

# Royally THE RUGELEY RECORD

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 2



## WE'RE PAINTING RUGELEY RED(WHITE & BLUE!)

It's time for a celebration - remember those?! And boy, does Rugeley have a lot to celebrate. First up, our wonderful Queen is celebrating her Platinum Jubilee this Summer and we will obviously be helping her to do that in style, it would be rude not to!

So Saturday 4th June will see the Town Centre come alive with street parties and entertainment well into the evening, along with our wonderful Artisan Market and our Inflatable Fun Zone in Elmore Park. The street parties will be run by individual community groups throughout the day, who will bring their own individual charm to their designated areas.

Some of our lovely local Primary Schools will be joining us, with so many guests that they will be hosting their parties in 'sittings'! The Rugeley Churches will be coming together to celebrate, no doubt with a musical accompaniment or two, and the Hart School will be turning Anson Street into 'Equality Street', celebrating our differences as a community, showcasing how different cultures celebrate and encouraging us all to be more tolerant of our differences.

There will be wandering entertainers, live music and

face-painters, games and activities for families, fancy dress and of course tea and cake. Our wonderful High Street will be open and buzzing, with our fabulous cafes and restaurants already taking bookings.

There will be a big screen in Market Square throughout the day, with a live feed to the celebrations taking place in London, live entertainment and our fabulous band - Candy and the Sound, to finish off the day with a good knees-up. Market Square will be transformed into a dance floor from 6pm with first-come-first-served tables, allowing you to order refreshments from some of our great Town Centre eateries.

So come and spend the day with us, enjoy the entertainment, if you're not part of one of our community group street parties, come and grab a deckchair or table in Market Square, bring a picnic, and pop over and enjoy the inflatable fun in Elmore Park.



# WHAT'S ON AT THE ROSE THEATRE

## MAY

- 6 The Birmingham Rep on Tour with - Grime Boy
- 27 James and the Giant Peach

## JUNE

- 1 Pop Up Cinema (Film TBC)
- 10 The McCoy's Live - The sound of the 60's
- 12 Wrestling Show

## JULY

- 1 Pop Up Cinema (Film TBC)

## AUGUST

- 17 Pop Up Cinema (Film TBC)
- 24 Summer Circus Party

## SEPTEMBER

- 9 Medium Show

## OCTOBER

- 7/8 Rugeley Musical Theatre Company (Show TBC)
- 21 ABBA Sensation - Live Show

If you would like any additional information, give us a call on **01889 584036**  
or drop us an email on [theatre@rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:theatre@rugeleytowncouncil.gov.uk)

## NEW LOOK FOR THE ROSE

### Palmer Season brings new life to Rugeley's theatre

It's been a tough few years for the Arts, and Rugeley has been no exception. Cancelled productions and theatre companies battling long periods without income, threatened the theatre's viability. But as the world has begun to open up once again, so has our own Rose Theatre, with two brand new, unique productions written and performed by local people, our lovely town theatre opened its doors to showcase 'The Palmer Season'.

The productions, consisted of the play 'I am a Murdered Man' by Gerry Hinks and 'The Prince of Poisoners' - a musical tale of the Rugeley Poisoner William Palmer, written by Dan Smith and Claire Hughes, performed by the fabulous Rugeley Musical Theatre Company, were Rugeley firsts. Widely proclaimed by the local community, both productions were great hits and gave us the opportunity to showcase our fabulous gem of a

theatre and remind everyone that it is here and a great venue for all occasions.

The theatre and its public spaces are currently enjoying a re-vamp, and we are looking at many ways to make this fabulous space more accessible to the local community and for private hire.

If you're planning a wedding, party or any event, give us a call on **01889 584036** and come and see us for a show-round. You may hire the entire space or just a small part of it and our prices are very competitive. We have lots of ideas in the planning stages for the Rose, so follow us on Facebook to stay up to date.

 **@TheRoseTheatre**



# WHY WE SHOULD SUPPORT OUR HIGH STREET

Throughout the past two or more years of the pandemic, we've experienced how our local communities and interactions with one another are the core of mental and physical health and wellbeing. Through our local Rugeley infrastructure – whether that be social, visiting the doctors, going to church, the gym, the pub, the market, whatever we choose or need to do on a daily basis – we have discovered 'community' is vital to our happiness and will continue to be in the future.

For many years the big corporations have called the shots. They've built out of town retail parks and encouraged us to spend our weekends there, being influenced by the clever advertising and food outlets on site, haemorrhaging our hard earned cash and often relying on credit, buying things we didn't need – and we did, in our millions. They've told us that they'll deliver everything we need to our doors, often in 24 hours, making us a nation dependent on convenience and encouraging seclusion. But the only winners in this philosophy are the multi-billion-pound retailers, not us and not our local communities.

What has changed in recent years is the way we use our high streets. The government's plans to force landlords to fill shops after 6 months sitting empty is a starting point, but we need to do more. We should not just be filling space, but really do the work into what we need in our town centre that brings new life. There is a thought that we should be working towards the ideal that everyone should have everything they need in life within a 15 minute walk or cycle ride, encouraging participation, community and inclusion, making our neighbourhoods accessible to everyone who lives here.

We have a strong belief that if we establish a social hub in the Town Centre making it the beating heart of our community -the economic upturn will follow.

