

Times
ArchiveA splendour of
coaches at the
International
Horse Show

At the International Horse Show of 1937 the Coaching Marathon sets off from Richmond Park in Surrey to Olympia, London, where the main part of the show takes place. Here some of the four-in-hand coaches are making their way through the park on a fine June day. The Mappin Cup for road coaches was won by H. J. Colebrook with his Nimrod coach and team of brown bays



Archive

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Barony

The life barony conferred on the Michael John Martin has been gazetted by the name, style and title of Baron Martin of Springburn, of Port Dundas in the city of Glasgow.

Service appointments

Navy Commander J. N. Macleod to be promoted Captain and to be a member of the Strategic Defence Review Team with effect from September 2009.

Legal news

Catherine Margaret Healy has been appointed a salaried judge of the First-Tier Tribunal of the Health, Education and Social Care Chamber, to exercise the mental health jurisdiction within that chamber in the Northern Region, with effect from October 1, 2009.

Appointments

Ambassador to the Dominican Republic
Mr Steven Fisher has been appointed Ambassador to the Dominican Republic and non-resident Ambassador to Haiti in succession to Mr Ian Worthington. Mr Fisher will take up his appointment during December 2009.

Church news

Archdeacon of Loughborough
The Rev Canon David Newman, Rector, Loughborough Emmanuel and St Mary in Charnwood (Leicester), to be Archdeacon of Loughborough (same diocese).

The olive oiled Greece's trade with Egypt

Norman Hammond
Archaeology Correspondent

The summer exhibition at Buckingham Palace on the Queen's Commonwealth tours includes more than a hundred gifts that she received, ranging from totem poles to a whale's tooth, all deemed appropriate for a reigning monarch. Some are more practical, including a silk scarf from Nelson Mandela and diamond brooches in the form of national emblems from Australia and New Zealand.

Ancient rulers also exchanged "greeting gifts", and a Dutch scholar has recently shown that the Greek Bronze Age kings of Mycenae gave the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten the eminently useful present of jars of perfumed olive oil. Egypt was not an olive-growing region, and the gift must have been greatly appreciated.

Writing in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, Jorrit Kelder notes that the relationship between the Greek mainland and Egypt some 3,500 years ago is regarded as "elusive", and that most scholars envisage irregular exchange via middlemen in Cyprus or the Levant rather than direct contact.

Kelder argues that it was in fact direct, highly organised, and "involved the active engagement of the ruling elite at Mycenae as well as the pharaonic court" at the time of the New Kingdom 18th Dynasty.

Egypt was expansionist at this period — Thutmose III (1479-1425BC), had even crossed the Euphrates as well as fighting in the Levant — and in response he received an emissary in 1437BC bringing gifts from the ruler of a hitherto unknown land

called "Tnj" or Tanaju, across the "Great Green" of the Mediterranean. Later texts suggest that this was the Argolid region around Mycenae, and that the Pharaohs recognised its ruler as a fellow king. Written evidence of such contacts lasts for only a few decades, from 1437 to around 1350BC.

Evidence for direct courtly contact was recognised a generation ago by the late Vronwy Hankey, who noted the surprising number and narrow range of Mycenaean pottery vessels found at Tell el-Amarna, the heretic Pharaoh Akhenaten's short-lived capital from 1352 to 1336BC.

Most were relatively small, fine ware jars with a stirrup handle, and the 1,500-2,000 fragments are thought to have represented about 600 whole vessels, mostly found in the central

part of the city where the official buildings stood, and arriving over less than 20 years.

Although a few sherds were found earlier and at other sites, "Amarna marks the advent of Mycenaean pottery in the Egyptian archaeological record", Kelder says. Such pottery is then found down to the 12th century BC, notably at Pi-Ramesses, the capital of Ramesses II in the Nile Delta, and "it is generally accepted that these vessels served as containers for a liquid, probably perfumed olive oil".

Both wild and cultivated olives were used in Greece from the early bronze age onwards: Mycenaean Linear B tablets from Pylos talk about "perfumed oil for textiles", and in Egypt presumably imported oil was used in temple lamps. The remains of olives

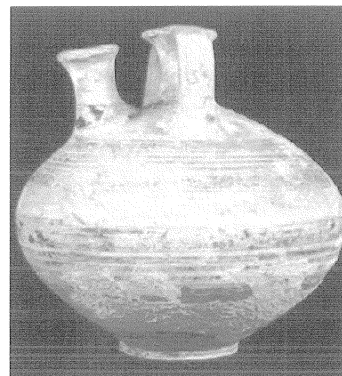
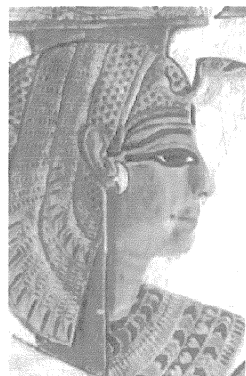
are found only rarely before the reign of Akhenaten, but he is shown offering his god an olive branch, and olive twigs were used in Tutankhamun's funerary bouquets: they "were important in Amarna-age royal display", Kelder says, although large-scale orchards were probably not present until the reign of Ramesses II.

Kelder argues that both the oil and the plant came from Mycenaean Greece, and that the royal contexts of their occurrence suggest formal and diplomatic rather than private and commercial contact.

Egyptian faience plaques with the cartouche of Amehotep III, father of Akhenaten, found at Mycenae suggest direct diplomatic contact, though perhaps not the formal embassy there that some scholars accept, Kelder says. He envisages a three-stage contact, beginning with the envoys of Tanaju reaching Thutmose III in the Levant, and followed by those of Amenhotep III going to Mycenae decades later. Finally, "messengers bring a large quantity of Argive vessels containing perfumed olive oil to Akhenaten as a greeting gift", a hypothesis which is "a plausible explanation for the sudden presence of the large collection of Mycenaean pottery at Amarna and the equally sudden appearance of references to the Aegean in Egyptian iconography".

Other goods may have passed as well, with oil the lubricant of trade. Agamemnon's ancestors may have had far closer relations with the land of the Pharaohs than has been hitherto documented.

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Greek gifts: Nefertari wearing Aegean-style earrings, and a Mycenaean jar