



# SCOTTISH MEMORIES

IMMIGRATION STORIES



S FRIDAY AUGUST 15 1947  
INDEPENDENT





# Scottish Memories

IMMIGRATION STORIES







*“Do I have big hopes for my grandchildren? Of course!  
If Barack Obama can work hard and become the first  
black President of the USA then one of my grandchildren  
through hard work, education and determination could  
become Prime Minister of the UK”*

*Abdul Razzaq*



*Dundee 1980*



*Glasgow 1973*



*Edinburgh 1962*

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Foreword

Rohini Sharma Joshi   Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager, Trust Housing Association

Since I began working for the Equal Opportunities Programme run by Trust, Hanover and Bield housing associations 14 years ago, it has been my great privilege to meet many older people from different minority ethnic backgrounds.

The idea for this book sprang from getting to know the people behind these stories and encouraging them to share them with a new generation.

I realised that each one of them had a unique tale to tell about how they came to live in Scotland, about the families and friends they left behind and about the forces that drove them to leave home in search of new beginnings.

They came from different walks of life: some were engineers and doctors, while others were farmers, soldiers or sailors. They arrived in the 1950s and 1960s, from cities and villages in India, Pakistan, China, Africa and the Caribbean, establishing new families, new communities and new careers in Scotland.

As the generation of immigrants who arrived half a century ago grows older, some of the stories of their early struggles are being lost, not only to their own families, but to Scotland. The voices and faces of older people from minority ethnic backgrounds seldom appear in official archives yet collectively their stories constitute a vital

missing chapter in Scotland’s socio-economic history and its development into a modern multi-cultural nation.

The men and women who appear in this book belong to a generation that frequently battled against poverty and prejudice to make a living, many with the added handicap of speaking little or no English. They worked long hours in shops, restaurants, factories and on the buses to give their families a better future.

They are proud to have lived to see their children and grandchildren flourish and prosper in Scotland and their stories serve as great examples of how the virtues of endurance, perseverance, hope and kindness can build strong new communities in an adopted land.

Sadly, some of the older people we interviewed for this book died before it was completed. We remember them in these pages and thank their families for permitting us to include their comments and to keep their stories and their memories alive.

The financial support of the Heritage Lottery Fund enabled us to make what began as an idea, a reality, delivering a lasting historical legacy. The stories we present here represent a glimpse into just some of the lives of this generation. Many more stories, equally inspiring, are yet to be told.



## Introduction

One of the most significant changes in Scottish life in the past 50 years has been in the cultural identities and ethnic origins of its population. A wave of immigration post-WWII has transformed Scotland into a modern, multicultural nation, enriched by many customs, traditions, languages and beliefs.

Much has been written of the struggles, hopes and dreams which prompted Scots to leave their native land through the centuries in search of new lives.

Far less has been documented on the 20th Century experiences of a generation of immigrants from India, China, Africa and the Caribbean who looked to Scotland from afar and chose it as their future.

During the 19th Century and early 20th Century, Scottish immigration was dominated by largely white ethnic groups including Irish, Italians, Jews, Russian and Poles, each of which brought their own cultural inheritance.

A new pattern of immigration emerged during the 1950s and 1960s which laid the foundation for an even more diverse nation of people of different colour and creeds. They introduced different cultural traditions as well as gastronomies, establishing curry and Chinese food as firm favourites among Scots.

It spawned the creation of new communities in Scotland's cities and towns and led the emergence of new landmarks as Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus scrimped and saved to progress from makeshift places of worship to establishing Scotland's first mosques and temples.

The lives of a generation of men and women from black and minority ethnic backgrounds who arrived in Scotland in that time as young immigrants were shaped by forces largely beyond their control: historic events that redrew the political world map, powerful economic forces, and legislation which had a radical impact on immigration trends.

In the first half of the 20th Century the British Empire held dominion over 458 million people. By the end of the Second World War, Britain's position as a world power had diminished and resurgent nationalism in Commonwealth countries paved the way for significant population movements.

The people who arrived from former Commonwealth nations in the 1950s and 1960s were by no means the first of their countrymen to set foot in Scotland, but they were the first to arrive in significant numbers and the first to establish permanent homes, businesses and communities.

Back in the 19th and early 20th centuries there were small settlements of 'lascars' – mainly Indian (but some Chinese) seamen in Scotland who worked for big shipping lines and clustered around big ports, living semi-peripatetic lives. However, the total number of Asians living permanently in

Scotland in the 1920s is estimated at fewer than 50, including the parents of some people in this book.

Historical events which sparked a new wave of immigration to Scotland include the Partition of India and the creation of Pakistan as a new Muslim state in 1947. In the ensuing bloodshed and unrest, some 15 million Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus crossed borders seeking safety, prompting many to emigrate to Britain.

There were only an estimated 450 people from the Indian subcontinent in Scotland in 1940, rising to around 600 in 1950. The small increase in that period is explained partly by the difficulty in gaining passage to Britain for non-whites immediately after Partition.

This changed in the years that followed the passing of the British Nationality Act 1948 which created the new status of "citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies" (CUKC) for people born or naturalised in either the United Kingdom or one of its colonies.

It heralded the arrival in the UK of immigrants from many former colonies from the early 1950s onwards. Initially, immigrants from India, Pakistan and China were mostly males who lived communally and sent money home to their families.

This changed significantly as a result of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962, which introduced tighter controls, requiring immigrants to have government-controlled employment vouchers. There was provision for the unification of families but many feared the window of opportunity to emigrate to Britain was closing, sparking a surge in new arrivals

during the early 1960s, as many men sent for their wives and children to join them.

For the first time, Asian children went to school and played alongside white children, marking a new phase in Scotland's social history. Many enjoyed very friendly relations with Scottish neighbours but others suffered abuse and discrimination and struggled to find homes and employment.

The immigrants who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s were from diverse backgrounds and included poor farmers struggling to live on small family agricultural holdings as well as students and professionals including engineers and doctors and nurses who came to work for the National Health Service.

By 2001 there were 32,000 people of Pakistani origin and 15,000 of Indian origin living in Scotland. By the 2011 Scottish Census 141,000 people classified themselves as of Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian origin, the largest non-white minority ethnic group, representing 2.7% of the total Scottish population.

The Chinese community in Scotland, which was 16,000 strong in 2001, represents another important part of immigration history. Factors which led to the arrival of Chinese immigrants include the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and a collapse of the agricultural economy.

Impoverished male farmers from the New Territories were in the vanguard of Chinese immigrants, followed by political refugees from Mao's Cultural Revolution.



The first Chinese immigrants settled in London and Liverpool before spreading northward. There was no significant Chinese settlement in Britain until the 1950s and most Chinese immigrants to Scotland came from Hong Kong in the 1960s. Few spoke English and most worked long hours in Chinese restaurants, living communally ‘above the shop’ and saving up to establish their own homes and families.

Scottish-Caribbean links date back to the slave trade and the forcible transportation of Africans to the Caribbean to work as plantation slaves. Hence, the first significant black population in Scotland constituted slaves brought back by Scots to work as domestic servants. It took until 1778 for a landmark case to make it illegal to own a slave in Scotland.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the proportion of the Scottish (and indeed UK) population of Afro-Caribbean origin remained very small. Mass migration from the Caribbean to the UK was sparked by a combination of the British Nationality Act 1948 and Britain’s need to plug a post-war labour shortage which led to the government offering cheap transport for Caribbean people who wanted to work in the UK.

In 1948 almost 500 passengers, including demobbed Caribbean soldiers and airmen, sailed to Britain from Jamaica aboard the SS Empire Windrush, disembarking



at Tilbury Docks. The ‘Windrush generation’ were among the forefathers of multicultural Britain and their arrival marked the start of a significant rise in Caribbean immigration which continued for more than a decade, slowing from a flood to a trickle after the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 came into force.

Likewise, although there are strong historical links between Africa and Scotland, for much of the last 50 years the number of African immigrants in Scotland has been small in comparison to other minority ethnic groups, although it has risen sharply in the last decade.

African students began coming to study at Scottish universities as far back as the mid-19th Century, initially mainly from southern Africa, with Nigerian students first enrolling at Glasgow University in 1913. Expansion in African economies after the First World War resulted in more new arrivals and by 1958 there were enough East African students studying at Glasgow institutions to form their own society.

Although there were small pockets of African and Caribbean immigrants in large cities, particularly around universities in the 1950s and 1960s, they were outnumbered by Indian, Pakistani and Chinese immigrants. Even by 2001 there were just over 5,000 Africans in Scotland; however by 2011 there had been a six-fold increase to 30,000, partly swelled by refugees.

Overall, the total size of the minority ethnic population in Scotland in 2011 was just over 200,000 or four per cent of the

total population, having doubled since the 2001 census.

Scotland’s minority ethnic population is concentrated in major cities, where immigrants first settled to find work in heavy industry, engineering or transport, and established shops and restaurants.

Many of the immigrants who came in the 1950s and 1960s initially lived in cramped conditions and grinding poverty yet there are many inspiring examples of men and women who started with little and rose to prominence in commerce, academia, cultural and civic life.

The stories published here provide a glimpse into the struggles and hardships faced by a diverse group of immigrants who are now part of the rich social fabric of Scottish society. They also celebrate the friendships, humour and the achievements of a pioneering generation.

A recurring theme among the people interviewed for this book is a sense of pride at having laid strong foundations which enabled their children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren to flourish in Scotland.

As the first generation of immigrants ages, we have captured their stories which collectively constitute an important chapter in modern Scottish history.





*“We rented the Curzon cinema on a Sunday to show Indian films and all the community came to watch. I was the announcer and all the kids used to cheer”*  
*Prem Bahanda*



# West of Scotland



# Balkrishna & Kulwant Baldev

✕ Arrived in 1961



When Balkrishna Baldev arrived in Edinburgh in October 1961, after a long journey from India, the 23 year old was actually coming home – even if it didn't feel like that.

Balkrishna had been born there in 1938; his father had come to Scotland in 1934 and his mother and elder sister three years later. But at the outbreak of the Second World War his father had to put his studies aside to work in an ammunition factory. After the war ended, the family went into the drapery business, setting up home in Holyrood Road.

"I remember going to school there," says Balkrishna. "And at the end of the war there were visits to Edinburgh Zoo, to Portobello beach and to Waverley railway station."

For Balkrishna's mother though, this was a difficult time. She was unable to speak English and rationing made finding familiar foods difficult. There was also the plight of Balkrishna's uncle, who had brought his mother and sister to Scotland but had been unable to return to India – and his wife – because of the war.

Meanwhile, in 1946, the P&O company's ship Stratheden was refitted after transporting troops but still had government work to do, bringing civil servants back from Mumbai (then

Bombay) ahead of India's independence and the Partition that followed.

"We were allowed to travel in the ship on compassionate grounds," says Balkrishna. "My mother wanted my uncle to go back to his wife in India and my mother, two sisters and I went with him. I was just eight years old but I have faint memories of leaving Edinburgh, the huge ship and the soldiers and Italian prisoners of war who embarked with us in London. I missed breakfast one day and the waiter smacked me on the head for not being in time! I also remember our arrival in Bombay and all the horse-drawn buggies.

"My father joined us from Edinburgh a year later. We went to the city of Ludhiana in Punjab state, then moved to our village near there."

Balkrishna's father began farming but decided to go back to Edinburgh in 1951 – though, with unhappy memories, his mother didn't want to return. However, Balkrishna, who had recently married Kulwant, travelled back to Edinburgh alone in 1961.

"When I left India I did have a sense of leaving home behind," he says. "I had been there for 15 years and now also had a wife there."

He did not retain English from his childhood in Scotland but learned it in India. "My father was living in Leith but I found Scotland very grey and smoky," he says. "I could not

get a job in Edinburgh and became a bus conductor for over a year in Glasgow, renting a room with an Indian family in Kinning Park."

Less than a year later, one of his flatmates announced that Balkrishna had a surprise visitor – Kulwant. Despite her family's pleas, Kulwant had decided she'd missed her husband long enough and had travelled alone from Delhi to Scotland.

"I had no problem communicating in English as I had gained a Masters degree in Economics in India," she says. "But when I landed at Glasgow there were no phones and I wasn't sure where to go. An Indian family at the airport offered to take me and though I had imagined everything would be beautiful, everything in Glasgow was dark and miserable."

"My husband was shocked to see me. My father was in the army in India – we had a good life there and lived in a bungalow. But when my husband drew the curtain and I saw a chair and a table in a one-room bedsit I was so disappointed."

However, Kulwant had prepared and before leaving India had written to Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow to enquire about becoming a primary school teacher.

"We went to the General Teaching Council," she says, where she was told that there were only four days before classes were due to start. "But I went to Jordanhill where





*“When I landed at Glasgow there were no phones and I wasn’t sure where to go. An Indian family at the airport offered to take me and though I had imagined everything would be beautiful, everything in Glasgow was dark and miserable.”*





the principal, Mr Henry Wood, was surprised I had just arrived in Scotland the day before but spoke English so well and I was admitted to the college.”

The Dean of women’s students helped her to access a £30 grant that the couple used to help buy a flat. “A local woman whose family ran a bookmaker’s business and was very well off stopped me in the street one day and told me she wanted to sell me her house. I told her we had £50 in cash and could only afford £4 in monthly payments. It was a five-bedroom flat and she vacated one bedroom for us, then handed us £12 per month rent money for the other four rooms as the house was ours.”

Six months into her studies, Kulwant was expecting the couple’s first child. After her exams in 1962 she started as a trainee in Mossbank Primary School and in July 1963 she qualified as a teacher – the same day on which she gave birth to their daughter.

Kulwant continued to teach, as their family grew to two daughters and two sons and in the same year Balkrishna, encouraged by his wife (“I pleaded his case at the college,” she says) also went to Jordanhill to train as a high school science teacher. He qualified in 1964 and taught in North Kelvinside School in Glasgow for four years.

After a severe winter and the gale of January 15 1968 that left 20 people in Glasgow dead, their home in Kinning Park was

demolished due to storm damage and the family moved to a four-bedroom house in Pollok. Later that year, the couple decided on a big career and lifestyle change and moved to Kenya for almost 10 years, where Balkrishna worked for the Ministry of Overseas Development as an administrative service officer.

“So many Asian people were fleeing discriminatory laws in Kenya at that time,” he says. “They wondered why we were arriving when they were all leaving! But we loved living there.”

The family returned to Scotland in 1977 to ensure a better education for their children and moved to Hamilton. Balkrishna taught science at Blantyre High School until he retired in 1995 and Kulwant taught at Chatelherault and Townhill primary schools until her retirement in 2001. The couple, who have 11 grandchildren, are still involved in voluntary work and visit India every year.

“We are very proud of our teaching jobs, of what we’ve achieved and of our children, who have all done well,” say Balkrishna and Kulwant. “The weather is not so good in Scotland – but this is our home. It’s time to slow down a bit now. We’ve been travelling for many years.”



# Puran Kaur



*Arrived in 1960*

Puran Kaur spent five years in the Punjab raising four young children single-handedly before setting sail for Britain in 1960 to join her husband who met her in Dover and accompanied the family to their new home in Glasgow.

The sea voyage took 21 days and on board the ship Puran dressed her children, then aged five, eight, 11 and 14, in pyjamas, which were popular daywear in India at the time. It was not until she arrived in Britain that a woman advised her that pyjamas were only worn at night and she should change the children into more appropriate clothes.

The pyjama incident was the first among many things she had to grapple with as a new immigrant. Trying to master English was one of the toughest challenges for Puran and she started in a small way with the basic words she needed to go shopping. “My friends helped me. The first things they taught me to say were: Cornflakes, porridge, Rice Krispies, cauliflower, marrow, turnip, carrots and spinach,” she says.

Puran is from Jagutpur in the Jalandhar district of East Punjab (in common with many immigrants to Scotland in the 1960s) and before coming to Britain her family had a small farm





but it did not generate enough income to make a living for a growing family.

Her situation, arriving in Britain years after her husband, was quite common at that time as menfolk from India and Pakistan tended to immigrate ahead of their families and to send money back home to support them until they could afford to be reunited. Her husband, a Sikh, was formerly in the British Army and before that worked as a labourer. When he settled in Scotland he stopped wearing his turban and cut his hair in order to find work. He secured employment as a chemical worker and also worked in a factory run by Singer. For Puran, who was still in the Punjab when he removed his turban, the first picture she received of her husband shorn of his hair and beard, came as a shock. “I was very sad when he sent me a photo of himself with short hair. I did not recognise him,” she says.

Her husband had bought a two-bedroom flat in North Frederick Street for the family for £300. It had only a big iron bathtub so mostly the whole family trooped off to public baths, wearing big boots and heavy coats on cold days.

It was just before the pace of immigration to Scotland from India and Pakistan intensified and Puran says that in 1960 there were still very few Asian people in Glasgow. “If the kids saw anyone walking about in an Asian outfit they would come running in very excited to tell me all about it ... I used to come out of my flat to start a conversation with them and we would become friends very quickly,” she says.

Moving to Scotland was a bittersweet experience for the children. Puran says the children cried at first and did not want to go to school because they could not understand English. But at other times they enjoyed the novelty of new experiences.

“When my husband came to Dover to pick us up he bought some cheese salad sandwiches for the children. The kids thought that it was some kind of sweets, as they had not seen lettuce with bread in India. It was a very amusing time for them,” Puran recalls.

She used her skills as a machinist and seamstress to contribute to the family’s earnings, making two suits per day and earned up to £7 per week. Later she worked for a company as a home-based seamstress.

She and her husband have raised six children, two of whom were born in Scotland and she says life is very different for them and for her grandchildren. She says: “There are so many facilities available in every field. The new generation is lucky in the sense of not experiencing the hardship we went through.”

She adds that she tells her grandchildren about her early days in Scotland and she says they are interested but they find talk of ‘the olden days’ very amusing.







# Gurdial Singh Toohan



It took 22 days for Gurdial Singh to travel by boat from Bombay to Southampton in 1956, affording plenty of time for the 26 year old to imagine what life would be like when he disembarked.

He had heard much about the UK – the roads were wonderful, the standard of living high and everything clean and neat. But when he strode down the gangplank on a crisp English morning, his first sight of British people eating fish and chips wrapped in newspaper left him depressed. The biting cold only intensified his feelings of gloom and despondency.

Gurdial had initially decided to come to the UK to study and his trip was sponsored by relatives in Glasgow but on arriving in Scotland he decided to look for work instead of enrolling on a course. After a fruitless job search, he concluded that as a Sikh, his chances of finding employment while wearing a turban and sporting a long beard were minimal.

Among Sikhs, the turban is an article of faith representing honor, self-respect, courage, spirituality and piety. It is also an important element of Sikh identity. Gurdial says the decision to remove his turban in order to find a job was not one he took lightly.











*“When the hairdresser began cutting my hair, the tears started streaming down my face”*

By 1964, when he left the Glasgow Corporation, Gurdial had saved enough money to buy his own newsagent and confectionery shop in Glasgow’s Maryhill. Back in India, his family had run a clothes shop and he inherited their entrepreneurial flair, successfully running his own shop for 34 years until retiring in 1997.

“I bought the business from a gentleman whose health was declining and the shop shelves were almost empty when we took over. We changed it, added a lot more stock and people said to us ‘What magic have you got, the door is always open now and the shop is so busy’,” Gurdial says.

Looking back at how life in Glasgow has changed in the last 50 years, he says: “In those days foreigners were treated with great hospitality. Life was very simple. Every Sunday we used to see so many parents going to church with children dressed in colourful clothes. It was great to see but you hardly see these things nowadays – you only see the traffic on the roads as all the shopping centres are open. I miss nice quiet Sundays.”

Compared to his early days in Scotland when Asian families were few and far between, Gurdial says there is a bigger community now which allows the older generation to enjoy a better social life.

He believes it is important for the younger generation of Asians born in Scotland to understand how their older relatives struggled to get established and make a life. “I enjoy telling stories about the old days to my grandchildren. Life is easy for them, like cake on a plate. I want them to know that hard work is the key to success.”

## Tin-Fu Chung



*Arrived in 1959*

Tin-Fu Chung was a barefoot farmer scratching a living on an small offshore island in Hong Kong when he began to dream of making a new life in Britain. He belonged to a generation of young Chinese whose education was interrupted by a combination of growing up during The Second World War and living in a place where grinding poverty was commonplace and education a luxury.

In 1959, aged 24, he resolved to emigrate to Britain to make a better life and sought encouragement from his mother’s brother, who had already secured a job and a place to live in Nottingham.

But his uncle sounded a note of caution when his young nephew asked him what life in Britain was really like. Tin-Fu says: “He told me that Britain was not a good place to live because of the cold weather – even though the wages were not bad. I just wondered if he didn’t want me to come because I had asked him to guarantee my visa application.”

However, his uncle did agree to help him gain entry to Britain. When Tin-Fu arrived in Dover in 1959 after travelling by sea for 28 days, he carried only light luggage containing some clothes he had ordered specially for the cold British weather





and some Chinese food ingredients because he had been warned it was hard to find them in Britain.

His first impression of British people was favourable: “At the port in Dover, I felt the people were very polite and I found this most surprising. I can’t recall whether I felt welcome or not but at least I remember appreciating their good manners.”

He managed to make his way directly from London to Liverpool despite not speaking a word of English, a handicap which made his journey a fraught experience. Tin-Fu recalls: “I found great problems in communicating in daily life, particularly as a new arrival in the first year.”

Shopping was especially difficult – not only because of language problems but because it was hard to find his favourite food and also clothes which fitted properly. “The small sizes of clothes and shoes we Chinese needed were not available,” he says.

He found friendship among his fellow restaurant workers with whom he shared a dormitory. “At the time I was still single ... I felt comfortable and secure although the place was crowded with other colleagues,” he says.

Tin-Fu started in the lowliest role in a restaurant, washing up and doing other menial jobs and working long hours to improve his prospects, which eventually paid off when he became a successful chef in Scotland.

Looking back, he says his lack of English was a major barrier to finding different employment, limiting his options to kitchen work in Chinese restaurants.

From the start he was hungry to move up in the world and worked longer hours than his colleagues, starting earlier and only taking a half day off in a week in order to learn as much as possible about the restaurant business. “I made use of my half day off to work as an assistant to my senior colleagues, to earn more money but also to learn more from them at the same time,” he says.

He was constantly on the lookout for opportunities to move to a better job and says: “By word of mouth, I moved on from lower level jobs in the kitchen to more important jobs until I became a chef in a restaurant. Gradually I got better wages and was able to build up savings which allowed me to return to Hong Kong to get married.”

He came to Scotland some three years after arriving in Britain and started work in a restaurant outside Glasgow before becoming a chef at a restaurant in the city centre called Meiye Lau which he ran with a partner. He suffered some setbacks in business over the years, running into problems with business partners. “Besides (that), I did not have any bigger trouble though I had to struggle all the time for a living,” he says.

He and his wife have raised five children and Tin-Fu says living in Scotland enabled them to offer their family a far







brighter future than if he had remained in Hong Kong. “If I hadn’t come here, I could only have been a farmer in the countryside in Hong Kong. I couldn’t have the same standard of living as I have now...I’m very proud of how my hard work has contributed to the lives of my family and my children. All five of them are graduates, one of them has a Masters degree and they are all doing well in their professions,” he says.

Keeping up traditions and customs can be hard when your children are born in a different country from their parents, says Tin-Fu. “Nevertheless, I do keep up the language and traditions, such as the celebrations of Moon Festival or Chinese New Year.”

One of his children has gone back to their roots and is living in Hong Kong while another two live in Canada which has a relatively large Chinese population, making it easier for them to retain their language skills and hold on to Chinese customs. Their life experiences have been very different from their parents, says Tin-Fu, making it hard for them to appreciate the experiences which shaped the older generation as they struggled to become established in a foreign land.

“I don’t think my children can understand, so I don’t bother them to know about my history. However, if they were eager to know about, it would be worth telling them in order to encourage them to face problems bravely in their lives,” he says.

## Gulshan Midha

✈ Arrived in 1960

Gulshan Midha’s family ran their own successful business in India and it looked as if he would naturally follow in their footsteps, taking over the reins from his father in due course. However, when he saw how much money a friend of his was able to send back by working in the UK, he began to think of emigrating himself and wrote to his friend asking him to sponsor him.

The friend agreed and in November 1960 the 25-year-old Gulshan boarded a ship bound for Liverpool and the start of a new chapter in his life. He had barely touched foot on British soil (just long enough to begin to feel self-conscious and very different from all the white faces he encountered in the bustling port city) before he got on another boat and headed to Ireland where his friend was then living.

“It was very primitive where my friend lived. His house had no toilet and we had to use buckets of water to wash ourselves. Finding something to eat was hard too – I’m vegetarian but there was nothing much to eat apart from some tomatoes and onion,” he recalls.

It was a short-lived visit to Ireland and Gulshan decided to move on to Glasgow where he was relieved to be able to tuck into a hot dinner of chapatis and lentils made by an Indian lady he met there. “It tasted so good after missing Indian cooking for so long,” he said.





He rented a room in a flat he shared with friends and started work as a bus conductor. None of his single male flatmates were very adept at cooking and Gulshan found the lack of decent food depressing. He found it hard to obtain Indian vegetables such as okra which he was used to and much of the time he was getting by on a bland diet of baked beans and bread – not much to sustain him on long shifts on the buses in a cold climate.

“I tried making my own curry but none of my friends wanted to eat it. When I started thinking about my old life where I was a responsible person managing a business for my family, it made me very depressed and I decided I should go back home to India.”

In 1963 he returned to India to pick up the traces of his old life, with no intention of coming back to the UK to live but after two years he found himself involved in a dispute with his family over the business so in 1965 he came back to Glasgow again and resumed working as a bus conductor.

The emotional tug-of-war between his new life in Scotland and his parents and his old life in India continued for several more years. Meanwhile, Gulshan tried to establish himself more permanently in his adopted homeland, buying his first property, a one-bedroom flat in Garnet Street in Glasgow for £300 and also investing his savings in a small shop.

But the call of his father, a strong character, came again and at his insistence, Gulshan sold his house in 1969 and went back to India to get married and take the helm of the family business. This time the arrangement lasted for

another two years before Gulshan had had enough and this time resolved to return to Scotland on a permanent basis with his young wife, a qualified teacher.

Back in Glasgow however, his wife found it hard to get a decent job despite being highly-educated and well-qualified and Gulshan ended up back on the buses again. The couple saved up to buy their own home again – a one-bedroom flat in Argyle Street which they bought for £800 – and Gulshan had a spell as a shopkeeper for several years in the 1970s before donning his bus conductor uniform for the fourth time in his working life, a job he held until his retirement.

The Midhas raised two sons who are both in professional careers and though Mrs Midha recently died, he remains part of a close-knit community of older Indians who still congregate in central Glasgow half a century after they first arrived in the city.





# Prem & Santosh Bahanda



Arrived in 1953

In 1956 Santosh Bahanda was on a P&O ship with her five-year-old son and three-year-old daughter, en route from India to the UK to join her husband Prem when their plans for a family reunion were almost thwarted by the Suez Canal crisis.

Prem had moved to Glasgow from Jalandhar in the Punjab in 1953 initially living with a cousin and then sharing a rented room with friends in Glasgow. “Maryhill Road was very cheap at that time. Even though wages were not so good, you could still make it, and even though it was after the War there was still rationing and you needed a coupon to buy anything,” he remembered.

He initially earned money by carrying a heavy suitcase from door to door selling clothes but desperately missed his wife and children, who were still in India. “When we came over there were only single men over here from India and Pakistan, no families. I was not happy at the beginning and I was thinking of going back but it was a question of money – that’s why I stayed,” he said.





Most single men were saving to get married, while married men were scraping money together to bring their wives and children to Scotland. After three years of living apart, Prem was looking forward to being reunited with his family when their ship arrived at Tilbury Docks in London but the journey, which was supposed to take 18 days, turned into an epic voyage as the ship passed through the Suez Canal at a pivotal moment in history.

The Canal, a critical trade route, became the focus of a major international conflict in 1956 after Egypt decided to nationalise it, sparking a tense power struggle and military strikes against Egypt by Britain, France and Israel. The conflict and closure of the Canal were short-lived and Santosh and fellow travellers were unharmed, but it was an extremely tense and uncertain period.

Santosh, who was only 22, remained cheerful despite the political drama taking place around her. “There were lots of other families coming to Glasgow too. We were travelling for five weeks but it felt like a picnic. I was so excited to be joining my husband,” she said.

They finally arrived in Glasgow on the third of December and Santosh began her new life with two small children, no knowledge of English and in the midst of one of the coldest Scottish winters on record. “I remember everything was dark and black...All the houses looked the same and it was easy to get lost. We lived in a two- bedroom flat in St George’s Road and another couple rented a room in it,” Santosh said.

It was to be 13 years before she would return to India to see her family and with no telephone, the only way to keep in touch was via the post. “We used to get very excited to get letters from India,” she said.

Santosh says the children adapted well to their new life, learning the language quickly but she struggled to find a college course to learn English and ended up combining lessons at Elmbank school with looking after the home and later working as a machinist in a Marks & Spencer clothing factory in Castlemilk.

“It seemed every Glasgow Indian woman was there by 1964-65 but there were Scottish ladies too, it was a mix. I earned £5 a week. My sister came over after that and my husband’s brother. We had 12 people living in our three-bedroom flat, including seven children. My sister lived with us for 13 years,” Santosh said.

Prem took various jobs to support his family, giving up peddling to work in the transport sector, first on the railways, then as a bus conductor, tram driver and later bus driver. “Mostly everyone who had come over at that time worked in transport. It was not easy to get jobs in offices at the beginning...it changed later...but then there were graduates from India who still had to work in transport or as labourers in factories,” he said.

“We had heard a few things about Scotland before we came, like whisky and the John Brown shipyard. I became the tram driver on the route to John Brown. The fare was 6d, it was





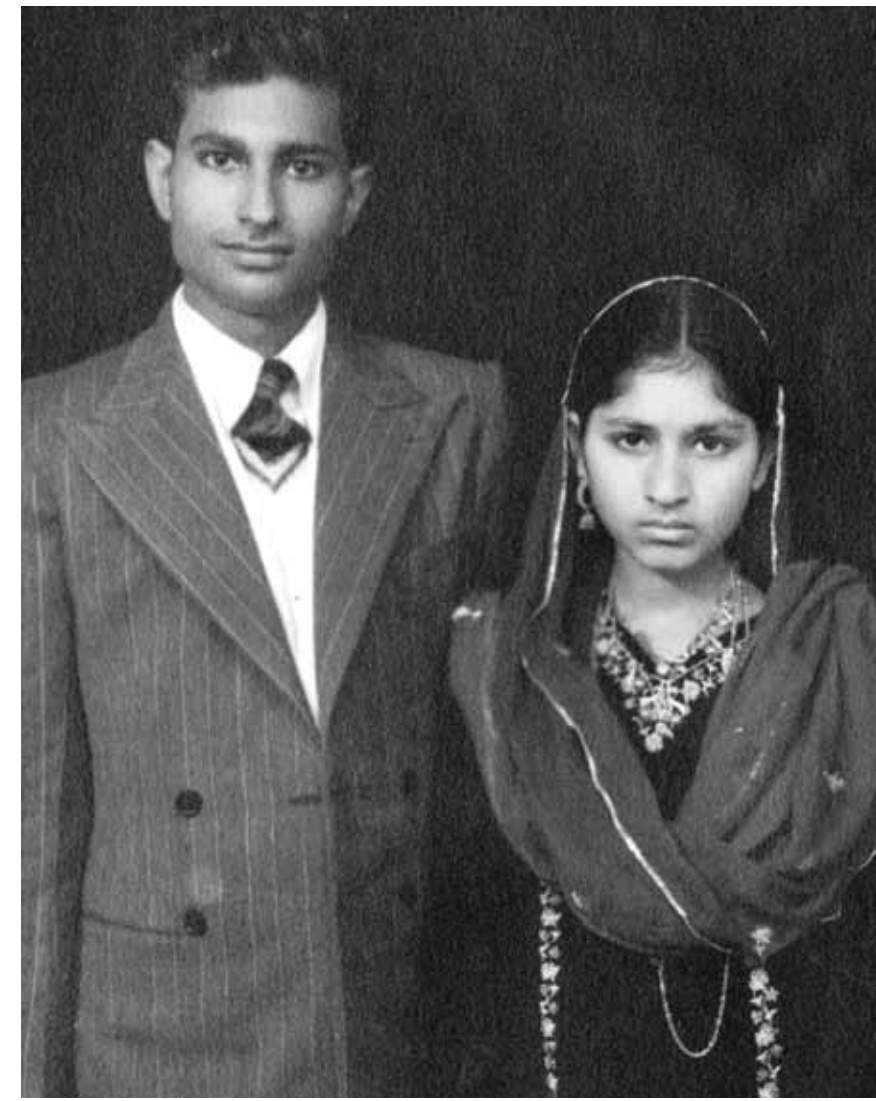


the number 9 from Dalmuir to Auchenshuggle. I spent 14 years in transport. There was plenty of overtime: the early shift started at 4am and finished at 12 then we did four to five hours more. The Indian and Pakistani people were working hard to fill the gaps,” he said.

“Shift work is tiring so I decided to get a shop but that’s not easy. I opened every morning at 6am, and sold papers and groceries,” he added.

Prem and Santosh had another daughter and the family enjoyed being part of a vibrant growing Indian community in Glasgow. “On Sundays we all got together and showed Indian films to the community. We rented the Curzon cinema halls in Sauchiehall Street and in Arygle Stree because they were not open on a Sunday and we hired their projectors to show two films a day. I was the announcer and all the kids used to cheer,” Prem said.

