

The Den Festival

Weekends from
9 May – 1 Jun

Stalybridge Civic Hall

Exchanging
culture,
community,
and creativity
in Tameside

royalexchange.co.uk



Welcome to The Den Festival

This May, The Den Festival returns to Tameside for four jam-packed weekends at Stalybridge Civic Hall. We've been working with a brilliant and passionate group of local Ambassadors and Champions to create a festival full of joy, surprises and celebrations! Expect music, workshops, shows, comedy, dance, drama, family mornings and much, much more.

Want to get involved?

Grooves in the Den

Tameside's Global Grooves need you! For the final night of the festival they want to bring together community and professional performers to create a performance of Afro-Brazilian Carnival beats. If you're interested and want to take part, then come along to the drumming workshops on Saturday 17 or 24 May. Suitable for ages 11+.

Congrats! A Half-term project

Are you 11-14 years old? Want to perform, make new friends and have fun in half-term? We have an exciting FREE half-term project happening in Stalybridge. The group will create a new play from scratch under the expert guidance of director Martha Simon and perform it on Saturday 31 May in the Den. Deadline for applications 28 April. To find out more please visit rxtheat.re/HalfTermPDen

Or scan this code



Useful Information

Everyone is welcome at The Den Festival. Our venue is wheelchair accessible and has an accessible toilet. We also have a calm space, a prayer room, and a selection of adapted shows.

CC

this show will be captioned



this show will be BSL interpreted

A

this show will be a sensory adapted performance

To find out more about the festival, what to expect and more information about the venue and how to get here, visit rxtheat.re/TheDenFestFAQs



Family Mornings

10.30am – 12.30pm every weekend

will be a jam-packed Family Morning at the festival. Join us on Saturdays for a calmer & quieter morning, whilst on Sundays expect things to get noisier and more energetic.

Please note that children under 14 must be accompanied at all times.

Friday 9 May

Open 5.00pm – 9.00pm

Welcome to the Den

Help us to launch The Den Festival! Expect music, crafts, entertainment and more! Step inside the Civic Hall to get a taste of what's to come!

Featuring a special performance from Tameside's own Kyla Brox.

Saturday 10 May

Open 10.00am – 9.00pm

Phantasmagoria's Magical Travelling Emporium

10.30am – 4.30pm / Drop-in

Step into a world of whimsical wonders! Help solve a magical mystery and get stuck into some marvellous making at Phantasmagoria's Magical Travelling Emporium.



Circus Skills

with Circus Sensible

1.30pm – 4.30pm / Drop-in

Roll up and take part in a circus skills workshop with Circus Sensible! This fun-filled drop-in workshop is suitable for all ages, so pop in whenever you want and give it a try.

LUCKY TONIGHT!

by Afreena Islam-Wright

7.00pm – 8.30pm / Performance



In this interactive pub quiz-cum-theatre show, your host, Afreena, will put you through your paces to help her tell her story. From Old Trafford to Chittagong, Afreena shares what it really means to be 'British' and 'Bangladeshi', whilst not really fitting in to either of them...



Sunday 11 May

Open 10.00am – 7.30pm

Doodle Dance

with Bonn and Bred Dance Theatre

Workshop

Create doodles and dance moves of your own in these fun and playful workshops. Come along if you love to move or doodle or dance and explore...

10.30am – 11.15am / Age 3 – 6

11.30am – 12.30pm / Age 7 – 11



1.00pm – 2.30pm / Age 12+

Act in the Den

3.00pm – 4.00pm / Workshop / Age 12+

Are you keen to see what it's like to perform on the stage at the Den? Always wanted to try acting but never had the chance? Then join this workshop to get a taste of drama and explore your creativity through our fun give-it-a-go workshop!

Company Chameleon Double Bill by Company Chameleon

6.00pm – 6.45pm / Performance

Push and Hands Down are two electric dance performances. Powerful and emotive, Hands Down is a contact-based duet, which looks at the tensions of union and how we display strength and manage vulnerability. Whilst Push is a powerful duet that looks at the different stances we take to understand and relate to each other.

Saturday 17 May

Open 10.00am – 9.00pm

Creative Self-Celebration

10.30am – 12.30pm / Drop-in

Join Phoebe Foxtrot for a morning of joyful self-celebration and clay creating. Make your very own little clay pot to take home and celebrate all the glorious things about ourselves!



Grooves in the Den

with Global Grooves

Taster Workshop

12.00pm – 2.00pm / Age 11+

Join Global Grooves, a Carnival and outdoor arts organisation, for a taster drumming workshop. People of all abilities and experience levels are welcome.

Performance Workshop

3.00pm – 5.00pm / Age 11+

Perform alongside Global Grooves on the final day of the festival. Immersive yourself in Afro-Brazilian Carnival beats in this fun drumming lesson – suitable for all abilities and experience levels.

No Such Thing as Ordinary

a Royal Exchange Theatre Production

2.00pm – 3.00pm / Performance



7.00pm – 8.00pm / Performance



Inspired by interviews with members of the Tameside community, this play gives a snapshot of their stories and lives. Six characters, one question: Is there really such a thing as ordinary?

