

L Manze of High Street, Walthamstow

Emigration To London - Seeking A Better Future



Picture above is of Ravello, in the Province of Salerno, Campania, S Italy

In 1878, twenty eight year old *Guisepe Manze*, his twenty six year old wife *Raffaella* and their three sons: *Pantaleone*, aged five years, *Michele*, aged 3 years and two year old *Luigi* arrived in England.

They came from a beautiful hillside small town in the south of Italy named Ravello on the Amalfi coast and they walked thirty five miles north to Naples to board a ship. Like thousands of other Italians, they had emigrated because of the worsening economic conditions in Italy which had occurred after the unification of the Italian states into one country.

Overpopulation & Poverty

The unification of Italy broke down the feudal land system that had survived in the south since the Middle Ages, especially where land had been the property of aristocrats, religious bodies or the king. However, the breakdown of feudalism and the redistribution of land did not necessarily lead to small farmers in the south getting more land of their own or land from which they could work and profit. Many remained landless and plots grew smaller and smaller as the more unproductive land was subdivided among heirs.

Another major problem was the overpopulation of southern Italy following the unification process and the improvement if social and economic conditions. After 1861, southern Italian families started to have access to hospitals, improved hygienic conditions and a better food supply. This created a population boom and forced the new generations to emigrate en masse at the end of the 19th century

Little Italy



Initially, they lived in Clerkenwell which was where most Italian immigrants lived in London They lived in a warren of streets around Hatton Garden and the area was known as 'Little Italy' The Italian immigrants were marble and terrazzo workers, organ grinders, ice cream makers, confectioners, restaurateurs, and shopkeepers The Italian church in Clerkenwell Road was established in 1883 and became a central focus for Italians in London. It served as a 'labour exchange' after mass on Sundays. St. Peter's school was opened around the corner from the church in Back Hill and was a day time English school for Italian and Irish children. After school it was an Italian language school for children of Italian migrants.

In 1884, the Italian hospital was opened in Queen Square (WC1) to cater for the growing number of Italians in London and the Italian chamber of commerce opened in London in 1886 The Italian consul published a report in 1895 estimating there were 12,000 Italians in London with southern Italians traditionally making their home in Little Italy while those from farther north were establishing a newer base in Soho.

Above - The image is of St Peter's Italian Church, Clerkenwell Road.(Chiesa italiana di san Pietro)

Making Good

By 1891 the family had moved to Bermondsey and Guiseppe & Raffaella by then had produced a further six children (Three boys & three girls) The three older boys worked as Confectioners. They all lived and worked at 85 & 87, Bermondsey New Road and they employed two other Italians as a Shopman and Shopman assistant confectioner.

Ten years later, in 1901, the eldest son, Pantaleone, was married and had four young children. He now had a Fruiterer's business at 208, Bermondsey Street where he and his family lived. He also employed two men (One, Spanish & one, Italian) in the business.

Michele (Michael) had married Ada Rosetta Poole neé Cooke He had a young step-daughter and the family lived at 246, East Street, Southwark. He ran his own business selling ice cream and employed four young Italian men as Ice cream vendors and hawkers who were boarders at his home

His father, Guiseppe Manze together with his wife and family, including his twenty three year old son, Luigi, was also running an Ice cream business a few doors away at number 250, East Street. Guiseppe and Luigi were also Ice cream vendors and hawkers and employed two other young men in the business. When Luigi married in May 1901 both he and his father (Who had Anglicised his name to Joseph) were described as Ice Merchants.

Italian Ice Cream Sellers



Before the invention of electric refrigeration, ice cream was an expensive delicacy as ice was generally only available in winter. In London, this changed when around 1860, a Swiss-Italian man, Carla Gatti living in Clerkenwell, began to import large quantities of ice from Norway. This was stored in a cleverly constructed icehouse at Kings Cross,

This enabled many Italian residents of 'Little Italy' to set up in business as Ice cream makers and sellers and by the 1890' there were 900 ice-cream sellers in the area. The ice cream was made in their homes and the men went out from Clerkenwell to most parts of London selling ice cream from their hand carts .

