

SH Transcription

Audio Quality : Good volume, no background noise, speech a little unclear at times.

0:00:00

LMI: Hello [REDACTED]

SH: Yeah, hello.

LMI: Do you want to tell me when you first came to England and started working in a mill and where it was?

SH: First time I came in '70, first '70, you know. And I live about 8-9 months in Worcester, near Birmingham.

LMI: Oh yeah?

SH: Yeah. And after '70, when I came in this Keighley.

LMI: To Keighley, yeah.

SH: And I started work for Low Mill.

0:00:30

SH: Just near, you know, railway station.

LMI: Oh yes, yes, I know that.

SH: Yeah, I worked about five, six months there, per day.

LMI: And what did you do there?

SH: Spinning.

LMI: And how old were you then?

SH: I am nearly 17, 18 years.

LMI: When you were 17 or 18?

SH: 17, 17 years.

LMI: Had you ever worked in a mill before?

0:00:51

SH: No, no, no. First time. First time I start Low Mill, you know.

LMI: And what was it like?

SH: It was alright.

LMI: You enjoyed it?

SH: Yeah, yeah.

LMI: Did you have to learn?

SH: Yeah, each one, two days, you know, people give me learning. It's all family working there. That's why I got no problem.

LMI: And did it feel very different?

SH: Yeah. Different from Pakistan to here, and all that difference, yeah.

0:01:14

LMI: And did you know people around here?

SH: Yeah.

LMI: You had friends and family here?

SH: Yeah.

LMI: So you got to know them quite well.

LMI: And what was it like working in the mill, in Low Mill? What were the conditions like? Was it noisy? Was it quiet?

SH: It is noisy. Low Mill, you know, the spinning, you know, is very noisy.

0:01:35

SH: But after a few weeks I am used to that.

LMI: And did you know anybody there when you went there?

SH: Yeah, yeah, I know my few friends over there. Who take me over there for... help me for job. Yeah, I know him.

LMI: And... How long did you work there for?

SH: I think about 6 months, 7 months I worked there. Then I go for another mill.

0:01:59

SH: Is a... Crosshill is... Don't you need to go to A field?

[Speaker 3]: Cross Hills.

LMI: Oh yeah, Cross Hills, yeah.

SH: I worked a night shift about 3-4 years over there.

LMI: 3-4 years working the night shift?

SH: Night shift, yes.

LMI: What was that like?

SH: Yes, that's alright, textile, you know, spinning.

0:02:16

SH: That's all, you know.

LMI: Was it hard work?

SH: It is hard work for 12 hours. 7 to 7.

LMI: 12-hour shift?

SH: Yes, 12 hour shift. 7 to 7.

LMI: 5 days a week? 4 days a week?

0:02:28

SH: Sometimes 6, and sometimes 4 or 5.

LMI: Whoah! Were you paid well for doing it?

SH: I think £19 and £20 like this for 6 days... 6 nights.

LMI: And so was the night shift mainly an Asian community? Or was it people from...?

SH: Almost Asian.

LMI: Yes, yes. Yes, yes.

SH: Just one in charge, you know, local. They English.

0:02:55

SH: Other all Asians.

LMI: Right. And so, did you like it working over in Cross Hills?

SH: Yes, yes. I like it. All right. All right.

LMI: And did you have family here then, or did you get married?

SH: No, no family. After six years, seven years after, my family came here. In '79 go for a marriage.

0:03:05

LMI: Then... You're 79? 79.

[Speaker 3]: In 1979.

SH: No, '79. '79 I go for a marriage.

LMI: Ah, right.

SH: Then '81, my wife and children come in.

LMI: Okay, so you worked here for quite a long time as a single man?

0:03:32

SH: Yes, single man.

LMI: And what did you do for... when you weren't working? Did you kind of go out in Keighley or meet friends?

SH: Sometimes when I got Saturday and Sunday, you know, I like to go for Bradford looking films. Yeah. Indian films.

LMI: Yeah, yeah.

SH: And go for restaurant, you know.

LMI: Whereabouts were the Indian films?

0:03:54

SH: Indian films, you know, is...

LMI: What was the cinema?

SH: Cinema, cinema, yeah.

LMI: Do you know what the cinema was? I bet it's not there anymore.

SH: I don't know anymore, I forget the name. But I got 2, 3 cinema in Bradford. Sometimes, every 3, 4 weeks, I got allowed for one time go. And my one brother is on here now. And my father not let me go every week, you know.

0:04:20

LMI: Why, because they didn't trust you?

