



# THE TIME BEFORE

An Archaeological Adventure  
by Derek P. Blake

# **The Time Before**

**by**

**Derek P. Blake**

**An adventure that starts with the accidental finding of a treasure trove during a holiday in Cyprus. The trail leads across Europe and the Indian sub-continent, pursued by terrorists and greedy collectors of antiquities and those who's reputations are on the line. The trail leads to a discovery that will shake the world to its very foundations.**

**© 2013 by Derek P. Blake**

All rights reserved. Distribution without permission is prohibited.  
Licensees may copy, distribute, and display only verbatim copies of the work. Licensees may not create any derivative works based on it without the express written permission of the author.

Electronic edition

All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental..

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Derek P. Blake has contributed to many magazines on scientific subjects, originally he was an aerospace engineer with a Ph.D. in control and guidance systems. He has worked on projects for British Aerospace, European Space Agency and NASA during that time. Later he was a manager of a Youth Training Scheme and finally a senior manager for a special needs Housing Association specialising in housing and supporting offenders, he is now retired.

# The Discovery

Preston, Near Weymouth, England;  
Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> 2031

Breakfast in the Markson family was always a relaxed affair since Joanne had left home to follow her chosen career as an Archaeologist. Archaeology had always fascinated her since she was a child watching the operations of Channel 4's 'Time Team' on TV. Her parents had encouraged her in this interest, taking her on visits to archaeological sites both in Britain and across Europe and a visit to Cyprus in 2022 had finally convinced her that she should make the past into a career. Whilst in Cyprus the family, Jim, Carol, Joanne and their son Peter had visited the ten-thousand year old Neolithic settlement of Choirokoitia, on a steep hillside outside of Larnaca. Jo had been just 15 at the time but had the presence of mind to spot some unnatural stone formation in the hillside below the settlement. Despite the protestations of her father she had climbed over the perimeter fence and scabbled down the scree to the outcrop. Dad had returned down the path to the gate and took a goat-path along the gully outside of the site to find his daughter. By the time Jim had joined Jo she had already removed enough rubble and boulders to reveal a void in the hill beyond. Jim remembered Jo shouting to him to fetch a torch from the hire car with such urgency that Jim had responded immediately.

When Jim got back to the car his wife, Carol was already getting impatient and their ten year old son Peter was in the back playing his Game Boy-VR, as usual. Jim told his wife that he would just be another half hour or so as he was just humouring Jo for a while. Jim reached his daughter some ten minutes later to find her waiting for him outside of a manhole sized cavern. "Jo, you are not going in there, it's

too dangerous”, Jim had told her. Jo took the torch, switched it on and directed the beam into the hole, it took them nearly a minute to accustom their eyes to the darkness but gradually the scene took shape. They had both knelt there open mouthed and in total silence for what seemed like minutes before Jim broke the silence with a echoing, “Bloody hell!”. Before them, packed in like a store room at the British Museum, was the most fantastic treasure haul ever found on the island, it was a find that rivalled the great tombs of Egypt, both in financial and historical value.

This discovery had changed their lives forever, Joanne Markson became an instant celebrity and the Republic of Cyprus had presented her with a reward of five percent of the estimated value of the treasure. Although five-percent seemed scant reward at first, it amounted to almost fifty-million pounds sterling. Jo divided the money in two; twenty-five million to set up a Trust fund and the remainder between herself and the family. Needless to say none of the Marksons had any further need to work but Jim wasn't that sort of man, so he became the unpaid administrator of the Joanne Markson Research Trust. Joanne had studied hard for her 'A' Levels and obtained a place at Bristol University where she had obtained a first class honours degree, and now at age 24 was working towards her doctorate. So here they were enjoying a relaxed summer breakfast on the terrace of the house they had purchased just outside of Weymouth on the south coast of Dorset, England.

