

A Collection of Goan Voices 2: Writing by People of Goan Descent

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Prologue Collecting Goan voices

I very much enjoyed collecting stories from people of Goan descent when I began to produce the first collection. I learnt much about the way previous generations had lived. Their reflections seemed both poignant and discerning. I was particularly struck by how even though the stories signaled hardship and difficulties that had been endured, the telling of these stories conveyed a sense of pride and accomplishment, as well as a certain degree of relish. It would appear that people of Goan descent are a hardy bunch. They are genially predisposed towards dealing with challenges with a modicum of delight, a lot of hope and way too much modesty.

This second collection of voices was equally difficult to collect. Though feedback from those who have read the first volume suggest that people have stories to tell, most still feel shy about sharing their stories publicly. However, I have special skills when it comes to nagging. Nevertheless, many still felt that no one would be interested in an account of their experiences. But, as with the first collection these voices provide an insight into the reality of life for Goans over the last few decades. I should also apologise to Mavis Castanha, as her story mysteriously disappeared from the first edition. I have tried, as with the first collection, to minimise editing, and I have tried to retain the voice of the individual. However, it should be noted that all typos are my fault.

The accounts in this volume have been collated according to location. There are three location sections, the first one is of course Goa, India. The second section includes stories written about Goans describing their time in Africa. The third section includes stories written by Goans who migrated to other nations such as Canada, Australasia or the UK. Between each section is a story about migration. Once again, my sincere thanks to all those who contributed stories and tolerated the nagging to write them.

Thanks again to my dad, Ferdinand Rodrigues, for reading through the draft and correcting errors. The remaining errors are mine, but I hope they will not distract you when you read the short stories and the poetry.

MIRACALOUS ROADSIDE CROSSES

Savio Rodrigues (SJ)

Goa is saturated with roadside crosses. Some are to commemorate a tragic event, others a joyful event and many as a result of a vow made by an individual. I intend to run through some of the crosses to which miraculous powers have been attributed.

The best know such cross is the Bambolim cross. Now a shrine has been built over the cross. It is also called “Fullancho Khuris” The cross of flowers. Tradition states that this was a stone quarry. All of a sudden the stone began to diminish, and the quarry had reached the point of being abandoned. The stonecutters began to pray very fervently. It was not long after that they struck rock once again, and the business began to flourish. Hence in thanksgiving a cross was erected on the site. Later on the apostates, the Gavdde/Kunbis, who reverted to their old Hindi ways of life, began to use this quarry as a burial ground for women who died in childbirth or when pregnant. They used to cover the cross with a reddish orange flower called “abolins” on such occasions.

Later on this cross became a stopping point for load bearing trekkers. Next to the cross there was a “dovornem” a structure on which loads could be kept, without another persons help. It was T shaped, built in stone. The traveler could also slip the burden on to his/her head without the help of another person. This route soon became the main road from Panjim to Agacaim. Being a lonely place, it was frequented by robbers who way laid the travelers returning after doing business in Panjim.

Now people on foot, bullock carts and later the “Caminhao”, used to make a regular stop here, so that people could get off and offer prayers for a safe journey home.

KANTEANTLO KHURIS

In Loutolim there was a place where the local butchers used to slaughter cattle for beef. This slaughter -house was very close to a small stream “Wadi” At night people were afraid to venture in this direction as they could see torches of fire moving to the place of

slaughter. The persons carrying the torches were never visible, but the movement of the torches suggested some persons were carrying them. Here a cross was erected and the torches never appeared again

SANT ESTEVAO

One morning as a farmer was taking his cattle to the fields, for grazing, he saw something very odd happening. Every single of his cattle went down on its fore feet, and they continued on their way to the grazing grounds. On the return journey in the evening the cows did the same thing. This followed the next day too. The people rushed to witness this odd sight. The parish priest then said, “They are genuflecting. Dig up around that spot.”

A few days earlier, a thief had broken into the church and decamped with the ciborium with consecrated hosts. They dug up and discovered the hosts in the mud. They were removed and taken to the church in a procession, led by the cows. The thief too was nabbed. A cross was erected here.

TALLEANCHO KHURIS

In Pazarconi, in Cuncolim, a childless woman used to pray at the cross asking for a child. She promised that she would cover the cross in green, the colour of hope, if her favour was granted.

Her wish was granted, and she gave birth to a baby girl. Now to fulfill her vow, she tied lots of green twigs to the cross. People began to follow her method of prayer and fulfillment of the promise, but the process was a troublesome one.

A wise guy decided to bore small holes into the cross. Today people have to just push the green twigs into these holes and the cross looks like a live plant. It is always full of fresh branches.

EXPERIENCES IN GOA

Sophia Cotta

From an early age my parents introduced my brother and me to Goa and the life that they had at our age. I know I can speak for both of us when I say how much we cherish and admire the love with which these memories are told. Also something that I feel must never be lost is the humour that exists during those experiences, it puts life today into perspective when we hear about the past.

Although I am “only” 32, there are memories that I think I will always cherish from my childhood days, probably too many to go into here (although entertaining). One thing that I have noticed which is very often apparent from all of those memories is the kind and generous nature of the “Goenkar”. No matter what they do – it is done with pride and dedication.

I will never forget patiently watching the Leela Palace Hotel staff so diligently cutting the grass on their hands and knees – with a pair of scissors! Showing off a pristine lawn to be admired and enjoyed by the hotel guests holidaying that season.

Or the highways workers crouched down and inhaling the fume riddled traffic passing right behind them whilst they meticulously paint the black and white strips on the concrete parapet for the safety of drivers!

Coming closer to home, I have fond memories of bathing in an old style ‘shower room’ at home in Chinchinim, before we modernised the washing facilities. Our ‘adopted’ of the house, a very genuine, kindhearted lady called Marie (who was just like an extended family member) used to patiently stay awake until we had all finished our baths. She used to pass hot water through a small discrete ‘hole in the wall’ after faithfully keeping it hot on the wood-burning stove. To this day I have no idea when she actually slept, because no matter what time we woke up she was always ready with hot water for tea and fresh chapattis – and always with a smile!

Our ancestral home in Chinchinim (built over 100 years ago by my Great Grandfather) is also home to our Family Tree that dates back to 1580 (researched by my grandfather and diligently drawn by my father). So as well as being able to enjoy living the life of a Goan in our ancestral home, we have had the opportunity to learn about our ancestors from my father and grandfathers hard work and efforts. In fact, I am sitting under the fan in my bedroom in Chinchinim writing this in front of the very same tree! (Ok – I’m also hiding under the mosquito net with the fear of getting attacked by the little beasts there are some things about Goa that I will never get used to!!)

Although we travel to Goa as “tourists”, over the years our familiarity with the people and places has made it feel more like a second home than a holiday destination. So much so that my brother met and married his wife here just last year. On the same day and in the same church as our parents 40 years ago (Our Lady of Hope) just opposite the house “Patio da Igreja” (Church compound) in Chinchinim. They are now looking forward to starting their own family in Windsor, UK. I think my mum however has a different perspective on her visits to Goa – although having spent more than half of her lifetime in the UK, to me she still looks more “at home” in Goa. But then she is always excellent at adapting to wherever she is. She has always taken great pride in preserving our heritage and family home; thanks to her efforts of maintaining the house, we are able to enjoy such a homely visit to Goa year after year.

Changes over the years.

Looking after one of these old Portuguese style houses is not a joke – nothing like taking care of my little 3 bedroom house in Bexleyheath !! You have to think of every part of a Goan house as a living item, if you are not turning the tiles every few years to keep the roof space clean and monsoon rain out, you are trimming the mango trees if its not already in bloom or yielding fruit, pruning the Akasha trees so that they create a boundary but don’t block too much light from the house, polishing the furniture to save them from ‘white ants’, plucking the coconut trees in the garden, painting the walls to keep them preserved and clean, cleaning the well so that the water remains good enough to drink etc, etc, etc

In the short time that I have traveled to Goa, even I have seen changes to village life that I would never have dreamt of happening. The simple things that at home in Bexleyheath I take for granted like power, water, telephone, TV etc..... were a totally different experience only 10 years ago in Goa. We no longer pull water from the well as our only source of water – the arrival of the mains supply has eradicated the need to plan your water resources for the day, telephones / mobiles / TV's were never really missed, as being in the village the front door was always open to visitors to pass the time and there's always something or someone to keep you busy.

Coping with the frequent power cuts becomes second nature. As time passes you become immune to the discomfort and treat it as a part of life! Unless of course you forget your candles or matches and are having a bath/shower – then it is the most irritating thing on earth!! Being woken up early morning by the church bells is also something I am finally immune to – however the barking dogs and cockerels crowing still take a little longer to adjust to.

Having the opportunity to experience a much simpler way of living really helps you appreciate the simple things in life. The simple task of drawing water from the well to quench your thirst, really makes you think. Nowadays with the vast array of soft drinks, juices, teas, and alcoholic beverages on sale – a drink is never far away; something we in the western world often take for granted. In my upbringing and even profession I have always been taught to respect the environment, through my travels I fully understand why.

There was a time a few years back when I really thought that Goa would get swallowed up by the technology and culture of the western world almost 'brainwashing' the few Goans that could cope with that culture and leaving the rest behind – but thankfully my fears have not materialised. Goan minds seem to be just as smart (if not much smarter) to cope with new ideas and make use of them to improve the environment that they live in.

There is a distinct improvement in things like the road quality (white lines and even cats eyes/reflectors have been installed along part of NH 17 (National Highway); unfortunately no one seems to realise that the idea is to KEEP to one side of the white line! So the pastime of overtaking just "because you can" still happens!

The “random” police checks to enforce the helmet and seatbelt restrictions are in place (even though a small bribe now and again still keeps the cops happy!). The Speed breakers on the road definitely slow the traffic down (and in time there will be a reduction in the numbers of crushed cars abandoned on the side of the road next to the speed breakers, where drivers haven’t quite understood the “slow down” concept yet!!!) But there is hope!!

I am confident that this positive development will continue to grow and the State of Goa will only build on what it already has to offer, without losing its own special characteristics. There are many things about Goa that I don’t think will ever change, here are just a few that you may also be able to relate to:

- the battle you have with driving – not with other cars but the humans and animals that seem to have precedence over the cars that the road was initially built for!
- the way the benches at Sunday mass seem to be able to accommodate a ‘never ending’ number of people and if there’s “no space” you can always shuffle up and find space!
- the herd of cows that are brought by a local farmer to the idyllic beach to have their early morning bath in the sea (just before the tourists come and swim in the same water!!)
- the totally random person you may bump into in the street – but after 5 minutes conversation, you realise they know you, your parents, your grandparents and probably your grandparents next door neighbours!

In fact it happened just today (October 2006) – I was parking up in Margao in the only available parking space just near Grace Church (isn’t everything!?) and my mum and I popped into what we thought was a normal cafe, sat down to have a snack. A voice from the other side of the table said “are you not Fr. Sergio’s sister Dr Samiro’s elder sister from Majorda Teacher Selma !!! You used to teach me - 40 years ago !!!” Much to my mother’s surprise – she fitted the entire description and yes, he was her student (40 years ago!). Then the reminiscing continued and we got a free sorpatel and sardon lunch (or ‘sumna’ as I always seem to pronounce it!) – as the same guy owned the cafe. This could only happen in Goa!!

My stories could go on for ever, but they are just a glimpse into my experiences as a Goan brought up in the UK. I feel as if I've had the best of both worlds and look forward to sharing them all one day with my own children, just as my parents have with my brother and me. I will always have the utmost respect for both the Western and Asian cultures that have moulded my childhood, providing opportunities and presenting me with challenges for my future.

APSHI

Savio Rodrigues (SJ)

There are plenty of stories connected with Apshi's. An Apshi is a good spirit, a guardian spirit, or just a benevolent ghost.

Folklore of almost every village has some connection or the other with Apshis. I wish to relate about three that I have found recorded in ancient historical documents. On the mountains of Sarzora, a village between Cuncolim, Paroda and Chinchinim, there is a well know apshi. This spirit has been sighted by many people who have dared to climb these hills. The story goes, that there lived in the village of Sarzora, a miser. This man was rich in lands and money. He never did any charity. He spent all his time and energy guarding his wealth.

On the top of the hills in Sarzora there was a lake. This lake had a bandh (mud dam), which gave way every monsoon. The villagers were tired of having every year to repair it. One year, it was decided to ask every kunbi (original Goan tribal) in the village to carry a basket of earth to the top of the hill. Many baskets of earth were transported up. At this juncture, the miser was asked to go down the dam, into the breach and inspect it, and give his verdict. When this man went down, and was in the breach of the dam, the kunbis began to empty their baskets of earth on to him, into the breach in the dam. The miser was buried in the earth. From that day the dam has never breached. The miser is known to guard it, as he guarded his own wealth. He harms no one.

In Carmona, the area, between Janot Bazar and the house of Socorro, the toddy tapper, is called Betpatchi Bhaim. (The well of the Goddess Betal). Originally there was a temple dedicated to her on this spot. At around mid night, around new moon nights, when there is no light around, people report that they hear the chimes of a baker's staff. In olden days the baker had a bamboo staff. This staff had around four openings cut into the bamboo. In each of these openings were placed small round cymbals. When the baker banged his staff on to the ground, the cymbals clashed and produced a sound. This sound informed the people that the baker was around.

It is claimed that the Apshi of the original temple still guards this property. Guards in ancient days used the same type of staff to make their presence known. Here too, it is never known to have harmed anyone.

In Loutolim, Three vaddos (wards) meet at one point. This meeting point is right in the middle of the “Big Foot” (an exhibition of ancient Goan tradition) Here too it is stated that there are three Apshis. Each one makes his presence felt in a very unique way. One of them does use the bakers’ staff. The other two leave trail marks.

Are these the equivalent of guardian angels?

In the village of Sirigao, in the Bicholim district, the village famous for its fire yatra, (people walk on live coals) this odd incident is narrated.

Every year eight days before the day of the yatra, five men of the village just disappear. No body knows their whereabouts, and no one files a “missing report” with the police.

A massive search or hunt for them is organised, not with the intention of finding them, but of seeing them.

Tradition is that these five men appear in various sizes, in various places and at various times. They are never seen together. They are seen on the very top of a tree, or on the water, or as a huge giant, or a baby etc. Try to catch them, and they run away or just vanish into nothingness.

This brings the village community together, to perform a common task. Tradition says they are taken captive, by the spirits of the village, to prove that they (the spirits) are very much present around. On the day of the yatra, as the fire walking is in progress, (which is the culmination of the festivities) these five men are suddenly discovered among the bystanders. They are not aware that they were missing, or about the happenings of the past week.

In Narva, on the way to Divar, there exists a fairly large lake. Tradition states that from this lake, from time to time, a hand carrying a silver platter, laden with gold ornaments surfaces.

This normally appears to a person who is in need of gold ornaments, for use during a pending wedding or festival.

The person can take the platter and use the gold for the occasion. But he has to return ALL the gold after the function. Two hundred years ago the Rego family made use of the gold, but when returning the platter, retained a small set of earrings. They felt these would not be noticed.

To this day every child born in the Rego clan, sports a streak of white hair on the right side of their head.

THE GOAN PIG

Armand Rodrigues

The name of no animal is more maligned in any language than that of the humble pig. Swine, hog and boar are used as synonyms. Ass, donkey, cat and others cannot hold the candle to Pig when it comes to derogatory usage. No other three-letter word conveys a better connotation of a greedy, dirty, smelly, sulky, immoral, obstinate or annoying person. Any wonder feminists use it in invectives like male chauvinist pig?