Above an early ice cream 'Hokey Pokey' man with satisfied customers

The Hokey-Pokey Man

By the 1880s the 'Hokey-Pokey' Man was a common sight, The colloquial name came from his cry of "*Ecco un poco!*" meaning 'Here's a little' (taste) Children used to buy their 'penny licks' from the *Hokey Pokey* man and had their own little song that went "*Hokey Pokey, penny a lump, the more you eat the more you jump!*"

The fact that *Guiseppe & Luigi Manze* were Ice cream vendors and hawkers is an indication that they had a shop/home premises where they made their ice cream. The term 'vendors and hawkers ' tells us that it was sold in the streets from hand carts. The fact that they were 'Ice Merchants' indicates that they were buying quantities of ice from Carla and Gatto and suggests that they were not only using it themselves but were also selling the ice to other ice cream makers.

Michele (Michael) Manze

Michael had married the widowed daughter of Robert Cooke who was a Pie shop keeper and in 1902 Michael opened his own Pie Shop (Eels, Pie & Mash) at 87, Tower Bridge Road, Bermondsey. He went on to open his second shop at 250 Southwark Park Road, Bermondsey in 1908, and two further shops in Poplar, which were lost during World War Two. His Fifth and final shop at 105 Peckham High Street was opened in 1927.

Luigi Manze



In the 1911 census we find *Luigi Manze* and his wife *Florence* running a Refreshment House (Eels, Pie & Mash) at 74, Chapel Street, Islington. They have four small children and their shop is in busy Chapel Street Market. They have five 'live in' servants who were an Assistant cook, a Cook's assistant, a General domestic servant and a Nurse maid. , Assisting them in the business were four 'live-in' Provision Assistants.

This shop is still in business today and is an Islington trendy restaurant called 'The Seagrass @ Manze's' where you pick from a short menu with one 'sea' (fish) option and one 'grass' (meat, poultry, game) option for each course from the set £30 pp menu.

Above – Chapel Street market in Islington c1910

In 1929, Luigi Manze opened the Pie, mash and eels shop at 76, Walthamstow High Street. By 1930 there were a total of 14 pie, mash & eel shops in London bearing the Manze name. The three leading London Pie, Mash and Eels families of Kelly, Cooke and Manze were now all linked by marriage.

Luigi died in Beckenham Hospital in 1948. At probate there were effects of £46,138-0s-7d which is equivalent to about £1.5 million today.

Pantaleone Manze

By 1911 *Pantaleone Manze* was a widower and assisted by his two eldest children had changed from running a *Fruiterer* business and ran a *Fishmonger* business at 26-28 Bermondsey Street. His four children and four general servants all live there. It is tempting to wonder if he was supplying the live eels to his siblings Pie, Mash & Eels shops.

He died in 1943 in Woolwich and his effects at probate were: £16,033.11s.6d

Guiseppe & Raffaella Manze

In 1911, Guiseppe (Joseph) is a Fruiterer at 327, Long Lane, Bermondsey and Raffaella assists with the business..

Walthamstow



The picture left is from artist Eleanor Crow's East London series

The following is what some customers have written about the shop:

'Each booth is made of dark wood benches with high backs and shallow seats with a white table in the centre. The high backs give a sense of privacy when you are eating, the shallow seats indicate that perhaps this isn't a place to linger when you have finished eating. The walls are lined floor to ceiling with tiles, some are plain white and others are decorated, the brown tiles surrounding the mirrors looking almost like tortoise-shell. Sitting in one of the booths, surrounded by the beautiful original interior, listening to other customers chat about their day on the market, it feels like you have been transported to a different time. If the walls had ears I'm sure they would have heard the



same kind of conversations in the 1920's as they would hear today. Parents encouraging their kids to eat, people discussing which bargains are to be had on the market, plans being made and life being lived..... Manze's may only be a humble pie and mash shop but it is also a reminder of how Walthamstow used to be, serving food for the body and fuel for the imagination.' <http://walthamstowdiary.com/>

'Still the best, our daughter brings it to us in Norwich. Brings back memories of working there as a pie maker in the late 60s & 'Mr Manze giving me a large bowl of jellied eels for my wedding reception then moaning that I was getting married on Saturday not on Wednesday because that was half day closing lol' **Clive Newstead** Wednesday, March 06, 2013

