

Concept by Karen MacDougall working with Dr Frances McIntosh and HW1900

Participants, today's Frontier Voices, created votive plaques to give thanks for something that was important to them. They were inspired by seeing Roman examples of those found in the Roman borderlands and then created their own for display in the café at Chesters Fort after the exhibition.

The Romans worshipped many gods and left behind large and small altars. The Mithraeum at Carrawburgh is a place where a secret Roman religion was worshipped, with its roots in the Middle East - evidence of the diversity of soldiers along the Wall. Corbridge Museum has some fantastic metalwork with the Corbridge Lanx showing Roman Gods. Metal plaques were another art form where thanks was given or a bargain made to be thanked for later when the good fortune occurred, eg. after a safe journey to Britain from Rome. Dr Frances McIntosh introduced these ideas to a group of Hadrian's Wall Volunteers who had worked on the 1900 Festival and already knew quite a lot about the Wall. They saw lots of examples, different shapes sizes and metal types with both detailed and also quite crude designs, which had been found in the Borderlands near the Wall.

Karen then introduced the Frontier Voices project, UNESCO values and led the group through mark-making, creating a leaf for the Sill installation to practise basic skills and then onto the design and creation of a votive plaque. Embossing works by making indentations into metal, made with a wooden double-ended stylus with the metal sheet positioned on a soft surface. This resulted in a number of fantastic designs giving thanks for all sorts of things - love, family, Coventina, Bacchus, carpe diem, Neptune, 2022, 1900, cats, Sycamore Gap, fair wind and clean water, very little is needed for a happy life.....

