



HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

HAMPTON COURT PALACE

THE INDIAN ARMY AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE



SPACE TO STIR AND BE STIRRED

TOWER OF LONDON • HAMPTON COURT PALACE • BANQUETING HOUSE
KENSINGTON PALACE • KEW PALACE • HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE AND GARDENS



34nd Sikh Pioneers Indian Army officer's full dress tunic, 1902-3. This was only worn on ceremonial occasions such as parades, by officers, or men serving in older and more distinguished regiments.
COURTESY OF COMMUNITY CURATOR DR TEJ PAL SINGH RALHILL

Badges and insignia of Sikh Pioneers regiments including shoulder badges, turban badges, collar badges, buttons, pouch belt plate and epaulettes.
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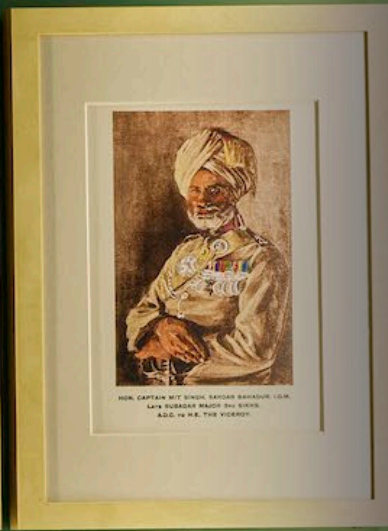
INTRODUCTION

In the early 20th century, soldiers from the Indian Army camped at Hampton Court Palace on a number of occasions. They were invited to join the coronation celebrations of Edward VII (1902), George V (1911) and George VI (1937) as well as the [First World War peace parades in 1919](#). For some, this would have been their first visit to England.

This forgotten history is now on display at Hampton Court Palace from September 2023 to September 2024. This guide has been designed to support teachers and community group leaders to prepare and deliver engaging visits for their classes and groups to the Indian Army exhibition display. This exhibition aims to uncover the daily lives of soldiers whilst they were encamped within the Palace, showcase press and public reaction of the time as well as discovering the impact on the wider South Asian community of today.

The Indian Army at the Palace exhibition, introduces themes and narratives that have never been explored at Hampton Court Palace previously. However, there are certain themes and objects that may be challenging for groups. This guide aims to outline what to expect, helping teachers and group leaders prepare for the visit and engage their classes and groups before, during and after their visit.

This resource guide has been created in collaboration with [A Little History of The Sikhs](#). More information about the group can be found here: [A little History of the Sikhs – Sikh History on the streets of London](#)



←
2nd Sikh Pioneers Indian Army officer's full dress tunic, 1908-9. This was only worn on ceremonial occasions such as parades, by officers, or men serving in older and more distinguished regiments.
COURTESY OF COMMUNITY CURATOR DR TEJ PAL SINGH RALMILL

←
Badges and insignia of Sikh Pioneers regiments including shoulder badges, turban badges, collar badges, buttons, pouch belt plate and epaulettes.
COURTESY OF COMMUNITY CURATOR DR TEJ PAL SINGH RALMILL

←
LEFT COMMUNITY OBJECT
Tej:
This is an iconic image of my great grandfather, Subadar-Major Bawa Singh, a veteran of WW1. Seated in the centre, this photo was taken in 1921 when he was a Subadar (Captain), as indicated by the 2 pipes on his shoulder. I stumbled upon this photo by chance when the UK Punjab Heritage Association (UKPHA) uploaded it during their exhibition. This image represents Sikhs in the military for many, but for me, it is a personal inspiration to uphold the Sikh identity. His stoic expression reflects the challenges he endured during harsh campaigns on the North West Frontier, and his immaculate uniform symbolises a disciplined lifestyle I aspire to emulate.
COURTESY OF COMMUNITY CURATOR DR TEJ PAL SINGH RALMILL

←
RIGHT COMMUNITY OBJECT
Aman:
This is a painting of my great grandfather who served in the British Indian Army between 1878 and 1918. I don't know much about him but from this image I know he was well decorated in the Army and had earned many medals.
COURTESY OF COMMUNITY PARTNER AMAN KALEKA

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR VISITING

Hampton Court Palace opening days and hours vary throughout the year so please always check our website before planning your visit. There you can also find up-to-date information on palace route closures and special events which may affect your visit.

BOOKING TICKETS

Pre-booking is essential for all group visits to Hampton Court Palace.

For school visits, please visit our website to [book a session](#).

Community Access Scheme group visits can be booked using the online [CAS Group Visit Request Form](#).

Community Access Scheme 'Free Visit' cards can be used during the time of this exhibition and do not need to be pre-booked. Please exchange them for tickets at the Hampton Court Palace ticket office.

GETTING TO THE PALACE

Hampton Court Palace is within travel zone 6.

Bus

From Kingston: 111, 216, 411, 461, 513. *From Richmond:* R68

Underground

The nearest underground stations are in Wimbledon and Richmond, where connecting bus or train routes are available.

Train

Hampton Court train station is located a five-minute walk from the palace. Trains returning to London Waterloo depart from Hampton Court station at regular times.

For further information please call 020 7941 2400 or visit Transport for London's website: www.tfl.gov.uk.

Bicycle

Cycle racks are located to the left of the palace entrance (by the Work's Yard, just before the barrier) and in the car park next to the Rose Garden.

Coach and Minibus

Please note that there are no drop off or collection points outside the entrances to the palace or the gardens for coaches. The nearest is at the station. Taxis may drop off in the onsite car park.

Please contact communities@hrp.org.uk or hamptoncourtlearning@hrp.org.uk if you will be coming by minibus or have any questions about parking on site.



Car Parking

Limited parking is available. Car parking is available on a first come, first served basis, with payment required on site. During our busy periods it is advisable to consider other means of travel.

On-site

£1.60 per hour (car parking bays fit a standard car only). Pay for your parking with card only. Please note the parking machines are touch screen and sanitiser dispensers are next to machines. Alternatively, you can use the Glide app

If our on-site car park is full, please use our nearby off-site car park at Hampton Court Green.

– Accessible Parking

There are 10 disabled parking bays available on site. Parking on site is free for Blue Badge holders. Our Blue Badge bays are now wider and two have now been relocated closer to the palace entrance.

– Electric Vehicle Chargers

We have four EV Chargers in operation for visitors to use at 44 pence per Kwh. These feature on the EV Pod point map.

Nearby

Hampton Court Green is located 500m from the entrance of the palace and is charged at £1.50 per hour.

Hampton Court Train Station (200 metres from entrance). For information about prices, please visit the National Rail website.

Bushy Park (15 minute walk). For more information, visit the Royal Parks website.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The Indian Army at the Palace display is a small exhibition which covers two rooms. Visitors will be continually moving throughout the space, there is only one entrance which also serves as the exit point.

In the main exhibition room, you will find interactive elements, a soundscape of soldiers' letters being read in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu as well as a variety of objects and films on display. In the second room you will find a film that showcases family history stories from the descendants of the soldiers that were encamped at the Palace. There is seating in this space.

Where to find the exhibition space? The exhibition is located in a room just before you enter the East Front Gardens. From the main entrance, walk straight through Base Court, Clock Court and Fountain Court.

