

HEIRLOOM HEIRLOOM



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Notice to be given or received on the day of making up.**

**2.--Any person guilty of Improper Conduct, or who
Spoils or Neglects his or her work, will be Discharged
without Notice.**

By Order of

HEIRLOOM
HEIRLOOM



OVERVIEW

This Arts Council funded project Heirloom aimed to capture nostalgic personal histories that are fast disappearing from our textile landscape. Artists, designers and historians have engaged with a diverse group of men to explore links between masculinity, clothing, work and identity. They have shared their personal narratives which have been crafted into a collection of bespoke shirts. The design process has been informed and inspired through exploring family histories, textile artefacts, the industrial heritage of Lancashire and stories of migration that brought workers to the textile mills. Each individual shirt uses either authentic, un-bleached mule spun, heritage cloth 2/36 cotton warp 1/8 cotton weft, or mule spun red striped fabric, 1/8 sized cotton warp 1/8 cotton weft traditionally used for tea-towels. We also used some of the iconic 'union shirt' blue and natural striped fabrics on detailing.

Led by Amanda Odlin, Bev Lamey and Christopher Molloy, academics from the Fashion & Textiles department at the University of Central Lancashire, the project team included artists, Yasmin Siddique, and Regina Arkwright, University of Central Lancashire historian Dr Jack Southern and photographer, Alex Hurst.

This exhibition is part of a larger collaborative project between academics from the University of Central Lancashire and Gawthorpe Textiles Collection. The project team are committed to the development of art and craft skills within the communities around Burnley and boosting the recognition of the rich textile heritage of East Lancashire and how that relates to the diverse communities across the region. Queen Street Mill and Gawthorpe Textiles Collection (GTC) are key locations for this so we chose to use the collection for inspiration and use the mill as the venue for the project and the location of the exhibition. The founder of GTC, Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth, was particularly interested in political and social issues surrounding the textile industry and was keen to improve the lives of the industrial workers through education and the arts. Working with two local museums of national significance whose resources are underused due to financial restrictions, together with preconceptions around the purpose of museums that hinder wider audience participation, created an opportunity for us to work together with historians, curators and artists to create artwork through the vehicle of embroidery techniques and fashion.

Heirloom is very much about a shared experience and knowledge transfer, preserving craftsmanship and almost extinct techniques as the generation who have experience of working in the mills get older, and younger generations see no relevance or connection to them. This exhibition aims to inject new interest in younger audiences by creating a contemporary outcome with the hand-crafted shirt, which has relevance for all ages.

The success of a project like this is dependent on the contribution of our participants. We reached out to men who were part of the thriving regional textile industry, from communities that were dispersed after the mass closure of mills in the 1980's & 1990's. We have been lucky to work with a diverse range of people with a wide experience of different aspects of the industry. Every story we heard was unique and special. Many of these men have had minimal connection to textiles since the industry constricted and little chance to share memories and tell their stories, although at least one is still employed in a local textile mill.

The creative team were joined by History academic, Jack Southern, who helped capture the stories and provide a broader context for their personal narrative. The artists and Fashion & Textiles academics developed designs for the shirts and embellished them with embroidery, print, and dyeing. Each shirt demonstrates a bespoke and unique response to the personal history of each man.

Alex Hurst's photographs show each participant wearing their shirt. Portraits captured in the atmospheric surroundings of Queen Street Mill, echoing the black & white images of mill workers from the beginning of the 20th century who laboured in mills such as this one. All other photographs were taken by the project team apart from the archive photographs on page 5, 6 and 7 and the photograph on page 9 which shows the grandfather of participant Colin Stevens.

The shirts and portraits are displayed in the weaving shed, an unconventional setting for an exhibition. We hope that the wider public will engage with the narratives that have emerged from this two-way dialogue, and enjoy the outcomes on display. When the exhibition finishes the men will have their shirts to keep as a legacy of this project, hopefully passed down to their children and grandchildren as a family Heirloom that will remind them of their own link to the textile heritage of Lancashire.

Amanda Odlin, Christopher Molloy and Bev Lamey

Fashion & Textiles

School of Art, Design and Fashion

University of Central Lancashire



Weaver's Triangle viewed from the Mitre - 1910





Trafalger Shed, Victoria Mill, now UCLan Burnley campus

INTRODUCTION

The Lancashire textile industry continues to have a powerful presence in the collective memory of Britain. The rise and fall of 'King Cotton', and with it the transition from an imagined 'rural idyll' to smoke-filled urban sprawls is an emotive image that dominates understanding of the rapid and seismic changes popularly characterised as the Industrial Revolution and its aftermath. This story is complex. It is shown through images of Victorian-era children crawling under dangerous machinery, of busy, industrial towns, and through to the 1930s, periods of prosperity interlaced with those of widespread unemployment and poverty. Yet, overwhelmingly it is the story of people, families, and communities, and their lives in and with cotton.

Lancashire was once the textile capital of the world. As such, it was one of the driving-forces of the British Empire. It connected villages to towns, cities, the nation, and to the world. It was a popular belief that Lancashire could produce enough cotton goods for Britain before breakfast, and enough to supply the rest of the world through the rest of the day. With this productivity came prosperity. Towns were built on the success of cotton. It was a genuine belief, based in reality, that with luck, hard-work, and 'thrift' individuals could rise from weaver to mill owner, and eventually retire to a seaside town where so many textiles operatives spent their holidays. The transition from poverty to prosperity served as dream that was within reach for many working families. Equally, it was felt that the reverse could happen, and that families could go, through bad-luck, idleness and stupidity, from 'clogs-to-clogs' in three generations, such was the luck of cotton.

Across Lancashire, the mills that once dominated entire townscapes, often now remain as a symbol of this lost period of prosperity. Derelict mills still stand in various forms of disrepair, where once they were hubs of economic verve. Although more recently we have seen these repurposed and given new life, it has taken decades. As well as this physical reminder, the people in cotton towns had two main options. Either they migrated, looking for new possibilities, or they stayed in the towns, continuing to deal with the aftermath of the industry's decline. As the nation moved away from textiles, they lived through attempts to answer the question: what was to become of 'cotton town' without a cotton industry?

As both the British Empire and textile industry declined, Lancashire did not stand still. Those remaining sections of the industry that bucked the trend changed and adapted. Working patterns, technology, and goods changed. Yet, the spirit of entrepreneurialism that had dominated the area for decades ceased to function effectively as Britain attempted to find its place in the world. Although the decline started around the First World War, it took until in the period after the Second World War for the realisation that cotton would not recover to become firm reality. Textiles went through a radical period of rationalisation and change, and with this came the need to fill positions in new branches of industry. Immigrants from across the world embarked on journeys to the north of England in search of opportunity, and to make their own fortune. They found a place that was alien but made their lives in towns that became their homes. As compatriots and other immigrants have joined them in making these journeys, communities have changed, grown, and blossomed, linked, in one-way or another to the story of cotton.

Heirloom Project

Heirloom is a trans-disciplinary project to explore the story of textiles in Lancashire. Utilising oral history, interpretation, and textile design, it represents the personal story of people across the county and their relationship with textiles. These life-stories have included amongst them former weavers, descendants of mill owners, textile migrants, and people to whom the cotton industry has impacted, in one-way or another in their lives.

These narrative 'threads' have been transformed into shirts, as physical expressions of their lives and their relationships with textiles. Moreover, these stories are part of the story of Britain. They detail bravery, survival, and change.

