

The Fall of Little Germany

The Effect of the First World War on German Communities in Bradford

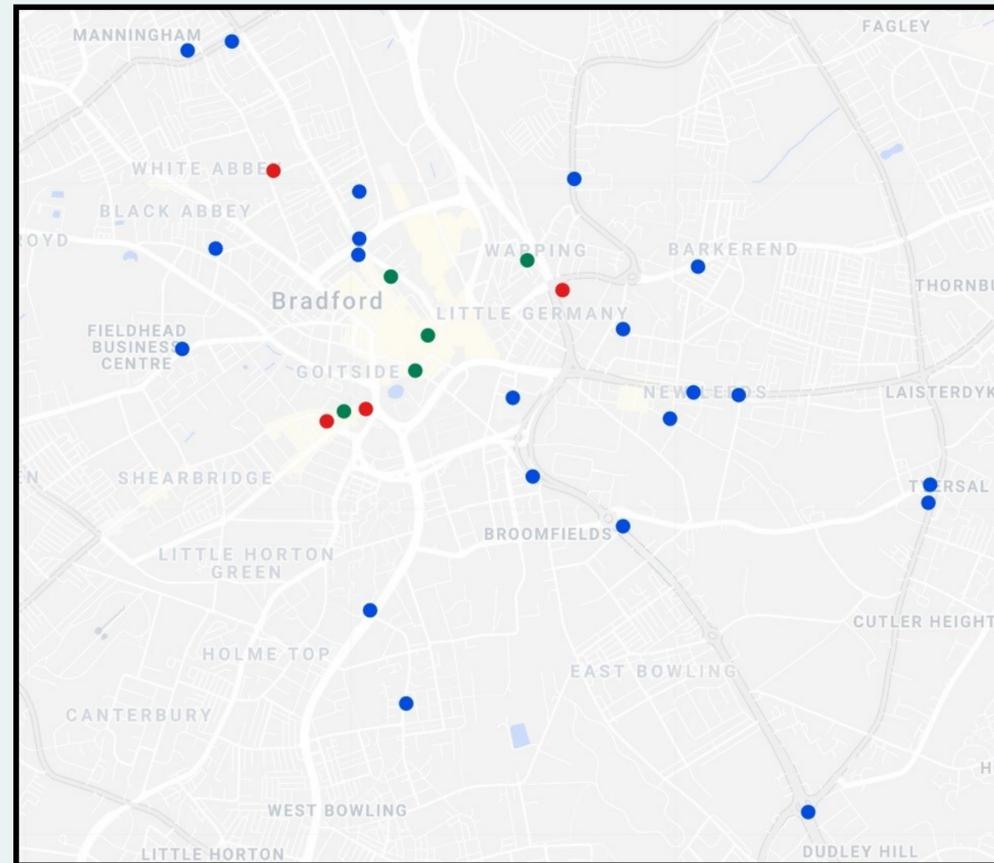
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Echoes of the past—window display advertisement in Little Germany. Little Germany was a warehouse district, once heavily used by German merchants.



The German Evangelical Church, Great Horton Road. Modern use of the Church shows there is some continuation of the German character in Bradford today.



Location of German run businesses and places of worship in 1912.

● German run businesses ● German run hotels, clubs, and restaurants ● Places of worship led by Germans

Now is the chance of the English writer if only he will rise to the occasion. The majority, probably the vast majority, of his German and Austrian rivals have departed and left him, not in undisputed possession of the field, but with undoubted prospects of improving his position.

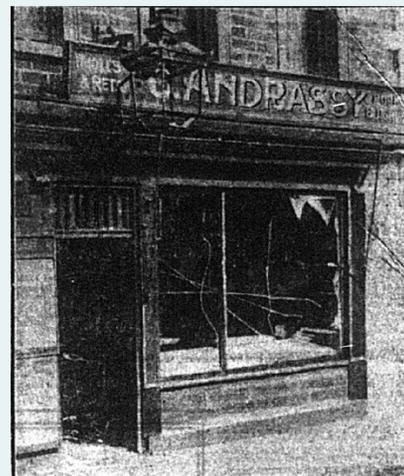
The Bradford Daily Argus, 22/08/1914
 Some trades were particularly German dominated. The internment and deportation of Germans during WWI appears to have had an effect early on in the war.

