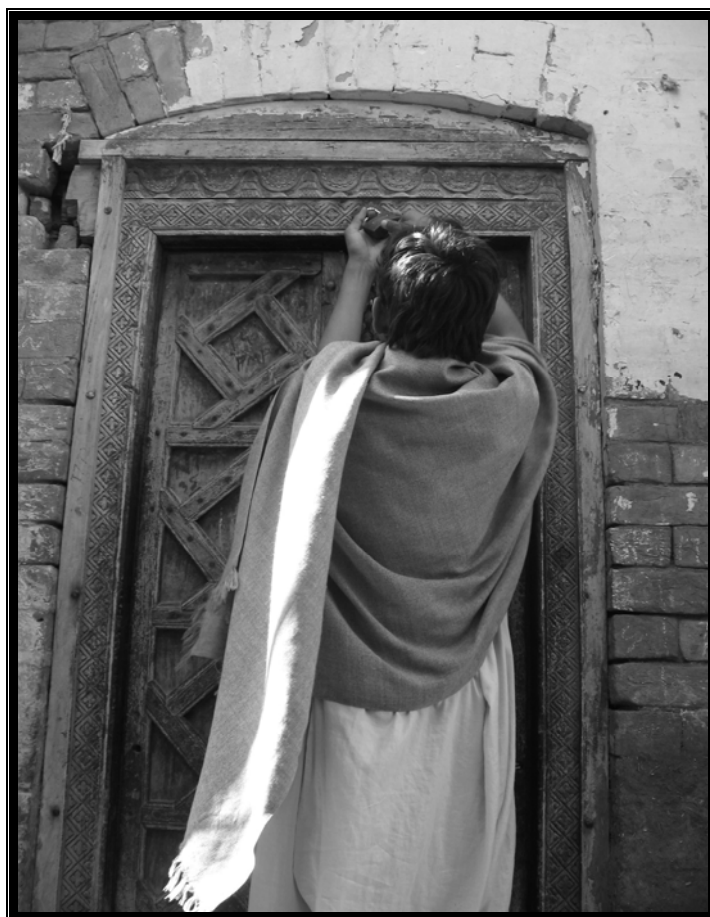


**Imperial College**  
London

## 2007 India & Pakistan Expedition: Places were Home

Tariq Khalil



*Dedicated to my father, the late Ahmed Khalil, who inspired my love of travel and people, but who never made it back home to Saha, India.*

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### 1.0 Introduction

This report details a fine art inspired photographic expedition funded by Imperial College Exploration Society (ICES). This report compliments a diverse range of expeditions to date that have been funded and assisted by ICES. These can be viewed at <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/expeditions>.

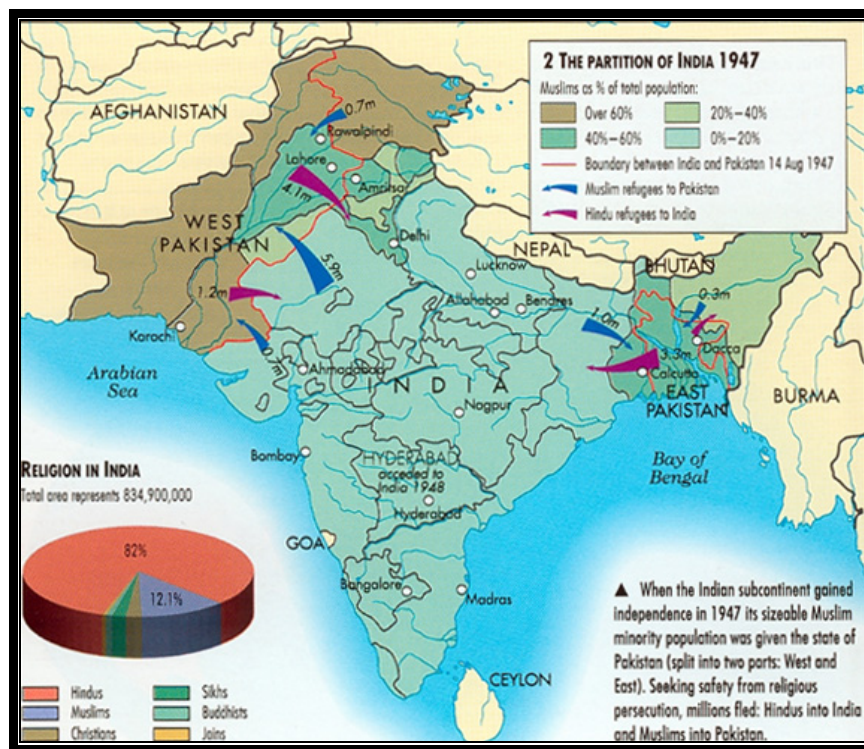
This report sets out to document areas of previously overlooked India and Pakistan post Partition in 1947 and more specifically, the fate of displaced people’s homes. The location of this project was situated in former and current family areas of northern India and central Pakistan respectively. No photographic study of this nature; one which treats all subject areas in a parallel manner is known to have been undertaken. My emphasis was on the residual built environment interpreted via the exhibition of a selection of monochrome photographs.

### 1.2 The Historical Event

The ‘ethnic’ partition of India in August 1947 caused one of the greatest migrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Millions of people were forced to abandon and, if lucky, exchange their homes and countries in the space of one ‘hot’ summer. About 12 million people moved between the new India and the two parts of newly created Pakistan. The largest proportion of refugees (about 10 million) crossed the western Punjab border: Muslims travelling west to Pakistan, Hindus and Sikhs east to India.

Slaughter, rape and the abduction of women and children accompanied this extraordinary mass movement. Estimates of the dead vary from 200,000 to 2 million (a later Indian estimate). Around 1 million deaths is now the widely accepted figure. Apart from the dead, the scars on the survivors were deep; thousands of families were divided, homes destroyed and entire villages abandoned.

Figure 1 Map of Migration



[http://cla.calpoly.edu/~lcall/partition\\_india.jpg](http://cla.calpoly.edu/~lcall/partition_india.jpg)

