



Gharma Siknu: Learn at Home

Brad Hall, Digital Officer

An Introduction to the project

Gharma Siknu, Nepali for 'To Learn at Home' is a set of five short, presenter led, animated films for children. The films sit alongside our ever-expanding Gharma Sunnu (Listen at Home) digital outreach initiative and have been made available to watch online as well as in the Museum, where they tell some of the most important and interesting stories from Gurkha history including the first Gurkha Victoria Cross and The Battle of Kalunga.

As the museum looks to embark on an exciting period of redevelopment and reinterpretation it is vital that we diversify our audiences and engage with those who may have previously thought that military museums are not for them. After our success in reaching a worldwide audience with Gharma Sunnu, it was especially important to us that not only did we use this project as an opportunity to attract a younger audience but also a younger Nepali audience, given the large Nepali diaspora in Hampshire who are not currently engaging with the Museum. Gharma Siknu was our answer to this.



Casting a Nepali actress as one of our two hosts was pivotal in this, as not only was she able to attract a large following from the community but we were also able to film two of the episodes in Nepali and break down

the language barrier faced by some young Nepali people. We also feel that by casting an actor and actress of Asian descent we have been able to create content with both racial and gender diversity, which has encouraged wider viewers from demographics who are currently underrepresented in mainstream media.

The Process

The production of the films was split into three defined stages, pre-production, production, and post- production.

After securing funding via a grant from AMOT, we set off with our pre-production which began with a casting call to choose our hosts as well as adapting the stories



for screen with a young audience in mind. This would help us set the overall tone for the films. Also included in the pre-production phase was location scouting, risk assessments and finding an animator that fitted the unique style we wanted whilst being able to convey the serious messages that the stories held.

The production phase took place over four days in three locations. Firstly, the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens in Romsey which had a Chautara (a stone structure used as a resting place for weary travellers in Nepal) as well as woodland to depict the forests in Northern India and an area to represent the jungles of Malaya. Next we went to Princes Gardens in Aldershot which is home to a statue of Kulbir Thapa, the first Gurkha Victoria Cross recipient and finally we filmed in the Museum's medal gallery which houses the Victoria Crosses of Tulbahadur Pun and Michael Allmand.

Lastly the post-production stage, which consisted of editing the videos in house and then sending them to the animator. It also involved distribution which was predominantly via Facebook and YouTube however also included TikTok, Instagram and Twitter. As well as investing in Google and Facebook

Ads, we released the films during Winchester Heritage Open Days when we were offering free admission to the Museum, which helped increase online activity but also encouraged families to visit after viewing the films. To increase reach further, the films have been entered into the Smiley Charity Film Awards and the Museums + Heritage Awards.

Analysing the results of the project

Whilst reflecting on the success of Gharma Siknu, our primary measure was the video's audience reach and engagement. In total, our view count for the series stands at over 65,000 and counting from our primary social media channels of YouTube and Facebook. This has surpassed many of our expectations and is incredibly encouraging for future projects. This does not include the 47,000 views we've seen on TikTok and 26,000 on Instagram using shortened adaptations of the videos.

The educational, presenter-led history channel is a fast-expanding online market. YouTubers and Museums alike are constantly finding new ways to tell a wide range of stories from history. We are thankful to The Army Museums Ogilby Trust for helping us to become a part of it with our own unique approach and would encourage other Museums to use a similar format as a way of educating and inspiring young people.

To view the films and other digital resources, please visit:

<https://thegurkhamuseum.co.uk/gharma-sunnu/>

About the Gurkha Museum

Located in Peninsula Barracks in Winchester The Gurkha Museum takes you on a journey through Gurkha history, beginning with their origins in Nepal and the moment in 1815 when Gurkhas were first enlisted to fight for Britain. The extraordinary stories on display and housed in our archives cover not only the battles and campaigns but the culture and religion of the homeland of this unique fighting force. We see them locked in battle with mutinous sepoys in 1857, then standing guard in India's North West and North East frontiers before being sent half a world away to the trenches of the Western Front in 1914 and The Falkland Islands in the early 1980s.

Through its collections and archives the Museum represents over 200 years of a unique and historic relationship, one that continues to this day, with the annual recruitment of Gurkhas from Nepal continuing to be vital for Britain's Armed Forces.

Website: <https://thegurkhamuseum.co.uk>

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Visit:

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