

THE WORLD IN ONE CITY:

Liverpool

Mike Royden examines the multi-cultural history of this northern city and charts its changes from vibrant port to European City of Culture



The Custom House at Canning dock, as seen in 1841

Liverpool has always had a reputation as a vibrant city, but the visitor today cannot help but notice a real sense of optimism and change in the air. Driven on by the 800th anniversary in 2007 and its designation as European Capital of Culture in 2008, the city is enjoying a resurgence, economically, architecturally, and culturally, with more museums, theatres, galleries and listed buildings than in any other region outside London.

At the heart of the city's identity are its links with the past and this is an exciting time for anyone with Liverpool ancestors. In a ground-breaking arrangement with Liverpool Record Office, Ancestry.co.uk has just digitised and released over three million Liverpool parish records, and this partnership will also see the digitising of vast swathes of the local archive over the next few years.

In addition, due to open in late 2012, and currently undergoing a £50 million redevelopment programme, is the new Liverpool Central Library. Included in this

“BY THE MID-19TH CENTURY 40 PER CENT OF THE WORLD’S TRADE PASSED THROUGH ITS DOCKS”

venture is the new Liverpool Record Office, with its purpose-built genealogy centre, while down at the Pier Head on the riverside, the new Museum of Liverpool life is set to open its doors on 19 July this year.

Liverpool wasn't always such a vibrant city. From its foundation in 1207 right down to the 17th century, Liverpool witnessed little growth and was overshadowed by the port of Chester. It is hard to imagine that this fishing hamlet would give birth to one of the greatest ports in the world. The kick-start came by way of the expanding 17th-century salt trade and the demise of Chester's port due to the silting up of the River Dee. By the mid-19th century, Liverpool had become the 'Second city of the Empire' with 40 per cent of the world's trade passing through its docks.

Most of the people making up Liverpool's ethnic mix were directly or indirectly connected to the port, which created a constant interchange of people. Integration was not always cordial, with prejudice and discrimination common. Racial problems persisted, with frequent sectarian violence. If your ancestor came from Liverpool, they may well have belonged to one of the following communities.

The Irish

The stigmatised stereotype of the Irish Catholic migrant as being low in morals and hygiene was a difficult image to shake off. A local magistrate declared that within 12 hours of disembarkation, the Famine Irish were to be “found in one of three classes – paupers, vagrants, or thieves”. In 1847 alone, ↪

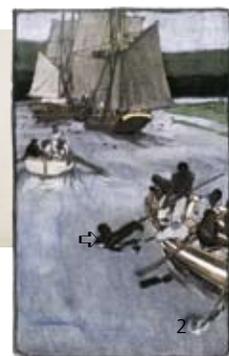
TIMELINE Liverpool's history

1207

King John grants Liverpool a Letters Patent – a legal document advertising the new borough and inviting people to settle there.

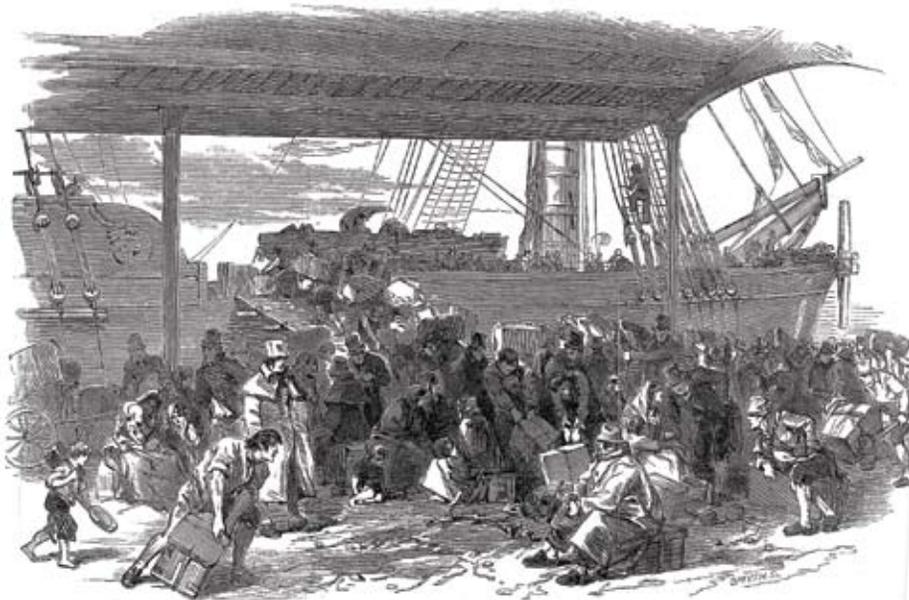
1770

The city's first recorded slave ship, the *Liverpool Merchant*, sets sail. It arrives in Barbados on 18 September 1770 with a 'cargo' of 220 enslaved Africans.

