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Scene One-The Wheel

MUSIC STING

JESSICA (Dramatically)

This, is the beginning.... 7000 years ago some genius stumbles and rolls down a hill, hits his head and has an idea. Thus begins...

LEE

(With Reverb) THE AGE OF THE WHEEL

(reverb off)

You know what, this doesn’t need explaining: A wheel’s a wheel!

JESSICA

Wheely.(beat) Alright, let’s move on. Apart from horses and carts nothing much happens for thousands of years.

Music: Nonchalant whistling

LEE (Reverb)

THE AGE OF NOTHING MUCH

Reverb off

JESSICA

That’s it! Up to a few hundred years ago we're all living off the land. If you're going to move into the city, you have to be able to get hold of the bare essentials of life

LEE

Food, a house, a job ...erm... an X-Box?

JESSICA

Correct, (beat) mostly. Whole civilisations rise and fall waiting for a breakthrough in moving stuff around... and then three come at once.

SFX: This section sped up in post as if fast-forwarding

LEE

4000 years ago, 3000, 2000 years ago...

JESSICA

The year 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900,

1000, 1100, 1200, 1300, 1400, 1500, 1600, 1700

SFX: big splosh sound

MUSIC CUE: Suggest something Dick Dale and Surfy might be good

Scene Two- The Age of Barge

LEE (Reverb)

THE AGE OF BARGE!

JESSICA

Right, let’s get it straight. NO CANAL NO MANCHESTER! The Bridgewater Canal was the beginning of the world’s first industrial city, because this is where all the STUFF arrived.

WORLD FIRST STING

JESSICA

This gent is the Duke of Bridgewater.

LEE

Nice hat.

JESSICA

Nice hat man needed to get coal from his mines in Worsley into town to sell so he built a canal. And that canal pretty much started the industrial revolution.

LEE

Into Manchester sailed cotton, bricks and paving stones, food, and finally, people. There was a passenger station down in Castlefield with timetables and tickets.

JESSICA

Canals could shift huge weights and quantities...

LEE

(interrupting)... we still say ‘barging in’...

JESSICA

And it’s still annoying. (beat) Among other things, the canals shipped Manchester’s finest raw sewage to Yorkshire. Not just for pleasure, but to use as fertiliser.

LEE

Where there’s muck there’s brass.

JESSICA

Barges were pulled by horses. Making this....

FX: Neigh

Scene Three- The Age of Horse Power

LEE (reverb)

THE AGE OF HORSE POWER

JESSICA

Up until now, if you couldn’t afford your own carriage, (and you couldn’t) you had to live in walking distance of work.

LEE

The city starts to expand at a stupendous rate. In 1801 Manchester and Salford together only added up to 90,000 people. BOOM by 1851 there were a third of a million. Imagine getting 10,000 new neighbours every Christmas... for half a century. The city was soon packed to busting.

JESSICA

Enter John Greenwood, who set up started the first horse bus service in the country, so workers could commute into town from Pendleton.

LEE

Londoners will try to tell you they had buses first, but the fact is Greenwood ran his first bus way back in 1824.

JESSICA

And so the middle classes started escaping to the suburbs rather than have to bunk up with the unwashed.

LEE

Greenwood’s omnibuses were pretty basic. A bone-jangling wood box on wheels crammed with nine people. And that was first class. The rest were out in the rain clinging on by their nails

JESSICA

At his peak, Greenwood alone was running nearly 4,000 horses. Add in all the rival horse bus and tram companies and...

LEE

Wait, that’s a load of dung!

JESSICA

No, straight up. Oh sorry I see...

LEE (Straight in)

There really was a lot of dung. So much so that people called ‘scavengers’ made a living shovelling it up.

JESSICA

But not much of a living. The horses were probably better fed than most of the scavengers.

LEE

They certainly didn’t have the money to spend on glitzy stuff arriving in town... via the new Ship Canal.

