

# Celebrating the history of Asian cricket in Yorkshire

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Asian cricketers in Yorkshire John Bolloten Photography

For over four decades, Asian migrants to the UK have been avid cricket fans. Current England cricketers Moeen Ali and Adil Rashid owe part of their success to their predecessors, who have played in local parks and set up teams and leagues since the 1960s.

Now, thanks to National Lottery players, the AYA Foundation, a community organisation specialising in promoting minority heritage, arts and culture are leading on a new project, 'From Parks to Pavilions', documenting the history of Asian cricket in Yorkshire. Working with young people, they will record

interviews and collect memorabilia from the founders of one of the oldest Asian led cricket leagues in Britain, the Bradford based Quaid-e Azam Sunday Cricket League.

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Mobeen Butt, Projects Director at the AYA Foundation said: “The Quaid-e Azam League has been running for nearly four decades. Players from these Asian cricket leagues are now being scouted by county cricket clubs and have even gone on to play for England. I believe, in the same way Black and mixed-race players and audiences have changed the face of football, Asian players and supporters could go on to change the face of cricket – and when this happens the material that a project like this collects will be vital to help tell the complete story of cricket in Britain.”

The project will work with over 20 young people and include trips to museums and archives, as well as visits to Headingley and Lords. The project will produce a documentary and exhibit at this summer’s England v Pakistan ODI at Headingley.

Nasser Hanif, a BBC Radio journalist and Project Manager, commented: “This project has been developed to coincide with this summer’s Pakistan tour of England. Older members of the Quaid-e Azam League say that it was when Pakistan toured England in the early 1970s that their passion for cricket was ignited and they would grab a bat and ball and start playing in the streets, alley ways and parks”.

Fiona Spiers, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “South Asian communities have contributed to cricket across the UK for many years, and we are delighted to fund this fascinating project looking back at the grassroots origins of so many successful players. We are particularly pleased to see young people getting the opportunity to explore an area of their community’s heritage with particular relevance to them”.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the project should get in touch with the AYA Foundation via [email](#).