



THE NATIONAL  
**FESTIVAL  
OF MAKING**

A national celebration of  
making from the kitchen  
table to the factory floor



Morag Myerscough + Crown Paints

## Overview

**The National Festival of Making is an annual town centre-wide event in Blackburn, Lancashire, activating the high street through collaboration between local industry and the public sector, delivered and produced by Blackburn-based not-for-profit social enterprise, Festival of Making CIC.**

Each year the festival attracts over 40,000 visitors from the local area and nationally; hosts 100+ independent makers across 20+ venues and delivers 60+ workshops, public realm exhibitions and performances across one weekend. An industry conference for design, architecture, placemaking and manufacturing sector professionals opens the Festival on Friday, shining a light on Lancashire as the home of UK manufacturing and innovation.

**Using pop-up events and public realm intervention as a catalyst for cross-sector collaboration:**

The National Festival of Making's strategic aims include using arts and culture to platform Lancashire's industrial heritage and contemporary manufacturing and making sectors, and boosting the Lancashire economy through groundbreaking events and experiences, creative placemaking and cross-sector collaborations.



[festivalofmaking.co.uk](http://festivalofmaking.co.uk)



[artinmanufacturing.co.uk](http://artinmanufacturing.co.uk)



“I just think the Festival is brilliant - the combination of ambition, embeddedness and such a collectively positive atmosphere over the whole weekend - I don't know of anything else like it.”

**COMMISSIONED ARTIST QUOTE**

# Vision and Objectives



# Our Vision

**Our Vision is to create a celebratory public arena for UK making across manufacturing, engineering, arts, craft and construction.**

## Industrial Heritage and Unlocking Innovation

Through art and public celebration on a national scale, promote Lancashire as the home of industrial heritage and the future of making and manufacturing innovation in the North and beyond.

## A Making Celebration

Produce an annual event of national significance that celebrates making in the form of a participatory, town-wide festival experience appropriate for both a general audience and established arts and culture audiences.

## Making Experiences

Place inventive making experiences at the core of the festival to inspire multi-generational audiences to become industrious future makers.

## Placemaking

Create accessible place-based experiences by activating urban environments with high quality content and wayfinding to create a vibrant public realm and strong sense of place.

## Sustainable Futures

Establish sustainable partnerships with the UK's leading makers and manufacturers, local and regional sector support organisations, businesses and artists to create legacy impact\* and strategic development opportunities.

