

Generation Change: Young People's Participation in Protest

The Battle of Bannockburn Experience



Introduction



The Living Museums project, delivered by Children in Scotland, works with young people in Stirling, Perth and Dumfries, to make museums more reflective of their views.

The Living Museums Stirling group began working with the Battle of Bannockburn Experience in April 2021. The result was *Generation Change: Young People's Participation in Protest*, an exhibition launched in August 2021. The work is now shared in this booklet.

The aim of exhibition was to explore how young people responded to the issues that sparked worldwide protests over the past year or so, including climate change, Black Lives Matter, and women's safety. The photographs and protest signs featured in the exhibition and this booklet are from young people across the UK who have participated in recent protests. The Living Museums Stirling group curated this content through social media call-outs and by contacting various organisations.

The Battle of Bannockburn Experience, as a historical place of protest, was proud to present *Generation Change*. We also hope that this booklet, and the Living Museums project in general, will inspire the museum sector to listen to and represent the voices and vision of young people.

The topics featured in the exhibition and this booklet were chosen by the young people involved. The introduction to each topic was written by members of the project group.



Participants



The Living Museums project group in Stirling has worked together every two weeks since April. The exhibition and this booklet are the summation of this work.

We have discussed the ways that museums work and what we would like to see displayed in them. As a group we decided to focus on how museums could explore more contemporary issues. We decided to explore how young people had been engaged in protests across the period of the coronavirus pandemic. The project group conducted a series of outreach activities to gather ideas and examples for the exhibition. Members of the group and staff from Children in Scotland posted calls on social media and reached out to different organisations to find examples of young people having been engaged in protests across the period over the past 18 months.

We heard back from a number of different organisations with examples of work that we could include. As a group we discussed which organisations and examples we wanted to use to show what young people had been focusing on. We chose these topics as we thought they were powerful examples of young people talking about really important topics.

Thank you to everyone who submitted examples to us, we were interested to receive examples from across these different issues and to share their work. We were pleased to launch the exhibit in the Battle of Bannockburn and are now pleased to share this booklet as a lasting example of the work. We hope it provides an example of how museums can discuss new topics in an accessible and interesting manner that can help not just the Battle of Bannockburn Experience but all museums.



Living Museums project members curating exhibition materials

"Going forward I really hope that the exhibition shows people within the heritage sector that it is alright to do something outside of your usual box and confront issues head on. I hope that NTS takes what we have done and uses it as a first step to making their sites more accessible to, and reflective of, young people"

Living Museums project members



Climate change

The introduction to each topic was written by members of the project group.

"Climate change is a key issue focused on by the younger generations as it is they who will feel the true impact that global warming will have on our planet. A key movement started by young people is the school strike for climate, which was founded by Greta Thunberg at the age of 15 when she took a day of school to protest climate change in front of the Swedish Riksdag. Since then, weekly protests have been taking place worldwide during which young people take the day off school in hopes of having an impact on their governments to make the right steps towards saving climate change. The movement held its largest protest on the 20 September 2019 with more than four million participating worldwide.

"Large corporations are also doing huge damage to the world in search of a quick profit, an issue many young people feel very strongly about. Every day more than 200,000 acres of rainforests are cut down, this is about 150 every minute and 78 million every year. This is done to produce wood for cheap furniture and to create plantations for palm oil, an ingredient found in almost everything from chocolate to deodorant to pizza.

"Companies like Nestlé are harvesting natural resources like water and selling it at a huge profit worldwide in single use plastic bottles. It's estimated that globally more than 580 billion bottles of water are sold every year, piling up in our oceans and landfills. It is clear that changes must be made and alternatives must be looked for, and with only 45 years' worth of oil left, it must be done fast."



Milo and Annabel

Climate Strike, Bristol

February 2020



Oban High school pupils with MP Brendan O'Hara

Climate Change protest, Oban

November 2019

Young people from across Britain submitted examples of climate protests that they have attended.



Poetry



Featured in the exhibition, young people working with Toonspeak submitted a series of creative responses to the climate crisis, such as poetry and spoken word. [Click here to read them.](#)

The collection demonstrates how young people experienced the protests and their views on the climate crisis more widely.

Left and below

Toonspeak Protest Lab

Roystonhill Community Hub, Glasgow



Black Lives Matter



The introduction to each topic was written by members of the project group.

“The anti-racism protests sparked by George Floyd’s murder in May 2020 were one of the year’s defining moments.

“The Black Lives Matter movement started as a Twitter hashtag in 2013 after the acquittal in the Trayvon Martin murder trial but it became internationally recognisable after these protests. Concerns were raised about the risks of mass gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic but protesters still showed up in their thousands to express their anger at both George Floyd’s murder and wider systematic racism. The protests were largely peaceful, with social distancing and mask-wearing helping to lower the possibility of transmission of the virus.

“Perhaps the most significant consequence of the protests in Scotland was the way in which they forced important questions to be asked about how the country can improve the volume, and quality, of Black History in the national curriculum, and triggered demands for Scotland’s role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade to be better acknowledged.

“The legacy of the protests remains evident. Taking the knee has continued at sporting fixtures, and there was widespread condemnation of the racist abuse of England players after the Euro 2020 final. There is undoubtedly more awareness of racism and more confidence to call it out. However, comments made by the Prime Minister and Home Secretary were viewed by many as condoning racism, or at least undermined their ability to reprimand it, and the repeated racist undertones of reporting on Meghan Markle throws

doubt over how far we have moved forward.