To denounce this admittedly malodorous, be-dabbled creature that wallows in quagmires and other unmentionables, would be akin to arraigning it without fair trial. Time therefore, to take cognisance of its virtues.

The pig in the Western hemisphere leads a relatively sheltered life in a climate-controlled barn, is well looked after by a farmer and by a veterinarian, has a clean sty, and is fed potatoes, apples and vegetables that even humans in poorer countries would envy. With an assured food supply, all it has to do is put on pound after pound for the market, not exert itself at all, and swish its curled little tail with a contented grunt. Dr. Gunter Voss of the Toronto Zoo once said: "Pig domestication goes hand in hand with the owner's sedentary way of life. Nomadic tribes do not keep pigs." By and large, the Western pig is an albino in pigmentation, with scanty bristles. But what about the lifestyle of its counterpart from the Eastern hemisphere?

The pig in Goa and in the Eastern hemisphere is perhaps without an equal. It is a closer relative of the bush species of the Old World than its domesticated and docile cousins from the west. Like all pigs, it has very few sweat glands and has no choice but to wallow in the mud for relief from the tropical heat. It costs next to nothing to rear a pig in Goa. During its curtailed life span, the Goan pig is a sanitary engineer par excellence and scavenges on fodder that superior animals would scorn. It thrives on leftovers: rice-water, husks, copra residue, vegetable and banana peel, fallen fruit like mangoes, papayas, jackfruit, cashews, foraged sweet-potatoes and watermelons. Its ever-probing muzzle misses nothing. Although it eats incessantly, this

omnivorous creature has an insatiable appetite and does not forego regular offerings provided by its owner. In Goa, many a pig is summoned by gong --- a piece of rail and a spike for striker --- at feed time, and others by some traditional hog-calls like Yoh! Yoh! Yoh! Dukra! (come, come, come, pig). Also, it is not unusual in Goa to treat a pig as a pet and call it by name.

No part of the pig's anatomy is wasted. Its bristles are used for brushes, its skin for fine-grained leather in some countries, its toes as talismans, its bones are believed to improve crops, its blood is an integral part of some Goan dishes and is also used for blood-pudding sausages.

In the Doomsday book the pig is referred to on every page. Shakespeare makes reference to the animal many a time. And, as Charles Lamb's story goes, a Chinese lad accidentally burned down a sty with some pigs in it. Guilt forced him to touch one of the "hot" pigs to see if it was alive. To ease the inexorable pain of his burnt finger he stuck it in his mouth. The rest is history. Man got his first taste of porcine delicacy, even though it took him a long time to figure out that a sty didn't have to be burned down each time.

The flesh of the pig may be anathema to people of certain religious denominations but is recognised as a gastronomical delight to the palates of the world. The Scots can have their haggis, the Brits their fish and chips, the Irish their stew, the Italians their spaghetti, the French their soufflé, the Canadians their hot-dogs, but Goans and people of the East revel in pungent, spicy, pork dishes. The Corsican pig fed on chestnuts has a unique flavour and is regarded as superior to any in Europe. But, to the Goan, there is no other that can compare with the one from his/her own backyard nurtured on unquantifiable edibles to give it its special taste. Quite often the dishes in Goa are accompanied by a porous bread made of rice flour (sanna), to soak up the savoury gravy. For many, a pork dish is an ambrosia unmatched by any other.

FINDING THE RIGHT MAN

Winnie Castanha

My name is Winnie Castanha, formerly Pinto Bragança. Born in Goa I was the third of five children born to Miguel and Catarina Bragança. My dad died when we were quite young so my mum brought us up.

I studied in Goa at the Sacred Heart of Jesus School in Parra. It was a very famous school at the time.

One morning the sun was shining, the sky was blue and my mum decided she was going shopping to Friday bazaar in Mapusa with our servant. I decided I was going with my mum. So we called the driver to take us.

As we were walking along I spotted a crowd of boys mucking around in that blazing sun. I said: “Look mum those boys over there are nice looking guys.” For this I was told off severely, the subject was finished and I went home sulking.

In Parra we had our own crowd of friends (boys and girls) who used to cycle to the seaside most evenings. To my surprise I happened to see the same boys again in Calangute. I said to my friends to watch me as I was going over to introduce myself. And so I did. “Excuse me, my name is Winnie. What’s your name?” He was reluctant to say because of the other guys who were still around. We eventually made eye contact and got chatting. Eventually I invited him over to my house the next day.

He was there on our doorstep at 9.00am sharp. My mum was not very happy but she did come out and meet him. Things started to move fast after that, and we got engaged within four weeks at his dad and mum’s house in Calangute. He gave me a huge diamond ring.

We got married at St Alexi’s Church, Calangute on 27 July 1959. The wedding was lavish. Cypriano had to get back to duty in Nairobi in September and so I joined him in November. I sailed on SS Karanja from Marmagao to Mombasa: a ten day journey by ship which was fantastic.

When I docked at Mombasa my husband was there to meet me. From Mombasa to Nairobi we travelled by train. In those days, the government met ship and rail travel costs. So after settling down for a week or so we went on our delayed honeymoon: round Lake Victoria, then to Kampala, Entebbe, Jinga, Kisumu and a couple of other places.

And so I ended up finding the right man from the same village I was born in!

MUSIC IN THE BLOOD OF GOANS

Tony D'Mello

I was born in Tanga, a small town in Tanganyika (now known as Tanzania). However, I was brought up in Goa. In the early 1930s my family moved from Tanga to Moira, Goa, India. Moira was the home and roots of my parents.

In the early 1930s when my family moved to Goa, I was 5 years old. My first schooling was at the local village Parish School. We were taught to read and write in Konkani, and in Portuguese and this was followed by music lessons.

I recollect we were between 20 and 30 boys at any one time in the village Parish School. All of different ages and aspiring to be musicians!! We had a Music teacher- he was reverently known to us as the “Mistri or Mestri” (from the Portuguese translation of “Mestre”). He was employed for a pittance by the Moira Church and was paid from Church funds. He also earned a small income from playing music for weddings, funerals etc, and we were his performers. He needed us as much as we needed him for the music lessons.

Mestre, taught us to sing, to learn SOL, FA, or DO RE MI and to sing the scales in ascending and descending orders. We learned to write music- drawing accurate lines, entering the notes, etc. We had to sing, note by note, in tune. If we sang slightly out of tune, Mestre would squeeze and twist our little ears until we hit the correct note.

Despite all our hardships I was keen to learn to play the ‘Rebek’ (Violin). Hearing all our old village maestros performing entranced me. Fortunately for me a neighbour, Mr Luis Pinto, came to Goa on holiday from Africa. He heard that I was an aspiring violinist and thanks to him, he offered to help me by buying a brand new violin- this was in 1936, when I was just eight years old. I was thrilled and overjoyed, - at that age, and in those days, I only had access to play on a full sized violin, since there were no small sizes available. Being rather small in stature, I had to stretch my left hand to get the right

note on the violin string. If it was a fraction of a tone lower, Mestre would squeeze and twist my ear clockwise to raise the note higher, and he would do this anti clockwise if it had to be a note lower! Squeezing my ear and twisting it gave me the lifelong best EAR for Music!!

Each morning we had to attend the 7 o'clock mass in the Church. We had to serve at the mass as Altar Servers or sing hymns during the Mass or play the violin. After mass we would come home for breakfast and then go back to School. School hours were from 8.30 am to 11.30 am and then from 2pm to 5pm. So we ended up with several hours of music everyday, singing, playing the violin, practicing the art of writing music. There were no holidays for us, except of course Sundays, Days of Obligations and Feast Days. Boys from the English or Portuguese Schools would join us during their school holidays, to learn music only, particularly if they came from India for a holiday in Goa.

In my teens I left the Parish/Music School and went to an English school. Upon completion of my secondary education in Goa, India, my brother Alex and I left for Uganda in the 1950s. Sebastian (popularly known as PCSC Nazareth) his wife Annie and sister Lily Nazareth, and Marcus D'Souza helped and made the necessary arrangements for us to emigrate to Uganda.

We came to Entebbe, Uganda. There I was conscripted into the choir of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Association. We held practices once each week and we always sang and performed for the Feast of the Sacred Heart in June, the St Francis Xavier Feast in December, and on Sundays in the Church in Entebbe. Once each month the Mass was held in the Entebbe Goan Institute, and we performed there. On Christmas Eve at the Midnight mass in the Entebbe Goan Institute we sang and supported the Service. After the Midnight Mass, we all had a mug of coffee, laced with Tia Maria, or Cognac, and then went serenading from Goan house to Goan house, until the early hours of the Christmas morning. We would sing a carol in each house, drink from one mug/jug of coco cola with brandy, and move on! On Christmas Day and Boxing Day we would visit our close friends and the Goan Institute would hold an Annual Sports Day, distribution of trophies for the whole year etc. On New Year's Day we would have a get together, the President would give his review, we would see the old

year out and welcome the New Year in a symbolic manner. It was great!

I was always keen to learn to play a blowing instrument and so I bought a clarinet and taught myself to play it. I joined Nobby's Band and played for the first time on the 24th April 1955, at the Golden Jubilee Anniversary of the Entebbe Goan Institute. I was keen to play other instruments and, therefore I made a huge sacrifice at the time and rather selfishly to the family, bought myself an Alto Saxophone. I played the violin, the clarinet and the saxophone in the Band.

We played regularly in the Kampala European Club, (later called the Kampala Sports Club). We also played for all Sports, Christmas, New Year, Easter events and other events in Entebbe, Kampala and Jinja Goan Institutes. We traveled to Kenya by invitation, and played in Eldoret, Nakuru and Nairobi (the Railway Institute and the Gymkhana). We were invited to play for various charity musical concerts, at the Government House in Entebbe. I remember Lady Cohen, wife of the Governor of Uganda, who was a good singer in her own right, sang songs from the musical "My Fair Lady". I was in Nobby's Band, which was the only civilian band to play for the Uganda Independence Day Celebrations at the State Ball held in Lugogo Stadium on 9th October 1962. The other bands were the Army and Police Bands from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi.

Coming to the UK in 1972, following the infamous expulsions of Asians from Uganda, I brought along my three much prized musical instruments, the violin, the clarinet and the saxophone. I quickly got involved with other groups and played and sang for dances, socials, church choirs and Konkani concerts. Quite often I ended up having to write the music for Konkani 'tiatrs'.

I have always loved music which I enjoyed playing and I encourage the younger generation to take this up. I am thankful to the Mestre from Moira, who taught me and gave me the good ear for music! I always followed his three Ps- Practice, Patience and Perseverance.

FOOD and SHELTER

Armand Rodrigues

Catching a pig for slaughter was not always easy. In some villages, the catcher's reward was the snout, trotters, ears and tail. Some of these scraps were for the catcher's dog that assisted in the chase. And, it was not unusual to treat all the kids around to a piece of liver roasted on an open fire.

Aside from coconut trees, there are other nut trees (talgude) that are hard to climb. In some places if monkeys were taunted enough, they would pluck the nuts and throw them at you. Not necessarily the best ones, of course!

Did you know that if you waded into a river, at night, with a pressure lamp a few inches above the water, fish got attracted to the light and seemed stunned? All you had to do was grab them and put them in your knapsack.

With the first rains, bottom-feeders in some ponds make straight for the banks as if for fresh air. A machete was the tool of choice for beheading them and then scooping up the spoils.

Even more fun was getting behind fishermen's nets, in waist-deep ocean water, and pouncing on escaping fish, as the nets were being pulled in. Fresh mackerel, roasted in a crackling fire on the beach, was always a treat for the nose and palette.

How about the large mussels that cling to the rock-face at the murky mouth of the Rio Sal, in Betul? Daring young men would descend with coconut oil in their mouths and release it when they reached a promising spot. With visibility improved, they had to fight against time to pry the shellfish loose, before coming up for air. And they had to have clean-shaven heads or else risk a mussel clamping their "floating" hair and trapping them in a watery grave.

Not many Goans know that our traditional old windows were made with opaque fish scales in the slats. The scales were imported mainly

from the Far East. You can still find such scales on the shores of Penang.

During WW II, imported goods were hard to come by. The ingenious Goan improvised with whatever basic material was at hand. Grease was made by warming beeswax (old church candles) in coconut oil and then allowing the mixture to cool.

And, did you know that a Papal Bull granted to Portugal was extended to cover Goa? It permitted people to eat meat on days of fasting and abstinence, for a small "fee" based on one's assets. This was a therapeutic benefit to our bodies!

BUB-BUDEM TOLLEM

Savio Rodrigues (SJ)

After having heard so much about this bud-budem tollem, (lake that sends out bubbles), I decided to go and have a look at it myself. In the company of six youth and five grown-ups, we decided we would travel in two cars for a days outing. From Mapuca, we drove to Margao in one car. There we met up with the rest of the group, and settled into the two cars. We drove down to Paroda, Quepem, Sanguem, and then turned off for Netorlim.

After having driven for over an hour, (because we lost our way, and also visited the Selaulim dam) we finally were at the famous lake.

Our expectations were shattered when we spotted the tank. It was a stone built water tank. No Lake. It measured about ten meters by four meters. That's all. There was hardly any water. At the deepest spot it may be five feet deep. It was layered with moss all over.

Not to be totally disappointed we decided to clap our hands and await the reaction. Yes, in a number of spots, a stream of bubbles began to surface. We spent some time doing just this, to enjoy ourselves and also to find a plausible reason for this phenomenon.

We finally arrived at a reasonable answer. There was a lot of moss at the bottom. With the slightest vibration on the surface, that moss got disturbed and realised the air that was trapped below its layer. As we were about to leave the Bhatt, (Hindu priest) arrived to perform his noon pooja (devotions). After he had finished we asked him for his explanation of the phenomenon. He was very direct and more scientific than we ever expected. He said that all the wells to the right of the tank ran dry much before summer, and their water is sweet to taste. The wells to the left never run dry, and the water is tasteless. The water in this tank too never runs dry and is tasteless. The conclusion is simple. They both have a common source.

It is also certain that there is a lot of limestone to the left, along the path of the springs, hence the water has lost its taste. Reaction of lime with water releases carbon dioxide, and it is this gas that gets trapped

at the bottom of the muck. This gas is released at the slightest disturbance on the surface. No miracle here, but mother nature's ways.

From here we drove a few kilometres to visit the Datta Mandir, in Netorlim itself. This small temple is built on the banks of a rivulet. In the monsoons the waters rise and the rivulet gets flooded. The temple is almost below water, but the deity never gets submerged in water, even though the deity is actually below the ground level of the temple. There are no retaining walls to keep the waters out.

What is the secret here?

Our next stop, on our home ward journey, was the famous Damodar Temple, at Zambaulim.

Here at a side shrine there are seven arrows emerging from one point, like rays emerging from the sun.

The Poojari (celebrant), attaches seven flower petals with water to the arrows. He does not pierce them, just attaches them with water, instead of glue.

The devotee then tells the deity about his/her decision. If the decision is the right one the petals fall off. If it is the wrong one the petals remain fixed, for as long as the devotee is around the shrine. The moment he/she leaves, the petals all get dislodged. Miracle, myth or trick?

CAN CONTENTMENT BE ACHIEVED FROM GOAN TRADITION?

Neville Moniz

I am a Goan. Proud to be so. Proud of my upbringing. Grateful for the strong sense of right and wrong that underpins Goan tradition.