Modest as the house was for multi-millionaires it had cost them over one million pounds eight years ago, with a commanding view Weymouth Bay to the front and a chalk hill carving on the hill behind, it was an almost idyllic spot. There were four bedrooms, two overlooking the bay, whilst the other two gazed at the enigmatic form of the chalk giant

cut into the turf of the hillside, a remnant of a long dead religious sect. Jo chose the largest of the two back bedrooms, which she still used during 'vacs' and every three or so weekends when she was in the country. Peter was now at university in Manchester's UMIST, the foremost technological institute, in his second year of an Applied Physics Degree. Peter returns between every semester complete with three months worth of washing and a new idea for an invention to work on. Carol chose the master bedroom with the balcony overlooking the Preston Beach and the terrace, for her and Jim. Carol was the one who held the whole family together, which was no mean feat when they were so often separated by thousands of miles. Carol was slightly built with blond hair, her face although attractive was just a little too sharply chiselled to be called a classic beauty, she had never had a weight problem and loved her food. The family benefited from Carol's love affair with gastronomy and the family meal remained the high point of the day when they were together.

Today, Jim was off to London to appear on EU Today to explain some of the work the Trust had been doing over the past few months, so this was a much needed time of domestic tranquillity before the flight to London. The media had never lost interest in the Marksons even though the original discovery was almost nine years ago. The impact of the treasure items upon the accepted historical time-line had been immense, they were classified as Oufacts; Out of place Artefacts. As the items themselves were estimated to be around eleven thousand years old but were of a technological standard far beyond anything that could be expected of that era. The press at the time had had a field day speculating on the origin of the items, some even suggested that they had been brought to Cyprus by aliens and hidden as religious artefacts. Some parts of the establishment claimed that the treasures were fakes planted to cause maximum disruption to the accepted

archaeological time-line. In retort the Cyprus government had asked why anyone would spend over a billion dollars to such an obscure end.

The hoard had consisted of many hundreds of items, many of these had been constructed in pure gold, others were made of materials that had then been unknown to modern technology. A fascinating compass that not only worked but actually shielded itself from outside magnetic fields, meaning it would work in every situation, no one has yet replicated the technology despite having all its components analysed. There were alloy gold plates just microns thick that were engraved with diagrams and symbols that could not be obliterated despite the thinness of the material. Some of these diagrams have been identified as circuit diagrams for unknown uses, only a fraction have been identified and one of these seems to have been for a VDU circuit. A fascinating object was a model or prototype flying machine made from metal as strong as titanium but as light as styrene, again back engineering has totally failed to reproduce the smallest quantity of this metal. The Cypriot government has jealously guarded the hoard, allowing only Joanne and certain members of the Research Trust to have unrestricted access. Because of this the Marksons bought a house in Nicosia to use when research was being carried out and it was to this destination that the whole family would travel in another ten days. The house was large so also housed the headquarters of the Research Trust as well as a well equipped laboratory.

After breakfast Jim spent the morning preparing for the evening's interview, he ate his lunch with Carol, and just after one o'clock his LIMO (Low-level International MOdule) lifted off on an automatic course to London. The trip took almost thirty-five minutes and landed at the Tedington Lock Complex at fifteen before two. Jim always hated trips to London, the smog had grown worse over the past five

years, another effect of the progressive global warming process. LIMO's could only land on the highest of buildings now as the ground was permanently hidden in the smog, only 'Ground-track' vehicles could navigate the streets or were now allowed to. The little violet and blue LIMO was taken on the elevator to the parking area and a transverse-lift took Jim to the correct studio complex. Jim could remember a time when London was a pleasant place to visit, with parks and walks along the great River Thames but those days were gone now. The river had been sealed off from the sea with the Estuary Barrier and was no more than a canal now, the water in the broad width of the river evaporated quickly and the resultant rain turned the riverbed to mud, not that anyone could actually see it now. London's magnificent parks now alternated between mini-deserts and mud-bathes, the Serpentine in Hyde Park had finally disappeared in 2025 and Regents Park Zoo had closed the year before. In 2027 Heathrow Airport had closed, partly because of the introduction of the LIMO and partly because of the availability of clear days, Stanstead and Gatwick had taken up what strain there was but these were now under review.

