

WIGAN **THE FIRE WITHIN**

This map of Wigan Borough is formed from chemical coal compound diagrams. 100 years ago, 1000 pit holes mined the fire within ancient forests and animals buried across a five mile radius of Wigan town centre. This manifesto explores the people, the heritage, the art and culture that is shaping life upon this explosive ground beneath our feet.

ANCIENT AND LOYAL

PROGRESS WITH UNITY

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The Spinning Jenny tile panel in Leigh Town Hall remembers The Fire Within Leigh inventor Thomas Highs who in the 18th Century transformed the textile industry with mechanical motion.

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DANCE – FREEDOM, MOVEMENT AND LIBERATION
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THE FIRE WITHIN

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MAPS

The players and their coordinates.

The Beginning of the Chapters of Coming forth by Day,
of the Words which bring about Resurrection and Glory,
and of coming out of and entering into...

I am one of those gods, the Powers who effect the triumph
over adversaries on the day of the Weighing of the Words.

Book of Coming Forth by Day

Egypt

1550BCE

The Moses from Wigan

Sir John Scott was a Judge born in Wigan.

In the spirit of Wigan's fight for workers rights his Fire Within reformed the Egyptian legal system,
abolishing slave labour that had been in existence since the Pharaohs. After his death his collection of
Ancient Egyptian treasures were donated to Wigan. In this manifesto, the priceless Royal Egyptian gold
death mask enchants Wiganers past and present.

Sir John Scott

1841–1904

63 orbits

The Unforgettable Eye

From the moment George Orwell encountered the 'lunar landscape' of Wigan Pier and experienced working-class life in our town, he found The Fire Within to write an unforgettable, graphic description of social injustice, slum housing, mining conditions, squalor, hunger and growing unemployment with unblinking honesty, fury and great humanity. His searing account and bitter polemic in The Road to Wigan Pier continues to grip every reader with its exceptional immediacy, freshness and vigour and will forever connect our town to the struggle for liberation from the constrictions of class.

George Orwell
1903–1950
46 orbits

The Lord of the Manor

The Fire Within Lord Lindsay built a library at Haigh Hall in Wigan. He devoted himself to collecting bibliographical pursuits and polymathic investigations into art history, comparative religion, philosophy, ethnology, linguistics and genealogy; the best and most valuable books, landmarks of thought and progress. He elevated the library to a matter of international importance; it fulfilled a serious moral, political and cultural purpose unmatched by any other private library in Britain.

Lord William Alexander Lindsay
1812–1880
78 orbits

The Goddess of the Sea

Dr Kathleen Mary Drew-Baker was a botanist born in Leigh. The Fire Within inspired her research into the reproductive biology of algae, which is the key to efficient farming of the seaweed 'nori', the essential component of Japanese sushi. On the 14th April at the annual Drew festival in Japan, Kathleen is worshipped as a Goddess, The Mother of the Sea.

Kathleen Mary Drew Baker
1901–1957
55 orbits

The Master Baker

James Edwards
1905–1978
73 orbits

FOREWORD: THE FIRE WITHIN

In 1892 my Great Grandfather died tragically during shaft sinking in a Wigan coal mine, leaving his widow Anne with a young family to care for. There was no offer of Widow's pensions, or benefits for Miner's families, only the Poor Law remained, and with it the threat of the Workhouse in Frog Lane. To survive, my Great Grandmother Anne started baking pies in her fireside oven. She and her children went out selling the pies to the local community, and the business grew. Generations of her family would emerge to build Edwards award winning Bakery and contribute to the culture of our town.

I always remember my Grandfather's dedicated passionate belief in hard work and incredible attention to creative detail, which I have come to recognise as the eye of an artist. I knew from his work great success could be achieved here, but as I grew up in Wigan, I knew my desire to create Art could not be fostered in my home town at that time, it just wasn't something that happened in Wigan. And so I moved to London, and after studying with my partner AL, began a journey of creativity that took us from London to New York, to Paris, to Beijing, on a journey around the World.

My Mother Gladys would call me on her hotline from Wigan and ask me as we were travelling, "when are you coming home?", and during my travels, I never knew what she meant. It was only when we returned here to look after her during a terminal illness that I truly understood. I was a Wiganer, through and through, and this town and its people meant something to me, as all our roots do. The place we are born inspires us, shapes us, and should be fought for. It should be the place we dream it to be, because, what is stopping that from happening?

Since returning to Wigan, we have made our best work from our studio in Standish. We have made films which have been broadcast internationally on television, a space opera which premiered on Broadway in New York, exhibitions and award winning films which have been shown in 50 countries around the World and are currently being developed into multi million pound cinematic releases. The point is this, anything is possible in our great town. My family's story, like George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*, is about a struggle towards liberation, liberation from the constrictions of class.

