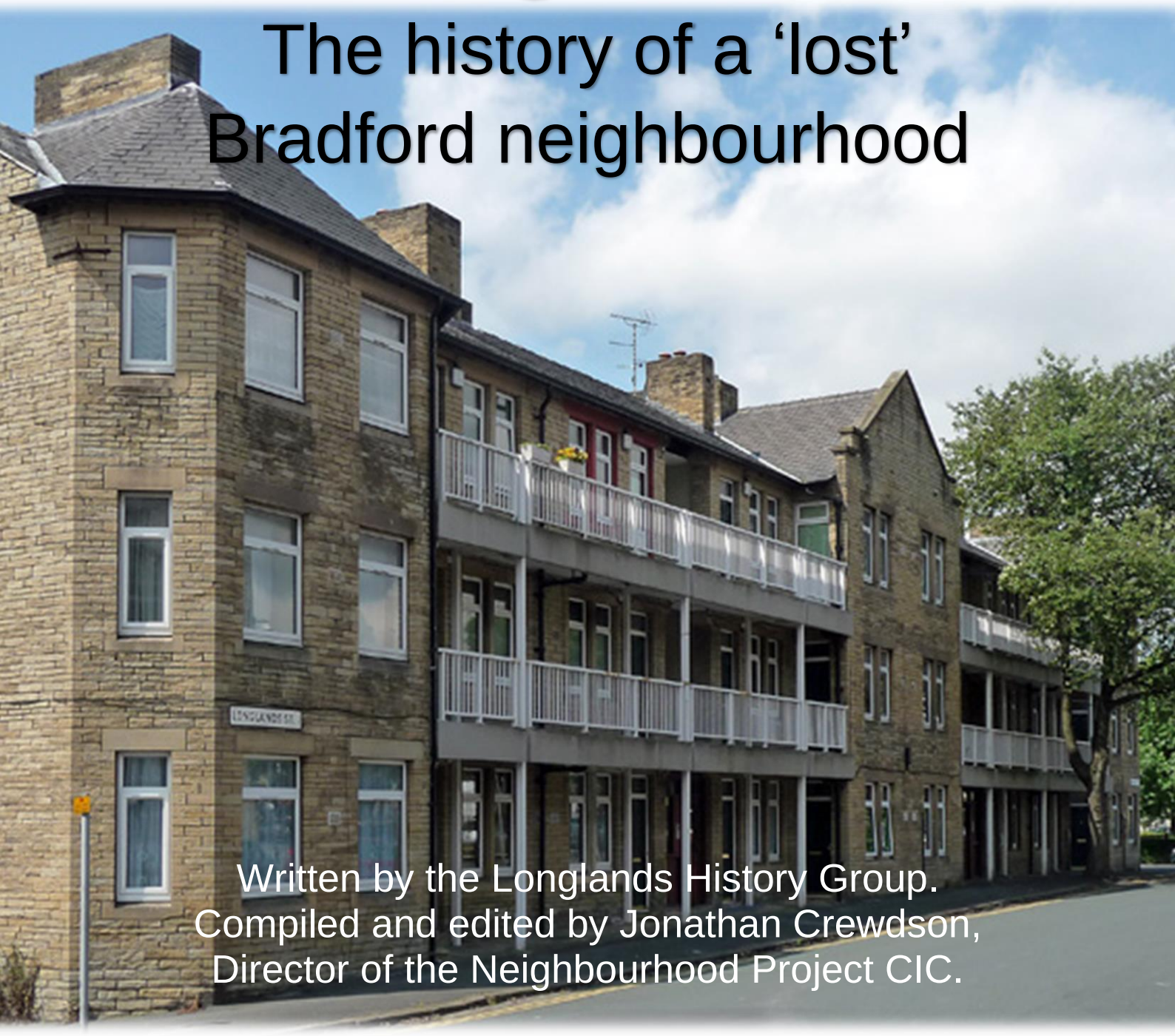
Longlands

The history of a ‘lost’ Bradford neighbourhood



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THE Neighbourhood PROJECT

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We hope this publication will prove educative and informative to those who read it and may assist others in continuing to research the history of this fascinating small part of Bradford: a neighbourhood which had a massive impact on social progress in the city through the provision of decent housing.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Longlands: Arguably One of Braford's Most Significant Neighbourhoods

As a teenager growing up in Bradford, I often felt drawn to the 'top of town', especially the stretch of Westgate between what used to be the old Morrisons store and the start of Lumb Lane. I was fascinated by the Victorian shops lining the opposite side of the road, aided by several good independent record shops I'd spend my free time browsing for bargains. In my later years, the New Beehive Inn a little further up became a regular haunt and my favourite Bradford pub with its beautiful ornate interior and iconic gas lanterns. In many respects, this small patch of the city felt like 'home', despite me growing up many miles to the south of it.

Of equal fascination were the tenement blocks tucked away behind the shops on Westgate. Whilst obviously built for social housing, and certainly at the time looking to have seen better days, their style was radically different to anything else I'd seen in Bradford. I knew there had to be an interesting story as to why they were there and this curiosity led me to spend many hours in the reference library, searching for anything mentioning this area, looking at old maps and trying to piece together what had led them to be built.

The story of Longlands, this unique site on the north-western edge of the City Centre, is one of the most important in the history of modern Bradford and arguably had a direct impact on its housing policy in the 20th Century. It certainly ranks alongside Margaret McMillan's efforts for children and education in terms of social progress, but most people wouldn't have any idea if you were to ask them where 'Longlands' is.

Back in the late 19th Century, it was one of several 'lost' neighbourhoods circling Bradford town centre including Broomfields, Wapping, New Leeds, White Abbey, and the George Street area. Like its counterparts, Longlands was made up of densely packed back-to-back terraced housing with cobbled streets, small courtyards, and little in the way of sanitation. Unlike most of our neighbourhoods today, each of these was served by far more amenities including butchers, greengrocers, bake houses, pubs, and blacksmiths, making them communities rather than just areas of housing. Many of the properties were not structurally sound and practically all were owned by private landlords. The population density in Longlands was huge with over 250 people per acre and typically 4 families per house, many sleeping on floors. Infant mortality rates were high as was disease and crime. It was often remarked how much safer it was to drink beer than the local water.

In response to concerns about these conditions, Frederick Jowett, the first Independent Labour Party councillor elected to Bradford Corporation, took it upon himself to press for the local authority to use its powers under the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890. This allowed a council to declare an area 'insanitary' and obtain compulsory purchase powers over the affected properties, demolishing them and replacing with purpose-built social housing. Jowett felt that Longlands was particularly bad and using his position as Chair of the Health Committee he was able to begin a public inquiry led by Bradford's Medical Officer, W. Arnold Evans.

