

1966

Dinesh and Mukesh Panchal completed their GCE O'Levels. Dinesh made the front of the Keighley News as he got 11 (or was it 13?) O'Levels.

Mukesh went to India and, as I had requested, brought back a lovely tysokoto and a tape full of latest songs.

My placement finished at end of September. I had got nominal pay during my placement. My grant was only available during the college term. So I got a job at a cotton mill, down the road, packing cotton reels and doing night shifts.

Bhai's friend circle grew. Bhai always regretted not getting a medical degree so our friend circle was made up of predominantly people from medical profession.

On 1st January 1967, I started my 3rd year at the college. We found a room in Bradford.



Pramila and I moved in to this house owned by Jinabhai Patel. Jinabhai was sharing the house with his daughter, Jyoti. Jyoti was a lovely girl and got on well with Pramila. Her father was trying to get her married to a local boy but the boy was not sure whether Jyoti was serious. We were asked to go and talk to the boy. Once he was convinced that Jyoti was agreeable, they got engaged and Jinabhai arranged to get his wife and son over from India. So at end of January, we had to move. We found a nice little flat at other end of Bradford.

In hindsight, I regret getting involved in arranging this match as short time later, Jyoti left her husband to join Brahmakumari sect. I never actually met her after her marriage, but she used to visit Ba at Harrow.

Just down the road, there was a Patel family living in a block of council flats. Premjibhai was living with his son and daughter-in-law. I used to be envious because the flat was modern with central heating. I occasionally sat with him as he played harmonium. I learnt a little bit about Indian classical Ragas from him. He was quite active in local Gujarati community and the Gujarati Association. Then one day, whilst I was there, they had a visit from a Ramnik Solanki from London. He was very keen on extending Gujarati associations throughout the country. He started slating people who would start other associations like Indian association in Bradford. We had a heated argument about whether in a foreign land, we were Indian first or Gujarati first. Then Premjibhai mentioned that actually Bhai was the president of Indian association. It transpired that Ramnik Solanki was trying to start a Gujarati newspaper and was looking for support from Gujarati associations. Few months later, he started Gujarati newspaper, Garvi Gujarat.

New flat was nice with 2 rooms. Traveling time to college increased. The minivan was getting unreliable so that was exchanged for an Hillman Imp. Not a good buy because it had this new fangled device called automatic-choke which did not work very well and starting it in the morning was a pain.

One weekend in April, we were at our keighley home. Bhai told us that Pramila's father had passed away on 29th April. Pramila was about 3 months pregnant. the shock gave initiated severe pains. She spent next few days in bed to avoid miscarriage.

Jyoti would drop in occasionally to give Pramila company.

I got an interview with an electronic firm, Fielden electronics, in Manchester, for work placement. I was interviewed by the training officer. Interview went well. The company manufactured level sensing equipment. My job was to be a test engineer. I was also to stand-in as training officer, whilst he was on leave for 3 weeks. He said it would be an easy job. I had to teach girls how to solder and teach them to read colour codes so that they could count above thousand. Unfortunately, the placement was for only 3 months. Good thing was I would make £13 per week. Manchester is university town with flourishing rental business. We visited one letting agency and got ourselves a room booked.

Indian Association, Bradford decided to do a variety show to celebrate India Independence day. Bhai, as president, asked me to organise one. Main hall of the Bradford university was booked for the function.

What could we do?

We could do Dandia Ras. A dance by Jayshree. Song or 2

Music would normally come from our collections. There was a good Gujarati Garbo in our tape of Pinakin Shah.

"Sanj ne samere jyare suraj name".

For Jayshree's dance we listened to our collection and then decided to do a song from film, Leader: Daiya re daiya.

The song required male and female accompaniment for the chorus bit. Recruitment was very difficult, especially getting lads to dance.



We started rehearsals, using our portable tape recorder to provide the music. We used the original recording of the garba for rehearsals.

Attempts by Jyotika and me to choreograph the dance and garbo was pathetic.

Then 2 things happened.

Bharatbhai Upadhyaya came to visit us and stayed with us for a few days. At that time, Gulam Nabi was staying with his uncle in keighley. Pramila and I used to go there. We had set up a little studio and practised taking portraits.

Recently, I had bought a record which played western songs on a sitar. At home, I put the record on.

