

Bolton Libraries, Museums and Culture

What's On

July to December 2026



SCAN ME

Scan to get
the e-version
of the guide



www.boltonlams.co.uk

Bolton
Council

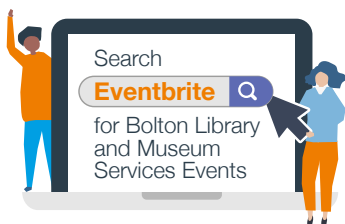


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10
libraries across
the borough for
residents, visitors,
students and
workers.

For a fun
family day out
and inspiration
for all, Bolton's
Museums and
Libraries are
the places
to go





**Come along
and see your
new-look
library, hope
to see you
soon!**

Welcome

Bolton Central Library, Museum, Aquarium and Archive is located within a Grade II listed building on Le Mans Crescent, at the heart of Bolton town centre's cultural quarter. The venue is also home to an internationally acclaimed Egyptology collection, featuring thousands of artefacts and a full-sized reconstruction of the tomb of Thutmose III.

Following its redevelopment and reopening in 2024, Central Library has been thoughtfully reimagined to reflect the evolving needs of modern communities, with a renewed focus on reading, creativity, and digital inclusion.

Across the borough, our nine additional libraries continue to play a vital role as community hubs, offering a wide range of services, activities, and support. Further details about these and upcoming events can be found on our website.

Building on the success of last year, we are delighted to welcome the return of the "Put Big Light On Festival" for its fourth year. By popular demand, the spectacular "Spark!" will once again bring their vibrant performances, combining dynamic rhythms, striking choreography, and illuminated costumes; and Central Library is also proud to be hosting "Helios" by renowned artist Luke Jerram.

For more updates, visit **www.boltonlams.co.uk**
or follow Bolton Library and Museum Services on socials.



-  Bolton Library and Museum Services
-  Bolton_Library_Museum
-  BoltonLMS



Smithills Hall

Smithills Hall is one of Bolton's original family homes. It is **free** to visit and is open Wednesday to Friday from 10am to 4pm, and Sunday from 12pm to 4pm.



Come along to our summer

Garden Party

Smithills Hall

Sun 5 July, 12pm – 4pm



Our annual Garden Party is back! Join us for a family-fun day, including craft and food stalls, music, and plenty of fantastic summer activities. Charges applicable for some activities and refreshments.

Free
drop-in
activity



Author Talk with
Sally O'Reilly

Sat 25 July, 2pm



Join acclaimed author Sally O'Reilly in the atmospheric surroundings of our medieval hall at Smithills as she discusses her latest work, *Hagtale: A Macbeth Original Story*.

[www|eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Free

Shakespeare in the Gardens

Sat 25 July

A Place For Us Theatre Company presents
Romeo and Juliet, 4pm
Hamlet, 6pm



Join us for a double bill of two of Shakespeare's most famous plays, performed outdoors in the gardens, by multi-award-winning 'A Place For Us Theatre'.

Bring your own blanket and/or chair (due to space limitations, picnic tables will not be allowed at this event), enjoy a snack box from Bake and Roast (or bring a picnic of your own), and watch these iconic plays with the hall as a stunning backdrop.

(Please note that these shows will only be cancelled in the event of extreme weather, so please attend dressed appropriately with waterproofs and/or jumpers at the ready).

Tickets available via A Place For Us Events on

[www | ticket
source](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk)

7+

**Come along for
a fun-themed
craft session**

**11am – 12.30pm on
the following Fridays**

24
Jul

31
Jul

7
Aug

14
Aug

21
Aug

28
Aug

30
Oct

Suitable for ages 4 to 11

[www | eventbrite](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk)

Costs
apply

Halloween Fun Day

Wed 28 October, 11am – 3pm

Come in your spookiest costume and join us for crafts, games, and a Halloween disco. Suitable for children aged 4+ and families.



Free
No need
to book

Smithills Hall

Smithills Hall is one of Bolton's original family homes. It is **free** to visit and is open Wednesday to Friday from 10am to 4pm, and Sunday from 12pm to 4pm.



After Dark Haunted Halloween Family Ghost Tours

Fri 30 October, from 5.30pm

The Housekeeper will take you on a spooky tour of the hall, where you may meet some previous residents - prepare for some jumps and screams.

Not suitable for children under 6, or those of a nervous disposition.

Book on Eventbrite - available from September.



