



Chapter One: Loom of Fate: The History of Manchester

"If you see someone in Manchester with a tan. Don't believe it. They've just gone rusty."

Elderly resident explaining the weather to foreign visitors.

The Pit

Manchester lies in the grasp of the Pennines. The flat plain of the city is walled 15 miles to the east by the hills of millstone grit.

The city is bisected by the River Medlock, which joins the River Irwell and the Manchester Ship Canal.

The lack of dissolved lime in the rocks of the hills has ensured that the water was soft, making it good for the bleaching of linen during Manchester Industrial heyday.

About Manchester the plains of Lancashire and Cheshire lie on a bed rock of coal while the city of Manchester stands upon sandstone, making early building of the city a pinkish red.

The skies of Manchester are seldom free of dreary clouds. The Skies above are often in a state of flux, of growing towers and spires of cloud.

It is for those reasons above that the dawn and dusk of Manchester allow for spectacular displays of light.

However, compared to other cities in the United Kingdom, Manchester has an undeserving reputation for rain. Considering it has less annual rainfall than Glasgow the city will always be a city where it does rain all the time.

To the east rise the hills of the Pennines, the backbone of England.

The Pennines are made up of lime stone and gritstone bedrock, and contain a warren of cave systems and watercourses.

The upland moors are sparsely populated, a haven for sheep farming, quarries and tourism based upon a variety of outdoor pursuits and nature reserves.

Mamucium

The earliest known mention of the location of Manchester comes from the Roman Julius Agricola, who in 79 AD brought a garrison of men to construct a fort to over

look the region and the river crossing. It was at the location of Mamucium, or the "breast shaped hill".

The fort lay within the territory of the area previously held by the Celtic tribe known as the Brigante. This tribe of Celts was defeated at the Battle of Scotch Corner, with the tribe fleeing north to the Lake District.

Agricola soon set about establishing himself in the region, with a wooden fortress being constructed, and some 3 centuries later a stone fortress was erected in the area that is now known as Castlefield.

The Gate of the Castle in the Field

The gate way to the north has been a centre for magical energies ever since the reconstruction of it during the 1970 excavations.

The presence of this rebuilt body has had a strange effect in the Shadow and has had a noticeable effect on the area.

Rumours abound of people seeing the ghosts of Roman soldiers, while others claim to have seen strange beasts crossing through the gate.

What is known is that the gate stands on a powerful ley line. Whether or not this means the gate is in some way tapping into ages past is unknown.

Of more interest is how the gate itself ties into the relics about that bear the emblem of Mithras, the god of labyrinths.

The Roman occupation persisted until the withdrawal of forces in Britain in the year of 411 AD.

The end of the Roman occupation soon left the region open to be plundered by the Norsemen and Saxons.

In 429 AD the area was plundered by the fierce Northmen.

The region was under a state of constant flux as various groups claimed possession of the region over the course of the following centuries. At first the town

was held by the king of Northumbria, and then in 870 AD the town was razed by the vicious attacks of the Danes, their longboats unopposed upon the River Mersey.

By the year 923 AD the town was held by the West Saxons kings of Mercia, known in these times as the town of Mamecaestre or Manceastrae.

A notable relic of this time that still survives today in the Cathedral (which at the time would have been the church of St Mary) is the effigy of the local patron saint, the Archangel Michael.

This artefact was uncovered in 1871 and now stands within the walls of the Cathedral, known more commonly as the "Angel Stone".

The Angel Stone

Rumours amongst the more occult inclined have noted that such an icon of importance to the town would not have been buried except for good reason.

This has led many a scholar amongst those in the know to ponder the true nature of the effigy. Such a patron saint would not be treated in such a manner. But if it wasn't an angel then the possibility is that it is of another being.

Dragon's Fire

The conquest of Britain by William the Conqueror brought much change to the region. William's methods overshadowed the acts of the Norse in previous centuries. In particular he treated Cheshire with utter brutality as towns were raised and crops were burnt.

In the Domesday survey of 1086 the lands about Manchester were simply referred to as 'wasta', wasteland.

