

unaware that Tutankhamun is still in residence in his burial place, known as KV62 in the Valley of the Kings, they presume that like most of the other New Kingdom royals he has been removed to the relative safety of the [Cairo](#) Museum.

However, due to the fragile condition of the king's mummified remains, a decision was made shortly after the discovery of his tomb to leave him in situ. So there he lies in his coffin in his tomb in his original resting place, the only pharaoh currently in residence in the valley, that we know about anyway.

The new plans are to place his mummy in a climate-controlled display case alongside his coffin, as currently he has no protection from the high humidity in the tomb caused in the main by the high number of visitors in such a small space. The Valley of the Kings receives approximately two million visitors a year, yet Tutankhamun's tomb, mainly due to the additional ticket charge to enter, receives only a tenth of this number. Putting the body of the King on display will inevitably increase the number of visitors; however, Tutankhamun will now be protected from the effects of their visits by his new case. His body will also be discreetly covered, much like the mummies in the Cairo Museum's two royal mummy rooms and only his face will be visible.

And finally, scientists have now stated that they discovered the real reason for Tutankhamun's premature death at the age of 19. They claim it is from a fall from his chariot in which he broke his leg, which later became infected, an infection which was ultimately to take his life. Will this be the last word on Tutankhamun's life and death? I do not think so. As they say, watch this space.

The Germans try to outdo the Ancient Egyptians

In what I thought at first was a very late or early April fool's joke, a press announcement from [Germany](#) arrived in my inbox proclaiming "On the drawing board: the great pyramid of Germany." I read on intrigued by this bizarre proclamation.

Well it is true, but there is a catch. Two German entrepreneurs, Ingo Niemann and Jens Thiel are planning to build a pyramid larger than the Great Pyramid at Giza, just outside the German city of Dessau-Rosslau and use it as a massive cemetery. That is, of course, if they get planning permission, and are able to raise the money to build it. The plans are revealed on their website at <http://www.thegreatpyramid.org>

The original design was for a pyramid of over 1,600 ft in height which would be, if built, the largest building ever constructed by humankind; however, the plans have already been dramatically scaled down. The revised plans are now for a pyramid of some 492 ft, still some 60 ft taller than the Khufu's Great Pyramid at Giza which stands at 432-ft high. The building work is envisaged to take some 30 years to complete with the finished structure able to store the remains of millions of people. There is currently an impressive list of [reservations](#) on the website for places within the pyramid. I was tempted. After all, all Egyptologists secretly want to be buried in a pyramid.

Each stone of the German pyramid will be a one cubic meter sized concrete block. Potential purchasers will reserve a block for each internment. Each block will house an urn containing ashes and will carry an inscription in memory of the deceased. The entrepreneurs have secured initial funding for a feasibility plan and have launched a 'Friends of the Great Pyramid' group to raise further funds.

They boldly claim that as the pyramids of Egypt were designed for only one mortal soul, they are improving on the work of the pharaohs. Well, only time will tell.

Water News

Recent news in the field of archaeology in Egypt has been somewhat focused on water, I will explain; firstly a plan has been drawn up to survey the Nile to look for lost antiquities in its depths and the remains of a long suspected canal system have been discovered in Aswan close to the famous ancient quarries.

It often occurred to me when crossing the Nile at Luxor, while I was working in the Valley of the Kings that the Nile in that area must be full of priceless objects. Why? Well for one it has been known for a long time that the Ancient Egyptians would ferry statues, obelisks, gold and precious materials all around the country by boat.

When we consider the amount of business on the Nile, there must have been many accidents over the thousands of years the pharaohs ruled Egypt. Add to this the documented loses of antiquities on the Nile in the colonial era, when Egypt was suffering wholesale blunder by Western powers of the time and you have a veritable treasure trove on your hands.

This has prompted Dr Zahi Hawass of the Supreme Council of Antiquities to order a survey of the Nile initially from the area between the quarries in Aswan and Abydos. Alaa Mahrous, director of the Underwater Antiquities department in Alexandria, said "I would like to stress that this will be only a survey to locate the site of the antiquities. Recovering them will follow at a different stage. We aim to carry out a survey of all the locations of sunken antiquities countrywide, a plan that will take us years of hard work."

And in the last few days, a team in Aswan have confirmed the existence of a long suspected canal system attached to the granite quarries in the southern Egyptian city. It has been hypothesised for many years now that such a canal system must exist as it would have been impractical to transport large stones such as obelisks over land to the Nile. Most obelisks weighed over fifty tons and the famous unfinished obelisk left in situ at the quarry in Aswan would have weighed over 1,100 tons if

erected. Most archaeologists consider the Ancient Egyptians a very practical people and this latest discovery confirms that.

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