

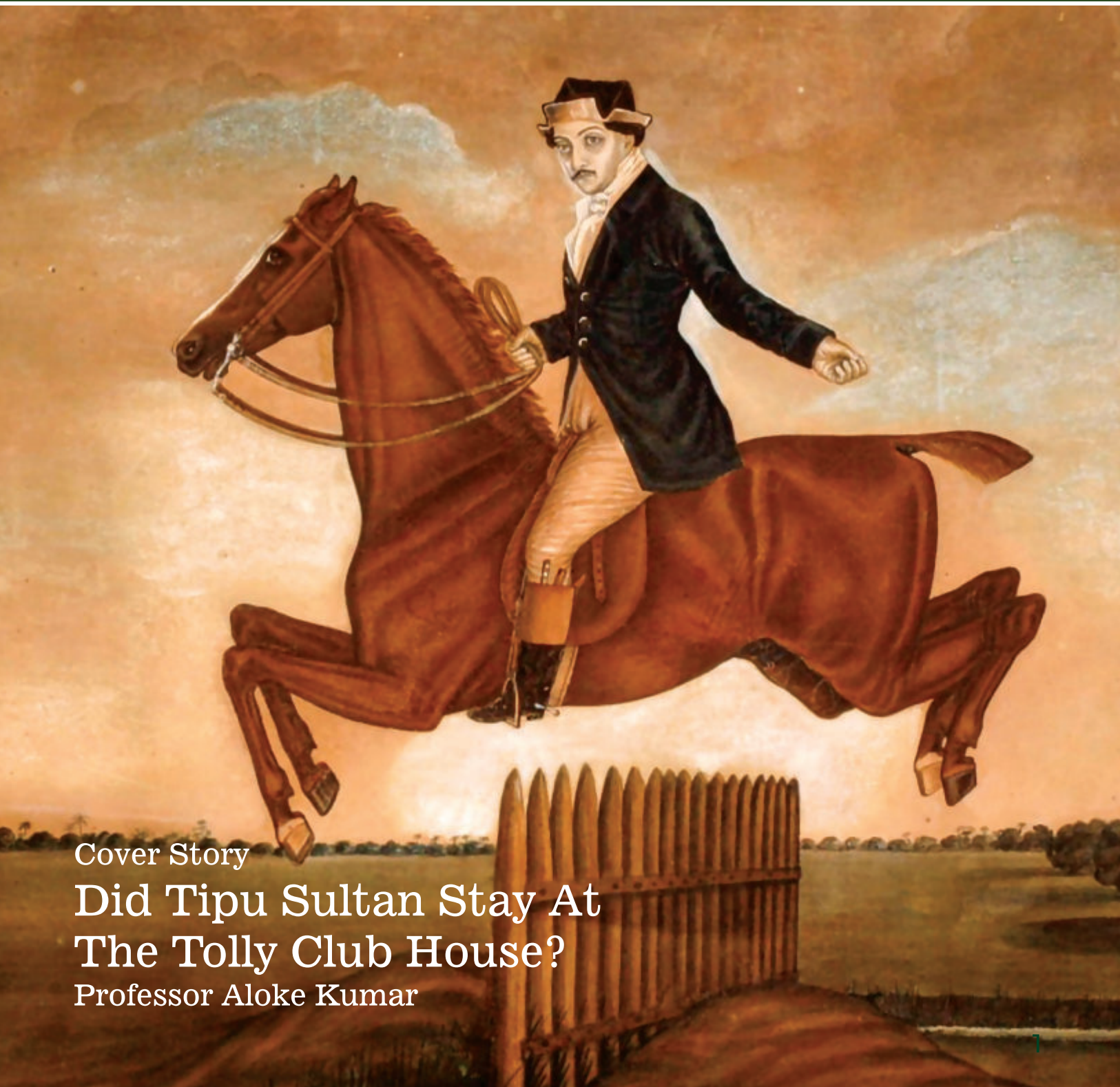


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TOLLY TATLER

THE TOLLYGUNGE CLUB NEWS AND FEATURES BULLETIN

SUMMER 2023



Cover Story

Did Tipu Sultan Stay At The Tolly Club House?

Professor Aloke Kumar

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CONTENTS



Foreword Chairman, Tolly: Brand & Sponsorships	5
Tolly Plaque	6
The Changing of the Guard	7
President Speak Captain Sanjiv Dhir	8
Did Tipu Sultan Stay at the Tolly Club House? Professor Aloke Kumar	9 - 12
Encounters of the Tolly kind! Vijay Jacob Parakkal	13 - 16
In love again at 73 and a half years Jayant Kripalani	17 - 18
Tolly Fest Hiteshwar Singh	19 - 26
One Day at the Pub Arijit Dasgupta	27

CONTENTS

The Hills are Alive Arun Muthukumaran	28
Facing Life's Realities Positively Avinash Sahai	29 - 30
Live from Liverpool! Tarika Seth	31 - 32
My Tollyana Sojourn Saswati Mukherji	33
Rethinking Urban Mobility: Through the tram route Samudra Mukherji	34
Legal Eagalese Ananya Bose	35
Tolly Tattle with Anil R Mukerji	36 - 37
Tolly Events: Tolly's Football Footfalls! Dev Basu	38 - 50
Tolly Trivia	51

FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of the Tolly Tatler on the behalf of the team. We hope that you will enjoy reading it and find it informative and engaging.

As we continue to navigate through these interesting times, we are reminded of the importance of community and staying connected. The Tollygunge Club has always been a place where we come together to relax, socialize, and enjoy various activities. This edition of Tolly Tatler is a reflection of this vibrant Tolly spirit and provides a platform for us to share news, views, and stories that are relevant to our members.

We have highlighted some of the recent events that have taken place at the Club, such as the second edition of the action packed Tolly Fest, the memorable Christmas and NYE celebrations, our former CEO Anil Mukerji's farewell etc, to name a few. We understand that our members have diverse interests and preferences, and therefore, we have included articles on a wide range of topics. Finally, my team and I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all our contributors, advertisers, and sponsors for their support and encouragement.

Best regards,

Vijay Jacob Parakkal

Chairman

Brand and Sponsorship Committee

Featured on right:

The Tatler Editorial Team



TOLLY GETS A HERITAGE PLAQUE

Tollygunge Club received a heritage plaque as a Grade 1 heritage structure early this year.

GM Kapur of Intach, Kolkata unveiled the plaque in the presence of the President, Captain Sanjiv Dhir and other club officials, past and present.



THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Joydeep Datta Gupta hands over the reins to Captain Sanjiv Dhir as President at the AGM on 24th September 2023.



