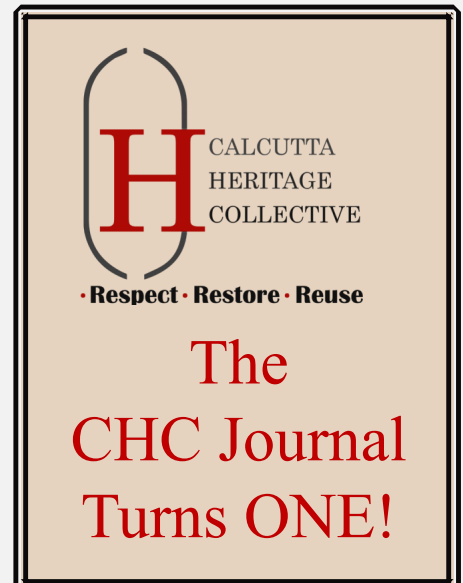
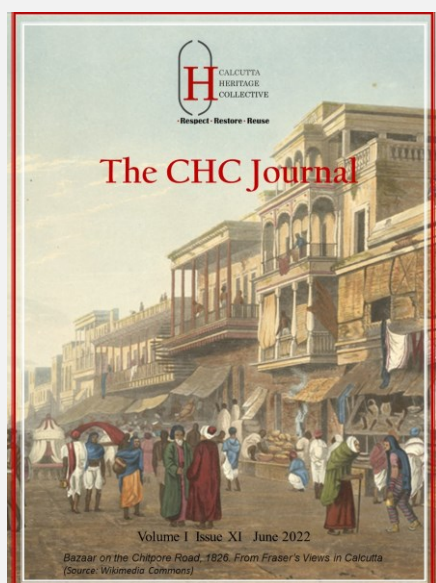
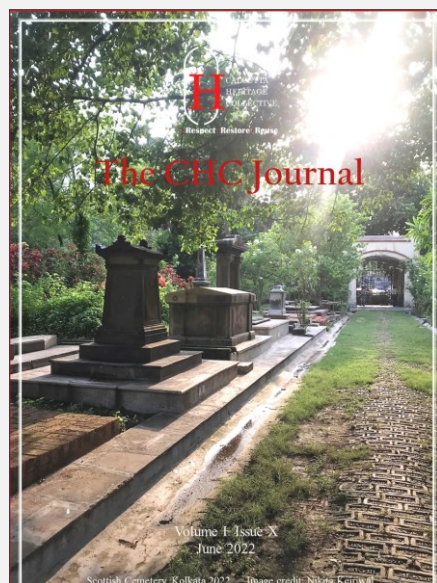
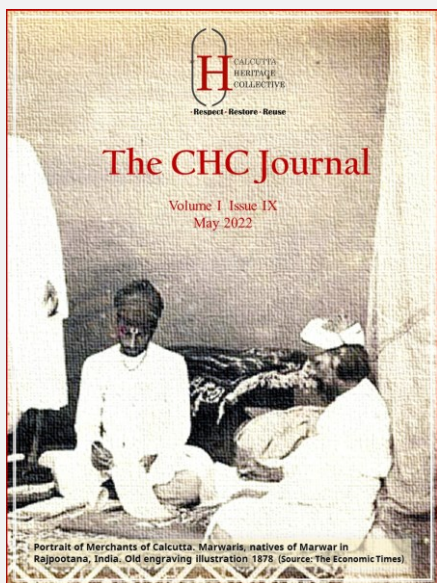
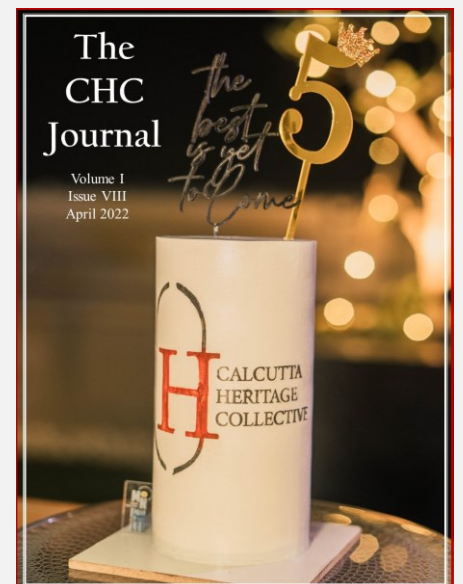
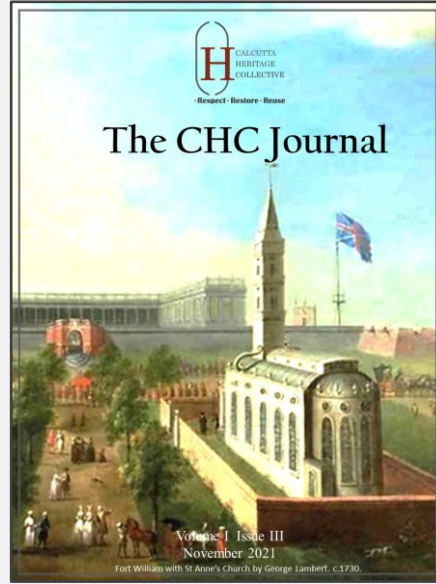


