

DURGA & KALI PUJA 2016



Wales Puja Committee

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The Wales Puja Committee would like to extend our warmest welcome to all attending the Durga Puja this year.

We have planned a very special Puja to celebrate our new Durga image. We have been busy for much of the year with the ambitious 'Preserving the Heritage of Durga Puja Festival and Clay Image Making in Wales' project and the festival this year and indeed, this souvenir will showcase this.



We would also like to invite you to our Kali and Saraswati Puja festivities and indeed the Bijoya and Diwali programmes.

We also hold various events through the year and these can be followed on our website or Facebook pages.

We would be grateful for your feedback, suggestion and involvement in future events.



Wales Puja Committee

Presents

Bijoya Sammelani 2016



Date ; Sat, 15th October
7.00 PM onwards
Venue - Penyrheol Community
Centre
Heol Aneurin ; CF38 2PG
Tickets - £10
(Limited tickets only)
Children below 12 years -Free



An enchanting evening of Kishore Kumar/Asha Bhosle songs presented by
Jeet & Ranjana.

Followed by mouthwatering dinner, and if you still got energy, Bollywood Disco.

For Tickets Contact : Sandip Raha (07957251448) ; Kaushik Mukherjee (07931317935) ;
Raja Biswas (07711268577) ; Neeleem Saha (07886808034)



WALES PUJA COMMITTEE presents

DIWALI DHAMAKA 2016

On 5th November from 730pm till late, we will rock
'THE WAREHOUSE', NOVOTEL HOTEL , CARDIFF BAY.

The highlights of our Diwali celebrations include

- A lively evening of Bollywood and Western music to dance the night away with our in house DJ Sin
- A sumptuous three course sit down meal
- Family friendly fun with raffles and much more

Tickets Adults & Children >12: £25, Children 5-12: £12, under 5s: free

For information and tickets please get in touch with
Dr Sandip Raha 07957251448 Mr Neeleem Saha 07886808034
Dr Kausik Mukherjee 07931317935

Venue

Novotel Hotel, Schooner Way, Cardiff CF10 4RT

Tel no: 02920 475000

On site parking is free but limited but there is plenty of offsite parking available nearby.



DURGA PUJA

2016 Programme



SASHTHI & BODHAN Friday 7th October

Inauguration 6.30 pm
Bodhan & Adhibas 6.45 pm
Cultural Programme 7.30pm—9 pm
Bhog 9pm

SAPTAMI Saturday 8th October

Puja & Pushpanjali 11am —1.30pm
Afternoon Bhog 1.30 pm
Evening Arati 7pm —7.30 pm
Cultural Programme 7.30 pm —9 pm
Bhog 9 pm

ASHTAMI Sunday 9th October

Puja & Pushpanjali 11am—1pm
Sandhi Puja 1—1.30 pm
Afternoon Bhog 1.30 pm
Evening Arati 7 pm —7.30 pm
Cultural Programme 7.30 pm —9 pm
Bhog 9 pm

NAVAMI Monday 10th October

Puja & Pushpanjali 11am —1.30pm
Afternoon Bhog 1.30 pm
Evening Arati 7pm —7.30 pm
Cultural Programme 7.30 pm —9 pm
Bhog 9 pm

BIJOYA DASHAMI Tuesday 11th October

Puja, Visharjan 11am —12 noon
Sindur Khela 12 noon
Bhog 1 pm

BIJOYA SAMMELANI Saturday 15th October

This is a ticketed event, the poster is in this souvenir and you can follow plans on our Facebook site. Tickets will be available in the Puja Hall

KALI PUJA Saturday 29th October

Further details will be made available on our Facebook Page and Website

DIWALI DHAMAKA Saturday 5th November

This is a ticketed event, the poster is in this souvenir and you can follow plans on our Facebook site. Tickets will be available in the Puja Hall

All our events (except Diwali dhamaka) are at the PENYRHEOL COMMUNITY CENTRE
HEOL ANEURIN, CAERPHILLY CF83 2PA
Visit our FACEBOOK PAGE or website www.pujainwales.com for further details

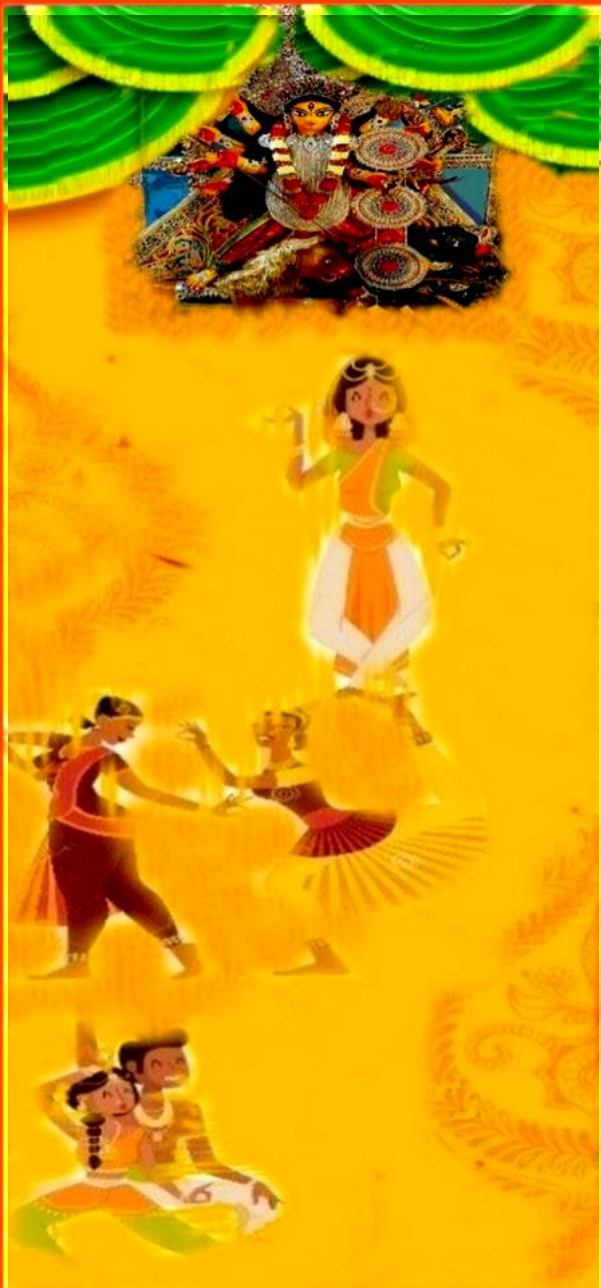
A Trip Through the Cultural Programme with Sinjini

The monsoons are long gone and there is a sudden crispness in the air. The clear autumn sky is awash with frequent doses of gentle breeze. The air is filled with the intoxicating fragrance of Shiuli and the earth flaunts Kaash ubiquitously. As nature turns the world into a big orange canvas, the stage is set for Maa Durga to visit us.

With shows lined up back to back every evening, we are all set to celebrate her homecoming with fun and gaiety. Each day has a flavour of its own.

It is said that travel opens up the world to you, but here at Wales Puja Committee, the whole world travels to you on one stage.

'Abahon', performed on **Shashti**, starts with a choreographic piece portraying the nine forms of Goddess Durga. Maa Durga exists in many forms. As we unveil our new Durga pratima, we will bring to life on stage the nine forms celebrated as Navaratri through beautiful choreography, mesmerising agomoni songs and elaborate narratives.



Wales Puja Committee Presents Abahon: The Invocation

Shashti, 7th of October 2016

Come celebrate with us as we kickstart our four days of puja fun and masti by unveiling our new Durga Protima with much pomp and granduer.

As Goddess Durga transcends on earth from her heavenly abode we welcome her by bringing to life on stage her nine avatars worshipped during nine days of Navaratri through colourful narrations, dance and music.

An evening of artistic cornucopia, the production promises to be a treat to the eyes and soul.

Be there at 6:30 sharp!! You would not want to miss our gala unveiling show.

Date: 07/10/2016

Time: 6:30 PM onwards

Venue: Penyrheol community centre

'Classical vs Contemporary', on **Saptami** evening, presents a snapshot of the broad variety of art forms, old and new in India.

The show includes classical dance styles of Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi as well as Mohiniyattam and Kathakali for the first time. We have instrumentalists who play the mouth organ and percussions such as the tabla.

The production also includes popular Bollywood music.



*Wales Puja Committee
presents
Classical vs Contemporary
Saptami, 8th of October 2016*

Music and dance please the soul. Be it classical or contemporary. And this evening brings to you an amalgamation of both the forms. From classical to semi classical to contemporary, the artists explore the different structures of these genres of music, song and dance. With an eclectic programme of melodious classical and contemporary forms, the evening promises to be another landmark

Date: 08/10/2016

Time: 7:30 PM

Venue: Penyrheol community centre

'Dhak Dhunuchi and More' on **Ashtami** evening

brings to you the quintessential flavour of Bengal.

Dhunuchi and dhak are an integral part of Durga Puja.

We have tried to enhance the atmosphere of celebration and fervour amongst the people by adding your participation on ashtami evening.

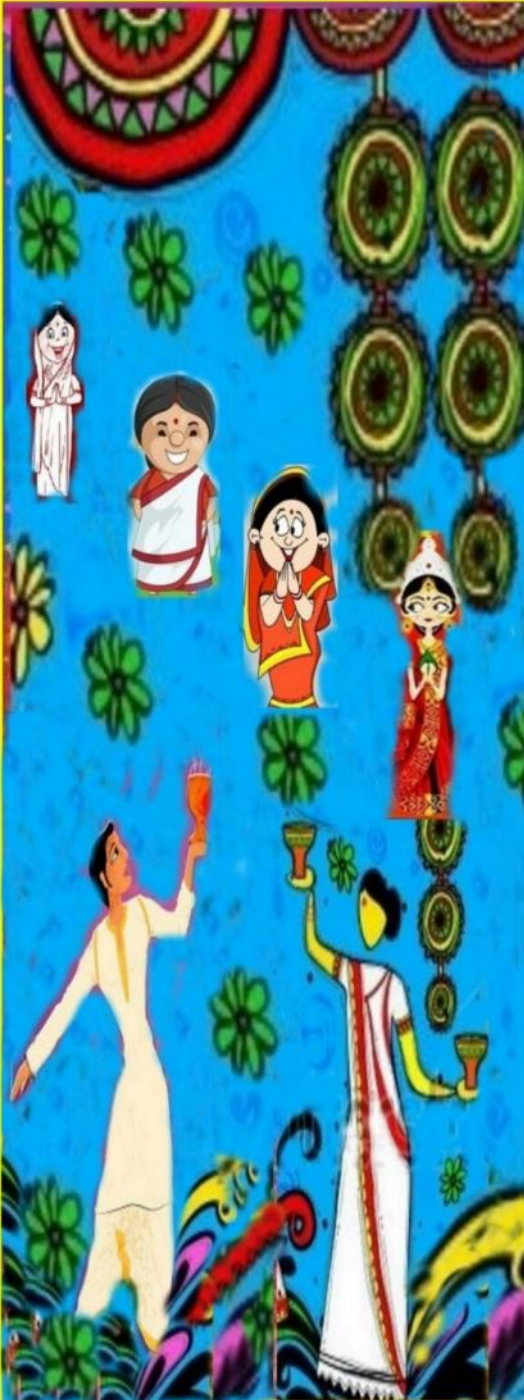
It's time for the audience to put on dancing shoes and join in on the fiery balancing act of the dhunuchi dance to the pulsating tempo of the dhak.

