



Rediscover Your World

Make an Encyclopaedia of Wonderful Things

A Creative Challenge from Manchester Museum

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The University of Manchester

Manchester Cultural
Education **Partnership**



About this Resource

This resource offers a series of prompts to help you to take notice of the everyday spaces and surroundings that have become so familiar during lockdown. These spaces may be indoors – at home or at school, or outside – a garden, local park, school playground area or a route that is regularly walked.

Who is it for?

This resource has been created for use by teachers and home educating families. While the basic idea is very simple, it has been designed to be used and adapted to support learners of any age and ability. We hope that by taking time to notice and connect with familiar spaces and places, this resource will help to support and enhance wellbeing.

What do I need?

The creative challenge has been designed so that **anyone** can take part and all you need is: pens, pencils, paper, some time, and plenty of imagination. A camera would be useful, but you can always draw your objects as an alternative.

Introduction

Museums are places where you can travel in time and space, connecting with different places, people, creatures, cultures and ideas from near and far. As places where worlds are encountered, museums bring people, things and ideas together to tell stories. They are also places where these encounters can spark new ideas, feelings, relationships and opinions: where new stories are made.

Our own spaces are also full of all sorts of life, things, meanings and memories that are part of who we are. Just like museums, they are also full of stories.

Lockdown collapsed our worlds into the limited spaces of our homes and nearby outdoor spaces; being stuck in these spaces may have made them familiar and mundane. The worlds we've created during lockdown have made the most of what we have to hand and, even if our surroundings have become so familiar that we don't even notice them, we've all adapted to the situation and made it our own in all sorts of wonderful, creative and imaginative ways.

When Manchester Museum closed in March 2020, we wanted to make sure that people could still enjoy our amazing collection. Museums have a great deal to offer people in such challenging times: as a distraction, a source of inspiration, or a learning resource.

So we decided to share some of our favourite objects and the stories they tell by creating an Encyclopaedia of Wondrous Objects, providing a *"daily dose of awe and wonder from our encyclopaedic collection of over 4.5 million objects"*.

