

## Gerald and Fredalina McCauley - Transcription

*Audio Quality: a bit quiet, some overlapping conversations, FM a bit inaudible at times*

**0:00:00**

**LMI:** So here we are with Gerald and Fredalina. That's right. And Gerald and Fredalina came over from Northern Ireland in.... What year was that?

**GM:** 1962.

**LMI:** 1962.

**FM:** I came over after him.

**LMI:** So do you want to tell us the story of your coming over from Ireland and what prompted you to do that. And then what it was like working in the mills in Bradford?

**0:00:51**

**GM:** Well, I came over in 1962. I was employed at home in Ireland as a weaver but there were no great prospects. My sister was already living here in Bradford. She, well, my half-sister, and she was living in Bradford. And my two sisters had already gone before me, over here. And I decided I should like to come over and get some work here. The first job I got was in an engineering company on Leeds Road, Carter Gears, it was. I was there for a few months, doing really well. Until one day a foreman put me on to looking after a big milling machine. And I was doing really well. And then one day he comes along, and he says, 'Oh, I've got to take you off.' I says, 'Why would you want to do that?' He says, 'Because you're not in the union, are you?'

**0:01:58**

**GM:** I says, 'No.' But I'd never been asked to be in the union either, you know. Nobody had mentioned it. But what annoyed me so much about that was the fact that I used to talk to the guy who was the Union Man regularly, you know, during the course of the work. So, I had... they took me off this job, which was a... you know, it was an advancement for me. But I was really annoyed. So I decided that I wasn't going to let them have my services anymore. So I started looking back into textiles. Because I've always been in textiles. And I seen a job advertised at... as it was then, Associated Weavers, on Tong Street, Bradford. And they were looking for a card cutter, which was cutting cards for the designs on Jacquard looms, which I'd had a bit of experience of in Ireland and knew a bit about.

**0:03:03**

**GM:** Anyway, I got in there and... probably the best thing that ever happened to me, because when I got in, I was ushered into an office and there were several managers there. And I could have had three jobs on that one day. Which was good.

**LMI:** And this was in 1962?

**GM:** '62. But I went there, and I got this card job. Looking after the packing cards for the looms. I never went... I never done any more weaving though. But Associated Weavers was a carpets company. And I was then moved from the... I moved from the carpets to managing in the warehouse, yarn warehouse - looking after yarns to supply the looms. That was a couple of years maybe. And from there... I moved then onto looking after the winding department, which I always liked, a little bit of tinkering with machinery.

**LMI:** How big was this mill what you worked in?

**GM:** Sorry?

**0:04:35**

**LMI:** How big was the mill? How many people do you think worked there?

**GM:** Oh, I don't know... difficult to say really.

**LMI:** Hundreds?

**GM:** Oh yeah, hundreds, yeah. Maybe a couple hundred. It was all in three shifts, you know. And there were a lot of carpet looms, a lot... you know. And I looked after the winding department. I'd done that for years.

**LMI:** What does the winding department do?

**GM:** They got yarn, in hanks. Hanks of yarn coming from the dyehouse. And wound onto bobbins. And issued them out to the looms as and when required. Colours and all the rest of it, you know. The different shades that was required in the looms.

**LM12:** So did they have their own dyehouse?

**0:05:31**

**GM:** Pardon?

**LM12:** Did they have an in-house dyehouse? Was it their dyehouse, or did they have a dye house on site?

**GM:** I'm sorry, I'm not getting you.

**LM12:** Did they have their own dye house, Associated Weavers?

**GM:** Yeah.

**LM12:** They did?

**GM:** Yeah.

**LM12:** So it was all coming from the company?

**0:05:53**

**GM:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. And as I say, I got into the winding department there. And I managed that for a while. Then a lot of years later I got Warehouse Manager. I was there a long... in total for thirty-nine years.

**LMI:** And you worked your way around the whole factory.

**GM:** I'd done nearly every job in there. I was pretty well experienced in the business line, you know. And, er... I just missed out on my 40 years' service when they made me redundant.

**LMI:** And was that when the factory was closing, or...?

**GM:** Yeah, that was when... But I had missed out, I call it missed out, and avoided redundancies, maybe... The company had been... changed hands several times over that period... from Associated Wavers to Colour Row to John Clowder to Carpets International. There were several companies. And I escaped redundancy in all of the occasions, you know, because everyone that took over made their own changes, you see. And instead, as I say, I managed to stay until the bitter end, really. Until it closed down altogether. It was taken over by an American company and er... it went by the board.

**LMI:** That's a long period of service then, isn't it?

**0:07:40**

**GM:** It is a long period. You know, forgive me if I... lots of little things that I don't remember any more.

**LMI:** That's alright. So Fredalina, you came over..

**FM:** I left Ireland when I was 20.

**LMI:** You left when you were 20?

**FM:** In 1964.

**LMI:** So you'd already been here for two years.

**FM:** He came over and took me back on Christmas Boxing Day.

**LMI:** Say that again, sorry?

**FM:** He came over at Christmas and I went back with him on Boxing Day.

**LMI:** You went back with him on Boxing Day?

**0:08:10**

**FM:** Because he only got two days off, one at Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

**LMI:** So you came over to England on Boxing Day?

**FM:** Yes.

**LMI:** Did you know you were going to come over?

**FM:** Yes I did. I'd arranged it.

**LMI:** And did you go straight to work?

**FM:** Yeah, well, we went looking for a job. We went to see... went to all the mills around. Could have a job at any of the mills. There was that much work going. And then I went to Seabrooke... Crisps, instead. Got married from there. And then I left there and went to burling and mending

[**GM:** Was one of those meant for Fredalina

Yeah. ]

**FM:** I went into burling and mending.

**LMI:** Burling and mending?

**FM:** Yeah. And I looked.

**LMI:** Where did you do that?

**FM:** I done that down at the Courtaulds. It used to be... down at the square, near the... in Bradford

**0:08:57**

**LMI:** Oh, I remember Courtaulds.

**LM12:** Courtaulds?

**FM:** And, er... Like that. Thank you. Like that, er... This is... I, I just... Well, we, we, we, we've been in Ireland, in Iceland, and you need a false, what false was it? It's a ticker false, but we just call them different names here.

