

Muslim Communities in the UK Historical Background



Woking Mosque

ROOTS OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE UK

Lascars



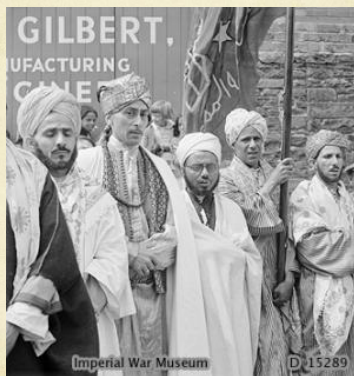
Ship's crew



Bute Town



1943: Cardiff mosque re-dedication after being bombed in Blitz, 1940



<http://www.ww2talk.com/forum/united-kingdom/23451-germans-bombed-our-mosque-butetown-cardiff.html>

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Photo: Bert Hardy: inside of Butetown mosque. Published in *Down the Bay: Picture Post, Humanist Photography and Images of 1950s Cardiff*

Choudry Qasim Ali



SOURCE: 'Here to Stay: Bradford's South Asian Communities' (Bradford: Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, 1994)



BHRC - bus driver



SOURCE: 'Here to Stay: Bradford's South Asian Communities' (Bradford: Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, 1994)

Bus conductor



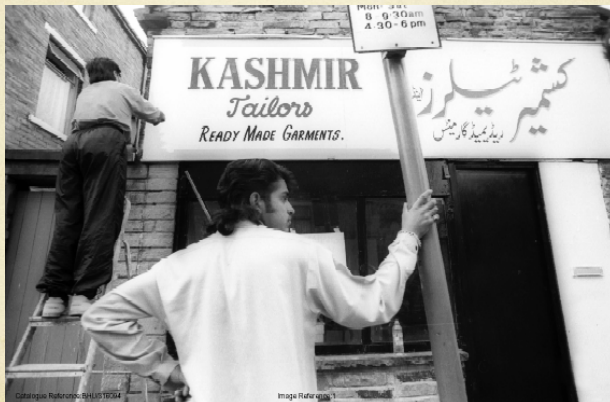


SOURCE: 'Here to Stay: Bradford's South Asian Communities' (Bradford: Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, 1994)



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Kashmir Tailors Bradford



SOURCE: 'Here to Stay: Bradford's South Asian Communities' (Bradford: Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, 1994)

Cricket supporters



SOURCE: 'Here to Stay: Bradford's South Asian Communities' (Bradford: Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, 1994)

Case studies

- The regional studies draw from work by Sophie Gilliat-Ray ('Muslims in Britain'), denoted SGR in slide notes. Other related studies include work by Richard Lawless (cited by Gilliat-Ray), Fred Halliday and Yvonne Howard-Bunt.
- Other findings are drawn from Gary Bunt's research.

Origins of Muslims in UK

From the 19th century, Muslim communities existed in several ports:

CARDIFF

LIVERPOOL

LONDON

SOUTH SHIELDS, TYNESIDE

SCOTLAND: GLASGOW, ABERDEEN, DUMBARTON

SOUTH SHIELDS

- Mainly Arab (Yemeni) and Somali seafarers
- Settlers post WWI + boarding houses (with communal prayer room)
- 1928 halal slaughter
- Funeral rites 1916 on
- Mecca pilgrimages
- Shaykh Abdullah Ali al-Hakim influence 1936 on

SOUTH SHIELDS II

- Community faces pressures and abuse
- Concern re relationships re Arabs and local women
- Tariqah Sufi order from Yemen established by al-Hakimi (also in Cardiff, Hull, Liverpool) promotes religious festivals; al-Hakimi works with councillors, etc. seen by some as 'head of Muslim community'
- Yemeni political conflicts spill onto streets of Cardiff and Tyneside.

