

# Middlesbrough Libraries Supporting Literacy





PUBLIC LIBRARY



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## Middlesbrough Libraries - Supporting Literacy in Middlesbrough

**We are passionate about enabling people to reach their full potential and provide a range of services, events and initiatives which support literacy and wellbeing.**

Improving literacy in all forms and fostering a love of reading can create opportunities, tackle disadvantage, improve skills for employment and is an investment in the future of the town.

We play a vital role in supporting health and wellbeing and preventing social isolation, working in partnership with others to offer a wide range of activities and services for all the family.

We actively work to support the Middlesbrough Reading Promise, a Middlesbrough Council led strategy in partnership with the National Literacy Trust.

This brochure highlights a selection of the work taking place throughout Libraries in Middlesbrough to support literacy and learning for all.



# Bookstart in Middlesbrough - Early Years Literacy Pathway

The Middlesbrough Promise has at its heart the need to bring key partners, parents and carers, children and young people together with a shared commitment to improve reading through their own pledges and actions.

A key objective being to raise awareness of the importance of reading across Middlesbrough and increase engagement with, and enjoyment of, books. Partners aim to promote the role of parents/carers, the wider family and community in developing reading skills from the earliest opportunity.

Our Early Years Literacy Pathway offers all children and their parents' access to books and information to support literacy development pre-birth and up until school reception entry at age 5. We work with Health Visitors, Registrars and Health Professionals at Baby Clinics as well as schools to embed the message that sharing books from an early age helps give your child the best start in life.

This Pathway ensures that by the time each child in Middlesbrough attends full time school, there have been key opportunities for all partners to engage with parents about the importance of sharing books and reading.

## Pre birth

Expectant parents are told about the importance of reading to your bump at 'Pregnancy Birth and Beyond' sessions and gifted a book for baby and National Literacy Trust information.

## Birth to 12 months

Bookstart Congratulations Cards are given to parents as they register the birth of their baby.

Health Visitors gift 'Baby's First Shapes' booklet at the baby's very first check and at the 6-8 week check, a 'Sing with Me' leaflet.

Parents are reminded that sharing books, stories and rhymes help improve bonding and boosts language and literacy development.

The Health Visitor gifts the Bookstart Baby Pack, containing board books, a rhyme sheet and an information booklet at the 9-12 month check. A library membership form is included to encourage families to join the library and share books early and often.

## School and private, voluntary and independent nurseries

Children receive their Bookstart Treasure Pack containing a book, information leaflet and library membership form at nursery. This helps every child to become a confident and enthusiastic learner.



**Bookstart**  
BookTrust





## Book Trust - Time to Read

Delivered through the Library service to ensure that every reception aged child receives a free book gifted by BookTrust, the UK's largest reading charity, ensuring that every child has access to books at home.

School reception classes within walking distance visit the library to receive their free book. For many children, this will be their first experience of a library, so the session is fun, welcoming and interactive.

Time to Read Packs are delivered directly to schools not within walking distance of a library.

## Reading for all and family activities

We undertake a range of family events and activities throughout the year, and during school holidays to foster a love of reading, promote literature and inspire creativity.





Photos © Dave Warren 2019 for The Reading Agency with thanks to Pencers Square Library

# The Reading Agency Summer Reading Challenge

We participate in the annual Summer Reading Challenge to get children aged 4 to 11 to read six library books of their own choice during the summer holidays. Each year has a different theme to engage children, aiming to encourage them to continue reading during the holiday period when there may not be access to books or encouragement to read.

A programme of supporting events and activity takes place in libraries throughout the summer.

Every child who completes the challenge receives a medal at a special awards ceremony held at Middlesbrough Reference Library and certificates are sent to schools.

**In 2018, 922 children signed up with 59% of those completing the challenge.**

We work with a variety of partners and education providers to make the challenge exciting and accessible.

# Borrowbox eBooks - the 24 hour library

We provide free 24 hour access to eBooks and eAudiobooks with a large collection including both adult and junior titles. The Borrowbox app is free to download and library members can borrow up to 4 eBooks and 2 eAudiobooks at any one time.