People with two left feet need not worry as they can rest their feet and have a good laugh over our comedy play.

With set design, lighting and acoustics,

be ready to be enthralled as the play unravels with comic consequences.

To add some variety, we have some lovely Bengali songs lined up this evening.



Wales Puja Committee Presents

Dhak Dhunuchi and More

Ashtami, 9th of October 2016

No pujo is complete without the effervescent dhunuchi dance. As the air fills with the beats of the dhak, we invite you to join us in the dhunuchi dance and take the spiritual fever a few notches higher. So put on your best dancing gear and get ready to shimmy to the beats of the dhak.

And if dancing is not your cup of tea, join us to have a good laugh over our comedy play featuring a spin off of a typical indian arranged marriage scenario. And thats not all!! We have some good light music and songs lined up to lift your heart and bring a smile on your face.

Date: 09/10/2016

Time: 7: 30 PM

Venue: Penyrheol community centre

Navami evening features '**An Evening of Artistic Delights**'.

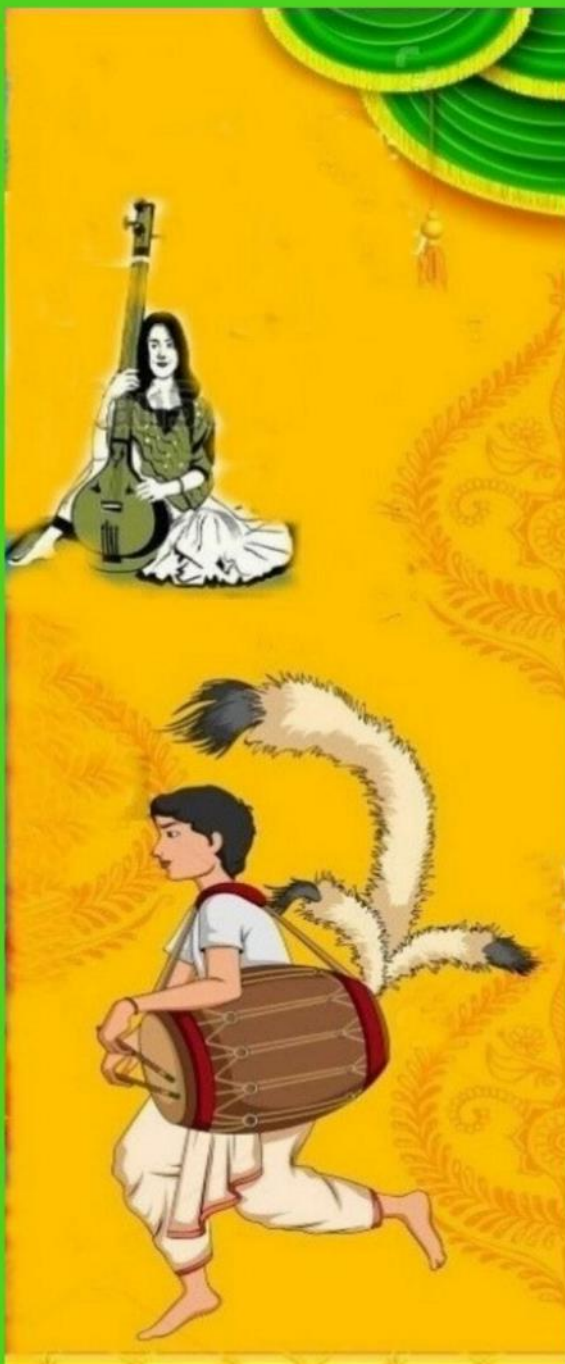
We have tried to bring together myriad art forms under one banner, with artists from differing fields collaborating to put together some magical moments on stage.

This production aims to deliver a multi-disciplinary programme on stage for the discerning and curious culture-hungry ones.

The raison d'être of our cultural programme this year is to broaden the horizon of the community we live in to the rich tapestry of art forms of an ancient civilisation. We want to bring people together and provide a platform for the art loving community to indulge in some colourful entertainment.

WPC Durgotsav 2016 brings to you some of the best talent within our community. It highlights a fusion of popular modern and classical art forms with captivating performances to present a truly artistic experience that educate and enthrall people of all ages.

For us it is all about forging lasting relationships between artists and audience. So come join us in the biggest Bengali carnival of the year!



*Wales Puja Committee
Presents*

An Evening of Artistic Delights

Navami, 10th October 2016

Featuring vibrant choreographies, enchanting poetry recitations, hilarious skits and soulful music, this joyous evening brings together on stage, a whirlwind of colours and an abundance of energy. The stunning plethora of performances celebrate the spirit of India in the true sense. Watch the artists weave magic on stage.

Date: 10/10/2016

Time: 7:30 PM

Venue: Penhyreol community centre

From the Chairperson's Desk Wales Puja Committee, September 2016



Dear Friends,

I would like to welcome all of you to our 43rd Durga Puja in Wales.

If you look back two decades you can see how the seeds planted in the early 1970's have grown into what we are today.

Our Clay Image Making and Heritage Project this year, an effort to preserve our history and heritage for generations to come in Wales and the wider community in UK and abroad, has been the pinnacle of our achievements. This has only been possible through a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of Wales and their kind guidance during the application phase. I must congratulate all our members as well as the non-members and children whose commitment and sincere effort have made this project such a success so far.

Over the next 4-5 months we plan to collect, record and publish the experiences of many involved throughout this project including our three local partner schools (Cardiff High, Radyr Comprehensive & Llanishen High) and their Art and R E teachers, Lisa James & Eve Oliver of Cardiff High, Sharon Williams & Ceri Skene (Radyr Comprehensive) and Paul Foster of Llanishen High. I would also like to thank Vicky Patterson, Anne Frost, Anna Bhushan, Natasha Mayo and Duncan Ayscough from the Cardiff School of Arts and Design (Cardiff Metropolitan University).

Many of our members have given valuable time and resources over the last year to make this event successful and this goes on to show our comradeship within the WPC. I extend my special thanks to our two sculptors, Sunil Pal and Dibyendu Dey from Kolkata, for their beautiful and artistic efforts in the face of many hurdles whilst making these images here in Cardiff. They have both shown tremendous perseverance and hard work to finish the images on time.

My sincere thanks to Bute Town History and Arts Centre, especially Prof Chris Weedon and their volunteer worker Faisal who were very helpful during the whole process of Clay image making.

On behalf of the Committee special mention and thanks goes to Hazel Thomas of People's Collection Wales who trained and loaned us the scanner, laptop and digital recording system; Samantha Heale from Cardiff Story Museum, Craig Owen and Jane Harris from Wales For Peace.

Finally, my sincere thanks to our priests Kanai Chatterjee, Anirban Mukhopadhyay and their better halves for doing our various pujas throughout the year and making our events successful. Our events have come to life only because of vibrant cultural officers and their tireless efforts, months before and during our events and many participants including children and their parents.

My additional thanks to Penyrheol Community Centre, our venue over last 18 years, especially Mr Ken Harris for his continued support.

I hope we can live up to the standards you all have come to expect from Wales Puja Committee over the last few decades and wish you all Sarod Subhechha (best wishes for Autumn festival).

Dr Sandip Raha

Chairperson



From the Secretary's Desk Wales Puja Committee, September 2016



Dear Friends,

Welcome all to our Durga Puja 2016. 'Sarat' is here again and we can feel the rhythm of 'Dhak', heralding the five most awaited days of the year - the five days of 'Sarodotsav'. All of Bengal gears up to welcome Parvati and her four children in our "Okal Bodhon".

Whether in Swadesh or in Probash, whether 'Barowari' or 'Ghoroa' this auspicious event is celebrated everywhere with style and grandeur. The pandals, lights, decoration, music, food and above all, Puja rituals including Anjali, Sandhi Puja and Boron are all integral parts of our tradition and culture.

Here in Cardiff, we too are getting ready to join in the celebration with utmost dedication and enthusiasm. Our Durga Puja brings together people from all over Wales and also from beyond the borders. The Bongs and the non-Bongs join in equally to celebrate pure 'Bangaliyana' in all its glory.

This is WPC's 43rd Durga Puja celebration and a very special year. We were successful in getting a special grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of Wales for our prestigious project on the heritage of Durga Puja in Wales. It was launched with an opening ceremony in the Cardiff School of Art and Design attended by over fifty people. As part of this project, we created a new Durga Pratima at the Butetown History and Arts Centre. As on previous occasions, artists came over from Kolkata and worked closely with the Committee members for a month to create these new idols. Several schools participated in the project, with school children showing tremendous enthusiasm in the process of image making. The exquisitely beautiful new 'Pratima' was on display in the Cardiff Story Museum for 2 weeks in August for the benefit of the local population. I am sure you all will appreciate the beauty of 'Ma' and her children over the next few years.

A special mention should be made of the contribution by some young non-members without whom this project could not have been a success - the names of Debanjali, Aditi, Mayukh, Sayantan and Ishani comes to mind. Most importantly, the project enthused a lot of interest among the children of the Bengali diaspora, living in Cardiff.

WPC is committed in maintaining the tradition of Puja rituals over these five days. Our priest Mr Kanai Chatterjee with the help of Mr Anirban Mukhopadhyay and the stage volunteers perform every 'Puja Pronali' with utmost accuracy and sincerity. The devotees watch and participate and the children help in making garlands and serving Prasad and food.

Besides the Puja, the other two attractions of this festival are the sumptuous Bengali meals provided daily and the evening cultural programmes. Our strong catering team of dedicated volunteers and WPC members, led by Mrs Christina Roy (Krishna), is already thrashing out various menu ideas and rest assured mouth-watering food will be served in the true spirit of WPC. A huge amount of work goes behind the scene in planning and preparing freshly cooked meals twice a day for a large often unpredictable number of devotees. It is the sheer hard work and organisational skills of the catering team that makes it possible year after year.

WPC's cultural program has reached a new dimension. Ms Madhu Mitra (Moon) worked tirelessly for the last three years and successfully produced fantastic programmes, the quality of which were truly professionally. Her main achievement was to bring the best out of our local talents and incorporate the non-Bengali community thus showing off the true spirit of Indian culture and heritage. Moon has now passed on the responsibility to Sinjini, Anirban and Raja, our new cultural officers who are working hard to bring in fresh ideas and new talents. Sinjini has spent hours planning, choreographing and teaching dance items which shows her dedication to the cause.

This year, WPC is organising a 'Bijoya Sammiloni' on 15/10/16. The restaurant chain "Haveli" is providing the food, Jeet & Ranjana will provide the entertainment and there is a promise of disco! Dr Raja Biswas is leading this project and knowing his organisational skills I am sure this year's Bijoya Sammilani will be a roaring success.

The Diwali Party last year was organised at a new venue, the Novotel Hotel. The food was excellent, the party rocked and once again it was a sell-out event. Because of the success and excellent feedback we have decided to have our Diwali party at the same venue on 5/11/16. We hope to see you all in both these fun events.

This is my second and final year as the secretary of Wales Puja Committee. I thank my seniors and the previous secretaries for all the support and advice. It has been a privilege to serve as the secretary and be a part of our extended WPC family.

I welcome all again, to join in our Puja celebration. We strive to make this event even better every year and this is only possible with your support and generosity. Please come forward with any new ideas, constructive criticism or just your enthusiasm.

