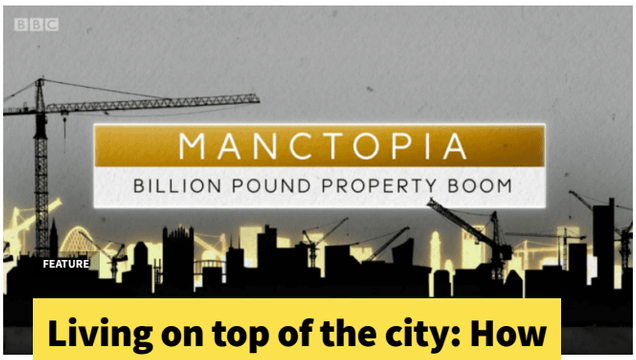

Living on top of the city: How Manctopia's Sarah Lomas sees Manchester differently from above

The BBC's 'Manctopia' documentary covered every kind of character and story in modern Manchester – but it was Sarah's rise from below the poverty line up to a penthouse that struck the biggest chord.

BY THE MANC · 15TH OCTOBER 2020 · 3 SHARES · 6 MINUTE READ

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"*This* is what you call city centre living..."

Dazzled interior designer Sarah Whatmore is stood on top of Manchester, gawping at the city below her feet.

She's been tasked with kitting out a luxury penthouse in West Tower – one of Britain's tallest skyscrapers outside the big smoke – but the view is distracting her.

During a conversation with the building's general manager, she gazes through the floor-to-ceiling windows at the concrete labyrinth wriggling away into the sunset.

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The two women look out at Manchester and share a moment of silent awe.

"… great place to live," Sarah eventually mutters, still in half a trance.

Even after days spent dedicated to this building, they're still taken aback.

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This scene plays out during BBC's *Manctopia* – a property boom documentary that dedicates much of its final episode to teasing the arrival of a new penthouse owner in the Deansgate Square development.

For almost an hour, the episode keeps its cards close to its chest. All we're told is that the new buyer is an international businesswoman who'd spent so much on fittings that the designers won't even reveal the numbers on screen.

"Very expensive," is all they'd give away.

Then, around the 50 minute-mark, the owner appears.

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It turns out to be Sarah Lomas, a born-and-bred northerner who'd spent her early twenties just a few miles away in Denton – completely broke and living on inflatable furniture.

Now the CEO of global health brand REVIV, Sarah recites a truncated version of her rags-to-riches story in *Manctopia*, calling it an "incredible feeling" to be standing in the best apartment in Manchester after her upbringing on a council estate.

It's only a forty-second cameo. But after the credits rolled, Sarah's social media inbox was almost set ablaze.

More 3,000 messages poured in from viewers who wanted to know how she'd done it.

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Manctopia covered every kind of character and story in modern Manchester – but it was Sarah's rise from below the poverty line up to a penthouse that struck the biggest chord.

Nonetheless, Sarah isn't convinced her tale is worth talking about too much.

"There's not a really interesting story there," Sarah tells The Manc.

"Other than the fact it was bloody hard work."

In Sarah's eyes, there's a much bigger narrative in play here: The one that's shaping Manchester's future.

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According to the REVIV owner, Manc still isn't being taken seriously as it should – despite all these brand new glistening buildings bumping their heads against clouds.

Relentless urban development aside, Sarah believes that London still sees Manchester as being behind the pace.

But it's not so much the wealth divide. Apparently, it's the way we talk.

According to Sarah, there's been no bigger hindrance to her corporate career than her northern twang.

"I was working as a single mum in a male-dominated environment, but the largest obstacle wasn't being a parent or even a female – it was my northern accent," she explains.

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"To get further up the ladder, I was actually told to go for elocution lessons."

Imagine that.

You're a single mother with no qualifications. You sell all your furniture to pay your bills. You work night shifts to put food on the table. You spend years upskilling and studying in your spare time. You earn a long-term deal with one of the world's biggest banks. You rapidly rise through the ranks and enjoy an enormously successful two decades in finance.

But then… you're told that none of that really matters.

What's really important is that you speak proper.

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"In the end, I went to work in countries where my accent didn't matter," Sarah admits.

"I was the only British person in an international group; so nobody detected the Manc. They just thought I was from the UK."

Whilst Sarah accepts the corporate scene has changed a lot since the nineties, she believes accent discrimination remains rife and is holding fellow businesspeople back as we speak.

"It still exists, 100%," she asserts.

