**Esperance David – Before the War**

Int: Today is the 18th May 2015, and we are here to interview Esperance David. Hello Esperance.

ED: Hello.

Int: Could you begin and tell us when you were born?

ED: The 7th of May, 1929.  (laughter).

Int: Where were you born? And what was your name at birth?

ED: I was born in Baghdad, and my name was Esperance Ovadia.

Int: And what language did you speak?

ED: Arabic, Jewish Arabic.

Int: Is that different?

ED: Yeah, well not very different. It’s kind of, well, botched up Jewish Arabic. A pidgin Arabic if you like.

Int: Can you tell us a little bit about your family life in Baghdad? Did you have brothers and sisters?

ED: I have three brothers and one sister.

Int: What did your father do?

ED: My Dad was an auditing accountant.  He worked in the financial office in the Ministry of Finance, in Baghdad. That’s in Iraq of course.

Int: When he was at work did he speak the Jewish Arabic, or could he?

ED: No, no, because they were not Jewish. The state was Muslim, Arab Muslim. It’s not a different language, but the Jewish Arabic has got a bit of a quirk in it, you know. They understand it, and we understand their language, but there are sometimes terms and expressions, and even the accents, sometimes are a bit different.

Int: Tell us about your family life. Was it fun to grow up in Baghdad?

ED: It was fun, it was good. We made our own fun. We lived in a community. They were mostly Jewish in our area, but there were some Arab Muslims there, but we lived together. There was no hiding, but we did not really mix with them. My Dad happened to be working with them, but the schools we went to were Jewish schools.  The Alliance Israelite Universaire, that’s a universal[international] Jewish school. They have them in France and in other places as well. But ours was established in Baghdad by someone who was well off in the family, and very well known. Yes, it was a very nice, excellent school.

Int: Was that the common way that things were done? That Jewish children went into Jewish schools?

ED: They were private schools, and there were some who really were very, kind of not really affluent, not poor, but they were not in the bracket where they can afford private Jewish schools. There were some other schools. This wasn’t the only one. The one we went to, and my family, was one of the best. It was a public school in terms of the English schools. Public, not in state school, it was a private school.

Int: Did you have Jewish studies in the school? Did you learn Hebrew?

ED: We learnt the alphabet,we were kind of allowed, but very reluctantly to really learn at school. And at my school we learnt a little bit, nothing to speak. Just we learnt the alphabet, and we learnt to read one or two paragraphs from the Seder books, and things like that. We went to shul, the service was conducted in Hebrew, and we were allowed that. But very kind of reluctantly we were allowed to do these things, and we always had to kind of look behind our shoulders, [that] kind of thing.

We did have a lot of incidents. I suppose like here, when it is high festivals, we were known ‘these are the Jewish people’, going to the synagogue and we were looked down upon [by the Arabs]. But sometimes they were a bit nasty, but not physically, you know.

Int: You mean like name calling and such stuff?

ED: Name calling, yes, and they didn’t do name calling but they were kind of hostile a bit to the idea, but they didn’t do anything. But occasionally they did create problems in the synagogue,people coming [in]. You know, being aggressive, creating a fight if you like, and making life a bit uncomfortable.

Int: Was this organised by the government or was this just individuals?

ED: For sure it was very much the [Muslim] community. It was not organised, just the Muslim public you know.

Int: So that must have been something that marred your childhood a little. Did it? Were you very conscious of that as a young person?

ED: Yes, yes. But not, I mean, we didn’t live with it consciously, we lived our own life, but that was there. I mean we knew it was there. For example; if I walked to school, which is about a twenty minutes’ walk, and it’s very early in the morning, I would go along the river. There were little vendors, they were only teenagers. I must have been something like nine years old at that time, and I would just have to look away, pretending that I’m not seeing them.  But they would pass snide remarks and would give  very kind of rude, obscene gestures, and that’s terrifying for a nine year old. But I would hoof it and just get out of that place.

Int: So that would be 1938 time?

ED: Yeah.

Int: So while things were happening in Europe. Did you know what was happening in Europe?

ED: Oh yes. Oh yes.  We did. I mean not as a child, I was not bothered by that. My Dad is a very good reader and he knew what it was, and we always listened to the radio. And then they [The Arabs]  became very anti Jewish at that time, and very pro fascist Hitler.