JESSICA

But it wasn’t all plain sailing

Working Men’s Club Style drum roll or cymbal

LEE

No, you think Liverpool and Manchester are rivals now. 19th century Manchester was so heavily taxed by Liverpool for hauling imports up the Mersey that in 1894 we decided to build a bypass. The Manchester Ship Canal was born!

JESSICA

Suddenly Manchester was one of the country’s busiest ports despite being miles from the sea. Instantly the city was open for business with the whole world.

LEE

A riot of new foods and fashions flooded in. It was like for years Mancunians just wore mouldy sacks then BANG Primark, Top Shop and H and M all opened together.

(PICTURE: CANAL WORKERS IN SMOCKS)

LEE

Of course the mouldy sack look still had its fans.

JESSICA

And this would have been the first time any northerner had even seen an orange or a banana.

LEE

But of course North-Western cities weren’t always at each other’s throats.

Music Cue (Something with a du dah dah du rhythm)

JESSICA

All aboard for...

Scene four - The Age of Rail

FX Train Whistle

LEE

THE AGE OF RAIL (Reverb)

WORLD FIRST STING

LEE

In 1830 Liverpool and Manchester railway opened. The first intercity passenger railway in the world!

JESSICA

That first railway station – Liverpool Road - is now the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry.

LEE

Let's be honest here, it didn’t get off to the greatest start.

JESSICA

No, the MP for Liverpool was run over and killed on its first run and a mob pelted the arriving train with rocks.

LEE

But it soon caught on. The first year saw half a million passengers, and as the train network spread its iron tentacles across the country we now come to without doubt the most significant event in world history.

JESSICA

Oh yes

LEE

The invention of fish and chips!

JESSICA

(Laughing). It’s true though, rail meant fresh fish from the sea. The first chippy opened near Oldham in 1863.

LEE

And just in the nick of time. Long factory hours soon worked up an appetite for fast food.

JESSICA

It wasn’t just the food that was fast. This was the quickest long-distance transport ever.

LEE

It scared the living daylights out of a lot of people. So-called experts lined up to pronounce that the hi-speed rail traveller would suffocate or that his body might just explode with the acceleration.

JESSICA

After all Jeremy Clarkson, we’re talking speeds of up to 17... that's 1, 7 MPH

LEE

Life was moving faster too. Time itself changed when Manchester moved to Railway Time in 1846.

Music Sting 2s: Suspenseful tremolo guitar or Theremin type thing

JESSICA

This is like something out of Doctor Who but hear me out. Local time had always been based on the sunrise, so London was about ten minutes ahead of Longsight. Imagine trying to read a timetable – telling the time by the sun had to go.

Standardised national railway time came in instead, but this was NOT popular...

LEE

...and we've been complaining about trains running on time ever since.

SFX Train Whistle

JESSICA

Super-speed created free time and gave birth to both the weekend and the seaside holiday as hordes of glad-ragged workers piled out of Manchester annually to descend on Blackpool and Southport.

Music Cue: Seaside Organ

LEE

Blackpool in 1800 comprised a few houses. By the twentieth century it had its own Eiffel Tower, Trams and a prom prom prom.

JESSICA

City Breaks began as crowds flocked to London for the Great Exhibition in 1851 and Old Trafford station was built for a Manchester Art Treasures event.

LEE

Intercity lines gave birth to the National Football league too. Previously both teams and fans could never practically get to more distant games in a day. And Man U actually began life as Lancashire and Yorkshire Railways Works Football Team.

JESSICA

Yeah, I can just see Rooney hoofing a pig’s bladder around a rail yard. In 1849 a proper commuter train, the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham railway opened.

LEE

And as the century turned, even the Cheshire set could now pop into Manchester for retail therapy.

JESSICA

Now hundreds of huge trains rumbled through Manchester’s huge stations, and after 1850 new electric trams trundled through Lancashire mill towns.

Music Cue: Ominous Tone

LEE (Vincent Price)

But it was the arrival of a very small vehicle that sent a shiver down the tracks.