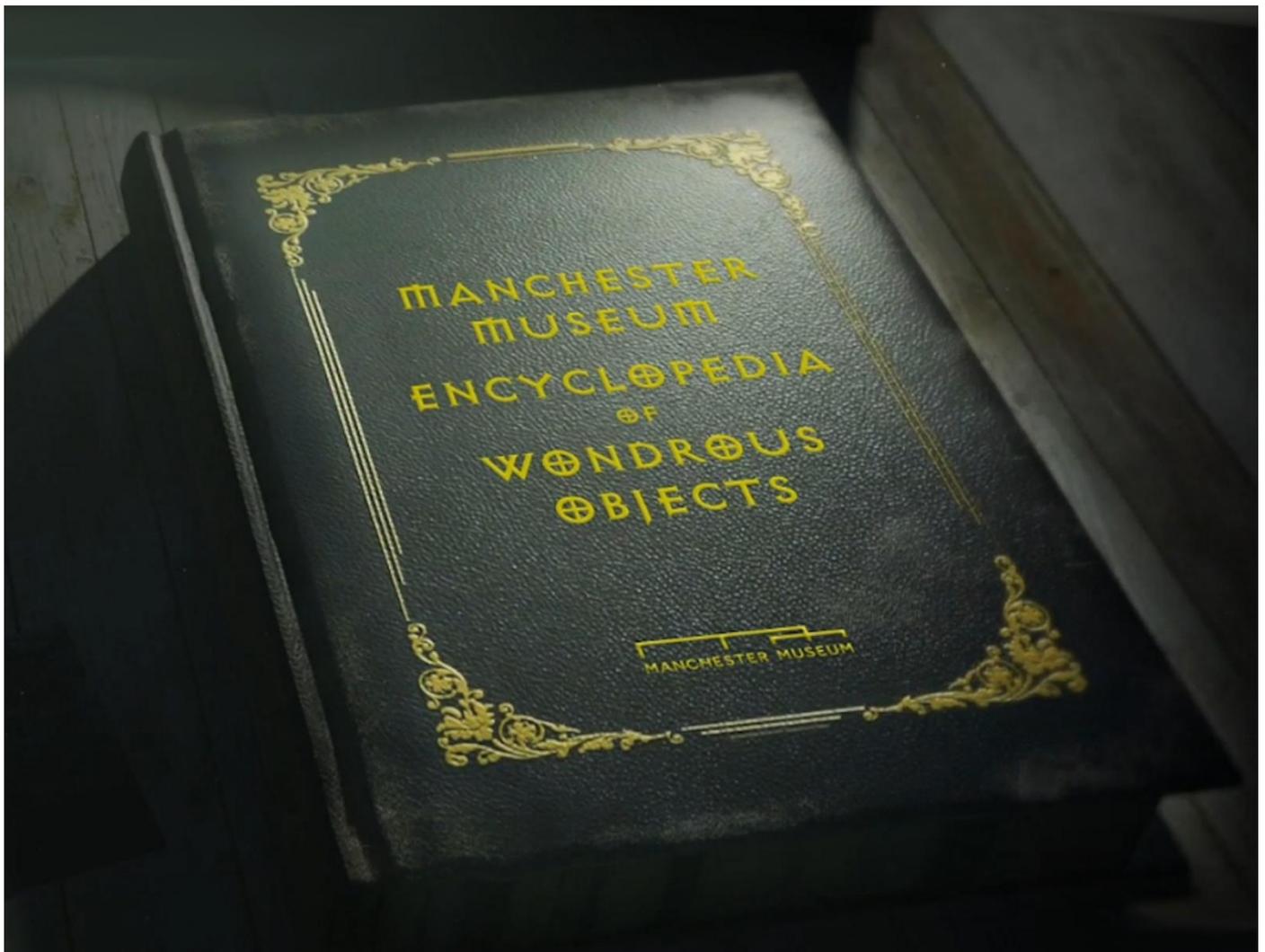
Our Creative Challenge

...create and share your own Encyclopaedia of Wonderful Things

We want you to take a moment to step out of your everyday and familiar surroundings and notice how your world is full of life, packed with things, and shaped by different thoughts, beliefs and ideas. As you start notice all of the amazing indoor spaces and outdoor places that have surrounded you over the last year, we want you to see some of the wonderful things that you may have forgotten to notice.

Getting started (optional)

- Visit the Museum's Encyclopaedia of Wondrous Objects to discover some of the stories we've written about objects: www.mmmfromhome.com/encyclopaedia
- Notice the different writing styles that we use to tell stories: Some of the entries are *descriptive* while others are more *factual*. Some entries tell the *life story* of an object or *how it was discovered*, while others describe what an object *represents*.



STEP 1: Find something wonderful

Before you start: *Make sure you have something to write with and plenty of paper. Take photos of the things you find if you have a camera, or draw them if you don't.*

- Look for wonderful things inside

Go to a room where you have spent a lot of your time over the last year, perhaps your bedroom, lounge or classroom. Make yourself comfortable and take some time to slowly look and notice the things around you – *really* look hard at the space. Ask yourself: *What do you share your space with? What other living things share your space with you? Are there other people, animals, plants, or insects? What are the things in your space? What stuff is your world filled with? Who does it belong to? Why is it there? Where did it come from?*

- Look for wonderful things outside

Go to a familiar place outside or take a walk you know really well. Try to zoom in on the details. Look down so you focus on the ground rather than the horizon. Move really slowly and take the time to notice what you're walking on / over / past / through. Ask yourself: *What living things do you notice? What evidence do you see that has been left by the people, creatures and plants living nearby? What about the non-living materials and other elements of your environment?*

STEP 2: Write your encyclopaedia entry

- What stories can you tell about the things you find, to make them wonderful?

Your encyclopaedia entry could focus on the facts or you might want to write a really detailed description of it. Are there stories you want to tell about the object; why it's important, how it came to be where it is now, where it came from or what it does? You could even write the entry from the perspective of the thing itself. If you need some inspiration, you will find a few encyclopaedia entries below, illustrating how ordinary things can be made wonderful by the stories we tell about them.

STEP 3: Share your work with others

- Now you've written your encyclopaedia entries, add the photographs or drawings to the text and share your work.

Upload a picture of your encyclopaedia entry to Twitter and/or Instagram along with #creativeyouthmcr or email us: museum@manchester.ac.uk

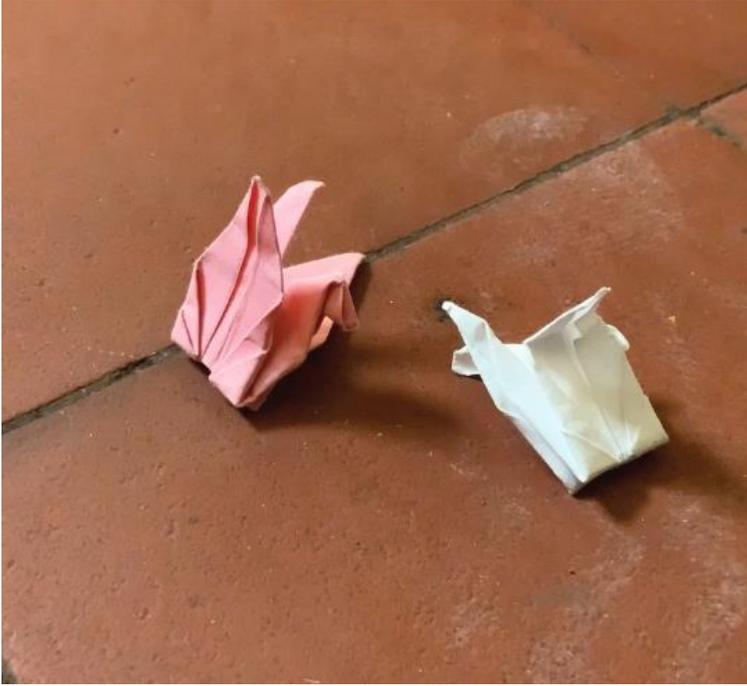
EXTENSION: A bonus activity for multilingual learners

Let's celebrate the linguistic diversity of our city!

