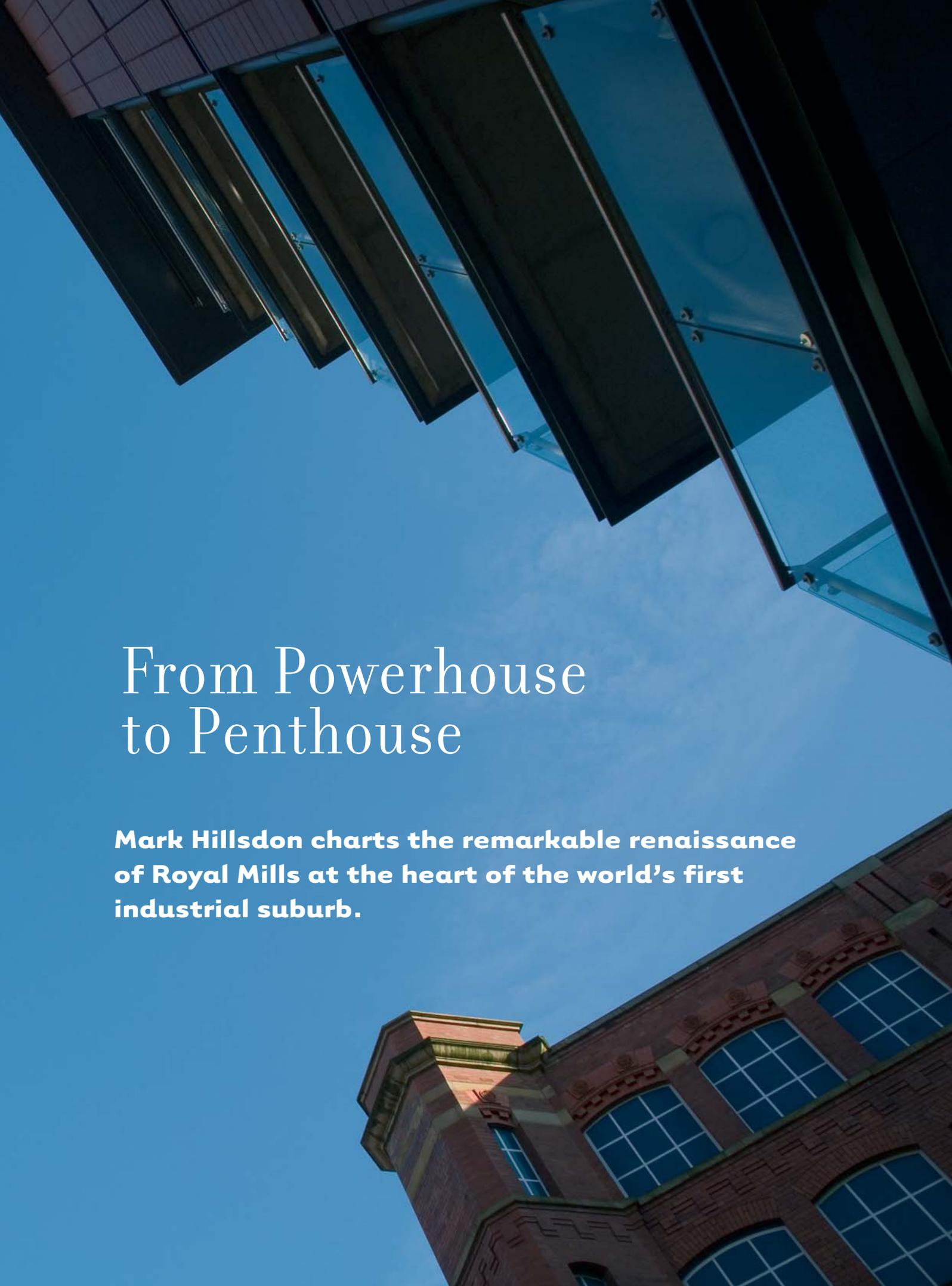


Dying Days
Powerhouse to Penthouse
Newcomers
Get on That Bus!

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From Powerhouse to Penthouse

**Mark Hillsdon charts the remarkable renaissance
of Royal Mills at the heart of the world's first
industrial suburb.**

...it's only as you wander the streets and get up close to the red brick walls of the mills, that you realise Ancoats still has a unique atmosphere and a real sense of its own place in history.

In its heyday around 1,000 people beat a path to the gates of Royal Mills each morning, anxious to take up their places at the frames and looms before the doors were shut and bolted. The mill was the powerhouse within Ancoats, which itself was the centre of Britain's global cotton trade and the world's first industrial suburb.

Now, nearly fifty years since the last shuttle flew back and forth, life is returning to this neglected area, just north of Manchester city centre, with Royal Mills set to play a central part in the area's new, sustainable future.

Look at a picture of Ancoats from the air and nothing particularly spectacular jumps out. Hemmed in by main roads on two sides, and a derelict housing estate and the Rochdale Canal on the others, it's only as you wander the streets and get up close to the red brick walls of the mills, that you realise Ancoats still has a unique atmosphere and a real sense of its own place in history.

Local architectural historian Steve Little has spent the last 20 years researching this history. He explains that Royal Mills is a complex made up of four mills, Redhill Street, Paragon, and Sedgwick Old and New, which didn't gain its regal tag until after a visit by George VI in 1942.

