The UK and India
A partnership for research
The **Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)** supports world-class research that furthers our understanding of human culture and creativity. It supports research and postgraduate training in a wide range of subject areas, from ancient history and heritage science to modern dance and digital content. Research into these areas helps us to interpret our experiences, probe our identities, interrogate our cultural assumptions and understand our historical, social, economic and political context. It adds to the economic success of the UK, through its contributions to the knowledge economy and innovation agenda. The research we fund can lead to improvements in social and intellectual capital, community identity, learning skills, technological evolution and the quality of life of the nation. For further information, please go to: [www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk)

**Research Councils UK (RCUK)** is the strategic partnership of the UK’s seven Research Councils who annually invest around £3 billion in research. We support excellent research, as judged by peer review, that has an impact on the growth, prosperity and wellbeing of the UK. To maintain the UK’s global research position we offer a diverse range of funding opportunities, foster international collaborations and provide access to the best facilities and infrastructure around the world. We also support the training and career development of researchers and work with them to inspire young people and engage the wider public with research. To maximise the impact of research on economic growth and societal wellbeing we work in partnership with other research funders including the Technology Strategy Board, the UK Higher Education funding bodies, business, government, and charitable organisations.

[www.rcuk.ac.uk](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk)
Research is quickly becoming the cornerstone of many blossoming UK-India partnerships. Our governments have jointly committed more than £90 million to research collaborations in the last 3 years. It is important that we recognise the potential of the arts and humanities in this growing endeavour. As this booklet demonstrates, some of the best minds from our great universities, cultural organisations and creative sectors have worked together for many years. These collaborations have produced—and will continue to produce—new ideas, reflections and thought-provoking information that can only serve to benefit both countries.

Sir James Bevan KCMG
British High Commissioner

Introduction

The UK and India are bound by deep and common bonds—historical, social, economic and cultural. Our histories are entwined in ways that we are still uncovering. Many UK citizens are of Indian heritage, contributing hugely to our communities and our society.

Research has a key role to play in enabling our two countries to forge a new and lasting relationship based on friendship, understanding, mutual respect and common interests.

As a major emerging economy, India is expanding its higher education sector and developing world-class research and training institutes. As global research leaders both countries have much to gain from closer collaboration and widening opportunities for their researchers.

There is a growing recognition in both countries too that the arts and humanities, as well as generating cultural and economic wealth, enhance our quality of life and that we have valuable lessons to learn from each other about how they do this.

It’s often said that modern research is global; it should also be said that its future is collaborative. Researchers in India and the UK working together have so much to learn from each other in understanding the shared parts of our history and culture and realising their potential. I look forward to building on the excellent projects featured here, cementing relationships and developing joint endeavours.

Professor Rick Rylance
CEO of the Arts and Humanities Research Council

Hunterwali ki Beti (Daughter of Woman with the Whip, 1943)
The AHRC and India

The Arts and Humanities Research Council works closely with Research Councils UK to build partnerships with Indian research organisations and increase international research mobility between our two countries.

The AHRC also works directly with Indian cultural organisations to explore our shared pasts and understand the mutual benefits to be gained from enabling researchers to work together in the present. The UK and India’s rich, varied and shared past has left a legacy of familiarity and mutual understanding – from similar university settings to shared legal frameworks.

As the examples in this publication show, AHRC-funded research reflects a small but important part of this shared history and these mutual interactions – from nineteenth century literature to the First World War, from post-War immigration to the Southall of today; it uncovers new perspectives – on Indian temple architecture, for example, classical music, or the Indian films of the 1920s and ‘30s; and it tells us about the world we live in - how religious culture is transmitted from generation to generation, for example, or how children make music.

These are subjects that reflect and enrich our common but different experiences, our entwined histories, as well as our shared future.

RCUK India

RCUK India was launched in October 2008 as a representative office for the UK’s seven Research Councils, to enable the best researchers in the UK and India to develop high-quality and high-impact research partnerships. The AHRC is keen to develop and build on positive, sustainable and influential relationships in India. Working on behalf of AHRC, RCUK India helps facilitate these relationships with an aim to ensure that the two countries continue to benefit from collaborative activities.

Partnerships

Partnerships enable organisations to achieve more together than they would working on their own, and this is never more true than when working across national borders.

AHRC has joined forces with diverse organisations including the British Library, National Library of India and HE Cell Bangalore to organise lively and successful workshops on diverse topics, including climate change records and early Bengali books. The different partners each bought something unique – access to records, contacts, new perspectives and insights – to discussions.