Dr Kausik Mukherjee

From the Treasurer's Desk

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present the **Interim WPC Accounts for 2015—2016**.

This has been yet another very busy year for us and in addition to the Pujas we are in the midst of a successful Making of Durga project funded by the Heritage Lottery of Wales. The accounting of this has been rigorous and in real time and I thank Mr Neeleem Saha for keeping a close eye on this.

We have as ever donated generously to charitable causes.

Over the year we have also made capital investments in Puja equipment, sound systems, pratima, laptop, projection equipment, software and stationary. This will all help us reach forwards in future years.

In spite of all these significant capital development we should end up with a surplus and once again I would also like to thank Mr Neeleem Saha, Dr Sandip Raha and Mr Dipak Kundu for their invaluable help. The accounts has a rosier tinge due to their Gift Aid work and constant help.

This is only an Interim Account as we are still in the middle of the Making of Durga Heritage project and we will be able to present a final account sheet when this is complete.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Shiladitya Sinha

Wales Puja Committee Accounts 2015-16

	Income		Expense
Durga Puja 2015			
Donations	6077.00	Hall Hire (inc. gas and electricity)	607.50
Advert	825.00	Catering	2356.00
Puja Barshiki	277.00	Puja	346.50
		Cultural & Equipment	500.93
		Souvenir	399.00
		Puja Barshiki	260.00
		General Expenses	258.00
Total	7179.00		4727.93
Kali Puja 2015			
Donations	1318.00	Hall	60.00
		Puja Samagri	81.49
		Catering Expenses	630.40
		Miscellaneous	226.33
Total	1318.00		998.22
Diwali 2015			
Ticket Sales	3279.00	Venue and Food	2365.00
RAFFLE	300.00	Entertainment	500.00
Total	3579.00		2865.00
Saraswati Puja 2016			
Donations	780	Hall Booking	70.00
		Catering	350.00
		Entertainment	50.00
		Puja Provision	105.00
		Miscellaneous	200.00
Total	780.00		775.00
Total	12826.00		9366.15
Other Income/ Expenses			
Additional Donations (Charity)	970.00	Gandhi Statue	1000.00
Regular Donations	900.00	Banchbo	150.00
HMRC Gift Aid	1843.24	Chennai	600.00
		Capital	320.00
		Miscellaneous (including website etc)	770.80
Grand Total	16569.24	Total Outgoing	12206.95
Surplus for the year	4362.29		
Brought forward from 31/08/2015	£15409.23		

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of WALES PUJA COMMITTEE 2016-17

OFFICE BEARERS

CHAIRPERSON	<i>Dr Sandip Raha</i>
VICECHAIRPERSON (acting)	<i>Mr Dipak Kundu</i>
SECRETARY	<i>Dr Kausik Mukherjee</i>
TREASURER	<i>Dr Shiladitya Sinha</i>
CATERING	<i>Mrs Christina Roy Dr Ashok Mukherjee</i>
ENTERTAINMENT & PUBLICITY	<i>Mrs Sinjini Chakraborty Dr Raja Biswas Mr Anirban Mukherjee</i>
EVENTS OFFICER	<i>Mr Neeleem Saha</i>
PUJA CO-ORDINATOR	<i>Mrs Mahua Mukherjee Mrs Tamashree Mukherjee</i>

MEMBERS

<i>Dr Chandana Banerjee</i>	<i>Mr Niladri Chakraborty</i>	<i>Dr Anirban Choudhury</i>
<i>Mrs Padma (Maitreyi) Das</i>	<i>Dr Sankar Das</i>	<i>Mrs Sikha (Utsa) Das</i>
<i>Dr Subhash Das</i>	<i>Dr Sakti Guha Niyogi</i>	<i>Dr Madhuparna Mitra</i>
<i>Mrs A Narayan</i>	<i>Dr Kanti Nath</i>	<i>Mrs Sikha Nath</i>
<i>Dr Anjan Ray</i>	<i>Mrs Christina Roy</i>	<i>Mr Pankaj Sarkar</i>
<i>Mrs Raktima Bhadra Sarkar</i>	<i>Dr H V Shah</i>	<i>Mrs Sharada Sharma</i>
<i>Dr. Satya Kishore Sharma</i>	<i>Dr Ranjit Sinha Ray</i>	<i>Mrs Banani Sinha Ray</i>

TRUSTEES of WALES PUJA COMMITTEE

<i>Dr. Sankar Das</i>	<i>Dr. Ashok Mukherjee</i>
<i>Mr. Dipak Kundu</i>	<i>Dr. Rupen Majumdar</i>
<i>Dr. Ravi Narayan</i>	<i>Dr. Kanti Nath</i>
<i>Dr. Sandip Raha</i>	<i>Dr. Satya Kishore Sharma</i>

HONORARY MEMBERS

<i>Mr Trilochan Kar</i>	<i>Mrs Jharna Majumdar</i>	<i>Dr Rupen Majumdar</i>
<i>Dr Ravi Narayan</i>	<i>Dr Mohan Nath</i>	

Preserving the heritage of Durga Puja festival and clay image making in Wales

The Wales Puja Committee embarked on a community project called 'Preserving the heritage of Durga Puja festival and clay image making in Wales' in the spring of this year. This is perhaps the single biggest and longest project that we have taken on in our 43-year history in terms of duration, targets and budget. The celebration of Durga Puja over 43 years in Wales and clay image making together is a great heritage.

The project is primarily aimed at preserving this heritage. It has three primary objectives as below:

- ◇ To spread learning and awareness about the great festival of Durga Puja celebrated in India and all over the world amongst the Indian diaspora
- ◇ To spread learning and awareness about the amazing art of clay image making in the Indian state of West Bengal, its history in Wales followed by the making of a set of clay images of Goddess Durga and her children in Cardiff by two well known artists from India
- ◇ To record and archive the history of the Durga Puja festival in Wales

The project was conceived by the members of the executive committee towards the end of 2015. We wanted to particularly work with students and young people on the learning and awareness aspects of the project. It was realised straight away that a project of this scale was not financially viable for the Wales Puja Committee without external funding.

With this in mind WPC approached the Heritage Lottery Fund of Wales (supported by the National Lottery) to explore potential grant programmes that may be available. The HLF were very supportive in helping us develop the narrative about the heritage. They also guided us with our grant application.

HLF also pointed us towards potential partner organisations that would be able to work or partner with us in the project and also benefit from the project. We partnered with eight organisations in the project.

We partnered with three comprehensive schools in Cardiff - Radyr Comprehensive School, Cardiff High School and Llanishen High School.

We also partnered with the Cardiff School of Art and Design which is part of the Cardiff Metropolitan University.

The other organisations we partnered with are Wales for Peace (Welsh Centre for International Affairs), People's Collection Wales, Cardiff Story Museum, Butetown History and Arts Centre and Vale and Valley Arts.

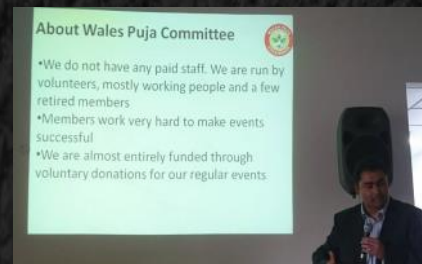
The Butetown History and Arts Centre was the venue for the clay image making part of the project. It was rather amazing that every organisation that WPC approached about the project actually partnered on the project.

We put in a huge amount of effort into making a high quality grant application and submitted the application at the end of December 2015. After 8 weeks of evaluation, the HLF gave us the fantastic news that we had been successful in our bid amidst some tough competition.

The committee got to work straight away and started planning for the various activities and achievables of the project. There have been several streams of work going on simultaneously.

The various events, activities and highlights of the past few months (in no particular order of importance) are:

- ◇ Inaugural event of the project at the central 'Heart Space' in the Cardiff School of Art and Design which was attended by representatives of our partners and many of them spoke about their interest in the project.
- ◇ Oral History training for members from Cardiff Story Museum and then collection of oral histories of many veteran members to be archived (this is an ongoing activity).



- ◇ Digitising training for members from People's Collection Wales and continuous publication of digital content on the People's Collection Wales website.



- ◇ Significant amount of work by our members in organising the visas and travel for the artists for clay image making.
- ◇ A digital story about Durga Puja was made by Vale and Valley Arts who are one of our partner organisations and this film was used in the various learning sessions conducted over the last few months.
- ◇ Multiple learning events at all the partner schools for students to learn about the festival of Durga Puja and the art of clay image making.

- ◇ A school booklet was created specifically to raise awareness amongst school children of the mythology of Durga, the worship of the Goddess, the art of clay image making and the history of Durga Pujas and clay image making in Wales.



- ◇ The most significant and important part of the project - Making of Clay images of Maa Durga and her children by two artists from India over a period of one month from beginning of June to beginning of July. The two renowned artists were Sunil Pal and Dibyendu Dey.
- ◇ The image making venue was open for the public to visit every day and see the process of image making in action.
- ◇ Members from all over, children and students of the Cardiff School of Art and Design worked hands on during the clay image making process.
- ◇ Several school visits and workshops/ art activities for school students led by artists from India to the image making venue.
- ◇ Two events during image making month - one on the day the eyes of Maa Durga were painted called 'Chakkhu Daan' ceremony. The second was a week later marking the completion of the images. Both the events had rich cultural programmes by children and adults from the community and speeches by our partners. Both were well attended.
- ◇ Display of the completed images at the Cardiff Story Museum for two weeks in August.
- ◇ Fantastic art work done by school students inspired by the Durga Project and using materials that were supplied to them by the Wales Puja Committee. The art works will be on display for the public during the Puja days.
- ◇ The project has drawn huge amounts of interest from the local population, both of Indian origin and the local Welsh population. Much new collaboration has come out of this and we think the project is achieving its more strategic objective of trying to integrate the communities of South Wales and beyond.

Future plans for the project:

- ◇ The Durga Puja festival itself while not part of the project will be used to showcase the new images and the festival. Various art displays, talks and cultural programmes are being staged to convey the spirit of this great festival.
- ◇ Oral Histories and Digital Materials will be recorded and archived with the Cardiff Story Museum and People's Collection Wales.
- ◇ A film is to be made capturing all aspects of the heritage and is expected to be released next year.

It would be impossible to name people individually because of the sheer numbers involved but the Wales Puja Committee is extremely grateful to all its partners, the HLF, the members of the public and lastly not the least the members of the executive committee who are helping this project work and achieve what it set out to do. We hope that we can lead this project to successful completion next year and help preserve this great heritage we have in Wales.

PLEASE DO HELP US CONTINUE TO MAKE THIS
A SUCCESS!

Neeleem Saha Events Officer, WPC



Pictures from the WPC Vaults to rekindle memories



These old pictures have been scanned in by Dr Raha using hi res scanner loaned for our project

Clay Image making in Wales Dr Sandip Raha

Wales Puja Committee has been in existence over 43 years. Initially known as the Bengali Society of Wales, it conducted Durga Puja in Cardiff since 1973.

For the first seven years, we had a canvas of Goddess Durga. Artists in Kolkata had painted this and donated it to our fledgling organisation.

In 1984, Mr Kamal Ghatak a member of the Bengali Community in Cardiff, sculptured a five piece Durga Image in his garage in Pentwyn from clay with materials brought from Kolkata. This Image was donated by him to WPC (which had been formally established that year) and worshipped till 1990. The pujas then were held in 28 The Parade, Roath in Cardiff.



