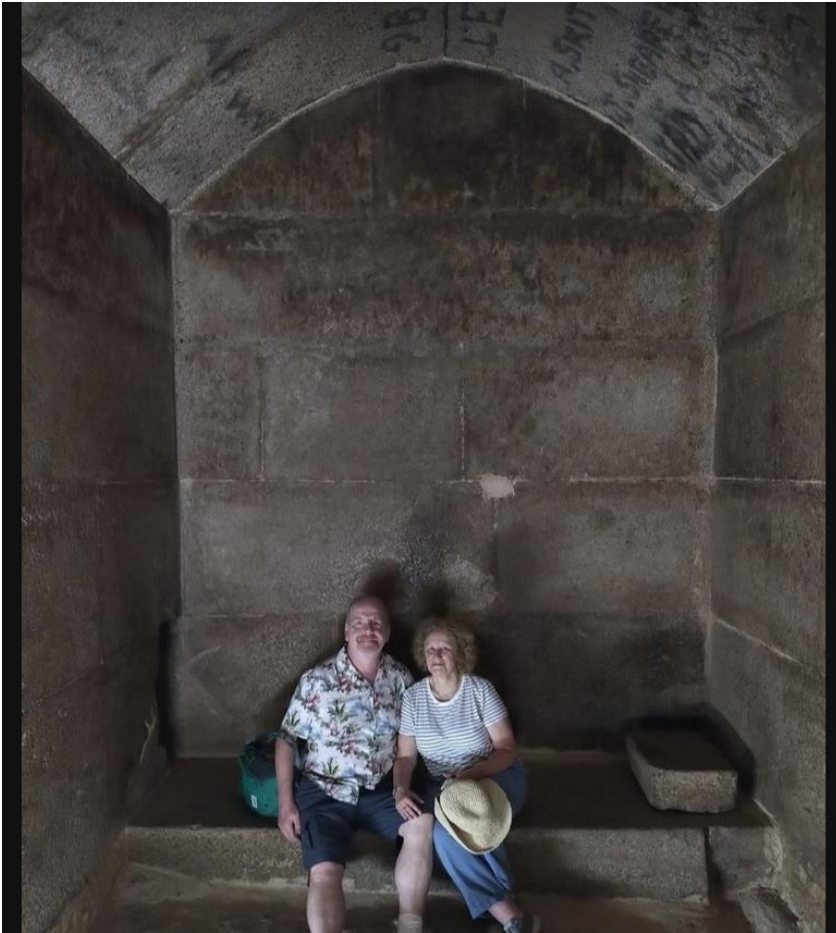
*Belinda in front of the great Pyramid of Khufu*

We wandered around, with Nahed filling us in with lots of interesting info. We also ventured down into the pyramid of Menkaure, the smallest of the three great pyramids. It was steep and hot with quite a bit of crouching needed, but not as difficult as the Khufu pyramid, which took more than 30 minutes to get in and out – a lot more people visiting that one.





*Entrance to the pyramid*



*Inside the pyramid.*

We then moved over to the Sphinx and took the requisite pictures 😊



We returned from Giza, and after a short rest, we walked into Downtown Cairo. However, it was very, very busy since it was Eid, the end of Ramadan, and hundreds of people hanging around having picnics and taking photos of themselves on the bridges. Eventually the crowds and the heat drove us back to the hotel for dinner and much needed sleep.

**12<sup>th</sup> April**

The next day we were taken to the Museum, where Nahed filled us in on many of the fabulous things on display, including Tutankhamen's mask etc. Sadly, no photos allowed of the mask (no idea why) but lots of other interesting things.



*The rather beautiful Cairo Museum*



*The Narmer Palette*





After the exhausting museum trip, we again returned to the hotel to relax by the pool and then have a rather nice Japanese meal for dinner.



