

## WANTED! YOUR MEMORIES

Yemeni Roots Salford Lives is a year-long history project. We want to record the lives of Yemeni people in Eccles, so that future generations can celebrate the achievements and learn from the past.



Yemenis in Eccles meeting the Yemeni Ambassador

**Do you remember anyone in this photo?  
Do you have other photographs you would like to share?**

We are looking for stories about the community's development, past, present and future. The following pages contain memories collected so far. If you have anything to add, please get in touch with project worker Jennie Vickers on 07585 916769, or YCA Chairman Gadri Audhali on 07872 986231. We would love to talk to you.

This project is a partnership between the Yemeni Community Association, the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust and the University of Salford. We need your support to make it a success.

[www.yca-manchester.org.uk](http://www.yca-manchester.org.uk)

**Ahmed Iqbal Ullah  
Education  
Trust**



# A close-knit community...



Eccles Mosque/  
Christian Science Church



Yemeni people came to Eccles in the 1950s. We helped each other to build our community. The Eccles Mosque is one of our great achievements, founded in 1980.

We had to raise the deposit to buy the former Christian Scientist Church. **Mukbil Ahmed** remembers:

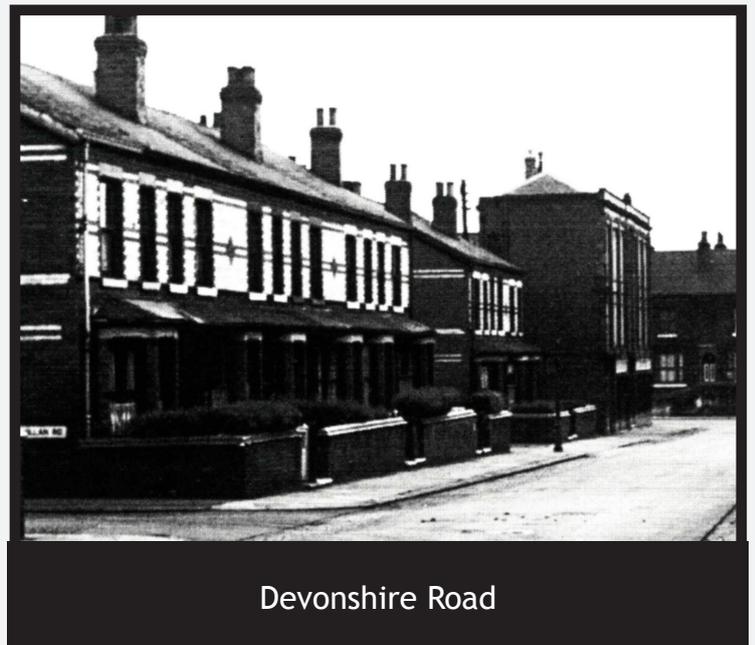
'We collected the money. Everybody gives so much – five pound, ten pound, twenty pound, whatever... put it to the deposit and borrowed money from the bank.'

Were you involved in setting up the Mosque?  
What are your memories of that time?

The first Yemenis lived with other Yemenis in boarding houses. **Fatima Dykstra** remembers:

'So many would live in one house... a lot of people thought (which was their ignorance) "there's 20 men living in there". But what they didn't know was those 20 men were paying so much a week towards the mortgage, until it was paid. Then they'd move to another house and leave the man that's got his... They'd move into another house and do exactly the same again, until that house was paid for...

They all stuck together. They were just one big community. Everybody looked out for everybody else.'



Devonshire Road

Did you or a member of your family live in a boarding house? What was that like?

