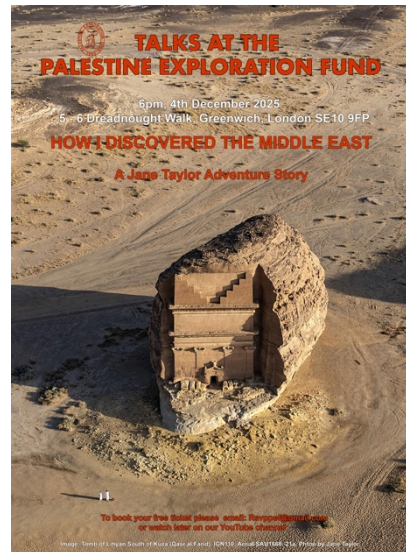


PEF EVENT

Thursday 4th December 2025, 6pm

HOW I DISCOVERED THE MIDDLE EAST: A JANE TAYLOR ADVENTURE STORY

- With Jane Taylor, introduced by Bob Bewley
- PEF, 5-6 Dreadnought Walk, Greenwich, London SE10 9FP
- Free, please email rsvppef@gmail.com to reserve your ticket/s



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Summary

As a colonial child – born in Malaya (as it was called then) and brought up there, in Tasmania and finally in West Sussex – the Middle East was never in my line of sight. Until I went to university. As part of my Mediaeval History degree at St Andrews, I came face to face with the Byzantine Empire – at its greatest extent reaching to the northern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. How wild, I thought.

While my early working life kept me firmly rooted in Britain, by 1971 I was thirsting for a break from orthodoxy. Casting around the world for somewhere to go for a year or so, I miraculously chose Istanbul. There, early in my stay, I was picked up by the BBC to research a TV series on the history and art of Turkey. And so began my freelance life in TV.

Back in London, moonlighting between TV jobs, I was asked if I would like to accompany a tour to Jordan and Syria – would I not! The lecturer had Jordanian friends, who were amazingly generous to the whole group – and they became my friends. They even suggested I go back there to photograph yet more spectacular landscapes and antiquities. On one visit in 1985, a chance question and a surprisingly positive answer led to my first opportunity to photograph from a Royal Jordanian Air Force helicopter – thus was my first Jordan book, *High Above Jordan*, was born. When it came out in early 1989 I went to live in Amman – I thought for a year – to help promote the book. One year turned into 27.

From that special base in the Middle East, I visited, photographed and/or wrote about Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia. And I produced several more Jordan books...a process which is ongoing.

About the Speakers

Jane Taylor is an award-winning photographer and writer, specialising in documenting the unique social and cultural heritage of the Middle East. Her incredible career has seen her working in many countries, including Pakistan, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, but she is perhaps best known for her work in Jordan. In 2015 she donated 7,000 photos to the American Centre of Research (ACOR) in Amman, which can be viewed here:

<https://photoarchive.acorjordan.org/jane-taylor-collection/>

Bob Bewley is an aerial archaeologist and photographer who shares Jane's love of the Middle East and Jordan in particular.

HOW TO FIND US

THE PEF is situated on the south bank of the River Thames, a short walk away from Greenwich train and DLR station and Greenwich Pier (Riverbus). Cutty Sark CLR station is currently closed until Spring 2026.