## 2.0 Aims

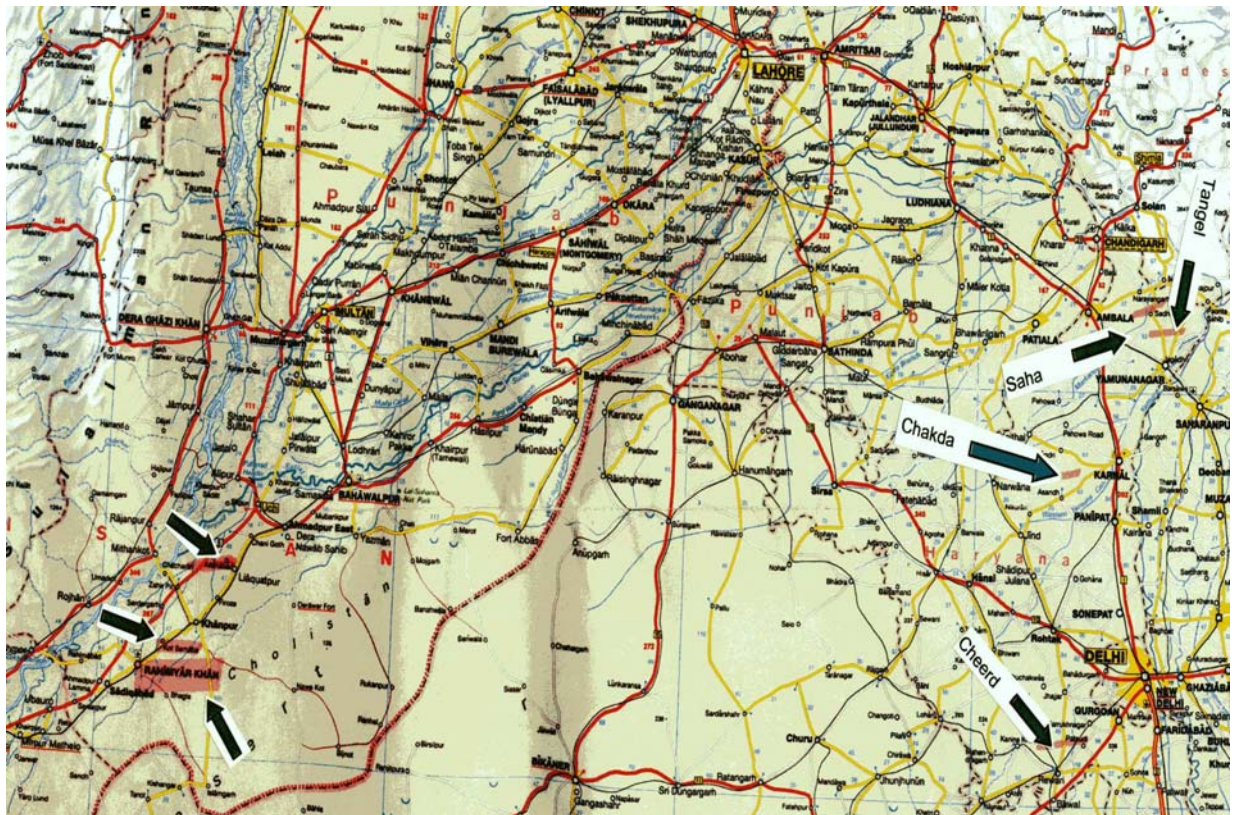
My passion for photography provided a means to illustrate the shared past of the core South Asians communities, Muslim, Hindu & Sikh. The project entailed reflecting the mood arising from the legacy of embedded architectural history within the exchanged homes and villages of some communities in both India and Pakistan. I chose the medium of black & white photography to create a bold visual record of one of the legacies from the partition and forced migration events. The aims of the expedition were to:

- Locate former family homes in India and compare with resettled homes in Pakistan
- Produce high quality medium format monochrome prints to highlight form of buildings and hopefully to interpret and reflect an essence of previous occupants.
- Produce gallery standard images for exhibition purposes.

## 3.0 Methodology & Planning

Prior to undertaking the actual expedition, a small amount of planning and preparation was required as locations to be visited in India had not been visited by any family member or friends since 1947. Figure 2 shoes the areas visited in both India & later Pakistan.

Figure 2 Route Map



### 3.1 Planning phase

Initially, direct face to face interviews were planned with relatives in Pakistan. However, this was not possible as there were concerns that having a visa from Pakistan could create difficulties in securing a visa for entering India. Thus it was that India became my first destination for exploration. Phone calls were duly made to Pakistan and several telephone interviews were held with elderly relatives. This information was contrasted and compared with that originally been provided by my father and later my mother, both young refugees in 1947. This process helped to establish and clarify locations, dwelling details, socio-economic status and other factors that were reported to exist in India pre 1947.

To enhance and socially expand this expedition's locus, two archive sources were consulted. Firstly the British Library's Indian Office Records, was visited. Here I came across census maps, Gazettes & Journals. The Gazettes were the most useful as will be discussed in later parts of this report. Secondly the Royal Geographical Society and its Expedition Advisory Centre was consulted. This however did not yield historic information relating to the subject area pre-partition.

### 3.2 Field phase

Once in the field, I would ask to meet the oldest non refugee residents as they could provide first hand knowledge of the village prior to migration and influx. These prove to be a useful technique. The types of dwellings recorded are summarised in section 4.

## 4.0 Part 1 India

I arrived in Delhi and the smells and traffic chaos were remarkably similar to those experienced during past visits. This initial phase of the expedition was completed in October 2006 safely after the monsoon.

I spent one evening with Fiaz Khan's family which was located in a desirable housing society adjacent to the favoured backpacker ghetto of Paharghanj. Fiaz Khan an international renowned Tabla master is a highly regarded accompanist in India and it was a privilege to receive his family's hospitality. In the blue gloom of fluorescent lighting, he proceeded to warn me that there were some risks in what I was planning to undertake. Essentially the India Pakistan crisis that summer had reached a new low; there was no certainty as what could happen if I was in the wrong place. In a situation like this, he advised me to be careful as I could easily be arrested for having Pakistani connections. I was advised not to mention any connection with Pakistan in any of my conversations. Basically my story should be that after partition, my family had moved to the UK and we had no connections with Pakistan. A combination of jet lag and gloom made this cautious advice sound depressingly reasonable.

A plan was thus conceived to start with the most northern village Saha, (my fathers) near Ambala and work our way south via Karnal to my mother place then back to Delhi then south towards Gurgaon, the new IT outsourcing capital, (i.e. call centre town), where my uncles dubious family mansion or *Havelli* was reportedly located.

Riaz Khan, the eldest son, classically trained singer and teacher, organised a driver, Kishore. He advised me to pay little attention to Kishore's tales, avoid drink and do not pay the entire driving fee up front, (yet to be arranged). He was booked for 7.30am the next day.

I arrived early at the Khan's residence, but the day started late. After several *chai*, ubiquitous sweet, aromatic milky tea, omelettes and toast, we decided to call Kishore. At 8.30 we called Kishore and were told he was having a bath. Kishore arrives, a small balding man with a slight build and a pencil thin moustache. He assures me that we will do it all in a day and be back for dinner. I tell him there's no hurry. The sky is clear and it was getting hot as we started to drive north out of Delhi. The squalor increased as we left central Delhi and headed towards the

northern suburbs; shanty towns and municipal landfills where new Indian migrant communities had settled. Tree planting along the Northern Highway were eucalyptus and agriculture such as wheat was dominant. Several road safety signs were repeated along the highway and at the back of Lorries, many in English such as the classic *Give Horn Please* or *Whisky risky on roads*. A few Mughal dome shaped structures, marking the old trading route were still to be found on the roadside in various states of decay.

On the first morning, Kishore assured me he knew the route as his in-laws lived in Karnal which was half way towards Ambala, our first destination. Doubts began to arise when I asked him to turn off according to the road map along the route. Looking past the map on several occasions, I realised he could not read the map, preferring to rely on his sense of the route. Soon we were lost and had to rely on locals to navigate us. Whilst this was enjoyable; we were mostly welcomed at every roadside or by passing cyclists. The journey began to take a tortuous route as the directions we were given were not linear. As a travel companion, Kishore proved to be a good entertainer which I thought to my dread would be my role as an overseas passenger. He clearly liked an audience although most of his conversation centred on past sexual exploits and forbidden romance, which all seemed rather dubious. Whilst this was initially entertaining, after an hour or so, it gradually became tedious.

#### **4.1 Profile: Father's Family – Saha Village, Ambala**

Location: Past Ambala city, east of village Peepal Tala then Saha Village. The house had a big courtyard or *daira*.

