

**Maria Hodson – Transcript**

*Audio Quality: Ok. Sometimes speakers are a bit indistinct and talk over each other  
Transcript focuses on immigration*

**00:00:00**

**LMI:** So I'm sat here with Maria Hodson and her daughter Vanda. And we're going to talk today about Maria's experiences of working in Bradford's textile industry, in...when did you start work?

**00:00:14**

**MH:** 1950.

**LMI:** In 1950. So, and where... Maria's from Italy originally. Whereabouts in Italy did you come over from?

**MH:** Well, it's just outside Rome.

**LMI:** Just outside Rome?

**00:00:26**

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Oh, that's great. And you came over to the UK in 1950. And did you come straight to Bradford? Yes. Did you know there was work in Bradford?

**MH:** I had an idea, because my manageress from the firm I worked, she came over to fetch me.

**LMI:** Oh, right, so you had a friend here already?

**MH:** Yes.

**LMI:** And where did you come to in Bradford?

**MH:** ?

**00:00:56**

**V:** So what happened was...where she lived in a little farming village called Arpino...outside the town hall there were a billboard advertising for jobs over in England. And my mum's younger sister wanted to come. And my grandma said, 'You can only go if Maria comes with you.' So my mum went, 'Ah,ok.' It were only meant to be for two years, actually, wasn't it? So they came over here. And they lived in Baildon with a lot of other Italian ladies in a hostel.

**00:01:26**

**LMI:** Ah, right, so you came over with...?

**00:01:29**

**MH:** And then, when the two years was over, they paid the fare to go back home.

**LMI:** They paid the fare to go back home?

**00:01:39**

**MH:** Because we only came for two years, you know.

**LMI:** But you didn't go back home?

**00:01:44**

**MH:** No, because we met...

**V:** She met my dad.

**LMI:** You met Mr Hodson, did you?

**MH:** Yeah. We got married. That was it.

**00:01:52**

**LMI:** So, what mill did you work in?

**00:01:56**

**MH:** C.F. Taylor.

**LMI:** Say it again.

**MH:** C.F. Taylor.

**V:** C.F. Taylor's.

**LMI:** C. F. Taylor's. Ok. And is that where you met your husband?

**MH:** No.

**LMI:** No? Where did you meet?

**MH:** He used to live by us.

**LMI:** Oh, right.

**00:02:11**

**V:** Tell him how you met my dad, though. On the bus.

**00:02:15**

**MH:** On the bus. We went to Bradford. And on the way, went for a bus. And man sat next to me, started chatting, you know, like he...

**LMI:** He started talking to you?

**00:02:29**

**MH:** That was it.

**LMI:** That was it. Was it love at first sight?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Oh, how lovely, how lovely.

**MH:** So I've got two children, four grandchildren. They're all grown up.

**LMI:** And they all speak Italian?

**00:02:48**

**MH:** Do you know, sometimes I get a little bit...

**LMI:** of Italian?

**MH:** ...mistake.

**LMI:** Oh, right.

**00:02:56**

**MH:** I want to talk to my family in Italy. I finish in English. But in Italy I've got a brother (who just died). He was here in Nottingham.

**00:03:07**

**LMI:** He came over as well to work, did he?

**00:03:11**

**MH:** Yeah. He was in Nottingham with two children.

**LMI:** And so just...was there no work in Italy?

**00:03:21**

**MH:** Yeah, there was. But the trouble is, when they're young, you want an adventure.

**LMI:** Oh, you wanted an adventure. Oh, nice. What a lovely... Well, you certainly had one of those.

**MH:** I did.

**00:03:33**

**V:** Her grandson, my son Robert, he speaks fluent Italian, and he lives in Rome.

**LMI:** Oh, how lovely.

**V:** And he teaches maths. He's been there for three years.

**LMI:** Oh, how brilliant.

**V:** Yeah.

**LMI:** I've been to Italy many times.

**V:** Have you?

**00:03:48**

**LMI:** Yeah, to Viareggio, north of Pisa.

**MH:** Oh, yeah.

**LMI:** So... You got a job in C.F. Taylor?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** And where was that? Whereabouts in Bradford was it?

**00:04:00**

**MH:** Down there.

**V:** ?

**LMI:** Oh, right, in Baildon.

**MH:** Baildon.

**LMI:** Baildon/Shibley borders?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Oh ok. And what kind of textiles work were you doing?