In 2010, AHRC and RCUK India worked with the India Foundation of the Arts on a small project to understand the arts and humanities landscape in India. While the outcomes from this could only ever give the briefest of oversights of the rich and varied terrain in India, the report highlighted the very wide range of high quality organisations working in the arts and humanities in India across a broad disciplinary base. To read the report, please go to:

www.rcuk.ac.uk/international/Offices/OfficeinIndia/landscape/Pages/Arts.aspx
Impact

The UK and India share a commitment to ensuring that research touches people’s lives in a real and meaningful way. UK-India collaborations have done this in a range of ways; for example, the Beyond the Frame project involved researchers from the UK (The Open University and the British Library, London) working with the National Archives of India and British Council India on a variety of activities with wide outreach. The research project explored the significance of South Asian’s impact on British life and led to a touring exhibition, workshops with school children, and public lectures at seven locations across India.

Other instances of impact abound in the examples given in this publication – through exhibitions in museums and galleries, concerts, books, films, but much more broadly, through the direct engagement of people and their communities with research and researchers.

The AHRC also supports a wide range of research on the creative industries, which are a crucial part of both the UK and India’s economy. There is significant potential for exploring the mutual priorities and exciting research possibilities in this area.

Early career collaborations

The AHRC believes that the links made early on in a researcher’s career can have a huge impact – both in terms of the skills learnt, but also in the new and exciting ideas researchers are exposed to. For this reason, the AHRC has an International Placement Scheme to support and encourage researchers embarking on research careers to take short-term fellowships at overseas organisations.

AHRC has built a relationship with the Sarai Research Programme within the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. From autumn 2012 we will fund a number of early career scholars to travel there every year to work on diverse topics such as moving image art, sign language poetry in Indian film, curatorial practice, public libraries and cultural change and colonial law. The hope is to extend and broaden the range of opportunities for early career researchers from both countries in the future.

Further information

We hope you enjoy reading about the AHRC-funded projects outlined in this publication. If you would like further information on anything featured here, please contact Pippa Craggs on p.craggs@ahrc.ac.uk
Sikh identity and the formation and transmission of ‘Sikhism’ in Britain

Jasjit Singh University of Leeds

How is Sikhism transmitted among young adults between the ages of 18 and 30?

This project examines the growth of religious transmission events for young Sikhs – such as youth camps and university Sikh societies – and considers them in the context of both traditional and new methods, particularly religious institutions and the internet.

A collaboration between the Religion and Society programme and BECAS (the British Educational and Cultural Association of Sikhs), the project has encouraged more than 600 young Sikhs to engage with the research through an online survey.

Further information:
www.leeds.ac.uk/sikhs

“Finally, someone has created a survey for modern Sikhs. I thank the University of Leeds.”

Online survey respondent

BECAS are pleased to have worked in conjunction with Leeds University to sponsor Jasjit Singh. The research and its findings will be invaluable in increasing awareness of the religious lives of young British Sikhs and in understanding how they engage with their religion and culture.

Mr Trilochan Singh Duggal
President of BECAS (British Educational and Cultural Association of Sikhs)

Jaina Law and the Jaina Community in India and Britain

Werner Menski SOAS

The main aim of the project was to reconstruct the social history of Jaina law and the emergence of Jainism as a ‘world religion’ in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Using court cases, biographies, community histories and interviews with contemporary community leaders both in India and the UK, the aim was to contribute to better understanding of both the socio-legal position of the Jainas in India and abroad, and of how they cultivated their own sense of identity. The project helped consolidate a minority subject which has recently made great advances and continues to attract great interest globally.

For further information:
www.soas.ac.uk/jainastudies

“The SOAS project on Jaina Law helped ‘insiders’ to Jainism, its advocates and those advancing its cause, to attest their views/arguments with independent research. The project also facilitates meaningful understanding of present legal contests and dialogues for ‘outsiders’ by offering historical and well juxtaposed socio-legal perspectives.”

Rishabh Sancheti
Advocate, Supreme Court of India
The public representation of a religion called Hinduism: postcolonial patterns in India, Britain and the US

John Zavos University of Manchester

Linking sociology, religious studies, ethnography, cultural studies and politics, this project explores the ways in which Hindu traditions and communities have been represented as ‘religious’ in modern public environments – initially in India, the US and the UK, but increasingly in other parts of the world too. Research explores key areas such as the relationship between Hinduism in the diaspora and at ‘home’, and the location of Hindu nationalism in relation to Hinduism more broadly.