PRESIDENT SPEAK

Captain Sanjiv Dhir



Sanjiv Dhir is a Master Mariner by profession who has been a diehard Tollyite ever since he joined the Club in 1986. He's a passionate sportsperson who can be seen at almost all the various sports arenas of the club at various times.

Tolly Tatler has documented in print and pictures the multifaceted events and developments in the club through the decades. Flipping through old editions is a nostalgic journey bringing back many happy memories for our members.

The Tatler has had many avatars from a simple four page "Newsletter" to emerge as a Quarterly covering a range of events with excellent photographs, well written articles and immaculate printing. I would like to thank our Brands and Communications Committee for their dedication and commitment to producing an excellent journal Maintaining the high standards that were set by their predecessors.

The Tatler keeping members sentiment in mind is now being made available on both the hard copy and digital versions. This will lead to a wider range

of coverage and cost optimization which is the need of the hour.

This is the Second Edition of the Tatler after a gap of two years due to the pandemic. A wide range of club activities have been covered. The pace of activities post Covid was hectic with enthusiastic participations.

The Tolly Fest was a defining moment so well captured in the Tatler. From its inception last year, the fest reached new heights in the record number of participants. Lessons were well learnt from the previous year by the organisers and a complex and intricate event was immaculately conducted. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organising team for an outstanding job and they have set the bar high for next year.

This had been a "year of catch up" when all developments came to a halt for the two pandemic years. Pending infrastructural improvements were implemented at a hectic pace. Renovation and repairs were carried out with what seemed impossible targets to meet.

I would take this opportunity to congratulate the sub committees and club management for their commitment and innovation to meet these targets.

The Tatler is an example of that commitment.

DID TIPU SULTAN STAY AT THE TOLLY CLUBHOUSE?

Professor Alope Kumar



Prof. Alope Kumar is an accomplished communications professor, author, editor, cultural critic and essayist. An eclectic thinker, combining elements of Indian idealism, Romanticism and Indian Mythology. Kumar has made enduring and influential contributions to communication, aesthetic theory, literary criticism and historical narrative.



The Tollygunge Clubhouse - Did Tipu Sultan stay here?

Most members, tell their friends and guests that Tipu Sultan stayed at the Tolly premise and Tolly Club House was his home. The popular myth is further talked about these days with the placement of the INTACH Heritage Plaque at the Club House. The fact is that Tipu Sultan never came to Kolkata. It is his son Prince Ghulam Mohammad along with members of his family that stayed here.

Tipu Sultan, the 'Tiger of Mysore', born Fateh Ali Sahab Tipu in 1750 at a place now part of Bengaluru, was never in Kolkata. Tipu Sultan, was the powerful ruler in South India, when the British themselves were taking over India in their empire-building frenzy. He was a formidable opponent to their imperialistic ambitions.

In 1792, his opponents advanced on all fronts, with the main British force under Cornwallis. The allied army was well-supplied, and Tipu was unable to prevent the junction of forces from Bengaluru and Mumbai before Srirangapatnam. After about two weeks of siege, Tipu opened negotiations for terms of surrender. In the ensuing treaty, he was forced to cede half his territories to the allies and deliver two of his sons as hostages, until he paid in full three crores and thirty lakhs rupees fixed as war indemnity to the British for the campaign against him.



Tipu Sultan, the 'Tiger of Mysore' - a hand-coloured engraving



Prince Ghulam Mohammad Anwar Shah (1795-1872)

He paid the amount in two installments and got back his sons from Vellore. Tipu Sultan was killed at the Hoally (Diddy) Gateway. He died on the battle field in 1799.

Prince Ghulam Mohammad Anwar Shah (1795-1872), Tipu's fourteenth son was only four years old when his father was killed. The East India Company initially sent him and his siblings to live in the city of Vellore but transferred them to Kolkata after the Vellore Mutiny of 1806 with the entire family and entourage of about 300 people literally being shipped off to Kolkata.

The family was settled in hutments on marshy tracts of land in Russapugla, the area which now houses the Tolly Club and Royal Calcutta Golf Club. Russapugla, a densely forested area abounding in Sundari, Byne and Garjan trees which even today make up the bulk of the Sunderbans, the estuary of the river Ganges.

The name Russapugla stems from a unique tree which gave shade to Pugla Pir (the Sufi saint with remarkable powers) who meditated and died in the neighbourhood.

Initially living in penurious conditions their fortune changed. Gilbert Elliot, the First Earl of Minto who succeeded Lord Wellesley, assumed the Governor Generalship of the East India Company's territories in India in 1807 and arrived at Calcutta in the same year. One of the first duties was to settle some administrative issues. Among these were the settlement of the Mysore Privy Purse and scale of allowance. Ghulam Mohammed Shah was enterprising. He scrounged and saved the amount he received from the British and built up his finances judiciously, later acquiring the lands they were settled in and around the surrounding Tollygunge area, not yet known as Tollygunge. Tollygunge got its name from Colonel William Tolly, who dredged the Gobindapur Creek in 1773 and reconnected



Russapugla later named Tollygunge - Painting by Edward Lear

with the Matla and Bidyadhari rivers. He was also permitted to levy a tax on ships plying to and from and built a market there, a 'gunge'. The area was thereafter known as Tollygunge.

In due course, Prince Ghulam became the owner of almost all the land. According to available documents, in 1781 Richard Johnson, an employee of the East India Company, started an indigo plantation in the area. In the course of time, Prince Ghulam Mohammed purchased the property and at first lived in the outhouse of the Johnson Estate. Prince Ghulam Mohammed made the sprawling green into Royal Park and remodelled the house of Johnsons as his Garden House in the Palladian style. Prince Ghulam Muhammad was the last surviving son of Tipu Sultan and he lived from 1795-1872.

Queen Victoria recorded her first meeting with Ghulam Muhammad at Buckingham Palace on 28th April 1854 in her journal:

"Prince Ghulam & his son were presented at the Drawing room. He is the last surviving son of the Tipu Sahib, & a fine, kind, modest man, who bears the highest character & always lives at Calcutta as a private gentleman, although treated by the Governors General with the greatest distinction, as a Prince, the son of a powerful & gallant fellow enemy [...] He speaks English perfectly & expressed himself again & again as so happy to see me, it having been his greatest wish, — saying

