

Mohammed Hanif – Transcript

*Audio Quality: Some sound tech issues, a bit of translation. 0:16:0:2-0:17:45 will need checking as this is AI translation*

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I am recording. Yet to know.

LMI: Mohammed Hani. Hello, do you want to just quickly introduce yourself and just describe you coming over here and your experience with the textile mills?

MH: My name is Muhammad Hanif. I came to this country with my dad in 1963.

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LMI: How old were you then?

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MH: I was only 15. Less than 15. And then when we got to the airport, it was night time, evening time, and it was really cold. And I wasn't used to cold at all. And we had to catch a bus. Go to King Cross station in London from Heathrow. So I had to ask somebody 'How can we get to the King Cross station?' And so I did, I managed anyways. I wasn't able to speak a lot of English then, but I did manage. And we got in the bus and asked the next person who was sitting with me to tell us where to get off. So we got to King Cross Station. From there, on the train. And it was night train, which I think carries post. And you were stopping here and there, everywhere. It took about all night to get to Bradford. We got to Bradford in the morning, about 8 o'clock. And we get a taxi from there, station, to Leitham Street, where the University is now. That's where Leitham Street used to be.

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LMI: And when you came over here, and you were only very young, when did you start working in the textile mills?

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MH: Well, after a few weeks, I started looking for work. And there is a mill called Illingworth on Thornton Road. They accepted me. And I went to work in the morning. I worked about two hours and then they said, 'Go and get your National Insurance card.' I went to... I think it used to be insurance of a difference, I went there. And they tell me, 'You are not old enough to work yet. You have to go to school for two, three weeks.' So they send me back. I didn't go

back to Illingworth then. And I went to school at Barking Road, Barking School for two, three weeks only. And then I started work at H. A. & Co. That's on Thornton Road as well. And I worked about a week. I left it because it was too cold (it was a warehouse job), it was too cold for me. So, next job I found was in Smith Hartley in Skipton. I worked there a few months. And then for the battery filler I went to Carlton, Aspinall Brothers. And I worked there... I didn't work too long anywhere anyway... all my life. I worked there about two, three... two and a half years maybe. My father went ill. Not ill, sick.

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MH: They used to have orthopedic problems somewhere in the back. So there was a hospital, Rawdon Hospital, no, Middleton Hospital in Rawdon. That's where we took him. And from Skipton, getting to the hospital was two buses to change. For me, I thought it was a bit too much. So I left Aspinall Brothers. I started working at night in particular somewhere here in Greenland.

LMI: Wow. So you worked in a lot of different companies.

MH: Different companies, yes.

LMI: What about Mr Khan, what did he do?

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MH: He'd been working in the mill.

Mr K: Highfield Mill.

MH: Highfield Mill.

LMI: What job did he do?

Mr K: Reeling.

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MH: Reeling.

LMI: Wow. And how long did he do that for?

MH: Just one month.

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Mr K: Then I worked in Willam Hartley.

MH: William Hartley.

Mr K: Here also, reeling.

MH: Same job?

Mr K: Same job, yes.

MH: How long did you work for that?

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Mr K: I worked there for 6-7 months.

MH: 6-7 months?

Mr K: No, 6 years.

MH: About 6-7 years?

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Mr K: Yes, 6-7 years.

MH: Yeah, he worked 6-7 years at William Hartley.

LMI: And did you like it, the job?

Mr K: I liked it.

LMI: And did you like the people you worked with as well?

Mr K: Yes.

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MH: Yes.

MH: Robert Glue. Robert Clough, I don't know where it was. Where was it?

Mr Khan: Westland.

MH: West Lane?

Mr K: Yes.

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MH: He worked in West Lane, Robert Clough, for about three years.

LMI: Wow.

Mr K: I worked again in John Haggas.

MH: John Haggas.

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Mr K: I worked there for six years.

MH: Six years in John Haggas.

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LMI: And what was it like working in those mills? Because some people have said it was quite noisy. What was that like?

[unclear – translating]

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MH: Yes, it was noisy.

LMI: And when you worked in the mills, what was the difference between the men's jobs and the women's jobs?

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MH: I started at Smith Hartley in Skipton first, as a battery filler on the weaving machine. And it was very, very noisy, to be honest. And ladies used to look after the machine, and I used to do battery filling on the machines.

LMI: And did you chat to the women? Or was it too...

MH: Yeah, well, not really. We couldn't chat there. It was so noisy. We couldn't talk to each other.

