

► REAL ◀ ROCHDALE



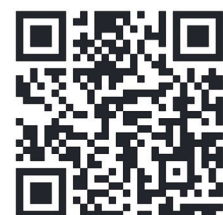
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A warm welcome to Real Rochdale magazine

This edition of the magazine is so packed with interesting and inspiring features it is difficult to choose which to highlight, but without doubt completing the awe-inspiring challenge of walking the 'Rochdale Way', in aid of Springhill Hospice, by a team from MysonPages has to be mentioned.

The music of Rochdale Feel Good Festival has always been popular, and this year was no exception as R&B icon Gabrielle topped the bill. Preceded on the Town Hall Square stage the night before by one of Britain's best-loved and most influential pop groups, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark (OMD).

We have an interview with new Rochdale AFC head coach, Ian Watson, who explains his football philosophy.

Examples of amazing dedication: Jennifer Harris has completed an incredible sixty years working for the library service. My friends Sharon and Megan Whittaker of CHANGES Hair Design in Littleborough are celebrating half a century of style.

A mention also for the Martlet Kitchen, the restaurant based at Rochdale Town Hall now has a terrace space where diners can choose to enjoy their meal alfresco.

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ORCHESTRAL MANOEUVRES IN THE DARK

Photographer: David Murphy



The walkers ready to set off from Owd Betts



Over the hills but never far away from Rochdale!

THE ROCHDALE WAY CHARITY CHALLENGE

A team from MysonPages walked the Rochdale Way over two days raising over £10,000 for Springhill Hospice

The route takes walkers through some of the most spectacular countryside of Rochdale and the South Pennines, passing through river valleys, peaceful woodlands and outlying towns and villages filled with grand architecture revealing a proud industrial past.

Day one

Starting at Owd Betts the group walked to Heywood, via Ashworth Valley; from Heywood and around the Middleton Loop; on to Hollingworth Lake via Newhey and Ogden; and from Hollingworth Lake to The Moorcock to complete the first day and around two thirds of the distance.

On the evening of day one there was a gathering at The Moorcock with friends from Springhill Hospice and For Generations to Come, to help raise funds, hear stories from other recent fundraisers, and enjoy food and a welcome drink.

Day two

Day two started at The Moorcock and over the hills to Watergrove; from Watergrove to Healey Dell; onto to Greenbooth via Prickshaw, before the final leg from Greenbooth over Knowl Hill and back to Owd Betts.

Sense of achievement

After completing the challenge, Dave Brereton, Managing Director of MysonPages, who organised the walk, said: "What started as a way to raise funds for Springhill Hospice ended up being so much more.

"Two days walking round the edge of the borough along a path that came in to being in 1999.

"Two days of being present in every step, being joined by friends and colleagues along the way.

"Two days of conversations that would never happen in the digital world, and two days that we will never forget.

"The sense of achievement is so real, and it would be worth just doing it to say you have done it, but to raise well over £10k for Springhill along the way is simply amazing. Thanks to all who have made that happen.

"Someone once said to me that community is at the heart of everything I do, and I sheepishly replied that I don't know any other way. It's something I got from my mum and dad who freely gave their time to organise things for others.

"If you'd like to add to the tally, you can do so at:"

www.justgiving.com/page/mysonrochdaleway

cont...



Dave Brereton (white t-shirt) with Springhill Hospice staff and supporters at The Moorcock

THE ROCHDALE WAY CHARITY CHALLENGE

Fundraising for Springhill Hospice

The walkers raised over £10,000 for Springhill Hospice and Vicki Barnett, Senior Corporate Fundraiser at Springhill Hospice, thanked the MysonPages team, she said: "We are incredibly grateful to the team at MysonPages for taking on yet another inspiring fundraising challenge in support of Springhill Hospice. Completing the Rochdale Way is no small feat, and their determination and commitment to making a difference has been truly remarkable.

"The team have raised an incredible amount of money through their challenge, and every pound will help us continue providing specialist care and support to local people with life-limiting illnesses and their families when they need it most.

"It was wonderful to welcome the team to The Moorcock at the halfway point and to see so many members of the local community come together to cheer them on.

"Congratulations to everyone involved on this fantastic achievement, and thank you for your continued support of Springhill Hospice."

Springhill has an annual fundraising target of £2.5 million, and every pound raised is one more pound funding services.

To find out more visit the Springhill Hospice website at: www.springhill.org.uk



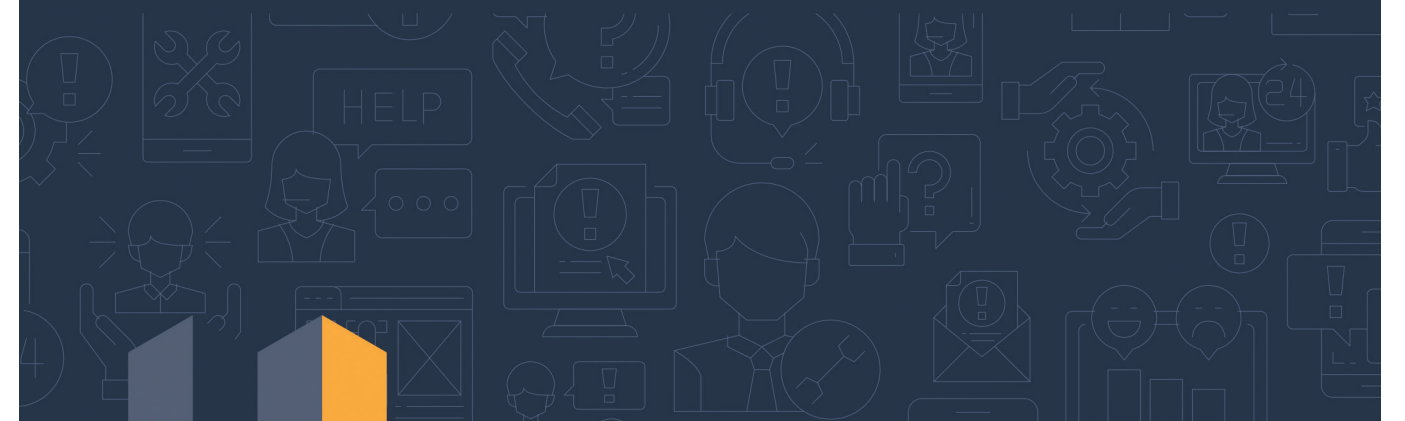
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RACHEL LAVER BUILDING ROCHDALE'S NEXT CHAPTER

by Nikki Staley

When Rachel Laver first stood alone in Rochdale Town Hall's magnificent Great Hall, she admits she was unexpectedly emotional.

