

THE EGYPTIAN SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA



In Memory of Keith Grenville



Keith Grenville

13 September 1935 - 26 August 2024

www.maestramary.altervista.org



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death on Monday 26th August, 2024 of the esteemed founder of The Egyptian Society of South Africa (TESSA). As a man of great presence and superb voice, his passion, knowledge, and talent was the driving force and mainstay of the society. He was Chairman for ten years from 1996 to 2006, but still took an active interest and was always there to give advice and encouragement. Unfortunately in the last couple of years ill health meant he could no longer take an active role in the society, but we knew he was there in spirit. His loss is inestimable. However, as in the ancient Egyptian tradition, if one's name is remembered, one gains immortality. Keith Grenville's name will live on in his legacy.

Born in England to a Jewish mother and an Italian Catholic father, his real surname was Benugli. Grenville is his stage name.

It is a fitting tribute to Keith that the society that he founded in 1996 is still active after 28 years.

On the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the Society, Keith wrote the following in a special anniversary booklet:

When I considered creating an "Egyptian" society in 1996, it never entered my mind that 21 years later I would be writing these words. With the energetic support of my Founding Committee coupled with the enthusiasm of the 153 Founding Members signed up on that memorable inaugural meeting on 4th November 1996, here we are at the 21st birthday of The Egyptian Society of South Africa. Coincidentally, on the same day in 1922, the first step of Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered.

To form the Founding Committee, I approached personal friends. The late Desmond Caywood, became the first Treasurer, an office he occupied with integrity until ill-health caused him to stand down. Carla Irving was enormously supportive following her first visit to Egypt, and became Secretary. Anlen Boshoff, then Curator of the Ancient Egyptian collection at Cape Town's SA Cultural History Museum, was Vice Chairman - a valuable link with the museum as our Constitution includes support of the museum's Egyptian collection - a link which, sadly, has weakened with the museum's re-organisation. Another significant member of that Founding Committee was the late Angus McBride, internationally recognized artist and illustrator, whose knowledge of ancient Egypt and irrepressible enthusiasm made him essential to the society. Angus designed our eloquent logo.

The most enduringly loyal member of that original Committee is Founding Member, Mireille Farah, whom I met following several messages from her offering support for the society. Mireille has served with distinction and diligence for the best part of 21 years. Her portfolio was, and remains, "Press & Public Relations". I hope she will continue for years to come.

That first Committee was also supported by Elizabeth Hedley, and as the year passed, Debbie Blinkhorn joined the Committee. A succession of dedicated people followed who

have ably served the society - Professor Anthony Humphreys as hard-working Chairman for 9 years from 2007, succeeded by Marilie van der Walt for one year. Mention must be made of the late Catherine le Sueur, Denise Bremridge who served for a time as Vice Chairman, Christine Paddon, and Johnny Johnston. Coleen Cox has been our highly valued and meticulous Librarian since July 200, a finer Librarian would be hard to find - loyally assisted by methodical Jackie Weitsz. Michael Beaumont was a fine Treasurer for 10 years, supported by his wife Shirley - both were heavily involved in society events, especially arrangements for visiting international guest lecturers. David Wolfaardt took over the job of treasurer when Michael stepped down. John Lombard painstakingly served for some years as Organiser and continues to assist on technical matters. Jane Mulder scrupulously organised and co-ordinated the successful national lecture tour marking our 10th anniversary year of the redoubtable Dr. Zahi Hawass in 2005, then Director of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities.

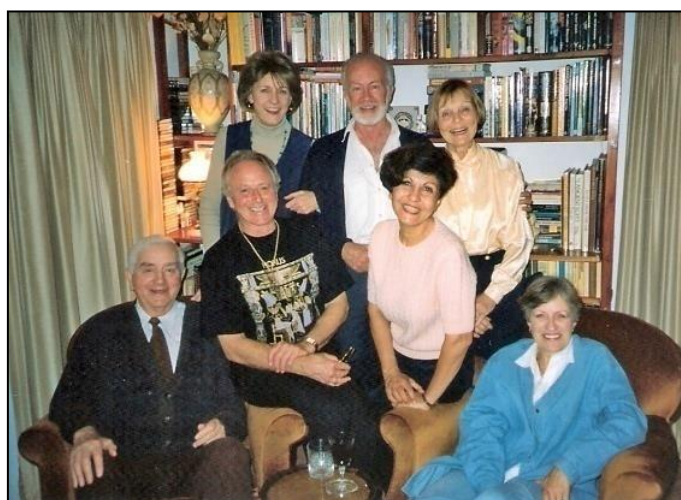
Jean Smith became Secretary in 2000, a role which she has performed rigorously with an ever-widening acceptance of responsibilities. The society would be in desperate straits without her boundless enthusiasm and input. Currently Jean Smith acts as both Chairman and Secretary.

Limited space prevents fuller acknowledgement of much in these wonderful 21 years - Nerine Dorman as Editor of SHEMU, Lila Komnick, Dianne Norman, Bill and Elaine Weckesser as Committee members, our excellent speakers, international guests, various meeting venues, improved facilities, donors, sponsors, Day Schools, St George's Grammar School management, and so on.

The Society has also been privileged to be addressed by a number of eminent international speakers.

In 1999 - Dr Toby Wilkinson; 2000 - Dr Kent Weeks; 2002 - Prof Mustafa el-Abbadi; 2003 - Dr Toby Wilkinson; 2005 - Dr Zahi Hawass; 2010 - Dr Joann Fletcher and Dr Stephen Buckley; 2013 - Dr Selima Ikram; 2014 - Dr Huub Pragt.

TESSA's existence depends on our loyal members and those who serve on the Committee, the administrative muscle of the society, now and in the future.