Evans described Longlands as 'a festering sore' on page 1 of his final report and recommended the area be declared 'insanitary' under the Act for improvements to be made. Despite the clear-cut nature of this fact and a housing scheme being presented, internal opposition in Bradford Corporation, mostly from Tory landlords on the Housing Committee whose properties were to be demolished, held matters up for some years until finally by the turn of the 20th Century an agreement was reached. By 1909, the area had been rebuilt with five tenement blocks erected

(only three of which survive today) with a design influenced by the Garden City Movement. In 1914, the estate was further extended.

Of course, the residents of Longlands needed to be moved elsewhere for their neighbourhood to be cleared and rebuilt. To that end, the Faxfleet estate, in between Marshfields and Odsal Top in that south of Bradford, was erected. It is worth noting there was a lot of opposition from the residents themselves, predominantly Irish Catholic, of being moved so far away from their places of work as well as a feeling they were being singled out because of who they were. The Irish heritage of Longlands is reflected in the Harp of Erin pub that was built as part of the new estate, St Patrick's Catholic Church which remains today and the fact that, for many decades, the area was served by the city's Irish Club.

And so, with the restoration of Longlands, a model was set for further slum clearances in Bradford. Whilst this process was interrupted by the two world wars, new estates were created further out of the city to temporarily relocate the populations of inner-city areas needing demolition and resurrection, for instance Canterbury which was built to relocate the residents of Broomfields. One by one, these old neighbourhoods have either now gone or been radically changed and most of their names are no longer commonly used. The same can be said for Longlands which is often mistakenly called 'Chain Street' or 'Upper Goitside'.

A talk on the history of Longlands held on 25th February 2022 at the Millside Centre to launch the research project.

This pamphlet came about from a research project, kindly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to investigate life in the Longlands area following the Second World War. This was arguably the least well documented period of its history and thanks to interviews with former and current residents as well as wider family members, a relatively clear picture has emerged of what it was like to call this area home during much of that time: a place that enjoyed strong community spirit with the local school and church being pivotal.

Sadly, around the turn of the 21st Century it suffered decline with the future of Longlands as a residential district being questioned at one stage. Against the odds and unlike many other 'lost'

neighbourhoods in or on the edge of the city centre, for instance New Leeds which has sadly been demolished, it has managed to survive and enjoyed physical regeneration including refurbished blocks and new-build family housing. However, many of these changes appear to have been at the cost of its neighbourliness with the removal of its community room, the folding of its residents group and policy changes to much of its tenanted population by the social landlord now running the tenement blocks. It seems there is little community activism or shared identity left in the area.

In many respects, the newly regenerated Longlands could flag up the area to be once again a local pioneer, for whilst it served as a model for slum clearance and redevelopment in the early 20th Century, it now provides another template for the renewal of other derelict parts of central Bradford, albeit in the modern context of city centre living. However, this view should be held with caution so long as lessons can be learned from how it has been regenerated and how not to replicate the downside of this experience elsewhere. Physical regeneration should go together with community development if our neighbourhoods are to be sustainable and more than just places for people to live, for they then need the active support and ownership of their populations.

It is hoped that, as part of this renewal, the name 'Longlands' will also experience a revival. It should be preserved and indeed celebrated for its significance in the social progress of Bradford in the 20th Century and its regeneration in the 21st Century.

Jonathan Crewdson: Chair of the Longlands History Group, February 2023.

Chapter 2: The origins of ‘Longlands’

According to Mills (2011), the word ‘Longlands’ or ‘Long Lands’ as a place name derives from the old English word ‘lang’ and refers to a long strip of land. This suggests the area in question was agricultural land, ploughed as long strips. Its relative proximity to the Bradford Beck would add further weight to this theory, providing a source of water to irrigate crops. According to Barker (2016), the medieval goit that was built to channel water from and back to the beck (and from which the nearby Goitside area gets its name) suggests that corn mills were present and so again supports this area being farmland.

Whilst Bradford grew up as a settlement around what is today the Cathedral quarter and dates back to Anglo-Saxon times, Longlands appears as undeveloped land until around the middle of the 19th Century. Along with fourteen or so other neighbourhoods covering roughly what is now the city centre, Longlands sprang up during a period of rapid and intense industrialisation in Bradford, transforming it from a rural market town at the beginning of the 19th Century to a densely populated urban centre by the end of the same century.

Old maps of Ripleyville and Broomfields: two of central Bradford’s ‘lost’ neighbourhoods.

To cram as many people into an expanding Bradford, back-to-back terraced houses were the norm, usually with families sharing a single room, and James (1866) reflects how, to maximise this, ‘cellar dwellings’ would also be used to provide accommodation in places such as Broomfields at the opposite end of the centre.

Some of these neighbourhoods, for instance Bermondsey which Barker (2017) notes was near what is now the Midland Hotel, appear only briefly on maps, whilst it is debatable whether others such as Westgate were ever neighbourhoods or simply part of the larger town centre. Aside from a few exceptions such as the model urban village Ripleyville, this reflects how these settlements were never official districts, that they developed organically in some respects, and so their names and boundaries were a matter of local opinion.

Boundaries of modern Longlands © 2023 Google UK Limited.

Thus, the origin of Longlands as a settlement was to provide housing for the workers of local mills and factories. When it was finally earmarked for demolition and clearance, Evans (1902) notes how it covered land of almost five acres (around the size of two football pitches) and contained 254 dwelling houses, 10 lodging houses, pubs, shops and some 1,350 people. It was therefore more than just a collection of housing but also a functioning community with its own amenities and places that residents could meet and socialise.

In the modern setting of what is now Bradford, it is arguable the area that is being discussed falls as far west as Sunbridge Road, as far south as Grattan Road, as far east as Westgate and as far north as City Road. However, this is simply the author's opinion and others (including current residents) may hold very different views. Certainly, one of the strongest themes to emerge from our research is how the 'community' of post-war Longlands often overlapped into surrounding areas, aided by shared institutions such as St Patrick's Church and its primary school.

Chapter 3: A Brief History Until the late 19th Century

On maps at the beginning of the 19th Century covering Bradford, there are no buildings visible in the Longlands area. In contrast, maps at the end of the century shows a vast urban sprawl of houses and industrial buildings covering the whole of Longlands and beyond.

This was not simply an area of houses, mills and factories: like most functioning communities, Longlands also enjoyed amenities including a number of shops, at least three pubs (the Masons Arms, the Longlands Tavern and the Beehive Inn), two bakehouses and two blacksmiths. This was typical of the new neighbourhoods in Bradford with small local businesses being set up to serve the ever-increasing population.