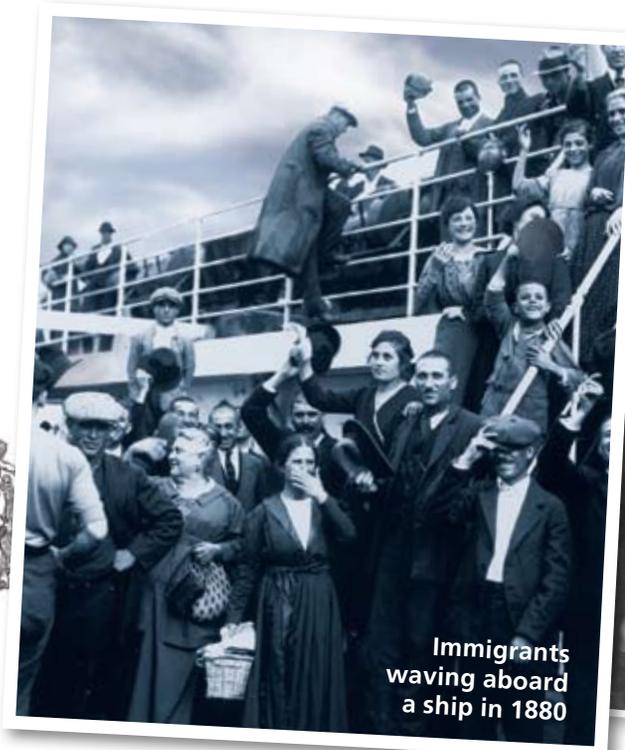


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Irish immigrants at Waterloo Dock, Liverpool in 1850



Immigrants waving aboard a ship in 1880

300,000 arrived, mostly in dreadful circumstances – 116,000 were said to be “half naked and starving”. During the famine years, approximately 1.3 million Irish passed through the port. But, it must be remembered that 17 per cent of Liverpool’s population before the famine was Irish – according to the census 50,000 had already settled by 1841.

Famine migrants who could not move on to America or elsewhere were therefore able to integrate into a Liverpool-Irish community, mainly in the Scotland Road area of North Liverpool. High child mortality, and epidemics like cholera and typhus, were a consequence of primitive sanitary facilities and overcrowding.

The Irish middle class tended to use the town as a stepping stone rather than a destination, but some did remain and went on to occupy positions in local politics, law, journalism and the medical professions, while Irish merchants frequently dominated the mercantile circles. By 1851, the Irish in Liverpool had risen to over 22 per cent (83,813) of the city’s population.

The Welsh

The Liverpool Welsh came in their thousands between 1780 and 1820, during which a large number of Welsh Chapels and Churches were built. In 1851 the Welsh-born population was 20,262 (5.4 per cent of the population), and many could only speak their native tongue.

By the end of the century that figure had doubled to 10 per cent. The pattern of Welsh settlement tended to favour the newly created residential developments, leading to Welsh clusters in Everton, Anfield and Bootle, and also in the southern areas of Toxteth Park. As the areas became Welsh in speech and in culture, the streets were often given Welsh names.

The first Welsh chapel was built in 1787 in Pall Mall – an area later to be known as ‘Little Wales’. In 1868 the ‘Welsh Cathedral’, the Gothic Welsh Presbyterian church with its impressive spire, was erected on Princes Road – an area that excluded public houses. The local *Liberal Review* praised the Welsh as: among the most peaceable, law-abiding, cleanly and provident of the Liverpool citizens... they retain their national customs and habits, and, in the midst of this great Saxon population, have a little Wales of their own” .

The Scottish

Regarding the Liverpool-Scottish, four per cent of the local population was Scots-born in 1871, and in size was second only to the Scottish community in Newcastle. Many early migrants were involved in merchant shipping, sugar refining and brewing. The Scottish presence was keenly felt in medicine when the town benefited from the arrival of many men trained in Edinburgh. James Currie, Thomas Traill and William Duncan, (the first Medical

Officer of Health), all were all notables in their field. Skilled Scottish workers migrated towards the more salubrious outskirts of the North End, forming a distance from the Irish labourers in the South End. The Liverpool Scottish Regiment was formed as an infantry battalion in 1900 in response to the crisis of the Boer War.

