



Masbrough Our Home

Midland
Iron Works
St. Paul's Church





In memory of:
the many WWII Ex-Servicemen
who made this residence their home.
They lived here between 1948 and 1991.
This property was visited on May 5th 1962
by General T. Bór-Komorowski, the
leader of the Warsaw Uprising (1944).
The uprising was against occupying
Nazi Germany - a major
WWII event.

This zine brings together artwork and interviews created by Big Sisterz who spent Spring 2026 exploring the Masbrough and Ferham area of Rotherham, a place many of them call home. Through a series of creative workshops, interviews and heritage walks, the girls explored their sense of identity and connection to this important part of Rotherham and South Yorkshire.

As part of this journey, they interviewed a number of residents who have spent their lives in Masbrough, their stories bringing to life how things were in the 1960s and 1970s.

We hope you enjoy reading!



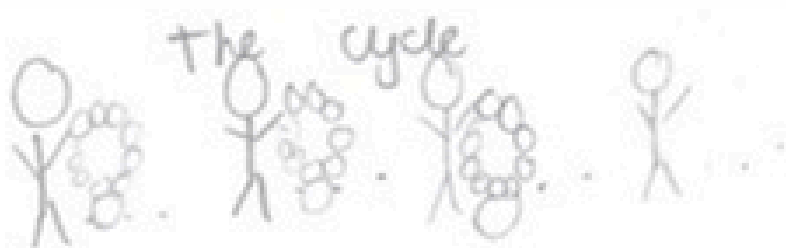


Contents

Exploring Masbrough through Collage	4-7
Interview with Guhlan	8-10
Home means... by Amina Lina	11
Exploring Masbrough's History with Rotherham District Society	12-21
Heritage means... by Maya Akram	22
Interview with Barbara Gamston	24-27
Interview Snapshots	26-30
Thank You	31



The foundation of many zines is collage, so we started off exploring Masbrough and favourite places through mixed media pieces. Alongside the artwork are some creative writing we composed during a later session. We explored what heritage and home means to us. You'll see some other writing and poetry created during this workshop later in the zine.



Heritage is history. Heritage is special things that are passed down by generations.

- Myra



Home means Masbrough where my family, friends and my life started. Home is where my primary school is; home to the furry friendly cats.

- Yasmin Wahid



Masbrough means where you go to school.

- Aniya

Masbrough means a lot to me.

- Myra



Masbrough means to me a future that was yet to come. Every walk to primary school and every walk to the shops. The stories and adventures I would excite in my mind. I've had laughter and loss, but I wouldn't wanna change it. A place I grew in, but grew out of.

- Maya Akram



Those Were The Days: "People were honest then and never took advantage of each other. I would leave my door unlocked all day."

An interview with Ghulam Fatima, who reflects on her life in Masbrough, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s.

What is your earliest memory of Masbrough?

It was a nice, friendly town, better than other towns. We heard good things about Rotherham. Masbrough was a nice area, nice people. I liked Masbrough compared to Newcastle, where we first lived when I came from Pakistan in 1961. We had a few Pakistani families here close by, and there was a sense of community amongst all residents.



Which streets have you lived on, and what were your houses like?

When we first came here, we stayed with my husband's cousin in the Clifton area. We then bought our own house on Henley Grove Road in Masbrough, which cost £500. It was two up and two down with a large garden; it had an outside toilet at the end of the garden. In winter, it was cold taking children to the toilet in the dark. A few doors away was the corner grocery shop. I would spend £2 on our weekly shop. I did not speak English and did not know about the currency. I would put some money in the palm of my hand and show it to the shopkeeper; he would take just the money that I owed. He was honest and never took more. He would carry my groceries home for me, a couple of large bags. People were honest then and never took advantage of each other. I would leave my door unlocked all day.

One of the Pakistani women I first met on Henley Grove Road, who resided nearby, now lives directly across from me. We shared our youth, and now we are aging together.

