

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF BRADWELL
(Published in the *Bradwell News* January-March 2009)

Foreword to the piece appearing in the *Bradwell News* January 2009

The planned demolition, by Newburgh Estates, of the core of our village and the building of 148 new dwellings has caused one villager to reminisce on Bradwell's past, and in particular how and why the village has grown through the years. Brian Gillham has been looking at how our village came to be like it is, and in particular how and why it grew. With Brian's kind permission we are publishing his article in full, although for reasons of length it will be serialised. We hope you enjoy it, and that it helps you gain a clearer understanding of why Bradda is the way it is today.

The piece published in the *Bradwell News* over 3 months January-March 2009

In its Vision Statement for the years 2006-2011 the Peak District National Park Authority states that its aim is for:

“A conserved and enhanced Peak District where the natural beauty and quality of its landscapes, its biodiversity, tranquillity, cultural heritage and the settlements within it continue to be valued for their diversity and richness.”

It is right then that we in Bradwell (and the Park Authority) be very clear on the cultural heritage of the settlement that is Bradwell. For if we (and they) don't know that then how can we (and they) hope to conserve that cultural heritage? The people of Bradwell have to hand two excellent reminders of the cultural history of their village. The first is the book *Bradwell Ancient and Modern*, by local polymath Seth Evans. The second was published by the Bradwell Historical Society in 2008, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and is called '*After Seth – Bradwell into the 21st Century*'. In his book, published in 1912 Seth gives a description of the Bradwell he saw:

“...steep, winding streets – if streets they be called – and all sorts of queer, out of the way queer places running in and out in all directions – break neck, skew tilted, beginning everywhere, heading nowhere ...”

This picture is easily recognisable to today's inhabitants of the village. Seth Evans' book establishes clearly the heritage of Bradwell as a Working Village. Nor is it by chance that the first and keynote chapter (after the Introduction) of '*After Seth*' is entitled Bradwell at Work (in another chapter there is an incisive review of building in the village in the 20th century). The fact that a recent reprint of '*Bradwell Ancient and Modern*' had itself to be reprinted indicates the interest in the village and beyond in the history of the village. It is easy to assert that Bradwell's history has been that of a Working Village, but what is the evidence? Having marshalled the evidence we can then begin to answer a crucial question; 'How has the working nature of the village influenced the building of houses in the village?' On carrying out this exercise it becomes evident that housing provision in the village has generally followed the jobs, not the other way round. The other driver of building has been the desire to provide homes for the elderly. The project entitled '*A Vision of Britain Through Time*' provides key data on the population, number of houses, number of houses built, number of

rooms per house (and the number of people per room) of Bradwell. These data take us up to 1961. Local information, most of it collected by Keith Hall as part of the *After Seth* project, extends this data set up to the present. The picture that emerges when these data are set alongside information on the working history of Bradwell an interesting scenario begins to emerge.

As early as 1801 the population of Bradwell stood at 955 and by the middle of that century this had risen to 1334 (the 2001 census of Bradwell shows a population of 1423!). The village at that time had 301 houses. An idea of the occupations of these inhabitants comes from an 1870 Gazetteer that states:

“BRADWELL, a township in Hope parish, Derby; under the Peak, 2 miles SE of Castleton. It has a post office under Sheffield. Real property, £2,622. Pop., 1,304. Houses, 297. Some of the inhabitants are cotton workers; but more are employed in lead and calamine mines.”

