

SHARED ROOTS IN FAITH

Interview by Becky Sear

A conversation with Jacqui,
a Christian, living in East London.

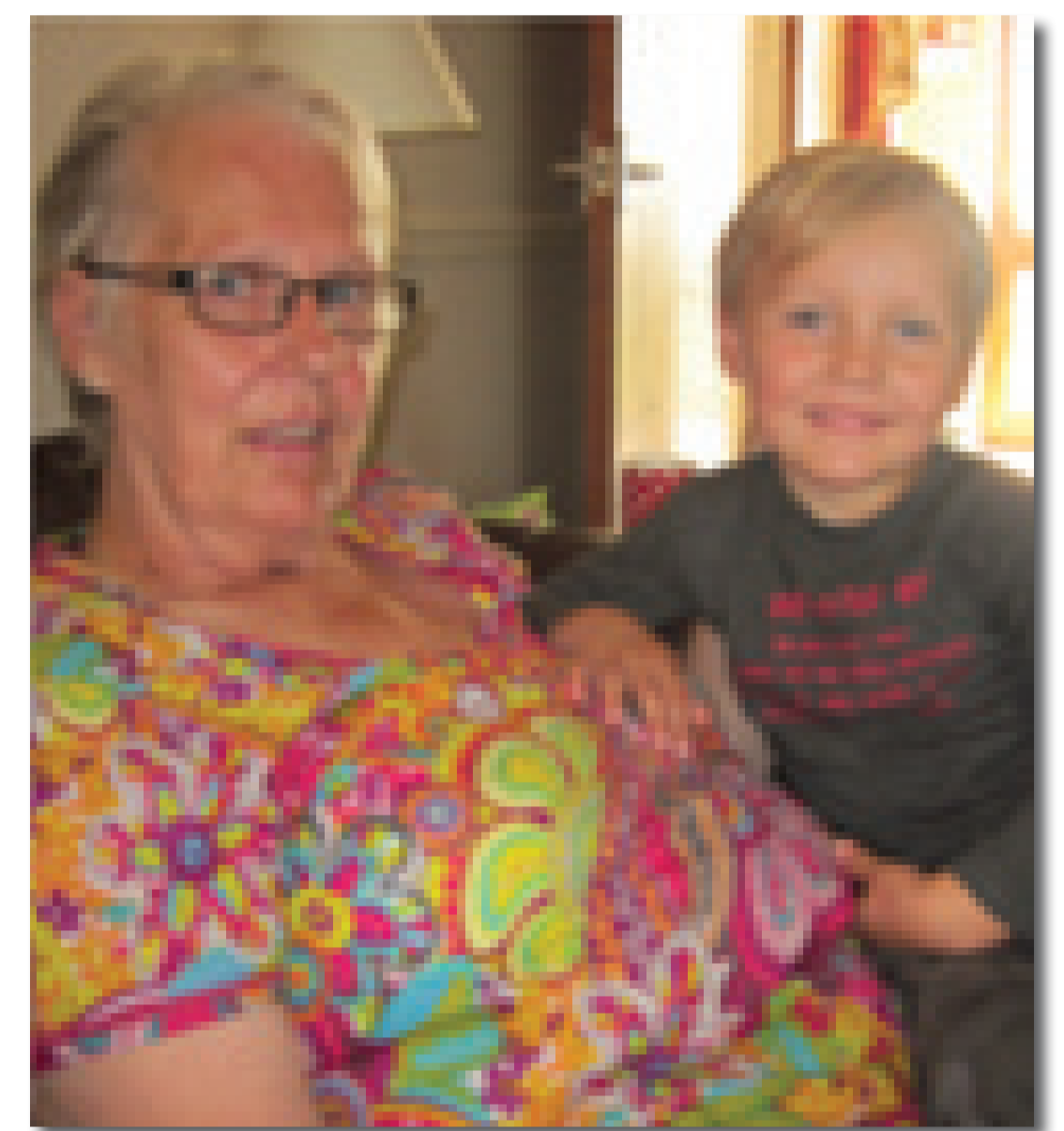
**The East End: a Patchwork of Faiths – How waves
of immigration created the rich multicultural population.**

Late 17th century - 50,000 Huguenots left France, and many ended up in Spitalfields, bringing their Calvinist work ethic and silk weaving skills with them. They settled in particular around Petticoat Lane. The French Protestant Church is built in the typical Huguenot style and can be seen in Soho Square.

Late 19th century - Many Ashkenazi Jews settled in the East End after escaping the Pogroms, or religious persecutions, in Eastern Europe. Many became tailors, and they established a rich culture,

including theatres and speciality kosher food shops.

20th century - As a large portion of the Jewish population moved towards London suburbs, many Bangladeshis have made the East End of London their home. The Jamme Masjid (Mosque) on Brick Lane is a testament to the changing faces of the East End – once a Chapel, it became a Synagogue and now serves predominantly the Bengali community.



On Family Life

“[We lived in] ex-Captain’s houses for the East India Company. They were grand. And my Nan lived there. Who ever got married would have the basement flat for two or three years ‘til they sorted themselves out and got their own properties.”
“I mean religion does play a big part. But, it was all mixed: Catholic, Church of England and Jewish. Your day of respect was a Sunday, likewise was a Saturday for Jews and people respected it. If that was your neighbour you respected it.”

On growing up in the East End

“Life in the East End.... was wonderful I must say. It was a lovely patchwork of things, rich, and it doesn’t happen in that way today.” “Someone in every family worked in a Jewish environment, in a factory, or house cleaning...my grandmother [worked for] frightfully very religious Jewish people... all around New Road, Stepney. She would go to their home and the Challah

On Faith

“Anything that creates a wholeness is valuable. And that’s what religion does, brings a family together - it unites them.” “Everyone should take time out to enter someone else’s religion, they find the basis are all the same. Love of mankind, love of the family... If you read the Qur’an or the Torah....they’ve all got the same meaning.”
“To be within a faith is a strength. When I was younger, to go to a Catholic school was lovely. You see the families going to mass. You think “why can’t I do that?” It was very open minded and forward thinking. I wasn’t indoctrinated.”

was prepared. She’d put that into the oven and do all the lights after sunset.” “I remember the lovely smells of the Caribbean...Their house was always open, and you would go in and, the brown sugar, they were boiling it to make the rum. We’d get to know people who was working on the Caribbean boats that was bringing the spices in and also the rum coming back.”

East India