[www|eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

6+

A Christmas Carol at Smithills Hall

Sat 5 and Sun 6 December, 5pm and 7pm

To get our festive programme underway, award-winning A Place For Us Theatre Company returns with its version of the Charles Dickens classic in the atmospheric setting of Smithills Great Hall.

Tickets available via A Place For Us Events on



The Father Christmas Experience at Smithills Hall



The popular event is back for 2026.

There will be a special My First Father Christmas Experience - a day for children with additional needs and a day for adult and teenage believers - in addition to our traditional Father Christmas Experience.

All the events will include a gift from Santa, Christmas Decoration, Festive Trail, and the chance to write a letter to

Santa to get a reply via Elf Post. The traditional Father Christmas Experience will also include festive drinks and treats for the children from Bake and Roast.

For our events for children/adults/teens with additional needs, we will have a more chilled-out Waiting Room, including bubbles and a sensory space for those children who may need a quieter atmosphere.

All of these will be payable and ticket-only events. Booking information will be released via Eventbrite on 16 September. Full all event dates, see page 27.



Museum exhibition events

As well as permanent museum galleries, we also have temporary exhibitions throughout the year.



KFOR and Kosovo +25 Exhibition

A photodocumentary exhibition to mark the 25th anniversary of KFOR in Kosovo.

**Up Close Gallery,
1 July – 13 September 2026**

This exhibition presents images by internationally acclaimed photojournalist Nick Sidle, which tell the human story of the NATO-led international peacekeeping force in Kosovo in 2000-01. Produced by arts organisation Heartstone, the exhibition has been made possible with the support of The National Lottery Heritage Fund.





Unpacked: From the Stores

To Autumn 2026

Unpacked showcases gems from the museum collections, many of which have not been on display for a long time. They have been chosen by museum staff, volunteers, and community partners.

Bolton Museum's collection was established in 1852 and through gifts, bequests, and purchases, has now grown to include over 300,000 art, Egyptology, natural history, and local history objects.

The museum can only display a selection of the objects at a time, with the rest of the collections being cared for in stores, though accessible on request.

This exhibition offers a glimpse into the amazing diversity of the collections.



Museum exhibition events

As well as permanent museum galleries, we also have temporary exhibitions throughout the year.

Archive Tours

7
Jul

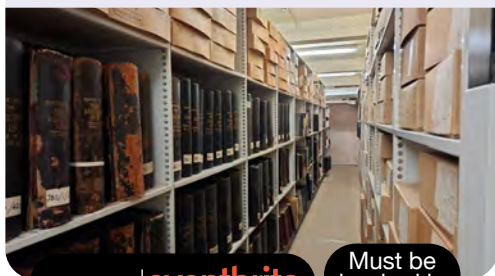
18
Aug

29
Sep

29
Dec

**10.30am – 11.30am and
1.30pm – 2.30pm**

A chance to look at the archives of Bolton Museum with selected material on display, with archivists on hand to discuss local/family history questions and queries.



[www|eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Must be
booked in
advance

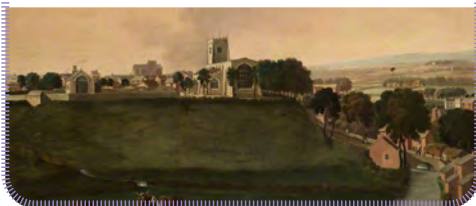
Saturday Curator Tours/Talks

Tours
from
1pm

History Gallery Highlights Tour
18 July, 12 September

Birds of Prey in Bolton, **22 August**

Corvids of the UK, **28 November**



Tuesday Curator Talks/Tours

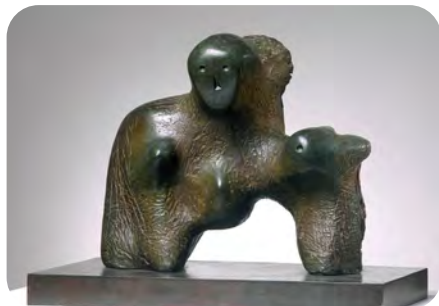
Tours
from
1pm

Aquarium Insights, **28 July**

The Birds of Bolton Museum,
29 September

Victorian Gothic, Kim Edwards-Keates
27 October

Great Art for Everybody: A History
of Bolton's Art Collection,
24 November

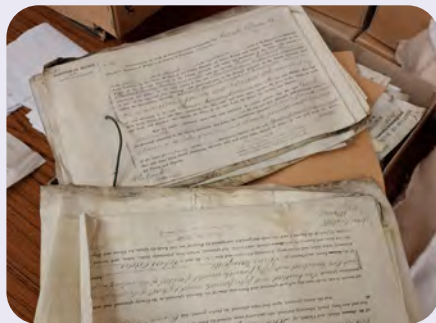


Heritage Open Day

Join us in September as we celebrate
National Heritage Open Days.

