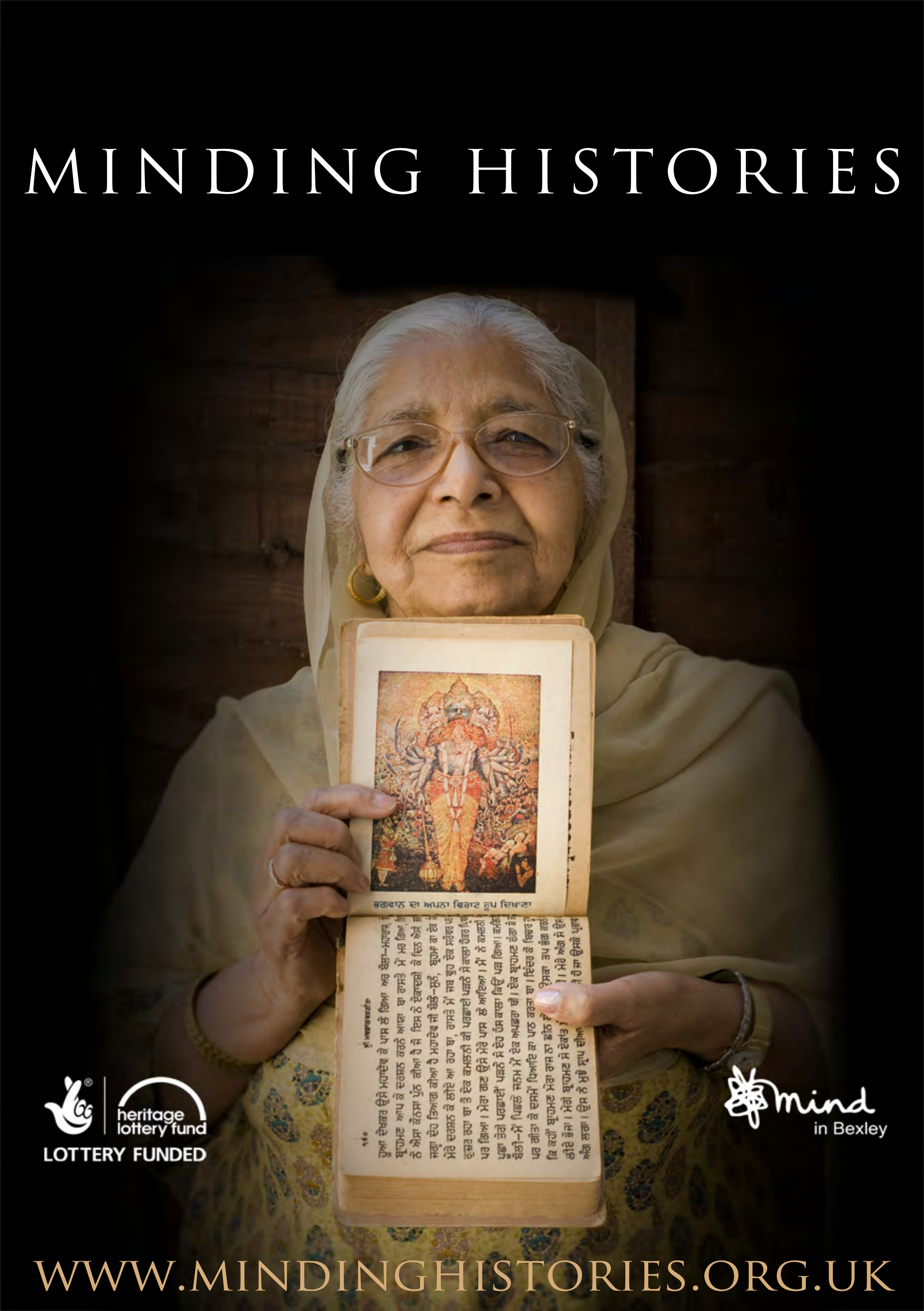
MINDING HISTORIES



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An oral history exhibition exploring migration, settlement and well-being
Preserving the experiences and heritage of migrant communities in Bexley

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M I N D I N G

Welcome to Minding Histories, an oral history project that explores the relationship between migration, mental health and well-being in the London Borough of Bexley from the 1950's to the present day.

This project was initiated in 2008 at the mental health charity, Mind in Bexley. Through our work with local Vietnamese and Chinese communities, we became aware of the many difficulties faced by those who had migrated to the UK. These included isolation, unemployment, poverty and prejudice, experiences that can affect mental health.

We became interested in the individual stories of people who had settled in Bexley. We wanted to find out more about how they had adapted to a new country and culture, what obstacles there had been and how they had overcome these. Above all, we wanted to better understandwhat impact migration and re-settlement had on a person's mental well-being.

Minding Histories received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for an 18-month project, which formally began in April 2009.

This work was undertaken by a team of volunteers. We provided them with training in oral history research methods and interview skills.

Through our partnerships with local community groups and networks we recorded and archived oral history interviews with 60 individuals including those from the Albanian, Bangladeshi, Burmese, Chinese, Ethiopian, Ghanaian, Indian, Irish, Jamaican, Nigerian, Sri Lankan, Trinidadian and Vietnamese communities resident in Bexley.

The interviews and transcripts are archived at the Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre.

Mr and Mrs Sian from India

H I S T O R I E S

ORAL HISTORY

It is widely accepted that written historical records often reflect the interests and viewpoints of established authorities, those who have privilege and power. Governments, academics and the media have a public voice and status that means what they say about historical events is easily heard and readily accepted. Oral history practice challenges this. By recording the memories of those who directly experienced the past, it creates a space in the historical record for ordinary people, whose voices might otherwise remain unheard.

