

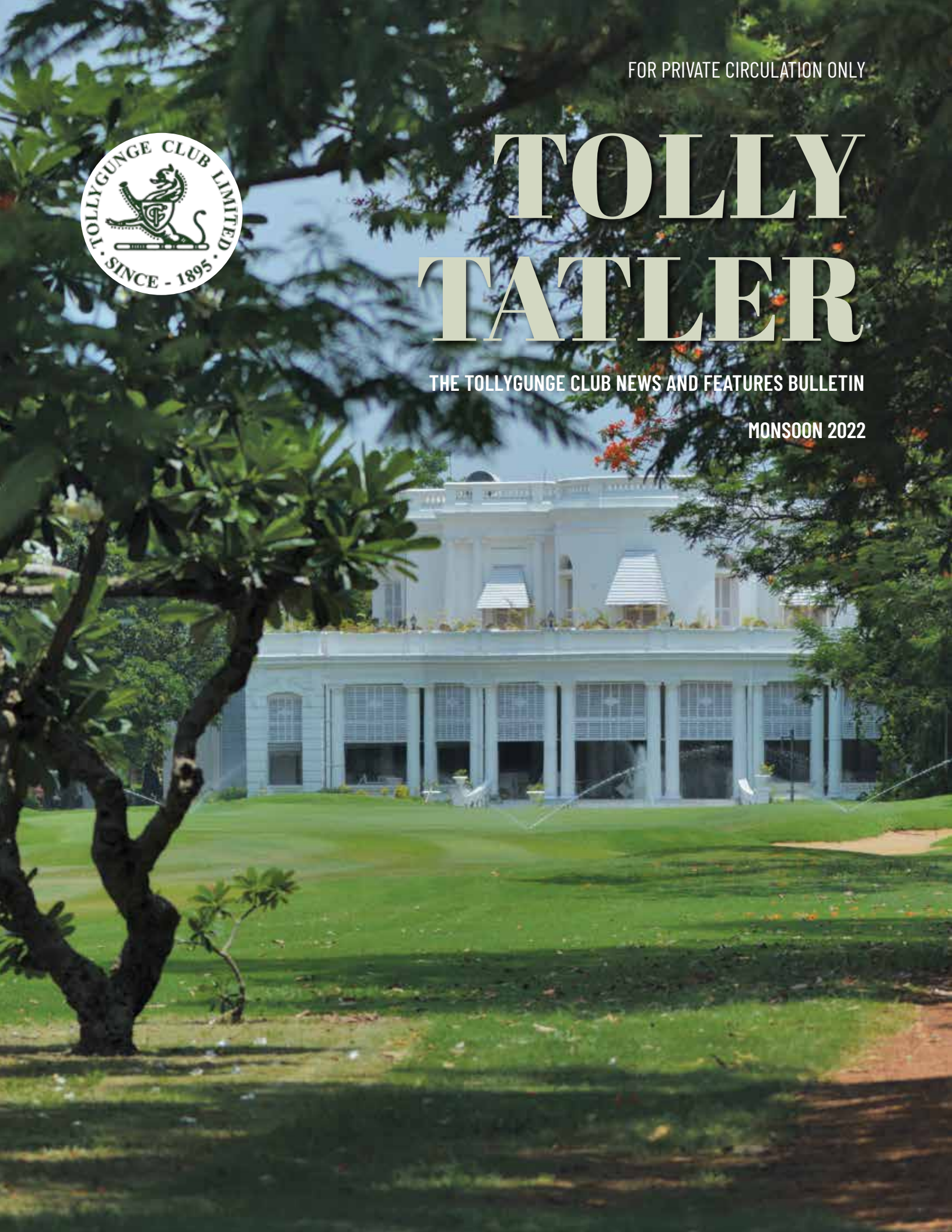
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TOLLY TATLER

THE TOLLYGUNGE CLUB NEWS AND FEATURES BULLETIN

MONSOON 2022

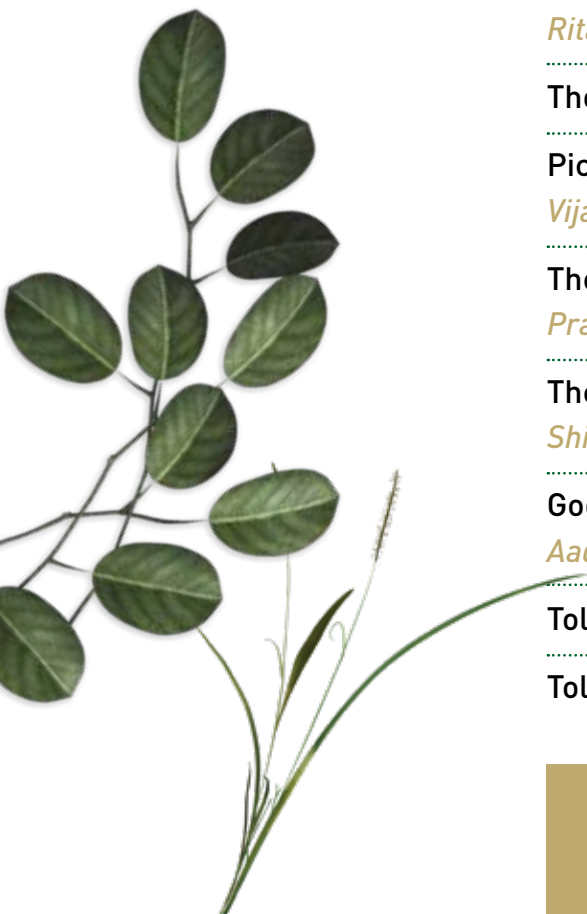







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From quiet homes and first beginning,
Out to the undiscovered ends,
There's nothing worth the wear of winning,
But laughter and the love of friends.

— Hilaire Belloc

Foreword

We are delighted to bring you the *Tolly Tatler* after a gap of over three years. The intervening period has seen us brave the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ravages of Cyclone Amphan and the ennui of being confined to our homes in social isolation owing to multiple lockdowns. Through all of this, Tollygunge Club has been a go-to, safe haven for our members. It has also had its share of highs and hyperactivity, what with the 125-year celebrations – albeit truncated by the pandemic – the inaugural Tolly Festival with its concomitant camaraderie and competition, and, of course, embellishments of the club's facilities and exemplary ecological initiatives.

While this issue of the *Tatler* evidently focuses on the foregoing, it is also enriched by some pieces that capture the associations our talented and eclectic membership fraternity has with Tolly – ranging from sepia-tinted reminiscences of a bygone era to Tolly as a location for a recent film that is also a tribute to Satyajit Ray in his centenary year, as well as two paradoxical, but equally engrossing, perspectives on golf!

I must thank the editorial board and other members of the Brand, Communications & Sponsorships Committee, as also Anil Mukerji and Saibal Bose from the Tolly management team, for their untiring efforts in putting together this issue of *Tolly Tatler*. I must also thank the team from Allcap Communications (our creative partners) for being the voice of sanity in the frenetic activities of the last month or so.

Hopefully, the next issue of the *Tatler* will arrive a few months down the line, and we look forward to more contributions from our members for it to continue to be an interesting potpourri of Tolly tales.

I wish you all the very best for the upcoming festive season.

Amitava Sinha



Tolly Tatler editorial board
(L-R) Rita Bhimani, Amitava Sinha, Suniti Khastgir, Sumantra (Sumo) Dutta and Anil Mukerji

The Changing of the Guard



September 2019:
Renji Thomas hands
over the reins to
Dr Ronen Roy



March 2021:
Dr Ronen Roy
hands over
the reins to
BB Chatterjee



December 2021:
BB Chatterjee hands
over the reins to
Joydeep Datta Gupta

Tolly Knows How to Carpe Diem!