10 September, 11am and 1pm

Central Library - Tours of the Archives



18 September, 1pm and 2.30pm

Smithills Hall Tours - including the
room where protestant preacher
George Marsh was interrogated
before being sent to trial.



[www|eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Places
are free
but limited

Theatre in the Park

Join us at Elizabeth Park (opposite Bolton Market) over the Summer Holidays for free family-friendly theatre shows.

Each show varies in length between 30-45 minutes and is perfect for all the family.

Life at the Lido Thurs 23 July

Grab your bathers, come and take a dip with us! Meet our trio of swimmers as they retell stories from the past and present, meeting some interesting characters along the way. This family show brings together a joyous combination of music and storytelling, which will go down swimmingly with all ages.



Circus House plus workshop Thurs 30 July

Clown, circus, and showmanship are rolled together in this 30-minute family-friendly performance. Plus, join in with Circus Skills workshops between **11.30am and 1.30pm**.

If the weather proves too bad for the show to go ahead in the park, we will relocate into Bolton Central Library.

**Free
drop-in**

**No
need to
book**

**Every
Thursday at
11am and
2pm***

Pirate Princess **Thurs 6 August**

Join Poor Princess Poppy, shipwrecked and stranded in a cumbersome ball gown, and help her to transform her outfit into a practical yet fabulous solution, enabling her to climb the mast in a stunning display of circus strength and hoist the flag for clothing equality!



Old McDonald and the Three Pigs Plus **Thurs 13 August**

The Three Pigs are tired of singing “Eee aye eee aye oh!” and leave Old McDonald’s farm to build homes of their own. With help from the friendly farmer and animals, can you stop the Big Bad Wolf from blowing their hard work away?

Pipes and Poo **Thurs 20 August**

Have you ever wondered what happens to a poo after you flush it down the loo? Join us for a delightfully disgusting 45-minute interactive theatre gameshow exploring the extraordinary world of water, pipes, and poo.

Can you help Bubbles win the golden crown? And what will we discover along the way?



***Please note,**
there will be no
Theatre Show on
Thursday 27 Aug
as we will be
preparing for the Food
and Drink Festival
in the Park.



**Funded by
UK Government**

**together
we are**

**GREATER
MANCHESTER**

**Bolton
Council**

Family events

We offer a variety of activities and events at weekends and school holidays, and the Museum can get very busy at these times.

If you would prefer to visit us during **quieter times**, we don't hold events between **9am and 10am on a Saturday** or between **10am and 11am on a Sunday**. If you want to visit and have any specific access needs, please get in touch and we will do our best to help you.

Fish Feeds

Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 1pm during all school holidays (some of these will include a Curator Talk, please check Curator Talks for details).



Central Library

Digi Kids Club

10.30am – 12pm



4
Jul

1
Aug

12
Sep

10
Oct

7
Nov



Join our monthly Digital Club which gives children aged 7–12 the chance to build, code, and explore in a fun, supportive environment with equipment provided. Perfect for curious minds, our club encourages children to learn through play while developing future digital skills, all while having fun!

Digital Saturdays

10.30am – 12pm



18
Jul

26
Sept

24
Oct



A fun, hands-on session where children can explore coding, creative tech, and digital play with a different theme each time. Suitable for children aged 7–12.

[www.eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

**Book in
advance**

Digital Discovery Days

1pm – 4pm

24
Jul

21
Aug

30
Oct

(SPOOKY
SPECIAL)

**Free
drop-in**

Step into a world of digital fun at our Digital Discovery Day where children and families can explore virtual reality, Minecraft, coding, and more hands-on tech adventures!



School's Out

Bolton Central Library and Museum,
**10.30am – 12pm and
1.30pm – 3.30pm**

Join us during the school holidays, where there will be fun activities, storytelling, trails, and film screenings.

Sat 18 July – Sun 30 August

Take part in the Summer Reading Challenge and different activities across all the libraries and at the museum.

Sat 24 October – Sun 1 November

Join us for half term with storytelling, activities, films, and theatre performances.

Free

No booking
unless otherwise stated

High Street Library Family Film Club

Join us on the first Saturday of every month for our Family Film Club at High Street Library. Vote for your favourite film a week in advance, and we'll show the film with the most votes! You can even bring cold snacks and juice for the full film club experience. All films will be rated U or PG.

