

Reaching Rochdale

Rail: Rochdale is just 15 minutes from Manchester Victoria station on the Manchester to Leeds main line.

Bus: Buses from surrounding towns come straight into the town centre. From Manchester take Service 17 from Shudehill bus station.

Metrolink: Metrolink will reach Rochdale in 2012. This service will run from Manchester city centre to Rochdale railway station via Oldham. From 2014 there will be a connection into the town centre.

Road: Leave the M62 at Junction 20 and follow the signs for the town centre and Touchstones.

Enquiries:

National Rail: 08457-48-49-50
www.nationalrail.co.uk

Bus and Metrolink: 0871-200-22-33
www.tfgm.com

Celebrating Our Heritage

Rochdale Town Centre Trail



Welcome to Rochdale's rich and fascinating history!

Rochdale's recorded history can be traced back to 1086 with an entry in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book.

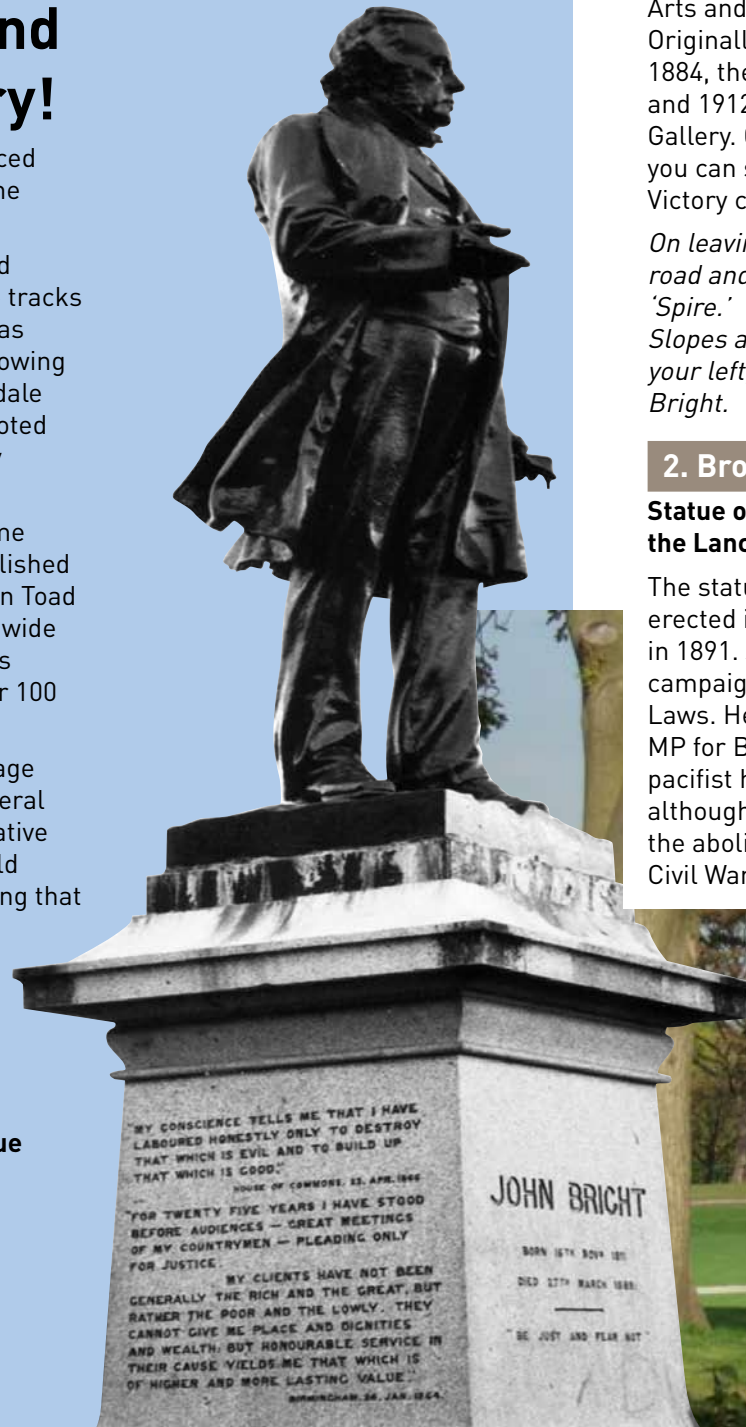
Sited near the border of Lancashire and Yorkshire, with a network of packhorse tracks linking towns and villages, Rochdale was well placed to take advantage of the growing woollen trade. By the late 1700s Rochdale had several 'manufactories' and was noted as being 'remarkable for many wealthy merchants'.

In the 1800s a group of men who became known as the Rochdale Pioneers established a co-operative store. This small shop on Toad Lane became the catalyst for the worldwide Co-operative Movement, which now has more than 800 million members in over 100 countries.

We are proud of our co-operative heritage and are delighted that in 2011, the General Assembly of the International Co-operative Alliance declared Rochdale as the World Capital of Co-operatives - acknowledging that it was here where it all began.

Our rich history is reflected in the architectural heritage of the borough and of Rochdale town centre in particular.

We hope that you enjoy this trail and celebrate Rochdale's wonderful, unique history.



1. Touchstones Rochdale

Touchstones Rochdale opened as an Arts and Heritage Centre in 2002. Originally built as a Public Library in 1884, the building was extended in 1903 and 1912 to provide a Museum and Art Gallery. On the outside of the building you can see carvings which represent Victory crowning Arts and Crafts.

On leaving Touchstones, cross the road and walk to the right, passing the 'Spire.' Turn left onto Broadfield Park Slopes and follow the path round to your left, uphill to the statue of John Bright.

2. Broadfield Park

Statue of John Bright and Memorial to the Lancashire Dialect Poets.

The statue of John Bright was originally erected in the Town Hall Square in 1891. John Bright is known for campaigning for the repeal of the Corn Laws. He was a local mill owner and MP for Birmingham. As a Quaker and pacifist he opposed the Crimean War, although he supported the North and the abolition of slavery in the American Civil War.

Looking straight ahead from John Bright's statue, you can see the monument to the Lancashire Dialect Poets.

Leaving John Bright's statue, follow the path leading towards the road keeping the Broadfield Park Hotel on your left. Go through the gateway to Sparrow Hill Road and turn left, walking past the front of the Broadfield Park Hotel.

3. The Broadfield Park Hotel

The Broadfield Park Hotel on your left was built as a residence for the District Nurses in 1904. It stands on the site of the former Rochdale Grammar School.

Carry on along Sparrow Hill Road, passing Broadfield Primary School and the new vicarage, both on the left, with Broadfield Park on the right.



4. St Chad's (old) Vicarage

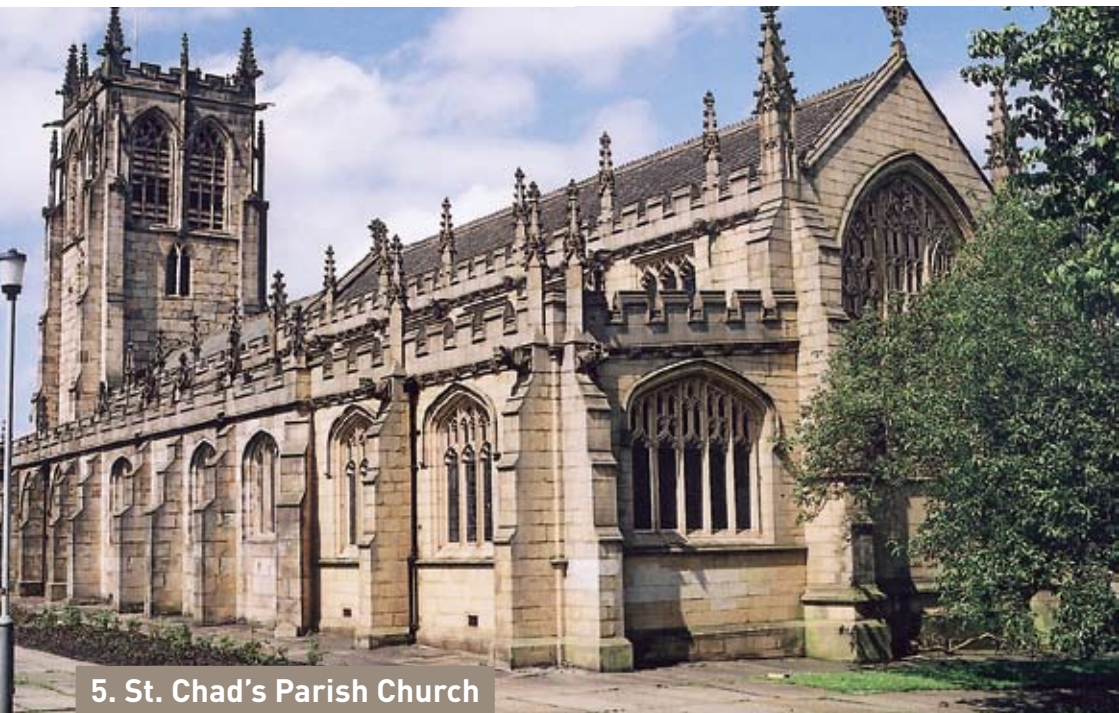
Built in the reign of George I, the vicarage boasts a projecting Queen Anne style porch. The house was built by Samuel Dunster, Vicar of Rochdale 1722 - 1754 and was modelled on his London home. It replaced a half timbered, thatched house with dirt floors.

Continue to the stone porch leading into the churchyard.

6. The Stocks & 'Tim Bobbin's' Grave

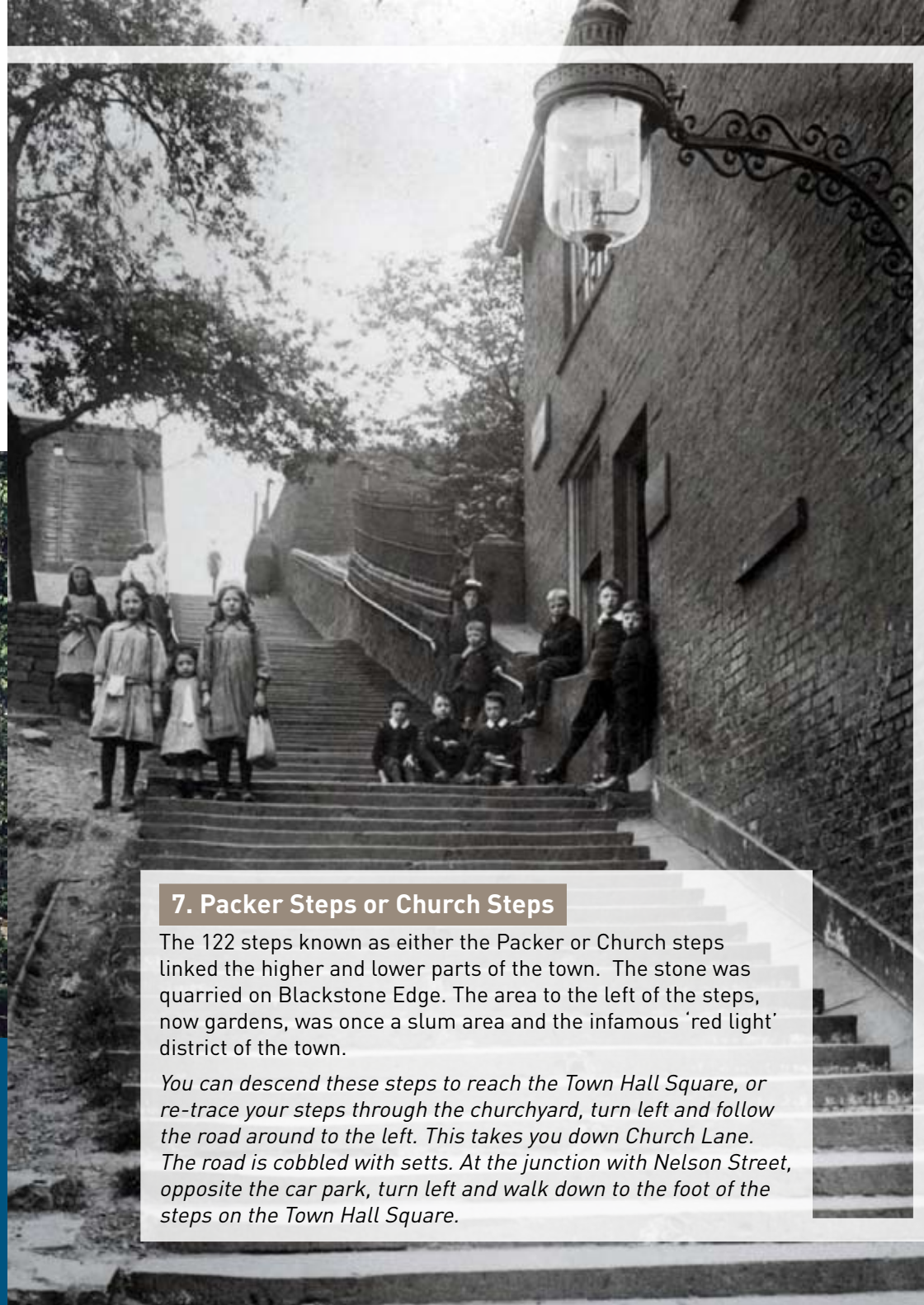
The remains of the stocks can be seen across the churchyard, on the right, next to the path. Bill Pod was the last person to be put in the stocks as a punishment, in 1822.

On the far side of the graveyard you can see the grave of John Collier, schoolmaster, dialect writer and cartoonist - Tim Bobbin was his 'pen name.' Iron railings surround his grave.



5. St. Chad's Parish Church

The church was consecrated in 1170. The building does have evidence of an earlier, possibly Saxon building. The majority of the building dates from the 15th century with some 19th century additions. Legend has it that the Church was to be built on the north bank of the river Roch but each night goblins moved the stones up the hill to the present site.



7. Packer Steps or Church Steps

The 122 steps known as either the Packer or Church steps linked the higher and lower parts of the town. The stone was quarried on Blackstone Edge. The area to the left of the steps, now gardens, was once a slum area and the infamous 'red light' district of the town.

You can descend these steps to reach the Town Hall Square, or re-trace your steps through the churchyard, turn left and follow the road around to the left. This takes you down Church Lane. The road is cobbled with setts. At the junction with Nelson Street, opposite the car park, turn left and walk down to the foot of the steps on the Town Hall Square.

8. Town Hall Square

The vast expanse of the Town Hall Square was once a densely built up area. Henry Brierley described the buildings: "Most of these houses were then considerably over 100 years old and had been grouped together in a most fantastic fashion, though many of them by their handsomely carved fireplaces testified to their having been...the dwellings of some well to do citizens of a former age."



9. Packer Spout Gardens

To the left of the steps you can see Packer Spout Gardens, built around the 1930's. The spring that feeds the ornamental pond was known as Packer Spout and fed Rochdale's first reservoir, built by Samuel & Ralph Taylor in 1760. The water was piped to houses in the low-lying area around the town centre. It is believed that packhorses were watered at Packer Spout in the past - hence the name.



10. Town Hall

The architect W. H. Crossland designed Rochdale's magnificent gothic style Town Hall. It was completed in 1871 at a cost of £160,000. Alfred Waterhouse, architect of Manchester Town Hall, designed the present tower which replaced the original tower after it was destroyed by fire on 10th April 1883.

The entrance Exchange features exquisite Minton tiles. Ascending the grand staircase you can visit the Great Hall with its mural of the signing of the Magna Carta, the world famous magnificent organ and beautiful stained glass. Legend has it that Hitler coveted the fine stained glass windows depicting the Kings and Queens of England, planning to remove them to Germany on his hoped for victory. You can tour this magnificent building. For details please ask at the Town Hall Reception.



11. Flying Horse Hotel

The original Flying Horse Hotel was built in the late 18th century and boasted the largest assembly room in the town prior to the building of the Town Hall. The weekly police court was held there.

The old building was replaced in 1926 by the current hotel that still retains the separate entrance to the first floor function room used by the gentry of yesteryear.



12. Empire Hall

The Dali Bar occupies the former Empire Hall. The building was opened as a Music Hall in 1904. When 'moving pictures' became more popular it concentrated on these, becoming known locally as Pringle's Picture Palace.

13. The (old) Post Office

Yates's, on the corner of Packer Street and Fleece Street, was once Rochdale's Post Office, and later still the offices of the County Court.

14. Town Hall Chambers

Standing on the corner of Packer Street and South Parade, the red brick building known as Town Hall Chambers, was also home to the Post Office for a while.

15. The Royal Bank of Scotland, site of the former Bank House

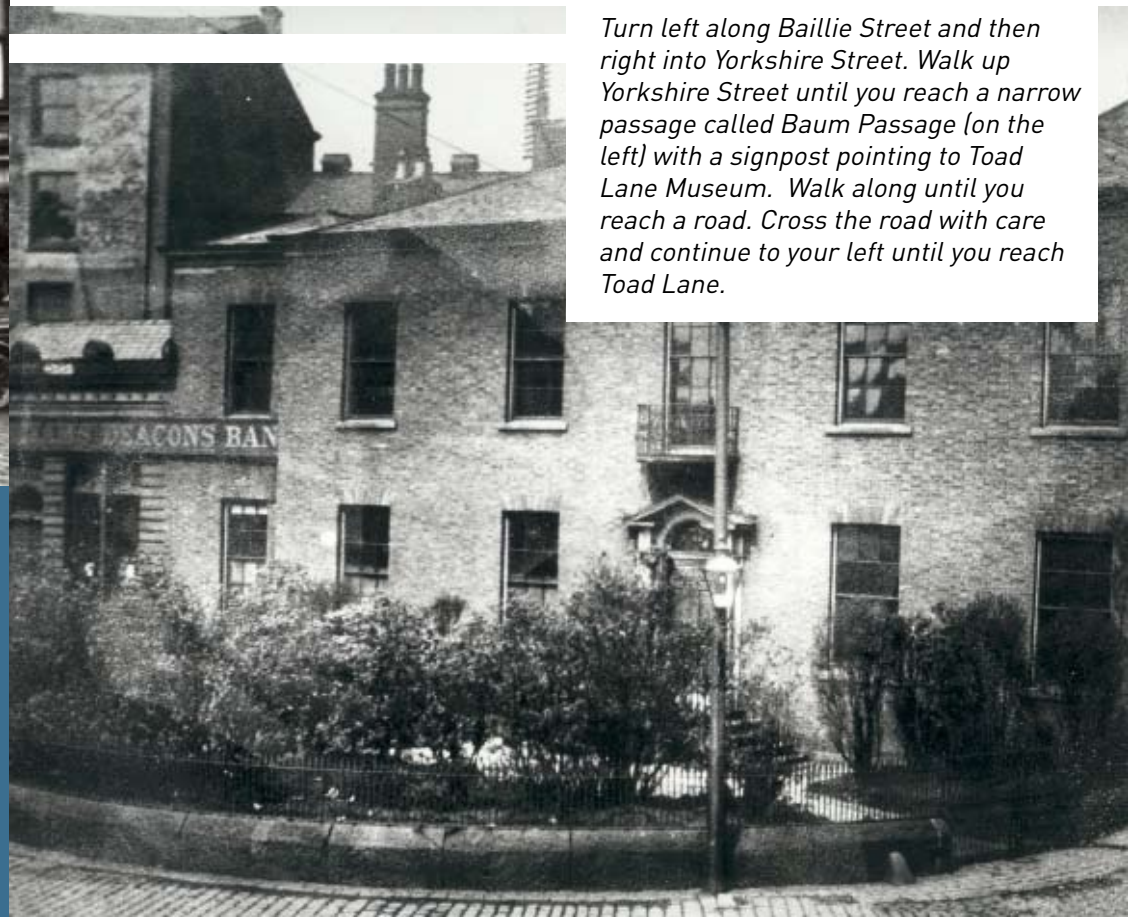
The red brick building adjoining the Royal Bank of Scotland became part of Rawson's Bank in 1819. The bank was sold to the Royds family in 1827. In 1879 a new stone extension was added to the bank, in Butts Avenue. In 1881 Clement Royds sold the bank to the Manchester & Salford Bank, of which he became a Director.

In 1890 this bank merged with the Williams Deacon's Bank and Clement Royds became Chairman. By 1913 the bank had extended into the Manager's house, shown in the photograph. In 1914 most of this house was demolished and the present white stone Georgian style building was erected. Today the Royal Bank of Scotland occupies the building.

Turn to your left up Butts Avenue, and then walk up the tunnel called Bull Brow, heading for Baillie Street. To avoid Bull Brow, walk to the end of Butts Avenue and turn right into Yorkshire Street.

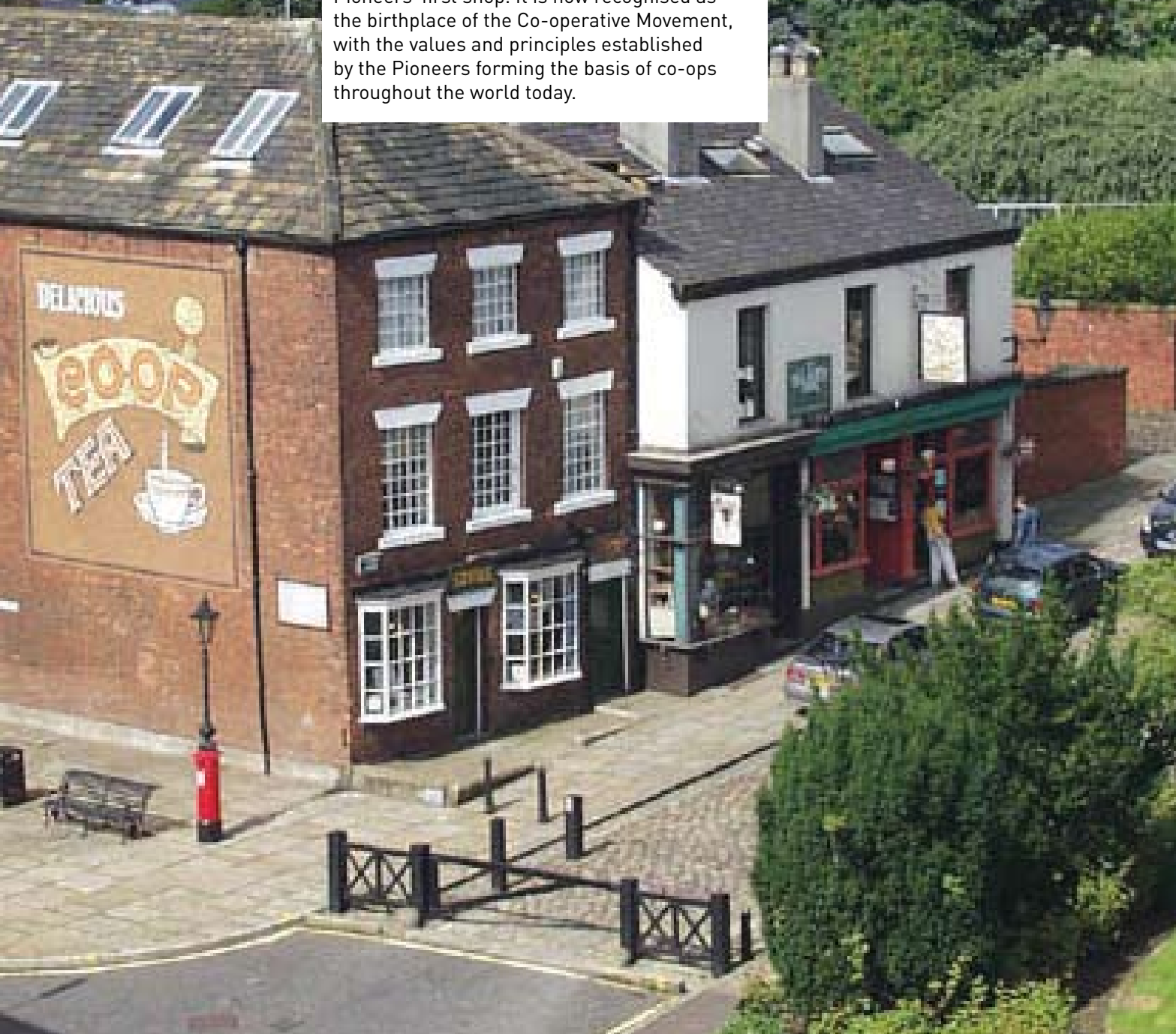
Bull baiting used to take place in the river Roch, in the shallow water in front of the bank.

Turn left along Baillie Street and then right into Yorkshire Street. Walk up Yorkshire Street until you reach a narrow passage called Baum Passage (on the left) with a signpost pointing to Toad Lane Museum. Walk along until you reach a road. Cross the road with care and continue to your left until you reach Toad Lane.



16. Toad Lane Museum

Toad Lane Museum was the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers' first shop. It is now recognised as the birthplace of the Co-operative Movement, with the values and principles established by the Pioneers forming the basis of co-ops throughout the world today.



It was on December 21 1844 that the small shop opened selling the bare essentials - flour, sugar, butter and oatmeal. Before this store opened, poverty-stricken customers were suffering at the hands of unscrupulous shopkeepers. They were being sold less than they were paying for and products were being adulterated - for example, flour was being mixed with chalk and oatmeal was being mixed with sawdust.

This shop, set up by 28 working men, was different. Its customers became members to show their commitment to it, and it traded honestly and fairly. Members had democratic control of it, profits made were invested back into the shop and members got a share of the profits too, based on what they'd spent - this became known as 'the divi'.

Many earlier attempts to set up co-op stores failed but this store thrived and the rest, as they say, is history.

The Museum has been undergoing refurbishment supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and reopens in 2012 for the International Year of Co-operatives.

To visit the church of St Mary in the Baum you can either turn right into Park Lane and climb the steps into the churchyard, or walk to the top of Toad Lane and turn right along St Mary's Gate to reach a level entrance. Take care as the road is a busy dual carriageway.

17. St Mary in the Baum

The original church was consecrated in 1744, but was replaced later by the present church, designed by Ninian Comper. It is the only example of his work in the north of England, and it was consecrated in 1911. If you are very lucky you might catch sight of the legendary Baum Rabbit, a ghostly creature said to haunt the churchyard.

Retrace your steps to Yorkshire Steet.



18. 150th Anniversary Mosaic

Outside the Exchange Shopping Centre you can see a mosaic celebrating the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Toad Lane store in 1844. The anniversary was celebrated by co-operators across the world and brought thousands of visitors to Rochdale as the birthplace of the Co-operative Movement. The year of events in the borough included gaining the record for the world's largest pancake! It ended with a procession and huge firework display on 21 December, the actual anniversary of the store's opening.

19. Lloyds Bank (on the right).

Built in 1708 as a private residence for the Vavasour family, it later became the Union Flag Hotel. As such, it was the centre of Jacobite activity in 1745, when rebels entering the town were said to have used it as their headquarters.

Adjoining the Lloyds Bank building are the former premises of the Rochdale Provident Co-operative Society's Outfitting and Tailoring Departments

20. No 3-5 Yorkshire Street.

Built in 1745 for the Stead family it later became the Bluebell Inn. On the back of the building is the date 1911, when it became Yates's Wine Lodge prior to becoming The Blue Lounge.

At the end of Yorkshire Street turn right by Barclay's Bank and cross the road towards the Post Office, a white building on the Esplanade, opposite the Town Hall.





21. Post Office.

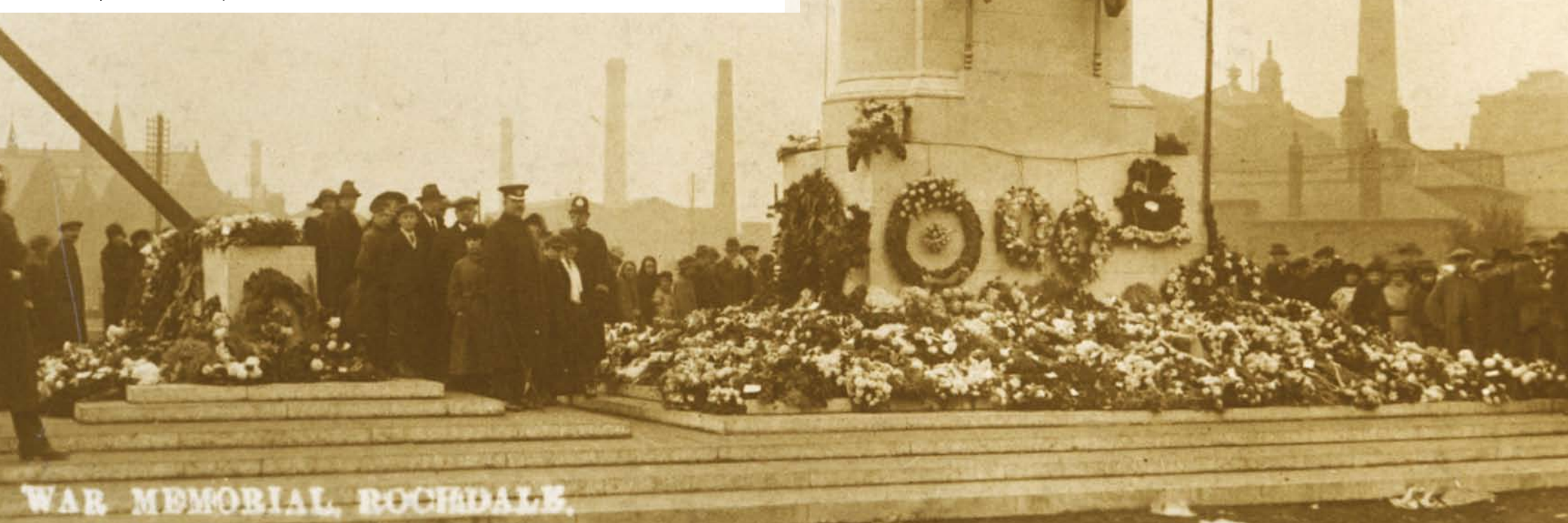
Rochdale's Post Office was designed by the Post Office's own architect, Charles Wilkinson. It had been proposed as early as 1911, but due to World War I it was not completed until July 1927.



22. War Memorial.

Designed by Sir Edward Lutyens, it is similar in design to the Whitehall Cenotaph which he also designed. The Earl of Derby unveiled the memorial, which is 32 feet high, on 22nd November 1922. It stands on the site of Orchard House, formerly home of the Dearden family who held the title Lord of the Manor of Rochdale. During the first World War the Orchard was used as a recruiting office for the armed forces.

Continue to walk along the Esplanade, passing the War Memorial, and the balustrade of the bridge over the Roch, until you are back again at Touchstones.



Rochdale Town Centre

1. Touchstones Rochdale
2. Broadfield Park
3. The Broadfield Park Hotel
4. St Chad's (old) Vicarage
5. St. Chad's Parish Church
6. The Stocks & 'Tim Bobbin's' Grave
7. Packer Steps or Church Steps
8. Town Hall Square
9. Packer Spout Gardens
10. Town Hall
11. Flying Horse Hotel
12. Empire Hall
13. The (old) Post Office
14. Town Hall Chambers
15. The Royal Bank of Scotland
16. Toad Lane Museum
17. St Mary in the Baum
18. 150th Anniversary Mosaic
19. Lloyds Bank
20. 3-5 Yorkshire Street
21. Post Office
22. War Memorial



Rochdale – full of surprises

This trail takes you around Rochdale's fascinating town centre, but there's much more to see in the surrounding area.

Co-op heritage, industrial history, glorious countryside, and food and drink from around the world can all be enjoyed in the Borough.

There's plenty of Enjoy England quality graded accommodation to choose from and it's a handy base for visiting Manchester, The Lake District and The Peak District.

To find out more about what Rochdale has to offer, take a look at www.visitrochdale.com or head to the Tourist Information Centre at Touchstones Rochdale on The Esplanade.

Touchstones Rochdale

Touchstones Rochdale, the start of this walk, is where you'll find our Tourist Information Centre.

It also has four Art Galleries, a 'hands on' Museum for all the family and a Local Studies Centre with internet access. It's all free to explore and enjoy! There's also a café and shop and a full programme of events.

Finding us

We are a five minute walk from the bus station and 15 minutes from the railway station. Taxis and buses link the railway and bus stations. Cycle parking is available outside Touchstones and in other parts of the town centre. Long stay car parks are signposted, and short stay pay-and-display parking is available close to Touchstones, as are parking bays for Blue Badge permit holders.

Access

We are fully accessible for people with disabilities with limited disabled parking outside the Centre.

Get in Touch

Pop in - Touchstones Rochdale, The Esplanade, Rochdale, OL16 1AQ. Open five days a week. Tuesday–Saturday 10am–5pm.

Call us - 01706 924 928

E-mail us - tic@link4life.org

Check out our website - visitrochdale.com

Keep in Touch

There's lots going on throughout the year. To make sure you receive a copy of our exhibitions and events programme, join our mailing list by ringing 01706 924 492.