Joydeep Datta Gupta

Tolly gave so many of us the opportunity to retain our balance, sanity and well-being in a world that was ravaged by Covid. We lost many near and dear ones whom we will miss forever. We also learnt to value life and health and well-being a lot more. The natural beauty of Tolly gave us the opportunity, as William Henry Davies would have liked, "to stand and stare."

We owe a debt to our management team (led by Anil Mukerji), our successive committees and sub-committees and many of our members who worked with a sense of mission, passion and deep commitment to preserve and nurture the club through the pandemic and two devastating storms.

I made use of the respite I got from my travels to work on my golf swing, learn how to hit a ball out of a bunker, visit the stables and walk around the club almost every day. In the process, I made many new friends. Among the best things about Tolly are the friendships we enjoy. Many of my closest friends are fellow members.

When the intensity of the pandemic receded to some extent, our members celebrated with a vengeance. We made up for the lost time with intense activity. We had a "monthly medal" golf tournament almost every week! Our sub-committees went into hyper mode and organised events and activities for our members every week.

A landmark highlight, of course, was the Tolly Fest. This event was conceptualized to celebrate our ethos and culture, connect our members from different activities and interest groups in order to create new friendships and, of course, celebrate the freedom of enjoying ourselves. The club wore a festive look during the week. There was participation from all our outdoor and indoor sports disciplines as well as from every activity group at Tolly. Each team had team members from each discipline. There were special activities and competitions for children,



which they thoroughly enjoyed. There were high-quality entertainment events every evening. The response from members was absolutely overwhelming. This event will now be held annually.

The next few months made up for all the lost time with several sports events and diverse entertainment events.

Our retail outlets came back to life and the club regained the vibrancy that we were used to.

Our culture and ethos are unique. We love sports, we love nature, we are animal-friendly, we love children. We are cosmopolitan and celebrate our diversity. We love our informal and relaxed ambience. We love to have a good time and share such good times with our fellow members. Tolly is indeed a second home to our members and families. Let us preserve and nurture our heritage and culture, not just for ourselves but for future generations to enjoy.

Joydeep Datta Gupta is the President of Tolly and a member since the Seventies. Apart from being a partner with Deloitte, he is an avid golfer and sportsman, and loves his horses, his dogs and his jazz in equal measure

Tolly's Green Guardians

Suniti Khastgir



No uprooted trees went to waste

The wood being gathered to be put to use

Perhaps the first impression of a visitor to Tollygunge Club is the resplendence of the verdant green that is all around. In the sprawling and ever-expanding urban jungle that our city has become, Tolly is an oasis of peace and tranquillity. As soon as we pull in through the gates and along the winding drive, majestic trees with butterflies flitting through the wildflowers below with their ever-changing palette of colours seem to magically suck the dust and grime of the city out of our lungs. No matter what time of the day or which season we enter this wonderland, we are guaranteed a magnificent show that Mother Nature puts up for us, whether it is the sun glistening off the winter morning dew, the monsoon rain bending the leaves gently forward,



The wood from the fallen trees was used to make this tray

or the warm red glow of a departing summer sun through the trees.

Having been a proud member of the club for over three decades, I have frequented the club on countless occasions, and it is easy to take the surroundings for granted. I am sure most people do. However, for me, personally, my perspective changed radically after the global Covid-19 pandemic, which forced us into a lockdown within our homes for over two long years. When I contracted the virus and had to be hospitalised, I learnt the hard way how valuable each breath of fresh air is and the irony of the fact that this involuntary activity that we undertake over 20,000 times a day is something we rarely ever spare a thought for. This hit home for me when

I walked into the Tolly greenery after a hiatus of two years and took a deep breath under the trees. A euphoric sense of freedom and freshness encircled me.

Recently, it saddened me to read a publication which listed Kolkata as the second most polluted city in the world. Climate change is a hard truth that we are witnessing in real time in the span of only one generation, with erratic weather patterns and an exponential rise in the incidence of respiratory diseases. It is in this context that the 110 acres of Tolly are truly one of the life-giving lungs of the city.

The biodiversity of the club ecosystem is, in fact, quite staggering. Within the grounds of the club, there are an astonishing 158 species of plants, over 146 varieties of trees, 36 species of wildflowers, 93 species of birds, 76 species of butterflies and 24 species of mammals, amphibians and reptiles. Our beloved domesticated equine and rescued canine and feline friends add to this beautiful mix.

Just as the beating heart of an expensive watch is a precision movement involving hundreds of moving parts that work together behind the watch face, Tollygunge Club has a myriad, often unseen, workers who toil behind the scenes through all seasons and hours of the day to keep this precious jewel of the city alive. From the humble *mali* to the renowned environmentalist, they are all the green guardians of the environment.

The green champions of Tollygunge Club have worked tirelessly for environmental conservation for many years, and have set the benchmark through their efforts. Their initiatives have not only benefited the club and its members but the wider society and city as well. From the likes of Sir Paul Benthall, Ian Turcan, Bob McAlpine, Sir Owain Jenkins, Robert and Anne Wright to our current Environment Committee under the leadership of Nandini Chakravarty, Harkirat Singh Siddhu, Arijit Dutta, Diti Mukherjee, Rajdeep Sikand, Neha Swaika and Sherni Chinoy, and the tireless support of the club administration, led by Anil Mukerji, CP Sharma, Gaurav Pundir, Ubendran S and Sudip Dhara, these people represent a continuity of vision that will extend to the future generation.

It is wonderful to see that horticulturists at the Kolkata Municipal Corporation have benefited from Golf Superintendent Gaurav Pundir's success at controlling the fungal infection of neem trees. His meticulously chronicled book, *Tolly Trees*, illustrates 146 varieties of trees in the club, and is both a valuable resource and a pleasure to read.

Members plant trees



“

The earth is moving towards urbanization. A good chunk of the human population now lives or works in cities or metros. As rustic landscapes metamorphose into cities, the flora and fauna of our planet also changes. Taking Kolkata as an example, we have noticed some changes in the climate of the area. One such change is the frequency and intensity of thunder squalls. It seems that Kolkata is experiencing more storms and the effect on vegetation along with material damage has increased. This may be due to a manifold increase in the concretization of the city. Increase in non-green areas and old houses giving way to new high-rises leads to heat being absorbed and retained by the concrete. These heat islands perhaps attract more lightning with accompanying thunderstorms. The result of their intensity and frequency is reflected by the storm in April 2018 when the wind speed reached nearly 100 km/hr to uproot over 200 trees in the metropolis and caused at least 5 deaths! We have to live with this weather and must do something to sustain the trees and the biodiversity depending on it.

— Kushal Mookherjee

”

20 trees replanted at Tolly Club, members use Aila experience

Ajanta Chakravarty
@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Tollygunge Club, one of the city's oldest and greenest clubs, has swung into action after Cyclone Amphan had left its grounds battered. Members of the club cashed in on their Aila experience for undertaking a systemic restoration and replantation plan on the 100-acre premises. Twenty trees uprooted by the cyclone have already been transplanted there.

Immediately after Amphan had lashed the city, the club's environment committee members, headed by Nandini Chakravarty, swung into action. A detailed



Trees uprooted by Amphan being restored on Tolly Club premises.

pink cassia, manila tamarind, yellow oleander, African tulip and east-Indian walnut.

"During Aila that had hit the city on May 25 in

self superintendent Gaurav Pandit, who is a qualified forester and has co-authored the book, "Tolly Trees" that illustrates 146 varieties of trees on the club premises.

"No other golf course in

Coverage for the initiative in *The Times of India*

Storms and Trees in a City: Kushal Mookherjee

Amongst all these illustrious environmentalists is the towering giant of a wildlife crusader, campaigner, photographer and researcher, the late Kushal Mookherjee, whose invaluable contribution to the creation of awareness of the richness of the flora and fauna is hailed not just by the club members but all lovers of nature. With over three decades of experience in conducting field activities to increase environmental awareness among students in India, Kushal served on the National Board for Wildlife, the West Bengal state wildlife advisory board, and represented both the Zoological Survey of India and the World Wildlife Fund. A man who spent his life protecting and campaigning for nature, "he was an important force for nature conservation," says Mrs Lee Durrell.

