



The CHC Journal

Volume I Issue XI June 2022

*Bazaar on the Chitpore Road, 1826. From Fraser's Views in Calcutta
(Source: Wikimedia Commons)*

The CHC Journal

Vol. I Issue XI June 2022



Point of View

It is my belief that the word "Heritage" is meaningful to only those who have had a particular kind of upbringing. It is a passion which is inherent in a person ever since childhood, a passion inculcated over the years amidst surroundings bearing witness to a by-gone era. For me, "Heritage" is that which arouses my curiosity to unearth all that lies behind it: the origin, the untold tales and anecdotes, the people who had lived there, their traditions and customs, the landmarks bearing silent witness to a glorious past. It arouses within me an unknown urge or desire to showcase or protect the object of interest, stemming out of an awe and respect for all that is old and decaying under oblivion. I grew up in a household, probably one of the oldest in Hooghly District, around thirty kilometres away from Kolkata. The heavy monsoons in the plains of Gangetic Bengal over the years, and most of all, the passage of time itself, over the centuries, have all taken a toll on what is referred to as "Sheoraphuli Rajbati", the abode of the Royal Family hailing from Patuli (Agrawip) in Burdwan District. It is a long heartbreaking tale of a flourishing family of benevolent rulers who lost their palatial ancestral home and hundreds of acres of landed property in the depths of the Ganges due to the river shifting its course because of soil erosion. As far as my memory goes, I grew up in a tumble-down house at Sheoraphuli, with lofty ceilings with termite-eaten wooden beams, long never-ending verandahs, with extra-large windows with "jalousies", huge open dusty courtyards, the "Deorhi" and Thakurbari, the "Khirki" which could easily have been a small reserve forest, the out-houses, several water-bodies dotted over the sprawling complex of what one would call a "Rajbati". It is my "House of memories" which I cling to fondly, trying to maintain it as a prize possession, one of utmost heritage value to me. My "House of memories" has been a silent witness to so many happenings in this region: the history of the Danes in Serampore actually originated in this house; Serampore or Srirampur owes its name to the venerated Deities of this family; this house has, over the centuries, been the hub of all kinds of cultural activities and sports. In fact, this house is like a touch-stone which triggers off many untold tales and names lost in oblivion. My personal satisfaction is that I am trying to contribute in my own humble way to protect and reuse a piece of heritage, steeped in local history, of an era much earlier than the arrival of the European powers! ~ **Basabi Pal**



Printed and published by the Calcutta Heritage Collective. This publication is solely for internal circulation within the members of the Calcutta Heritage Collective.

[Visit for additional information](#)



Mukul Agarwal : Publisher
Rajiv Soni: Advisor
Vibha Mitra: Editor
Ipsita Ganguli : Co-Editor
Nikita Kejriwal : Creatives

The Bengal Story



A few Bengali entrepreneurs whose brands are not only alive but daring to go far, even in the modern era. **Duckback** – The Manufacturer of Swadeshi Waterproofs. The brand came up with a variety of waterproof products.

The catchy name might have been derived from the term 'Dak Bags' that they supplied for the postal officers. During the British Colonial Rule in India, the local market was flooded with imported, high-priced waterproof British products. The Berkley and Stanford educated Bengali entrepreneur, Surendra Mohan Bose created his waterproof brand, Duckback by Bengal Waterproof Limited, it was established in 1940 as an answer to the British monopoly in the waterproof and textile trade in India.

Sulekha – India's first Ink Business Inspired by Gandhi's Swadeshi Movement. Shri Satish Chandra Dasgupta, a Chief Chemist of Bengal Chemicals, prepared the first Swadeshi ink, "Krishnadhara," and later gave the formulation to two brothers Shri Sankaracharya Maitra and Shri Nani Gopal Maitra who set up an ink manufacturing plant at Rajshahi (now in Bangladesh) and later in several places in Kolkata and India. Established in 1934, 'Sulekha' is thus considered as a creation of the Self Reliance Movement initiated by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi during India's freedom struggle. The brand name was christened 'Sulekha' by none other than Rabindranath Tagore. The name 'Sulekha' means 'beautiful writing.' The ink was of good quality and it quickly became a symbolic attack against the British regime as it broke the monopoly of British Ink brands like Quink. There were hardly any college-goers or office 'babu' then in Kolkata who had not used Sulekha ink in the fountain pens they carried. Sulekha Works Limited is a Bengali enterprise that was started in the pre-independence period in undivided Bengal. It re-started its journey again in 2006 with a diversified line of Home Hygiene Products, Solar power solutions, ink, and stationery.

Bengal Chemicals - India's first pharmaceutical company. Bengal Chemical's Cantharidine hair oil to keep hair silky, Bengal Chemical's Phenyle to clean and disinfect your home. Bengal Chemical's Naphthalene balls to keep your woollens moth-free. Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Ltd., formerly Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works Ltd. (BCPW), is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) in India. Established in Kolkata in 1901, it is the first Pharmaceutical Company of India, founded by Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, the Father of Indian Chemistry. The company manufactured quality Chemicals, Drugs, Pharmaceuticals, and Home Products, employing indigenous technology, skill, and raw materials

More Swadeshi products in Bengal, **Clyde Engineering Company Limited** by Kshirode Bihari Chakraborty was the first electric fan manufacturing company set up by a Bengali entrepreneur in 1918. Gour Mohon Dutta, a Bengali Merchant, defied the British through the creation of a Swadeshi antiseptic cream brand **Boroline** in 1929 manufactured under the aegis of GD Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd's There were other smaller ones like **Bengal Immunity** and **Dey's Chemicals** in pharmaceuticals, **Bengal Lamps** in electric lightning products, **Bande Mataram** in matches, **Banga Laxmi Cotton Mills** in textiles. **Calcutta Chemical Company**, established in 1916 by Bengali entrepreneurs K.C. Das, B.N. Maitra, and R.N. Sen during the time of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal. It is a pioneering brand ~ **Vibha Mitra**

Read the full article at <https://vibhamitra.com/?p=1411&preview=true>

Down Memory Lane

A Sardarni visiting the Kali temple and talking of the Durga Puja rituals with authority. The next morning I am at the Gurudwara. A true blend of cultures inherited and adopted. The name stands out else the distinction is blurred. Heartfelt. My family settled here after partition , and I have got much joy from visiting the Victoria Memorial and The Golden Temple. My mom learnt Bengali recipes, we relished the food.

A lal paar saree during Durga Puja was a must instead of the usual Salwar Kameez. Heritage memories for me mean the saradriji taxi driver which the city so fondly misses today, heritage memories mean dad

never wanting to leave the city during Durga Puja because a Bengali friend had invited him to his house for ashtami . And the family tradition carries on. I never leave the city during the Pujas and soak in the beautiful festival and community bonding ~ **Navpreet Arora**



Heritage News



<https://www.getbengal.com/details/kolkata-heritage-ambassador-taxi-now-on-sydney-streets>

The Ambassador car was modelled on Britain's 1956 Morris Oxford Series III, by Hindustan Motors. It was first produced in India in 1957. For decades, Hindustan Ambassador cars ruled the subcontinent as travellers were chauffeured, auto industry jobs created, and taxis became abundant. No Ola or Uber services existed then. Though taxi services started in Kolkata as early as 1907, the iconic Ambassador Taxi became a standard model only in 1962, providing jobs to a range of drivers who came from Bihar and Punjab primarily.

Canning a place where the story of colonising began. It was an erroneous decision rectified later. The beautiful house in shambles still exists <https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/places/explore-the-history-behind-lord-cannings-residence-in-canning-in-sunderbans-two-hours-from-kolkata/cid/1862862>

Kolkata has potential to become World Heritage City

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/start-work-to-make-kol-world-heritage-city/articleshow/90923007.cms>

Know your CHC Members



Sreela Mitra is a motivational speaker, leadership coach and a communication expert. She's been helping people acquire effective communication skills for over two decades and has coached thought leaders and

award winning public speakers. She went to Loreto House, Kolkata after which she completed her BSc, Economics Honors from St. Xavier's College Kolkata. She is Professionally Certified in Effective Communication Skills from Trinity College London and was the Global highest scorer in 2006. Whether Sreela was actively participating in live debates, moderating shows on radio and television or being a panelist on both live and televised programmes, she was constantly aware of the importance of communicating impactfully.

With time it only became clearer to her - the huge positive impact this would have in people's lives, if honed from early on. Thus, began her journey. Sreela's journey started in 2008 in her drawing room in Kolkata and very quickly spread its wings into becoming SpeakSmart Academy. In addition to being an impeccable communicator, Sreela has always been a vital and charismatic leader. She was the First President of Millennium Mams from 2005-2008 and currently, is a committee member of Ladies Study Group, Kolkata. Sreela enjoys social work to uplift the economically downtrodden and has been involved with various projects over the years. She is the Founder and patron of 'Taali' a wholly charitable educational centre, coaching over 300 school children in Nadia district, West Bengal. Being an avid reader herself, she is also the founder of a book club, Erudites.



Swati Tibrewal is a second generation Kolkatan with a bachelor's degree in Business from Kolkata University. She is a freelance financial consultant / advisor with specialization in the areas of life insurance and individual income tax. She was a keen sportswoman in school and college having represented them in throwball and table tennis. She was the wind beneath the wings of her two children becoming nationally ranked tennis players on the junior circuit. Swati was always interested in visiting places of historical / archeological importance and interest. She joined CHC with a view to learn more about the great heritage of Kolkata and West Bengal and contribute her two bits in its upkeep

Members are welcome to contribute for any of the journal sections. We would love to publish your articles/notes.

Please message

Vibha Mitra (+919830933434) or

Ipsita Ganguli (+919831283192) or

send an email to

contact@calcuttaheritagecollective.com