



Military History Society Workshop

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The History Department was delighted to host a session led by Professor Eleanor Dickey (Department of Classics, University of Reading) for the opening session of this year's Garth Hill College Military History Society. Professor Dickey is a world authority on bilingual learning in the ancient world, focusing on how ancient Latin speakers learnt Ancient Greek and how Greek speakers learnt Classical Latin. It was common for people to be bilingual in many areas of life that required literacy skills.

In a session designed specifically for our society, pupils got to see how people living in Vindolanda, near Hadrian's Wall, wrote letters to each other. After an introduction to a selection of translated letters, recited with gusto by Professor Dickey, pupils then got the chance to draft their own Vindolanda-style tablets in English before transcribing them into the Latin alphabet used at the time.

The highlight of the session for pupils was using replica tools, such as pens, inkwells and tablets, to write out their letter, fold it, address it, tie it together in the ancient style and take them home.

Professor Dickey observed that the pupils did an excellent job and that one was so neatly written that it could have been written by a professional ancient scribe. Pupils stayed beyond the planned end-time to complete their letters. It was a joy to see how much they got from the experience.

Professor Dickey will indeed be a tough act to follow for future speakers at the GHC Military History Society.

