

Bradford Through Time

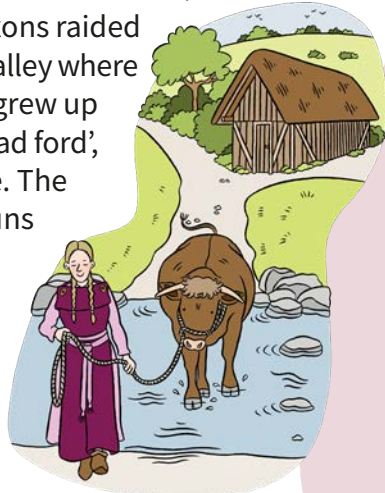


1 Ancient Britain (Before 410AD)

Archaeologists tell us that, as early as prehistoric times, people were living in the moorlands surrounding what we know today as Bradford. These people would have been hunters and gatherers and later, the first farmers. By the Iron Age (1200-550BC), a tribe called the Brigantes controlled much of the North of England including Bradford. During the Roman occupation there is evidence of activity in the area but no settlements other than a fort at nearby Ilkley.

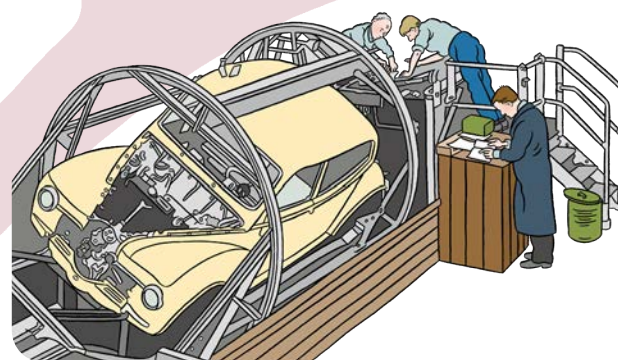
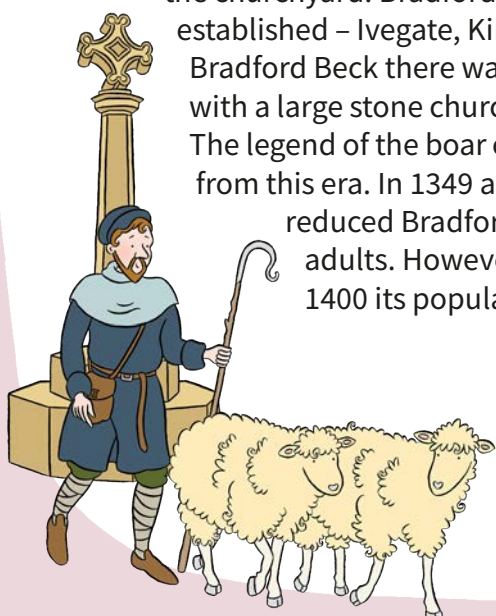
2 The Anglo-Saxon Era (410-1066)

Around 500AD, when the Anglo-Saxons raided England, some settled locally in a valley where three streams met. A small village grew up at a crossing point, known as a 'broad ford', which is how Bradford got its name. The stream called Bradford Beck still runs under the city today. These early Saxons lived in simple wooden houses. Later a wooden chapel was added, probably built by Christian missionaries from Dewsbury.



3 The Middle Ages (1066-1485)

After the Norman invasion in 1066, the North of England rebelled. In response, William the Conqueror ordered the destruction of many villages including Bradford which was then given to William's supporter, Ilbert de Lacy. Gradually Bradford grew as a market town, holding a weekly market in the churchyard. Bradford's three main streets were established – Ivegate, Kirkgate and Westgate. Close to Bradford Beck there was a corn and fulling mill along with a large stone church, built by Alice de Lacy. The legend of the boar on Bradford's coat of arms stems from this era. In 1349 a plague known as the Black Death, reduced Bradford's population to less than 100 adults. However, Bradford still survived and by 1400 its population had grown again.