Int: So you felt the difference because of what was happening in Europe?

ED: Oh yes, oh yes. Absolutely, absolutely. We were more cautious really. We didn’t, we lived very carefully and tried not to create anything.  But otherwise we lived our life just as normal as we could. We didn’t allow it to kind of stop us doing things. We had clubs,The community was more maybe like here for us, a lot of family you know, aunties and uncles, and cousins, so we didn’t need anyone from outside if you like.

Int: I remember you told me your Father was limited in his work because of his background, because he was Jewish.

ED: No he wasn’t limited in his work, not at all. He was quite exploited really. He worked in an office, a quite responsible job. His boss was a Muslim Arab from the government, and he did all the work, and his salary was very kind of low compared, when he was doing the work, but he wasn’t paid. And a colleague of m his, used to say while smoking a cigarette, “Well you do all the work and we enjoy it” kind of thing. And he didn’t mind doing all the work because he was good at it. He just got on with it, and that’s it. But it was very difficult when the pay was very low. The same people in the same office I should imagine had much more pay really.

Int: So you come from a Sephardic background.

ED: Yes.

Int: So we have a traditional Friday night. So what do you have on a Friday night?

ED: We are Jews you know! Well back home we did. I live here it’s different for me.

Int: Yeah, so what sort of things…you’d have on a Friday night?

ED: Yes, you’d get the family around, and my Dad used to have the glass of wine. And he said the Kiddush, you know, eating chicken and all this kind of thing, and candles, My Mum used the candles. And you don’t buy the candles like you do here. We had kind of a little bowl with water and oil, the real old fashioned thing. And things that my Mum used to make, like a kind of a little stick, with cotton wool, and dip it in the oil and light it until the oil finished, and there is water underneath and that’s it, very old things, yeah.

Int: Traditions. Had your parents lived there many many years? Your grandparents and before that. Had they lived in Baghdad for long?

ED: Yes, I knew my grandparents. They were all from Baghdad. Yes, I go as far as my granddad.  Beyond that I don’t really know. I just heard about them you know. Like my Dad’s father, he used to write. So for him in the shul, handwriting, he was very good.

Int: What about the size of the community? It must have been a very large community. Do you have any idea how big it was?

ED: I wouldn’t say we lived in ghettos, but you can tell in Newton Mearns [Glasgow] there’s a lot of Jews here. And where we were in Batawiin there were a lot of Jewish people there. But not exclusively. It’s not like a ghetto; there were a lot of nice homes for Arabs to live there as well. But they kept to themselves, and we kept to ourseves.

Int: And what types of youth club did you go to?

ED: Well at that time I was too busy studying. I was an eight / nine year old if I remember. And the clubs arrived much later. Social clubs, they  would meet and they  would blether, and they would gossip and discuss things. Mostly it was the men, but then the women started joining too.

Int: Were they Zionistic?

ED: No. Oh don’t mention that word in Baghdad. It’s enough to be Jewish. If they call you a Zionist, you know.

We had soldiers from the Haganah, [they were ]Polish soldiers, and we did have underground classes, and my Dad used to cringe and get upset because if they [the Muslims]knew, [ that would be difficult as the Polish soldiers] were Zionists. This what they did and they taught us the Hebrew and that wasn’t really in the open.

**Esperance David – During the War in the early 40’s**

ED:      Well there was a very bad persecution when I was there, when I was about ten, eleven years old, in the early 40’s, when we had a terrible uprising.  That was awful.  It started one afternoon and my cousin came, they usually came at any time, and he said, shouting, “Batten [down] your windows and your doors, there is terrible things brewing and I’d better go home.”  And that night,  we started hearing shots and it got more and more, and, in the night, it was more than shots, maybe like hand grenades or whatever it was, it was big explosions.  And, you know, in Baghdad, we sleep on the roof, so we could hear all that and we could see flares  and you could hear screams and screams.  That was not far from us but it wasn’t exactly in our road, so they were really going into houses, killing and looting and shooting, and stones, knives, whatever it is they had. And you could hear shouting and screaming, and we were absolutely frozen to death, you know, just, what do we do, we were going to be next?  And, after the screams, you hear a, this is horrendous, I don’t know what they suffered in the Nazi Germany, you hear the voice kind of fades away and that is someone obviously killed.

