



WOODEN HEART The stalls have made their mark at the centre of Christmas shopping in Manchester in the 10 years they have been coming to the city. This year they will be here until the last big festive shopping weekend

Traders set stalls out for best markets ever

■ 200 on their way for run-up to Christmas

■ This year they will be here until December 21

DON FRAME

MANCHESTER'S famous festive markets are returning for their 10th year - and this time they will run up to the last weekend

before Christmas. It all started in 1998 with just 17 traders from Frankfurt. Now, it is now one of the biggest events of its kind in Europe.

This year there will be 200 stalls offering a heady mix of European and local produce, arts and crafts, fashion items and gifts.

Organisers have responded to complaints that the markets end too early by extending their run to Sunday December 21. This includes the last big shopping weekend before Christmas. There will be six sites

across the city, with the addition of a new location in Exchange Square. Last year the markets brought an estimated £42m of extra business to the city.

An average of 43,000 people a day visited the main Albert Square market over the five-week run.

Coun Pat Karney, city centre spokesman, said: "The Christmas market continues to go from strength to strength and we are delighted to be celebrating 10 years of what has become the mainstay of our events calendar." The main European

market in Albert Square opens on Tuesday, November 18. The layout has been re-planned to ease congestion, increase space and improve the shopping experience.

St Ann's Square will host the German market, Brazenose Street a world market and Exchange Street an arts and crafts market. There will also be markets on New Cathedral Street and Exchange Square.

Mark Legomski, the city's head of markets, said: "The success of the Christmas market is phenomenal.

"People travel from all over the country to visit us, and we are contacted by traders from right across Europe each year, keen for a place here.

"The festival atmosphere this creates is fantastic, and it's a wonderful place to be for experiencing some genuine Christmas spirit."

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS UP - BEFORE SUMMER'S OVER

THE Christmas lights have been put up in Manchester city centre - and it's not even the end of British Summer Time.

The weather may be wintry, but summer doesn't officially end until October 26, when the

clocks go back. Decorations are already up on Deansgate and other popular routes.

This week Coleford, a market town in Gloucestershire, was the first in Britain to start putting up Christmas lights

because volunteers feared they would otherwise not be finished in time. Manchester's Christmas displays will be officially lit up on November 7 - at an Albert Square party advertised since June.

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MANCHESTER ROAD, HOLLINWOOD

Pals plunge six storeys from hotel balcony

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sun. Mr Cook, who is from Ashton under Lyne, was also a member of the holiday party, but is not Jemma's boyfriend.

The group of friends went out on Wednesday evening and returned to their rooms in the Casablanca Apartments at around 3am on Thursday.

Hotel receptionist Isabel Bego said: "The night porter heard a noise and checked all eight floors to see what had happened. A guest told him that they thought two people had fallen from a balcony so he went outside and found them there. They landed on plastic tables, which were covered in blood."

Emergency services were

called. An investigation has now been launched by the Spanish Civil Guard.

Hotel staff said the eight friends were booked to stay in four rooms. Jemma and Mr Cook were not sharing a room.

Spanish police have interviewed the other six members of the party - who are said to be 'very shaken up' - but it is understood the fall is being treated as an accident. The injured holidaymakers are being treated at the Insular University Hospital in Las Palmas.

Friends of Jemma have been posting messages of good will on her Facebook website. A Foreign Office spokesman said the British consulate had offered to help everyone involved.

BRITAIN TODAY

Snag as fishing resort prize can't be landed

DEVON A prize draw for a £1 million mini holiday resort has been put on hold following legal advice from the Gambling Commission.

Brian and Wendy Wilshaw have sold 46,000 tickets at £25 each for the chance to win their home, the 11-acre Oldborough Fishing Retreat in Morchard Bishop.

They were due to draw the winner yesterday, but a statement on their website said it was postponed after the Gambling Commission had stepped in to confirm legal requirements were met.

Last week the commission warned homeowners that

such competitions could go against the Gambling Act of 2005.

Schemes that do not meet a test of skill are classed as lotteries and cannot be operated for private gain.

The prize on offer is a five-bedroom house, four holiday lodges, 9.5 acres of woodland and a two-acre fishing lake.

Mr and Mrs Wilshaw said they were forced to offer the estate as a prize, rather than selling it conventionally, because of the downturn in the property market.

Lily in the pink after MBE honour

LONDON Chat show host Paul O'Grady collected his MBE from Prince Charles wearing top hat and tails and admitted: "It's a long way from Lily Savage."

O'Grady, 53, who found fame wearing drag as his alter ego, said he was not tempted to slip on the blonde beehive, mini-skirt and high heels for his visit to Buckingham Palace.

The star, pictured with his daughter Sharyn Mousley, said he was 'delighted' to receive the MBE, but had initially thought the letter was a joke: "Then they rang me up and said 'Are you coming or not?' They said I had been a hugely popular choice, so that's nice."

O'Grady worked as a waiter and social worker before finding fame as Savage. He even presented the BBC game show Blankety Blank in character, but in 2004 O'Grady dropped Savage and has pledged never to bring her back. >> See video online at manchestereveningnews.co.uk



GCSE results improve - but Tories blast gap

WHITEHALL Another improvement in GCSE results has been hailed by ministers.

Provisional figures from this summer's exams showed 47.2 per cent achieved five or more A*-C grades - up 0.9 pc on last year.

The Tories said the figures were 'appalling'.

Their analysis showed the average numbers getting five A*-C grades including Maths and English in the top 10 local authorities was 61.3 pc compared with just 34.8pc in the bottom 10 pc.

Policeman in court over death of teenage girl

NEWCASTLE A police officer appeared in court charged with causing the death of a schoolgirl by dangerous driving.

Pc John Dougal, 40, spoke only to confirm his name and age at Newcastle Magistrates' Court.

Hayley Adamson, 16, died when she was hit by a marked police car as she crossed a road in May.

Dougal was given unconditional bail until his next appearance at Newcastle Crown Court on November 6.

'Dr Death' suicide workshop off

EASTBOURNE A seaside hotel has become the third venue to cancel a DIY suicide workshop by a controversial euthanasia expert dubbed 'Dr Death'.

Dr Philip Nitschke was due at the Langham hotel in Eastbourne, East Sussex, on Sunday after twice being forced to scrap plans to appear in Bournemouth. But the hotel announced it was not allowing the booking to go ahead, hours after it was revealed the workshop would be held there.

A hotel spokesman said: "We are not going to declare our reasons."