

Mark McGlinchey - Transcription

Audio Quality: Lot of background noise throughout.

Transcript focuses on use of mills as theatre and film locations and family life

0:00:00

LMI: ...all that machinery in here and sort of sights and sounds of it. What did you think about the scale of the building?

MM: I mean obviously, I was like this big. And it was just, I'd never seen anything like it in my life. I was just... even now I regularly visit Salt's Mill, and they've got a new exhibition upstairs at the moment of David Hockney's longest piece. It's 90 foot long. And you see it, and I've never seen the space so open, that you could stand in the middle and look, and it's just a vast expanse of space on the fourth floor, and that way as well. And I go now and I think, 'Wow!' And when I worked in the theatre, Northern Broadside did productions in the derelict parts of the mill sometimes so that was interesting. I was in there, [and] I was thinking, I wonder if this is the room where my grandad worked or..

0:00:42

LMI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, I don't know. Do you know if people who worked in the mill, you know, if you were working the spinning part, would you be going into different parts of the factory?

MM: I don't know. I mean, that's something I don't know. I mean, today, most people, when you get a job, you end up doing a bit here and a bit there. But I would have thought, just from a perspective of how things worked back then, that if you were a lady who put the reels on and made sure... that's exactly what...

LMI: You'd have your specialism.

MM: That is it.

LMI: And you'd get very fast and skilled.

MM: Yeah, and you'd do that from the moment you walked in till the moment you left.

0:01:15

LMI: Yeah, yeah. Were there lots of people in [the] space then?

MM: Oh, there was loads.

LMI: Yeah.

MM: It was just, you know, it was really weird, because they'd say, 'Is this your grandson, John? Oh, here's 10 shillings, you know, get yourself some sweets or something.' Because my dad, he worked in Repton Foundry in Crossflats. And when my dad used to take me out, I used to end up coming out with pockets full of money!

0:01:51

LMI: Well, I bet that was a sight if you went to the foundry.

MM: We lived literally almost next door to the foundry. My mum would put me out in my pram when I was a baby, and I'd come in orange - from the rust. And you think, 'Oh my goodness.'

LMI: It's funny that, my dad used to be a steel fixer, and he used to come home from work everyday orange. And when he had a bath, there'd just be a big orange slick of water! It gets everywhere, rust!

0:02:21

LMI: So in terms of that sort of period of time when your grandfather worked there, what would that have been? When did he retire?

MM: He was there in the 1970s. Because it used to be quite good, because I was at school at Cottingley Manor. And sometimes I'd be waiting at the bus stop and I'd see my grandad coming along on his little motorbike. And I'd get a lift, and all my friends were like, 'Oh he's on a motorbike!' Not jealousy but it was quite cool, you know.

LMI: Yeah.

MM: Yeah, so he had road bikes and a motorcycle. When he actually met my grandma, she was still going back at the weekend to... what was left of her family, in Barnsley. And he used to cycle from Keighley to Barnsley to see her, and back.

0:03:07

LMI: So, had she worked in textile mills in Barnsley?

MM: No, the first mill she worked at, I don't know which one, but it would have been...

LMI: 'Cos there are a few, aren't there?

MM: No, she came from a mining family.

LMI: Oh, ok.

MM: She had 11 brothers and sisters, like my dad -he had 11 brothers and sisters as well. Irish Catholic family. And, yeah, what happened was, is her father died when she was young. She was raised by her mother until she was 11. And her mother died. And that's why they decided to come over here to find work. Because basically, they had nothing.

0:03:40

LMI: Ok. And so did she continue working in the mills?

MM: She did for a while, until she had my mum. As was traditional in those days.

LMI: Yeah, yeah. And did she go back when they were grown up?

MM: No, never went back.

LMI: Yeah, and where did she work then?

MM: I don't know which mill. I don't know.

LMI: Yeah, but a romantic place, so, whatever.

MM: How it happened is that my great-grandmother used to take in boarders.

0:04:17

LMI: Oh, okay.

MM: And for a while she was a boarder, and that's how she met...

LMI: Oh, okay, so it wasn't at work, it was...

MM: No, I mean, obviously much later on. Obviously when she was 11, that would have been slightly wrong.

LMI: No, no, no, yeah, of course. Okay, so when he retired, your grandfather, how old was he when he finished?

