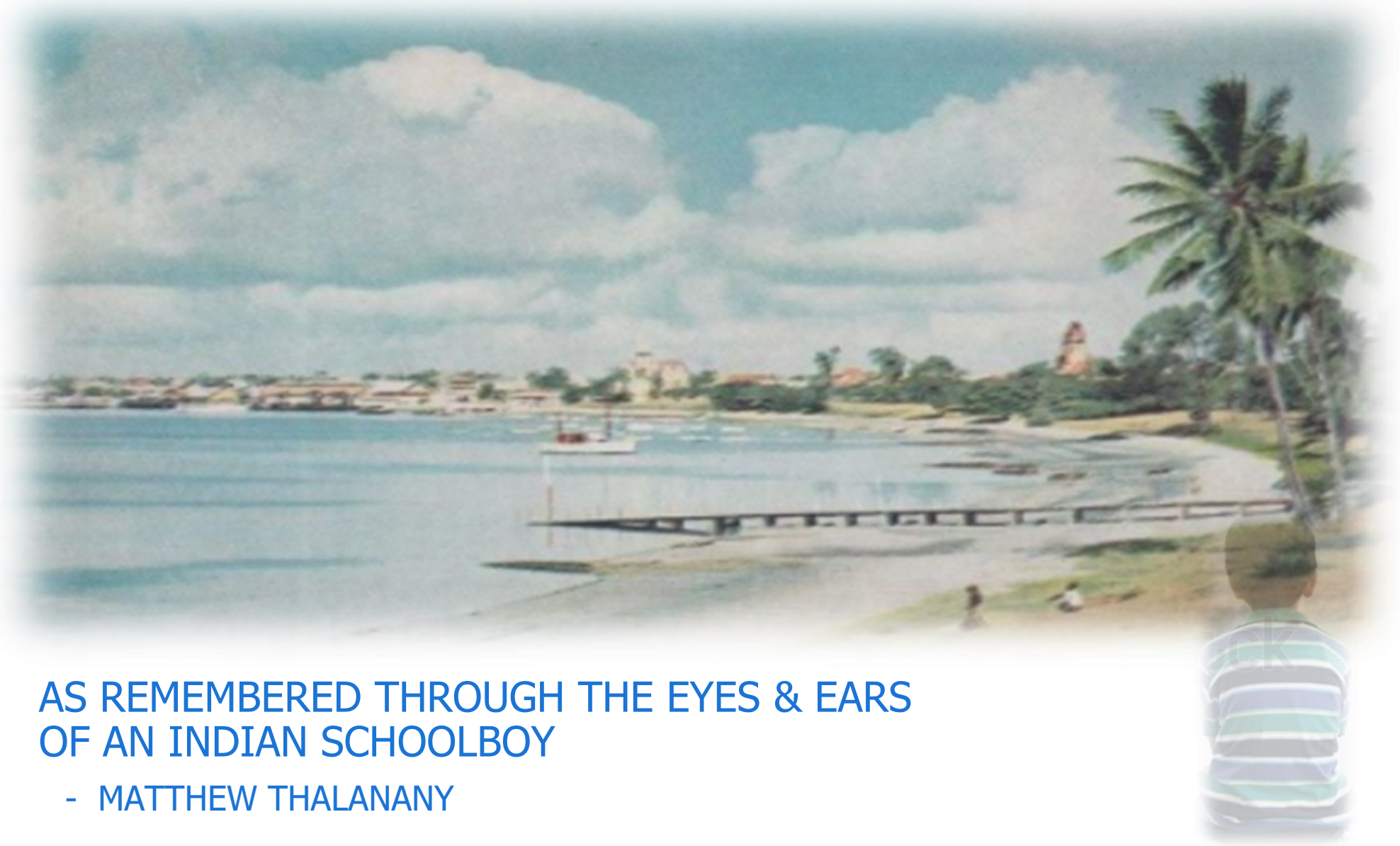
LIFE IN 1950s DAR ES SALAAM ……
……..TRAIPSING THROUGH INTO THE EARLY 60s….



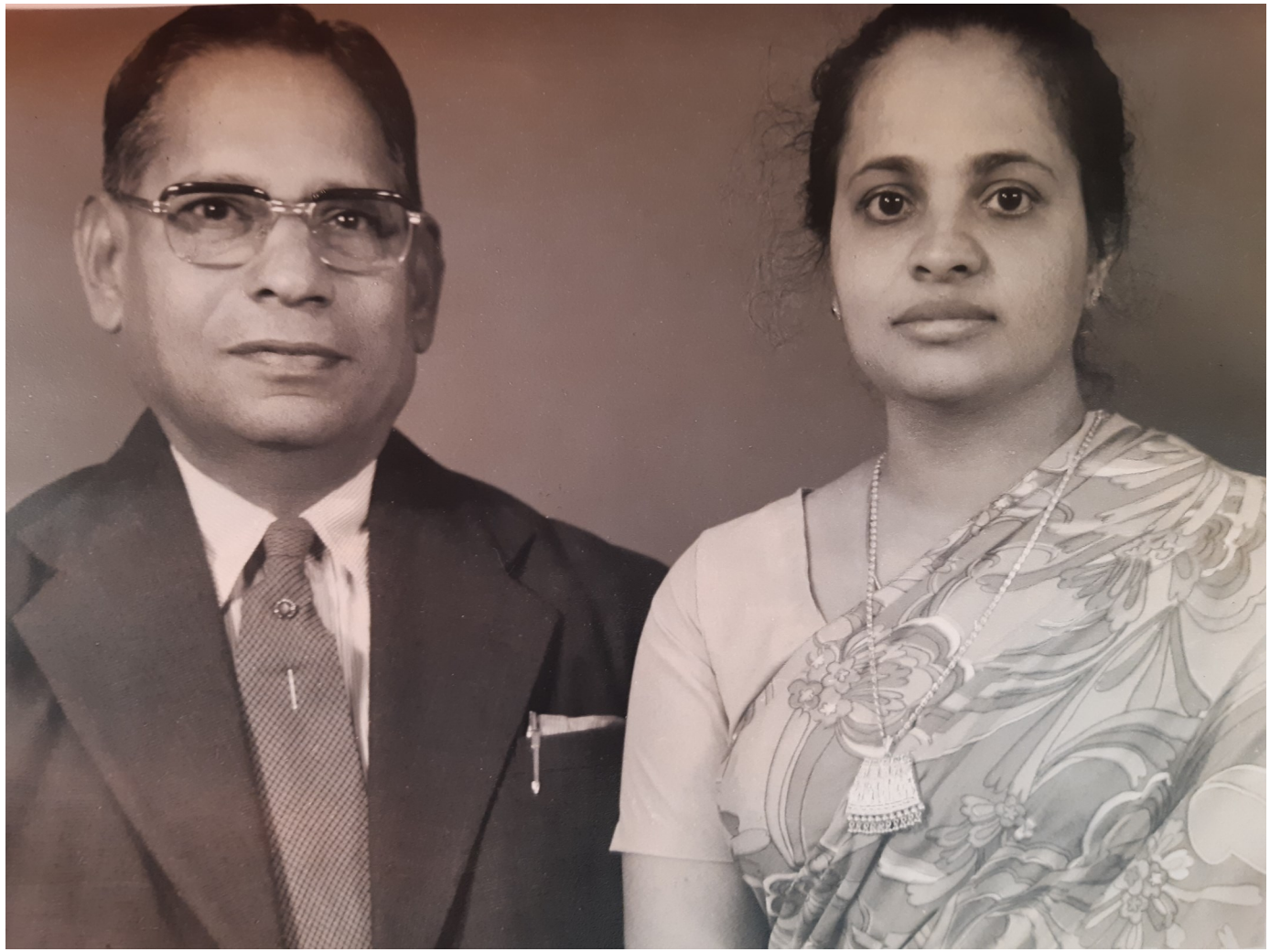
AS REMEMBERED THROUGH THE EYES & EARS
OF AN INDIAN SCHOOLBOY

- MATTHEW THALANANY

This is a collection of a series of articles that I had originally posted on the EAMM's What's App Group site starting from Christmas time 2020 all the way through to September 2021.

— Dr Matthew Thalanany

Dedicated to the Memory of My Parents



RECOLLECTIONS OF DR MATTHEW THALANANY FOR THE EAMM GROUP

An Invitation, A Bit Of Background & A Small Note Of Caution

To the curious reader who happens to pass by the way of these pages and pauses to look, - you are ever so welcome to linger and explore a little further….

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CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

The young man's face stared out at me from the screen, looking rather perplexed and worried. His GP's face looked out at me from the adjacent screen. This was a 3-way Skype consultation. Around me were other doctors, also sat at long tables, crowded with computers, wearing audio headsets, and peering intently at their screens as they conducted conversations with those on screen, while their nimble fingers moved deftly and rapidly on keyboards to shoot off messages and images every now and again.

This was winter December 2020 in the heart of London, at Wellington House, one of the 3 sites of the UK Department of Health in London. This was pandemic Britain.

I was one of a team of volunteer doctors drawn from among retired NHS consultants across the UK to serve on the London Coronavirus Response Team. I had been travelling to and from London over the previous 6 months to assist in this crisis.

The sudden buzzing and ringing of my mobile phone on the desk rudely interrupted our 3-way conversation. With a quick movement I silenced it. Apologising profusely to the two on screen, I picked up the call - an unfamiliar number from India.

A few days earlier I had received an invitation from Joy Philip (Mathew Philip in the EAMM Group) via my sister Libby (Mrs Elizabeth Mathews) to join a What's App group of Malayali people whose parents had lived and worked in East Africa.

The person on the phone was Jeevan Thampi, the EAMM Group Co-ordinator, welcoming me into the group. Hurriedly, and apologetically, I explained what I was in the middle of, and promised to call back later.

Later on, looking at my phone, I found that I had been enrolled onto the EAMM What's App group, and soon after I was able to see the flurry of activity as people shot off messages, comments and responses into the forum.

When I got a free moment that weekend, I called Jeevan. He explained that this group had been through different forms, versions and re-incarnations. It had originally stemmed from the East African Malayali Pensioners' Association in Trivandrum. Given that many from that parent generation were no more, this was now an attempt to bring people of that time together and to retain the collective memories of those that remained and that of their children.

Jeevan's particular request was that, if I could spare a few moments every now and again to capture my memories and recollections of life in Dar es Salaam, then would I please share them with the Group through the What's App Group medium. He mentioned that there were one or two others doing the same, and that these recollections were always gratefully received.

I said I'd give it a thought. Then feeling that it was a good idea I agreed to help by contributing my 2 pennies worth.

Well, here it is. Read on!

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My name is Matthew Thalanany. I am a retired doctor. I was born in Dar es Salaam in 1947 and spent my schoolboy life there. I was known by my pet name and my father's name strung together – Sunny Sebastian.

My father, TM Sebastian, hailed from the Thalanany family of Plassanal, a village in the foothills of remote rural Central Travancore, 7 miles out of the town of Pala in Kottayam District, in the domain of the Thampuran of Poonjar.

He was known to my peers as Uncle Sebastian or Uncle Devasiachen. He was an Electrical Engineer with Daresco, (Dar es Salaam & District Electric Supply Company, a subsidiary of EAPL, East African Power & Lighting, a British owned company, with government interests in it). In subsequent years it got renamed Tanesco.

My mother, Mrs Mary Sebastian, of the Malayil family of Alleppey, used to be called Aunty Mammykutty. She was known to Dar es Salaam Malayalis of that era as a humble housewife, a kind and generous hearted woman, and an excellent cook. To her children she was all of those plus an absolutely fantastic mother.

We lived originally on Ring Street in the heart of town. We moved to Changombe in 1958 on medical advice following my mother's serious, almost fatal, illness.

My two sisters are younger to me. The 1st is known to many in the EAMM Group. She is Libby (Mrs Elizabeth Mathews), and left Tanganyika in 1969 when she completed her schooling at St Francis Xavier's Primary School and Shaaban Robert's Secondary School. She and I were born at the European Hospital in Dar es Salaam.

My 2nd sister was born in Alleppey, Kerala, in 1964, after I had left Tanganyika. She is Molly (Mrs. Mary Paul). She left Dar as a small child in 1970 and has hardly any memories from there, but she has met a lot of our Dar es Salaam friends who used to come and visit my parents at our home in Plassanal.

Dad qualified from the University of Karachi in 1934, (at that time still in India). He used to talk of two other Malayali lads from Travancore who were his college mates, a chap called Mathen, and another by name Pothen. They took out digs somewhere near the college and had a local man who came into cook for them. His first job, after graduating, was as Assistant Junior Engineer to Lloyd Barrage & Canals in Sukkur Sind, a major irrigation project that even today waters that part of the Indus Valley in what is the Pakistan of today. In 1935 he was sent to Quetta in the north-west to assist with the infrastructure repairs required following the massive earthquake there in May of that year. On completion of the initial phase, he was called back to the Lloyd Barrage. He used to talk in later years of the tall, proud and rather fierce people called Pathans he came across while spending time there in the north-west frontier region. They were an unconquerable people he used to say.

Towards mid-1939 when the storm clouds of war were gathering over Europe, and the white British engineers in East Africa were being recruited into the British military forces, my father was deployed from Sind to Dar es Salaam. I recall him saying how he travelled by train to Karachi to catch the steamer that was coming in from Bombay, enroute to Mombasa and Dar es Salaam.

Many Malayali Uncles were on that ship. They became close friends over the subsequent years. One of the Uncles was Uncle VM Abraham, father of Rennie on this group. I think Uncle Sivaraman Pillai (Mr MS Pillai), was on the same ship, there was a Mr PT Varghese who subsequently moved to Kenya, and Aunty Thankamma Mathews (wife of Mr PG Mathews), with her little son Achenkutty (George Parel) coming to join Uncle Mathews who worked up country on the Damon Sisal Estates in Mauzi, Kimamba near Kilosa.....I've forgotten who the others were….

On arrival in Dar and disembarking from the ship he was met by Uncle Kunjunny Nair (Uncle MK Nayar). Uncle Nayar worked in the Government Service and had come to receive my father at Dar es Salaam harbour at the request of my father's eldest brother, Dr TM Joseph, who was posted upcountry at that time (in Iringa ....I think.....). Dad used to recount his memory of that first meeting with Uncle Nayar – whom he thought of as an erudite and distinguished gentle-man destined for big things. Many of the Malayali Uncles and Dad resided in a building called Mani Bhavan where they shared accommodation. They were either bachelors like Dad, or else married men, with wives and children in India and waiting to bring them over.

My father was appointed as Junior Engineer at Daresco, the Dar es Salaam Electric Supply Company. Sometimes he used to talk about his early days in Dar es Salaam. On the morning after his arrival he reported for work. He was met by his line manager to-be, an English chap, and an older Senior Manager, a Scotsman. The Senior Manager asked him, in his thick and heavy Scots accent, how he proposed to get about at work.
"I have my bicycle, Sir".

"Aah, I see. Well, my dear fellow, that won't get you very far in this job. We'll have to fix you up with something a wee bit faster than that".
He then asked my father whether he knew any Swahili. My father replied "No".
"Well, you will need to learn pretty fast. How long do you think you will take…?"
"Two hours".
"WHAT??!!? Are you quite alright you chap??!!? 2 hours??!!".
My father, still a little tired after his sea voyage and rather befuddled by the man's thick Scottish accent, had misunderstood the question, but quickly recovering his composure, he blurted out "Sorry, I mean I will devote 2 hours every day to learn it."
"Excellent!".

He was tasked with the electrification of outlying parts of Uzaramo District – the district within which lay the harbour port town of Dar es Salaam. He did this with his usual dedication and eye for details, overseeing the workforce with strictness but fairness. In town he used a Raleigh bicycle to get about, but when on duty he used his BSA motorbike, bought with a loan from Daresco, which he rode into the semi-forested bush areas outside the main town where the work was going on.

In 1945 after the Allies had won in Europe, he sailed to India, went home, got married and came back with his young bride. The war being over, demobilisation had commenced, and the British engineers were going back to the colonies. When Dad reported for duty, he learned that he had been demoted to the post of Sub Assistant Engineer Electrician, reporting to another Scottish man less qualified and experienced than him. With a new bride on hand, he was in no position to make a big fuss and fight about things and he accepted it for what it was. He was never bitter about this experience but taught me that one's survival skills should include being better than other people at some things, and that building upon that would always help one to stay afloat in any storm.
Uncle Kunjunny Nayar was very sorry to hear what had happened and wanted to get Dad to transfer to the PWD, but

there was no equivalent electrical engineer post, and he couldn't just manufacture one just to help his friend. Dad remembered to tell me all this later on in his old age when I used to visit him in India.

My father was a hearty and jovial man who loved his food , and over the course of years, he developed a sizeable paunch, which did not disturb him the least. He said people should eat well and be able to show it. He had many friends in the various Indian communities in Dar es Salaam, but his Malayali friends from the early days were the people he was most fond of. They repaid his sincere friendship years later with their loyalty, when after his retirement, many of them would come to visit him in his remote rural village of Plassanal in Kottayam District. The house used to ring with laughter as they exchanged memories. On one such occasion I was lucky to meet his old University friend from the 1930s, Mr Pothen, and in 1990 I was very happy to see Uncle K I Ipe at home. He told me then that his son Melville lived and worked in London, and that his eldest daughter Mabel lived in Scotland, while his 2nd daughter Molly lived in Hyderabad.

My Uncle, Dr. Joseph, whom I called Uncle Kunjettan, was my father's eldest brother. He did his medical education in London, was trained at the Royal London Medical School Hospital and qualified in 1922. After a short stint working in London, he joined the British Colonial Medical Service and was posted to Tanganyika in 1923. He sailed from London, via Marseilles, to Dar es Salaam. He was posted as DMO initially to Lindi, then Pangani, and later to Mtwara and Tabora. If I am not wrong, Uncle was the 1st Malayali doctor in Tanganyika, and probably the first in East Africa.

In 1940 he moved from Tabora to Dar es Salaam after the birth of his 3rd son, my cousin Rennie Joseph. He stepped down from full-time Government work, became part time and set up his own GP practice. Initially this was located in the downstairs flat where my Dad was living in Ring Street. Dad moved upstairs, but he came down again after he got married while Uncle moved his GP practice clinic and dispensary to Mnazi Moja. He worked part-time at what was the then European Hospital in Oyster Bay, and as Government Medical Officer of Health/ Port Health Officer for the Port of Dar es Salaam.

Aunty was Mrs Thankam Joseph, hailing from the Poovathur family in Chengannur, Kerala. Aunty, who had graduated from Madras Queen Mary's, and was teaching in Colombo, Ceylon, in the 1920s. The marriage proposal was brought forward by one of Aunty's Poovathur relatives working in Iringa .....as I seem to remember from family talk.... She became the Headmistress of Aga Khan Girls Secondary School, Dar es Salaam. They had 3 children – Toby (Mathew) – Tobychayan as I called him, Dolly (Elizabeth), Dollamamma to me, and Rennie, Rennichayan to me. They all became doctors eventually after finishing school in Dar es Salaam.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Uncle for caring for and saving my mother's life in 1957.

He retired and returned to India in 1958, settling in our hometown of Palai continuing to see patients until his death in 1974, I think aged 82.

The other Thalanany family Uncle I had in Tanganyika was Mr DT Sebastian, whom I called Uncle Kunjunju or more simply, Uncle Kilosa. He had arrived a year or two before my father. He was my father's 1st cousin, the same age, and they had grown up together in Plassanal as twin brothers, very fond of each other. He worked in Kilosa at the East African Sisal Plantations in the accounts department and rose eventually to become the Head of Finance and Accounts.

Aunty (also named Mary Sebastian like my mother) hailed from the Ramapuram family in Pala. She was Aunty Pennamma to me and my sister. She, like my mother was a housewife, and a jolly hostess to many Malayali families in the Kilosa region.

They had 3 children. The eldest was Betty (Alice Sebastian – later Mrs Alice Kuriakose), my age, born at the European Hospital. The 2nd was Benny, (Sebastian Thalanany), also born at the European Hospital, in 1951. The 3rd was Tommy (Thomas Thalanany), born at Kilosa Hospital in 1957.

Betty and Benny lived with us in our house for some years before they moved into St Joseph's School as boarders.

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To the Curious Reader who has managed to stay with these pages so far – just a tiny word of caution:

I do confess, that although this is supposed to be an East African group, my accounts are limited to what I knew and saw and can remember from those days, and so, they are very biased towards Dar es Salaam, and Tanganyika.

I must state also, that these recollections of mine are written from the perspective of a schoolboy — the tone and style of writing may convey that to the reader. The recollections of an Indian schoolboy living in the racially segregated society of 1950s Dar es Salaam, capital of colonial Tanganyika, in the waning days of the British Empire.

They do not pretend to be anything other than those boyish recollections.

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ABOVE: The old European Hospital in Dar es Salaam of the 1950s, re-named Ocean Road Hospital after Tanganyikan independence.

From my father's collection of Dar es Salaam postcards.

1951— NURSERY SCHOOL YEAR

My memories of early education are of days of absolute fun.

There was a nursery school in town which was located on one of the main streets – which I think was called Main Avenue. From my faded memories - The 'school' was located upstairs in a cream coloured 2-storied building with a large balcony that had big arches. It was run by Mrs Olive Dass, the sister of Mrs. Nasser. Mr & Mrs Nasser were well known to us. They and Mrs Dass were Pakistani Christians. Aunty Nasser taught at Aga Khan Girl's Secondary where my aunt, Thankamma Joseph, was headmistress. It is through that connection I got admitted to Mrs Dass' nursery school.

All that I remember is that we were about 20 children. My clear recollection is that my friend Joe Kamicheril (Jopen, younger brother of Molly on this group), was one of the boys there. I think Lalitha Zachariah, daughter of Uncle Police Zachariah was another there. I've forgotten who the rest were…

Mrs Dass taught us through a combination of games and rote learning. There were plenty of nursery rhymes to sing, and act out too, in groups. She would remind us to use handkerchiefs to blow our noses and wash our hands. At 11 o'clock she would serve us biscuits and lime juice. By 12 noon our respective manservants (houseboys) would come to collect us, and we would all walk home.

Among the songs we learned was one which to my ears sounded like "*Ayaru thandey, ayaru thandey*". My Mum was utterly mystified. Later in the week when we were visiting Uncle Ousepachen Kamicheril, my mother asked Aunty Marykutty whether Jopen was singing the songs at home. And Aunty said "Yes, but there is something he sings that we don't understand – he sings *Ayaru thandey* – what language is it?"

The mystery was solved later one evening during our Azania Front evening strolls. We were all together – the Kamicherils, my Dad, Mum and I, Uncle VM John Saar and family, and Uncle Chackochen and Aunty Kunjamma and their 4 daughters, Monsy, Gertie, Flossie, and the smallest, a little baby in a pram - Lettie. (Aunty Kunjamma Jacob and Aunty Achutan were my mum's loving and responsible "older sisters" in Dar when my mum had arrived there after marriage as a very young bride - I'll write later about it…. Aunty Kunjamma was aunt to Aunty Grace Samuel on this group).

We bumped into Mrs Dass. She was very complimentary about all her small charges, including me. Dad asked her what languages the songs were. She said that they were all in English. He mentioned that I and Jopen were singing something which didn't sound English or Swahili. Mrs Dass asked us both to sing it. We dutifully did. Then, with her face wreathed in amusement, she turned to our parents saying "That is 'I hear thunder, I hear thunder'". My Mum and Aunty Marykutty

burst into peals and peals of laughter, as did all the other Uncles & Aunties. For a few years after, when my head used to get a bit swollen, and I would start arguing back, Dad would just sing out "*Ayaru thandey, ayaru thandey*", and my head very quickly deflated to proper size and put me back in my proper place.

Recently I happened to turn on Spotify in the car one day, and at random a collection of children's nursery rhymes sprang up. I clicked on it and started singing along, reliving the old songs from Dar es Salaam and Mrs Dass' days. Suddenly, up came "I hear Thunder, I hear thunder, Hark don't you, hark don't you? Pitter patter raindrops, pitter patter raindrops, all wet through, all wet through"…....

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1952 — ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, DAR ES SALAAM

St Joseph's School – the full name of the school was actually St Joseph's Convent School. It was run by the Franciscan Sisters from Baldegg in Switzerland.

The Headmistress at one time, I gather, was Sr Solana. However, by the time I joined it was Sr Salvina – formal and distant, but always ready to smile. Sr Raphaela, warm, smiling, kind and generous, taught us prayers and hymns. Dear old little Sr Miriam, who looked really, really ancient to us, with her doddery voice, taught us stories from the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible. She used to bring with her a collection of large poster boards on which were depictions of various significant events recorded in the scriptures. These beautiful, coloured illustrations helped to bring life to what was being taught and drive down deeply into our heads the moral truths and life-shaping lessons being imparted. Sr Miriam retired, and moved to the Msimbazi Mission, where the Sisters had a convent, and had a wonderful garden where they grew a large variety of beautiful flowers to adorn the Cathedral altar.

At some stage Sr Jacinta became the headmistress. She was a most remarkable person, even we as small schoolboys understood that. Short in stature, (evident even to us), she had an apple-cheeked rubicund face which beamed most of the time but could become very stern when encountering indiscipline.

Many years later all these missionary sisters returned to Switzerland, as also did the Capuchin Fathers at the Cathedral. As I learnt from my parents, Archbishop Edgar Maranta left in 1968, and Cardinal Laurean Rugambwa (probably the first African Catholic bishop elevated to the College of Cardinals) took over at the Cathedral.

When we started in Std 1, we were in an odd-shaped little building – (looking back on it, I think it had an octagonal shape). Our class teacher was a kindly English lady by name Mrs Ivy Chapman. She built upon what we had learned from Mrs Dass. We were a completely international crowd of somewhere between 20 or 30. We sat in rows at long wooden benches (it's still the same today in rural India, rural Nigeria and rural Ethiopia), and we recited the alphabet, and numbers, and did simple sums and little exercises. My friends whom I remember were Jopen (Joe Kamicheril, Molly's younger brother), Peter D'Souza a Goan boy, a Chinese boy named Chew Yook, an Arab boy Ali Salim Dhiyebi. Ali's father owned and ran the Dhiyebi diaries, the main source of milk supply to the town. (The Msimbazi Catholic mission provided a limited supply.) Ali lived in the same building as my Uncle Dr Joseph, on the floor above, and I knew his father, and would see his mother dressed and completely veiled in black, but never got to see her face. She would converse with my mother in Swahili. Some years later the dairy was sold, and the family returned to Oman where they hailed from.

Among the English boys there were only 2 with whom I was pally. Thinnish Andrew Evans, quiet and serious, but friendly,

wearing round-rimmed eyeglasses, and chubby Paul Turner, also bespectacled, but with an ever-cheerful countenance, beaming with smiles and a mischievous look on his face always. Other chaps included a very fair blue-eyed Seychellois boy named Peter Naya, and Joe D'Silva, a Goan. Somewhere during the year, a couple of much bigger boys joined us, a set of South African mixed race White brothers, Andrew and Kenneth, (who sported golden frizzy African hair – a most curious novelty to the rest of us), and an English lad named Richard something or the other. They were with us only for a short while and then moved classes upwards as soon as matters were arranged. I think this second Andrew remained a little longer. He was a real devil, getting up to all sorts of pranks and mischief behind Mrs Chapman's back.

Once, during recess, an older boy tried bullying Jopen, who went off and got his older brother Alex who was in a senior class. Alex gave the bully a stern telling-off and shoved his fist in his face. The bully slunk away quietly, Jopen gained envious respect from the assembled onlookers, and I became extra pally with Jopen, now realising the tremendous protective power of having a big brother around. Good old Alex, he was a kind 'elder brother' to me in that period.

