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Moments of **Culture in Tameside** *Magic*



Culture plays an essential part in our lives. The benefits that can come from taking part in arts activities, visiting museums, galleries and archives and exploring the outdoors are huge.

Engaging with Culture helps us develop a sense of wellbeing and creates a shared sense of pride in our borough. Culture brings communities together and inspires and energises people.

Tameside Council Cultural Services aims to transform and enrich the lives of all Tameside residents through vibrant and quality cultural experiences. These case studies highlight some of the exciting and innovative projects the service has been part of recently. These projects have all created those Moments of Magic that make a real positive impact on people's lives.



CLlr Jackie Lane
Assistant Executive Member
Culture, Heritage and Tourism

Emma Varnam
Head of Stronger Communities
Tameside MBC



“It was a truly amazing experience for both children and staff. It added so much to their Year 6 experience and made memories for life!”



First World War Centenary projects

Working with 70 children from primary and secondary schools across Tameside, a brand new piece of theatre was created supported by a team of professional artists. All the participants went to watch the National Theatre's production of 'War Horse' at The Lowry, and then used the themes to create a new piece of theatre entitled 'Over The Wall'.

To celebrate national 'Armed Forces Day', an event was held in Victoria Park, Denton bringing together service personnel, organisations, charities and members of the wider community. The event was a huge success with entertainment for families and a service to remember those who have fallen. Several Army personal also received medals for their bravery in the line of duty.

Our partnerships with the National Theatre and the Lowry enabled us to secure the appearance of 'Joey' the War Horse, a highlight of the event.

We also created a stunning tree of poppies that had been knitted and crocheted by members of the public.

A group of Tameside Scouts and veterans travelled to the National Arboretum. After a moving tour they assisted in the laying of a wreath on behalf of the people of Tameside.

What we did:

- Supported young people to create a new piece of theatre, which they performed to over 250 people.
- Developed strong links with The National Theatre and The Lowry.
- We held a large scale celebratory event.
- We held a memorial service prior to the event with veterans, cadets, Scouts and the general public as a mark of respect.
- Provided a showcase opportunity for all service organisations and charities within the borough.

Benefits:

- 70 young people achieved their Explore Arts Award.
- Raised the confidence and skills of young people.
- Provided an opportunity for intergenerational dialogue between veterans and members of the wider community.
- We encouraged members of the public to actively engage in celebrating our armed forces.
- Working with our partners in 103rd Regiment Royal Artillery and the National Theatre, we raised the aspirations of people attending the event.

“All the Scouts (and leaders) involved in both these trips took away so many memories of the events and what heightened the events was the chance to share the experience and to talk to the veterans of various campaigns who accompanied them on both of the visits.”





Ashton Grammar Memorial: Commemorating the First World War

Portland Basin Museum in Ashton worked with Performing Art students at Ashton Sixth Form College and theatre company Two Boards and a Passion to interpret the names on Ashton Grammar School's First World War memorial. After securing £10,000 of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the memorial was conserved and the stories of the 27 men named on the memorial were researched for the first time.

The students then created a drama around the lives of the men and the families they left behind, which they acted out on the old street displays at Portland Basin Museum.

The promenade style performance was watched by hundreds of people and thousands more visited the memorial on display.

What we did:

- Conserved the memorial and displayed it at Portland Basin Museum.
- Worked with volunteers in the community to research the names on the memorial.
- Brought to light untold stories of the men named on the memorial.
- Developed the skills of Performing Arts students outside of their usual classroom setting.
- Put on a unique piece of theatre at Portland Basin Museum, creating a new way of using the museum's displays.
- Created a new First World War schools workshop based around the memorial.

Benefits:

- Interpreted an important piece of local history, of immense significance to the many people who attended the Grammar School.
- Fostered a new understanding of local heritage among the Performing Arts students.
- Provided advice and inspiration for others wanting to research men who fought in the First World War.
- Attracted widespread publicity for the borough, including an article in Who Do You Think You Are magazine.

“It was a wonderful production, and a fantastic concept using the museum to tell ordinary people's stories.”

“I have enjoyed every moment of working on this production.”





“It has given me the kind of experience and skills which prospective employers take into consideration when considering me for employment.”