We stand together upon this explosive ground beneath our feet. My Great Grandfather's death in a pit of this combustible rock sparked the ingenuity of my ancestor's future. My Mother passed on *The Fire Within* me, which was given to her by her Father, from one generation to the next. This burning desire to make the best of every moment. To ignite dreams and make them real. It is here that we share *The Fire Within*, that we hope to ignite *The Fire Within* you, and spark the next generation to search for the creative dreams in your hearts, and share those dreams with the people around you. We are all the imagineers of our future. We can expect no one else to do it for us.

AL and AL
25th November 2018
Standish-with-Langtree, Wigan

Collieries, Carbon and Catalyst

Mary Griffiths' year-long residency at the former Astley Green colliery, now a Mining Museum and home to the last surviving headgear in Lancashire, became the catalyst for a new body of work. Her lyrical drawings inspired by the mine and its machinery, the coal that was dug from the Earth, and the primeval forests that laid that carbon down 300 million years ago culminated in a critically acclaimed solo exhibition at the Turnpike in Leigh. The Turnpike, an extraordinary brutalist gem built during the end of the coal era opened its doors with an exhibition of Henry Moore. Helen Stalker today continues to bring the greatest artists to our borough with an ambitious programme of exhibitions, events and educational activities celebrating the very best in the arts.

Jazz, Brass and Bounce

Wigan has a deep history and connection with the liberating spirit of music. Wigan's annual International Jazz Festival hosts iconic Jazz musicians and is considered one of the finest Jazz festivals in Europe. Pemberton Brass Band continues to celebrate a century long formidable reputation of prize-winning performances. The legendary Northern Soul all-nighters at Wigan Casino continue to spin mythologies into infinity. A new generation bop to Bounce, a unique uplifting electronic sound evolved from Chicago House that Donked Wigan Pier. Wigan Music Service and Wigan Youth Zone continue to light the fire within a new generation of musicians.

Freedom, Movement and Liberation

Amy Burdon, director of WigLe dance is a true hero of the cultural community in Wigan. Her commitment to providing dance as a creative discipline to a new generation of our borough's youth is igniting The Fire Within a company of girls and boys, inspiring them to experience the freedom and liberation of expression through movement. Each WigLe session is filled with joy and friendship, directing Wigan's youth to live happy, healthy and socially engaged lives through dance.

Steam, Silks and Sewing

Wigan Borough's heritage is forever entangled in the history of the textile industry. The Spinning Jenny in Leigh ignited the industrial weaving process. Over 10,000 people created beautiful Victorian silk designs woven on domestic hand looms and in weaving sheds. The extraordinary steam engine at Trencherfield Mill was built to power a cotton mill. The canal was etched into the landscape to ship American cotton from Liverpool to Wigan Pier. This story of the textile industry transformed Wigan and Leigh and continues to inspire Mikael Nzembani-Biaka, pictured here in the fashion sewing rooms at Wigan School for the Arts.

Shakespeare, Pride and Performance

In 2019 Sir Ian McKellan will celebrate his 80th Birthday by going back to where it all began, returning to Wigan Little Theatre where The Fire Within was lit when he saw his first Shakespeare production as a child. Sir Ian grew up in Wigan during World War Two and makes regular visits back to his home town, pictured here performing a sell-out solo appearance at the Old Courts during Wigan Pride. The Old Courts are currently renovating the extraordinary Royal Court Theatre, ushering an exciting new era of theatre and live performance into our borough.

THE FIRE WITHIN

A NEW CULTURAL MANIFESTO FOR WIGAN

This Manifesto emerged from a cultural strategy which was commissioned by Wigan Council, supported by Arts Council England, and researched by consultants Maria Brewster, Debbie Chan and Sue Potts. Their research brought together the findings of an in-depth, cross-sector consultation.

This Manifesto builds on the collective and collaborative groundwork the cultural strategy instigated, connecting and enabling the Borough in a joint effort.

This Manifesto builds on The Deal for the Future Strategy and Wigan's vision to be a place where people want to work, live, visit and invest.

This Manifesto sets out a five year plan of five curatorial themes in which Cornerstone projects are embedded. Following rigorous research and a democratic consultation process across Wigan Borough, the five themes were formulated by artists, cultural organisations and community groups to focus and ignite their collective energy. The five themes are written by the People, for the People.

SPARK

Wigan will spark and commission homegrown talent.

Wigan will invest in our cultural innovators and dynamic artistic community.

Wigan will celebrate our unique heritage and identity.

Wigan will activate artists to transform our Borough's cultural vitality.

Wigan will welcome new talent into our inspirational Borough.

Wigan will collaborate with artists to make great works and stage World Class events.

