

VOLUME I ISSUE III

MAY 2022

CHC SCHOOL JOURNAL

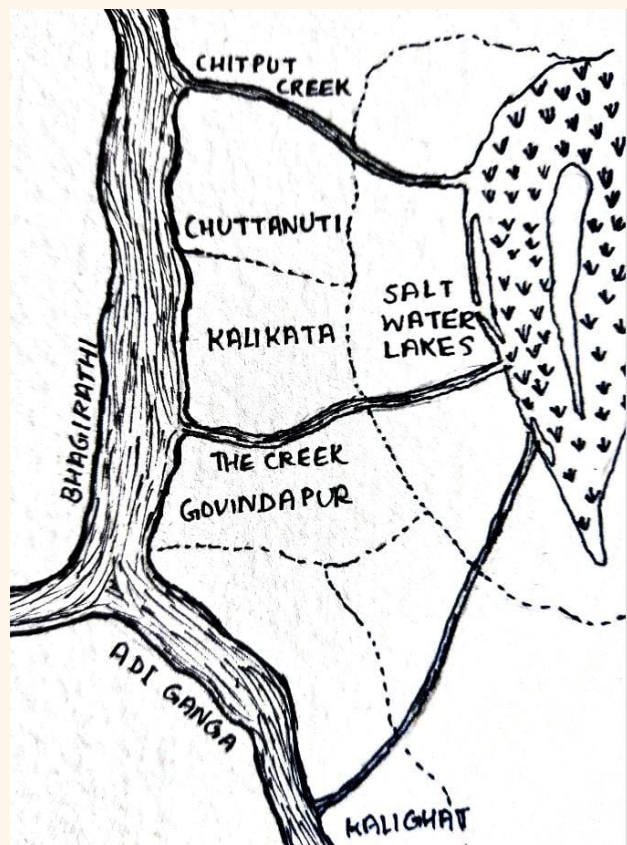
IN COLLABORATION WITH AKSHAR SCHOOL



TRAILING TOLLY



From an inhospitable tract crawling with wild flora and fauna, to an estate with colonial garden houses in less than 350 years!

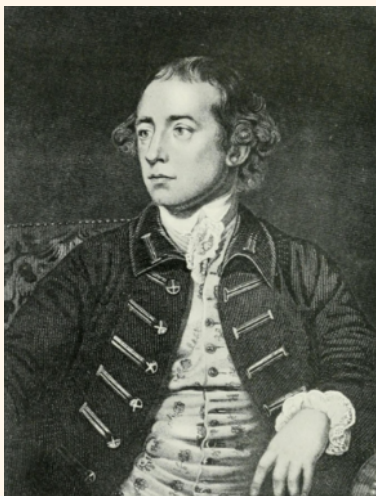


WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

THE MYSTIQUE OF RUSSAPUGLA

Prior to the locality being named Tollygunge it was known as Russapugla, a densely forested area abounding in sundari, baine and gurjan trees which even today make up the bulk of the Sunderbans, the estuary of the river Ganges. According to local-urban history, we can assume that the area Russapugla was named after Hazrat Quazi Peer, also known as Pagla Pir, the Sufi saint who meditated and died in the neighbourhood.

THE TALES OF TOLLY



COLONEL WILLIAM TOLLY

Tollygunge- a British creation, got its name after Colonel William Tolly, an engineer in the service of the East India Company.

He initiated a project to excavate and dredge the old Govindapore Nullah (now Tolly's Nullah) with the object of opening the river route connection of Calcutta with the districts of East Bengal.

A twelve year lease was negotiated by him to establish a 'gunge' (market) on the eastern bank of the nullah, which continues to bear his name.

THE TOLLY'S NULLAH



ADI GANGA OR TOLLY'S NULLAH IN KALIGHAT, 1865

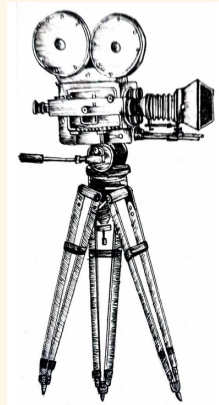
An interesting story, although not historically proven; Major Tolly sought permission from the East India Company to build a nullah to make his wife's journey to East Bengal easier and faster. He carried out the excavation at his own expense.

