

Birthplace of everything from the industrial revolution and the computer to the football league and Top Of The Pops, Manchester is truly a city of firsts.

With one of the world's busiest international airports, the city attracts a large number of worldwide visitors, connecting over 22 million passengers a year with over 200 destinations; more than any other UK airport.

Although Manchester was first put on the map by the Romans around 80 AD, the city is perhaps more famously known as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution when it took the lead in the world's textile manufacturing and production in the late 18th century.

Over the years Manchester has evolved from an industrial region to a vibrant metropolis. The once small village is now the capital of the Northwest.

Manchester boasts a rich and diverse cultural lifestyle. From Chinatown to the wide range of museums and arts, people from all over the world will feel at home. It is now one of the largest metropolitan conurbations (with 10 sub-regional districts) in the United Kingdom.

In recent years Manchester has rebuilt itself as a leading centre of modernist architecture. It is apparent in the new and ever-increasing number of hotels, restaurants, shopping areas and museums. As a result Manchester is stronger than ever and a city like no other.

Music

The music scene in Manchester has played a huge part in putting the city on the map. With groups such as The Hollies, The Bee Gees and The Smiths it is no wonder that the city's musical heritage has always been a great source of pride. One key moment in Manchester's musical history occurred on the 4th of June 1976 when the Sex Pistols arrived at the Lesser Free Trade Hall in Castlefield to play a legendary gig. The gig inspired the late Tony Wilson to begin a fascinating music career, with his factory record label leading bands such as Joy Division, the Happy Mondays and New Order to great success.

As the 80s grew closer Manchester was taken over by a scene developed around the famous Hacienda nightclub. It was later known as the 'Madchester' period which is dramatised in Michael Winterbottom's 2002 film *24 Hour Party People*. Recently Manchester has been known for its critically acclaimed acts such as Oasis and Take That who have taken the city by storm.

Sport

When it comes to sport Manchester is ahead of its game. Home to the world's biggest football club, Manchester United, and with six major international sporting events taking place in 2008, Manchester leads the way for active pursuits.