Wigan will galvanise our new generation and kindle The Fire Within them.

Wigan will provide exceptional creative education to stimulate a sustainable cultural economy.

Wigan will empower people to produce social justice through the culture it makes.

Wigan will democratise the creative process and act to amplify unheard voices through culture.

Wigan will inspire The Fire Within us all to burn brightly with pride and belief in our Borough.

IGNITE

The Fire Within 5 year goals are to...

Create culture led transformation in Wigan.

Seek and develop ambitious cultural opportunities for Wigan's creative talent.

Stage World Class cultural events and commissions in Wigan.

Nurture, nourish and connect Wigan's cultural talent to achieve our aims together.

Produce dynamic local and international collaborations with Wigan's cultural organisations.

Empower a people-led cultural identity inspired by Wigan's magnificent social heritage.

Amplify Wigan's flourishing and distinctive cultural scene.

Enable thriving creativity in Wigan through resourceful and stimulating cultural networks.

Support artists in Wigan on their journey from the seedlings of early years practise.

Invest in professional artists to make innovative, ground breaking work in Wigan.

Offer radical research archival access to stimulate and develop extraordinary Wigan stories.

Attract creative innovators to Wigan.

Provide exceptional cultural education in Wigan for future creatives.

Find cultural methods to benefit everyone in Wigan, in solidarity with the entire community.

Enhance life experience in Wigan, nourishing love and progress with unity.

Stay loyal to Wigan's roots, expanding social cohesion and growth.

FUEL

The Fire Within will accomplish the goals of our 5 year plan by....

Securing investment to stimulate artistic talent, cultural entrepreneurship and people led cultural activity in unique local places.

Commissioning hyperlocal exceptional culture which is inspired and driven to nourish our people's love of Wigan and their neighbourhoods, causing national interest and significance.

Activating dynamic creative hubs which empower our cultural community to innovate, collaborate, network, connect and mobilise.

Focusing on the local communities dreams and memories, creating an arts and cultural programme that responds to their hopes and wishes to improve our community life.

Engaging, challenging and galvanising our young people to take centre stage and show us new ways of seeing the world which create pivotal cultural innovations and experiences.

FIRE

The Fire Within 5 year plan will ensure....

The culture we create represents and involves artists, creative industries, cultural organisations, public sector and voluntary services in decision making.

The culture we create focuses on the people of Wigan, stimulating stories that have meaning and purpose, fuelling local mythologies which lead to social happiness and health.

The culture we create unifies everyone to work together and collectively take responsibility for delivering World Class events to the people of Wigan and beyond.

The culture we create stimulates national and international visitors, activating new partnerships which boost our economy, driving Wigan forwards in the Northern Powerhouse.

The culture we create enables everyone in Wigan the opportunity to be involved in celebrating our unique local traditions, social histories and magnificent heritage.

The culture we create will awaken untapped potential in Wigan's young people, encouraging the local community to embrace the transformative power of innovation through creativity.

5 THEMES FOR A 5 YEAR PLAN

Following the rigorous research and consultation in Wigan, 5 themes were formulated by artists, cultural organisations and community groups to focus and ignite their collective energy.

The 5 themes are written by the People, for the People.

The 5 themes will unite programming across Wigan's diverse cultural organisations.

The 5 themes will engage new audiences and resources.

The 5 themes will orchestrate Wigan based community cultural activity.

The 5 themes will inspire brave and ambitious new cultural commissions in Wigan.

The 5 themes will connect Wigan to the Greater Manchester Cultural Authorities priorities.

The 5 themes will coordinate with national funding to empower Wigan's cultural landscape.

The 5 themes will attract national and international expertise and partnerships to Wigan.

From 2019-2023 the 5 themes will provide a framework around which cultural organisations and communities will collectively curate and collaborate for the people of Wigan and beyond.

In each year, an innovative and ambitious new public work of national significance will be commissioned. These projects will take the form of a temporary or permanent public art work, exhibition or performance.

The Fire Within Consortium will ensure quality, inclusivity and delivery of World Class events for the People of Wigan and beyond for the next 5 years.

2019

WIGAN'S FUTURE ARTISTS

"Every human being is an artist, a freedom being, called to participate in transforming and reshaping the conditions, thinking and structures that shape and inform our lives."

Joseph Beuys

While adolescence is a period of vulnerability, it is also a time of enormous creativity, one that should be acknowledged, nurtured and celebrated. In 2019 Wigan's future artists will draw upon award-winning neuroscientist Sarah-Jayne Blakemore's cutting-edge and award winning research about what happens inside the adolescent brain, what her team's experiments have revealed about our behaviour, and how we relate to each other and our environment as we go through this period of our lives. The human brain develops during adolescence, and previously unknown details of this process mean society's treatment of the often-maligned group should change. Self-absorption, hyper-sensitivity and risk-taking, she explains, are all reasonable responses when the biological purpose of adolescence is the creation of a sense of self. This vital process of the

creation of oneself will be explored within the context of Wigan's own cultural transformation in collaboration with young artists. The young artists of today are the imagineers of our future.