**0:09:20**

**LMI:** You were picking the faults?

**FM:** Yes.

**LMI:** Were you perching?

**FM:** No, I wasn't perching. Somebody perched before we started mending them.

**LMI:** Oh, right, so you were doing them? You were mending them?

**FM:** I was mending.

**LMI:** And so... and that was at Courtauld's? And did you do that for a long time?

**FM:** I spent four years with it, in total.

**0:09:47**

**LMI:** So what was this story you started telling me before we turned the recorder on? What was it about? Was it working at home? You were working at home?

**FM:** Oh, yeah. I used to burl and mend. When I burl and mend, then I left to have the children. I had Glen and his sister Siobhan. And I couldn't go out to work, so what I used to do was take up burling and mending into the house. And I had a big cellar, with lights and that. And a table down there. And when Gerald would go on to nights, I would go downstairs and do the burling and mending.

**LMI:** So you were working nights in a factory.

**GM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** And you were working nights at home.

**FM:** Yes.

**LMI:** How many hours would you do a day, then?

**0:10:28**

**FM:** Well I just, yeah, nights I'd do it. Couldn't do it during the day because the children were running around. So I done it at night, maybe, I mean, probably six hours a night.

**LMI:** I presume that was like piece work, was it? You got paid by the piece?

**FM:** Yeah, you got paid by the piece. They were like big, big rolls of men's... material.

**LMI:** And they used to deliver rolls of cloth to the house?

**FM:** Yeah, they delivered it to the house.

**GM:** Web of cloth, they called it, you know. Maybe about 50 yards or something like that.

**LMI2:** Yeah, that's what I was going to ask. I think, yeah, 50, 60 yards, I think, is a piece.

**0:11:04**

**FM:** And you looked at all the faults that were in it. They had a purse in it and a pecker.

**LMI:** What kind of fabric was it?

**FM:** It was a men's worsted suit fabric.

**GM:** You know, like men's suiting.

**LMI:** And so when you were doing the mending, what did you actually do? How did you mend it?

**FM:** Well, say there was a hole. You'd get that hole cleared by pulling out the 'weeding shots', what they call 'shots'. And then you'd start...and you'd get the pattern, and you'd do the pattern.

**LMI:** So you had to kind of repair it very carefully?

**0:11:43**

**FM:** Repair it. And then when you repaired it, you took it up to the lady, and she would pass it. And if it wasn't good enough, you had to go back up and do it again.

**LMI:** Oh my goodness.

**GM:** Probably like, I suppose best way to describe it, would be like...

**FM:** Darning...

**GM:** ...continuing the weave of the cloth.

**FM:** Yeah.

**GM:** With thread.

**LMI:** So when you...

**GM:** Matching the colour and the... But you can imagine, suit lengths. Fine worsted suit.

**0:12:09**

**LMI:** Yeah.

**LMI2:** It's tight. It's tight fabric as well.

**LMI:** So when you did it at home, did they give you all the different threads that you needed to fix the cloth?

**FM:** No, because you cut a piece off the bottom of the roll.

**LMI:** Oh, of course. Of course you did.

**0:12:23**

**FM:** Yeah, so that's how you got it finished.

**LMI:** And was that hard work? Was it tiring?

**GM:** Very hard work.

**FM:** No, I enjoyed it.

**LMI:** You enjoyed it?

**FM:** I enjoyed it, I tell you.

**LMI2:** Really highly skilled.

**GM:** It was hard though. It wasn't easy, because when I would come home from work in the morning, we'd have to fold the cloth back up. Because she used to take it over the table and undo the web and bring it up and bend it and... But then it all had to be refolded. So that was like what we'd done together then, when she finished, didn't we?

**0:13:05**

**LMI:** And they would be heavy wouldn't they?

**FM:** Oh yes.

**Son:** I think you had to concentrate, because these blemishes... my mum would be scouring the material. They're not obvious. They're tiny little imperfections. So, the thing that I found amazing was how the light would be on it, and you were like forensically looking at this cloth. And if you were doing it for six hours, you were concentrating a long time looking for these minute little imperfections. And then when you found it, you then had to have the skill to fix it.

**LMI:** So did you help them?

**Son:** No, I just looked and thought, 'What is this? Is this what work looks like?'

**LMI2:** So did the mill provide the lighting for you to...?

**0:13:51**

**FM:** No, no, no.

**GM:** They didn't provide anything. Just the cloth.

**FM:** Just the fabric.

**GM:** And as you repaired them, they were taken back and checked over.

**LMI2:** And so did you do it over a big table?

**FM:** A big table, you'd fold it down and then you went across with your hands .

**LMI:** Do you remember how much you were paid?

**GM:** I couldn't even put a guess on it. I honestly couldn't.

**FM:** It depends on how... you got paid sometimes by piece work. It depends how hard you worked. And you used to try and work as quick as you could to get your money. Maybe 16, 17 pounds.

**LMI:** A week?

**FM:** Yeah.

**LMI2:** Did you know other women doing the same thing? Working from home?

**0:14:39**

**GM:** Yeah.

**FM:** I didn't know anyone.

**GM:** We didn't know anyone. But yeah, because the van used to go round, taking pieces round, didn't it?

**FM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** So you weren't Fredalina's boss, though?

**GM:** No.

**LMI:** No, you were doing carpets and Fredalina was doing worsted.

**FM:** When I was there, I couldn't afford to stay with the wage, because I was only learning. So I gave my notice in and I went back to Seabrook.

