

# VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Issue 1, March 2015



## From the desk of the Secretary and Curator



Dear Friends,

As the winter chill slowly recedes and the mammoth crowds of our peak tourist season begin to thin just a little bit, we are back with the latest issue of the *Victoria Memorial Hall Newsletter*, with reports of the events and exhibitions that kept us busy over the past few months. You will have seen a lot of construction activity going on in our 57-acre campus during those months – scaffolds being set up, the Makrana marble surface being cleaned (by using layers of *Multani mitti*, of all things!), the first-floor galleries closing down for renovation, and the general din and bustle of giving the 94-year-old building a much-needed makeover. But we have been overwhelmed with the mood of positive encouragement and support from all concerned – morning-walkers, visitors, media personnel, and sundry interested persons who have sent letters and emails from afar – which has given all of us the confidence to go about this demanding job with patience, fortitude and determination. It has been tough to do the kind of diverse programmes that we have put together along with our exhibitions – and we could only do it because of the dedicated teamwork of the many members of the VMH family – but the warmly positive response that this has generated clearly indicates that the VMH in recent times has touched a new chord with the people of this city. It is this support that we hope to bank on for carrying out this project.

As you have probably noticed, we have enhanced our activities with schoolchildren. We have probably the only dedicated Activity Club among museums in India, and that unit has been doing sterling work with children for several years. A number of special workshops and competitions have in recent times brought very large groups of schoolchildren from diverse backgrounds into our campus. Our exhibition on 'Wildlife in Africa: Through the Eyes of Colonel William Cornwallis Harris' was specially designed for them, and to add to their experience we organized continuous screenings of African wildlife documentaries in the exhibition hall. We followed this up with a special workshop on how to teach the history of the freedom movement to young children. These events were so successful and popular with both students and teachers that we are now considering developing some galleries as – or at least turning some of them temporarily into – visually enriched on-site classrooms for children. Over the coming months, you will probably see a number of events designed especially around subjects that interest schoolchildren. We hope we will receive your support and encouragement, as always, in this initiative as well.

**Dr. Jayanta Sengupta**





# Heritage of Commemoration

In tune with the above theme as declared by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for this year's **World Heritage Day** there was a lively battle of words, arguments and wit on **18 April 2014** in the Western Quadrangle of Victoria Memorial Hall to debate on the provocative motion: ***Commemoration is a regressive Pastime of fossilised Minds***. The House finally voted overwhelmingly against the motion. Participants: **Dr Kunal Sarkar, Shri Ashoke Viswanathan and Shri Pradeep Gooptu** (for); **Professor Surendra Munshi, Smt Sujata Sen and Smt Devi Kar** (against); Chairperson: **Shri Utpal Chatterjee**.



# Global Warming

About 150 children in the age group of 14 to 17 years from 23 schools came out with interesting ideas on the above theme at a poster-making competition on **21 April 2014** (eve of **Earth Day**) organised by the Activity Club of VMH in collaboration with *Narkeldanga Rehnuma-e-Niswaan*. An eminent panel of judges – **Shri Wasim Kapoor, Smt Nilima Goel and Smt Bipasha Bhunja** selected the winners and gave away the prizes and certificates of participation.





## Wildlife in Africa

This exhibition from the collection of Victoria Memorial Hall featuring 30 lithograph prints depicting wild animals of Southern Africa as captured through the eyes of **Captain William Cornwallis Harris** (1807-1848), along with films on wild life, proved to be a summer bonanza for children from **29 April to 15 June 2014**. On popular demand the exhibition was remounted on **2 August 2014** and kept on display till the end of **September 2014**.



## International Museum Day

The two-day programme began with a special lecture on **17 May 2014** in collaboration with INTACH, West Bengal Chapter, where **Shri Jawhar Sircar**, CEO, Prasar Bharati, raised several pertinent questions on ***Why do we waste Museum Collections and Opportunities?*** This was preceded by brief power-point presentations on this year's theme: ***Museum Collections make Connections*** by **Mr Stéphane Amalir**, Director, Alliance Française du Bengale, **Shri Samarjit Guha**, Head Programmes, British Council Kolkata and **Shri Anindya Basu**, Architect.







