



Dhirubhai Mavjibhai Patel



Dhirubhai aged 90, was born in a village called Bagumra in the state of Gujarat. He was the third child in a family of six brothers and one sister.

His father Mavjibhai Bhikubhai died when he was 25 years old and his mother Gullabben Mavjibhai died in 1991 when he was 60 years old. He always spoke of his memories, helping his paternal grandfather who was blind by age 18. The importance of exercise, was learned at an early age of 7 from an older friend who had wished he had taken better care of himself. He passed on his passion for exercise to his children who in turn inspired their own children. Financial pressure meant the much needed glasses from age 8, was not affordable.

He loved studying and came 1st in his year at school but, because he was so small, he didn't like to go to school as he was made fun of. For 5 years, he had to travel 3 miles on a train to high school and passed his SSC with 99/100 at aged 17 years. He then started MTB College and got his first glasses. He received a scholarship to go college but he knew there was no money for commerce / book keeping. He had to leave college to fulfil his duty to the family and weighed only 7 stones. He was 19 and during this period his siblings were getting married.

In 1952, he applied with documents at Taluka Palsan for a passport. The fees were paid but the passport was rejected as there was no one to seek



advice from. Whilst working in Surat, he sought to find out procedures and entry requirements himself to go to England. He was unsuccessful.

However an engineer in Bagumra working on the canals helped to get things moving with the passport as his own son worked at the passport office. The engineer's son supported the application by endorsing a Bombay address so that the application could go through. This time he was successful but some procedures had to be broken to achieve this.

He arrived in England in 1954 by plane with his older brother Munchubhai when he was only 23 years old. He has lived in many places and he tells us stories of his stay in Great Bridge as a lodger with a Pakistani landlord. He shared lodgings with 20 other people and the room rent at the time was 50p weekly (out of £5.50 per week income) and because he was fit he could walk the 5 miles to public baths. He tells us they were always on a bed rota system for the morning, afternoon and evenings. His brother Munchubhai returned to India after two years as he was feeling homesick. From 1954 to 1973, Dhirubhai sent money to India for 19 years to support his brothers and family - back then, most Indians who came to England would send money to support their families back home. He married Bhuliben in 1962, aged 19, shortly after her 17 day ship journey to the UK. Arriving on 1st December 1961, she had only ever seen pictures of Dhirubhai. She also worked much of her life and retired due to arthritis and is now Dhirubhai's primary carer.

He was made redundant aged 52 years old but went on to support his two sons with a family business until 2008 when he took much deserved retirement.

In the holidays, he enjoyed spending time with his family – especially his 6 grand daughters who would spend their childhood Summer holidays with their dada and ma. He loved taking them to the park and sitting and telling them stories of his childhood. He would spend hours weighing up and packing sweets to sell in the shop and would love getting his granddaughters to help. He also loved reading Garavi Gujarat every day. Sadly, His eyesight has deteriorated over the years and he can no longer do this but he still loves being surrounded by his family.



The children feel he is a kind and sincere man who loves sweets. Their mum a selfless, loyal and giving woman who loves picture sharing on WhatsApp. They taught us to always be positive in thoughts and “Visit people when they are alive and not at funerals”

Dhirubhai Mavjibhai Patel & Bhuliben Patel “Our Rocks – We are thankful to our hard working parents who made such a brave journey to the UK for a better life for future generations to come”

Our Family tree



Dhirubhai



Bhuliben



Children: Ramesh, Ranjan & Dinesh



Dinesh, Ramesh & Ashok



6 Granddaughters: Bina, Amisha, Sarah, Nisha, Lina, Trishna



Kushum, Ranjan & Anita



Bina, Shibbs, Aarvi & Jovee



Lina, Mitesh & Viviana



Amisha, Rohit & Anya



Sarah & Ravi



Nisha & Jared



Trishna & Viraj