

## **Appendix 1**

### **Report of the Monuments Review Steering Group to Bradford Council Executive, November 2020**

#### **1. Introduction from Charles Dacres, Chair**

*I was honoured to be invited by Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe to lead this independent review of the statues and monuments across Bradford District, in response to the focus that the Black Lives Matter movement has brought to statues across the country, and who and what they represent.*

*This is important work; statues and monuments are highly visible local landmarks that both local residents and visitors recognise as key symbols of our District's heritage and values. We often take them for granted as part of our everyday local landscapes, but this review has allowed us the opportunity to reflect on what and who our local monuments represent, to challenge and question whether they are appropriate in the context of our proud and diverse District, and to start to consider how we would want to represent our District's heritage and values for the future.*

*On behalf of the Steering Group I am very pleased to present below the findings of Phase 1 of this review, which set out to audit as comprehensively as possible our existing statues and monuments, and to consider their links to slavery, colonialism and Black Lives Matter. We are indebted to Penny Green, Heritage Learning Officer, for her support to the group in carrying out the background research.*

*Charles Dacres*

#### **2. Executive Summary and key findings**

From the outset, the Steering Group have been unanimous in their view that **we should not seek to erase any aspect of our history or to tear down existing monuments**, but instead **focus on telling a more complete story about the people our monuments represent**, present all the facts honestly, and seek to educate people about them (especially younger people).

Our **research has not uncovered any direct local links to slavery or slave ownership** in our most famous historical figures. **However, the wealth produced through slavery funded key aspects of technology in the Industrial Revolution and so forms the backdrop to our local story and should be recognised.**

Bradford is not a port city so, unlike cities like Bristol, Liverpool and London, does not have the same links to figures notoriously associated with the slave trade. Nevertheless we have recognised that, in common with the rest of the country, **much of the wealth of individual families, businesses, institutions and the monarchy during Britain's colonial period is reflected in Bradford's history and in the buildings and monuments to 'famous' people across the District.**

A question mark was raised over Sir Robert Peel (a public petition was initiated to remove this statue, but then abandoned) however it was his father who was linked to slavery; and in common with places up and down the country, we have statues and monuments to well-known national figures linked to colonialism such as Queen Victoria and Christopher Columbus.

Instead, a different picture has emerged of Bradford as a stronghold of non-conformist philanthropists, many of whom were abolitionists, and as a place that has produced examples of pioneering work in terms of diversity that we can be proud of. Bradford is one of the most diverse cities in the country; it has a history of welcoming migrants and refugees, has a most diverse Literature Festival, and the University of Bradford has been named the UK's University of the Year for Social Inclusion in 2020.

This is a story we want to tell more fully through educational tools and materials, fresh interpretation of our monuments, and through our museums. We want to do this in a balanced way that avoids depicting people as either 'heroes' or 'villains' but as products of their time and circumstances, whilst not excusing atrocities linked to slavery and colonialism. We do not want to airbrush history but rather to be honest and informative about it.

This will form part of the second phase of the Review; we will work with schools and communities to create educational tools and materials that tell the full story of our key local statues and monuments, as well as uncovering the untold diverse stories .

Bradford's bid to be the UK City of Culture for 2025, and the development of a new District-wide cultural strategy, will also present our Steering Group, and partners, with a compelling opportunity to bring some of these stories to life, and will help promote Bradford as a pioneering and inclusive city on the world stage.

### **3. Audit of Statues and Monuments**

Research has been carried out from various sources including: Local Studies and Museum collections, information from the Council's Parks & Green Spaces and Conservation teams, the Civic Trust, local historians and members of the Steering Group, in order to build a picture of the main statues and monuments across the District which is as comprehensive as possible. The list is appended to this report at Appendix 2. Inevitably there may be some omissions, and the Group would welcome any further information for inclusion in the list. Similarly, we would be grateful to be informed of any links to slavery and colonialism in our statues and memorials, that we may have missed.

All of the information collected will be held in the Local Studies Libraries in the City and Keighley for public access and research purposes.

The list includes statues and monuments in the following categories:

- 1 Statues of historical figures
- 2 Memorials
- 3 Public Art
- 4 Plaques
- 5 Architectural features
- 6 Sites named after historical figures

We were also interested in street names, however, with more than 10,000 street names across the District, it has not been possible to trawl through them all. We are aware of one – Rhodesia Avenue – which may need additional interpretation, as well as a range of streets that have been named to reflect local diversity including: Karam Close, Quba Court, Syedna Way/Place, Ariba Avenue, Hayaat Walk, Bangla Court and Saddiq Way.