LMI: And when you came over here, you said that your English was quite limited.

MH: Very limited.

[21  
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Technician: Can we just pause for a second.

Okay.

We just studied another microphone problem.

I'm going to just see if I can swap the batteries, see if that helps.

We're just having a microphone issue.

What? We're just having an issue with one of the mics.

I don't know what is the battery, but I'm going to go and get my phone. That's the quickest I've lost on the whole thing.

Well we've done the best we can.

We have, yeah, and we've got lots of different slides.]

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LMI2: When you first came to England, did you get a flight or did you...?

MH: Fly, yeah.

LMI: Was that your first time on an aeroplane?

MH: That was my first time.

LMI: Wow. Did you enjoy it?

MH: I used to smoke, except my dad didn't knew it. My dad didn't knew I smokes.

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LMI: That's a long time to go without smoking.

LMI2: Well, you could smoke, you could smoke on the plane back then, couldn't you.

LMI: Oh, you could smoke back then?

MH: You could smoke there in the plane. But I couldn't smoke on the plane because my dad was sitting next to me. So I went to the toilet and I smoked there. But that plane landed a few places there. On the field... in Europe somewhere. And as soon I throw the cigarette in the toilet it changed the sound. 'Oh, dear me.' I thought I'd throw the cigarette and I've done

something wrong. So anyway, I run away to my seat. It was on the sea, and it was landing that's why it changed the sound.

LMI2: But surely your dad...[?] could tell you'd been smoking when you came back from the toilet?

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MH: I don't know if he could smell.

LMI2: He definitely could.

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MH: You could smoke, if everybody could smoke in the plane...

LMI: That's true.

MH: ...there was no problem smoking in toilets. But there was written, 'No smoking in the toilet.'

LMI2: Oh, was there?

MH: 'No smoking in the toilet.' That's why I got scared.

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0:10:26

LMI: Yeah.

Tech: I think we're good now. We can try that now.

LMI: Do we need to re-rehearse after?

Tech: Yeah, I think you got to asking about...

LMI: I was going to go and see English wasn't I?

Tech: Yeah, and I think we got up to like women's roles versus men's roles.]

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LMI: Yeah, thank you. So when you first came over here, you said your English was quite limited. How hard was that working in a mill, where you couldn't necessarily understand what everybody was saying?

MH: When it's battery filling, there was no problem. Because once they showed me what to do, I got used to it. And then when I left Smith Hartley and went to Aspinall Brothers, that's where I used to work on the mule spinning. That was a bit quieter. There were carding machines on the side. And I used to work with the ladies then. I remember Miss Sheldon, she used to teach me English. She used to say something, if I don't understand, she used to write it, tell me, 'Take this writing home and ask somebody what it means, and tell me tomorrow.' That's how I learned my English.

LMI: That is amazing.

MH: And to be honest, I had a good... She was... I was 15 and she was about 50-54. This different age. And when she got retired... I used to live in Keighley, and she used to live in Skipton. She changed her address. I went to see her at home because she was too old really. And I remember her very well. And to be honest, Aspinall brothers, those people were so nice. I couldn't think of anybody so nice.

MH: Mr. Aspinall, his son Mr. Bruce, his brother Alan, I knew them all. One day I was working... they asked me to work late. There was only one bus going from Carlton to Skipton late night, you know, late in the evening. So I said, 'There's no bus after that, how can I work late? He said, 'Don't worry about it.' I said, 'Ok.' I worked, he came, Bruce came, he said, 'Right, the rest of the stuff, just cut it off, and I'll take you home.'

LMI: And he had a car, then?

MH: He had a car. And he had a helicopter as well, that mill owner.

LMI: Wow!

MH: He took me home. On the way up he was saying, 'I've brought you some sandwiches.' I said, 'My food will be ready.' He says, 'Who will cook for you?' I says, 'My dad.' He says, 'My dad doesn't cook for me.' I said, 'The way you speak to your dad, I don't speak like that to him.' Because the day before, they were fighting over some of the stuff they were putting on this machine, and Bruce was saying, 'I will put on that machine...'

LMI: So they were fighting over it?

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MH: To your [his?] dad, yeah.

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LMI: So it was father and son that owned the mill?

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MH: Yeah, Mr. Hubert's brother, Alan as well, all three. All three of them used to work.

LMI: And did you see them quite regularly?

MH: Yeah, they were coming round and round. And I used to work on mule spinning.

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LMI: Could you just briefly explain what that was? What you had to do?

