



Case Study

Stirling Smith

WHY TAKE PART ?

The museum has just gone through the first stage of a major refurbishment and wanted to raise its profile. It also has challenges attracting young people. The museum wanted to find a way to connect young people with the collections so they would value them and come back in the future. The Administrator had heard about Takeover Day through social media channel Twitter and Museums Galleries Scotland.

WHO TOOK PART ?

Seven P6 pupils (10 year olds). Children who were interested had to 'apply' to take part and were selected by the Education Officer and the school.

WHAT DID THEY DO ?

The children took on roles as collections curators, visitor welcome assistants and gallery guides.

HOW DID THEY SPEND THEIR TIME ON THE DAY ?

The museum selected a few items from the stores that they thought would appeal to the children. These included the world's oldest football, Zulu grass skirts and a Samurai helmet with hair still attached. The children handled the objects wearing white gloves, and worked with a volunteer to research online and wrote labels.

The whole event was public facing and flexible. Object handling and research was done in the lecture theatre and visitors could wander in to see what the children were doing. Laptops with wi-fi connection were set up for the online research with some preparation beforehand to avoid any inappropriate sites that may have linked to the children's keywords search. A laptop was also linked up to the big screen to show the Twitter feed.

Children took on roles as:

- Curators – handling objects, researching and writing labels
- Visitor Welcome Assistants – ensuring visitors felt welcome
- Gallery Guides – talking about their focus objects

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT ?

Children made a podcast to talk about what they enjoyed and improvements they'd recommend. The museum noticed that there seemed to be a larger number of younger visitors on the day. They felt that the day enabled them to cement their relationship with the school. There was a lot of press support and activity on social media.

The museum plans to do more work with this age group. They want to explore ways in which children can work flexibly and creatively with the collection, not just in exhibitions. A real buzz was generated amongst staff and volunteers.

'Staff and volunteers really enjoyed getting hands-on, almost as much as the kids!' Administrator