Many people liked Masbrough and stayed here, and just moved a few streets away when their house got demolished, or they needed a bigger one. Our next house was on Tenter Street, opposite the old Thornhill primary school. We stayed there for 5 years. That was £900, and my husband paid more for it so the children could go safely to school. My daughter got knocked down by a car on the way to school from Henley Grove Road, so he was concerned about road safety. We lived in a two-up and two-down terrace house with a small garden. The children played in the woods at the back of the house, and one of the mums would take them for long walks in the fields above Clough Road.

We moved to James Street in 1978 when my youngest child was 1 year old, and my eldest was 16 and just left school. The house was much bigger, but there was a lot of damp when we first moved.

When you were our age (whether in another country or this), how did you spend your time when not in school?

I did not go to school in Pakistan when I was your age, 15. I helped around the house, milking the cows, harvesting corn in the fields, and grinding corn into flour with my mother.

Did you get a lot of snow back then?

A lot of snow, it was cold. We had no central heating, just a coal fire. I used to wear big Wellingtons to take the kids to school. Sometimes schools were closed when the snow was really heavy. My son loved the snow and made snowmen all day; it was hard to get him inside.

What shops and facilities did you have in Masbrough in the 1960s and 1970s?

We had a few shops, such as Mick's corner shop in the middle of James Street, which sold everything; he was a nice man and kept his shop open until late with his wife. There was also Mary's fruit shop on College Road, which she ran with her daughter. We also had an Asian shop on Brown Street, Mr. Bhatti's.


Was there a lot of industry in Masbrough? Can you name any?

My husband worked at Robert Jenkins; a lot of local men worked there. My father worked at Beatson Clarks, Glassworks. Living near factories meant we got smog and fumes. The air was heavy to breathe.

What was daily life like for you in the 60s and 70s?

Life was busy; the men went to work, and the women looked after the house and the children. I got up early in the morning and finished well after my husband got home. Every day, it was washing clothes by hand, terry towel nappies, and children's clothes. Washing them in a tin bath in the living room next to a coal fire. You cooked food all day.

One of my sons was a great help before he went to school; he lit the coal fire to warm the living room for me. He would put blocks of coal lighter and then scrunch some paper, add small wood, and set them alight, and after a while, add coal to get a blazing fire. He would then plait his three younger sisters' hair. He was still in primary school. The day went so quickly. After school, the children went to the Mosque. Chapple Walk Mosque was our first Rotherham Mosque. As we lived close to the town, we walked to town. I never caught a bus. We had red phone boxes on Brown Street. I used to ring my sister on a Sunday who lived in the Midlands.



“ Every day, it was washing clothes by hand, terry towel nappies, and children's clothes. Washing them in a tin bath in the living room next to a coal fire. You cooked food all day. ” 9

Do you remember any of your neighbours from way back and what they were like?

On Tenter Street, we had next door to us a nice Italian family who had two boys and one daughter. When the boys left school, they started selling ice cream in a van. We also had a few Pakistani families, and we became really good friends. Two of my friends have passed away; they used to take me to town with them and show me the shops, and if I could not go to town due to small children, they did my shopping for me. One of them showed me Ferham park, so I was able to take my children, three or four mums went together and let the children run around the park. Ferham Park was better looked after; it was a nice local park.

Did people get on with each other from different communities?

In those days, there was a sense of community, and there was routine, and people kept busy, so they had no time to argue with each other.

What brought this community together?

Work brought people to Rotherham; this town felt safe, and they had a good police force. There was a sense of community across the ethnic divide. You were part of your Pakistani community, but also part of the Masbrough Community.

“ In those days, there was a sense of community, and there was routine, and people kept busy, so they had no time to argue with each other. ”

What kind of community events happened? (May Queen, Easter Parade, Queen's Jubilee. Bingo, events in Ferham park)

I cannot remember events; I may have been too busy at home. My husband took the children to the circus at Clifton Park every year when the circus came to Rotherham.

Did you like living in Masbrough? What was good about it then, and what do you think is good about it now?

I have good memories of Masbrough, and we had no trouble with people from different backgrounds. We taught our children to respect everyone.

If someone came to you and asked you to tell the story of Rotherham, what would you say?

A town that welcomed people, regardless of which part of the world they came from. A friendly and welcoming place. People always said "Hello" with a smile to any stranger that crossed their path.

Home means a place where you feel safe and have people around you who you can trust and love.