In fact, in 1851 there were some 280 people who gave their occupations as lead-mining related (of course lead mining in Bradwell has a history going back before Roman times). No doubt some of those 301 houses had been built to accommodate those miners (such as those in Hill Head which were built beside a rake), but lead mining was a failing industry and by 1891 there were only 5 mines or lead smelters. This fall had been compensated in part by the advent of the railways, the growth of quarrying and the expansion of the activities of Bamford Cotton Mill. Nevertheless, by 1901 the population had fallen to 1032 with 295 houses to meet their needs (more than enough apparently, because some 50 were unoccupied). The empty houses would have proven useful when the next surge in population occurred. By 1911 the inhabitants of Bradwell numbered 1325 and houses 373. Once again the increase in house numbers and population appear to be related to the jobs. The official commentary on this increase tells us that the large increase in the population of Bradwell CP is attributed mainly to the presence of workmen engaged on the construction of the Derwent Valley New Waterworks. It may well have also noted the effect of the installation of the new engine at Bamford Mill (contemporary accounts note the carriage that took cotton workers from Bradwell to Hope – in 1901 they numbered 24). The opening of the G&T Earle Cement works came in the 1920s and by 1931 the total number of houses in Bradwell had risen to 397. Then, in the 1930s Earle's stepped up their production. The consequences in terms of population and houses is difficult to assess systematically because there was no census in 1941. Local oral history tells of men arriving to work at Earle's (many of them from the depressed north east), taking lodgings in Bradwell (and Hope), eventually finding houses to live in and then sending for the families. The next major employer to come to Bradwell was Newburgh Engineering and the date over the entrance of the works is 1939 (it should perhaps be a year earlier). In the early years they took on, and trained when necessary, engineers from the village and the valley. As the business grew the immediate surroundings could not supply the needs of the growing firm and a company bus collected workers to bring them to the factory. But, as an enlightened employer Newburgh both bought houses in the village for their employees and also built 22 houses in Springfield Road. This is a perfect example of houses following jobs. In the 1960s the housing stock of Bradwell rose by 70 and this number included old people's accommodation, built at Springhead. Then, in the 1970's another 80 houses were added, including building for the elderly in Wortley Court. In later decades more building had taken place, including significant building for the elderly in Michlow Close (these figures relate to builds and don't take into account demolitions that have preceded builds). In these decades (and continuing) there have been a number of barn conversions and

shops being changed into houses. As a result of these changes the housing stock of Bradwell was 545 in 1971 (population 1,548) and 625 in 1981 (population 1,462). By 2001 the population of Bradwell stood at 1,425 and in 2009 the Bradwell News (committed to delivering to every household in the village) had 715 houses on its list. (These included some 25 holiday cottages and an unknown number of houses being second homes). Alongside these changes in housing stock a surprising number of small businesses have grown up around Bradwell. From this it can be seen that for much of Bradwell's history since the nineteenth century there has been an intimate relationship between population, jobs and houses. When the relationship hasn't been as tight the biggest concern has been ageing of the population and a natural desire to provide houses for the elderly. The other conclusion is that between 1851 and 2009 the total number of houses in Bradwell increased from 301 to 715, an increase of 237%, or 25 houses per decade, with a maximum of 80 in the heady decade of the 1970s.

Will the proposal of Newburgh Engineering, as it relates to house building, be consonant with the history of Bradwell? The first thing that should be said is the numbers are not easy to come by from the application lodged by Newburgh Engineering. This is because the application was lodged and then modified and it is very difficult to know to what extent the original 'master plan' has been changed by the modifications. Nevertheless, it seems that the proposal is to build twenty three (3) bedroom houses, sixteen (4) bedroom houses, sixteen (5) bedroom houses and two (6) bedroom houses, a total of 57 houses. The rest of the proposed housing-related build is of apartments and of these 54 will be of 1 bedroom and 39 of 2 bedrooms. This seems to total some 150 buildings for housing, with a total of 357 bedrooms. If one makes a modest assumption of one person per bedroom this implies a population increase of 357 in the next decade, or about 25% of the present population about the same as the whole increase in population since 1901. (Historically the occupation of houses in Bradwell has been one person per room/bedroom). When the Newburgh master plan is examined it seems that it is in the apartments that the historical concerns of Bradwell are best reflected. There is provision for homes for the elderly and there is a focus on the provision of affordable homes. Affordable homes are key to the future of a Working Village because if the young of Bradwell are going to be able to live and work in their village they will need homes they can afford to buy. The proposal for houses and particularly the top end houses with 4, 5 and 6 bedrooms seems not to consider from where the jobs would come for occupants of these large houses, or the chaos of perhaps one third of that number leaving the village to work elsewhere, all leaving about the same time each morning.