So there were a lot of them. I don’t know, as I say, I mean I was too young to, but it was terrible. One of my cousins was killed.  They got some babies. I hadn’t seen that, but my dad went out the next morning and he said, “The gutters are full of blood”, you know, it was terrible.  “Why did you go there?”, oh dad was one of these people, he just wanted to know what’s going on, but, “Shhh, stay there and be quiet”, and the stories that went, they see a baby, you know, and I don’t if it’s tradition here, they have little, kind of, bangles round their ankles, a little gold one.  If they couldn’t take it off, they ripped the child and they took it off, it’s horrendous, I don’t want to hear that, that’s really awful.  And a lot of that happened and young, you know, young girls, just married and they killed their husband and their relatives, right in front of them.

There was a time the Arabs were not like that. If you stood there and said, “Please, I’m at your mercy”, they understood that and they let it go, but there was no mercy left. They were all there to loot and haul things and jangle, and felt so wonderful at killing so many Jews and that was the uprising.  That was an uprising.

I think it must have been in the early forties, I don’t really remember. Maybe, I think the war was on at that time.  I don’t remember because I wasn’t really, I was just a child at that time, ‘41, when the war was on.  They were very, I mean, the government was very pro-Nazi so, the looting, they came in riding on horses, supposed to be, kind of, looking after you and protecting you, but they went with the looters and they joined in, you know.  So it was, it wasn’t just a mob, it was the government and who do you call?  There was no-one to protect you. They used to say, you know, the looters were themselves, you know. They allowed it, they gave them a free hand to do what they liked and they did what they liked, what they wanted, in a very atrocious way.  That was awful.

**Esperance David – In London in 1948**

INT:    So you were in London, and you’re sending letters to your parents?

ED:      Well that came after

INT:    Could they tell you about what was happening in Baghdad?

ED:      No, no.  In, [they ]kind of, covered [up], what do you call it, enigmatic?

INT:    Code?

ED:      Yeah, very little.  But I did something that they suffered for.  You know, we were sitting in the, what they call the Common Room at college, and [we had ] the Telegraph, you know at college everyone is celebrating the State of Israel and I was Jewish and in London. I mean, that’s fantastic and I had friends, they were very well-to-do, they were in Belgium.  She sent me, my girlfriend, my best friend, she sent me a cutting about the State of Israel and me, in my stupidity, or in my enthusiasm, I sent that piece of paper in a letter to my brother.  And as I was just saying, everything was censored.

“Ah, that’s your sister, you are all Zionist and this is what you are all, you are just, you are terrible, you’re the scum of the earth, and all the other expletives about the Jews.” And they took them to prison to question them.  And so, you know, they asked them about their family and that, and my dad had two brothers in America, one in New York, one in California at that time, for a long time they were there.

“So you get letters from them as well. So your daughter now is in London, and you are quite a ring,[network] you cover the whole world of Zionism. Your daughter is an agent in London, you’ve got your brothers in America and now you’ve got Hebrew books and you’re getting sent letters and you’re writing letters.”

So they put them in prison and the way they treated them, my brother, you wonder why my brother suffers like that, Abraham [my brother].  They tortured him and he spoke up because he was very young,  and my dad used to tell him to ‘shut up, shut up.’ “No I’m fighting for my rights.”  “We have no rights, be quiet, and just let me speak for you.”  And they kept, you know, hitting him and that.  He was very ill and my brother suffered, you know

INT2:  The three boys and your dad.

ED:      Yes, but Abraham was the one who was most [out]spoken, Na’eem took it lying down, but Abraham thought he was going to defend himself and this is what I said in the letter, “the State of Israel and we’re all very happy and all that, so we’ll get rid of all”. I must have put a line to say, “we’ll get rid of all this [anti-Semitism](https://gatheringthevoices.com/glossary/anti-semitism/) now”, and that, and that got in and they went to the British Consul, [and said] “Look at what that girl, the Jewish girl, is writing about us and about everything”, so, I was, what do they call it, a criminal as well, abroad, you know?  [They] just tried to get me, so I was terrified at that time.

INT:    Did they put your mother into prison as well?