CARDIFF

- Community from late 19th century
- Boarding houses owned by Yemenis
- 1920s/30s Butetown (Tiger Bay) significance.
- 1900 – 5,000 Arab seamen in Cardiff?
- WWI – demand for maritime labour increases
- Prejudice also emerged – anti-Arab, racist.
- Post WWI 1919 race riots in Cardiff

CARDIFF II

- Increased unemployment 1919 on
- Some people repatriated.
- Concerns re Arab-‘local’ women relationships
- Al-Hakimi lives in Cardiff after 1938
- By 1936, there were 6 mosques linked to boarding houses

CARDIFF III

- 1938 Peel Street houses purchased.
- Becomes Nur al-Islam Mosque
- Post WWI al-Hakimi published Al-Salam Arabic newspaper
- Yemen tensions on Cardiff streets
- Al-Hakimi leaves 1952; Deputy Hassan Ismail, followed by adoptive son Shaikh Said.



Quilliam

- In Liverpool, Abdullah (William) Quilliam encouraged da'wa missionary work, following the foundation in 1889 of a mosque, Muslim Institute and Children's Home – which declined after he left Britain in 1908.
- [Abdullah Quilliam website](#)

Woking Mosque

- In 1889, an Indian funded purpose built mosque and Institute were constructed in Woking, Surrey.
- The mosque is still used today.
- [Shah Jahan Mosque](#)

SCHOLARS AND INFLUENCES



Baron Headley



Abdullah William Quilliam



Marmaduke Pickthall



Abdullah Yusuf Ali

PIONEERS

- Textile mills between WWII attract former seamen/dock workers
- WWII: armament factories – substantial work

Origins of Muslims in UK

- Communities centred around Indian and Arab sailors – with strong colonial links
- There were also Muslims studying and living elsewhere in Britain – and a number of converts

Mosques

- Early communities may not have had a central place for prayer (especially important for Friday prayer)
- Few communities had an imam to lead prayer.
- The history of communities' development shows a growing number of converted structures becoming mosques, or purpose built mosques being constructed.

Origins of Muslims in UK

- Majority links post World War Two immigration
- 1950s to 1960s, primarily British Commonwealth
- A significant proportion of 2 million ++ immigrants to Britain

ORIGINS

- BANGLADESH (EAST PAKISTAN) – Sylhet
- PAKISTAN – Mirpur (especially after 1960 flooding of Mangla dam), Campbellpur district (Chhachh people); Jhellum, Lyallpur, Rawalpindi
- HEADING FOR INDUSTRIAL CITIES (BRADFORD, MANCHESTER, BIRMINGHAM. LEICESTER)

OTHER MIGRATION PATTERNS

FROM NUMEROUS OTHER LOCATIONS:

- Turkish Cypriots (especially in London);
- West Indies (Trinidad, Guyana, Tobago);
- Asians from East Africa (some from Uganda were Muslim, with knowledge of Gujrati);
- Asylum seekers: Algeria, Bosnia, Somalia, Kurdistan

Legislation

- Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 gave conditions for entry
- 1971 legislation became tighter
- As legislation became rumoured, more women and children migrated.

Muslim migrants

- 'pioneers': young single males
- Work, save, seek to buy property in places of origin
- Pioneers + descendants =

BASIS OF U.K. MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Population Issues

	TOTAL	% BORN IN BRITAIN
1951	5,000	-
1961	24,000	1.2
1971	170,000	23.5
1981	360,000	37.5
1991	640,000	47.0
2001	1,029,811	46.0

Table: Number of Britons of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent, and percentage born in Britain, 1951-2001. Source: Lewis, 1994, Census 2001.

REPRODUCED FROM S. GILLIAT-RAY, 'MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN' 47

Why stay?

- ☐ Rights of residence
- ☐ Acquisition of property and businesses
- ☐ Economic opportunities or security
- ☐ Alienation from origins
- ☐ Time
- ☐ Shifting cultural patterns

Why stay? II

- ☐ Crises: wars, class-clan conflicts
- ☐ Political shifts
- ☐ Networks: family, patronage
- ☐ 'British' education

Identity issues

- ☐ Individual
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Community
- ☐ National

Identity issues II

- ☐ Preservation of 'Islam'?
- ☐ Preservation of a specific interpretation(s)?
- ☐ Cultural and traditional factors
- ☐ Access to 'Islamic knowledge' – precedent, practices, levels of education

Reactions

- 'Walls and barriers'
 - Around interpretations of Islam
 - Fear: assimilation and loss of identity
 - Fear: informs decision making processes
- + reactions to UK circumstances