




 **India's Gateway:**
Gujarat, Mumbai & Britain

A stunning new exhibition exploring the links between
Gujarat, Britain and Redbridge

 Photographs  Film  People's Stories

18 October 2016 – 28 January 2017

Redbridge Museum
Redbridge Central Library
Clements Road, Ilford, Essex IG1 1EA
020 8708 2317   www.redbridge.gov.uk/museum

WIN
an exhibition
book

Tues - Fri 10 - 5 Sat 10 - 4
Free admission

India's Gateway

Gujarat, Mumbai, Britain & Redbridge

Redbridge Museum





- India's Gateway exhibition explored the 400 year links between Gujarat, Mumbai and Britain
- National partnership led by photographer Tim Smith with 6 small and regional museums
- ACE strategic touring programme 2015-17



Redbridge Museum

- LB Redbridge 4th most ethnically diverse borough in UK
- About 40% South Asian heritage
- Gujarati's from east Africa arrived from late 1960s
- Redbridge Museum tries to develop an understanding of diversity of visitors, audiences and partners – not just seeing people as 'Asian'

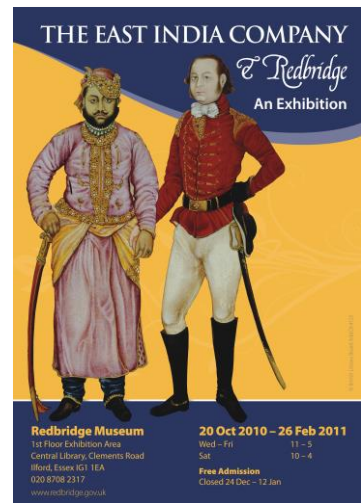
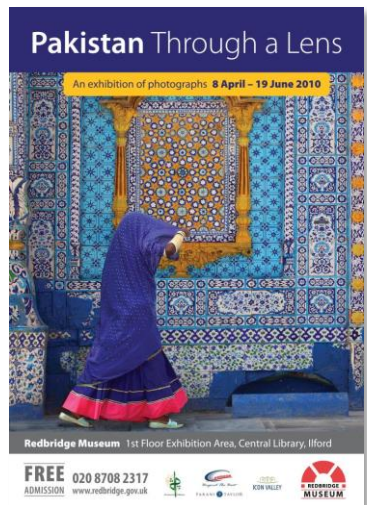
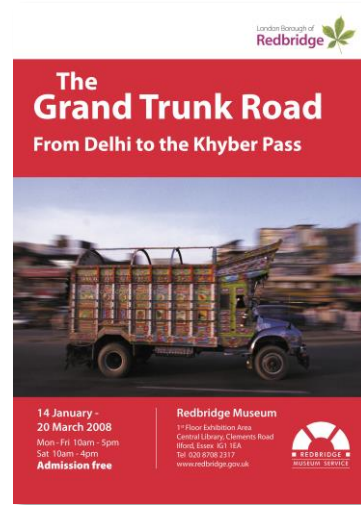
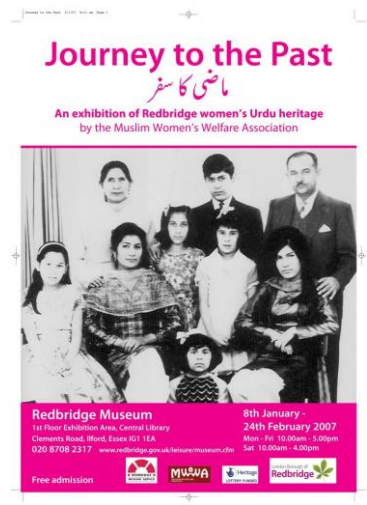
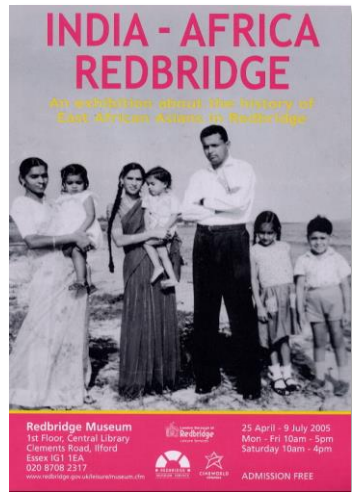


**Sir Thomas Roe, English
Ambassador to Mughal court,
lived in Redbridge 1640-44**



**Surendra Patel (right), newsagent,
lived in Redbridge since 1975**

- Redbridge Museum tries to link “local” history to “community” history and the global to the local
- India’s Gateway linked the presence of Gujarati’s in Redbridge to historic local East India Company links



- India's Gateway built on 20 years of Redbridge Museum's work with local South Asian communities
- Museum used existing contacts but built up new ones



Redbridge Gujarati's visiting Gujarat, 2014

- Personal connections
- Researching local history and communities



Arrival of Europeans

Trade has been going on between India and Europe for thousands of years. The Europeans prized spices such as cloves, nutmeg and pepper for use in food, medicines and perfumes. But spices brought overland were expensive and by the fifteenth century the Europeans were looking for a direct sea route to the East.

In 1498 the Portuguese sailed around the southern tip of Africa for the first time. Guided by Gujarati navigator Kanji Malam, the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama went on to reach India, and the Portuguese began to ship spices directly to Europe.

In 1596 Dutch ships reached Indonesia and returned with a cargo of peppercorns and nutmeg. The English were keen to get in on the spice trade and in 1600 London traders set up the East India Company, given a royal charter by Queen Elizabeth I for exclusive trade with the East.

Spice merchants were not interested in the heavy woollen cloth offered them by English traders. So instead the English began to buy and trade with Indian goods, especially textiles which they bought from Gujarat. At this time much of India was ruled by the Mughal Empire, and the East India Company built a trading post in Surat, the main Mughal port. Later the Company established its own base in Bombay, now Mumbai, the port which became the main link between Britain and India.

As the Mughal Empire declined the East India Company moved beyond its role as a trading concern. It made treaties with local kingdoms, and defeated others using its own private armies. By the early 1900s the Company had imposed its rule across India.

Photo: Children exercising outside Our Lady of the Sea, a Catholic church built by the Portuguese as part of St Jerome's Fort in Daman.



- Tim Smith's photography and graphic panels provided a 'core' exhibition
- Each museum developed local but integral content





Redbridge Asian Mandal, 2016

- Go to where people meet
- Be curious about the world
- Challenges of small team, time and timings
- Community champions
- Telling individual stories to reveal the bigger picture



Patel family and English guests at wedding, Ilford, 1976

- Use existing archives and original research
- Use visitor data
- Get to know your world
- Develop a wide network



Redbridge Asian Mandal, 2016

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India's Gateway at Redbridge Museum

- Low-cost appropriate marketing
- 33% new visitors
- 65% south Asian and 18% were white British visitors so matching the local demographics
- 44% had a connection to Gujarat so reaching non-Gujarati's as well



Impacts:

“As cheesy as it sounds, I feel a part of Ilford rather than just the Indian community.

Redbridge Museum is not presenting us as a 'festival' or 'fun activity' but talking about our history which isn't done often.”