On **18 May 2014**, the actual International Museum Day, visitors to the Museum were engaged in an exciting participative event titled **On the Trail**, where armed with clues they had to explore the galleries and come up with right answers to questions to win spot prizes.





# Raise your Voice, not the Sea Level

A pre-announced slogan-writing competition on the above theme for this year's **World Environment Day** on **5 June 2014** attracted online entries to a dedicated e-mail ID from over 200 participants in the junior category (classes V to VIII) and over 150 participants in the senior category (classes IX to XII) from all over West Bengal. The winners were adjudged from the submitted slogans within 10 words in Bengali, Hindi and English by **Shri Pathik Guha, Smt Joyashree Roy** and **Shri Masood Huq**.

An **Open Environment Quiz** for students in the age group 12-18 years, conducted by **Shri S V Raman**, Programme Consultant of VMH, witnessed nearly 100 pre-registered participants vying with each other for the spot prizes for correct answers.

The day started in the customary fashion with the staff of VMH planting 30 new saplings in the Victoria Memorial Gardens.





## (Re)creating Music

A brief talk and presentation by **Shri Abhijit Dasgupta**, based on his own research and findings, featured ***Traditional Tunes – Originals and Recreations*** from home and abroad to celebrate **World Music Day** on **21 June 2014**.



## Orientalism Revisited

A rare exhibition in collaboration with and from the collection of Allahabad Museum was inaugurated on **24 June 2014** by eminent artist **Shri Shuvaprasanna** under the title ***Orientalism Revisited – The Creative World of Asit Kumar Haldar (1890-1964)***. Curated by **Shri Rajesh Purohit**, Director, Allahabad Museum, 55 works of this great artist with roots in Bengal remained on display till the end of **July 2014**.









# How does one teach the History of the Freedom Movement to young Children today?

The panellists – **Smt Anita Prasad** of Modern High School for Girls, **Smt Tina Servaia** of Calcutta International School, **Smt Megha Malhotra** of the Seagull Foundation for the Arts and **Shri Anirban Mondal** of Netaji Nagar High School, Durgapur – shared their experiences of handling this issue through new approaches in the classroom on **19 August 2014**, with over 100 teachers from 20 schools, with **Smt Devi Kar**, Director, Modern High School as the moderator.



## Recalling Jewish Calcutta

Based on intensive research over the last couple of years, author and Fulbright Nehru Scholar **Dr Jael Silliman** presented an interesting and informative illustrated lecture on **1 September 2014** revealing several facets of the deep-rooted connection that the Jewish community had with the city of Calcutta.

Dr Silliman's talk was preceded by brief remarks from **Mr Adam Grotzky**, Executive Director, US-India Educational Foundation, **Mr G M Kapur** of INTACH, West Bengal Chapter, **Professor Amlan Dasgupta** of the School of Cultural Texts and Records, Jadavpur University and **Mrs Jo Cohen** representing the Jewish community in Kolkata.





## Utsaber Sekal o Ekal

Through reminiscences and anecdotes **Smt Krishna Bose**, Chairperson, Netaji Research Bureau and eminent artist **Shri Shuvaprasanna** shared their experiences of the *Puja* festive season in earlier times and now on **20 September 2014**.



## Tourism and Community Development

In tune with this theme for this year's **World Tourism Day** the entire premises of Victoria Memorial was abuzz with a range of activities on **27 September 2014** – a workshop for about 120 children on **clay-pot painting**, artisans exhibiting their skills in creating *patachitra*, *wooden dolls*, *sitalpati*, *kachiripana* and *dokra*, wandering *bauls* singing *fakiri* songs, a workshop-cum-demonstration of *chhau dance*, short films on crafts-making and much more.

**Shri Bratya Basu**, Honourable Minister for Tourism, Government of West Bengal, graced the occasion and gave away certificates to the participants of the children's workshop.