The nullah connected the river Hooghly with the river Baidyadhari. Tolly received the right to levy tolls at 1% on the price of all goods navigating along the canal.

Apart from playing a huge role in trade and transportation the canal acted as an outlet for the city's waste water.

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

Tollygunge is the hub of Bengal's film studios. It was a preferred location for shooting and production activities owing to its distance from the hustle and bustle of city life. It was a forested area and was thus calm.



New Theatres at Tollygunge and the Mitchell camera which was used by Satyajit Ray to shoot most of his iconic films.

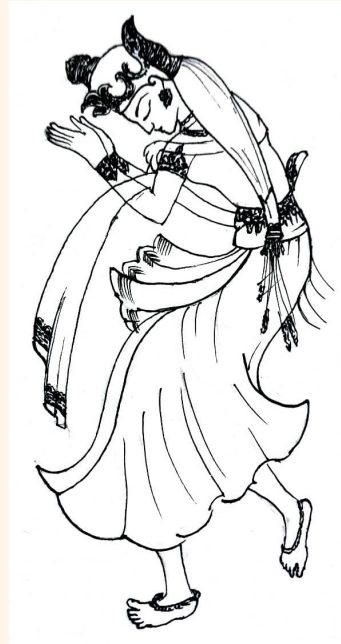
10th February, 1931- New Theatres, one of the pillars of the Indian film industry was born; it spanned over the wilderness of Tollygunge. From Pramathesh Barua to Debaki Kumar Bose and Nitin Bose, they all made their entry into cinema through New Theatres.

New Theatres also claims credit for introducing the technology of playback singing in cinema.

On Tagore's 70th birth anniversary, he was invited to direct a film version of his dance-drama Natir Puja.

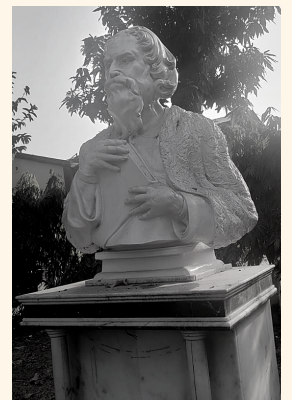
Did you know?

'Natir Puja', was a film directed by Rabindranath Tagore wherein he himself played the role of a female character!



'Natir Puja'- a sketch created by Nandalal Bose 1952. Nandalal had a special interest in the play because his daughter Gauri had played the lead role.

The place where Tagore sat and wrote and directed his plays is now converted into a Kali Temple- conferring utmost respect to him and his work.



Kali Temple (Left) and a statue of Rabindranath Tagore (Right) at New Studios.

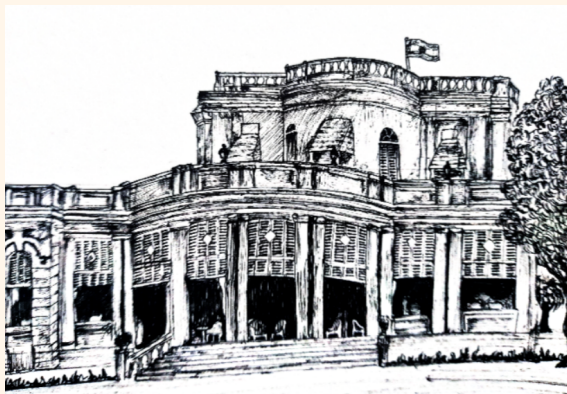
The original studio was a mere thatched roof on top guarded by four walls, but to Tagore it reminded him of his home in Shantiniketan.

To the older generation of Bengalis, New Theatres is an institution like Rabindranath Tagore, the name they were familiar with from childhood.