**13<sup>th</sup> April**

The following day we had an early flight to Aswan. The plane sat on the tarmac for an hour or so before it eventually left, but the flight was nice enough. We were taken to the hotel over the old Aswan dam, over a hundred years old

We checked into the Old Cataract Hotel (which is very posh) and after lounging around a bit, eventually got into our room



*Old Cataract Hotel, Aswan*

The room was enormous, with separate sitting room, dressing room, bedroom and kitchenette. It also had a very nice balcony overlooking the Nile



*View from the room*

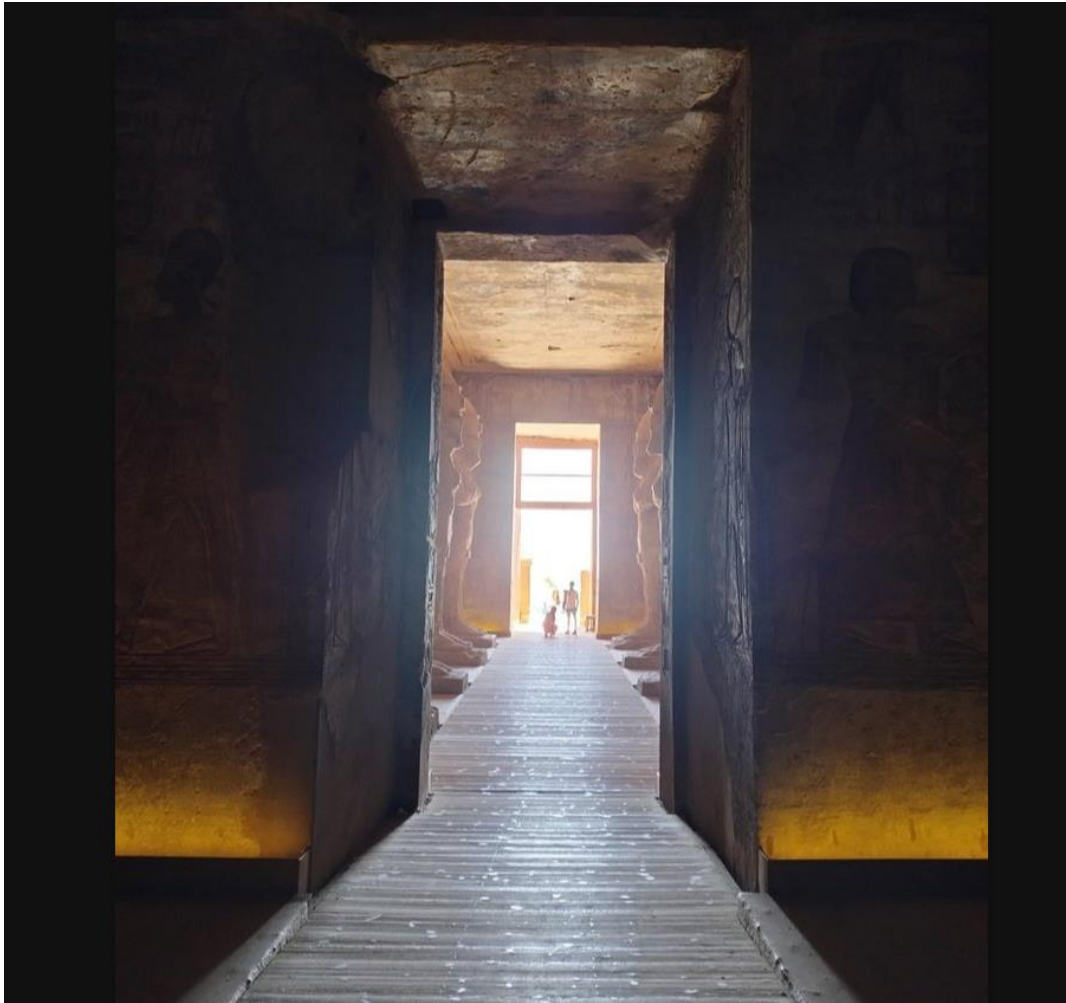
Tomorrow, we have an early start with a long drive to see Abu Simbel, so along with a slight case of an upset stomach we retired early (after a tour of Agatha Christie's suite) and luxuriated in the room.

