

Dispersal of Jewish migrants in Northern Ireland

The first Belfast Jewish synagogue was in Annesley Street. It opened in 1904 and accommodated 355 males and 212 females. Females were seated separately in a back gallery. The first wave of Jews were from Russia and the second wave were from Lithuania and Poland. The synagogue architects was a well known firm Young and MacKenzie. The last service was held in 1964.

Businesses

Tapestry Weavers was a Jewish business located in Crevilly near **Ballymena**. Henry Nathan was a German Jew who settled here in 1947. He focussed on carpets, upholstery and tapestry work. 80% of production went abroad. They made cushion covers for QE2. They presented Queen Elizabeth with six cushion covers as a Coronation present. In May 1995 they closed the factory and the machinery was taken over to Burnley, England.

Nat Goorwitch - a successful businessman - wanted to establish a kibbutz in **Stuart Hall** near Stewartstown. The Earl of Castle Stewart provided his home as a centre. In August 1941 200 evacuees and 50 Nissan huts moved in. Nat Goorwitch launched plans for vocational training in horticulture and garment making. His grandson **Michael Herbert** has established himself as a leading businessman.

There was a small Jewish synagogue at **Armagh** around 1895. Similar small synagogues were opened in Limerick, Derry, Dundalk and Waterford. The rabbi in Armagh was called **Glickman** and his son - born in Armagh - was a noted rabbi in Manchester.

Watermans Shoe Shop was in **Downpatrick**. Samuel Waterman left Russia to avoid Russian army service. In 1905 he moved to England with his wife. In 1921 he set up shop in Downpatrick at 3 Saul Terrace. They lived above the shop. His four sons all drifted down to Dublin - Izzy the youngest left in 1951.

Shrigley industrial village County Down developed around its linen mill. In 1930 the mill shut and so the village was facing a very grim

future. The **Utitz** brothers had run a tanning factory in Czechoslovakia. By November 1939 they had taken over the empty mill at Shrigley. They employed ninety workers and focussed on leather shoes, fancy bags and clothing. By the late sixties the Utitz brothers employed over 400 workers. **Walter Weinegar** in Belfast finished off the handbags at his **Marybag factory** in Belfast.

Around 1893 a Jewish community had settled in **Derry/Londonderry**. Families lived in Bishop Street, Fountain Street and the Abercorn area. In 1929 they opened a **synagogue** at 4 Kennedy Place. In 2013 the building collapsed.

In 1856 the newly married **Countess of Charlemont** left Co Meath and moved to **Co Tyrone**. She converted to Judaism and at some time after marriage her baby daughter died. The Countess died in 1882 and her Jewish funeral service caused a few surprises for the local gentry. A second Jewish grave beside her grave holds a young Jewish girl - Frances M Jacobs - died December 1942. Two Jewish graves in a Co Tyrone graveyard.

Ballycastle was home for a Belarus Jew called **Mark Bendas**. MB arrived there in 1934 and opened a drapery shop in the Diamond area. He retired to Southport about 1960.

Jetta Franklin lived in **Glenalina House, Donegal**. The estate had a beautiful 250 acre garden. In 2017 fifteen rabbis held a conference there.

York Street Belfast was home for a number of furniture shop businesses. Central Furnishing Co - Empire Furnishing Co - Grand Furnishing Co - Model Furnishing Co - Universal Furniture. Then there was Gilpins of Sandy Row - Lees Hyman and Lees of Corporation Street and Coles Furniture on the Newtownards Road.

Gibraltarians were evacuated from the Rock at the beginning of WW2. About **6,600 evacuees** were sent to N Ireland and 500 were sent to Scotland. Others went to Madeira, Jamaica and French Morocco.

Seventeen emergency camps were set up in Northern Ireland.

Camp four at **Saintfield** accommodated about 300 **Sephardic Jews**. Their language was Ladino, their cuisine and culture were Mediterranean. They lived in Nissan huts and found the winter weather brutal.

There were **eight camps** in **Co Antrim** - set up in the fields in Nissan huts and with brickbuilt buildings for canteens and washrooms. The huts were cold and damp. Despite the language barrier local people were able to extend a warm welcome to the evacuees living beside them. Ballymena Cemetery has records for 42 Gibraltarians buried in their cemetery. Ballymena Lions charity has made links with the Rock and in 2006 **Ballymena** officially twinned with Gibraltar.