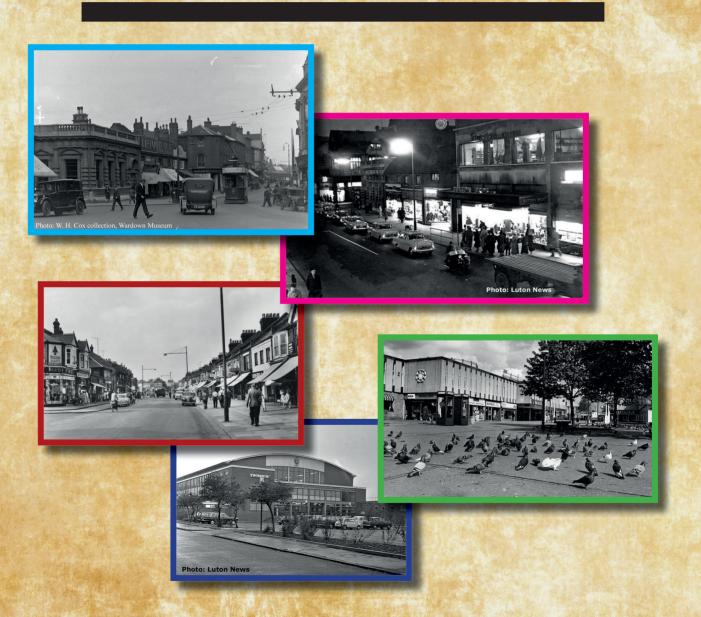


# Our Our Past Present





Presented by:
One Stop Advice & Training Centre

Supported by:







# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Trying to locate and use old images of Luton proved to be very difficult, however The Luton news have done a fantastic job of permitting us to use old imagery throughout the project, for which we are grateful to Luton News. We would like to further extend our thanks to the Luton Sixth Form College for locating individuals who they felt would benefit from working on the project as volunteers. Also the Luton Culture along with the Central Library who have contributed by supplying us with information which we were able to use for this project.

More importantly without the involvement and contribution from all the volunteers who took part in this project. We therefore would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals: Maria Gul, William Liddel, Tasnia Matin, Shahreen Khan, Umer Hussain, Samiyah Ali, Shumaila Rehman, Azra Thaker, Muhammad Hamza, Selina Khan, Kazim Ali, Imran Khan, Fiza Syed, Armaan Khan, Zaynab Shah, Fatima Asmat, Jamie Simpson and Sher Bano.

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Azra Jan
One Stop Advice & Training Centre







# "OUR PAST OUR PRESENT"

#### ABOUT LUTON

Luton is a large town in Bedfordshire, England, with a population of about 203,200. It is located 30 miles away from London.

Luton is home to the Luton Town Football Club, which is currently in League Two. The team's history includes several spells in the top flight of the English league, as well as a Football League Cup triumph in 1988. They play at Kenilworth Road stadium, which has been their home since 1905.





Luton has its very own airport, which opened in 1938 and is one of England's major airports. During the Second World War, it doubled as an RAF base.

To this day, Luton prides itself in being a multi-cultural town, home to the largest one day carnival in Europe. The Luton Carnival has traditionally been held on the Whitsun May bank holiday.

The town was also famous for hat-making, and a large Vauxhall Motors factory; the head office of Vauxhall Motors is still situated in the town. Car production at the plant began in 1905 and continued until 2002, where commercial vehicle production remains. This industry attracted many migrants, particularly those belonging to the first generation of Pakistani/Kashmiri heritage who to work at this factory.

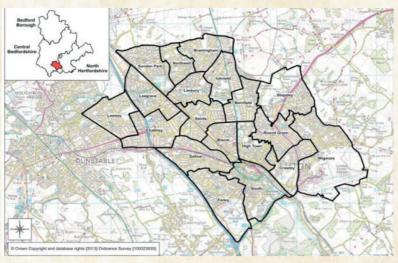






The Hat-making industry also attracted many people towards Luton and by 1930, the town was producing more than 70 million hats per year. A local venue which opened in 2004 called the Hat Factory is named in tribute to legacy of the industry.

## MAP OF LUTON



## LUTON POPULATION

2011 CENSUS POPULATION FIGURE FOR LUTON:	203,201
2001 Census	184,371
2010 Mid Year Estimate	196,173
2001-2011 Census % Change	+10.2%
Persons in Households	201,549
Persons in Communal Establishments	1 652

RESIDENT POPULATION	Luton	East of England	England & Wales
Population Density	46.9	3.1	3.7
Average Household Size			
Male Residents	50.2%	49.2%	49.2%
Female Residents	49.8%	50.8%	50.8%
Occupancy Rating <-2	5.6	1.4	2.3

Luton Borough Council statistics confirm that in the year 2011 the population stood at 203,201 people, with 30% of these people belonging to an Asian background.