As will be gathered from the names over the shops, more than half the pork butchers of Bradford are Germans, but they are Germans who have come to stay, for most of them are naturalised. The

The Bradford Daily Telegraph, 11/08/1914
 Newspaper articles can give a better picture of the character of the city. Here, it is mentioned that in 1914, a large proportion of pork butchers' in Bradford were German run.

The war is making Britons at a quite astonishing rate. German names are changed into English in a night. The painter has been busy over the shop doors crossing out Herr Sauerkraut and painting on John Bull. We can now almost say of every pork butchers in Bradford "This is a Ingelische shopp." German

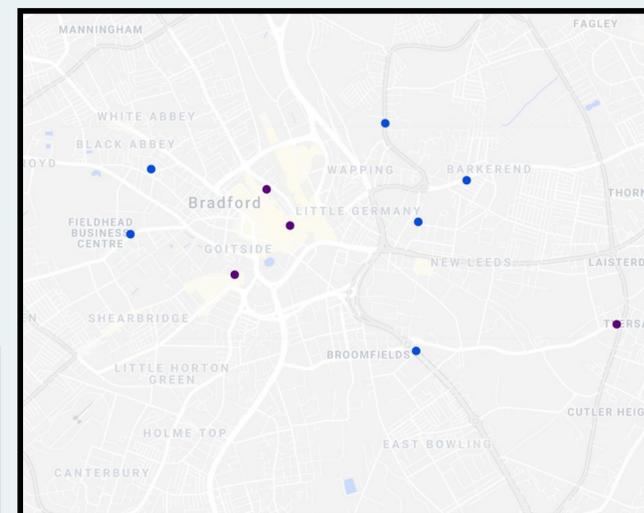
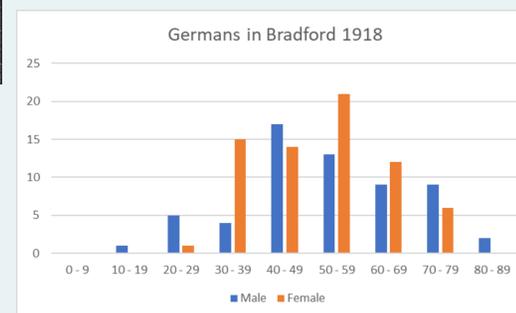
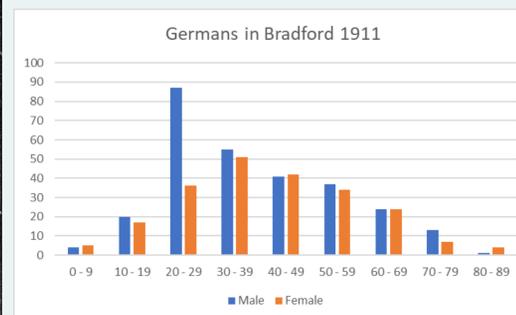
The Bradford Daily Telegraph, 25/08/1914
 Overt German elements within the city, including shop names appear to have been erased and changed during the war.



The Bradford Daily Telegraph, 01/09/1914
 Bradford did have some anti-German incidents, particularly at the beginning of the war and after the 1915 sinking of the Lusitania. Above is a photograph of smashed windows of a German run butchers' shop in Keighley. Following the attack, the shop owner and his family moved elsewhere.

Sir,—These are days when a good deal of personal restraint must be exercised, especially with regard to those of German nationality who are residents of our city and country. May I express the hope that we in Bradford treat with respect those who as citizens have lived peacefully amongst us, many of them for long years, and are not guilty of any acts of enmity?

The Bradford Daily Argus, 13/08/1914
 Unlike some areas of Britain, Bradford appears not to have fallen so much into the anti-German frenzy that played a big part in the removal of German influence.



Remaining German run businesses, 1927.

There wasn't just a decrease in the number of Germans in Bradford after the war, but also big changes in age and sex distributions, which would have had an effect on the German character of the city.

● German run businesses ● German run businesses, since taken over

Aims:

To look at the effect of the First World War on the German community in Bradford and the German character of the city.

Method:

Archive data was primarily used in this project. Census data, electoral roles, and local directories were used to find and track changes in the numbers of German-run businesses and the German community itself. Newspaper archives were also used to get a broader picture of how the War affected the German character of Bradford.

Conclusions:

Policies of deportation of German immigrants during WWI led to a massive, visible decrease in the German character of Bradford. Numbers of German-run businesses and places of worship fell by 80% between 1912 and 1927. The German population itself fell by three quarters between 1914 and 1918, from 502 to 129.

References:

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