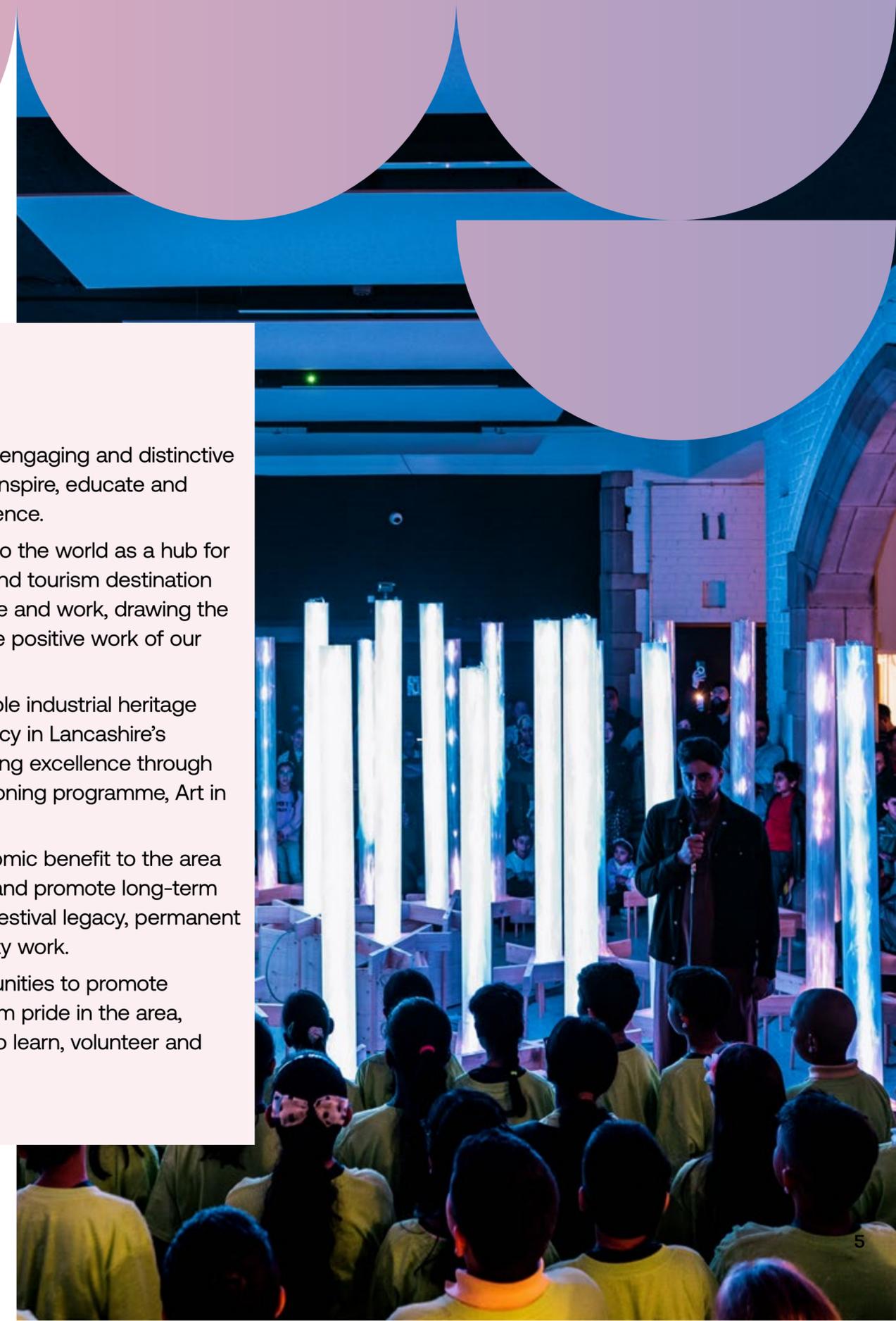
*\*social, economic, environment, cultural, skills*

## Boosting Economies

Increase regional and national visitor numbers to Lancashire, improving perceptions and encouraging visitor spend and overall economic impact.

# Objectives

- Develop an even more engaging and distinctive festival programme to inspire, educate and upskill our festival audience.
- Showcase Lancashire to the world as a hub for innovation, an events and tourism destination and a great place to live and work, drawing the nation's attention to the positive work of our partners and sponsors.
- Bring to life the incredible industrial heritage of the area and its legacy in Lancashire's continuing manufacturing excellence through our headline commissioning programme, Art in Manufacturing.
- Bring short-term economic benefit to the area through visitor spend, and promote long-term development through festival legacy, permanent projects and community work.
- Work with local communities to promote making, foster long-term pride in the area, provide opportunities to learn, volunteer and develop for everyone.



## A Landmark Attraction

In 2025 the National Festival of Making achieved:

Over  
**44,000**  
visitors

A boost of  
**£1.9m**  
to the local economy

**15,000**  
**first time visitors:**  
the festival brings new audiences to  
Blackburn and Lancashire



“This wonderful event not only looks at our rich heritage but also spotlights everything positive about our town.”

VISITOR QUOTE





# Facts & Figures

## Audience Profile

- 5% of visitors work in **routine, semi-routine and manual employment**. This is **more than double the UK NPO average of 2%**. The event is accessible to audiences who do not traditionally engage with cultural programmes.
- 28% of visitors are **modern professionals**, an audience segment that has strong reach across the culture sector. This represents our largest audience segment.
- 80% of visitors visited with **friends and family** - The National Festival of Making is an accessible and varied event for local communities.
- 59% of visitors are **from the Blackburn area** and demographics are in line with UK census data - the festival is **popular with local people**.
- 40% of visitors are from outside Blackburn - the festival is a cultural tourism destination for **families and culture seekers** from **across the region and further afield**.



