

BENGAL HISTORY WEEK 2016

8-16 OCTOBER 2016

Brick Lane Circle's is organising its Seventh Annual Bengal History Week during 8-16 October 2016, which aims to help generate greater levels of interest on the learning of the history of Bengal.



**FREE ENTRY!
ALL WELCOME!**

**SATURDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2016,
2-2.30PM.** Kobi Nazul Centre, 30
Hanbury St, London E1 6QR.

Bangladesh 2021 A critical history initiative

A challenge to all Bangladeshis - help produce fifty great works of Bangladeshi history in five years.

In 2021 Bangladesh will be half a century old as an independent country. Like everywhere else on Earth, the history of the land which constitutes Bangladeshi today goes back a long way. To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Bangladesh, Brick Lane Circle invites all interested Bangladeshis to become critical historians and help produce at least fifty great works of history by 2021.

Those who are inspired by it do not have to be involved with Brick Lane Circle. They can undertake their work independently, without any reference to us. We are simply interested in seeing more Bangladeshis being engaged in cutting edge work on history.

During the next five years Brick Lane Circle will organise a number of seminars, training, workshops and conferences with a view to help generate and share conversations on engaging in cutting edge research on history and history writing. For further details, please attend the launch of this initiative.

**SATURDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2016,
2.30-6PM.** Kobi Nazul Centre, 30
Hanbury St, London E1 6QR

Workshops on research methodologies, sources of information and history writings

'The Historian's Craft' Revisited

By Dr. Layli Uddin

Who is a historian? What is the task of a historian? How does a historian engage with writing social, political, cultural and intellectual history? What are their methods and materials for interpreting and understanding historical events, figures and institutions? What are the limitations of a historian, and perhaps of history itself?

This workshop engages with 'history from below' approaches and the work of Subaltern Studies historians as well as my own doctoral work to understand how we go about recovering the more complex and rich histories of particular events, groups and figures that have, thus far, been marginalized, subsumed or erased in existing historiographies. She will go through the research process of her doctoral dissertation on Maulana Bhashani and his political mobilisation of peasants and workers in the making and unmaking of East Pakistan in terms of the research questions asked, methods employed and the archives used, as well as the difficulties and limitations encountered. She will demonstrate the possibilities and importance of writing the histories of those who continually are written out of it.

Dr. Layli Uddin is currently a Project Curator (Bengali) at the British Library for the 'Two Centuries of Indian Print' project. She completed her PhD in History from Royal Holloway in 2015.

She is a social historian by training, with a focus on 20th century East Bengal, decolonization, working class cultures, and popular socio-religious movements.

Studying the Sultanate period in Bengal (1203-1576)

By Muhammad Mojlum Khan

He is an award-winning writer, literary critic and research scholar, and author of the bestselling *The Muslim 100* (2008) and *The Muslim Heritage of Bengal* (2013). He has published many articles his writings have been translated into many languages including Bengali, Indonesian and German. He is a Fellow of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Founding Director of Bengal Muslim Research Institute UK. His latest book 'Muslim Heritage of the West: lives, thoughts and achievements of 50 great western Muslims', due out early 2017, KUBE publishing.

**SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER 2016,
2.30-4.30PM.** Lab 7, Idea Store
Whitechapel

'Citizens' or 'Aliens'? Lascar settlement in Britain (1900-1946)



By Naina Manjrekar

The paper will describe the origins of lascar seamen and their settlement in British ports, showing how the needs of the colonial state regulated whether they were considered 'aliens' or 'British subjects.'

Naina Manjrekar is currently pursuing a PhD in History at the School of Oriental and African Studies on the Political Lives of Colonial Seamen. She has previously done an MA History and BA English in New Delhi.