# The CHC Journal





# The CHC Journal

Vol. I Issue XII August 2022



## Point of View

As I sat down to write my point of view regarding heritage and conservation, I realized that I was never one for old things. Like many people today, I liked the new, the shiny, the modern. Then I moved back to India, a grownup, with my own sensibilities, likes and dislikes. As I started to explore India, Kolkata specifically stood out to me. I fell in love with the old architecture, the practicality, the design. As I studied the buildings further, I realized that old doesn't necessarily mean dilapidated. Buildings that were restored and well maintained transported me back to another era. I could imagine the ladies in all their finery celebrating Durga Puja in the halls, drying chillies on the rooftop, the children running through the halls, the men debating over a cup of tea. I could imagine Life. When we conserve and restore a building, we give it a second life, a second chance and in the process we learn a lot about our culture, our heritage, our building techniques. As the world moves towards "green" architecture, we need to realize that our Indian architecture was "green" long before it became the correct way of designing. Tall ceilings, ventilators, thick walls – all are in response to the climate we live in. As we all work towards reducing our carbon footprint, reuse is the keyword. I realize that preserving and restoring buildings could take an economic toll on the owners, but I also believe that every problem has a solution. Governments, organizations, public policy, we the people, we can all be a part of the solution.

I still like the modern, the minimalist look. I design in that way. I like to live in that way. But I also love the old, well maintained buildings and spaces – I know these are opposites but it is also the best of both worlds.

As we publish the twelfth issue, You, dear reader, have gone on this journey with us. You have read various Points of Views, relived memories with some of our members in Down Memory Lane, explored and learnt about Kolkata and conservation projects via our various articles, and you have learnt about the changemakers who are our members. Now, It is up to you, dear reader, to create your own point of view, to create your own memories, to explore our built heritage, not only in Kolkata but all over India, to participate and most importantly, to effect positive change in other people too

~ **Nikita Kejriwal**, Architect, Art enthusiast, Avid reader

*Kolkata, as it's often said, is not a city, it is an emotion. Those who stay there, or have visited the city, can go on endlessly about the place, and about its rich heritage and its food. Kolkata breeds nostalgia, and once you are there, you never really leave the city. You may not be physically present, but a part of you always stays back, in some alley in the city*

[www.vagabomb.com](http://www.vagabomb.com)



**Aishwarya Tipnis** is an award winning architect, educator and heritage conservationist based in New Delhi. She can be found at [@studio.ata.delhi](https://www.instagram.com/studio.ata.delhi) on Instagram

### Heritage & Us

Heritage isn't just about grand old buildings; it is about the people who lived then and who live now.

Heritage isn't just about what we inherit, it is also about what meaning we ascribe to it, it is subjective and sometimes very personal too. So, who gets to decide what is heritage and who decides what should happen to it?

Traditionally, it has always been the community who has been the custodian of their own heritage but today the community is largely disconnected with it. We leave these decisions to a top-down planning system, whose priority is development and not heritage conservation.

