

Liverpool Irish Community trail

Liverpool's Irish connections go back centuries. There was already an established community before the huge influx during the years of the Great Hunger of the 1840s. Irish settlement has continued through to today with an estimated 75% of Liverpool's population having some Irish ancestry. Irish people, culture and traditions continue to shape the social, political and economic history of the city.

Diverse communities are represented throughout the museum. From time to time, different communities may also feature in special exhibitions.

Liverpool Jewish, Black*, and Irish Community trails are currently available.

*Black refers to people with African heritage



Look out for this symbol to help you find the items on the trail.

GROUND FLOOR

Atrium

Calderstones spiral

Links across the Irish Sea stretch back over 5000 years. This large spiral design is taken from Liverpool's 'Calderstones'. It is identical to carvings which were very common in the north and east of Ireland. The Calderstones were part of a communal burial place for ceremonial worship.



GROUND FLOOR

The Great Port

Early Irish imports: Warehouse Wonders - from old rope to silk purses

Trade with Ireland dominated Liverpool's early development and the hogs lard and kelp referred to here are typical items. In the 18th century the people arriving from Ireland included those destined to dig out canals (navvies). Later migrants became harvest workers and dock labourers. Irish women found work in cotton picking, tobacco works, nail factories, chemical works and street trading. The port still handles 40% of all Irish trade today.



Dock workers: Dock People Images 9, 11 and 16

King Edward potatoes were a typical Irish export. By the mid-19th century Irish workers dominated the unskilled and semi-skilled work on the north docks. Irish leaders, including James Sexton and Richard McGhee, fought for better pay and safer conditions on the docks. The 'barrow ladies', many of them Irish women, were also a familiar sight selling fruit on the Pier Head.



Courtesy of Liverpool Daily Post and Echo



Courtesy of Bluecoat Press

FLOOR ONE

City Soldiers

First World War: Liverpool Irish battalion
Cap badge, object 4 in display case



Courtesy of Imperial War Museum

The battalion was originally formed as volunteers in the 1860s and recruited from the Liverpool Irish community. They later became part of the King's Regiment and were re-numbered Battalion 8, earning a reputation for their fierce bravery.

Over 4500 Liverpool Irish soldiers are listed on the King's Regiment Devereux computer touch screen in this area.

FLOOR ONE

Overhead Railway

Overhead Railway model
Clarence Dock and film
Sandon Dock to James Street

Between 1830 -1929 new arrivals from Ireland came through the Clarence Dock gates. They found the massive Stanley Tobacco Warehouse on one side, and boxer Jack Langan's famous pub on the other. Many went no further than the crowded streets and courts around this neighbourhood. Vauxhall Road formed the backbone of the Catholic parishes, Irish clubs and thriving businesses along the north docks.

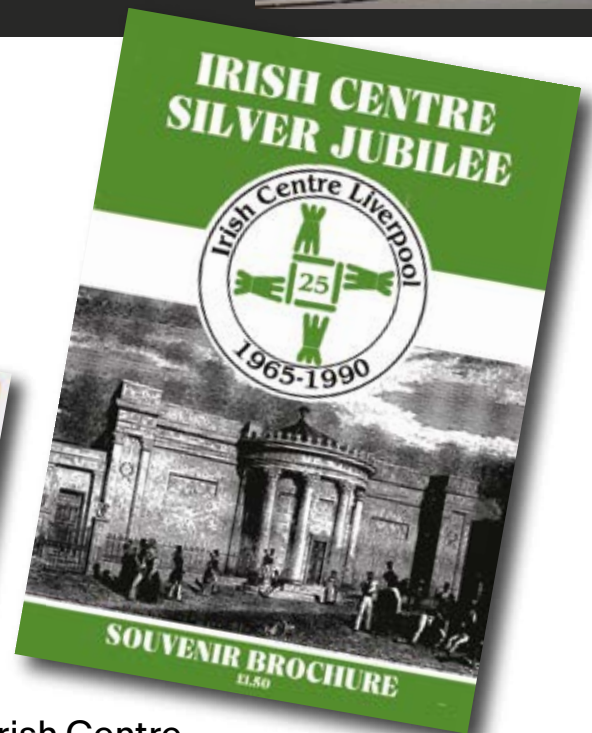
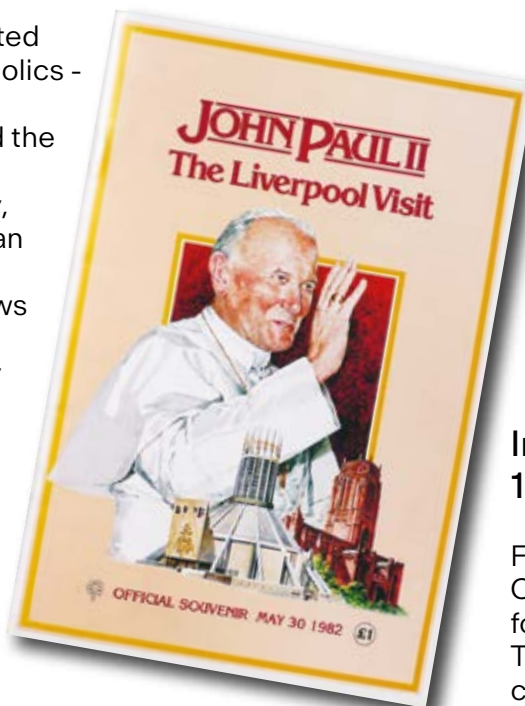


FLOOR ONE

History Detectives

Pope John Paul II visit: 1980s timeline
Objects 93, 94 and 95 in display case

The visit in 1982 highlighted the large number of Catholics - mainly of Irish descent - on Merseyside. It marked the continuing progress of denominational harmony, in contrast to the sectarian rioting of earlier times. The 'popolopy' card shows that for some the visit provided the opportunity for amusement.