TESSA's first committee

Front: Desmond Cawood, Keith Grenville, Mireille Farah, Anlen Boshoff

Back: Carla Irving, Angus McBride, Elizabeth Hedley

For the 25th anniversary of the society on 4th November, 2021, Keith wrote the following message in a special anniversary booklet to mark the Silver Jubilee:

An everlasting memory of mine concerning the formation of this society on 4th November 1996 was the crowd of enthusiastic people who packed the large function room on the top floor of the historic Josephine Mill in Newlands as a result of media releases announcing the foundation meeting of the first-ever Egyptian society in South Africa. I recall people even sitting on the floor, hemming me in to a restricted floor space where I could just about move my feet when addressing the audience.

Those who were unable to get access to the room sat on the staircase; others could not even get into the building. Such was the enthusiasm. I had calculated that if we were able to sign up 60 members that evening we would be able to organise and run a society. A remarkable total of 153 members paid their subscriptions that same evening. Thus was established The Cape Town Egyptian Society, as we were originally called. The name was changed swiftly to the Egyptian Society of South Africa caused by the swelling membership from all over this country and from abroad.

TESSA's membership grew, and the society gained international repute. Keith also played a very active role in bringing international speakers to South Africa.

In September 2000 he escorted archaeologist Dr Kent Weeks as he delivered his lecture *The Lost Tomb* in Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria. Keith spent two weeks driving Kent and his wife Susan around the country, and got to know them well.

In April 2002 he accompanied Egyptian Professor El Abbadi & his wife Professor Kararah who presented lectures *Alexandria in Cape Town* in Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Durban, and Johannesburg.

In July 2006 Dr Zahi Hawass was brought to South Africa by the Society to present his lecture *Recent Discoveries in the pyramids*. Although Keith played a very active role in this most ambitious project, unfortunately due to a sudden bout of ill-health he was not able to escort Dr Hawass during his lecture tour in Johannesburg and Pretoria. However his presence in Cape Town was of invaluable help to the coordinator of the tour, Jane Mulder. The two lectures delivered at The Baxter were sold out.

In September 2010 Drs Joann Fletcher and Stephen Buckley were brought out to present lectures at St George's Grammar School auditorium - *The search for Nefertiti* and *Testing the DNA of Tutankhamun*.

Other experts visiting Cape Town from abroad and who lectured the society were:

- July 1999 - Dr Toby Wilkinson - *Early Dynastic Egypt - New Light on a Dark Age* and September 2003 - *Genesis of the Pharaohs: rethinking the origins of ancient Egypt*.
- April 2013 - Dr Salima Ikram - *Mummies in ancient Egypt*
- October 2014 - Dr Huub Pragt - *The hidden tomb and the theft of Amarna art*
- September 2022 - Dr Heba Abd el Gawad - *Who owns Egypt's Dispersed Heritage ?*

LECTURES TO TESSA

Keith was a sought-after lecturer, and apart from the many lectures he gave to TESSA, he also lectured in a number of venues offering adult education. The following is a list of the 42 lectures he gave to TESSA:

- 24/02/1998 - *Akhenaton, before and after - winner or loser?*
- 24/10/1998 - Day School - *Hatshepsut, the female king*
- 22/06/1999 - *Ancient Egypt in Paris*
- 22/07/2000 - Day School - *I have seen yesterday; I know tomorrow*
- 21/08/2000 - *Lake Nasser and the Nubian Monuments*
- 28/07/2001 - *Abydos - anatomy of a temple: history & features of the most sacred site in ancient Egypt*
- 22/01/2002 - *Autopsy on Tutankhamun* - Keith, John Lombard, Angus McBride, Dr B. Brown
- 27/07/2002 - Day School - *Myths, Music & Theatre Magic*
- 27/08/2002 - *Sex & sexuality in ancient Egypt - Divine & Human*
- 28/01/2003 - *Western Desert safari & Middle Egypt Tour - based on the Society's 2002 tour*
- 26/07/2003 - Day School - *Akhenaten - Splendour of the sun disk*
- 24/08/2004 - *Egypt observed - words & images*
- 22/02/2005 - *The Grandeur of Karnak* (double lecture)
- 21/06/2005 - *The Valley of the Kings*
- 24/01/2006 - *The Hatshepsut Enigma*
- 23/01/2007 - *Priests, Princes and Pharaohs* (double lecture)
- 21/07/2007 - Day School - *Bull, Bird & Birth - Abydos, Edfu & Dendera*
- *Portraits of Pharaoh*
- 26/02/2008 - *Back to the present in Egypt- A visual remembrance of things past*
- 27/05/2008 - *Imhotep - the new museum at Saqqara*
- 24/02/2009 - *Flesh of the Gods*
- 25/07/2009 - Day School - *Abydos - Anatomy of a Temple*
- *Philae - the House of Isis*
- 23/03/2010 - *Ancient Egypt in London*
- *Travels with a tour leader in Egypt; Comedies & near tragedies of leading groups*
- 24/07/2010 - Day School - *Ancient Thebes to Modern Luxor*
- 22/02/2011 - *Jackal among the tombs*
- 23/07/2011 - *The Giza family of pyramids*
- 24/01/2012 - *"I am for the sky... soar cloudwards to the sky like a heron" - The Pyramid Texts*
- 28/07/2012 - Day School - *Bravo Belzoni*
- 26/03/2013 - *Ancient Egypt in Victorian Art*
- 27/07/2013 - Day School - *Hatshepsut - Betrayal or a royal cover-up?*
- 25/02/2014 - *Royal crowns of ancient Egypt*
- 19/07/2014 - Day School - *It's all in a name - the dawn of the Aten*
- 23/09/2014 - *Ancient Egypt in the 'Crystal Palace'*
- 24/02/2015 - *Ramesses III's temple and palace at Medinet Habu*

25/07/2015 - Day School - *Symbolism in ancient Egyptian art*
26/01/2016 - *Howard Carter the man, and the road to Tutankhamun*
28/06/2016 - *Fun quiz* with quiz master Keith Grenville
16/07/2016 - *The cenotaph of Ramses II the Great at Abydos*
22/11/2016 - *Akhenaten's great hymn to the Aten*
15/07/2017 - *Making a meal of it - Tutankhamun's menu*
28/11/2017 - *Akhenaten's great hymn to the Aten*
14/07/2018 - *Once upon a time ... and they lived happily ever after*
22/10/2019 - *Farouk - the last king of Egypt*

TOUR DIRECTOR

Keith's passion for ancient Egypt led him to conduct tours to Egypt, when he was able to introduce travellers to the wonders of the ancient land. In time he started his own tour company *Egypt Today* and conducted groups to a number of countries, such as Turkey, Russia, Morocco and India. He also offered tours to other countries, such as Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It was his background in extensive travel in Egypt that stimulated him to start a society of like-minded Egyptophiles.

