

JM - Transcription

Audio quality - Not so good. Background noise throughout.

0:00:00

LMI: So here I am with [REDACTED] And [REDACTED], do you want to just give me a little bit of background of yourself, and when you first came to Bradford?

JM: Well, I came to Bradford from Africa, East Africa. 9th of June 1964. When I was 16.

LMI: Did you come with your family?

JM: No, I came alone. My father was here.

LMI: In Bradford?

JM: Bradford. Yeah, he worked in textile.

LMI: Ah, right. So did you come over and go straight to work?

JM: Well, after two months I went to work.

LMI: And where did you have your first job?

0:00:41

Saltaire.

LMI: In Salt's Mill?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And what were you doing in East Africa before you came over?

JM: I went to school there.

LMI: You were at school? So you went from a school in East Africa to a huge mill in Saltaire?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: What was that like for you?

0:01:02

JM: Well, it's a bit noisy first time, you know.

LMI: And what were you doing at the age of 16?

JM: I was trucking down, you know, a cart, wheeling cart, you know.

LMI: Moving carts full of bobbins? And were you moving them from floor to floor?

JM: Floor to floor, yeah,

LMI: Oh interesting. And how long did you do that for?

0:01:27

JM: For 5, 6 months. Then it was too far, so my friend took me down to Illingworth.

LMI: To Illingworth. And what kind of textiles did they make there?

JM: They were making spinning, you know.

LMI: Oh, there was a spinning mill? What were they spinning?

JM: Cotton.

LMI: Cotton? And wool as well?

0:01:48

JM: Wool as well.

LMI: And what was the wool used for? Was it knitting wool or was it for weaving?

JM: Weaving.

LMI: And what were you doing there?

JM: Well, I used to take the same job, you know. Bobbin, floor to floor, and all that.

LMI: And that was like a labouring job?

JM: Labouring job, yes.

LMI: And what was it like for you? What did it feel like?

0:02:12

JM: It was a bit heavy for me.

LMI: It was heavy?

JM: Heavy, yes. Wheeling cart, and all that.

LMI: Because you were quite young?

JM: Yes.

LMI: And so did you get very tired?

JM: Well, not tired, but it was heavy, you know.

LMI: And how many hours were you working a day?

JM: 47.

0:02:35

LMI: A week?

JM: 47, 48 hours.

LMI: That's quite a long working week. That's about nearly 10 hours a day.

JM: 10 hours a day, yeah.

LMI: And did you work from Monday through to Saturday?

JM: Friday.

LMI: Friday.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And you had the weekends off?

0:02:51

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And where were you living?

JM: I used to live in Manville Terrace.

LMI: Manville Terrace?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: In Manningham?

JM: No, no, down here.

LMI: Down here?

JM: In Clayton Road.

LMI: Off of Clayton Road?

0:03:02

JM: No, University, opposite University.

LMI: Opposite the University? Oh, I remember, I know where that is, yeah. And so, was all your family over here? Or was it just your father?

JM: My father, lodging, you know.

LMI: And what was that like? A group of men living together?

JM: Yeah, alright.

LMI: Did you have to cook?

JM: Yeah.

0:03:26

LMI: Had you cooked before?

JM: No, my father, you know, he used to teach me.

LMI: You had to learn to cook when you came over here?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: So you went from being a student to working quite hard in a mill?

JM: Yeah. Then I started... after a year, I started in Courtaulds, Westcourt Mill, [where Tesco is].

LMI: Ah, right. Courtaulds.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Alright. So, what did it feel like coming from West Africa to work in a textile mill in Bradford? Was it strange?

0:03:54

JM: It was strange. It was strange at first.

LMI: Were you homesick?

JM: No, not homesick, but well, what to do, something to do anyway.

LMI: Something to do, and presumably you needed to earn money.

JM: Money, yeah.

LMI: And so you went from Salt's Mill...

JM: Yeah, Illingworth, about a year after I went to Courtauld's Mill.

LMI: And were you doing the same thing in Courtauld's Mill?

0:04:23

JM: Spinning. Twisting, sorry.

LMI: Twisting?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: So you went on to a machine?

JM: Machine, yeah.

LMI: So you were trained for that?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Yeah. And how long were you at Courtauld's for?

JM: About 5 years

LMI: Five years. So you really were experienced by the end of that. What was it like working in a spinning mill?

0:04:44

JM: Well, bit different, you know.

LMI: Was it men and women together?

JM: No, only men.

LMI: Only men?

JM: Yeah. After five years then I started in...you know, there's a Calakoodman down here in Farnham Road.

LMI: What was it?

JM: Used to be a small mill. Calakoodman. Calakoodman.

0:04:59

LMI: Oh, I've not heard of that one.

JM: Oh yeah, it's on Farnham Road, used to be.