The couple are proud of their three children’s achievements. One daughter has a law degree, their son is an accountant and their youngest daughter is a travel agent. Santosh said: “We don’t talk about the early days – of course we should tell young people. But now it’s difficult for us; our grandchildren only speak a few words of Punjabi.”





# Ismail Ashrif



*Arrived in 1949*

When 17-year-old Ismail Ashrif emigrated in 1949 he had two significant advantages over many other young Asians starting a new life in a distant and foreign land – he was accompanied by his older brother and he was coming to join his father Ata, one of the leading figures in Glasgow’s then small Muslim community.

“I was lucky because my brother had already visited Scotland so he was able to tell me a bit about what to expect before I came but I was still surprised by how very different it was to anything I had ever experienced before,” he says.

Ismail’s father Ata was a trailblazer, one of the first generation of no more than 200 Indians to have been living in Scotland in the 1920s. A farmer’s son from Madarpura, a village in the Punjab, Ata had arrived in Glasgow in 1926.

By the time his sons came to live with him more than two decades later, Ata had established not only a successful clothing warehouse business but also Jamiat ul Muslimin, the first Muslim Association in Scotland. He co-founded it in 1934 and became the first president to run the association, which catered for the spiritual and material needs of the Muslim community.







The presence of a supportive network of relatives and the companionship of the wider Muslim community made it a relatively smooth transition for Ata's sons when they joined him, just two years after India was declared independent.

"I did struggle with the language at first but I worked hard and overcame that. I worked with my father in his business and my brother studied and went on to get a PhD," Ismail says.

Ismail recalls that although there was only a relatively small number of Muslims living in Glasgow in the 1940s, they had banded together to establish a makeshift mosque in a flat in Oxford Street in 1943, giving new arrivals a central place to gather for prayers and to make friends. "When I arrived in Glasgow the Muslim community was already established which meant I could socialise with other Muslims and I had a place to worship," he says.

It was to be another 40 years before the city opened the doors to the Glasgow Central Mosque, the first purpose built mosque and a project steered by community leaders belonging to Jamiat al Muslimin, the association that Ismail's father had set up back in 1934.

When he was 21, Ismail went back home, where a marriage had been arranged with a young woman in Pakistan and the following year he brought his wife back to Glasgow with him.

He continued working in his father's business until he retired, taking over the reins of the company which played an important part in sustaining the earliest pedlars from India, many of whom were illiterate, spoke no English and



were heavily reliant on the business to buy their goods.

Now Ismail's own children have taken over running the clothing warehouse business that was set up almost a century ago by their grandfather.

"My family have a better life here in Scotland than they would have had in Pakistan. But it's important that the younger generation knows where their parents and grandparents came from so that they understand the history, the culture and the traditions and pass it on to the next generation," he says.







## Harinder Kaur & Sewa Singh Kohli

✕ Arrived in 1962

Harinder Kaur has had an eventful life since she joined her husband, Sewa Singh Kohli, in Scotland. It was 1962 and he had arrived seven months earlier to be treated for an eye problem. When he decided to stay he asked his family, wife Harinder, daughter Pushpinder and young sons Aman and Harpreet to join him from Delhi later that year.

He was especially keen for his children to benefit from better educational opportunities available in Scotland.

Sewa Singh, who passed away in 2012, was affectionately known as ‘Papa Ji’, and was a colourful and much-loved figure – not only among Indians in Scotland but also in the wider community as a well-known leader and businessman.

He was born in 1919 in Ambala, in northern India, the fourth of nine children. After school and college, he graduated in oriental languages in 1941 from Punjab University in Lahore and always retained a passion for social justice.

Active in the trade union movement and a member of the Communist Party of India (CPI) from 1941 to 1948, Sewa worked for the North Western Railway, becoming a full-time union official and CPI leader until 1959. The Partition of 1947 brought great challenges and he was involved in several

dramatic episodes – including saving the life of a Muslim man who was fleeing an angry mob – and helping refugees from West Punjab to settle in Delhi.

Harinder was born in 1928, one of a family of six children and became a primary school teacher in Delhi. When she arrived in Glasgow, life was initially difficult: her husband was then renting two rooms in a house with a shared kitchen and toilet in Kent Street, near the Mitchell Library. It was, she recalls, a “dirty” place and the family didn’t like it.

While she began work in a biscuit factory for £5 a week, her husband worked for Mr Bedi, a friend, in his shop and he was also paid £5 a week.

Harinder was asked to wear a skirt to work in the factory but was very uncomfortable with this so would wear salwar (Indian trousers) under her skirt when going to work – then take the salwar off in the factory.

Life, though, began to improve for the family. They bought a one-bedroom flat in West Graham Street, off Cowcaddens Road, for £200 and while Sewa Singh’s Indian university degree was not recognised in the UK, he studied import and exports and went into business, opening the BK Trading Company in 1965 – the first cash and carry in Scotland to sell imported Asian food. In later years he owned a very successful restaurant in Cumbernauld called the Spice of Life and also set up a travel agency in Glasgow, Kohli Travel.

Harinder was also keen to keep busy. “I was a working girl and did not want to sit at home so I joined an evening class to learn ‘general craft’ for three years,” she says. She found work as a



crafts teacher for around six months, “which I really enjoyed”.

The family went to India after this and when she returned she was posted to Drumchapel. “I did not enjoy this as much as the students were not well behaved, so I left.”

She did, though, find alternative work in television: in 1966 the BBC asked her to act in a TV drama series, This Man Craig, set in a fictional secondary school, as the Punjabi-speaking mother of an Indian girl dating a Scottish boy. She worked for 10 days and was paid £200 for the job – a lot of money in those days, she remembers. She subsequently appeared in the Incomers – a documentary – with her family.

The family’s attachment to the arts was not surprising. Sewa Singh wrote poetry in Urdu and Punjabi and he helped develop the Glasgow Arts Centre as a place to showcase Punjabi folk dance and drama.

Meanwhile, he never forgot his social responsibility and in the 1980s campaigned to ensure that Sikh, Hindu and Muslim religious marriages were legally recognised in Scotland.

It was a social concern informed by tragic events close to the family. His oldest brother was killed in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots that followed the assassination of India’s Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.

His son Harpreet says: “My father was not consumed with hatred. He sought the truth about the riots and for justice for those affected.”

A prominent supporter of the Sikh way of life, Sewa Singh organised pilgrimages to India and Pakistan – recognised by

the President of Pakistan. He also organised photographic exhibitions of the Sikh community’s contribution to Glasgow and that of Sikhs to the Allied cause during the Second World War.

He was a longstanding Labour Party member and received several awards, including the MBE and the Lord Provost of Glasgow’s Special Award for Services to Community Relations.

Aware of the need for older Asian people to have a place of their own to get together, greet friends and have a hot meal, he worked tirelessly to create Mel Milaap – a south Asian community centre in Glasgow’s Charing Cross area.

Sewa Singh’s commercial acumen had also enabled him to open an Indian restaurant in Cumbernauld that was a big success – and one that Harinder helped to establish.

“As a result of this we were able to buy a big four-bedroom house on Otago Street after 10 years,” she says.

Life for the Kohlis, she says, has been full of ups and downs – but generally it has been good. “I have three children, 10 grandchildren and a great grand-daughter. My children and grandchildren have pursued their studies and some are doctors, engineers and businessmen.

She herself had wanted to be a doctor, she says, but her parents could not afford to fund the courses. “I am happy now that now my grandchildren have fulfilled my dreams and I had a wonderful life with my husband.”





# Gurmej Singh

✕ Arrived in 1962

Jalandhar, in the north-western Indian state of Punjab, felt a world away when Gurmej Singh arrived in Birmingham in 1962. He was already anxious but when he discovered that his uncle was not at the airport to meet him he really began to worry.

Gurmej, who was born in 1935, had a lot at stake. He and his three brothers and two sisters worked on the family farm, where they grew sugar cane, beets and corn. Already married with a young family, he had been sponsored by his uncle to come to the UK and the 27 year old had to mortgage his land to buy the ticket. But it seemed the telegram giving details of his arrival had been lost in the post and Gurmej – who was unable to speak any English – didn’t know what to do. Luckily, he had his uncle’s address written down and a man he spoke to was good enough to take him to his uncle’s house.

“I was so relieved,” says Gurmej. “But I didn’t like it at first. I was so sad. I had green fields at home but here it was all about ‘don’t do this, don’t do that’. Even crossing the road was difficult. I didn’t feel free anymore. I missed my family and home and as I didn’t know the language I felt helpless.”



However, he soon picked up a few words, such as ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘I want a job’. He obtained work at a foundry at Smethwick, in the west Midlands, making gearboxes for cars manufactured by the Rover Group. Eventually, Gurmej was able to send enough money back to India to pay off the mortgage on his land.

The job was tough and demanding though. “A family friend helped me get it,” says Gurmej. “It was heavy work, in a team of four, with three English people. I began to pick up a few words from them.

“Most of the workers in the foundry were Indians and after five years they asked me to be their trades union representative for the TGWU.” He was a shop steward for four years and a good negotiator, working through an interpreter. “There were safety issues and I argued that a person should get paid more than others if they were involved in heavy lifting. I was asked to go to evening classes but only attended a few. I do understand a little bit of English now but not much.”

“There were 15 of us living in a three-bedroom house,” adds Gurmej. “My brother joined me in Birmingham and we and two friends collected money and bought the house for £500. If people couldn’t find a place they’d come and stay. We had to take turns and sleep in shifts. We would charge 50p a week and all became friends. On Sundays we would all enjoy our time off together.”

There was a major sacrifice he had and many other Sikh men had to make in seeking employment: their traditional





hairstyle and beards. When Sikhs first arrived in the UK, he explains, they all had long hair and a beard – which made it hard to find work. With local barbers unwilling to serve them, Gurmej decided to do the job for everyone.

“If we couldn’t find work then how could we eat? It was very difficult and emotional to have our hair cut and it was heart-breaking for me to do it. But I had to do it for them.”

Facilities in the house were limited. There was no shower there – or in the foundry – so Gurmej heated up water to pour it over himself while standing in a metal container in the toilet then went to the public baths on Sundays.

Food was another problem. Although he learned to cook, bread, yogurt and eggs formed the main part of his diet.

He had enjoyed wrestling in India, so he started going to a gym in Birmingham and became involved in setting up kabaddi and wrestling teams, organising matches between the Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) in Coventry and Birmingham. The Gurdwara committees supported these teams financially and now major kabaddi and wrestling tournaments are a regular feature.

In 1965, the arrival of his wife Mahinder Kaur and his four sons prompted a move to another house and another job, with a company that ultimately became part of British Leyland. But in 1987, when there were major redundancies in the car industry, Gurmej found himself out of work.

By now, his brother was living in Glasgow. “He advised me

to join him,” he says. “We bought a grocery shop and news-agent in partnership in Roystonhill and after three years we sold it and acquired a shop in Greenock.”

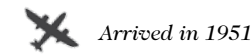
Living in Pollokshields, he had to drive there, which meant a long working day. “It was very difficult, like starting a whole new life again. What I missed most were my friends in Birmingham. My son and my wife helped me in the shop; my wife had some education and knew a little English.

Gurmej got used to it but recalls that the hours were too long. “I was up at 5.30am at the fruit market, opened the shop at 6.45am, closed at 6pm and then went to the cash and carry – seven days a week with a half day on Sunday. There would be a break-in at least once a month and I’ve had to get up during the night to deal with something.”

Since he retired, his sons have taken over the business. Gurmej looks back on his first days in the UK with some amazement and still remembers happy days in India, which he visits every year. He and his wife have many stories for their 25 grandchildren.

“Life is very different now,” he says. “There is so much available to people and the young generation don’t have to go through the hardship we went through. Our sons and daughters have been well educated and they are all settled. We’re very pleased for them and for what they have achieved. They go to the temple and our grandchildren attend Punjabi classes. We don’t have any great grandchildren – yet.”

## Gurnam Singh Bedi



*Arrived in 1951*

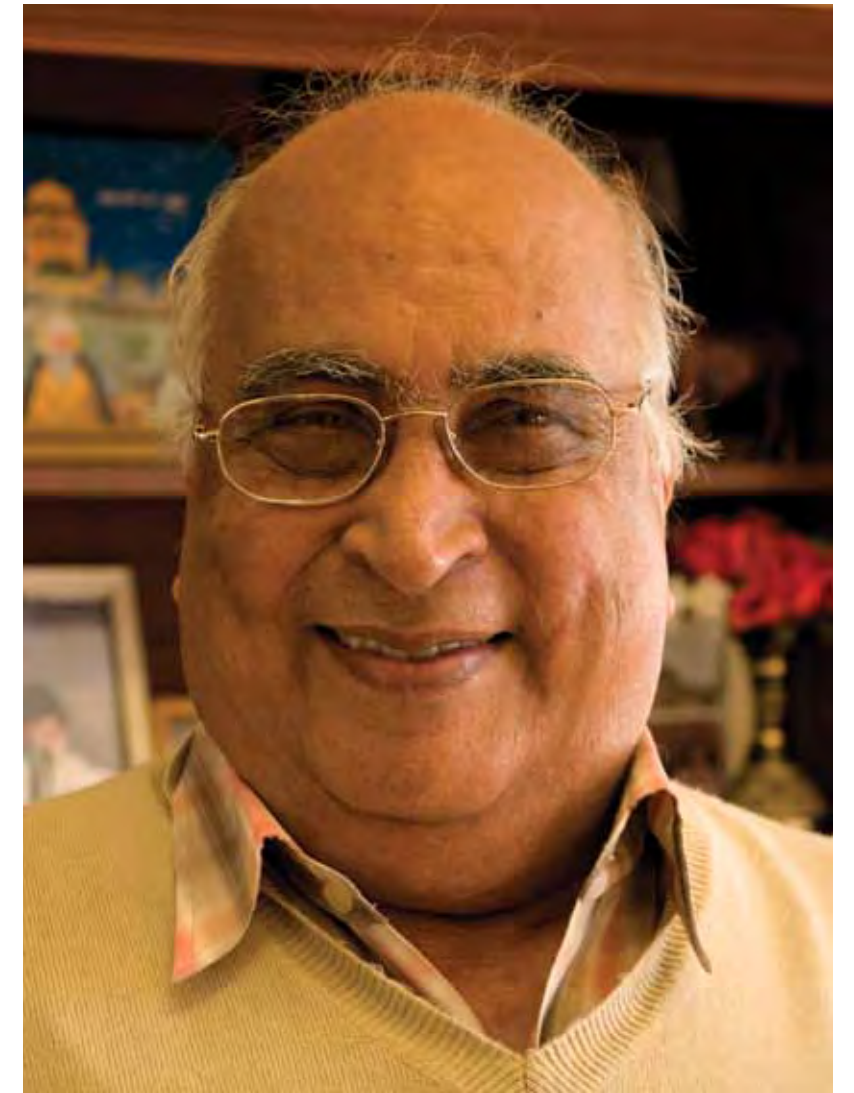
Gurnam Singh Bedi has experienced hard graft and tough living conditions in more than one industrial British town, having spent time as a young immigrant worker in both Glasgow and Halifax in West Yorkshire.

He was only 20 years old when his aunt, who lived in a flat in Glasgow, sponsored his passage to the UK from India and he arrived by ship at Tilbury docks in 1951 on a winter’s day after a 21-day voyage. “It was very cold and dark and I felt very strange seeing so many white people. I was very glad to see my relatives were there to meet me and they took me up to Glasgow by train,” he says.

Gurnam found a job as a bus conductor, joining a growing band of Indian men who took their first step into the Scottish world of work on the deck of the Glasgow Corporation Transport’s distinctive green and yellow buses.

Keen to earn more, he left after two years to sell clothes door-to-door, saving assiduously for his own two-bedroom tenement flat which he managed to buy three years after arriving in the UK with nothing but a suitcase to his name.

But after three years of living with his aunt, he found having to fend for himself hard. “I really missed home cooking and I missed my family terribly. I learned to cook some basic things but I was mostly living off bread and eggs,” he says.







He left Glasgow for four years to work in a wool mill in Halifax in West Yorkshire as a spinner and weaver, skilled work in an industry that was entering its sunset phase in a county which was once the wool capital of the world.

Not only were working conditions

hard, with high temperatures and textile fibres clogging the air, but living conditions were also spartan. At the end of a gruelling shift, Gurnam would return to a two-bedroom flat shared by 10 or more people. "It was a very difficult time. We had to take turns to sleep in a bed, according to what shift you worked and we had to stand in a queue to use the bathroom," he remembers.

"But even though life was tough sometimes, I was determined to save as much money as I could to support my family back in India," he adds.

Gurnam moved back to Scotland and his wife joined him, raised their children and also worked as a machinist while he put his energies into opening his own small shop, working successfully as a shopkeeper until his retirement. "My children are all qualified professionals and very well settled and I tell my grandchildren stories about the early days. I am so proud of the life they have all made here."



S. Gurnam Singh 'Bedi' , of Glasgo, U.K. is being honoured by the members of Nam Dev Ji Memorial Association Punjab n 05-12-2000. He donated for Darshni Gate at NARSI NAM DEV (M





# Mohammed Safdar

✈ Arrived in 1961

When Mohammed Safdar volunteered to join the Pakistan Army reserves he was just 18 but already hard-working and determined to make the most of his talents. Born in 1934 in Sanghoi, Jhelum, an area of the Punjab in former British India, Mohammed was a skilled motor mechanic and went on to serve nine years with the reserves.

“I served in areas including Quetta, Jhelum, Rawalpindi and Islamabad,” he says. “I was chosen to look after and service motor vehicles for a number of high-ranking military personnel. I was also offered a promotion but decided to resign from the army because I wanted to seek employment outside the forces.”

Mohammed’s experience soon led to him being offered a job with BP Pakistan – but unfortunately this led to jealousy and tension within his family.

“Some family members were not happy that I had gained such a good position and wages in a private company,” he says. “It was a difficult situation and I decided not to take the job but to come and seek a new future in the UK.”

Mohammed flew from Karachi to London in early October 1961, with a one-hour detour to Rome because of the ice and fog. Luckily, he was well prepared.





“I brought a lot of bedding, including quilts, because I had been told it was very cold in the UK,” he says. “Some of the men I travelled with offered to take me to Birmingham but I chose to go with the people who had come to meet me at the airport as I knew them from my village.”

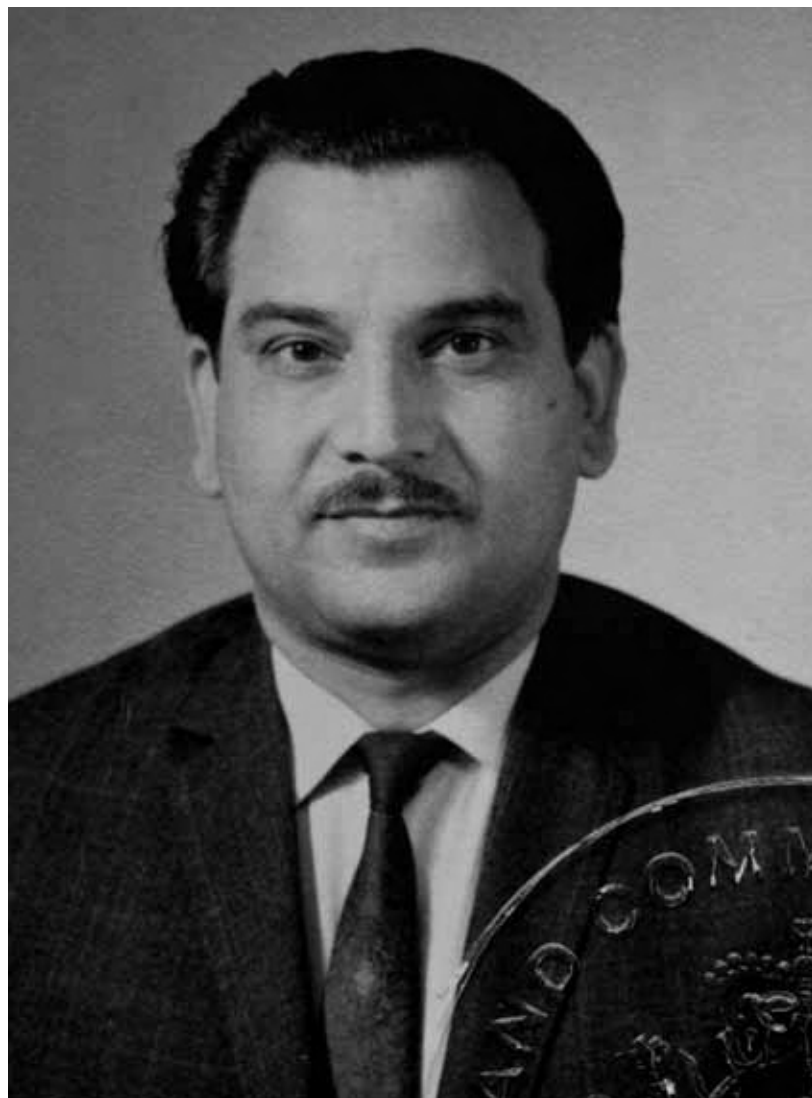
He arrived in his new home near Chesham in Buckinghamshire and with just one day to find his bearings, Mohammed began working on a factory production line that made car panels before moving to another manufacturing company making circuit board parts.

“I was given a raise from five shillings and seven pence to nine shillings and seven pence when I turned off a hot water pipe that burst in the factory when the other workers did nothing,” says Mohammed.

In 1966 he married Razaqat Begum and the couple moved to Northampton as Mohammed looked for work. However, it was one of his regular visits to their local Bengali-owned shop that led to him making a big career switch.

“One day when I went in to buy halal meat I saw that the shop had started to sell alcohol,” says Mohammed. “I was shocked because this is against the Muslim religion. I spoke to the owner but he was dismissive of my concerns about shop workers handling alcohol and then handling the meat when butchering it.”

Mohammed decided to look at a vacant shop nearby and although he couldn’t afford to buy it, the owner agreed to give



him the chance to manage the business on his behalf. As part of this job Mohammed taught himself how to butcher halal meat and says the shop picked up a lot of customers from that of the other owner who had dismissed his [religious] concerns.

The growing family were settled in Northampton, and the business also flourished. However, Mohammed’s brother Akram had moved to the south side of Glasgow where he opened a grocery shop in Govanhill. In 1983, at Akram’s invitation, Mohammed, Razaqat and their children moved up to join him. The brothers ran the shop together until their retirement some years ago but Mohammed’s nephews still work there.

With two sons, four daughters and nine grandchildren, Mohammed is proud that he has built a good life for his family in the UK and also of what they have gone on to achieve. However, he says that he has often had to deal with prejudice along the way.

“I always felt I was being judged and stereotyped by the colour of my skin. I found it easier to find Asian food and employment in areas where there was already more of an Asian community. In addition to my family and home life this community has also been the centre of my social life.

“I was a founder member of Chesham’s Muslim welfare society. I was one of those who saw a need to help the local Muslim population with issues such as funerals and also

to bring the community together to help each other. The society is still active.

“I followed in the footsteps of generations of my family back in Jhelum who had been involved in local government there. I also see this tradition continuing as one of my daughters is a councillor in East Lothian.”





# Ali Mohammed & Sardaran Bibi

✂ Arrived in 1958

Born in 1932 in Lyallpur, British India, now Faisalabad in Pakistan, Ali and his family struggled to make a living on their small plot of land. By the time he was 22, he had decided to join relatives in Glasgow, where he could find more work.

It took almost four years to get the British passport he needed and Ali was relieved to finally arrive on a cold, harsh day at Heathrow Airport in 1958.

Weighed down by the bedding he carried, Ali had just £2 in cash and a £10 cheque.

“It seemed like another world,” he says. “Back home we were farmers working the fields and when I first came here it was so crowded that it seemed crazy. Also, I didn’t have much money and I was worried about that.”

And that money didn’t last long. He used some to share a taxi to Victoria Station with some men who had been on the same flight and then gave most of the cash he had left over to one of the others who didn’t have enough money for his train fare.

But when he tried to cash his cheque at the station Ali was told he needed the signature of the person who wrote it – who



was of course back in British India. He then went to the High Commission but a junior staff member warned him not to discuss it with anyone as he was in danger of being sent back on the next flight. Instead, he was told to go to a canteen for students in London who might be able to help him.

“They treated me so well there,” he says. “I was given food and drink and they looked after me. A man who was well respected within the community and known for helping others told them to cash my cheque and give me the £10 cash.”

At last, Ali could buy his ticket and travel to Glasgow, where he went to live with a relative who worked on the trams. But he failed his interview with the tram company and quickly began to feel homesick.

“I wrote to my family and told them I felt just going back home,” he says. “But they said I should try to stay a bit longer. Then I started to work in door-to-door sales and as I began to earn some money this made me feel a bit better.

“I still couldn’t speak the language but my relatives helped. I went around the neighbours in the tenement and at first they didn’t want to buy anything but many of them were good and opened the door for me to come in anyway.”

Most of Ali’s customers were women who were at home during the day and he soon learned what items would sell best: children’s clothes, women’s clothes and stockings. After a year, he had learned some English and had begun







*“I felt if we didn’t go to Pakistan then my children would never understand about where they came from”*



selling clothes at the markets then, beginning to feel more settled, he moved into a flat with a man he met through work.

In 1960 Ali returned to Faisalabad and got married, bringing his wife Sardaran Bibi back with him. By this time there were shops in Glasgow that were selling traditional items such as spices and he was able to cook chapatis for his new bride. With a friend, he bought their first flat, in Norfolk Street in the Gorbals, for £300.

Ali was still working on the markets but also spent five years working with the gas-fuelled street lights and as their family grew, they moved to bigger flats in Lesley Street, Carfin Street and then Albert Avenue, before settling in Newton Mearns, where they brought up their two sons and three daughters.

In the early 1980s, a conversation with a shop-owner friend who was unhappy about the attitude of his children made Ali completely re-think his life. In 1983 he decided to move his whole family to Pakistan so they would be immersed in their traditional culture and religion and for 10 years this is how they lived, returning to Glasgow every year for several months before heading back to Pakistan.

“I felt that if we didn’t go then my children would never understand about where they came from,” says Ali. “It was always my intention to come back.”

The children found it difficult at first but soon came to

enjoy it and are now grateful for having developed a deeper appreciation of their background over those years. The family never sold their home in Newton Mearns, so were able to return and pick up their lives again in Glasgow.

Ali’s wife was particularly keen to get back permanently to the city she had quickly adopted as home.

“I like it here in Glasgow,” says Sardaran Bibi. “He likes both. I was only 15 when I got married, so this is my country and this is my home. I came here in 1960 – and I liked everything straight away. I was so young it felt like a bit of an adventure. When I was growing up in Pakistan I was not allowed out of the home so here I had more freedom to be my own person. I was 16 when I had my first child and my family keep me very happy. My parents and my brothers have passed away; you want to be where your family is and my family is here.”

The couple, who also have 13 grandchildren, now live in a smaller home in the Pollokshields area of the city. Their sons run chip shops in Knightswood, Clydebank and Cambuslang.

“All my children are doing well and I’m thankful for the happy life we’ve had,” says Ali. “I’m very proud of how my children have grown up – they take good care of each other and great care of us.”





# Rahmat Ali

✂ Arrived in 1955

The first person in Rahmat Ali's family to travel to Scotland was his uncle, who arrived in Glasgow in 1935, worked in the famous Clydebank shipyards and served in the Merchant Navy during the Second World War.

It's not surprising that the world seemed such an exciting place to the young Rahmat, who was born in 1938 in Lyallpur, British India. In 1955 he and another uncle also set off on the journey, leaving their town by train for Karachi. He was just 17.

"I was interested in travelling and wanted to see something of the world," he says. "We arrived in London on a BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation) flight that took 24 hours. It stopped in Tehran, Cairo and Rome before landing at Heathrow, which was a small airport then.

"It was the first time I'd seen white people or women wearing stockings. I didn't know what they were! The people at the airport were nice and welcoming and in those days there was no need for a visa so long as you could prove you were a British Commonwealth citizen. We took the train from London to Glasgow."

Like many others who arrived in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s, they had each brought a quilt. "It was filled with





five kilogrammes of cotton wool as we had been told that Scotland was cold,” explains Rahmat. “A normal quilt was made with four kilogrammes of stuffing.”

They first lived with his uncle in Burnbank Gardens, in Glasgow’s west end. “There was a shop that sold Indian spices and the six or seven people who lived in my uncle’s house cooked food together and shared the cost. We didn’t take money for food or accommodation from new arrivals from Pakistan until they found work. It was a common practice in those days.

“We didn’t meet or socialise with local people – mostly with Pakistanis and Indians and sometimes we would go to watch Indian films.”

Rahmat began work, as did many others like him, selling goods out of a suitcase. “There was not much money in it and most people shut the door in our faces,” he says.

Meanwhile, he took evening classes in English and in 1957, after two years, his efforts paid off when he found a job as a bus conductor – at £9 for a 44-hour week. He and his uncle moved to Pollokshields in the south side of the city and in 1959 Rahmat returned to Pakistan.

“I travelled by sea on the Anchor Line and the journey took 20 days but I could not afford to travel by air,” he says. “It cost £95 to travel by sea.”

There, Rahmat married Inait Begum Ali and spent six months in Pakistan before leaving his new wife to return to Glasgow. His first son was born in Pakistan and the family was reunited in Glasgow in 1962 and set up home in Hillhead.

“I bought my first house in Gibson Street for £500,” says Rahmat. “It was a five-bedroom house and I still own it. We then had a daughter before travelling to Pakistan by car at the end of 1964.”

It took more than three weeks to get there and, he says, it was a memorable journey. “In Turkey we got stuck in the snow on the top of a hill and thought that no one was going to find us but we were lucky to be rescued. I stayed for four months in Pakistan and my wife stayed behind for two years while our other son was born.”

Inait Begum Ali rejoined Rahmat in Glasgow in 1967 and the couple had another two children, growing their family to three sons and two daughters.

One year later, Rahmat went into the restaurant business with his uncle, at the Taj Mahal on Park Road, often cited as the first Indian restaurant in Glasgow. (A claim also made on behalf of the Green Gates in nearby Bank Street.)

In 1973, Rahmat bought his own restaurant in Gibson Street, the Shalimar, which was popular and highly successful but only because of the long hours and hard work that Rahmat and Inait Begum Ali – who was also caring for a young family – put into their venture.

“My wife helped me run the restaurant,” says Rahmat. The business did well and they bought the shop next door so that they could expand. “We worked very hard and long hours. All my family contributed: the children used to come to the restaurant after school to help.” It was a hectic but successful period for Rahmat, who was also in a partnership







running the Airways Travel business, in Albert Drive, on the city's south side.

In 2002, after almost 30 years, Rahmat sold his restaurant and decided to visit the farmhouse he owned back in Pakistan. Unfortunately, the news of his retirement had travelled before him, making him a target for kidnappers.

"There was a rumour that because I had sold my business I had a lot of money so could pay a big ransom," he says. "The kidnappers locked my staff in a room and took me away in my car – it was very frightening.

"They took me across a river where we then walked for another six hours. But my staff escaped and phoned my family back in Scotland. I gave the kidnappers some money but they wanted a lot more.

"My family and many close friends back in Glasgow were involved in helping to free me. They contacted the Glasgow MP Mohammad Sarwar (the first Muslim MP in the UK, now Governor of Punjab province in Pakistan). The Inspector General in Pakistan was alerted and I was rescued."

Despite this traumatic experience, Rahmat still looks back with satisfaction on his family's achievements. His children are all married and have their own businesses, the grandchildren all know their grandparents' story – and he will never forget how much those closest to him did to help in a great hour of need.

"I'm very proud of my family and friends," he says.





# Abdul Razzaq

✂ Arrived in 1961



Scotland was a mysterious place for the young Abdul Razzaq, who was born in Jalandhar, former British India, in 1940. Growing up in Faisalabad in Pakistan he discovered one fact about the country where he would later make a new life for himself – that railway engines were built in Scotland – and learned one tale about the country.

“When I was in school the only thing they really taught us about Scotland was the story about Robert the Bruce and the spider,” he says. “To try, try and try again!”

It took a second attempt at obtaining a visa before Abdul, then 21, was able to follow his cousin Abdul Sattar to the UK, flying to London and then travelling to Glasgow to join his relatives. He found a city “full of dark buildings”. Though the Clean Air Act of 1956 had tackled the pollution problem, this was before Glasgow began the cleaning and restoration of its soot-stained tenements.

Abdul went to live with his cousin and two friends in a flat in Burnbank Gardens, near St George’s Cross, where he rented a bed for 10 shillings (50 pence) a week but also had to pay





a shilling to use the public baths. After a few months he and his cousin moved to another flat in nearby Maryhill and by this time Abdul was working in his first job – though it didn’t last long.

“My first job was lighting the street and building lights at Finnieston Cross,” he says. “I got a wee step ladder and had to use this to light each one. But I didn’t have any experience. There was no electricity in our home village at that time although there is now. Some of the closes were very dark and I sometimes missed lights.”

He didn’t know the foreman was following and checking him and after three months he was sacked but got a job in a whisky bond in James Watt Street doing general labouring for £5 a week – and would walk to work or hop on the tram. But the Robert the Bruce tale stood him in good stead again when he failed his first test in a bid to become a bus conductor: when he sat it a second time he passed. By 1964 he was working out of the bus terminal at Gavinburn, Old Kilpatrick, which has since been demolished.