The Masons Arms and the Beehive Inn served the old Longlands neighbourhood.

The population of Longlands appears to have been predominantly Irish Catholic since its beginnings, mostly unskilled workers who were employed within a short walking distance of their homes. Indeed, Dale (2014) notes that this side of Bradford had the highest concentration of Irish residents according to available information. The neighbourhood was densely packed with back-to-back terraced houses and further densely populated: there were over 250 people per acre by the end of the century with often two, three or four families sharing a house.

The housing stock, almost completely owned by private landlords, was of poor quality and often had structural problems, thanks to there being no local building regulations in Bradford at the time of their construction. There was a lack of facilities to safely dispose of human and household waste and no clean water supply meaning it was safer to drink the beer from local pubs than tap water. As with much of Bradford's population, residents suffered with appalling health conditions including pulmonary tuberculosis and a high infant mortality rate. Longlands was also notorious for its high crime rate, particularly violence and anti-social behaviour from alcoholism as well as a thriving prostitution trade.

Similar problems affected all of Bradford's central settlements by the end of the 19th Century, effectively making every one of the new neighbourhoods a slum area, but according to statistics from Bradford Corporation, Longlands was by far affected the worst of all for its health issues: Boughton (2017) notes how the death rate from tuberculosis was five times that of Bradford's average. This was something that would directly affect the future of the area.

Chapter 4: Frederick Jowett and the Longlands Improvement District

Frederick Jowett was the second member of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) to be elected to Bradford Corporation but the first to win a contested election. Born in Bradford in 1864, he was a passionate socialist campaigner and an ally of Margaret McMillan over issues such as free school meals.

Jowett's main concern was the housing conditions for working class people in Bradford and how bad the slum areas in central Bradford had become. Having been appointed as the Chairman of the Health Committee, he saw an opportunity for Bradford Corporation to use the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890 which could allow it to declare an area 'insanitary' and then acquire compulsory purchase powers to clear slum housing in favour of high-quality social housing stock.

Frederick Jowett

Aware that Longlands was the worst affected neighbourhood, he ordered a public enquiry into conditions in the area which was led by William Arnold Evans: Bradford's Medical Officer. In 1898 he officially recommended that Longlands be declared 'insanitary' and its housing cleared. The report was accepted by the Health Committee but there was friction with the Street Improvement and Housing Committee which was dominated by property interests including landlords of the Longlands area.

By 1899, after much disagreement with the Sanitary Committee and the Street Improvement and Housing Committee, a scheme for 93 through dwellings to house 465 people was put to the full Council and passed by just one vote. In November of the same year, local elections were held that gave the Conservative Party additional seats. They then forced a new vote on the scheme, this time succeeding in rescinding it.

In February 1900, the Health Committee resubmitted the same scheme but unsurprisingly the full Council again rejected it. In August 1901, however, a new scheme that involved tenement blocks and warehouses was presented to the full Council and this time was approved. In 1902, the Local Government Board provisionally accepted the scheme on behalf of the UK Government but with the condition that properties are built elsewhere to house the current population of Longlands during its redevelopment.

Municipal housing in the Faxfleet estate to provide accommodation to Longlands residents.

The result of this was the building of the Faxfleet Estate in 1904, in between Marshfields and Odsal top in south Bradford. This was arguably the first social housing built in the Bradford area and there was much opposition from local property owners in this district about the estate and the 'type of people' it would bring.

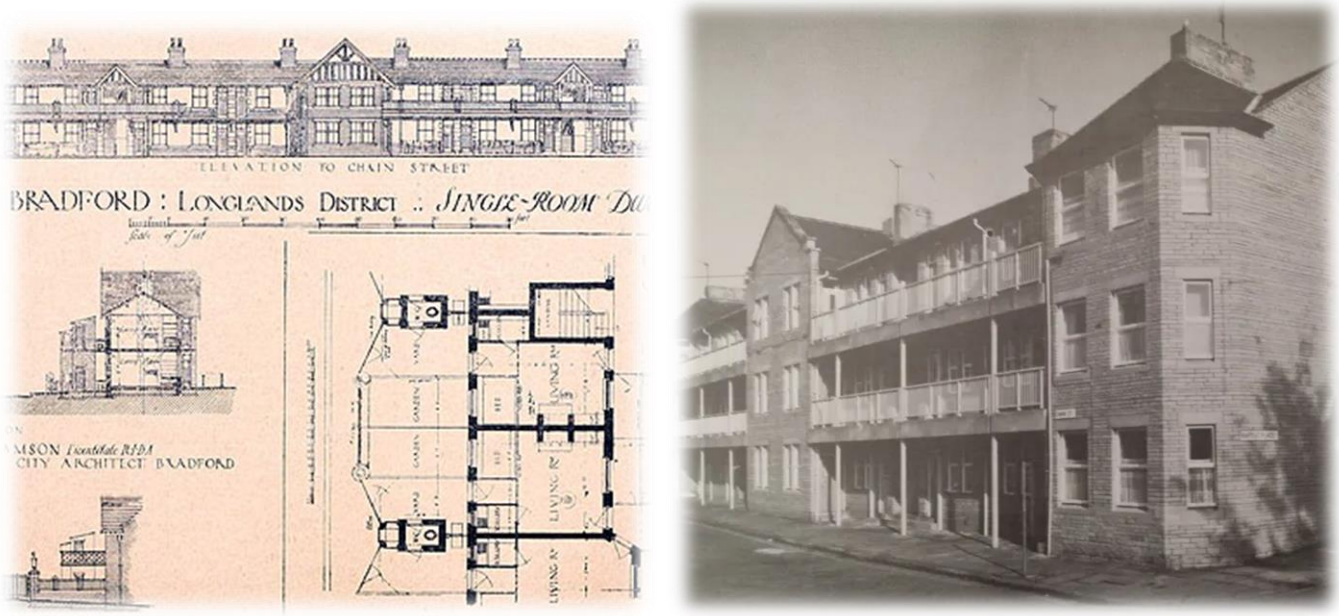
There was also much opposition from the population of Longlands itself and the local Catholic church over what they saw as being singled out and forced to move away from their established homes and places of work.

The new houses in Faxfleet were through dwellings, much larger than anything the residents had previously lived in, and included a living room, scullery, front and back bedrooms and an attic. Each had a back yard containing a WC, coal store and ash bin. Also, despite their fears about living further away from their places of work, there was a local municipal tram service which took people into the town centre.

Thus, many Longlands residents opted to stay in Flaxfleet and the estate was further extended before 1914.

