

## Library of Birmingham Archives & Collections

### Sources in with reference to Bengal

The number in **bold** is the number required to order a document.  
The sources are listed in chronological order.

As a result of changes to the political boundaries of what was once the region of Bengal, some areas are now in India and some in Bangladesh.

Letter from a T. Day, dated 1784, describing a tiger hunt conducted on elephants near Chinsura in West Bengal.

**Reference number: MS 3101/E/5**

[The original document is too fragile to serve. A transcript has been made and is included at the end of this list].

The firm of Boulton & Watt provided steam engines for the Mint at Calcutta  
There are plans of the Mint and drawings of the engines and coining machinery provided.

**Reference numbers: MS 3147/5/707a-d. Calcutta Mint.**

**MS 3147/5/707a.** Calcutta Mint, Rolling Mill Engine and Workshop Engine. 1822. 8 items.

**MS 3147/5/707b.** Calcutta Mint, Coining Engine (SS). 1822. 10 items.

**MS 3147/5/707c.** Calcutta Mint, Rolling Mill Engine and Cutting-Out Engine. 1821, 1822, 1823. 13 items.

**MS 3147/5/707d.** Calcutta Mint, Machinery & Apparatus, Plans of the Mint etc. 1805, 1821, 1822, 1823, 1860. 62 items.

**MS 3147/4/95** Engine Order Book, 1816-1820.

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Incoming Correspondence re: Calcutta Mint. 1821-23.

**MS 3147/3/490/1-116**

**MS 3147/6/7** Calcutta Mint, drawings for new cylinder for the 40 horse engine.

The Birmingham firm of F. & C. Osler supplied lamps, chandeliers, ornamental glass and other items to India, inventing a special 'punkah lamp' for that market. Letters from their agent in Calcutta sent back to the firm survive for the period 1840-1887. They provide a fascinating account of life there from business enterprise to the 'Indian Mutiny'.

**Reference number: MS 6**

The Drawings Day Book of Boulton & Watt, steam engine manufacturers, shows that on 21 September 1865, three sons of the Nawob Nazin of Bengal, and their retinue, visited the Soho Foundry.

**Reference number: MS 3147/4/146**

Between 1889 and 1914, Helen Caddick, a wealthy woman from Birmingham travelled to many areas of the world. In 1893, she went to India, where she visited many places, including Darjeeling and Calcutta. She kept a diary of her travels which is illustrated with photographs.

**Reference number: MS 908/3**

In 1936, Elizabeth Cadbury visited Calcutta as head of a delegation of twenty British women attending the World Conference of Women. She kept a diary of her visit and notes about issues raised, which included film censorship, women miners, contraception, education. She also raised funds for a travelling dispensary for the Friends' hospital at Itarsi and a scholarship. 1935-1937.

**Reference number: MS 466/169**

There are two newscuttings about **Kali Dasgupta (1926-2005)**, musician, and three CDs with him singing Bengali songs and playing musical instruments from Bengal, in the "A Future for Ordinary Folk" part of the Charles Parker Archive.

**Reference numbers for the CDs are MS 4000/5/3/5/4/103, 132, 138.**

[N.B.: /103 has poor sound quality]

The newscuttings have the **reference number: MS 4000 additional (Accession 2004/169)**

Kali Dasgupta met Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger when he visited Britain in 1965, and on a later visit, they brought him along to the Grey Cock Folk Club.

There are also recordings by Charles Parker of a long interview with Kali Dasgupta made on 4 June, 1971, which are also available to listen to on CD.

Kali Dasgupta talks about folk songs and traditions from different parts of Bengal, political developments in Bengal, women's lives, protest songs, etc.

**The reference numbers are: MS 4000/6/1/69/38C and 39C**

There may also be relevant material in the papers and recordings for the programmes "Asian Teenager" which Charles Parker produces and which were broadcast in 1968.

**Reference numbers: Papers: MS 4000/2/127**

**CDs: MS 4000/6/1/15C and 16C**

**The Birmingham firm of Metro Cammell produced railway rolling stock for companies all over the world, including:**

lists of specifications for railway rolling stock for  
Assam Bengal  
Indian State, Eastern Bengal  
Bengal Nagpur

and drawings of railway rolling stock for  
Assam Bengal Railway  
Bengal Doaars  
Bengal Nagpur Railway  
Bengal and North Western Railway  
Eastern Bengal Railway

There is also information on, and photographs of, people from Bengal in the following collections:

Records of the **Indian Workers Association**  
**Reference number: MS 2141**

Records of **Avtar Jouhl**  
**Reference number: MS 2142**

Records of **Derek Bishton**, photographer (**Sidelines, 10:8 etc.**)  
**Reference number: MS 2478**

Records for **Home Front** photographic exhibition, 1979-1984  
**Reference number: MS 2546**

Records for **Birmingham Community Relations Council**, 1971-1989.  
**Reference number: MS 1952**

## MS 3101/E/5 Transcript

[Spelling and punctuation are as in the original].

