

Hidden Heritages Cambridgeshire

"A family album"









The project is led by Hadithi C.I.C, and made possible through The National Lottery Heritage Fund, our thanks to National Lottery players. It was supported by Cambridgeshire Archives, Cambridge City Council and the Museum of Cambridge.

Visit the back of this album for our contact details and information on how to find out more.

Hidden Heritages Cambridgeshire Cross-generational connections through memories



Dr. Maya Parmar

Hadithi C.I.C, a social enterprise, was launched in January 2022. Its mission? To reveal and highlight stories often obscured. We're particularly interested in narratives from and about the margins. Hadithi is Swahili for 'story'.

It is from here that Hidden Heritages Cambridgeshire was conceived. Made possible through The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Hidden Heritages Cambridgeshire is an intergenerational oral history project, with diverse South Asian communities in Cambridgeshire.

It commemorates two 2022 anniversaries: the 50th anniversary of South Asian expulsion from Uganda, and the 75th anniversary of partition and independence.

Hidden Heritages Cambridgeshire trained young people in oral history techniques, empowering them to collect and preserve memories from community elders, on the themes of belonging, identity and migration.

What did we do?

We trained up participants from a range of South Asian backgrounds, in Cambridgeshire, aged 15–25 years old, in oral history.

Through three days of intensive oral history training, alongside a mentorship programme, we empowered these young people to research and conduct oral history interviews with community members, and then curate what they collected. Through this process they captured, explored and preserved precious memories around South Asian heritage, before they were lost.

We then produced this 'family album' keepsake, as well as a short film, which were launched during the project Community and Launch Event, in December 2022. That event took place as part of Cambridge's Mill Road Winter Fair.

These oral histories are deposited with Cambridgeshire Archives, permanently.

Why did we do it?

We believe that Hidden Heritages Cambridgeshire reveals and captures important marginal histories of migration that are quickly disappearing. We don't want to lose these stories, and believe they should be preserved and widely shared.

At the same time, we wanted to skill up South Asian young people in oral history techniques. The training helped forge lifelong skills, empowering the participants to see themselves as active historians, whilst exploring community and personal heritage.

Finally, we hope that the project creates bonds between generations, and between trainee participants, increasing wellbeing.

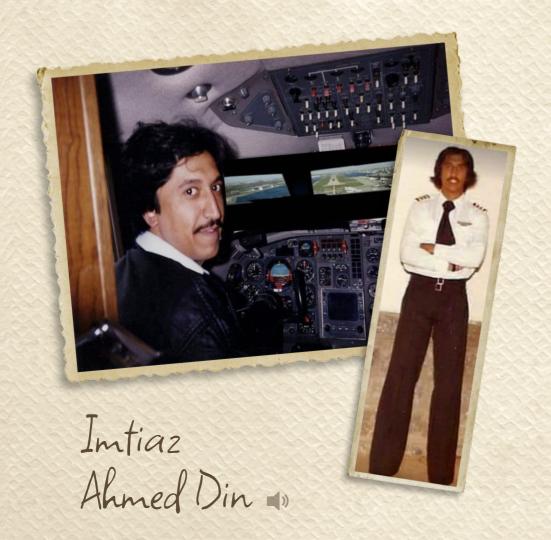
What is this 'Family Album'?

On the following pages you will find pictures from and of most of our participants, those who have been interviewed and those who have been trained to conduct the interviews. You'll also find excerpt quotations from interviews, as well as anonymised quotations from the trainees about their experience on the project. By bringing together our work in a 'family album', we've crafted a space for project participation to creatively coalesce. Enjoy!

Maya Parmar



My father always used to say that you should take
the best of each culture — you should leave the things
that hold you back and aren't progressive, but you
should hang onto the things that are good, so he
always encouraged us to take from the culture here,
and whatever was good about it, and to respect the
culture here as well, but also to hang onto the good
things about your own culture or religion.



Kenya is the country of my birth, America has been the country of my education,
England is the country of my residence. England has given me a lot. So why should I be in this country and fly the flag of another?



The other one was actual stone throwing and threats. And that was Surinder, as I say my friend. As a Sikh, he actually stood out because he wore a turban. Our school uniform was actually a green hat, a cap. [...] They used to pick on him and throw stones and snowballs, to try and knock it off. They succeeded every now and then.