## Supporting The Local Economy

**The festival generates over £1m each year in revenue to local businesses, with average spend per visitor of £49.**

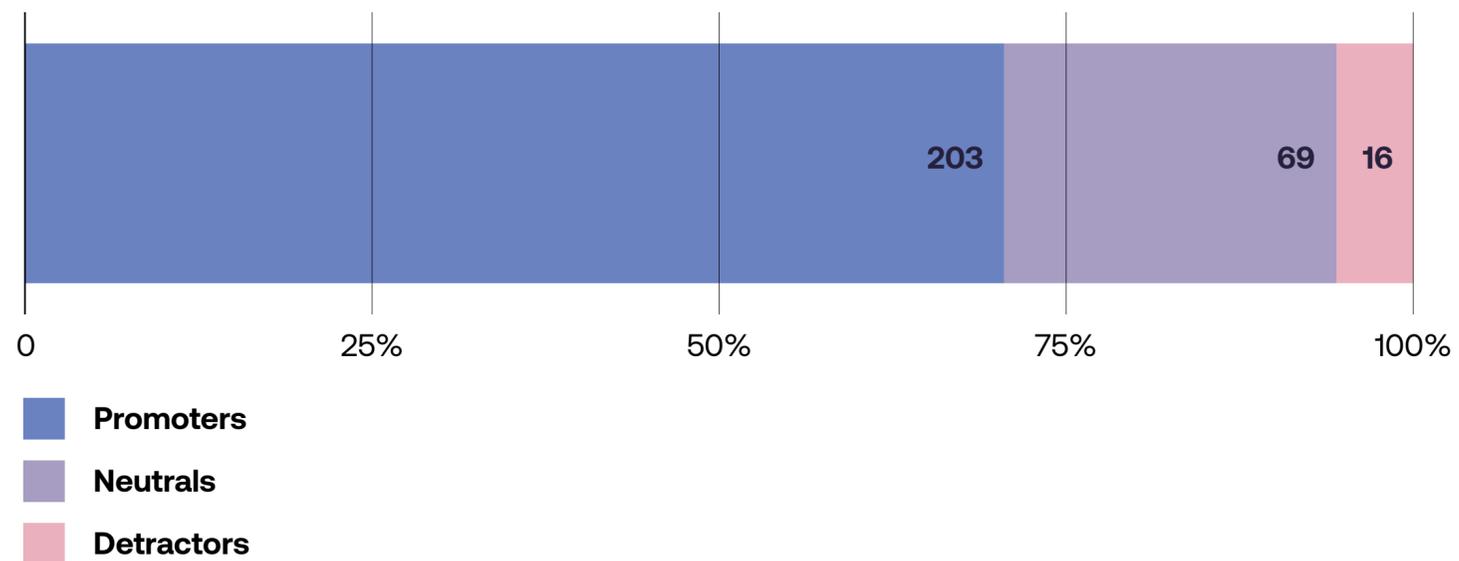
The festival has created significant economic impact in its operational years:

2019	—	£1.3m
2022	—	£950k
2023	—	£1m
2024	—	£1.8m
2025	—	£1.9m

The National Festival of Making is highly regarded by audiences:

### Net Promoter Score

The festival received a Net Promoter Score of **64.3** (an increase from 54 in 2024). NPS ratings range from -100 to +100. This is an **excellent score\***.



\* <https://www.qualtrics.com/en-gb/experience-management/customer/good-net-promoter-score/>





## Arts Council England Quality Metrics

The Quality Metrics are a set of statements, developed by arts and cultural organisations. The metrics help organisations understand what people value about their work, as well as allowing them to benchmark against similar organisations.