**14<sup>th</sup> April**

After driving for about 3 hours through the desert, and getting within 40km of Sudan, we arrived at Abu Simbel – a jewel of Egypt’s temples. It was magnificent – huge towering statues of Rameses II and a very interesting set of rooms to explore inside



*A tiny Belinda*



*Looking out from the temple*

Back at the hotel, the sun was setting as we went for dinner



**15<sup>th</sup> April**

The following day we left the lovely Cataract hotel and boarded the MS Sunray, for our Nile cruise from Aswan to Luxor, which took 3 days



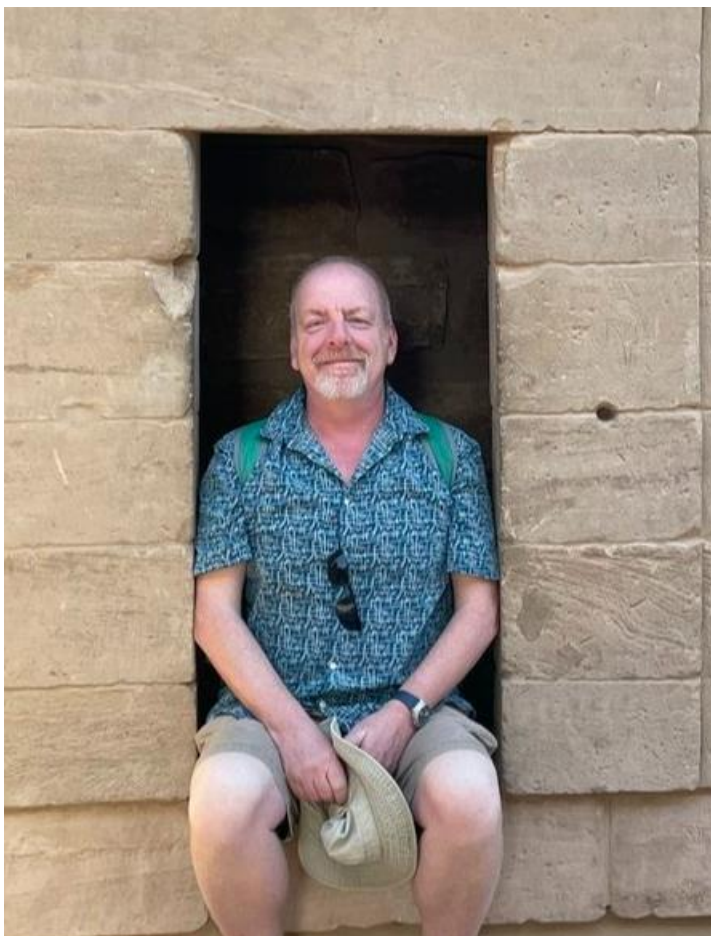
*View from the boat*

Our room on the boat was nice, about the same size as a small hotel room, which a nice view. The boat was only about 1/3 full (about 40 people), so there was plenty of room. The first night there was a belly dancing show, which Belinda and I joined in with great enthusiasm – sadly no pictures, but there is a video is anyone ever wants to see it 😊 On the first night Belinda and I were on a table by ourselves, but after that we were on a table with Pat and Ger from Cork, and Mike and Liz from Havant. Nice people and we spent quite a bit of time with P&G, and drank a rather large amount of wine over the next few days !!

We visited the Temple at Philae with our group of 11 people and the guide, Ahmed. He was very good and friendly, but perhaps gave us too much info and not enough time for wandering. 2 of our group were missing because Barbara fell getting onto the boat and hurt her leg. To be honest, I don't think we missed them, Barbara was described as "Kathy Bates from Misery" by Ger



*Temple at Philae*



*Small door or big Andrew?*



*Boat trip back from Philae*



*View from the boat trip*



*Pat and Ger doing their best*





*View of the Nile from the Sunray*

**16<sup>th</sup> April**

The next day we visited a few temples 25 miles north of Aswan, one of which we visited by horse and carriage.



*Surgical Instruments from about 3000 years ago including forceps and hooks at Kom Ombo temple*



*Driver and our guide on the way to Edfu temple*



*Wandering around Edfu temple.*



*In the pool on the boat*



*Sunset from the boat.*

**17<sup>th</sup> April**

The next day was a long one, with Valley of the Kings, Valley of the Queens and the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut. Then in the afternoon we visited Karnak and Luxor temples. Temple fatigue was starting to set in by then, they are all impressive, all huge and all old, but they do tend to blend into one another after a time.





