

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE & CULTURE

COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN
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ARTS AND HERITAGE

Painting on Tour

An atmospheric painting of a rural scene owned by Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery has gone on loan.

Evening – The Watering Place will be on show at the Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne until September 16 as part of the exhibition [Edward Stott: A Master of Colour and Atmosphere](#).

It is the first major exhibition in more than 40 years of the work of the Rochdale-born artist who is described as “the poet-painter of the twilight”. It marks the centenary of his death. Stott (1855-1918) trained in Paris and was influenced by French impressionism. He later settled in Amberley in Sussex.

Evening – The Watering Place was purchased by Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery in 1913 and was previously on display in the museum’s Victorian Gallery.

A Master of Colour and Atmosphere also includes works from Towner’s collection, as well as those on loan from national institutions including the Royal Academy of Arts, Manchester Art Gallery and the National Trust.

Blackburn Open walls 17- 21 July The Street art project returns to Blackburn town centre this July, this year it will be bigger and bolder as it has gained a grant from Arts council England. Not only will there be work created by international artists but workshops, an exhibition at Prism Gallery and the ‘Unselfie’ truck taking portraits of local residents. The project will end with a tour around all the new works on the afternoon of the 21st July.

FESTIVAL OF MAKING 2018

The 2nd annual Festival of Making took place in Blackburn Town centre on weekend of 12 and 13 May and attracted a significantly larger attendance than 2017 with over 140 different activities across more than 30 town-centre venues which included 40 hands-on workshops.

There were many highlights including the amazing 34-tonnes of advanced manufacturing technology in a truck with virtual reality opportunities to dismantle a jet engine; an incredible clay sculpture which grew over the course of the weekend outside of the museum, the cardboard cinema and the installation of '@The making of an Indian Wedding' in the market

Full evaluations are still being worked on but below are just a few of attendees feedback:

'Such a creative festival bringing diverse communities together! Brilliant all round. Been buzzing from yesterday's performance and up close interactive audience participation dances. Blackburn THANK YOU – magnificent community'

'loved the variety of hands-on workshops, the fact that you couldn't remain spectator, everything around you was full of life and joy. I also loved the yellow line drawn so you couldn't miss anything.'

'Fabulous day @festofmaking a celebration of art, creativity manufacturing and making. Blackburn you should be proud!'

'It was great. I love the way that Blackburn tells the story of its making heritage too in a very 21 century way. You should go.'

LIBRARIES

Library Loans – at a time when national trends are showing a decline Blackburn with Darwen libraries have increased resource loans performance by 2% in comparison with the previous year. The figures include e-book, e-audio and e-magazine usage.

As part of the **Digital Borough** Workstream the library service has led on the mapping of council facilities and help available to citizens to "get online", access digital services, apply for UC (Universal Credit) and subsequently manage their claims. A spreadsheet listing the venues, Monday to Saturday access, resources and assistance offered is being shared both internally and with partners to support effective signposting. The exercise has highlighted the need for additional support in Darwen and from 11th June the library is now offering a weekly 2 hour IT drop-in on Monday afternoons in addition to the existing programme of free basic IT courses held on Thursdays.

VENUES

April and May saw high profile names playing at KGH; Russell Brand entertained a sell out audience in April and the Manchester band, James was the fastest ever venue sell out in just under 5 minutes and played one of just 7 gigs to an enthusiastic crowd last month . A warm-up date for Squeeze was also popular drawing a big audience to the Windsor Suite. The Summer comedy programme has included a third date in 7 months for Jason Manford and 2 sell out nights of Sarah Millican.

LEISURE

The Weavers Wheel cycling route will be launched on Saturday 30th June in Witton park. The event will include a family fun day with a range of activities to try out, led walks and healthy lifestyle stands. It marks the start of Blackburn with Darwen's Walking and Cycling Festival that takes place from Saturday 30th June until Sunday 8th July 2018. For a full programme of activities go to www.refreshbwd.com.