ED:      No, not my mother, but the boys.  Na’eem was all right but Abraham got it really, and my dad

INT2:  How did they get out?

ED:      I don’t really know how they got out, by someone who really knew my dad through the work and also money, probably, changed that.  I don’t really know the details of that, how they got out.  So my brother, who suffered a lot, he tried to go to Israel and, at that time, that wasn’t allowed. It wasn’t, So he goes out as a fugitive, if you like.  And he went via Iran and he was caught there. Iran was no better, and he was caught up in hospital. He developed appendicitis, So, Abraham was, that’s why he is not such a brave man now. He’s terrified, runs away from a mouse, now.  So that really preyed on him, so he got, eventually, somehow or other, through the Agency, probably the Jewish Agency, he did get into Israel.

INT:    Was he imprisoned, also, in Iran, after the appendicitis?

ED:      He wasn’t imprisoned in Iran but he was persecuted there because he was a Jew. But, obviously, they took him to hospital to have his appendix out and they wanted rid of him. I don’t know how he got to Israel.

**Esperance David – Baghdad Pogrom 1941**

INT:    Can I ask you, again, about the pogrom that you lived through, as a child?  Do you think that was directly related to what was happening in Europe?

ED:      Yes, because my dad says, and I have a vision of that, although I don’t remember seeing it, about half a dozen Gestapo people walked in the main street of Baghdad, like the high street, and they were followed by mobs of Arabs, you know, welcoming them and all that.  There were only about four or six of them, all in their leather things and their outfit, the uniform and all that, and the swastika. I have a vision of that, I don’t really know if I saw them, if I was in the street by chance, or if my dad told me about them.  But there is a picture, in my head, that I saw these officers, the SS officers, being welcomed in the middle of Baghdad.

And then things changed, I think, in Europe at that time, maybe.  Because, at that time, all Europe was really,[under Nazi occupation] Belgium and France and up to Norway and, of course, up to Egypt as well, so we were not far from them then.

INT:    So you think that you suffered, especially, because of what was happening in Nazi Germany?

ED:      Yeah, because the government were very pro-Nazi and, at that time, (Oh it’s really very convoluted) we had a young, I was still there, a very young king there. His father was killed in an accident and he was only about ten\*, and he was killed in a motor bike accident, or in a car accident. So we had a Regent there, and that’s when I left, so I don’t really know what happened after that.

\*{Editor’s note. The car accident happened in 1938, when the young King was aged 3}

**Esperance David – In the 50’s in Baghdad**

So the regent and his family were killed by that coup [in 1958] by them [by the Revolutionists], because there was a coup in the government at that time.  So, from a kingdom, that was done away, literally done away, killed all of them, and they established the republic and, from then on, it became Iraq as a republic.  They had a president and all the rest of it.

INT:    And when was that?

ED:      That was when I was away, in the early 50’s, after Israel.  I didn’t see any of that.

**Esperance David – The family in Israel**

INT:    So your family were in Israel, they’re building a life up. So, were they with other Iraqis?  Were they a community in Iraq?

ED:      Well yes, as I was saying, they were all told to leave and take 50 [pounds]. No matter what you had, house or anything. And when I was in Israel, I asked my sister, what happened to your lovely house?  So she laughed, she said, we have got the key of it. She was really being sarcastic. They took the house, what’s the key used for?  They took everything, confiscated everything. “And now you want to go to be in Israel. You’re Jews, you are Zionist, you go to Israel, take fifty pounds, see how far you can go with it and the suitcase that you can carry with you”, and that was it.  And this is how they started.

**Esperance David – Life for Esperance in England**

INT:    So you must, you were in Britain…

INT:    They were in Israel, building the, when did you see them again?

ED:      1953.

INT:    So, you studied?

ED:      I finished my study, then I was teaching.

INT:    Oh you were a teacher?

ED:      I was teaching.

INT:    In London?

ED:      In London, I was teaching in London?  No, well I was living in London at the time, but I, it’s a long story.  I met some friends, when I was in Eastbourne.  And I had no money and my family were all disbanded and just scraping a living, they had to…my dad is very, he’s got such a lot of go in him, he doesn’t stand still. They had this house and a little garden, so he started, you know, to put in potatoes or courgettes, or something, to live, you know, literally off the land

INT:    You were teaching.

