

REAL ROCHDALE

ISSUE 07 WINTER 2019



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EDITOR'S WORDS

A warm welcome to Real Rochdale



A very warm welcome to our Winter 2019 edition of Real Rochdale.

This issue, learn all about the history of the co-operative movement, founded right here in Rochdale. Michelle Kight explores the 175 years of history since the Rochdale Pioneers set up shop.

Katie Davies met with two very inspirational women, Karen Johnson, of the GEM Appeal charity, and this year's Woman of Rochdale, Carole Kelly, who founded the Jolly Josh charity. Both have been through heart-breaking situations which motivated them to make a difference for others in similar situations.

Independent retailer Buckley Menswear has been shortlisted for a prestigious industry award, local internet provider Zen has been named the Best Broadband Provider for the 16th consecutive year and the Flying Horse Hotel has beaten off the competition to be named as CAMRA's Greater Manchester Pub of the Year for the second year running.

Milnrow Band celebrates an impressive 150 years as the Rochdale Music Society celebrates 40 years of hard work.

Discover the hidden history of the Healey Dell nature reserve and the best way to keep all your passwords safe and secure, plus a wonderful winter warmer favourite: homemade mince pies with brandy butter.

As always, thank you to our amazing sponsors, and we will see you again in Spring 2020.

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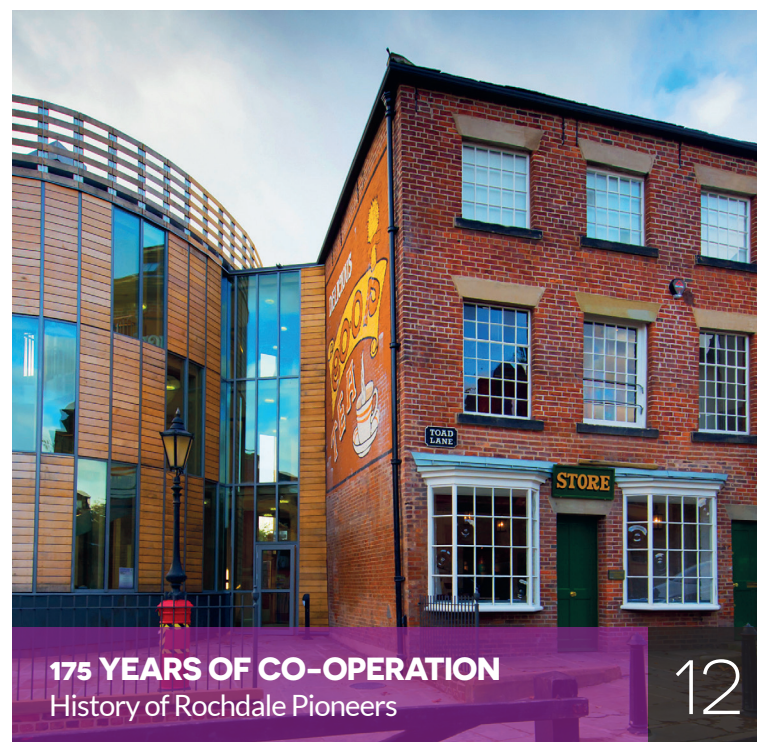
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GEM Appeal celebrates 25 years of fundraising



Karen Johnson, founder of the GEM Appeal charity, is celebrating 25 years of fundraising in 2019.

Founded in 1994 after Karen's sons, Simon and Mikey, were diagnosed with Hunter Syndrome, the GEM Appeal ('Genetics. Enzymes. Metabolics') raises money to fund research and find cures for genetic diseases.

25 years ago, Karen, who lives in Bamford, was told that her 18-month-old son had Hunter Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that causes abnormalities in organs due to deficiencies of the enzyme iduronate-2-sulfatase (I2S), located on the X chromosome.

Then, 8 months pregnant with her second boy, Karen was told that there was a 50% chance that he would have Hunter Syndrome too.

Karen said: "At that time, there was no treatment and no hope for children diagnosed with rare genetic disorders, and very little research was being done to change the chances of survival.

"I wanted to fund research and find a cure; I certainly wasn't just going to sit around and accept that my children were dying."

Karen was approached by Consultant Paediatrician Dr Ed Wraith with a request for money to be raised to extend the Willink Unit at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, which would be a base for research into the disorder that her two sons were dying from, as well as other genetic disorders that were prematurely ending many young lives.

"With the help of the people of Rochdale, £250,000 was raised in the GEM Appeal's first year", Karen said.

"This was the start of our major fundraising."

As the years went by, the GEM Appeal grew to have 11 trustees and 16 committee members who are mainly Rochdale based. They became the strength and drive for the amazing success that the GEM Appeal has become today.

Karen even continued fundraising when her healthy third child, Katie, was diagnosed with leukaemia and given six weeks to live.

"I had all three of my children potentially dying at the same time," she said.

"When Katie was seven, she relapsed and couldn't tolerate the chemotherapy anymore. She received a bone marrow transplant from Mikey, who was a perfect match for her.

"Now a healthy 29-year-old, Katie is engaged and is living a happy life. She is the only known person to have had a bone marrow transplant from someone with Hunter Syndrome."

Tragically, both Karen's sons lost their lives to the incurable disease at the age of 12.

www.gem-appeal.co.uk

"Simon and Mikey were born 18 months apart, and they died 18 months apart," she continued.

"I focused all of my anger and grief on fundraising for research and treatment, so my boys' story could help others and change the future for those with genetic disorders.

"My dream is that when my daughter decides to have a child, and it might have Hunter Syndrome, that it will be a given that they can be healthy and live a long life, as there is now a degree of treatment available."

All the money raised by the GEM Appeal has gone, and is still going, towards purchasing diagnostic equipment to enable the doctors and scientists at the Willink Unit to research, diagnose and treat children and young people with rare genetic and metabolic disorders which were previously incurable.

Because of the money raised by the charity, children are now living longer healthier lives and the future is more positive for those diagnosed.

Trials of enzyme replacement therapy treatment, which Simon and Mikey needed, are also now available with promising results.

In 2016, Karen accepted a Special Recognition Pride of Britain Award from Take That's Gary Barlow, Howard Donald and Mark Owen for her dedication to raising funds.

More recently in September 2019, the GEM Appeal was presented with a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service - the highest award a voluntary group can

Run entirely by volunteers in their spare time, with no government or lottery funding, the GEM Appeal has raised over £3million.

receive in the UK. Karen said: "We are very honoured to receive this accolade.

"As a charity, we are very fortunate in that we have local businesses and people who continue to support us; for example, Lloyds Bank allow us to have charity buckets and Barclays match our funds at certain events.

"The bulk of the money we have raised is by Rochdale people and businesses, with every penny going into research and equipment."

Karen took part in the Rochdale 10k in October with her daughter Katie and GEM Appeal trustee Wendy Mills to raise money for the charity.

Additionally, Denise Welch hosted the charity's 18th annual winter ball at Principle Manchester in November. A 'Strawberry Sparkle' fundraiser is also held yearly at Nutters Restaurant near Karen's birthday, which is always a sell-out.

The GEM Appeal is currently raising money to buy a Tecan machine for Manchester Children's Hospital at a cost of £175,000. At the time of publication, £82,569.48 has been raised for the equipment, which will prepare and arrange blood samples for DNA analysis, enabling the specialist staff at the Willink Unit to concentrate on more complex tasks.



