

The UK Nepali Community

A Transcultural thematic information resource created by the UK Nepal Friendship Society, and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



Preface:

This e-book/PDF was completed over the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, and across the period of the ONS 2021 Census, including into in late 2022 release of Census data, a period as well which witnessed a hunger strike by Nepali Gurkhas in regard to needs some of that community has and in which much little known history of the Gurkha relationship with Britain valuably came to light. As such this e-book through its accompanying online thematic resource -- <https://nepaliculturalheritage.com/> -- dissemination to a wide range of audiences and organisations, as the final part of the Heritage Lottery Fund supported project, has had we are delighted to state, major impacts.

Of these that concerning the socio-cultural profiling information, but also including the story for the first time told concerning the Nepali-Gurkha UK history, and sports cultures (at time of writing this short preface the National Football Museum for instance having come to awareness of the Gurkha football phenomenon as a unique strand in England's football history, and with strong supportive interest by England FA): all of these until creation of this educational resource had been but little known or poorly covered.

In particular, the socio-cultural information has been acclaimed by multiple branches of the DWP (particularly London and SE England), various local authorities at CEO and Council Leaders level (the resource for example leading to a request to the UKNFS to assist with developing Ashford Council's new Equality policy), and contributed a powerful assistance to the ONS in gaining a better understanding about the UK Nepali community - all crucial for filling the knowledge gap about the community, so important to planning and delivering services (<https://hanacs.org/event-hanacs-uknfs-and-nepalese-association-of-wiltshire-naw-census-2021-data-use-by-public-services-providing-organisations-agencies-swindon-event-19th-november-with-the-office-of-national-st/>).

This e-book and project has even played a part in the evolution of the UKNFS into a new phase as an organization, as it has developed into the Himalayan and Nepal Arts and Culture Society (<https://hanacs.org/>) with major emphasis on arts and culture, albeit with crucially important continuity of the core UKNFS UK Nepali community support function, through a dedicated UKNFS Chapter (<https://hanacs.org/about-the-uknfs-chapter-background-and-interconnection-with-the-hanacs/>).

Testimony to the special value and wide-ranging influence in educational and multicultural and integration domains is provided so eloquently in the dedications and formal best wishes section of the website accompanying this e-book (<https://nepaliculturalheritage.com/supportive-good-wishes-dedications/>), including from the former Prime Minister of Nepal, former Culture Minister of Nepal, former Ambassador of Nepal, and from community leads (including a Vice President of NRNA UK of the time the resource was created, from Sgt Hiradhan Rai, and the President Kirat Rai Yayokkha UK), from the President of The Royal British Legion, and Head of the National League System of England FA. All of their descriptions of the importance of and need for the information resource capture so well its essence and impact.

Alan Mercel-Sanca

UKNFS (HANACS) Lead

Indexes of subjects covered by the main sections:

Nepal and its Peoples -- Key facts introductory information (two parts, A and B)

PART A: About Nepal and its Peoples

PART B: The UK Nepali Diaspora - Peoples, Society, Culture & Communication -- **Topics covered:**

- Background
- Composition of the UK Nepali community
- UK Nepali community communication and in-community support - the role of societies (Samaj haru) and other forms and types of support
- The special role of the Embassy of Nepal
- NRNA UK
- Note on the UK Nepal Friendship Society (UKNFS)
- Other Britain - Nepal societies - BNS and the BNCC
- Other main UK Nepali community meeting points - the role of Nepali restaurants
- The early 2000's -- Gurkha settlement rights in the UK
- Size and locations of the UK Nepali population
- Careers and employment sectors
- UK Nepali sub-populations and minorities of significance
- The role of UK Nepali media and social media in UK Nepali community members life

Some major facets of UK Nepali culture

- Family - importance of the concept of family in UK Nepali life and society
- Respect and related
- Some Nepali words, and globally recognised Nepal and Nepali associated names -- windows into Nepali culture and society
- Some popular beliefs
- Gender - women's roles, rights and search for equality
- Life Events
- Festivals and related, and the Nepali Calendar
- Integration and related
- Culture preservation - Nepali language classes, dance classes
- Health and Healing

The Gurkhas and their place in British history and society

List of topics covered and sections:

- About, and note on topics and contributing sources
- Gurkha Characteristics, and Who are the Gurkhas? -

- In their own words - serving Gurkhas about the uniqueness of the Gurkhas in the British Army setting: responses to information resource questionnaire
- Need to Know, Nepal background to the Gurkhas entering British history -- and associated Note on need for Updating the approach on recording of particulars of the Nepali Gurkhas role & record regarding impacts on preserving British sovereignty and global influence*
- The Queens Gurkha Engineers
- The Queens Gurkha Signals
- The Royal Gurkha Rifles
- The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas
- The Gurkhas and the British Royal Family
- Gurkha perspectives on the importance of Nepali food for those in military service

Sports and Stamina -- the Gurkhas

Topics covered:

- Background
- Hill Racing
- Speed Climbing - the ultimate 'against the clock' endurance sport: Nirmal 'Nims' Purja and 'Project Possible'
- Football
- UK Nepali football Gurkha origins and development - the Nepal Cup
- Martial Arts and the Gurkhas - Taekwondo

The Sherpa people:

Index of topics:

- Introduction
- Sherpa Culture - religion and related
- The Sherpa main annual Festivals
- Sherpa Association UK Gyalpo Losar 2047 Celebration Programme at Ashford in Kent
- The Sherpas in the UK
- Sherpa Foods
- Mountaineering, tourism, the flight to seek employment in other lands
- Names matter
- Names matter - continued: Sherpas and traditional head garments, to contemporary 'Sherpa styled Beanies'
- The Sherpas and international friendships for life

Non-Stamina Sports Volleyball Cricket and also Football outside of the British Army:

Topics covered:

- Background to UK Nepali community sports outside of the British Army and endurance sports
- Volleyball
- Football -- The Gurkha Cup
- The Swindon Cup - a multi-sports (football and volleyball) UK Nepali community annual event
- Cricket

The Arts dimension of UK Nepali culture:

Topics index:

- Introduction
- Clothing
- Artisanship -- Ceremonial and practical functional items
- Music and Dance
- Television and Film
- Culinary and foods - introduction to separate, parallel information resource
- Literature
- Visual Arts - including interviews
- Glossary of Nepali arts terms

Galleries & Exhibition resource:

- Exhibition Gallery
- Culture Gallery
- History Gallery
- Gurkha related Gallery
- UK Nepali community societies, organisations, and Embassy of Nepal Gallery
- Sherpa Gallery
- Sports Gallery
- Arts Galleries (3-4)
- British institutes - British Library Nepal archives Gallery
- Nepal locations Gallery

Interviews list:

Contributors and thanks:

Introduction note on purpose of and need for the information resource:

Why the cultural & social heritage resource matters and is needed:

'... Perhaps surprisingly to our current-day sensitivities, Motilal's difficult circumstances in Victorian Britain were in no way helped by his being a Gurkha. Today the context is very different - Gurkhas are held in high esteem - and yet the lives of ex-Gurkhas in Britain are not without problems. Former Gurkhas continue to fight for equal pensions, family visas and other welfare entitlements, and continue to face occasional racial prejudice. **A greater appreciation of the long history of Gurkhas living in the UK, going as far back to, and perhaps beyond, Motilal Singh, could help to address some of these issues.**'*

Source: <https://www.migrationmuseum.org/tag/motilal-singh/> *Motilal Singh was the first, to date, recorded Nepali-Gurkha settler in the UK.

The above from the Migration Museum website encapsulates the purpose - to at last provide a comprehensive Nepali community directed thematic narrative to share with others/the whole British nation, who the UK Nepali and Nepali-Gurkha community is, how it entered into British history, its distinctive, unique identity, and its contribution to the British nation - of the UKNFS UK Nepali cultural & social heritage project.

The excerpt also indicates why this information resource has been needed - especially in the time of its publication which has coincided with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement across the summer and autumn of 2020 -- and the benefits and purposes of its content for enduring transcultural learning and related social competence and communication in daily life and educational domains with this given, and by extension all UK Diverse Communities.

In conjunction with this purpose, the excerpt above encapsulates so well the from earliest days to the present Nepali strand of British history, culture, and society, the many UK Nepali community contributors inspiration to participate and provide their invaluable insights and content to this transcultural learning information resource project. These insights are badly needed from the 'man or woman on the street' through to policy makers in Westminster and Whitehall, learning about this given BAME community's history and its cultural and social heritage particulars, and engaging competently and successfully from basic communication to policy creation development and delivery levels (again as the excerpt above indicates).

The information resource and accompanying exhibition/gallery are timely too in terms of finalisation and release, coinciding with Covid 19 Anti-Asian / Anti-Nepali-Gurkha (and Sherpa!) prejudice derived incidents and hate crimes in not a few Nepali community locations across the UK.

On this it is only through effective transcultural educational means, resources, teaching and transcultural awareness training that such needless blights on too many minority communities' lives and on broader society and the country, can be contained, minimised and eventually removed. This information resource funded by the National Lottery Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) certainly realises this goal; an accomplishment recognised by for example The Royal British Legion (TRBL) embracing enthusiastically the purpose and content, especially in regard to its Gurkha related material, of the information resource linking to its own Commemoration related outstanding educational resources.

Galleries and Exhibition:

So extensive in number were the images included with the resource, that the accompanying online Version of this e-book includes a dedicated thematic Galleries/Exhibition section
<https://nepaliculturalheritage.com/exhibition-gallery/>

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The Peoples of Nepal and the UK Nepali populations need to
know information overview

Nepal and its Peoples -- Key facts introductory information:



Image from Mr Shankar Adhikari, Nepal

PART A: About Nepal and its Peoples:

Country location - Northern South Asia:

Nepal (Federal Democratic Republic) is a landlocked country located between the Himalaya to the north and the northern part of the Gangetic plains to the south (this part of Nepal is known as the Terai, and includes the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, Lumbini, and the famous Hindu pilgrimage destination of Janakpur). The capital is Kathmandu, comprised of three historic cities, Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur, in the Kathmandu Valley region (together the three cities constitute modern 2020's Greater Kathmandu).

National flag:



Double Pennant with sun and moon represented on red field with blue trim.

National Emblem and national symbols:

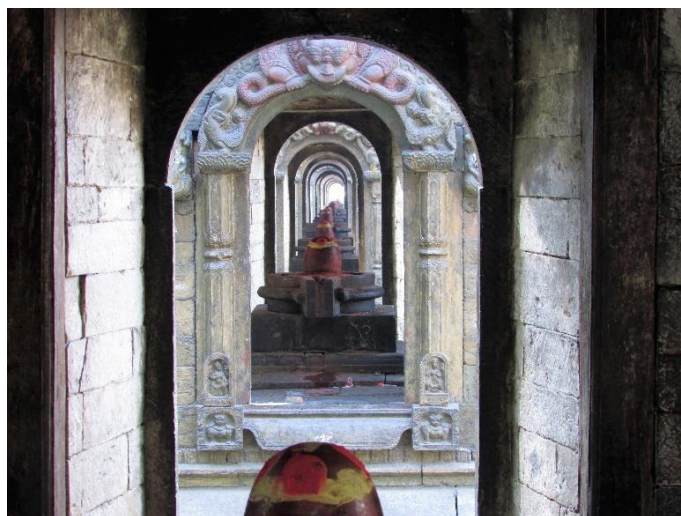


The official emblem of state and of Nepal Government and its departments and agencies: Red Rhododendron, national flag, hands of friendship and collaboration, white outline of national territory, and Himalaya background.

History and relationship with the UK:

Apart from Nepal's northern/Himalayan territory, the country falls within the ancient Vedic cultural zone of the northern part of the Indian Sub-Continent. Nepal was never a British Empire, or East India Company, colony or protectorate, but fought with the latter in the early 19th Century, reaching an armistice and subsequently established a special relationship with Britain and the British people, especially through the British Army - Nepali Gurkha recruitment and British Army Brigade of Gurkha relationship. Much of the UK - Nepal history details of this information resource is found in a number of sections of the Gurkha component, and to a certain extent the Sherpa component too.

Religions and culture:



Some 80%+ of Nepal's population follow Hinduism in various forms, 10%+ a number of forms of Buddhism, and the remaining population a number of different religions including shamanic and animistic ancient beliefs in the higher regions of the Himalaya. Hinduism and Buddhism take multiple and distinctly Nepali forms in Nepal, and it is a unique feature of life in the country that devout Hindus and Buddhists will visit and worship at each others temples and places of religious devotion. This practice transfers to the UK Nepali diaspora, and other Nepali diasporas across the world. It is said that in Nepal there are more festivals than days in the year, due to the numbers of different cultures, religions, ethnicities in what is a comparatively small-sized country.

Interestingly it is one of only a handful of lands where there are three+ different New Years' celebrated: Nepali (around Mid-April), Sherpa (around end of February), and Western (1st January). In

addition months of the year vary, and so do the year calculations. For example, in the Western Calendar 2020 becomes the Year 2077 in the Nepali Calendar, and in the Sherpa Calendar it is 2047.

Geography-Topography:



Nepal comprises three topographical ecological and climate zones (ranging from an Alpine climate in the high mountains, to temperate in the central valleys, and subtropical in the Terai/southern plains): picture above of Solu Khumbu districts and Churi Gai Himali Cow, kindly provided by the Sherpa Association UK

- The Himalaya: Nepal has eight of the fourteen highest mountains in the world, most famous of which is Mt Everest (in Sherpa and Tibetan, Chomolungma, and in Nepali, Sagarmatha)
- The middle hill and Himalayan foothill zone (many of the hill peoples[please see map below] have been and remain major sources of Gurkha/Gorkha British and Indian armies recruitment - Gurung, Rai, Tamang, Magar, Limbu, Sherpa are particular major peoples associated with such recruitment)
- The southern plains, known as the Terai: locations of the birthplace of the Lord Buddha (Lumbini), and the famous Hindu pilgrimage destination of Janakpur (associated with Sita, Consort of Lord Rama)

Climate:

Nepal's Himalaya include the coldest in the world, and its southern/Terai lands amongst the hottest of Southern Asia. Accordingly, Nepal's range of vegetation and herbs and medicinal plants comprise a degree of diversity that almost no other country equals in such a small territory.

National flower and botany:



Nepal's national flower is the Red Rhododendron, which provides a unique link to the Rhododendron as a beautiful and thriving shrub in a number of counties of Southern England - a unique link between the two countries. Because of its vast range of climatic zones, soils, and weather types, for its size Nepal counts as one of the richest countries of the world for medicinal plants and herbs.

The work of Dr Mark Watson, Head of Flora at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh (RBGE) is of global importance in this field - the UKNFS records here as well that it was through Dr Watson that key support was provided that enabled the UKNFS to undertake the UK side of the Nepal Art Council, Britain - Nepal Bicentenary Exhibition, without which support from the UKNFS the exhibition would have been impossible. The starting point for the latter was research work with Dr Watson at the RBGE, and at RBG Kew Gardens. Here are two useful links on Nepal's flora: <https://vimeo.com/channels/996882/174797964> <http://www.floraofnepal.org/>

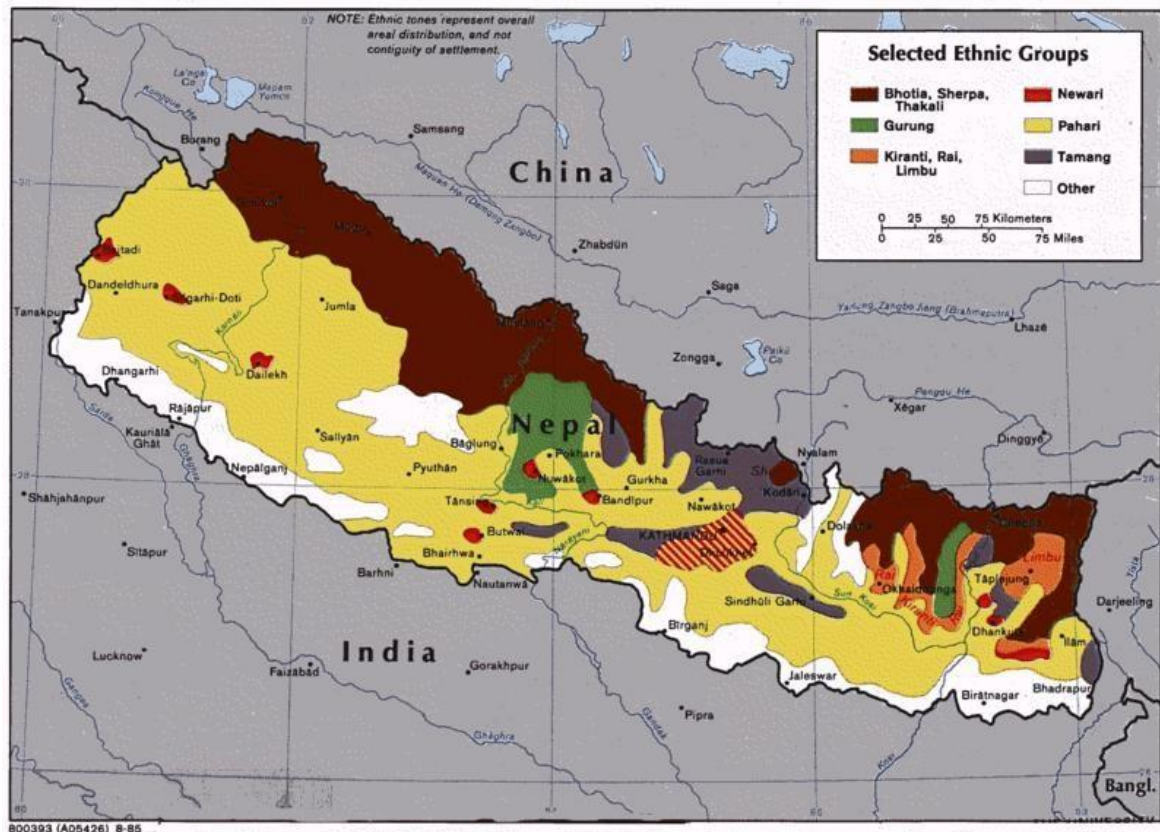
Economy:

Still largely agrarian, tourism is the main income generator. Nepal (pre-Covid 19 impacts) has one of the fastest economic growth rates in Asia and the world. The country still has an extensive diaspora sourced overseas remittances dimension to its economy: an important element of core income for many Nepali families especially in remoter parts of the country.

Peoples of Nepal:

Just as it is essential for Nepalis to be aware that the UK is a Parliamentary Democracy and Constitutional Monarchy (head of state a monarch rather than a democratically elected president) and has four core constituent devolved administration components (as well as 'overseas dependencies/territories such as the Falklands and Gibraltar) - England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland. So too is it important for all British citizens to be aware of the core particulars of Nepal.

These are that the country is a constitution-based republic following a federal system of parliamentary democracy and comprises some hundred plus ethnic minority and major ethnic communities. The map below details the latter: ethnicity and clan and/or caste matter in Nepali culture and society and transfer to the UK in terms of preserving cultural identity.



Source: Wikipedia *On the map the term 'Pahari' refers to the languages of hill dwellers in the main. The white areas on the southern border relate to 'Terai' peoples such as the Madhesi in the South-East on the India-Bihar frontier.

In Nepal's 2011 Census (the institution of a 'Census' derived in terms of its introduction in South Asia, from the UK and took place every ten years: in terms of the year in the decade cycle when censuses are taken, this in Nepal is derived from and follows the British model of the first year of each decade, a little known fact of the depth of interlinkages of the two countries) it was estimated that there were some 126 ethnicities and caste groups linked to the latter. In terms of languages spoken by the different ethnic communities, there were 123 recorded in 2011. Of those languages 90% were spoken by indigenous peoples (in Government of Nepal recorded as Indigenous Nationalities), with some of the smallest ethnicities and their languages on the verge of extinction. Associated with ethnicities and castes are broader ancient, traditional cultures and arts forms such as in music, song, dance, sculpture, woodwork, architecture, and costume as well as of course ethnicity-culture specific festivals.

Major ethnic/indigenous nationalities influence significance in Nepal comprise, Bahun/Brahmin-Chhetri, Pahari, Newari, Sherpa, Madhesi.

More on Languages:

Nepali is the official language of Nepal. The three main language groups of Nepal are Indo-Aryan, Burman-Tibetan, multiple indigenous languages. In terms of major languages spoken, the country has three which are: Nepali (also known as Gorkhali), Maithili, and Bhojपुरi (both of the last being spoken mostly in Nepal's Terai). However, English is the official language of Higher Education (universities).

PART B: The UK Nepali Diaspora – Peoples, Society, Culture & Communication:

The UK Nepali community

Key overview information

Topics covered:

- Background
- Composition of the UK Nepali community
- UK Nepali community communication and in-community support - the role of societies (Samaj haru) and other forms and types of support
- The special role of the Embassy of Nepal
- NRNA UK
- Note on the UK Nepal Friendship Society (UKNFS)
- Other Britain - Nepal societies - BNS and the BNCC
- Other main UK Nepali community meeting points - the role of Nepali restaurants
- The early 2000's -- Gurkha settlement rights in the UK
- Size and locations of the UK Nepali population
- Careers and employment sectors
- UK Nepali sub-populations and minorities of significance
- The role of UK Nepali media and social media in UK Nepali community members life

Background:



Images above: The Prime Minister of Nepal the Honourable Mr KP Sharma Oli, and HRH Prince Harry: UK - Nepal Bicentenary logo

The story of the in-the-UK dimension of the Nepali-British relationship, and establishment of the UK-British Nepali Diaspora begins initially with the then Prime Minister of Nepal (subsequently Founder of the Nepal Rana Dynasty) Jang Bahadur Kunwar (later 'Rana') who visited England and Europe/France in 1850, and preceding that visit, and subsequently after at increasingly substantial levels (especially in the early 20th Century to date) with the Gurkha British Army regiments creation and development. On the Gurkha dimension of the Nepali-British relationship, and establishment of the UK-British Nepali Diaspora subjects - that yet have a certain degree of interconnection - the information resource provides details in its extensive thematic topics Gurkha section.

Here though we note that through the research of Dr Krishna Adhikari of Oxford University and his colleagues at the Britain - Nepal Academic Council and Centre for Nepali Studies UK (please see note and links below) we note from Dr Adhikari that a former veteran of the Anglo-Nepal War of the mid 1810's, Mr Motilal Singh, was in fact made history as the first Nepali settler in the UK (he acted as English - Nepali interpreter to Prime Minister Kunwar during his visit). His story as recorded by Dr Adhikari (please see second link below), and key elements of Mr Singh's experiences of early 19th Century British Colonial era Britain noted by the ground-breaking Migration Museum organisation (<https://www.migrationmuseum.org/tag/motilal-singh/>) form salutary reminders of the journey of the UK at human rights, inclusion and race relations levels.

For detailed level information on the UK Nepali population, its composition, attributes, activities we commend most strongly the exceptional Nepal studies work of the Britain – Nepal Academic Council (BNAC) and the Centre for Nepal Studies UK (CNSUK) organisations, and the related ground-breaking academic research level work of Dr Krishna Adhikari, Dr Chandra Laksamba, and Dr Sondra Hausner, and Professor David Gellner, please see the links below:

Britain Nepal Academic Council (includes access to BNAC downloadable e-books on a number of important subjects): <https://www.bnac.ac.uk/publications/>

Regarding Motilal Singh: https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:950b8ad7-1000-40e0-828e-a79d2705fef5/download_file?file_format=pdf&safe_filename=Adhikari.First%2BNepali.pdf&type_of_work=Journal+article

Composition of the UK Nepali community:

In terms of ethnic composition, the UK Nepali community comprises all or almost all of the major and minor ethnicities of Nepal itself, and typically range from Gurung, Rai, Tamang, Limbu through to Madhesi, Sherpa, Bahun-Chhetri, to Sherpa. Gurung being perhaps numerically the largest Nepali community.

UK Nepali community communication and in-community support - the role of societies, and other forms and types of support:



Some UK Nepali community organisations logos



There are an estimated hundreds of dedicated Nepali societies (the Nepali word for a society being ‘*Samaj*’) in the UK (image above courtesy of Nepalese Association of Wiltshire [NAW] from an Association major meeting in Swindon), with 152 of the main societies & organisations being listed on the Embassy of Nepal website: <https://uk.nepalembassy.gov.np/nepalese-organizations-uk/>

These societies (‘*samaj haru*’) range from Nepali doctors and nurses associations, to university Nepali societies, Nepali academic research groups (such as the BNAC and CNSUK, referred to above) through specific village group societies (such as the Chaar Banjyang Tamu Samaj: literally Four Gurung village Society), to ethnicity specific (such as Tamu Dhee Association UK -- literally ‘Gurung Home’ Association UK - which is the overarching Gurung peoples’ organisation, and the Sherpa Association UK.

There are other Samaj such as Sahara UK Association ('Sahara' meaning 'Support'). These often link to major activities, such as associations with sports or sports promotion in both countries (Sahara UK and Tamu Dhee UK are good examples of this where football is concerned), and larger scale charitable undertakings (such as building or maintaining schools) back in Nepal.

Then there are women's groups, specific cultural activity (such as dance) related groups, and a small number of non-ethnicity age gender location specific Samaj, such as Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community (GRNC) and the Nepalese Association of Wiltshire (NAW) - models for new emerging comparable all sections and members of Nepali society specific to a given UK location (such as in Birmingham). These latter umbrella 'all sections of society' organisations play the most important role in terms of assisting integration, as they both provide community cultural related support across all the different UK Nepali communities ethnicities (GRNC itself for example supports separate independent groups that run Nepali ladies dance sessions, Nepali language classes (Rushmoor Nepali ladies dance group image below), or Nepali film clubs) and interface with the given local authority, local councillors, public service organisations on the integration, safety and safeguarding needs of both established and especially new settling community members on rights and responsibilities.



There are approximately six Gurkha welfare and rights organisations in the UK ranging from the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT), to the British Gurkha Welfare Society (BGWS) to GESO (British Gurkha Ex-servicemen's Organisation). These organisations provide dedicated support and often campaigning initiatives on retired Nepali Gurkha community needs and issues, such as settlement issues and pensions.

Typical functions and aspects of UK Nepali community societies and associations activity and social and cultural interaction include, but are not limited to:

Award winning, giving donations / fundraising, communal banquets, cultural music and dance displays, performances and participation. In some instances they also facilitate major outdoor events with sometimes 10,000 attendees, such as the Nepali Mela, Buddha Jayanti in Trafalgar Square (both of these by the Embassy of Nepal), The Gurkha Cup (Tamu Dhee Association UK), the Swindon Cup. On the latter (Swindon Cup), the organiser, the Nepalese Association of Wiltshire (NAW) have contributed the following description to us for this section of the information resource:

Annual Swindon Cup



Nepalese Association of Wiltshire, established in 2006 came to organise a sports event the following year in 2007, known as “Swindon Cup”. This event allows for the participation of male football teams and both female and male volleyball teams. The team needs to register in advance in order to participate (nepaleseassociationofwiltshire.com).

The rationale behind this event is to encourage Nepalese youths of not only Swindon but the whole of UK to involve themselves within the Nepalese community. Essentially, it is a way to ensure the Nepalese youths in the UK stay in touch with their cultural heritage while engaging in an enjoyable event.

Understandably, this objective has been considerably extended in the past years to also include other purposes. In particular, this event has provided a platform for the implementation of charity work for the benefit of Nepalese people not only in the UK but also back in Nepal; as well as a platform to promote Nepalese businesses etc.

Swindon Cup therefore, primarily being a platform for the connection between the Nepalese youth and the Nepalese community, has become a platform for Nepalese people in the UK as a whole to stay connected with their cultural heritage.

Gyan Gurung: NAW President

The special role of the Embassy of Nepal in UK Nepali community life:



The Embassy (12A Kensington Palace Gardens, London) is of historic and symbolic as well as functional and socio-political importance for Nepalis, UK citizens needing visa services for visiting Nepal, and in fact is a physical epicentre in the UK for Nepali-UK relations and friendship: it was provided to Nepal in 1937 built in 1865 for Samuel Morton Peto (an MP for two decades, and a renowned civil engineer and railway developer).

However, some years ago (2013) sale of the building, to generate funds, was mooted, and swiftly found the whole of the Nepali community and British friends of the community and Nepal, strongly opposing this idea:

“This building became ours because of the blood spilt by the Gurkhas and it is a historic symbol of Nepal’s sovereignty,” says the coordinator of the campaign and retired British Army major, Damar Ghale. “The embassy’s value cannot be measured in cash, it is priceless.”

The Nepal Embassy on 12A Kensington Palace Gardens consists of a four-storey stucco Victorian villa within a 750 acre property bordering Hyde Park. It was built in 1865 and is now a crown leasehold property

Source: <https://archive.nepalitimes.com/article/nation/FOR-SALE,322>

This reaction provides valuable evidence of just what a place the Embassy building has in the heart of countless Nepalis and others.



Ambassador of Nepal to centre right, and Lord Mayor of City of London to centre left



Image above, H.E. Dr Durga Bahadur Subedi, Ambassador of Nepal to the UK

Almost all programmes and announcements of importance take place at the Embassy or see H.E. the Ambassador and/or his senior deputies (DCM, etc.) presiding at those which do not take place in the building: examples of these latter being for example the Annual Nepali Mela at Kempton Park Racecourse, Buddha Jayanti (the Lord Buddha's Birthday) celebration in Trafalgar Square, and others.

Please also see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Embassy_of_Nepal,_London

NRNA UK:



The Non-Residential Nepali Association UK (NRNA UK) -- <https://nmauk.org/> -- is one of the most, perhaps the most important sections of the global NRNA organisation (it has 70+ countries level branches, amongst which the UK NRNA is perhaps for reasons of history and the Nepali-Gurkha British army relationship of 200+ years, the most important). The NRNA is formally attached to the Office of the Prime Minister of Nepal, and fulfils Nepali community representation on voice and needs functions that are not covered by embassies. The NRNA in the UK supports issues raised by UK Nepali specific communities, such as the Gurkhas on Gurkha welfare/integration/rights, and also on supporting on issues of importance that from time to time arise, such as in the UK recently in the Covid 19 impacts period, the plight of Nepali international students at a number of less than 'best practice' UK universities.

The current President, Mrs Poonam Gurung (<https://www.khusilimbu.com/news/2019/04/22/13/22/52/429/>), of the NRNA UK has provided a multi-part, one-hour duration interview with the UKNFS as one of the UKNFS enabled interviews as part of the UK Nepali Community Cultural & Social Heritage information resource and related exhibition project. This interview can be accessed through the link below, and gives multiple facets

need-to-know insights about the crucial work, values and perspectives of this very important organisation:

Interview with NRNA UK President:

Interview with Mrs Poonam Gurung, President of the NRNA UK, on the role and purposes of the NRNA and NRNA UK in regard to UK Nepali community support on issues of major importance, support on Nepali community voice profiling in the UK, and also gender equality work and values of the NRNA and NRNA UK: <https://www.facebook.com/nmauk.org/> and <https://nmauk.org/>

UK Nepal Friendship Society (UKNFS):

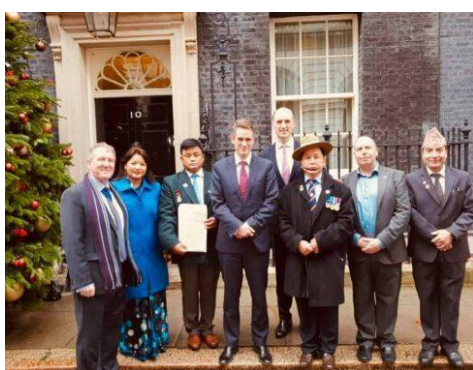


The UK Nepal Friendship Society (official patron, H.E. the Ambassador of Nepal to the UK and to the Republic of Ireland and to Malta) unique in its core purposes and dynamics which are to share Nepali culture(s) informed by transcultural learning perspectives and educational outputs.

The UKNFS also functions as a mechanism for very focused initiatives on Nepali rights and integration, and holding UK government to public services and national agencies and entities to account on performance; doing so in a constructive solutions orientated way, this including on prejudice related ASB, where the UKNFS is looked to as perhaps the most effective 'go to' organisation.

Particularly, beyond the transcultural learning activities and resources creation (from Nepali international students support resources, to projects such as the UK Nepali Cultural & Social Heritage information resources creation) the society responds to and supports particular needs that matter to the UK Nepali community. It also lead on enabling the realisation of the Nepal Art Council's dream of a Britain-Nepal Bicentenary Exhibition: <https://uknfs.org/april-2017-update-launch-of-the-nepal-art-council-uknfs-nepal-uk-bicentenary-exhibition/>

Examples of that 'listening to and serving the community' guiding ethos include on inclusion of a dedicated Nepali entry on the UK ONS National Census, including a related formal delegation to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street: <https://uknfs.org/uk-nepali-community-census-entry-nrna-uk-led-uknfs-facilitated-petition-delegation-to-prime-minister-10-downing-street/>



Enablement through successful negotiation with the England FA (Wembley) of a 10 years+ aspiration of Sahara UK Association and other Nepali organisations including in Nepal, for a Nepal National Team - England friendly international football match: although postponed due to current Covid 19 impacts, this long-sought, but illusive goal was achieved, and it was through the UKNFS that in 2018 and 2019 the famous FA 'Emirates' World Cup Trophy was displayed for photo taking opportunities at the Gurkha Cup Annual Tournament. Link: <https://uknfs.org/friendly-international-nepal-england-c-team-uknfs-role-and-support-to-nepal-and-the-fa/>

The UKNFS also at the request of very senior UK Nepali community leaders and in particular Mr Ekendra Gurung, Tamu Dhee UK Association advisor (also responsible for developing many of the key UK Nepali organisations, such as NRNA UK, Tamu Dhee Association, Sahara UK, Greater Rushmoor

Nepali Community, constitutions), enabled Westminster/Parliament Democratic Processes bespoke 4-5 hrs educational event: <https://uknfs.org/historic-uk-nepali-communities-delegation-parliament-fact-finding-visit/>

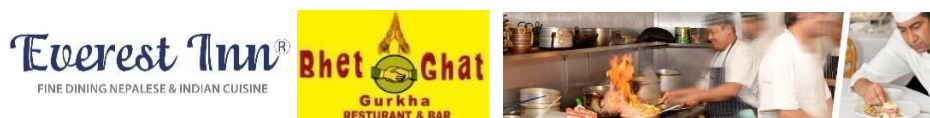
Other Britain - Nepal societies: the Britain Nepal Society, and the Britain Nepal Chamber of Commerce:

There are other special category British - Nepal organisations that have special historically important relations with regarding Britain - Nepal relations such as the **Britain – Nepal Society** (BNS) whose chief patron is HRH The Duke of Gloucester; in Kathmandu there is a parallel '**Nepal – Britain Society**' whose Official Patron is H.E. The British Ambassador. Again, in the UK, there is the **Britain – Nepal Chamber of Commerce** (BNCC) that works to support British - Nepali trade and business opportunities. Links:

BNS: <http://britainnepalsociety.org/>

BNCC: <https://www.bncc.org.uk/>

Other main UK Nepali community meeting points – the special role of Nepali restaurants:



Restaurants as meeting points: Beyond the UK Nepali community societies and other organisations and entities such as the Embassy of Nepal and the NRNA UK in particular, many Nepali restaurants double up as major local (sometimes national) community meeting place hubs.

The heart of every restaurant is of course the Kitchen. In the case of the some 200+ UK Nepali restaurants - flagship representative examples being for instances the Everest Inn Group restaurants in Blackheath, London, and in Kent, and the East Midlands 'Gurkha Oven Restaurant, and the Bhet Ghat Gurkha Restaurant (Aldershot Hight Street), and The Aile in Reading. This still largely first generation settler community, finds restaurant work to give invaluable opportunities to maintain and strengthen in-community Nepali community bonds and friendships.

Food is a particularly important dimension of Nepali culture, and it is across South Asia as well as the UK, generally known that Nepali culinary expertise is second to none for skills and creative expertise (so important is this topic that the information resource has developed a parallel Nepali cuisines component and accompanying booklet). It is to the general public little known, but within the Asian catering sector, especially amongst the largely Bangladeshi owned and run UK Indian restaurants world, that if you can secure an experienced chef or even sous-chef who is Nepali, then such restaurants will have the best possible opportunity of succeeding and establishing great reputations for the quality of their food. In the case of Nepali owned and run Nepali restaurants, the kitchen sees experts come together from a number of different families, engaged in an activity all of those experts have a great passion for and proficiency in that is a major facet of Nepali culture itself.

Beyond the Kitchen many restaurants also form the setting for key meetings on community support and issues. Of an afternoon and sometimes of an evening for instance one can find the restaurant 'pre-booked by a private party/group for a function.'



For example the Bhet Ghat Gurkha Restaurant of Aldershot High Street commonly services such meetings where the main restaurant dining space is occupied on a block of seats facing a film/display screen, or one long room/hall length table, basis for community leads events. An example of this at the restaurant named

included lead officers of the ONS/Census providing a three-hour consultation, information and engagement event organised by the NRNA UK and UKNFS with senior officers of the Census/Office of National Statistics (ONS) on the UK 2021 Census (image above).

The same restaurant - its name 'Bhet Ghat' in fact means 'meeting' in Nepali - also supports an NRNA UK office (to the side of the main restaurant banqueting area): key meetings taking place in that room for national to local (Rushmoor area) level NRNA UK affairs and UK Nepali community voice needs meetings (such as with the leader of Rushmoor Council: image below).



The early 2000's -- Gurkha settlement rights in the UK:



The information resource with its cultural and social heritage emphasis, does not cover political topics directly, but here it needs to be recorded that it was in April 2009, after a formidable campaign by a number of Gurkha rights organisations and with outstanding championing work by Joanna Lumley OBE (in image to left, kindly provided by Sgt Hiranadhan Rai), the then government of Prime Minister Gordon Brown found the direction given by Whitehall to his government on Gurkha settlement rights, being rejected in Parliament. This was an outstanding accomplishment for Nepali Gurkhas, and such a long journey from the experiences of ex-Gurkha Mr Motilal Singh in the early 19th Century!

Consequently all former Gurkhas to be allowed to live in the UK, not just those who retired after 1997 (source: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/apr/29/government-loses-gurkhas-vote>).



The campaign for Gurkha pension justice and settlement rights has been a work of decades and many Gurkha associations - such as British Gurkha Welfare Society <http://www.bgws.org/> -- undertaking tenaciously extensive activity for ex-Gurkhas. At practical support level for ex-Gurkhas the work of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT: <https://www.gwt.org.uk/>) - image to left -- is outstanding in Nepal and the UK.

Until that time, the number of Nepalis living in or settled with citizenship rights in the UK amounted to just a few thousand. These mainly included serving British Army Brigade of the Gurkhas military personnel and members of their immediate families (but with, in most cases no right to settlement and citizenship), and a much smaller number of Nepali businesspeople (restaurant owners, etc.), undergraduate to PhD level UK universities Nepali students, and of course Nepali citizens in marriage based relationships with indigenous British citizens.

Total numbers of Nepalis in the UK were never calculated as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 'censuses' had never included a dedicated Nepali (despite the Gurkha British Army exceptional factor) entry, so precise numbers of the community were never known except from British Army serving Gurkhas members, citizenship registration, universities enrolments, and recorded marriages data.

Size and locations of the UK Nepali population:

The Gurkha Settlement rights development in the 2009 - 2010 period constituted a major revolutionary new dynamic where Nepali UK settlement was concerned (a perceived tenfold+ expansion of the Nepali population of the UK).

Because of the unintended shortcomings in the Whitehall (ONS and related census) created UK population data gathering systems there is still in 2020 not any scientific, reliable national to localities and socio-economic and Nepali sub-populations data available, crippling services planning from local

authority to UK national and government level agencies and public services organisations service provisions - a situation that serves ill support for the effective integration of our new citizens from Nepal (most ex-servicemen and their families) that have major support needs.

Estimates for the UK Nepali population range consequently from about 80,000 to 150,000+.

In terms of main locations for the UK Nepali population, these have for reasons of the Brigade of Gurkhas (and its various regiments and components ranging from crack troop frontline to ceremonial) British Army dynamic, been mostly British Army garrisons and bases linked.

However, it is important to record that separate to this medical and healthcare professions have played their part regarding the pioneer development of the UK Nepali population, and that a major migration of nursing professionals initiated by NHS South Asian area overseas recruitment took place between the late 1990s and middle of the first decade of the 21st Century, a number of years before the Gurkha settlement rights landmark development.

Beyond these, at a much smaller level, university associated communities, and with major UK cities natural directions for UK Nepali community members British citizens to settle in, and of course smallest in terms of settlement locations towns and rural locations (these destinations usually linked to Nepali - indigenous British citizens marriages and partnerships. The following locations give an indication of the range of settlement location considerations detailed above:

Aldershot and Rushmoor, Folkestone (Shorncliffe), Blandford, Maidstone, Canterbury, Brecon, Catterick.

South East (Woolwich and Greenwich) and West (South Harrow, Southall) London, Swindon, Reading, Slough, Southampton, Birmingham, Oxford, Bournemouth.

Careers and employment sectors:

It is now (at the time of creation of this information resource) a full ten years since the 2010 landmark Gordon Brown Government decision to accord on the direction of Parliament, retired Nepali Gurkhas and their families settlement and citizenship rights. In 2019 it was estimated that 65%+ of the total UK Nepali community were British Army Gurkha related.

However - as illustrated by a reputed 2000+ NHS Nepali nurses cadre within the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) - the first major professional personnel level migration to the UK took place in the late 1990s to 2004 period. This when the NHS due to a 20,000+ deficit in required nurses undertook a major South Asian recruitment campaign that included Nepal, where nursing as a career choice was an honourable path in life and popular. As such the medical and healthcare (subsequently social care / residential homes private sector) professions in fact preceded the Gurkha settlement rights milestone, in regard to the substantial acceleration of the UK Nepali population.

Understandably, with retirement from the army, retired Gurkhas because of their exceptional reputation for ferocity combined with outstanding combat expertise and martial skills, swiftly entered and were eagerly sought after by security sector businesses, especially from 2010. Retired Gurkhas dominate the security businesses sector where BAME employees, managers and owners are concerned (as a very by nature entrepreneurial people, Nepalis have naturally gravitated to managerial and business owners positions in this and other sectors of the UK economy), and are a

major frontline to manager level component within the security companies world of Britain (and this extends to a certain extent to the EU, North America, Singapore, Malaysia and beyond).

Beyond the security and nursing/health and social care sectors, perhaps the major (and growing) employment, career, and business ownership area of Nepali prominence lies in the restaurants and catering field. The practical, skills and expertise based reasons for this are covered in the Nepali cuisine section of this information resource, but here it is important to mention that in South Asia, Nepal is renowned for the variety and quality of its multiple forms of cuisine (Kathmandu being a true South Asian 'Mecca' for quality and diversity of Nepali foods). Indeed, in the UK it is a common belief of Indian restaurant owners and managers (who are in fact mostly, even 85%+, Bangladeshi rather than Hindustani) that if they can secure a Nepali chef or sous-chef this will be a major asset to their business in terms of quality of food cooked and served.

As such these are the three, historic-based employment and business sectors that the UK Nepali community are dynamically associated with. Beyond these areas, entrepreneurial, creative, innovative, compassionate and peoples orientated career paths, Nepalis have taken very successful career paths in multiple sectors of the UK economy, from bus or taxi drivers to PhD academics, to artists, to graphic designers and make-up artists, social care professionals, to politicians.

UK Nepali sub-populations and minorities of significance:

To be truly representative of the totality and diversity of the UK Nepali community population - in some ways (particularly around main shared aspects of culture) homogenous, in certain cases, certainly not -- and to fulfil the core educational and knowledge extending purposes of the UK Nepali community cultural & social heritage information resource project, particular UK Nepali sub-population groups and minorities of significance required brief mention for their particular characteristics and in some cases, needs.

Elderly Nepalis & retired Gurkhas and their families:



In Nepal the elderly (parents and grandparents, uncles, aunts, great aunts and great uncles) are regarded with reverence and respect - they gave one life, nurtured one as children and youth and want to see their children and grandchildren in honourable situations of life, not only in terms of jobs/wealth/careers, but in terms of contribution to overall society, to the broader social group, clan, given community and town or village - this could be through involving in charitable activity for a health/medical service, hospital, school, orphanage. And to maintain and transfer cultural traditions and practices.

This is a very different approach to senior/elderly family members to that increasingly found in the UK/West in the last decades of the 20th Century and first two decades of the 21st Century. In a UK context, if parents and grandparents remain in Nepal, while their children and grandchildren have settled in the UK, remittance support for support to those elders is expected and assumed. In the UK however in regard to the UK Nepali ex-Gurkhas, many parents and grandparents have settled in the UK

itself by right. Yet, because in most (with one or two honourable exceptions, such as the Aldershot -

Farnborough / Rushmoor area) instances national to public service organisations have not been in terms of systems & communications, and cultural awareness training, prepared, elderly Nepali settlers in the UK have found them, and especially their siblings confronted with major practical day to day living support needs and especially cultural learning needs; all of these amplified by the particular needs the elderly anywhere in the world have, ageing, physical health decline, mental health and well-being. As a result, traumatic challenges are not uncommon to elderly first-generation ex-Gurkha family members.

Younger Nepalis: We include in this important age/generation group, Nepali international students and academics, and artists, in this category, as well as health and social care workers, and others. Younger Nepalis often have much greater career development and income earning potentiality profiles, at least beyond basic social care work sector, areas. Many find themselves in the UK whilst their fathers or elder brothers serve in the British Army Brigade of the Gurkhas. Often much more highly educated and schooled in Western education systems and outside of the UK Nepali community contexts, they can find themselves in disorientating and challenging cultural spaces where their birth-culture (Nepali) is not known or rapidly being lost, and at the same time the UK/Western host culture is not properly known for its strengths but also its weaknesses.

Nepali language classes, such as the 'Junkiri' language class group provided at Blandford Camp in Dorset, and major work by organisations such as the Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community (GRNC) and even national level sports and community festivals such as the Gurkha Cup and Swindon Cup are all designed to support UK Nepali youth to protect them from the worst elements of the host country/Western culture (ASB, excess drinking, drugs taking, involvement in some urban areas in gangs, etc.), and at the same time preserve and share knowledge of Nepali culture traditions, customs and values.

Nepali women -- gender equality and women's inclusion and empowerment:



Nepali society in Nepal is still considerably male-orientated in terms of rights and powers at family, employment types and career, as well as broader society levels. This dynamic transfers in many, but not all, cases to the UK Nepali community. In the UK however, Nepali women have exposure to exceptional gender equality and empowerment factors and support, of kinds not yet commonplace in Nepal.

As such whilst many aspects of traditional ages-old culture and traditions where the role and presence of females/women are concerned are and continue to be revered - especially in the spiritual and religious and related concepts and legends are concerned (on Sita through to the Goddess Durga, even the Goddess Kali) - not sanctioned and frowned upon female disempowering or worse, practices are increasingly being

challenged.

The secular, individual-respecting, equality, diversity, inclusion human rights perspectives and related

‘red lines not to be crossed’ on abusive/exploitative conduct and crimes, prevailing and deepening

values in the UK/West, are providing major inspiration and support to Nepali women, not least UK Nepali community leaders in the UK (the current NRNA UK President, Mrs Poonam Gurung and one of the NRNA UK's Vice Presidents, Mrs Rojina Pradhan Rai [images below: Mrs Poonam Gurung to left, and Mrs Rojina Pradhan Rai to right]).



In this sense our UK Nepali women's community is impacting on culturally sensitive/appropriate gender equality change and women's empowerment in Nepal itself, which in the upper caste and political and business leads circles of Kathmandu, accelerating considerably. In the main 'Culture' component of this information resource, further information is provided regarding UK Nepali women, including in particular two interviews (representative of younger and often HE educated, generation Nepali women's experiences and perspectives) in its **Gender – women's roles, rights and search for equality**, section.

Sexual orientation and gender minorities (LGB&T): In Nepal LGB&T community members still face major often extreme personally disastrous prejudice and reactions at family, employment/career, and societal levels. Consequently the natural reticence to share sexual or gender minority identity for such reasons has to date transferred for Nepali LGB&Ts (that the UK Home Office 'hostile environment' at time of providing this information, aggravates in the case of Nepali LGB&Ts through its treatment of the latter under the UK immigration regime).

The UKNFS through a National Lottery funded research project on health and wellbeing issues and needs exploration in the 2014 - 2015 period found for example that out of a large (300+ individuals) sample size of participants in SE London's Nepali community, revealed a 0% participation rate by the latter's LGB&T community (in the UK, Nepal, globally, never less than 6% out of the total given population are on the basis of extensive academic research and other evidence, LGB or T. This meant that the 6%+ LGB&T participants of the research project weren't comfortable and probably were afraid to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity to the researchers, who were Nepali.

In the UK, Nepali LGB&T community members exist, and not a few have found the UK a more appropriate and, generally speaking, respectful of their identities, society than that of Nepal itself: not a few are in dual heritage Anglo-Nepali partnerships/marriages/civil partnerships. However, generally, we through outreach to UK Nepali LGB&T community members as part of developing the content of this information resource, have found that almost universally these community members have to conceal their identities (not be 'Out' as LGB or T) in regard to broader UK Nepali community communication. Nevertheless, the community takes part in the UK's broader LGB&T South Asian sub-

culture through once monthly London dedicated South Asian LGB&T community nightclub events and in other ways.

Dual nationality couples: Increasing numbers of loving couples, married partners or civil partners, in the UK, two loving individuals from different nationalities, cultures and ethnicities/races have from the earliest times and especially since the second half of the 20th Century and more than ever now in the early 21st Century, been coming together to form unions. This phenomenon is also accelerating in regard to indigenous British and Nepalis.

Such unions result in equal level mutually rewarding learning about each partner's given culture, and as such produce a unique phenomenon of Pan-Western/British - South Asian/Nepali life-long sharing of cultures and even forming distinct transcultural lived and developed experience, happiness and wisdom: the very opposite of the phenomenon of defensive, ignorance-based racism. As such, although small in number still, Anglo-Nepali couples count as a particularly important UK Nepali sub-population.

There is at least one example of an Nepali-English married couple where the indigenous British side of the partnership is a famous UK pop musician, there are UK - Nepali same-sex married/civil partner couples, and even major UK Nepali-retired Gurkha community leads married not to Nepalis but to indigenous British wives.

The role of UK Nepali media and social media in UK Nepali community members life

The role of Nepali media and social media is fundamental in preserving Nepali identity and cultural heritage in the UK because at community-wide communication level it has proven to be a crucial social and socialising element in the daily life of most members of the community, especially younger UK Nepalis and community leads and activists.