Property: Small & *kutchra* (mud/ clay)

Family: Great Grandparents Rao Rahim Baksh aka 'Deero'. Great Grandfather Wali Mohamed, Grandfather Rao/ Rana Latif

##### **4.1.1 Findings**

When I arrived at Saha Village, I began to slowly feel an odd mix of emotions, such as disbelief at being there, privilege, honour and mild anticipation of a hostile reception. The village has as usual quiet road that leads from the main road, most homes were a mixture of single and two story concrete blocks. We consult, (i.e. wake up) several elderly gentlemen lying on traditional woven beds, or *manja* outside their homes. My apprehension begins to melt as they have no hostile reaction to my questions about Muslim homes. I believe this must be related to the easier pace of rural life. Eventually we are led to Somnath Ram's house. We first met his two sons and their wives, and then he emerged from the house. He was middle aged, very courteous and eager to help, however we first had to decline the numerous offers of lunch, tea then lunch again. Firstly he had a think about the older generation then we were taken to meet the village *Numberdhar* or record keeper, Harbans Singh.

We enter a modern house with an iron gate decorated with a swastika. We were invited into the living room where we are introduced to Harbans Singh, a tall elderly gentleman with a long white wispy beard. Again he was extremely courteous and we were urged to have lunch and stay at least a few days. A young Sikh boy enters the room silently and offers stainless steel tumblers of cool water. I hesitate, momentarily thinking of bottled water but then sip slowly. He recites the family names and admits that he was a refugee from Lala Musa Village in Pakistani Gujarat. As I was asking questions, he was consulting his note address book. It was then I noticed his handwriting was in Urdu. I queried this and was told that Urdu was his first language at school along with Persian and Punjabi. I asked to take his portrait which he duly obliged. Meanwhile Kishore was out looking for food and came back with biscuits which he shared out. I had a piece but it was stale so I foolishly put the remainder in my pocket. Harbans Singh and Somnath agree on who I need to meet and we, an ever growing number of persons proceed on a tour of the village which involves several introductions with all the indigenous old timers, most of whom, when interviewed could not remember a thing (presumably due to old age). We then drive about 200m or less towards the bazaar, which are an open air affair and not the classic narrow alleyway with covered roofing. Our first stop, a dry food store where on a mat sat an elderly man, he cannot remember; another house but

nobody was in, then to a tailors where three elderly gentlemen are sitting. They appear too young to be able to help, but give off an air of suspicious when I mention London.

Finally we were led to Tejh Ram, a retired *Lala* or money lender who it was claimed had knowledge of Muslim inhabitants. He was asleep in a small brick built *daira*, the size of a double room with two single *manja*. We were asked to sit on the free bed opposite. As he slept, he was covered in a silver veneer of light entering the doorway; it was like a silver line that faintly quavered with his slight breathing.

It felt awkward asking to wake him however, once woken he began with the recollection that the village was predominantly Muslim Rajput in those days, which was correct. He then recalled my grandparent's clan and the locality and type construction which again was correct. This created an overwhelming moment of emotion. He was blind and very elderly, however I felt a connection as he slowly recalled this old time. He told us that our homes had been cleared many years ago and the site was now occupied by the Krishna Mandir. During my preparations, my mother had told me that my father's family were not well off in India and had borrowed against their meagre land assets from village money lenders. As a result they did not have a solid house and were of a lower economic standing than my mother's family. It was odd that I was now meeting the very people who had facilitated my grandfather's family into debt lifestyle.

We visited the Mandir where again we were offered lunch and tea by the priest. The temple was rather ordinary with very plain buildings and zero character. Permission was given to photograph the site. A new, but polite crowd gathered whilst I set up the cameras. I deliberately used distortions using standard camera movements whilst maintaining true verticals. This location yielded what I still consider my strongest and favourite image; the home now Hindu temple.

There were 4 Mosques in the village, all in advanced states of ruin. On one street leading to the first Mosque there was a row of four mansions of Havellis, all abandoned and in quite a state of ruin. Each was built using the distinctive thin brick with ornate door arches and decorative features typical of the north Indian Havelli genre. The mosque at this locality was inspected in detail. It was raised from street level with steps at the entrance. One outer wall had partially collapsed. On the inside, the courtyard area was overgrown with trees and bushes. It had a well in which a puppy had fallen and was trapped. Whilst I was inside I was told to get out as there were snakes. The mother was seen wandering in and out of the arches attending to the other pups that could also be heard. The building itself was partly demolished and there was the distinct smell of decaying flesh. The atmosphere and impression was bleak and reflective of the legacy of demographic engineering.

We found a second mosque that looked, at least inhabited as there was a clothes line with washing lain out for drying. I asked my entourage who lived there but got no straight answer. I climbed the few tile decorated steps and came across a woman having a traditional shower using buckets; we both froze in embarrassment which felt like a few moments. I quickly retreated but took a few frames using the handheld camera once outside. This seemed better than prolonging any embarrassment by setting up the view camera. Meanwhile another polite crowd had gathered outside. It became clear to me that this site was now home to landless, lower caste family who had managed to acquire a roof over their heads.

Contrary to what I had expected, the atmosphere and warmth of the first location prove to be overwhelming. There was no real sense of threat or risk, just mild curiosity and persistent questions around the theme of..... 'So you are really not from Pakistan?'

One curious feature of the village was the Muslim Shrine of Dharga Pir Nath Khan Shah. I asked the locals why this site was so well maintained as there were flowers, bright paint, devotees and oil burners at the entrance. I was told that these sites were considered sacred and desecration was thought to be a sin and a harbinger of bad luck. We talk to a blind man whom



we help to sit down on a *manja* under a tree. He said the shrine was well attended and respected by locals.

#### **4.2 Profile: Distant Grandfather, Tangel Village, Ambala**

Location: 25km from Barwa Station, past Maulana Sher 8km to Tangel. Village had four Minars (or Burjs) in village.

Property: Big tree in courtyard of house.

Family: Safraz Patwari/ Noor Mohamed Patwari

Neighbours next door were four brothers; Santo, Sadhu, Atta, Babu. Another nearby neighbour was called Murshi Nanak

##### **4.2.1 Findings**

Enquiries and the reception at this village were disappointing. Nobody was willing to help and we were treated as a curiosity and bemusement when we mentioned we were looking for Muslim homes or their family friends. Eventually an older gentleman named Ram, offered to help and he told us that the neighbours we were looking for had all died and that there were no more homes or Mosque to be found. These had been levelled years ago. Ram stated that Muslim homes were generally of mud and not pukka (i.e. solid or brick built). This was correct as it matched what I had been told by my cousins' grandfather.

Again a Mazar or shrine of a Muslim Baba was found in the village in perfect condition and fully operational. It was a simple grave in one metre high walled enclosure with a gate and green flags at each corner decorated with gold tinsel. One gentleman emerged from the crowd that had gathered and made an offer of lunch, however the mood of the village, who by this time were quite sizable and not too welcoming. He then began to insist that we were from Pakistan which started to annoy me. Kishore appeared as eager as I was to leave. We said we were finished and began to reverse the car out of the village through a herd of buffaloes which had appeared whilst virtually the whole village looked on. Kishore remarked that this place was a typical village where there had been 'zero progress' in the mentality of the inhabitants. Lunch was a sad affair of bland dhals taken at *dabas* or roadside dinners, (see section 6), but always accompanied by Kishore's tales of sex, money and bravado.

#### **4.3 Profile: Mother's Family - Chakda, Karnal**

Location: District Karnal, Block Nissang

Property: Havelli with four-five homes enclosed. Next door to Mosque

Family: Grandfather Sharif from the Dade Family (four brothers)

##### **4.3.1 Findings**

Travelling south from the Ambala region, we stayed overnight in Karnal to allow a convenient route to Chakda village some 20km east. I booked into a largish four floor hotel. The staff were remarkably surly and there was a wedding on in the adjoining hall. I spent the evening at Kishore's in laws avoiding the return to the hotel, the grubby interior and the wedding ambience. The in-laws family home was in an old quarter with many magnificent Havellis and shop houses belonging, I was told, to Jains. Their modest two room home was in a private courtyard located on the top floor. The in-laws were strict vegetarians so there was no arguing about eating meat. Dinner was cauliflower and potato eaten on the roof, on a *manja* with candles as lighting and served on stainless steel plates with yoghurt on the side. This was one of the most memorable meals of the trip; it tasted so much like my mothers.