**00:04:10**

**MH:** Well, mine, they call it...oh gosh, what do you call it?

**V:** Spinning, you did.

**00:04:15**

**MH:** Well, more or less, yeah.

**V:** Sort of like on a spinning machine.

**LMI:** You were spinning the yarn.

**00:04:23**

**V:** Yeah. It were wool textiles.

**LMI:** And what was that like?

**MH:** It was lovely. I enjoyed it. But then of course I got married. And she come. I don't go to work anymore.

**LMI:** And that was the end of it, was it?

**MH:** Yeah. The end of my work.

**LMI:** So how many years did you work in the mill for?

**MH:** Ten.

**LMI:** Ten years?

**MH:** In the mill.

**LMI:** So from 1950...

**MH:** To '60.

**LMI:** So 1950 to 1960.

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** And was it very different from the beginning to the end?

**MH:** It was... a nice job, you know.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** To do it. Because I couldn't carry on... My husband... he was engineering. Pattern-making engineering.

**LMI:** Pattern-making? Yeah.

**00:05:18**

**MH:** Which, in those days, it was well paid.

**LMI:** So you didn't have to work?

**MH:** No.

**LMI:** Did you miss working in the mill?

**MH:** I did miss the company.

**00:05:28**

**LMI:** The company, yeah.

**MH:** I missed a lot of people.

**00:05:31**

**LMI:** So were you working with all women? Or was it a mix?

**00:05:36**

**MH:** Well, it was a mix, so they were all...Everybody mixed, you know.

**00:05:41**

**V:** Men and women.

**LMI:** Men and women together. And was it a spinning mill only? Or did they do weaving as well?

**MH:** Spinning mill and..., yeah.

**LMI:** They didn't do any weaving?

**V:** Did they do a weaving there?

**00:05:52**

**MH:** Yeah, they did weave.

**LMI:** Oh, right. And what kind of... It was wool?

**MH:** Wool.

**LMI:** And what did they manufacture? What did they make? What kind of cloth?

**00:06:03**

**MH:** Well, they made wool to send, to make clothes.

**00:06:08**

**LMI:** Oh, of course.

**V:** Was it just balls of wool? Did they just make balls of wool?

**LMI:** Oh, so they didn't do any weaving.

**MH:** No. Oh, they sent it to next mill.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** To weave it.

**LMI:** Oh, they sent it to another mill to weave it? Oh, ok. And do you know what kind of... Was it to make all different kinds of cloth? Material?

**00:06:32**

**MH:** Well, they just make mostly men work. Men...

**V:** Menswear.

**00:06:38**

**LMI:** Oh, menswear. Ok. All right, ok. And so, did you have many friends in the mill?

**MH:** They were all friends.

**LMI:** They were all friends?

**MH:** You got to be all friends.

**LMI:** Was it a big mill or a small mill? **00:06:51**

**MH:** Oh, very big mill.

**LMI:** Very big.

**MH:** Yeah, very big. There were 100 people used to work on there. **00:06:59**

**LMI:** Oh, that's good. So was it very different from life in Italy for you? **00:07:03**

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** In what way was it different? **00:07:07**

**LMI:** Well, the jobs, there weren't so much jobs and I didn't dare.

**V:** Well, mum, you would have ended up working on a farm, wouldn't you, probably?

**MH:** I don't know. Well, I was born on a farm.

**V:** [?] She was born on a farm, she probably...[?] **00:07:23**

**LMI:** You were born on a farm. You're a farmer's girl, are you?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Farm girl.

**V:** Yes. She had seven siblings.

**LMI:** So, what did you think of Bradford when you came to it? **00:07:36**

**MH:** You know, I loved it.

**LMI:** You loved it? **00:07:39**

**MH:** [?] It was different.



**LMI:** I bet the weather was different.

**MH:** Well, there were a lot of things to go to, a lot of things to see.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** Yeah.

**V:** Yeah. In fact, her sister that she came over with just lived up the road there, she's sadly died now, but she met her husband and...

**00:07:58**

**LMI:** Oh, so it was a big family move then, was it?

**V:** Yeah.

**MH:** Lots of [us] went back, you know, after two years, because that was the contract. Two years and then they come back.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** But whether they pay the fare to come back... We went back for two weeks.

**LMI:** You went back for two weeks?

**MH:** For two weeks.

**LMI:** And then you got homesick for Bradford?

**MH:** We waited to come back.

**00:08:24**

**LMI:** Couldn't wait to come back. That's amazing.

**00:08:30**

**MH:** But we had the fare paid.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** Why not?

**LMI:** Exactly. And did you fly, or did you do train? Or boats? Or..,

**MH:** We went by boat.

**LMI:** Yeah. And that must be quite a long journey.

**MH:** Well...

**LMI:** A few days?

**MH:** No, two days.

**LMI:** Two days. Oh, ok. And so, what was it like working in the mill? Was it...was the conditions difficult? Was it hard work?