GM1914

The Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership launched a new volunteering scheme to commemorate the First World War. Working collaboratively across the ten Greater Manchester authorities, volunteers were recruited and trained before being set to work on uncovering forgotten stories about life on the home front during the conflict. Stories from Tameside included the Ashton-under-Lyne munitions explosion and the Kenyon Letters.

95 volunteers have so far contributed 6,000 hours since the project launch, three in five of whom had never used archives before. The age of the volunteers ranged from undergraduates to 70 year-olds. The project's blog publishes one to two stories a week, and now totals over 90 since the original launch. It has been viewed in 88 different countries, has an average of 67 views per day and has been viewed over 33,600 times in total.

What we did

- Created a new digital resource for the history of the First World War at www.gm1914.wordpress.com
- Engaged with new volunteers, none of whom had ever visited an archive and local studies service before.
- Improved public access and engagement with archives using digital technology.
- Improved the quality of volunteering experiences in Greater Manchester.

Benefits

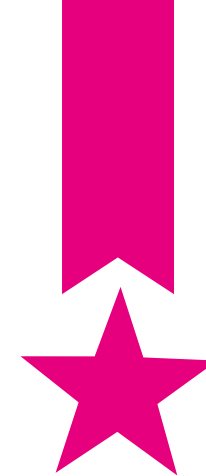
- Maximised the potential for volunteers to develop life-long skills in the sector.
- Widened the range of volunteers in archive and local studies services.
- Reached a new audience through digital engagement.
- Created a template for future collaborative volunteering projects across the city region.

GM1914 was awarded the Archives and Records Association Volunteering Award for the project.

The judges commented that:

"This project has delivered at every level: collaboration, community support, range of volunteers, and professional archive staff support. It has also used publicity and technology effectively, reaching a wider audience as well as stimulating local engagement. Despite its operational complexity, its impact has been extensive and is ongoing."

“I found the whole research process interesting and, at times, heart-rending... There was so much that I didn't realise about the 'home front' aspect, how people coped with shortages and how they rallied to support the troops... I will now view my family and local history research of the period with new eyes.”



“ This group has enhanced my life in several ways. There are some people who have been ill and were trying to get back into society and each of them said that they felt they were better for joining. ”

Member of Stitch in Time



Community Engagement across Museums and Galleries

Tameside's four museums and galleries - Portland Basin Museum, Astley Cheetham Art Gallery, The Museum of the Manchester Regiment and Central Art Gallery - support a growing number of groups and community events. The museums and galleries are used for a diverse range of activities, as well as each housing excellent displays and changing exhibitions. We have increasingly worked with partners in the community and displayed a 'can-do' attitude in the face of reduced funding. As a result, visitor figures have increased across all venues and they remain exceptionally well supported by the local community.

What we did:

- Launched 'Little Hands', a weekly drop-in activity for pre-schoolers and their carers aimed at supporting school readiness.
- Held a sleepover at Portland Basin Museum to celebrate the Brownie centenary.
- Had an artist in residence at Portland Basin Museum who created a willow 'War Horse'.
- Held children's theatre and cinema events at both art galleries.
- Supported Central Art Gallery's 'Knit and Natter' group to knit a Christmas tree to raise money for local charities.
- Worked with the local African community to host 'Kumbu Kumbu', a celebration of African culture at Portland Basin Museum.
- Worked with partners in Public Health to support people living with dementia.

- Support three community led groups: 'Stitch in Time' at Manchester Regiment Museum, 'Quilting Bee' at Portland Basin Museum and 'Knit and Natter' at Central Art Gallery.

Benefits:

- Enhanced wellbeing of participants – the Museum of the Manchester Regiment's 'Stitch in Time' group achieved national recognition for its contribution to supporting people's wellbeing.
- Brought new audiences to the Museums and Galleries.
- Raised the profile of Museums and Galleries.
- Created safe, friendly environments for people to visit.
- Visitor numbers to Portland Basin Museum are rising year on year.