Elders Company Workshop

with the Royal Exchange Theatre

4.00pm – 5.30pm / Workshop / Age 60+

If you are aged 60+ and want to take part in drama and performance workshops or learn more about theatre, this session is for you. Get a taste of the Royal Exchange's Elders programme and find out how you can get involved.

Sunday 18 May

Open 10.00am – 9.00pm

Armchair Adventures: A Shakespeare Adventure

with Made by Mortals

10.30am – 12.00pm / Workshop

Join Uncle Chris for a magical workshop inspired by Shakespeare! Through imagination, drama games, and interactive storytelling, enter the world of award-winning Armchair Adventures for lots of historical join-in fun.



Fresh Voices

Guide Bridge Theatre presents

2.00pm – 3.00pm / 14+ / Performance

Fresh Voices is Guide Bridge Theatre's festival of new writing. Watch three of this year's final selection at the Den.

Creatives in the Den

1.00pm – 7.00pm / Drop-in

Calling all Tameside creatives! Join us for a day of talks, workshops and surgeries about all things creative. Then stick around for the artist mixer.

Artist Mixer

with the Tameside Creative Network

6.00pm – 7.00pm / Drop-in

Connect with creative peers from across the borough. Everyone is welcome no matter your background or where you are in your career or practice. Check the website for more information.

Bridge Fest in the Den

7.00pm – 9.00pm / Drop-in

Bridge Fest is coming to the Den for a special one-off evening of music. See some of the incredible local musical talent that Tameside has to offer!

The Den

Festival

Stalybridge Civic Hall

Weekends
from
9 May –
1 Jun

Performances

**LUCKY
TONIGHT!**

**Company
Chameleon
Double Bill**

**No Such
Thing as
Ordinary**

**Fresh
Voices**

**Best Mates,
Top Bins &
Venga Venga**

**Shakin' up
Shakespeare**

**The Taming of
the "Shrew"**

Congrats!

**Comedy
in the Den**

**Grooves in
the Den**

**Bridge Fest in
the Den**

**Kyla
Brox**

Workshops

Doodle Dance
Act in the Den
Grooves in the Den
Elders Company Workshop
Armchair Adventures:
A Shakespeare Adventure
Exploring Shakespeare's Text
Intro to Lighting & Sound
Be Hear Now
Story Chest Adventures
Behind the Seams

Drop-In

Phantasmagoria's Magical
Travelling Emporium
Circus Skills
Creative Self
Celebration
Creatives in the Den
Artist Mixer
Den Building
Instrument Petting Zoo
Celebrate in the Den

Saturday 24 May

Open 10.00am – 8.00pm

Den Building

10.30am – 12.30pm / Drop-in

Come and join local artist Martha, in a large den build and make your own mini one to take away with you.



Grooves in the Den

with Global Grooves

Taster Workshop

12.00pm – 2.00pm / Age 11+

Join Global Grooves, a Carnival and outdoor arts organisation, for a taster drumming workshop. People of all abilities and experience levels are welcome.

Performance Workshop

3.00pm – 5.00pm / Age 11+

Perform alongside Global Grooves on the final day of the festival. Immerse yourself in Afro-Brazilian Carnival beats in this fun drumming lesson – suitable for all abilities and experience levels.

Instrument Petting Zoo

with The Bridgewater Hall

4.00pm – 5.00pm / Drop-in

Ever wanted to try out a trombone? Or vibe with the violin? Join Sarah Atter and The Bridgewater Hall at our Instrument Petting Zoo and have a go at playing a range of instruments and take part in musical games.

Best Mates, Top Bins & Venga Venga

Royal Exchange Theatre presents

2.00pm – 3.00pm / Performance

6.00pm – 7.00pm / Performance

Exploring themes of joy and surprise, these four short plays by Tameside Primary Schools and writers Lekhani Chinwa & Lauren-Nicole Mayes are a delight. See the words of these young playwrights brought to life by a spectacular professional cast, directed by Tori Bungess.



Sunday 25 May

Open 10.00am – 10.00pm

Story Chest Adventures

10.30am – 12.30pm / Workshop

Join storytellers Colin and Kathryn as they open the Story Chest and invite you to pick out costumes & objects and join them in creating a new adventure. This exciting interactive performance is perfect for children aged 5 - 11.



Behind the Seams

2.00pm – 3.00pm / Workshop / Age 14+

Ever wondered how the dazzling costumes you see on stage are created? Join this workshop to get an insight into the world of costume and have a go at designing your own.

Exploring Shakespeare's Text

with HER Productions

4.00pm – 5.00pm / Workshop / Age 14+

Come and explore Shakespearian text with HER Productions! Unravel the language, and unpack some of the Bard's most iconic monologues.

Shakin' up Shakespeare!

by Sarah England School of Dance

5.00pm – 6.00pm / Performance

Performers from Stalybridge's own Bangorang! musical theatre and drama group, present their own collection of Shakespeare's famous scenes. Taken from The Tempest, Macbeth and Twelfth Night, and woven together with their own narration, they will seek to entertain and amuse us.

