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Digitisation the Victorian

The Illustrated London News (ILN) was one of the most significant illustrated periodicals of the 19th and early 20th centuries, providing rich visual and textual accounts of global events, including the Indian subcontinent. The depictions of Sikhs, the Punjab, and the broader North Indian region offer unique insights into British perceptions, colonial narratives, and cross-cultural exchanges during this period.

The Sikh Museum Initiative (SMI), in partnership with the Heritage Hub/University of Leicester, is collaboratively working to digitise, research, and interpret selected pages of the Illustrated London News related to the themes below. This collaboration will contribute to scholarship on imperial representation and community heritage while engaging local volunteers and students in meaningful digital skills training.

Themes

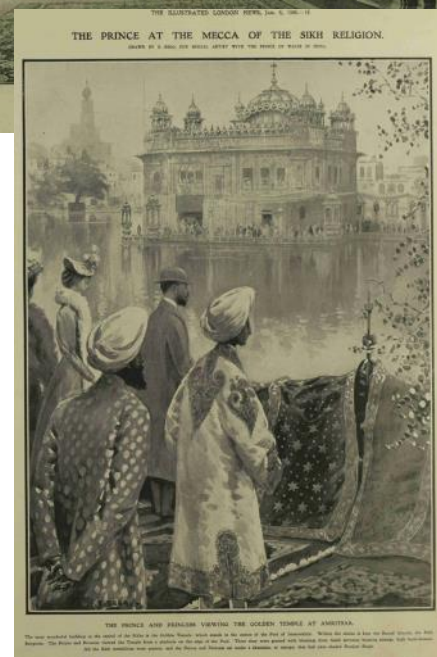
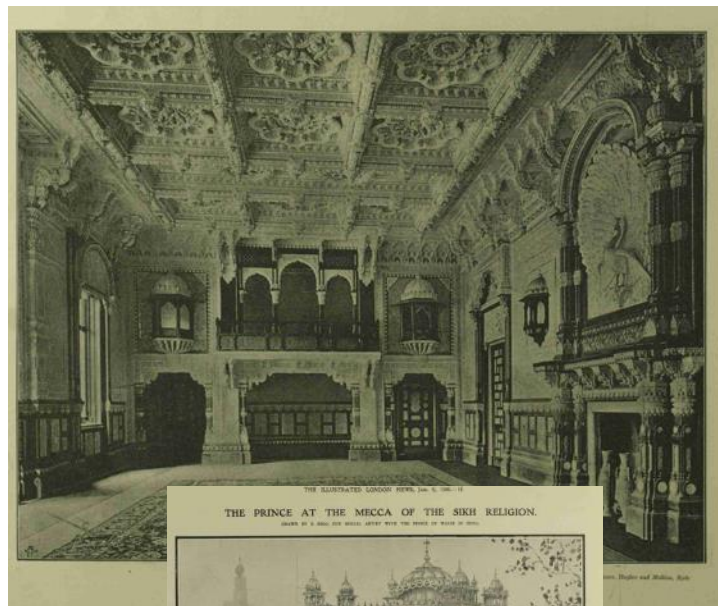
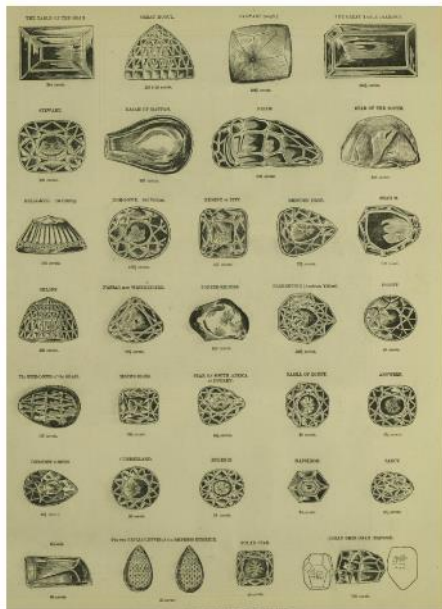
- The newspaper covered a wide range of themes related to Sikh and Punjab history, including:
- The Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845-1849) and the British encounters with the Sikh Empire.
- The role and representation of the Akali Nihangs as warrior-saints.
- The annexation of the Punjab (1849) and its aftermath.
- The relationship between the princely states of Punjab and the British Crown.
- The recruitment of Sikhs into the Indian Army during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- The participation of Sikh regiments in global military campaigns, including the World Wars