“ It is truly wonderful that you lay on such an event for an hour, free of charge and so much time and effort goes into it. ”

Little Hands participant

Little
Hands





Cultural Education

One of the strengths of the cultural and creative industries in Tameside is the cooperation that exists between the community, community arts organisations, artist practitioners and the creative industries. Since January 2014, Tameside Cultural Services have produced and helped deliver a comprehensive Arts Award offer to participants between ages 5 and 25 across formal and non-formal settings in Tameside. The Service has become an Arts Award Supporter organisation and trained over 150 Arts Award advisers. We have also worked with 40 schools on the journey to achieving Arts Mark. Continuing on from this success we have now been recognised nationally as an Arts Award 'Centre of Excellence'.

What we did:

- We developed a closer working relationship with our client base.
- We offered a bespoke service that caters for the needs of each organisation.
- We created 40 bespoke Arts Award logs.
- We engaged in partnership work with National Portfolio Organizations, enabling us to offer a richer experience for our participants.
- We now assist and support thousands of people on their 'Arts Award' journey and their linked schools, arts organisations and community groups.

Activities we have been involved in include:

- Wild Ways
- Site based visits to our heritage sites, Museums and Galleries
- War Horse
- BBC Ten Pieces
- Denton Remembers

- Adopt-a-Player, Giraffes can't Dance, Halle Shine with the Halle
- Storybox - Creative Cafe workshops for people living with dementia

Benefits:

- Helped foster a sense of place and a sense of pride in Tameside.
- Acted as an integrating force to develop social and cultural tolerance in local neighbourhoods.
- Acted as a regenerative influence through increased community engagement activities.
- Brought enjoyment to thousands of people through events and activities within the borough.
- Helped communities to access high quality arts and cultural experiences.
- Participants in Arts Award received a nationally recognised qualification.





“ The best bit was using the special tools to carve the block of stone. ” Parochial school pupil

“ The weaving was a great idea for getting the whole community involved. We may do some more as a group. ”
Gee Cross WI member



Great Outdoors Project

Tameside Cultural Services secured funding to deliver an exciting programme of Arts and Cultural activities celebrating Tameside's fabulous outdoors. The project enabled the service to work in partnership with community arts groups, visiting artists, craftsmen, professional theatre and film productions. Arts engagement was a priority and an Arts Award log book 'Naturally Creative' was developed, enabling schools and groups to visit National Portfolio Organisations and work with professional artists.



What we did:

- Created willow sculpture public art and held community workshops.
- Led stone carving sessions with school groups.
- Engaged in community weaving projects.
- Created bird box art and design. Produced a wildlife themed wood and metal sculpture.
- Wildlife themed wood and metal sculpture.
- Created a WW1 poppy tree art installation.
- Took participants to visit Yorkshire Sculpture Park.
- Showed a programme of outdoor theatre and film productions.
- Worked with Tameside schools to deliver Arts Award.



Benefits:

- We provided a programme of outdoor themed events which were well attended, free of charge and accessible.
- Celebrated Tameside's outdoors with the creation of quality art installations.
- Raised the profile of outdoor spaces.
- Provided opportunities for the public to experience different art forms.
- Helped children and young people enjoy outdoor art activities.
- Provided a project that enabled participants to gain a recognised qualification.



“ So good to have this kind of exhibition in somewhere like Ashton, would like to see more stuff like this. ”

“ We couldn't believe our eyes when we walked in. ”

‘Generation’ family-friendly art exhibitions

Central Art Gallery in Ashton-under-Lyne has partnered with Durham Art Gallery, Berwick Visual Arts Centre and Towneley Hall in Burnley to create a series of touring art exhibitions. With £150,000 of funding from Arts Council England, the aim of the exhibitions has been to engage family audiences with contemporary art. All of the four venues were under-visited by local families so the exhibitions sought to address this. The first two exhibitions were ‘Generation Noise’ by Owl Project and ‘Generation Air’ by Spacecadets, followed by ‘Musical Chairs’ by Hellicar and Lewis and finally ‘The Tree, the Butterfly and the Caterpillar’ by Aether and Hemera.

What we did:

- Created exciting and unusual exhibitions for people to touch and interact with.
- Worked with staff at children's centres in Ashton-under-Lyne to select the artists and ensure they would appeal to local families.
- Branded the exhibitions under the ‘Generation’ theme, created a website, bespoke leaflets and marketing materials aimed at a family audience.
- Organised a series of event days both in the gallery and in the community to promote the exhibition and draw in new visitors.
- Delivered training to museum staff.