Bharatbhai said "Oh that's Chiman Kothari. I have met

him. I know where he lives". So a phone call was made to Chim and he agreed to appear on the show as long as his expenses were paid.

Pallana family visited us, bringing a guest with them, Padmaben Anantani. Padmaben had recently come from Tanzania. She was an accomplished radio presenter, singer and choreographer. She looked at our efforts at choreography. "Requires some polish" She said. Threw in some ideas.

We managed to get couples for the Ras but had problems getting boys. Jayshree had got friendly with a girl who lived in Shipley, Vijay (or Jay). She was in. Jyotika was in. Jayshree was sweet on one of the boys who helped. He would not join as a dancer but got his brother to join. On strength of that, we got another 2 boys to volunteer. With another girl volunteer we had 3 boys and 3 girls and Jayshree as the main dancer.

I thought I would mention here that the guy Jayshree was sweet on, had asked his parents about Jayshree. They were against him marrying outside their community and so Bhai and Ba never found out about it. As they, *fate* and *for the best* etc.

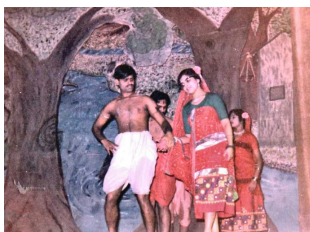
Drawing on my experience in creating backdrops for the drama, in Aden, I decided that a forest scene would be good. A boat to get the boys on stage and some water scenes for the boat. Secretary's jaw dropped when I asked for some canvas material, 50 foot wide by 25 feet high. Two of those please, I said. Also some material which was 50 ft long and 6 ft wide. I located some wheels at the hardware store and made a cart which would carry 3 young lads.

And rehearsals began.

My HND exams finished on 30th June and, on Monday, 3rd July, I took up 3 month work placement with Fielden electronics, in Manchester. I enjoyed working there. Quite different to working in a mill or at Charlie's factory. Only other useful thing I did was buy a guitar from my first pay packet Oh and we went to see Sound of Music.



Weekends were spent in Keighley and Bradford for rehearsals. I went to see Charlie and asked if I could make a contraption made of iron tubing, for the stage. It was going to be a 50 ft length of conduit tube with handle at one end, randomly welded spikes on the length and 4 tripods to support the contraption. A cloth painted with water and waves would be draped over it. When handle is turned, the effect should be water and waves. Are you going to come back to work, he asked I said I would come and work for him from October to December. So I was allowed to make this contraption, No charge.



We practised the Ras from the original music. In the meantime, I managed to contact Nasiruddin Meghji, who happened to be the only main singer we had. He agreed to sing the Ras. I am not sure if I managed to get Shavjibhai to sing as well. Anyway, we seemed to have a reasonable lineup.

We needed some large space to paint the scenery. Bhai spoke his boss, Norman Wall. He said we could use his warehouse after seven on a Saturday evening but should clear it before eight on Monday morning.



So a weekend before the show, Amrit and Hasmukh Shah came to Keighley. WE went to the warehouse. They had cleared the floor for us. We started painting the scenery. It was huge canvas needing lot of paint. By 7:am on Monday morning, we had finished. The 3 canvases were not as good as my previous attempt but considering the amount of time we had, it was not a bad effort.

To celebrate 20th anniversary of Indian independence, on Saturday, 19 August 1967, the show went off without the hitch. There was sitar recital by Chim Kothari, songs by Nasiruddin Meghji. Padmaben Anantani sang Aye Mere Watan Ke Logo, a song dedicated to the fallen soldiers during 1962 Indo-China war. Th3 forest dance produced the effect I wanted. It was very well received by the audience. Jayshree got her picture in the local paper, Telegraph and Argus.



I gained my Higher National Diploma



On 28th September we returned to Keighley and on 2 October 1967, I started work at Charlie's factory.

On 21 October 1967, Vimal was born at Victoria Hospital, Keighley. Ba was at her side. In those days, men were not allowed anywhere near the delivery room.

[More details when I find Vimal's album](#)

1968

1 January 1968 was the start of my 4th year at college. Room with the Polish lady was not available as she was selling her property. Rooms were available, next door. The house was owned by a Nigerian guy. It was dingy little place with sparse and dirty kitchen.