Throughout my life I have heard and read of famous people (of various hue) who have given up their lives for what they believe. I have always felt that these were noble people doing unusual, heroic things that I do not have the courage to do myself!

A while ago I lost a friend of mine who was suffering from a difficult disease. He will never be famous enough to go down in history as a famous celebrity; but he did become a role model to those who knew him – because throughout his difficult years and right up until his death he adopted an attitude, which was exemplary, admirable and brave.

He had spent enormous amounts of time in the hospital, underwent painful treatment and several major operations. As often as possible to avoid troubling his family, he would travel on his own to hospital for treatment; he would dress and clean his wounds himself. He had a tube put in through his throat to help him breathe; he cleaned and changed it himself. Shortly before he died he could eat nothing and was restricted in what he could drink. He longed for his rice and curry; but could not have that or anything else. Yet it seems in hospital right to the end he was teasing people, making fun of everybody, and hugging everybody who went to visit him. Once, I am told, when a friend last went to visit him, he asked for permission and disconnected all his tubes etc. Then they went to a bar (!) and he took his milkshake with him! I am told that in the bar it was evident that he really enjoyed himself, after which they went back, and he just reconnected his tubes etc. etc. In the midst of extreme strife he actually found a way to be satisfied!

Once when I met him I had a particularly long chat with him as I tried to grasp what he was going through and how he felt. There was no self pity, no grumpy-ness, appreciative comments about the doctors and

nurses (there was not even a trace of complaint questioning the level of care in our NHS hospitals); and he was honest about how he felt about the things he missed. Impressively however he seemed to enjoy what little he could and he accepted that, while he tried his best, whatever was to be would be.

The day he died came suddenly. It was a mixture of sadness, emptiness and admiration that descended upon all who knew him. In fact, strangely enough, every thought of him even now brings a tear but with a smile; remembering and missing his infectious attitude, fun and sense of humour.

The question in my mind is/was: how is it that he could behave with such a bright attitude? He had to have felt pain, anger, bitterness, and resentment and yet he looked for and found something positive in all that he went through? Was he born with that attitude? I don't think so. It is my belief that we are born with our own personality traits and characteristics. Do I have the choice therefore to develop my own attitudes and influence my own behaviour?

And it struck me that while it had nothing to do with being martyred for some grand righteous cause; all that my friend was doing, most courageously, was living his life according to what he believed to be the correct way.

It does not matter where he chose his beliefs to come from – whether it be from Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela or just his own conscience maybe; he lived them! And by just living his life doing what's right, employing the necessary fortitude he became an example for those who knew him!

The huge advantage I have is that as a Goan I have been privileged to be born into a decent, deep-rooted, Christian based, conscientious community. Obviously we do also have our weaknesses. Does, therefore, the Goan toolbox of life have any of what I need to live my life in the way I choose? What if I choose to use weakness, over self-indulgence, jealousy, disunity, greed or grudging bitterness to guide my life?

On the other hand what would be the consequence if I chose to use old fashioned Goan: fun, peace, music, hospitality, kindness,

perseverance, honesty, cheer, or warm-heartedness? Could either choice possibly mould an attitude, which might then be reflected in my resultant behaviour? And for those, like my friend, who choose the latter option and lived accordingly; is it the attitude that then makes them courageous and gives them fulfillment?

I keep pondering on these in my quest to acquire, within the Goan traditions that I feel so proud of, the essence to live an accomplished and contented normal everyday life. What do you think?

MEDICINES

Armand Rodrigues

Dozing under a banyan tree in the noon-day sun, one's thoughts can stray well into the past, in Goa. Such reminiscing can only come from having actually experienced or witnessed situations firsthand, but such random thoughts do not lend themselves to a logical presentation. For what it is worth, some are put forth below.

Most people who have lived in Goa will have similar anecdotes to offer. Perhaps they can supplement my humble contribution by making submissions to this medium. Human interest stories always have a readership especially among those interested to know more about our native land.

From time immemorial, panaceas for all ills have been our potent local brews. Whether made from fermented coconut tree toddy, the juice of cashews (the fruit) or unusual plums called "jambul", the preventative and curative attributes of these liquors are legendary.

In Goa, herbs, roots and leaves have been age-old remedies for colds, constipation, loss of appetite, blood pressure, muscular pains, wounds etc.. Long before chlorophyll was used in toothpastes, we used guava and mango leaves or neem tree twigs, to brush our teeth. But, many a secret remedy was taken to their graves by our ancestors.

Leeches were used extensively to control blood pressure problems. Yes, you lay in bed after the leeches were applied, while they went to work. In the process they contributed a "thinning agent" to the blood. A brine-bath caused the leeches to relinquish their grip when it was time to get them off.

Dry-cupping was used effectively to "pull out" chills in the back. A vacuum was created when a cotton ball in a goblet was ignited, and when the goblet was applied to the affected parts it sucked out the chill.

An effective cure for jaundice was branding a person with a red-hot spoon and applying the yolk of an egg to the blister.

In parts of Salcete, the remedy for whooping cough was a special brew actually concocted from the hindquarters of a fox.

In conjunction with the above remedies, a panacea for all ills was the "removal" of evil eye. Chillies or alum, hot coals and a suitable invocation for divine intervention, formed part of the ritual.

Being possessed by the devil was not an uncommon phenomenon. Exorcists of all stripes were always on hand to offer their services. Many Catholic and Hindu priests had a good clientele.

Occasionally you would find that, because of acrimony, a deceased person had put a curse on a plot of land. Bad luck was said to invariably follow the new owner of the land. Certain measures had to be taken to appease the soul of the deceased and neutralise the curse.

CARMONA

Savio Rodrigues (SJ)

The entrance to the priest's residence proudly displays the monogram of the Society of Jesus. This unique positioning of the monogram suggests that this residence was not just a presbytery, but also a major Jesuit residence. It is stated that it was a Jesuit novitiate. The question arises, novices from where? No Indians were accepted into the Jesuit order, and the novices who arrived from Europe were housed in Old Goa (St. Paul's) and Choraó (St. Jerome's). Could it be a house for learning of Konkani, as Margao was getting saturated with too many ministries?

It is also a historical fact that the Jesuits owned a lot of landed property in Carmona (Gabriel Saldanha).

To this day the properties from the Cavelossim church, through the Carmona church right up to the Orlim church are called, "Padrim Bhatt" A strip is well known as "Confis," derived from "confiscated," after the expulsion of the Jesuit order.

The church was built in 1607, but Fr. Velinkar suggests that together with Deussua a church was erected in Carmona, and a chapel in Assolna, in 1590. Could this be a private Jesuit church for the novitiate, before it was thrown open to the public in 1607?

Brother Manuel Gomes in a letter written in 1560 states that on his visits to Salcete he encountered some Catholics in some villages. He clearly states that in Carmona he found 40 Catholics, and among them a Portuguese gentleman settler.

Fr. Pedro Mascarenhas, s.j. visited Carmona in 1561, and says he was requested by a maimed person, to read the gospel and erect a cross in front of the man's house. Fr. Mascarenhas spent the night in Carmona and with about 40 Christians left for Cortalim. (Letter of Fr. Lourenco Peres the Lisbon, 1563. DHMPPPO Vol 9)

The church is dedicated to Our lady of Succour.

The first Parish priest on record is Fr. Roque Viera S.J. in 1698. Was the church till then, ministered to, by the priests from Orlim, or the resident priests of the Novitiate?

The Jesuit logo is also found below the altar of St. Theresa of the child Jesus.

MY FIRST VISIT TO BOMBAY

Tensing Rodrigues

I had never been to Bombay before. I had heard a lot about it. My mother lived there for some time. Her father worked there, and her brothers were still there. My father had been there a couple of times, including once during the post partition Hindu-Muslim riots. One of his brothers still lived there. Like many others in our part of Goa, my links with Bombay were strong. But I never had the chance or reason to go there.

That was until my sister married in 1982, and moved to Baroda in Gujarat. That was in January. As the summer vacation approached, my mum began making plans to send me to Baroda, to see my sister. So, by the beginning of April, I was off. By then my sister's youngest brother-in-law had just finished his Secondary School Certificate (SSC), and his parents wanted to send him to his brother in Baroda for a holiday.

The train from Margao would take us to Victoria Terminus, better known as VT, in Bombay by the next morning. From there we would have to go to Bombay Central Terminus to take a night train to Baroda. All these were merely place names for me. But I was briefed thoroughly about the geography of Bombay.

Well, that was not really necessary. Because we would be picked up at VT by my maternal uncle, taken to his house at Byculla and then dropped at Bombay Central in time for the night train. Byculla was sort of midway between VT and Bombay Central. And to make things doubly fool-proof my paternal uncle living at Mazagon, the Goan ghetto adjoining Byculla, was also asked to meet me at VT.

So there we were, I with my luggage that included goodies sent by my mother for her daughter, and my sister's brother-in-law with his huge guitar, approaching Bombay in the early hours of the day. We were just outside Dadar station. The train would halt there to allow some of the passengers to disembark; the next halt would be VT, some fifteen minutes ride away, I supposed. But the train refused to move. One by one the passengers began to jump off the train and walk along the

tracks. The station was some metres away. We gathered that, since the train was late, there was no slot available at the station, and that the train was being terminated at Dadar Yard.

What was to be done now? The whole plan had fallen flat. I knew nothing about Dadar or beyond. For that matter I knew nothing about anything in Bombay. All that I knew was that my uncle lived in a building called Arcadia in Byculla, that this building was opposite J.J Hospital, and that there was something called Bharat Motor Training School on the ground floor of the building. Well, that was like looking for a needle in a haystack. But that was all that I had, to cling to in the ocean called Bombay.

Having no other alternative, we came out of the station and hailed a taxi. Along came a “Sardarji” driver. The worst of my fears were confirmed. I had heard a lot of scary tales about “Sardarji taxi drivers” in Bombay. But we had no choice.

We pushed ourselves in and told the taxi driver to drive to Byculla – I had no idea how far it was. As, I suppose, we neared Byculla, the taxi driver asked us where in Byculla we wanted to go. I said opposite J.J Hospital – I had no idea what it looked like. My hope was that there would be a big board saying J.J Hospital or Arcadia or Bharat Motor Training School. But I could see none. I suppose we had already reached near J.J Hospital and the driver asked us again where we wanted to get down. I said near Bharat Motor Training School. The driver asked me promptly where exactly that was. For he too could see no board. Well, I thought I was letting my ignorance out, and making us vulnerable to the evil designs of the “Sardarji driver. I mustered some courage and let out a lashing at the driver “ Since when are you driving the taxi? If you do not know where Bharat Motor Training School is, what do you know?”

To my great surprise and relief, it worked. Meekly, the driver pleaded ignorance. Half of my fears disappeared with that. He halted and asked a passerby for directions. There it was, a few metres away. And that was the end of our nightmare.

GOAN METALS

Armand Rodrigues

Up until the thirties, many rich folks used palanquins, on the shoulders of four bearers, for transportation.

In the late thirties Goa had an air force of exactly one tiny 'plane. The short, grass landing strip was on the hill immediately behind the railway station in Marmagoa. The interesting little 'plane had a sharp ploughshare in its rear, instead of a wheel. When it landed, the plough dug deep into the field and stopped the shuddering 'plane from going over the cliff. This was like the 'planes on aircraft carriers today, except that ours made deep furrows in the field, that had to be promptly refilled. During the monsoons, flying was out of the question as there was no way to "arrest" the 'plane on a waterlogged field.

During the war, gas (petrol) was in very short supply. Buses were converted to use steam. A boiler occupied the passenger space next to the driver, and the steam contraption provided good, alternative motive power.

In the '40s and '50s bus and car parts were virtually unavailable either because of the war or because some vehicles were relics of a bygone era. Some cannibalisation of older vehicles was possible. But the village blacksmiths came to the rescue, more often than not, by forging parts on their primitive anvils, using goat-skin bellows and hot coals to heat the metals. How they managed exact tolerances is nothing short of amazing.

Then there was the railway. The bridges, like the one across the Rio Sal at Margao or the one near Sanvordem, had very low clearances.

Sad to say, quite a few firemen got decapitated as they were shoveling coal from the tender behind the engine, quite oblivious of the approaching danger overhead. A stationmaster named Antonio Gomes, who lost a brother in such a mishap, is credited with coming up with an idea that solved the problem. A string of loose canes was hung from

a trestle, a fair distance from each bridge. A delinquent fireman got a gentle early warning tap on the head.

Up to the early 50s, when people from Africa went on six months' leave to Goa, their heavy trunks followed them home by bullock cart, from Marmagoa, and arrived a day or two later. Many from Bardez and Ilhas got theirs on narrow boats propelled by a bamboo pole.

During World War II, three German ships (Ehrenfels, Drachenfels, Bramfels) and one Italian vessel (Anfora) sought refuge in our neutral port of Marmagoa. The Portuguese allowed them to stay provided their radios and transmitters were dismantled. But the Ehrenfels had a secret transmitter. This spy-ship transmitted intelligence covertly that resulted in massive losses of British ships and submarines.

In 1943, a clandestine British operation, by a small group of retired officers from Calcutta, set all the ships ablaze. Most of the skeleton crew on the ships had been lured to a Goan party on shore! Not till I read "Boarding Party" by James Leasor, in the June 1980 Reader's Digest did I realise what had caused the blazing inferno I had witnessed. The related film, "The Sea Wolves", starring Roger Moore, Gregory Peck, and David Niven was filmed on location.

Goan high-grade manganese ore was in great demand by Japan and Germany (for the Volkswagen) in the '40s and '50s. On an average day, forty ore carriers were loaded by conveyor belt.

THE PAULISTAS

Savio Rodrigues (SJ)

The Jesuits in Goa were called “Paulistas”, because they resided in the college of St. Paul in Old Goa. In ancient times super human attributes were bestowed upon them. The Jesuits, (Paulistas) were not only men of exceptional religious knowledge, but among them were great builders, farmers and surgeons. The Jesuit brother was known for his physical strength, and his determination. They were quick thinkers and fast workers.

Hence the legends attributed to them

In Panjim there exists to this day a bridge, called the “patto” bridge. It is stated that the Paulistas build that bridge in one night, with the help of one candle. They mean to say it was built in record time, working even at night, or in the dark.

The whole of the Ribandar causeway is also thought to have been built by the Paulistas, even though records state it was built by Conte de Linhares. A causeway of that length was never seen before.

At Banastarim, also called San Tiago, the Paulistas built many ramparts for the fortress. They also built bridges and landing jetties on every island. Travel became easy for the villagers. To this day they are adored as mini gods in these areas.

In Sarzora, the claim is that a lake on the hills was created by the Paulistas by constructing a dam with just one spade. To this day it is called ek khoreiamchem tollem (the one spade pond).

In Loutolim when the people tried to erect a new church, and construction work was being interrupted by ants. A Jesuit priest (Paulista) hoisted the picture of Jesus, Saviour of the world, amidst the foundations, and the ants left in a hurry.

Stories of the achievements of the Paulistas is legion. One has to try and understand the metaphor behind the story to appreciate the actual fact. They are not rubbish, nor are they mysteries. They are historical facts narrated in an exaggerated form.

