

# Warrington

## Fact Sheet



Warrington was an important crossing place across the Mersey in Roman times and the town grew up around it. This also made it a favourable place for a market.

In the 17th century Warrington benefited from the growth of Liverpool. It created a large market for sailcloth. In the 1770s a writer said that Warrington supplied 'nearly one half of the Navy of Great Britain'. In the 18th century Warrington became known for its sacking industry and canvas industry. Bank Hall was built in 1750, which later became the Town Hall. The first newspaper in Warrington was printed in 1756.

In the 19th century there were a number of improvements to Warrington. In 1813 an Act of Parliament formed a body of men called Police Commissioners. They had powers to pave, clean and light the streets of Warrington. At first oil lamps lighted the streets but in 1821 gaslight was introduced. The Commissioners also organised refuse disposal and from 1828 they provided a fire brigade. The first police force in Warrington was formed in 1838.

However, like all early 19th century towns Warrington was overcrowded and unsanitary. In 1832 there was a cholera epidemic that killed 169 people. In 1846 a company was formed to supply Warrington with piped water supply. In the 1860s and 1870s sewers were dug.

In 1847 Warrington was made a borough and gained a mayor and corporation. Meanwhile in 1810 a dispensary was opened where the poor could obtain free medicines. Warrington infirmary opened in 1877.

In 1848 the first public library opened in Warrington. In 1856 a Market Hall was built. In the late 19th century parks were opened. Bank Park opened to the public in 1873. Victoria Park and Queens Gardens opened in 1897. Parr Hall opened in 1898.

During the 19th century Warrington was transformed from a market town to a major industrial centre. In the early 19th century glassmaking in Warrington declined due to competition from St Helens. However other industries boomed. There was a large metalworking industry, ironworks, aluminium, file making and a considerable textile industry.

In the 20th century Warrington, like other towns, underwent 'de-industrialisation'. Old manufacturing industries declined. However service industries such as retail, education and local government grew rapidly.

The first electricity was generated in Warrington in 1900. Between 1902 and 1935 electric trams ran in the streets. The first buses ran in 1913 and between 1931 and 1935 they replaced the trams.

In 1917 Orford Park (originally the grounds of a hall) opened. The first council houses in Warrington were built in the 1920s and 1930s. Many more were built after 1945, to replace demolished slums.

In 1968 Warrington became a new town. People from Greater Manchester were moved to the town and as a result Warrington grew rapidly with new suburbs and industrial estates. In 1974 the boundaries of Warrington were enlarged and in 1998 Warrington became a unitary authority.