

Spinning Lifestyles – Shajahn

Can you start by telling me your name?

My name is Shajahn.

And where are you from?

Pakistan.

Have you lived all your life in the UK?

I know about Bangladesh from my Grandfather.

Where was your Mum from?

Pakistan.

When did your father come?

In 1925.

And how did he come?

He was in the Royal Navy.

What did he do in the Navy?

[rather muffled] ?

How long was he in the Navy?

I don't know.

And how did he meet your Mother?

They were living in Manchester. She was white.

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Two sisters and two brothers.

Where did you work in London?

In the East End, there were lots of jobs around.

How long did you work in the Leather industry?

About 10 years.

Was it hard?

Yes.

Long hours?

Yes.

So what time did you start?

Eight o'clock in the morning till about 9.30 at night.

Was it a big factory?

Yes, a big factory.

Where did you live at the time?

In Beckton.

Was there a large Bengali community there? Did you know everybody?

Yes.

Was there a good sense of community, did you help each other?

Yes

What made you finish in the leather industry?

?

What did you do after that?

Packing.? Then I got married to a woman from Bangaldesh.

Was it an arranged marriage?

Yes.

Your mother was still living in Manchester?

Yes.

Did you go back to Manchester at all?

I go sometimes. I went last year.

Are you brothers and sisters still in Manchester?

No, they all live in London now.

You've lived in Tower Hamlets a long time now haven't you?

Yes. ? [too muffled to hear what he said]

That's terrible.

?

How long ago?

1998.

And the council moved you out?

Yes

Where do you live now?

?

Is that alright?

Very nice.

?

Yes.

Did you ever meet him?

?

Did your Mum ever talk about him?

Yes she talked about him ? [too muffled]

Gosh, that's amazing.

Does your Mother work?

No. She's a pensioner.

How did she meet your Dad?

?, they got married. We had a restaurant, a house, everything.

Did you help out in the restaurant?

?

Your mother worked in the restaurant?

Yes.

?

How long were they together?

A long time.

Did she find it difficult at the time being married to a Bengali man?

No. She was happy. She cleaned house and went to the Mosque as well.

That's lovely. Was there a large Bengali community?

No not at that time.

What made you come to London?

My Dad wanted to come.

Did he have a lot of family come over from Bangladesh?

Yes.

Whereabouts in Bangladesh?

Hatchput.

Is that a little village?

Yes

You've been back there, haven't you?

Yes.

What's it like there?

Sunshine, fresh foods.

Do you think the younger people now are different from your generation?

Yes. Modern.

What do you mean by modern?

? [too muffled]

They don't?

No, none of them do. Manners.

What about your children?

They don't want to go back.

Really? Has he been there before?

Yes, once.

Does he say why he doesn't want to go back?

Doesn't like?

I would like to go?

Have you been there?

No, no, I've been to Southern India, but not Bangladesh.

Where?

Kerala.

Is it nice?

Lovely, beautiful. They are so kind, they really looked after me.

If you go to Bangladesh, be careful, All the poor people ask you for money.
They are taught to buy things but they have no money, they are all poor
people.

Your wife is from Bangladesh isn't she?

Yes.

How did she find it when she came over here?

She didn't like it?