The mills were built between 1818 and 1913 by McConnel and Kennedy who, says Little, "were the dominant spinning company in Manchester, and therefore the world, with a reputation for exceptionally fine yarn."

By the standards of the time, they also had a reputation as benevolent employers. "It was better working there than many other places," continues Little. "People were better paid and the McConnells were relatively good employers. They ran their own school and subscribed to quite a number of charities... they even used to pay sick pay on occasions."

The company, like the mill itself, proved to be a great survivor, and it was one of the few spinners that continued operating during the great cotton famine of the 1860s.

Eventually the complex began to expand, and whole streets were consumed as a network of tunnels, walkways, yards and sheds linked the mills together. Inside great engineering feats were also taking place, such as the huge Fairburn crankshaft, which involved over 100 vertical rods soaring up through eight floors and powering a host of machines. And with true Victorian vigour, the spinners kept spinning as the shaft was installed.

But gradually the demand for Manchester cotton dwindled, and in 1959, after nearly 170 years of production, spinning came to an end at Royal Mills. It signalled the start of a slow and steady decline. At first many of Ancoats' mills were bought up by local estate agents who leased them out for a peppercorn rent to myriad small tenants, many of them still involved with textiles.

The 1960s saw major slum clearances in Manchester, and a massive programme of council house building that gave rise to estates such as the Cardroom, which itself has since given way to New Islington. But with the wrecking balls hovering on the edge of Ancoats, the programme ran out of steam.

"Ancoats was left alone and in many ways that was its salvation," says Lyn Fenton, development director at the Ancoats Urban Village Company (AUVV). "It's like a little time capsule that was ignored." The home of the industrial revolution had been saved but more by default than design.

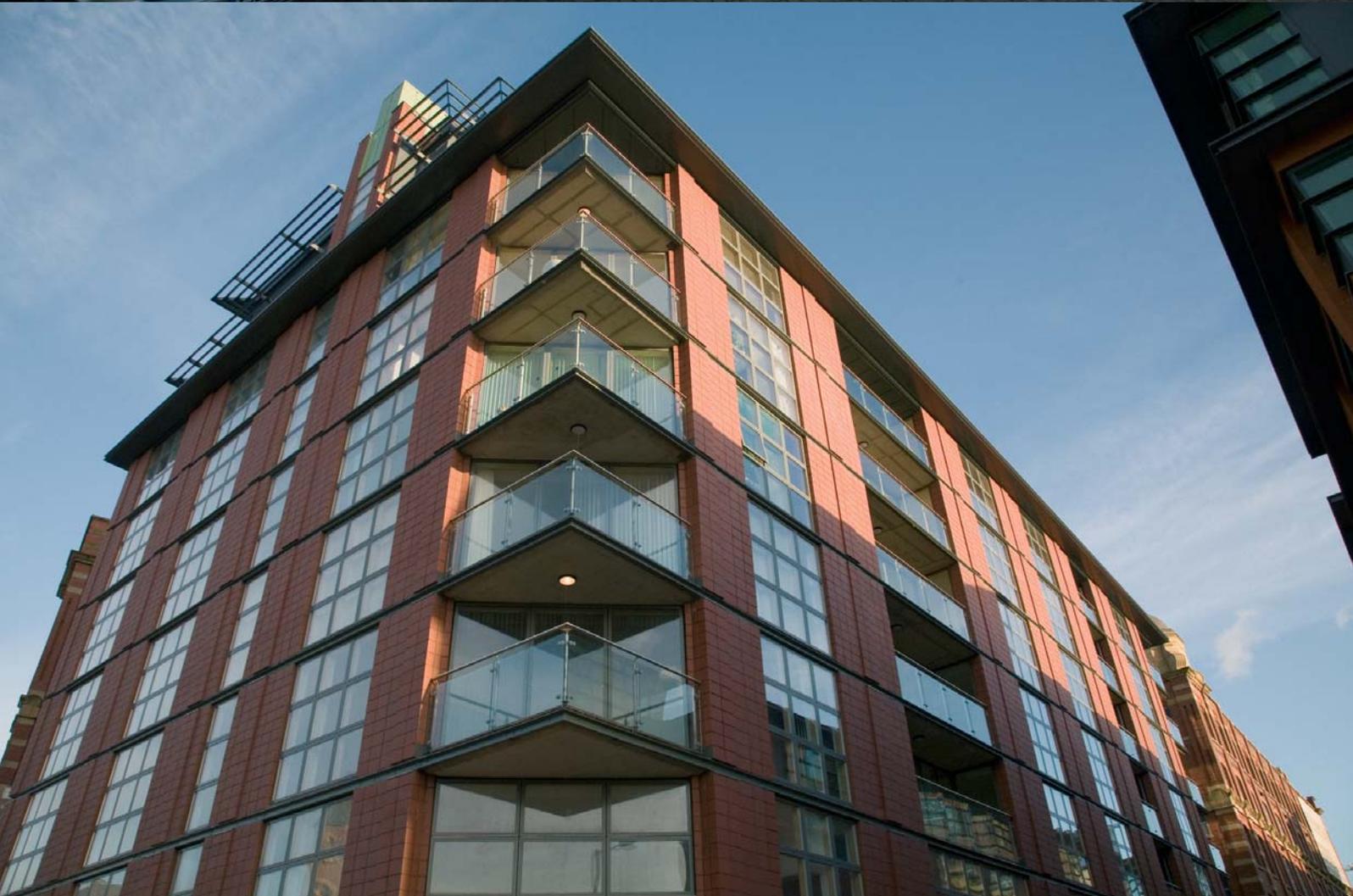
However, it proved to be a short stay of execution and in an ironic twist, it was an initiative designed to put the city back on the international map that nearly finished off Ancoats for good.