Home is a warm feeling that helps you build your comfort and that comfort only some people have.

Home is not always about walls, door and roof, it is about the people that make it feel like a place you want to always find when you are alone, as you know there are people who are waiting for you.

- Amina Lina



As part of the project, we explored the Masbrough area with Rotherham Civic Society, who took us on a walk to explore local historical sites.

Masbrough was at the heart of the industrial revolution; it was where Walker Iron Works was located which was one of the largest iron foundries in the North of England. During the walk we explored infamous sites including Masbrough Chapel, and the Walker Mausoleum. We also learnt about Ebenezer Elliott, who was born in Masbrough and was an influential English poet and activist.

After the walk, we had a go at lino printing, capturing parts of this history, including the Masbrough boat disaster in 1841, which resulted in the tragic death of 64 people, including many children.

We also took lots of photographs of the area and these sites as we explored our heritage.

Artwork: Big Sisterz

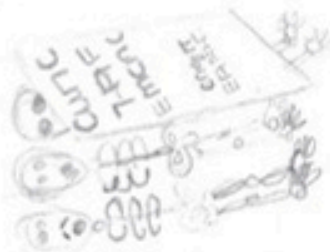
Photography: Rhianna, Kai, Mylo

"Elliott did not sing, but scream; he did not lament, but blaspheme; his verses were curses showered right and left with indiscriminate frenzy. No matter: they stirred the heart of the multitude, and roused the curiosity of the refined."

Chambers' Papers For The People, 1850.



The Masbrough boat disaster



GOD'S
A C R E



*Home is everything. Home is where you can do anything
you want and be your self.*

- Myra









*Heritage is not something that can be passed down, it is
about the memories.
Heritage is something that you should be proud of as you
make it alive.*

- Amina Lina





Heritage means unheard stories that flood through our roads like the blood that pumps through our veins. As the wind whirls through the streets, it brings back laughter from the past.

All their struggles and triumphs. All the smiles and all their tears. All engraved into the roads from the people who once were. No matter, young or no matter old.

We all felt that fresh air from the beach that hit us as if it was an electric wave of emotions.

We all had the smile and experience of this place we call home.

- Maya Akram

Those Were The Days: "It was hard growing up like that, but I still say I've had a good life—and I still do."

An interview with Barbara Gamston who reflects on her home and long life in Masbrough.

What is your earliest memory of Masbrough?

My earliest memory is from when I was about five or six. There were five of us—two older sisters and two younger brothers—and we didn't have much. My Dad worked at Guest and Chrimes when it was open and he always said "sorry, I can't get that its too much." At Christmas, all we usually got was an orange, a penny, and a few sweets. I'd always wanted a doll and pram, but my dad said we couldn't afford it.

On Christmas morning, everyone else had presents, but I couldn't find mine. When I asked, my Dad told me it was in the corner. There I found a tiny second-hand pram. At first, I was disappointed because it looked empty, and I started crying. Then he told me to lift the blanket and inside was a doll. It was one of them stuffed ones with a pot head.

A few months later, my mum sent me to Mill's Chemist and I said: "I want mi doll" so she give me the doll and some money. I'm happy and I'm running down King Street, and guess what I did? I dropped the bloody doll and all the head were in pieces. I ran back up with bits in mi hands to mi mother. "Have you been to shop?", "no no, mi dolls dead" I replied. "What you mean yer dolls dead?", "her heads gone" I said. "Aw come on she said, we'll get you another", and we got another.

Which streets have you lived on, and what were your houses like?

Just King Street, when I was little. I was born there in that house. We lived in a two-up, two-down house. There was one bedroom for my mum and dad and one for the five of us. Us three girls—Joan, Norah and me—shared a big bed, and the boys, Keith and Bob, had theirs on the other side. My mum put up a curtain across the room and warned the boys not to come over.

We had no bathroom or indoor toilet, so we had to run across the yard in rain, snow or whatever if you wanted a wee in the toilet. Bath day was once a week. Mum had a Copper, and they used to put a fire underneath it. It held a lot of water, she used to build it up and get all t' water red hot and that were it. Once she'd done washing, she used to leave some water in and we all had t'get in it, one by one.



