

This 40 min walk takes you to the finest Parks and Gardens of Rochdale town centre, and will make you discover their history and the best views. An alternative route can also be followed for a shorter walk. The walk starts and finishes in front of the magnificent Town Hall. Each step of the walk is detailed below.

1 Town Hall

In front of you is Rochdale Town Hall which is Grade I listed. The foundation stone was laid in 1866 and in 1871 the building was finally completed. Designed by William Henry Crossland (1835 - 1908) it is regarded as one of the finest interpretations of Gothic revival architecture in the world.

When completed in 1871 it had a 240-ft clock tower topped by a wooden spire, both of which were destroyed by fire on 10 April 1883, leaving the building without a spire for four years. A new 190-ft stone clock tower and spire in the style of Manchester Town Hall was designed by Alfred Waterhouse, and erected in 1887.

2 Cenotaph Lawns & Memorial Gardens

Designed in 1922 by Sir Edward Lutyens (1869 - 1944), the Grade II listed War Memorial commemorates the Great War. The Cenotaph lies adjacent to the magnificent Grade II listed Post Office, completed in 1920 and designed by C. P. Wilkinson. The Memorial Gardens were designed by the Borough's architect as a memorial to the Second World War. There is an 'Axis of Remembrance' that runs from the Bronze Tablet at the Town Hall entrance (Boer War) to the War Memorial (Great War) and the Memorial Gardens (Second World War).

3 Memorial Gardens Fountain

One of the most important features within the Memorial Gardens is its fountain which lies within the sunken gardens at the northern end. The fountain is currently being restored. **Did you know that The Memorial Gardens were built on the former site of 'The Orchard'?**

4 The Orchard

In front of the newly refurbished Police Headquarters, on the land adjacent to the children's play area, an incredible idea has emerged: the creation of an orchard. Several fruit trees were planted there to give this piece of land an identity and offer Rochdale's residents an access to edible fruit. This action could have several great advantages, of which bringing colour to Rochdale is just one!

5 Sensory Garden

The sensory garden is there to encourage you to explore your senses. Have a try and see, touch, taste, hear and smell the plants.

6 Unity Sculpture and Green Wall

Along the banks of the river Roch is Touchstones garden, where the Unity sculpture sits. Installed in 1995, 'Unity' commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Rochdale Pioneers. On 21st of December 1844, the Rochdale Pioneers opened their first shop on Toad Lane, making this former warehouse the birthplace of the Co-operative Movement.

7 Touchstones Rochdale & Herb Garden

This magnificent Grade II listed Local Studies, Museum, Art Gallery and Visitors Information Centre reopened in 2002 following restoration works. The building was erected in three phases and designed by Jesse Horsfall who also designed the Carnegie Library in Castleton. It first opened as a free public library in 1884 and was then extended to house the Museum and Art Gallery in 1903.

Can you guess what the sculpted panels on the façade mean?

Did you know that it was the clock tower fire (where the former library was) that accelerated the construction of this new public library?

Please take this opportunity to visit the Museum which tells the unique history of Rochdale.

8 Broadfield Park & Statue of John Bright

You are now in the oldest park of the Borough. The park opened in 1871, and it was extended in the 1890s and 1925. Broadfield Park is a Grade II listed Registered Park and is of great historic interest. To start your journey in the park, stop at the Grade II listed statue of John Bright (1811 - 1889) which was originally positioned in the Town Hall Square. He was a member of the Anti-Corn Law League, who campaigned for the repeal of the hated Corn Law - a tax on imported corn that was hated by mill owners and workers alike. As an M.P. he proved to be a powerful speaker in Parliament.

9 Dialect Writers Memorial

Here, the Dialect Writers Memorial was designed by the architect Edward Sykes who presented his design to the memorial committee in July 1899. One year later it was

erected to commemorate local dialect writers Edwin Waugh, John Trafford Clegg, Margaret Lahee, and Oliver Ormerod who contributed to preserve local dialect in their verses and prose.

10 Victorian Footbridge

On the Broadfield Slopes, see the superb iron work of the recently restored Victorian footbridge which offers impressive view towards the Town Hall.

From here, make a U-turn and take the direction of the pond at No 11. Alternatively, for a shorter walk, you can follow the footpath leading to Packer Spout Gardens and go to No 20.

11 The Pond

The irregularly shaped pond, lined with York stone, was part of a 19th century design. It was restored in 2005 and forms a Sustainable Urban Drainage System from land-drains through the park. The water eventually feeds into the River Roch.

On the way to the Statue of Alderman George Leach Ashworth, enjoy the view to Rochdale town centre from Flagstaff Hill. Also, you can stop at The Jubilee Drinking Fountain (Co-operative Memorial) at the south-west corner of the sunken garden, which was presented to the town by the Provident Society in 1907.

12 Statue of Alderman George Leach Ashworth

The Grade II listed statue of Alderman George Leach Ashworth erected in 1878 commemorates the man who supported the construction of Rochdale Town Hall. Close to the statue is a boulder, which was originally found at Cowm Top Farm, Castleton and donated to the park. Made of Andesite, its origins are the Borrowdale and Coniston areas of the Lake District.

13 Victorian Bandstand

Broadfield Park has considerable beauty and charm which is recognised by it being awarded Green Flag status. This historical park has been extensively refurbished and contains bowling greens and a play area for children. Before the end of your journey, stop at the impressive Victorian bandstand. Cross the street to discover the magnificent St Chad's Church and gardens.

14 Partnership House Gardens

Discover the food growing gardens of Partnership House, which used to be the Old Vicarage. This Grade II listed Georgian house was built in 1724.