Professor Pralay Kanungo Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

“This project provided an excellent intellectual platform to researchers on Hinduism across continents, gave an impetus to the unfolding of new ideas, ignited inter-disciplinary dialogue, set the agenda for future research and collaboration, and produced an outstanding volume at the end. In fact, scholars adore it as a model project.”

Image: Professor Raymond Brady Williams
Making Britain: South Asian visions of home and abroad, 1870-1950
Susheila Nasta The Open University

Led by the The Open University, in collaboration with the University of Oxford and King’s College London, Making Britain was an interdisciplinary research project which examined the formative contributions South Asians made to Britain’s literary, political and cultural life in the period 1870–1950. Supported by a number of distinguished partners including the British Library, London, the project examined how South Asians positioned themselves within British society and culture, and explored the significance of their impact on British life. The project held a number of events during its initial three-year phase, including workshops, a major international conference and two exhibitions.

Beyond the frame:
India in Britain, 1858-1950
Susheila Nasta The Open University, with the British Library and the World Collections Programme

Beyond the Frame celebrated the long and often overlooked history of the Indian presence in Britain. It built on extensive archival research deriving from the 3-year Making Britain project (see above). Designed for an Indian audience, Beyond the Frame curated an exhibition which launched at the British Council’s Delhi office and the National Archives of India in November 2011. It subsequently toured to British Council’s Kolkata offices and Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad and Chennai, attracting nearly 20,000 visitors in all and generating extensive press coverage.

“Thank you for recording this information on a history that is little understood.”
Nivedita Velamati FCO research analyst in the UK

“The Asians in Britain website and the database should be required reading for anyone joining the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s South Asia team.”
Sanjay Wadvani British Deputy High Commissioner, Eastern India

A school workshop in Chennai.

Further information: www.open.ac.uk/Arts/south-asians-making-britain
India Arrived: seeing and being in Britain, 1870-1914: an examination of the definitive phases and key moments of early Indian migration to Britain

Elleke Boehmer University of Oxford

Tracing a cultural and literary history of the first major phase of Indian migration to Britain, the book *India Arrived: Seeing and Being in Britain, 1870-1914* builds on the path-breaking archival research carried out through the 2007-10 AHRC-funded ‘Making Britain’ project (see left). The study explores the formation of Britain’s first diasporic communities and the Indian-British literary and cross-cultural collaborations, exchanges and appropriations that took place between two different but increasingly interdependent cultures. *India Arrived* asks how the cosmopolitan vision of the writers and intellectuals of this period anticipated the development of migrant South Asian and multicultural identities in Britain later in the twentieth century.

Further information: www.english.ox.ac.uk/about-faculty/faculty-members/postcolonial-and-world-literatures/boehmer-professor-elleke

The Bengal diaspora: Bengali Muslim settlers in South Asia and Britain

Joya Chatterji Cambridge University

The research team worked with Bengali communities in the United Kingdom as well as the Bengal Delta, asking who these migrants were, where they came from, and in what ways their experience of integration has been shaped by their different locations. Using archival sources, oral and life history interviews, family trees, and photographic material they explored the communities’ patterns of movement and homemaking. Launching a website and education pack – including materials for teachers and schoolchildren undertaking Key Stage 3 – with the Runnymede Trust, they have encouraged young people to engage with their family histories, and the experiences of their parents and grandparents, as well as their local community and broader society.

Further information: www.banglastories.org

The Bengal Diaspora research has had an enormous impact on young people from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds right across the UK. The project led to the development of the Banglastories website (www.banglastories.org) the aim of which was to bring these stories of migration, history, movement and identity outside the academy and into the classrooms of the next generation of British schoolchildren.

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard
Senior Research & Policy Analyst, Education, Runnymede Trust
The Southall story: a cultural history of Britain’s ‘Little India’ since 1979

Jerri Daboo University of Exeter

This project investigates how forms of culture and performance have emerged from Southall – ‘Britain’s “Little India”’ – through music, dance, film, theatre, poetry and visual arts. Alongside this, the project is recording the history of the activist movements that grew up in Southall in response to events such as the 1979 protests against the National Front and the death of Blair Peach. The project worked with local artists and partner organisations such as the Royal Geographical Society and the Dominion Centre in Southall, and has developed oral history projects in a local school as well as with community focus groups, a special programme on the project broadcast on Desi Radio in Southall and a major exhibition at the Southbank Centre in London in 2010.