Chapter 5: The New Longlands from the early 20th Century until 1945

The first residents returned to Longlands in 1909, though as previously noted many remained in Faxfleet. Originally five tenement blocks were built with a design inspired by the Garden City Movement. Municipal tenement blocks had already been pioneered in London, Manchester and Liverpool by this time.



A tenement block forming part of the new Longlands estate.

Each flat consisted of a living room, a scullery, one or two bedrooms, and a WC and coal store on a rear balcony. As with the Faxfleet development, the space enjoyed by residents was far larger than the previously cramped conditions in the old Longlands neighbourhood. The quality of the build also compared favourably with later social housing developments across Bradford.

Reflecting the Irish heritage of the area, the Harp of Erin pub was built as part of the estate along with a new Catholic elementary school and a new Catholic church. The new Longlands estate was further extended 1914. From our research, it does not appear there were any other notable changes to the area until after the Second World War.

The Harp of Erin pub constructed as part of the new Longlands estate.

Thus, the result of what happened in Longlands provided Bradford with its first social housing and a model for further slum clearances locally. In a variation, it was later repeated in Wapping, Broomfields, White Abbey, New Leeds and elsewhere. The Canterbury estate in Little Horton, for instance, was built to accommodate residents in Broomfields during its slum clearance.

In between the two world wars and afterwards, the neighbourhoods of central Bradford were demolished by Bradford Corporation and new social housing built further out from the centre to at least temporarily home residents whilst most of these neighbourhoods were then rebuilt as purpose-designed estates.

Chapter 6: Post-War Life in Longlands

The whole reason this publication came about was to research and document post-war living in Longlands: a time which appeared to be the least well recorded period from our initial scoping. Our interviews with former residents during two 'memory bank' events provided an invaluable insight into this period from a first-hand perspective. What we uncovered was, at least until around the 1970's, the district was very much a community with life revolving around the local Catholic school and church.

On Wednesday 29th June 2022, the Longlands History Group held two 'memory bank' events at the Millside Centre on Grattan Road, just on the edge of the Longlands area. These were opportunities for current and former residents of both the estate and adjacent places to talk about their experiences of living in the area.

The views of two ladies

Our first session attracted two women who had lived in the area, both now in their 80s, one called Eileen and the other wishing to remain anonymous. This second lady spoke first. She had lived in West Grove Street in a house that was made into a shop. People paid the end of the week for groceries from there. She also remarked there was a beetroot factory in the area.

People went to church every Sunday morning to St Patrick's. There were processions at the church on Sunday evenings. On Monday morning at school, you had to put your hand up to confirm you had been to church that weekend. If you hadn't, you had to stand out.

'Nuns taught the children at the school. 6 of us had the same coat which was made of rubber. There was a very cold draft one day at school, so I asked if I could take my coat to wear it inside, but the nun said no, so I left. People went looking for me but didn't find me. I sat in the toilets. All my family were looking for me. I thought it was funny.'

Her sister lived opposite the Harp of Erin in one of the flats. She had to move out of it temporarily for rewiring work to be done and a stud wall built, then moved back in.

They had previously lived at the top of the street on Baptist Place in a one-bedroom ground floor flat. This was next to a second-hand shop on Westgate. This lady also worked in the Harp of Erin but only for a short time.

Eileen told us that her grandmother had lived in Longlands, firstly on Grace Street and later Flat 33 on Baptist Place, at some time in the 1930's. This was a 3-bedroom flat for when they had a family, and then finally her grandmother moved to 3 Chain Street when the family left, which was a smaller flat. People were made to move when their families downsized as the larger flats were needed by other families. Eileen's grandmother died in the 1950's.

There was a big open place in the middle of the area. The son of Alice Galvin was a priest at St Patrick's, Fr Galvin, who was also ordained at St Patrick's. Photographs of her grandmother, grandfather and Uncle Willy were shared with us.

The ground floor flat on Chain Street had a small garden at the front and its own external door rather than a communal entrance. Inside was a partition with a wash area the other side of it, then a living area, then at the back an outside toilet. There was a pint pot in the oven out of which cups of tea were served. On the other side of the road, the flats didn't have gardens and you stepped straight out of the door into the street.

Across the road from the flats on Chain Street was a square, open yard with a plantation in the middle. There were 3 ways into the square and it was at the back of a music shop on Westgate. The flats backed onto Textile Hall on Westgate. All the shops were on Westgate and there was an open market. There was a pub on the corner called Penny Orrocks and another called the Washington on Paradise Street. There was the Metropol pub on the corner of Grattan Road going up to the flats at Longlands.

Eileen walking up steps from Sunbridge Road into the Longlands estate.

There was a very short street called One Street in the area with steps down to Thornton Road. Eileen had relatives that lived in a house there.

An interesting point both women made was that by this point, residents called the area 'Chain Street' rather than 'Longlands'. Eileen remarked that if you said 'Chain Street' then everybody knew where that was. Residents would hang washing between their back door and outside toilet on a line. The toilets had pull string. They were only one person flats.

'It was a lovely neighbourhood and felt like a village. Nearly everyone was Irish Catholics. It was a very Irish area. I can only remember two black girls at school, but they lived across in White Abbey.'

Eileen said her family came over in 1925 and lived on Vincent Street. They were all Irish Catholics. Eileen's grandmother would get a glass and a jug of Guinness from the Harp of Erin on some evenings, which she said was a highlight. A lot of the Irish population moved to Little Horton Lane to larger houses and rented them.

The Grattan Road area and down the side of Sunwin House was called 'Goitside' and was seen as a slum area. It had a reputation for drinking and fighting in the streets. It was essentially made up of back-to-back terraced houses, many of which were not in a good condition. In contrast, Longlands (or 'Chain Street' as people called it by then) was viewed in a more positive way.

St Patrick's School was on Paradise Street. The playground is still there behind the New Beehive Inn. The women said they didn't like the nuns as they were very strict and would hit the children with a cane. There was a pavilion behind the school where school dinners were served and sometimes shows were held. A hut was built on nearby land to serve as an extra classroom. St Patrick's School later burned down, about three years after Eileen left. When she heard about it, she said it had happened three years too late!

There was a Sister Cuthbert at the school and Eileen said she looked like Charles Laughton. *'She used to be in her black gown, coming along hitting her hand with her cane. We used to say "Eyup! Here comes Charles Laughton".'*

The Salvation Army had a property next to the Beehive and there was a post office around that area as well as a row of shop, the end one being a sweet shop. There was also a funeral director in the area.