A HOUSE IN SAHIBAN BAGICHA

The Tollygunge Club was founded by a Scottish banker, William Dixon Cruickshank to provide facilities for games, sports and pastimes in the neighbourhood of Kolkata. Cruickshank partially leased and partially bought some of the property surrounding an 18th century Palladian garden house which was once owned by Richard Johnson, an employee of the East India Company.

Later the grounds became a royal park or the heart of the princely estate established by the exiled family of Tipu Sultan- the defeated ruler of Mysore.



The Club House

The Clubhouse and surrounding areas carry a rich store of legends, anecdotes and memories and the Club has inherited a tradition of sports from its inception in 1895.

The British readily became patrons of the Tollygunge Club, extending their influence over it through the 19th century.

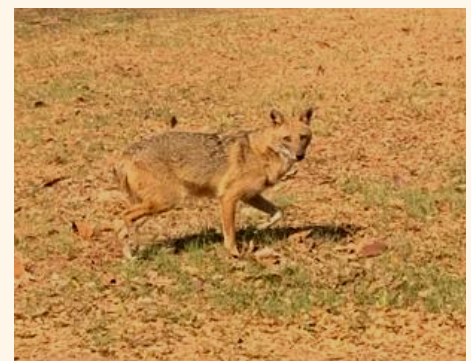
Did you know?

The first hole of the golf links at the Tollygunge Club is named after Tpu Sultan- someone who never even stepped foot in the city.



The wooden spiral staircase of the old building (left) and the club flag (right).

The long stretches used as a golf course by the club provide an ideal foraging ground for a multitude of birds. Some species adapted themselves to the changing times and others moved in as the salinity of the area decreased. Within the crowded city in an oasis of green, the Tollygunge Club is the home of several jackals.



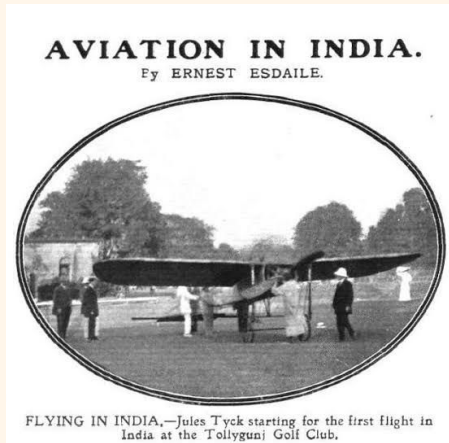
Jackal at the club grounds.



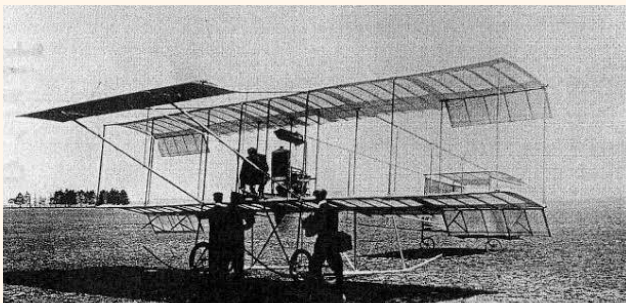
Old graves found in the Club premises.

THE GREENS OF TOLLY

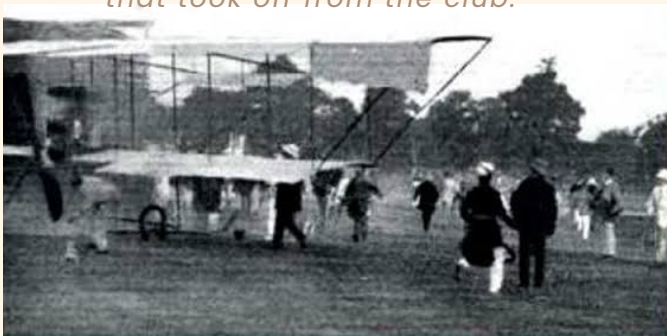
Seven years after Wilbur and Orville Wright invented the airplane, not one but two planes took off from Tollygunge Club's golfing greens on December 28, 1910.