**LMI:** You went back to Seabrooks.

**FM:** And then one Sunday night, we were going to the pictures in town. And when we came down to the bus stop, the boss - the burler and mender - was standing at the bus stop. And he said... he spoke to me...and then he says to Ger[ald]...

**GM:** He comes, he said to me, he says, you know, he says, 'If I had her, I'd put her over my knee and smack her bottom, because,' he says, 'she was [the] best mender we've ever had, and she went and left us.'



**0:15:37**

**FM:** And he says, 'Come down in the morning.'

**GM:** 'Come down in the morning, I'll put you on [improvers?] rate.

**FM:** And I went down and he put me on the top rate. And stayed there till I got home.

**GM:** It was a good job, you see, was mending

**LMI:** You stayed there until?

**FM:** I had Glen and Siobhan.

**LMI:** Oh, right. So how many years was that?

**FM:** Probably four, maybe four years.

**GM:** Three or four years, wasn't it?

**0:15:58**

**LMI:** And you enjoyed doing it?

**FM:** Yeah, I enjoyed it.

**LMI:** Is it better than the crisp factory?

**FM:** Oh no, I liked the crisp factory, so I did. I liked the crisp factory.

**GM:** You liked the atmosphere there. There were a great lot of people there, weren't they?

**FM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** What was the atmosphere like at the carpet factory, whatever name it had at any time?

**0:16:21**

**GM:** Oh yeah.

**LMI:** Did it change a lot over the years?

**GM:** I enjoyed working there, obviously. I mean, I wouldn't have stayed there... But yeah, it was good, you know. Good people. And eventually, like I say, I got to be in charge of different departments. At that time, there were a lot of Asian people coming in. And, you know, you were setting people on. No problem for getting people to work. Reminds me of a story once... That's a little funny, is this one... because a friend of mine, who was in another department, we'd set on a guy sweeping, an Asian chap, you know.

**0:17:00**

**GM:** He was a sweeper. So he's sweeping round the shed. So this guy comes to me and says, 'I don't get that bloke that you've just set on.' I says, 'How do you mean? I haven't set anybody on.' I says, 'I thought you set him on.' He says, 'I didn't.' I said, 'Well, who set him on?' It turned out he should have been working for the spinning department. But then, you know, it was a really laid-back sort of atmosphere, you know. It wasn't as keen as it might be nowadays, you know. But, er... I had a lot of Asian people coming in and out at that time.

**LMI:** So were you a boss?

**GM:** Yeah.

**0:17:53**

**LMI:** Did they see you as a boss?

**GM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** You were the man in charge?

**GM:** Mm. Not all... but, you know, later years, yeah.

**LMI:** So were there industrial disputes at all?

**GM:** Oh yeah, we had our disputes. Over... I had a lot of women as well, to contend with. The winders. And there was always issues with sharing of work. Because different yarns would be easier to handle than others. And you knew like what was what. And you had to sort of be seen to be fair in all, you know, in all respects. But I never ever had a major dispute that I couldn't resolve.

**LMI:** Sometimes they thought you weren't being fair, then? Is that what you...?

**GM:** Sorry?

**LMI:** Did sometimes they think that you weren't being very fair? Or were you...? They had their own arguments between each other, and you would have to sort it out?

**GM:** Oh yeah.

**LMI2:** An intermediary.

**GM:** You were not a master like and the disputes and the fights to sort out. And arguments and... you know. Yeah.

**LMI:** And were you responsible for training people as well?

**0:19:19**

**GM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** What was that like?

**GM:** Ok, yeah. So, training people, you say?

**LMI:** Yeah.

**GM:** I had to... we had to bring people in to learn the jobs, you know, the different... they would have several little times... like learning how to use machines and machinery, and what have you.

**LMI:** So could you do all of the jobs in the mill? Did you know how to run all those machines?

**GM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** You could do them all?

**GM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Wow, that's quite a skill.

**0:20:07**

**GM:** Yeah, yeah. It was, yeah. The biggest challenge really was once in the... 1981 when they decided they would go... automatic winding machines. And they brought these automatic winding machines in from Belgium - Gill box machine. And these were super, you know. They just put their... they automatically cut the bobbins to the size required and doffed it off. It was all done automatically, you know. But they brought them over and installed them in the mill. And they left a fitter installing them. And they left them on the premises for a week. And they says, 'Right. It's yours.' These machines, £20,000 machines then, you know. And so they said, 'Look after that lot.'

**0:20:56**

**LMI:** So did you know how to operate them?

**GM:** I coped.

**LMI:** You just had to learn on the job, did you?

**GM:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, you see, I were... As well as being in charge, I were, you know, looking after the maintenance of the machines. Because that was part and parcel of the job, you know.

**LMI:** God, you really did everything didn't you?

**GM:** Yeah just about.

**LMI:** So look, and what I'm interested in as well...what we're interested in is your journey from Northern Ireland to here. And what was...I mean obviously, you had family here anyway.

**GM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** But what was it that made you want to come over? And were there any kind of...was it the conditions in Northern Ireland that made you want to come over? And what was it like arriving in Bradford? Did you feel strange?

**GM:** No, me personally, I thought Bradford was great because you could pick and choose jobs. And there was none of that at home because there was no future.

**FM:** The wages were very bad.

**0:22:00**

**LMI:** The wages were bad?

**GM:** The wages were bad and...

**FM:** They were very strict. You know, like, you used to clock in in the morning. And if you were a half a minute late, they wouldn't let you in.