# SUMMER READING CHALLENGE





## Learning to read

Libraries have numerous reading scheme books to complement and support children learning to read through phonics. They are designed for independent reading as well as for sharing. Series available include, Oxford Reading Tree, Reading Champion, Early Reader, Reading Corner, Ladybird Read It Yourself, I am Reading, Let's Read, Skylarks, Tadpoles, Reading Corner Phonics, Biff, Chip and Kipper, Espresso and Songbirds.

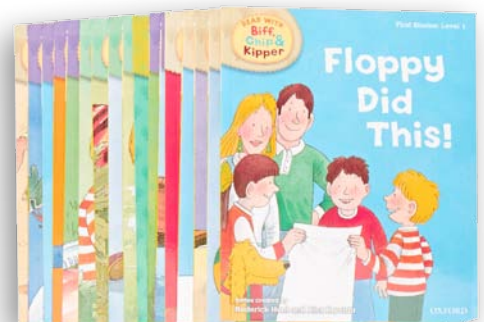
## Borrow a book

A community library loan scheme, run in partnership with Libraries & Children's Centres, enabling families to become library members, borrow and return library books at Children's Centre sessions whilst families are encouraged to share books together.

## Rhyme Times

Rhyme Times currently take place at selected Libraries.

The sessions offer a mix of songs, rhymes, rhythm and movement, while providing the opportunity to share games, books and toys in a friendly, inclusive space. Parents and carers have the opportunity to meet others and make new friends.







## Crossing the Tees book festival

All five library authorities in the Tees Valley come together to host this exciting annual festival celebrating the word in all forms. Thanks to funding from Arts Council England, the festival has brought best-selling authors such as Milly Johnson, Joanne Harris and Sophie Hannah to the region. Festival activity has included short story competitions, poetry, open mic events and History Wardrobe presentations.

The festival includes an exciting programme of children's authors who speak to school audiences about their books and inspire a love of reading. Authors visiting Middlesbrough have included Jeremy Strong, Katherine Woodfine and Jim Smith. With the support of Teesside University, multi-school events have taken place enabling us to reach large school audiences.

## Boro Babies Fair

The Library Service, Children's Centres and Middlesbrough 0-19 Healthy Child Service came together to organise the first 'Boro Babies' Fair in 2018. The event raised awareness of literacy, health and giving your baby the best start in life. Partners from all sectors were on hand to give advice and support, along with local businesses. Free taster sessions on offer included baby yoga/massage, music and post-natal exercise. It is hoped that this event will now continue to take place every year.





## Harry Potter Book Night

**Middlesbrough Reference Library is transformed into Hogwarts Great Hall for one evening every year in February to celebrate Harry Potter Book Night - a national event held in association with Bloomsbury.**

This is one of the most of the most popular events in the library calendar, encouraging children to discover the magic of reading Harry Potter.

In 2017 the Central Library hosted the 'History of Magic' exhibition as part of our British Library Living Knowledge network partnership. The exhibition panels were enhanced with artefacts curated by the Dorman Museum. Over 7,800 visited the exhibition.



© Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2015



## Book Benches

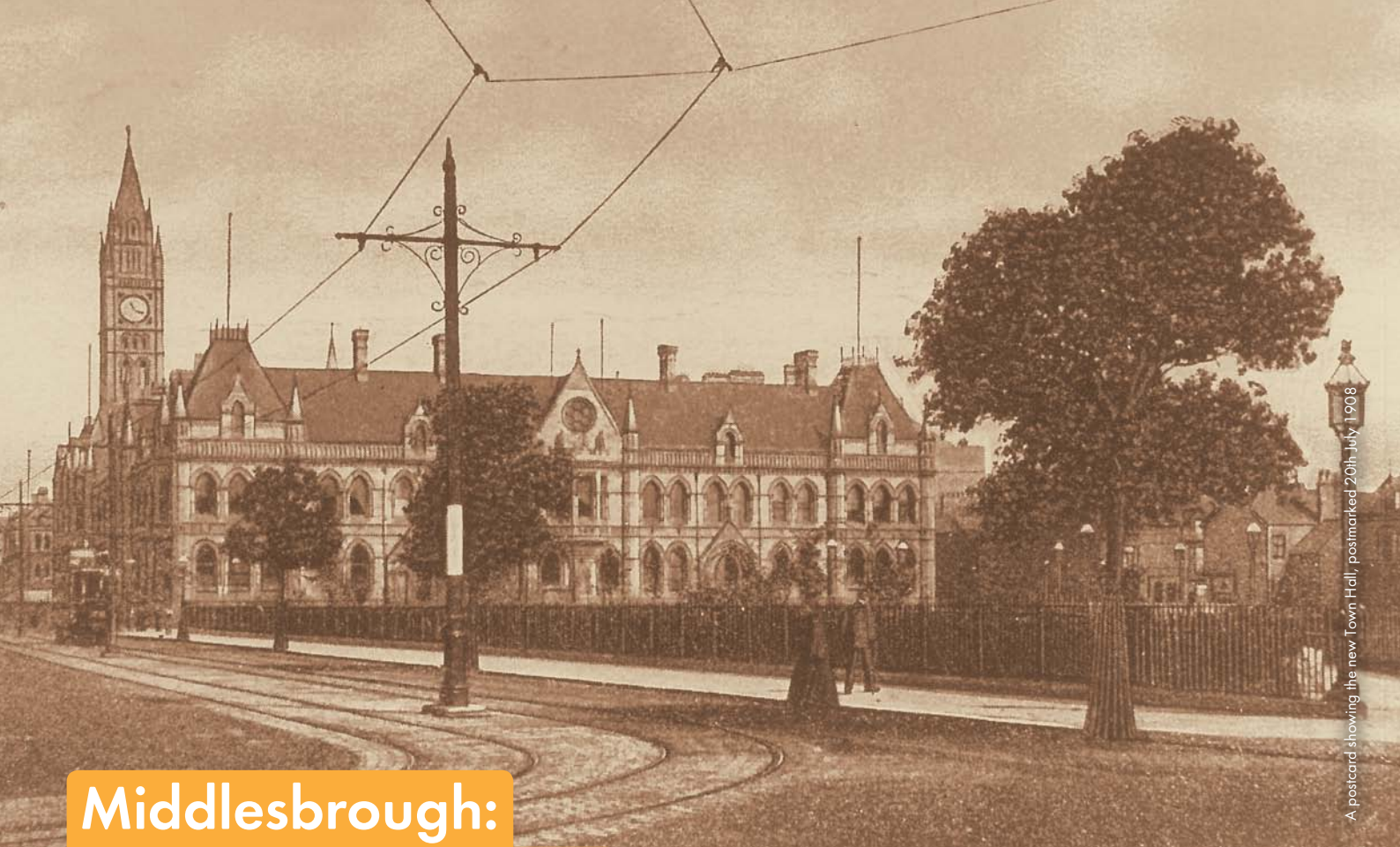
In 2017, young people in Middlesbrough were asked to vote for their favourite reads from the Middlesbrough Best Reads for Children leaflet.

An interactive webpage, created by the Council's Digital team enabled children to select their favourite books. Almost 7,000 votes were cast and the ultimate favourite was 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen.

The top favourite reads have been depicted on benches, currently located in libraries and Community Hubs. Families, schools and community groups took part in workshops to transform the benches with images and characters from the books.

**In Summer 2019, an Arts Council funded project will see the book benches form a trail across the town centre, encouraging people to view all the benches and encourage reading for pleasure.**





A postcard showing the new Town Hall, postmarked 20th July 1908

## Middlesbrough: My Town My Future

Middlesbrough Libraries were one of only twenty library authorities to receive Arts Council England funding as part of the Libraries Opportunities for Everyone fund - £94,000 was received in April 2017 for a year-long project.

The funding enabled the digitisation of the Reference Library's photograph collection with the help of volunteers. Images can now be shared all over the world on a specially created website. Within the first year of the project, 40,000 people viewed the website.

Members of the community were invited to take photographs and produce a piece of creative writing about Middlesbrough. A wide variety of groups took part, including Bridge Hill Day Service, a group for young adults to encourage independent living skills.