Further information: http://culturalhistoryofsouthall.wordpress.com

“The work being done has provided the Southall community with an un-biased platform to voice histories, experiences and concerns. The process has not only extracted useful information, but also allowed people to express themselves openly without being judged. This is invaluably nurturing, healing and transformational for the community.”

Kuljit Bhamra MBE musician and producer, and consultant on ‘The Southall Story Project’

The correspondence of Indian soldiers on the Western Front, 1914-1918

David Omissi University of Hull

This project reminds a wider public of the Indian Army’s involvement on the Western Front in the 1914–1918 war and that the soldiers’ experience was about more than front-line combat.

“Other people see paradise after death, and then only if their fate is good; but we, through the favour of God, have seen paradise [in France] with our living eyes... [The French] always speak the truth. There is neither treachery, nor theft, nor deceit, nor backbiting, nor slander amongst them. In short, we have never seen man, woman or child at strife with each other, nor have we seen anyone weeping.”

Santa Singh
Sikh cavalryman in France, writing home in December 1916

Examining Indian soldiers’ letters, written under conditions of military censorship in England and France, the project evaluated the soldiers’ experience of civilian Europe in wartime, and considered how this encounter may have affected their engagement with Indian values and with post-war India after demobilisation.
The Indian temple: production, place and patronage

Adam Hardy  Cardiff University

Temples dominated the landscape of India between the 7th and 13th centuries. Protected by kings and widely supported by endowments, temples were centres of religious life, socio-economic power and artistic production.

This project focussed on how the temples were designed and built, the king’s role as a patron of architecture and Sanskrit letters, and the social and political role of temples in medieval society.

Adam Hardy was subsequently commissioned by the Shree Kalyana Venkateshwara Hoysala Art Foundation to design a temple in the Hoysala style, a style that has not been practiced in over 700 years.

Adam also created a multimedia display for 'India: the Art of the Temple', an exhibition by the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum, held in Shanghai in 2010.

Further information:  www.prasada.org.uk
Liquid City: water, landscape and social formation in twenty-first century Mumbai

Matthew Gandy, UCL

This project explored the material and metaphorical dimensions to water and landscape in the city of Mumbai. It combined an analysis of the flow of water through the city with the making of a documentary film in collaboration with the Mumbai-based organisation Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action & Research (PUKAR). The project focuses on three themes: the cultural significance of water as symbol and feature of the urban landscape; the impact of colonial-era and post-colonial infrastructure on the landscape, morphology and culture of modern Mumbai; and the emphasis on water as a constituent element of the urban landscape.

Further information: http://matthewgandy.org

Beyond the gaze: collecting and displaying modern and contemporary South Asian art in the UK

Emilia Terracciano, supervisor Dr Deborah Swallow
The Courtauld Institute of Art and the Victoria & Albert Museum

Beyond the gaze is a project that looks at the ways in which modern and contemporary Indian and South Asian art has been collected and displayed, traded and received in the UK.

Student Emilia Terracciano spent time undertaking fieldwork and will have direct access to the physical collection and archive at the V&A, as well as fieldwork, in other public collections such as the British Museum, Bradford, Leicester, and Birmingham museums. Supervision by both academics and practitioners ensures Emilia is immersed in the theoretical, practical and institutional collecting and display issues. The V&A also benefits through the rigorous theoretical approach provided by Emilia, an approach that will lead to the first ever survey of modern and contemporary South Asian art in the UK.

‘Terribly sympathetic’ from the album The Realm of the Absurd (1917) by Gaganendranath Tagore. (V&A South Asian Collection).
Growing into music: a multicultural study of musical enculturation in oral traditions

Lucy Durán, Nicolas Magriel  SOAS

This three-year project explored how children acquire musical expertise in six specialist cultures of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, mostly through the medium of video. An archive of some 400 hours of unique video footage documents musical transmission and acquisition and highlights economic and social changes which threaten the survival of oral traditions. In India, the project focused on Hindustani classical music and on the folk music of the Manganiyars and Langas of Rajasthan, following children’s musical progress over the three years.

Further information: www.growingintomusic.co.uk

Fearless Nadia, the woman with the whip: stunt films and stars in pre-independence Bombay cinema

Rosie Thomas  University of Westminster

Fearless Nadia was the queen of the Indian stunt films, a swashbuckling, whip-cracking avenger who championed India’s independence and women’s rights. An AHRC grant allowed Rosie Thomas to spend two semesters researching a project on the Wadia Movietone movies of 1930s and 1940s Bombay which featured Fearless Nadia and much else besides.