ACTING CAREER

But ancient Egypt but was but one string to the bow of this very talented and accomplished man. He was a renowned actor, director and producer both in theatre, TV and film (locally and internationally), and received numerous awards. He was particularly noted for his Shakespearean roles.

Apart from his theatre performances, such as in *Pygmalion* in Colchester, from his early days of acting he also played smaller parts in a range of TV and film productions in England. It was a fortunate day for us when he decided to remain in South Africa after being invited out from England in 1971 to play the role of Leontes in *A Winter's Tale* at Maynardville. He was 35 years old. In South Africa his career took off and he was cast in a number of major roles in both local and international films and TV dramas.

For many years he did major work acting and directing for CAPAB (Drama Director), NAPAC and PACT, as well as being Consultant Director at the Baxter Theatre.

THEATRE

At Maynardville - *The Winter's Tale* (1971); *Measure for Measure* (1987)

At the Space - *The Bear*; *Endgame*; *L'amante Anglaise*; *Lesson in Blood & Rose*; *Othello Slegs Blankes*; *Revenge*; *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore*

CAPAB - *Entertaining Mr Sloane* (1977); *Dear Liar* (1979)

PACT - *The Director of the Opera* (1977); *Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1981)

At Baxter Theatre - *Home* (1978); *Dear Liar* (1981); *King Lear* (1985); *Under Milkwood* (1985)

FILMS

Emergency-Ward 10 (1957); *The Fourth Reich*; *Love me Leave Me*; *My Partner the Ghost* (1969); *UFO* (1971); *Deadly Jaws* (1974); *Decision to Die* (1978) *The Star Child* (1989); *That Englishwoman* (1990) ; *The Gospel According to Matthew* (1993);

Voice-overs: *The First Christmas* (1998); *The Chimes* (1999)

TV ROLES

On British TV he had occasional roles in a number of series, such as:

The Wednesday Play (1966), *Conflict* (1966), *The Power Game* (1966 & 1969), *The Rat Catchers* (1966 & 1967), *The Informer* (1967), *Who Is Sylvia?* (1967), *George and the Dragon* (1968), *ITV Playhouse* (1969), *My Partner the Ghost* (1969), *The Gold Robbers* (1969), *Complete and Utter History of Britain* (1969), *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* (1969-1970), *Timeslip* (1971), *Doomwatch* (1971)

In South Africa he played major roles in a number of series:

An Entirely New Concept in Packaging (1983); *Shaka Zulu* (1986); *Arende* (1989), *Arende II: Moordenaars Karoo* (1992), *The Legend of the Hidden City* (1996, 1998), as well as appearances in locally filmed international series, like *Deadly Jaws* (1974) and *The Adventures of Sinbad* (1996)

DIRECTOR

For the Space Theatre: *The Caretaker*, *A Galway Girl*, *Fallen Angels*

For CAPAB: *Dear Liar* (1979), *The Phantom of the Opera*

For the Baxter Theatre: *Under Milkwood* (19**), *Dear Liar* (1981), *It's a Boy!* (1982), *Anyone for Denis?* (1983), *Under Milkwood* (1985), *Gulls* (1987), *Under Milkwood* (1996)

For Volute Productions: *Not About Heroes* (1986); Michael Drinn's stage play *The Phantom of the Opera* (1990)

For Pieter Toerien and Shirley Firth: Robert Kirby's *It's a Boy!* (1982)

For Maynardville: *Twelfth Night* (1989), *As You Like It* (1999), *Othello* (2001)

For The Little Theatre: *A Nightingale Sang*

AWARDS

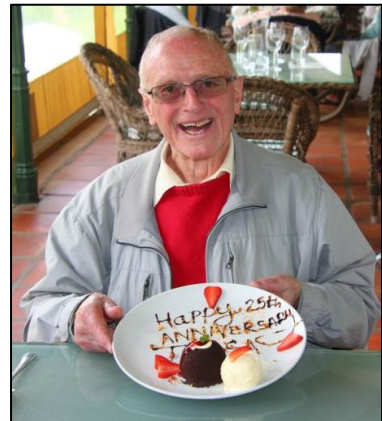
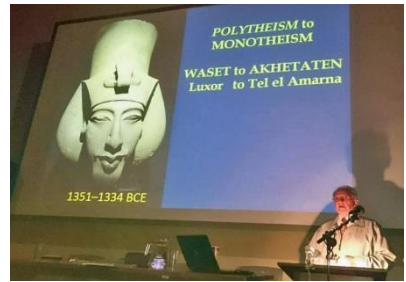
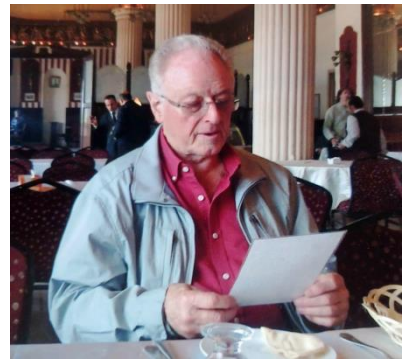
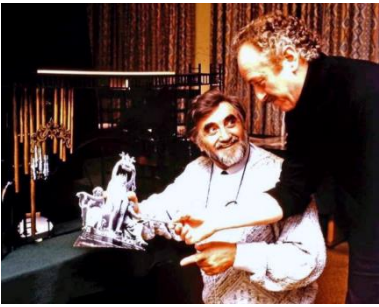
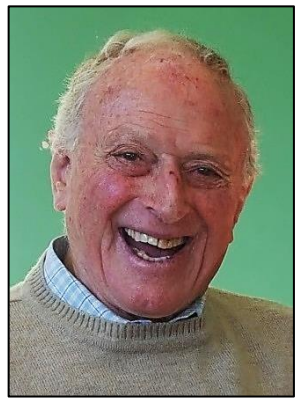
Keith received numerous awards over the years, the most prestigious of which were *The Three Leaf Award*; *The Fleur du Cap Theatre Award* as Best Leading Actor (1978) and Best Director (1999); and in 1987 the Vita award for his direction of *Gulls*.