The project inspired creativity and participants were encouraged to think about their town in new ways. The photographs and creative writing pieces were curated into an exhibition and anthology of work.



## Northern Children's Book Festival

The 12 library authorities in the North East work in partnership to organise this annual regional festival. An exciting programme of visits by authors, illustrators and poets who visit schools and libraries culminates in a Gala Day which rotates around the region.

Middlesbrough hosted the festival Gala Day in 2016 with activities taking place in Central Library and MIMA. Renowned children's authors and illustrators, including Vivian French, Paul Cookson, Philip Ardagh and local author Gabrielle Kent took part in the free fun day. Author Cathy Cassidy signed dozens of books for excited fans. Visitors came from as far as Northumberland and Leeds.





## LEGO clubs

Our free LEGO clubs run weekly and are suitable for children 4+ and their families. The models built by the groups are on display for all to see in-between sessions.

There are currently four LEGO clubs taking place across the service - Central Library, North Ormesby, Acklam and Marton library and Community Hub.

A home education group also utilise LEGO to run their own group during term time only.

## Chess club

The Central Library hosts a weekly chess club on Saturday mornings from 10am-12pm with the Chess into Schools organisation. The club is for the whole family, for those who have never played chess and would like to learn and also for chess lovers who would like to meet likeminded enthusiasts.



## Maker Space workshops

These sessions give families the opportunity to foster creativity by making a variety of objects such as LED torches and card making, scribebots and explore the conductivity of playdough.

By engaging with these fun sessions children develop a range of digital literacy and creative design skills and it is hoped to inspire young people to engage with the STEAM agenda - (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics)





## Work with schools

### Our class visit offer

We offer a diverse range of sessions for primary schools in Middlesbrough focusing on Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2, enabling us to introduce children to libraries at an early age

### Storytelling sessions

Free, fun interactive sessions, using story sacks, which include props, puppets and dressing up for children between the ages of 3-11.

### National Curriculum based sessions

Support and compliment children's study for early years and Key Stage 1 & 2. Topics Include Captain Cook, Ancient Egypt and houses and homes. These sessions are chargeable.

### Research and Library skills interactive sessions

Give children the skills they need to use the library to find books for pleasure or homework.

### Dementia Awareness sessions for Years 1-6

Use storytelling, memory games and object handling to teach children about dementia (this session has been created by Stockton Library Service and is provided in Middlesbrough with their permission).

### Central Library tours

Are welcomed and provide schools with an opportunity to visit the beautiful historic Carnegie building. Classes have the opportunity to choose books to loan and look at some of the special items in the Reference Library including historic maps and photographs.

**For more information on any of the above, contact [classvisit@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:classvisit@middlesbrough.gov.uk) or 01642 729002.**





## Wellbeing

We provide a range of health and wellbeing books and information.

For children and families, our libraries have a range of picture books to help children deal with issues such as anxiety, bullying, grief and divorce.

For teenagers and adults, we offer a wide selection of titles to support all aspects of health and wellbeing.

## Reading Well

We provide access to the Reading Agency's national Reading Well initiatives to help people understand and manage their health and wellbeing using self-help reading.

Reading Well booklists currently available cover common mental health issues, dementia, mental health issues affecting teenagers and chronic long term health conditions. Health professionals can recommend titles, or alternatively anyone can call into their local library to pick up a book from the scheme they may be interested in.

Copies of all Reading Well titles are available to borrow from libraries in Middlesbrough.

