

# WHAT'S ON with All Across the Arts

with Steve Cooke



## Church captured light in its glass

ANDREA SARGINSON

"WE asked the architect to give us a church that was well ventilated and with plenty of light in our town where the sun is so often hidden, and the sky is grey."

This was the request of the congregation of the old St Mary's Church for their new church.

The old church had been built in 1742 on the Baum (or balm) field when Rochdale's successful woollen industry had caused a population expansion, but in 1909 fearsomely loud cracking noises made it

essential to build a new one. The famous architect who took the job was Ninian Comper.

In Rochdale, the smoky atmosphere had an influence on both material and style.

Comper chose to build the exterior in brick rather than stone to prevent it becoming depressingly black, although stone was used inside.

He designed large windows on the east, south and west sides to let in as much light as possible.

The east window was aligned to avoid the shadow of tall buildings.

However, the emotional attachment of the parishioners to the old church also mattered – they wanted to retain vestiges of the old building.

The result was a church, consecrated in 1911, that, unusually, combined the best of the old classical style of the old building with the new Victorian gothic style.

Comper became famous for this idea – unity by inclusion.

On the north side are remnants of the old church – thick columns and round-headed windows containing

roundels of stained glass, pictorially telling the story of Jesus.

The south side soars upwards with tall, thinner columns and high windows of clear glass through which the southern light streams.

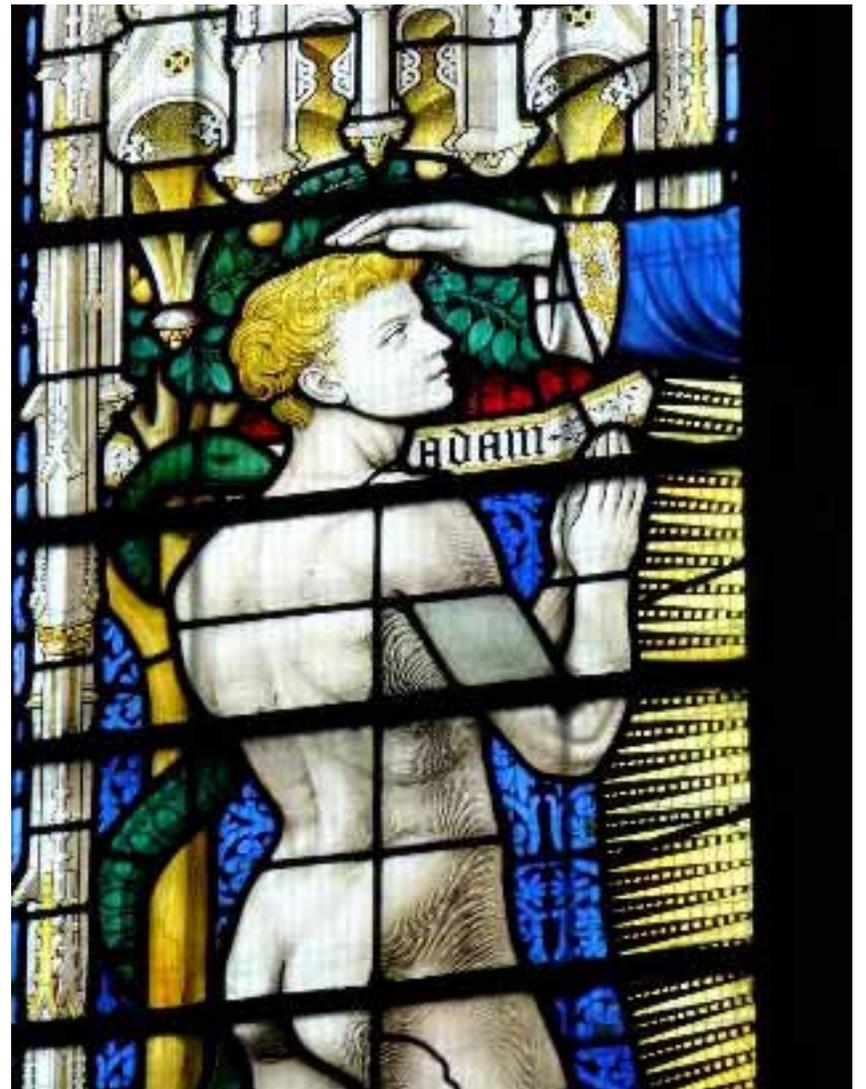
The east window is a glory of Comper's skill. It is 30ft high by 18ft wide and said to be inspired by the love of God bestowed upon man.

The coloured glass is transparent and the first impression is one of lightness – unlike many others of similar date that were dark, opaque and dull.

The blue glass, even today, is especially beautiful and was made by a medieval technique which used sand and seaweed.