Queen Street Mill

The bulk of Heirloom has taken place at Queen Street Mill, Harle Syke.

Queen Street Mill was built in 1894 for the Queen Street Manufacturing Company and epitomised the period where the Lancashire cotton weaving industry rose to its peak. Utilising shares as a source of funding, The Company sought to take advantage of the thriving industry that had seen Harle Syke develop from vacant fields into a thriving industrial village over a short period time. Houses, amenities, and other industries developed as a result of cotton, forging a community united around the success of a single industry. It was the epitome of the opportunity that cotton presented. In the prospectus for the mill, issued in the local Burnley Express newspaper, in 1894, the directors wrote of how:

'The population of this district has lately greatly increased, so that there will be no difficulty in obtaining thrifty, skilled work-people, and it will meet urgent want of employment for our young people.'

Queen Street Mill's geographical position on the fringes of the main population centres of Burnley and Nelson meant that it had a closer link to the surrounding community than mills in larger settlements. That some weavers were shareholders in the company several times caused issues with trade unions. The mill was thus atypical to the wider story of Lancashire cotton, but epitomises the story of textile communities. Its workers often lived and died within walking distance of the mill. If disaster struck, such as a mill fire, the repercussions were felt across the village. Likewise, events like weddings or funerals could see production stopped for the day as whole families were involved.

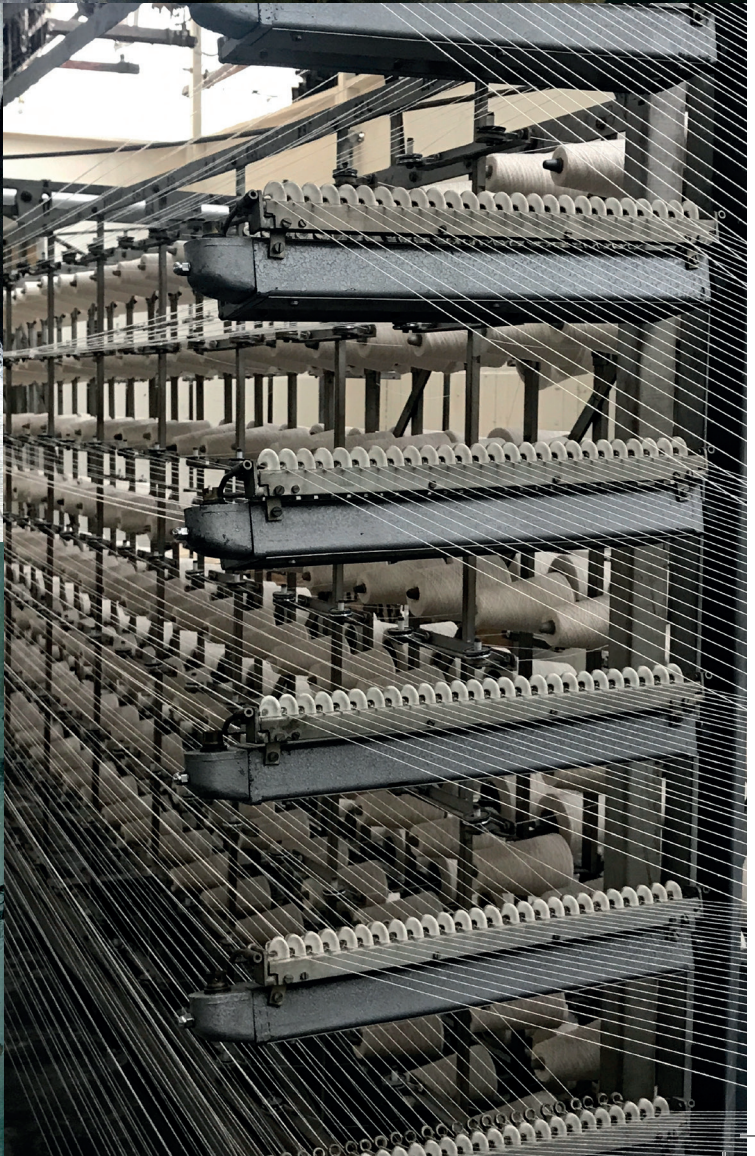
The mill survived long-past the period that the industry went into decline. Demographic changes, and shifts to working other materials and with this, changes to working patterns greatly altered what was for a long-time a generally homogenous work force. The mill community was thus an active participant in change. They were part of enterprise, innovation, and changing patterns. Indeed, they 'lived' these phenomena.

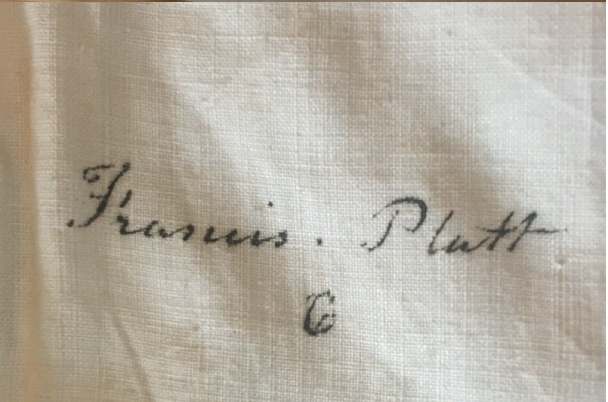
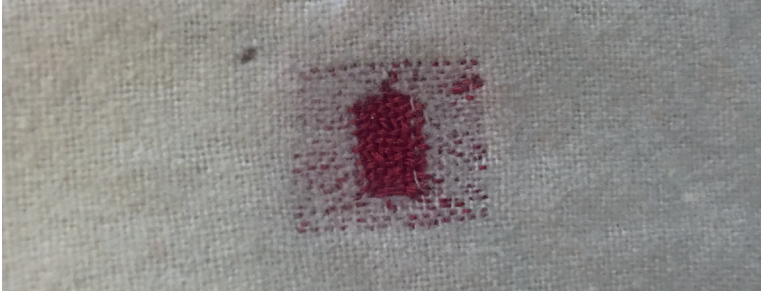
The mill ceased active operation in the early 1980s and was mothballed. It was reborn as a textile museum in 1986. It is now Grade 1 listed and is now the last surviving, working, 19th century steam powered weaving mill in the world. It is testament to the story of Lancashire cotton, a living story, that away from facts and figures is a human one.



Mill workers including Colin Sevens grandfather. Image reproduced with thanks to Colin Stevens







INSPIRATION

Gawthorpe Textiles Collection

In Western dress the shirt existed for much of its history as a loose-fitting undergarment reaching to the hip or mid-thigh worn solely by men. Women had their own version known as the shift or chemise which was very similar in shape and construction but longer in length. The simplest shirts used only rectangular panels of full width fabric to minimise waste and allow the selvages to provide added strength in the seams. Details such as gussets at the neck and underarms, yokes, cuffs or collars originated as ways to provide reinforcement to weak points.

A shirt's main purpose was purely functional; it acted as a barrier between the skin and the rest of the clothes to protect them from the sweat, oils and odour of the body. Shirts were most commonly made of linen and were strongly constructed to make sure they could withstand many rigorous washes. By contrast most outer garments were either difficult or impossible to wash so the shirt played an important role in prolonging the life of the more expensive outer garments. They also helped stop outer clothing, especially woollen garments from rubbing or itching. Before the development of men's drawers, the shirt is also thought to have been tucked between the legs as a rudimentary form of underpants.