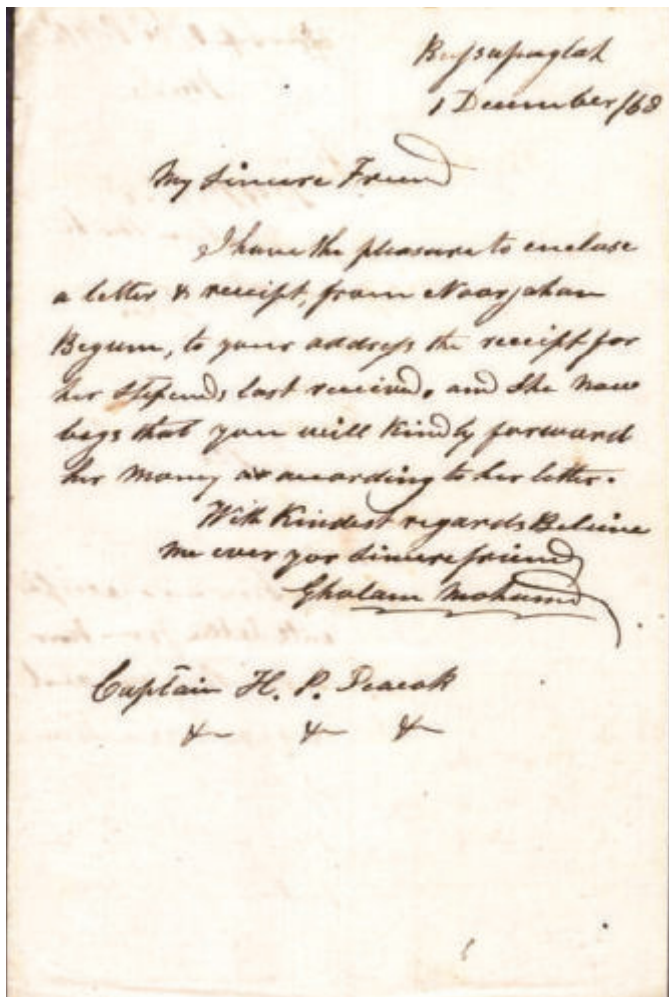
all this with the graceful phraseology of the East [...] As usual with all natives of the East, they were full of self possessiveness & had perfect manners. — The good man touched me, for I could not but think of his poor Father, & what he might have been, instead of now only being a Pensioner!"

In 1895, after the family's fortunes changed, they sold some portions of the plantation and leased out other sections to William Dixon Cruickshank, a Scottish banker, who was looking to build a sports club for the British that would also allow residential facilities and provide space for the British to socialise. Cruickshank partially leased and partially bought some of the property surrounding the 18th century Palladian garden house once used by its owner Prince Ghulam Mohammed Shah. Over time, Tipu Sultan's family divested complete control of the estate and the lands around 100 acres came under the direct control of the Tollygunge Club, and the Garden House became the present Clubhouse of Tolly Club, which is over 220 years old.

The club that Cruickshank built got its name from the neighbourhood it was located in. Over the decades, most of the open spaces in the club were converted into an 18-hole golf course and the forest land was cleared to make space for other structures and facilities inside the club premises.



The house of the Johnsons



Letter written in English and signed by Prince Ghulam Muhammad, 1868

The first hole of the golf course at Tollygunge Club is named after Tipu Sultan and for someone who never even set foot in this city, leave aside setting his foot on Tolly premise, his legacy here is quite something to wonder at. The myth of Tipu Sultan residing at the Tolly premise may have been perpetuated by Prince Ghulam Mohammed Shah himself.

Having built the famous Tipu Sultan Shahi Masjid located at the junction of Dharmatala Street and Chowringhee, in honour of his father, in 1832 and a decade later building the twin of that mosque in Tollygunge at the start of Prince Anwar Shah Road, the name of Tipu Sultan got etched with the city.



Tipu Sultan Shahi Masjid, Dharmatala

Tipu Sultan was many things to many people. He was probably what many monarchs were at that time, benevolent and violent, fighting valiant battles to retain his lands and his people, harsh and despotic, heroic and innovative, patriotic and tyrannical and a whole lot more.

Tipu Sultan will be a significant character in the history of our club as his name comes up over and over again.



ENCOUNTERS OF THE TOLLY KIND!

Vijay Jacob Parakkal



Vijay Jacob Parakkal is a Senior Vice President and Managing Partner at Wunderman Thompson. He is the Chairman of the Tolly Brand and Sponsorship committee. Passionate about Advertising and Golf.



*A thrilling comeback for three ladies to Tolly after 50 years
Left to Right : Michelle, Phil & Fiona*

After a very hotly fought round of golf, my daughter Ananya and I were filling our scorecard and discussing our game in the Shamiana. Fiona and her group were sitting on the next table. Fiona came across and we started talking. She had a very interesting story to tell.

In March, three old members returned to the Tolly after 50 years. Fiona Gill, daughter of Jacqui and David Nicoll, who was 11 years when she left Kolkata for England, came with her husband Graham and daughter Emma. Also in the party were Philipine van Liere (Phil) and her sister Michelle from the Netherlands. Phil was 14 when she left in 1973 and Michelle was 12 years.

VJ: How does it feel to be back at Tolly Club after 50 years?

It was totally amazing, and we still can't quite believe that it was possible! Tolly is such an important place to us that we wouldn't have come back to Kolkata if we had not been able to visit it. Phil said "It was such a delight to come back to Tolly. It has made our holiday such a success and we are so grateful to those who have made it possible to stay in my favourite place." We were so sad 50 years ago when our parents told us that we had to leave Kolkata, and we have absolutely loved the opportunity to relive old memories.

It's amazing what a difference a few years make. Phil was old enough and big enough to begin



Phil has just won a race and there is Michelle and Fiona beside her, and Bob Wright patting the horse

riding at 13, and she was champion jockey twice. The newspaper reported 'Miss P V' an Liere with a perfectly balanced seat which aids her into a faultless rhythm displayed an acumen for judgement of pace steering lesser-fancied Fey



Phil beating Jacqui Nicoll by a whisker

Son (4 to 1) to a thrilling finish. Miss P Van Liere rode a very clever race, riding her challenge with a perfectly timed dash. The frail-looking Dutch girl had Fey Son lengthening his stride after the distance post to pip tiring Stock in a photo finish.' Phil remembers early morning training at Tolly: "During the season, I would be at Tolly by 5:00 every morning to ride the horses I was racing. We had to finish by 6:00 before the golfers started.



Fiona jumping

Then there was just enough time for a quick swim before being picked up in time for school!"

Michelle and Fiona's experience was different. We were too young to race and also too small - Fiona was only 22 kilos at 10 years old - but we were spectators and passionate horse enthusiasts at the races.

We knew all the horses, and we were as much a part of it as we could be. Michelle's mum raced as did Fiona's father, but it was Fiona's mother Jacqui who was champion jockey 5 times. Fiona remembers her winning the Governor's Cup on Neelofer in 1971 and the Governor, Anthony Dias, presented her with it.