"Their doom was sealed with Manchester's first Olympic bid," says Fenton. "A number of people came to the city with a shopping bag and thought, 'where we can we buy up cheap property that will really rise in value when Manchester wins the Olympics?' They assumed that Ancoats would become part of a future Olympic site."

"They [the new owners] turfed the tenants out so that they could offer the buildings to the Olympics with vacant possession," continues Fenton. "So overnight that meant the 'caretakers' of the buildings were no longer there and within a really short space of time, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, these buildings deteriorated much more rapidly than they had done in the preceding thirty years, simply because there was no-one there to take care of them. There were break-ins and a spate of fires when a number of buildings were lost."

In 1988 Royal Mills had been given a grade II* listing but three years later most of Ancoats' surviving mills were on their last legs. English Heritage rushed to put them all on the Buildings at Risk register and finally the city sat up and took notice – a vital piece of world history was crumbling away on its doorstep.





6 east The Royal Mills complex, on the edge of Ancoats Urban Village. The McConnell Building, below, one of two newly built apartment blocks.



The curved glass 'ski slope' atrium roof, above. This show apartment in the Old Sedgwick Mill has views over the Rochdale Canal.

“The purists may say they’ve been ruined, but [at least] the buildings are still there.”

In 1989, the whole area was designated a Conservation Area to provide greater protection of its historic significance. Then in 1996 Ancoats Urban Village (now part of New East Manchester) was set up by the City Council which subsequently helped lobby for Ancoats to be included on the ‘tentative list for nomination’ as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

AUVC began working with various private developers across the whole of Ancoats and in 2002 announced that the international property company ING Real Estate had come up with an £85 million refurbishment/redevelopment plan (including £9 million of public money) for Royal Mills that involved developing 312 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments in the complex along with offices and other commercial uses.

The sensitive treatment of the buildings by architects FSP has meant that they have retained much of their historic resonance, with bare brick walls and timber floors, while the ceiling beams, pillars and shafts that once drove machinery now form idiosyncratic features in the new apartments.

The centrepiece of the development is a curved £1m glass atrium which encloses the old central yard where weavers and spinners once congregated each day. Natural light bathes the whole development.

But there’s a lot more substance to Royal Mills than iconic architecture and the latest in interior design. An important part of the whole concept is that it will be mixed-use, with shops, bars and a business centre alongside the well-appointed apartments.

“To keep this area vibrant it can’t just become a residential dormitory; it’s got to be live, work and play,” says Fenton.

It’s the idea of transforming Ancoats into a new, vibrant part of the city centre that appealed to Mathew Kelly, a 30-year-old lawyer, who recently bought a two-bedroom flat at Royal Mills.

Manchester born and bred, he recalls the Ancoats of his childhood as a wild no-go area. “I remember that we were told never to go up there! Ancoats was always a bit run down and derelict – there was nothing to go there for really.”

But he’d admired the mills from afar and when the chance to live in one came up, he was first in the queue. “They’re the essence of Manchester,” he says.

Kelly is excited by the prospect of the new bars and restaurants in the atrium underneath his flat, “people are exactly what this area needs,” he adds.

A great community spirit has already developed within Royal Mills, continues Kelly, with many residents extremely enthusiastic about living in such an important historical building. They even have their own online forum.

But he also sees Royal Mills as just one part of the New East Manchester jigsaw. Of equal importance to the sustainability of the area is the new infrastructure, the new shops and the new school across the Rochdale Canal in New Islington. These, he believes, will ensure the long-term future of the area.

One criticism that has already been raised several times across the whole of New East Manchester is the issue of social housing. And with price tags exceeding £350,000 it’s one that’s been levelled at Royal Mills too.

But Fenton is quick to defend the development. “We make no apologies for saying that we’ve introduced a market that didn’t previously exist, which was a market for housing at the going market rate. There is a problem, and it’s a nationwide problem around affordability. But affordability isn’t just about social housing.”

Developments such as Royal Mills can lift a whole area, she explains. They bring in new people, create new communities and help raise people’s aspirations.

And the fact that Royal Mills has a future at all should be applauded. “Without the conversion [to apartments] we’d have lost these mills,” says Little. “The purists may say they’ve been ruined, but [at least] the buildings are still there.”

Fenton recalls the reaction when plans to regenerate Ancoats were first announced, with many local people in favour of pulling the whole lot down. “People were saying: ‘All they represent to us is the oppression of our ancestors in appalling working conditions, it’s like a great shadow hanging over this area that we can’t shake off.’”

But these views are changing. “If you talk to them now, then people are much prouder about what this area is, was, and can be again,” says Fenton. “Regeneration can’t be done to a set formula that ignores local context. And here local context jumps up and bites you on the bum. You can’t avoid it.”



The show apartment in the McConnel Building.

New to East Manchester

Manchester has a long tradition of welcoming newcomers to the city. Len Grant investigates how recently arrived asylum seekers and refugees are settling into east Manchester.

“English is very difficult for me,” says Buaphat Russell as she sits at her dining table slowly writing out a list of words. “I’m still not using the right words yet and spelling is a problem.”