SH: Yeah.

[Speaker 3]: It wasn't a good thing, yeah, I'm trying to remember, because my dad used to drive past and say, "The cinema used to be here." I don't know if you could find out where that cinema is.

LMI: Is it on Manningham Lane?

SH: No, no, no, one town centre is here. One Manningham Lane I think. One cinema is Manningham Lane as well. At that time.

LMI: But there wasn't a cinema in Keighley that showed Indian films, then?

0:04:47

SH: No, a few times I can see on air, you know, the Skipton Road, you know.

LMI: Oh, right.

SH: Yeah, I can see here for Indian film as well.

LMI: That's a nice little cinema, isn't it?

SH: Yeah, nice little cinema.

LMI: Still there, still there.

SH: Sometimes.

LMI: So, you worked in Low Mill and then you went to Cross Hills?

SH: Yeah.

0:05:03

LMI: How long were you there for?

SH: Three, four years. Four years, then I go Pakistan. I'm stopped there nearly two years, one year, stopped. Then come back. Then I start work at Low Mill... no sorry, William Morris. William Morris. Yeah.

LMI: William Morris?

SH: Again same, Cross Hills.

0:05:27

LMI: In... Cross Hill's again?

SH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Two, three year work out there, then I go for again for Pakistan, go for a marriage. Which one I... my wife, you know, my cousins. She was under 16, that's why I came back. Waiting for her, she was over 16, to go for a marriage.

LMI: And so you came back and there, and you worked in...

SH: Arranged marriage, I got arranged marriage, yeah.

LMI: And how many years did you work in the mills for? When did you stop working in the mills?

0:05:58

SH: I stopped working... about 10 years ago, you know, I stopped working.

LMI: In the mills?

SH: Yeah, in the mills.

LMI: So you worked for a long time?

SH: Yeah, 40 years, 40 years, 35 years, all, you know, Keighley, nearly all mill, you know, I worked for all.

LMI: And what was the difference between when you started and when you finished? Was it very different?

SH: Yes, it is, it is different.

LMI: What was, in what way was it different?

SH: What's been different? Well, I used to, for a mill everything, you know, when I, over 50, 60, then I go for Pakistan, I stop over there, my father and mother, you know, very ill, I stay over there for 5, 6 years there.

0:06:43

SH: When I come back again for go one plastic factory. See, over the Cross Hill, plastic factory, plastic factory, see, oh.

LMI: Plastic factory?

[Speaker 3]: Four-hole moldings.

SH: Yeah, four-hole molding. I work here 3-4 years.

LMI: So you went to a plastics factory? Yeah, yeah. Did you go back into a mill?

0:07:05

SH: Mill nearly all closed.

LMI: So they all started closing?

SH: Yeah, all nearly closed.

LMI: And did that make it difficult?

SH: I am over nearly 60, you know, I can't do fast work.

LMI: Oh right. You have to work really fast to work in the mill?

SH: Yeah, I like very easy work. The plastic factory let them sit down here, just check it and put on here part, a few part, make everything light and every part, you know.

0:07:32

SH: I work here about 5 years on night shift.

LMI: Right, and so did you always... did you get promoted? Did you become a foreman or anything like that?

SH: No, no, just a worker.

LMI: And were you in a trade union?

SH: A union?

LMI: Were you in a union?

SH: Yeah, yeah, John and I made a union. John and I and our discovery mill, I made a union over there as well.

LMI: You made the union? You started it up?

SH: Yeah.

LMI: Oh right. What was that like?

SH: Not me starting, somebody else started. I go for a member.

0:08:07

LMI: Ah, you joined?

SH: I am joined for a member.

LMI: Was that useful?

SH: Yeah, that's good. One time, you know, I... after the discovery mill, you know, I want to go to Pakistan. The manager said, "You no going." I said, "I have to go. My father is very ill."

LMI: They tried to stop you?

SH: Yeah, he tried to stop me, and let me go.

0:08:29

SH: Then when I come back, he said "No job for you."

LMI: Oh really?

SH: I joined for a union, you know. Union man come in here and he give me about £1200/£1500 pound for compensation. Then he said "No job for you here, now."

LMI: You are a troublemaker.

SH: Yes, troublemaker. Then...

LMI: When was that?

SH: I think it was in '90 something, you know.

LMI: When your father was ill?

SH: Yes.

LMI: Was that the end of your working in the mills?

SH: No, no, after that, again a few mill I work in.

0:09:15

LMI: Ah, right, you carried on.