Key events

Key Events Mentioned in the *Illustrated London News* from 1846 to 1900

Year	Event / Title
1846	Battles of Moodkee and Ferozepore
1849	Sikh Artillery in London
1849	War in the Punjab
1851	Windsor Castle illustration (Sikh guns and flags)
1852	The Great Exhibition
1853	The Great Exhibition (Ireland)
1854	New Church in Punjab
1856	Duleep Singh illustration
1857	Indian Mutiny
1858	Holy Tank and Temple of Sikhs, <u>Umritsur</u>
1860	Procession of Sikh Chiefs and Others at Lahore (Feb 1860)
1860	War in China
1865	War in Bhutan
1872	The <u>Umritsur</u> Training Institution
1876	Prince of Wales in India
1878	The Afghan War
1880	Prince Albert Victor in India
1893	Indian Durbar Hall at Osborne
1896	Indian Sikh Prince in Europe — Jagjit Singh
1900	Crisis in China

Examples



The Royal Lahore Toshkhana

- The Toshkhana, or royal treasury, of the Kingdom of Punjab under Maharajah Ranjit Singh was one of the most remarkable repositories of Sikh heritage, housing an array of invaluable artefacts including arms, jewellery, manuscripts, textiles, and religious relics. Following the annexation of the Panjab in 1849 by the British, numerous items from the Toshkhana and other royal collections were catalogued and dispersed into British institutions, private estates, and collections.



Emily Eden, Portraits of the Princes and People of India

The British Library

- The British Library holds several important lists and catalogues pertaining to the Punjab Toshkhana and related material acquisitions during and after the Anglo-Sikh Wars.
- These documents provide vital evidence for understanding how Sikh relics and objects travelled from the heart of the Sikh Empire to the United Kingdom.