Jacqui loved her time at Tolly, and Fiona has kept a large suitcase full of her race books, paper cuttings and photos. Fiona and Michelle also remember riding at Tolly. Sometimes the ponies were brought there to ride early on Sunday mornings. Only a few top pony riders had the



Governor's cup prize giving with Bob Wright, Anthony Dias and Jacqui Nicoll

opportunity to do this, but it was so much more exciting than just riding around the ring at the Ballygunge Riding Club. On many occasions, Fiona's parents would come early to ride on a Sunday, and Fiona would tag along with her hat in the car in the hope that Bob Wright would offer her a horse to ride. "One of my favourites was Marco who was a polo horse who won quite a number of races at Tolly.



Cyril Anthony with winner Michelle in 1973



Winner Michelle at a competition

He didn't seem to mind having such a small person riding him and I remember the exhilaration of taking him over the hurdles. Or maybe he took me." When Fiona spotted the large pond, it reminded her of the time she rode a horse into the pond and the horse decided to roll! She also remembers riding with the syce through the streets back to the stables. It was such a unique childhood with surprisingly few restrictions. As Fiona's daughter Emma pointed out during our stay, her childhood had been very different!

We were particularly pleased to meet Cyril Anthony who we remember as a teenager. It was so good to hear his stories at Tolly too.

Michelle reflected that Phil and Michelle's passion for horses started in India, and this continued when they returned to Holland.

"Although we were soon too big to race, we switched to eventing and show jumping,"

They still both run stables in Holland where they breed and train top show jumping horses. Fiona, Phil and Michelle all grew up to be strong, capable women successfully achieving in professions dominated by men, and it's highly probable that this wouldn't have happened without their time at the Tolly Club.



Jacqui Nicoll racing past the post, the clubhouse in the background

VJ: You are visiting us after 50 years. What is your impression about the club?

The club is fabulous now. Some things haven't changed, such as the old clubhouse, the tables under the trees and the indoor pool, and we enjoyed working out where the race track used to go, and the impact of the land sold for the Metro.

We may feel nostalgic that the racing stopped, but the reality is that Tolly has so much more to offer and it has been developed sensitively so that it remains an oasis from the busyness of life with a focus on sport and hospitality. For us

the highlights were of course the horses with the new focus on jumping, and we also loved the accommodation, the transformation of the old grandstands, the additional sitting spaces and the outdoor pool. Phil reflected: "Although I miss the race course a lot, it was fantastic to have my lovely room just after the finishing post above where we used to gallop our horses home." It can be difficult to return to somewhere you remember from so long ago, but it's been an absolute joy as the changes have added so much to the club, and it clearly is loved and continues to be developed by its members.

VJ: Will you come back again?

We would absolutely love to - and maybe Fiona and Michelle will bring their sons next time!



IN LOVE AGAIN

AT 73 AND A HALF YEARS

Jayant Kripalani



Jayant Kripalani is an acclaimed actor-director-writer who finds that laughing keeps him alive. And ever since joining the Club, golf has been doing its bit to keep him laughing.

Never in all these years that this writer has played cricket, and he was pretty good at it in his misbegotten youth, had he scored a century. 60s, 70s, the occasional ducks were expected of him and try as he could, he didn't exceed those expectations, more's the pity.

Sometime in February in the year of our lord 2023, for the first time in forty years, he stepped up to the plate as it were, looked around his surroundings, surveyed the field and set about correcting the record.

He got his long-awaited century.
'Never', said the poor friend masquerading as his

coach, 'have I ever seen a more elegant series of cover drives, square cuts, slices, and pulls that have gone over the boundaries with such amazing regularity. If this were cricket, you would have scored a hundred, even more.' So much for his first day at the Tolly Club driving range. Cut to, as they say in the movies, the next morning.

Many hot and cold showers, pain killers and muscle relaxants later, he staggers off to his physiotherapist, another old friend, who has little or no sympathy for him and who looks at him with a mild sneer, 'Did you have to take up Golf at your age?'

'I need help. Not a lecture' our hero says pleadingly. 'Well you seemed to have strained your upper and lower gluteus maximus.'

'What on earth is that?'

'Known in common parlance as your butt. You've been sitting on it for so long, it's bound to hurt after any activity. You haven't done much good to your biceps femoris either. Why don't you take up chess instead? He suggests with pity bordering on utter contempt. 'Oh don't be such a pompous killjoy! I'm heading straight to Tolly from here.'

'Don't come to me tomorrow when your vastus lateralis and the adductor magnus come into play.'

'All that is Greek to me. Just give me a pain killer and fast.'

'It's Latin actually. Here let me write a prescription. What's today's date?'
'February the 15th,' says our hero. He snatches the prescription off the table, limps into his car, tells his driver to head to Tolly and as he caresses

the No 7 iron with a strip of chamois leather, he smiles, secure in the knowledge that there will never be another Valentine's Day like the 14th of February 2023.





TOLLY FEST

2023

Hiteshwar Singh



Hiteshwar Singh is an entrepreneur, photographer and a wildlife conservationist, apart from being a Tolly enthusiast. He is passionate about racquet sport-being co-chair of the Racquets Committee, a Badminton Captain and a Tolly tennis team member for over 20 years.

Tolly boasts an impressive lineage in sports, with a legacy of wholesome competition. During my 25-year tenure of representing the Club across various disciplines, I have personally witnessed our members' proficiency and competitive spirit surge to life. Our Club's fifteen-year-long dominance in sports such as tennis and squash, coupled with our unwavering position in the top 4 in snooker, bridge, badminton, table tennis, swimming, darts, poker, and cricket, is a source of great pride. Mr. Joydeep Dutta Gupta, our esteemed ex-president, demonstrated tremendous vision and foresight by resurrecting the long-forgotten festival of sport from Tolly's archives and christening it the Tolly Fest. Following the resounding success of the inaugural edition, which drew an impressive 500+ entries, the core committee faced the daunting challenge of raising the bar for the event's second iteration while ensuring greater inclusivity. The Fest Committee finally arrived at the mandate and framework for the Fest's sophomore edition through numerous brainstorming and exhaustive deliberations with the respective Chairpersons.

