

1 Pioneers Museum, Toad Lane

These premises are recognised as the birthplace of modern co-operation. Many earlier attempts failed, but in 1844 the Principles of the Society succeeded. These Rochdale principles remain the basis for the co-operative movements world-wide.

2 Pioneers Central Store

All that remains of the four-storey building erected in 1867 at the junction of Toad Lane and Cheetham Street is the large stone beehive originally sited above the clock. The beehive is now situated at the back of the museum, proceed round the side of the museum, or go right round the back of the Baum public house.

Opposite the museum is:

3 St Mary's Church, Wardleworth – the Baum

Original chapel was consecrated in 1744; the present church was consecrated in 1911. Hailed as an architectural gem, it is the only example of Ninian Comper's work in the North of England

In 1808 the original chapel served as temporary accommodation for the Halifax Volunteers drafted in to quell the shuttle gathering riot, a direct result of this was that Rochdale became a barracks town.

4 Proceed onto St Mary's Gate, past the side of the Church, taking great

care to cross the dual carriage way opposite the RSPCA building (corner of Redcross Street) Go along High Street to Lidl Supermarket, this is the site of the first factory in Rochdale, erected in 1791 the chimney was said to have attracted many sightseers.

Turn right onto Spotland Road, on the opposite side of the road, is:

5 Rochdale Unitarian Chapel, Clover Street

Erected in 1818 by the followers of James Wilkinson, known as the Methodist Unitarians. The chapel became known locally as the Co-op chapel because Wilkinson and at least nine of the original co-operators worshipped there. The present chapel is built on the site of the old 'Co-op' chapel.

Return back along High Street to Old Mill Street, use the subway to cross to Cheetham Street, walk towards Yorkshire Street, turn up the street and make your way to George Street.

6 On the corner of Ball Street and St George Street is the **Friends Burial Ground** (note blue plaque on George Street wall) Most of the Bright family are buried here including John Bright the famous nineteenth Century statesman, see also No 25 on the trail.

7 Go back along George Street towards Yorkshire Street on your right is **St James' Church Wardleworth**. Consecrated in 1821. This was the church to which the militia were marched for their Sunday act of worship. Now recognised as the Unitarian Catholic Church.

8 On your left is the site of the **Socialist Institute** (now St James Place). Established in 1838 it was the scene of many lively debates by the handloom weavers. Many eminent men such as Cobbett, Robert Owen and the Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor addressed meetings here.

9 On your way down Yorkshire St. is a passage to the Reed Hotel opposite the entrance of the Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre). One of the few remaining inns which was used by the Halifax wool merchants who attended the Rochdale market. By 1798 a wagon from the Reed set off each Tuesday to Liverpool and to Newcastle three times a week transporting finished goods, often for export.

10 The Old Market

Situated at the bottom of Yorkshire St. It was here in 1839, during the height of Chartist activity that arms were freely available.

11 Pioneer House

Site of the Central Offices of the Provident Industrial Society set up as a rival to the Pioneer's Society in 1870.

12 Lloyds Bank

Erected in 1708 as a private residence, it later became the Union Flag Hotel, centre of the Jacobite activity in 1745. (It eventually became King's ironmongers and then the bank)

13 Yates Wine Lodge

Built in 1745 for the Stead family (date and initials are on the top of the downspout) it later became the Bluebell Inn. On the back of the building on Newgate is the date 1911, when it became Yates Wine Lodge.

At the end of Yorkshire St. turn left onto the Butts -

14 Scene of the infamous bull baiting displays until 1820. The Butts was the largest open space in the town centre. A large protest meeting demanding the extension of voting rights was held there in May 1831. When the Reform Bill became law in 1832 the vote was only extended to the middle classes.



Rochdale & Co-operation Town Trail

15 Cross over at the pelican crossing to South Parade, **Rochdale Savings Bank** was originally sited here. The failure of the bank in 1849 gave impetus to the success of the Rochdale Co-operative Society. When George Howarth, son of the founder, died in 1849, it was discovered that he had embezzled the bank's funds. This bred mistrust in the working people who had been encouraged to deposit their savings. Many turned to the Co-operative Society drawing a dividend on their deposits.