Linen was the traditional fabric of choice due to its strength and absorbency but cotton became popular from the 19th century onwards. The quality of the fabric reflected the status of the wearer with the finest and smoothest weaves being the most desirable. With the exception of labourers at work it was generally seen as improper to have the shirt on show, and for most men they would be almost entirely hidden by a waistcoat and coat or jacket. As a result many shirts had no decoration with only the fineness of the linen and quality of sewing denoting the status of the wearer. If it was present decoration usually took the form of embroidery, lace or finely gathered ruffles. The textile collection has two gentleman's shirts from the 1820s both of which have delicate whitework embroidery around the neck.. Most decoration would not have been easily noticeable under a waistcoat and cravat so so it might be added purely for the wearer's benefit and enjoyment if the maker of the shirt was a family member such as a wife or sister.

Until the 20th century the making and repair of shirts was commonly carried out by the women of the family or female servants if available. Strong, neat construction stitching and seam finishes were important in making sure the garment would survive many washes and were part of the 'plain sewing' that was an important skill for most women. The textile collection contains many examples of plain sewing samplers that display the necessary techniques required to construct and maintain undergarments such as shirts. They were often produced as part of school sewing exercises and acted as a sort of portfolio for girls to show off their skills to prospective employers. Several examples in the collection take the form of fully-fashioned shirts in miniature form with incredibly fine stitching and minuscule details like tiny functioning buttonholes.

Most households would have to deal with washing large numbers of shirts in addition to nightshirts and women's chemises. These garments were often difficult to tell apart so, like most undergarments, they would be carefully marked in Indian ink or cross stitch with the initials of the owner and sometimes a year or running number to identify the specific garment. This ensured they were returned to the correct person after laundering and helped keep track of what were getting worn out or needed repairs. Shirts in the textile collection bear marks such as "LH no2" or "JM5". Starched collars and expensive or fragile trimmings such as fine mother of pearl buttons or lace would be removed before each wash and sewn back on afterwards to prevent them from being damaged.

When the waistcoat began to fall in popularity the shirt became increasingly exposed and dress shirts in the textile collection from the 20s, 30s and 40s show increasing emphasis on pleats, fastenings, pockets and trimmings. By the end of the 19th century light colours, especially blue, and small-scale printed cottons started being used for workers shirts and examples of these fabrics appear in several late 19th century patchwork coverlets in the collection. As the shirt became more and more visible it evolved into a fashionable garment in its own right and designers began to experiment with the scale and placement of design features, patterns and colour in a way that continues in today's shirt fashions.

Rachel Midgley

Collection Curator

Gawthorpe Textile Collection

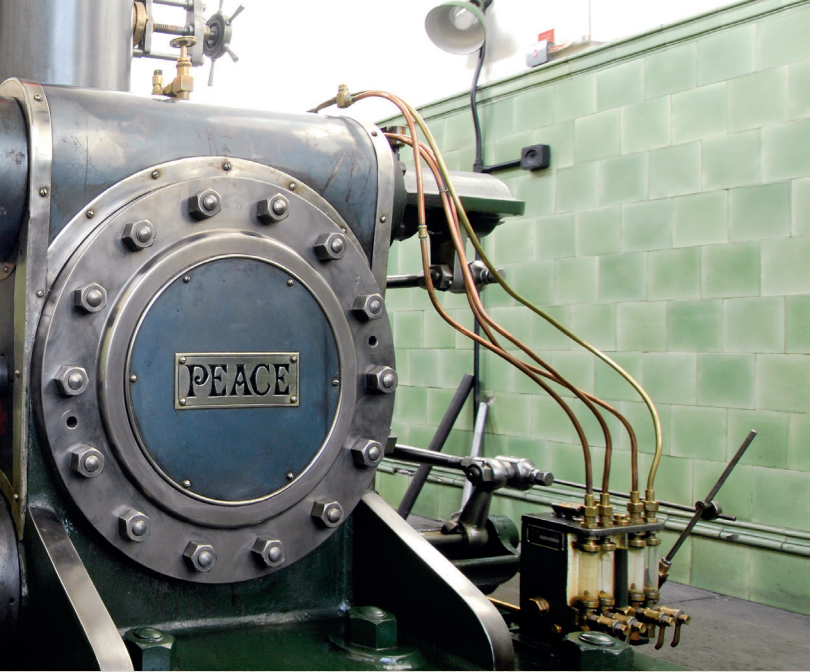


Colour

The Heirloom colour palette is a combination of the atmosphere and industrial tones within Queen Street Mill, an environment with palpable inspiration. The practicality of colours used within the mill chosen for instigating responses and informing behaviour, such as highlighting danger, procedures or regulations, overlaps with numerous distinctly human narratives.

A discovery of Victorian haberdashery ribbons on a sourcing trip echoed the colour identity of the mill and became the central palette for developing our creative ideas for the project. These historic colours represented the archival approach we utilised for this project of capturing material before it is lost to time.







Queen St. Mill, QSM to those of us locals, is more than just an historic icon of a bygone age. It is a living, breathing treasure house of people, place & purpose.

It shaped & continues to shape, a community, far & near, in its ever evolving roles from place of employment to place of education & pleasure. Above all, this is a place of passion - passion for engineering, passion for urban architecture, passion for textiles & every participant and visitor is a thread carrying that passion back home wherever that may be.

*Queen St. Mill - join us to smell, taste, feel,
breath a future emerging from the past.*

Cllr. Cosima Towneley





PROJECT TEAM

Amanda Odlin-Bates, Lead Researcher

Amanda Odlin-Bates is course Leader of the BA (Hons) Fashion Design course and Lead Researcher on Heirloom. She has a keen interest in modest dress and the stories of migration surrounding the textile industry in the region. Amanda is passionate about the textile heritage of Pennine Lancashire. This passion has seen Amanda working on Research projects that aim to highlight the amazing wealth of textile history in the region. Previous projects include Hidden Gems, which was a collaboration between UCLan and Gawthorpe Textile Collection, Padiham, and resulted in an exhibition of powerful portraits showing local women and girls from the Asian community, wearing hijabs they designed using fabrics from the textile collection as inspiration. She presented on the project along with Co- Researcher, Bev Lamey at Futurescan 4, and they have written a paper for the Valuing Practice publication. Heirloom is the second Arts Council funded project that Amanda and the Research team are working on in collaboration with Queen Street Mill, in Burnley. Heirloom aims to showcase this amazing mill. Using her fashion knowledge Amanda wanted to create garments from the cloth that is still woven at the mill on these Victorian looms, and the Heirloom shirt project was born. At the heart of Amanda's Research are the human stories that unfold as you converse with people about textiles. The passion, the memories, the love that people have when you talk to them about the process, their memories, family connections to the industry and the sheer joy these projects bring when participants see the final outcome. aodlin@uclan.ac.uk

Bev Lamey, Co-Researcher

Bev Lamey is co-researcher. A surface pattern designer and textile artist with a particular interest in interior textiles, Lamey worked for some years as a freelance textile designer, working alongside architects and manufacturers to commission and for international exhibition, before starting to teach at UCLan. Lamey is now course leader for MA Surface Pattern and Textiles at UCLan. She has presented papers at international design research conferences including Futureground at Monash University, Australia and Include at the Royal College of Art, London. In November 2006, Lamey was curator of Hidden, an exhibition that exposed the hidden environment of modern mental healthcare. Lamey has worked with a number of user groups who are marginalised by society: the homeless; the disabled; the mentally ill; to establish a methodology that empowers and encourages participation and inclusion. Lamey worked with Amanda Odlin on the Hidden Gems project, which has been exhibited widely. She presented a paper with Amanda about the project at Futurescan 4, the Fashion & Textiles conference, which will be included as part of the conference proceedings. blamey@uclan.ac.uk

