

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: The University of Leeds		
Unit of Assessment: History / 28		
Title of case study: Preserving the UK's South Asian Heritage: The India Club, Ambedkar House and Partition Commemoration		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008 - 2019		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): William Gould	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Indian History	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2003-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>William Gould's work on 1940s India and British Asian communities was pivotal in preserving two South Asian historical sites as an integral part of Britain's heritage, with impact across three strands of activity:</p> <p>i) his research was fundamental to a successful campaign to assist the India Club, London, which developed out of the India League in the 1940s, reject a planned re-development as a luxury hotel;</p> <p>ii) he provided expert witness, Proof of Evidence and essential background research for the successful appeal against the closure of the Ambedkar House Museum in Primrose Hill, Camden;</p> <p>iii) he inaugurated and co-led the Education Group promoting a national Partition Commemoration Day on 17 August and South Asian History Month, alongside providing key research for educational resources for Key Stages 2-3.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The underpinning research for the work supporting South Asian heritage and historical sites in the UK comprises two key areas, which explore: a) mid 20th Century Indian politics, including anti-colonialism and its thinkers, and the politics of Dalit movements; and b) British Asian histories and cultures. Linked to a) are a monograph [1], co-authored with Professor Sarah Ansari, Royal Holloway, University of London; a single authored monograph [6]; and a large scale AHRC research project 'From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan' [2]. Linked to b) are two separate research projects: a collaboration between Gould and Irna Qureshi, anthropologist, writer and founding co-organiser of the Bradford Literature Festival; and the AHRC-funded project 'Bradford as a National Museum' [5] a collaboration with the National Science and Media Museum in Bradford, with Dr Helen Graham (PI), University of Leeds. These publications and projects established Gould's research profile in early post-independence South Asian history, which informed his work for the India Club, the Ambedkar Museum and on the National Partition Commemoration/South Asian History Month project.</p> <p>The key research insights of these publications with importance to this case-study are four-fold. Firstly, the 2019 monograph [1] covers the experience of Partition and its aftermath over the 1930s to 1950s, illustrating its enduring importance for contemporary Britain, as the relationship between independent India and the UK changed. Secondly, Gould's work [1-6] explores anti-colonialism in inter-war British institutions and intellectual networks which connected Indian political figures to British culture, via the process of Indian independence and constitutional change. This is central to Gould's work for the India Club and Ambedkar House, both of which survived due to convincing historical evidence showing how Indian intellectuals, social reformers and nationalists, formed an important part of Britain's diverse public histories. Thirdly, Gould's research has explored the development of civic culture and protest politics among politically marginalised (including) Dalit communities, especially as they manifest</p>		

themselves in constitutional forms [1, 4, 6]. It was these forms that connected Ambedkarite politics, in particular, to global, including British ideas about constitutional change, group rights and labour mobilisation. This has been pivotal to **Gould's** work on behalf of Ambedkar House. Fourthly, monograph [1] dissects the experience of both Indian and Pakistani citizens. In neither case did the experiences necessarily take place in India or Pakistan suggesting that sites of South Asian public history in the UK are important to a larger global history of anti-colonial politics connecting all of Britain's South Asian communities. This joint India-Pakistan history has been pivotal for working out a clear 'South Asian' approach to national commemoration of Partition in the UK, since there are significant communities of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage within the population.