# Working Lives

The first Yemeni men in Eccles worked in heavy industry. The days were long and exhausting. **Mukbil Ahmed** remembers:

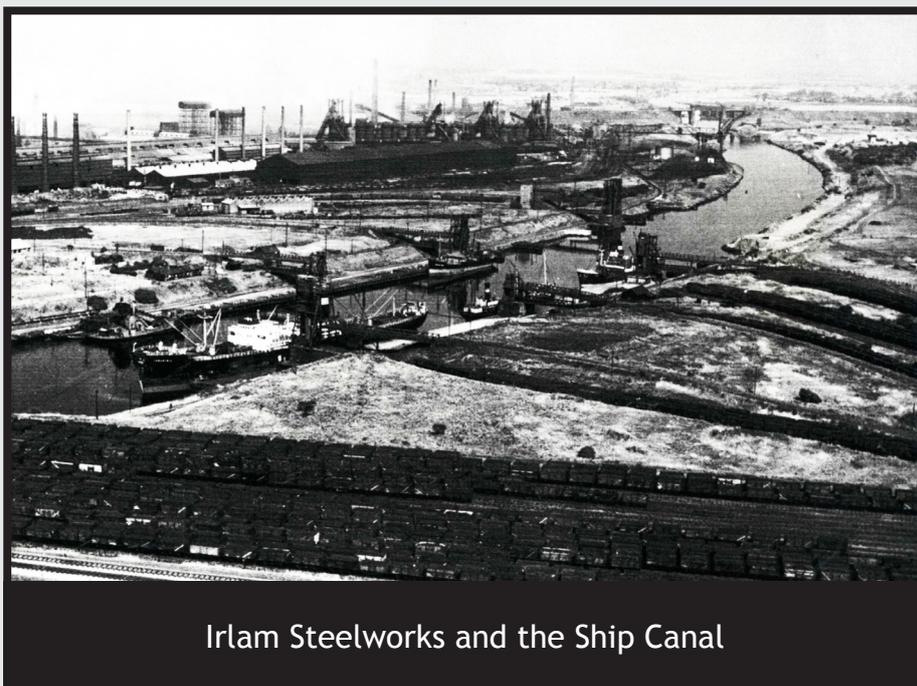
**'From the mattress factory I moved to Regent Rubber, making tyres. I worked there nine and a half years... from six 'til six. Six to six for seven pounds, eight pounds, nine pounds, something like that! It was very hard work, very hard work.**

**I went from there to Irlam Steelworks... then I moved from the Steelworks to Gardners industrial machines. Oh, a very bad job...I stayed with Gardners or 15 years.'**

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It was hard for Yemeni people who didn't know much English. **Mohamed Abdul Kader** remembers:

**'One fella, he's been here five years. He's been working in the Merchant Navy. He didn't understand English! And I was working – me and him – in the factory, in a factory to build things up. And I feel very thirsty. I want some water. I said to him "please, if you go to ask for water, what do you want to say?" And he said to me "go down to the lodge outside; tell him I want to wash". I believed him because he'd been here five years before me!'**



Irlam Steelworks and the Ship Canal



Gardners Barton Hall Engine Works

**Did you work at Gardners or another local factory?  
What were your working hours, conditions or pay?**

# Evenings and weekends...

Fatima Dykstra moved to Eccles from Liverpool. Her father, Mohammed Kasseum, opened a café on Monton Road (later on Church Street) in the early 1960s.

'It was somewhere for the Arab men to sit. They'd come in my Dad's café and they'd sit playing cards all day. And they'd buy cups of tea or have some soup. It was somewhere they could gather together... one of them had a jukebox so we'd put music on for them, Arab music and English music...'



Mohammed Kasseum was a well known figure in the community:

'Everybody called him Aba. "Hiya Aba" they'd say, when they came into the café. Even the English people when they'd come in...'

**Do you remember the Arabic cafés in Eccles?  
Where were they, and what food did they serve?**

Belle Vue was somewhere to go at the weekend. Mukbil Ahmed remembers:

'Sometimes we'd go wrestling – go to see it in Manchester, Belle Vue. Every Saturday we'd go there! We just loved it!'

**Did you visit Belle Vue – to watch the wrestling, or to see the circus?  
What are your memories?**

In 1962, the local council let the Regent Cinema open on Sundays for special screenings of Arabic films. The first film shown was 'Samson and Delilah'. Atteager Audhali remembers

'...next to Morrisons there was a cinema, and we used to go and watch Arab films there, years ago. There's a picture of my mum and dad, where my dad was writing people's names ... my dad used to take bottles of coke to the cinema, so he could sell them to the people there.'

A film she remembers vividly was an Egyptian version of Jane Eyre.

**Do you remember other films shown at the Regent?**