Christopher Molloy, Co-Researcher

Christopher Molloy is the senior lecturer in BA (Hons) Fashion Design at UCLan and joined the research team for Heirloom, which enriched the project by utilising his wealth of knowledge regarding colour and trend forecasting and menswear design. Christopher's professional experience covers the creative areas of art direction, retail/manufacturing, product development, fashion journalism and digital design services' where he was at the forefront of developing the B2B digital service WGSN.com. He also worked as a creative specialist for mobile communications companies such as Nokia where he developed creative research into lifestyle concepts and developmental opportunities for a worldwide market. His appetite for cultural investigation and creative research is what drives him to explore many creative disciplines and he keeps a keen eye on emerging trends and the impact they may have on society. Christopher and Amanda developed the shirt prototype silhouettes for Heirloom, inspired by their study days at the Gawthorpe Textile Collection. They also assisted in recording the stories from each of the men translating these narratives into styling and embellishment designs to give each shirt their personal story and identity, thus creating the 'Heirloom' for each participant. cmolloy1@uclan.ac.uk

Yasmin Siddique, Fashion Designer

Yasmin Siddique is a key member of the Heirloom team. Yasmin is a modest fashion designer with a BA (Hons) in Eastern Fashion Design. Using her skills in embroidery she helped to translate the stories into wearable designs which she embroidered onto the cloth. Yasmin also designed a traditional Asian style shirt prototype called a Kurtha, which was extremely popular with many of the participants. Her knowledge of traditional stitch techniques such as Kantha Stitch and shisha-mirrorwork was extremely valuable for the Asian men taking part in Heirloom project, to help them translate their cultural stories into shirt designs.

Regina Arkwright, Textile Artist

Regina Arkwright is a highly experienced embroidery and mixed-media textile artist working in Pennine Lancashire and is especially interested in working with memory and cloth in her artworks. After studying on the Fine Art Embroidery degree course at Manchester College of Art in the early 70's Regina went on to have a career in teaching Fine Art whilst still exhibiting her own work. Regina's input into Heirloom was invaluable, her knowledge of stitch and concepts for surface textures and details helped to bring the Heirloom shirts to life. Regina is passionate about textiles and passing on her vast wealth of knowledge, she was a key person for all of the Heirloom workshops held at Queen Street Mill over the summer.

Alex Hurst, Photographer

Alex Hurst is an extremely talented freelance commercial photographer. Alex specialises in fashion shoots and portraiture as well as being a part-time lecturer at UCLan so was the perfect person to collaborate with on Heirloom. Alex also worked on the Hidden Gems Research project and produced the most amazing portraits of the women and girls wearing their hijabs. Alex has the ability to get the best out of the sitter and is fastidious on the detail – which is why her images are so arresting.

Dr Jack Southern, Social Historian

Dr Jack Southern is lecturer in Public History at the University of Central Lancashire. He undertook his PhD at UCLan with funding from the Lancashire Museums Service via Queen Street Mill. His primary research interest is the social and cultural history of the British textile industry. He also works with arts and heritage organisations as well as community history groups across the North West on collaborative projects. One of his main interests is oral history and testimony, and how we can better understand the modern history of Lancashire through these.

Rachel Midgley, Curator, Gawthorpe Textile Collection

Rachel Midgley is the curator of the Gawthorpe Textile Collection (GTC) and truly inspired us with her knowledge of the shirts held in the collection. The details she shared with us inspired our own designs and details such as the numbering system used to ensure you received back the correct shirts after going to the laundry, which we incorporated into our own labels.

Kary Backhouse, Museum Manager, Queen Street Mill

Karen Backhouse is the Museum manager at Queen Street Mill and was a real support throughout the project, especially the workshops that ran over the summer. Kary is passionate about safeguarding the future of Queen Street Mill and preserving it for future generations. She is keen to collaborate, engage with new audiences and find new ways of making a sustainable future for the historic mill.

Audrey Hindle, Fashion Technician

Audrey Hindle is a workshop technician in the fashion department at UCLan, she provided vital support in the manufacturing process. Her advice and skills enabled us to create the Heirloom shirts within the tight timescale.

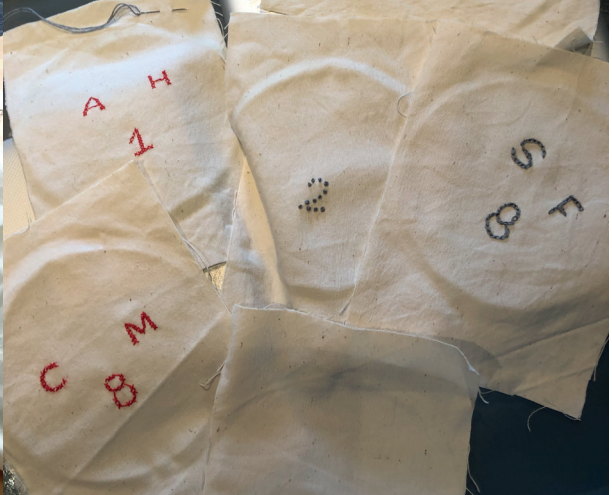
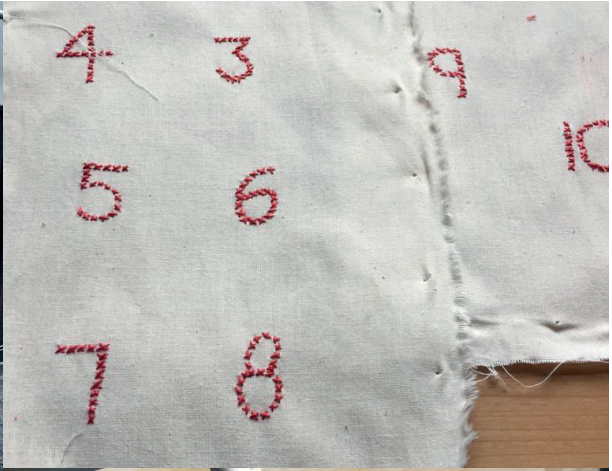


Photographing the men at the mill, which is so steeped in history, was a privilege and an experience I will never forget. Each room I shot in was filled with natural, beautiful light which further enhanced the portraits. So thrilled to have been a part of this very meaningful project.

