

Imperial Heartland

Working-class Britons played a crucial role in the pioneering settlement and integration of South Asians in imperial Britain. Using a host of new and neglected sources, *Imperial Heartland* revises the history of early South Asian immigration to Britain, focusing on the northern English city of Sheffield. Rather than viewing immigration through the lens of inevitable conflict, this study takes an alternative approach, situating mixed marriages and inter-racial social networks centrally within the South Asian settlement of modern Britain. Whilst acknowledging the episodic racial conflict of the early inter-war period, David Holland challenges assumptions that insurmountable barriers of race, religion and culture existed between the British working classes and non-white newcomers. *Imperial Heartland* closely examines the reactions of working-class natives to these young South Asian men and overturns our pre-conceptions that hostility to perceived racial or national difference was an overriding pre-occupation of working-class people during this period. *Imperial Heartland* therefore offers a fresh and inspiring new perspective on the social and cultural history of modern Britain.

David Holland was born into a working-class family in the mid 1960s. The child of a white English mother and an Asian Muslim father, he was raised primarily by his maternal grandparents. Despite finishing a formal education without much in the way of qualifications, at the age of forty-six he entered the University of Sheffield to read history as an undergraduate. Awarded a highly competitive Wolfson Foundation scholarship for his doctorate, he graduated in 2019. Holland has published articles in *Past and Present* and *Twentieth Century British History*. He is currently an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield and a member of the Royal Historical Society.

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*Immigration, Working-Class Culture and
Everyday Tolerance, 1917–1947*

David Holland



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This book is dedicated to the memory of my
grandparents Madge and Alf.

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We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time. T. S. Eliot, *Little Gidding* (1942)

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Maps</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiv
Introduction	1
1 Sheffield, ‘Steel City’	26
2 The Sheffield Area’s South Asian Migration Networks	48
3 Working Lives	74
4 Marriage, Belonging and Tolerance in the Era of Moral Condemnation	162
5 Empire, Racism and Everyday Tolerance	249
Conclusion	299
<i>Bibliography</i>	310
<i>Index</i>	327

Figures

1 Grave of Souriya Khan, Burngreave, Sheffield	page 3
2 The visit of King Amanullah and Queen Souriya of Afghanistan to Sheffield, 27 March 1928	5
3 Sheffield’s Manor Estate between the two world wars	6
4 Robert and George Cruickshank, ‘Lowest “Life in London” – Tom, Jerry and Logic among the Unsophisticated Sons and Daughters of Nature at “All Max” in the East’ (1823)	10
5 The children of Liverpool dockland neighbourhood, 1954	15
6 Buying, rather than selling, South Asian men, probably seafarers, browse the wares of a London street market in 1937	16
7 The smoggy and heavily polluted heavy-industrial setting of the River Don, 1927	34
8 Sarfaraz Khan, Chief Engine-Room <i>Serang</i>	59
9 Grave of Sultan Mohomed in Burngreave, Sheffield	66
10 Laitifoolla Nairoolla, also known as Naqibullah Nairoolla, c. 1919	77
11 South Asian firemen and trimmers in the stokehold of a P&O steamer	90
12 Men fire the boilers at a northern colliery in 1912	92
13 ‘The Lascar in Glasgow’	100
14 Lascar seafarers undergo a routine search for contraband in their quarters by Port of London officials	102
15 Shoppers throng Petticoat Lane market in the East End of London, December 1938	103
16 The ‘Indian Silky Toffee Man’	108
17 Sheffield’s popular Rag ‘n’ Tag market in the 1930s	112
18 Rasool and Elsie Khan and with their sons and their friend Jim Badloe between performances at Abbeydale Gala, Sheffield, August 1939	115

List of Figures	ix
19 Rasool Khan with the South Asian members of the cast of Zoltan Korda's film <i>The Drum</i> , including Sabu, at Denham Studios, 1938	117
20 Pedlar's certificate for Rakhnite Shah, issued 1945	121
21 Programme for the cultural celebrations associated with the Summer Olympiad, Helsinki, 1952	138
22 Chular & Sons, Indian eye specialists	140
23 Warris Khan, c. 1935, from his seafarer's Continuous Certificate of Discharge	151
24 Unemployed workers undertaking road improvements in Sheffield during the economic slump of the 1920s	156
25 A 'tommy-talker'-type jazz band based in Sheffield's Walkley district, 1927	159
26 Amid the music and comedy of <i>Charlot's Revue</i> , a dramatic sketch featured a blacked-up and coal-smudged Peter Haddon in the role of a 'menacing lascar drug trafficker'	170
27 The travelling spectacle of the 'Indian Village', 1933	185
28 Lobby card promoting Rudolph Valentino in <i>The Young Rajah</i> (1922)	189
29 The Windsor Hotel on the junction of Princess Street and Windsor Street, Attercliffe, c. 1910	195
30 Corby Street, Attercliffe, the site of the Sheffield riot of 1921	197
31 A Whitsuntide parade in Sheffield's Attercliffe district, c. 1910	222
32 Bacon Lane playground in Attercliffe, c. 1940s	223
33 An open-air Methodist service in Attercliffe in Sheffield's East End, c. 1920s	224
34 The shared courtyard to the rear of Amberley Street, Sheffield – the neighbourhood of Rasool and Elsie Khan	225
35 Women workers (now dubbed Sheffield's 'Women of Steel' and commemorated by a public statue) celebrate VE Day in 1945 at Thomas Firth and John Brown Ltd	226
36 Male and female munitions workers at Hadfield's works in Sheffield, 1916	226
37 Buffer girls at a mobile canteen, December 1940	230
38 Rasool and Elsie Khan with their children Doreen and Anman, 1931	243

x	List of Figures	
39	A fine day, probably during the steelworks’ annual summer shutdown. The air, temporarily free of smoke and smog, afforded this unusually clear view of Sheffield’s East End in the 1930s	263
40	A typical smoggy view of the crowded mix of the residential and the heavy-industrial in Sheffield’s East End during the 1930s	263
41	Schoolchildren performing during Empire Day celebrations at Bramall Lane football and cricket ground, 1906	284

Maps

1 Map of British India showing the positions of Chhacch, Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Kashmir and Sylhet	<i>page 4</i>
2 The distribution of British registered marriages with a Muslim-named spouse, 1916–1947	12
3 Map of inter-war Sheffield and Rotherham	28
4 Map showing the location of the Sheffield area within England, including Rotherham, Barnsley, Chesterfield and Doncaster	29

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Abbreviations

b. cert.	birth certificate
BISN	British India Steamship Navigation Company
BL	British Library, London
BSHC	British Social Hygiene Council
CASO	Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order, 1925
CCD	[Seaman's] Continuous Certificate of Discharge ('nully' or 'nolly')
CO	Colonial Office
d. cert.	death certificate
GRO	General Register Office, Southport
HO	Home Office
IOR	India Office Records
KK	Khudai Khidmatgar
m. cert.	marriage certificate
MT	Ministry of Transport
NSFU	National Sailors' and Firemen's Union
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
P&O	Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London
UAB	Unemployment Assistance Board