

The Deindustrialisation of Manchester

Manchester is a very important city in North West England, often called the 'Capital of the North'. In 2017, the population was estimated to be 530,300 people, which makes it the sixth largest city in the UK. The city is in the middle of the Greater Manchester Urban Area. This has a population of almost 2,800,000.

During the Industrial Revolution, Manchester became one of the main centres of textile manufacture in the UK. It was an important trading centre, well connected to Great Britain and abroad by the railway, the port and canals. The population of the city increased rapidly as people came from all over Great Britain to work there. Manchester was the world's first industrialised city.

In the 19th century, Manchester was known as 'Cottonopolis' because of the high number of cotton mills.

Almost a third of the global production of cotton was produced there.

During World War One (1914-1918), Manchester found it difficult to export its products while the production of cotton in other areas of the world increased. The Great Depression of the 1930s also impacted negatively on the city.

After the end of the Second World War in 1945, Manchester began to see a decline in both textile manufacture and trade. This deindustrialisation continued with disastrous results: the trade exchange closed in 1968, and the port closed in 1982. 3,000 jobs were lost. Manchester was a city which desperately needed regeneration.

This regeneration began in the late 1980s with the redevelopment of the city centre. Buildings once used for industrial purposes were converted into offices. This gave businesses in the areas of finance and insurance the opportunity to develop.

In 1996, the Irish Republican Army car-bombed the city centre, injuring about 200 people, but luckily killing no-one. The bomb attack badly damaged many offices and shops and a number of businesses suffered as a result. However, thanks to investment following this event, the redevelopment of the city centre continued – with new places to eat and shop. These included Manchester Arndale, one of the largest city centre shopping malls in the UK, and Beetham Tower, one of the tallest buildings in the country.

The number of jobs in Manchester is still 1% less than 100 years ago. However, the attempt to replace the manufacturing jobs lost during deindustrialisation has been mainly successful. Many new jobs have been created in the tertiary sector.

The Globalisation and World Cities Research Network considers Manchester a Beta level World City because of its strong links to the global economy. Manchester is now the second most important city in England after London.

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