**LMI:** Oh, what, you were out for the day?

**FM:** You were out for the day.

**LMI:** Golly.

**GM:** In the village they had a huge horn that sounded all over the village, yeah? And it went off at quarter past seven in the morning...It was quarter past seven? Yeah, quarter past seven in the morning; quarter to eight; and then five to eight. And eight o'clock you had to be through that door otherwise you didn't get it in.

**LMI:** One minute late and you were out.

**0:22:59**

**GM:** One minute late, yeah. Or if you were like a minute and the the guy who were on the door took pity on you, he would ask your boss if he could take you in. But as a rule, you didn't get in.

**LMI:** So would people want your job as well? Were lots of people looking for work?

**GM:** Oh yeah, there were no problems with them there. It was hard times really.

**FM:** They were living...

**GM:** ....But you didn't think so, at the time really, to be honest, you know.

**LMI:** So, if I said to you did you come over to Bradford for a better life, a better quality of life, would that be...?

**GM:** Yeah, yeah, I could see a better life, yeah. And yeah.

**LMI:** And was it a better life?

**FM:** Yes.

**GM:** Something you don't know initially. You don't know what it would have been like had you stopped. But we figured so, I'm sure. Yeah.

**LMI:** And what was it like coming to Bradford for, I don't know if it was the first time, but well... Did it feel very different?

**FM:** There were loads of shops. There were shops everywhere. There were loads of shops.

**GM:** Freddie loves shopping!.

**FM:** Loads of shops everywhere.

**GM:** Oh, yeah. It was bustling, it was great, was Bradford, in them days. You know, and then there's... I don't know, how old are you, sir?

**0:23:56**

**LMI:** I'm 75.

**GM:** Just a lad!

**LMI:** So I came to Bradford in 1969.

**GM:** 1969. 1969, oh yeah, just over there.

**FM:** Claire was born in 1969.

**LMI:** Sorry?

**FM:** Claire was born in 1969.

**LMI:** Oh, was he?

**GM:** Yeah, all right, yeah. So yeah, Bradford was a bustling city then. And I used to watch the football a lot, you know. I was a big football fan. And I used to watch Bradford City and Bradford Park Avenue. Alternate weeks, you know. And then Bradford Park Avenue folded.

0:24:42

**LMI:** It did.

**GM:** And I stuck with City, and I've been a lifelong City supporter ever since.

**LMI:** And the ups and downs.

**GM:** Yeah, ups and downs.

**FM:** More downs than ups.

**GM:** But I can remember, I had...A friend of mine who was a Park Avenue supporter and when Park Avenue finished, you know, when they went out... he loved going to football and I said 'Well, come along with me, we'll go down to City...' 'Oh, you wouldn't get me down there. No way!'

**LMI:** It was like Manchester United and Manchester City?

**GM:** Yeah, exactly. He would not, under no circumstances, walk inside...

**LMI:** Even though his team didn't exist anymore?

**GM:** But Bradford were good, yeah.

**FM:** It was a good old market, Saturday. You know, by Boxendolls and the old Kirkgate.

**LMI2:** The old market, yeah.

**GM:** And there were lots of clubs and pubs. And we were members of two or three different clubs, weren't we, Freddie? The Catholic Club in Allerton was a mainstay really, wasn't it?

0:25:59

**LMI:** Was there quite a big Irish community in Bradford? From Northern Ireland?

**GM:** There was quite a few, yeah. There was more round about the Keighley area, I do think. Although, we didn't... we were more, you know...you got the Irish people in the Irish club in town. And we didn't go in town much, we were always on the outskirts.

**FM:** [?]

**GM:** I always remember the day one morning going to work and... across Bradford and I sees this guy coming, walking down the street. Remember this, Freddie?... Noel Stanley.

**FM:** Noel Stanley.

**GM:** And he's walking, and I think, 'I know that face.' I says, 'Hello!' And he says, 'Eh, what are you doing here?' and I says, 'I'm living here.' He says, 'You what?' And he gives me his

address. And I lost the damn thing. And I never seen him ever again. And he was a fella who worked in the same mill as we did in...

**0:26:48**

**LMI:** In Bessbrook.

**GM:** Yeah, in Bessbrook.

**FM:** I'm one of the ones who was trying to get through Kirkgate, the old Kirkgate. And right up at the top, I could see this lass. And I says to Gerald, 'That's Ray Mooney.' I said, 'She lived at home.'

**0:27:17**

**FM:** So I went up and tapped her on the shoulder. I said, 'Are you Ray Mooney's friend? She said, 'Oh, you're Freddie [?]' she said. They had come over that morning. But they didn't stay. We arranged to meet the following week. But they went back.

**0:27:37**

**LMI:** They went back to Ireland?

**FM:** Yeah, they went back to Ireland.

**LMI:** Did many people want to go back to Ireland, do you think?

**FM:** If you were homesick.

**LMI:** Did you ever get homesick?

**FM:** I was homesick every time I went back to Ireland.

**0:27:58**

**FM:** I used to come back, and I'd cry for six months. I just didn't know if anyone else was coming back for you. But then when the kids came along, it was different.

**GM:** Yeah...

**LMI:** You get more... So, let's go back to the mills, and working in the mills. A couple of questions I wanted to ask you. One is, people have talked about mills being... feeling a bit like a family. Did that feel like that for you? A bit of a mill family? Like a community of people that looked after each other?

**GM:** Oh yeah, I think that was a lot of that.

**0:28:28**

**LMI:** And did you do social things together?

**FM:** No we didn't, we didn't.

**GM:** Oh yes, of course. Yeah. It was... It was a good, it was good working environment. I always felt. I mean... I never had a problem with anything and... You know, everything.

