

Bangor University Library & Archives Service Go Primary!

June 2012

Summary

In support of one of our strategic objectives (SO6 - Partnerships and Community Engagement), the Library and Archives Service at Bangor University invited pupils from 4 local schools to visit the Main University Library to spend the day as a Bangor University student and experience the Library's facilities and services.

As well as raising the University and Library profile with the children and teachers, parents would be indirectly exposed to the Library and partners by way of a promotional goody bag...and the children's tale of a (hopefully) enjoyable day.

Objectives

A number of objectives were identified:

- Raise awareness of the University and of the Library and Archives Service amongst the local community.
- Engage and build links with local schools.
- Give the children an insight into university life and study.
- Raise aspirations at a crucial age and inspire the children to work harder in school.
- Raise awareness within the University of the role that Library & Archives could play in community engagement and external marketing
- Raise awareness of partner institutions within the North Wales Libraries Partnership - i.e. Gwynedd and Anglesey library services.
- Additionally, visits would fulfil community engagement elements of CyMAL's Libraries Inspire strategy.

Planning & Promotion of visits

Library staff made direct contact with 4 local primary schools – 2 in Bangor, 2 in Holyhead in January 2011. Meetings were held with head teachers and staff from schools to discuss attractiveness of proposed visits and potential activities for the day. All schools were enthusiastic about the prospect of visiting the university, and dates were arranged for groups of children to visit once University teaching had finished.

Based on discussions with schools, four internal university departments and two external partners (within the North Wales Libraries Partnership) were approached for assistance, with the promise of a marketing opportunity for their own service.

Resources Used/Costs:

With the exception of 48 hours of staff time and promotional material, direct expenses relating to the activities were virtually zero cost to the Library & Archives Service.

- Pens, pencils, post-it notes, notebook, ruler, bookmarks, and highlighters for 'goodie bags' were provided by Bangor University Library and Archives and other internal university departments. Materials were also supplied by Gwynedd and Anglesey library services.

- The actual goodie bag was supplied by University Marketing and Corporate Communications.
- Existing flyers and promotional material were obtained from Partner institutions to publicise their services.
- Exhibits were drawn from library stock, or borrowed from Partners (including a two headed lamb).
- 1 ream of paper (for the children to make notes on!)
- 140 pieces of card from stock to create attendance certificates presented to the children in their classrooms a couple of weeks after the event.

Visit Content:

Subjects studied within the schools were pre-identified, and materials, exhibitions and activities directly related to topics covered in the curriculum. A complete list of activities, subject sections and exhibitions is given in Appendix B. Activities directly relating to the University and Library & Archives were:

- Tour around the library (which was greeted with gasps, wows and “awesomes”!);
- Learnt how to use the self-issue machines and library catalogue;
- Learnt how to find the books via the call numbers;
- Q&A session to assess what they thought and knew about university;
- Listened to a short presentation covering Bangor University history, the library, university life and study.
- Watched footage of field trips abroad, laboratory experiments and the canoeing club.
- Watched a DVD with animations created by students studying creative studies/film/English;

Promotion of services – the goodie bag

As a memento of the day, and as opportunity to spread our message to their parents, children were given goodie bags to take home. These contained:

- Pens, pencils, post-it notes, notebook, ruler, bookmarks, highlighter trio;
- Promotional materials advertising:
 - Bangor University library;
 - Gwynedd/Ynys Mon library services
 - LINC y Gogledd
 - Librarywales.org
 - Bangor University (via prospectuses)
 - Coleg Menai (via prospectuses)
 - Pontio;¹

Feedback:

The children had a wonderful day and the comments on their student surveys were positive and amusing (see Appendix C). They were each asked to write down their 3 favourite

¹ *Pontio is a project currently being implemented by Bangor University. Pontio will be a world class Arts and Innovation Centre set in the heart of Bangor. The project intends to build bridges between arts and sciences, the University and the local community, and Bangor and the wider world. Pontio organises events, film screenings, bands, and theatre productions, which are held both, within the University and in local towns and villages.*

elements of the day and what we could improve upon. Every aspect of the day was covered and will be included in 2013. Many children wrote that their day could not have been any better and thanked us for having them.

- They were also asked do they want to come to university now they had spent the day as a student, do they want to join their local library and will they work harder in school. The vast majority of children answered yes to all 3 questions.
- Teachers were also very complimentary and were delighted that the children had been allowed to visit the library. Even the 'problem' children were fully engaged for the whole day and one teacher whose school had provided extra staff to ensure the children behaved, commented that she had never seen them so engrossed or well behaved.
- One headmaster said that the children returned 'inspired and enthused towards university study', and a Bangor University staff member whose child visited with the school, came into the library to say that her son had 'raved about the library since his return'.

Future Development/Sustainability:

- The project has enabled Bangor University Library and Archives Service to initiate relationships with local schools and create and develop a simple, sustainable and scalable structure for future school visits.
- Feedback from children and comments from teachers will be used to fine tune visits and promotional material given – i.e. delivery of event through Welsh medium; increase time spent on site, a longer tour of University buildings; more about Bangor University, (how many buildings, rooms, keys(!) and students does the university have?). We will, however, be unable to produce a real 3 headed lamb.
- Increase the number of schools involved.
- Incorporate new additions – the library's new Confucius collection, fossils and carnivorous plants supplied by Bangor University Treborth Botanical Garden, and the Body Wise exhibition created by Bangor University library staff for the national libraries marketing campaign. Exhibition on the life and works of R. S. Thomas.
- During one school's visit, a student was practicing the organ in the main hall and the children asked if they could go in to listen. We allowed them to, providing they were quiet (which they were). Listening to the student play was noted on a handful of surveys so we hope to include students playing instruments where possible.
- Subject areas will be allocated to Library staff who will oversee the children as they peruse the materials to explain the content and help children with spelling/reading/writing.

