

Spinning Lifestyles – Edinburgh to London

Can you tell me where you come from?

Bangladesh

4 years ago?

No, no I came nearly 30 years ago and just live in Tower Hamlets for 4 years.

So where did you live when you came from Bangladesh?

Edinburgh, Scotland. Aberdeen and after that Highgate, Hampstead Heath.

What took you to Edinburgh?

It's a long story, So this is the first time in the borough and even when for 4 years I have seen dramatic changes, since we got the Olympic games and it has exacerbated the improvement faster than I expected and hopefully it is better for Tower Hamlets.

What brought you to Tower Hamlets?

It is very personal.

That's fine.

Since I'm visually impaired I was forced to come here.

What changes have you seen since you first arrived 4 years ago.

Well, I couldn't see at that time, before that I used to drive around.
(speaks to second man – with an interpreter).

Can you tell me when you first came to the UK?

14th May 1963.

And where did you come from?

East Pakistan.

What did you do when you first arrived in the UK.

First I came to London, the City.

What was it like when you first arrived.

He didn't like London.

What did he do when he first came here?

He started work in a restaurant. A Greek restaurant in Ealing Broadway.

Where did you live?

North London.

Did he have friends here when he came?

Yes.

Did they help him get work?

Yes, they did.

And how long did he work in the restaurant?

About 10 weeks.

And then what did he do after that?

After that I went to Bexley, to a chicken factory.

What did you do there ?

There were 10,000 chickens. After that I worked for the Council.

What did you do at the Council.

I used to cut grass.

How long did you do that for?

To 1980.

What did he do after that?

He went to Birmingham.

Did he have friends in Birmingham?

He worked in a foundry for 6 months. Making tubes and pipes.

How long did he work there?

1 year.

Was he sharing a house with a lot of people?

Yes.

What did he do after working in a factory.

There wasn't much time to do social things, like cooking , washing and things like that.

Did he do anything at all in his leisure time?

Sunday, go to public bath.

What did he do after that year, where did he go?

He went to Gaskins, who make nuts and bolts.

And was that still in Birmingham?

No, Willesden.

When did you come back to London?

From Birmingham he went to Bangladesh. Then he went to Middlesborough.

And how long was he in Bangladesh for?

One and a half years.

Did he get married there?

When he came for the first time he was already married with 4 kids.

What took him to Middlesburgh.

When he came back from Bangladesh some fellow gave him some clothing for someone in Middlesburgh, so he took it to him and he stay here, there's a job here, so he stayed on.

What did he do there?

He worked in a factory, making cotton and thread.

How many hours did he work? 6 days a week?

Five and a half days.

And what did he do on the 6th and 7th days.

He used to go to the seaside.

With friends?

Yes.

So when did he come back to London?

2 years after, and stayed in Ponders End.

Did he have friends there, what did he do in Ponders End.

Engineering Factory.

Was it hard to get work then?

No, there were plenty of jobs.

Did they pay well?

About 22,000 people worked for Gaskins.

So , it's closed down now?

Then I work in a?... Factory.

When did he bring his family over.

1985, his wife came and left him one son.

She didn't stay?

No, she left some children back home that's why she didn't stay.

What did your son do when he came here?

He was 14 years, when he came, he went to language school. He worked in a restaurant.

He must have been very surprised when he came, did he find it very different?

My daughter, by then, married and came to this country, so he stayed with her.

Did she find it very different when she came here?

The daughter has children and grandchildren now, a very extended family.

Did he find a difference how his children were brought up and his grandchildren now.

Yes, a big difference.

In what way?

He doesn't want to elaborate on that.

That's OK.

His grandchildren think more about this country.

Does he feel that they have lost their culture?

Yes, they are back home at the moment but they are not getting on well with the people there, they want to come back.

How long has he lived in the Brick Lane area?

About 13/14 years.

And has he found during those years that it has change very dramatically?

Yes, big changes.

Can he tell us some of those?

It's easier to get more produce, (food) etc. When we came there wasn't much available. And it's much easier to live in the area

Is it like an extended family or a close knit community?

Yes, it is.

Does all his family live round the area?

My son lives very close, others live further away. My daughter lives in Essex.

So people are moving out?

Yes, some are moving out.

How long has it been since he's been back to Bangladesh?

My wife is back there and is staying there. I saw her about 3 months ago. I went there for about 8 weeks.

Did your wife not like London?

His wife came in 1985 and then went back, but now it is difficult because immigration say how are you going to maintain her here, so he can't bring her over here any more.

Did she like it when she was over here?

She only lived here 10 weeks

(first man speaks again)

I'm sorry, then later I have problem when I was cooking in the kitchen because I had a big problem with my eyes. 12 years ago I am not working because now I can't see. When I was born I had a problem with my eyes.

Where were you born ?

In Bangladesh. I came in 1977, I was nearly 20.

So you were young man?

Did you come with your family?

Yes.

And what was it like when you first came here?

When I come first I was a little scared. Then after 6 months I now understand a little English. When I came I didn't like to work because I couldn't speak English. After 6 months working I got stronger. After one or two year I am running all over London

Going everywhere. Then im not scared, very happy life, enjoy it here.

What did you enjoy about London? The lifestyle, going to see films

Im happy with work. Before there was harassment and many problem. Now about nearly 10/12 years its fine. Now our community little bit problem. Now new technology come, new world.

Have you been back to Bangladesh at all, since 1979?

Many times

Is it very different?

Yes very different

What do you find that's very different in Bangladesh to Tower Hamlets?

Bangladesh and Tower Hamlets, oh Tower Hamlets is also very busy, to much crowded because Bangladesh you see you go into shopping centre its not like over crowded people. ??? somebody pushing you don't say anything, the I say 'what are you doing? Then he tempers with me, but he don't know? But my country I'm not complaining, but I'm telling true things I'm not complaining. I don't anything more them that, that's enough.

It's different, it's a different place, different way of life as well.

But my family is working, my grandfather also