The legacy of Wigan's historical investment in cultural education and activity for Wigan's youth continues to define the Borough's future. The Wigan International Jazz Festival was formed in 1986 in response to the region's growing audience for jazz and big band music, created in part by the Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra. Featuring many of the world's finest jazz artists, the iconic event has acquired a reputation for being one of the finest jazz Festivals in Europe.

Wigan's leading cultural curators, producers and artists all attribute a lifelong passion of the arts from visits and encounters at Drumcroon, The Turnpike, tuition from the music service, or playing in Pemberton Brass Band. The 5 year plan aspires to ignite The Fire Within a new generation of Wigan's future artists, creatives, producers and audiences. Wigan Youth Zone's arts programme, Wigan College of the Arts, and all the cultural organisation's programmes in our Borough keep this legacy burning.

In 2019 The Fire Within will...

Establish the Cultural Education Partnership, with support from Curious Minds, who are dedicated to improving the lives of children and young people through great art and culture.

Spark creative programmes and develop cultural education in schools, colleges, cultural organisations and support a new generation of Wigan artists with support from the Communities Investment Fund.

Provide a voice within cultural programming for the new generation of Wiganers with the creation of a Youth Culture Board.

Commission a borough wide cultural work to be selected and developed by the Youth Culture Board and Fire Within Consortium.

Expand on the progression routes for our new generation with the inspired team at Wigan School of the Arts, The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts and other cultural organisations.

2020

DIGITAL WIGAN

"Sometimes it is the people no one can imagine anything of who do the things no one can imagine."

Alan Turing

The computer age has transformed everyone into an artist. Teenagers on average have created over 200,000 images on their smartphones by the time they graduate from college. This digital democratisation of image making and the power to broadcast on social media, enabling us all to creatively publish our own life stories and incidents, is a revolution which is fuelling a radical metamorphosis of society. Furthermore, the far-reaching consequences of digital technology have extended out into the exponential growth of online shopping and home delivery services, causing a huge vacuum of space in our towns and high streets. The North West region's cultural heritage has played a fundamental role in the creation of this computer age. Alan Turing created the world's first computer in Manchester and sowed the seeds for a new intelligent species of machines. Digital Wigan 2020 will explore how computers have transformed aesthetics and hierarchies, revealing how the Digital Age has reshaped art making, research and knowledge, working life, social connections and the capacity to reconfigure human communities and the built environment.

Wigan has nurtured a groundswell of digital cultural events and spaces. WiganSTEAM provides learning opportunities, enriching social spaces, and collaborative working environments to empower young people and adults with creative digital knowledge to navigate and innovate future worlds. D:Circus stages ground breaking digital artistic work and performances in Wigan Libraries and in site specific locations around Wigan and Leigh.

In 2020 Digital Wigan will explore, celebrate and amplify our technological heritage and future...

Developing strategic collaborations with regional New Media Arts organisations Abandon Normal Devices, FACT Liverpool and Future Everything to generate co-commissions, touring programmes and festival housing.

Commissioning multi-sited digital public art works by Internationally renowned Wigan based artists AL and AL, as a linchpin for a year of digital activity to coincide with their solo exhibition at The Turnpike in Leigh, which explores Machine Intelligence and the future of this new sentient species.

Launching the new Heritage Lottery Funded digital archive, with the creation of a public searchroom, heritage exhibition space and expanded specialist storage strongrooms for the archive collections at Leigh Town Hall, providing a network of digital resources for artists and public.

Curating digital programmes across the Borough's cultural organisations which celebrate and connect our unique technological heritage to our digital future in Libraries, from WiganSTEAM, Leigh Hackspace, Get It Loud, The Turnpike and The Old Courts.

Staging new artistic interventions and approaches for utilising and sharing public space in The Galleries shopping Mall at the heart of Wigan town centre, now currently vacated as a consequence of the digital online shopping revolution.

Exploring the potential of a digital hub, network lounge, multi platform performance and exhibition space for WiganSTEAM.

2021

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

“Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions.”

Dalai Lama

Recent findings in cognitive psychology have corroborated the same synapses of the brain fire whether you are remembering your own experiences, recalling a scene that you once read in a book or saw in a film, or dreaming of some future happiness. This research is especially significant in relation to Art and Culture and the power it contains to transform our collective spirit and the quality of our lives. Everybody should be able to enjoy the pleasure, the opportunity for personal expression and the insightful, life-changing journey it can take us on. Through culture, the individual and communities are enriched with vitality to live healthy and happy lives.