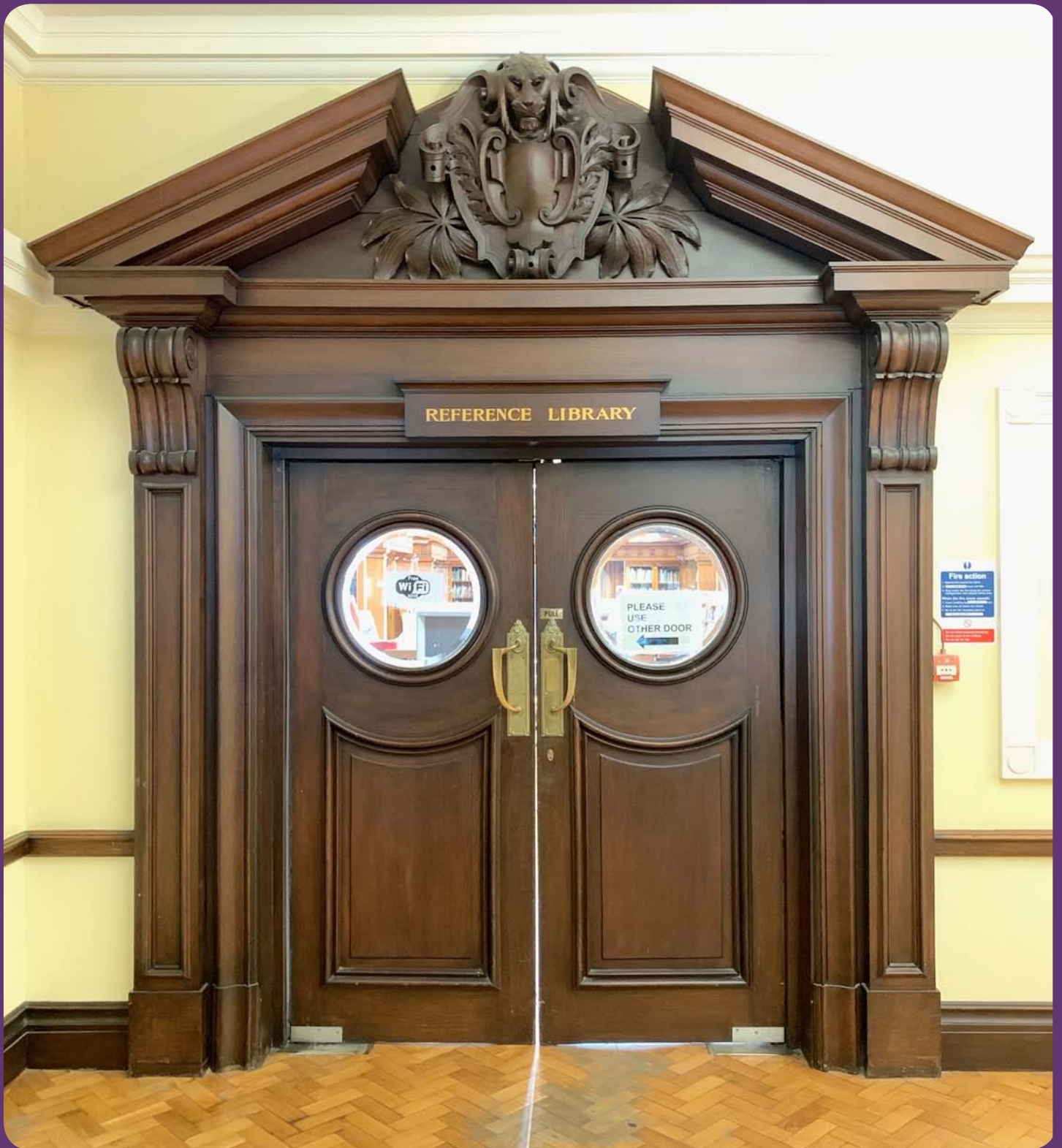
## Autism hour

An autism friendly hour takes place every Saturday morning at the Central Library from 9.30-10.30am. During this hour the lights can be lowered or turned off if required and quiet spaces are available.

Social stories and library floor plans are available to borrow at the library counter. They can also be downloaded from the council web site prior to a visit. Autism friendly signage is displayed throughout the library and all staff have undergone Autism Awareness training and are ready to assist if needed.



# READING WELL



For further information about any of the information or activities listed, please contact:

Martin Harvey • [martin\\_harvey@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:martin_harvey@middlesbrough.gov.uk)

Diane Fleet • [diane\\_fleet@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:diane_fleet@middlesbrough.gov.uk), or

Ruth Cull • [ruth\\_cull@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:ruth_cull@middlesbrough.gov.uk)