**LMI:** Did you... What about sort of holidays and things? Did you do things together? Did you have Christmas parties and that kind of thing?

**0:28:47**

**GM:** In the mill? No, we didn't. Yeah, but it did happen. It did occur, yeah. Yeah, they used to have... the mill workers, like, because if you were the boss, you sort of weren't involved much... Yeah, but they had parties and what have you, yeah.

**FM:** We always went back to Ireland on holidays.

**LMI:** Ah.

**GM:** We always went back to Ireland on holidays, you know. But every time we got a holiday we went back. We went back maybe a couple of times a year, you know. If time was allowed, you know. But talking about... and then there were another instance of meeting another person who comes from a local area [back] home, was:

**0:29:34**

**GM:** There were road works going on near my work, and the contractors...big wagons, 'O. Haughey', H-A-U-G-H-E-Y, Haughey, 'O. Haughey.' I thought, 'I know an O. Haughey. Oliver Haughey!' It's not a common sort of name, you know. 'I can't believe that. I wonder if that could possibly be him.' And then we were in Keighley one day and we were in a pub. And lo and behold, if I didn't go and spot him in the pub. I said 'Oliver,' Do you remember Freddie? Oliver Haughey. And we got talking and yeah, he'd done the same, got out of [?] He'd done really well. He'd got a contract in business. And he was into civil engineering. How he done that, I have no idea, but he'd done it.

**LMI:** That's fantastic. That's fantastic. Another question I'd like to ask you, because it's something which people don't bring up very often unless I ask them about it. And that is... so in the 1970s we had the three-day week, and all of that. And all that kind of turmoil then, which began the process of mill closures, really, they really began to accelerate after that, but did you have to close the mill down during that time for the when there are all those power cuts?

**0:31:04**

**GM:** I can't remember a lot of detail about that, to be honest with you.

**FM:** You were on nights...you used to work nights.



**GM:** We used to have to different shifts. And had to share the work out at given times. I can't...to be honest, I can't remember all the detail about that.

**FM:** I remember because...

**GM:** She's good. She's the memory woman.

**0:31:46**

**FM:** We lived in a back-to-back at the time and it had four floors. Three or four floors. Glen was only a baby. So it was nearly all his daughter was. What Gerald used to do was, leave me upstairs at night. I'd make sandwiches and a flask of tea. And I'd go upstairs to bed, and the poor little lad. He'd take me up and then the next morning, he'd come back up. Home from work. And take me back down again.

**LMI:** Ah, so you'd kind of live up there?

**FM:** Yes, when he wasn't there.

**LMI:** Oh, right. And what was it like working nights? I mean, it must have caused sort of disruption to your lives together, surely?

**GM:** Yeah, but it's like when you get into the routine, it is a routine, you know. You come home, go to bed, get up in the afternoon, do whatever you have to do, then plod off to work again in the evening. You know, at first it's a little bit... you're troubled getting...your sleeping system going, you know. You're knocked out of kilter a little bit, you know. But once you got a couple nights over, you were fine. I felt it anyway, you know, I didn't...

**0:32:51**

**LMI:** Would you go to bed as soon as you got home and then wake up in the afternoon before you went to work?

**GM:** Sorry?

**LMI:** Would you... as soon as you got home from work in the morning, would you go to bed and then wake up in the afternoon?

**GM:** Yeah, after, yeah, I'd done, taken the kids to school or...

**Son:** Yeah, well, that's it, my dad would arrive, and then we, my mum would go to work and me and my sister would be there. And I remember we used to have like Snakes and Ladders championships. So we'd have... my dad would be, obviously he'd be like coming down from work. And he'd be like... we'd be doing, we'd be like playing, I don't know, sort of Ludo or Snakes and Ladders or something. We used to keep a little tally in a little book, of who was, who was winning. And then we would then go off to school. And then my dad, after he'd been victorious at Snakes and Ladders, he would go to bed.

**0:33:44**

**FM:** I got a job in a local factory then.

**LMI:** You got a job in a local factory when Glen was...

**FM:** When he was small.

**LMI:** Oh right.

**FM:** Gerry's come over at nights, some nights, to take them to school. So then one year Glen got a chickenpox, couldn't look undercoat now to Ireland. I was looking to come back. Siobhan helped me. I didn't know what I was going to do with the work. So I went round to the manager and I asked him, 'Could I do the shift work with Gerald?'

**0:34:14**

**FM:** 'Whenever he'd be on nights, could I work?' So I would take the kids to school and collect them. And he said 'Yes.' And that's how we worked.

**LMI:** You swapped over, so there was always someone in the house? And I bet you got away with murder, didn't you, Glen?

**Son:** Yes.

**FM:** But we done what we had to do, we wanted a living - a decent living.

**LMI:** Would you say it was hard?

**FM:** Well, I felt it was hard because... when Glen and Siobhan both went to school full time; they used to go to school, and then I'd go to work. But before that I would take them up to...when the four of them went to school, I used to take them up to the baby minder. And I'd run up the road in the mornings with them. And then I'd run down the road again. Start work. And then in the evenings I'd run up the road again, to get them. And then I'd have to come down again. So I'd do a bit of shopping. No car.

**0:35:05**

**Son:** And we didn't have a car at that stage.

**GM:** No.

**Son:** So we only... We got a sort of car in like 1980. So when I was about 10 or 11.

**FM:** Around Christmas, and I'd been to the Co-op. And I'd got that many bags. This woman stopped me. She said, 'Where are you going, love?' I said, 'I'm going off to collect the kids from the baby minder'. So she helped me up the road. I couldn't carry the bags, there was that many.