At a personal level, I take pride in knowing that we shared the same *alma mater* and studied the same subjects. In her homage to his memory, Nandini says: "Kushal and his contribution to the awareness about the biodiversity at the club are monumental. His book, which was launched during the club's Centenary year,



Coverage for the initiative in *The Telegraph*

is seminal, as it was the first to identify the birds and trees of Tolly. His silent but continuous support was instrumental in ensuring the club's biodiversity. Kushal's passion for the club's rich natural heritage is known to most members. The great vacuum created by his untimely demise is being deeply felt by the

club." The flora and fauna of Tolly will be a legacy to be left behind for successive generations. It is a legacy we salute and need to honour by keeping his vision alive. We should pay homage to Kushal through the revival of the Nature Club activities under the aegis of the Kushal Mookherjee Foundation for environmental education with nature walks, tree identification, potting of plants, members and children's activity corner along with advanced conservation studies and research.

Positive impact

Biodiversity and sustenance to protect natural resources and ecosystems is at the heart of Tolly's environment committee, and there are several success stories. Perhaps the most unique one is the preservation of Tolly's healthy jackal population. Urban biodiversity conservation is achieved within Kolkata's urban sprawl by providing a safe habitat and supply of food. This helps mitigate potential aggression and helps peaceful coexistence with other animals. Birds' nests around the club are built, protected and safeguarded to make the club environs inviting to local and migratory birds. Planting of trees is an ongoing, annual process, and efforts have been made to make the club near-organic by the use of organic fertilizers as much as possible. Water preservation through rainwater and groundwater harvesting is undertaken by recycling wastewater to irrigate the grounds and gardens. This ensures that wastewater from the club does not pollute the city sewers and the Tolly Nullah. Use of solar energy for heating our pools provides clean energy and reduces reliance on the grid. Tolly is now a 'no plastic' club, which actively promotes an ethos of zero littering by members, guests and staff.

The most dramatic example of the positive impact of the environment team under the leadership of Nandini Chakravarty and Anil Mukerji occurred in the aftermath of Cyclone Amphan, when 73 trees were uprooted. All hands – the gardeners, ball boys, waiters, caddies and other workers at Tolly – were on deck, pitching in with love and enthusiasm while risking their health during the pandemic,



Kushal Mookherjee on a nature walk with students



Benches made from the wood of fallen trees can now be found in the club

in the race to conduct an extensive restoration project to save the trees. The trees included many local and exotic species such as silver oak, Indian lilac, eucalyptus, gulmohar, wild date palm, yellow bel, Mexican mahogany, Spanish cherry, African tulip, yellow oleander, jacaranda, sausage tree, purple bauhinia, east Indian walnut and more. The previous experience of tree preservation gained after Cyclone Aila in 2009 was applied with great success immediately after Amphan. The love for trees as part of our lives was evident from the use of wood from trees that could not be saved to make benches, trays, fences and, touchingly, even a tree map with inscriptions as a memorial to the lost trees.

As life slowly returns to normal after the pandemic, I have been going to Tollygunge Club more often to meet and learn from our

own green guardians of the environment. Often, I find myself just sitting and looking, listening and breathing the air of the Tolly green.

To quote the Welsh poet, William Henry Davies,
 What is this life if, full of care,
 We have no time to stand and stare?—
 No time to stand beneath the boughs,
 And stare as long as sheep or cows:
 No time to see, when woods we pass,
 Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:
 No time to see, in broad daylight,
 Streams full of stars, like skies at night:
 No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
 And watch her feet, how they can dance:
 No time to wait till her mouth can
 Enrich that smile her eyes began?
 A poor life this if, full of care,
 We have no time to stand and stare.

Suniti (Rosie) Khastgir, a Tolly member for thirty years, is an artist, mentor and curator. She is a marketing, business excellence and organisational development consultant who is passionate about social responsibility and her animals



Members participating in clearing up the Tolly greens after Cyclone Amphan

Tolly Tattle with Anik Dutta

The filmmaker talks about life, Satyajit Ray, *Aparajito* and our beloved club

How was your transition from an adman to a film creator? Apart from directing, we believe you write the story and the script as well.

I never set out to become an advertising man. However, joining the film department of Hindustan Thompson Associates, the largest agency at that point of time, changed things for me. While I was there, I started making small films, which is not a normal practice in advertising agencies. I convinced my bosses that this would save them a lot of money, and I started doing dealer videos, offer films, corporate films and so on. I began going to Bombay to supervise TVC shoots. In the process, I spent time observing the work of some of the best advertising filmmakers in the country and honed my filmmaking skills.

I then became an independent filmmaker and made numerous commercials over a long period before making my first feature film. The 'transition' was like moving from limited-overs cricket to Test cricket.

About being a 'creator', yes! I get involved in pretty much every department of my films, because I enjoy the act of filmmaking at every stage: from co-writing the script, dialogue and lyrics to pre-production, from shooting to post-production. I am involved with the music, art direction, costume design and so on, more than many other directors, and I also do the basic publicity designs.



At what stage did Tollygunge Club become an integral part of your plans for *Aparajito*?

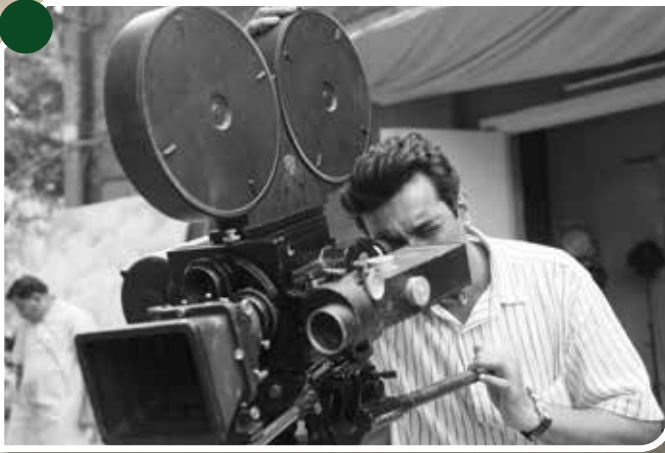
I have been shooting in Tolly for many years, from the time of Bob Wright. I used to shoot my commercials then. In my third feature film — *Meghnadbadh Rohoshyo* — I needed to depict a section of old England, so I shot at Tolly, and it worked. While I was planning this movie, I needed to show London in the 50s. It was a small section and I thought I could recreate that in Tolly. I also needed to shoot some period sequences in the opulent clubs of Calcutta. Our Managing Member, Anil Mukerji, was very helpful, particularly so because the film was a tribute to Satyajit Ray on his birth centenary. I would also like to thank Joydeep Datta Gupta, the President of the club and an old friend, as well as Saibal *babu*, for extending their support. A lot of club members are in some of these scenes. My wife is a regular at the club. She knows a lot of people. I know a few. They volunteered to be part of certain scenes, which was also a huge help.

As a master of one-liners, what does Tolly in your script of *Aparajito* mean to you?

"Kolkata London *holo taholey*"

(So Kolkata did become London after all!)





Did you always have the AC Lounge, the Club House and the golf course in mind, or did you decide on the location after checking out various places?

I choose my locations according to the demands of the script. Since I am a member here, I know every nook and corner. So I can immediately visualise which sequence would work where.



What did you find most interesting about Tolly during the research and shooting?

Well, Tolly has always fascinated me with its magnificent colonial architecture among idyllic settings, and its history – the notorious indigo plantations, the dreaded Nilkuthi, Tipu Sultan's family

taking refuge. It's caught in a time warp. You can also depict the outdoors in England here because the trees that line the 'Queen's Path' were brought from England and planted here by the British so that they could feel at home. Every time I explore the club, I discover something new. This time, during the recce, I found a vintage ambulance in a garage near the stable.