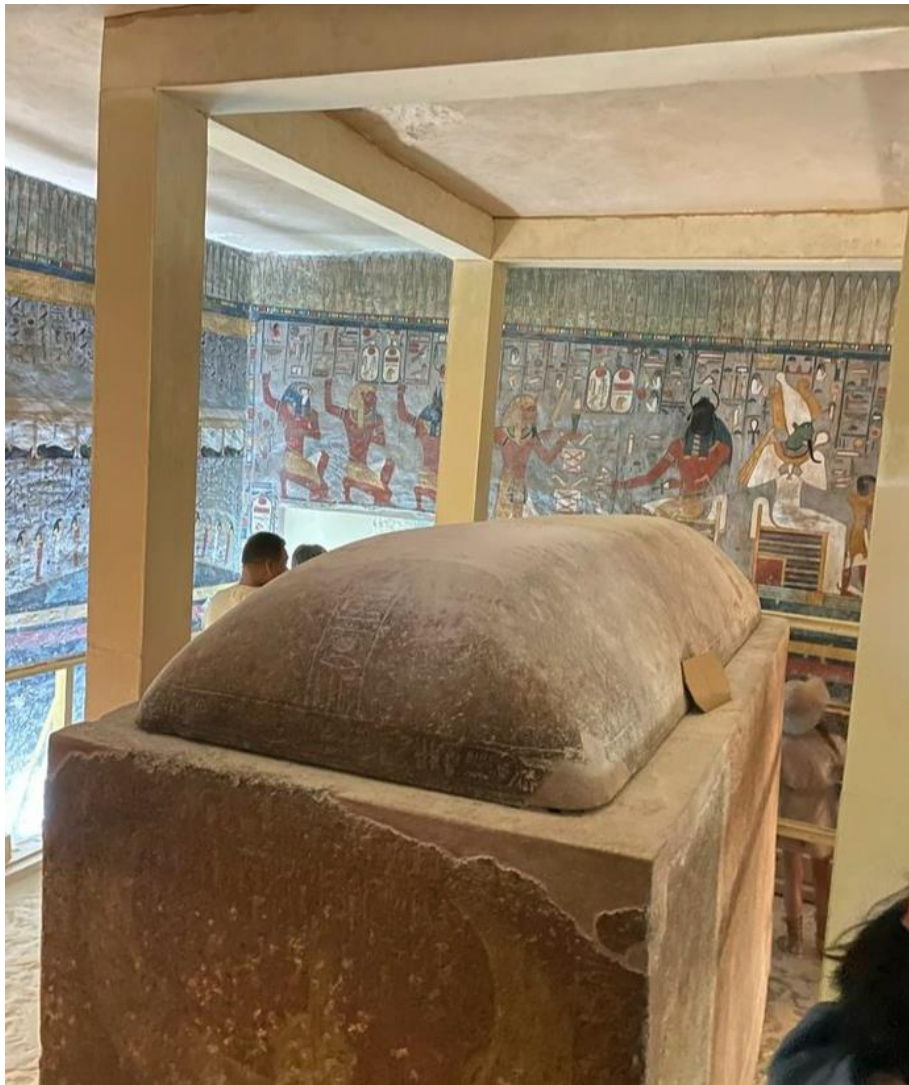
*Tutankhamen's mummy*











*A few pictures from inside Rameses I IV and VI's tombs (I think)*



*The mortuary temple of Hatshepsu*



*Karnak ('twas hot)*



This was a mighty hot day, reaching 39C in the early afternoon, but after a short lunch on the boat, we went back out to Karnak and Luxor temples.





*Karnak*



*Luxor*



*Luxor*





It was also my birthday, and I got a surprise cake from the crew, all of whom were superb on the boat.



*Every night there was a different towel sculpture in our room – this was a baboon type thing!*

**18<sup>th</sup> April**

The next morning, we left the boat and went to the Hilton hotel, coincidentally with Pat and Ger. We had a superbly relaxing day with no temples, just resting, eating, swimming and drinking. Here are a few photos





By the end of the day it got very murky, but still hot. The atmosphere was filled with dust which gave everything a very different look.

**19<sup>th</sup> April**

Next morning, we were picked up and driven to the Red Sea coast and we checked into the Movenpick Resort in El Gouna.





