

## Interview of Yousaf Ali by Marion Webber on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**Yousaf describes how he came to Newport in the 1960s from Pakistan, his life as a bus driver and how he settled into Newport. Community House played an important role in helping him to feel 'at home'. Yousaf was the subject of a documentary film in 1976 called 'Home from Home.'**

**Link to the film: <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-home-from-home-1976-online>**

**He reflects on what makes a community and the rise of social media and the effect it is having on communities.**

**0 – 3 minutes:** Yousaf Ali came to Newport from Pakistan with his parents in the 1960s when he was 15 years old.

*"I was just about 15 and not mature enough to know what was going on. In Pakistan there was no limit to when you go to school, but here there were O Levels, so I was of an age where I only spent 3 – 4 months in school. I tried to get into college but in those days there were no sort of evening classes or any classes I could join because my English wasn't high enough, so I had to go to work."*

Yousaf describes how he first started working in various factories in the Newport area, (including Crompton Batteries) but after a year or so he applied to work as a bus driver and was successful. He worked as a bus driver until he had to retire because of his health problems.

He describes how, to his knowledge, the family moved to the UK not because of any difficult situation in Pakistan, but because in those days there was a shortage of workforce in England following the second world war. Following the independence between India and Pakistan, people from those countries were encouraged to come over to the UK to rebuild the economy.

His family settled in Newport and Yousaf has children and grandchildren living in the area.

*"Everyone is happy living in the here in the community but things have changed. When I first came you could go anywhere to find work, now the work has gone. Most of the factories in Newport have gone and it is difficult for the youngsters now to get a job unless they have a good qualification and then there is just office work, not much industry".*

**3 – 6 minutes: Yousaf describes his connection to Community House.**

*Community House played a big part in his life in the early days. He wanted to participate but was unable to join any classes because his English was poor. Teachers from two different schools came to Community House to teach English every week.*

*"Working on the buses and meeting people also helped with my English, but the main place I learned from was Community House. Three trainee teachers came every Tuesday and Thursday when the hall was available to help. Mr. Summers, the Bishop of the church next door and his daughter, and Brian also helped us. Mrs. Jones used to run the café here. They were very friendly and helpful people. We had a good group of people from different nationalities and cultures and we all had a good time".*

He describes how people from all walks of life, not just Pakistan, from France and

Africa all came to Community House and everyone was happy to help each other. As well as English classes there was a playgroup, table tennis and other games including a small pool table.

*"We became an International Club. Ingrid Wilson joined and did quite a lot, and Mr. Wilson helped to run the community group. Ingrid is still very much involved"*.

**6 mins:** Yousaf describes how his life has changed.

Yousaf is no longer able to join in activities because his wife is ill and he also has health problems. Although his daughters and daughter-in-law help out, they are working. Life is busy and he spends most of his time at home.

*"I do get out and about, but not a lot because of my heart. I have been suffering quite a while now with anxiety and depression and I am officially retired two years ago"*.

**7 – 14 minutes:** Yousaf talks about his work as a bus driver and about a documentary film which was made about him in 1974 by the Newport Film School.

He talks about the time in 1974 when he went home to get married. When he came back he worked as a bus driver in Cardiff for a year, then transferred to the Newport bus company. He loved the job as he was on the go all the time and meeting friendly people.

He first saw the film in the cinema but can now watch it on the internet. He thinks it is a fair representation of his life then.

*"It was all about what life was like in the UK. It could have been better if I'd understood more but they were not good at communicating, just trying to concentrate on the scene they wanted to create. There was a scene with a marching band. You used to see them often, but not anymore"*

The film makes him nostalgic for past times as he describes how he thinks times have changed since the 1960's and 1970's.

*"People used to go to church on Sundays but that's gone. Life is now too much hustle and bustle, so expensive and not much work. People are now just busy on their phones and the internet instead of closeness with family."*

Yousif feels that we are all becoming more selfish and the world is becoming more problematic.

*"You see people all over the world killing each other. In the past people tried to make friendships and build relationships. The world is going backwards instead of forward"*.

He believes that social media is causing problems by *"putting rubbish into young minds"*.

**16 – 20 minutes:** Yousaf talks about Community House now and in the future.

He believes that Community House needs to continue and enable different groups with different activities to meet there. It has been a while since he's been able to come to Community House but he believes there are different activities going on in the

afternoons and evenings. Marion explains how the project came about.

He talks about Cyril Summers and his vision and hopes for the community.

*"He was a very good man and he knew the problems of the community and he played a big part in running Community House and the church. I got on very well with Mr. Summers and his daughter who was a very sweet person, and I remember Dorothy his wife. They moved away and when they came for a visit we had a special night and I was invited. I also see Brian now and again, but a lot of people have come and gone. I hope Community House keeps going, but you need people to run it. You can't do it with one or two".*

**22 – 28 minutes:** Yousaf talks about his involvement with the mosque.

He used to be very involved with the mosque and the Muslim community but couldn't continue because of his ill health.

*"you don't see people turning up to the mosques any more except for occasions like Ramadan or special events. People are not into religion in any community now, they have moved away from it".*

Yousaf talks about his feeling about the world as it is now.

*"All the wars going on in the world, Syria, Iran, Yemen, you see young people and children being killed and you think 'what are they doing that for – why?'. It's difficult to understand the killing of innocent people all over the world. World leaders don't know what they're doing. It's a shame, the world would be a lot better if there was a live and let-live understanding".*

*"these suicide-bombers – no religion teaches that. It takes a lot to build a home and someone comes along and blows it up – for what? I'm 100% sure that no religion or culture says this is right".*

**33 minutes, end:** Yousaf talks about how he hopes Community House can keep running for the benefit of people in the community.

*"There are still a lot of good people helping out and trying to do good in the world".*