What message would you send out to young Tolly members who aspire to make films, and to those who would like a second innings in their life by getting into films and the creative arts?

I don't like giving messages. Everyone's life is very different, and everyone deals with it in his or her own way. No one gave me advice on how to go about filmmaking. I will just say, whatever you do – and it need not necessarily be films – check out two things:

1. Are you passionate about it?
2. Do you think you will be good at it? Conduct an honest, objective self-assessment.

If the answer to both is 'yes', then just go for it with grit and determination, and let nothing deter you.

**Aparajito has completed more than 125 days and is still running in a few theatres in Calcutta. It was released across India and across continents, where it has been well received. It was screened at well-known film festivals around the globe, and has won prestigious international awards. It is currently streaming on Zee5.*



New in Tolly

GK Sports helps you get sporty

The brand has been around for decades now, and having the GK Sports outlet at Tolly will ensure that members can avail themselves of a wide variety of sporting equipment. GK Sports came in after an arduous selection process, with its long standing reputation in the market.

It is a one-stop shop for all sports, be it tennis, riding, golf or swimming. There is a variety to choose from, too, from tennis rackets, to wrist bands, caps, T-shirts, shorts, trousers for many disciplines, shoes, golf and tennis balls, gloves, swim-wear, table tennis equipment, dumbbells for weight-lifting and so on. You can place an order and they will get it for you. Adjacent to this store is the specialist golf outlet run by Indrajit Bhalotia.

Branded Tolly products like the cloth bags with sketches of Tolly scenes, books such as *Birds and Trees of Tolly*, and other memorabilia have become popular with members.

GK Sports



Open-Air Gym



Sweat it out at the open-air gym

The Tolly gym is a well-established and popular workout place. The good news is that it is now being reworked, post Covid, but not without a sister gym to complement it, outdoors. Calisthenics has become the order of the day and the desire to exercise out in the open has increased. It was inaugurated recently on a Sunday morning, right next to the swimming pool, and it had all the fitness experts demonstrating pull-ups and push-ups using the sets of rods that have been specially constructed for this purpose. The whole Mehta family, from Jahan to Sanaya and their brood, were at it from morning, and the seniors and officials of the club tried their hand at it too.

The outdoor gym, which will shortly be relocated to the 7th Tank area, caters to all age groups, from eight to eighty, who can enjoy using the monkey bar and other equipment to increase their strength, flexibility and endurance. This gym is available for workouts right from the early hours of the morning to the evening.

Order pronto, at Pronto

This gourmet fast-food outlet is part of the young zone at Tolly—with the Children's Park just opposite it and the Flury's outlet next to it. Pronto is the go-to place for those who love a large juicy burger or a hearty slider or sandwich, rated to be amongst the best in town. Just about everyone goes there at one time or another—the teens in search of a filling snack, young parents waiting it out while kid-sitting their offspring at the park, and the seniors, who can sit at the Pantiles and have themselves a beer and burger.

Ice creams complete the picture.

The idea of Pronto was to have an outlet where you could get a quick meal in between all your sporting activity. They are known for their Whaler burgers (which contain fried fish fillets with cheese and piled high with toppings) shawarma, ramen dishes, pizza and lots more.

A perfectly chilled-out environment that cuts across all age groups.

Pronto





THE MULTI FACETED TOLLY FEST 2022

It was a first-timer for Tolly who came up with the idea of a six-day fest for members and their families. A participative, inclusive event, it had everything going for it—a wide range of activities, the spirit of competition, and the huge bonhomie that it generated. Joydeep Datta Gupta, President of Tollygunge Club, put it aptly: “The idea of Tolly Fest was to bring together members from different disciplines and allow them to create new relationships and friendships.” There was something for everyone in the numerous categories—culture was covered under dance and poetry, the outdoor events saw everything from golf to swimming and tennis and even children’s races, the indoor events covered bridge and table tennis, mental stimulation came from a quiz, and the music and dance events rocked the evenings. The eldest and youngest participants—one at 82 and a young girl of six—were felicitated, apart from the recognition accorded to people who had achieved at a national level. The Far Pavilion lawns were the site for shoppers and foodies. Well-known bands kept people grooving and, during those few days, it was a high octane fest, which successive years should see growing into a larger brand.

Sporting Spirit



On the gallop



Tee on the greens



Sporting Spirit

Serve and volley



Make a splash



A jolly good racquet



Sporting Spirit



Just smash it



Can't read that Poker face



Right on cue

Sporting Spirit



Crossing the Bridge now



Darting in and out



Scrabbling for words



Song and Dance



Dancing up a storm



Rock 'n' roll will never die



Beats per minute



Rhythm of the night



Unchained melody



Work a Little, Play a Little



Why so quizzical?



Tempting fete



A barrel of laughs



A serious matter

Kid Gloves



Duck tales with Daffy



Clowning around



Ride into the future

The Winner Takes It All



Sweet victory: the Gravel Giants win the Tolly Fest

Smashing show: the Belvedere Bulls finish as runners-up



President Joydeep Datta Gupta presents actress Raima Sen with a souvenir for being a judge at the music competition



Tolly Tales: Pandemic and After

Rita Bhimani



What did most of you do during the pandemic? The fear psychosis apart, I believe it was a time to introspect, a time to reinvent and rejig one's priorities and dispel Corona-centered fears; it was when Tolly came into the picture as that haven of go-to comfort, the oasis that greened our senses. Tolly needed

all of you as much as you craved its sanctuary, and so many of you jumped in with responsible action.

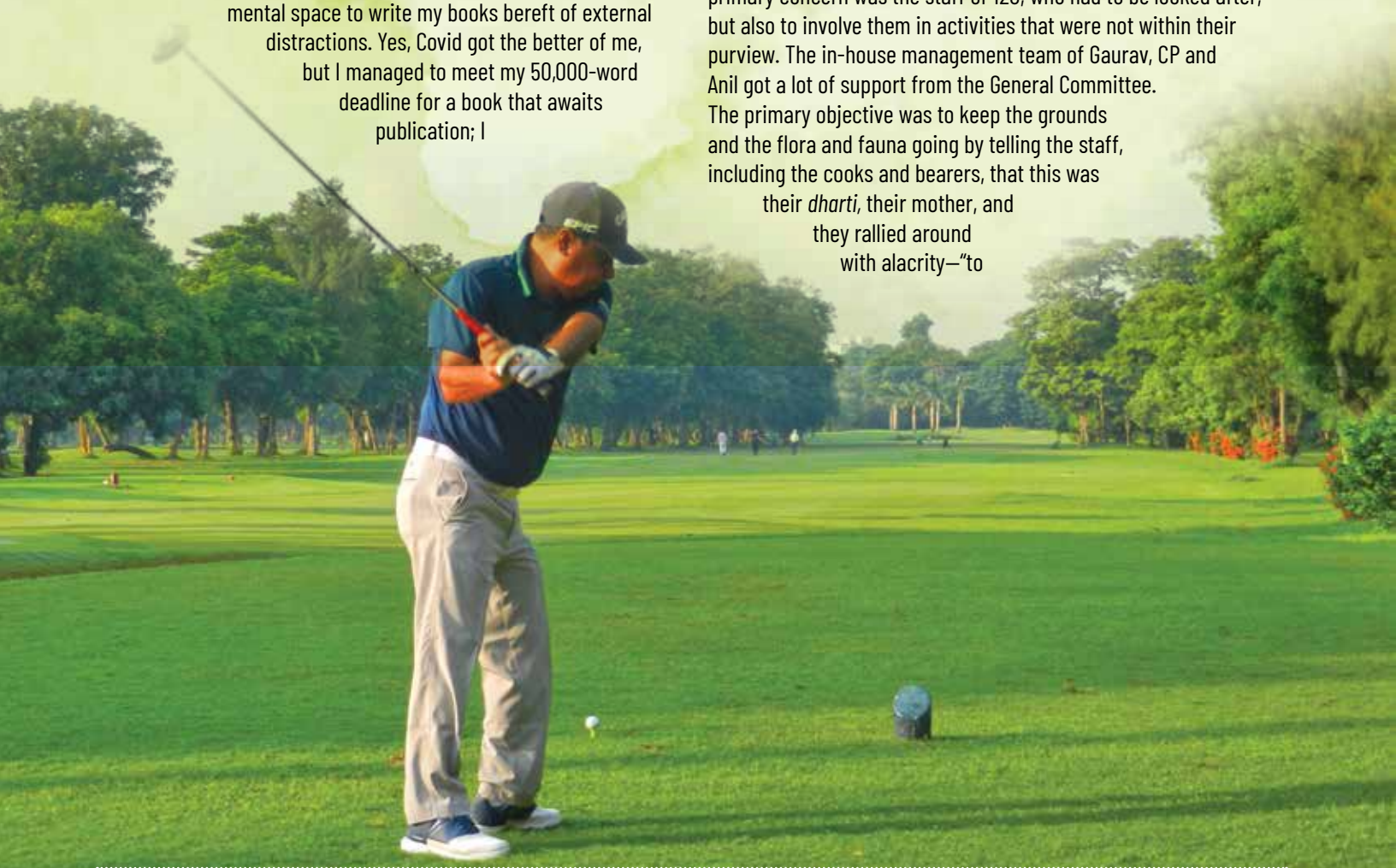
For me, it was a quiet time that provided ample mental space to write my books bereft of external distractions. Yes, Covid got the better of me, but I managed to meet my 50,000-word deadline for a book that awaits publication; I