**0:35:31**

**FM:** So I went in and got the kids, and took them down in push chair. And I went to the pub then, for Christmas and my sister-in-law was there. We were talking about shopping. She says 'I'll give you a laugh,' She says, 'So this woman', she says, 'had been in the Co-op. She had that many bags she couldn't hardly walk. And then she went and collected two kids in a push chair.' I said, 'That was me!' I said. 'That was me.' But it was hard.

**GM:** She were Irish, as well, wasn't she?

**FM:** Yeah.

**GM:** Yeah.

**0:36:00**

**LMI:** So do you think, do you think, I mean generally, do you think life was harder then than it is now for people? I mean did you work hard for your...

**FM:** I don't think it's... we had to get on with it.

**GM:** Yeah. I think people were better. It's a daft thing to say, maybe. But people got on with the work and... you know... today... There was none of this, 'It's not my job.' It's... much of 'This is not my job.' You know, it's... they're all... typecast, slot into slots, you know. 'I can't. I don't do that. You do that. He does that.'

**LMI:** Do you think perhaps when the textile industry began to close, do you think it changed Bradford a lot?

**GM:** I think so, yeah.

**LMI:** In what way?

**0:37:02**

**GM:** It became more... I don't know how to describe it really. It wasn't as a relaxed an atmosphere, perhaps... I find it hard to describe.

**LMI:** I think probably it would be difficult for people today to say they worked in the same place for 30 years the way you did.

**GM:** Yeah, that's a thing as well. Maybe some people would change their jobs every other week, nigh on, at that time, when I was starting in Bradford. But that was one of the things that got me when I worked at the engineering. Crofts engineering, it was, who I worked for in the first place. But I started there, and I couldn't believe it. You know, when we used to finish work at 6 o'clock, I think it was, then. I don't know if you know where Crofts was? It was on Leeds Road. But when the whistle went for finishing time, they were out through that door, running like heck down onto Leeds Road to catch a bus. And there'd be a fleet of

buses. And I thought, 'Have they all gone mad here? Are they all mad, or what? There's always another bus!' But I wasn't there too long, maybe a couple of weeks, and I was as mad as the rest of them! And I was running for the bus as well. It was so laid back at home.

**FM:** In Ireland if there wasn't a bus, you'd wait for the next one.

**GM:** If there wasn't a bus, no, you'd get the next one. You were laid back.

**0:38:42**

**FM:** You wouldn't run for a bus now. And if there's cars coming down the road, they would stop.

**LMI:** What, and give you a lift?

**FM:** No. [?] Don't stop. You know, it was a different way of going on.

**GM:** Yeah. I remember one of the first times when we went back home. The local, the nearest train station... I got off... I don't know whether you were with us at the time, Freddie? And I was going to go to catch the bus to take us out to Bessborough. And the bus driver seen us, and I knew the bus driver. And he was like [whistles] 'Get in.' You know... and this was Tom Black, do you remember, Fred? Were you there, or was I on my own then?

**0:39:33**

**FM:** You were on your own.

**GM:** I think I was on my own then.

**FM:** You could just stop anyone.

**GM:** He stopped the bus so that I can get on. Can you imagine doing that here?

**LMI:** Not very often.

**LMI2:** Big city differences.

**LMI:** So, I think we're getting towards the end here, but really...

**GM:** I don't know whether we're helping you.

**LMI:** No, you are, you are, you are. Believe me, believe me.

**LMI2:** Can I ask about the difference between working with linen and working in the wool industry? What's the... The carpets, were they pure wool? Is that what you..?

**GM:** Yeah. No, there was mixtures. There was wool. Wool and nylon. Acrylic, you know. Lots of different yarns. Again, you had to know your different yarns.

**0:40:32**

**LMI2:** So, when you started working here, that period includes when lots more synthetic fibres are coming into the mixes, aren't they? Was it different working with synthetics to working with the natural fibers? Did they behave differently in the machinery and stuff?

**GM:** Yeah, yeah, you did get that, yeah, because wool... wool's a great fibre, you know. It's a wool carpet. And then of course the wool, and wool and nylon. And you get different fibres react differently in machining processes. You know, sometimes it can be more lively. And you have to adapt to all the different aspects of the yarns that you're using, you know. And you have to be able to tell them which were which.

**0:41:40**

**GM:** And the big thing was shades, colours. Getting colours right, you know. Because if you didn't get a matching colour for continuity in the carpet, then you were in trouble. Because customers would complain.

**LMI2:** Yeah, so you knew all your batch numbers.

**GM:** Yeah, you knew every shade number, you know. You could pick up and say, 'Oh that's year 94. There's some down in the warehouse. Go down there and get some of that.' Yeah, that was part and parcel of it.

**LMI:** Did you enjoy it?

**GM:** Yeah. I enjoyed it. I've never... I used to feel sorry for people who, when they got up in the morning, hated the thought of going to work. I have never been like that, have I, Freddie?

**FM:** No.

**0:42:41**

**GM:** Freddie hasn't either, she never hated going to work. And I feel sorry for anybody who felt like that. Because there were people there who would say that. And, you know, 'I hate this place.' Get yourself off, get on your bike. And one guy... I remember one incident, a fellow says... He'd come from another company. And he was doing a job. And I said, 'No, no, you don't do it like that.' He says, [Oh, he's got a call going outside]

**0:43:13**

**LMI:** Keep going, keep going.

**FM:** Keep going.

**GM:** Is that them...?

**LMI:** Tell the story.

**GM:** Yeah, so he said. He says... I said, 'Well, you don't do it, that's not...' He says, 'Where I worked before, that's how we done it.' I said, 'If that's how you done it, you'd best get back there and do it then, because you're not doing it here. You're doing it my way.' But these were little instances that you remember.