The collaboration with Irna Qureshi [3] explored the production of South Asian community histories in the UK, and their impact on the academy. It emerged out of an AHRC project 'Writing British Asian Cities' (2005-2008), which resulted in **Gould's** chapter in the edited volume accompanying the project. This chapter examined the larger role of South Asian histories in British public history, and crucially pinpointed the problems of South Asian migrants' marginalisation in British public historical narratives [3]. Finally, research and the approaches defining [1- 4] were applied to a large AHRC project [5], on which **Gould** is a CI. This developed family oral histories that explore the importance of civic engagement in Bradford among South Asian communities, and how it relates to trans-local ways of living. The outcome was a national exhibition at the Bradford National Media Museum – 'Above the Noise' <https://www.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/what-was-on/above-noise>.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. William Gould and Sarah Ansari, *Boundaries of Belonging: Localities, Citizenship and Rights in India and Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019)
2. Large AHRC standard grant project, Gould PI, 'From Subjects to Citizens: Society and the Everyday State in India and Pakistan' 2008-2011, total value £950,000
3. William Gould and Irna Qureshi, 'South Asian Histories in Britain: Nation, Locality and Marginality', in McLoughlin, Kabir, Gould and Tomalin, *Writing the City in British Asian Diasporas* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 137- 157
4. William Gould, *Religion and Conflict in Modern South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge, University Press, 2012)
5. Large AHRC project with Helen Graham as PI (Gould CI), 'Bradford as a National Museum', 2017-2020, total value £1 million
6. William Gould, *Bureaucracy, Community and Influence: Society and the State in India 1930-1960s* (London: Routledge, 2011).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Gould's research led to three interconnected impacts through his contribution to the preservation of tangible and intangible South Asian community histories in the UK: i) the prevention of the redevelopment of the India Club as a luxury hotel in 2018; ii) the successful appeal against the closure of the Ambedkar House Museum; and iii) the move to establish a permanent national Partition Commemoration Day at part of a new South Asian Heritage Month.

i) Prevention of the redevelopment of the India Club

The India Club, based at 143 Strand, and founded in 1951, is regarded as an important site of South Asian heritage in London with connections to one of the main historical movements of anti-colonialism in the UK. The India League, the premier organisation linking Indian politicians in 1930s India to British MPs, was led by VK Krishna Menon who became High Commissioner in London, Indian representative to the UN and eventually Minister of Defence. Shortly after independence the India League and India Club hosted visits by Jawaharlal Nehru, Lord and

Lady Mountbatten and a range of other political and cultural figures. Today, this history remains significant to many Indians in the capital.

The current owners of the building that houses the Club planned to redevelop it as a luxury hotel closing down the Club in the process. A campaign to save the Club was launched by its managers, who approached **Gould** to write a report exposing its historic and cultural value. In May 2018 the present building was refused listed status, on the basis that although the India Club is the successor to the India League, the present building is not the one occupied by its 1920s predecessor.

Gould's combined research on 1940s-50s anti-colonialism, Indian independence and Indo-British relations [1, 3, 4] formed the basis for his 8000-word heritage report to Historic England [C]. Through the Report and in its aftermath, **Gould's** research was pivotal in demonstrating that the India Club's current site was a primary hub for the main South Asian diasporas into London from the '50s, and crucially, that it developed out of the India League. Armed with **Gould's** Report and a mass petition, the family that currently manages the India Club persuaded Westminster City Council to reject the planning application to change the function of the building. The Westminster Council's decision (31 July 2018) stated, 'Notwithstanding Historic England's conclusion that the application site is not the building originally occupied by the India Club, it is still linked to the India League and is considered to be of cultural significance'. This conclusion was drawn specifically from **Gould's** report, which was also noted by the Club's Manager as having played a 'central role in our campaign highlighting the cultural and historical significance of the India Club' [B].

As part of the campaign the managers of the India Club organised an online petition alongside **Gould's** Report, and which as testament to its importance to Indians in the capital and elsewhere, gathered over 32,500 signatures.

The campaign to preserve the India Club received extensive print and online media coverage, much of it acknowledging the importance of **Gould's** contribution. For example, *The Times* (9 October 2017) described **Gould** as 'key to the defence' of the India Club in its fight for survival. *The Guardian* (20 May 2018) quoted **Gould's** view on the historic evidence surrounding the India Club as a key site for 1960s South Asian migrants to the UK. Crucially, *The Hindustan Times* (1 August 2018), connected **Gould's** research on the India League and the statement of Westminster Council about the League's importance to the Club [D]. Social media interest in the campaign and its successful outcome was also high with @saveindiachub tweeting its thanks to **Gould** for his 'invaluable role' in it [D]. Tweeting support over 2017-19, there were a number of high profile supporters too, including the author Will Self, the Indian politician/celebrity Shashi Tharoor, David Harries OBE, the BBC News education correspondent Sean Coughlan, and Jo Maugham QC.

In January 2019 the National Trust launched 'Home Away from Home' an exhibition about the Club alongside a documentary film and a programme of public events informed by **Gould's** report and his wider research (See <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/a-home-away-from-home-the-india-club>). Additionally, **Gould** advised on the content of the exhibition guide booklet [A]. The Programme Coordinator with responsibility for developing the exhibition observed that 'The historic report has been invaluable in understanding the significance of the Club.' [A]

An additional benefit, confirmed by the Manager of the India Club in July 2019, was that the success of the campaign to save it had led to the building being designated an Asset of Community Value [B]. Such status ensures that the Community Right to Bid can be used if the building ever comes up for sale and there is sufficient interest from the community in raising the funds to try and purchase it. In January 2021, the landlords served a notice to the managers to vacate and this is currently being contested in the courts. The tenants again contacted **Gould** on 25 January 2021 [B] as a key academic contact and he is currently helping to mobilise other academics, community groups and the media to support the on-going campaign to protect the site.

ii) Successful appeal against the closure of the Ambedkar House Museum

Gould was one of three witnesses, and the only historical witness, for the Ambedkar House Museum, London during the hearing in September and October 2019 to appeal the decision of Camden Council to close it down. The significance of Dr B R Ambedkar to the Dalit community worldwide is enormous (over 200 million in India alone), and 10 King Henry Road, where the Museum is based, is seen as pivotal to his heritage. He is not only viewed as the primary intellectual and political figure for these communities, but also the ‘father of the Constitution of India’, and is honoured in the names of political institutions across India. 10 King Henry Road was inaugurated as one of ‘5 places of pilgrimage’ for Ambedkar by India’s Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in November 2015 (see, NDTV, 15 November 2015, at <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/pm-narendra-modi-inaugurates-ambedkar-memorial-in-london-1243419>)

During the hearing, **Gould** acted as the expert historical witness, for which he provided a 4000-word research-based Proof of Evidence (POE) document [I], under cross examination. His evidence pivoted on research that demonstrated the key importance of Ambedkar to British as well as Indian history, via his key interventions in constitutional changes through the late 1910s to the 1940s. This was rooted in **Gould**’s research on the nature of Scheduled Caste organisations that lobbied and mobilised around constitutional structures in the colonial period [1, 6], research which had also led to him appearing on BBC Radio 4’s ‘Beyond Belief’ to discuss the role of Ambedkar in India’s independence, in August 2017. **Gould**’s research on India’s constitutional affairs in the 1940s [1] and on the political, constitutional and intellectual career of Ambedkar, the drafter of India’s Constitution, informed his POE [I]. At the hearing (25 September 2019), **Gould**’s POE was pivotal to the appeal case in stating the importance of Ambedkar to Indian visitors, the Government of India and to the UK Indian diaspora. It was highlighted as central in the appellant barrister’s summing up and acknowledged by the High Commission of India who manage the Museum [I]. Specifically: i) the barrister used **Gould**’s work on the interconnection between economics and social/political thought in Ambedkar’s work on Dalits to undermine the Camden evidence. He was able to show that Ambedkar was not ‘simply studying economics’ while at 10 King Henry Rd. as argued by Camden but developing economic thought was closely linked to his wider constitutional and political campaigns; ii) the barrister used **Gould**’s POE to demonstrate that Ambedkar was already a key figure in India’s constitutional negotiations by the mid 1920s and was involved in social reform movements while in London; and iii) the barrister made use of **Gould**’s detailed research on the career and intellectual interactions of Ambedkar to prove that he must have stayed at 10 King Henry Road as his main residence in London. Throughout the entire preparation for the case, the barrister also drew extensively on **Gould**’s expertise and research [G]. As a result, the appeal was recovered for the Secretary of State for Housing’s determination because of its importance and was successfully upheld with planning permission granted on 12 March 2020 [F].