The cities around Manchester felt the brunt of the Norman conquest as Chester was sacked and Macclesfield was demolished. The devastation left the people of the region deprived and starved for years to come.



Manchester of these times was noted for simply having a small parish church.

Many lands were handed over to French lords, and Manchester was given to a Rodger de Poitou.

Subsequently the region exchanged hands a number of times until it was held by Albert Grelley and his family for the next two hundred years.

It was the Grelley family who were to leave an impression upon the town by allowing it to become a free borough with a collegiate church, the future Cathedral of St Mary.

Manchester acted as the administrative centre for the collection of manors given to the Grelley family; however it was by accident that the town itself was separated from Salford as two separate charters were issued.

Manchester remained a market town for some time, though with the growth of such a town it was given the right to hold an annual fair and was given a charter in 1301.

Manchester, like many settlements of the time suffered from outbreaks of the Plague, though the town grew.

Flemish weavers settled in the region and the start of the local wool trade began, and a sign of this prosperity was the construction of the

Other signs of the continual growth of the town was the construction of a grammar school in 1515 by Hugh Oldham, the bishop of Exeter. It was also around this time that the church had been completed.

The growth and trade of the town attracted many settlers from Europe who came to share in the prosperity or to flee religious persecution, and a court was trusted with ensuring that products of the town maintained a consistent quality, with aulnagers stamping woollen cloth when it was ready to be sold.

A variety of products came out of the mills of Manchester, such as fustian, flax and raw cotton, with these products being exported as far as markets in France.

It was after the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VII and the Reformation that the collegiate church was in the care of wardens and one of

Particular note, the mystic of Elizabeth I, John Dee.

John Dee held the position until 1603, and during his ward over the town he is said to have translated into English a copy of the *Necronomicon*.

John Dee

The following is not meant to be extensive by any means; however we should note some important historical facts about John Dee.

It was after his first degree that he travelled to Holland and returned with his first astronomer's staff and brass gloves.

At times he was often expelled from England for his practices or imprisoned for them.

Dee acted as Elizabeth I astrologer, and he has many scientific achievements to his name.

He dabbled with crystalomancy, divination, and with Edward Kelly used the fabricated language of Enochian to invoke spirits and angels.

Apparently the *Necronomicon* isn't the only legacy left by the wizard, as rumours persist of tunnels centred on the church, the design of the Corn Exchange being that of a Roman temple to Ceres, and the potential remains of his house under the Corn Exchange.

Dark Water, Black Steam

Following outbreaks of plague and the recovery of the city from the loss of life the town drew in new workers from the poor in the countryside around. The fabric industry continued and soon the city was producing finer materials such as silk.

In 1642 came the Civil war and Manchester sided with the Parliament, with the town besieged by the Royalist forces. The community fought back and erected earthworks and ramparts to repel the Cavaliers. However, with the town firmly held by the Parliament the trade to and from the city suffered greatly.

The 18th century brought much change to the town and was to shape the city to come, as the population of was to sky rocket.

Manchester remained a famous centre for the trade and manufacture of lime and wool, and the ever need to trade, import and export goods, was the drive to widen the rivers to Manchester, in effect creating an inland port connect to many of its resource centres about the region.

Social improvements were also made as the population grew. The Royal Infirmary was built, as was the first workhouse in 1745.

In 1761 the Bridgewater Canal act was passed, allowing for the construction of a water way from Worsley in the North West which would allow for the transport of coal to the ever hungry furnaces of the town.

The Bridgewater canal was to be one of many that would criss-cross the region transport raw material to the great cotton town, with the last being constructed in 1894, the Manchester Ship Canal, allowing for ocean going vessels to pass 36 miles inland to Manchester.

Workers poured into the town from all around, and the population had almost risen to 50,000. Improvements to the sanitation were a must, and the streets were lined with gas lamps, and at night watchmen patrolled the town.

Manchester was a centre for such innovations, with steam trains also bringing coal in from the mines, and in 1789 steam engines were used for powering looms to enable the town to produce mass quantities of fabrics. Manchester was truly at the heart of the industrial age.