KENYA TO GOA: BY AIR, SEA AND ROAD

Daryl Castanha

Traveling from Kenya to Goa was a long and adventurous experience. My first recollections of traveling to Goa included a flight from Nairobi's Embakasi Airport to Bombay by Air India. The flight itself was an experience in so far as that it was occupied by people from the sub continent, as opposed to Goans. Abusing the seat and toilets was just a small thought that I remember which was an eye opener in itself. This abuse was not carried out by the Goans I hasten to add.

On arrival at Bombay the heat was the first thing that entered the air conditioned aircraft, followed by an awful smell, rotten eggs! The next part of the journey was a 24 hour crossing on the Arabian Sea, from Bombay to Goa.

Once the ship docked in Marmagoa we then had to endure a two hour journey to North Goa (Bardez). Part of this road journey included two ferry crossings.

All in all traveling to Goa wiped out 2 days of the holiday.

Nowadays traveling to Goa from the UK you can get direct flights from London (Gatwick Airport) to Goa (Dabolim Airport). Bridges now link the Zuari and Mandovi River, reducing the journey from Goa Airport to North Goa to 1 hour.

TRANSITION IN TRANSPORT

Ferdinand Rodrigues

In 1939, when I was just five years old, at the Entebbe Goan Kindergarten School, which perhaps my mother was instrumental in founding, the headmistress, a Mrs. Jones had a coupe car. The back opened up and we could scramble into it. We enjoyed going out to the Botanical Gardens in her coupe. She would open the back and we would all clamber in and have a good time. At that time, Jacob had a memorable lorry, Souza Figueiredo's had two Studebaker cars and Souza Noronha's had one vehicle. The only other Goans, Alfonso's had a car and Azavedo (Degegede) had another. Azavedo's car did not have proper floor-boards and we always joked that it was easy to put your feet down and push when stuck!!

Soon, one or two others had cars. We went to Church (two miles away) in Jacob's open lorry that was always parked outside the Souza Noronha store. We hired cars from the Souza Figueiredo or the Souza Noronha store depending on what was on offer. We pedaled away on bicycles or walked to church or to the convent services for us and for the children. The Nuns of Marie Repatrix were part and parcel of our families. They knew us, our parents, our families and we were proud of them and their involvement.

Entebbe had no proper airport. My parents, in all their finery, went down to Mpigi to witness the arrival of the first aircraft, a seaplane, which sent the local hippopotamuses of the area into a frenzy. Now Uganda has an International Airport into which my son, an airline pilot born in Uganda, occasionally flies in a British Airways Jumbo 747!!

When we ventured from Entebbe into Kampala (21 miles away) it was a special expedition. We were going to meet someone at the Railway station or to buy something we could not get in Entebbe – sports equipment, clothing, Indian sweetmeats, etc. Friends got together to place orders for their special requirements. It was either a bus trip or we could hire a car, and later, we could travel by shared taxi at Shs.2 each way. This made it possible to go to late night events, the cinema in Kampala, the drive in cinema and other functions.

We ventured out to cricket matches in the hired cars and shared the costs. We knew by word of mouth, in the club, who was going into Kampala, and when. And then we arranged our travel. I recollect how we went to Jinja (70 miles away) in a car hired by Felix D'Mello, from Souza Figueiredo, for a Quadrangular cricket match. We were stranded on the Jinja bridge at night in a heavy thunderstorm when the car stalled. The bridge was a famous landmark, opened in 1937 as part of the King George VI coronation events and was always proudly displayed on Uganda postage stamps. It carried trains overhead and pedestrians and other vehicles below. We managed to get a lift from some passing car in the heavy rain and ended up in Lugazi for an impromptu hospitable Indian meal with the friends of the driver! We were most welcome such was the atmosphere and friendship amongst the community then.

In late 1950 I returned to Uganda. My father had, by virtue of his civil servant's entitlement, reserved my travel by sea and train to Kampala. I was met by the Government Coast Agent, after 10 days on SS Karanja from Marmagoa to Mombasa. Mr. Vincent Fernandes (from Assolna) took charge of me and my accommodation, etc. before putting me on a train (that took 3 days to get to Kampala). At Kampala Railway Station my dad, and my two brothers were there to welcome me, and a Government Staff Car took me home to Entebbe.

My dad had already arranged a job for me in the Secretariat, the Chief Secretary's Office, in Entebbe. Two days later, I was interviewed by J.A. Hudson, Office Supervisor. I was offered, at that time, a very lucrative employment as a Clerk, Grade 1 in the Local Civil Service, at a then excitable salary of £180 p.a. (or £15 per month). I gratefully accepted it. Then I passed the Executive Grade examination and moved on.

Before appointment to the Civil Service I had to appear for a medical check-up. My dad had bought me a Raleigh Bicycle for £15 (one month's salary to me). It was the only major gift from him. I always treasured and remembered. Dad and I pedaled away to the Asian Hospital with Dr. Achar Singh in charge. I need not have worried. Dr. Achar Singh was after all our neighbour. He gave me a certificate in a few minutes. We emerged onto the verandah of the hospital only to see a thief disappearing away with my dad's bicycle, jumping on to it and

pedaling way furiously down the slope at the Hospital. That was the last we ever saw of the bicycle or of the thief.

In those days (1950's) every able Goan had a bicycle. The only car owners were Souza Figueiredo and the Souza Noronha, who were the only two major general storekeepers in Entebbe. Their vehicles were available for hire for weddings, etc. And, there was always Jacob who owned an open lorry and always available for transport. When Father Christmas came to the Entebbe Goan Institute (Club) it was always on Jacob's lorry, until we moved on to a helicopter that was arranged by the late Arthur D'Mello.

We went to the Entebbe Sacred Heart Church on bicycle, in the back of Jacob's lorry or on foot. The Church was about two miles away in the then exclusive European housing area. (We Asians had a separate Asian Housing area, and indeed in offices we had a separate toilet system - European, Asian, African. This was later changed to grades by position in the civil service. This meant that I could go to a toilet where my fellow Goan or African could not! I never understood how this system could be policed – where my fellow Goan could come up with me up to the entrance only to find that he had to go to another section for a wee!)

As I said before, there were two Goans in the 1950's who were the proud owners of cars – the Alfonso and the Azavedo family. By the 1960's some of the senior civil servants owned cars – Antu Rodrigues, MBE, Bruno Fernandes MBE. Leo Gama MBE, Rapose (a Water Engineer). We envied them!!!

We went on picnics to Nkumba and Kisubi – over 7 miles and elsewhere. Took girl friends and others who had no bikes, on the cross bar and on the pillion seats. Loaded with food and other essentials, we had a glorious time. Some had a bumpy ride if the rider was not in a good mood and he deliberately went over potholes and corrugated sections of the road to make life miserable for her. Nevertheless the picnics were great, enjoyable, simple and still remembered 50 years on.

My wife, as a child, learned to cycle early and my dad would accompany her to the Church. After all, she was born on the same date in different years from him. We would plough along on our bicycles

and take a “bar passenger”. Jacob’s open back lorry was always there to provide transport for the rest.

My brother Placido, Felix D’Mello (Senior!) and Eddie Fonseca took their bicycles to the Botanical Gardens. Eddie was up a Guava tree plucking the best, when the “Askari” (watchman) appeared. Placie and Felix (the cowards) promptly jumped on their bikes leaving Eddie up the tree. The Askari set off after Placie and Felix, who went down a steep slope and into the Hindu crematorium, the local abattoir, and disappeared. This left Eddie, up on the tree, to calmly climb down the guava tree, loaded with guavas to return to the Entebbe Goan Institute, where Placie and Felix had sheepishly appeared.

That also reminds me of the incident where Raul Lima, Arthur D’Mello and Vincey Azavedo, as young boys were caught helping themselves to succulent mangoes in the Botanical Gardens and were taken to the Entebbe Police station. Their parents were called – Raul was given a telling off by his dad, Arthur was given a stiff cuff over the head, Vincey was given a firm kick down his backside and fell down the steps at the Entebbe Police Station. Whereupon, the OC Police charged Vincey’s father for cruelty to children!!

On one occasion, as some of us were returning home from the Club at night, and walking our bicycles up-hill, we came across the Night Soil Porters (Churras). They were the ones who cleaned our toilets into their storage carts. There was no flush system then. I remember one recently arrived Goan who was in the toilet when the Churras opened the rear to remove the tray. He came screaming out without his trousers, shouting ‘robbers, robbers’! One of us taunted the Churras and we were faced with the prospect of a bucket full of excrement. We made a hasty exit.

Some of the bicycle owners were enthusiast. We had Felix D’Mello who only bought a green Humber cycle. Armand Rodrigues, a Raleigh enthusiast, who always polished his bike with Simoniz Wax. He even invented a brake light for his bicycle. Most of us had dynamos, run off the cycle wheel, to provide light. And we had an assortment of cycle horns, trouser clips to avoid grease from the chain, etc. Those were the days.

Then, we graduated to motorcycles. Domnic Santos owned a Harley

Davidson, the envy of us all. John Remedios had a BSA Bantam. My brother, Armand, bought a BSA Bantam. I bought a Triumph. His was always gleaming but mine sounded better and ran well. Later, Hubert D'Souza, Lawrence Siqueira and some others had motorcycles. We all had good fun. Picnics became more fulfilling and girlfriends more admiring.

Joseph D'Mello on his BSA 650cc from the Public Works Department was coming back from Kampala to Entebbe, with Cajetan Leitao on the pillion seat. Nearing Entebbe, up a climb, Joseph had to stop. Cajetan stood up to ease his feet and Joseph took off happily carrying on a conversation with Cajetan, only to discover when he reached home that his passenger had been left standing.

Hubert D'Souza, at the time he had the best motorbike and was the envy of us all. Henry Rodrigues was on the pillion seat holding a tray-full of eggs, bought at his office. Hubert took a fast, sharp, turn at the Entebbe Town Council Offices and Henry went off for a six and was naturally splattered with the eggs!

Willie Mascarenhas, on a very powerful 500cc Triumph, was coming up Nsamizi Hill. He misjudged and miscalculated his speed and crashed into the road culvert round the bend. Fortunately, he was totally uninjured, unlike his motorbike. He got up, walked across to the culvert and kicked it, abusing the damn thing for being in the wrong place!

When we bought our motorcycles, we did not need a driving licence. When Driving Licences were introduced we all had to go to a formality test at the Entebbe Police Station. Mr. Anderson, the O/C Police asked each of us a few questions and then told us to ride out, a minute apiece, turn left and return after 3 miles down the road. We faithfully followed his instructions. On our return, most of us (including myself) were told we had failed, because we had not indicated by hand that we were turning left out of the Police forecourt. However, we were told that we would be given our licence next week!

Our social life and our picnics became more entertaining after that. Those of us who had motorcycles took passengers and picnic foods, etc. This led to a break-up between those who had and those who did not. The latter called themselves Moonrockers. They even clubbed

together to buy a giant Citroen car which, with only one registered driver between them, made many an expedition to the cinema in Kampala, picnics, etc. We may have ridiculed them but we did admire them.

By 1956 my brother Armand had bought a VW Beetle. It was the idol of his eye, polished, clean and gleaming at all times. I went on to buy an Opel Kadet. It took me to the National Parks, to Kenya and to romance. My brother and I shared accommodation with one garage with Asbestos sides and roof and with an overhanging guava tree. One day, Armand returned home, opened the garage door and found Felix D'Mello who was trapped after falling off the guava tree, and plummeting into the garage after smashing the roof!

By then many Entebbe Goans became eligible for subsidised Government loans (deposit of less than 3%, less than 3% interest on the rest.) and bought cars. We did not even need a full driving licence for the loan. We had several accidents, some fatal. A young wife and a friend died in a VW Beetle. The Chief Clerk in the Secretariat died on his way back from duty. Several young boys passed away on their way back from a successful football match.

Once, coming out of Kampala, after a cricket match, with my Peugeot Estate car crammed with 11 passengers, we came across a Police motorcyclist (nicknamed "MAU MAU"). He glanced at the overloaded car and went down the road to the round-a-about. We knew that he was gunning for us. I accelerated away, saw him in the distance, turned into a dirt track and got my passengers out. We silently watched him tearing past. My excess passengers thumbed lifts back and I drove on. We came across a confused Police motorcyclist who did not believe his eyes.

By 1968, nearly every Goan household owned a car in Entebbe. We had parking problems at the Club, at the Church and elsewhere. Where we previously in Entebbe, in the 1950's, had only 5 cars in Entebbe, a lorry, over a hundred bicycles and a few motorcycles – in the 1960's we only had a few bicycles, several motor cycles and over 70 cars! We had moved on from walking, cycling, and motorcycling to car ownership.

FAMILY TRAJECTORIES

Ferdinand Rodrigues

I was born in Jinja, Uganda. My father, who was a British Civil Servant was employed as a Clerk in the Forest Department. Even though he was the only son he had emigrated from Goa, then Portuguese India, in 1915 (aged 19). He was seen off at Mormugao Harbour (the scene for the film “Sea Wolves”), by his tearful mother Artemisia Godinho Rodrigues, whose husband had perished at sea many years earlier.

My father was fortunate to set out to work for a merchant, the Menezes family business, in Kisumu. They owned a prosperous general store in Kisumu, Kenya.

Kisumu was earlier on a part of Uganda but was transferred by the colonial powers of the day to Kenya, to give it an only outlet on to Lake Victoria. President Idi Amin in the 1970’s offered to buy it back for £2000, which was the nominal book value when it was transferred.

My father left the Menezes firm to join up on the SS MacKinnon, a boat that did the rounds of Lake Victoria. He then joined the Forest Department and served in Masindi, Jinja and Entebbe for a total of 35 years. He was duly recognised by the British Government with a Certificate of Honour awarded by King George VI. We still treasure his Certificate and memories of his medal and a toffee tin given to him by the Duchess of York (later Queen Mother) when he assisted during their visit to Uganda (all of which were later stolen!) My father’s exploits and memories would have made for memorable reading.

I was a Civil Servant of the British Protectorate of Uganda from 1950 until 1972. As a civil servant I had to swear allegiance and loyalty to King George VI then to Queen Elizabeth (our present monarch) and was proud of it. I had to also swear allegiance and loyalty to the Ugandan Government. I was a naturalised British Subject who ironically, later on, did not have the right to enter the United Kingdom and was subject to a “quota voucher”!

When King George VI passed away, and Princess Elizabeth was in Kenya, and the Nairobi Airport at Embakasi was waterlogged, she had to return to England via Entebbe. I was at the airport because I was the Duty Officer in the Chief Secretary’s Office for the weekend.

George Cartland, the then Administrative Secretary (who was acting in the absence of the Governor and of the Chief Secretary, who were away in Kenya and elsewhere), had to deputise. The Queen did greet me and several others at the airport. To me it was a momentous occasion to be proud of, to have met the future queen of the realm albeit in such sad circumstances.

In 1969, I was given full charge of the arrangements for the visit of Pope Paul VI to Uganda and indeed to the whole of Africa. The Pope had accepted an invitation to visit Uganda, to lay the foundation stone for a National Shrine, to announce the beatification of 14 Ugandan martyrs and to meet with all the Catholic Bishops of Africa. All that I knew was that I was in full charge, that money was not to be my consideration and that I should just get on with it within the next 79 days. President Obote added: ‘this is a first visit by the Pope to Africa and we do want to be proud of it’.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Basil Bataringaya was appointed Chairman to the Papal Visit Committee, and my Permanent Secretary, Frank Kalimuzo was the Secretary. I reported to Bataringaya and Kalimuzo regularly, had no feedback from Bataringaya who was quite supportive, and to Kalimuzo who was a stalwart at all times, even when two days before the visit Obote told me off for not accommodating the visiting Cardinals in the small Grand Hotel instead of the national 5 star Apollo Hotel. He said the latter was a bed of prostitutes. During the preparations for the visit that was indeed the only one occasion I personally met with Obote. We hastily switched the venues, arranged for the necessary altars, etc. to be transferred. To avoid black-marketeering we had taken over all hotels, all bookings, and with no guarantee that we would pay for their services. Similarly, all transport, all souvenir shops and street kiosks, had been taken over, and we had set up campsites for 10,000 local visitors. All this was on Obote’s instruction to avoid profiteering.