**1
Aug**

**5
Sept**

**3
Oct**

**7
Nov**

**5
Dec**

Book on the day at High Street Library

The Jeweller's Daughter

Thurs 29 October, 11am and 2pm
Central Library

Join us for this vibrant true story of a young girl from Zanzibar. The Jeweller's Daughter theatre show celebrates culture, community, and the joy of difference.



Audiences of all ages are invited to play, create, and help storyteller Natasha bring this colourful journey to life.

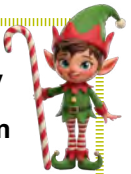
[www|eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

**Costs
apply**

Elf Takeover Day

Sat 5 December, 11am – 3pm
Central Library and Museum

Bring your very own cheeky elf and join our mischievous little helpers for a day packed with elf-tastic adventures, elf-mazing games, and just a sprinkle of playful elf-chaos.



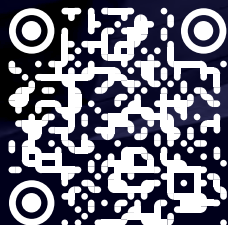
**Free
drop-in**

put big light on

Put Big Light On
Festival returns
to Bolton this
November.

**Thurs 19 to Sun 22
November 2026
5–9pm
Bolton Town Centre**

Scan to follow
us on Facebook!



Experience Bolton's free light art festival, filled with spectacular installations, live performances, and immersive moments for all ages. Don't miss Luke Jerram's **Helios** and - appearing in Bolton for the first time - the internationally acclaimed illuminated giants, **DUNDU**.



Helios by Luke Jerram © Bec Hughes,
House of Hues

Co-curated by Bolton Council and Things That Go On Things



Giants of Light by DUNDU



Spark! LED drummers and DUNDU light giant

Follow Put Big Light On Festival on social media for updates and announcements.



Put Big Light On Festival



PutBigLightOnBolton

Library events and activities

Our venues offer a wide range of events and regular weekly activities for all ages.

Regular sessions are free and there is no need to book – special events may require booking in advance.

Please also check at your local branch as not all events are listed in this guide.



2026 Summer Reading Challenge

Read to the Beat

Sat 4 July until Sat 12 Sept

Summer Reading Challenge Launch

Sat 18 July, 11am – 3pm

at Central Library

“Read to the Beat” and join us at our launch event of this year’s Summer Reading Challenge - hosted at Bolton Central Library. Sign up, grab books, and take part in activities to inspire you for your challenge.



Manchester Camerata Wind Quintet

Sat 19 September, 2pm and 3.30pm
at Central Library

We will be joined by a Camerata Wind Quintet who will perform two short family-friendly concerts.

This event will be **free**, please keep an eye on our socials for booking details.



National Poetry Day Open Mic

**Thurs 1 October, 6pm
at Central Library**

Join us for an evening of verse and creativity - secure your slot now to perform your original work for five minutes in front of an audience!

Performers will need to book a slot via Eventbrite, but if you would just like to watch, you can just turn up.

[www|eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Free

**Get Online Week: Have a go
with digital**

18+

**Fri 23 October, 10am - 2pm
at Central Library**

Explore everyday digital skills, try out fun and friendly technology, and build your confidence in a relaxed, supportive setting.

**Book Speed Dating
Non-Fiction Special**

**Thurs 12 November, 6pm - 7.15pm
at Central Library**

In honour of non-fiction month, join us for an event where our book lovers have just four minutes to persuade you of the charms of their favourite non-fiction book. An evening covering a wide selection of non-fiction titles.

[www|eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Free

**Big Games Event
at Farnworth Library**

Sat 25 July, 10.30am - 4pm

Traditional and modern games available for all. Play an old favourite and introduce family members to something new.

Free
No need
to book

**Mini Plant Show
at Little Lever Library**

Tues 4 August, 1pm - 2.30pm

Come and celebrate Summer Flowers with Little Lever's Garden Brew & Chat Club.

Free
No need
to book

**South East Asian Family Games
Festival at High Street Library**

Sat 19 September, 12pm - 4pm

Manchester Indian Film Festival returns with a range of exciting new South Asian family games premieres. Be the first people in the UK to play!

**Science Saturday
at Little Lever Library**

Sat 24 October, 11am - 3pm

Find the fun in science by exploring, creating, and joining in interactive activities.

Free
No need
to book

**Ancient Egypt at Harwood Library
Thurs 29 October, 11am - 4pm**

Celebrate all things Ancient Egyptian.

