

## Psamtek, the Bay's ancient Egyptian connection

**In 1956, Lady Winnaretta Leeds of Oldway Mansion donated one of Torquay Museum's most magical objects, a beautiful ancient Egyptian child's coffin, and mummified boy, but it was not until 2011 that a visiting expert recognised its true age.**

Psamtek's royal coffin, as it is now known, is displayed in the centre of our Explorers' Gallery.

It was given to the museum by Lady Leeds, daughter of Paris Singer, and it once resided in Oldway Mansion in Paignton.

We don't know exactly how Lady Leeds acquired the coffin and mummified boy but we know she was a fundraiser for the Egypt Exploration Society and cruised the Nile while holidaying at Alexandria in Egypt in the 1920s.

The coffin was examined by Dr

**BARRY CHANDLER**  
Torquay Museum

Aidan Dodson, a senior research fellow at the department of archaeology and anthropology at Bristol University, in 2011 who recognised immediately that this was a very special object.

With its finely modelled features and rock crystal inlaid eyes, it is a masterpiece of funerary craftsmanship dating from the 18th Dynasty, around 800 years older than we had previously thought.

Made somewhere between 1525 and 1470 BC, it was almost certainly intended for the child of a pharaoh just a few generations before the most famous of all the ancient Egyptian kings,



Psamtek's coffin. Above right, Lady Leeds, who donated the coffin and mummified boy to Torquay Museum in 1956

Pictures: TORQUAY MUSEUM

Tutankhamun.

Tomb robbers appear to have destroyed its original occupant. The coffin was then re-inscribed and at least one new occupant, the last of which, Psamtek, was sealed inside and preserved for the afterlife.

Who the coffin was originally made for, we will probably never

know.

Psamtek the boy mummy has captured the imagination of generations of museum visitors. However, his burial contains a mystery as to how he came to occupy a coffin 1,000 years older than himself and probably made for junior royalty.

The museum is incredibly lucky

to have what is probably the finest Ancient Egyptian coffin in a regional museum in Britain, it would not be out of place in the Louvre in Paris or the British Museum.

You can adopt Psamtek's coffin for a year by looking for crowdfunding on the Museum's website [www.torquaymuseum.org](http://www.torquaymuseum.org).



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