In the UK Nepali world, news journalists comprise a key and greatly respected group of individuals de-facto providing a bond not only from the community back to Nepal, but also, uniquely providing news and perspectives on current affairs in the UK, in the UK Nepali community, and back into Nepal. By definition UK Nepali news journalists cover the matters of moment to all sections of Nepali society from the most marginal and often overlooked, through to those that represented very large numbers (from conservative, traditional to pan-national contemporary and progressive/inclusive and social justice orientated).

There are many UK Nepali news houses and agencies (these have in all cases links back to national, respected parallel media agencies of major to niche, in Nepal) and a spirit of camaraderie amongst them all. In the UK the Federation of Nepali Journalists UK) - FNJUK: <http://fnjuk.org/> -- includes representatives from most of those agencies, including for example E-Kantipur and WeNepali, through founders and leads such as Mr Nabin Pokherel, Mr Naresh Khapangi Magar.



FNJUK members and officers with H.E. Dr Durga Bahadur Subedi at the Embassy of Nepal

The BBC through BBC Nepal (online) also plays a role in regard to Nepal related news sharing, but its presence has been diminished to a certain degree when a couple of years ago through a cost-cutting rationalisation exercise decided despite strong UK Nepali community representation (including from the UKNFS) to end its provision of a dedicated news journalist post.

Social Media:

Social media is perhaps even more important than traditional online news channels, as it involves the crucial personal, social interaction factor so important to a still largely first generation diaspora community that sees micro (100-) to macro (20,000+) UK Nepali communities geographically distanced in England and the UK, and of course the great need of comparable real-time, video, text messaging, audio/phone and even online news views and announcement direct social interaction. Social media is also used for official communication from the Government of Nepal and Embassy of Nepal, as well as for job and study opportunities posts.

Facebook has been now for many years, and remains by far the most popular and preferred social media for UK Nepali community members (and for Nepalis in Nepal itself):



We conclude this section of the information resource with reference to an audio interview with FNJUK co-founder and E-Kantipur news lead Mr Nabin Pokherel.



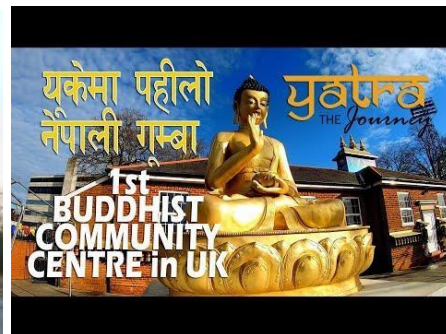
In the interview three questions were asked, on the importance of the UK Nepali news media, importance to the UK Nepali community of social media conveying news of importance to the community, and on the role of initiatives such as Miss Nepal UK contest.

The key responses for each were in brief that the UK Nepali news media respects and supports the diversity of the UK Nepali community; that social media provides an essential independent platform where the mainstream general UK news media presents an inaccurate, picture of sometimes brushing aside the often substantial issues on support and inclusion where integration experienced by the community is concerned. Nabin ji's response to the Miss Nepal initiative, indicated how through such competitions and in other ways the UK Nepali community is forging

its own identity, as a Nepali one that includes both Nepali and broader indigenous British values perspectives and creativity.

Interview link: [Link To be provided on website at point of launching.](#)

Some major facets of UK Nepali culture



The whole of this information resource concentrates on multiple types and levels of preserving or sharing Nepali culture in the UK (above two images from the Aldershot Nepali Buddhist Temple), from within the British Army, to football and sports, to arts, and at UK Nepali social to broader UK society levels.

Here in this section of the information resource we provide some further UK Nepali culture and society subjects of importance. The subjects covered are listed below:

- Family - importance of the concept of family in UK Nepali life and society
- Respect and related
- Some Nepali words, and globally recognised Nepal and Nepali associated names -- windows into Nepali culture and society
- Some popular beliefs
- Gender - women's roles, rights and search for equality
- Life Events
- Festivals and related, and the Nepali Calendar
- Integration and related

- Culture preservation - Nepali language classes, dance classes
- Health and Healing

Family – importance of the concept of family in UK Nepali life and society:



The family is the most important social unit in Nepal. Families tend to be larger, especially in rural areas, and more extended than Western families. Older members of the family are much respected by younger generations, and expect to be looked after by their sons in old age.

In the UK Nepali community regular often at length social media (Facebook especially) daily or every other day video call communications with immediate family members in Nepal, not in the UK, or visiting back to Nepal are a main feature of daily life, evidencing the closeness of family bonds.

One of the interviews the UKNFS carried out in support of this information resource's development featured the topic of the role of the family. We are very grateful to Mr Kripesh Adhikari (Bournemouth Nepali community) for contributing his thoughts and perspectives, which are provided below (questions in italics):

The family structure and role of the elderly and elders -- Traditional expectations (oldest son, daughters, etc.) of serving the family and family name?

In the traditional Nepali culture, when a child is born, they automatically get the family name or surname of their father. The family name is carried forward from the father's name of previous generation. However, the mother surname is not considered to be such significant. Actually, the woman surname changes to the surname of her husband after the marriage. The oldest son in the family has greater responsibility than the rest and considered to take the charge to support the whole family in the absence of his father. The parents are looked after by usually the elder son until their death. Old people living in care homes is not popular even today unless there are no one to look after or the children wants to send them deliberately away. Even during the funeral of parents, sons have to shave their head and wear white clothes. The male family member can only perform the last rites. Only in some special cases where no male is there in the family, the female can take that role.

Changing dynamics of family structure in regard to UK / Western norms attractive to more Westernised [especially younger generations, particularly those working in academia and non-traditional more

Western economic sectors] Nepali community members - what are the main strengths and challenges to UK Nepali communities from young to elderly regarding this phenomenon?

Things at present for Nepali community in UK have changed drastically in the name of westernisation. The western culture of UK has given much more freedom in term of their living habits and choices. From food to living in are more common than ever in specially in younger generation. People in Nepali culture are more used to consume homemade foods than to look for fast food and takeaways like in the UK. Hence cooking is a naturally developing skills found in most people of Nepal as they are used to seeing their parents cook in the kitchen. Cooking for yourself is more favourable in all cases like in terms of health or saving money. The other tradition that western culture attract is going to clubs and pubs leading to consumption of alcohol and cigarettes. Younger generation quite easily gets attracted to this believing it as a fun thing to do. Talking about the strength of the western society that UK Nepali community are benefitted with is the better quality of life. UK provides better value in terms of food, better living with hard work. Other than that, the quality of education and medical treatments are also better compared to the living in Nepal.

Kripesh Adhikari

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Respect and related:

Respect is a fundamental concept and lynchpin of Nepali culture in the UK Nepali community as much as in Nepal itself. The salutation 'Namaste' / 'Namaskar' -- literally meaning 'I salute the god within you' (traditional values governed Nepalis in the UK, even when younger will sometimes have reticence on shaking hands with those who are older or in perceived more senior positions in life) encapsulates this reverence for the concept of respect.



The **Tikka Blessing** is perhaps the ultimate ceremony level manifestation of the veneration for respect: there is fuller information on the Tikka Blessing in the Festivals and related, and the Nepali Calendar section of this information resource.

Whilst the removal of shoes on entering a traditional Nepali family home in the UK is a custom as vibrant as it is mandatory, and with a significance as important as doing the same on entering a Hindu temple or Buddhist temple, or mosque. There are subtle but very real associations of spiritual energy and symbolism relating to this act, but it basically means awareness between the outer world and private living and worship spaces. Not far behind these two examples of the presentation of khada scarves (see clothing section of this information resource) and conferring or receiving Tikka blessings.

Beyond these and indicated in the Namaste / Namaskar difference, there are also age and relationship name differences of importance, and the fact that just as in French there are verb forms for familiarity and ones for more formal intercommunication: in French 'tu' and 'vous' forms and in Nepali 'timi' and 'tapai' forms.

Age is not a cause of embarrassment for Nepali people, but a requirement for respect. This is reflected in forms of address used to speak even to complete strangers. If you are perceived to be older than the person addressing you, they will call you *Didi*, meaning "older sister," or *Dai* ("older brother"); if perceived to be younger Bhai (for men) and Bahini (for women) are used to signify 'younger brother' or 'younger sister.' You may also be addressed as "Uncle" or "Auntie." These are entirely respectful terms. Similarly, a -jee (also 'Ji') suffix added to someone's name when you address them is a mark of respect. The suffix 'Jiu' is used for very senior respected figures such as ministers, prime ministers, organisation leads, experts, ambassadors, etc. Contradictory attributes may draw respect: wealth is respected, and yet so is self-denial and humility.

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Some Nepali words, and globally recognised Nepal and Nepali associated names **-- windows into Nepali culture and society:**

In Nepali culture names matter as they give the presence of the ancient past and social interactions and position. In this short section we give some examples as insights into culture, psychology, and some internationally famous names associated with Nepal and the Nepali people.

Perhaps the single most famous Nepali family names, of international renown, are 'Sherpa' and 'Lama.' Whilst beyond these, 'Gurkha' - the adjusted Western [British] context name of 'Gorkha' in Nepal and used across South Asia - is almost a global brand name of Nepal in the field of military courage and prowess. In the Sherpa component of this information resource we look more closely at the names 'Sherpa' and 'Everest,' but here we note in addition to these two words associated with the Himalaya and the peoples of the world's highest mountains. These are 'North Face' (or 'The North Face') - associated with the hardest side of Mt Everest, to climb - 'Lama' (most famously associated with the Dalai Lama (and to some extent Panchen Lama), the name of many people in the Himalayan part of Nepal, and 'Mustang': the latter a region of the Nepali Himalayas, but made famous as renowned fighter plane of the Second World War, and a classic car.

Names matter to anyone interest in the actual identity characteristics and history of a place, country, people, and beyond the international profiled names relating to the Himalaya, personal and family names for instance take one to the heart of ancient culture, folklore, religion, spirituality, and human psychology. We provide some examples of names below associated with ancient culture, caste, and religions from Hinduism (especially figures/heroes/heroines in Hindu epics, such as the Ramayana, and Mahabharata) at Pan-South Asian and Nepal specific levels:

- 'Sita': a very popular forename for Nepali women of all castes. Name of the Consort of Lord Rama, seventh Avatar of the God Vishnu, famous for his slaying of the demon king Ravana (from which the name 'ravenous' is derived)
- 'Acharya': a surname - literally meaning 'master' it is a caste derived name often used by families of the Bahun/Brahmin caste
- 'Chhetri': a surname - an upper caste derived name.
- 'Sagar': a popular forename. In the Sherpa section of the information resource the word 'Sagar' appeared in the note on the Nepali name - Sagarmatha -- given in the late 19th Century to Chomolungma, the World's highest mountain, better known as Mt Everest: Sagar meaning 'sky' and 'matha' head. Here an example of a celestial name with related auspicious character associations.

- 'Tej': meaning literally 'brilliant'
- 'Uttam': meaning 'Excellent'
- 'Bhimsen': a Nepali forename, associated with the Nepali god of the same name - God of Income. Reputed as ferocious and auspicious
- 'Tamrakar': Newari name - meaning Coppersmith
- 'Chitrakar': Newari name - associated with painting and being an artist.

We conclude with the words 'Namaste' / 'Namaskar': this is the famous salutation of greeting and farewell used in Nepali and Indian cultures and globally famous as such. It literally means 'I salute the god within you.' Both words have the same meaning and reflect the Nepali (and Hindustani) affirmation of life being essentially a spiritual phenomenon; culturally the two versions speak of the reverence for differences of types and levels of respect towards for example those who are older than yourself or who hold high positions and posts (for these Namaskar, not Namaste, is used). A completely different word for Namaste is used by the Sherpa People - 'Tasidelek' - as such re-emphasising that Nepali is a truly multi-ethnic, multicultural country of diverse peoples and cultures.

Some popular beliefs:



With multiple cultures there are many different popular beliefs, and some may apply to one culture in particular but not all others. The three given below are however almost universal across the UK Nepali community older generations, and clearly relate to auric energies and/or symbolism

- Avoiding touching the head of a stranger:
- Not crossing/passing on top of or above someone
- Not passing on handkerchiefs to friends or people you love, as this brings ill fortune and potential catastrophe in a relationship.

The most famous Nepali belief, or custom, known throughout not only the UK Nepali community and in Nepal, but having a global profile, is that concerning for actual Gurkhas to not be able to sheath a Kukri knife again unless it has drawn blood. This martial focus purpose being where required (such as using a kukri for culinary food preparation purposes) symbolically fulfilled through nicking a finger.

Honouring Nepali Hindu and Buddhist deities and teachers on special occasions in the Nepali annual religious observances calendar, but also year-round in the home: almost all UK Nepali homes have a dedicated sacred space where statues and sacred images are revered, often with offerings of fruit and flowers and the lighting of candles on special occasions such as life events or festivals. The two images (statue of the Lord Ganesha, and offerings before a Newari Hindu Mandir) above are from Kathmandu, but indicate the scale and ancient pedigree of such worship.

Gender – women’s roles, rights and search for equality:



The two images above of UK Nepali women’s group cultural events and traditional socialising (please note for example the ‘anti’ water dispensers and other brassware in foreground of second picture) kindly provided by Mrs Rojina Pradhan Rai, Vice President of NRNA UK

Some Nepali sub-cultures see women enjoying a high status. However, this is generally-speaking an exception which proves a general rule in Nepal where until very recent times women have been often disadvantaged both legally and socially. The UK Nepali diaspora’s female population therefore has its own challenges in addition to those experienced by the general UK Nepali population, and also opportunities for voice and equality in culturally sensitive, appropriate ways, and including being able

to be a beacon for culturally sensitive gender equality and women's empowerment and human rights for Nepal's female population. Elsewhere these topics have been touched on from extensive discussion at many levels and multiple UK Nepali community locations, but here, we provide important detail regarding a set of interviews that the UKNFS carried out through the research information and data gathering phase of the information resource project. Locations included Canterbury, Nth Hampshire, Bournemouth (the responses below), and also elements of a ground-breaking audio interview with the NRNA UK's first female president, Mrs Poonam Gurung (<http://en.newsnrm.com/2019/09/25/first-female-president-in-nrm-uk-history/>).

Two Interviews:

The UKNFS is pleased to provide two representative women's related subject dedicated interviews, responses below: these provide valuable insights on the challenges, strengths, and opportunities on culturally sensitive gender equality and women's empowerment taking place across many sections of the UK Nepali women's community.

UK Nepali women related questions for heritage project:

1. *What would you say are the main characteristics of women's contribution to Nepali society generally and in the home setting?*

Women have been seen very inhibited in a male dominated culture. They are not equal as per British culture. They are rarely the main breadwinner. They raise children to the best of there ability, but are lacking in education and skills to bring change.

2. *What would you say are the main contributions of women to a) traditional and b) contemporary Nepali culture in the UK*

Women have been a big part for religious and cultural preservation. Contemporary is being introduced by the next generation learning to integrate in the U.K.

3. *What do you feel are the main areas of mutual learning between UK Nepali women and UK women in general on gender equality and inclusion (please give some examples)*

Education is becoming more of an opportunity and the need of it has been better appreciated amongst both. In terms of inclusion and gender equality there remains a huge discrepancy. In Nepal, without the father's name you are not entitled to citizenship, therefore women remain financially abused and socially abused. The element of inclusion is particularly difficult as a nepali women living in the U.K., as there is a silo of a nepali community which adds pressure to conform to be a part of the community. Those breaking that boundary are not accepted in the community. This is where there is a lot of work required. To ensure the peer pressure does not take away human rights, which are not always a consideration in Nepal.

Language prevents the women from getting better paid jobs and advancing. Hence they remain stuck at low level skills and jobs - unable to break the cycle towards independent living.

4. *About yourself: could you say a little about yourself as a UK Nepali woman and community lead from a Nepali women's voice perspective*

I am a British born Nepali, from conservative parents. I broke the mould and was the first person in my family to go to University and complete my undergrad. I completed my masters from University of Surrey. I am a single parent of two daughters. My husband is from Nepali

origin. I have worked hard in the community to see women come out of their shell and achieve some understanding of life outside of their 4 walls. I founded Asian Mahila Association (AMA) in 2005 - you only had to be Nepali woman and you were welcome. Therefore no caste, religion or background dependent. I introduced English classes, computer classes, healthy living, Bollywood dance and coffee mornings.. It was very much a great opportunity to bring some empowerment to Nepali women in the U.K.

Women were never in community organisations, their views were never encompassed. Nowadays, women are speaking up more, achieving better, sharing and understanding about equality - even though they may not be able to achieve it outside of their own home - as they were conditioned that way.

It is hard being a Nepali woman in a male dominated society, but I see change has been made. More work needs to be done, to help women that are unable to help themselves.

Where there is so much help with the Gurkhas, there needs to be more investment towards the people that come into the U.K. with them - children and wives. The mothers don't understand the education system, so how can they guide their children? Even parents evenings take place in which they can't communicate.

Hopefully more work and investment will happen in this arena?

Miaya KC GRNC Vice President and Gorkha Ama Samuha founder

UK Nepali women related questions for heritage project:

1. What would you say are the main characteristics of women's contribution to Nepali society generally and in the home setting?

Women of Nepali society are the main caretaker for all the family members. They look after every single member of the family helping them with day to day living. Almost all of the women from earlier generations are only housewives who only look after house and family members. They perform all the housekeeping work and prepare food for the whole family. Usually men are considered to earn money for the whole family and wife to maintain the living standard within that budget. Traditionally, females were considered to be the leaving member of the family. A woman should go to the man house and start living there after the marriage. They should look after their men after the marriage. Therefore, investing in women's education and training was considered to be a loss. However, men were well educated and trained so that they can earn better money for the family. But things are changing now and equal educations are practised more in this modern time.

2. What would you say are the main contributions of women to a) traditional and b) contemporary Nepali culture in the UK

Even in UK, women from the traditional Nepali culture were brought to UK after marriage to work as caretaker for their men. As they were not educated, they cannot compete and therefore hesitate to work outside in the UK society. They are not able to communicate well with other nationals and would

always have low esteem. However, women from contemporary Nepali culture are equally educated and trained as their men. They are able to manage things and contribute in a better way. They can work outside to earn money for living with the support of equal opportunity or gender equality provided by the government of UK and also able to manage the house on free times. Men and women are working in a balance manner to live a better life in the present time.

3. What do you feel are the main areas of mutual learning between UK Nepali women and UK women in general on gender equality and inclusion (please give some examples)

UK Nepali women must not hesitate to bring themselves out of the house and explore the opportunity that UK provides. The best thing is to observe and learn how they can also grab the similar opportunities that exists. The most important thing is to build confidence and be self-motivated to push yourself out of the weak areas. Appropriate training and skills can always be acquired for self-development. The main areas are improving communication skills including reading and writing. One can meet many people, observe their way and improve. There are several inexpensive mediums to get the information and trainings. One example of mutual learning is to catch up for lunch and dinner and discuss the recipe and food preparation. Cookery is a naturally developing skill in the Nepali women which is observed less in the UK women. This skill can be easily shared and enjoy mutual benefit. Other than that, Nepali women mostly have knitting and sewing skills. Handmade sweaters are quite popular in Nepal. These kinds of skills can always be shared and both can be benefited with discussion on the development.

4. About yourself: could you say a little about yourself as a UK Nepali woman and community lead from a Nepali women's voice perspective?

I consider myself as the UK Nepali women of the modern time. I have the necessary education and skill that can provide me enough opportunity to work and contribute equally. I am willing to share my skills and knowledge to anyone that can be benefited to have their personal development.

Mrs Lata Khanal (Bournemouth, Dorset)

Nepal traditional contexts on women's rights, respect, and roles in society and changing development:

The law has only recently changed to allow a woman not married by the age of thirty-five to inherit an equal share from her parents, and the Constitution of 2015 is likely to further extend this welcome change. Her dowry is otherwise her share, and as this constitutes a considerable expense to her family, the birth of a boy is preferred. However, there are sometimes, rarely, instances of dowries being put to exceptional uses by wives with the support of husbands, such as being used for altruistic purposes such as setting up schools and centres for children with disabilities, etc.

The September 2015 Constitution has the rights of women explicitly recognized, with a specific provision stating that "women shall have equal ancestral right without any gender-based discrimination."

Gender determination clinics exist, and female feticide is undoubtedly an issue. Women suspected of having an abortion may be imprisoned. Girl trafficking to brothels in India and beyond is still a very

real problem with Nepali children's and women's human rights organisations undertaking exceptional work to reduce this.

According to a Nepali saying, "Having a daughter is like planting a seed in another man's garden." Girls officially change families upon marriage. They enter their husband's family at the lowest level, gaining in status only when they produce a child, preferably a son. Traditionally they are expected to defer to their husbands and in-laws at all times. Daughters do however maintain a special relationship with their *maiti* (maternal home), and when permitted to visit after marriage, they are likely to be treated there as princesses, higher in status than their sisters-in-law.

Menstruating women or those who have just given birth are considered *jiuto* (impure) and must in extreme cases leave the house for a few days in order not to sully the purity of their husbands. There is however another side to this: women are not permitted to prepare food during menstruation and are allowed to rest while their husbands do the cooking.

There is still a much higher level of illiteracy among women. Increasing access to education has, however, improved the position of women. A good education ensures that a daughter will make a better marriage. Wealthy and high-caste women are not generally expected to work. In some cases a husband might lose face if his wife worked.

Divorce is very uncommon. It is difficult for a divorced woman to return to her original family and she will be expelled by her husband's. Children may remain with their mother until the age of six, after which they "belong" to their father.

Widows are traditionally shunned by society, especially in more remote districts. They may well be thrown out by their husband's family as an extra mouth to feed. It is believed they are responsible for their husbands' deaths, and in extreme cases they may even be called witches.

In marked contrast, in the business world of Kathmandu and in increasing numbers of governmental and national agencies organisations, women are increasingly emerging as CEOs and holding other senior posts. The first President of Nepal was Ram Baran Yadav. Nepal's first president of the Federal Democratic Republic, Bidhya Devi Bhandari, elected in October 2015, as the first female head of state.

Life Events:

Marriage, death, and birth constitute perhaps the most important personal and family level events in life in terms of honouring and deploying, albeit in a UK setting rather than in Nepal, ancient time-honoured rites of Nepali Hindu, Nepali Buddhist, and of Sherpa-Tibetan kinds.

With these three life events there are associated major rites, largely Nepali Hindu caste (especially higher castes) related (including in the case of the preliminary to marriage, engagement). These take place in the UK in often substantially different forms - especially in regard to death - but with the essence of each being maintained. It should be noted that in all three life events certain foods exist as integral parts of main ceremonies (such as first rice eating at the **Pasni Ceremony** for infants, or the elaborate types of abstentions after the death of a parent or close family member).

Marriage: Traditional Nepali marriages take place over three days, with the wedding ceremony known as **Bibaha**; the main form follows the Nepali Newari Hindu tradition (close to but not exactly the same

as that in the Terai and much of India (Bharat). However, in contrast to the West and other parts of the world, the Nepali and Hindu South Asian concept of marriage is not linked solely to the wedding ceremony and subsequent life in union of a duly engaged couple. In fact there are three stages to marriage in Nepali Newari culture for girls. The first two marriages are symbolic: the first marriage being when pre-adolescent girls are married to a symbol of the Lord Vishnu, a wild fruit (wood apple), the Bael/Bel Fruit (this first marriage is therefore named 'Bel Bibaha' and its ceremony, 'lhi'). The second symbolic marriage takes place for girls in the years of adolescence (7 - 13) and are symbolically married to the Sun (also a God, existing in other ancient cultures such as Greek and Egyptian). This marriage is known as Bhara. The third marriage is to the human soulmate, traditionally being arranged by the two given families, and strongly influenced by astrological considerations and a professional astrologer specialising in this very important field of astrology.

The third marriage (Bibaha) in Nepal would normally for higher caste families couples take place across three days involving various ceremonies, and with a uniting of two families through the married couple as a major backdrop (marriages therefore often traditionally leading to such families extending their status or influence, from wealth creation & busines to political and other domains). This is an important factor when one considers why divorce is traditionally regarded as extremely inauspicious.

There is a belief therefore because of the three-marriages tradition that should a woman find her third-marriage husband passing on, she, because of the two preceding symbolic marriages, will not be a widow. This also establishes a powerful block in this traditional culture, on remarriage.

In the UK however, many younger Nepali community members of both sexes, respect such traditions, but, sometimes with some struggle with parents and families, do not necessarily follow them. This because of alternative perspectives, and especially critical scrutiny of arranged marriage (which is a general rule traditionally, but not absolute or always mandatory as love marriages - the coming together of two individuals who fall in love - have also always been recognised and honoured from the earliest times), that exist in the UK, often enforced by law and Acts of Parliament. Love marriages predominate in UK society, and sometimes marriages of convenience of types not known in traditional Nepali, also for same-sex orientated people, natural love marriages and/or civil partnerships exist in ways that are not possible in Nepal.

In the UK marriage ceremonies can also be associated with large scale marriage celebrations, of even in some cases 300+ attendees. Aldershot's Empire Hall is an example of a venue where such celebrations take place, but it is not uncommon for Nepali restaurants across the UK to be booked out for private events that are marriage celebration related.

Finally, prior to the third type of marriage, there is almost always an engagement 'Tika-Tala' ceremony: this compared to the subsequent wedding ceremony, is a simple promise between bride and groom, with accompanying spoken vows (a ceremony that features in not a few love-themed Bollywood films).

Customs relating to death:



Cremation (and associated cremation rituals: Dahan Sanskar) is the absolutely required method of ritual passing on of the mortal remains of an individual. In Nepal funerary ceremonies (Antim **Sanskar**) traditionally mean a wooden funeral pyre, and subsequently sending the ashes into a river - Nepal has many sacred rivers which feed into the Ganges: Pashupatinath Mandir (above: photo courtesy of Tom Pouncy, a contributor to the arts & culture section of the information resource) in Kathmandu is perhaps the most famous of locations for cremation & last rights for Nepali Hindus. This is not possible in the UK, but ashes from cremation may still often be returned to Nepal for sending into the waters of sacred rivers.

Mourning takes many forms and can relate at stages from one month up to a year. In addition to lighting candles and invoking prayers silently or spoken/chanted, particularly mourning takes the form of abstinence of almost all types of food, especially spicy food and related ingredients such as chilies and garlic, onions, but also no milk or dairy products (milk, yoghurt, eggs, cheese), or meats (including fish). Foods must be bland/non-spicy.

On the thirteenth offerings are made to assist in auspicious sending of the departed soul (Atma) moving on from earthly attachments.

There is also an important annual ceremony, Shraddha (Day of Remembrance), which is a parallel to a birthday. Shraddha is an auspicious rather than mournful anniversary, and especially concerns parents (each has their own Day of Remembrance) that have passed on. It involves reverence and deep appreciation towards those who have passed on, remembering all they did for their children and those left behind.

Birth, and related:

There are a number of different of rites and ceremonies associated with birth, but two are of especial importance; the **Chhaiti Ceremony**, and the **Pasni Ceremony**.

Regarding the Chhaiti Ceremony, this takes place six days from birth, and involves the Bidatha (or 'faith writer' as instrument of Heaven/God) who writes the faith of the infant. Traditionally for the six days from birth until the Chhaiti Ceremony the family of the baby sit together in meditation-type focused state to seek auspicious energies for the infant.

Regarding the Pasni Ceremony, this involves the occasion and related celebration (to whom select special family friends as well as broader family are invited) when for the first time that the infant eats rice and other staples.

Naming Ceremony: The 'Nuwaran' ceremony involves the symbolically very important matter of conferring an auspicious appropriate name to the newly born baby. This takes place on the eight day from birth for a girl, and on the ninth day from birth for a boy. An astrologer oversees the Nuwaran Ceremony; the process commencing with the astrologer advising a letter of the alphabet relating to the time of birth of the infant. The baby's astrologically assigned name has to commence with that letter.

Festivals and related, and the Nepali Calendar:



Religion and spirituality are core aspects of life in Nepal - and consequently for most first generation settlers in the UK (especially older and elderly family members) -- that has been said that "every other building is a temple, and every other day is a festival." There are hundreds of religious festivals throughout the year. Most are related to Hindu or Buddhist gods or tradition, but some honour personal relatives or ancestors, while others mark the passing of the seasons or agricultural cycles. They may be celebrated at temples or other religious sites (such as rivers), or at home (this practice transfers substantially to almost all Nepali family homes in the UK). Most culminate in feasting within the family. They are part of the common heritage, and bring people together whatever their creed or ethnic or cultural background.

Tikka Blessings: The image above is of Tikka and Jamara (young shoots of Wheat Grass), the two elements of the famous Tikka Blessing that takes place during perhaps the most famous of Nepali festivals (Autumn), Dashain; celebrated by all Nepali Hindus (80%+ of the total population of Nepal) and the Kirat people of Nepal. The blessing is officiated by the most senior, elderly member of Nepali families, to family members and friends coming together at a family home for Dashain. The Tikka (red powder) is more famous in the general British population through the 'Chicken Tikka' dishes available in UK Indian restaurants and ready/microwavable and tinned curries in British supermarkets: Tikka is a particular strong red powder. The Tikka (moist) is applied by the elder to the central space of the forehead, and the Jamara is placed behind both ears, and for mass blessings for mainly above the right ear. Tikka blessings (without Jamara) are also made as honorific blessings at special moments and occasions throughout the year, such as on return from or commencement of an international journey, or when one succeeds in a major accomplishment such as a graduation, news about or adoption of a new job or post.

Main Festivals, and the Nepali Calendar:

Nepalis in the UK, as in Nepal, follow the 'Vikram Sambat' Solar calendar, which is fifty-seven years ahead of the Western calendar. However, Nepali Newaris and Sherpas have their own separate calendars and, consequently, New Years (detailed elsewhere in this information resource, such is in its Sherpa Component). The Nepali year begins in mid-April (Nepali New Year or Nepali Sambat) and consists of twelve months that are out of step with the Western ones.

January/February:

Basant Panchami marks the beginning of spring and is devoted to Saraswati, the goddess of learning. Schoolchildren make offerings at her shrines to bring success in learning.

Losar, the Sherpa-Tibetan New Year, is observed by Tibeto-Burman people with folk songs and dancing at the new moon in February.

February/March:

Shivaratri brings thousands of *sadhus* and other pilgrims from all over Nepal and India to Pashupatinath. People bathe in the Bagmati. At night, hundreds of oil lamps are lit and an all-night vigil is held. Picture from Pashupatinath Temple in the 19th Century, followed by image of two Sadhus (Holy Men) at Pashupatinath (Image courtesy of Tom Pouncy):



Holi - the **Festival of Colours** (also known in Nepali as '**Fagu Purnima**') -- heralds the beginning of spring and looks forward to the coming harvest. People roam the streets throwing coloured powder and water at each other.



You can learn more about this now globally famous Hindu festival at <https://www.welcomenepal.com/whatson/holi-fagu-pumima.html>

Festival of Rato Machhendranath, (in Kathmandu the image of the god Rato Machhendranath ‘Red Machhendranath’) is transported around Patan on a tall, precarious-looking wooden chariot that dwarfs the men heaving it along on its solid wooden wheels). Rato Machhendranath is believed to have great influence over the monsoon. For Nepali Buddhists Machhendranath is Lokeshvara, lord of the world. The festival is thus celebrated by both Hindus and Buddhists, and was traditionally attended by the king, and the Kumari Devi, who gave the king her blessing.

April/May:

Nepali New Year (Nepal Sambat): The Bisket Jatra festival marks the Nepali New Year, which starts at the beginning of the Nepali month of Baisakh, approximately Mid-April. This is an official public holiday, and the Embassy of Nepal in particular enables Nepal Sambat formal programmes of celebration.

‘On the Nepali calendar, Nepal Sambat comes at the beginning of the Lunar month called “Navavarsh”. As an agricultural country, it is to embark the beginning of spring when the people needs to start sowing crops.’ Gyan Gurung. NAW President

Mani Rimdu is a major three-day Sherpa festival at the full moon in May and celebrates the vanquishing of the ancient Tibetan Bon religion by Buddhism.

Buddha Jayanti is celebrated by both Hindus and Buddhists to mark the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha (a reincarnation of Vishnu for Hindus). It is celebrated formally under the auspices of the Embassy of Nepal in London’s Trafalgar Square. *‘Buddha Jayanti is celebrated on the full moon day in the Nepali calendar, which is normally in May. On this day people celebrate the life of Lord Buddha; his birth, enlightenment and death (Mahaparinirvana).’* NAW President, Gyan Gurung.



July/August:

At the festival of **Janai Purnima**, *Bahun* and *Chhetri* men change the *janai* (sacred thread) that they wear from left shoulder to right hip to symbolize purity. Everyone is given a thread to be tied around their wrist on this day as a protective talisman for the rest of the year.

Gai Jatra venerates the cow. The Newar people believe that cows will lead them to the next world after death.

August/September:

Teej, traditionally dedicated to the Goddess Parvati, is a special, three-day festival for women, involving a major feast, the *Dar* (named after 'heavy food' or Daro khana), followed by rigorous fasting, ritual bathing to wash away sin, and dancing. They pray for the longevity of their husbands and the success of their marriages. Teej also celebrates the start of the monsoon.

Indra Jatra marks the end of the monsoon and is celebrated enthusiastically by both Hindus and Buddhists. In Kathmandu it involves a procession of three golden chariots taken around the city, carrying the *Kumari* (the Living Goddess) and her attendants—two boys dressed up as Ganesh and Bhairab.

September-December:

Dashain is the most important festival for UK Nepalis. People celebrate by eating good food and buying new clothes. It takes place after the monsoon, in late September or early October. It is also

known as **Durga Puja**, as it celebrates the slaying of the buffalo demon Mahisasura by the goddess Durga.

Certain days of Dashain are more significant than others. In Nepal on the first day the devout bathe and plant barley in sand and water taken from the river. On the seventh day, *Fulpati* ("sacred flowers"), flowers are brought from the old palace of Prithvi Narayan Shah at Gorkha to the king at Hanuman Dhoka in Kathmandu. The eighth day is *Kala Ratri* ("black night"), when eight buffaloes and a hundred-and-eight goats are decapitated in Durbar Square, Kathmandu, ideally with one chop of the knife.

During Dashain, most people will have goat for dinner. Family visits are made on the tenth day and parents put *tikkas* on their children's foreheads and shoots of the barley planted on the first day in their hair.

Tihar (Nepali name for 'Deepawali' / 'Divali'), also known as the Festival of Lights, lasts five days and is celebrated toward the end of October or early November. On the first day, crows (messengers of the god of death) are honoured. On the second day, dogs are honoured for their role in guiding the deceased across the river of the dead; this day is known as 'Kukur Tihar' or 'Kukur Puja' (Kukur is the name for dog in Nepali). Cows are garlanded on the third day, bullocks on the fourth, and the fifth day is called *Bhai Tikka* (Brothers' Day), when sisters honour their brothers with *tikkas* and blessings, and gifts are exchanged. On the third, most important day, also known as *Lakshmi Puja*, people light up their homes with candles and wick lamps in order to usher in Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. As with many festivals, Tihar ends with a family feast. The festival marks the end of the Nepali lunar calendar, auspicious for new beginnings and for prosperity, business and health.

Sita Bibaha Panchami recalls the marriage of Rama and Sita and in Nepal is celebrated mainly in Janakpur, birthplace of Sita, in late November or early December.



The festival is particularly important in the famous Hindu pilgrimage city of Janakpur (one of the most important pilgrimage sites in the whole of the Hindu world: especially) in the Terai, where it is believed that Sita and Lord Ram married. The Janaki Mandir [Temple] to the Goddess Sita is the most important of all. Thousands of

pilgrims come to Janakpur, ancient capital of the Mithila Kingdom that spanned the Janakpur area and neighbouring districts in Nepal, and much of the state of Bihar in India, to celebrate Sita Bibaha Panchami. Image of Janakpur below:



Integration and related:

In Nepal itself almost all sections of society across the country are very civic-minded and community orientated in their approaches to life and what they value. This same spirit has certainly transferred to the UK where, as most Nepalis are first generation settlers and also a sizable majority (65%+) have British Army, Brigade of Gurkhas contexts, the concept of 'Society' and that of 'Community' are major influencers where on-community activity and action is concerned.

Family matters and the clan, broader ethnicity, caste or location of origin all continue to be defining factors in terms of life outside of work, and even marriage. This takes place against a very different societal backdrop of the secular society of the adopted country, the UK, where most of those factors don't exist, and a consumerist materialistic approach to life largely dominates, seen in the approach to the elderly, where in many cases if you are affluent or even only moderately so, elderly parents are placed in 'residential care and retirement homes' as sons and daughters and grandchildren have little time of apparent inclination to spend time with and look after their elderly parents and grandparents.

In terms of integration issues and challenges, the UK Nepali new settlers/new UK citizens are perhaps of all peoples of the world, unique, in that by far still the vast majority are British Army Gurkha linked, and as such because of their civic and social and community spirit and outlook coupled with direct links of the most outstanding and honourable kinds with that British Institute (British Army) and related ones, commonly where Nepali Gurkhas are concerned are viewed as 'more British than the British.' The Nepali people's natural and world-famous politeness and friendliness also are powerful elements where integration is concerned. However, on the host country side there are still at time of creating this information resources, major needs for change and action on systems, communicating on the latter and rights and responsibilities, and issues such as deliberate or unintended exploitation, and regarding racism and indirect discrimination (mentioned below).

Both the Nepal and British National Anthems are played at all of the main national and many of the more important annual events celebrating the close interlinkage of peoples and nations. The discs used to play the anthems unite the two anthems seamlessly so that one follows the other in uninterrupted manner; symbolically representative of the Nepali approach of warmth and respect to the adopted country, that often most have had long association with through the British Army. In some ways the playing of national anthems harks back to an almost pre-WWII Britain.

Racism and discrimination and exploitation, and issues and needs concerning systems and related communications:



Inevitably throughout the seeking of the views, and learning of the experiences and issues of importance direct to the UK Nepali community itself, that have arisen and emerged throughout the research and then finalising stages of this information resource creation, the topics referred to above have occurred on multiple occasions, at many levels, and many geographical locations. Indeed the project was underway in early 2019 when the scale and severity of Anti-Gurkha Anti-Asian racism in Swindon, emerged, and in the concluding phase of Spring and Summer 2020 at the time of Covid 19 and its impacts the same issue and others emerged in multiple forms in Kent and beyond. Links:

<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/04/24/nepalis-in-london-on-the-receiving-end-of-xenophobia-amidst-covid-19-fears>

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/maidstone/news/demand-for-action-after-ex-gurkhas-car-torched-226001/>

<https://uknfs.org/uknfs-support-to-our-swindon-nepali-gurkha-community-in-face-of-experience-of-community-wide-racist-asb-2/>

The impacts of such experiences have principally around making ex-Gurkhas, and even frontline NHS and social care workers who are Nepali feeling fearful and unwelcome. Only educational means (such as particularly for example this information resource provides on what unites rather than divides, and dispels ignorance, can resolve these problems.

Exploitation and related indirect indiscriminate in places of work are real phenomenon that also amplify for those community members afflicted, the feeling of not being welcome in the UK except to be taken advantage of for their skills and labour - rogue employers and service providers have in this a direct affinity and dark impact on community cohesion, to that of those who are openly racist; they also tarnish the British name and name of the country. As a concrete example, the UKNFS after much evidence of plight and extreme cases from other South Asian (Indian) international students at a number of South Coast universities of poor and sometimes inhumane treatment, the UKNFS working with another South Coast multicultural organisation (One Community Hampshire and Dorset: <https://www.ochd.org.uk/>) led to a national level initiative to support Nepali students at such universities. Because of the core UKNFS partnering/collaboration relationship with the NRNA UK at national leadership level, the NRNA UK initiated an outreach and research gathering campaign across all UK universities that have Nepali students, to support Nepali international students in plight - some 300+ reporting experiences of the most worrying kinds. Such experiences, again, impact negatively on perceptions of British 'values' and Britain itself.

This topic links to the main challenge for UK state mechanisms, especially national government departments/agencies to local authority and public services organisations in being able to effectively engage and communicate with and support the integration and fundamental day to day living, working (and studying: please see above) needs of the Nepali and Nepali Gurkha community members. Issues here include the Home Office/UK Immigration organisations 'Gurkha DNA Scandal' that in 2019 the then Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, formally apologised for on behalf of the UK Visa Immigration (UKVI) Home Office agency, and on insensitivities, Gurkha Pensions, and unintended but very powerful negative impacts on ex-Gurkhas and their families concerning 'Universal Credit' system insensitivities, with extreme negative impacts for 100,000+ members of the Nepali-Gurkha community on duration of family in Nepal visit, needs.

In all of these, the common denominator is poorly [to non-existent level] culturally informed policy developers in the UK Civil Service at UK Government Departments [Home Office, DWP, DfE] Whitehall - Not Westminster - level, down to local level public service organisations that apply the Whitehall directed policies. Again, this information resource de-facto provides the crucial 'need to know' cultural heritage and socio-economic profile details on this particular BAME [Nepali - Gurkha] community, unique for its renown beyond Whitehall, and in the minds and hearts of almost all British citizens as being 'more British than the British' and 'Bravest of the Brave.'

The above in terms of cultural heritage and culture-sharing needs focus particularly on the following issues and dynamics:

- Is the UK truly at practical, safety, safeguarding and day to living and working level welcoming of those accorded the honour in the national perception of a community that is regarded as 'more British than the British' and 'Bravest of the Brave'
- The need to avoid and end any perceptions at community and individual levels of such a special community being made to feel unwelcome through all too commonplace Anti-Gurkha/Asian prejudice related ASB
- Extreme insensitivities at policy shaping level in UK Government (Whitehall, Not Westminster/Downing Street) on culturally important matters such as the Universal Credit 'duration of family leave' matter - not to be aware of its significance indicates a wholesale failure of those who created the Universal Credit Full Service system to understand 'first generation community members settling in the UK largely through a defence of Nation and Crown service through the British Army particular core circumstances' nor how much family ties [why family visits of sufficient length, that existed until the introduction of the DWP's 'Universal Credit'] matter to this particular community.

Integration and transcultural awareness:

The 'mission' if so it can be described, of the creation and then use and dissemination of this information resource particularly concentrates on the transcultural awareness dimension of integration for the Nepali community, and conversely what this exceptional still quite small (compared to other, long established BAME communities) in number, ethnic minority community brings to the UK and the UK majority and minority communities where community cohesion and diversity & social competence skills and perspectives are concerned.

Linking to the topic of unawareness/unintended but major life-impacting errors and dearth of cultural awareness to policy developers in Whitehall and public services and national government departments and agencies policy and programmes implementation level, transcultural awareness (so to speak, this given BAME cultural and social heritage 'need to know' profile) particulars, which for the first time ever in the UK this information resource provides, is essential to maximise effective integration, community cohesion and related 'welcome' and contributing to British society and economy factors.

Culture preservation – Nepali language classes, dance classes

Happiness and good mental health equilibrium in terms of experience and needs of first-generation settlers in the UK, whatever their country of origin, are well known to centre on retaining, preserving practicing and celebrating key aspects of their home country culture. This has certainly been the case with new settlers to the UK who are Nepali. One of the most important ways of preserving both Nepali culture in the UK, Nepali traditions and culture and good mental health and emotional wellbeing has involved creation and development of Nepali language classes, especially for the very young, and for

older, especially more elderly female members of the UK Nepali community through regular group activities and accompanying socialising via Nepali dance classes.

Junkiri Language Class Club, Blandford Camp:



In the case of Nepali language teaching and preservation to and with UK Nepali youth, the Blandford Nepali community, at Blandford Camp, 'Junkiri' ('Glow worm') Nepali language study is a very good example. We thank Mrs Mingma Sherpa and her Junkiri Language Class Club, with Captain Gopal Saru, for sharing with us the importance of these regular language classes (currently still only local Nepali community supported, as statutory sector organisations have not yet found the ways to support directly, but the British Army supports the group's activities through providing the teaching/learning venue at no charge).

What was learned from the engagement with Junkiri Language Class Club, was that in the words of the brilliant teachers, and of parents of attendees, that there was a major problem of Nepali children facing UK cultural integration problems, and at the same time because being brought up in a remote rural location (Blandford, Nth Dorset) they were almost completely cut off from the natural culture and Nepali language learning/absorbing culture and customs experience that their counterparts in Nepal enjoy. The language class group also sometimes has UK community members, non-Gurkha British Army personnel attending - an exceptional transcultural learning phenomenon, that must be commended and need to be much more broadly publicised.

Nepali women's dance club, Aldershot:

In Aldershot a very different age range within the local, reputedly 20,000+ Nepali-Gurkha community is catered for.



The needs of the elderly, especially women, members of retired Gurkhas families for recreating in the UK, outside of Nepal, settings for socialising and celebrating traditional culture, are as important as that of the need to learn about and be proud of Nepali culture and identity in the young members of the far distant Junkiri Language Class Club at Blandford. These weekly meetings at the UK Nepali owned, managed and staffed Empire Banqueting Hall provide a major wellbeing boost to the 100+ local elderly Nepali women's community members attending, and in fact offer opportunities that don't even exist in Nepal for different Nepali ethnicities to come together!

Traditional mass-group Nepali dances, an individual and small group dances are enjoyed with gracefulness and exuberance. Meeting the dance group earlier in 2019, through the introductions of Mr Jib Belbase, the then Greater Rushmoor Nepali Community (GRNC) President, was a great privilege and a further evidence of the UK Nepali community capacity for very successful culture and societal support initiative where community identity preservation and related wellbeing are concerned.

Health and Healing:

With some honourable exceptions (such as in the Nth Hampshire area) UK Nepali community members still, across all geographical areas of the information resource creation project recorded commonly at best diffidence and confusion in terms of NHS/Western, largely pharmaceutical solutions health and medical solutions.

Many, especially UK Nepali community members who are elderly and others too with minimal English language proficiency found the NHS and GP healthcare systems 'challenging' - as a result dual approaches to this are commonplace.

One of these is to generally speaking 'tough out' a medical need until it reaches emergency A&E admission level, and the other is to turn to Nepal family and traditional Ayurvedic doctors and medical practitioners advise what to do in terms of for example appropriate physical exercises, and what natural/Ayurvedic medicines to take - these latter are a commonplace very important item in Nepal to UK transited goods in family members and friends luggage.



Dentistry: the UK dentistry system and services both NHS and Private do not carry a particularly good name with most UK Nepali general community members. Excessive costs, long waits, last minute cancellations all have created this reputation.

Consequently for all but the most unlooked for emergency dental work, most UK Nepali community members prefer to wait to have their dental including cosmetic dental needs taken care of Not in the UK, but back in Nepal where the quality of dentistry is regarded as at a general level superior to the UK. Indeed through the course of the project, through a conversation with Dr Mark Watson (RBGE Head of Flora) it emerged that Nepal has a little known but very established reputation as a popular destination for international diplomats seeking good quality affordable dental work in comfortable surroundings.

The Gurkhas and their place in British history and society



‘Better to Die than to be a Coward,’ ‘Bravest of the Brave,’ and ‘More British than the British’

“Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had a country more faithful friends than you”.

Sir Ralph Turner MC, 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles, 1931

List of topics covered and sections:

- About, and note on topics and contributing sources
- Gurkha Characteristics, and Who are the Gurkhas? -
- In their own words - serving Gurkhas about the uniqueness of the Gurkhas in the British Army setting: responses to information resource questionnaire
- Need to Know, Nepal background to the Gurkhas entering British history -- and associated Note on need for Updating the approach on recording of particulars of the Nepali Gurkhas role & record regarding impacts on preserving British sovereignty and global influence*
- The Queens Gurkha Engineers
- The Queens Gurkha Signals
- The Royal Gurkha Rifles
- The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas
- The Gurkhas and the British Royal Family
- Gurkha perspectives on the importance of Nepali food for those in military service

*Before the information project concluded the UKNFS had established national level connection with The Royal British Legion (TRBL) with the result that relevant, Gurkha, Project content will be from 2021 included in TRBL's educational Commemoration resources

A separate section of the Gurkha component of the information resource -- 'The Gurkhas and endurance Sports, martial arts, and football' - covers the exceptional relationship between the Gurkhas and certain sports.

About, and note on topics and contributing sources:

The mottos and saying above are as well-known and honoured, as they accurate in terms of describing the martial-spiritual character of the Gurkhas, and the perceptions of the broader British general public, of the Gurkhas serving and retired. Gurkha reputation for fierceness and implacability on the battlefield can best and accurately be described as a unique psychological warfare asset of the most strategically important level possessed by the British Army from 19th to 21st centuries.

This section of the cultural & social heritage project covers a people of Nepal as famous as emblematic of Nepal itself, as Mt Everest: the Gurkhas, heroic and holding a place of great honour and affection in the collective British heart.

To date, the fame of the name ‘Gurkha’ has matched disproportionately actual major work of knowledge about the people themselves and their culture and their special relationship with the UK and the indigenous British people. Addressing this issue in a thorough thematic way, we have divided this section of the resource into two parts (Part A, and Part B), whose topics are listed below. Transcending both, we divide the Gurkhas into armed service, **enlisting/serving**, and **retired**, and relating to both, **families**.

The Nepalese Army has a long history even though it was established by King Drabya Shah in 1559 (1616 BS) later modernized and reorganized to the Nepalese Army in 1743 AD (1800 BS) by Prithvi Narayan Shah. In the course of its service to the nation and people, the Nepalese Army's nomenclature has also been changed time to time such as Tilangas, the Gorkhas, Gorkha Army, Nepalese Army, Royal Nepalese Army and Nepalese Army again. The army has contributed and played an admirable role in every walk of Nepalese life. The Nepalese Army has maintained its respect and honor as a loyal, dedicated and disciplined institution of the state.

Source Nepalese Army Military Museum: <http://www.museum.mil.np/>

Note on topics covered:

The topics cover ‘need to know’ themes on the to date, not covered fully and in one place joined up facts-backed detail in regard to the significance of the Gurkhas in the setting of Britain’s history on the global stage and for furtherance of the 21st century multicultural dynamics of the nation in settings from the army to sport (the latter we include as a separate component, but here it needs be noted that the Gurkha contribution to certain sports such as football, and endurance stamina related sports such as hill racing, is substantial and even fundamental). These dynamics are as important for the whole nation and society, as they are unique - this uniqueness being particularly linked to challenging and eroding perspectives that are not compatible with a diverse, new 21st Century nation at ease with itself in terms of genuine recognition of the strengths of diversity and diverse communities as major assets at socio-economic equality & inclusion, and global stage/international presentation levels. In all of these cultural and societal topics, from food and cookery, to customs, spiritual beliefs and more, are at various points, found. As an over view of the UK Nepali Gurkhas is wedded to the history of arguably the most embedded and illustrious multicultural dimension of the British Army, we have through the guidance and review of content developed support, included a number of major sections/chapters around specific components of the Brigade of Gurkhas and related topics, including the Gurkha historical and formal relationship with royalty (Nepali as well as British!).

