

## TELLING OUR STORIES, FINDING OUR ROOTS ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM

<b>Date of interview</b>	11th September 2020
<b>Location of interview</b>	Remote
<b>Name of interviewee</b>	Adam Hassan
<b>Name of interviewer</b>	Nicole Redfern
<b>Length of interview</b>	00:43:11
<b>File format, storage format</b>	WAV, hosted on Soundcloud. Digital copy obtainable from DDE.

**Tags:**

Egypt ; Education ; First Generation Story ; Language ; Language Learning ; Diversity ; Identity ; Okehampton

**Interviewee's wishes regarding use of interview**

None.

**Interviewer's notes / any issues on recording**

[00:38:03] - clattering noise as Adam drops his pen. Minimal disruption.

**Linked objects/photographs.**

Adam begins the interview by referencing the Egyptian Flag on his bedroom wall.

**Key themes and topics covered in the interview**

Theme / topic	Timecode on recording
The Egyptian flag	[00:00:42 - 00:02:25]
The differences between life in Egypt and in the UK	[00:02:41 - 00:06:25]
Difficulties (and tools to ease these) in moving from Egypt to the UK	[00:06:43 - 00:09:00]
Languages (English & Arabic)	[00:09:22 - 00:13:27]
First impressions of - and life in - Okehampton	[00:13:45 - 00:18:58]
Diversity	[00:19:22 - 00:21:21]
“Mixing in” and discussing Egyptian culture with new friends	[00:22:42 - 00:29:51]
Aspiration and wishes for the future	[00:30:11 - 00:35:45]
Lessons learned in (and personal changes from) moving from Egypt to the UK	[00:35:52 - 00:42:54]

**Interview highlights**

On adapting to new environments: “things take time and that’s the beauty about it, that it’s a slow process.” [00:42:04 - 00:42:10].

“I definitely feel like Okehampton's a part of my life now and I can say I've spent the time of me growing up in Okehampton, it's affected who I am.” [00:35:34 - 00:35:45].

“people bring interesting stories with them, you know, when they're from different places” [00:21:04 - 00:21:13].

## Interview summary

Adam Hassan is an A-Level student, who moved to Okehampton from Egypt around three years prior to this interview. He begins by talking about the Egyptian flag on his wall, explaining how it serves as “a visual reminder um of where I come from” [00:00:42 - 00:02:18]. He also asserts that he feels like he is “from here now” (“here” being Okehampton) [00:02:18 - 00:02:25].

Adam talks about being half English and the decision for he and his siblings to continue their studies in the UK, which he felt was “a good move for us, you know, especially [as] this year I’m applying to university.” [00:02:41 - 00:03:07]. He moves on to discuss how his life in Egypt contrasted to his experiences in Okehampton [00:03:07 - 00:06:25], including the differences in weather and climate [00:03:12 - 00:04:11], adapting to different conversational styles and social interactions [00:04:12 - 00:05:18], particularly noting the differences in body language in these communications (“in Egypt we’re quite gesture-y”) [00:04:58 - 00:05:18]. He talks also about how these differences made him think about his own cultural identity in a different way [00:05:18 - 00:06:25].

Adam goes on to discuss his transition to Okehampton College, in terms of finding new friends who were “really interested to find out” about his life and heritage [00:06:43 - 00:07:31]. But he also notes how tiring he found the process [00:07:31 - 00:07:56]. He concludes here by asserting that his transition to life in Okehampton was helped by resting a lot and being in contact with his family in Egypt [00:07:56 - 00:09:00].

He talks next about growing up in a bilingual (Arabic/English) household [00:09:22 - 00:09:35], and how it prepared him for their move to the UK, but also of the particular struggles of understanding local slang and “the way people put words together” [00:09:35 - 00:11:20]. Adam speak English most of the time now [00:11:38 - 00:11:49], but he also notes that he still uses Arabic at home, as well as in his Arabic A Level, because “some ideas... can only be expressed in Arabic” [00:11:49 - 00:12:21]. Adam notices particular differences in himself when he speaks English and Arabic [00:12:21 - 00:13:04], noting particularly that he feels he might “speak more passionately or... faster” in Arabic. He says that, now he lives in England, he enjoys speaking Arabic more as it seems “a bit exotic”, though this was the opposite when he lived in Egypt [00:13:04 - 00:13:27].

Adam recounts that the first thing he noticed upon moving to Okehampton was the grey sky [00:13:45 - 00:14:25]. He talks further about the atmosphere and fresh air in Devon, as opposed to the city he came from [00:14:25 - 00:14:57]. He then mentions the first few people he met, who have become his friends, and eased his transition into life in Okehampton. He reports that “they were really supportive. You know, um, they understood that I’m from a different place, and all the questions I had, they were really, you know, they would happily tell me about Okehampton.” [00:14:57 - 00:15:30]. Adam then talks about some of the practical differences between his homes in Egypt and Okehampton [00:15:30 - 00:16:11], including the use of different sides of the road for drivers and the difference in popular names (Omar as opposed to Sophie, for instance). He closes these thoughts by noting that he grew to like the colder climate of Okehampton because “you can style different outfits with jackets” [00:16:11 - 00:16:29].