**0:43:46**

**LMI:** Any real characters?

**GM:** Oh yeah, some real characters. Some absolute gems. And some of the funnies that happened, you know, was...you know like, we had a lift... We used to lift yarn up from one floor to the next. And it was like a lift, but it wasn't a shop lift or anything like that. Just a platform going up in a caged area. And one day we were putting something...they'd get big sacks of yarn, about so tall, you know. Full of bobbins. And you'd stack them in and lift them up onto the next floor. But this particular time, this lift was going up. And it got stuck at the top because a bag had keeled over and jammed. And the lift couldn't go any further.

**0:44:51**

**GM:** So, one of the chaps at the top end, on the top floor opened the door. Which he shouldn't have done. But he opened the door and started to try and release it. But prior to him...they tried to take the lift back down again. The lift... the cables came slack, but the lift didn't move. So, this guy opened the door at the top, and he pushed his wheels. And the whole lot went down. Head first down the shaft.

**LMI:** Did he go down as well?

**GM:** Down 30 feet, you know.

**LMI:** Did he go down as well?

**GM:** He went down. I thought, 'Oh, God Almighty, there's going to be hell to pay over this.' But he got himself up. Guy got himself up. He was an Asian lad, you know. And he was a big lad, you know. He got himself up, and he put his coat on, and he went home.

**0:45:43**

**GM:** I thought, 'My God. 'And lo and behold, he rolled up the following morning, and got to work, and you never heard another word said about it. And I thought, 'If that happened now today, oh my God, you'd be hung drawn and quartered.' With the safety people.

**LMI:** Was it a dangerous place to work, a mill?

**GM:** I don't know, I didn't think so. But, you know, I also think that health and safety are... I think one of the things that people... It was very difficult.

**LMI:** One of the things that people told us about (I don't know if Glen was one of them) was children going and meeting their parents in the mill. Going in and...

**LMI2:** To pick them up from work.

**0:46:30**

**FM:** [?]

**LMI:** Say that again.

**FM:** When I worked at the mill. I worked at the mill for so long - when they started coming up on their own from school, they used to pop in to me. I asked the boss, 'Would it be alright?' so I said, 'There's nobody in the house.' [He would...]

**LMI:** And wait in the factory?

**FM:** Yes.

[**Son:** I had to take a Teams call through there.

**GM:** You ok?

**0:46:58**

**Son:** Yeah.]

**FM:** If you were a good worker, they would try and hold onto you.

**LMI:** So they'd do that so you...

**FM:** They'd do that for you.

**LMI:** Couldn't do it now, could they?

**LMI2:** So when you finished after 39 years? Did you retire? Was that when you retired? Or did you find some other work?

**GM:** No, I was made redundant.

**LMI2:** What did you do after that?

**GM:** I was 62 then. I was 62, wasn't I Freddie?

**FM:** Yes.

**0:47:43**

**GM:** The manufacturing side of things, the weaving carpets, had all gone by the board prior to this, a few years before. So the printing carpets took over. But then output folded. But when the weaving side of things folded, they then transferred me into the admin side of things. And I got an office job then. And I was doing office work then. And I would do...Again, I done alright! And so, from there, then... I don't know, I done so many things.

From there the transport guy used to check wagons of carpets in and out from other branches in the country. Bringing rolls in and taking rolls out, because they'd a factory in Abingdon in Wales. There was always transport problems. Well, not problems but transport. And then I got in charge of transport, you know. Logistics, you would call it, I suppose. And I was looking after that as well as, you know. And, er...but er..

**LMI:** I don't think people realise sometimes how many different jobs there were in the textile industry. I think people, er... because children get taken to the Industrial Museum and they see they see looms and they see spinning machines and that kind of stuff. And they think that's all it is. But behind that production there was a huge number of other jobs as well.

**GM:** Oh, for sure.

**0:49:29**

**LMI:** From the mending that you were doing to dyeing.

**LM12:** All the engineering.

**LMI:** All the engineering.

**GM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** All of that stuff.

**GM:** Yes. Yeah.

**LM12:** Yeah, so what did you prefer? Did you prefer being more kind of, you know, on the...

**GM:** Hands-on. Yeah. What I did in the... the Axminster's side of things. That's, you know, Axminster's carpet. That's woven. Whereas the print side of things, to me, it was never carpet.

**LMI:** Not proper carpet!

**GM:** No, no proper carpet! This was proper carpet. And it's a woven carpet. A spool of Axminster.

**LM12:** And they were exported all over the world. I mean, it was premium Axminster. They were really premium...

**0:50:21**

**GM:** Oh yeah, that was.....

**LM12:** ...product, wasn't it?

**0:50:48**



**GM:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, they used to have a particular quality that... oh, I've forgotten the name of it. And it was woven in a little loom. 27 inch wide. And that loom was donkey's years old. God knows how long, I don't know. But I could have given my heart and soul for that loom. It was a wonderful little machine. And the carpet that it made was unbelievable in price, you couldn't buy it. It was such good stuff.

**LMI:** Was that a kind of speciality...stuff?

**GM:** Oh it was terrific, was that stuff.

**LMI:** So it had to be a print or a..?

**GM:** It had to be a sideline compared to the main business, you know. But printing took over. They could churn out printing carpet, like wallpaper, you know. It wasn't the same, you know. But no, I finished. I was made redundant then and when it... Actually, the whole business closed when I was 62. And, like I said, I was made redundant. Before I was made redundant, a guy from a factory in Dewsbury who'd done the same line of business and knew me, knew what I did, and all the rest of it. And he offered me a job with him. So I went to see him and looked at the job. And yeah, I was going to be getting more money than I was already on at that time. So anyhow I came back home, and we discussed it. And we decided that it wasn't going to be a thing to do because Freddie didn't like the idea of me trailing over to Dewsbury like...

