

Press release



## Manchester's summer garden party blossoms

### Dig the City 2015 Festival Programme Revealed

Keep cool this summer at Manchester's seven day al fresco party, as Dig the City returns from Friday 31 July to Thursday 6 August.

Sponsored by NCP, the UK's largest summer garden festival takes over the shopping streets with glorious gardens, daytime and evening events, shopping exclusives, pop-up bars and masses of FREE events.

#### **Show Gardens and Installations - TOTALLY FREE TO SEE**

For the full list of Show Gardens go to: [www.digthecity.co.uk](http://www.digthecity.co.uk)

28 stunning designs will be displayed throughout the festival, from both professional and amateur designers, as well as community groups and businesses. The theme for this year is *Innovate and Interact*, and some of the highlights include a **pop-up meadow on wheels** from horticultural experts **Kew Gardens**, a **mountain stream** by Hulme Community Garden Centre, a garden which erupts from cracks in Manchester's pavements, and a vertical growing experiment with bug houses and a mud kitchen from **Incredible Edible**.

Manchester's most famous street inspires **Coronation Street The Tour Garden**. Designed by Coronation Street The Tour and Manchester City Council, the garden explores how a famous ginnel behind the Rovers Return can be turned green and beautiful. Following the festival, this garden will be used to create a new green alleyway in the city.

Stimulating the senses from the city streets will be a digital garden from the **University of Salford** and a performance venue garden from **The Bridgewater Hall**.

**Manchester Jazz Festival** will be taking over the New Cathedral Street Bandstand on Sunday 2 August, and there will be three spectacular gardens fresh from **RHS Tatton**, including a previous Tatton Gold winner, **a bee garden** and a striking space where visitors can become RHS designers and rearrange the plants to their liking.

IWM North will be celebrating their **Horrible Histories: Blitzed Brits** summer exhibition with a 'Dig for Victory' allotment, and hanging baskets will bloom in New Cathedral Street, bringing colour and fragrance at every turn.

Bring a plant to St Ann's Square on the opening weekend to make a triumphant Manchester **'People's Garden'**. Those who bring a pot will be entered into a fabulous prize draw, and plants will be donated to local community groups as part of Dig the City's lasting legacy.

The gardens and installations will be judged on Friday 31 July by celebrity gardener and BBC presenter **Diarmuid Gavin** and Manchester's **National Trust Gardener in Residence**, Sean Harkin.

## Shopping

Attention fashionistas! On Saturday 1 August comes **#digforfashion** to launch Dig the City's '**One Big Shopping Weekend**'. A moving fashion show will strut its stuff from King Street to New Cathedral Street, on a green grass runway. See collections from Selfridges, 7 for All Mankind, Jigsaw and more, and help find '**The Face of Dig 2015**', or enter yourself using the Flower Wall for sensory selfies.

Shop windows will turn into gardens pretty as a picture. Retailers from Jigsaw, LK Bennett and Hobbs, to Paperchase, Skipton Building Society and Molton Brown will bring their windows to life with flowers and plants. Check out **House of Fraser** who will be displaying a floral textile collection from **The Whitworth**. Show your love on social media and vote for The People's Favourite window using **#digthecitymcr**

Look for the Dig the City logo on shop windows to discover which retailers have special events and offers on during the '**One Big Shopping Weekend**' such as Dig discounts at Gap, Joy, Selfridges, Kipling, The White Company, Henri Lloyd, Paperchase, Patisserie Valerie, The Whiskey Shop, Links of London and Vidal Sassoon, makeovers and gifts at SpaceNK and The Body Shop, children's planting event, free coffee and pamper events at White Stuff and Mint Cocktails at Mint Velvet.

## Talks

It's all happening at the **Dig the City Den** in St Ann's Square.

There'll be an **11am Coffee Morning** every day, with talks from **Kew Gardens**, the **National Trust**, who'll give a history lesson on 'The Lost Gardens of Manchester', BBC Radio Manchester gardening expert **Shaun Gagie**, BBC Two's **Big Allotment Challenge** Winner Rob Smith and **The Moss Cider Project**.