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Our Vision

There is simply so much to see and do in Rochdale town centre and truly something for everyone. Why not start with an informative walk taking in many of Rochdale's historic Parks and Gardens? This walk takes you across the town centre and introduces you to its rich historic and cultural heritage.

This new initiative builds upon a growing awareness that Rochdale was an internationally influential town of great wealth centred on the fording point on the River Roch. During the Industrial Revolution, Rochdale grew rapidly and the town centre was transformed into a remarkable and romantic Victorian town. The masterpiece of this urban landscape is the Town Hall (Grade I listed), designed by W.H. Crossland, which sits juxtaposed to the old town. Rochdale is also the town of the Rochdale Pioneers, Lord Byron, John Bright, John Collier and W.H. Crossland.

During the Victorian times, several parks and gardens were created in the town centre, which give Rochdale its unique character. Each park and garden has an interesting story to tell, and this trail will guide you to discover them.



Link4Life

This document was created by Rochdale Council in collaboration with Link4Life. This leaflet can be downloaded on www.rochdale.gov.uk

To find out more about the local history of Rochdale visit Local Studies at Touchstones Rochdale. For information about the walk, contact the Visitors Information Centre at Touchstones Rochdale.

01706 924928 - tic@link4life.org

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Parks & Gardens Walk Rochdale Town Centre



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15 St Chad's Church and Churchyard

There has been a church on the hill overlooking Rochdale Town Centre for well over 1,000 years. Part of the present church tower has been dated back to Saxon times. The church has notable stained glass, the best known being the Burne-Jones window in the tower, depicting Faith, Hope and Charity. Restoration work was undertaken in the 19th century by W.H. Crossland, architect of the Town Hall. The Church is listed Grade II*.

16 Sun dial

The Sun Dial (Grade II listed) was built in 1783 and was formerly located on the site of the present War Memorial in the Memorial Gardens in front of the Town Hall.

17 The Saxon Wall

The Saxon Wall (Grade II listed) consists of 23 vertical stone posts of which the date is unknown. They were discovered partially buried in 1903 and re-erected by a local man called Dr Wilson.

18 The Medieval Stocks

The Medieval Stocks (Grade II listed) were relocated in 1891 from the former Market Place site. Used in the past to immobilize offenders by locking their hands and feet, it was a form of punishment that lasted night and day, exposing the victims to the mockery and sometimes to the torture of passers-by. These were used for the last time in 1822 to shackle Bill Pod.

Do you know that the footpaths within the grounds of the church are made up of gravestones?

19 Tim Bobbin's Grave - John Collier

John Collier (1708 -1786), a famous Rochdale writer, painter, engraver, caricaturist and satirist who used the pen-name 'Tim Bobbin' was buried in a modest grave in St Chad's churchyard. After Sir Walter Scott, a Scottish novelist, playwright and poet visited the grave in 1792, he suggested that a public subscription be raised to refurbish it. One thousand people donated a pound each; the tombstone was raised and a fence erected.

20 Church Steps & St Chad's Church

Stand at the top of the steps looking across Rochdale, as Lord Byron did when he proclaimed "Fair breaks the morn o'er the distant hills".

Lord George Gordon Byron, the poet, (1788 - 1824) inherited the Manor of Rochdale in 1808 and was the last Byron to be Lord of the Manor. The original steps possibly date back to the 12th century and were later extended in 1660. They were built to create a direct pedestrian access between the town centre and St Chad's Church. At the summit of the steps you will be rewarded with an impressive view across the town centre.

Can you guess how many individual steps there are?

The gardens were built on the site of a former mill, demolished in 1934 as part of the redevelopment of the town centre. In 2007 as part of Broadfield Park restoration project, the railings, steps and entrances of St Chad's Gardens were restored to improve this public garden.

21 Packer Spout Gardens, Fountain & Market Cross

Packer Spout Gardens were built in 1934. 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. The fountain was restored in 2007 as part of a Heritage Lottery Fund project (Broadfield Park) and lying adjacent to it is the Grade II listed Market Cross, which dates from the 18th century.

End of the Trail

The walk finishes at the Town Hall and why not take this opportunity to look inside it? The Grand Staircase, the magnificent Great Hall, frescos, stained glass, statues, ceramics and paintings all add to the grandeur of this exuberant expression of civic pride.

Other information

Why don't you visit **Rochdale Pioneers Museum?**

Follow the fingerpost signs for a 2 minutes' walk to reach Toad Lane, where the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society opened their first store on December 21st 1844.

Parks & Gardens Walk



Parks & Gardens Walk

- Key:**
- Listed building
 - Children's play area
 - Information board
 - Food growing garden
 - View
 - Visitors Information Centre
 - Metrolink stop

Things to look out for:

1. Town Hall
2. Cenotaph Lawns & Memorial Gardens
3. Memorial Gardens Fountain
4. The Orchard
5. Sensory Garden
6. Unity Sculpture and Green Wall
7. Touchstones Rochdale & Herb Garden
8. Broadfield Park & Statue of John Bright
9. Dialect Writers Memorial
10. Victorian Footbridge
11. The Pond
12. Statue of Georges Leach Ashworth
13. Victorian Bandstand
14. Partnership House Gardens
15. St Chad's Church & Churchyard
16. Sun Dial
17. The Saxon Wall
18. The Medieval Stocks
19. Tim Bobbins Grave
20. Church Steps & St Chad's Gardens
21. Packer Spout Gardens, Fountain & Market Cross

