

## The youth vote - Manchester

Young people give their verdict on Museums and Galleries month exhibitions across the country targeted at children.

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*Museums Journal* asked a group of young journalists from *Children's Express* to tell us what they thought of Museums and Galleries Month exhibitions around the country.

**All Our Saturdays, The Pump House People's History Museum, Manchester** It was shocking to find out how hard people once had to work, and how dangerous it could sometimes be for them.

The exhibition All Our Saturdays was described as a fun-filled day out, with lots of hands on things to do. We anticipated lots of people sifting through information about how we'd won Saturdays as one of our days of leisure. But everyone expects museums to be uninteresting, and the dull, brown appearance of the museum, hidden behind a big tree, had us fearing the whole day would be boring and unenjoyable.

We needn't have worried. The event was brilliant --- much better than we'd expected. Not only did we find the exhibition fun, the whole of the museum was too. There was lots of things to do, and the activities were wonderfully surrounded with colourful displays of the history of working life in Britain. It showed how Saturday changed from being a working day to one for free time - and how people found new things like football, picnics, and bicycle rides to fill it.

Among the many hands-on activities were: a working clocking-in machine, dressing up clothes in the exhibition, a jukebox, distorting funfair mirrors (which we really enjoyed), cards and dominoes, plastic picnic food, and a book of people's memories about Saturdays. It was shocking to find out how hard people once had to work, and how dangerous it could sometimes be for them.

Making cardboard gift boxes was one of the many jobs which people were keen to escape from on Saturdays. We found out that women had to make 144 boxes to get paid the equivalent of five pence. It took us the best part of five minutes to make one box from a pre-cut template, but we were shocked to learn that not only would the women have had to pay for their own glue, they would have had to measure them all out as well.

The only disappointment of the exhibition was the introductory video, which was in black and white and seemed like it was aimed at adults. It didn't add to the excitement of what we were expecting to see, although we did get quite a surprise from the life-like models of people we found there, wearing dirty, period clothes, who seemed to be watching it!

Apart from our group, there were only a few other people there. We weren't complaining - we had the place to ourselves. The staff were friendly and helpful. They let us go out for our packed lunch in the gardens and come back again. They kept a discreet distance, but were there to help. The only let-down in were the toilets, which could only be reached by going down stairs and along a damp, dark and dingy corridor.

The exhibition was aimed at ages 'eight to eighty' and we think it fits this description. Over all it was a worthwhile day out and we would recommend it to anybody over eight.

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### About the team

This article was produced by Editor Safeera Laher, 14, and reporters Emma Fletcher and Faythe Halsall, 13, from the Blackburn with Darwen bureau. None are regular museum-goers, and they knew little about British industrial history before they visited the Pump House People's History Museum.

It was published in the *Museums Journal*. For more reviews, see column, left.

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