8 20th Century (1901-2000)

Bradford remained prosperous into the early 20th century, helped by the demands of the First World War which created full employment. However, after the war, demand for textiles slumped and only recovered later with the Second World War. When war ended in 1945, it left a shortage of workers for the mills. Consequently, much needed migrant workers were recruited from Eastern Europe, India and Pakistan. New industries were set up, such as car production, banking, insurance and local government. Later, engineering, food and chemical manufacture, digital technology and media were established.

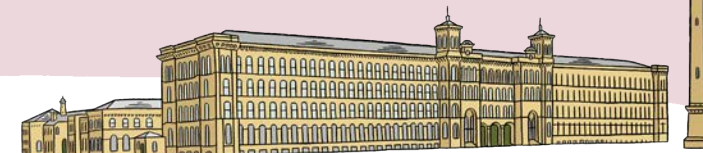
9 21st Century (2001 onwards)

Today Bradford enjoys a richness of diverse cultures. New buildings reflect new interests and faiths, such as the Grand Mosque, opened in 2014. In 2022 Bradford was crowned the UK City of Culture 2025 in recognition of its reputation as a young and vibrant city with a rich heritage. Bradford's impressive bid drew upon its many cultural assets including the Brontë Parsonage, Saltaire UNESCO World Heritage Site and the National Science and Media Museum.



4 The Tudor Era (1485-1603)

In Tudor times Bradford continued to grow, becoming more prosperous. The cloth-making industry expanded, producing coarse woollen cloth known as 'kersey'. Most people farmed just enough for their own needs and made extra money from spinning and weaving at home. Other growing industries were shoemaking and iron manufacture. Bradford now had a grammar school and many of its wooden houses were replaced with two-storey stone houses, the largest being Bolling Hall.



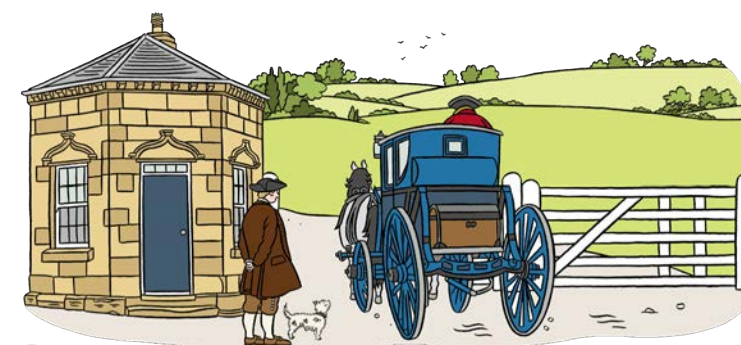
7 Mid-Late Victorian Era (1848-1901)

In 1853 a successful mill owner, Titus Salt, built a new mill and village called Saltaire on the outskirts of Bradford where the air was cleaner. He built new houses and provided amenities such as a school, library and hospital. Creating better living conditions meant his workers could lead a healthier life. In the city centre there were improvements in sanitation and many of today's architecturally splendid buildings were built, including the Town Hall, which was renamed City Hall when Bradford was granted city status in 1897.



6 Early Victorian Era (1837-48)

By the first half of the 19th century people moved to work in Bradford's textile mills, making it the fastest growing town in England. With its large coal reserves, it had a huge advantage when steam replaced water power. The arrival of the Leeds to Skipton railway in 1846 also helped. Bradford became a world-famous wool capital, known as 'Worstedopolis'. However, living and working conditions were harsh and it gained the reputation as the 'dirtiest town in the country'.



5 The Stuart (1603-1714) and Georgian (1714-1837) Eras

The English Civil War (1642-1651) badly damaged Bradford and slowed its growth. Cloth-making gradually became Bradford's chief industry, though it changed from making 'kersey' to 'worsted' – a finer more desirable cloth for suits and dresses. In 1734 the turnpike road between Manchester and Leeds opened and in 1777 the Bradford Canal was linked to the Leeds to Liverpool Canal. Improvements like these reduced the cost of transporting wool, cloth and limestone and boosted the textile industry. In 1794 the town's first factory opened.