In 1906, what was called 'the ragged school' was attached to St Patrick's Church which was where Eileen's Father had attended. She remarked *'This was for all the poor Irish that came over'.*

Whilst being mostly an elementary school, St Patrick's School would allow pupils to stay on from 11 to 15 years old, otherwise girls could go to St Joseph's College and boys to St Bede's. The second women remarked that she didn't want to go to St Joseph's as the focus was just on Catholicism. She instead left school and said that she enjoyed life's education after that!

There was a fire station in the area. There was another neighbourhood called 'Mill Bank' near Silsbridge Lane. It was again made up of back-to-back terraced houses, as was Vincent Street. *'We loved it, bad as it were,'* said Eileen. *'We saw it improving, much as we didn't like change'.*

'Everybody knew everybody. Times were very hard, however. Shoplifting happened a lot due to how hard it was.'

Eileen's grandfather was born in 1859 and lived in Longlands from childhood.

The women also observed how the wider central Bradford area was mostly back-to-back terraced houses at that time. There was St Bede's School around the area where the Hamm Strasse dual carriageway is now. Eileen said *'It was a good community. They should never have built Hamm Strasse. They ruined a good community'.*

The views of a family

Our second session attracted five members of the same family: Susan, Karen, Beverley, Mavis, and Nicole. Their ages stretched from late 50's into 80's. Susan began by saying *'It was a massive community. It was "all Irish".'*

A relative of theirs called Reenie had kept a diary which they had been able to refer to. Reenie had lived in the Longlands area all her life, worked at nearby Hayes Mill for a time, and died about 7 years ago age 72.

Mrs Carwood, who had been Susan's grandmother, used to live in a one roomed flat. '*There was a double bed with which we all slept in and there was a sink and some drawers. We kept our coats on because there was no heating.'*

They had family on West Grove Street, near the school. Wigan Street also had flats on it like Chain Street. This is from about 1947 onwards.

They mentioned 'Big Anna', also often referred to as 'Old Anna' or 'Polish Anna', who lived on Longlands. She was a local character quite well known in Bradford and worked on nearby John Street Market.

There were communal baths or 'slipper baths' on Acomb Road. Every Friday night, Reenie used to take her towel and a bar of soap and go to these baths.

Express Dairies was also nearby, as were the West Riding Cleaning Company with its swinging glass doors and Provident Financial, all on Thornton Road. At the top of Clayton Street was Ross's Ice Cream. It was remarked that Provident Finance hired mostly Catholics and the staff would regularly go to the Harp of Erin after work.

Off Thornton Road on Preston Street, at the site that is now Grattans, used to be a coal yard. They used to go into this as children, walk on the timber there and steal some of the coal. They used to take a pram to carry it in. Children also used to play on Infirmary Fields in nearby White Abbey.

1947 was remembered for its heavy snow and serious flooding after that. By 1957 or 1958, housing was being pulled down on nearby City Road and people were being moved to maisonettes on Green Lane, off Lumb Lane in White Abbey. Susan was 25 at the time. She had lived on Dyson Street.

Reenie lived with Susan's grandma on Dyson Street, then Wigan Street, then Chain Street. They moved to Longlands Street when they refurbished Chain Street.

Their family ran the Gladstone pub on City Road, then the Britannia which was on Clayton Street, now demolished.

Carrie said she was 5 in 1962 and had been at the nursery. That was part of St Patrick's School and was where the car park is now in Longlands. One interviewee's dad took her to nursery instead of school as she had her eye on the slides and swings. There was a maypole on the same site as the nursery.

When St Patrick's School burned down it was said that the basement had caught fire. The pupils used to roller skate in the basement and had Irish dancing. They also served the school dinners there which were delivered to St Patrick's School from nearby Green Lane School. St Patrick's School was divided into a boy's school and a girl's school.

In the 1950's, some of the family members had the duty of visiting two elderly sisters in a flat on the end of Longlands near Grattan Road. They were called Mary and Nelly. *'Going into their front door, which was on an angle, and into the flat was like entering a museum. They had a big black range for cooking and heating. There was a big Victorian sideboard against the wall. The main living room was quite big. There were 2 rooms with the bedroom at the end. This is going back 60 years. It was scary! it was always dark. One of them was bedridden in a big double bed that they obviously both slept in. The one that was bedridden. We just used to go through and say hello. We were only children.'*

There was a post office and sweet shop at the bottom of St Michael's Road, on the corner with City Road. One of the two sisters mentioned above ran the shop and was sadly killed: she was hit on the head during a robbery in the shop and the culprit only managed to get away with pence.

The murderer fled to London but was caught years later. They recalled the robbery happening around 1962 and family members had to give evidence and fingerprints to the police.

The family members also used to visit their Auntie Lisha and say a prayer because she was dying. Somebody remembered kneeling by the bed. *'We used to be quick and then "whoosh" we were out!'*

Soldiers used to march German prisoners of war to the dairy at the bottom of Sunbridge Road. '*We called them all "serfs" until Mum found out.'* Some Italian people and some German refugees lived in the area near the dairy, near the bottom of Grattan Road. Polish and Ukrainian people came to live there during and after the Second World War. *'Half of our class was Polish or Ukrainian. There were Polish refugees and some RAF pilots who were Polish. One person's husband never had to buy a drink as he was ex-RAF, so it was always on the house. There used to be Polish and Ukrainian days at school where people from these places dressed in national costume and did dances.'*

'There are a lot of different nationalities in the area by that time but back then it was all families, and we all knew each other. Everybody knew everybody. It was still a proper Irish community. We all worked in Hayes Mill. St Patrick's Church knitted everyone together. They had a mothers' union. The priest used to come round to people's homes once a week for contributions. He was called Fr Sheridan or Fr Sheeran. All the neighbours used to come round to see him. He was right handsome!'

Talking again about St Patrick's School, it was mentioned that children were taught Irish dances by the nuns and used to train the children all year. The pupils would dance at the Mecca on St Patrick's Day evening. The priests were supposed to watch the dances but would get too drunk to do so! One year one of the interviewee's fathers complained because there was no room downstairs for them and they had to stay upstairs, so they could not watch the dances. The year after, they were allowed chairs at the sides so they could watch.

The nuns at St Patrick's School lived in the top house on Sedgefield Terrace. There was a nun called Sister Margaret May or Maggie May. *'One year, there was a fire, and we all came rushing out. Maggie May caught us all running at the bottom of the stairs and told us all to go back up and come down again in silence and in single file! The nuns said the girls were not allowed to wear polished leather shoes because the boys could see their knickers reflected in them. The nuns were horrible. They were good at psychological torture'*.