**0:52:17**

**FM:** During the bad weather.

**GM:** In the bad weather, and all that driving. And she was a little bit of a worrier. And she, you know, she worried about me, didn't you?

**FM:** Yeah.

**GM:** Yeah. So, I turned that down and I thought, 'Well, what am I going to do now?' But I had got a good settlement with me redundancy, because I'd had a lot of service in. As you know. I was in a pension fund. And that was good as well. I managed to get to 65, you know, and everything kicked in. Touch wood.

**LMI:** So when... that was it, so when you...

**GM:** I never really struggled, we never struggled at all. Thankfully. But we were privileged, you know what I mean. I planned, I payed a little bit extra into my pension, and stuff like that. So that when the rainy days came, they'd be okay, you know. Don't you think, Fred?

**FM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** So you started off in a back-to-back in Allerton, and you're up here now in...

**0:53:33**

**FM:** An outside toilet. We used to put...

**GM:** Back-to-back, like I used to be.

**FM:** ...a little light on in the winter. To keep it warm.

**LMI:** Stop it freezing up.

**FM:** Hang my nappies across the space.

**LMI:** Do you know the number of people I've talked to, who lived in back-to-backs with outside toilets. Huge number. There must have been thousands of them in Bradford in the 1960s and '70s.

**0:53:58**

**FM:** When I came over here in 1964. You and I and part of these two sisters lived up Covent Street. And they lived in these little back-to-backs. And they had outside toilets. And you had to go across the street to go to the toilet.

**LMI:** It wasn't even in the backyard? It was up the street.

**GM:** It wasn't even in the back, it was across the street.

**FM/GM:**Everybody knew when you were going!

**LMI:** Not so good in the middle of the night!

**GM:** No!

**0:54:35**

**FM:** And then there was an old lady who lived beside us, in the back-to-back, and she was 92. She was 50 odd years older than I was. Mrs. Hirst, they called her. And whenever the winter would come, I would go down and get her a pension for her. And she'd mind the kids while I done the shopping. And every Friday morning... She had a big tin bath. And every Friday morning she would have a boy washed in this big tin bath. And she would empty it out. And then Friday night we had a tin bath. [So we all helped...]

**GM:** We never...if you put someone into that scenario nowadays, they'd go mad, wouldn't they? But we never found it an awful hardship, you know.

**FM:** Well, nowadays they wouldn't do it,

**GM:** Oh, they just couldn't do it.

**LMI:** A tin bath, in front of the fire. It's not going to happen, is it?

**GM:** No, no, no.

0:55:12

**FM:** In the basement, it was.

**LMI:** It was in the basement?

**FM:** What it is... We had two bedrooms upstairs. And then we had a lounge. And then we had the kitchen, And then we had, you know, we made them, we rented it. And we asked the landlady if we could do so and so, and she said, 'Do whatever you want.' And we put fire in it and all sorts.

**LMI:** And then did you buy a place of your own in the end?

0:55:58

**FM:** Then we bought a house, a typical... big terraced...four-bedroom terrace we bought. We stayed there 30 years. And then we moved to here. Because I have got Parkinson's disease and I thought we'd better get out. It was too big to look after. So I retired at 58.

**LMI:** Say that again.

**FM:** I retired at 58.

**LMI:** You were 58?

**FM:** Had to do it.

**LMI:** Oh right. Yeah, my partner's got Parkinson's.

**FM:** How long has she had it? She's had it 15 years.

**FM:** I've had mine 20.

**LMI:** Wow, you're doing well. You're both doing well actually.

**FM:** I'm not actually. Can she walk?

**LMI:** Yeah, yeah.

**FM:** I can't walk at all.

**LMI:** Oh really. Oh that's a shame.

**GM:** See there's a so much variation in Parkinson's. There's a lot of variations. Freddie can't walk but there's people who can. And tremors all the time, you know. It's not good. But when we left the back-to-back, it was so unreal, wasn't it? We were only a couple of hundred yards away, and we got a pram and moved along.

**FM:** [?]

**GM:** Well, that's what I'm going to say an' all, because the woman overheard. You tell the story about the woman...

**0:57:21**

**FM:** I was going into town, and we were leaving... we hadn't given notice to the landlady. And I was in the town, and I was standing at the bus stop, and this other woman was talking to this lady. And she was saying, 'I see you've another house empty.' She said, 'Are you going to rent that out?' She said, 'I have no other house empty.' She said, 'You have. That old couple has left.' So she said, 'They never told me.' And there's all this going on, and I'm standing beside her. She didn't know my name. So when I got on the bus to go home, I thought, 'She'll get off the bus where I'm getting off.' So I got off the stop before her and I ran up the street, and I said to Gerry, 'She'll be coming, she'll be coming.' So she came and knocked the door. And she said, 'Oh, somebody told me you had left.' 'I don't know what you're talking about?' I said. So I took her around, showed her all around the house, so she knew we didn't leave it in a state. And she said, 'You've got a beautiful,' she said, 'Why didn't you tell me you wanted another house; I'd have sold it to you.'

**0:58:04**

**LMI:** Oh my word.

**GM:** Yeah, that's true.

**LMI:** But you ended up in a terraced house rather than back-to-back anyway.

**FM:** Yeah.

**LMI:** Listen, I'm going to turn this off now, and it's been great talking to you.

**GM:** Honestly, I'm not so sure that we've been any good.

**LMI:** Of course you have.

**LM12:** It's brilliant.

**LMI:** Of course you have.

**0:58:32**

**LM12:** Yeah. It's a really interesting journey you've had through two different types of textile industry.

**LMI:** Yeah. It's fascinating.

**LM12:** Yeah. Small. Big. Different countries. Wow.

**GM:** So is that all on tape?

**LMI:** Yeah, it is.

**0:58:50**

**GM:** Oh, God.