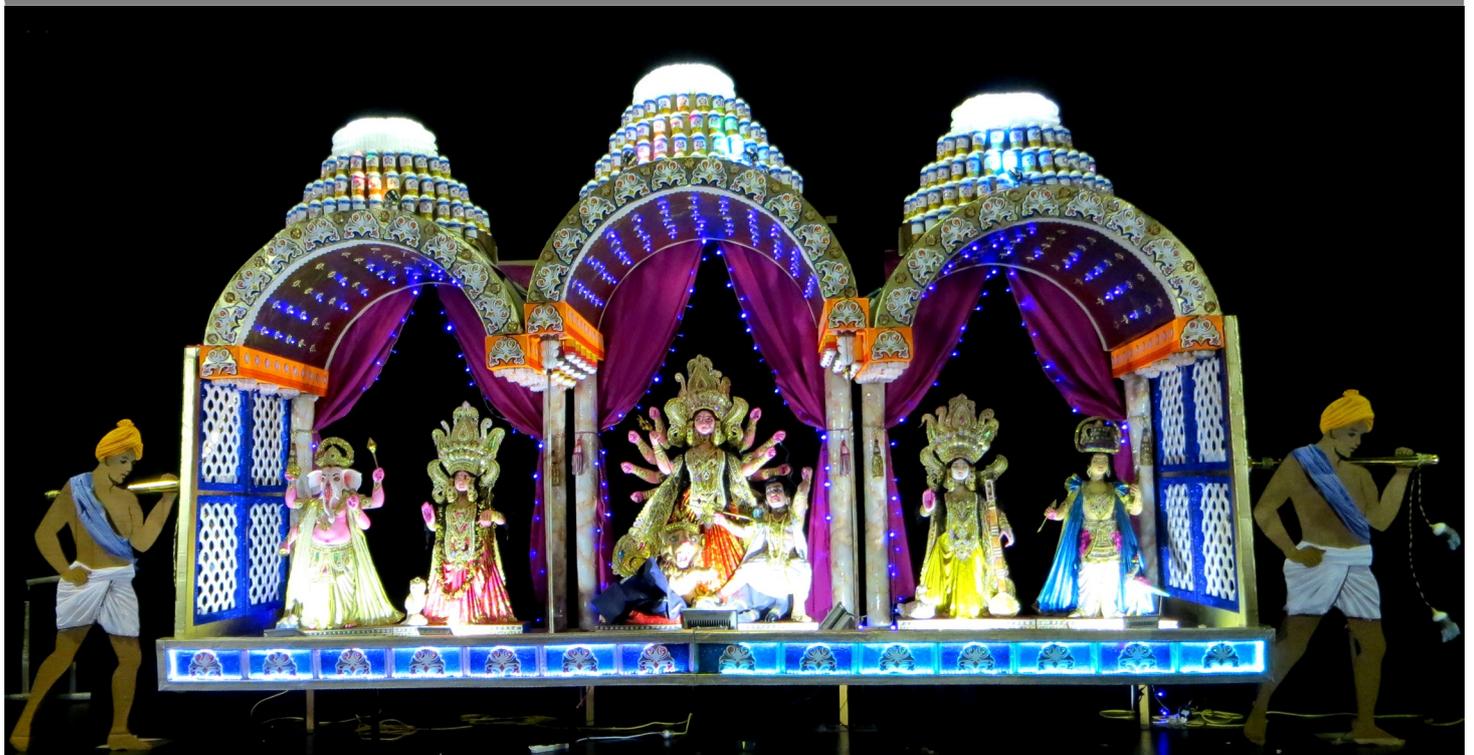


## Bengali Society of Queensland November 2021 Newsletter



*Durga Puja pratima decoration by Sukumar Chakraborty*

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2021

**President:** Ramkrishna Choudhury

**Vice President:** Shukla Chakraborty

**General Secretary:** Brinda Dutta

**Treasurer:** Rahul Roy

**Secretary - Communication and**

**Membership:** Anujit Ghosh

**Secretary - Stores and Logistics:**

Prasad Karmakar

**Secretary - Venue:** Arghya Mukherjee

**General Members:**

Banibrata Mukherjee

Sujata Guha

Debapriya Chakraborty

Bingsati Ghosh

### A month of festivals

The months of October and November have been full of festivities in our community. On 15th, 16th and 17th October we celebrated Durga Puja at Aspley State School. The following Saturday we came together for Lakshmi Puja, and on 13th November members joined in to celebrate Deepawali — our last cultural event for 2021.

### In this issue

- Durga Puja celebrations
- Lucknow Down Under
- Deepawali celebrations
- Community art
- News and upcoming events



### SOME SNAPSHOTS FROM OUR DURGA PUJO 2021

This year BSQ had organised Durga Puja at Aspley State School. Our preparation started many months ago with mandap decoration commenced by Sukumar Chakraborty, detailed planning by the Executive Committee, finalisation of menus for the three days, and fundraising from our generous members and businesses. On average we had 350 members attending each day and night events starting on Friday evening and ending on Sunday night.