After a largely sleepless night owing to the wedding party and the shrill sounds of the brass band, we got off to another late start. Soon we were out of Karnal and lost despite going over the route with the in-laws and my map. I told Kishore that I was not happy with his driving and his claims about knowing the area.

We soon started to ask locals the way. This prove to be quite simple and we found Chakda village which had a straight 1 mile road as an approach. A temple, bleached white by the sun was seen straight ahead and I wandered if that was the former Mosque. Initial enquiries were

straightforward and we were taken to the house and *Daira* of Sardar Bagwan Singh. We first had *chai*, biscuits (which were crisp) and a chat about who we were and then we began to listen to them.

No *Numberdhar* was available neither were there any elderly people native to the area available to talk to. Mr Singh however was able to verify some locations. After his family fled west Punjab, he was born in 1950 and spent 3 years in a refugee camp in nearby Patiala, Haryana. His son Dhaljit Singh, in his 40s agreed to be our guide. Meanwhile Kishore began to complain about the influence of the evil eye and requested some mustard oil and a small oil burner so he could remove the mild curse. We all watched from the beds in the afternoon sun as he co-opted some children to be his assistants and proceeded to burn the oil, recite some mantras then throw the burning oil against the wall. The flickering flame he said prove how strong the curse was and he felt better shortly afterwards.

Dhaljit Singh recommended and pointed out three of sites adjacent to the former Mosque which was now the village Gurdawara. Judging by its size it was quite a sizable building with minarets reaching 15m. The first site was largely rubble and was being used as the *Langhar* or the Gurdawaras communal kitchen. The 2<sup>nd</sup> site immediately behind was then visited and we were told that this had several homes with one left intact that was now a store house. This matched my mother's description and it soon became clear by the thin brick outlines that there had been several other buildings on the outer courtyard wall. I felt distinctly underwhelmed at being at my mother home. Whilst I set up the camera and took several pictures; Dhaljit Singh said he had to get back to his fields and left us to explore. We thanked him for his help and kindness.

The third property was partly occupied and we saw a woman in one of the houses near the entrance of the courtyard. She refused to come out when we called out. The rear end of the house backed up to the Gurdawara and the older single story house was still standing. We entered the courtyard and had a look around; I took some photos and then had a closer look at the older home. It was being used as a store room. I decided to leave as there was not much that held my interest. Upon leaving we started to get an earful from the woman who began to complain that we had no right to enter her home. We mentioned Dhaljit Singh, but her complaining got louder and louder and she eventually came out and began to escort us out of the courtyard. Others had soon gathered and we decided to get back to the car briskly. As we were loading the car we decided to pay a visit to Mr Singh, but they had locked up and presumably returned to the fields. A young man appeared as we were loading and demanded to know what we were up to. We told him about Dhaljit Singh, but then Kishore started a story about writing a book and the BBC. Kishore then flashed a press card and pointed adamantly to a *press* sticker on his car boot window. This seemed to work and we quickly drove off with Kishore being very indignant at such villager's attitudes.

On the way out we noticed a roadside Mazar, a simple affair consisting of a cement covered grave on a raised ledge with a few oil burners. I asked to stop the car and ask some locals clustered around a small shop about it. One young man in his thirties, Safdar Khan, in a quiet voice said it was the shrine of Malik Shah and the devotees were from all communities. There were Muslims still in the locality he stated, but not in these immediate villages. He wanted to show us Amupur as it had many former Muslim properties. We accepted his offer and gave him a lift which he appreciated. Indeed upon entering nearby Amupur, there were several magnificent Havellis now occupied by new owners and a ruined Mosque. The reception was much more subdued perhaps as we did not have a point of reference other than coming to take a look in a car and carrying cameras. Several kids were beginning to annoy Kishore as they were getting to close to his car, he lost his temper but some adults standing nearby did not seem to mind.

That afternoon Kishore appears happy as we are returning to Delhi after a few days away and he will have money to spend. He recalls that he has slept with 400-500 girls but only remembers 5. Many stories and exploits are recounted on the lorry congested Northern Highway back to Delhi. We stop at the famous *achar* or Asian pickle factory, the Pachranga or

five colours brand in Panipat. This was the very town famed for its historical battles between various invaders and rulers of medieval Delhi. I picked up a few jars of mixed vegetable pickle and jams for friends in Delhi and for Kishore's family.

#### 4.4 Uncle Sardar's Family – Cheerdh Village, Khalilpur

Location: 2km West of Khalilpur Station, then Cheerd

Property: Nage Havelli

Family: Subhedar Rehmatulla Tahkur Murad Khan & Ashraf Khan

##### 4.4.1 Findings

On day four after a nights rest in Delhi and retelling my tales to the Khans, we made preparations for the final location. I was told by Riaz not to pay all the balance to Kishore as he would end up drinking it and fail to show for the last stage of the trip.

Travelling south of Delhi the highways starts quickly and is more like an expressway with maintained vegetation and no encroachment. We are soon travelling through construction sites of elevated and half prepared highways, the traffic combined with the heat and smog is unpleasant and tiring. There is that ever present odour of sewage and *pan* or betel leaf. Gurgaon the shining modern capital of high tech outsourcing appears. Initially its all high rise offices blocks, but the shanty towns, broken roads, no sewers, no clear sense of land planning coupled with people everywhere and traffic congestion bring things back into perspective. Minibuses with company logos could be seen bussing in *IT specialists*, i.e. call centre workers to various buildings offering bright futures in outsourcing.

We get lost as usual and have to double back and pay a second toll. I am unhappy as I complained about the route which he also claimed to know well. We had a big row and Kishore becomes indignant and wants me to get out of his car. He claims he is not a driver now and only does this work as a favour. I calm things down, but begin to bear a grudge. Later when I give my report to the Khans of the final part of the trip they become iridescent with rage. Riaz wants to go round and teach him a lesson for being so rude to their guest. I fear this could get out of hand even if they manage to find Kishore that night. I decline their kind offer and insist it was a small incident that did not matter as I had completed my work.

The journey away from the southern highway towards Rewari and Cheerd becomes rustic again, eucalyptus lines roads, heavy lorry traffic, agricultural fields and brick huts with beautifully hand painted product advertisements for items such as industrial weed killers, soaps and water pumps. Eventually we get to Khalilpur town. Local men, in their 50s are squatting on walls or benches drinking *chai* in small thick greenish blue glass tumblers. They confirm Cheerd village is second on the right etc, etc. I get a sense of an easy going place and our row seems like it occurred at least yesterday. We arrive at a small village and are taken to meet a man identified as the landlord Mange Ram. We find an elderly man lying on his *manja* in his courtyard. He recalls the family and recalls that the Khans, my uncle's family were big people in their day. He insists that we are his guests and that we stay a few days. We accost a couple of youths, both skinny and shy who both share the front seat and act as guides.