The visit went off very well and was a credit to the Government. President Obote had made it clear that Amin should not be involved. However, each time the Papal motorcade went past Nakivubo clock tower roundabout, there was Amin in the turret of a tank, standing to attention and solemnly saluting. Amin posed no problem whatsoever and was very helpful when we needed army presence.

Pope Paul was quite impressed, wanted to meet my family which Archbishop Paul Marcincus (his Personal Assistant) arranged and the Pope presented my wife and each of the children with a memento, including an autographed photograph of himself which I still treasure. I was duly honoured by the Vatican, with a Knight Commander of the order of St. Gregory the Great with the approval of the Queen.

In April 1972 I was awarded the Uganda Republic Medal (the only Honour that the Uganda Government had introduced). The late B.G. Patel, late James D'Souza, MBE and Eric D'Souza were also honoured. James D'Souza and I had left Uganda by then and the Uganda Government even went through the protocol of obtaining the approval of the Queen for us to be awarded this honour!

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

Exano Pereira

The following was provided by Exano Pereira. It was doing the rounds on an email chain mail without an original source identified and without any copyright signaled, but with a request to pass it on to others who may recognize the features it describes.

We would share a dosa; dip a chapatti into someone else's plate of curry without batting an eyelid. We ate jam sandwiches or pickle on bread and butter, raw mangoes with salt that set our teeth on edge, and drank orange squash with sugar and water in it. We ate at roadside stalls, drank water from tender coconuts, ate everything that was bad for us from mumfalees to bhel puri to bhajias and samosas. We ate fruit lying on the ground that we shook down from the tree above. And we never washed the fruit.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day during the holidays, we were never ever bored, and we were allowed freedom all day as long as we were back when the streetlights came on, or when our parents told us to do.

We would spend hours making paper kites, building things out of scraps with old pram wheels or cycle rims, inventing our own games, playing traditional games called hide and seek, kick the can and rounders, ride old cycles and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. We rode cycles everywhere and someone sat on the carrier or across the bar to school or the pictures, or you walked to a friend's house. We swam with an inflated tube, which we got from somebody who was replacing their car tyres. We ran barefoot without thinking about it, if we got cut we used iodine on it, which made us jump.

We were put in prams and sent out with ayahs to meet other children with ayahs, whilst our parents were busy. We had great friends, whose parents we called Uncle and Aunty! The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

We had a bath using a bucket and mug and used Lifebuoy soap. We did not know what conditioners meant.

Those were the days my friend!!

JINJA TO KAMPALA

Nita Rodrigues

It was past mid-night way back in September 1970, when my husband Placido, my brother Tolly and myself were returning to Jinja from Frieda D'Souza's 21st Birthday Party which was celebrated in grand style in a posh hall in Kampala, Uganda, when suddenly our car stalled and came to a halt. This was on the Jinja-Kampala road about 10 miles away from Kampala.

Luckily there was a petrol station nearby (though closed for the night), so we pushed the car off the road and parked it under their lamp-post. We then stood by the road hoping for a ride. A few party cars drove past but we only recognised the fourth car (an Audi) that came along at speed - it was Evarist Correa's with Sandra and a car-load of people. We waved out frantically but to no avail. They did not notice us due to the speed and just drove on!

A few minutes later, a Police car drove past and next moment a short distance away there was a scary loud bang - As it was a Police car we felt safe enough to walk up to them.

It transpired that their car suffered a burst tyre and they said they would have to wait for back-up but would stop a car for us. We wanted to go back to Kampala to get a ride with my brother Ben. So the Police stopped the first car that came along and asked the man in the car to take us to Kampala. We volunteered to pay him for the ride. So we got into his car. He drove for a couple of miles and casually told us that he had to make a diversion to meet his brother. We told him that he had agreed to take us straight to Kampala. He insisted and suddenly turned right into a single mud track into the forest, which was a very bumpy ride. We kept telling him to stop and let us out. He continued driving and after a quick consultation between Placido Tolly and myself - we decided it was time for action!!

Tolly and Placido - together grabbed and turned the steering wheel towards the left where it was just a grass verge....into a shallow ditch and simultaneously as the car came to a halt, each of us opened our doors and jumped out, running back towards the main

road in pitch darkness like the devil himself was after us - though the headlights facing in the opposite direction helped us a bit as it provided a glow of light.

The man kept shouting at us to return to his car - we just ran all the way, down the slope, fearfully looking back to check if he was following us till we reached the junction. I had to take off my high-heeled shoes to keep up with Placido and Tolly.

We saw a row of little 'dukhas' (shops) across the road. We crossed over and from nowhere appeared a man with a 'panga' (like a machete) asking what we wanted. He was the 'askari' (watchman) and was disturbed from his sleep I guess. We told him what happened and he said that we had a lucky escape because that was a hideout of thieves. He said they would have stripped us of all our possessions and dumped us in a ditch. Wow, that was so scary - we were shaking.

In a few minutes another Police car turned up to replace the 'burst' tyre of their earlier parked car. So once again we stopped the Police - told them our story - and this time, seeing our plight, they readily gave us a lift to Kampala right up to Ben's place, who took us to Mubango (Mabira Forest) where my parents lived and were babysitting our young sons Randell and Roy. My Dad arranged for our Ford Classic 315 to be towed back to Mubango immediately. Otherwise we might only be left with just the 'shell' of the car.

We had a narrow escape indeed! All's well that ends well.

IDI AMIN

Ferdinand Rodrigues

The film, “Last King of Scotland”, and a letter from H.H. Greaves, published in the Sunday Mail of 28th January 2007, prompts me to write about my time in Uganda.

The last self proclaimed King of Scotland, conqueror of the British Empire and the President of Uganda was a simple soldier when I first met him face to face in Arua, West Nile District of Uganda, at the Government Rest House in January 1963. I was there to attend my brother’s wedding, in the company of the late Arthur D’Mello, late L. D’Costa, late Ivor Rodrigues and my own brother, the late Leonid Rodrigues. Our journey to Arua, through the Murchison Falls National Park, was an adventure and could form another story.

I had known of Amin as a simple, jovial good humoured man and a well known and good boxer. He candidly told me that he knew that he had been propped up by British Officers for army propaganda purposes only. This was two years after Uganda had gained its independence from the British Government.

He was at the Arua Rest House with two of his rustic and illiterate wives and some children. He was genial, hospitable and good company, playing simple ludo with his children in the front verandah of the Guest House, under the Alladina paraffin lamp, swatting away at mosquitoes. When I told him that we were going into the Belgian Congo (now known as Zaire) he even warned me to beware of the border crooks (his own words) because petrol and beer was cheaper on the other side and the Custom officials extracted bribes. We had no problems because the Customs Officer in charge was a Goan, who even accompanied us into and out of the Congo. However, the Manager of the Guest House told me quite candidly that he did not expect to receive payment for the stay by Amin and his entourage at the guest house. I never knew whether Amin ever consciously remembered me after that brief meeting of three days in 1963.

On the night of the coup in Uganda, Mike Davies, an ex-Permanent Secretary for Internal Affairs, and by then the Principal of the Institute for Public Administration, telephoned me at about 2.00 am. He was resident in Kampala and I was in Entebbe – some 21 miles away. Entebbe had been the seat of the Government and though the seat of

government had been moved to Kampala most of the Government Offices were still in Entebbe.

Entebbe was previously known as Port Alice and then as Entebbe (in the local language Entebbe meant “seat”). Davies rang to tell me that there was an uprising by the Army, the Police Commissioner’s House (which was close to his residence) had been bombed and the Commissioner’s father had been killed, tanks were rolling all over. I began to wonder how he was aware of all this at such short notice.

Nevertheless he was an honest, decent, pragmatic person and someone I could call upon for advice with a great deal of confidence.

I immediately telephoned Z.H.K. Bigirwenkya, (nicknamed “BIG”) who was by then Permanent Secretary in the President’s Office, where I was the Under Secretary with responsibility for the Administrative Services (19 District Commissioners and over 1000 staff), for administration generally and for security reporting in the Districts. BIG instructed me to ensure that the President’s Office in Entebbe and other Government Departments in Entebbe remained closed. I became very busy and engrossed in this task, having to make phone calls and even personal visits, that I forgot to mention to three persons (Aloma Lima, Felix D’Mello and Arvind Thakore) whom I regularly took to Kampala, that we would not be traveling that day. Some others, who were not aware of the up-rising were taken by surprise. Offices in Entebbe were closed and everybody stayed at home and on the alert.

The Government owned TV and Radio stations broadcast music and no news.

It had been ominously quiet. There had been no incidents in Entebbe whatsoever. However, that evening, army vehicles appeared. They went directly to Entebbe Airport. A Rasputin missionary flight from Holland was due in and Fr. DeMers, a White Father’s Missionary for several years in Uganda, who also was their Treasurer, was at the airport to welcome incoming missionaries and to receive aid and to escort departing missionaries.

The army drove into the Airport premises, opened fire indiscriminately. Portraits of Obote were shot at and blasted off the walls. The late Arthur D’Mello, a Goan employee of East African Airways, rescued an injured Dutch priest and managed to get him to the nearest hospital in Entebbe. The priest survived to return to Holland thanks to the late Arthur D’Mello. Another priest, Fr. DeMers

dead body slumped across a weighing scale. Several counter staff were also killed and injured. Fr. DeMers body was discovered two days later on the lake shore in Old Entebbe, ironically at the very monument which marked the landing of the first White Father missionary to Uganda. He had been robbed of all his personal possessions and left in just his underwear. I was left to draft a letter of apology to the then Archbishop Tourigny – which Amin never signed but Valerian Ovonji, the Permanent Secretary was gentleman enough to do so.

Late that evening the Radio music was repeatedly interrupted to instruct all Civil Servants to report for duty next morning as usual. I was the Under Secretary in the President's Office, which was based in Kampala but I was, by choice, resident in Entebbe 21 miles away. Two of the three persons, named earlier, were not prepared to do the journey with me. So I set out with Felix D'Mello.

We went past dead bodies on the 21 miles drive. The Baganda (people of Buganda Province) were gloating, celebrating, putting branches of trees over dead bodies to keep them smoldering. One dead body I shall never forget was that of Albert Erikodi (from Sebei District). He was the head chauffeur and doubled up as a security man for President Obote. I grieved for his seven children and family. Albert and I would go game hunting together with Major Gus Karugaba and Cajetan Leitao (now in Australia) and we all shared an amicable relationship.

I drove the 21 miles with no interference from the Army who were everywhere. I arrived at Parliament Building, where the President's Office was based. My office was on the third floor (a floor below the President's Office). The ornate metal gates to the car park and office had been blown apart. In the car park were four huge tanks and plenty of soldiers. My car space was occupied and so I reversed, helped by many grinning and happy soldiers. I parked outside on the street facing the Municipal Offices. I walked back into the car park and into the Offices, up the lift and into my own office with not a single question asked.

Later, our Chief Accountant, the late Baldevbhai Patel, came in, followed by Ralph Nshekanabo, the Under Secretary for Establishments. We were the only three staff, out of the complement of some 260 who reported for the first week.

At about 11.00 am my office door was kicked open, three armed soldiers came in – Who was I? What was I doing? Who did I work

for? The leader barked an order in Lugbara (a local northern dialect). The two soldiers opened a large urn, dipped in a mess tin and served me coffee dripping on to my table. The next day was better. They served me coffee in a metal mug, put a tissue under it and came later to take away the mug! Patel had the same treatment.

Patel, Nshekanabo and I would sit and talk. There was no work we could do. We read and re-read our files and papers. The two Registries (Security and Open Registry) where all the files were stored remained shut. We had no incoming mail. We would walk out at lunchtime and watch the crowds celebrating, cheering, etc.

Obote's effigy in the form of an emblem the shape of a coin, on the ceremonial arch at the entrance drive to Parliament Building, was being removed over a period of two days by an Indian (Sikh - Khalsi) firm who had actually devised and installed it. Michael Kaggwa (son of Kawalya Kaggwa OBE, who was a member of the Legislative Assembly in British days), an eminent lawyer, was filming the removal of the effigy. The next day he was found dead, with his hands bound to the steering wheel of his Mercedes car that had been set alight. I saw Michael's charred body.

Late during the afternoon of the day following the coup, Amin gave his first press conference, which I was asked to attend. My Permanent Secretary (the late Z.H.K. Bigirwenkya) was nowhere around. To his credit Wacha Olwol, his deputy, turned up. Wacha Olwol was a close relation of President Obote and a Langi, (the tribe of Obote). We were just five civil servants present with the Press and army officials around.

Amin was cool and calm, he told us that the Army had taken over, that he would bring prosperity and welfare to the people of Uganda and that he had already received support from the British Government. This scenario was repeated the following day, when all the 19 District Commissioners had been summoned to Kampala.

We had seen Bataringaya, the Deputy Prime Minister, being hustled away to a waiting car in the car park. The next day, we got to know that the Deputy Prime Minister had been killed.

Frank Kalimuzo, my colleague and then at Independence my first Permanent Secretary in the President's Office, had been transferred to Makerere University as its Chancellor. Frank was summarily arrested on the campus and then released. Later the same evening of his

release, an announcement was made on air that he had escaped and was being sought. He was actually at his residence, with his family and other staff from the University, at the time. That night he was picked up from his residence and never seen again. (His widow, Esther, had a clothing boutique in Kampala in 1990 when I met her).

Obote's brother, Michael Engena, who was the Chief Cypher Officer and Security Officer to Obote, was arrested, his arms with his scourged body tied to the rear of a landrover and paraded all over Entebbe town. It is alleged that he was later dragged through the streets of Entebbe, from the back of the landrover.

One relaxation that our children and we had, was fishing off the Entebbe Pier or elsewhere on the lakeshore. After the coup we had to abandon this pastime because of the dead bloated bodies that would float past. Perch had been introduced by the Israelis in the catchment area and it was rumoured that one of the Perch that had been caught had a gold ring in its stomach. Many of us stopped eating fish!

I was due to take early retirement in 1972, prior to the coup, but I was asked to stay on for another six months. The Government had the right to do this. As part of my duties, I had to visit, inspect and talk to my District Commissioners in their respective districts. On such trips I would take with me some junior staff so that they could gain experience. On the last occasion I had Joseph Kato and Arvind Thakore. I also had my three firearms in my car. My firearms were for the odd game for food and perhaps for protection. (When I left Uganda, before the infamous Asian expulsions, I deposited the firearms in the Government armory, Jinja for safe keeping. They have all vanished.) We set off for Jinja, Tororo, Mbale, Kapchorwa, Soroti, Moroto (Karamoja district), through Lira (Obote's home district) to Gulu and back.