ETHNICITY	% Luton
White	55%
Mixed	4%
Asian	30%
Black	10%
Other	2%

Of which 29,353 (14.4%) people belong to the Pakistani/Kashmiri background.

ETHNICITY – all residents	Number -	% Luton	% East of	% England and
	Luton		England	Wales
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/N. Irish/British	90,530	44.6%	85.3%	80.5%
White: Irish	6,126	3.0%	1.0%	0.9%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	198	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
White: Other White	14,225	7.0%	4.5%	4.4%
Mixed/multiple: White & Black Caribbean	3,831	1.9%	0.6%	0.8%
Mixed/multiple: White & Black African	915	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%
Mixed/multiple: White and Asian	1,805	0.9%	0.6%	0.6%
Mixed/multiple: Other Mixed	1,730	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	10,625	5.2%	1.5%	2.5%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	29,353	14.4%	1.1%	2.0%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	13,606	6.7%	0.6%	0.8%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	1,497	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	5,871	2.9%	1.0%	1.5%
Black: African	9,169	4.5%	1.2%	1.8%
Black: Caribbean	8,177	4.0%	0.6%	1.1%
Black: Other Black	2,563	1.3%	0.2%	0.5%
Other ethnic group: Arab	1,646	0.8%	0.2%	0.4%
Other ethnic group: Other	1,334	0.7%	0.3%	0.6%

As you can see from the statistics above, Luton is home to a large number of Pakistani/Kashmiri people.

## INTRODUCING OUR PAST OUR PRESENT

The Heritage project aims to capture memories from the first and second generation of Pakistani/Kashmiri people who entered the United Kingdom. We hope to focus and elaborate on Luton, a town that is known for its diversity. We aim to uncover and document memories to provide an information source for those conducting research and those interested in the history of the town.



## FACTS & FIGURES

In 2011, the overall population of the Pakistani/Kashmiri community in Luton was 29,353. UK is home to the largest Pakistani community in Europe, having approximately 1,174,983 British Pakistanis residing in the UK – about 1.8% of the total population. British Pakistanis are the second largest group of ethnic minority population and second largest sub group of British Asians.

#### SOME INFORMATION ABOUT PAKISTAN/KASHMIR



The administrative units of Pakistan consist of four provinces; these are Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. British Pakistanis are citizens of the UK, whose ancestral roots lie in Pakistan. People may either have been born in Pakistan and then migrated to the UK or are just of Pakistani descent.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir is a self-governing administrative division of Pakistan. The territory lies west of the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmir is often referred to as the disputed territory, because after the 1947 war in which Pakistan split from India the fate of a large part of Kashmir remained uncertain. Due to its predominantly Muslim population, people originating from Kashmir identify themselves as Pakistani's.

#### THE EARLY MIGRANTS

The first few Pakistanis arrived in the UK in the mid-nineteenth century. During this time, Pakistan came under the British Raj and it was alongside the British Indian Army that they served as soldiers. They served not only in Britain, but also other countries that came under the British Empire. However, following the Second World War, the breakup of the British Empire and the newfound independence of Pakistan, the number of Pakistani immigrants increased dramatically, especially during the 1950's and 1960's. Pakistani immigration was only easy in this time as Pakistan was a member of the Commonwealth.

In Britain, Pakistani immigrants were used to help resolve the problem of labour shortages that occurred after the war, especially in the steel and textile industries. In the 1960s, Pakistani's were being asked to migrate to the country as part of the National Health Service's programme of recruiting doctors.

Over the decades, the demographics for British Pakistanis have changed immensely. There were approximately only 10,000 Pakistanis living in Britain in the 1950s; however, since 2011, this number has gone up to 1.7 million and is still increasing. 90% of the British Pakistani community is Muslim, with a small number of 17,000 British Pakistani residents being Christian (2011). This makes up one of the largest overseas Pakistani Christian communities. As well as making up a large proportion of the population of England, British Pakistanis have also influenced British life with their contributions to society in political and cultural aspects.

Although, the 2001 census showed high rates of poverty amongst the community, evident progress has been made since then. The 2011 census shows that British Pakistanis belong to the groups having highest rates of home ownership in Britain. British Pakistanis also tend to be traditionally self-employed, mainly working in the transport industry or the retail sector of family run businesses.

#### SETTLEMENT

Following the Second World War, more and more Pakistani/Kashmiri immigrants started arriving in England and a majority settled down in places where industrial business were popular. Lancashire, Manchester and Bradford were well all known for their textile industry, while the West Midlands and Birmingham were doing well in automotive and engineering industries

About 70% of British Pakistanis belong to cities such as: Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Kotli and Mirpur in Azad Kashmir. Mass migration took place in 1960's, as there was a project known as Mangla Dam project, which was built on the farmland. It resulted in the loss of over 5000 homes. The project had links with the British Government, and as a result o around 5000 people were given settlement in the UK.

