

Delving into Edinburgh's social history



A collection of family and community histories from many of Edinburgh's faith groups exploring their journey from immigration to integration opens on Friday 10 November and runs to Monday 23 April

This exhibition in the Museum of Edinburgh celebrates the city's rich diversity through the stories of people who live here. Some settled here, many were born here.

The Our Story Project is run by Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, a charity that works towards effective dialogue, peace and understanding between faiths in the city of Edinburgh.

Funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund has made this project possible.

Stefan Boran said: "At Easter there is the tradition of [Swieconka]: the food which is prepared for Easter morning breakfast is blessed in church on Easter Saturday.

"If you were to go to the Cathedral, or many churches in Scotland, you would see throngs of Polish people with little baskets making their way to the church."

Trishna Singh said: "I'm so proud to be a Sikh woman. I was the first Sikh woman from the Bhatra community in Edinburgh to work in an office... [and] in 2014, I was the first Sikh woman in Scotland to be awarded an OBE."

Mohammad Aslam said: "I was involved with setting up the Lothian Race Relations Board, in the Pakistani community but also I was involved with the sport as well. I was a cricket

player, and established the Pakistani community cricket club. The club still goes and my grandson – he plays for Scotland now, for the main team.”

Khalid Mir said: “You get used to the lifestyle, when you’ve spent that much time, this is our home now, this is the place where my children are born, so for me there’s nothing else in Pakistan now!”

Nila said: “When the Hindu community were offered an old church by the council to make into a Mandir (Hindu temple)] half of the roof was gone. When we were doing our prayers and it started to rain, we put out buckets and we all moved in that corner or in that corner.

“We struggled a lot. But god-willing, our fate was there. In 1976-77 we used to go and clean it, wash the stone, there was no carpet and we used to take blankets from our own house to put on the floor and sit. No heating system, no electricity, nothing. So we used to light hundreds of candles and do prayers. But god helped us, and now you can see the beautiful temple”

Carrie Alderton, project co-ordinator of the project, said: “The process of researching for the exhibition has been an exciting adventure delving into Edinburgh’s diverse history.

“The joy of oral histories is that you’re let into the person’s story, you get to hear their memories, struggles and triumphs. This is exactly what we have tried to capture in the exhibition.

“Rather than a factual history of Edinburgh, this exhibition celebrates Edinburgh’s diversity and history through people, their lives, memories, struggles and triumphs.”

Councillor Donald Wilson, Edinburgh’s Culture and Communities Convener, said: “This exhibition is an opportunity to delve into Edinburgh’s fascinating social history and learn about

some of the many people who have chosen to call this city home.

“Weaving the lives of local people together to tell Our Story, the display celebrates our diversity and our togetherness.

“I hope the exhibition provides a warm and contemporary introduction to the story of Edinburgh’s faith communities and serves as an important reminder of how our city’s vibrant culture is thanks to a multi-cultural mix of citizens.”