LMI: Oh right.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And what were you doing there?

JM: Weaving, you know, the suit material.

LMI: Weaving suit material. So you went from spinning to weaving?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: On a machine?

0:05:19

JM: Not machine. Started again on labouring, you know.

LMI: What was the money like? Was it good?

JM: Yeah, no. If you don't work, if you don't work your time they'll cut your... if you do the overtime they won't pay you overtime for that money.

LMI: So you...

0:05:33

JM: They take it off, then exact hours are done, and they'll pay you overtime.

LMI: And so you needed to work overtime in order to have enough money?

JM: If you break a time, you'll have to deduct it in your own time.

LMI: So that was why you were...

JM: That was a bit hard.

LMI: That was hard.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: What time did you start in the morning?

0:05:55

JM: Half past seven

LMI: Half past seven?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And what time did you finish?

JM: About five o'clock

LMI: That's a long, long day, isn't it? Wow.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And you did that five days a week?

JM: Five days a week.

0:06:08

LMI: And what did you do at weekends?

JM: Weekends. Sometimes I was working on Saturday, then we worked on Saturday.

LMI: And did you have a social life? Did you have a social life?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Did you go out? Did you...

JM: I'd go out with friends and...

LMI: And what did you think of Bradford as a place to come and live?

0:06:29

JM: Before it was alright, but now... I lived 45 years in Bradford Savon

LMI: 45 years you've lived in Bradford?

JM: 45 years. First we lived in Manville Terrace, then we moved to Trinity Road for a year. And we bought a house.

LMI: You bought a house?

JM: Swinton Place.

LMI: Swinton Place? is that near the University as well?

JM: Yeah.

0:06:53

LMI: Yeah. And... this is really interesting. So Bradford must have been quite different from where you came from.

JM: Now from before, yeah.

LMI: And you say it's different again now? In what way is it different now?

JM: Down here there's no cleanliness. Bradford city, no cleanliness. But now I live up in Highgate Road it's very clean and tidy. There's no restaurant or anything.

LMI: So you think the restaurants...

JM: From Mumtaz to Downwood.

LMI: Say that again.

JM: From Mumtaz to PTS there's about 17 restaurants.

LMI: 17? And they make a lot of mess?

0:07:30

JM: Lot of mess.

LMI: It's all take away food.

JM: Take away food, throw away, eat in car, throw the litter out, they never used to do that.

LMI: No, no it was very different.

JM: That is very silly.

LMI: So do you think Bradford was a better place?

JM: Better place before. Now I live up there, it's clean and tidy.

LMI: Did you say in Highgate?

0:07:53

JM: I live in Highgate.

LMI: Yeah right. So it's nice up there? And it's clean, tidy. You mean up the top of Emm Lane?

JM: Cooper Lane.

LMI: Upper Lane?

JM: Cooper Lane.

LMI: Cooper Lane, oh ok. And so how long did you work in the mills all together?

JM: All together? About 15 years.

LMI: 15 years.

JM: Then I started in... work television, you know. Now. it's that good now.

0:08:29

LMI: Where was that?

JM: TV, television.

LMI: Oh, you worked for TV, with Bairds?

JM: Yeah, I worked about 7 years there.

LMI: So you went from the mill to Bairds television?

JM: It closed down, and I went to International Harvesters.

LMI: International Harvesters, oh okay, so you've moved around quite a lot.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: So this project is mainly about the textile mills.

JM: Yeah.

0:08:53

LMI: So were you very aware of all the mills closing down?

JM: Yeah, mills closing down. After Baird Television closed down, and a lot of mills closed down as well, at the same time, I went to International Harvester. I worked [there] two and a half years, [then] they closed down.

LMI: So lots of things were closing down. When was this, in the 1970s, '80s?

JM: '80s.

LMI: 1980s. Was that a difficult time for you?

0:09:20

JM: Well, I got a job after, when I finished International, I got a job in Grattan Warehouse.

LMI: In Grattans, which used to be a big mill.

JM: Big mill, big packing section. Good job, good money, less time, 35 hours.

LMI: Oh right, 35 hours?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And that was when Grattans was like a big...

JM: Big.

LMI: Like Argos.

JM: You know where they're building houses? Where they're building houses, used to be old place.

LMI: The old [whole?] place where the houses are being built now.

0:09:54

JM: Yeah, yeah. But they moved to Thornton Road, new building. I worked in contract for... 20 week contract with them. Nearly 5 years. After 5 years they made me permanent.

LMI: So you were working on 20 week contracts for 5 years?

JM: People left because they don't like it... in contract working..

LMI: There is no permanence.

JM: Yeah. I stayed for 20....25...5 years as a contractor... for their contract. I made permanent after straight away

LMI: Were you packing all that time?

0:10:31

JM: Well, packing, picking, everything.