In 2021 Wigan will begin a programme of cultural events, actions and happenings which will invite our citizens to imagine, visualise, build concepts and images which will begin a process of cultural transformation in our towns, parks, streets and homes. This stirring of the creative Fire Within is integral to building a vital path to health and happiness.

In 2021 The Fire Within will...

Evolve and expand WELLFEST, Wigan’s health and wellbeing festival, as a showcase for rejuvenation and creativity in our Borough.

Collaborate with Public health and Clinical Commissioners Group activity to focus on cultural activity that explores mental health, encouraging open dialogue and expression, giving voice which creates more understanding and eradicates stigma.

Galvanise the 15 Libraries in our towns across the borough, to work closely with our communities, and highlight exciting new scientific research, literature and publications focused on health and happiness.

Mobilise and explore Wigan’s exceptional green spaces to stage cultural events and community activity. Haigh Hall has the largest area of Woodland in Greater Manchester. Wigan’s Central Park was once host to an annual Carnival with 1500 performers and attracted 40,000 visitors.

Activate and promote Wigan’s exceptional green network of canals through the borough, in partnership with The Canal and River Trust, highlighting the 23 locks of the Wigan Flight Canal

Route, which according to World Heritage Expert John Hinchcliffe is 'one of the most impressive ensembles of canal infrastructure in the country'.

2022

EVERY COMMUNITY NEEDS A STAGE

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,"
William Shakespeare

Every year on Boxing Day the people of Wigan come together, transforming the streets into a stage with a festival of costume and fancy dress. Through this extraordinary collective imagination, a festival of performance and masquerade is already evolving and demonstrating the will and desire of local people to create a stage of celebration. Performing arts are inherently social arts and provide a necessary opportunity to develop social and communication skills required by a healthy democracy. Cultural activities and the performing arts specifically, can uniquely serve as a meeting place and site for the formation of a shared communal identity. To ignite The Fire Within, it is not enough to present performances, it is necessary to cultivate lively, candid and meaningful participation. Every community needs a space to show their creative expression and to share its diverse stories. Stages, both permanent and temporary, festivals and moments of collective participation bring people together and anchor our community and cultural identity.

In 2022 Wigan will cultivate stages, as well as develop theatre as an artform in our Borough...

Supporting the Royal Court Theatre development plan, which will provide a stage for a wide range of cultural events and performances.

Developing a first floor studio theatre and project space at The Turnpike as part of the Leigh Cultural Quarter.

Collaborating with the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts at Trencherfield Mill to fulfill their potential in our Borough.

Partnering with the Royal Exchange Theatre Development programme to enable the creation of new works made collaboratively in community spaces.

Commissioning a socially engaged performance piece that embeds the collective making and sharing of new work in our Borough's communities.

Financially and practically supporting hyperlocal festivals, happenings and performances, opening resources and event spaces to collaborate, share and redefine social space.

Encouraging everyone to get involved in their communities, social groups and local projects as part of the incredible Wigan LGBTQ+ Pride Festival of equality and diversity.

2023

A NEW HERITAGE

He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past.
George Orwell

During the democratic consultation process which instigated this manifesto, the significance and importance of heritage was universally identified and accepted as a fundamental point of focus to be explored. George Orwell, who is forever entangled in the history of our town after his visit, understood and reported in an explosive way the struggle towards liberation for working class Wiganers. Art and culture play a central role in the way our heritage and history is told and understood by each generation, liberation from the constrictions of class lies at the heart of our struggle. This manifesto has suggested some icons from the town for future research and representation. Sir John Scott, Wigan's own Moses, a rebel leader Judge who ended Pharaonic slavery in Egypt. The Fire Within Sir John Scott's story can shed new light on Wigan's own quest for worker's rights and the socialist dream of equality. Dr Kathleen Mary Drew-Baker was a botanist born in Leigh, worshipped as a Goddess of the Sea in Japan, her ground-breaking research is an amazing story about the quest for scientific truth and it's far reaching consequences. Her story also reminds us of the importance of women's fight for equality and liberation. If we tell stories from our past with a new hope and insightfulness, the future is certain, and the past will become unpredictable and the source of inspiration. This manifesto has begun this process of mining for new meanings, new mythologies, it is a work that is never done.

Wigan's heritage should be protected for the future and everyone should have the chance to explore and define it. Every historical site in our Borough has an important story to tell and these stories have inspired many people to strengthen their convictions and commitment to fight injustice and oppression. Our Heritage sites are living monuments, a record of happenings that embody a real connection to our past. Wigan's history matters because it reminds us of who we are, what we've done and what we might become. It's central to our sense of place and identity, and how we learn from the past as we go forward into the future. Heritage shapes how people identify with the places they live, work and play. Historic buildings and the historic quarters of our major towns and cities are the very places where new ideas and new growth are most likely to happen. This is true of The Old Courts, Wigan Pier and The Royal Court Theatre.

