

How else can I start this week apart from with a massive congratulations to the World Club Champions, the mighty Saints!

After winning four titles in a row this squad's place in history was already secured, but to then go down under and beat the back to back NRL champions on their own home turf makes them immortals of the game.

It's the greatest ever achievement of any British team and it's the perfect way to mark the club's 150th year – on top of the world!

Saints' 150th anniversary is just one milestone we can all celebrate this year, with others including the 100th anniversary of St Helens Rotary and the 50th anniversary of the St Helens Star.

Our local history, our present and our future are what we will be celebrating when we launch our year as the Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture on Saturday 4th March at the World of Glass.

The event is open to all, and among the special guests attending we'll be welcoming a delegation from Stuttgart who will be helping to mark the 75th Anniversary of our twinning with the German city.

Also attending will be the Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, who introduced the Borough of Culture initiative in 2018 as part of the Combined Authority's '1% for Culture' programme, which commits to invest 1% of the annual budget directly in culture and creativity.

Throughout the day there will be lots of great entertainment, displays and activity from local performers and organisations including St Helens Singers, UC Crew, North West Miners Heritage Association, the Pilkington Choir, Haydock Band, St Helens Archive Service, Saints Heritage Society, Sankey Valley Project, glassblowing demonstrations and much more!

And highlights for the year ahead will include visits from the Tate on Tour Truck, a St Helens Heritage Festival, the annual PRIDE event, Armed Forces Day in Victoria Park in June, and a special Irish festival in October – with more to be confirmed in the weeks and months ahead.

As with many things there are bound to be some people who are negative about the Borough of Culture year, especially on social media. But that's all the more reason for the majority of us to speak loud and proud about the things that make St Helens great – and there's plenty to choose from!

Best wishes to all Star readers.