



Mystery Object – Mummy Case

What is it?

This is a mummy case that is on display in Macclesfield Silk Museum. It is made from linen covered in plaster. The main purpose of the mummy case was to protect the mummy from scavenging animals and tomb robbers. They also had an important religious role linked to their shape and decoration.

What would it have had inside?

The mummy case would have had an embalmed body, a mummy, inside. The markings on the outside of the mummy case have been transcribed by the British Museum and reveal that this mummy case was for a girl called Shebmut. She had the role of 'Singer of the Interior of Amun'. This would have been a highly respected position which meant that she was allowed inside the temple.

How did it end up in Macclesfield?

The mummy case was brought to Macclesfield by two Victorian women, Marianne Brocklehurst and Mary Booth, in 1874. They were keen travellers and made a number of visits to Egypt together. They brought back many objects including this mummy case. The collection was originally on display in West Park Museum but has now moved to the Silk Museum.

Interesting facts

We don't know how old Shebmut was when she died. It has long been thought that she was just a teenager given the size of the mummy case. However, there is no mummy inside the case so we can't know for sure.

The images on the mummy case have been compared with other dated examples and suggest that it is from around 800-750 BC (almost 3000 years ago!).

