

Torquay Museum

Why take part?

Previously, the museum worked with the Young Archaeology Club (YAC). The experience of working with the YAC on a small-scale event inspired museum staff to aim for more meaningful and empowering outcomes this year.

Who took part?

Ten members of the YAC group who were joined by twelve Brownies from a local unit. The children were aged 7-14.

What did they do?

Children took over a variety of roles throughout the museum, from meeting VIP guests to selling tickets in the shop.

The Learning Officer visited the two groups in advance to ask them what they would like to do on Takeover Day. The Learning Officer supported their ideas with input on the operations of the museum. The children came up with job titles for themselves and descriptions of what they thought their role should do.

A weekend pre-visit was arranged and those children who were able to visit explored the museum. Children annotated 'We're Taking Over' posters and displayed them in their schools. They also sent out postcards to encourage family and friends to come along.

How did they spend their time on the day?

Key to the experience was letting the children decide which roles they wanted to take over. Some children stayed in the same role whilst others rotated. Brownies took over for the morning and YAC members all day.

Roles included:

- Working with the curatorial team to identify and catalogue objects
- Acting as VIP hosts, meeting and greeting the guest speaker and local MP who were visiting, giving them refreshments
- Selling tickets and shop merchandise to visitors
- Giving guided tours to visitors
- Generating ideas for improving the museum floor plan

Torbay's MP presented certificates to the children at the end of the event and families were invited to come along and interact throughout the day.

What happened next?

One Brownie came back to visit with her school; after recognising the Learning Officer, the girl invited her to be a guest of honour at an assembly to celebrate their work from the trip. This led to further conversations with the school and a subsequent Takeover Day being organised.

The experience of taking over has inspired members of the YAC to volunteer to run guided tours, object handling and craft activities at another community event organised by the museum.

Feedback collected by the children has been useful in improving the visitor experience at the museum. Their ideas from reviewing the current floor plan are being incorporated into the development of a family-friendly museum map.