“Young people’s participation in these protests provides hope that the next generation is more motivated than ever to tackle racism.”



Black Lives Matter protesters

Glasgow Green

Summer 2020

Black Lives Matter exhibition materials



We received a range of photos of young people at Black Lives Matter protests in Glasgow. The photos show people attending the protests as well as the placards and banners on display.



Living Museums project members curating exhibition materials

Women's safety



The introduction to each topic was written by members of the project group.

"Various protests began to take place due to the uproar following the death of Sarah Everard. A woman who did not make it home on a cold night in March after being raped and murdered by a police officer. After this devastating murder, many women felt the need to speak up about women's safety through protests online and in public.

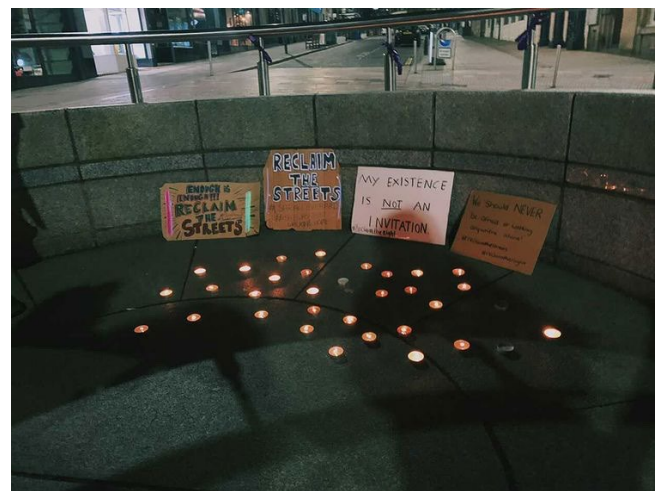
"Protests via social media comprised of posts by women telling their stories of when they did not feel safe in public due to the presence of a man. These posts of women received pushback from men responding with a hashtag #NotAllMen, emphasising to women that not all men are malicious to women. The response to this hashtag by women was backed up by statistical evidence that 99.7% of women in the UK have experienced or are experiencing violence, harassment and abuse. Therefore, women responded to the #NotAllMen hashtag by highlighting that not all men but almost all women.

"Various protests took place all over the UK. The protest that received the most coverage was the peaceful mourning of Sarah Everard in south London which was disrespectfully destroyed by police silencing these women which eventually turned violent. In Glasgow, many women took part in 'Reclaim These Streets' which was an organised event for women to leave ribbons and notes for Sarah Everard around the city including at George Square, Kelvingrove Park, Queen's Park and the Mary Barbour statue.

"The legacy of these online and physical protests has sparked discussions and

more women, particularly young women, are beginning to tell their story.

"There is now more awareness on the safety of women than ever but there are still conversations to be had. All women must continue to fight for all the women we have lost due to men that think violence, abuse and harassment is okay."



Reclaim the Streets vigil

Stirling

March 2021



Women's safety exhibit *in situ*



Materials were submitted to the exhibition from young people working with Forth Valley Rape Crisis Centre. These materials demonstrated their experiences of the protests and the banners that they took to the protests.

Above

Reclaim the Night poster

Forth Valley Rape Crisis Centre

Artist – Becca May Bracey

Below

Protest banner

Forth Valley Rape Crisis Centre





Feedback from launch event

The Living Museums Project has aimed to make museums more reflective of the views of young people. The exhibition at the Battle of Bannockburn Experience has shown young people engaging in protest and highlighted issues that are important to them.

Based on feedback about the launch event there is a clear appetite for content that focuses on the views of young people and for museums to tackle contemporary issues. Visitors to the launch told us that they found the exhibition challenging, emotive and powerful. Visitors were keen for spaces like Battle of Bannockburn to have more temporary exhibitions that continue to tackle these sorts of issues.



Visitors explore the **Generation Change** exhibits
Battle of Bannockburn Experience

This feedback and engagement provides important learning for how museums can continue to engage with new audiences and the benefit of tackling new ideas. From this exhibition and project we have also learned about the importance of representing a range of views in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

"I'm hugely encouraged to see young people coming together on issues of such importance."

"Fantastic exhibition, really wonderful to see such a range of important topics highlighted at Bannockburn and I loved that it was all co-produced by young people."

"It's great to see so many issues being held together in one space, and for these issues to be curated and created by young people."

"Please do more things like this!"

"I'd like to thank you all for including my work, it is inspiring to see my poem here in a museum and other creative individuals pieces which help me understand all the various issues in a deeper way."

"It was wonderful to see an exhibition put together by young people and focused on issues important to them."

"Such a powerful exhibition, so great to see things like this in the heritage sector."

"I thought this exhibition was really important for our children to see."

Find out more

[Click here](#) to find out more about the Living Museums project.

For further information, please contact:

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You can find more information about each of the issues on display in the exhibition here:

Climate change

Friends of the Earth Scotland: [Click here](#) to visit their website.

Black Lives Matter

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights: [Click here](#) to visit their website.

Women's safety

Forth Valley Rape Crisis Centre: [Click here](#) to visit their website.

Thank you

We would like to thank all the young people who submitted their work to the exhibition and that we have shared in this booklet.

Thanks also to the organisations who supported this including Toonspeak and Forth Valley Rape Crisis Centre.

Cover photo

Black Lives Matter protesters, Glasgow Green, Summer 2020