On Tuesday 4 August, Dig's '**Community Gardening Day**' will feature talks at 11am, 2pm and 3pm, covering horticultural tips including guerrilla gardening, seed-bomb making and how to get involved in gardening projects in your neighbourhood.

On Friday 31 July, at 12 noon **Diarmuid Gavin** will also be taking questions at the Bandstand on New Cathedral Street. Whether it's greenfly blighting your honeysuckle or how to make the most of a "yarden", Diarmuid is here to help.

For the full schedule of talks go to **[digthecity.co.uk](http://digthecity.co.uk)**

## Music

There will be live classical and jazz performances at **The Bridgewater Hall Bandstand** on New Cathedral Street, by students and new young performers from across Manchester, the RNCM and University of Manchester.

In the **Dig the City Den in St Ann's Square**, enjoy daily **musical entertainment** from 12pm, ranging from Ukelele soloists, jazz and folk duos, steel band Pantonic All Stars, the Manchester School of Samba, Dr Butler's Medicine Hatstand Band and spicy Spanish guitar duo Jalapeno Hombres. Stick around after the coffee morning, come down on your lunch or after work - there'll always be something lively and different in the den and on the square.

Kicking off the festival weekend there are two evening **garden parties** from 8pm – 11pm in the den. On Friday 31 July, it's **Northern Soul Night**, hosted by Howling Rhythm and featuring Northern Soul dancers and a full live brass section - **The Howling Horns**. Party go-ers can join in Northern Soul dance classes and taste whiskies from The Whisky Shop.

On Saturday 1 August channel your inner Gatsby for the **1920's Speakeasy Party**, with vintage jazz collective 52 Skiddoo and Charston dancers to make the party swing. Sample botanical gins cocktails and party like its 1929!

Take your pick from the **DJs in the Den**; on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>, Mancunian party people **Drunk at Vogue and Pumping Iron** take to the decks.

Sunday 2 August welcomes **Manchester Jazz Festival** to Dig the City, with a selection of the best jazz bands the festival has to offer, all at the Bandstand on New Cathedral Street.

At the King Street **Budvar Bar**, Dig the City will be on the search for **Manchester's Best Busker**. Apply online to get a slot and show us what you can do. Earn the pennies and the glory and attract the attention of thousands of city centre visitors.

### **Other Entertainment**

For the more Zen amongst us, **The Whitworth** art gallery will be teaching us all about how art, gardening and meditation can improve wellbeing, by holding free daily **Tai Chi** sessions. Head to the Dig the City Den in St Ann's Square at 3pm, and the lessons will be held on one of the Show Gardens.

All week, the beautiful **Manchester Cathedral** will play host to **urban gardening exhibition, Carrot City**. Carrot City showcases examples of urban agriculture from around the world including vertical gardening, rooftop gardening, community gardens and allotments. The idea is that we can grow anywhere, even within the most complex of urban environments.

On Wednesday 5 August, 6-7pm in the Dig the City Den, there will be explosive cocktails and a taste of Alice in Wonderland from famed cocktail haven **The Alchemist**, proving there's more to cocktails than just botanicals.

### **Food and Drink**

A garden party needs great food and drink, and Dig the City is serving up some real treats.

The **Dig the City Den** will offer fine ales, a tearoom for coffee and cake, sharing platters, hog roast and paella. Over on King Street, there'll be ping pong, cold beer and busking at the **Budvar Bar**.

A touch of France comes to New Cathedral Street at the **Harvey Nichols and Grey Goose Boulangerie François Terrasse**. Expect small plates, mini patisseries and fruit tarts alongside light and zesty cocktails – all based on, of course, Grey Goose flavoured vodkas.

There's also afternoon tea with a floral twist at the **Double Tree by Hilton**, floral inspired cocktails at **The Lowry** and tours of **The Printworks** henhouses and bee hives and a special Dig the City menu at the **Hard Rock Cafe**.

### **For Families - TOTALLY FREE**

Bring the family and make a Dig day of it. There are plenty of free things to do at Dig the City to keep the whole family entertained.

Every tiddler's favourite gardener **Mr Bloom from CBeebies** visits Dig the City on Sunday 1 August and Monday 2 August. Mr Bloom will be encouraging the kids to get their hands dirty with some great gardening activities. Head to Greengate Square, opposite Manchester Cathedral to join in the fun – don't forget to dress for the outdoors!