Manchester acted as a hub for many other industries, ranging from brewing, food processing and the bottling of mineral water. However discontentment was ever present amongst the work force. No matter how many acts were passed the factories were dangerous, the streets were unsanitary, and their homes were death traps.

Many homes, if they can indeed be called that, worked on shifts, with the workers sharing beds, and damp seeping



in from the outside. Some dwellings are even described as mushrooming.

The dead rotted next to the living, and the living drank from a river into which all manner of waste was dumped. Cholera was rampant and in many cases the only method to stop the spread of disease was to simply brick over the cellar chambers.

However with the epidemic past and the cellars reopened, it was found that in fact some of the dwellings were already back in use. Every day the cellars would be drained of the river water that had flowed in during the evening, and the cycle continued.

Blood Red Coats

The social unrest amongst the work forces of Manchester came to a head in 1819 as a mob descended upon St Peter's Field.

The mass of people was around 60,000, and were brought together by the need to see a parliamentary reform, free trade, the improvement of work conditions, and the end of the price inflating Corn Laws.

The situation was a disaster as the town authorities ordered the crowd dispersed, and mounted troops charged head long into the mob. Their target was the ring leader of the mob, Henry Hunt.

Officially only eleven people died from the attacks of the volunteers, while a further 400 or more were injured.

The event shocked the country, and was dubbed the Peterloo Massacre, after the Battle of Waterloo, by one of those in the crowd who had been present at the conflict.

Reforms followed, with the founding of the Anti-Corn Law League, and the Free Trade movement, otherwise known as "The Manchester School" or "Manchesterism".

It is events like this and those to come that show how Manchester is truly a location where ideas and innovations move at a frightening pace.

In between 1801 to 1831 Manchester gained an influx of immigrants from Ireland, and the town

stood at a population of 142,000. Water was soon piped in to those who could afford it.

Toward the end of the century many changes had come to pass, the Manchester Mechanics' Institute (the future University of Manchester Institute for Science and Technology; UMIST) was founded in 1824. the railway to Liverpool was opened in 1830, and the Owens College was opened in 1851 (this went on to be the Victoria University of Manchester, and then in 2004 merged with UMIST to form the University of Manchester), plus other institutions for the arts and sciences were built over the following decades.

In 1838 Manchester was made a borough for the first time, and then in 1847 the Church of St Mary was conferred the title of Cathedral. Finally in 1853 Manchester was declared a city, with a town hall built in 1877.

A Century of Bombs

The city of Manchester at the start of the century was one of the major powerhouses of the country; its factories producing vast amounts of products, and the city acting as a centre for revolutionary new ideas in both industry, the sciences and social order.

The city continued to grow, pushing in all directions but west, where the city of Salford stood. Rusholme, Bradford and other small towns and regions were drawn into the city limits.

Manchester at the end of the 19th century was a hub of political activity, what with the city being the centre of the Women Suffrage and the Labour party, both acting improve the rights of their respective groups.

In addition Manchester's industries grew and branched out, enticing companies such as Ford to the city. However the glory days of Manchester's economic might were soon to end.

The outbreak of war cut off trade to India and the east, with Manchester feeling the pinch as the economy in the north failed, and soon previous markets began to turn from their British suppliers.

The Second World War however was to have an even greater impact on the city.

Many of the factories were diverted to the war effort, producing munitions and machines of war. Being such a centre for supplies for the armed forces the city was one of the many cities targeted during the Blitz. Much of the city centre was levelled, only to rise again as concrete towers, which now only 50 years on are being torn down again to make way for steel and glass.

After the strain of the war the city saw a decline in its economy, with many companies closing and the textile industry being outdated by rivals in the US and the east. However despite all these problems Manchester maintain its position as a city of innovation.

A shining example of the scientific achievements of the city, which continues to this day, was the work by Alan Turing and the creation of the Small-Scale Experimental Machine, otherwise known as Baby; a machine that was the first to use a stored program. Following in its footsteps was the Manchester Mark 1 and led to the start of the computer age.