I remember crying once and she said, "You've got to have a bath sometime Barbara... this is only bath were gonna bloody get in." I said, "this is burning my bum... fires still on underneath." She told me, "get this flannel and sit on it." It were rough, but we loved it.

When you were our age how did you spend your time when not in school?

As kids, we mostly played on the "Rec," a local playground with swings and seesaws. All the children from King Street went there, and we had a King Street gang. There was also an Orchard Place gang, and we were always fighting them—and we usually won. We spent loads of time there growing up.

As we got older, we tried things like smoking, but I didn't like it. The only thing that really happened was the fair came to town each November. Even though we lived on King Street, we were only allowed to go once.

When the fair was on, we could hear the music from our bedroom. We'd open the windows and stand listening. Some kids who were better off would say, "you're not you're not coming to the fair." I'd reply, "well, I'm not bothered." But really... I were.

Did you get a lot of snow back then?

We bloody did ah. And I'll tell you something, we didn't have any boots when we were kids, but we still had to go to school, no matter how deep the snow was. One day at King Street, the snow had completely blocked both entrances to our yard. I said, "I can't," and told my mum to get Dad to look. He knew—it was piled so high.

When he cleared it, the snow still came up to my knees, and I had to go to school anyway. When it melted, it turned into streams running down both sides of the road, like rivers, so there was no escaping it.

It was hard growing up like that, but I still say I've had a good life—and I still do.

What shops and facilities did you have in Masbrough in the 1960s and 1970s?

My mother, Maud had her favourite shop, it was Coppers on King Street and was run by a mother and daughter. There was also Ridgeway's paper shop at the bottom, and King's fish shop. She'd go to Coopers at dinner, get stuff from King's at teatime, and my dad would send me to Ridgeway's for a paper.

When mi mother were a bit skint, she'd give me a note for Coopers to ask for tea and sugar "on tick," and they'd let her. She always paid it back, every week. Some didn't, though, and Coopers put their names in the window. I told mi mum, and she said, "God, I hope she's not putting us in." I said, "you pay every week."



Was there a lot of industry in Masbrough? Can you name any?

The biggest industry was where my dad worked at Guest & Chrimes. It was a brass foundry and my dad worked there years and years and years. I left school at 14, which we had to do then, and the teacher got me a job. Do you know where New York is? Well, it was a corset factory in New York, just before bridge and pub. It was a corset factory, and I bet you don't know what they are, corsets.

Rhianna (interviewee) "I know what corsets are. I've got a few corsets".

Oh, right. Oh, have you? Oh, right. I'll have to see you in one of them. And what they did, they put me on a bloody sewing machine. Well, I couldn't do it. I've never been on it; my mother didn't have a sewing machine. So, I said, I can't do that. I said, give me a brush and shovel. I'll sweep up all day. And I used to do that. But I got paid. So...

What brought this community together?

Our community centre meant everything—nearly everyone my age went. We had bingo on, and I'd go Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Now I don't get out nowhere, nowhere to go, not even on me scooter. There's no community, no shops—they've all gone to Parkgate, and Rotherham's too far.

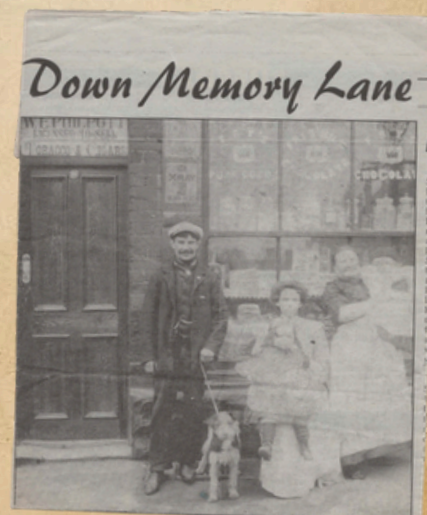
It's time they got that centre back. That's bombed our community. I've not seen me friends for four years—they're at Kimberworth. We used to have parties, trips, Christmas do's.

What was daily life like for you in the 60s and 70s?