Life was generally good for the young man, who soon settled into his new city. “I enjoyed being in Glasgow,” says Abdul. “I’d go to the pictures, meet up with good friends. We would visit places like Loch Lomond, eat out in cafes and socialise at each other’s houses.

“Of course you get good people and bad people. At first I didn’t know about racism. Working on the buses was one driver who used always to sit in his cab and didn’t come out to talk to me. Otherwise, most people were okay.”

After a spell working from the bus station in the city centre at Waterloo Street, Abdul heard there was a lot of work going in Dundee. “I moved there for six months and worked in a jute factory on nightshifts,” he says. “But the flat had no bath, I didn’t like it and I moved back to Glasgow to work on the buses again.”

He was saving money though, and in 1968 put £300 together with a friend’s £200 and they bought a grocery shop in Maryhill. “We would take £40-£50 a week then,” says Abdul. “It was a good turnover, as we were able to stay open on days when other shops were closed. We sold it on for a profit a year later and I bought a grocery shop in Govan with my cousin for £2500. We applied to make it a licensed shop and this, as well as it being near the shipyard, helped to make it very busy and successful.”

Abdul built on this success by buying the dairy next door for £1500. In 1972 he married Rehana, from Kenya, and they bought their first house in West Princes Street in Woodlands for £2400. Their son Sajid was born two years later. Rehana had arrived in Scotland, aged 16, with her family in 1969. “It was so cold I used to cry,” she says. “And my brother cried when he saw the black buildings.”

Meanwhile, Abdul continued to build his business, selling the Govan shop in 1980 but buying others along the way, in Woodlands, Thornliebank and Pollok. He eventually moved his family to Pollokshields on the south side of the city in 1989 and he and his wife have now lived in their house for 10 years.







“I always had good relationships with my customers,” Abdul says. “In business, if you are willing to work hard to be successful, it pays off. There’s nothing easy in life – It’s up to you what you make of it.”

Abdul believes he and his family have done well in Scotland and looks back with pride at the life he has built. “I’ve done a lot of travelling – to Canada and Turkey and I’ve visited London many times. But I’ve spent 52 years in Glasgow and I love this city. I feel more Glaswegian than anything.”

Abdul says there are some young people who perhaps don’t appreciate what has been achieved by others. “This generation works hard too,” he says. “But things are different. Friends who came here in the 1960s have mostly done well but it’s hard for small businesses now: you need a good education to make a successful future and I invested in this for my son, who now encourages his children.

“When we came to Scotland with £5 we had to work hard and now my son and three grandchildren are inheriting the benefits of that.

“Do I have big hopes for my grandchildren? Of course! If Barack Obama can work hard and become the first black President of the USA then one of my grandchildren – through hard work, education and determination – could become Prime Minister of the UK.”

## Abdul Sattar

✂ Arrived in 1960



It was a conversation at college that first sparked Abdul Sattar’s interest in the UK. Abdul was born in 1941 and was brought up in the small farming village of Malri in Faisalabad, Pakistan. The idea that there would be many more opportunities in the UK seemed very exciting to the teenager and within a few months,

he and his friend had decided to pay 2000 rupees for their security deposits and headed for the airport.

The 19-year-old Abdul and his friend arrived in London just before Christmas 1960. They had travelled together but were now going their separate ways. The friend chose to go to Birmingham where he already knew people but Abdul flew on to Glasgow where he had relatives. They picked him up from the airport and helped him to settle in. Despite the strangeness of his new surroundings, he quickly adapted.





“Everything seemed different when I first arrived – the weather, the houses, the people,” he says. “But when you get used it you are okay. I knew some English but I learned as I went along – it was only maybe the slang words or some accents that could be hard to understand and I still find the Glasgow accent a bit difficult!”

He took the test to become a bus conductor but initially failed as he could not identify all the currency denominations. “But I retook the test and passed it so I soon began working on the buses. I enjoyed it and they were good people to work with. The buses come on time here – not like at home!”

It helped that Abdul soon began to make friends and within a year he was able to buy his own flat in a tenement in Maryhill.

“I was a bit homesick sometimes but then I met other people from my area,” he says. “We would go to the picture-house or visit each other’s houses in Glasgow or in Paisley and Renfrew to cook curries together or play cards. I found out that some of these men were from villages in Pakistan that were just five miles away from where I had lived but we hadn’t known each other back home.

“Later I bought a house for £500 in Maryhill Road. My cousin Abdul Razaq moved in along with some other boys and there were about five of us in the house, but it changed as some moved out and others would move in. It was very cold as there was no carpet or central heating, just the coal fire, but I



liked having my own place as I could cook when I wanted to.

In 1966 Abdul married Irshad, who had come from Pakistan. “She was very homesick,” says Abdul. “But once my other friends started to get married they would bring their wives round and she was able to make friends. Our first son was born after a year. Life changes after your children are born.”

Abdul and his family went to live in Barrington Drive, near Kelvinbridge, then eventually moved to the south side of Glasgow to Dumbreck, near Pollokshields. He continued to work on the buses until 1974 when he bought a grocery shop in Govan that his son still runs and in 1980 ran a number of



shops with his cousin. Working in these businesses provided a good life for Abdul and Irshad, their two sons and three daughters.

“I had to start working in the shop at around 4am – it was freezing,” he says. “It was hard work compared to the buses. But it was my own business and I could take a cup of tea and sit down. After 40

years of that though, I think there is something missing. I still go every evening to the shop but I miss that early morning routine. You also get used to seeing your customers – they are very friendly and many of them have grown older with me.

“But I wish that I had learned some other skills rather than working all the time. I should have continued with my education here in Scotland or taken some classes to learn about plumbing or electrics. And I also think you need to spend more time with your family.

“I have been very lucky here,” he says. “I didn’t have to experience any real hardship. When I think about my

mother, who not only had to work at home but also tended to the farm where they lived in Pakistan and milked cows, it was a hard life. In Pakistan now things are very different; the farmers have tractors to help them.”

Abdul says that his children and grandchildren don’t know much about his early days in this country but he is happy to see them all being successful in what they do.

“I’ve enjoyed my life here,” he says. “I’ve had no difficulty. I like Glasgow people and it’s my home. I feel more like a visitor now when I go back to Pakistan.”





# Sampuran Singh Battu & Satwant Kaur Battu



Sampuran Singh Battu is one of the founding fathers of Glasgow's Sikh community. His devotion to his religion led to the creation of the city's first makeshift Sikh temple in a room in a flat in Glasgow's west end in the 1950s.

He arrived in the city in 1955 aged 31 to join his sister and her husband, leaving his wife and children behind in India for another two years until he could establish a home for them. He travelled via Southampton to Glasgow with just a single suitcase: "I fell down the escalators because I wasn't used to them," he remembers.

Originally from Barnala in the Punjab, he had been an accountant in the Indian Army during the Second World War but when he came to Scotland he earned his first income going door-to-door selling cardigans from his brother-in-law's knitwear factory.

In common with other Sikhs, Sampuran found that having a turban and beard made it difficult to find other work and he reluctantly reached a decision to remove his turban, cut his hair and shave his beard to improve his chances. For



Sikhs, long hair is a symbol of love and respect for God, so the decision was a heart-breaking one for Sampuran. "After I cut my hair I was crying and I did not want to eat my dinner for many days," he said.

He missed his family and was delighted when his then 21-year-old wife Satwant Kaur Battu arrived with three children in 1957. "I remember that it was very snowy and I fell over so many times. When I went shopping I had to touch the things I needed because I didn't know the English words for them," she said.

She arrived with few possessions – just Indian quilts, cooking pots and a big tin of ghee. Desperately homesick, she put on a brave face and tried to adapt to a very different life: "It used to take four weeks for letters from home to get here and I read them over and over. I cried for two years but not in front of my husband," she said.

Sampuran Singh is both a dedicated family man and community leader and was very active in building the foundations of a supportive social, cultural and religious community for Sikh families in Scotland. He was twice President of the Sikh Temple and helped raise money to establish new temples in the city and to provide an opportunity for Sikh children to join special classes to learn more about their culture and religion.

"We started the Indian Workers Association in Woodside Halls and we used to celebrate Indian Independence Day. It was about having a social and cultural place to come







together too and all the kids came,” he said. He raised five children who have gone on to successful careers and he worked hard for many years to build up his own businesses, which included two grocers’ shops and a newsagent. He also ran a post office until he retired.

“The kids tease us sometimes and say: ‘You’re off the boat’ but I’m very proud of them and what they have achieved. There is a much bigger circle of people from our community here now. Our struggles in the early days to make a better future helped build what we have today,” he said.

*Mrs Battu passed away aged 76 in March 2013 after contributing to this book.*



*“I couldn’t find a job so I decided I had to cut off my hair. After I cut my hair I was crying and I did not want to eat my dinner for many days.”*





# Dr Nirmal Dhar



*Arrived in 1965*

The University of Strathclyde in Glasgow had a specific appeal to the young and ambitious Nirmal Dhar. He knew nothing about the city or Scotland – just that it was likely to be permanently cold. However, for this well-educated 27 year old, Strathclyde had something no other university in the UK was offering: a course leading directly to a PhD in Pharmaceutical Chemistry.

Nirmal was born in 1938 in the small, remote village of Chittagong, then in East Bengal and part of British India. Following the Partition of 1947, the area became East Pakistan, before a period of turbulence and war led to the establishment of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh in 1971.

“After Partition, the future for a minority in East Pakistan had looked bleak,” says Nirmal, who is a Hindu. He studied Applied Chemistry at the University of Dhaka and graduated in 1958 before becoming a postgraduate in 1960. The next year he was appointed as a senior lecturer in a college in Chittagong and was promoted to head of the chemistry department. However, he wanted to continue studying and was keen to go abroad for higher education.



In order to do this, Nirmal used the Commonwealth directory to look up the contact details of universities to apply for admission. In 1965, the University of Strathclyde offered him a place to study for a PhD in pharmaceutical chemistry. He had received other offers but, he says: “I decided to go for Strathclyde as the University of Manchester had only offered me the chance to study first for an MSc degree leading to a PhD.”

Nirmal arrived in the UK in October that year, staying with friends in London for a few days before boarding a flight to Glasgow.

“I did not know anyone in Scotland,” he says. “And I knew nothing about it – the only information I had was about Strathclyde University.”

“I had contacted the British Council and the university for accommodation, which was arranged for me at the YMCA hotel at 100 Bothwell Street, near Glasgow Central Station.”

He had been told that Scotland was a very cold country, always covered with snow. “But when I landed at the airport I was happy to see the city’s surrounding hills which reminded me of home.”

Nirmal was not allowed to bring much British currency with him and had just £125 when he arrived, with the permission of the Pakistan government. “I brought a suit and warm clothes as I knew it was going to be very cold and I bought an overcoat when I arrived.”

He could speak English, though, and says that the other Pakistani and Indian students helped him a lot, which is why he did not face many initial problems.

However, food was the main challenge for Nirmal, who began to miss the comfort of friends and family despite his first sense of acclimatisation. Making new friends helped him a lot during through an initially difficult time.

“I did not like the food,” he says. “It was only five guineas (five pounds and five shillings) a week for accommodation with full board in the YMCA but the quality of the food was not good at all. I was homesick and missed the dishes from home.”

Together with students who had become friends, he started to cook Indian food at the weekends although at that time there were not many shops in Glasgow where spices and other ethnic ingredients were available.

After a year or so, Nirmal moved from the YMCA to rent a room with an Indian family at Parkgrove Terrace near the Kelvin Hall in the west end of the city. Then, in the summer of 1967 he moved to the south side of the city where he rented a one-bedroom flat in Pollokshaws Road for £25 a month. It was a very expensive move, considering he was receiving £41 a month from his elder brother but he needed a better place for his study.

Nirmal successfully completed his studies for his PhD in September 1968 but had already started a new job as a research officer with the university that summer.





He was paid £1,260 per year, leaving him with £82 cash after tax every month. With this income, the young Nirmal was now planning to go back to East Pakistan to get married. After about six months working as a university employee he managed to get permission from the Home Office to go home and he returned after his marriage in 1969.

Nirmal returned to Glasgow with his wife Anita after a few months. Anita, just like her husband, was homesick at first but gradually brushed up her skills in English at Anniesland College and was finally able to secure a job as a day centre officer in the Social Work Department at East Renfrewshire Council. The couple went on to have two sons, Arup in 1979 and Arnab in 1984.

Nirmal's career was now flourishing. He was one of five members of a research team that discovered Atracurium, a neuromuscular blocking agent (muscle relaxant), while working in the Department of Pharmacy at Strathclyde University.

The drug was patented in 1975, took nine years to come to the market in 1983 and is now in worldwide use in a wide range of surgical procedures. As part of the team that developed the drug, Nirmal received the Queen's Award for Technological Achievement.

It was a significant honour for the whole team. In 1986 the Queen's Award was presented to Wellcome's UK research laboratories jointly with the team led by the late Professor John Stenlake of the Department of Pharmacy at the







*“At the university, I was one of a team of five researchers in technology who invented a drug in 1974. It took nine years for it to come to the market and we were recognised with an award for the achievement.”*



University of Strathclyde, in recognition of their work.

In 1977 the family had moved to a three-bedroom, semi-detached house in Bishopbriggs on the northern edge of Glasgow, for which they paid £15,000.

They then moved to a three-bedroom, detached house in the same area. In 1991 they eventually moved across the city to Newton Mearns on the southern outskirts to their current home.

Nirmal says: “I have found Scottish people to be very friendly and helpful. We have always had very good neighbours and many Scottish friends with whom we socialise. I am very happy that I came to Scotland and made it my home.”

Nirmal retired in 1994 but continued to work at the University of Strathclyde as a volunteer for a further four years. His wife still works with East Renfrewshire Council as a day centre officer.

“We are proud of our sons and happy at their success,” he says. “I am also proud of my profession and of what I achieved, including the Queen’s Award.”

He is happy that his two sons understand his culture and traditions. “In my opinion it is important for the future that our children understand how their life started in Scotland – and also their origins.”





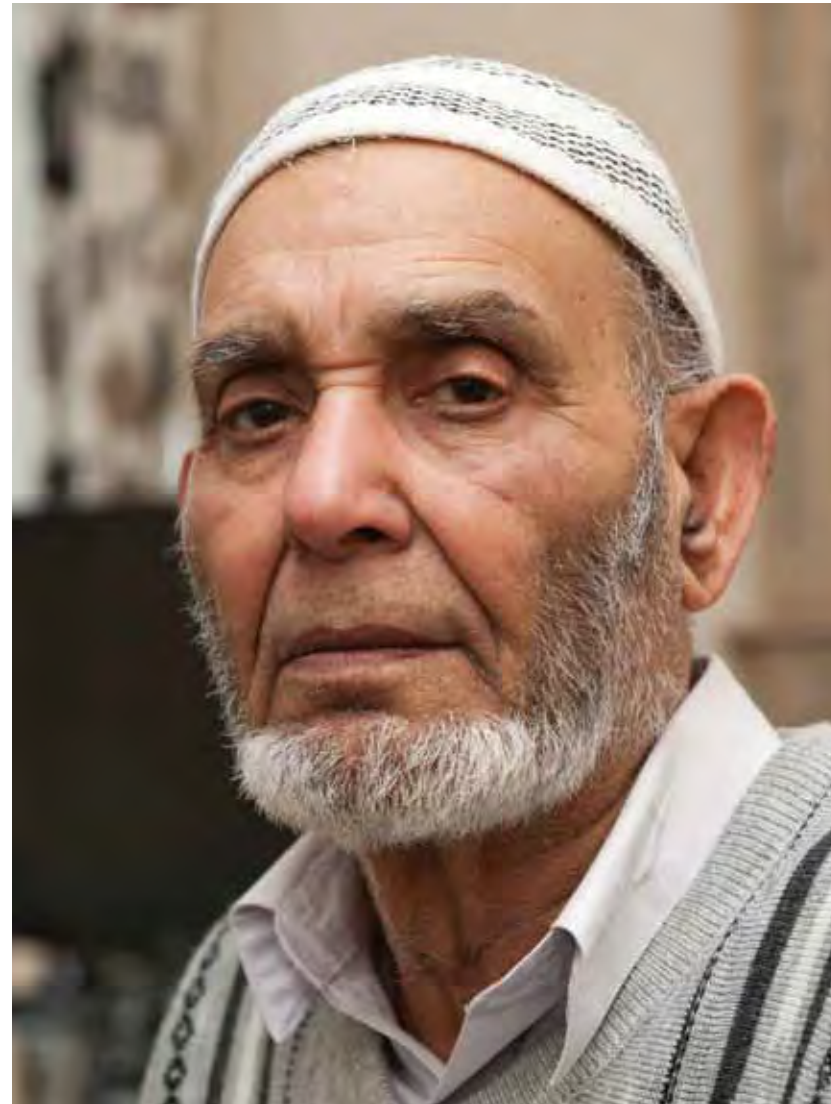
# Mohammed Latif

✂ Arrived in 1960

When Mohammed Latif was born in 1933, the Hoshiarpur district of Punjab where his family lived was still in British India. The young Mohammed passed his Matric exams (Matriculation is similar to the current Scottish Standard Grades) and went on to work in the accounts department of the Coal Commission office in Karachi. After a few years he was promoted and in 1958 married Kalsum Akhtar.

Mohammed continued to work for the coal commission until a friend suggested he might be better off working in the UK. “I wrote to my uncle who had gone to Glasgow and he said he would be glad of the company if I came over,” says Mohammed. “I flew to London in July 1960 and then on to Glasgow. When I got the bus from the airport to the city centre the conductor told me not to bother with the fare as I only had a cheque for £5.

“Then when I went for a taxi to my uncle’s house, I showed the driver the cheque and he said he couldn’t take it. But he asked if there would be someone at the house where I was going and took me to the house in the south side of Glasgow, where my uncle paid the fare.



“Here I found the only jobs that were available were on the buses or at the Singer sewing machine factory and I decided on the buses. I was interviewed at the Hampden garage for the position of bus conductor and passed. After two years they suggested that I took the driving test so I paid a friend to teach me how to drive and after I passed this test I became a bus driver. But my knee is bad these days and I can’t drive a bus or a car now.”

Away from his wife and from most of his family, Mohammed felt very lonely. However, along with other young men from Pakistan they would keep each other’s spirits up, meeting at one other’s houses or going out together to the ‘picture house’, the movies. In the works cafe at the bus garage there were two girls who made the tea at break time and they gave Mohammed and his friends a record player so that they could put on their own music.

By then he was sharing a flat with a group of other young men. One night when they were out, someone broke in and stole his passport. Luckily – because he had given his passport number and information to his employers – it was easy to have another one issued.

One of Mohammed’s strongest memories from those early days (when Glasgow was first beginning to tackle smog and pollution) was that he could not see the sun. “I think it wasn’t until about 1968 that the sun came out properly and shone in the way I had known it in Pakistan,” he says.

“There was so much smoke that you could never even see



the stars or the moon. We didn’t have any central heating then – just coal for the fire. A man would come calling ‘coal!’ every three days and we’d buy a bag every time.”

One day at work Mohammed started to feel unwell. He tried lying down in the office above the bus garage but later dragged himself down to do some work. “The inspector asked me what was wrong,” says Mohammed. “I told him ‘I’m sore here’ and showed him. I told him I was feeling sick and he decided to phone an ambulance.

“At the Victoria Infirmary they found it was my appendix. I had to have an operation and I was there for nine days. The inspector came to visit me but none of the other men I lived with came to see me. I don’t think they knew where





*“There was so much smoke that you could never see the stars or the moon. We didn’t have any central heating then – just coal for the fire”*

I was. But I was able to get word to my uncle and he came to visit me too.”

Over this period of time Mohammed had left his job about five or six times to return to Pakistan, especially during spells when his parents had been ill. But in 1972 he was able to arrange for passports for his family and brought his wife, two daughters and one son to live with him in Glasgow.

His children all settled there and, he says, have now done well for themselves. They know a little about his experiences but his grandchildren really don’t have any idea about what life was like for their grandfather when he first came to the UK. “My daughter-in-law teaches the grandchildren Urdu and about our traditions and the Quran. This is so they are brought up with a knowledge of culture and of religion.”

Mohammed and his family live in the Pollokshields area of Glasgow, where he says they have always had good neighbours and found it easy to make friends. Overall, he reckons, life has been good.

“When we make curry we still sometimes go and give some to the neighbours. It’s very friendly here and everyone likes me. If you know me you will get on well with me.

“I love everything about this country. Just last month I had problems with my electricity. They fixed it and I got £200! I’m very happy here.”

## Ruqia Mohammed

✈ Arrived in 1967



When Ruqia Mohammed came to join her new husband in the UK in the summer of 1967, she had little idea of what to expect. Born in Jalandhar in British India 26 years earlier, Ruqia spent the first few months in her new home feeling homesick and anxious.

Taj, her husband, had lived in the UK for 11 years before he married her – and his brother’s, wife and children had arrived previously.

“I flew to Heathrow Airport in London with my sister-in-law and her children as my husband had promised his mother we would look after her grandchildren and daughter-in-law,” says Ruqia. “I stayed with them in Manchester for a few months to help them settle and fulfil the promise my husband had made to his mother.

“It was very cold and I felt a little uneasy because I could not see any other Asian people. We had to go outside to use







the toilet, even in bad weather, and had to light the fire nearly every day then wait until it heated up the water before we could take a bath.”

Her husband had advised her not to bring many possessions, just warm clothes – including some sweaters she had made specially – plus her gold. After a few months in Manchester, Ruqia moved

to Glasgow to set up home with her husband in Westmoreland Street, in Govanhill, on the south side of the city.

Unfortunately, because Taj had a shop in the south of Scotland in Stranraer, Wigtonshire, he was away a lot and often stayed there. He had worked as a door-to-door salesman before his marriage to Ruqia.

“I was very reliant upon my husband and when he came back we would bulk shop, buying halal meat and a few chickens,” says Ruqia.

Fortunately, they found everything they needed in Glasgow where there were shops selling traditional ingredients and clothing. “I did not know much English and I am still not

fluent,” she says. My husband’s language skills were much better so he used to do a lot of the talking.”

The couple’s situation improved when the elderly woman who owned the house next to the shop in Stranraer sold it to them, on the condition that she could stay on and live in one room.

“She was a good woman and did a lot for us,” says Ruqia. “She looked after the house, made sure the fire was lit and kept it clean. We even taught her how to make chapatis and curry, which she would make for my husband. I’m very grateful for what she did for us.”

Eight years after arriving in the UK Ruqia became unwell. She was suffering from arthritis and the doctors and her family eventually agreed it might help if she went back to Pakistan for some warmth and sunshine. Unfortunately, her condition deteriorated there and she returned to Glasgow where she was hospitalised for a few months. She then received some other bad news.

“When I was in the hospital our house was broken into and all my gold jewellery was stolen,” says Ruqia. “Some had been given to me by my parents and in-laws. I was so upset that the staff became concerned for me and thought it would be better for me to get home to finish my recovery there – but when I got back I was worried all the time about people trying to break in again.”

By this time, in the late 1980s, Ruqia’s husband had opened

*“When I was in the hospital our house was broken into and all my gold jewellery was stolen. Some had been given to me by my parents and in-laws”*



the Taj Protective clothing factory in Candleriggs, in what is now Glasgow’s Merchant City, manufacturing jackets such as the high visibility ones used by building and utility workers. Taj was so concerned about how his wife had been affected by the break-ins that he began to take her into the factory with him.

“My husband asked me to come and work with him to help take my mind off what had happened,” says Ruqia. She enjoyed the work and says it also helped improve her English.

The couple, who lived in Thornliebank, just outside Glasgow, worked well together and the business was a success. Sadly though, Taj passed away a few years ago.

“When my husband died I kept the factory going for a while,” says Ruqia. But eventually she found it too much and allowed the business to be sold. “I had always depended so much on my husband until he passed away,” she says. “But I have wonderful friends and neighbours who look out for me, doing shopping and taking me to medical appointments as I suffer from many health problems.

“I still remember that time when my jewellery was stolen, though. Recently, when I went to Pakistan, I made sure to leave my possessions in the care of one of my friends.”



# Noor Mohammed

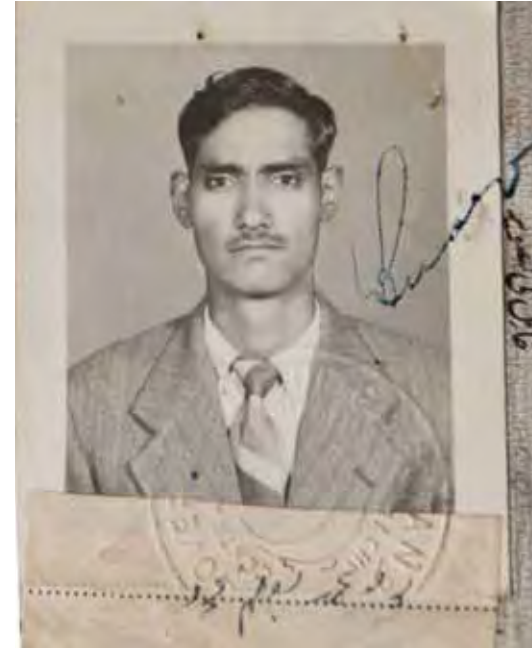
✂ Arrived in 1958

When Noor Mohammed decided to travel to the UK in 1958 he was 25 years old and looking forward to finding what would be a well-paid job. He was apprehensive though: it was a big step for the young man who had been born in Faisalabad in 1933.

“I brought a suit and other clothing, bedding and £5 with me but I really did not know what kinds of things I would need,” he says. Some people from his village were staying in Glasgow so after flying into Heathrow Airport he took a train to the city.

“I found the language very difficult as I did not know much English so I had to keep asking people at which stop we had arrived and how far we had to go to Glasgow.

“I stayed with my friends for a few days then went to live in a flat in the Gorbals on Hospital Street. I found things very strange at first and I did not know many people. I was a little bit lonely but I had no problems in finding food, clothing and other cultural and religious items as there were plenty of shops and other people in the community who could help



*“I found the language very difficult as I did not know much English so I had to keep asking people which stop we had arrived at and how far we had to go to Glasgow”*

me. There was also a shop where we could buy halal meat.” In 1964 Mohammed took a ship to Pakistan, married Khishwar and they returned to Glasgow the following year. “Later, in 1968 we travelled by road to Pakistan for a visit with my wife and my brother-in-law and his family,” says Mohammed.

“It was a very long and interesting journey but the car broke down in Germany on the way back. My wife and I had to complete the journey home by train and ferry.”

Mohammed spent several months selling door-to-door but was happy to secure a job as a parcel maker at Lo-Cost Traders. In the late 1970s he moved south for a spell and found work in a textile mill in Huddersfield, living near Manchester but the following year, in 1979, he moved back to Glasgow and set up home in Mansewood, in the south side of the city.

“I got a job working as the caretaker and undertaker for the Central Mosque and worked there for many years until I retired due to health reasons,” says Mohammed.

“My wife and I have three sons, six daughters and 17 grandchildren. They have some knowledge of the language and traditions of Pakistan but they do not really have any understanding of my experiences and how hard things were when I first arrived.”



# Shanti Sharma

✈ Arrived in 1957

With three young children and a friend for support, Shanti Sharma left her home in India to join her husband in the UK in 1957. It had been three years since she and the children, who were aged six, eight and 10, had seen Ramnath, who had travelled by sea to the UK, determined to earn more money for his family.

Shanti, born in 1929 in the village of Pagala in the Punjab, couldn't wait for them to start their new life together and was already determined to make the best of their opportunity.

"We flew into London and had to stay in a hotel for a day," she says. "I really liked it: we were excited, everything looked good and it was so comfortable. I thought London was a beautiful place."

However, this was just the start of the young family's journey, as Ramnath had not stayed long in Newcastle, his first destination, before moving on to set up home in Portadown, County Armagh.

Once they were reunited, the Sharma family continued to live in Northern Ireland for three years, in a large house in a quiet area away from the town centre. Shanti's husband was still running his business from a van, going door-to-door selling clothes. Unfortunately, it wasn't an easy way to earn a living.



"It was very difficult to run a business at that time as many customers were not very comfortable with Asian people," says Shanti. "Some people would not even open their door if they saw an Asian man at the step. Some asked their children to go to the door to tell Ramnath that their mother was not at home."

There were other problems for the young mother as she attempted to settle her family in their new home and Shanti believes her friendliness and positive approach proved crucial to making a success of this.

"We used to go to the public baths and to the wash house to clean our clothes," she says. "We would take the children's pram to carry the load. It was also difficult finding the right food: some Indian vegetables like bhindi and tinda were not available in Northern Ireland.

"But we had no problems with our neighbours and the local people. Our neighbours helped me a lot and they used to give the children lifts to school. They helped to teach me some English too. I think I coped well with all the changes after moving from India because of my personality, as I'm usually a very confident person who can handle challenges easily."

By 1960, the Sharma family had two more children and Shanti's husband was keen to start involving their oldest son in the door-to-door sales. But Shanti didn't agree, as she didn't think there was enough money in the business. Her husband had a few friends in Glasgow and he decided to travel to Glasgow to look for work and soon found a job as a bus conductor.





Shanti was not able to join him straight away as it took some time to find suitable accommodation. But after seven months, the big move to Glasgow for Shanti and her five children was on.

“It was hard to leave as my neighbours in Northern Ireland were so wonderful,” she says. “They were very helpful to me while I was there on my own. We travelled by sea to Glasgow and brought a baby’s cot and two beds with us from Ireland.”

Ramnath bought a flat in West End Park Street, near Charing Cross. He paid a £50 deposit then instalments of £5 a month. “We were the first Asian family in that tenement building,” says Shanti. “It was very dirty and in a very bad condition. We worked hard to make improvements and I did the plastering, papering and painting.”

Unfortunately, Shanti’s husband became unwell after just a few months and in order to meet the £5 repayments on their home, their eldest son left school when he was 15 and started working to help his father.

The family’s fortunes gradually began to improve. They bought a shop in Maryhill on Rolland Street (a street that disappeared at the end of the 1960s when Queen Margaret Drive was extended) in 1962, with £400 that Shanti’s husband had borrowed from a friend and the business flourished. Soon the family, now with three sons and three daughters, were able to buy a new home in Bishopbriggs, the area where Shanti, a grandmother and great-grandmother, still lives now.



“Life seems so easy nowadays,” she says. “I tell all the children about my experiences and how the family have done well over the years. Sending money back home to the family isn’t a challenge any more as, to be honest, we have very little family left back in India.”

## Adarsh Khullar

✕ Arrived in 1964

After she met the man who would become her husband, Adarsh Khullar began to dream of a glamorous new life in the UK. Born in Amritsar in 1940, she was 23 when family friends introduced her to the young man who had come back to India after seven years living in London. After their marriage, the couple spent three months together before his return to the UK. Soon after, her sponsorship was organised and Adarsh arrived in London on August 1 that same year.

“I was very excited,” she says. “I was going to live in a different country, to see a different world though I was also sad to leave my family and friends behind. The Air India flight stopped at Rome and I bought a postcard to send back to India.

“I had £3 with me but I didn’t really understand the value of money. When I was left with 10 shillings I just gave it to the shopkeeper and told him I did not need money as my husband would have plenty in London. So I was left with nothing.”

At first Adarsh, who had been brought up in a family who were quite well off, was full of hope for the future and the opportunities it would bring. Unfortunately, she would learn very quickly about the value of money – and how to earn it.







“My husband had come to the UK to be a photographer but he was a mechanic working in a garage when I arrived,” she says. “My family were wealthy and so was his. He had been very pampered but now his family wanted him to learn how to stand on his own two feet.” But old habits die hard. “He never saved and whatever he earned he spent on entertaining friends.”

England was not what she thought it would be. “My husband lived in a two-bedroom flat in Slough and while it looked beautiful inside, the furniture and appliances were all bought on hire purchase.”

Ardash realised she would have to take charge of the finances. This was not the only challenge for the young woman, who by this time was starting to feel very homesick.

“I knew a little English but I was not confident I was fluent enough to properly communicate with the people around me,” she says. “This hurt me a lot. I was an independent person but I was becoming more and more dependent on my husband due to the language barrier. When he went to work I would go to bed and often cry. I missed my parents terribly and though my husband tried very hard to keep me happy I could not stop missing my family.”

Adarsh was soon expecting their first child and after their daughter was born, she was determined to help improve her growing family’s circumstances.

While she wanted to work, her husband did not like the idea but an Indian friend had offered to look after her daughter







while she looked for a job. “I started asking in offices and the first two companies said no. At the third place, Aspro Nicholas (the Slough pharmacy producing the painkiller discovered and developed by George Nicholas), I was told I could start work if I wore a skirt or a dress – but not the trousers I was wearing.”

Adarsh bought two skirts and a dress from Marks & Spencer as she prepared to start her new job. Her husband was still upset but she was not going to give up her ambition.

“I was paid £7 and 10 shillings per week,” she said. “Out of that I paid £2 every week to our babysitter, an English lady. Soon my husband became very proud of me and later told his friends that his wife was the first Asian lady to work at Aspro.”

In 1968, following the birth of their second daughter, Adarsh took her children back to India for a year. Her husband travelled there by car and the family stayed for six months before flying back to the UK. The couple’s third daughter was born in 1971 and that year the family went on holiday to Scotland.

“One of my husband’s friends had asked him to run a shop in Glasgow but I did not like the city and felt it was a little backwards,” says Adarsh. “The buildings were dark and the weather was always bad.”

Back in Slough, though, her husband persuaded her to move and the family rented a one-bedroom flat in West End Park Street near Charing Cross in the Woodlands area of Glasgow.

“There was no bath,” she says. “I was very upset. After a few months we moved to a three-bedroom flat in the same street but I still wanted to go back to Slough where we still owned our house.

“After living in West End Park Street for two years I knew we were going to stay so we bought a flat in nearby Dunearn Street for £3500 and upgraded it. My husband opened a garage in Napiershall Street and our shop was in Meadowpark Street in Dennistoun in the east end.

“My son was born in 1975. I went to the shop in the evenings from 6pm-10pm and during the daytime looked after my children while my husband looked after them in the evenings. In 1980 we sold both businesses and bought a newsagent and off-licence in Dumbarton Road.



*“A high school head teacher was a regular customer at the shop and she guided me on the children’s education and Scottish culture. I will always be grateful for that”*



“When I started working in the shop I realised how nice and helpful Scottish people were. A high school head teacher was a regular customer and she guided me a lot on the children’s education and Scottish culture. She had a huge impact on my life and I will always be grateful for that.”

The family flourished, buying Adarsh’s current house in Scotstoun in 1983 and with the children now helping out, the couple retired from the business in 1996. They had big plans, setting out on a world tour, visiting America then India, before there was a terribly sad turn of events.

“My husband stayed behind in India a bit longer to spend some time with his family but he fell ill,” explains Adarsh. “He came back to Glasgow but passed away in July 1997.”

Adarsh and her children sold the business but while her grown-up family were becoming established in their careers, Adarsh, still grieving for her husband, felt that her world had been turned upside down again.

“I was very sad and lonely and I also had a lot of responsibilities,” she says. “Then I realised I had to do something with my own life.”

Adarsh set up a group for single and older Asian women – the Scottish Asian Ekta Group (Ekta means ‘unity’), the first group of its kind in Scotland.

“I set it up for women in a similar situation to my own,” she explains. “I chair the group and we now have more than 60 members. We meet every week to talk and have lunch



together but we also take part in activities such as music, yoga, dance or singing, or go away on day trips. We are also delighted that Liz Cameron, the local Councillor and the former Lord Provost of Glasgow (*pictured above*) is our patron.”

Adarsh has a busy life now. One daughter is in America, the other two in London along with her son. She has six grandchildren, who she visits regularly. “My family know our story and are very proud of me,” she says. “And yes, when I look back, I’m proud of what I’ve achieved too.”

## Kanta Jain

✕ Arrived in 1954

Cold, dark and lonely – that was Kanta Jain’s first impression of Scotland and it took a long time before she revised that view.

Kanta was born in Sultanpur Lodhi, a town in the Indian state of Punjab, in 1930 and enjoyed a comfortable upbringing in a wealthy family with a large home. In 1954, however, that all changed. Her husband, Ram Rach Pal Jain, had already travelled over to Glasgow and aged 24, Kanta and her young son, brother-in-law and sister-in-law flew to London on the first leg of the journey to join them.

“I had brought some Indian sweets and blankets,” she says. “Apart from my husband, I did not know anyone in Glasgow. I had heard from my neighbours in India that white people lived there and that their culture was completely different from ours.”

Kanta’s husband Pal was already settled in Glasgow but the first-floor, four-bedroom flat in Garnethill Street that was to be her new home was not at all what she had been expecting.

“The buildings were all dark and the condition of the house was not good,” she said. “I had arrived in Glasgow in October and it was very cold. There was no carpet and no central





heating. I wore cardigans and long Johns underneath my sari! We had only paraffin oil heaters and coal fires to heat the flat and it was hard work. Washing our clothes was another problem as we did not have washing machines at that time.

“In India my parents and parents-in-law were rich and could afford to have servants. But here we had no money. I had to do everything – just keeping the house warm was hard and dirty work, taking the ashes out, filling the fire with coal and re-lighting it.

“I was very young and it was difficult to adjust to it all. The weather was cold and depressing and the isolation was another factor. I was sad and depressed, thinking about my family back home and crying on my own.”

Meanwhile Pal was working hard, selling clothes door-to-door around the wider Glasgow area and dragging bags of garments with him.

“Some Scottish people did not even open the door when they saw an Asian man on their doorstep,” says Kanta. “Some were very nice but others would shut the door in his face. It was very embarrassing and depressing for him.” Pal continued in this business for three years, then bought a clothing warehouse.

Kanta could speak English so that at least was not a problem. In fact, as she began to make friends with others who had come to Glasgow from India, she would help them with the language.





“I did find Scottish people friendly,” she says. “Friendlier than they had been in London. Our neighbours were Scottish and we got on well with them.”

Despite this, Kanta was still lonely and could not settle. The weather and difficulties with food – Indian vegetables such as bhindi, karela, tinda and lauki were not readily available – became too much for her and after five years she went back to India, staying there until 1966.

“We’d had enough of Britain,” she says. “But my husband returned to Glasgow, where he was working hard with his new business, the clothing warehouse in the Gorbals, Paul Jain & Sons.”

Seven years after she left, Kanta and her children were back living in Garnethill Street in Glasgow. As the business prospered, so did the family and they moved house a number of times before settling in Bishopbriggs, on the northern edge of the city.

“When the kids were older, I found things a lot better,” says Kanta. “We were all working hard for the business, going to Ingliston market together and working at the warehouse.”

Since the death of her husband Pal, Kanta has been supported and comforted by her two sons, three daughters and nine grandchildren.

“I’m very proud of my family for being well educated and so successful in business,” she says. “I tell my grandchildren the story of how we came to Glasgow and how hard we had



to work and what we achieved. They listen carefully and appreciate what we have done.”

Kanta has been back to India many times but despite her early unhappiness, Scotland is now her home – although one thing has not changed. “It’s still too cold,” she says.

## Abdul Rashid

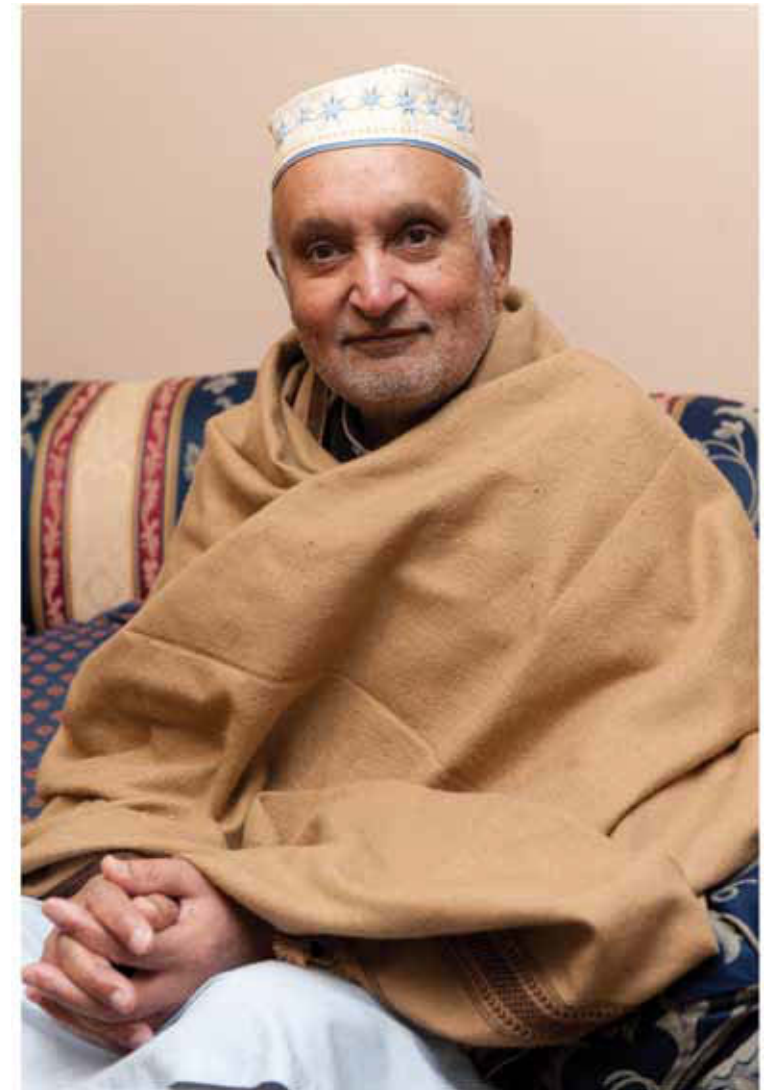
✈ Arrived in 1962

Abdul Rashid had not seen his father for almost eight years when he arrived in the depths of a London winter from Pakistan in January 1962. Despite his father’s warnings, the 19 year old was not quite prepared for the harshness of the weather.

“There was a huge amount of snow, enormous piles and drifts as high as a door,” he says “My father asked me to bring bedding and warm clothes but they were not warm enough so he had to buy me more.”

Abdul was born in 1943 in Montgomery, British India – now Sahiwal in Pakistan. He came from a family of farmers and was one of four brothers who expected to continue on this path but following Partition his father left for the UK to find work in Birmingham. When Abdul joined him, his father found him a job with the Asia Weekly.

“I would take stories from the UK newspapers, from individuals we would visit, or information that had been sent and translate them into Urdu,” explains Abdul. “I enjoyed the job but it was six days a week and for not much money.” After about a year in Birmingham, in the cold, cramped attic floor of a three-storey house – “I’ve never been as cold as I was then” – Abdul’s father bought a house in nearby Blackheath, where he found a job at Lloyd’s steelworks, later part of British Steel.





“I worked for 44 hours, earning £13 a week,” he says. “The return trip to work was by bus and that cost a shilling for each journey.

Things weren’t all bad. “We had good neighbours who were happy to help, especially if we had trouble understanding anything. Also, my father was known as a great joker and teller of tales in Urdu and people would come around on Sundays to hear his stories.

“In Birmingham and in Blackheath, even though the houses were quite large, there were no indoor toilets. We had to go outside to the back garden to use the toilet. In Birmingham we had to go to a public bath house at the weekend and pay half a crown (worth roughly £1.50 today) for soap and a towel to have a bath. But in Blackheath, as the public baths were about eight miles away, we got around this by using an old woodshed in the garden with a big old metal bath we filled with buckets of hot and cold water from the house.”

Abdul’s father moved back to Pakistan in 1972 and a year later asked his son to go back to get married. They returned to the UK in 1974 with Abdul’s new wife, Zubaida. He then found night-shift work in a pressed steel factory in Smethwick.

“I felt uneasy taking buses at night and early in the morning especially as I had to go through the town centre,” admits Abdul. “There were skinheads there. Although I never experienced anything physical, there was verbal racism.”

The money in Smethwick was not bad but the conditions weren’t good so when Abdul met up with his old Asia Weekly





boss in Birmingham, he was persuaded to run the shop he owned in Scotland and in 1979, as his father returned to Pakistan, Abdul, Zubaida and their baby son moved to Edinburgh – the first time, he says that they had an indoor bathroom.

While Abdul was enjoying his new role, for Zubaida, the move proved difficult. “I cried in Edinburgh,” she says. “We shared a kitchen and I felt miserable being stuck in the house all day alone.”

Abdul went into business with friends, first running another shop in Edinburgh but when the chance of a shop came up in Ayrshire the growing family made their next move and Abdul set up business near Kincaidston in Ayr where they set up home in the village of Coylton – the start of a happy and settled time for all his family.

In the early 1990s the family moved to their current home in Galston. Around that time a group was set up by the local council, so Zubaida was able to meet other Pakistani people in the area and make new friends.

“We had a very good relationship with our local doctor and the primary school,” says Abdul. “The doctor would happily come out to see us in our home – as it was difficult to get to the surgery with a shop and the children. The children’s headmistress would also pick up the children from home and school. We were very happy to have such good and friendly people around us.”

Abdul believes his father’s experiences in coming to this country were more trying than his – but says that people in

general were kind and helpful and recalls two stories about the friendliness his father also experienced.

“When he first arrived in the country all he had was an address on a piece of paper he’d been given in Pakistan,” he says. “At the airport he showed this to a policeman who put him on the right bus and told the driver to take him to the stop. He only had £5 – which he gave to the conductor, who gave him his change and helped him off with his luggage. He then showed the address to a lady who actually took him to the right place.

“My father then got work in a Ford factory which was four miles from his home. He told his manager that as a Muslim he needed to do his prayers and that some of these would fall during his work time, saying he was happy to have his wages docked for the time he prayed or to work extra to cover the time. But his manager said that would be unfair and provided my father with a new, clean hessian bag and a place to pray.”

Abdul says they met many kind people but still remembers the cold, struggling with the language and what he says was a lack of community in those earlier years; memories of which he’d also like his two sons and daughters to be aware.

“Then it was mainly single men from Pakistan who came to this country,” he explains. “There were not many women and children until years later. The social and community life is much improved now.



“Now younger people don’t ask or really want to know about these experiences. My children have grown up in a very different time. They have so much available that they find it hard to accept such situations were even possible – they don’t understand the struggles and the challenges.”

Things have changed a lot for Abdul. “Before, people were much more friendly. Then there were shops; now there are

supermarkets and not so much of a sense of being part of the community.”

There is a note of regret in his voice: “Young people now have everything. I try to explain to them what it was like not to have so many facilities and all the things they have now. They say: ‘All right dad, it was your life – we have different lives now so don’t go on about it!’.”



# Pritam Singh & Jasmail Kaur Kainth

✕ Arrived in 1955

Scotland did not appear to be anything like the marvellous country that had been described to Jasmail Kaur by her elder brother, who was already living in Glasgow with his own drapery business.

Jasmail, who was born in 1934 in the Ludhiana district of Punjab in India had dreams of becoming a doctor – and in 1955 her brother invited her to stay with him to study medicine. She flew from Delhi to London in May of that year.

“I was told that Scotland was a beautiful and rich country and the people were all very nice, civil and educated,” says Jasmail. “My brother met me at the airport in London and we took the sleeper train to Glasgow.

“The waiting room in the station was very cold and people were smoking everywhere – I could not stand it. My brother bought us coffee and I couldn’t taste it – just the cigarette smoke. I thought I had made a terrible mistake.”

They arrived in Glasgow the next morning. “My brother lived in Milton Street, just off Petershill Road in Springburn, with his Scottish wife and son in a two-bedroom flat. I was shocked to see how small the house was as I had much more space at home.



However, her brother and his wife looked after Jasmail well. “On Sunday evenings we would go to the Sikh temple in the south side of Glasgow but I found the language difficult and food was also a problem: you could only buy turnip, carrots and potatoes and there was just one type of lentil.”

The buildings, she recalls were gloomy and the streets and pavements narrow and dark. “Most of the people were friendly but there were some who called you ‘darkie’.”

Jasmail became further disillusioned when she discovered that her qualifications and the studies she had completed at college in Glasgow were not enough to let her pursue a career in medicine. Instead, she trained to be a teacher at the city’s Jordanhill College.

“After completing my studies, I was asked if I intended to stay in Scotland or return to India,” says Jasmail. She decided to go back, left Scotland in 1960 and married Pritam Singh a year later.

She found it difficult to settle again in India as despite the fact she had done so well in qualifying as a teacher she couldn’t help comparing her achievements to those of her friends, some of whom had become doctors.

In 1962, the couple arrived back in Glasgow. Pritam, who had an English Literature degree, did not have the same language problems his wife had experienced but still had some big adjustments to make.

“My brother-in-law lived in a second-floor flat, which was a







new experience for me as I had never seen flats before,” he says. “I didn’t like it all but I did like Glasgow; I thought it was a clean and interesting city.

“The day after we arrived my brother-in-law took me to a barber to get my hair cut. As a Sikh, I was proud of my hair and very sad to have to do this. But in those days it was difficult to find a job with [traditional Sikh] hair.

“The next day I went to the Employment Exchange and was prepared to do anything. My first job was oiling trains, which paid £7 per week. I didn’t like it – it was dirty and my clothes were always covered in oil but I needed to work.”

His workmates, he says, were “OK” and accepted him and language wasn’t a problem as he had a degree in English and Maths. “But I had to work as a labourer as this was the only job on offer. I didn’t want to have to rely on social security money,” he says.

“After six weeks I got a job as a bus conductor and it paid £9 per week plus overtime.” The couple rented a room for three months before saving £50 for a deposit to buy a one-bedroom flat with a kitchen and inside toilet in Springburn. “It was a good property. We lived there for four years and had our two children there.”

But Pritam wasn’t happy working as a bus conductor. “I was frustrated that I wasn’t making use of my education and my qualifications.” When he saw the post of Tax Officer advertised in the paper he decided to apply and in 1967 he







became the first Asian Tax Officer in Scotland.

“After two years I was regraded to Tax Officer higher grade with a salary of £1,400 a year. My salary grew over the years and I eventually retired in 1996 from the Inland Revenue. I always enjoyed my job and got on very well with most of my colleagues, though there were one or two who were not pleased when I was awarded a higher grade.”

The couple had moved to East Kilbride to be nearer Pritam’s place of work. Jasmail, unable to secure a teaching job when she returned to Glasgow with her husband, had also completed one year of nursing training before her first child came along.

But with a growing family, she decided to take part-time work in a local supermarket in the town and adapt her hours when the children went to school.

“Our children have done well and they all have degrees,” says Jasmail. “They follow Indian traditions, they were married with our blessing and are happy.”

Despite the family’s happiness and success, Pritam believes he faced a barrier in his career.

“Sometimes I think I would have had more professional success if I’d been back in India, with a higher position and more money,” he says. “I think it was due to my accent and background that I only reached the Revenue Executive rank in Scotland.”





# Mushtaq Ahmed

B.Sc. C.Eng. F.I.Min.E.



*Arrived in 1950*

The terrible events that preceded the Partition of 1947 spread throughout India and included killing and rioting in Bihar, where a young Mushtaq Ahmed was studying at the Indian School of Mines. Mushtaq, born in Calcutta in 1929, had been brought up by his older sister as his mother had been ill since his birth and it was his sister's insistence that he get out of India that ultimately led to him coming to the UK.

“There were some Hindu and Muslim riots in 1946,” he says. “I was in no trouble though my sister worried about me. My elder brother was principal of the Indian Police College in Calcutta and had a friend who was the Deputy Inspector General, who arranged for a police vehicle to bring me from the Indian School of Mines to my brother's residence in the Police College.”

Eventually though, his family decided to send him to the UK to study and in September 1950 he arrived to study mining engineering at Strathclyde University.

“I travelled by Imperial Airways as my family was reasonably well off and could afford to pay for the flight and my studies. It took two days to travel from Calcutta to Karachi and then to Cairo and Heathrow.

“My elder brother graduated from Oxford University in 1939 and had told me about the UK. I had also read some English literature fairly deeply but had less information about Scotland and did not know anyone there. My cousin was at the airport to meet me and put me on a train to Glasgow.”

Mushtaq settled quickly into the new city and his new home. “I found it easier to understand the Scottish accent than that in London,” he says. “My landlady was very good and treated me like one of her children – all the landladies I've had here treated me like this.

“I didn't expect the weather to be so bad and the food wasn't to my liking. I got used to it, although I missed Indian food badly. One landlady got me some pepper to put on food and another served smoked haddock. I also got a particular liking for haggis.

“When I had arrived in London, my cousin had taken me to Selfridges and made me buy a suit, long johns, a heavy overcoat, a Harris Tweed jacket and brogues. I could not get used to all these heavy clothes and only kept the overcoat when I threw the other items away – then I bought a university blazer and scarf in Glasgow. No student wore suits at the university.”

Mushtaq says he had a good relationship with his fellow students and graduated in 1953 with first class honours. He was offered a job in Quetta in Pakistan and was on his travels again to take up the post of mine manager. But he was back in Glasgow around three months later.







“It was not my scene,” he says. “I came straight back here.” He joined the National Coal Board as a graduate trainee in 1954 and was paid £500 a year (paying £2.50 a week for full board in his digs). After three years’ training he was made acting mine manager, with a salary of £1,100 a year and tied accommodation in Stirling at a low rent until 1968.

“I met a marvellous set of people staying here,” says Mushtaq. “I met my wife Charlotte at Stirling High School former pupils’ badminton club – she was visiting after having moved to Canada – and we married a year later. I was fully accepted by her family and it was fortunate I managed to grab her.”

Mushtaq joined the Civil Service in 1969, the first Indian to hold the position of principal in the administration grade, on a salary of £3,000 a year. He bought a three-bedroom house in Bexley, London for £6,000 but found it hard to settle into this new lifestyle and 18 months later made another career move.

“It was hard to manage the mortgage payments and other expenses,” says Mushtaq. “In 1970, I decided to join the National Coal Board in London in the staff department as an officer, then moved to Doncaster where I spent 10 years.”

It was there at a dinner party he met a classmate from Strathclyde, who was now a professor at the university. This led Mushtaq to explore new opportunities and in 1982 he returned to Scotland to take up a lectureship at the University of Strathclyde in the department of Mining and Petroleum Engineering. He bought a house in Stirling,



where the couple still live, having retired after 10 years of commuting to Glasgow. “Teaching is an honour and a privilege,” says Mushtaq. “I think I was born to teach.”

In August 2007, a friend helped Mushtaq celebrate India’s 60th year of independence by downloading a flag from the internet but while he is immensely proud of his culture and background, Scotland has become his home.

“I used to go back to India every second year but it is too much now,” he says. “All my people are here – there is nobody left there.”

Mushtaq looks back positively on his experiences after he arrived in Scotland. With three daughters and a son, plus seven grandchildren, he is also proud of what his family have achieved.

“We have generations of academics and civil servants in the family and all the kids are honours graduates,” he says. “I’ve been very fortunate. I must have been very good in my previous life. My wife is a splendid person – my best achievement.

“I always say that when we die the archangel will tell my wife to go in – and when I arrive they’ll ask: ‘who are you?’. So I’ll say: ‘I’m with her’ and they’ll say: ‘in you go then!’ Of course, as a scientist I don’t really believe that. We’ll all be quarks or strings.”





East of Scotland



# Sapuran Singh



Arrived in 1949

It was a big step into the unknown for Sapuran Singh when in 1949, aged 22, he decided to make the long sea journey to the UK.

This was two years after the Partition of India had created the state of Pakistan, scattering many communities. The young man, born and brought up as part of the Gilotar clan in the Punjab, began his journey by first travelling to Amritsar and then joined a ship in Bombay, now Mumbai.

After 18 days at sea, Sapuran stepped off the boat at the port of Tilbury into post-war London. He was greeted by a bleak landscape then travelled to Glasgow, where his older brother and sister had already settled.

“The British Government had advised that refugees could come to the UK so in March 1949 that’s what I did,” says Sapuran.

“I knew practically nothing of Scotland before I came here. When I arrived in London I found lots of the buildings bombed and crumbling and it was like the middle of winter.

“ I had no English and it was very cold but it didn’t put me off – I liked the snow. My sister was already in Glasgow with her husband and I travelled with my older brother. I felt very welcome there: people were kind and sweet to me.



“Communication was the most difficult thing and I had to learn everything from scratch but my brother-in-law taught me a lot of English.”

As a young Sikh man, he felt that perhaps his pug and dahri (turban and beard) were the reasons he found it difficult to find work. But then Sapuran started selling door-to-door, throughout Scotland. However, after six months he followed his sister and family to live for a time in Manchester, before returning to Scotland in 1958.

By this time, he had his own family. “A friend told me Edinburgh was a good place to come to, so I settled here with my wife, Sarjit Kaur and three children,” says Sapuran. Working door-to-door again, he fell victim to a violent attack. Sapuran stressed that wearing the turban in Scotland had never been a problem for him – apart from seeking work – but after this terrible experience, he believes it may even have helped save his life.

“I was across the Forth Road Bridge in a village in Fife,” he recalls. “Three men from a pub asked: ‘what are you selling? I need a tie.’ So I said it was six shillings (around £6 now). Another had a hammer which he swung at my head and tried to kill me but my turban cushioned the blow.

“A woman shouted at them from a window and came and helped me into a joiner’s shop. They called the police and while one woman made me a cup of tea, another picked up all my stuff that was scattered. The turban certainly saved me and I didn’t go back there.”







Otherwise, Sapuran was doing well in business and still remembers these times fondly. “When you’re young, you spend money,” he says. “My brother, brother-in-law and I had a car and would go and meet Scottish friends, cook, eat and have a whisky or two.

“Spices were hard to find but I used to buy red chilli, curry powder and chapati flour from Boots the Chemist on Nicholson Street. We went to the cinema in Nicholson Square on Sundays. Lots of people would go – there was always a good story then, they aren’t so good now. Then in the 1970s video came along and ended it.”

Sapuran got a mortgage to buy a family home. After a while, he opened his own clothing store in Nicholson Street and for a time one of his sons came to work with him there before the big stores, he says, “took away my custom”.

He also remembers the Gurdwara, the Sikh temple they created by knocking through a wall in a flat, before everyone in their Edinburgh community contributed to a new one at Sheriff Brae in Leith.

Sapuran still has one or two whiskies every evening – “after eight o’clock” – and lives in the flat where he made the family home more than 40 years ago. Sadly, his wife Sarjit Kaur passed away in 2001. Their three sons and three daughters, plus many grandchildren and great-grandchildren live locally and throughout the UK and his family visit him regularly.





# Kuldip & Jit Singh Bhakar

✂ Arrived in 1959

A little more than a year before Kuldip Singh Bhakar and his family were due to travel to the UK from India, his father died after falling ill with pneumonia.

The tragedy left the Bhakars struggling with grief but they were still determined to make a new life in the UK, having previously spent some time in England.

Kuldip, born in Amritsar in 1946, had two brothers and five sisters. He was just 12 when his father passed away and was 14 by the time his family made the journey to London. His father, who was well off, had left enough money for them to see through their plans.

“As we had been to the UK before we knew we wanted to live there,” says Kuldip. “My sister was in Edinburgh with her husband as well as my elder brother. My father had booked his ticket to India but tragically died before the journey. I only had 10 days until my passport ran out, so we had to get organised quickly.”

Kuldip’s father had first come to London in 1950 with his son-in-law and returned to India to bring his family back with him in 1953. Kuldip lived in London for three years with his parents and two brothers and a third brother was born during this spell in 1954.



“When I was little we had travelled from Bombay to London for the first time on a big black ship,” he says. “It took six weeks and while we stayed in London my wee brother was born. Then we went back to Amritsar in India to renovate our house, which was collapsing, and build a new one. I remember my dad holding an umbrella to shelter us from the sun and watching to make sure the labourers were working. I would play with my kite.

“Before my father died, I had a great childhood. He was a businessman and we had everything we needed, including a huge house. People would come to him for advice and to borrow money.

“My father and older brother returned to London in 1957 and came to visit my elder sister who was living in Edinburgh with her husband and children. While he was in Edinburgh, my father fell ill with pneumonia and died.”

It was a difficult time for the grieving family but in 1959 they were ready to make the trip to the UK, leaving the house in India for one of Kuldip’s sisters.

When they arrived in London they then went to Birmingham, sleeping in the temple, then in an attic flat, before moving to Scotland.

“We joined my sister in Edinburgh,” says Kuldip. “We arrived in January and it was freezing. The first few months were hugely difficult. We knew it was going to be cold but I wasn’t prepared for the lack of support and the responsibilities I had to take on.





*“I was like a workaholic, buying more shops, takeaways and restaurants and still worked at the market where my teenage sons helped me”*



“There were nine of us in a two-room flat in Tennant Street, with an inside toilet. Three of us would go to the public baths on Great Junction Street with three pennies. Sometimes we would take our laundry and do it in a bath there to save money as the ladies would have to pay to do the family’s laundry at the washhouse on Broughton Road.”

Life, he says, was incredibly hard, with no friends, no other relatives, language problems – and poverty. “My children cannot believe we used to live that way but they are fascinated by the story,” he says.

Clothes and furniture were bought second-hand. “If someone bought something new, people would go to their house just to see it! I was constantly nagged and told to work – I had no time just to be a teenager and play football or have fun in the way kids can now.”

Kuldip went to Claremont High School for six months, then attended English language night classes. “I already knew my ABC but this gave me a bigger vocabulary and more confidence. My mother never bothered to learn one word of English – even after 40 years here she completely refused. She would even tell her grandchildren not to speak English in the house and would get irritated when they did.

“At 15, I got a job in a labourer’s firm as a tea boy and ran around all day doing errands for £3.50 per week. The neighbours were neither particularly friendly nor unfriendly. They were very poor and just concentrating on getting by on a day-to-day basis.

“Other Indian people around were helpful but there were no Pakistani or Indian shops to speak of so we went to an Italian shop on Leith Walk (Valvona & Crolla) where Asian people would go to buy spices, chilli, brown flour and black pepper. We had very little social life.”

By 1966, when the family was on a more steady footing, Kuldip married Jit Kaur Singh, who had come to Scotland with her family from Delhi. She was shocked to find the family living in such a small flat and three months later they bought their own two-bedroom flat around the corner in Albert Street.

“I became self-employed as a door-to-door salesman, earning £16 a week,” says Kuldip. “I worked seven days a week as I had great ambition: it was a tough job and I did it for 10 years until 1976 when I bought my own grocery shop.

“I was like a workaholic, buying more shops, takeaways and restaurants and still worked at the market where my teenage sons helped me. It was 6am to 6pm every day for years and my hands would turn to ice in the winter.”

With three sons and two daughters, Jit was working hard too. “I would support him as when he was at the market and I opened up the shop and brought up the kids,” she says. “We had no holidays and it was 30 years before we had the chance to go back to visit Amritsar.”

Kuldip has no regrets, as he was determined his children would not have to experience the hardship he had suffered.



“I did not stop working,” he says. “My philosophy is that everything comes from hard work. But eventually I got where I wanted to be. I’m glad our family are now on their own two feet and have a reasonable standing in society.

“We have kept our traditions in terms of food and religion but unfortunately my grandchildren don’t speak Punjabi, though they understand it. My kids speak it and we try to speak Punjabi in the house. It is important that the younger generations who have everything on a plate know how hard it was for us to come here and how hard we had to work.”





# Faqir Alam Mohammed



*Arrived in 1961*

Faqir Alam Mohammed is among a successful group of young immigrants from the Indian subcontinent who arrived in Scotland in the 1960s and deployed a combination of entrepreneurial flair, raw ambition and sheer hard graft to build successful businesses.

He arrived at the age of 17 in 1961. “My cousins and I got together and decided to come over and have an adventure,” he smiles.

The adventure began with a flight from Karachi to London and a train to Edinburgh where Faqir disembarked at Waverley station with just £2 in his pocket, a few clothes and a duvet. He did not know it then, but his first job would turn out to be as a porter weighing parcels in Waverley station. Eight people shared a four-bedroom house with no carpet and an outside toilet. Bathing involved a trip to the public baths in Infirmary Street. “It cost two shillings for a bath and if you stayed in too long they banged on the door,” Faqir says.

There were several major differences between life in Pakistan and life in Scotland, says Faqir. “What surprised me most was having to do my own cooking and other things that we were used to women doing in Pakistan...I missed the food

back home and I could not make a chapati for myself.”

The Italian deli Valvona & Crolla in Edinburgh stocked some favourite ingredients such as brown flour for chapatis but generally, the ingredients for Indian-style food were hard to come by. Faqir recalls travelling to Glasgow to buy chickens. “They were kept alive in a basement and they would slaughter them for you,” he says.

He got by in English without too many difficulties, assisted by his cousins who accompanied him on doctor’s visits and other formal meetings. “Back then people were very polite and people spoke to us very nicely – maybe because there weren’t many Asians,” he says.

However, he adds that he did not need a strong command of English in his first jobs: as a porter and then as a bus conductor. He received his bus driver’s licence in 1965 and in 1969 was granted a Nationality Certificate from the passport office in Glasgow granting him UK citizenship.