The Manx

Liverpool has long had close ties with the Isle of Man and the Island became a resort for Liverpool holiday-makers. Many Manx workers coming to Liverpool in the 19th century were seasonal, deriving their income from the summer tourist trade at home, before travelling to Liverpool, hoping for a position to tide them through to the following year.

The Liverpool Manx Society was set up 1895 to keep the Manx spirit alive and to help support these who made their stay permanent. One such family were the Quilliams. William Quilliam was born in Liverpool to a wealthy Manx family in 1856, and is remembered today as a 19th-century convert from Christianity to Islam, who founded England’s first mosque and Islamic centre.

The Jewish

The Liverpool Jewish community was the first organised Jewish community in the north of England. Settlers arrived in the mid-18th



1712

Work starts on the world’s first enclosed commercial wet dock, designed to make the transfer of cargo easier by maintaining a constant water level.

1830

The Liverpool and Manchester Railway opens on 15 September 1830, connecting the two cities and forming the first route in the world to carry both freight and passengers.



PHOTOLIBRARY/ALAMY/CORBIS



Making traditional Indian flatbreads in Liverpool in 1955



Children queue up at a youth centre in 1949

“THE SCALE OF THE SCANDANAVIAN EMIGRATION FROM THE 1850S TO THE GREAT WAR WAS UNPRECEDENTED”

FROM THE SHOW

KIM UNCOVERED MORE ABOUT HER FAMILY'S LINKS TO LIVERPOOL'S IMPOVERISHED PAST

KIM CATTRALL

century and there is a record of an early synagogue in Stanley Street in 1753. Jews soon established a niche supplying chandlery and general provisions to the local seafaring quarter, while sending out hawkers into the local communities with cheap goods. A second wave of settlers arrived from the late 19th century to 1914, when destitute Russian and Polish Jews arrived following the pogroms. At least 5,000 stayed in Liverpool, settling in the Brownlow Hill/Crown Street area. The Princes Road Synagogue, with its beautiful interior was consecrated in 1874.

Other communities

After the Second World War, Liverpool became home to a significant number of Commonwealth immigrants who mostly settled in the inner city, especially Toxteth. However, a Black African community had already existed in Liverpool well before this time, many being brought to Liverpool as domestic servants or as seamen. Some were the children of traders sent to be educated, or freed slaves (as slaves entering the country after 1722 were declared free).

During the late 19th and early 20th century, Liverpool also drew immigrants from across Europe and the Indian subcontinent. The scale of the Scandinavian emigration from the 1850s to the outbreak of the First World War was unprecedented, reaching around ↔

Although she found international fame with her role in the Manhattan-set *Sex and the City*, Kim Cattrall was born in Liverpool, and the actress returned to the city to attempt to unravel a 70-year-old family mystery in her episode of *Who Do You Think You Are?*

Kim's mother, Shane, was just eight years old when her father, George Baugh, left his wife and their three daughters in the deprived inner-city area of Toxteth. Life after his disappearance was hard, and Shane remembers the family having to sell everything just to keep going: they drank from jars, had no furniture, and the children had to share a single bed. The girls only owned one indistinct picture of their father, meaning that they had only a faint idea of what he looked like.

Although their father's departure undoubtedly adds a tragic edge to the

family's story, the Baugh's living conditions were sadly far from unusual in Liverpool during the 1930s. Approximately 15 per cent of the city's population existed below the poverty line, and Toxteth in particular saw its impoverished population expand rapidly during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Kim was able to track down George's sisters, who believed that he may have used Liverpool's busy docks to emigrate to the US. Their hunch turned out to be along the right lines: passenger records revealed that he tried to stow away on a ship bound for New York in 1935. And this turns out to be only one example of his wayward nature: documents show that George was also a bigamist.

Despite these upsetting revelations, Kim is still upbeat about the city in which she was born. "Whenever I think about family, I think of Liverpool," she says.



1845

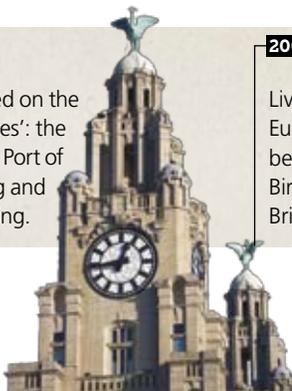
The Great Famine causes a million Irish people to flee, many to Liverpool. The 1851 census reveals that 22 per cent of the people in the city had been born in Ireland.

1916

Work is completed on the city's 'Three Graces': the Liver Building, the Port of Liverpool Building and the Cunard Building.