launched another book with the whole audience in masks and, then, with my deep personal loss of a life partner of decades, I finally took a break and checked in for calm and quietude at Tolly. The club gave me more than I could give.

But there were many of you who continued to be involved with the club, during the pandemic and after, caring, sharing, giving your time, and ensuring that Tolly held its head high through it all.

Our own CEO, Anil Mukerji, invested his captive situation with a proactive stance that kept everyone else motivated—the captain steering a ship through troubled waters.

He's a hugely busy man, so I nabbed him one day before his game of tennis. He talked with so much candour and empathy. His primary concern was the staff of 120, who had to be looked after, but also to involve them in activities that were not within their purview. The in-house management team of Gaurav, CP and Anil got a lot of support from the General Committee. The primary objective was to keep the grounds and the flora and fauna going by telling the staff, including the cooks and bearers, that this was their *dharti*, their mother, and they rallied around with alacrity—"to



a man, to a woman, to a child," says Anil. A benevolent trust was mooted for the ball boys and caddies, and members were requested to contribute, which they did readily. And the kids for whom time hung heavy? Rakhi Pundir, wife of Golf Superintendent Gaurav, got 30 children involved in classes she conducted in the AC Shamiana, and did a magnificent job keeping them engaged.

Amphan was another major blow, and with 73 trees lost in the devastation, Anil, with his background in the armed forces, got the staff motivated into various regiments—like the Bihari Regiment, the Bengal Regiment and the Oriya Regiment—and they worked relentlessly, day and night, to get the situation back to some semblance of normalcy. The committee generously allocated funds to feed them, and the staff never asked for overtime. "We will not betray our salt," they said.

Doctors weighed in with their expertise, and committee members like Ronen, Abe, Sandipan, Vandana and many others regularly visited, providing guidance.

Harki and Nandini showed how to deal with the whole environment, for which the latter has given her invaluable inputs in this article.

"No other club has challenges like ours," says Anil, "and the sense of belonging is a major plus point."

His energetic Chairperson of the Environment Committee, Nandini Chakravarty, played a hugely meaningful role in so many areas that impacted a club of our size, and all the restorative work that took place to save the trees following the devastation caused by Amphan. Nandini is always eager to acknowledge her team members on the committee like Harki, Diti and Sherni, and the support of Anil, CP, Gaurav and Ubendran, to name a few. And recognizing the efforts of the ball boys, waiters, caddies and other workers at Tolly, who showed exemplary team spirit at all times. Carrying the green legacy of Tolly forward has been her lodestar.

Sensitising members about Tolly's unique biodiversity has been addressed on an ongoing basis; so has the amazing water management plan, where the system of recharging aquifers from rainwater harvesting sites restricts chemical usage at the grounds, with recycled water used to irrigate the golf course.

Then there's the upgrading of the nursery and the creation of a centre of green excellence. The nursery and the adjoining area consisting of a cycle stand were identified as a possible location for workshops, hydroponic culture, and terrariums, and even the propagation of our own tree species from fallen seeds. And members can get plants and saplings for their own use, too, by paying a small quarterly membership—ensuring their commitment!

Amphan did not deter our Chairperson Environment or the teams working with her. They got into the act of making benches, gates, furniture, pergolas, signage and so on from the wood of Tolly trees lost to Amphan. A small portion of wood from the fallen trees from Amphan was given to Don Bosco Ashalayam (an NGO engaged in



The magic of golf

skills development through carpentry for underprivileged boys). As a token of their recognition of this favour, Tollygunge Club was gifted eight benches. They had excellent craftsmanship. A tree map of Tolly was created from one such plank, and is intended to be put up for display at the Shamiana. More wooden logs will be kept for in-house usage—for picket fences, horse show jumping apparatus, tables and gates—endless possibilities.

Over 320 new saplings were planted in the last one-and-a-half years to compensate for the losses over the years and those lost to Amphan.

A lot of the best practices already followed by the club match the critical criteria for eligibility for the geo-certification tag which has been applied for.

And there's more: the revival of the Nature Club activity for environmental education with nature walks, tree identification, potting of plants, children's activity corner.

So much has been done, and the groundwork laid. It's up to Tolly members to grab all these opportunities.

As Nandini Chakravarty says with deep satisfaction: “I give kudos to the room boys, caddies, bearers, who worked without any sophisticated gears, but used whatever axes and shovels were at hand. They did all the work. We could knit everyone together in the same fabric.”

Ride and shine

It's a sunshine morning at the stables as Songit Bagrodia gets the horses to lunge and warm up. Sharad Bhutoria, Chairman of the Equestrian Committee, gets going, but not before we have our own warm-up conversation. Sharad introduces us to the others—Captain Sajjan Kumar, senior trainer, and Shane Domingo, stable-in-charge. Shane was one person who was at the stables throughout the pandemic.

Songit started riding way back in 1976 and still continues to do so, though he has reached his half-century mark. From riding at Fort William and participating in the Nationals, it is now his turn to give back. Which he has demonstrated so ably by organizing four Nationals in the last 12 years, including a couple of Junior Nationals and one Show Jumping event for the club with which he has been associated for the past 15 years.

His focus is on riders at Tolly, particularly the children who are keen, to give them a safe environment to ride in; to give them advanced training when required; to keep the horses and ponies fit and going. But it was during the pandemic that the commitment

really came to the fore, with so much fear and panic that happened. Initially, they would discuss the diet of the horses on the phone, but once the restrictions were lifted, four people would go there regularly. They were permitted at the club from 6 to 7.30, and each of them took responsibility to look after the horses, getting them out, riding them. Medical treatment was always at hand.

It was great to see Goli Mukherjee, their most important and trusted adviser, who has shown a total involvement going back to 1999. He's been a rider, trainer, and is there daily, dog in tow.

So, riding is back on course, and there is actually a waiting list for youngsters keen on learning.

Hole in One!