At home, our Mums were always interested in knowing who our friends were, and their names, and parents' names, and so on. Among others, I mentioned Peter "Nair", a very fair skinned blue-eyed boy. My mum was totally baffled at which Malayali family this boy came from. Later in the week, she caught up with Aunty Marykutty, and the conversation turned to the 2 boys in Std 1. Aunty Marykutty had been equally confused when Jopen had told her of white skinned blue-eyed Peter "Nair". All came to light later one Sunday, after Morning Mass, when they both found out that Peter's actual surname was Naya, and that his mother and father were from the Seychelles.

Later, in Standard 2 or 3, I remember my good friend Anand Kumar, son of Uncle Vellappan Nair (GV Nair). Anand and I remained chums all through our school days. We parted our ways when we went off to India for University studies. I met him again at Trivandrum as a guest at my sister Libby's wedding. On that same occasion, I was so overjoyed to meet again Aunty Jyoti Pillai, widow of the late Uncle Narayana Pillai (MN Pillai), – many people will not know of the reasons for the emotional ties that bound me to her……I'll explain at a later stage.....

I met Anand again, with his wife and daughter, in 2013 in Bombay. Once again we lost touch…..

The uniforms at school were white shirt, khaki shorts, white socks, and black shoes – no cap that I can recall. For the girls, it was a deep blue pinafore, (navy blue maybe), white blouse, white socks, black shoes, and blue, white or black hair ribbons. I remember this clearly because my cousin Betty from Kilosa, (Mrs Alice Kuriakose in later life), lived with us at that time to attend school.

The school anthem was "Hail Alma Mater". The chorus went:

Hail Alma Mater,

we are thy children

Little do we know

Of our life's destiny.

The 1st line of the 1st stanza was "Joseph our patron…."

I still remember the tune clearly but unfortunately have forgotten the lyrics.

Mrs Heine, (we used to pronounce her surname as Hyinee), the Music teacher, in a conical straw hat, used to conduct, and someone on a raised dais played the piano.

One year there was a concert. I forget the plot of the main item, but it had a witch in it. On stage suddenly, in a huge puff of white smoke, there sprang up this big, tall witch completely dressed in black, with a towering witches' hat and big broom. A black cauldron emerged – (all from trap doors underneath as we later began to learn) – and the witch started singing a most captivating song. She then pranced around the steaming cauldron, and in a horrifying manner, uttered the verse "Double, double, toil and trouble, fire burn, and cauldron bubble...." Some years later, in secondary school, we realised the source of these words when we had to learn Macbeth as one of our texts.

The witch, we found out to our delight, was a senior from one of the higher classes, a West Indian Afro Caribbean boy by name Peter Rowlands. Peter was a highly talented and skilled stage performer, and he became a huge hit among the small boys. Of course, you can guess what comes next – at recess time we boys used to prance around a big water drum, shouting "double, double, toil and trouble….". The song he had sung I heard some months later on the radio – it was Miriam Makeba's famous "Click" song - "*Qongqothwane*".

For Standard 2 we moved to a rented building at the corner of Speke Street and Burton Street – Why? – ...I don't remember… Our teacher was Mrs Alice Fernandes. There was a smallish boy there named Louis Pinto. We were actually good friends, but we would all tend to wrestle and knock each other about a little at recess, and at end of school when waiting for parents or houseboys to come and collect us. One day at the end of school, we had a similar joust. Most unfortunately my fist connected square on to his little nose. He screamed, and then all the boys screamed "Miss, Miss!!". As I watched absolutely petrified, I saw a stream of red blood pouring down his nostrils, turning the front of his dusty white shirt into bright scarlet. Mrs Fernandes came out running, Louis was taken inside, and a towel soaked in cold water held firmly to his nose. The bleeding stopped within a few minutes. Next she turned her eyes to me. A ruler was produced, my palms

were outstretched, and 6 of the very best were delivered. I jumped around a little, but that was nothing compared to the mortal fear that now gripped me.

On that day, Ramzani was not coming to collect me; rather it was my Dad in his Morris Minor, because in those days he gave lifts to some classmates back into town. Those classmates were silent as the Morris Minor approached, but as the car halted, another bunch started jumping up and down, around the car, screaming "Uncle! Uncle! Matthew is killing Louis, Louis is bleeding". (Wretched traitors –!!).

Dad got out, strode into the building, got the facts from Mrs Fernandes, strode back purposefully into the car, waited for all to get in, and drove off. Not a word, not a single word. Drove straight home, without dropping off the other boys. Got out, went in, took 3 of the finest "*Irkallees*" from Ramzani's broom, and then swiftly began to deliver a cascade to my legs. Thus began a fantastic display of lower limb agility, dexterity and choreography as I hopped and pranced and jumped with alacrity. The dance that I put on would have excelled and beaten any of Aunty Nirmala Kambil's Bharata Natyam dances that were to come to Dar in the 1960s that lay ahead.

Together with the dance there has to be music – and there was – it was a high-pitched whining and howling sound that I soon realised was actually emanating from my own mouth.

With such excellent entertainment going on, there has to be an audience. Of course there was, — the audience were the boys who had been given the lift. They watched in utter terror and stupefaction. After about 2 or 3 minutes of this, the show stopped, and the dumb-stricken boys were ushered into the car and were dropped off at home. My mother, who had watched all this in amazement, asked me what had happened. Sobbing I explained. For once, I didn't get a double dose. I think she understood that sufficient justice had been done to Louis.

Years later in India, when we talked about "*Ahimsa*", I always fully understood – because I could always see Louis Pinto's bleeding face in front of me…..and my own attempts at *Bharatha Natyam* that fateful afternoon….

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***[FOOTNOTE** — I was delighted to reconnect with Anand on this Group after contacting his sister Usha, also on this Group. We had a few happy conversations, but sadly Anand passed away in July 2021. May his soul rest in peace**].**

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Left to right
Sr. Edgara (Needlework) (91)
Sr. Victoria Da Cruz (1st Class)
Sr. Jacinta (91)

Photo taken January 2012

ABOVE: Sr Jacinta Daehler - once long ago, Headmistress at St Joseph's School, Dar es Salaam

LEFT: January 2012 — Sr Jacinta, aged 91, is sat on the right. She was by then resident in the Baldegg Nursing Home, Switzerland. She enclosed this photograph in a letter to me.

Her handwriting appears on the reverse of the photo.

On the left, Sr Edgara, who used to teach the girls needlework, and in the middle is Sr Victoria Da Cruz.

ST JOSEPH'S CONVENT SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STAFF — ??...PROBABLY 1950 OR 1951

This is a picture taken earlier than 1952/1953.

I have named those I remember.

FRONT ROW: LEFT TO RIGHT:

2. Sr Raphaela

3. Fr Richard

4. Sr Miriam

5. Sr Salvina

12. I think this is my Std 1 Teacher Mrs Ivy Chapman

19. Aunty Noronha (looking much younger than I remember her) (Std 4/ 5)

20. Mr Nazareth - he used to be the Choirmaster at the Cathedral

26. Miss Lobo (related to Dr & Dr Mrs Pais) (Std 2/ 3)

...I don't think No 9 is Sr Jacinta….and I can't remember Mrs Heine's features well enough to recognise her now.

Picture Courtesy of the Mervyn Lobo Collection

1953 — A NEW ARRIVAL IN THE FAMILY & THE CORONATION

In 1953 we were all being prepared for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth. Simultaneously, I was being prepared for the arrival of a new baby brother or sister. She was born in April, a day after the incoming Queen's birthday, at what used to be called European Hospital, but later named Ocean Road Hospital. My father took me to see her. The place smelt strongly of carbolic acid. I was quite fascinated by the tiny person and her tiny fingers and toes, but soon got bored and went out of the ward to look at the rabbits and guinea pigs kept in cages. My mother came home with her in my Uncle's Austin A40.

When she arrived at home in our downstairs flat, all the neighbours, (the women) had gathered to see the new baby, and there was much cooing and aaah-ing, and the like.

So, what was she to be called?

Elizabeth, of course.

"Oh! So you are naming her after our new Queen?" and then another "Ahh, ahaahh!, that is the name of the new Queen – so that's why Elizabeth..."

"No, not at all – but because it is the name of her grandmother".

"Oh, is that so?" , "O, I see..", etc, etc ...no, they didn't see at all.

In contrast, our Malayali Aunties had no difficulty at all in understanding the choice of grandparental name - they knew it was the custom back at home - this Syrian Catholic couple were just adhering to their traditions.

A few weeks later my father got his 1st car, a 2nd-hand Morris Minor, from a work colleague Englishman who was returning to Britain. He gave up his beloved BSA motorbike which had carried him through rough terrain from 1939 onwards when he used to go to the rural outskirts, overseeing the Dar es Salaam Rural Electrification Programme. My mother said to me later how she had been scared out of her wits, when soon after her marriage and arrival, Dad had described how in his early days he would have to ride out to the worksites. Once or twice, he had passed by lions crossing the track road. Of course, they didn't attack, he didn't get eaten, and he just drove on, revving up his bike like mad. According to him, these were lions trailing the Masai herds coming in from the north, the herdsmen heading towards Dar. Because otherwise, lions didn't habit that part of the territory. Later on, down the years, Mum said that, whatever his theories were, she was very glad when he got rid of that motorbike. Apparently, there used to be a photo of me getting a ride on it, sitting on the tank, belted to him. Don't know what happened to the photo. I can just about,

- very vaguely, - recall sitting on it when he came home after work one afternoon and gave me a ride in the courtyard at the back.

At school, there was a lot of excitement as Coronation Day in June grew closer. The town was full of a buzz. Shops, offices and people's homes were decorated with flags and buntings and lit up with bulbs coloured blue, red and white. Banners sprang up on telephone and electric posts carrying the colours of the Union Jack. Then one day we were asked to assemble and queue up, class by class, and we were each given a souvenir – a blue, white and red ribbon on a pin from which hung a beautiful golden medal with the face of the Queen. (Gold plate – but still beautiful).

It was some important official who presented the medals that day — it could have been the Mayor.

My mum was busy at home with the baby, and my Aunty Thankam Joseph would come after school in the evenings, but two Malayali Aunties (who had already been coming and going every day for several weeks before, helping my mother out with this and that), now stepped in and insisted that Mum should go out and see the decorations and the lights. One was Aunty Achutan, and the other was Aunty Kunjamma Jacob Mathews. They took it in turns for quite a few evenings to baby sit my new sister.

Coronation Day came and went. Soon the movies of the event arrived, and everyone was going to see the movie. Everyone was impressed at the grandeur of it all. At school we pretended to be the mounted Royal Horse Guards during recess time. This was a new game. The usual games at break time used to be "*Askari Mwizi*" (cops and robbers), or Cowboys & Red Indians. The childhood heroes for boys were Buck Jones, Kit Carson and his horse Silver, and Roy Rogers and his horse Trigger, and the Red Indian Chiefs :– Sitting Bull was one, Lone Eagle was another, and the rest…o well…..don't know…. Every now and again someone would ride up to the next person and stick out his fingers like a revolver, and cry out "Your money or life, or your bald-headed wife!" Reading cowboy comics was a favourite pastime. Bubble-gum strips used to come in little envelopes which contained the photo pictures of the cowboys, but also of the other Hollywood stars – and in that way we got acquainted with the faces of Rita Hayworth, Grace Kelly, Cary Grant, Dean Martin, James Stewart, Judy Garland and so on. We rivalled each other blowing bubbles with gum to see who achieved the largest bubble before it burst and smeared your face and nose. Every now and again someone would bring in the Beano or the Dandy to school, and these used to get passed round furtively, so that the teachers wouldn't catch you reading them – the teachers hated comics because they contained bad grammar, slang language and bad spelling. To us though, The Bash Street Kids, Roger the Dodger, Minnie the Minx, and Biffo the Bear were all real friends.

About 2 years later, when the movie "The Robe" came to Dar es Salaam, the new game at recess was soldiers and gladiators. Foot rulers became swords, dustbin tops were the shields. There were shouts and cries of "Hail Caesar!" whilst

smartly hitting the left shoulder, or "Perish, perish, villainous foe! "and thrusting a ruler at someone's belly. Everyone wanted to be Marcellus or Demetrius. We went to see it from school, and then got a 2nd helping when we went as families. Now, by remembering all this, another face comes swimming into view – Prakash. Prakash was the elder of 2 sons of Uncle Raghavan and Aunty Sulu. Prakash was a really nice friend, and classmate. They lived much further away from us, in a house that was much nicer than ours and in a neighbourhood that had trees and was quiet, unlike busy Ring Street.

Prakash and I remained good friends but parted when I moved secondary school, and he remained at St Josephs. After our Cambridge exams, we lost touch completely.

We lived in Nurbhai Building on Ring Street. Our building had 6 flats. Directly above us lived a Goan family - Uncle & Aunty Pereira and their 4 lads, Vladimir, Rosario, Santano, and Leonard, (Butchu, Bublush, Sandhu, and Lanny), and their bad-tempered mongrel, Rayaka who barked incessantly. They had a piano, a beautiful old upright. A Goan gentleman, Mr Sylvester, always dapper in a white sharkskin suit, used to come to give the boys piano lessons. My mum always hoped that I could get lessons too, but Dad always seemed to develop some sort of mysterious and transient deafness whenever the subject was broached, and he would be very busy all of a sudden with various things to do. The only Malayali children who came for lessons were Uncle Raphael Noronha's daughters, Dolly and Priscilla. I think Norma David might have come too. The middle set of flats were taken up by people whom I've forgotten. At the other end from us, the downstairs was occupied by the landlord and his family – Mr TN Sadikot, a Bohora gentleman with a French beard and a hat.

Upstairs lived Uncle Police Achutan and Aunty, and their 3 sons, Prasannan, Prashanth and Prahalad (Sunny, Babu, Baby). Aunty Achutan taught at Aga Khan Girls. Uncle was always coming and going upcountry on duty. I remember a place he used to go to was Tukuyu. Sunny Senior was a most polite young man – he finished school around then and left for the UK for further studies. Babu was a handsome dashing character – an outgoing friendly chap. He was incredibly good in music, and in the later 50s used to entertain us at Malabar Club and Kerala Kala Mandalam with Elvis Presley songs. He had a lovely Hohner harmonica on which he used to play fabulously. Baby was a thoughtful pleasant and merry but quiet going chap, ever so helpful when asked to carry out errands. My Mum expected me to model my behaviour on him.

Opposite us was Hakimjee's Building. It was located at the angle of an intersection and so was a large triangle-shaped multi-storied block, with its front somewhat resembling the bow of a ship (at least that's what it looked like to me). Over there lived Uncle PC Zachariah from the police, with Aunty Baby, and children, Lalitha (around my age), Sunny (junior to

me), and Babu. (I think Tony arrived on the scene after they moved from Hakimjee's to Changombe). More or less that same time, there lived there for a short period, Uncle Police Koshy and wife, and twin daughters Sally and Emily. I think their elder children, son Roy and daughter Polly, were already in India by then. Uncle Police Koshy was elder brother to my Aunt Thankam Joseph. Uncle Koshy was transferred upcountry, and I think the twins moved to India. There were other Malayali couples who lived there too, but sadly I've forgotten who they were…..

Not too far away from us lived Uncle Narayanan, Aunty, Shyamala, and her sisters. They lived near my Uncle Dr Joseph's place. ***[It's been delightful reconnecting with Shyamala (Narayanan) Rajan again after joining this EAMM Group].

If, you came out of our ground floor flat on Ring Street and turned left, there was a large vacant plot of land. Around a couple of years, or so, later building construction commenced, and soon there were workmen putting up this building which was to become the Standard Bank. For the first time in my life, I saw European men working there as manual labourers. My mother explained that these were Italian craftsmen who were making pillars and floors which would look very nice. It turned out to be, as I came to know later, mosaic work, with terrazzo flooring - I vaguely recall cream yellowish pillars which had shiny and coloured bits of stone embedded in them.

If you kept on walking further a while, you would reach another multi-storied building on the left, with several flats. It was called Kandala Building. Lots of Indian families, including Sikhs, lived there. You went upstairs by an external covered stairway. I remember 2 Malayali families living there. Uncle Ramachandran, Aunty Subhadra, and their 3 daughters, Hema, Prema, and Shobha. Hema and Prema were nice friends to have, Shoba was too young. In another section of that building lived Uncle Ipe, and Aunty, and their 2 children, Mabel and Melvyn (Melville). Mabel and Melvyn were also nice friends to play with. Their youngest sister, Molly, was born later. I remember, very vaguely, that one birthday, (I think my mum had been unwell), Aunty Ipe, I think her name was Susan, brought a big steaming hot pot of *payasam* within a container, because my mum had been unable to make it. It was "*cherrupayar*" and jaggery *payasam*, with square bits of sliced coconut which had been fried in ghee. Oooh, what a lovely *payasam* it was! - and only a little was shared with neighbours this time.

I remember too — Aunty Achutan used to send across white rice *payasam* or the jaggery one for her boys' birthdays.

Dear Aunty Ipe passed away after a surgical operation – sometime after her daughter Molly was born – I remember my Uncle saying something about 'chloroform' – my mum explained that it was a type of medicine which would make people sleep, so that their stomachs could be opened to do an operation. They wouldn't feel pain or be aware. Something had gone wrong with anaesthesia. Uncle Ipe took the children to India. Suddenly I lost 2 friends. They came back some years later when Uncle re-married and came with his new wife. I was in secondary school by then. Also, not too far from

where we lived was Uncle Kunju Govi, Aunty, and their daughters – I think the elder was called Geetha, I forgot the name of the 2nd. Both were nice and friendly, and smart girls. ***[What a joy to reconnect with Geetha now on EAMM].

Afternoons and evenings were spent in playing – neighbouring children would all come trooping across to our place, or else we would gather at Hakimjee's opposite. Ours was favoured because it was less busy than Hakimjee's. The boys from upstairs, (except the eldest), and I, and the boys from across the road would have a whale of a time. The courtyard at the back of the house was the "playfield". It was concreted over, so several times there would be temporary halts, as somebody or the other fell over and then ran inside to my mum to get some iodine or Dettol on the cut and grazed knee. Crying was impossible because you would be called a "cry baby". Sometimes Rayeka from upstairs would be let loose, and would come bounding down, and join the fray, grabbing the ball, leaping about, barking madly, and adding to the general din.

The landlord's youngest son, just a year or two older than the rest of us, - I forget his name, - would pass by sometimes, looking rather disdainfully at these riff-raff ruffianly boys. (Towards the end of our time there he thawed somewhat, and he used to stop and have a few words with us). On the contrary, his directly older sister, a plump and cheerful teenage girl, named Bilkis, was a friendly soul, and would always stop to have chats with my mother or Aunty Pereira upstairs. The other siblings were all adults, the eldest girl already married and coming to visit. They were of no interest. Their mother was quiet and friendly and conversed in Swahili. I picture her as wearing traditional attire, head veiled, enveloped in a sort of mauve/maroon cloak and gown, but her face was unveiled. At Idd she used to send across *pilau*, *kebabs* and *samosas*.

We didn't have a fridge at that time, and my father used to go to an ice factory somewhere in the heart of town. I remember accompanying him once or twice. All that I remember is massive blocks of ice tumbling down from some machine and labourers passing them down and wrapping them in boxes containing sawdust. They would cry out "*Barafu baridi*!" Dad used to carry it home, wash it down, and break it up into chunks. We enjoyed "*Maji baridi*" at that meal. Later on, he got Mum a "Frigidaire" refrigerator and she was so happy with it. Following that purchase, every now and again Aunty Pereira used to ask Mum if she could store some fresh fish for her for a couple of days, and of course it was gladly done. In those days, when mum suddenly ran out of sugar, she would run me on an errand - I just ran upstairs and asked Aunty, who would cheerfully provide a cup or two. That arrangement was mutually reciprocal and just a nice way of neighbourly life. Mum had a tabletop Creda cooker with 4 electric rings and a small oven, and she did all her baking and cooking on that. I think the small charcoal stove which Juma or Ramzani would light for her, was used for boiling water, and for things which needed prolonged boiling. The houseboys used it to cook their cornmeal, *ugali*.

(Later on, after we moved to Changombe, Dad bought her a big 2nd hand upstanding Jackson cooker also with 4 rings, but with 2 ovens. So, with 3 ovens now, a lot of baking went on, and that's how I too learnt to bake cakes and biscuits – but never as good as Mum's).

The dustbins, large drums, were located in one corner of the courtyard. Every week a pick-up lorry would arrive, accompanied by a swarm of flies and a flock of raucous crows. The bin men would empty the drums and leave the onlooking cats wondering where they could get their next tasty titbits. Periodically, a PWD tractor would arrive in the courtyard pulling a mounted tank on it. 2 men would clamber down, open the manhole covers and let down a hose. A clattering motor was started. A most nauseating stench would then pervade the entire atmosphere. This was the PWD urban cesspit clearing ritual. Inside the house, Mum would direct Juma, or Ramzani, to light up 2 clay pots with burning charcoal, topped up with a heap of frankincense. The scented smoke from these pots was to combat the "perfumes" from the exterior invading the house. The tank I think got emptied at some central pool. From there I remember it got conducted to the seafront and the sewage got dumped right into the ocean. Years later when we moved to Changombe, this whole blooming shebang stopped, because the residences there had septic tanks, as opposed to the cesspits in town.

Shopping was done at Kariakoo Market for fish and fresh vegetables. I used to accompany my father sometimes. It was an exciting place! So much noise and bustle as the vendors outdid each other in clamouring to get your attention, and your money. To my mind it seemed that the whole world could eat as much as they wanted. The fresh meat counters were boring, swarming with flies, and with huge carcasses, and lumps of meat. In contrast, the fresh fish counters, although smelly, were so exciting because you could find so many different kinds of fish, some long, some huge, some small, some really tiny. They had these great names like *Kole-kole, shangu, nguru, daga-papa* – all very useful names because you could use them at school to insult other boys when you got into fights. You couldn't use swear words, like the ones which started with "blood…" Punishment was severe. At home, if mum ever heard me use such a word, her middle finger and thumb would spring into action, flick on to my lower lip, and then I had to sorry to Jesus, and say a prayer to my Guardian Angel. Sometimes at the market you would encounter fierce-looking short Africans who had black tattoos on their cheeks and their lips pierced with a sort of black button. I learnt from my father that these were a tribe called the Makonde. Sometimes we would see tall handsome statuesque people, reddish in colour, hair reddened and hanging like thin red ropes from their head. Their bodies were covered or smeared with red mud making them look reddish. They smelt of cattle. They wore spectacular beaded jewellery, and their bodies were draped with red cloaks. The whole effect was utterly entrancing. My father said that they were Masai tribesmen. One day, Mum had also come to choose the fish. We came across some Masai. Suddenly a gust of wind raised the cloaks, and to my astonishment I saw that the fellows had nothing on underneath. For a moment I was thunderstruck, then I burst out giggling and hooting

loudly with laughter, pointing at their 'crown jewels'. Straightaway I got a twin set of sharp smacks from my mother who asked me to look elsewhere.

The general dry goods provisions were purchased from Kerala Stores run by an Uncle Raghavan not far away from us. Everything was sold in brown paper bags tied up with string – just as in Julie Andrews' song in the "Sound of Music". Later on, a new Uncle came from upcountry and started a new shop, called I think Standard General Stores. It was not a competition at all because many new Indians, including Malayalis, were arriving in Dar es Salaam from India, landing new jobs. This new family was Uncle VM Abraham, Aunty, and Rennie and his brother Sunny, and lots of sisters whose names I had forgotten, until Rennie reminded me recently. They lived nearby, and now suddenly I had 2 new friends to add to my collection of friends. How thrilling!! Sadly, they moved away upcountry after some time, and I never knew where they went.

Not too far away, - where exactly I can't remember, but towards the Jamat Khana side - lived Uncle and Aunty Jacob Mathews (Uncle Chackochen & Aunty Kunjamma), and their 4 daughters Monsy (Annie), Gertie (Rebecca), Flossie and little Lettie. To me Monsy and Gertie were like big sisters, and Flossie was a cherished playmate.

Despite having a very busy schedule herself, Aunty Kunjamma always had time to come and spend with my Mum. Both she and Aunty Achuthan were like my Mum's elder sisters from the day she had first arrived as a young bride in Dar es Salaam. They lovingly provided her with so much help and support – something that she never forgot, - ever.

In August 1953, Uncle Chackochen and Aunty and the girls went upcountry on holiday.

Aunty had come home the previous night, to give the baby a bath, and together with Aunty Achutan, went over things with Mum to make sure that all was OK and in order before she left.

On Thursday 13th August morning, my father came home suddenly before mid-day, his face looking terribly grave and very deeply worried. He spoke a few brief words to Mum, who collapsed on to the bed in shock and tears. Dad hurriedly packed a few clothes and left the house. He and a few other Uncles had chartered a plane to take them to Arusha.

Gradually the information penetrated downwards to my level. A terrible, horrible car crash had occurred the previous night….Uncle, Aunty, Flossie and Lettie passed away. It was a terrible tragedy that shook Tanganyika.

Some weeks later when we were coming back from the evening walk on the Azania Front with the baby, we passed by where Uncle Chackochen & Aunty used to live. My mother looked up and stared at the closed windows. She was very, very quiet and looked pale. Then she asked my father if she could stop and rest at Uncle VM John Saar's place nearby.

We stopped there and sat down. Rajan, Ivy and I started playing indoors. Aunty was taking things for tea, when suddenly there was a huge sound of a crash. My mother was lying on the floor unconscious. Uncle John Saar and my father ran to fetch my doctor Uncle. Soon my mother was OK enough to get up and lie in bed. Aunty came and stayed with us that night to keep my Mum company, leaving Rajan and Ivy behind in Uncle's care for the night. She too, was a really lovely human being. She had understood the sense of pain and loss that my mother had experienced.

Uncle & Aunty Achuthan retired and returned to India – and I lost touch with them. For years together Dad and Mum kept in touch with Uncle & Aunty by letter, and then gradually I no longer heard news of them. I never got to know where Sunny, Babu and Baby were after that.

In December 2003, my mother lay dying. She made a request. She wondered whether I would go and find out where Monsy lived in England, go there, visit her, and pay the debt of gratitude she owed Aunty Kunjamma to Monsy. She said she didn't know where Aunty Achuthan's boys were, or else she would have asked the same of me.

Mum passed away on 7th January 2004.

I kept my promise that Easter.

That is how I got re-connected with Monsy Chechi (Dr Annie Samuel), after a span of 50 years.

May God rest the souls of Uncle Chackochen, Aunty Kunjamma, Flossie and little Lettie. Young boy though I was then, I distinctly recall the deep sense of sadness and loss that I felt, especially of my playmate Flossie.

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***Footnotes** –

After I posted this episode on the What'sApp site Jitender Balakrishnan kindly responded with appreciative comments, and recalled many of our boyhood friends. It triggered a faint memory within me of Uncle Mooliyil Gopalan going to the UK.

I think Uncle Gopalan (Mr Mooliyil Gopalan) had actually gone to London for the Coronation.....? In their glass cabinet there used to be a beautiful miniature replica of the Coronation procession, replete with the Royal Horse Guards in their resplendent uniform, mounted on white steeds and black stallions, pulling that gilded royal coach. It was Venu's delight, and he used to show it to us when we went there on house visits. Somehow I can't remember Venu as a boy at St Joseph's, and when I moved to secondary school I lost connection with most St Joseph's friends, apart from my Malayali peer group whom I kept meeting either through house visits or at social functions at Malabar Club and Kerala Kala Mandalam.

I was very happy to be able to reconnect with Shyamala (Narayanan) Rajan after joining the EAMM Group, and equally so with Geetha (Govindan) Viswanathan (daughter of Uncle Kunju Govi and Aunty Jeya).

I obtained, also, some information on Sunny, Babu, and Baby Achutan after I joined the EAMM. May their souls rest in peace.

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1954 - ….?…..?….

What happened during this year…?...—I don't know……just like the year before and the year after I guess……

Nothing particular makes it stand out for me…….nothing that I can actually recall with ease……

History scholars will reveal that that was the year that Julius Nyerere established the political party TANU, the Tanganyika African National Union — and of what interest is that, may I ask, to a primary schoolboy…?..