The day ended with an illustrated lecture on **Community led Heritage Tourism – a Process and Product** delivered by **Smt Sayantani Raychaudhuri**, General Manager, banglanatak dot com, who coordinated and supported some of the activities of the day.









## Tribute to Richard Strauss

**Professor Siegfried Mauser** (piano) and **Amélie Sandmann-Mauser** (soprano), a virtuoso duo from Germany, enthralled a packed audience of about 300 in the Western Quadrangle with an evening of western classical music titled ***Towards Modernity*** on the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Richard Strauss. This was preceded by a performance of the **Calcutta Chamber Orchestra Camerata**. The event on **3 November 2014** was in collaboration with Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata and Calcutta School of Music.



## Beyond Bollywood

Several Indian Americans have over time contributed significantly towards the shaping of the American Nation. This was showcased in an exhibition ***Beyond Bollywood*** on **5 November 2014**. Organized in collaboration with the American Center, the exhibition was curated by **Dr Masum Momaya** of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, and it remained on display till **9 November 2014**.





# Objects of the Month

## Salvador Dali

Two etchings of the Spanish maestro **Salvador Dali** from the collection of Victoria Memorial Hall (donated by Dr Bimal Banerjee) were put up on display as **Objects of the Month** in **July 2014** and remained on view for the visitors till the end of **September 2014**.



## Guru Nanak

An old miniature painting of Guru Nanak as **Object of the Month** in the Prince Hall highlighted **Guru Nanak's Birthday** on **6 November 2014**. The watercolour by artist W Kapoor Singh was acquired by Victoria Memorial Hall in 1911.





## Commemorating the First World War

An exhibition ***War and Colonies 1914-1918***, depicting photographs of troops of the colonized countries drafted for the war, was mounted in collaboration with Alliance Française du Bengale on **11 November 2014** and remained on display till the first week of December 2014. Guest speakers **General Shankar Roychowdhury**, former Member of Parliament and **Professor Kaushik Roy**, Guru Nanak Professor and Head of the Department of History, Jadavpur University, shared their thoughts on the war with the audience. A related Belgian documentary film (courtesy INPUT Society) ***Le bruit et la fureur*** (Noise and Fury, 2008) was screened and discussed on **17 November 2014**.



## Golpo Mela

About 800 children, mainly from the *Nabadisha* project run by Kolkata Police for underprivileged children, actively participated in the ***Golpo Mela – The Peaceworks Storytelling Festival*** organized on **15 November 2014** in collaboration with The Seagull Foundation for the Arts and in association with Kolkata Police to celebrate Children's Day (14 November). The day-long event comprised a gamut of activities – storytelling by children, puppets alive show, open air art workshop, display of art and crafts by children and games stalls set up by student volunteers from several city schools.









# World Heritage Week

Whether *Test Cricket is doomed to be consigned to the Annals of History and Heritage* was the question at an engaging conversation between **Gideon Haigh**, eminent cricket writer from Australia and **Kishore Bhimani**, sports writer, columnist and commentator, to usher in the **World Heritage Week (19-25 November 2014)**.



The Week continued with a *Patachitra* workshop on **24 November 2014** for members of the Activity Club of VMH, with the participation of 60 children from seven schools.





# Stop Violence against Women

A galaxy of eminent personalities took part in a national level panel discussion on ***Violence against Women and the Role of Media*** organized on **29 November 2014** in collaboration with Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata and Kolkata Sukriti Foundation in support of the United Nations International Day to end violence against women (25 November). **Smt Ankita Mukherji, Smt Bhairavi Jani, Shri D R Kaarthikeyan, Dr Mallika Sarabhai, Dr Mohan Agashe, Shri Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, Shri Rakesh Khanna and Dr Urvashi Butalia**, presented their viewpoints, interspersed with lively comments by the moderator **Dr Kunal Sarkar**.