In 1990 WPC imported a Kumartuli Pratima for the first time. Bought in Kolkata and shipped to Southampton, it arrived in Cardiff on Sashthi just in time for our Puja celebrations held in Old St. David's Hospital Community Hall. This image was worshipped till 1996, when another new five-piece image was brought from Kolkata and airfreighted to Paris. It then travelled by road to Cardiff and arrived in our venue at the Penyrheol Community Centre in time for 1997 Durga Puja.

In 1992, we immersed our old five-piece image (made by Mr Ghatak) into the Bristol Channel sailing out of Cardiff Bay. This was the first immersion in the UK .



In 2002, we had the unique opportunity to commission the making of a five-piece clay image. To be made in Cardiff, this was a joint venture between WPC, Cardiff 2008 (bid for European city of culture) and Arts Council of Wales. This was facilitated by late Christine McKay (then curator of National Museum of Wales). The Craft Council of West Bengal were sending two sculptors to Edinburgh Museum to build a clay image of Goddess Durga. The two artists Nemai Pal (Kumartuli) and Biswajit Mukherjee came to Cardiff after they had completed a full size image in

Edinburgh. In the Old Library, Hayes (now Cardiff Story Museum) over three weeks from the 4th to the 21st of November 2002, clay images of Goddess Durga and her family were made in Wales for the first time.

The project was covered by BBC2W and BBC Wales TV as well as Radio Wales Asian programme conducted by Anand Jasani. School children visited the project and over 500 visitors saw the project over a period of 3 weeks. This image was used in our Pujas till 2009.



In 2004 we carried out our second Visarjan when our 1997 Kumartuli Image was immersed in the Bristol Channel out of Cardiff Barrage. This was well reported by the local media.



2009 brought another opportunity to commission a new image. In a project in partnership with Arts council of Wales and St Fagans National History Museum. The accomplished brothers, Purnendu and Dibyendu Dey from Burdwan created a wonderful set of images in the museum for us as part of a living exhibition held in Oriel 1 of the National Welsh History Museum. The museum focuses on Welsh identities and explores who we are by further examining language, cultures, beliefs and sense of place. A total of over 1300 visitors took part in this project and a post completion display was held in the museum for three weeks in March & April. The images were made of papier Mache and clay and were lighter and more durable. During the project we had visits from school children and two local artists of clay held demonstration and public engagement along with visiting artists. Papier-mâché workshops were organised for students and family activities organised. Two religious ceremonies were held as part of creating a Goddess.



A blog was maintained by museum detailing the progress of the project and this enabled many who couldn't attend to follow the progress remotely. Images of the process were also uploaded on Flickr. This process created a material that could be added to the Museum's collection representing Hindu community in Wales for the first time.

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project and this enabled many who couldn't attend to follow the progress remotely. Images of the process were also uploaded on Flickr. This process created a material that could be added to the Museum's collection representing Hindu community in Wales for the first time.

This partnership with St Fagans National History Museum created an important representation of the Hindu community in Wales to the national collection creating a heritage for future. This also resulted in a change in image of the museum by showing diversity to its visitors reflecting cultures of people who have made Wales their home.

During 2015 we started exploring the idea of heritage preservation of Durga Puja and clay image making in South Wales as seen and experienced by WPC. This ground work helped in our grant application to Heritage Lottery Fund of Wales in December 2015 for the project "Heritage of Durga Puja & Clay image making in Wales" and a successful grant in February 2016. This time we are collaborating with 7 partners in and around Cardiff including three local high schools (Radyr Comprehensive, Llanishen High & Cardiff High), Cardiff School of Arts & Design (Cardiff Metropolitan University), Wales for Peace/Peoples Collection of Wales, Bute Town History and Arts Centre, Cardiff Story Museum.

After immense planning, project kicked off with an inaugural event with our 8 partners in Cardiff School of Arts & Design in April 2016, followed by three priming school workshops about the project and clay image making. Our members were trained on digital aural history and its collection by our partner, Cardiff Story Museum. Peoples Collection of Wales trained us on digital archiving and copyright as well as website material uploading.

From 2nd June to 5th July we hosted two renowned artists. Dibyendu Dey from Burdhaman (he had created the 2009 image with his brother, Purnendu) and Sunil Paul from Kolkata and Dibyendu Dey. They made a five-piece image in Bute Town

History and Arts Centre, Bute Street, Cardiff. During the clay image making we held four workshops at the venue for our partner schools and their art students. Three second year degree art students from Cardiff school of art & design helped our artists in image making at Papier mache / hay and clay stages. Chokkhudan (the eye painting ceremony) and the completion ceremony featured cultural shows by



our members and their children and were both well attended. Between the 7th - 20th August, the completed five-piece image went on to display in Cardiff Story Museum. Soon it will be the centre piece of our Durga Puja festival. For the first time, arts students from the partner schools have made this project their major GCSE art work. The students from Radyr Comprehensive are producing finished artworks inspired by their exposure to the Durga image making and their interactions with the visiting artists.

We have also been collecting stories and experiences from our senior members and partners during the project about how they see clay image making and this festival and indeed its origins and evolution in South Wales over the last 43 years.



We are also collecting comments, opinion and your thoughts about this project and history of clay image making (fourteen years in Wales) and very much like you to take time to talk to us and give your opinion during our five day festival 7th - 11th October 2016.



All the materials we collect will be edited and archived on Peoples Collection of Wales website for free access and, we plan to make a short film by end of this year to be released in February 2017 on completion of this project. We hope that all this will culminate in the people of Wales taking part along with Indian community in the preservation of this heritage for the future.



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<http://www.facebook.com/transcedent-knowledge-society-non-profitable-non-government-organisation-1087847367910260/>

UK contact 07957251448

The Artists, Mr Dibyendu Dey & Mr Sunil Pal



Dibyendu had been to Cardiff before with his brother Purnendu for our previous Making of Durga project in 2009. This time he returned to work his magic with Mr Sunil Pal.



Dibyendu Dey lives and works in Burdwan where he teaches and experiments in two and three dimensional art forms of painting and sculpture. Travel, architecture and photography have also always interested him. He completed formal art education from M S University, Baroda 1995 and moved to Kanoria Center for Arts , Ahmedabad and worked there in the department of sculpture for quite a long time. He was part of the visiting faculty of the National Institute of Design (NID). He then moved to the College of Art& Design (CAD) in the Department of Sculpture, The University of Burdwan, Burdwan .



Assorted works of Dibyendu Dey



Sunil Pal in his words : I draw on images that I perceive in and around the city of Kolkata. I infuse the past with the present, the mundane with the Surreal, the ideal with the Comical to create a grand narrative of human condition. I draw on the images of the visual reality to lay bare the incongruities of our socio-cultural existence. I approximate the style of modern digital form to invoke the claims of reality. I think that the Paintings are encoded metaphors of our multi layered existence. I have won,

- 2009 : Governor's Award, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata
- 2009, 2008 : National Award from Lalitkala Academy
- 2001 : Award in Best Oil painting from Indian College of Art Draftsmanship
- 2000 : Award in Oil Painting from Indian college of Art Draftsmanship



Sunil with some of his works

Our Partners

The Cardiff Story Museum

City of Cardiff



Butetown History &
Arts Centre



Wales for Peace &
Welsh Centre for
International Affairs



People's Collection
Wales



Cardiff School of Art & Design



Cardiff Metropolitan University



Radyr Comprehensive School



Llanishen High School



Cardiff High School



The Wales Puja Committee would like to thank our project partners for their involvement in this venture.

THE PROJECT COVERED ON THE HLF WEBSITE

Communities come together to celebrate Durga Puja 05/08/2016

Durga Puja is one of the biggest festivals in India - and now, thanks to National Lottery players, communities in south Wales are working together in a £20,000 project, sharing their cultural history to create the festival's all-important Durga idols. Local secondary school children and students from Cardiff Metropolitan University have worked with two artists from India to get the eye-catching statues of the goddess Durga and her children ready for the festival.

Youngsters have also helped record the legacy of the festival in South Wales since the 1970s through films, photos and interviews, which will be stored on the People's Collection Wales website.

The statues are on display for two weeks between 8–20 August at the Cardiff Story Museum, before they will be used for the Durga Puja between 7–11 October.

Around 1,500 families will attend this year's five day Puja in Caerphilly, which is free and includes music, dance, drama, entertainment and food. The image of the goddess is central to the celebrations, with the life-sized clay statues of Durga and her four children spanning almost 20 feet.

Neeleem Saha, from the Wales Puja Committee (WPC) which has organised the project, explains why the statues are so important: "Traditionally, clay is collected from the banks of the Ganges, but for our statues we have mixed this with local clay to help bring our two worlds together, creating something amazing to behold for anyone who sees it - no matter their culture.

"The Durga Puja is for Hindus as big as Christmas – but while Christmas is about being with your closest friends and family, Durga Puja is about going out into the community and celebrating together. The statues remind us that this festival should be shared by everyone, and so far we have certainly seen huge interest from the local community and also more second and third generation Indians re-connecting with the puja through our project."

The statues are on display for two weeks between 8–20 August at the Cardiff Story Museum, before they will be used for the Durga Puja between 7–11 October. To find out more, please visit WPC's Facebook page or website.



We would like to extend our thanks the Heritage Lottery Fund Wales and specially to Michelle O' Neill Kiddie, Grants Officer and Julie Hughes for their guidance through the application process and the generous grant that made this project a reality for all of us.



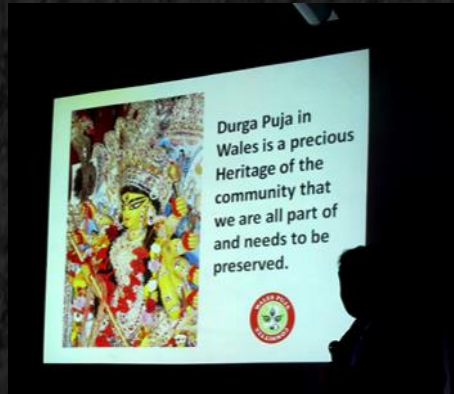


'Preserving the heritage of Durga Puja festival and clay image making in Wales' was inaugurated at the Heart Space within the CSAD. We heard stirring talks by senior faculty members which added an artistic perspective to the project. Natasha Mayo's talk on the power of clay and ceramics was moving as has been Anna Bhushan's support through out.



About Wales Puja Committee

- *We do not have any paid staff. We are run by volunteers, mostly working people and a few retired members
- *Members work very hard to make events successful
- *We are almost entirely funded through voluntary donations for our regular events



Throughout the project, we have received encouragement from the faculty and enthusiastic participation from Rachel Smith, Vicki Patterson and Anne Marie Frost.

Rachel was a regular helper with the clay image making and worked closely with the artists. She clearly really enjoyed the clay modelling stages.



Few of us will forget Anne Marie Frost's emotional speech at the Closing Ceremony at BHAC, she reflected on how deeply her involvement with this project had inspired her. She was also a regular and wonderful participant.





Vicki Patterson has been a central member of this project, she has been involved in story telling to the schools and a help through out. Here I am sharing some of her artwork and writing stimulated by this project.

'In the early months of this year, I became involved with this project. I have visited India three times in the last few years, and I have recorded my travelling experiences in a visual journal. I am a mature student, studying illustration and my dissertation research is: How can storytelling enhance connectivity and awareness across diverse communities?