"I just looked around and thought, this is exquisite," she recalls. "What an incredible asset to have."

That moment captured exactly what attracted Rachel to her new role as Managing Director of Rochdale Development Agency (RDA). Beyond the investment, major developments and ambitious plans, she sees something even more valuable, a borough with remarkable strengths and enormous untapped potential.

After more than 20 years leading regeneration and economic development programmes across the country, Rachel has returned to what she loves most: helping places grow, businesses succeed, and communities prosper.

"I love regeneration because you can genuinely see the difference you're making," she says. "You create jobs, improve places and help people build better futures."

"We've got fantastic foundations. The challenge now is making sure more people discover them."

She joins the RDA at one of the most exciting periods in Rochdale's history. With transformational projects including Atom Valley, the Northern Gateway, Middleton's regeneration programme and the Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC), Rachel believes the borough is perfectly positioned to attract new investment while supporting the businesses already calling Rochdale home.

Yet for Rachel, success isn't measured simply by new buildings or headline announcements.

"It's about making sure local people benefit from every opportunity," she explains. "We want young people to believe they can build successful careers here. We want businesses to have access to the skills they need. We want talented people who leave to study to see Rochdale as somewhere they want to return to."

Creating that future means bringing the right people together.

Rachel describes the RDA as a connector, helping businesses, investors, education providers, local authorities and partners work towards shared ambitions.

"We're here to listen," she says. "The more we understand the challenges businesses face, the better we can help. Sometimes our role is making introductions, sometimes it's unlocking funding, sometimes it's influencing policy. Often it's simply bringing the right people around the same table."

Innovation will be central to that ambition. Through the SMMC and collaborative programmes already supporting manufacturers, Rachel believes businesses of every size can become more productive, embrace new technologies and improve sustainability while strengthening their competitiveness.

"Our role is to bring people together, unlock opportunities and help businesses thrive."

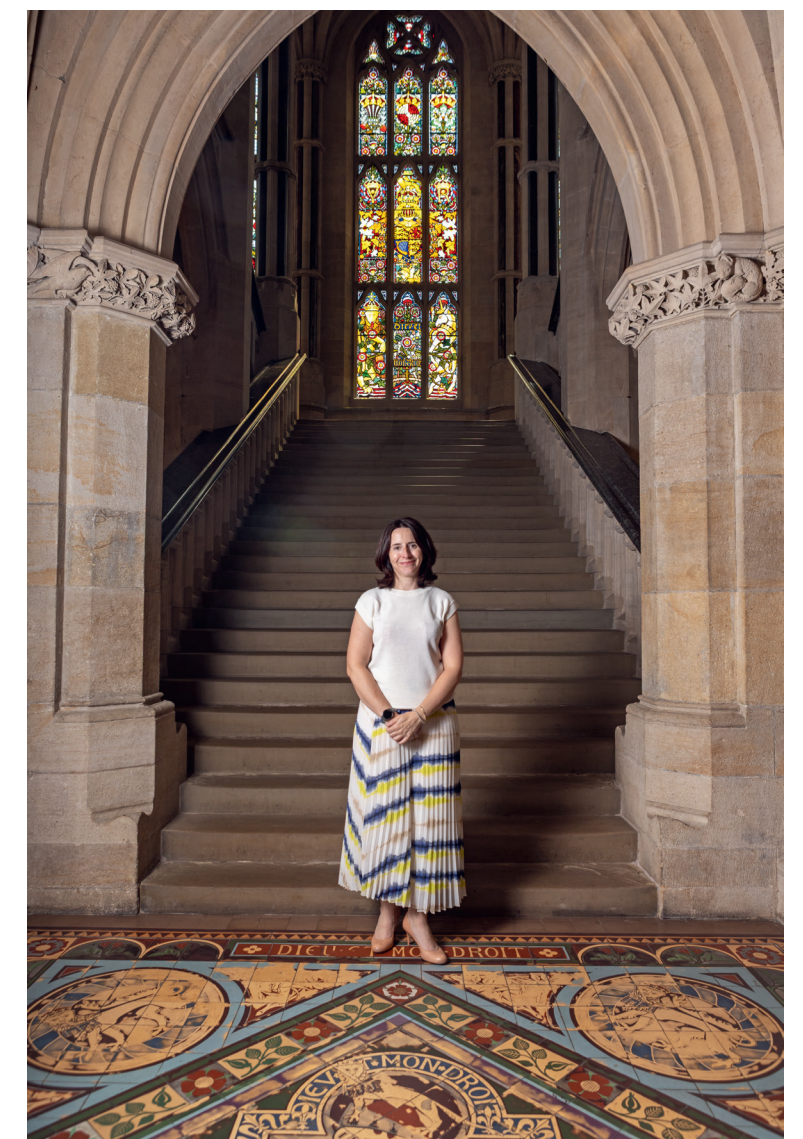
Just as important, she wants Rochdale's success stories to become better known. "There are businesses here doing extraordinary things, supplying global industries and developing world-class products, but too many people simply don't know they're here. We need to celebrate those businesses and help them connect with new opportunities."

Rachel also believes Rochdale offers something increasingly rare: room to grow. Excellent transport links, affordable commercial space, high-quality housing, beautiful countryside, rich heritage and proximity to Manchester create a compelling proposition for businesses, investors and families alike.

"We've got fantastic foundations," she says. "The challenge now is making sure more people discover them."

Looking ahead, Rachel hopes her legacy will be measured not only in completed developments, but in stronger businesses, thriving town centres and communities that feel the benefits of long-term investment.

"If, in five years' time, more businesses are choosing Rochdale, more people are building their careers here and our town centres are thriving, then we've done our job. Ultimately, everything we do is about creating opportunity and improving quality of life for the people who call Rochdale home."



Rachel says Rochdale Town Hall is an "incredible asset"

investinrochdale.co.uk

MAYOR OF ROCHDALE

FAISAL RANA

For his mayoral year, Faisal has chosen five causes to support and here he explains the reasons behind his choices...