# Media Clutter vs Credibility

After the high-profile debate was flagged off by Chief Guest **Shri Jawhar Sircar**, CEO, Prasar Bharati, eminent personalities from India and abroad argued with one another on *whether Clutter in the Media has compromised Credibility* under the steering roles of Chairpersons **Dr Sandip Chatterjee**, eminent cardiologist and debater, and **Dr Rudrangshu Mukherjee**, Vice-Chancellor, Ashoka University. Participating Indian speakers: **Shri Chandan Mitra** (MP), **Shri Kishore Bhimani** (sports journalist), **Shri Paranjay Guha Thakurta** (journalist), **Smt Paroma Roy Chowdhury** (Google India), **Smt Swati Bhattacharya** (journalist, ABP), **Smt Swati Gautam** (entrepreneur), **Shri Utpal Chatterjee** (journalist); Overseas speakers: **Mr Brendan Miller** (BBC, UK), **Mr Javed Umair** (Dawn, Pakistan), **Ms Jil Robinson** (BBC, UK), **Ms Mehmal Sarfraz** (GEO, Pakistan), **Mr Rob Hopkin** (BBC, UK), **Mr Samuel W Packard** (USA). The event on **13 December 2014** was organized in collaboration with Calcutta Debating Circle and Kolkata Sukriti Foundation.





# From Britain to India

An exhibition on ***Folk Archive – Contemporary Popular Art from the UK*** by **Mr. Alan Kane** and **Mr. Jeremy Deller** was mounted in collaboration with The British Council. The exhibition was inaugurated on **16 December 2014** and was on view till **7 January 2015**.



Satellite events in the form of outreach activities, e.g. different crafts workshops like mask making, clay modeling, Origami, etc. were held with students on **17, 18 and 19 December 2014**. Around 100 school students from different schools participated in these workshops in the Western Quadrangle of Victoria Memorial Hall.





## Modern India

A panel discussion on **Modern India: Approaches, Understandings and Teachings**, chaired by **Shri Sabyasachi Bhattacharya**, Tagore National Fellow, National Archives of India, New Delhi and Former Vice-Chancellor, Visva Bharati University was organized in collaboration with Cambridge University Press on **18 December 2014**. The panelists were **Smt. Tanika Sarkar**, Professor of History, Centre for Historical Studies Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, **Shri Sekhar Bandyopadhyay**, Professor of History and Director, New Zealand India Research Institute Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand and **Smt Ishita Banerjee-Dube**, Professor of History, El Colegio de Mexico, Mexico.



## Outreach Activities

Victoria Memorial Hall participated in the **Vibrant India Exhibition 2014** and **9<sup>th</sup> Meri Dilli Utsav** from **17-19 October 2014** at Janak Puri, Dilli Haat, New Delhi, with an exhibition of photographs highlighting its own recent activities. The VMH was awarded the 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize among all the participants in the exhibition.



VMH participated in the **Sundarban Krishti Mela O Loka Sanskriti Utsav** organised by Kultali Milon Tirtha Society at Kultali, P.O. Narayantala, P.S. and Block- Basanti, Dist. - 24 Parganas (South), West Bengal during **20 - 29 December 2014**.



# In-House Events

## Hindi Workshop

An in-house **Hindi Workshop** was conducted for the staff of VMH by **Shri Ram Narayan Saroj**, Deputy Director, Hindi Teaching Scheme, Department of Official Language, Government of India.



**Hindi Workshop on 16 June 2014**



**Hindi Workshop on 24 November 2014**

## Swachh Bharat

The **Swachh Bharat** pledge was taken by the staff members of VMH on **2 October 2014**, followed by sweeping and mopping of the floors of the galleries. [Photo of this event is to be provided by Education unit]



**Swachh Bharat Mission**

**World Toilet Day – 19 November 2014**

## Hindi Saptah

The **Hindi Saptah** (Hindi Week, **15 to 20 September 2014**) featured an informative illustrated talk on **15 September 2014** by **Shri Gholam Nabi**, Head, Documentation Unit of VMH on **Rangmala Chitrakala–Ek Nazar**, a Hindi writing competition on **18 September 2014** and a general quiz conducted by **Shri Binoy Singh**, Hindi Translator, VMH on **20 September 2014**. Prizes were given for the best efforts.