Challenging the assumption that mythological and melodramatic social films dominated the pre-Independence era, this research has helped to restore to prominence the fun-filled, politically-charged and culturally hybrid stunt and fantasy films that were such a significant box-office and cultural force.

The research has also led directly on to Thomas’s current project, which explores the influence of the Arabian Nights on early Indian cinema and popular culture.

Further information: www.westminster.ac.uk/?a=46496
Tate encounters: black and Asian identities, Britishness and visual culture

Andrew Dewdney
London Southbank University with Tate Britain and University of the Arts, London.

Recognising that existing initiatives at Tate Britain were failing to attract a diverse audience that was representative of modern Britain, Professor Andrew Dewdney’s research team at the Tate focussed on how undergraduate students at London South Bank University with a migrant family background, encountered Tate Britain and its collections over a three-year period. Over 600 students from London South Bank University took part in the encounter and 15 sustained a two-year involvement documenting their thoughts and perspectives on Tate Britain, art and identity. The project used its findings to develop new curatorial and educational perspectives relevant to wider and more culturally diverse audiences, and provided a body of evidence for the wider museums and galleries sector.

Further information:
www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/tate-encounters

“Tate Encounters has had a considerable impact. It revealed how we understood government policies on cultural diversity, which research methodologies to use and about managing Tate’s programme and audience expectations. The terms ‘transculturalism’ and ‘transmigrational’ are gradually supplanting ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘globalised’ and we now see that diverse audiences means diverse modes of spectatorship. Most of all, the project reminded us how valuable it is for our own organisation to be the subject of enquiry and discussion.”

Nigel Llewellyn Head of Research, Tate


educational perspectives relevant to wider and more culturally diverse audiences, and provided a body of evidence for the wider museums and galleries sector.

Further information:
www.tate.org.uk/about/projects/tate-encounters

Maria Cinta Esmel Pamies, 'Identity Remix', Late-at-Tate, March 2009. Photograph Pablo Goikoetxea
Images – acknowledgements

Front Cover

1st row from left to right
Channi Singh – by Ammy Phull
Abandoned zamidari – courtesy of the LSE/Runnymede Trust/Bangla Stories
The University Machine, by Gaganendranath Tagore from the series 'Wry Thunderbolt' (1915). (Private collection.)
From home page of Making Britain's online database on Asian Britain

2nd row from left to right
Red hand – courtesy of the LSE/Runnymede Trust/Bangla Stories
William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore, courtesy of Elleke Boehmer
Sakar Khan Manganiyar and grandson in Hamira Rajasthan.
Photo – Nicolas Magriel

3rd row left to right
Southall Story Exhibition at Southbank Centre – photo by Ammy Phull
Photo – Professor Raymond Brady Williams
'Terribly sympathetic' from the album 'The Realm of the Absurd' (1917), by Gaganendranath Tagore. (V&A South Asian Collection.)
Thane, north of Bombay/Mumbai, 2006.
Photo – Matthew Gandy

4th row left to right
Children learning music from Muse Khan Langa teaching in Jodhpur Rajasthan. Photo by Nicolas Magriel
Dancer – by Ammy Phull
Anwara – courtesy of the LSE/Runnymede Trust/Bangla Stories
Children learning music from Gevar and Anwar Khan Manganiyars in Jaisalmer. Photo – Nicolas Magriel

Page 1
Picture of Sir James Bevan © All rights reserved by UK in India

Pages 2 and 3 from left to right
Launch of exhibition in Delhi – courtesy of Beyond the Frame
Heera jumping – by Ammy Phull
The University Machine, by Gaganendranath Tagore from the series 'Wry Thunderbolt' (1915). (V&A South Asian Collection.)
Abandoned zamidari – courtesy of the LSE/Runnymede Trust/Bangla Stories

Pages 4 and 5
Picture of Mr Trilochan Singh Duggal – courtesy of Mr Duggal
Picture of Rishabh Sancheti – courtesy of Mr Sancheti
Red hand – courtesy of the LSE/Runnymede Trust/Bangla Stories

Page 9
Courtesy of Professor Adam Hardy

Page 12
Dinajpur – Kantanagar Temple – courtesy of the LSE/Runnymede Trust/Bangla Stories
All other images as stated.