The Havelli was lying a mile or so out of the village. My sense of surprise begins to grow. I had hitherto treated my uncle's claim about his elevated family background with a degree of scepticism. We drive through high sugar cane fields and turn a corner and in front of us emerge large crumbling blocks backlit by the afternoon sun. There are four large two story buildings with magnificent Mughal style entrances sadly with the doors missing. The impression is one of wonder at the decayed grandeur; I feel I owe my uncle an apology for those moments of scepticism. I begin to reflect on how traumatic it must have been for his family to have lost so much. There is almost complete silence around us as the afternoon sun peaks. We start to wander around the ruins, but are told by the boys that snakes are in the buildings. There is a small Mosque with its roof collapsed, a large overgrown stone lined pond the size of a two tennis courts with two ornate stone pavilions located along one bank. Despite

the sadness of its decay and quiet ruin, the grounds managed to appear very decadent. There was single domed white *Mazar* located next to the pond, in perfect condition. All around amongst the grass and weeds are shards of old floors tiles and floor slabs amongst sheep droppings. This gives an impression of the grand scale of the site and its subsequent ruin. It shared something with a neglected archaeological site from war zone.

Nearby there is the tinkle of cattle and sheep bells and several shepherds emerge. Relying on their curiosity we quickly manage to make our introductions. One middle aged shepherd provides a history and points to the building next to the ruined Mosque. It turns out to be the Gurdawara. Both buildings lie next to each other in quiet ruin and are a testament to communal violence. It appears that the new Sikh occupants arriving in 1948 may have destroyed the Mosque. Or in 1984 following the anti Sikh pogroms that coincided with the assassination of Indira Gandhi, everything of their homes was destroyed by the organised mobs that embarked on that particular program. Some farmers have ploughed the land all around the site like an encroaching sea, but it appears nobody wants to get too close to the place as it is menaced by bad luck. I ask the shepherds about who carried out the massacre in 1984; they reply simply that it was outsiders from Congress. I ask to take their portrait with the *Mazar* as backdrop. This setting was used as a mixed portrait with the two shepherds blurred in the foreground and the *Mazar* forming the background.

I set up the camera at several other locations in the grounds whilst Kishore took off with the youths to start up the *tubewell* or water pump house so we can all have a cooling plunge. Kishore speaks for the group now in his y-fronts and urges me to join them. I politely decline on several occasions and wander amongst the ruins. They return shortly afterwards, and the boys look bored. I tip the shy boys some rupees and they quietly sulk off to the village. We eventually return to the village and notice another *Mazar* with a large graveyard attached. The entrance is very ornate and one grave has a sheet over it which gives the impression of upkeep. We find Mange Ram still on his bed and he begins to fill in some gaps to the areas history. Suberdhar Rehmatulla family were extremely wealthy landlords and the father was an officer in the British Army. They all fled in 1947 to Pakistan and in 1948 Paker Singh's family took possession of the property. I recalled electric wiring that I had seen hanging from some walls and through broken ceilings in the larger buildings. This must have been remnants from their habitation showing aspects of modernisation.

## 5.0 Part 2 - Pakistan

The final part of the expedition was in all senses easier as it has already been visited as a child and there would be ample assistance. However, there would discoveries and surprises which had previously been overlooked. This final part of the expedition took place in February 2007.

### 5.1 Profile: Father's Family Kot Samaba

Location: Kot Samaba Town, Southern Punjab

Properties: New constructions in concrete and brick with many surviving Havellis resettled  
And others abandoned and in slow ruin.

Families: Various Muslim Rajput families

The Punjab Gazetteer for Bahawalpur State (1904) records Kot Samaba with a population of 1269. These were mostly Kurrars who were Hindus belonging to sub castes such as Bhattias and Banias. Their forte was commerce and their shops sold on a credit system. Rice was noted as a major crop.

In Kot Samaba I was urged to meet a local man. This occurred shortly afterwards and I was kindly assisted with information provided by Mohamed Iqbal, a local amateur historian and his communist son, Ali Murad. As natives of the area, they were not refugees from India and would know a lot more than the residents whose homes I would photograph. Iqbal stated that the Hindu population of Kot Samaba were landed gentry with commercial interests in the form of shops and land. They departed peacefully, largely without incident and ended up in Delhi. The indigenous Muslim population of Kot Samaba and its surrounds were largely landless and

formed a labouring class. Ali wanted me to meet his uncle a local labour organiser for the People Labour Bureau. This would have been very insightful, but sadly there was not enough time.

Unlike what I had previously understood about allocation of vacated homes; I was told that many Havellis had stood empty for years until they were bought. I was told that my grandfather was an entrepreneur who steadily managed to build up capital from small trading and soon bought a Havelli which was subsequently demolished and replaced with brick and concrete style houses.

### 5.1.1 Findings

I consciously shifted the focus of my methodology whilst in Pakistan. Rather than restrict my photos to family homes, I widened it now to include buildings that were to me, objects of beauty or those that also possessed character and mood.

The first house we visited was Asaf Ali's House which had a Mandir in the basement. The key reason for selecting this Havelli was its magnificent entrance; ornately carved brick and plaster with thick decorated wooden doors. The courtyard led first to an area for animals and then to a large two building house at the rear in the shade of a large tree. This family arrived from the city of Jhallunder in East Punjab and moved into the property in 1964. Numerous statues were found when a secret passage way was discovered leading from a concealed cellar. This had given the house its fame for some time a few years ago. We had a look but the stairwell did not look safe enough to enter.

The most memorable building was the former school. According to Iqbal, it was built in 1866 and was an administration office for British, then later converted to a school. However some people claimed it was the old caravanserai whilst others insisted that it had been demolished. Nonetheless, this building in its quiet grounds had a hold on me. I returned to this building over several days. It was two stories with several archways creating a magnificent fascia with decorative brickwork adorning the arches and windows on the second floor and characteristic domed recesses for oil lamps. Goats and cats were wandering amongst the debris of the grounds. The exterior stairwell had partially collapsed.

The town's Mandir was no longer in existence and according to Iqbal was believed to be somewhere in the locality of the school grounds.

Three of the finest surviving Havellis were picked out and my cousin Shaheed, with minimal arrangements allowed me access. This was a simple exercise; Shaheed would knock on a door which would be a warning that men were coming in and that any women should be in *purdah* or removed from public view. As they were Rajput caste from the same villages in India, this made access so much easier. Each was three stories tall with a small courtyards and heavy wooden entrance doors intricately carved.

The Havelli of the Lodi family was also visited as a recommendation from Shaheed and party. Its inner fascia was photographed. On each side of the inner buildings entrance were outlines of domed shaped recesses, but larger than those used for oil burner. These we were told had religious statues in them but had subsequently been cemented. The roofs still showed tiles and dark wooden beams. Former prayer areas made by indentations into interior walls were in evidence. The property according to Iqbal was at least 110 years old.

### 5.2 Profile: Mother's Family Allahabad

Location: Allahabad Town, Southern Punjab

Properties: New constructions in concrete and brick with many fine surviving Havellis

Families: Various Muslim Rajput families

Punjab Gazetteers for Bahawalpur State (1904), lists the town as having mixed dwellings of both brick (pukka) and mud (kutcha). The city was named by the Nawab in 1729. The bazaar

was in existence running North to South. Rice was the main export crop. The population was then recorded at 2800.

The wealth of the town was held by traders who shared the similar socio economic make up as those in Kot Samaba; wealth was largely concentrated amongst the indigenous Hindu Kirtar community. This was reflected in the grandeur of the Havellis, most of which were now in an advanced state of ruin.

### 5.2.1 Findings

The plan was to photograph my mother's family home and anything else that came along. During my visit to Allahabad, I was continually being introduced to new uncles or cousins, who inevitably created the tea and lunch, stand off. My aunty was visited and we stayed there for lunch. Despite my protestations she made chicken etc. After eating we set out on our expedition, too full to accept any offers of *chai* and biscuits.

