The late Harry James will be known to many with an interest in the study of ancient Egypt. Harry spent the majority of his working life at the British Museum where he became Keeper of the Department of Egyptology. For several years he served as Chairman of the Egypt Exploration Society (EES). He also published several books and academic papers. Harry James also had a keen interest in travellers to Egypt. He recognised that their lives and activities there and elsewhere in the Middle East were integral to the study of ancient Egypt. In 1995 Harry organised a symposium at Kingston Lacy, the former home of William John Bankes where papers were read describing the lives of a number of 19th century travellers. A few years later the Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East (ASTENE) was formed with an enthusiastic Harry James being elected its first President.

The T G H James Memorial Essay Prize has been created by ASTENE to encourage young people having an interest in Egypt and the Near East to learn about the lives and challenges of those who have travelled in the area over the centuries and also the local people they met. The Prize is open to all under the age of 25. There are two prizes: one of £250 and another of £100. Each prize also includes a 2-year membership to ASTENE and a Bursary (covering the cost of accommodation and meals but not travel costs) to attend an ASTENE Conference to collect their prize. Both winning essays will appear in the quarterly ASTENE Bulletin.

The submitted Essay should be about 3,000 words in length, and may be illustrated. It must be on a subject having relevance to the study of travel and travellers to the ASTENE area of interest – for this refer to the ASTENE website www.astene.org.uk. Importantly, the essay should not be about Egyptology, nor just be a summary of views expressed elsewhere. For example, the essay could concentrate only on the life of a less well known traveller; the ways, routes, lodging houses, customs houses, quarantine regulations, and costs of travel in the area; an historic event as seen through the eyes of different travellers; accounts of travellers meetings with Mohammed Ali or other local officials; travellers’ descriptions of cities in the region; etc. The subject matter is endless but the essay should bring something fresh. The essay must be properly referenced, including noting all material gathered from the internet.

To submit your Essay, please send it electronically in MSWord before 31 March 2015 with your name and address for correspondence, to chairman@astene.org.uk using the subject heading ‘T G H James Memorial Essay Prize’. You will be contacted to confirm your essay has been received. The winners will be announced at the ASTENE Conference in July 2015.

http://www.astene.org.uk/