It was the time, I vaguely recall, when the Mau Mau rebellion was terrorising neighbouring Kenya, and Malayali Uncles used to talk about these matters, as news about this used to feature prominently on the radio and the Tanganyika Standard.

1955 — GOING THROUGH STANDARD 4

By 1955 we had returned to the main school. Standard 4 and Standard 5 were in a large hut, with walls halfway up on one side, looking out on to the open yard. Our class teacher I think was initially Miss Lobo. She was a kind and good-hearted person, and a patient teacher. I remember her taking us all out for nature-study walks and also taking us to the museum. She was a Mangalorean, and related to Dr Pais, whose wife was also a doctor. During one of her lessons, I recall her talking about mountains and snowfall, and how piled-up snow can come thundering down like a flood and kill and destroy things in its path. That was called an avalanche. She had lost a brother like that – in an avalanche - in the Indian mountains called the Himalayas. To us boys, who had only read about snow, and seen it only in movies, it was something that we couldn't fully comprehend. A few years later, after I had moved to secondary school, I learnt with sadness that she had died in a tragic manner. During one of her nature-study walks, a couple of high-spirited boys had thrown stones at a hive of bees up in the branches of a tree somewhere near the museum. The furious bees came swooping down, stinging the pupils. Miss Lobo, to protect the ones who were most under attack, flung herself on top of them. She was very badly stung, seemingly by hundreds of bees. She was rushed to hospital but died soon after.

Mrs. Noronha, whom I have referred to before, was our teacher in Standard 5. She too was a really good teacher, and a good-hearted lady, keeping discipline, but with kindness. She was Aunty Noronha to the Malayali pupils.

It was the year when the Catholic children would be receiving their First Holy Communion. The preparations for this meant a step-up in the number of catechism classes being delivered – and being taught all the elements of good behaviour and a good life, and how to get rid of sin and wrongdoing. The types of sin, big ones like killing and stealing, were differentiated from the less serious ones telling a lie about who stole the last biscuits in the tin, or fighting over someone else's toys and so on. In order to receive First Communion, we would need to be in a state of grace. So, we were prepared for our First Confessions, when we would have to confess our sins in private to a priest sitting in the confessional. That seemed a daunting task to quite a few of us.

The 10 Commandments were re-enforced. Most of the Commandments could be understood but one which really puzzled and perplexed us was the 6th commandment. Dear old Sr Miriam gave us a sort of muddled answer which just confused us more, so we asked Sr Raphaela. "What is adultery, Sister?" She, God bless her soul, replied "O children, don't worry about that -, it is a kind of sin that adults commit, - it's not for children, it's not for you". Going home and asking my mother got me nowhere. That was that. Anyway, it was a relief, because that was one less sin to worry about as we prepared to make our First Confession, a few days preceding the First Holy Communion.

Looking back on it, I wonder how many times those Franciscan Capuchin missionary priests sitting in the confessionals must have heard during those 1st time confessions – "I spat on my brother and hit him", "I stole my sister's sweets", "I kicked Johnny" and so on.

The First Holy Communion Day was on Sunday 13th November 1955. As the weeks drew nearer, parents were getting busy, approaching Goan tailors to order the stitching of the white garments that needed to be worn. Boys were to be dressed in white suits, white shoes, and girls looked like small brides, with white gowns, white veils with floral head wreaths and white shoes. Uncle Kilosa and Aunty had arrived, with Benny in tow. Preparations at home were in full swing for the big day, with lots of advance cooking. My cousin Betty and I, Joe Kamicheril, Joe D'Silva, Peter D'Souza, Peter Naya, Valentine Soares - these are the only faces I can now recall from a very large group of children on that day. We were fed adequately the Saturday night. As a mark of personal sacrifice, overnight fasting was required in those days before partaking of Holy Communion. We were up early on Sunday morning. The parents, all decked out in their best, took us to Morning Mass, celebrated in solemnity by Archbishop Edgar Maranta, assisted by other priests and a whole co-terie of altar servers in their white and scarlet robes.

At Communion time, Sr Miriam and Sr Raphaela, ushered us row by row, to the altar where the altar rails were draped in pure white stiffly starched cotton drapes under which we were to place our praying hands. The Archbishop personally administered Communion to all the children. We all had large white wax candles to carry, decorated with white ruffles at the bottom, to prevent melted wax trickling down and scalding our hands.

After that we trooped into the large parish hall where we and our parents and families were treated to a very nice break-fast – that is, breaking our fast. All I can recall was a very nice piece of cake, with white, soft fondant icing on which were thin swirls of chocolate piping. After breakfast we were whisked away to have our photographs taken. The firm was AC Gomes, but the actual photographer who had always dealt with us was Mr Pereira. People used to confuse him as Mr Gomes. I don't recall ever seeing the actual Mr Gomes. We had the photos taken individually, and then there was one meant to be of Betty and me together. Benny took it upon himself to be in the photo and shoved his way in between the 2 of us at the last moment, pushing me out of kilter, so that that particular photo shows me standing like a drooping sun-flower or wilted cabbage, carrying the big white candle in one hand and a rosary in the other. All these photos were then despatched with speed to Alleppey and Plassanal for waiting grandparents and Uncles and Aunties and cousins to see. Registered Post envelopes were tied up with blue string, and sealed with red sealing wax using my father' seal, "TMS".

Lots of our Goan and Malayali Uncles and Aunties came to greet us at home that day. Betty and I were showered with gifts and reminded that we should always stay good in our lives (…Did we !!….?...!..??..).

Lillu came with Uncle Kunjunny Nair and Aunty Susheela that day, carrying a huge box of chocolates for Betty and me. It had a beautiful picture of Switzerland on it. There were cows and sheep grazing on green grass on the mountainside, and little cottages, and blue skies above. We only knew it was Switzerland because Lillu told us so. She always knew a lot of things like that. Those chocolates were really, really good.

Benny straightaway delved into the box and scoffed and polished off almost a third of the chocolates until Aunty snatched it away from him. He was such a right royal scamp in those days – absolute mischief and full of fun.

At that year's school Christmas concert, there was a song called "The Wedding of the Painted Doll", which was acted out, and there was also a puppet show. Can't remember more, except that Peter D'Souza and Prakash Raghavan were at the top of the class, and I…..?....O - I was lurking somewhere in the bottom third…..

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FIRST HOLY COMMUNION DAY, DAR ES SALAAM, NOVEMBER 1955

LEFT: Me, in my white First Holy Communion suit, looking rather solemn and glum — (I don't know why…).

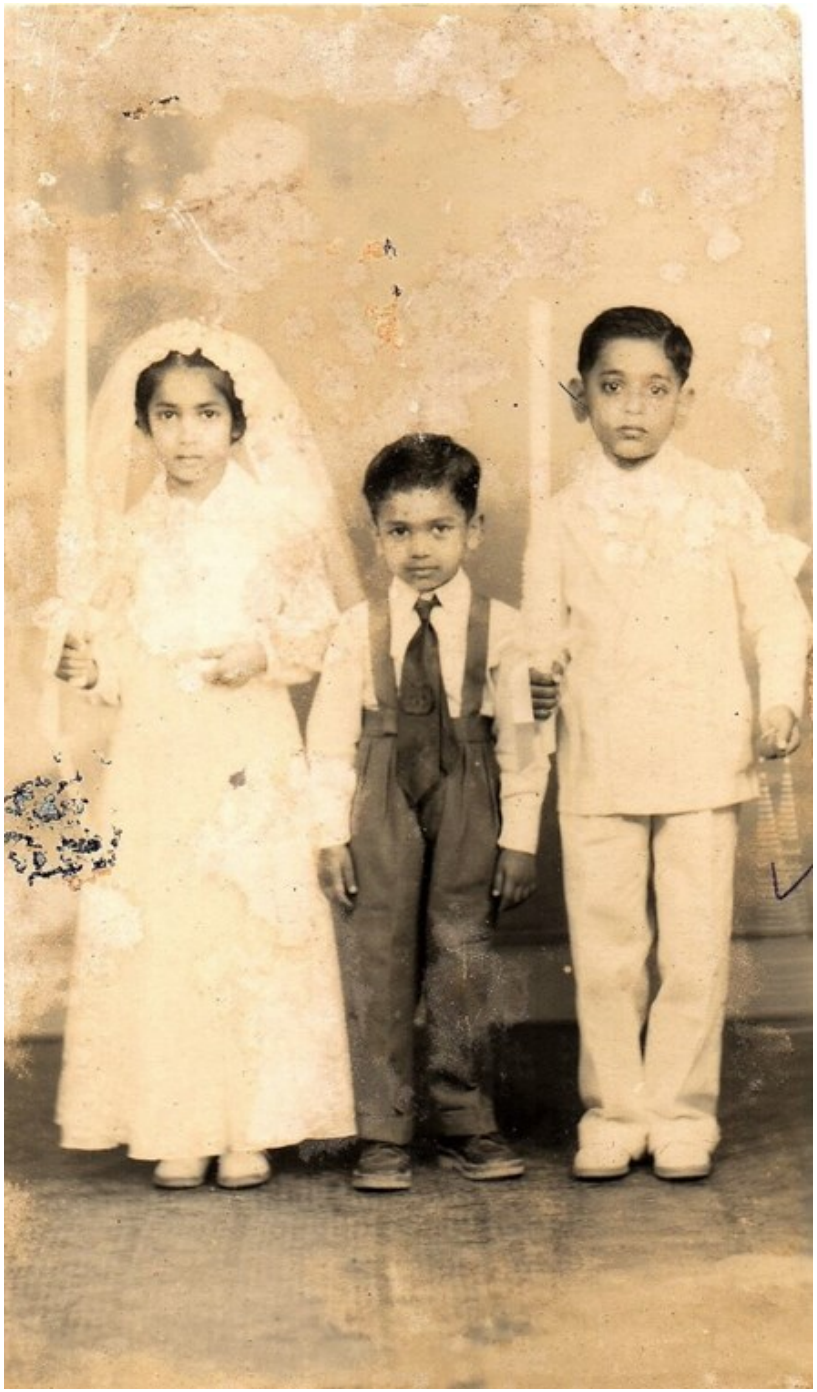
I have a white ribbon sash with gold tassels on my left sleeve

RIGHT: My cousin Betty in her white First Holy Communion gown and veil.

Both of us are carrying white candles, decorated with white paper-lace ruffs.

White is meant to signify the purity of the children's' hearts on that day.

RIGHT: This is when my cousin Benny, shoved his way in at the last moment, knocking me askew, so much so that I look like a wilted plant.



ABOVE: First Holy Communion Boys on their way to the Cathedral walking past the Standard 1 octagonal building.

RIGHT: Sr Miriam leads the children to the Cathedral in procession

Pictures from the Mervyn Lobo Collection

THE DAR ES SALAAM OF YESTERYEAR

Old postcard - The Askari Statue at the intersection of Ingles Street, Windsor Street, and Acacia Avenue. The statue It was erected to commemorate the lives laid down by African soldiers in the First World War.

The Azania Front — it was customary during the 1950s for families to take an evening stroll by the harbour-side. The 2 iconic landmarks used to be St Joseph's Cathedral (seen in the background), and the Lutheran Church. Both were built during the time Germany ruled Tanganyika. St Joseph's Convent school was next to the Cathedral.

The Lutheran Church and the Cenotaph on the Azania Front. The Cenotaph used to be the assembly point for Remembrance Day Memorial services in November every year. Adults wore a scarlet poppy in their button holes, signifying the red poppies of the fields of Flanders where the blood of thousands of soldiers was spilt in the 1st World War.

Picture from Library of Congress Archive

St Joseph's Cathedral, Dar es Salaam, was built between 1897 and 1908 by Benedictine monks from the monastery of St. Ottilien in Bavaria. It was the seat of the Diocese of Southern Zanguebar (Zanzibar) until the Diocese of Dar es Salaam was established in 1906.

Bishop Bonifatius Fleschutz was the first Bishop of Dar es Salaam, 1887-1891.

Bishop Edgar Maranta, a Swiss Franciscan missionary was appointed as Bishop to the diocese in 1930.

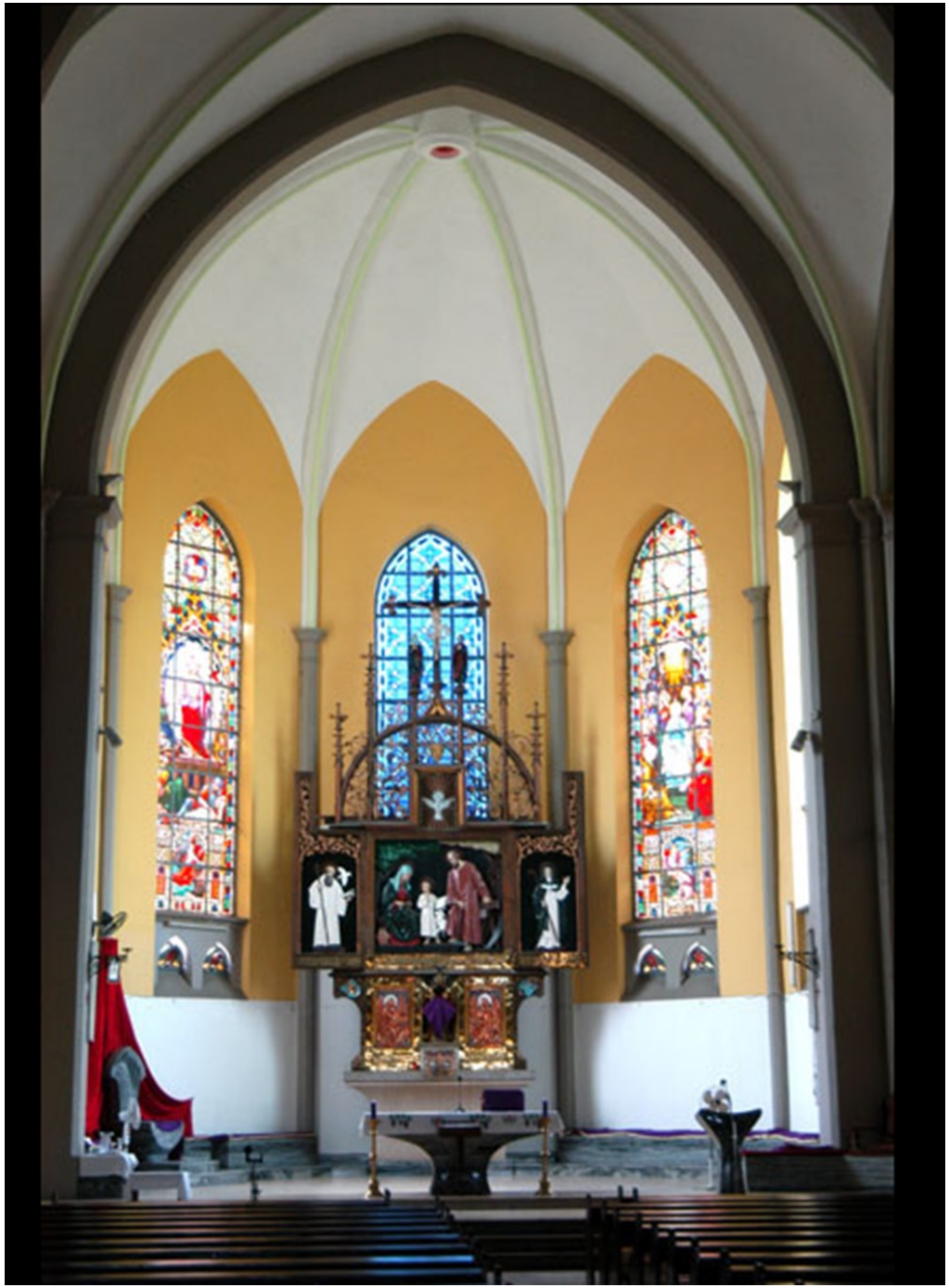
Dar es Salaam Diocese was elevated to Archdiocese level in 1953, and Bishop Edgar Maranta became the first Archbishop of Dar es Salaam. He retired and returned to Switzerland in 1968, giving way to Cardinal Laurean Rugambwa, the 1st African to be appointed as a Cardinal.

The cathedral was a well-known landmark for those sailing into the harbour during the 1950s with its distinctive white tower and grey spire.

It is built in a rather plain Gothic architectural style, and not as ornate as the Flamboyant Gothic , Brabantine Gothic and Italian Gothic styles seen in Europe. It houses some beautiful works of art, principally the altar pieces and the its stained-glass windows.

The white tower houses the carillon of bells, and is surmounted by a simple grey spire.

The stained-glass windows are of truly high quality workmanship and they rival, in their beauty, any of the superb stained-glass windows that I have seen in the cathedrals of Western Europe.



The sanctuary houses the main altar above which is the tabernacle, veiled in purple. On either side of the tabernacle are bas relief sculptures of angels facing the tabernacle doors.

Above the tabernacle is a massive wooden triptych altarpiece. The side panel depicts Saint Theresa of Liseux on the right. I forget now who it depicts on the left panel; it could be St Benedict, the founder of the Benedictine Order. After all, it was the Benedictines who founded and built the cathedral.

The centre panel depicts the Holy Family : Mary the Mother of Christ, the Christ Child in the middle, and St Joseph, the carpenter, after whom the cathedral is named.

The triptych is topped by a smaller panel depicting the Holy Spirit, and surmounting that is an arch bearing a a figure of Christ on the cross in the middle and a statue of Mary, the Mother of Christ on one side, and of the Apostle St John on the other.

Three gothic windows adorn the walls, the central one directly behind the altar carrying decorated motifs, and one on either side, and made of stained glass, the one on the left depicts the Resurrection of Christ, the one on the right depicts the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and on Mary the Mother of Christ, on the first Pentecost.

Courtesy of Brian McMorrow PBase Collection

Detail of the centre panel of the altar triptych portraying the Holy Family. The stylised depiction of the Christ Child foreshadows His future role as a Rabbi or Teacher, and as a Good Shepherd. Note the carpenter's trademarks : a work-bench, an axe and a saw.

Picture courtesy of Elizabeth Cain, a US author of Tanganyika-based novels. https://www.elizabethcainauthor.com/books

An oval glass window shows the Annunciation: The Archangel Gabriel announces momentous news to Mary, a young Jewish woman, the daughter of Joachim and Anna.

Courtesy of Brian McMorrow PBase Collection

An oval window showing the Nativity scene of Christ's birth.

Courtesy of Brian McMorrow PBase Collection

The gothic window on the left of the altar represents the Resurrection of Christ.

Note the rich colours of the glass, produced by the addition of various substances such as cadmium sulphide, gold chloride, and cobalt, selenium and antimony oxides to molten glass.

Courtesy of Brian McMorrow PBase Collection

The gothic window to the right of the altar depicts the Descent of the Holy Spirit at the first Pentecost.

Courtesy of Brian McMorrow PBase Collection

A Baobab Tree - called Mbuyu in Swahili. There was a Goan lady teacher at St Joseph's, of rather large girth, who got nick-named Mbuyu (behind her back, of course) by young miscreant boys. I have forgotten the good lady's name, but I'm sure she would be remembered by others in the EAMM Group who attended St Joseph's in the 1950s. *Picture: Commons Wikimedia*

CHRISTMAS TIME IN THE 1950s.....MALABAR CLUB IN THE 1950s.....

Christmas is the time of year when I always think of my Kilosa cousins Betty, and Benny, my sister Libby and myself as 4 children who grew up like siblings in Tanganyika, in the days of the British Empire. Christmas was the time we all got together, whether in Dar-es-Salaam or in Kilosa.

My uncle in Kilosa, Mr DT Sebastian, whom I used to call Uncle Kilosa, and Aunty Pennamma would often come to Dar es Salaam for Christmas. There were lots of parties, meeting friends, and lots of shopping, and going to the beach, and so on. They always stayed with us. My uncle Dr TM Joseph Thalanany and Aunty, (whom I called Uncle Kunjettan and Aunty Thankammachi), would come home regularly almost everyday, and when Uncle Kilosa and Aunty Pennamma came, all the 6 adults would sit together and have very long conversations about Plassanal, and Pala and Travancore, and the past.

I feel quite sorry that I have no pictures of Christmas time from that period - of what, as children, we thought was a magical time of the year. The main shops that I can recall - TeeKay (belonged to Mr. Topandas Kimatrai = hence TeeKay), B Choitram's, Stewart's Stores, - all gaily bedecked with fairy lights and glowing and glittering Christmas trees, the windows filled with smart clothes at TeeKay's and Choitram's, and with all sorts of fine porcelain and household items and gadgets at Stewart's Stores. All these smart shops were on Acacia Avenue. My mother and Aunty Pennamma loved going together to all these smart shops at Christmas time. There was another shop they loved going to – its owner was, I think, an Ismaili Khoja lady, whose shop was near the old Jamat Khana in town. I think her name was Mrs Virji. It had sarees, and blouse pieces and scarves from India, and was a favourite port of call for our Malayali Aunties.

At St Joseph's Cathedral there was always a beautiful large and lifelike Nativity set. One year a few Italian craftsmen made a large motorised Nativity set which became an immediate hit and sensation. Carefully placed miniature pulleys and small motors, cleverly concealed behind and underneath the backdrop of the night skies and rocky terrain, orchestrated the Nativity scene in a very realistic manner. Angels flew, shepherds knelt and arose, and the 3 kings appeared on mounted camels, bearing their gifts, all against the backdrop of a velvety dark blue sky. It gave the Tanganyika Standard something to talk about on Christmas eve.

My Mum would be preparing *achappam*, *kozhalappam*, biscuits, *kalkal*, diamond cuts, cutlets, samosas, and cakes. The main cake was a big one and always a fruit cake. It had to have all the right amounts of flour, butter, vanilla, sugar, currants, sultanas, raisins, brandy (and difficult-to-get glace cherries). It was my task to keep stirring and stirring and stirring the batter until my arms ached, but the reward was to be able to lick the spoon and polish off the last few drops of batter left in the bowl, after the batter had been poured into the butter- greased and baking paper-lined baking tin. (Kenwood machines only appeared at Stewart's stores long after....). I remember she was very particular that the Creda

Oven had reached the right temperature before the cake went in. The house was filled with the most delicious aroma you could imagine.

Whenever Aunty Pennamma came, she would come bringing loads of her cakes, and biscuits, and pickles. She used to make very good lime pickles, fish pickles, and mango pickles, and a very nice tomato sauce, more like tomato chutney, which was delicious to have with cutlets.

On Christmas day, after morning Mass, it was open house. Malayali Uncles and Aunties and their children would so graciously come to visit us and greet us, bearing gifts for my sister and myself. They were treated to the dainties that Mum had prepared. A significant proportion of those foods would be sent, on decorated and covered trays, to our non-Catholic neighbours and friends - Gujaratis, Punjabis, Ismaili Khojas, Bohoras, and so on. My sister and I knew that at Diwali time our Gujarati friends would reciprocate, sending equally heavy-laden trays filled with deliciously crisp jelabis drenched in sweet rose syrup, bondas, ladhus, doodh beda, and so on, and at the Idd festival our Islamic friends would send us hot spots of biriyani or pilau, and crispy samosas to rival Mum's samosas. (I vaguely recall that Aunty Kuldas ran a class at the Malabar club once for our Malayali Aunties on how to make samosas).

Every Christmas, without fail, Uncle Kunjunny Nayar (MK Nayar), Aunty, and Vasu and Lillu would come bearing gifts which were so carefully chosen. They knew I loved books, and that Libby loved dolls. I built up quite a collection which I grew really fond of. In 1955, my sister, only 2 ,was given a wind-up toy of a Viennese couple waltzing the waltz. It went carefully under lock and key until we went to India the following year in 1956. We took it with us. It provided great entertainment to all our cousins in Alleppey and Plassanal.

I clearly remember Uncle Nayar and Aunty Susheela as such incredibly kind and humble people, even though Uncle rose to become such a very high ranking civil servant working under Governor Edward Twining. They lived in a big grand house with a huge downstairs lounge and lovely rooms upstairs. Later on as a secondary school student I used to borrow Lillu's story books and novels– she had a veritable library of her own! I remember the day, some years down the line, when I returned Neville Shute's "The Rainbow and the Rose".....At 12, or 13 maybe, I had struggled to comprehend it, and Aunty who was an avid reader herself, explained to my Mum that another couple of years or so and I would pick up the lost threads with ease.

At some stage during these years my cousins Betty and Benny came to live with us, to avail of the benefit of attending St Joseph's School, so that at the end of Christmas and New Year when Uncle and Aunty returned to Kilosa, Betty would be tearful, and Benny and I would feel morose.

When Uncle and Aunty started doing their trips by car things would always be a little frantic, although I was not quite

sure why. Once on their way back to Kilosa, Uncle and Aunty had stopped for tea and a break at Morogoro where there were a few Malayali families to visit. After tea they set off for Kilosa. It was already dark. Halfway between Morogoro and Kilosa, Uncle came to a sudden stop.

Right in the middle of the road was a herd of wild elephants. He switched off the lights. Aunty and he prayed together, and after a while the herd moved away, and they and the car were left unharmed. Uncle phoned Daddy on reaching home late at night. Daddy was rather upset and yet so grateful to God. He and Uncle were like brothers, very fond of each other, and they had grown up like twins in Plassanal, or Melampara as it used to be called. Ever after that when they were leaving for Kilosa Daddy would practically shoo them out of the house so that they could reach Kilosa during the daylight hours and before dark descended.

Another memory that I have of childhood Christmases is that of Malabar Club…..

Malabar Club in the 1950s - what a happy place it was for Malayali children to gather….!... An old bungalow style building with a fairly large compound is how I recall it.

Periodically there would be parties and functions with entertainment put on by a bunch of talented people. Onam time was one of the annual gatherings I recall, Christmas was another.

Sadly I forget the names of so many Uncles and Aunties of that time.

What I do remember is a kindly Uncle whom we children used to call Uncle Chachen.

One year at the Christmas party there was the sound of jingling bells, and suddenly round a corner there came a rotund man clad in red, face almost fully covered with white whiskers and a long beard. The children started crying out and shouting "Fr Christmas! Fr Christmas!" and then fell silent. Slumped over his shoulder and back was a big gunya sack, bulging with things. There was an expectant pause, then he started addressing the children. He asked them very many questions — whether they had been good at home and their school, whether they had been giving any trouble to their daddies and mummies, whether they had been doing their holiday homework as their parents had told them to do. All the answers were given, some confidently, others bashfully, and some just about whispered (the one about holiday homework of course...).

Then he started handing out the gifts as one of the Uncles started reading out the names. He had a twinkle in his eye and a merry smile. And then 1 of the older boys peered closely at him and shouted out "It's Uncle Chachen, it's Uncle Chachen!" There was much laughter and shouting as the entire crowd of children gathered round him, saying "Uncle Chachen, Uncle Chachen, my present, my present!"

Every one got a nice present. Mine was a toy rail-engine with 2 coaches. I treasured it for a long while.

On another occasion the Indian Navy visited. (There were 2 naval visits that I seem to recall...1 during the 1950s when I was a primary schoolboy at St Joseph's, and another some years later when I was at secondary school).

The vessels were the INS Mysore I think the 1st time, accompanied by a pair of frigates, and the INS Delhi the next time round, also escorted by frigates. Maybe it was the other way round...don't know.

What makes the 1st visit so memorable was that we as children were taken from school for a visit on board the ship. Sr Salvina, our Headmistress gave us a talk and told us to be on our best behaviour. Doubtless this message had already been drilled into our heads at our homes before we left for school that day.

No greater excitement could be had for small school boys than to go near the gun turrets and go up and down the stairs exploring the inside. The sailors all smartly bedecked in starched whites and polished black shoes handed out biscuits and sweets. All the boys were very keen to become sailors on a navy ship. I don't recollect what my parents thought or what the parents of my friends made of that sudden spurt of enthusiasm for naval careers.