In conclusion, it seems clear that the Bradwell site of Newburgh Engineering should be developed with the present needs and past history of the village in mind. This plan seems to pay sufficient attention to neither. To put the Newburgh Engineering proposal in context, in a document published in June 2009 and entitled *Peak Sub Region Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment*, the planned housing builds for the period 6 to 15 years from the date of the report signals the possibility of building 265 houses in the whole of the Peak District National Park. Therefore the Newburgh Engineering application would lead to the building in Bradwell of about 57% of all the houses to be built in the Park. In any view this must be a distortion.

Table Showing the Historical Changes in the Population and Number of Houses in Bradwell and how these reflected the needs of the Village

Date	Pop	Houses	Increase over previous	Providing for in the previous decade
1801	955			
1851	1334	305		Lead miners, quarry men
1881	1019	307*	2	Rail workers, quarry men, cotton workers
1891	837	297**	-10	
1901	1033	352	55	
1911	1325	373	21	Builders of the Derwent Valley dams, cotton workers
1921	1325	397	26	
1931	1313	397	0	Hallgate View (1939)
1951	1481	459	62***	'Homes fit for heroes' inc Elliott Avenue, Hallgate View
1961	1368	475	15	Homes for the elderly Wortley Court, Springhead
1971	1550	545	80	Newburgh workers: Springfield Close build
1981	1462	625	80	Homes for the elderly Wortley Court second phase
1991	1426	-		Homes for the elderly Michlow Drive
2001	1423	-		Homes Michlow Close
2009		715	90****	

* 55 unoccupied, ** 50 Unoccupied, *** Two decades (no 1941 census), **** Builds since 1981.

Postscript (2017)

This piece was written in 2009 shortly after Newburgh Engineering had submitted their original plan. As a result of ongoing discussions involving the many parties with an interest in the future of Bradwell a greatly modified plan was accepted in 2017 and work according to that Plan was in hand the same year. As the original Plan was being refined over the years two significant events happened. In the first a Bradwell Neighbourhood Plan for the village was produced and accepted by all involved. The process of acceptance included a village-wide referendum on the Plan that was carried by 260 votes to 60. With the positive result of the referendum the Peak District National Park Authority adopted the Neighbourhood Plan so that future planning in the village must adhere to the guidelines set out in that Plan.

The second event in the lead up to the acceptance of the modified Newburgh Plan was the setting up of a Bradwell Community Land Trust. The stated aims and objectives of the CLT are as follows:

Bradwell Community Land Trust is a non profit, limited liability company which is operated by volunteers on behalf of, and for the benefit of the local community. The primary objective is to provide permanently affordable housing for local people, but the future scope can be widened to include other developments of benefit to the community, such as meeting spaces, workspaces, retail premises and allotment gardens. The Trust has been established in order to create local developments which are maintained at permanently affordable levels and which will benefit the community in perpetuity.

The very existence of the CLT and its stated aims has meant that when permission was given to Newburgh Engineering and their developer Camstead Limited it was drawn up along the following lines:

Plans to demolish the industrial buildings and build 55 houses have been unanimously approved by the Peak District National Park's planning committee. The developer, Camstead Ltd and Newburgh Engineering Ltd have been given permission to build the 55 houses, including 43 three to five-bedroom houses for the open market, providing that they also build 12 two-bedroom affordable homes to meet local needs, and 6 small industrial units to encourage local businesses.

and the CLT will administer the 12 affordable homes.

Thus it can be seen that the mix of housing and small industrial units comes much closer to falling in with the way homes and business has always gone hand in hand in the working village that is Bradwell. In addition Newburgh itself will maintain its links with the village by purpose building their own business unit.