ED: I was teaching and I went to this Jewish school in Brighton.  The man who owned it, it was a private school, he was Jewish, Irish-Jewish, but all the teachers were Roman Catholic. I was the only Jewish girl there, and he was a bastard, he was a real swine.  He treated me so, so badly.  One of the teachers who was running the school, he was so sympathetic and I used to go and cry and he said, “I’ll go and have a, how dare he treat you like that, when your people are suffering for it, and you are here, you are working very hard”, and spoke to him. No, well that’s the way it is, he’s running a school and that’s it.

Oh that’s another really, quite a sad story, he was nasty, he was really nasty to me, very much, to the extent I’ll just tell you this.  It was Yom Kippur and I’m raised not very frum, but I am Jewish, so I wanted to fast for Yom Kippur.  My college were dishing out, there wasn’t even bacon at that time, God knows what it was, rabbits and all kinds of things, and I didn’t want it, I wanted to have a kosher meal.  So I went to a café, would you believe it?  How your mind works at that time. Went to a café and asked for two fried eggs and that was, as kosher as that was to me, to fast on. I used to work every other weekend, so that was Yom Kippur there and it was a Saturday, and I was working on Saturday, Yom Kippur, and the headmaster, and he wasn’t Catholic, he was just Church of England or something, he came up at lunchtime and he said, “Are you all right?” and he brought me a cup of tea.  I said, “No”, “Not a cup of tea, glass of…?”, “No, no, that’s our Day of Atonement”, “And you are working with young children and it’s three o’clock now?”, “Yeah, yeah, that’s all right, that’s all right, that’s fine”, and he went and had a barney with the head teacher. He said, “Well, she’s Jewish, so I’m Jewish, it’s a mitzvah that she’s working with children, with Jewish children.” What kind of a mitzvah is that?  I’m Jewish too, and there were other people to take over.

INT:    But the children, the children were Jewish as well?

ED:      The children, it’s a Jewish school.  The children were Jewish, the owner, that’s the principal, Mr. Eliasuf, I’ll never forget his name, he owned the school, but he appointed, he employed Catholic, most of them were Catholic. But this headmaster who ran the school, he wasn’t Catholic but he was also not Jewish, and he was very sympathetic.  He was such a nice man.  So, I said, “Well I really need to leave, Mr. Kemp”. He was, kind of, nice to talk to, he said, “You don’t leave now because that’s your first year”, that’s how I remember it was my first year. “It’ll be a bad spell on you to leave after, the fault will be on you.  Anyone will ask why did you leave, not finishing a year?”

So I stomached it and finished a year, and I said to him in due course, “I’m leaving”. So I’d been writing applications and I’d been asked for an interview, for Sunday.  For Sunday, to go for an interview, I was to be on duty. He wouldn’t let me go to the interview.  I was heartbroken, so I went, crying, to Mr. Kemp. “He can’t do that.” Well he’s doing that, what could I do, I live there, and I’ve nowhere to go?  He knows I’m leaving and he knows I’m looking for a job, he doesn’t allow me to go for an interview, and Sunday was my day.  Sunday was a Sunday, everybody was…So anyway, he said, “Well let’s face it”, that’s Mr. Kemp, the headmaster. He said, “Go and phone”. ( It was a head teacher owning a school, a private school), “and tell her that something happened. Make up a story,” he said, “I don’t care.  Tell any story and tell her you just can’t make it, if she will see you the next Sunday, when you are off duty”.  So I went to the phone, there was a phone in the school, he wouldn’t let me use the phone, “You can go outside and phone”.  This telephone is a pay box telephone, To tell him that I’m cancelling my interview. It’s not so easy to get an interview and cancel it.  So, Mr. Kemp said, “Well just go outside and make that phone call, for God’s sake.”  So I phoned and I don’t know what I said. I said, I think, there was a teacher, I don’t know, I made up a story, who fell ill all of a sudden and I had to take over, so it sounded very good and very kosher, very sympathetic.  And this is it, I went the following Sunday and I got the job eventually. It was in Surrey, near Epsom, near Dorking in Surrey.  Mickleham, it’s a nice, lovely little village in Surrey, it was very nice.