Contributions and contributors to the information resource:

The UKNFS is delighted that so many members of the retired and also in designated relevant areas, British army serving soldiers and officers have contributed their time, experiences and invaluable insights on contributing to the Gurkha component of this UK Nepali cultural & social heritage resource. Below we list contributing groups:

Blandford Community (Blandford Camp and Blandford Town) and the Royal Signals Museum

Aldershot and Farnborough Nepali Gurkha community

Sgt Hiradhan Rai (Gloucester)

A wide range of retired Gurkha community members nationwide including from Gurkha community representation organisations and groups

The UKNFS also commends relevant resources of the Gurkha Museum, Winchester, and the Gurkha Museum, Pokhara (Nepal).

The UKNFS particularly wishes to thank Captain Robin Rai (QGS, Blandford Camp, Dorset) for his recommendation and loan of his copy of the “A Short History of Queen’s Gurkha Signals 1949 to 2009” landmark book written by Major Ben White, former Regimental Historian for the Queens Gurkha Signals (QGS) -- Gamecock Barracks, Bramcote, Nuneaton. An excerpt of the book can be accessed (Pages 35-38) <https://royalsignals.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/RSI-Journal-Spring-2010.pdf>

Regarding the Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR), the History of the UK.com, History of Britain, Gurkha Rifles website as a strongly recommended source of RGR history: <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Gurkha-Rifles/>

Gurkha Characteristics, and Who are the Gurkhas?

Gurkha Characteristics:



Endurance of pain and extreme stress levels, and tenacity in the face of overwhelming odds in battle in perilous positions, loyalty, and ferocity in action are perhaps the best known Gurkha characteristics,

but also - and this is little mentioned (but known by all who in shoulder-to-shoulder military service alongside Gurkhas - a great humanity and capacity to engage with traumatised civilians in extreme military action settings (such as Kosovo, etc.).



Ceremonial level exceptional deportment by members of the Brigade of Gurkhas has seen Brigade regiments from the Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR) to the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas has seen the Gurkhas involved in recent decades in formal, including royalty related deployments as almost iconic figures representing the British Army as a whole. These characteristics combined are beyond the individual soldier and officer, at collective distinct group level the unique preserve of the Nepali, British Gurkhas from earliest times in the 19th century in Indian Sub-Continent (when of course under the European colonial imperialist philosophy non-indigenous ‘white’ British,

colonial regime subjected peoples were regarded in law and at socio-economic levels as ‘inferior’) to the 2020’s absolutely unique in the history and lore of the colonial era and post-colonial era British army.



It is of course a particularly important dimension, and indeed privilege of the HLF assisted and pan-UK Nepali community participating and supported, UK Nepal Friendship Society facilitated, UK Nepali Cultural & Social Heritage Project, to fulfil the spirit of the project and one of the most important purposes of the HLF itself, in this the Gurkha section of the project for the first time ever, and so long needed, we address this need. In the initial exploratory and subsequent HLF project support initial research stages in considering the Gurkha dimension of this culture & social heritage recording, preserving, sharing educational project, understandably the very rare and integral to understanding

the British - Nepali Gurkha relationship, the topic was repeatedly raised in the appropriate British Army and associated settings on the following:

'What record is there of non-individual soldier/officer, regiment, battalion, section/other organised mass group, Gurkha (therefore Nepali/non-indigenous colonial and post-colonial [and United Nations and UN Peacekeeping] era) contribution to in the military and warfare spheres, protection, overseas influence and global prestige of Britain/the UK, and concomitantly the British name?

The answer in every direction sought from junior to very senior serving army officers, to museum curators and museums and educational resource and services directions, was NONE.

We are proud through this project to be contributing to taking the people of the UK, and after them, British institutions and State towards reaching the latter destination: and as indicated above in the record of the response to such an important - from an inclusive diversity 21st Century Britain perspective - question, that there is still far to travel in quarters of influence in the British state.

This information resource contributed to and involving active participation of many within the UK Gurkha community, does much to advance reaching that multicultural awareness, modern inclusive Britain, goal. On this the experiences and content gathered for this, the Gurkha section of the project information educational resource takes one from Equality Act 2010 'equality & diversity' concepts and legal requirements implementation testing, to actual realities concerning the latter through the medium of one particular ethnic minority sub-population group, as the latter's experiences of the culture and society in a UK setting have been shared.

The information resource where the Nepali-Gurkha community is concerned therefore addresses, in a ground-breaking much needed way the unintended but subliminal *'Dealing with difference, maintaining dominance under a supremist ethos: one size fits all, those who are different can't possibly contribute at highest levels to the defence and prestige of the nation overseas'* block that still in some, key, circles exists.

Who are the Gurkhas?

The Gurkhas are as much a unique historical context phenomenon, as an actual 'people.' Even in regard to the latter there is a major commonplace error [as presented to-date] by those outside of the British Army that the Gurkhas are comprised of a specific race/ethnicity. They are Not.

There are multiple Nepali ethnic peoples historically linked to British and Indian armies Gurkha [in India 'Gorkha'] recruitment, such as especially 'Gurung' but 'Rai' and even a part of the Nepali Sherpa community where there is an approximately 90% British Army Brigade of Gurkhas recruitment-sought application base. All UK [and Indian Army] Gurkhas are of Nepal origin and Nepali nationality. Gurkhas to be Gurkhas however are NOT simply British Army soldiers/officers who are Nepali.

To be a Gurkha involves passing endurance and martial skills of almost superhuman endurance testing training kinds, to secure successful entry into the Gurkha components of both the British Army and the Indian Army, and then joining one of those components (here we only cover the British Army dimension of recruitment and enlistment: prior to 1947 there were 10 Gurkha regiments within the British Army, prior to the creation of the state of India, that received and still has to this day six regiments, and the British Army four (but not kept to the same full capacity).

Recommended viewing: The Life-Changing Journey Of Being Selected As A Gurkha | Forces TV:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8pIJglsYUE>

In their own words – serving Gurkhas about the uniqueness of the Gurkhas in the British Army setting: responses to information resource questionnaire

Blandford Camp QGS soldiery questionnaire responses:

QUESTIONS:

1. Please tell us a little about the training in Nepal to qualify to become a Gurkha? Do you have any particular stories/experiences you would like to share on that training?
2. What do you feel makes the unique and distinctive character of serving as a Gurkha in the British Army, compared with non-Gurkha soldiers and officers? This could be on expectations placed upon Gurkhas by themselves, the different situation for families, etc.
3. Do you have any stories or experiences you would like to share on exemplary Gurkhas that inspire you?
4. Where do you feel celebration of Nepali-Gurkha cultural heritage can be further recognised within the army and by general society? This seeing the Gurkha regiments as a unique multicultural strength to the broader army community and general society.
5. Any other cultural or social heritage stories and experiences you would like to share

Lance Corporal Laxman Gurung responses

1. The selection to become a British Gurkha Soldier in Nepal occurs in three phases. There are many army training institutions which helps to carry out the trainings successfully. But it might be an expensive option for some but if you decide to do it on your own then you should be more proactive. The training itself is physically and mentally challenging. You have to be dedicated and diligent. As of my experience when I first attempted to join, I was studying +2 in Science and it was a little difficult to manage time for the training because of my education.
2. All Gurkhas in the British Army come from Nepal, a country of highly diverse and rich geography, culture, tradition and religions. We are very proud to be Nepalese and we are also proud on whatever we do. Our family background is different, values and ethos are different. Gurkhas Kaida(ethos) make us unique from non-Gurkhas soldiers and officers. Being selected ones we all are well-educated, disciplined, brave and have strong unity and high potentials which are distinctive character of every Gurkha soldier.
3. A story of Sgt Dipprasad Pun, from 1 RGR is very exemplary which I think not only inspires me but every Gurkha Soldiers. He is a brave man who single-handedly defeated more than 30 Taliban fighters during his tour to Afghanistan and saved his team members from them.
4. We have full privilege of celebrating the Nepalese culture in Brigade of Gurkhas and we try to play a part wherever we can. The most important ones are Dashain, Tihar and Nepalese New Year. We have a big function in every unit on these occasions and we celebrate as a big family. Some of the non-Gurkha officers and some key personal are also invited. This kind of function promotes our mutual bonding and strengthens our unity. Our culture is unique and liked by most of them which makes us feel proud.

5. We have an organised an Educational visit to Gurkha Museum for the troop members to enhance the Gurkha culture and also to understand the conceptual history of the British and Gurkha Soldiers.

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Signalman Amit Rai Responses

Dear sir, these are the answers of the questions you had sent to me:

Q.1) My training in Nepal to qualify to become a Gurkha was pretty rigorous and arduous. I would train two times a day for about five days a week. My training was mainly focused on endurance and strength conditioning. I would equally focus on my upper body and lower body throughout the week. The core workout being my favourite. Rather than sharing story I would like to give advice for those who have been training in Nepal, have a good knowledge of running attire so that they can prevent serious injuries.

Q.2) I feel that there are numbers of characters that make a Gurkha unique and distinctive compared with non-Gurkha counter parts. The high competition being the most vital one. There is high sense of competition amongst each other within Gurkhas from day 1 of their recruitment and each at every stage is equally challenging and gruellingly testing. Apart from that the Gurkhas are keen and enthusiastic towards their duty. The culture they come from, teaches them to respect elders and love younger due to which they always remain loyal to the chain of command.

Q.3) Each and every Gurkha inspires me on a day to day basis, however there is a Gurkha that is exemplary and his name is Csgt Dip Prasad Pun (1RGR). He was decorated with the conspicuous gallantry cross for an act of bravery during the war in Afghanistan on the night of 17 September 2010. He single handedly defeated 12 to 30 Taliban insurgents who were storming his control post near Babiji in Helmand province.

Q.4) well, I think the celebration of Nepali Gurkha cultural heritage is well recognised. I have experienced the celebrations of major Nepalese festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Teej, widely throughout the Gurkha contingent. I would like this process to carry on in future as well.

Q.5) Currently there are not any cultural or social heritage stories or experiences that I oiled like to share.

Regards,
Sig Amit Rai
30293614

.....

Signalman Bibek Gurung responses

Below are my responses:

1. Well everybody has to go through a year long selection process followed by doko race at the end .I had my bachelor study running side by side. I used to catch up my remaining two subjects after finishing my morning training .

2. Bond. That's all I would like to say. We see ourselves as brothers.
3. Lieutenant Colonel Yam Rana. He is the first to reach late Entry Gurkha officer to reach the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.
4. Online platform maybe.
5. Culture of joining the army. It's an honour or pride to join the army.

Regards,
Signalman Bibek ji

Signalman Iman Singh Gurung Responses:

1. Training is quite hard however a practice in every morning and evening makes a daily routine and courage within us let it go easy. When I joined the training centre to become a Gurkha , fire of passion and dedication burnt within me to achieve my dream.
I failed once but I couldn't think of others except being a Gurkha, so I kept on trying and finally succeeded. In overall, it's a addiction trend among youngsters like me to secure a good career.
2. Gurkhas itself is a unique brand in the world so I'm proud of myself being a Gurkha soldier. Our ancestors and generations had created a specific image in the British Army along with good reputation, so everyone know who are we and how we operate in different situations. Everyone praise us for our teamwork and fantastic chain of command within Brigade of Gurkhas. Wherever we go, never need to feel alone cause Gurkhas association itself is a family and their is always unity and support. Of course, I'm away from home but my family is happy and proud of me. Every celebrations of festivals and events bring a family environment and care from seniors create a homely environment.
3. Yes, I was inspired by many exemplary Gurkha personalities and their stories but I don't have any experiences and proper stories. However I learn to be brave and courageous from them.
4. Celebrations of Nepali-Gurkhas cultural heritages can be recognised wherever we are either in camp, exercise , operation or war. These are our source of moral and identity to survive. We have faith in our culture and traditions so, time and again we organise worship ceremony and celebrate the festivals as like in Nepal. Gurkha Temples are in every camp and we make a visit in every events. Gurkhas utensils and equipments are used in every festival celebrations; designed according to respective celebrations in order to bring the actual vibes and reflect our Nepali festival. Nepali dance and music are performed in there. Band of brigade and khukhuri dance are famous in general society. We present our cultural food and show on different charity events in the society along with the maximum participation of non-gurkhas. Everyone love it. To widen our culture we need to realise the importance of celebrations to generations and make maximum invitation of non-gurkhas with its purpose.
5. when I became a member of brigade of Gurkhas, I knew more festivals and celebrations in army than I used to in Nepal so, I don't have much to share any experiences as being a young Gurkha.

Signalman Nirmal Lawati Responses:

1. There are lots of training centre which gives a proper training to become a Gurkha. Those training centre start training young people before 4 to 5 months of Regional Selection. From my experience I knew that, we had done a lots of training to become a Gurkha. We had to do two times training per day, in the early morning and evening but I did just once a day i.e in the evening, because I had to continue my study as well.
2. As a result of bravery shown by our forefathers, Queen honoured us our own cap badge. Cap badge with two cross “Khukuri” which represents the bravest of the brave. By wearing that cap badge makes us the unique and distinctive than others.
3. The story of all the Gurkhas who received the Victoria cross and mostly the story of the living Gurkha Victoria Cross “ Rambahadur Limbu” inspired me to join the British Army as Gurkha soldier.
4. Gurkha Regiment is culturally rich. To celebrate Nepalese Gurkha culture does not mean just of joy and enjoyment. It builds up brotherhood and teamwork between us and we could know each other if we weren’t met before so I think it should be further recognised within the army and general society.
5. We have different culture among Nepalese people. We celebrate and respect every culture though thats not our culture. I am a Limbu by caste that doesn’t mean just to celebrate and follow the Limbu culture. I celebrate every culture of Nepal without separating the other culture.

Regards,
Sig Nirmal Lawati

Signalman Sanjok Gurung Responses:

question 1

Before joining the army, I had worked hard for about a year. I sacrificed a lot of things. I used to walk about an hour to reach my training centre. I had never been so committed before. I used to skip my college just to train for the gruelling selection process. I went from 4 pull ups to 24.

question 2

Kaida is the thing that bound the gorkhas within the boundaries. CDRILLS are followed by every gorkhas. The best thing about gorkhas is our cultural that we sill celebrate even though we are far from Nepal. Other thing is team work. And love and affection towards our numbaries and respect and love for our saheb, gurujis and bhai haru. Thats why I think it we are quite different.

Question 3

My saheb and gurujis are my inspiration but particularly I am most inspired by the living legend Ram bahadur limbu. He was awarded the VC for his bravery in the theatre. I want to show my courage and bravery like he did.

Question 4

I believe that our culture has already been recognised but i believe it can be further recognised if we involved native british army during our cultural programme.

Question 5

I don't have that much but i have couple of stories and experiences. During dashain me along with fellow numbaries performed the event which was very successful and in tihar more other people were attracted and the joined and learned our culture.

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Signalman Vijon Rana responses

I am Sig Vijon Rana from Blandford,Royal School of Signals as a phase-2 trainee QGS. Firstly I am very thankful to have my words with you. I would like to define my answers in points as follows:

1- The training phase in Nepal to get into the British army was the long and hard process if I have to define it, we train like there is no other options left we just feel like army is all. The safety and management isn't that good to be compared but we get through as we go cause we have seen the struggle and we know what people get to live with.

2- Serving as the Gurkha in the army with the cross Khukuri gives us the motivation that we are aspected to be better then other, they see us as the elites body of the army. The fair that comes while working with that cross Khukuri on to not to let the pride down pushes us further more to achieve and show them its not only the flash we wear.

3- In my view every person as something to inspire other, I look at our senior and just think having different way of approach they all have succesful carrier in professional and personal life, all i can say looking at them is be humble , drive for chance and stay hungry.

4- Nepali culture within the smaller units would be more effective to get recognise in the army.

At last I would like to thank your entire team for this opportunity and hope to hear you soon thank you.

Yours sincerely

Vijon

Need to Know, Nepal background to the Gurkhas entering British history:



British Library Nepal collection sourced painting 'Assemblage of Ghoorkhas' 1820



This section includes important 'need to know' essential details about the background to the emergence of the phenomenon of Gurkha martial prowess in conjunction with the creation of Nepal and ultimately the Nepal - British special friendship through which provision for recruiting from Nepal for the British Army commenced. However, as much of the history of the Gurkha component of the British Army (from British Empire phase to modern UK) is linked to specific regiments (such as the *Sirmoor Rifles Regiment*) and functions, we have provided sections on these, where more detail is provided - taken together we have with the help of retired and serving Gurkhas directly, provided valuable signposting to respected sources of Gurkha history in the UK and Nepal, at the direction of our contributors; these sources include the Gurkha Museum (Winchester), Gurkha Museum Pokhara (Nepal).

Modern Nepal was born in the 1770's under the lead of the King of Gorkha, Prithvi Narayan Shah, who for years before this period built up the martial strength of Gorkha.

In the 1810's Nepal was a state considerably (33%+) larger than its current 21st Century area. In particular it had conquered an extensive territory in the Western Himalayan area (now a part of the Indian state that became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth on 15 August 1947) of what subsequently became a part of one of the states of the new [1947] country of India which became fully independent in January 1950.

Originally, the current area of Nepal (and 2010's Greater Nepal) was a patchwork of different independent kingdoms, with the three most important - Kathmandu/Patan/Bhaktapur - being in the Kathmandu Valley. However, the Principality of Gorkha, from which the name Gurkha is derived, under its ruler the Maharaja ('Great King') Prithivi Narayan Shah (1723-1775): last King of Gorkha, first King of Nepal (also known as the Kingdom of Gorkha). With Prithivi Narayan Shah's (portrait above) conquest of the Kathmandu Valley kingdoms the stage was set for the creation, unification and subsequent expansion of Nepal.

The name Gurkha: derived directly from the name of the town of Gorkha, the origins date to the medieval period as Gorkha itself in turn gained its name through being the location of a famous warrior saint, Guru Gorakhnath, who has a shrine dedicated to his honour in the town.

By appropriate destiny, during the period of the creation of the resources of the UK Nepali cultural & social heritage project, the martial associated town of Gorkha came to be twinned with Rushmoor in the UK, where is located Aldershot 'Home of the British Army.'

In the 1810's Nepal was continuing on its expansionist path (the Nepal/Gorkha Empire was at that point equal in territory to the British Isles [UK and Ireland]), and much of the southern flank of the mighty Himalaya and down in to the Mahabarat range, mid-hills and northern parts of the plains (Terai) southmost part of the country were under its sway. At the same time, the then British Empire, under the East India Company had conquered, annexed directly or else forced client state protectorates status across the Indian Sub-Continent. A clash was inevitable between the two expansionist powers, one Western, one indigenous/South Asian. This set the scene for the Anglo - Nepali War (1st November 1814 with armistice signed on 2nd December 2015, with the formal end of the war): more on particulars of importance below and elsewhere in this information resource, concerning significant engagements.

Consequently, establishment of a new chapter in Nepal - UK relations commenced on the 4th March 2016 with the signing of the Treaty of Sugauli. The treaty was to some extent an unequal one with aspects of Nepal's sovereignty being impinged on (a British Empire residency for example was imposed, situated in Kathmandu: image below): however, the Nepal - Britain Treaty of 1923 resolved this, establishing beyond all doubt Nepal's status as an independent state, further reinforced with the treaty being recorded two years later (1925) at the League of Nations.



Kathmandu 1850: watercolour painting of British Residency - source: British Library Nepal archives

There has for the interest and reference of 21st Century British audiences learning for the first time about this crucial formative stage of the Nepali-Gurkha, Britain/British Army relationship that was to subsequently develop after the Treaty of Sugauli, been a topic of great importance regarding this very important time.

Elements, that doubtless have lingering attachments to the British overseas conquests [invasions] colonial era, regarding the hypothetical notion put out by those not comfortable with the might of the British colonialist empire being held in check, and by non-British/non-Western/non-Christian, Asian warriors, have put out the following notion:

That if the British Empire military forces had wanted to at the time, they could have pushed on and conquered and annexed or otherwise subjugated all of Nepal: they were so powerful, etc. etc. ...the territory was poor in natural resources, etc. . not therefore worth the effort to pursue further military conquest etc. etc.

The realities were that the war involved British Empire forces [East India Company] invading on a major scale, a sovereign state, not by chance, but for reasons of strategic territorial conquest interest: Nepal was the independent state standing in the way of long desired penetration of British Empire power directly from its Sub-Continent dominions to Tibet and China (more on this towards the end of this topic overview).

The ferocity of the defence ultimately led to an armistice in which almost all of the core Kingdom of Nepal territory remained independent/not annexed. Whilst there were some restrictions on Nepal's independence, de-facto independent the kingdom remained and was never subject to nominal independent vassal client states/protectorates as occurred across many parts of the Indian

subcontinent, where such territories could be formally absorbed into the British Raj on minor pretexts when extreme conditions imposed on rulers and populations of such territories, caused resistance to the foreign occupier. Nepal Never suffered this fate.

World history geo-political significance in regard to Nepal retention of independence:

In fact Nepal's continued independence [an unlooked for irony of the terms of the Treaty of Sugauli] effectively put an end to British Government [Whitehall and 10 Downing Street] dreams -- mobilised by British Empire business houses and supported by many Christian missionaries of that colonial ear (the European colonial Powers formula of 'bullets & Bibles' used for centuries in overseas expansions) - of extending its power into China via Tibet, to a level attained in the Indian Sub-Continent.

Nepal, a continuing independent Nepal, controlling all of the central sector of the Himalaya trade routes and strategic passes, the bond of special friendship at the heart of which were and remain Nepal's Gurkhas, meant it was effectively impossible to use the type of force and diktat British and other European colonial powers used elsewhere across the globe, to effect this extension of power and conquest from South Asia to East Asia.

Seaward penetration of the mid to late 19th Century ailing Qing [Manchu] Chinese Empire, was never going to be a substitute for substantial invasion/influence landward from the South West: as such British colonial influence (including of course the infamous use of Opium addiction to gain and extent influence in China) had via the coastal areas and later the greatest rivers of the Chinese Empire, to compete with other European powers and of course Imperial Japan - challenges and competition that they would never have had to face from landward/South Western penetration.

What is little-known generally in the UK and overlooked by those recording Nepal - UK history in various domains, is a key fact and a related affirmation of the unique role an independent (or rather, a not conquered and turned into a colony by the British Empire) Nepal played in this crucial part of world history regarding tipping points in the struggle of invaded lands and peoples with foreign/Western colonial powers.

At the time of the Anglo-Nepal mid 1810's war, for some twenty five year's Nepal had been prior to that time been recognised as a Qing Empire 'tributary' state (similarly Ladakh to the North North-West): the Sino - Nepalese War (also known as the Sino - Gorkha War) of 1788 - 1792 that commenced with Nepal invasion of Tibet, with eventual treaty favourable to the Qing Empire that resulted in this status has parallels with that of the Anglo-Nepal War in terms of outcomes.

Nepal didn't win this war, but Nepal didn't lose its de-facto independence either, becoming only a very nominal 'tributary' state of the Qing Empire at the acme of its power, and with the very new Kingdom of Nepal [Gorkha] still in a state of consolidation within its core territory. As such if the Anglo-Nepal War had resulted less in stalemate, and instead in unambiguous British/East India Company victory, Britain would have found itself in the position of seizing a Chinese Empire tributary state, with very extensive implications for both Britain and China.

Decades on, in the years 1855 - 1856 Nepal invaded Tibet, and was nominally the winner of the war: Nepal's military however was however more effective than the army of the defending Tibetans. An armistice and then a formal end of the war was agreed and signed favourable in minor but symbolically important terms to Nepal, in Nepal's capital through the Treaty of Thapathali in March 1856. A nominal annual tribute was to be paid by Tibet to Nepal, and more importantly a formal Nepal presence was imposed in Lhasa, Tibet's capital, this taking the shape in particular through a Nepal trading post. From that point Nepal's nominal tributary of the Qing Empire status was ended, and to

- albeit a very limited degree - Tibet became technically-speaking a nominal tributary state of Nepal. The infamous 'Opium Wars' with China, and other destabilising impacts of European Colonial Powers (Britain to Germany) and their interest in turning the Chinese Empire into 'zones of influence,' and most of all for Imperial China the destabilising impacts of the fourteen years long (1850 - 1864) 'Taiping Rebellion' cumulatively saw the end of the Chinese Empire. Its demise a matter of 'if' but 'when' in the early years of the 20th Century - a situation that also saw the then Japanese Empire take a comparable predatory colonial acquisitions approach.

From the above, the folly of those de-facto covert or unintentional proponents of 19th Century European Powers colonialist and related Western supremacist world views that argue that in effect 'Britain was generous to Nepal, and only didn't push on to conquer it, because it didn't have enough wealth or natural assets to make this worthwhile' can be seen for what they are: self-delusional at best, disingenuous at worst.

More importantly, it cannot be doubted that through Gurkha martial prowess first and foremost, because Nepal's independence was maintained post-Treaty of Sugauli, an independent Nepal (still ready and able long after Sugauli to invade much larger states to the north of its borders) ended forever the opportunity for landward penetration and progressively implemented seizure of China from the West. This a matter of the greatest geo-political significance in world history.

It is appropriate at this point of this, background and history section of our information resource to raise the matter of certain elements who not stating, but doubtless confused by and uncomfortable about Nepal's Gurkhas world renowned military prowess and its unique contribution to by its very special role within British military and British Army history to Britain's history itself to address the question 'are the Gurkhas mercenaries?'

This question is one that has frequently been raised in regard to the association and connection between the Nepali Gurkhas and the British Army from the commencement of the special relationship between Nepal and the British state in terms of the latter's engagement of Nepalis - the Gurkhas - within the British Army.

For those with selective to non-existent knowledge of the actual history, this question has from time to time arisen; it has doubtless also arisen in the selective/non-objective thinking of those on the British side who have issues with a key component of the British Army having such an illustrious reputation and key role in the history of the UK at geo-political and British Army due to its martial prowess and crucial role in critically important military engagements in key campaigns of fundamental importance to the military history of Britain. Some - those with a competent knowledge of the actual facts and record of history -- could consider therefore the 'mercenary' imputation, an unjustifiable slur, and one made potentially from out of date Western colonialist supremacist [and by extension neo-racial imperialist] unstated perspectives. Whatever may be the case in regard to this question, it is valuable here to provide clarifying definitions; definitions of what a mercenary is in objective terms. On this, two essential need-to-know considerations are, and remain:

- Nepali - Gurkha soldiery and officers were even before the end of the Anglo - Nepali War of 1814 - 1816 being formally recruited as regiments within the British Army: from that time the Gurkhas have been and remain a unique component of the British Army, and even in recent decades in particular enjoying ceremonial and cultural roles of the most prestigious and elevated kinds (phenomena entirely incompatible with the status and functions of mercenaries).

- Gurkhas served in the earliest and subsequent phases of the Nepal - UK relationship served under the authority of the King of Gorkha [Nepal], and eventually, the distinct Gurkha components of the British Army, organised as ten regiments until the British Army - Indian Army split in 1947 were and have ever been on the British Army Gurkhas (the Brigade of the Gurkhas) side organised from 1949 onwards on a basis where given regiments have British Royal Family patrons, and even in the case of the RGR (Royal Gurkha Rifles) having HRH The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, as Colonel-in-Chief
- British Empire soldiery and officers at the time of the Anglo - Nepali War and up to the time of the Indian Mutiny of the late 1850's servants of the East India Company, a for-profit entity (a phenomenon consonant with archetypal mercenary services)

As such this Gurkha component of the information resource presents a de-facto holistic British Empire to modern inclusive 21st Century British Army (that celebrates diversity and especially the exceptional role of the Nepali Gurkhas in its history and current forces) voice – from guidance and multiple sources support – of the UK Nepali Gurkhas on their contribution to our nation: a contribution of the most exceptional, defence and geo-politically important kinds for modern Britain and All British citizens.

The next, and a major section of the Gurkha component of the information resource covers the main Brigade of Gurkhas regiments characteristics and histories.

The Queens Gurkha Engineers

Background and development:

The Queens Gurkha Engineers originated through enlistment in 1948 into the Corps of Royal engineers. In that year a training squadron was raised (in Malaya) and across the following three years (to 1951) field squadrons and a regiment HQ were created. In September 1955 this regiment (based near to Kuala Lumpur from this year until 1961) became part of the Brigade of Gurkhas, with on the 28th of that month a Royal Warrant being assigned for its name the 'Gurkha Engineers.'

On 21st April 1977 Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth bestowed the title 'The Queen's Gurkha Engineers' and from 1981 the newly created 69 Gurkha Field Squadron became based at the Kitchener Barracks in Medway, Kent; 69 Squadron and the 70 Field Support Squadron were reformed in 2000, and based (continuing to the present/2020) at Invicta Park Barracks, Maidstone, Kent in 1994. The UK Government/MOD have scheduled the closure of the barracks for 2027: if this decision proceeds, then it is hoped a new headquarters will be found for the Queens Gurkha Engineers.

The Queens Gurkha Engineers (QGE) background has through the Royal Engineers ('sappers') section of the British Army roots from as early as the Norman Conquest of Anglo-Saxon England by William

the Conqueror in 1066: military engineers played a key role in the success of the conquest, including doubtless the fear and courage engendering device of the drilling of holes in the invaders ships to enable conquer or perish focus in the Norman Army. Later, parallel to the creation of the Royal Artillery a Board of Ordinance was established in the 15th Century, from which time the Royal Engineers and Royal Artillery corps were born, continuing to this day.

Of equal, perhaps greater importance regarding the QGE and its unique attributes, the historical context is crucial to understand why the QGE was created, and why it continues in a (at this time) greatly pared down British Army / UK armed forces, age. The sappers repertoire of skills and crucial activities clearly played a major background support part in the success of the Nepal / Gorkha Kingdom's forces at war with the British' East India Company and British military forces in the 1814 - 1815 conflict.

It cannot be doubted that some 40 years later, the Nepal [Gurkha] component of the British Army forces sappers played exceptional roles in support to the Gurkha frontline (Simmoor Rifles in particular: the regiment also had a particular association, as the ultimate genesis of the of the QGE itself, with mining and sapper work) soldiery and broader British Army side in regard to the Siege of Delhi and the Relief of Lucknow.

Of course strategic decision bodies and related meetings, of the kinds that second, secure, experts such as those of the early 19th Century Nepali-Gurkha sappers, and certainly some hundred+ years later, the decision within the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall to continue to have and recruit Gurkha sappers within the Royal Engineers, and subsequently to see the QGE itself be created, do not make such decisions by chance, especially where - unique in the British Army - overseas nationals are concerned.

The reasons for this are indicated above and are considered in the Gurkha community as more than credible, with no other explanation for the presence within the British Army of the Gurkha sappers, and ultimately QGE, being able to hold up to scrutiny. This is a significant phenomenon, and does not appear explicitly in British Armed Forces history, but remains clear enough as credible and compelling; the Gurkhas have in this instance, as well as much better known & recorded ones (RGR), the honour of in fact/deed, being a major presence in the story of British military history and overseas power from the colonial age through to the more wholesome 21st Century context of honourable important presence of the modern British Army in international peacekeeping [UN]. And by extension a unique and yet, to date, little highlighted role in the age mentioned and presence referred to at British national history level.

The Royal Engineers are one of four Combat Support Arms of the British Army. The other three are: the Royal Artillery, the Royal Corps of Signals (which includes the Queens Gurkha Signals [QGS]), and the Intelligence Corps.

The RGE played in terms of number, a small, in terms of impact, substantial role in the Falklands War (2 Apr - 14 Jun 1982) and in the much more recent Afghanistan conflict, itself famous for a further deepening of the direct British Royal Family connection to and special relationship with the Gurkhas (in this case with HRH Prince Harry seeing active service alongside the Gurkhas). We conclude below with excerpts from the army.mod website concerning the Royal engineers themselves; this provides valuable detail on their functions and importance, and by extension the skills and activities of the soldiery and officers of the QGE:

Enabling Defence to Live, Move & Fight: Royal Engineer soldiers are called Sappers! We are unique, motivated and intelligent. We are multi-skilled soldiers, combat engineers and tradesmen. We provide essential support to all areas of Defence in peacetime and on operations.

As a potential Sapper, you will complete basic training. You will learn the skills required to become a robust and confident soldier. You will complete combat engineer training, which will give you the engineering knowledge required to use speed boats, handle explosives, build bridges, purify water, build fortifications and many other exciting tasks. As a Sapper you will gain a trade, with the opportunity to gain civilian recognised qualifications.

Source: <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/corps-of-royal-engineers/>

The Queens Gurkha Signals

'My Grandad fought in Burma during WW2 for the Royal Artillery and fought alongside the Ghukhas. He didn't talk much about his experiences, but I found out after he died that he did talk to me about it from about the age of 12. maybe some kind of therapy?

Anyway in memory of him, he often talked about the Gurkhas and this is what I remember.

Whilst his battalion often moved in the valleys for the day, the Gurkhas would be high up on the difficult to navigate ridge, giving cover. Despite this, they would always have camp set-up when the RA got there!

They were truly amazing. if they hit a bottleneck of enemy, these guys would literally go in as a problem solving squad and deal with it. My Grandad always used to say that they were truly mystical back then and seemed to understand and melt into the jungle in some way.

One taught him how to defend himself with a knife, which in itself was amazing because he said they kept themselves to them themselves in camp. the kind of training a soldier in the UK army doesn't get! It saved his life one day when he found himself isolated and being hunted by an enemy soldier...'

Source: Quora website (article recommended by Gurkha advisers to the information resource project) <https://www.quora.com/Are-British-Gurkhas-really-as-good-as-people-say-they-are>

The above is a subject-setting direct introduction to the phenomenon of the Gurkhas in terms of courage, military sagacity and effectiveness, and peerless service to and within the British Army.

The Gurkha Signals (predecessor of the Queens Gurkha Signals [QGS]) were established in 1949.

Signalling activity originally came under the Royal Engineers, and in terms of the presence of Gurkha service in this important area of military activity, by the time of the First World War era some Gurkhas were already serving in the three Indian Corps of Sappers and Miners, and during the war period actual Companies of Gurkhas were formed in the three corps, subsequently in 1920 these Companies were organised into the Indian Signal Service.

The first major operations of the Gurkha Signals took place in Malaya and Borneo, with across a fourteen year period Gurkhas having the highly prestigious Mention in Dispatches, twenty five times. The total broader Brigade of Gurkhas itself (which included the Gurkha Signals) was however from that point downsized from 15,000 to 6,700. For the Gurkha Signals this meant a reduction from three Brigade Signals Squadrons to just a Regimental Headquarters and two Squadrons; a reduction from 1,100 to 416, with 17 Gurkha Signal Regiment leaving Seremban (Malaysia) in 1970, to be subsequently disbanded in Singapore on 31st July 1971. From that point 248 Gurkha Signal Squadron was reformed, and moved to Hong Kong.

Separate to the Gurkha Signals, the 99 Gurkha Infantry Brigade, through 1st and 2nd King Edward VII Own Gurkha Rifles saw service in countering the First Brunei Rebellion in 1962. Brunei was a small British Protectorate, and Sultanate, on the north coast of Borneo. By 1963 part of 248 Gurkha Signals Squadron were despatched as elements of the Indonesian military threatened Nth Borneo and Brunei. These were more conventional type engagements rather than countering and preventing ambushes.

Hong Kong: 48 Gurkha Infantry Brigade Signal Squadron was formed in late 1954 from reorganisations and deployments in the Far East, that had seen 26 Gurkha Infantry Brigade Signal Squadron under the lead of Captain Dhan Bahadur Gurung in conjunction with Major Glanvill and Captain Dexter took this squadron to Hong Kong in October 1954. Hong Kong was to be the location from which major reorganisations of the Gurkha Signals (and other Gurkha components of the British Army) that eventually led to relocating to the United Kingdom. Across 1955 the Gurkha Signals squadron in Hong Kong was known as the Independent Gurkha Infantry Brigade Signal Squadron, and its members in this formative period were put through new training for new types of warfare preparedness. On this, Ben White, Regimental Historian, Bramcote, in his seminal History of the Queens Gurkha Signals (2009) - kindly loaned by Captain Robin Rai to the UKNFS for our study and awareness - noted that Major Glanvill received this particular (and very characteristic of Gurkhas past and present tenacity and mastering to the highest degree techniques and practices) that the Brigade Commander had noted of an important study exercise, that:

It was noted of the Independent Squadron (Gurkha Signals) in the 1956 Regimental Newsletter:

“they have reached a standard of training in European type Signals warfare in which they can more than hold their own with any British Signals here”

It cannot be doubted that this report showing the illustrious nature of Gurkha mastery of new techniques that presaged their later transfer to the UK/West, which was eventually to become home to the Queens Gurkha Signals when it was eventually formed, indicated the assiduity of this particular group of Gurkha soldiers and their officer, developed through many years of frontline service in Malaya, Borneo and Brunei.

Interestingly, this communication concludes with another, very different dimension of the Gurkha story: namely passion for and prowess in sport, particularly football:

“They have not neglected sport in their efforts to improve technically and the Squadron reached the final of the Royal Signals Cup (Hong Kong) in the soccer competition.”

On 20th April 1977, the year of Her Majesty The Queen’s ‘Silver Jubilee’ an historic event in the history of the Gurkha Signals and broader Gurkha presence in the British Army, occurred. Her Majesty

authorised the title of the regiment to the 'Queens Gurkha Signals' (QGS). A further 'red letter day' in the history of the regiment took place on the 30th April 1983, when HRH Princess Anne made a formal visit to the regiment at its headquarters in Hong Kong. On a cultural note, the visit highlight featured HRH making a tour of a Nepali - Gurkha village that had been created for the occasion: a Nepali 'Rote Ping' (children's ride) was also demonstrated, and on HRH's departure Major Shyamlal Gurung MVO presented Princess Anne with a Nepali rum jar (a Puchai). In the June to August 1996 QGS (250 Squadron) made its first public duty debut under the Royal Signals Public Duties commitment through providing the guard for the Tower of London.

The year 1984 was important for members of the regiment taking part in Operation Lionheart' in Germany: meanwhile at Catterick in the UK in the same year saw the first Gurkha instructor deployed to 8 Signal Regiment. This was an important event in demonstrating the quality of Gurkha tradesman from the QGS. Holding in mind and planning, the transfer of Hong Kong back to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, in 1988 the Regiment converted its tradesmen to the trades that at this time had been introduced at the Royal Corps of Signals; enabling unifying of talent for future transfer and deployment of the QGS after the end of British rule in Hong Kong.

As a result, with the transfer of skills, in 1990 the formation of 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron in the UK, at Blandford to be a component of 30 Signal Regiment at Blandford Camp. On 1st June 1990 a symbolically important parade was carried out at Blandford with a synthesis of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the 30 Signal Regiment in the march paces used. Initially there were just 58 soldiers of the squadron, and their role was to provide aspects of key communication and HQ facilities to the UKMF Rear Maintenance Area. Just two months (October 1990) after Sergeant Padam Bahadur Rai earned the honour of being the first Gurkha to be deployed to the Gulf as part of Operation Granby, initiated in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The move of the Regiment's HQ from the Prince of Wales Barracks on Hong Kong Island to Bramcote in the UK on 1st April 1996 marked a considerable downsizing of QGS to 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron, three Gurkha Infantry Battalion Signal Troops (approximately 1600+), and the Brunei and Nepal Signal Troops, all under 30 Signal Regiment (covering in this period the main part of the British Army's satellite communications).

QGS saw service in Brazzaville (Zaire) in 1997 at the same time as Hong Kong was being handed over to the Peoples Republic of China: in the Brazzaville operation (March) to evacuate UK residents, Lieutenant Hitman Gurung led 12 soldiers as part of Operation Determinant, with Lieutenant Gurung's troops providing key strategic support communications to the spearhead battalion involved in evacuating British nationals from Zaire. There were a number of other operations involving the QGS at this time of the final years of the century and the early years of the first decade of the 21st Century, including Operation Grapple - in Bosnia -- (seeing a Commanders Commendation for Cpl Tulsi Raj Rai), Operation Jural (Saudi Arabia), Operations Resolute and Operation Palatine (in the area of the former Republic of Yugoslavia), Operations Resinate North and South (Turkey and Kuwait), and Operation Chantress in Angola.

In 1999, through Operation Agricola as part of the NATO mission to Kosovo, QGS 250 Gurkha Squadron returned to the Balkans contributing important services in this very important operation: on this the UKNFS learned whilst on a visit to Nepal in January 2018, on the occasion of the inauguration of a school being re-founded in Sindupalchok, of experiences of Gurkha soldiery in Kosovo on the occasion of the armistice.

The British Army presence in the operation saw the Gurkhas selected for the highly sensitive duty of finding and removing major concealed (hidden without marking, in the ground) enemy arms dumps in plain sight of the enemy. Heroic service, that few in the broader British general public are aware of, but characteristic of the British Army at strategic command's level of the regard for the courage and technical expertise of the Gurkhas! In this particular activity engagement diplomatic prowess and capability of the Gurkhas matched their technical expertise brilliance - no 'flair up' in this trigger-sensitive situation took place, nor were Gurkha/British lives lost in the removal of the concealed ammunition.

A good example of the strategic interrelationship of the QGS and RGS (Royal Gurkha Rifles) in the field, was evidenced also in 1999 with activity in Macedonia (under Operation Agricola): a strategic location. The Kacanik Defile was cleared through the combined endeavour of the 526 Rear Link Detachment (1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles) with their provision of the critically important link back to this operation's Commanding Officer. This involved major coordination and deployment of data and Rapid Reaction Corps Information System, to SATCOM systems and switchboard telephone system. Similar RGS engagement combined with QGS technical support, took place in East Timor in the same year.

The geographical scale of QGS deployment was further demonstrated in September 2011 where the 22 Regiment celebrated their birthday at the Southern Italian Gioia del Colle base. They have along with the Queens Gurkha Engineers been providing important services and support in Afghanistan, with the RGS being to the fore in this long-term deployment in regard to containing and fighting the Taliban. HRH Prince Harry in fact served with the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in Afghanistan in 2007, with it in 2008 being recorded that the prince helped RGR troops repel a major attack by Taliban insurgents. This further cemented the direct Gurkha Brigade links with the British Royal Family; something honoured in the special presence of the RGR and other components of the Brigade at Prince Harry's wedding on 19th May 2018.

On public duty fronts in this period extensive service was undertaken, including 248 Squadron following in the footsteps of 250 Squadron ten years earlier, mounting the Guard at the Tower of London, and on 23rd August 2007 the Squadron delivered their first Queens Guard on parade at Buckingham Palace. We provide more information on the QGS and the broader Brigade of Gurkhas in our **Royalty and the Gurkhas** section. However, here we conclude on a ceremonial topic - the 'Pipe and Drums Band' (part of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas) of the QGS - as this represents so well a synthesis of Nepali and British, especially Scottish British cultures.



In particular interlinking between Scottish culture and QGS and to some extent the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, not only through Scotland classic songs and marches related musical pieces in the repertoires of the QGS Corps of Pipe and Drums and the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas at major, ceremonial, and minor performance events (and available on CDs), but also through QGS Corps of Pipes and Drums slouch hat badge (created around 1955 which is when the Corps formed). This badge's background is red tartan of the Grant Clan; specifically, Red Grant Tartan Number 15.

This arose because of affinities between Nepal (particularly the areas of country where most recruits are drawn from) and Scotland as mountainous lands, and specifically because of Scotland and the Gurkhas regimental affiliations. The hat badge background was envisaged as early as 1952 by 17 Gurkha Division Signal Regiment commanded by Major L.H.M. Gregory BEM.

The Gurkha Signals were officially constituted on the 16th October 1953 as 17 Gurkha Division Signal Regiment and was commanded by Major L.H.M. Gregory BEM. This unit had emerged from the embryo 48th Gurkha Brigade Signal Squadron which was launched on 18th December 1950.

As early as 1952 Major Gregory had proposed that the Regiment should have a pipe band as other Gurkha Regiments had. Help was forthcoming from the Royal Scottish Fusiliers and 51st Highland Division Signal Regiment (Now 32 (Scottish) Signal Regiment (Volunteers) and a Corps of Pipes and Drums was formed.

Due to their affiliation with 32 (Scottish) Signals Regiment (V) the Gurkha Signals Corps of Pipes and Drums when wearing their slouch hat (Terai Hat) are permitted to wear a Grant Tartan with the Gurkha Signals badge attached. The wearing of the Grant Tartan was authorised by Lord Strathspey, Clan Chief of the Clan Grant.

Source: http://www.signalsbadges.co.uk/Asia/qe2gs_pipesanddrums_slouch_c1955.htm

The Royal Gurkha Rifles

Regiment motto:

‘कातर हुनु भन्दा मर्नु राम्रो’ Kaatar Hunnu Bhandu Marnu ~~to~~ "Better to die than to be a coward" ‘



The Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR) has ever been and remains the very vanguard of the Gurkha frontline combat dimension of the British Army's Brigade of Gurkhas, and related history of Nepali/Gurkha interrelationship with the British Army, and, more importantly, unique role in both British military and UK national/political histories.

This by way of introduction to the RGR from the Winchester-based UK's **Gurkha Museum**, whose educational resources across some key areas of information about the Nepali - Gurkha unique contribution to [through the British Army] the story of the UK's military history of the past 200 years, and by extension many decisive elements of the broader related history (from defence/retained independence, to overseas influence [pre and post European colonial-imperialist eras]) of the UK:

‘The modern Brigade of Gurkhas is an integral part of the British Army in the 21st century, providing well-trained and fully manned units, deployable across the full spectrum of operations and environments. The Gurkhas remain a strategic source of manpower, able to expand rapidly as required, with an unsurpassed competition for recruiting.

Gurkhas can boast no wastage in initial training and full retention, which leads to an enviable accumulation of experience. All Gurkhas are trained as 'Infantry first', and thus all Gurkhas are Riflemen at heart even if they join one of the Corps units. ...

The main body of the Gurkhas form two battalions in The Royal Gurkha Rifles. One battalion is in the UK as part of 16 Air Assault Brigade and they are the specialist Air Assault Task Force. The other battalion is based in Brunei in South-East Asia and is the UK's Jungle Warfare specialist battalion. All Brigade of Gurkha units continue to be heavily involved and at the forefront of all UK military operations.'

Source: <https://thegurkhamuseum.co.uk/gurkhastoday/>

Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR) background and history:

In terms of formal constitution, the Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR) - most famous in Britain and Nepal and internationally for the regiment motto [above] backed by a related history of incredible courage in the most extreme battleground frontline contexts and related ferocity of soldiery and officers -- has a much more recent provenance than for example the Queens Gurkha Signals (QGS) or the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas: the RGR was formed in 1994 from four separate Gurkha regiments. These were the (the Sirmoor Rifles being the most famous):

- 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (originally, The Sirmoor Rifles)
- 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles
- 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles
- 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles

The actual origins of the RGR reach back to the earliest period, in South Asia, of the post-Treaty of Sugauli (2016). The Gurkha Brigade Association website's Royal Gurkha Rifles page has a valuable History section, whose details are cited below:

The Gurkhas were first recruited into the British East Indian Company in 1816 and they distinguished themselves during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Over 200, 000 Gurkhas volunteered to serve with the British-Indian Army in the World Wars.

After the partition of India in 1947, four of the 10 Gurkha regiments (2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles: The Sirmoor Rifles, 6th Queen Elizabeth's Own Gurkha Rifles (see Gallipoli below in WW I section), 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles, 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles) opted to transfer to the British Army and formed the main part of the what is now called the Brigade of Gurkhas. Following the Government's Options for Change in 1994, the four regiments of Gurkha Rifles were amalgamated to form a single regiment, The Royal Gurkha Rifles.*

The RGR consists of two Light Role Infantry Battalions (1 and 2 RGR). They alternate between Brunei and the UK every three years. The Brunei based battalion specialises in Jungle Warfare and the UK based battalion is part of 16 Air Assault Brigade.

Source: <https://www.gurkhabde.com/the-royal-gurkha-rifles/>

Origins:

The Gurkha Rifles in fact sprang to life in 1815, even **before the end of the 1814 – 1816 Anglo – Nepali War**, and on the basis of the spirit of equality and above all, mutual self-respect, as the following excerpt from a *New York Times* (1964) news article on the Gurkhas and the British so well provides regarding the dramatic origin and its portentous sequel concerning the recruitment of the first three Gurkha Rifles regiments:

*A JUNIOR British officer, Lieut. Frederick Young, became the first successful recruiter of Gurkhas in quixotic circumstances which perhaps offer a clue to the enduring loyalty and affection between the Gurkhas and their British commanders. Deserted by his Indian column, red - coated Lieutenant Young, with drawn sword, was surrounded by derisive Gurkhas. His Indian irregulars had broken and run when 200 tribesmen descended upon them, brandishing their dreaded fcufris[*kukris] and shouting their old war cry, “Ayo Gorkhali!” (“The Gurkhas are upon you!”).*

The Gurkha leader asked Young why he also had not fled. “I have not come so far in order to run away,” he replied. “I am here to stay.” His bearing impressed the Gurkhas. “We could serve under men like you,” the leader told him. He sheathed his kurki. Young sheathed his sword. They shook hands.

*Young was treated with respect and released. On his return to his commander, General Ochterlony, he asked to be allowed to seek recruits among Gurkha war prisoners —who were also being treated with respect. His first bid was at historic Dehra Dun camp. It was a sensational success. As Young put it: “I went in as one man and came out as three thousand.” Ochterlony ordered additional levies. **Before mid-1815, while the war was still scrambling to its equivocal conclusion in 1816, three Gurkha regiments had been enlisted under the British Raj: the 1st, 2d and 3d Gurkha Rifles.***

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/10/18/archives/ayo-gorkhali-the-gurkhas-are-upon-you-is-the-battle-cry-of-one-of.html>



By the time of the great Indian Rebellion against British rule (the British ‘Raj’) of 10th May 1857 to 1st November 1858, also known as in British colonial history as the ‘Sepoy Mutiny’ (in Indian history the ‘mutiny’ was known as the War for Independence. But - some forty years after the Treaty of Sugauli -- the British Army relationship with Nepal’s fierce and martial focused peoples who comprised what are better known as the Gurkhas, was clearly by this stage complete. The Gurkha Rifles were and remain both vanguard and bulwark of the Gurkha presence within the British Army. Image to left is of the

exterior of the besieged Hindoo Rao’s residency - a target during the rebellion for Rao’s close association with the British invaders.

We are very pleased that the UKNFS through our Gurkha community (retired and serving from Dorset to Aldershot and Kent) shared their perspectives on their perceptions on the Gurkha presence in not only the British Army, but also that presence’s role at key points in British history. They also directed to a number of different high-quality academic researchers books and papers on the subject of the Nepali - Gurkha role and exceptional contributions in support to the British side in the Sepoy Mutiny.