Their bold decision to expand the total number of disciplines to a staggering 17, which included the introduction of chess and cricket, coupled with the option for members to compete in multiple events, amplified the complexities of this Herculean task. Despite the formidable challenges, the Club's unrelenting commitment to inclusion was evident in their decision to extend the entry deadline thrice to accommodate the overwhelming response from members, eventually culminating in a recordbreaking 865 entries. The Christmas and New Year period witnessed several keenly contested qualifiers, ultimately limiting the field of qualified participants to just under 600. Last year's random allotment system underwent a significant overhaul, with the introduction of a highly competitive drafting process featuring Captains and Icons for each team and discipline, respectively. This novel approach enabled teams to strategize and assemble a well-rounded and highly competitive roster. The sight of Captains and Vice Captains huddled around laptops and phones, meticulously plotting their drafting strategies, set the stage for an intensely competitive edition. The excitement and thrill of the drafting process proved to be a unique experience for Tolly. The Club's IT department's tireless efforts bore fruit in the



seamless digitization of the team allotment process, ensuring a hassle-free and streamlined experience for all involved. As the last week of January dawned, teams feverishly scrambled to form WhatsApp groups, forge bonds, and practice as a cohesive unit. The Opening Night, headlined by the renowned band Indian Ocean, proved to be a mesmerizing affair, with newly-inducted teammates bonding over their first drinks and joining in unison with the President's rallying cry of "Let the games begin." As February 5th dawned, the mood became markedly serious, with Table Tennis kicking off proceedings on Saturday morning. With the assistance of Gaurav Pundir and his skilled grounds team, a cricket pitch spanning twenty yards was meticulously laid out on the driving range, marking the



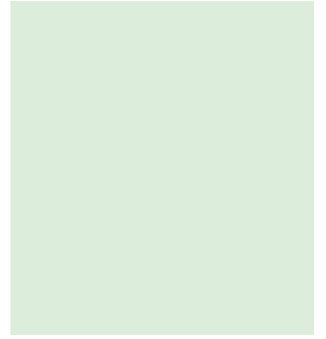
Club's first-ever formal foray into the sport. The atmosphere within the Club during the ten day fest was nothing short of electric, featuring unforgettable moments such as an injured CP smashing a boundary to seal a nail-biting cricket match, euphoric penalty shootouts on the tennis court, several events going down to the wire in tie-breakers, and a plethora of upsets. Undoubtedly, the most captivating aspect of the festival was the fervent cheering and conviviality that permeated the atmosphere among teammates. It was truly awe-inspiring to witness youngsters cajoling and urging their parents to accompany them to the Club to cheer for their teams, even in events they were not personally participating in. The festival effectively accomplished its primary objective of fostering a sense of togetherness among club members while simultaneously celebrating the virtues of sportsmanship and camaraderie that define the Tolly spirit and set this Club apart. The concluding evening featured a medley of captivating elements, including a highlights video that offered a nostalgic summary of the week, a



spirited prize distribution ceremony, some Oscars-worthy speeches, and an elated victory lap taken by the triumphant team, culminating in a festive celebration. Last year's champions, the Gravel Giants, displayed remarkable synergy, dominating the competition across various events, such as chess, golf, music, poker, quiz, and tennis, leaving their rivals in the dust and clinching the coveted Champions Trophy by a substantial margin. The Tolly Fest has been the most significant bonding event in the Club's illustrious history. Kudos to the President, the Fest Committee, the outgoing and incoming CEOs, the Protouch team, and the entire staff of Tolly, who worked tirelessly to make Kolkata's biggest Club sporting event a success. As we draw the curtains on this magnificent celebration of sport, let us acknowledge that the actual triumph does not merely lie in the trophies earned but also in the camaraderie cultivated, the reminiscences crafted, and the ethos of sportsmanship that permeates every facet of what the Tollygunge Club signifies. I am proud to have been a part of the organizing committee for both iterations of this grand event and look forward to Tolly Fest 2024 with unbridled enthusiasm.



Cricket | Billiards



#TollyFest2023

Squash | Swimming



Tennis | Table Tennis



#TollyFest2023



Fitness | Poker | Bridge | Scrabble



#TollyFest2023

Darts | Singing | Dancing



ONE DAY AT THE PUB

Arijit Dasgupta



Arijit Das Gupta is a tea taster and auctioneer by profession. An avid reader, a high handicap golf enthusiast, his other passions include rum, cognac and mangoes, not necessarily in that order. The poem chosen here is from a collection of a dozen written over a decade ago in Guwahati. The author has never before, or since, attempted to write poetry again.

Was sitting in a smoke-filled pub close to the shore
 When I spied old man God walk in through the door
 I said 'Hey Almighty when are we getting peace and tranquility?'
 And he said, 'Just call me omnipotent, there is no formality.'

The Lord pulled up a chair and ordered two pink gins
 And said, 'It's a tough job delivering folks from their sins
 You wouldn't believe the kind of day that it's been'
 And I said, 'Go ahead old man, let's have you spill the beans.'

The Lord looked tired and was suffering from great stress
 I said, 'What you need is some tender loving caress.'
 He seemed tempted and for a while it was on the line
 He knocked off his gins and asked for some wine

Now this bar had a waitress her name was Salma Dean
 And she does get around if you know what I mean
 And I saw the Lord look at her from the corner of his eye
 And he smoothed his hair and adjusted the bow tie

With a crashing sound of thunder in walked the devil
 He was wearing a t-shirt which said, 'it's fun to be evil'
 He walked up to Salma and offered to buy her a beer
 And shortly afterwards we saw them exit from the rear

The Lord looked somber and announced lust is a sin
 Its underhand, immoral, unethical and even mean
 I said, 'People in glass houses ought not to cast the first stone.'
 The Lord said, 'He didn't like cheeky men, and to mind my tone.'

After that we didn't have much conversation to make
 Attitude like that could get one nailed to the stake
 We parted ways soon as we did not want to cause a scene
 The lord went his way while I went looking for Salma Dean

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

Arun Muthukumaran



Arun Muthukumaran is a writer, photographer, and a spiritual wanderer. He was a tech executive in California for 20 years before returning home to India in 2019. In his upcoming memoir, Inward, he reflects on life's big (and small) questions, discovering answers in unassuming slices of life.



The sun is about to set. A thick mountain fog swallows Cheena Peak, the tallest in the region. The mist then moves westward, thinning along the way to reveal a valley recently greened by the monsoons. I stand on a balcony, shaped like the bow of the Titanic. To my left are trees whose trunks I can't see. To my right, a few cottages that once belonged to the British. And to my far right, on the valley floor, is the Nainital lake.

A Great Barbet, with its blue head and yellow bill, settles on a branch. The fog returns and a gentle rain moves with the wind. Languors appear bothered. At first, they grunt. As the rain gains strength, however, their soft grunts turn into raspy snorts. A familiar family, a father, a mother, a baby, and perhaps a close aunt, convene on a nearby tree. They seem content, though the aunt looks lost.

Behind the rustling leaves of the oak tree that partially obstructs my view, is a Favela on the opposite hill. Crudely constructed homes painted in bold colors, stacked one over another, twinkle through the fog. Distant stars, specks in the night sky, wink. An earthy scent is in the air. With every breath I take in, I feel like I'm born again. What brings me to the hills, I ask myself. It was perhaps an escape from my urban life: the perpetual ringing of the doorbell, overdue social visits, and a rigid clock. Over here in the hills, I wake up when the sun rises, not when my alarm goes off. I eat when I'm hungry, not when it's lunch hour. I sleep when I'm tired, not when it's late.