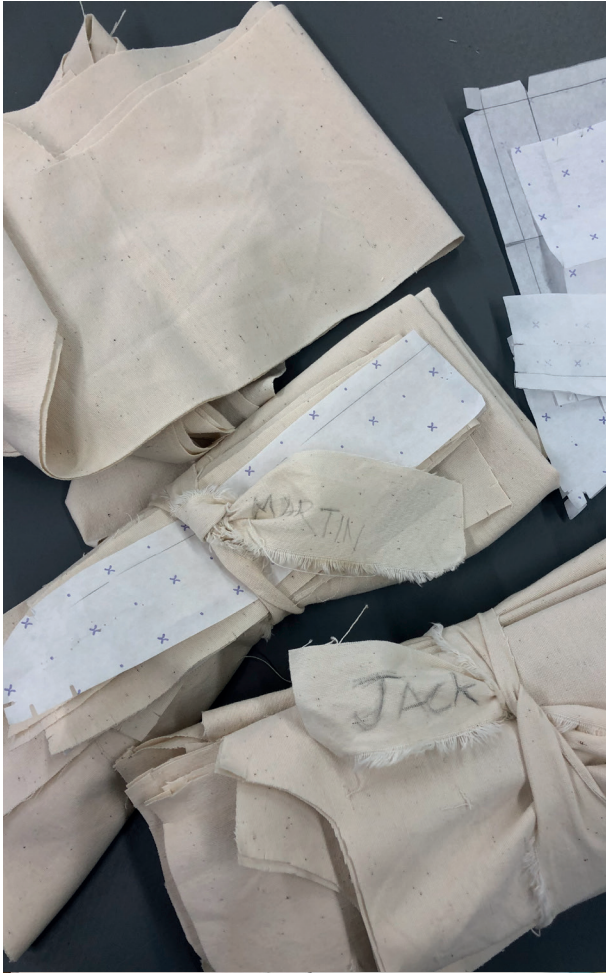


THE PROCESS









THE SHOOT







T H E M E N





Arif Khan

We met Arif Khan on Saturday 27th July at Queen Street Mill, he heard about our project and knew we were looking for men who had worked in the textile industry. Mr Khan actually said to us that he had been 'waiting to tell his story all his life'. As his life journey unfolded, we were astounded at the detail he remembered, the amount of change he had gone through in his life and how much he had achieved.

Arif was born in Kashmir, Pakistan, his family ancestors have been in Kashmir for over 5,000 years. His ancestors were leaders and huntsmen, he inherited land and woodlands, that his family made a living from. They grew wheat, corn and vegetables and any surplus crops they sold to buy clothes and provisions.

Arif's Father never went to school, he always wanted his son to be a police officer, to have authority. Arif remembered how he would walk four miles to school, barefoot and often with nothing to eat. Sometimes he would get a small piece of chapatti and he would have to make it last. He remembered these were very hard times. When he was fourteen, he decided to leave the country, by then he was in year ten, which was the highest level of study at the time in Kashmir. He persuaded his teacher to help him get a passport to enable him to get to England. Arif agreed that he would pay the teacher back when he reached England and got a job. He found the one and only place to take a photo for his passport, and he still has that photo today. He remembered how scared he was to tell his father his plans as he was the eldest son and supported his father, but his Grandfather explained to Arif's father how the times were changing and persuaded him to let his son go to England.

He needed 1,720 Rupees for his airfare, which took him over seven months to gather. The money came from many different people, such as his teacher and he convinced his father to sell his animals to get the money. Then in 1963, at the age of fourteen, Arif left for England with no money, no food and clutching the address of a distant relative who lived in Bradford. He was wearing a western suit, he said there were plenty of second-hand western clothes in Kashmir from all of the Ex-Pats who lived there. He wanted to look smart and make a good impression. The whole village came out to say goodbye to him.

He was met by his relative and driven to Bradford, after a week he was told that he had to go and find a job, so he went to Bingley Mill and found his first job jacquard weaving woollen cloth. He stayed two weeks with the family in Bradford, but the room was so small another Asian man from the mill offered him a bed in a shared room for £1 a week. Arif worked the day shift and his friend did the night shift, so they shared the bed. It cost him £1.10s a week for eating and sleeping so he saved up some money to go to the cinema.

After a couple of weeks he was so homesick, he didn't even know how to make a cup of tea, he longed for his Mother's cooking, he had few friends and missed everyone. He wrote to his Father, but he told him that if he came home he would bankrupt the family. Arif knew that he had to stick it out and not let his family down so he looked for another job that would pay him more money. He went to the George Arkwright Mill, Bingley where the wages were £4.8s for the shift 7.30am – 5.30pm and he worked overtime on Saturday. He was getting more used to living in England, people were friendly, but times were tough. There were no bathrooms in the houses, and four houses shared an outside toilet. At times he was absolutely freezing. He saved up and every Saturday went to Bingley Baths to have a wash, it cost 6d half a shilling to have a bath back then, and they only filled the bath half full! In search of more money Arif moved to Brighouse Mill to work the night shift ring spinning. He worked seven nights, thirteen hours, with no breaks but he earned £15 and a ten-shilling note. He remembered that he used to buy lots of fruit with his extra money and he bought his first Grundig radio which was £10, but he could listen to Karachi radio, which brought back so many fond memories of home.

He felt quite rich at this point and was sending money back to his family in Kashmir. In 1968 he bought his first car, an Austin A40, which was £75. He didn't know how to drive so a friend at work showed him in the car park one lunchtime and he was mobile. Arif wrote to his father and said you must get my brothers and sisters a good education – he said at the time girls were not encouraged to go to school, they only went to school to year five gaining basic skills in reading and writing but Arif insisted that his father send his sisters to school. As he earned more money Arif never let his father work, he sent him money so he could retire. In 1969 Arif heard there was more money to be made down south as his cousin worked there, so he moved to Woking in Surrey and got a job in a plastics factory. But he wanted to learn more so he went to Bromley College, where he was taught how to make computers. There was a large Asian and Italian community in Woking and so Woking became the first place in the UK to have a Mosque. He lived in a small house on Walton Road, with eighteen people living in one room. Mainly men all living together, as at that point they all thought they would be going back home, they never sent for the women to come over. Arif supported all of his family, his mum visited in 1981 but his father never came to England. Arif told us that one of his friends used to buy the Daily Telegraph, he started to read it and he bought a dictionary to help him understand English. When in Woking he worked seven days a week and made a lot of money but he said if you were even on the toilet too long they would knock on the door. However, Arif thought that was very wrong so he contacted a Trade Union but kept it a secret as he was worried about the consequences. He was invited to Clapham Common to talk about setting up a union in his factory, he was really worried about doing this, but he did set up a trade union becoming the first shop steward. He was actually treated very well and even paid a little more money by the company. Arif left

Woking in 1975, he married in 1976 and bought his first house in Rochdale for £325. He was a 'crimp spinner' in a mill in Bury. He soon moved back to Burnley and served as a JP for Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale, he was so proud that Lord Hailsham personally congratulated him on his achievements. He bought a newsagent in Duke Bar and settled down in Burnley again and in 1998 he was elected as a councillor for Danes House, Burnley. He is now retired and loves gardening, which brings back memories of his childhood tending the land. He grows figs, walnuts, fruit and vegetables.

We loved hearing Arif's story, it was unbelievable to see all of the things he had achieved in his life as a result of travelling to England in 1963 with absolutely nothing. It was the textile industry that gave him his first break when he came to England and he holds many fond memories of those days. The thing that struck us was this amazing 'can do' attitude that he held throughout his life and his incredible work ethic. Two of the quotes from our discussions were "Nothing is impossible in this world if you have the will to do it you can achieve it" and "Opportunity only knocks once" which we embroidered into his shirt.

It was uplifting to hear his stories of how friendly people were for those first-generation Asian men who bravely came over to England and worked in the textile mills. Perhaps these were the first 'dark-skinned' people these mill workers had ever seen, yet they were treated with respect.

We have carefully taken key elements from Arif's life story and incorporated them into his shirt. We hope that this shirt will become a treasured family heirloom and will encourage younger generations of his family to talk about his amazing history when they see it in the exhibition.