Throughout the process of developing this particularly important component of the UK Nepali cultural & social heritage, we shared the drafting and development of content, which received strong and enthusiastic support as covering the key aspects of the Gurkha - UK special 200 years+ relationship.

One of the papers referred to above, was particularly recommended as it filled in important gaps on a key early phase in the history of the Gurkhas in British history. The paper - source: <https://www.spotlightnepal.com/2015/04/09/gurkhas-in-the-indian-mutiny/> -- ‘Gurkhas in the Indian Mutiny,’ by Dr Bipin Adhikari (senior constitutional expert and the founding dean of the Kathmandu University School of Law), provides analysis of the excellent book by Frederick P. Gibbon, *The Disputed VC: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny* (London: Blackie & Son) is particularly commended for its details from a Nepali, South Asian, objective perspective. At the very heart of the critically important and decisive - for the British, East India Company side - role of the Gurkhas (effectively, Kingdom of Nepal, non-British nationals) in the Sepoy Mutiny manifested through the *Sirmoor Rifles*, founded in 1815. Ultimately the Sirmoor Rifles were the core component of what eventually became the RGR.

We cite the following excerpts from Dr Bipin’s paper, below - key entries in regard to the significance and nature of the Gurkha role in this climactic foreign/British imperialist versus subjugated peoples war in the history of European colonial imperialism, are indicated in **bold**:

‘The role of the Gurkhas was incredibly important to the Company to suppress the war of independence. The beginning of the rebellion was much unexpected. It grew rapidly and spread out very fast. It was very hard for Company forces to tackle the rebellion in the beginning. A Nepalese soldier at the front has been quoted as saying: "This war will soon be over. Jung Bahadur is going to march down to Lucknow with his army....He is our prime minister and commander-in-chief in Nepal. He offered to bring an army down to help you English two months ago, and now the government has accepted his offer." That indeed helped change some of the scenario.

*The deployment of tiny Gurkhas, the “Irishmen of Asia”, **created panic among the rebels.** Ted Russell, an ensign of the 193rd Bengal Native Infantry, stationed at Aurungpore, and one of the principal actors in the book, **makes clear that the Gurkhas were eager to come in contact with the mutinous hordes and fight them out. These hordes were even seen by him running with terrified eyes and panting breath at different places. They fought like anything, throwing down musket and bayonet, and drawing their razor-edged kukris and plunged into the thick of their opponents, hewing them down and scattering them on every side by the fury of their charge.***

The book lists many instances of the fierce character of Gurkhas and their bravery. One such instance is the chasing down of dozen or so Wahabi fanatics by a single Gurkha "highlander" during a rebellion rally ... The book also glorifies the heroics of Gurkha "picket" that withstood the siege of Delhi for nearly three months under severe threat through bombardment and advancement of rebel fighters.

*Similarly, describing the attributes of the Gurkhas and the Nepali Kingdom, Ted Russell states, “these Gurkies ain’t natives but furriners in Injia same as us, livin’ in a furrin country called Nepal, up amongst the Himalayas, which you’ve never ’eard on, I dare say. **And the Gurky king ain’t a subject of the queen**, like the Injian rajahs and nawabs and nizams and such, **but free and independent, like voters at an election. I’ve fought side by side with ’em, ... and they’re as good pals on a battle-field as any chaps from Battersea.**” This clearly demonstrates the amount of admiration and fondness Ted Russell had for the brave and valiant Gurkhas.*

The book also reveals the great loyalty the Gurkha contingent demonstrated towards their British friends. In his book, the narrator discusses of incidents where the rebels tried to persuade the Gurkhas to side with them, luring them with monetary incentives while also appealing to their religious inclination. However, the determined Gurkhas refused to side with the rebels and marched on with the objective of suppressing the Mutiny. This, according to the author, bred hate amongst the rebels towards the Gurkhas. This is clearly demonstrated in the following quote from the book: "Those monkeys of Gurkhas are renegades to their faith!" declared the [rebellious] Brahman priests to those mutineers in Delhi who were of their persuasion." They prefer to receive the Englishman's pay rather than follow the dictates of their holy men. Let them be outcasts! Spare them not! When we have destroyed the white men, then shall we deal with them, if any have escaped by that time !"

Even though the Gurkhas were finally overbearing, they also suffered terrible casualties from the mutineers. However, even the wounded ones refused to leave their post. Such was their determination that when the British comrades offered to assist and relocate the injured soldiers to a relatively less threatened zone, where they could receive medical assistance, they flatly refused instead preferring to stay by the side of their battling comrades.

Moreover, there is much in the book that shows how Gurkhas interacted with the British enriching each other with love and forbearance. Both contingents, according to the author, related to the tales of war and glorification of each other's love for their homeland. The author in his book states, in the course of their interaction that "...the Gurkhas began to speak of their own beloved country of Nepal, by the mighty snow-clad Himalayas, of its wonderful beauty, and of its unequalled sport and wealth of animal life; and the Englishmen tried to explain the extent of their empire and the wonders of London, and told of their mighty ships of war and great sea-borne commerce." This provided an opportunity for two diverse cultures to bond, albeit under extreme circumstances of war.

In contrast to the Gurkhas of Sirmur Battalion, according to Ted, the Gurkhas coming from Nepal, paled in comparison. Referencing the standards maintained by brave and valiant Gurkhas such as Merban Sing and Gorla Thapa in Sirmur Battalion, the author described the Nepalese counterparts as comparatively, "taller in stature, less sturdy and considerably dirtier" lacking the "true military swagger and jolly recklessness."

The Gurkhas then assisted the British in capturing Lucknow from the mutineers and this dealt a great blow to the aspirations of the rebels. Through subsequent fighting, that lasted for months, the British were successful in driving the sepoys away from the great city of Lucknow and further north into the Terai region bordering Nepal. The author professes the relevance of this feat through the following statement: "everyone understood that all danger to the British raj was over through this day's work." The British had successfully defeated the Great Sepoy Mutiny and the Gurkhas had played a significant part in the suppression.'

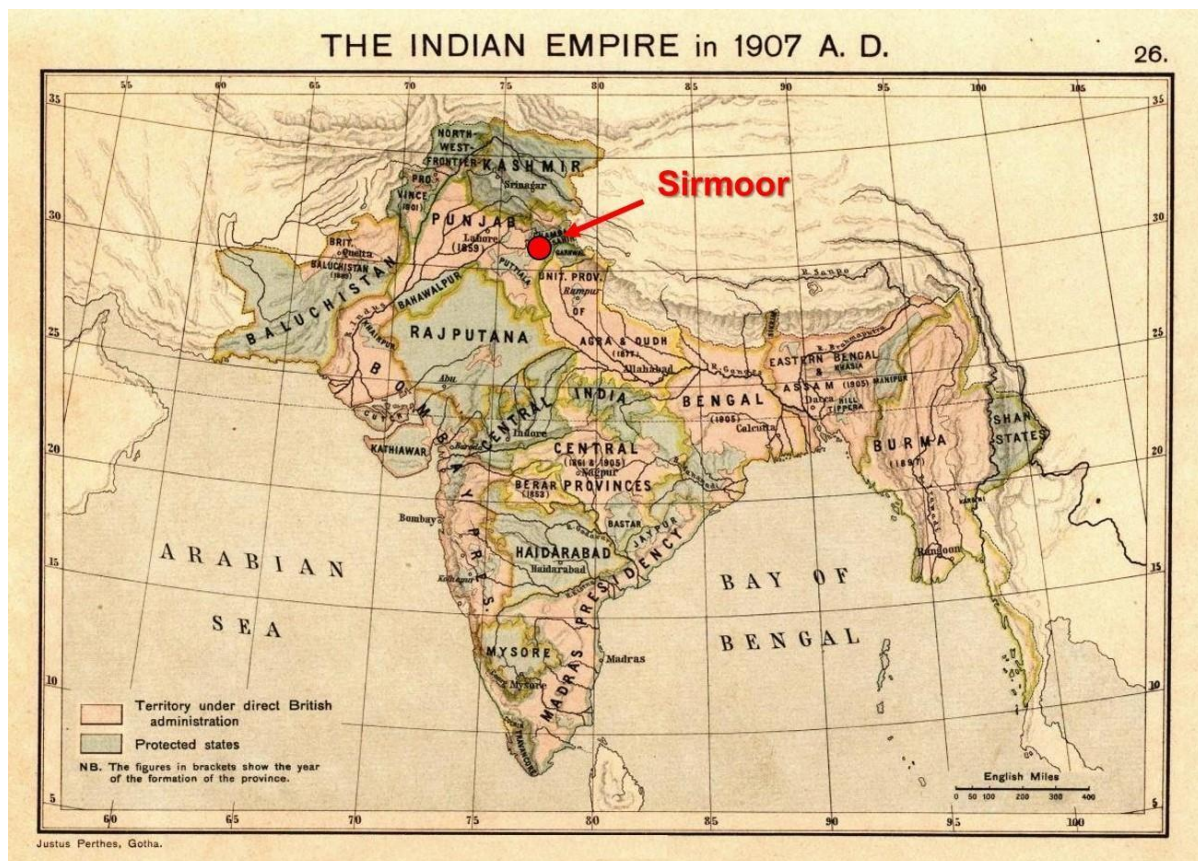
Regarding the East India Company and its activity in South Asia the following source provides valuable context information: <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/The-East-India-Company/>

Regarding the Sirmoor Regiment, Sirmoor, and the Queens Truncheon:

Sirmoor (now in the north of the Republic of India) in British Army history is inextricably linked with the Sirmoor [Gurkha] Rifles Regiment's key role in containing and then suppressing the Sepoy Rebellion/Indian Mutiny, particularly in regard to the Siege of Delhi and the Relief of Lucknow in British occupied Hindustan. To date (2020) the story of Sirmoor, specifically through the Gurkha Sirmoor Rifles/Regiment has been little told - if one makes search online -- in British Army history, and by extension early 19th Century UK British colonial history, and of course current [early 21st Century] British history in the era of a modern UK that is happily moving on from the shadows of its 19th and earlier 20th centuries racial supremacist 'difficult' past. Sirmoor, although a very small principedom within British India, was significant in the East India Company's and subsequently British Government's strategies for controlling the Indian sub-continent because:

'... most of its Rajas were able rulers and fully supported the British Crown in the various conflicts and wars across India and even WW1 and WW2. They were well known for providing some of the best miners and sappers for aiding sieges.'

Source: <http://www.dcstamps.com/sirmoor-princely-state-of-india-1815-1948/>



Sirmoor in fact has a remarkable significance for Nepal and for Britain. A small principedom within the modern/post 1947 state of India, some hundreds of miles to the west of Nepal, the distance between Sirmoor and the current Western border of Nepal is approximately two thirds the distance - a reflection of the scale and success of pre-British East India Company military incursion, Nepal-Gurkha military prowess -- as that between that of Nepal's current western and eastern frontiers.

As such, given the Nepal (Gorkha/Gurkha) Sirmoor interconnections - aggressive (on a par with that of the British/'East India Company' across the Indian Subcontinent) expansionist campaigns of the

Nepal monarchy and state along the southern flanks of the Himalaya, the significance of Nepali-Gurkha military success and martial prowess can readily be understood.

For reference, the Sirmoor Regiment (that was founded in 1815, and developed in the decades following the Treaty of Sugauli, largely and finally becoming Nepali - Gurkha in terms of soldiery' and officers) also interconnects with the earliest history of the Gurkha Engineers (eventually to become the Queen's Gurkha Engineers), as the army of the principedom of Sirmoor although very small, had a reputation for very effective miners and sappers.

British Army recorded history in regard to the Gurkhas effectively begins with the Gurkhas of the Sirmoor Regiment, and that history focuses most of all on the so-called 'Indian Mutiny' (from Hindustani patriots perspective the 'War for Independence'), particularly in regard to the role of the Gurkhas through the regiment in the Siege of Delhi and the Relief of Lucknow.

In effect, the Siege marked the holding in check of the 'Mutiny' /Hindustani War for Independence against foreign/Western-European invasion and occupation, and the Relief, the turning of the tide against the 'mutineers/Hindustani patriots' (to give both occupier/invasion and occupied/invaded perspectives) and the British 'Raj' regaining its seized dominions and consolidating these up to the collapse of the British Raj at the end of World War II. In the final stages of the 'Mutiny' the Sirmoor Rifles Regiment [Gurkhas] played a decisive role in support to British Army/East India Company military reconquest of central Hindustan/India.

As such, the British state and Crown owed the Gurkhas and ultimately the Kingdom of Nepal a major debt of gratitude for this politico-economic salvation of the Empire, which cannot be overstated for its strategic geo-political and economic value to the British Empire. This role played by the Gurkhas was further consolidated with the reconquest of the central Hindustan lands, through their significant military supportive interventions.

It cannot be doubted that the Nepali Gurkhas role in these decisive points in the suppression of the Sepoy Rebellion and the subsequent restoration of British rule in the sub-continent related not so much to numbers of Gurkhas involved, as instead, rather both equally their outstanding fighting skills from hand to hand (in practice riflery and prowess with the Kukri) to sapper work in conjunction with their reputation for ferocity combined with focus in fighting.

Here it is important to record that the Gurkha military impact was far out of proportion to actual Nepali-Gurkha military intervention numbers: the reputation for ferocity and military success that the Gurkhas had even by this time established, being a truly enormous strategic asset to the British state in this crucial struggle to maintain empire. To date (up to the start of the third decade of the 21st Century) the Gurkha role in British Empire and subsequent post-empire era history has been but rarely referred to, and when it has been it has tended to rank their [Nepali-Gurkha] role as of symbolic value, rather than the enormous strategic value it has had in decisive engagements in key campaigns of geo-politically crucial wars.

As such, and for these reasons the impact of the Gurkhas involvement was highly disproportionate compared to actual numbers in this critical point in British history. However across the second half of the 19th Century and into the 1900s this role was further consolidated as Gurkhas were deployed on the Afghan - North West Frontier territories and on the North East Frontier, with the former in particular being the most significant theatre of war for the British in the sub-continent, after the Indian

Mutiny. The terrain in these two frontier locations was ideal for Gurkha/Gorkha deployment as essentially very similar to Nepal's own topography, whilst in the case of the North Eastern Frontier (northern Assam) in part, some of the peoples (as with Sikkim and Bhutan) included those closely connected in terms of ethnicity with the Nepali Gurkhas themselves - indeed there is in the early 21st Century a swathe of districts within the Republic of India in these provinces that is known as 'Gorkha land.'

Sirmoor Rifles related -- The 'Queen's Truncheon' and its history:

RGS and broader serving and retired Gurkhas have indicated the symbolic importance of the 'Queens Truncheon' in the history of the Brigade of Gurkhas role within the British Army, and commended the sources and information below regarding the Truncheon.



Replica of the Queen's Truncheon -- Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen%27s_Truncheon



The history of the Truncheon dates back to the time of the Indian Mutiny when The Sirmoor Battalion (later the 2nd KEO Gurkha Rifles) particularly distinguished itself by holding the Ridge during the siege of Delhi. Here they fought along side the 60th Rifles. During the prolonged action all its officers and 327 of its 490 other ranks became casualties.

For the Battalion's outstanding service during the Mutiny, Queen Victoria was pleased to grant it a third colour inscribed 'Delhi' in English, Hindi and Persian. (The Sirmoor Battalion already held a

Queen's Colour and a black Regimental Colour.) At the same time additional distinctions were awarded to the Battalion. Henceforth, the rank and file were to be known as Riflemen, the title was changed to the Sirmoor Rifle Regiment and the Battalion was authorised to wear the uniform of the 60th Rifles (now The Rifles). The affiliation with The Rifles remains to this day.



It was not considered appropriate for Rifle Regiments to carry colours and uniquely Her Majesty Queen Victoria presented the regiment with the Truncheon to be carried in lieu of this third colour. The Queen's Truncheon is 'accorded all the dignities and compliments appropriate to a King's Colour of Infantry'. Since the Queen's Truncheon was passed to the Royal Gurkha Rifles it has continued to be held in the greatest reverence. Accordingly all New Recruits continue to be sworn in to the Regiment in the presence of the Queen's Truncheon.

Source: <https://www.gurkhabde.com/history-of-the-queens-truncheon/>

BBC news article on the Queens Truncheon: The regiment which later became the 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles) was raised in northern India in 1815 as the Sirmoor Battalion, a local corps until 1861 when it became a regular regiment in the Bengal Army. During the Indian Mutiny it distinguished itself when, for more than three months, it held a key post on the ridge which was the main British position during the Siege of Delhi. During that Siege and the assault to capture the City it suffered 327 dead and wounded out of 490 all ranks, and formed a strong affiliation with the 60th Rifles. Because Rifle Regiments did not carry Colours, the newly titled Sirmoor Rifle Regiment had to stop doing so, which meant that the privilege of carrying a third Colour was lost. To keep the distinction Her Majesty Queen Victoria authorised the replacement of the third Colour by a Truncheon.

The Truncheon, which is about 6 feet high and made of bronze and silver, is carried on parade by the Truncheon Jemadar, whose post was added to the Establishment for the purpose, escorted by two Sergeants and two Corporals. Like a Sovereign's Colour it is greeted with a Royal salute when it appears. **Comments are closed for this object.**

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/OlrZr5X5RZOwqKSMLJlapg>

Videos relating to the Queen's Truncheon:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S117K92iAac> -- The Queen's Truncheon presented to Her Majesty The Queen. 568 views •Jul 16, 2019
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JpRF-pVlg8> -- Gurkhas swear oath on Queen's Truncheon 12.12.11 18,102 views •Dec 13, 2011

The Gurkha Rifles and the two world wars:

World War I:

Some 200,000 Gurkhas (Nepalis) were involved in World War I, out of which some 16,000+ deaths resulted: with the 2nd King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles particularly constituted the core fighting force, with other regiments (Signals, Engineers, the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, particularly) contributing to the British effort in the war.

All not having the same geo-political strategic importance of the sub-continent interventions of the previous century, the 'Great War' as World War 1 was known, saw different outcomes for the Gurkhas, especially the riflemen.

On the one hand there were the horrific experiences of a poorly thought through by the War Office in Whitehall, deployment to the trenches of the Western Front, and the depressing experience of Gallipoli that resulted from essentially a sound strategy and good start being transformed into a bloodbath and eventual retreat because of largely poor communications and related tactical errors by the British Army. On the other hand, the heroism and the martial glamour of the Gurkha reputation for ferocity and success in appropriate combat situations, advanced considerably through certain battles and campaigns. Most famous of these were 'Gurkha Bluff' in Gallipoli (perhaps the best known success of the courageous British forces), the Fall of Bagdad, and participation in the legendary campaign of Arab uprising against the Ottoman Empire [the Turks] led by Captain (later Colonel) T.E. Lawrence - better known as 'Lawrence of Arabia.' Gurkha Bluff - Gallipoli perhaps more than any other engagement, gave Nepal's Gurkhas a truly global renown for their deadly fierceness in battle. Such renown carries weight in the human heart (and certainly that of the military strategist who considers the possibility of coming up against, or deploying such a phenomenal fighting force) rather than dry numbers and places those numbers where deployed in.

The Fall of Bagdad, the fabled ancient city of Mesopotamia [later, capital of Iraq] is comparable to the Siege of Delhi and Relief of Lucknow at the time of the Indian Mutiny, for its strategic relevance as Bagdad had for centuries been the key city of the Ottoman Empire in its south-eastern territories in the Gulf - Middle East region: its taking by the British forces (the UK after WW I took effective control of the Iraq - Mesopotamia region as a British Protectorate under a League of Nations Mandate [France took the lands to the West, Syria, in a similar capacity]) marked the end of Ottoman hegemony in the broader region, and the birth of the new political borders map of the Middle East. Consequently, again, the Gurkha role at a decisive frontline engagement level had a broader global level significance for not only British overseas power, but in ushering in a new chapter in world history.

In regard to 'Gurkha Bluff' in the Gallipoli campaign, and the role of the Gurkhas through Laurence of Arabia's British support on the British supported Arab uprising against the Ottoman Turks, which ushered in the eventual liberation of the Arab lands of the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula and

subsequent post WW II political geography of this part of the world, we provide excerpts from two sources below. These indicate both the practical level and types of the Nepali - Gurkha role, and also the latter's geo-political strategic impacts.

On Gurkha Bluff, Gallipoli:



Image source: UK National Army Museum - Gurkha infantry in Gallipoli

We have had recommend to us this valuable very educational video regarding the Gurkhas in Gallipoli - also showing the full size of a WW1 Gurkha Rifles kukri: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA2MAKkrHqg>

Also recommended to us in the course of our engagement and research for the Gurkha component of the information resource is the interview below, as it gives a thorough overview of the Gurkha Rifles role at Gallipoli.

"I first met the 6th Gurkha Rifles in 1915 in Gallipoli. There I was so struck by their bearing in one of the most desperate battles in history that I resolved, should the opportunity come, to try to serve with them. Four years later it came, and I spent many of the happiest and, from a military point of view, the most valuable years of my life in the Regiment."

Field Marshal Sir William Slim

"When everything comes out, this Dardanelles show will prove to have been the most mismanaged show on earth with thousands of lives that have been unnecessarily thrown away"

Lt Col Allanson, 6 GR

On April the 24th 1914 orders were received for the 1/6th Gurkha Rifles to embark at Port Said on s.s. Dunluce Castle for the Dardanelles (see Maps 1 and 2). The ship anchored off Sedd-al-Bahr at 1230 on April the 30th. The Battalion subsequently left Mardos for Alexandria on 21st December, and little

did they know what was in store over the next 8 months in what became known as the Gallipoli campaign.

Overall the Gallipoli campaign was a disaster from beginning to end. The mission was ineptly commanded and poorly equipped. After nine months of deadlock and the loss of more than 100,000 lives the allies eventually withdrew their attack on the peninsula. The offensive's ultimate aim was to push through the Dardanelles Straits and capture Constantinople, the Turkish capital. If a breakthrough had been achieved, the Turks, who were allied with the central powers (Austria and Germany), would have been unable to prevent Britain and France from joining the Russians in the war against Austria-Hungary and Turkey.

However, the 6th Gurkhas gained immortal fame at Gallipoli during the capture from the Turks of the feature later known as "Gurkha Bluff" and at "Sari Bair" they were the only troops in the whole campaign to reach and hold the crest line and look down on the Straits which was the ultimate objective.

Gurkha Bluff

The second despatch of General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, dealt with the Krithia battles of May and June 1915.

"During the night of the 10th/11th May the 6th Gurkhas started off to seize this bluff. Their scouts descended to the sea, worked their way for some distance through the broken ground along the shore and crawled hands and knees up the precipitous face of the cliff. On reaching the top they were heavily fired on. As a surprise the enterprise had failed, but as a reconnaissance it proved very useful. On the following day Major-General H. V. Cox, commanding 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, submitted proposals for a concerted attack on this bluff (now called Gurkha Bluff). ...

The following General Routine Order (16) was published on May 17th, 1915:

"In order to mark the good work done by the 1/6th Gurkha Rifles in capturing the Bluff on the coast west of Krithia. The General Officer commanding has ordered that this Bluff will in future be known as "Gurkha Bluff" (see Photograph 2).

The Krithia battles were most significant as they proved that the original British assumption of a swift victory over an indifferent enemy was grossly mistaken. Thereafter Helles would become the scene of numerous attrition battles and success would be measured by an advance of a hundred yards or the capture of a trench.

The total battle casualties sustained by the 1/6th in the Cape Helles battles were 96 killed and 383 wounded. Capt F. B. Abbot and Capt D. G. J. Ryan were awarded DSOs and Lt H. C. Poynder the MC.

Sari Bair

Extract from Sir Ian Hamilton's despatch dated 15 December 1915:

"General Baldwin's column had assembled in the Chailak Dere on 6th of August, and was moving up towards General Johnstone's headquarters. Our plan contemplated the massing of this column immediately behind the trenches held by the New Zealand Infantry Brigade. Thence it was intended to launch the battalions in successive lines, keeping them as much as possible on the high ground. Infinite trouble had been taken to ensure that the narrow track should be kept clear, guides also were provided; but in spite of all precautions the darkness, the rough scrub-covered country, its sheer steepness, so delayed the column that they were unable to take full advantage of the configuration of the ground, and, inclining to the left, did not reach the line of the Farm - Chunuk Bair till 5.15 a.m.

But now, under that fine leader, Major C. G. L. Allanson (see Photograph 3), the 6th Gurkhas pressed up the slopes of Sari Bair (see Map 3), crowned the heights of the col between Chunuk Bair and Hill Q, viewed far beneath them the waters of the Hellespont, viewed the Asiatic shores along which motor transport was bringing supplies to the lighters.”

In Allanson’s own words “At the top we met the Turks; Le Marchand went down, a bayonet through the heart. I got one through the leg, and then, for about ten minutes, we fought hand to hand, we bit and fisted, and used rifles and pistols as clubs; blood was flying like spray from a hair wash bottle. And the Turks turned and fled, and I felt a very proud man; the key of the whole peninsula was ours, and our losses had not been so very great for such a result. Below I saw the Straits, motors and wheeled transport, on the roads leading to Achi Baba”

To continue with General Hamilton’s despatch:

“Not only did this battalion, as well as some of the 6th South Lancashire Regiment, reach the crest, but they began to attack down the far side of it, firing as they went at the fast retreating enemy. But the fortune of war was against us. At this supreme moment Baldwin’s column was still a long way from our trenches on the crest of Chunuk Bair, whence they should even now have been sweeping out towards Q along the whole ridge of the mountain. And instead of Baldwin’s support came suddenly a salvo of heavy shells. These falling so unexpectedly among the stormers threw them into terrible confusion. The Turkish commander saw his chance; instantly his troops were rallied and brought back in a counter-charge, and the South Lancashire’s and Gurkhas, who had seen the promised land and had seemed for a moment to have held victory in their grasp, were forced backwards over the crest and on to the lower slopes whence they had first started.”

Every British officer in the 1/6th had been killed or wounded, except for the Medical Officer Capt Phipson, and **the withdrawal was carried out by Subedar-Major Gambirsing Pun**, who spoke no English, and relied on Capt Phipson (see Photograph 4) to interpret for him. The Battalion withdrew in good order and Gambirsing was awarded the MC for his leadership and gallantry. Total casualties amounted to 204 all ranks in three days fighting, of whom 45 were killed, three of them British officers. Allanson and Phipson were awarded the DSO, and of the many Battle Honours awarded to 6GR “Sari Bair” must rank as outstanding. ...

Post Script:

It was the considered opinion of the Lt Gen Sir Reginald Savory, who served at Gallipoli with the 14th KGO Sikhs that the 1/6th Gurkha Rifles were “the outstanding battalion of the Gallipoli Campaign”.

General Sir Ian Hamilton’s secretary, in a letter acknowledging a Christmas card from the Regiment, says “It is Sir Ian Hamilton’s most cherished conviction that if he had been given more Gurkhas at the Dardanelles he would never had been held up by the Turks”. He was probably right!

6GR were subsequently awarded the Battle Honours “Helles”, “Suvla”, “Krithia” and “Gallipoli 1915”.

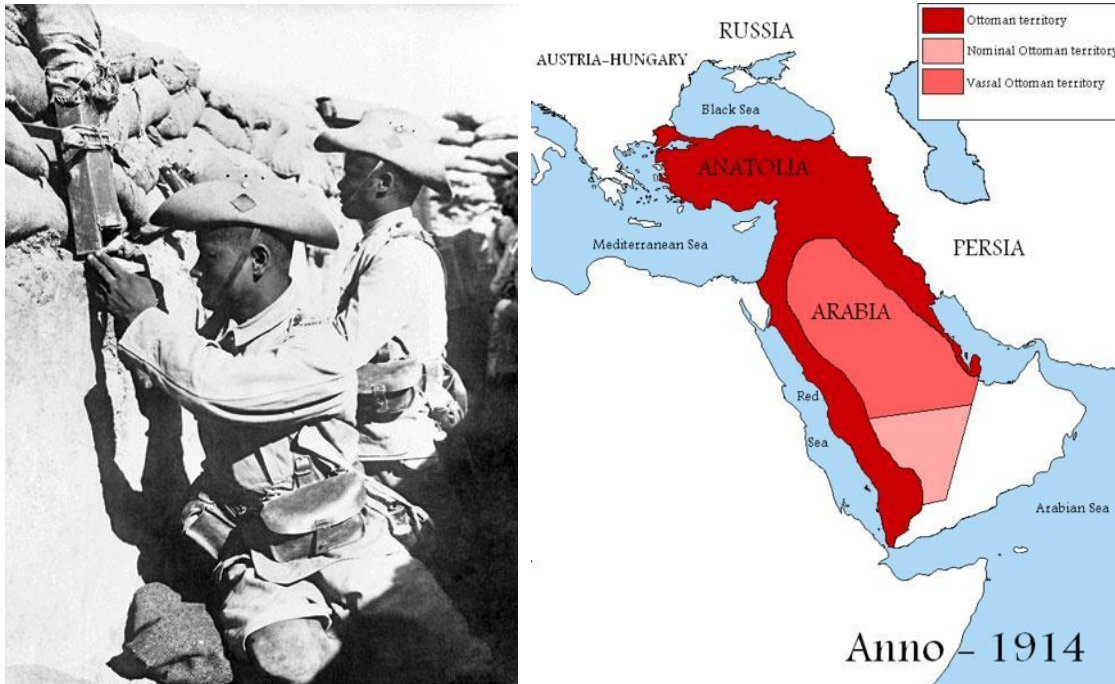
Today a painting by Terence Cuneo showing Major Allanson and the 1/6th on the crest of Sari Bair is displayed by the Royal Gurkha Rifles, successors to 6 GR (see Picture 1).

Author: Colonel P D Pettigrew

Source (website of the 6th Gurkha Rifles): <https://www.6thgurkhas.org/the-regiment/gallipoli-campaign/>

The Arabian Peninsula and 'Laurence of Arabia' - the role of the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles:

Gurkha soldiery and officers were a key part of Captain TE Laurence's extraordinary and incredibly successful military campaign in Arabia, Palestine and beyond, British military campaigns to subvert and assist to become independent and under a new, British, hegemonic influence, these long established Ottoman Turkish Empire territories.



Gurkhas in Palestine, and map of Ottoman Empire c. 1914

In an attempt to foster Arab resistance to the Ottoman Empire (the large multi-ethnic empire which ruled much of the Middle East, including the Arabian Peninsula, during the First World War) The Allies began to provide Arab leaders with resources and sent intelligence officers into the region to coordinate and assist their efforts. Perhaps the most famous of these intelligence agents is Captain (later Colonel) Thomas Edward Lawrence, a British Army soldier and archaeologist, better known as Lawrence of Arabia. From 1916-1918 Lawrence led a combined British and Arab military force in raids against Ottoman positions and railways, tying up troops and disrupting the Ottoman war effort.



In October and November 1918, at the height of these hit-and-run campaigns, Gurkha soldiers from the second and third battalions of 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles were recruited into this group under the command of a Captain Scott-Higgins of 3/3GR. Though having little experience of camel-riding, just under 30 soldiers are believed to have volunteered for 'Unt Ka Kam' or 'Camel Work' and departed in total secrecy on August 13th 1918 for Suez. An account given by one Havildar Manhabadur Gurung relates how, after a mere week spent training how to ride camels, the

volunteers were sent into the desert. The Gurkhas rode for over three weeks, almost without halt or fires, in order to avoid detection by Ottoman troops, to meet with a larger force made up of a variety of allied troops. This force then began raiding along the Hejaz railway, with the Gurkhas taking part in the breaking of the line in several places.

These raids (and others like them) aimed to prevent reinforcements being brought up to the Ottoman front lines quickly in the event of an Allied attack and are considered to have severely hampered the Ottoman ability to reinforce their troops to the North during the final stages of the war.

Source: <https://thegurkhamuseum.co.uk/telawrence/>

World War II:

The Brigade of Gurkhas was deployed in multiple theatres throughout the Second World War with all components of the Brigade playing crucial parts in Gurkha frontline action. The Gurkha Rifles were ever to the forefront of this action. In total an estimated quarter of a million Gurkhas served with the British Army in Europe in World War II.

In the West/European theatre of war, the Gurkhas first entered service in Cyprus (a key strategic British possession in the Eastern Mediterranean, halfway between southern Turkey and the north of Egypt), from there deployed to Egypt. As such they served with courage and to great effect in the two decisive battles of the North African theatre of war, at El Alamein; the first saw the British Army decisively check the until then relentless advance of the German Army under Field Marshal Rommel; the second Battle of El Alamein under General Montgomery was the start point of the British forces pushing the German Army out of North Africa. It cannot be doubted that the presence of the Gurkhas played through their battlefield ferocity and reputation, a significant supportive part in these two key battles for the control of North Africa, the Suez Canal, and Middle East.

Subsequently, the Gurkhas played their part in the British Army part of the Allies invasion of southern Italy: notable service including the battle for and taking of the almost impregnable Axis fortress of Monte Cassino (a converted/fortified mountain-top historically important Benedictine monastery). Multiple key engagements in which the Gurkhas, and especially the Gurkha Rifles made significant contributions in the Second World War included largely Italy (but also in the final stage of the war in Europe, Greece [1944 - 1945] too) are recorded in Battle Honours details at the end of this section. Of equal importance to the West, were the Gurkha contributions to the British War effort in the Far

East (Battle Honours for this this part of the war are also referred to below). In regard to the latter, the main theatres of war in which the Gurkhas were present and played honourable parts, essentially were Burma, and before the Burma campaigns, Malaya and Singapore.

Burma and the Gurkhas:



The Gurkhas in Burma (Myanmar) -- source: <https://www.chinditslongcloth1943.com/32-gurkha-roll-call.html>

More on Gurkha ferocity and ingenuity in the four campaigns that took place from the time of the Japanese seizure of Burma to the Japanese Army expulsion from the then British colony – some stories and accounts:

The following stories were particularly recommended by the various Gurkha authorities (British Army serving and retired Gurkhas of multiple generations) supporting, contributing to and advising on the UKNFS facilitated UK Nepali cultural & social heritage project information project content.

‘ ... My father was sent to India during WW 2 to take command of a Gurkha regiment that was slated to go to Burma. He had nothing but tremendous respect for the men he commanded and praised them every chance he got.

Three cases may highlight how they operate.

- 1. Dad and a patrol were moving through the jungle on a narrow dirt path when, from up ahead a sound was heard, everyone went to ground and prepared to ambush whoever was coming down the path or to surprise them from their hiding place if they were friends. They turned out to be a Japanese patrol. After the firefight a few Japanese prisoners were held. Dad told the men to bury them and walked off to check on a few things and he then returned to the prisoners. The dead Japs were in the bottom of a hole that had been dug and the live prisoners were standing in the bottom. The Gurkhas were getting ready to shoot the prisoners. Dad asked the Jemadar (minor ranked officer in the Indian army - dad's men came from the hill forts in India and were NOT Nepalis) what was happening and the response was that they were going to shoot them and then bury them because it would not be a nice thing to bury them*

alive. Dad, of course, expected them to bury the dead but take the live prisoners back for interrogations. **THEY TAKE ORDERS LITERALLY!**

2. The second case was when one of Dad's men went a little stir crazy while in barracks and would not exit the barrack he was in and would shoot at anyone who tried to get into the barrack. Dad had no idea what to do and a Gurkha Sergeant Major told dad that he would sort everything out. He went to the barrack door, called out to the man inside, opened the door, no shot was fired, a minute later the Sergeant exited the barrack room cleaning his Kukri, he resheathed it, and told my dad that the man would no longer shame the regiment. **EVEN A GURKHA DOESN'T MESS WITH OTHER GURKHAS!**
3. Apparently while in Burma the Gurkhas, even though they were ordered to stay in the camp overnight, would sneak out looking for Japanese sentries. If they found one they would silently come up behind them and feel their boots to see if there were two toes (called Tabi in Japan) and slit their throats if they were wearing these Japanese style boots. Also, on the way back to camp they would sneak up on any guards set around their camp and silently undo their shoe laces and tie them together. My father told me about this as well and also told me that every night there would be swearing from the camp guards as they tried to move off and fell flat on their faces.

I'm guessing the Japanese were terrified of them!'

Source - Lance Chambers in Quora: <https://www.quora.com/Are-British-Gurkhas-really-as-good-as-people-say-they-are>

' ... My Grandad fought in Burma during WW2 for the Royal Artillery and fought along side the Ghukhas. ... Anyway in memory of him, he often talked about the Gurkhas and this is what I remember.

Whilst his battalion often moved in the valleys for the day, the Gurkhas would be high up on the difficult to navigate ridge, giving cover. Despite this, they would always have camp set-up when the RA got there!

They were truly amazing. if they hit a bottleneck of enemy, these guys would literally go in as a problem solving squad and deal with it. My Grandad always used to say that they were truly mystical back then and seemed to understand and melt into the jungle in some way.

One taught him how to defend himself with a knife, which in itself was amazing because he said they kept themselves to them themselves in camp. the kind of training a soldier in the UK army doesn't get! It saved his life one day when he found himself isolated and being hunted by an enemy soldier.

He used to laugh that the Gurkhas could not expose the blade of their knife without it drawing blood during time of war and after they cleaned and sharpened them at the end of each day, they would have to nick their thumbs with it. I don't know if that was true or not, but it just underlined every time he talked about them, his eyes lit up with the sheer amazement of them.

When I was older I asked him if he thought that the Gurkhas were better than the SAS. His answer was that in jungle warfare no-one was better and he went further in saying that he literally owed his life to those men that protected them in Burma.'

Source - Dave Kind in Quora: <https://www.quora.com/Are-British-Gurkhas-really-as-good-as-people-say-they-are>

There was Havildar Gaje Ghale, who in May 1943 rallied men while under heavy mortar fire and led them forward. Approaching a well-entrenched Japanese enemy, the platoon came under withering fire and Havildar was wounded in the arm, chest and leg by an enemy hand grenade.

Without pausing to attend to his serious injuries and ignoring intensive fire from both sides, he led his men forward to close encounters with the enemy.

A bitter hand-to-hand struggle ensued and Havildar dominated the fight with dauntless courage and superb leadership. He hurled hand grenades, covered in blood from his own wounds, and led assault after assault, encouraging his men by shouting the Gur- khas' blood-curdling battle cry.

Spurred on by the will of their leader, the platoon stormed the hill and inflicted heavy casualties on the Japanese.

In Burma, during intensive fighting in June 1944, Rifleman Agam Singh Rai and his men fell under intense fire from a 37mm gun. Without hesitation he led his men towards the gun under heavy fire. Despite this, Rifleman Rai and his men quickly reformed for a final assault.

In the subsequent advance brutal machine gun fire and showers of grenades from an isolated bunker position caused further casualties.

Once more, Rifleman Rai pushed ahead alone with a grenade in one hand and his Thompson sub-machine gun in the other. He wiped out all four occupants of the bunker.

Source: <https://www.express.co.uk/expressyourself/98467/Our-greatest-Gurkha-heroes>

First and Second world wars Gurkha Rifles Battle Honours (source: Wikipedia):

The regiment was awarded the following battle honours:

- Bhurtpure, Aliwal, Sobraon, Delhi 1857, Kabul 1879, Kandahar 1880, Afghanistan 1878-80, Chin-Lushai Expedition 1889-90, Tirah, Punjab Frontier
- First World War: La Bassée 1914, Festubert 1914 '15, Givenchy 1914, Neuve Chapelle, Aubers, Loos, France and Flanders 1914-15, Egypt 1915, Tigris 1916, Kut al Amara 1917, Baghdad, Mesopotamia 1916-18, Persia 1918, Baluchistan 1918
- Interwar Years: Afghanistan 1919
- The Second World War (main theatres of involvement: North Africa, Greece, Burma: El Alamein, Mareth, Akarit, Djebel el Meida, Enfidaville, Tunis, North Africa 1942-43, Cassino I, Monastery Hill, Pian di Maggio, Gothic Line, Coriano, Poggio San Giovanni, Monte Reggiano, Italy 1944-45, Greece 1944-45, North Malaya, Jitra, Central Malaya, Kampar, Slim River, Johore, Singapore Island, Malaya 1941-42, North Arakan, Irrawaddy, Magwe, Sittang 1945, Point 1433, Arakan Beaches, Myebon, Tanbingon, Tamandu, Chindits 1943, Burma 1943-45.[3][12]

From the period of the end of the Second World War (WWII) and commencement of Indian Independence, to the creation of the Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR) in 1994, and including the Falklands War:

This period saw the Gurkha Rifles battalions serving in a number of theatres of war, from conventional warfare to anti-guerrilla operations and counter insurgency, as well as training and policing type support. Malaya (the tour of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles lasted there from 1948 to 1960), Borneo (Sabah, Malaysia), Brunei, were particularly active areas of service in this period, whilst Borneo and Brunei remain important to this day for training purposes. In addition, in the case of Borneo (North Borneo / Sabah Province of Malaysia) the Gurkhas are renowned for their feats of agility and endurance on mountain climbing and marathon, hill racing circuits at Mt Kinabalu (continuing to this day). In 1974 the Gurkha Rifles (10th PMO Gurkha Rifles) also saw deployment to Cyprus in defence of the UK sovereign base areas (SBAs), to support pre-existing British Army presence in these territories, after the Turkish invasion of the northern parts of the East Mediterranean island.

In 1992 the 1st and 2nd Battalions merged whilst the Gurkha Rifles final years of being based overseas in Hong Kong drew to a close, with their leaving for the UK in 1994 (a regimental depot had been established in Hampshire long before this) which was the year that four original Gurkha rifles regiments combined, and the Royal Gurkha Rifles was finally born. For related reference, the Gurkha Rifles along with both the Gurkha Signals (later QGS) and the then Gurkha Transport Regiment were all originally based in Singapore, making Hong Kong their new home from 1971.

Singapore: the Gurkhas from the early days of its history, the Gurkhas have had a special relationship with the island state of Singapore (a former British colony on the Strait of Malacca, and strategically vital entrepot on the route between the Suez Canal and the Far East), where many still serve within the police force: an interesting anomaly from British colonial history.

The Falklands War:

Clearly out of the 1945 to 1994 period, the Falkland War (2 April 2nd 1982 to the 14th June 1982) stands out by far as the most important campaign the Gurkhas (1st Battalion 7th DEO Gurkha Rifles) participated in: important because of the conflict's geo-political importance for the United Kingdom, perhaps in such terms - although not anywhere near the same scale - as important as the Indian Mutiny, because had Britain lost the war, its prestige and influence in the very different post-colonial age of a rapidly globalising world would have been as seriously eclipsed as would have been the case if the UK had lost the Indian Sub-Continent in 1859. The number of Gurkhas (mainly the Rifles but others in support) participating in the conflict were few. The Gurkha impact was again entirely disproportionate to numbers, being related to one of the most important dimensions of warfare throughout the ages: destabilizing fighting capability of frontline soldiery and officers of the enemy - the morale collapsing factor. This factor is recorded below, and comprised the Gurkhas reputation as an implacable and deadly foe going before them, and certainly further enhanced by some Gurkha frontline actions in the distant South Atlantic islands.

*In the Falklands, soon after the war had ended, I found myself talking to a captured Argentine major, a character whose scarred face bore testimony to battle-hardened valour. As we -discussed the relative merits of our fighting men, he suddenly shook his head and looked very serious. **"Let me impress on you one thing," he said. "Our men knew well in advance the reputation of your front line regiments like the Guards and the toughness of the Paras. But do you know who frightened our men the most? The Gurkhas, those little men from Nepal."***

Source: <https://www.express.co.uk/expressyourself/98467/Our-greatest-Gurkha-heroes>

The fear factor noted in the interview with a major of the Argentinian Army, above, was well justified, for in the Falklands War, although small in number of combatants, the Gurkha (again, largely the RGR) contribution to the British victory in retaking from the Argentinian military, the British colony [overseas dependency] in the remote South Atlantic, was vast in terms of engendering very justified fear of swift and violent death in the hearts of those facing them.

The 1994 to 2020 period -- The Balkans (Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia: UN Peacekeeping) to Iraq and Afghanistan:

The RGR saw deployment in the NATO 'SFOR' (Special Forces Bosnia & Herzegovina) peacekeeping force in the Balkans in 2001 via the British Army's UK Battle Group (UKBG). SFOR being instituted to enable Bosnia after the horrors it experienced in the Serbia - Croatia - Bosnia conflict (with Bosnia & Herzegovina's largely Muslim population being targeted to the point of genocide through the infamous 'ethnic cleansing' practiced against the latter by hard-line elements of the two neighbouring Christian [Roman Catholic for Croatia, and Orthodox Christian for Serbia] states). UKNFS contacts in the Aldershot area in particular shared about RGR soldiers and officers services at that time in Bosnia showing the strength of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Gurkha forces in regard to support on shared humanity characteristics in the peacekeeping setting of Bosnia. These sources recommended online articles about the RGR operational theatre activities in Bosnia, with in particular one below, excerpts of which we are pleased to cite, in which Gurkha communication skills affability aplomb emerges in conjunction with their much better well-known frontline skills as vanguard operational level experts and warriors:

*New members to the United Kingdom Battle Group (UKBG) include a battalion of Gurkhas, Nepalese warriors with a long history of service in the British Army. **Their unquestionable soldier skills and engaging personality make them invaluable assets in carrying out SFOR's mission** of maintaining a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).*



Mrkonjic Grad - Outside the British Bus Station Camp, Gurkha troops mingle with local children. Only a week in BiH, the soldiers are already trying out some Bosnian phrases with the kids. Communication seems to come naturally to the Gurkhas, and soon the children are smiling.

Just across the street a few soldiers are preparing for a visit from COMSFOR, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. John Sylvester. Before the Blackhawk helicopters land with the general and his entourage, Gurkha riflemen secure the area surrounding the landing site. So practised is their field craft, none of them can be seen.

This is the dual nature of these soldiers from Nepal.

"The Gurkhas have a natural charm, but they also have excellent warrior skills," said Lt. Col. Ian Thomas, UKBG commander.

The combination of skills makes the Gurkhas particularly well suited to the mission of maintaining a safe and secure environment in BiH, Thomas added.

"We want to earn the respect and trust of the people in our area of responsibility so they feel confident in our ability to promote the secure environment. The Gurkhas are an engaging people and can be a reassuring presence, but that presence is also a deterrent force," he said.



The Gurkha force is nearly 500-strong in BiH. All infantrymen, they are from the 2nd Battalion, Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR), based in southern England. Along with a company of Royal Engineers, a cavalry squadron and an artillery battery, the Gurkhas help make up the UKBG.

"We're very looking forward to the tour," Thomas said. "We can bring a lot to the mission."

He added that the interaction between Gurkha and British troops within the battle group has been a "seamless coming together." Thomas attributes much of this to the long history of trust and respect between the two.

Source (Sgt. Peter Fitzgerald: *SFOR Informer*): <https://www.nato.int/sfor/indexinf/124/p04a/t0104a.htm>

The peacekeeping dimension of the Gurkhas as a window on the unique range of interconnected expertise, characteristics and aptitudes that the Gurkhas encapsulate certainly reflects honour on the British name, through the British Army. Why, because in the peacekeeping role and still more how that role is discharged, the name 'Gurkha' - and therefore the names of 'Nepali' and 'Nepal' and by extension the cultures of the Gurkhas and related South Asia - has brought perhaps as no other single people have, a reputation that being a peerless effective protector of the most defenceless against the most brutal is in proportion to a global level reputation of the very same peacekeepers being the most ferocious and lethally effective, focused soldiery and officers in the world.

Kosovo:

In addition to Bosnia, Kosovo (and to a lesser extent, Macedonia) were Balkans peacekeeping operations under NATO and especially the UN, where the Gurkhas provided vanguard -- including often the most dangerous types of activity such as military presence 'making safe and securing' key locations, as well as mine and concealed arms dumps clearance -- operations under the aegis of the British Army whose given leads assigned the Gurkhas (especially foremost the RGR) these strategically most important and personally perilous, tasks. We provide below a news report below:

"We are the fighting force, but wherever we go there will be peace. It is our history."

The words above are from an unnamed British Army Gurkha infantryman serving in the Gurkha component of the British Army in Kosovo, in regard to his very -- on the basis of the record of history -- accurate and perceptive appraisal of the ultimate outcomes of engagements in battles, and by extension in some instances battles within wars of geo-political major significance (such as in the British contexts of the Indian Mutiny and the Falklands).

Source (BBC: Monday June 14th 1999): <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/367951.stm>

We provide the full BBC news report below, for its particulars are important to share with both the general public, and especially policy formers in Whitehall and Westminster:



Gurkhas enter Kosovo: *'Wherever we go there will be peace'*

'Gurkhas: A force to be reckoned with'

"Better to die than be a coward" - the motto of the world famous Gurkha soldiers.

It is surely no coincidence that the British Army chose these fearsome warriors from Nepal to spearhead a multinational force for Kosovo.

About 660 men from the 1st Battalion of Royal Gurkha Rifles, together with the 1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment, form the 5 Airborne Brigade, which numbers around 2,000 men.

Their role in Operation Joint Guardian is to secure a path into the province for the heavy armour of the King's Royal Hussars and the Irish Guards.

In the vanguard



"The Gurkhas are in the vanguard of any move into Kosovo," a spokesman for the Ministry of Defence told BBC News Online.

"They were flown into Kosovo by Chinook and Puma helicopters on Saturday, where they established a route into Pristina by securing the main road."

While they awaited their orders, the Gurkhas trained with the Paras at Petrovac in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

They are equipped with modern SA80 rifles and are renowned as natural marksmen. But they still carry into battle their traditional weapon - an 18-inch long curved knife known as the kukri.

In times past, it was said that once a kukri was drawn in battle, it had to "taste blood" - if not, its owner had to cut himself before returning it to its sheath.

Now, it is used mainly for cooking, but one Gurkha in Macedonia told reporters: "When the ammunition runs out we still use them."

"We don't expect to use them, but we would not be Gurkhas without them," said 25-year-old Tirtha Ghale.

Single-handed hero

In the 185 years they have served in the British Army, the Gurkhas have won 26 Victoria Crosses, more than any other single group in the army.



Havildar Lachhiman Gurung won his VC by preventing the escape of Japanese forces in Burma in 1945, literally single-handedly.

He threw back three hand-grenades thrown into his trench - the third of which blew off his right hand.

In spite of his wounds, he carried on fighting, firing and re-loading his rifle with his left hand for four hours.

Loyal fighters

The British first realised the potential of these fearsome warriors at the height of their empire-building in the last century.

After suffering heavy casualties in the invasion of Nepal, the British East India Company signed a hasty peace deal in 1815, which also allowed it to recruit from the ranks of the former enemy.



Lethal weapon: The traditional "kukri"

Since then, the Gurkhas have loyally fought for the British all over the world, and their British officers are taught the Gurkhali language.