Springhill Hospice

Springhill Hospice is an incredible organisation, caring for patients and loved ones across the borough of Rochdale who are affected by life limiting conditions like cancer, motor neurone disease, and heart failure. The specialist care provided helps people enjoy the best possible quality of life, to the end of life.

I know from personal experience, when my brother was diagnosed with cancer, what an important job Springhill Hospice do supporting and caring for people during their illness.

I have also seen at first hand, from my visits in a personal and professional capacity, what a wonderful, dedicated and committed team of staff Springhill Hospice has.

We are blessed to have Springhill in our borough and long may they continue to make every moment count.

The Christie

The Christie is, for the same reason, particularly close to my heart. As a family we have a strong and emotional connection with this wonderful facility.

The Christie is the largest single site cancer facility in Europe and the first in the UK to be accredited as a comprehensive cancer centre.

The support they provided my brother was truly inspiring, from the heartfelt conversations, the blood tests, operations, and chemotherapy.

Anyone who has had a cancer diagnosis will know how important it is to receive high-quality treatment, support and that dedicated personal touch. The Christie never fails to provide this, and I can't speak highly enough of this organisation and the staff who work there. Truly world class.

I am proud to be support The Christie throughout my mayoral year and beyond. They will never be forgotten.

SANDS

I am also extremely proud to support SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society).

Again, this is an organisation I have a deep emotional connection with, as my daughter tragically lost a child at stillbirth. They were there for my daughter and my family in our time of need. We will never forget.

SANDS is the UK's leading pregnancy and baby loss charity. They are always there to support everyone touched by pregnancy loss or the death of a baby. It's a sobering thought that every day in the UK 13 babies die shortly before, during or soon after birth. At least one in six pregnancies end in miscarriage. Thousands of parents and families are experiencing the heartbreak of pregnancy and baby loss every year in the UK.

For more than 40 years, SANDS has provided a safe, understanding, and caring community for anyone touched by pregnancy or baby loss. Long may they continue to do so. I will be doing my utmost to support their wonderful work.

The Rochdale Veterans Breakfast Club

My 15 years in the Armed Forces were some of the most fulfilling of my life.

We have always prided ourselves in Rochdale on our work to support veterans. We never forget the service and sacrifice of those who help to keep us safe and to protect our shores.

I didn't hesitate to choose the Rochdale Veterans' Breakfast Club as one of my charities. The breakfast club does an inspiring job, in bringing veterans together every week over a breakfast and brew.

There are so many wider benefits to the breakfast club, not least in helping to boost veterans' wellbeing and to reduce social isolation.

Since it began around a decade ago, it's gone from strength to strength, bringing together veterans at the Flying Horse Hotel to swap stories, reminisce and remember their service.

Thousands of breakfasts are plated up every year, with over 50 veterans a week being supported through the club.

We do so much as a council to support our veterans and, through the mayor's charity, this will enable the breakfast club to keep going from strength to strength.

Rochdale's Women's Welfare Association

My fifth charity is Rochdale's Women's Welfare Association (RWWA). RWWA is a dedicated women led organisation striving to empower all women, in particular black and minoritised women to reach their potential. This wonderful organisation tackles inequalities and works towards the elimination of violence against women and girls. They provide holistic support in a safe, culturally appropriate environment. Quite simply, they are inspirational.

Every person has the right to be safe, empowered, and free from violence and the fear of violence.

RWWA is in the heart of the community and delivering important and highly valued work, helping to empower the powerless and giving a voice to those who refuse to be silenced. I am honoured to be supporting the association as one of my charities.

Throughout my mayoral year, the mayoress and I hope we can rely on your support, across the community, to raise important funds for these charities. Working together, we can all play our part in supporting what they do to improve people's lives. I look forward to meeting as many people as possible over the coming 12 months, as I serve our wonderful borough as its civic head and first citizen.

Donations to the mayor's charities can be sent to:

The Mayor's Office, Rochdale Borough Council, Floor 2, Number One Riverside, Smith Street, Rochdale OL16 1XU.

If any organisation would like a visit, please ring 01706 924834 and my team will be happy to help.

Further information on my charities and the work I will be undertaking can be found at:

www.rochdale.gov.uk/mayor





PAUL WAUGH MP

PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Paul Waugh, the Labour and Co-operative MP for Rochdale, has been appointed by Prime Minister Andy Burnham as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Education.

Paul said: “Being appointed a minister in the Department for Education is one of the proudest moments of my career, and it is a moment I want to share with the whole of Rochdale.

“I was born in Wardle, brought up on a council estate in Spotland and went to state schools here in Rochdale, including Oulder Hill. The teachers I had genuinely changed my life by showing me what was possible, and I have never forgotten it. Now I have the chance to help do the same for youngsters here and right across the country.

“For the first time in the constituency’s history, Rochdale has one of its own serving as a minister in a government department.

“This is the town that gave the world the co-operative movement, and its people have always known that we get further together than we ever do alone. That is the Rochdale spirit I will carry into this job every single day.”



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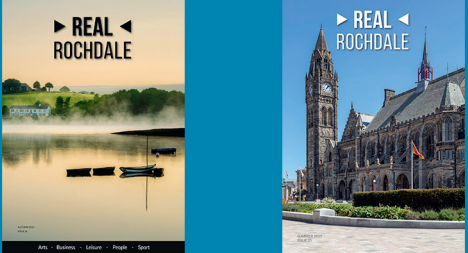
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JENNIFER HARRIS



60 YEARS WORKING FOR THE LIBRARY SERVICE

Jennifer Harris has completed sixty years working for the library service, having first joined in 1966. She started at Milnrow Branch Library when she was 19, now 79 she is still employed part-time at Smithy Bridge Branch Library.

Her passion for the role is as strong today as it was when she first started, she said: “I have loved every minute, it does not feel like work, it has always been a pleasure.”

She has watched generations grow up, with many of today’s adult borrowers first joining the library as children.

Jennifer said: “All the borrowers are lovely, I know every one of them, and it is an honour to be part of their lives.”

Earlier this year, she was given a ‘Long Service Award’ at the Town Hall.

Another of the highlights of Jennifer’s remarkable career came on her 75th birthday, when Andy Burnham surprised her by calling in to enjoy tea and cake with staff and visitors.

Jennifer is also a dedicated fundraiser for The Christie, Prostate Cancer Research and Maggie’s.



TOM McNEENEY ROCH VALLEY RADIO'S NEW PRESENTER

From The Oxford Pub in Rochdale to countless hours of volunteering and charity work across the borough, Tom McNeeney has become a familiar face to many... and now he's getting behind the microphone at Roch Valley Radio.

Tom will be waking you up every Friday morning alongside Jo Ali, another well-known local whose incredible work supporting the Mayor's charities, Springhill Hospice and causes across the borough has made her a familiar name to many.

Together, Tom and Jo will be kickstarting the weekend with a Friday morning show packed with great music, local conversation, plenty of laughs and, most importantly, the people and stories that make Rochdale what it is.

Roch Valley Radio's David Murphy said: "As a community asset for Rochdale, both for radio and as the local news outlet, it's vital that we put friendly and familiar faces behind the microphone, people our listeners know, recognise and can relate to.

"Tom and Jo are both already incredibly involved in the community and have a genuine passion for Rochdale and its people. That's exactly what local radio should be about.

"They know the borough, they know its people and, between the two of them, they certainly won't be short of things to talk about!"

Tom said: "I'm pretty excited to be adding radio presenter to my list of titles, especially alongside my great friend Jo. To get to spend Friday mornings spreading a little feel good energy out into the world seems the best possible way to start the weekend.

"As someone who has championed Rochdale on a local and a national stage plenty of times the opportunity to work with the fantastic community that Roch Valley Radio have built over the years to celebrate all that is good about our little part of the world was too good an opportunity to pass up."

roch valley radio

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IAN WATSON

ROCHDALE AFC HEAD COACH

Rochdale AFC appointed Ian Watson as new head coach on a three-year contract in the summer.

Ian, who hails from the North East, is a highly regarded coach who has earned recognition for his progressive football philosophy, player development, and leadership qualities.

Following a playing career as a full back, his senior coaching career began in 2019.

Ian describes his start at the club as having been “amazing”. He said: “The energy I have felt throughout the club has been perfect for me; I thrive on that energy. I have built relationships with people inside the club quickly and that’s really important for me.”



With a number of new players having been recruited, speaking about the balance of the squad he said: “There is always going to be a turnover when you go into a new league, you are looking to improve, coupled with the fact that I am new to the club, a change of management, a change of coaches.”

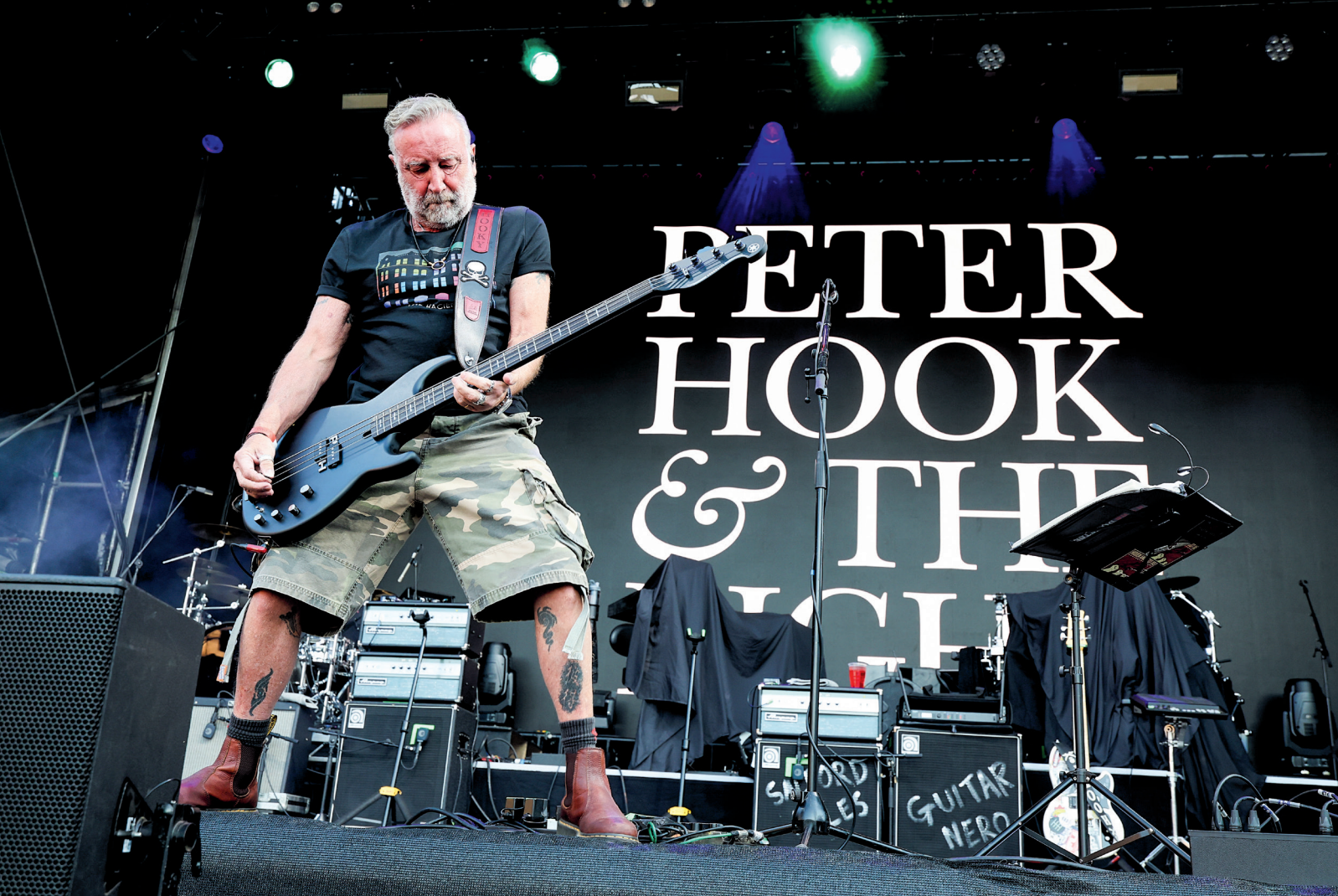
He added: “Behind the scenes the football club have been amazing, working relentlessly to make sure we get the right players for Rochdale.”