MM: He was 65.

LMI: 65, so a proper retirement age? And what sort of things did he do when he retired, if he'd been working there for a while?

MM: His garden was immaculate. He spent so much time - he used to grow vegetables, seasonal vegetables. It was always quite amazing, because when we went down, you know, you knew it was a certain time of year because you'd get new potatoes, or you'd get a tomato, or something. And yeah, he just did that and he spent lots of time in his shed. Always making things.

0:05:04

LMI: Did they do any things around that socially at the mills? Sort of things like flower shows or...stuff like that?

MM: No, but they used to go on an annual outing to...this is going back even further... there was an annual outing, I think to Morecambe, which of course is known as Bradford by the Sea, because of all the people who used to go there. But no, he used to spend his time...when he first retired he used to cycle a lot as well. He kept up the cycling. And years ago he was a member of the Keighley Cycling Club. And they used to go off on weekends. Getting up to no good!

0:05:44

LMI: So, one of the things that is interesting about the conversations that...I suppose this is the start of the process of collecting this stuff... is, you know, understanding the social life that people had. You know, their colleagues and...

MM: I don't think there really was that. Like today, I think if you work in a group of people, you tend to sort of maybe socialise with them a little bit. I don't know if that happened back then. I can't ever recall.

LMI: It's about personal choice, as well. Some people, when they go home, they don't want to see people from work, they want to go home and not be at work, don't they? And then other people, you know, it's seeking out chances to sort of socialise with their colleagues and stuff like that.

0:06:36

MM: I mean, I never recall him ever saying, 'Oh, I'm going out with my work colleagues tonight.'

LMI: Yeah.

MM: Do you know what I mean?

LMI: No, no. One of the reasons I ask particularly about Salt's Mill is, you know, there is the social club at Caroline Social Club in Saltaire, which I think is still part of that whole... is linked to the mill.

0:06:59

MM: I would imagine that there may be relatives, but I can't imagine there's too many people that are still around.

LMI: No, no, no, no, no. But, you know, well, that building, if you ever go in it...

MM: Oh, I go in...

LMI: You have to have country music stuff on there. It's like a time capsule from the 1970s.

MM: ...at least once a month.

LMI: Right, yeah.

0:07:25

MM: And I just go in, and I just love the feel of the place. I just love the smell of the place, you know, with the lilies. And I love looking round the books, and going upstairs to see what Hockney's been up to.

LMI: Yeah, yeah.

MM: I just think when Jonathan Silver took over the mill, I think he was... I don't know, one of the most important people of that time.

LMI: He was visionary really, wasn't he?

MM: If it wasn't for him... I don't think it would have been demolished...because one of the reasons that Dean Clough Mill in Halifax has never been demolished is... if it was, it would flood the market with so much stone it would almost make stone worthless.

0:08:07

LMI: Wow!

MM: Because it's so big.

LMI: Yeah, yeah.

MM: You know, if you source stone now, it's quite expensive because... But can you imagine suddenly millions of tonnes of stone being on sale?

LMI: Yeah, I mean, I think... I went...last week I went up to Manningham Mill, because we're going to be doing one of these next week up there. And I just was looking at that building, and I thought (because it's huge isn't it?) 'There must have been half a hill of stone in here,' you know. And just the amount of carting around of stone there must have been at one point in Bradford!

MM: I've got some photographs that I took... when would it be? Maybe late '80s, early '90s, before it got converted. And I've got a picture of, like the heart of the building. It's where the generators were...

LMI: Is this at Saltaire or Manningham?

0:08:59

MM: No, at Manningham. Because we were looking for locations for theatre productions.

LMI: Oh, okay, yeah, yeah.

MM: So all you had to say is 'I'm looking for...' and they're like, 'Yeah, come in, have a look.'

LMI: Yeah, yeah, It's interesting, I mean quite a few mills are still marketed as film locations as well. And I found some really interesting drone footage of a mill in Keighley actually, that's part of the Screen Yorkshire promotion of it for a film location.

MM: It's not Dalton Mills, is it?

0:09:28

LMI: I think it might be Dalton Mills. Yeah.

MM: I remember being so upset when that mill burnt down.