As motor cars became more readily available the inner city soon saw its population moving to the outer suburbs, with only the poor and the immigrants staying. The city witnessed much re-development during the 60's as over crowded houses made way for high rise blocks of flats, and the winding alleys of the city centre were demolished, only to be rebuilt upon by the Manchester Arndale shopping centre.

With time the inner city was devoted purely to trade, with the city emerging as a more cosmopolitan centre, with media studios allowing for Manchester to allow its cultural innovation to be spread across the country and globe.

The 80's saw the city suffer at the hands of the restructuring enforced by Thatcherism, however such strife always leads to revolutions, and the city saw new growth again toward the end of the 80's as its music industry boomed, the youth rebelling through the sounds and clubs of Manchester. The city

during this time gained a new face, Madchester.

Before the turn of the millennium the city was to face one more hardship as the city was struck by an IRA bomb. On the 15th of June one of the largest IRA bomb was detonated in the city centre, damaging the Arndale centre and the Marks and Spencer building. Fortunately no one was hurt as a warning was given an hour earlier, though over 200 were hurt by falling glass shattered by the explosion. As a result the city has taken the chance to redevelop the city centre and the area around, allowing for Manchester to take on a more modern climate.

The IRA Bomb

This section stands as a disclaimer to this book on this event. The reason for this is that this book does not go out to present any form of actual truth on the matter, but merely take a subject that is very real today and look back on the event through a certain lens for the use of stories set within the setting present in this book.

This is in no way meant to be malicious or disrespectful to either those who committed the act or the victims, and for those wishing to seek information on this event I would suggest consulting actual evidence and documentation rather than this fan made book.

The City of Man

Modern Manchester is a melting pot of architecture, people and cultures. The city is home to many religions, colours and creeds. The area of Rusholme boasts its "Curry Mile" and a large proportion of the Asian community, while the city centre is home to the large Chinese and Far Eastern community.

Manchester boasts a population of around 2.6 million within the central boundaries, and a further 7 million in the surrounding areas.

Manchester is still a haven for the media, what with the city and hosting the



studios to soaps and the clubs that celebrities of these shows frequent.

Almost every street has a local pub/club/bar/restaurant, making the city a constantly breathing entity at all time of the day, especially with the 24 hour licenses that can be applied for.

The city also boasts three universities and one of the largest student populations in Europe, 50,000 in total, and tied to that fact the city claims one of the busiest bus routes in Europe as well.

Much of the city to the south is made up of the university district that takes up a proportion of Chorlton on Medlock, the terraced houses of Moss Side, the Victorian middle class residential areas of Rusholme, Withington and Disbury. In addition a vast amount of the student population live in the rented accommodation in this direction, with Fallowfield being a community devoted to student life.

Also to the south lie the airport and many major hospitals, with the world famous cancer research centre of Christies being situated there.

To the east are the townships of Openshaw, Bradford, Gorton and Clayton. All these areas saw development during the industrial revolution, though in the early 20th century the regions suffered a decline in their populations as the various mills and factories closed down in the regions. Now today only certain light industries remain and regeneration projects are in action to revitalise the areas and draw people back into the districts.

To the north lie Ancoats, Newton Heath, Cheetham and Blackley, townships which bore the brunt of the growth of the suburbs, with Newton Heath being the origin of Manchester United football club.

Economically speaking the city is still a major industrial city, though in addition more modern businesses in finance and scientific research are pursued.

Madchester

The city centre of Manchester lies just 20 meters over the River Irwell from the centre of the city of Salford.

Two main train stations serve the city centre, those being Piccadilly and Victoria, with the Metro Link trams system cutting through the city centre between the two, and then out toward Bury, Eccles, and Altrincham in the south, stopping at what used to be old train stations. In effect the tram route is one big T shape, with the top running from Bury to Altrincham.

Manchester doesn't have an underground network as rumours circulate with regard to underground tunnel beneath Manchester, possibly referring to the Guardian nuclear bomb shelter, or underground train tunnels from Manchester to Liverpool.