BMI The Highfield Hospital celebrates 'Good' rating in independent watchdog report



A national healthcare watchdog has described BMI The Highfield Hospital in Rochdale as having safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led services.

The report, by the independent regulator the Care Quality Commission (CQC), further noted how staff worked well as a team and had great pride in their work; that they cared for people with compassion and involved families and carers to make sure that patients felt well informed to make decisions.

The CQC regulates private hospitals to the same degree as NHS hospitals, analysing how well providers perform in five 'domains' of being safe; effective; caring; responsive to people's needs; and well-led.

Executive Director Sam Sheehan said: "Patients coming here can be assured that they have made a 'good' decision to choose Highfield, and that everyone is here for them."

The CQC inspection report also highlights a culture of openness and honesty, with a strong focus on patient-centred care.

Consultant orthopaedic surgeon Mr Saqif Hossain said: "Everybody in the hospital is there for the patients – from the porters and the catering staff to the consultants and the Executive Director. This is a hospital that is well-led from the top and I would certainly recommend any of my family to have their treatment at Highfield."

Consultant urologist Neeraj Sharma said: "There is no doubt that the team has put in a massive effort to achieve a good rating. They are proactive in driving success forward; their determination to raise standards is very visible."

For more information

Contact: BMI The Highfield Hospital
Call: 01706 655 121 or 0800 404 6667
Visit: www.bmihealthcare.co.uk/highfield

BMI The Highfield Hospital is part of BMI Healthcare, the UK's largest provider of independent healthcare, offering treatments and services for those who live in Rochdale, Lancashire and further afield. The hospital is accessible for NHS, Self-pay and Insured patients.

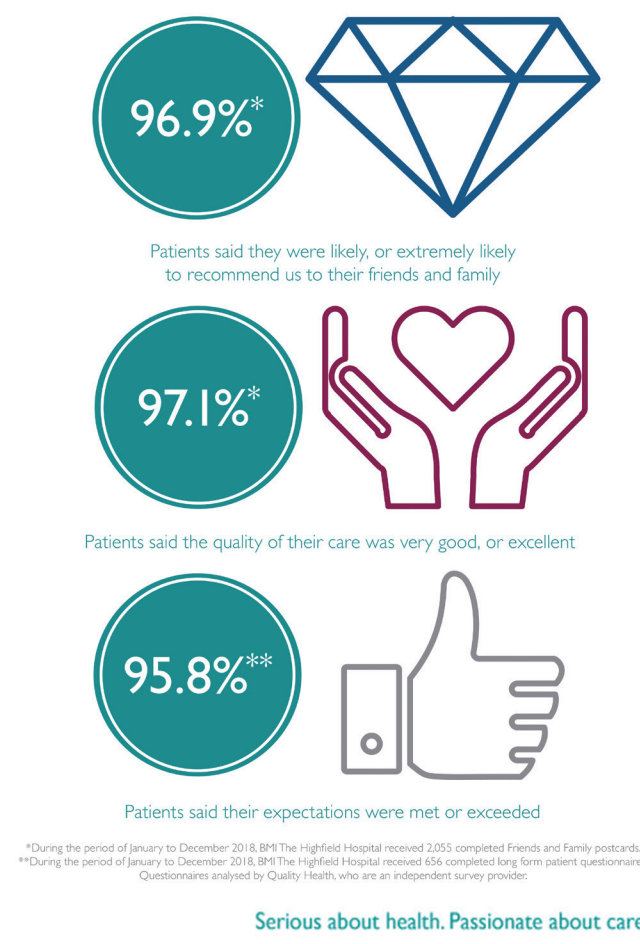
BMI The Highfield Hospital has access to state of the art technology and equipment. Services available at the hospital include;

- Dermatology
- ENT
- Gastroenterology
- General Surgery
- Gynaecology
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Pain Management
- Plastic Surgery
- Private GPs
- Urology
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Digital Mammography

An experienced team of Chartered Physiotherapists

Onsite pharmacy



The photo on the cover of this issue is the work of an all Rochdale creative team

Model: Jade Hodkinson

Jade, who lives in Rochdale, is a local hairdresser and previous salon owner, with over 14 years' experience.

Married with three beautiful children, Jade is a former professional model.

Photographer: Malcolm Journeaux

Malcolm is an award winning photographer who lives in Castleton.

He has two distinctions from the Royal Photographic Society and was given an 'honourable mention' in the 2019 International Photography Awards.

Make Up Artist: Tylaa Clements

Tylaa, who lives in Shawclough, is qualified to degree level and has industry experience in photographic and theatre.

Having trained with many academies, Tylaa ensures her knowledge is up-to-date.

Hairdresser/Assistant: Greg Couzens

Greg, who lives in Spotland, is an award winning hairdresser who has owned Couzens Hair Salon in the town centre for 36 years.

He is also a keen photographer who has his own photographic studio on the top floor of his stunning salon.

The background is kitchen foil that has been crumpled up then glued to a cardboard backing.

Lighting the background is a speedlite (flash) covered with a yellow gel. Jade was lit by a speedlite modified by a white umbrella and feathered to soften the light further.

175 YEARS OF CO-OPERATION

Saturday 21 December 1844: 28 local workers began trading as a co-operative at 31 Toad Lane, Rochdale, selling a simple selection of high-quality goods at honest prices.

This was the day the global co-operative movement was born 175 years ago, a day which would make history.

The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers began the world's first successful consumer co-operative store, a business owned by its customers, formed to serve the community with goods they couldn't usually afford.

Who exactly the Pioneers were is subject of much debate, as they never actually wrote down an official list, but some sources list all 28. Some were known co-operative enthusiasts and had been involved in earlier co-operative ventures in the town, whilst others were Chartists and idealists.

What is known is they were all working men: more than half were involved in the textile trade, ten of them were flannel weavers, whilst others were cloggers, shoemakers, joiners or cabinet makers.

Making a stand against the capitalist ideologies of the Industrial Revolution – a time when an increasing number of skilled workers were falling into poverty as their jobs were taken over by machines – the group wrote a list of simple rules of how they would run their co-operative.

The Rochdale Principles of Co-operation stipulated that provisions should be of high quality and sold at full weight, that there should be equality of the sexes in membership and that each customer would have a direct share in the business and its profits.

The Rochdale Principles formed the foundation of the principles still in use by the modern co-operative movement, which now numbers around 3 million Co-ops worldwide with 1.2 billion members.

With their rules in place, the Pioneers opened their store four days before Christmas in an old warehouse on Toad Lane, selling a basic offering of sugar, butter, oatmeal and flour, plus candles – which the Pioneers had to use to light the shop after their gas supply was switched off. The gas company didn't believe the Pioneers would be able to pay the bills.



Photo: Andy Hirst Photography



Taken c1865, 13 of the surviving members of the Rochdale Pioneers

At first the co-op was open for only two nights a week, but within three months, business had grown so much that it was open five days a week.

By the 1860s, a new central store was needed, so purpose-built premises opened on Toad Lane in 1867, costing £10,000 to build.

It housed all the departments under one roof, as well as a boardroom and library. The top floor had a hall which could seat 1,500 people. The money used to build the central store came from the co-op's profits. Any surplus profit was divided between members, just like it is today.

By 1900, there were 1,439 different co-operative societies and around two million members.

The Pioneers' original store on Toad Lane, now widely regarded as the home of the co-operative movement, was rented by them until they moved away in 1867.