The planes took off from the golf course as thousands of people watched as the wonder machines reached a height of 6,500ft.



Henry Farman biplane- one of the planes that took off from the club.



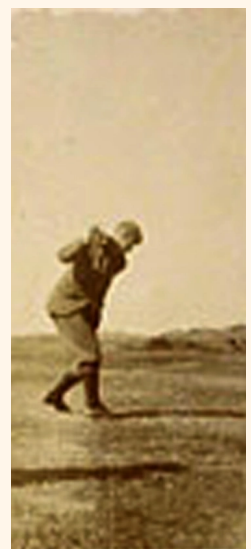
The flights ended when the engine of one backfired and ignited the petrol that had dripped on the aeroplane's lower wing. Sand from the golf course bunkers was used to douse the fire!

THE ROYAL CALCUTTA GOLF CLUB

The Royal Calcutta Golf Club is older than any club in the world beyond British Isles. It has antecedents stretching back to the days when the British Raj was gaining strength.



RCGC was founded in 1829 and first used a site at Dum Dum. After a series of moves, the Dum Dum Golfing Club, as RCGC was originally called, settled finally in Tollygunge.



A part of the club land was sold to the Bengal Government to provide recreational space for refugees who have crowded the club's boundaries since the partition of Bengal in 1947.

BEYOND THE JOURNAL

1. The Tollygunge Club crest symbolizes a legendary creature which denotes strength. Name the creature.
2. Name the film director/ author who writes extensively about the neighbourhoods of Tollygunge in his memoir.
3. This English novel written by a famous Pulitzer Prize winning author begins in Tollygunge. Name the novel.
4. When is Tipu Jayanti celebrated?
5. Name the famous English landscape painter and writer of nonsense verses who painted scenes of Tollygunge and preferred its calmness to that of Calcutta, which he famously addressed as "Husstleffussabad".

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- [HTTPS://WWW.TOLLYGUNGECLUB.ORG/?PAGE_ID=579](https://www.tollygungeclub.org/?PAGE_ID=579)
- [HTTPS://UPPERSTALL.COM/FEATURES/NEW-THEATRES-A-CINEMATIC-EQUIVALENCE-OF-LITERATURE/](https://upperstall.com/features/new-theatres-a-cinematic-equivalence-of-literature/)
- [HTTPS://WWW.TOP100GOLFCOURSES.COM/GOLF-COURSE/ROYAL-CALCUTTA#:~:text=older%20than%20any%20club%20in,the%20beginnings%20of%20victoria's%20reign.](https://www.top100golfcourses.com/golf-course/royal-calcutta#:~:text=older%20than%20any%20club%20in,the%20beginnings%20of%20victoria's%20reign.)
- THE TOLLYGUNGE CLUB SINCE 1895- BOOK BY PRADIP AND AMITA DAS

Scan to see the journey of our journal !



Look out for art and architectural significance of Tollygunge in our next issue.

Printed and published by the Calcutta Heritage Collective. This publication is solely for educational purposes under CHC's initiative for heritage awareness

Visit for additional information



Answers: 1. Griffin 2. Rituparno Ghosh 3. The Lowland 4. November 10 5. Edward Lear

OUR TEAM

Teachers in-charge-

Ms. Jayanti Neogi,
Ms. Nandita Gupta and
Ms. Anasuya Sircar

Student Coordinator-

Navya Reshamwala
(Class XII)

Artwork- Samkiti Shah
(Class XII)

Students involved- Varun
Nagar (Class XII), Meet
Ravrani (Class XII) ,
Ananya Pandey (Class X)
and Devanshi Khaitan
(Class X)

Special Thanks:

Mr. Anil Mukherjee (CEO
of the Tollygunge Club) ,
Mr. Saugata Nandi
(Senior Director at India
Film Laboratories Private
Limited- New Theatre
Film Studio) and
Mr. Pinakee Chakraborty.