Oral history methods were central to our research. Immigration is often talked about in negative terms and those who have migrated to the UK can be marginalised and unheard. An oral history approach to our work gave some of those who have migrated and settled in Bexley an opportunity to speak for themselves.

We hope that the participants found the process of sharing and reflecting on their migration histories interesting and helpful. We consider their contributions invaluable. Minding Histories has provided an opportunity to preserve the heritage of those involved and to raise awareness amongst the wider community.

Mrs Bhachu on her wedding day

MIGRATION: FROM THERE...

People migrate from one country to another for many different reasons. Some of the participants chose to come to the UK, hoping for opportunities to work for a better life.

"I got a little letter saying... we'd like you to come to the UK, for some UK training...for couple of years. How do you feel about that? So I said oh, marvellous, I mean, chance of a lifetime... I was very excited... I thought, oh gosh... I've actually got a chance to go to the UK now, and see the Queen and all the rest of it."

Mr. Windsor, from Burma, who arrived in the UK on Valentine's Day, 1957.

"Mostly for the good life and money...Healthy life. Because,no much progress in India...I feel inside me I must do something and, that's when I left home...To make a better life for my children."

Mr. Sian moved from the Punjab, India to live in Erith in September 1960. His wife and children joined him five years later.

Others were forced to leave their homes as they fled war and persecution. They came here in search of peace and safety.

"We were the backdrops of Idi Amin, lost children should I say…our parents wanted to find a new way of life in the United Kingdom and they were hoping that it'd be better way of life than Uganda, the atrocities, the violence and everything, so we left all that and we came to a country where's there no violence on that scale at all."

Mr Patel, who was born in Kampala
and brought up in Thamesmead.

Many of those we interviewed spoke of suffering loss and trauma in the events that led to their migration.

"When I came here, I came here as a person who is looking for asylum, to be allowed to stay in this country for the purpose of mere survival. The '83 riots in July 23rd came about which was a shocking environment... people who you thought of as your neighbours and friends were seen as killers and looking.. to kill you, so we had to hide and…crawl through the bushes and run away… I felt the real fear of cold sweat… to see what, ten people coming with torches and knives and guns towards your home looking for you. That was an experience that I think nobody should undergo. That was a real life threatening experience… That will affect somebody for life."

Mr Anandraja who fled the anti-Tamil
attacks from Sinhala mobs that
began in Sri Lanka on July 23, 1983

...TO HERE: JOURNEY AND ARRIVAL

Whether it is by choice or necessity, migration from one country to another is invariably an emotional event.

"...I was so excited about leaving I was unprepared for the emotions I felt because in those days you felt, when you left Trinidad to go to England, it was if you weren't coming back, it was...so many miles away. It was a one-way ticket...I remember sitting on the plane and eating nothing all the way to England and crying and getting to England and not sleeping and missing my family."

Anon, Trinidad. Came to study as a nurse in 1974.

"In the plane, we still had trouble with knife and fork and things like that. We get by, two hand.. I laughing now, people [were] laughing on us because we can't use knife and fork, so we start, with hand... I didn't feel ashamed. Because it was... a new life to us."