More than 200,000 fought in the two world wars, with 14,000 killed in engagements in France, the Middle East, Gallipoli, Italy, Greece and South East Asia.

In the past 50 years, they have served in Hong Kong, Malaya, Borneo, Cyprus and the Falklands.

With deep defence cuts, their numbers have been reduced to 3,600 from a World War II peak of 112,000 men.

After being stationed in Malaya - as it was then known - and Hong Kong, the Gurkhas are now based at Church Crookham in the English county of Hampshire.

Only the toughest

The selection process has been described as one of the toughest in the world and is fiercely contested.

Young hopefuls have to run uphill for 40 minutes carrying a wicker basket on their back filled with rocks weighing 70lbs.

This year, 36,000 young would-be Gurkhas competed for just 230 places.

Hardly surprising then that Gurkha soldiers on their way to the Balkans relish the chance to show off their prowess.

"We are looking forward to this new challenge," said one infantryman. Another said: "We are the fighting force, but wherever we go there will be peace. It is our history."

Iraq:



Source: <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Gurkha-Rifles/>

Historic UK .Com has been recommended by retired Gurkhas who served in Iraq.

Even though, sadly, there is at the time of completing this information resource (summer 2020) minimal information provided on Gurkha contributions to the Kuwait liberation war, and subsequently later the Iraq War in which the Western Allies occupied Iraq, the Gurkhas were honourably involved in both wars: in our Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas reference is made to the Band's presence in the Kuwait liberation engagement, and here we provide a BBC news link in regard to a medal award to a Gurkha for outstanding service in the second Iraq War: http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/vkUb8PO7TEKwp1EIS_K1AQ

Comments on the article above:

Dipak is a Gurkha serving a 22 year contract with the British Armed Forces. He was awarded this medal for his service in Iraq in 2008. Gurkhas come from Kathmandu and have served with the British Army for more than a hundred years.

Maybe, Dipak is from Kathmandu but all the Gurkhas do not come from Kathmandu.

NOTE: The news item is poor in quality of accuracy to a level of cultural insensitivity -- 'Gurkhas come from Kathmandu and have served with the British Army for more than a hundred years'. As this is from the state news broadcaster, the BBC, the errors (factual, and a careless typing spelling) are particularly alarming. Disrespect was evidenced by Dipesh' position/post in the British Army not being provided, and by no information on his particular, doubtless exceptional frontline service being detailed: the culturally incompetent point on criticism of an almost 19th Century British colonialist style tactlessness on the journalist's 'Gurkhas come from Kathmandu' error, is symptomatic of such incompetence in understanding about the Gurkhas and the Gurkha - British Army history and interrelationship. Suffice it to say British Army Gurkhas served, and with honour, in the second Iraq conflict.

Afghanistan:



The two images above are kindly provided by Sgt Hiradhan Rai, who features in the centre of both photographs, taken with soldiers of the Afghan Army

The role of the British Army Gurkhas in the West's (USA led, British supported) interventions in Afghanistan over the past two decades provide the concluding part of the history section of the UK Nepali Gurkha information resource.

That day a lone Gurkha took out 30 Taliban using every weapon within reach

To say that Gurkhas are simply soldiers from Nepal would be a massive, massive understatement. If there's a single reason no one goes to war with Nepal, it is because of the Gurkhas' reputation. They are elite, fearless warriors who serve in not only the Nepalese Army but also in the British and Indian armies as well, a tradition since the end of the Anglo-Nepalese War in 1816. They are known for their exceptional bravery, ability, and heroism in the face of insurmountable odds. Faithful to their traditions, one Gurkha in Afghanistan, [Dipprasad Pun](#), singlehandedly held his post against more than 30 Taliban fighters.

It was a September evening in Afghanistan's Helmand Province. It was 2010, and Sergeant Dipprasad Pun of the Royal Gurkha Rifles was on duty at a two-story outpost. He heard some noises and found two insurgents attempting to lay an IED in a nearby road. He realized he was surrounded. The night sky filled up with bullets and RPG fire. Taliban fighters sprang into a well-planned assault on Pun's outpost.

Pun responded by pulling his machine gun off its tripod and handholding it as he returned fire toward the oncoming fighters. He went through every round he had available before tossing 17 grenades at the attackers. When he was out of grenades, he picked up his SA80 service rifle and started using that. He even threw a land mine at the enemy.



As Pun defended his position, one Taliban fighter climbed the side of the tower adjacent to the guard house, hopped on to the roof and rushed him. Pun turned to take the fighter out, but his weapon misfired. Pun grabbed the tripod of his machine gun and tossed it at the Taliban's face, which knocked the enemy fighter off of the roof of the building.

Pun continued to fight off the assault until reinforcements arrived. When it was all said

and done, 30 Taliban lay dead.

He was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace.



"At that time I wasn't worried, there wasn't any choice but to fight. The Taliban were all around the checkpoint, I was alone," he told the crowd gathered at the ceremony. "I had so many of them around me that I thought I was definitely going to die so I thought I'd kill as many of them as I could before they killed me."

In all, he fired off 250 machine gun rounds, 180 SA80 rounds, threw six phosphorous grenades and six normal grenades, and one Claymore mine.

Pun comes from a long line of Gurkhas. His father served in the Gurkha Rifles, as did his grandfather, who received the Victoria Cross for an action in the World War II Burma theater.



Source: <https://www.wearethemighty.com/articles/that-day-a-lone-gurkha-took-out-30-taliban-using-every-weapon-within-reach>

The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas



Located at Shorncliffe's Sir John Moore Barracks Barracks, Folkestone, the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, coming under the 'ceremonial' dimension of the British Army through the 'Corps of Army Music' ('Camus') - insignia to far left with badge of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas to right -- provides a unique synthesis of Gurkha focus on a given skill and activity (with certain distinct Nepali-Gurkha music culture aspects, such as Nepal and Gurkha musical compositions and musical instruments) and

traditional British military culture in the domain of music. The latter is most famously associated with the Royal Military School of Music (RMSM), its repertoire of military music associated with the British Army over centuries (and more broadly beyond the military context), and the School's equally legendary home, Kneller Hall, Twickenham. Camus includes: Symphonic Wind Bands, a Mounted Band, Brass Bands, a String Orchestra, Rock/Pop Groups, Fanfare Trumpeters, Small Ensembles (quintets etc), and Traditional Folk Music Groups.



The Band is one of the elite components of the Corps of Army Music - which includes for example: The Band of The Household Cavalry; The Band of the Grenadier Guards; Band of the Coldstream Guards - and as such has national/UK, and international (Western/European, AND Nepali) marches and other musical compositions of great renown in its repertoire.

When not engaged in their main [largely peacetime] purpose, of musical performance, Camus bands, such as the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, assist also in battlefield medical duties and stretcher bearing.

Just as regiments, squadrons and other components of an army are best known through their respective renowned heroes and the key engagements in strategically [and symbolically] important military action campaigns in major theatres of war crucial to the preservation/defence or global influence of the nation, so in the domain of military music, the given band is renowned for its repertoire of musical pieces. This certainly applies to the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

Some history:

The band, as with all comparable historic British Army regiment-associated military bands was associated with military action functions. The band was actually a part of the Gurkha, British Army's special Nepal-raised, Gurkha, Sirmoor Rifle Regiment (created 1859) - operation area, British India: famous for its immediate antecedents role during the 'Indian Mutiny' critically important engagements such as the Siege of Delhi and Relief of Lucknow -- which also was the ultimate origin of

the Royal Gurkha Rifles : it had 16 members and a bandsman (a *Naik*: also Nepali). By 1886 the band had expanded in conjunction with the raising of a 2nd battalion.

A new band (56 members strong) was formed in 1949, post-British Raj, Post WWII, at the beginning of what has subsequently been known as the 'retreat from empire' era that affected the United Kingdom more than any other European colonial power. Between 1949 and 1951 a crucial phase of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, took place; enabling its preparation to later become one of the elite, most internationally renowned British Army's Corps of Army Music. Within the first 12 months of this phase a brigade staff band was created (two bands existing: one in the UK, and one in Hong Kong until 1994), and still more importantly from then until end of May in 1951 a substantial training initiative was undertaken on a functional rather than formal basis, with education and technical instruction by British military bandmasters and other particularly renowned musicians in the army.

By the 1st June 1951 this crucial retraining phase had been completed, and with its conclusion the Nepali-Gurkha bandsmen -- as adept and successful at swift, very effective, focused successful learning of techniques in this special field as with better known military arts and sciences such as signaller, sapper, rifleman - had the practical technical knowledge and practice grounding for their modern late 20th Century to early 21st Century repertoire and national and international prowess.

In regard to secondary, important functions of the Band, some of its members provided important stretcher bearer services in the first Gulf War (whose purpose was to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation) in the 1990 - 1991 period: in conjunction with this the [now no longer in existence] Gurkha Transport Regiment served in the conflict under the provided 28 [Ambulance] Squadron.

By 2019/2020 the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas was rationalised due to financial reasons, to a single band of 30+ members. It also provides a detachment for ceremonial service at the Tower of London: <https://www.gurkhabde.com/the-queens-gurkha-engineers-tower-of-london-detachment/>

Accoutrements: The *Kilmarnock*

The *Kilmarnock* (otherwise known as the 'pillbox hat') was used by almost all of the original Gurkha regiments of the British Army (including its 19th Century to pre-1947 period). A completely unlooked for cross-cultural clothing and fashion development was to occur in 1930's Britain when the *Kilmarnock* served as inspiration for the - in fashion history - much more famous, ladies 'pillbox hat.' There was in fact a hat known as the 'Pilleus' or 'Pannonian Hat' worn by Roman soldiers (Pannonia was a province of the Roman Empire in the central region of the River Danube) some two thousand years ago: from the name and shape of the cap it is likely the *Kilmarnock* therefore has very ancient, auspicious martial associations.

It is also interesting to find that the *Kilmarnock* in fact had its origins in the Gurkha component of, by extension, British military history at cultural level. Of all sections of the Brigade of Gurkhas it is the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas that have preserved use of the *Kilmarnock* in their formal attire; in so doing they also preserve, through this continuity link to the earliest times of the Nepali-Gurkhas becoming an indispensable part of the United Kingdom's military forces. The other, perhaps better known Gurkha hat, largely worn by the Royal Gurkha Rifles soldiery and officers is the Terai Slouch Hat.

Military bands have historically played an integral military action supportive function as their primary *raison d'être*; rather than their ceremonial and entertainment functions which are characteristic of military corps of music in the 21st Century. Their military function role involves inspiring elan and fighting spirit, and as we will see below, special purposes such as sounding retreat.

Music (and song) is absolutely in, so to speak the veins of the Nepali people, and therefore Nepali-Gurkhas as anyone who has direct familiarity with the country and people will be aware. It is therefore little surprising that from even in the early stages of the Gurkhas and Britain special friendship and especially its military/British Army dimension, that music should become a foci of special passion and activity.

Below are some of the music pieces performed by the Band across a range of settings from ceremonial, civilian as well as military settings, to CD compilations - truly illustrating the uniqueness of the Band in the world of music inside and outside of the British Army setting. Here are just some of the selections of the Band's repertoire music:

*Sounding Retreat**, *The Last Post*, *Reveille*, *Amazing Grace*, *Queen Elisabeth's Own*, *Silver Bugles*.

Marche Militaire, *Sambre Et Meuse* - both renowned French Army's French Republican *Guard Band*, the *Orchestre de la Garde Républicaine*. *Marching Thro' Georgia*. *New York*. *Robin Hood Prince Of Thieves*.

Nepali: *Khukuri Dance*, *Yo Nepali*, *Jhyam Jhyam Pareli*, *Chantari Ma Basera*, *Jati Lasam Khaye Pani*.

As such, this is a phenomenon that is truly a hybrid of Western and South Asian culture in the domain of music, and without parallel elsewhere in the world! Only the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas within the British Army's Corps of Army Music (Camus) includes a non-Western, a Nepali/South Asian major component within its performance repertoire, making it unique in a genuinely global role for the British Army in this very important world [East and West] cultures bridging dimension of Camus.

Conversely, and on the theme of the Gurkhas being regarded as the acme of the best of being British in terms of military history and culture - or, as in the famous saying 'more British than the British' - the Pipes and Drums of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas are particularly renowned for having the non-indigenous British, Gurkhas exemplify in the Pipes & Drums channelling the very essence of traditional British military music culture. **Pipe band.** Pipe bands are currently maintained by the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Gurkha Rifles as parts of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, whereas - also part of the latter - the Queens Gurkha Signals (QGS) maintains Pipe & Drums Band.

***Sounding Retreat**

Beating Retreat (performed by the Massed Bands of the Household Division) is famous - originally military action functional based - in British military music lore, and *Sounding Retreat* is a closely related form. Nowadays Sounding Retreat is only performed by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas. As such Sounding Retreat and its unique relationship with the Gurkhas demonstrates the latter's status of equal level to the most famous of British Army military music pedigree, Beating Retreat - a rare honour and recognition of non-indigenous British, Gurkha prowess within the culture of the British Army of the past two hundred years.

We conclude on two, partly interrelated phenomena concerning the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas: one, the Band's use of the world-famous Nepali and South Asian *Sringa* (or *Tutari*) horn, and the other

the deployment of members of the Band at uniquely UK Nepali community formal functions, from football cup matches to Nepal Embassy conferences and special cultural events.



Taking the latter first, no other Camus band of the British Army to date has undertaken such special ceremonial roles: a little-known but symbolically important fact.

As examples the horns (Sringa), pipes, drums were used in the summer 2019 formal visit and welcome function at the Embassy of Nepal on the occasion of the visit to London and the UK of the Prime Minister of Nepal, at the Spring 2019 joint Embassy of Nepal and UKNFS 'Nepal Development Conference' to open the conference with the chief guest of honour, the Lord Mayor of the City of London, and the other guest speakers, and at the 2019 (and preceding years) Nepali Mela at Kempton Park Racecourse. However the Band also plays a major part and the larger cultural events in the annual UK Nepali calendar, including but not limited to the Gurkha Cup (held annually at Aldershot in the late spring) - where they provide a spectacular opening of the match for the finalist contending adult and youth teams - and at Annual Dinner events such as, often, for example at the Tamu Dhee Association UK, Sahara UK Association, with special NRNA UK events, etc.

Finally, unlike any other component of the Corps of Army Music, the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas includes the Sringa (or Tutari in the Maharashtra part of India) in its musical instruments repertoire; this very large circular horn, with mouthpiece at one end and large horn opening at the other is as distinctive in appearance as it is unique in the sound it produces. It gives an authentic cultural taste of the Himalayas and the Indian Sub-Continent in musical terms, and has an ancient history linked to religious-spiritual custom and beliefs, and entirely removed from and different to the types of horn found in Western military band and music traditions. As such it is essentially, with rare exceptions, deployed for Nepali culture related ceremonies and cultural events such as the Mela and Gurkha Cup referred to above. The Sringa is - with exception of its special role in marriages rites and ceremonies -- first and foremost a musical instrument associated in earlier times with royalty and royal ceremony traditions: it as such is a political statement associated with power.

There are a vast range of musical instruments that feature in Nepal, across the Himalayan land's multiple and ancient cultures and different peoples; in total 108 instruments - a sacred number in Buddhist tradition in particular. Of all of these the Sringa is unique in bringing that ancient musical heritage from the Himalaya to multiple settings in the United Kingdom itself!

The music section of the arts component of this information resource on UK Nepali cultural and social heritage includes more detail on the role and types of music in the life of the Nepali people.

We conclude with a Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas [in its entirety and also constituent parts] ceremonial highlight related news article on the Band's formal performance at a SE England *Battle of Britain* commemoration event in 2014 'National Memorial to the Few' at Capel-le-Ferne (East Kent) which took place on Friday, 28 March of that year.

'Gurkha band appearance now confirmed'

The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas has confirmed that this season's spectacular curtain-raiser to the 2014 season at the National Memorial to the Few at Capel-le-Ferne will take place on Friday, 28 March.

The Gurkha Band, led by Director of Music Major Paul Norley, will provide a short marching display from 12 noon on that day.

The display will be part of an inspection of the band, which is based at the Sir John Moore Barracks in Shorncliffe, Folkestone, by Headquarters Army Music, Kneller Hall.

The 30 minute marching display is part of the inspection programme for the day, but rather than march in camp with a limited audience, Major Norley and his bandsmen have offered to bring their display to the clifftop home of the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust.

The display will be completely free but there will be a collection on site to support the work of the Trust and the Wing Appeal.

Source: <https://www.battleofbritainmemorial.org/news-and-events/news/gurkha-band-appearance-now-confirmed/>

The Gurkhas and the British Royal Family

The Life-Changing Journey Of Being Selected As A Gurkha | Forces TV:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8pJglsYUE>

The earliest days of the relationship, and the Queen's Truncheon:

The story of the special bond and relationship between the Nepali Gurkhas and the British monarchy commences at a formal level with Queen Victoria's institution and presentation of the Queen's Truncheon in 1863, in place of a Colour, in recognition for the exceptional role and sacrifice the Gurkhas made in the Indian Mutiny, epitomised by a key engagement - the defence of Hindu Rao's House* - in Delhi (during the four month siege of the city), where the Gurkhas lost 327 out of 490 men. * For reference Hindu Rao was a Hindustani raja (king) who was closely associated with supporting the British Raj in Hindustan.

The Gurkha - British Royal Family relationship appears at first glance only as an honourable, auspicious detail but in fact constitutes a very important feature of both Nepal - UK history, and the history of the Gurkhas, and the British Army's centuries long special bonds with the British Royal Family. In this section we detail some highlights and aspects of the Royal Family and the Brigade of Gurkhas relationship. Firstly though, reflections back on this from a number of retired and serving Gurkhas, about how the relationship began are important to provide.

The Gorkha Kingdom of Nepal and the British Empire had much in common. Both were monarchies at the peak of expansionist political tides, with their king and queen respectively being linked closely to those expansionist activities. It was only a few short decades since the King of Gorkha led his army to the Kathmandu Valley, established and unified Nepal through by military means, and was soon expanding Nepal's territory, and consequently on a collision course with the British forces under the East India Company, doing the same.

We have elsewhere in this information resource detailed how ultimately both Nepalis and the British, through combat, came to respect each other on, in terms of military prowess, a more or less equal basis. While it was seemingly impossible to have defeated the British in the Indian Sub-Continent in the 1810's (the 'Sepoy Mutiny' forty years later ultimately indicated that the British could be for all their power, vulnerable to revolt), neither was it deemed practicable to conquer Nepal, turning it into a colony or British 'protectorate' (technical name for a foreign controlled territory with some limited autonomy, but real power in the hands of the foreign controlling power): the ferocity and tenacity of the Nepali hill tribes (from whom many Gurkhas were recruited) in particular was far too great to make this feasible.

Moreover, virtually none of Nepal's core territory had been conquered by the British, only very recently acquitted territories to west and east beyond this. On the other hand, including provision within the Treaty of Sugauli for recruiting soldiery from Nepal, defined the special status of Nepal and in particular the quality of its military being uniquely high. Because the basis of mutual respect was the core dynamic underpinning this provision in the treaty and the subsequent nature of recruitment, where the Gurkha motto of 'better to die than to be a coward' was fully demonstrated, and of great service to the British Empire and the British military (navy, and army) that expanded and protected it.

As such 'honour' linked to martial prowess and performance, marked the Nepali Gurkha character from the outset in terms of military service. Such prowess and performance reflected upon the Nepali nation and ultimately its ruler, the monarch: these are perspectives that emerged regularly as engagement with retired and serving Nepali Gurkhas took place over the duration of the information gathering phase of the UK Nepali Community Cultural & Social Heritage Project, when former or serving officers and soldiers were asked to reflect on their forbears in the 19th and to some extent much of the 20th, centuries.

The admiration for the Gurkhas of the British queen, Queen Victoria on the basis of not only being the formal head of the British Empire at its zenith, and the spirit of friendship and mutual which commenced from Sugauli, consequently accelerating, was clear from the outset. In spirit, the Gurkhas

serving as components of the British Army, saw themselves as honorary British, and as such for the honour of Nepal, its monarch and people, cherished all opportunities to serve with and support the military forces of the British monarch.

The natural respect and admiration for the supreme representative of the aggressively expansionist, focused, highly organised and hierarchical British Empire, the empire's monarch, by Nepal's Gurkha soldiery and officers therefore is not a matter to be surprised at in the circumstances.

On the **Nepal side**, the role of royalty in terms of direct presence, and clearly inspiration to Gurkha soldiery and officers was found in the person of Jung Bahadur Rana (Prime Minister of Nepal) leading the Gurkha forces sent by the King of Nepal to support the East India Company in the Indian Mutiny, specifically at the Siege of Delhi and Relief of Lucknow: Jung Bahadur Rana subsequently became founder of the Rana Dynasty of the Kingdom of Nepal. This from the valuable history of the Gurkhas museum in Pokhara, Nepal:

It is interesting to note that during the Mutiny, Jangabhadur Rana himself took the field with around 5,800 Nepali soldiers and assisted General Campbell in the relief of Lucknow. In recognition of these services, part of the Terai was restored to Nepal.

Source: <http://gurkhamuseum.org.np/history-of-gurkha/>

Prime Minister Rana was the first Nepali VVIP leader to visit London (and Paris). This visit taking place in 1850, including three audiences with Her Majesty Queen Victoria. More details on this pivotal figure in the history of 19th Century Nepal can be found at:

<https://kathmandupost.com/miscellaneous/2018/01/20/jung-bahadurs-love-for-british-guns> (which records in particular the Prime Minister's passion for guns, befitting both his martial and hunting interests) and at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jung_Bahadur_Rana.

Jung Bahadur Rana instituted a 21 gun salute from 24th May 1852 to honour Queen Victoria's birthday, and when the 83 years old Duke of Wellington (whom Prime Minister Rana met during his 1850 visit to London) died in September that same year, had an 83 minute gun salute (the Duke's age). The image below is of former Prime Minister with entourage (including British national in 'Stove Pipe' hat), subsequently King of Gorkha/Nepal, Jung Bahadur Rana:



Source: British Library Nepal archives - one of the images researched by the UKNFS for the 2016 UKNFS enabled Nepal Art Council Britain - Nepal Bicentenary Exhibition

More information on the Queen's Truncheon*:

The creation and presentation of the Queen's Truncheon, marked the formal level start of the special connection between the Gurkhas and the British Royal Family. From that time the relationship burgeoned, with in particular of regiments and battalions having title-name and commander in chief direct connections with the monarch or other members of the British royal family.

The history of the Truncheon dates back to the time of the Indian Mutiny when The Sirmoor Battalion (later the 2nd KEO Gurkha Rifles) particularly distinguished itself by holding the Ridge during the siege of Delhi. Here they fought along side the 60th Rifles. During the prolonged action all its officers and 327 of its 490 other ranks became casualties.

For the Battalion's outstanding service during the Mutiny, Queen Victoria was pleased to grant it a third colour inscribed 'Delhi' in English, Hindi and Persian. (The Sirmoor Battalion already held a Queen's Colour and a black Regimental Colour.) At the same time additional distinctions were awarded to the Battalion. Henceforth, the rank and file were to be known as Riflemen, the title was changed to the Sirmoor Rifle Regiment and the Battalion was authorised to wear the uniform of the 60th Rifles (now The Rifles). The affiliation with The Rifles remains to this day.

It was not considered appropriate for Rifle Regiments to carry colours and uniquely Her Majesty Queen Victoria presented the regiment with the Truncheon to be carried in lieu of this third colour. The Queen's Truncheon is 'accorded all the dignities and compliments appropriate to a King's Colour of Infantry'. Since the Queen's Truncheon was passed to the Royal Gurkha Rifles it has continued to be held in the greatest reverence. Accordingly all New Recruits continue to be sworn in to the Regiment in the presence of the Queen's Truncheon.

Source: <https://www.gurkhabde.com/history-of-the-queens-truncheon/>

The Queen's Truncheon:

The regiment which later became the 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles) was raised in northern India in 1815 as the Sirmoor Battalion, a local corps until 1861 when it became a regular regiment in the Bengal Army. During the Indian Mutiny it distinguished itself when, for more than three months, it held a key post on the ridge which was the main British position during the Siege of Delhi. During that Siege and the assault to capture the City it suffered 327 dead and wounded out of 490 all ranks, and formed a strong affiliation with the 60th Rifles, Because Rifle Regiments did not carry Colours, the newly titled Sirmoor Rifle Regiment had to stop doing so, which meant that the privilege of carrying a third Colour was lost. To keep the distinction Her Majesty Queen Victoria authorised the replacement of the third Colour by a Truncheon. The Truncheon, which is about 6 feet high and made of bronze and silver, is carried on parade by the Truncheon Jemadar, whose post was added to the Establishment for the purpose, escorted by two Sergeants and two Corporals. Like a Sovereign's Colour it is greeted with a Royal salute when it appears

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/OlrZr5X5RZOwqKSMJlJlpg>

Videos regarding the Queen's Truncheon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JpRF-pVlg8> -- Gurkhas swear oath on Queen's Truncheon Dec 13, 2011

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S117K92iAac> -- The Queen's Truncheon presented to Her Majesty The Queen. Jul 16, 2019

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From late 19th Century to the present – Royal patrons and colonels in chief, Royal comrade in arms, and ceremonial functions associated with royalty:

“When you know you are with the Gurkhas, I think there's no safer place to be, really.”

HRH Prince Harry, reflection on his service in Afghanistan (2007 - 2008) with the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles

The second part of this section of the Gurkha component of the UK Nepali community cultural & social heritage project education resource focuses on the development and consolidation of the Gurkha - British Royal Family special relationship from the late 19th Century to 2020, and in the recent decades of this 150+ years period the unique, embedded and honourable role of the Brigade of Gurkhas within ceremonial functions of state, and especially those most closely associated with the British Royal Family.

As such it briefly details an exceptional phenomenon, highlighted in the first part of this section, above: that underlying service by the Nepali Gurkhas to the British State through the British Army in

multiple key engagements in mostly geo-politically important conflicts and wars of the British Empire and later UK, was the special relationship of interconnection with the British Monarchy itself, and the mutual respect of queens and kings of England and the King of Gorkha (Nepal). The related values of loyalty, honour, unstinting military ferocity and tenacity are a golden thread within the British - Gurkhas 200+ years very special relationship - a dynamic as live and prospering in 2020, as it was famously in 1815 - 1816 and especially 1858. It cannot be doubted that the medieval times association of royalty with martial valour and leading armies in real battle setting wars (celebrated most famously by Shakespeare in his play 'Richard II') spoke, figuratively speaking, directly to the martial spirit of the King of Nepal (Gorkha) and especially his source of power, the Gorkha Army, largely drawn from Nepal's doughty hill tribes. This martial spirit coalesced in the spirit in which military service was provided as a unique, but formal part of the British Army, and continues to this day.

The UKNFS was enthusiastically referred by retired and serving Gurkhas to a number of sources felt to be of value for their quality and contributions & coverage regarding the topics of this section, especially the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT), beyond and taking prompt from that guidance, UKNFS project team members made valuable secondary research. We start with the section's topics Commander in Chief (C in C) theme and conclude with some other representative examples of Gurkha - British Monarchy direct connections, and the unique role of the Gurkhas in ceremonial, capacities.

The institution of the Queen's Truncheon was followed in 1876 by the [Gurkha] Sirmoor Rifles Regiment having as it's Patron His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII). Today, from 1977 to the present, the successor of the Sirmoor Rifle Regiment and other regiments of Gurkha rifles, which from 1994 combined to become the Royal Gurkha Rifles (RGR), is HRH Prince Charles, Prince of Wales. The Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) provided a valuable online news article on Gurkha - British royal family special links on the 28th August 2018, on the GWT website in regard to HRH Prince Charles, current Prince of Wales and with decades of history of formal relations and certainly on an informal, individual/personal basis the most warm respect for the Gurkhas on human as well as military service fronts, as expressed in the quote below:

The Prince of Wales' link to the Royal Gurkha Rifles dates back to 1977 when he became Colonel-in-Chief of the 2nd King Edward VII's Own Gurkha Rifles (The Sirmoor Rifles).

At a ceremony held in Buckingham Palace last year, speaking to around 150 soldiers and their family members present in the palace, the Prince said:

"Your forefathers would be most proud of you here today, continuing to demonstrate the traditions and achievements that together ensure the worldwide reputation of the Gurkhas as the best soldiers."

Source: <https://www.gwt.org.uk/news/royal-family-gurkhas/>

In 1949 the 10th Gurkha Rifles were formally renamed as the 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles (one of the components of Gurkha Rifles that later in 1994 were to become the Royal Gurkha Rifles),

evidencing further the Gurkhas and British Royal Family relations (Princess Mary had provided outstanding support for the British nation and people in the Second World War).

Regarding direct Nepal, Royal Family connections via the Gurkhas, particularly via the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT: <https://www.gwt.org.uk/>) whose Patron is HRH The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, two particularly memorable events beyond direct British Army service contexts, celebrating direct Nepal to UK special connection of the British royal family at direct personal level by very senior members of Britain's royal family. The first of these events was the visit to Nepal in 1993 of HRH Princess Diana, the Princess of Wales, and the second, the visit of Princess Diana's son, HRH, Prince Harry, to Nepal in March 2016 -- famously, Prince Harry decided to stay on in Nepal for some days extra beyond the planned span of his visit.

Both royal visits facilitation and support on itinerary of each visit saw the Gurkha Welfare Trust taking a central role, including particularly visits to locations where the Trust's work in Nepal takes place. For example, in the case of HRH the Princess of Wales in her Nepal visit in 1993 this included to the GWT centre in Gurethum (Eastern Nepal), and for Prince Harry visiting GWT building projects for retired Gurkhas and Gurkha widows in March 2016. We understand that the personal communication and engagement for which HRH Princess Diana was so famous across the world as well as the UK -- and especially with the isolated and marginalised, and diverse/minority communities facing greater needs and often overlooked or at operational level, minimally supported and engaged with by state mechanisms - earned great respect and warmth during her Nepal visit.

Many years later, one of her two sons, HRH Prince Harry came to Nepal in 2016, the land of the Gurkhas, and did so after shoulder to shoulder, and in some cases life or death level comradeship in key engagement activity in the fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan in the 2007 - 2008 period. In the 2016 visit the prince travelled to many locations associated with the Gurkhas, including Pokhara, -- Nepal's most beautiful city on the shores of Lake Phewa in the shadow of Fishtail Mountain - famous as the gathering point for Gurkha recruitment and final phases of the formidable endurance training required to qualify for joining the British Army Gurkha regiments. This was of course less than a year on from the terrible earthquake of 25th April 2015 that hit Gorkha and many towns and villages where Gurkha recruits and potential recruits and their families lived, such as Lamjung district (where he met the staff and pupils of for example Shree Gaunda School which had, had to be completely rebuilt after its destruction in 2015).

As such the humanity, readiness to spend as much unrushed time as possible with the communities he visited, in company with former Gurkha comrades of from the Afghan conflict of 2007, endeared the prince to not only all those he met in person, but to the whole of Nepal.

Certainly, it cannot be doubted that the young prince would on learning of his mother, the Princess of Wales visit to Nepal and connection through it with that land and the illustrious Gurkhas would have been remembered ahead of Prince Harry's service in the field with the Gurkhas in the 2007 - 2008 period, with the RGR presence within the British Army's contribution to the Afghanistan, Taliban containing intervention.

To a certain extent at a personal level, Prince Harry's visit was a pilgrimage in honour of the time he spent fighting alongside and providing active fighting support alongside the Gurkhas at that earlier time in Afghanistan: he was on his Nepal visit, accorded the exceptional distinction of being made an honorary Gurkha for the action he provided in the field. According to the protocols of such a very rare honour being granted, this was given for that service NOT because he was a member of the British

Royal Family, but because of actual military service in the field of a standard required of Gurkhas themselves, and of course in the fighting with the Taliban attacking his Gurkha held post, he had contributed to saving Gurkha lives.

The year 2015 also marked the Bicentenary of Nepal - Britain friendship and special relations, the most famous product of which was the British Army and the Nepali Gurkhas dynamic within the history of the British Army and broader British history over two centuries.

2015 was the bicentenary of the Gurkhas fighting alongside Great Britain – 200 years of courageous and loyal service in the British Army. To celebrate this momentous milestone, amongst other members of the Royal Family, The Queen attended the G200 pageant in London in recognition of all that the Gurkhas have done for Britain.

Source: <https://www.gwt.org.uk/news/royal-family-gurkhas/>

Ceremony:

From 1954, Queen Elizabeth made permanent the practice of having two Gurkha Officers as ‘Queen’s Gurkha Orderly Officers’: these two officers are rotated on an annual basis. These two Gurkha officers attend functions at Her Majesty’s side to this day - a symbolic and poignant dimension of British royal family ceremony and recognition of the unique British Royal Family - Nepal, through the British Army Gurkhas, relationship.

On public duty ceremonial fronts the early years of the 21st Century saw new and subsequent extensive services being undertaken by different sections of the Royal Brigade of Gurkhas, undertaken. These including 248 Squadron (Queens Gurkha Signals) following in the footsteps of 250 Squadron ten years earlier, mounting the Guard at the Tower of London, and on 23rd August 2007 the Squadron delivered their first Queens Guard on parade at Buckingham Palace. In terms of ceremonial duties the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas has enjoyed a particularly important perennial role - more information on the Band is provided in its section of this information resource.

Regimental anniversaries: these annual events are memorable ones of great importance to all sections of the Brigade of Gurkhas, as we learned with great happiness and pride, for example from Captain Gopal Saru (Blandford Camp, QGS) on the particularly important and auspicious occasion in 2019 of the 70th Anniversary of the Queens Gurkha Signals which he attended at the regimental Headquarters of Bramcote.

The ultimate example of the Gurkha role within royal ceremony, of course came in 2018 on the auspicious occasion of the Royal Marriage, when HRH Prince Harry wed Ms Megan Markle at Windsor Castle on 19th May 2018. On this special, historic day as all will be aware the Gurkhas participation was particularly conspicuous, and included a Guard of Honour comprised of soldiers and officers of the Royal Gurkha Rifles, and invitees including those who had served with Prince Harry in Afghanistan. This from the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT):

Amongst the Gurkhas involved was Captain Chandra Bahadur Pun who served with Prince Harry in Afghanistan. His Royal Highness actually stopped to shake hands with Chandra and

introduce him to Prince William before entering the ceremony. Captain Jiwan Gurung, who was also a part of the day spoke about being part of the RGR guard for the Royal Wedding.

Source: <https://www.gwt.org.uk/news/royal-family-gurkhas/>

Gurkha perspectives on the importance of Nepali food for those in military service

As part of the Nepali food component of the project we were able to conduct an engagement with the Gurkha officers and soldiery of Blandford Camp, doing so via a set of specific questions for the community. The questions are provided below along with responses conveyed by community leads. The interest we had was to see to what extent in conjunction with multicultural values and learning for the broader army community, is taking place presently, and could take place in the future in regard to the opportunity to learn about and enjoy Nepali food, due to the presence of the Gurkhas.

QUESTIONS & RESPONSES:

What types of Nepali khanaa are cooked in the Mess [compound], and in conjunctions with adjacent Mandir religious & cultural occasions / special days?

Both in the Offrs' and Sgts' Mess, normal British foods are served on a daily basis on a pay as you go system. When we hold temple service and cultural events, we make ourselves or Gurkha Chefs prepare for us but nothing is funded by the Army.

What types of Nepali khanaa are cooked in the soldiers domestic, family settings?

Normal British breakfast and lunch served on a pay as you go system for Phase 2 trainees Bhai haru, Phase 3 soldiers and permanent staff. Their evening meal will be a mixture of British and basic Nepalese curry (Bhat).

Are there any particular meat dishes prepared in Nepali cuisine styles, that are considered to be 'power foods' for Gurkha soldiers?

Due to contractor supplying food on behalf of Army, they don't just target for the Gurkhas, they sell basic Nepalese style curry made from chicken, Pork and may be lamb sometimes. The contractor needs, we understand to make profit by selling food to all, and on this basis at this time there is not such a messing facility in Nepali food for Gurkha soldiers.

Your thoughts on Nepali maasu ra tarkari [meat & vegetable] dishes being included in selections of Blandford Camp canteens?

As it is targeted for the wider audience, the food contractors currently do not provide such a full version of Nepalese type and standard of food. All our trainees (indigenous British as well as Gurkha) love Gurkha Curry: the standard is ok, but it is felt it would be better if my Gurkha soldiers are supplied with full version of Nepalese-style Masu, Daal, Bhat, Tarkari and chutney (achar; spiced pickle). This would add extra morale and motivation to the soldiers, but we understand that this may raise the food costs soldiers need to pay.

What provisions are made by the British Army at camps such as Blandford, for provision of Gurkha

/ Nepali staple foods ingredients (chamal, masala, etc.) provision?

*The Army has hired a contractor service that controls everything; Gurkha chefs, rations, type of food available, labour etc. they are a profitable company and supply basic food for a charge. However standards of food could be improved. They provide some basic rice but this is **not Basmati (our core and only type of rice eaten by Gurkhas in Nepal and outside the army)**, ingredients are ok, however we still have Gurkha Chefs,*

Do you have any experience of British soldiers and officers at Blandford Camp joining in Mess or Gurkha soldiers domestic settings and on-camp Nepali festival occasions, eating and enjoying Nepali khanaa?

Yes, senior British officers are invited to join our key festivals such as Dashain, Tihar and New Year and they know exactly what our full Gurkha Curry looks and tastes like. They enjoy very much our Gurkha Dinner. The standard of food we serve during the key festivals referred to is far better than the one cooks serve to our Gurkha soldiers.

Question responses provided on behalf of the Blandford Garrison Gurkha community by Captain Gopal Saru, with additional support from Sergeant Major Saindra Chemjong, involving liaison with garrison Gurkha officers & soldiery.

*I am responsible for looking after Gurkha community, serving soldiers, trainees and families. My Deputy is WO2 Saindra. We eat our food at our own homes. **Captain Gopal Saru***

Summary:

The Blandford Camp Gurkha community responses show that in terms of quality of authentic Nepali food, there is some room for improvement. Having through the Gurkha community actual Nepali chefs to cook is a huge strength, as Nepali people have as a people a great reputation for expertise in cookery. There is clearly great potential for development of Nepali food being more widely available and promoted within the British Army generally as there are many army bases across the UK where Gurkhas are based, and therefore the opportunity to experience and enjoy Nepali culinary heritage exists for the British Army officers & soldiery in general in all of those bases.

At present, at least at Blandford, ordinary rice which is NOT the staple, Basmati rice represents a cultural sensitivity matter that it would be really valuable to address in terms of a global change to just using Basmati which will make Nepali food provision much more authentic and be so well received for morale reasons by our Gurkhas.

Uniquely, through this component of the Nepali culinary heritage information resource, we see in some responses of the interview questions responses, the specific topics of morale, and enhanced

[military] performance linked unambiguously to food and type of food. In this special setting such matters transcend the role of food as just nourishment and a pleasure, per se, raising to key concepts at the heart of military performance. In the final part of the last section of the interview, this question of morale and food type & quality is reiterated in the information volunteered about making food at home; clearly a really important matter for the two considerations referred to.

It is exciting to learn of the involvement of senior British Army officers being invited to and clearly appreciating experience of attending key Nepali cultural festivals, a major aspect of which includes Nepali food (some types of which - Sel Roti, etc. - are particularly popular at and associated with some of these festivals), which through the Gurkha Curry and Gurkha Dinner they discover, and which stands out for its quality due to the culinary prowess of the Gurkha chefs.

In summing up the interview responses show that there is an element of culturally appropriate food available within the British Army for our Gurkhas and, importantly that the broader British Army officers and soldiery can and do enjoy this too. There are clearly areas where improvement can be made, particularly on the culturally sensitive matter of advisability for morale reasons (a Respect factor from the army food servicing provision point of view) of instituting Basmati rice. There are very extensive opportunities as well for multicultural learning benefits to be expanded for all British Army personnel on using the feature of Nepali food on menus to share more about the broader cultural heritage (festivals, language, history, etc.) of the Gurkhas. Such learning can only further extend the elan and camaraderie in military operation contexts between the British Army Gurkha community and the broader British Army community that have such respect and admiration for the former on their courage and famous capabilities in battle.

Sports and Stamina -- the Gurkhas

Topics covered:

- Background
 - Hill Racing
 - Speed Climbing - the ultimate 'against the clock' endurance sport: Nirmal 'Nims' Purja and 'Project Possible'
 - Football
 - UK Nepali football Gurkha origins and development - the Nepal Cup
 - Martial Arts and the Gurkhas - Taekwondo
-

Background:

Natural contexts to the military prowess of the Gurkhas are sports and especially those where testing and developing stamina are concerned. In addition, the competitiveness and the team coordination that sports are well known to encourage and perfect, have been natural companions to the element of discipline, coordination, and focus that are particular characteristics of the military calling.

The special connection that the Gurkhas have with particular sports can rightly, largely be said to have origins in the endurance and stamina training that are the main basis of preparation to become a Gurkha, and to pass the necessary tests to be accepted into the British Army (and of course also the Army of India).

The origins of the Gurkhas association with endurance sports go back to the times at least of the last King of Gorkha and first king of Nepal, Prithivi Narayan Shah, and certainly established on a large scale by the time of Prime Minister Jang Bahadur Kunwar, later first King of the Rana Dynasty.

With at least 10,000 aspirant Gurkhas competing for approximately 300 places each year in the British Army's Brigade of Gurkhas, and an even larger parallel phenomenon concerning those seeking to join the Gurkha component of the Army of India.

In terms of scale of numbers of aspirants since Nepali Gurkha regiments were formed in the first half of the 19th Century no other country has a culture of such large scale recruitment of the highest calibre soldiery across such a long period of time in the modern world. Perhaps the best parallel being the martial culture of ancient Sparta the most warlike state of ancient Greece, birthplace of the Olympic Games and multiple forms of competitive and often endurance-orientated athletics, including famously the Marathon and broader racing.

.....
.....
Hill Racing:

There are in the UK and globally a number of endurance-stamina related sports, some of which have world record holder and national [UK] to international competition levels recognition and status.

By far it is clear that Hill Racing is the Gurkha associated endurance sport par excellence. It has ranged from locations such as Hong Kong and the New Territories (prior to their return to China) and Malaysia (Sabah/Borneo) to the South Downs of Sussex. This sport merges in some of its manifestations into full-blown famous mountains marathons -- such as Mt Everest and Mt Kinabalu -- 'mountain running.'

Hill Racing is an endurance competitive sport that represents the acme of Gurkha/Nepali and British/British Army cultures synthesis. Instituted in the spirit of classical competition on an individual basis in the context of requiring and demonstrating particular stamina related techniques and prowess. In the course of research for creation of information on this particular endurance sport it was a great privilege to meet Kusang Gurung Ji, one of the Gurkha famous conquerors/winners, three times of the Mt Kinabalu marathon/climbathon (1991 - 1993), during the community research stage of the UK Nepali cultural & social heritage project. With a one-year gap before Kusang ji, Sundar Kumar Linthap Ji was winner of this exceptional mountain marathon, also for three consecutive years from 1988 to 1990. In the key formative years of this exceptional endurance sport, the Gurkhas dominated, and still have a significant presence to this day.

It cannot be doubted that Hill Racing (and Climbathons) were at quality and scale levels given invaluable impetus by the experience of myriad Nepali, Gurkhas over the 19th and the 20th centuries, through the incredible and almost unimaginably challenging physical endurance techniques of Gurkha training in Nepal, such as in particular running uphill with 70 lbs of weight in backpacks.

The following from the World Mountain Running Association sets well the background to Hill Racing and Mountain Racing :

About Mountain Running, a brief history

A person's need to run quickly over both short and long distances is as old as humankind. To be fast helped us to survive, to catch an animal for food, to escape from danger and natural catastrophes, to be successful in war or, as in the case of the first marathon, to take messages.

And where did this hunter, warrior, messenger live? Probably somewhere in the hilly countryside. There were no roads, no tunnels to avoid the mountains, no bridges to cross rivers. Therefore we had to run over hills, over mountains, through forests, across rivers as fast as we could. We were not running for medals, or money, or trophies or glory, it was running to survive!

Today this need is no longer necessary, but there is bred into us a desire to run in the nature and over the mountains and so we have our mountain running competitions, where medals, trophies and money replace the historic basic need of survival.

The first written account of a mountain race took place in 1068 when a Scottish King needed to select the most able messenger so the test was to see who could run up and down the mountain nearby in the fastest time. Fast forward to 1895 and the oldest mountain fell race that still continues today took place in United Kingdom.

Source: <http://www.wmra.ch/about-us>

The Brigade of Gurkhas and Hill Racing:



Picture above provided by Sgt Hiradhan Rai from one of the earliest Trailwalker contests

origins of hill racing as a major phenomenon in the British Army's, Brigade of Gurkhas commenced in 1981 with Exercise Trailwalker: Ben White, Regimental Historian, Queens Gurkha Signals (QGS) notes in his ground-breaking, historically important book on the history of the QGS that the event was the brainchild of Major SMA Lee, and saw 246 (Gurkha Field Force) Signal Squadron (the latter to later become the Queens Gurkha Signals). The first Exercise Trailwalker was, as were all subsequent Trailwalker exercises, not a sports endeavour but a very focused Exercise of and for military skills development and honing purposes in real military operations and battle purposes, only. QGS Regimental Historian, Ben White, records that the challenge of the first Exercise Trailwalker, in 1981, was to complete the course (100 km long: a trail created by Governor of Hong Kong Sir Murray Maclehoose, who also in 1979 established a number of hiking trails and parks in Hong Kong & the New Territories) in 24 hours.

However, at the same time, the opportunity was naturally seen that there was fundraising potential arising from Exercise Trailwalker - consequently this gained popularity and attention of a kind associated with a latent and potentially very popular endurance and speed performance related sport. Exercise Trailwalker became, for these reasons, literally, a 'trailblazer.' The first Exercise Trailwalker raised some \$70,000 Hong Kong Dollars for the Hong Kong Spastics Society; it proved from a military exercise training perspective a complete success, and a direct echo of one of the types of speed and endurance tests that aspiring Gurkhas in Nepal undergo and had undergone across the 19th and 20th centuries. It touched directly as well into the much more ancient tradition, made famous in Ancient & Classical Age Greece of a very effective military training device united to sports competitiveness allied to society-wide fame - this latter element, albeit by seeming chance, guaranteed by the level and scale of publicity that the first and subsequent Exercise Trailwalkers' gained through the happy chance and/or fortuitous consideration of including a charity fundraising dimension.

In 1983 the second Exercise Trailwalker took place over the same trail in Hong Kong, with this time a different nominated charity beneficiaries (a day centre in Kowloon [Hong Kong] and a library at Harichaur, Galkot near Baglung [Nepal]) according to QGS Regimental Historian Ben White).

The pattern was established. In later years fundraising for important projects and support services of the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT: <https://www.gwt.org.uk/>) that provides crucial fundraising and retired Gurkha support (including for community needs and projects in many locations in Nepal, particularly those where Gurkhas have been recruited from and/o return to after military service) became established, rightly linking to the scale and success of British Army Gurkhas in such endurance training exercises.

Subsequently, all the essential elements for a new, combined endurance/stamina and speed type of sport - hill racing -- was born, and, ultimately, a subsequent further variant albeit for far fewer in number, speed climbing.

In North Borneo/Sabah, Malaysia, a location of substantial British Army support to Malaysia for many years, became and remains a particularly important location for training, including hill racing. Famous Mt Kinabalu, located in North Borneo was to go on to become the location in the early years of its creation and development, famously associated with world Climbathons and the Mount Kinabalu marathon.

Trailwalker comes to The South Downs:

Trailwalker, originating in the Far East (Hong Kong and Nth Borneo), opened a new auspicious chapter in 1986 when it not only transferred to the UK, but became a new national UK endurance sport annual event that was opened out to the general public, but in which the core British Army presence through direct Brigade of Gurkhas, Gurkha participation and core British Army Gurkha (Queens Gurkha Signals) facilitation and fundraising (for, for example Oxfam, and the Gurkha Welfare Trust) dimensions were and remain intrinsic parts of this unique British Army originated endurance sport.

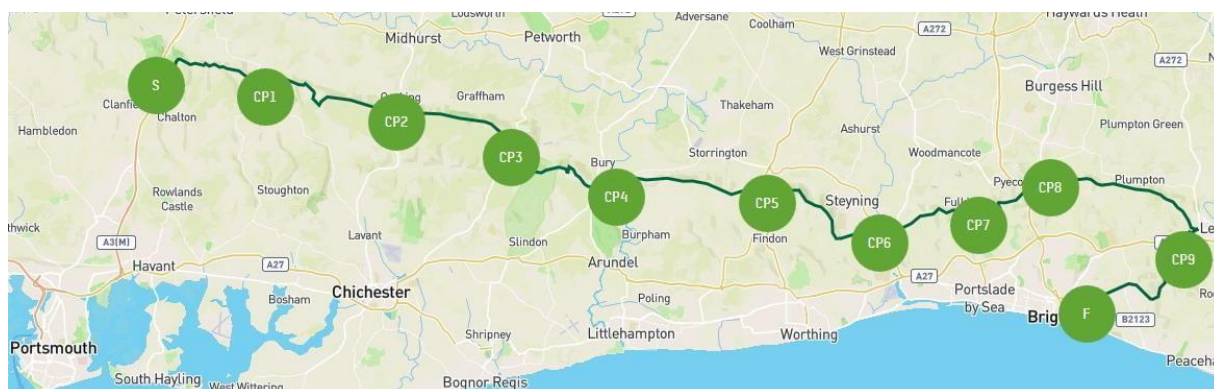
Mt Kinabalu and the hill districts of Hong Kong were exchanged for the South of England uplands of the South Downs (challenging too physically and for concentration/focus), and thereby in the domain of endurance sport the UK saw an illustrious new truly multiracial, multicultural dawn.

The South Downs Trailwalker annual competition embeds in equal measure the Nepali and British national passions for fundraising for good causes for humanitarian purposes and activities. It is unique in having a military origin and at the same time an Asian origin linked to the 200+ years special and equal basis relationship between the Nepali Gurkhas and the people of the UK.

The outstanding feature of Trailwalker is therefore that because from 1986 it opened to the general public (included within which were and continue to be, specific humanitarian organisations such as the Gurkha Welfare Trust, Oxfam, and others) the broader non-Nepali-Gurkha UK population have been privileged, and inspired by in a modest yet real measure, with the phenomenon of borderline superhuman endurance that for the best part of 200 years Nepali Gurkhas have experienced and continue to experience year on year (typically 10,000+ Nepalis compete for just 300 places per year) to become members of the Brigade of Gurkhas of the British Army.