We were denied access to one house in which we were told had a small Mandir. Indeed as we approached the whitewashed house with the beautiful Mughal style doorway and high walls it suggested something grander than just a private house. The original wood carved door had been painted sky blue which gave it the Greek postcard look. The house was occupied by a Pathan family. The man of the house, a large bearded Pathan took umbrage at our suggestion of a Mandir so we quickly decided to let it go.

A walk through the old bazaar was quite revealing. Like Kot Samaba it was old and of the shop house style with open fronts, thin ledges for seating at the entrance and shuttered windowed rooms above. All of those which were open had gone through new ownership post 1947. We asked a few traders about the Mandir's location. One old timer said it was round the corner, but had been demolished years ago. On further questioning it turned out that this had actually been a mosque belonging to the Ismailis, a Shia sect. This sort of attitude and quality of information would not prove worthwhile so I soon gave up on the search for the Mandir or anything not orthodox. My mother's house was duly photographed and then some better shots were taken from other Rajput Havellis of the town's skyline showing layers of decay and ruin.

### 5.3 Profile: Uncle's Family Rahim Yar Khan

Location: Rahim Yar Khan City, Southern Punjab

Properties: New constructions in concrete and brick with a few surviving Havellis

Families: Various family homes.

Punjab Gazetteers for Bahawalpur State (1904) mentions little of this town or its socio economic profile. What was noticeable on my visit was the age of the old bazaar and its size. Clearly there was wealthy population of Hindu traders who had developed this bazaar and town pre 1947. According to the Gazettes, Muslims tended to be landless and had occupations such as weavers, shoe makers, carpenters and artisans. Sikhs were the farming class.

### 5.3.1 Findings

My uncle's house, new build from the 1960s was not considered interesting subject matter. There were other Havellis which had clearly been subject to repopulation and one of these was approached and pictures taken with the kind permission of the occupants. Again there was an insistence that we stay for *chai pani*; lit. food and water.

With the help of Shaheed's jeweller friends and after several *chai*, we were taken to Mohalla Khanji, the Hindu quarter and later we visited the Mandir. After much confusion we found both the Ram Dev Mandir (rebuilt after demolition by a mob in retaliation to the 1992 Babri Mosque demolition in India) and a Hindu shrine with a sizable population of local devotees. I was then introduced to Lilla Ram, a 30 something Jeweller. I asked some basic questions concerning the fate of the departed Hindu population and their past socio economic position. With some irony I was told that the wealth of the town was held in the hands of the Hindu traders who were noted for their shrewd business skills and meanness. The whole bazaar was indeed theirs. The age of

the bazaar did indeed reflect and older history. Ram said they fled in fear of their lives after 1947. I was not given a reason for his family's decision to stay though.

Whilst wandering the old quarter, we came across a tall thin three storey Havelli occupied by the Abdul Ghaffour family. He was of the Jhat caste, who are agricultural, but tend to be predominantly followers of the Sikh faith. His family were refugees from Mugha Village, Firozpur, East Punjab. He allowed me to photograph him in front of his home once we managed to move the very heavy washing machine out of the way.

#### 5.4 Lahore

Two days were spent in Lahore after completing the core works in central Pakistan. I spent my daylight time with Saba Samee; an architectural restorer who had worked on UNICEF funded projects such as the restoration of the *Mothi Mahal* or Pearl Palace at the Red Fort. She kindly introduced me to architect Hafiz Arif & draughtsperson Amjad Pervaiz, both of whom worked for the State Government's Department of Archaeology, based at the Red Fort. I was kindly offered the services of her driver and immensely enjoyable lunches with her ex-colleagues at the Fort. This period is discussed further in Section 8.

### 6.0 Technical Issues

Thankfully there were no technical issues that were not easily manageable. Language spoken throughout the trip was Urdu and Hindi with little to separate the two in my mind. Having knowledge of language allowed a deeper understanding of people and their stories. However the following are worth noting.

#### 6.1 Film

BW film is stable and will tolerate temperatures above 20°C, which would make the use of slide film risky as its emulsions become unstable. However, to keep costs down, I took a gamble and opted for local processing BW film in both India & Pakistan. I made several enquiries prior to departure and contacted several photographers in India. The common recommendation was Mahatta in Connaught. True to their word there were no problems with the quality of their service, which was in fact comparable to London's pro labs. Sadly in Pakistan the availability of pro labs was more difficult and I decided not to take a chance and opted to take my last batch of film back to London. Given the choice again, I would look into the possibilities of using a digital back with the same cameras or a combination of the two.

#### 6.2 Food & Health

Food and eating remain a passion for me both at home and away. Eating, its planning and the act has become a dominant feature of my life when at home; when travelling across the UK for work or abroad. From past experience, food hygiene was a concern and would have to be managed partly by luck.

Food in Haryana, India was generally vegetarian food eaten either at homes or at roadside cafes or *dhabas*. Breakfast at homes or cafes was *chai*, *parathas* and *achar* layered buttered chapattis served with mixed pickles, toast and butter or omelettes made with green chillies and fresh coriander. Lunch and dinner generally consisted of a wide variety of dhals; black, green, brown, red, orange, yellow or white and sometimes with white cheese or *paneer*. Classic dishes were *sag paneer*, mustard greens and white cheese or *rajma*, kidney beans.

As I was with friends or family in Pakistan and at times in India, from experience this meant the prospect of being treated like a guest. The downside was that meat dishes would be lovingly and enthusiastically prepared at every meal opportunity. Upon arrival I declared myself a vegetarian causing immediate bemusement and much consternation in the kitchens of my Muslim hosts and their wives.

Lahore seems to consider itself, like Glasgow as a food capital. In Glasgow's case its regard for the quality of its curries are simply delusional. Cities like Bradford, Manchester, Leicester Leeds, Birmingham are miles ahead when it comes to offering excellent Indian cuisine. Sadly

nobody has had the heart to tell Glasgow that they really need to get out more. Lahore suffers a similar condition as it too is unable to offer sufficient substance to back up its claims. Having been to most ASEAN countries, I have found a real outside food culture with crucial elements such as quality, choice, presentation and innovation. Despite the city hype, the company in Lahore made up for the predictable retinue of meat dishes. Certain classics are worth mentioning; deep fried spicy catfish, lamb karahis, (wok style) with grated ginger, *tandoori rotis* or breads and the anytime snack favourite; vegetable samosas with *channa dhal* sauce or mashed chick peas best enjoyed at the Red Fort in the company of local staff.

Unlike Glasgow, most Lahoris and for that matter Pakistanis do not have the luxury of travel or the experience of a truly cosmopolitan eating culture, such as that found in parts of New Delhi, so they are at a real disadvantage.

Based on past experience of the area, I contracted food poisoning, but fortunately this occurred at the end of my Indian trip, which coincided with the completion of my field work. I was struck down with classic food poisoning symptoms and altered consciousness that lasted two long days. To my surprise, no similar illness occurred in Pakistan, despite the similar cultural landscape.

## **7.0 Findings**

The project has been successful in achieving the exploration's set project aims. It has also made a worthy contribution to south Asian art via the integration of exploration, historiography, photography & architecture. My lasting impression of visiting these sites and the people was that living amongst ruins and recycled homes; each possessing its own vague past belonging to others, people on both sides of the border accepted their surroundings. More specifically I found that many families belonging to the Muslim Rajput caste had been resettled in Allahabad from Chakda in India. The same was noted in Kot Samaba. This suggests that resettlement on both sides of the border post 1947 was largely determined on a caste, clan and regional basis.

