

Ourania Georgiou

My name is Ourania Georgiou. My first impressions of London was how foggy it was. We found ourselves constantly apologising to lamp posts because we kept bumping into them and thought they were people. Also we would get lost when we were travelling by bus because we didn't know our way around. Fares only because about 1p then. We arrived in England believing we would return to Cyprus as millionaires but we never did. I brought with me from Cyprus a large sieve.

I came over to England in 1955 with my husband to find work.

We started working in a factory which was run by a Greek Cypriot. My husband was a tailor. I didn't have a trade and I ended up a finisher. My husband earned £10 and I earned £4. We came over from Cyprus one day and the next day we had jobs in a factory. We saved and a year later we bought a house.

We came over from Cyprus because we had no money. We had to leave two children behind, one was 2 years old, the other 7 months but we had to do it because of the money. I felt really bad about leaving the children in Cyprus all I could do in England was cry. I got the sack from my boss because he thought I was crying because I was unhappy with my job. My husband went to see him to explain but he didn't care. I went to the factory opposite which was owned by an English man. He refused to give me any work because I was Cypriot, because of the troubles back in Cyprus he thought we were all trouble. A few weeks later the Greek boss where I used to work asked my husband if I'd come back to work for him because I was good at my job and I stayed there for a very long time.

It's different in England now as it's very expensive. I want to go back. Life is much better in Cyprus, especially for the elderly. I will always be a stranger in the eyes of the English. In Cyprus I don't get that feeling at all, English people live in my village now.

I can't go back until my last daughter is married. I can't leave her here if she is single, I have a responsibility. She doesn't want to get married anyway, whenever I mention it she says "no", so I'm stuck here. My daughter is 34 years old.