“

Nothing is impossible
in this world if you
have the will to do it
you can achieve it

”



Colin Stevens

Colin Stevens has weaving in his blood! His story is fascinating, the amount of different mills he worked in was amazing. He started working in textiles aged 15 at County Brook Mill in Foulridge, which is still a thriving mill but re-named Mitchel Interflex. Colin told us how when he asked for a job the boss said to him that he had to learn how to do the weavers knot and he showed him three times then said come back tomorrow with 50 and you can have the job.

His dad and granddad both worked in textiles and he knew he could earn good money as a weaver. He explained how back in those days everyone could get a job in the mills as there was so much work, 'until the 1980's then it went downhill' he told us. He remembers how the bosses got rid of all tattlers and brought in motor mechanics as they bought in new looms that never stopped – well if they were set up right! The unions weren't happy.

Colin then went to Colne to a mill called Melfore, which was owned by a Yorkshire company. He earned more money and had better conditions. It was his first sartorial weaving job, he was working with cashmere and mohair and loved it. He mentioned "The boss really looked after you, he knew everyone's name but the cloth had to be right and if anything went wrong your name would be above the loom with what you'd done wrong!" But Colin was good at his job and learnt very quickly.

Next he moved to Denholme Velvets near Halifax, he was a 'flat weaver' but he only worked there six months – he didn't like it there as you had no breaks and had to work very long shifts. "They sent a lady round with a tea trolley but you weren't allowed to stop working – they even timed you when you went to the toilet back in those days!" So he moved to Carringtons in Barrowford which was a very big mill and had three weaving sheds. He didn't stay there long either as he then moved to Dawes in Nelson to work with his Dad and uncle. Then he was poached to work at Matthews Mill, Yorkshire. He worked there for five years and loved it. At that mill they were producing high quality cloth that was destined for Savile Row. He was in charge of seven looms and a 'ghost loom' which was a loom they hadn't bought yet. It was interesting to hear that at Matthews Mill they saved everything, it was put into a ledger and ticketed, he said "there was fabric dating back to 1930 and if the colour wasn't right old fabrics were dyed black and re-used, nothing was wasted." Which is the mantra for sustainability today. Colin moved back to Burnley and worked at John Spencer Textiles, a family run mill. He worked there for twenty-eight years and was so proud to be the Union Representative there. He now passes on his knowledge working at Queen Street Mill and is one of the few people left that knows how to work these Heritage looms.

It's hard to condense all of Colin's experience into one page but we loved working with him as he was so passionate and knowledgeable about the textile industry – it clearly was his life. When we were interpreting his story into a shirt we picked up on the weaver's knot story and how proud he felt being a Union Rep, he showed us his badge and we incorporated that into the design of his shirt.

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The boss really looked after you, he knew everyone's name but the cloth had to be right and if anything went wrong your name would be above the loom with what you'd done wrong!

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Martin Griffin

Martin Griffin was visiting Queen Street Mill on Thursday 1st August with his wife. We managed to talk to him about his experiences working in the textile industry.

Martin was born and bred in Nelson, so the textile industry was in his blood, his wife's aunty had even worked in Queen Street Mill. He remembered how many people he knew got a job in the mills as soon as they left school, although he hadn't and came late to weaving.

Martin started working at Vita Achter, Burnley in the late 1980's which made car components, and he started working in a specialist area of weaving the car seats. Martin was a specialist in section warping and direct beaming. He was trained by someone on the job and picked it up easily. There were many different areas in the mill such as the circular knit department, but he didn't have much to do with that area of production. The shifts were 4 days on and 4 days off in a twelve-hour shift, plus he worked regular nights.

We asked Martin if there was a multi-cultural workforce and he said mainly men worked at Vita Achter, there were about three to six Asian men working there in weaving. He said it was commonplace to work with Asian men in the textile industry but he was in a different section so didn't personally interact much with the men apart from the café. He never saw any Asian women working in the mill.

Whilst working at Vita Achter Martin was head-hunted and moved to a mill in Derby, where an ex- boss had set up a weaving division within Guilford Europe and wanted him to use his specialist knowledge to set up a weaving section. Martin did not stay in Derby too long as he missed being in the North where his family was.

Because of his specialist knowledge Martin was also asked to help out at a mill in Padiham – Riverside Knitting, which is no longer running, and so he was made redundant, so he moved to Britannia mill in Blackburn where he worked in the section warping and weaving division.

Britannia Mill formed part of Oswaldtwistle Mill which wove a fine cotton cloth that was used extensively for table cloths and napkins throughout restaurants and hotels around the UK.

Martin was once again head-hunted and is working at Howarth's Textiles in Nelson. Howarth Mill used to be called Dawes Mill, but they have now moved to Colne. Dawes mill is owned by Stephen Shepherd who has an extensive background in the textile industry. It was through knowing Stephen that his journey in the industry has progressed.

Martin was an interesting person to meet as he highlighted to us the diversity and resilience of the textile industry. For example, he mentioned, how the fabric used to produce tennis balls, along with other industrial fabrics had been commissioned by Howarth's due to machinery used at Dunlop being replaced. This is not something you would think is part of the textile industry.

Martin has many fond memories of working in the mills and remembered for one of his first jobs he was shown how to make a weaver's knot, told to go home and practice and if he could do it fast enough, he would get the job! He also commented that "there were so many different jobs for people within the mills such as Weavers, Tattlers, Bobbin Turners, Cardroomers, Cardmakers, Fettleers, etc. so many people involved in the industry, all with a specialist skill, but sadly most of these skills are being replaced by robots in many companies", which made it all the better for us to find Martin as he is still working in the textile industry!

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Jamroz Khan

Jamroz Khan came to the launch of Heirloom in July and shared his story with us. He was born in Kashmir and came to England in 1969 when he was only twelve years old. His Father had come to England in 1961 because his whole village was demolished, the land was all gone, so his father came over to England, with most men from the village. A lot of migrants went to Bradford at that time for the work. It was easier to form a community as they were from the same region in Kashmir, but the new generation now move where ever they want.

Jamroz went to school for six months. He told us there were 16 people living in one house and he was the youngest in the whole house. He started cooking when he was 13 years old, he made food for his dad and cousin, he taught himself how to cook he was left all alone, so he had to adapt. He remembered there were some Asian food shops at that time, so he could find all the ingredients, but in between school he would work in a farm and he would get chickens, some Asian men in 60's and 70's did this because there were no halal chickens, so he had to kill the chickens himself.

After just six months his father went back to Pakistan, so Jamroz had to leave school and start work aged just 15. His Dad Came back in 1974 and worked in a Plastics factory in Rose Grove. His whole family came in 1972 and they all moved to Burnley in 1974. They bought one property then two more, all in one street, for all the family members.

Jamroz went to school again and he made a few friends, but after 6 months he decided that he wasn't that interested in education, it had been so difficult going backwards and forwards. So, he left school and went to a mill, but it was manufacturing aerospace parts, making nuts and bolts.

Jamroz came to the textile industry when he got a job in James Kenny Mill in Bury, where he learnt how to weave. He told us "I picked it up very quickly, I had six looms to run, it was an American mill, and we were making parachute cloth. We used automatic looms. I worked there seven months and loved it". He continued "I moved to Burnley in 1974, the boss's at James Kenny Mill didn't want me to leave because I was such a good worker, and the Bury Times came to take my photo, I felt famous as my friends said they saw me in the newspaper!"

Jamroz then went to work at Victoria mill in Burnley, which is now part of the UCLan campus. He started working making curtains, they gave him 36 looms, but he said that the machines were automatic, so it wasn't too bad, but the looms were not as good quality as the Bury mill, the threads kept breaking.