Her teacher, 67-year-old Barbara, has been visiting Buaphat in her Beswick home each week for the past two years where she puts her through her paces in basic English. This is the Home Tuition programme – coordinated by New Deal for Communities – where learners who are unable to attend college courses can build up their language proficiency in their own home.

What is surprising about this programme is that Barbara and many of her teaching colleagues are asylum seekers or refugees themselves.

“I taught primary schoolchildren back home in Zimbabwe,” she explains, “but I lost my husband and the situation was not good there at all. I decided to leave.”

As an asylum seeker Barbara is not allowed to take on paid work but, as a volunteer, is able to make a contribution to her adopted community. Apart from Buaphat she helps two other students in east Manchester.

“While I’m in this strange twilight zone, waiting for a decision on whether I can stay, I volunteer my skills,” she says. “It keeps me going and I get satisfaction from helping others.”

In Britain an asylum seeker is defined as anyone who has fled persecution in their homeland and formally applied for asylum on their arrival here. If their application is approved then they are regarded as a refugee. Asylum seekers are not only prevented from working while they await a decision from the Home Office but state support for them is 30% below the normal level of income support.

“I had to attend a training course before I was able to volunteer,” explains Barbara, “and for each student that we teach we have to prepare lesson plans which are approved by our supervisor. I have one student who is from Congo and she is just beginning to learn English. She finds it difficult because her baby has been sick recently.”

As well as volunteering on the Home Tuition programme Barbara has also attended courses in healthcare, community relations and youth work.

The number of displaced people from around the world seeking asylum in Britain has been falling for the past few years. Britain in fact only hosts 2% of the world’s refugees. Most move around (sometimes up to 16 times!) in their own country before moving abroad for shelter. Latest estimates suggest Pakistan accepts the largest number of refugees: one million out of a worldwide total of eight million.

“I lost my husband and the situation was not good there at all. I decided to leave.”



Barbara's home country, Zimbabwe, has been led by President Mugabe for over 25 years. In that time the economy has slumped into an ever-worsening crisis, estimated to have shrunk by 40% in the last seven years. The predominantly agricultural economy is now in tatters, with spiralling inflation and shortages of food and fuel. In an effort to stay in power the president has resorted to strong-arm tactics to silence his critics. Two years ago he ordered the clearing of urban slums where the groundswell of his political opposition lived. Thousands of people, already living in poverty because of the failure of the economy, found themselves destitute and homeless. Partly due to the worsening economic situation, Zimbabwe now has the lowest life expectancy anywhere in the world: 34 years for women and 37 years for men.

The Home Office's figures for 2006 state there were 23,520 asylum applications (the lowest level since 1993). Of these only 10% were initially recognised as refugees and granted asylum. Of those who appealed against their decision, 23% were eventually successful. Commentators suggest the drop in asylum numbers in Britain reflects a harsher system rather than improved world security.

While Barbara is teaching English to newcomers across east Manchester one English-born woman is trying to get to grips with a few Zimbabwean words.

Shanine Buller has been a registered childminder for nearly three years and knows more than most about the challenges immigrants face when integrating into their adopted community. For the past eighteen months Shanine has been looking after five Zimbabwean schoolchildren in her Newton Heath home while their parents work or study in Manchester.

"I pick them up from primary school every day," explains Shanine, who has two children of her own. "There's one older girl who's at high school and she makes her own way here. I remember when they first came they were more interested in watching TV, but now that novelty has worn off and we get involved in different craft activities and projects. We've just been doing a project on global warming.

"To begin with the children would just talk together in their own language but now we all

speak English together. Their parents wanted an English-speaking childminder to help with their language development.

"And yes, I do get funny looks and overhear the odd racist comment when I'm out with them all. You know, it's the usual, 'They come over here and take all our jobs and benefits.' These children's parents are all working or studying hard, yet they still don't always qualify for the benefits others receive. One mother studying at university didn't immediately qualify for childcare allowance because she hadn't been in the country long enough, but she was still paying taxes like everyone else."

Shanine is a member of the National Childminding Association working toward her level 4 qualification. At one of the association's local network meetings the Multi Agency for Refugee Integration in Manchester (MARIM) held a workshop to introduce childminders to some of the issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees in east Manchester.

"It was interesting getting some of the true statistics about immigration," she recalls, "and it just goes to show how much the media distort the realities around these issues."

Shanine is happy to be contributing to the children's integration in their new country. "I can see their confidence growing month by month. They're all changing as they get older. It's nice to watch."

Like many service providers, schools have embraced the opportunities that immigration offers and have been able to cultivate the different cultural experiences of their newest pupils and so extend the understanding and appreciation of global issues to all pupils.

Over the past 18 months MARIM and the East District New Arrivals Support Team (EDNAST) have been working with local schools on 'Planet School', a programme designed to support school staff in developing their knowledge and understanding of the needs of newly arrived children in school. The current group of teachers chose to develop work around the theme of linguistic diversity.

"It's been a great project," says Sue Gaffney of EDNAST, speaking at a recent



...the project has helped massively to support schools to raise awareness of the needs of newly arrived families...

“Every nationality is welcome, and because I can speak five languages, there’s a good chance I can talk to them all!”

celebration event for the project at the Grange Community Centre in Beswick. “By offering a collaborative network opportunity which builds on school’s existing work, the project has helped massively to support schools to raise awareness of the needs of newly arrived families, not just amongst children but amongst parents from all backgrounds.”