Potential Triggers

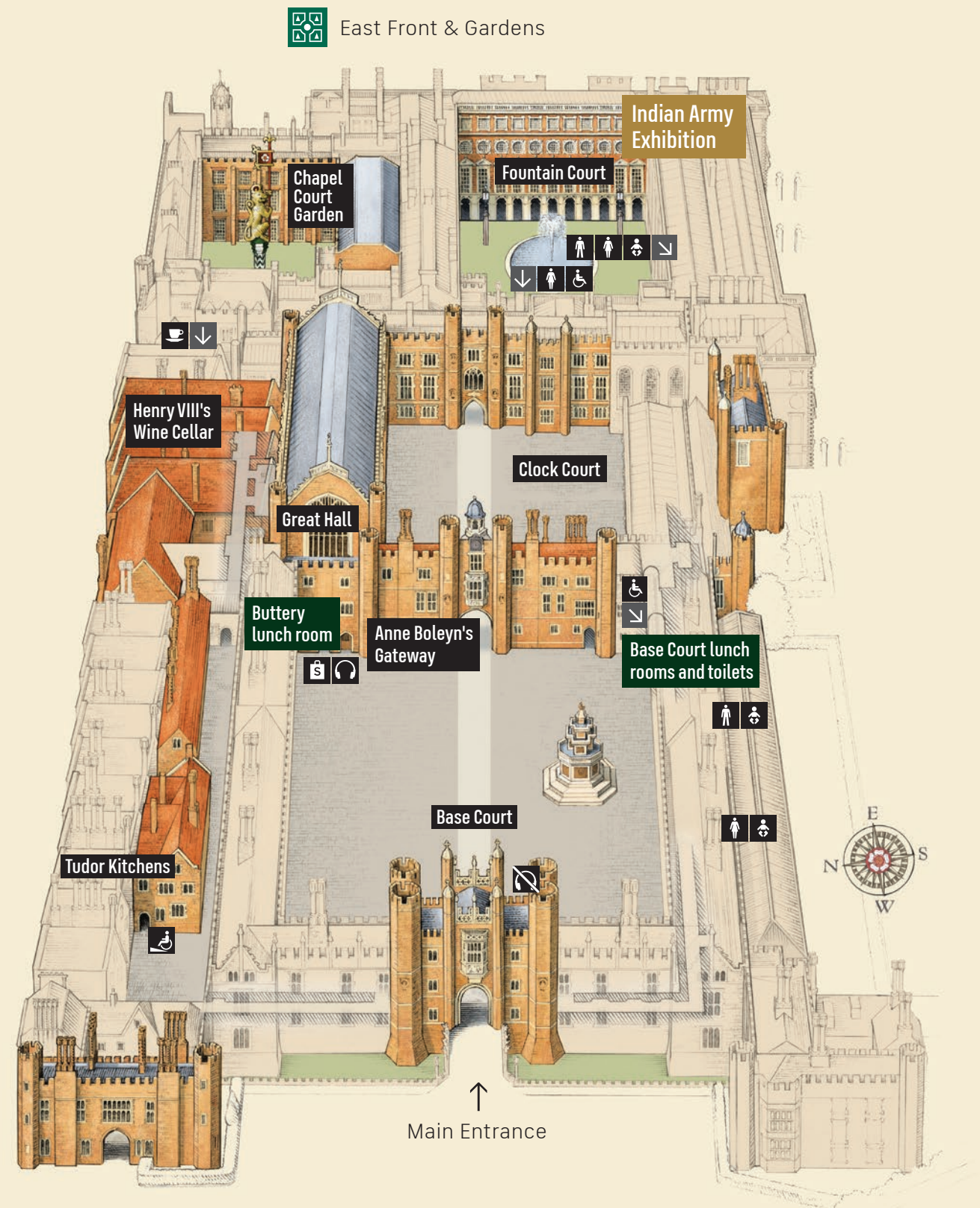
Some of the themes explored within the exhibition touch upon sensitive topics such as racial profiling and eugenics. Should this cause any distress with anyone in your group please refer to the visitor guide that can be downloaded via the QR code in the exhibition space as well as here: [About the Display: The Indian Army at the Palace \(office.com\)](#)

Additionally, in January 2024 as part of the exhibition there will be a virtual reality experience, Child of Empire, by Project Dastaan that focuses upon the 1947 Partition of India. More about Project Dastaan can be explored here: [About – Project Dastaan](#)

Child of Empire is an animated virtual reality docu-drama experience which immerses viewers in one of the largest forced migrations in human history.

The film takes audiences through a deeply personal perspective of this epic historical event. Two men from the Partition generation — Ishar Das Arora (voiced by Adil Hussain), an Indian Hindu who migrated from Pakistan to India, and Iqbal-ud-din Ahmed (voiced by Salman Shahid), a Pakistani Muslim who made the opposite journey — share childhood memories of their experiences while playing a board game. As the two men unpack their memories, audiences embody the experience of a 7-year-old child at key points in the migration. Child of Empire offers a powerful counter-narrative that lends a fresh perspective on the effects of forced migration on everyday individuals.

More information about [Possible Risks and Hazards at Hampton Court Palace](#) can be found on our website.





GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Here are a few terms that you may come across within the exhibition

South Asia – This usually refers to an area which covers modern day Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka

Indian subcontinent – This is a subregion of Asia, consisting at least of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, and other areas may also be included in some uses of the term, which is frequently, but not always, interchangeable with the term South Asia.

Indian Army – This refers to the army under the British empire and covers what is now modern-day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

1947 Partition – The Partition of India in 1947 was the change of political borders and the division of other assets that accompanied the dissolution of the British Raj in the Indian subcontinent and the creation of two independent dominions in South Asia: India and East and West Pakistan. East Pakistan subsequently became Bangladesh in 1972 after the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Eugenics – Eugenics is the scientifically incorrect and immoral theory of “racial improvement” and “planned breeding,” which gained popularity during the early 20th century. Eugenicists worldwide believed that they could perfect human beings and eliminate so-called social ills through genetics.