Most of the above details of his career were sourced from

https://esat.sun.ac.za/index.php/Keith_Grenville and <https://en.kinorium.com/name/256994/>

With thanks to the following who supplied photos:

Eduard Bantjes, Janneke Engelbrecht, Gunther Komnick, John Lombard, Peter Mulder





**THE EGYPTIAN SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA
1996-2024**

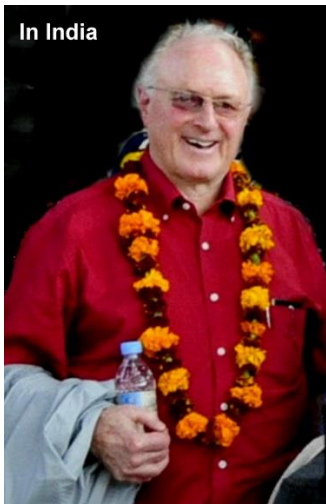
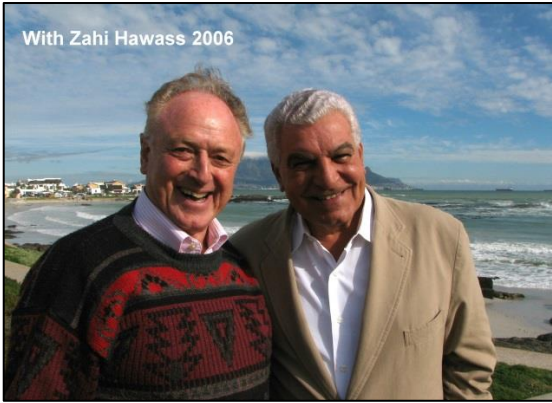
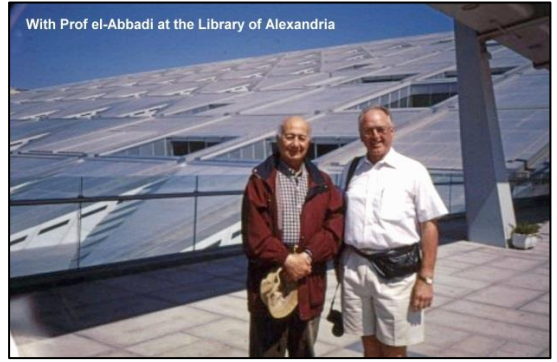
Website:

<http://egyptiansociety.co.za/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/353552841373111/>

Commemoration brochure written and compiled by Jane Mulder



TRIBUTES



*"May you rise like Osiris, the king of the dead,
and may you shine like Ra, the sun god.
May your soul live forever in the Field of Reeds."*

Pyramid Texts

www.maestramary.altervista.org

From Keith's step-brother Ian Harris

I thought it was appropriate that I contact you today as you prepare to celebrate Keith's life this evening, not just as the Patron and Founder of TESSA, but a very talented individual. Keith and I became step brothers back in 1969, when our respective parents married. This was prior to Keith moving to South Africa. Keith, my sister Shirley and I, always enjoyed the most friendly of long distance relationships, and on either my various family or business trips to SA would enjoy hearing of the developments of TESSA and Keith's various trips to Egypt, plus regularly monthly updates on Skype. It is a source of great regret that I was never able to join one of his escorted tours, but Egypt remains firmly on my bucket list, with my sister having visited last October. I am sending this mail from Larnaca, Cyprus, so couldn't get much closer! Have a wonderful evening celebrating the life of a special and much loved individual. My wife and I will raise a glass at 19.30 this evening to Keith, whiskey, of course. Best Wishes

*Joseph Koetsier*

A man of one thousand realms - I remember my first meeting with Keith during the AGM in November 2006, which was enriched by belly-dancing introduced by Keith's eloquent voice. His powerful voice guided us through many presentations, from the London Crystal Palace, King Farouk and two magnificent presentations of the Hymn to the Aten. We shared a love for the 18th dynasty. What Keith taught me for my own presentations was: 'Be sure about what you are not telling'. This guided me on my journey to new discoveries in Egypt. Thank you, dear Keith.

*Lila & Günther Komnick*

We first met Keith in August 1996, when he gave a series of evening lectures on Ancient Egypt at the Josephine Mill. We had been to Egypt for the first time the year before, shortly after diplomatic relations with South Africa had been resumed and SA tourists were welcome again. The room was packed, the atmosphere was electrifying. Keith was a brilliant presenter with a charismatic presence, velvety voice, and vast knowledge of Ancient Egypt. It was the start of a hugely enriching bond through TESSA which lasted 28 years. Words cannot express how much we appreciated him then and shall miss him now.

*Jane & Peter Mulder*

Having joined the society in 1998, we are thankful for the 26 years in which Keith enriched our knowledge and love of ancient Egypt. He was an extraordinarily talented man, and his theatre experience was very evident in the fascinating lectures he gave to the society - he always drew the crowds. He had an inimitable presence, and his presence in our lives will be sadly missed. But like the pharaohs of ancient Egypt, we hope that he has found his place among the stars - as he certainly was a star during his time on earth. He will not be forgotten.

*Oonah Kühn*

Thanks to Keith I've had an added interest in my life for almost 25 years I have been a member of TESSA since 2000 when I attended Keith's lectures in Milnerton and went on his tour to Egypt and another in 2002. We will remember his amazing ability to hold the audience's attention with his voice and information we couldn't hear enough of. Keith was TESSA inspired Thank you.