At Malabar Club there was an evening function to entertain the sailors. All the Aunties had been allocated menu tasks. My mother was given the task of preparing 100 iddlis and 200 parrippu vaddas. Typical of their times, Mum and all the Aunties stretched their items to 120 or 230, and so there was bucket loads of food for hungry sailors and some equally hungry teenage boys who were senior to us and whom we, as small boys, looked up to in awe. The seniors of that time whom I recall were Rennie (my cousin, - Dr. Joseph's 2nd son), Babu, (Prashant Achutan), Baby (Babu's younger brother Prahalad), Jaipal Anandan (PK Jaipal in the EAMM Group), Alex Kamicheril (Molly's brother), Vinu Sukumaran, Vasu Nayar (Lillu's brother), and so on.

It was a memorable function, all the more enjoyable because we had seen some of the sailors on board and recognised them.

In contrast to the town-based Christmases in Dar es Salaam what I enjoyed far more were the Christmases in Kilosa.

My earliest memory of such a trip was when we went by train. I might have been about five years old. It was a very smart compartment, and there was a very smartly uniformed attendant in a tall red fez cap, white coat and trousers, and a red buckled sash or belt at his waist, who brought us a very nice Christmas lunch on gleaming silver trays, and topped off by Christmas pudding. Looking back on it now, I think it must have been a 1st class compartment. I can’t remember more about that trip, and it was the train journey that was so exciting and remains in my mind. In Kilosa I recall, Uncle had an old black Ford car which had to be cranked up from the front to start it. My father hadn’t acquired a car at that

stage, so I liked going in Uncle's car. I can just about recall that my cousin Betty was there in Kilosa, but I don't think Benny had been born then, nor had my sister Libby — so it must have been 1950 or 1951.

In later years my sister Libby and I loved travelling to Kilosa with Dad & Mum. We were always excited by the car journey itself, looking out for lions, or elephants, but only ever saw a few gazelles, giraffes, or zebras.

Stopover partway was at Uncle Tungi Baby's place at Morogoro (Uncle VM Thomas), father of Biji Thomas in the EAMM Group. (Uncle to Rennie and Ivy on this group). Aunty Ponnamma would have a tasty lunch ready, and I enjoyed playing with the sons.

[* - I'd forgotten their names, so it was really nice to hear from Biji Thomas in the US after joining the EAMM Group**].**

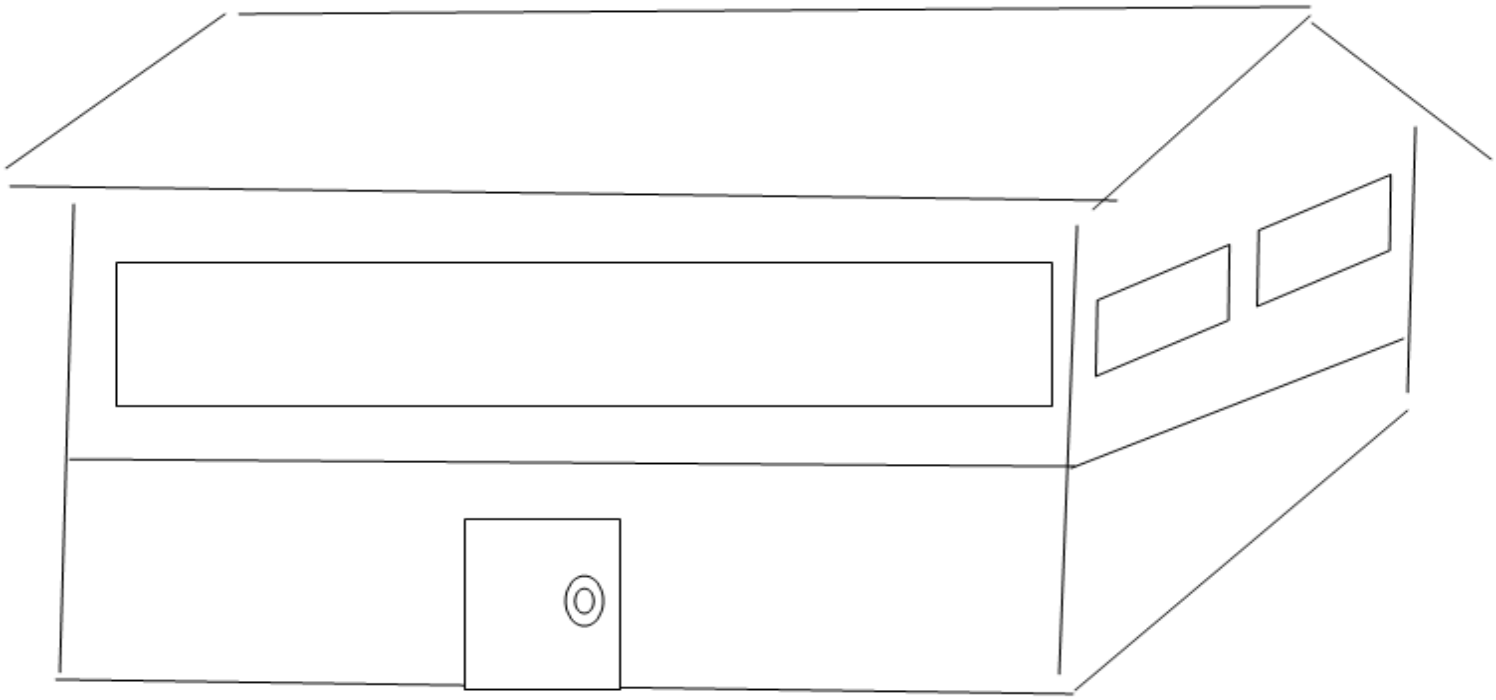
After a few visits to other Uncles and Aunties there, whom I have now sadly forgotten, we were off on our way, in Dad's small camel brown coloured Morris Minor, DSH 634, stuffed and packed with gifts, goodies and our things.

In Kilosa, Uncle and Aunty lived in a large old spread-out bungalow which was perched on a hillside in the middle of the forest. It was probably built by the Germans when they used to rule over Tanganyika before the 1st World war.

RIGHT: My rather crude attempt to sketch out Uncle & Aunty's Kilosa bungalow as I remember it from my boyhood days.

The basement store entrance in front was always kept securely locked.

The main double door was at the back, and there was a side entrance to the kitchen.



After the Germans lost, Tanganyika came under the British. Uncle worked at the East African Sisal Plantations (EASP).

I loved that old very long tropical house, or rather bungalow. It had this large inside verandah that ran the entire length of the house, with an equally long window enclosed only by iron bars and mosquito netting, so that you could look out from that hillside down on to the plains stretching away for miles and miles into the distance. What a view !!!

Because it was perched on the hillside, the front looked like it had 2 floors, but it was just an old bungalow with a basement store towards the front. The main entrance was at the back, where there was a car porch. ……. I wish there were some photos that would help to show you what I mean, because I can clearly see it in my mind. It was an exciting house for children….Bina Kottanattu, Joy Philip or Jeevan Thampi may have memories of it having lived in Kilosa.

The basement store was always closed. Benny and I loved going in there looking for big lizards and snakes. Once we came across a mamba. Whooo ! - Quick exit, shouts, and there came our manservant, Ernestie, armed with a stick, who deftly put the hapless reptile out of action.

We got it from him, draped it on a stick, then pounced upon the unsuspecting Betty and small Libby and proceeded to chase them in great glee, while they fled screaming in terror.

It was just a few short-lived moments of fun for us, the 2 boys, because a few sharp smartly-administered smacks from the respective mums put an end to that particular game.

For me, a "townie" boy, there were other novelties. Located near the house was a large water tank about the height of a 2 storey building. This is something I had not seen serving individual houses in Dar-es-Salaam. Water was pumped up periodically from some river source not too far away. What I remember is that the water looked quite reddish in colour, and reddish sediment would settle at the bottom after it stood for a while. Aunty would say to my mother that it was a bane to get white clothes white after washing, and things would eventually acquire a faint beige-like hue. The principal point of interest for Benny and me was to climb the ladder up to the top of the tank and gaze into it, and then drop stones into the water to see the clouds of sediment rise up. Of course, done when parental eyes were not watching.

Electricity in Dar es Salaam was for my immature mind, just a question of putting on a switch, or switching it off. Here it was supplied via a large machine which I learned from my father was called a generator located down at the estate offices. It came on at night for some hours and I learnt that it would get switched off at some point in the early hours of the morning.

In the kitchen I was fascinated to see a fridge that ran, not on electricity, but on kerosene. It had this violet blue lamp underneath, and I would bend down to peer at it, wondering how a hot thing like a flame could make things cold in the

fridge. Periodically Uncle or Ernestie, would pull out the tank from underneath and refill it with more kerosene. I was to encounter this strange home appliance many years later when I was when posted to work in the old "Biafra" area of Nigeria. In fact we had a large chest freezer too, run on kerosene. Once, while on a trip home to India from Nigeria, I was describing this fridge with some aplomb to my cousins, when one of them piped up. "Athu valia kariyam allelo Sunny. Njangallde vitillum athopolethe fridge ondallo". (That's not all that great Sunny. We have one like that too at home). You see, she and her husband lived in the middle of their large estates in Nilambur. They had inherited theirs as a legacy from some long gone colonial era.

My Uncle worked in some high capacity at EASP and was therefore given this European grade accommodation. But for Aunty it was a bit lonely and so they used to go into town very evening. Uncle's name, like my father's, was Sebastian too, but at home I called him Uncle Kunjunju or Uncle Kilosa alternating between the two. Aunty's first name was Mary, like my mother, but Pennamma at home to family and friends, ...Aunty Pennamma to my sister and me....

Another thing fab about that house was the number of mango trees in its compound. Usually there would be mangoes when we went, and we would enjoy eating the big fat 'Embe Dodo', the smaller and elongate one called 'Embe Shindano', (apparently because to some people it resembled a long and pointy injection needle or syringe), and the star of the show, the mid-size delicious 'Embe Makkai'.

Aunty' Pennamma's younger brother Uncle Varkichen (Mr RT George, father of Bina Kottanattu in the EAMM Group) worked there too. He was a bachelor at that stage. Uncle had a big moustache. I used to watch with fascination as he twirled it round in the midst of conversation with friends. He was one of those Uncles who always brought fun and excitement with him. He would dash about on his big motorbike much to the disapproval of Aunty Pennamma who feared for his safety. Once there was a Christmas fair in Kilosa. All of us went together. There were merry-go-round rides, coconut shies, and all sorts of similar activity. Uncle bought a raffle ticket. When the prizes were announced all of us were stunned and then whooped with glee - Uncle had wone the 1st prize . I was very small at that time. All that I can remember was that he won the red car that was on display ….what make?..?.. what model.?....I don't know...On that same occasion Uncle had taken out a 50-cent piece from his pocket with other change. The coin slipped from his hand and fell down. No one could spot it anywhere in the grass. As I scrabbled down on the ground searching for it, I suddenly spied a gleam in the turn-up of his trousers (remember that in the 50s all gentlemen wore trousers with turn-ups at the ankles. Turn-ups went out of fashion in the early 60s and when the Beatles hit the scene, drainpipe trousers became the order of the day for younger men). Anyway, I yelled out "Uncle, there's your Sumini piece !". Sure enough it was. He bent down, retrieved it, and promptly gave it to me as a reward. O - I felt so rich …!

Coming home at night, was always an eerie experience as we drove through the forest, up the hill to get back to the house. I remember Aunty recalling how once, when they pulled up into the car porch, Betty, who was very small then, got out of the car, and then seeing something in the corner of the porch, ran forward in great glee saying, "Pussy, pussy !" They didn't have a cat. Aunty took one look, and then sprang forward and pulled Betty back. There for all the world, with markings looking like a great big grey and black tabby cat, was a coiled up huge python. Uncle went in, got his rifle, and the unfortunate reptile exited this world.

In the subsequent years, my cousin Betty and I were older, and we each now had our respective siblings, my cousin Benny, and my sister Libby. Going into town was fun for Benny and me because a visit to Uncle CM Philip's and Aunty's house meant we could play with Joy and his brother Roy. (***Joy Philip is Mathew Philip** in the EAMM - son of Uncle CM Philip).

Also working in EASP was a Parsi family, Mr Rusi Singaporewalla and his wife and young son Keki. They would visit us, and sometimes Dr Dave, the Gujarati doctor at the Government Hospital in town would call on us with his wife. He knew my Uncle, Dr Joseph, as his senior in service years ago.

Uncle and Dad would fetch a casuarina tree in, and it would be decorated as our Christmas tree. In Kilosa, I used to see tiny little birds hopping about in the trees and on the ground. I had never seen these in Dar. They were brightly coloured little things, one sort with red feathers, the other type with blue chests. They looked like little jewels and I so desperately wanted to hold them in my hands, and have them as pets. I kept asking my Uncle and my Dad. I remember one year my father and Uncle rigged up a sort of trap with chicken coop wire, and trapped these little things. They brought them inside, and tied them to the tree with thin thread. The poor little things shivered and flapped with fright while we children tried feeding them with rice grains, and small insects. By evening, seeing their piteous condition, my father asked me how I would like to be tied like that to the tree if I was one of those little things. I said "No", and sadly, asked him to let them go. They took off like a shot when he released them a few minutes later…....

At Christmas Midnight Mass, we sang carols in English and in Swahili. Pity I've forgotten them. I still have the tune of 1 particular Swahili carol running in my head, but the lyrics have gone - I remember that it was a call to the little children of Kilosa, "Watoto wa Kilosa", to awaken from their "kitandas" to greet this newly arrived little Baby who had no bed.

Visits to Kimamba were great because there lived Uncle PG Mathews Parel, (Kozhencherry), who worked on Damon's sisal estates at Kisangata Mauzi. George (Achenkutty) was the eldest, much senior to us. He would drive tractors on the estate to impress Benny and me, and would only watch us all from a distance. Nirmala (Nina) was my age and Kunjmol (Susan)

was closer in age to Benny and Libby. They lived in a large rambling old bungalow. Whilst the girls played, Benny and I would get tractor rides from Achenkutty, - something for me to boast about to my school friends when I got back to Dar.

On one occasion, the general manager's wife, Mrs Helen Watson, called upon my Aunt. There was going to be a fancy dress competition at the European Club. She wanted to go dressed in a sari. She wanted help from Aunty and my mother. As it turned out, the sari chosen happened to be my mother's. The evening came round, and she turned up to be dressed. She left after a while, looking very splendid in her sari, but walking in a funny sort of way. Next day she came back to return the sari, her face beaming and glowing like one of the decorations hanging on the Christmas tree. She had won the 1st Prize at the Fancy Dress show. She had a big bouquet of fresh flowers and a huge box of chocolates as a Thank You gift for Aunty and my mother. We waited for her to go. Then of course you can guess what happened. Between Betty, Benny, Libby and myself, soon there was not much left of the box of chocolates.

Sometimes the menfolk would round up to go hunting. My father, my Uncle, would join Uncle Varkichen (Bina Kottanatu's Dad), Uncle Mauzi Mathews, and a relative of Uncle Mathews called Uncle Rajan who was a game warden living in Kisangata. They would all go together in jeeps. Often they just came back with game birds like wood pigeons and guinea fowl, nothing big, and sometimes it would be some poor little dik-dik. The guinea fowl were quite tough compared to chicken meat, but tasty.

As I grew older my feelings began to change somewhat...Once 2 pigeons were still alive, not seriously injured. I kicked up a tremendous fuss, asking for them to be taken to the vet in town. Nothing doing. Their throats were slit. They were served up for dinner. I steadfastly refused to partake in spite of the delicious aroma. Benny hid a piece and brought it to our room for me. I still refused, and suddenly he saw another side of me that he hadn't known till then.

Once Uncle took us all for a visit to the sisal estates and the sisal factory. That was quite exciting. First he took us to the estates show where the plants grew. It was a sea of green that stretched out as far as we could see. This was now a close-up view of what I always enjoyed looking at, faraway from up on the hillside, from the verandah in Uncle's house. They were really big plants with leaves that were all bunched up at the bottom and turned upwards like a bowl. The leaves were long, had needle-sharp pointy ends, were very thick and the sides had nasty thorns jutting out from them. Tall pole-like stalks, carrying what looked like flowers, jutted straight up out of the middle of these bunches ("bowls") of leaves. All around were gangs of African labourers overseen by supervisors, of whom some were European. The men were busy with long 'pangas', chopping the leaves from their bottom, and piling them up at the side. Other men gathered them up into bundles which were then put on to a wagon which ran on rails that looked like small railway lines. The wagons would take these leaves to sheds near the factory Uncle told us.

He drove us there next. We saw the leaves being put onto belts of big rollers that carried them forward at speed, they were doused under spraying water and then went through another set of machines. These had wheels which crushed and mangled the leaves, from where they sped on to another area where the soft juicy part was all drained away and what remained looked like a tangled mass of golden creamy coloured fibre. There was a nasty stench in there, which, my Uncle said was due to the chemicals being added to the water to mash the leaves. The fibres then went through combing machines to separate out the fibres, which were hung out on wires to dry in the open air. We then moved to a shed where the dried fibre was brought in and compacted into huge bales, which Uncle said would be sent overseas to make rope and so on. Some of that rope-making went on here also. We saw this in another section. The dried fibre was twisted and spun into ropes of varying thickness and coiled up onto huge drums.

Uncle told us that sisal rope was used by the shipping companies. It was very useful to use at harboursides for mooring ships because the fibre could resist damage from salt water for a long period compared to some other types of rope. Eventually of course it fray and break, and would need to be replaced. That was a nice trip. Sadly I have no photos of that memorable visit.

RIGHT: This old postcard from my father's collection shows the sisal fibre being dried outside in fields.

RIGHT: A boy lays out fibre to dry on wires.

Picture courtesy of the David Marsh Collection. David Marsh wrote to me to say:-

"Matthew

Here's a larger version of "sisal boy". It's a scan of an original black and white print.

Notes say that I took it, so it would have been with a Kodak Box Brownie. I think it was taken in 1956. You can see Mt Meru in the background, so it was probably taken south of Arusha (where we lived).

I think that when we returned to England in 1957 we had enlargements made, and I have a vague memory of getting a commendation in some kind of photo competition/ exhibition."

BELOW: the machines that strip and mash and pulp the leaves to extract the fibre – the process is called sisal decortication.

Picture Courtesy "Sisal 1945" travelfilmarchive.com

One year Dad & Mum, Uncle & Aunty, all went out to a Christmas party. It was night. We were older by then. We the children were quite thrilled to be at home to play without any adult interference. We had the night watchman ("kokroni") patrolling the grounds, and Ernestie, the man servant in the house. (What was "kokroni"?..I have no idea, but that was what we called him — it wasn't his name, which was something else altogether…)...

Suddenly we started hearing a very strange and rather frightening, blood-curdling sound, like a madman laughing. Betty recognised it straightaway, and simultaneously the kokroni came running to the door asking the house servant to call me. I went to see him, the other 3 all clustering behind me. I must have been around 9 or 10 years age then, Betty the same age as me, Benny about 6 or 7, and Libby around 3 or 4.

The watchman addressed me in Swahili – "Bwana Kidogu", means "Small Master" (which inflated my head a little). He told us that the sound of the mad man laughing was "Fisi" (hyenas). Of course, if you lived in Tanganyika or Kenya, you know that means one thing, straightaway. If the hyenas are barking, lions are nearby. He told us to stay safely in-doors, and not to come out at all. We asked about him, but he showed us his "bunduki" – a big 303 rifle – he said he would climb the big tall mango tree in the courtyard and keep a lookout from there.

After a long while of watching, and peeping out of the windows, we suddenly heard the grunting roar of a lion, getting closer and closer. Benny and I watched with bated breath, hoping desperately to see some awful terrible killing, whilst Betty and my sister Libby crept away, behind the curtains. We kept on looking and looking, but saw nothing, and after a while the sound of the roars and the laughing madman faded away.

When our parents returned after their jollies, we went running and told them, very excited about the whole thing. My mother looked rather worried, but Uncle simply said " O, that's nothing to worry about, it happens every now and again. This is African 'kaahdu' ".

There were so many little adventures like that. That's why I preferred Christmases in Kilosa to the ones in Dar.

Christmas was always a feast - My mother and Aunty putting up a really good show...the memories of the good food and fun remain….

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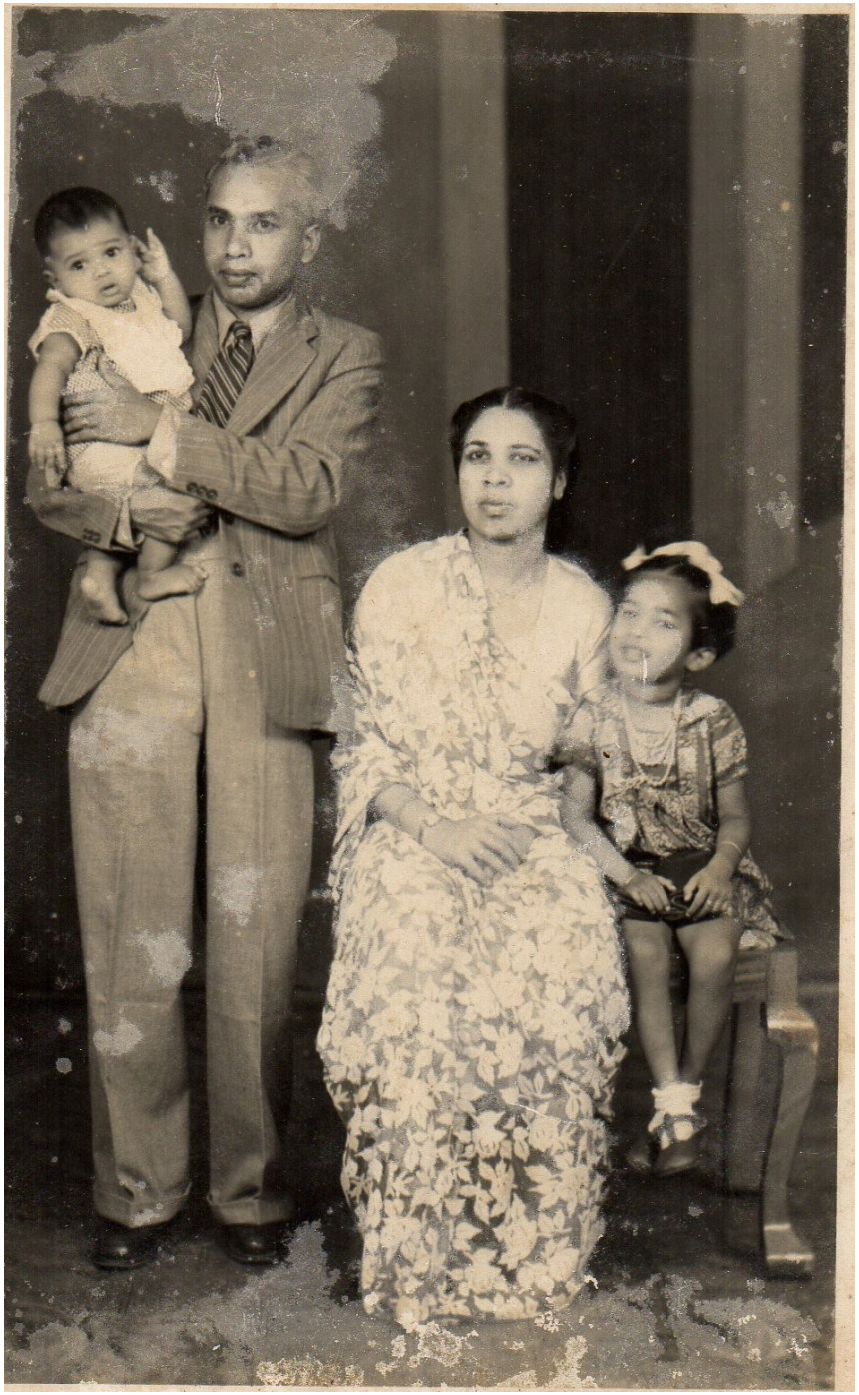

LEFT: Uncle Kilosa, (DT Sebastian), Aunty Pennamma, Betty aged around , and Benny just a few months old - 1951

ABOVE: Benny aged around 3, on his trike, on the car porch of the old Kilosa bungalow.

I never forgot the highly coloured little birds I saw in Kilosa, and learnt in later years that the blue-chested ones were called blue waxbills, and the red ones were fire finches.

Many, ever so many, years later, I was delighted to come across them again, ….in my garden, ….when, after my retirement, I undertook a volunteering stint in Ethiopia.

LEFT: A blue waxbill sporting its blue chest.

BELOW: A red fire finch male and his little harem.

1956 — TRAVEL TO INDIA ! …&….PRINCESS MARGARET VISITS TANGANYIKA

By 1956, it was time for my dad to take "Long Leave". This was something that entailed a lot of preparation. I could see that Mum and Dad were busy buying presents for the Uncles and Aunties and cousins at home. They once again started showing my sister Libby and me the pictures of all our relatives – grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, so that we would be familiar with their names and faces on arrival. We started getting quite excited about it – lots of new friends to play with. Poor Betty felt very left out, because she was not accompanying us, but I reminded her that she would be going with Uncle, Aunty and Benny after we returned, and that was sufficient for her to be pleased. When I heard that the long leave was for 5 months, I was immensely thrilled – one long holiday – whoopee! No such luck. Dad & Mum met up with Aunty Noronha and got a big list of exercises that would keep me busy and out of mischief for most mornings I would be in Plassanal. An elder cousin, who had just graduated from St Joseph's, Trichy, was to be my tutor, at least until he got a job. We would be staying at the "*tharavadu*" at both Plassanal and Alleppey, so there were special ornamental gifts to be purchased from Stewarts Stores on Acacia Avenue. As the time drew closer, Uncle Joseph called us all into his clinic-dispensary. All of us, except Betty, were given injections against cholera and against smallpox. My father had some small booklets with him, one for each of us. Uncle wrote something in each, then signed it, then put a big seal mark on each. Mum explained that these were nasty sicknesses, and that the injections would prevent the sicknesses.

Meanwhile, never mind the Indian family preparing to travel, life in Dar was still going on as usual. The local African carts men, pulling large heavily laden wooden carts with large metal-rimmed wheels, would rumble past every day. They worked in teams to pull the carts. On top stood their leader, much like a boat coxswain, who to keep up the momentum, would rhythmically shout out "*Mali ya nani*??" – the team of cart pullers would heave, pull, and respond with tremendous energy, "Gulamhussein!!" It turned out that Gulamhussein was a local businessman engaged in various trades.

Fresh vegetables would be brought to the back door, so that Mum could buy them from these street vendors. Every Friday a number of beggars would arrive throughout the day, and my mother would hand them out coins, and they would call down a blessing on her.

Some years later, when we lived in Changombe, there were only 1 or 2 beggars on a Friday. It became my task to do the almsgiving if I was at home when they came. I was absolutely fascinated by an old man who had lost his right forearm - elbow down. He used to utter a very long blessing in Arabic, the words for which fail me, but it was liquid poetry to hearken to – the name of Allah figured in it and words that sounded like "*hamdilal*", and "*makbul*". He told my mother one day that he had lost his arm in a crocodile attack.

However, amidst all this there was also some mysterious darkness in the air. Uncles and Aunties used to talk about

something serious happening. The words Mau Mau were used. In later years I understood that they were referring to the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, which was essentially a freedom struggle but conducted in a terrorist manner.

Several white farmers in the Kenya Highlands had been killed. The British had ruthlessly tried to suppress the rebellion, but it continued to fester in spots. Some of them had slipped across the border into Tanganyika, and local sympathisers had emulated the terrorist acts. Upcountry, some Indian' *banya dukawallahs'* had also been attacked. (Gujarati / or Indian businessmen used to be called '*Banyanis*'). The concern for Malayalis was this:- would they eventually become targets too?...