The Secretary of State’s principal point in his decision was that he ‘agreed with the Inspector’s analysis at IR53 about the significance of Dr Ambedkar as a major figure in Indian and British History’ [J]. In paragraph 55 of his decision, the Inspector concluded that ‘The evidence of Ms Dass and Professor Gould on the importance of this period of residence at no.10 in the evolution of Dr Ambedkar’s philosophy and of its linkages to his later achievements is convincing.’ In addition, in paragraph 56, he suggested that the historical and spiritual link between Ambedkar and no. 10 were ‘widely perceived, especially among people of South Asian heritage. This is explained in the evidence of Ms Dass and Professor Gould’ [J]. Ken Hunt, a member of the public at the hearing who spoke on behalf of the appellants in open questions, tweeted directly to **Gould** on 13 March 2020, ‘The part you played was vital. You brought perspectives on the subcontinent’s history that only an academic could bring - and the passion and steadfastness that only someone grounded in social and equality principles could. It was illuminating.’ Santosh Dass, one of the other appellant witnesses who worked alongside **Gould** in preparing the case, tweeted on 13 March, ‘William @willgupshup, your contribution was magnificent. And only we know how much work and research went into building our carefully constructed case for the

museum'. The Secretary of State for Housing's own tweet expressing pleasure for his role in saving the Museum received over 5.6K 'likes' and 2.1K retweets [G].

3. Campaign for permanent Partition Commemoration and educational resource development

Gould co-led a national project (2018-19), which aims to enhance public histories of South Asians as part of mainstream British history. Building on his work in [1] alongside Dr Sarah Ansari, he inaugurated and led the 'Education Group expert panel' strand of a project to establish a permanent National Partition commemoration in the UK on 17 August, and to promote the history of Partition and South Asia in school curricula in the UK. The initiative started in a Houses of Parliament meeting involving TV celebrities, two MPs of British Asian heritage and representatives of the Amritsar Partition museum. The campaign coordinator emailed **Gould** on 30 July 2018: 'It seems looking at the responses that you and Sarah [Ansari] are clearly the people who are best placed to take this forward.' [E]. **Gould** was subsequently invited speaker to large meetings at the Manchester Central Library (17 August 2018), and the Houses of Parliament (5 February 2019), which developed the 'South Asian History Month'. In these events, and on the 'Education Group', **Gould's** expertise on Partition and its longer-term relevance, especially in [1] has been pivotal. The research has also specifically changed two key educational resources designed by the project for use in Schools KS 2-3. The first, 'Never Set Eyes on the Land', a downloadable toolkit resource providing English, History and Drama-based activities was created by Nutkhut, a mixed performance and creative learning company dedicated to bringing British South-Asian stories and histories to life. The resource was repurposed as a touring installation and selected for inclusion in the Staging Places exhibition of theatre design at the Victoria and Albert Museum (July 2019 - January 2020). During its development the downloadable toolkit was reworked with **Gould** and Ansari's advice to include more detail on how to present Partition violence in the pack. Nutkhut's Learning and Education Manager, who made amendments to the resource based on **Gould** and Ansari's interventions, reported to **Gould** that it was 'invaluable to have access to such expertise' [H].

For the second, **Gould** provided historical assistance to the University of Oxford-based team developing 'Project Dastaan' a large-scale VR project which records the home towns of partition migrants for those who migrated enabling them to return home again in a virtual sense, and which forms a central online resource element for schools exploring Partition [E].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- A. Email from Programmes Coordinator, The National Trust (20.11.18); Home from Home exhibition booklet.
- B. Selected emails from the Manager of the India Club, Strand, London (31.7.18 – 25.1.21)
- C. Report for Historic England authored by Gould, and email correspondence around it.
- D. *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Hindustan Times* and *Hindu* articles and tweets about role of Gould's research in supporting the India Club's preservation.
- E. Emails and correspondence with organisers of Partition Commemoration / South Asian Heritage Month on the role of Gould and Ansari in developing the permanent national partition commemoration in the UK, including from Dastaan and Nutkhut education projects.
- F. Emails from Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), and appellant's solicitors and barrister re: Ambedkar House successful PI and granting of planning permission
- G. Emails from solicitors for High Commission of India regarding Gould's expert work for Ambedkar House, London (20.9.19 – 12.3.20); Tweets from other witnesses and members of public at hearing following result on 13 March 2020
- H. Email correspondence between Nutkhut's Learning and Education Manager and Gould/Ansari about their contribution to the educational toolkit.
- I. Gould's Proof of Evidence (POE) document and Barrister's summing up document, 25 September 2019.
- J. Decision letter and Inspector's Report – Recovered Appeal: Land at King Henry's Road, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recovered-appeal-land-at-10-king-henrys-road-london-nw3-3rp-ref-3219239-12-march-2020>