*Kite surfing was a big thing, with some impressive jumps and tricks right outside our room*

We went on a glass bottomed boat/snorkling trip, which was brilliant. Saw a huge number of very colourful fish, and we got to drive the boat for a few minutes

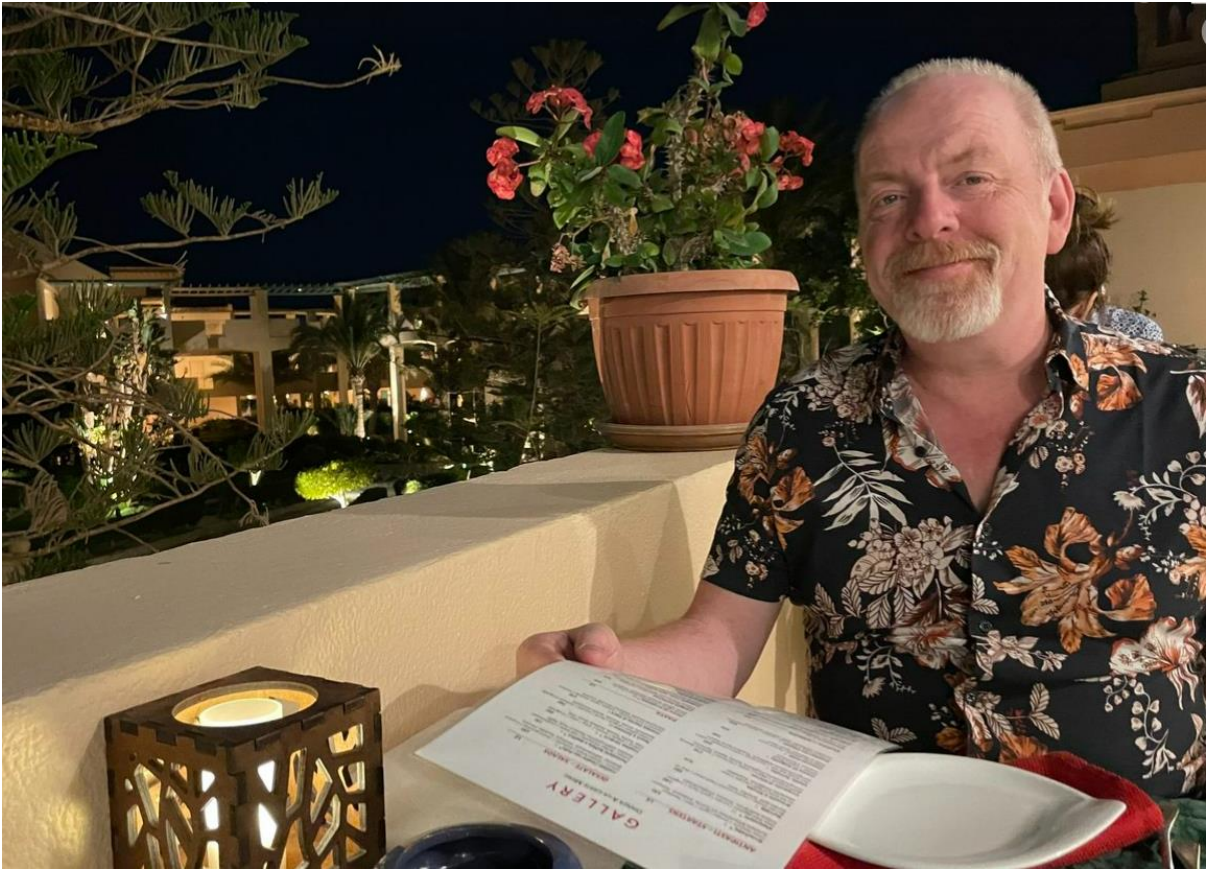








*After the superb snorkelling adventure*



*And eating at the resort.*

We also went for a dune buggy trip across about 20km of the Sahara, very hot, very dusty but great fun





*And saw a migrating flock of storks riding the thermals above us.*



*The obligatory camel ride*



*I am not as elegant as Belinda*

So, after 3 lovely days in El Gouna, that evening we flew home direct to Manchester, and eventually got home at about 5:30am