16 At the corner of South Parade and Drake St. on the opposite side of the road was the **Wellington Hotel** (now a night-club). Originally a wool merchant's residence, then a boarding school, it became the Wellington in 1811. After the Reform Act of 1832 three candidates presented themselves to a crowd of 8,000 at the hustings outside the hotel. James Taylor, a lay preacher at Clover St. Chapel and Radical politician was nominated by an overwhelming show of hands, however when a ballot was called, few of his supporters actually had the vote.

17 Proceed up Drake St, crossing at the first pelican crossing. Opposite Wet Rake Gardens is the second branch of the Co-op, this replaced an earlier branch in School Lane. The building is now designated as 7 - 11 Oldham Road and is only recognisable from the top storey.

18 On the corner of Milnrow Road and Oldham Road, stands the Newbold Buildings, originally the offices of the Newbold Friendly Society and the Crippled Children's Union. A few yards along Milnrow Road on the left, are a small number of weavers cottages, possessing the distinctive loom windows on the upper floor.

Cross here and approach the Parish Church via School Lane, so called as it was the site of the first Grammar School in 1565.

19 St Chad's Church
Records for this church go as far back as 1194. In 1840 the churchyard was the scene of a violent dispute between John Bright and the vicar, Rev J. Molesworth about Church rates. At a further meeting the Riot Act was read and the vicar was smuggled away by the military.

Note - Blue-Plaque on Church-Lane commemorates the site of the cattle market.

20 Packer Steps
Descend down to the Town Hall Square via these 122 steps, first mentioned in the church records in 1660. (Alternatively you can go down Church Lane or through Packer Spout Gardens).
In 1830 the Weaver's Association organised a protest march, the sight and sound of thousands of clog-shod weavers descending the steps must have been an unforgettable sight.

21 The Town Hall was designed by W.H. Crossland and completed in 1871. It is a prime example of gothic architecture and possesses some very fine stained glass windows. The entrance hall was intended as a Textile Exchange, but was never used for that purpose.

22 Walk along the front of the Town Hall to Vicars Gate and up the steps to Broadfield Park,(alternatively carry on along the Esplanade up the gentle slope or view 24& 25 from street level). Cross the bridge towards the Broadfield Hotel originally a nursing home, it stands on the site of the second grammar school.

23 At the corner of the park overlooking the Esplanade stands the statue of John Bright, originally erected in the Town Hall Square in 1891. John Bright is principally remembered for his part in the repeal of the Corn Laws. He was something of a paradoxical figure, he was a pacifist, yet supported the American Civil War. He wished to extend voting rights but opposed to Universal Suffrage. He regarded himself as an enlightened mill owner yet totally opposed the Ten Hours Bill and Trade Unions.

Go left past the statue across the road, turn right down the park slopes onto the Esplanade, past the roundabout then across to **Touchstones Rochdale**

24 Rochdale's arts and heritage centre providing an exciting mix of Museum, Local Studies, Art Gallery, Education and Performance space, Tourist Information Centre, Shop and Café – why not take a rest and enjoy some well earned refreshments.

In 1993 the Central Library moved out of this building to a new purpose built library in the Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre.

25 Proceed down the Esplanade towards the Memorial Gardens which were the site of the old **Cloth Hall**. It was built by public subscription in 1772. Here the wool merchants from Yorkshire came to trade. Walk past the Gardens to Newgate, further down this street are stairs and a lift to the market car park. Alternatively you could go over to the Town Hall where guided tours are available. Contact the Town Hall for details.

