

## **The Houghtons settle into Hertford life, with a South African identity.**

*How did you settle into Hertford?*

Brigitte:

It takes a lot of guts to leave a country, it really does, you are upheaving your whole life – everything changes. So, you've got to throw yourself into society if you want to enjoy living there. And the first thing I did was I went to a PTA meeting, and my husband said to me "Sit on your hands, you're not going to nominate yourself for anything." I walked out of that meeting as the secretary, and the next year I was the treasurer, and next year I was the chair. I also volunteered with Hertford town council, just to build up some experience within the country. And I made a lot of friends doing that as well which was good, because that's one thing that you lose completely when you move country is your network.

Danielle:

I'm part of Herts Canoe Club, and that's great because I get to meet different people of all different ages, background and stuff, so that's great for building a network. It's introduced me to a lot of the friends that I have now.

*Do you feel South African or British?*

I went to uni, I work in Hertfordshire county council now, so my life would have been completely different if I'd stayed there and I would have sounded like "this" [In South African accent]. People used to take the mick out of my accent, I think that's why it changed so quickly, it changed within a year of me being here.

Brigitte:

I must say, I've had a couple of issues with people, and I found stuff that people said about me before I started "Oh gosh, I've got to listen to that accent" that kind of thing. When we did go back to South Africa a couple of times, people would comment "Ooh, listen to you all posh".

David:

I get called English when I go to South Africa, and South African when I'm in England. But I think Hertford has embraced us.

Brigitte:

We were just accepted. A lot of people say "Oh, the English are not very friendly, they don't welcome you", well, we haven't had that experience. My attitude is I'm moving to your country, I need to adopt your ways and adapt my ways to your ways.

Danielle:

I think my mannerisms change when I'm at home compared to my friends, like I call a tea towel a luffy, and I'll speak a bit of Afrikaans and stuff every now and then. But when I'm with my friends, I'm very English. So, it's like a dual personality almost.

Brigitte:

So, we've brought in some of our ways but we've adapted to the country because we are living here, and if it's good enough to live in its good enough to adapt to their ways. But a landmark in my life is 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013 I became a British citizen. To me it was as big a day as my wedding day. Then we had a citizenship party at home, union flags all over the place and things.

Danielle:

It's a bit of a weird one for me because I'd say you obviously want to be part of society and kind of assimilate into their culture, you shouldn't feel like you should lose yourself. Because I've been here for so long I kind of consider myself English now. I do feel that I'm missing a part of who I used to be as well. So, I'd say if you are a family unit and stuff make sure you keep the culture in your house and talk about things, bring up history in your family, because otherwise it's so easy to forget it. Be who you are and remember that.