It was the custom at that time, that when each family was about to depart, cooking would cease in the household and the neighbouring Aunties used to bring in the meals. Also, there would be several "Bon voyage" visits. Each family would bring a gift for the departing family – in our case, for my sister and myself. There were beautiful tins of toffees and sweets – Sharps toffees, Baileys sweets, Mackintosh Quality Street sweets, biscuits by Peek Freans, and by Huntley & Palmer. I remember 2 particular tins which were like jewellery boxes, embossed with beautiful, coloured enamel pictures and decorations, and with a small key to open and lock each. Some of these tins have become collector items today! My father collected all these gifts and filled a huge thick padded canvas sack which had large eyelets around the top through which a bicycle chain lock and padlock were threaded to lock it. He told us that these gifts for us would be our gifts for our cousins. Rather unusually for us, both my sister and I were actually rather pleased with the thought of sharing and giving those gifts away to our cousins.

We were to travel by the British India Steam Navigation Co. The ship we were to travel on was the SS Amra. I gathered that the SS Kampala was a better ship, but that people preferred the Amra over the SS Karanja which was considered a dump. Our ship was to stop at Mombasa and at the Seychelles. The whole thing was becoming more and more exciting. It would take 3 weeks in all to reach Bombay. I knew all these ships by sight because we used to spot them in the harbour. Sometimes we used to go to the narrow harbour entrance to see the ships as they arrived and left.

At the harbour entrance there was an old German shipwreck, submerged, so ships had to steer through a really narrow channel. The German ship had been sunk by a British gunship during the First World War. The custom was that when the ships were to leave the harbour, they would blow their siren once for departure, and twice for arrival….or maybe it was the other way round….The narrow harbour entrance was also the site for the ferry across to the other side. There used to be a hotel there on the other side called the Dolphin Hotel. You could go to the harbour entrance and wait there. When family friends were departing, as the ship passed by, they would gather on the deck, and there would be a frantic effort by those onshore to try and spot them on the deck, and then, when spotted, we would furiously wave our handkerchiefs

and arms as we spotted them, and they too would equally frantically wave back in delight.

Now, even as I write these lines, something else springs to mind…….the main part of the harbour was rather circular, but the entrance was narrow. Azania Front ran up till there and then it swung down to become Ocean Road. Just near that point where it swung around, in a nice bungalow set apart, there lived an Uncle and Aunty by name Govindan. Aunty used to be a schoolteacher, and they had a daughter, Vijaya.

They retired and left Dar at some stage during my schooldays. Many years later I gathered that there was a sad, rather tragic, story involving the family……but I don't have any more details…..

Arrangements were made for Yusuf, the house servant, to go home during that period. His uncle, whom I think, he called Kaka Hassani, arrived. Kaka Hassani was a familiar figure to me. He had brought Juma and Ramzani as previous servants and had himself served my father in my father's bachelor days. When each house servant got to marriageable age, he would leave and Hassani would arrange the next person. Hassani was a tall striking figure. He wore a long white cassock-like tunic, called a '*kanzu'*, and a closely fitting embroidered white cap, but sometimes he wore a smart red fez cap, with little black strings coming off the top, and hanging by the rim, which I had seen a few other Muslims people wearing from time to time. It is worn even today in Turkey and Egypt. Dad arranged for Yusuf to return in 5 months' time, gave him Yusuf's wages for the next 5 months, and Yusuf and Hassani went off to a place called Rufiji.

On the day we were leaving, my Aunt Thankam Joseph came to take the spare set of keys for safe keeping. Then we went in a taxi to the harbour front. The old wharf and Customs and Immigration House on Azania Front was opposite St Joseph's Cathedral. I think there used to be a Malayali Uncle who worked in Immigration or Customs by name D'Cruz, who, if I am right, we had met through Uncle & Aunty Noronha. Uncle D'Cruz scribbled and marked each luggage item with a piece of white chalk. We had a large number of trunks and suitcases, plus that big canvas sack of sweets. All had BISN labels on them with our names and destinations written on them, and some with names painted on for good measure. The majority of them were marked HOLD and would go into the ship's hold as not required during the voyage; the ones labelled CABIN BAGGAGE would go directly to our cabins. Among the cabin baggage was an upright blue cabin trunk, with metal corners, that was my Dad's particular pleasure – it was an upright trunk, which opened out to become a standing wardrobe, so that his suits and formal clothes were on hangers as in a regular wardrobe. He had purchased it for a previous trip that they had made in 1950 which I was too small to recollect.

(On that 1950 trip, they had travelled 1st Class, and it seems, I was often wearing a mini sailor naval suit. The Captain had asked for the Indian couple with the small sailor boy to sit with him at the table for dinner quite a number of times

during that voyage – apparently a big thing in those days…!..?... My parents would later say that each time we sat there at his table he used to see me collecting Coca Cola bottle tops, and he would tell me to throw them away, and instead he would give me bright shilling coins, and '*sumini'* pieces (50 cent pieces), saying that that is what I should be collecting. ….Maybe I should have followed his advice over the years that lay in my future – but it never happened – well….., never mind - …each to his own life ....).

We then had to pass through Port Health. To my pleasant surprise my Uncle Joseph was sitting there with an English-man, a doctor, both in their doctors' white attire – my mother explained that Uncle and the other doctor were Port Health Medical Officers. Uncle and the other doctor looked at our vaccination booklets, and then bid us farewell.

In those days, the ships were anchored offshore in the middle of the harbour, as the docks had not yet been built. Passengers were ferried out from the jetty to the ship on motorboats. Adult passengers clambered up "accommodation ladders", hung by the side of the ship. The ladder swung and swayed about a bit as you mounted each stair. It was a mixture of simultaneous terror and enjoyable excitement, looking down at the water below, until you reached the top and were quickly pulled on board by the waiting crew. Children, including my sister and myself, were carried up by the boatsmen. A following motorboat would bring our cabin baggage. As we clambered on to the deck, the purser would be standing there, inspecting the passports and tickets. A much larger motorboat would bring across the HOLD baggage of several families at a time. My mother stood at the rails on the deck, looking out anxiously, and keeping a watch until our luggage had arrived. It was hoisted on board from the boat on to the ship by the ship's cranes, and then disappear down into some seemingly bottomless pit called the Hold.

Once on board our allocated cabin stewards would escort us to our respective cabins. The cabins were fun for us. They had bunk beds, so you could climb up the ladders on the side and sleep on top. There was a circular window called the port hole, looking through to the outside, which had strong metal fastening clamps by which you could open and close the window.

After some hours, the embarkation was over, and the ship made ready to set sail. The anchor was pulled up, 2 tugboats arrived, and a man looking like a naval officer arrived in a launch. He came on board and went up to the bridge. This was the Pilot. He would guide the vessel safely out of the harbour through that narrow channel at the entrance out into the open sea, and then return. The ships engines were running but not really doing any moving. The sirens went off. The tugboats began to pull, and the ship slowly began to move, and then we were off gliding through the harbour.

We could see our school, and the Cathedral, and the Lutheran Church, and the other familiar sights where we used to go for evening walks. It looked so different seeing it this way. We passed through the channel out on to the open sea.

The ship stopped. The tugboats were freed from the ropes, and the pilot stepped down, back into his motor launch, and waved us farewell. Now you could suddenly feel a throbbing and vibration as the ship's engines turned on full swing. As the ship steamed on, we passed by the familiar sight of the white Government House on Ocean Road, and then later on the hospital, but gradually things got smaller and smaller, and then dwindled into the distance, and all we could see was the land line. Our attention now turned to the other children on board and soon we were picking up and making new friendships. I cannot recall any Malayali families being on the outbound trip.

Then it was out across the deep blue waters of the Indian Ocean. The next stop was the Seychelles.

We stopped there just for a day. As we approached Victoria Harbour we gasped with delight. The water was a pale blue, and so clear that you could see all the way through it to the seabed below. Swimming in it were shoals and shoals of different types of gaily coloured fish. A number of small boats started approaching the ship with several men on board hailing us with greetings and showing off things they had to sell. After the ship had dropped anchor, they swarmed aboard. There was a display of trinkets made from coral, from shells, and wooden carvings. Suddenly my eyes lit on something strange among the wares. It looked like a double coconut shell. For all the world, it looked like a……well, - because we are so enriched by the genteel and polite company of ladies in this EAMM Group, I won't go on to describe it in any further anatomical detail. It was the fabled "coco-de-mer", a botanical item unique to the Seychelles. The vendors approached my parents. They showed us the shells. They were quite fascinating and looked like double coconuts. They had been sawn across in half, with the top and the bottom held together at the back by small hinges. The insides had been hollowed out and the interior and the exterior had been polished. Mum took one look and said "*Huhh! Ee virthikatta sadhanam namakka engam venda*!" On the contrary, Dad bought not one, but three, two of them to give away as presents in India. Years later I still remember, Mum would always glare with disgust and loathing at the one that he had kept for himself. I am pretty sure that just to tease her, he would most ostentatiously take off his wristwatch and place it within the shell, along with his wallet and keys, and close the lid gently and carefully……

Every morning we were woken up to the pleasant tune of a xylophone being played – a bright and cheerful wake-up call. It was our cabin steward traversing the corridors with the instrument. A few minutes later there would be a knock on the door, and he would come in bearing a huge tray containing plates of hot buttered toast, a steaming pot of tea, a jug of equally steaming coffee, along with milk, sugar and cups and saucers. This was "bed coffee". Bathrooms and toilets were shared in each corridor, so you would have to queue up in your dressing gown and pyjamas or nighties, with your towels and toiletry bag, etc, etc. We would get ourselves ready to go up for breakfast to the main dining rooms. Breakfast was usually very English in cuisine, - sizzling hot sausages, bacon and eggs, and croissants and rolls, but on certain days you

could pre-order Indian cuisine – *chappathis*, *puris*, and gorgeous chickpeas curry, egg curry, and potato *masala* and so on. Mum made sure that on Fridays we would not have any "*saippu*" breakfast/ lunch or dinner. Not that we minded. The North Indian vegetarian cuisine was so good too.

We waited impatiently, eyeing the other boys and girls at the other tables, and breakfast over, we would make a dash for the bathrooms to rinse our mouths as ordered to do by the ever-watchful mothers, and then shoot off upstairs on to the deck in the glorious sunshine. There were all sorts of deck games you could play, ring tennis, quiots, and so on. We would play undisturbed until the big boys loomed up and hogged the place to themselves for the rest of the day. But there was always so much else to do. The parents would strike up on board friendships, exchange news and gossip, and take brisk walks around the entire perimeter of the decks. At 11am the bars would open, and the gentlemen would rapidly disappear into the cavernous interior of the saloons to enjoy their pre-lunch beer or whatever.

Every 3rd day or so, - I think, - no one was allowed below deck to their cabins from 10.30am onwards. The reason?? – O it was the Captain's Rounds. And what was the Captain's rounds? O that was when the Captain, accompanied by some of his officers, would go below deck, through the cabin corridors, inspecting cabins as he threw random cabin doors open, checking that the stewards had done a thorough job of cleaning the rooms, and had ensured that the port hole windows were closed when no one was in. Of course, his inspection extended much further and beyond to the engine rooms and boiler rooms and so on, but that didn't concern us. Lunch was heralded by our xylophone players, the cabin stewards, trotting around, summoning us to the dining rooms with their music. Lunch was a sumptuous affair. Lots of nice things, but the British way of cooking cabbage and other vegetables was most unappetising, unpleasant and so off-putting. Teatime was cakes and hot scones with butter or cream and jam, and biscuits galore. Dinner was at 7pm or 7.30pm. I remember my mother saying that thankfully, there was no huge amount of dressing up required in the way that it had to be done for their 1950 trip in 1st Class. For us, the children, the *piece de resistance* was actually not a food item but rather the entertainment that followed – a movie some nights, a concert some other nights – with lots of Hindi songs that we already knew, and familiar with the lyrics so that we could sing along.

As we got across the Arabian Sea, the waves started swelling and mounting, and depending on how the ship was navigated or steered, it would either pitch from front and rear, or roll from side to side. Most adults found this very unpleasant and began confining themselves to their rooms with sea sickness. The cabin stewards would serve them soup and light meals in their cabins. Children seemed to tolerate things a little better, and of course the newfound freedom of being unsupervised meant you could go up on deck and get away with a lot of things otherwise not allowed. Mind you, there were always stewards around to ensure that things didn't get too out of hand.

3 weeks later we spotted the faint outline of land. Several hours later we were docked in Bombay. Things had to be offloaded, we said goodbye to all our shipmate friends, swearing undying loyalty to them, and had promptly forgotten them within a week. We disembarked, went off in a big taxi, followed by another with our luggage to some hotel or the other. We stayed there for a couple of days. Every morning a newspaper boy used to walk the hotel corridors, and sing out in a sing-song manner, "Times! Times of India! Daily paper, newspaper. Times!"

Dad thought he should take us around to show us the sights. Mum agreed reluctantly – she had only one thing on her mind now – get home to her beloved parents. I remember we went to the Gateway of India, saw a crowded market called Crawford Market, which to my mind was 10 times bigger than Kariakoo Market, and had lots more stuff to sell than just meat, fish and vegetables. My sister and I were entranced by the Taraporewala Aquarium. We were thrilled to see some of the fish we had spotted in the clear blue waters of the Seychelles. There were lots of other things too, like getting a ride in in a horse carriage and pony cart, and so on, but it is all in a haze now.

We then set off by train from Victoria Terminus for the south. We changed trains at Madras Central and proceeded on our long journey to Ernakulam. The train journey was a different sort of fun, but we had already been on trains in Dar so there was no great novelty there. The novelty was the country, and the people. We stopped at many major stations and as the train came to a halt, we would be surrounded by cries of "*Kappi, kappi*!!", "*Chai vaddey, Chai vaddey*!!" A crowd of vendors would surge forward. You could get all sorts of snacks delivered through the bars of your window, - what a fascinating collection of things to eat! My mother would insist that we buy the bare minimum from vendors, worried about hygiene, but Dad was always more adventurous. Regular meals were pre-ordered and served on board by staff of a company called Spencer's. In this matter, Mum got her own way, and she fully insisted that we have nothing but strictly vegetarian food . Dad gave in. The food was always delicious, served hot in little dishes, sat on big shining brass trays which my mother said were called "*thalis*". We pulled into Ernakulam South about 3 days after leaving Bombay.

There were hordes of Uncles waiting to take us home, first to Mum's parents at their "*tharavadu*", and then a week later, to Dad's remote village family "*tharavadu*". Everywhere there were new friends to make among the cousins. I learnt that '*tharavadu'* meant a sort of ancestral family home.

At Mum's home were her parents, "Valiachayan" and Valiammachi" to me and my sister. As I entered the house I looked at them with a little awe and trepidation. They both looked quite grand and aged. They were clad in dazzling white garments. Valiyammachi wore huge gold hoops through her ears. Living with them was one of my mother's brothers and his family. The other brothers all lived close by with their families. Valiachayan and Valiammachi were said to be strict but in actual fact were always kind and generous to their grandchildren including my sister and myself. If Valiammachi noticed

my mother administering the occasional healthy ear-screwing dose to me, she would summon the head manservant (Antonichettan" to us children) to ride his bicycle in haste to the bakery in town and fetch freshly baked hot buns for me to eat, as a compensation. So I actually didn't mind getting a few ear-pulls like that if there were hot buns to follow.

Alleppey was a quiet, sleepy port town, once the habitat of British businessmen, with old colonial bungalows on the sea-front, busy bazaars and market places, and goldsmiths like Bhima Brothers, silversmiths, and textile shops, and had running water and electricity. There were canals in the town through which large boats called *'vallams'* brought in copra, and coconut, and sacks of rice or whatever. I noticed that here, too, as in Bombay, there were half-starved-looking men who pulled carriages in which you could get a ride. One had to clamber in and sit back on the seat, and the owner would stand between 2 shafts affixed to the carriage, pick them upright, and then with a weak, crackled heave-ho sort of call, he would pull you along, all the world like a donkey or a horse. I learnt that these carriages were called *"rikshas*", (rickshaws as I learnt in due course). My father simply loathed the idea of using this form of human labour to carry him around in pomp and magnificence as it were. He would only get on them at the insistence of his brothers-in-law, my uncles, when the driver and taxi man didn't turn up, and we were all in a group needing to get somewhere. He would say pityingly to my mother that these riksha men didn't have *"paththil onnu shakthi"* (1/10th the strength) of his African labourers in Dar es Salaam and that it wasn't good to take advantage of them ("*mothal eddekua"* were the words). My mother, rather more urbane, who had grown-up here as a towns girl and used to riksha pullers, would respond that at least it was one way that they were honestly employed He would pay very generous tips to the pullers, under the rather disapproving gaze of my uncles. He would ask them why they couldn't invest in a business that would get a motor and a battery into the riksha and make life liveable for the poor puller. My uncles would smile. Their business was all about copra, jute and spices, and mills, not rikshas.

At the back of the Alleppey house was a huge compound that stretched back a long way. It was festooned with coconut trees, banana trees, and other kinds of flowering shrubs and trees, some of them bearing fruits that I hadn't seen before. There was something called "*champenga*" which was elongate, pink, fleshy and tart, another called "*globika*", a round and marble sized berry, red when ripe, which was sweet-sour to taste, and had tiny paper-like seeds, there was "*nellika*", there was delicious "*chikku* ", also called "*sappota*", with brown flesh and black seeds, and any number of guava trees.

There was a huge pond in which were fish and frogs. From a nearby wooden shed there would emerge a steady stream of a gaggle of ducks, drakes, and ducklings which would waddle their way down onto the pond to feast on the fish and frogs and whatever else. Their quacking sound, their waddling walk, and their overall comical look would give me and my sister a lot of amusement. These birds would periodically appear on the dinner table as delicious roasts and curries.

In the cowshed were two cows and a calf. It was great fun watching the cowhand coming in every morning to wash them, and feed them. A junior maid would come out to milk them and carry the milk to the kitchen to be boiled, while the cowhand then lit a fire on which was a huge round flat low-level cauldron called "*uralli*", rather like a huge metal basin. Into this he would pour bucketloads of water and then pour in a grainy brown floury thing, "*pinnakku*", the left-over copra from which the oil had been extracted. He would make a sort of soup or gruel which the animals lapped up with pleasure, finishing it off to the bottom of the cauldron. He would deftly clean out the cowshed, put the manure into a heap under a cover of branches, and then take the cows out for their days grazing somewhere outside, bringing them back late evening for another milking round.

King of the domain was Rajah, the mighty Alsatian guard dog. The lead manservant, Antonichettan, was his keeper. Ferocious though he could be, Rajah was docile whenever brought into the presence of my grandmother, and he would lie at her feet, head flat on the floor between his paws, eyes gazing upward at her face. My mother was rather scared of him and kept a distance. My sister and I were allowed to pat him when Antonichettan said it was OK to do so.

The pet monkey was called Chow Chow. He had a cage all to himself, perched high up on a pole next to a guava tree. Fixed by his cage was a taut stay wire, that ran diagonally all the way to the ground, along which he would slide up and down using a chain as his seat. He would watch my cousin Babu and me with suspicion, and make chattering sounds. Sometimes Babu and I would tease him, upon which he would get quite angry and shout monkey language abuse at us. Once, when the imps got into both of us, we took up some small gravel stones and began to throw them at him. Some struck him, and some didn't. Chow Chow's response was immediate, and with fury and alacrity. Holding his small palm under his back-passage, he produced 3 or 4 blackish pebble-sized pieces of his own, which he hurled at us in rapid succession with such amazing precision and fantastic accuracy, that we never ever tried that particular game again.

At evening time, all the cousins would gather at the main house from the nearby houses. The aunties would be there not long after. During our first night there I had no clue why that was, but soon found out. Each cousin took a small candle from the prayer room. They gave me one too. Then armed with a box of matches we wended our way to a nearby "*kurishupalli" (*wayside chapel). There we dutifully lit the candles at the bottom of the cross and made our way back. As we went I could hear a beautiful melodious chanting going on from nearby houses, and my cousins said that it was our Hindu friends and neighbours at their evening prayers. I had not had a chance to see or hear this in Dar and I felt that it was a nice new experience. Back in the house, the front room was full. The aunties and uncles had all assembled by then. Valiachayan, (Grandfather) commenced the evening prayer. Prayer after prayer was recited, everyone took turns, and it went on for much longer than I knew at home in Dar es Salaam. The warm evening and the soft rhythmic sound

of prayers led my eyelids to draw just a little bit closer and closer. Suddenly I felt a poke in my ribs and I sprang alert. It was my cousin sat next to me. Valiachayan was looking at me. Valiachayan was asking me to take my turn. I mumbled out in English as best I could my usual prayers (learned from my mother and the Sisters at St Joseph's). Prayers finished off with a hymn. The aunty of the House, (Aunty Lillikutty), played the harmonium beautifully while everyone else sang the hymn from a Malayalam hymnbook. When all was over, we stood up and I was told that it was time for "Sthuthi". This was the final part of the evening prayer devotion. We each went to offer the peace sign with folded palms, rendering praise to Christ as we offered the peace sign, starting first with Valiachayan and Valiammachi, and then working our way down the hierarchy through senior Uncles, Aunties, our parents, junior uncles and aunties, and finishing off with senior cousins. After 2 or 3 evenings of doing this I got to know who everybody in the family was.

My mother had an Uncle and Aunt living a little further along from the 'tharavadu'. They had a grand old house with mighty gardens. In later years I realised the significance of those gardens, but at that stage my mind was focussed firmly on the unfriendly looking guard dog who seemed to take an exceptional dislike to me. So I was unable to explore those grounds much as though I would have liked to. If you kept walking further along that same path you reached the water's edge. Here was a lake called the Thathampally Kayal, where you could see small canoes, motor boats and big 'vallams' all making their way across the water in various directions.

A little more than a week had passed and we were off again. Two of my Alleppey Uncles escorted us, bearing gifts for my father's relatives and the tharavadu. We travelled by a big motor boat which took us from Alleppey across the Thathampally Kayal, and then across a much bigger big lake called the Vembanad Kayal on which we experienced the swells that we normally get at sea. After a while we had crossed that too. We then passed through large tracts of water, on either side of which, stretching into the distance were what looked mile after mile of paddy fields. We saw men and women workers, towels draped over their heads, stooping, ankle deep in water, working on the growing plants. Someone said this land belonged to a person named Kayal Murikan. Soon after that , we entered a long and winding canal system that led us to Kottayam. As we passed through the canals we could see people living in their houses on either side. In some households lunch was being cooked on the verandahs in front. Palm trees, bushes and flowering shrubs grew in profusion. Cows were tied to stakes or palm trees on the banks, and grazed at the grass growing there. Some people sat on the banks, fishing with a rod. Small children played at the water's edge, and bigger ones more or less my age were bathing and swimming in it, while women were busy washing clothes. The water looked quite brown and made me wonder how they managed to get clothes and bodies clean.

At Kottayam, my father's brothers were waiting with taxis. We stopped briefly for lunch, and then our whole party, left for

Pala and the ultimate destination, Plassanal. We reached there by late afternoon after a brief stop at Pala. There were many elephants on the way, led by their mahouts, hauling huge logs of timber. Everything looked different, huge trees grew thickly everywhere, like in Kilosa, but in between were large tracts of land which had trees, neatly planted in rows, which appeared to be slashed around the base, and had coconut shells fixed to them. My father told me that these were rubber trees, and that the white slashes were actually lines cut into the bark, from which sap dripped into the coconut shell, to be collected by the rubber tapper. I had no clue what he was talking about. An uncle said "I'll show you what we mean when we get home".

Everywhere I looked there were hills and valleys and streams, and the road became more winding and bendy as we went upward. Bullock carts carrying firewood or baskets of vegetables or other bags of stuff, and herds of goats kept slowing us down.

We would be staying at the 'tharavadu' which, by inheritance, fell to my father as the youngest of 6 brothers, but was actually lived in and looked after by his immediate elder brother and family. My grandfather and grandmother were no more.

I quickly learnt the etiquette of name suffixes by which to address the uncles and aunties. Senior uncles were "*Perappen*", aunties were "*Peramma*", younger uncles were "*Chitappan*" or just "*Pahppen*", and junior aunties were "*Elley-amma*" which rolled around on the tongue to be "*Eellamma*".

Plassanal was completely the opposite of Alleppey, thrilling, almost like a tropical jungle, with weird insect noises all day and all night. One expected tigers to pounce out at any time. Nothing of the sort. My forefathers had, in their quests, seen off all the local fauna several decades ago. I learnt that a tiger is called *'kaddua'* and a leopard is called *'puli'*. I wondered how things would have been….However, to compensate there were many other terrors. Cobras and vipers on the paths, even during daytime. Scorpions, centipedes or tarantulas that would creep indoors from the outside from time to time. My cousins told me to be cautious, and to always first look into bags, or shoes, before putting my hand in.

The tharavadu house was long and built of wood. It had a verandah with tall wooden pillars all the way round. The verandah floor was cement but the inside floors were earthen. The rooms were all dark inside and had narrow wooden windows with shutters and bars, but no glass. Small villaku lamps shed a soft orangey light just around them, but there were dark corners where the light did not penetrate.

As dusk swiftly darkened into night, small sparkling lights began dancing in the night air – my cousins called them "*minna miningu*" – which I learnt were little insects emitting a rhythmic glow from their bellies - fireflies. Thinking back on it, I

had seen them in Kilosa too, but not as many as these. In Kilosa they sat on trees like Christmas lights, these ones here flew about here and there.

The first night was an eye-opener in terms of learning and quickly adapting to ways of personal hygiene, bathing, toilet, and sleeping.

There was no electricity – the lights at night were hurricane lamps, and Petromax lamps, candles, and a host of small lamps called "*villaku*". There was no running water – instead water supply was fresh clear water hand-drawn from wells dug deep into the granite hillside. These were hauled up every day and stored in large wooden barrels, covered by wooden covers.

Soon it was bath time. My mother and a cousin took me a distance away from the house. We passed a big well on the way. There, in pristine isolation, stood the bathroom, - a small hut constructed out of thatched dried palm leaves (*'ola*) and logs. It had a door which swung open and closed. My cousin stepped in first, cast his eyes upwards and took a good look around and then came out. Outside the hut stood a huge cauldron, supported on stones, under which a fire blazed merrily, fed by firewood. In close proximity stood another big cauldron also full of water but unheated. Inside the hut were 2 big buckets one with cold water and the other with hot, and a smaller bucket which my mother explained was to mix the hot and cold water for my bathing. Around the walls were fixed narrow shelves on which stood dishes of soap and mugs, and in the wooden frames were hooks for towels and clothes. They left me to get on with it, leaving a hurricane lamp for light. The water was nicely hot. A rustle in the thatch above turned my gaze upwards - a large ugly lizard, with prickly looking skin and baleful eyes, crawled out and leered at me. Oh ! - that was a very short bath indeed ! As I scurried out, a fresh gust of wind blew the smoke from the fire under the cauldron in my direction, enveloping me nicely, so that when I reached back I had a fine layer of ash on my face and I smelt of smoke. Everyone was amused, none more so than me.

When all were back from bath we gathered on the verandah. Candles and lamps were lit. It was prayer time. This time it was the uncle of the House who began the prayers. Again it was a very long series of prayers with everyone participating, ending with a hymn and the giving of "Stuthi".

The house had an open space in its middle which was the dining area set up with plain wooden tables and chairs and bench seats. This area separated the main house from the kitchen and scullery and store area. Supper was rice and egg curry and a variety of vegetables. The children ate first and got out of the way.

My cousins and I sat on the verandah and talked. They were very curious to hear about the ship and train journeys and about Dar es Salaam. I, in turn, just wanted to hear how they dealt with cobras. I gathered it was quite simple. Just step

back a good many steps and scream for your parents, hoping they were within earshot. Wait for them to arrive with their sticks and knives, and they would dispatch the said trespasser.