LMI: And was it all textiles, then?

JM: No, better than textile. Good clean job.

LMI: Yeah. But in Grattans was it all textiles they were packing, or was it all sorts of things?

JM: Yeah. Clean job.

LMI: A clean job.

0:10:50

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Whereas...were the textiles very dirty?

JM: Noisy and dirty job.

LMI: What was the noise like?

JM: Machinery noise.

LMI: Was it very loud?

JM: Very loud, yeah.

LMI: And did you have any ear protection?

0:11:08

JM: No, no. Not that time.

LMI: And what were the other people like, [that] you worked with in the mills?

JM: They all... loud. They complained, can't hear, no. Like my wife, she worked in a combing machine, they're making comb for textile mills. So very loud when they mould the thing, you know. And now her hearing is gone now, she can't hear.

LMI: And it was all because of working in the mill?

JM: Well, not in the mill, but in engineering.

LMI: In the engineering, making the combing machine?

JM: Machine mill.

LMI: Oh, I see, I see. And the mills themselves? Were they dirty as well as noisy?

0:11:51

JM: Yeah. But this one was a clean job. Baird television was a clean job.

LMI: Which was a clean job?

JM: Both, Baird Television and Grattan. And Grattan.

LMI: Both clean?

JM: Both clean.

LMI: But the mills weren't?

JM: Mills, no.

LMI: Not at all.

JM: I won't go there now. There's no job now.

0:12:09

LMI: Was it sad to see the mills closing? How did you feel about the...

JM: A bit sad, and you know...

LMI: You didn't lose a job. Did other people you know lose their jobs?

JM: They lose their jobs.

LMI: Was that difficult?

JM: For them.

LMI: Yeah.

JM: Maybe they got rid of them at that time.

0:12:32

LMI: Yeah. So, how did you get on with the other people? Was it a very mixed group of people? Were they old...?

JM: Yeah, mixed, yeah.

LMI: Did you all get on well?

JM: Yeah. Well, you have to. There's no choice.

LMI: And did you ever work nights? Or did you always work days?

0:12:54

JM: I worked at night as well, in Courtauld's.

LMI: What was that like?

JM: Alright. You worked 7 o'clock in the evening till 7 in the morning.

LMI: 12-hour shift.

JM: Yes, 12-hour shift.

LMI: That's a long day. Did you do that five days....?

JM: Long night. 5 days.

0:13:11

LMI: You worked 5 days?

JM: International Harvester, I worked 4 nights. If you work on Friday night, you get paid overtime.

LMI: Ah, right.

JM: For less hours.

LMI: For less hours. But that didn't happen in...

JM: No. Not in textiles.

LMI: Courtauld's?

JM: No. Not in textiles.

0:13:28

LMI: And is there anything that kind of you remember, that you particularly remember about things that happened in the mill? You know, what happened that sort of..

JM: Well, after the new machinery. Textile, you know, spinning, twisting,

LMI: New machinery came in?

JM: Came in.

LMI: What was that like?

JM: Then the people started losing their job. These people, instead of handling two machines, they moved to four machines.

0:13:57

LMI: Alright. So two people were looking after machines and then four people, then they were looking... Sorry, one person was looking after two machines.

JM: Two machines. And they started, you know, on and on, going harder and harder.

LMI: So, were they actually making people redundant?

JM: Yeah. That's the story.

LMI: Sorry?

0:14:15

JM: That's the story.

LMI: Yeah. So when did that happen? When did the new machinery come in?

JM: It came in '70s, early '80s.

LMI: In the early 80s?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And that was, were they good machines to work on?

JM: No, I didn't work that time, you know.

0:14:37

LMI: Oh right. But this happened to other people?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Yeah. So, a couple of other things. Did you meet your wife over here?

JM: Yeah, my wife came after one year.

LMI: She came over from East Africa?

JM: No, from India.

LMI: Oh, from India?

JM: Yeah.

0:14:57

LMI: Oh, ok.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: You were in East Africa, she was in India?

JM: No, she was in Dar es Salaam.

LMI: Oh, ok. Yeah.

JM: I was in Kenya.

LMI: Oh right.

JM: I came from Kenya, she went to Dar es Salaam, to India, and came here.

0:15:13

LMI: Oh right. Ok. And you were already married, were you?

JM: I married here.

LMI: Oh yeah. And have you got family now?

JM: Yeah, two, two. Boy and a girl. Girl in America.

LMI: They're in America?

JM: Yeah. And son in Coventry.

LMI: Oh, I know Coventry.

JM: Yeah. Girl in America, she go nearly 20 years now. Son in Coventry, after marriage he moved to Coventry with his wife. He used to work in Shipley, in the tax office.

0:15:47

LMI: Oh, I know the tax office.

JM: So they're closed now.