Letter. T [or J?]. Day (Chinsura) to Sir William Jones (——). 22 Apr. 1784  
*Docketed: Tiger Chace.*

To the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Sir William Jones etc. etc. etc.  
Chinsura. 22<sup>d</sup> of April 1784.

My dear Sir

Tho' you could not partake of the pleasure, I am resolved that you shall not entirely escape the fatigue of our enterprise, & with that laudable view, tho' we have not return'd more than an hour, & that at this moment a Sound Sleep were Heaven to me, I snatch the Pen, to give you, the following hasty & imperfect description of the business of the day.

Matters had been thus judiciously arranged —— Tents had been sent off yesterday, & an Encampment formed within a mile & a half of the Jungle<sup>1</sup> which was to be the scene of our operations.

At one this morning, thirty Elephants, with the Servants & Refreshments of all Kinds, were dispatched, at Two, we all followed in Palankeens; at a quarter past 4 we reached the Encampment, & having rested near an hour, we mounted our Elephants & proceeded to the Jungle. In our way we met with Game of all Kinds, Hares, Antelopes, Hog-deer, wild Boars & wild Buffaloes, but nothing could divert our attention from the fiercer & more glorious Game ——

At the grey of the dawn, my Elephant (Sorely against my grain but there was no remedy, for the driver was a Keen Sportsman & he & I Spoke no common Language) passed thro' the centre, but happily not Tiger had, at that hour, nestled there: I saw however as I passed thro' it the Bed of one, in which there lay an alf devoured Bullock, & two human Skulls, with an heap of Bones, Some bleach'd, & Some Still red with Gore.

We had not proceeded beyond this Jungle five hundred yards, when we heard a general cry <sup>2</sup> Bang! Bang!<sup>2</sup> On which we wheel'd, & forming the line anew enter'd the great Jungle, when the Spot where a Single Tiger lay, having been pointed out, on the discharge of the first Gun, a Scene presented itself confessed by all the experienced Tiger Hunters present, to be the finest they had ever seen. Five full grown Royal Tigers sprung together from the Same Spot where they had Sat in bloody Congress ——

They ran diversely but running [sic] heavily, they all couch'd again in new covers, within the Same Jungle & all where marked. We followed having formed the Line into a Crescent So as to embrace either extremity of the Jungle. In the Centre were the Houders<sup>3</sup>, Elephants with the Marksmen & the Ladies, to comfort & encourage them —— viz in one Mr. Zoffany with Mrs Ramus, in the other Mr Ramus with Lady Day led the attack, my Brother & I supported them, Mr Van Europe (a dutch Gentlemen [sic]) & Mr Longcroft.

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<sup>1</sup> a Thicket of long rank Grass and Reeds growing, in some places, to the height of 15 feet.

<sup>2</sup> the term in the language of the country for a Tiger.

<sup>3</sup> Elephants trained for State or for the Chace & magnificently Caparison'd.

These Gentlemen had, each an Elephant to himself, when we had Slowly & warily approach'd the Spot where the first Tiger lay —— he moved not till we were just upon him, when with a roar that resembled Thunder, he rushed upon us, the Elephants wheel'd at once & (for it is not to be described by any Quadrupede motion we know, I must therefore coin a Term for the occasion) we shuffled off —— They returned however, after a Flight of about fifty yards, & again approaching the Spot where the Tiger had lodg'd himself, towards the Skirts of the Jungle, he again rush'd forth & springing at the side of an Elephant upon which three of the Natives were mounted, at one Stroke tore a portion of the Pad from under them, & one of the Riders – pannic [sic] Struck fell off — the Tiger however, seeing his enemies in force, return'd Slow, & indignant into his Shelter, when, the place he lay in being mark'd, & an heavy & well directed Fire was pour'd in by the principal Marksmen, when pushing in we Saw him in the Struggles of death & growling & foaming he expired —— we roused the other 3, in close succession & with little variation of Circumstances Killed them all; the Oldest & most ferocious of the Family had however early in the Conflict very Sensibly quitted the Scene of action & escap'd to another part of the Country.

While the Fate of the last & largest was depending more shots were fired, than in the other 3 attacks, he escaped 4 several Assaults & taking post in different parts of the Jungle, rushed upon us at each wound he received, with rekindled rage, & as often put the whole line to flight. In his last pursuit, he singled out the Elephant upon which Lady Day was, & was at its Tail with Jaws distended & in the act of rising upon his hind paws to fasten on her, when fortunately She cleared the Jungle, & a general discharge from the Hunters having forced him to give up the Chace he return'd to his Shelter —— The danger, I believe, was not very great, but it was Sufficient, when She shall again be invited, to make her Say, with Lord Chesterfield (when they attempted to allure him to a Second Fox hunt, “ I have been.”