INT:    Do you think he was so harsh to you, especially, because you were foreign, you’d come from somewhere else, or was he like that with everybody?

ED:      No, I was the only one in that position.  He was strict, to be honest, I mean they all took him for what he is, and they knew how to tackle him, but he was absolutely nasty to me, he really was.  And, as I say, it shows you, from what he did for Yom Kippur, I never forgave him for that, he was really nasty.  For someone else, who is not even Jewish, to be more sympathetic, and after that, to not let me use a phone, to not let me. So what?  Am I a prisoner there?  I get notice, due notice, and he knows I have nowhere to go, I have to look for a job, and that’s an interview for a job.

INT:    You were very brave.

ED:      I wasn’t brave.  When you are in, I was cornered, what do you do?  You’re just under this kind of thing. That Mr. Kemp, he was the angel, because I didn’t, to tell you the truth, I didn’t even know how to write an application for a job.  I was in Brighton, a very well-known friend asked me for a Friday night, for Sabbath evening, and she said, “Well, what are you doing?”.  I said, “Well, I’ve just come from holiday, from the other place”, what was it?

INT2:  Eastbourne.

ED:      Eastbourne.  And, “Nothing really”, so, “What, you’re doing nothing ? I said, “Yes.”  “Oh”, she said, “let’s finish dinner and there is this Eliasuf, that school, he’s always looking for new teachers”.

INT:    Probably he loses them so rapidly.

ED:      Absolutely, they don’t last there like I did.  So she picked up the phone and she phoned him up, “I’ve got a blah, blah, blah, newly-qualified, excellent, very nice young lady”, and all that, “Yes, send her to see me on Sunday.”  That was Friday night, he picked up the phone and he would not allow me to pick up the phone for Saturday.  But he picked up the phone.

**Esperance David – Life with her husband David**

INT:    We haven’t heard about your husband, how did you meet him?

ED:      Well, that’s a long story, isn’t it?

[Laughter].

ED:      Well, while I was in Israel on my first visit, I was staying with my mum and dad, obviously, but my brother got married and his wife was five months’ pregnant and they didn’t have a house yet, or a flat or anywhere to go.  So they stayed, while waiting to go somewhere.  So I stayed there and Lulu, that’s my sister-in-law, she said, “Well, go and take your shower and put your, whatever you have nice something, we are going to a wedding.”  We are going to a wedding, nobody knows me here and I don’t go where I’m not invited.  “No, no, they know you are here because this is one of my cousins and I’m going and you’re coming with us.  They said to bring her with you.”  So, I looked at mum, she said, “Well, why don’t you go, there’s nothing else to do?”

So I went and there was a cousin of David there, she was invited there, and she sat and she was talking with my sister-in-law, on that kind of table, and she said, “Oh, you must have, David is here, you must have met David, he’s from London, here on holiday.” “Who’s David, who met David?”  “He’s from Baghdad.”  Well, he didn’t live next door and even then, so Jewish people in Baghdad, I didn’t know, I didn’t know him from… And she said, “David”, right across, you know they still do that in Israel, and David came and I was introduced to David.

And, you know, I came back to London and he hadn’t finished his studies yet. I was working and we just, kind of, really met very casually, not like today, you know?  And I was living in London; he was in London, finishing. I was staying in, what do they call them now?  In a guest house, kind of thing.  He was studying and working in the evening, to keep himself.  And then he finished his studies and there were four other guys with him, and to celebrate their fortunes and misfortunes, they took me to the opera that night, and they were teasing David, he’s got Honours and one of them did not quite pass. And Honours is, those days you don’t work for Honours, if you sit an exam and you do very well, over the mark of passing, you get an Honours degree.  So they were teasing him for that.  So anyway, they all went and he said, “Well I’ll take you home”. It wasn’t very far, and we sat and talked, and you know, we just talked and we eventually got together.

INT:    And, once you were married, did you speak in Arabic at home or did you…?

ED:      Yes, in Arabic at home and, every now and again, a word in French and a word in English, you know.  If it happened to be because, you know, my mum and dad didn’t learn English.  That’s how we arrived in Scotland.

**Esperance David – Integration**

INT:    Did you find it easy to integrate into Scottish society, or did you feel different?

ED:      Jewish society or anything?