**00:08:57**

**MH:** No, no, it was very easy. Very easy machinery.

**00:09:01**

**LMI:** So you were good with the machinery, were you?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** You knew how to operate it. Did it take very long to learn?

**MH:** No.

**LMI:** No? And what about accidents? Did anybody have an accident?

**MH:** No, not really.

**LMI:** Really? It was quite safe, was it?

**00:09:18**

**MH:** And like I said about our accident, you know, that... the trouble is that now everything is gone.

**LMI:** Yes, it has.

**MH:** You forget about mill, forget about these things.

**LMI:** I don't think children realise, today, how much Bradford was a place of spinning and weaving and textiles.

**MH:** Oh yeah, well, Saltaire.

**LMI:** Yes, exactly.

**MH:** You know Saltaire?

**LMI:** Yes, I live near there.

**MH:** Oh, do you?

**LMI:** I only live down the road.

**00:09:49**

**MH:** Saltaire there were a lots and lots of them. Foreign people.

**V:** Yeah, foreign people.

**LMI:** Yeah, that's right, yeah. Are you still a foreign person?

**MH:** Yeah. No, but not now.

**LMI:** No, no.

**MH:** No. I changed it straight away.

**LMI:** You changed your nationality?

**00:10:06**

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Oh, well done, well done.

**V:** When they got married, she became a British citizen.

**MH:** Well, when you married, you got to be same, don't you?

**LMI:** Yeah. Yes.

**00:10:19**

**MH:** See, a lot of them didn't want the tour, they got married. Wife wants to go on away, husband to go another way, when he's travelling. But I didn't want that.

**LMI:** So were there lots of other Italian ladies working in the mill as well?

**MH:** Oh gosh, there were hundreds.

**LMI:** Hundreds of them?

**00:10:35**

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Hundreds of you. From all over Italy?

**00:10:39**

**MH:** Yeah. German.

**LMI:** And Germans as well?

**MH:** Switzerland.

**LMI:** It's always been the story of Bradford's mills. People come to them from all over the world, don't they?

**V:** Absolutely.

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** And it was a nice way to work and earn a wage, was it? Was it good money?

**MH:** In those days it was ok.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** But, like I said, we got about £3 a week, in those days.

**LMI:** £3 a week. Well, that was quite a lot of money then.

**MH:** And we had to pay where we lived.

**LMI:** Yes.

**MH:** Which was plenty enough.

**LMI:** So did you all cook together and live together?

**MH:** No, no, no. There was staff. We didn't do any cooking.

**LMI:** Oh, in the hostel?

**00:11:26**

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Oh, there was staff in the hostel?

**MH:** Yeah.

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

**00:11:31**

**MH:** Oh, yeah.

**LMI:** And they cooked for you?

**MH:** Yeah. They cook and they clean there.

**00:11:35**

**LMI:** What was their cooking like?

**00:11:39**

**MH:** ...Well, it's just British cooking.

**LMI:** But you come from Italy. You come from the home of cooking! And you had to have English cooking.

**MH:** [?]

**V:** You've got two funny stories to tell him, haven't you? One when you were pretending to that farmer that spaghetti were growing. Tell him that. That's quite funny, is that.

**MH:** Oh, well...

**LMI:** Go on, tell me the story.

**MH:** Well, there were lots of people in there, in this hostel. They kept...Everyone there, they kept say, 'How do you grow spaghetti in Italy?'

**LMI:** How do you grow spaghetti in Italy?

**MH:** How do you grow it?

**LMI:** So you made it up, did you?

**00:12:22**

**MH:** We did.

**LMI:** So what did you say?

**V:** Well, it's not what they said, it's what they did.

**MH:** We went to shop. We bought a packet of spaghetti.

**LMI:** Dried spaghetti?

**00:12:35**

**MH:** Yeah, from there. Everyone there did. We used to go there. Lift up a little bit.

**LMI:** What, you put it in the ground?

**00:12:43**

**V:** Yeah. And then [?] went on lifting it up a bit so it looked like it was growing.

**LMI:** Oh, I see. So you put it in the ground and then you pulled it out bit by bit to make it look like it was growing? That's hilarious! That's hilarious! Did he believe you? Did he believe it?