Faqir was keen to work for himself and after he got married he started his first business in Tollcross, renting a shop space from Edinburgh City Council for £10 a month. He sold clothes, which he bought cheaply from contacts in Rochdale



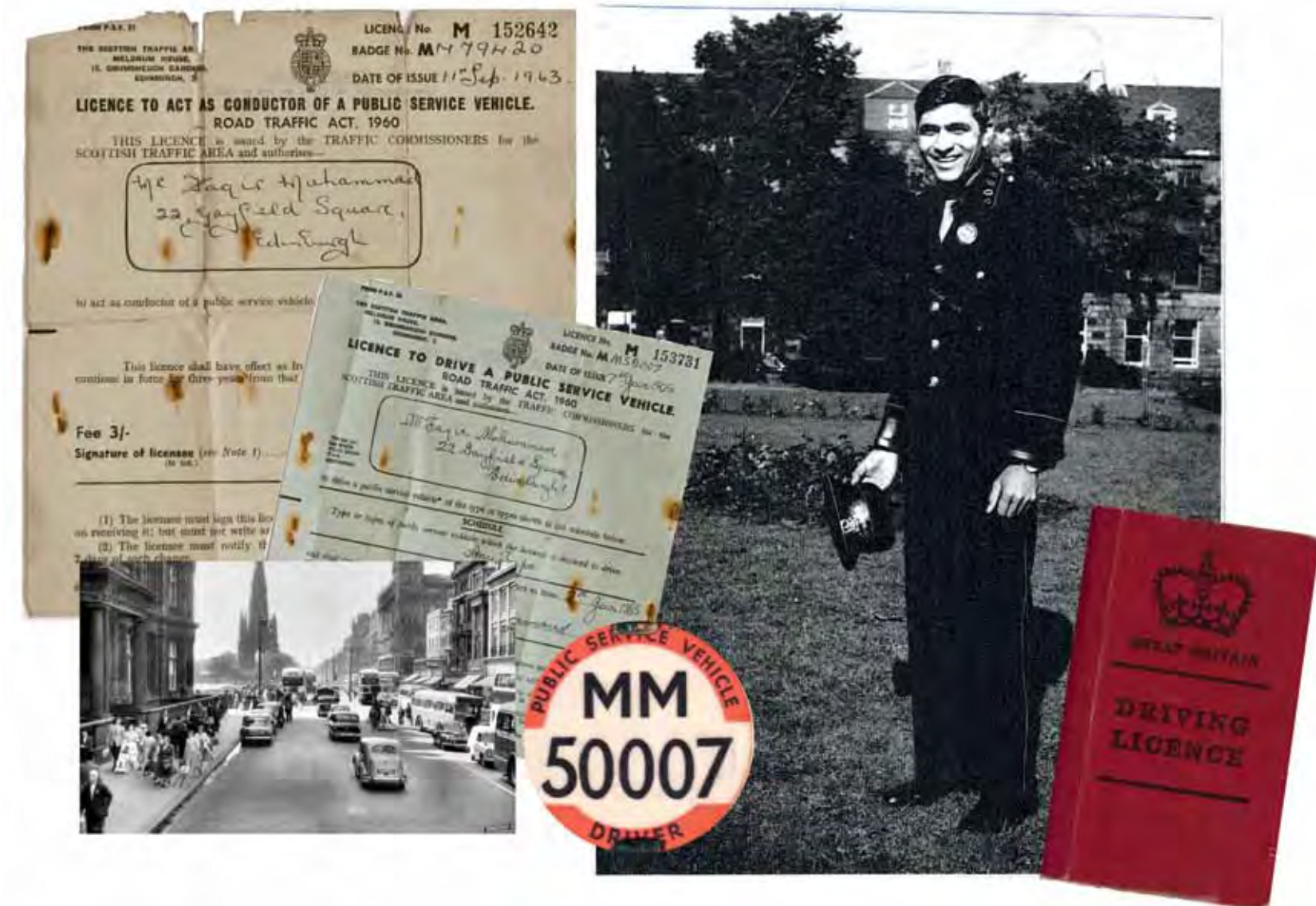


and Manchester. “The business did extremely well and we were run off our feet all the time,” he says.

He went on to open the biggest cash and carry business in Edinburgh in 1980, leasing it out and then opening his two biggest shops in Dalkeith and Hawick. “What makes me most proud about what my family has achieved is how well we have done in business,” he says.

However, he also played a key role in establishing social networks for people from Pakistan living in Scotland. He is an active member of the Pakistan Association which was established in Edinburgh in 1961 and which he has chaired for the past eight years.

Married, with grown-up children and grandchildren, he says his younger family members speak mainly English but also some Punjabi and Urdu. He says: “I don’t really talk to them about the past but I suppose it is important for them to realise that everything is so easy for them. Everything here is set up already for them...It was difficult for me. The first generation always suffers.”





# Amrit & Saroj Lal



*Arrived in 1952*

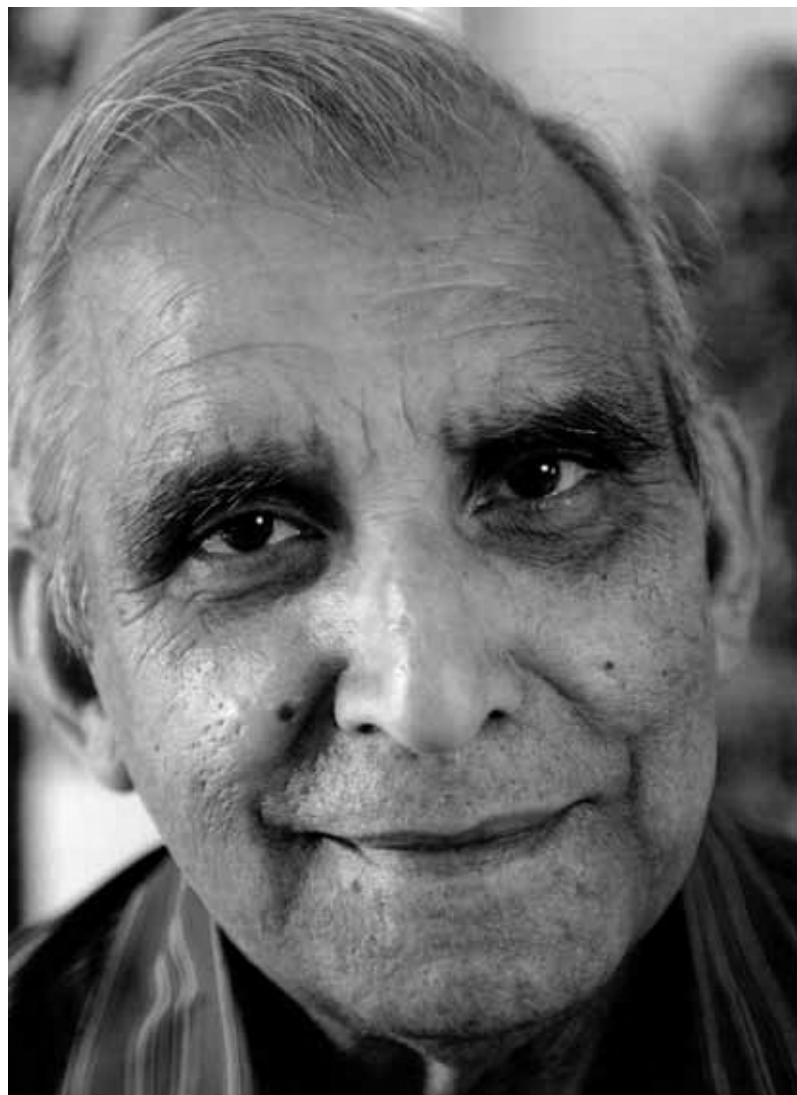
When 19-year-old mechanical engineering student Amrit Lal arrived shivering in Glasgow’s Central Station one November morning in 1952, he struggled to find his way. A combination of snow and fog swathed the city.

He recalls: “When I first arrived there were not many people around as it was first thing in the morning. It was November so it was terribly cold. I experienced snow for the very first time and there was a lot of fog because so much was powered by coal back then. You literally could not see your own hand in front of you a lot of the time.”

Emerging from the night train from Southampton, he was weary after a 16-day sea voyage from Bombay but excited to see the sights of his new home. He brought with him a ‘rajai’, an Indian duvet, and was grateful for the warmth it provided against the winter chill.

Amrit was born in Mandi Ahmedgarh in the Indian state of Punjab but had been living in Bombay before emigrating to Britain so he was used to life in a big city. Nevertheless, the sophisticated infrastructure of Scotland’s major cities surprised him when he first arrived.

He says: “I did not really know anything about Scotland before I came. What surprised me most was how developed everything was compared to India, like the transport system – back then



they had trams in Edinburgh, and there was street lighting and the use of electricity everywhere.”

However, the most welcome surprise for Amrit was learning that free healthcare was available to everyone through the National Health Service. “I was told to register with a local doctor but I didn’t know what they meant. I could not believe it when I found out that everything – health checks, seeing a doctor, even medicines were all free.”

Amrit was fluent in English when he arrived but it took him three months to understand Scottish accents. On the whole, he found Scottish people very helpful and understanding. He says: “They would invite me to their home for meals and to socialise with their families. Even at work they said: ‘Have you ever been to the football?’ and they would take me to the football at weekends and even pay for me to get in.”

Amrit lived at a YMCA hostel for a short while and then in rented rooms in a succession of flats. It was an austere existence. “There were no fridges or central heating back then...I would have to sleep with my shoes on as I would become extremely cold at night when my coal fire ran out,” he says, adding that toilet facilities were communal and he had to use the public baths once a week at a cost of 6d a time.

Cooking was difficult in the early days. “Scottish food took a lot of getting used to...it was a bit bland and tasteless but my palate gradually got used to it. You could not buy any Indian vegetables back then but you could buy lentils and spices. People used to teach each other to cook because they missed the food so much they simply had to learn. It was a case of trial

and error,” he says. He sometimes had to resort to subterfuge to spice up his food lest he cause offence to his Scottish hosts. “My landlady once gave me some soup and I had to secretly put some chilli powder into it when she was not looking – I had bought it earlier from Boots the Chemist,” he says with a smile.

Improvisation was the order of the day, with Amrit and his friends turning traditional griddles used for making scones into makeshift Indian style ‘tawa’ pans. He says: “I bought a huge pan I used to cook everything in and only recently threw that pan away.”

Food rationing was still in force in Britain when Amrit arrived and was not fully phased out until 1954. “When I first came I had to register myself for a ration card to get butter, milk, eggs and sweets. That lasted for six months,” he says.

Ordering your favourite Indian takeaway was simply not an option in the early 1950s. Amrit says: “There were no Indian takeaways or restaurants, only one called Khushi’s in Edinburgh. So a group of us made a special trip to visit the city and to eat at this restaurant.”

He established a lively social circle with fellow immigrants from India. “I had plenty of people to socialise with from my own background because I had met a few people on the ship who had relatives here. They made sure to introduce me to many people and kept me busy at weekends. People from the Indian community, including those who were already settled here, were very supportive and eager to help. I think people’s attitudes were different back then,” he says. Communicating with family in India was difficult, as neither Amrit nor his friends in Scotland





had phones, nor did their relatives back home, so news travelled slowly via letter. “I used to write home about once a month. Sometimes I forgot and my father would become angry,” he recalls.

The friendliness of his Scottish neighbours varied. “When I was living on my own in a rented room I had virtually no contact with any neighbours apart from ‘Hi’ in passing. But when I bought my first flat (all in all it cost me £300) I had a lot of contact with the neighbours who were very friendly and used to invite me round to their home for dinner because they knew I was alone,” he says.

Amrit worked as a student engineering apprentice at first but then took six months to find a permanent job. He had to live off his savings until he secured work, first at the Albion Motors factory in Scotstoun before moving on to British Locomotives at Springburn and later to Mavor & Coulson, a company in Bridgeton which made mining machinery.

An accomplished engineer, he moved back to India briefly to take a job in Madras and to marry. He then accepted a teaching position at Singapore Polytechnic and his son was born while the family were living there.

He says: “It was good living there but it became difficult because my wife was not allowed to work. So I decided to do a Masters degree and was offered a place at Birmingham University.” After his daughter was born, the family moved to Edinburgh where he took up a post as a lecturer in engineering at the city’s Napier College.

Looking back, Amrit says the most difficult thing about coming to Scotland was finding suitable accommodation. “Finding a place to stay was extremely difficult. I yearned for a place of my own. It was hard finding a place which suited in terms of location, and the state of the place...It was also tough finding a landlord you were happy with,” he says.

His children’s achievements in Scotland fill him with pride. “The thing that makes me most proud is the fact that my children have been educated here and to watch them settling down over the years. In that way I think I am much like many Indians,” he says

Amrit believes it is important for the next generation to know about the difficulties he and his peers faced when moving from India in the 1950s. He adds: “They do not necessarily want to know because they are part of the system here and always have been. But it is important for them to understand how easy they have it.”

His own children know his life story and the family, including Amrit’s grandchildren, keep up Indian traditions such as celebrating festivals. Amrit says: “It is important to know your culture and also to learn the language. For me, bilingualism is the most important thing as it helps you to understand your family and elders – and if you do not understand the language it can create barriers between people.”





# Mahendra Agarwal

✕ Arrived in 1962

When Mahendra Agarwal arrived at Glasgow airport on a bitterly cold night in February 1962 he was a 25-year-old graduate with three pounds in his pocket, a suitcase of clothes and a rising sense of excitement about starting a new life in Scotland.

He had planned to join a college friend in Edinburgh but his flight was diverted to Glasgow because of blizzards. As he stepped out into the biting cold, his first sight of Scottish soil was a blanket of snow covering the airport. “It was white everywhere. I had never seen snow before; it was something different, something new,” he recalls.

His journey to Britain began with an Air India flight from Bombay via Cairo, Frankfurt, Paris and London, with each stop bringing new experiences. “When I left Bombay my first stop was Cairo Airport. We were allowed to go inside and I went to the toilet, which had a towel pulling machine. I was surprised and astonished as to where the towel was coming from.”

The behaviour of the people was also different than he had expected. “When I landed in London, we were waiting to be transferred and looking around, excited to be in London. I saw a couple kissing openly and it was a surprise to me.”

From Glasgow airport he was transferred to the BEA airline office in George Street in Edinburgh, arriving in the dark, clutching the address of his friend. Although Mahendra had studied English in India he struggled with the Scottish accents at first. “Language was a problem at the beginning... it was difficult to pick up the accent and what people were saying,” he says.

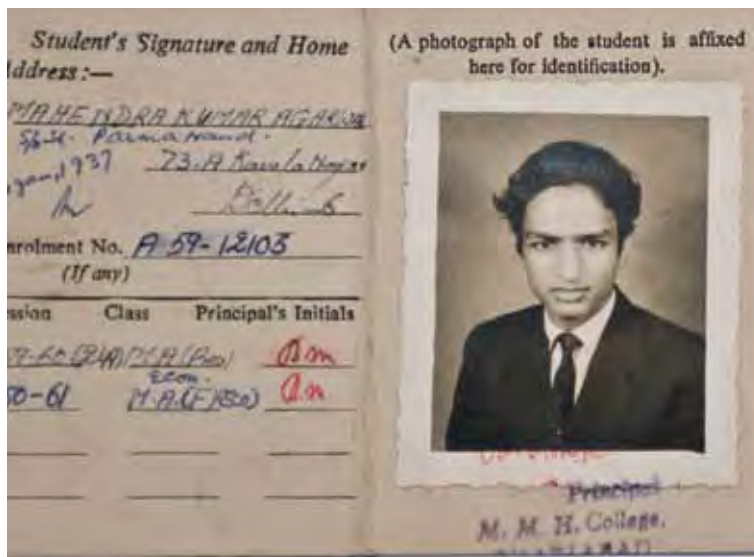
A girl at the BEA office ordered a taxi for him to get to his friend’s house. “I did not know how much the taxi would cost so I gave the driver three pounds, all the money I had. He took the fare and returned my change. When I arrived at my friend’s house, it was very warm inside and I was very happy.”

He stayed with his friend for three days after which they moved to a rented flat together which cost one pound a week. Then he set out to look for work. “I could not find a job for two weeks. There was no national assistance so my friend supported me while I was looking for a job,” he recalls.

In 1962 the Indian High Commission was preparing to open an Indian Tea Centre on Edinburgh’s Princes Street and Mahendra was keen to find out about potential job opportunities there.

“One day when I was walking past I saw some people working on preparations for the opening of the centre. I walked in and saw Das Gupta, the First Secretary from the Indian Commission, who was there to oversee the progress of the





centre with his assistants. I asked if there were any jobs and he replied ‘Yes, we are looking for someone’. He asked me to fill in an application.”

The next day Mahendra handed in his completed form. “I got the job and that was the beginning of my life. It changed...it was the breakthrough I was looking for. I was appointed as a manager with £1200 per annum. It was very good money in those days. After tax I used to have £78 a month in my hand. I had a diplomatic company car and I was promoted to director within two years.”

The India Tea Centre was opened to promote Indian teas, a key export, and part of Mahendra’s job involved educating

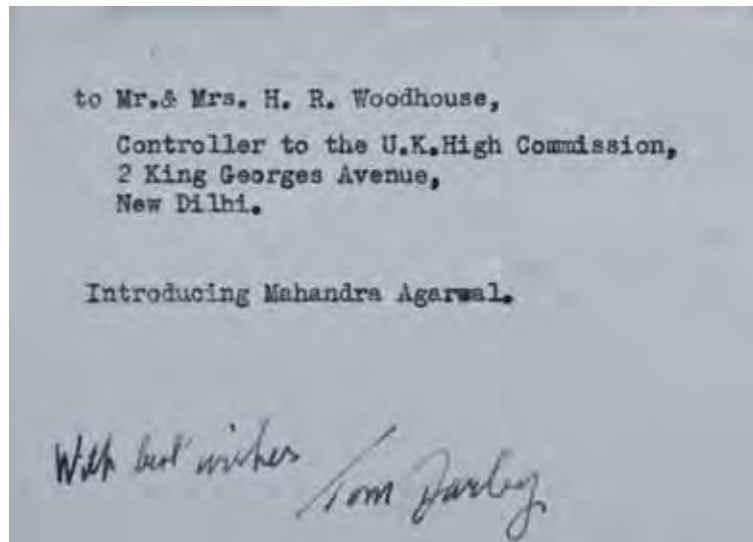
Scots about different tea qualities and flavours at events and food exhibitions around Scotland. It became a popular meeting place for people from all walks of life. “The Duchess of Buccleuch used to come for tea every month. Ravi Shankar attended in 1964 and Elizabeth Taylor came and had tea there too.”

The India Tea Centre continued to trade until 1970 when the lease on the property expired and it was closed down. “It was such a well-known place that even today when I’m walking down Princes Street I’ll get people tapping me on the back and saying, hey Mister, where’s your tea?” he recalls with a smile.

Mahendra was offered the chance to transfer to Melbourne in Australia but declined the offer and decided instead to start his own business in Scotland, opening what became the first of three Indian restaurants. “I opened three restaurants and a handicraft shop and bought the whole building for £1,500 in 1971,” says Mahendra, who bought his first home in Edinburgh, a two-bedroom house for £100 in 1965.

Working in the India Tea Centre gave him access to many of his favourite foods from home but in the 1960s, Indian staples were hard to find in Edinburgh and Indians living in the capital had to travel to Glasgow to find shops selling ingredients for Indian meals.

In the early years in his adopted homeland, life could be lonely, Mahendra says. Although he was proud to own his own home for the first time in 1965, he did not like living alone. “I moved in for two months but it was lonely and



isolated. I went back to my landlady, rented my room back and let the house out for rent,” he says.

His social life changed in 1971 when he went back to India to get married and brought his new wife home with him to Edinburgh. They had two children, a son and a daughter, both of whom have done very well in life, he says.

“My daughter is a qualified CA and is married with two children. My son runs his own property development business. I am very proud of my family – life is very comfortable now. I have no worries about my children, no responsibilities and I have good health. What else could I wish for?”

“My grandchildren are still young but I will tell them when they are older about our traditions and how I got to where I am today. My destiny brought me to Scotland and I have had a good life. I never imagined how my life in Scotland would be when I was a student in Delhi.”





# Gurcharan Singh Landa

✕ Arrived in 1957

Gurcharan Singh Landa (nicknamed Avtar Singh) was a 12-year-old schoolboy when he arrived in Scotland from India in 1957 with his family after a gruelling journey that lasted three days and two nights.

His clearest memory is of being constantly hungry. “We only ate one banana during the journey because were scared of being fed beef. We felt starved because we ate practically nothing.”

He has a vivid memory of arriving: “It was snowing heavily... we wondered how it was possible to live in ice.”

Gurcharan’s family had been encouraged by the positive experiences of his brother-in-law and his brother who had moved to Scotland in 1951 and 1953 respectively.

“My brother told us that people in Scotland were very friendly and that business was good. They all made a living from selling door-to-door,” he says. Money was tight and living conditions cramped when he first arrived in Edinburgh and the family was forced to squeeze into a small house bought jointly by two brothers and one brother-in-law.

“We had two bedrooms and a box room and a living room



and kitchen which became a bedroom for my brother’s family – and three families lived in that house. There were six adults and five children: one family per room,” he recalls.

Among their older neighbours, Gurcharan and his family were generally treated respectfully but he says “the youngsters used to call us racist names.”

Gurcharan also discovered that life in an Edinburgh school in the 1950s could be tough for ‘outsiders’. As a Sikh, he wore a turban, which marked him out as different. “My classmates used to call me racist names and remove my turban. It was very hard in school. I was the only Asian person in my class, with one African, a Chinese and a gypsy boy who was very rough and tough.”

Gurcharan says he had both friends and opponents among his classmates. “I still have one friend from my school days,” he says.

His teachers gave him an extra half-hour lesson each day as he only knew basic English. “I learned to speak English but never got used to writing. We had an Indian doctor and he used to help with forms and another educated Asian friend used to help with correspondence and contact with the authorities,” he says.

Gurcharan began his working life at 15, initially selling goods door-to-door and then as an apprentice mechanic before setting up in business for himself.

As a teenager he started weight training at the Dunedin



Amateur Weight Lifting Club, whose famous alumni include Sir Sean Connery. He showed a natural aptitude for the sport and by the time was 18 he had won the Scottish featherweight champion title.

He worked hard too, establishing a successful partnership with his brother in a drapery business and earning enough money to buy a two-bedroom house in 1966 for £450, the same year his wife (whom he married in India in 1964) arrived in Scotland.

Finding traditional Punjabi food was a struggle. “There was





*“It was snowing heavily...*

*We wondered how it was possible to live in ice”*

only one shop where we managed to find chapati flour. We used to travel to Glasgow for spices or lentils or get them from relatives down south. We would butcher our own chickens and lambs from the farmers we would deal with while selling door-to-door.”

Wearing a turban caused a lot of problems for Gurcharan and his fellow Sikhs over the years as many employers refused to hire them unless they removed them, cut their hair and shaved their beards. It involved constant battles.

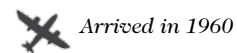
His children have prospered in Scotland and are married with their own families and businesses. “I am proud of my daughter’s achievement. She has had a good education and is running a successful restaurant with her husband,” he says.

Gurcharan wants the younger generation of Sikhs in Scotland to understand and appreciate the sacrifices and hardships made by his generation and those before him. “I regularly tell my grandchildren about the experiences we had when we arrived and how we got here.”





# W K Wan



The feeling of isolation in a strange new country began for W K Wan as soon as he stepped off the plane from Hong Kong at the airport in London in 1960.

Just 20 years old, he had grown up in a small agricultural village in the New Territories in Hong Kong and as a child during the Second World War had received scant formal education.

In common with most farming families, the Wans had struggled to eke a living from the land in the post-war years, prompting the young Wan to seek employment in the UK, where his elder brother was already working in a Chinese restaurant in Liverpool.

Wan says: “A lot of villagers were forced to go somewhere else to find a better chance (in life) instead of staying in the countryside and doing nothing. I decided to take a risk while I was single and just in my early twenties. I was told that the weather in the UK was very cold, especially in Scotland...It was a place where you might get better wages but you needed to work very long hours.”

The air fare from Hong Kong to London cost Wan several thousand Hong Kong dollars, a lot of money in 1960, forcing him to run up debts to fund his journey and leaving him very



little with which to start his new life. “In my luggage there were only clothes, a duvet and some food and I had just £15 in my pocket,” he says.

His most pressing concern when he arrived in the UK was how to communicate. “That was a big problem for me as I knew no English at all,” he says, adding that he did not receive a warm welcome on his first day in his new homeland. After a journey lasting more than 24 hours, he remembers hostile looks at the airport. “I did not feel welcome...people gave me a cool stare without any smile,” he says.

He travelled alone by train from London to Liverpool to join his brother, carrying a piece of paper with an address in the city, but with no means of communicating with his fellow passengers. “All I could do on the way was to show the address to people and also put a huge effort into using body language,” he says.

He received a warmer welcome when he arrived in Liverpool and moved into a dormitory that he shared with his brothers and fellow Chinese restaurant workers. “My brother’s boss was a very kind and generous man who was willing to offer hospitality to all newly-arrived job seekers from the New Territories of Hong Kong,” he says.

From Liverpool he moved to a restaurant in Middlesbrough in the north-east of England then went further north to Scotland in 1966. These were hard years for Wan, who was working long hours and learning the restaurant trade from the bottom up, starting as a dishwasher then moving on to preparing food for

the chef before progressing to a front-of-house role as a waiter. “Don’t forget that I had learned no English before that –and you can imagine how hard life could be,” he says.

Even though he was working in the restaurant business, he still found it very difficult to find the ingredients he needed to make traditional Chinese food. He also found buying clothes in Britain prohibitively expensive on a meagre salary so he bought cheaper clothing in Hong Kong and had it shipped over.

For the young farmer used to an outdoor life, becoming accustomed to working in a restaurant was not easy. “At first, I knew nothing about catering. I didn’t even know how to cook; I learnt it step by step as I went from being an employee to an employer.”

Wan says that he and his friends received harsh treatment from British people, especially in the early days. “In those days, I had very bad experiences with my neighbours; they looked down at me, sometimes spat in front of me and used bad language,” he says.

However, the hard years were made easier by close friendships with colleagues from the same background, several of whom remain good friends today. Wan saved money before marrying in his mid-twenties and he and his friends then pooled their savings to start their own business in 1966, moving to Edinburgh where they opened a restaurant.

By 1978 he had saved enough to set up his own business and





in the same year he and his friends formed an association to arrange social activities for their compatriots. “We also gathered resources to help some other incomers, just as we had been helped by some nice and generous people before,” Wan says.

He is proud of what his family have achieved. “As I didn’t have much education I feel satisfied that my children had the chance to receive a higher education here in Scotland. I’m very proud of my younger son; he is a Chartered Civil Engineer who is now working in London,” he says.

Looking back at his experience as a new arrival in 1960, he says: “I had quite a lot of difficulties such as homesickness, language and cultural barriers, an unforeseeable future, and debts to repay in Hong Kong. However, the most difficult experience of all was when I had to work as a waiter serving the customers in the restaurant.”

His children know little about their family’s history before their father arrived in Scotland although they speak Chinese and keep up some Chinese traditions.

Wan says: “I think it is important to tell my story for the generations who came after me because it will encourage them to work hard and make their dreams come true.”

He adds: “Let them know that they are much luckier than the older generation – since now they can be well-educated and equip themselves to have more chances of enjoying a better life.”







## Hamida Murtaza

✕ Arrived in 1966

Swapping life in her father's big airy house in Pakistan for a tiny flat in Leith was a major culture shock for Hamida Murtaza when she arrived in Edinburgh in 1966 to join her husband.

She felt increasingly nervous as she got nearer to her destination, flying into Edinburgh airport with her brother, and bringing with her only a small bag with four items of clothing.

She recalls: "When we got into the airport, people were looking at us and we were looking at them. It was so shocking to me to see white people all around me everywhere, there were no other Asian people in sight." She was 26 years old, from Faisalabad in Pakistan and although she had heard a lot about Scotland from her three brothers and several cousins who were already living there, the harsh realities of her new life hit her hard.

"The biggest shock was the cold. It was terribly cold and I had only brought a few light clothes. I developed asthma which I still have today...I also became ill because of the shock of living in such confined spaces in our flat in Leith.





I remember wanting to go back to Pakistan because the flat was so small and the weather was so harsh,” she says.

Language proved a difficult barrier for Hamida. “I knew virtually no English. My husband taught us little essential phrases to use if we needed to buy something in a shop. At the beginning everything was hard, every single day. I could not go on a bus, I could not communicate with anyone at all. Slowly, as my children grew up, they helped me and I gradually became more independent and eventually learned to do everything on my own.”

But in the early days her inability to communicate was hugely frustrating. On one cold day, she accidentally got locked out of the house while hanging out the washing and remained shivering in the garden until her brother found her and with the help of a neighbour opened the window latch. “I had to put my little daughter through the window because she was four and small enough.”

Her husband, who worked as a bus conductor, mostly dealt with the authorities but Hamida had to rely on her children to translate when he was working. “For me, my young daughter was my voice when we went out. From the age of six onwards, she took me to asthma clinics and ante-natal clinics. We did not go to our daughter’s parents evenings until she was in secondary school,” she says.

In the early years there were few other Pakistani families in the area with whom to socialise. “Practically everyone

we knew we were related to. All our socialising was basically with our extended family,” Hamida says. Friendly neighbours made her life easier. “The neighbours were a really good sort. My daughter was the same age as some children on the street so she would go out and play with them. They would share toys and books.”

Finding halal food and Indian spices was not a major problem in Edinburgh – though there were no takeaways or restaurants, she says.

The family started its own greengrocer business in 1968, building up Capital Wholesale into a supplier of fruit and vegetables to hotels, restaurants, schools and universities.

Her children used to help in the business especially after her husband died in his forties while on holiday in Pakistan, leaving her to take over the reins. “I was in shock – he died so young and away from us. God gave me the strength to continue,” she says.

All of her children went on to further education. “The thing I am most proud of is that they are all strong and independent. My daughter is a doctor and others have degrees in chemistry and work in beauty therapy.

“It is important for children to know how hard it was for us to settle and live here. Nowadays children are practically born with a job – but we had to build ourselves up and it took years and years.”

## Bashir Ahmed

✂ *Arrived in 1966*

Beginning a new life in an unknown country is a difficult choice for a young man but for Bashir Ahmed the decision to leave his village in Pakistan was made for him by his father. “My dad said to me: ‘You’re going to Scotland’. I had no choice. The main aim was to support the family.”

Within a week and carrying only a bag with a few possessions, he boarded a flight from Karachi to Heathrow Airport and then a train to Kings Cross. “I arrived at Kings Cross desperate for the toilet. I was anxious to find help but I didn’t speak any English. Then a Sikh man asked me in Urdu if I had just arrived. I said ‘yes’ and he took me to the toilet and helped me buy a ticket to Edinburgh.”

Bashir’s good fortune continued when he arrived in Edinburgh and was given a lift by a passing stranger to a two-bedroom house in Stockbridge where he knew a few of the five men already staying there. The next challenge was to find work and that proved harder – he sought employment both in Edinburgh and in Glasgow but in vain. “Everywhere you went there were ‘no vacancies’ signs,” he said.

Eventually Bashir found a job in a jute factory in Dundee but didn’t enjoy coming home covered in jute every night so he







moved on to find work in Glasgow and then in Rochdale, where he worked in a cotton factory for a year then spent two years moving goods in a railway yard before deciding to return to Scotland.

He went for an interview with Edinburgh Corporation Transport to work at the Longstone bus depot and was taken on as a bus conductor, moving into a one bedroom flat that he shared with

four single fellow Asian men.

“When I was a conductor my driver said: ‘Bashir, don’t answer back. Keep your mouth shut, issue the ticket and collect the fare. I liked being on the buses because you worked independently and there were a lot of Asians working there. We were prepared to do night shift and long shifts – we all started as bus conductors then we got the chance after one and a half years to become bus drivers.”

Bashir’s single friends began to go back to Pakistan to get married and he did the same in 1969, bringing his wife back to Scotland to live in the one-bedroom flat he bought for them to begin their married life.

“In 1971 I opened a small shop in Stockbridge. My cousin was in the manufacturing business making ladies’ clothes







*“My grandchildren are growing in my hands.  
Scotland gave me the future for my family”*

and he supplied my stock. My wife worked in the shop and the response was very good.”

“At first I still kept my job driving the number 22 bus and everywhere I went people would say ‘there’s the man from Iris Fashion’. We made more from the shop that I earned working on the buses so I gave up and ran the shop full-time. I kept the shop for 40 years and built up the business to the extent that I had three shops at one point.”

“Most of my early group of friends have been very successful. We set up the Pakistan Association of Edinburgh and we built the first mosque in Roxburgh Street in 1969-70. It was a ground-floor flat and a basement we bought for £7,000 which we then split into two and opened a second one in Pilgrim Street.”

Bashir is actively involved with charitable work and is a founder member of the World Without Hunger Charity. He lives in Edinburgh with his extended family.

“Scotland gave me the future for my family. My grandchildren are growing in my hands and they can achieve anything they like here.”







# Ying Loong Lee



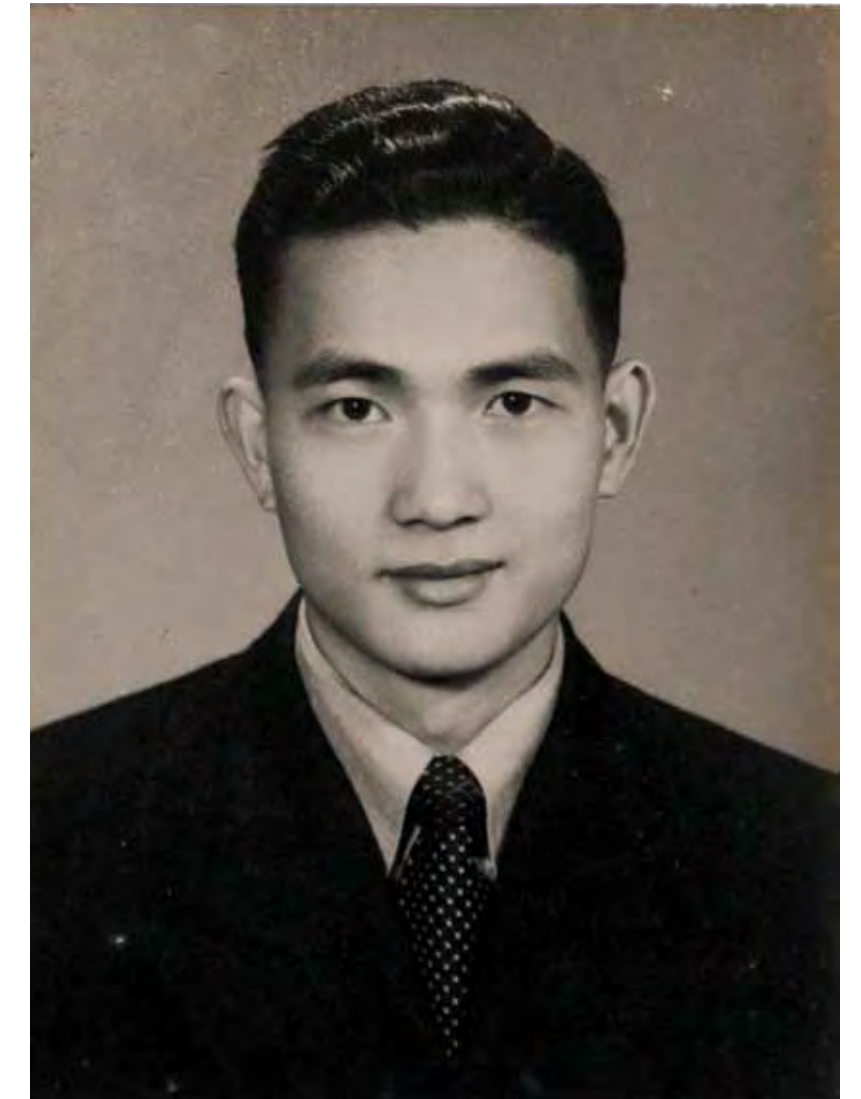
*Arrived in 1967*

Hong Kong-born Lee used his culinary and business skills to create one of Edinburgh's most famous Chinese restaurants, Mister Lee's, gradually working his way from restaurant worker to restaurateur, after arriving in the Scottish capital in 1967.