The LIMO was introduced to the world in late 2020 by the Nissan Corporation in conjunction with Euro Aerospace and was an immediate hit with the super-rich, within the next ten years they were to become available to the average family. The design was based on the Harrier Fighter Jet but the engines now burned Hydrogen fuel. Auto-mobiles were finally banned in Britain at the end of 2030 but sadly most of the cars taken off the road in the run-up to that date ended up in Asia swelling their carbon emissions by a dreadful sixty percent. Most LIMO shuttles now converted their fuel from either sea-water or fresh water if you could find it, so a large section of the population now live within a few miles of the coast. In 2025 a new satellite system went live allowing the LIMO shuttles

to become truly international, providing foolproof navigation and vehicle avoidance to almost any destination on the planet. The journey to Nicosia took just three hours by LIMO and trips to New York could be achieved in just over four hours and with free fuel the old congestion charges imposed on auto-mobiles in the first years of the century were now being directed to the LIMO.

Jim met with the researchers between three and four-thirty and then rehearsed the interview with the presenter, Declan Brook between five and five-thirty. At six-thirty the transmission went live. The studio lights flared into life and the opening music flooded the stage, monitors and auto-cue screens flickered into life, "Hello and welcome to EU Today, on tonight's transmission", announced Declan. The taster clips rolled and the show was under way. Jim had to wait almost fifteen minutes before the interview was scheduled and he spent the time chatting to one of the production assistants about the difficulty the TV company was experiencing in recruiting suitable staff. The time went fast enough and before long Jim was ushered onto the set and settled in a leather armchair. Almost immediately Declan crossed the studio to Jim all the time talking to camera, "Please welcome the second most famous treasure hunter, Jim Markson; Jim welcome to EU Today". "Thank you Declan, it's nice to be back."

"Your lovely daughter is not with you I see Jim."

"No, she is quite busy at the moment."

"Tell us what Joanne is doing at the moment."

"Well Declan I'm not sure what she's doing at this very moment but generally she is in Ethiopia following up on some new discoveries."

"Really, that sounds exciting, tell us more."

"Well something like five months ago some people were white-water kayaking down the Blue Nile River, they decided to spend the night in a cave close to the river. When putting up their tents inside the cave they hammered

steel pegs into convenient cracks in the cave wall and floor, one peg disappeared through the crack as it opened up. Using the hammer they opened the crack further and nearly fell into the fissure.”

“Not another treasure hoard like the one in Cyprus”, interrupted Declan.

“Yes; but not the size of the Cyprus hoard but some very significant finds”, answered Jim.

“Significant in what way?”

“The items are very much in line with the original finds in so much that they are very sophisticated items, but these seem to be of a more practical type. There were only small quantities of Gold found and most of the artefacts seem to have a purpose or a practical use that we can only guess at this time.”

“What sort of age are we talking about here Jim”, asked Declan.

“Again, very much in line with the Cyprus hoard; we have only had chance to do some preliminary testing but certainly it looks like we have a date of around nine thousand years. We have hopes that we may be able to obtain a date that is much more accurate for at least one item.”

“Is this a new process?”

“No but one of the items has a decoration depicting a star constellation, if we can match that with known records we may be able to match a date.”

“That’s amazing; I think we have a picture of the item, do we? Yes we do. It’s beautiful! But who made these wonderful items, what civilisation could have been so advanced to produce products like these,” asked Declan

“That’s what we all want to know,” answered Jim, “and that’s what the Trust is all about, trying to determine who made them, why they were made, why they were buried in caves across the world; all these questions need an answer.”

“How many discoveries have been made up until now Jim?”

“I’m not sure, we’ve been involved in seven over the past four years, but there are discoveries that have been made over the past century and before, that fit into this category. There was the gold medallion that a woman in the US chipped out of a lump of coal way back in the nineteen-fifties. At the beginning of the twentieth century Greek fishermen in the Aegean brought up a mechanical computer in their nets, no one knows what that was used for still. The perfect spheres some two meters diameter that are found in parts of the South American jungle, not to mention the famous crystal skull that’s appeared in more TV programmes than you have Declan.”