As the proverb goes, a picture says a 1000 words, we are sharing some of the many golden moments.





**SOME SNAPSHOTS FROM OUR DURGA PUJO 2021**



## Lucknow down under

### *Indrani Ganguly*

The Immigration Officer looked so long and hard at my passport, I began to feel quite nervous. I couldn't think of what was amiss since it was an Australian passport. I finally plucked up the courage to ask 'Is there anything the matter?'

The officer looked up with a big smile. 'Oh no,' she laughed. 'I've just never met anyone who was born in Lucknow like me.'

I looked at the officer who looked indisputably Caucasian. 'Were your parents posted in India during the British Raj and then migrate to India?'

The officer laughed again. 'No, we've been in Australia for many generations and have never been to India. I was born in Lucknow, New South Wales!'

The conversation ended there but she had managed to arouse my curiosity. Since my husband who is Australian-born and grew up in New South Wales had never heard of it either I started looking around for print and online information.

I learnt the Australian Lucknow is a historic but tiny, former goldmining village located 9 km south-east of Orange on the Mitchell Highway and 250 km north-west of Sydney, best known as the site of Australia's second gold discovery.



Entrance to Lucknow

However, the information about why the settlement was named Lucknow was inconclusive. One explanation was this was a reference to the good fortune the town proffered (i.e., luck now).

A second explanation was that it was named after the siege at Lucknow in India in 1857. *'All the English-speaking world had been scandalized by the siege of Lucknow in India ...during the Sepoy Mutiny and mutiny from May until November 1857... Many atrocities had occurred with some of the British being murdered, including several women and children. The means by which both the Indians and the British fought was by mining under each other's position and then blowing the mines up, thus causing the overhead ground, with or without buildings, to collapse, causing much devastation and loss of life. Thus, the mining at the Wentworth Goldfields, being of an underground nature, was similar to Lucknow where it stands'.<sup>1</sup>*

Not surprisingly there is no mention of the fact that the British were invaders and colonisers in India and the huge number of Indian soldiers and civilians they slaughtered.

I didn't do much with this information beyond thinking I should try and visit the Australian Lucknow one day to get a feel for the place and perhaps some more information.

That opportunity to do so did not come till May this year as part of a longer visit to New South Wales. A friend who grew up in Orange which is very close advised: 'Don't blink while you drive through it or you'll miss it!'



Lucknow Coffee Shop

<sup>1</sup>Kerrin Cook, *Lucknow: A Veritable Goldmine*, Orange City Council 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Project, 1995

This was very true. Lucknow turned out to be a tiny town on the Mitchell Highway 9 km south-east of Orange and 245 km north-west of Sydney, with a population of less than 300.

However, it still had some places of interest. We started with coffee at the local café then began the Lucknow Heritage Trail. This is a circular journey around the town which begins at the Wentworth Gold Mine. The mine wasn't open to the public on that day but we could walk around it and see the corrugated iron buildings and the entrance to the mine.

We also saw a number of miner's cottages and statues of gold prospectors and read about Reform Mine which was described as the 'richest small gold field of its type in the world'.

Not so old but still interesting was the Lucknow Skin Shop with products made from cow and sheep skins and some beautiful residences.

Before we knew it, we were back where we had begun! The whole tour took just about an hour. But we agreed it was well worth learning a bit more about the connections between the colonial past of both India and Australia.



*The Wentworth Mine*



*Statues of gold prospectors*



*One of the beautiful old buildings*



*The Lucknow Skin Shop*



## Deepavali celebration

At end of our festive time of the year we came together to celebrate Deepavali. Many thanks to our dedicated members for their overwhelming attendance on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at Moggill State School.

For almost the last two years, we have been in the midst of a pandemic that has turned our lives upside down. After a particularly dark year of Covid-19, we celebrated the occasion of "Festival of Lights" together in a joyous spirit to conquer the darkness. We are thankful to everyone who has come forward to contribute in any manner to make it a big success.

Our Deepavali cultural function was inaugurated by chief guest Councillor Greg Adermann who represented Lord Mayor Adrian Schinner, pictured lighting the traditional oil lamp surrounded by floral rangoli.



The first half of the function included formal speeches followed by Krishna Gopi dance. This graceful dance was based on love and celebration of togetherness, amorous love in Vrindavan, innocence and mischief, exquisite flute sound, spreading love across the villages by Krishna.



The second item was a foot-tapping medley dance performed by a large ensemble cast of 18 children from 3 years to 13 years. It was based on Bollywood songs from 1979 to the latest hits.



