The book is based around vivid personal accounts of Bengali-speaking (Banglabhashi) settlers in the UK who were among the first three hundred or so to come to this island during the early part of the century... the fore-runners of the 35,000 who are now living in East London, and the thousands more who live throughout this country.

Edited and introduced by Caroline Adams, these enthralling life-stories encapsulate the experience of the first generations of Bengali-speaking 'Lascars' to come to this country as 'children of the Empire'. These were the young men from the villages of Sylhet (Bangladesh) who sailed the fleets of the Merchant Navy in the pre- and post-war years as stokers and engine-hands... who toiled below decks in the sweltering heats of the Southern Oceans, and who suffered torpedo and shipwreck in the icy turmoil of the North Atlantic Convoys.

They tell their own stories in plain but poignant words - stories of adventure and hardship, of bravery and opportunity, stories of separation from home and family... and of the eventual establishment of the largest community of Bengali-speakers outside the Indian sub-continent, in the heart of London's East End.

'Seven Seas...' begins with a comprehensive historical background to Assam and Sylhet, the commercial dominance of the East India Company, and the long-standing traditions of seafaring amongst the men of the Ganges Delta which prompted them to 'go to the ship'.

The life-stories which make up the main part of the book tell of the Wartime experiences which befell these young adventurers, and stand as testimony to the debt which the Allies owed the many thousands of un-named Asian seamen - the 'Lascars' - who played their parts, and lost their lives, in the great conflict of the Second World War.

Through their own personal accounts these men tell of what it was like to run away to sea in search of adventure and fortune - travelling the world in the service of the British Navy... jumping ship in the wartime docks of Liverpool, Cardiff and London... seeking out fellow countrymen and establishing communities in places like Birmingham and the East End of London... communities in touch with the urban realities of Post-War Britain and at the same time deeply involved in the issues of Partition in 1947 and the later Bangladesh Independence struggles in the 1970's.

The stories show too the fight for rights and respect, for decent living conditions and freedom from harassment in this country... recounted by some of those who were in the forefront of those struggles. They chronicle, perhaps for the first time, the development in this country of the 'Indian' restaurant trade, in which these Banglabhashi men were so successful... and the consolidation of a community here when they were at last able to bring over their wives and families after many years apart... coming nearer the present with the beginnings of the many aspiring community, welfare and youth organizations which struggled and flourished in the early seventies.