

The Terracotta Warriors at Liverpool's World Museum.

The build up to seeing the Terracotta Warriors at the World Museum in Liverpool was extremely well managed. The History Group were given a time-slot for entry to this important exhibition, which had a six-week waiting list to view over the summer holidays.

On entry to the exhibition, a short film was shown, in a reception area, which left the audience with the question 'Now what?' A set of doors opened, from the reception into another room and there in front of us, on a simple stand, was a terracotta model of a man and a horse. There was a sense of understatement about this display, as round the walls were information panels about the First Chinese Emperor, Qin Shi Huan, and these information panels drew the eye. I approached a Steward and asked 'Is this an original' and with her 'Yes' I had come face-to-face with the first of the Terracotta Warriors.



Here was an almost life-size Horse Keeper and a Cavalry Horse, both exquisitely modelled, the horse with a plaited tail and saddle, the Horse Keeper with an inscrutable look on his realistic face. It was hard to believe that these models were over 2,000 years old, and that each human model in the Terracotta Army of 8,000 personnel was individually made, and that no two faces were the same.

The next room gave chronological tables and additional information about the site and the finds, and the room after displayed musical instruments and jewellery found in the tombs. From then on there were information boards and display cabinets in every room, and also films, projections and animations to inform the visitors.

Among the more than 180 artefacts displayed were: ritual vessels; gold ornaments for horses and chariots; bronze mirrors; bronze coins; stone helmets and stone protective clothing, a forerunner of the chain-mail coats of armour of later eras, carefully pieced together with bronze wire. A modern replica of the bronze chariot of the first Emperor was displayed with four Terracotta horses pulling it. Later in the exhibition there was an entire tomb doorway on display, from a later era, as well as a crossbow and other weapons.

As we progressed through the exhibition we came to a queue of people patiently lining up. The cause of this hold-up was that in this room were seven Terracotta Warriors, of varying ranks in the Emperor's Army, displayed side-by-side. Each visitor was eager to capture this unique opportunity to photograph these models and they took their time to pass by. These slightly larger-than-life

models were extremely realistic, in naturalistic poses and an assortment of military costumes.



Face-to-face with the Terracotta Warriors.



Examples of their realistic poses.

The detail of these figures was remarkable. Every part of their costume had been accurately reproduced and information sheets explained the differences in their ranking and role. Even their hairstyles and their plaited hair had been carefully created. Their faces were meticulously crafted and their 'body language' was authentically positioned.

The tomb was built so that the Emperor could continue his life-style in his afterlife, but there was a price to pay. It took 700,000 people to build the tomb and twelve of the Emperor's horses were killed, to be put in the tomb and accompany him. All the Emperor's childless concubines were killed and placed in the tomb with him, as were many craftsmen, officials and other members of his court. This terrible cost left a sombre feeling amongst members of our U3A group and posed the question: Is any achievement, however great, really worth this incredible cost?

With some time to spare members of the group visited the Central Library, next door, and had amazing views over the City of Liverpool from the Roof Terrace on the fourth floor. The modern entrance atrium was very impressive, and in contrast the Hornby Library, within the complex, still retained its original Victorian features. Next to the Central Library was the Walker Art Gallery and this too was visited by members of the group. This Art Gallery has an exceptional collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings.



The modern Atrium in the Central Library, Liverpool.



The Hornby Library.

Altogether, the view was that the day had been a great success and we had been very privileged to view one of the wonders of the ancient world.

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