Colleen Cox

Upon reflection on my 26 years association with Keith, two highlights come to mind illustrating Jekyll and Hyde aspects of his mercurial, artistic nature. The first, when I was on the committee, he read a news article I wrote, and suddenly shouted: "What is THIS?" furious at me because of the changes the Editor had made! The second, when I was mugged after a TESSA meeting, and my Library bag stolen, Keith was sympathetic and supportive, personally collecting my recovered items. I was saddened at his passing, and commit his memory to the Lord.

*John Badenhorst (close friend of Keith)*

Keith Grenville has died at 89. Brilliant actor, excellent director, tour group leader deluxe, noted Egyptologist. He taught me so much, about the theatre, the opera, England, Firenze and Italy in general, and also the meaning of having and sticking to standards. I remember Keith as being the ultimate "can do" person. He had a joie de vivre and energy inherited from his dynamo mother, Kitty. He was a force of nature, a kind man who meant a great deal to his colleagues, especially younger actors. He lived his life to the full and leaves us with a great example.

*Prof Salima Ikram, American University in Cairo*

So very sorry. Please do convey my condolences to the society as well as Keith's family. He was an amazing force for good in the world of Egyptology in South Africa, and he will be sorely missed. Thinking of him and his family and friends at this time. May his soul join with the eternal stars.

*Dr Kent Weeks, Theban Mapping Project*

I am indeed sorry to hear of Keith's death. He was a remarkably generous host and certainly one of South Africa's best tourist guides! Our visit to South Africa was one of the highlights of our lives. I hope one day to return again.

*Reading from Shakespeare's The Tempest, as a tribute to Keith from Denise Bremridge*

"Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
 as I foretold you, were all spirits and
 are melted into air, into thin air:
 And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
 the cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 the solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
 and, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
 as dreams are made on, and our little life
 is rounded with a sleep."



TRIBUTE BY CHAIRLADY, RIA ROBINSON DURING OPENING OF PROCEEDINGS

I will always remember the impact of my first meeting with Keith. Jean introduced me to him and his welcome was sincere and inspiring. It was always a pleasant experience listening to his enthusiasm, passion, love and knowledge. It was heart-warming to see the admiration and appreciation of his audience. His special phone call to congratulate me on being chairlady and his regular calls to check and encourage me meant so much to me. His sense of humour was special. It is an honour to continue with the wonderful legacy he has left us.



MY DEAR FRIEND KEITH

Spoken by Jean Smith

I first heard of Keith when he was directing a play at Maynardville.

I was pleased to meet him when I joined TESSA in June 1997. I was in awe of this man. I'd heard so much about him. His charming greeting to me as a new member made me feel so welcome.

I got to know him a little better when I joined the TESSA committee as secretary in 2000. The first meeting was daunting for me, as I'd never done any secretarial work. However Keith explained my duties so kindly and helpfully that I soon got to enjoy this new 'job', also knowing he was always available to give advice.

He was always so full of wonderful ideas of how to expand and increase membership, and ideas for future speakers, and was so enthusiastic that he created enthusiasm in the committee as well.

His biggest and most daring idea to celebrate TESSA's 10th anniversary was for this tiny society at the tip of Africa to invite no less a person than the famous Dr Zahi Hawass, who, at the time, was the head of the Supreme Council of Antiquities.

That was my dear friend Keith's nature, think big!

I have admired Keith in every way, his great interest in Ancient Egypt combined with his vast knowledge of this subject, his enthusiasm and of course his beautiful voice, was an inspiration to me. His reading of the Great Hymn to the Aten will forever remain in my mind and heart.

Although we had not seen him for a while due to his illness, he will always be remembered fondly and with great admiration for his boundless energy and enthusiasm for ancient Egypt.

As a man and a friend we corresponded occasionally, always sending each other a hug. When he did come to the meetings, I'd meet him and remind him that I owed him a hug, and he always laughed.

Dear Keith, my mentor and wise councillor - your kindness, patience and friendship were so appreciated and valued. Your beautiful voice is still, and I am sad but...."May your spirit live, may you spend millions of years, you who loved Thebes, sitting with your face to the north wind, your eyes beholding happiness". *[Translated by Howard Carter from a chalice of Tutankhamun.]*

As an aspect of ancient Egyptian religion, there are five aspects of the soul. The KA could not leave the tomb, but the BA was able to, and could spend time in the places that the deceased had loved in life. Perhaps Keith's 'BA' is here tonight.

Good night dear Keith, you will never be forgotten by all of us who admired and loved you.



MEMORIES OF KEITH

Spoken by Mireille Farah

I have some great memories of Keith that I would like to share with you.

It was in 1995. I was listening to FMR when this rich, warm voice came on the airwaves, talking passionately about Ancient Egypt and expressing the wish to create an Egyptian society. I got very excited. Being Egyptian myself, it definitely touched a chord. To have an Egyptian Society in South Africa was beyond my dreams. And this is how I got to meet Keith, the owner of that superb voice. The rest is history.

Anlen Boshoff was then the vice Chairman. She told me an amusing story. She said that Keith told the committee that he was very excited to have met a "real" Egyptian lady and that this was going to be the perfect person to have on the committee due to her Egyptian background. She said that they all looked at me as "the Egyptian". I was proud to have been part of that distinguished committee that saw the birth of TESSA.

I was educated in French schools in Alexandria, Egypt and, therefore, had to study the history of France. The fact that I had to come to Cape Town and meet Keith to learn more about the history of Ancient Egypt is truly remarkable.

Keith's extensive knowledge of Ancient Egypt, combined with his magnetic personality, and passion, captivated his audience. His lectures and enthralling voice brought the pharaohs to life. His interpretation of hieroglyphs was indeed fascinating.

Keith put TESSA on the international map and, due to his relentless energy, the society has been privileged to be addressed by a number of eminent international speakers.

How does one start to describe Keith?

He infused TESSA with passion! He is leaving us a tremendous legacy and we shall strive to carry on in his footsteps.

You will always be remembered, dear Keith. Who can ever forget your superb voice still in our ears?