Indian Infantry	Indian Cavalry	British Infantry Rank
Sepoy	Sowar	Private
Lance Naik	Acting Lance Duffadar	Lance Corporal
Naik	Lance Duffadar	Corporal
Havildar	Duffadar	Sergeant
Havildar Major	Kot Duffadar	Sergeant Major
Jemadar	Jemadar	Lieutenant
Subedar	Risaldar	Captain
Subedar Major	Risaldar Major	Major

Bhisti – A follower in the Indian Army who served as a water carrier, transporting it in a large goatskin slung over his back. They were known for their bravery on the battlefield in supplying water to wounded soldiers at grave personal risk.

Coolie/Cooly – An unskilled labourer.

Dhobi – A washerman.

Khalasi – Dock worker/Lascar.

Langri – A cook.

Syce – A groom. Syces weren't limited to cavalry regiments in the Indian Army, as infantry regiments used syces to look after the officers' horses.

CURRICULUM LINKS

This exhibition is suitable for students studying History at KS3 and above.

KS3

- Ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745-1901
 - The development of the British Empire with a depth study (for example, of India)
- Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day
 - The First World War and the Peace Settlement
 - Indian independence and end of Empire

KS4

- OCR (A) Component 2: War and British Society c.790-2010
- AQA Paper 1 Section B (Wider World Depth Study): **BA Conflict and tension: The First World War, 1894–1918** and BB Conflict and tension: The inter-war years, 1918–1939

KS5

- AQA Paper 1 Breadth study: 1J **The British Empire, c1857–1967**
- OCR Thematic Study: Y320 From Colonialism to Independence: The British Empire 1857–1965
- Pearson Edexcel: Paper 2 Depth Study: F.1: India, c1914–48: the road to independence

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY IDEAS

Alongside the practical planning, it is a good idea to introduce the themes and narratives of The Indian Army at the Palace exhibition to students and group members before visiting. This will support everyone to get the most out of the visitor experience.

The Indian Army at the Palace explores;

- Press and public reaction to the Indian Army in Britain
- Daily life of the soldiers
- Family histories from descendants of the soldiers

Who was the Indian Army?

The Indian Army was the creation of British colonial rule, built around racial prejudices to secure dominion over the Indian subcontinent. Soldiers from different regiments were not truly representative of the Indian population. The British organised the Indian Army to defend the country's borders and to deter rebellion, so troops were recruited from particularly loyal communities using specific racial preferences. The global impact of the First World War led to this army fighting in Europe and the Middle East, and again in the Second World War. Over 2.3 million troops from the Indian subcontinent fought in World War One and Two making it the largest volunteer army in the world. By including Indian Army soldiers in British celebrations, the government recognised their sacrifices. However, early promises of independence were not honoured until 1947, when independence was returned with the Partition of India.

ACTIVITIES

Letters to Home & Censorship

During World War One, Indian soldiers would often write letters to be sent back to their friends and families in India. These letters would be checked by British censors to make sure no secret information was being shared. However, information about poor conditions and low moral was also removed. Indian soldiers would write their letters in Hindi, Urdu or Punjabi and have codes such as “Black Pepper” and “White Pepper” referring to Indian and British troops to evade censorship.

Write your own letter to a soldier, would you use a code to make sure your letter would not be censored?



Two Indian Soldiers – a painting by Philip de László

The portrait depicts the cavalry officers Risaldar Jagat Singh and Risaldar Man Singh. The pair were junior troop commanders in the British Indian Army's Expeditionary Force who served at the Battle of the Somme. The soldiers sat for the artist in London two months before being sent to France to fight in the trenches. The painting is extremely rare in depicting active Indian participants in the First World War. The painting is a fine example of a portrait by one of the most renowned artists of the twentieth century and captures an important moment in British history as soldiers from across the Empire came to fight in Europe. The painting appears to have been created for de László's own collection and it remained in his studio until he died in 1937.

More information about the painting can be found here: [Philip de László painting of two Indian soldiers at risk of leaving UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Discovery and Observation: As a class or group, look at the image and decide whether they are primary or secondary sources. Does the portrait tell you what their life was like or what kind of people they were?

Activity Idea: Imagine it is a hundred years from now and the painting has been discovered in a time capsule. Discuss what you would want people in the future to know about the soldiers' lives?



POST-VISIT ACTIVITY IDEAS

We hope you enjoyed your visit to The Indian Army at the Palace exhibition. Below are some extension questions and activities to do with your group or independently.

Questions for Group Discussion

- Were there any surprising stories you uncovered?
- What food do you think was eaten within the camps?
- How did the British public view the Indian Soldiers?
- What would have been the Indian Soldiers' thoughts about the British public?
- What places in London would you want the Indian Soldiers to visit?
- Why is Hampton Court Palace a significant place for the Indian Army?