MONDAY 10 OCTOBER 2016, 6.30-8.30PM. Lab 2, Idea Store Whitechapel

Mental Maps of Pre- colonial Bengal



Gitagovinda, Bengal c.1790

By Dr Richard David William

Although cartography was limited in South Asia before the eighteenth century, many early modern literary texts provide rich descriptions of landscapes and routes covered on specific journeys. When poets explored their local surroundings or the wider world through verse, the distance between points on the imagined map proved extremely subjective. Each writer had an idiosyncratic sense of a significant geography and carved out their own landscape, highlighting certain sites important to them and occluding others.

What can these literary, imagined maps tell us about pre-colonial Bengal, and how Bengalis understood the world around them? Using an eighteenth-century travelogue cum pilgrimage record, the *Tirthamangal*, as my starting point, I will consider the different, overlapping geographies that stemmed from Bengal before the region was re-imagined under colonialism.

Dr Richard David Williams is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the

University of Oxford. He researches the cultural history of early modern and colonial north India, with particular interests in theology, literature, and music.

TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2016, 6.30-8.30PM. Lab 1, Idea Store Whitechapel

Migration Plan and its Influence on Integration Strategic among Bangladeshi Migrants in Italy. A first glance at the data



By Valeria Giannuzzi

The arrival of Bangladeshis in Italy is a relatively new process, which begins around the '90s. Among the reasons of the transition of southern Europe from an area of emigration to one of immigration, maybe the most influent, are the progressive restriction of immigration policies implemented by west European countries and, on the other hand, more permissive migration policies in Southern Europe, particularly in Italy, which allowed more easily the acquisition of the citizenship. Thus, during the last 30 years Italy would have changed its nature as "transit country" to a "settlement country". Nonetheless, a new phenomenon is taking place in the last years, and we have very little data about it: Italian Bangladeshi coming to United Kingdom. Why are they moving (or willing to move) to UK? Why did they get to Italy the first? Will Brexit vote modify their plans to move from Italy to United Kingdom?

Valeria Giannuzzi is Clinical Psychologist, PhD Student in Social Science at Colegio de la Frontera Norte in Tijuana, Mexico, and Visiting Fellow at University of East London at the Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging, where she is carrying on part of her research on migration plan and integration strategies among Bangladeshi migrants in Rome and London with a

narrative approach. She is a founder member and in charge for the migration studies area at PsyPlus Onlus, a non-profit organization based in Rome.

WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2016, 6.30-8.30PM. Lab 5, Idea Store Whitechapel

'Omitted due to insignificance': the significance of autobiography in archiving colonial theatre histories: the case of Nati Binodini



By Dr Priyanka Basu

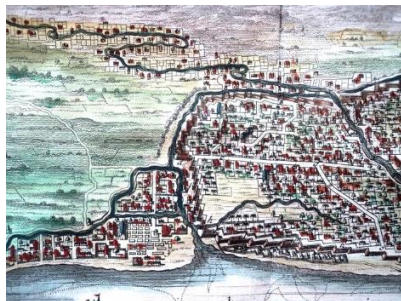
Nati Binodini (1863-1941), popularly referred to as the 'Flower of the Native Stage' and 'Moon of the Star Theatre', was a nineteenth century Bengali theatre actress who came under the tutelage of the renowned dramatist/actor, Girishchandra Ghosh (1844-1912). As a female icon of the colonial Bengali stage, Binodini remains embedded in the cultural memory of Bengal as is evident from the number of plays and films that have been produced on her life. However, little attention has been paid to her autobiography which offers key insight into the conditions of contemporary theatre as well as the marginal existence of women actresses. Even lesser attention has been paid to her poetic works thus underlining the questions of canonization in Bengali literary histories and the role of women therein. 'Omitted due to insignificance' is a phrase borrowed from Girish Ghosh's commentary on Binodini's autobiography which he edited in order to make it 'acceptable' to readers. His commentary also raises questions about what constitutes a structured autobiography and the need for facts over 'poetic digression'. In reading Binodini's autobiography (in dialogue with this commentary) I take into account this key idea of 'omission' and try to understand: (i) the

significance of autobiographies as written documentations of colonial performance histories, and (ii) the authoritative hands that occlude women's voices in theatre archives.