Me mother and dad did what they could for us. We always had summat to eat, even if it were only toast. Sometimes porridge, but mostly toast. On Sundays, my dad would say, "Stop in bed Maud and I'll bring your breakfast up," and make her breakfast—bread dipped in tomatoes, maybe a bit of sausage.

Me mother always made a proper Sunday dinner, with big Yorkshire puddings, reyt high, cut into squares for us all. She'd say, "Don't give me beef with blood in, I'll have this end what's cooked."

At tea time, we might get a tea cake, then bed. It were simple, but we had a good life. Me mother always looked after me dad, and he always worked.





Head of family with

How Barbara's costs add up
£5 : **£10** : **£20**
 How much she gives to under 13s : What she gifts if they're a bit older : To any in the aged 21 or over

started their family in they had daughter Carol, and three years ago. They larily hard on her. Samantha sa
 es - Tina ks and was still- in 1969. distance aged 61 said: "I can't remember how many there are" her she had to b about it. Even if it h one person who through the same th will have done a go by speaking out abo Barbara began w 14 in a pickle fact

The power of flowers
 WHERE have all the flowers gone? Dig up by the council one by one, because of cuts.
 We on Vine Close are living in what looks like a war zone, with the burnt out charred no-one cares about. There is litter, weeds and overgrown hedges. Wake up Street-Prize.
 At a kid grilling up on King Street, my gran had window boxes to cheer up the neighbours. We wake up to doom and gloom every day.
 Mrs B Gamston, Vine Close, Mablethorpe
 3.5.13

MEERKATS
 Simplest to spot thief
 A GREAT gran found a pair of meerkats get comments at a property show every day.
 In Northampton, 91 three of the four back a floral aproned class room and topped bar e she said: "I think make sure there were and there was a meerkat one distinctive and our meerkat spotted bar e she have digged through the dirt of the in Brighthelm, South demanding the re the fourth one."

Gone to pot
 THIEVES have stolen two ornamental chimney pots from the home of a pensioner who was recently targeted by a hate campaign.
 The 88-year-old Mablethorpe woman, who does not want to be named, woke to find the two large chimney pot planters, which are painted white, missing from outside her front door.
 "They went a person from my son about 16 or 17 years ago—she has really spook me," she told the Advertiser.
 The pensioner has also been targeted by anonymous and abusive letters and has had paint and a petrol bomb thrown at her home.
 Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the chimney pots, or who has information on any of the other incidents, is asked to contact the police on 0114 220 220 24, 5.0

I've had 9 kids me. I've never let my kids want for anything that I know about. I still spoil them and they're grown up. I've got 152 Grandchildren, 153 soon. When I was 90, I don't know how Daily Mirror got hold of it, I think it had been in Advertiser for my birthday about Grandkids, and they come from to see if they could get my photo with all kids.

”



