

Noors Jahan Begum, Mrs K Nessa, Mrs R Begum - Transcript

My name is Noors Jahan. My husband worked in the mills. He came first in 1956 and he was a spinner at Salts Mill. All the people who came from abroad, they came to London first, then they moved to Bradford because all the men could get a job. They used to work daytime, sometimes three shifts. Morning shift was at 6am. There was also a night shift. They got told which shift, they didn't get to choose. I came over in 1987. My husband sometimes came to Bangladesh to visit me. He came to Bangladesh after three years over here, then every year.

My family came over in 1956, 57, 62 and 63. That time all the people came for textile work. The government from India, they asked people to come and do the job because the English workers didn't want to do this job because it's night time and it's dark in the world. That's why they were coming from abroad and improving that. So they go over specifically to bring guys. My husband used to work in Gomersal. Thomas Van Lee I think. An old mill. It was an old mill. He was a... card minder. It was a fiddly job. I came over in 1978 in November. That time it was snowing. There was lots of snow. And he came from Gomersal to Cleckheaton to Bradford. There were long work days. Everyone around us were Indian Gujarati people. Everybody went to work at this factory. And our people, lots of people work in Westcroft. Here, in BD4. You can see now that mill is closed. All the mills closed.

We came in 1956. I was 17. Thomas Van Lee I guess, yeah, closed in '70. I can't actually remember, but it was the 70s to... before 80s. Our husbands lost their jobs. My husband said his salary was 50 shillings. Then, after a few years, he then earned £7.

Since I came, that time was at £50 my husband's over £10,000, '80, '70, the best or highest. Yeah. But this was... it was in '70, 1970. But before that I think so, I had the shilling or £5, £7. We got paid cash in hand every week but the first week was in hand.

It was dark work. Everything was very dusty. They had to put a mask on. Lots of sound and noise.

It was hard moving from Bangladesh. There were not a lot of Asian shops or mosques. Or, you know, like this BEAP centre wasn't here. I went to language learning. Straight to learning English. Tessa Wider taught me English. And Thomas. And after that, I went to a Bradford college. They were very helpful. They came to our homes. And they are friendly. I always remember Tessa and Thomas. Tessa said to us... She's my friend. I always go to Tessa, she said to me her father was MP.

When our husbands moved over, somebody would rent a house and everybody, the rest of the people, it's just one, two, three people living together. They live together. And cook together. Sometimes some people work night shifts.

My husband didn't live with others because he came a bit later. He came in 1963, I think. When I moved over, he had already bought a house. That time, everybody lived and looked after mankind and said take all this, this bed sheet, bedclothes, all this. They had got a big tub of hot water shower.

I came in '76 to this country. I liked it when I was young. I was very young when I was in Bangladesh.

I was born in the year of the horse. I lived on Cornell Road, yeah. It was early in the morning and my husband used to work in Post Office, he locked the door and would go out to work. So, I was scared to open the door. I would look out the window. Because if something happened to me, what shall I do? Yes, yes. I was really scared to get out. I would just lie down, no television, nothing else. That time I was pregnant as well. I brought my children over. The children were very happy to be going to England. We came by train. They had spent a lot of time without their Dad. I lived in 15 Cornwall place, then second or third day my husband took me among them, on top of Cornwall Road, and said, 'Look at the clock there. You can go there.' So all the time I would go there and there's a khakat market, monks and such. Since I came here, then my husband said, I need a sewing machine.

The children go to school, and my big son goes to language school. They learnt English quickly and everybody went to university for language classes when coming from Bangladesh. All children might get a degree. Back then, my children were 3 years, 4 years, 12 years and 15 years old. They are married now, some have children. I am a future great grandmother. I'm very happy.

My husband was working in a bakery. A bread factory. He worked there for 25 years. He got a pension and retired.

When the mills closed, my husband became a labourer. He liked the mill more because he was a spinner. He said this to me every time he's working.

I came in 1976. My husband and I were separated for about 15 years. He came in the 50s. I came at 19 and I've been here 50 years now. Whatever money they got, they sent something to Bangladesh or Pakistan, and they spent some money here. So they couldn't afford to go over there and bring their family as well. They had such small amounts of money they couldn't afford the house. Not everybody had a house at that time. They shared a house. Sometimes they shared a bed. When I came, one milk bottle was 10 pence. My husband was paid £9 at night time, they paid you more than the day shift which was £7.

I was born in 1978. I was 17 years old. I was born in 1978. I was not able to go to school. I bought a house for £500. That time English people are very helpful. Mostly, that time was not racist. It is worse now.

In 1997, I had 11 days in hospital. My son was born. I was crying to go home. They would say 'Go for a bath', and every day 'Go for exercise.' Back then, you couldn't just go home same

day. They would give the baby a bath and they had a book for the baby. That time was so nice.

Because nowadays we don't like living in Bradford. But I have to like it because my children, we can go with our children, children like it here. Yeah, now it's our roots here.

First time we bought a house was in 1980. Yeah. That's £7000 for a house.

My house is still that first house. It was a terraced house. My husband bought it for only £1600. Oh they don't want to give each other black people a house. The banks did not want to let us borrow. My husband walked about to work, sometimes by bus. By bus for Manningham or Saltaire. Nobody could find a car at that time. It was 1984-1985 they got a car.

My friends, they got a car and they took us every Saturday, Sunday, and Sunday evening. So, outside... the countryside. We went every Saturday, Sunday. Lots of hills. Yay!