Muriel: The gentlemen took their port and cigars and disappeared into another room and the ladies were left in another room with their sherry. And I thought: “Well, what’s this then?”

Andrew: The football craze here is on a different scale. So, I wasn’t really aware of these football (sort of) fans and the people, sort of belonging to particular clubs.

Presenter: Voices of immigrants remembering the cultural differences they experience when they first arrived in Britain.

Our first speaker, Yun, came from China to the South of England in 1991. Since she’s been living in England, Yun has noticed that several parts of her own culture are becoming more and more popular amongst British people. In particular, Yun mentions the Chinese New Year…. ‘Kung Fu’ – a Chinese style of fighting using only the hands and feet… ‘Tai Chi’ – a Chinese form of
meditation or going deep into thought, whilst using physical movements... And Yun also mentions Chinese medicine, which makes use of natural herbs and remedies.

Insert 1
In Britain, I have noticed that Chinese culture plays a more important role in British culture, in British people’s lives. And you can notice every Chinese New Year, all the shops have these promotions and try to sell Chinese food. And you can see that Kung Fu, Tai Chi are very popular, and (the) Chinese medicine. And a lot of British people eat Chinese food regularly and I can’t imagine, without Chinese food, how the British people live! (Laughs).

Presenter: And of course, it’s now said that every major city in Britain has a Chinese takeaway restaurant! But why are British people so interested in Yun’s culture – what she calls Eastern philosophy?

Insert 2
I think the British people are more interested in Eastern philosophy and probably because their life is busier and stressful and they want to relax more, or they want to search for some spiritual meanings in their life. Or maybe it’s just a fashionable thing to do. So, that’s why they just go into this Chinese Fung Shui or meditation, Tai Chi.... everything.

Presenter: Muriel Hunte, is our next speaker, and like Yun, she’s noticed that some things from her part of the world are now a part of British life. She believes that these changes are due to immigrants, like herself, moving to Britain. When Muriel arrived in London in 1953, it wasn’t long after the Second World War, and
things were still ‘on ration’, there were limits to how much food and other
things people could buy. And Muriel was used to eating a variety of fresh food
each day in Guyana.

Insert 3
Food was difficult, because most of the food was potatoes, greens - meat was on ration, so
you only had a small quantity. But, we made do. Bananas, I think that was the first thing we
had plenty of and I loved bananas so that was alright.

Presenter: So, bananas arrived in Britain. Another difference, which Muriel noticed in
Britain, was the clothes. She didn’t like them when she first arrived, because
they were so different to what she was accustomed to – used to. However, she
soon helped to make some sensational changes!

Insert 4
When I came, there were not the colourful clothes I was accustomed to. But I had brought
my own colourful clothes which caused sensation at times because people would stop and
stare. I remember the first coat I bought was a red coat and it was four sizes bigger than me.
But, the fact that I saw a red coat in one of the shops…I just couldn’t resist it, regardless of its
size. But, as time wore on and they started to take things off of the ration, things started to
look up a bit. And I think with us wearing our colourful clothes, they thought: “Well, we
better wear some colourful clothes as well.” So, you know, people started to wear blues and
greens and browns, you know, mixed. But, the first impression was: the clothes were very
dull.
Presenter: When Muriel finally saw something colourful to wear, her first coat, she bought it, even though it was much too big. The important thing was that it was red – it was colourful. Muriel thinks that she and other immigrants from her part of the world, helped to make British fashion more colourful.

Our next speaker is Andrew Zsigmond who arrived in Britain in 1957. When Andrew left Hungary, he’d been a third year medical student. However, he was only allowed to move to Britain if he agreed to work as a coal miner, after some training. Of course, when an opportunity to complete his medical studies arose, he took it. However, he had to re-take his professional exams, which he’d already taken during his first two years at medical school in Hungary. Did Andrew notice many differences between the Hungarian and the British educational system?

Insert 5

The education system varies immensely, actually, because in Hungary, professional examinations are all done in viva voce – in conversational-type of examinations; long, arduous, but conversational. In Britain, of course, we had to do written papers right away. So, even though by then, my English was, I suppose, colloquially enough to get by, but writing a professional paper was of course very, very difficult. So, we really had to hit the books and work hard at it.

Presenter: So the main difference Andrew noticed between the medical schools in Hungary and Britain, were the professional examinations, or exams. In Hungary, his exams were what he calls ‘viva voce’ and ‘conversational’ – they were long and arduous – very difficult, but in spoken Hungarian. In Britain, the same exams
had to be written in English. This was very difficult for Andrew because, although he could speak English quite well by then, and even knew colloquial – everyday English - his written English was certainly not as good. Well, Andrew studied hard - as he says, he hit the books, and later on, became a doctor in Liverpool, in the north-west of England.

Renate Thornton arrived in Cardiff, the capital of Wales, from Germany in 1964. She remembers one particular dinner party that she attended with her husband, who was a lecturer. At the time, she was astonished – really surprised by one particular cultural difference!

Insert 6

In the 1960s in Cardiff, there was one cultural difference which really astonished me. We were invited to a dinner party. Then afterwards, the gentlemen took their port and cigars and disappeared into another room and the ladies were left in another room with their sherry. And I thought, well, what’s this then? This is very boring – what do we talk about? It was then talk about the household, the children…full stop! And I thought: “Goodness gracious me! This is incredible!!” But I’m sure this doesn’t exist anymore.

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Presenter: Our last speaker today is Rajinder Dulai, who came to the Midlands in England from India in 1977. He clearly remembers the day when he discovered how important football is to supporters of the various teams across Britain. Not long after his arrival, Rajinder was waiting for a bus. That day, it was very cold, so he was wearing his cousin’s football club scarf - his Aston Villa scarf - around
his neck. Aston Villa had beaten another team earlier that day, and those fans were still in the area where Rajinder was waiting for his bus. At that time, Rajinder didn’t understand English very well.

Insert 7

The football craze here is on a different scale. So, I wasn’t really aware of these football (sort of) fans and the people, sort of belonging to particular clubs. And it was winter, so I went out and had a scarf, a Villa scarf. For me, a scarf is a scarf. And I was waiting for a bus at a bus stop and then three youths approached me - English people - and they started saying something to me and I really didn’t understand what they were saying. And then they sort of came close, then they started shoving me and then they sort of got my scarf and started swinging me around. They really humiliated me and then they sort of punched me and then they took the scarf off me, and then they put it on (the) floor and then they started banging it with their feet. I thought they were crazy or something! And I went home and told my cousin what happened, then he gathered immediately. He said that there was a Villa match today and their team had lost and so they were probably taking some kind of revenge on you. I thought, well - that’s quite nice!! (Laughs)

**Presenter:** A violent and humiliating experience – one that made Rajinder feel small, embarrassed and humble. His cousin explained that it was probably a revenge attack, the youths - three young men - wanted to make Rajinder suffer because their team had lost. Such people are generally called “football hooligans.” Rajinder’s comment at the end was: “Oh, that’s nice!” – an ironic remark, actually meaning that it wasn’t nice at all.