Ten-year-old Zahri Gohari and her friend Crystal Shunkin were just two of the performers from St Francis Primary School in Gorton singing on stage at the event. Zahri, from Iran, has been in Britain for just six weeks: “I like my new school,” she says slowly in her new language, “the teachers are kind and I’ve made some new friends.”

“My family are from Congo,” chips in Crystal, “so we speak French and whenever we have a new pupil at school who can only speak French then I can look after them. You know, we’ve got 31 languages at our school,” she adds proudly.

As well as education, sport has traditionally been a way in which newcomers quickly integrate into their host communities. One local team, New East Manchester FC, has players from Brazil, Malawi, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Angola, as well those born within a stone’s throw of their training ground in Ardwick. Newcomers to the team might not at first realise the wealth of talent that their player-coach Gil Gomes brings to this fledgling club.

Born in Angola into a family of seven brothers and four sisters, Gil moved to Portugal, Angola’s mother country, when he was just fourteen.

“My godfather wanted to help me to go to Portugal to study. When I got there it was clear that I had a talent for football and I joined Benfica. When I left Angola the situation was very bad back home and I used to send all the money I earned playing football back to my family.”

In 1991, having become a Portuguese citizen, he played for the national under-21s team that beat Brazil in the finals of the FIFA World Youth Championships. “That was a very special time,” recalls Gil, “we were managed by Carlos Queiroz, who is now assistant manager at Manchester United, and I played

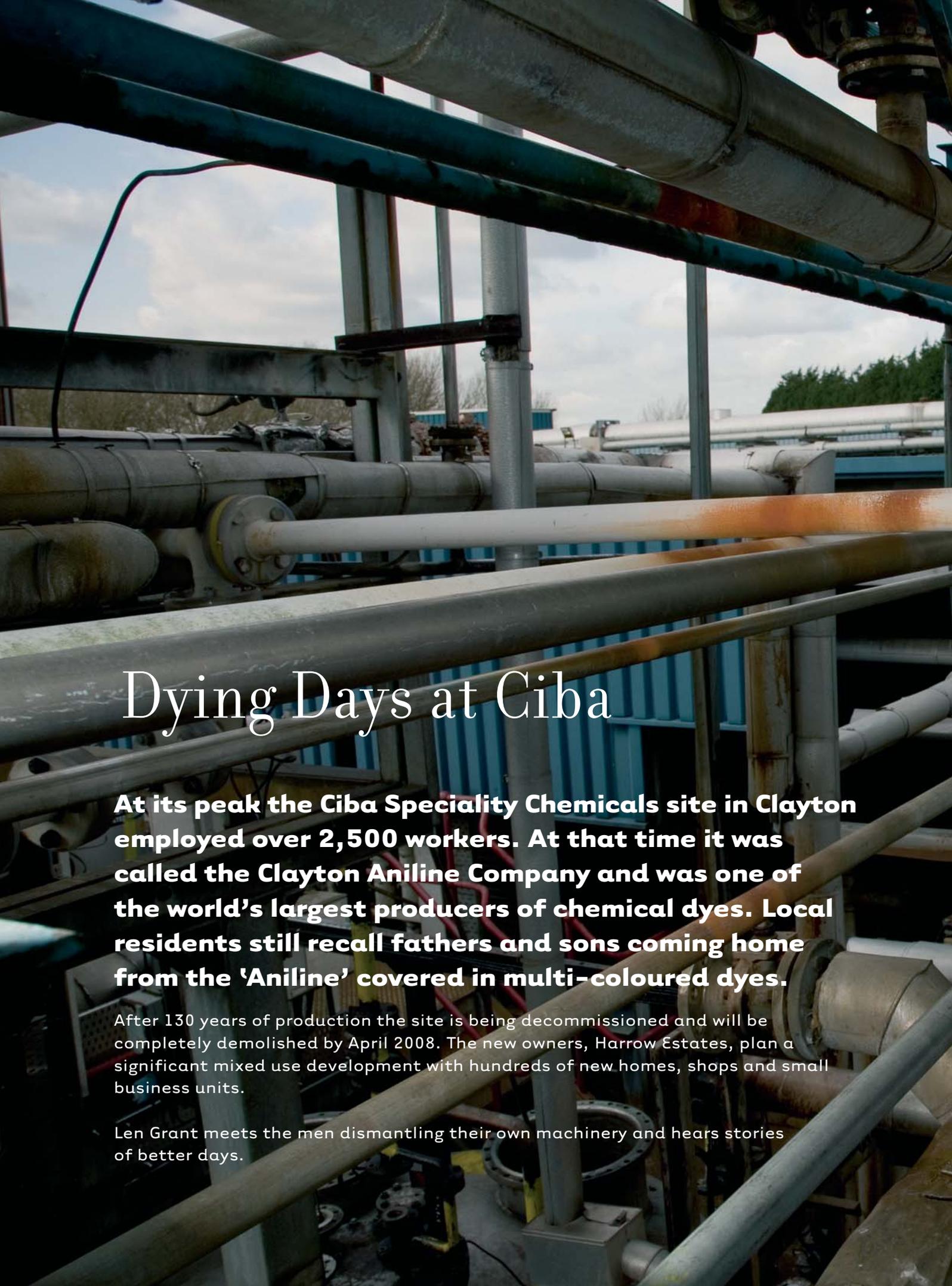
alongside some of the greats like Luis Figo and Rui Costa.”