'We were given a brown envelope we had to give to our parents. Of course, on the way home we'd open the envelopes because we were curious. All it said was that, if we were at a dance and a boy asked us to go outside, not to go. We never knew why.'

'In terms of careers, our options were: to become a nun; to get married and have kids; to become a teacher; or perhaps become a nun and teach. I used to say to God "I'm not going to be a nun God. You can sod off!" But when the nuns asked us what we were going to do, I said "a nun".

There was a snuff shop on Westgate. Lister's Fish and Chip Shop was also on Westgate, said to be the best in Bradford. *'It was very dirty though and food was fried in dirty fat.'*

City Road was back-to-back terraced houses. At White Abbey, there were some council flats. Gracechurch Street, where the Pakistani Community Centre is today, used to be red brick tenement flats. Unfortunately, the Yorkshire Ripper had victims in this area. Much of what is called 'Girlington' now used to be referred to as 'Brown Royd'.

There was a street party on Lower Clayton Street after the war. The movie 'Room at the Top' was filmed around this area. Later, 'Band of Gold' was filmed around this area and used the Provident Finance building as the police HQ.

The Bobbin Mill was on Lower Dyson Street and a lot of people who lived in that area also worked there. People tended to work within the immediate vicinity of their places of work and families tended to stay close to one another.

By the early 1990's, the area had become a red-light area. It was mentioned there used to be prostitutes on Chain Street and outside of the Harp of Erin pub especially. '*They were out on the balconies and Reeny and a friend called May used to listen to it all. That was why the council gated the entrances of the estate'.* This was referring to West Grove Street and Rebecca Street. Residents on nearby Lumb Lane managed to persuade the prostitutes to leave that area and they moved onto Thornton Road and Chain Street. Susan remembers an Asian gentleman chasing them off by waving a walking stick at them. She also remembered her aunt going downstairs in the morning and they'd all be there.

Other Submissions

We had contact with some other parties who were unable to attend the memory banks but still wanted to submit material for us to use. One provided us with his understanding of the area from the 1960's onwards and how it began to gain a negative reputation for poverty and violence. The phrase *'like White Abbey'* was often used to describe drunken scenes, in reference to the White Abbey district's poor reputation in this respect. However, it was unclear whether this was specifically Longlands or the wider area as places such as Goitside were certainly viewed so negatively. The contribution of the family at the second memory bank certainly suggests that.

Another party discussed living in the area during the 1980's and how by then it seemed to have lost its distinct 'Irishness'. The Harp of Erin and Irish Club were both thriving venues but the population of Longlands was essentially British in its outlook and overwhelmingly white British in ethnicity. As with previous contributions, it was made clear the estate was usually referred to as 'Chain Street' by that point.

Below is a submission from Daniel:

‘My Grandma, Alice Galvin (nee McLaren) lived there. I used to go and see her every day as a schoolboy. Her address was most definitely on Chain Street. I have a feeling that Longlands Place was nearby.

‘Grandma's flat was one ground floor room, her old double bed against the back wall, but with an L-shaped curtain round it, like in hospitals. There was a small scullery in the corner, with a shallow sink, a cold tap and a window. A back door, providing the vital (as was then thought) through ventilation, led down a few steps to the outside spotless toilet, a new-fangled water closet to replace the usual earth closet. The only toilet paper was 6-inch squares of the Telegraph & Argus fixed on a nail on the back of the door.

‘A black fireplace range, vigorously polished with ZEBO, provided both heating and cooking, with a coal fire at knee height in the middle, a coal oven on the left and a deep hot water store on the right where the blackened kettle stood ever ready to go on the fire. There was constant hot water as long as the fire was lit. Grandma made oven-bottom cakes in the oven (flat cakes), delicious eaten hot with "best butter" but if they unaccountably rose even without yeast, she called them “Jerdan cakes”. Since the upper floors had a walkway, it jutted out over Grandma's window, so it was always dark. She always thought her windows were dirty and I had to clean them nearly every time I went.

‘She had a wireless (radio) driven by an accumulator in a glass bottle, there being no mains sockets, and when the accumulator ran down, I had to go to the Co-op and exchange it for a fully charged one.

‘Before Chain Street, Grandma lived at Baptist Place, a top floor flat, recently demolished. She had 3 bedrooms a living room, kitchen and a bath in the kitchen with a board on the top. She brought up her 4 sons there, having previously lived at White Abbey and Gracechurch. First, she married an O'Hara, who died young. They had a boy (my father) and a girl, who also died young. She then married a grand old Irishman with a droopy white moustache, a lovely soft-spoken man, who had been in the Royal Irish Fusiliers in World War One, had suffered and later died, and she then had a long, fruitless correspondence with the War Office to get compensation.

‘She had 3 more sons to Daniel Galvin and all except the youngest (who became a priest in Africa) served in the Western Desert with General Montgomery.

‘Grandma's social life revolved around St Patrick's church, the Irish Democratic League club in Drewton Street and the Textile Club, her nearest, where she liked to sit on the bench, behatted with best coat on (concealing her Sunday Pinnie) and watch the men playing billiards.

‘She drank only Jubilee or Mackeson's - both milk stouts. Guinness at that time came only in bottles with a cork and would have been too dear or too strong for her. From an early age, however, I was sent along to “Tharp” (The Harp of Erin) only a few yards away, for a jug

of draught ale, discreetly covered with a lace cloth. Delia Murphy, a notable landlady there, had a running battle with Tetley's brewery, because they wouldn't bring the ale unless she paid, and she wouldn't pay unless they brought the ale: a typically Irish dilemma.

'Sunday lunchtime was a big night out for the men (12 noon till 2PM), who used to pile straight out of 11 o'clock mass at St Patrick's into the New Beehive. Beer fumes reeked out of all pub doorways in those days. It took me ages to get used to it. Small children would hover outside the Beehive, accosting clients "Is my dad in there? Will you tell him his dinner's ready?" Although Sunday dinner was promptly on the table at one o'clock sharp, the pub didn't shut till two: a perennially unsolved Irish domestic problem.'

Later Life in Longlands

We initially struggled to identify anyone who lived in the area in the 1960's and '70s but eventually managed to secure further individual testimonies. The following is a contribution from David:

'I moved to the area in 1963. I was born in London (where I was in care) and was moved to Bradford to be reunited with my natural mother (whom I didn't know), she had moved to Bradford a couple of years earlier. We lived in the (now demolished) flats at the top of Wigan Street, on the left, facing Westgate. We were on the top (second) floor. All very strange to me, another than my mother, everybody "spoke funny"! My first meal in Bradford was cake and chips, and I was relieved when I didn't get a slice of cake and some chips presented to me on a plate.

'I moved away from the area in 1974/5 under very difficult personal circumstances.

'The area generally was known as "Westgate", although it was locally referred to as "the Square", "Roundhill", and, further along, "Rebecca Street" and "Westgrove Street". Beyond City Road was the dreaded White Abbey.

'The immediate area was serviced by a good number of small shop's including tobacconists, tailor, post office, dolls hospital, three or more grocery style, plus a couple of chippies! The Metropole Hotel, the Harp of Erin, the Washington Hotel, the Irish Democratic League (IDL) Club, the Beehive, the Lancasters, the Rose and Crown, and the Gladstone made up the numbers for pubs, topped off with Europa Nightclub (Westgate) at the weekends. Other types of more sober pastimes could be found at St Patricks Church, the Salvation Army Citadal, and the small methodist mission on Rebecca Street - the last two being regular Sunday morning street entertainment as they held outdoor services (literally in the street).

'The original tenements at the top of Wigan Street (on the right facing Westgate) were demolished around 1970 - reputed to be some of "the oldest council flats in the north" at their time of demolition.

'All of the blocks of flats (those with a first and second floor) in St Thomas's Road, Wigan Street, and Longlands Street, and Chain Street were propped with wooden beam structures around 1970/1 to stop the landings from falling down and remained that way for many years. Over the years the cobbled streets were re-surfaced.

'The original Hotpoint service centre at the junction of Wigan Street & Longcroft and the nearby cottages were also demolished around 1971.

'St Patricks Nursery (Wigan Street) continued into the very early seventies before closure.

‘Great community spirit, although it could sometimes depend on which flats you lived in for the local social pecking order.’

More Recent Life in Longlands

Following the two memory banks, the group found it difficult to identify anybody who was prepared to give a more recent account of life in Longlands. Eventually, three interviews were held with residents and former residents separately through a mix of face-to-face discussion and questions replied to by email: one was with a current and long-standing resident of around 30 years, another with a former resident who moved out of the estate about 13 years ago, and finally a relatively new resident living in one of the recently constructed houses. Whilst the memory banks had provided a good picture of life in the decades following the end of the war and until the 1970’s, we hoped these interviews would yield some more recent viewpoints. All asked if their comments could be anonymised. This first section below is from the long-standing resident who lives in one of the tenement blocks:

‘I moved there either 1992 or 93. Still here, but not same property. When I first moved in, the flat was a mess, needed a thorough clean and some stuff fixing. Old fashioned fittings, like the cupboards, but they were proper wood, dove tailed, made to last. There was an immersion heater in the bedroom, which doubled up as an airing cupboard, and there was a bath, no shower. Gas fire in the living room, but we did have central heating. It was a small flat but had good build in cupboard space.

‘The front door came straight into the living room, which I was not fond of, but a door curtain made it homely and snug. there were three steps outside the front door, and a row of rose bushes outside the front. Sometimes they grew enough to see them out of the living room window. The bushes and steps kept pedestrians slightly back from the door/window, I think much more than the grassy area and central path. There were also a few trees out the front. Cherry blossom, which created a splash of colour on the trees, and the petals fell like confetti when the wind blew them off, to form a petal pathway.

‘Out the back, through the kitchen window, which I gazed out of whilst washing up in a round sink, I could see the square, and the parking area, but mostly "the island". It was a raised area, with trees and bushes, a green oasis in the inner city, during the summer. At the time of moving in, the grass was neatly trimmed, the roses pruned regularly, there was no litter or fly tipping. Generally, the area was well kept and surprisingly peaceful for being city centre. I was told it was an area that was hard to get housed in, that it was well sort after and had a reputation of people stating on the top floor, then moving down as they got less able to use the stairs. Most people around me had lived there a long time.

This resident thus got off to a very positive start with arriving in Longlands, and it is pleasing to know it remained an area with a positive reputation. It appears, however, this has shifted since then:

‘When I first moved there, the neighbours were fine, we all got on, mostly. I did not have any disagreement with anyone. There was a strong sense of community, everyone helped each other and knew each other. Things changed. Mostly when it got privatised. When it became, what is now, “Incommunities”. The shift to the social landlord saw rent rises and services disappear.

‘There was also a change in ethos. The area, which before had been deemed for older people, was now to be used to rehouse drug addicts and prostitutes. It was an appalling mix. Our quiet neighbourhood, overnight, changed into a place of fear. Many residents felt they had to leave. I

was too scared to use my front door, as needles were being thrown out of an upstairs window, so deemed it too risky to use it. Thankfully, I had a back door. Noise levels and violence, amongst the new residents and their associates became much more common. Our pleas to deal with it, went unheard. We were told we should support them.

Refurbished tenement flats on the Longlands estate.

'During this period, the "Lanes" were cleared of sex workers, and the Housing Department allowed the Police to move onto our street to work. We complained and Housing told us that we had to consider the safety of the women: that they were safer working on a residential street than on a street with just businesses. One of my neighbours said, if she heard one of them cry for help, she would not call the police.

'People got very down. There were cars at all hours making noise, condoms and needles everywhere, including used ones being put on door handles. Men would assume any woman, regardless of age or dress, was a prostitute in the area. It was hell, 24/7. The prostitutes were always asking the men for business, and the women asked for money. Leaving your "home" was running the gauntlet. Eventually, after many complaints, they finally moved the women down to Thornton Road, where it is commercial. However, the businesses complained about having to pass them on the way in or out, so the moved them back to us, for us to endure 24/7. At one point, I think it was the Abundant Life Church, parked a van on Chain Street late at night with the engine running, offering the women sandwiches and condoms. They parked outside someone's bedroom window, keeping her up at night, before having to get up in the morning for work and see the debris that had been left by their "good work".

'We used to have a great sense of community, helping each other. I recall one guy; he lived opposite me. He was sick with work-related asbestos. He used to stand on the "balcony" (walkway) and watch the world go by. My next-door neighbour used to go over and help him. When he got too sick, he moved next door to me, as it was ground floor. Sometimes he would sit on the steps at the front door. Our doors were one brick apart, we shared the three steps in the front. I would hear him go out to sit, and sometimes I would go out and sit with him. He was very sick by now. Later, I would pop in to see him as he was sleeping on the settee in the living room with his oxygen, surrounded by medication. My neighbour used to clean and shop for him. When he went into hospital, I went in and cleaned the place for his return. My other neighbour was visiting him'.

This second resident, somebody who had lived for a shorter period in the area and has since moved away, echoed much of above with what they had to say. They also lived in one of the tenement blocks:

'I first moved to the area in 2000, I was homeless and a care leaving teen. So, I moved because I needed somewhere and living close to the city appealed to me at the time. And I moved from the area in 2005 as the council forced me to move as part of the redevelopment even though I had asked for ages to move house.