He worked shifts from 6am to 2.00pm, 2.00pm or 10.00pm he told us he didn't do the night shift, he was lucky. Unfortunately, he only worked there four months as the mill was closing. He then went to Smith and Nephew mill, in Brierfield, but in the morning he went to college, then to the mill to work in the afternoon. He had 30 looms, and they were making jeans. He worked there six months, then he fell ill, he was only 17 or 18 years old, he had a chest infection as there was too much dust in the mill. He told us that there were many people from Bangladesh, Kashmir and Pakistan working at Smith and Nephew. He said "The women only started coming to England in the 1970's. Women brought the culture over to England, but there was a language barrier. Before that the men lived all together, sometimes there were 16 men all living together". "One of my uncles came in 1935, he was in the merchant Navy, most of the time the men never had any intention of staying here."

He had to keep moving as all the mills were closing down so he came to work at Queen Street Mill, but it was only spinning at the time, it closed in 1976, so he went across the road to Kings Mill, where they did weaving and he worked there for two years. Mostly Asian men worked in Kings mill, but also English women who taught them weaving.

They made plain cotton at Kings Mill, which Jamroz said would be good material for shirts! He knew the fabric was plain cotton but it was dyed somewhere else. He made good friends in that mill, and he got married whilst working there, his wife is from Kashmir.

Unfortunately, Kings Mill also closed down. When it shut down he became a taxi driver, by now it was 1981. He also had his own clothes shop in Able street that sold Asian Designers garments, there was a need for Asian clothes, so she opened the shop.

Jamroz goes back to Kashmir but didn't go back for 10 years when he first came to England. He now goes almost every year.

Now, Jamroz is semi-retired, and he is fostering children because he saw a muslin family with three children, they could not look after them, so they took the children away from them, but there were no Muslim foster parents at the time to help which inspired him to look into fostering. He has 3 boys and 4 girls, only two boys are still at home.

It was so inspiring to hear Jamroz's story. We were amazed how adaptable he had to be throughout his life, how resilient he is and how much he loved his time working in the textile mills. We have created a unique shirt for Jamroz that hopefully reflects part of his story that he can share with his family.

"I moved to Burnley in 1974, the boss's where I worked at James Kenny Mill didn't want me to leave because I was such a good worker, and the Bury Times came to take my photo, I felt famous as my friends said they saw me in the newspaper!"



Richard Hall

Richard Hall was a really interesting character and very knowledgeable. Richard left school aged fifteen and went straight into working in 'the mill'- actually named Turnball and Stockdale in Stubbins, although he admitted that really he wanted to work in radio. His first job was as a 'Reacher-in', which meant he was sitting under a loom and fed the threads through. In this mill they wove upholstery fabrics that were used on shipping liners and the jacquard looms could produce complex patterns. He remembered that he had six weeks training and then he was given two looms to look after but only producing plain cloth, although you could have up to six different colours of weft. He was paid a basic rate and said "each loom had a clock which counted the picks and that's how you got paid". Richard was a weaver for three years before the mill closed 'They brought in sixteen new looms that were run by battery' 'with modern machines you were more 'tending' than anything else, you would run your hands down the fabric to keep it tight, but that was about it'. "If there was a problem with the cloth, even complex patterns could be 'pulled back' with a little comb and we would take the fault out, some of the women would 'weave' with a needle to fill in any holes - like darning". Weavers always have sandpaper with them to keep the shuttle smooth or it would catch on the cloth and make faults. We used to make our own beams and bobbins, there was a term 'kissing shuttles' highlighting the action of sucking the shuttle to draw the threads in, which consequently is why so many people in this region have breathing problems. "I was part of the union and I remember them bringing in ear defenders for the workers but we didn't like wearing them as you couldn't hear the faults in the machine, you got so used to your looms you knew exactly how they should

sound." He remembered that mainly local people worked in the mills and weavers were mainly women of all ages. There were some Egyptian workers in the mill and he still keeps in touch with these people. He also remembered what he called 'Tramp weavers', who were highly skilled vagrant weavers that travelled around for work. He remembered working with the first Asians that came into the mills around 1964, many who lived in Haslingden. One of his tales described how they all had lockers in the mill for their personal belongings, and Richard kept his sandals in his locker. Each morning he kept noticing that when he came to put his sandals on they felt warm, after a few weeks he realised that one of the Asian men on the night shift had been wearing his sandals thinking they were for general use. Ironically when the mill closed all the looms were sent to Pakistan. In 1983 he finished in the textile industry as it was just becoming an admin role. He could see from the mid 1960's things were rapidly changing and mills were closing all over the region. He came on a visit to Queen Street Mill, approximately six years ago, and the smell of the mill evoked such great memories and as he walked round he soon realised that he should share his knowledge and especially his practical skills so he now works two days a week showing people round and sharing his personal insights.

When we spoke to Richard what struck us was his tool kit that he still had with him, his story shows how knowledgeable he is about his craft and we wanted his shirt design to be simple but incorporate an apron that he always wore to keep his tools in. We used the iconic red striped fabric that is usually used for making tea-towels to make his shirt and it worked perfectly.

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I was part of the union and I remember them bringing in ear defenders for the workers, but we didn't like wearing them as you couldn't hear the faults in the machine, you got so used to your looms you knew exactly how they should sound.

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Gary Smithson

Gary Smithson came along to Queen Street mill over the summer to meet us as he had heard about our project at the 'Community Conversation' event, held earlier this year in the mill. His story was very interesting and certainly different to other stories we had heard. Gary felt a strong link to the textile industry. His story began with his great grandfather, Mr Arthur James Dent who was a highly respected manager of Messrs John Kay and Sons Ltd, Spafield Mill, for over twenty years. He put his whole life into the mill, Gary shared some wonderful photos of his great grandfather with us. He was an extremely smart man and inspired us greatly when we came to design his shirt.

Gary remembered his grandfather, Albert, who was married to a lady called Netta and they worked in the mill from age fifteen, he said if they were one minute late for work they were sent home. They managed to make a decent living and as we noted from the photos, they were able to afford good clothes, which were always known as their 'Sunday Best'. His Grandfather, Albert, went on to work at CWS Co-op in Burnley.

Gary told us how he had vivid memories of the 1960's when he was about nine years old, when he would play outside Habergham Mill, on Coal Clough Lane, and he would go in with his friend to ask for money to get some chips, he saw the women using a kind of sign language, lip-reading and miming to each other because the noise was so incredibly loud. He said "living near Habergham Mill you saw everything going on outside, there were always lots of shuttles on the road, and I saw waggons outside the mills taking stuff to India. Then there were the lodges which were really dangerous, in fact I knew of a young girl who had drowned, playing in the water".

Gary went on to become a fire engineer and would regularly visit the mills to check the safety conditions. He remembers how he would visit Queen Street Mill and saw the engine when it was fired up. He told us how dangerous the mills were as cotton is so combustible, and the mills could get very hot, which could easily cause a fire, 'which is another good reason the mills were here in Lancashire as the air was so moist and the damp atmosphere really made the conditions safer".