SH: Carried on, yeah. Before in Keighley, you know, plenty mills, you know. You finish one, go to other. You finish here, go to other. No problem, plenty mills there. But I worked long time, the John Ivers.

LMI: What was it like when that mills all closed in Keighley? Did it change Keighley very much?

SH: Yes, it is. It is changing. All people go for taxi driver now.

0:09:44

LMI: Did you become a taxi driver?

SH: No, I am not. I am a driver but not go for taxis.

LMI: No, no.

SH: Not go for taxis. All people... close the mill and go for taxi driver.

LMI: Was it hard finding work?

SH: Yes, it is. Hard taxi driver.

LMI: So that would be in... I suppose that started in the 1980s when the mills started closing down?

0:10:09

SH: Yeah, end of 2000, you know, is nearly all gone. Now I think one, two mills, you know, fuel part on here.

LMI: So did you enjoy working in the mill? Did you like it?

SH: Yeah, I enjoyed it. I got money for... I worked for the money. But we no enjoy it! Nobody enjoy it for work! [All laugh.] Init! Nobody... just works...if you can't work, you can't...can't look after children.

[Speaker 3]: But obviously once you work, that's a big part of life. If you don't like work, then it's hard.

SH: Yeah, no I like work! I need the money.

LMI: Were they good people to work with?

0:10:49

SH: Yeah, good people as well. One is by Rabani ka, main ko 5 saal kathe hi, what I kam kita.

[Speaker 3]: Mr. Rabani?

SH: Mr. Rabani and me, you know, I got 5-6 years, you know like this, sale department. I do spinning, he is a laborer over there, just, which one I work, you know. He bring here, weight, and he said, "This machine got it, now wait, this machine got it, now wait, that's it." Mr. Ramani is a very good man. I work with him.

[Speaker 3]: Do you know who he is? He is Swamiji, I think.

LMI: Oh, right. Oh, yeah, I do remember him.

0:11:24

SH: He is my good friend.

LMI: Oh, really?

SH: Yeah, he is my good friend. I work together and I can eat dinner time together and everything, you know.

[Speaker 3]: You see, he will give you plenty of stories. Mr. Ramani went from textile worker to manager of the Sangha Centre.

SH: Yes, Sangha Centre, yeah, it started a long time, Sangha Centre, you know, I come in here for every problem, you know, make passport and everything, you know, they help with pensions. They start my pension, I come here, my age, they see, you know, they work out for me, you know, and I got pension.

LMI: So you get a pension from the mills that you worked in?

0:12:05

SH: Yeah.

LMI: That must be a lot of different bits of pension. Or did you move it around?

SH: Yeah.

LMI: Did you move your pension, or it all came together as one?

SH: Yeah, I'm alright. I'm happy.

LMI: Are you happy?

SH: Yeah, I'm happy.

LMI: That's good to know.

SH: Maybe £200 I got pension.

0:12:21

SH: Yeah. My children work by themselves and he got job.

LMI: So how many children did you have?

SH: I got four children.

LMI: They all live in Keighley still?

SH: Yes. Two girls and two boys.

LMI: So you are all close together?

SH: Yes.

LMI: They can't go and work in the mills, can they?

0:12:42

SH: No, no, no.

LMI: What would you say to them if they said they were going to work in the mills?

SH: No, good reading and go for a university. Got a degree, both my son and my one daughter as well. Then you have good jobs.

LMI: What did your family in Pakistan think of you coming over here to work? Did they think it was...?

SH: I'm Pakistani, you know, just farmer, life over there, is a farmer. I got on plenty, what's called this, sheep and everything, you know.

LMI: Oh, as a farmer.

0:13:13

SH: Yeah, farmer, yeah. I'm used to farmer in my... when I pass on.

LMI: So were they pleased, your family were happy for you to come to England? And work in...?

SH: Yeah, yeah. .

LMI: So it was very different coming from a farm to here, to work in a factory?

SH: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

LMI: Were there any parts of working in the mill that you didn't like? Were there any bits where, is it hard work? I don't...

0:13:42

[Speaker 3]: Would you not....

SH: Oh... No, it's alright. I'm happy. I can do work.

LMI: Yeah?

SH: Yeah. Happy for work, nothing. No problem.

LMI: Oh, that's really, that's really interesting. Did your wife work at all?

SH: No, she is sewing in home. She is not going out to work.

0:14:06

SH: She got sewing of her clothes, you know, ladies' clothes. Something in home. She has got £4 or £5 for one suit, for making. Just for home. She is not working outside.