Benefits:

- Challenged assumptions about what contemporary art is and made it less intimidating for family visitors.
- Attracted new visitors to Central Art Gallery.
- Raised the profile of the gallery and brought international artists to Tameside.
- Increased visitor numbers to the gallery – visits to the first touring exhibition, Generation Noise, were 50% higher than the same period the previous year.
- Built links with local children's centres by involving their staff and by organising events for families who use the centres.

“ Surprising, challenging interactive, led to lots of curious questions. ”



Heritage Open Days

During Heritage Weekend over 25 heritage buildings across Tameside were opened to the public. People were able to access spaces that would usually be locked up or off limits, to highlight the borough's incredible architectural heritage. The people of Tameside were given the opportunity to go inside Ashton Old Baths, which last opened its doors to the public over 40 years ago. To celebrate this event and highlight it to a wider audience, Tameside Cultural Services hosted a Victorian themed beach weekend on Ashton Market ground. The event sought to invigorate people's pride in their town and community.

What we did:

- Built a beach, which measured nine metres square, using 26 tonnes of sand; including a sound-scape of waves and seagulls creating the full seaside experience.
- Opened the weekend celebrations with a traditional afternoon tea dance.
- Offered traditional seaside entertainment including donkey rides, Punch and Judy, Acro-Chaps!, jugglers, circus performers and more.
- Involved local businesses by creating a heritage trail of seaside themed museum objects across Ashton town centre.
- Hosted a variety of live music across the weekend with a brass quintet and New Lights Swing Band.
- Worked with the owners of Ashton Old Baths to allow nearly 600 people to step inside the building.
- Worked with Tameside4Good on a world record tea making attempt.

Benefits:

- Celebrated and promoted Tameside's heritage and architecture.
- Provided a varied programme of unique and unusual events that were both accessible and free of charge.
- Created a real "beach" experience in an area where approximately 20 per cent of children under the age of 10 have never experienced this.
- Delivered a quality cultural experience for over 8000 people during the course of the weekend.
- Enabled members of the public to actively engage in celebrating both our architecture and heritage.
- Working with multiple partners and volunteers helped to raise the aspirations of all participants.
- Gained widespread coverage and the event was featured on BBC's Call the Council.



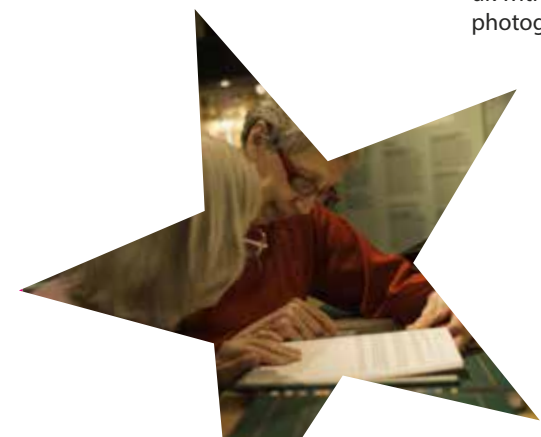


Men Behind the Medals

The Museum of the Manchester Regiment successfully secured funding to make a long held dream a reality – to research every single medal in the collection. After two and a half years of research, writing and editing, the project culminated in the launch of the Men Behind the Medals website. Around 70 relatives of the soldiers attended the launch and other relatives as far away as Australia contributed to the project.

What we did:

- Secured over £50,000 of funding from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.
- Employed a researcher to research all of the medals in the collection.
- Contacted families of the soldiers so that they could be part of the project and enrich the research.
- Had each medal professionally photographed.
- Created an eight volume reference book containing all the biographies.
- Created a website www.themenbehindthemedals.org.uk with the biographies and photographs of each soldier.



Benefits:

- The stories of 785 men and one woman of the Manchester Regiment were told for the first time.
- Highlighted the wealth of resources held by Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre.
- Increased our understanding of the museum collection as a whole – the majority of the silverware, uniform and souvenirs displayed in the museum relate to the same men that were researched.
- Increased engagement between the public and the Manchester Regiment collection.
- Relatives of a number of men, including Victoria Cross winners James Pitts and George Henderson, have since visited the museum.
- We were invited to speak about the project at the Museums Association's annual conference.



“My favourite part of the project was hearing the veteran's personal stories and opinions.”