#### CULTURE

The Pakistani/Kashmiri culture is a very rich one. Many different languages are spoken throughout the country, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Saraiki, Balochi, Hindko, Barushaski and Balti to name a few. The style of dress along with many other factors varies from the traditional English dress. The Pakistani/Kashmiri cuisines are very popular in UK. They play an important role within the food industry and are liked by many people. The Pakistani cuisine is mixture of Indian, Afghan, Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Kashmiri foods.

#### **SPORTS**

Cricket is a sport which was mainly played in South Asian countries; however the expansion of the British Empire led to cricket being played overseas. Cricket is a popular sport played by Pakistanis/Kashmiri's, however though Hockey is the national sport of Pakistan.

#### TYPICAL FAMILY STRUCTURE

When immigration began, the normality of things was that the male member of the family would travel out to the UK, coming in the hope of a 'better future'; which would usually mean employment. The remaining family members would stay in Pakistan or Kashmir until the UK based family member was stable enough to support the rest of the family at which stage he would then invite the rest of the family to join him in the UK. Individuals from the Pakistani/ Kashmiri descent tend to belong to larger families however, over the decades; this has changed, as has the role of the average Pakistani man. Though he is still predominantly the breadwinner, he is no longer the only one as females are encouraged to seek an education, which will result in them having a respectable job in the future. The culture has evolved over the years and as a result the second and third generations are more focused on sustaining themselves in the country as they are now encouraged to seek an education.



### WHO WAS THE FIRST PAKISTANI/KASHMIRI PERSON TO ENTER THE UK

Immigration began long before the independence of Pakistan in 1947. Muslim immigrants from Azad Kashmir, Punjab, and Baluchistan as well as other parts of the subcontinent, arrived in the British Isles as early as the mid-seventeenth century. They arrived as employees of the East India Company, typically as Soldiers (lashkars) and sailors in British port cities. These immigrants were often the first Asians to be seen in British port cities and were initially perceived as indolent due to their reliance on Christian charities. Despite this, most early Pakistani immigrants married local white British women, because there were few South Asian women in Britain at the time. During the colonial era, Asians continued coming to Britain as seamen, traders, students, domestic workers, cricketers, political officials and visitors, and many of them settled in the region.

Many early Pakistanis came to the UK as scholars and studied at major British institutions, before later returning to British India. An example of such a person is Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. Jinnah came to the UK in 1892 and started an apprenticeship at Graham's Shipping and Trading Company. After completing his apprenticeship, Jinnah joined Lincoln's Inn where he trained as a barrister. At 19, Jinnah became the youngest person from the Indian subcontinent to be called to the bar in Britain, he later went on to establish Pakistan in 1947 as a separate entity.

### MEMORIES FROM VARIOUS GENERATIONS

We have managed to locate and interview individuals of Pakistani/Kashmiri descent in order to gain first-hand information on what life was like for them when they first arrived to Luton.

#### First Generation: Mr Khan - Luton Resident

Mr Khan – Arrived in UK in the late 60's having lived in Luton all his life, he would like to share his experiences with us.

Mr Khan explains that when he found out he would be travelling to the UK he was overwhelmed with feelings of great joy, knowing that a better life awaited him and so simply couldn't wait to reach UK. Having no real employment prospects in Pakistan and a very limited source of income, he felt that this was a great opportunity for him.

Explaining a little about his experiences and the living conditions when he first arrived, Mr Khan tells us that initially life was very difficult, the living conditions were very poor, and he remembers having to share a room with 4 other people, "We used to carry out shift work at the factory and so took turns to sleep on the bed. The heating situation was such that we did not have the centralised heating system present in houses today instead we had a coal fire to keep us warm." Not being used to the cold, Mr Khan was very ill, but eventually got used to the weather. The social life was also very different, he recalls there not being many Pakistani restaurants, hence no trend of going out for meals. However, he recalls getting together with other fellow countrymen and playing cricket or simply sit around reminiscing about their lives in Pakistan. Communication with family members abroad was predominantly via letters. Due to his poor financial situation, Mr Khan was not able to sustain his family and therefore waited and saved until he was in a better position to bring his wife over to the country. At this stage, he had managed to purchase a small house and had started working as a taxi driver.

Life was very different for the first generation, the struggles they faced along with the sacrifices made by them have all helped shape the future of second and third generations. Many would refer to the first generation of Pakistani/ Kashmiri immigrants as pioneers.



#### Second Generation: Tafheen Sharif - Former Councillor

Tafheen Sharif, a second generation Kashmiri has lived in Luton all her life, born to Kashmiri parents. Tafheen discusses her experiences;

Tafheen explains that she has lived in Luton all her life prior to moving last year to be with her family. Her early education was in the town.