- Multilingual learners can translate or add to entries from the Museum's Encyclopaedia of Wondrous Objects using our online Multilingual Museum: <https://multilingualmuseum.wixsite.com/multilingualmuseum>

Some Wonderful Things

Origami cranes



Found behind the counter of the cafe, these two origami cranes are a sad example of a beautiful paper craft left in the dust. The correct term for these cranes is the Japanese translation; 'Orizuru.' In Japan, it is believed that the wings are said to carry the souls up to a paradise. Particularly, they are used in ceremonies at restaurant tables or as a wrapping. If you were to string a thousand of them together you would get a 'Senbazuru,' which is a literal translation of 'Thousand cranes.'

It is rumoured that if you fold a thousand Orizuru, you are granted a single wish. What I find especially tragic is that if souls are in fact carried away to a paradise, whoever made these will surely be there now and we would never know. Possible or not, a part of me finds it morbidly fascinating how origami cranes have been used in signs of tragedy, formality, and spirituality.

The forgotten menu



Tucked away in a small cranny behind the mini bar, this café menu once served the purpose of opening the mind to new and exciting (but most importantly delicious) choices of indulging yourself in tasty treats and invigorating beverages. Nowadays the idea of touching something like this would be taboo, understandable, considering how much dirt and dusty residue has coated the matte finish.

But if you look closely, you can see the handprint of old human activity. It's maddening how long this evidence of human touch has withstood the elements, un-faded by filth for over 365 days. A textbook example of how metaphorically humanity can adapt and overcome against all odds and continue to persevere. A crying shame I won't be able to have a hibiscus, rosehip and strawberry tea anytime soon...

A bulldog clip



"I may not have teeth but I have a great deal in common with that symbol of Britain: the bulldog. Strong, reliable, plucky and determined, like my namesake I have doggedness and grip that sets me apart. Think of all those inferior paper fastening devices, and by comparison, I stand out as the ultimate solution. Even empty, my shape, materials and design still give me an edge and I simply can't be ignored: out of use, I can so easily just be locked on to anything – a shelf edge, notice board, whatever! What can you do with an unused paperclip? Make a chain or necklace? But then how useful is that when you need to use one quickly?"

The second you need me - when there is just too much paper floating around, but when you're not quite ready to commit to something as permanent as a staple - there I am. Unclip me from your shelf and I'm there, ready to help you keep things together, secured and bound in a nice neat stack. But then as easily as I can grab hold of things, I am just as efficient at letting go. A little squeeze and there you go: jaws unlocked, paper released. No trouble at all."

Tea in a bamboo cup



This cup of tea, made at approximately 09:00 on Tuesday 2nd March 2021 marks the start of the working day. Unusually milky and weak, some may not call it tea. But for the person who will drink it, this cuppa is the perfect temperature to drink without having to wait for it to cool down. The owner has discovered that tea made too hot must be left, and this increases the probability of the cup of tea being forgotten and going cold. You will notice that this cup has no handle, and there is no saucer, tea spoon, tea pot, milk jug or any of the other paraphernalia often associated with the act of tea-making.

This bamboo cup is the preferred vessel for the drinker – keeping the tea hot but not so hot that the cup can't be held. You may notice the absence of the standard rubber grip that would normally be used to protect the holder from burning their hand. This is another reason that the drinker likes to have milky tea. But perhaps most importantly, the cup is large enough to make a cup of tea that can be safely carried from the kitchen, without spilling the tea everywhere.

Discarded banana peel



Apparently, the 'banana skin gag' was first perfected by the American performer *Sliding Billy Watson* in the early 1900s. Inspired by the sight of a man slipping on a banana skin as he walked down the street, the execution of such a move on stage involved a great deal of practice, special shoes and a lot of talcum powder. Thanks Charlie Chaplain and Laurel and Hardy, amongst others, the banana skin achieved iconic status in the comedy world.

But when I came across this banana peel, I was not amused. For me, the sight of a banana skin on the ground, no more than 3 steps away from a perfectly good bin, represents a thoughtless act of littering. How funny is that?

A rusted dinosaur badge



This bright, albeit cool badge of a T-Rex looks to have been lying here for over a year or more. I can't pinpoint the exact amount of time it would take for the metallic mechanism to rust after so long. What I can tell you is that this badge had a short journey, because I believe this is from the museum gift shop and that's quite a walk all the way to this courtyard from the other side of the building. Perhaps when the pandemic is nothing short of a cruel memory, I'll go buy one as a memento.

Acknowledgements: This resource has been created by Manchester Museum with support from Manchester Cultural Education Partnership. The accompanying film was produced for the Museum by [Vanessa Scott](#), who worked with two students from [Project Inc.](#), a specialist college for creative education. Special thanks to Ethan Camilleri who is studying A-Level Art with Project Inc., based at Manchester Museum, and shared his encyclopaedia entries for 'Origami Cranes', 'The forgotten menu' and 'A rusted dinosaur badge' that he found in and around the Museum.