This beautiful church is important for Rochdale and British architecture in general. It marks a significant period in Comper's work.

At around the same time, he was also building



● Stained glass at St Mary's Church

his greatest church in Wellingborough. His stained glass

windows include Westminster Abbey and can be identified by a little

strawberry stem drawn in the lower right corner of them.

## EVENTS

### SUN, SEPT 2

**Jazz On A Sunday:** Frog Island Jazz Band, playing classic New Orleans jazz of the 1920s and early 1930s. Newtown National Club, 3 Nixon Street, Castleton, Rochdale. Doors open 7.15pm, concert 8pm-11pm. £7. Call 0161 740 3714 or 01706 640713 or visit [www.jazznorthwest.co.uk/rochdale.htm](http://www.jazznorthwest.co.uk/rochdale.htm).  
**Friends of Hare Hill Park Summer Concert:** Relax with music in the park from Blackley Brass Band, a fourth section contesting band based in north Manchester. Refreshments available. Hare Hill Park, 27 Town House Road, Littleborough. 3pm-5pm. Free.

### WEDS, SEPT 5

**Toad Lane Concerts - Rochdale's Weekly Music at Lunchtime:** Olga Paliy (piano). St Mary in the Baum, Toad Lane/St Mary's Gate, Rochdale. 12.30pm-1.30pm. £4. Call 01706 6488724.

### STEVE COOKE

[steve@aata.me](mailto:steve@aata.me)

BASED on the popular 1967 film with Rex Harrison, Dr Dolittle is a spectacular new stage show starring Mark Williams, which will be on at the Lowry this Christmas.

Mark is known for his roles in shows such as Father Brown, The Fast Show, 101 Dalmatians, The Borrowers, Shakespeare in Love and seven of the Harry Potter films.

Joining him in Dr Dolittle will be Vicky Entwistle, who plays Coronation Street's Janice Battersby and has recently been in both the television series Ackley Bridge and on stage in Les Misérables, as his trusty side-kick Polynesia and Brian Capron, also known as Coronation Street's Richard Hillman, playing both the vivacious Albert Blossom and the mighty Straight Arrow.

Featuring stunning visual puppetry, this new production from the producers of Chitty Chitty



● Mark Williams as Dr Dolittle

Bang Bang and The Addams Family, will be part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the original film and will feature the same songs, including the Academy Award-winning Talk to the Animals.

The eccentric doctor, his human companions and his exotic menagerie of animal friends will

undertake an adventure to find the Giant Pink Sea Snail that holds the secret of life and making the world a happier place.

Not only talking to the animals, he will be listening to them as well.

For more information, call 0843 208 6000, email [boxofficeadmin@thelowry.com](mailto:boxofficeadmin@thelowry.com) or visit [www.thelowry.com](http://www.thelowry.com).

**ESCORTED HOLIDAY**  
Preferred Travel Services

**Rochdale Observer**

### Tenerife - Island of Contrasts

Flying Direct from Manchester  
Departs Nov 2 2018, Feb 24, Mar 10 & 22 2019

Much more than an escape to the winter sunshine, Tenerife is truly an island of contrasts - miles of sun-drenched coastline overlooked by the snow-capped peak of Mount Teide - Spain's highest mountain. You stay in the north part of the island where the lush, tropical landscape contrasts with the arid terrain of the south.

**Price includes**

- Return direct flights from Manchester
- 7 nights 4-star HB accommodation in Puerto de la Cruz
- Visits to the UNESCO listed town of La Laguna, the Botanic Garden Orotava Valley, and Mount Teide
- Services of a tour representative

8 days from **£729**

### Walking - the Costa Blanca Mountains

Flying Direct from Manchester  
Departs Sep 27, Nov 8 2018 & Mar 21 2019

Inland from the resorts of the Costa Blanca lies some of the best walking country in Spain. The sparsely populated mountains rise up to 3000ft and are a haven for wildlife. Well maintained tracks along the rocky peaks and through lush valleys link traditional villages where the old Valencian lifestyle still prevails. Your holiday base in Calpe has a bit of everything - beautiful beaches as well as a lively and picturesque old town and stunning mountain scenery.

**Price includes**

- Return direct flights from Manchester
- 7 nights HB 4-star accommodation in Calpe
- 3 fully guided walks
- One free spa discount in the hotel
- Services of a tour representative

8 days from **£739**

[www.preferredts.com/ash1](http://www.preferredts.com/ash1)  
0116 279 3929 code **ASH1**

Holidays organised by Preferred Travel Services ABTA WATTS ATOL protected 2017. Prices are based on 2 people sharing and are subject to availability.

[www.allacrossthearts.com](http://www.allacrossthearts.com) -  
[Defiant Radio www.defiantradiouk.com](http://www.defiantradiouk.com)