Keeping golf strokes ahead during the pandemic was a rare feat, and one could eke out the story from Deep Banerjee, an 8 handicap. It was Playstation 4 for online golfing, which would happen with friends logging in together in the evening. It continued for the entire lockdown. He cooked a lot too, and from all accounts, the family lapped it all up. And he could spend a lot of time with his family and a young daughter.

When lockdown was lifted, the Eco Park nine-hole course was the best bet as it opened first, and that is when they realized that pushing their own trolleys, especially in the swelter of summer, was daunting, but little did they realise that it was there to stay for a while.



The club cleared up in the wake of Cyclone Amphan



The nursery has been upgraded. By paying a quarterly fee, members can avail themselves of their own plants and saplings here

Tolly started the practice golf range, and suddenly golf was back in life, golf had opened up. When the golf course opened, the caddies were at hand, all gloved and masked, but they were to only function as ball spotters initially, and since there was no F&B, tea was carried in a flask, as were snacks.

Slowly, caddies were allowed to resume their normal duties, and club tournaments also resumed, but with restrictions. Some rules had to be abided by. For instance, the flagsticks were forbidden from being removed from the greens. So, the ardent golfers devised an ingenious mechanism where, with the help of a lever, the ball would come out! Talk of Indian *jugaad*!

The wonderful thing is the resumption of the golfing calendar. A watershed moment has been the Tolly Monsoon Cup, which happened on a limited scale last year, but it was only recently when, in a major breakthrough, there were 390 participants in the current Monsoon Cup!

Finally, with a caddies' benevolent fund in place, and Amphan damage addressed, it is time to look ahead at golfing trips, at bringing in new golfers into the fold. The Tolly inheritance continues thus to be nurtured.

Incidentally, just this April, Deep got his hole-in-one at the 11th hole.

Rita Bhimani, a Tolly member for over 30 years, is a Public Relations professional, columnist, author and educator, who gave the Tatler its name as its first editor



Warming up the horses

Thought for Food

Never forget that Tolly is largely a sporting club, and so, its culinary offerings are geared towards people wanting their comfort foods and a quick bite before and after their tee off and other games that they sally forth into. Areas like the Gravel, the South Verandah and the Shamiana are perfect venues for some of the Tolly favourites. While some of these are classics, newer dishes have been added to cater to a variety of tastes.

Of course, there are the regulars like the Chicken Masala Toast, a Roast Chicken with its accompanying veggies and a Grilled Fish that you can never go wrong with. Tolly feels that a limited choice always ensures quality and quick service.

The newer favourites are Tolly Chickpea Chaat, Mushroom Bhujia and Ham Bhujia—somewhat off the beaten track, you will agree.

The Chinese wok section is there for those who want their oriental palate catered to.

And, then, there is Mintoo Special—an open-faced club sandwich, which was 'invented' during the lockdown, for its hearty and filling capabilities. Chef Mintoo is busy trying out new variants.



Chilli Pepper Pork
from the Wok



Mushroom
Bhujia



Mintoo Special

Roast Chicken



Ham Bhujia



Chicken Tikka



What's Cooking in the Belvedere Dining Hall?

Amongst the exciting new dishes on offer, here are four dishes to whet your appetite, quite literally!

Crispy Skin on Salmon: A fillet of imported Norwegian salmon cooked in lemon, caper butter and rocket leaves. It's perfect for a light lunch.



Club Style Vegetable Moussaka: Aubergine, tomatoes and bell pepper baked in a rich cheese sauce, served with garlic toast. We like to think that this is what the doctor recommends for an early dinner!



Honey Glazed Pork Scallops: Slices of grilled pork tossed in rosemary and honey, served with roast potatoes and vegetables. The sauce is light and has a sweet aftertaste. This one can be the highlight of your weekend.



Broccoli Macaroni Cheese: Macaroni in a creamy cheese sauce, served with broccoli and garlic bread. It might be the only way to get your kids to eat some greens and still enjoy their meal!



Tollygunge Club App



Purpose: This has primarily been created for the convenience of members during rush hour at the 18th Shamiana and Gravel areas. Using this app, members can order their choice of menu items directly from the kitchen.

What you need: Download the app from iOS App Store or Android Play Store. The app has been designed to be used by members and their spouses only, and not yet by dependant members. You will be able to verify your membership as Primary Member or Spouse with your membership and registered mobile numbers as well as email IDs.

How it works: The table order tab will take you to the Shamiana menu. Once you have mentioned your table order and how many people are at your table, you will be able to place a new order or track an existing order. The menu offerings are divided into various subheads such as Sandwiches, Bakers' Oven, Tandoor and Dessert. Select your dishes and add them to your cart. You will also be able to leave special instructions for the kitchen before you place the order. The Member Credit button will confirm your payment, after which you will receive the details of the bill, and the bearer assigned to the table will be notified about your order.

Pick Up the Ball and Move On!

Vijay Jacob Parakkal



In the year 2020, the world changed for all of us. The pandemic struck hard. Endless Zoom meetings and an online school schedule soon led to a fatigued dad and a subdued child.

And, then, our Tollygunge Club opened for golf. My daughter and

I formed our very own safety bubble, picked up our golf gear and embarked on what turned out to be a very memorable life journey.

I decided to introduce her to golf. “Why?” she asked. And that got me thinking.

I told her it taught me a few things and, maybe, you might find it useful too.

Getting you involved in golf at an early age could be one of the best things I could possibly do to set you up for success in life.

And the benefits go beyond just physical fitness—it can help you develop social and emotional skills that will last you your entire life.

In nature and the outdoors

Today, because of computers, video games and smartphones, most kids don’t get out as much as they used to. Golf gets you outside, breathing in the fresh air and enjoying the sunshine. Most golf courses like our Tolly’s, for example, are well maintained and beautifully landscaped, allowing you to enjoy the beauty of the trees and the flowers, the wide variety of birds and other animals that live in and around the courses. Spotting a fox or a snake can add to the excitement and sense of adventure.

Though it’s often thought of as an individual game, golf is actually very social. Most of the time, we will be playing with friends, colleagues or even in tournaments with people watching.

At the very least, you can make friends on the course with people you may not meet at school, thus expanding your social circles.

Exercise

When you’re walking the course, golf is good exercise. You’re outside getting fresh air and stretching, using nearly every part of your body to coordinate a swing that sends the golf ball flying towards your target—teaching you balance, power and control all at once.

Honesty

Golf teaches you honesty. Owing to the nature of the game, it would be easy for anyone to cheat a little by moving the ball or adjusting their score, but you quickly realise that you are only cheating yourself, and that never feels good. So, golf does inculcate in you the values of honesty and integrity. After the game, you can always face the mirror, knowing you played right.

Patience and focus

Golf teaches you patience and how to focus. If you make a bad shot, you don’t have the time to dwell on it and think about what went wrong, because the next shot is right around the corner. You learn to keep your wits about you, take a deep breath and focus on what is ahead.

The patience learned from playing golf can translate into every other aspect of your life too. Now, when you come back home from a bad day at school or a small tiff with your best friend, I will give you a patient hearing. And when I tell you such is life, I am sure this too shall pass. For now, you have to pick up the ball and move on; you will smile because golf has taught you that one important life lesson.

No matter what life throws at you, you have to pick up the ball and move on!

Vijay Jacob Parakkal is a Senior Vice-President and Managing Partner at Wunderman Thompson. His daughter studies at Loreto House. The duo, spotted regularly on the Tolly golf course, went on to win the parent-child tournament at Tolly in 2022

The Fascinating Game and I

Pratik Basu



One disadvantage, among several, of being a gentleman of leisure—which is a kinder way of saying “unemployed” or “prematurely retired”—is that when you are spotted walking your dogs every morning at the sporting club that you’ve been a longstanding member of, idle minds construe, as idle minds

are prone to, that if there is someone still sprightly enough, despite all physical evidence to the contrary, to keep in check two Beagles with minds of their own and wild adventure in their hearts, then there goes someone supremely qualified to take up golf—the one sport guaranteed to keep gentlemen of leisure out of the hair of their family members (most notably, their wives) for at least a few hours a day and, with a little bit of encouragement and false flattery, several in the week.