LMI: That's all closed now.

JM: Yeah, so he went to... got a job in Coventry.

LMI: Ah, right. So when you came to Bradford, did you think you were going to stay?

JM: Well, you have to. No choice.

LMI: Did you think, 'I'll just earn some money and then go somewhere else?'

JM: No, no, no. You can't, no.

LMI: Do you think 'I'm here to stay now?'

0:16:15

JM: No, no. Just to make your mind up, you know.

LMI: Say that again.

JM: Just to make your mind up.

LMI: Yeah.

JM: Because you've been struggling all your life.

LMI: And when you had children presumably, it was more difficult to move around anyway.

JM: See, terraced house, two bedroom, there's no toilet. Outside. Attic.

LMI: I think people forget, don't they, what houses were like in the 1960s, in Bradford?

JM: Now, no dormers or anything. After '60s they started building dormers.

LMI: Yeah, the houses were very basic in Bradford in the 1960s. What was your house like, your first house?

0:16:59

JM: When I moved into this house, at Swinton Place. Toilet was outside. Kitchen, small kitchen. Two bedroom, no toilet upstairs. Loft, attic was open, you know. And before my daughter got born, I made a bathroom and toilet in attic.

LMI: Oh right. And did it have a garden?

JM: Well, back garden. But we struggled you know, instead of going out with the children, you know.

LMI: So did you do all that work or did someone...?

0:17:42

JM: Only my father and me.

LMI: That must have been difficult.

JM: Difficult, yeah.

LMI: Yeah, yeah. Oh that's interesting, because many houses in Bradford then, they all had outside toilets.

JM: Yeah, before there was no central heating or anything.

LMI: No.

JM: No gas fire.

0:18:01

LMI: No. Just coal fires.

JM: This is strange, yeah.

LMI: Do you think...

JM: People now come, everything is ready for them. All these new young people come from India, everything is ready for them.

LMI: What?

JM: We can't... I went after 16 years to India. Came here, then I went to... 16 years, you know. When I was 9-and-a-half-year-old, I went to Africa.

LMI: Oh right.

JM: My wife came and she went to India after 14 years.

0:18:35

LMI: And have you been back to India?

JM: I've been quite a few times now.

LMI: Which bit of India is your family from?

JM: India, Gujarat.

LMI: Gujarat?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Northern India.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Right. That's great. One more thing. Some of the mills had outings and trips out in a coach. Did your mill do that? Any of the mills you worked in? All get in a coach and go somewhere?

0:19:07

JM: My father did, you know.

LMI: Your father did.

JM: Not these new mills, you know. All these mills. All mills were closed down, John Prescott and everything closed down nearly. Year after year after, you know.

LMI: Yeah. And so your father worked in a mill as well, until he got old?

JM: Yeah. He never been to another mill.

LMI: Never been?

JM: Another mill.

LMI: He worked in Salt's mill all his life?

JM: No, not Salt's mill. We were craftsmen. That's what we were.

0:19:43

LMI: Ah, you were...

JM: Carpet.

LMI: Oh, the carpet mill. And he worked there all his life?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Wow. Oh, so when you went to Salt's mill he wasn't there then?

JM: No. No,

LMI: So you went there on your own.

0:19:57

JM: Yeah. That's the story for me.

LMI: Have you been back to Saltaire since?

JM: No. No, we passed by you know.

LMI: I think you ought to go in one day, into the building. It's very different now.

JM: Is it?

LMI: Oh totally, there's cafes...and the whole area is a World Heritage Site now. Okay.

JM: Yeah, that's the story.

0:20:22

LMI: Well that's some of the stories. If you think of anything else do get in touch with me.

JM: Yeah.

LMI: And Harkishan's got my contact details. If any little stories come to mind, of anything that happened, I don't know...industrial disputes. You must have... I'm going to carry on a bit now... You must have been working in a mill during the three-day week, when everything had to shut down?

JM: When the power...

LMI: Yeah, when the power was turned off.

JM: Power strike.

0:20:50

LMI: That's right. What was that like?

JM: No. Can't do.

LMI: You were just sent home?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: Was that tough times?

JM: Three days, four days, you know.

LMI: No wages?

JM: Yeah.

LMI: You managed somehow?

0:21:10

JM: Yeah, you have to manage, you know.

LMI: Okay. I'm going to turn this off now. If I can make it. Say that again.

JM: That's a very hard time, that time, when we came in '60s, that year. You know up to '70s, everything would change, and people get good money, wages, then it was alright.

LMI: But those early days were much more difficult?

0:21:37

JM: Very hard, yeah.

LMI: You were just working. Were you saving money, or trying to save?

JM: No, no, we had to pay rent and shopping, everything, you know.

LMI: Ah, interesting. Okay, thanks very much indeed. Thank you.