Ian brings a particular football philosophy to the club which he explained means: “I like my teams to run a lot, to play with a lot of energy. I like having the ball and working the ball in certain situations to try and attack. With the ball we want to progress it and try and get our players in the best areas possible to give them the chance to create and score goals.

“That’s what I love about the game, trying to attack, and if we lose the ball we create a lot of energy and we counter press, and if we can’t get the counter press we run back.

“Out of possession we have to show we are aggressive and we are not a soft touch to play against, that’s what we have worked on a lot.”

Asked what his target is for this season, Ian said: “I don’t have a target, I just try to be present in everything that we are doing. My job is to focus on the now, if you start putting targets on things you can miss what’s right in front of you. I need to make sure training sessions are perfect and that the players are willing to work as hard as they possibly can, and with that I think the sky is the limit for the group.”



SPECIAL GUESTS JOINING OMD WERE PETER HOOK AND THE LIGHT AND A CERTAIN RATIO



OMD SUMMER OF HITS





Photo: Alan Hamer



OMD LIT UP HISTORIC NIGHT IN ROCHDALE WITH SYNTH-POP CLASSICS

Synth-pop icons Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark (OMD) made history in Rochdale on Friday 7 August, bringing their acclaimed 'Summer of Hits' tour to town alongside post-punk legend Peter Hook with his band The Light, and Manchester's post-punk/funk band, A Certain Ratio.

Despite recording their debut single *Electricity* in Rochdale in 1979, OMD had never played the town before. That was put right in style in front of a sold-out crowd of well over 5,000 as the four-piece bounced onto stage and delivered an energetic 90-minute career spanning set featuring tracks from the majority of their studio albums including *Messages*, *Joan of Arc*, *Souvenir*, *Tesla Girls*, *Locomotion*, *Sailing on the Seven Seas* and *Enola Gay*. Appropriately, their encore ended with *Electricity*.

With a career spanning more than four decades, over 40 million records sold worldwide and 18 top 40 hits, OMD remain one of Britain's best-loved and influential pop groups.

Peter Hook & The Light played a selection of iconic tracks from Joy Division, New Order and Monaco, opening with *Transmission* followed by classics including *Regret*, *What do you want from me?*, *True Faith*, *Blue Monday* and *Love Will Tear Us Apart*.

Manchester's post-punk/funk band A Certain Ratio were first to take to the stage at Rochdale Town Hall Square - the first time OMD, Peter Hook and A Certain Ratio had played together since 1979.

Inspirational Carpets' keyboard player, vocalist and songwriter Clint Boon, DJ'd in between the bands and kept the crowd dancing during the historic show.

GABRIELLE BROUGHT HER BIGGEST HITS TO ROCHDALE

Headlined by Gabrielle, the legendary soul sensation captivated a crowd of over 3,000 with a hit-packed appearance, including the upbeat *When a Woman*, *Give Me a Little More Time*, *Sunshine*, *If You Ever*, and *Don't Need the Sun to Shine*. The Bob Dylan sampled *Rise* had everyone swaying as Gabrielle showcased real heartfelt emotion. *Out of Reach* sounded as timely as ever. *Dreams*, another timeless classic, ended the set on a high.

Ash opened with a dramatic intro from latest album *Ad Astra* and power track *Fun People* before belting out all the hits from their number one album, 1977, and beyond.

Rock band Starsailor drew a big crowd as they delivered a set packed with hits and fan favourites including *Four To The Floor*, *Good Souls*, *Silence Is Easy*, *Alcoholic* and *Fever*.

The Allergies got the enthusiastic crowd up and dancing in the sunshine with feel-good funk, soul sampling and infectious hip-hop beats.

Also performing on the main stage was Alex Spencer, an indie artist from Manchester, widely seen as one of the UK's most exciting new voices.

Local band K-ESTATE played an energetic set of house-pop, funk and indie disco. From Middleton, they were chosen for the line-up by London based international music agency Free Trade.

There was an impressive debut from another local band, Metro, that got a great reception from the crowd. Only formed last year, Metro won this year's Rochdale Music Service Battle of the Bands competition.

GABRIELLE



Photos: Malcolm Journeaux

ASH



FEEL GOOD FESTIVAL

THE ALLERGIES



Photos: David Murphy

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Rochdale Town Hall is widely regarded as one of the UK’s finest examples of Victorian Gothic architecture, and nestled within its walls, The Martlet Kitchen provides a stunning backdrop to the dining experience.

The restaurant opened in September 2024 and offers afternoon teas, evenings of fine dining, special Sunday dinners, and now a terrace space has been launched so diners can choose to enjoy their meal alfresco.

Leading the kitchen is multi-award winning chef Darren Parkinson. The talented chef hails from the borough of Rochdale, having grown up in Heywood and trained in catering at Hopwood Hall College, before kicking off his long and successful career in kitchens in the UK, as well as in northern France.

The Martlet is a mythical bird with no feet, it is said that the bird never roosts from the moment of birth until its final fall. Imagery of The Martlet appears throughout Rochdale Town Hall, with many examples unearthed during restoration work.

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Computer generated image of a new first-floor gallery space at Touchstones Rochdale
Courtesy of Architectural Emporium Ltd

TOUCHSTONES TRANSFORMATION PROGRESSING

The redevelopment of Touchstones Rochdale, the borough's major arts and heritage venue is progressing with work on first-floor galleries and further roof repairs.

The first-floor gallery spaces will be improved to provide better conditions for artwork and a much lighter, brighter experience for visitors.

The ground floor, basement and some roof work has already been completed with new flexible performance spaces including a 130-seat studio, meeting rooms, education facilities, reception, dining and collections space, kitchen and artwork storage area.

Due to be completed in summer 2027, the project has been developed in partnership between Rochdale Borough Council, Your Trust, who operate Touchstones as the council's culture and leisure partner, and Rochdale Development Agency (RDA), who deliver regeneration projects on behalf of the council.



Historic images of galleries from 1915



What is Live-in Care?

Live-in Care is a type of Home Care.

It means that our highly-trained Care Experts will live in your loved one's home with them, giving them the everyday care and support they need.

If our home care services are good, then Live-in Care is absolutely another level where the level of support and companionship is so much more than an hour or so could ever hope to replicate.

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Why choose Live-in Care?