In 2023 The Fire Within will commence...

Systematic and inspired cataloguing of Wigan and Leigh's Heritage, from personal stories to Museum archives, engaging volunteers with organisational support.

Continued support for Wigan's local heritage groups and projects.

Coordinating and promoting the visibility for the Heritage Open Days in our Borough.

Collaborating and commissioning creative residencies which explore heritage sites.

Continuing the development, which will begin in 2019, of Wigan Pier as a cultural and entertainment centre.

Curating exhibitions of local icons and stories at the Heritage Lottery Funded Digital Archives in Leigh Town hall.

Exploring Wigan's historical role in socialism, supporting the annual Diggers festival

Repurpose significant Industrial heritage sites Trencherfield Mill and Spinners Mill for cultural use and locations for artistic production

Exploring the culture of food in Wigan. Heinz in Kitt Green is Europe's largest food factory. Uncle Joe's Mint balls and Edward's Bakery have extraordinary local heritage and culinary success stories.

Collaborate with The Canal and River Trust as a co-commissioning partner across the Canal network in Wigan, exploring the industrial transformation of the landscape and the technological creation of space and culture.

Stage a Northern Soul heritage Lottery fund project, involving documenting, recreating, recording and performing, with contemporary reinterpretations and mass participation.

Fire, Fire!
She's Fire, She's Fire
She's too much for me
She's Fire, She's Fire
She's too much for me
When your lips meet mine
You really start crying
She sets my heart ablaze
Sets my soul on fire

Fire, Fire!
She's Fire, She's Fire
She's too much for me
She's Fire, She's Fire
She's too much for me
When your lips meet mine
You really start crying
She sets my heart ablaze
Sets my soul on fire

The C.O.D.s

She's Fire

1966

Future Projects

The Royal Court Theatre

The Royal Court Theatre opened its doors in 1886 to a performance of the comical Opera, The Beggar Student. Originally seating an audience of 3000 people, the Royal Court showcased Opera, Music and Theatre until 1930 when it was redesigned into a home for the silver screen. In 2019 The Royal Court Theatre will undergo a transformation, and be restored to its former glory for the people of Wigan and beyond. This incredibly exciting new development, driven by Dave Jenkins of The Old Courts will once again provide the people of our Borough a space to engage and be inspired by magical evenings of live performance.

I remember a winter afternoon in the dreadful environs of Wigan. All round was the lunar landscape of slag-heaps, and to the north, through the passes, as it were, between the mountains of slag, you could see the factory chimneys sending out their plumes of smoke. The canal path was a mixture of cinders and frozen mud, criss-crossed by the imprints of innumerable clogs, and all round, as far as the slag-heaps in the distance, stretched the 'flashes' — pools of stagnant water that had seeped into the hollows caused by the subsidence of ancient pits. It was horribly cold...

George Orwell

The Road to Wigan Pier

1937

Wigan Pier

When George Orwell first encountered and described the 'lunar landscape' of Wigan Pier he witnessed a space transformed by the industrial revolution. Orwell's powerful and vivid book, *The Road to Wigan Pier* etched our collective cultural memory of working class life in a coal mining town, making Wigan Pier internationally famous. In 2019, Wigan Arts Cultural Heritage Trust and Step Places will collaborate to transform the iconic cluster of buildings at Wigan Pier into a cultural hub for community arts. An alternative arts and cultural education centre, a new conference room and a large food and beverage events space with micro-brewery will inspire a new generation to make Wigan Pier a destination for all.

AL and AL

Alan Turing created the World's first computer here in Manchester before dying tragically in the prime of his life because of love. In 2020 during Wigan's Digital year of culture, the pioneering-Wigan-based-International-artist duo AL and AL will stage a major solo exhibition at The Turnpike in Leigh, celebrating Alan Turing's love for Christopher Morcom who inspired the creation of sentient machines. Connecting the entire Wigan borough together with a series of Emoji Topiary flower sculptures, AL and AL will transform the streets, inspired by our digital messages of love flying into the smartphones in our pockets and hearts.

Archives and Local Studies

In 2019, building work will begin on the new Heritage Lottery Funded regeneration of Wigan Archives and Local Studies space in Leigh Town Hall. The project aims to redevelop Wigan Borough's Archives with the creation of a new public search room, heritage exhibition space and expanded specialist storage strong rooms for the archive collections. A programme of cultural engagement activities, will investigate the Fire Within our Borough's history and encourage people to donate records to the Archives for preservation.