Adam continues to talk more specifically about what he enjoys about living in Okehampton - specifically the green spaces and historical sites like Dartmoor and Okehampton Castle - which he notes as a difference between his current situation and his past city life [00:16:43 - 00:17:54]. But he then mentions how this lack of city infrastructure affects him, noting that “for someone who’s transitioning into adulthood, it can be a bit restrictive.” [00:17:54 - 00:18:22]. He talks about his hope to go to university somewhere where “there are more people” and where he can “experience different cultures” [00:18:22 - 00:18:45], before he briefly returns to capitulating his feelings about the surrounding area of Dartmoor [00:18:45 - 00:18:58].

Adam talks about what diversity means to him [00:19:22 - 00:19:39], and how he finds diversity in Okehampton in terms of age, but not necessarily culture [00:19:39 - 00:20:28]. He talks about how this differs from cities like London, and how he would like to see more diversity in his community, which is made up mainly of “people from Okehampton or... surrounding areas” [00:20:28 - 00:21:21].

## Interview summary

Adam mentions how having visited Devon in the past prepared him for his move [00:21:44 - 00:22:47], but also that “I felt like I need to, I need to kind of, um, mix in properly. Right? And when when I came, uh, into Okehampton with that in mind, actually, I found that people are more welcoming than I thought.” [00:22:42 - 00:23:17]. He felt that this welcome was helped by people his age being taught about different cultures and being interested by differences [00:23:17 - 00:23:50]. Then he talks of discussions about his culture, particularly about festivals [00:23:50 - 00:24:34], some of which he has shared with his friends from college (such as Ramadan) [00:24:44 - 00:26:18]. Next, Adam mentions features of his Egyptian heritage and culture that remain in his life in Okehampton [00:26:47 - 00:29:57]. These include his confidence in talking to and approaching people [00:26:57 - 00:29:51], meaning that he “had to personally get used to dialling it down. Um. But I think I am who I am and and people got used to that and um actually, I noticed that they were fine with it after a while.” [00:29:30 - 00:29:51].

Adam describes the opportunities he has taken over the 2020 lockdown period [00:30:11 - 00:31:18], including a work experience programme with JP Morgan, and becoming Head Boy of his college. In talking about the process of becoming Head Boy, Adam expresses his desire to encourage aspiration in his peers and the disparity of support for students and private schools and those at comprehensives like Okehampton College [00:31:18 - 00:33:24].

In discussing his own future, Adam expresses a wish to go into finance and banking after gaining a degree in computer science and maths [00:33:34 - 00:33:46] and how his love of maths, like his essential morals and views, have remained consistent despite his move from Egypt to the UK [00:33:46 - 00:34:30]. Adam notes that, if he were to go away to university as planned, he would still follow the “family orientated” tradition of his Egyptian heritage by visiting his family in Okehampton regularly [00:34:41 - 00:34:56], and his worries about another big move, stating that “I guess it’s round two for me. I’ve done it before I can do it again.” [00:34:56 - 00:35:45].

In thinking about how the move to Okehampton has changed him as a person, Adam asserts that “my English accent’s, improved loads” [00:35:52 - 00:36:02] and is more “open to different ideas” and challenges from peers who might disagree with him [00:36:02 - 00:36:37]. He also talks about sharing a joy of learning and a sense of community in Okehampton [00:36:37 - 00:37:12]. Adam then talks about the things he thinks he will miss most at university, including his family, being so close to the town centre, and Dartmoor’s wildlife (particularly swimming in Meldon Reservoir) [00:37:30 - 00:38:29]. Although he does mention the difficulty of being an hour’s bus ride away from the nearest city centre, while also being only an hour’s bus ride away from a beach [00:38:42 - 00:39:24].

Here Adam leaves a message to future listeners, which encourages them to “be open to people from different places” and to learn from them [00:39:47 - 00:40:50]. He places particular emphasis on learning and expanding knowledge, and expresses the wish to have done “more of that when I was back at home” [00:40:14 - 00:40:40]. To his younger self, Adam advises that there is no rush, and to adapt slowly to new environments, even though moving will be a different experience [00:41:08 - 00:41:54]. He talks of the hope of coming back from university with new knowledge [00:41:54 - 00:42:04], and enjoys looking back on his younger self through the lens of his younger siblings’ development [00:42:13 - 00:42:54].