Gary's story took an incredible twist as he told us that he was now a film extra and in 2013 he got a part in a Channel 4 four-part production called 'The Mill' based around the industrial revolution. The drama was filmed at Quarry Bank Mill, Cheshire, and Gary had to learn how to weave on a Victorian loom, just like the looms we are using to make his shirt, for his role. He said it really brought home to him how terrible the conditions were in those days, when children as young as nine worked a twelve hour shift in the cotton mills, and how freezing it was, especially as many of the youngsters had nothing on their feet, the whole experience really moved him, which is why he was so keen to share his story with us and take part in the Heirloom project.

“

I've always felt a strong link to the textile industry because of my great grandfather, Mr Arthur James Dent, who was a highly respected mill manager for over twenty years, he put his whole life into the mill and I am proud to own a shirt that incorporates his image into the design

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Ibrar Syed

Ibrar Syed is an important part of our Heirloom project, not because he worked in the textile industry, but because of his passion in trying to help us find men who did work in the textile industry and who had migrated to Lancashire to work in the mills for our project. Ibrar helped us to find Mr Arif and Mr Jamroz as we affectionately called them, and our project would not be complete without them.

Ibrar is from Karachi in Pakistan, and he loves fashion, he also loved our project and offered to help us all he could. When we first met him he talked to us about a TV programme that he watched, which has become a phenomenon in Asian culture. 'Ertugrul' is a Turkish programme that depicts stories as far back as the 13th Century and is so popular that it is influencing trends in Asian fashion.

To show our appreciation of Ibrar's support we wanted to make him a shirt that could become his heirloom. Regina painstakingly embroidered designs inspired by 'Ertugrul' onto his shirt and created a unique design.

Ibrar has the strap line 'To Live, Love, Learn and Leave a positive Legacy' for his business and we feel that our project fits in perfectly with this ethos. Thank-you Ibrar.

“

Live, Love,
Learn and
Leave a positive
Legacy

”



Peter Coles

We met Pete Coles in August when he came into one of the workshops with his friend Gary Smithson who also took part in this project. Pete had a different angle for us, he was drawn to Queen Street Mill because of his love of steam engines rather than the textile side of the mill. It all became clear when Pete told us he was in fact a train driver!

Pete is based in Northampton but loves visiting the mill whenever he is in the North visiting his friend Gary. At the time of our Research project it was a shame that we did not have access to the engine or 'Peace' as it is affectionately known, because the chimney was having renovations to make it safe and the steam engine was not able to run.

Pete told us he did have a link to mills but not a textile mill. Pete's link was through a boot and shoe mill called Church's, where his Father worked for many years. The mill in Northampton has been producing luxury shoes since 1873 and is still in business today. The shoes are traditionally hand-crafted and still very popular today.

Interestingly, Pete had another strong link to several of the men taking part in this project, that he was a trade union representative. He was one of the youngest ASLEF union reps and has been doing the role for over 20 years now.

For us, when we spoke to Pete it gave us the opportunity to design something different. We wanted to incorporate the steam engine into the design of his shirt and we had a wonderful image of the front of the engine that represented the 'peace' logo and we used that for embellishment on his design. Pete had selected the Kurtha style shirt, designed by Yasmin and told us he loved the design and was hoping to visit India sometime soon and hoped that he could wear it there. Yasmin used her traditional skills to incorporate the Shisha mirror-work to represent the bolts on the engine and it worked perfectly, creating a truly cross-cultural shirt design.

“ I love my shirt design, the mirror work is perfect on the Peace engine, it really stands out, I can't wait to wear this shirt when I visit India ”



Tim Birtwistle

Tim Birtwistle's relationship with textiles comes from his family. Although he has no first-hand experience of mills, or the levels of extreme wealth that were generated from textiles, the legacy of the period, where Lancashire's economy reached nadir, clearly influenced his life in various ways. Moreover, it clearly influenced countless other lives across towns linked to textiles. It is as much a personal, family history, as it is a Lancashire, and nation-wide one. The Birtwistle's built an empire, stretching across Lancashire, and across Britain, employing around 9,000 people at one point.

The Birtwistles can be traced back to the Norman Conquest and have a long history in the weaving areas of Lancashire. The name derives from Bridtwisell, a clearing between two streams near Hapton and Huncoat. The family lived at Huncote Hall for 482 years. The family coat of arms was granted in 1567, and later updated in 1938 to reflect the significance of the cotton industry.

The Birtwistle cotton story began with the birth of William Birtwistle in Read in 1808. Like many contemporaries, he started in hand-loom weaving, before seizing the opportunity granted by the success of cotton, rising to become a warehouse manager, and building his own mill, Alston Mill, in 1852.

The company grew quickly, and as his son Micah took over the firm, they soon owned four mills and over 100 houses. Like many of the late-Victorian industrialists in Lancashire, Micah remained humble, living in an end terrace house near one of the mills, whilst investing in other mills, railways, paper mills, property and the Savoy Hotel in London.

Birtwistle's invested in mills and machinery. The workers were treated well. May family maintained a close relationship with them. He had expectations on how they behaved, but rewarded them for good work with decent wages.

The success of the family continued, and under William They acquired more mills, and with them properties. From their profits, they acquired houses, yachts, and were the first family to own a motor car in Blackburn. By 1918, they controlled 10,000 looms and 350,000 spindles, more than any other individual. They balanced this by maintaining the mills and workers houses, taking great pride, but also sharing their prosperity with their communities. They helped the Royal Infirmary, Cathedral building fund and made other generous contributions to a variety of institutions.

The family did not escape major social events. They donated money to causes, such as £216,000 for a tank, named Egbert in 1918, more than any other single individual. Arthur Britwistle returned from the war a hero, as Brigadier General, DSO, CB CMG order of St Michael and St George, Companion of the Bath. He was later honoured as a justice of the peace, Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, President of the British Legion (Blackburn), and the Boys brigade. Arthur died suddenly in 1937, at just 59, days before he was due to take his place at Westminster Abbey for the coronation of King George VI.

Following the First World War, underlying structural issues in the First World War were greatly exacerbated by a speculative boom, that witnessed mills purchased at hugely inflated prices. When this boom turned to bust, widespread poverty became common across Lancashire. Despite this, the family diversified more, moving into new materials, updating machinery and continuing to innovate. They also moved into retail, trading as John Hawkins and Son. Taking advantage of improving economic conditions, they expanded to have shops in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Lancashire and in the South West.

IN 1937, Mr Birtwistle's Grandfather, Arthur Hillman Birtwistle took over the company, and ran the company primarily from his home at Mitton Hall. The company continued to innovate, investing in new technology, and still act paternally to its employees, and Arthur's sister Vi oversaw the building of mill canteens. However, the industry started to contract following the Second World War, and in struggling financial times, in 1971, the majority of company was sold to the Menaged family, from Manchester, but contraction continued through the 1970s and 1980s. The last Birtwistle Mill finally closed in 1992, 150 years on from when the Family started.

For us, Tim was the side of the textile industry that we hadn't really considered for our project. We never thought that we would find someone whose family had such longstanding and important connections with the textile industry in Lancashire. Tim had fond memories that he shared with us of being with his grandfather and the exciting places they visited, and he was grateful for the standard of living that the textile industry had allowed him and his family to have. He was also extremely proud of the family crest which we have used as a key inspiration in his shirt design.

“

It's wonderful that Lancashire's cotton Industry is being celebrated in the Heirloom project. Lancashire's textile heritage and the relationship between the cotton mills' and its people has been sensitively remembered through individual personal stories. I am delighted that my family's involvement with the rise of the cotton industry in Lancashire has been recognised in the project. It has also been exciting to see archive information and family details being realised visually through the finished piece.

”





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