

## **A view of NCUK university towns (Liverpool)**

The Spinners, a popular Liverpool folk group of the 1960s sang of their beloved city: "We speak with an accent exceedingly rare and if you want a cathedral, we've got one to spare . . . ." The local accent (Scouse) does indeed have an interesting twang, the result of historical immigration, largely from Ireland, and the locals, Scousers have great pride in their city and its musical and football heritage.

In order to understand Liverpool's strategic and commercial importance, we must remember that in times past it was the port that was closest to the Atlantic and so much trade from America and the Caribbean came through it that it was necessary to build massive docks with locks, so that the loading and unloading of ships would not be subject to the changes of the tide. The dual track line from Liverpool to Manchester, opened in 1830 was the first full-scale inter-city railway in the world, providing a service for both passengers and freight. Cotton was delivered through Liverpool and processed in Manchester and surrounding cities. This provided an immense source of wealth, which even today is reflected in Liverpool's buildings. The iconic Liver Building on the waterfront was one of the first in the world to be built using reinforced concrete.

It was quite natural that opulent cities of the Victorian era should want to have their own university and Liverpool's was founded in 1882. The extensive use of red brick in its construction led to the title "Red Brick" for this and many similarly styled universities. The founding fathers attracted the eminent scientist Oliver Lodge who first demonstrated radio transmission in 1894, made significant developments in lightning protection and laid the foundation for the University's eminence in high voltage research. The University can also claim that eight Nobel laureates have passed through its doors. One of these, Sir Ronald Ross discovered the mode of spread of malaria and was an inspiration for the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. Other Nobel laureates associated with the University include the alkaloid chemist, Sir Robert Robinson and Sir James Chadwick who discovered the neutron.

Even before Liverpool had a university it had an institute dedicated to the improvement of the educational level of ordinary people. Liverpool Mechanics's School of Arts was founded in 1823 and after it amalgamated with several other colleges it became Liverpool Polytechnic. In 1992, when the UK Government granted university status to many colleges and polytechnics of high standing this body took the name Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) which is also part of NCUK. Moores was a philanthropist and founder of Littlewoods Pools and the Littlewoods Department stores. He was a great believer in the creation of opportunity for all, something which embodies the ethos of LJMU in providing educational routes for people of all ages and from all backgrounds.