He was drawn to Scotland by his relatives who had offered him a job and although he was married with children and had a good job in the catering department of an airline in Hong Kong, he says he was excited at the prospect of changing his life while he was still relatively young.

He knew very little about Scotland and was unsure what to expect. "I heard that the people here were hard working, and the weather was very cold. When I got here, the fresh air surprised me most – it was cold all the time," he says.

It took a long time to reach Scotland from Hong Kong by air in those days, involving transit stops in Bangkok, Dubai and London. Lee packed Chinese food to bring with him on the journey, fearful that it would be in short supply in Scotland – a fear, which proved grounded in reality.





*“I’m proud of my children as they are all well educated and independent. My son works in Canada as an engineer. Better education changed my life and the lives of my children”*

“At the airport in Edinburgh, people were friendly and I felt welcome at that time. I didn’t have many problems in communicating in English though I had received little education and had previously learned only some simple English,” he recalls.

He was able to live with his relatives at first though he later moved into the dormitory of the restaurant where he worked. In common with many Chinese restaurant workers, despite working in the food industry, he struggled to find authentic Chinese ingredients in Scotland.

But unlike his compatriots, many of whom were slightly built compared to Western men, Lee did not have a problem in finding clothes that fitted. “I am tall and I suit the western size. I liked both the quality and the style of the clothes here even when I first arrived,” he says.

He flourished in business, successfully running several restaurants and carry-out businesses, providing a stable income for his wife and three children who had joined him in Scotland after a year.

Lee enjoys being at the heart of a vibrant Chinese community in Edinburgh. “I have a lot of friends and I think I’m quite well known to the community as I have been a committee member on the Board of the Edinburgh Chinese Elderly Support Association for many years,” he says.

He has a palpable sense of pride in his family, which now extends to five grandchildren. Two of his children have degrees and one has a Masters in Electronic Engineering while three of his grandchildren are also graduates, two of them with Masters degrees.

“I’m proud of my children as they’re all well-educated and independent. My son works in Canada as an engineer. Better education changed my life and the lives of my children,” he says. He is satisfied that coming to Scotland when he did was a smart choice for him: “I got a better chance of developing my business and improving my life as well.”

Lee and his family still keep up Chinese traditions and the language but he says it gets harder for his grandchildren’s generation to hold on to their Chinese identity. He believes that it is essential for them to learn about their roots and the experiences of their grandparents.

“It’s very important because although our stories are outdated, we must teach them about the past to encourage them to make an effort in their lives.”





# Mohammed Shaffi



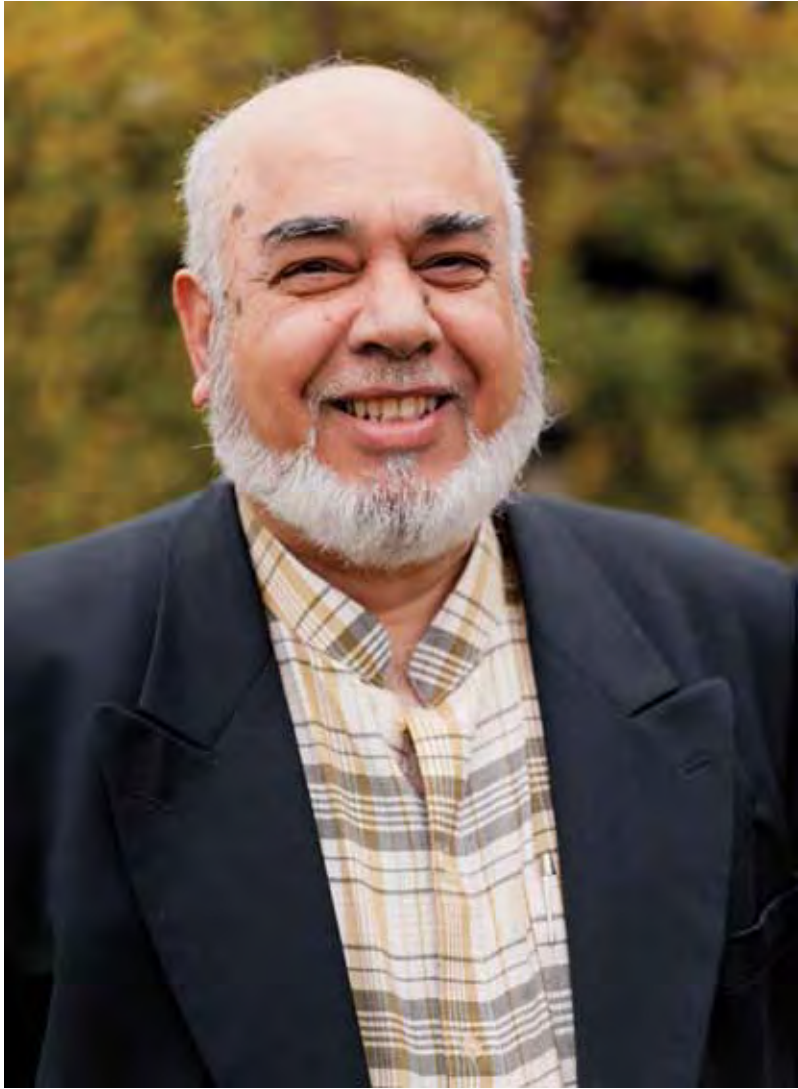
*Arrived in 1961*

Tanzanian-born Mohammed Shaffi has made a major mark on Scottish life, both from a business and community perspective, working his way up from his first job as a bus conductor to owning a string of businesses and being awarded a Good Citizens Award in 1997 and an MBE at Holyrood Palace in 2002 for services to the arts.

He is founder and was the long-serving chair of the Pakistan Society in Edinburgh and was also director of the Edinburgh Mela, an annual celebration of arts with cultural performances by the capital’s Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani communities.

As the eldest of a family of eight children living in Kenya, he says he felt a strong sense of responsibility to look after the rest of the family, especially after his father suffered a heart attack which made it hard for him to continue working as a building contractor.

Mohammed Shaffi was encouraged to come to Scotland by a nephew who had moved there in 1957 and who offered to help find his uncle work as a bus conductor. In April 1961 at the age of 21, Mohammed Shaffi began a new life in a one



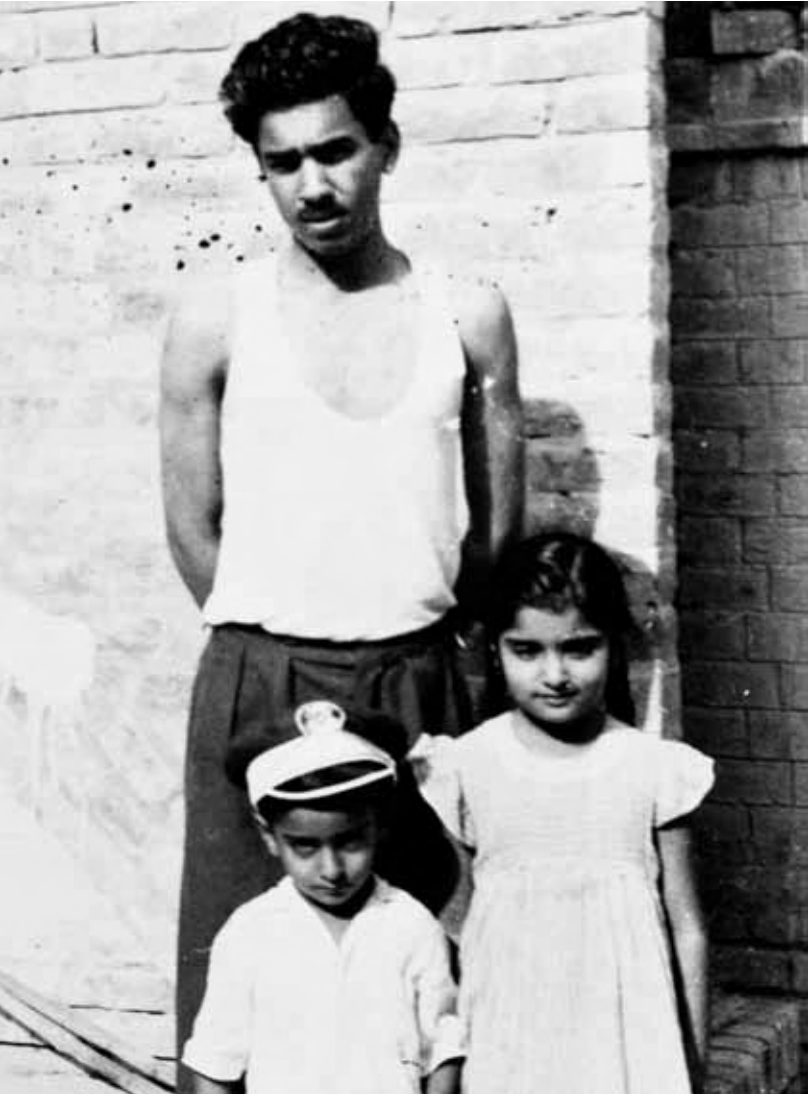
room tenement flat in the Gorbals with his nephew. “Back home we lived in a house with 10 rooms so it was strange moving into a place with only one room,” he said.

Two days after arriving he started work on the buses as a conductor for Glasgow Corporation Transport which had taken on a number of newly-arrived Indian and Pakistani employees. “The buses were always short of staff and I earned £7.58 for a 40-hour week but we used to do four or five hours overtime after our shift finished.”

“I used to socialise with the other Pakistanis in the garage canteen. We each made sure the others were OK and cooked for each other. I used to watch things like Westerns and Jerry Lewis films, which I loved.”

He found Glaswegians quite friendly but said: “Sometimes there were rough people on the buses who were abusive or drunk. We’d ring the bell three times to tell the driver to go straight to the police station if there was trouble. At one stage I had to run from the bus to save my life.”

By 1966 he was ready to settle down and start a family and returned to Pakistan where he married, bringing his bride back to join him in Glasgow. “She is a very strong woman...but it took her time to get used to life here. She helped me when I set up my first business in 1968, making anoraks with just a couple of sewing machines. We grew the business to about 10 people after a year and two years later we employed 30 people in Glasgow.”







The clothing business ran into financial difficulties and so Mohammed Shaffi moved to Edinburgh and began a new chapter, setting up grocery stores in the city with his brothers, as well as a cash-and-carry and a restaurant in Rose Street.

He sold the grocery businesses in 1983 and opened a knitwear factory in Peffermill but says it ran into trouble and lost him a lot of money. His business failure hit him hard but he said: "I have learned to never give up easily. If you fall three times, get up three times."

He said that when people from the Indian subcontinent came to Scotland in the 1960s they often planned to stay just a few years and then go home. "They had a dream – maybe to work very hard for five years then go back home to buy some land and settle there. Some were very successful and invested in Pakistan and made money. I invested too but I lost it all – I never dreamed about going back to Pakistan because the education of my children was far more important."

Now retired he is focused on continuing his work for the community and spending time with his extended family which includes five children and ten grandchildren as well as his seven brothers and sister.

"My proudest achievements have been bringing all of my brothers to the UK, seeing my children well-educated and well-established and seeing my grandchildren succeed and go to university. I'm also proud of the work we've done







1946



with the Pakistan Society. That's something I have never stopped learning from.

"All my children were born in Scotland but they speak Punjabi and Urdu as well as English. It's important to tell the next generation about our lives so they can learn from our stories and understand that life is not smooth and that you must expect ups and downs. I believe you must be ready for the bad times and fight for what you want until the last minute."





# Shu Lun Henry Leung



*Arrived in 1963*

When Henry Leung boarded a ship in Hong Kong en route to a new life in Britain, he was clutching a third-class ticket and his entire worldly goods which amounted to £15 in his pocket – and a big canvas bag with some clothes and canned food.

The voyage took more than one month and he endured terrible seasickness. “All you got for a third-class ticket was a bunk bed in a public cabin in the ship. The ship was called Cambodia and belonged to a French shipping company. The French crew were very impolite to us and the food was horrible.”

When the ship eventually docked in Marseilles, Henry took a train to Paris, a ferry to Dover and then another train to Victoria station in London after a journey which included the Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore, Bombay, Djibouti and the Suez Canal.

“When we landed at Marseilles, all the Chinese were separated from the rest of the passengers which gave us the impression that we were not welcome.”

Henry had arranged to start work at a Chinese restaurant in



Darlington and was offered accommodation in a dormitory. He was welcomed by his new colleagues but did not enjoy doing menial kitchen work. “Once when I was peeling potatoes I cut my finger and it bled a lot. That night in the dormitory I was very upset and began to cry. I thought I could not get used to this kind of life.”

“All my friendly colleagues treated me like a brother and comforted me and told me things would get better. A month later I was assigned to work as a waiter and I settled down to do that job for about four years.”

In 1963, Henry and three colleagues decided to move to Edinburgh to run a new Chinese restaurant, the Golden Gate. It was only the fourth Chinese restaurant in the city and the friends thought there would be good opportunities to grow their business. Setting up was not easy but the business went on to become very successful.

“At that time there were not many Chinese people living in Edinburgh, maybe only 50 or 60 – students, doctors, nurses and a few restaurant workers like us. There were no Chinese grocers so it was very hard to get any Chinese food like roast duck, Chinese vegetables or noodles.”

In 1966 Henry briefly returned to Hong Kong to get married and brought his wife back to Edinburgh to raise a family. They went on to have two daughters and a son. He was very active in establishing social and cultural activities for the Chinese community, including setting up the Edinburgh and







*“All my friendly colleagues treated me like a brother and comforted me and told me it would get better. A month later I was assigned to work as a waiter and I settled down to do that job for about four years.”*

District Chinese Association along with colleagues in 1980. The group also provided hospitality for Chinese trade teams visiting Scotland.

“We arranged picnics for members and their families, we had dinner parties for Chinese New Year and we had Lion Dance teams which trained to perform at special events like the Edinburgh Festival.”

Henry said starting a new life and a new business in his early years in the UK was not easy because he did not have much education which meant he was under a lot of pressure. “I was lucky that I had good partners. We shared every good and bad moment together and we are still close friends now.”

His three children are all graduates, working in Germany, London and Australia. “Sometimes I think they did so well because they are well-educated and brought up in Scotland, part of Europe, which gives them more experience and exposes them to many different things. I am really proud of them and what they have achieved.”

“I tell my own children about my life in Hong Kong but it’s not easy even for them, the next generation to keep up the language and traditions...I don’t think my grandchildren will understand – three are half-German and one is half-Scottish.”





# Sir Geoff Palmer



Arrived in 1955

The daunting journey from Jamaica to the UK seemed like an adventure for the 14-year-old Geoff Palmer. Yet it was just the first step, as the teenager later discovered that education would take him even further than he could have imagined – indeed, to his receiving a knighthood in the Queen’s New Year’s Honours list of 2014.

“In 1955 I was sent to London to join my mother, who had gone there in 1948,” says Geoff. “I was 14 and hadn’t seen her for seven years. I was looked after by my aunts. It took one day by plane to get to New York, then just over 10 days sailing across the Atlantic to Liverpool, then the train to London. I’d never seen a plane close up before and was a bit apprehensive but I remember flying into Florida at night and looking down to see all the lights: it was like fairyland.

“We wouldn’t expect children to travel alone like that now but that’s what immigrant children had to go through. It was a 5000-mile journey and I never asked directions once. Now I can’t get to Glasgow without asking for directions! My mum, who I hadn’t seen for seven years, met me at Paddington station and I didn’t recognise her.”



Geoff was happy to be back with his mother but the living conditions in late 1950s London, where slum landlords flourished, were very difficult for the reunited family.

“Mum was working at the Post Office sorting mail bags at night – she couldn’t get any other job. We lived in slum housing in Highbury and then the Haringey area. A Jamaican guy had a house with 10 families renting and each family had a room. We were in the attic with cooks on the landing.

“My mum cooked in the room on a paraffin heater – just one pot at a time. We had a sink in the room and shared the bathroom but it was difficult to get a slot and every Sunday we would walk quite far so we could use the public baths.

“My mother’s intention had been for me to work and she had saved £85 for me to come across. I had to attend a secondary modern school because I had been classed as ‘educationally subnormal’. However I was very good at cricket and played for London schoolboys.

“Only grammar and private school boys played cricket in those days so for a secondary modern schoolboy to make the team made news in the Islington Gazette. I’d only been in the country six months and was now playing against schools such as Eton, Harrow and Winchester.”

Eton, he says, were never beaten at cricket – until that July. “All the other boys arrived to play with their dads and carrying their kit. My teacher gave me his shoes and pads and then, as the Gazette reported, with batsman Palmer and







*‘In Edinburgh my life took on a different perspective. I met people from private schools, became aware of their opportunities and my lack of them’*

bowler Williams, the London schoolboys beat Eton. Because of this I was transferred to a grammar school and by 1958 I had a few O-levels and A-Levels.

By the time Geoff left school in 1958, his younger brother had joined him in the UK. Geoff soon secured a job at Queen Elizabeth College University London as a junior lab technician – but the interview was an unusual one.

“My name is actually Godfrey but the professor said: ‘I’ll give you the job if you change your name to Geoff’. Professor Garth Chapman was a very well known zoologist. So from that day everyone knew me as Geoff, except my mother, and on my official documents I’m still Godfrey. I can’t even remember if the request was made seriously or jokingly; I didn’t really think about it, because there were bigger issues to deal with at the time, including the race riots.

“We had moved to a new house and there was a gas lamp outside the window which I used to study by when mum went to bed, by opening the curtains. But house values started to go up and our landlord decided he wanted us and the other immigrant families out.

“One day – without telling us – he blocked the access to the kitchen and turned off the drinking water. I had to steal a bucket from the lab where I worked so we could collect water from next door. I still have that bucket in the garage! However, we didn’t let the landlord away with it: we took him to court and won the right to stay.

“This had been a very difficult time in London. I worked next to Notting Hill Gate and on the way home the blackshirts [racist youths fired up by far-right groups such as Oswald Moseley’s Blackshirt Union Movement and the White Defence League] blocked the road. You had to walk down three streets and around to avoid them on the way home; people tried to throw urine over my mum; there were often fights. If you called the police they never seemed to turn up and you didn’t dare go into a police station to complain in case they arrested you.”

During Geoff’s three years as a lab technician, Professor Chapman encouraged him to keep up his studies and gave him one day off a week to do more A-Levels. By 1961, he had four A-Levels and eight O-Levels and with a Major County Grant from London County Council, he was ready to go to university.

“My background as an immigrant meant nearly all the universities turned me down,” says Geoff. “Professor Chapman was shocked and called Leicester University, where he spoke to another professor and I was accepted.”

After three years of studying botany, Geoff returned to London in 1964 with his Honours degree. After visiting the Labour Exchange in Holloway (“I was nearly laughed out”) he was offered two jobs: one in a betting shop and one peeling potatoes. He took the restaurant job ... but in August that year saw an advertisement for a PhD course at Heriot-Watt College (later University) in Edinburgh.



“I was interviewed by the venerable Professor Anna MacLeod and she said I’d been accepted because she felt my achievement far exceeded what a UK-born student would have achieved in the same [circumstances] and that ultimately this would come to mean I would achieve much more.”

He did, becoming a grain expert (studying the mechanisms that transform barley into malt – crucial for the baking, brewing and distilling industries) and completing his PhD and then a post-doctoral fellowship.



“In Edinburgh my life took on a different perspective,” explains Geoff. “I met Scottish students and private school educated West Indian students for the first time. I became aware of their opportunities and my lack of them. I met a group of educated West Indians reading medicine and dentistry – very different from my experience in London. It was also my first time mixing with Asian people.

“I became president of the West Indian Association at Edinburgh University and started taking part in community events – there had been nothing of the sort in Leicester or London. Lots of white people came along to get to know more about ethnic people and I met my wife Margaret in Leicester at my first attempt to set up an ethnically diverse organisation.”

Geoff worked at the Brewing Industry Research Foundation in Surrey from 1968 to 1977. He attained an international reputation, providing him with a platform to lobby for recognition of the problems faced by West Indian children in schools.

He was published in the Times Educational Supplement and gave talks to schools and educators. When he returned to Edinburgh as a lecturer at Heriot-Watt he continued his research work, supporting the work of African students researching the native grain, sorghum. In 1985 he gained his Doctor of Science degree and was elected to a personal Chair as professor in 1990.

“When I was given a Chair at the university I called my mother to tell her and at first she thought that I meant I’d literally been given a chair. When I explained she said: ‘Ask them to give you money!’.”

Sir Geoff Palmer, Professor Emeritus in the School of Life Sciences of Heriot-Watt University, the first black professor in Scotland and his wife Margaret live in Penicuik, where they brought up their three children. He was made an OBE in 2003 and a Freeman of Midlothian in 2011.

“My children have been to university,” he said. “I believe that shows that people before me in my family could have achieved the same. Any immigrant who gets the opportunity I did can work and achieve the same and I want people to know this.”

In addition to cereal and brewing textbooks, Geoff has also written a book about Scotland’s involvement in black slavery, entitled The Enlightenment Abolished. “Almost 70 per cent of Jamaicans have a Scottish surname,” adds Geoff.

“I didn’t know much about Scotland before I came, although the church I went to in Jamaica had links with Scotland. I’d never wondered before why my family had names such as Mowatt, Gladstone, MacLean and Eliot and why my grand-aunt had blue eyes.”

## Bachan & Rita Kharbanda



Bachan Kharbanda’s early curiosity about Scotland was sparked by his father, who developed a love for Scotland after a spell studying Physical Education in Dunfermline in the late 1920s.

Bachan was born in Rawalpindi in 1936 and grew up in an affluent Sikh family that suffered a reversal of fortune after – like many of their countrymen – they were forced to leave their possessions behind following the Partition of India in 1947.

“My father was a major in the British Army and later a Social Education officer for Punjab. He came from a very well-to-do family of landowners who also had been given the sole rights as whisky merchants in their county.” he recalls.

Before Bachan was born, it was his father’s military bearing and physical fitness that prompted a British Army officer, Colonel Hogg from Aberdeen, to send him to Scotland in 1928 to spend a year in Dunfermline studying Physical Education.

Colonel Hogg’s plan was that on his return from Dunfermline they would introduce Physical Education to Indian schools. In 1932 they set up the first Physical Training College at Walton near Lahore – which transferred to Pakistan after India’s







Partition. His efforts were rewarded with a letter from King George V inviting him to join the British Army.

Thus began the Kharbanda family's enduring fondness for and fascination with Scotland, one which passed from father to son. "I remember my dad sitting with his hunting stool and tartan socks on listening to Scottish music on the gramophone," he says.

As a boy, Bachan's family lived next door to the Swiss-born architect Le Corbusier who had been personally invited by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the newly independent India, to design the new city of Chandigarh as the provincial capital for the Punjab state.

A gifted child, Bachan showed an early talent for painting and developed a keen artistic eye, a skill that led to his later business success in his adopted homeland. After graduating from Ewing Christian College, one of the oldest colleges in India, he wanted to study in Scotland and in 1954 he sailed for Glasgow, full of optimism and energy.

However, he soon found that money got tight, so taking advantage of the then preferential tax rates on the import of hand-crafted goods from former Commonwealth countries, he began to import wooden and ivory goods. At first he sold them on a stall in Glasgow's 'Barras' market and he still owns a tiny carved ivory elephant that was one of the first things he imported. His sales success led to him buying a shop in Glasgow's Maryhill for £400 and he began selling ladies fashions until in 1959, beguiled by the charms of Scotland's capital city,



*"My dad loved Scotland. I remember him sitting with his hunting stool and tartan socks on listening to Scottish music on the gramophone"*





he turned his attention to setting up business there, seizing an opportunity to start a shop in the Canongate at the bottom of the Royal Mile. He also opened an Indian restaurant in Edinburgh (only the second in the city after Khushi's which opened in 1947).

"I remember seeing Princes Street for the first time. I used to dream of it when I was in India – I dreamed that Britain would be like this, with Victorian-style streetlights all down the sides and the middle," he says.

Bachan named his new shop Eastern Crafts and with the help of his wife Rita, who arrived in Scotland in 1964, built a thriving business selling a wide range of arts and crafts from not just India but across the Orient, appealing to an emerging trend in the 1960s for more exotic home decor.

For Rita, life as a young bride in Scotland was full of challenges as well as opportunities, starting before her flight even landed. "I remember flying into Glasgow airport and I said to Bachan: 'I don't think I can breathe down there, it's so dark and cloudy and foggy.'"

"Children used to stop and come up to me and touch my sari because they'd never seen one before. It was really hard at first and quite lonely sometimes," she says. However, her husband says that her natural style and charm with customers, as well as her later role as the mother of a lively young family, helped the couple to establish a warm circle of friends and family.

Bachan, an avid cinephile who studied cinematography at night school, recalls one particular highlight for Eastern Crafts when Nutan Behl (regarded as one of the finest female actors in the history of Hindi cinema and a former Miss India) served behind the counter of his shop while visiting Edinburgh to promote Indian art and culture during the Edinburgh Festival.

The couple had a flair for publicity and had many VIP visitors and also leveraged the power of advertising to spread the word about their business. Now retired, with grown-up children, their home in Edinburgh is filled with exotic art and finely-crafted furniture, providing a pleasant daily reminder of their days running what Bachan bills as "Britain's first successful Indian boutique."





# Mariat Badamas



*Arrived in 1964*

The UK was covered in a blanket of snow when the 18-year-old Mariat, known as Marie, Badamas stepped off the boat in Liverpool, after a six-day journey from Freetown, Sierra Leone. It was 1964 and Marie was on her way to join her husband Hamid Majid, who was a student on the marine engineering course at Leith Nautical College in Edinburgh.

“I did not know anybody here and I knew nothing about Scotland,” says Marie. “I arrived in the dead of winter and had never seen snow before so I was extremely excited. All I had with me were some clothes but as Sierra Leone is an English-speaking country I had no problems communicating.”

The couple rented a room in East Restalrig Terrace, in Leith, where Marie spent a lot of time alone as Hamid was studying and working part time.

“The landlord would not allow us to use a paraffin heater so I had to use a coin-operated one, which was expensive,” she says. “It was very cold. My husband did the shopping and I did the cooking. We didn’t have many friends but my husband knew a Nigerian couple: I would cook and we would all eat together on Sundays.

In January 1965, Marie decided things had to change. “I was



so bored being on my own and one day I simply left the house and went out,” she says. “I found a textile factory that had vacancies and got a job at the John Berry factory, working with the material that was used to clean ships. The pay was £9 per week (which was well above the usual £3 per week) and I soon started to make lots of friends.

“I had brought spices like cayenne pepper with me but gradually some Nigerian and Ghanaian shops opened and began to sell roughly the same produce. There was a very good shop called De Africa in Dalry Road. I bought food with my wages and put some aside. We managed in this way but I was also very homesick then discovered that I was pregnant. My son was born later that year and I had to give up my job.”

With just one wage coming in, the family began to have financial problems. “My husband was stressed as he had to provide everything,” says Marie. “We applied for benefits and a maternity grant which we thought we were entitled to, as long as we were in receipt of 26 insurance stamps. But we found out we had not been in the country for long enough. It was hard financially and we really struggled. We managed to get a two-bedroom flat in Stockbridge, on the top floor, and furnished it with second-hand furniture. It cost £1000 and our mortgage was £12 a week.”

With Marie’s husband beginning to spend time at sea, she started work at the Western General Hospital but then became pregnant with her first daughter. This time, the couple were entitled to benefit support for the new baby.





“I would have been happy being a housewife but after the birth of our second child my husband encouraged me to apply to South Edinburgh College to do nursing,” says Marie. “It was a two-year, part-time course but I was also working and there was a problem with child minding. My husband suggested sending the kids home for two years to allow me to do the course.

“I went home to my mum and dad with my son, who was two, and my daughter, who was 18 months old, stayed with them for six months and then came back to start the course.

“I was reassured that I was leaving my children with my parents. But when I got back to Edinburgh, to my dismay, I became pregnant with my third child, which defeated the purpose of sending my older children home. I waited until gave birth to my second daughter in August and enrolled in college just over two weeks later. I didn’t tell the college. A lovely woman on London Road looked after my daughter during the day and I passed my exams.”

Marie soon found work as a theatre nurse at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and the couple had another daughter, with the whole family eventually reunited when the eldest two came back from Sierra Leone after seven years.

“My husband was still at sea,” explains Marie. “It was tough though because I had to juggle my hours to take them to nursery and playgroup. I was exhausted but I had to do it.

“My husband wanted to become a captain. Eventually he







passed his exams and went to Belgium to navigate in 1980, where he was given a post at £1000 a month.

Finally, things seemed to be going well for the family. Hamid had been working and studying for many years and it had also been difficult at times for the hard-working Marie and her four children. On March 31, came shocking news.

“My husband had suffered a heart attack and died,” says Marie. “When I spoke to the people at his work they said they couldn’t believe it and that when he came in he had been full of beans. I received £500 due to him being put on pay from earlier that month.”

Hamid was only 41 when he died. Their son was 14 and their youngest daughter was just nine. Times were tough for Marie but she had the mortgage on their four-bedroom house in Meadowbank transferred to her name and managed to keep paying it.

“if I hadn’t had my children I would have packed up and gone home to Sierra Leone,” says Marie. “They kept me going.”

By this time, Marie’s work with the maxillofacial surgery unit for NHS Lothian had taken her from the Western General and finally to the Eye Pavilion.

“I sold the family four-bedroom home as it was now too big for us. Only my youngest child was left at home by then anyway as my son had moved out and my other daughters had moved to take up jobs in London.”

Marie retired in 2008 and despite some health problems still has a busy social life – and is also grandmother to 14 and great-grandmother to one. Although she endured a hard start in Scotland and suffered sadness, she is happy with life.



“I’m so proud my children did not have to struggle or claim benefits and all managed to get good jobs,” she says. “Three years after my husband died I took all the kids back to Sierra Leone for a while. I took my granddaughter back too, so she could know our culture. It’s important for my children and grandchildren to know how far we have come and what we have achieved.

“But I have never felt depressed about living in Scotland. I have always found everyone to be very friendly and I have so many Scottish friends. This is my home now: my husband is buried here and my family is here. But I never forget where I’m from and I love to wear traditional costume when I can – it depends on the weather!”



# Omkar Singh & Ganga Gopal

✕ Arrived in 1951

It was Rabbie Burns who was responsible for bringing the young Omkar Singh and Ganga Gopal together in 1958. Although Ganga’s singing ability clearly had a little to do with it too.

Omkar, known as Omi, was brought up in Uganda, where his doctor father was determined to see his children also had a good career.

“My father’s one aim was to educate us all in Britain,” says Omi, who was born in Masaka in 1934. “Now there are two doctors, two barristers and one dentist in the family. When I was seven I went to India with my mother to study, while my father remained in Uganda, and we returned nine years later after I finished school. I stayed a year and learned Swahili and then I got out before the start of Idi Amin’s rise.”

His father suggested he study pharmacy and Omi was accepted by Dundee. He flew to London in 1951 and stayed with his two brothers, who were studying law, before taking the train to Scotland. After completing his Highers at college in Dundee, he began studying pharmacy but after his father wrote to say he should do dentistry he switched to dentistry at Dundee and qualified in 1959. It was a great achievement



for a young man who had struggled with his new surroundings.

“When I arrived in Scotland I did not know anyone,” says Omi. “My family spoke Hindi and I did not speak English. Also, I knew nothing about Scotland. The cold surprised me most. After a few days one of my brothers, who was 19, came to Dundee to be with me. He studied in the School of Economics (which became part of Queens College in 1953) and found us a place to live. People use to look at us and say ‘no vacancies’. It happened many times but eventually we found a lodging and paid £2 and 10 shillings for a room with breakfast and high tea.

College was difficult as I could not understand the Scottish accent. My classmates were very good: one local boy, John, asked me to his home for a meal and I went to his house for dinner two or three times. His parents were very nice and those were the best meals I’d had since arriving in Scotland.

“We lived in Strawberry Bank for six months, then moved to Airlie Place, nearer the university. I shared a room with my brother and we moved after seven months to Broughty Ferry. This was nice but the landlady was mean with the food: most of the time it was beans or spaghetti on toast. Then my brother moved to London and I was left alone but by then I was more independent and the landlady’s family were very nice.

