

**GRAHAM MASLEN**

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## **Feeling Hungry in Queen's Road Halifax**

Queen's Road lies in West Central Halifax wholly within Park ward. It runs from King Cross north to Pellon Lane. It is 1.4 kms long. This area was mainly fields in the early 19th century but it developed rapidly in the second half of the century. Textile mills and associated terrace housing covered the area. Queen's Road was opened in 1861. It attracted more mills, houses and businesses. New businesses in the early 20th century included machine tool manufacturing, wire mills and biscuit factories with further housing.

Park ward is the smallest of the 17 wards in Calderdale covering just 2.5Kms<sup>2</sup>. In 2021 the population of the Ward was 15,699. The population density of Park ward is much higher (6,280 per KM<sup>2</sup>) compared to the Calderdale average (567 per KM<sup>2</sup>). There are over 4,900 houses in Park and some two-thirds are terraced houses. The rest are larger Victorian houses, inter and post-war semi-detached properties and a few more recent developments on sites which have been cleared. Much of the housing is small and relatively poor quality. Over a fifth of the housing is privately rented and low-income households occupy 55% of the housing stock.

Employment sites are intermingled with the residential areas. There are a range of small manufacturing, engineering and motor trade businesses with a few larger manufacturing companies. Some former mill buildings have been re-purposed for commercial or residential use but a number remain unused and derelict. Currently unemployment is over double the Calderdale rate and a very high proportion (43%) of the population is economically inactive.

Cheap housing and the prospect of employment in the ward or elsewhere in Halifax has meant that Park has received different waves of migrants over time. In the 1950s people from Ukraine, Italy, Ireland and Poland settled in the area. In the 1960s there was significant migration from Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the early part of the 21st century people from Eastern Europe moved to the area. More recently government policy of dispersing asylum seekers and refugees fleeing conflict in places like Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Ethiopia has seen hundreds being housed in this community. Park is the most diverse ward in Calderdale in terms of ethnicity, religious belief, and languages.

Indices of deprivation and poverty reveal that people living in the area experience challenging lives;

- Over half the children live in low income families
- A fifth of households experience fuel poverty
- Three times as many households are overcrowded compared to Calderdale
- Nearly one in ten report bad health
- Nearly a fifth have a long term illness or disability

Queen's Road runs through the centre of the ward and is the main retail centre for residents along with King Cross. Despite the economic and social hardships experienced by the local population they have access to a rich range of affordable foodstuffs. There are 29 outlets selling food that are open or recently closed. About one third are food stores the remainder are takeaways. If you want to buy Gizzard Cow Skin, Cow Tripe, Ogbono, Puna Yam or Black Eye Beans then you can buy them along the Queen's Road. Over a dozen types of rice can be bought in a shop on the Queen's Road. You can drink tea in an Asian tea café or buy many different types of tea from a shop on the Queen's Road. Food stuffs from Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary are readily available from mini-markets along the Queen's Road. If you want a take-away you can buy a traditional sandwich, English fish and chips, New York fries, Peri Peri Chicken, Donner Kebabs, Indian curries, Italian Pasta & Everywhere burgers at outlets along the Queen's Road.

The Queen's Road is a culinary gem. The various people who have migrated to and settled in the area have brought their culture and eating habits with them so that now the Queen's Road provides an eclectic and diverse range of foodstuffs. Eating different foods can help you eat healthier, add nutrients to your diet and introduce you to different cultures. Trying different cuisines is often the best way to learn about different cultures. It can teach you about the ingredients and spices that are used in different parts of the world. You can learn a lot about the values and traditions that other countries have when you make their staple dishes. Cooking new cuisines can teach you and your family about customs, ceremonies and special dishes celebrated in different countries around the world. We are very lucky to have ready access to these tasty and exotic foods in our area. If you are feeling hungry then go to the Queen's Road.