It was later purchased by the movement, and opened as a museum in 1931, telling the story of how the co-operative movement developed through self-help to increase productive employment and overcome poverty.

In 2019, it was named as one of Historic England's ten historic industrial sites that shaped the country.

The building was extensively restored and refurbished in the 1970s, with the front ground floor room replicating the simplicity of the original store of 1844. The museum was closed for two years between 2010 and 2012 for a major development project to improve access, add an education and meeting space and renew the exhibitions.

Rochdale Pioneers traded independently until 1991, with name changes inspired by mergers with neighbouring co-operatives: as Pioneers from 1976, and Norwest Pioneers from 1982, based in Wythenshawe, Manchester, by 1991.

In 1991, then-Norwest Co-operative Society transferred its engagements to United Co-operatives, which was run from Rochdale, before being transferred to the

Manchester-based national hybrid society, The Co-operative Group, in 2007.

These days, the Rochdale Pioneers Museum is part of the Co-operative Heritage Trust, set up in 2007, to inspire and educate people about the movement.

The museum houses artefacts and hosts exhibitions about the cooperative movement and hosts events and projects for visitors and the community.

In 2018, everything came full circle, with the Rochdale Pioneers Museum launching a volunteer-run co-operative pantry allowing residents to top up on their store cupboard essentials at a reasonable cost.

The Pioneer Pantry is member-owned, meaning members can vote on how any surplus profits are spent.

This year, members voted to buy gardening equipment and now grow fruit and vegetables outside the museum, a scheme called 'Incredible Edible: Toad Lane Allotments'.

The fresh food is then placed in the pantry for members to take away. Members have worked together this autumn to make chutney and jam using the fruit grown.

As part of the Heritage Lottery funded project 'Young Roots: Pioneer Places', the museum has also been working with a group of young people from across Rochdale to explore the town's co-operative heritage and retell it in their own voice.

The group is currently working with a videographer to create a short film showcasing their findings and also have a podcast, 'Pioneer Places', which can be downloaded via all major platforms.

Find information about upcoming events at Rochdale Pioneers Museum on the museum's website.

www.co-operativeheritage.coop

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FLYER CELEBRATES DOUBLE CAMRA SUCCESS

The Flying Horse Hotel has once again galloped to glory, being named the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Greater Manchester Pub of the Year for the second year running.

Lined up this year against eight other exceptional pubs in Greater Manchester, an expert team of volunteer judges visited unannounced and evaluated the qualities of each. The businesses were scored on a variety of weighted features including quality of welcome, value for money, community focus and – most importantly – the quality of beers and ciders.

Trade at 'The Flyer', as locals call it, began in 1691 and it now serves a unique selection of food and beer to the locals of Rochdale and beyond.

It is presently named amongst the top 16 pubs in the UK.

This journey of success began in 2011 when landlords Benjamin Boothman and Craig Richardson took the reins of the town centre business.

Ben himself has been a local to The Flying Horse since he first visited the pub in 1988, before officially starting work there in 1997 and becoming manager in 2000. Leaving for four years to learn more about the trade he was passionate about, Ben returned in 2007 and subsequently bought the business with partner Craig.

Ben could see the potential to transform the Edwardian stone-built premises into a destination for drinkers, diners and overnight visitors, as well as having an ambition to become

the town's premier free live music establishment with a long-term commitment to providing the very best real ales underscoring his efforts.

The Flying Horse is a supporter of town centre initiatives including the Rochdale Ale Trail, Rochdale Food and Drink Festival and the Feel Good Festival, and has been recognised locally by the Rochdale, Oldham & Bury branch of CAMRA as its Pub of the Year for the last four years.

In the Good Beer Guide since 2002, The Flyer was most recently shortlisted as a finalist for Best Craft Pub at the Manchester Food and Drink Awards 2019; the ever-growing success saw a doubling in size of its real ales to twelve handpumps, with traditional ciders, craft keg and a selection of foreign beers, making it a drinkers' delight.

The business has also scooped gold for the past three years with its floral displays, representing Rochdale in the 'small accommodation' category of North West in Bloom, and was presented with a Mayor's Recognition Award in 2018 for services to the town.

A finalist for Rochdale Business Person of the Year this year, Ben hopes to build on his achievements with his involvement in some of the larger family-run group of pubs and restaurants including The Baum, Littleborough's Hare on the Hill, and, most recently, the takeover of The Crown & Shuttle pub in Firgrove, which re-opened in October.

Bombay Brew – an Indian Street Food and Cask Ale Emporium – is also set to open soon in the old Wellington building on Drake Street, under the operation of Ben and his team.

Zen Internet named Best Broadband Provider for the 16th consecutive year



Rochdale-based Zen Internet has been named PC Pro's Best Broadband Provider for the 16th consecutive year.

With an overall rating of 95%, the independently-owned telecommunications and technology service came out on top – a world apart from the “big four” telecoms providers that have come to dominate the market.

Zen scored exceedingly high ratings for its customer support (98%), reliability (97%), speed (91%) and buy again (99%).

It also scored strongly on value (89%) with only one provider scoring ahead in this category at 91%.

Zen was also named as a Which? Recommended Broadband Provider in March 2019.

Zen's founder and chairman Richard Tang founded the company in 1995 and still owns 100% of the business. We interviewed him last year about his people before profit philosophy.

He said: “The purpose of the business is not to make as much money as we possibly can, no matter what the consequences.”

“Zen's purpose of being is three fold - happy staff, happy customers, happy suppliers.”



Rochdale AFC Ladies go from strength to strength



Rochdale AFC Ladies' open age team has made a good start to the 2019/20 season.

After a successful season of development last year, Emma Thetford's side have really kicked on in the build-up to the winter months, securing emphatic wins over Bolton Wanderers and a 7-1 victory over Urmston Meadowside.

The ladies' team started back in 2015 and, in just over four years, has gone from a collective of 14 to over 100 girls from age ranges of 9 upwards, including a range of BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) diverse groups.

“We had a bit of a slow start to the season but we have all been working hard at training and on match days,” said Thetford.

“We now find ourselves in a run of six unbeaten games and top of League One heading into November.

“The players are working hard in training and are really benefiting from our close relationship with the Soccer Factory.

“Having the nine versus nine pitch available to us means we can work on game-like scenarios which then helps us put our learning into practice in matches.

“It also has the benefit of being indoors, which is an added bonus, especially with the wet and cold wintery nights drawing in.

“We have a strong and talented squad. Our aim this season is to continue working hard and keep improving individually as well as a team, and hopefully the results will continue to follow.

“Having the backing and support from Rochdale Football Club and our sponsor, Jonathan James Lettings, is extremely important to us and being able to play in the Rochdale AFC kit helps us to feel part of the club.”

The winter months will be tough for the side, but Thetford is hoping her side can push on at the top of League One.

The ladies' sessions, operated by the Dale Sports Trust, run every Wednesday evening at the Soccer Factory in Castleton, where youngsters up to under-13s can enjoy sessions from 5pm to 6pm, whilst those over this age can play from 6pm til 7pm. Sessions are open to everybody, no matter what experience you have of playing.

You can read match reports for Dale's Open Age Ladies' team on www.rochdaleafc.co.uk, or visit the Rochdale AFC Ladies' Facebook page for fixture information.

CHRISTMAS AT THE DALE

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- Traditional Christmas carols performed by Wardle Academy Brass Band
- Pre-match Christmas lunch served in our 1907 Lounge
- After-match FREE Neil Diamond Tribute Act

CHRISTMAS CAR BOOT SALE

Saturday 14 December, 12pm - 4pm, Crown Oil Arena Car Park

Make some cash for Christmas or pick up a treasure for a unique Christmas gift!

Fees: £10 per car / £15 per van. Book your pitch in advance or turn up on the day.

For more information contact Frances on Tel: 01706 753 581 or Email: frances@rochdaleafc.co.uk

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Looking for a perfect gift this Christmas for the Dale fan in your life?

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You will receive your 4 x match tickets in a unique Dale wallet making the perfect Christmas present for the Dale fan in your life.

Our Christmas Ticket Bundle will be available to purchase from our Ticket Office from Monday 02 December until Christmas Eve.

CAROLE KELLY

Current Woman of Rochdale, Carole Kelly, has an ambition to make the borough more accessible for children with disabilities and/or complex and additional needs.

She spoke to Katie Davies about local group 'Jolly Josh' and her vision for the future.

Jolly Josh is a registered charity in Rochdale which enables families with children with disabilities and/or complex or additional needs to meet, exchange information and create social networks with others in similar situations.

At weekly sensory themed sessions, currently based at Springside with Hamer Learning Community, a variety of professionals, services and charities connect to provide support to families.

This vital local charity was the brainchild of Carole Kelly, from Wardle, who wanted to 'organise a group with no questions asked, where everyone could feel included and not isolated, and where we all understand what one another are going through'.

In April 2017, Carole became the full-time carer for her son, Joshua Kelly, who, at the age of six months, was found to have 'extensive brain damage' due to the genetic condition Mitochondrial Disease, which causes mutations in mitochondria, vital to every cell in the body.

A week after his first birthday, Joshua's health began to rapidly decline and in May 2017, Carole and her husband, James, were given the devastating news that their son had 'weeks, maybe months, until he found peace'.

"The idea of Jolly Josh two years ago was pure imagination", said Carole.

"A chain of events would lead me to realise that there was a huge gap in the system; the solution would become Joshua's legacy.

"When my son became ill, it was an incredibly dark time. As a 'stay at home' mummy to both my babies (Joshua and his big sister Sophie), we wanted to be out and about, making memories.



James and Carole Kelly with children Sophie and Joshua

"I took Joshua to many baby groups and never met another disabled child or a child with complex medical needs. It became hard to go out when people asked, 'what is wrong with him'.

"I attended an information day event in Rochdale for parents and carers of disabled children with the hope to find services that would help Joshua and our circumstances, but sadly, they were minimal. We already had a play worker and there was nothing else available as he was under four.

"Finally, I met a mummy at a sign language group whose daughter was also fed through a nasogastric tube – the first child (other than Josh) that I had met with one. I was so excited that Josh would know that he wasn't the only child to be different and we had so much in common to discuss. That's when I realised this interaction was what I needed.

"I knew then that Jolly Josh was going to make an impact."

Carole approached Joshua's care team with her ideas for a local group that would enable children with disabilities and their families to 'Connect, Support and Thrive', whilst inspiring inclusion and overcoming isolation.

"Unfortunately, for me, health visitors, nurses, GPs, etc. were not able to connect families due to confidentiality policies," said Carole, "but Jolly Josh would finally enable this to happen..."

Joshua sadly died on 27 August 2017, just one month before his legacy, Jolly Josh, was due to begin.

"My whole first year of bereavement was spent setting up Jolly Josh," Carole said.

"It was something that I needed to develop to help me as a coping mechanism, distraction and to create a legacy for Joshua, in addition to providing a service to myself and others that was previously unavailable.

"Now, I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved over two years."

Jolly Josh was awarded charitable status in April 2018, just seven months after opening. In May 2018, Carole was shortlisted for a Greater Manchester Health and Care Champion Award and in April 2019 she was named Woman of Rochdale.

To mark the second anniversary of the charity on 22 September 2019, a pirate themed family fun day was hosted at Callaghan House, Heywood, raising £1,800.

Speaking of the benefits Jolly Josh has brought to the borough, Carole said: "Our families provide each other with guidance; children are making friendships and thriving, and their siblings gain support too. The children learn that we are all different and that's what makes us special.

"Going to clinic with a poorly child is extremely difficult, even for the most confident of people, as emotions are heightened. When professionals visit families at Jolly Josh, they are amongst their peers; the children are entertained playing and the experience is far less formal."



Jolly Josh second anniversary family fun day



James and Carole Kelly with Oliver and Sophie

Carole is now set on bigger plans for the future, including accomplishing her dream of Jolly Josh having its own venue and building an accessible park for those with disabilities and/or complex additional needs in Rochdale.

"There are still many challenges facing disabled children and their siblings and families, for example, the need for public changing places and the need for more accessible playgrounds in parks for those children that do have complex medical needs.

"We have set up Jolly Josh and I have provided this service, but there are still so many gaps that we need to work on, tackling a lot of the services that are missed."

In Jolly Josh's first year, 63 families visited the sessions along with 23 professionals.

She concluded: "These numbers speak volumes of how much this group was needed; it wasn't just me feeling the need to reach out – the gap was there."

Carole is currently on maternity leave from her job as a teacher of children with profound and multiple learning disabilities after Joshua's younger brother, Oliver was born in July 2019.

Carole hopes she can encourage Rochdale and other boroughs to fill the gaps that she experienced with her family.

Jolly Josh sessions currently run on Thursday mornings, 9am – 12noon, at Springside with Hamer School.

www.jollyjosh.co.uk

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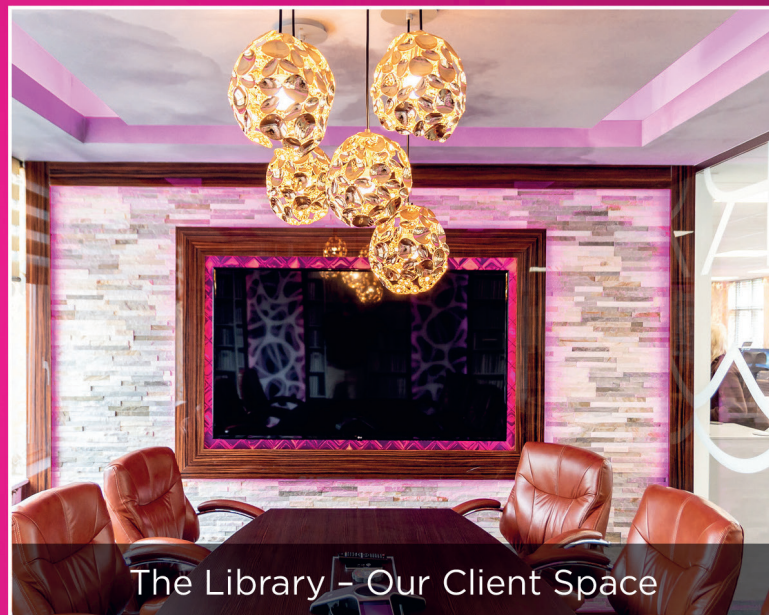
WHOLE of Market Comparison



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MILNROW BAND 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Milnrow Band, one of Britain's top brass bands, is celebrating an impressive 150 years of bringing music to the borough's ears

Made up of around 30 players aged between 17 – 55 years of age, including percussionists and the musical director, Milnrow Band's roots can be traced back to 1869 when it was originally formed as the St Stephen's Band.

The band changed its name twice more before World War Two, finally settling on the name of the village in which it is based – Milnrow.

Milnrow remained in the lower sections of the brass band ranks until 1995 when it began a successful competitive drive under the baton of David Morris, at the Greater Metropolitan Police Championships where the band claimed first prize in the fourth section.

Over the next three years, Milnrow progressed to second section and, in 1998, merged with Rochdale Co-op Band. Under the baton of Ian Brownbill, the band went on to take second place at the Nationals and became a first

section band six years after the start of its progressive competitive campaign.

Milnrow Band finally became a championship section band in 2006 and has proudly held the position ever since.

The band meets at its band room twice a week for rehearsals, increasing this to three or four times per week in the immediate weeks before a contest. In addition to competitions, the band also performs concerts, at private events and at local parades.

In 2011, Milnrow band joined forces with Mareika Gray and enjoyed a string of successes under her baton. With the assistance of Mareika's husband, Russell, the band qualified for the finals of the 2013 National Championships for the first time in its long history.

Keen to build on this success, and with Mareika back at the helm, Milnrow won the 2013 Grand Shield, qualifying for the 2013 British Open – where the band competed for five consecutive years – before returning to the Grand Shield in 2017.

Despite this, 2017 is regarded by many as Milnrow Band's most successful year. Under the direction of Mark Benthams, the band once again qualified for the finals of the National Championships, finishing in tenth place, Milnrow Band's highest-ever placing at the Royal Albert Hall.



Milnrow Band at the 2017 National Championships



Milnrow Band leading Milnrow & Newhey Carnival in June 2019

Milnrow Band also won the All England International Masters contest in Kettering, before completing the year with another win at the Rochdale contest, to add to victories in 2014 and 2016.

Towards the end of 2018, Milnrow partnered with current conductor Dennis Hadfield.

To celebrate their 150th anniversary, Milnrow Band will be performing a special concert at Rochdale Town Hall in March 2020, where the band will also launch a special commemorative CD to mark the occasion.

The band will also be playing at this year's Scottish Open on Saturday 23 November, as part of the Scottish Brass Band Association's celebratory Festival of Brass 2019, before performing at the annual Christmas Concert at Milnrow Cricket Club on Sunday 22 December.

Band manager, Francis Thewlis said: "We are really proud to be celebrating 150 years of Milnrow Band; it is quite an achievement to reach this milestone, particularly when some

brass bands have sadly struggled to survive due to financial pressures and loss of players.

"We are still a village band, and whilst competing at a high level, we are still very much part of the village community, leading the annual carnival, remembrance parade and playing carols all over the village at Christmas.

"Our 150 years of Milnrow Band celebration concert will be on Saturday 21 March 2020 at Rochdale Town Hall and we hope as many people as possible will come and celebrate with us."



Milnrow Band in 1960

The hidden history of Healey Dell



Like the hidden folds of the Dell itself, the history of the area is hidden in the mists of time.

About 8,000 years ago, at the end of the last Ice Age, humans first appeared in the Rochdale area. They were nomadic tribes but later began to settle during the Bronze Age (6000-2000 BC). By 70 AD, a tribe known to the conquering Romans as the Brigante first settled in the Dell area.

1,000 years later, it was the Normans who sub-let the land to the De Healey, who built Healey Hall, and the area consequently came to be known as the Healey Dell.

Sheep farming was prevalent here and the animals grazed the surrounding area extensively. The meandering Spodden formed an ideal base for many small mills, which subsequently saw the development of woollen mills and later, cotton. Packhorse routes emerged, markets flourished, and the area became one of the most affluent in the region.

A number of local families lived here. These included the Ashtons, Butterworths, Chadwicks, Gartside, Halliwell, Healeys, Holts, Schofields and Twedales, among others.

Tucked away in the Dell today you will find stone rubbing mills (Th'owd Mill I'th Thrutch – the old mill in the thrutch), waterfalls and rapids, 'fairies chapel', the disused railway station at Broadley Mill, the Rochdale to Bacup disused railway line (which was converted to a walking/cycling trail), reservoirs, and the remains of a wartime munitions factory. There are also seven distinct walking trails in the area.

Many thanks to Phillip Blackshaw and Allan Marshall who contributed significantly to researching the history of Healey Dell.

The Healey Dell Heritage Centre and Tea Rooms on Dell Road is a great starting point for local information and includes permanent heritage information on display. The venue is full of character, in a stunning and scenic natural setting on the banks of the Spodden river.

For more information, visit Trip Advisor, Healey Dell Tea Rooms or alternatively call 01706 350459. Disabled parking and toilet facilities are available at the Heritage Centre.

In the next edition of Real Rochdale we will focus on the period of the Industrial Revolution and the establishment of the railways in Healey Dell.

Healey Dell Heritage Centre & Tea Rooms
An Edwardian themed charm and local information centre

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Inward Investment Award – Zen Internet
Paul Dixon with Karen Finnegan



Apprentice of the Year – Liam Marshall
from Jackson Jackson & Sons



Employee of the Year – Sharon Molly
from WHAG

WINNERS

In addition to the winners shown here, Kandy Kitchen Creations Ltd was named New Business of the Year and Wireless CCTV Ltd was named Skills, Education and Training Employer of the Year.

Mayor of Rochdale, Councillor Billy Sheerin, said: “These awards are a great way of promoting Rochdale. All the people here are contributors to making our place somewhat special.

“I applaud all businesses in Rochdale for their endeavours and for bringing employment to the borough, and wish them prosperity and all the best for the future.”



Business Person of the Year - Ben Boothman
The Flying Horse, The Baum, Hare on the Hill & Quirky Catering

RECOGNITION



Carol Hopkins from the Business Awards steering group,
Mayor of Rochdale Billy Sheerin and host Paul Crone

The ninth annual Rochdale Business Awards were held at Rochdale Town Hall on Friday 8 November.

Rochdale Business Awards celebrate the achievements of businesses and business people within the Rochdale Borough, recognising the huge contribution businesses make to the local community, economy and their individual successes.

Rochdale Business Awards 2019



Business of the Year (turnover over £5million) – Wireless CCTV Ltd



Business of the Year (turnover less than £1million) - Rochdale Connections Trust



Business of the Year (turnover between £1million - £5million) – Riley & Sons Ltd



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Facing up to ageing

Ageing is a biological norm, but this natural process is challenging for some to accept. We want to age well and appear youthful, but the majority of us want it to appear to have been achieved naturally (without anyone knowing we have had help).

Fortunately, there is a pioneering non-surgical face lifting treatment called Silhouette Soft which can help to discretely rejuvenate and achieve a completely natural-looking face. Although the treatment is carried out in a clinical setting, it requires no general anaesthetic or scalpel.

Silhouette Soft is designed to redefine the face for those looking for restored volume and reduced wrinkles, but unlike other popular anti-ageing treatments, it doesn't unnaturally plump out or freeze facial movements. Its effects are two pronged: combatting the signs of ageing requires the restoration of sagging skin, so it is lifted, smoother and more toned, but treatment also needs to redefine the shape to combat the gravitational pull and fat slipping around the lower half of the face, neck and jawline. To meet this dual requirement, Silhouette Soft combines two effects: lifting and regenerating.

The lifting effect is immediate – brought about by elevating the skin at the time of treatment. The tension of the inserted thread lifts the sagging tissues.

The regenerative effect is gradual and natural. After insertion, re-absorbable cones on the threads anchor themselves into the tissues and stimulate the body to produce fresh new collagen. This action, which continues over time, helps increase the volume of hollow and saggy areas and restores shape to the face gradually to achieve a natural-looking result.

Both the threads and bidirectional cones are made from a polymer which is completely biodegradable and is absorbed by the body over time, but not before it has stimulated the body's production of flexible collagen.

The minimally-invasive treatment is performed by specially trained clinicians. Local anaesthetic is applied to the face. Once numb, Silhouette Soft threads, dotted with tiny cones, are introduced just under the skin, which is then lifted. The whole procedure takes less than an hour and patients can resume their daily routines after treatment. Sometimes there is a small amount of bruising around the thread entry points, however these can be covered with mineral make-up.

Many prospective patients say they would consider an anti-ageing treatment if no one knew they had had it, and if there was no recovery time. It appears that a Silhouette Soft treatment provides a way to achieve this. Treatment typically suits someone aged 40+ who can push lax skin on their face upwards by a centimetre.



Deborah Vines is a Registered General Nurse, Nurse Prescriber and the Medical Director of Face Medical Clinic based in Heywood. She has been a full time Aesthetic Nurse for eighteen years, owns one of the longest established Medical Aesthetic Clinics in the North West and has recently gained her Care Quality Commission Registration for medical treatments.



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KITAID AMBASSADOR MARY HD COMES TO ROCHDALE

The Crown Oil Arena, home of Rochdale AFC, was the location for a promotional photo shoot featuring KitAid ambassador Mary HD.

KitAid is a registered charity set up by Derrick Williams MBE, who visited Tanzania in 1998 and was amazed at the reception he received just because he was wearing a football shirt.

So began a mission to provide kit and equipment to the bare-footed children playing with footballs made of tied string and plastic bags.

Twenty one years on, KitAid has sent out 600,000+ kits to 55 different countries across the world.

Kit is donated by clubs from the whole football pyramid, ranging from Premier League teams such as Liverpool and Man Utd through to non-league and Sunday league teams from all over the UK.

Mary HD was chosen as KitAid's ambassador because of her impressive background of charity work and her values closely align with KitAid's vision of bringing peace, love and happiness through sport.

KitAid founder, Derrick Williams MBE, said: "A lot of our work is with girls and younger women and we felt that Mary was the perfect role model for this age group to aspire to."

"Mary has a wide range of talents and a big following on social media. We are keen to bring KitAid to a different audience, not just to football fans, and Mary has agreed to help us to share our story with her followers."

Frances Fielding, Sales & Marketing Director at Rochdale AFC, said: "We were delighted to welcome Mary to the Crown Oil Arena for her photo shoot to promote her new role as an ambassador for KitAid."



Photo: Greg Couzens

Formerly trading as Mike Ellor & Son, this family business has been serving Rochdale since 1962. Although Mike has now long since retired, his son Mark has kept the long-standing traditions of his father running, which are now being passed onto the next generation.

Mark, who has over 25 years of experience under his belt, said: "I was taught by my father and I'm happy to be passing on both his and my experience to local Rochdale apprentices through the Floortrain programme."

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Mark added: "Due to our low overheads, we are often cheaper than the high street stores and offer to beat any genuine quotation.

"We've also recently launched rugs, both instore and online at rugs2runners.co.uk, which are available to view before you buy."

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Password Security



Rob Gibbons has run an IT support business for over 14 years and has a wealth of knowledge on how to get the best out of infrastructure for businesses whilst ensuring the network is optimised for productivity.

Let's not cover over old ground here by telling you that your password isn't good enough. If this is the case, then you have only got yourself to blame.

Passwords are now unavoidable in modern life. We need them for our phones, our computers, our emails, for websites, apps, and much more.

Have you ever needed to reset a password for something crucial – like your bank account – and found that the reset process is simply to click a link that was sent to your email?

The idea of someone accessing your email is terrifying, but preventable.

Protecting yourself is as easy as creating unique, mixed symbol passwords that aren't easily figured out from basic details of your life.

I once read a saying that really hit home with me: 'If you can remember your password, then it's not complex enough!'

Let's face it, we all have passwords we can remember. And, furthermore I bet everybody has a password they use multiple times!

Keeping your passwords strong is vital to your digital safety, but it isn't enough. You also need unique passwords for all of your devices, apps, and websites. That way, if a hacker somehow finds out one of your passwords, they don't immediately gain access to everything else.

We have a lot of passwords these days and keeping them all unique and secure can be a lot to handle. The idea of trying to remember them all or writing them down or finding a way to keep them secure digitally causes many people to fall back into the pattern of using the same password everywhere.

Instead, I'd like to share a solution with you, where you can store all your secret credentials in a safe, secure location.

One way to keep track of your passwords is to use a password manager that will keep your login information organised and safe. I recommend LastPass to my clients which is probably one of the industry leaders for password management.

Take the stress away and let LastPass do the work for you.

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Guys and Dolls leaves audience wanting more

Often described as a template for the modern musical, Guys and Dolls is about to turn 70 years old and is an audience favourite with young and old alike.

Judging by the audience reaction at the Curtain Theatre, this musical shows no sign of waning in popularity as Whitworth AMDS sang and danced their way through fourteen songs that feel as familiar as the characters portraying them.

Set-in post-war New York city, this evergreen tale is a hybrid of Damon Runyon's stories of colourful street characters, their strip bar working girlfriends and the local Salvation Army group who would have them change their wicked ways.

Andy Kelly's production in October stuck closely to the original style and source material and yet managed to deliver a modern production of lighting, sound and orchestration that would be fitting in any professional theatre in Manchester or London.

The production has a total run time of almost three hours, but never did I once feel bored or clock watch. This was largely down to the performance of the leading actors. Terry Banham as Nathan Detroit, Liam Dodd as Sky Masterson and Elliot O' Brart as Nicely Nicely Johnson stood out in a cast of performers that would have complemented any ensemble production in amateur theatre. Banham's comedy, Dodd's chocolatey singing voice and O' Brart's comedy characterisation all contributed to an ensemble cast that quite frankly had no weak links.

Also worthy of note was Megan Wight as Sarah Brown who has one of those rare soprano voices that soared and chimed through her songs with disguised ease that matched both her characterisation and delivery. It is very easy to get this character wrong in this show and forget to point out when it is performed well. And well it was done here.

In fact, the depth of characters is what made this show work – the Mission members, minor hoodlums, street cops and working girls all contributed to an ensemble production that culminated in the show stopping "Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat" in Act Two. I counted thirty cast members clapping and singing through a rendition that somehow managed to be traditional and new at the same time (an additional vocal section, I think) and left me frustrated that there was no encore.

A special mention needs to go to Mike Law as Arvide Abernathy (Sarah's grandfather and leader of the Save a Soul Mission). His wise Irish characterisation and measured delivery provided a perfect counter point to the brash street hustlers, and I'm pretty sure there were a few audience tears being wiped away at the close of his solo number, "More I Cannot Wish You".



On the night I came, there were a few clunky scene changes and a couple of fluffed lines that broke up the flow of the otherwise slick dialogue, but this is nit picking in the grander scheme of things. The staging could have been more imaginative to tell the truth, with a simple open set being garnished with some basic props and lit signage, but I'm guessing this was to accommodate such a big cast on a small stage.

On that note, it is so refreshing to see so many strong male performers in an Am Dram cast. The sound they made during "Luck be a Lady" and "Oldest Established" made the hairs on your arms stand up. But do not let this overshadow the female chorus which was brilliantly coordinated by society choreographer Julie Milligan. A beautiful line up of 'Hotbox' girls sang and hoofed through the shows two digetic numbers ably led by Annabelle Taylor in the role of Adelaide – Nathan's long suffering fiancé.

With a slick band (led by musical director Matt Corrigan) and its colourful period costumes, Guys and Dolls left the audience whistling the title song all the way home.

With Return to the Forbidden Planet and The Producers on the cards for WAMDS in 2020, you should book early to see this company next year if this production is anything to go by.



Photographs: Rochdale District Camera Club



*Model: Hasina Begum
Hair: Georgia Couzens
Photography: Gregory Couzens*

HAIRDRESSING TREND

by GREG COUZENS

BRONDE

Before you visit your favourite hair salon and request 'highlights' please take some time to find out what type of highlights are available: balayage, foil highlights, sombre, ombré.

When it comes to brunette hair and highlights you have many options, the most difficult part is deciding what is right for you.

A growing favourite is a sweet spot right in the middle of blonde and brunette, named 'bronde' - and it can look fabulous.

A perfect example is when Hasina Begum made an appointment with Georgia Couzens, a senior technician at Couzens Hair Salon in Rochdale town centre. Hasina took in a photograph showing a perfect bronde - cool tones on brunette.

Hasina has naturally dark hair at the roots and a lighter colour on the ends that appeared to have yellow tones.

Georgia applied a full head of foils using different colours on the ends and the roots; to unify the colour from roots to the ends.

The next challenge was to take the rest of the hair back to a cool brunette and eliminate the yellow tones.

The final stage was to apply an overall colour to bring all the tones together: cool highlights, natural brunette, with a luxurious sheen.

Bronde requires very little ongoing maintenance, in fact, all it needs is a silver shampoo to keep the gorgeous cool tones.

When you find yourself asking 'are they blond or brunette?' you know the salon has succeeded in achieving the perfect shade of bronde.

40 years of Rochdale Music Society

The Rochdale Music Society is celebrating 40 years of bringing the very best classical music to the borough this year



Alexander Soares - November 2019



Benyounes Quartet - December 2012

Founded in 1979, the range of musical expertise and artistry brought to venues in Rochdale by Rochdale Music Society has been tremendous, from solo pianists to full symphonic ensembles.

Over the years, Rochdale Music Society has featured many internationally renowned orchestras and artists as well as encouraging the very best up-and-coming musicians in the early stages of their careers.

Music from likes of the Amadeus String Quartet, Julian Lloyd Webber, Paul Tortelier, Segovia, Clifford Curzon, Robert Tear, Annie Fischer, Igor Oistrakh, Eugene Sarbu, Amanda Roocroft and the Melos Ensemble of London – and so, so many more – have all been enjoyed locally by thousands.

Putting Rochdale firmly on the classical music map, the Rochdale Music Society was formed on the back of an idea from the then Director of Arts and Entertainment Services at Rochdale Borough Council, David John, when speaking with Rhona Bennett.

Wanting to set up something similar to the Friends of the Art Gallery, which was now up and running, he asked Rhona if she would be interested in starting a music society.

After giving the idea some thought, and despite initial lukewarm support, Rhona told David: “Well, I suppose if we get The Vermeer Quartet to Rochdale, we’ll have made it.”

The ball was rolling, and at the end of February 1980, David asked Rhona to call a steering committee together after the council gave a preliminary go-ahead for The Vermeer Quartet to play in Rochdale.

A main committee formed, with the expectation that four small trial concerts would be held in the old council chamber, plus a booking of The Vermeer Quartet.

However, chairman Kip Heron had very different ideas, shunning any thought of trials.

At the next meeting, he proposed concerts at the Gracie Fields Theatre featuring the Amadeus String Quartet; Julian Lloyd Webber; London Mozart Players, conducted by Harry Blech, and the Tortelier trio.

Excitement in the air, the first major concert season was voted in and the musicians booked, in spite of the committee having very little to go on.

All costs considered, an average cost of a six-concert season could be anywhere between £12,000 and £20,000 – a vast sum of money to be found each year.

Support largely came from the Rochdale community: the local authority, businesses, societies and music-lovers alike, followed by the Music Society Club (later The Friends) in 1985.



London Wind Ensemble - May 2011

The concerts at the Gracie Fields Theatre had to be different to other Saturday night offerings to keep people coming, and so, the decision was taken to book artists with household names – those the audience would have heard about, having played with the Halle, won a national or international prize, or having been featured on the radio.

The social side began following the success of the first after concert buffet, a euphoric celebration in honour of what the music society had achieved in its first year. A permanent feature, it became more inclusive when the audience began to want to meet the artists.

Summer concerts were arranged during the summer recess, an opportunity for the music society to travel around Rochdale and attract different audiences.

One such concert by Daniel Chorzemper saw St Chad’s Parish Church packed out as the gifted organist added Rochdale to his concert tour, filling the church with the wondrous sounds of its organ.

There aren’t many music societies which can bring this level of music to their concert platforms, testament to Rochdale Music Society’s long-running history.

Photographs courtesy of Allan Franklin



Scott Brothers - April 2009

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The biggest health choice you will face this winter is where and when to receive your treatment.

With no sign of significant extra resources, our hospitals will be creaking again as they try and maintain their splendid service.

Despite some wonderful local initiatives, such as triaging patients over the phone, GP surgeries will be full to the seams and appointments difficult to get.

Avoiding becoming ill is the most effective way of staying healthy in the cold. There are more flu jabs on offer this year than ever before. These are dispensed free to those already facing life-limiting conditions such as COPD and to those who care for them.

If you are over 65 or already living with a chest condition you can also receive a complimentary pneumonia jab.

Should the sniffles and the aches and pains begin, you can do yourself a huge favour by firstly visiting the NHS Choices website or calling the 111 NHS helpline. The pharmacist might also assist in deciding what illness you are facing. Do you really want a four-hour wait in A&E to be told you have a cold and bill the NHS for the cost of some paracetamol?

Another way of preventing being poorly is to eat well, keep exercising and drink in moderation. Yes, we all long for feast time when we can rest up, hide away from the



ABOUT THE WRITER

Dr Chauhan is a respected GP, health and social care campaigner, and champion of social justice and charity. As a local GP, he has become a powerful advocate for his patients and introduced innovative methods to improve their care. His work mentoring and employing young people has won national recognition.

winter weather and eat, drink and be merry. But a short regular walk will do wonders for your health and the preponderance of fresh fruit and vegetables should be taken advantage of – for vitamin C is a great defence against colds.

Staying hydrated and not indulging in too many winter libations will increase your odds of staying healthy.

A well-stocked medicine cupboard and some thought about medication over the Christmas bank holidays is advisable. Out of hours appointments and walk-in centres are another alternative to the emergency department.

Winter is a particularly precarious season for the vulnerable and helping them stay well must be a priority. A quick check on an elderly neighbour or a kind word for a homeless person (my Homeless-Friendly initiative provides health care for rough sleepers at surgeries) would do wonders.