'Later I discovered it was not as good an area as I expected. For a start the council seemed to think that my front door was a BD1 postcode, and the rear door of the ground floor flay was BD8, and they sent me council tax bills for it, and I had to go to court as they refused to accept it was a single property. There were14 burglaries whilst I was there. There were the street workers shouting at night. Violent offenders that were put into the flats to be monitored used to pour petrol through letterboxes. All this made for a lack of sleep.

'I was often told how good it used to be from neighbours but never saw any of that. Only the bad as that's what the council allowed it to become as they wanted to demolish it all so that was clearly deliberate acts from them.

'I only even felt community spirit after I moved and met others who had also moved, is appeared there was more camaraderie at surviving the area than there was being a residential member within it. It appears there is a community spirit now after the redevelopment and families moving in as opposed to the single person households living in rundown bedsits that had no heating or power half the time.

'I do remember when work was done on the car park that human remains were found, and it transpired that the old infirmary used to scatter the unturned remains in the area prior to its demolition.'

The third current resident lives in one of the new-build homes on Baptist Place with their partner and young child:

'We've been living in this place for a few years now. We moved from another part of the city which doesn't have a good reputation because of crime and drugs. We rent this house from a private landlord and whilst it is basic, it provides us with everything we need for now. It's quite handy for me being in the city centre as I can walk to work and not have to deal with queues of traffic or Bradford's unreliable bus services. The downside is you get more noise as we're not that far from shops and a busy road, but you sort of get used to it after a while.

'My impression of the immediate area is that people keep themselves to themselves. We know a few of our neighbours through passing them in the street but we've not got to know anybody that well. I've been told the pub (Harp of Erin) used to be where people met up, but it doesn't look like that happens these days. A lot of the regulars don't live in this area.

'The people who live in the blocks: generally, we get the impression that a lot of them have issues and live alone. The blocks don't look to be well maintained and seem scabby, but people have told us they were done up not that long ago. Most of the people who live in the new houses are couples or small families, and we don't really mix with the people from the blocks.

New modern homes on the Longlands estate.

'There isn't really anything going on community-wise. I didn't even realise this area had a name until you told me about it. We just see ourselves as living in a bit of the city centre.

I can't see us living here forever. We may have another child and then this place will be too small. We'd also prefer somewhere that's quieter, a proper community that feels safer, and where we can put down roots. I just can't see that being possible around here.'

Whilst the regeneration means that more people now live in Longlands, and indeed it appears to be more ethnically diverse with people of south Asian origin now living in some of the housing, it is a divided place with residents in the new housing around Baptist Place not generally mixing with those living in the remaining tenement blocks. It also seems that community identity and spirit have disappeared with people living more isolated lives and an increase in crime and social problems. In many respects, Longlands as it is now seems to have ceased to be a neighbourhood and is simply just another part of the city centre.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The memory banks, interviews and other submissions provided invaluable primary research in putting together this pamphlet and a picture of life in post-war Longlands. This was far more insightful than other exercises in scoping archives for newspaper articles and other papers that covered the area as it gave us first-hand testimonies enriched with a more personal and emotional standpoint.

What is clear is that, whilst Longlands continued to both exist and thrive as a community after the Second World War, and its identity as an Irish community continued to be strong with St Patrick's Church and School both key hubs for residents, it was no longer purely of Irish identity. New residents from mostly eastern European countries such as Poland and Ukraine began to live there but it appears they were welcomed and integrated into the community.

By the 1980's, this had changed again with the distinct 'Irishness' of the estate beginning to be watered down save for the ongoing presences of the Harp of Erin and the Irish Club. Residents from other backgrounds including British outnumbered the Irish locals and the nature of the place also began to change. Facilities disappeared in a piecemeal fashion from the post office and shops further along past the Beehive through to the Washington pub becoming Jesters and finally closing.

By the early 2000's, the area became the city's red-light district, apparently tolerated by the local authority and police, and this simply accelerated the decline. There were few services immediately serving Longlands with its community rooms being closed by the new social landlord in the mid 2000's and the residents group folding around the same time as people moved elsewhere. Now, thanks to changes in the tenanting policies of the social landlord, individuals with various social issues are being purposely housed in the tenement blocks. From the feedback of interviewees, it is fair to say that community identity and activity has massively reduced with this decline and many people no longer enjoy living on the estate.

Of further significance is how the name 'Longlands' appears to have largely fallen out of use by the post-war period with people mostly calling the area 'Chain Street'. It is not clear why this occurred, but it is fair to assume that the name of the original neighbourhood could have started to be dropped with the slum clearance and rebuild, for the new estate was in reality an entirely new venture.

The impact of the slum clearances themselves also must be considered: the memory banks made it clear the community network of Longlands reached into surrounding places including White Abbey, Brown Royd and Goitside as people shared the church and school. With the continuation of the local authority's programme of slum clearances after the Second World War resulting in the disappearance of terraced housing and amenities from these places, and new roads being built such as Hamm Strasse and the widening of Westgate, the nature of the area that Longlands sits in was radically changed. Indeed, Matthews (2022) comments how development in Bradford during this period was driven by the car and the convenience of shoppers to the city centre not having to walk more than 150 yards. Preservation of established communities became very much a secondary consideration, if indeed it was considered at all.

And whilst it appears that the new residents that have settled in the area with the more recent regeneration of the estate have again shaken up the nature of its population, for example introducing more people of south Asian origin, it is observed how today the estate is far more integrated into the wider city centre with boundaries between a residential area and central business district blurring. Thus, it is not surprising how little community spirit there appears to be.

As with many modern developments, new residents appear to largely keep themselves to themselves and not feel part of a wider social network in their immediate vicinity.

But with the continued promotion of city centre living by the local authority as part of its wider regeneration policies, Longlands again represents a viable alternative to simply converting the space above shops and in redundant warehouses into new apartments: new houses, some enjoying modest gardens, provide a welcome solution for families to begin moving into the centre. It is also clear that at least some residents in the new developments are more aware of their neighbours than others who live in flats. The basics are now there for the community to develop its geographical identity once more though perhaps something further needs to be done in order to make this happen, for instance a new community group be set up and a meeting place that everyone feels comfortable in attending be opened. Potentially, Longlands again could provide an answer to further developments elsewhere in the city centre.

Whatever the future holds, it is clear the Longlands estate will continue to be a residential district of some form and thus the legacy of Frederick Jowett and his supporters appears to be secure.

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