“I improved my skills of speaking to new people - I now feel less frightened and unnerved.”



Korea - the Forgotten War

The Korean War has a particularly strong legacy in the North West. Ashton-under-Lyne was one of the main recruitment barracks for the area and of the four Victoria Crosses awarded to those who served in the War, two went to North West servicemen. The region also has the largest number of surviving veterans.

The Greater Manchester branch of the national British Korean Veterans Association (BKVA) had over 200 members when the association disbanded in 2014. Liverpool, Preston and the Wirral also had very active branches. Despite its significant impact on 20th and 21st century history, the Korean War is under-documented compared to other conflicts and personal stories are often unheard. This was the motivation behind the development of a £60,600 partnership project between Tameside Cultural Services and Legasee Educational Trust, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

What we did

- Built partnerships between Tameside Council and Legasee Educational Trust, Korean veterans, Manchester University, the local Korean community and local schools to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the conflict and to honour the 63,000 British troops who joined the Allied forces in Korea between June 1950 and July 1953.
- Used Arts Award to deliver educational session in local schools, exploring the conflict and drawing parallels with contemporary conflicts in places such as Afghanistan.
- Captured oral histories on film by interviewing local Korean veterans, many of whom were national servicemen.
- Curated an exhibition at the Local Studies and Archives Centre exploring the significance of the war and the role played by servicemen from the North West.

Benefits

- Given Korean veterans a louder voice by adding their testimonies to Legasee Educational Trust's growing national digital film library, ensuring that veterans' voices can be heard by generations to come.
- Cast a local perspective on the anniversary and created a new resource for the study of the conflict.
- Provided opportunities for volunteers to learn new skills in interviewing and filming.





Greater Manchester Museums Group (GMMG)

Tameside Museums and Galleries are part of the Greater Manchester Museums Group (GMMG) along with museums in Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Salford and Wigan. Together, with Arts Council Funding, we have been involved with a wide range of activities, events, exhibitions, marketing and staff development which have hugely benefitted Tameside's four museums and galleries.

What we did as part of GMMG:

- Co-curated exhibitions across Greater Manchester through Our Connected Histories project and an exhibition at Media City.
- Created a touring exhibition 'Towards Modernity: Three Centuries of British Art' which toured art galleries across China and was seen by millions of people. More international touring exhibitions are being developed.
- Created a GMMG website highlighting our collections and promoting each venue's exhibitions and events.
- Attracted over £400,000 of external funding.
- Commissioned bespoke products based on our collection to sell online, to raise awareness of our collections and to generate income.
- Invested in staff development, including a leadership programme and Front of House training.
- Produced a trail leaflet promoting Tameside's four venues.

Benefits:

- Raising awareness of Tameside Museums and Galleries among staff and visitors in museums across Greater Manchester.
- Increased income generation and delivered tangible benefits for the people of Tameside.
- Shared staff expertise and resources across the region and beyond.
- Increased standing in the region, national and international museum world, leading to additional opportunities in the future.





Lantern Parade

Tameside Cultural Services engaged with community groups across the borough in a series of lantern building workshops. Local professional artists led the workshops in a variety of settings, including schools, libraries and community buildings. 2000 people participated in making a lantern for the parade, which took a route through Ashton Town Centre and preceded the turning on of the Christmas lights. The route was just over a mile long and around 10,000 members of the public lined the route. The parade culminated with all of Tameside's brass bands playing "Jingle Bells", "Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer" and "Winter Wonderland" to crowds assembled in front of Ashton Town Hall.

What we did:

- Created a fun, free and welcoming event.
- Reached over 10,000 people through this project.
- New partnerships were brokered with community groups from across the borough.
- Employed seven local artists on the project.
- Worked collaboratively within the local authority, across a number of services and departments.

Benefits:

- Developed a sense of community spirit and engaged with a cross section of the community.
- Raised money for the Civic Mayor's charities.
- Changed the format of the traditional Christmas lights switch on, which was met with a very positive response.
- Developed new ways of working with partners.
- Gained excellent publicity for the borough.

“ It was a fabulous spectacle, bringing together many of Tameside's community groups, brass bands and cultural organisations. For 2,000 people to take part in such an event is an amazing achievement and is something we should all be very proud of. ”