Mr Sian, India

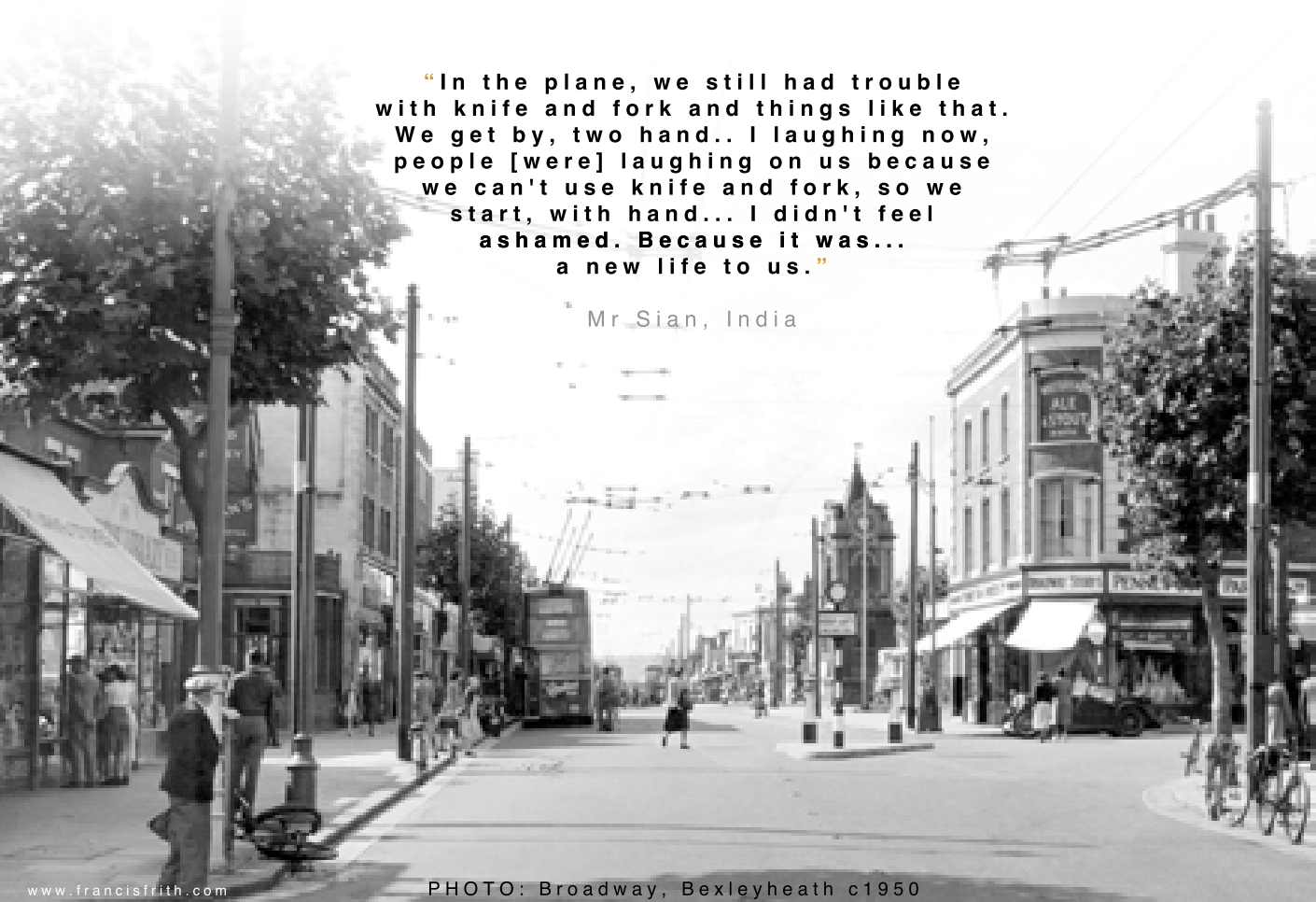


PHOTO: Broadway, Bexleyheath c1950

The journey represents a significant transition, from a familiar place and way of life to something new and uncertain.

Our participants commonly told us that their first impressions of Britain did not match with their expectations.

"…everyone warned us you'll be disappointed when you see London, because it's not the same London you dreamed of!"

Mrs Rashid, Bangladesh

"Well I had, my main ideas…about England…from school…and from picture postcards…I always thought it would be…lovely, thatched cottages with beautiful gardens. But when I came and we saw the reality it was a big shock…you could see smoke belching out of chimneys, there was fog in the winter and it was freezing cold…"

Mrs Windsor, from Burma spoke about the England she had imagined until her arrival in April 1957.

The physical environment was not the only source of surprise, as one interviewee told us who had grown up in Tanzania, East Africa:

"…I mean my first...strange thing …[was] driving from the airport and seeing white people digging the roads and doing the menial tasks that the Africans used to…I can remember nudging my sister in the coach and saying 'Oh gosh look at that!' because it was just a sight we had never seen…the English and the Europeans who came there [Tanzania] had very exclusive jobs… digging the roads…was an African job for an African person. So yes, that was my first ever impression, when I was coming in on the coach from Heathrow."

Anon.

ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE

Project participants shared stories that highlighted the struggles involved in adjusting to a new and sometimes contrasting culture. The ability to communicate in English was often identified as key to successfully settling here:

"...if you live in water you must know how to swim...So if you live in a country where English is the language, unless you...can speak in English, you are socially excluded...that's simple as that. That's what we thought."

Anon, Bangladesh. His wife provides English classes to Bangladeshi women.

Two teenage sisters, who arrived in 1964 from Tanzania

Many told us that learning the unspoken language of social etiquette, norms and customs could also be bewildering. British styles of interaction seemed alien to many of our interviewees and people reported feelings of isolation.

"In the East, people always smiled and spoke to you and…you could visit people without…having an appointment…you were always welcome to a cup of tea… But here… I suppose it was because of the weather people tended to live within their own little family unit."

Mrs Windsor, Burma.

"…I was really yearning for a bit of recognition… maybe a little bit of encouragement or comfort… Because I was feeling terribly homesick to begin with, the whole experience of coming to the UK… was overwhelming to say the least…I just wanted a bit of reassurance but I didn't get it in the church and I was terribly disappointed "

Mr Windsor, Burma.

At the same time as they worked hard to adapt to life in Britain, many interviewees kept in touch with their self-identity and cultural heritage through food and clothing.

"There was only one shop Patak's which is now a big name and that was in Drummond Street, quite close to where I was working in High Holborn... It was only a grocer's, not a restaurant. We had an office newsletter where I was working and we would write recipes using Patak spices."

Mr Babraa who came to London to study architecture in 1957.

"...now you can get almost anything you want in London. I remember when I first came there were hardly any sari shops. We used to go to John Lewis and buy material by the yard. Chiffon, you know"

Mrs Westcombe, born in Calcutta in 1945, arrived in the UK in 1972.

"...we try to keep our culture and of course I cook Albanian food, but you know the children go to school, have school dinner or packed lunch ... it's different, they sometimes want to change it and we change it. Mix it! Mix the culture..."

Anon, moved from Tirana, Albania in 1998.

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Interviewees recalled experiences of racial abuse, violence and discrimination. Racism appeared in all areas of life and took different forms. Several interviewees spoke of the hostility they encountered as they looked for accommodation:

"You see in those days it was open…people would say, quite straight, if they advertised, no coloured, no children…and we had an added thing - no Gentiles, you see, in a Jewish area. So we had all sorts of things to contend with. …I'd get to a place and…before I'd get there I'd 'phone … they couldn't probably tell from the voice… As soon as I turn up, bang, they'd slam the door in my face."

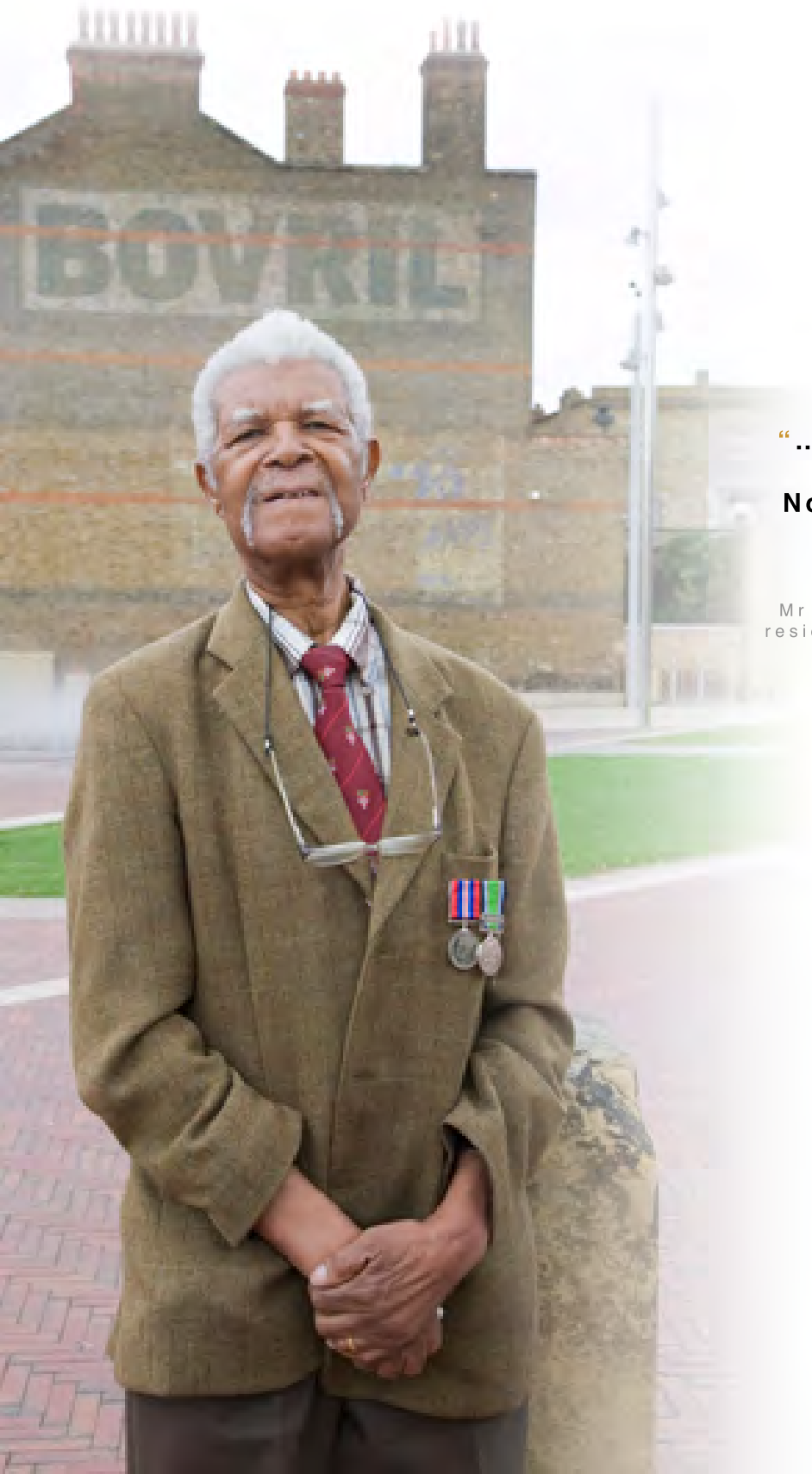
Mr Windsor on his search for accommodation in London in the 1950's.

"…I felt people sort of, treated me slightly better They probably thought I was from China or from the Philippines or, some thought at first I was from Greece. And they seemed to be a little bit… kinder to people with the slightly lighter skin..."

Mrs Windsor took over from her husband in the search for accommodation, eventually securing a flat for their young family.

"...the person I was going to buy the house off, said to me, 'I told a neighbour that a black woman was buying the house and he said, Oh why are you selling it to a black person?' He [the vendor] said, 'No, no she's nice, she's really nice, she's a nurse and she's really nice.' But when he said that...in such a blasé manner, does he understand the gravity of what he just said?"

Anon, Trinidad.
Who bought her house in Bexley
8 years ago



"...On the door was a sign: 'No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs' it's hurtful."

Mr King MBE from Jamaica, a resident of Bexley and a former Mayor of Southwark.