Dr Priyanka Basu has finished her PhD from the Department of South Asia in SOAS and currently works at the Asian & African Collection at the British Library. Her research looks at the cultural politics of contemporary Bengali *Kobigaan* in West Bengal and Bangladesh, and her further research interests include performance and film histories, gender, and Dance Studies.

THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER 2016, 6.30-8.30PM. Lab 1, Idea Store Whitechapel

The first voyage of the East India Company under Captain James Lancaster (1601-3) and Edmund Scot's 'A Discourse of Java, and of the first English Factory there, with divers Indian, English, and Dutch Occurrences' (1602-5)



By M Ahmedullah

The paper tells the story of the First Voyage of the East India Company, led by the flagship Red Dragon under the command of Captain James Lancaster, that sailed out of Woolwich in February 1601 with five ships. Four ships arrived in Aceh in June 1602 and then, after concluding a trade deal with the local Sultan, they sailed to several other places to buy more peppers and explore business opportunities.

Before setting sail for the return journey to England, Lancaster established a factory in Banten and left nearly twenty Englishmen at the city to strengthen their base (factory),

develop trade and purchase more spices for the next voyage. While in Banten one of the two English factor who survived three dangerous years in the city, Edmund Scot, wrote down a detailed account of his observations of the country, its people, culture and trade. The presentation will explore the nature of the journey, places stopped for re-victualling, experiences of scurvy and about the life and observations of Edmund Scot.

Dr. M Ahmedullah has worked in major regeneration programmes in the UK for many years. In 1998 he completed his PhD on the topic of 'Relationship between Epistemology and Political Theory' from Kent University. Between May 2005 and June 2010 he has delivered a unique exhibition on Dhaka City around the UK. He is the secretary of Brick Lane Circle.

SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER 2016, 11AM-1PM. Lab 7, Idea Store Whitechapel

Popular East India Company Dockside walk



By Dr Georgie Wemyss

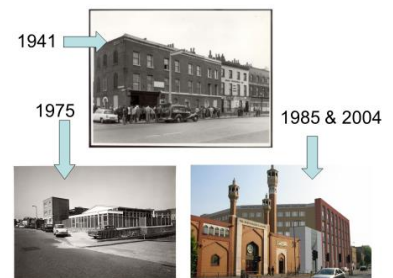
Places are free but advance booking only. Meeting place will be provided to those who are booked on the walk.

Dr Georgie Wemyss is the author of *The Invisible Empire: White Discourse, Tolerance and Belonging* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), and Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging at UEL.

SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER 2016, 2.45-4.15PM. Venue 2, The Rich

Mix Centre, 35-47 Bethnal Green Rd, E1 6LA.

Historical evolution of the East London Mosque



By Professor Humayun Ansar OBE

Post 9/11 and 7/7, the mosque, as a socially dynamic and influential multi-purpose community institution, has come under increasing scrutiny as academic and political debates surrounding identity and belonging, the radicalisation of young Muslims, struggles for power within and beyond Muslim communities and policies on integration and social cohesion reach a new pitch.

By exploring historically, the dynamic interplay between Muslim experience and the institutions of British society with regard to the efforts for establishing a mosque in London over many decades – the East London Mosque - this paper attempts to deepen our understanding of how Muslims have sought to establish themselves as an integral part of British society, through a specific kind of place-making.

Humayun Ansari is Professor of Islam and Cultural Diversity and Director of the Centre for Minority Studies, Department of History, at Royal Holloway, University of London. He has taught undergraduates and postgraduates in the Faculty of History and Social Sciences. His research interests include radical Islamic thought, ethnicity, identity, migration and multiculturalism. He has advised and addressed a wide spectrum of organisations and provided consultancy and training in the field of ethnicity and equal opportunities for organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors, including government departments and agencies, further and higher

education, and within industry and commerce.

SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER 2016, 2.30-6.30PM. Venue 2, Rich Mix Centre, 35-47 Bethnal Green Rd, London E1 6LA.

Bangladeshi marriages in the UK - a half a day conference

Changing culture of British Bengali marriages - by Salam Jones

Forced Marriage, so called "Honour-based Violence" and community engagement - by Dr Nazia Khanum OBE

Marriage ceremonies, competitions and costs - by Rooful Ali

Marriage related stressors & mental health - by Dr Sidrah Muntaha

Panel discussion: the above speakers plus Shahida Rahman and Sufiya Ahmed



Dr Nazia Khanum has PhD in History (SOAS). She is founder Director of Equality in Diversity - an independent management, research and training consultancy. Her previous jobs included: University lecturer in Political Science; Head of Equalities in five English local authorities.

Working closely with national and local government and community groups since 1982, she has given evidence to various Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiries into the Bangladeshi community's needs, Terrorism/Violent Extremism and Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage and Honour-based Violence. Her publications include research papers, reports and articles on many topics,

Forced Marriage and Honour-based Violence in Oxford.

Dr Sidrah Muntaha is a Chartered Clinical Psychologist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society. She is member of the Division of Clinical Psychology and has specialist experience of severe & complex mental health disorders including Psychosis and Personality disorder.

She offers individual Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Systemic Family Interventions and Supervision from clinics based in South Woodford and Harley Street, London. (website: www.dynamic-therapy.co.uk)

Shahida Rahman is an author, publisher and freelance writer. She writes historical fiction, non-fiction and short stories including the following. Shahida wrote 'The Integration of the Hijab into Police Uniforms,' which was published in the 'Behind the Hijab' anthology, in March 2009 by Monsoon Press. Also in 2009, she was commissioned to write a radio play 'The Lascar' for the Lascar Heritage Project for Silsila Productions.

'Lascar' (Indigo Dreams Publishing 2012) is a work of historical fiction inspired by a paternal ancestor, a lascar (seaman). 'Lascar' was shortlisted for the Muslim Writers Awards, Unpublished Novel Awards (2008).

Sufiya Ahmed is the award winning author of the Young Adult novel 'Secrets of the Henna Girl', published by Puffin Books. She is also a public speaker on girls' rights. 'Secrets of the Henna Girl' was launched on International Women's Day at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London in 2012. It has been translated into Arabic, Spanish and Polish.

She regularly visits secondary schools and discusses her previous career in the Houses of Parliament to educate and inspire pupils about the democratic process and discusses how her political activism influences her writing.

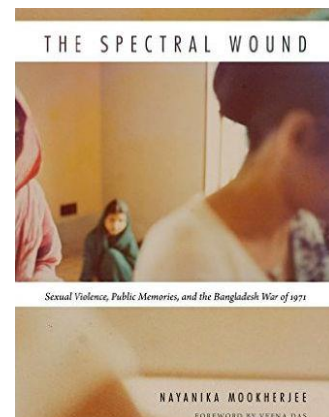
Sufiya is the founder and director of the BIBI Foundation, a non-profit organisation which arranges visits to the Houses of Parliament for diverse and underprivileged children.

7.00-8.30pm

Stand-up comedy show - hosted by Asif Baul. Details TBC

WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2016, 6.30-8.30PM. Harold Pinter Studio, Queen Mary University, Mile End Rd, London E1 4NS.

Readings from The Spectral Wound. Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971



By Dr Nayanika Mookherjee

Nayanika Mookherjee is the Research Director and Reader of Socio-Cultural Anthropology in Durham University. In June 2014 she was invited to the international summit End Sexual Violence in Conflict and in October 2014 she was awarded the Mahatma Gandhi Pravasi Samman (for overseas Indians) award at the House of Lords for her work on gendered violence during wars. She has published extensively on anthropology of violence, ethics and aesthetics. Her book: *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War* (2015, Duke University Press, Foreword by Prof. Veena Das) was among the top two books shortlisted for the BBC's Thinking Allowed and Best Ethnography Award

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