ACTIVITIES

Look on the museum at the timeline on the left as you enter- find the 4 dates and write down the reason the Indian army visited Hampton Court at that time.

Year: _ _ _ _ Purpose of visit: _____

Year: _ _ _ _ Purpose of visit: _____

Year: _ _ _ _ Purpose of visit: _____

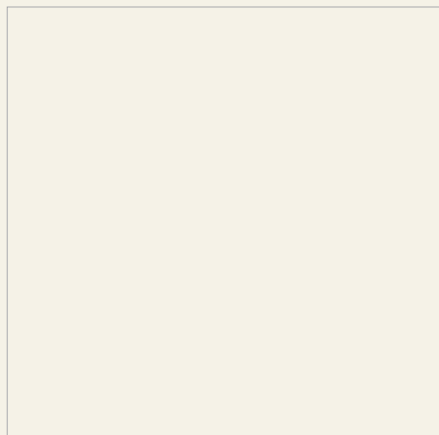
Year: _ _ _ _ Purpose of visit: _____

Q1 Apart from the soldiers, who else came along with each battalion?

Q2 Find the picture of the chefs feeding the soldiers outside their camp.
Can you identify what they are eating?

Q3 Where in Hampton Court did the army stay?

Q4 Find the Coronation medal and sketch it in the space below:



Q5 Watch the videos section. Who were the 6 people being interviewed?

Q6 Of all the questions they all wish they could ask their ancestors, what was your favourite question and why?

Q7 Complete the word search

S F C O R O N A T I O N C Y E H I V T I U W W
I Q M R M M H J B O N P M A C Y M R A O K T D
K P U J H D G D R K R A P E M O H A M O K O E
H E S N A I A I N D I A N A R M Y M W J Y G D
R I L R P H B L D E L H I D A R B A R Y K R A
E T I N D S A U G U V M Z H I N D U S U P J R
G N M H Y P L Z W M F E I A N A I H D U L M A
I E S Q H A A O L B B X S S R Y Y O T M R Q P
M M D F I N W V I W O R L D W A R O N E M V Y
E P O E Q I N I K W L L A I V E G R O E G V R
N M G I N S A A I L T R U O C N O T P M A H O
T A R O G H I I A I H P O S S S E C N I R P T
W C A T P F L H E N R Y V I I I E V N G N Y C
F N S K U L L F Y C Q G T X R H Q W V D I M I
U E X A L U A P L B X D R A W D E G N I K W V
G A O F R K J G Q Y R O T S I H H K I S X V S

JALLIANWALA BAGH
SIKH REGIMENT
WORLD WAR ONE
KING EDWARD
INDIAN ARMY
ARMY CAMP
MUSLIMS

PRINCESS SOPHIA
HAMPTON COURT
DELHI DARBAR
ENCAMPMENT
HENRY VIII
GEORGE VI
HINDUS

VICTORY PARADE
SIKH HISTORY
SPANISH FLU
CORONATION
HOME PARK
LUDHIANA

<http://www.alittlehistoryofthesikhs.org>

Worksheet created by: Mr Ravinderpal Singh Khalsa

Listen:

Two podcast episodes have been created that explore further themes within the exhibition. You can listen to them here;

Context of Empire: <https://historicroyalpalaces.libsyn.com/site/the-indian-army-at-the-palace-context-of-empire>

Legacy of Empire: <https://historicroyalpalaces.libsyn.com/site/the-indian-army-at-the-palace-legacy-of-empire>

Explore:

Many families who have roots linked to the Indian Subcontinent often are unable to trace their own family records of who served in the war as can be done within the West. However, UK Punjab Heritage Association is now digitising records of men from Punjab that served in World War One. More information can be found here: **** Punjab and World War One **** (punjabww1.com)

Visit:

Exhibition – Ranjit Singh: Sikh, Warrior, King
Wallace Collection, 10 April – 20 October 2024

More info: [Ranjit Singh: Sikh, Warrior, King - The Wallace Collection](#)

Website – National Army Museum
Indian Army resources and collection

More info: [Indian Army | National Army Museum \(nam.ac.uk\)](#)

Website – Imperial War Museum
Indian Army resources and collection

More info: [Search | Imperial War Museums \(iwm.org.uk\)](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Historic Royal Palaces' Schools & Communities team is happy to offer additional support and advice to prepare for visits to all of our palaces.

For school visits, please contact: hamptoncourtlearning@hrp.org.uk

For community visits, please contact: communities@hrp.org.uk



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