

The Commonwealth: shared histories

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Participants in the Empire, Faith and War project on a research visit to the National Army Museum
Jeff Gilbert

When the Empire Windrush docked at London's Tilbury Docks in June 1948, it brought hopeful workers and others from the Caribbean, it heralded a new chapter in the formation of the UK's modern multicultural society

For two decades, we have been funding projects exploring the UK's relationship with countries that now form part of the Commonwealth. Exploring stories and experiences or historic sites and events, projects have enabled communities to discover more about our shared heritage with Commonwealth countries.

Reflecting on history

In this 70th anniversary year of the Empire Windrush's arrival at Tilbury, Swansea's [Windrush Intergenerational project](#) and others will be commemorating this iconic ship, and revisiting the place it occupies in our understanding of post-war immigration to the UK.

Conflict

Global conflict continues to shape our world. Many UK communities are exploring how experiences of conflict have affected generations past and present by sharing and uncovering stories.

For example, the [Empire, Faith and War: The Sikhs and WW1 project](#) focuses on the previously little-known heritage of Sikh combatants and their families.

Style, culture and dance

Many projects explore Commonwealth fashions, design and culture, as well as their influence on UK society and culture today.

The [Fashioning Africa](#) collection at the Royal Pavilion Museums in Brighton is the result of a project that involved the local community in creating a new collection, helping build understanding of changes in African fashion post-1960.

Sport and games

No subject brings Commonwealth countries together like sport, and it is no surprise that sharing sporting heritage has inspired many projects.

[The Asian Social & Humanitarian Association led one of these](#), bringing people together to research and play traditional Asian games in East London.

Find funding for your project

If these projects have inspired you and you are considering a project of your own, why not find out more about our funding? Read more on our [Sharing Heritage](#) and [Our Heritage](#) programme pages.



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[A lady pinning a flower on a Sikh soldier, 1916](#)

[Empire, Faith & War: The Sikhs & WWI](#)



Participants in the Windrush Intergenerational Project



Adult volunteers conduct oral history interviews

Asian Traditional Games of early 20th Century (1900-1950)