

## Kate Rawnsley - Transcription

Audio Quality: Very good

**0:00:00**

**KR:** So do you want me...?

**LMI:** Here we go, we've started already. So I'm here with Kate Rawnsley. Kate, would you like to say who you are and why we're here?

**KR:** Basically, I worked in the mills from about 1982 to 1985. And I worked at C.H. Fletcher's in Steeton, and I was a textile designer.

**LMI:** And what did you do? How old were you then?

**KR:** I was 22 till I was 25.

**LMI:** And had you come from college?

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**KR:** No, that was a strange thing! I'd done my foundation year at Jacob Cramer in Leeds. And then I did a year at Hull and hated it, because it just smelt of fish and the course was rubbish. Why I signed up for...

**LMI:** This was the university?

**KR:** At the College of Art in Hull. And I left there after a year, and then me and my mum had moved up to Stainforth in the Yorkshire Dales. And I noticed an advert in the Craven Herald for textile designer, and it required no qualifications, just a series of drawing exams. So I went along. There was about 150 of us, and they whittled it down to two of us. And we both got the job, me and my colleague John. So we had to sit there for hours on end doing all these drawings and sketches, and then they worked out who could do the job and I was one of them.

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**LMI:** So did they do that all in one day?

**KR:** No, they did it over several weeks.

**LMI:** Oh right.

**KR:** So they had a lot of people in. And then I started the job and that was quite interesting.

**LMI:** Tell me about the mill.

**KR:** The mill itself was a medium-sized mill, not overly big, and it was Jacquard material. Which is basically where the design is in the weave, but it was in very, very complex designs.

And we worked in silk, cotton, viscose and rayon and that, which viscose and rayon are the same thing, it's just trade names. But... and we used to work for people like GB Shirting, Marks and Spencers... a whole range of quite high quality companies.

**LMI:** And it was all fabric for clothing?

**KR:** Well, we did upholstery as well.

**0:02:40**

**LMI:** Oh right.

**KR:** Yeah, so that we used to do some more robust material. The mill was actually owned by the Courtaulds group who had a base in London. And sometimes we used to go to London as designers, and use their archive, which was fascinating.

**LMI:** So what did you have to do?

**KR:** Right so basically they've worked out your style of drawing, and which...

**LMI:** Can you explain that a bit more?

**KR:** So we had reps, so there was three reps at the mill and they represented different companies. So they kind of looked at your work and worked out whether your way of working, your sort of... the type of textiles that you designed, whether they would suit Marks and Spencers or whichever company they were representing. So I ended up with Marks and Spencers and a few other companies that used to sell their fabrics to places like Topshop and Chelsea Girl, that kind of thing. It was quite trendy stuff. So back then it was sort of New Romantics, so there was a lot of paisleys, big roses, quite flamboyant designs which I *loved*. It was really, really interesting.

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**KR:** So what would happen is the rep would come in in the morning and say, 'This is what this company needs, could you design something similar to this?' So they'd often have a piece of fabric, but you could never copy it because that's copyright, but they would say 'Something in the vein of... could you have a bash at coming up with something quite new and novel but along this line.' Like a new paisley or a new animal print, or all sorts of things. So then you had, basically, if they wanted 6 designs you were given 2 days. If they wanted 3 designs, it had to be out by the four o'clock courier. So you were racing like mad. So, you had to do... there were various, as I learned on the job, various different repeats. So you got a half drop, half cut, reverse cut. And the thing about the repeats that was so important is when they repeated out, you know, to the fabric as a whole, say a pair of curtains, they must not stripe diagonally, vertically, zigzag or anything. So getting the design right was just so important. It was incredibly, you have to, in your mind's eye, you have to see that design

repeated over a huge sheet of cloth without it... and the idea was that you had to get the fabric to look like one without any dominating elements to it.

**LMI:** Oh interesting. So all of this was done without a computer I presume?

**KR:** Absolutely. So the process was - you started off with tracing paper. So you had your tracing paper and you worked out your designs, you worked out your repeats, and you worked out in your mind how that was going to look repeated over a huge sheet of cloth.