As Vimal was just 2 months old, Pramila stayed in Keighley. Jyotika had just got herself a placement at the Huddersfield infirmary. We were offered one large room with another room in the annex. Originally, this would have been a master bedroom with adjoining dressing room. The guy was not very helpful. We were not allowed to make or receive calls and phone was left under lock & Key.

During this time, I had a letter, from India, suggesting that it was inappropriate that two of us should be sharing a room together. The letter was filed in the place it deserved.

Few weeks later, Shavjibhai bought a bigger property, nearby, at no 7, Clare Hill. We were offered the 2 rooms upstairs. They would occupy the 2 rooms on ground floor.

So Jyotika and I moved there. Pramila and Vimal soon joined us and Jyotika was offered the attic room. One room had cooker and sink fitted and had a coal fire, We used this room as kitchen/ diner/sitting room. Other room was used as our bedroom.

Hot water was supplied by a coal fire in the cellar.

There was a problem with my grant. I did not get my weekly payment and my fees for the term were not paid.

I took a day off college to go to the West Riding County Council offices in Wakefield. It seemed that my grant was only approved for 3 year diploma course. They promised to look in to it.

In the meantime, Shavjibhai wanted more money to supply hot water. I flatly refused and he stopped lighting fire in the basement. Pramila was livid. She had to wash dirty nappies, using cold water. But I had no income.

In Keighley, one of our visitors was admiring Bhai's shiny Cortina. "Would he sell it to me?" He asked. I suggested £300. I knew things were not that easy in Keighley, either.

An angry Bhai phoned me a few days later. You had promised to sell my car, he said.

I said that I was only suggesting a price, if the car was for sale.

Well, I had to sell it to him as he said, you had promised it to him.

So, I gave Bhai, my Hillman Imp. He did not like it very much as it was small and too ordinary. But he had no choice. I could not afford to run a car anyway.

My tutor, Dr. Roberts, suggested I better start looking for a job. There was a free sheet newspaper called Electronic Weekly, which was full of job opportunities in electronic industry. There were jobs going at National Space Research Centre, The BBC and The Independent Television Authority.(ITA) I applied and the first two interviews were a disaster. I did not appreciate that I would have to answer technical questions. How would I know the

height of a satellite to get geostationary orbit. BBC guy wanted to know how the TV programmes would be distributed round the country. With help from tutor, I was a little bit more prepared for my 3rd interview. The preliminary interview was at the local transmitting station at Emley Moor. Transport was sent to take me there. I managed to get through that with some vague answers. I got through alright and had my final interview, at the head office in Knightsbridge, London, at end of February. Interview did not go as well as I planned. There was a big push to change the UK TV system to colour. New transmitters would need to be installed. Colour TV was more complicated and good grasp of maths would be required. I passed the colour blindness test. I did not get any offers from other interviews but ITA offered me job, to be located at the Emley Moor transmitter in Huddersfield. Perfect. Starting salary would be £960 p.a. Before I started, I had 2 pay increases. It went up £1060 and then to £1142. Things were looking up. I agreed to start on 30th May 1968, immediately after my exams. Why 30th? Bhai thought Thursday 30th was more auspicious than Monday, 3rd June.

I gained my College Associateship. I also passed final exam for Institute of Electrical Engineers. So after 12 months training, I would be Chartered Engineer. Bhai was happy. I did not need a car as company minibus would pick me up from Huddersfield and bring me back. I would also qualify for a company mortgage on 1 June 1969. I would be working shifts of 8 to 4 or 4 to midnight. And they were going to pay me to watch television!!

Kamlesh had just finished his first year at Hartington Comprehensive in Keighley, in 1967. We thought it would be good to get him into grammar school. So admission was obtained. Kamlesh moved to Huddersfield and started at Huddersfield New College in September. By this time, we must have taken 4 rooms at Clare Hill. 3rd had become vacant so Jyotika took that and Kamlesh was located in the attic.

Pramila was fed up of our digs. It was not easy to look after Vimal in one room, cook in that room. There was coal fire in the room so she used to put Vimal on a leash so he would not start fiddling with coal fire. I was not really keen on getting a property until I was eligible for mortgage. I think Dinesh and Pramila used to go round looking for properties.

Dinesh started at Imperial College London, reading Chemical Engineering.

