

Hillview Inheritance Remembered by Chris Harrison

We came to Hillview, late, in '77, bedraggled pigeons driven to roost, acting on instinct, a magnetic Polarity urging the way for our little bird brains, to these, our then down-and-out, cliff-edge, nests. Our Council betters (believe it or not) drew plans to empty and demolish our homes and dreamt instead

Of huge and storied concrete car parks pictured, no doubt, in high key architectural brochures, Brutally clean rectangles against a bird-less sterile sky where should have stood our humane smutty Hillview.

Except then comes Maggie and steals the Council's car park money and in a land of unintended consequences

(For surely she did not mean to save us wretched squatters' homes) Hillview people stood and put down roots!

Some old tenant outside his old flat, lingering-on, and a squatter chatting in '79, with gentle misunderstanding:

You always lived here? (fresh-faced 70s sociology student, planning a possible Hillview project, remembers asking),

"Nah love, lived all over!" punctuated with an all-encompassing careless wave of an aged anchor-tattooed arm.

Whereabouts (ancient mariner)? Kathmandu? Timbuktu? (scenting links to old empires for an otherwise dull thesis),

"Nah love," he says (the doddering index finger now jabbing more precisely around the filthy courtyard), "I lived first there! At number 40, then at 21 and then at 37 and then ... and then... ALL OVER!"

So an old man's small scale history then, his family's, his neighbours', free from high politics and jingoism,

Almost unremembered, almost razed, but certainly titanic in their epic battles to survive in poverty for generations,

Through disease and the parasites, six legged and two, The Great War, Depression and Blitz.

Not Maggie's flag-waving, Union-Jack-on-a-tail-plane history, nor sound-bites' falsifying hand-of, history,

But a real-life, lived-in and relentless history of all our base humanity's struggles against all the odds,

And in the face of spivs and speculators in the coming years, unless we accidental and blessed

Inheritors of Hillview honour and remember their stories and add them to ours,

We'll betray those who fought before us and impoverish those that come after.