"I can see it's still out there by the sheer volume of people coming to me.

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“Most of the messages I get are from people feeling held back by their accent. And interestingly, about 65% of them are men.

“Perhaps you could say I took the easy way out – I left the country.

“But others are still having problems with it right now – and I think that’s something we need to address.”

Living on top of the city: How Manctopia’s Sarah Lomas sees Manchester differently from above, The Manc

Despite its archaic, prejudicial nature, accent discrimination did lead to Sarah opting to go her own way and build a company on her own terms.

It’s the business that ended up buying her the flat in West Tower: REVIV (a health organisation that offers intravenous (IV) vitamin hydration and wellness therapy).

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The company’s global hub and flagship clinic is operating right here in Sarah’s hometown – with the service being rolled out to a staggering 41 countries around the world.

Big names like Hap Klopp – the founder of Northface – are on the company board, and the service has proven unsurprisingly popular with the cultural elite – from pro athletes to actors and actresses.

But what’s intriguing about REVIV is that services are also accessible for the everyman.

Product prices start at just £25 – and their IV Therapy has now been commissioned for public use for the very first time.

But most amazingly of all, REVIV can offer customers a personalised diet and supplement plan based on their own genetics that ensures the best possible levels of health; with an app in development that lets users scan an item and reveal how beneficial it is for their body.

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Sarah says she wants to change ideas and understanding of wellbeing in Britain – whilst making these treatments – typically considered exotic – available for all.

“The reality is, everyone is different,” Sarah states.

“Coffee is good for some people, bad for others. A glass of red wine is beneficial for some, but can do real damage in some cases.

“It’s all down to the individual.

“There are millions of variables and you need to be able to understand your own blueprint to stay healthy.”

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REVIV has also weighed in to provide support with COVID testing services since the pandemic took hold – and Sarah believes that the emergence of coronavirus has forced people to reevaluate the way they look at their own health.

“We’ve got work to do; but this situation [COVID] is a brilliant opportunity to make something positive out of negative,” she says.

“The World Health Organisation is starting to make this connection of nutrition being key to our ability to fight off viruses such as this.

“We’ve heard a lot about how people without underlying conditions are being even affected by the virus. But having no underlying conditions is very different to actually being healthy.”

Living on top of the city: How Manctopia’s Sarah Lomas sees Manchester differently from above, The Manc

Sarah’s in her West Tower penthouse when we talk – and as she scans the city from thirty flights above, she’s conflicted.

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“Whichever side of this house you go to, you get an incredible view,” Sarah muses.

“I can see everything in the city. I find that quite inspiring.”

But something is eating away at her. An itch no skyline could scratch.

“I’m worried about Manchester,” Sarah admits.

“I’ve got concerns about the economics of the city. I’ve got concerns for small businesses that aren’t able to recover.

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“I’m also aware that many people still aren’t recognising us for the city we truly are.

“I want to play my part in helping wherever I can.

“I want to work on that.”

Sarah has already inspired hundreds of Mancs and now runs a company that’s dedicated to creating a healthier city for tomorrow.

It’s safe to say that ‘work’ has already started.

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Manchester woman dies after 'cold water therapy' session in Peak District river

Emergency services were called to a "medial emergency" at Bankside in the Bridgemont area of Whaley Bridge on Monday.

Extra tickets for Ed Sheeran's stadium gigs in Manchester released

Ed Sheeran will release more tickets for his UK stadium shows today, including four nights at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester.

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Andy Burnham responds after petition against Clean Air Zone charge gets over 16,000 signatures

The Mayor of Greater Manchester said he "owed everyone who has signed it the courtesy of a reply," to explain "where we go from here."

Gogglebox producers on the hunt for new people to appear on the show

After an unforeseen string of circumstances, producers are looking to recruit some new talent to bring laughs to the nation's living rooms.

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The Manc: Boris Johnson calls Greater Manchester's Clean Air Zone plans 'completely unworkable'

The story of Kersal Massive: Manchester's most infamous ever rap trio

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A house in Greater Manchester has gone up for sale for £1
A house in Openshaw, east Manchester has been listed for sale for £1 and will be sold at auction next month - but it needs some work.
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The quirkiest pubs in Manchester, from wonky buildings to 7am pints
We've rounded up the quirkiest pubs in Manchester, each one packed full of secrets and treasures and history.