Conclusion

The visits were a great success. The children (and schools) were engaged on the and exposed to the University and our services. Through the goodie bags, services were marketed to their parents.

The format used is low cost, sustainable and easy to scale upwards for future similar exercises. Other schools have already expressed an interest in visiting us in 2013.

Appendix A – List of partners:

Internal Bangor University Departments:

- School of Biology.
- School of Environment and Natural Sciences.
- Health and Safety Services.
- Marketing and Corporate Communications.

External Partners:

- Caergeiliog Foundation School, Holyhead.
- Ysgol Cae Top, Bangor.
- Ysgol Hiracl, Bangor
- Ysgol Llanfawr.
- Countryside Council for Wales.
- Gwynedd Library Service.
- Ynys Mon Library Service.
- Coleg Menai.

Appendix B – List of activities:

- Activities:
 - Q&A session to assess what they thought and knew about university;
 - Listened to a short presentation covering Bangor University history, the library, university life and study;
 - Watched footage of field trips abroad, laboratory experiments and the canoeing club;
 - Watched a DVD with animations created by students studying creative studies/film/English;
 - Learnt how to use the self-issue machines and library catalogue;
 - Learnt how to find the books via the call numbers;
 - Tour around the library (which was greeted with gasps, wows and “awesomes”!);
 - Examining tiny shells and corals through microscopes;
 - Each child was given an A4 sheet of paper with 3 questions relating to the exhibitions and materials which they had to complete;
 - Story time;
 - Each ‘student’ asked to complete a ‘BU student survey’ about their day;
 - Children were put into groups and asked to create a PowerPoint presentation on the large screen PCs in the Library’s Social Learning Space, which they then presented to the class and Bangor University Library and Archives staff;
 - Tour around Main Arts and lunch in the inner quad garden;

- Subject sections:
 - Welsh history and heritage – castles and landmarks, maps of ancient Wales, Victorian North Wales, historic guide books, Druids, Mabinogion, old newspapers;
 - Welsh national heroes from Glyndŵr to Gigg;
 - Greece and the Olympics;
 - World War II;
 - Ancient botanical journals containing hand painted colour plates of flowers, ferns, caterpillars and butterflies;
 - Randoms table – a mixture of ancient books and curiosities;

- Exhibitions:
 - Natural history and habitat. Key exhibits – whale skulls, stuffed turtles, a two-headed lamb, hammerhead shark, stingray, puffed-up one eyed puffer fish, mutant starfish with 6 legs, devils toenail shell, urchins, bioluminescent sea creatures from the darkest ocean depths, giant triton shells.
 - Local history and World War II. The exhibition traced the life of a local WWII fighter pilot through his flight log book, pictures, and letters to his family. The children were astounded to find him telling his little sister to watch Bambi in the cinema, and saddened to find that he died during combat;
 - The Welsh language exhibition traced the development, difficulties and revival of the Welsh language;

- Antique china collection (permanent exhibition in the Main Arts Building).

Appendix C – Survey Feedback:

Many children commented that the day was great and they couldn't think of any way to improve their visit.

- Caergeiliog Foundation School
 - “It is amazing. I am myself a bookworm”
 - “I think it is very clean and useful. It is also full of interesting things. It is lovely”
 - “I think it was really interesting and it was amazing to have more than 500,000 books and they all looked very fascinating and also very clean”
 - “It is amazing!!! And very interesting”
 - “I thought that it was much more fun than I expected because it wasn't just pen to paper all the time”
 - “I think it was perfect and you couldn't change anything”
- Ysgol Cae Top
 - “It was amazing”
 - “It was very fun and interesting”
 - “I think it is very cool and very educational”
 - “It was very good and amazing”
- Ysgol Hirael
 - “It's fun and I can't wait to come here again”
 - “Brilliant”
 - “Bangor University's library was very good. I liked looking at the newspapers and also the letters”
 - “It's really big and cool and I want to read all of the books”
 - “It's amazing. I loved it”
 - “It was good here. It was big as well. I would love to come here”
 - “I think Bangor University is great”
- Ysgol Llanfawr
 - “It was very interesting”
 - “It's amazing, just a bit creepy. Oh and it's a lot like Hogwarts”
 - “Really cool and awesome”
 - “I think it's wonderful and would be a great place for students”
 - “It was really fun to look and find new facts”
 - “It was very interesting and I enjoyed it”
 - “It was brilliant. Thank you for letting us come”

Student Survey results:

- 62% of pupils gave 10/10 for their day
- 83% gave 9-10/10
- 90% said they will work harder at school as a result of their visit to BU library
- 20 children did not want to come to university before their visit to BU library; 18/20 now wish to
- 77% of children recognise that libraries are important to education and the world they live in

Vice Chancellor John Hughes, Ysgol Cae Top pupils and teachers and Bangor University Library staff.



Up close and personal with a puffer fish, a 2 headed lamb and the bio-luminescent sea creatures:



WWII Exhibition and creating PowerPoint presentations:



Here's looking at you kid!



Sei whale skull:





Botanical journals