**Distinctiveness:** It was different from things I've experienced before.

**Variety:** It had an interesting mix of activities/work.

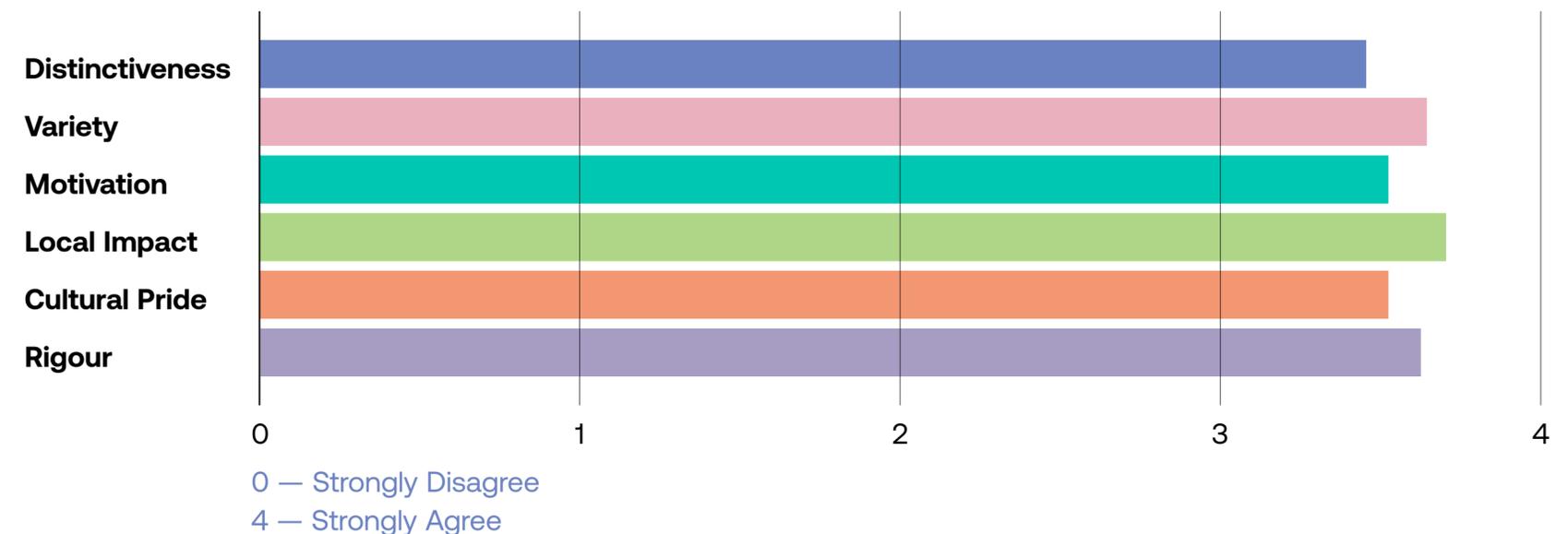
**Motivation:** It made me feel more motivated to do creative things in the future.

**Local Impact:** It is important that is happening here in Blackburn.

**Cultural Pride:** It strengthened my cultural pride.

**Rigour:** It was well thought-through and put together.

Strong positive ratings indicates the festival maintains a consistent, high standard of audience satisfaction and perceived value. The highest average rating was for Local Impact, as was the case in 2024.



“The festival was incredible, the atmosphere was so **upbeat and enthusiastic**, the volunteers were so friendly and welcoming and knowledgeable, and the workshops were **inspiring and informative**. There was so much to do and my whole family LOVED the day. It’s so wonderful to have something for the whole family which is free and so very **inspiring**.”

VISITOR QUOTE



# Press & PR



## Press Quotes

### Promoting Lancashire to the World

The festival attracts local, national and international media attention, promoting Blackburn and Lancashire to new audiences as a dynamic region with thriving industries and engaged local communities:

“For those curious about what happens when artists roll up their sleeves and step into the engine rooms of British industry, it’s not one to miss.”

**CREATIVE BOOM**

“One town is celebrating our production prowess”

**BBC RADIO 4 WORLD AT ONE**

“Blackburn and the county of Lancashire have pioneered textile arts for hundreds of years and this event hopes to inspire guests and continue this rich legacy.”

**THE WEST AUSTRALIAN**

(Australian daily newspaper reaching 4.1m readers every month)





“The festival is an important component in the cultural landscape of Blackburn, Lancashire and the North of England and acts as a key advocate for meaningful cultural regeneration.”  
**MAG NORTH**

“Blackburn, the northern town boasts a population that works in making and manufacturing at a rate twice the national average. It makes Blackburn the perfect place to host the National Festival of Making.”  
**BBC RADIO 4 FRONT ROW**

## Media Coverage

- BBC RADIO 4**
- THE TIMES**
- VisitEngland**
- The West Australian**
- BBC RADIO LANCASHIRE**
- BBC RADIO CUMBRIA**
- selvedge**
- CREATIVE BOOM**
- THE MANUFACTURER**
- COLOSSAL**
- MATERIAL SOURCE**
- LANCASHIRE Telegraph**



## Marketing Impact

Promoting the festival and attracting audiences to Blackburn through **digital and outdoor advertising**:

