Battlefield bonds: sharing the heritage of Nepal and



The Gurkha Museum is supported by a thriving community of current and former Gurkhas

The Gurkha Museum's redevelopment project will celebrate the unique relationship between Nepal, the British Army and the UK.

> A black and white historical photo of Gurkha soldiers climbing a rocky hill. The khukuri (knife) of one of the soldiers
> Gurkhas have served in the British Army for over 200 years.

For over 200 years, Gurkha soldiers have been recruited in their homeland, Nepal, to serve in the British Army. Their actions have earned them the reputation of being among the finest soldiers in the world.

Central to what it means to be a Gurkha soldier is *kaida*, ?????, the Nepali word for a unique blend of heritage, customs and ethos, coupled with a forward-looking mindset.

Kaida is at the root of the Gurkhas' success. It has also inspired the name of The Gurkha Museum's vision to reimagine and reimagine how the Museum tells the Gurkhas' stories. *Project Kaida* received National Lottery funding begin work in June 2023.

Starting a museum interpretation project

An artist's impression of the planned interior of the redeveloped Gurkha Museum

An artist's impression of the redeveloped Gurkha Museum.

Project *Kaida* will strip out, redesign, reinterpret and refit the museum's two floors of public galleries.

It will place a greater emphasis on the Gurkha soldier, their family and their achievements within British society.

As the project gets underway the museum is consulting with the Gurkha and Nepali communities and scoping how to gather oral histories and digitise their collections.

Success in these initial stages will mean the museum can fulfil long-held ambitions to collect and preserve more Gurkha heritage and celebrate these inspiring stories with an ever-broader range of people.

Mrs Sudha Rai, Trustee of The Gurkha Museum Trust, says:

"The money and support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund is hugely significant for the global Gurkha and Nepali communities. Our specific *kaida* is fundamental to our distinct and enduring cultural and historical legacy.

"We have stories we need to share to a wider audience and the redevelopment of The Gurkha Museum, Project *Kaida*, will allow us to do this."

The Gurkha Museum Trust, ?? Trustee, Mrs Sudha Rai ?? ????:

National Lottery Heritage Fund ?? ??? ? ????? ???????????? ????? ?????? ?????????? ??????? ???????? ????? ?????????????? ?? ????Winchester ?? Gurkha Museum ?????? ????????? “??????? ???????????? ??????????” ?? ??? ????? ??? ????? ?????????? ? ????? ???? ???????????? ??????? ??? ?? ??????? ?????? ??? ?????????? ????? ???? ?????? ????? ????? ??, ?????? ???? ???????, ?????? ?????????? ? ?????????? ????????? ???? ??? ???????? ??????? ?????? ????????? ???????????? ????????? ??? ?????????????? ?, ???? Gurkha Museum, “Project KAIDA” ?? ????????????????? ?? ?????????? ?????? ???? ?

Dr Daren Bowyer, Director of The Gurkha Museum says: “We are in the very early stages of beginning our project and working with the Heritage Fund team, but it’s already apparent to us that this is the start of a productive relationship. We feel we have been welcomed into a transformational relationship based on common shared values, a shared plan, and a shared vision for the difference we can make to heritage.”

Iconic objects and human stories

Project *Kaida* will use more of the museum's 30,000 objects and archives to share stories and memories that show the crossover of the Gurkhas’ cultural and military heritage.

The fighter and their weapon

A khukuri is the weapon and utility knife issued to every Gurkha soldier, recognisable by its distinct curved broad blade. It is the national weapon of Nepal and is synonymous with Gurkha legends. The museum holds over four hundred khukuris, including ones that are over 150 years old, modern military examples and the khukuri seen in the film ‘The Hunger Games’.





The modern military khukuri and helmet of Rifleman Tuljung Gurung, who in 2013 defended Patrol Base Sparta, Lashkar Gah, in Afghanistan from an attack by two insurgents. His quick thinking and instinctive use of his khukuri saved lives, and he was awarded the Military Cross.

Lieutenant Fisher, a British officer in a Gurkha unit, and Rifleman Tuljung, a Gurkha soldier, are separated by nearly two centuries. Nevertheless, they both typify the *kaida*, bravery and weapon-handling skills needed by those serving with the Gurkhas.

Bonds of brotherhood

Gurkha soldiers' unofficial motto is ???? ??? ?????? ????? ????? ?????? which roughly translates as 'better to die than live a coward'. It is not surprising that Gurkhas have been awarded thousands of medals for selfless acts of bravery. The Gurkha Museum holds over 1,700 medal sets, but just two are needed to show the Gurkhas' fighting ethos and the enduring bond between the men who fight alongside each other.

The medals of Allmand and Tulbahadur

Captain Michael Allmand and Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun came from different backgrounds: Captain Allmand was the son of a London university professor, while Rifleman Tulbahadur was born in an isolated hill village in western Nepal. They served together during the Second World War, including on a mission behind Japanese lines in occupied Burma as part of the force known as the Chindits. In June 1944 their battalion took part in an attempt to capture the city of Mogaung.

> 5 military medals including a Victoria Cross awarded to Rifleman Tulbahadur Pun
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Captain Allmand and Rifleman Tulbahadur both fought at the assault of the Mogaung railway bridge, and both were awarded the Victoria Cross for their actions. Leading from the front and exhorting his men to follow him, Captain Allmand was killed while eliminating a machine gun nest, aged just 20 old. Rifleman Tulbahadur single-handedly seized a key Japanese defensive position named the Red House after almost the whole of his section was killed in crossfire.

Captain Allmand and Rifleman Tulbahadur's medals were donated by their families to The Gurkha Museum on the condition they are always displayed alongside each other.

Creating a lasting legacy

Project *Kaida*, rooted in the shared heritage between the UK and Nepal, is taking an ambitious approach to transforming how the Gurkhas' living heritage is presented by a museum. Inspired by the Gurkhas' unique way of doing things, this project will ensure The Gurkha Museum can engage new audiences far into the future.

Planning your heritage project

Take a look at our good practice guidance on creating interpretation, oral histories or planning a digitisation project.

You might also be interested in...



Visitors take part in food recipe demonstrations, tasting ingredients found in hedgerows. Credit: The Food Museum





Items from the Medical Museum collection. Photo: Dawn Jutton

Medical Museum protects collections and engages local community