LMI: So, the mills that you worked in, they are all closed now, are they?

SH: Yeah.

LMI: All of them?

SH: Yeah. Yeah.

0:14:27

LMI: And you, did you never worked in Dalton Mill?

SH: Which one?

LMI: Dalton Mill.

SH: No, no, no.

LMI: The one where the big fire was.

SH: No, no big mill.

LMI: No, that was a big, that was a shame, wasn't it? That fire that burned.

SH: Yeah, yeah, I've seen the army there when I see this fire.

LMI: Huge fire.

0:14:44

SH: Yeah, huge fire, yeah, yeah. I've seen that.

LMI: Yeah. And, and did any other mills have burnt down in Keighley?

SH: No. In some, it's torn inside, they break down and make jobs and something like this, you know.

LMI: So do you miss working in the mill? Do you ever think, "Oh I'd like to get up there and go back and work in the mill again?"

SH: No, I don't like work. I don't like work. [All laugh!]

0:15:10

LMI: I thought I'd check that one!

SH: I don't like work now.

LMI: You are happy not to work.

SH: Yeah. My children look after me. I go almost, this 15 years, I stay in Pakistan.

LMI: Oh right.

SH: Come in here 2-3 months, then I go back again for Pakistan.

LMI: Oh, that's good. Come here for the summer here and go to Pakistan when it's not so hot.

0:15:39

SH: Yeah.

LMI: Okay.

SH: August, end of August, you know, I'm going again, now for Pakistan. Summer over there. No, summer here, cold weather in Pakistan, good.

LMI: Yeah. I think we're wrapping up here a bit. Is there anything else you want to tell me about?

0:15:56

LMI: Are there any particular stories or anything that happened in the mill that you can remember, sort of events, things that happened?

[Speaker 3]: [I'm just heading up to your...]

LMI: You know, did, you know, I don't particularly... I don't know anything from, you know er...er... parties to accidents to...

SH: Yeah, John, when I work with John I got plenty parties if anybody got son, you know, you know then everybody said, "You have got son, you know, bring, then take away, you know, peas and chickens and bring here, for make a party here."

0:16:35

LMI: Oh, that's very nice.

SH: Yeah, I do party out there.

LMI: And was it safe working in the mill? Did you have accidents at all?

SH: No accidents, no accidents, safe, everything.

LMI: And how was it like working with the managers were they

SH: Some are good manager but almost I worked night shift; night shift very quiet.

LMI: Yeah, so they let you get on with it?

SH: Yeah. Night shift one in charge you know. I call him Overlooker, you know, he change the machines everything. But they don't bother us. "Sit down over there." you know. And I do all Pakistani worker here together.

0:17:14

LMI: Was it a very skillful job? I mean, was it difficult to learn? Did you have to know...

SH: No, no, not difficult, not difficult. Just take a few weeks difference, just two, three weeks, you know, when I learn another job. Three, four different jobs in...

LMI: So what were your different jobs?

SH: They call them gill box and a roving machine.

0:17:41

LMI: A roving machine, yeah.

SH: And what is called spinning.

LMI: Yeah.

SH: And twisting. Twisting. But I can do all, all mostly all work. Different, different men.

LMI: And was it, I suppose, it became more... did it become kind of... using artificial fibres, you know, or was it all wool that you were weaving with and spinning with? Was it wool from sheep or was it artificial?

0:18:09

SH: Yeah, artificial as well and sheep as well. I worked some Saltaire.

LMI: Oh, you worked in the Saltaire Mill?

SH: Yeah, in Saltaire.

LMI: I lived near there.

SH: For two or three years I worked there, and go for Keighley to every day. Night shift, still night shift.

LMI: It's a big mill, isn't it?

SH: Yeah, it is a very big mill. But almost you know, night shift easy. Quiet you know. Day shift you know, manager come in, second manager, some visitor come in, everything keep cleaning and I was alone. But night shift no bother.

LMI: I've never thought of that. That's very interesting.

SH: Yeah, it is.

LMI: It's a quiet time.

SH: Yeah, quiet time, nobody.

LMI: All the managers have gone home.

0:18:50

SH: Everybody, everybody, manager and whole tester and plenty people you know, on day shift. I work few job on day shift as well, but almost I work for night shift

LMI: So how many years did you work night shift? most of the

SH: Most of night shift

LMI: And did your family get used to that?

SH: Yeah, yeah

LMI: So did they change their sleeping and waking to fit in with you?

0:19:17

LMI: Or were you asleep during the day and they were all awake?