How does it feel to be among the stars with the pharaohs?



**TRIBUTE TO KEITH GRENVILLE,
FOUNDER OF THE EGYPTIAN SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Spoken by Gillian Russell-Johansen

O Keith! You of the golden voice - what can be said of you that has not already been spoken and written by so many?

Your eloquence, passion, knowledge of Ancient Egypt, your charisma, have all been admired and rightly applauded.

In remembering you, I recall the time, many years ago, standing in a queue to buy tickets for a show at the then Nico Malan Opera House, and hearing behind me, a man chatting to his

companion as they waited - the voice, smooth, rich, beautifully-modulated, articulating each word in a flow of Sound that seemed to find resonance against the marble floor.

Unobtrusively, I hoped, I turned to see the owner of this enthralling voice - it was the instantly-recognizable Shakespearean actor, Keith Grenville!

A few years later, I joined a crowd of excited fellow Egyptophiles, packed into an upstairs room at Josephine Mill in Newlands, to hear Keith outline his plans to establish a society devoted to Ancient Egypt. His enthusiasm, and the quietly magnetic presence of his dear friend Angus McBride, gave birth to the thriving group that would become The Egyptian Society of South Africa, fondly known as TESSA.

I was thrilled to see so many people, right here in Cape Town, who shared my fervent interest, since childhood, in Ancient Egypt, and meetings immediately became the most important event of my month.

Keith, you were our Star Turn, drawing the crowds. Standing in the wings, I watched as you shone, centre-stage in the spotlight, doing what you were gifted to do, your voice painting the pictures in your mind in vivid colour, sharing your love of this ancient land... you knew exactly how to transport your audience with sound and image, back to other times and places...

None more so, than in your mesmerising delivery of Akhenaten's Hymn to the Aten, illustrated with carefully-chosen slides. In the darkness of the hall, the resonance of your voice carried me back three and a half thousand years, to the Great Temple of the Aten at Amarna, as the first rays of the golden orb stretched its fingers across the horizon, bringing re-birth and spreading Life-giving Light across the desert sand towards the river.

"Thy dawning is beautiful, O Living Aten, Lord of Eternity, who gives life forever and ever.

Your surface gleams, giving Life to all hearts. You rise on the horizon of heaven and fill the land with your love, creating that which is on it, mankind, herds, flocks, trees and all that grows on the land.

They live when you rise for them; your rays illuminate the whole world: every heart rejoices at the sight of you..." [Abbreviated translation of excerpts from Akhenaten's Hymn to the Aten]

If it is true that the words of those who are True of Voice (*ma'at herw*) live on forever, that pure Sound cannot die, may yours be held in the stones of Egypt's temples, and echo in the halls and theatres.

Fly in Splendour into the Great Mystery, dear Keith, as we celebrate all that you have meant to us !

Thank you !





REMINISCENCES

Anlen Boshoff

Read by Gillian Russell-Johansen

This is not a eulogy to Keith but a rather disjointed trip down memory lane, snippets of interesting twists and turns connecting fascinating events where our paths crossed.

My introduction to Keith happened via Owen Kinahan as he wanted to introduce me to a fellow Egyptian enthusiast. And of course, this was followed by the inaugural meeting in 1996 of the Cape Town Egyptian Society, at Josephine Mill which of course was much too small to accommodate all the enthusiasts. A few years later Keith travelled to Johannesburg to discuss the possibility of having a branch in the north and on his return, he thought it best to make sure we are known to all as The Egyptian Society of South Africa, hence the acronym TESSA after that.

In 1997 I joined Keith on a memorable tour to Egypt. That was before he had his own company. I think we must have bored the other tour members with our constant chatter about our new society. The only interested tour members turned out to be Lambert and Roxanne Vorster. Who will forget the thought provoking visits to the Vorster farm to examine Lambert's wonderful collections of ancient artefacts, including the Egyptian pottery from the Prynnsberg estate near Clocolan in the Free State where Charles Newbury built a beautiful mansion. One of his daughters married Guy Brunton, the well-known Egyptologist who worked with Flinders Petrie.

On our tour we had many discussions regarding future lectures. My main duty as vice chair was to find suitable speakers. This became quite an educational exercise meeting various people with Egyptian related interests, including the University of Stellenbosch Ancient Studies Department, especially Prof Sakkie Cornelius.

On a lighter note. While on our Nile cruise on the Vittoria, Keith made it his mission to find the best belly dancer as he wanted me to understand and appreciate the art of belly dancing. We dashed from boat to boat and eventually found the real thing!

I remember the many Day Schools we did together. We always tried to have a golden thread running through our lectures - the one time still at the Baxter - where Keith kicked off with a superb lecture about the Great Belzoni and I followed with Flinders Petrie - in 2012. All this included many telephone conversations. Another Day School we did was at Kelvin Grove, when Keith, Jean Smith and Anthony Humphreys were the speakers.

Another memorable occasion was with Toby Wilkinson's visit. His lecture was in the then South African History Museum before it became the Slave Lodge. And when Kent and Susan Weeks visited the museum Keith was there as well. Salima Ikram was another fresh breeze to behold!

I do not know how many of you remember the huge painting by Frederick Goodall of the *Subsiding of the Nile*? Keith and Owen Kinahan worked together to relocate the painting to the South African Cultural History Museum (Slave Lodge) in 1997. The grand opening in the museum was attended by the Egyptian consul and all of us posed in front of the painting. Unfortunately, the size and weight of the painting prevented it from being displayed near the Egyptian display and due to changes the picture remained crated at the Slave Lodge. In 2003 the picture was returned to the Cape Town City Council.

Although small changes were made to the very old Ancient Egyptian display in the Slave Lodge it is basically as I developed and researched it in the preceding century. Here Keith's input was very important. The only positive aspect is that the University of Stellenbosch's Ancient Studies Department brings students to the exhibition as well as the precious artefacts in storage, including the Classical Cultures.

We all remember aspects of events when we interact with other human beings, and this is how we create precious memories to last as long as we live.