### **7.1 Risks & Realities**

One mild concern was the potential for adverse or sectarian reactions upon arrival at the cleared villages of Haryana, India. This risk did not occur despite precautionary advice from my hosts the Khans in New Delhi and the depressing state of relations between Pakistan & India last year. My trip to India coincided with a series of bombings in Bombay. I was warned to be very careful when entering each village and not to mention any connection with Pakistan as this could arouse suspicion and invite the unwelcome attention of the local police. A common complaint was that Muslims were not always looked upon favourably by the law. My encounters and treatment as a Muslim were good natured from villagers who acted out of the desire to help. As would be expected, basic hospitality in villages was encountered almost everywhere, such as being invited into homes and being offered food and water at each stop.

### **7.2 Muslim Shrines in India**

One curious and contradictory finding was that despite the destruction and desecration of mosques in the repopulated villages visited in Haryana, there was ample evidence that suggested a curious and singular respect for shrines belonging to Muslim holy men. In all Indian villages and along roadsides, such shrines were a common feature having more than survived the chaos of repopulation.

### **7.3 Sikh & Hindu Heritage in Pakistan**

The minority non Muslim population of Pakistan is circa <5%, however there is a substantial footprint of Non Muslim heritage though very variable in its preservation. There is important Sikh heritage in northern Punjab, Buddhist cities such as Taxilla and the very important Hindu sites such as the Indus Valley in Sind. The scale of ethnic cleansing that took place in most of Pakistan may explain in some instances why there was little trace of Sikh or Hindu temples in either the villages or towns vicinity surveyed or in Lahore. In the former these sites were presumably converted or demolished by incoming Muslim refugees from India post 1947.



Notwithstanding this finding, the heritage potential that Pakistan possesses is given further consideration in section 8.

#### 7.4 Conclusions

My conclusions revolve around the *why* and *what was achieved* by the pitiless division of people's hearts, homes and land. Firstly the hypothetical question is constantly raised, would we have been better off staying in India rather than being forced to migrate to Pakistan? Judging by the life experience of Indian Muslims, it is largely disturbing and not very encouraging. Pakistan however has managed to be just as disappointing and at times more unsafe for its minority Muslim ethnic groups including the *Muhajir* or Urdu speaking Indian Muslim refugee population and the Shia. Moreover Pakistan has acquired the *failed state* accolade and is far too regularly making the wrong kind of international headlines. Despite the region sharing very deep cultural bonds, the effect of religion in social life, once merged with politics often becomes a destructive or *communalistic* force leading to *riots*, aka pogroms. Religious and cultural bigotry is prevalent at all levels of south Asian society, its negative energy sadly permeating many aspects of South Asian life, culture and politics. Overall the divisions nurtured via religion and sustained in the political domain have hindered the socio-economic development and unity of the south Asian region. This factor makes the aspirations of South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation or SAARC, the loosely held regional federation of nation states more distant.

#### 8.0 Future Works

The project's completion and photographic output has been very rewarding. Apart from the personal sense of accomplishment, my work is planned for exhibition at two London spaces this year. Firstly Asia House ([www.asiahouse.org](http://www.asiahouse.org)) London's premier Asian art and culture venue will host circa 10 pieces in July & August. Secondly Imperial College will similarly provide exhibition space during the autumn term. Furthermore this project has been inspirational for developing new subject areas within photographically based exploration.

#### 8.1 Collaborative Projects

On my short trip to Lahore I took the opportunity to make contact with cultural heritage specialists who offered to assist me to take an initial look into this once mixed and culturally diverse city's past. With the kind assistance already mentioned, I spent two exciting days being given what felt like free reign to visit and document badly neglected or overlooked non Muslim sites. Where the opportunity arose, between the numerous *chai* and Tiffin moments, I managed to document one magnificent Mandir and associated shop houses (Mool Chand) and three key Sikh Gurdwaras normally closed to non Sikhs visitors. Thus the long term impact on the built fabric of Lahore following the emptying of its Sikh and Hindu inhabitants and subsequent re-population with Muslim refugees fleeing India would be a meaningful subject matter and project.

ICES' support for my first project has provided an opportunity for new areas of development. Firstly I intend to pursue a collaborative book based project. This would be with Heritage Foundation Pakistan which would photographically document important minority heritage sites across Pakistan. Secondly Heer productions in Glasgow, a Pakistani based film organisation have expressed an interest in my work and there is talk of seeking funding to develop a long term twin city project based on Glasgow and its affinity with Lahore. The aim at this stage is to follow in the spirit of this work and use Lahore, as a demographically reengineered city and mirror to Glasgow's Asian Diaspora.

#### 9.0 Accounts

ICES kindly awarded the project £1,500. This was duly supplemented by £500 from myself. No further money was raised; however the shortfalls have been made up by further contributions from myself. Full accounts details of proposed and actual are detailed in tables 1 & 2.

## 9.1 Original Fee Estimate

**Table 1 Proposed Budget**

| Item  | Unit Cost | Number         | Total Cost    |
|---|-----------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>TRAVEL</b>                                 |           |                |               |
| Flights rtn London –Delhi                     | £415      | 1              | £415          |
| Buses/Trains rtn North x2                     | £50       | 2              | £100          |
| Flights rtn London –Karachi                   | £510      | 1              | £510          |
| Buses/Trains rtn to Rahimyarkhan              | £30       | 1              | £30           |
| Misc. travel around each location & airports  | £50       | 2              | £100          |
| <b>EQUIPMENT</b>                              |           |                |               |
| Flex body used camera body                    | £990      | 1              | £990          |
| First aid supplies (estimate)                 | £5        | 1              | £5            |
| Film BW (15 x120 rolls)                       | £26*      | 1              | £26           |
| Film BW processing & contact (15 x rolls)     | £135      | 1              | £135          |
| Photographic printing final exhibition prints | 21*       | 10             | 210           |
| Spare Batteries light meter (x2)              | £5*       | 2              | £10           |
| <b>SUBSISTENCE</b>                            |           |                |               |
| Food in India up to 10 days x2 people         | £100      | 2              | £200          |
| Accommodation in India Delhi (up to 4 nights) | £10       | 4              | £40           |
| Accommodation in rural India (c10nights)      | £5        | 10             | £50           |
| Assistant labour fee - up to 10 days          | 15        | 10             | 150           |
| Assistant accommodation - up to 10 days       | 5         | 10             | 50            |
| Translator/ set up assistant                  |           | Included above |               |
| <b>OTHER</b>                                  |           |                |               |
| Visa for India 3 month                        | £60       | 1              | £60           |
| Visa for Pakistan - single entry              | £41       | 1              | £41           |
| Travel insurance                              | NA        |                | NA            |
| Report printing and binding                   | £100      | 1              | £100          |
| Misc. expedition expenses                     | £100      | 1              | £100          |
| <b>TOTAL*</b>                                 |           |                | <b>£3,395</b> |

## 9.2 Actual Expenditure

The actual shortfall anticipated was reduced by savings and economies made during both trips. The core shortfall would be created by the exhibition which at this stage was estimated to be circa £500 for image production and exhibition.