The Taming of the "Shrew"

HER Productions presents

7.30pm – 9.50pm /

Performance / Age 14+ 

The Bella's Club will officially re-open in 2025 and you're invited! HER Productions remount their highly successful rendition of one of Shakespeare's most polarising comedies.



Saturday 31 May

Open 10.00am – 9.30pm

Phantasmagoria's Magical Travelling Emporium

10.30am – 4.30pm / Drop-in

Step into a world of whimsical wonders! Help solve a magical mystery and get stuck into some marvellous making at Phantasmagoria's Magical Travelling Emporium.



Congrats!

1.30pm – 2.00pm / Performance

After a week-long drama course, young people from across Tameside have created a play from scratch exploring the theme of celebration.

Intro to Lighting & Sound

3.00pm – 5.30pm / Workshop

Ever been curious about technical theatre? Our technical theatre workshops give you an insight into what goes on behind the scenes.

Intro to lighting: 3.00pm – 4.00pm

Intro to sound: 4.30pm – 5.30pm

Comedy in the Den

7.00pm – 9.00pm /

Performance / Age 18 +

Fancy a laugh? Come on down for a hilarious night of comedy in the Den. With Tameside's own Nina Gilligan headlining, this will be a night you won't want to miss!

*Acts can be subject to change.



Sunday 1 June

Open 10.00am – 8.00pm

Be Hear Now

with The Bridgewater Hall

11.00am – 12.30pm / Workshop

These relaxed sessions are for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, plus their families. Led by Beth Bishop and The Bridgewater Hall, explore music, creativity, and movement, inspired by performances from Live Music Now's professional ensembles.



Grooves in the Den

With Global Grooves and the people of Tameside

5.00pm – 6.00pm / Performance

Catch this joyous performance of Afro-Brazilian Carnival beats that has been created throughout the festival to celebrate the final evening of the Den.

Celebrate in the Den

6.00pm – 8.00pm / Drop-in

After four fabulous weekends of joy, surprises and celebrating the creativity of Tameside, you are invited to the Den for one final celebration. Whether this is your first, or eighth day of the festival, we want to see you there!



MIKE LEIGH'S ABIGAIL'S PARTY

13 May / Age 12+ / Performance

From 4 April – 24 May, you can catch Mike Leigh's tragicomic masterpiece ABIGAIL'S PARTY at the Royal Exchange Theatre. On the 13 May the party is going all the way from Stalybridge Civic Hall to the Royal Exchange Theatre! Join us in the Civic Hall and start the 70's soiree early, before we bring you on a coach to the Royal Exchange to watch the show and transport you back to the Civic Hall and 2025 afterwards!

rxtheat.re/AbiPartyD

Scan here for
more information



Our work in Tameside

Alongside working with the Ambassadors and Champions to bring the Den Festival to life, the Exchange's work in Tameside has also involved:

- A performance project with Samuel Laycock School
- Working with Bradley Green Primary Academy, Micklehurst All Saints Primary School, St. Paul's CE Primary School and St. Peter's Catholic Primary to create Best Mates, Top Bins & Venga Venga which you can catch on Sat 24 May!
- A front-of-house training programme with local residents
- Bringing local secondary schools to the Den to learn more about behind the scenes and careers in theatre
- Continued our relationship with Jigsaw Homes and Peoples Community Dukinfield since the conception of the Craft Cafe in 2020
- Creation of a curtain raiser performance at the Den Festival with artist Perveen Hussain and the Women's Drama Group at HTCC
- Bringing community groups to the Royal Exchange Theatre including Power of Resilience, Khush Amdid and 4C community centre.

Discover something new in Tameside

Tameside is a borough rich with culture, history, and heritage. We are proud of the sights, sounds, and treasures that make this a fantastic place to live and visit.

Explore our canals weaving through the streets, the industrial cotton mills shaping our skyline, and the greenery stretching across our nine towns. Each town adds a unique chapter and character to Tameside's story.

Our amazing attractions and countryside offer history, culture and greenery galore, giving everyone the opportunity to try something different. Discover local gems like the Portland Basin Museum and Astley Cheetham Gallery or enjoy scenic walks and trails through our lush green spaces or get in a hand of golf or some sporting activities.

Our vibrant calendar of events and exhibitions– including Stalybridge Street Fest, family activities at local libraries or enjoy an Artisan Market – showcases our community spirit, pride and creative flair.

Whether you're after culture, nature, history or family fun, there's always something everyone can join in with.

What are you waiting for?
Explore something new to do in
Tameside today.

You can find inspiration and all about the latest events happening at www.intameside.co.uk.

You can also follow In Tameside on Instagram and Facebook:

 @intameside

 In Tameside



All tickets for the Den Festival are either Pay What You Can or Free!

You can book

Online at royalexchange.co.uk

By phone at **0161 833 9833**

Via email boxoffice@royalexchange.co.uk

Or just turn up on the day (tickets are allocated on a first come first serve basis)

This festival is part of Local Exchange, the Royal Exchange Theatre's ambitious long-term programme co-created with Ambassadors and Champions in communities across Greater Manchester.

* We've kept the ticket price low because we want everyone to be able to attend. If cost or access is a barrier then please get in touch at engage@royalexchange.co.uk



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