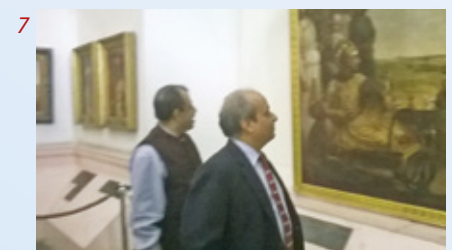
An in-house lecture on **Presidential Directives on Reservation Policy** held on **22 December 2014**. **Dr. S. K. Naskar**, former Deputy Director, National Commission for SC/ST, conducted the programme.





# Important Visits

- **Shri Swapnonil Barua**, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Assam, on **30 April 2014**
- **Mr. Rishi Desai**, Vice Consul with the U.S. Consulate General in Kolkata on **7 May 2014**.
- **Mr Prasittidesh Vichitsorasatra**, Consulate General of Thailand in Kolkata on **30 June 2014**
- **Mr. Sanjiv M. Mehta**, Chairman and Managing Director, The East India Company, London on **3 June 2014**.
- Directors of Public Libraries of all states of India on **12 June 2014**.
- **HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand** accompanied by Royal Entourage and Military officers and cadets to Kolkata on **22 July 2014**. <sup>1</sup>
- **A Malaysian delegation** consisting of three senior officers on **12 August 2014**.
- **Ambassador (Retd.) Kathleen Stephens, US Charge d' Affaires** on **13 August 2014**. <sup>2</sup>
- **Lt General Raman Dhawan**, VSM, General Officer Commanding, Bengal Area on **19 September 2014**.
- **Shri Ravi Raj**, Principal Director, Defence Estates, Eastern Command on **20 September 2014**.
- **Shri Navdeep Rinwa**, Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Minister of Culture, Govt. of India on **13 October 2014**. <sup>3</sup>
- His Excellency **Mr. Joon- Gyu Lee**, Ambassador, Republic of Korea along with other officials on **28 October 2014**. <sup>4</sup>
- **Shri Sankaran P. Raghunath**, Director, India International Education, Broward College along with other foreign delegates as a part of the conference of AICTE on **20 November, 2014**.
- **Smt. Jai Verma**, Chairperson, Kavya Rang, a global association of poets and writers on **22 November, 2014**.
- **Mr. Andres Barbe**, Ambassador of Chile in India on **24 November, 2014**. <sup>5</sup>
- **Shri Raghav Chandra**, Additional Secretary and Financial Advisor, Ministry of Culture/ Agriculture, Govt. of India on **28 November 2014**. <sup>6</sup>
- **Shri K. K. Mittal**, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India on **9 December 2014**. <sup>7</sup>
- A group of 20 IA & AS Officer Trainees of 2013 batch as a part of Bharat Darshan cum Study tour on **15 December 2014**.
- **Shri Biswadip Dey**, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Bhutan on **20 December 2014**.





## School Visits





## Staff Corner



### Farewell and Retirement

Shri Ramsavad Ram (Head Khallasi-MTS) on 30.06.2014

Shri Kulamoni Puham (MTS) on 31.10.2014

Shri Sanjib Pramanick (MTS- Tractor-cum-Van driver) on 30.11.2014

### Joining

Smt. Nivedita Roy Chowdhury, Accounts Officer on 10.06.2014





# Son-et-lumière

The Light and Sound shows will remain suspended till further announcement on account of on-going modernization work.

## Information for Visitors

The modernization and upgradation of the galleries and storage areas of the Victoria Memorial Hall is now in full swing. The building surface of Makrana marble – the same variety as used in the Taj Mahal – is being cleaned in an organic manner, by using *Multani mitti* as a cleansing agent. The renovation work in the security enclosure and the new museum shop has almost been completed. The old National Leaders' Gallery on the first floor is being converted into a new, bigger temporary exhibition gallery that will make it possible to do larger, high-profile exhibitions.

### Location

Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata is located at 1, Queen's Way, Kolkata – 700071. It is on the western side opposite Birla Planetarium, St. Pauls Cathedral and Academy of Fine Arts (on Cathedral Road), with S.S.K.M. Hospital (on A.J.C. Bose Road) to its south, the Maidan to its north and the Race Course to its west. Tickets counters are situated at the north and south gates.