As a postscript to Keith's commemoration, the following message and tribute was received from Eduard Bantjes, a close friend of Keith:

Dear Mireille, Jean, Jane and the entire TESSA Committee,

When a great man dies, for years the light he leaves behind him lies on the paths of those he leaves behind. Such a man was Keith Grenville, a visionary leader and a man of unsurpassed generosity and kindness. His legacy will live on in his beloved TESSA but also in the theatre history of Cape Town and indeed South Africa.

Our beloved Keith took his flight with the angels. With time the pain and emptiness make way for the wonderful and treasured memories of a life lived with incredible love, kindness and vision. Having had Keith in our lives was indeed a blessing - one that has left an indomitable mark.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation to you for the very moving farewell to our beloved Keith. What a fitting tribute to such a unique and multi-faceted individual. It brought closure.

Funeral Blues - W.H. Auden

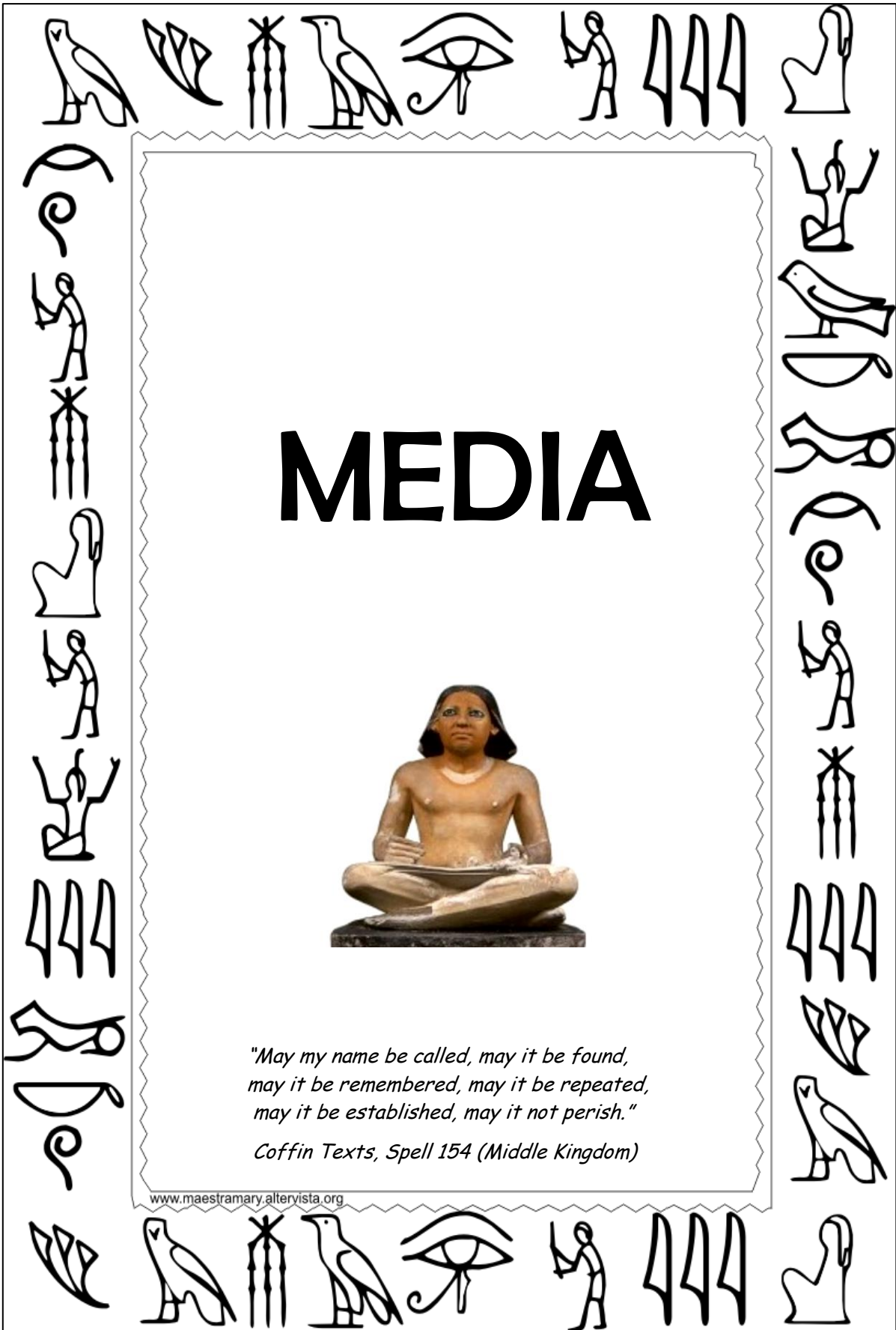
Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message 'He is Dead'.
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.


He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

With immense appreciation
Eduard Bantjes



MEDIA



*"May my name be called, may it be found,
 may it be remembered, may it be repeated,
 may it be established, may it not perish."*

Coffin Texts, Spell 154 (Middle Kingdom)

www.maestramary.altervista.org

10th September, 2024

Actor and historian remembered for his dedication to Egyptian heritage

People's Post

Namhla Monakali



Keith Grenville, the founding member of Egyptian Society of South Africa.
Günther Kornick

Keith Grenville, founder of The Egyptian Society of South Africa (TESSA), passed away on 26 August.

- **Known for his dedication to Egyptian heritage, Grenville also had a successful career in the performing arts.**
- **His legacy lives on through the society, which continues to promote understanding of Egypt's rich culture and history.**

“Keith always valued people who made a difference.” This is how Joseph Koetsier, the treasurer of The Egyptian Society of South Africa (TESSA), remembers the late Keith Grenville, the founding member of Society.

Grenville passed away on Monday 26 August. His dedication to preserving Egyptian culture and history has left a lasting impact both within the society and beyond.

