

Year 4'S visit to Arbeia Roman Fort



On the 23rd of September, Year 3 and 4 visited Arbeia , which is a real Roman fort where the Romans lived in our county for four hundred years. We found out that it was used to store supplies for the main forts along Hadrian's Wall.

Fortunately, part of the fort has been reconstructed to show us what it actually looked like when the Romans lived in it, two thousand years ago! The rest

of the fort has been excavated by archaeologists but it hasn't been reconstructed so you have to use your imagination to reconstruct the buildings in your head.

We first visited the west Gateway, it was enormous. It had steep ditches at the front of the gateway. Apparently, this was to make it difficult for the Celts, who were the Roman's enemies, to attack the fort.

When we went inside the gateway there was a model of the fort so we could see what it would have looked like in Roman times. It had twenty six granaries which would have stored grain at the time. Each granary had under floor heating to keep the grain dry. There was also a model of a Celtic house. Another name for it was, "round house" because it was round.

After we had seen the models, we climbed more stairs and wandered outside onto the battlements. (This is where the soldiers would have stood guard watching for the enemy.) In the distance, you could see the River Tyne but if you looked straight ahead, you could see all of the ruins of the fort to the other side, where the barracks and Commanding Officers Quarters were.



Ms. Allison took us to the Roman vault. We found out that the vault was where the Roman's kept all their money. The walls were the thickest walls of any of the Roman forts on Hadrian's Wall as Arbeia used to keep all the money in their vault for the soldier's wages and supplies. There would have been several guards to protect the money in the vault and it was underground making it was more difficult to steal the money.



Time Quest was in a room that was made to look like an archaeological dig. We then pretended to be archaeologists. We found lots of tiles, pieces of broken pottery, an antler from a deer, a metal hammer and



human skull that was cracked! We found out later that it wasn't a real skull but it was made of clay.

Immediately after the archaeological dig, we were taken to a different part of Time Quest where there were many other activities that archaeologists would do. There were lots of things to do here like reconstructing a Roman bowl, stones that had Roman writing on so we could use crayons and take a rubbing

from it, we could also use a microscope to identify patterns and symbols on old Roman coins, we used little clay cubes to make a mosaic and there was a sorting game where we had to identify bones, pottery and shells.

After lunch, we went to the barracks, this was where the soldiers slept. The ordinary soldiers had poor conditions! They slept in huge bunk beds where they would have to sleep four men on the bottom and four men on the top. They would have had straw on the floor to make it warmer.





Attached to the barracks were other rooms used for servants. One of the rooms had a cot in it so it was probably used for a servant girl and her baby because the soldiers weren't allowed to have wives in the army. There was also a Centurion's living quarters. He would have

been in charge of eighty men so his rooms were slightly better than the barracks. Before we left the barracks I noticed that there was also a room for storage and cooking as it had pots sitting on the shelves.



Finally, we visited the Commander's Quarters. The Commanding Officer, who was in charge of the fort, lived in quarters that were far superior to where the legionary soldiers lived. I found out that he had two dining rooms, one for summer that was huge with comfortable furniture; he would have held parties in this room. The winter dining room was smaller so it could be heated up easier with under floor heating. The



Commander also had an office that had a huge wooden table and filing cabinets that would have been full of important scrolls.