Going to the toilet that night was a bit scary, having to walk that dark path, amid strange noises, with a cousin walking ahead carrying a lit hurricane lamp and a burning torch "*choott*", made from a bunch of dried palm leaves tied up together, doused in kerosene, which he waved about to keep it lit, and me close behind expecting to see a cobra rearing up at any moment. The toilet was located outside, a short walking distance from the house, and away in a different direction from where the bath hut stood It also had to be reached by a narrow winding path through shrubs and trees. (My forefathers never dreamt of having a toilet indoors — it was considered to be the most uncivilised, disgusting and unhygienic thing imaginable to *"vellikarangua"* inside one's dwelling, unless one was that old, sick and infirm). The toilet was a revelation. It was within a palm thatched hut, and one had to sit over a very long drop hole. It could get quite smelly, and I gather that the seniors would periodically pour in carbolic acid, and then throw in a spadesful or two of sand. Before I entered the hut, my cousin stepped in, took a quick look at the rafters to check whether there were any unwelcome visitors lurking there. Business done, I made a rapid exit and beat a hasty retreat back to the house.

Today all that has been replaced by modern indoor conveniences, but I still have memories of perching on top of that smelly long drop hole. It was therefore no great surprise, decades later, to come across similar arrangements in the wilds of the national parks of the Outback in Australia.

Bedtime came round. The parents all had their beds but children lay on the floor. My mother took my sister Libby in with her. The cousins all lay on the verandah on thin mattresses laid on floor mats which were brought out in large bundles from the rooms inside the tharavadu. I was given a bundle and shown how to unfurl and use it. I slept soundly on that verandah and woke up to the sound of bird calls and crowing roosters the next morning.

That Saturday afternoon, my other uncles and their families, came down from the hills where they had their homes and properties. That evening, prayer time was magnified about 5-fold. Heads kept nodding off and springing back up again, with a quick furtive look around to see if anyone else had spotted that nod-off. The hymn and "Stuthi" woke everyone up and a very nice supper followed. Everyone stayed overnight, except those living the closest to the tharavadu.

On Sunday, after Morning Mass, the whole clan assembled for breakfast, and then a sumptuous lunch. There was lots of chatter and natter while we the children played. There was a very small white-washed old building adjacent to the tharavadu, so close that it could almost be considered an extension but it wasn't an extension, it was quite separate, and was constructed of cement, and had its own little verandah. It had a nice bedroom given for the use of my parents.

From within there, a senior cousin brought out an old black box. He opened it to reveal an old crank-up style HMV gramophone which my father had brought back in some bygone time. It played the old fashioned breakable shellac records. The surrounding was filled with music. Also from within my father and the cousin brought out the canvas sack of goodies, now somewhat depleted. A good amount of contents had already been off-loaded at Alleppey to the absolute delight of my cousins there. Now he proceeded to dish out the goodies to the cousins here. Everyone got something. My parents had also packed things like colour pencils and erasers and pens, which were received with great satisfaction.

The senior uncle of the House, had a long cane armchair on the verandah, on the side of the house adjacent to the small building. Under the chair he stored some weird paraphernalia. From underneath there he brought out a tin. He went down into the courtyard and plucked off some green leaves which grew on some vine-like plants growing around trees. He then assembled a whole collection of things on a small brass tray. From his tin he drew out a small brass jar and a small sharp paring knife.

He opened the jar, put in a small spoon and brought a white paste that looked like toothpaste. He smeared it onto the leaves like applying butter on bread. From the tin he also took out some dried nuts which I recognised from seeing them previously in Dar es Salaam, - they were called areca nuts. He brought out a pair of nutcrackers, which looked somewhat like electric pliers, and gripping an areca nut in its jaws, he cracked it into small pieces. He then took out a small leather pouch from the tin, and from it withdrew something that looked like dried dead black leaves.

He then proceeded to wrap some broken nut pieces and some of the black stuff and wrapped up the green leaf like a samosa. He made a few more of these and then handed them out to one or two of the other uncles there. They stuffed these green leaf samosas into their mouths and started chewing them. In a little while I saw to my surprise, that they held their fingers to their lips, and then out from their mouths they shot out a jet stream of red saliva on to the gravelled ground. I found this most interestingly disgusting, absolutely fascinating, and utterly enjoyable to watch! My cousins watched my fascination with amusement and told me that this was *"moorukku".*

I recalled then seeing these red stains in Dar es Salaam when we went to certain parts of the town where my father's Gujarati friends lived. So this is what it was…. My Uncle made a few of these green-leaf samosas but without the black leaf stuff (which I later came to know was tobacco, same as in cigarettes). He gave these to me and one or two of my peer-group cousins. I found it had a sharp astringent sort of taste - neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Soon we were busy rivalling ourselves to see who could spit the farthest.

My senior aunt of the house happened to come walking around from the back. She saw all these spittle stains. She had a

long-suffering look of resignation on her face. She went to the front. Now, at one corner of the verandah, on the lower steps there always stood a bucket of fresh water and a mug, and a brass bowl which had a long spout which also contained water. I had noticed that people always washed their feet on a black slab at the foot of those steps, pouring it out from this brass pot on to their feet and cleaning them, before they got up the steps on to the verandah. My mother had made sure that my sister and I had learnt this habit the very first day we were there.

Anyway, the House Peramma now came round carrying the brass pot, which I learnt was called a "*kinddi".* She poured water onto the red spittle stains to wash them away. My mother gave me a quiet ticking off later saying that I should not add to poor Peramma's busy work schedule. I said I thought that that was totally unfair to have a go at me - after all it was the Perappens who had done most of the spitting anyway, so why didn't she go and tell them off instead?! - Result..? - I got my ears nicely pinched and screwed for talking back. You never win with Mums !....

At the back of the house some distance away stood a cowshed. There were housed the senior cow, a large black animal with sharp horns, and her russet brown calf, a delightful little fellow. Also there, was a young heifer, white in colour and a rather mean temper. They were washed and the cow got milked every morning by the cowhand, who took them away, accompanied by some cousins my age, who helped to guide the creatures across to areas where there was grass, making short sharp commands and tongue-clicking noises as they went, pulling on the guide ropes. I soon learned to imitate these sounds and to guide the calf along. He was a high-spirited fellow who just wanted to prance and gambol, and go his own way. They were brought back in the late afternoons to the cowshed.

Sometimes my cousins would go bathing in nearby rivers, and call me along with them. There was always a senior cousin present, and we were not permitted to go on our own. The waters gushed down from somewhere high up in the hills, and was clear and cold as it sloshed and bounded down over large stones, rocks, and smooth pebbles. Here and there where the course slowed down and flattened out a little, we would find good spots to bathe. It was huge fun splashing, cavorting and frolicking in the clear running water. Tiny little fish would congregate here and there between the stones and water plants, but trying to catch them was never easy. On occasions we managed to get a few but would let them slip away. Our senior cousin would keep a sharp lookout and warn us not to enter the deep pools where there were eddies and strong currents. My cousins told me that these rivers were the Karimbakuzhy and the Vattakuzhy. Both were tributaries that ran into the large River Meenachil that flowed through Pala town.

New foods kept appearing from time to time. I was familiar with "*kappa and meen*" at home in Dar es Salaam, but there were quite a few twists in the way tapioca was prepared and served here and with what it was served. Raw jackfruit was another new dish, served with meat and vegetables. Yams of different types, shapes, sizes appeared at the table. Later I

was to learn at secondary school that these were called white yams, purple yams *("kaachal"),* colocassia yams ("*cheymbu*"), elephant's foot yam ("*cheynna*"), and so on. There were also many varieties of beans, gourds, marrows and pumpkins, in addition to the usual pavekka prepared in a variety of ways.

Spending time with my uncles and cousins, I began to recognise the different plants and what they yielded. There were mangoes of course, and several varieties of bananas, and the larger plantains, but also other fruits, some of which I no longer see today in Kerala. I got familiar with the names of different types of trees and how each type of timber was used for specific purposes. I was shown a "*thaal*" plant which looked like a jungle vine. It grew up tree trunks. Growing in the vicinity were trees that yielded fruit that looked like small round jackfruit, but with red seeds inside. These were "*anjhali*" trees. Anjhali timber was prized for building and construction, just like the teak trees. Teak trees could not be felled without permits. The same went for sandalwood trees. The combination of a 'thaal' growing around an 'anjhali' tree had once been at the spot where the tharavadu had been built, and eventually, had contributed to a change in the surname of the family, by combining the words "thaal" and "anjhali".

I had not forgotten the slashes on the rubber trees, and I saw how every day a group of workers would arrive to empty the coconut shells affixed to the trunks. One of them explained that they came very early in the morning and would cut through the bark of the tree with a very sharp knife to make a kind of groove or channel in the tree. From this would begin to ooze a sticky white sap which was latex. They fixed a small piece of metal which acted as a spout or channel through which the sticky white sap flowed into the coconut shells. They came around midday to collect the sap which they emptied into containers that they carried, and then cleaned out the shell and returned it to the tree.

One day a senior cousin took me to a large shed like a godown where he showed me how all the latex that was brought in by the workers was poured into trays and curdled with acid. This solidified the rubber. This was then passed through a kind of machine which wrung it and pressed it into sheets. These sheets were hung out to dry in the godown, and they were then smoked to develop a brown colour. It was all a bit smelly. From here the sheets were bundled and taken off by lorry to Kottayam. Apparently from there they found their way to factories where rubber goods were made.

On some occasions my senior cousins would venture deeper into the forest, and on occasions they would carry guns. I asked them why, and they would say that there were wild pigs about which could be dangerous. The thought of encountering a fierce wild boar fed my imagination, and I asked about other wild beasts. My cousins said that many years ago, in the time of our grandfather and great grand father, there used to be tigers ("*kaddua*"), leopards ("*pooli*") wild deer ("*maahn*"), and wild buffalo ("*kaahtu potthu*"). However, all these had now disappeared, or been shot.

***[Decades later, today, as an adult, when arguments rage about the clearing of the Amazon Forest, and the invasion of the Serengeti by tribal pastoral nomads, with the devastating impact on ecosystems, I reflect on what had happened in the eastern foothills of the Ghats, here in Central Travancore. The deforestation and the extinction of wildlife in these

areas was done by people including my forefathers, and their peers and contemporaries, done by them in good faith, in order to ensure the survival of their own future human generations].

True to his word my senior cousin, the Trichy graduate who was to be my tutor pro tem, made his appearance on the 2nd day after arrival, and arrangements were made for me to have tuition classes based on what my class teacher, Aunty Noronha, had laid down. These classes went through a large part of the morning, while my other cousins, my contemporaries in age, went off to the local primary school. While doing grammar or doing arithmetic exercises, it was difficult not to get distracted by the fascinating variety of birds that flittered through the trees, of different shapes and colours and song calls. All that I had seen in Dar were raucous crows, sleek house martins and swifts, and chirpy house sparrows.

It was 5 months of sheer pleasure, so many new things to see and discover, so many different games, unlike the ones in Dar es Salaam, and so many different ways in which food was served. Those 5 idyllic months passed by so swiftly. Soon they came to a close.

Our return trip was dull, with our parents feeling very morose, - my mother tearful – about leaving all the loved ones behind, and they in turn, back in Plassanal and Alleppey, equally morose and tearful. My sister and I sat up with interest when the train passed Ottapalam, because our father told us that that was where Vasu and Lillu had their grandparental home, it was Uncle Nayar's place. That was nice, because this immediately connected us back with Dar, and our friends in Dar, and we perked up quickly.

In Bombay, after embarkation, I found to my delight a Malayali family with 3 boys whom I had vaguely known in Dar.

These were Uncle & Aunty MK Daniel (Mattackel family from Kumbanad), Koshy, Thomas, and Benjamin (Raju, Sam and Benji). Uncle, as an asthmatic, had been a frequent patient at my Uncle's clinic-dispensary. Little was I to know that within about another couple of years or so, the 2 older boys were to become my very thick chums – I wrote off Benji straightaway – he was my sister's age and they got on fine – but of absolutely no interest to me. (I probably had some sort of inbuilt prejudiced 'ageism', of an inverted sort, - meaning towards those younger than me….).

The ocean was rougher this time round, but we still had a jolly good time on board. One night there was a movie we had seen in Dar the year before. Mum, Aunty Marykutty, and other Aunties used to talk about Nargis. The song went – "*Mera joota hai japani, yeh patloon englistani*, ….something, something, …*hai hindustani*" – a lovely carefree song. Another familiar one was "*Naboley naboley, naboley rey*", and then "*Applaam, chapalam*", and many others. (Today, in this age of You Tube, of course we can track down what movie it was, what song it was and so I can listen to my heart's content). Dad had previously bought a Garrards automatic record changer on which he used to play his and Mum's favourite Hindi

film songs. It came housed in a sky-blue cabinet box, and could stack up to 10 records, one on top of each other. The arm would swing out to remove the played record and replace it with another one.

The journey back was straight to Mombasa, and no stop in Seychelles, - and no more *coco de mer*.

When we arrived at Dar es Salaam, we could see that on the far side of the harbour there was a lot of work going on. It had actually been going on even when we had left, it's just that I noticed it only now. My mother explained that new docks were being built, like the ones in Mombasa, but not quite as many as in Mombasa. This meant that in future we could embark on ships via gangways as in Bombay and Mombasa, rather than on the dangling contraption on the side of the ship. The Queen's sister, Princess Margaret would be coming soon to visit Tanganyika, and that is where her ship would dock.

Back to school. Aunty Noronha now had a lazy boy on her hands. She kindly agreed to my parents' request to give me after-hours tuition in order for me to catch up with the rest of the class. To her credit, she lifted me up from my usual desultory bottom third place to somewhere up within the top 5 or 6. Kind, good-hearted Aunty Noronha, who knew well how to handle unruly boys and lazy boys.

Soon the school was agog with excitement. Princess Margaret was arriving. We had to go through practice walks to the Azania Front where each class had an allocated place by the roadside. We were told to be very neatly dressed, shoes well-polished, and we would all carry little Union Jacks which we should all wave and cry out "Hooray!" as the Princess went past. The town was once again decorated with Union Jack banners and lit at night.

The Princess arrived on the royal yacht Britannia. It moored at the new docks. I think she spent the 1st night on board. Anyway, whatever it was, when she disembarked, one of the first official things she did was to formally open the new "Princess Margaret Quay". The teachers had taken particular care to teach us that it is pronounced like the word "key", and no way should we pronounce it "Kway". (We are all aware of the absurdities of pronunciation in the English language).

We were crocodile-marched to the Azania Front. Soon, there was a hush, and then a fleet of policemen on motorcycles swished by, then came a procession of the King's African Rifles soldiers, and their military band. Then, important looking cars started going past. Anand and I used to be very keen on knowing all about the different models and makes of cars, Prakash and Joe much less so. Then came a big open top limousine in which stood this elegant smiling woman wearing a hat, by her side was Governor Twining in full uniform and regalia. She stood upright, wearing elbow-length white gloves, holding a bouquet of flowers in her left hand, the other held stiffly aloft. I learnt that royalty do not wave, they hold their right arm stiff in a sort of salute as they go by. We all started clapping and waving our flags and cheering "Hooray!!" as her car went by. And that was that. We waited as the remaining vehicles passed, Rolls Royces, Bentleys, and others.

Anand showed me a car which he said was an Armstrong Siddeley. In it sat the Chief Justice, robed in red, and bewigged, accompanied by his wife. The whole motorcade was going to Government House. In the subsequent days, the Tanganyika Standard had more or less nothing else to report than the royal visit.

There were banquets on board the Britannia, there were banquets and garden parties at Government House. I think Uncle Kunjunny Nayar was the only Malayali invited to attend. I think it left my Uncle Dr Joseph a little peeved that he had been overlooked. Well yes, said Aunty, but he was no longer the only Indian doctor in Dar, or Tanganyika, anymore. It didn't matter that he had been trained in Britain and had been in the British Colonial Medical Service starting all those ages ago, there just were so many more Indian doctors around now. Her saying that peeved him still more.

All the Aunties were busy looking at their Women's Own magazines, and such like, where all this news was coming through. There used to be a large magazine called Illustrated London News which Uncle used to receive, and it carried a lot of royal news. My mother and the Aunties used to speak mysteriously about someone named Captain Townsend associating it with the Princess' name. The princess opened up a new hospital, named after her, Princess Margaret Hospital. I learnt after I left Tanganyika, that the name was changed to Muhimbili Hospital. This was a modern hospital unlike the old and half-dilapidated Sewa Haji Hospital, and unlike the European Hospital (which got renamed after Independence as Ocean Road Hospital). She left for upcountry to Arusha, and from there to Kenya. In later years, after I came to Britain, I learnt what an unhappy life she had led, in spite of all this external show of pomp and glitter.

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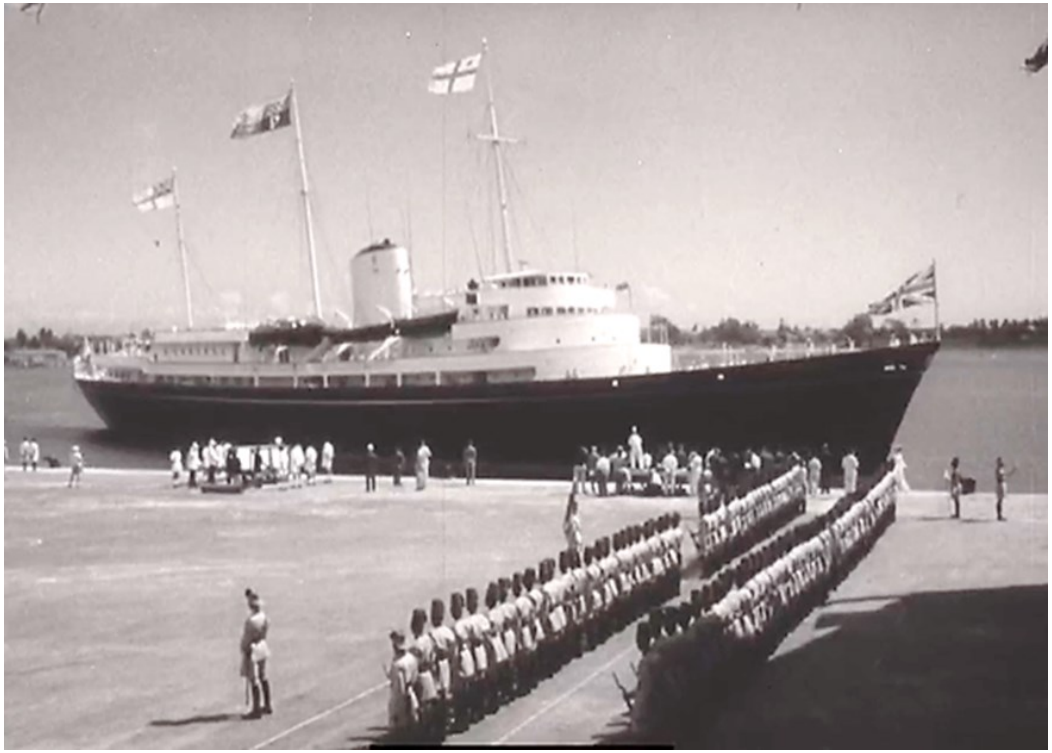
ABOVE: The SS Amra as I remember her in 1956.

Picture Courtesy of Ships Nostalgia.

RIGHT: 1956 was the centenary year for BISN Lines (British India Steam Navigation). All families travelling on their ships were given memorabilia as keepsakes. One of them was a glass paperweight which used to be on my father's desk, and is now on mine. It shows the Amra in her previous black and white livery in 1955. In 1940 she was temporarily commissioned to become a hospital ship during the 2nd World War. She was fitted out for that purpose in Bombay, and wore a white livery with large red crosses painted mid-ship.



The Royal Visit, Dar es Salaam 1956.

ABOVE: The Royal Yacht Britannia arrives at the new quayside in Dar es Salaam harbour, which was officially opened within the hour by Princess Margaret, and named after her as the Princess Margaret Quay. The name changed after Tanganyikan independence

RIGHT: The Princess is escorted to inspect the Guard of Honour

Pictures Courtesy of Pathé News

ABOVE: A 1955 Rolls Royce Convertible

Picture from: supercars.net

RIGHT: A 1953 Armstrong Siddeley

Picture from: Armstrong Siddeley Heritage Trust

The Muhimbili Hospital, Dar es Salaam

Picture Courtesy: Muhimbili National Hospital

1957 — STANDARD 6 …. &……MEDICAL MATTERS……

1957 started off well. Uncle Kilosa and Aunty had returned so Betty and Benny were back. Betty had brought with her a repertoire of Hindi songs that she had learnt on the ship. She went prancing round the house singing "*Chuppi chuppi*, … something…something……*samanani yah heh*…"

We had moved to Standard 6. It was a class near to where the boarding section of the school was. Miss Philomena D'Souza was our class teacher. Miss D'Souza was the elder sister of Peter D'Souza, lead boy in our class, always 1st in class, term after term, year after year. He was now followed hot on his heels by Prakash Raghavan. Aunty Noronha's good teaching still remained somewhere in the recesses and crevices of my brain - because I was no longer in the bottom third, but somewhere within the top 5 or 6. I remember Anand used to excel in arithmetic. He also excelled in acrobatics. At recess time he used to climb on to horizontal poles, hang himself upside down by his knees, and then, arms gripping the bar, he would spin round the pole like a wheel using the back of his knees, much to the amazement and amusement of the rest of us. There was another amusement too. It requires a bit of a lengthy explanation.

Earlier on at some stage during 1955 - 1956, during school holidays, Uncle Kunjettan, (Dr Joseph), would come by sometimes and pick me up for a drive as he went around work. He was a part-time Government doctor, part-time private GP. I had seen him at the harbour as a Port Health Officer. I found out that he was also a Schools Medical Officer. I remember being taken twice or thrice to local African schools. I used to watch him as he walked in, dressed in regulation whites, with his stethoscope and leather bag carrying a whole array of exciting and dangerous looking things. The teachers would come and greet *'Bwana Mwaganga'* and take him with great aplomb to a vacated classroom. There he would examine children who had been rounded up by the teachers who they felt needed special attention.

On one occasion, a European nurse had arrived there too. Uncle and the nurse started unpacking boxes and bags. The whole paraphernalia that they assembled was quite extraordinary and thrilling. There were loads of covered gleaming metallic trays containing glass syringes, others containing sharp needles of different sizes. A whole row of small lamps was assembled - from which burnt beautiful blue flames emitting a strange odour. (Spirit lamps as I learnt later). The trays were filled with water from a huge bottle, which said 'Distilled Water' on it, and then set over the burning lamps. Soon they were boiling, and the nurse took them off the fire. Then, with a contraption that looked like scissors but could hold things, (forceps as I came to know later), she took out the syringes laying them on a green cloth. She asked me to stand well back from that table. The nurse brought out a box of ice cubes in which were packages. As each was opened, a small bottle containing powdered medicine was taken out. It had a little red rubber stopper. Uncle fitted a needle on to the syringe, inserted it through the stopper, injected distilled water, and the medicine powder in the little

vial was shaken to dissolve the medicine to make up a solution (re-constituting freeze dried vaccine, as I came to understand many years later).

The children were lined up, and brought to them one by one, and each was given an injection. Some yelped, others grimaced and contorted their faces and looked away but took it gamely, some had to be brought forward screaming, dragged forcefully by teachers and attendants, while other attendants kept a lookout to see that none of the children in the queue ran away. Goodness knows what it was all about, but looking at it, through the eyes of today, it was a School Immunisation Day.

After the show was over, we went back to Uncle's clinic-dispensary. Now that was a place I had often seen before, visiting there with occasional ailments, or, more often when we were doing a family visit (he and Aunty and the family lived in the flat upstairs. They had an "*mpishi*" – a cook, as well as a houseboy). The dispensary section had rows and rows of shelves on it, carrying huge bottles, small bottles, glass jars of various sizes, all containing different coloured liquids, powders, or salts. I had often seen Uncle take stuff out of a jar of one powder or another, then some from the jars of salts, weigh them on a brass balance, mix them in a white porcelain mortar, and then he would grind them all up together. They would be dispensed in little paper packets. He would advise people to take these with a little honey, or sometimes mixed with milk. At other times he would take cone-shaped measuring glasses which had a spout or lip through which liquids could be poured. He would take measures of the different liquids and mix them up together and then dispense the mixture in bottles, with labels stuck on the bottles to show the correct dose to take. It was entrancing to watch – like watching a magician or wizard concocting potions to cast spells. There was a brown mixture that he used to label "Mist. Ipecac" – it was meant to alleviate coughs and loosen the phlegm. It was a nasty tasting thing. One of the more pleasant concoctions was a pinkish liquid that he called "Mist. Carminitiva". This was to help with digestive complaints. There was the vile white stuff called Philips Milk of Magnesia, meant to be used as an "opening dose", and children used to be given it to clean their "insides". I hated the revolting stuff, served out in a large tablespoon at bedtime, and I hated the unpleasant bowel actions that followed the next day. (Vomiting it out was no option, you just got given another spoonful).

Anyway, on this particular day, I noticed that he was discarding some of the glass syringes into a special bin. I asked him why he was throwing them away, and he explained that the pistons had become loose because the rubber ring had worn out, and so he couldn't measure the medicines properly and give the injections correctly. Very innocently I asked him if I could have a few. I said that I would like to use them just to see how they worked. He saw no harm but said that I should be careful as they were made of glass and could break easily and cut me. He gave me a small box in which I could keep them safely, each separated from the other by paper folds so that they wouldn't rattle and crack. A further "innocent"

request for discarded needles was summarily dismissed. I went upstairs to his flat, carefully guarding my treasure. Aunty wanted to know what I was carrying. I showed her. Her face furrowed up with frowns. When my parents came later with Betty and Libby to pay a visit, and to collect me, she mentioned it to them. Uncle finished his work and came upstairs. Aunty had a go at him. This was not the sort of thing that children should be given to play – what was he thinking about, etc., etc. My mother looked a little uncomfortable, but Uncle had his way, and we walked home, me carrying my prize.

Within 2 days, the syringes were in my schoolbag and taken to school. I showed my treasure to Anand, Prakash, Peter, Joe D'Silva, Jopen, and other boys. All were mighty impressed. All wanted to have a try, filling it with water and pretending to give injections to each other. Soon that became boring. We found something more interesting to do. During school recess time, the girls used to play near our classroom. They used to play a game called "L-O-N-D-O-N, London!!" And they came close up to the classroom wall. Hiding behind the low walls we peeped out at them, and then using our water-filled syringes, we squirted water at the ones who came near. They didn't spot us and ran off squealing and wondering how they had got wet. This got a little out of hand, and when Betty came up running to the wall, I gave her a full blast from 2 loaded syringes. Betty, being Betty, was always very particular about her dress and appearance. The water had soaked her hair and her uniform. She complained to her class teacher about her cousin-brother Sunny and his friends. Her teacher spoke to Miss D'Souza. Miss D'Souza gave me a lecture, and then a note to be signed by my father, and to be returned to her the next day. Our small gang was given imposition of 100 lines "I will not behave badly at recess time".

At home, dear old Betty, made a sing-song about the whole thing, and I got a severe telling-off from my mother. The difficulty now was how to get that wretched note signed for the next day. After supper, I approached my Dad, and blurted out that Miss wanted his signature. For what? Well, it's there in the note. He took it, read it, glared at me, and I had a telling-off. But the coup-de-grace was delivered by my mother when she realised that (1) not only had I done mischief and incited others to mischief, but (2) that I had tried to hide the fact of the note from her. That was it. The syringes were confiscated for good. (Years later my father revealed how amused he had felt, but had to pretend otherwise).

When the syringes were returned to me some months later, I had moved on to other interests, and I had no further interest in them. I never knew what eventually happened to them…..probably ended up in the weekly '*Taka Taka'* lorry.

Somewhere during those months, we managed to come home with measles. I don't remember who caught it first, but all 4 of us had it, Betty Benny, Libby and myself. Mum had her hands full with 4 sick children at home, more or less one after the other.