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**KR:** Then, basically, a client would then decide whether they could imagine that as a series of weaves. If they couldn't, we had to paint them and we had to use Japanese brushes because we were painting on tracing paper. And it was a *nightmare* to get used to those Japanese brushes. So we had to colour all the different weaves different colours with these amazingly difficult brushes. But once you got used to them you realised that they were beautiful things to work with. So we'd do these, they get sent off to the clients and then they'd come back if they liked a particular design. Then we have to go in a dark room with a projector, put the little square, whether it was 12 inch or 6 inch square, onto the projector, project it onto a wall which had point paper which was probably about four foot by four foot, or maybe five foot by five. It was huge.

**0:07:23**

**LMI:** Can you explain point paper?

**KR:** Point paper is like... it looks like graph paper, and each square on it represents a pick. So that is basically where the thread goes under the warp and weft, so when it goes under the weft. So basically you're looking at a huge sheet of fabric that's magnified a million times with these little tiny picks. So you had to then draw... the design was projected onto the point paper. Then you had to draw it onto the point paper. Then once you've got that worked out that it repeated on the point paper, because often the projector would be a little bit wobbly. This is all very... it really was! So there was a lot of rubbing out, and working out whether this end would connect to that end, and the top would connect to the bottom. Once you got it right then came the tricky bit. Because each each section, each bit of your design, say it was a rose, and you've got petals that interconnect, each petal was a different weave.

**0:08:34**

**KR:** So it would stand out. So the weaves...you had to kind of invent them, right. And each weave had to interconnect with the next weave with a sort of mathematical formula. Which drove us bonkers! Because... and then you pointed, you painted the point papers with the Japanese brushes again. And each weave was a different colour So each little square had to connect with the next little square mathematically. And it was *heartbreaking* to do!

**LMI:** So you did all of this with no training whatsoever. You just learnt it on the job?

**KR:** Yes.

**LMI:** How long did that take you?

**KR:** It took me about six months to get the grip of point papers. I did make a few mistakes, and I was severely bollocked! Because if the weaves don't interconnect, once it's woven... well basically I'll wind back a bit... once you've got your point paper and you think it's okay, and the boss has checked it and all the rest of it, and it's huge and it's complicated, it then goes to the card cutter, which is the guy on the machine, who then translates what he's got on that point paper into a series of cards that drop through the top of the....

**0:09:46**

**LMI:** Jacquard loom.

**KR:** Jacquard loom.

**LMI:** I think we need to explain at this point what a Jacquard loom is for anybody that's listening who doesn't [know].

**KR:** Right, a Jacquard loom is like a normal loom, except it's incredibly complicated. So you've got... it's much finer... and it's basically like the beginnings of a computer, really. So it works on a binary system. So, if there's a hole in the card that drops down, it means that they, what do you call them? The loom can, the hooks can pick up, and so the weft can go under. So if it's... if the hole is blocked it means that the hooks can't go through, right?

**LMI:** Oh, it's straightforward physical preventing it going through the hole?

**KR:** Yes.

**LMI:** Oh, I did not know that.

**KR:** So it works on a binary system.

**0:10:56**

**KR:** So basically the the card paper is telling the loom either 'yes or no', 'yes or no', 'yes or no'. But this is... so it's a really really complicated system of 'yes or no's', which build up this amazing pattern.

**LMI:** I'm presuming you have different colours as well?

**KR:** No... we, oh yeah, we did, we did. Sometimes we did, but we'd only ever work in two colours.

**LMI:** Oh okay.

**KR:** So you've got, maybe the weft and the warp would be different colours, and that would produce different colours, because some of the weft would go underneath and that produces

amazing different colours, yeah. So anyway, so then that would come back... so they'd weave maybe 6 metres of the fabric to see if it was okay. I made a mistake, it would come back and where the two weaves would interconnect, there'd be a hole. And I was like, 'Kate!' I'm like, 'Shit!'

**0:12:02**

**KR:** So, and then that means the whole process had to be done again. So you've got to go back to your point paper, find out where you made...