SH: No, at the weekend you know, at the weekend.

LMI: Was it difficult to switch at the weekend to being awake during the day?

SH: No, no, no. I am used to that.

LMI: You just got used to changing over?

SH: Yes. Sleep at 8 o'clock, I get up 3, 4 o'clock for prayer, Zor pray, you know then I can do, bring the children I got 5, 6 hours, everyday 6 hours, 7.

LMI: What time did you start in the evening?

0:19:51

SH: Almost 8 o'clock, 9 o'clock different mill and different time

LMI: And work through to 8 or 9 in the morning?

SH: Yeah When I come here, wife is still there making me lunch, you know, breakfast, taking, go for bed, 8 hours, 5, 6 hours, 7 hours for sleep, then I got up and do some other job as well, for inside home, you know, look after children and go for somebody, friends and families.

LMI: Did you get tired?

SH: Eh?

LMI: Did you get tired?

0:20:21

SH: Yes, sometimes tired, sometimes. When I was young I no bother. Now I am tired.

LMI: I know that feeling.

SH: Now I feel tired, you know. But I know when I 55, 60 I finish work. 55. Then I go almost Pakistan. My father and mother there.

0:20:44

SH: He is alright. He got few jobs and income. I look after him and over there, all right.

LMI: That's great. This has been a really good interview. And actually it's interesting, you know, people sometimes think of working in a mill as hard work and dirty and all that, but actually you really seem to enjoy doing it.

SH: Yeah, no, I enjoy it, no problem. If it's hard work, I go for another mill. [All laugh.] Yeah, I do. Some of my friends say, you know, you work here, it is very hard work, you know. You come here, it is an easy job there.

0:21:14

SH: You have plenty of rest. Almost John is a very good mill. He makes like this small, you know.

LMI: Oh yeah, very fine.

SH: Very fine, easy job. John has, you know, when he change here, it's very easy. Yeah, by last, about 5, 10 years I work for John has, you know, just good enjoying here.

LMI: What was Salt's Mill like to work in?

SH: Yeah, the spinning over there as well, I work for spinning.

LMI: Was it good? Was it a nice place to work?

SH: It is all a nice place, but it's not... older machines.

LMI: Older machines?

0:21:46

SH: Yeah, it's older machines. John has a very good machine, you know, easy for workers.

LMI: So did the machines change as you...?

SH: Yes, three different, which is my life, you know, spinning three, four different...

LMI: Over the time they got... and did they get better?

SH: Better and better and better and better, yes.

LMI: So did you not have to do as much when they were working? Did they break down very often, or stop or did you have to... When the mills were running, did they break down?

0:22:19

LMI: Did they go wrong? Did they stop working? The mill, the machine?

SH: Yeah, yeah, it do sometimes. Break machine, yeah.

LMI: And did you have to kind of fix it?

SH: No, I not fixing. Mechanic. Mechanic and... in charge, you know. They fixed it up. If you can't fix it, write it down, it broke. And you can go for help each other, you know, people just around there.

LMI: And did the new machines were better, were they?

0:23:02

SH: Yeah, very better new machines, you know.

LMI: Were they easier?

SH: Yeah, after '85, '90, you know, they come in new machines, very good.

LMI: Oh right.

SH: Spinning, spinning and everything, you know, new machine.

LMI: And you watch them?

SH: Yeah when I came here '70 you know it's very old machine. Almost in Keighley, you know make a Keighley spinner spinning, rolling. Is one factory here you know, still, you know, make machines.

LMI: Oh right.

SH: They very old.

0:23:28

LMI: All right so they were old when you started?

SH: Yeah, very old when I start. When I finish is very good machinery, but all closed now. All closed now. But this young man [his son?] can't do the spinning. Very hard.

LMI: That's true. I see... do your children, or your grandchildren, have you got grandchildren? Do they know that you worked in a mill?

0:23:58

SH: Yeah, they know that. I show them sometimes.

LMI: Because I think there are some children today who don't know anything about Bradford or Keighley and its mills and its textile story. "Do you know why we do this?"

SH: No, no interested people, no interested now.

LMI: They will be one day. They'll say, "Oh what happened then? We don't know anything about it." And then they'll be able to listen to you.

SH: Yeah. That's it.

LMI: OK, listen, thank you very, very much indeed. That's great.

SH: Alright, no problem. Thank you very much.

LMI: Thank you.

SH: Alright.

LMI: You can go and have your lunch now.

0:24:33

SH: Yeah.