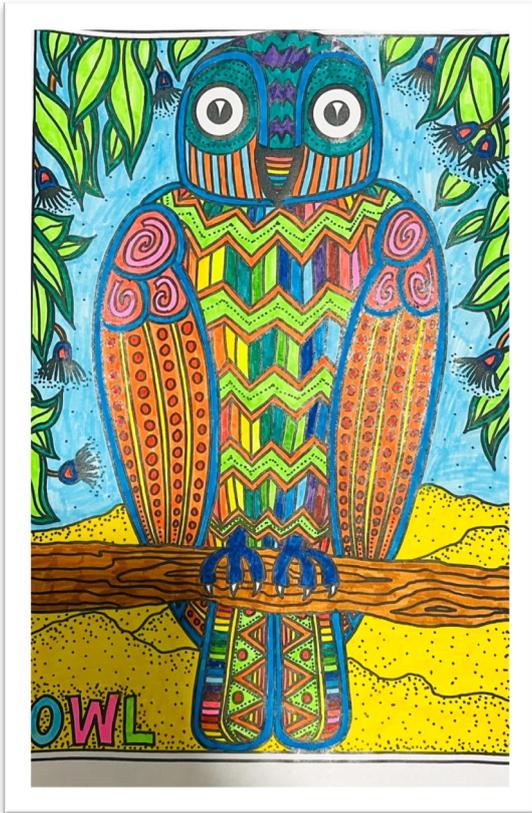
After a small tea-break, a theatre group of our members presented a spectacular short version of the drama, Punorjonmo (Rebirth). The story of rebirth unfolded where 9 million ghosts from West Bengal are serving punishment of an average of 30,000 years each. At the end of the drama, Bidhata (God) blessed all ghosts to be reborn, but not as humans.



Everyone enjoyed the hot samosas served with tea and coffee before the start of the function, like a traditional entrée in Suvo Sondha. Dinner comprised of scrumptious food packets containing biryani for non-vegetarians, delicious fried rice with paneer for vegetarians and 'kalo jam' for dessert.

The Deepavali celebration ended with 20 minutes of dynamic fire show by guest fire performer, Dylan. Children, as well as adults watched the jaw dropping display of fire, dance and pyro show.





Rahil Saha (Owl)

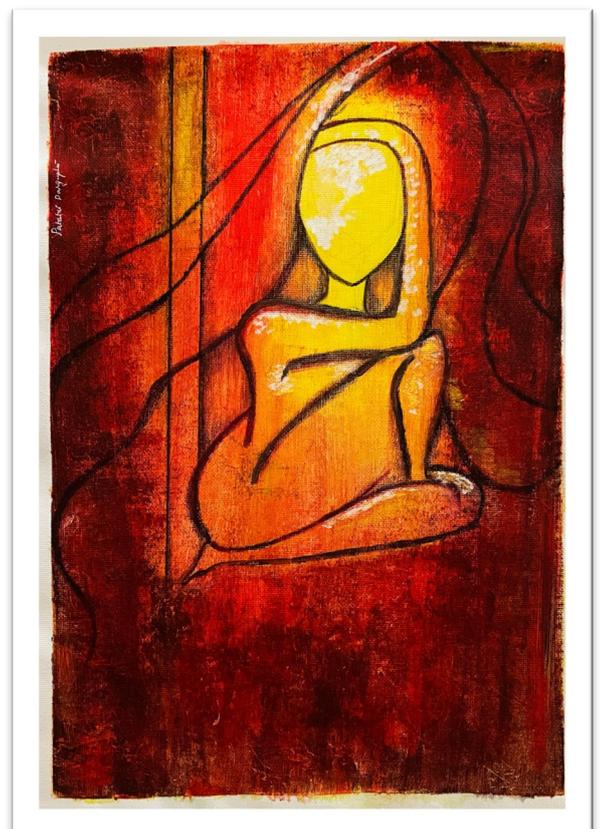


Patatri Dasgupta

# Community art



Shanaya Das (4 years old)



Patatri Dasgupta

### Charity starts at home

Recently we circulated an email to our members about communal violence in Bangladesh during Durga Puja celebrations where we requested donations from our community to support the victims — Bengali-Hindus in Bangladesh. Many thanks to our members who generously donated to this cause. We will send the collected funds to the appropriate charity organisations in Bangladesh.

**We are thankful to all our members for your passionate participation in all events and for helping to bring our community together. We wish you the very best at the end of 2021 and pray for a healthy and Covid-19 free 2022. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2022 to you and your families.**

Are you a keen writer, artist or photographer? We welcome creative works from all our members and their children for publication in our regular newsletters. Send us your original short stories, poetry, creative non-fiction, recipes, photography and artwork.

**Email: [bsq.qld@gmail.com](mailto:bsq.qld@gmail.com)**

### Upcoming events

**Join us to celebrate Saraswati Pujo on 5th February 2022.**

**We look forward to your support and participation for our first event of the New Year.**

**Until then stay safe and healthy.**