**00:12:58**

**MH:** He believed it.

**LMI:** Excellent.

**MH:** We had to tell him. We explained to him.

**00:13:00**

**LMI:** And so when he found out, what did he think? What did he say?

**00:13:09**

**MH:** Oh, they laughed.

**LMI:** That is hilarious. That is hilarious.

**V:** Really funny. Funny. And also, when she first came over here, they didn't sell any foreign foods. No pasta, no nothing. And then your friend went out one day and went to the shop, didn't she, and bought something, what she thought was spaghetti. Do you remember?

**00:13:32**

**MH:** No, there were...

[Laughter]

**LMI:** What was it? Was it edible?

**V:** It was.

**00:13:37**

**MH:** We went to Morrisons in Bradford. There's a packet full. A little packet.

**LMI:** Packets of?

**00:13:45**

**MH:** [?] Like a spaghetti. We buy a packet.

**V:** You know that that looks like birds' nests?

**LMI:** Oh, I know, yeah.

**00:13:53**

**MH:** We did coconut stuff, so we took the stuff, so we took the stuff, and then we'd give it to the hostel. And when they came over, we opened it, it was Shredded Wheat.

**V:** Shredded Wheat! [Laughs [?]]

**00:14:05**

**LMI:** It was Shredded Wheat? Oh, hilarious! It's like a distant relation. I mean, it all comes from wheat.

**V:** Well, yes. Exactly. And it looks similar.

**00:14:18**

**LMI:** Oh, that's hilarious. So, did you have lots of things to do? Did you go out in the evening? Did you do lots of...?

**MH:** Yes. We were free, went to pictures anyway. We used to go to Bradford dancing.

**LMI:** Dancing?

**00:14:32**

**MH:** In Bradford.

**LMI:** Where did you go in Bradford to dance?

**MH:** That one that was opposite the...

**00:14:41**

**LMI:** Where the night... big dance halls were there?

**MH:** In Manningham Lane

**00:14:43**

**LMI:** Oh, I know the one on Manningham Lane. The one that...

**V:** Mecca

**00:14:47**

**LMI:** ...became Mecca. Yeah, it must be. Yeah.

**MH:** We used to come there a lot.

**00:14:53**

**LMI:** That was big, that place. Huge.

**V:** Yeah, it was. It was massive. Tell him how you met me dad as well.

**MH:** I told him.

**00:15:00**

**LMI:** On the bus.

**MH:** I was on the bus.

**V:** Yeah, but I don't think you finished the story.

**LMI:** No.

**V:** So she'd gone to... She'd been into Bradford. And they got to Shipley centre and she felt a bit nauseous. So she decided to get off the bus and just walk down to the end of Green Lane, where she lived. And my dad followed her.

**MH:** Yeah, but he was sat next to me.

**V:** No, he was sat next to her. So they were chatting on the bus. So he gets off with her and then he walked her down home and the rest...because he was home from leave. He were based in Egypt.

**LMI:** Oh, he was a soldier, was he?

**V:** Yeah.

**00:15:30**

**LMI:** My dad was in Egypt in the war.



**V:** Oh, was he?

**LMI:** Or just after the war.

**V:** Oh, right, ok.

**LMI:** He got TB there.

**V:** Oh, did he? Oh, crikey.

**LMI:** So, did it all feel very strange and different to you? Coming to Bradford?

**MH:** Well, when you're young, you don't think it's different.

**00:15:49**

**LMI:** Ok, when you're young. And what about the language? Did you speak any English when you came?

**MH:** Well, there was...Well, what was the word? Silly one, you know. But we're lightning.[learning?]

**LMI:** So did you just pick it up or did you go for lessons?

**00:16:10**

**MH:** Well, there was a [?] college.

**LMI:** Oh, right.

**MH:** We used to go there. But the trouble was, they wanted to teach us English when they learning me Italian.

**V:** They were more interested in learning Italian than teaching them English.

**LMI:** Oh, I see.

**MH:** There was an Italian priest, Catholic priest, in Bradford.

**00:16:32**

**LMI:** Was there an Italian church as well?

**MH:** Yeah. [?] He used to come into the hostel.

**V:** Yeah. To teach you English.

**LMI:** Yeah, because there was... used to be...I did...there is a kind of Italian group in Bradford.

**V:** Oh yeah, there were.

**MH:** A big one.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**00:16:48**

**V:** My mum's sister, my auntie, she used to go all... my mum never did.

**LMI:** Because I tried to get in touch with them recently but none of their numbers or emails work anymore.

**MH:** Well, they've all gone.

**00:16:57**

**LMI:** I don't know if they've disbanded.

**V:** Yeah, probably old age...

**MH:** There's the one with the kettle I think, I don't know what happened now.

**00:17:04**

**LMI:** Oh right.

**MH:** Because I was lost touch with everybody.

**LMI:** So did you stay in touch with all the Italian women that you were in the hostel with? And did they stay friends?