She became councillor in 2011 and represented the Dallow ward, alongside this she was also the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner from 2012-2014.

Tafheen explains that her parents were passionate for her to succeed academically. She attended Foxdell Infant & Junior School, Challney High School for Girls and later Luton Sixth Form College. Tafheen then went on to London to study Law.

She explains that her mother had a keen interest in education and was top in her class, especially in Maths. However, she did not have the opportunity to study further as she moved to the UK to join her husband.

Life in early Luton was very different to how it is now in 2016. She says that her parents often shared stories about the hardships they faced in terms of employment, especially the need to work up to eighteen hours a day to earn a decent living. She states that her parents would recall and speak about "how they came with nothing and what they have today is due to sheer hard work, the opportunities that came their way and blessings from the Creator." She says; "to this day this has had an influence on my persona - to work your hardest despite the setbacks and to always be thankful."

Tafheen visited the Kashmir region for a brief period when she was younger. Her experience of the country was a good; she particularly enjoyed the fresh air, the peace in the villages, and the atmosphere.

Socialising revolves around going out for meals, watching movies and keeping active in the community.

It would be interesting to find out how connected Tafheen feels to Pakistan and whether her connection with England is a lot stronger. We asked Tafheen to shed some light on how she feels. She said, "I have felt that cohesion and integration have become a bit of a hot subject in recent years. Whilst attending school and university, and the early years of my career I have felt no need to discuss cohesion as it was never an issue. However, I feel that over the last few years with media propaganda, rise of social media, political issues (with a small p), extremists like EDL and ISIS and certain events have led to misunderstandings and tensions bringing community cohesion to the forefront of the debate. This has not in any way compromised my values which have been ingrained in me, however I do feel it may have suppressed others who are not confident or are vulnerable making them victims of hate incidents for example." Tafheen highlighted that her connection to Britain is very great as is her connection to her Kashmiri heritage.

Tafheen has elaborated on some of the issues she feel that the youth of Luton are being faced with, she states that "I would love for our young people to realise their potential, work hard, seek opportunities and be all round good people. We have too many of our youth in Luton who have gone down the route of drug dealing and serious organised crime like fraud, insurance scams etc in order to obtain big cars and such material goods. Let us look within ourselves and be the best people that we can, and to achieve good things in the right manner. Our parents have worked extremely hard for us. Some have left their own homes and countries to give us a better chance in life. Let us not waste it and let us be thankful!"





## Third generation Maria Gul

Maria Gul has lived in Luton all her life. Her grandparents belong to the first generation of Pakistani migrants and she shares her experiences of life in Luton, along with some memories from her parents.

Maria recalls her mother discussing growing up in Luton; "My mum often comments on how when she was growing up the Pakistani/Kashmiri culture was not 'out there' in terms of the ethnic clothing stores and food. The job market was also completely different. There were so many jobs when she was younger; you would give your CV out, if the first shop did not take you the second would definitely offer you a position. House prices are another issue. My parents often ponder about being able to purchase a property for a third of the average house price. The housing market is extortionate. My parents also tell me how early life in Luton was somewhat unsettling for the family. In the event of a football match, she recalls how her parents took care to keep the children at home due to the disturbances by hooligans."

Maria explains how the concept of socialising has been transformed. "We tend to go out for meals, get together with friends to watch a movie, go ice skating etc. this is completely different to how my parents or their parents socialised. My mother and fathers social activities revolved around their families and there was no real element of socialising outside of that, neither were there many facilities during those times."

On topic of being part of the wider community she says, "growing in Luton I feel I am just as English as anyone else. But, appreciating the struggles faced by our grandparents to build a brighter future is what motivates me to work hard and achieve."

## DVD: Our Past - Our Present

The DVD depicts a great story about how the first generation came to the country, what their expectations were, as well as the socio economic impact on them when they arrived. It's very interesting to compare how they progressed and made Luton their home, coming from very humble backgrounds and developing the way they have. The second and third generation revealed what they knew of early Britain or Luton, the contrast is visibly prominent. It's also very stimulating to see how the first generation were willing to fit into the society and therefore to some extent may have been more understanding and appreciative of the differences. This may be contrary to the feelings and thoughts of the third generation, who did not face the struggles and so may have a different view on things. We have found that the third generation are now faced with issues, which concern every citizen resident in the UK, regardless of ethnic origin, such as living expenses, the EU, and education.

## "Our past our present"

## Teyba Seyed – Project Co-ordinator

#### Volunteers

Maria Gul	Samiyah Ali	Selina Khan
William Liddel	Umer Hussain	Imran Khan
Hamza Hussain	Azra Thaker	Jamie Simpson
Shahreen Khan	Awais Khan	Sher Band
Tasnia Matin	Fiza Shah	Armaan Khan
Shumaila Rehman	Zaynab Shah	Fatima Asmat
	Kazim Ali	

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