Music Cue: Have you got a radio car advert we could use???

Scene Five: The Age of Petrol

LEE (Reverb)

THE AGE OF PETROL

JESSICA

Ah hah, the car. At the beginning of the twentieth century having a private car was a rich man’s game.

LEE

You could call them the motor-ocracy

WORLD FIRST STING

JESSICA

And the poshest car in the world was from Manchester...

LEE

What the Subaru Impreza?

JESSICA

I can really imagine the Queen in one of those.

LEE

Oh yeah.... Mr Royce and Mr Rolls met in the Midland Hotel in 1904 and production on their swanky limos began in swanky Hulme.

JESSICA

The appeal of the car was as personal cocoon, no sharing seats with the rabble. With only a few people rich enough to afford a car, nobody worried much about the pollution.

LEE

And that was the problem. As cars became cheaper after mass production, everybody wanted one. But then in a city as packed as Manchester you need somewhere to put them all.

JESSICA

By the fifties the prevailing mood backed the car as the future and in 1949 Manchester’s trams closed. The 1960s saw hundreds of branch railway lines shut in a notorious cost-cutting drive.

LEE

Public transport had become the bus. But trying to cope with gridlocks of angry motorists and loads of buses on from the whole of Greater Manchester isn’t easy. And don’t forget all these petrol engines choking up the cities airways.

JESSICA

So the next decades became all about planning and managing this. How could the city council and the government keep this show on the road?

LEE

By experimenting. Let the council run everything, **[SFX:nu nuh*]** Let private companies run everything, **[SFX: nu nuh}** Nationalise, privatise, regulate, deregulate, make everybody use spacehoppers, sorry not that one...

*(*The Catchphrase wrong sound)*

JESSICA

The holy grail was primarily a public service but one that could bring in enough cash to keep wheels rolling and still have attractively patterned seat covers.

MUSIC CUE: Modern R and B/ something current

JESSICA

And that brings us to...

LEE

(Use delay so Now echoes off into the distance)

No-o-o-o-o-w!

JESSICA

By the 80’s, punch drunk after the decline in manufacturing, Manchester was on a downer. No wonder all the music from back then sounds so miserable.

LEE

But when the IRA bomb blew up the city centre, it was a wake-up for the city. Manchester gave itself a shake and decided to grab the future with both hands.

JESSICA

A master plan was put together. The big ide: Bring Back The Trams! The Metrolink opened in 1992 and finally connected the city centre and all Manchester’s stations setting the ball rolling for the modernisation of the city.

LEE

The canal system was overhauled. The old docks re-opened as Salford Quays with Commonwealth swimming in the Canal. Whole sections of the city were rebuilt and cleaned up, including Castlefield, where it all began and Piccadilly station.

JESSICA

The council cannily hung on to Manchester Airport after many cities had sold theirs, and today it makes us a world player, just like the canals first did 250 years ago. So here we are in...

Scene Six: The Future

Music Cue: Kraftwerk type thing

LEE (Reverb)

THE AGE OF THE FUTURE

JESSICA

Does that even make sense?

Music Cue: Start to fade up from here

LEE

No, but what does is trying to learn from the past so that planning the future won’t be so hard.

JESSICA

Manchester knows better than anywhere that public transport can make or break a city. For 250 years Mancunians have been inventing the public transport future for the whole world...

LEE

But transport in the form of the dirty old internal combustion engine looks less and less like a future we want...

JESSICA

...so we're going to need to keep coming up with new ideas and new plans and keep changing the world around us.

Leave a few seconds

LEE

As long as I get my Jetpack. Or a teleporter. Or a monorail. Or high speed travelators. Or a hovercar or a robot surfboard or one of those zoom tubes or bionic wings or rocket powered bikes or ... [etc to fade]

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL V/O

There's two ways to use this program. Either sit back as we take you on a guided tour, or explore under your own steam. You can switch between them with the button in the bottom right corner.

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Mitchell and Kenyon commentaries