Pie 'n' Mash on Walthamstow market on Wednesdays with my Nan is one of my happiest childhood memories. The tiles, the steam on the windows, the old ladies chatting about....well whatever old ladies chat about, (I never did discover).....wonderful! I still go to this day nearly 40 years later, in fact I'm going to Walthamstow later on so think I may well pop in for some. **cockneyreject**

I had pie and mash in the High Street when we visited England in 1989, **Barbara Warren (nee Coveney)**

'My mum had brought back pie and mash and liquor from the pie shop, Manzie's. This was in the days long before KFC and McDonalds and even today, I still rate pie and mash as a more fulfilling and wholesome meal.' **Cleve Edmonston**
<http://www.walthamstowhistory.com/ym2011.htm>

'We went to Manze's in Walthamstow High St. on Thursday 3rd Jan 2013. Partly to relive very old memories and to show visitors from up north what Pie and Mash is really like.! The pies were just as remembered and so was the mash, served with a wooden spoon thus creating a flat side at the edge of the plate. The liquor was just as remembered, great colour and texture. The staff were really helpful and did not rush us out while we people watched! Our Northern friends were amazed and want to return on their next visit South. Our only failure was that we did not order double of everything!' **Bob Roberts** Mon Jan 7



<http://www.timeout.com/london/restaurants/londons-best-pie-and-mash>

'If I ever return to London where I spent my youth, I would just have to revisit the Manze's Pie and Mash Shop in Walthamstow, where I enjoyed so many delicious meals, the memory of which linger still on my taste-buds.

For most of my life since I have compared many varieties of pies. In fact I would say I have become a Connoisseur of the Meat Pie, but in almost half-a-century I have yet to taste a sample anywhere near the quality and flavour of the meat, the taste and texture of the pastry of a Manze's Pie. But devouring that exemplary pie was only a part of this particular dining out experience. The whole ambience of eating at Manze's Pie and Mash Shop was awesome.'

<http://writingalifestory.blogspot.co.uk/2008/09/who-remembers-londons-manzes-pie-and.html>

'I've been going to this branch of Manze's for as long as I can remember. Mum used to take me as a baby even and that was 65 years ago. The food is great, and so is the ambience. Friendly, cheerful staff

also make this a great place to eat. It is also terrific value. Back in the day there used to be queues outside during the busy times, (I'm talking 1950s/1960s here.) it still gets busy at certain times, but that is part of the fun. Like another reviewer, it was a great treat to have the pie, mash and liquor on Christmas Eve during that last minute shopping. It really is a huge part of the famous Walthamstow High Street scene, and one of the last remaining original icons of this famous street. ' <http://www.yelp.co.uk/biz/l-manze-pie-and-mash-shop-london>

'This is the world famous Pie'n'mash shop much loved by ex-pat Londoners, (google it, you'll see) Proper cockney, it's hardly changed in my lifetime or my mums (she's 78) Still has the marble and mirrors, but thankfully not the stall outside where a man in a bloody apron butchered live eels!



mash.com/memretrieve.php?1

The pies are delicious, and the mysterious green liquor (to be mixed with vinegar) added to mashed potatoes make a feast fit for a (Pearly) king. They also sell jellied eels, an acquired taste, and sweet pies and custard, if you need a dessert. If you crave a bit of Cockney nostalgia, this is the best! <http://www.yelp.co.uk/biz/-manze-pie-and-mash-shop-london>

'My Mum (who, as a little girl in the thirties, was brought up on pie and mash at M. Manze's in Chapel Street Market) had moved to Walthamstow and tells me that during her pregnancy she had those "uncontrollable cravings" that pregnant women have. Her craving was for pie, mash and liquor. So, every day, bar Sundays, she would trot off to L. Manze's in Walthamstow High Street for her lunch time dose. That dish was coursing through my foetal veins long before I ever saw the light of day. Finally I was born in Bethnal Green.' By **Mal Vango** from Somerset <http://www.pie-and->



Jacqueline Cooper whose family have run the shop since 1986 . Some time ago, Waltham Forest Heritage, on the behalf of

'What a delight to find this gem of a place in the middle of Walthamstow market. Clean and bright decor greets you along with the aroma of fresh pies, jellied eels and mashed potatoe. The decor of the restaurant appears to be unchanged from the day that it must have opened - don't get me wrong it is clean and bright, but possesses some magnificent wall tiles, snug seating and of course produces excellent pie and mash (along with traditional liquor). A tasty treat whatever time of year and reasonably priced too.'