#### **4. Principles, approach and ethical considerations**

The Group agreed to focus our more detailed analysis on public monuments in the public realm, rather than those found in private institutions or private monuments in places like cemeteries. We also agreed to focus any decisions on the future of monuments to local figures rather than national figures; the Chair has been in contact with the person leading the City of London monuments review, who has agreed that a common approach across the country to nationally recognised figures would be beneficial. Therefore we have not gone into detail about these national figures and will await the outcome of the London review.

It was recognised that the subject of statues is emotive, that monuments can mean different things to different people, and that the whole subject needs sensitive handling. Nevertheless, there was an appetite for any controversy to stimulate constructive debate, as an opportunity for community reflection, and to promote understanding between people with different viewpoints, rather than to avoid debate altogether.

The Group shared a desire for people to understand the complexity of our history and of individuals through an honest and informative account, and to encourage people to see characters ‘in the round’ rather than in a binary way as either ‘heroes’ or ‘villains’. We want people to engage with the topic, to find out more, and – so far as possible – to use education to foster acceptance and understanding, as well as a sense of pride in Bradford in all its diversity.

For the future, the Group concluded that the whole concept of erecting statues to individuals as ‘heroic figures’ is fraught with difficulty, especially as the passage of time reveals more about their lives and the times in which they lived. We felt that individuals might be better celebrated through lower-key plaques or written accounts than statues, which are also very expensive if they are to last for future generations. Future monuments might be better to be representative of groups of people (e.g. the Windrush generation) with the focus on telling lots of stories of ‘ordinary’ people rather than a few individuals.

Overall, there was a recognition that, whilst much has been done to celebrate the District’s White British and South Asian roots, there are many other (smaller) communities who are often overlooked, including the Irish, Jewish, Polish, Ukrainian, Latvian, Estonian, African and Caribbean communities, for example, as well as the LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities. In particular, we recognised the need – in the wake of Black Lives Matter – to particularly seek out any links to slavery and colonialism, and to celebrate the contribution of Black African and Caribbean people to our District.

We also recognised the need to consider the implications of any decisions we make today about our monuments, on future generations – both in terms of tearing things down and putting things up. We do not want to deprive future generations of learning about any aspect of our history, nor do we want to prolong any offence that may be felt.

At the same time, the Group acknowledged that some communities – especially Black communities – are hugely under-represented in terms of monuments in the public realm, and these stories need to be more visible, giving young people iconic figures to look up to and be inspired by. However, we also recognise that there is a significant cost to memorialising people, as monuments are designed to last for future generations.

There is no national body to commission and oversee the administration of blue plaques, so this work is generally overseen by local civic societies or other charitable trusts. In Bradford, the Bradford

Civic Society's blue plaque scheme uses a combination of English Heritage guidance and local expertise when deciding on subjects of blue plaques. In line with English Heritage guidance on London plaques – and in common with other established blue plaque schemes in cities such as Leeds and Birmingham – there should *generally* be a delay of some years (varying between 5- 30 years) after the death of a public figure before they can be considered for a blue plaque or other memorial. This allows for a period of reflection and for the full facts of the person's life to be known, and mitigates against any posthumous controversies around individuals. Bradford Civic Society is actively looking to make its scheme more representative and has made a start on this with a focus on recognising notable local women, who have been previously under-represented in blue plaques in the Bradford district.

In terms of living individuals, there are opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of people through a variety of awards and honours schemes in place in various institutions, including the Council, and it would be good to ensure that these are fully inclusive.

## 5. Research findings

Whilst we have not found any direct local links to slave ownership, there are statues and monuments to individuals with more indirect links to slavery and colonialism.

- **Sir Robert Peel**

The statue to Robert Peel was the first public statue in Bradford. It is important to state that the statue is of Robert Peel the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron, not his father (also called Robert Peel) who was pro-slavery and whose wealth was based on the cotton industry. Whilst there is no evidence that his son supported slavery, there is no doubt that his inheritance was the wealth his father obtained involving slavery. The statue was controversial even at the time of its erection; Peel was popular with the mill owners in Bradford, but he was very unpopular with the Irish mill workers and an effigy of him was burnt. For more details of Peel and others, see Appendix 3.

The statue has come to the attention of the Black Lives Matter campaign and earlier this year a petition was started for the statue to be removed. However the petition was soon taken down due to the high level of support for the statue to remain.