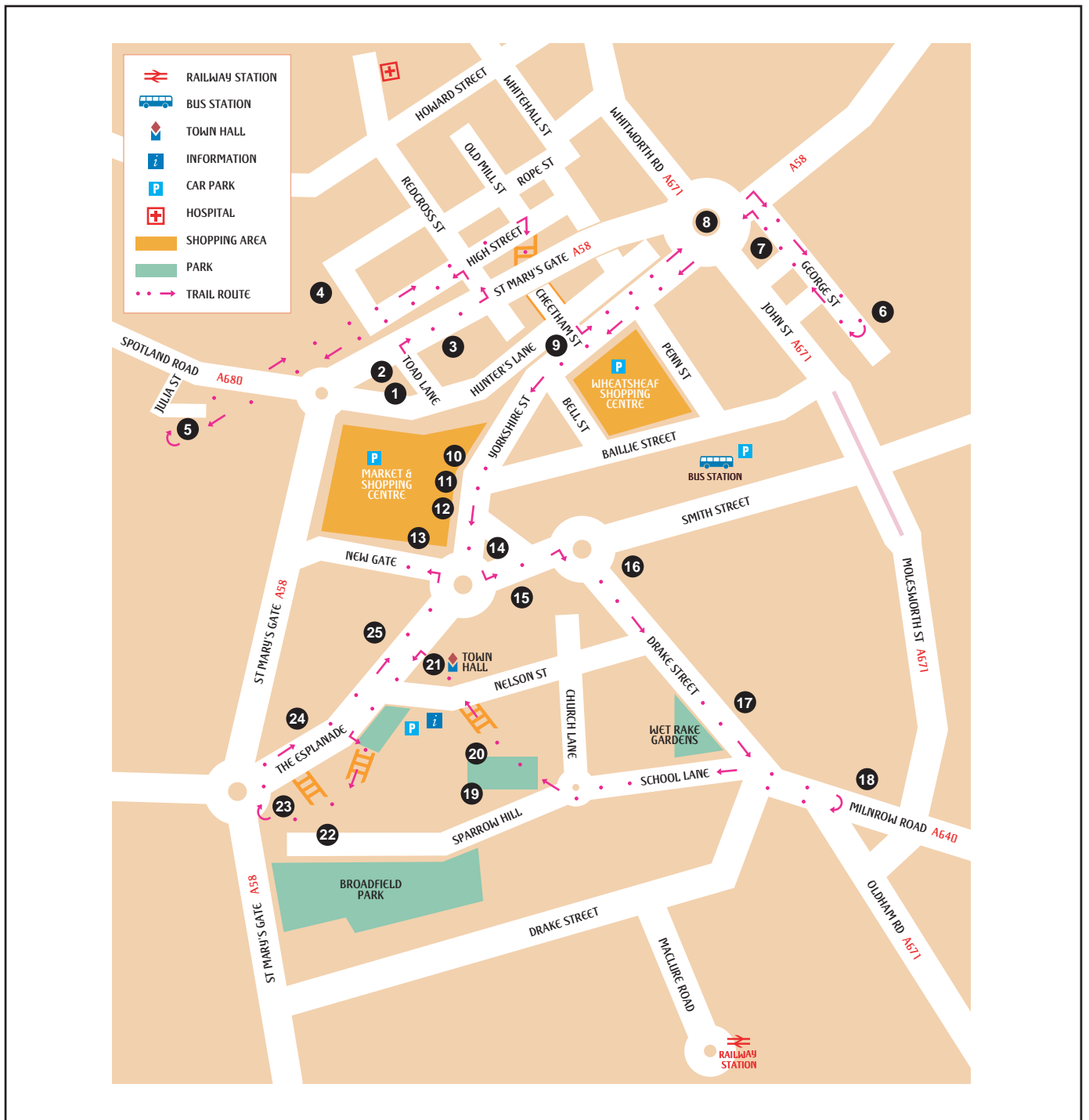
This trail has been compiled by the Local Studies and Museum Services - for further information contact:

Touchstones Rochdale	01706 864986
Local Studies	01706 864915
Museum Services	01706 864938
Tourist Information Centre	01706 864928

If you would like a guided walk of the trail contact the Blue Badge Guides through the Tourist Information Centre. (The Guides also do many other walks though-out the Borough)



Rochdale & Co-operation Town Trail



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