We stayed in Hotels or in Government Rest Houses. Having stayed the night in the Soroti (Teso District) guest house we set off for Moroto, in the Karamoja District. We encountered a severe thunderstorm and torrential rain. Eventually we came across a "drift". A "drift" is best described in Africa terms as a sudden flood of water across the main road. We waited for several hours for the water to subside. We sat in the car in front of a Bailey bridge. Every few minutes we reversed and watched as the water level rose. Eventually we realised that we could not cross it and we decided to make a detour to Gulu (Acholi District).

When we arrived in Gulu and checked into the Acholi Inn, I called the District Commissioner of Gulu, Acholi District, to tell him that we were there. He was quite excited to hear that we were safe. Apparently, Henry Kiyemba (ex Obote Personal Assistant and by then my Permanent Secretary in the President's Office) had been ringing around to establish my whereabouts.

That day in Moroto when the soldiers had lined up for their meal in the army canteen all those of Obote's tribe were singled out, attacked and killed. The town was in an uproar and the District Commissioner, of Moroto, Luka Idro, did not want me to arrive there in the middle of it.

The District Commissioner for Teso District was later arrested by the army on some trumped up pretext. I saw him on British Television. His main crime, perhaps, was to instruct the Council labourers to recover and bury the bodies floating on the lake. The town drew its water supply from this lake. Unfortunately the army appeared and forced the labourers to return the bodies to the lake. The District Commissioner issued a notice to the Town to boil the water, which was contaminated.

At the suggestion of the District Commissioner, Gulu, I spoke with Henry Kiyemba, my then Permanent Secretary in the President's Office. He told us to return to Kampala immediately because of the likelihood of the unrest spreading. Before we could even have a meal or refreshments, Joseph, Arvind and I set off from Gulu late that evening. We had to cross the bridge at Karuma Falls, which is just before the famous 19 foot wide Murchison Falls. We rolled round a bend approaching the bridge and saw several army tanks, jeeps, etc lined up.

We did not have time to think. We just drove sedately past them all without being challenged even once. They were too busy pilfering from the prisoners. We knew that this bridge was notorious and used by the army to dispose of unwanted persons. They were given options: to either jump off the bridge; or they could be pushed over; or they could opt to be shot. The Nile below was infested by then, with well-fed crocodiles. Whatever the poor victim's choice was, the result was inevitable.

We did not even breathe a sigh of relief or speak to each other for a long time but drove on as fast as we could into the night. Imagine what if we were challenged and my firearms were discovered. Though we

had Security Passes with our photographs and signatures, at roadblocks between Entebbe and Kampala I had discovered that the soldiers could not read and the Security Passes meant nothing to them. Indeed an American negro, who was stopped had a rough time because he was seen as a negro who pretended that he was not a local and could not speak the language.

We reached Kampala after 4.00 am in the morning and drove straight into Bat Valley, a restaurant; woke up the staff and demanded a few stiff drinks. We needed it, having not even spoken to each other for over three hours in the car.

THE PERILS IN BEING A GOOD SAMARITAN IN UGANDA

Nita Rodrigues

In the early 1960's I used to drive to work - from Mubango (Mabira Forest) Uganda, to Jinja town (about 40 miles round trip) accompanied by my brothers Ben and Tolly, and sisters Zita and Myra. I would drop them to their respective schools and then proceed to my office. During the school holidays I used to be on my own.

One day on my way home, about 5 miles before my turn off from the main road, I noticed a fallen motorbike on the road. I slowed down, maneuvered past it and a little further I saw a man lying on his side seemingly unconscious. As I was alone, I wasn't quite sure what I should do. Of course, we had no 'mobiles' or 'cell phones' in those days. So I drove close enough to the man, who was in uniform - he was a traffic policeman.

I did not get out of the car, kept the engine running, eased myself from the driver's seat into the passenger's seat, rolled down the window glass, then noticed that he was bleeding so I poured cold water on to his face. He started moaning and groaning and stirred. I stayed in the car. He blinked for a few moments, opened his eyes and saw me. He spoke English, asked me what happened, so I told him that I stopped because I saw him lying unconscious and couldn't just drive away. He tried to focus his eyes on me but soon shut them with a groan. A car came along, I waved for it to stop, and it slowed down but did not stop.

The next vehicle that came by was a huge truck - (all this time I had my car engine running, stood beside the car with the door ajar - ready for a speedy take-off if the need arose). The truck stopped, I explained the situation, so the truck driver with the help of his assistant, picked up the heavy motor-bike off the road and flung it into the back of his truck. I then requested him to take the unconscious man to the hospital in Jinja, as he was heading that way. He mumbled something and to my utter amazement, before I could say another word, he climbed into his seat and just drove off!! A few cars slowed down to take a look.

I finally succeeded in persuading one person to take the wounded man to the Jinja Hospital. He was loaded into the back seat of the car and I headed home. I told my family the story. They had mixed opinions about the whole episode mainly because of the risk, as I was on my own.

About a week later, I got a telephone call from the Jinja Police Station at my place of work (PWD Jinja). I went there and was taken to meet someone (the policeman who was knocked down from his motor bike). He looked at me and said he remembered my face but nothing else - I believe that the first car that drove past, reported the accident to the Jinja Police Station and also described me and my 'Zephyr' car registration. So it was generally assumed that I had knocked him down.

Whilst totally shocked and taken aback, I explained that I was innocent and did not appreciate being accused when, in fact, I had done a good deed for the Police Department; I then wrote a statement to that effect. The Police said they would investigate further and keep me informed. A few days later I was asked to report once again to the Jinja Police Station and this time I was thanked profusely by them for saving a life.

Apparently, a passenger who was in the taxi that knocked down the Policeman reported the incident to the Police saying that a Policeman was chasing their overloaded taxi; when he was alongside ordering the driver to pull over, the taxi driver deliberately swerved, sent the motorbike out of control and the Policeman landed hard on the ground and drove off. As he continued to bleed he obviously lost consciousness. That was when I reached the spot and tried to revive him with a splash of cold water.

When all this information was heard by the policeman, it all came back to him and I was thanked again and cleared.

Our prayers were answered.

Moral of the story? There can be repercussions by being a good Samaritan! But we still continue with kind deeds.

MY LAST DAYS IN UGANDA

Rowland Rebello

I was living and working in a small town called Jinja, which is approximately 50 miles from Kampala, the capital of Uganda. I had to travel this distance from Jinja to finalise my emigration formalities. It must be noted that within this short distance of 50 miles from Jinja to Kampala, there were 5 roadblocks manned by Uganda Army soldiers who were usually drunk and unruly.

The purpose of these army roadblocks was to check on all emigrating Uganda Asians. At each of these checkpoints we were forced to open our car trunks and suitcases at gunpoint. An eventful and disturbing trip happened to me and two of my friends, Kenneth Antao and Brian D'Silva in early November 1972. This is what happened on that unforgettable afternoon.

We left Barclays Bank in Jinja after completing our final banking formalities. I said a very tearful and heart breaking farewell to my very trusted servant and friend Antonio Okoti. He had served my maternal grandparents) the Da Silva family in his homeland Ngora in the Teso District) for well over 40 years and my family, the Rebello family for over 20 years.

After this last goodbye we Kenneth Antao, Brian D'Silva and myself, left Jinja in Kenneth's car for Kampala and Entebbe Airport, which was to become our final departure from Uganda, the country of our birth. As we drove very carefully through the streets of Jinja one could clearly notice how dead this once thriving town was by way of business activity and traffic.

The only activities were the army tracks and soldiers patrolling the streets. We drove past these soldiers trying our best not to attract attention because the soldiers were always drunk and disorderly and one mishap could cost us our lives.

We wound our way through the streets and eventually came to the Jinja Bridge, which was the first main roadblock between Jinja and Kampala. At this checkpoint we were made to open the car trunk and

suitcases at gunpoint. Here one could actually see and sense the hatred by the Uganda soldiers against the Asians. The soldiers were rude, aggressive and unnecessarily pointing their guns at us and the other Asians in the cars behind us.

When we got the green light from the soldiers to go ahead, we got into our car and to our surprise there was a drunken soldier sitting in the back seat with a pistol and army rifle. He refused to leave the car and with the situation in Uganda at that time and with so many soldiers around, we could not use force to get him out of the car.

He demanded to be taken to Kampala and, under the circumstances, we complied. We noticed that this soldier was terribly intoxicated and he was bleeding profusely from the face. From his wounds it appeared that he was probably beaten up days earlier and before the wounds could heal, he was either beaten again or due to his drunken state he may have fallen on his face causing the blood to pour from what appeared to be old scar tissue.

As we left the bridge, we were all very tense not knowing whether, further ahead, he would hijack the car at gunpoint or if this was a trap, working in collusion with other renegade soldiers. During the drive to Kampala he kept on pointing the gun behind our heads in a menacing manner.

Kenneth Antao was driving and during this ordeal he and Brian, who was in the back seat with the soldier, were very calm and collected. I was in the passenger seat, sitting in such a position that if a dangerous situation arose, I could grab the pistol from the soldier's hand. Fortunately that opportunity did not arise as one mistake on my part could have been disastrous.

The next check point was Lugazi and we were very clearly concerned about our safety because this soldier was bleeding so profusely that he could have easily have told the soldiers at the Lugazi road block that we attacked him and we were the cause of his wounds.

We could not take the risk of reaching the Lugazi checkpoint with this wounded soldier and by this time each of us was formulating a plan in our minds to get rid of this soldier by whatever means possible. But

the question was, by what means? It must be noted that he was intoxicated and still waving the pistol behind our heads.

A few miles before reaching Lugazi we were passing a row of houses occupied by the small farmers of that area. He asked us to slow down, which we did and suddenly asked us to stop the car near one of the houses because he had spotted a number of young teenage girls standing in front of one of the houses. He asked us to accompany him because he obviously wanted to satisfy his sexual lust with those girls, and being a soldier he thought he could easily have his way. We agreed to accompany him but with the intention of leaving him there as soon as the opportunity arose.

He got out of the car, but was very unsteady on his feet and it was then that I told Kenneth Antao to keep the engine running.

Kenneth very calmly waited for me to tell him the next move, and Brian D'Silva in the rear seat looked as calm and cool as a cucumber but anxiously waited for the next move. I was in the front passenger seat with my car door open when the soldier came out of the rear seat next to Brian D'Silva and stood in front of my open car door and, as a result, I was unable to close my door to get away. The only alternative now was to push him away so that I could close my car door.

I gave him a push and he stumbled backward into a small ditch and as soon as this happened, Kenneth made the right move and drove off as fast as he could away from the surprised soldier. Brian and I looked back expecting to see the soldier shooting at our moving car, but what we saw was to our advantage. The soldier was struggling to get to his feet and therefore in no position or condition to do any shooting. That was the last we saw of him.

When we reached Kampala that afternoon we kept a low profile just in case he reported the matter to his superiors or the other soldiers. I would like to emphasise yet again that the life of any Asian was not worth a dime during the crisis in Uganda. Throughout this ordeal although we were uneasy, not knowing what to expect next, Kenneth, Brian and myself maintained a very calm exterior.

That night we stayed in a hotel and the next evening we got to Entebbe Airport by a special bus reserved for expelled Uganda Asians.

Needless to say we had to pass through 3 roadblocks between Kampala and Entebbe Airport.

Kenneth, Brian and myself traveled on a Red Cross passport destined for Italy, as refugees. Kenneth left 5 hours earlier. Brian and myself, joined by Philip DeSouza, eventually boarded a plane after sleeping on the Airport floor for 24 hours. When the plane eventually got into the air we knew we were now safe at last and, when we looked down, we saw Uganda for the last time.

I must say I was sad leaving the land of our birth and the wonderful trusted servants we had to leave behind, especially Antonio Okoti, but deep down we knew we were going to a better life in far away lands. We would not see our servants again. I guess that was our destiny, and it was meant to be that way. As the plane picked up height and momentum, we knew we were out of Uganda and literally out of Africa.

The above-mentioned incidents, as you all know, happened in 1972. Since that time we learned that my trusted servant Antonio Okoti died in 1975 or thereabouts. Kenneth Antao is in Vancouver. Brian D'Silva is happily married with a family in Michigan. And I, Rowland Rebello, am living in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, with a wonderful family.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Ferdinand Rodrigues

When asked, I simply confirm that I did 21 years' service with the British and Uganda Government as a Civil Servant, ending up as the Under Secretary in the President's Office with responsibility for the Administrative Service and its 19 District Commissioners. My role included responsibility for organizing many of the main events in Uganda during that time. Amongst many events, I was responsible for the administrative arrangements for the 13th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, the Conference of the Organization of African Unity, the historical visit of Pope Paul VI, and other important events.

During all these events there always were incidents and problems to contend with. Fortunately I was only answerable to my Permanent Secretary, Frank Kalimuzo or the Minister responsible. In many instances I was given full authority and told, -get on with the job, money is not your concern, just do it! I would like to recall a couple of incidents during these important events.

At all these major State events, we would set up a Secretariat consisting of Assistant Secretaries from the Administrative Service and other professional civil servants. The Assistant Secretaries would be delegated responsibility for each of the foreign delegations.

For the Organization of African Unity conference all the foreign delegations were housed at the then Apollo Hotel (now re-named the Inter-Continental) in Kampala. An Assistant Secretary was allocated to each delegation. The Assistant Secretary allocated to the Kenya delegation was Gus Karugaba. F. Okwenje was allocated to the Ethiopian delegation.

The OAU Conference went well. Mobutu of Zaire turned up with a secretariat of 96 supporters. They spent much of their time in Uganda shopping for luxuries that they could not get in Zaire. Electronic firms did well. (The hotel lost a lot of its fittings and linen!) Mobuto left a tip of exactly £500 for the staff at the Hotel.

Emperor Haille Selasie had his entourage including 2 Chinchinellas with diamond-encrusted collars. At the end of each evening when we, the staff, met for debriefing we would eye the dogs hoping they would lose their collar if their minder was not around. It was a standing joke amongst us.

Upon conclusion of the conference, Haille Selasie was due to depart from Entebbe Airport. He had expressed a wish to meet with ex-servicemen who had served during the last World War in Abyssinia and Ethiopia. So we mobilized television, radio, District Commissioners, Chiefs, etc. Some 68 ex-servicemen turned up and we arranged for them to be present at Entebbe Airport on the day of Haille Selasie's departure. They were lined up to meet with him prior to his inspection of the Guard of Honour mounted by the Uganda Police. He duly shook hands with each one and had a word, (-I wonder whether they understood him-) and thanked each of the ex-servicemen.

At the end of the line he suddenly turned to an aide, produced a wad of Sterling (£750 to be exact) and said it should be divided amongst the 68 ex-servicemen. F. Okwenje ended up with the money in his hand. The small figure of Haille Selasie mounted the steps to the aircraft, waved goodbye and was gone. Okwenje had a host of ex-servicemen demanding their share of the money. It was past noon and the only Bank in Entebbe, the National and Grindlays was shut for the day and the Bank Manager could not change the security timing on it. Okwenje used his initiative, got in touch with the late Baldevbhai Patel, Chief Accountant in the President's Office at the time, and managed to get the £750 exchanged for Ugandan Shillings. The 68 ex-servicemen were outside the gates to the President's Office clamouring for their money when Okwenje distributed the cash to them.