This is as such the finest outcome of Trailwalker: a message on the interconnection of two peoples separated by thousands of miles, but linked through a new sport that the army of one of the two peoples nations initiated, and with such exceptional multicultural ‘one humanity’ experience bonding outcomes.

The South Downs annual Trailwalker contest itself spans three Southern England counties, covering some 100 kilometres and taking place across three days and covering some nine checkpoints (excluding the start and finish points of Trailwalker). Course route screen capture below:



Trailwalker starts in the far east of Hampshire on the Downs of that historic county (that once had in Winchester, the location of the capital of Anglo-Saxon England and the ancient Kingdom of Wessex of ‘Alfred the Great’) at Queen Elizabeth Country Park (Gravel Hill, Horndean, Waterlooville), the Trailwalker course crests the contours of the West Sussex part of the famous South Downs, before

turning briefly into East Sussex and concluding at Brighton Racecourse. Some images from the Trailwalker course are provided below:



A footnote to Trailwalker:

In 2018 a senior officer of a South of England area UK Government contracted private sector business, inspired by the Gurkha, Trailwalker legendary annual endurance sport event suggested how good it would be for public service and private sector businesses staff to undertake a Trailwalker style challenge with the Gurkhas (that it was understood of course the latter would win exponentially!) to raise funds for charitable endeavours. This is mentioned to demonstrate just how far Gurkha renown is Respected, and how broader non-Gurkha British wish to attach to and associate with the Nepali-Gurkhas ('more British than the British').

A Covid 19 era Spring - Summer 2020, the Gurkhas and endurance-stamina final note on the Gurkhas 'More British than the British' theme, being the ultimate epitome of British fundraising for UK patriotic 'whole of the British nation and society' humanitarian purposes:

Gurkha Soldiers Aim To Run Length Of Country For Hospital Fundraising: Troops take it in turns to run laps day and night until completing the distance.



A team of Gurkha soldiers is aiming to run the equivalent length of the UK to help raise funds for a hospital trust.

C (Mogaung) Company of First Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles, are attempting to run 1956 kilometres, which equates to 815 laps of their camp, to raise £3000 for the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford, Kent.

It also represents the distance between the two furthest points on the UK mainland - Land's End and John o'Groats.

Nearly half of the Folkestone-based soldiers' wives are nurses and 'key workers' at the hospital and are on the 'frontline' in the nation's fight against the coronavirus.

Sergeant Indra Gurung and Corporal Naresh Rai (whose wife works as a nurse at the hospital) planned the event and started on 11 May.

Sergeant Gurung said: "We have witnessed our NHS Staff providing 24/7 comprehensive care while putting themselves at higher risk of developing the virus and would like to express our huge thank you to all the NHS staff throughout the nation. They are fantastic, and are working selflessly throughout the pandemic to keep us safe.

"We know how hard it is, both physically and mentally, for people to cope with this situation, and we have been motivated by this hardship to run the equivalent length of the UK from Land's End to John O' Groats in support of this amazing hard work."

Corporal Rai added: "Our aim is to raise as much money as possible for our local NHS Trust to show our appreciation for their outstanding work during this pandemic."

Troops take it in turns to run laps day and night until completing the distance, representing 'round the clock' care being provided by NHS staff.

First Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles are part of 16 Air Assault Brigade - the British Army's airborne rapid reaction force. It is held in a state of very high readiness in order to be able to deploy anywhere in the world at short notice, if needs be.



East Kent Hospitals' Chief Operating Officer, Lee Martin said: 'We are delighted to have the support of our local Royal Gurkha Rifles Regiment in raising funds for East Kent Hospitals Charity's Helping Your Hospitals Appeal.

"The funds raised will be used to provide additional support for staff wellbeing at the William Harvey Hospital, during the coronavirus outbreak. Our communities have been wonderfully supportive of our local hospitals, and we wish the regiment the very best of luck in their fundraising challenge."

Cover image: British Army.

Source: <https://www.forces.net/news/gurkhas/gurkha-soldiers-aim-run-length-country-hospital-fundraising>

Speed Climbing – the ultimate 'against the clock' endurance sport: Nirmal 'Nims' Purja and Project Possible



The Himalaya, the World's highest mountain range, are intimately bound with the spirit and the life of many of the people of Nepal from birth to death. Perhaps most famously this is the case with the Sherpa people, associated with world famous Sagarmartha (Mt Everest), renowned for their

mountaineering prowess, and so too many of the peoples who are known through the name of 'Gurkha' (in the UK, and in India and broader South Asia as 'Gorkha').

Image above: Nirmal 'Nims' Purja stands at the summit of Gasherbrum II on 29 October, completing his record-breaking speed-climbing feat. Photograph: Nirmal 'Nims' Purja - Bremont Pr/AFP via Getty Images

As such, and with eight of the fourteen highest mountains in the world being located within Nepal, it is not surprising that mountaineering capabilities and lore perhaps belong to Nepalis more than any other peoples of the world. Whether or not skilled in mountaineering, every Nepali person takes great and understandable pride in that unique relationship with the skills that enable mastering the legendary heights of many of the world's highest places, whether or not they have such skills themselves.

This was born out in the course of the heritage project early information gathering stage on a meeting with committee members of the Nepalese Association of Wiltshire (NAW) in Swindon in the late Spring of 2019. At the meeting the name of Nirmal 'Nims' Purja, and that of *Mission Possible*, were introduced when we discussed the very special sports dimension of Nepali, especially Nepali-Gurkha culture. At that point Mission Possible was still progressing towards its, ultimately, very exceptional

successful conclusion, and an introduction kindly made from the NAW Committee's members to the representative of Mr Nirmal Purja. By happy timing, the completion of the cultural & social heritage project was after the completion of Nirmal 'Nims' Purja's epic Mission Possible challenge.

Below through two news links, is an account of this historically important, heroic accomplishment on Ultimate Endurance Sport, Speed Climbing.

'It's not about ego', says speed climber who tamed world's 14 highest peaks

Nirmal Purja says hardest part of his record-breaking feat was solving a diplomatic impasse with China

Nirmal "Nims" Purja's record-breaking ascent of the world's 14 highest mountains in just over six months drew plaudits and astonishment at his physical feat. But for the man himself, the climbing was "the easy part".

Speaking to the Guardian from the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu, Nims said the real challenges were the logistics and fundraising.

Perhaps most difficult of all was the diplomacy required to persuade the Chinese authorities to open the last mountain on his list, Shishapangma, which was closed to climbers for a year.

Nims, a former Gurkha and British Special Forces member, completed the final ascent of his gruelling challenge earlier this week. Along the way he assisted in several dangerous rescues of stricken climbers, risking his own project.

If there was a final issue for Nims to overcome, it was, perhaps, the least tangible: a widespread disbelief that he could really do it, despite having climbed Everest, Lhotse and Makalu in five days in 2017 and "feeling fine" – the experience that persuaded him that he could do this challenge.

"No one believed it could be done. Some people made a joke out of it," he explained, comparing his ambition to the recent successful efforts to run the world's first sub-2hr marathon.

"The main thing is to believe in it. That you can give 100%. But in all honesty the most emotional moment was when we succeeded in persuading the Chinese to open Shishapangma just for our team.



The Project Possible team, from left: Lakpa Dendi, Mingma David, Geljen, 'Nims' Purja, Dawa, Halung Dorchi, Gesman. *Photograph: Project Possible*

"After I climbed the mountains in Pakistan [including the world's second highest, K2, and Nanga Parbat] I flew straight back to Nepal and went to work on persuading the Chinese to let us climb on Shishapangma."

That including lobbying the Nepalese government, as well as climbers from around the world, to intercede.

"It was crazy, but I made it happen. It's part of my Special Forces training. You're taught to come up with a solutions, not look for excuses."

For Nims that included selling his house and resigning from his job in the Special Boat Service, after the Royal Navy said his ambitions were "too risky".

The achievement, however, has not been without controversy. Mountaineers have criticised Nims for using supplementary oxygen above 7,500m and fixed ropes. The Everest luminary Chris Bonington suggested Nims' achievement will eventually be seen as a "footnote" in mountaineering history.

But it has also been celebrated, not least by Reinhold Messner, one of the world's greatest ever mountaineers and the first person to climb all 14 8,000m peaks. He described it as a "unique mountaineering achievement".

In the brutal world of high-altitude mountaineering, in which climbers have been known to pass stricken fellow mountaineers without offering assistance, Nims drew plaudits for twice risking his own life to help others.

The first time occurred while descending from Annapurna on 23 April - a few days into his effort - when he led a rescue of fellow climber Dr Chin Wui Kin, who had been separated from

an accompanying expedition and left without food, water or oxygen for 40 hours. He later died in hospital.

Less than a month later on 15 May, having made it to the summit of Kanchenjunga in just 21 hours, Nims and his team rescued a further two climbers from a height of 8,400m, sacrificing their own supplementary oxygen to the climbers in need.

“For me it’s not about ego,” he said, explaining why he would put himself and his project at risk. “It’s about principles. You can’t call yourself a climber and not help in that situation.”

For most non-Himalayan climbers, Nims first came to wider international attention earlier this year, when a picture he took of crowding on Everest’s summit ridge went viral.



Nirmal Purja’s picture of a crowded Everest summit was taken in May. Photograph: Nirmal Purja/Project Possible/AFP/Getty Images

Although he describes arguments that took place among climbers trying to ascend and descend through the bottleneck, he said he was personally “not fazed” by the experience, despite being slowed for hours on his summit day.

He hopes too that the international attention now focussed on his climbs will bring a higher profile to Nepalese mountaineers whose efforts are too often eclipsed by media coverage of western climbers.

“Nepalese guides get forgotten in the story often. Let’s give credit to Nepalese climbing. I hope what I have done can come to be seen as an example of what can be done and what is possible for Nepalese mountaineering.”

For the future, he has his eye on one of the great remaining prizes of 8,000m Himalayan climbing: a winter ascent of the world’s second highest mountain and the only Himalayan giant not yet climbed in that season, Pakistan’s K2.

Nims said he would not be surprised if someone climbs the 14 mountains faster.

“Records are made to be broken. Someone one day will come along and be stronger. People are only limited by their imagination. If you don’t dream then you won’t do it. Human beings are capable of doing amazing things.”

Link: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/01/nirmal-nims-purja-speed-climber-worlds-14-highest-peaks-everest>

Nirmal Purja sets new world record and climbs all 14 “death zone” mountains in six months

In just 6 months and 6 days, Nirmal “Nims” Purja MBE has completed his challenge to summit Earth’s 14 tallest mountains, smashing the previous record of almost eight years and taking his place in mountaineering history.

“I am overwhelmed and incredibly proud to have completed this final summit and achieved my goal of climbing the world’s 14 tallest mountains in record time. It has been a gruelling but humbling six months, and I hope to have proven that anything is possible with some determination, self-belief and positivity. I could not have made it happen without the unending support of my friends and family who have been in my heart this entire time. We started with nothing, but look how far we’ve come,” commented Nims.

Earth’s 14 tallest mountains, all higher than 8,000m, enter the ‘death zone’ which is so-called because human life cannot exist there. This did not deter Nims, who joins a list of just 40 climbers to have completed what could be considered the ultimate mountaineering goal.

“I believed in this project and I made sure to surround myself with people who believed in it too. This was never just about me, which is the reason I’ve been able to overcome some huge obstacles on this journey. By achieving this goal, I knew I could inspire people from all generations, across the world,” added Nims.

Nims began Project Possible when he reached the top of Annapurna on 23rd April this year and has accomplished this extreme feat of mountaineering with a rotating support team made up of exclusively Nepalese climbers.

The previous world records for one individual climbing all 14 peaks was 7 years, 11 months and 14 days held by Jerzy Kukuczka in 1987, and South Korean Kim Chang-ho who beat Kukuczka’s record in 2013 by just 1 month and 8 days.

The clock stopped on Nims attempt at 08:58 local time (00:58 GMT) as he reached the summit of Shishpangma on 29th October, beating the world record by 7 years, 5 months & 8 days. Nims’ incredible achievement consisted of 14 summits in 189 days:

- Annapurna summitted 23rd April
- Dhaulagiri summitted 12th May
- Kanchenjunga summitted 15th May
- Everest summitted 22nd May
- Lhotse summitted 22nd May
- Makalu summitted 24th May
- Nanga Parbat summitted 3rd July
- Gasherbrum I summitted 15th July
- Gasherbrum II summitted 18th July

- K2 summited 24th July
- Broad Peak summited 26th July
- Cho You summited 23rd September
- Manaslu summited 27th September
- Shishapangma summited 29th October

On 22nd May, Nims reached the summit of Mount Everest along with 320 other mountaineers. It was on this climb that he took the photo seen around the world of a 'traffic jam' to reach the summit, bringing global attention to the mountain's dangerous overcrowding.

As well as smashing his overall goal of scaling all 14 of the world's 8,000m peaks in under 7 months, Nims has achieved a further six world records in the process:

- The most 8,000m mountains summited in the spring season (6)
- (Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Kanchenjunga, Everest, Lhotse and Makalu)
- The most 8,000m mountains summited in the summer season (5)
- (K2, Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrum 1, Gasherbrum 2, Broad Peak - the first person to summit all 8000m peaks of Pakistan in one season and in just 23 days.)
- The fastest summit of the three highest mountains in the world
- The fastest summit of the five highest mountains in the world
- The fastest summit of the lowest 8,000m mountains (Gasherbrum 1, Gasherbrum 2 and Broad Peak)
- The fastest summit of the higher 8,000m mountains, with consecutive summits of Everest, Lhotse and Makalu in 48 hours (beating his own previous record of 5 days)

The Bremont Project Possible team included Nirmal 'Nims' Purja and his Nepalese companions Mingma David Sherpa, Geljen Sherpa, Lakpa Dendi Sherpa, Gesman Tamang and Halung Dorchi Sherpa, along with Dawa Sherpa who acted as a base camp manager.

Bremont Project Possible also gave Nims' Nepalese team of Sherpa guides the chance to have their own achievements recognised on the world stage, with Mingma David setting the record for the youngest person to summit all 14 of the Earth's highest mountains (completing 9 of these summits during the project).

On 23rd April, just days into his world-record attempt and descending Annapurna, Nims led a successful rescue attempt to find fellow climber Dr Chin Wui Kin, who had been separated from an accompanying expedition and left without food, water or an oxygen bottle for 40 hours. On 15th May, having made it to the summit of Kanchenjunga in just 21 hours, Nims and his team rescued a further two climbers from a height of 8,400m and sacrificing their own supplementary oxygen to the climbers in need.

Nims has a history of carrying out daring rescues during his expeditions, and in 2016 saved the life of an Indian climber in the Mount Everest death zone, taking her down 500m from an altitude of 8450m single handedly.

Nims will next be climbing Ama Dablam in the Himalayas to plant a poppy for Remembrance Day commemorations on 11th November.

Link: <https://projectpossible.co.uk/>

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Football:

Football is the major sports contribution to Nepal from British sports culture, just as hill racing and to a lesser extent are mountain racing/marathons and speed climbing are to Britain and the world from the Nepal/Nepali-Gurkha British Army context.

The story of football as a particularly special sports-culture sharing phenomenon between the two peoples and countries dates back at a formal level to the 1921 when football commenced in Nepal on a formal teams' basis.

Nepal football origins and development:

The actual early origins of the game as played in Nepal are little-known, but it is clear the knowledge of football will have been received through association with the British, probably quite early on the special 200+ years friendship and relations between the two countries and their peoples, essentially in the domain of Nepali Gurkha presence within the British Army.

In 1921 under the Rana Monarchy we find that football was being played for instance in royal palace grounds (Singhdarbar, Chhauni, Gaucharan, Jawalakhel and Lainchaur) in Kathmandu by particularly palace teams, but some non-palace local teams too. designated football teams. We learn from All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) research that even in its infancy, football matches in Kathmandu were watched by extensive audiences. ANFA cites the names of Narayan Narshingh Rana and Chandrajung Thapa, as the pioneers of football as an organised sport with by the early 1930s, mass popularity in Nepal. In 1934 Prime minister Padma Shumsher initiated the Ram Janaki Football tournament; its purpose was to consolidate and further develop the already clear appetite for football that the general public had. As such Prime Minister Shumsher, through taking this crucial step for development of football in Nepal ranks next after Narayan Narshingh Rana and Chandrajung Thapa.

Up until about 1990, many teams played football without goalposts and net. Such teams in substitution for these key features of the game used instead getting the football to the goal line. In effect football played in such a technically different way, constitutes a distinct, unique form of the game itself because the area in which goals are scored is so different, impacting on tactics of team as well as the goal scorer/potential scorer. To this day many who enjoy playing the game, especially in remoter parts of Nepal, such as Dadeldhura in the Far West of Nepal, use the goal line as opposed to formal goal posts/net area.

ANFA, and football leagues in Nepal:

The All Nepal Football Association (ANFA), is FIFA affiliated, and was created in 1951, AFC affiliated in 1954, and became FIFA affiliated in 1972. ANFS is Nepal's governing body for football. It has responsibility for all main club and football leagues competitions, and for Nepal's National Team, including for Nepal national youth and women's football teams: Mr Karma Tsering Sherpa is the current (2020) president.

Football leagues in Nepal: There are a number of football leagues in Nepal that include from national professional to other levels. The National League is the main one of these, but beyond this also the

national Martyrs Memorial League. The A Division of the latter is one of the most important of ANFA facilitated leagues and is contested by approximately 12 - 16 clubs, on a promotion - relegation basis from the Martyr's Memorial League B Division: currently the A Division is sponsored by Qatar Airways and is consequently known as the Qatar Airways Martyr's Memorial A-Division League. The Martyrs Memorial League is so named because it remembers national martyrs of many kinds in Nepal. The League in fact originated from the Ram Janaki Football tournament (commenced in 1934)

‘... After the establishment of democracy in 1950, the Nepali Police Force had initial successes, enjoying consecutive hat-trick wins and monopolizing the trophy for several years. The Nepal Football Association received the trophy from them, continuing the tournament in remembrance of national martyrs. The trophy is presented today to the winners of the "Martyr's Memorial League Tournament".

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyr%27s_Memorial_A-Division_League

UK Nepali football Gurkha origins and development – the Nepal Cup:

Football as a Nepali phenomenon in the UK begins around the end of the 1940's and is linked to the Gurkhas' British Army context through creation of the annual Nepal Cup tournament. As such it constitutes a parallel phenomenon to that of football in Nepal, with the two (UK, and Nepal) forming Nepali football per se: an attacking orientated often swift moving game that it is a great pleasure and thrilling to watch.

In the UK context, the British Army through the Brigade of Gurkhas is at and remains at the heart of the Nepali UK Nepali community football passion and phenomenon: the British Army/Army FA - Brigade of Gurkhas 'Nepal Cup' annual tournament is at the heart of this phenomenon, and has inspired outside of the Army and Army FA such outstanding developments as the 'Gurkha Cup' and others such on a lesser scale, as the 'Swindon Cup.'

The Nepal Cup:



Sgt Hiran Rai who has kindly lead for research and discussion on a number of areas - including football and endurance sports and martial arts -- for the UK Nepali Cultural & Social Heritage information resource project has noted directly from Brigade of Gurkha sources, where the Nepal Cup's origins were concerned, the key date is 1948.

At that time His Highness the Maharaja [literally, Great King] Mohan Shamsher Janga Bahadur Rana GCIE CBE, Prime Minister of Nepal and Colonel-in-Chief of the Gurkha Brigade, presented this famous cup trophy to be subsequently competed for on an annual Gurkha Brigade inter-unit basis. It is recorded that *'with high spirits, competitive emotions, and pride for those fortunate and skilful enough to win it, this tradition has endured.'* More on the Nepal Cup below.

Nepal Cup 2019

The 71-year-old Nepal Cup may not be quite as old as the FIFA World Cup but it certainly matches it in terms of excitement and spirit. This annual football competition pitches teams from units in the British Army's Brigade of Gurkhas against each other, and this year it was played at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, with the final in the Aldershot stadium. With support from friends and family throughout the Gurkha community, the matches highlighted some real talent and provided a great deal of entertainment and excitement.





250 Gurkha Signal Squadron, part of 30 Signal Regiment only wanted one outcome for this year's competition and successfully played their way to the final on 13th July against 1 RGR. The atmosphere was electric and both teams played well in a tense and hard-fought match. By the end of 90 minutes, the only difference was a single goal scored by LCpl Tamang from a free kick, giving 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron the win.

On the same day, 30 Signal Regiment also won the Army Tug-of-War cup and finished runners-up in the ladies' volleyball competition. With the 60th anniversary of the Regiment's founding the following week, it really gave them a fantastic birthday present! **The Royal Signals continue to provide the cyber, IT and communications support to the rest of the British Army, but also pride themselves in their sporting and adventure training prowess.** Well done to all those who took part and supported: players, management, coaches and fans.

Source: <https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2019/08/nepal-cup-2019/>

<http://www.armyfa.com/about/history>

The Beginning (1888-1918)

Even before the Army Football Association was formed Army teams were in the forefront of the developing game.

The Royal Engineers, Chatham, were in the first three FA Cup finals (1873-75) and were runners-up in the first two years and eventually won in 1875, beating Old Etonians 2-0 in a replay at the Kennington Oval.

In 1888 a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Major F A Marindin CMG, President of the Football Association of England. This was the first stage to the formation of the Army Football Association. Field Marshal His Royal Highness George Duke of Cambridge KG KP GCB GCMG GCH accepted the Presidency of the association. The winners of the first ever Army FA Cup were 2nd Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders on 27th March 1889.

In 1901 an Army side played a civilian team for the first time competing against Dorset and also Surrey County. The following year Tottenham Hotspur became the first Football League club to play the Army.

The 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards' Corporal Lease was selected to play as goalkeeper for England versus France in April 1910.

In 1913 the War Office stated that the Army Council had no objections to matches taking place between officers of the Dutch and British Armies, and arrangements were made to organise the first match.

In the same year the Army FA took over the Army Athletics Ground in Aldershot as its permanent football home. The ground would be known as the Army Football Ground.

Between The Wars (1919-1939)

In 1919 the Army Challenge Cup recommenced after the end of the First World War in addition to the fixtures versus the French and Belgian Army.

The 1920 Army Cup Final at Aldershot was won by the Royal Army Medical Corps in front of 15,000 spectators in front of Their Majesties The King and Queen and the Royal Princess and Princes. In the same year the formation of the Army FA Referees' Committee was made with the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel G H Impey DSC, Royal Sussex Regiment and Lieutenant A E Edwards, Royal Field Artillery, as the first President and Honorary Secretary respectively.

The Army Sports Control Board took over the Army Football Ground in Aldershot from the Army FA for a sum of £822.

In 1921 the annual Inter Service competition versus the Royal Navy FA was extended to include the Royal Air Force FA. The competition was named the Constantinople Cup.

In 1939 the Army Sports Control Board instructed all associations that they were to close for the duration of World War 2. An emergency War Committee was formed and various army matches were authorised.

The National Service Era (1946-1962)

All players that played for the Army during the war years were presented with a trophy to take the form of an Army FA crest in recognition of funds totalling £24,875.11s.6d being raised by the various tours that were provided to charities and relief funds.

In 1948 during the Army Cup final between the RAC Bovington and 121 Training Regiment Royal Artillery the Aldershot stadium was struck by lightning, resulting in the death of one member of each team and injury to players, officials and spectators. The match was abandoned and the trophy was shared.

The 1949/50 season saw a record 205 entries for the Army Cup together with a record of 1,200 Referees. This was superseded in 1955 by a figure of over 2000.

In 1956 a representative Army team toured British Army of The Rhine and played against seven German civilian teams. RSM C F Blackman (Royal Artillery) was appointed team manager. The following were later selected as England international players: Pte D Edwards (RAOC), LCpl GJ Armfield (King's Own Royal Regiment). Later internationals would include Driver W Foulkes (RASC), Gunner C Jones (Royal Artillery) (Wales), Sapper D McKay (Royal Engineers) (Scotland) and LCpl R Charlton (RAOC), Pte A Young (RASC) (Scotland), Pte J Baxter (Black Watch) (Scotland).

During the same year Brigadier General R J Kentish CMG DSO passed away. He had served Army football for a total of 40 years. The Triangular Tournament between the British, French and Belgian Armies would become known as The Kentish Cup.

In 1959 Major CH Dennis was appointed Linesman at the FA Cup Final at Wembley.

In 1962 the end of National Service saw the end of a memorable epoch in Army Football. In the 15 year period the Army team included a long line of international players who became household names internationally. It was now important to reconstruct the Army team with regular Army players.

To the present day

Captain V Tennuci (RAMC) refereed the Challenge Cup Final and set up a unique record of being the only holder of a winners medal (Depot and Training Establishment RAMC 1949) to have taken charge of a Final tie. In 1968 CSM Instructor M Kerkhof (APTC) was promoted to the Referees List of the Football League.

In 1971 the Directors of Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes presented a new Trophy to be known as the NAAFI Jubilee Cup for Inter Unit and Inter Service competition. Five year later, in 1976, the Army FA Six A Side competition was introduced. Major Alan Dobson (MBE), the Secretary of the association, was appointed a FIFA Referee Instructor and appointed to conduct the first Referees' Course dealing with third world countries. Three years later Re-diffusion became the first sponsors of the Army Cup. The Grenadier Guards Trophy was introduced in 1986 for an annual fixture versus the Metropolitan Police.

100 years of the Army FA was celebrated in 1988 as Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Kent presented the Army Challenge

Cup to School of Signals. The match was attended by England manager, Bobby Robson. To commemorate the centenary the Army senior team played a Football League XI.

Football remains the most popular sport in today's Army. Regular matches are played at unit level, corps (with the mens Massey Trophy) and Womens Inter Corps competitions too. The Army Officers Football Team (Crusaders), formed in 1922, continue to participate and now have a Veterans team too.

There are three Army FA representative teams. In 1999 the Williamson Trophy was formed to provide a Womens Inter Services tournament whilst in 2006 an Under 23 Mens Development Inter Services competition commenced. In recent years there have also been successful representative tours including visits to Hong Kong, Thailand, Nepal, South Africa, Brazil and, in 2009, the mens

senior team visited Croatia to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the Liberation of the Dalmation coast.

Many players have progressed through the Army into professional football. In recent year they include Maik Taylor, Guy Whittingham and Lee Bradbury. Between them the trio have made over 1500 senior professional appearances for the likes of Aston Villa, Sheffield Wednesday, Portsmouth, Manchester City and Birmingham City whilst Taylor also represented Northern Ireland on over 80 occasions.

In addition the Army FA has provided an excellent platform for Match Officials too with Major Danny McDermid (RLC) being an established Football League Referee until his posting to Cyprus in 2012, WO1 Andy Halliday (APTC) a Premier League Assistant, Sgt Declan Ford (REME) and LCpl Rob Ellis (RAMC) Football League Assistants). In March 2011 the Army FA created history when four soldiers were appointed as the match officials for the Football League match between Notts County and Bristol Rovers.

In May 2011, for the first time in the history of the association, the Challenge Cup and Minor Units Cup Finals were both staged on the same day as part of the "Festival of Football" day in Aldershot.

The association moved offices in May 2012 and is now based within the headquarters of the RAPTC in Fox Lines, Aldershot. In the same month it played host to the German Bundeswehr in a friendly fixture; the first time the German armed forces had visited the United Kingdom. The Army FA remains a busy organisation and celebrated its 125th anniversary during 2013/14 where the highlight of a healthy activity of events was a fixture played at Reading FC's Madejski Stadium between the Army (managed by Stuart Pearce) and an FA Legends team managed by England boss Roy Hodgson. It concluded the festivities in May 2014 with a Presidents Dinner where the guest of honour was respected football columnist Henry Winter.

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Martial Arts and the Gurkhas -- Taekwondo:



Understandably, martial arts are a key part of Brigade of Gurkhas military training and active service, and consequently can lead to life-long interest in martial arts at professional to amateur and even international tournaments level.



A number of martial arts are popular in Nepal (such as Taekwondo, Kung Fu, Karate, even the mainland China/PRC performance display martial art 'Wushu') and across the Gurkha serving or retired community in the UK. Of all these arts and absolutely fundamental in training and active service application, is Taekwondo. There are many famous ex-Gurkhas in the UK actively involved in teaching Taekwondo. Picture above and to left [demonstrating Kukri strike] kindly provided by Sgt

Hiradhan Rai. The image below from England (Rushmoor) is also from Sgt Rai: it shows popularity amongst UK Nepali youth of this Brigade of the Gurkhas of the British Army martial art.



An example of such an Ex-Gurkha is Maidstone-based Master Rastra Rai. Rastra has an established Taekwondo school in that Kent town (historically a base for the Royal Gurkha Rifles and Royal Gurkha Engineers), the Sagarmatha TaeKwon-Do Dojang. Master Rai as a contributor to this information resource has highlighted in this area, as in many others, how UK-based Nepalis, especially retired Gurkhas, extend their community return charitable work back into Nepal itself. In this case a parallel Taekwondo club being established in Eastern Nepal (homeland of the main part of the Rai ethnic group) where hundreds of young Nepalis are learning this famous martial art. Below are some pictures from the Nepal school (Taekwondo is as popular with female as well as male youth as the certificates presentation image illustrates), and after these we conclude with some images provided by Sgt Hiradhan Rai of Taekwondo groups in the British Army Gurkhas regiments:





Images (below) of British Army Gurkhas, Taekwondo groups, kindly provided by Sgt Hiradhan Rai:



The Sherpa people:



Note regarding section content: The UKNFS provides this note of great appreciation to the Sherpa Association UK Committee and the association's Chair, Mr Sana Sherpa on guidance on main points and perspectives to provide in this, dedicated Sherpa section of the information resource, pointers on sources of information considered appropriate and valuable, and on directly provided dialogues content on festivals, food, and other areas, and three images (including above). Mr Sherpa and the association also provided invaluable assistance on review of the final draft and checking names. The UKNFS also thanks the Sherpa Association UK and Mr Sana Sherpa for enabling the recording of interviews, dance performances, ceremonies, and taking of images from the Association's Losar 2047 celebrations at Ashford in Kent on 29th February 2020.

Index of topics:

- Introduction
- Sherpa Culture - religion and related
- The Sherpa main annual Festivals
- Sherpa Association UK Gyalpo Losar 2047 Celebration Programme at Ashford in Kent
- The Sherpas in the UK
- Sherpa Foods
- Mountaineering, tourism, the flight to seek employment in other lands
- Names matter

- Names matter - continued: Sherpas and traditional head garments, to contemporary ‘Sherpa styled Beanies’
- The Sherpas and international friendships for life

Introduction:

The name ‘Sherpa’ in mountaineering prowess lore globally is as world-renowned as that of ‘Gurkha’ in military prowess lore across the UK, India, the World.

The mystical fabled lands of the highest Himalaya, with Sagarmatha [Mt Everest] in particular, form the lands of birth of the Sherpa people, whose homelands focus in particular [there are other Sherpa peoples lands along parts of Nepal’s frontier with Tibet] on the Solu Khumbu region with at its heart Sagarmatha, better known internationally as Mt Everest, and with its name in the Sherpa language being Chomolungma (in Tibetan, Quomolungma). The Sherpa people (in their own language, Sherpa, literally ‘Sher’ [east] ‘pa’ [people]) are in fact migrants from Kham in Tibet, and came to settle in Solu Khumbu and other regions and districts in Himalayan Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nth Western Bengal and beyond, around and after the 1400s (CE).

There were four main clans (just as there are a number of those with the Gorkha peoples: Gurung, Rai, Tamang, Limbu, etc. whose names recur frequently in military service and other domains) of Sherpa People at the time the Sherpas migrated from Kham in Tibet to Solu Khumbu and other areas of Himalayan Nepal some 600+ years ago, and subsequently developed some 20+ sub-group clans.

You can read more about the Sherpa people’s history and geographical distribution at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherpa_people



The terrain and certainly the weather have and continue to shape the culture of the Sherpa people, influencing everything for foods to sacred and other festivals, and certainly traditional forms of livelihood and employment which for many have increasingly over the past fifty years included the mountaineering supportive local economy, key to employment generation. ‘THE’ Mountain (Mt Everest) has obscured for many (but far from all) overseas travellers to Solu-Khumbu and Mt Everest the opportunity to learn about the very ancient culture of the Sherpa people. This section of the information resource in some modest way tackles this.

Traditionally for all, and still for many, daily life of the Sherpa people has been dominated by pastoral animal husbandry and agriculture, each of these in turn influenced by the seasons and of course the ever present raw power of extreme altitudes. Alongside these major land linked daily life influences, trade has traditionally been of comparable importance, and with it of course artisanship linked to both functional needs, building, storage of foodstuffs, and social occasions, and ancient religious and spiritual cultures.

For the Sherpa People as with other Burmo-Tibetan peoples born and living in the Himalaya, the mountains and especially mountain summits, hidden valleys (epitomised by the myth and legend of 'Shangri La') and caves of the high places, are scared, extraordinary places of awe, inspiration and reverence. However, the intrusion of plastic culture and hordes of mountaineers from all over the world have brought major shifts in socio-economic life and most of all the life of the people, and the natural environment.

The effects of mountaineering, especially the lure of 'conquering the highest mountain in the world, Sagarmatha (Mt Everest)' has however had as great an impact for Solum Khumbu and the Sherpa people as at turns a major plague, and a 'gold rush.'

Sherpa Culture – religion and related:



The Sherpa People are deeply religious and have a true reverence for the spiritual dimension of their ancient culture. It is believed that the migration of the Sherpas from in particular the Kham location in Eastern Tibet that took place across the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries (CE) was largely an outcome of religious strife occurring linked to the Mahayana Buddhism (the 'Great Vehicle' form of Buddhism) of the time. The stupas, 'Gompas' (spelled 'Gumbas' by non-Sherpa Nepali follows of Buddhism) -- Buddhist temples, particularly for those following Tibetan forms of Buddhism -- pilgrimage routes, small wayside shrines, and of course the world famous prayer flags (alternating in colours, particularly of yellow, white, red, blue, and green, and with sacred Buddhist scripts printed on each).

All of characterise how closely the Sherpa people identify and reverence in their stunning but often perilous landscape, their daily lives, with the presence of the power of the spiritual in life. An on location prayer flags image is provided at the beginning of the Sherpa component of this information resource. In terms of religions, there are a number, all to greater or lesser extents interconnected: Tibetan Buddhism, Lamaism, Tantric and Vajrayana Buddhism, and ancient pre-Buddhist Shamanism.

Because of the invasion and forced occupation of Tibet earlier in the second half of the 20th Century by the Peoples Republic of China, to a certain extent now only in the Sherpa and other peoples lands of Himalayan Nepal (and of course neighbouring Himalayan lands) are the ancient traditional religious beliefs kept alive, most of which originated from Tibet itself. Tibet, once a vast empire the size of China, was the conduit point through which Buddhist study and beliefs, travelled from West (the Himalaya and Indian Sub-Continent) to the East (China) and sacred Buddhist scrolls were sought from India & the Himalayas, by the court of the Tang Emperors. In turn under later Chinese imperial dynasties, Nepali crafts expertise [through Nepali artists and artisans retinues passing through the Himalayan passes across Tibet] was sought to assist the development of many different forms artisanship development in far distant China, beyond Tibet.

Below we provide for context, some [mainly Wikipedia] links to each of the religions referred to:

- Tibetan Buddhism: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism
- Tantric and Vajrayana Buddhism: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajrayana>
- Mahayana Buddhism: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahayana>
- Lamaism: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/eastern-religions/buddhism/lamaism>
- Shamanism: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shamanism>

The Sherpa main annual Festivals:



Sherpa women in traditional dress

In our homeland of the Solu-Khumbu, Everest, region we have many festivals, but three major ones, which I am pleased to say a few words on below. Sharing about these is important to us because celebrating the festivals here in Britain across our community (a small one of about 1000+ people) and in our family homes is a most effective way of retaining connection to the culture of the land of our part of the mighty Himalaya in this remote and very different land. By sharing we preserve our culture through the action of explaining about it to our British friends, and, we hope in so doing adding a little to the human and social wealth that we have in the United Kingdom through our multicultural nation.

About Losar: Losar is the festival of the Sherpa's New Year. An auspicious occasion in which feasting accompanied by song, dance and drink are the rule. We celebrate the festival towards the end of the Western month of February. Losar aligns to the Tibetan calendar, and as such differs in point of timing to Nepali New Year (which takes place in the April period).

About Dumje: Our Dumje festival takes place over seven days, and is about celebrating good health, the prosperity, and for the welfare of the Sherpa community in general. Dumje takes place in the Western calendar month of July. This is because then agricultural work has been accomplished and we take at this time our herds to the upper pastures, and also coincides with our trading expeditions over to Tibet being completed. A particularly important dimension of Dumje is for Sherpas, who are very spiritual people, going to visit and offer prayers at the monasteries and offer prayers to their gods. Our young people involve on the festival's singing and dancing: a happy time for all ages is Dumje which sees food and drink enjoyed greatly in good and happy spirit. We try where able as a community and on family level to celebrate all the elements of Dumje that are possible within our community in the UK.

About Mani Rimdu: Mani Rimdu celebrations are held four times a year, twice in Khumbu (at the Tami and Tengboche monasteries) and twice in Solu-Khumbu (at the Chiwong and Thaksindhu monasteries). Monks in colorful costumes and elaborate masks impersonate gods and demons and perform religious dances intended to scare the evil spirits.

On the concept of Mani Rimdu we are aware that our expression of a complex spiritual concept that Mani Rimdu manifests is not easily at first glance simple for Western people to grasp - it can look like a quaint folklore festival. It is not so regarded on our side, but relates to very tangible realities in the human experience. Here we can say that evil manifests in many different forms and the forces that spy it, go to battle with it, and may or may not defeat it in a person, a society and -- as we have seen with for example the Nazis in the late 1920's to 1945 in Germany a venerable European land from Roman times in your history - even nations, are very real to the human day to day life experience.

NOTE: On the Gyalpo Losar Festival 2047, please also see the rare and precious footage of ancient ceremonial rites and dedications, as well as a set of exceptional dance, music, and songs performed at the festival. Links to these are provided at the end of the cultural festivals, concluding part of this section of the UK Nepali cultural & social heritage resource.

Note on Sherpa Music:

We are very pleased to provide in this section of the information resource direct links to the Losar Sherpa New Year 2047, Ashford, Sherpa Association UK celebrations recording of a set of Sherpa dance performances (thanks to the Association) in which traditional and popular Sherpa and Nepali music is provided as the setting for the dances:

On the guidance of the Association we also provide some further information on Sherpa music:

In 1973, anthropologist John M. Bishop recorded music of the remote village of Melemichigaon, Nepal. With influence from Tibet, this Nepalese music is characterized by unison singing and occasional accompaniment on the *damian*, a stringed instrument in the lute family that provides a strong rhythmic base. The musicians generally sing in Helambu (a Sherpa-Tibetan dialect) and sometimes in Tibetan on themes of religion, a desire for material wealth, the natural landscape, and a “sense of an ordered world in contrast to the nomadic pattern of many peoples’ lives” (Bishop). Liner notes include a description of the village and its music, track notes, and lyrics in Helambu/Tibetan and English.

Source: <https://folkways.si.edu/music-of-a-sherpa-village/world/album/smithsonian>

Sherpa Association UK Gyalpo Losar 2047 Celebration Programme at Ashford in Kent:

Some images from this auspicious event, the last major one for early 2020 in the UK Nepali cultural festivals calendar, prior to the Covid 19 pandemic crisis lockdown. The Sherpa Calendar follows the Tibetan lunar calendar and elements (metal, fire, etc.) and animals and mythological creatures zodiac that is closely associated with that of ancient China, Japan and other East Asian cultures. Nepali New Year (Mid-April normally) follows a different lunar calendar calculated system: in 2020 it fell on 13th April. Whereas Sherpa New Year is closely linked to that of Tibetan, and to some extent Chinese New Year, with New Year for the Sherpas normally falling around the end of February.

The programme featured cultural performance (especially dance, song, music [including traditional musical instruments such as the Sherpa flute]) welcome to guests and invocation ceremony of candle-lighting to invoke auspicious spiritual energies for the year to come and to thank for the good that took place in the year passed, and to ward off negative energies and evil forces in the year just about to start.

Traditional Sherpa and Nepali foods, as snacks and main meal are important features, and on the liquid refreshment front, the milky coloured ‘chyang’ rice liquor and Sherpa and Nepali spiced tea (Masala Chya/Chai) are available. In addition to ceremony and cultural performances - very important for serving as foci for preserving and maintaining Sherpa identity in the UK - and enjoyment of food and drink, the whole evening provides the opportunity for important reunions, discussion of family and community affairs and social warmth interaction of kinds not found in the same ways outside of the community.

Here we provide links to a set of musical and dance performances, ceremony, and interviews from the Sherpa Association UK Gyalpo Losar 2047:

- Presentation of karda: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ZPsJzsNZqwaTpnXA>
- Losar opening Ceremonial with Ambassador: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ZEaiA1w9gbsSC8ch9>
- Two male Dancers performance: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/TbnJH2N9vSpcERvt8>
- Female dance, solo: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/BQ6rYXxcAACPGvm9>
- Two female dancers performance: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/xthveg5Ach8cJt5X6>
- Four person female dancing group performance: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/qsSGbDL4Znf6mKHv9>
- Male and female dance group performance: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/WD8sigcVs7rXPuaL9>
- Interview with Mr Sana Sherpa: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/HfCbaphfsnh5zcSh7>
- Interview with Mr Tharka : <https://photos.app.goo.gl/mf9E6Ci468mLhUgR8>



Main hall of the Gyalpo Losar 2047 celebration programme at Ashford in Kent: all generations attend, with Sherpa community members and families travelling from London, the South West, and even in some cases the North and Wales for this most important major Sherpa annual cultural celebration of Sherpa identity and community spirit. Note the important presence of the Prayer Flags in the top of the picture honouring and reminding of the spirituality of Sherpa culture.



In many cases Losar celebration programmes also celebrate Sherpa culture through the wearing of traditional Sherpa costumes. Above is an example of husband, wife, daughter in traditional Sherpa attire (a very big thank you from the UKNFS to Mrs Mingma Sherpa [to right] who travelled with her husband and daughter from Blandford in Nth Dorset to take part in Losar 2047). Elsewhere in the Sherpa component of the UK Nepali community cultural and social heritage information resource, we have discussed traditional and functional Sherpa hats.



Traditional Nepali copper serving canteens: initial Nepali snacks (below) are provided first from the serving station, with after, a main feature of the Losar Programme (as with other Nepali cultural events and major functions also at the Embassy of Nepal in London, a main meal is served. Normally on major community cultural programmes such as Nepali New Year, Sherpa New Year, Dashain, and others, the VIP guests and dignitaries will be served at their tables by programme team members.



Traditional vegetable spiced pastries, Sel Roti, vegetable curry and beaten rice (chiura)

The Sherpas in the UK:

The UK Nepali cultural and social heritage information resource project has where the Sherpas of the UK are concerned, required a proper background to their story and characteristics, which of course lay in the Solum Khumbu, Sagarmatha districts of far away Nepal. It was felt through liaison with the UK Sherpa community, Sherpa Association UK that the particulars detailed above be provided for anyone to have a proper understanding of who the Sherpa people are and their story in the world and uniqueness. Here we turn to the UK chapter, a developing, growing one, of this famous people.

On the occasion of the Gyalpo Losar Festival 2047 (Nepali and Sherpa Calendar: 2020 in the Western/UK Calendar) - Sherpa New Year (this particular Year being the 'Year of Male Iron Mouse/Rat') - celebrations of the UK Sherpa community on Saturday 29th February, facilitated by the Sherpa Association UK at Ashford [The Norton Knatchbull school] in Kent, video interviews were made to record the perspectives of the Chair of the Sherpa Association UK (Mr Sana Sherpa) and other respected community leads on the purpose and importance of the Losar Festival and more generally on the Sherpa community in the UK and that of the Gurkha and broader Nepali community. In the interview with Mr Sana Sherpa it was related that in fact some 90% of Sherpa community members in Nepal apply for registration to become British Army Gurkha Brigade members. This shows the extraordinary record of connection of the Nepali Sherpa People with the British People and state through the British Army.

NOTE: On the Gyalpo Losar Festival 2047, please also see the rare and precious footage of ancient ceremonial rites and dedications, as well as a set of exceptional dance, music, and songs performed at the festival. Links to these are provided at the end of the cultural festivals, concluding part of this section of the UK Nepali cultural & social heritage resource.

Ashford in Kent is the main location for the Sherpa community in the UK, although smaller numbers are dispersed across the other established UK Nepali community locations: Ashford is midway between Maidstone and Folkestone which have Gurkha Brigade regiments (and in the case of Folkestone, even the base of the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas) - the Gurkha Engineers and Royal Gurkha Rifles (and the Band). Although very small in number (an estimated 1000+ people) compared to the broader Nepali Gurkha community (at time of completing this information resource, 65%+ of the total UK Nepali community) which is estimated to be in the area of 150,000+, the Sherpa community. As detailed in the video interview with Mr Sana Sherpa referred to above, probably in terms of the percentage of the Sherpa population of [main location] Solu Khumbu in Nepal seeking to become Gurkhas, the Solu Khumbu Sherpas have the highest percentage of any given Nepali ethnic group seeking to enlist in the Brigade of Gurkhas, albeit numerically much smaller than others (such as Tamu/Gurung) because of the very small size of the Solu Khumbu Sherpa population.

The migration to the UK of the Sherpas was initially, with very few exceptions, linked to the British Army Brigade of Gurkhas connection, and began in earnest in the latter part of the second half of the first decade of the 2000's when partial settlement rights were granted to Gurkhas and retired Gurkhas and some members of their families. The intervention of the British actress Joanna Lumley OBE, born in Srinagar in 1946, tipping the balance on these rights accorded by Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government through the major long-term campaigning work of Gurkha ex-servicemen organisations, such as the British Gurkha Welfare Society [Major Dewan]. Subsequently as with the vast majority of Gurkha ex-servicemen, Sherpa retired Gurkhas deployed their legendary expertise in their time of

military service, by seeking frontline to manager and increasingly owner level employment in the security sector, and in more recent years broader employment occupations.

Parallel to this, and for not a few female members of the Sherpa [and broader female population of the UK Nepal community] community along with other UK Nepali communities began to engage in the UK social/residential care private sector and in the NHS on roles from nursing and healthcare work to ancillary, but in some cases at medical specialist, consultant and GP levels too. The Nepali national characteristic of friendliness, and its attributes of good listening, compassion, humane warmth fitting Sherpa and broader Nepali communities for the care and healthcare sectors and NHS in the UK: something reflected in the considerable 2500+ cadre of RCN (Royal College of Nursing) Nepali nurses.

In the spring and summer of 2020 in the context of the unacceptable reprehensible Anti-Asian/Anti-Nepali-Gurkha attacks and racist hate crime incidents of the period, it was noted in Kent and broader UK news media the fact that Nepali NHS and social care frontline workers, including Sherpas in Ashford, Kent, were often facing en-route to and from their places of work where they were saving lives, such abuse: <https://uknfs.org/kent-racist-anti-nepali-gurkha-representation-update-response-from-sherpa-association-uk/> and <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/maidstone/news/demand-for-action-after-ex-gurkhas-car-torched-226001/> ‘... Ms Grant [MP for Maidstone and the Weald] expressed her condemnation of the "abhorrent and deeply upsetting" incidents in Barming, whose victims included a retired Gurkha soldier and NHS staff working at Maidstone Hospital. One of the families targeted expressed their belief that they had been victims of a Covid-19-inspired hate crime.

Some Sherpa community members (very small in number) have also settled in the UK through becoming graduates and postgraduates/PhDs (some of these UK Nepali community members playing key roles in the founding of and continuing work in a number of areas, of the UKNFS itself at Board Member to Expert Adviser levels).

In brief, the above constitutes the story of how the Sherpas came to the UK and their continuing and further developing of the story of the UK’s socio-economic and broader multicultural/diverse communities, development.

Sherpa Foods:



Sherpa MO MO (Meat Dumpling)



Sherpa Stew

Shyakpa

(Sherpa

Stew)



The details I provide of interest for the Nepali foods project from our Sherpa perspective, largely refer to our culinary arts in the Solu-Khumbu districts of the Everest region of Nepal, such as I and other members of the UK Sherpa community were brought up to enjoy and use in our youth. In the UK food options are very different of course because of British/Western culture, modern convenience, and of course on climate, terrain, and availability or non-availability of traditional Sherpa staples of food and drink and ingredients.

Where able, and particularly on our Sherpa people's special occasions of family importance or our main festivals (these are Losar, Dumje, and Mani Rimdu), of which three are of major importance to us to honour for our own culture even if far from the land and mountains of our birth, we try where able to cook and enjoy some of our Sherpa foods. The warmth of social occasions matter greatly to us, and include particularly for festivals drinking and feasting accompanied by song and - where space permits - dances; this in home and family settings, but also in bigger, community ones: feasting and

drinking go together in our culture, rather than separately. In the UK our socialising takes place in our homes with friends and relations often and on special occasions joining, and news being shared on the doings and matters of importance that are taking place with our community here (we have most of our people based here in Ashford in Kent) and in Nepal, the Himalaya.

Some information on Sherpa cuisine and related topics:

Main ingredients in Sherpa foods include potato, radish (important for its heating nature and spiciness), carrots, and butter (ghee) features a lot. Potato is though our staple food, taking the part enjoyed by rice in the lands to the south of our Nepal and of course in Hindustan beyond. Because of our homeland's extreme climate, food has a special health preserving role, rather than just for nourishment and taste and so has to be filling in a way that fortifies against the cold, which is why the benefits of butter are so great as they help develop necessary fat to insulate; here though there isn't the same physical health need, so it is not used so much in what we eat compared to in the high mountains, but ghee still features on special occasions to keep touch with the traditions & culture of the land of our birth.

As with our friends the Newars, we also have our own particular utensils for preparing and cooking our foods, and in addition food and drink portage and storage. I am pleased to share names and descriptions of the main cooking and drinking related items with this important project's audiences in the utensils section of this information resource. In this functional practical topic, in sharing, I and the UK Sherpa people preserve our culture, as here and in the main part of the UK Nepali cultural & and social heritage project share it with our friends the British. Here in Britain we have adopted replacements for some of our cooking utensils, but I feel that this is being just practical; the foods taste just the same though!

Famous recipes:

The most ancient, and/or popular of Sherpa dishes and types of food include, but are not limited too: Potato pancakes (Riki Kur), Sherpa Noodle Soup (very similar to Tibetan noodle soup and Thukpa) known as Shyakpa or Thenthuk , and Sherpa Salted Butter Tea. I have provided a classic recipe for Riki Kur in the main recipes & dishes section of this information resource.