After Benfica Gil played for clubs in France, Switzerland, Italy and the USA before coming to Britain. At 34 he’s now settled in Manchester where he works as a director for the sports development company, Sport4life, which develops all kinds of sports particularly in areas of deprivation. “I work a lot with schoolchildren,” says Gil, “but also enjoy training the East Manchester team.

“We have great talent in our team and they come from all over the world. Every nationality is welcome, and because I can speak five languages, there’s a good chance I can talk to them all!”

The arrival of immigrants to Manchester is nothing new. There can’t be many so-called established families who haven’t had a grandparent or great-grandparent come from Ireland, Eastern Europe or the Caribbean to escape political or economic hardship. And, given the right opportunities, immigrants have consistently made significant contributions to the cultural and economic success of this city.





Dying Days at Ciba

At its peak the Ciba Speciality Chemicals site in Clayton employed over 2,500 workers. At that time it was called the Clayton Aniline Company and was one of the world's largest producers of chemical dyes. Local residents still recall fathers and sons coming home from the 'Aniline' covered in multi-coloured dyes.

After 130 years of production the site is being decommissioned and will be completely demolished by April 2008. The new owners, Harrow Estates, plan a significant mixed use development with hundreds of new homes, shops and small business units.

Len Grant meets the men dismantling their own machinery and hears stories of better days.



It was very much a family atmosphere: the plant manager was like a second father to me... just like one big happy family.

Alf Hulme, Shift Team Leader, 33 years

My first job was with Hardman and Holden, a chemical firm next door to here. We used to make whiteners, cleaners if you like. I worked in the research department and when I was made redundant I moved over here as a lab technician.

I was 21 then and there were 2,250 people here. The place was buzzing, I mean you've seen what it's like now, but back then it used to be like a train station with people shouting about all over the place. When it was home time – 4 o'clock – there was standing traffic on the main road. It was like the end of a United match, so many people leaving at once. At dinnertime both canteens would be heaving, people'd be queuing on the stairs just to get fed. It was a real hub of industry.

Plenty of social life too. They used to have a football team, a cricket team, several bowling teams in the local league, a golf society, climbing, walking... and a photography club.

It was one of those places where if your dad worked here then, chances were, you'd get a job too. You'd see generation after generation.

I think the best time for me was in the early days when 74 Building was still operational. It was very much a family atmosphere: the plant manager was like a second father to me. He had a good repartee with everyone, and it was a good social life... just like one big happy family.

Things have always been changing, the bigger plants were replaced with smaller ones, with more computerisation and so needing less people. The death-knell has been hanging over us for a couple of years and now of course we know the end is in sight: we're talking about March, April next year. And although people are getting stuck into the job as professionals, it's not the same. It's very depressing at times. People just want it to end.

Alan Dugdale, Shift Team Leader, 37 years

I'd always wanted to work here because my dad had worked here. I remember when I was about five and, for whatever reason, dad was on the sick and we came down to collect his sick pay. I can remember coming in at the front gate and going up some wooden stairs to what must have been the pay office to collect his sick pay.

I didn't do so well at school, only got a couple of exams, and at first I worked at a textile firm down Clayton Lane. I'd get £13 a week for seven until seven. You couldn't work at the Aniline until you were 21 so as soon as I was old enough my dad asked and I got a job. I was working quarter to eight while five o'clock and getting £20 a week. So it was a lot more money for a lot less hours.

When I first started it was three shifts, Monday to Friday, and then it started getting busier and busier, and we started working continuously. We just worked all the way through for 365 days. Non-stop. But there's nothing left any more.

It feels very sad. You know when you've worked here for so long and you've seen a lot of changes. People have changed as well, you know... the atmosphere's changed. I mean, you can still have a good laugh with your mates, but...





20 east Dave Phillips, Process Operator, 28 years: "I was a reserve fireman here, I'd have liked to have joined the proper fire brigade but I'm too old now."



200000
N₂ FLOW (L/H)

DCS Measurement
APPROX. NOISE
PULSE & SIGNAL

200000
N₂ FLOW

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N₂ PRESSURE

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100000
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Barry Paul, Process Operator, 24 years

I wouldn't like to hazard a guess how many of my family have worked here. There's been me, my brother, my father, my uncles, cousins, nephews, aunties... we were one of the biggest families in here but there were loads of others. I think we can go back to the 1940s, maybe 1930s when my granddad worked here. In those days we were based in what was called Bradford, just down the road. For some reason they've changed it to Beswick now. That's where I was born.

I was working in engineering after I left school and then that firm closed down so my dad said, "There's vacancies here, d'you fancy it? Tell 'em you'll play on the football team, and you'll be in!" Well they asked on the application form whether I had any relatives working here and I practically filled the whole form with names! I never did play on the football team though.

I'll need to find another job after I leave. Most of the interviews I've had so far are in the same industry but I'm beginning to think that maybe I won't bother because this industry's all shift work now, and I think I've done my share of that. I quite like the idea of not doing nights or weekends.

I'm probably going to have to go self-employed. So I'm looking at courier work, which is up-and-coming now, and I'm looking at buying a black-cab taxi. I think there's jobs for everyone, but not on the same money as they're on here. The lads who've already gone have got decent jobs, but they've all been in their thirties. The lads that are left now are all in their fifties and companies aren't interested. I'm one of the younger ones left. I'm only 49, 50 in September.

"I'm probably going to have to go self-employed. I'm looking at buying a black-cab taxi."