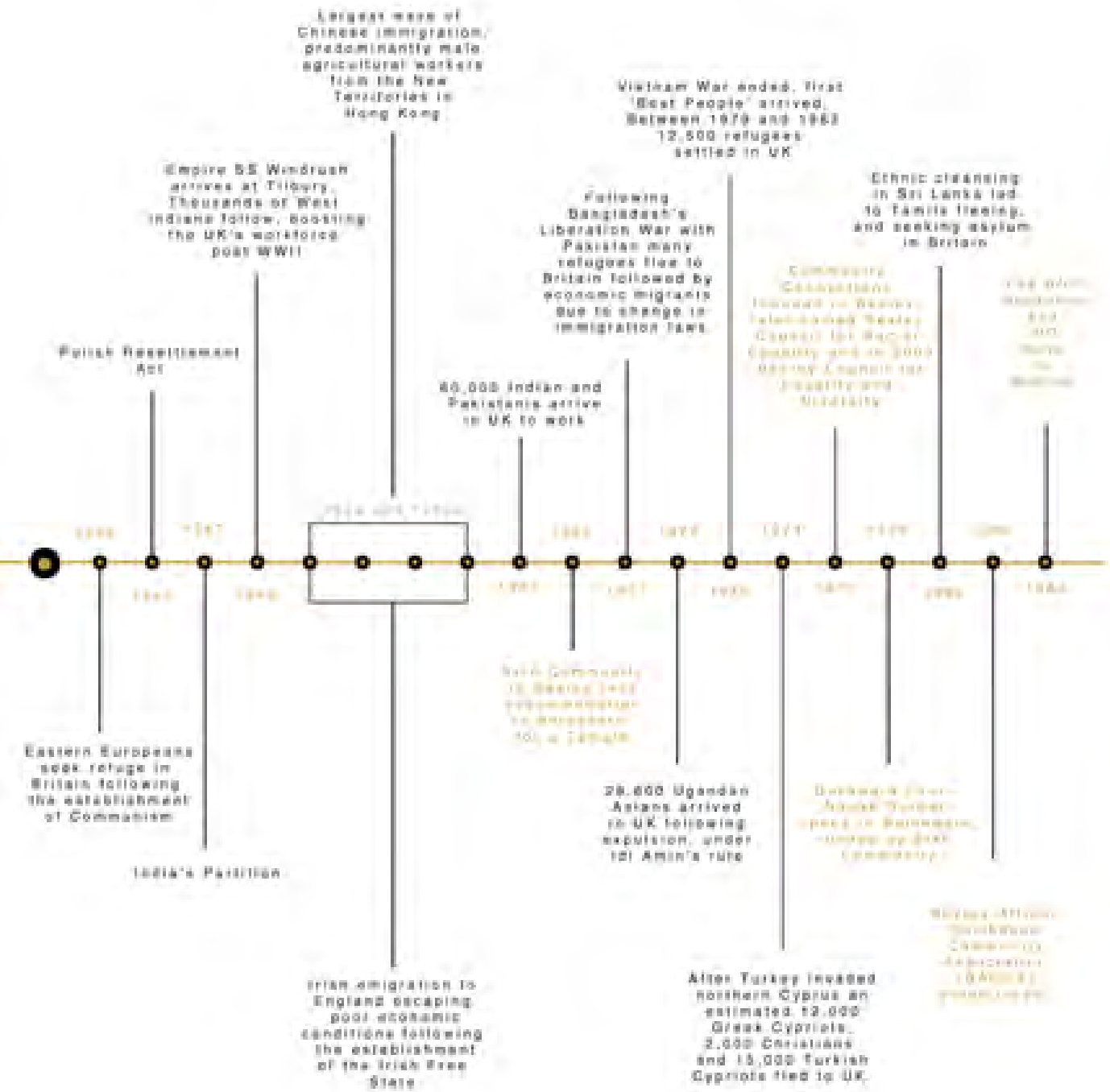
Others told us of prejudicial and racist treatment in the workplace.

"There was discrimination, the first discrimination was with us, who came from a Sikh family…I had to cut my hairs and shave and everything, and then I got the job, otherwise they were not giving the job with turbans… My hair was up to here…I was very, very disappointed...but I could not get a job…so…I said alright."

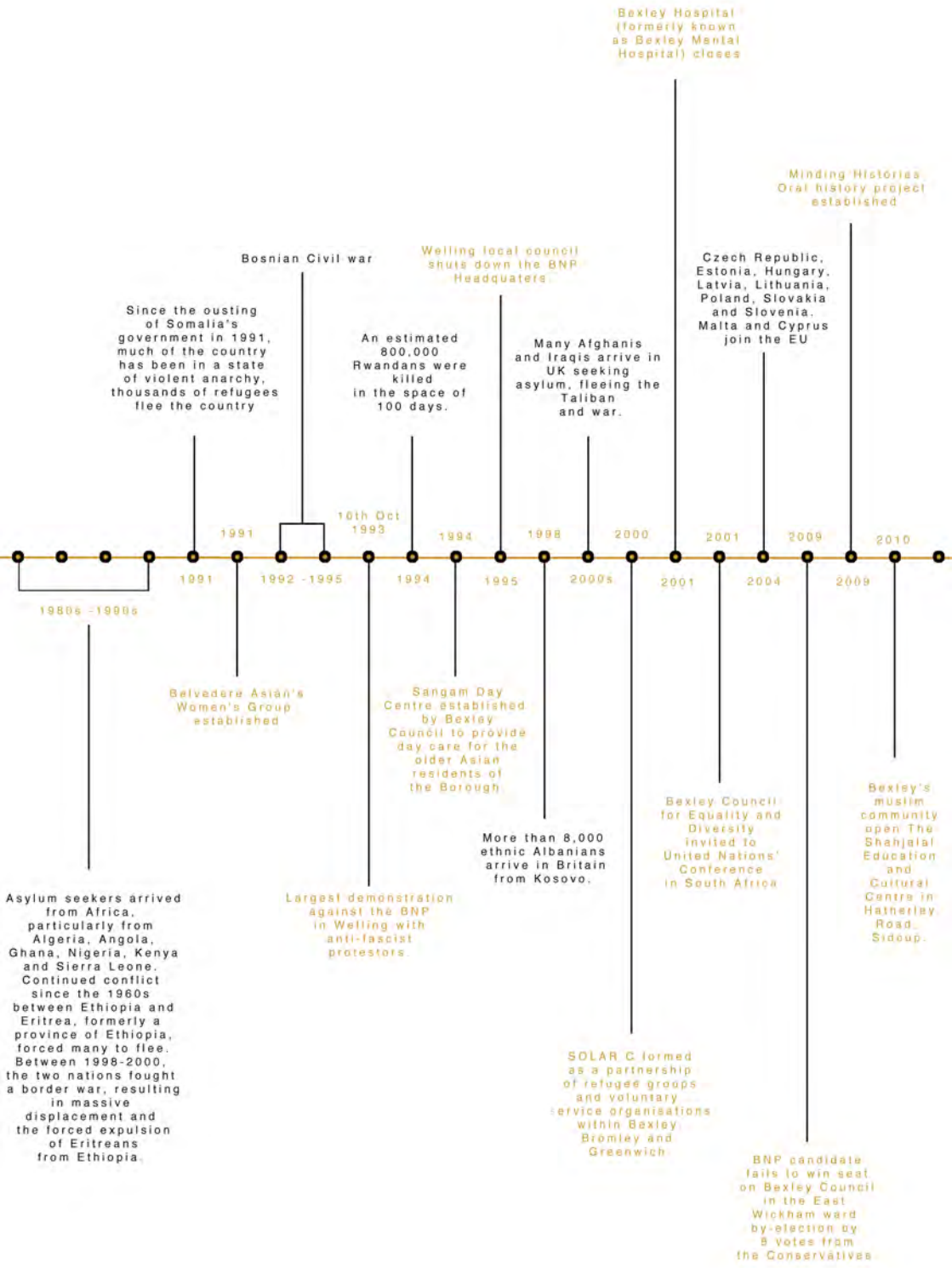
Mr Hothi, who came from the Punjab, India in 1963.

"…a few years ago I had to take one of my employers to tribunal for discrimination and racism…I came through that experience because the people who supported me was the Council for Racial Equality…I couldn't prove it because people like the doctor who knew it had happened… and had been subjected to racism decided that she wasn't going to give evidence because she was from Sri Lanka, she said I want to stay employed by them, I know what will happen.I met her years later in a clinic…and she said what I had complained about then, she was still experiencing it."

Anon, Trinidad.


Largest wave of Chinese immigration, predominantly male agricultural workers from the New Territories in Hong Kong
Vietnam War ended, first 'Boat People' arrived. Between 1979 and 1983 12,500 refugees settled in UK
Empire SS Windrush arrives at Tilbury. Thousands of West Indians follow, boosting the UK's workforce post WWII
Following Bangladesh's Liberation War with Pakistan many refugees flee to Britain followed by economic migrants due to change in immigration laws.
Ethnic cleansing in Sri Lanka led to Tamils fleeing, and seeking asylum in Britain
Polish Resettlement Act
80,000 Indian and Pakistanis arrive in UK to work
Eastern Europeans seek refuge in Britain following the establishment of Communism
India's Partition
Irish emigration to England escaping poor economic conditions following the establishment of the Irish Free State
28,000 Ugandan Asians arrived in UK following expulsion, under Idi Amin's rule
After Turkey invaded northern Cyprus an estimated 12,000 Greek Cypriots, 2,000 Christians and 15,000 Turkish Cypriots fled to UK.

TIMELINE


Bexley Hospital (formerly known as Bexley Mental Hospital) closes
Minding Histories Oral history project established
Bosnian Civil war
Welling local council shuts down the BNP Headquaters
Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus join the EU
Since the ousting of Somalia's government in 1991, much of the country has been in a state of violent anarchy, thousands of refugees flee the country
An estimated 800,000 Rwandans were killed in the space of 100 days.
Many Afghanis and Iraqis arrive in UK seeking asylum, fleeing the Taliban and war.
1991
10th Oct 1993
1994
1998
2000
2001
2009
2010
1991
1992 -1995
1994
1995
2000s
2001
2004
2009
1980s -1990s
Belvedere Asian's Women's Group established
Sangam Day Centre established by Bexley Council to provide day care for the older Asian residents of the Borough
Bexley Council for Equality and Diversity invited to United Nations' Conference in South Africa
Bexley's muslim community open The Shahjalal Education and Cultural Centre in Hatherley Road, Sidcup.
More than 8,000 ethnic Albanians arrive in Britain from Kosovo.
Asylum seekers arrived from Africa, particularly from Algeria, Angola, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Sierra Leone. Continued conflict since the 1960s between Ethiopia and Eritrea, formerly a province of Ethiopia, forced many to flee. Between 1998-2000, the two nations fought a border war, resulting in massive displacement and the forced expulsion of Eritreans from Ethiopia.
Largest demonstration against the BNP in Welling with anti-fascist protestors.
SOLAR C formed as a partnership of refugee groups and voluntary service organisations within Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich
BNP candidate fails to win seat on Bexley Council in the East Wickham ward by-election by 8 votes from the Conservatives

Participants remembered verbal abuse at school:

"…The common thing was…'You're a Paki kid, get out,' and things like that and first of all obviously when we were little we came to accept it but sometimes…you didn't accept it and you end up having a fight over it…the teachers explained to me, as you grow older you're going to find this on a dail basis you can't have a fight with everyone every day so you just have to…control yourself and just walk away from things, that's what we've learnt. we've learned to walk away from things as much as we can."

Mr. Patel, Ugandan Asian.

Others told of attacks on family members:

"The incident that has really had impact on my life is my son, when he got beaten up. Badly, his face was swollen for three days and nobody did anything…. Why? Why wouldn't anybody do anything…? I keep on asking that question, it's been two or three years now but I still ask that question...I'm here but not here, my heart is not in this country, it's gone back to Africa."

Anon, Ghana.

On homes:

"…on several occasions rotten eggs were thrown, our kitchen windows were plastered with mud, all sorts of things happened but we didn't react. In some cases I didn't even tell the police because that would have aggravated the situation further and people realised that we were calm people. We hadn't come here to fight them or steal their rights for ourselves."

Mrs Babraa, Ugandan Asian.

And on places of worship:

"…in Woolwich the Sikh temple suffered from graffiti, fire, dirt being thrown into the compound, all these things. Although the police tried to tackle it nobody found out who these people were who were doing this, so people knew that they were being targeted as a community by the white people whether they were National Front or not. That fear was there."

