

## Evaluation of Marvellous and Medieval Fun Time - 15<sup>th</sup> August 2004

The Marvellous and Medieval family fun time was the last event in a series of 6, and was organised by the Learning and Access section. The theme of the event was selected to tie in with Medieval items on display in the Human History exhibition. Various activities were organised: make a medieval person; design an illuminated letter; write with a feather; a spinning display; handle medieval objects; a 'Food and Fayre' trail; and meet Robert the Bruce.

The general learning outcomes for this event were set as follows:

<b>Marvellous and Medieval</b>	
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	Make public aware of Sunday openings Learn about medieval life in Perth Understanding of evolution of Perth from medieval town to current situation
<b>Skills</b>	Art skills Investigative abilities Communication skills
<b>Attitudes and Values</b>	Learning together as a family Increase in self-esteem from learning something new
<b>Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity</b>	Feel excited to meet someone famous from history Exploring their own creativity through art activities Feel inspired by touching historical objects
<b>Activity, Behaviour, Progression</b>	Return visits to the museum Broader interest in history

Each of the activities seemed successful, holding appeal to different people. A lot of the older children and parents enjoyed the intricacy of designing an illuminated letter, whereas the younger children preferred creating a medieval person. Many families commented on how much they enjoyed doing the 'Food and Fayre' trail as this was something they were all able to do together and contribute to. The 'live' displays of Robert the Bruce and spinning had a real 'wow' factor for lots of the participants. Many people also commented on how much they enjoyed being able to handle 'real' medieval objects. The museum staff dressed up as peasants for the day.

On the whole, it seems the General Learning Outcomes were met: the day was evaluated by copying a form for people to fill in on the back of the 'Food and Fayre' trail (26 received) and by 16 conducting face-to-face interviews.

<b>Marvellous and Medieval</b>	
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	"Better awareness of medieval times" (5) "An understanding that things used to be different" (2) "Interesting facts and history of the city" (2) Details such as "know how to make thin and thick thread, how heavy chain mail is and what a stew strainer is and King Robert was wearing a fake chain - 'cause the real one is too heavy."(1); "What the grooves in swords are for"(1); "Wore chain mail under armour"(1).
<b>Skills</b>	"Looked carefully at exhibits" (1) "Details on medieval history" (2) "Learning new things" (2) "Educational" (6) "Learning" (3) "How to make people out of yoghurt pots"(1)

<b>Attitudes and Values</b>	"Learning together" (2) "Time together" (2)
<b>Enjoyment, Inspiration and Creativity</b>	"Learnt history in fun educational manner" (3) "Interesting" (1) Benefited from it being "hands-on" (4) "Fun/enjoyable" (10) Specific activities were also listed as holding particular appeal, such as meeting Robert the Bruce (2), the treasure hunt (1), the illuminated letters (2), trying on chain mail, shoes and watching spinning (1), making knights and royalty (5), writing with a feather (3) and everything (1).
<b>Activity, Behaviour, Progression</b>	"Introduced children to the museum" (1) "Continue the education of children" (1) Everyone said they would like to return apart from 2 parties who said they would be unable to return as they did not live in the area. People cited various reasons as to why they would return including "love to see exhibits", a "good day out", its "interesting fun and educational", an "enjoyable experience with friendly helpful staff" and because it's "cool/good/fun". Out of the 16 people interviewed, 13 people said they would come back for both for a general visit and to attend another fun day, 2 just for a fun day and 1 for a general visit.

### Visitor Analysis

The event proved popular with 160 participants, compared to 75 visitors on the previous Sunday. 94% of the people interviewed stated that they had come to the museum especially for the fun day. Only 2 (8%) of the 26 forms received from different parties were new users and these people were visitors to the area. This is similar to the results of the interviews: only 1 out of 16 people interviewed was a new user. 50% of the participants interviewed had already attended one of the other fun days. On a positive note for the museum, 47% of people interviewed had already come to the museum for a general visit, 31% had come for both a general visit and a fun day, with 19% visiting only on fun days. People interviewed cited various reasons as to why they had come to the fun day, from "something to do" (3 people), attracted by the theme (2 people) to "wanted to see the chainmail" (1 person).

People were also asked how the museum could be improved for them. The responses are noted below:

Response	Number	Response	Number
No improvement needed	9	More fun days	4
Open on a Sunday	2	Art activities	1
Don't know/no answer	8	Café	1
Quizzes and activities	1	Activities for younger children	1

### Marketing

The event was marketed in the same manner as all the other fun days. Learning and Access staff and attendants were also actively handing out fun day flyers to visitors. The success of these marketing strategies is outlined below:

Friend	25%	Found out last fun day	7%
Museum flyer	21%	Was passing by	7%
Bags of Info	14%	Primary Times	4%
Poster outside museum	7%	From Principal Officer, L&A	4%
Internet	7%	Phoned	4%

### Cost effectiveness

The following costs were incurred in setting up the event: Robert the Bruce (£120); art tutor (£50); and spinning materials (£50), totalling £220, an average of £1.40 per person. Art materials used were those in stock. The participants stated they would be prepared to pay the following amounts for this kind of event:

Yes - no amount stated	8%	£5	4%
Under £1	4%	Minimal	4%
£1-2	18%	No answer	11%
£2-3	32%	No	14%

At least 75% of people were prepared to pay for this event, and over 50% would have paid a sufficient amount to cover costs. It is possible people could be charged in the future for this kind of event.

In terms of museum staffing costs for the event, two Learning and Access staff and one curatorial member of staff ran the different activities. There were two attendants on 'normal' duty.

### Partnership Working

The company 'Ossianic' was contacted and provided a Robert the Bruce character, played by Alan Ireby. He was very positive about the experience stating that "venue had display information to back up verbal presentation" and "some history was imparted to children, many of whom had only a slender knowledge of the period. Hands-on examination of weaponry was appreciated". Local spinners Margaret Smith and Lainie Polton were contacted to do a demonstration of medieval spinning techniques which they generously offered to do for free. They enjoy talking to people about their craft and said that "the children and adults showed much interest and we did some hands-on" and "we were part of the medieval day and that was great - the other interests in the same room added to the atmosphere". Local art tutor Kathy Burns was employed to assist running the medieval people activity. Robin Rodger, the Heritage Manager, ran the medieval object handling activity.

### Organisation

There were no real difficulties in organising the activities. The only problem, which has occurred on every Sunday fun day, is that it can be a rush to get ready for 2pm, no matter how much preparation is done in advance. One child also hurt her nose because she pressed it against a barrier, but it is difficult to see how this could have been prevented.