Uncle Kilosa & Aunty had by now a new baby boy – Tommy (Thomas Sebastian Thalanany). He was baptised at Kilosa,

and so we missed his baptism. We saw him when they came to Dar es Salaam . He looked a lovely little boy but was really unwell. He had a bad cough and fever, but it had not improved after treatment in Kilosa. He had been brought to be seen by Uncle Kunjettan. My mother and Aunty took it in turns to carry this poor sick baby. Uncle Kunjettan felt certain what was wrong, but he called upon the child specialist from European Hospital to take a look at him too. It was whooping cough. The baby was treated, and Uncle Kilosa & Aunty hurriedly returned to Kilosa, not wanting us, the 4 children here in Dar, to catch it. Too late. The damage had been done. The 4 of us just recovering from measles now had this to contend with. The sounds of each other coughing filled the house, - and every now and again that WHOOP! Uncle ordered some medicine for us. He brought it himself. It came in small jars, with golden tops. It was a brand-new medicine and he said that it was better than penicillin injections. The medicine came as chocolate granules, which we had to dissolve in a little milk. All 4 of us had to take it for a certain number of days. The Medicine was called AUREOMYCIN, and it was made in America by a company called LEDERLE. I can still see the golden-yellow-topped round jar and label in my mind. We were gleeful. Chocolate granules in milk were quite nice to have compared to all the other revolting stuff that we had had to swallow so far. Actually, it tasted far less than nice, with a disgusting aftertaste. Many years later, as a medical student in Bangalore, I realised that this brand-new medicine of 1957 was nothing other than tetracycline – easily available by then in all countries across the world, and as cheap as chips.

My mother was getting quite worn out now. Because of the infectious nature of all these diseases, Uncle had asked our family friends to stay away, so that their children would not get these illnesses.

Now she started coughing, but didn't pay much attention to it, and just carried on running the house, and caring for the 4 of us.

It never rains but it pours.

Along came that worldwide pandemic – the 1957 Asian Flu pandemic. It had reached Dar es Salaam. One after the other we came down with it. And then, my mother came down with it too. My father was run off his wit's end, rushing in from office earlier than usual. Yusuf, our houseboy, was a real champion. He realised what was happening. Every morning he would come to my mother's bedside and ask '*Memsaab'* what she wanted done on that day. She would give him the orders and he just got on with it. Superb chap. I'll always remember him, not just for that but also for sticking on with us through the years that lay ahead, ever loyal and faithful.

We started getting better, but things started getting worse for my mother. Her fever didn't come down, and she kept coughing. Then she started with wheezing with her asthma.

The situation changed rapidly. Uncle started coming in more frequently, paying 2 or 3 visits every day. My mother could simply not care for any children by this stage. He rang Uncle Kilosa and asked for Betty and Benny to be taken home. This shattered all 4 of us children. Betty and Benny went back to Kilosa. When the new school term commenced, they became boarders at St Joseph's School. It was never the same again, 4 of us growing up together. My father took days off in between using his local leave. Things got even worse with my mother's coughing and asthma.

She was given many different sorts of tablets. I remember looking at the bottles. There was one labelled '*Tedral'.* She had to take that 3 times a day. There was another called '*Franol'*. She took that at night. There were cough mixtures. My father mixed honey, and ginger, and black pepper in hot water, and gave her that to drink every now and again. Uncle used to give her an injection through her veins. It was in a huge syringe, and he took a long time to give it. He called it AMINOPHYLLINE.

She just got worse and worse. Uncle was getting worried now. He told my father that he had been speaking to his colleague doctors, and one by one they came and visited together with him. Sometimes some new medicine would be suggested. Nothing changed her state.

Then things got even worse. Aunty Pereira from upstairs was now sending us food every day and Aunty Thankamma, was bringing stuff from her place too. Malayali Aunties were dropping in, bringing food, but were not allowed to stay long. By now my mother was too weak to even stand up. Uncle arranged for a bedside commode and other sorts of "toilety" things which I had seen my grandmother use in India.

Uncle arranged a European Hospital nurse to come in. He put up a metal stand from which he and the nurse hung up a glass bottle containing medicine. They connected the bottle by means of red rubber tubes to a needle which was put into the veins in her arm. The medicine dripped through, drop by drop, and the nurse kept careful watch over my mother. My sister, much smaller than me, and I, watched all this feeling a little frightened because our mother could hardly speak to us with her laboured breathing. We had not seen anything like this before. A big metal cylinder was brought in, and by a rubber tube it was connected to a mask which was put on my mother's face. My father said it was oxygen, a gas that would help my mother to breathe better. Meanwhile she kept on coughing and coughing.

Uncle said to my father that he suspected this was the same whooping cough that we had already had, but it was quite unusual to occur in an adult. He had been talking to his doctor friends. They did not agree with him. He wrote to his old teachers in London.

Next day towards noon, my father dropped in hurriedly, snatching a few minutes from work to see how my mother was.

The nurse looked worried. My mother was breathing but rather weakly, and she looked a different greyish colour. She was propped up on several pillows but kept slipping downwards. My father dashed off to get Uncle. Uncle came, took a look, felt her pulse again and again, took her blood pressure with that odd looking instrument in which mercury jumped up and down. He gave her an injection of a medicine called ADRENALINE.

That afternoon, a whole team of doctors arrived, led by my Uncle. There was the famous Dr Coles from European Hospital, accompanied by another doctor from the hospital, named Dr Meredith. I had heard their names before but never seen them. There were also Dr MS Patel, Dr Koya, Dr Pais, Dr DN Patel, Dr Lawrence. All these other doctors had already been coming and going intermittently, and my sister and I were accustomed to their faces. Dr Coles and Dr Meredith were new. They spent a long time conferring. At last, they came to some decision. Dr Coles went back to the hospital and returned with a box of injection vials. The 1st injection was given. Another vial of that same medicine was added into another glass bottle on a stand connected to my mother's arms. It was called CORTISONE.

Some hours later the 2nd injection was given. The nurse went home. That evening Uncle stayed back with us, and my father took Aunty home. He saw my mother looking feebly at my sister and myself. He asked us to kneel, and, looking at a framed picture of Christ and His Mother hanging by the bedside, he asked us to pray with him to make our mother better. My father went upstairs to Uncle Pereira's house. The whole family of the 4 boys and parents came down, and there was nothing but the sound prayers, all of us together, for what seemed like hours and hours together, until my sister fell asleep. Aunty put her to bed, sent her 4 boys off upstairs, and gave me something to eat, and asked me to go to bed. As I went, I could see my father and Uncle still on their knees praying together.

Next morning my mother looked a little better. That awful colour on her face had gone, and she was sitting up and breathing better. Uncle stopped the Aminophylline and took down the bottle. Later that day he came back with a telegram. His old teachers in London had replied. They agreed with Uncle. Mum had had Whooping cough on top of everything else. She too was given the chocolate granules in milk.

Over subsequent days and weeks she gradually improved. The doctors were unanimous in their firm opinion that we would have to leave town. The dust and clamour of Ring Street were just not right for my mother.

As the year end approached, I was completing Standard 6. I realised from my parents that they had decided to move me from St Joseph's School to Azania Secondary. They felt it was the right place for me to go to, there were lots of Malayali Uncles there who were excellent teachers. I was not so sure that I wanted to go. Both Sr Jacinta and Sr Salvina were very sorry when they heard, but they were quite understanding and gave all the necessary transfer papers. I didn't like

AT ALL the idea of losing my friends; I was EVEN LESS interested in being under the ever-watchful gaze of a horde of Malayali Uncle teachers - family friends well-known to my father and mother. My personal opinions about all this were not asked for and were of no account even when I delivered them loudly and clearly. The one big consolation was that Jopen and Anand were also moving with me to this new school stuffed full of ominously-watchful Malayali Uncles and strange teachers, and even stranger boys.

My father had a problem as to where to move to, but with help from our landlord, Mr Sadikot, the Bohora Association released a small guest house that they had at the very outskirts of Changombe. That was where the old airport used to be. It was a small bungalow. Although it looked like one of the red-tiled cream-washed Government Quarters bungalows in Changombe, it was actually smaller, but it had a big garden space at the front and back.

Many years later, as a medical student, when I visited my Uncle in Pala, I asked him to recount all that had happened during those fateful days in 1957, to match it with what I remembered of that time. Delving into one of the drawers of his desk, he brought out a faded old copy of "The Lancet", the prestigious medical journal, known all across the world. It was from October 1956. In it were the first published clinical trial results of cortisone acetate administered for asthma. My mother had fallen into a near fatal state called Status Asthmaticus, and cortisone had been found effective for this in the UK trial – just some months before. It was a hospital medicine available only under Dr Coles, who was the Chief Physician at the European Hospital. Uncle also brought out a faded telegram. It had come from his teachers in reply to his seeking their help. In it were the words "Status Asthmaticus, Rx cortisone. Pertussis, Rx tetracycline. Hutchison." There was also a detailed letter from them which spelt out things in more detail. Whooping cough could occur in adults too, and antibiotics would help to clear the infection. My mother had indeed suffered from whooping cough and almost simultaneously from the Asian flu. In the cold light of medical knowledge today, we now know that viral infections can predispose underlying asthma to emerge, and that whooping cough also exacerbates asthma.

Uncle's teachers had been none other than the great Sir Robert Hutchison and Dr Donald Hunter. Sir Robert had been his Senior Lecturer at the Royal London, and Dr Hunter had been his assigned personal tutor.

All doctors of my generation will know that, right across the entire Commonwealth, 'Hutchison & Hunter' used to be the classic textbook that we all used when we entered our clinical training, usually around the 3rd year of medical studies. It lays down in clear and concise language, how to go about taking a detailed clinical history and then examining a patient. It was just the right size to carry about, and just about fit into the white coat pockets. It contained a lot of other good clinical information so that medical students would not appear to be buffoons in front of the poor patients.

Today cortisone has been refined and modified and the steroids that are used today are a far cry from what my mother first received in 1957. Although the treatment for asthma has been refined over the subsequent decades, it still remains an enigmatic condition. I know because I suffered asthma as a boy. I learnt over subsequent years that it tends to disappear in adolescence. For some people it stays away like that, but for others there is a resurgence in later adulthood. I understood why I was perpetually having an itchy eczematous skin as a boy, perpetually infected by my constant scratching. I understood the itchy eyes and sneezing that used to affect my mother and I when we went to Kilosa, and when we went to her maternal home in Kuttanad – because of the pollen from the sisal, and dust and pollen from the paddy fields at "*koith*" time. All these were just different manifestations of the parts of the disease spectrum that contains asthma.

"*Tedral*" and "*Franol*" were nothing more than combination medicines containing ephedrine and theophylline, substances that allow easier breathing in asthma. *Franol* was given at night because it contained barbiturates – which were supposed to help the patient to sleep. Aminophylline is still in use today.

Meanwhile antibiotics have proliferated and have been misused. I have had the difficult experience of sitting with medical colleagues, here as well as in Europe, and being berated as a professional body, and taken to task by microbiologists and virologists for the indiscriminate use and over-prescribing of antimicrobials that goes on in the medical profession. They point out at the rapidly increasing problem of anti-microbial resistance that is escalating worldwide. Drug and pharmaceuticals companies, they remind us, are less interested today in researching and discovering newer antibiotics, as there is far more money to be gained in the cancer and chronic disease fields. We have always argued back that the veterinary industry and the farming industry are even more indiscriminate and injudicious in the use of antibiotics in poultry and livestock breeding, and that that's where they should be aiming their fire and anger.

Nevertheless, we do admit, they indeed have a serious point. AMR – Antimicrobial Resistance - is now one of the major threats that face human survival, alongside climate change, the reckless desecration and pollution of our oceans, the looming spectre of global drinking water shortages, and a whole host of other things that we are now threatened with.

In this 21st century pandemic era it is something that I reflect on.

How we 4 children survived can only be attributed to the care and attention that we received in a middle-class educated Indian family. There were no vaccines or inoculations against whooping cough or measles in those days. Nor was there any vaccine against influenza.

We know that, today, the childhood immunisation schedules across the world contain vaccines against whooping cough and measles, amongst other things – these were big killers of children in those days. How many millions have perished is never recorded. The success of worldwide immunisation led to the eradication of smallpox – a terrible disease – we no longer see survivors with their deep pock-marked scarred faces. The small pox vaccination, which was so routine in our infancy, is no longer used anywhere with the disappearance of small pox. The success of worldwide immunisation has seen a dramatic plunge in the deaths recorded from tetanus, and polio, and the horrendous deformities caused in infants due to rubella infection in their mothers. We no longer see the deaths and cardiac and neural damage inflicted by diphtheria in the way we used to see in the 60s, even though penicillin and other antibiotics had already arrived by then.

It saddens me, therefore, to observe the plethora of misinformation about vaccinations and immunisation that traverses the globe today, in a matter of milliseconds through social media, sowing distrust and discord amid the medical efforts to stamp out and pull up infectious diseases by their very roots. It seems to be done by a group of people with vested interests, whose interests, I feel, do not really coincide with those of the common man. I always wish that, if it were physically possible, such people should be taken back by time capsule to accompany me and my St John's classmates to the time when we were posted for a period of 3 weeks in our 4th year of training at the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Bangalore. It might open their eyes a little to see the terrible, terrible, agonising way in which people can die from the ravages of some infectious diseases….. Small pox, tetanus, rabies….

1957 was a dismal year – it is indelibly imprinted on my memory as the Year of Sickness and Misery. It changed me. I quietened down. Also, I now knew exactly what I was going to be – I no longer wanted to be an aeroplane pilot or a sea captain - instead, like my Uncle, I was going to become a doctor.

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MATERIA MEDICA FROM A BYGONE ERA

LEFT: A bottle of Isufranol (Franol) tablets

CENTRE: A bottle of Tedral tablets

RIGHT: A small case containing glass ampoules of adrenalin for injection.

Pictures from the WorthPoint Collection

The 1st report of the clinical trial that tested the clinical effectiveness of using cortisone acetate in status asthmaticus, published in The Lancet, October 1956.

Reference: Controlled Trial of Effects of Cortisone Acetate in Status Asthmaticus: Report to The Medical Research Council by The Subcommittee on Clinical Trials in Asthma. The Lancet 1956; 268:803-806.

not receiving it, and 7 of these were reported to be well. At one of the hospitals there was a tendency to avoid the further use of cortisone, whereas, by contrast, at four others the tendency was to continue it. The reasons for these tendencies were not clear. Information was available about 27 patients who had received the placebo in the trial. Treatment without cortisone was continued in 10 patients, of whom 6 were reported to be well. Seventeen received cortisone or corticotrophin after the end of the trial, and 6 of these were reported to be well. The proportion of patients whose asthma was controlled is strikingly similar in the various groups, but some patients who had not received cortisone in the trial appeared to benefit later from the administration of either cortisone or corticotrophin.

The side-effects of cortisone during this trial were not particularly troublesome and, with one or two doubtful exceptions, did not necessitate interruption of treatment. The psychoneurosis which developed in one patient and the duodenal ulcer in another after 2 weeks' treatment may have been caused in part by cortisone, but may have been of old standing and exacerbated by it. It is possible that in the patient in whom tuberculosis of the kidney was discovered after 20 weeks' treatment the progress of this condition may have been accelerated.

The patient dying in status asthmaticus after the withdrawal of cortisone might be cited as a warning about possible dangers of this procedure. The unequivocal side-effects are, of course, those usually associated with cortisone, headed by significant weight gain in 50% and œdema in 20%. There seemed to be no evidence that the onset of œdema was associated with any important degree of cardiac failure. A much smaller, but noticeable, proportion of patients receiving the placebo were recorded as having gained weight and developed œdema. The remaining side-effects of cortisone were mild. A few patients developed hypertension of mild degree and insufficient to be a practical problem. None of the cortisone-treated patients had to be withdrawn from the trial on account of side-effects, but this may be due to careful selection of the patients admitted to exclude those with cardiac failure and other contra-indications.

Conclusion

The general conclusion to be drawn from the trial is that the patients receiving cortisone were subjectively and objectively improved during the first 2 months of treatment to a greater extent than those receiving the placebo, both groups simultaneously receiving antispasmodics. The early improvement with cortisone treatment was hardly sufficient to make a significant contribution to improved capacity for work, and cannot by any standard be regarded as dramatic or as great as that shown in patients with status asthmaticus (see Medical Research Council 1956). This early improvement was not maintained, and by the end of the trial the cortisone-treated group showed no significant advantage over the control group.

Summary

The effect of cortisone-acetate tablets was compared with that of placebo tablets in outpatients with chronic asthma, simultaneously receiving routine antispasmodic treatment.

96 patients were studied: 49 in the cortisone group and 47 in the control group. Treatment continued for 6 months.

Particularly as regards diminution of rhonchi and exercise tolerance, there was a partial, but significant, advantage to the cortisone-treated group during the first 8 weeks. From then to the end of the 6 months and during 3 months' follow-up this advantage gradually disappeared.

Difficulty was encountered in withdrawing both cortisone and placebo tablets in the follow-up period.

In the selected patients studied side-effects of cortisone in the doses used were not severe enough to cause practical difficulties.

We wish to thank the physicians who referred cases for inclusion in the trial, and Messrs. Roussel Laboratories Limited, who very generously provided the large number of placebo tablets.

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CONTROLLED TRIAL OF EFFECTS OF CORTISONE ACETATE IN STATUS ASTHMATICUS

REPORT TO THE MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLINICAL TRIALS IN ASTHMA*

SINCE the early reports of the use of cortisone in asthma (e.g., Carryer et al. 1950) there has been a good deal of agreement about its value in the treatment of patients in status asthmaticus. Recent papers (Ball 1954, Pearson 1955) have reported satisfactory results from the treatment of small groups of patients suffering from this condition. It is known, however, that the treatment of status asthmaticus with antispasmodic drugs is successful in a high proportion of patients; and it seemed advisable to compare, with proper precautions, the effectiveness of cortisone with that of antispasmodic drugs. Cortisone was selected for the trial because it was known to be likely to become freely available and also because of the ease of its effective administration by mouth compared with corticotrophin, which must be given by intramuscular injection. Thirteen centres participated in the trial.†

Material and Methods

Type of Patient

It was agreed that the patients in status asthmaticus to be included in the trial must (*a*) be more than 14 years of age; (*b*) have had at least one previous severe attack of asthma; and (*c*) not have received any previous cortisone therapy. All patients admitted to hospital who met these requirements received "standard" treatment during the first 24 hours. The "standard" treatment received was determined by the normal practice of the clinician in charge of the patient, and might include (*a*) adrenaline 1 in 1000 solution subcutaneously, (*b*) aminophylline intravenously, (*c*) isoprenaline 1% inhaled,

* The members of the subcommittee are given on p. 798.

† Centres taking part in the trial: Chase Farm Hospital (Dr. T. Simpson); Crumpsall Hospital, Manchester (Dr. R. W. Luxton); Guy's Hospital, London (Dr. R. Kauntze, Dr. J. R. Trounce); King's College Hospital, London (Dr. R. S. B. Pearson, Dr. F. I. Rackow); Manchester Royal Infirmary (Dr. W. Brockbank, Dr. R. S. Savidge, Dr. Hugh Brebner); Northern General Hospital, Edinburgh (Dr. I. W. B. Grant, Dr. A. R. Somner); Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham (Prof. W. M. Arnott, Dr. John Butler); Royal Hospital, Sheffield (Prof. C. H. Stuart-Harris); St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London (Dr. N. Oswald); St. David's Hospital, Cardiff (Dr. D. A. Williams); St. Thomas's Hospital, London (Dr. H. J. Anderson, Dr. D. S. Cadman); University College Hospital, London (Dr. H. Nicholson, Mrs. M. E. Turner-Warwick); Wright-Fleming Institute, St. Mary's Hospital, London (Dr. A. W. Frankland). The subcommittee is indebted to Dr. J. T. Boyd, of the Medical Research Council's Statistical Research Unit, for his analysis of data in the trial.

ABOVE: The kind of doctor's bag that my Uncle used to carry with him when he was out on house calls. Made of leather and sturdily constructed on a metal frame, it contained various medical instruments, including a spirit lamp. Shelved neatly on the sides, were rows of syringes, needles of varying sizes, and glass ampoules of medicines for injection.

Picture from the WorthPoint Collection.

1958 — NEW HOME, NEW SCHOOL…….

In 1958 I moved to Azania Secondary School. In those days it was a school that the Government had built specifically for the needs of Indian boys, and it was called Government Indian Secondary School. It had built up a reputation for good teaching, particularly in science and mathematics, and in sports and athletics. It had massive playing fields, at least that is what it seemed to me after the confines of St Joseph's. The uniform was the same as St Joseph's, white shirt and khaki shorts. The name changed later on to Azania Secondary School, just before or around the time of Tanganyikan Independence in December 1961, to reflect a departure from ethnic categorisation and segregation, and a more integrated society.

My Mum, (bless her soul), to her everlasting DIScredit in my eyes, had already been far-sighted enough in matters of school uniform. When we had gone to India in 1956, at her '*tharavadu'* in Alleppey she had summoned the services of Anthappan (Mr Anthony probably), the family tailor. I was kitted out with several pairs of khaki shorts, deliberately stitched a little loose with small straps and buttons at the waist to tighten and loosen the waist. They were stitched so long that they flopped below my knees. The great strategy and plan that she had in mind was 2-fold. One, I would have enough uniforms to last me all my way through school. Two, it would save us the annual trip to the tailor in Dar es Salaam, and the expense of getting uniforms every year. I was as timid and shy as a mouse when I first appeared in these RIDICULOUS shorts at school on return from home leave. I am actually quite impressed with the faithful and loyal friends I had at St Joseph's, that none of them ever burst out laughing, none howled with mirth, or poked fun at me in this regard. What they thought of me, or said of me, in private and behind my back was of no concern. (As an aside, - Mr Anthony - Anthappan Chettan - had a business partner, Jose, who opened a small branch in Ernakulam. Years later that small branch grew, and grew, and grew, and flourished to become what eventually came to be known as Jos Brothers Tailors in Ernakulam – and even the junction where that building was originally located became known as Jos Junction. Mr Anthappan, on the contrary, never had the same success. In fact the poor man's shop got completely burnt down during the communist vs. non-communist struggle in Alleppey just a few years later. My grandfather ordered my Uncles to have his shop re-built for him).

The equivalent girls' school was Jangwani Girls Secondary School. It was adjacent to the boys' school. They wore, if I remember correctly, an orange skirt and grey or brownish blouse, or something like that with some orangey colour. They were located very close to the Morogoro Road. Many Malayali girls used to attend there.

***When I first posted this episode on the What'sApp site,I had asked the former alumni of the Jangwani Girls school in this EAMM Group to confirm or correct me on these points. I assumed no response as assent of accuracy.

During my time, Azania School was staffed with a mixture of Indian and British teachers, and somewhere around 1960 / 1961 a lone African teacher arrived, who taught us Swahili and the Tanganyikan national anthem. A significant proportion of Indian teachers were Malayalis, all well known to my parents, and family friends.

I cannot recall all the details of joining day and the days that followed, but I do distinctly recall that I joined with a feeling of trepidation. No more familiar faces of friends and teachers known to me. Instead - So many strange faces, and then every now and again a Malayali Uncle. Now, about seeing the Malayali Uncles - whilst that was reassuring in the immediate context, there was a real long-term worry – would they always be watching me and getting things back to my parents……..o boy, no, I really didn't like this school AT ALL….

The fact of the matter is that those worries were totally unfounded as the future revealed. The Malayali Uncles did keep a watchful eye, yes, - and yes, they did admonish and bring me into line whenever that was needed, but they never snitched or grassed on me to my parents. Great guys! They were always there to answer doubts and to explain things patiently to this fellow who sometimes required repeated explanation before the light penetrated through….. Not all the Malayali Uncles were my teachers, but some of them used to step in to take an occasional class when the regular teacher was ill or away.

I remember with affection, fondness and respect Uncle John Saar (Mr VM John, Ivy's father), Uncle Sathyanathan (Mr A Sathyanathan), Uncle Avarankutty (Mr VA Zachariah), Uncle Unni Saar (Mr MG Nayar) and in my final year Mr GP Nair. They were such sincere and dedicated teachers.

Uncle VM John was my class teacher twice, once in Standard 8 or 9, and then again in Final Year, Standard 12. He taught us Biology which I found fascinating – to be able to look at the intricate structure within living beings, and to learn how that structure actually functioned. However, by Standard 9, when matters of reproduction began to be taught, rude innuendos used to be made under the breath, and suppressed giggling occurred. These innuendos and giggles became rather more overt in the last 2 years of school when Mr Sharma came along to teach Health Science - when human biology and physiology came on board.

One of the first quests on that first day was to find Jopen and Anand. Thankfully, both were there. Huge sigh of relief. Even more so because we were all in the same class 7A. There were a few other boys there whom I knew. I was pleased to see Koshy Daniel there, and Boniface Sathyanathan. They were just a year ahead. I can't remember whether Jairaj Sukumaran had moved to Azania too, or whether he had stayed back at St Joseph's. He had been a year or two senior to me at St Joseph's and had once performed on stage. All of us at that time, I remember, burst into laughter as Jairaj recited some poem or song which ended "Monkey, monkey, monkey, monkey, monkey, monkey, monkey you" pointing

his finger at several boys in the audience.

In the days that followed I began to miss Prakash Raghavan and an Italian boy named John Togni, a jovial chap who could cheerfully bluff his way out of any situation and was therefore always a useful ally to have in sticky situations. Another lad whom I missed was Anthony Pillai, son of Mr Gregory Muthaiah Pillai. Mr & Mrs Pillai were from Madras. Uncle was a lawyer. Anthony had a big brother, Xavier Pillai, an older sister named Bala, and a younger brother. There was an even older brother somewhere in England. Anthony was a nice, easy-going quiet and placid chap.

But then I/ we found a chap who was bright, chirpy, and friendly – at Azania. He had not been at St Joseph's as far as I knew. Anand, I think seemed to know him from before, but I couldn't recall having met him previously either at Malabar Club or at Kerala Kala Mandalam. His name was Jayachandran Nair. I learnt that his father was a teacher in Physics for the senior-most boys in the school. His mother was a teacher at some other school. He told me he had a big brother named Prem at the school, and a big sister called Ashalatha who was at the neighbouring Jangwani's. He had a younger brother named Sharan. He pointed out his father to me. Then I suddenly remembered in a flash seeing Uncle GP Nair and Aunty at Uncle Joseph's clinic from time to time.

Soon Anand, Jayachandran and I became very close friends as a trio. Jayachandran was called Kuttan at home and that is the name we adopted for him. We were all 3 of us rather vertically challenged and got labelled as the class "shorties". We walked around together, we played together at recess time, and soon we were labelled by our British teachers as the "3 short Travancoreans". One of the Malayali Uncles told our parents about this nickname that we had earned. We were also called 'The 3 Musketeers' because the movie had recently been through Dar. Kuttan used to regale us with interesting stories. One of them was concerning a relative. He said that Mr Menon was the Indian Ambassador to the then USSR, or Russia as we called it. That Mr Menon's wife had a daughter when in Moscow. To mark her birthplace, her parents gave her the pet name "Moscowammakutty". Even in those days we knew that Ambassadors were highly distinguished people. They worked in the Courts and Places of Kings and Queens. We were mightily impressed. If the glow of glory of Mr Menon was in some way reflected on Kuttan through their relationship, then by associating with him, maybe some of that glow would rub off on to us too. Kuttan was another Prakash. He was good at all subjects, always 1st in class. He maintained this all the way through to the Cambridge exams. He excelled at games, especially cricket. What he lacked in height and stature, he more than made up for in his batting vigour and skill, sprinting at lightning speed to score as many runs as he could.

The Malayali "big boys", as we labelled them, were all in Standard 12 or HSC. Vaguely, I remember Alex Kamicheril being there. Xavier Pillai, elder brother of Anthony Pillai was there. I seem to remember Vasu, Lillu's older brother, was in

the highest class called HSC, and he wore long trousers as did all the other 'big' boys in HSC.

