

# The CHC Journal

Vol. I  
September 2021

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## Point of View

*Dear fellow CHCians*

I am very happy to present the first volume of our very own CHC journal. It is a monthly journal designed solely BY the members, OF the members and FOR the members!

Looking back on our journey, I recall the launch of Calcutta Heritage Collective on the 16th of March 2018, with a request to all to "Take a Call" on how we wanted to see our heritage - destroyed, decayed and disappeared OR as living emblems of a glorious past, connecting our today and tomorrow with our roots.

Since then CHC has been involved in a variety of activities spreading awareness of our heritage. We opened with a wonderful photographic exhibition of heritage architectural sites at an old North Calcutta Mansion, then undergoing restoration. World Heritage Day 2018 was celebrated in collaboration with Kolkata Port Trust. On this occasion Vikramjit Singh Rooprai spoke on "Who Owns Heritage ". We hosted an interactive talk with Lord Bruce on Calcutta's Scottish Heritage. CHC conducted Heritage Walks through Kumartuli, Burrabazar, Cornwallis Street, Metiaburz and other areas highlighting different periods of the history of the city. We have been actively trying to spread awareness amongst the younger generation by hosting our popular heritage quizzes with the city schools. We have received worldwide viewership for our online talk show on the Heritage Clubs of Calcutta which has been very well received and widely featured by both the leading dailies, Times of India and The Telegraph.

We look forward to carrying on with our commitment towards Restoration, Respect and Reuse of built Heritage, which are the core values and mission of CHC. My heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Vibha, Ipsita and Nikita for not only taking the responsibility upon themselves but also for designing an amazing journal! Not to omit mentioning Rajiv, whose presence is required in every activity of the Collective! Most of the segments covered here will be continued in each volume. I request all members to please participate and partner with us in this endeavour.

*Mukul Agarwal*  
*Founder Trustee*



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## The Bengal Story

A fabulous showcase of Bengal by **Baltazard Solvyns**. His paintings focus on Bengal. Pencil Drawings filled in with colour. Fascinating trivia. He believed that as a people we Indians hadn't changed in essence through the centuries. He has beautifully depicted the quintessential India.

<https://www.architecturaldigest.in/story/etchings-by-baltazard-solvyns-beautiful-showcase-of-bengal-1790s/>



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## Heritage in the News

- ❖ Pujas are round the corner. This fascinating story of syncretism in Bengal.  
<https://www.telegraphindia.com/culture/the-gods-must-be-angry/cid/1825682>
- ❖ ASI breathes life into the Dutch settlement Chinsurah. To save, restore, reuse, conserve these artefacts, a part of our History, a legacy, roots of our origin  
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kolkata/asi-breathes-life-into-17th-century-dutch-cemetery-at-chinsurah/article35654106.ece/amp/?fbclid=IwAR03sUNKpqhmuMj6-Jk2rHI-5Ey8nWQbNv9lvWUA6rjtnB1N9zMiZYxRS4w>

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## Conservation Trivia

### What are Blue Plaques? What is the significance?



The famous Blue Plaque is an internationally recognized historical marker found all over Europe and elsewhere. Originally started in the United Kingdom, the plaques are permanent signs installed in publicly visible locations on buildings to commemorate either a famous person who lived or worked in the building or site or an event that occurred within the building.

It is made by vitreous enameling which is a process of glass coating on metal and has many useful properties. It is smooth, hard, anti abrasive, anti corrosive, durable, scratch resistant and has long-lasting colour fastness. Being durable and hardy vitreous enamel is the natural choice for these permanent markers.

Enameling is an old and widely adopted technology used in jewelry and decorative art. Since the 19th century, enamels have also been applied to many consumer objects, such as some cooking vessels, signages, storage silos etc. This process is intrinsically connected with Bengal. The forerunners were two quintessentially indigenous companies, Bengal Enamel and Sur Enamel. It should be imperative to initiate this international symbol of Heritage in Bengal. ~ *By Ipsita Ganguli*

***We call for sponsoring Blue Plaques for Heritage sites of your choice.***

***Write to  
contact@calcuttaheritagecollective.com***

***Let's Blue Plaque the city!***

### **You ask - We answer**

From house restoration to a part of Heritage we didn't know about but need to know. Write to  
**contact@calcuttaheritagecollective.com**

**Did You Know?** It was 1942. The allied espionage knew that the Japanese air force identified Kolkata by the Victoria Memorial. This was a big problem. How do you hide a large magnificent white marble landmark of the city from the hawkish eyes of the Japanese bombers? Painting it black wasn't an option as it would spoil the marble permanently and it would be difficult to remove the paint after the war was over. The dark grey soil from the Hooghly river, and easy and unlimited supply of dark brown cow dung provided the solution. A mud-pack was prepared by the military engineers blending these two easily available materials, and the entire Victoria Memorial was covered by this special mud pack. This protected the marble, and successfully hid the building at night from the prying eyes of Japanese planes. The pack would of course had to be replaced every few days as it dried and peeled off the walls.