After several meetings with committee members, I teamed up with the 'Wales for Peace' organisation and between us, planned presentations to the three schools involved with the project. My main contribution was to tell the story of Durga. Personally, in response to the story, I produced some artwork to show to the school children. It was a great collaborative experience, as I visited the Butetown History and Art Centre with the schoolchildren, whilst the two visiting artists from



Calcutta conducted creative workshops with clay. I with fellow ceramic students from our university, periodically visited the centre to help and observe these experienced, talented artists, patiently creating the symbolic religious statues of The Goddess Durga, with her four children and animals, being created from start to finish.



I can quite honestly say, it is one of the most exciting and inspiring experiences of my life and it will enable me to creatively use many ideas in my own practice in the future. It was lovely to get to know the committee families, dropping in, to help mix clay, we all had such a lovely time. It was also great to chat with members of the public, popping in to have a look. The completed images were exhibited at the Cardiff Story Museum. They looked so beautiful, shining brightly in the dark room. I feel a sense of pride being involved in



such a great project AND the fun still continues! with the festival event next week."

Our Partner Schools

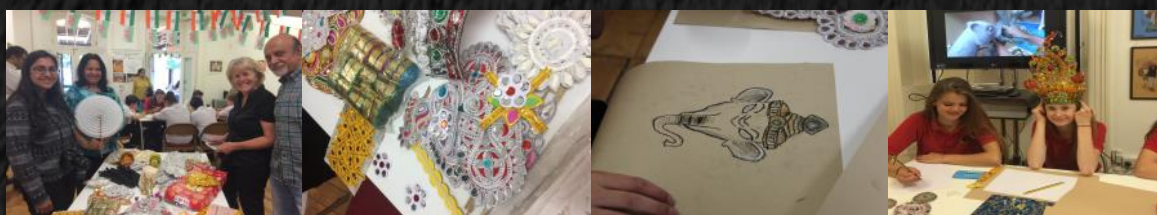
Radyr Comprehensive School

Cardiff High School

Llanishen High School

The earliest days of the project found us all meeting at the amazing art rooms of Radyr Comprehensive School. Amidst some really high quality and much varied art work, some members of the WPC, a representative of Peoples Collection Wales, Arts and RE teachers and Vicki Patterson discussed and planned the school involvement. This included the material collected from India, the school visits and what will be on them, the school booklet and finally the school workshops were discussed. The schools also discussed what they might do and plans for an exhibition during the pujas were also aired. We were all struck by the immense excitement amongst the school teachers and the students when we met them.

The school visits proved to be some of the most satisfying parts of the whole project. We loved the excitement in the students eyes, their obvious interest and their blossoming artwork.





Durga created by Jasmine Thomas, Issy Lee and Ruby Seago



Lakshmi created by Olivia Tarr, Chloe Sparey and Abbie Hall



Ganesha created by Jenise Thomas, Eirinn Henley and Carys Rivers



Kartik created by Jess Wood, Fiona Harris and Ellie Goodfellow

'As a school we were fortunate to have the opportunity to be involved in the Durga Heritage project this year. 15 Year 9 GCSE pupils participated in a series of workshops which enabled them to immerse themselves in this wonderful festival. They got to experience from first hand the process of visiting artists creating Idols. They were able to engage in constructive learning conversations relating to traditional model making techniques and the resourceful methods used to highly decorate the Idols. The artists kindly offered our students a workshop which resulted in each pupil creating a papier mache/clay sculptural piece. It has been a pleasure for us to be involved in the Durga Heritage Project. We have been warmly welcomed by the Durga Puja Committee and our students have responded so positively to the experience which I feel has enriched their Art education. As a result of the project our pupils have created mixed media silk paintings depicting their interpretation of the Idols back at school.'

Mrs Sharon Williams and Ms Ceri Skene, Joint Heads of Art at Radyr have taken a particular interest in the project and this has reflected in the close involvement the school has had with us and the excellent work by their students.



Cardiff High students have been busy with wonderful clay tiles inspired by their exposure to the project. "I thought I would send you a picture of some of the work our pupils produced at the workshop today. Pupils produced clay tiles, responding to the images seen. Many of the pupils included text in their designs, stamping the words that had been prominent in the discussions during their Religious Philosophy sessions. We had 'tweeted' a few more images (@artchs1.) Our plan is to back the tiles onto painted wooden boards and embellish with some of the materials that you gave to us in our box of 'goodies'."

The have been admirably lead by **Lisa James and Eve Oliver** .





Cardiff Story Museum

"We were delighted when Neeleem got in touch to ask us about partnering on this project. The Cardiff Story Museum has been building links with communities throughout the city since before the museum opened. Many local community groups have been involved in a variety of ways, donating objects, telling their stories and working with the museum team to hold events. We believe that the museum should not only speak to but be of our communities - in our galleries it is not the Curator who tells the story of Cardiff but the people who were there and experienced it. The oral histories collected as part of this project and archived at the Cardiff Story Museum will enable the history and traditions of the Hindu Community in Cardiff to be shared. It will be voices of those involved in the Durga Puja festival who will be telling the story to future generations.

Displaying the idols was a fantastic opportunity to enable the wider Cardiff community and visitors to the city to learn about the Durga Puja festival and the work involved in creating the idols. We also hope it inspired pride in the Hindu community. The reaction to the idols can be summed up in one word 'WOW!' The Front of House team heard this word constantly throughout the time the idols were on display. Visitors were impressed by the craftsmanship and fascinated by the story of the Goddess Durga.

During the exhibition we ran a family craft session where participants created artworks inspired by the Durga Puja festival. Visitors were encouraged to view the clay images displayed within the Cardiff in Context gallery and utilise fabric and materials provided by Wales PUJA committee members to create drawings and artworks based on the Goddess Durga. A wide age range of children (3-11 years old) took part in the crafts as well as their family members. Feedback from the craft event echoed participant's enjoyment in learning about the Durga Puja festival through looking at and utilising the colourful materials used to create the clay images.

We have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Wales Puja Committee on this project and look forward to continuing to work together once the project is complete."



Samantha Heale, Collections Curator at the Cardiff Story Museum has been a pillar of support. She has taken classes on the understanding and collection of oral histories greatly enriching WPC Members knowledge and perception of these matters.

The Cardiff Story Museum also exhibited our finished images prominently in the heart of Cardiff City Centre in August drawing wonderful reactions.



Name	Date	Comment
Sonu Sharma Cardiff	18-08-2016	Awesome work. Idols painted very nicely. Wish more such art comes in Cardiff. Organiser at Cardiff museum very friendly & kind to provide lots of information.
Chris & Hazel	18.8.16	Really fascinating. Very well done.
AMANDA Tylorstown RHONDDA	20-8-16.	Absolutely brilliant! The Indian display is AMAZING!
KIM Tylorstown RHONDDA	20-8-16	I enjoyed it all.
Joyce Tylorstown	20-8-16	AMAZING!



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Wales Puja Committee remains our closest link with home. This immensely exciting organisation was created nearly 50 years ago by a hand full of very young home sick engineers who came to Wales even before there was any significant Bengali or Indian presence. Determined, these bravados plodded

on despite natural hurdles and geopolitical boundaries. Their dreams took real shape and Wales Puja Committee spread out its arms to enfold all.

No committee survives so long unless it is doing something right. In today's day and age one has to be progressive, eternally expansive and open. We in Wales have kept our vision focused on growth.

Wales Puja Committee (WPC) over the years has seen many changes, many faces many ages many moods and survived many seasons. We have become an important part of the local community, participating in and exchanging with social and cultural heritage.

We live beyond our selves and have been adopted into our host community as one of their own.

WPC started purely as a 'Bengalis from Calcutta' committee performing Durga Puja. Gradually we transcended all odds to take on a size larger than we could ever speculate. We are now Big really big and a notable part of this society.

This year has been epic. We in right earnest created a mammoth project, 'creation of Durga'. Every stage of 'Pratima' making we converted to an Art project inviting Schools and Art colleges to participate in and learn the various stages and methods of clay image making.. We introduced the mythology of Durga as a religious course in multi disciplinary schools.

There was good local presence with nothing less than appreciation.

Conducting and choreographing the state of the art 'Indian Mela' has also been one of our mega success stories.

Cultural programmes (dance, music & drama) from all corners of India are produced by our very talented members

and staged with profound professionalism. There is never any dearth of appreciation.

We as WPC are established and here to stay as an important part of this diaspora.

Hats off to our predecessors who had the vision and credits to our young members who gave shape, and articulated the vision. Every member of WPC is indispensable and together we get stronger.

Mr Ashok Mukherjee, a stalwart of WPC, the most gracious of men and an Orthopaedic Surgeon of repute



**Dr Ranjit Sinha Ray,
Our multi faceted and
artistically minded
physician**

My experience with the Heritage of Durga Puja project had been awesome. The whole project had its launch at the CMU. I was lucky to deliver a talk on the Mythology of Durga on that day. Then the training process of archiving with the PCW and Cardiff Story began in its earnest, which was a nuevo experience altogether. Actual making of Durga started at the Cardiff History Museum. It was a mind boggling event. Seeing the art of clay image making was very fulfilling for the soul. Now we are at the very dramatic juncture when we start the worship of the new Durga image. A poignant moment had arrived in my life. I would like to extend my gratitude to Neeleem, Sandip and Deepakda for bringing into fruition the whole project. Kudos to them for all the hard works. All the best wishes to the members of the WPC for contributing significant and quality time to help with project, without which this project was truly undoable. Thanks to Miku for his magnanimous efforts for all the computer works, which helped tremendously.

The Faces are smoothed and polished using clay from the Ganges



The final stages of clay before painting



Primer painting in white of the statues



It was as if a childhood memory had travelled across time and transpired into reality. As a kid, I watched the process every year at our neighbour's 'puja mandap' – the frame, the straw, the layers of clay being applied for days, finally the paint, the finer details, the decorations. Except that this time I was not banned from participating. "Eil Edike ashbe na!" of years ago had changed to "Chole esho, kaaje lege poRo!"

"When I was a kid, I would often visit Kumartuli and watch images taking shape", artist Sunil Pal shared. "But they never allowed me to touch anything. I would feel very sad. Why couldn't I? Even if I messed it up a bit, couldn't the grownups put things back together?" As if to pacify that distraught child of yesteryears, Sunil invited and encouraged every child and grown up visiting the image-making venue to have a go. Be it in softening the clay, mixing and kneading clay with papier mache, be it in applying clay mix on the images, or, most challengingly, tying the saree around the images of Laxmi and Saraswati. "Come on, have a go, it will be an experience for you", he would say. And it was. Unique and unforgettable.

Way back in 2009, when I had first heard about the Durga clay image-making project in Cardiff, I regretted being tucked away in Darlington. We had already experienced the warmth and hospitality of the Wales Puja Committee since 2007 and the heights it was reaching was overwhelming. Image-making for Durga Puja in this faraway island country? Workshops with local school children? I simply craved to be there. Little did I know seven years later, by now blessed with a two-year-old and a five-year-old, all of us would have the privilege to watch and participate in the process. A privilege not many would have had even back in India.

The site itself was magical. Glass roof and doors allowed plenty of daylight. The greenery outside was refreshing while sounds of laughter and mischief from the nursery next door spread happiness in the air. Meeting friends from the WPC meant sharing a festive mood even when our festival was months away. For our friends from other parts of India, it was an artistic journey they were witnessing and participating in for the first time in life.

