

Transcription

“So, I went there, with all elderly ladies, making dresses and younger girls as assistants. So I was attached to one of the elderly ladies. They were very nice, And the owner of that – what do you call it? – the house, you know, the dressmaking house, he told them that ‘You’ve got to teach her English, how to speak’ and all that.

[Interviewer: Were they all English then?]

They were all English. There wasn’t anybody who could speak my language or anything. And I started, you know, slowly, going there ... And I always dressed up like this; I never put trousers on or anything. So they all knew that I am ‘Indian’.

I said, ok, so I started talking to them and whenever I speak a wrong sentence or a wrong word or anything, they would immediately correct me.”

Parveen Khan was born in Sahiwal in 1943. The city was then in India but became part of independent Pakistan in 1947. Parveen came to London as an 18-year old bride.

She married her husband, Mohammed, a fellow Pakistani who had been raised in Kenya, in 1961. They first lived together in Bayswater. Through their landlord, they met some colourful characters and Parveen recalled going out to revue shows to see singers and musicians perform in the nightclubs, such as Normal Wisdom, Bruce Forsythe and Danny La Rue.

Through the landlord, Parveen found work in a fashionable dressmaker’s workshop in Grosvenor Square. She arrived in England speaking no English but going out to work helped her learn and become more comfortable with English life.

Her husband, **Mohammed Khan** was born in Mombassa in 1938. He came to London in 1960 and worked for British Rail. A keen table tennis player, he won the British Rail competition and recalled his pride at being the first “Black Man” to have his name on the trophy.