I provide from our Sherpa community a set of images from our food, including Riki Kur, Sherpa Mo-Mo, stew, and some further images including of our homeland. I hope these will be of educational value and interest to all who read this important information resource, and for the project e-booklet on Nepali cuisines.

Traditional Sherpa Potato Pancake -- Aloo Roti (Riki Kur):



Main ingredients: potato and egg are the main ingredients for this dish. **Potatoes** are a major source of potassium (higher concentrations than in bananas) and vitamin C; they are cholesterol-free, and fat and sodium free, are carbohydrate-rich, and an excellent source of vitamin C. **Eggs** are a source of high-quality protein, riboflavin and selenium (mainly egg white), with highest concentrations of nutrients (particularly Vitamin D) found in the yolk.

Taste description & background:

Riki Kur is one of our Sherpa communities main traditional dishes back in Nepal, but we enjoy it here in Britain too, especially when we gather together as a community at our homes. It is filling and gives energy, and is really tasty; great for winter weather in the UK as much as the Himalayan climate. It is a mainstay Sherpa food enjoyed for centuries and its recipe, as with the accompanying Yak cheese & spring onion achar / pickle, which we use with other traditional dishes too; the cheese, chili, and spring onion complement the pancake's taste, with its blend of potato and butter, itself so well.

I first enjoyed it as a very young child, learning from my mother soon after in the family kitchen. I feel since that time long ago, and settling in the UK, and learning a little about traditional British foods, that there are at least in the Riki Kur itself, some similarities with aspects of Scottish food, and that maybe we can say that terrain and climate do have some influence on the types of food different peoples develop as distinctive to their nutrition needs relating to the lands they live in.

Sana Sherpa

Chair, UK Sherpa Association

Mountaineering, tourism, the flight to seek employment in other lands:

Through the founding of the legendary ascent of Sagarmatha by Tenzing Norgay 'Sherpa Tenzing' and Sir Edmund Hilary (New Zealand, British mountaineer), the name of 'Sherpa' came to be introduced to the whole world with the joint ascent and reaching of the summit of Sagarmatha/Mt Everest on 29th May 1953. Commencing in the pre-consumerist second half of the 20th Century the ascent put Nepal and the Sherpa People through Sherpa Tenzing and Sir Edmund Hillary's heroic feat, truly on the global 'map.' Fast forward to the late 2010's: mass 'conquering Everest' tourism choking the sacred mountain for tens of miles around in plastic waste, and with the traditional economy drawn off, often largely submerged through the overseas/international visitors mountaineering support economy.

There has consequently been overseas money brought into Nepal's economy through 'the Everest, follow in the footsteps of Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay factor' and at the same time an unintended ecological disaster turning upside down the region of the Sherpa People's society and culture. The government of Nepal is taking exceptional 'era of climate change awareness' action on this with the Sherpa people of Solum Khumbu (and indeed other regions of Himalayan Nepal) on the flood of plastic items that the international visitor-mountaineers understandably, at this point in time, have dependency on to live and achieve their mountaineering quests.

For every person that ascends Sagarmatha has to in returning collect and dispose of a weight-specified amount of plastics left on the rocky slopes and in the snows of the World's highest mountain. As such, change is coming to the land of the Sherpas on a blight that was never foreseen in Hillary and Norgay's time but which through the advent and subsequent industrial scale development of 'mountaineering tourism': of this the People of the land of their birth, the Sherpas, are understandably happy because in addition to counteracting climate change considerations, the all-important reverence for the soil, rock, snows and ice of their land and its peaks, glaciers, caves, slopes, cliffs at the heart of traditional, ancient Sherpa culture, is starting to be respected from national to international levels.

Names matter:

Names matter, and a numerically very small people can through their traits of devoted focused technical dedicated expertise lend their name to global level public service traits and activity.

The most important way at start off level to come to know about a people, culture, country, nation is to learn of the literal translations and/or meaning of key names and words relating to a given people and culture. **There is a short component of this information resource on key and example Nepali names**, but here we highlight for the Sherpa People of Nepal two names to properly fulfil the purpose of all those seeking knowledge about the latter and their land, and how these express culture and outstanding human traits. One concerns the variations in different language of the name of Planet Earth's highest mountain, and the other the global borrowing of the name 'Sherpa' itself.

Mount Everest / Sagarmatha (Chomolungma) – different, South Asian, and Western colonial era approaches to naming a mountain:

As mentioned towards the start of the Sherpa section of this information resource in the Sherpa language the name of world's tallest mountain is Chomolungma ("World Mother Goddess"), and spelled and pronounced almost identically in Tibetan, 'Quomolungma', reminding us of the Tibetan origin (location: Kham in Eastern Tibet) and close ethnic and cultural affinities with Tibet, of the Sherpa Peoples, who migrated from that fabled land (for centuries a mighty empire as great as China or the much earlier Mauryan Empire) some 600+ years ago to Solu Khumbu and other locations in the Himalaya.

The Nepali name for Mt Everest is comprised of the two Nepali words 'sagar' and 'matha'; Sky and Head (Head of the Earth touching Heaven), respectively - a functional descriptive yet poetic name for the highest point in the world. Sagar is also a personal name in Nepali. A Nepali historian, Baburam Acharya (1888-1971) reputedly gave this name to the mountain as there had been until this point no official Nepal state recognised name for Chomolungma (Sherpa name for the mountain). Source: <https://www.quora.com/Who-named-Mt-Everest-as-Sagarmatha>

Enter ... 'Mount Everest':

'In 1852 the British-sponsored Great Trigonometrical Survey, which had been mapping the Indian subcontinent since the early 1800s, identified the highest mountain in the world straddling Nepal and Tibet in the Himalayas. The British initially referred to the 29,035-foot-tall pinnacle as Peak XV until Andrew Waugh, the surveyor general of India, proposed that it be named for his predecessor, Sir George Everest.

Born in Wales on July 4, 1790, Everest attended military schools in England before spending much of his adult life in India. After working for the East India Company, the geodesist joined the Great Trigonometrical Survey in 1818 ... working his way up to superintendent in 1823 and then surveyor general of India in 1830. ...

Everest, who had favored native place-names as a surveyor, objected to Waugh's proposal that the highest peak in the world be named in his honor. Although the Tibetans already called the mountain Chomolungma ("Goddess Mother of the World"), Waugh was apparently unaware of that indigenous moniker or those used in Nepal, which had barred the survey team from crossing its borders*. "I was taught by my respected chief and predecessor,

Colonel Sir George Everest to assign to every

geographical object its true local or native appellation. But here is a mountain, most probably the highest in the world, without any local name that we can discover, whose native appellation, if it has any, will not very likely be ascertained before we are allowed to penetrate into Nepal,” Waugh wrote to the Royal Geographical Society in 1856. In spite of Everest’s argument that locals would have difficulty pronouncing his name, the society decided in 1865 to dub the world’s tallest peak Mount Everest anyway. The 76-year-old Everest died the following year on December 1, 1866. It’s unknown whether he ever glimpsed his namesake mountain.’

Source: <https://www.history.com/news/who-is-mount-everest-named-after>

* Nepal was an independent state not a British colony or ‘protectorate’ and entry had to be authorised

Ironically therefore, the man whom the mountain was named after in an age when European colonial power regarded imposing English/European language names on major geographical and topographical features such as seas, mountains, rivers as a mark of Eurocentric supremacist might and cultural appropriation/misappropriation (a very common phenomenon in lands such as the USA and Australia where the names for these accorded in ancient times by indigenous/first peoples were ignored and routinely replaced ‘Ayres Rock’ etc.) actually had an enlightened spiritually attuned post-colonial perspective that rejected such an imposition of a name.

Sherpa: The word ‘Sherpa’ has taken on in the English-speaking world connotations of a Nepali people supreme in mountaineering skills ultimate ‘knowledge of terrain’ path-makers for mountaineers from across the globe, guiding and protecting from danger the latter. It has by a logical transference to political, heads of state, and diplomatic domains, meaning ‘emissary’ that has come to be the chosen term for path-making and masterly preparation for matters of state, especially international conferences of the greatest moment - **an incredible but so well-deserved tribute to the attributes and capabilities of the actual Sherpas themselves in life or death settings in the World’s highest mountains!**

A sherpa^[1] is the personal representative of a head of state or government who prepares an international summit, particularly the annual G7 and G20 summits. Between the G7 summits there are multiple sherpa conferences where possible agreements are laid out. ... The sherpa is generally quite influential, although they do not have the authority to make a final decision about any given agreement. The name is derived from the Sherpa people, a Nepalese ethnic group, who serve as guides and porters in the Himalayas, a reference to the fact that the sherpa clears the way for a head of state at a major summit.

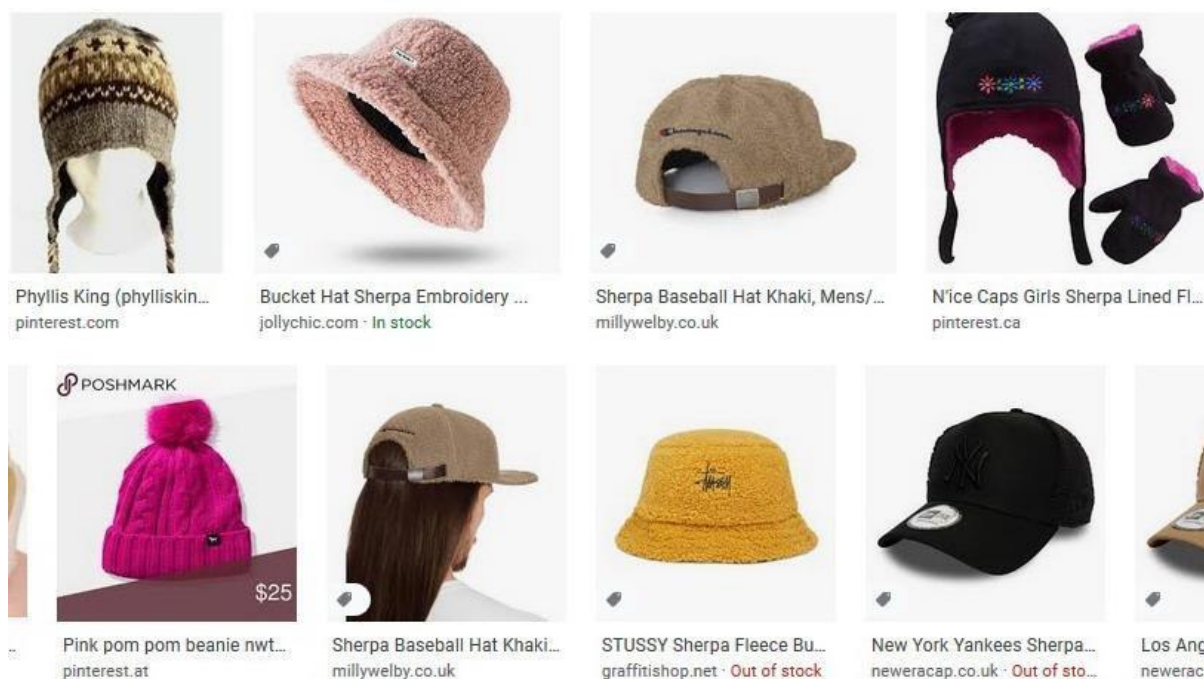
Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherpa_\(emissary\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherpa_(emissary))

As such the name Sherpa belongs to a very, very, small number of names of peoples that have become epitomes for their characteristics at a human nature prowess level (such as ‘Stoic’ or ‘Spartan’ or even ‘Amazon’).

Names matter – continued: Sherpas and traditional head garments, to contemporary ‘Sherpa styled Beanies’:

Not as famous as the politico-diplomatic worlds adoption of the term ‘Sherpa’ nevertheless traditional functional Sherpa headgear has made its name felt across the world with many non-Nepali, Western

businesses catching on the Sherpa style ‘brand,’ as indicated in the screen capture below (featuring even ‘Sherpa baseball caps’:



Of course, whilst flattering, it is questionable to what extent hijacking of the Sherpa name has transferred to at scale income and employment generation being returned to the Sherpa people and Sherpa lands in Nepal from this phenomenon.



Certainly there are three main Sherpa traditional ceremonial and functional weather and climate protection related hats. These include formal ceremonial hats with ear protective fur trim flaps, through to the close-fitting hat (subsequently called in western for-profit markets a ‘beanie’), and wide-brim cowboy look hats (see image below) of the Sherpas own creation.

To left the ceremonial style hat is illustrated, worn by Mr Sana Sherpa on the occasion of the Losar [Sherpa New Year] 2047 celebration programme organised by the Sherpa Association UK, in Ashford (Kent) on 29th February 2020.



The Sherpas and international friendships for life:

Through the bond of the mountaineering experience the Sherpa people given their numerically small number and the degree of connection the Sherpas have with the international mountaineering community, no other people of the world have such a for-life bonding friendship experience at scale and in quality record. The most famous historical example of this exceptional phenomenon is of course that of Sherpa Tenzing and Edmund Hillary, but there have been and continue to be almost countless examples of this to date: the unaffected, natural friendliness of the Sherpas is undoubtedly one of their most outstanding and defining characteristics. Below we provide two instances of online articles that evidence this (one on the Hillary - Norgay conquering of Mt Everest story, and the other on that of the UKNFS' Scotland Board Member, James Lamb and Sherpa monk Tashi Lama).

Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay:

Everest 1953: First Footsteps - Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay

'By today's standards, the 1953 British expedition, under the military-style leadership of Sir John Hunt, was massive in the extreme, but in an oddly bottom-heavy way: 350 porters, 20 Sherpas, and tons of supplies to support a vanguard of only ten climbers. ...

... By the spring of 1953, the ascent of the world's highest mountain was beginning to seem inevitable.

*At first it seemed the Swiss would claim the prize. In 1952 a strong Swiss team that included legendary alpinist Raymond Lambert had pioneered the route up the steep Lhotse Face and reached the South Col. From that high, broad saddle, **Lambert and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay then pushed all the way to 28,210 feet (8,598 meters) on the Southeast Ridge before turning back—probably as high as anyone had ever stood on Earth.***

Now the British were determined to bring every possible advantage to their spring 1953 offensive—including hiring Tenzing, 38, as their lead Sherpa, or sirdar. ...

... So it was that three days later Hillary and Tenzing set out for the top. Their pairing was hardly an accident. "It had always been Hunt's intention, if feasible, to include a Sherpa in one of the summit teams, as a way of recognizing their invaluable contribution to the success of these expeditions," Band says. "Tenzing had already proved he had summit potential by his performance the previous year with Lambert."

In fact, he had been at least 4,000 feet (1,219 meters) higher than any of us!" Indeed, Tenzing (who died in 1986) was the most experienced Everest veteran alive, having participated in six previous attempts on the mountain dating all the way back to 1935. (To those who criticize the practice of leading paying clients on Everest, Himalayan Experience founder and longtime Everest guide Russell Brice has a barbed, half-joking response: "You know who the first guided client on Everest was? Ed Hillary.")

... With an earlier start from a higher camp than Bourdillon and Evans's, Tenzing and Hillary reached the South Summit by 9 a.m. But the difficulties were far from over. After the South Summit, the ridge takes a slight dip before rising abruptly in a rocky spur some 40 feet (12 meters) high just before the true summit. Scraping at the snow with his ax, Hillary chimneyed between the rock pillar and an adjacent ridge of ice to surmount this daunting obstacle, later to be known as the Hillary Step. The pair reached the highest point on Earth at 11:30 a.m. on May 29.

The men shook hands, as Hillary later wrote, "in good Anglo-Saxon fashion," but then Tenzing clasped his partner in his arms and pounded him on the back. The pair spent only 15 minutes on top. "Inevitably my thoughts turned to Mallory and Irvine," Hillary wrote, referring to the two British climbers who had vanished high on Everest's Northeast Ridge in 1924. "With little hope I looked around for some sign that they had reached the summit, but could see nothing."

As the two men made their way back down, the first climber they met was teammate George Lowe, also a New Zealander. Hillary's legendary greeting: "Well, George, we knocked the bastard off!"

Their fame was spreading even as Hillary and Tenzing left the mountain. "When we came out toward Kathmandu, there was a very strong political feeling, particularly among the Indian and Nepalese press, who very much wanted to be assured that Tenzing was first," Sir Edmund recalls today. "That would indicate that Nepalese and Indian climbers were at least as good as foreign climbers. We felt quite uncomfortable with this at the time. John Hunt, Tenzing, and I had a little meeting. We agreed not to tell who stepped on the summit first.

"To a mountaineer, it's of no great consequence who actually sets foot first. Often the one who puts more into the climb steps back and lets his partner stand on top first." The pair's pact stood until years later, when Tenzing revealed in his autobiography, *Tiger of the Snows*, that Hillary had in fact preceded him.

Neither man anticipated how much, in the wake of their success, the appeal of that patch of snow more than five miles in the sky would grow. "Both Tenzing and I thought that once we'd climbed the mountain, it was unlikely anyone would ever make another attempt," Sir Edmund admits today. "We couldn't have been more wrong."

Source link -- National Geographic revisits the 1953 British summit to Everest when the first people stood atop the world's highest mountain. Excerpts above from National Geographic article "50 Years on Everest," by Contributing Editor David Roberts, National Geographic Adventure, April 2003: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/features/everest/sir-edmund-hillary-tenzing-norgay-1953/>

James Lamb and Tashi Lama:



James Lamb (UKNFS board member and representative in Scotland) has a deep, many years duration, connection with the Sherpa people, and especially with monk Mr Tashi Lama. The results of this special Scottish - Sherpa special friendship have produced some exceptional educational and humanitarian, educational results. Excerpts from the article below bring this into focus.

Perthshire man's film from Nepal 'Sherpas Speak' is a big hit at international film festivals -- 'Sherpas Speak' wins people's choice award at Dundee Mountain Film Festival



A Perthshire man's film about Sherpas in Nepal has been making waves across the globe.

James Lamb, who lives in Little Dunkeld, has made a documentary film called 'Sherpas Speak' with the BAFTA award-winning filmmaker Richard Else.

Not only has the film won the people's choice award at the Dundee Mountain Film Festival, it is to be shown at the Trento Film Festival in Italy and the pair have been invited to screen it at the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival.

For the last few years, James has split his time between Perthshire and Nepal where he runs a trekking business called

Tengboche Trekking with a local monk called Tashi Lama, and a charity called The Little Sherpa Foundation.

He spends his time in the Asian country trying to rebuild the Sherpa communities affected by an avalanche which hit Mount Everest in 2014, and the devastating Gorkha earthquake which struck a year later, killing 9000 people.

The film saw James and Richard travelling out to Nepal to capture what life is like for the Sherpa people, an indigenous group who live 4000 metres above sea level, using guides from Inspire Trek and Travel.

James said: "The film has done incredibly well.

"We won the people's choice award at the Dundee Mountain Film Festival.

"To be the only film of all the ones submitted and watched to be chosen is really big.

"We have submitted the film to Trento, the oldest mountain film festival in the world, and Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival has asked us to submit the film too - just to be invited is huge."

James said the film is important not only because it raises money for his charity, but because it spreads awareness of who the Sherpa people are.

He continued: "Richard Else and I put the film together. "When we went out to Nepal to do the filming, I was doing the interviews - because of the charity work I do out there, the Sherpa people trust me.

"It is all about Sherpa life, what pressures they have, their worries, and about their cultures and beliefs.

"The Sherpa people have narrated the film as well.

"There is no one else in the film apart from Sherpas, so it is the only film of its kind in the world that we know of.

"It is important because people think Sherpas are just climbers, particularly if you go to America or Canada – I still know people who have been out to the Himalayas and trekked and climbed with them, and still don't know they are an indigenous group of people.

"We wanted to give Sherpas their voice."

The film is also raising money for James's The Little Sherpa Foundation.

The music in 'Sherpas Speak' was written and performed by fellow Dunkeld resident Dougie Maclean, who along with Jamie Maclean is currently writing an album inspired by the film to try and raise even more money.

One of the next projects James is looking to take on is to build an earthquake resistant primary school and he is also hoping to bring running water to a village of 550 people.

James and Richard are both now looking to make more documentaries on the Sherpa people in Nepal, and are hoping to go back out later this year to do even more filming.

Source: <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/perthshire-mans-film-nepal-sherpas-21614219>

.....

Non-Stamina Sports Volleyball Cricket and also Football outside of the British Army:

Topics covered:

- Background to UK Nepali community sports outside of the British Army and endurance sports
- Volleyball
- Football -- The Gurkha Cup
- The Swindon Cup - a multi-sports (football and volleyball) UK Nepali community annual event
- Cricket

Background to UK Nepali community sports outside of the British Army and endurance sports:

The story of Nepali involvement with sports, even to pioneer and international reputation for often leading level (Hill Racing) is largely, in the UK that founded in and developed by our serving British Army Gurkhas and their predecessors. However, beyond this core source regarding the UK Nepali community and sports, there are also some non-stamina sports of note which are highly popular; especially volleyball and cricket, which this section of the information resource, concentrates on. Before covering these topics further, the following information gives an all round view of the types of sports popular in Nepal:

‘Some of the games held in Nepal in 2019 are Football (Men’ s/Women’s), athletics, boxing (Men’s), taekwondo, karate, volleyball (Men’ s/Women’s), Table Tennis, kabaddi, badminton, wushu, handball (Men’s), Kho Kho (Men’s), ITF Taekwondo, full-contact karate, basketball, weightlifting, wrestling, judo, bodybuilding, hockey, chess, golf, billiard and snooker, cycling, archery, swimming, squash, soft tennis, lawn tennis, gymnastics, boxing (Women’s), cricket, shooting, weightlifting (Women’s), Volleyball, and Dandi Biyo. These are the popular sports in Nepal where many sportspersons have been able to achieve remarkable recognition.’

Source: <https://www.sourcenepal.com/national-game-nepal/>

Volleyball:

Increasingly Nepalis are joining general volleyball clubs where often people of many different nationalities and ethnicities come together to play this popular indoor and outdoor sport. More on this presently. However so popular is volleyball within the UK Nepali community that getting dedicated teams and clubs together has been easy and spontaneous. In the case of the Swindon Cup the tournament in fact splits equally between football and volleyball, championships of each being played on the day. Men’s and women’s volleyball teams are represented at the Swindon Cup, and other comparable and lesser sports orientated events year-round. In 2017 volleyball became the National Sport of Nepal (see more at the end of this section) because of its popularity and because of natural aptitude. Below, courtesy of the Nepalese Association of Wiltshire, we provide some images

of the Men's and Women's component of the Swindon Cup (men's match in play and presentation of prizes to the women's component winners):



In the UK, in the summer beach volleyball is also popular amongst Nepali community members - especially because of its very sociable 'for fun' nature -- such as Deepak Tamrakar, who also provides some images below including trophies of when he was a key member of the then Bournemouth Volleyball Club (BVC).



Finally, we provide a valuable article on the background to volleyball becoming the National Sport of Nepal:

Volleyball was in 2017 formally recognised as Nepal's 'National Sport.'

KATHMANDU, May 23: A cabinet meeting on Monday has decided to recognize 'volleyball' as the national sport of Nepal. The government took the decision after the Ministry of Youth and Sports had suggested declaring volleyball as the national sport.

Three years back, the Ministry for Youth and Sports had started discussion over deciding national sport and it also had publicly asked suggestions to make the decision. Now, the ministry has said that its decision was based on the suggestions from stakeholders of the sports fraternity of Nepal.

Meanwhile football and cricket also were in the race to become the national sport but due to volleyball's easily playable nature in all terrains and country wide organization it pipped the other two popular sports.

Nepal Volleyball Association (NVA) was demanding that the government make volleyball the national sport since five years. Meanwhile, NVA has welcomed the decision of the government to choose volleyball as the national sport. "Volleyball has completed the minimum requirement to become national sport. It can be played anywhere in country, in any terrains, in a low cost. So it fully deserved to be the national sport," said NVA's General Secretary Jitendra Bahadur Chand.

"Every sport has its own specialty and importance, but to be the national sport it has to be hugely popular and should have strong organization. In country like Nepal, these things should be taken in consideration while announcing any sport as national sport," added Chand.

National men's volleyball team skipper Em Rana also expressed his delight over the government's decision. "Volleyball is very much popular in the country and played in every part including the Himalayan region, the hills and the tarai. So this decision makes sense," said Rana.

National women's team skipper Manju Gurung also expressed her happiness over the decision. "Majority of the population grow up playing volleyball. It doesn't need big space for playing so we can play it everywhere. Not only players but the whole nation is happy about the government's decision of making volleyball as the national sport," said Gurung.

Source: <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/volleyball-recognized-as-national-sport/>

The Gurkha Cup:



The Gurkha Cup annual football tournament commenced in 2000 (further details below) and constitutes one of the most important annual events in the UK Nepali social calendar almost rivalling the annual Nepali Mela (held at Kempton Park racecourse) and the Lord Buddha's birthday - Buddha Jayanti (held annually in Trafalgar Square, central London) - that like the annual Nepali Mela, is facilitated by the Embassy of Nepal. Some 10,000 - 12,000+ Nepali community members come to Aldershot's Queens Avenue, Aldershot for the annual Gurkha Cup tournament finale.



The Gurkha Cup tournament (facilitated by the **Tamu Dhee Association UK**) is football focused, but at a UK Nepali community level, an unequalled largest scale social Nepali culture celebrating event. It is best described as embodying at a national level the finest characteristics of a late 19th to early 20th centuries English County Fayre in many of its dimensions and attributes beyond the actual football pitch grand finale and related exceptional cultural arts performances and world famous Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas musical performance, dimensions. Major (retired) Krishna Gurung (pictured left) was the lead founder of the Gurkha Cup, and explained to the UKNFS, for the information resource project, that a core reason for the Cup's creation was to draw some in Nepali youth in the UK, away from some of the types of bad path behaviour that exists in some elements of British youth, such as excess drinking,

drugs, and not being a good citizen & community member.

Foods sold, mo.mo snacks, Nepali Dal-Bhat, Nepali pakaudas, Nepali jewellery sold, groceries, Nepali clothes of functional and formal kinds (topis [the hats worn by Nepali men], sarees, daura surawal, etc.), interactions with many different businesses stalls beyond these selling services of importance to community members by UK Nepali businesses, but also features martial art displays, impromptu and formally included in the main programme of the event, Nepali folk dance, and even Paint Ball!

Beyond such food, business and recreational & fun dimensions and interactions, the main purpose and feature of at community [non-sports] level, the social reunions of family members branches in the UK and of friends ['sathiharu'] for important once in a year direct precious and long looked forward to

interactions. This constitutes the main context for this unparalleled once a year major social - as well as cultural and sports - event in our annual UK Nepali calendar: friends and family members reunited in ways that in fact replicate such major focal social [family and friends] reunions enabling national and regional festival events in Nepal itself.



The UKNFS has been honoured to have a VIP guests presence across the 2017 - 2019 period at the Gurkha Cup annual tournament. Our organisation was very pleased to enable through the contact to us of Mr Kevin Coleman (England FA Equality Manager) on his suggestion that could it be welcome for the FA Cup trophy to be presented at the Gurkha Cup Tournament [2018] for all attending to see and have the opportunity to have photos with the fabled Cup?

Of course we/the UKNFS replied 'Yes' and that the presence of the cup trophy at the Gurkha Cup was a great honour, and, even more importantly, that the Nepali football phenomenon in turn - through firstly the British Army context Nepal Cup, and, subsequently, beyond the army, the exceptional phenomenon of the Gurkha Cup (that see's some 10 to 12 thousand participants annually attend its Final) and joined to this our relationship with England FA, in securing for two [hopefully more, post-Covid 19 crisis] successive years, the presence of the FA Cup trophy itself at the Gurkha Cup tournament (held annually at the Recreation Ground, Queens Avenue, Aldershot).

In this a truly unique opportunity for the England derived sport of football be joined to that of the Gurkha/Nepali football phenomenon to inspire and educate people in the UK and across the world, whose hearts are touched deeply by the 'beautiful game' as not only Sport, but as a powerful, uniquely powerful activity to unite all humanity, including to against the stupidity of prejudice of racial and all

kinds, not least through the illustrious role of the Gurkhas [Nepalis] in British army, and ultimately through their special role in the latter, British history itself.

The South Asia Time (SAT) online article below gives context to the unique UK Nepali community and UK land of settlement context to the outstanding event that the Gurkha Cup comprises - the SAT news article also provides origin and background detail to the Gurkha Cup itself and its trophy [Cup]:

The 17th grand episode of the Gurkha cup is going to held on 26 May 2019 at Queens Avenue, Aldershot, GU11 2LE.

Gurkha Cup is one of the biggest events organized by a Nepalese community in United Kingdom where youth from not only UK but also from European country like Portugal, Belgium and Germany traveled to the fields at Queens Avenue for the Tournament.

This event is organized annually by Tamu Dhee UK, One of the biggest and dynamic Nepalese community in the UK.

The organizing committee has announced the key dates for booking the stall and the entry for the participants. The stall booking from the program is opened from 18th of March and will be closed on the 18th of May. Similarly, the interested team can start their registration from 18th of March and the last date of the entry is said to be 18th of May 2019. All the bookings and team registration can be done from the website of the program www.gurkhacupuk.com

Gurkha Cup, it was established in the year 2000. The cup itself was presented by the King of Greece in the year 2000. Since then the popularity of Gurkha Cup is growing strength to strength among all Nepalese Community not only in the UK but the charm and popularity is growing in other European countries as well. This is now the biggest, the most popular and the most prestigious event that we organize in comparison to other events that is organized by different Nepalese organization.

Gurkha Cup Event is itself a unique day, it not only shows the football tournament but is also combined with various kind of stalls and displays i.e free-fall parachute display, Brigade of Gurkha Band display, Cultural dance, Tai-Kwon-do display and many more. As a whole, it is a nice family day out to meet and greet friends and family and to spread your networking. Army and local Police also feel proud to get involved in Gurkha Cup by putting some of their Recruiting Stalls and providing Referees for the day. Hampshire Police will be performing a dance program this year.

About 50 teams participate in this nine-a-side Gurkha Cup tournament to lift the much-coveted Gurkha Cup trophy and the tournament gets more competitive each year. The tournament provides a platform for teams to display their skills, teamwork and sportsmanship; whilst on the other hand; it provides a great family day out to spectators in a secure environment to meet and greet both old and new friends and families as well as to enjoy watching competitive football matches. The Rushmoor Borough Council has recognised this prestigious tournament and is included in their annual calendar.

Attractions:

*Display of FA Cup
Spectacle of top quality football competition
Various mouth-watering food restaurants,
Art and craft stall
Saree Shops
Breath-taking Parachute Display*

Martial Art Display
Nepali folk dance
Paint Ball

Source: <https://www.southasiatime.com/2019/03/23/team-entry-registration-and-stall-booking-is-opened-for-17th-gurkha-cup-2019-one-of-the-biggest-event-of-nepalese-community-in-uk/>

An exceptional centenary:



The year 1921 saw the introduction of the sport of football to and in Nepal by the British, making in 2021 one hundred years that the game has been played there through the cultural level special people to people level friendship between the two countries. Although a planned two-leg friendly international match between Nepal's national team, and England C Team was due to start with the first, England leg, match being played at Aldershot on 25th May 2020, has been postponed due to the global Coronavirus pandemic, it is certain that in or around the time of the centenary of football in Nepal, that a friendly international or comparable Nepal - Britain celebration will take place within the next 18 months.

In the course of this resource creation (summer 2020) at a number of UK Nepali-Gurkha community locations across the UK upsurges of Covid 19 pretext Anti-Asian (including especially retired Gurkhas) racism. Through the UKNFS an educational initiative that has been welcomed and be assisted by England FA, to counteract such behaviour through sharing the Nepali-Gurkha football phenomenon is to be commenced and facilitated by the UKNFS (that flagged up this potential project two years earlier through its role in negotiating with the FA on behalf of Sahara UK, with the FA), with core elements drawn from this information resource. This will coincide with the centenary mentioned above. Earlier in 2020 an FA team lead by Mr Laurence Jones visited ANFA in Kathmandu to celebrate the friendly international match initiative and on a mutual learning basis (image above)

Gurkha Cup - Tamu Dhee: <http://gurkhacupuk.com/about-us/>

About Us

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Just to give you a terse background of Gurkha Cup, it was established in the year 2000. The cup itself was presented by the King of Greece in year 2000. Since then the popularity of Gurkha Cup is growing strength to strength among all Nepalese Community not only in UK but the charm and popularity is growing in other European countries as well. This is now the biggest, the most popular and the most prestigious event that we organise in comparison to other events that is organised by different Nepalese organisation. Such is the charm and popularity of the Gurkha Cup that spectators from all walks of life descend upon the tournament in Aldershot in their thousands from near and a far – from UK and abroad. The record number of people we have had is 13,000 in 2016. It has raised money for good causes and has donated it to the victims of the Japanese Tsunami, the Philippines Typhoon Haiyan, major flooding and landslides in Nepal, Gurkha Welfare trust and also for Help for Heroes to name a few, in 2015 for Nepal Earthquake £80,000 was raised and donated to support the victims of earthquake. It prides itself in helping others and in providing a social platform for Nepalese and other races to help integration and understanding. The Gurkha Cup also provides platform for different business's for networking and for their advertisement.

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Gurkha Cup
Like Page

Calendar

MAY 2020

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Links Desktop ENG 22:29 02/05/2020

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Gurkha Cup
Like Page

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

May

Featured Posts

16th Gurkha Cup 2018
June 24, 2018

Links Desktop ENG 22:29 02/05/2020

The Swindon Cup – a multi-sports (football and volleyball) UK Nepali community annual event

In the course of the UK Nepali community cultural & social heritage project we were privileged to work closely with the Nepalese Association of Wiltshire (NAW), in the course of this engagement we learned of the fact that although not on the scale of the Gurkha Cup or Nepal Cup, the Swindon and North Wiltshire Nepali community had from 2007 initiated its own annual sports celebration, with the Swindon Cup at its heart. Ms Bura Rana (NAW General Secretary)

Nepalese come together for annual Swindon Cup



... on Saturday as the Nepalese Association of Wiltshire held its annual Swindon Cup competition.

The event, which took place at Buckhurst Park Community Centre, saw football teams and ladies volleyball players come together for a day of food and sport in the summer sunshine.

Organiser Manju Bura, 27, from Stratton, said: “The Swindon Cup started in 2007 as a community barbecue to bring people together.

We thought it would be a good, easy way to get people out for some summer fun and it’s always a really popular event.”

“Since then it has gone on and grown each year with different sports teams taking part. We don’t have as many this year as we’d like, but it should still be a great day.”

Medals and trophies were presented to the winners later in the day and there was a wide selection of food to sample throughout.

Organisers said around 200 people attended most of whom came from the town’s Nepalese community.

The day’s main event was the women’s volleyball tournament and it was only the second time the sport had been hosted.

Maita Limbu, 51, said: “This year is unlike previous years because we’ve had a few restrictions with football pitches. There are so many other programmes going on this weekend that we struggled to attract teams from outside, so we decided to make it more ‘in-house’ and bring everyone from Swindon’s Nepalese community together.

“Ladies volleyball has taken priority this year and we want to get everybody here to have a great day.

“We are serving food and offering people the chance to watch some good games of football and volleyball.”

The Nepalese Association of Wiltshire, which started in 2006, is based in Swindon and the majority of Nepalese people arrived in the town after 2005 when the government decided to give permanent settlement to some Gurkhas.

The association is also designed to help Nepalese people newly arrived in the UK to cope providing information on transport facilities and where to go for certain things.

Source: <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/14668696.nepalese-come-together-for-annual-swindon-cup/>

An exceptional development in regard to football and the Swindon & North Wiltshire community also took place in 2019 through the UKNFS and NAW in conjunction with Wiltshire FA and Swindon Town FC. Although the origins of this initiative, a new football festival, came into being as a positive response to racism experienced by the local Nepali-Gurkha and broader Asian and BAME communities (<https://uknfs.org/uknfs-support-to-our-swindon-nepali-gurkha-community-in-face-of-experience-of-community-wide-racist-asb-2/>). This ground-breaking football festival -- <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/17800023.pictures-swindon-youngsters-first-try-new-3g-football-pitch-shadow-county-ground/> -- saw an unprecedented 33% BAME communities members and two-fifths girls as players.

An outstanding success of the Nepali community in conjunction with football, building new links and changing the face of football to boost gender equality and racial inclusion, in diversity celebration, originally through Ms Bura Rana and Alan Mercel-Sanca joining the Wiltshire FA Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) that was initiated by Mr Oliver Selfe, CEO of Wiltshire FA as a direct response to the blight of unchallenged anti-Nepali-Gurkha attacks that the year opened with.

The culture of football being a world where diversity was celebrated and all were united in love of ‘the Beautiful Game’ in a shared humanity and love for sport. Councillor Junab Ali, *Swindon’s first Bangladeshi mayor*, *praised the diversity drive*:

“For far too long institutions like the FA have said they want all this, but in reality nothing has been done. It’s been a token gesture. “But this time, Oliver Selfe and the Wiltshire FA have really taken it on. They’ve come up with the goods.”

Source: <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/17800023.pictures-swindon-youngsters-first-try-new-3g-football-pitch-shadow-county-ground/>

Football as a mechanism for integration and youth development:

The founder of the Gurkha Cup explained in an interview to the UKNFS, at the time of the Gurkha Cup 2019 that the Cup/Tournament’s origins in fact lay in the need for Nepali community members, beyond Nepali-Gurkha community members in active service within the context of the Brigade of Gurkhas within the British Army, to ensure non-military UK Nepali youth have wholesome sports & physical activity structures in their lives. This to keep them away from contemporary UK youth society perils such as heavy drinking and dangers of drugs. In this the Gurkha Cup has been a phenomenal

success with hundreds of UK Nepali youth taking part, and football becoming a part of their daily/weekly lifestyles.

As such sport, and football especially, have been playing dynamic parts in the lives of hundreds of UK Nepali, especially Nepali-Gurkha family members, young persons and in fact connecting them with their broader UK Nepali community in the most meaningful daily living and sharing of culture (linked back strongly to Nepal itself in regards to sport/football) ways.

On the challenges of integration [that include encountered discrimination and racism, as well as the problems of growing up in a different country with a very different culture and society] the indigenous British have in the domain of football been reaching out as well to younger members of the UK Nepali community, in the core location of settlement in the UK, Farnborough - Aldershot, as the following BBC news report, detailed below, evidences:

Aldershot football team helps Nepalese integration

A Hampshire youth worker has started a football team involving Nepalese and British-born players in a bid to promote integration in Aldershot.

Three years ago many Gurkhas were given the right to settle in the UK following a high-profile campaign by actress Joanna Lumley.

Since 2009, many Nepalese families with Gurkha connections have moved to north Hampshire because of its links to the military and its established Nepali community.

Now a tenth of the population of Aldershot and its surrounding area is believed to be made up of Nepalis and the area has become known locally as "Little Nepal".

The influx has caused repeated clashes between locals and newly arrived Nepalese teenagers, according to youth workers.

Last summer, the police set up a dispersal order in Manor Park, which allowed them to move on any groups of youths involved in anti-social behaviour.

Richard Cooper formed United Rushmoor following clashes in and around Aldershot

Nepalese teenager Bishal Gurung agreed there were problems in the community.

"If the community wants to put their hands out to be friends, we will be the first to put our hands out.

"This is a whole new country for us, and it's not like home.

"To make new friends, this is what we want."

Now youth worker Richard Cooper has started up a football team, called United Rushmoor.

Nepalese and British-born white teenagers came together in mid-January to play their first friendly match in mixed teams.

Further events involving both communities, including cricket, drama and basketball will also be held by the club over the coming months.

Mr Cooper said: "It's been a tough couple of years. The pressure on local resources has been tough whether you are Nepali or non-Nepali, but things have turned around in the last couple of weeks."

Mikka Thakali took part in the football match.

He said: "We play together, Nepali and white people, and we make friendship more so there won't be any trouble in our own town."

A further step towards integration will hopefully be taken this Saturday, when a Best of Both event will take place from midday until 17:00 GMT at the KC21 building in Aldershot.

Traditional food such as curry and momos will be on offer along with music, markets and dancing to showcase positive aspects of Nepali and British culture.

Source (31 January 2012): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-16796228>

Cricket:

In Nepal cricket is very popular as in India, but due to the space required for practice and formal matches, its potential for growth has been limited across most of this very hilly and mountainous country, with the exception of some parts of the Terai in the south of the country. It is nevertheless the most popular of all sports amongst Nepalis, including television and online: for more detail on cricket in Nepal please see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cricket_in_Nepal



Many Nepalis look to some of the main Indian IPL Clubs such as Mumbai Indians, to follow. In the UK at this time (2020) there is still little development of actual Nepali cricket clubs and tournaments, but Nepalis in the UK are starting to play in English County Cricket affiliate clubs such as Poole Town Cricket Club, again Deepak Tamrakar is our example of a Nepali community member integrating in such clubs. In his case winning a Man of the Match accolade (and presentation, as per traditional custom, with the match cricket ball in the 2019 season) - see image of ball above. We understand however that in Ireland there is at least one Nepali community members cricket club, which is an exceptional development considering there are only some 2000 Nepali residents settled in the Republic.

A very special event happened in the summer of 2016 (<https://sports.ndtv.com/cricket/nepal-to-play-marylebone-cricket-club-at-lord-s-in-2016-1493320>), however, when the Nepal National Cricket Team played a friendly with MCC at Lords Cricket Ground in London. This was to mark the bicentenary of Nepal - British friendship and relations and was organised by Mr Nabin Gurung, Mr Prashant Kunwar and others: we provide details of this historic match below. Subsequently from this initiative, pre-

Covid 19 further matches have been played in England by Nepal's national team, making for a really exciting development of match level links between England and Nepal.



Captain Paras Khadka at the toss before the game against the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lord's on Tuesday, July 19, 2016. Photo Courtesy: Raman Shiwakoti

KATHMANDU: *Nepal defeated Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) by 41 runs to record a triumph at historic Lord's Cricket Ground of London in England on Tuesday.*

Nepal's spinners dented MCC's run chase as they were skittled for paltry 176 runs in pursuit of 218 for victory.

MCC's opener Adair tried to steer his side to victory with a measured innings of 100 but fell short to take his side over the line.

Nepal's spinners bowled in tandem to tandem without giving any width to the home side and orchestrated the victory.

Sagar Pun was pick of the Nepali bowlers as he scalped up three crucial MCC's wickets with the best figure of 10-2-35-3. Basanta Regmi claimed 3-35 while medium-pacer Som Pal Kami took 2-33.

MCC's batsmen found hard to handle the variety of Nepali bowling as spinners took wickets at regular interval.



Nepal's opening batsman Gyanendra Malla tries to play a cut-shot against MCC at the Lord's Cricket Ground, London in England, on Tuesday, July 19, 2016. Photo Courtesy: CricketingNepal

Adair had anchored the MCC's innings with his sensible 100 but fell to left arm delivery of Basanta Regmi's outgoing ball to snick a catch to Raju Rijal behind the stumps.

He also struck three maximum blows during his innings, playing spinners and seamers with ease and nudging ones and two's all around the park. He reached his milestone off 122 deliveries, with a forward push to long-on off Basanta Regmi's delivery.



Nepal team waves to the crowd at the end of their friendly game against MCC at the Lord's Cricket Ground, London in England, on Tuesday, July 19, 2016. Photo Courtesy: Cricketing Nepal



Contingent of Nepali cricket supporters watch their team's play against the hosts MCC at the Lord's Cricket Ground, London in England, on Tuesday, July 19, 2016. Photo Courtesy: CricketingNepal

Earlier, Nepal had won the toss and elected to bat first in the slow batting wicket at the Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

Nepal posted a formidable total of 218 runs for victory to MCC in their first ever game at Cricket's holy grail Lord's.

Source: <https://thehimalayantimes.com/sports/nepal-record-historic-lords-win/>

The Arts dimension of UK Nepali culture:

Topics index:

- Introduction
- Clothing
- Artisanship -- Ceremonial and practical functional items
- Music and Dance
- Television and Film
- Culinary and foods - introduction to separate, parallel information resource
- Literature
- Visual Arts - including interviews

- Glossary of Nepali arts terms

Introduction:



The Arts pervade almost all key aspects of life for UK Nepali community members, in daily living, in the home, in Nepali culture related purchases (such as clothes or scared Murti [statuary] of Nepali Hinduism or Nepali Buddhism (such as the Vajra Newar Buddhist tradition, Swayambhunath complex in northern Kathmandu: image source - Tom Pouncy) in their multiple forms, through to food and drink vessels and utensils, through to paintings both secular and sacred, and woodwork [the example above left of Newari medieval era woodwork in the Kathmandu Valley]: image source, also from Tom Pouncy).

Still more so is the case for Nepali societies (Samaj) and of course UK Nepali performing artists. Here from guidance from community members across Southern England major and minor Nepali communities we provide some of the main areas of arts involvement in life and living.

At the end of this section we provide an arts related glossary, as this is an ideal starting point for exploring the incredibly rewarding journey of engaging with Nepali arts related culture.

This main section of the Nepali arts component covers major art forms that contribute to UK Nepali identity and living.

The section concludes on visual arts, with interviews with two internationally renowned UK-based painters, Govinda Sah ‘Azad,’ and Subash Thebe, and details on a UK art student who through contribution to a large-scale Nepali arts project at a major South of England College, who as a result of participation in the project subsequently went to Nepal to learn more directly about Nepali arts as part of Nepal’s vibrant culture (this includes a video interview).

Clothing (Nepali: ‘lugaa haru’):



This section of the information resource focuses on two areas. Firstly, on three iconic Nepali clothing items worn or utilised extensively from Embassy to community leads and major to local UK Nepali community events and societies levels, and secondly on in-the-UK Nepali community Western style men's suits and Nepali women's traditional ethnicity and culture related clothing as worn, respectively from high level business and formal occasions through to daily in the street as well as in the home. Below Newari lady in Newari traditional costume at a UK Nepali community cultural event.



Three iconic Nepal clothing items used extensively in the UK from Embassy of Nepal and major to minor community organisations events:

Topi:

The Topi is a cylindrical hat (there is a comparable, often white, hat worn in India, with similar status and Hindustani cultural importance), traditionally made of hemp, and black, or in given ethnic culture patterns of subtle colours, with 'Dhaka' being perhaps the most famous non-black design for coloured Topis.

Worn at all formal occasions by Nepali politicians, including prime ministers and ministers and senior government officials, as well as Nepali ambassadors, the Topi is also worn by craftsmen, farmers, labourers, and conveys a sense of unique distinct Nepali cultural identity and personal dignity. In the UK, perhaps the largest single collection of Topis is that, numbering hundreds, of Dr Mark Watson, Head of Flora at the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE), who has provided invaluable support in preliminaries to this information resource project with key aspects of the UKNFS enablement of the Nepal Art Council (NAW) Britain - Nepal Bicentenary project. Dr Watson's priceless knowledge is shared through a link on the Floras of Nepal in the relevant section of this information resource. Topis are commonly worn in all UK Nepali community towns such as Ashford in Kent, Aldershot, Swindon, London (west and South-East), but almost always in terms of on the street level, by older to especially elderly Nepali men.

Daura Suruwal:



The Daura Suruwal - trouser, shirt ('Daura': a long shirt with close fitting around the neck and strings to tie to the body), sometimes black waistcoat, but in the classic Daura Suruwal a dark jacket, and black Topi - is for Nepali men THE de-facto national-level representative formal attire. For ladies the parallel being Nepali forms of sari linked to given ethnic peoples and cultures, and castes.

Reputedly it was Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Kunwar [later Jung Bahadur Rana, founder of the Rana Dynasty] that added the dark jacket - this is of a classic Western/European NOT South Asian, kind. Prime Minister Jung was perhaps the most famous figure in the history of Nepali-British special relations in the 19th Century, and travelled in his capacity as Prime Minister of Nepal to England (and France) in 1850. During that visit Jung Bahadur was an avid learner, including from cutting edge Western armaments to clearly clothing couture.

As such the classical Daura Suruwal is perhaps the epitome of Nepali national level costume (for males) being a Nepali/South Asian - British/Western synthesis. The Newar people of Nepal have been the origin of the classical Daura Suruwal, through a traditional Newari men's costume, the Tapalan (this lacked the Topi and jacket/waistcoat however).

As with wearing of Topis, so too, but to a little lesser extent, Daura Suruwal are often worn by older UK Nepali men in towns and locations that have substantial Nepali populations.

Image above to left of Sahara UK Association immediate past president, Min Bahadur Gurung wearing Daura Suruwal and Topi.



Khada (ceremonial scarf of Tibetan- Sherpa cultural zone origin) also spelled 'khata': The Khada ceremonial scarf, although originally Tibetan culture, and therefore at global cultural zone level Tibetan - Sherpa, in origin has been increasingly over the late 19th through to early 21st centuries, iconic as a THE token of conferment of respect and auspicious good wishes.

It is conferred on those who have achieved some major accomplishment (such as passing out from school or college, graduating from university, at

point of travelling to or from abroad [international airports such as Tribhuvan International Airport in Nepal or Heathrow in the UK often bear witness to khada presentations], or on important community events [AGMs, Annual Dinners, etc.], or on initiating or concluding political or business occasion meetings of importance, and of course in regard to marriages!).

These silk scarves are traditionally white or crème, but can often as well be nowadays yellow/golden, red, green, and other colours, and can have organisation, society logos and sacred religious scripts to convey wisdom or provide protection, printed on them.

Khada presentations are a special feature at major cultural or society events, including at the Embassy of Nepal in London. The scarves are presented sometimes to VIPs and other respected persons on entering the event, or when called up to the main stage or presentation area: the recipient gives the Namaste/Namaskar two hands palms together salute in reciprocation to the officer/dignitary offering and presenting the khada.

The Khada is perhaps the most symbolic distinctive Nepali culture clothing item in terms of indicating that Nepal is unique for being the geographical meeting point of both Avedic Hindu and Buddhist South Asian/Indian Sub-Continent, and Tibetan-Burman South Central Asian cultures.

There are other forms of clothing particular to serving and retired Nepali Gurkhas, but also to the Sherpa People. Details of these are found in the Gurkha and Sherpa sections of this information resource.

Western style designer and high-end suits, and Nepali women's ethnicity clan and caste clothing:

In the UK Nepali leaders at all levels have the commonplace practice of having their suits made by experts ('Master ji' / master tailors) in Kathmandu as a general rule.



In terms of traditional Nepali costumes, such as the Daura Suruwal for Nepali men, and especially for Nepali women of all ethnicities, castes, cultures, the general rule is also to have such costumes created in Nepal and shipped to the UK, although in locations such as Aldershot that have major Nepali communities, ‘Master ji’ of either sex are increasingly servicing this important need. We provide below a set of images of both Western-style high-end designer suits for Nepali men (example to left), and also traditional Nepali women’s costume (illustration below, and others elsewhere in the information resource, including Sherpa component). Towns with UK Nepali

communities of larger kinds have Nepali tailors and seamstress businesses, often in shops in town centres such as at Aldershot.