The Chace being over, we return'd in triumph to our encampment, & were follow'd by the Spoils of the morning & by an accumulating multitude of the Ryots (Husbandmen) from the Circumjacent Villages, who press'd round an open Tent in which we Sat at Breakfast with gratulations, Blessings & Thanksgivings; the four Tigers were laid in front & the natives view'd them with terror, some with tears ——

There was a very affecting Circumstance, with [sic] So fastned [sic] upon Zoffany's imagination & So touch'd his heart, that he means to give it a principal place in a Picture which he meditates upon the Subject & which, had you been with us, I should have hoped might have been also recorded elegantly & pathetically in Song ——

An old woman, looking earnestly at the largest of the Tigers & pointing to his Tusks, & at times lifting his fore Paws & viewing his Talons, her Furrows bathed in tears, in broken & mourning Tones, narrated Something to a little cercle [sic] composed of three Bramins & a young woman, with a child in her arms —— no human misery could pierce the phlegm & apathy of the Bramins, & with them, there was not a feature soften , but horror & sorrow were alternately painted in the Face of the Female, & from her clasping at times her child more closely to her Breast I guess'd the Subject of the old woman's Story, & upon inquiry found that I was right in my Conjectures —— She was widow'd & childless, She ow'd both misfortunes to the Tigers of that Jungle, & most probably to those which lay dead before her, for they had recently carried off her husband & her two sons grown up to manhood, & now She wanted food —— In the phrenzy of her Grief She alternately described her loss to the

Crowd, & in a wild Scream, demanded her Husband & he[r] children of the Tigers ——  
Indeed it was a piteous Spectacle.

The Site of our Encampment was well chosen, it was a Small Sloping Lawn, the verdure fresh, & Skirted on three sides with Trees; the fourth bounded by a dead Nulla (a Ravine) at proper distances on this there were five large & commodious [sic] Tents pitch'd in a Semi – circle —— that in which we all assembled & passed the Sultry part of the day, was carpeted, & by means of Tatty[?] <sup>4\*</sup> continually watered, kept at a temperature pretty near to

That of an April day in England —— Here we had a luxurious cold dinner, with a variety of excellent wines & other Liquors well cool'd, & while we dined the French Horns &c. play'd Marches, Hunting pieces descriptives of the death of the Game & other Slow movements.

The Tigers Still lying in Front & the people Still assembled, but retired to a greater distance, where they anxiously waited the Signal for Skining & cutting the Slain, for with them the fat of the Tiger is a Panacea, the Tongue dried and pulverized a Sovereign Specific in nervous cases, & every part applicable to some use; even the Wiskers, they deam a deadly poison, & most anxiously, but secretly, seek them as the means, in drink, of certain destruction to an enemy —— As my Share of the Spoils, I have reserved one of the Talons of the large Tiger, which pursued Lady day & intend to have it set in gold, with a Swivel & a Fillet, ornamented with diamonds, & having fill'd it with Otta of Roses I Shall, Sometime hence, Surprise her with it & insist upon her giving it a place among the Trinkets of her Watch, as a Trophy the “Spolia Opima” torn from the body of an enemy Slain in Battle.

I have reserved also a Skin for you, which Shall, when cured, be sent to you, & I Shall hope to see it ere many years elapse, an Hammer Cloth to an handsome Chariot of yours in the Streets of London ——

Dinner over, the Tigers Skined & there flesh & Offals distributed, as soon as the Sun declin'd we return'd to Chinsura —— & here ends the History of the Chace, In which I have been thus minute, that you may be tempted to accompany us on some future expeditions, & if not, that you may say that you have been authentically inform'd upon the Subject, by an Eye witness.

I am Sir &c  
T.Day.

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<sup>4</sup> double wickers applied to the Tent doors, with an interstration of an aromatic grass, against which water being dashed from without, at once cools , & perfume the Air.

## **Secondary sources In Birmingham Archives & Heritage**

**Yousuf Choudhury** The Roots and Tales of Bangladeshi settlers in Birmingham (1993)

**reference number: L21.85 or 305.891 BLACK HISTORY COLLECTION.**

**Yousuf Choudhury** Sons of Empire: oral history from Bangladeshi seamen who served on British ships in 1939-45 war (1995)

**reference number: L 75.8**

**Yousuf Choudhury and Peter Drake** From Bangladesh to Birmingham (2001)

**reference number: L 21.85**

**Yousuf Choudhury** The roots of Indian sub-continental catering in Britain (2002)

**reference number: LSH 647.9541 BLACK HISTORY COLLECTION.**

**Yousuf Choudhury** A son of Empire : video documentary about Yousuf Choudhury (2005)