Mrs Babraa.

In contrast, others told of the support and warmth from neighbours and the wider community.

Having been verbally assaulted in the street Mrs Westcombe recalls:

"…there was a white woman, she turned around and she said to me 'don't take any notice of the stupid man love'… so she kind of apologised by saying don't take any notice of these stupid people and gave me confidence in that you know, it's fine you are different, so what."

Another woman reflected on the positive impact of moving to the UK:

"…it was only when I came here that I started reflecting and realised that the African wasn't beneath us and we were all the same and that it is something that England taught me. Which is unusual, isn't it, when you think about it…of course I was still young but …it was England that made me realise that we had to accept all different nationalities "

Anon, Tanzania.

IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The processes of economic and forced migration may expose individuals to a range of stressful experiences, which may have a negative impact on their mental well-being. The move to a new country away from family, friends and support networks can be an isolating experience.

"I struggled hugely when I came here. Really, really struggled. I was lost and isolated... such a huge city not like back home where it was small and everyone knew each other and talked and the community was small and very close... you know. Yeah, I'd really hate going back and closing the door to my bedsit… The loneliness it made me very sad and depressed and it was very hard."

Reflects Mr D, Ireland.

Loneliness and isolation was a reoccurring theme:

"It was difficult…I felt very lonely….when [my husband] went off to work, I just had [my young daughter]. So I used to take her to the local parks and just sit there… and put her on the swings and roundabouts... that's how I spent my leisure time…nobody spoke to me and I didn't really expect them to."

Mrs Windsor, Burma.

Without English language skills a person can have difficulty expressing their needs or forming relationships.

Mr Sian describes the problems his Indian colleagues faced:

"…if they work with…Indian people they alright… but if they work with the English people, they all get depressed... If you can't understand, can't talk each other, it's very difficult to pass your time. Twelve hour shifts you have to work, without speaking the word, it's very, very...difficult..."

The new physical environment can take its toll:

"...we couldn't get accommodation so we lived in a kind of bedsit and that was very difficult compared to the houses we lived in Africa... I remember my sister didn't talk for a week because she was so shocked that we had to live in this room."

Anon. Describing the first few months after leaving Tanzania.

"I will tell you what happened the first few weeks when I came, it was the worst winter we had for 80 something years…those days we had all the smog and the fog it was awful, really awful. The first morning I got up I started crying I said what am I doing here? Why am I here? Let's get back home."

Councillor Persaud who arrived from Guiana in 1962.

Loss of status at work can impair confidence and a person's sense of self.

"…being the last man in I got all the, all the donkey jobs…And that was a big shock… by the time I'd left Burma I'd worked myself up…I was in charge of the Finance Department...where I'd had people working for me…suddenly I was right down…at the bottom. But it was a bit humbling… I thought, hang on… I had this image of, being something quite special but…I'd come right down to rock bottom."

Mr Windsor, Burma.

"You see, in the beginning stages it was a bit difficult to have worked as a production executive in a multi-national company and working here to carry bottles over your shoulder, it has been a bit of a difficulty because I was not used to that sort of physical work at that time for one thing, second thing is the status symbol…"

Mr Anandraja, Sri Lanka.

Prejudice can have wide-ranging consequences for health and well-being:

"…I was off sick for months and went back to work and was crying at work... This was my first experience of something like that in all the years I'd lived in England... It was harrowing, it was awful, I tried to stay and work…but...I got very depressed, it was my first experience of depression like that…"

Anon, from Trinidad, suffered racism in the workplace.

"…if you're treated as inferior…whether intentionally or unintentionally…it sort of gets into your psyche….you… start thinking, hang on, perhaps I am not as good as the next guy…"

Mr. Windsor, Burma

In some circumstances it can cause extreme mental distress with devastating consequences

"…I was walking down John Ruskin street one evening with some Scottish friends…and these two English guys, 18 19, 20 years, who were very drunk and stoned out, started arguing for no reason and stabbed me in the stomach for no reason shouting F… Off Irish B… I ended up in hospital for two months with lots of problems and suffered very badly afterwards in terms of mentalhealth. The police never got them and it left me scarred… I've never really got over it. It was 1987."

Mr D from Ireland shares a life changing experience.

In some cases the political climate impacted on people's sense of security, heightened by the presence of the National Front Headquarters in Welling.

"They were threatening, they were around, in Belvedere in the pubs and if there was an Indian they would have trouble with them, on the road as well. You see, that I was feeling sometimes when I see that, we are hard-working and not any grudge or anything with others, why are they doing such like things?"

Mr Hothi from the Punjab, India.

"I went a couple of times protesting 'cos I was living in Plumstead then. I made it my duty to say to the leader of the Labour Party if we get control of Bexley council the first thing I want to see is to close their offices…and we did it. We did it. It's not right. Look, we're here on borrowed time, life is short why behave like this?

Councillor Persaud, from Guiana reflects on his own campaigning against the National Front.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS AND PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Though interviewees often spoke of the barriers they faced as they tried to adapt and settle in the UK, they also recalled their resilience and tenacity.

"My eighteen year old sister went to St Giles Hospital for a job and was refused. She was wearing Jamaican clothes. My wife was a nurse in Sidcup and said 'you need to have the right clothes,to look like them.' Eighteen years later my sister had trained at Queen Mary's and had seven nursing qualifications…She applied for the Matron of St Giles and got it."

Mr King MBE, Jamaica.

Mrs Salmon with Colleagues

People shared memories of their drive and determination to succeed.

"Ten years I worked, not a single minute I came late or not a single day I'm off, always...ten years! I have my record, they survey one year and then they give me my certificate for my attendance, you see that I hard work, no any complaint from my workmen."