LMI: Oh no, not Dalton Mills, that's the one that broke down. No, it's a building that's still standing. I think it's been used for Peaky Blinders. I don't know. I can't remember the name.

MM: The Peaky Blinders one was Dalton Mills.

LMI: Oh, was it?

MM: Yeah.

0:09:45

LMI: Ok, well, it's out of date then. He's taking down to me, because it's not like it looked in the...

MM: I mean, it was just absolutely tragic what happened to that. I mean, just...

LMI: Was it about two years ago that that burnt down?

0:10:01

MM: Yeah. I mean, because parts of it have been "arsoned". There's no way around it, that's what happened. The end part... if you're looking at it...the sort of eastern side of it...that end had been attacked before, but the fire brigade managed to get there in time. And when I heard on the radio that it was on fire, I was thinking, 'Oh, they'll put it out.' And when I saw the footage, I was just like, 'You have got to be kidding.'

LMI: No, it hurts, doesn't it, I think.

0:10:22

MM: It was such an important part of the town. And it brought in, well people from all over. And you can always tell when there's a...when there was filming going on, because if you look at the lampposts, they have...usually it's orange, and it's about that big with an arrow, and it'll say something like 'BOP' on it, or something.

LMI: Right, Ok.

MM: And it's code.

LMI: So that's the marker for if it's being filmed there.

MM: It tells the crew or the, you know, the trucks, you know, the lighting trucks, where they need to go. And it's always a good clue, if you ever see one.

LMI: Okay, it's like, 'Oh, filming going on somewhere.' Right, ok, I didn't know that.

0:10:56

MM: But they film so much down there. It's similar reason they use East Germany, sorry, Little Germany, for East Berlin so many times, because it resembles...

LMI: Well, I agree. I mean, I don't know if you've ever been to East Berlin, but it is very like that. And, you know, Little Germany really reminds me of Glasgow. And it reminds me of New York, if you've ever been to New York. There's something about the scale of those streets and buildings that's... you know, it's got an international feel to it, that space.

MM: I remember watching a movie, I can't remember which one it was, but it was a big movie, and I suddenly went, 'That's Little Germany!' You could just tell. There was just something about it.

0:11:39

LMI: Probably the colour of the stone. Yeah, sometimes you pick up on...

MM: Yeah, and of course that's all based around the woollen industry, isn't it?

LMI: Yeah, yeah, of course, yeah. It's the warehouses, yeah, and where all the trade happened, yeah. In terms of the stories that we're collecting, is there something that you're sort of really, really sort of dying to make sure that kind of gets put on record? Or a story that you sort of want to tell?

MM: Not a story as much, but I think what people should do is show an interest in local history because one day... and I hope this never happens, that there won't be people like *you*, and there won't be people like *me*, who have a little knowledge, or a lot of knowledge that they want to pass on. And it might just slowly over years just decline where nobody will ask, 'Oh, what was that?'

0:12:35

LMI: Yeah, I think it's interesting you say that because... I find it interesting because I didn't grow up here. I'm from North Staffordshire, which has its own very different sort of industrial story to tell...

MM: Pottery.

LMI: Absolutely. So, you know, I got taken into a pottery factory when I was little and got to see all those sensory overload of that. But when I came to live here and realised I was going

to stay in West Yorkshire, I actually went and did a course at Bradford University, which was like regional studies. Because I couldn't find a way into understanding what the story was. And I didn't know enough older-than-me local people to tell me that story. And even when I'd ask about neighbours and stuff, they'd not really want to tell me. I think they thought I was asking daft questions or something.

0:13:29

LMI: Because the things I was interested in seemed very mundane. So, I think it is great to have resources that people who might be from here, and people who come into here, can access, to understand something that's moving into the past. Or, you know, it might just be a completely different place to where you've grown up.

MM: I think as well, what I did, or what my grandad did and what my dad did, would never be allowed now. Because it would be health and safety. You can't take a child into a mill! And I think that will never happen again.

LMI: Or done in a very formal way. And you wouldn't get so much pocket money out of the process!

MM: No.

0:14:17

LMI: No, I think that's one of the big motivations around it. And, you know, this... I mean, if you worked in mills in the '70s and '80s, you know, you're going to be in your 60s and over. And if we're not careful, this whole generation of the story...