As any casual reader might have culled from the preceding sentence, I’ve not been an advocate, enthusiastic or otherwise, of a game that requires one to repeatedly strike a tiny ball and then go ambling after it over dale, downs, sand traps and the occasional pond, till a final series of premeditated and painstakingly executed nudges takes it into a hole that even Alice would have been reluctant to venture into despite the promise of Wonderland—a masochistic operation conducted not once but 18 times, invariably accompanied by warning shouts, agonised groans and screamed epithets and, on occasion, twisted necks, painful backs and feelings of severe self-doubt.

But all that was before the keen eye of a predatory Pro spied me walking my Beagle girls one ordinary morning and conjured up an alluring vision of yours truly in Adidas polo tee, Blackberry khakis, Nike Tech Swoosh cap and Reebok two-toned golfing shoes, swinging a Callaway Big Bertha with swashbuckling abandon and effortlessly sending little white balls to distant places where, on a clear day when you can

see forever, the sky meets the horizon—a slideshow seductive enough to crumble the hard-shell, crustacean resistance of decades and lure me to the club’s state-of-the-art driving range, stick in hand and gleam in eye.

One session of 55 minutes was enough for me to eat humble crow—not one but a murder of them—and retract every pompous and derogatory remark that I might have made about the game, including adages that my unjustifiably supercilious attitude made me particularly partial to, like: “Golf is popular simply because it is the best game in the world at which to be bad.”

Or, as P.G. Wodehouse once wrote: “Golf, like the measles, should be caught young, for, if postponed to riper years, the results may be serious.”

This absolute retraction comes after 55 minutes of agony, as much for me—bending, picking ball, placing, straightening, crouching, swinging—as for a surprisingly patient Pro, who, as he saw a ball stutter drunkenly off the tee to die ingloriously at his feet—or disappear into areas unintended and uncharted, or resolutely stand its ground, unperturbed and untouched, even after several vigorous swings of a wildly wielded No. 6—must have begun to question the sanity of having persuaded me to take up the game when, 10 minutes into the session, his every professional instinct was telling him he shouldn’t have. And while I was engaged in unimaginable, uncoordinated bodily contortions, he must have silently wept with frustration at my inability to understand and execute one fundamental golfing premise—that the ball is there to be hit, not air-kissed, air-brushed, or just plain ignored.

Lesson learnt.

“Golf is a fascinating game; it has taken me nearly forty years to discover that I can’t play it.”

Pratik Basu, a long-time Tolly member, is an author, culinary experimenter, movie and rock music aficionado, gastronome and dedicated walking companion to Sophie and Cherie

The Forsaken Treasures of Tolly

Shivaji Dasgupta



For no credit of mine except fortuitous parentage, I have been thriving on the delights of Tollygunge Club since the summer of 1978. That, however, does lead me to thoughtful nostalgia, experiences routinely cherished then but mostly *non grata* now.

Foremost in the timeline is the Grandstand movie, a repository

for racing fiends transformed on Sunday evenings to an open-air Globe Cinema. I distinctly recollect viewing, wide-eyed, Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* while making friends with a consulate kid accompanied by a rather opinionated Doberman. On duty, with military precision, was the mutton burger circumnavigated by tearful paper, truly a melodious taste. Nowadays, this very space houses the nondescript Tolly Towers, necessary revenues regrettably scoring over needy character.

How many of you remember Guy Fawkes Night, a quaint rehash of colonial tradition, but accompanied by intense Housie? Well, I was certainly there for one such version, in 1980 or maybe 1981, remarkably well attended, considering the fairly modest lighting given Jyoti Babu's electric temperament. Mr Bob Wright was clearly the Viceroy of ceremonies, expertly twirling the Angostura bitters in the glass earnestly anticipating gin, a learned ritual aped comically by his many admirers.

At that time, the club still possessed an indigenous bakery, with a cake counter residing close to the present-day entrance of the South Verandah. The chocolate pastry was surely gooey but resplendent with excess, and thus attractive to greedy youngsters. Much later, I did learn that this was indeed the swansong of a reasonably celebrated tradition of oven curation, which inspired the popular Sunday High Tea, sadly before my time. Also, exactly why are the rather ample grounds hosting events still termed The Tea Lawn, though preferred nowadays for soulful whisky?

On the gravel, though, the heroine was the Sunday buffet

lunch, catered by the elegantly astute Mrs Khan, connected to Aligarh nobility, whose daughter runs Darjeeling Express in London. Equally valuably, her catering unit was reputed for recruiting the superannuated staff of Firpo's, logically leading to exceptional conjuring. And, I must duly confess, in grateful possession of a blessed life with generous exposure, the lingering sensorial melodies of the *kormas*, *kalias* and the *shahi tukra* are yet to be matched, forget surpassed. Confessedly, she was rather stern on second helpings of non veg, especially regulating the distribution with distressing strictures.

Now, I must digress to the South Verandah, which is a much appreciated *déjà vu*, as this is exactly how the topography was stipulated. On the side towards the gravel, there was a bar, and the area further down was the dining table setup, rather modest and fairly utilitarian. At the extreme end, where the current bar thrives, was a table tennis table, *en route* to toilets, which I suspect have now become kitchens, plumbing funnily the common conduit. In interim decades, this area was senselessly partitioned and it is refreshing to witness the restoration of immeasurable character. Incidentally, video footage of the same does exist in Mrinal Sen's *Mrigayaa*, shot in 1976, with the iconic Managing Member playing an affable guest character.

No account of Tolly from that era can be concluded without a hazy recollection of the weekend races, when dishevelled punters took over the pristine premises. A signboard from that time zone still persists opposite The Far Pavilion, while the well-appointed stables bear evidence of a serious commitment to racing, now confined to joy rides and equestrianism. The first floor of the Hastings Block, now bearing the impressive library, was then home to the limited guest rooms, stoic in amenities compared to the hotel-like facilities of today.

There is so much more that tickled the curiosities of an impressionable, unfettered mind, and for that this column is insufficient. Freshly crafted potato chips with infirm textures and a divine taste, not the manicured assembly line produce of the day. Cheddar (which I pronounced as Kedar) cheese

from an early bespoke farm and the Sundarbans Honey acted as the finishing school for eager-beaver pancakes.

The frightening yet intense tombs of the Johnson family merited late night sojourns escorted by sincere jackals. When ITC became the chief patron, the surreal exposure to Bukhara cuisine during the annual golf tourney truly became a tornado for inquisitive taste buds. Moonlight tent pegging, followed by fried eggs and bacon, is routine today, but heavenly yesterday, when we knew so little of other-worldly pleasures.

What mattered immensely was the imposing presence of Bob Wright and his clan, deserving and not entitled imperialists(!), as the man was responsible for rescuing the club from hoodlums and bestowing financial equilibrium, courtesy the corporate sponsorships, collaborative unions and the successful guest rooms. Today, Tolly is an astonishingly well-run establishment,

and much credit is surely due to the accomplished present-day management, who resonate with the imperatives of continuing profitability.

Those who walk into Tolly today get bamboozled by a world-class sustainable facility with an incredible heritage, but there are a fortunate few who still revel in the quaint backstory. The St Helena postal address of Tipu Sultan rebooting as an Indigo planter's HQ further resurrected as a thriving social institution, constantly reinventing its DNA to be truthful to the evolving times. Tolly is way beyond an institution; it is a lofty tradition and a chronic addiction, and this unlikely twosome explains its non-negotiable permanence.