Mr Bloom will be appearing at half an hour sessions, from 10am – 3pm. **A ticket is required, go to [www.digthecity.co.uk](http://www.digthecity.co.uk) to book.**

**The National Trust** returns to St Ann's Square all week, with a shed load of garden memories - your memories. Have you been part of Remembering Our Lost Gardens? If so, you will find your memory inside the shed. There's still time to tweet your memories to **#digthecitymcr**. There will also be courses for kids on dry-stone walling, barefoot walking, giant wild art, mud-pie and kite making and giant garden games.

The mystical and mysterious **'Run Wild, Child'**, from the creators of Just So Festival, **Wild Rumpus**, brings Dig the City to a stunning close on Thursday 6 August. **From 10am**, families turn detective for the day and have the freedom of the city, discovering clues and meeting curious characters. At 3pm in Greengate Square, immerse yourselves in a fabulous final water fight!

On the day, collect your mini-explorers map from the St Ann's Square **Info Point** to get going. Find out more and get dressing-up tips at [www.runwildchild.co.uk](http://www.runwildchild.co.uk).

Whilst the Wild Rumpus get the kids running wild around the city centre, Manchester's new arts centre **HOME** presents a taste of their winter family play, **Inkheart**, in the Dig the City Den. The play tells the story of books coming to life, and kids will be visited by two actresses from the play for very special interactive storytelling sessions – at 11am and 2pm.

On Tuesday 4 August, from 11am at the Bandstand, crafty families can make crazy garden-themed hats from a variety of craft and organic material with help from the team at **Manchester Central Library**.

There's also plenty to get small hands dirty at some of the Show Gardens – Pendleton Together's 'Friendly Fences', The Moss Cider Project, Real Food Wythenshawe, Incredible Edible and Dreamscape Gardens all have interactive activities for kids, including hands-on planting and growing, smoothie making and even apple juicing.

**Manchester Arndale** will present an interactive garden with a quirky twist, inviting shoppers to paint Manchester's largest flower garden design in Halle Square. Families and kids can paint a section of the 7m x 8m floral garden throughout the week, so it will be beautifully complete as Dig the City comes to a close on 6 August.

**An Information Point will be located in St Ann's Square, open daily for programme info, directions and maps (open 10am – 6pm, Friday 31 July – Thursday 6 August).**

**For full listings at this year's Dig the City go to [www.digthecity.co.uk](http://www.digthecity.co.uk)**

**Follow the festival [@/digthecitymcr](https://twitter.com/digthecitymcr) on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.**

**[Join the event on Facebook](#)**

**[25% OFF NCP Parking Discount](#)**

Dig the City sponsor NCP is offering visitors a **25% discount** when drivers pre-book their parking online, using the promo code 'Dig15'.

The offer is available during the festival dates (31st July to 6th August) at selected city centre car parks. More information can be found at [ncp.co.uk/dig15](http://ncp.co.uk/dig15)