At about the same time as Haille Selasie's departure, Jomo Kenyatta was due to leave from Kampala by road. He did not travel by air. His bodyguard would run alongside his car until it gained sufficient momentum and before jumping into their own following vehicle. The Guard of Honour to be mounted at the Apollo Hotel was by the Army. When the time came for the departure it began to rain. Gus Karugaba, who was responsible for the Kenya delegation, instructed the Officer in Charge of the Guard to move from the open car park to the covered drive-in that was in front of the hotel. At that juncture, Idi Amin in a

technicolour shirt turned up. He barked at the Officer in charge and demanded to know who was the person who instructed him to move the Guard. Gus Karugaba who was already under a lot of pressure retorted to Amin, in the presence of the men, – ‘Idi, you know who I am. When I was in the army you were not fit to polish my shoes.’ There was an unholy uproar. The men knew and respected Karugaba but who was the boss?

It must be recorded that Karugaba was a commissioned officer in the Army with the rank of a Major and was deputy to Amin. Whilst recruiting into the army he firmly rejected any candidates who did not match up to the required standards. Many of the candidates were put forward by political masters, including the Minister of Defence, Onama. Karugaba was suspended and due to be dismissed from the Army. He argued that he was a commissioned officer and could only be dismissed after a full court martial. The then Attorney General, Godfrey Binaisa, eventually agreed that he would succeed in an appeal. Through an agreed compromise, Karugaba was, by mutual agreement, moved into the Administrative Service as a Senior Assistant Secretary in the President’s Office, and which is why I had contact with him.

Amin demanded an apology from Karugaba that President Obote supported. Karugaba refused to apologise. Within a few days, President Obote went off to Singapore to attend the Commonwealth Prime Minister’s Conference during which Idi Amin staged a coup. Karugaba was, quite naturally, quite concerned. Surprise, surprise – Amin directed that Karugaba be appointed the Head of the Immigration Department.

A year later when I was leaving Uganda for good, at the Kampala Railway Station, I was given a note by a porter – it was from Karugaba. He was sorry he could not be present at the farewell party for me at the President’s Lodge. He was no longer in charge of the Immigration Department and he was fearful for his life. Later he left Uganda for Tanzania, was granted a scholarship to read Law in the USA, returned to Uganda under President Museveni, and became the Minister for Transport.

MEMORIES OF SCHOOL DAYS IN KENYA

Mavis Rodrigues

The name of my school was Catholic Parochial School and it was set in the grounds adjacent to Holy Family Cathedral. I remember my father always dropped me off in his light grey Morris Minor 1000. Its registration, KHQ 461 is set deep in my memory, as are its soft red leather seats and the weekly bath and shine he used to give it every Saturday morning. I remember it well because it was the one time in the week that I could indulge my fantasy of driving in the East African Safari Rally with Joginder Singh as *my* co-pilot.

School started promptly at 8.45 am – or should I say the National Anthem did. The Kenya flag would be hoisted up in pin drop silence to the whole school, which would have assembled in alphabetical order. Then we sang out, loud and strong in Swahili. The flag was then duly lowered and folded using what I assumed was the correct procedure, because it produced a triangle which I have since seen reproduced in other flag folding ceremonies.

This over, we would then have to line up again – this time in front of the wrought iron gates at the foot of the main school stairway. The names in each class were then called out for the register: ‘...Janice De Souza?...yes Miss Pinto!...Holly Fernandes?...yes Miss Pinto!..’ and it went on. This happened religiously every weekday...every weekday, that is, except Wednesday. Then, we had to cross over the large car park in front of the school and line up at the foot of the Cathedral steps, complete with light blue beret, for both boys and girls. A missing blue beret earned you an instant detention for an hour, after school on the Thursday of the same week.

The Cathedral seemed huge – the altar appeared to be a fair distance from the front door. I seem to recall that the aisle sloped down to it, and there was a towering Crucifix of Our Lord at the back of the altar. There was some more seating beyond the altar at this point and further seating to either side. I recall standing in that area left of the altar many a time, as part of the Sunday choir, conducted by our brilliant music teacher Mother Gertrude. She was a tiny, bespectacled Irish nun. She wore a white habit and a short black veil. The skirts of her habit seemed to have an abundance of material and 2 very deep pockets. I remember this because she would often dig deep for her

great white handkerchief to buff her specs. She was so focused on her music, and very good at it – we were all in awe of her.

The car park, which was common to both our school and the Cathedral, was fenced on two sides by hedges of orange bougainvillea. I remember this distinctly because we often picked a flower or leaf or two while we were waiting, small fluttering Kenya flags in hand, waiting for the motorcade of President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta to drive by on its way to/from Kenya Conference Centre nearby.

The far corner of the car park, the quiet end, would double as our games area. We had 4 houses: Red, Blue, Green and Yellow. I was in Green House. The only way of identifying your house was that you had to wear ‘bloomers’ of your house colour. What an old fashioned word it seems now, but in truth it described them accurately, because they were elasticated, very loose-fitting and airy and came down to the top of your knee. They were practical too, because they fitted over your school dress, so you didn’t necessarily have to waste time in changing rooms!

Each morning we would arrive at our desks with our school bag (more like a small suitcase) that we had packed the night before with the books required for that day. All our books, even our exercise books had to be covered with brown paper and have a label with your name, subject/book title and the Standard (class) that you were in. We used to get the nicest labels from the Catholic Bookshop, which was just behind our school. They were blue and white and the gum tasted lovely when you licked the back to stick them onto your books. The Catholic Bookshop was where you bought your first Parker Ink pen when your writing graduated from pencil to ink. I know that mine was coloured black and gold and it had a fine rather than a medium nib. It was like writing on silk. You bought, or rather your parents bought most things from there – colouring pencils, erasers with a blue bit for ink and a white bit for pencil correction, and rulers....

Rulers...I remember once when our Kiswahili teacher went round the class checking our homework. She then asked if anyone had a ruler that she could borrow. Loads of us put up our hands ‘Miss!...miss! Here’s one!...I’ve got one..!’ We wanted the kudos of *our* ruler being chosen by the teacher, not knowing, of course what she wanted it for. She accepted two of the rulers, called six peoples names and asked them to stand at the front of the classroom and pull their socks down.

Holding the rulers together she promptly strapped each of the 6 with the rulers because parts of their homework were wrong. I remember that the enthusiasm for lending your ruler became lost from that point on. Discipline took many forms...I remember a boy in our class who had an unfortunate protruding lower lip. On one occasion, he kept pulling his lip down - first with one hand and then the other in quick movements. Every time our teacher asked him to stop, he would listen for a few minutes and then resume the same behaviour. So in exasperation, she made him stand up and asked him to pull his lip down as far as he could. She made sure he remained this way for the remainder of the lesson.

Another time, another classmate kept chatting to his friend in the Geography lesson. She asked him to stand on top of his desk and open his mouth as wide as he possibly could because 'he enjoyed using his mouth so much'.

I think it was the shame of the punishment that hurt more than anything – but you never ever cried – because the teasing from your classmates would have been even more severe.

Nevertheless, there were many good times at school with friends and with the things that happened at school – like Prize Giving Day and birthdays. They are memories that you keep for a lifetime.

Catholic Parochial School is still there in the centre of Nairobi, as is the lovely Holy Family Cathedral. So too is my father's Morris 1000. It is often spotted by friends who still live there, still in its pristine condition.

They like the memories, it appears, were built to last.

MY LIFE ON THREE CONTINENTS

Rose Castanha

My first school was in Entebbe, Uganda. In 1942 I went to Goa with my parents and my brothers. Our dad left us in Goa with our Mum and he went back to Uganda. This was during the Second World War. For four years I attended a Convent School, St Francis Xavier's in Mapusa in Goa.

My parents were educated in Belgaum, so they decided that I should go to school in Belgaum. I went to school in Belgaum from 1947 to 1954. It was an all girls' school, though the nuns were strict, we had our fun because St Paul's High School, the boys' school was just across the road there. After I finished my matriculation I went to Uganda. There I started working for the Treasury. My dad had arranged a job for me. I then worked for South British Insurance for between three to four years.

I got married in Goa, in Calangute. The wedding ceremony and reception were organized by our parents. My wedding was a traditional Goan wedding. We had the reception in Calangute, at my husband's parent's residence. The next day another reception was held at my parent's residence in Mapusa. My wedding gown was tailored in Goa, but I brought the material from Nairobi. My headgear was also from Nairobi.

Once we were married we went to Nairobi, Kenya and I started working for Business Machines. When I became pregnant, I went to Uganda, to have my first son, because my parents wanted me to come to Uganda. I made the journey by overnight train to Uganda and was accompanied by my dad.

I had my second son in Kenya, because I couldn't get to Uganda in time. I stayed at home to look after my two children, because there was no such thing as maternity leave. I stayed at home until my youngest son was three years old. Then I started working for an Indian Doctor as a receptionist and secretary.

We left Kenya in 1972 because we weren't Kenyan citizens. After spending two months in Goa, we came to the UK. Our first house was rented accommodation in South Norwood. A friend from Tooting recommended the rented accommodation in South Norwood. We lived in South Norwood for two years and I found it to be a big challenge.

I really missed Africa, and the lifestyle there, because in the UK there was no help, and no servant. In Africa I had a houseboy to help with the domestic work and to help look after my youngest son. But in the UK we had to do everything ourselves. I even told my husband I was going to Goa because I didn't like it. But for the children's education, we stayed on. It has been worth it, staying in the UK, because both the boys did well in their studies.

After two years we moved to Bexleyheath, because we knew people there and because we liked the area. Once I moved into my new house I felt more settled. I suppose being in one's own home means you are free to do what you want. We have now lived in our house for nearly 32 years.

GOAN LIFE IN THE UK

Sophia Cotta

Having been born and bred in Greenwich, London for the first 28 years of my life, it may sound strange that I call myself a Goan. But I do and am proud of it! I guess that I am one of the few real “London born Goans” that have had the privilege of being introduced to their roots from an early age – both my brother and I can only thank my parents for that precious gift.

As a family we made trips to Goa every 2 or 3 years. For me, they started from just before my first birthday, to more recent trips almost every year for the last 16 years since my father passed away. The more times I enter the country, the closer I feel to calling it my 2nd home, even though I was born in the UK – I guess it has a lot to do with the warm, loving welcome we always seem to get from friends and family whilst visiting Goa.

In spite of my parents being in the UK for more than half of their lifetime, they have always encouraged us as kids and now as grownups, to learn about our roots and ancestors. If not for them and the choices they made many years ago, our lives today could have been very different.

By understanding how difficult life was in the past, we are able to appreciate the simple things we have now, rather than take them for granted.

Our achievements have always been lovingly celebrated by our parents – a characteristic that I am happy to say still seems to exist in many families, not just in Goan ones. They say, “by planting a seed and nurturing it through the early stages of new life, a mature and wise tree can surely be grown” (that’s me!!)

After my parents were born in East Africa, they spent the first part of their childhood days between 2 continents – Africa and Asia. Mum’s birthplace of Uganda (Entebbe) has gone through just as many changes as my dad’s place of birth Tanzania (Dar-e-Salam).

One day I hope to visit both places, to complete the picture I have developed in my mind from childhood memories re-visited and stories told to us by my parents.

My mum and dad spent a number of fruitful years in Goa and as well as starting their married life together there, they also began their professional lives in Goa - mum as Headmistress of Mount Mary's School (Chinchinim) and dad as a Civil and Structural Engineer. Following a strategic move to the UK, they continued to prosper in both their careers and decided to start a family life of their own (that's where me and my brother came along!)

Thirty-five years later, my brother is a Business Research Practice Manager at Imperial College (with lots of letters after his name) and I am a Chartered Civil Engineer, flying the flag of "Cotta Consulting Ltd" (also with lots of letters after my name).

Unfortunately my father passed away in 1990 and never really had the opportunity to see his "seeds grow". My mother has however dutifully kept up the encouragement, excitement and proud celebrations for every graduation ceremony, every award and prize giving, every milestone birthday, every church celebration (brothers wedding), etc.... She has faithfully organised a function (big or small) to congratulate us on every achievement I can think of!

Although my father is not physically with us in these celebrations or day to day life, his words of encouragement from the precious time we did have with him will always be remembered lovingly by us all.

CYCLONE ISAAC (AISAKE) NUKU'ALOFA, KINGDOM OF TONGA

Ivy De Souza

Mid-November 2006 we heard of the political unrest in Tonga – thugs have looted and burnt down shops, and the centre of town is utter chaos! We have so many memories of our two-year stay.

In September 1981 my husband Edwin and I began work in the Kingdom of Tonga – named the ‘Friendly Isles’ by Captain Cook. We were based in Nuku’alofa the capital of the largest island Tongatapu, one of 36 inhabited islands out of 169 in total.

A warm, tropical climate with vegetation similar to that of East Africa; the sea smells even reminded me of low tide (maji mafu) that Dad talked of in Dar. The weeks that followed were sheer bliss: going for walks on the beach front with our daughters and smiling non-stop as everyone smiled and greeted us – we truly believed Tongans were the friendliest people in the world. My jaw ached with muscles stretched as never before and I am sure the crow’s feet would be a permanent reminder of my continuous effort to reciprocate with this friendly nation. We drove around the villages seeing pigs, piglets, chooks, and everywhere we were welcomed with more smiles and cheerful, happy faces.

We soon settled into a routine of school, church and home; making friends with other expatriates from various parts of the world, who came through the Commonwealth Secretariat, United Nations, Australian, New Zealand and Indian Government. The girls learnt Tongan dances at school and performed in front of the King and visiting dignitaries, including Indira Gandhi when we were among the distinguished guests. We went to “Indian picnics” with the dozen or so Indian families: no two families spoke the same Indian vernacular and English was the common medium with only one man helping his wife understand. I learnt more of the differences in our cultures as all of them were Vegetarians and a couple were totally vegetarian which meant not even eggs in their diet!

Wednesday morning 3 March 1982 started with extremely strong winds, buffeting everything outside and howling furiously as if threatening to take the whole house elsewhere. Before 7.30 am it was announced on radio that schools would be closed as Cyclone Isaac was on its way and would be in full force by 3.00 pm. Since there had been a few false alarms the previous weeks, it did not worry most folk – no one took it seriously for a while. The earlier warnings had helped us to stock up on food, candles, gas, kerosene lamp, etc. It started to rain a little later and, coupled with other eerie sounds the wind made, it was getting a bit uncomfortable. The electricity went off about 9 am and soon thereafter the water trickled through the taps.....

Indications were that the cyclone “eye” was experienced in many of the small islands. The Kingdom of Tonga consists of over one hundred islands and we were stationed at Tongatapu, the capital being Nuku’alofa. Hazards included violent winds, deluging rain, high seas and heavy swell extending from the centre when it passed close to land, hence the flood damage caused in low lying areas. The highest winds experienced at Nuku’alofa were at 1.45 pm. The combination of severe tropical cyclone and associated sea surge caused the worst damage in the history of Tonga.

All the doors and windows were secured but the wind was so fierce that dirty/dusty rainwater from outside was desperately trying to squeeze through the shut louvres of the bathroom in a fine spray. We had a few leaks as some of the tiles were blown off the roof. Our opposite neighbour came over with their little baby and spent the night with us as their home was getting flooded – the sea was rising and it was also high tide. We all lived close to the sea front but apparently our side was a bit higher than theirs. Later we learned that the tidal surge tore down a sea wall, carved potholes in the main road and flooded houses as it raced more than 300 metres inland

Our daughters were terrified and huddled together in their room, watching the destruction taking place outside. The cacophony intensified. I prowled around inside – stopping to watch the antics of the wind: some sod being vibrated from the ground for a few seconds and then hurled full force on to the ranch slider glass and smashed into smithereens; a coconut palm swaying to and fro for a few moments and then – snap in the middle of the trunk; another coconut palm

swaying until the whole tree dashed to the ground exposing roots! So sad to see a tree try and stand tall against the frenetic wind and finally give up

It rained breadfruit and pawpaw in our compound (all the pawpaw trees went down and one breadfruit out of the four; the mango tree got 'beheaded three-quarters of the way down). We had cleared the huge compound and planted tomatoes, chillies, beans, aubergines and ladyfingers (okra/bende) – these were being blown about, clinging for dear life as the ground was being stripped of foliage. The frangipani, hibiscus and numerous other plants and flowers crushed into tiny pieces as though put through a crusher.