ALRA & Leigh Film Society

ALRA North is an established and important centre of learning in the Greater Manchester film and theatre community. Based in Wigan's historic Trencherfield Mill the innovative ALRA MA Directing course integrates the performance environment with audio and film directing. In collaboration with Wigan libraries, ALRA North is planning to house historic screenplay archives as a national resource to light the fire within future film makers. Wigan borough hosts the annual Leigh Short Film Festival, an international event staged by the Leigh Film Society, who in 2018 were awarded The Queens Award for Voluntary Service for providing socially-inclusive cinema screenings for everyone in the community and broadening access to culture.

Boxing Day and Beyond

Every year on Boxing Day the people of Wigan come together, celebrating on the streets in magnificent costumes and fancy dress attracting international news coverage. Through this extraordinary collective imagination, a festival of performance and masquerade has evolved over 40 years of celebrations demonstrating the will and desire of local people to create culture together.

MAPS

The Turnpike Civic Square, Leigh WN7 1EB, UK

Latitude: 53.497734 | Longitude: -2.519849

The Turnpike is an independent arts organisation situated in the iconic 1970's brutalist building in the centre of Leigh. Their purpose is to bring the very best art to Leigh, creating high quality new cultural opportunities for all and raising aspiration across the community. Helen Stalker leads an inspirational curatorial programme, following on from her work at the V&A Theatre Museum, Tate Liverpool and curator of Fine Art at the Whitworth art gallery.

The Old Courts Gerrard Winstanley House, Crawford St, Wigan WN1 1NA, UK

Latitude: 53.545736 | Longitude: -2.634163

The Old Courts is a not for profit centre promoting the best in arts and culture in the Wigan Borough. With two music venues, a theatre, an art gallery, Victorian Court Room, rehearsal rooms and performance space. The Old Courts attracts worldwide performers and artists, as well as collaborating with renowned institutions such as Battersea Arts Centre and Central St Martins.

Wigan STEAM 4a, 1NN, 33-53 Library St, Wigan WN1 1DF, UK

Latitude: 53.544801 | Longitude: -2.630382

WiganSTEAM provides learning opportunities, enriching social spaces, and collaborative working environments to empower young people and adults with creative digital knowledge to navigate and innovate future worlds. They support STEM learning, working to achieve a world-leading education for all young people in science, technology, engineering and mathematics through art and culture.

Cross Street Arts 114-116 The Standish Centre, Cross Street, Standish WN6 0HQ, UK

Latitude: 53.586044 | Longitude: -2.662533

Cross Street Arts is a group of professional artists based in Standish who aim to provide access to studio spaces and exhibition opportunities for artists. They run a curatorial programme of group exhibitions, open studio events, artists talks and workshops. Resident artist Anna FC Smith, recently showcased her Suffragettes inspired work in New York.

Lancashire Mining Museum at Astley Green Higher Green Ln, Astley Green, Astley, Tyldesley M29 7JB, UK

Latitude: 53.495406 | Longitude: -2.447854

Lancashire Mining Museum at Astley Green Colliery hosts artists residencies exploring the unique site which houses Lancashire's only surviving headgear and engine house, both of which now have scheduled monument and listed building status. Mary Griffiths' year-long residency culminated in a critically acclaimed body of work which featured in her solo exhibition Wild Honey.

WigLe Dance, Spinning Gate Market, Leigh WN7 1QR, UK

Latitude: 53.499893 | Longitude: -2.518834

WigLe is a dance development organisation that aims to inspire children and young people to be happy, healthy and socially engaged through dance. Their purpose is to ensure the residents of Wigan and Leigh have the opportunity to experience dance at its best, through participation and performance.

Mount Zion Hall, Enfield St, Wigan WN5 8DZ, UK

Latitude: 53.534554 | Longitude: -2.675085

Pemberton Brass Band has a long and outstanding history that dates back to the late 19th century. In recent years their organisation has gone from strength to strength. As well as having a First Section band conducted by Ben Dixon, they have a thriving, diverse B Band of all ages currently well placed in the 2nd section. They also have a Junior Band where 30 youngsters are trained by John Don-Duncan. An extensive, historic library of Brass Band music is housed at their rehearsal studios in Mount Zion Hall.

Wigan College of the Arts, Wigan WN1 1RR, UK

Latitude: 53.549534 | Longitude: -2.634991

Wigan School of the Arts is a centre of education excellence focused on raising aspirations in Creative Arts through innovative and outstanding teaching and delivers a wide range of courses up to degree level for careers in Creative Direction & Design, Fine Art, Fashion, Music, TV & Radio, Photography, Broadcasting, Arts Education, Illustration, Journalism and PR.

