



Championing Sikh and Punjabi Culture

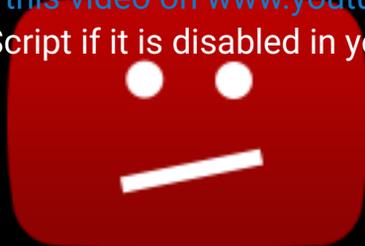
521. Amandeep Singh Madra (London)

522. Parmjit Singh (London)

Two friends from west London have led a huge drive to preserve and celebrate Sikh and Punjabi heritage in the United Kingdom for more than twenty years.

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British-born Sikhs, Amandeep Singh Madra and Parmjit Singh began their journey of discovery in the early 1990s when they travelled to museums, academic institutions, private collections and libraries around both the UK and the Indian subcontinent to learn more about their cultural heritage.

They discovered a huge wealth of material relating to the rich and fascinating legacy of Punjabi and Sikh culture; beautifully created manuscripts, paintings, drawings, exquisite examples of arms and armour and rare photos were unearthed by the pair, who have brought them to light through exhibitions, lectures, TV and radio and a series of books. They are co-founders of The [UK Punjab Heritage Association](#) (UKPHA) which is widely recognised as a leading cultural institution of Sikh and Punjabi heritage in the UK and beyond.

Their work has also inspired dozens of young, British volunteers, who have been instrumental in the creation and running of two major London exhibitions and more besides. The 2011 exhibition on the Golden Temple of Amritsar was hugely successful attracting a remarkable 23,000 visitors.

Through a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, they have led the 'Empire, Faith & War: The Sikhs and World War One' project, which launched with an even more successful exhibition and lecture series attracting over

25,000 visitors. The project aims to inspire Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike to research the disproportionately large role part played by Sikhs during the First World War. The outcome will be a unique interactive database of stories, educational materials for schools and a free publication and documentary film.

Prime Minister David Cameron said:

“Amandeep and Parmjit have dedicated their lives to preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Punjab region and sharing it with generations of Sikhs living in the UK. By leading a team of volunteers to discover artefacts that bring to life the arts, literature and traditions of the region, they have connected Sikhs in the UK with their history and roots. Their work has also given people around the country an opportunity to commemorate the important role Sikhs played in the First World War. As we celebrate Vaisakhi I am delighted to recognise Amandeep and Parmjit as Points of Light.”

Amandeep said:

“Parmjit Singh and I are extremely honoured to receive this award in recognition of the wider effort of the UKPHA team and trustees – and of course of our incredible volunteers who have worked tirelessly in discovering, presenting and enthusing the public about the rich and inspiring heritage of the Sikhs and the Punjab.”

The daily Points of Light award recognises outstanding individual volunteers - people who are making a change in their community.

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