INT:    Jewish and the wider society.

ED:      Well, the wider society, I went back to work when we had another…

INT2:  You had a son in between all that.

ED:      A son in between, I didn’t work for five years and Lil was about four, five years, and Tony was two years, two, three years, and I was working at that time.   Michelle was born in Scotland.  Yes, she’s a Scottish lass.

INT:    Ah, that’s nice.  And the people here, were they welcoming?

ED:      The people here, well, the people here, the neighbours were nice, where we were in Loughborough. We didn’t know many people, but the house we rented was from a Jewish woman and we had, David had a friend who was Jewish and he was working with him in Loughborough, and his family, and they came and saw us.  With two small children, there wasn’t really much chance to go and socialise or do anything, especially when we were strangers to, let’s face it, to the Jewish community as well. I don’t think they took to us very much.  We were just as foreign as anyone else, you know?  People from Baghdad, you know, that was a different world.

INT2:  You weren’t there for that long, because you were in Sandhurst for eight or nine years.

ED:      Yes, well I’m just abridging a bit.  We were in Sandhurst.

INT2:  But that was a big bit.

ED:      That’s a big bit, yes, we went from Loughborough to Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield, and Tony was born there, and then David, you know, had to move in the job.  He was offered a good job in Sandhurst and we moved to Sandhurst for a few years, there, for five, six years.  Tony was going to school and Lil was just going to grammar school, and David was offered a very, very promoted job, by an American firm, Honeywell, very well…you see Honeywell boxes everywhere, and he worked there and I was working as well, but I stopped when Michelle came.

And then he couldn’t take it. He couldn’t take the American way of life. It was a rat race, whatever he did wasn’t enough and it was a very worrying job, and he became really ill.  So, he had to just leave. He just couldn’t take any more, he was very, very ill.  So I was working and we managed, took Michelle to nursery school, while he recuperated a bit

**Esperance David – Reflection**

INT:    Did you like Scotland?

ED:      Yes, I think so.  They were more open, you know. I worked in a school in Scotland, in East Kilbride.  That came after, really, Sandhurst wasn’t it?  And they were very, very nice, you know. The headmaster was nice, a retired army officer, sergeant major, so the school was run on those lines. Listen, everywhere I went I was a foreigner, you know?  And to the Home Office, do you know how they referred to us at this time?

INT2:  No.

ED:      We had to go to the Aliens Department in the Home Office.  The Aliens, we were aliens.

INT:    And do you still feel very foreign now, even now, or do you feel a bit more Scottish?  What do you feel, what do you consider yourself to be?

ED:      I don’t feel Scottish, I don’t feel English and I don’t feel Israeli either.  And Baghdad, I don’t want to know.  So I really, no, this is my house, I made it my home but it’s not really, you know, like them, they were born in England. They were born, you know, Britain is their home, but you can’t divorce yourself from where you are really. I was there until seventeen years old, I was grown up, you know, just…

INT:    So, my last question is, if you look back now on your time here, once you’d got to Scotland, what are the highs and lows that stand out for you?

ED:      For Scotland or for me?

INT:    For your whole life.

ED:      All in all, it was an interesting life. It wasn’t milk and honey. I’ve had to fight all my life, maybe I still fight now, you know?  Because it wasn’t easy getting, or acquiring, anything. It was always, you know, kind of, not a hundred per cent, it was more fifty per cent more that I should give of myself or do more to really get. Even at school, you know, I was Mrs. David, the notorious Mrs. David, if you like.  I had to. I wouldn’t let anyone walk over me and they were inclined to do that because I’m a foreigner.  It doesn’t matter if we lived in England for ten, fifteen years, I’m still, you know, I’m here. Wherever I was, I’m a foreigner, you know?  I’m an alien.

[Laughter].

INT:    And the high points?  What would you say, what…?

ED:      The high point, getting married and having my own home.  Life was very tough, as I said. David wasn’t even qualified yet, but we managed somehow or other.  Yes, and I didn’t teach until Michelle grew up and the other two were grown up enough. And I taught, I was here in, twenty years in here and about three, four years in East Kilbride, yes.  So, until I retired here, yes.

INT:    Well, thank you, we’ve had a fascinating afternoon and it’s very kind of you to share your memories with us.