MM: I mean, the only time I worked in a mill was in Wibsey, and it was my father-in-law's mill.

LMI: Right.

MM: And the sad task was to dismantle all the machinery.

LMI: Right, ok, so you were there taking it all down. Ok, where did the machinery go to, do you know?

MM: Scrap.

0:14:55

LMI: Scrap.

MM: And it was so sad, I mean, the last thing to go was what's called a folding machine.

LMI: Right, ok.

MM: And it was the... everywhere you looked there were these cardboard... about a quarter of an inch thick... and they were used to wrap the fabric. In fact, I actually said to him, 'Can I have this fabric?' Do you remember, I don't think you're old enough, but do you remember ABC, the group?

0:15:14

LMI: I do, yeah, yeah, I'm old enough.

MM: They had this almost like shiny silver suit. Well, there was some alpaca wool suit.

LMI: Oh, my goodness.

MM: He gave me this material and I said, 'One day I'll have that made into a suit.' But before that ever happened, we got divorced. So it never happened.

0:15:39

LMI: Oh no.

MM: But it was so sad.

LMI: The beautiful ABC suit never came into being.

MM: It was so sad to just like, I don't know, to see it all fold up and just, just...

LMI: And how was he managing... dealing with that process? Was it something that...

MM: He had decided to partly diversify into something else anyway. So when that finally happened, he had something else to fall back on, another business. But in terms of textiles, that was the last time that the Dobson family were involved in textiles in Bradford.

0:16:05

LMI: And you said he had three mills?

MM: *His* father had three mills.

LMI: His father, yeah.

MM: Or Dobson & Co. was the...

LMI: Ok. And were they all across the district?

MM: I don't know. I just know that he must have made quite a good bit of money because they lived in a beautiful detached house in Hipperholme. His wife was chauffeured around.

LMI: Oh, my goodness. That is posh.

0:16:37

MM: And she used to get chauffeured...

[Can you see Jane in a minute, Marie?

Of course, yes, yes.

She's just going to go to the Heart Foundation shop and come back.

Hope you find a bargain. Sorry.]

MM: And she used to get chauffeured down to Rackham's in Bradford. It wasn't called Rackham's, it was called Brown Muff's. And they used to know it was her, 'cos they used to open the door specially.

LMI: Wow, that's almost royalty sort of treatment.

0:17:07

MM: It was, and the amount of... I mean they had things like a baby grand piano in one of the rooms of the house. And she had so many furs.

LMI: Wow. So sort of all the trappings...

MM: Of textile wealth.

LMI: Yeah, yeah. Wow. I suppose that's the whole world that's sort of, you know, in the past.

MM: It is. It *is* another world. I mean, the thing that gets me about things like Manningham Mill, Salt's Mills, some of the other mills, is... I cannot imagine the cost of building a mill (and in Saltaire) an entire village to house your workers. The initial outlay for that must have been absolutely phenomenal. I can't imagine having that amount of money, back then.

LMI: No, and even if you take into account the fact that, you know, what you would have paid people to quarry the stone and build the buildings would have been a lot less. You know, even so, that's an enormous investment, isn't it?

0:18:04

MM: It is. And to then actually make lots of money afterwards.

LMI: And to have accumulated that money so quickly as well.

MM: I know, I know. It was, you know, Bradford was the textile capital of the world. That's why...

LMI: I suppose everybody needs clothes, don't they?

MM: And it's something I think people should be very proud of. And also quite saddened as well, that it lost its edge.

LMI: Yeah. Yeah. So, I'm really interested in this sort of taking... the end of the mill...sort of taking it apart, the year that you were around to... sort of see. So, were any of the people who'd worked in the mill longer term part of that process?

0:18:46

MM: No. It was just me and him.

LMI: Yeah, yeah. And it's just a case of taking stuff apart, shifting it off to the scrap.

MM: I mean, you know, I think he did offer it to, what's it called, the Bradford... the one in Bradford, that has all the industrial machinery.

LMI: Oh, the Industrial Museum, yeah.

MM: He did offer some bits to them, but they said 'No'. Because obviously over time we've [they've?] been offered so much from the textile industry.

0:19:20

LMI: Of course, all at once as well. I think they've probably got a lot of stuff in storage that nobody ever gets to see.