2008

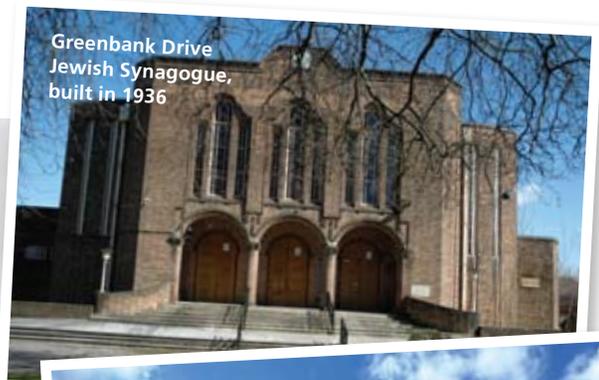
Liverpool is named the European Capital of Culture, beating off rival bids from Birmingham, Newcastle, Bristol, Cardiff and Oxford.



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The SS Etruria at Pier Head in Liverpool, c1900



The arch at the entrance to Liverpool's Chinatown



50,000. The Gustaf Adolfs Kyrka Seamen's Church was built in 1883/4 to respond to the needs of both seafarers and emigrants.

Among foreign merchants, the Greeks occupied a prominent and important place. Five shipping lines exported to Greece: Leyland, Moss, Cunard, Papayanti Johnstone and Prince's Line. The increasing prosperity of the Greek ship-owning and mercantile community was reflected in erection of the Greek Orthodox church in Toxteth.

Liverpool's 'Little Italy', concentrated around Gerard Street, numbered around 500 in 1915. Italians worshipped mainly at St Joseph's Church, Grosvenor Street, and Holy Cross Church, Great Crosshall Street. Official records referring to the surnames of Italian immigrants show variations in the spellings, and during the 1940s there was a tendency for the spelling and pronunciation of some Italian surnames to become anglicised.

The Asian Indian presence pre-dates the larger-scale post-independence migration of Asians to Britain. By the 1890s, ship owners were finding it increasingly difficult to staff their ships with British ratings because of the low wages and poor conditions afloat. The number of lascars (Indian seamen) engaged for service grew, with lascars encountering harsh conditions, substandard dietary provision, and unequal treatment, including wages far below white seamen. Lascar desertion was a problem,

and gradually a small community of Asian sailors grew up in Liverpool.

The first presence of Chinese people in Liverpool dates back to the early 19th century, with the main influx arriving at the end of the century. By then, Liverpool had the highest concentration of Chinese residents in England. Immigrants from China came as sailors or stokers on the new steamships.

From the 1890s, those who settled lived near the docks, sometimes working in small businesses catering to Chinese sailors or in the numerous laundries. During the First World War there were over 6,000 Chinese mariners in the city, but numbers escalated to around 20,000 in the Second World War with some marrying local women. From the late 1950s onwards, families began to arrive from Hong Kong and the Chinese population of Liverpool started to form a truly separate entity.

Cosmopolitan city

The city today is a mix of those descended from many of the migrants from the period of the port's expansion. The old out-dated moniker of 'Second City of the Empire' has been well and truly replaced by 'The World in One City', a description that truly reflects the diverse make-up today of this vibrant, cultured city, enriched by the contributions of its multicultural population and its various communities. ■

NEW TO LIVERPOOL

Museum of Liverpool

Opening in July 2011

Family historians will be able to discover more about their ancestors' lives in Liverpool and explore a diverse range of photos, artefacts, documents and oral histories when the new Museum of Liverpool opens on 19 July 2011. For full details of what will be on offer, please see our news story on page 12.

Liverpool Central Library

Opening in 2012

When Liverpool Central Library opens next year following a two-year redevelopment programme, visitors will be able access a specially-designed family history hub, as well as the complete holdings of Liverpool Record Office. Work is currently expected to be completed towards the end of the year.

More archives & resources in **Liverpool**

Liverpool Record Office

Until late 2012, due to redevelopment, the Liverpool Record Office is temporarily based at:
 ☒ Horseshoe Gallery, World Museum (2nd floor), William Brown Street
 ☎ 0151 233 5817

🌐 www.liverpool.gov.uk/Leisure_and_culture/Local_history_and_heritage/index.asp

✉ recoffice.central.library@liverpool.gov.uk

The record office holds a vast resource of information dating from the 13th century to the present. These include archives of the City Council and its predecessors, schools, churches, families, businesses and societies, books, maps, watercolours and photographs, as well as the usual family history staples of parish registers, census returns, BMD indexes, newspapers and directories. A reader's ticket is needed to request archives, books, maps, photographs and watercolours. Please bring proof of name and address.