Several hours later when the wind seemed to have decreased, next door neighbour and husband decided to go for a walk 'and see how things were' a little further a field, in spite of my concerns for their safety. Moments later both hightailed it home, out of breath, imagining what could have happened to them - apparently they watched fascinated as a piece of corrugated iron was taken upward by the wind, and sliced cleanly through a coconut frond!!!

The aftermath: All kinds of damage could be seen. A ship lying on its side at sea (the Tongan Government fishing vessel), and an ocean-going tug blown aground on Nuku'alofa reef; it was a black day for small boats – A dinghy crushed under a fallen tree; a launch beside the national saluting battery; yet another resting beside the fountain; the seafront with all the huge boulders and stones smashed and scattered all over, across the road and into other peoples' houses; a 500-gallon ferro-cement water tank was brought over from another island and landed on the main road together with a well known launch; jetties and wharves smashed with tons of coral from the sea covering them; boats taken for miles inland.

Some of the motorboats had broken off anchors and drifted inland on the instant pool of sea water – one that got away and landed 300 metres from the beach front where she was originally moored. The sea was everywhere. It was raining salt water too – the strong wind lifting the waves off the sea! This is now ruining the trees – they are burnt up with the salt on them. Imagine a coconut trees standing half denuded (no fruit and fronds; almost nil), plantations of bananas flattened,

debris and fallen assortment of trees; houses non-existent or in various state of damage: just rubble.

The shambles is a sad sight - corrugated roofs 'wrapped' around trees too!

The roof of the Tonga Electric Power Board building was sucked up by the wind, their warehouse was destroyed. Public stadium grandstand roofs had disappeared. The Shell Company Depot was a mess – huge storage containers thrown higgledy-piggledy into recently-formed lakes.

Large numbers of the islanders' timber-framed and corrugated-roofed houses were either wrecked or badly damaged by 170 miles an hour winds. A Structural Engineer was being sent by Britain the following week to advise villagers on Tonga how to make buildings hurricane-resistant.

In different areas: some houses were turned upside down in water, some were flooded as it was also high tide. We heard of fish swimming in there too. (I could imagine people looking for their belongings with all sorts of insects fighting to survive – would a 18 cm centipede with an outer shell so hard that I had to use a hammer to destroy it on hard ground be able to swim?) Some of the houses were taken away with the tide; some with roofs blown off; some with half their roofs still there; some as though a giant hand had picked up roof and sides and put in a heap elsewhere leaving the foundation firmly behind.

Some of the residents had evacuated from their village homes to reside with their immediate relatives in Nuku'alofa before disaster struck, some lost everything. All chickens and livestock disappeared – how I enjoyed seeing pigs and piglets roaming freely near their owners' homes; the fruit bats (flying foxes) and King's pigeons were not visible either.

The Palace, Royal Chapel, Prime Minister's Office, Justice Department and other Government buildings, Universities, Colleges, Schools were damaged. Waves raced through into the Customs Shed to ruin over T\$1 million worth of imported goods stored there, to be buried by debris and sand to about 20 to 30 centimetres on the wharf

surface – Some of the people went ‘fishing’ for imported canned foodstuff which were swept on to the reef; many water-damaged unlabelled wine bottles were auctioned off to interested parties.

The supermarkets were running low on greens and when few vegetables were brought in the prices rocketed. We went round to the Indian community taking our fallen green bananas, the banana flowers, pawpaws, breadfruit and tendli (gherkins). The 6 feet tall ladyfingers plants which were lying horizontally (propped up after the storms) seemed to shoot up overnight and produce very healthy-looking 6-8 inches long okra (bende), were given days later. Needless to say, these were gratefully received as Vegetarians would have no other means of surviving.

An emergency meeting of the Tonga National Council of Churches was held two days later to discuss what action should be taken following the destruction to Churches, Cathedral and Basilica besides the Church schools and general Church properties. An appeal was made to the World Council of Churches and the Australian Council of Churches had also been contacted to purchase maize seed. Tonga Red Cross staff and volunteers had been consistently and constructively active throughout the week since Cyclone Isaac struck.

Donations poured in. Loss of textbooks and equipment in schools with students also losing their books and stationery was a huge disaster – I still remember my pen friend Basilio Magno sending Deutschemarks, my buying a wall clock for my Classroom and the students each typing a sentence or two to convey their thanks and appreciation!

In a previous event of wind power, a piece of 4”x 2” pierced through the base of a coconut tree and is now “a protected Tourist attraction”

My copy of the Tonga Chronicle, which gives details and numerous photographs, has yellowed with age but the memories remain fresh as ever. We hope to be visiting Nuku’alofa in a few weeks’ time..... Hopefully we shall still find the ‘Friendly Isles’ as wonderful as when we first got there if

THE POST-EXPULSIONS PHASE AND CANADA

Armand Rodrigues

The news of Idi Amin's notorious edict in 1972 hit the handful of Ugandan Goans in Toronto, like a bombshell. It was hard to believe that he had vented his vitriol on the very people he needed most from an economic standpoint or from the Civil Service angle. The minuscule Goan population had become an unwitting pawn in Amin's blanket exercise of expelling some 60,000 Asians.

To their credit, the Government of Canada reacted in a timely manner to mobilise forces and to mount a rescue mission. The key players at the time were Pierre Elliot Trudeau, the Prime Minister, Bryce Mackersy, the Minister for Immigration, and the Aga Khan, a friend of Trudeau's. In Uganda, Roger St.Vincent was the Charge de Affaires for Canada. The cause was humanitarian. Logistics were soon in place and 'planes from Canada were arranged to pick up the hapless refugees from Entebbe, for direct flights back. This was a precedent-setting chapter in Canada's history. It was the first operation of its kind for non-European refugees.

Having come to Canada, by choice, almost four years earlier, my family and I thought it ironic that we were going to see friends again who thought they would never see us after we left Uganda. Some even thought we were making a huge mistake by leaving! Be that as it may, we were here on the side-lines, and can chronicle some of the events as they unfolded.

Elaborate reception and re-settlement plans were put in place, post-haste, by Canada. In Toronto, a special Immigration kiosk was set up at the Toronto Dominion Centre, downtown. Zulema D'Souza played a crucial role in assisting with the arrangements and in relentless follow-up action. My office happened to be a couple of blocks from the centre and my nominal role was to drop by, scan the lists of refugees being considered for admission, and confirm that I would assist any Goan that I knew who did not have a "sponsor".

Winter clothing and boots in particular, plus anything else needed to start from scratch, was provided or made available on a "help yourself" basis. People could literally have come with only the shirt on their

backs. Everything else had been anticipated. Based on regional employment needs, people were matched to jobs in cities where they had the best chance of being successfully absorbed, and were earmarked for those cities. Accommodation and school admissions were also arranged and monetary allowances provided until people were back on their feet and in the workforce. Zulema was able to arrange accommodation for a number of people in the apartment building where her family rented. So much so, the building soon came to be known as "Uganda House"!

It was heartening to see how employers readily absorbed the refugees. Considering that some of us who came as landed immigrants had difficulty earlier in finding employment, because we were "over-qualified" and "over-experienced", the welcome change of heart seemed to auger well for all.

Reports in the press complimented the Government for its action, and the refugees for the ease with which they assimilated into Canadian society. It was recognised that because of their Western orientation and English language skills, the refugees took to Canada "like ducks to water." More importantly, Canada benefited too, as the refugees came with education and valuable experience that had not been acquired at Canada's expense. Qualitatively, Canada had never before accepted a better group of refugees. There was a strong perception of success in the endeavour and re-settlement process, shared by the refugees and Government.

For the record, it must be said that one mean-spirited Ugandan (who shall remain nameless), who happened to be here before 1972, was quoted by the press as saying that the Government was pampering the Ugandans -- more so than previous refugees -- and that not all had come empty-handed. Little attention was paid to the gratuitous remarks.

Some acculturation was, of course, necessary on the part of the refugees. They were quick to learn what cookie(biscuit), candy(sweets), faucet(tap), stove/range(cooker), garbage can(dustbin), truck(lorry), gas(petrol), hydro(electricity), and double negatives like "don't know nothing", meant. Convoluted American spelling (officially, Canada uses Queen's English) in newspapers and

magazines was a little hard to take initially. The concern: Was this the spelling children would use in school? Some people had to learn how to use tools like a hammer, saw or pliers. Washing dishes, doing windows, mowing the lawn or shoveling snow were born of necessity - - no mpisi or toto-jokoni any more!

Also, after a few near-misses, driving on the right became second nature.

If the refugees expected they would only see two-legged friends from Uganda, they were in for a pleasant surprise. Some may remember Chipperfield Brothers' animal orphanage in Entebbe. Many of those four-legged creatures were brought to Canada to start the African Lion Safari near Hamilton, in 1970.

On the social front, a trail had already been blazed for the newcomers. At least two Ugandans (Willie Monteiro and the writer) had helped set up the first Goan field hockey team in Toronto and Canada, in 1970. Both were also part of the original six Goans that spearheaded and saw to fruition the formation of the G.O.A., Toronto, in 1970. The writer also happened to have started tennis, in Toronto, in the same year. Other sports soon joined the offerings of the club. The Ugandans walked right in and gave a welcome fillip to all facets of club life.

Whether in sports, or in experience as office bearers in clubs, the Ugandan collective contribution was, and is, perhaps, unmatched. It was no accident that the following Ugandans held office as President of the club over the succeeding years:

The late Martin J. Rodrigues (1975); Zulema D'Souza (1982 and 1987/88); John Nazareth (1985/86); John Noronha (1989/90); Errol Francis (1993/94); David Nazareth (1997/98).

And, Zulema D'Souza deserves credit for the highly successful International Goan Convention, held in Toronto in 1988. This milestone in our lives may remain unequalled. Also, hats off to Stan D'Souza for the reunion in 1992, in Toronto that attracted Ugandan Goans from all over the globe and to Al Lobo for the Entebbe Goan Institute Centenary Celebrations in 2005.

Uganda soon became a closed chapter.

Detached from the blighted past and their harrowing experiences, the Ugandans showed intestinal fortitude and dug in with renewed hope for the future. Many upgraded their academic qualifications, even if only for the mythical Canadian content. Their quality of life kept getting better every day. Most bought homes before long. Visitors to Canada seem to think that the Ugandans in Canada emerged as the most fortunate in a global context. But that is debatable.

All I know is that today the Ugandans stand tall and Canada is proud of them.

GOAN DENTIST 'EXTRACTS' LIQUID GOLD IN CANADA

Armand Rodrigues

What Cabernet Sauvignon has done for California, Sauvignon Blanc for New Zealand, Burgundies for France, Ice Wine for Ontario, Dr. Hilary Rodrigues' Blueberry Wine is poised to do for Newfoundland.

But who is Dr. Hilary? Where did he come from? What led him to Canada? Why did he stay? How did he branch out from the practice of dentistry into being a vintner?

It is common knowledge that economic necessity sent many a Goan --- like Hilary's parents --- to Africa. Hilary was born in Tanga, Tanzania. By 1969 he had graduated in dentistry at the University of London, England. He practised dentistry and also lectured in London until 1974.

In 1974, he and his wife, Marie-France, came to Newfoundland (Nfld) to visit friends. Nfld. was short of doctors and dentists at the time and the Provincial Minister of Health extended an invitation to Hilary to stay. The pastoral setting and gentle people struck a chord in the couple.

Hilary turned down lucrative offers in other parts of the world and opted to put down roots in Canada.

One Christmas Hilary was at a local cheese and wine party. It used to be a tradition in Nfld. to make blueberry wine specially for Christmas. The home-made wine hit the spot for Hilary and resuscitated an interest that had lain dormant in him for a while. He was no stranger to wine-making. He says he got a kick out of doing it, in his university days. And, what is more is that he remembers vividly how his mother used to make the best vinegar in the Tanga area, from coconut toddy. She also distilled the fermented toddy in large amphorae. The genetic predisposition seems to have manifested itself in Hilary.

After the blueberry wine experience, Hilary wasted no time. He started Markland Cottage Winery in 1993, essentially to pursue his innate

wine-making prowess. He tested his first batch of 300 cases of blueberry wine on baby-boomers, rightly surmising that they would find some affinity in the traditional Yuletide tippie of their fathers and grandfathers. Of course, he did not quit his "day job" as a dentist.

From modest beginnings, Hilary now has a thriving business selling 24,000 cases a year, of six different varieties of wines --- blueberry, partridgeberry, cloudberry, strawberry, raspberry and plum and assorted liqueurs and brandies. All his products are sulphite-free. His winery is the largest hand-picked fruit winery in Canada and the first in Nfld. It is also the first to produce fully Kosher wines in Canada, enhancing its name by the numerous medals won for these wines. He has found ready markets in Canada, U.S.A and Japan. Hilary has the added distinction of having established the first distillery in Nfld..

After savouring the delectable nectar, dinner conversations inevitably turn to the bottles, the labels and even the corks. Hilary's touch of class is his attractive gold-stamped labels on elegant, elongated, Italian Altus bottles, with Portuguese corks stamped "Rodrigues" on their sides

The ever-expanding winery has a current workforce of seven full-time employees --- including two Goans --- and several part-time, seasonal workers. All the berries and fruits that are used come from the wild, where the soil, air and water remain uncontaminated; with daughter, Vanessa, being an environmentalist, it could hardly be otherwise. In son, Lionel, Hilary has a qualified fermentation specialist on board, and the circle is complete. However, if it is a question of cutting the mustard, all we need to remember is that the mother figure, Marie-France, is from Dijon, France.

It is noteworthy that, along the trail, Hilary took Municipal affairs in his stride. Rodrigues exemplifies extraordinary entrepreneurship and staying power. His Midas touch is reflected in the liquid gold that he now puts out as a vintner. In his own modest way he says: "This province has been good to me and my family and this is a small way of helping out. We love living in Newfoundland".

Dr Hilary is clearly a Goan with far more than the normal Go!

IN A FOREIGN LAND

Dr Tracy A F Coelho

Seated now in a gnawing solitude,
Thinking of those days in my real land ,
The place I grew in joy or may be lesser joy,
But yet I had the warmth of my people and the sand.

The snowy specks of clustered sheep here,
O'er the distant lush green carpets,
Of those spectacular yet lonely hills,
Or the beautiful skies with their starry glows,
Or even the feel of nature's pleasant blows,
Mean no great happiness to me at all!

Marching ahead unrelentless
Through a worthy achievement
And strides of fame;
But still the void kills all contentment
As my dearest people are far away
To share the joy of the same.

Pardon me ! Oh my gracious mother,
This worthless son of your soil
He who breached your cord of warmth and love ,
For delights of life through easy toil.

In pursuit of skills ,
Or joys of money
through a quicker hand,
Here I am all by myself,
In a foreign land !
In despair I stand,
Lonely and all lost,
Dying for the feel of my land!