- Because your loved one will receive personalised, 1-to-1 support in their own home.
- Because our Care Experts really care, and form a bond with your loved one.
- Because the service is completely tailored to your loved one's needs and can be adapted at any time.
- Because it lessens the likelihood of falls and slows the development of age related illnesses.
- Because your loved one can enjoy all the same hobbies as usual, from gardening to Gin Rummy with friends.
- Because you can make the most of the time you spend with your family, rather than looking after them all the time.

Your home your life



GTAS

SUPPORTING VETERANS AND FAMILIES IN ROCHDALE

Based in Rochdale, Get Together After Serving (GTAS) CIC is dedicated to supporting military veterans, their families, and the broader Rochdale community through holistic mental and physical health initiatives, driven by a strong mission and community-focused values.

Founded by Adam Trennery, GTAS was built from his own lived experience. Adam recognised a significant gap in the support available to veterans as they transitioned back into civilian life, with too many facing the challenges of reintegration alone while struggling with housing, financial hardship, employment, and their mental wellbeing.

Determined that no veteran should ever feel forgotten or left behind, he established GTAS to provide practical, person-centred support that makes a real difference.

GTAS provide veterans with practical assistance with accommodation, household bills, food shopping, employment opportunities, welfare advice, and signposting to specialist services, ensuring that those who have served never have to face life's challenges alone.

What began as a mission to support veterans has grown into an organisation that is at the heart of the community, providing opportunities, support, and inclusion for people of all ages.

- The GTAS Academy welcomes children from Under 8s through to Under 12s, helping young players develop football skills, confidence, teamwork, resilience, and a lifelong love of the game within a safe, structured, and supportive environment.
- Star Tots sessions introduce younger children to football through fun, engaging activities.
- Dedicated SEN and Autism sessions provide an environment where children can participate, develop new skills, build friendships, and flourish at their own pace.
- Adult football sessions offer men and women a safe and welcoming environment where they can improve their physical health, strengthen their mental wellbeing, and build friendships.

GTAS SERVICES

- **Veteran Wellbeing Support**
Providing personalised care and resources to enhance mental and physical health.
- **Family & Community Assistance**
Offering practical help and guidance to strengthen family and community bonds.
- **Outreach & Engagement**
Connecting veterans and locals through events and social initiatives for lasting impact.
- **Employment & Skills Development**
Empowering individuals with training and resources for meaningful career opportunities.
- **Homelessness Support**
Helping veterans find a home when they leave the armed forces.

All support and programs are offered at no cost to eligible individuals.

gtascic.co.uk - 01706 599394

GTAS VET GUARD

A free platform dedicated to supporting veterans by providing a safe, welcoming, and supportive community

The aim of GTAS Vet Guard is to ensure that no veteran has to face life's challenges alone by offering opportunities to connect, share experiences, and access help when it's needed most.

Vet Guard has been created to bring veterans together and provide a trusted network of peer support.

Through the platform, members can access community features, connect with others through the buddy system, stay informed with updates, and take advantage of new services as they are introduced.

GTAS Vet Guard is available online at:

gtasvetguard.co.uk



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SCAN HERE:

Information
Sessions

Our next Open Evenings:



🕒 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm

ROCHDALE TRAINING LEARNER AWARDS

The 56th annual Rochdale Training Learner Awards took place at Rochdale Town Hall and brought together apprentices, learners, employers, partners and supporters for an inspiring evening of recognition, networking, food and entertainment, hosted by Chris Maguire.

Apprentice of the Year Level 2
Winner - Richie Butterworth
Finalist - Niall Birkitt
Finalist - Mackenzie Moran

Adult Learner of the Year
Winner - Stephen Challinor
Finalist - Stephanie Malthouse
Finalist - Chelsea Williamson

Apprentice of the Year Level 3
Winner - Danielle Duffy
Finalist - Conor Weldon
Finalist - Christine Curtis

Rising Star
Winner - Jon Smith
Finalist - Harvey Walsh
Finalist - Ebony Smith

Apprentice of the Year Level 4
Winner - Hiral Patel
Finalist - Anila John Kollannur
Finalist - Lynne McDermott

Trailblazer Award
Winner - Silvanya Cassandra
Finalist - Maria Jabbar
Finalist - Alisa Birch

**Higher National Learner of
the Year**
Winner - Danny Helme
Finalist - Joshua Mitchell
Finalist - Jack Wynn

Employer of the Year
**Winner - Hurstead House
Care Home**
Finalist - A&F Sprinklers
Finalist - Greggs PLC

Community Impact Award
Winner - Hassan Jabbar

WHAT IF MORE PUBLIC SECTOR SPENDING STAYED IN ROCHDALE?

Billions of pounds are spent through public sector procurement every year, but how much of that investment could stay local, creating new opportunities for Rochdale businesses and supporting the borough's future prosperity?

The Rochdale Procurement 360 Summit brings together local businesses, public sector organisations and procurement professionals for a practical, business-focused look at how to win public sector contracts.

Whether you already supply the public sector or are looking to secure your first contract, you will gain valuable insight into:

- How public sector procurement works
- What buyers are looking for in successful bids
- The impact of the Procurement Act 2023
- How to win through meaningful social value
- Where to find public sector commissioning opportunities
- How to position your business for future contracts

STAR Procurement will join an expert panel discussion, sharing practical insight and answering your questions about procurement, bidding and working with the public sector.

The event will also feature keynote speakers and an expert panel. Speaker bios will be revealed on the RDA LinkedIn page, with the full programme and panel line-up announced over the coming weeks.

Find out how your business can get ready to win more public sector work and help keep more procurement spend in Rochdale.

Use the QR code below or visit www.investinrochdale.co.uk/events for more information.



Rochdale Procurement 360 Summit

Wednesday 7th October 2026
Rochdale AFC, Crown Oil Arena
7.30am - 10.30am

Unlock public sector opportunities
and put your business in a stronger
position to win

Hosted by: Chris Maguire


SCAN ME





ROCHDALE BUSINESS AWARDS 2026

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY 

FRIDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2026

Celebrating the very best
of Rochdale's business community since 2011

There's a category for every business, whatever your size, sector or stage of your journey. Whether you're celebrating business growth, recognising outstanding people or showcasing your commitment to your customers, community or the environment, we want to hear your story.