Present Day

The Manze family ran the shop until 1970 and the current owner is Waltham Forest Council, recognised the local architectural importance of the premises and erected a Blue plaque and included the property on the register of locally listed buildings.



unique part of the capital's heritage and is as relevant and popular now as it was when it first opened in the 1920s. It clearly deserves to be given Grade II-listed status."

On the 31st of October 2013, the premises achieved national recognition when it was praised by *English Heritage* inspectors for its 'exceptionally complete interior' and was awarded a Grade II listing. Announcing the award, Culture minister *Ed Vaizey* said: "Pie and mash shops are as intrinsically linked to London as black cabs and beefeaters. L Manze's in Walthamstow is a

Bill Bayliss

October 2013

Notes:

In writing this article, I have consulted many internet sources and compiled a genealogy of the *Manze* family and a part genealogy of the *Cooke* family. Some of the information on the internet seems to consist of unverifiable and in some cases, demonstrably incorrect information that, unfortunately, has been copied and incorporated into other articles. I have tried only to use material that is verifiable.

I have had some knowledge of 'Little Italy' and Italian migration to Clerkenwell (And the Lea Valley) for many years. As a boy I went to school at the Angel, Islington and I knew Chapel Street market well. After the war, my paternal Nan lent money to re-finance a number of market stall holders so that could buy stock. In the 1980-1990's, I worked as a Housing Manager for about ten years in Clerkenwell & Finsbury and I was in contact with several activist members of the Italian community.

Eels - A Londoner's Delicacy

The eel was a cheap, nutritious and readily available food source for the people of London. They were so common in the Thames that eel traps were set as far upriver as London itself, and eels became a staple for London's poor. Unfortunately, when London demand was at its highest in the 19th century, the Thames had become so polluted that it could no longer sustain significant eel populations so to satisfy London market they were imported from Holland.

The earliest known eel, pie and mash houses opened in London in the 18th century, and the oldest surviving shop, M Manze, has been open since 1902. At the end of the Second World War, there were around a hundred eel, pie and mash houses in London

Historically, in London, eels were originally stewed and used as a pie filling and sold in Pie Shops. Pie men hawked the pies in London' streets, As the eel supply diminished they were replaced in pies by minced meat.

Jellied eels are a traditional cockney delicacy that originated in the 18th century and are eaten cold. The dish consists of chopped eels boiled in a spiced stock that is allowed to cool and set, forming a jelly.

Larousse, A famous French chef, gives these instructions for preparing eels "To kill an eel, seize it with a cloth and bang its head violently against a hard surface. To skin it, put a noose around the base and hang it up. Slit the skin in a circle just beneath the noose. Pull away a small portion of the skin, turn it back, take hold of it with a cloth and pull it down hard." The problem is that eels are hardy creatures and whacking them on their heads may not kill them. However, a good sharp heavy knife will do the trick although they will still keep wriggling for a time afterwards. When I worked in a fish and chip shop preparing rock eel, I cut a slit in the skin at the head end and used pliers to peel off the skin.

Liquor, The Green Stuff

When I was a little boy in Islington, about once a month, when Mum had got her 'housekeeping' money, she treated herself to Pie Mash and liquor from the Pie & Mash shop in Hornsey Road. On one occasion. I accompanied her to the shop and tried it. I thought it was disgusting and never ate it again.

Traditionally, 'Pie & Mash shops were 'Eel, Pie & Mash' shops. The Pie and Mash and eels arrived at the table covered in a green liquor. Originally, this was made by melting a knob of butter and mixing with a little cornflour to form a paste, then adding the water in which the eels were cooked, When this had been assimilated, a generous amount of parsley and seasoning was added. When it was served, some people added vinegar. These days, because many shops no longer cook eels, chicken stock is substituted for the eel water.

The Vegetarian Option

In some circles Pie & Mash shops have become very 'trendy'. Some *Manze* Pie & Mash shops now have a vegetarian option substituting quorn for mince in the pies and a vegetable stock in the liquor.

Bill Bayliss