Shivaji Dasgupta is a writer and an autonomous consultant in brand communications. He has been associated with the advertising industry for over 25 years

Good Old Tolly, Back in Action

Aadit Nag



Whenever I travel to Kolkata, visiting Tollygunge Club is a must. Come rain or shine, I can't miss a good hit on the tennis court with my dad or a satisfying meal in the Shamiana. But, because I live in Dubai, I don't come that often, and during the pandemic, the club wasn't itself. The Verandah

and the Shamiana were practically empty, and it had lost its bustling feel.

But, on our recent visit, I returned to Tolly to find it was back to its old self.

Everyone was enjoying breakfast, Flurys was packed and members were out and about. There is a significant difference between when Tolly was caught in the pandemic and its normal, busy self. Here are my experiences of the club post pandemic!

When coming to Tolly, I always play tennis with dad. So, this time around, I decided to try a new sport. A visit to the driving range was perfect! Quickly grabbing a club and a bucket of balls, I hurried up the steps to get some practice. The coaches helped me improve my technique and I was proud of my improvement—my best shot was 100!

Apart from playing golf, I also decided to hit a few balls in the tennis room with my grandma. In fact, she was the one who taught me how to play on those very tables, and she's still got it!

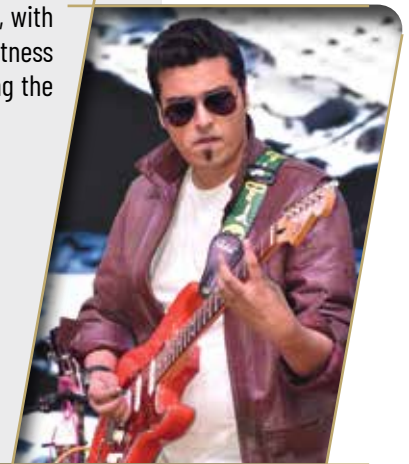
A trip to Tolly is incomplete without a hearty meal. After trying lots of dishes, I think my new favourite meal is a hot bowl of Chicken Do Pyaza with some *naan* slices and a nice mug of *lassi* on the side.

Tollygunge Club is my comfort spot, my happy space and the feeling of liveliness after the pandemic is always reassuring. It's amazing to be back.

Aadit Nag is 11 years old, and is a student of Year 7 in Dubai College. He plays tennis and blogs at Adventures of Aadit

Tollygunge Club Turns 125

The iconic nature of Tollygunge Club and its long, illustrious history cannot quite be encapsulated in a few words... but it can be celebrated with aplomb. And there was no better time to rejoice in the glory of the institution than on the occasion of 125 years of its establishment. That's right: in 2020, Tolly turned 125 years old. And even though the pandemic temporarily put a spanner in the works, the club and its members went all out to commemorate this historic milestone—be it through iconic club events like Christmas Lunch, New Year's Eve and the pet show or musical and cultural programmes exploring India's diversity and its cordial relations with other nations. Of course, with the sporting events highlighting the pride of Tolly Club—its dedication to sports, fitness and excellence—the celebration of 125 years was truly momentous. Keep turning the pages for a few glimpses into the magic of Tolly@125!



Deck The Halls

Be it the honey-glazed ham or the uniquely festive atmosphere, Christmas Lunch at Tolly is Kolkata's go-to lunch every year on December 25... and it was no different in 2019. Accompanied by the historic New Year's Eve celebration that year, where Louis Banks made magic with iconic tunes from the '70s and '80s along with a soulful, modern rendition of *Auld Lang Syne* to ring in 2020, the two December events formed an integral part of the 125-years celebration.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2019



NEW YEAR'S EVE 2019



The Beat of the Drums

The association between the Japanese Consulate and Tollygunge Club is long and full of warmth. Thus it stands to reason that when the Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata invited the touring Japanese taiko group, Wakana, to showcase traditional Japanese instrumental music to music lovers in the club in February 2020, the evening would be a special one. Have a look at how the stupendous musicians regaled their rapt audience.



Woodstock Vibes

The famous Woodstock Festival of 1969 has captured popular imagination for over five decades. So could there be anything more fitting of the Tolly spirit of celebrating music than a recreation of the iconic event? Attended by around 1,400 people, Woodstock Tolly in January 2020 witnessed the greatest rock hits of the 1970s and 1980s by renowned musicians, along with artistic creations by members and an overall celebration of good music and good times.



Colours of India

There's nothing quite like India's colours, tastes, sounds, emotions and experiences. Given that diversity and cosmopolitanism are hallmarks of the Tolly legacy, there could be no better way of celebrating 125 years than to bring the entire gamut of India's cultural beauty into one event. Thus was born 'Rang De Basanti'—a fusion of India's arts, dance forms, music, food and culture. And what a fusion it was!



Special Bonds

The armed forces and Tollygunge Club have long shared a special relationship. In fact, till date, Tolly is the only civilian club that The Eastern Naval Command Band has performed at: a distinction unlike any other. In a landmark event for both the armed forces and the club, the naval band put up a stupendous orchestral performance that included everything from pop, jazz and Michael Jackson's hits to a rendition of *Saare Jahan Se Achha* and, of course, the national anthem. Here are a few glimpses into the unforgettable evening in January 2020, along with a pictorial tour of the club's several illustrious Library events.

THE EASTERN NAVAL COMMAND BAND



LIBRARY EVENTS WITH RAJA GUHATHAKURTA, JAWHAR SIRCAR AND SHUMA RAHA



Love and Excellence Know No Bounds

One of the many things that sets the Tolly ethos apart is that it is a club that loves and welcomes animals of all kinds. This is evident not only in Tolly's unique Pet Show, which witnesses stunning feats both by members' dogs and police dogs, but also in the club's unmatched equestrian legacy, which combines both sporting excellence and a deep love of horses. Here's to celebrating 125 more years of encouraging members and their children to appreciate and love animals!

PET SHOW



RACING



Fitness Is For All

We all know that old adage, 'Health is wealth', right? Well, Tolly has always valued sports, fitness and the health of its members. No wonder, then, that an event truly close to the club's heart was the Tollython—a day of swimming, running and obstacle courses that witnessed the participation of more than a hundred members of different ages. Very much in keeping with the Tolly spirit, here are a few peeks into a very active day for members and their children!

TOLLYTHON



TOLLY

Trivia



Did you know...

1

... what the most beloved meeting place in Tollygunge Club is?

It's the legendary mango tree that grows in the gravel area of the club! The tree has been around for decades, and "let's meet under the mango tree" is a recognised rendezvous marker for club members. When the mango tree flowers profusely, it means that a good mango season lies ahead!

2

... where Mrinal Sen's 1976 Bollywood film, *Mrigayaa*, was shot?

It was filmed at Tolly! *Mrigayaa* proved to be the launch vehicle for the film careers of the renowned danseuse, Mamata Shankar, and the iconic actor, Mithun Chakraborty. The film went on to win the Golden Lotus—National Award for the Best Film, was nominated for the Golden Prize at the Moscow International Film Festival (1977) and won the Filmfare (Critics) Award for Best Film. Chakraborty won the Silver Lotus National Award for Best Actor. That's not all: the film also starred the actor, Robert Wright, who was also a top executive at the club.

3

... that the trees at Tolly are not planted in the usual horizontal manner?

That's right, the Tolly trees are planted in a zigzag manner. This method creates wind barriers and anchors the roots of the trees so as to prevent them from being uprooted during cyclones and storms.

4

... where the first flight from India took off from?

You guessed it; it took off from Tolly! In the early 20th century, Jules G.J. Tyck, the Belgian cyclist and aviation pioneer, reportedly flew the first flight in India from the club, and set the Indian altitude record at 213 metres. The first Indian woman to fly an aeroplane was Mrinalini Devi, the wife of Nirmal Chandra Sen and the sister-in-law of the then Maharani of Cooch Behar.

5

... that the club is ranked as one of the top 20 country clubs in the world?

That's right! Our beloved Tollygunge Club, spread over 110 acres, is among the best, globally. It boasts an 18-hole golf course and 67 well-equipped luxurious rooms.

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