Irish Centre 1997 Irish Centre closes

From 1965 until 1997 the Liverpool Irish Centre on Mount Pleasant was the dynamic focal point of Irish culture on Merseyside. The venue was home to live music, dance classes, social events, meetings of Irish clubs and societies, wedding receptions, family occasions, and many memorable nights of music and song.

FLOOR TWO

Wondrous Place

Liverpool on Stage and Screen

Starring David McCallum, Anne Heywood and Peter Cushing, the film, *Violent Playground*, focuses on youth crime and the Juvenile Liaison Scheme in Liverpool's deprived inner-city areas. Filming locations include Gerard Gardens tenements. It focuses on the Irish family, the Murphys. Cathie (Anne Heywood) struggles to take care of her siblings including rebellious teenager, Johnnie (David McCallum).



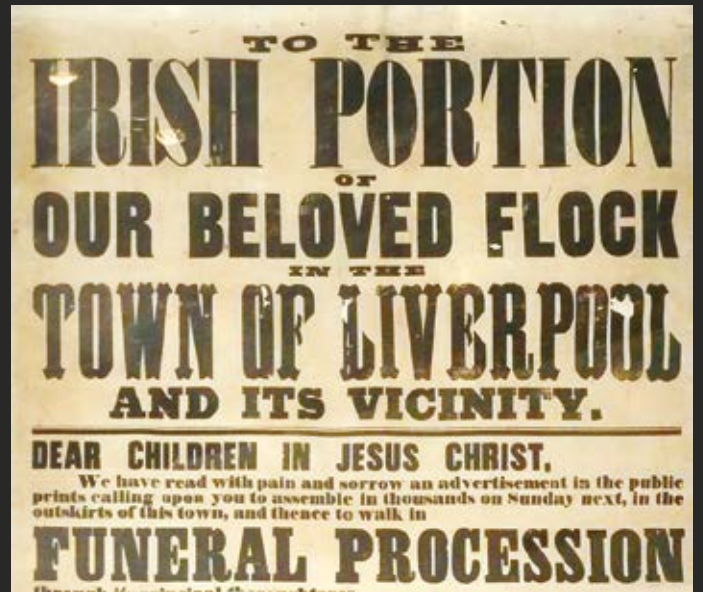
Liverpool Sounds

This fiddle was owned and played by Sean McNamara. Sean was a founder member of the Liverpool Ceili Band and helped to establish the Liverpool Irish Festival and the first English branch of Comhaltas (a creative community nurturing Irish culture). The Liverpool Ceili band enjoyed a string of successes in the early 1960s as well as earning a global reputation for their live performances.



Finding A Voice

Objects 1, 10 and 13 in display case



By 1871, 35% of the population of the Vauxhall Road area were Irish born. The Conservative election campaigns under Archibald Salvidge used fear of Irish nationalism, attachment to Protestantism and loyalty to the Empire and the Crown, as issues to attract voters. Catholic bishops were also opposed to Irish nationalism.

FLOOR TWO

The People's Republic

Irish Emigrants Entering Liverpool, painting by David Jacques



When the Great Hunger struck Ireland in 1846 over one million starved. Many more left, with over 1.5 million passing through Liverpool. The hardship and overcrowding of the passage from Ireland are all depicted in this work. Most travelled on the exposed open deck. There were many deaths. In Dec 1848, for example, 72 died on the steamer Londonderry, when 200 passengers were forced into a hold below deck during a storm.

Finding a voice

'The Other' (film)



Discover more about Liverpool's past with this film by Derek Murray and Curtis Watt. They explore how discrimination based on religion and ethnicity has shaped the city for more than 200 years.

FLOOR TWO

The People's Republic Court housing reconstruction



Large numbers of Irish people lived in the very poorest dwellings – the court housing. Often several dozen families, like the McVeigh's featured here, had just one room, all sharing one water tap and one toilet. Cellars were dark, damp and frequently flooded. Highly infectious diseases such as typhoid and cholera were common.



Working and Health James Larkin statuette Object 5 in display case

A full size statue of James Larkin stands in the centre of O'Connell Street, Dublin, in recognition of his central role in Irish labour history, and the struggle for union recognition and better wages and conditions. Born in Toxteth, he became a key member of the Labour movement and led many campaigns throughout his time in the city. His sister, Delia, founded the Irish Women Workers Union and was a successful dramatist.

Working and Health Kitty Wilkinson (1785 – 1860)



Kitty was born in Derry/Londonderry and came to Liverpool as a child. Famed for her lifesaving work throughout the deadly cholera epidemic of 1832, Kitty recognised that keeping clean meant staying healthy. As owner of her street's only hot water boiler, she allowed neighbours into her home and provided washing facilities for 85 families a week. By 1842, inspired by Kitty's work, Liverpool Corporation opened the country's first public baths and washhouse.

Find out more

Further information about the Irish Community in Liverpool can be found at:

University of Liverpool, Institute of Irish Studies
<http://www.liv.ac.uk/irish/>

St Michael's Irish Centre
<http://www.stmichaelsirishcentre.org/>

Liverpool Irish Festival
<http://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/>

Irish Community Care Merseyside
<http://iccm.org.uk/>

House of Memories
National Museums Liverpool

Irish Community Suitcase

Through the House of Memories programme we have developed memory suitcases for use as part of group reminiscence sessions. There is a special suitcase which relates to the Liverpool Irish Community. It contains photos, memorabilia and objects that help promote conversations about memories of days gone by. It can be booked by groups who have attended House of Memories dementia awareness training. For more details see houseofmemories.co.uk/dementia-training/