Over here in the hills, I don't follow. I flow. The rain eases. The weather clears. The hill town sleeps.

FACING LIFE'S REALITIES POSITIVELY

Avinash Sahai



Avinash Sahai, a Tolly member for 28 years, is a Gold Medallist engineer, who had the Big B as his schoolmate in Allahabad; was GM at LT and worked for Swedish and Finnish conglomerates for aeons. He's a popular stand-up comedian these days and his article reflects his 80 years of gravitas.

We all travel through our own unique path. As we move forward we keep on adding experiences about life. Mostly we tend to stay and work in our own self made comfort zone. However, for many of us, life's journey is not always smooth. Our life oscillates between extreme suffering at the one end and blissful moments at the other end. Life is never presented to us in perfect conditions.

Every one of us has to strive and struggle

to achieve what we desire in life. In modern times competition is severe but so are the opportunities, which are presented to us. We have to be mindfully conscious and aware about things of that our happening around us. From each of these experiences we perceive and draw some truths. The world often appears meaningless, devoid of any purpose, so we need to create our own meaning of life

Some of the philosophers have argued that the universe is a terrifying place, full of sufferings, tragedies, horrific pain, violence and above all devoid of any meaning. However, some say that the universe is full of joy, happiness, beauty, goodness and meaningful purpose behind our existence.

In earlier times, people believed that there was some Supreme Being watching over us and if we did good deeds we would go to heaven. So, there was a great meaning to our existence.

For more than 2000 years, God gave the meaningful purpose to all of us, to undertake life's journey. We were also fearful of the Supreme Power guiding humanity.

However, people gradually believed that due to progress in science and reason, that there is no proven basis behind the popular ideas like



*Light in Darkness | Artist Suniti Khastgir
When we have darkness within, we miss the light around us
Acrylic on Canvas 30" x 30"*

heaven after life. But as architects of our own destiny we can create our own meaning of life. We human beings are highly vulnerable beings, living in uncertain times. Despite our best efforts, life can take unexpected turns. Life becomes hostile and ruthless all of a sudden giving us no time to prepare for such times.

So I say that change is the only constant of our life. No one could have thought of the pandemic unexpectedly transforming the world as a whole. Humanity had never seen such a massive change in recent past. Similarly, at an individual level, the change can be of any magnitude having a potential to transform our life.

Each one of us must have experienced that if we are humble, God fearing, and receptive we can overcome any change in life. It is ultimately our behaviour towards other fellow beings which really helps us during troubled times. We must respect others irrespective of their social and economic status and avoid ego coming in between relationships. We are modern humans but ill equipped to

handle modern day problems. Though our brains are far 'brainier' and more efficient than the best supercomputer ever made, they are ill suited for handling the stress, anxiety, loneliness and depression of modern times.

Not only are we alienating ourselves from Mother Nature, but also getting disconnected from our Inner Self.

In this highly materialistic world, everyone is struggling to be successful which means more wealth and material goods, higher status and prestige. Our mind is in a state of perpetual dissatisfaction and restlessness, a desire-generating machine. When one desire is fulfilled a bigger one arises. We also getting attached to the outcome of our desire.

We are all destined to die one day but we live, as if we are immortal. It never struck us during those times that we will one day leave all these material goods for others. So, why not do those things now that make us happy and satisfied. We must start seeing aging as a journey of transition.

I end with a note on a book by Todd Henry's titled Die Empty where he has motivated people to pour out their ideas and potential energies in their communities and turn them into something useful. The true meaning of this expression, to die empty, is to share all the goodness that is within you and deliver it to this world before you leave.

If you have an idea, perform it. If you have knowledge give it out. If, you have a goal achieve it. Love, share and distribute, do not keep it inside. Stop judging others and holding unnecessary grudges inside.

Shall we begin to give and spread every atom of goodness inside us, and start the race now?

LIVE FROM LIVERPOOL!

Tarika Seth



Tarika Seth is passionate about education and has almost 8 years of work experience in the industry. She is a huge fan of Liverpool Football Club. She enjoys theatre, anime, painting and baking up a storm for friends and family and has stray dogs at every corner of the city that she calls friends.

As I was about to send my piece for Tolly Tatler recalling our wonderful experience of Anfield, came the amazing news of Liverpool routing Manchester United by seven goals to nil. So it is only appropriate that I recall our very own experience of watching Liverpool at its very best.

Growing up in a family of sports enthusiasts' where the sounds of cheers and sports commentary reverberated through our senses, all that was left was for Anfield to experience the

Seth Family ardour and passion for Liverpool all together. It was to be the first time for us as a family and the match was taking place on the eve of the Hillsborough Disaster anniversary, a tragedy where 96 fans had lost their lives during a football match. The game was an extremely critical one, where a win would secure Liverpool at the top of the league.

The morning of the match, each of us was well outfitted in all our favourite Liverpool merchandise. Nainika was ready with her favourite eating hotspots and more. Even our taxi driver Steve had been a season ticket holder at Liverpool for 32 years and shared stories of Liverpool greats through the journey to the stadium.

The streets approaching the stadium were filled with a sea of red Liverpool shirts, and people selling match day tickets and pins. We watched the players bus come in amidst endless songs and chants and the flares of cheering red smoke will be memories that we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

The air was filled with history, passion, and anticipation to win this cracking game between two giants - Liverpool and Chelsea.

The first stop of the day was the official Liverpool store, which for us was sheer Liverpool heaven - a store dedicated to just Liverpool thing - from bedsheets to water bottles to pens. We bought

lots of Liverpool souvenirs, and then to the oldest pub in Anfield road for a traditional beer with many young artists singing Liverpool chants and songs, ending up in one of the oldest pubs to get a scouse pie, a traditional pre-match Liverpool delicacy.

Before the game we walked around the entire stadium, seeing all the different great players whose murals and pictures had been put up next to the Bill Shankly Statue and the famous Liverpool gates. We even walked by to see the stones at the stadium that Liverpool families had bought and had their names engraved on them. Sadly the waiting line for that was about 7 years and we couldn't possibly have "Seths" engraved onto the stadium flooring. Before we walked into the Stadium we paid our tribute to the Hillsborough memorial.

Walking up the stairs, and into the gates of the stadium we could all barely control the excitement. Experiencing Anfield – the home of the Mighty Redmen of Liverpool FC was an unreal magical atmosphere. At Liverpool, we pride ourselves on having a 12th man in a football match of 11 players - the 12th being the die-hard fans.

A pre-game ritual at Anfield is when 50000 fans come together to sing the anthem: "You'll Never Walk Alone". We had experienced it in the comfort of beanbags at home, but being there as part of the 50000 Liverpool family gave us real goose bumps. As an 8-year-old girl, I knew that the Reds played at Anfield and the experience was said to be great, but being together for a game at the club we loved so much made every bit of this day sweeter for us. Dad had always wanted us to experience Anfield with all our senses, which sticks with me till date.