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MH: Mule spinning, we used to put bobbins on them. They were coming from cartons to there, cartons to there. And then we used to twitch the ends, you know? Thread, making thread there. And machine used to warp back. And with the machine we used to come back. And then when it goes in, we used to go *in* with the machine. Because any end brokes, we have to pick up and tie it quickly, as quick as we can.

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LMI: And you said that you got the bus and things to and from work.

MH: Yeah.

LMI: How did... Mr Khan, how did he get to and from work?

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MH: From work?

LMI: Yeah.

MH: In the morning? In the morning, we used to get up, and there is a bridge near railway station. Over the bridge [?] we used to go. And we used to catch it from that bridge and that... about 10 minutes yearning.

LMI: And do either of you remember when the mills started to close? Were you affected by that?



MH: No. To be honest, I left textile. I went to stay in Birmingham. I worked in railways. I worked British Steel. I worked plastic moulding. I went to Maidstone, Kent, I worked there. You know these seats, cushions for the car? We used to make those cushions there.

LMI: And what did *you* do when, after the textile mills....

MH: Are you asking him?

LMI: Yeah.

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MH: What else did you do after you retired?

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Mr K: I came here before you did. I worked in a brickyard.

MH: What?

Mr Khan: I worked in a brickyard.

MH: You mean foundry?

Mr K: No foundry.

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MH: Oh, he'd been working for...er... bricks, you know. He used to make bricks. First he started on those, making bricks.

LMI: Wow. And that happened a long time ago.

Mr K: I was there for five years.

MH: What did you do?

Mr K: I was working as a driver in a truck.

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MH: Oh, a fork truck.

Mr K: Yes, a fork truck.

MH: He was driving a truck.

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LMI: And why did you leave the mills?

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Mr K: I left it there because my family was here. Family started there.

MH: Who does? Foundry?

Mr K: Luton or Bedford.

MH: That was in the Bedford. Bedford near Luton. And he left it because all of rest of his family was here. And he had to come to see them. So it would be too far for him.

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LMI: And so instead of joining the mill here, he found a different...

MH: Yeah, it's a different type of work really when you come into mill. So you came here and started with the small mill?

Mr K: Yes.

MH: Where did you start?

Mr K: Here in Hayfield Mill.

MH: Then he started in Hayfield Mill. Then he stayed in textiles.

Mr K: No, I did foundry here. You did foundry here, Deansmith, Lawkholme Lane.

MH: He worked in a foundry as well, in Lawkholme Lane, Keighley.

Mr K: Dean Smith.

MH: Dean Smith.]

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LMI: And are there any other specific memories you've got from working in the mills around here?

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MH: When I was in Maidstone, my father went sick again. So I made a trip on the weekend because I was used to work at night. And when you make... there's only one day rest day sort of. Because if you are working night, Saturday you sleep during day, all day. So that's not a rest day. Sunday is the rest day. And I left work in the morning, Saturday morning, and

caught a train and came to Bradford to see my dad. And I went back on a Sunday. There was no rest at all. So I did two weeks now. Then I rung Mr. Aspinall['s] son, Bruce, I asked him, 'Have you got a job for me?'

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MH: He says, 'Who's speaking?' I said, 'Hanif.' He said, 'Where are you?' I said, 'I'm in Kent. Maidstone, Kent.' He said, 'Are you sure you want to work here?' I said, 'Yes.'

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MH: He said, 'Come back. I'll have a job for you. Don't worry. You come any time.' So I went there again to work. And he put me in a vacuum plant. They used to make carpet. Under the carpet they used to put ashen on or foam, you know. And that department didn't had a Pakistani bloke in there before. I was the first one to go in there.

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LMI: And were the people you worked with, were they friendly? Were they welcoming?

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MH: Most of them were, but there was a bloke called Ripley, I can't remember his first name. Ripley was in charge of that vacuum plant and he wasn't very friendly, really. He was my age, my age, but he wasn't very friendly. Otherwise, most of the people were very, very friendly.

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LMI: Good. Oh, I'm glad. Thank you so much for talking with us. I think we've got everything that we need.

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MH: Thank you very much.

LMI: Thank you so much.

MH: Thank you. That's it?

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LMI: That's it.

[[?]: Okay, thank you very much. Thanks a lot.

LMI: That was lovely. Thank you.

[?]: Thanks everybody.

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[?]: Thank you.

[?]: Cheers. I'll come and get that back. Thanks very much.

[?]: It's been really nice to speak to you. It's been really nice to speak to you.]