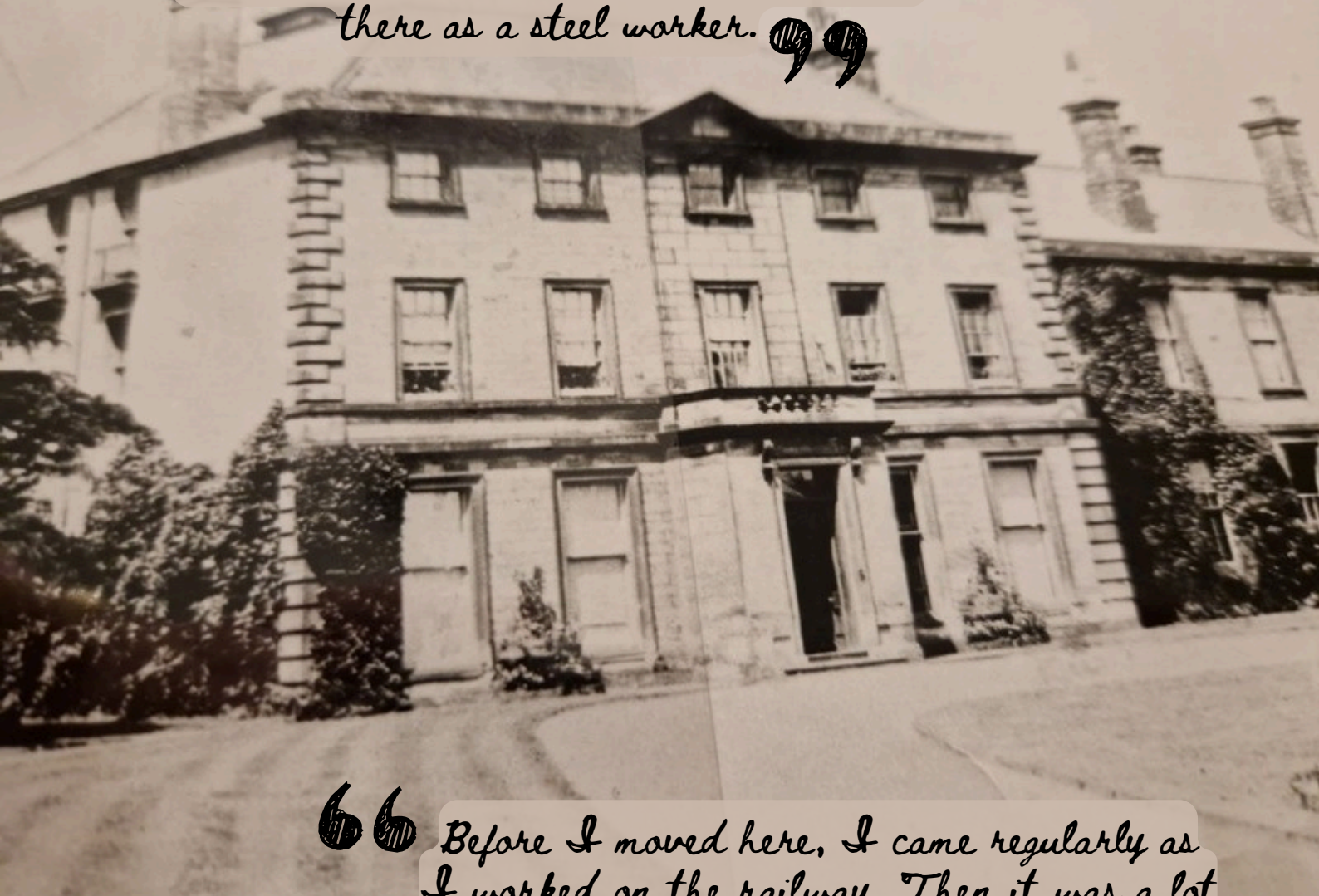
Some Quotes from other interviews...

What was your earliest memory of Masbrough?

““

First thing I remember about Masbrough is where my husband worked, he worked at Jenkins factory, it was where the petrol pump is close by there. My husband worked there as a steel worker.

””



““

Before I moved here, I came regularly as I worked on the railway. Then it was a lot easier work, plus you didn't have so many rules and regs. I used to walk to the pubs, call in and have a couple of pints. It was all-right round here and then I did a lot of work on the weekends, I used to drive a crane on the railway.

””



Photograph: Rhianna, Kai, Mylo

When you were my age, how did you spend your days when you were not at school?

