

Egyptian Day!



Year 3 & 4 had an amazing Egyptian Day on Tuesday 6th February when Ross and Emily from The Outreach Team of Durham University's Oriental Museum joined us.



Ross led an activity where the children learned about Mummification and studied x-rays from two real life Mummies that are kept at the Oriental Museum in Durham. The children were told how scientists can establish evidence from the x-rays about age and gender as well as identifying whether the Mummy was rich or poor from their teeth and bones. We found out that one of the Mummies was a boy aged around 14 years old and he was from a poor background as his bones and teeth had not developed with age related expectations. The other mummy was a lady who was rich as she had many golden inscriptions on her sarcophagus. She also had a prosthetic arm. Not everyone was mummified in Egyptian time as it cost so much but people wanted to give their dead the best send off to the afterlife so it wasn't just pharaohs who were mummified. We also found out that many of the mummies that are here in Britain were brought here by rich Victorian people who brought them back as souvenirs and then had unwrapping parties...yuk!

After the research the children then used clay to design and make amulets or Shabti dolls which were wooden or stone figures which had an inscription carved into them of what their skill would be in the afterlife to serve the Pharaoh. The amulets and Shabti dolls accompanied the deceased to the afterlife to become their servants.





Emily led an activity which allowed the children to handle real Egyptian artefacts. Some of these artefacts were 3,000 years old so the children had to be very careful! The activity allowed the children to describe the objects in great detail, saying what they thought they were made from and what they thought they would have been used for in Egyptian times. The children had to justify their thinking and use evidence that they had previously learned to back up their theories.

In the afternoon, the children learnt about hieroglyphics (Egyptian writing). They then designed an offering table which would be sent with the Mummy to the afterlife so they would have enough food for their next life. The children learned how the Egyptians used hieroglyphics to write a person's name, town and skills in a cartouche. We discovered that Egyptian writing was really difficult to read as some words had vowels



missed out, some writing went from left to right and some went from right to left and even some was written vertically! Its no wonder not many people could read and write in the Ancient Egyptian times.



The last activity that we all did together was to make William into a Mummy (just pretend as we thought his mum and dad might be a bit upset if we did it for real!). He was embalmed by Rosie, Aaron and Anthony. Many of the children acted out the

Mummification as gods and after Pharaoh William had been mummified the gods had to decide if he was telling the truth to the questions they asked or if he was lying. If he was telling the truth Pharaoh William would go to the afterlife but if he was lying he would go to Sobek (a crocodile god) who would eat his heart and he wouldn't go to the afterlife. Guess where Pharaoh William ended up? Yes his heart was eaten by Sobek... however Ross told us, this always happens to the children when they act this out as it's more gory!

Our next Egyptian experience is a visit to meet the Mummies at the Oriental Museum in Durham on Friday 9th March 2018.