“I doubt that,” commented Declan, laughing.

“Nevertheless, those and many hundreds of other artefacts have been found and all have things in common. They are very old, they are very advanced and no one knows what they really are, or what they were used for, well most of them anyway.”

“So what’s next Jim.”

“Well we need to examine these new finds and see if we can figure them out, but we are all off to Nicosia for the summer and do some work out there, Jo and my son Peter are joining us there. The Ethiopian government has given permission to take some of the items to Cyprus for research purposes, and can I express my gratitude to them for that.”

“The Cypriot government has also supported and sponsored your family I believe.”

“Yes we are so indebted to the Republic for their help and allowing us to base the Research Trust there, we just hope we can justify their faith in us and come up with answers.”

“Well thank you for coming in to talk to us Jim, I am sure all our viewers across Europe wish you every success with this fascinating project.”

“Thank you,” responded Jim.

“Now we turn to the news desk for an update.” The autocue blanked and the red lights went off, Declan shook Jim’s hand and thanked him again, “We’ll no doubt be seeing you again soon, and try to get that daughter of yours to come along next time will you?”

“I’ll try,” promised Jim.

Outside in the corridor it seemed dim after the studio lights and Jim made his way to the Green Room for refreshments before his trip back to Weymouth. A plate of sandwiches was waiting for him when he arrived there with a pot of synth-coffee; there was also a message from Carol asking him to ring her immediately. Jim switched on his Com Unit and told it to connect to Carol, Carol’s face appeared almost instantly. “What’s up Darling?”

“Jim, Joanne’s been on the Com, she tried to get you but you were in the studio, can you contact her before you start for home. She seemed a bit excitable.”

“OK Carol I’ll do it now, see you in about an hour. Love you, bye.” Jim closed the connection and asked the unit to get Jo for him, the screen flashed a warning that he was going outside the EU and the Western Alliance Area, a few more flashes and a dim picture of Jo appeared on the screen.

“Hi Dad, saw the interview on the satellite link, you did real good,” Jo almost shouted.

“What’s the trouble Jo, is something wrong?”

“Well yes and no,” she volunteered, “That artefact with the constellation on it, the one that you showed on TV, it sort of lit up,”

“What do you mean, ‘lit up’ asked Jim.

“Dad, I mean it lit up, it glowed for about ten minutes just before the interview started and then went dead again. It was a sort of blue-green light emitting from around the edges and through the little stars on the top.”

“Did you touch it?”

“No! Not when it was glowing.”

“Did you do anything to it before it activated?”

“Well we were examining it again, we were attempting to get a density reading with the Sonic SG Analyser.”

“Jo, don’t do anything with it again, Is that one of the items they are allowing you to bring to Cyprus?”

“Yes it is, but Dad. . . .”

“We will look at it when you get to Nicosia so don’t mess with it until you brother and I are there, this is out of your field.”

“Yeah but Dad . . .”

“Jo! This is a job for Peter and I; OK?”

“OK.”

“Good, we’ll see you next week then.”

“Dad, I love you.”

“I love you too sweetheart, bye.” The picture flickered out and Jim placed the Com in his case and sat down deep in thought whilst he ate his synthetic ham sandwiches.

On his way back to Weymouth Jim connected with his son Peter and told him about the artefact, “Can you borrow some test equipment from UMIST that might give us a clue to what is happening?”

“That would be great if we had even a clue to what it was or what sort of power it uses, Dad we’re working blind on this and I think we have all we need at the Trust Lab.”

“I was thinking of radiation, I don’t want anyone to go near it if there is a chance of radiation.”

“We have a clicker in the Lab but it can be any one of a dozen radiations and to cover that I would need to get an army truck to get the equipment out there not a LIMO.”

“Well have a think and do what you can Peter, OK”

“OK I have a word with Professor Gwilliam, see you next week Dad.”

“Bye Son.” Just then the proximity alarm sounded to tell the occupant that they were approaching their destination and Jim could see the lights of his house just below. The LIMO gently touched down in its bay and closed the

engines down. The canopy hissed open and Jim climbed out into the balmy June night, he could smell the brine from the beach a hundred meters away and smiled contentedly as he walked towards the house.