Joe Walsh, Process Operator, 38 years

I had a few other jobs before I started working here. From aged 15 I was an apprentice plumber, then I worked for about a month as hammer-driver, but I didn't like that, it frightened me to death.

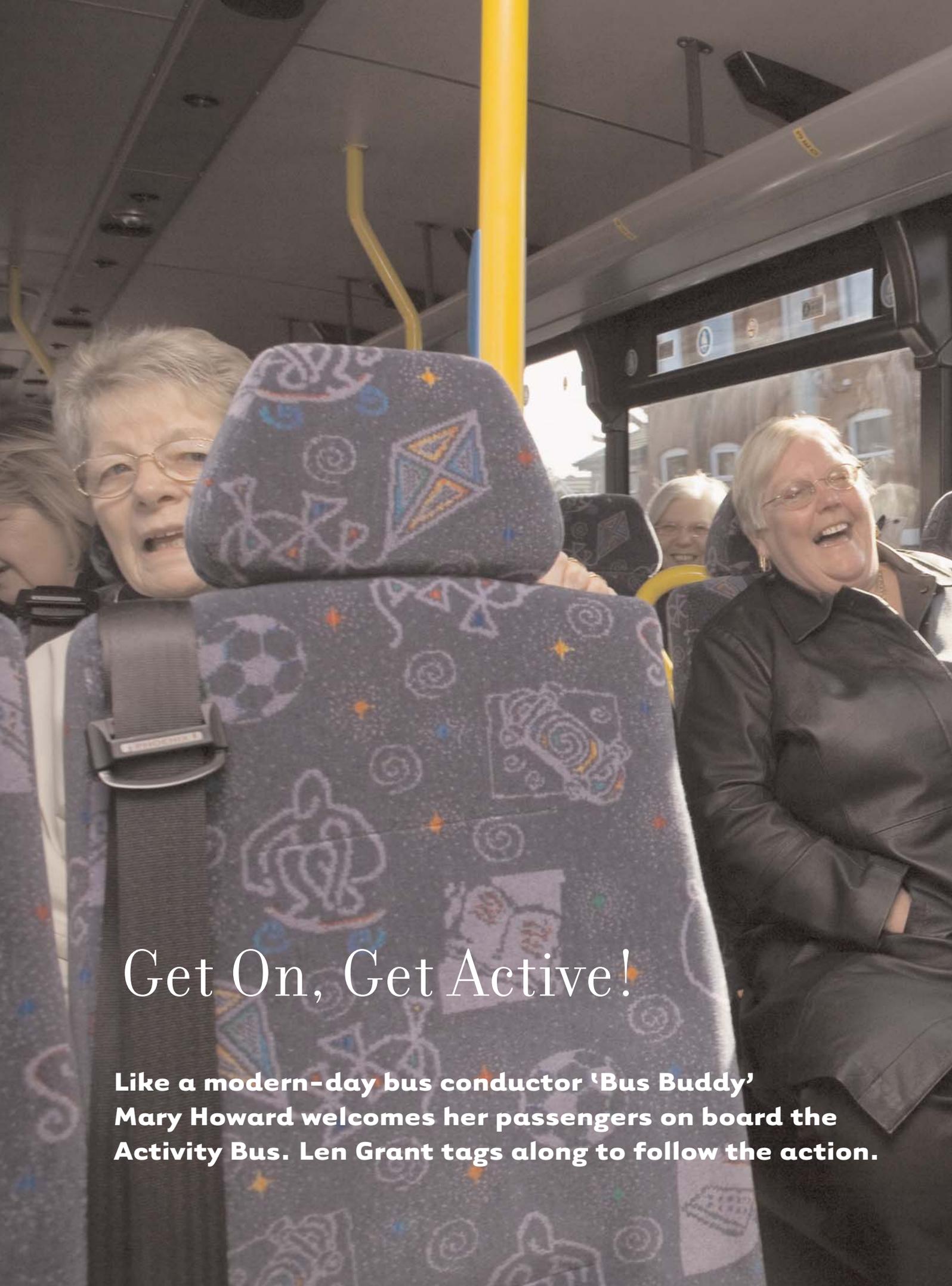
Before I started at the Aniline I was working round the corner on nights getting £21 a week for five 12-hour shifts. My cousin was working here getting the same money for three eight-hour shifts. "I'll get you a job at our place," he said. And so he did and I've been here ever since. I was 21 then, I'm 59 now.

In those days, there were no computers and you'd have to make up the dyes by hand: shovelling it out of a drum into a pot and of course the powder would go everywhere, you'd be covered in it. Health and safety has always been good in this firm so you'd have your face mask and breathing apparatus but no matter how much you wore, you'd still be covered in it.

My gran used to work here when it was all cobbled streets and little trucks, and the men didn't have showers then, and they'd be leaving the Aniline covered in red, yellow, green, blue dyes, whatever they'd been using that day. When it was snowing you'd see trails of the stuff all along the pavements.

They've really looked after me here. Within 12 months of starting I'd got three rises. I'd never known anything like it in my life. We all got pewter tankards for the centenary, we got a free trip to Belle Vue, they've even raffled a car once. What other company does that sort of thing?

As regards leaving the place, it's not hit home yet. And I don't think it'll hit home 'til I get my letter. Then that'll be it. But I'm one of the fortunate ones, I'm retiring because I'm nearly 60. So I won't be looking for another job, I'll be taking the wife all over the country. She's a clairvoyant. That'll be my job.