There are a range of local monuments to national figures who had, sometimes unexpected, links to colonialism and racism including:

- **JB Priestley** - Priestley is rightly recognised for his influence on social reforms; however some of his work has come under scrutiny more recently for content reflecting some of the racist attitudes and language prevalent in his time.
- **Richard Oastler** – whilst he was a committed abolitionist, he also compared the treatment of white child factory workers to black slaves in the Caribbean, calling it 'Yorkshire slavery'. As a result, Oastler's name has been appropriated by some white supremacists and linked to their cause.
- **WE Forster** – celebrated for introducing the 1870 Education Act, he was also responsible for overseeing the brutal treatment of indigenous black people in Sudan and the Transvaal in his role as undersecretary of state for the colonies.

- **Christopher Columbus** – his reputation has been reassessed in recent years due to the atrocities carried out under his governance of islands. He is now a very divisive figure and statues of him have been pulled down in America.
- **Kings and Queens of England** - there are many links to colonialism and slavery throughout the English monarchy

More positively, Bradford has emerged as a City with lots of links to abolitionists and positive stories about welcoming immigrants and refugees. Bradford had the first Asian Lord Mayor in the country, Mohammed Ajeeb, who is still active within the community, and Bradford people were responsible for the design of the Windrush flag which has since been widely adopted, used and displayed elsewhere.

- **Isaac Holden** – he made fortunes inventing a wool-combing machine. He was a Methodist and a radical MP; he was against slavery and home rule in Ireland. He had a mansion in Oakworth; the gates from the mansion remain and on top of them are two bronze figures of black males. Of all the statues across the district, these are only ones we can find of black people; they could even be celebrating the freedom of black people from slavery.
- Another monument to a black person exists in Scholemoor Cemetery to a young Somali woman, **Halimo Abdi Batel**, who died of tuberculosis whilst visiting Bradford as part of a group that recreated a Somali village in Lister Park for the Bradford Exhibition in 1904, which marked the opening of Cartwright Hall. She was reportedly given the first Muslim burial in the city, attended by hundreds of people. Today we may see this re-enactment of a Somali village as a demeaning kind of ‘human zoo’, however, it would be a mistake to view this particular group as nothing more than unworldly ‘victims’. On their departure from Bradford, it was noted that half the men wore English suits, many spoke English and were unhappy about the pay for their work - they went to the town hall to negotiate a fairer deal. They were booked to appear in Liege in 1905 and the leader mentioned that working at the exhibition was better than trading sheep.

These monuments and stories deserve greater prominence and a fuller account for local people and visitors in future.

## 6. Linked projects

Through discussion at both the Steering Group and the Working Group, it has become apparent that there are a range of projects – past and present – that seek to research and tell a more diverse account of the people of Bradford District than our current statues and monuments present. Some of these are outlined below.

- Bradford Museums and Galleries are working with external contributors on a '**Decolonising the Collection**' project, in light of the Black Lives Matter movement, to assess objects and stories with colonial links, how the service catalogues objects within the collection and how Bradford Museums' represent and interpret these objects and stories.
- **The University of Bradford** is working towards becoming an Anti-Racist University; it launched the **Decolonising UniBrad project** in Summer 2020. Decolonising UniBrad seeks to support the university to be a fully inclusive and socially progressive university by tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage on a structural, cultural and individual level. Through this work, the University is seeking to drive change to create a racially inclusive and **anti-racist** institution.

This is an important next step in recognising patterns of inequality and working collectively to design lasting solutions that will benefit the University community.

- **www.Bradford Revealed.org.uk** : <http://www.509arts.co.uk/project/bradford-revealed/> This project is setting out to tell Bradford Stories from across the District in around 500 objects. Collecting local and everyday stories from people that live and work in the District, the online exhibition Bradford Revealed will be an opportunity to create a new and more diverse iconography for the District.
- **Bradford Street Gallery Project:** This is a District wide cultural project capturing images, moments & feelings of the people of Bradford and the District's towns and villages and bringing these iconic images to life on our streets. Creating the opportunity for people to experience the incredible talent we have in Bradford, this 12 month collaborative project will see billboards, sides of houses, pavements, lampposts, windows & school railings be transformed into a canvas of work by the people of Bradford District. The project is likely to include The Windrush photography project by Bradford based artist Tim Smith.
- **Top of Town Project** – a Bradford Museums & Galleries HLF funded project which completed in March 2020 and is in the process of turning into small online exhibition. It involved local schools and artists responding to the architecture and local history around the Top of Town.

