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Ugandan Asian refugees in Surrey 50 years on

4 August 2023



On 4 August 1972, the Ugandan dictator, General Idi Amin, ordered around 60,000 ethnic Asians to leave the country within 90 days. In the autumn and winter of 1972 to 1973, over 28,000 Ugandan Asians refugees who held British passports, arrived in the UK following their eviction, after hastily organised and often fraught journeys. Most left behind their entire wealth and worldly possessions.

The Home Office organised The Ugandan Resettlement Board (URB) to set up camps across the country in which to house in-coming refugees. The majority were billeted at large camps across the UK but one small temporary camp was located in Surrey, at Hobbs Barracks, near Lingfield.

In 2022, the ‘British Ugandan Asians at 50’ project marked the 50th anniversary of the expulsion of Asian communities from Uganda.

The **Surrey History Centre** has made the following appeal: “South Asian culture has made a significant impact on Britain and its rich and proud heritage has blended into the British way of life, contributing to the diversity of our nation. Celebrating South Asian Heritage Month (18 July to 17 August), provides an opportunity for us to discover, embrace and celebrate the history and identity of British South Asians. Find out more about the South Asian Heritage Month campaign.

This year’s theme ‘Stories to tell’ promotes the unique stories that make up South Asian communities, but it is also an opportunity to share your memories and preserve them in the archives at Surrey History Centre. Documenting South Asian presence in Surrey is key to making our heritage collections representative of all communities in the county. If you have stories or material which you can contribute, we’d be delighted to hear from you.“

You can read more about the history of the Surrey county wide support for the refugees and other initiatives of the Surrey History Centre HERE.

Surrey History Centre

Image: Refugees arriving at Stansted Airport 1972 cc National Education Network

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