Get On, Get Active!

Like a modern-day bus conductor 'Bus Buddy' Mary Howard welcomes her passengers on board the Activity Bus. Len Grant tags along to follow the action.



Starting at Gorton Tub, the Activity Bus wends its way through the streets of east Manchester picking up passengers waiting on street corners wrapped in their winter coats. An hour or so later the same passengers are all in their 'cossies' being put through their paces in a fun aqua-aerobics session at the Manchester Aquatics Centre.

"Most of my passengers have been encouraged to do some physical activity by their doctors," says Mary Howard, the Bus Buddy, "and you can see that people's health has really improved since they've been coming."

"That's how I started," Mary continues. "I was overweight and they said if I started swimming that it would help, and it did. I used to come every week."

Soon afterwards, Mary became a volunteer Bus Buddy and she's ridden the Activity Bus every week since. "It's brilliant because I've now got lots of friends. I don't go out except on the bus so it's really opened my world up for me. And everyone on the bus is great, I couldn't pick the best because they're all good!"

The activity bus, which was initiated by New Deal for Communities and the Sport Action Zone, is part of a wider health and sports strategy encouraging more community use of former Commonwealth Games facilities and taking people to activities outside the area, like the swimming.

"We always come to the Aquatics," explains Mary, "but we also go to the tennis or squash centres at Sportcity, or the indoor bowling at the Grange in Beswick, or Clayton Vale for a health walk, all different things."

"In the school holidays we need two buses with all the families that use us. The kiddies are great, always well behaved. There's one large family from Clayton that love the bus, but I can never remember all their names! If I see them in the street it's always: 'Hey, there's Mary off the bus!' and we say hello. That's really nice."

"There are places I've discovered because of the bus. I'd never been to Clayton Vale or Philips Park. Imagine that! I've been living so close to these places but have never actually visited them. I'd only ever go down to the shops and back."

Mary can testify that as well as the activities the bus has helped people socially too. "Oh, yes. We're one big happy family, we've even had people get married who've met on the bus," she says. "Mostly it's different people on each day but there's a few that come on the bus three times a week. There's Vera, she must be 83 now. She's been coming for five years, she's an absolute star. And Terry, he couldn't swim when he started but he taught himself and now helps others."

"If fact, on Fridays there are free swimming lessons for those who've never learnt to swim... so there's no excuse!"

"If anyone is thinking of coming on the bus I'd just say to them, 'Get on and have some fun!'"

The Activity Bus runs on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The fare is £1 return for adults and children over five. Swimming at the Aquatics Centre is £1.70. Call 0161 223 6711 or email: info@manct.org for times and pick-up points. The Activity Bus is now operated by Manchester Community Transport.

East is the magazine about regeneration in east Manchester and is published three times a year by Len Grant Photography on behalf of New East Manchester Ltd and New Deal for Communities

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Cover: Joe Walsh, Process Operator, has worked 38 years at Ciba Speciality Chemicals, formerly the Clayton Aniline Co Ltd.

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About East

Once again we welcome you to our magazine about the regeneration of east Manchester, a programme that is significantly improving the social, economic and physical make-up of the area.

At the beginning of the year east Manchester found itself well and truly in the media spotlight when the Casino Advisory Panel recommended the UK's first super-casino should come to Manchester. As this edition goes to press we are awaiting a decision by Government following the House of Lords' vote. Although the situation remains a little uncertain we continue to work closely with the City Council to bringing this massive investment to the area.

Another recent success is the announcement that the UK's leading bakery retailer, Greggs, will remain in the area. A new £16m factory will be built in Openshaw securing hundreds of jobs for local people. This move is assisted by a £7 million grant from the North West Regional Development Agency and is the result of a great deal of hard work from our development team.

In this issue the magnificent Royal Mills in Ancoats have been profiled by writer Mark Hillsdon. These historic mills were once the tallest buildings in the city and people would travel great distances to just gawp in awe. They have been sympathetically restored by ING Estates into high specification apartments and business units.

Elsewhere in east Manchester the outcome for another site of industrial activity has been different. The massive Ciba Speciality Chemicals site – still known locally as the 'Aniline' – is being decommissioned by the men who have spent most of their working lives at the company. Through a series of portraits and interviews Len Grant takes a nostalgic look back before the site become a cornerstone of a massive new investment programme for Clayton. As one door closes...

Immigrants have historically contributed significantly to east Manchester and the way in which our immigrant community has been welcomed and helped to integrate into the area is highlighted in our piece about newcomers. It's a subject that is often misrepresented in the media. We hope this article will go some way to redress that balance.

Tom Russell
New East Manchester Ltd

Sean McGonigle
New Deal for Communities

Contributors in this issue

Len Grant is a freelance photographer based in Manchester. For the past decade or so he has made regeneration the subject of his personal and commissioned work. He is currently preparing a second book on the transformation of New Islington in east Manchester which will be published in the summer. Also see www.lengrant.co.uk.

Mark Hillsdon is a freelance writer who came to Manchester as a student 20 years ago and never left. He's written for a diverse range of publications from *Maxim* to *Country Walking*, as well as several national newspapers. Most recently he worked as consultant editor on the new *Time Out* guide to Manchester.

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In this issue of East:

Mark Hillsdon recounts a regal story of Ancoats' continuing restoration; east Manchester welcomes newcomers; taking the bus to get fit; and long-time workers at the 'Aniline' take a nostalgic look back.

