

AH - Transcription

Audio Quality: Background noise, other interviews going on?

Brief interview mentioning Italian mother with emphasis on immigration and anecdotes

0:00:00

LMI: So here I am talking to [REDACTED] just tell me who you are and where you come from.

AH: Well, I live in Keighley but I'm originally from Bingley. And I was just passing... well, going to Farm Foods actually... so I saw this and I just called in to see what was going on.

LMI: And tell us about your mum.

AH: Well, my mum, she's Italian. And she's 89 now, but she came to England in 1956 to come and work in the mills, like a hell of a lot of Italians did. Because where my mum lived, it was such a tiny little place, they were just all farming and things, there was just no future. So I think she was enticed by coming over to England to come and work in the mills. She came over... she was born in '33 so 1956, So... 1956, '33, '43, '53.

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AH: She was only 23 and she could *not* speak a scrap of English at all. And none of them could either. So just imagine how they went on when they went shopping and things. But she can speak English really well now. She went to work at Bingley Mills, which were then known as Big Beavers. I don't know why it was called that. It just was. And, um, I think she did just about everything there. I can just remember these spinning, doffing, winding, weaving. You name it, and everything.

LMI: And how long did she do that for?

AH: Well, she did different jobs.

LMI: How long did she work in mills for, though?

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AH: All her life. Since she came [over]. Until she retired.

LMI: And how old was she? What year would it have been she retired?

AH: Well, she retired when she was 60, so... '33, '43, '53, '63, '73 '83, '93... Yeah, round about '93, because I had my daughter in 1991. Natasha. And now... my mum... I used to take her to my mum's house, and then my mum used to babysit while I worked part-time, so I was lucky there.

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AH: But I can remember quite a few stories. But the most vivid one is during the school holidays when my mum used to do the six-while-two shift. We all used to go meet her, me and my two sisters used to go meet her, after she'd finished. We used to walk in, and I can clearly remember that smell. That mill smell.

LMI: Yeah. It is so vivid.

AH: And the noise. You've never heard anything like it. And they didn't have ear defenders or anything, it was just...you know.

LMI: And they just let you walk in?

AH: Yeah, we used to sit down at the table and wait for me mum. But they'd never let us do that anymore, obviously not.

LMI: So, did lots of your friends work...[friends'] parents work in the mills as well?

AH: Everybody... Most of the Italian ladies that came to live in Bingley. Well, they came to work at that mills. I think they organised coaches from Italy. They paid for all the transport and everything. I don't know... I think they also found them somewhere to 'lodge', as my mum always called it. And I can't remember whereabouts in Bingley she came to when she first came to England. I could always ask her and find out.

LMI: I went to Bingley College of Education.

AH: You went to what?

LMI: I went to Bingley College of Education in the '60s.

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AH: We used to go from St. Joseph's Primary School, and we used to go there for some reason. I can't remember why. I think it was like recreation or something? I can't remember.

LMI: So your mum worked in the mill all those... for the whole of her life?

AH: Yeah, yeah, but she worked at Bingley Mills, and then she moved to Keighley. Down Dalton Lane. I can't remember the name of the mill.

LMI: That probably would have been Dalton Mills, wouldn't it?

AH: Yeah, I'm not sure, but I guess it would have been.

LMI: So, do you think your mum would be happy to talk to us? Or are you going to ask her?

AH: I'll ask her.

LMI: I'd really like to talk to her, actually. That would be really interesting.

AH: Yeah, yeah.

LMI: I'm quite happy to do it in person. We can go to her, we can do it on the phone, or... you know, whatever.

0:04:17

AH: I'll ask me mum. She's got plenty of stories to tell. Oh, she used to come home... we used to...when all the...what they call...all the things that they use...when they're empty...

LMI: Bobbins.

AH: Bobbins and stuff. And cones and things. We always used to take them home and play with them and make all sorts with them.

LMI: Well, and of course, you're in charge of the time when all the mills were closing as well.

0:04:44

AH: I'm not sure when the mills started to close.

LMI: I do remember as a student, there were always lots of derelict mills around. I remember having a...using bobbins to make bookshelves with.

AH: Yeah, we used to... there were like a big, skip - when I say skip, made like a fabric - and they had all sorts in it, and we just used to take whatever we wanted to. It was great.

LMI: I'll stop now, but that was great, that's nice, a little nice interview.

AH: If I'd have thought on a bit more, I'd probably remember all sorts of different things afterwards. But there were a hell of a lot of Italians that worked there. I think they were all Italian, from what I remember, perhaps men and women.

LMI: Oh, interesting, oh, interesting.