**MH:** Just a friend. And they... Well... There were some silly, silly Italian people. Hulk. Hulk only. And they weren't...

**LMI:** They were silly people, did you say?

**MH:** Yeah.

**V:** That she didn't really get on with. But she did have some really good friends. I mean, there's one... Amelia, that was your best friend, wasn't she? She lives in Baildon.

00:17:36

**MH:** [?] I know one or two now who got dementia.

**V:** Dementia.

**LMI:** Oh yes, yeah. And your sister is no longer with you?

**MH:** No.

**LMI:** And she lived nearby. So did...

**MH:** Just up here.

**LMI:** You were very close friends, were you?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** So you worked for ten years in the mill?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** And you enjoyed it?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Have you got any special memories? What did you do at Christmas?

**MH:** Christmas?

00:18:07

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** Oh, we used to love Christmas. Because there were such a lot of people in there. They were under a disaster.

**LMI:** Yeah. So did you have a party in the mill?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** And what was that like? What did you do?

**MH:** It was very, very nice. I think they used to do [it] for us, to make a welcome.

**LMI:** Who made the welcome?

**MH:** They...

**LMI:** The bosses?

**00:18:33**

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Oh, right. So did they provide a meal for you?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** And did they decorate the place?

**00:18:42**

**MH:** Yeah. They had a big room, you know, where we used to go for lunch.

**LMI:** Oh, the canteen.

**MH:** Well...Yeah.

**LMI:** And did you close down in the summer for a holiday for a week or two weeks? Did the mill shut completely?

**00:19:01**

**MH:** Yeah, we used to go. We used to go to...once we went to Blackpool. Once we went to outside of York. we used to go.

**LMI:** So, did lots of you go?

**00:19:11**

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** On a trip?

**MH:** Yeah.

**LMI:** And did you stay over?

**MH:** We stayed for a week or two.

**00:19:16**

**LMI:** Oh, ok. Oh, that's very good.

**MH:** And then come back.

**LMI:** That's very good. And then you had your daughter. Daughters.

**MH:** [?]

**V:** Son. I've got a brother. Four years younger than me.

**00:19:24**

**LMI:** Oh, right.

**00:19:31**

**MH:** Then I was home.

**LMI:** And so did you go and work at a mill?

**MH:** No.

**V:** I didn't, no. I went to work for, well, I went to work for Damart, that was my first full time job.

**LMI:** Oh, right, well, that's a mill.

**V:** So I suppose... yeah, it is.

**00:19:42**

**LMI:** It is. So were you selling...?

**V:** I was data inputting.

**LMI:** Oh right, ok.

**V:** And then I went down to the Inland Revenue for ten years.

**LMI:** Which they're knocking down.

**00:19:52**

**MH:** It's not there now, is it?

**V:** No, no, they've just knocked it down.

**LMI:** It's half knocked down at the moment.

**V:** It's half knocked down. So I've got like a 40 year IT background, really.

**LMI:** Oh ok.

**00:20:02**

**MH:** Now she's a retired.

**V:** Now I'm retired from everything.

**00:20:06**

**LMI:** You don't look old enough to be retired.

**V:** Well, I'm 65 in two or three weeks.

**LMI:** Oh brilliant. You know that's not technically retired anymore, is it?

**00:20:11**

**V:** Well, no it's not. Well, 66 is my proper retirement age. But I was also a Labour councillor for 18 years.

**LMI:** Oh, were you?

**V:** Yeah, I've retired from that now as well.

**LMI:** Oh really? Oh, that's right because that's how I...because your name was in my address book.

**00:20:29**

**V:** Oh, that's right, yes it was, because you rang me about a postal vote or something.

**LMI:** I did, that's right, that's right. I didn't realise you'd been a councillor as well.

**V:** Yeah, yeah, I was 18 years. 18 years. And I worked for an MP for a couple of years.

**LMI:** Which one?

**00:20:42**

**V:** Imran Hussain, Bradford East

**LMI:** Oh right, yeah, yeah. Yeah, because I grew up in a really political family.

**V:** Oh, did you?

**00:20:49**

**LMI:** Yeah, my dad was an assistant general secretary of Newpea.

**V:** Oh, really?

**00:20:54**

**LMI:** Yeah. So he was one of the architects of the Winter of Discontent.

**V:** Oh, wow.

**LMI:** So he got a hate mail from everybody.

**V:** Well, I can imagine. Yeah, I bet.

**LMI:** All the people on the left said, 'You let Margaret Thatcher get elected.' All the people on the right said, 'You're a raving communist.'

**V:** [?] Well, thankfully now we're just down that middle at the moment, aren't we? Which is why we're doing all right. Yeah, that's interesting. Well, we should beat Philip Davies anyway.

**LMI:** One would think so. He's got a 5,000 majority, so... And he's got all his mates in the gambling industry, to bankroll him for the next few years.

**00:21:31**

**V:** He doesn't even live here. He lives in Cheshire.

**LMI:** No, it's true. I'm going to turn this off.

**V:** Sorry! Don't get me on politics.

**LMI:** Now, before I do that, is there anything else you want to tell me about your time working in the textile mills?

**MH:** I've had a good time and I've enjoyed myself.

**00:21:49**

**LMI:** Did you stop because you wanted to or because you had to?

**00:21:54**

**MH:** Well, I stopped working. Like I said, [when] Vanda was born.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** And...

**LMI:** You decided that was it?

**00:22:00**

**MH:** Yeah. Well, my husband said, 'Well, children, or working.' So I prefer to look after the children.

**LMI:** Yeah.

**MH:** [?]

**LMI:** Did you mind? Did you mind? Did you want to go back to work?

**MH:** No.

**LMI:** No. Quite happy being...

**00:22:16**

**MH:** Well, I had a... After she was born, my father-in-law, he was bedfast for 10 years before he died. So I used to spend my time going back and forward. To look after...

**LMI:** You were a carer for him.

**MH:** Yes.

**V:** I mean, she's great with kids, is my mum, because when she lived back home, so that her mum could go out to work, she's got two young twin sisters, and you used to look after them, didn't you?

**MH:** Yeah.

**V:** Rather than go out to work.

**00:22:48**

**LMI:** Sorry, who had the twin sisters?

**V:** She's got two twin sisters.

**LMI:** Oh, I see.

**V:** So that my grandma, her mum could go out to work, my mum stayed at home, and looked after...

**LMI:** Oh, I see.

**V:** In fact, she's got other interesting stories there as well. So one day she was sat, you know Italian kitchens are like, they're massive.



**LMI:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**V:** And she was sat in the kitchen and she had a twin on each knee. All of a sudden six German soldiers walked into the kitchen, emptied all the cupboards, never said a word to her, emptied all the cupboards, took everything out and just left.

**LMI:** Oh, wow.

**00:23:15**

**V:** I mean, that's quite scary.

**LMI:** It is.

**V:** There's other things, like my father, he was... because they were on a farm, he was sat under this nut tree, wasn't he, having a seat, just sitting on the floor. Went back home, five minutes after that, that tree got blown up.

**LMI:** Oh my God, so he could have...if he'd stayed there...

**00:23:28**

**V:** Yeah. I mean, things could have been so different. My mum got called up when she was 17, because they needed more women. So you couldn't get called up when you were 18. She'd got all her bag packed, everything ready to go. And I can't remember what day D-Day was. V-Day was, sorry...

**MH:** May

**V:** 5th of May...

**LMI:** VE Day

**00:23:45**

**V:** VE Day. And, say it was 9th of May for example, she had all the bags ready to go. And she was meant to be going on the following day. But she escaped from going to the army...

**LMI:** And of course that would have been a kind of..um.. would it have still been the fascist Italian army?

**V:** Yeah. Mussolini and all that.

**LMI:** Golly.

**V:** And she, they lived 20 minutes away from Monte Cassino as well.

**MH:** Yeah, not far from there.

**LMI:** Oh, really? Oh golly. That was a nightmare.

**V:** It was, it was terrible. So, you know, so, there for the grace of God kind of thing, you know.

**LMI:** Exactly. Exactly.

**MH:** We watched Monte Cassino when it blew up. [?]

**00:24:29**

**LMI:** Horrific. Horrific, wasn't it? Lots of people died.

: [?]

**V:** Yeah, it were awful.

**LMI:** Right, I *am* going to turn this off now. Listen, Vanda, thanks very much for telling me about your time coming over here and working in the mills. And if she remembers anything else, just send me an email or something.

**V:** Yeah, course I will, yeah,yeah.