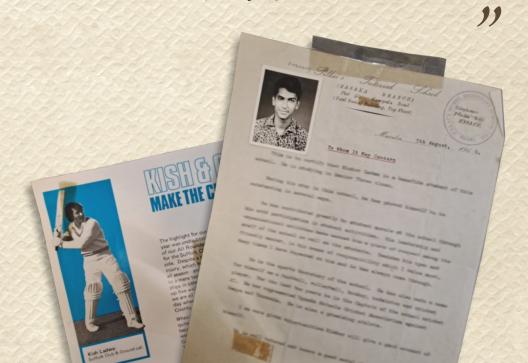


Rasik Kotecha 🖜

Overall [we have] no regrets, only thing we missed was the weather in Kenya. [The] weather was perfect throughout the year and we never talked about the weather in Kenya because it was the same every day of the year.

Kishor Ladwa 🖜

Initially when we came there was a counsellor called Charles Swift, he was the main guy who insisted on welcoming the fifty Ugandan families to settle here [in Peterborough]. When he did that there was a lot of opposition: "immigrants are coming" [...] but he was so determined to help us and get everybody sorted, give us accommodation. There was a lot of press, people demonstrating and also he had problem[s] at his home as well. He did help fifty Ugandan families to settle here.



Julius Lipner =>

The two of us were on our own, my wife and I, and then when the children came along, we had to forge, carve out, our own lives [here].

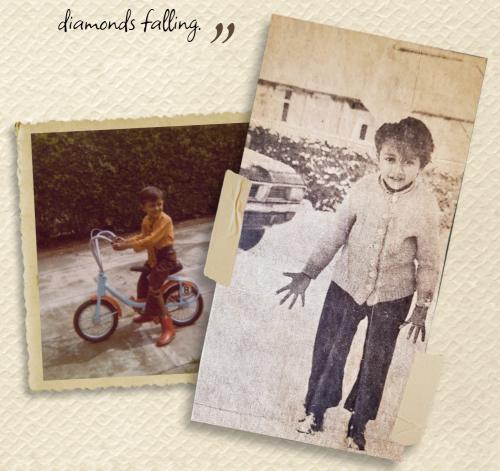
India needed and deserved Independence. The country needs to be free to develop [...] My father saw that and supported it. [...] It was not violent, but it was just a strong protest for Independence, which I think was a good thing.

Rizwan Rahemtulla =>

Oh, my goodness. Seeing snow for the first time was just amazing. It was like a dream — almost like "what's this white stuff falling from the sky?"

I had never seen it, never seen it at all.

And it was almost, well, wow, these are like



Meet our trainees

These are our young-people participants, who undertook the oral history training course, and conducted the oral history interviews.



I felt like I did something on this project.

I study a whole unit on public history at university, but what I have done on Hidden Heritages is what I want to tell people about. I feel much more confident.

Oral history trainee and interviewer, Anon

I guess for me what was really lovely in both the interviews I conducted is that the interviewees spoke about being friends and having connections with other South Asians despite their differences. And also a sense of interfaith communities. I feel like throughout this whole process I've also tapped into such a sense of community. I've made friends and have stayed in contact with my interviewees.

Oral history trainee and interviewer, Anon









At the very end of my interview, the interviewee thanked me for giving him the opportunity to reflect on his life and how his South Asian heritage has played such a huge role in it. This was a precious moment for me as it was one of my goals.

Oral history trainee and interviewer, Anon





Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to participate in this project. It has been an enriching experience and I'm very grateful. Maya is a wonderful mentor and has been so kind to me for the duration of this project.

Oral history trainee and interviewer, Anon

Acknowledgments

Hidden Heritages Cambridgeshire was made possible through The National Lottery Heritage Fund. We are grateful to them and to National Lottery players.

We'd like to extend our thanks to Cambridgeshire Archives, Cambridge City Council, the Museum of Cambridge, as well as Rib Davis (our oral history expert).

Finally, if it wasn't for our wonderful participants, featured in this album, this project would not have been possible. Thank you for taking part, and helping us to explore, capture and preserve these valuable forms of heritage.

Want to find out more or contact us?

You can get in touch through hello@hadithi.co.uk. Alternatively, visit the Hidden Heritages website or Hadithi C.I.C. Follow us on Twitter @hadithistories and on Instagram hadithi.stories for updates.







