

Edinburgh Science Festival

So The Edinburgh Reporter went to The Science Festival....

It seemed appropriate (and necessary) to bring along great-nephew Craig who is 10. So the choice of what to do was his, and he decided that we should go along to Robotaster in Adam House on Chambers Street. Not exactly the most exciting or eye-catching venue inside, it is part of The Edinburgh University estate.

The second year Computer Science students from Edinburgh University were all very enthusiastic about the activities and this enthusiasm was passed on to the group of children who presented themselves at 11 am for two hours of programming the little Lego robot. First, Craig and his partner Matthew learned how to program the little wheeled device to go forwards and backwards, turn on itself and turn corners. This was accomplished by working out the movements on the computer first and then downloading these to the device. Certainly there was plenty of space for trying it out.



Then they moved on to embellish the little robot a little with a light sensor and a sensor that made it turn when approaching a solid object. (Yes there will be some fancy name for this but The Reporter is no scientist!) The light sensor made it look a little bit more like Wall-E and so it became a bit more likeable all of a sudden. It started whizzing around and ran up a ramp to make contact with a pad which then turned a wheel....Watch the movie here.....soon!



The whole thing was based on Lego Mindstorms Education Pack 9797 which is probably only available to schools or universities, but would be great fun for all you robot geeks out there. Or indeed for the family whose mother decided that she could actually do it all much better than the children she

had with her (presumably her own) and major-generalled the whole two hours.



2 hours £3 – good value and great fun.

Afterwards, we went to The Museum further along Chambers Street to 'Meet the Medics and Vets' where we met all the furry toys which are used for visualising blood cells or penicillin... Craig and The Reporter both did an IQ test which was standard for 11 year-olds in 1936 and thankfully both passed! The drop-in activities were a little bit more daunting and perhaps harder just to join in with than the organised event had been.

We were also a little hungry by then, so dashed up to the roof just for a look at The Castle and then went off for a much-needed rest and lunch at the ever-wonderful cafe under St Giles. Good day out!



The Science Festival finishes on 17 April.