



## Our Belfast

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## The Tour

The tour began in the main entrance foyer to the building where the purpose of the building and the links to Titanic were explained to the children.

The gasp from the children when they entered the main foyer of City Hall was audible. It is quite an experience to view the foyer for the first time. This was the starting point for the tour and the children were led up the grand staircase to the first floor, with various stained glass windows being pointed out along the way. The phenomenon of the whispering gallery was explained to them and they were astonished at the echoes produced by the main dome.



A Corridor with portraits of mayors  
B Some spaces were very comfortable  
C The girls dancing together



Rhian, age 7

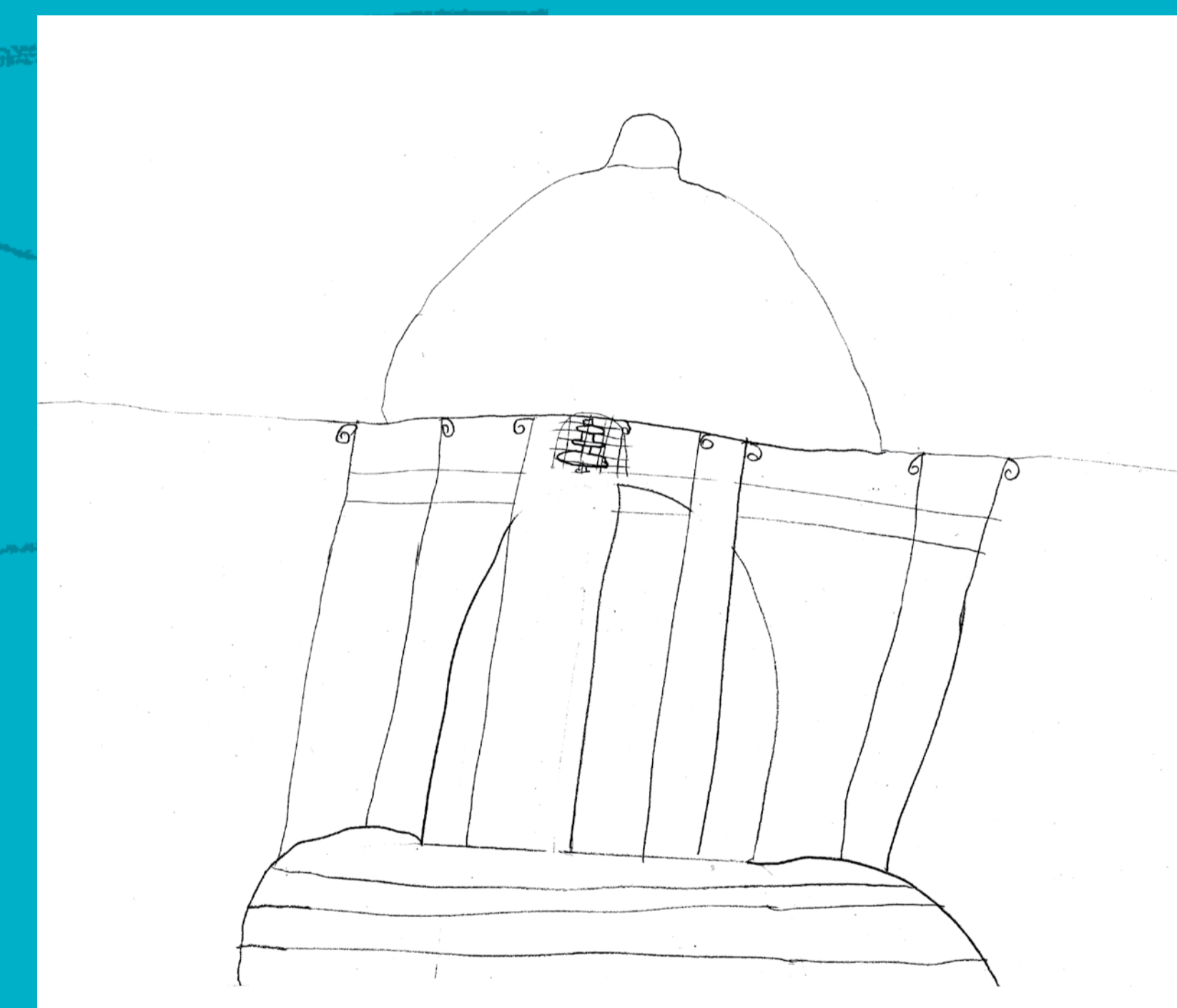


Charis, age 10

From the first floor landing, the children were led down a corridor past all of the paintings of the previous mayors of Belfast, and were invited into the Council Chamber. They quickly took on the character of different members of council and this was accentuated when they were given the opportunity to wear one of the council gowns. It was amazing to watch how the experience induced the children to improvise different scenes. The tour progressed from the boardroom into the grand ballroom where the history of the room, its reconstruction and the life story of the stained glass windows were explained. The dance floor beckoned and the girls within the group were the centre of attention as they twirled and skipped within the space.

Background image: Owen, age 10

In having the opportunity to enter and see a space that they would normally just walk past, the imaginations of the children as they spent time in this space, appeared to slip over into their outward behaviour. Along with the senses, imagination is also important when it comes to the means by which children understand and experience a space. The space does not only offer them that which is visible, but it also offers them the opportunity to experience the space at a totally different level to the eyes of their imagination. It is wonderful to watch!



Charis, age 10

**“I can dance on the floor. We can dance together.”**

*Rhian, age 7*