

The City of Manchester

Background

Manchester is one of the UK's largest cities, with a population of approximately 450,000 in the city and over 2.5 million in the wider metropolitan area. The name of the city comes from Mamucium, the Roman name, based on the Celtic word for a breast-shaped hill. The Roman fort was established in 79 AD, to control the Chester to York road. The Romans stayed until the mid-C3rd, with the Castlefield area of the modern city named after the location of the Roman fort. The original Neolithic settlement from approximately 3800 BC is now buried under runway two of Manchester Airport.

During the Dark Ages, between the Romans and the Normans, the area around Manchester was fought over by the British and the Danish. By 1086, the Normans had established a parish although it was not heavily populated at that time. In 1223 Manchester gained the right to hold an annual fair, with its position as a market town confirmed in 1301 when its charter as a town was granted.

Textile Trade

In the C14th Manchester became home to a community of Flemish weavers from Belgium, beginning the city's long involvement in the manufacture of cloth. This trade led to Manchester becoming the biggest industrial centre in Lancashire in the Middle Ages, with the construction of what is now Manchester Cathedral commencing in 1422.

By the C16th the wool trade had made Manchester a very busy town. The church that is now the Cathedral was completed in 1510, and the carved wooden choir stalls which can be seen inside the building date from this time. More Flemish weavers arrived and continued the growth of the town, also making it a centre of Puritanism, the orthodox form of Protestantism followed by Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the Parliamentary army in the English Civil War in the mid-C17th. This led to Manchester supporting Cromwell in the War and the period when Cromwell was the leader of England.

Humphrey Chetham (1580-1653)

In the period from 1649-1660, during which England was a republic, Humphrey Chetham, a Manchester-born cotton merchant and important figure in Lancashire society, gave money to open an orphanage in the buildings that had been the original manor house of the Lord of the Manor of Manchester. The orphanage opened as Chetham's Hospital after the merchant's death in 1653, and included some of the original Manor House buildings dating from 1421. The orphanage became Chetham's School of Music in 1969, which is now the largest specialist music school in the UK and the centre where MJA & Stars Language hold their English Language summer camps.

In addition to the orphanage, Chetham also left money to establish a library, which was the first free public reference library in the English-speaking world. It was the place where Karl Marx met Friedrich Engels when Marx visited Manchester in the 1840s, and the economics books he used are still on the shelves today.

Industrial Revolution

Manchester's real growth began in the Industrial Revolution in the late C18th. The combination of a wet climate and a lot of hills in the local area made Manchester ideal for the construction of water-powered cotton mills, such as Quarry Bank Mill, which industrialised cloth production. Quarry Bank was the largest cotton mill in the UK in 1832, and is now a museum of the cotton industry. Although unpaid child apprentices were used in Quarry Bank and other such mills until 1847, the first doctor to be employed to care for children and other workers was also employed at Quarry Bank.

Richard Arkwright (1733-92) from nearby Preston, was an entrepreneur of the Industrial Revolution who successfully applied the combination of water power, machinery and semi-skilled labour to the production of cotton. He developed mass production more than 100 years before Henry Ford, and effectively invented the modern factory system. Arkwright's use of a Watt steam engine to operate machinery was the key breakthrough, and the city grew to the extent that it was known as 'cottonopolis' in the mid-C19th and the Bank of England opened a branch in Manchester in 1826 due to the wealth created in the city.

The cotton used in the mills was imported through the port of Liverpool and transported by river. This industrial link is a key part of the reason for the fierce rivalry between the two cities. The growth of industrialisation also led to a growth in transport links, with the first canal of the industrial age, the Bridgewater Canal, built in 1761. By the late C19th the city was booming and as a response to high charges from the docks in Liverpool, the Manchester Ship Canal was built, to connect Manchester directly to the sea. When it was completed in 1894 Manchester became Britain's 3rd busiest port, despite being 60kms from the sea.

In 1824 one of the world's first bus services operated between Market Street and Salford, and in 1830 the world's first steam passenger railway opened between Liverpool and Manchester, with connections to Birmingham and London by 1838.

Manchester officially became a city in 1853, and its population also changed dramatically during the period of Industrialisation, with large numbers of Irish immigrants arriving, especially after the potato famine of the 1840s. By the turn of the 20th century, Manchester was one of the 10 largest urban areas in the world. Approximately one third of the modern population of Manchester and Salford is of Irish origin and every year there is a big St. Patrick's Day (March 17) parade in the city. Manchester also has the biggest Jewish population in the UK outside London and has a large number of people of Indian and Pakistani origin, as well as having a Chinatown area, a symbol of its ethnic diversity. The city has also long had a reputation as a non-conformist and radical city. It was the world's first Nuclear Free City in 1980, and was the subject of Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844). The city is also remembered for the incident known as the Peterloo Massacre, when 15 protesters were killed and 600 others were injured when soldiers fired on a crowd in the city.

Modern Manchester

The city has recovered from industrial decline in the late C20th and is now arguably England's second city, and is home to the UK's largest university since two institutions merged in 2004 to form the University of Manchester. The university was where the first ever stored-program computer was developed in 1948 and the world-leading Jodrell Bank observatory is also part of the modern institution.

The distinctive, wedge-shaped Beetham Tower, completed in 2006, is 168m or 47 storeys high and has the highest residential accommodation in the UK, on the floors above the Hilton Hotel. The city is also home to Manchester United, the most successful British football team of the modern era, as well as the blue side, Manchester City, reputed to be the richest football club in the world and set to challenge the dominance of their Salford rivals. Both clubs' stadiums are also part of England's 2018 football World Cup bid. The city was also home to the Commonwealth Games in 2002, has the national cycle velodrome and one of the few 50m swimming pools in England. It also has a thriving music scene, with a range of venues of different sizes, and through the 1990s was the location of the vibrant 'Madchester' scene, based around the Hacienda nightclub, with bands such as the Stone Roses, New Order and Joy Division, as well as The Smiths playing their part in the resurgence of the city.

Famous Mancunians include Anthony Burgess, author of *A Clockwork Orange*; William Webb Ellis, who is credited with inventing the game of Rugby; John Amaechi, the first English player to start a game in American professional basketball; Howard Jacobson, novelist and broadcaster; Liam and Noel Gallagher of Oasis; Nobby Stiles, a member of England's 1966 World Cup winning team; Don Arden, manager of various bands including Black Sabbath, and father of Sharon Osbourne, wife of Ozzy; Morrissey and Johnny Marr, singer and guitarist from The Smiths; and L.S. Lowry, who painted scenes of the city in his distinctive 'matchstick men' style.