Grenville, originally named Benugli, was born in England to a Jewish mother and an Italian Catholic father. He later adopted the stage name Grenville during his successful career in the performing arts. Before moving to South Africa, he was a celebrated Shakespearean actor in the United Kingdom (UK), appearing in various TV productions. His talent earned him prestigious awards, including The Three Leaf Award, the Fleur du Cap Theatre Award for Best Leading Actor in 1978 and Best Director in 1999, as well as the Vita Award for directing “Gulls” in 1987.

Grenville’s passion, however, extended beyond the stage. His deep fascination with ancient Egypt led him to establish TESSA in 1996.

The society was founded with the mission to explore and understand Egypt’s rich cultural and spiritual heritage, from Cape to Cairo embedded on the society’s mission.

This year, TESSA celebrates its 28th anniversary.

Tour company

The society continues to hold monthly lectures on the first Tuesday of each month, helping members appreciate both ancient and contemporary Egypt.

Koetsier, a member since 2006, fondly remembers Grenville for his presence, voice, his knowledge and his unwavering commitment to the heritage of the countries he visited.

“Keith always valued people who made a difference,” Koetsier said.

Grenville’s passion for Egypt also led him to start his own tour company, Egypt Today. He guided travellers to Egypt’s ancient wonders. His tours expanded to other countries, including Turkey, Russia, Morocco, India, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Even after stepping down as TESSA chair in 2006 due to ill health, Grenville remained an influential figure in the society. He delivered his final lecture on 22 October 2019, discussing Farouk, the last king of Egypt. Koetsier recalls how Grenville had a unique ability to make history come alive: “He was dedicated to ensuring that the legacy of Egypt endured.”

Grenville’s significant contributions to TESSA and his dedication to Egyptian heritage will be remembered for many years to come. As he once wrote on the occasion of the society’s 21st anniversary, “People should remember the great work that was laid and carry on the tradition.”

Grenville’s life was filled with passion, creativity and dedication. His legacy will continue to inspire those who seek to understand the heart of Africa and beyond.

Memorial gathering

The Society sends an open invitation to the memorial gathering in celebration of the life Grenville, at 19:30 on Tuesday 17 September, at St George's Grammar School, Mowbray. RSVP by tomorrow (11 September) to Jos Koetsier – sherab.koetsier@gmail.com.



Bulletin INFORMATION!

31 850 copies delivered free on Thursdays to homes in Bergvliet, Constantia, Diep River, Flimtdale Estate, Kirstenhof, Klein Wassenaar, Meadowridge, Plumstead, Southfield, Tokai, Wynberg and Westlake.

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief:
Africa Community Media
Chantel Effort
chantel.effort@acm.co.za

Editor:
Cape Community Media
Simoneh de Bruin
simoneh.debruin@acm.co.za

Reporter:
Janice Matthews
060 5891205
janice.matthews@acm.co.za

Sports Editor:
Fuad Esack
fuad.esack@acm.co.za

Entertainment News
Email entertain.ccn@acm.co.za

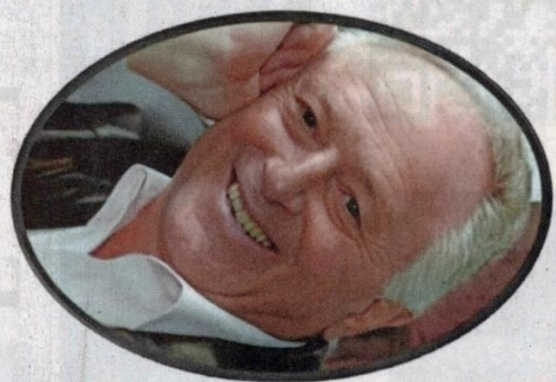
Letters must include the writer's full name, address and contact number. Email: simoneh.debruin@acm.co.za

What's On notices are free and must be received a week before publication. There is no guarantee they

OBITUARY

Bulletin

■ The founder of the Egyptian Society of South Africa, Keith Grenville.



■ Members of the Egyptian Society of South Africa having a 25th anniversary lunch in 2021. Keith Grenville is in the middle. From left, are Ria Robinson, Mireille Farrah, Jeon Smith and Jane Mulder.

Egyptian society pays tribute to founder.

WESLEY FORD
WESLEY.FORD@ACM.CO.ZA

The Egyptian Society of South Africa paid tribute to its founder, Keith Grenville, in a memorial service at St George's Grammar School, Mowbray, on Tuesday September 17. Mr Grenville, of Diep River, died on Monday August 26. He was 88. He founded the society in 1996, initially as a tour leader taking people on tours to Egypt. "Realising there was an interest

in Egypt and her monuments, he advertised a meeting of those interested," said society member Jean Smith ("Egyptian society celebrates a milestone," Southern Suburbs Tattler, October 28, 2021). The society held public lectures at St George's Grammar School and hosted visits by experts who explored 3000 years of ancient Egyptian history.

According to a brochure compiled by society member Jane Mulder, Mr Grenville was born in London, England. His surname was originally Bennugli, but he changed it to Grenville to a pursue a career in acting that saw him take on various stage, TV and movie roles. He came to South Africa in the early 1970s, where he performed in various theatre productions, including *The Winter's Tale* (1971) at Maynardville, and *Under Milkwood* (1985) at the Baxter Theatre.

In his later years, he became tour director of his own company, Egypt Today, where he took tourists to Egypt as well as other countries. Society chairperson Ria Robinson said Mr Grenville had left "a huge void which will be hard to fill". Long-serving member Mireille Farrah said she had joined the society after hearing Mr Grenville speaking on the radio about it in the 1990s. "As I am Egyptian, to have a society like that in South Africa was a dream," she said. "Keith put the Egyptian Society on the map, and due to relentless energy, the society has been privileged to be addressed by a number of eminent international speakers."

A LOOK INTO THE PAST

YouTube VIDEO

Egyptian Society annual day school

[TygerBurgerWeb](#)

On 27th July, 2013 TESSA's Day School was held at the Kelvin Grove. The theme was *Female Pharaohs of Egypt*. A short video in which the three speakers - Keith Grenville, Jean Smith, and Anthony Humphreys - described what their lectures would cover was posted to YouTube. Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRPZaZzezNM>