25 years: inspiring passion, people and pride in



Once a bustling hub of the Industrial Revolution, after years of decline Rochdale is facing a brighter future thanks in part to 25 years of National Lottery investment.

> “The River Roch ran beneath our feet
>
> encased in slabs of grey concrete
>
> but now it runs again so free
>
> as once it was
>
> and so should be..."*

Set on the foothills of the sweeping Pennines, Rochdale was the powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution. A hub of the ancient wool trade, by the 1900s the booming cotton industry saw the town fill with wealthy merchants and their workers.

It is a town of radical community. Rochdale is where the modern co-operative movement began 175 years ago this December. On 21 December 1844, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers opened their Toad Lane shop. Set up to sell food at affordable prices during a time of hardship, it sparked a global movement.



Young people involved with the Pioneers Museum's Exploring Pioneer Places project

Today it is the site of the Rochdale Pioneers Museum. More than £2million investment from The National Lottery Heritage Fund has refurbished the building and helped run school and education programmes, welcoming in the diverse communities of the town. Even today the museum hosts Pioneer Pantry, a member-owned shop to help those impoverished and struggling.

Rochdale has been hit hard by the decline of the cotton mills and local manufacturing, and by years of recession and austerity.

Yet, today it is drawing on its unique past as a place of industry, innovation, fairness and tolerance to build a brighter future. That's thanks in part to nearly £18million over 25 years from The National Lottery.

River Roch

Nowhere is this story more dramatically told than in the £1.2m uncovering of the concreted-over 800-year-old bridge and the River Roch beneath. Now light glimmers on the surface of the water once more, a place for people to stop and reflect, for nature to thrive, and for new businesses to gather. And in 2015, it helped to stop the floods that ravaged Rochdale from sweeping into the Town Hall and beyond.

The Town Hall



The incredible interior of Rochdale Town Hall's Great Hall

This soaring Gothic masterpiece was built at the height of Rochdale’s Victorian pomp and power. Today the North's "Cathedral of Commerce" is partway through a nearly £9m regeneration that will see the Grade I-listed building showcase the city and its people – including the restoration of its Magna Carta mural and reopening of the old library as a community space named after local anti-slavery manufacturer John Bright.

Greater Manchester Fire Station Museum



Bob Bonner, one of the volunteers behind the Greater Manchester Fire Station Museum

A true labour of love, this project run by passionate ex-firefighters will see a neglected 1930s fire station turned into a new home for the Greater Manchester Fire Service Museum's collections. Thanks to £1.8m funding, it is set to become a bustling tourist attraction only minutes from the train station.

Dippy

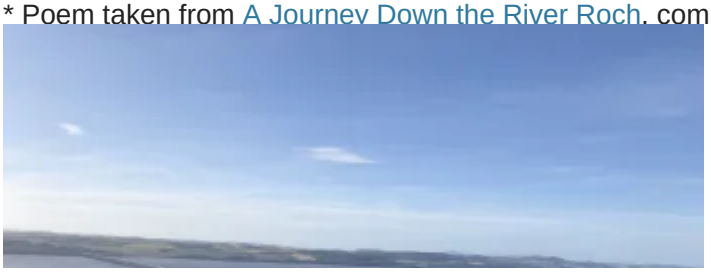
In spring 2020, the town is hoping to attract 300,000 visitors to marvel at the iconic Dippy the Diplodocus. Number One Riverside, Rochdale, is one of just eight places hosting the dinosaur skeleton during its UK tour.

Thanks to £249,000 National Lottery funding, the town will host an awe-inspiring exhibition at the Touchstones Gallery, where future scientists can learn about dinosaurs, get up-close with Rochdale's 300-million-year-old scorpion fossil - and learn how to look after our natural world in the future.

25 years of funding for heritage

Over the past 25 years, The National Lottery Heritage Fund has been the largest dedicated grant funder of the UK's heritage. We've awarded £8bn to more than 44,000 projects across the UK.

* Poem taken from A Journey Down the River Roch, commissioned by Rochdale Borough Council.







, City of Discovery



of her home city



of Blaenavon

25 years: from church to grime, Waltham Forest celebrates its heritage