Mr Hothi, India.

And achievements:

"...while I was working, I thought I better...keep myself busy. So, I started making enquiries about what qualifications I could do... To have come from more or less zero, to get... the top qualification in accountancy, was something. I mean... I say this with some... humility but also with, I suppose, pride."

Mr.Windsor, Burma.

Others remembered their parents' determination to provide a good life for them.

"My father worked in Ford Motor Company, and I remember him working Monday to Friday there and then Saturday, Sunday he worked as a security guard just to keep us going…at that time I couldn't see… but having looked back…now, I know why they had to do that…it was very hard for them…they got us educated and… got businesses and…it's because of them, this is the fruits of their labour"

Mr Patel, Ugandan Asian, who has run a business in Thamesmead for over 30 years.

"Dad worked… for the bakery and he'd do 18 hours on the go… and my Mum worked…all the ladies in that generation worked even though they didn't know a word of English…body language, they made do with that. My Dad came here with three pounds because that was all he was allowed to bring and we are where we are through our own hard work."

Mrs Randhawa from the Punjab, India.

Many participants reflected that their children had benefited from these efforts.

"I'm very appreciative… that…my children were able to go to the same schools as everybody else…all my children have done well...They're nicely settled….So, we, we were like the launch pad if you like…"

Mr Windsor, Burma.

"They happy, all happy. My daughter, her MBE, last year. My son is electrical engineer. My other daughter is a...solicitor's secretary. The other one is a work in a bank…my daughter, she write books, it's all good, all bella. My...granddaughter university, all three university now."

Mr Sian, India.

AGEING IN BEXLEY

The different age groups of the participants largely reflect the patterns of migration to the Borough from the 1950's onwards. Some had lived in the UK for most of their lives. They were able to reflect on changes they had observed and experienced.

They spoke of differences in Britain:

"...Things have changed an awful lot in this... country. People's attitudes...have changed....

We've found...over the years there was much more tolerance."

Mr Windsor, Burma.

They also commented on changes in their self-identity:

"As I get older I suppose I hold my culture more ... I am prouder of it than I was years ago."

Anon, Trinidad.

"Actually, to tell you very frankly, we feel proud to be British, we also feel proud to be of Bangladeshi origin, so there is no difference."

Anon, Bangladesh.

Some interviewees told us that over time they had combined elements of British culture with that of their country of origin.

"You have to accept and there has to be a compromise that you are not living in your own country you are living in another country…you have to accept the culture. I always tell people that there are positives in every culture. Take the positives."

Mrs Westcombe, who has lived in Britain for over 40 years.

"…we think that we are actually taking the best of the both world and trying to combine them. That's, that's how we feel actually…"

Anon, Bangladesh.

Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darba

Interviewees expressed concerns about the well-being of their parents and the older generation in general. A changing family structure affects traditional patterns of care for the elderly:

"...now what has happened is – it's become a common practice amongst the Asians - as soon as the children get married they move out of the family home...people have started accepting it but they miss it in their old age the thought of going into a care home frightens them."

Mrs Babraa, Ugandan Asian.

Mrs Randhawa discussed the importance of the Belvedere Asian Women's Group:

"My mother goes once a week and she can't go anywhere unless my brother takes her...they can go to the centre where they can communicate with one another and they are not isolated, that's what we need, places like that.

The temple is one important place but we need others..."

Mrs Randhawa, India.

Asians Women's Group, Belvedere

MIND IN BEXLEY:
AN OVERVIEW

Mind in Bexley was founded in 1968 and offers high quality services to local residents seeking mental health information and support.

The vision of Mind in Bexley is a society that promotes and protects good mental well-being for all, and that treats people with experience of mental distress fairly, positively, and with respect. Mind in Bexley aspires to become an effective and vocal representative voice driving positive changes for all in the London Borough of Bexley and beyond.

The aims of Mind in Bexley are:

- To promote mental health and well-being (from prevention through to recovery).
- To relieve emotional and mental distress.
- To empower people to lead a full and independent life as a part of their local community.
- To raise public awareness of mental health issues and combat stigma and discrimination.
- To undertake consultations and research in order to influence local and national policy, legislation and practice on issues relating to mental health and wellbeing.
- To develop and improve mental health services, which promote inclusion, embrace diversity and work to promote equal outcomes for all sections of the community.

Mind in Bexley works to improve the emotional and mental distress and well-being of individual service users through advice and information, outreach work, advocacy, day service provision, befriending, peer mentoring, welfare rights, CBT Counselling and research. Mind also conducts health promotion and prevention initiatives and engages with relevant networks and strategic groups to influence policies relating to wellbeing, integration and social cohesion.

For further information visit
www.mindinbexley.org.uk

or contact Mind in Bexley
Tel: 0208 303 5816

mind in Bexley

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all our interviewees for sharing their stories. These are central to the project and help bring history to life. For some this has been an emotional experience but we hope it has been rewarding and provided participants with a chance to preserve their family history and heritage.

The extracts featured in the exhibition represent a small proportion of the stories we collected. We are only sorry we could not publish more. The extracts here were selected for their relevance to the project's themes . Transcriptions of all the interviews are archived at the Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre and are accessible to the general public, free of charge.

We are indebted to the volunteers who conducted the interviews and spent hours transcribing them for the archive. They have helped with all aspects of the project including the set up and design of the exhibition.

We would also like to thank the staff who trained and mentored our volunteers, and shared their wealth of experience.

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For further information visit
www.mindinghistories.org.uk

There is also an accompanying DVD, please email

info@mindinghistories.org.uk

or contact Mind in Bexley
Tel: 0208 303 5816

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