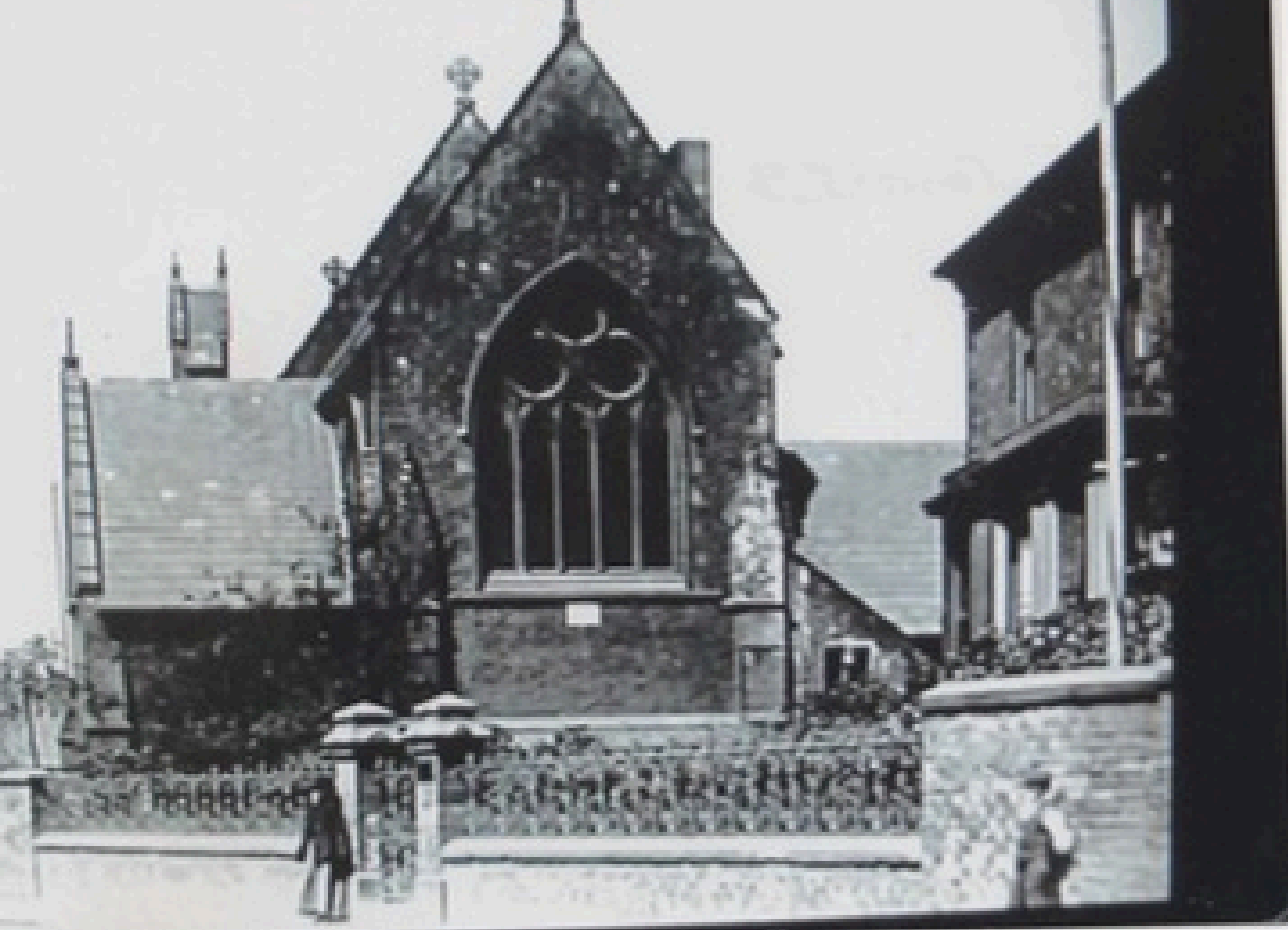
“ I used to love knitting, I used to love doing crochet, and making crochet lace. I used to go to a local lady who would teach me how to knit and crochet. I used to crochet lace big sheets that were used in the house. ”



What did you find different in England compared to Pakistan?

“ It was very cold here in England and heavy snow, we had shared accommodation with my father's friend's family when we first came. The ladies we lived with treated me like their own daughter, they never let me do anything in terms of house work. They would wake up in the morning and help clean my children. ”





What brought the community together?

““ They were helpful to each other, we had a good relationship, for example Mick the shop keeper would open the shop even when closed if we needed anything in emergency.

I used to offer neighbours food like pakoras when I would make them. ””

““ I used to share food with my neighbours as they liked Asian food. Everyone used to check on each other. I went to Tesco the other day and I couldn't reach a shelf and a white man helped me so there are still helpful pleasant people.

I think helping each other helped our community. ””



A big thank you to everyone who was involved in participating and being involved in this zine, including...

- Kathy, Zanib and Mezz - Steel City Community Consultancy
- Rotherham District Civic Society - Richard and Tracy Maher
- Barbara Gamston
- Ghulam Fatima
- William Carroll & Dorothy Carroll
- Riaz Bi
- Faisalat Jan
- Amy - Workshop facilitator and zine maker