The game started with a silent ahead of kick-off as Liverpool remembered the 96 victims of the Hillsborough 30 years on from the disaster. To see the game unfolding on the pitch was an electric

experience. As brilliant as Liverpool is to watch on TV, it does not do justice to the spectacle they are in person. From the very get-go, the players regained control of their emotions and gave it their all to seal a sensational victory.

We watched in awe, those players we have worshipped and idolised for years. In the first half, we had many chances, but it was the second half that started with a bang, where only 5 minutes later, Mane's close-range header gave us the lead. Our captain, Henderson, clipped the ball towards the back post and Mane converted the goal only from a few yards out to give us the goal they craved. But we were not ready for Mohamed Salah's perfect long range unstoppable curler, which was sure to be a goal-of-the-season contender, and created absolute pandemonium in the stadium again. The Liverpool players celebrated and roared back to the top of the Premier League at a jubilant Anfield. The final whistle was filled with unbelievable joy and happiness - ending with Juergen Klopp's famous fist bumps!

With gleaming smiles and happiness in our hearts, we all walked out of the stadium after the match. Nobody in and around could really fathom how good Salah's goal was and winning the league was actually a dream come true. Our visit to Anfield was a culmination of our love for football as a family - a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



MY TOLLYANA

SOJOURN

Saswati Mukherji



Saswati (Binka) A Masters in English Literature, primarily a Modern High, Loreto and Calcutta University Girl. The classroom and the world of animals have always been her adrenaline rush and passion. She has been writing from childhood and enjoys the sound and play of words. Her connect with students and nature are intrinsic to her nature.

The Tolly I, fourteen years ago, gave my heart to,
 Gleams where hues of the earth merge with the blue.
 A lustrous gem in the midst of the hurly burly,
 Where smiles sparkle, no occasion to be surly.
 Where woodland paths tell stories of dogs, jackals and
 horses, whose very spirit through Tolly veins courses.
 Flower laden boughs bend down to smile,
 As one walks around, mile on mile.
 Softly rustling leaves comfort with the promise of a
 better day, When I listen quietly, they have so much to say.
 The whispering wind across the greens,
 Creates shimmering showers and swirling scenes.
 Colours that run riot and wild,
 Appeal to man, woman and child.
 My Tollyana sojourn of years fourteen,
 Taught me to care for all creatures seen and unseen.
 My heart I gave to countless devoted paws,
 And to winged beings with feathers and claws.
 I watched them grow in love and trust,
 And knew that animals in my life are a must.
 They have no greed or any malice,
 They drink from loyalty's very own chalice.
 My daily prayer round where I would care,
 For them, and in their joy of the moment share.
 Much have I been humbled and I have learned,
 To cherish this magic, for so long I yearned.
 The time is now nigh for me to part,
 And to walk steadily towards a brand new start.
 Every message from these beings,
 I carry with me, in thanksgiving I go down on bended knee.

RETHINKING

URBAN MOBILITY: THROUGH THE TRAM ROUTE

Samudra Mukherji



Samudra Mukherji is a management consultant with 11+ years of experience across technology and business strategy domains. An electronics engineer and management post graduate by education. He is married to Narayani Mookerjee and they pursue interests like sports, reading, movies etc.

Our city of joy - Kolkata and associated metropolitan areas including satellite city Howrah, adjoining districts - North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas have fewer vehicles and manufacturing industries compared to the national capital region (NCR). Despite this, Kolkata has high pollution levels when compared to peer cities. This may be attributed to a number of factors. Critical among these are: an aging fleet of polluting buses which adhere to older pollution norms and are poorly maintained; There is an extensive use of kerosene mixed fuel

by auto rickshaw drivers across the city from North Kolkata Salt Lake to South Kolkata and beyond. Furthermore, the city is home to ancient Hindustan Motors Ambassador taxi cabs which are embedded in the collective consciousness of the city but are often deeply polluting and add to the woes of our lungs.

A prospective ameliorative factor for our pollution woes may be taken from Calcutta's history pages – the humble tram. Trams have similar capacities to buses and emit no pollution at the point of use. In an era where business leaders are busy copy pasting “sustainability” in their speeches it would be prudent to revive this time-tested mode of transportation which offers last mile connectivity, faster accessibility, is cheaper than subways and offers tourism potential.

Production of electricity - at a central thermal plant is typically at a remote location and does cause pollution, but it must be noted that such plants are distant from main human habitats. Furthermore, power plants are 24x7 operational and the addition of a tram circuit should have a marginal impact. Properly integrated into the city, trams can indeed look beautiful. An adjoining image created through artificial intelligence shows a harmonious coexistence of trams within a modern green city.

LEGAL EAGALESE

Ananya Bose



Ananya Bose is a third year student who aims at providing free legal aid and is also a member of pro bono club at her college in Raipur. She is a motivated and hardworking individual trying to make a difference.

Law students are a unique breed. They're like a hybrid of Hermione Granger and Chandler Bing, with a dash of Harvey Specter thrown in for good measure. As someone who has spent a fair amount of time with law students, let me tell you, they're a hilarious bunch.

First of all, there's the jargon. Law students love to use big words and legal terminology, even when it's not necessary. I once heard a law student order a coffee and ask for "amicus curiae," which apparently means "friend of the court." I mean, come on, just ask for some cream and sugar like a normal person.

And then there's the fashion. Law students love to dress up in their suits and ties, even when they're

just going to the library to study. It's like they're trying to prove to the world that they're serious, sophisticated individuals who mean business. But let's be honest, we all know they secretly love the feeling of power that comes with wearing a suit.

But what really makes law students funny is their obsession with the law. They can't get enough of it. They read cases for fun, they debate legal theories in their spare time, and they dream about one day arguing before the Supreme Court. It's like they've all been bitten by a radioactive lawyer and now they can't stop talking about contracts and torts.

And let's not forget about their love for argument. Law students will argue about anything and everything, even if they don't really care about the topic. They'll argue about whether pineapple belongs on pizza (spoiler alert: it does), whether aliens exist (spoiler alert: they probably do), and whether Taylor Swift is a good role model (spoiler alert: she definitely is).

In conclusion, law students are a funny bunch. They love big words, fancy suits, the law, and arguing. But hey, at least they're never boring. So here's to all the law students out there - keep being your quirky, hilarious selves. The world needs more people like you.

TOLLY TATTLE WITH ANIL R MUKERJI

Reminiscences with Editorial team of the Tolly Tatler and looks back on his incredible journey.



Your feelings thoughts when you made the transition from being a Tolly member to MM & CEO of Tolly.