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The breathtaking Peak District walk that looks like something from Lord of the Rings

Lud's Church and The Roaches is one of the Peak District's best walks, and looks like it belongs in a Lord of the Rings film.

Chester Zoo announces the shock sudden death of its 'firm favourite' jaguar

Chester Zoo has announced with "a huge amount of sadness" that one of its resident jaguars has died suddenly overnight this week.

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Susan Boyle is now so thin and looks beautiful!

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Gino D'Acampo says he 'kicked out' Piccolino for new Alderley Edge restaurant

Gino D'Acampo has said that he 'kicked out' Piccolino in Alderley Edge as he prepares to launch a new Luciano restaurant.

Aldi is selling pet steps for £5.99 so little dogs can climb onto sofas or beds

The 'Pet Collection Plush Pet Stairs' are specially-designed to help them get up and down from higher levels.

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Public warned not to approach killer who's escaped prison for SECOND time

The public are being warned not to approach a convicted killer who has escaped from a prison in Warrington.

A Northern bakery has created explicit doughnuts - and men are confused

Doe Bakehouse has gained national attention for its 'Vulva-Nuts' doughnuts this week, after sending a box to Channel 4's Steph McGovern.

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BBC finally confirms release date for final series of Peaky Blinders

The long-awaited air date for the final series of the BBC drama was revealed via a large mural on the side of a pub in Birmingham.

Sale Sharks suspend player arrested on suspicion of rape of teenager

Sale Sharks has released a statement after one of the rugby club's players was arrested on suspicion of rape of a teenager.

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Doctor from Altrincham fell to his death from the same spot he proposed to his wife 27 years earlier

Due to poor visibility during the misty weather, the court heard that the GP fell and was subsequently pronounced dead at the scene.

Mowgli Street Food closes its 'prettiest restaurant' in Manchester

Much-loved Indian street food brand Mowgli has closed one of its Manchester restaurants, once dubbed its prettiest site.

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Wetherspoons is sending back all of its Russian beers

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Aldi is selling a barbecue pizza oven - and it's an absolute bargain

Aldi is selling a pizza oven that you can stick on top of your barbecue as part of its latest Specialbuys range.

Tributes to cricketer Shane Warne flood in after his shock death at 52 years old

Tributes have been pouring in this afternoon after the sudden death of cricketing legend Shane Warne, 52, was announced.

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Heartwarming moment Sainsbury's worker is surprised by colleagues after he was mugged

29-year-old Tommy autism means he has difficulty expressing his emotions, but was said to be "buzzing" by his kind-hearted colleagues' actions.

Manchester bus driver sacked for being 'too short' has been reinstated

Tracey Scholes was one of the first female bus drivers in the city, but was dismissed after back in November 2021 after 34 years behind the wheel.

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The 'loneliest dog in Britain' has found a home after over 500 days in kennels

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Shocking new footage shows damage left by New Year's Eve blaze at One Eight Six

New videos show the ruined interiors of popular Manchester bar One Eight Six, which was devastated by a fire on New Year's Eve.

10 hot properties for sale in Greater Manchester | January 2022

The Greater Manchester property market is booming now that we're in a new year, and here's 10 of the hottest picks we've seen.

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We changed our sleeping habits after a month long family vacation

While the girls were out exploring, I went to their rooms to put away some laundry. It was then that I noticed one little detail.

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Failsworth man goes swimming in his back garden after Storm Franklin

Pete Brotherton, from Failsworth in Greater Manchester, decided to go for a swim when his back garden flooded in Storm Franklin.

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Over on Oxford Road, Manchester curry house Zouk is creating a very special curry that takes an entire day to prepare.

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Teenage boy charged in connection with the murder of Dylan Keelan in Tameside

20-year-old Dylan Keelan was fatally stabbed at around 9.30pm on Cheetham Hill Road in Dukinfield on Friday 4 February 2022.

Coronation Street's Sally Dynevor receives MBE but initially thought it was a 'hoax'

The 58-year-old Middleton-born actress has played the role of Sally Webster on the iconic Manchester-based soap since 1986.

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Elnecot bosses to open new 'Anglo-Saxon' Dokes pizzeria in Prestwich

New 'Anglo-Saxon' pizzeria Dokes pizza is opening in Prestwich from the team behind esteemed Ancoats restaurant Elnecot.

Chorlton restaurant hits out at 'no-show' customer who left 1-star review

Chorlton bar and restaurant The Laundrette has hit out at a 'no-show' customer who left a 1-star review, despite not turning up.

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