

English for Life in the UK.

Episode one: The history of migration.

Hello my name's Mark. I am a volunteer at the St Augustine's Centre in Halifax. Welcome to the podcast 'English for life in the UK'. I will be joined on this podcast by Christine and John. Together we teach a course called 'English for Life in the UK'. The St Augustine's Centre is a charity which supports those people in greatest need in our local area. For us this is mainly asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. The St Augustine's Centre provides a range of English courses. This particular course aims to help people with their English and at the same time to teach you more about life in this country.

We believe that one of the best ways of learning a language is to do a lot of listening, listening to native English speakers talking about a range of different subjects. That is what we will be doing in this podcast and we hope that in the same way that a child learns their first language, by doing a lot of listening and understanding and then gradually being able to speak and engage in conversation about more complex subjects using a range of different phrases and words, so you will improve your English in that way. At the same time the subjects we are covering will also help you to learn more about life in this country. For those of you who are attending the St Augustine's course we hope that this will reinforce your learning, that is provide additional learning for you. However we also hope that this course will be of use to anyone who wants to know more about life in this country and improve their English. In future episodes we will talk a bit more about the philosophy, the ideas, behind this approach but for now let's get on and talk about our first topic.

Mark: Okay so today we've been talking about the history of migration in relation to the United Kingdom. John's with me. John what do you think the main lessons were from today?

John: I think the main thing that we took from today's lesson was that migration is not a recent phenomenon. It's something that's been happening not just for hundreds but for thousands of years. So we went all the way back to, I guess, Neolithic migration and then we looked at Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Viking et cetera and then moved on to some more modern examples of migration to the British Isles.

Mark: Yeah. And I think it was encouraging the students to realise that migration is something that has always been with us and that the United Kingdom, as it is today, has been formed by migration that's happened over, as you say, thousands of years. If we go back to that Roman period, what can we say about what was happening at that stage?

John: Well one of the interesting things that came up in terms of Roman Britain, so from around 50 AD to 400 A.D., was that the Romans brought with them people from

right across the Roman Empire. So there would have been people from North Africa, from the Iberian peninsular, from modern day, the Levant and as far away as Armenia and we also looked at the proof for this in terms of DNA analysis that's been conducted by archaeologists, that was able to show that people in York or Carlisle or Exeter in Roman cities hailed originally from all the various parts of the Roman Empire, so as far away as North Africa and the Middle East which I think they found very interesting.

Mark: Yeah. I think it's good that we have the scientific evidence now for a lot of these things so we also talked a bit about who were the first black people to come to this country and of course actually if you go right back, we now know that Cheddar man, who, we reckon, dates from several thousand years BC, before Christ, was almost certainly black and originated in Africa and we have the evidence for that now.

Mark: What about examples of more recent migration John?

John: We looked at the example of the Huguenot migration from France. The Huguenots were a religious minority in France at the time, 17th century, 18th-century. They were a Protestant minority in France and they were persecuted for their religious beliefs. They emigrated to the United Kingdom. I think that struck a chord with some of our students because they had perhaps similar experiences. One of the reasons that they may have migrated to the UK is that in their country of origin they were in a religious minority and they were suffering, perhaps, persecution for their religious views so I think they found that quite interesting.

Mark: Yeah. I think it was interesting you were able to use some of your family history as well talk another, about another period of migration.

John: Yeah. We discussed Irish migration to Great Britain, to England and Scotland. So we looked at the example of the migration that was precipitated by the Irish potato famine in the 1840s, explained that, you know, that there'd been a famine in Ireland and that many people came to England to find work and eventually many of them worked as labourers on the canals and railways in the booming industry of the English economy at that time.

Mark: And then what about coming into the 20th century and the period of the First World War and then also after the Second World War, what kind of patterns did we identify there?

John: One of the major migrations we identified was the, kind of, the Jewish migration from the late 1900s into the early 20th century and so Russians again who had been persecuted, Russian Jews who'd been persecuted, the pogroms and then many of them moved from the Baltic states, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia to the United Kingdom. Then we moved on to the First World War. We examined some of this in the language café yesterday about the many thousands of Indian troops and other Commonwealth troops who came to support the United Kingdom in the First World War. And then on similarly to the Second World War, people came from the British colonies, in the Caribbean in Africa and East Asia to support the British war effort. And then moving on into the 40s came again to build, to aid the reconstruction of the UK after the Second World War.

Mark: Yeah I'd thought as well it was interesting when we talked about the post-Second World War period and the way in which immigration was encouraged. Workers were encouraged to come from West Indies, Caribbean, India, Pakistan to work in industries in this country where there was a shortage of labour and in particular, in this area in Yorkshire, how the textile industry, for example, was very dependent on significant numbers of immigrants coming from India and Pakistan. And, certainly in this local area here, that is part of what has established the pattern of the population that we have today.

John: I think it were we had a nice mix of students today from right across the world. (Mark: Yeah) Obviously we've got our Iranian students and we had students in today from sub-Saharan Africa, from across the Middle East, a variety of different places. So we had a lot of very interesting input from the students themselves.

Mark: Yeah. So what would we say we would identify as the main reasons why people are moving today into the UK?

John: I think they are very similar in some ways to the historic causes of migration that we examined in the lesson. So unfortunately religious persecution is still an issue for many migrants to the UK, particularly from the Middle East. Again they are fleeing in some cases fleeing war, fleeing famine, and coming to seek a better life, coming to seek employment in our industries and to build a better life in the United Kingdom.

Mark: Yeah.

Language support

From this last section when we were talking about the history of migration there are a few words and concepts, that's ideas, which some of you may have found quite challenging. So I'm going to unpick a few of these....

First of all, John used the word **phenomenon**. He talked about migration not being a recent phenomenon. A phenomenon is a fact or a situation that exists. So it is not a fact that migration is only recent. It has been around for a long time. So **phenomenon**: fact or situation that exists.

John also referred to the **Neolithic** period of history this is usually used to mean the period which we also call the **stone age** - very early period of human existence although it lasted for millions of years.

We also talked about the phrase **pogrom**. This was in relation to Jewish migration. They were escaping the **pogroms** in Eastern Europe and Russia. A **pogrom** is an organised racist attack or massacre of a particular ethnic group.

There were also a few uses of different phrases to talk about dates...

So first of all of all we had some dates that were **A.D.** That stands for *Anno Domini* from the Latin and means after the birth of Christ.

Other dates were referred to as **BC** that is **B**efore **C**hrist.

The English calendar works around the birth of Christ as being year zero. All the dates after that are **AD** dates and the dates before that are **BC** dates, before Christ.

We also referred to **centuries**, for example the '17th century'. And the 17th century is any date between 1600 and 1699 because the first century was between the year zero and the year 100.

And also at one point I talked about the **post**-Second World War period. The Second World War happened between 1939 and 1945. If we talk about something being **post**-Second World War, it simply means 'after'. So it happened after the Second World War period.

I hope this language support has been helpful to you. Thank you for listening to 'English for Life in the UK'. Look out for the next edition of our podcast - coming soon.