

Publicity Pack

British Broadcasting Corporation BBC Television Publicity
Television Centre Wood Lane London W12 7RJ



PYRAMID

BBC ONE, Monday 28th October, 9pm

The Great Pyramid of Giza - the majestic burial place of King Khufu and the only one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World to survive. For four and a half thousand years, people have marvelled at the magnitude and beauty of the Great Pyramid and asked how and why it was built. By combining the latest archaeological research with the most up-to-date visual technology, BBC One's *Pyramid* tells the story of the Great Pyramid through the eyes of the men who built it.

With a voiceover by the distinguished Egyptian actor Omar Sharif, *Pyramid* employs the cinematic production values of a feature film to bring the construction of this extraordinary Egyptian monument to life. The programme is one of the most ambitious and visually stunning history projects ever made by the BBC shot entirely on location on 35mm and combining complex state-of-the-art special effects, produced by Mill TV - the Oscar award-winning company who created the special effects for *Gladiator*.

The programme is also accompanied by a groundbreaking interactive challenge from BBCi available on terrestrial, digital and via the BBC History website. By successfully solving the Pyramid Challenge viewers can enter a prize draw and take their own trip to the Pyramid complex. The challenge includes the world's first interactive TV adventure story on digital satellite and digital terrestrial television in which viewers are encouraged to take control of an intrepid treasure seeker via their remote control.

Pyramid's BAFTA award-winning executive producer, Laurence Rees says: "We wanted to explore people's timeless fascination with Ancient Egypt and the Great Pyramid. Crucially in the programme what viewers are able to see for the first time is the Great Pyramid actually being built. We're able to recreate this with stunning visuals which I believe will make compelling and immersive viewing, not only for those already fascinated by this period of history, but also those new to the genre."

The challenge for the team at Mill TV is to bring Ancient Egypt back to life. "Our task is to create huge architectural and crowd scenes," says Dave Throssell Head of Mill TV, "and to provide an immense but historically accurate environment. But my vision for the special effects is that the viewer doesn't even notice them. It will be as if they are there for real."

The history of the Great Pyramid's construction is told through the fictional story of a young Egyptian conscript called Nakht. His tale is told through drama re-constructions shot on location in Egypt and his voice is narrated by Omar Sharif. Nakht's world has been created by using the most up-to-date research into the era of the Pyramid builders and every detail of his life is based on the findings of archaeology.

"Nakht's story provides a powerful emotional focus enabling the viewer to engage directly with the past," explains *Pyramid's* Emmy award-winning producer Jonathan Stamp. "We learn of the hardships and the great dangers of the Pyramid builders' world, and also of its comradeship and fulfillment. By the time we have arrived at the end of Nakht's story we will understand the Pyramid as never before."

Pyramid airs on BBC ONE on Monday 28th October, 9pm. A fully illustrated hardback book also accompanies the series from BBC Worldwide.

Pyramid is a BBC production for BBC ONE in association with Discovery Channel and NDR.

The Great Pyramid of Giza – A Monumental Construction for the Ancient Egyptians

Until the building of the Eiffel Tower in Paris in 1889, the Great Pyramid reigned supreme as the tallest building in the world.

The area covered by the Great Pyramid – some 13 acres - could easily accommodate the Houses of Parliament and St Paul's Cathedral and still have room to spare. The cathedrals of Florence, Milan and St Peter's in Rome would also all fit comfortably inside.

The Great Pyramid is aligned with the four points of the compass with a near perfect precision. The average deviation of the sides from their alignment to north, south, east and west is a tiny fraction of a single degree - just 3 minutes 6 seconds.

It originally contained approximately 2,300,000 separate blocks of stone, each weighing an average of 2.5 tons.

According to the Turin Papyrus the whole structure was built in twenty-three years or less. Other sources imply 30 years or even slightly more. A rough calculation based on a 10 hour working day suggests that 34 stones (2.5 tons each) would have been laid in place every hour – this is, slightly more than one block every two minutes.

When it was built, the Great Pyramid rose to 481 feet (146.6 metres) – the top 31 feet (9.45 metres), including the capstone are now missing.

Its total weight was almost 6 million tons.

The horizontal cross section of the Pyramid is square at any level, with each side measuring approximately 756 feet (230.42 metres). The side lengths of the Pyramid are identical to within less than 2 inches.

The four corners of the Pyramid are almost perfect right angles and the sloping angle of its sides is a remarkably exactly 51 degrees 50 minutes and 40 seconds.

Some blocks were much larger than the average 2.5 tons. The limestone casing blocks which once covered its exterior weighed 10 tons or more and there are granite blocks in the Pyramid's interior known to weigh up to 50 tons.

Workers would need to have quarried just over 11,000 cubic feet (or a little more than 300 cubic metres) of stone every day

It is estimated that total labour force of cutters, haulers and stone setters would have numbered approximately 4,000 men. The single largest crew of labourers working on the Pyramid at any one time would have been around 2,000 men.

