

SHARED ROOTS IN FAITH

Interview by Steph Eldridge

Aumie Shapiro, born in 1924 in Bow, East London

By comparing the number of synagogues could give an idea of the number of practising Jewish people in a given area:

East End 1950's - 150 Synagogues

East End 2011- 4 Synagogues

While living in East London

East London- 1924-1945-Community life and interfaith relations: 'The overall atmosphere was very friendly indeed'

'I found no problem whatsoever personally of working very, very closely with the Indian community, the Bangladeshi community and with the ordinary Christian community. Indeed in



Old Montague street sign.

the school that I went to as a kiddie, going back to that time, 50% of the people were Jewish, no we were pretty active the Jewish part of the school. The captain of Speech was a Jewish Girl and the captain of the school was a Jewish boy. But nevertheless there was no kind of faith problems of any kind.'

East London Today, - The Decline of the Jewish Community - 'Of course today in the east end there's only about 3,000 Jewish people'

The decline of the Jewish community has left very few Jewish families in the East End and even less provision for them- 'Of course today in the east end there's only about 3,000 Jewish people.' Aumie draws



East London Mosque

on the fact that the only place Kosher food can be bought is at a counter in the local Sainsbury's. This is a large contrast to the 1950s where Kosher shops, Jewish tailors and bakers had a strong presence in the East End Aumie feels that the reason many Jewish families left East London was not due to unrest, conflict or feelings of being ousted by the growing Muslim community, but rather due to the fact that after the Blitz there was no home to go back to.



Roman Market entrance in Roman Street, East London

Moving to North London

Aumie's reason for moving: 'It (the East End) was already getting weaker as a community.'

'In 1953 we moved to Neasden. And the reason was because so much of the Jewish community had suffered very badly during the bombing- so many Jewish homes were destroyed during the Blitz as it concentrated on the East End.



Tradicional Jewish Bakery in Hendon

Also, even during the 1930s quite large numbers of people moved to Forest Gate, to the east. Or would move to Stanford hill to North London. So there was generally, with economic improvement a tendency to move to the North West which had already established some very strong Jewish communities that were established here.' East London, the community were poor and focused on trade and their faith: 'For instance the Hebrew class that I went to as a child, would at Passover time organise us poor kids and I was one of the poor kids. Supplied us with a completely new suit for Passover'

Bow

Neasden