Museum of Wigan Life 41 Library St, Wigan WN1 1NU, UK

Latitude: 53.544077 | Longitude: -2.629624

The Museum of Wigan Life holds over 30,000 treasures relating to life in Wigan Borough, past and present. Their collections include fine art, Roman archaeology, social history, natural history, coins, decorative art and industrial history. The Museum houses Sir John Scott's Egyptian collection, including the priceless Royal gold death mask. The nineteenth-century listed building is by architect Alfred Waterhouse. It originally housed Wigan Library, where George Orwell researched his book *The Road to Wigan Pier* in 1936.

Leigh Film Society, The Turnpike Civic Square, Leigh WN7 1EB, UK

Latitude: 53.497734 | Longitude: -2.519849

Leigh Film Society is an award winning organisation run by volunteers. They provide professionally delivered, quality film screenings in venues around Wigan & Leigh. At the prestigious Film Society of the Year event held by Cinema For All in Sheffield they recently collected the Film Discovery Award for the 2nd year running and also won Best Film Programme. They also received Commendations in the Best Marketing & Publicity, Best Single Event and the Community Award categories.

Wigan International Jazz Festival, DW Stadium 15 Loire Dr, Wigan WN5 0UH, UK

Latitude: 53.547463 | Longitude: -2.653755

Wigan International Jazz Festival was formed in 1986 in response to the region's growing audience for jazz and big band music created in part by the Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra. Featuring many of the world's iconic jazz artists, the event quickly gained a reputation for being one of the finest Jazz Festivals in Europe. Artists such as Freddie Hubbard, Horace Silver, Red Rodney Art Blakey, Diana Krall, Michael Brecker, Paquito D'Rivera, Maynard Ferguson, Phil Woods, Ray Brown, Bobby Shew and many more attract capacity audiences to make it a 'must-attend' event on the European Jazz Festival circuit.

Leigh Hackspace, Unit F1, The Cotton Mill, Mather House, Mather Ln, Leigh WN7 2PW, United Kingdom
Latitude: 53.493034 | Longitude: -2.510153

Leigh Hackspace is a membership-funded creative workspace where people with common interests can meet, socialize and collaborate. Currently occupying a 4,500 sq ft converted cotton mill, they have a fully-fitted darkroom, a woodworking area, a textiles area, a well-equipped electronics bench, 3D printers, Raspberry Pis and laptops for members use.

Wigan Music Service, Park Rd, Hindley, Wigan WN2 3RU, UK
Latitude: 53.530585 | Longitude: -2.57482

Wigan Music Service is an award-winning Music Service that supports children and young people to access a wide range of music making opportunities both in and outside of the classroom through instrumental music tuition, curriculum Support for Schools, Bands, Choirs, Orchestras and Ensembles. A teaching team of over 80 music specialists deliver music in schools and colleges throughout the borough.

Get it Loud, Wigan Library Wigan Life Centre, The Wiend, Wigan WN1 1NH, UK
Latitude: 53.545529 | Longitude: -2.6303

Get It Loud in Libraries is a unique award-winning project designed to give people who love music, the chance to see top-notch artists in their local library. Since 2005, it has delivered high quality gigs in libraries in towns and cities all over the UK, featuring breakthrough and established music acts such as Adele, Jessie J, Plan B, Cate Le Bon, Clean Bandit, Juliette Lewis, Meilyr Jones and many more.

Wigan Little Theatre 44 Crompton St, Wigan WN1 3SL, UK
Latitude: 53.547128 | Longitude: -2.627228

Wigan Little Theatre is an amateur dramatic organization that has been in Wigan for over 70 years. They are delighted to have been selected as one of the chosen venues for Sir Ian McKellen's 80th Birthday Tour. Ian returns to his childhood hometown, where he saw his first Shakespeare at Wigan Little Theatre.

ARLA, Trencherfield Mill Heritage Way, Wigan WN3 4DU, UK
Latitude: 53.541215 | Longitude: -2.6379

Academy of Live and Recorded Arts equips actors and theatre professionals with skills fundamental to a productive and creative life in the performance industries. It is dedicated to helping students of all backgrounds and ages to enter the world of live and recorded arts. It has a distinguished record of training professionals prepared and ready to work in collaboration with the industry.

Steam Engine, Trencherfield Mill Heritage Way, Wigan WN3 4DU, UK
Latitude: 53.541215 | Longitude: -2.6379

Trencherfield Mill engine room is a cathedral of the industrial revolution, home to one of the largest and finest fully operational steam engines. Built over 100 years ago, this mammoth metal powerhouse is highly regarded as a feat of industrial engineering. Churning out a massive 2,500 horse power to drive the cotton making machinery of Trencherfield Mill, it plays an instrumental role in Wigan's industrial heritage.

COLOPHON

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