**Football-Themed Family Fun
at Horwich Library**

Sat 12 September, 11am - 4pm

Come and join us to celebrate all things football.

Free
No need
to book

Library events and activities

Community Library regular activities
Bolton's libraries host free regular
activities for adults and families,
including reading groups, art classes,
writing groups, Toddler Tales, parent
and baby groups, crafts, and more.

For more information about these
activities, contact:

askboltonlibraries@bolton.gov.uk
01204 332853
www.boltonlams.co.uk

Groups at
Bolton Central Library

Baby Time
Tues, 10.30am

Mah Jong
Tues, 1pm - 3pm

Singing for Health
Tues, 2.15pm - 3.45pm

Precious Gems - arts and crafts
Wed, 12pm - 2pm

Scrabble group
Thurs, 1pm - 3pm

Poetry Appreciation group
Third Thursday of each month, 11am

Reading group
Third Thursday of each month,
6.15pm

Reading Friends
Second Friday of each month,
2pm - 3pm



Lego group
Fourth Saturday of each month,
10am - 11am

Graphic Novel group
Fourth Saturday of each month,
3.30pm

Cinema Screenings

**Lecture Theatre,
 Bolton Central Library**



We hold a variety of Cinema Screenings throughout the year:

- **Family Film Screenings**
- **Dementia-friendly Screenings**
- **Silver Screenings**

For dates and times, please see separate leaflets available at all libraries. Keep your eye on our Facebook page or email:
askboltonlibraries@bolton.gov.uk



Toddler Tales

Free storytelling sessions for young children and their mums, dads, and carers - ideal for toddlers.

Sessions take place at all Bolton libraries throughout the week. See below for details:

- Blackrod Library, Thurs, 10.30am
- Brightmet Library, Wed, 10.30am
- Bromley Cross Library, Thurs, 10.45am
- Central Library, Wed & Fri, 11am
- Farnworth Library, Tues, 11am
- Harwood Library, Mon, 10.30am
- High Street Library, Mon, 12pm
- Horwich Library, Thurs, 10.30am
- Little Lever Library, Fri, 10.30am
- Westhoughton Library, Fri, 10.30am

**Contact
 any Bolton
 library
 for further
 details.**

Digital, Employment and Skills



A way of life...
Just a click away

More than just digital

The Digital, Employment and Skills team can support you to find work, training, and learning opportunities. Visit www.boltondes.org.uk for more information.

Digital Skills Job Club

at Bolton Central Library

Every Thursday, 10am to 12pm

- Get help with digital skills to search and apply for jobs
- Learn how to update and upload your CV
- Find training and learning opportunities online
- Access basic digital skills to get started on your journey

Free

No booking



Digital skills one-to-ones

Various days and times, including Saturdays at libraries across Bolton.

Get tailored support to use a smartphone, tablet or laptop from our friendly Digital Helpers. Learn basic digital skills, including:

- Registering and using the NHS app
- Searching and applying for jobs
- Microsoft Word and Excel
- Setting up and using emails
- Using social media
- Buying and selling online

Booking required - speak to a member of staff at your local library, call **01204 332853** or email des@bolton.gov.uk

Better Skills, Better Health, Better Futures

Sat 12 September, 10am – 2pm

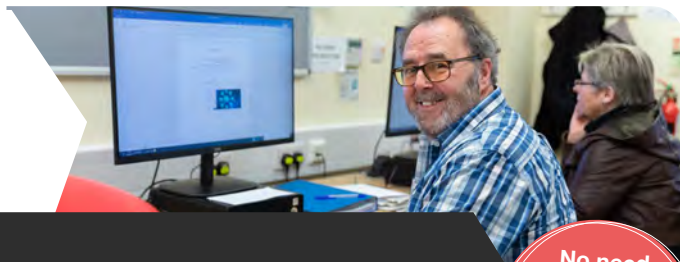
Victoria Square, Bolton

Whether you're looking for work, considering a career change, wanting to upskill, or simply seeking advice and support, there will be friendly organisations on hand to talk things through. You can:

- Learn about local job and training opportunities
- Meet employers and support services face to face
- Find out what help is available to support your health, wellbeing, and future prospects

Free

No booking



Digital Drop-ins

Not sure where to start? Find out about the benefits of being online and get help to stay safe whilst using apps and websites.

Join us for a free cuppa and get support to use your smartphone, tablet or laptop from one of our friendly Digital Helpers.

