

**HAT WORKS PRESS RELEASE  
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**ROYAL ASCOT COMES TO HATWORKS**

Stockport's Hat Works Museum, the UK's only museum dedicated to the hatting industry and headwear, will be unveiling a new exhibition in May featuring hats from the most celebrated race meeting in the world.

The exhibition entitled 'Ascot: At the Races' is a celebration of headwear from Royal Ascot, the world famous race meeting held annually. This is the first time an exhibition of this kind has been shown in Stockport and prestigious milliners and designers such as Nigel Rayment, David Shilling, Sara Gadd will be making a contribution to the collection. Esteemed designer Philip Somerville, who has been appointed to design this year's hat for her majesty, the Queen, will also be exhibiting at the Hatworks.

One of the most elaborate pieces of headwear has been donated by David Shilling, who designed a hat for his mother every year specifically for the Ascot races. Gertrude Shilling was known as the 'Ascot Mascot' for over 30 years and was attributed to bringing glamour and poise to Ascot, making it one of the most sought after social engagements of the year. The hat and dress on show were worn at Ascot in the 1970s and depict the bold and flamboyant print of the time.

One area of the exhibition is designated to 'Black Ascot', which commemorates the death of King Edward VII in 1910, who died just a few weeks before the summer racing season. Instead of cancelling Royal Ascot, all those attending worn black from head to toe and every woman had her black hat trimmed with black feathers, crepe or lace.

Stephanie Murfin, Collection Access Officer at Hat Works, said: "Royal Ascot is synonymous with the beautiful and sometimes extraordinary hats that appear on the heads of the ladies and gentlemen attending. Ascot: At The Races explores the history of Ascot through hat design and fashions, from the design of Jockey silks to the social etiquette at the racing event."

"We are really excited at this opportunity to exhibit a selection of such prestigious and flamboyant headwear from such renowned designers and milliners. The exhibition promises to be an engaging and visually spectacular display of much-celebrated Ascot headwear."

The exhibition will be on display from 17 May through to 17 August 2008 and entry is free.

For more information contact the Hatworks on 0161 355 7770 or visit [www.hatworks.org.uk](http://www.hatworks.org.uk)

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