Date with Prabal Gurung

Listen to this talented designer's story
and the reality of 'dreaming big'



Photo: Courtesy TNM Magazine

KATHMANDU: While the world's aspiring designers look up to him, fashionistas want to 'wear' him as this talented fashion designer has dressed world famous celebrities like the First Lady of the

US Michelle Obama, The Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton and Oprah Winfrey, to name a few. His focus on quality and innovation has placed Prabal Gurung at the forefront of American fashion. He is living a life and leading a career that many can't

dream of, while few attempt to achieve it but find it very difficult to accomplish.

If you are eager to know the story behind success of this significant figure in the world of fashion or wish to achieve like him dreaming "big", there is an opportunity for you to listen to his story.

Head to the Army Officers' Club, Bhadrakali on November 1 at 4:00 pm where Gurung will be present at the venue for 'In Conversation with Prabal Gurung'.

"The main objective of the programme is to provide a platform for our youth to listen to Prabal's inspirational story and encourage them to dream big," stated a press release issued by TNM Magazine, the magazine partner of the event.

You will get to listen to motivational stories of Gurung, who launched his eponymous collection in February 2009 with a philosophy encompassing modern luxury, indelible style and an acute sense of glamour.

The entire proceeds raised from this event will go to Pushpa Basnet's Early Childhood Development Centre. The event has been presented by Shiksha Foundation Nepal in association with Samsung Galaxy Note 3 & Gear. The event is co-supported by Dabur Nepal and Mega Bank. The Himalayan Times is one of the official media partners along with RVL radio, TNM Magazine and Himalayan Television.

Tickets are priced at Rs 250 and available at Roadhouse Café (Pulchowk, Thamel, Boudha, Bhatbhateni); Bakery Café (New Road); Nanglo (Durbar Marg); Café Cheeno (Patan Dhoka). —*mta*

Nepali high-end Western style tailoring has an international reputation with for example we found during the project, one of the Gurkha association leads (Major Dewan at BGWS) sharing that he has all his suits made in Kathmandu.

New York based Prabal Gurung is for example one of the world's top fashion designers.

It should be noted as well that UK Nepali community members, especially younger generation ones, and non-Nepali British visitors to Nepal often wear culture-related T-shirts of very high quality and displaying cultural, often spiritual symbols designs (below):



In terms of traditional ethnic, military service context, and functional civilian, our information resource Gurkha and Sherpa components includes sections where headgear/hats details are also provided – with transcultural clothing domain learning outstanding knowledge and details.

.....

Artisanship -- Ceremonial and practical functional items:



As anyone familiar with Nepal will be aware, the country has exceptional level skill, evidenced for many hundreds of years and longer in terms of religious-devotional paintings displayed in temples, monasteries, homes, and also in sculpture, architecture, woodwork and metalwork - it is reputed that Nepal in fact has had a major little-known but real influence where pagoda and temple architecture is concerned, and in the country's history. The most celebrated international major level instance of this coming in China's Yuan Dynasty (Kublai Khan) under Nepal's Malla Monarchy, in the master craftsman Aneko / Araniko -- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Araniko>

The UK Nepali community of course cannot, to date deploy building level artisanship, but in minor items such as cooking wear, copperware or brass utensils and sometimes cutlery, they certainly are in evidence in most UK Nepali homes; Thangka paintings can feature, as well sometimes as items such as ceremonial drink dispensers (Anti) - featured to the left,

and a presentation gift to the UKNFS from H.E. Dr Durga Bahadur Subedi at the Embassy of Nepal.

The fabled 'Khukuri' / Kukri - Gurkha knife (for household/functional as well as military service, Brigade of Gurkhas, British Army contexts use, is perhaps the most famous of all Nepali artisan objects: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kukri> The example below is from a civilian, non-Gurkha member of our Dorset Nepali community, for dress use on for example Nepali dance performance occasions, and smaller and less angular than the Gurkha military use Khukuri.

On discussing the creation of the Khukuri on multiple occasions with community members from Canterbury, Ashford, Folkestone, to Aldershot, Dorset, and SE and West London, all shared about how Nepali divinities (Hindustani-Nepali, Sherpa-Tibetan) are associated with creativity, including metalwork and blades, as well as all aspects of temporal/daily-non-religious, and religious-sacred activities and living. The presiding deity/god of all of artisans & craftsmanship in Nepal and in India, Vishwakarma (attributed as the divine Architect of the whole universe: he built the city of Lanka of the demon god Ravana, and Dwarika, the city where the Lord Krishna lived), and traditionally, and still largely today in 2020 there is a specific Caste - the Kami Caste ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kami_\(caste\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kami_(caste))) -- associated with the artisans who create Khukuris.



Music and Dance:



Nepali ‘geet’ (Nepali song) and Nepali ‘naach’ (Nepali dance) are absolutely fundamental parts at the heart of diverse, creative, Nepali culture. Traditionally internationally renowned Bollywood Indian cinema has beautiful choreographed stunning dance and song at the heart of almost all of its films. This dynamic certainly transfers to many classic Nepali films but most of all is found on at least the same scale were community and given ethnic cultures are concerned in Nepal in regard to dance and song at folk (‘Lok’) level and beyond. The image above is from a UK inter-universities Nepali societies national annual dance competition: amazing dance performances reflecting many of the different ethnic cultures of Nepal with accompanying costumes, and also contemporary, experimental styles.

Nepali music:

Nepali music from folk, classical, to popular is incredibly uplifting. Ma Hu Nepali Babu (‘Made in Nepal’) is a famous example in the popular music domain: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5b_69TwtvOE . Nepali sacred (largely Buddhist) music, often based on chant/mantra is also energising in a powerful way (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Om_mani_padme_hum).



There are many Nepali (Nepal based AND UK-based [often linked to the latter]) radio stations that output popular, folk and classical Nepali music.

Below we provide a set of Nepali dance & music video links, thanks to the Sherpa Association UK (five pieces listed below: these present song/music, majoring on rarely seen outside of the UK Nepali community), and also from Ms Sita Maiya Rajchal:

- Two male Dancers performance: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/TbnJH2N9vSpcERvt8>
- Female dance, solo: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/BQ6rYXixcAACPGvm9>
- Two female dancers performance: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/xthveg5AcH8cJt5X6>
- Four person female dancing group performance: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/qsSGbDL4Znf6mKHv9>
- Male and female dance group performance: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/WD8sigcVs7rXPuaL9>

The UKNFS has in regard to classic Nepali and Indian musical instrumental music, through the Sita, been provided with a set of video performances of Sita Maiya Rajchal, a Nepali sitarist World Book of Records holder:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MuoIFNF_NNw
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhU8wgUS_E
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntxMggk27vA>

Bagpipes:



This You Tube link provided by the Tamrakar family of Dadeldhura in the Far West (Province 7 / Mahakali) of Nepal provides perhaps the most exceptional musical Nepal - British Isles cultures transcultural example, for it provides a demonstration of the Nepali 'bagpipes' which in essence are the same as the famous Scottish bagpipes: <https://www.facebook.com/1376562355966108/posts/2752999268322403/>

The musical affinities of Scottish and traditional popular Nepali music, as the video demonstrates, are particularly strong. Here are two more related links:

From the Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT): <https://www.gwt.org.uk/news/gurkhas-and-the-scots/>

'The Great Highland Bagpipe has also been adopted by many countries that were formerly part of the British Empire* despite their lack of a Scottish or Irish population. These countries include India, Pakistan, Nepal, Malaysia and Singapore.' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Highland_bagpipe

*To correct: Nepal was never a part of the British Empire, but a key country of South Asia in which transcultural arts learning from the British Isles cultures to those of South Asia took place, albeit little known until now in 21st Century UK.

Nepali dance:



UK Nepali community members, the vast majority of whom are first generation settlers often of only some 5 - 10 years establishment in the UK, preserve and practice at formal society and major cultural occasions, including at the Embassy of Nepal, through to Nepali dance groups, such as the ladies dance group in Aldershot (that meets weekly), almost all forms of Nepali dance as practiced in Nepal itself.

These forms range from solo (of both genders), male - male, female - female, male and female two dancers performances, through to small group (3-5+) up to large group 20+. In Nepal the latter can include 100+ participants, such as Far-Western Nepali [Dotali] community members (from Mahakali) settled in the capital, Kathmandu, celebrating festivals particular to their culture. Nepali dance is graceful with elegant hand & arm and leg movements, often interspersed with occasional light step moves.

Above we provide an image (permission from the performer) from a Nepali dance performance - rarely seen outside of the UK Nepali community itself - at the 2019 Dorset Indian Association Mela in Poole Park.

Television and film:

Television and film are great passions with most members of the UK Nepali community, at least as much as in Nepal itself. Across the course of the information resource creation and content gathering there were many occasions where we/UKNFS were able to join and enjoy evenings with families (such as Kripesh Adhikari and Lata Khanal at the Bournemouth community) in which Nepali and Indian TV formed backdrops to wonderful conversation and delicious Nepali meals.



A typical social evening in involves TV (Western and Nepali/Indian via internet or pay-view), sometimes a new or famous Nepali or Indian/Bollywood film, but also too talent and challenge shows such as *Khatron Ke Khiladi*, *Nepal Roadies*, *Nepal's Got Talent*, *India's Got Talent*, and for comedy the world renowned *Kapil Sharma Show*. Nepali snacks are served, and later a main course such as particularly Dal Bhat with meat or vegetable curry, and depending on age and gender alcohol-free or alcoholic drinks (sometimes even Nepali such as Chyang). In terms of conversation topics these usually include about families, friends, events in Nepal, issues and experiences of daily life including in work/study in the UK. Sometimes male only groups of friends ('sathi haru') may play cards, too.

Beyond this, in the Farnborough - Aldershot area, London and other locations of significant Nepali population new Nepali films are often premiered (poster image to left from *Sapan Entertainment Ltd* of Mr Sapan Kumar Rai) with lead

actors and actresses, producers and directors coming from Nepal for such premier showings of their films. At a different level, there are also UK Nepali community film clubs where community members gather to see famous and favourite films, and of course to socialise and catch up on news. The Empire Banqueting Hall on Aldershot High Street is home to such a film club, for instance.

Culinary and foods:



Image above kindly provided by The Aile Restaurant, Reading: Newari dishes including Bara (pancakes) to centre left



The information resource has a separate Nepali food / Foods of Nepal parallel website -- <http://foodsofnepal.com/> -- and related e-booklet. Here though we note from across multiple major to minor UK Nepali communities locations (from Nth Hampshire, to Swindon, to SE London, to Ashford in Kent, and Dorset) that all generations of UK Nepalis, most of whom are first generation from elders to youth, maintain a great love for Nepali cuisines of general to more specialist kinds. Image to left of dried Gundruk from Kathmandu imported to the UK for use in UK Nepali families, home cooking.

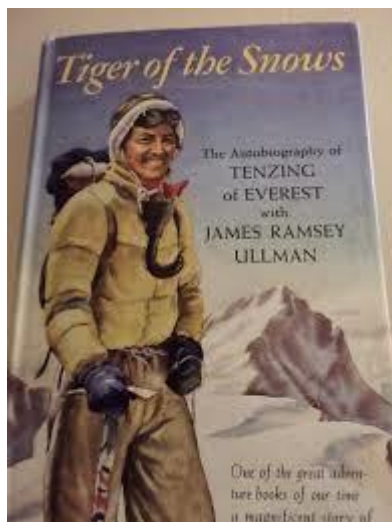
Meals and food are in UK Nepali culture much more than just eating and getting nutrition; they are a fundamental part of Nepali culture for UK Nepali community members in the UK, and they involve major to minor Nepali identity preserving daily and special annual festivals level activity, through to health maintaining and health restoring. On the latter this involves special Nepali foods taken at need through to boiled water (ummaleko paani) lemon (kagati) and crushed/diced raw ginger (aduwa) infusions. In practice, across all UK Nepali communities a phenomenon is clear: special Nepali foods (such as Gundruk: image above) are sought as much missed, very desirable items for UK Nepali household meals. Relating to this is a parallel phenomenon of with such Nepal specific staple food items, and also Nepali holistic medicine (most of which are chemicals-free) items, being sought by friends or family members visiting Nepal, purchasing and bring these back to the UK.

There is a parallel book/information resource for UK, Ireland and broader English language speaking/Western audiences concerning Nepali Cuisine / traditional and contemporary home- cooked foods: This constitutes a ground-breaking book of 100+ pages - 'Traditional & Contemporary Home Cooking: *Discovering a Little Known but Important South Asian Cuisine.*' Its compiler and editor is UKNFS Chief Executive Officer and published writer (Culture Smart - Nepal! Culture Smart global books series -- <https://www.culturesmartbooks.co.uk/> -- 2nd Edition: in bookshops from Kathmandu to LA, New York, London, from January 2021) Alan Mercel-Sanca, and Chief Contributor, UKNFS Arts Section officer Deepak Tamrakar). Two images from the book/resource are included below:



This book/resource is a separate component of the Heritage project: and its content will also be provided online at the following website, whose address is (NOTE: website live October 2020): <http://foodsofnepal.com/>

Literature:



This art form merits special mention, as to UK audiences there will be little awareness that Nepal and Nepali literary genius have little connection with 2020's UK, even though, in fact H.E. Dr Durga Bahadur Subedi, Ambassador of Nepal to the UK and to the Republic of Ireland, has a Nepal and international level greatly respected name as a man of letters, as illustrated by Dr Subedi's book, translation of '*Selected Poems by the famous Irish Poet, Michael D. Higgins*'.
<https://president.ie/en/diary/details/president-receives-h.e-dr-durga-bahadur-subedi-ambassador-of-nepal-on-a-courtesy-call>

Our information resource provides in regard to the UK dimension of Nepali English language literature two different examples, discussed below, which possess exceptional characteristics of outstanding transcultural educational kinds.

The first illustrates just how far there is to travel in elements of the UK - Nepal (and in this case broader UK - South Asian) special friendship and relationship, in this case in the arts domain of Nepali, English language novel writing. In the second an instance of the profound ethical-spiritual character of Nepali story telling genius.

The first example involves a request to the UK Nepal Friendship Society by an established Nepal and India (South Asia) level Nepali, English language author and novelist (who also happened to be a recognised supporter of the Gurkha settlement rights campaign in the second half of the 2000's, including meeting the then Prime Minister the Rt Hon Tony Blair MP and contributing speeches for the campaign at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, London). His novel 'Breaking Dawn' The author seeking the opportunity to have his book published - a best seller in India, to give context - found its style politely derided, by a senior figure in a society with long-established special links on Nepal - Britain connection who reviewed it. There was nothing personal in this of course, and the affront not intended but in terms of transcultural - therefore equal mutually respectful basis - understanding, the reaction showed a reticence to meet another culture, halfway. A competence level in this regard being far from met, and indicating how important it is if one truly wishes to know and engage with a different people with a different culture to one's own that meeting halfway is essential; otherwise one pays lip service only to respecting and honouring connections with another given people.

This example is particularly valuable in regard to the purpose of Nepal and UK culture sharing issues and opportunities in the 2020's, as it illustrates clashes of old carried over colonial era British world view perspective and powers in the domain of literature, and of the need to embrace in the domain of literature South Asian [non-Western] perspectives on literary style and important societal and contemporary culture level South Asian/Nepali subjects. A simple matter of human experiences in settings far distant from Whitehall, but of humanity-level relevance nonetheless to any person living in the UK.

A UK Nepali community member of literary and human rights renown:



On a very different, yet equally powerful transcultural Nepal to English-speaking/UK world educational learning note, of a spiritual/ethical kind, we provide below a few paragraphs by UK Nepali community member, and writer Sunil Babu Pant. Mr Pant, a former Member of Parliament [Nepal] is in Nepal and at a UN level better known as the founder of Nepal's LGBT human rights movement, who led on initiating changes in law and to Nepal's Constitution in regard to equality and human rights protections for gay, lesbian, and Trans communities members in Nepal, and creator of Nepal's official, Government of Nepal recognised, LGBT human rights organisation, the Blue Diamond Society.

However, beyond these very important honourable human rights credentials, Mr Pant, a devout Buddhist, also has an established reputation as a writer on ethical and spiritual subjects that bring the human experience into sharp focus through looking at human choices of conduct. The following excerpts from Sunil Babu Pant's ethical-spiritual tale (following in traditions of ancient kinds across the world) *'HimMaya, the Last Yeti ... and Dolma'* about the stupidity and brutality existing potentially in all of us when captured within by the dark forces of fear of difference unenlightened 'group-think' since the dawn of human life, illustrates:

Everyone was halving a wonderful time, eating and drinking and feeling good. It was at that very moment that my uncles observed that everyone was a bit tipsy. They had been waiting for weeks to play out their vicious plan to deal with the yetis. Now that moment had come."

"The yetis have been watching everything we are doing. It is now time to act," said one uncle. "Yes my brother in law, you are right. We must act. I will distribute the fake knives and you distribute the fake blood." And that is what they did. Each group receives a bowl of fake blood and fake knives. Everyone was asked to put on a mask and then they were invited to attack each other as they were angry. The fake blood covered the bodies of the masked actors. Blood was spilled everywhere as the people screamed and shouted. The children were frightened and then people began to fall to ground as if they were dead! It was a terrible thing to see. Everyone was too drunk to question this strange and terrifying game. As the finale, one of the uncles attacked the other uncle, who then fell to the ground as if dead. The remaining uncle then pretended to slit his own throat and cried out as if dying and the he fell to the ground as dead. Then there was a strange silence. After a while everyone got up and went home, leaving the blood and knives and food. One of the uncles replaced the fake knives with the real ones! The plan was set and now the waiting began."

"The uncles climbed the nearby trees and hid themselves in the dense foliage to watch the yetis. As expected, the yetis quietly crept into the festival ground. The started playing and eating the food, putting on the clothes and jewelry and started wielding the knives, imitating what they had just seen."

"Copying everything from drinking rukshi and eating the delicacies, to laughing and trying to dance. They did it all. And they were fascinated with the masks and knives. They had no idea that what they had seen was staged and used fake knives. They saw those attacked scream and cry and fall to the ground, and then wake up again. So they start attacking each other, but with real knives. They screamed and cried as their throats were slit. And this time, real blood flowed over the festival ground. There were dying screams and cries of terror."

"The villagers were now terrified and closed their windows and locked their doors amidst the screams and panic. The villagers didn't understand what was happening either; only the uncles, who were in

the trees witnessing the completion of their gruesome mission. Even so, with the roaring and screaming, the yetis falling down dead, one after another, killing each other, one by one, along the side of the field were the innocent survivors, who thought that this was a game, were still playing happily as if nothing serious or dangerous were happening.” ...

“In the early morning, my uncles were very happy. They ran through the villages telling people to come to the ground to witness the completion of their successful plan to bring an end of the yetis. ...

“My mother stood up to them saying, ‘Shame. Shame. Shame on you. You don’t know what you are saying. Who could commit such a sin and feel nothing? Who could commit such a heinous crime?’ My father then piped up and said, ‘I am ashamed that I have brothers like you. You are murderers ...

“The eagles and vultures started gathering, flying closely over the ground, looking for their own food. Finally the people said, ‘Let us care for these dead and provide them a fitting burial.’ So they dug up the festival ground, and there they buried all the dead yetis together, where they would be forever ...

Visual arts – including interviews:

scapes **thekathmandupost**

Abstraction and the subjectivity of truth

NIROJA THAKUR

The most Nepali artists, Subash Thebe strayed from a high school degree in Science to a year of Philosophy—before he finally joined Lalit Kala in 2005. Thebe had been drawing and painting from a very young age and it took some drifting before he actually decided on pursuing something that he was passionate about, academically and as a career. Even while studying courses that had nothing to do with art, he was constantly painting, fulfilling his need for expression through paint. In 2006, he left for England to attain a bachelor's degree in Fine Art. Three years after the completion of the course, he is still painting, in a style that is reminiscent of the Expressionist paintings of the latter half of the 20th century, but with a more contemporary twist—as he swings between the use of representational elements like portrait or text—placing him in what could be called a neo abstract-expressionist realm, involving context onto a primarily intuition- and gesture-based style of painting. Thebe is currently in Nepal as a resident artist at the Kathmandu Contemporary Art Centre, Patan, and will be exhibiting his collection of works titled a metadata at the Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal, on June 6.

“I believe that an art work should be grounded in aesthetic splendour or should possess gratifying conceptual and contextual underpinning. These two criteria I’ve set for myself,” says Thebe, as he leans

back in his chair at his studio at KCAC, to light a cigarette. *Lark Ascending* plays on his computer in the background. “Before leaving for England, I was only doing representational paintings and even after I got there I was continuing with it. Abstraction was just experiment, when I first started, I had no intention of becoming an abstract painter as such. But as I engaged more with paint, the infatuation towards brushstrokes grew,” he adds. Thebe’s works are almost always done in oil paint and make use of thick layers of brush strokes and dabs, those which mostly bear the texture of the carrier the artist uses to execute the strokes with. The process is one that lies between the command an artist has over his medium alongside how he submits to the material’s natural capability. He adds, “For somebody who’s painting figures and is restricted by boundaries, it’s fun to have none.”

What had been initiated as an experiment of gestures and strokes led to Thebe’s first series of abstractions, which were mostly based on music. The Dharan-native painted while listening to music and attempted to capture the impressions the audio made on him onto the canvas. It was not an attempt at illustrating the song in any way, but was more like a transfer—one that is personal and from the artist’s perspective—of the timbres and the frequencies, a piece of music possessed into an entirely different media of art. These paintings have heavy brush strokes and sometimes also have outward elements like traced waveform of sound or staff

notation and are almost always based on Western classical music. “I was involved with music when I was in Nepal but eventually I realised that I wasn’t very good at it, so I transferred all my energy into painting instead. I think that’s why my love for music seeped into my canvases,” says Thebe. Each painting that the artist completed through this process is named after the piece of music that he was referring to in that conjunction.

While the music-based art works that Thebe created were largely dominated by emotions and intuition, they were not a part of the second category the painter has set for himself—one bearing certain contextual grounds. But it’s something his latest body of work definitely embraces.

In 2013, there were a series of demonstrations by the former British Gurkha soldiers, demanding pay and facilities at par with their English colleagues. Thebe, whose father and grandfather fought on behalf of the British in different battles, also participated in some of the events. “After participating in the protests, I realised over where my family (the Gurkhas) stood, geographically. Were they the epitome of bravery or were they just mercenaries hired to kill? I was not criticising the situation, but was merely observing it and my realisation was that history is distorted and the mainstream media has played a huge part in the way its shape is changed,” says Thebe, who then started observing and researching Western mainstream media and the kind of news they produce.

The findings from his research have brought about a new set of dynamic in the artist’s works. The making and breaking series of videos by the artist asserts this. In the series, the artist is seen painting portraits of the likes of Bradley Manning, Julian Assange and Edward Snowden, whistleblowers who were regarded as traitors by their native. In the footage, the artist, after painting the faces, stops—contemplates through sips from a mug or puffs of smoke—and then starts again by manipulating the composition by writing ‘traitor

tre. On top of the colours reads ‘Dark Skin made suspect reliable source’. At first thought, the painting does seem very documentary-like and unbiased but as one observes the dark background, one can’t be help but notice that the artist has taken a mainstream media snippet and in turn altered it in his own way to give it a new meaning of sorts, which he intends to impart. This is as if associations are made with the clichéd meanings of colours. Because abstraction is so subjective a matter, the piece manages to refrain from taking sides. Thebe says, “The background could have been something else as well. It’s just something I started doing and came out the way it is.”

Thebe’s exhibition will also feature works that are based on local issues. It’s not happening references an aerial map of a section of the Himalayas, where glacial outbursts are acute and are a threat to the terrain as well as the communities that inhabit the valley below. “I read an article a couple of weeks ago about how the issue of climate change was a hoax and it was titled ‘It’s not happening’. Glacial lakes have doubled in size in recent years and that change cannot be undermined,” he says.

The kind of abstraction Thebe performs is very different to the Visual movement, although similar visually. It’s not entirely intuitive nor is it out of the subconscious. Observing the artist’s latest works—although he rejects such intentions—it can be guessed that the painter devises these textures and brushstrokes in a way that helps him get his message across. In his case, it’s more about how colours and textures could affect the viewer in response to the ‘other’ information the artists adds on to his work.

Thebe believes that one has to play a useful role in society as an artist, although this idea has been debated forever. He says, “I don’t know if my art will be able to change anything or not. I don’t know if art has the capability for reformation or whether it should bear that burden. I am just exploring.”




Kathmandu Post article on the philosophy of UK-based Nepali international artist Subash Thebe

In almost all if not all UK Nepali families homes will be found sacred Nepali Hindu or Nepali Buddhist (including Sherpa-Tibetan) or images, framed or even simple colour photocopy formatted, but All venerated - foci of connection with Nepal's spiritual and religious cultures in the homeland, and of devotion for prayer and on special family, personal or cultural festival occasions (such as Tihar/Divali). Beyond the formal spiritual/sacred visual arts (as with architecture, sculpture, metalwork) the visual and fine arts of Nepal are vast,

In terms of visual arts, the UK is also home to two very different in terms of styles and artistic topics for their brilliant creativity, yet united by the underlying theme that painting and other art forms are ultimately spiritual activity, internationally renowned painters, Govinda Sah 'Azad,' and Subesh Thebe, who have provided exclusive interviews (below) for the information resource.

UK Nepali artist Govinda Sah 'Azad' interview:



Govinda Sah 'Azad' was born in 1974, in Rajbiraj, Nepal. From an early age he was interested in drawing and sculpture. He left Nepal to live in India and from 1991-94, worked as a sign board and wall painter in Delhi. In 1995, he returned to Kathmandu and joined the Fine Art College to realise his dream to become a painter. It was at this point that the Professor and Campus Chief of the Fine Art College and prominent artist Govinda Dongol dubbed Govinda Sah as "Lion Heart".

From March-June 2000, Govinda began a nation-wide cycle tour to spread the awareness of peace through art under title *The 21st Century is the Century of Art and Peace*. During the three-month tour, he held several art shows, workshops, and gave lectures in schools and to community groups.

Govinda obtained a MA in Fine Art from Wimbledon College of Art in 2008. Some of his exhibitions have been sponsored and organised by the British Council in Nepal and Egypt's Ambassador to Nepal. Govinda Sah's works can be found in private collections worldwide.

Source: <http://www.octobergallery.co.uk/artists/sah/>

Question 1. If you were to explain to a non-Nepali, non-South Asian, Western British person what is the unique defining essence of Nepali art, what would you say it is?

Response: It is about spirituality in life, nature and human existence. At a human, artist level it is reverence for the spiritual through ancient spiritual values and philosophies that link Heaven, Man, Nature, seen in Nepali Hinduism and Nepali Buddhism. This reverence is seen through the devotion as well as subjects depicted by Nepali artists whether in sculpture and woodwork in our temples or in Thangka art. There is a mystic heart to Nepali religious & spiritual art, esoteric and often shamanic in character.

This is about energies, spiritual vibrations ultimately, the dynamics at the heart of profound spiritual truths, which in the Nepali and South Asian arts case are intimately linked to the attributes and the essences and powers of the gods and goddesses.

The 'Glorious Wheel of Creation' (in Sanskrit: 'Shristi-Chakra') from Govinda's show in New Delhi in 2012 exemplifies this so well. Derived from the Mandala concept, sacred geometry is powerful in the piece, with the depiction of a Tantric diagram, known as a 'Yantra.' This latter the divine source of emanation from the centre, beyond which are amorphous clouds in which energies are revealed and take form.

I am pleased to provide this January 2013 quote about this very subject of East - West interconnection in my work and vision, from an interview with Robert Beer:

'Govinda recognises that his artistic roots first germinated from the unique fusion of Hindu and Buddhist Tantric traditions that are found in Nepal. But his ...blossoming personal style of painting increasingly encompasses the visionary realms of intergalactic fields ...'

Question 2. What do you feel is the defining characteristic of British art compared to Nepali art, and are there any similarities with the latter?

Response: *I would say it is **experimentality in technique; originality** in composition and sometimes subject. On approach to art, in contemporary terms there are still major East - West differences of approach. I reflect on this very topic in an interview with Gerald Houghton when discussing my response to British art critics asking me questions, specific questions about my artworks and what through them are the questions I am raising and seek to resolve through art:*

There is also this, that Nepal is a totally different cultural matrix, a way of being based on different premises. We do things without always asking why; the answer's already understood, so, in Nepal, we don't need the question. Here [the West / UK] everyone questions everything, and you must be able to explain things precisely too.

But I must stress that there are major differences on such an approach between older, 19th Century in particular renowned British artists such as in particular Turner and Constable, and approaches to art and art criticism in early 21st Century Britain. I believe these two artistic convention breakers, pioneers who went on before their ends to become household names, have in their inspirations teachings which I connected with at a deep level when I was first brought in to contact with them through seeing and contemplating on their work, at technical technique level and still more the essence each conveyed. I have seen myself as, particularly Turner, spiritually speaking as their disciples. My fascination with the mysteries of light as a subject linked to the most ancient and profound of spiritual concepts on Life, the cosmos, the microcosm to macrocosm interconnection and synthesis are seen in many of the most famous later works of the great Turner, and in my main subject pieces.

Question 3. In what way do your major works have any direct inspiration from Nepali traditional art and what message do they convey to viewers in the West?

Response: *Neither the West nor the East is superior to the other where creative inspiration takes place in the soul of the artist. But yes, definitely each has something unique and my major works of art call on my inspiration from Nepali spiritual cultures. My most iconic and important works, my cloud and galactic and nebula pieces certainly at subliminal level take some of their power from those cultures. I have on the spiritual dynamic at work in these explained before and repeat here:*

'... my work becomes an abstract meditation on the wonders of the whole universe and of the spectacular natural phenomenon contained therein, irrespective of scale.'

Thank you for this opportunity through the UK Nepali heritage project, to be able to contribute to this exciting topic of that part of the arts heritage of British based Nepali artists such as myself and my good friend Subash. It has given me valuable opportunity for reflection, and the part of a given ethnic minority's cultural heritage that is a synthesis of that of land of birth and land of settlement is such an important one. Here we see, and particularly through art, how two cultural heritage can blend to create something new and of a much broader relevance! Thank you.

We are very honoured to provide below some examples of Govinda's ground-breaking art:





UK Nepali artist Subash Thebe interview:

Subash Thebe:



Nepalese artist. Born and raised in a small town, Dharan in eastern Nepal, Subash Thebe graduated from Middlesex University London in 2011 in BA Fine Art. Currently, he is the recipient of Vice Chancellor's International Scholarship and doing his Masters at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London (UAL). He explores the contemporary socio-political issues and its relation with media and technology. Subash lives and works in London. Source: <http://www.subashthebe.com/BIO/>

Interview questions context information:

"[ARTISTS] HAVE STIRRED OUR GREY MATTER AND QUESTIONED OUR CONSCIENCE AND HUMANITY. I GUESS THAT IS QUITE A BIG THING TO ACHIEVE

'It has often been debated whether art has a moral obligation to make a political stand. Perhaps the very act of making art is a political act. Though it will never be possible to pin down any rules and expectations on artists, perhaps as human beings we are morally obliged, in the least, to inform ourselves about power.

Subash Thebe writes in his artist's statement, "Maybe it was because of the losses we endured, I never even had the slightest thought of pursuing the British Gurkha military tradition of my community. Unconsciously, maybe I was choosing everything opposed to war and violence like art and music."

Source: <http://mydreamsmag.com/article/subash-thebe/>

Question 1. What are the main inspirations you take from Nepal's visual art heritage, inspiring your own forms of art?

Response: This project on the cultural and social heritage of our Nepali community in Britain, is a badly needed one, and the opportunity to contribute from an arts and artist perspective a great pleasure. Artists, or most artists, are by nature contemplative and reflective. The subject of what synthesis there is between two very different artistic cultural traditions and if there is a building of a new, hybrid form in the work of artists like myself and Govinda, is exciting because it speaks of what unites not what divides, it speaks of our shared humanity.

In answer to this question, the forms of inspiration, I have always been inspired by the practical ethics teaching concealed within Nepali religions legends and tales; doing the right thing in the face of moral dilemmas, Nepali Hinduism and Nepali Buddhism teach this, and these legends are all about us in the sacred architecture of stone and woodwork in our temples and shrines. It can't be doubted that this has inspired both artists and social activists, up to and into our own times.

Question 2. Do you believe there is a synthesis at any points between Nepali contemporary ethics & social comment art and the British/Western equivalent?

Response: There certainly is. Street art in both countries is perhaps the best example, but you have too famous figures here such as particularly Banksy. My passion for art as a medium for raising social justice and ethical subject gives a good bridging between the two art cultures as I take up subjects of global kinds on climate, the British immigration 'hostile environment' and other topics that are

important for Nepalis and not known of so much by most British people, such as the living conditions of those involved in construction industries in the Gulf.

My triptych, The Higher Powers Command: Paint Upper Right Corner Red! Is an example of my sardonic observation on art and capitalism, and looks to the work of the German artist Sigmar Polke, and involves use of the process work of the British (London) painter Jason Martin, whose monochromatic work has a power to project its message so well and in fact constitutes a blend between painting and architecture. This echoes some aspects of ancient Nepali art well. From Polke I have come to realise the special part of an artist's calling to be self-reflective, to pass beyond utilising technique to look at the bigger picture of what I wish to accomplish through my artwork.

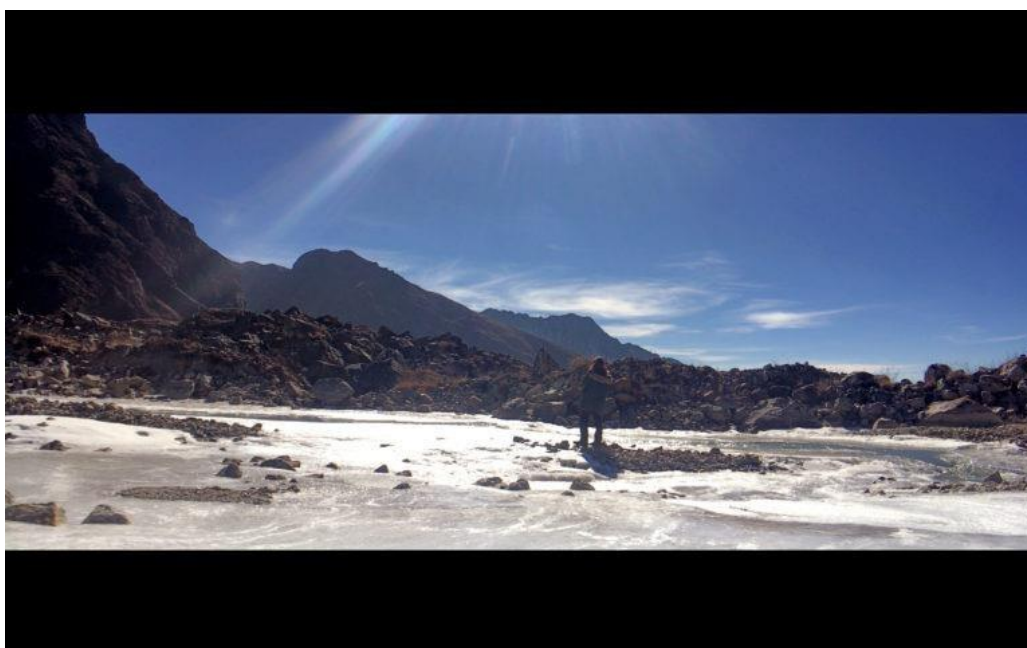
This I feel connects directly with the work of ancient to contemporary artists and artisans, especially the latter, creating works on sacred, spiritual, religious subjects. The act of creativity is a type of meditative, contemplative act capable of giving whether in act of creating, or through interaction as a viewer (or listener, for music and theatre have this great power too) profound revelation or understanding of truly life transforming kinds.

Question 3. Your work is particularly inspired by ethical impetuses and how these apply in the field of counteracting acts of inhumanity and injustice; please tell us more about this?

Response: Yes I do believe there is no alternative to speaking out and calling out where unethical and inhuman conduct is concern, and that you can't compromise with this as some do in terms of right and wrong being equal, a matter of opinion. Art gives a very special platform for speaking up and out. In my article 'Art versus Thought Control' (September 2014) I particularly talked about why this speaking out matters, with the topic covered in my exhibition 'Metadata' which is about mainstream media being revealed to manipulate current affairs and history in ways that are favourable to a very small wealthy elite.

Art such as painting, street art, and certainly theatre and the work of some of the playwrights and documentary film producers powerfully take up issues of burning injustice, and place back to the viewer the challenge of what they can do that is within their scope to give censure towards those involved in a given inhumanity or injustice, or complicit in covering it up or allowing it to continue unchallenged. In this sense I see my work as having strong ethical & moral purposes, a type of imperative that I think is something that deep down we all feel when confronted with things which are dark, and unacceptable.

Below we provide an example 'Mothership' of Subash' exceptional artwork:



You can also read more about Subash at <https://londonsartistquarter.org/artist-hub/users/subashthebe/profile>

Tom Pouncy – a young British artist’s perspectives on and respect for Nepali arts:



We are delighted to provide Tom Pouncy’s insights on Nepali arts related culture. He has provided a video interview (interview link: **TBA**), the text interview **(25/02/2020)** linked to the latter, below, and also an exceptional set of images from his travels and time in Nepal where subjects have been arts, artisanship, and broader culture related (this gallery can be accessed through this link **TBA**, and found on the information resource website Galleries section (link **TBA**).

The significance of Tom’s information is that it encapsulates the core transcultural learning and information purpose of the information resource project, as it witnesses a non-Nepali, British person embracing the learning and engaging experience that Nepali arts and culture offer to

UK non-Nepali people, to the extent of through active participation in an earlier transcultural learning & arts project of the UKNFS - the ‘Nepal International Arts Programme’ (<https://creativenepal.co.uk/>).

Tom has contributed an invaluable set of Kathmandu arts and culture, with special emphasis on spiritual and religious culture photographs taken by him during his visit to Nepal, with the images provided specifically as a dedicated contribution to the UKNFS facilitated, HLF funded UK Nepali culture & social heritage information resource. Three example images are provided below, and the full set of very educational photographs taken by Mr Pouncy are to be found in a dedicated gallery in the Exhibition & Galleries (Link: **TBA**) section of this information resource.







Nepal Cultural Heritage Project interview with British artist Tom Pouncy

Questions:

- Could you provide, based on your experience of the BPC Nepali Arts project and subsequently visiting Nepal, your reflections on the relationship between the Arts (sculpture, architecture, paintings, music, costume) and spirituality and religions?
- In your experience, could you share your observations and reflections on points of similarity and of difference between UK/Western and Nepali arts-creativity? This could include Western adaptation of some elements of Nepali art, etc.

Introduction

Hi, my Name is Thomas Pouncy, I am an Ambassador/ Associate for the UKNFS. Undergraduate at the Arts University Bournemouth (AUB - NOT Bournemouth University), studying BA Hons Creative Management.

I was Introduced to the UKNFS in 2015, through the Nepal International Arts Project (NIAP), at the Bournemouth and Poole College (BPC), during my time studying Illustration and Visual Arts. The project set a sail of interest towards Nepali Arts and Culture, inspiring me to participate and produce

geographically specific arts ideas that are based upon Nepalese Arts, Culture and Heritage. Project

Leader and UKNFS Organisation Leader Alan Mercel-Sanca then assisted me in travelling to Nepal in November 2016. In order to educate myself further on the Arts and Culture sector, I had traveled to Kathmandu and had been affiliated with Saroj Mahato, founder of the Bikalpa Arts Centre (BAC) and Advisor for the NIAP. BAC is an outstanding facility for local artists and a café, in Lalitpur. It is a contemporary art Centre and platform for Nepali artists to voice their work and/ or collaborate. Additional to the Networking opportunity, I took the real advantage of exploring Nepali local etiquette. I studied, I produced Art/Photos and I spoke with many. I had been left with an integral knowledge of the Arts and Culture in Nepal.

Question 1: Could you provide, based on your experience of the BPC Nepali Arts project and subsequently visiting Nepal, your reflections on the relationship between the Arts (sculpture, architecture, paintings, music, costume) and spirituality and religions?

Initially, during my participation of the BPC NIAP, I uncovered Nepal as a home of religion. Although, the relationship between spirituality and Arts in Nepal were instantly recognizable.

The study of art was the vehicle that lead me to understand the importance of the union in their communities. How the balance between religion and artistic symbolism has affected culture in Nepal. Not only for its communities but also in tourism and representation. The Arts in Nepal are of respected heritage and are encouraged. Through traditional forms of pottery in the tradition of Bhaktapur, fabric printing, religious symbols; to varieties of craftsmanship and ways to earn money.

The Arts in Nepal are not always presented like that of western culture. Anyone is able to become an artist, however respected traditions such as the Mandala, take years of skill and patient practice and are popular Hindu and Buddhist Religious Symbols.

I had the opportunity to meet an old-Master Buddhist monk, who elaborated the meanings of different Mandala Variations. For example, the Tibetan Buddhist Thangka- Samsara Mandala, alternatively known as the “wheel of life”, took my interest. It features Shiva, a Deity of death and lord of time, holding a shield of life and death. In the centre you will see the three poisons:

- Desire, seen as the Cockerel.*
- Hatred and jealousy, seen as the Snake.*
- Ignorance, seen as the Boar.*

Around the centre is Bardo. Which represents the path of ascent and descent in death, before rebirth. Then there is the Six worlds of Samsara, which feature in the highest order:

- Gods.*
- Titans of Samsara.*
- Humans.*
- Animals.*
- Hungry spirits and the beginning of Hell, in the Buddhist religion.*
- The Damned “Hell”.*

You may often also see the eight symbols of Buddhism in Mandalas. Like the Kalachakra Tantra Mandala, it is another Tibetan Buddhist practice and considered an advanced Vajrayana tradition, by the Dalai Lama. Similarly, the well-known Tibetan Sand Mandala being destroyed and released by river back into nature, is a physical artistic symbol which entails that changes are an inevitable foundation of nature.

These examples could show how Artistic symbolism can be found in Nepal. The use of art in culture has provided creative stability, visual understanding and colour to Nepal. As the use of Arts and symbolism continue to unite the country, using colour as a personal expression and compassion. This could additionally be found in the famous Tibetan Buddhist prayer flags and ceremonial fashions of wearing specific colours, in death, wedding or birth. Despite the general perception on colour, religion is a unique way to express your present identity.

Colour Representations in Buddhism and Hinduism may include:

Colour	Buddhism	Hinduism
White	Knowledge and Longevity	High social class and mourning of death.
Blue	Relations to Buddha, healing and wisdom.	Stability, Nature and Depth.
Green	A neutral colour; karma and harmony.	Life and happiness.
Red	Achievement, Virtue, Fortune and Dignity.	Sensuality and purity.
Yellow	Stability and being Grounded.	Happiness and Peace.
Saffron	Wisdom, Strength and Dignity.	Purity- Quest of Light.

Communal understanding and respect for arts in religion have allowed the people of Nepal to express themselves in a spiritual mechanism. There are over One Million Citizens living in Kathmandu, mixed religions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Syncretism. Harmonious understanding and Visual communications are a basis of culture in Nepal. A celebration of common relations.

These were a few examples of which I saw in Kathmandu, although, this is not limited to the entire country. There are many geographic and demographic foundations in Nepal, the Arts and Culture are diverse between music and architectural structuring. Including the Himalayan and Tibetan folk music culture. Craftsmanship is spread through music and hand-crafted manufacture of instruments, like the Sarangi.

Question2: In your experience, could you share your observations and reflections on points of similarity and of difference between UK/Western and Nepali arts-creativity? This could include Western adaptation of some elements of Nepali art, etc.

With Arts and Culture in mind, structural sculpting and architecture differ greatly around Nepal. The Newari, historic creators of Nepal Heritage and civilization, often carved into the buildings; often showing Deities and Demigods of Hinduism and Buddhism. Many artworks have been classed as sacred pieces of work. You could find examples of Newari artwork throughout Nepal. Here I saw an eccentric piece, at Pashupatinath Hindu Temple. You can see the detailed art in the woodwork.

Newari craftsmanship became a recognizable influence in Tibet as I believe it supported the style of art we see related to Hindu and Buddhist art pieces, to an exquisite detail of skill and quality. In the United Kingdom, we could categorize this level of expertise as a form of 'Fine Art'. Suggestively, this could be similar to Catholic and Christian related art works that we see in Cathedrals and churches. The artistic stylings are different but components in religious heritage could be similar, in context, to our own Religious Heritage Artworks in the United Kingdom, like Gothic Nouveau, Baroque and Renaissance - Architecture, sculptures and paintings.

Similar to the nature of wearing Shiva Eyes or wearing a mantra like in Nepal, Christians in the UK consider jewellery and accessories, like Rosary Beads or a Crucifix, to be religious symbols. Or Christians looking for blessings from a Priest, where as a Hindu may seek blessing from a Sadhu. To which I had received at Pashupatinath Temple.

And it doesn't stop there; like the colour symbolism in Buddhism and Hinduism, Christian citizens may use fashion to cover their bodies as an expression of purity, distantly resembling a pattern in Spiritual and Religious Symbolism. The United Kingdom has been represented as a Catholic Country; our religious arts have additionally affected our global image. However, whilst the citizens of Nepal have a widespread global image with Mandalas and Statues of Buddha and others hitting mainstream industry's; their religious attitudes and cultures are one of the most significant features to highlight.

Hinduism and Buddhism host a peaceful nature, with knowledge at your fingertips through modern technology, the Arts and Culture of Nepal has been adapted by Western countries in ways that may support the statement of "Nepal being an amazing place". Religious symbolism is being used further than the statues and mandalas, through paintings and artworks. The symbolism used in Buddhist and/or Hindu art is reflected in many textiles and practices.

In UK culture, our attitude towards life is based around our careers and money. It can often get slightly gloomy. The uplifting encouragement of colours, arts and peaceful culture in Nepal are a positive influence to Western society. Through Fabrics, Tapestries, Print wood block, colour use, mandalas, cultural adaptations of meditation and yoga. Many people in the Western hemisphere have found useful adoptions of Nepalese Arts and Culture as an influence in their life. Large productions of traditional Nepalese ornaments, like a singing bowl or seven metal bowl, have helped internationalize and grow Nepali heritage.

Nepal quickly affected me. It opened my World into many more thoughts and deepened my curiosity of life, it influenced my art instantly. The detail and skill of every single painting, sculpture, carving was incredible. It blew my mind; how different the two countries are. Human nature and habitual belief could be represented as an image. In heritage, in Arts and style, in nature. Nepal has a significantly colourful and Art based relationship with its heritage and Religious culture. And colours are known to directly affect your mood!

Thomas Pouncy

Glossary of Nepali arts terms:

As learning about another culture and its society starts often with learning its language, especially on important technical topics words, we have created at the suggestion of all in the UK Nepali community who have advised on or contributed to this its Arts section, the glossary of nouns and terms below. This on thematic topics and regarding particular art forms:

Literature

Glossary

Literature:

Sahitya

Book: Kitab/

Pustak **Novel:**

Upanyas **Novelist:**

Upanyaskar **Writer:**

Lekhak **Story:**

Katha

Tale: Kalpanik Katha

Storytelling: Katha

Bachan **Storyteller:**

Katha Bachak **Short**

story: Laghu Katha

Ghost story: Bhut

katha **Fiction:** Kalpanik

katha **Non-fiction:**

Satya Katha **Poem:**

Kabita

Poet: Kabi

Poetry: Kabita Lekhne kala

Epic: Mahakavya

Verse: Sholak

Prose: Chanda nabhayeko sahitya

Music

Glossary

Music:

Sangeet

Musician: Sangeetkar

Musical instrument: Badhyabadhan

Modern: Adhunik

Modern song(s): Adhunik Geet

Classical music: Sastriya sangeet

Contemporary music: Samasamahik
sangeet **Flute:** Murali / bansuri

Drum: Baja

Song: Geet

Songwriter: Geetkar

Folk song: Lok Geet
Folk Music: Lok
sangeet **Singer:**
Gayak
Lyricist: Geetkar
Rhyme: Baalgeet
Musical note: Sangitik tippani
Harmony: Laya/ Sur

Performing Arts Glossary

Performing arts: Kala
Sampadan
Dance: Nirtya / Naach
Film: chalchitra
Film Director: Chalchitra Nirdesak
Actor: Abhinetra
Actress:
Abhinetri
Theatre:
Nachaghar
Cinema:
Chalchitra **Play:**
Natak
Playwright:
Lekhot **Script:**
Katha
Narrator: Katha Bachak

Religious Art Glossary

Temple: Mandir
Shrine: Pabitrasthal
Monastery (Buddhist):
Gumba **Pagoda:** Mandir ko
saili **Wooden carving:**
Kasthakala
Devotional music: Dharmik Sangeet
Devotional painting: Dharmik
chitrakala **Statue:** Murti
Festival: Chadparba

Visual Arts

Glossary Art:

Kala

The Arts: Kala Vidha

Painting: Chitrakala

Painter: Rang lagaune manche

Drawing: Chitra

Print: Chapnu

Artist: Kaligadha

Gallery:

Kalabhawan

Canvas: Tel chitra banauna prayog garine kapada

Paints: Chitra Kornu

Pencils: Sisakalam

Sculpture: Murtikala

Sculptor: Murtikar

Exhibition and Galleries page content:

Throughout many pages and all components and sections of the information resource subject-specific images are provided, the vast majority of which have been contributed by project participants and content contributors, with the remaining small minority of images being widely used in the public domain or where required, attributed images.

Beyond all of these we remind that an ultimate major background to the cultural & social heritage information resource project itself lay the UKNFS work with most of the main British museums and collections that enabled through the UKNFS, the key UK aspect of the UKNFS supported Nepal Art Council (NAC) Britain-Nepal Bicentenary Exhibition: <https://uknfs.org/april-2017-update-launch-of-the-nepal-art-council-uknfs-nepal-uk-bicentenary-exhibition/>

These photographs and illustrations play an important educational part in evidencing or explaining about aspects of topics covered by the information resource. A set of these comprise the exhibition

component of the project. Here we provide these images as an exhibition related gallery, and a much greater in number and subjects content set of thematic galleries. Below we list the project's exhibition gallery, and all of the thematic galleries:

- Exhibition Gallery:
- Culture Gallery:
- Gurkha related Gallery:
- UK Nepali community societies, organisations, and Embassy of Nepal Gallery:
- Sherpa Gallery:
- Sports Gallery:
- Arts Gallery: Tom, etc.
- Nepal locations Gallery:
- The Nepali cuisine & foods Gallery (derived from the separate, parallel website and booklet images content)