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## Member in Focus

Pradip Chopra, a renowned entrepreneur, educator and real-estate magnate is an ardent Heritage Conservationist. He serves as President of the Murshidabad Heritage Development Society and is one of the founding members of the Department of Heritage at MAKAUT. He is a member of the Calcutta Heritage Development Society, and has founded the Rajasthan Heritage Development Society. He has undertaken several restoration projects including that of Sir BN Sircar's

house in West Bengal and the Chopra School in Rajasthan. Mr Chopra also spearheaded the repair of Prince Dwarkanath Tagore's monument in Kansal Green Cemetery in London and got his bust installed there. He is now embarking on the restoration of Lord Canning's House, the First Viceroy of British India. Mr Chopra has also done invaluable work in documenting HeritageHiscdocumentary films on The City of Joy Heritage walk, 1971 - India's finest Hour, Indira Gandhi, The Transfer of Power etc as well as the books authored by him such as the biography of Rakhaldas Banerjee, Murshidabad - the unknown wealth capital of the world, 11 heritage walks of Kolkata, Seherwali Regal vegetarian cuisine of Murshidabad, and these have been widely appreciated

*If you would like a copy of any of Mr Chopra's interesting journals, email us at [contact@calcuttaheritage.com](mailto:contact@calcuttaheritage.com)*

### Members in the News

#### Navpreet Arora

"Fun on the streets"  
Tripadvisors  
Travellers  
Choice Award  
2021

#### Ipsita Ganguli

"Rooted, India  
75, and We,  
The People" a  
poetic tribute  
recently  
published

### Fun Trivia

#### Know your CHC member

Lets see how well you know the members

- An impressive aficionado and collector of heritage
- Maybe a connection with the first bengali newspaper, Samchar Darpan
- Sheds light for sure

*Ans: Pradipta Bhattacharya*

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## Down Memory Lane

2022 will be the 75<sup>th</sup> year of our Independence.

The patriots fought hard to gain our birthright and the various feudal states were united as the Republic of India. The Partition broke many hearts especially in Punjab and Bengal as there was a loss of personal connects, homes, memories which many left behind to start life anew on either side. We are all the same divided by a political rhetoric.

*Down Memory Lane, from those days. We heard stories or shared some nostalgia or angst. Lets share some personal collectible, a photo, an object, a song. We would love to know about it.*

**Send your memories to [contact@calcuttaheritagecollective.com](mailto:contact@calcuttaheritagecollective.com)**

### TIME

Time ticks on  
Flowing into minutes , hours, days, years and centuries...  
And change is the only thing real...

And yet,  
Some fragrances linger from one century to another...  
And some memories become tangible..

Like the million scratches on the jumping watch, which you must have worn  
almost 100 years ago..

I still remember sometime in the later years of the last century, how you would  
lay out the 50 odd watches on the table in the mornings and wind them...

And I wonder what you would say to the watches we wear today that measure  
not just time but the steps we take and the calls we make

So here I am.. holding your jumping watch, the one you wore to school and  
college, the one you gifted me when I started wearing wrist watches to school,  
The watch that bear the marks of use  
The marks of you... And maybe a couple of mine too...

And time ticks on..  
As I hold my grandmother's delicate wristwatch with the solid blue meena  
and border, thinking of her..

And I look at your pocket watch... I never quite remember seeing you wear that  
But then maybe that one holds memories for you

What would you say Dada (Grandfather) to time flowing from yours to mine ,  
through the two centuries that we embrace and through our Nation flowing from  
subjugation to freedom.. and now clocking in 75 years of independence...

Does time really set us free?  
**Copyright ~ Ipsita Ganguli**



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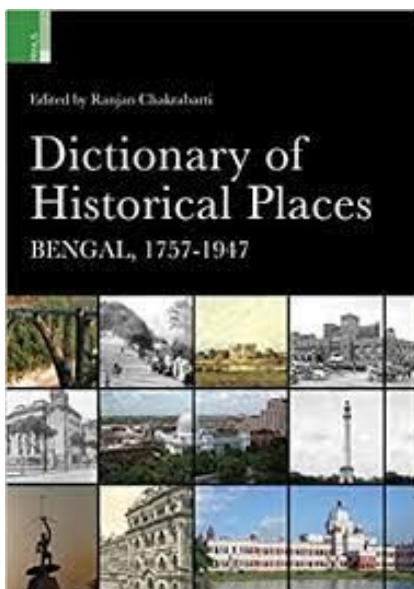
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## A Must Have for Heritage Lovers

Did you know that what was once the village of Ibrahimpur, now long forgotten, has now a well known University. We now call it Jadavpur!

Ranjan Chakraborti's book "Dictionary of Historical Places, Bengal, 1757 to 1947" is a must on the bookshelf of every heritage lover.



[https://books.google.com/books/about/Dictionary\\_of\\_Historical\\_Places.html?id=TJ6hmwEACAAJ](https://books.google.com/books/about/Dictionary_of_Historical_Places.html?id=TJ6hmwEACAAJ)

## This Month

**September** is Heritage Month in South Africa. They celebrate **24<sup>th</sup> September** as Heritage Day

**2 September** - Victory over Japan Day  
V J Day (WWII)

**10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September**  
Heritage Open Days  
England  
<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>

**September 15 to October 15** National Hispanic Heritage Month - America

**27 September** - World Tourism Day

## Activity Update

**Quiz:** We are ready with the second edition of the Online Inter School Quiz. 2020 was the debut and a great hit. The students surprised us with their Heritage knowledge and all of us learnt a bit more. **First quiz of the month is on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Before the online version last year, we partnered with The Apeejay Lit Fest in the years 2018 and 2019. Arnab Bannerjee conducted the quiz with many fun elements. Again very few questions came back to the Quiz Master. The hallmark of a great Quiz! Indeed! Follow our SMM handles for updates.

Members are welcome to contribute for any of the journal sections. We would love to publish your articles/notes. Please message Vibha Mitra at **+919830933434** or send an email to [vibhamitra@gmail.com](mailto:vibhamitra@gmail.com)

## The CHC Connect



**Mukul Agarwal** : Publisher

**Rajiv Soni**: Advisor

**Vibha Mitra**: Editor

**Ipsita Ganguli** : Co-Editor

**Nikita Kejriwal** : Creatives