### Transport

The Museum is well connected to the nearest bus terminus at Esplanade and Railway Stations at Howrah (on the west bank of river Hooghly) and Sealdah (in central Kolkata). Both are at a distance of about 7 (seven) Km. The nearest metro stations are Rabindra Sadan and Maidan – within a walking distance of 7(seven) minutes to both. The distance from the airport (Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport) is about 30 Km.

### Visiting Hours

#### Museum Galleries:

Tuesday to Sunday from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.  
(ticket counters close at 4.30 pm)

#### Garden timings:

March – September 5.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m.  
October – February 5.45 a.m. to 5.45 p.m.

#### Museum Garden:

Open on all days round the year.

#### ***The Museum Galleries remain closed on the following national holidays:***

- |                 |                       |                    |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| • Republic Day  | • Holi                | • Independence Day |
| • Id-ul-Fitr    | • Gandhiji's Birthday | • Dusserah         |
| • Christmas Day |                       |                    |

### Entry fees

The Entry Fees are revised from 1 March 2015

For Garden only: Rs. 10.00

For Garden & Museum: Rs. 20.00 (Indian nationals) : Rs 200.00 (Foreign nationals)

**Free for challenged visitors, school children in uniform and military personnel in uniform**



# Museum Shop

List of available items

## Prints

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. India as seen by Simpson (set of 5 prints)               | Rs. 40/- |
| 2. India in the Eyes of the Daniells (set of 6 prints)      | Rs. 40/- |
| 3. Select Views of India (set of 5 prints)                  | Rs. 40/- |
| 4. Charles D'Oyly's Calcutta - Album one (set of 4 prints)  | Rs. 40/- |
| 5. Charles D'Oyly's Calcutta - Album two (set of 4 prints)  | Rs. 40/- |
| 6. Natural History Paintings: series – 1 (set of 4 prints)  | Rs. 90/- |
| 7. Natural History Paintings : series – 2 (set of 4 prints) | Rs. 90/- |
| 8. Natural History Paintings: series – 3 (set of 4 prints)  | Rs. 90/- |
| 9. Picture Folio No. - 1 (one large print)                  | Re. 1/-  |
| 10. Picture Folio No. - 2 (one large print)                 | Re. 1/-  |
| 11. Picture Folio No. - 3 (one large print)                 | Rs. 2/-  |

## Publications

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Modern Masters                                       | Rs. 35/-  |
| 2. India: Land and People                               | Rs. 500/- |
| 3. Catalogue of exhibition on Mother Teresa             | Rs. 500/- |
| 4. Charles D'Oyly's Calcutta – early nineteenth century | Rs. 300/- |

## Souvenir items

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1. A set of 10 picture post cards on Mughal Miniatures.  | Rs. 100/-        |
| 2. 3 different key chains with motifs from the Victoria Memorial collection.                                       | Rs. 25/- (each)  |
| 3. 3 different coffee mugs with motifs from the Victoria Memorial collection.                                      | Rs. 185/- (each) |
| 4. Spiral note pads with motifs of Kalighat Paintings.   | Rs. 85/-         |
| 5. Pen with VM Logo.   | Rs. 5/-          |
| 6. 2 sets of picture post cards with paintings of Jamini Roy.  | Rs. 140/-        |
| 7. Jute Bag.   | Rs. 70/-         |
| 8. Juco Bag.   | Rs. 100/-        |
| 9. Cloth Bag.  | Rs. 80/-         |
| 10. A set of 10 picture post cards with photographs of Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata taken from different angles | Rs. 50/-         |
| 11. The Picturesque Ganga- reproductions of 10 rare paintings from the collection of Victoria Memorial Hall        | Rs.250/-         |





## Board of Trustees

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*The Passing of Shah Jahan* (1902), by Abanindranath Tagore; part of the exhibition in the Portrait Gallery of Victoria Memorial Hall from 3 March to 5 April 2015

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