



TAKEOVER DAY

CASE STUDIES 2014

Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey
Elmbridge Museum, Surrey
Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter
The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

Takeover Day Case Study Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey

WHY TAKE PART?

Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey is a museum with displays of farmland life and a historic abbey on site. The Education Officer first heard about Takeover Day at a SHARE Museums East meeting. As part of Norfolk Museums Service, SHARE is funded to do Museum Development in the East of England. SHARE gave eight museums a small budget to develop and participate in a Takeover Day. The Education Officer discussed Takeover Day ideas with the Kids in Museums Project Director and the other museum representatives at a sharing meeting. One of the museum's trustees was a school governor and invited the Headteacher to the museum to discuss Takeover Day. They were delighted with the idea and themed a Takeover Day which complemented the museum and covered the national curriculum.

WHO TOOK PART?

Ninety five children from Years 5 and 6 (9-11 year olds). Prior to Takeover Day, the Education Officer visited the school to work with the children. The museum is closed from November to March, so 70 children (8-9 year olds), their families and selected guests were invited as visitors on the day. The children travelled to the museum by coach and each year group was split with half visiting in the morning and the other half in the afternoon.

WHAT DID THEY DO?

Children took on the following roles:

- Visitor Service Assistants – opened and closed the site, welcomed visitors and guided them into the entrance kiosk, took visitor details at the reception desk and handed over to the child tour guides
- Tour Guides – prepared their own tours in advance of Takeover Day and led tours, explained and interpreted the buildings to the visitors on the day itself
- Press Officers – wrote a press release modelled on the museum's standard press release. Designed an invitation for the guests who acted as visitors on the day
- Curators – visited the collection before the day, made posters of their interpretation of the artefacts and set up the display in the temporary exhibition space
- Café Assistants – took orders in the café and waited on tables
- Performers – at school, the children had learnt Plainsong, a medieval form of singing. All the children were involved in the performance at the end of their session to close the visitors' experience in the abbey

HOW DID THEY SPEND THEIR TIME ON THE DAY?

The children arrived in medieval costume to reflect abbey life. They performed a range of roles and rotated their jobs during the day, apart from the tour guides who only led tours. Splitting the day meant that the children could experience different roles during the day.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Being part of the SHARE group enabled the Education Officer to find practical support when planning the day, share resources and gain the confidence to try something new. The museum and the school have developed a close working relationship on which to build future projects. The museum staff benefited from working together on a joint project to support the children on Takeover Day.

'Our organisation achieved a higher profile in the local community, both through the participating school and the visiting parents of the children involved. The day was also an excellent bonding exercise within the museum, bringing all the different teams together to achieve a result which was enjoyed by everyone.'

Education Officer, Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey

Takeover Day Case Study Elbridge Museum, Surrey

WHY TAKE PART?

Elbridge Museum closed in June 2014 and is instead displaying its collections in locations across the Borough. The museum staff wanted to show the museum has a valuable role to play in the community so they looked for ways to extend their existing outreach programme and use the object collection in new and innovative ways. They had never taken part in Takeover Day and thought that the centenary of the Brownie movement created a good opportunity to explore its history in the local area. The museum decided to use its collection of objects relating to the Brownie movement with local Brownies.

WHO TOOK PART?

A Brownie pack and their leaders participated. An initial session was held for the whole pack of 20 children. The group discussed the role of the museum and how to handle and conserve objects. During the next visit, two smaller groups of six children looked at the Brownie related artefacts, learnt about interpretation and created labels for a display. One group of children acted as curators, creating the Takeover Day display and attended the opening event.

WHAT DID THEY DO?

The Brownies helped to select objects, photos and uniforms from the museum's collections for the display. They thought about what they valued about being a Brownie and included this information in the mini exhibition which was set up in Esher Civic Centre's public foyer.

HOW DID THEY SPEND THEIR TIME ON THE DAY?

The children worked as:

- Curators – the group of six Brownies dressed and arranged mannequins and helped the museum staff set up the display of chosen objects

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Following Takeover Day, the Brownies attended an opening ceremony with the Mayor and other invited guests. The mini exhibition was advertised on a poster which was displayed in libraries and other council venues.

The Brownies also helped to host a reminiscence event for a community group with special educational needs. The event was held in the Civic Centre and followed a talk by the museum curator. The Brownies talked about their project, took handling objects round the group and shared their stories with the older people and people with learning disabilities. They served tea and cakes to their guests.

Being involved in the Takeover Day project also provided opportunities for the Brownies to work towards achieving a number of different badges, so there were positive personal and group outcomes for the Brownies. The project received publicity from the local press and feedback from the public has been very positive.

The museum staff had some challenges with the project as this was their first display away from the museum, but it turned out to be very successful. Involving the Brownies in this project opened up new ways to use and display the collection. Staff gained confidence and plan to work with other community groups and schools on innovative projects, which may change peoples' perceptions about a local museum being *'just a building full of old objects.'*

'Installing our display together with the Brownies on Takeover Day created a buzz about the exhibition and the way we are using our museum's collection to work in the community.'