ENTER NOW! The closing date for entries is Friday, 11th September, so don't miss your chance to get involved. Scan the QR code or visit: rochdalebusinessawards.co.uk





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HOPWOOD'S FIRST OPEN EVENTS OF THE YEAR PROMISE AN EXCITING GLIMPSE INTO COLLEGE

This autumn is the perfect time to experience everything on offer at the award-winning Hopwood Hall College.

Hopwood - a recipient of the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize – is holding a series of unmissable Open Events at its campuses in Rochdale town centre and Middleton.

They mark a fantastic opportunity for school leavers and adult learners who are interested in discovering just what makes the college such a popular place to learn.

The first event will be held from 10:30am – 1:30pm on Saturday 10 October, followed by a second instalment from 4:30pm – 6:30pm on Wednesday 21 October.

These two events are designed for school leavers and will allow them to delve into the different vocational qualifications on offer, including T-Levels, BTECs and Apprenticeships.

Meanwhile, a third event will take place from 4:30pm – 6:30pm on Wednesday 25 November.

On this occasion it will be 'Access All Areas' – offering not just school leavers but also adults of all ages the chance to experience life at Hopwood Hall.

This means that in addition to learning about courses for 16-19-year-olds, visitors can delve into pathways such as part-time study, Access and Higher Education.

During the trio of Open Events, those in attendance can look forward to hearing from the expert tutors and exploring the college's two state-of-the-art campuses.

At Middleton, visitors can tour the vast Advanced Technology and Construction Centre, where engineering technologies and green energy resources can be viewed.

You can also explore a replica hospital ward where the next generation of healthcare professionals are training on incredibly lifelike 'patients', as well as wildlife enclosures that home hundreds of rare and endangered species that are cared for by learners studying Animal Management.

Then, in Rochdale, there's the newly-extended Riverside Salon, outstanding media studios for those aspiring for a career in creative industries such as film, television, games development, art and Esports, and so many other brilliant facilities to see.

The Open Events are registration-only, so be sure to confirm your attendance today by visiting hopwood.ac.uk



Megan & Sharon Whittaker

CHANGES HAIR DESIGN CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF STYLE

by GREG COUZENS

For half a century, CHANGES Hair Design has been at the heart of Littleborough, where generations of clients have come for hairdressing, friendship and laughter with a warm welcome.

Founded by Tim and Sharon Whittaker, the salon has earned a reputation for professionalism, creativity and genuine care.

Over the past fifty years, it has adapted to changing fashions and techniques while never losing sight of what matters most: looking after clients.

Sharon has been a constant presence, welcoming clients as receptionist and bookkeeper, helping to create the family atmosphere that has always defined the salon. Along the way, many talented stylists started their careers at CHANGES before going on to run successful businesses of their own, with many still proudly describing Tim as the mentor who inspired them.

The next generation has continued that proud tradition. Tim and Sharon's daughter, Megan Whittaker, first joined the salon as a Saturday assistant before pursuing a career in hairdressing. Under Tim's guidance, she developed into an accomplished stylist, qualifying in 2019, a moment of pride for the family.

Like every salon, CHANGES faced a challenge during the Covid pandemic. An even more personal battle followed when Tim was diagnosed with stage four cancer. Sadly, he passed away in April 2021, just as the salon was preparing to reopen. It was a heartbreaking loss, not only for his family but also for the many clients whose lives he had touched.

Today, Sharon and Megan continue Tim's legacy with the same warmth, dedication and commitment that he instilled from the very beginning. The salon remains as busy as ever, welcoming loyal clients alongside new faces discovering CHANGES for the first time.

Fifty years is an extraordinary achievement. It is a story of resilience, family, loyalty and community, and a reminder that the best businesses are built not just on skill, but on kindness.

Above all, this milestone is a tribute to Tim Whittaker, whose passion, generosity and dedication helped shape not only a successful salon but also the lives and careers of so many people in Littleborough.

HAIRDRESSING TREND

by GREG COUZENS

Created in the early 1980s by Tim Whittaker and Gregory Couzens, this striking cut remains as fresh and contemporary today as it was more than four decades ago. It is a reminder that true creativity never goes out of fashion.



Haircut - Tim Whittaker | Root perm - Gregory Couzens
Model - Sharon Whittaker | Photography - Gregory Couzens

The look was built on a combination of technical skill and artistic vision. A carefully placed root perm created lift and volume through the crown, while the ends were left free to showcase bold colour and natural movement. The result was a hairstyle full of texture, softness and confidence.

Tim's precision cutting, combined with innovative technical work, produced a style that balanced strength with elegance. It challenged convention at a time when hairdressing was entering one of its most exciting and experimental periods.

Looking at the photograph today, it is remarkable how modern it still appears. The shape, texture and effortless finish would not look out of place in a contemporary fashion collection.

Rochdale has long been home to outstanding creative talent, and this image stands as a testament to that legacy. It celebrates an era when imagination, craftsmanship and the confidence to break new ground defined the very best of British hairdressing.



ANDY WARHOL MASTERPIECES IN ROCHDALE TOWN CENTRE

Andy Warhol masterpieces arrived in Rochdale, bringing one of the world's most recognisable artists to the heart of the town through a special pop up exhibition housed within a specialist fine art transport vehicle parked directly on Rochdale Town Hall Square.

The exhibition gave local people the opportunity to experience Warhol's bold and instantly recognisable imagery, encouraging visitors to look at everyday objects in a completely new way. An example of how great art can inspire, challenge and engage people of all ages.

The surprise display was part of the Rochdale's Side by Side festival, a free, three-day community celebration featuring live performances, art workshops, food, and family games.

Ceri Lewis, Senior Curator of Artist Rooms at Tate and National Galleries of Scotland, explained the exhibition reflects the Artist Rooms commitment to making outstanding modern and contemporary art accessible to everyone, not just those who travel to major national galleries.

She added: "Rochdale is full of energy. I especially love the murals, the Town Hall and the fact that all ages are participating. We have really enjoyed being part of the festival."

Former mayor Janet Emsley summed up the importance of the exhibition, saying: "It is great to see national works of art coming to Rochdale."

FRIENDS OF BAMFORD DOG SHOW

Bamford Green was alive with wagging tails, happy faces and plenty of community spirit as the annual Friends of Bamford Dog Show welcomed hundreds of visitors.

