

## The Kids Report: Hackney on film

**For Museums and Galleries month, two young Londoners review an exhibition of silent black and white movies - and come away with mixed feelings.**

### Hackney Museum, London

We've lived in North London all our lives, and so were interested in finding out a bit more about its history. Learning by film was more engaging for us because, unlike books, it combines sound and visual.

Amanda Huntley from the London Film Archive talked about the archive and the Gainsborough Studios, where Alfred Hitchcock began his career. The Archive collects all types of film from when it was first invented to the present day.

The first was about signing up for the army. Since it was silent, Amanda gave a talk, which we found distracting. It was hard enough to concentrate because of the speed of many silent movies, and in the end we didn't get the storyline.

The next films were also about enlisting into the army. As we were concentrating on Amanda, we missed the story and didn't enjoy them as much as the others. After that, there were films about V-day, and the celebration that came with it. These were filmed around Hackney, and around the room there were many "Wow, look at that's!" and "Oh my gosh's".

One of us lives in Hackney and recognised most of the places which made it more exciting than for the other, who does not. But I did recognise the Town Hall which is right opposite where the film was shown.

The second and last group of films were on a reel, and had sound. The reel was either too fast or too slow which created problems. Some of the films were also about the War. One was about bomb shelters and air raids, and was filmed too boost morale. It was interesting to see an earlier form of propaganda.

Another film was about the problem of overcrowding in slums. Some houses had more than one family per room and they were being moved to flats. We were surprised as we thought high-rise council flats were a thing of the 1970s and 80s.

Amanda then put on a film about Gainsborough Studios, which was supposed to be the highlight of the evening and it was interesting to see how sound was added to film as we had previously taken this for granted. One silent film about barges had slides of text that we thought quaint.

It was an enlightening evening because one of us likes history and the other is from the area. Unfortunately, we wouldn't recommend it to anyone younger than us, unless they absolutely love history. We would recommend it without hesitation to adults or the elderly. Our one improvement would have been less talking over the top of the silent films.

### About the team

This story was produced by Jade Burnett, 14, and Rheaz Liburd, 15, members of the Children's Express London Bureau.. It was published in the Museums Journal. For more reviews, see column, right.

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