Maritime Archives and Library

☒ Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool L3 4AQ
 ☎ 0151 478 4499

🌐 www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/archive

The Museum houses maritime books and documents, including one of the finest collections of merchant shipping records in the UK. Every aspect of Liverpool's maritime history is covered, and while the emphasis is on Liverpool, the coverage is national and international. The Museum website gives information and advice about its collections. Open Tuesday to Thursday, 10.30am-4.30pm, a reader's ticket is required, so please bring proof of identity. It is advised that bookings are made in advance.

Wirral Archives

☒ Wirral Archives Service, Lower Ground Floor, Cheshire Lines Building, Canning Street Birkenhead, Wirral CH41 1ND
 ☎ 0151 606 2929

✉ archives@wirral.gov.uk

🌐 www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/leisure-and-culture/wirral-archives-service

Wirral Archives Service cares for and offers public access to thousands of historical records relating to the history of the Wirral. Researchers requiring parish registers of baptisms, marriages and burials should contact Cheshire Record Office or Birkenhead Reference Library.

Cheshire Archives

☒ Cheshire Archives and Local Studies Service, Duke Street, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 1RL
 ☎ 01244 977195

✉ recordoffice@cheshire.gov.uk

🌐 <http://archive.cheshire.gov.uk>

The website gives a clear idea of what this archive holds, from parish registers to Poor Law records, estate papers and probate records. You can search for wills and order them from the website. You can also view the tithe maps and apportionments online, making them a great, searchable resource for locating your 19th-century ancestors. The archive also holds the records of societies, businesses, hospitals, schools, courts and local authorities. It is best to call before visiting to check opening hours and access requirements or look at the advice on the website.

University of Liverpool special collections and archives

🌐 <http://sca.lib.liv.ac.uk/collections>

The collections include manuscripts, medieval to modern; early and finely printed books, and archival collections. See the website for more details on holdings.

Liverpool Medical Institution Library

🌐 www.lmi.org.uk/LibraryAndArchives.aspx

The Library was founded in 1779 and houses a stock of monographs and journals covering the whole range of medical specialities. Although the library is primarily for members of the LMI, interested researchers may apply to the Librarian with a letter of introduction.

Liverpool & South-West Lancashire Family History Society

☒ Membership secretary, 39 Belmont St, Southport, Merseyside PR8 1LY

✉ membership@liverpool-genealogy.org.uk

🌐 www.liverpool-genealogy.org.uk

This is the main family history society for the Merseyside area with branches around the region. An active society with a regular journal and monthly meetings and lectures, the society welcomes anyone with family links to Liverpool and the surrounding area. The website offers a range of information from Liverpool orphanages to lists of cemeteries and churches.

RECOMMENDED READING

Mike Royden, *Tracing Your Liverpool Ancestors* (Pen & Sword, 2010)

Munro & Sim, *The Merseyside Scots* (Birkenhead, 2001)

D Ben Rees, *The Welsh of Merseyside* (2 volumes, Modern Welsh Publications Ltd, 1997)

John Belcham Irish *Catholic and Scouse: The History of the Liverpool Irish, 1800-1939* (Liverpool, 2007)

D Ben Rees, *The Welsh of Merseyside* (2 volumes, Modern Welsh Publications Ltd, 1997)

TEN OF THE BEST

Best websites

1 Liverpool & SW Lancashire FHS

www.liverpool-genealogy.org.uk
 Founded in 1976, the society has a close relationship with the Liverpool Record Office.

2 Local History Society

www.liverpoolhistorysociety.org.uk
 Contains a lot of information about membership benefits and lectures.

3 Mersey Gateway

(Port Cities Liverpool)
www.mersey-gateway.org
 An online history of the port and its people.

4 Mike Royden's local history pages

www.roydenhistory.co.uk
 A site covering aspects of the city's local history.

5 Yo! Liverpool

www.yoliverpool.com
 Over the last few years, Yo! Liverpool has grown into a great independent, popular site.

6 Historic Liverpool

http://historic-liverpool.co.uk
 Historic-Liverpool.co.uk shows the city's development over the years.

7 Old Liverpool

www.old-liverpool.co.uk
 Snippets gleaned about Liverpool's history.

8 Merseyside Genealogy and History Forum

http://merseygenforum.proboards.com
 Also run by Caryl Williams of the Old Liverpool site above, this is an excellent local forum.

9 Ancestry.co.uk

www.ancestry.co.uk/liverpool
 Has pages dedicated to Liverpool records.

10 Liverpool In Print

www.liverpoolinprint.org.uk
 This site contains the new online catalogue of the Liverpool Local Studies Collection, held by the Liverpool Record Office at the Central Library on William Brown Street.