Bolton Central Library, every Thursday

Farnworth Library, third Monday of the month

Harwood Library, second Tuesday of the month

Horwich Library, last Monday of the month

Little Lever Library, last Thursday of the month

Westhoughton Library, last Friday of the month

No need to book,
just turn up!

2pm-4pm

Digital Lending Library

We can loan laptops and tablets to groups and individuals who cannot afford their own devices. Email des@bolton.gov.uk to find out more.

Greater Manchester Databank Drop-in

Bolton Central Library
Every Friday, 2pm - 4pm

If you are an adult on a low income, struggling to access the internet at home or away from home, you may be eligible for a data, calls, and text SIM via the Greater Manchester Databank. A SIM provides free internet access for up to 12 months.



Call in with your smartphone to find out more.

Do more with the NHS App!



Did you know you can order repeat prescriptions at the touch of a button? We've teamed up with Bolton NHS to provide support to help you register and use it, saving you time and money.



Drop-in or book a one-to-one at your local library.

Digital, Employment and Skills

DIGITAL Bolton

A way of life...
Just a click away

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Advice Service

The ESOL advice service offers information, advice, and guidance to help residents improve their English language skills, connecting them with the right classes, assessing their learning needs, supporting enrolment, and providing ongoing advice so they can confidently progress in education, work, and everyday life.

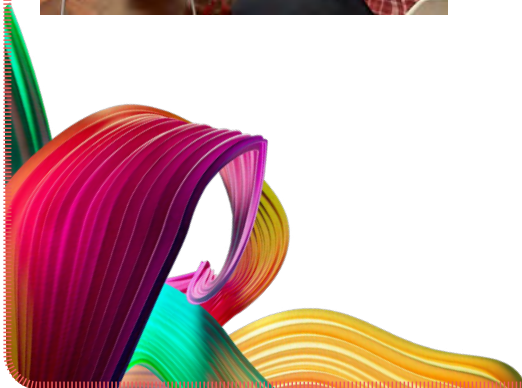
Ask for information at
your local library or email
ESOL@bolton.gov.uk

Build A Business in GM Libraries



Start or grow your business with us.

Whether you're dreaming of starting your own business, or need support to grow an existing one, Build A Business is here for you.



One-to-One Support

Arrange an appointment with an Enterprise Officer.

Scan the QR code, fill in the form, and we will get back to you to schedule an appointment. Your Enterprise Officer will work with you to determine the next steps, locate the right information, and help you develop an action plan.



Free Accounts Clinics

Advice on tax, accounts, and business.

Scan the QR code to book a free 30-minute consultation with a qualified accountant.



Available on the following dates:



Legal Advice Clinic

Free legal advice sessions booked via legaladvice@bolton.ac.uk

Available on the following dates:



Business Support Hub

- Business Services
- Business Start-up
- Business Growth

**Every Wednesday,
10am – 12 noon**

Drop in and chat over a coffee, meet people from the business support community, and find out how we can help.

**Business Centre,
Bolton Central Library,
BL1 1SE**



Calendar of events

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Find out more at
www.boltonlams.co.uk



Libraries

Museums

Archives

Aquarium



Visitor Information

Bolton Central Library and Museum

Le Mans Crescent, BL1 1SE
01204 333173

Smithills Hall

Smithills Dean Road, BL1 7NP
01204 332370

Blackrod Library

Church St, Blackrod, BL6 5EQ
01204 332380

Brightmet Library

Brightmet Fold Lane, BL2 6NT
01204 332352

Bromley Cross Library

The Crescent, Toppings Estate
BL7 9JU 01204 332354

Farnworth Library

Market St, Farnworth, BL4 7PG
01204 332344

Harwood Library

Gate Fold, Harwood, BL2 3HN
01204 332340

High Street Library

High St, Bolton, BL3 6SZ
01204 332358

Horwich Library

Jones St, Horwich, BL6 7AJ
01204 332347

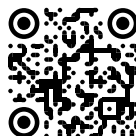
Little Lever Library

Market Street, Little Lever, BL3 1LP
01204 332360

Westhoughton Library

Library St, Westhoughton, BL5 3AU
01942 634640

Please see www.boltonlams.co.uk for opening times, email addresses, events, and activities.



Group visits: If your group is planning to visit us, we would love to see you, so please let us know when you intend to come by contacting:

Ask Bolton Libraries

01204 332853
askboltonlibraries@bolton.gov.uk

Stay in touch! Follow us on socials to keep updated on all our exhibitions and events:

 **Bolton Library and Museum Services**

 **Smithills Hall Museum**

 **Bolton_Library_Museum**

 **BoltonLMS**



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