



JUNE - 2023

PRESERVATION ♦ EDUCATION ♦ RESEARCH ♦ INSPIRE

Dear Member:

Congratulations to Time Sifters who on May 6th won **the 2023 Sarasota County Heritage Award for Archaeological Conservancy** from the Sarasota Alliance for Historical Preservation & History and Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County. **Well done team!**

The Trip to Turkey has been CANCELLED. We did not have enough people signed up to make it happen. Thank you Dorothy for all your effort.

The Board is taking its summer break for some needed travel and regeneration. Some of us are going to France, others are touring the USA. I'm doing both Yosemite and the Finger Lakes of New York! Hope you have a wonderful summer. See you on September 20.

Darwin "Smitty" Smith, President

hmsbeagle22@gmail.com

# Paleoanthropologist - Archaeologists You Should Know **Mary Douglas (Nicol) Leakey** Discovered "Zinjanthropus" (*Australopithecus boisei*)

By Smitty, Time Sifters Board Member. **Sources:** Wikipedia, Biography.com & Turkana Basin Institute.



**Mary Douglas (Nicol) Leakey** was born on 6 February 1913, in London, England to Erskine Edward Nicol and

Cecilia Marion (Frere) Nicol. Her father was a popular landscape artist so the Nicol family moved to numerous locations in Europe where he painted watercolors that he sold in England. Mary spent much of her childhood in the Dordogne and at Les Eyzies, France, a region rich in prehistoric art and archaeological sites, topics in which Mary became interested.

In the spring of 1926, when Mary was 13, her father died of cancer and the family returned to London from France. Attempts to give her some conventional education failed when she was

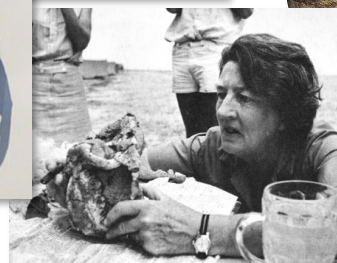


Olduvai Gorge

expelled from two Catholic convent schools. Next her mother hired two tutors, who were no more successful than the nuns. Finally, her mother hired a nanny who was successful at finishing her education. But in 1930, a formal university admission was impossible with



*Proconsul africanus*, *Australopithecus boisei*-skull  
Photos: Wikipedia



her academic record, so as an

**Continued on page 2 ...**

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## Leakey ...

unregistered student, she began auditing archaeology and geology courses at the University College and at the London Museum, where she studied under **Mortimer Wheeler**.

Mary applied to work on summer excavations and Wheeler accepted her for a dig at St. Albans at the nearby Roman site of Verulamium. Her next dig was at Hembury, a Neolithic site, under **Dorothy Liddell**, who trained her for four years until 1934. Her illustrations of artifacts and tools for Liddell drew the attention of **Gertrude**

**Caton Thompson**, and, in late 1932, she was hired as an illustrator for Caton Thompson's book *The Desert Fayoum*.

She met **Louis Leakey** in 1933 at Cambridge and they were married in 1936. They moved to Kenya the following year.

Mary and Louis had three sons: **Jonathan**, born in 1940, **Richard** in 1944, and **Philip** in 1949.

Mary made her first big discovery in 1948 at *Olduvai Gorge* in Tanzania in eastern Africa, where she found a partial skull of *Proconsul africanus*, an ancestor of apes and humans that later evolved into the two distinct species. The fossil, believed to be more than 18 million years old, was the first species of the primate genus to be discovered from the Miocene era.

In 1959, she discovered *the robust Zinjanthropus (Australopithecus boisei) skull* at Olduvai Gorge. This fossil was to



They also found huge numbers of animal footprints that had been fossilized in ash deposited by a nearby volcano. In 1978 she found what would be her greatest discovery, adjacent footprint tracks that had been left by two bipedal hominids. The subsequent years were filled with research at Olduvai and Laetoli, follow-up work to discoveries, and preparing publications.