The workshops with local school children were yet another unique experience. Explaining what I thought I already knew to a group of bright young minds brought me face to face with deeper questions on Hindu mythology and its layers of symbolism. The eye for details, concentration and enthusiasm of the school children and their teachers were impressive. Their delightful company kept my two-year old entertained and unobtrusive.

During the four weeks of image-making, Butetown History and Arts Centre became a place of creativity and happiness. The narrow yard behind the image-making hall became an exciting playground for our kids while for us, sitting and watching Sunil and Dibyenduda at work was a beautiful experience. Amidst sharing a joke, a snack or a cuppa, there was a profound silence that was deeply peaceful. A silence within which creative minds flourish, a silence that was healing.

Debanjali Bhattacharjee, a Geography graduate, has worked in various roles with the UNDP in the field of risk management and as a Researcher and Project Coordinator. Now a very busy Mum, she has been a great addition to our extended WPC family.





Chokkhuban



Our Completed Images



| দুর্গাদেবীর উৎস- সন্ধান |

ডঃ সুমিত্রা মিত্র ঘোষ

"কাত্যায়নায় বিদ্বাহে, কন্যকুমারী- ধীমহি, তন্নো দুর্গঃ প্রচোদয়াৎ ।।"

শরৎ আসছে, আমাদের দুর্গামাষীর সোনার মন্দিরের দুয়ারটি খুলে যাবে। মায়ের চরণে অঞ্জলি দেব আমরা। জননী আদ্যাশক্তির আদিরূপ দেখব বলে আজকের এই আখ্যান। উপনিষদ বলছেন, আদিকালে যখন জগৎ সৃষ্ট হয়নি, তখন ব্রহ্ম সাথির প্রয়োজনে নিজেকে দুই ভাগ করায় মহামায়ার আবির্ভাব হল। তিনরূপে ঐর প্রকাশ- মহালক্ষী, মহাসরস্বতী ও মহাকালী। মাতাদি এই দেবীই নামান্তরে জননী দুর্গা। সিন্ধু সভ্যতায় ঐকে শিবলিঙ্গকে ঘিরে থাকার গৌরীপটরূপে পূজা করা হত। বৈদিক যুগে দেবীর কোনো প্রতিমা ছিল না, তখন দেবী যজ্ঞগ্নিস্বরূপিণী। ঋগ্বেদের দশম মন্ডলের একশো পঁচিশ তম (125) দেবীসূক্ত ও একশো সাতাশ তম (127) রাত্রিসূত্রের মধ্যে দেবীর উল্লেখ আছে। কেনোপনিষদে দেবরাজ ইন্দ্র ঐকে ব্রহ্মবিদ দেখেন। বৃহন্নারদীয় পুরাণ আর ব্রহ্মবিবর্তপুরাণ বলছেন এই মহাশক্তি ই বিশ্বকে প্রসব করেছেন। মার্কন্ডেয় পুরাণের একাশি (৪১) থেকে তিরানব্বই (৯৩) -এই তেরোটি (১৩) অধ্যায়ের নাম "শ্রী শ্রী চন্দ্রী", যাতে মা দুর্গার বর্ণনা আছে।

বামনপুরাণের অষ্টাদশ অধ্যায়ে আমরা মহাদেবীর উল্লেখ পাই। ভাগবতপুরাণে ত্রেতাযুগে শ্রীরামচন্দ্রের বসন্তকালে বাসন্তী পূজার পরিবর্তে শরৎকালে সীতা উদ্ধার করতে অকালবোধন করে দুর্গাপূজা করার কাহিনী বলা আছে। দ্বাপরযুগে অজ্ঞাতবাসের সময় যুধিষ্ঠির দুর্গাবন্দনা করেন। আবার কুরুক্ষেত্রকালে ভীষ্মপর্বের তেইশ (২৩) তম অধ্যায়ে শ্রীকৃষ্ণ অর্জুনকে দুর্গা অর্চনা করতে বলেছিলেন। "দেবী ভাগবতে" আছে দেবী সবার মধ্যে আত্মরূপে বিরাজিত থাকেন। প্রাণীকে তিনি যখন ছেড়ে যান, তখন সে শব।

দুর্গা শব্দের নানা অর্থ হয়। 'দুর্গ' নামের অসুর, মহা বিপদ, জন্মমৃত্যুর আবর্তন, অসৎ কর্ম, শোক, দুঃখ, নরকভোগ, যমযন্ত্রণা, দেহধারণের কষ্ট, মহাভয় ও ব্যাধি- এই এগারোটি কষ্ট নিয়ে শব্দ হল 'দুর্গ', 'আ' শব্দ বিনাশ বোঝানোর কারণে - এদের যিনি বিনাশ করেন, তিনিই দুর্গা।

দৈত্যনাশক 'দ', বিঘ্ননাশক 'উ', পাপনাশক 'গ', রোগনাশক 'রেফ', শত্রুভয়ানক 'আ' -র মিলিত রূপ দুর্গা। দেবীপুরাণ থেকে জানা যায় রুরু অসুরের পুত্র দুর্গম ব্রহ্মার বরে পুরুষের হাতে অবধ হয়। শিবের অনুরোধে মহাদেবী বিষ্ণুচল পাহাড়ে বিষ্ণেশ্বরীরূপে দুর্গমের সঙ্গে যুদ্ধ করেন। ক্রমান্বয়ে হাতি, মহিষ ও সহস্রবাহু দৈত্যের রূপ ধারণ করা দুর্গমকে দেবী বারানসীতে হত্যা করেন। তরবারিটি মাটিতে ফেলে দিয়ে তার আঘাতে অসি নদীর সৃষ্টি হয় আর জগৎজননীকে সবাই দুর্গা নামে পূজা করে।

তন্ত্রমতে আদ্রাশক্তির ভয়ংকরী ও করুণাময়ী-দুই রূপে লীলাবিলাস। সন্তানের মঙ্গলের জন্য তিনি যে কোনো রূপ ধারণ করেন। তাঁর দশহাতে ধরা অস্ত্র আমাদের অভয় দেয়। মা- র ত্রিনয়ন জোড়া স্নেহসমুদ্র আর আমরা সকলে তাঁর কোলে সদাই নিরাপদ। শরৎ আসছে, মা আসবেন। আসুন আমরা শিউলি- পদ্মে তাঁর অরুণ - রাঙা চরণযুগল সাজিয়ে দিই।

"সর্বদুঃখনিয়ন্ত্রী ত্বং ভক্তিমুক্তিপ্রদায়িনী।

বিশ্বেশ্বরী জগদ্ধাত্রী দুর্গে দেবী নমহস্তুতে" ।।

Young Shivangi Das (6 years old) with her Shivalinga made using papier-mâché and techniques learnt from the visiting artists

👤 🌸 Hi, I am Shivangi Das. I am in Year 2. This year we have new idols for Maa Durga and her children for Durga Puja. I loved the way Goddess Durga was made from dry grass with paper mache and layers of clay. My favorite thing was mashing up the clay. I helped Sunil Uncle and Dibyendu Uncle by painting the blue background of the idols. Maa Durga is looking very very beautiful in her red saree. I am eagerly waiting for Durga puja. Inspired by the making of the idols, I have created this Shiv Thakur from clay and paints, with the help of my parents. 🌸 👤



The Festival of Homecoming

Rysha Biswas



Time goes by in a whirlwind. It's October already, the season of Durga Puja, the most important religious festival for Bengali Hindus.

The homecoming of Devi Durga is celebrated with great energy and vigour, both in India and abroad. The essence of the festivities lies in spending time with your loved ones and friends and I thoroughly enjoy the fun and merriment that fills the air during the five days of Durga Puja.

Here in Cardiff, the venue for the puja is transformed into a well decorated shrine, where we all spend time worshipping Devi Durga amidst a lot of joy and laughter. We like to wear our traditional clothes during these days and enthusiastically take part in our cultural programmes. I have fond memories of my participation over the years and rekindle my memories by watching videos of my previous dance performances during the pujas, the first being when I had just turned four.

The other attraction is meeting my friends and their families, all dressed in their finest, with one single purpose uniting us all - to celebrate the homecoming of Goddess Durga with her four children. We enjoy tasty food, actively participate in games and competitions and spend long hours playing with our friends.

This year I was lucky enough to watch the making of our idol from scratch by two very talented artists from India. It was a fascinating experience for me and I feel so proud of our rich culture and have shared my experience with my school friends and teachers. I have done a solo dance performance for the Chokkhu Dan (gifting of eyes) ceremony and look forward to my various dance performances for which we have been practicing for the last few months.

I have enjoyed Durga Puja both in UK and in Kolkata and to me, Durga Puja is a reminder that happiness finds its way home, every year. I think what I truly cherish about our Pujo is the festive spirit which brings us all together to celebrate our culture in perfect harmony.

time to sign the film and how she reached to Cardiff, where I met David Thomas. After exchanging pleasantries, he

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Cardiff passes on Bengali heritage to local students

With the help of Cardiff Story Museum, Cardiff University and other government and private organisations, WPC kick-started the project in April this year by briefing Class IX students of three schools. "We narrated the story of Durga's journey the battle between the good and the evil," said Sandip Raha, a doctor by profession and the chairman of the committee. "In June two artists, Dibyendu from Barrow and Sunil Pal from Kolkata, reached Cardiff and started our workshop in Museum History and Arts Centre, Cardiff," he added.



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School students participate in a workshop at Museum History and Arts Centre, Cardiff. (Below) sculptures made by the students

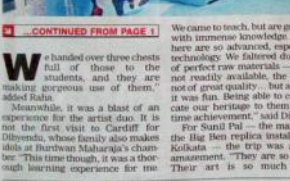
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Cardiff schoolkids used clay and papier mache for the idols

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We came to teach, but are going back with immense knowledge. The kids here are so advanced, especially in technology. We faltered due to lack of perfect raw materials - but was not readily available, but at the end, it was fun. Being able to communicate our heritage to them is a life-time achievement," said Dibyendu. For Sunil Pal - the man behind the big then regular installations in Kolkata - the trip was all about amazement. "They are so creative. Their art is so much richer,

exclaimed Pal. However, the stark contrast in the approach to art in Wales and back home has disbarred him. "I teach art in Kolkata. There is no dearth of creativity. However, by the time a student reaches Class VIII, the family insists on giving up the passion for creativity and throws them into the blackhole of competition. Here (in the UK), on the other hand, such creative exposure gives release to other professions too. Hence, the kids are more dedicated," added Pal. A visit to the actual Big Ben



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For the paper committee, it is a proud moment. "This is a six-year-old paper. Initially, it was just the medical practitioners from West Bengal. Now, the IT professional have also joined us. We wanted to archive our heritage in this country," said Raha. And they are one step closer to their mission. The idols made by the artist duo will find home at the Cardiff Story Museum after the puja.