**LMI:** Right to the very beginning.

**KR:** Well, back to your point paper, work out where you made the mistake. And then of course the card guy had to do all the cards again. So it was incredibly serious. So...

**LMI:** How long did all of that take from you kind of coming up with the first design, right through to the kind of first run of the fabric to kind of see if it worked?

**KR:** Well, that depended on the urgency of the job. So basically, you could turn that around theoretically in two weeks.

**0:12:42**

**KR:** Because I work... so, basically, I learnt to draw at speed and paint at speed and do point papers at speed. So it was incredibly rushed. The urgency of the job was incredible, which was quite amusing because I actually left, and I thought 'If I had a degree, I'd get paid more money.' So I went and started a degree at Bradford College, and I did textiles and printmaking. So the first day I was there, and I'd chosen textiles, and they said, 'Here's your brief, you've got six weeks.' I was like, 'I'm used to four o'clock!' Which was incredibly funny. So I dropped textiles in the end, and moved on to photography, but that's a different tale. So anyway, the working environment was stressed, funny and lovely, apart from my boss, who was a German POW.

**LMI:** Who stayed in England presumably?

**0:13:50**

**KR:** He married, and he stayed in England, and he'd only got one eye because he'd been driving a tractor and it fell on him. And he was incredibly, incredibly grumpy. And he was an alcoholic. And his wife, apparently the gossip went around the thing, that his wife was forever losing her false teeth, because she was also an alcoholic but was frequently sick. So when we saw her she often didn't have her teeth in because she'd lost them down the loo!

**LMI:** So how big was the team that you worked in?

**KR:** There was three of us.

**LMI:** Three designers?

**0:14:38**

**KR:** Three designers for the whole mill. So you can see it's quite pressured. There was a wonderfully, gorgeously posh girl. For the sake of this recording, we call her Linda. And then there was my colleague, John. Linda dressed *immaculately*. She had beautiful little mini skirts, gorgeous legs, high heels. Her hair was coiffured, and she had a big tin box on her desk which was full of makeup, and a mirror. And any time she knew that somebody was coming to the office, this tin box would get opened and a mirror was there, and off she was, plastering her face doing all this. It was hysterical. John and myself used to just kill ourselves laughing. But my boss, and possibly a lot of the men there, thought she was the most divine woman ever. Now, at that time... well, I still am a bit out there... I used to wear the craziest clothes ever. It was New Romantics, it was the '80s. Even though I wasn't a New Romantic, I used to go to The Warehouse in Leeds. I'm [I was] still sort of post-punk. And so she... My boss used to say, 'Why can't you be more like Linda? She's beautiful.'

**0:15:55**

**KR:** Look at those gorgeous legs. Look at you, wearing your wild and weird clothes, in your orange boiler suits.' And I used to say 'Because I don't want to be like that! I want to wear shoes that feel comfortable, and I like what I wear.' 'Well, you don't look feminine.' And when I asked for a wage rise once he said, 'This to you should be pin money. You should be married with children.' I said 'Well, I don't want to get married and have children. I just want to be myself. I'm only in my early 20s.' 'No, you should learn to be more ladylike.' Oh, it is... Misogyny was just absolutely horrendous. And it got worse, and the more he hit at me, the more that I got really, really angry with him. So, basically, when he was off on holiday, it was fantastic. We just had a whale of a time. But everyone else was really, really nice. I still know Dave, who was my rep, [I] still know him. Because I had an exhibition at... when I finished college, at Bradford University, and I didn't realise he was a friend of my good friend Martin, and he turned up, and he was like, 'Kate!' And I was like, 'Yes!' So yeah.

**0:17:22**

**LMI:** So there was three of you in this team? And was your boss just the boss of the three of you, or was he boss of more people than that?

**KR:** He was boss of the point paper guy and us three. So we were like the core team that got *everything* to the looms. So we were quite crucial, our little team, and he was head of that.

**LMI:** So did you ever have any confrontations with him?

**KR:** Yes, all the time! Yes, yeah, he was an incredible bully. He didn't like me at all. And I didn't like him, because I didn't conform to his idea of what women should be. And, I mean, there was an example one time. I used to make his tea. And... well, John and I took it in turns to make his tea.