The Story of Nakht - A Conscript's Tale

Pyramid tells the story of the Great Pyramid through the eyes of the men who built it. And of the many myths that surround the building of the Great Pyramid none is more difficult to eradicate than the belief that it was built by slaves. It was a rumour first put about by the Greek historian, Herodotus, over two thousand years ago and it was cemented in the popular imagination by films such as Cecil B De Mille's *Ten Commandments*. But slaves did not build the Great Pyramid, willing conscripts did, and *Pyramid* is the story of one of them.

Nakht is not a real historical figure, but every aspect of his life is based on real evidence: the journey he travels, the clothes he wears, the tasks he's assigned. Nakht is conscripted along with his brother Deba from a tiny village near Aswan in about 2,500 BC. The two of them sail up the Nile to work at Giza, the great desert plateau of limestone where the Great Pyramid still stands today.

His voice is read by Omar Sharif.

“It's more than forty years since the King's men came for me. They brought me to a life I could never have imagined, to a task I've come to understand only now it is complete...”

They came for me in late summer, in the village where I was born - the only world I had ever known. ‘In the name of the King, In the name of the King’. It was a shout I vaguely remembered. I had heard it as a tiny boy, when they had come for my grandfather. Now they had come for my brother - and for me...

Not one of us really knew where we going, though some pretended. Karem-ah - the King's Official - said nothing to explain, just that we owed everything to the King and that now we would have the chance to repay him...

We were already further from the village than I had ever been in my life. Days and night passed like this, unchanging. Until one afternoon. It was the hottest part of the day and so hazy that it might have been a dream. Set back in the desert, high on the cliff, was a great triangle of stone, like a mountain, but a mountain made by men. I shall never forget that first glimpse of the mystery to which I was to dedicate my life. There it stood, all revealed before me, and I could understand none of it..”

BBCi - The Pyramid Challenge

The Great Pyramid is the biggest archaeological puzzle on the planet. To accompany *Pyramid*, BBCi - the BBC's interactive service - sets the nation the Pyramid Challenge. Complete the challenge and viewers have a chance of winning their own Pyramid adventure - the prize is a unique trip for four people to the Pyramid Complex. The interactive challenge is available to all viewers across all platforms - through the main analogue broadcast, the web (bbc.co.uk/history) and via digital TV (digital satellite, digital terrestrial, and digital cable).

The Pyramid Challenge begins during the broadcast of *Pyramid* on BBC One. Hidden within the programme is a secret - it is two words. Viewers are asked to identify all the living animals in *Pyramid* and to place all ten creatures into a word grid which is available online or via Ceefax page 195. The grid reveals the leading lights of the Great Pyramid building site and by solving the word puzzle viewers can enter the prize draw either via the web, SMS or post.

The Pyramid Challenge continues with *The Book Of Buried Pearls*, the world's first interactive TV adventure story, which runs on a loop for one week after the main broadcast on digital satellite and digital terrestrial television.

In *Pyramid Challenge - The Book of Buried Pearls*, viewers are encouraged to take control

of an interactive treasure hunt. The challenge is available on BBCi, the BBC's interactive service, and on the BBC website (bbc.co.uk/history).

the ancient tomb raiders of Egypt, and viewers must use their remote control to dictate what the adventurer should do to discover the book's secret.

Viewers need all their powers of observation and common sense to guide Ian Wright (seasoned adventurer from The Lonely Planet guides) through a series of challenging situations in modern day Egypt. Viewers direct him on a journey from Aswan, deep in the south, to Saqqara where the first pyramid was built, and on to the Great Pyramid itself at Giza. There viewers face their final challenge - to unlock the Pharaoh's hidden chamber. Those who succeed are rewarded with the Pyramid Challenge's secret words and a chance of winning a family holiday - to live the adventure. Entry is again via the web, SMS and post.

Devised by the same team who made the Bafta-winning *Walking With Beasts Interactive*, the *Pyramid Challenge* is the first digital cross-platform TV service that allows viewers to dictate the dramatic outcome.

Digital cable viewers will also be able to take part with their own version of the *Pyramid Challenge*.

www.bbc.co.uk/history

Discover more about the splendours of Ancient Egypt with the BBCi History website.

Visitors to the site can try their luck at pyramid building, get their hands dirty in the mummification game and explore a reconstruction of the Great Pyramid complex.

A dedicated message board, hosted by the renowned archaeologist John Romer, will continue the 'how do they know that?' debate, inevitably provoked by the programme.

Leading authorities will investigate the innermost thoughts of the ancient Egyptians, whose hopes, fears and anxieties were remarkably similar to our own. Death, health and religion are amongst the subjects explored in the thought-provoking feature articles.

From King Khufu to Cleopatra, visitors can get the lowdown on the movers and shakers of Ancient Egypt. Photo galleries will present a dazzling array of mummified cats, tomb paintings of the gods and awe-inspiring pyramids. Hieroglyphic postcards will be a fun way of keeping in contact with fellow Egypt fans.

The BBCi history website has its own version of the Pyramid Challenge, along with full details of how to win a holiday to Egypt across all platforms.

Timeline of Ancient Egypt

Late Predynastic Period

3100

3rd Intermediate Period (21st-25th Dynasties)

1075-715 BC

Disunity and Libyan settlement in Egypt

Pyramid looks at some of the less orthodox theories of pyramidologists and considers how the

Book of Money. His work for the BBC includes films on Anthony Burgess, George Eliot and