Every few days a social media post informs us of some important building being mercilessly pulled down, more often than not the government or a private developer is declared the villain and we raise a voice, run a campaign, and then we go back to our lives and a few days later it happens again another

site another building is victim. Who then is this serial killer who threatens these buildings? It is us the people who live now, we are the real culprits. It is us the people who have to make the economics work, it is up to us to maintain these structures with no financial help from anyone else and how long can that happen? In a democracy such as ours who makes these policies and what do advocates such as us do when they are made? Why can't the community not do anything about their own heritage, why don't they have the power or the funding?

The problem with heritage conservation in India is essentially that it is not inclusive. It has been criticised for years as being an elitist preoccupation where issues of gender, social justice and equal right to the city are not considered as part of the mainstream debate. What makes our cities special is the life we hold in them, the way we live our everyday lives the way we use our spaces and somehow make space for each kind of citizen or user.

People often cite examples of London, Paris, Singapore are perfect cases to learn from, but are they? Cleaning up neighbourhoods and creating pretty pictures for tourists is not heritage conservation, in fact it is the contrary. Much of the corruption, marginalisation of local communities and cases of buildings at risks pulled down by greedy developers in these countries never make it to our imagination. We see a near flawless heritage system where almost every building is listed, but is it really that flawless? In keeping these heritage precincts who pays the bills? When property taxes become so high, local communities are pushed out, heritage areas are gentrified and only the rich and famous get to stay in "heritage areas". What then becomes important the buildings or the people that make the city special?

Maybe if we want heritage conservation to be successful in India, we need to flip the box, and look at the city as everyone's heritage. Maybe its time to adopt the lens of social justice and right to the city as the foremost approach to making our cities sustainable and liveable for generations to come. If we want to see real change, we need to make a difference at the root of the problem the politicians, policy makers and the custodians of that heritage.

## The Bengal Story Entrepreneurs: Women of Substance

Bengal is a place which witnessed resurgence of learning, arts and creativity. Women also rose to fame in various spheres. **Begum Rokkeya, Pritilata Waddedar, Bina Das, Matangini Hazra, Kadambini Ganguly, Rani Rashmoni.** The list is quite endless of the women who were at the forefront. There was another breed of women who came from entitled backgrounds who set up organisations for underprivileged and distressed adult women. They worked for development, education, vocational training to upskill them and empower them to not only earn a living but also to support their families if the need so arose. These bodies have withstood the test of time and are thriving even today with the same objectives and doing stellar work. Some of the founder members though old and frail are still spearheading activities with much gusto. They are entrepreneurs in their own right. Women of substance!



**Begum Rokkeya**



**Seeta Chaudhuri**

The “**Nari Seva Sangha**” Spring Fete is marked on all calendars where women entrepreneurs of all types congregate to display and sell their wares. Clothes, food, art, craft. Founder member and Secretary of Nari Seva Sangha, **Seeta Chaudhuri**, was Bengal's Florence Nightingale. The Sangha was founded in 1944 when hundreds of women were victims of the great Bengal famine in 1941-42 followed by the partition of Bengal.

**Saroj Nalini Dutt Memorial Association (S.N.D.M.A)** was founded by **Shri Gurusaday Dutt** in the year 1925 following the death of his wife **Smt Saroj Nalini Dutt**. He did this to fulfill his late wife's philanthropic vision. The cogent objective of this institution was to train helpless and needy women and transform them into independent and strong minded individuals. **Hemlata Thakur** was at the helm of affairs and now **Arati Dutt, Meera Chaudhuri, Sumita Sanyal** are the women who have been taking the organisation from strength to strength. S.N.D.M.A is one of the oldest Constituent Founder Members of the organization **Associated Country Women of the World (A.C.W.W)**.



**Saroj Nalini Dutt**

**All Bengal Women's Union (ABWU)** is a non-profit organization, founded in the year 1933. The inception of the organization can be traced back to the agitation by a group of determined women in Kolkata, whose campaign for the legislation against traffic of women and children played a major role in the passing of the Bengal Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act (1933). In 1933, ABWU opened its first shelter home in Dumdum, Kolkata, where three young women, who had been victims of exploitation, were provided with shelter support and direction to start new lives.