**0:18:16**

**KR:** He preferred it if I did it, because it was demeaning for me. So, one time he said, 'Oh, we've got this big meeting. We've got loads of...the head of Marks and Spence is coming in. We've got all these various characters coming. There's going to be a big meeting. Would you make the tea cake [?] because the tea lady's off on holiday?' And I went, 'No I won't.' And he said 'You will make the tea.' I said 'Oh okay then I'll make the tea.' Now I had this outfit which I loved and it was bright yellow and it had huge flocked pink roses on it. It was *so* loud! And it looked like a giant pair of pyjamas. It was just mad. So I thought 'I'll wear that.' I remember the day well, I got on the bus and the bus driver said, 'Hey up love you've still got your jim jams on!'

**0:19:06**

**KR:** 'These are not pyjamas this is a designer suit!' Anyway, I got there and I went and made the tea, and I put the biscuits on plates, and I put it on this little tea trolley and I rolled it in and everybody's all.... They're all suited and booted, and I just shouted...

**LMI:** All men?

**KR:** All men. And I just shouted 'Hey up! Tea's up!' really loud and rattled everything and gave them all the tea. Boy, did I get told off for that!

**LMI:** Did you care?

**KR:** No, not at all. It made me howl with laughter. My colleague and I, we just absolutely killed ourselves laughing. Yeah, because he was on my side, was John.

**LMI:** So tell me about John.

**KR:** John was an amazing designer as well. He was gay, but kind of reined it in a bit so the boss never found out. And he used to go away for... every weekend he was away at wild parties. And he'd often go to London and come back...and it was the time of Wham! And he said that he had been seeing George Michael. And I said 'Don't be daft. He's not gay!' And he went 'Oh, he is.' So John always had, on a Monday morning...I couldn't wait for Monday mornings, because you get these incredible tales. Like he used to go to parties at Russell Harty's house in Giggleswick. Yeah, yeah so he used to have great times.

**0:20:49**

**KR:** Yeah, he was fabulous, was John. He was so witty and funny. For example, I used to get The Guardian nearly every day, and he used to mess with the newspaper just to make me laugh. So he would cut out the headlines and things when I wasn't looking. I was probably in the projector room doing my point papers! And when I came back and it got to lunchtime and I turned the pages and he would have altered the headlines, changed things, and it was hysterical. But I do remember the absolute joy of getting to lunchtime, opening the paper,

and there was an article about this moving Madonna, in, I think it was **Ballyskinin** or somewhere, and she had been seen jittering about in some sort of, I don't know, not catacombs, but in a cave somewhere.

**0:21:43**

**LMI:** A statue?

**KR:** A statue, yeah. She was made of reinforced concrete, which was quite funny. But anyway, so what he'd done is he'd cut out this picture of the Madonna and then stuck it onto card, put it back in its place and then got various elastic bands and paper clips so when I opened the paper this Madonna went 'Woo!' and moved, and it was fantastic! And it was just... oh it just made me laugh so much. I wouldn't have stayed there as long if it wasn't for John and the rest of the other people. And then, because I smoked, I used to go outside, so I'd meet all the guys that worked downstairs in the mill, because we were upstairs. And they were just a fabulous set of people, really, really interesting. And sometimes we used to go down, John and I, just to go have a chat with them. And we'd go into where they were weaving all the cloth, and you had to have ear plugs in. But they didn't have ear plugs, and they could all lip read. It was amazing! Yeah, they were just a fabulous set of people. And it was just so sad when it... later in the '80s, it shut down. Obviously it was cheaper to send all this production over to China and India.

**LMI:** So, you'd left by then, presumably?

**KR:** I'd left by then and I'd gone to Bradford College to do my degree.

**LMI:** Did you know people who were still working there when it closed?

**KR:** Yeah, John and Linda were still there. Yeah, yeah. So it's like all those skills, those incredible skills, gone. I mean now with Jacquard, it's just incredible. You do your design on a computer; it repeats it for you and then it sends the information to the loom. So you could actually in a day you could get fabric woven Whereas then, it was this huge long...

**LMI:** Have you seen that being done?

**0:23:45**

**KR:** Yeah, because they used to have one of the looms at Bradford College. And I was just 'What?!' Yeah, I don't I mean...

**LMI:** Does it take the skill out of doing it?

**KR:** Well, this is a debate isn't it? It's quite interesting. I suppose it puts more emphasis on getting the design right. I don't know. I don't know.

**LMI:** So did the guys on the shop floor, on the factory floor, did they tell you what they thought of your designs?



**KR:** They often used to say, 'Oh we like, we like this one Kate, we like the roses.' It was, you know, if they enjoyed the design, I guess it made their job a little bit more interesting. They didn't like the shirt designs much, they were boring. Although I did create one, and it was a really, really... it was for GB shirting... and it was in stripes, and I did a very very tiny design down each stripe and it, obviously for men. So what I did was, I did cigarettes, beer and televisions. And you could only... and unless you went and held it up to your face and really scrutinised, you wouldn't have been able to tell. But that was my little inside joke about the guys that would be wearing these shirts.

**LMI:** And did the guys on the looms realise what you'd done?

**0:25:00**

**KR:** Yeah, they could see it.

**LMI:** That's fascinating. What about the management, did they realise what you'd done?

**KR:** Well, you see, my boss was more interested in the weaves and the fit and all the rest of it. And as long as it repeated, and it looked okay he didn't realize what I'd done. Remember he only had one eye.

**LMI:** Oh yeah.

**KR:** Yeah, so he wasn't... and as long as the reps liked it... and it must have just gone past a rep and they went, 'Yeah, that's fine. Yeah, that's okay.' So, GB shirting.

**LMI:** I love the idea of a secret design.

**0:25:35**

**KR:** Yes.

**LMI:** A secret bit of design. Did you do anything else like that?

**KR:** I didn't, I don't think. I do remember... it was quite an odd sensation when you're in your early 20s and you go into Marks and Spencer's and you see your designs there. I remember I used to, my mum lived in Stainforth, and I used to go out on an evening if I went to stay with her in Settle. And I remember one girl who was an absolute bitch to me. Why she took against me I've no idea. Anyway, one night we were out in Settle, and she saw me, and she just looked down on me. And she was wearing a dress that she'd obviously got from Topshop or Chelsea Girl. And the design was mine. And I just saw her in the toilets, and I said, 'Beautiful dress!' and she went 'Thank you! I don't think you could afford this!' I said, 'Probably not, but the design is mine.' And that was great.

**LMI:** What did she say?

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**KR:** She just went, 'What?!' And was furious and stormed off. But it was an interesting... when I look back on it now, I think, 'What a responsibility and what a joy to be able to design stuff and see your work out there at such a young age.' It was a fantastic education, art education. And I think that if I'd done it the other way around and done a textile degree first, I don't think I would have enjoyed it as much.

**LMI:** So who taught you when you went into the mill?

**KR:** It was Linda and it was my German boss.

**LMI:** They showed you how to do it all?

**KR:** Yeah, yeah, which I loved.

**LMI:** What happened to Linda?

**0:27:18**

**KR:** I saw her wearing cycling gear about ten years ago on a train with a bike, a racer. And she was still glamorous! I don't know how her hair had stayed in place on this racer, you know, with all the gear on. She looked immaculate. As she always did.

**LMI:** Did you talk to each other?

**KR:** No, she saw me and pulled a face. So I thought 'I shan't bother.' I don't know what happened to her at all. Yeah, and... it was a really fascinating job.

**LMI:** So was it, did you have a sense of community there?

**KR:** We did. We all went out for lunch on a Friday. We all kind of, well, John and I especially used to go out together, if he wasn't down in London or in Giggleswick. I used to go stop at his house. And we used to go out on the town. And then I used to go stay in Leeds with him, and then we'd go to The Warehouse, which was the most brilliant nightclub ever. It was good. Yeah, it was Mark Almond on the door going...and if you didn't make an effort and be fairly creative about what you were wearing, he used to say, 'Bugger off to Cinderella Rockefellers!' So he was, and then obviously he gravitated towards being a DJ. But it was just a great time.