“When I went to London in June 1953 for the Queen’s coronation my brothers and I stood on the pavement all night to see it. It was pouring with rain but we saw the Queen, Indira

Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru (the first prime minister of India).

“Later in 1953 I moved to the student hostel to do dentistry. There were many students from different countries there and I made good friends who I still keep up with. One evening we went to Glasgow in one of my Pakistani friend’s cars to an Indian restaurant (probably the Taj Mahal) and we ate as much as we could – I hadn’t had Indian food for seven or eight years! I would also go to an Indian restaurant in Edinburgh (probably Kushi’s) and stay overnight with my brother in law.

“I met my wife Ganga in 1958. It was Burns night and she had come with two Russian girls. She sang two Indian songs and I told her I enjoyed her singing. A few days later I asked to see her and although she said ‘no’, the first time, she then agreed and I cooked her hamburgers with curry powder for dinner but I didn’t know then she was a good cook. We got engaged in May 1958 and were married in January 1959 in Dundee.”







Ganga's father died when she was young, but she remembered he wanted her to be an independent woman. She was born in Coorg in 1939 and grew up there with her mother and brothers. Eventually, she decided she'd like to study medicine.

"My family wanted me to get married," she says. "But I was against the dowry system. My father had left a lot of money and he wanted me to stand

on my own two feet. I wanted that money to be spent on my study rather than on a wedding.

"However, I did not get a place in a university in India and my older brother, who was in Liverpool working in an eye hospital, applied for me to study biochemistry in the UK. My application was accepted by St Andrews but I had no idea where that was. In 1954 I flew from Bangalore to Bombay and a family friend put me on a plane to London where my brother and his girlfriend brought me to St Andrews.

"I was the only Indian student in the whole university. I was advised not to wear too many layers of clothing as I would wear a red university cape, so I wore saris, which kept me warm. The students were friendly but when I used to catch the train to travel down to see my brother in Liverpool, some

young people would call me 'darkie'.

"There was a get-together welcoming new students, the 'Towns and Gowns'. I went there and met Mrs Aikmen, who was very friendly and became like a mother figure to me. I went to her house a few times and kept in touch with her until she died.

At first I could not understand the language during lectures and I used to sit on a rock and cry. I didn't want people to see me. You had to toughen yourself. Sometimes people on the streets would say: 'Hello hen'. I used to wonder why they would call me a hen. When I graduated after three years my brother wanted me to move to Wales, where he lived with his wife and son. They were both doctors. He had been like a father to me, sending me £15 a week but I thought I'd like to do teaching then go home to India, so I moved to Dundee to do teacher training."

Ganga still laughs when she remembers about the evening she met her husband: "I didn't want to go to the Burns night. But the two Russian girls persuaded me so much I didn't want to be selfish and I went along."

Omi had to repeat his final year at university. His father had run out of money but Ganga was working as a science teacher at Stobswell Girls High School in Dundee. Omi graduated in December 1959 and was offered a job in Glenrothes.

"There was a demand for dentists and it was easy to find a job. Due to racism it was difficult to rent a private or council







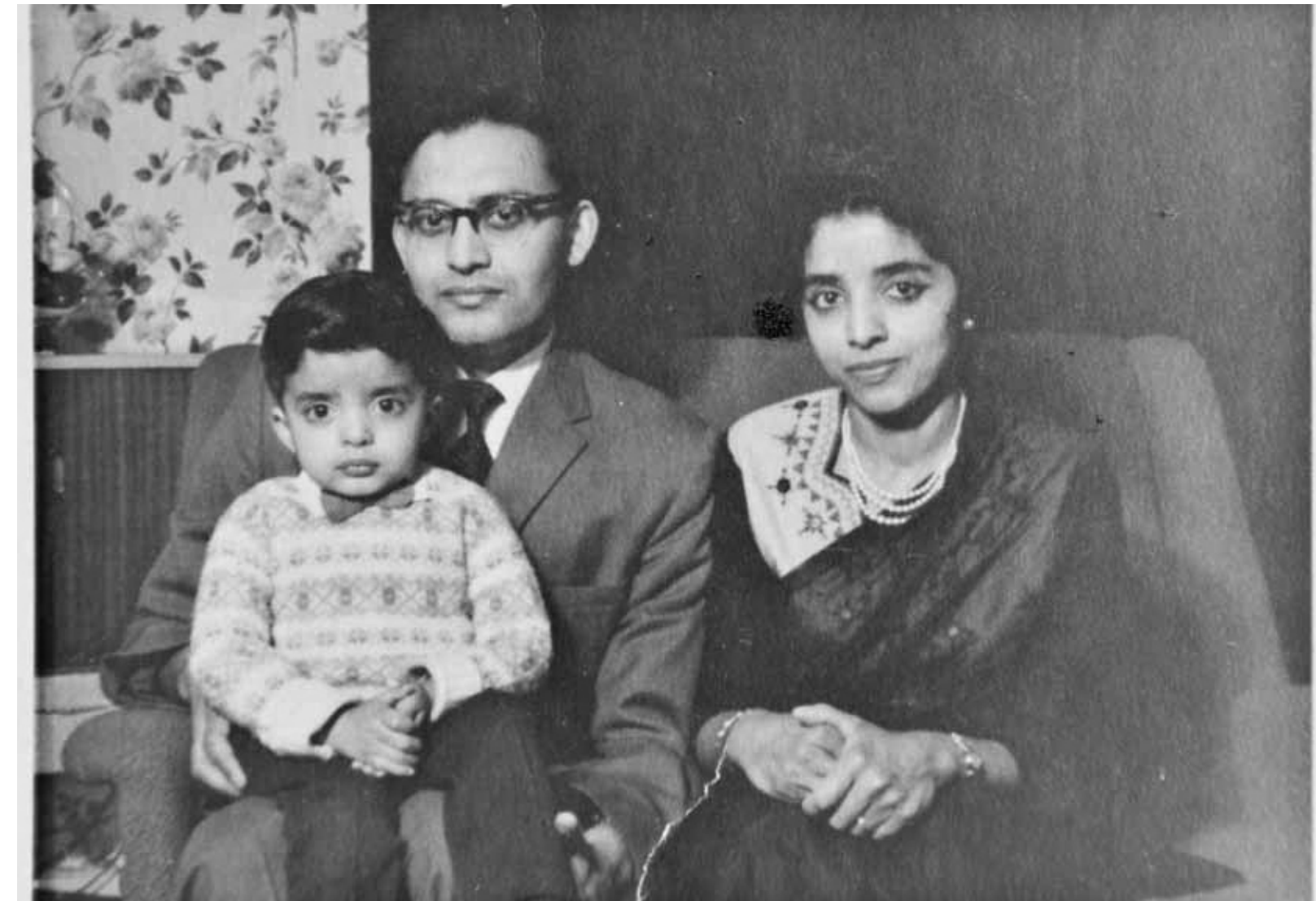
house in Dundee and as I was offered a council house with the job, that was the main reason to accept it. We lived there for two years and our son was born. My boss wanted to sell me a practice then but I started up on my own in Leven and we moved here to our current house, which we bought in March 1963, then we had our daughter. We have very good neighbours.”

As a mum to two children, Ganga then began helping her husband with bookkeeping when he had his own practice. She says they have built a happy life here in Scotland – but it didn’t always feel that way.

“Our son and daughter each have their own son and daughter now so we have four grandchildren,” says Ganga. “We have good neighbours and we have enjoyed living here. You don’t pay attention now if some young person says something like ‘Go home Paki’. It hurts, but you get a thick skin. When you were young and away from home though, it felt very different.”

Omi adds: “Both our children married Scottish partners, and our children and grandchildren make us proud. Over the years we have made many Indian friends. In the early days if I heard about someone who was Indian living nearby I would phone or go and see them to help welcome them. I always remember how lonely I felt. Back then I could never imagine being happy here. But I couldn’t live in India now – we go for holidays.”

*Sadly, since first talking to the Gopals, their daughter, Meera Gopal Sutherland passed away in November 2013, following a long-term illness.*





# Akbal Singh & Jagdish Kaur Singh

✕ Arrived in 1957

The snow was piled up in the streets of Edinburgh when eight-year-old Akbal Singh arrived there with his family in 1957. He was too young to remember much about the journey: just that he, his mum, three sisters and one brother had travelled from their home in the Punjab, flying into London before heading to Scotland to join their father.

“My dad started coming over to the UK from 1944 onwards,” says Akbal. “He was a door-to-door salesman and the men would come over, stay in one house, work and then send the money orders back to India. They didn’t earn much and found themselves travelling back and forward a lot – between England and Scotland then back to India – so my father decided to move here.

Akbal knew nothing about Scotland – and was astonished at the deep snow he saw. There were further barriers: “I didn’t know any English so I had problems communicating and used to get in fights at school where other kids used to grab my turban and call me names,” he says. “I went to St Mary’s Primary School and we stayed in St Mary’s Street, off the High Street, until 1971.

“I started learning English quite quickly, as in both primary and secondary school they put on extra classes for us. But it





was my worst subject and I hated it, though I enjoyed others: maths, metalwork, woodwork, geography and history. I also felt the English teacher was picking on me and I got the belt a lot. I wasn't a troublemaker but people used to wind me up by touching my turban and calling me names which would start it all off. Then I would get blamed for retaliating."

While often unhappy at school, Akbal also made many good friends with whom he still keeps in touch. "One of my classmates stood up for me and protected me but the bullying happened every day until I was 15; there was never a day when I didn't get in a fight.

"I wore a cap to keep my hair covered in the swimming pool as others made fun of it and called me a sissy. The teachers didn't bother. If you 'cliped' on someone you would get into a lot of bother after school. But I got over all of this a long time ago when I started work on the buses."

Akbal had many good times outside school – he was a choirboy at the Canongate Kirk, took up Ghurka fighting and joined his brothers and uncles in their passion for weightlifting. He was 15 when he left school in 1964 and began work as a fudge chef for Margiotta, the Italian confectioner.

"I wanted to further my education," says Akbal. "But my dad said 'no'. So I started making sweets and really enjoyed it. The fudge was sent all over the world."

Later that year, though, the Singhs relocated from Edinburgh to Birmingham for four years. "My father discussed it with



his brothers; they thought they would make more money down there," says Akbal.

"He was the eldest so they decided he should go first and then they would follow but they didn't. Missing my uncles, we moved back in 1968. My dad had sold the house in St Mary's Street to one of his brothers for £450, bought it back from him for the same price and I got my old job back making fudge."

In 1969, Akbal married Jagdish Kaur, who lived in Leeds – although their plans almost ran into problems when he had to meet the parents of his wife-to-be, who was 16.

"I didn't have a suit," says Akbal. "So I borrowed one from a cousin which didn't fit very well. Then I got off the train in York, which was the wrong station and was very late arriving. My uncle was looking for me and thought I'd gone missing."

Akbal bought the young couple's first house for £600, making payments every week. But he had to work a lot of overtime and in 1971 decided to get a job that was paid better.

"I applied to work on the buses and they told me I would have to cut my beard and hair," he says. "Some Sikh men did cut their hair to get a job and others went without work because they wouldn't do it. I was angry about this. I was talking about it in the temple and Professor G B Singh helped me take it to court where I was questioned about my turban in front of 12 people. I explained why the warriors didn't wear helmets when they fought in wars. I had to show them how

the turban was tied, what its purpose was and why we had to keep our hair tied.

"The story was reported in the papers and we won the case. I became the first conductor to wear the turban and I went on to become a bus driver.

"There were one or two of my colleagues who were difficult, saying they wanted to wear their tammy! But the rest were fine and the public was great. Many of them used to ask to take my photo."

After 10 years on the buses, Akbal bought a grocery shop on Wardlaw Place for £1400 and sold it in 1984 to buy a bigger shop, near Saughton Prison.

"It was very hard work," he says. "We started at 5.30am every day and finished at 8pm. My wife and the kids helped as you couldn't do it all by yourself."





There was no social life or holidays for the family. “But we enjoyed working in the business,” he says. “We had no trouble and our regular customers became like family. The prison officers – and even some inmates – would come in and while at first we were scared, the prison only let people out who behaved well.

“My wife would arrive at 1pm with lunch and as she would make extra we would give it to the customers. We had that shop for 20 years and I miss those times but I think we sold it at the right time.”

Akbal bought a new home in Shandon Place, where the couple brought up their two sons and two daughters. Their children are now all married and the couple now have 13 grandchildren.

Although the shop was sold in 2000, Akbal wasn’t ready to stop working and got another job in a supermarket before taking up his current role as a minibus driver for Lothian Community Transport Services – he enjoys voluntary work. Jagdish is busy too, giving cookery lessons in the temple, with one of her recipes, for lamb meatball curry, featured in Madhur Jaffrey’s Curry Nation cookbook.

“Our children and grandchildren know our family history and keep up with their traditions,” says Akbal. “It’s important to tell our story to let people know how we survived and got by. We were 15 people in a two-bedroom house then. Nowadays the children all want their own room!”





# Jyoti P Hazra



*Arrived in 1952*

As a young graduate in Calcutta, Jyoti Hazra found himself at a crossroads. Born in the West Bengal state capital in 1930, he had gained a BSc in Chemistry at the University of Calcutta in 1951 and despite a number of opportunities at colleges in India he was looking for something more.

When his uncle, who had studied to become a mining engineer at the University of Glasgow came to visit his father he found it.

“My uncle was the Chief Mining Engineer at the Tata Collieries of Bihar and he suggested I should try going to Glasgow too,” explains Jyoti. In September of the following year, he arrived in London on his way to Glasgow.

“I was 22 and didn’t know anyone,” he says. “But I became friends with many students on the Sabena Airlines’ flight to the UK.” They flew via Karachi, Iran, Athens and Rome to Heathrow. The airport, he says, looked like a shed in those days and the staff were not very welcoming.

A friend had arranged accommodation for him in London. He was quite impressed with the city and after two nights Jyoti took the overnight train to Glasgow – where first impressions were less positive.



“Before I had come to Scotland everyone said the roads were paved with gold – so that was a bit of a let-down,” he says. “It was cold and wet and everything looked grey and miserable.”

At first he lived in bed and breakfast accommodation booked by the Indian High Commissioner’s office at the YMCA in the city’s Bothwell Street. “Breakfast was acceptable,” he said. “Toast, tea and fried egg – and the bacon was not a problem for Hindus but I didn’t like it. In front of the YMCA there was a little café where we students went for evening meals but it was horrible. I had my first sausage there and when I pierced it, it splattered all over my face and smelt really bad. I’ve never eaten a sausage since.”

Jyoti had no problem understanding lectures but outside university he at first found the Glasgow accent difficult to understand. What was also difficult was finding a place to live so he could move on from the YMCA.

“People were very discriminatory,” says Jyoti. “We went to almost 20 places before eventually we found an Irish landlady, Mary Whelan, who charged £2 and 10 shillings a week including breakfast and an evening meal – and a bath once a week.

“It was on the top floor of 106 West Princes St and the only warm place was the kitchen.” He felt cold most of the time and spent a lot of time studying in the Mitchell Library, which was warm.

“Sugar was rationed until 1953 and butter and meat until 1954, so the landlady got signatures on the ration card for three or four of us and we were very happy to go to the first Asian restaurant in Glasgow, the Taj Mahal, which opened in 1954.”

Despite some people’s unpleasantness, Jyoti and his friends gradually began to widen their social circle as they looked to make new friends – and keep up their search for decent food.

“We only really socialised with other Indian students at first,” says Jyoti. The students decided that to mix with Scottish people they should learn to dance. “Some of my friends joined classes to improve our social mobility but



most of the time, white females would say: ‘no, thank you’ if you approached them.

“One day four of us decided to go to a church on the corner of Byres Road and Great Western Road (now Oran Mor) where we had discovered that free tea, coffee, cakes and sandwiches were served at an international evening. We were always looking for good food!”

It was here he met his future wife. “I asked Helen to dance with me but had no idea how to do it. It was the Gay Gordons and she said: ‘just follow me’. She was the most beautiful lady in that place and we have been married for 56 years.”

Jyoti graduated in 1957, the same year he married Helen, who was a professional musician. There were plenty of jobs for mining engineers and he was offered the chance to be a training supervisor in Scotland but wanted to return to India.

“I had been offered several jobs in Scotland and there was very little discrimination in the mines – if you were a boss or a gaffer they didn’t care. Everyone was black anyway! But I said I wasn’t staying.”

Their first child, a son, was born in 1958 and two years later the family travelled to India. They landed in Bombay in March and took a very hot train journey to Calcutta. “It was not a good introduction to the country for Helen and our son took heat stroke,” he says.

“Unfortunately, my Mine Manager certificate from the UK Ministry of Power was not recognised in India, where you



were expected to pass an exam covering Indian Law and working methods to become a manager.”

Their troubles continued in Calcutta, where Helen was not accepted by her new father-in-law. The young family went to live with Jyoti’s brother in the hills of Darjeeling where she was made welcome, and when Jyoti found a job with a British company as an assistant manager two months later, the family moved to Assam.

“There were very few mixed-marriage couples,” says Jyoti. “Helen felt isolated at first: it was a terrible time of adjustment, caught between British and Indian people and neither of them wanted to come and see us.”

But Helen adapted to the culture, settled well in India and their daughter was born in 1962. “I passed my exam, became





a manager and our life in Assam was very comfortable.

“When our son turned eight he went to school in Darjeeling and stayed with my brother but fell ill with kidney disease and the prognosis was not good – so we decided to take him back to Scotland.”

Helen explains that the consultants in Scotland couldn’t understand how he had recovered. “But he did. I think sausages and ice cream did the trick – and good water,” she joked

In 1966 the family moved in with Helen’s parents in Edinburgh. Jyoti went back to the mining industry, working and staying in Glenrothes in Fife but two years later the mine closures began and he trained to be a mathematics teacher at Moray House college of Education and became a maths lecturer at Dundee College, retiring as a senior lecturer in 1997, after a successful and fulfilling career.

“I’m most proud of two achievements,” he says. “My teaching and my voluntary work in race equality. I was appointed to the Curriculum Consultative Committee, the first ethnic minority person to be invited on to it. I was also invited to join the General Teaching Council’s Exceptional Qualification Committee and was part of the first team at the Education Institution of Scotland to develop religious education in schools.”

Jyoti and Helen, who still live in Broughty Ferry, have three grandchildren. “Our children and grandchildren take great pride in their Indian heritage,” says Jyoti. “We have often talked to them about our colourful life.”



## Abdul Ghafoor & Rashida Bibi

✈ Arrived in 1960

Neither schooling nor formal education were available to Abdul Ghafoor, who was born in rural British India in 1931 into a farming family. As he grew up, married and had three daughters, he became determined to make a new life for them all in Scotland.

“We were farmers and I never saw a school,” he says. “My brother came to Glasgow in 1947 to join a family friend and he invited another brother over in 1958.”

Gradually, all seven brothers moved over and Abdul was waiting for his turn. “I was the seventh and the last in 1962, when I travelled from Karachi to London. I was 31.

“When the plane landed in London I saw white people for the first time. The staff at the airport were pleasant and I felt welcome – but I couldn’t understand what was being said. No one came to pick us up. I was with my nephew and we were anxious to know how we could get to Glasgow. A man who spoke Urdu took us to the train station, showed us the platform and told us that Glasgow was the last stop.

“We travelled all night and did not tell my brother we were







coming. I had brought my quilt as well as clothes and a coat as I was sure it was going to be freezing. When we arrived in Glasgow another Asian man put us on a bus and told the driver we were going to Langside Road where my brother lived. He saw us from the window, came down to greet us and we were glad to be there – though everything was strange to us.

“I had been a farmer and was used to making everything. We used clay, not bricks, so to see all the roads, the pavement and buildings made from stone was a different world – though I liked it.

“My brother lived in a three-bedroom flat with his wife, two children and two other brothers. We also lived there for two months but I couldn’t find any work.

“We had been told Scotland was a beautiful country and when I arrived I loved it but due to the language barrier I couldn’t go out and enjoy it properly.”

Abdul was desperate to find work, so when he heard from a friend that there were opportunities in Dundee he moved

there and got a job in a jute factory at £7 a week, working shifts for six days a week with Sundays off.

“I had to learn to cook,” says Abdul. And there were other challenges: “There was no bath in the flat and we had to go to the corporation baths twice a week and wash our clothes at home. There was a coal fire in the house and the neighbours were fine – most people were nice but there were a few who would swear and shout at us in the street which I didn’t like, but didn’t know what to do about it.”

A year later he bought a two-bedroom flat with an inside toilet for £160 cash. “The people in the factory all became good friends and after two months I started to understand a little English. I knew enough to understand if someone was saying something nice...or abusive.”

As he hadn’t been to school, learning English wasn’t easy – and Abdul could neither read nor write Urdu. “I always felt limited because of that. I think things would have been very different if I’d been able to understand English: I couldn’t learn to drive and there have been many things where there has been a gap. The only thing I learned in English was to sign my name.”

His feelings of isolation continued over these six years. “I would work all day, come home and cook for myself – my family was not there and I missed them.

“I saved up for my family’s air fare, went back to Pakistan in 1968 and brought my wife and daughters then aged 16,



13 and seven back briefly to Glasgow and then to Dundee.”

Abdul’s eldest daughter was not accepted into school, unlike the younger ones who taught their sister English as they were learning themselves. “I was very excited to have them with me in Dundee. The family was there when I went home, food was ready and it was really good. Home is where the family is.”

For Rashida Bibi, Abdul’s wife, adapting to the move to Scotland was difficult at first but she soon settled and began working hard to help make a comfortable life for their growing family. Rashida, sadly, has passed away since she contributed to this story, but she shared her vivid memories then about arriving in Scotland.

“I found Glasgow strange,” she said. “It was very different and I didn’t understand the language. Then we came to Dundee and I just had to like it – this was where our family was. When I first got there we had to use tinned foods before one shop opened selling meat and Asian spices. Having come from a farming community where you grow your own food I

found that hard to get used to. My two sons were born here and in 1978 we moved into a two-bedroom house where we stayed for 15 years.

“I worked in a jute factory, beginning with the nightshift and was paid £30 a week. We would socialise with other Pakistani families and when the men went to work the women would get together in the park.” That improved life but the most difficult part of the transition was her inability to speak English.

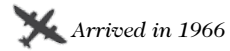
When Rashida passed away, the couple had lived in their house for 17 years. “It’s quiet and peaceful,” she recalled at the time. “The children are all married and make me very happy. I tell my grandchildren how I used to feel lonely and they are very understanding. My husband tells them what it was like being here on his own for so long. They always enjoy listening and are interested in what we tell them.”

Abdul also remembers how hard it was for him at first, spending six years without his family, but has many more good memories.

“Dundee is my home now,” he says. “I’ve been here for more than 50 years and my children are settled with their own families. I’m 83 and I find it comfortable – I feel as if I was born and brought up here.”



# Sardaran Bibi



When Sardaran Bibi’s plane touched down in London in 1966, she felt as if she had landed on another planet. Holding her three children close, Sardaran gathered their few possessions and stepped off the plane and into Heathrow Airport in search of her husband, who she had not seen for four years.

“When I arrived in London it looked like a different world,” says Sardaran. “I could not speak English and people looked different. Everything seemed strange. But my husband was there to meet us and we then got another flight from London to Glasgow, where we stayed with relatives for one night before travelling on to Dundee.”

Sardaran had been born in Faisalabad, British India, in 1938, and married when she was 18. She went on to have two daughters and one son before life took a sudden twist. An emigration agent arrived in their village and Sardaran’s husband took the opportunity to meet up with him while his father was away.

“My husband was one of four brothers,” she explains. “My father-in-law was very against the idea of emigrating to the UK, worried that because it was not a Muslim country anyone who went there would become westernised and lose



touch with their religion and values.

“But my husband was determined to go and as it was easy to get a permit his immigration documents were ready within a month and it cost £50 for everything.”

Sardaran’s husband made the journey, arriving in England in 1962. He found mill work but was injured and had to take some time off. Then, on the advice of a friend, he decided to go to Dundee, where he began working in a jute factory.

“He found it difficult,” says Sardaran. “He did not have to work as hard as that in Pakistan. He had been very well off there and had servants. He wasn’t used to working but here he had to work in factories.”

Before saving the money to bring his family over, Sardaran’s husband, who earned between £10-£12 per week, had bought a two-bedroom flat in Dundee in St Peter Street for £200.

“My children were aged 10, eight and five when we arrived,” says Sardaran. “I was very homesick and I thought the houses in Glasgow and in Dundee were small but the children were happy and they were excited to be here.”

Sardaran had another daughter after arriving in Dundee and she began to find it difficult to manage and run their family with just her husband’s salary.

“We still managed to save a little,” says Sardaran. “But after four years I started a cleaning job in a school and in a pub. I worked two and a half hours at the school in the mornings



and then at the pub for two hours. I used to earn £20 a week from the cleaning. Then I started to sew anoraks at home and that gave me some extra income, along with selling material at home. I never felt this work was beneath me.”

She began to sell Asian fabric that she bought at a stall in Glasgow. “But then I started to buy the fabric directly from the suppliers in Bradford and Birmingham. My eldest daughter would look after my youngest ones while I would take my middle daughter with me to Bradford by train to buy all the material. It became easier when the suppliers started to come to Dundee to deliver the stock and I would sell at the stalls in the market for three days a week – I was doing three jobs at the same time.”

Sardaran’s earnings helped the family to move on and up to





bigger homes. In 1983 a vacant shop came up for rent. She was interested in starting up a business and basing her fabric sales here but the hard-working mother wanted to buy the shop.

“I managed to buy it for £12,000, says Sardaran. “I put some money down for it and I also borrowed some. My shop did well and lots of people came to buy their material, including lots of Scottish people. It was always clean and well heated and people would come in and stay for a chat. I made money to run the house and also, with three daughters, I knew their weddings were going to be expensive.”

After 18 years, Sardaran sold the shop and bought the house where she now lives in Dundee. She looks back on her achievements with warmth and great pride, though she never forgets how hard her journey has been.

“The most difficult parts have been the times I felt very homesick when I first came to this country,” she says. “I missed my family terribly. I went back to Pakistan after 10 years and again 12 years later and it was difficult to be away from my family for so long.

“But I know I can have my religion and live here too. My neighbours here have been good and kind. I’ve never had a hard time because we are Muslim and my children are also religious. I’ve also been to Makkah five times.

“I thank God for giving me strength for all that I have managed to do and for giving me the courage to work hard



for this life here. I wanted to make a good life for me and my children. I got them all married, They are very good children and they have done well. I’m very proud of them. I also have seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. I’m very happy.”



# Mohammed Din



*Arrive in 1963*

The farming business was good for Mohammed Din, who was born in British India in 1937, in the Jalandhar district of Punjab. But people were talking about opportunities in the UK and Mohammed already had a friend who had gone to Scotland.

“I knew of an agent,” he says. “He got me a passport and a ticket and I flew from Karachi. It took almost three days to get to the UK and eventually I landed in London.”

It was 1963 and Mohammed, unable to speak English, found Heathrow Airport unpleasant and confusing. “The airport was not very clean and I was really anxious,” he says. “There was a fruit stall there run by an Indian lady and I asked her where it would be best to go. She suggested Scotland, as not many people lived there.

“I had an open ticket so I flew to Glasgow but when I landed at the airport I did not know what to do. I asked a policeman for help and he asked a taxi driver friend of his to take me to my friend’s house. He told the driver if he could not find the house to bring me back to the police station – but he found it and fortunately my friend was at home.

“I stayed with him for two days and I liked Glasgow. He worked

as a door-to-door salesman and he took me with him but it was very cold and the people were only paying ten shillings (50p) for his things. Then he took me to a shop and I used my £10 to buy a coat, shirts and a suit, along with a quilt.

“After two days I travelled to Dundee as I had a few more friends there. I thought the houses were very small but it was clean, with not too many people and they were friendlier – it was more like a village. I only really came to look around but I ended up staying.”

The 26-year-old Mohammed, whose wife and two children were back at home in Pakistan, began working in a jute factory but found the dust too oppressive and left after two weeks. He tried another jute factory where he stayed for two months and then settled into a job at carpet factory, Thomson Shepherd, also connected to the city’s jute industry.

In 1968 he made the first of a number of trips back to Pakistan, staying for seven months. On his return, he bought a one-bedroom flat with a friend for £100. He picked up his job at the carpet factory again but in 1970 switched working in a tube-making factory. Five years later, he was able to start up his own business.

“My first grocery shop was in Kirkcaldy and I travelled from Dundee every day. I bought a van for my business but we used to go to Glasgow for food shopping by train. At first I couldn’t even make a cup of tea but then I began learning to cook and on Sundays I’d get together with my Pakistani friends to play cards and eat. I also made friends with some





local people from the factory – in those days people were very friendly and easy to get on with.”

In 1977, Mohammed’s wife and children came to join him, as did his mother the following year.

“When my family came over we lived in a flat with friends who were in the same block across the landing,” says Mohammed. “It meant that my wife had some company and wouldn’t be so homesick.”

In 1979, he bought another grocery shop in Monifieth, which he ran for 19 years. During this time the family moved to a three-bedroom flat for four years and then to Ladywell for about 10 years, where they bought a council house.

During this time Mohammed’s wife joined many other Asian women working at a jute factory, winding spools of jute for eight hours a day at £55 a week. She, and later her daughter, spent seven years there before joining Mohammed to work in the shop.

“The foreman in the factory told me I was a very good worker and suggested I brought my daughter to work there so she joined me,” she explains. “It wasn’t a very nice area; some people would try to grab money from you. The Indian and Pakistani women would stay together so that there was a group of us on the bus together for the late shift that finished at 11pm.

“It was so cold that I used to bring pieces of wood from work

to burn on the fire. But I liked the work and the company and there is only so much you can do in the house. Working gets you out.”

Mohammed has seen a lot of change in Dundee over the years and believes it is important that his children know about the hard times his parents had to endure.

“I always made an effort to improve my living standards with the homes I have built over the years,” he says. “The toilets used to be outside and people had to go the public baths for a wash. We didn’t have a fridge at first and had to leave the milk outside to stay cool.

“Times were hard and I have had to learn to do a lot of things myself. I’ve seen Dundee change too.” He saw the Tay road bridge, which replaced the ferry, being built. “Sometimes everything seems to have changed so fast,” he says.

“But I’m proud to see my children and my grandchildren educated, in professions and doing well. My son thinks it’s a good idea for this to be recorded.”

## Mohammad & Shamin Alim

✈ *Arrived in 1962*

Tomatoes fill the greenhouse that extends from the side of the Dundee home owned by Mohammed Alim and his wife Shamin. This plant came to have a special significance for Mohammad, who was born into a rural community in Jalandhar in British India in 1940.

Alim’s uncle, who had come to Glasgow in 1932, had his own drapery business, and made arrangements for his 22-year-old nephew to join him.

“We were farmers,” says Alim “So my brother stayed to look after the farm and I came to the UK just one month before new immigration rules (the controversial and restrictive Commonwealth Immigrants Act) were being implemented in March 1962.

“I knew nothing about Scotland, though everyone knew about England. I flew from Karachi to London and there were long queues at the airport – it was all very new to me. I showed my written instructions to a taxi driver and paid £1 to get to the train station.

“I had £5 with me and bought a ticket to Glasg w. When I arrived I took another taxi to my uncle’s house at Nicholson







Street (in the Gorbals). Everything was different: the culture, buildings, people and language.” It was also cold and snowing, the first time he had seen snow.

After two weeks Alim started work on a farm in Lanarkshire, where Scotland’s successful tomato growing industry was based.

“My uncle’s customers were farmers,” says Alim. “They were looking for workers and I began looking after tomatoes in greenhouses as well as other plants and crops. I knew a lot about farming and the tomatoes grew well under my watch so my employer was very happy with me.

“I was paid £7 a week for an eight-hour shift and sometimes I worked overtime. I really enjoyed the work but travelling took an hour and a half each way on the bus from Glasgow to Carluke, 25 miles away. I stayed there for six months but I had a friend who lived in Dundee who told me there was better work, with a salary of £8 a week.”

Alim went to Dundee where he worked in the Bow Bridge jute factory. “It was piece work: the more you did the more you were paid but winding spools with thread was very hard. I used to get hurt and burn my fingers but eventually I became an expert and my manager began writing ‘Golden Spinner’ on boards about my work. I was very tidy and arrived at work five minutes early and left five minutes late.”

Alim and a friend lived with three others in a small room with a kitchen and one bed. Two would sleep on the bed and



three on the floor and conditions were hard. “The toilet was outside. It was very cold and when we put coal on the fire the fumes filled the room. There was no carpet and we would sleep on cardboard with quilts over us.

“I lived there for three weeks until one of our friends bought a two-room flat in North Street which was much better but more men joined us until there were 10 of us. After eight weeks I moved again but there were eight people there.”

Tired of these living conditions, Alim was helped by a Scottish friend to talk to an estate agent and he bought a two-room flat on Hill Street for £115 cash. There was no sink in the kitchen, windows were broken and the toilet was in the close but Alim made repairs and moved in with his cousin and another



friend. The flatmates got on very well but Alim was already thinking about making more improvements to his lifestyle.

“I bought another flat on Glamis Street and rented out the first to my friends for £2 a week,” he explains. “I didn’t want to share the flat I was living in with too many people, apart from one friend from Glasgow.”

In 1966 Alim drove to Pakistan with four friends to get married. He stayed for a year with Shamin before the couple flew back to start their life together in Scotland.