**Table 2 Actual Expenditure**

| <b>Item &amp; Detail</b>   | <b>Receipts*</b> | <b>Cost</b>     |
|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Linhof View Camera inc. P&P  | Yes              | 714.00          |
| Historical Map Northern Haryana, India                                     | Yes              | 26.50           |
| <b>Sub Total (Invoice 1)</b>   |                  | <b>740.50</b>   |
| Indian Visa  | No               | 30.00           |
| 20 Rolls BW film   | Yes              | 31.00           |
| Camera spares - 2 receipts (cleaning fluid, spare cable release & battery) | Yes              | 18.73           |
| Accommodation Delhi/ Haryana - 5 nights                                    | Estimate         | 60.00           |
| Food 5 days Delhi /Haryana   | Estimate         | 50.00           |
| Driver, Car Hire & Fuel 5 days   | Estimate         | 75.00           |
| Film Processing – Delhi 13 rolls & postcard prints                         | Yes              | 115.57          |
| Miscellaneous - transport in Delhi & to airport                            | Estimate         | 20.00           |
| 10 rolls B/W film for Pakistan part  | Yes              | 20.85           |
| <b>Sub Total (Invoice 2)</b>   |                  | <b>714.91</b>   |
| London Pakistan Rtn Air Fare   | Yes              | 494.70          |
| Pakistan Visa  | No               | 30.00           |
| Transport - Underground to Victoria  | NA               | 1.50            |
| Breakfast at Gatwick airport   | Yes              | 6.55            |
| Transport - train to Gatwick airport                                       | Yes              | 9.85            |
| Transport - Underground from Heathrow airport                              | NA               | 2.00            |
| <b>Sub Total (Invoice 3)</b>   |                  | <b>544.60</b>   |
| <b>Total Claimed</b>   |                  | <b>£2000.00</b> |
| Film Processing – 12 Rolls in London                                       | NA               | 120             |
| 8 No. Prints (£20 each)  | NA               | 160             |
| Presentation   | NA               | 50              |
| 8 No. Frames & Mounts  | NA               | 170             |
| Transport – 2 No. Mini Cabs trips  | TBC              | 50              |
| <b>Shortfall Total</b>   |                  | <b>£550</b>     |

### 10.0 Acknowledgements

Firstly to the ICES for their help and assistance throughout this venture. I also want to thank family in Pakistan, the people of Saha, Chakda & Cheered and the Khans in New Delhi. I also wish to thank the Yasmeen Lhari and Sabha Sama of Heritage Foundation Pakistan and my new friends at the Red Fort, Lahore.

### 11.0 References

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## 12.0 Selected Images from India

### 1. Abandoned & now squatted Mosque, Saha Village, Ambala, Hariyana



### 2. Site of my father's house now the Sri Krishna Temple, Saha Village, Ambala, Hariyana



3. Street view with line of Havellis ruins and mosque, Saha Village, Ambala, Hariyana



4. The only remains at my mother's family house, Chakda Village, Karnal, Hariyana



5. Dhaljit Singh at site of a former Havelli now the Langhar or Kitchen. Original rubble from Havelli in background. Chakda Village, Karnal, Hariyana



6. Remains of one Havelli entrance, Subedhar's Havelli Cheerd Village, Rewari, Hariyana



7. Shepherds in front of Mazar, Subedhhar's Havelli Cheerd Village, Rewari, Hariyana



8. Shepherd within family Mosque, Subedhhar's Havelli Cheerd Village, Rewari, Hariyana



9. Ruins of Lakeside Pavilion, Subedhar's Havelli, Cheerd Village, Rewari, Hariyana





### 13.0 Selected Images from Pakistan

1. The former serai or colonial administration building converted into a religious school and now abandoned, Kot Samaba, South Punjab



2. View of Havellis, Kot Samaba, South Punjab



3. View from Bazaar with Havelli, Kot Samaba, South Punjab



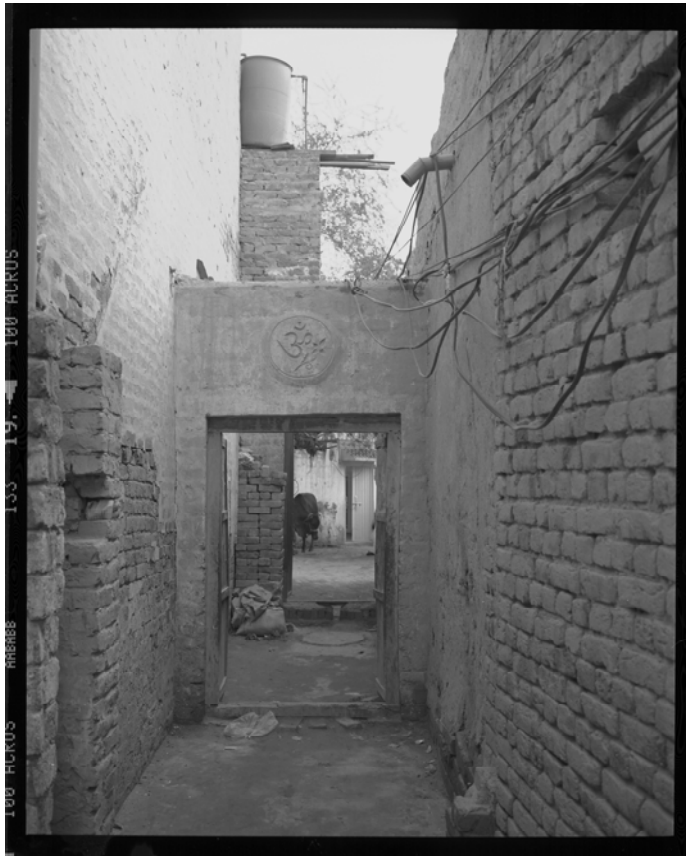
4. Mr Gaffour, a former refugee from east Punjab relocated in an evacuated Havelli in Rahim Yar Khan, South Punjab



5. The Masters House, a Havelli with an underground temple, Kot Samaba South Punjab



6. One entrance to the Hindu Quarter, Rahim Yar Khan, South Punjab



7. Havelli View, Allahabad, South Punjab

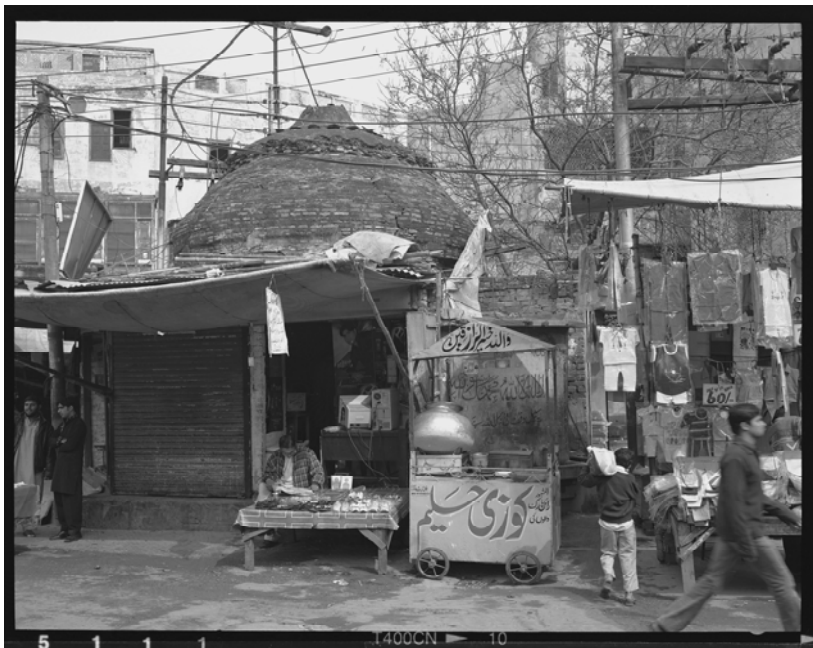


### 13.1 Selected Images from Lahore

#### 1. Sikh Gurdawara Shaheed Ganj, Nualalkha Bazaar, Walled City



#### 2. Remains of a Raja Dina Nath's Well, Walled City



### 3. Catholic Church, Heera Mundi, Walled City



### 4. Former Havellis and Shop houses of the Nualakha Hindu Temple, Nualakha Bazaar, Walled City