The schoolkids, who participated in the workshops, with the idols

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ওয়েলস পূজা কমিটির দুর্গাও সব অত্যন্ত ঐতিহ্যবাহী। ডাঃ সন্দীপ রাহা এবং নীলিম সাহা হেরিটেজ লটারি ফান্ডের সঙ্গে যৌথভাবে একটি পরিকল্পনা নিয়েছিলেন। সেটি হচ্ছে, ওয়েলস-এর গত ৪৫ বছরের দুর্গাপূজার আর্কাইভ করা এবং দুর্গা ও তার ছেলেমেয়েদের মূর্তি তৈরি করা। তাতে সাহায্যের হাত বাড়িয়ে দিয়েছেন কলকাতার দুই শিল্পী সুশীল পাল ও দিব্যেন্দু দে। তাঁরা জুন মাসেই ব্রিটেনে পৌঁছে গিয়েছেন প্রতিমা নির্মাণের জন্য। স্থানীয় হাইস্কুলের ছাত্রদের নিয়ে ইতিমধ্যে কর্মশালাও হয়ে গিয়েছে। কার্ডিফ আর্ট সেন্টারে প্রতিমা নির্মাণের পুরো কাজটি হয়েছিল। এই মূর্তিগুলিই ওয়েলসের পূজাকমিটির মণ্ডপের শোভাভরণ করবে। পুরো কাজটি নিয়ে একটি তথ্যচিত্র করার পরিকল্পনা হচ্ছে।

বর্তমান

Sculptures take shape for festival

ABBBB WIGHTWICE Reporter

MEAN artists are in Cardiff making the Durga Puja. The five-day Durga Puja festival is religious, cultural and social, said Dr Biswas. It symbolises the mother goddess Durga being welcomed to her father's house for five days and then going away. "We are expecting 1,500 people to come to the festival. Puja has been held in Wales for 40 years and this will be the biggest Puja ever held here."

He said the statues - as being made at the "Durgawati Art & History Centre" which launched in 1988 but is now close to falling to get future funding. It was important to get the Welsh new closer to the community approved. "We are expecting 1,500 people to come to the festival. Puja has been held in Wales for 40 years and this will be the biggest Puja ever held here."

Artist Dibyendu De will return to India in July, ready to create more Puja sculptures there. He said he was using equipment made in India.

"In India we would use clay from the Ganges or other rivers and locally made stone. Here we have bought clay from a shop and are using that. But it is the same. Because it is a Welsh festival, we are also putting images of Welsh connections at the base of the main sculpture, pictures of the Welsh flag and the Principality St. David."

"I came for the last Puja in Wales in 2009. I stayed overnight here to do this. We had very beautiful flowers and work on the festival."

Wales Puja gets heritage tag Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey | TNN | Updated: Sep 26, 2016, 03.41 AM

KOLKATA: Durga Puja celebrations now span the globe because of the Bengali diaspora settled abroad. Every year, new Puja committees are added to the list as more and more from the city move out. But one of the oldest ones abroad, the 40-year-old Puja in Wales, is now being organized with funds from their government, making it perhaps the only such case. What's more, the idol is being prepared by students in Wales.

The Puja was started in the mid-70s in Cardiff by the Wales Puja Committee - a motley group of Bengali doctors who had left Kolkata a decade earlier. Gradually, it became a community event with even the native Welsh populace participating in the festivities.

This year, organizers are documenting the lives of the first generation Bengali settlers through their Pujas and record it as part of Welsh heritage. The UK Heritage Lottery Fund, which is backed by the state to preserve tangible and intangible heritage, has included the Puja on their list and awarded the organizers £20,000 for this year's event. The idea was initiated by Sandeep Raha, a doctor, and IT specialist Neeleem Saha, both settled in Cardiff.

"A Puja by Bengalis becoming a part of Welsh written history is a huge honour. This is part of an overall effort to capture the multicultural heritage of Wales, the oldest part of England," said Raja Biswas, a doctor and a spokesperson of the committee, who was in town recently.

Three Welsh schools - Radyr Comprehensive, Llanishen High and Cardiff High School - have been roped in to study the community and the Puja as part of their religious study elective paper this session.

"You have to come to Wales to see the impact of our Bengali Puja on the Welsh population," Saha said. Another speciality this year is that instead of shipping an idol from Kumartuli, it is getting prepared at the venue itself.

Two artists from Kumartuli have been flown to Cardiff and the papier mache-and-clay idol is being crafted under their guidance by community members and students of Cardiff Art School. The excitement was palpable when 11 year old Rysha Biswas (11) said, "I loved working with the artist. I cannot wait to perform Indian dances during our cultural programme."

Her friend Ellora Mukherjee said, "It was unbelievable how mere drawings were transformed with straw, then clay and then paint."

TIMES OF INDIA

KUMARTULI, The Heart of Clay Image Making in Bengal

The history of Kumartuli and the making of clay idols of Goddess Durga is closely intertwined with the history of Kolkata itself. When the East India Company merged the three little villages of Gobindapur, Satanuti and Kalikata to create the city of Kolkata, separate districts were allotted to separate trades. Thus some 350 years or so ago was born Kumartuli, or the potters' quarters. Close to the wet clay and silt of the Hooghly River, a warm fragrance of wet clay still fills up her dark narrow lanes. Over time and facing the ravages of industrialization, the traditional craft of clay pottery had faded away leaving behind a thriving industry of clay image making.

Every little by lane in Kumartuli is full of stacks of bamboo and hay, lines of images of different shapes and sizes as different Gods and Goddesses in myriad different artistic styles jostle for attention. Tucked in these congested lanes, more than 450 workshops compete to produce idols even for distant places such as Singapore, London, San Francisco and New York. Art flourishes amidst tight deadlines as within 3 weeks barely three weeks a crude framework of bamboo and hay transforms into a beautifully bedecked and heavenly bride and the Goddess is ready for countless Puja marquees or pandals all over Kolkata and beyond. Some 4000 odd sets of images are delivered every year. It is an ever evolving and smart industry that provides employment to many.

Most artists and artisans have been image makers for generations. The Pal families have over the years produced legendary artists, Mohan Banshi Rudra Pal being the most famous. Some idols are traditional, built around a single frame although increasingly the Pujas are designed by artists with specific themes that push the boundaries of art, structural design and lighting arrangements. Durga however, in every form, theme and style, is always seen on her lion mount slaying the demon Mahishasura and with her four children Kartik, Ganesh, Lakshmi and Saraswati.

The idols are breathtaking but, it is not an easy process and indeed one which requires great skill, practice, planning and teamwork. These idols are always made to order, never sold off the shelf and must match the ambitious and competitive demands of the customer.

The initial skeleton is made of sun-dried clay over a bamboo and hay framework. Once this base is ready, it gets a skin of 'entel maati', a sticky variety of clay procured from the bed of the Hooghly. Once it dries up, the finishing touches are given with 'bele maati', a finer variety of clay which also comes from the river. The artisans work for hours and days to ensure that the final shape is perfectly rendered. The painters now paint the statues. The weavers and stylists design wonderful sarees along some embellishments and decorations. Artists trained in Patachitra paint tales from ancient texts on the wooden framework behind the Goddesses. Stunning headgear made from shola, the pith of a water reed are decorated with glass beads and jewelry. And then it is the time for the painters to bring life to the idols by drawing those expressive eyes drawing of the eyes of the goddess, also known as Chokkhudaan, used to be done on Mahalaya, however these final touches are completed well before nowadays.



Dr Shiladitya Sinha

A Visit to Potuapara through Neeleem Saha's Roving Lens



Poems by a dreamy Orthoped—Tirthankar Bhattacharya

। মাতৃদিবস।

মায়ের দিনে তোমায় আমি কি দেবো মা?
জন্ম নিয়েই মধ্যরাতের ঘুম কেড়েছি
তখন থেকে তোমার থেকে নিচ্ছি শুধু
তোমার কাছে দায় ঠেকিয়ে হাঁফ ছেড়েছি।
যত্ন দিলে, সময় দিলে, ভরসা দিলে
এত কিছু পাচ্ছি সেটা ভাবিওনি তো
মাগনা পেলো কেই বা অত কেয়ার করে
মায়ের আদর চিরকালীন উপেক্ষিত।
একটু বড় হতেই লাগতো বিরক্তিকর
কড়া গলায় শুধু বলা 'পড়তে বোসো'
বাড়ি ফিরতে দেরী হলে ধমক দিতে
নজর থেকে বাদ যেতো না একটা দোষও।
যাই বলো মা, বড় তোমার বাড়িবাড়ি
বন্ধুরা কে, কোথায় থাকে জানতে হবে
সিগারেটের পরে চিবাই পেয়ারাপাতা
তবুও সেটা ঠিক বুঝতে অনুভবে।
সত্যি বলছি, রাগ হতো খুব তোমার ওপর
গম্ভীর টেনে দিয়েছিলে নানান কাজে
আমিও যে তোমার জীবনগম্ভীর ছিলাম
রাগের চোটে সে সব নজর আসতো না যে।
এখন তো মা, আমি বড়, তুমি বুড়ি
রোজ ভুলে যাও চশমা কোথায় রাখলে খুলে
আমার প্রিয় খাবার কিছু রান্না হলে
মনে করে সেটা তো ঠিক রাখো তুলে।
মায়ের দিনে তোমায় আমি কি দেবো মা?
এই প্রজন্ম এসব নিয়ে মাথা ঘামায়
আমি শুধু একটু তোমার কোলে শোবো
সারা জীবন তুমিই তো সব দিলে আমায়।

আর্থতীর্থ।

। গান।

কথা নিয়ে কাটাচ্ছি দিন তোমার কাছে সুর চেয়েছি
তুমি বিনে হবে না গান কথায় কথায় টের পেয়েছি
তোমায় দেখে কথারা গান, এবার শুধু গাইতে বাকি
তুমি আমায় ঠিক করে দাও কোন ঘরানার এ গায়কি
আমার কথা গান করে দাও, দায়িত্ব নাও
তানপুরাটার
তোমার জন্য গাইতে পারি বৃষ্টি আনার মেঘমল্লার।
বৃষ্টিধারা নাও যদি চাও, তাও বলে দাও আগেভাগে
শিখিয়ে দিলে জ্বালতে পারি লক্ষ প্রদীপ
দীপকরাগে।
একজীবনের নিষাদ কোমল, উদারা শম দাও হে
বলে
কথা নিয়ে বসেই আছি, গান করে দাও সময় হলে।

আর্থতীর্থ

। ভাঙা স্বপ্ন।

কখনো দেখেছো স্বপ্নকে তুমি টুকরো টুকরো হতে?
খড়কুটো হয় বানভাসি মন ঘোলা হতাশার স্রোতে।
ভাঙা স্বপ্নের ধারালো ফলায় মন কেটে ফালাফালা
ধূসর পৃথিবী আরো কালো হয় এমনি বিষের জ্বালা।

ভাঙা স্বপ্নের টুকরোর সাথে ভেঙে পড়ে যায় মন
ভাঙা মন নিয়ে চলাফেরা করা সেও বড় জ্বালাতন।
শরীরে আঁচড় পড়লে সে ক্ষত মলম লাগালে সারে
ভাঙা স্বপ্নের খোঁচা খাওয়া মনে হতাশারা শুধু বাড়ে।

কিছু মন করে ভাঙা স্বপ্নতে গোঙানোর অভ্যেস
নিঃস্ব মনের পোড়ো জমি জুড়ে ধ্বংসের অবশেষ।
কি হতে পারতো সেই ভাবনাতে নিষ্ফল হালুতাশ
বিষাদপ্রাচীরে মাথা কুটে মরে আনন্দ উচ্ছ্বাস।

কিছু মন সেই টুকরোর ধারে মন জমি নেয় খুঁড়ে
নতুন স্বপ্নচারা পুঁতে দিয়ে আবার দাঁড়ায় ঘুরে।
এক স্বপ্নের মৃতদেহ থেকে নতুন স্বপ্ন ওঠে
ভাঙবার ব্যথা বুকে নিয়ে ফের স্বপ্ন ধরতে ছোট