### Dig the City Den (St Ann's Square) Line Up

Day	11am Talk	Lunchtime	Daytime		After Work	Late
Friday 31 July		12.00-14.00 Live Music in the Den: As You Like It	16.00-17.00 Dig the City Medal Awards With Diarmuid Gavin	17.00-19.00 Live Music in the Den: Maybe Frank	19.00-20.00 Whisky Tasting	20.00-23.00 Dig the City Disco: Northern Soul Live
Saturday 1 August	11am Coffee Morning Talk: Go Wild with Kew Gardens – How they created a meadow for Manchester	On The Square: 12.00 -15.30 Pantonic All Stars Steel Band		18.00-19.00 Live Music in the Den: Dr Butler's Hatstand Medicine Band	20.00-22.00 Dig the City Disco: 1920s Speakeasy Party	
		DJs In The Hub: 12.00-17.00				
Sunday 2 August	11am Coffee Morning Talk: Lost Gardens of Manchester	On The Square: 12.00 -16.00 Manchester School of Samba		16.30-18.30 Live Music in the Den: CRAB		
		DJs In The Hub: 12.00-16.00 Thom Docking (Drunk At Vogue) and Andrew Bailey (Pumping Iron)				
Monday 3 August	11am Coffee Morning Talk: Shaun Gagie BBC Manchester	12.00-14.00 Live Music in the Den: Riognach Connelly and Ellis Davis			17.00-19.00 Live Music in the Den: Mat Walklate and Paulo Fuschi	
Tuesday 4 August Community Gardening Day	11am Coffee Morning Talk: Au Naturelle with Rob Smith - Big Allotment Challenge Winner 2015		14.00-15.00 Community Gardening Day Talk: Carrot City, Guerrilla Gardening + Seed Bomb Workshop	15.00-16.00 Community Gardening Day Talk: How to get involved in Community Gardening	17.00-19.00 Live Music in the Den: Samantha Seth	
Wednesday 5 August Food and Drink Day	11am Coffee Morning Talk: Brew Your Own Beer and Cider with tasting			17.00-18.00 Live Music in the Den: Jalapaneno Hobres	The Alchemist Cocktail Making 6-7	19.00-20.00 Live Music in the Den: Jalapaneno Hobres
Thursday	11.00-12.00		14.00-16.00		17.00-19.00	

6 August	Storytelling by HOME		Storytelling by HOME		Live Music in the Den: Busking Challenge Winner
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**[ENDS]**

**For further information please contact:**

Jennifer Middleton – [jennifer@lemonzestpr.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@lemonzestpr.co.uk) or 01757268283 / 07708155501

Lucy Allen – [lucy@lucyallenpr.co.uk](mailto:lucy@lucyallenpr.co.uk) / 07968145611

Ellen Howells – [ellen@lemonzestpr.co.uk](mailto:ellen@lemonzestpr.co.uk) or 01757268283

**About Dig the City**

Dig the City is Manchester's summer garden festival and newest summer attraction. The event transforms the city's shopping streets – taking in Market Street, New Cathedral Street, St Ann's Square, King Street, Deansgate and Greengate Square. There are Show Gardens, horticultural talks and workshops, children's activities, live music, entertainment, fine food – and special shopping events and promotions.

The 2014 festival won 'Outstanding' recognition at the 2014 RHS Britain in Bloom Awards – following a 'Gold' award in 2013. The 2013 festival won a Commendation at the 2013 UK Events Awards.

Dig the City is produced by CityCo on behalf of the Heart of Manchester Business Improvement District (BID) – a consortium of over 380 city centre retailers.

The festival is supported by Manchester City Council, Manchester Cathedral, Visit Manchester, Salford City Council, Metrolink and the National Trust, alongside event partners and sponsors.

More information can be found at [digthecity.co.uk](http://digthecity.co.uk)

**About the Heart of Manchester BID**

The Heart of Manchester Business Improvement District (BID) is an independent not-for-profit company governed by a Board of retailers and city centre stakeholders.

A Business Improvement District is a successful management model operating in most towns and cities in the UK, and across the USA and Europe. Manchester's BID is a specific geographical area encompassing over 380 retailers spanning King Street, St Ann's Square, New Cathedral St, Exchange Square, Market St and part of Deansgate.

The BID is financed by a levy made on the basis of rateable value – meaning over £1 million per year will be invested for a period of 5 years. Agreement to launch was made through a

successful legal ballot. The BID is focused on delivering customer service and promotional initiatives aimed at increasing footfall and retail spend in city centre Manchester.

More information about the Heart of Manchester BID can be found at [www.heartofmanchester.com](http://www.heartofmanchester.com)

## **NCP**

NCP Manchester Limited (NML) was formed in 1999 as a joint venture between NCP and Manchester City Council. NML has allowed the city to change the way parking services are delivered, serving as a gateway to the city whilst integrating with the city's various transport systems. NML delivers many cutting edge innovations to ensure that Manchester enjoys the finest car park facilities, including our pre booking system, where customers can book their parking at selected car parks in Manchester through [www.ncp.co.uk](http://www.ncp.co.uk) to guarantee their space at all times.

For more information please contact: [pressoffice@ncp.co.uk](mailto:pressoffice@ncp.co.uk)