In 1983, Mary retired from active fieldwork, moving to Nairobi from Olduvai Gorge, where she had lived for nearly 20 years. Although it was Louis Leakey who was the more charismatic

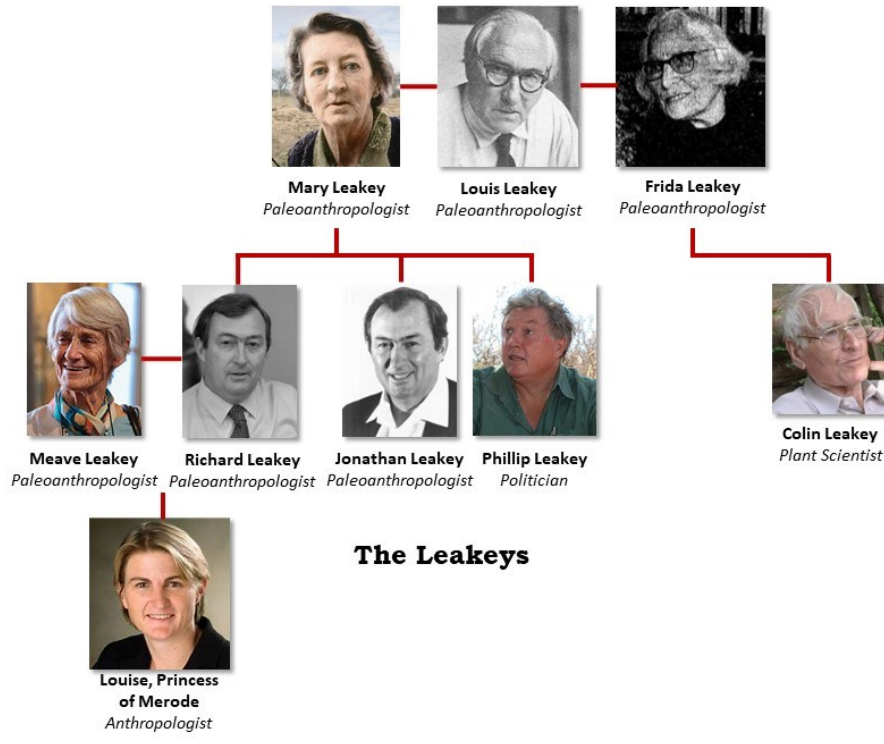
and well-known figure, Mary became a famous scientist in her own right. Although she had never earned a degree, by the end of her life she had received many honorary degrees and other awards.

Throughout her career, she discovered 15 new species of animals, and one new genus. She developed a system for classifying the stone tools found at

Olduvai. She was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1979.

Mary Leakey died on 9 December 1996, in Nairobi, Kenya, at the age of 83. Her family, who announced her death, did not give the cause, saying only that she died peacefully.

Please see the August 2022 Newsletter for Louis Leakey.



propel the Leakey family to worldwide fame. From the mid-1960's, she lived almost full time at Olduvai Gorge.

After her husband died in 1972, Mary continued their work at Olduvai. In 1974, she commenced excavations at nearby Laetoli where in 1976 her team discovered the *Laetoli footprints* and also, at the Laetoli site she discovered hominin fossils that were more than 3.75 million years old.

*In the News*

## **Time Sifters is Awarded the 2023 Sarasota County Heritage Award for Archaeological Conservancy**

On May 6th, President Smitty Smith and Vice President Sherry Svekis accepted **the 2023 Sarasota County Heritage Award for Archaeological Conservancy** from the Sarasota Alliance for Historical Preservation & History and Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County at the annual awards ceremony held at the Van Wezel. On behalf of Sherry and myself, I want to congratulate the Board and the membership for all the work they have done over **37 years**. Job well done!

Now what can we do in the future?



CONGRATULATIONS!



*In the News*

## **Viking Age Silver Hoard Discovered in Sweden.**

*by Smitty, Time Sifters Board Member. Sources: Archaeology Magazine, Arkeologerna.com, & Ancient Origins.*

**November 2022 ...** A 1000-year-old silver hoard containing beautiful torque-style neck rings, arm rings and coins has been discovered in Viggbyholm, Täby, outside Stockholm.