সবার জীবনে মৃত স্বপ্নের শব কিছু যায় থেকে
কিছু জীবন বুথা কেটে যায় সে লাশ আগলে রেখে।
কেউ কেউ শুধু মৃতদেহ ভুলে নতুন স্বপ্ন খোঁজে
শোকের জন্য ছোট এ জীবন, কিছু লোক সেটা বোঝে

আর্থতীর্থ।

। কে আমি।

কাব্যরসিক পদ্য পড়েন দেশবিদেশের কবি খুঁজে
কথাগুলোর প্যাঁচপয়জার সামলিয়ে নেন মানে বুঝে,
সময় করে তবুও যাঁরা পড়েন খুচরো কবির কথা,
আর্থতীর্থ তাঁদের জানায় হৃদয়ভরা কৃতজ্ঞতা।
আমার কলম সোজাসুজি মনের কথা মুখে আনে
পড়ার পরে যেমন বোঝো পদ্যগুলোর সেটাই মানে।
মাঝবয়েসের ভাবনা খুঁড়ে ফোয়ারা হয় কথা যত
রোজের জীবন কবিতাতে ঝংকার দেয় নিজের মত।
এর পেছনের মানুষটাকে তেমনভাবে জানতে হলে
সময় করে যে কোনোদিন যাদবপুরে এসো চলে।
এখানকারই কাছাকাছি ছোটোখাটো হাসপাতালে
মানুষ কেটে মানুষ জুড়ে পেটের ভাতের জোগাড় চলে।
মাঝেমাঝে ফাঁকা পেলে দু এক লাইন রাখি লিখে
পদ্য লেখার কায়দা কানুন অদ্যাবধি যাচ্ছি শিখে।
ফেসবুকে নেই তেমন করে, নেটদুনিয়া এড়িয়ে চলি
বদভ্যাসের মধ্যে বাপু একটু বেশী কথা বলি।
দেখতে আমি কাগতাদুয়া, বিন মেকআপের হরর ফিল্ম
গিন্মি বলেন বাড়ির কাজে আমি নাকি কুঁড়ের ডিম।
ধর্মজাতের ধার ধারিনা, ভগবানকেও দূরেই রাখি
থাকুন তিনি নিজের মতন, আমি আমার মতো থাকি।
আমায় যেটুকু জানার ছিলো, বলে দিলাম সবই তা
বাকিটুকু বলতে পারে আমার যত কবিতা।

WPC ON THE CULTURE FRONT



performing live at the **HARROW MUSIC FESTIVAL**

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Ealing Town Hall, New Broadway, London W5 2BY



Ellora Mukherjee



Ashmit Saha



Sinjini Chakraborty



Raktima Bhadra Sarkar



Madhuparna Mitra



Atreyee Saha

The cultural programmes of WPC continued to be a jewel in our crown.

Our plays, dramas, dances, songs and varied children programmes have continued to draw large crowds. Our members performed with great credit in the Harrow Music Festival this year.

Our Cultural Secretary Dr Madhuparna Mitra had raised the bar with our productions being meticulously rehearsed and performed. We have gradually improved our inventory and ability to use better light and sound equipment. Care has been taken to ensure that things run on time.

Sinjini Chakraborty, Anirban Mukhopadhaya and Dr Raja Biswas have planned out a new and exciting programme for the Pujas and it promises to be bigger, more colourful and even better this year.

WALES PUJA COMMITTEE PRESENTS

DR MRIDUL BANERJEE, MRS ATREYEE SAHA, DR. LIZA MUKHOPADHYAY,
MRS SOMALI RAY, MRS ADITI BASU & MRS SUDIPTA DAS



DIRECTED BY SAYANTAN DAS MUSIC DR SUDIPTA MOHAN MUKHOPADHYAY COSTUME & MAKEUP MRS SINJINI CHAKRABORTY
WRITTEN BY MRS BANANI MUKHOPADHYAY.

Banchbo - an unique project

People who know me are aware that I am rumoured to have a monthly pass with Air India to Kolkata (much to the chagrin of my friends) as I do visit Kolkata quite often. 2015 was no exception. We were planning to spend Durga Puja in Kolkata after 3 years, and was awaiting with eager anticipation. A few days prior to going to Kolkata, I had a call from Sandipda, who instructed me to contact Dr Dhiresh Choudhury on reaching Kolkata to take part in a charitable project which WPC was part of. Ob-



With Dhiresh & Badru Banerjee



viously I agreed, as WPC was a part of this, and it was a charitable project but most importantly, Sandipda had made me an offer like Marlon Brando, which I dare not refuse!

So when I contacted Dhiresh on reaching Kolkata, and got more information, I was glad that I had agreed to be a part of the project. It was also suggested that Mridul & Rysha (my wife/daughter) be co-opted. The project involved travelling all over Kolkata in an air conditioned bus and visiting some of the best Durga Pujas, and be judges to identify the best Puja. We will be accompanied by children & senior from Sunderban, who were going to be our co judges.. We would get priority in all pandals and be escorted to see the images and be treated like VIP's. We all agreed, after all we all have to make sacrifices for WPC!!!

On the day of the trip we met at a central point near Garia. There were judges representing various Pujas in UK - there were people from London, Birmingham, Glasgow etc. But the judges who got my attention were the little children. - 7-13 year old who had come from Sunderbans along with some seniors to take part and be judges for the day. The excitement in their faces was a joy to watch and their enthusiasm was infectious for everyone.



We started in Dumdum area and covered Pujas in North Kolkata, Lake Town Area, Salt Lake and finally South Kolkata. It was quite late in the evening when we finished. The whole day went in a blur of pandal hopping, snacking, getting off and on the bus and speaking to organisers of various pujas. It was tiring but satisfying. But in the whole day the most noticeable feature were the young and not so young from Sunderbans. They took their allocated task very seriously and even though some of us might have wandered around a bit, the children were serious about the proposed judging. They asked very relevant and interesting questions to all the organisers and based their judgement on the questions as well as the answers received. The day spent with them was a revelation as to how much such activities can enthuse the youngsters and how much it meant to them.

I was also privileged to meet Samar "Badru" Banerjee, who was a fellow judge. Those who are knowledgeable about Indian Football will know Badru Banerjee was the captain of the Indian Football team for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics (yes there was a time when India used to qualify for football in Olympics). I was amazed at the energy and enthusiasm of this Octogenarian, and his zest for life. His stories about the glory days of Maidan kept me captivated during the day and was a welcome bonus.

The person who was at the centre of this whole project was Dr Dhiresh Choudhury - a young doctor in Kolkata. He started this organisation, Banchbo, in the third year of his medical school and has developed it over the years. His dedication and tireless effort to better the life of under privileged children and elderly in Sunderban is praiseworthy and humbling for a lot of us. He tries to give something to the children and elderly that is more valuable than money - self-respect, confidence and dignity.

This project is an example of how an innovative idea, implemented by a few dedicated people and supported by charitable organisations can make a significant difference in the lives of under privileged children. These children need sponsorship to help with education and having a better future and all of us can do a bit to ensure that it happens.



To know more visit www.banchbo.org.in

The Chennai Floods— Dr Shiladitya Sinha

2015 saw the Coromandel coastline of Southern India hit by terrible floods. One of the worst natural disasters in a disaster prone year, the El Nino weather system generated record breaking rainfall over Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Andhra Pradesh. Chennai was especially badly hit.

The floods left more than 500 people were dead and over 1.8 million homeless with damages estimated over ₹1 trillion (US\$15 billion) in its wake.

The WPC felt that it should help in the relief effort and with the tireless efforts of our members and their donations we were able to hand £600 over to the Ramakrishna Mission Students Home for vital relief work. This was made possible by Dr Karthikeyan of the South Wales Tamil Association, Cardiff. I have attached the letter by Swami Satyajnanananda detailing the work done using our funds.



March 15, 2016

To

Dr Karthikeyan, South Wales Tamil Association, Cardiff, UK
Dr.Sinha, Wales Pooja Committee, Cardiff, UK

Namaskar.

We are very happy to receive your donation for the rehabilitation work for flood affected families. We thank you very much for your magnanimous gesture.

The amounts donated by you are used for the rehabilitation of Irula families who lost their houses during the unprecedented rains in November / December 2015.

Six houses have been constructed and remaining work is continuing. Out of them, 4 houses are provided with toilets and two houses did not have toilet facility. As the first two houses were constructed as model houses, toilet facility was not provided; we will be constructing two toilets separately and will be handed over to them. Beneficiaries were allowed to occupy the houses, as they have no shelter at present. It is proposed to have a formal inauguration of the project on 6th April 2016 for which the details of the program will be communicated separately.

The photographs of the six houses and the two toilets built separately are enclosed for your kind information.

We kindly invite you to visit the Students Home when you come to India.



With best wishes,
Swami Satyajnanananda
Secretary

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS
HOME
(A branch of Ramakrishna Mission, Belur
Math,)

E-mail: office@rkmsHOME.org
www.rkmsHOME.org



Kolkata Chicken Biryani

KOLKATA CHICKEN BIRIYANI

Biryani is derived from the Persian word 'Biryan'. In Farsi, Birian means 'Rice fried before Cooking'. In the olden days, rice was fried (without washing) in Ghee (Clarified butter) to provide a nutty flavour and to burn the outside starch layer by gelatinizing it. After the rice is stir-fried, it was boiled in water with spices till half cooked.

Ingredients	Quantity	Biryani Spices
fine Basmati Rice	200 gms	1 tbs black cumin seeds –sahi jeera
Kewra Water	1 tsp	1 tbs coriander seeds
Rose Water	2 tsp	1 tbs black pepper
Ghee	1 tbsp	1 tbs white pepper – sahi mirch
Oil	4 tbsp	2 black cardamom
Chicken Legs	4	7 green cardamom
Medium Potatoes	2	1 nutmeg (jaifol)
Big Onions	4	2 maces (javetri flower)
Ginger Garlic Paste	2 tsp	5 cloves
Plain Curd	150gms	1 inch cinnamon stick
Red Chilli Powder	1 tbsp	Method: Prepare the Biryani masala. Immerse the rice in water for at least 30 mins. Cook the rice in boiling water with a pinch of salt and some whole spices. Cut the onions and fry them in lot of oil. We need nicely caramelized onions. Slow cook the chicken pieces with oil, spices, curd, chili powder and ginger garlic paste. Cut the potatoes in big chunks and boil them. Fry the potatoes in the same pan after you remove the chicken. Assemble the layers in a heavy bottomed pan and cover with a lid. Cook for another 10 mins on a very low flame. Biryani is ready to serve.
Sugar	1 tsp	
Warm Milk	2 tbsp	
Saffron	1 pinch	
Biryani Masala	1 tsp	
Salt	To taste	



Christina Roy

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Sepsis is a life threatening condition that arises when the body's response to an infection injures its own tissues and organs. Sepsis leads to shock, multiple organ failure and death especially if not recognized early and treated promptly. Every year in the UK there are 150,000 cases of Sepsis, resulting in a staggering **44,000 deaths (2,200 in Wales)** – more than bowel, breast and prostate cancer combined.

The UK Sepsis Trust (UKST) was established as a charity in 2012 with the objective of saving 12,500 lives every year. We are committed to changing the way the NHS deals with Sepsis, to increasing public awareness and supporting those affected by Sepsis. If you would like to help or want further information, please visit www.sepsistrust.org
If you would like to help in Wales please contact terence@sepsistrust.org



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