With classes catering for dogs of every age, breed and personality, the competition proved as popular as ever.

One of the day's additional attractions was the impressive display from Rammy Valley Gundogs. Visitors watched in admiration as the dogs demonstrated their remarkable discipline, training and teamwork.

Claire Bayman, chair of the Friends of Bamford group, said: "Events such as the Dog Show are about much more than awarding rosettes. They bring neighbours together, introduce new people to the Friends of Bamford and raise valuable funds that are reinvested directly into our local community.

"This year's event will help fund several much-loved community initiatives, including Carols on the Green, our planned Community Spring Bulb Planting project, and the continued enhancement of Bamford Green itself.

"We're also proud to have donated £250 to Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary, helping support the incredible work they do caring for rescued animals.

"Perhaps the greatest success of the day wasn't measured by the number of entries or prize winners, but by the sense of community.

"Whether competing for a rosette, enjoying a slice of cake, chatting with neighbours or simply watching the fun unfold, everyone played a part in making the event another memorable occasion for Bamford.

"Friends of Bamford organises events and community projects throughout the year, all aimed at helping our local area thrive.

"If you'd like to get involved, new volunteers are always welcome."

To find out more, email:

friendsofbamford@proton.me





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THE OLD LODGE INN AT RAKEWOOD



A celebration to mark 200 years of local history, hosted by Lynn and Richard Mason together with Lorraine and Michael Ormerod, saw friends and neighbours gathered in fine period dress as a tribute to a building that has witnessed two centuries of change.

The old Lodge Inn at Rakewood is a reminder of a time when visitors to Hollingworth Lake would have passed through its doors for rest, refreshment and hospitality.

Opened in 1826, the Lodge Inn served the growing leisure trade that flourished around Hollingworth Lake during the nineteenth century.

The lake began life as a canal reservoir before evolving into a popular recreational destination, drawing visitors to its shores. In that setting, the Lodge Inn was more than a public house; it was part of the social fabric of a thriving waterside community.

The building closed as a pub in 1917 and was later converted into two private homes, though its former identity can still be seen within the fabric of the building.

What made the celebration especially striking was its sense of continuity. Historic buildings are at their most meaningful when they remain part of living memory, and the Lodge Inn clearly still holds a valued place in the local story. For one day, the past was not simply remembered but revived.

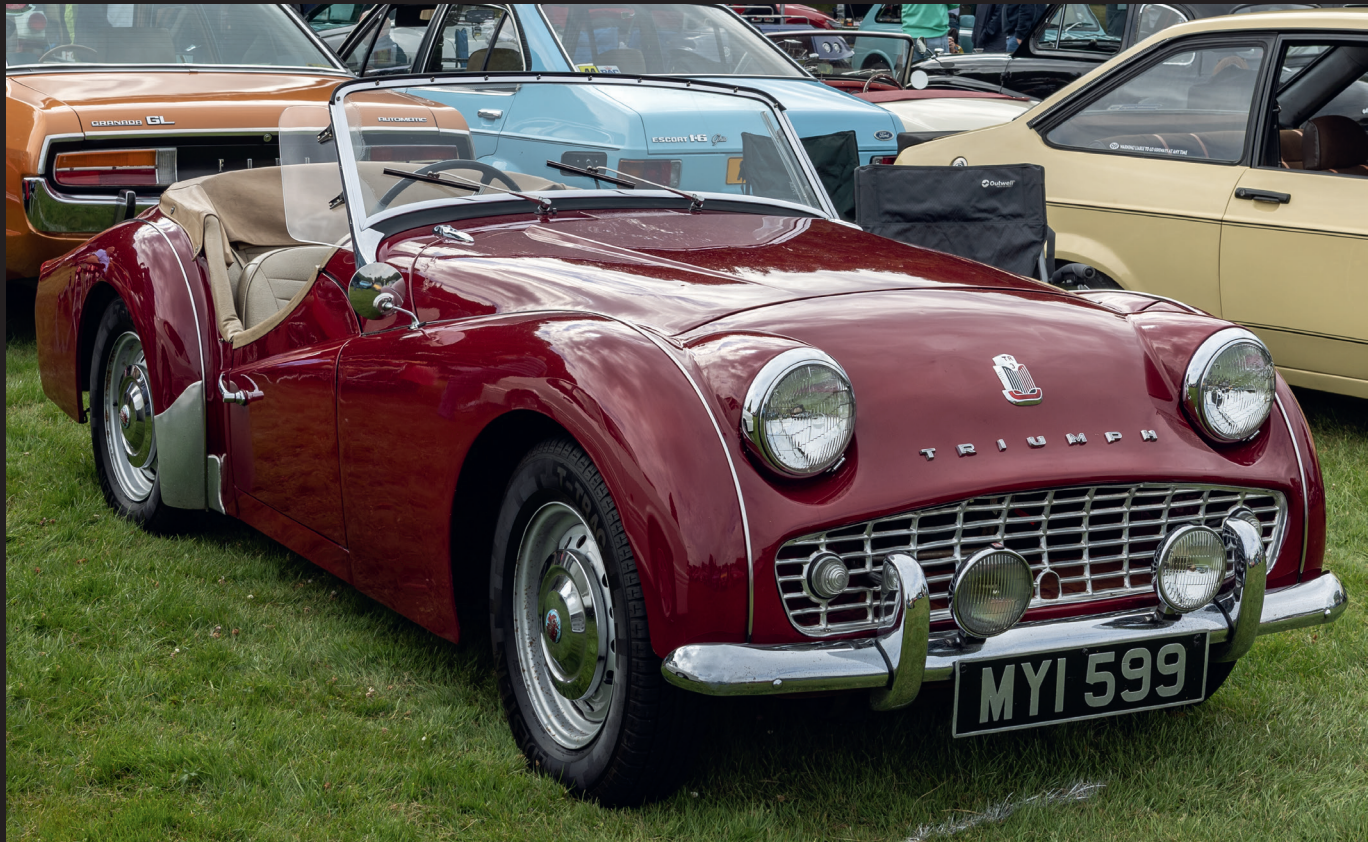


ROCHDALE CLASSIC CAR & BIKE SHOW

Organised by the Rotary Club of Rochdale



Rochdale Classic Car & Bike Show in Falinge Park featured
vintage, classic and collectable cars and motorcycles



Photos: Pauline Journeaux



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