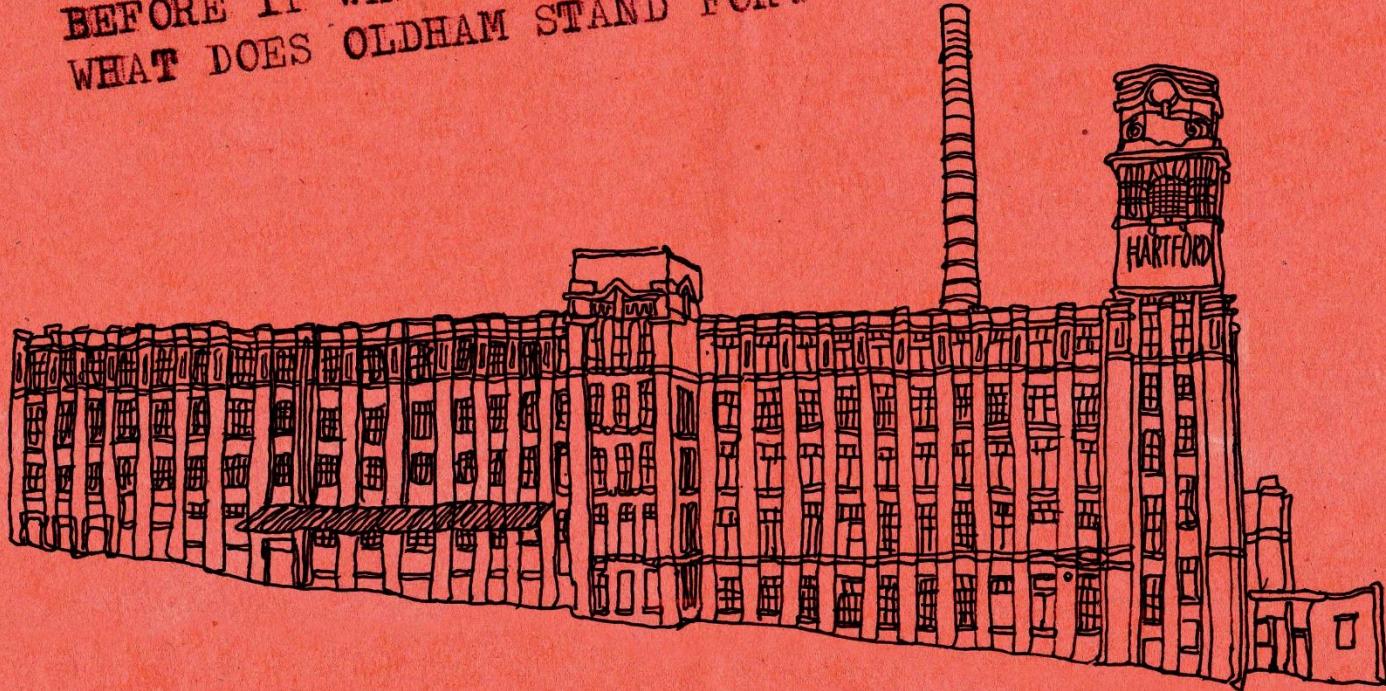


BEFORE IT WAS KING COTTON, NOW IT'S LIKE  
WHAT DOES OLDHAM STAND FOR?



We had that sense of community and I don't think we lost the sense of community because we had immigrants. I think we lost the sense of community because we lost the industry.

Once known as 'King Cotton', Oldham's textile mills started to go into decline in the 1930s.

When the speed of decline accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s, wide-scale redundancy followed. The Hartford Mill was built in 1907 to produce cotton, before closing in 1959. The mill stands as testimony to the legacies of deindustrialization. It represents a process marked not just by the loss of jobs but by the changing nature of work, community and place. It prompts questions about the identity of formerly industrial towns and communities. How we remember this industrial past matters, as the mills were not the preserve exclusively of any one group. Over the years industry provided work to established residents and successive generations of immigrants who sought to make a life in the town, even if practices of racial discrimination at times worked to exclude and marginalise South Asian workers in particular.

Oldham's history tells us that deindustrialisation and the long-term unemployment that resulted was a multiracial class experience. When the last of the cotton mills closed its doors in 1998, 'the working class in general' were left behind.

This work is funded by the British Academy/ Leverhulme Trust and The University of Manchester. It has also been approved by the University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee. To find out more about this work visit [www.ethnicity.ac.uk](http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk)