



**H** CALCUTTA  
HERITAGE  
COLLECTIVE  
• Respect • Restore • Reuse

# The CHC Journal

Volume I Issue X  
June 2022

Scottish Cemetery, Kolkata 2022

Image credit: Nikita Kejriwal

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## Point of View

How fair is it to prolong the life of a building when the societal that created it, is gone? This is something that has troubled me ever since I began documenting Calcutta. Clearly, mansions which were built as family homes, were built to serve the joint family, with a stress on communal space. Such buildings do not work for modern nuclear families which need more personal space. So how are we to preserve such buildings? Is adaptive re-use enough? Can we keep turning these old buildings into restaurants, boutiques and offices and still call it preservation, when the character of the building has changed, although its appearance has not? It is charming to see European towns which haven't changed a bit in the last 200 years. But is that possible for a city like Calcutta? After all, we burn our dead, so is preservation of the old perhaps an alien concept to us? I am afraid I have more questions than answers. But I continue to document Calcutta, to leave a record of the world I lived in. Maybe the buildings cannot all be saved. Maybe some of them can be saved. Whatever be it, the pictures will live on.



~ **Deepanjan Ghosh**, *broadcast professional, photographer, writer, freelance journalist*

## Respect . Restore . Reuse

A visit to the Scottish cemetery is an eye-opener to the biodiversity possible in the heart of our bustling city. Conservation Architect Dr Neeta Das and her team have worked tirelessly to restore the Scottish Cemetery and create a space which can be made usable for the community that surrounds it. Funded by the Kolkata Scottish Heritage Trust, 200 graves (out of 1809) have been restored and a nature trail has been created through the maintained overgrowth. The cemetery is being managed as a biodiversity spot by allowing the natural habitat to flourish to an extent that nurtures and encourages indigenous species - 70 species of flora and 53 species of fauna have been identified till date. Visitors from around the world come to trace their Scottish ancestry here. The community engagement program encourages people to visit the cemetery thus creating a sense of connection to the space, along with creating an awareness about heritage and nature. The precinct surrounding the cemetery has benefitted from the repair and redevelopment as rental values and new business is on the rise. This is a very good example of how a restored and reused site can bring about positive changes in its surroundings ~ **Nikita Kejriwal** and **Sangeeta Dudhoria**



<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/karaya-roads-scottish-cemetery-now-has-restored-graves-and-tombstones/cid/1863067>

# The Bengal Story

## Swadeshi Entrepreneurs

Bengalis as entrepreneurs, their history goes back to **Dwarkanath Tagore**.

He acquired the Raniganj collieries in 1836 from an English agency house, **Alexander & Co**. This was followed with ventures for operating tugboats, steamboat services connecting Kolkata and Allahabad, and a steam-powered floating ferry across the Hooghly, mainly to use the coal that was mined. Dwarkanath even envisaged a 160-km rail line from Raniganj to Kolkata, a project that the British authorities derailed for being promoted by a company under “native management”.

**Rajendra Nath Mookerjee**, a visionary and an industrialist whose engineering firm, **Martin & Co**, was at the turn of the 20th century executed major water-works stations, feeder railways and building projects all over India – including Kolkata’s magnificent **Victoria Memorial**. In 1924, this concern took over **Burn & Co**, which owned a pig iron ore unit that 15 years later began producing steel. **Indian Iron & Steel Company (IISCO)** became the flagship of the Mookerjee family-controlled Martin Burn group.

During the early part of last century: **Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals**, **Calcutta Chemical Company**, **Bengal Immunity**, **Bengal Lamps**, **Bengal Waterproof**, **Bande Mataram Match Factory**, **Banga Laxmi Cotton Mills**, etc. were born to promote Indian enterprise, spearheaded by men with superlative educational backgrounds. **Bengal Chemicals’** founder, **Prafulla Chandra Ray**, had a chemistry doctorate from the University of Edinburgh. **Bengal Waterproof’s** **Surendra Mohan Bose** and **Bengal Lamps’** **Kiran Shankar Roy** were fired by nationalistic zeal, even while studying at Berkeley and Harvard, respectively. **Rajendra Nath Mookerjee** was an engineer, who, in fact, presided over the Indian Science Congress session in 1921.



Image credit: Scripworld.com



The Bengali entrepreneurs were also present in a host of other industries from steel, engineering, drugs, ceramics, FMCG line and many consumer durables  
~ **Vibha Mitra**

Read full article at  
<https://vibhamitra.com/swadeshi-entrepreneurs-part-i/>

## Down Memory Lane

My love for handloom and handwoven fabrics started from childhood. Spinning their own yarn, my grandparents were “Khaddar-Dharis”. I too would spin the ‘Charkha’ with them. The process of soft cotton turning into yarn used to be mesmerising. Apart from Khaddar, my grandmother wore only handloom sarees. I would often accompany her for shopping from a young age. I learned to decipher the different weaves from different regions from then. Later I got married into a family with a Regal lineage where textiles, artefacts and Collections were part of the heritage. Due to my passion, I have taken immense interest in and utmost care of the textile collection and displaying them in my home. Textile curators from V&A London, NID Ahmedabad and enthusiasts from all over the world come to see the collection. Preserving them gives me immense satisfaction and pleasure. Adaptive reuse of 150 years old muslin Jamdani from Bengal in door & window panels of our home is one such example. ~ **Sangeeta Dudhoria**



## Heritage News

The Get Bengal Issue, some articles focus on Heritage

<http://magazine.getbengal.com/getbengal-rennaissance/?p=7>

The Ramchandra Goenka Ladies Ghat, a beautiful edifice has an uncertain future

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/ramchandra-goenka-ladies-bathing-ghat-under-threat/cid/1860988>

Heritage plaques with history notes on the people after whom these parks have been named

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/heritage-plaques-with-history-note-for-parks-in-kolkata/cid/1861293>

Awareness by school children of Indus Valley World School. Reinterpreting Visual Art

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/tryst-with-history-through-visual-arts-at-school-expo/articleshow/90922997.cms>

Balakrishnan is on a mission to create awareness about our built environment and how good design can play a substantial role in changing lives. Architect Geeta Balakrishnan walks 1800 Km to draw attention to design and built structures. Culling the best of what was from every region

<https://www.shethepeople.tv/interviews/know-why-architect-gita-balakrishnan-is-walking-1700-km-on-foot/>

# Know your CHC Members



**Jaideep Gupta** is a practicing advocate and has been handling commercial and constitutional litigation for over 30 years in the Supreme Court of India and High Courts across the country. He was born into a family of lawyers and his father, Dipankar Prasad Gupta, was Advocate General

of West Bengal and Solicitor General of India. He read for the Law Tripos in the University of Cambridge and then qualified for the English Bar from Lincoln's Inn in 1985. He worked in the chambers of Sri K.K.Venugopal. Jaideep was designated a Senior Advocate in 2002, and has frequently appeared before international and domestic arbitral and other tribunals. He has also been a regular participant and speaker at the Commonwealth Law Conference since 2011, at the Cambridge Symposium on Economic Crime since 2013 and other international conferences. He has co-authored the Arbitration section of Halsbury Laws of India and has contributed articles to several legal journals. He is an accredited Advocacy Trainer with 20 years' experience and currently a Vice President of the Bar Association of India. His love for heritage goes back to the study of history in school and later discovering the monuments that he had read about as he travelled. The Advanced History of India by Roychoudhury, Dutt and Mazumdar was a source of inspiration. This was further enhanced by the dynamic exposure to heritage in London. This gradually developed into a passion for photography. He used Doig's sketch frames to take photographs. He is delighted to be a part of the Calcutta Heritage Collective, a group from all walks of life united by a love for heritage and its preservation.



An event manager by profession, but an activist by passion. **Rehan Waris** runs an event

management company, based out of Calcutta, called Voiceworx Events. Having completed his Masters in HR & Marketing, he started his career with the leading English daily of east India, The Telegraph, and followed it up with a long run in the radio industry as a Radio Jockey at 93.5 Red Fm and 91.9 Friends FM. Rehan has a small but memorable stint in the reality TV industry when he was in Bombay in 2008 and freelanced for several saas - bahu dance shows. This has helped him to stay single. He has conducted several workshops since 2004 on communication, event management, RJing, Anchoring, Voiceovers, the art of conquering stage fright, etc. at various levels. Currently he shuffles time between with his events company, lecturing on Event Marketing at Calcutta Media Institute and building on a tech start-up, an online version of corporate Olympiad games. History and heritage building interests him, a lot.

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