Elbridge Museum Manager

Takeover Day Case Study Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

WHY TAKE PART ?

The Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) wanted to develop further links with Exeter's Deaf Academy and produce something to specifically support families of Deaf children that visit the museum. The museum had already produced two British Sign Language (BSL) interpreted films for adults. One explored key museum objects whilst the other introduced the museum, however neither were especially child friendly.

WHO TOOK PART ?

Ten children, aged from 7 to 17 years old from the Deaf Academy which is situated within walking distance of RAMM.

WHAT DID THEY DO ?

First, the children visited the museum to choose and draw their favourite objects from RAMM's displays and familiarise themselves with the galleries where the filming would take place. Back at school, they created scrapbooks and prepared their commentaries. On Takeover Day, they filmed each other explaining their choices in BSL in RAMM's galleries.

HOW DID THEY SPEND THEIR TIME ON THE DAY ?

The children worked as:

- Film Makers and Heritage Interpreters

They worked with a professional film maker who developed excellent rapport with the children, supporting them to use the equipment and to create the film themselves. Two BSL interpreters enabled communication between the children, the film maker and RAMM staff. Other museum visitors were very interested in watching the filming which was carried out in public galleries all over RAMM.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT ?

The film maker spent a day at the school with the children and supported them to edit their work. The children and staff at the Academy then added subtitles and audio in their own editing suite – something they have existing skills in doing. Making the film took a long time and was quite a challenging process, but the end result was well worth it and students were very enthusiastic throughout the process and valued taking part in the film. RAMM and the Academy celebrated filming completion with tea and buns and launched the film during Deaf Awareness Week in May – it is now posted on YouTube to make it as accessible as possible <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NeCdaUhgoM>

As a result of this project and participating in Takeover Day, RAMM has started to build a strong and positive relationship with the Academy and they are already planning to work together on another project as part of a city-wide festival.

'If we had not invited the young people from Exeter's Deaf Academy, we would never have known exactly what most intrigued them and caught their attention about RAMM's collections – and the film wouldn't have the authenticity that it does. Also we have strengthened our relationship with the Academy, which is a longer term goal as we have much to offer Deaf children and young people.'

Learning and Skills Officer, Royal Albert Memorial Museum

Takeover Day Case Study The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

WHY TAKE PART ?

This is the third year that The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has taken part in Takeover Day. The Trust has refined the programme over the years to give children a meaningful experience which focuses on their interests.

WHO TOOK PART ?

Two classes of Year 6 pupils (10-11 year olds) from a local primary school. The same school has been involved each year and has developed their work in school to support the event.

WHAT DID THEY DO ?

Half the children wore replica Tudor dress and the other half performed scenes from a Shakespearian play to visitors around the Birthplace. The 'Tudor' group took part in a carousel of work-related activities, rotating after a set time so they could experience all of them. One of the most successful of these was the handling collection in the exhibition room, where children helped visitors explore replica objects, described what they were and pointed out the real objects.

HOW DID THEY SPEND THEIR TIME ON THE DAY ?

The children's Takeover Day experience took place over the course of a week. On Monday, the Primary School Liaison Officer went into school to set the scene and explained the different activities on offer. Children then chose which they wanted to do. Teachers themed much of their work for that week around different aspects of the Birthplace operations, building pupils' confidence and getting them ready for the day. On Wednesday, the children had a familiarisation visit to the Birthplace, including a guided tour, going behind the scenes and planning their Takeover Day tasks e.g. making posters and visitor leaflets to advertise the performances. On Friday, (Takeover Day) children:

- Performed for the public in various onsite locations
- Designed and collected surveys and sold tickets at Reception
- Catalogued and handled documents and displayed / demonstrated early printed books and artefacts
- Created a blog about their experiences
- Guided visitors in every room of the Birthplace and facilitated handling sessions for visitors of more than ten nationalities

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT ?

After each year's event, the organisation listens to and acts upon the advice given by their Takeover Day participants e.g. where to position particular merchandise in the shop and other areas of the museum they want to take over. Positive outcomes included closer working between the Birthplace and the local community, as well as offering the school and the Birthplace a better understanding of what the other does. Parents of the children attending were given a free voucher to visit on that day and a very high proportion took up the offer. The Birthplace collected evidence to show a significant impact on visitor experience on the day.

'As a customer I was overwhelmed by the joy and excitement of seeing these children engage in history and literature and having the opportunity to engage in dialogue with real people. Their presence increased the pleasure of my excursion.'

There were two instances of children coming back with extended family and taking over independently, giving them a full guided tour of the Birthplace as they had done on Takeover Day. In one case, other visitors started to join in and ask questions. 2014 was an anniversary year for Shakespeare and eight of the Takeover Day children went to the Speakers' Apartments at the Houses of Parliament to give a flavour of Takeover Day and the birthday celebrations to MPs, including the Education Secretary.

'I love the Birthplace, I want to work here when I'm older. I can say I've had experience.' Takeover Day Participant