21 October was Vimal's first birthday. Ba & Bhai wanted a party. Pramila had mentioned to me that one of the doctor friends had made an inappropriate contact with Jayshree. So I was against inviting that couple to the party. Bhai disagreed. So it was that I wasn't there at Vimal's first birthday party.

Some houses were being built on Pennistone Road, at the edge of Huddersfield. The houses were on ITA transport route. I got confirmation from my employers that I would be eligible for mortgage on 1 June 1969. I rang up the builders and I was told that a show house was ready for viewing. So we all went to have a look. There were going to be rows of 3 bedroom [semi detached houses](#). We had a look. Location was good. So we came back to Clare Hill and I rang up the builders, George Haigh and Sons. The guy said, are you the coloured family who had a look around, earlier? I said, yes. "Our policy is not to sell to coloured people because that will jeopardise sales of our other properties."

“Do you know it has just become illegal to discriminate? “. Yes, he said. I was speechless. Race Relations Act of 1968 had just been enacted.

We were at Dr. Hasmukh Shah's house. Hasmukhbhai said “ Now you are qualified and got a job, would you have an alcoholic drink? I will mix you a drink”. So I had my first alcoholic drink: Whiskey and gingerale.

I knew the local community relations officer, Mrs Kulvietis. I went to see her. She said that It was my duty make a formal complaint. After a long discussion, I was persuaded and formal complaint was made.

A week later, a solicitor, Mr Malik, from Race Relations Board (RRB) turned up at work to interview me. RRB would sue the builder. I insisted that the damages we claim should be nominal. We agreed on £2 to cover our travel costs.

I became very unpopular at work. We worked in teams of 3 or 4. One engineer on my team, Colin Livesey, happened to be a good friend of Brian Haigh, the man from the builders' firm who had answered the phone.

It also became a sensitive issue at work. I was treated with suspicion. Colleagues were split in their opinion with half disapproving my action.

1969



It was a very cold winter. Winter lingered on into March. Weather was freezing. At work, The TV mast was draped in ice. mast On Wednesday, 19 March I would have been on duty but I was sent to the Yorkshire TV studio in Leeds for training. I was sitting at their master control room when suddenly the screens looking at TV mast went blank. The mast had fallen down due to the weight of ice on the stay wires which held up the mast. It



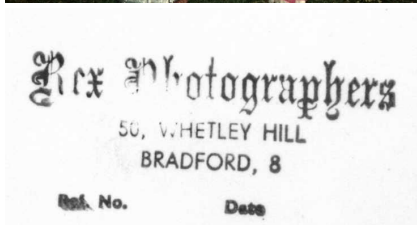
was very fortunate that the falling bits had decided to spare all the buildings , the parish church and the school bus had just missed the fall by few minutes. (Pictures of Mast before and after)



House hunting started again. We saw a house in the same area. It was a 3 bed detached house built on a slope. It was an unusual house. As one entered, there was bathroom, the kitchen and a largish open plan lounge / diner at the back. There were 3 bedrooms, one floor down. We decided buy it for £3,800. Estimate for full central heating was £370. I was still short of money. I borrowed £100 from Bhai to put a deposit down. (Recent Google picture of the house and not so good of picture of the view from lounge window.

News travel fast. When we next visited the house, we were told that Brian Haigh had come to the house and asked them not to sell the house to us. Apparently, that estate was built by the same builders. The ground was on leasehold of 999 years and the builders owned the ground.

The vendor said he could sell it anyone he wished. We bought the house and moved in at 14 Greenside Crescent, on 11 July 1969.



On our first day, Vimal was out and about playing in the front and ventured into the drive of next door neighbour at no 16. We were told in no uncertain terms to manage our child properly. They also happened to be good friends of Brian Haigh, the builder

We did not have much furniture. We bought sofas, beds and carpet. Jyotika had got engaged to Kanubhai and was going to India at end of the month. So we had a small party with carpet still rolled up at the end of the room.

Gulam Nabi had set up a studio in Bradford. At the back of the shop he stayed with his 2 brothers, Rubani and Iqbal (actually they were his cousins). A sign was painted with the name, Rex Studios. The darkroom was set up under the stairs. We decided that for portraiture, a twin lens reflex would be good so my Yashica B was set up as the studio camera.