***Play your part in the revival and shop local!***



## WHAT'S HAPPENING - SATURDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> JUNE: *Come and join us for our Big Day of Celebrations!*

	<p><b>ARTISAN MARKET</b> Our fabulous Artisan Market will be in Brook Square and Upper Brook Street from 10am - 5pm so come and have a browse</p>	<p><b>10 AM - 5 PM</b></p>
	<p><b>INFLATABLE FUN ZONE</b> Elmore Park will be full of large inflatable games and fun for the family.</p>	<p><b>10 AM - 4 PM</b></p>
	<p><b>COMMUNITY STREET PARTIES</b></p>	<p><b>10 AM - 4 PM</b></p>
<p>Community groups from Rugeley will be hosting their own street parties throughout the town centre</p>	<p><b>10 AM - 4 PM</b></p>	
	<p><b>EQUALITY STREET - HOSTED BY THE HART SCHOOL</b></p>	<p><b>10 AM - 4 PM</b></p>
<p>You're invited to join the Hart School in 'Equality Street' (formerly Anson Street for one day only) to experience how different cultures celebrate the Jubilee, for chats, refreshments and entertainment</p>	<p><b>10 AM - 4 PM</b></p>	
	<p><b>MARKET SQUARE - BIG SCREEN AND LIVE ENTERTAINMENT</b></p>	<p><b>10 AM - 9 PM</b></p>
<p>Big Screen action from the events happening in London and live entertainment, come and grab a seat and enjoy table service from Daisy's and The Bilash or bring your own picnic and spend the day with us.</p>	<p><b>10 AM - 9 PM</b></p>	
<p><b>PARTY BAND FUN</b></p>	<p>We're turning Market Square into a dance floor with the amazing Midlands band, Candy and the Sound, come and dance the evening away and celebrate the Jubilee in style. Free to all, tables first come first served.</p>	<p><b>6 PM - 9 PM</b></p>



# FROM GUNNER'S GOLDEN ARCHIVE

**Rugeley's heritage is remarkable, did you know that we helped to bring about the Industrial Revolution? Councillor Ian Gunner brings us the history of the Slitting Mill waterfall, and the very real threat of history repeating itself.**

The small village of Slitting Mill on the edge of Rugeley took its name from one such part of that history although prior to its renaming, it was actually called Stonehouse.

The village takes its name from a 16th century invention that underpinned the surge in industry across the Midlands, the Country and the World. Slitting Mills, introduced from Belgium, would take iron rods before using the power of water to 'slit' them into nails that supplied the West Midlands nail trade. Prior to Slitting Mill, nails were made by a craftsman who would hammer sheet metal into thin rods that would then be turned into nails.

Slitting Mill's would take the workload off a 'nailer'. The first Slitting Mill was brought into England in 1590 during the reign of Elizabeth I, in Dartford, Kent with the second Slitting Mill brought here to Slitting Mill in 1611.

Three technologies radically changed the nail making process: the Blast furnace, the Tilt hammer and the Slitting Mill. Whilst the Tilt hammer may have been used from the 13th century on the Rising Brook in Rugeley, it was visionary William (1st Baron) Paget who brought the blast furnace North of Sussex for the first time, in around 1555 and helped to shape the Midlands and England's iron trade, paving the way for the Industrial Revolution.

A few years later, the Paget's lands were confiscated by the Crown, who installed Fulke Greville to manage them. By 1578 the increased need for charcoal had begun to impact the forests significantly and in 1590, a report was produced to help maximise the profits from Greville's new acquisition. This became the first written account of iron production from start to finish in English; in essence, a template for the future.

In 1597, William (4th Baron) recovered the possessions of his father and confirmed Greville's lease until 1610 but by the time the lease came to an end, the Paget's had taken him to court for destruction of the Ironworks and decimation of the forest.

Paget then leased the works to 3 local men and it was one of them, Mr Coleman, who installed the Slitting Mill on Cannock Chase. It was believed to have been mainly funded by the Paget's as it would have revolutionised the rate of production of iron rods on The Chase and subsequently, nails. This allowed England to compete with Swedish iron imports, beginning the country's slow rise to become a global leader in industry. Had the Paget's not been interrupted, it's possible their dominance would have continued and the Industrial Revolution would have happened in Rugeley rather than Ironbridge; making our small Town a World heritage Site.

Today, we see a beautiful waterfall running along the Heritage Trail that has a firm place in the hearts of the Rugeley community. 3 years ago, the retaining wall next to the waterfall began to collapse and I reported this. Now this problem is even more pressing, it currently poses a potential risk to the safety of Heritage Trail users. Should this collapse more of our industrial heritage could be lost. This is not the first time the retaining wall has collapsed - in 1845 a torrent of water came down "so impetuously as to create the greatest alarm and consternation".

The Furnace Pool dam gave way, followed by further five downstream dams as it passed through Hagley Park. The monstrous surge that followed took out a 10ft wall along Sheep Fair, causing damage throughout the town and even carried a widow away down the street with flood waters 5 ft deep. Even as recently as the early 1980's the waterfall bank was repaired by kind locals, yet again the risk is imminent. When will this site be properly recognised? Rugeley needs to find a way to protect this at risk heritage asset for future generations, before this nationally important history is lost forever.