



TIMES PAST

The Newsletter of the Kennington History Society
Issue 25

Winter 2016

HISTORY SOCIETY IN 2016

Gerry Bowen-Thomas, Bob Johnston, Philip Martin and Linda Andrews have each taken it in turn to chair the meetings. Gerry drew the short straw when one speaker did not turn up on time, and he had to ad-lib, (with a little help from the members!). The society has bought a new projector, as the old one had started displaying stars (white spots) at the top of the pictures, we now hope for a clear view. The committee would welcome some new members, as some of us have been there since the start of the society in 2003, and could do with a break!

YOUR SOCIETY

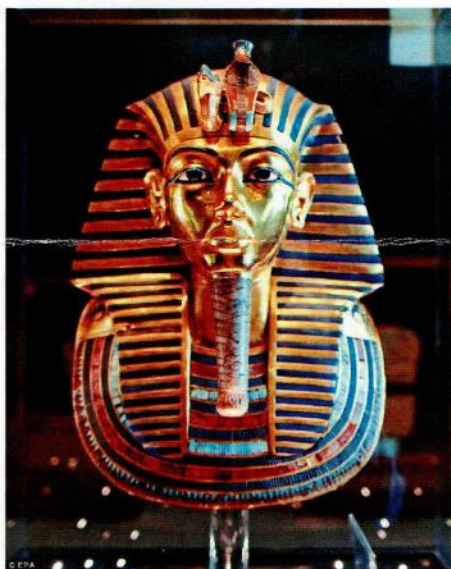


BLAST FROM THE PAST

It is Wednesday the 4th of November 1922 when British Archaeologist Howard Carter, who first went to Egypt in 1891, finds the steps to a Tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

Whilst most of the Egyptian Tombs had already been discovered, little known King Tutankhamen who died aged 18/19 was still unaccounted for. When on the 26th November Carter, with his backer Lord Carnarvon, punch a hole through the sealed doorway, Carnarvon asks 'Can you see anything?' to which Howard Carter famously reply's

'Yes, Wonderful Things'



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

16th January: Church Bell Restoration
Graham Clifton

20th February: AGM and Members Short talks Evening. We have three speakers offering short talks, but if you would like to speak contact a member of the committee.

20th March: James Sadler and Me: How the first Englishman to fly enabled me to overcome a life-long height anxiety

A humorous talk by Richard O Smith

FULL PROGRAMME FOR 2017

a copy is enclosed with this newsletter,

HISTORY SOCIETY WEBSITE

Keep up to date with the latest details of the society's events via the village website www.kennington-pc.gov.uk and clicking organisations and clubs, then History.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE (NO INCREASE)

Annual Subscriptions are due on the 1st January 2017. A renewal form is enclosed.

£12 Individual £20 family

QUOTATIONS

'Some men see things as they are and ask why.
I dream of things that never were and ask why not'
Robert Kennedy

'In the end, it's not the years in your life that counts.
It's the life in your years'
Abraham Lincoln



A Shocking History of Electricity in Medicine and Surgery

Early applications of electricity date back more than 2,000 years using electric fish were known to kill or at least give a strong and painful shock when touched. A famous Roman physician leaves us a prescription based on the application of a torpedo fish to treat haemorrhoids!

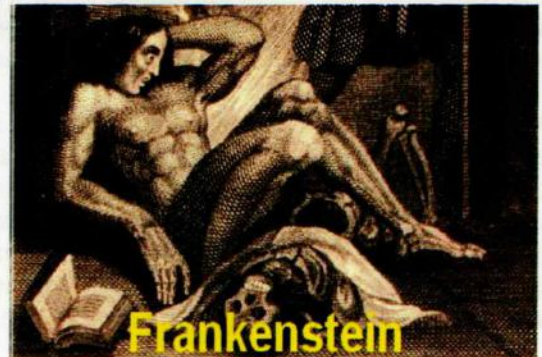
In the 18th and 19th centuries mechanical means were discovered that could generate electricity based on the storage of electrical charge, generated by a machine, and then discharging sparks to exposed nerves of dead animals and humans. Primitive batteries were also developed that produced twitches when applied. Many famous individuals, from many different walks of life, made their contribution, including; Alesandro Volta, Luigi Galvani, Benjamin Franklin, John Wesley. The effects were so dramatic that it was thought that electricity could bring back the dead – what we now know as cardiac resuscitation, a technology that can now be seen both in the village centre as well as in any operating theatre.

Many experiments were performed on hanged criminals sparking great debates in the scientific community and the general population as to the nature of this life giving “animal spirit”. In the literary field



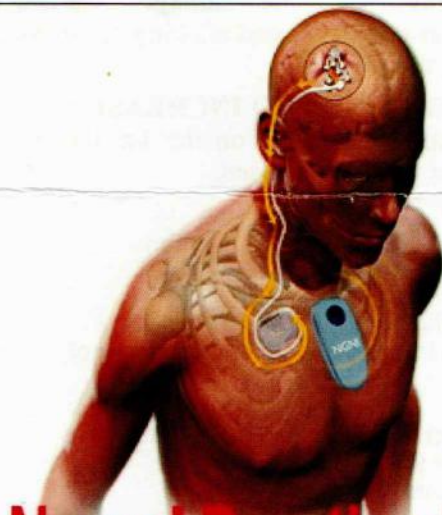
it inspired Mary Shelly to write the first science fiction “Frankenstein” – the original manuscript is in the Bodleian library. This remains a truly thought provoking work.

In London in 1831 Michael Faraday discovery



electromagnetic induction which provided a new and more effective way to generate the necessary stimulating electrical pulses. This type of electrical stimulation, called faradism, can produce smooth controllable contraction of muscle (rather than twitches) and forms the basis of

modern medical therapies and surgical applications. For example, the electrical stimuli can be applied to the skin by battery powered devices such as TENS stimulators used for pain relief that you can readily purchase in Boots. The electrical stimuli can also be applied using surgically implanted devices such as heart pacemakers.



Neural Prosthesis

My talk will conclude with a look at the present state of the art with a brief glimpse into the future of computerised stimulating devices that aim to restore lost physiological functions - neural prostheses. Devices that are every bit as fantastic as that envisaged by Mary Shelly. I will describe a few such systems that are being developed locally; to restore bladder and bowel function following spinal cord injury (SCI); restore movements such as standing and walking or exercise activity such as cycling and rowing after SCI; provide two-way signalling between the nervous system future artificial limbs; stimulate the brain to reduce debilitating tremor or restore sight to the blind or hearing to the deaf.

Brian Andrews, who will present his talk on this subject to the society on Monday 24th April.