Bhai said that someone mentioned that they were looking for a picture of a girl draped in a sari for advertisement, possibly on carrier bags. We would not use any one from the family. So we decided to hire a model. Nabi had used a modeling agency when he was going through his photography course. So we went to the agency in Leeds. We picked a girl from their album.

They said we would own the copyrights of the picture. "Would you want to do any nude photography?". Nabi looked at me. I had no experience of nude or otherwise in a professionally set up studio. So it was decided that we will do lot of portraiture and see if we wanted to do some semi nude work. So we booked an hour.

We needed someone to dress the girl in a sari. Pramila could not come because of Vimal. So we took Jayshree. She dressed the model and we took pictures. Then poor girl had to sit outside whilst 2 of us took some semi nude pictures. We travelled to Preston, I think, with Bhai, to see the guy and show him the pictures of the girl-in-sari. He was not prepared to pay for it. So we returned without a deal. We blew up the pictures, life size, and put them in the window. It did bring in some business.

British Rights Bill Gets Test

LEEDS, England (AP) — A court hearing opened Tuesday on a charge by an Aden-born electrical engineer that a builder refused to sell him a house because he is colored. The racial discrimination case is a first in British legal history.

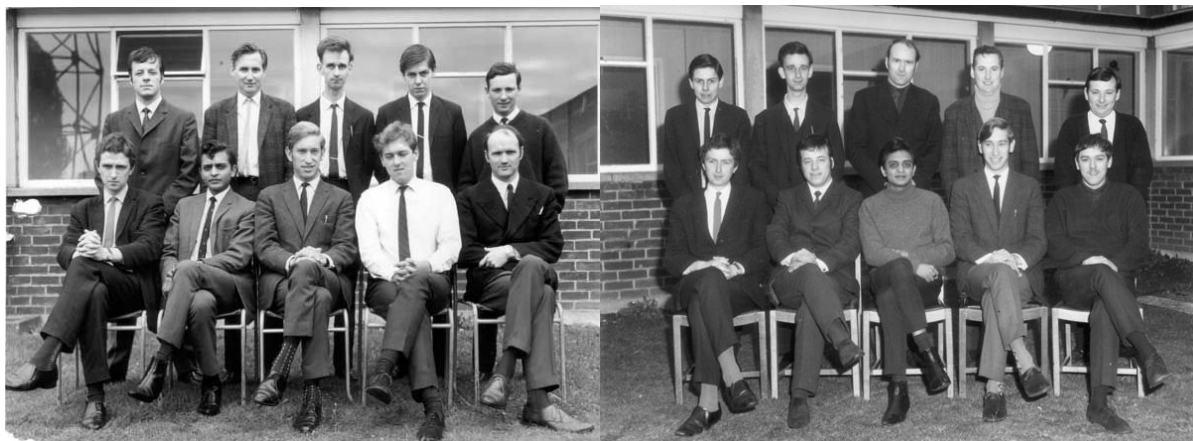
Mahesh Upadhyaya, 27, went to court under the year-old race relations act which provides penalties for discrimination on grounds of race.

Upadhyaya claimed nominal damages of two pounds—\$4.80—against George Haigh & Co. Ltd.

On Tuesday, 17 June 1969, hearing opened in Leeds Crown Court for the first prosecution under the Race Relations Act - 1968. Bhai accompanied me to the court. I did my best to avoid the media as atmosphere at work and at home with our neighbour was not very good. I was not very pleased because RRB had got ITA's chief accountant to take the stand to confirm that I would have been able to buy the house if I was permitted. Judgement was reserved.

At work, there was lot of activity with images coming over from NASA. TV screens had to be manned, 24 hours a day as spaceflight of Apollo 11 had landed the first humans on the Moon, Americans Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, on July 20, 1969. Armstrong became the first to step onto the lunar surface, on July 21 Armstrong spent about two and a half hours outside the spacecraft, Aldrin slightly less, and together they collected 47.5 pounds (21.5 kg) of lunar material for return to Earth.

I spent 8 weeks in September/ October and another 8 weeks in January/ February at



Marconi College, Chelmsford, learning how TV's work.



Ba went to India. Jyotika got married to Kanubhai Rajgor on 14 December 1969.

Bhai replaced the car, Hillman Imp with Mini.