Shamin, who was expecting their first child when she arrived, took a little time to adjust to her surroundings. “It was such a strange place for me,” she says. “I was surprised to see older Scottish women wearing lipstick and short skirts – I always thought only young women wore makeup.

“We went to live in the flat on Hill street and when I came back home after being out I would look and ask: ‘Which close is ours? They all look the same’. When my husband was at work I went to our friends’ house for company.”

Alim was back working in the jute factory but liked the idea of the additional income he’d enjoyed so bought another flat on Hill Street for £250 in 1969 and rented it out for £4 a week. After 12 years in the jute industry he decided it was time to move into the property business.

“I started property development in 1975. I sold my flat on Glamis Street and bought nearly 27 flats in a street within a space of five years. Practically the whole street was mine. A

lot of work was needed so I started renovating them myself and my wife would help me clean and decorate them. When the rental income reached £40 per week I stopped working in the factory.”

During the 1970s, the Alims had a female tenant who fell ill and Shamin looked after her until she felt better. By this time she had become like a family member and lived with them and their three sons and two daughters for 15 years, until she died.

“She helped me look after the children when I was at work,” says Shamin. “My children thought she was their granny! I thought of her like a mother.”

Since Alim stopped working 15 years ago, the couple have taken a step back from the property business but the family still rent out eight properties.

“We are happy here,” says Alim. “This is my country now. I like to go back to Pakistan to visit but only in March or April because after that it’s too hot. I wanted my family to live comfortably and now my children are all married and well settled and we have 10 grandchildren. I also helped my family in Pakistan.

“Now I grow tomatoes and cucumbers in the greenhouse and once grew a 14ft-tall sunflower which the Dundee Courier came to photograph. I am very happy with my life.”





# Mohammed & Jamila Hanif

✂ Arrived in 1961

There were no leaves on the trees when Mohammed Hanif arrived in London in March 1961. Despite the bleakness of his surroundings, the 24 year old was determined to stay upbeat – though his optimism was soon challenged.

Mohammed, born in the British India district of Jalandhar in 1937, was brought up in a farming community and didn't know what city life would be like.

“When I landed in London I was a bit anxious,” he says. “I could not speak any English but two other Pakistani friends could speak the language and they travelled with me to Manchester, where I stayed with a family friend for a month.

“I liked Manchester; it was very cold but I was young so I was able to bear it. I started looking for work and went along with my friends who were working at the markets. But I was unable to find a job that I wanted to do and as I did not want to be a burden I left without telling anyone.”

With just £5 in his pocket, Mohammed headed to the railway station and took a train to Bristol. He knew a relative was living there – but that was all he knew about it.

“I was told to get off at the fifth stop, then took a taxi to the house, where I stayed for five days,” he explains. “My relatives and their friend were working on building sites as

labourers. They took me with them to see what they did but when I asked at a few places for work I was rejected every time.”

Once again, embarrassed that he could not pay his way, Mohammed quietly left. This time, though, he bought a ticket to Dundee, where he knew a friend from back home was living.

“After I bought my ticket I was given a shilling back in change. I had to change trains three times and it took me 28 hours with nothing to eat.

“It was cold, I was very hungry and in Dundee I went to a shop with the shilling and asked if I could buy something with it but I was told ‘no’ but they offered me a glass of water instead. It was very difficult but I believed God was looking out for me.

“I took a taxi to my friend's house in Dundee – he paid the fare. I arrived on a Friday and on Monday my friend took me to the Bowbridge jute factory and I began work there.”

Mohammed's luck had finally changed. He stayed with his friend for 18 months before buying a flat with one of the two friends he came to the UK with in Hilltown, paying £60 cash.

“I was paid £8 per week and after the deductions had £6,” he explains. “There was also overtime and I worked as a sweeper for a month and then was taught how to spin thread, became a spinner and my salary increased to £12 a week.”

Mohammed befriended many Indians and Pakistanis in Dundee but his lack of English prevented him from making much contact with local people. “We only said ‘hello’ in the factory,” he says but outside work there was no contact. “My friends and I would get together when we had spare time







and talk about home. One friend spoke English and I would take him with me to help communicate with the council or solicitors.”

Getting food, though, was not difficult. “There was a mill where we bought flour to make chapatis and we bought lentils and spices from a shop in Glasgow. I had to learn how to cook.”

He and his friend bought a new car for £350 and went to Glasgow to watch Indian movies on Sundays. “My friend taught me to drive and I passed my test in 1964.”

Mohammed returned to Pakistan in 1965 and married Jamila. The couple stayed for six months before coming back to Dundee, where it took some time for Jamila to adjust to her new home.

She says: “I liked it but I was very lonely as there were no other Pakistani women. When others started to arrive it was much better. The men would go to work and we would all get together in one house.”

By 1968 the couple had a son and a daughter and Mohammed bought a two-bedroom flat for £500 on Victoria Road. Ten years later they had another daughter and he decided to go back to live in Pakistan.

“I left my job and sold my flat,” he says. “I thought I had worked hard in Dundee and wanted to settle down in Pakistan. I began farming again and bought a tractor. Our children were happy as there was a lot of open space to play. The idea had always been to go home as our parents wanted

to see their grandchildren – and no one else knew how to work the tractor! We stayed in Pakistan for a year until my friends in Dundee started writing to me to come back. I had got on very well with my manager from the factory, Stuart, who also wrote to me in Pakistan wanting me to return. He could speak Urdu as he had previously lived in India for 15 years – so after a year I sold my tractor and returned to Dundee.”

Mohammed came alone at first and started doing night shifts at the Victoria Spinning Company. Saving and borrowing, he again managed to buy a two-bedroom flat. After two more years, in 1973, Jamila and their four children – one had been born in Pakistan – came back to Dundee, where another child was born. Still working on the nightshift, Mohammed started to sell clothes for three days a week at the market, helped by Jamila, and by the early 1980s he had his first shop.

His business, The Disco Girl, was in the Wellgate Centre. It was a name they kept for three years then changed it to Style and Fashion. “We had four shops before my wife and I retired. My sons run them now,” he says.

“I had no education but I am proud of my five children as they are all educated, they are professionals and doing well – and we have ten grandchildren.

“I’ve told my children about our experiences and they are very proud of what we achieved with hard work and determination. I worked hard and have reaped the benefits of it and we are content and happy in our older age.





# Gurpal Kaur & Surinder Singh Athwal

✕ Arrived in 1966 and 1968

A terrible tragedy happened in 1965, just a year before Gurpal Kaur Athwal was to travel to the UK to join her father, who had settled in Bradford after a spell working in Singapore. He had answered a knock at the door – and was killed on the doorstep.

It was a dreadful time for Gurpal, who was born in the District of Jalandhar in the Punjab in 1946. But she and her mother continued with their plans and they eventually arrived in Bradford in 1966.

“I was 20 years old,” she says. “We arrived in London and it was very cold. After two years, in 1968, my marriage was arranged through relatives and my husband was sent a permit to come to the UK.”

Surinder Singh Athwal, born in British India in 1945, was soon preparing for his marriage to Gurpal. His uncle had lived in Dundee since 1956, with his father having come to the country many years before from Africa. The young man arrived in London in February 1968.



“Our registered wedding was in March that year and the religious ceremony was held five months later in Bradford,” says Surinder. “We travelled to Dundee, where my uncle had bought a two-room flat on Wolseley Street with an inside toilet for £180. He had put down a £40 deposit and was paying £8 a month for the mortgage.

“I started working in the South Mills on Paterson Street (where the semi-synthetic yarn Rayon was spun). I worked on a spinning machine and was paid £6 a week for working night shifts, for 40 hours a week.”

Gurpal had also begun working in a jute mill but she was soon expecting a baby and the couple’s first daughter was born in 1969. The following year, it was time for them to move into a new home and for Surinder, that was an important decision.

“Before I arrived I had no idea about Scotland,” he says. “But we found it dark, cold and cloudy. So after two years I thought about returning to India. We always said we were only over to earn money. I never felt homesick, though, as I had family in Dundee and the food was not a big problem: we used to make lentil dahl and cooked the other vegetables we could get. We also made curries from tins of mixed vegetables.”

But they didn’t move back. Instead, the growing family bought a third-floor flat for £550 and Gurpal started a new job on the assembly line at the Timex watch factory, where she was paid £6 a week. In 1973, the couple’s second child, a son, was born.

“I worked night shifts and my wife worked during the day, so we only met at weekends,” says Surinder. “We had no choice as one of us would have to look after the children, night and day. We didn’t have a car and she would get two buses to work, drop our son with a childminder and then make a similar journey home.”

Life, he says, was very hard. “There were no baths and we had to go to the council baths at weekends and bathe the children in the kitchen sink.”

In 1993 the Timex factory, the scene of a long and bitter industrial dispute, closed and Gurpal, who had some health problems, did not work after that. Two years previously Surinder had left the factory – after 25 years of nightshifts – and bought a newsagent shop in nearby Broughty Ferry.

“It was a big change,” he says. “It was hard for the first year because I could not sleep at night! But it’s a good shop in a nice area and the people are friendly. I still run it with my son.

“My wife tells me to sell it. But I say: ‘no’ – despite the fact that it’s hard work and I’m up at 3am and work until 6pm. I did have good times at the factory, though, and I’ll always remember that. The director of the factory where I worked lived in Broughty Ferry and used to come into my shop.”

Gurpal also remembers her time at the jute mill and the watch factory fondly. “I made a lot of friends,” she says. “And I enjoyed the money! I do miss that kind of friendship. But



*‘I never felt homesick as I was lucky to have family in Dundee and the food was not a big problem: we used to make lentil dahl and cooked other vegetables we could get’”*



I still see people around that I used to work with – there’s one lady on the till in the supermarket – and it’s good to say hello to them.”

The couple recall the camaraderie and social life of the old days and although their children’s generation are better off financially they think some of the positive spirit from previous times has been lost.

“Life was good,” says Sarinder. “People from India and Pakistan socialised with each other. There was a lot of love between people but not too much money – people needed



each other and so helped each other out a lot. We would all get together at the weekends. This generation does not have the same bond.

“We’ve only been back to India three times since I came to Scotland. We had to send money back to our families so had a lot of responsibility. We worked very hard, brought up our children, got them married and looked after our family in India.

“We now have four grandchildren and we are very happy. We still follow the traditions and we hope they will continue.”





# Lansana Bangura

 Arrived in 1964

It took nine days for 21-year-old Lansana Bangura to sail to Aberdeen from his home in Sierra Leone, intent on fulfilling a dream of studying engineering at Aberdeen University.

When he arrived in the Granite City his first impressions were not favourable: “It looked dull and bleak to me. I brought nothing with me except some clothes.”

He was inspired to begin a new life by Denis Garvie, a Scottish civil engineer working in Sierra Leone who offered Lansana an opportunity to live with his own mother in Aberdeen while he studied.

Lansana had left school aged seven when his father, a clan chief, died and so had missed a lot of education. His dream of becoming an engineer began when he got to know Denis and his colleagues who were working on an agricultural project in his mother’s village.

“He encouraged quite a few of us to improve ourselves. He said it would be nice if we visited his country so I decided to come to Aberdeen for six months and when it was time to go back I asked him if I could stay and he agreed.”







He stayed with his friend's mother for the first two years while he took his Highers at Aberdeen College of Commerce, developing a fondness for local food "I really liked my butteries in the morning," he remembers.

He went on to Aberdeen University to take a degree in Civil Engineering and looked for a place to share with fellow students. "When I was looking for a room to rent, I was refused by many people who would say 'no blacks.' It wasn't easy in those days."

He met his future wife, a fellow student at Aberdeen University and they married in 1973. Lansana moved to Newcastle in 1974 to work as a civil engineer and stayed there until 1978 when he decided to return to Sierra Leone with his wife and baby son Alimamy Denis. He and his wife had two more children in Sierra Leone but decided to relocate to Scotland in 1989, two years before civil war broke out in their country.

"My wife's father had died and she came back first with my daughter and then I came back with my sons. The situatuon in Sierra Leone was building up and one could sense something was wrong."

Lansana struggled to find engineering work when he returned to Scotland. "I got temporary contracts and decided to do a Masters degree at Strathelyde to try to get a better job but it didn't help. I could not find a job so I started working at Sunday markets to sell shoes as I wanted to do something



to make a living. Things have changed a lot for the better now. My children all studied and graduated and are working professionals. My children are my pride and they are proud of their heritage."

"If I'd stayed in my village in Sierra Leone and never come to Scotland I think I would have been a very big rice farmer...but as an old lady once said to me: 'We don't write the script.'"





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# Nemat Ali

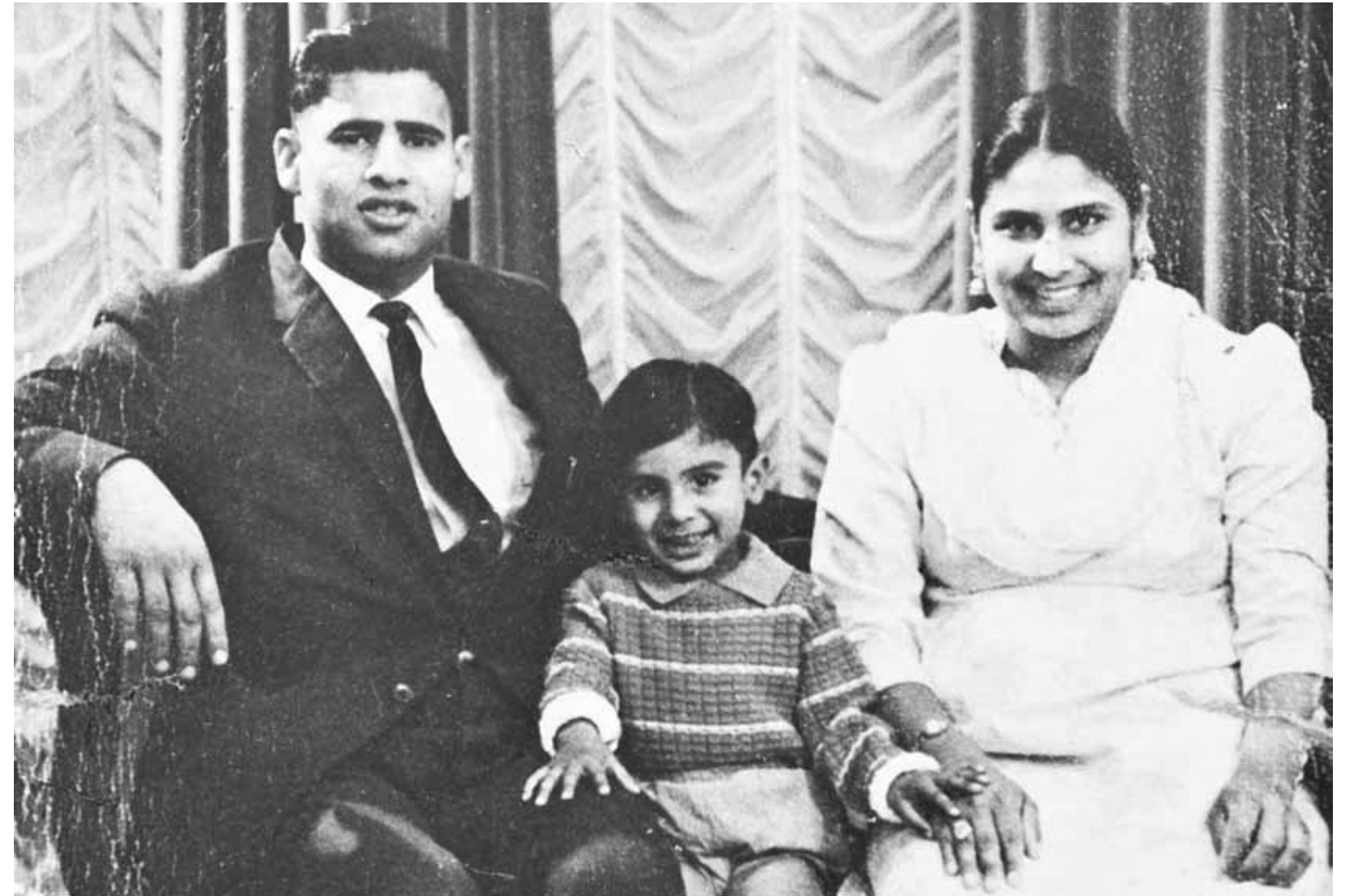
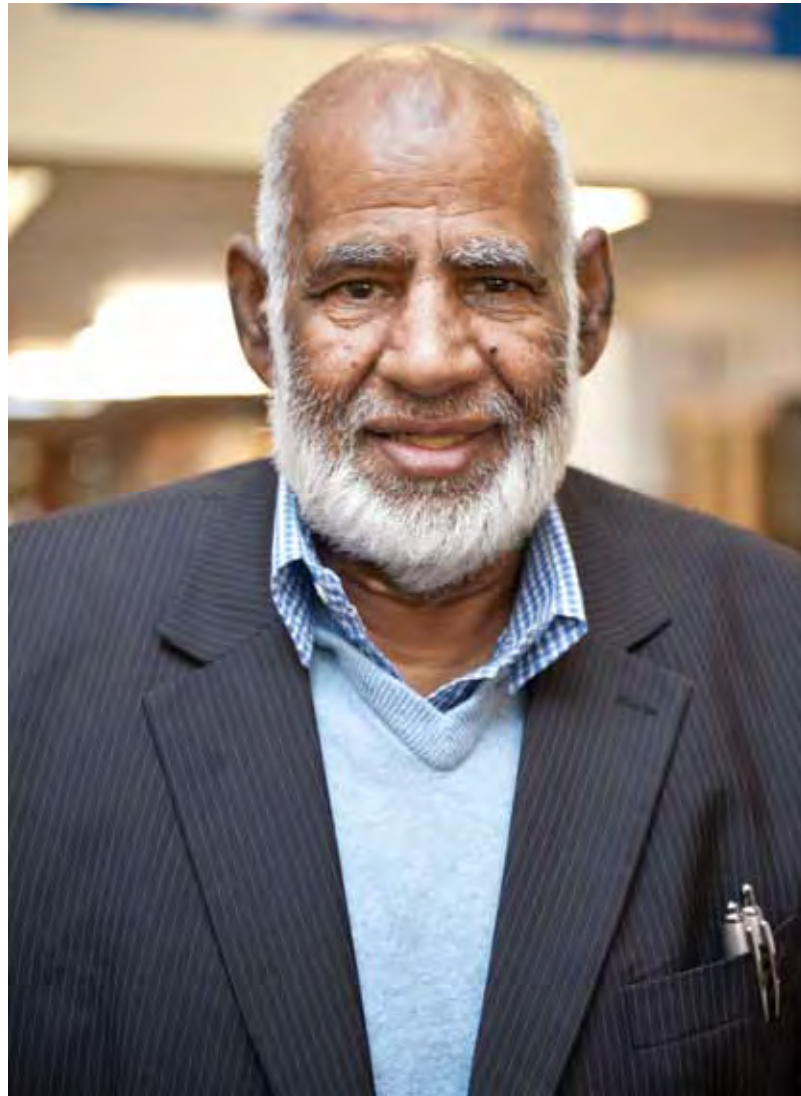
✕ Arrived in 1959

Friday lunchtime in Buckie was the best time of the week for Nemat Ali in 1959 because it was when the young women working at the Thorn EMI light bulb factory in the seaside town got paid.

Just 15 years old and newly arrived in Scotland from Pakistan, Nemat made a living selling clothes out of a suitcase door-to-door and his best sales day was when the factory girls wanted a new outfit on pay day. “There was a dance every Monday night in Fisherman’s Hall in Buckie and the girls were always looking for new things to wear. They used to give me orders and I became well-known in the town,” he says.

Nemat, who was born in Faisalabad came to Scotland in 1959, initially to live with his uncle in Lossiemouth. He flew from Pakistan to Glasgow via Dubai and London, bringing only two pairs of trousers, a suit, traditional clothes and a quilt. The journey took three days and he spent his first few days in Glasgow staying with a family friend before travelling north to Lossiemouth to join his uncle.

His uncle was also a door-to-door salesman who gave him a suitcase with £27 worth of clothes and sent him to knock on doors. “The first day I sold a handkerchief. Some ladies closed the door in my face but others were very nice,” he recalls.





“My first impression was of being very homesick but when I started selling and got to know my customers and the language I was happy. It took me four to six months to pick up English but I did all right, even when I didn’t speak English. A lady gave me tea every Friday but never bought anything. I went to her place at 11, said I was hungry, and she fed me and taught me a lot of words in English.

“In 1961 I bought a brand new van and covered a bigger area but I got a bit lazy. My sales dropped from £40 a week to £30 and I was spending too much time blethering to customers. So I left the van and went back to selling from my suitcase,” he says.

He and his wife used to buy chickens from a farmer but had to make regular trips to Glasgow for spices and Indian food.

Nemat saved £400 to buy his first house in Lossiemouth then sold it at a profit and bought a house in Buckie. He opened his first clothes shop in the town in 1963, renting premises for £5 a week before buying his own shop. He stayed in the clothing business until 1980 then opened a furniture shop which his family still owns today.

“I came here to make a better life because my family was very poor. I planned to go back after five years but my wife Munira followed me here in 1962 and we stayed. Most of my experiences in Scotland have been very positive – people in Buckie have been kind and very friendly. My wife and I would not live anywhere else but Buckie.”



Nemat and his wife raised five daughters and one son. “They are all bilingual and follow their family’s traditions. “They are all married and they have done well. I am very proud of my family.”

## Manmohan Singh & Jagindar Kaur Sangra

✂ Arrived in 1959 and 1962

For Manmohan Singh Sangra who grew up in the Kenyan city of Kisumu, his first glimpse of Leeds – the northern industrial city that was to become his first home in Britain – came as something of a culture shock.

Manmohan (who moved from Kenya to India in his teens) arrived in Heathrow airport from New Delhi in 1962 and travelled by train to Leeds to join his cousin in a back-to-back terrace. “When I got there I saw rows and rows of little houses with black smoke coming out. It was completely different to my expectation of what Britain would look like and it was so different to Kenya where we had paw paw and banana trees at the back of our house,” he said.

Manmohan had taken pity on a fellow Indian who was short of money for his train fare north and had just five shillings to his name when he got to Leeds. However armed with an innate confidence and the determination to forge a professional career, he signed on to the Youth Employment Exchange as the first step towards his goal.







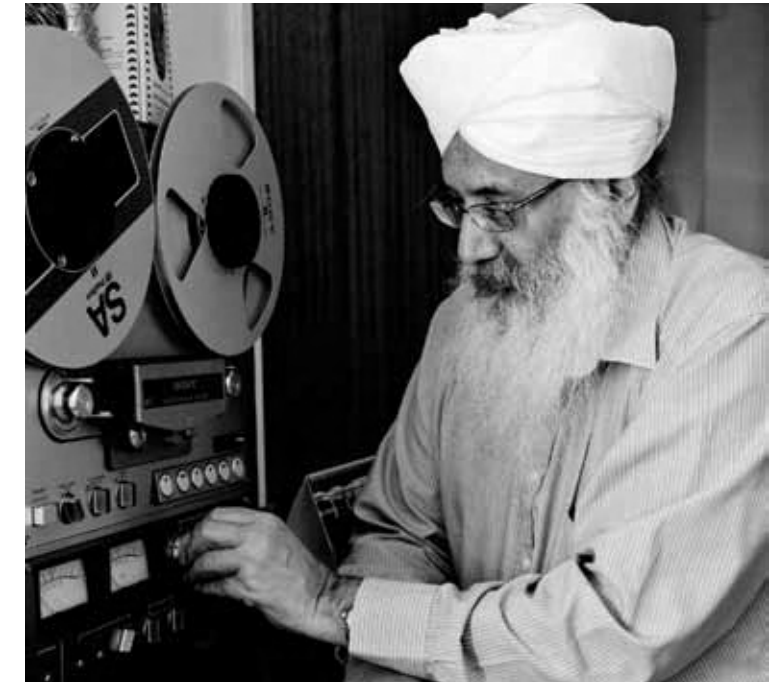
A chance encounter with a British clerk who had lived in Uganda proved a lucky stroke as he discussed his father's experiences working on the Owen Falls hydro-electric dam in Uganda, a huge engineering project. "She fixed me up with a job with an engineering company who trained me as a draughtsman and sponsored my education. The pay was £5 17 shillings and 6 pence but the boss gave me £1 more because I was on my own," he recalled.

Manmohan befriended other young single Asian men in Leeds, many living in cramped conditions, with up to five at a time sharing a room. They slept in shifts, sharing a single outside toilet. Manmohan would join them in a long queue for the public baths on Saturdays.

"I would read or write letters for the ones who were illiterate so they could keep in touch with their families back home. They used to borrow and lend money to each other to buy houses. It was like a little lending club," he said.

"These guys worked really hard. Some of them worked in textile factories and some were on the buses. Many of them came here and did very menial jobs but they had such a strong spirit and a real desire to earn enough to educate their families. They wanted their kids to do well in Britain and most of the children of that generation have done exceptionally well."

Manmohan himself worked hard by day and studied at night, obtaining first an ONC then an HNC in Engineering (eventually taking a Mechanical Engineering Degree at



Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen later in his career as a mature student).

One early job was as an engineering contractor for ICI in Harrogate where he designed specialist machinery, moving on to a Teesside company and an assignment in Aberdeen to do vital engineering work for the Claymore oilfield which was discovered in 1974, fuelling the North Sea boom.

It was a career move that led in 1976 to Manmohan becoming the first Sikh to work offshore in the North Sea. "In the





1970s going offshore was like flying to London: you got on a helicopter, put your sunglasses on and whistled. I'd go with my turban on in those days – you can't do that today, everyone has to wear a survival suit."

He worked on energy engineering projects in Norway and Denmark as well as the UK North Sea, eventually moving permanently to Aberdeen in 1980 with his wife Jagindar and young son Meharpal. One of the most experienced engineers

still working in the oil industry, Manmohan is currently a Senior Project Engineer in Aberdeen.

His engineering career was already on the rise in the late 1960s when he met his wife Jagindar, who had been born in the same city in Kenya and travelled to Bolton in 1959 to train as a nurse. Like her future husband, obtaining professional qualifications was important to her and she specialised in midwifery before obtaining a post-graduate qualification as an operating theatre nurse.

She lived in a hostel for young nurses under the watchful eye of a matron who took the young Indian girl under her wing. "Matron was so good to me. She let me cook my own meals in the big hostel kitchen and on my 21st birthday she organised a special birthday treat," she says.

"I made friends with two young Indian girls who were from South Africa. I found the classroom work fine but when we were on the wards it was difficult to understand the patients' accents."

Part of her work involved delivering babies at home, often to mothers who lived in poor and sometimes unsanitary conditions. "Some of the homes were not at all suitable for home births and we'd have to put down newspapers everywhere because the floors weren't clean."

They smile at the memory of their first meeting, which had been arranged by their families. "Usually the boy comes to the girl's house but she came to my house and I was fast asleep and my brother-in-law had to come and wake me up," Manmohan said.

They married in 1969 in Leeds because there was no Sikh temple in Bolton, which had relatively few Asian families at that time. They went on to have a son and life was sweet for the young family until Manmohan was unexpectedly made redundant. "I used to get £32 a week but that world suddenly came to an end. We had a little baby and I wondered how we'd manage. I did what I could: I collected Pools money and

I did some chauffeuring as well," he recalls.

Determined to get back on the engineering career ladder he got a job interview at ICI. "The interviewer asked me about calculating the power of a motor then he just sat there with a pencil in his mouth looking at me.

"Eventually I put my coat on and was heading out the door when he stopped me and said: 'it's OK – go and see the manager.' ICI offered me a job at £300 a week. I couldn't believe it – that was almost ten times what I was on before," he says.

For both Manmohan and Jagindar, the thing they value most about having left their childhood homes to make new lives in Britain is the opportunity to study and make a better life for themselves – and their son, who went on to become a consultant neurosurgeon at a Glasgow hospital.

"Look at all the youngsters now: in mine and Jagindar's family we have neurosurgeons, lawyers, lecturers, engineers and business managers – and it's because of the work of their parents," Manmohan says.



# Maqbul Ali

✈ Arrived in 1955

The far north of Scotland might seem an unlikely destination for an 18-year-old boy from the Punjab but when Maqbul Ali arrived in 1955, he was following in the footsteps of his uncle, who had been in Scotland since 1934, and older brother Mumtaz, who arrived in 1951.

“There were others who came from India before the Second World War to set up selling clothes door-to-door in Wick,” explains Maqbul. “When the war started some went home but one ship was torpedoed and after that people were too scared of the U-boats to go back. So my uncle went to live for a time in Glasgow.”

Maqbul, born in the Ludhiana district of Punjab in the former British India in 1937, flew from Karachi to Heathrow and then on to Newcastle, where he spent two weeks with his sister and family and other relatives.

He says: “I came from quite a big city so I was not scared but it was strange. On the train there were a lot of young men coming home from national service, I was the only Pakistani person. It was okay but I was a bit frightened in case someone attacked me.”

Maqbul then spent a fortnight at his cousin Mohammed Amin’s home in Glasgow. Mohammed then drove him north to Wick – a 12-hour journey in those days. Maqbul joined his brother in business and they would go out in their Morris Minor, selling clothes door to door.

Meanwhile, the young man was still trying to adjust to his new surroundings. “I was very homesick but what could you do ? There was not even a TV in Wick at that time. On one side of Wick is the coast and I was a bit frightened because I had never seen seawater before, only a small river at home,” said Maqbul. “When my brother took me to the harbour there were still hundreds of fishing boats there - I had only seen that in pictures.”

“Back then the farmers still ploughed their fields with horses. The first tractors didn’t start appearing until about 1957. Slowly, the horses disappeared as the tractors came in and that meant more unemployment as the farmers didn’t need so much help.”

Maqbul sometimes travelled to Glasg w to meet clothing suppliers and make sales. “When we went door-to- door many people were friendly but in some parts where they had not seen Asian people before they were frightened and called us ‘Names’. They weren’t cheeky, just scared because they hadn’t seen people like me before. We had Sikh friends staying with us and ladies used to lock their doors because they were frightened because they hadn’t seen men with turbans and long beards before,” he remembers.

Maqbul and Mumtaz bought chickens from local farmers and spices from shops in Glasg w so they could enjoy a home-cooked curry. “Farmers kept chickens just the same as at home in Pakistan so we’d buy them and take them back home and slaughter them according to our Muslim religion and make our own curries with daal (lentil).” or other spices and vegetables.





He recalls that many houses had no baths. “We used to go to the fisherman’s cafe and pay 2s/6d for a bath with soap and a towel. In my uncle’s house, a tenement in Nicolson Street in Glasgow’s Gorbals, 20 people from the asian continent stayed in a three bedroom house which was quite common back then. The Scottish neighbours used to say they didn’t like the curry smell when were were cooking but now times have changed as curries are probably one of the most popular dishes in scotland.

These were hard times for many people in the north of Scotland, with the fishing industry in decline and the oil industry yet to begin but Maqbul and Mumtaz – who had been joined in 1957 by younger brother Maqsood – were doing well and had opened two shops and Ali Brothers Drapers and Outfitters was established.

“People were poor here, making about £5.50 a week but we made £300 so we were quite rich,” he says. “I enjoyed judo and passed all the different grades. My brother Zahoor Ahmed, Neil Manson and I ran Judo Club in Assembly Rooms, Wicks and a competition in Thurso and it was in the local papers, the John O’Groat Journal and the Caithness Courier. We were also involved in weightlifting.”

Maqbul was friends with local police officers who encouraged him to become a special constable. “I said I had a business to run and no time but they said ‘you are good with people you will enjoy it’ and they talked me into it. I had a medical and passed the exam. I enjoyed it very much. I was very well liked. I didn’t charge anyone, I always gave them a warning

or caution. Even now young men will say: ‘I remember you let me off with a warning as a boy when the other policeman wanted to charge me’.”

Maqbul had been joined by his wife in 1962 and they were bringing up a young family , 4 boys, and busy with their business, with his brothers having returned to Pakistan. He still loved his special constable role but in 1979 was persuaded by an ex-policeman friend working at Dounreay, that he could earn a lot more money in security at the atomic energy plant.

Maqbul enjoyed the career switch but nine months later the family was devastated when one of their sons tragically passed away suddenly. “I had a nervous breakdown and so did my wife. I tried to carry on at the atomic plant. Some days were very bad and I didn’t go in for some months. My colleagues were very good and the company were supportive,” he said.

However his brother-in-law Abdul offered him an opportunity to jointly run a restaurant in Inverness so he and his second oldest 16-year-old son moved there in 1981, selling one of their two shops. With the help of cousins who ran a restaurant in Dundee, the new Gulistan Indian restaurant became a great success as the first Indian restaurant in Inverness and his wife and youngest two boys joined their family in the city soon after.

Now, Maqbul has 12 grandchildren and is hugely proud of his family and he has had other flourishing businesses to his credit in Inverness since the gulistan restaurant. “We became very successful in inverness. Everyone knows me here, everywhere I go, they know Mr Ali.”





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### Equal Opportunities Programme







More than half a century ago, young men and women from farms and villages, cities and sea ports in distant lands dared to plan new lives, new beginnings and a better future.

Carrying only a few belongings with them, they travelled from India, from China, from Africa and the Caribbean and set up home in Scotland. They battled over-crowding, poverty, prejudice, the biting cold and the constant ache of homesickness. Yet, their daily struggles were punctuated by many moments of triumph, humour, companionship and support.

The people who made those brave journeys and the families they raised have enriched Scottish society in many ways. These are their stories