

Venue:

The venue for this year's MMEX is the Queen Elizabeth Hall, which is part of Oldham's Civic Centre and is centrally located in the town. It offers excellent access from the M60 and M62 and is well served by buses and Manchester's Metrolink system. Approaching Oldham, the town centre's two highest buildings stand proud as helpful landmarks to head towards. These are the 10-storey office block that rises above the Civic Centre and the blue-and-white NHS 'Integrated Care Centre'. The Queen Elizabeth Hall lies between them, and Oldham's wide range of town centre facilities are only two minutes' walk away.

Facilities at the QEH are excellent and it offers significantly more exhibition space than last year's venue. There is also a more accommodating refreshment area and a seating area with bar. All exhibition areas (including the stage) are served by the large lift and, with the exception of the stage area, all the exhibition space is on one level within the open plan hall. There is level access into the building from the adjacent Civic Centre car park and drop-off point for disabled visitors and others with limited mobility immediately outside the main entrance.

Travelling by public transport:

Oldham's main bus station is at the top of West Street, immediately adjacent to the Civic Centre's tower block and its main entrance. The Queen Elizabeth Hall will be seen immediately to its right, very conveniently just across the Civic Centre car park from the bus station. Oldham is well served by buses from Manchester, surrounding towns and West Yorkshire.

The nearest Metrolink stop is Oldham, King Street. Travelling from Manchester and Victoria Station, this is the first stop after the two short, steep sections of track up to Oldham town centre. If travelling in the other direction from Rochdale and its railway station (Calder Valley line) the King Street stop comes shortly after on-street running along Union Street and the Union Street stop. It is about a 10 minute walk to reach the QEH. Walk past Mecca Bingo and the set of traffic lights at the top of Manchester Street to reach the junction of King Street, West Street, Rochdale Road and Middleton Road. Oldham's imposing Civic Centre will be seen running along Rochdale Road and up West Street, over towards your right. Walk up the access road that cuts underneath the Civic Centre at the bottom of West Street before turning immediately right and along the side of the QEH (on your left) to reach the front entrance of the hall.

Travelling by car:

PLEASE NOTE: The Queen Elizabeth Hall is accessed off *New Radcliffe Street* in Oldham and the postcode you should use is *OL1 1NL*. (The official address and postcode for the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Oldham Civic Centre will NOT direct you correctly to the event venue!) However, some Satnav systems may incorrectly direct you a very short section of *New Radcliffe Street* that is accessed via *St Mary's Way* and *Henshaw Street* but is isolated from the venue by the town's new bus station. The main part of *New Radcliffe Street* and the QEH are accessed directly off *Rochdale Road*.

From the direction of Rochdale and the M62 (Jct 20) leave the A627(M) at Jct 1. Take the second exit from the roundabout and follow the A627 (Chadderton Way) to the next roundabout. Take the second exit (still Chadderton Way, but now only single carriageway with speed bumps) to the traffic lights on Rochdale Road. Turn right and through the second set of traffic lights at the bottom of St Mary's Way. Turn left at the mini-roundabout onto New Radcliffe Street and turn right half way up it to reach the QEH and Civic Centre car park. (Alternatively, continue along the A627 from the roundabout's second exit to the first slip road. Keep over to the left and take the first exit, then follow the instructions below from the roundabout to the venue.)

From the direction of Manchester and the M60 (Jct 22) drive straight through all sets of traffic lights along the dual carriageway and up the hill to Oldham. When you reach the large roundabout with the town's by-pass bridging over it and Metrolink's tracks cutting across it, follow the road markings for the town centre then follow the instructions below from the roundabout to the venue.

From the direction of Yorkshire via A62 or A669 follow the by-pass (A62) past Sainsbury's and town centre buildings to your right and pass underneath the A627 (to Ashton). Immediately take the next slip road (for Manchester M62) but stay in the right hand lane. Leave the roundabout three-quarters the way round, following road markings for the town centre then follow the instructions below from the roundabout to the venue.

From the Manchester Street (A62) roundabout continue the short distance up Manchester Street to the traffic lights. Turn left and drive almost straight across the next junction, where you will see the Civic Centre fronting onto Rochdale Road and running back up West Street. Continue ahead past the gated facade of the building before turning immediately right at the mini-roundabout before you reach the lights at the end of St Mary's Way. Turn right half way up New Radcliffe Street into Civic Centre car park. You will see the front entrance of the QEH ahead, slightly to your right.

Car Parking:

There is plenty of parking available for exhibitors, stewards and visitors alike,

Please note that the car park to the side of the blue and white NHS 'Integrated Care Centre' on the other side of New Radcliffe Street is reserved for patients only and is not to be used by any exhibition visitors. Similarly, the nearby Leisure Centre car park is reserved for its customers.

The Civic Centre pay-and-display car park is located immediately in front of the entrance to the QEH. The ground is smooth tarmac and is predominantly level. ***On set-up day (Friday, 17 February) everyone other than Blue Badge holders must pay the full amount shown at the pay stations for the time that they intend to stay.*** A few spaces are reserved for Blue Badge holders, but entitled persons may park in any space and Blue Badges/time cards must be displayed. Blue Badge holders may park for a maximum of three hours without charge.

Rates currently displayed at the pay stations are: 0-1 hrs: £1.30; 0-2 hrs: £1.80; 0-3 hrs: £2.50; 0-4 hrs: £3.50; 0-5 hrs: £3.70; over 5 hrs: £8.00

On the exhibition days (Saturday, 18 February and Sunday, 19 February) anyone may park for up to three hours free of charge. However, everyone (including Blue Badge holders) is required to decide and select when they take their ticket on arrival that ***either*** they will not stay beyond three hours ***or*** they must pay the full amount for the full duration of their visit. (eg. If you intend to stay, say, 3½ hours, you must pay £3.50 on arrival.)

The Bloom Street pay-and-display car park is located little over five minutes' walk down the hill from the QEH and Civic Centre car park. It offers a convenient and cheap alternative if the Civic Centre car park is full, and especially for anyone who staying longer than 3 hours. Operated by Euro Car Parks, this car park costs only ***£2.50 for up to 12 hours*** every day but please note that there is no concession here for Blue Badge holders or stays of less than 3 hours. The Bloom Street car park states that it is for cars only, with barriers claiming to limit maximum vehicle width to 7' and maximum height to 6'6".

To reach the Bloom Street car park from the QEH and Civic Centre car park, drive back down New Radcliffe Street and turn left onto Rochdale Road. Keep over to the right and follow the arrows round the circulatory system to the right until you start to face where you have just come from. You then need to move immediately into the left lane and down Middleton Road, with Oldham College to your right. Ignore the first turning on your left (for Oldham Leisure Centre) and look for the corner of Booth Street and the yellow car park sign just a few yards further on. Alternatively, if you are driving from the Manchester Street (A62) roundabout you can drive directly onto the Bloom Street car park. About 100 yds after leaving the roundabout, take turn left into Bloom Street and follow it round into the car park. (Drive as far across the car park as possible in order to park near to the exit to the QEH.)

From the Bloom Street car park, walk up Middleton Road and past Oldham College (on your left) towards the Civic Centre. Cross Rochdale Road and start to walk up West Street in front of you before turning left up the access road that cuts underneath the Civic Centre at the bottom of West Street. Turn immediately right and along the side of the QEH (on your left) to reach the front entrance of the hall.

Additional council parking (with up to 3 hours' free parking on exhibition days) is also available, but this lies further away from the venue. For example, there are car parks at the far end of St Mary's Way and next to the Library and Art Gallery, but you should allow at least 20 minutes to walk back to the QEH through the town centre.