- Regional poster and flyer campaigns: **60k posters and flyers** distributed across **Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside**
- **Direct print marketing** to primary schools across Lancashire via flyer distribution in reading book bags, targeting over **50k families**
- High visibility outdoor advertising: **40 bus stop adshel sites, 4 digital billboards** and **200 lamp post advertising boards** across Blackburn town centre and main transport routes
- Takeover of **Fred Aldous shop window** in Manchester city centre - directional signage to networks of travel to Lancashire - promoting to a **metropolitan audience** and one of the biggest art and craft materials retailers in the in the North
- **Targeted social media advertising** promoting the festival to local and national audiences.
- High quality printed what's on guides, 'at a glance' flyers and maps distributed across Blackburn town centre

### Online Reach:

**36k** web sessions\*

**25.5k** unique web visitors\*

A reach of **372k** across Facebook and Instagram\*

**13.8k** Instagram followers

**7k** Facebook followers

\*Through May-July 2025

“It was a fantastic day out. So much to do and covering so many areas. I’m a DT teacher and it was lovely seeing **future generations enjoying and embracing making**. I’ve told everyone in my department they need to go next year.”

VISITOR QUOTE



# Partners & Stakeholders



# Festival Partners



Anita Morris Associates  
Public Relations

Artangel



Blackburn  
Central  
Library



BM&AG  
Blackburn Museum  
& Art Gallery



BLACKBURN & DARWEN  
YOUTH ZONE  
OnSide

BRITISH  
TEXTILE  
BIENNIAL



community clothing®



CROWN



DECO  
PUBLIQUE



Fred Aldous Ltd

HemingwayDesign

JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS  
TEXTILES FACTORY  
HERBERT FARMINGTON



JOHN SPENCER  
DESIGN • CULTURE • WEARE



LANDS



Marketing  
Lancashire

not only a  
street market

Prism Contemporary

QUEEN STREET  
MILL



R  
ROBIN ZÄHLER



SOURCE

THE SUPER  
SLOW WAY

TASTE  
Lancashire

Teacake



theCOLAB

UNCULT  
URED  
CREATIVES

Venture  
Arts

Wach  
EST 2003





## Art in Manufacturing: Industry Partners

**BYD**  
BLACKBURN YARN DYERS  
EST. 1915

**CARDBOARD  
BOXCOMPANY**

**cherrytree**  
BAKERY

**COOKSON&CLEGG**  
Made in England since 1882

**CNC ROBOTICS LTD**  
MANUFACTURING REVOLUTION

**CROWN  
PAINTS**

**DARWEN  
TERRACOTTA**

**Forbo**  
FLOORING SYSTEMS

**GRAHAM & BROWN**  
EST. 1790

**JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS  
TEXTILES FACTORY**  
HERBERT PARKINSON

**HERITAGE  
ENVELOPES LTD**

**JOHN SPENCER**  
DESIGNER - COLOURS - WEAVE

**LARGESHIRE SAW COMPANY OF  
BLACKBURN**

**THE  
MAKING  
ROOMS**

**MGS**  
TECHNICAL PLASTICS

**OEP**

**Pamaz**

**QUEEN STREET  
MILL**

*Roach Bridge Tissues*  
SPECIALIST PRODUCERS & CONVERTERS OF FINE QUALITY TISSUES

**RITHERDON**  
EST. 1895

**S&B** STANDFAST  
& BARRACKS  
EST. 1844  
FABRIC PRINTING COMPANY

**Silentnight**

**spiroflow**

**SURFACE  
PRINT**  
MAKERS OF THE GREAT WALLPAPERS

**The Senator Group**

**WEC  
GROUP**

**“This is the best thing I’ve seen in Blackburn. I grew up here in the 80s and it’s an absolute joy to see this event particularly because it brings together the different communities that live here.”**

**VISITOR QUOTE**



# Feedback & Testimonials





“I bloody love having this festival in Blackburn! It’s amazing that almost everything is for free and it’s great to see the whole of the town centre being used for something so positive! It was so nice to see full families enjoying themselves and participating in all of the activities. Such a good range of activities with a great community spirit!”

“What’s amazing about the Festival is that it genuinely is about making, and the **opportunities to give things a go are phenomenal**. And that it happens in Blackburn - and **engages everyone from locals to regional arty types** - is just brilliant.”





“The first time I visited with a friend was just for the afternoon. We decided we would need a whole day. This year we brought 2 more friends and decided we need to attend for the whole weekend next time! Love it. It’s a **fabulous event for Blackburn.**”



[festivalofmaking.co.uk](http://festivalofmaking.co.uk)



[artinmanufacturing.co.uk](http://artinmanufacturing.co.uk)

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