

## Cliffe Castle Museum

### Shabti Figures

This is a collection of Shabti figures, on display in the Ancient Egyptians gallery at Cliffe Castle Museum. A shabti figure is a small statue or figurine placed in ancient Egyptian tombs. They were inscribed with magical spells. Egyptians believed these figures would come to life in the afterlife and serve the deceased person, performing labour or tasks to ensure their comfort and well-being.

Shabti figures were made from various materials, such as wood, ceramic or stone. The shabtis in our collection are made from faience pottery, which was a type of glazed ceramic made from crushed quartz or sand. It has a distinctive shiny and brightly coloured finish.

The number of shabtis placed in a tomb would depend on a person's status and beliefs about the afterlife. The concept of shabtis reflects the Ancient Egyptian emphasis on ensuring a smooth transition to the afterlife and a continuation of a comfortable existence.



### Talk Topics

- What was the purpose of shabti figures?
- What do you think the Ancient Egyptians imagined that the afterlife was like?
- Which of your possessions would you like to take with you to the afterlife?
- If you were a person in Ancient Egypt, what tasks would you ask your shabti to do for you in the afterlife?
- How many shabti figures do you think were needed? Why?