My corporate career had come to a sudden and unexpected end with the company selling out, so my coming to Tolly was circumstantial, However, it ended being wonderful. I was quite familiar - with Tolly, having served on several committees prior to my joining it. When you looked at life from the other end, I realised how challenging the task had been for my predecessors.

Your most memorable moments at the helm of Tolly. Some marquee events that you were part of?

I never did anything on my own; I was always a part of a larger team. Being a part of the team that restored the beautiful Clubhouse was probably the most satisfying for me. The Club House is grouted in tradition, proud of her ethos, and if anything

is to last forever it will probably be this iconic building. It typifies what Tolly is all about.

I also think that being a part of the team that did the water recycling and resourcing is close to all our hearts, because the ecological preservation of Tolly – and, indeed, the planet we inhabit – is of utmost importance. And here, we are moving in the right direction. Perhaps, we will eventually become carbon negative! We have certainly taken the first step.

Two more incidents are worthy of sharing. The spirit and ethos of Tolly was seen when we had a huge fire on Christmas Day several years ago, the men's changing room and swimming pool were ablaze. Fire engines came into play as the Christmas lunch was on. The staff was absolutely exemplary. I went into the changing room trying to get them out. They refused and went ahead to remove every single article that members had left. They soldiered on bravely through the blaze and not a single member had lost even a rupee.

The second was when Amphan happened. We got hit by the huge storm, lost 73 trees, the walls had broken down, we were under lockdown and the staff came out to man and put their heart and soul into clearing the club. In three days though the club was closed under those COVID circumstances, they worked shoulder to shoulder and being with them was an uplifting moment for me, which I will never ever forget. I feel privileged to have been part of that team.

As for Live at Pantiles, the idea took shape through my discussions with Aniruddha Lahiri, then President. Our conversations morphed into converting the sleepy siding into an outdoor area where we could have music-a hangout place for people to enjoy the mild winters of Tolly with bands performing. As you know, Live at Pantiles is now a marquee event.

Moving to the sporting field, I would like to focus on the Tollython. It is actually under the swimming committee but really represents the sporting spirit of Tolly because all age groups participated in running, swimming and of course an obstacle course that I devised. I threw the idea to the swimming committee and they grabbed it and took it forward and today the Tollython is one of the most popular events that we've had.

The AC Auditorium used to be set up as a makeshift pandal and it was either too hot, wet or slushy where we could do nothing except hold boring AGMs. So we set up the AC Auditorium, and were able to activate the cultural and cerebral, the social side of Tolly and I'm glad to have been a part of that as well which is something that I think Tolly will improve on and take further to capture its multicultural multifaceted personality as an institution.

The biggest challenges that you faced during your tenure.

Amphan and the fire, and holding Tolly together collectively under the Covid regime, if we can call it that to keep up the spirit of people. We had 130 persons staying there.

Things that you wish you had done differently.

Everybody has regrets. I do, too. I have made a few mistakes, but there has never been a lack of integrity of purpose. I feel satisfied that I made no mistakes without trying my best. I have failed, but as we all know, failure is a part of success. So it's okay!

Your take on the Tolly core values ethos.

The club is not just a leisure centre. It is to

be treated like a home, and there is a kind of emotional involvement to it. There has to be that passion and involvement. The building, the people, and even the trees matter. To be a stakeholder in all of that is bigger than just being paying guests.

On a more personal note, Your favourite corners and your favourite foods at Tolly?

The animals at Tolly are some of the best things that have happened to me and to my family. So as everyone knows, the stables, the horses are very close to my heart and have been in my entire life. My other favourite places are the gym, the library and the open spaces all over I wouldn't give them up for anything and of course I love the South Veranda and the patio. My favourite foods at Tolly are the steak kebabs, I wouldn't want to change.

What of Tolly will you miss the most?

I will miss the environment and the ambience. I will also miss my friends. I am very close to my friends. We were a special bunch, and we will continue to be a special bunch. Tolly brought all of us together, and that is going to be missed a lot. Will miss our daily 'Aam Adda Party'! We have to continue the tradition, only it won't be a seven-days-a-week adda party but will be as exciting as they were before!



ELAN COUTURE FASHION SHOW



AGOMONI & BIJOYA SAMMILANI



THE TOLLY YU



LETIDE SPIRIT



INDIAN MUS



IC DIASPORA



PANTILES



ROCKS!



CLASSICAL PIANO AND FADO



BATTLE OF WALONG AND NAVY BAND

The Eastern Command presented the Battle of Walong, a light and sound show commemorating the legendary 1962 battle in the North Eastern-most tip of India. Tolly also witnessed a stellar performance by the Eastern Naval Command Band.



GOLF AT TOLLY



PETS, PARTIES & A PLAY



TOLLY'S FOOTBALL FOOTFALLS!

Dev Basu



Dev Basu was born and raised in Kolkata. A proud 2nd Gen member of the best club in the world, he's married conservative and a "straight shooter". From a finance background, he is passionate about music, movies and world travel. He loves football & has played for all his schools and college, growing up. Not ready to hang up his boots, yet.

Something you don't associate with Tolly – football. But here we are, a group of diehard football enthusiasts who occasionally play together on Mondays and have always put the pedal to the metal and competed with other clubs with every age group in inter-club events.



Let's go back to August 2022 when our camaraderie was in full display with two "legendary" football clubs—Tolly and CCFC resuming their annual friendly football match after a forced pandemic hiatus.

Tolly won the match against CCFC 2-1, played at the CCFC grounds. Then again in December 2022 Tolly again participated in a 4-a-side "Futsal" tournament organized by the Bengal Rowing Club at their premises. Tolly advanced to the semi- finals but were defeated by Dalhousie Institute 4-2.

Bravo Guys! Let's keep the Tolly Football flag flying. And here's hoping that the "Football Fanatics" (a Whatsapp group is all we have officially) can make Tolly proud in future.



DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 Colonel William Tolly desilted the Adi Ganga to make it navigable after which it became known as 'Tolly' Nullah, and the surrounding area Tollygunge, from which our club gets its name
- 2 The Clubhouse started off as the residence of Richard Johnson, an officer of the East India Company in 1785, who developed the greens around it, but was later to be built under the leadership of William Cruickshank. (see cover story) It was never an indigo plantation!
- 3 Our Club premises have a 'Pagla Gaach' Mad Tree or Buddha's coconut tree - all the leaves of which are different from each other! It is believed that one Saint Pir Pagla Baba - Hazraat Masood Ghazi, would sit under this tree, which gave him shelter during his lifetime and even after his death.
- 4 The Prince of Wales along with Earl Mountbatten attended the Paper Chase at Tollygunge Club. His horse Poormick ran away with him!

Tolly *Trivia*



www.tollygungeclub.org