The treasure was found during an archaeological excavation of a Viking Age settlement, an area thought to have been inhabited for several hundred years. The site contains more than 20 houses and buildings, the earliest dating from 400 CE, continuing into the Viking Age (800-1050 CE) and early Middle Ages. In addition to the neck rings, two arm rings, one ring, two pearls and 12-coin pendants (coins used as jewelry), were found in the ceramic pot.

The coins are a perfect example of the far-reaching connections and trade in Viking Age Scandinavia. Several coins represented

England, Bohemia and Bavaria and five Arabic coins, so called dirhams. One of the European coins is extremely rare and was minted in the city of Rouen, France. It dates to approximately the 10th Century CE.

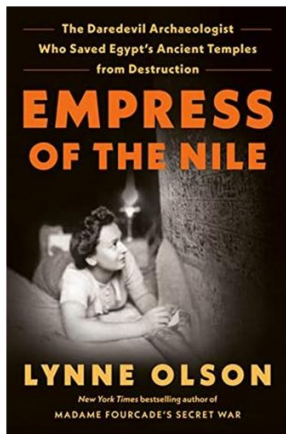


## A Time Sifters Book Review

# Empress of the Nile: The Daredevil Archaeologist Who Saved Egypt's Ancient Temples from Destruction

by Lynne Olson... Random House; Published February 28, 2023, ISBN: 9780525509479 - Source: Kirkus Reviews

The life of an archaeologist who deserves to be better known.



In her latest, bestselling historian Lynne Olson turns her attention to archaeologist Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt (1913-2011).

The book's first third is a delightful account of the career of an intelligent woman in early-20th-century France. Curious and self-confident, Desroches-Noblecourt became fascinated by ancient Egypt and excelled at the elite École du Louvre. "While most of her professors thought highly of her," writes Olson, "she

was treated like a pariah by several of her fellow Egyptology students, all of whom were male." She shattered the myth that women could not tolerate the miseries of the Egyptian desert, and, unlike many of her colleagues, she treated Egyptian laborers with respect, a behavior that bore impressive fruit later. At age 21, Desroches-Noblecourt became project manager in the Louvre department of Egyptian antiquities, "the only woman at the time to hold a professional position in the department." Olson recounts Egyptian history culminating in the 1952 military coup, which brought Abdel Nasser to power.

Infuriated at losing their colonial privileges, Britain and France, with Israel's cooperation, invaded Egypt in 1956, failing but poisoning relations with those two nations. This was the situation in 1960 when construction began on the

massive Aswan Dam, built across the Nile. Its reservoir, notes the author, would destroy "hundreds of temples, tombs, churches, fortresses, inscriptions, and carvings – the fruit of half a dozen cultures and civilizations."

At this point, Desroches-Noblecourt went into action. In the middle third, Olson describes her dogged but successful efforts to convince individuals and governments (including Egypt's) to preserve these priceless structures. The U.S. refused to participate until Jacqueline Kennedy persuaded her newly elected husband. Olson's conclusion digresses into other archaeological controversies and Jackie Kennedy's life, but readers will not complain. The author provides a fine account of Desroches-Noblecourt's long, distinguished career.

## The 2023 - 2024 Time Sifters Board

The Board of Directors and Officers for the 2023 - 2024 season are:

- Smitty Smith - President
- Sherry Svekis - Vice President
- Ken Woodworth - Treasurer
- Mary S. Maisel - Secretary
- Marion Almy - Director
- Dorothy Cascio - Director
- Karen Jensen - Director
- Jean Lammie - Director
- Evelyn Mangie - Director

Their term starts on the first of September 2023. We must say goodbye to **Laura Harrison** who has done a fantastic job as our Treasurer since 2017!



Board of  
Directors

### Officers:

Darwin "Smitty" Smith, President  
Sherry Svekis, Vice President  
Mary S. Maisel, Secretary  
Laura Harrison, Treasurer  
Marion Almy      Dorothy Cascio  
Karen Jensen      Jean Louise Lammie  
Evelyn Mangie      Ken Woodworth



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