Nicosia, Cyprus,  
22:15 Tuesday, June 24th 2031

In the laboratory the two research assistants had also been waiting for the interview on EU Today and had stayed late in the lab to catch the programme on the large LCD screen. Just before the interview things had started to go wrong. There had been a sudden whine from somewhere and the TV screen had gone crazy. No matter what the two did the picture was so broken up that there was no hope of seeing the transmission or hearing it, the ear piercing whine became so painful that the two decided to get out of the building. It lasted about ten minutes but by the time the whine had stopped the interview was almost over. The two spent all the following day puzzling over what had caused the anomaly. and, came up with nothing.

National Museum, Cairo,  
19:16 Tuesday June 24th 2031

Habra had been a watchman at Cairo's museum for seventeen years, it was probably the most boring job in Egypt, nothing ever happened. The only reason he did the job was his intense pride in his country and particularly his interest in its history. In his spare time he was a volunteer guide taking visitors around the museum and explaining in great detail, in several languages, the significance of the various exhibits. He was well regarded and knew as much about ancient Egypt than any university professor, he had

even taught himself Hieroglyphics and could translate as well as anyone. Habra was just settling down to a steaming mug of real Egyptian coffee when it happened and he was totally unprepared.

At about 19:17 local time the lights, such as they were, flickered and all the intruder alarms protecting the museum triggered. The sound was ear-piercing in the empty display halls and the hot coffee spilled everywhere causing Habra to jump up in pain, while the mug smashed into a hundred pieces on the stone floor. Habra rushed out of the small security office into the main entrance hall and display area, what greeted him took his mind off the hot coffee and the alarm sounders. In the centre of the hall was a display case containing the famous Golden Pyramid that was discovered buried deep between the paws of the great Sphinx. The pyramid was some 1.2 meters from base to apex and 1.8 meters along the base, as far as it was known it was made of pure gold, without any impurities. What was now startling about the artefact was that green/blue light was emanating from a horizontal line around the seemingly solid sides, and a beam of light streaming vertically from the apex. As Habra stopped in his tracks the glass case surrounding the pyramid suddenly shattered into a million pieces. Habra ran, he ran faster than he had ever run in his life.

The main security office was situated in the basement, during the day it was populated by a dozen or so watchers gazing at twice that number of monitors, although no one was now watching the screens were still active. Active but not one was displaying a picture, each monitor was a mass of lines and white-noise. Habra stopped for a second then made his way to the telephone in the supervisor's office. The phone wasn't working, all that could be heard was a high pitched whine so he replaced the receiver and retraced his steps out of the security unit. He could hear a

sort of buzz that had a curious static quality that made the hair on your arms stand up. Habra made his way cautiously back up the stairs to the hall, as he reached the door he could see the weird light but he could now see other blue lights whirling around the walls. He was about to withdraw again when he realised that the new blue lights were coming from outside the main glass doors, it was the police reacting to the alarm. Habra raced across to the entrance fumbling to get the electronic key from his belt pouch, his hand was shaking so much it took several seconds to locate the key in the transponder. Eventually the doors opened and two police officers stepped briskly into the museum.

“What’s the problem”, asked the larger of the officers?

“The p,.. p.. pyramid”, stammered Habra, “it. . . .” Habra turned to see that the light and the beam had vanished and the hall was dark and as the other officer had now cancelled the alarm, was also silent.

“What pyramid?”

“That pyramid, the Golden Pyramid, it was, it came alive, there were lights....”

“Well there are no lights now”, said the second officer.

The bigger officer looked Habra up and down and said, “Well just have a look around, see if there are any entry points.” He started to walk across the hall and soon he felt the crunch of broken glass under his booted feet. “Can we get some lights on in here?”

“Sure,” said Habra and crossed to his office where the main lighting board was situated. Outside the high output krypton flood-lights flared.

“How in the name of Allah has this happened,” shouted the larger officer to his partner.

“Someone’s broken into the case,” answered the second policeman.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