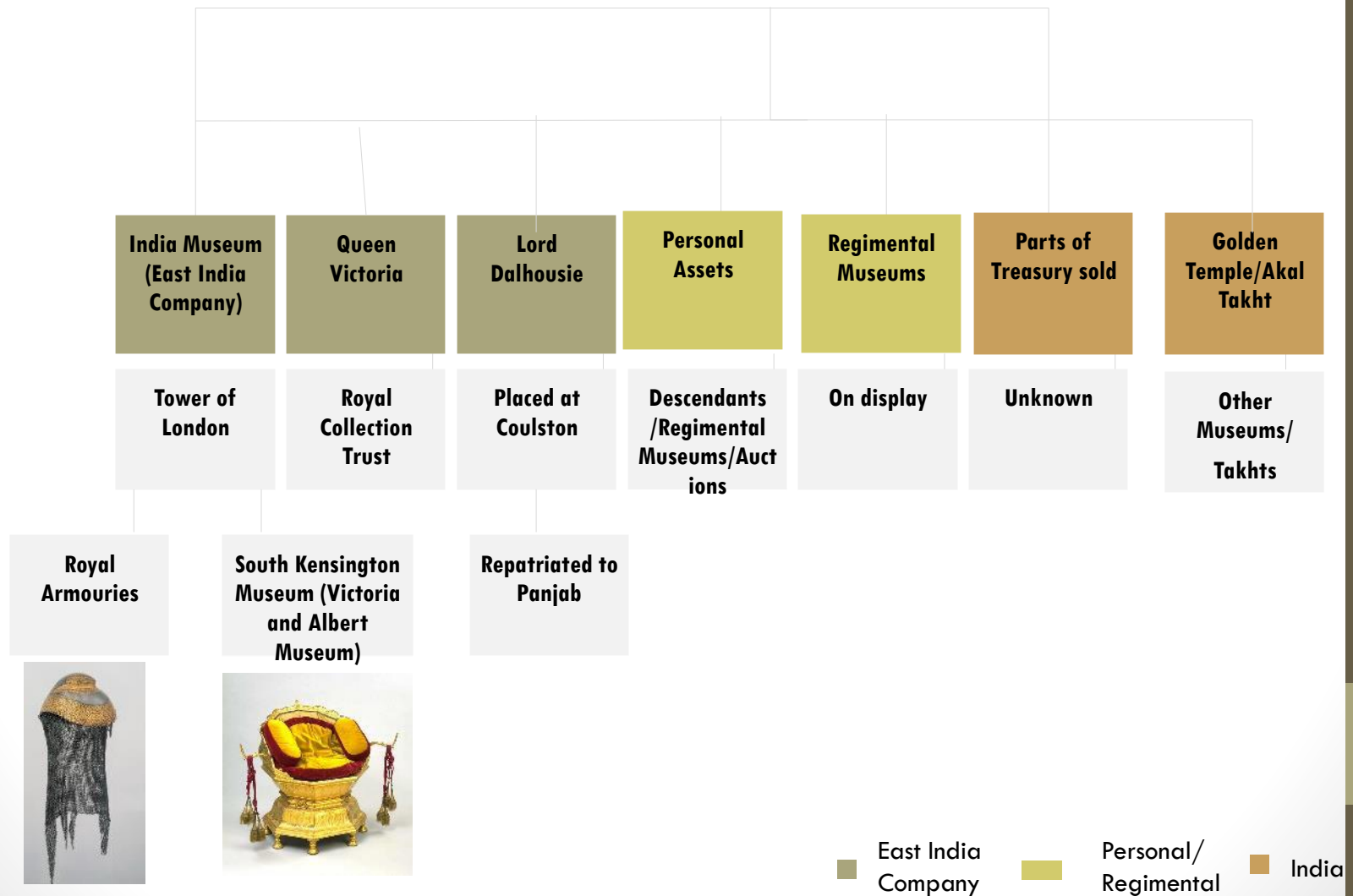


*SIR JOHN
SPENCER LOGIN*

Initial findings

- Lord Login's Catalogue of the Toshkhana – Detailing the contents of the Lahore treasury following the annexation of the Punjab.
- Lord Dalhousie's List for Queen Victoria – Items selected from the Toshkhana and Punjab collections for presentation to the British monarch.
- 'Missing Relics of the Khalsa' – Records and notes relating to lost or unaccounted-for artefacts, including swords attributed to Guru Gobind Singh Ji.
- Maharajah Duleep Singh's List of Lahore Relics – Documentation of personal possessions and relics associated with the last Maharajah of Punjab.
- List of Relics Returned to Maharani Jindan Kaur and Others – Correspondence and records indicating restitutions or identified artefacts connected to the royal family of Lahore.

Pathways: Sikh Toshkhana



Login List

Number	Description of Jewels	Number of pieces	Composition of Jewels, 1871																		Total Weight	Supposed
			Pearls (Moku)	Emeralds (Dima)	Diamonds (Heera)	Garnets (Chonee)	Manick	Small Rubies (Sakhee)	Large Rubies (Sak)	Topaz (Bakhar)	Sapphires (Sakham)	Turquois (Targ)	Onyx (Zoollee)	Crystal (Chotak)	Chrysolite (Chool mudrick)	Amethyst (Whitack)	Carbide (Saknee)	Onyx (Saknee)	Long Solimanee	Amber (Sakham)		
Armlets / Bangabandi																						
1	The Kohinoor Diamond set as an Armlet	1	11		3	11																
2	The Durgahieer Diamond set as an Armlet	1	11		11	11																
3	An Armlet of Diamonds	1			3																	
4	Do Do	1			5																	
5	Do Do	1			3																	
6	Armlet of Emeralds	2		8																		
7	Armlet of a Topaz	1						1														
8	Armlets of Pearls, Garnets and Rubies	2	32			22		14														
9	Armlet of gold with Rubies	1		1				14		1												
10	Do with Rubies	1						3														
11	Do with Emeralds	1		1	6																	
12	Armlets with Diamonds and Emeralds	2		8	84			2														
13	Do Do Do																					

Banda Singh Bahadur-Making a Statue

- 2-year project
- Working with Guru Nanak Darbar, Gurdwara, Gravesend
- Digital created by Taranjit Singh
- Worked with 3 foundries to achieve the goal
- Plinth contains representations of Sikh coins from 1712
- Recreated an existing image and used historical information to bring the statue alive.

Design



Manufacture



Launch

17th April 2026



Further Reading

- Gurinder Singh Mann et al, *The British and the Sikhs*
- Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Rise of the Sikh Soldier*
- www.sikhscholar.co.uk www.anglosikhmuseum.com
- @sikh_scholar @sikhmuseuminitiative