Stay warm, be hygienic when you cough or sneeze, and ensure you get proper sleep, are other tips to ensure that you stay well this winter.

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Ultimate guide to festive nails



As we approach the festive period, it is a popular time for nail services, so we are here to navigate the world of nails.

First things first, you need to decide if you want to extend the length of your nails, or if you want to just add colour to the length you already have.

If you want to extend length, then you need to request extensions. This treatment can take up to two hours depending on the design you choose. A gel polish or nail polish can be applied on the top.

If you are happy with the length of your nails, then a gel polish may be ideal and this can last up to two weeks on a strong healthy nail. This treatment takes about 45 minutes.

Furthermore, you could have a manicure which is a treat for both your hands and nails, by intensely hydrating and nourishing followed by a nail polish finish.

There are a large variety of nail designs to choose from, which can be overwhelming.

If you want something more elaborate than just gel or nail polish then we recommend looking for nail designs online. It is also a good idea to check out the website or social media pages of your nail salon to see what designs they have created.

Please be aware that some nail photos may be of competition nails which can take up to five hours to do, as well as some nail photos being photoshopped.

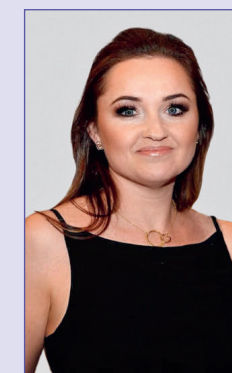
We recommend that when booking your appointment to state whether you want nail designs, as the nail technician will need to book extra time for this, and it is always a good idea to bring the photos of the design you want.

Snowflakes, Santa and reindeer are popular choices at Christmas.

If in doubt, add glitter! This is always a winner at the festive time of year and won't add too much time to any nail service.

ABOUT THE WRITER

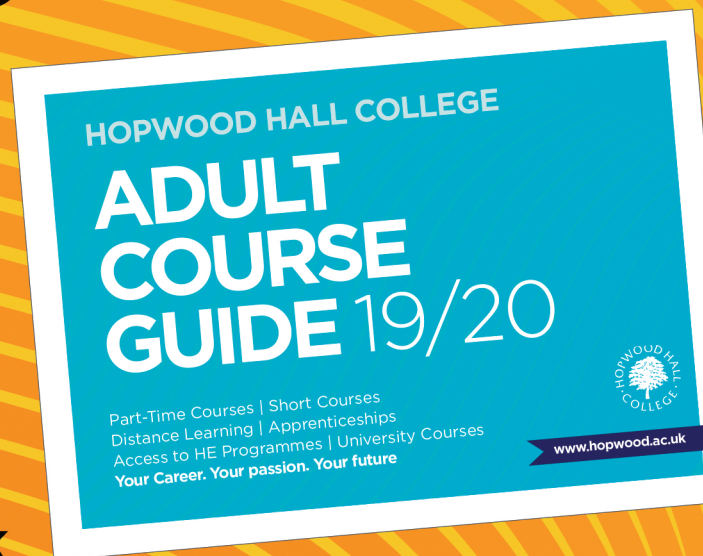
Beverley Watson is a director and therapist at Revive with 24 years' experience in the beauty industry, including seven years as a lecturer and assessor. She is skilled in all aspects of beauty, HD Pro Brow stylist, CND L&P master nail tech.



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BUCKLEY MENSWEAR CELEBRATES

Buckley Menswear celebrated its first birthday in November 2019.

Having worked for a well respected men's outfitters for over 20 years, owner Philip Buckley decided that the time was right to branch out and open his own store.

Located on South Parade, in one of the most iconic buildings in Rochdale town centre, Buckley Menswear has two floors filled with quality and classic menswear.

The ground floor features casual collections for everyday wear, with everything from jeans and t-shirts to coats and shoes.

The formal tailoring and suit hire departments are located downstairs, featuring with a comprehensive selection of suits and jackets, as well as formal trousers for all occasions.



In July 2019 the store was shortlisted for a Drapers Independent Award by the Drapers trade magazine.

Mr Buckley said: "For a one-man independent in Rochdale, it was massive to be named as one of the ten finalists. I was very pleased and humbled to be recognised in the Best New Retailer category."

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OKTOBERFEST

AT ROCHDALE TOWN HALL



Filo pastry mince pies

*by Natasha Brown
owner of Brown's Cakes*

These mince pies with a twist are exceptional, they taste nothing like shop bought ones and are incredibly moreish.

In addition to the ingredients listed below you will need a packet of filo pastry which is best brought out of the fridge an hour beforehand to let it get to room temperature.

Start by making your own mincemeat. It's a lot easier than you'd think and this recipe doesn't include any suet; it's just packed full of fruit.

Mincemeat

Ingredients:

90g dried cranberries
90g sultanas
90g currants
90g raisins
1 apple
50g flaked almonds

75g butter
110g light brown sugar
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp mixed spice
Grated rind and juice of half a lemon
100ml Amaretto

Peel and chop the apple and toss it in a large pan with all the other ingredients (except the Amaretto). Simmer gently over a low heat for 10 – 15 minutes.

Leave to cool then stir in the Amaretto (other alcohol can be used such as brandy, port or sherry but I love the almond flavour of the Amaretto).

Mince Pies

To make the mince pies you will need a sponge mixture:

Ingredients:

125g self raising flour
125g Stork margarine
125g caster sugar

2 eggs
1tsp vanilla extract

Place all the ingredients in a bowl and beat them together until nice and smooth.

Now cut the filo pastry into pieces, approximately 10-15 cm square (or cut each sheet into eight equal pieces).

Brush one side of a pastry square with melted butter (put a little butter in a bowl in the microwave for 30 seconds to melt it).



Brandy Butter

Brandy butter goes perfectly with these mince pies. You will need soft butter, so make sure you get the butter out of the fridge a few hours before you start to make the brandy butter.

Ingredients:

125g soft butter
125g icing sugar
45ml brandy

Beat the butter and icing sugar together until smooth. The more you beat it, the fluffier it will become.

Add the brandy and beat again. Check for taste and add more brandy if desired.

Lay a second square of filo pastry over the first diagonally so that you're making a star shape. Brush this with melted butter too. Lift the filo pastry and gently push it into a muffin tin so that the edges stick up out of the hole. Make another 11 of these so you have a tray full.

Spoon a generous teaspoon of mincemeat into the bottom of each pastry cup then add a dessert spoon full of sponge mixture over the mincemeat.

Bake the mince pies at 180°C for around 15 minutes until the sponge has cooked and when you press it gently the top springs back.

Dust the mince pies with a little icing sugar and serve as soon as they're cool enough to eat. Be careful you don't burn your mouth on the mincemeat in your haste to eat them!

You will have enough mincemeat to make at least 24 mince pies (possibly more). If you do have some left over, sterilise a jar and store the mincemeat in there until you're ready to make some more.

There are some people in my family who don't like dried fruit (don't ask me why). For these I use the same technique but substitute jam for the mincemeat. These are delightful too, but for me, you just can't beat a mince pie at Christmas.



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is coming to Town Hall

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MEMORY LANE



LISA STANSFIELD NOVEMBER 2012

After a decade away from the spotlight, Lisa Stansfield embarked on a comeback with two small gigs, including one at the former Sound Control in Manchester on 2 November 2012, where these photos were taken by local photographer Malcolm Journeaux.



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