Read all at <https://vibhamitra.com/entrepreneurs-women-of-substance/>



## Know your CHC Members



Vibha Mitra - A diversity of experiences, a passion for doing things well and a woman with an original point of view, airing

her views both profound and profane. An itinerant trying to find her place of sunshine. She is a believer. An optimist who believes in miracles. A Sagittarian, impulsive to the core, she leaps in where angels fear to tread. Faith in God's will to the point of arrogance. She kind of believes that all 33 crore Gods existed and still do. She tries not to look back and do everything with zeal and a desire to learn. Films, plays, crosswords, Scrabble, Sudoku, Netflix are all jostling for space in her world. With it is an abiding love for heritage / history, the handmade artisana, scribbling. Studied reasonably well in school and college. A rank holding Chartered Accountant and Lawyer but did not pursue it due to personal reasons. Started Opus, a test prep and my bete noire Qissaa, a textile store. Now Qissaa Buddy, a shopping companion. Qissaa – Freewheeling Conversations. Her Book Odds and Ends recently published, is a journal and her reflections on the world, Calcutta in large bits. She works and lives with passion in her wanderings, unknown, undetermined. Maybe. Surely.



Business Consultant, Former Hotelier, Author, Travel Writer, Heritage Enthusiast, Poet... Ipsita Ganguli continues to wear many hats...but above all, she has, and will always be a student of the myriad experiences that life holds out. Ipsita writes...because she

"must". Her poems have been published in several national and international e zines and anthologies She plays one of main characters of the poetry film Kolkata Cocktail which has been screened in domestic and overseas film festivals. She has also ideated, conceptualised and conducted a series of Talk Shows on Facebook entitled "Cafe Conversations" as well as curated offline Poetry events for Kolkata Literary Meet at Victoria Memorial and at Kolkata Centre for Creativity, amongst others. She has received many awards from various forums for her literary work, some of which are "Gujrat Shahitya Academy Award-2020" on the occasion of India's 74th Independence Day and "Order of Shakespeare Medal 2021", Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Certificate for Literary Appreciation 2022. Some of her poems have been translated into Bengali by eminent Bangladeshi poet Shakil Kalam and into Assamese by film critic and poet Utpal Dutta. Her solo compilation of poems "Of Love, Longing and Random Pondering" is available on Flipkart, Amazon, and in select stores . She has just launched her second compilation of poems entitled "Rooted, India 75, and We, the People" which is a poetic tribute to India as she enters the 75th year. Ipsita feels strongly that Heritage cannot be the custodian of a few, but infact should be a vibrant living reference to our common inherited legacy. Be inspired, be aware and move forward to strike that beautiful balance between past and present and spread new branches and blossom to new beginnings , all the while standing strong on the solidity of one's roots. Visit her website [www.ipsitaganguli.com](http://www.ipsitaganguli.com) for her poetry and other writings.

# The CHC Journal turns one!



Top fan

**Sangeeta Dudhoria**

The Bengal story is written very well.

6w Like Reply Hide



**Gaurav Gupta**

Wow another great edition

6w Like Reply Hide



**Jaideep Gupta**

Super! 👍

6w Like Reply Hide



**Mukul Agarwal**

super-like !

6w Like Reply Hide



**Sreemati Mukherjee**

Awesome! Varied, interesting.

14w Like Reply Hide



**Mita Goel Agrawal**

Great ..

14w Like Reply Hide



**Colleen Fairclough**

[Andrene](#), can you get a copy of this for me. Would really appreciate it. TIA.

40w Love Reply Hide



**Colleen Fairclough**

[Mayalakshmi](#), take a look at this.

40w Like Reply Hide



**Gopa Bhattacharjee**

Congratulations to team CHC

40w Like Reply Hide



**Ratnabali Shome**

Congratulations

40w Like Reply Hide



**Arajit Das**

Congratulations to the entire team of CHC Journal. Got to know many unknown facts about our City of Joy. Would love to receive more in the future months.

40w Like Reply Hide



Author

**Calcutta Heritage Collective**

Congratulations Team CHC Journal - [Vibha](#)

[Mitra](#), [Ipsita Ganguli](#) and [Nikita Kejriwal](#) !! Keep

them coming ❤️

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