**0:28:33**

**LMI:** And what about the, I mean, did you do anything with the kind of people on the shop floor as well?

**KR:** We did Christmas parties and that was about it. They tried to keep us separate.

**LMI:** Every mill seems to have had a Christmas party.

**KR:** Yes, yes. Rather drunken affairs they were. Yeah, yeah.

**LMI:** And presumably because it was part of a big conglomerate, I mean I've talked to one or two people where the mill owner would come in every day, and so everybody knew who he was, and he would talk to everybody, but you didn't have that, you were part of a big, much bigger...

**0:29:14**

**KR:** Well, we had old Mr Fletcher, who seems to have been there since Victorian times. And he had a big old book. And about once every two months, we had to go to a very, very serious meeting with old Mr Fletcher, who would shuffle in, and he'd get this big leather bound book and he'd open it up and go, 'The number of picks woven this three quarters of a year is 25,000.' We'd all go, 'Ooh!', And what it all meant I have no idea! And then he'd very solemnly close the book and say that the meeting was now closed. And I don't know what it was about at all. But he just had this enormous leather book where he kept a record of all the picks. And the other interesting thing about the mill is, on the very top floor was... they've kept every design since the mill had opened, in something like 1880, or something like that. So that was... when we were allowed... well we used to have to take our designs in bundles, number them and then put them into the archive upstairs.

**0:30:32**

**KR:** So you'd go up to the archive, and John would say, 'Shall we just say that we can't find which bit it is, and just spend some time looking at the other designs?' Well, that was fascinating. It was really, really incredible, just going through.

**LMI:** And had they always woven the same kind of material?

**KR:** Yeah, it had always been Jacquard, yeah always. These mills were quite... the looms were actually quite old, yeah, they were lovely.

**LMI:** So you were looking at designs for sort of Victorian curtains?

**KR:** Yes, yeah, it was brilliant. The deco designs were absolutely beautiful, [I] really liked those. And because we were part of Courtauld's, they invited us to London as well. So we used to do a week out of every year and go to London. And they'd put us up in a posh hotel. And then we used to go to their headquarters where they'd got an even bigger archive, and we could use that archive just to get inspiration.

**0:31:32**

**KR:** And so we'd go in there, and I remember I went – orange boiler suit time – and I had a big tube with all my pencils in and everything. And I got bored on the train, so I started sharpening all my pencils so they're all dead sharp by the time we got to the Courtauld's office. The plastic end came off my tube and all the pencil sharpenings and all the pencils

went over this posh carpet in reception. And Linda turned around and said, 'Typical!' It was really really funny, it was great.

**LMI:** So you were able to get a sense of fashions over quite a long period?

**KR:** Yeah, and the other weird thing about the job was that the mill used to pay into a service that could tell you what the fashions were going to be 18 months hence. And you were given your colorways, fashion, everything. So it was like a fashion predictor. And it kind of amazed me. I thought, you know, you have in your head this idea that fashion kind of happens, with design and input and all the rest of it. No! There's men in suits sat around going, 'What will the fashion be a year next autumn?'

**LMI:** And was it accurate?

**KR:** Yes, it was absolutely accurate. Because everybody... all the design companies bought into these fashion predictors, who predicted the fashion. So it was them that were setting the fashion trends, which was really, really odd. I found it - 'Oh, okay then,' - Very strange.

**0:33:17**

**LMI:** That's really interesting.

**KR:** Yeah.

**LMI:** I'm quite fascinated by the fact that... what you were talking about computers. And like, so now you could do what you were doing in that factory, on this tabletop.