## 7. Education and Learning

The Steering Group is keen to engage local schools and communities in collaborative, inter-generational work to research and co-produce new content about Bradford's local heritage and monuments, fostering increased knowledge and understanding. Naturally schools are preoccupied with the impact of the pandemic currently, however there is opportunity in future to use educational websites to promote and exploit the rich collections held by our local Museums and Libraries, as well as the information and research we have gathered about local statues and monuments. These include the new Bradford Teaching School Hub site <https://www.teachingschoolhub.co.uk/> as well as a new website being developed by the Council's Education Department.

We cannot rewrite history and do not want to sweep it under the carpet, we can only qualify and explain it with a new narrative, and educate people through storytelling. We want to balance telling the complete history, with a new positive narrative celebrating the contribution of our diverse communities.

Bradford Museums and Galleries holds rich diverse collections and offers learning materials including:

- **The Belle Vue Studio collection** which consists of 17,000 glass negatives of photographs taken at the Bradford studio from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until its closure in 1975. It documents the immigration to Bradford from around the world (including the Caribbean) and shows us how multicultural Bradford became post-WWII. Almost 11,000 of these negatives have been digitised and are available to view via the [Bradford Museums Photo Archive online](#). There are ongoing efforts to identify individuals and families in the photographs. This collection of extraordinary photographs was the focus on a BBC documentary in '[Hidden Histories: The Lost Portraits of Bradford](#)' (2019).

- **Bradford Heritage Recording Unit** (1983-88) left a collection of oral history recordings and photographs of various Bradford communities, including Caribbean communities. The oral history tapes are currently being digitised by the British Library's Sounds project. Some of the transcripts are accessible via Bradford Local Studies Libraries. The photographs are digitised and available to view via the [Bradford Museums Photo Archive online](#).
- **Bradford Stories:** Many Bradford Stories are presently told in the Bradford Museums' schools workshop offer, which together could contribute to a Bradford 'Place based' curriculum, following examples elsewhere in Birmingham, Leeds, Bristol and Peterborough. This includes the KS2 'Story of Immigration to Bradford' using the stories of everyday working people
- This idea is being expanded in the **Proud to be from Bradford** Museums & Schools Project (funded by Arts Council England and the Dept. for Education for completion by March 2021) telling stories like that of Marsha Singh who produced the first halal school dinners.

## 8. Next steps

Having researched and examined the existing statues and monuments across the District, the second phase of the Review will focus on individuals and groups whose stories have not yet been told, and how we can make the public realm, and who is commemorated in it, much more inclusive.

The Group wants to engage as many people locally as possible to uncover the 'untold' and diverse stories of people and communities that have had an impact in shaping our District, and to consider how these should be recognised and commemorated.

We will particularly seek out stories about Black Lives across the District, as we recognise these stories have been the least heard. This will enable us to produce information in the form of a Black History trail or similar.

## 9. Recommendations

The Steering Group makes the following recommendations to Bradford Council as a result of Phase 1 of this Review:

- 9.1 Not to remove or move any of the statues and monuments in our public realm, but to better interpret them and provide greater understanding of the role of colonialism in the history of Bradford District through new educational materials, working with local schools and communities, and the Council's libraries and museum services. To do this properly, additional funding is required, and we recommend the Council applies to relevant funding bodies for project funds.
- 9.2 To ensure every opportunity is taken to recognise and celebrate Black Lives and our diverse communities, strengthening the Council's co-ordination of Black History Month and other relevant cultural calendar events, ensuring the District's diverse stories are told.
- 9.3 To ensure that the Council's policies in relation to commissioning new statues and monuments, for agreeing street names and building names, and any other ways in which the public realm commemorates individuals and communities, is diverse and inclusive.

9.4 To ensure that the Council's processes for honouring individuals (including the Freedom of the City and other citizen awards) are diverse and inclusive.

**Steering Group members:**

Charles Dacres – Chair	Bradford Hate Crime Alliance
Udy Archibong	University of Bradford
Amerjeat Sarai	Education Partnership
Rahila Hussain	Author and Historian
Si Cunningham	Bradford Civic Society
Janet Senior	Bradford Historical & Antiquarian Society
Shannen Lang	Bradford Peace Museum
Erika Morris	Ilkley Literature Festival
Tim Smith	Photographer and Historian
John Ashton	Bellevue Collection
Paul Meszaros	IMOS and Hope not Hate
Elliot McKenzie	Younger people and students
Helena Danielczuk	Eastern European Community
Casey Magloire	Younger people and students
Paul Butler	Bradford Teaching School Hub
Nigel Grizzard	Jewish Community
Nikki Thorbrian	LGBTQ Community
Aleks Drobac	Eastern European Community
Zaroof Fazal	Pakistani Community

**Supported by Bradford  
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Christine May	Interim Head of Libraries
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