On an average day the Metro Link sees around 52,000 passengers a day, apparently accounting for 2 million car journeys a year.

An extensive network of bus routes serve the city almost at all times, with the main station being located in the heart of the city at Piccadilly Gardens. However the Metro Link and the buses are certainly not for the faint of heart at night, as they attract gangs of youths and boisterous students coming home from clubs.

The tram lines pass through a variety of suburban areas, each with its own character and social climate, such as the well off town of Altrincham, or the council estates of Stretford. Many of the stations are run down, and only at certain times does any form of security patrol the trams and the stations. It is for this reason that the stations seem to act as a gathering point for gangs and other criminals and beggars.

Between the stations the tracks run through fields, towns, and over iron bridges and under motorways. Of course with the tram running above ground at street level through the city centre there is the ever present danger of people being run over, or children.

At times along the 41, 42, and 142 routes along Oxford road, catching a bus can be a struggle. At times in the morning and evening they are packed with commuters and students, and often 3 or 4 will turn up at once, all managed by

different companies with a varying degree of care and disrepair.

The centre of Manchester is made up of a number of squares and shopping districts. Most notable are the Arndale centre in the centre of the city, the Triangle, located in the Corn Exchange near the rebuilt M&S building, and the Trafford centre with stands to the west of Manchester near the MUFC grounds.

The Arndale centre now stands as a shining achievement for the regeneration of Manchester. The previous shell of the building, the dirty yellow tiles; have now given way to sheet steel, glass and modern design, with much of the interior restyled or overhauled, in particular the north wing which houses many upper market stores that look out onto the popular Millennium Quarter.

The Millennium is also home to a number of local favourites. The first are the twin pubs The Wellington and the ever popular (and cheap) Sinclair's Oyster Bar. Both of these bars were originally located near the M&S building, being part of a set of buildings known as the Shambles, surviving the original construction of the Arndale centre. Both pubs are fine examples of Tudor buildings, both luckily surviving the bomb of '96 by being shielded by the M&S building. Both pubs were then move brick by brick and then raised 15 feet to their new location facing out onto the Millennium Quarter.

The Triangle, another smaller shopping centre, though no less prominent, is also located at the Millennium Quarter, along with other prestigious department stores such as Selfridges (which shares the same building as M&S) and Harvey Nicholas. However the Triangle has a long and strange history of commerce for this building was the Corn Exchange, the building designed by John Dee, and stands mere meters from the cathedral and the URBIS building. The Triangle is interesting as it was used for the better part of the 90's as a centre for curio shops, selling items ranging from second hand clothes, to occult books and tarot readers. Now after the bomb the centre is now home to many expensive stores.

The Trafford Centre, completed in 1998 is renowned as a "temple to commerce", costing £600 million pounds to build.

The centre houses many stores and flagship shops, but also it contains a large Megaplex cinema and a number of leisure activity centres.

The centre is a massive entity, being able to accommodate 350 coaches, 10,000 cars, occupying the space of 30 football pitches. It generates 400 tons of waste packaging every week and uses enough power for a small town. In addition the building is decorated with £40,000 worth of gold leaf and 3 massive domes.

With regard to the media Manchester is still an exciting city. In previous years it has hosted the Commonwealth games, calling for the construction of the Sport City in the east of the city, and is home to Granada Studios and soon the UK media centre for the BBC. Manchester still also acts as host for numerous bands and arts in its host of venues, in theatre constructed in Victorian times, and also in the renowned clubs that dominate the city centre.

One of the most recent and impressive developments of the city has been the construction of one of the tallest residential towers outside of Manchester, the Beeton tower, a massive spire of glass and steel that towers over the Deansgate locks. However this tower is the first of many as the city continues to develop. The question is how far can this development go, and if the city will loose its drive and instead begin to stagnate? If that were to occur then Manchester would truly loose its character. However the future looks bright as the redevelopment of Salford into the UK media centre is about to commence. It seems Manchester never really stands still. If anything it gets brighter and consumes itself.