**KR:** Yes.

**LMI:** And send it to Indonesia or wherever.

**KR:** Yeah. And for it to be woven.

**LMI:** So do you know if there are people doing those kinds of designs in this country today?

**KR:** Yes. You'll often see, well it will say, 'Designed in Britain.' It's not made in Britain; it's just designed in Britain. So basically, you will do your design on the computer, wing it over to Indonesia or India or China where it gets woven, and they can be weaving it within the hour. Which is just mind-blowing. It's incredible. But this is globalisation.

**LMI:** It is.

**0:34:14**

**KR:** Whether it's a good thing or a bad thing, but I just... I know in Germany around that time, because it kind of broke my heart that, you know, all our industry was shipped out. And I know that in Germany the government kind of intervened, and protected a lot of their industries from the kind of... the influx, the kind of... globalization, the way it kind of

destroyed a lot of industry. And they're still weaving. And there's...you know like places like Switzerland, Austria and all that.

**LMI:** So it kind of preserved the skills?

**KR:** It preserved the skills, yeah. But in the '80s it was just 'Who will do it for a lash of the whip and a bowl of rice?' Yeah, so it's an interesting...

**LMI:** So were you aware of all of the mills closing at that time?

**KR:** Yeah.

**LMI:** I mean obviously we all heard about mills burning down and that kind of thing, but the loss of an industry, and you were working in textiles must have been quite...

**KR:** Yeah, because we were very well aware of the other mills that were around us and what they were producing. And obviously there was some mills were making ties, weaving silk ties, which was... I think that was somewhere near Airedale Hospital, and then there was all the mills in Keighley.

**0:35:38**

**KR:** And it was just a tragedy that they all just disappeared. I mean, the looms could be easily fitted with... you know, computerized. So... and they were just gone.

**LMI:** Somebody told me the other day about shipping them all off, shipping the machinery off to...

**KR:** Yeah, that's what happened. Yeah. And the actual mill where I worked is now luxury flats.

**LMI:** Oh, is it?

**0:36:06**

**KR:** Yes.

**LMI:** In Steeton?

**KR:** Yes.

**LMI:** Oh, I'll have to go and look at it. What was the name of the mill again?

**KR:** C.H. Fletchers.

**LMI:** And can you tell me exactly where it is now? What road was it on?

**KR:** Oh gosh, I can't remember the name of the road. It's the top of the hill...when you get to that little junction in Steeton.

**LMI:** Oh, I know.

**KR:** Yeah, you know when you drive past the hospital, and you get to that junction and... if you're coming from the hospital, it's on your left-hand side.

**LMI:** I'll go and take a photograph of the luxury flats.

**KR:** You can take me; I've not been back since.

**LMI:** Thanks Kate, that's great. Great storytelling there. Thank you so much.

**KR:** I'm not very good.

**LMI:** It was great!

**LMI:** So Kate, tell me about the trade union in the mill.

**KR:** Right, the trade union in the mill was actually quite strong. And my rep, Dave, he was also our union rep for the top floor. And he helped us get a wage rise, because we were just on pin money, it was really, really shocking. And he helped us get a wage rise. And when I eventually left, and I was sort of bullied out of the job by this misogynistic boss, and Dave actually said to me, he said, 'In this present climate, we can't fight it because it's a really difficult thing to prove that he is a misogynist and he's bullied you out.'

**KR:** So he said, 'The best thing you can do is just resign, leave with your head held high and I'll support you as much as I can, and I'll get you a decent severance.' So that's basically what happened. But everybody was a member of the union. It was a really good thing to be.

**LMI:** Were there any disputes or anything?

**KR:** Most disputes were actually solved. Dave was a fantastic negotiator. Everybody loved him. He was like, 'Whey hey', bit of a wide boy, but he was adored by management. So, there was never any strikes or any disputes. People did get their wage rises that they wanted.

**LMI:** So what was the union?

**KR:** I cannot remember. Was it Boilermakers? I honestly can't remember. Yeah, it's a long time ago. I've always been a member of a union, always, since I worked at ASDA, when I left school. And somebody slipped on a sausage!

**KR:** She broke a leg in three places, it was serious! And the union rep said, 'Let this be a lesson to you all, you must all be a member of the union, because you may slip on a sausage.' Who knows, because she got six months pay. Anyway there you go.