We looked up at the HSC boys in a little awe. They seemed very remote and mightily clever. Before this set in HSC, they had been preceded by some other Malayalis – the famous Jaipal Anandan, a brilliant student, Uncle & Aunty Anandan's son. Uncle Anandan always impressed me. He was slim, elegantly dressed, very suave, and always had a bright and cheerful smile – I don't know why, but I associated him always with Malabar Club. Aunty too, as I faintly remember, was always very well turned out. Jaipal had a sister named Aruna, but I can't remember which school she went to. Jaipal had earned a name as being one of the topflight students in Tanganyika. I remember my parents glowing with pride and saying how this bright Malayali boy had earned a scholarship and he was going to England to become an engineer. ***[I was delighted when Jaipal joined this EAMM Group — Mr PK Jaipal].

My cousin Rennie Joseph Thalanany had already left by then to join St Joseph's Trichy prior to enrolling for Medicine in Calcutta.

The other "big boy" who had done well was Uncle & Aunty Sukumaran's son, Vinoo, elder brother of Jairaj, and his sister Nirmala. He, as I remember being told, was going to Hyderabad to study Geology. Good heavens - what was that? It turned out that it was closely linked to geography and involved studying all about the Earth, and its rocks, soils and minerals, and stuff like that – sounded frightfully clever, most impressive and very erudite. He went up mightily in my esteem. Uncle and Aunty Sukumaran were a delightful couple, and there was a lot of laughter when they visited us at home and in return when we used to visit them. They lived not too far from us when we lived on Ring Street in town. Nirmala was very good at dances laid on at Malabar Club and Kerala Kala Mandalam.

Alex Kamicheril, as I recall went off to Canada for higher studies, - I think it was for engineering too. Xavier Pillai went to England, but I don't remember to study what.

As the days and weeks passed, I gradually settled into the routine and rhythm of life in the new school.

What had made this school move doubly difficult had been the simultaneous house move from Ring Street to Changombe. We had lost all our connection with our town friends. And the buzz and liveliness of living in the heart of town. Changombe seemed so remote and distant, or at least it felt like that where we lived on the perimeter of the old airport. In front of us lay nothing but open grass fields. Just about 100 yards from the front of our house was a long open 20 or 30-foot-deep gully with steep banks. We never discovered its purpose, but it was not sewage, thank goodness. The banks were fully grassed and bushed over, but at the top, - level with the roadside - the PWD had laid a 10 or 12-foot-wide strip of fresh white sea sand for the entire length. It was separated from the road by a grass and shrub strip. In the

evenings, a fresh sea breeze used to blow across from the Kurasini Mtoni Creek and beyond. The road didn't even have a name at that stage. It was some 2 or 3 years later that it got given a name – Damas Road. I used to wonder at that name and where it originated from. Never found out. I decided that it must have been created by some dopey clerk who was too lazy to spell out Damascus in full.

I was quite thrilled to discover that the airport fields were used as grazing grounds by local herdsmen bringing their cattle along, clicking their tongues in a particular way, to steer the cattle along. Memories of Plassanal and 1956 returned. I used to admire the cool way in which, with their elbows draped over a long stick laid across the back of their necks and their shoulders, they managed to keep control over these large beasts. Soon I was there, with a stick of my own, trying to learn how to imitate those clicking sounds and steer those cattle. Never got far with acquiring that skill but managed to produce a lot of amusement for the native herdsmen and herds boys. Coming from Temeke, driving their herds, they used to pass by the front of our house in large groups of long-horned as well as short-horned cattle. Occasionally it would be flocks of sheep and goats, but usually it was cattle. They would go round the S-bend in the road and then turn right, to go on into the old airport fields. Soon some of those boys got used to me and would stop and call out "Saahny! Saahny!" meaning me. I would dash out before Mum had a chance to give long lectures about tsetse flies and sleeping sickness and brain disease. Some of the cattle, I learnt later from those boys, were destined for Tanganyika Packers, the meat canning factory.……Sadly within a year or so, these passing herdsmen stopped coming and I don't know what the reason for that was.

Speaking of cattle and herds and so on, reminds me now about milk supplies. With our move to Changombe our regular supplies from Msimbazi from the Sisters' farm, and from other sources had ceased. But not before long a new provider came on scene - Kerala Dairy - which could supply Changombe. Uncle Mukundan, whom I already knew from Malabar Club, used to come by every morning in a grey Peugeot 404 pickup, with the back filled with crates of milk bottles, full and empty. There were 2 cheerful African lads at the back who would dash out, grinning, deliver the full bottle, pick up the empty one and dash back. Uncle would give a cheery wave and off they went. Thus, that particular problem of "*maziwa*" supply got solved to my mother's satisfaction. Some years later we started getting pyramid-shaped packages of pasteurised milk flown in from the Kenya Co-operative Creameries. This lasted longer and had a delicious creamy taste – probably due to all that lovely cardiac-wrecking cholesterol in it. Which reminds me of another thing – Kenya Co-op Creameries butter – nowhere, but nowhere, has produced butter as good as that – whether it be Britain, Western Europe, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, - the world's countries famous for their dairy industry – not a patch on KCC butter. I'm afraid that even "Utterly, Butterly Delicious" is a notch below.

The front of our house was no longer a garden. It was stripped bare of plants and grass. Two huge lorry loads of white

beach sand were delivered and poured out and spread on the whole front garden area creating a white surface. Same thing done in the back garden too. Reason??.... – Just further precautions to prevent pollen in the near vicinity from triggering off sneezing and coughing and bringing on the inevitable asthma.

All the bungalows had neat hedges. They looked neat because they were trimmed. They hid a malign force. The hedge plants had nice small green leaves which, when you tore them, oozed a bright white milk which could be caustic on the skin. Interspersed among the leaves were huge ugly thorns which could deliver deadly wounds if your hands or legs happened to get entangled in the middle of a merry game. These wicked plants were called "*changomba*" from my memory. I used to mistakenly think that Changombe got its name from these plants because virtually all the houses and bungalows there used to have these hedges, almost as if it was a regulation. It was supposed to be a thief deterrent. It never deterred any thief. I learnt later on from Uncle Morais that, long before the Government Housing estate was built, Changombe used to be pastoral land for livestock grazing, and that the name Changombe apparently reflected that.

We soon discovered that many people in Changombe used to walk by our road for an evening walk to get the fresh air. Some people would sometimes bring a few snacks and sit on the white sand and enjoy the fresh breeze – it was almost like a beach….in later years we realised that the gully made the perfect getaway hiding spot for pole fishing thieves at night.

To our immediate right was a modern style bungalow with a nice sit-out and portico. It had terrazzo style flooring which I had first seen at the bank in Ring Street. An elderly couple lived there, Mr & Mrs Kassamali Gova and family. The eldest son was married and lived in this family house with his wife. Next came Farida, a tall statuesque girl, who sported all the up-to-date fashions of the late 50s and early 60s – later on as a teenager I remember being rather struck with her bouffant hair style when that became the 60s fashion. Then came her younger brother, Adil, a nice quiet-going pleasant chap, senior to me by about 3 years. Farida and Adil studied at Aga Khan Girls' and Aga Khan Boys', respectively.

Directly behind our house was a large empty plot of land. To the left and right of that were bungalows which opened on to the street behind.

To our immediate left was a 2 storied cream-washed building with 6 flats. There was a Goan family downstairs on the side closest to us - the Fonsecas. Later on, maybe a couple of years later, a new Malayali family moved in - Uncle Louis Morais and Aunty Tessy Morais. I think Uncle worked for the PWD, and Aunty became a schoolteacher. Uncle used to have a moped, the sort you kick start by riding like a bicycle, and then the petrol engine /motor would set in, and he would ride to work and back on that. My mother, as was customary in those days, sent across meals for the first few days until they had settled in. Very soon they became very firm friends with my parents, and we could always expect an

evening visit from them every day. This loving and sincere friendship lasted over decades even after return to India until finally, one by one, they all departed for their heavenly abode.

If you turned left from our house, the road curved into an S-bend and then you came to Uncle Daniel's house (Mr MK Daniel). He and Aunty Chinnamma had 4 boys then, Raju, (Koshy), Sam (Thomas), Benji (Benjamin), and Jose (Joseph). Little Mathew arrived in 1961 or 1962. With them lived Uncle's brother Uncle Varghese (Mr MK Varghese). He was still a bachelor at that stage. He went to India some years later and came back with Aunty Lissiamma. Uncle Daniel's house was 2-storied and had a terrace, a small front garden, and a reasonable sized back garden. The front entrance had a small sit-out /verandah where Uncle used to sit of an evening, reading the newspaper. In later years Uncle branched out on his own business, he set up the United Construction Company, (I think Unico, for short). After I left Dar in 1964, I learnt it became a major player in the construction industry.

Further away on the street behind us were a Mr and Mrs Nair. They had 3 or 4 boys, of whom I remember only Shankar because he was our age / class group. I think they went to Aga Khan Boys, but I seem to think that at some stage Shankar joined us at Azania. I could be confusing it with someone else. Mrs Nair was from Tamil Nadu, and they all spoke Tamil at home in preference to Malayalam. This was like Anthony Pillai's family. My curiosity was aroused – a language that seemed to sound like Malayalam, yet wasn't quite the same, and the letters looked different to the Malayalam script that Dad and Mum read. The important thing was that here was a potential friend and playmate.

If you went along further from Uncle Daniel's house you would come to another junction. Here in a corner bungalow lived Uncle and Aunty Krishnan and their daughter Shobana who was sort of around my age. I think Shobana had a sister – but not sure of that. What I do remember is that she had a little brother whose pet name was "Pudding". Shobana was a bright and ever-cheerful girl, ever ready to join in any game, and would occasionally join us boys at Uncle Daniel's house.

My mother felt a little lonely. Her big hostess days were over. She had been renowned for laying on massive dinners during the Ring Street days. All that ended now. The one that I remember most, even though I was quite small, was when Uncle AK Kurian Alapatt (Valia Kuriachan as he was known), retired. He had been one of the early Dar es Salaam residents, and had later moved on to Kenya, finishing up in Nairobi. Now before leaving Africa for good, he had come back to bid farewell to all his old friends, including Dad & Mum. Dad and Mum laid on this huge party for Malayali Uncles & Aunties. I have forgotten most of the details, but this bit remains very clear. Mum managed to procure 36, - I kid not! - 36 young chickens, killed and dressed. She smeared masala all over them and inside too for good measure, then had them stuffed and roasted. They were the main course for that dinner for the guests that night – each guest getting a whole small chicken – "*poussin*" as I came to know later. For dessert she had prepared a pinky-white thing –

she called it Floating Islands. It was dollops of stiffly beaten egg white cooked in a sweet vanilla flavoured pink milky sauce — delicious!...

She made that sweet subsequently sometimes for the "*Naahlu Mamykutty makkal*" – Betty Benny, Libby and I. Decades later, in Plassanal, my wife and I learnt from her how to stuff and roast chicken, using fried beef mince and potato mash or fried lamb mince and potato mash. Very nice.

My mother missed the non-Malayali friends she had among the Goans and Khojas and Gujaratis. She missed the easy purchases from door-to-door vegetable sellers on Ring Street, and she missed the old "*Maahli*" man. This was a man who would go around with a pushcart heaped with crockery and china and glass tableware. He would exchange these for old clothes. He would go around, from time to time, heralding his arrival by crying out "*Maahli, Maahli*!" Mum would have gathered up Dad's old uniforms, and old trousers and shirts, my rags, and other stuff which she would exchange for kitchen ware. She had built up quite a stock of stuff in this way. She was immensely proud of having acquired Pyrex dishware and cookware. Apparently, Pyrex stuff was a big thing at that time – a new thing on the scene. What the old *Maahli* man did with the old clothes, I have no clue. Whoever bought them from him? What did they do with it? Where did he get all his brand-new cookware and glass ware from? Who knows..... In later years I began to realise and to appreciate the thrift, the economies, the sensible approach that my mother took, to make do and to make things last, just in order to ensure that the main priority and focus would be on paying the way to give us, the children, a good education.

My sister and I missed our cat whom we had had to give away because of my mother's asthma, and my own asthma. We had loved her. She had come to us as a little kitten a few years before. One afternoon when Betty and I had returned from school, we saw my sister Libby, who was only about two at that time, looking very excited and giggling, pointing at a little round basket. From within it, peeping up over the rim, giving us the most adorable look, was a pair of small charcoal ears, a tiny white face with a small charcoal nose and the most amazing blue eyes. It was a little Siamese kitten, a "gift to Sebastian's children" from the wife of one of my father's English colleagues. "Siamy" as we named her grew up, and in course of time gave us her own little kittens, and was our fond favourite, but had to go when my mother had fallen desperately ill with asthma the previous year.

I missed the boys from upstairs dreadfully. All our games had come to an end. In fact, the evening games had already muted somewhat after the tortuous months of illness in the family, but now with this move, they came to an abrupt end. I missed Uncle and Aunty Pereira. Aunty Audrey Pereira and her sisters, Blanche and Jeanette, were a tightknit group. Unlike many Goans whom we knew, this was a bunch of Goans who felt hard done by Portugal and its grip over Goa.

They were always saying that Goa should be part of India because they were missing out on all the big schemes that were being laid out in India by the Indian Government. Their wish got granted in 1961 when India took over Goa. Aunty Audrey was very particular that she would dress only in sarees, unlike her sisters who wore very stylishly tailored European clothes. My mother and she would, from time to time, exchange gifts of sarees, especially when each had returned from home leave. When the Goan Club organised their Christmas Ball, or their big party for the Feast of St Francis Xavier on 3rd December every year, Aunty used to come downstairs so that Mum could give her a quick look over in her finery, to see that was all was OK and as it should be, before Uncle Pereira whisked her off.

Someone else whom I missed was a poor Ceylonese vagrant. How he ended up like that I don't know. There were always many theories about it that were propagated at school. The poor man was a mentally ill patient, and an alcoholic to boot. He would go swaying and doddering along the street crying out "*Tembo mbili pottaya*!! ….*Tembo mbili pottaya*!!..." The Africans would curse and throw stones at him, and he in return would hurl stones back at them, striking them with amazing accuracy, and shouting out foul, foul expletives in Swahili. Now and again the police would come and take him away somewhere. Apparently, he used to be released from Dodoma from time to time and would immediately find his way back to Dar.

Despite all the abrupt changes, very soon I found myself in the middle of a new group of friends. Koshy and Sam Daniel used to come every evening and we would gather, either in the front of our house, or in the open space in front of their house. We renewed our 1956 shipboard friendship and became firm friends. We were joined by the Nasser boys, Arif and Dilshad, who were friends of the Daniels. The Nasser family had 4 boys – the eldest was Parvez was much senior, maybe in HSC, then came another chap – I forget his name, then Arif – my age group – and his younger brother Dilshad. Uncle Sathyanathan's boys Bonnie and sometimes Reggie (Boniface and Jeyaraj) would come along from their house much further away. Anand would join us from time to time. Sometimes Michael, Aunty Pereira's nephew, (son of her sister Jeanette), would come along us and join the fun. Michael, who had continued at St Josephs, was a rather quiet, serious and bespectacled lad, but he would thaw up in the fun and fray of our games. At other times Mr Dalton's son, Charles and his younger brother – I forget his name - would join us. Mr Dalton and Mr Martin, and their respective families, were English missionaries in close friendship with the Daniels. In the early years, our games were really quite kiddish, but immense fun.

There was a game called 7 tiles. You piled up 7 stones, one on top of the other. 2 teams played against each other. One team had the task of throwing an old tennis ball at the stones to knock them down, or out of array. The other team would then scatter like mad, and yet have to try and build up the stones back into a tower, trying meanwhile to avoid being hit by the ball – if someone was hit, then that person was out of his team. If you managed to knock out all team

members from the opposing team, your team won, or something like that.

In course of time, the games matured. Someone managed to procure a baseball bat, and a game of rounders became the must every evening. It was the thing we looked forward to every day.

That lasted until someone else brought along an old, discarded cricket bat, and a piece of wood shaped to look like a bat, 3 straight wooden sticks, and 2 wooden pegs, and hey presto! – cricket was on. (Of course, nothing at all remotely comparable to the prowess of Jitender, and his senior friends Chidanandan and Thirthanandan, but still loads of mighty fun!!).

At a later stage, Uncle Daniel managed to rig up a net in the open space on the other side of the road in front of their house. Suddenly badminton, and the vital possession of a racket, became tour de force. It got even better when Uncle Daniel and his brother Uncle Varghese then taught us the elements of volleyball. Anand was really good at all these games. Koshy and Bonnie and the others were all OK. And me?.....O, me……o well, ….w-e-l-l…, ….I …tr-i-e-d….

By the time we had reached Standard 9 /10, bicycles became the thing. Dad managed to get me a 2nd hand bike from one of his office European staff going back to England. Now every evening became exploration time, with Koshy and Bonnie being the intrepid explorers leading a motley crew behind them. Here I was in my own element. Suddenly a new world had opened up, and it was in spite of all the several preceding falls, cut knees and grazed elbows. O this new-found freedom….we rode further and further each day, and in the length of time, over succeeding months and years, we had done the length of the entire runway, and beyond, of the old Kurasini aerodrome - with bicycle races being part of it of course.

Life moved on….

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KERALA KALA MANDALAM IN THE 1950s…….

This was the 2nd sociocultural club for Malayalis that opened sometime towards the tail end of the 1950s. From my memory as a schoolboy, I think the club was formed to mark the formation of the Indian State of Kerala in 1956.

The name I always associate with it, when I think of it, is Uncle PN Nair. He was, I think the inaugural General Secretary, and then later President at some stage. A refined and scholarly person, humble, friendly and polite, is how I recall him. (Behaviour that in many ways reflected Uncle Kunjunny Nayar, except that Uncle Nayar was a tall and towering figure – at least that's it what it seemed to me, a short schoolboy).

Mala Nair's father was one of the people instrumental in forming it. (My name for him remains Uncle Police Suku to differentiate from other Uncle Sukumarans). I gather that Mr Kurup was also involved. I recall Uncle PN Nair was involved in the production and direction of stage shows, and I think some years later he was the President of the Club. The Azania Secondary School Hall was often a venue, thanks to Uncle VM John Saar's and Uncle Unni Saar's behind-the-scenes work with the Principal to get the necessary permission.

The club had an anthem. It was dedicated to Bharatham and Keralam. I still have the tune in my head but don't remember the lyrics anymore. The refrain contained the words "*Jeya, jeya, jeya, jeya*….some words together….*Jeya, jeya, jeya, jeya*,…..different words…..". The club did not have fixed premises and preferred to hire out halls as and when needed.

One memorable event that I recall was a full-length drama that was laid on, I think, in 1956/ 57.... It may have been the 1st major production that the club had put on as a mark of its inauguration. It was a tragic romance. If I'm not mistaken, the script was probably written by Uncle PN Nair. Casting back to my schoolboy memory, the plot was about a lovelorn couple – a young man from a high caste Hindu family, a young lady from some other background …can't remember what, - but who was not so well-off as the young man.

The two star-crossed individuals were not thought to be suited to wed - maybe because of the difference in social status — I can't remember the full details, except the bits that interested me.... I think, also, the young man was already engaged, or meant to be engaged, to another woman – maybe that was the reason they weren't meant to associate. Anyway this hapless fellow falls in love with this 2nd woman. The 2nd woman's name I clearly remember as Vilasini. Ultimately, after facing so much opposition, and undergoing much distress, either the lovelorn couple committed suicide one after the other, or maybe Vilasini was killed and the young "Romeo" committed suicide on discovering her body……I can't recall this with exactitude, and I have a feeling that the latter was the more likely way it spun out…..(meaning that she got killed…)...

The person who acted as Vilasini, was Uncle Vellappan Nair (Uncle GV Nair, father of my friend and classmate Anand Kumar, and Anand's younger sisters, Asha, and Usha). In those days Malayali Aunties had not yet started appearing on stage. So a lot of skilful make-up artistry was involved, and also involved the use of coconut shells ("cherrata") for those playing female roles.

In this drama, Uncle Suku, (Mala's father), acted the part of the young Romeo, - we used to called him Police Uncle Suku to distinguish him from the Uncle Sukus in Dar es Salaam. He was a bachelor at that time).

My Dad was the enraged father of the young man. He chased him out of the house hurling dire threats at him, brandishing his walking stick at him and whacking him on the shoulder. Uncle Joseph Kamicheril (Molly's dad), had a part to play, and together with another Uncle (…??? Velayuthan… …??...) he tried to lighten the gloom with moments of humorous dialogue. There was a moonlight night scene where the Romeo and the Juliet met. There was a recorded song in the background – I think the lyrics began like this – "Vasantha Kaalaam, ……".

Anyway, the plot hardened, the young Juliet was either killed or committed suicide. I have a feeling she was killed by her mad brother (acted by Uncle Bhasi). The homeless vagabond young Romeo (Uncle Suku) was grief-stricken, became wild and utterly distraught, taking heavily to drink. He kept crying out "Endey Vilasini, endey Vilasini…". He committee suicide and fell to the floor, spurting red-ink blood all over. Gosh! What a frightful set of scenes…...thoroughly enjoyable for us schoolboys watching the play.

For days after that, we Malayali boys at school would go around at recess time, saying "Endey Vilasini, endey Vilasini…" and drop 'dead' to the floor, much to the bewilderment and amusement of non-Malayali boys.

Police Uncle Suku later went to India, and we heard that he got married to a princess from the Cochin royal family. On his return to Dar, as was the custom in those days, the young bridal couple used to visit all the senior Malayali households. At school, the Malayali boys were all agog with excitement – wow! a real-life Indian princess!! Imaginations surfeit on a diet of Grimm's Fairy Tales and Hans Christian Andersen's fables, we anticipated the home visits with excitement.

My sister Libby (Elizabeth), my cousin Betty (Alice), who lived with us at that time, and I, eagerly anticipated the visit of Uncle Suku, and the new Princess Aunty. My Mum, as was her wont, had prepared all the items for high tea – nobody actually called it 'high tea' in those days – but the items were of a variety and profusion that you would expect at high tea – savoury sandwiches, cutlets, samosas, cakes, biscuits, Malayali palaharams…..

The appointed evening came. Uncle and the new Aunty appeared – and O what an elegant, and charming, Aunty. She captivated us, but after they left, my sister who was really only a small girl, felt a tad disappointed because there had been no horses and carriage, and no bejewelled and caparisoned elephants. I had built up her expectations by telling her

that all Indian princesses always went about with horses and carriages and bejewelled caparisoned elephants …..I actually almost believed that stuff myself from a diet of fairy tales. I just think now how innocent – almost gullible, - we were as children in those days…..Today's little ones seem more worldly-wise from what I observe here.

****

***FOOTNOTES:** I posted this episode on the EAMM What'sApp Group on 3rd Jan 2021. Amidst the feedback I had then, I was happy to learn that Police Uncle Suku's family are here in the UK, and that Mala Nair is his daughter. Mala confirmed my description as follows:

"*Hello Chetta 💝 !! What a Wonderful Memory !! & Yes that 'Police' Suku & Subhadra are my parents & Indeed Amma is from the Cochin Royal Family. Well remembered (Amma & AcchN were married at the Elaya Thampuran Palace in Thrippunithura) ... The Nadavarambu Palace was built by my grandfather as Ammuma was from Irinjalakuda ... but basically she's from the Cochin Royal Family ... So delighted that story seems to have stood the test of time. Amma & I are in cold wintry Leicester ... Spk Soon 💝 Ente Vilasini ... Ente Vilasini ... Classic !!*"

I was very happy to learn too, from feedback from Deeta Nair, she is Uncle Unni Saar's daughter, and that she lives in the States, and that Aunty Saraswathi lives in Trivandrum.

****

Some years ago I brought over old photos from my father's collection. Most of them are still lingering in Kerala, waiting to be brought over. Sadly, many have been damaged over the years in the humid climate, attacked by fungus and silver-fish insects.

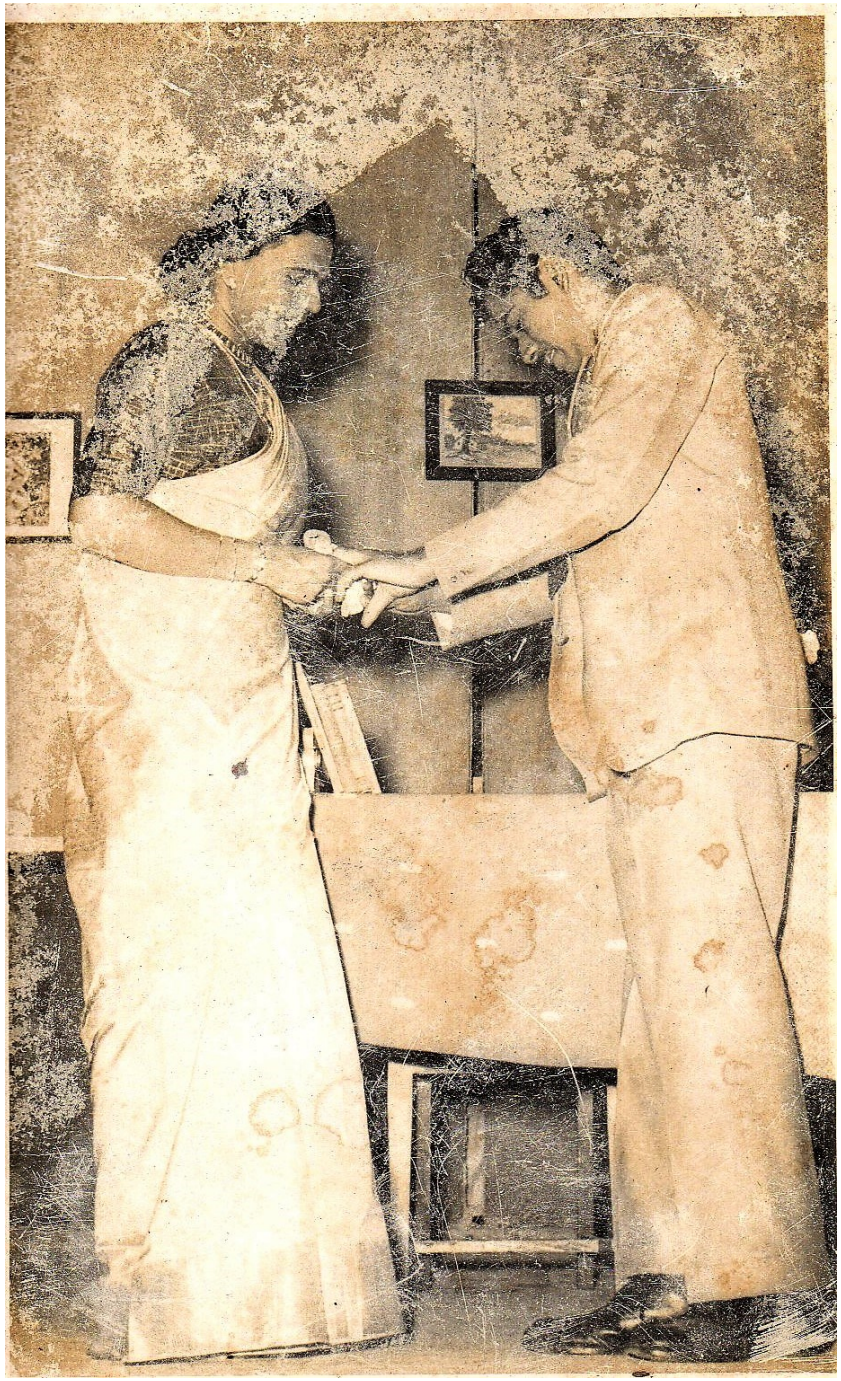
The pages that follow carry some pictures from that drama. (When I posted these pictures on the Group's site I had asked for help in identifying the names of people whose names I had forgotten, or did not know. ……..)

BELOW: The picture shows my father, (TM Sebastian), acting as the father of the young man (Uncle Suku). The father is pondering over something that the son has told him.

I recall that in a later scene (of which unfortunately I don't have a photo), the father, when he learns of his son's liaison with Vilasini, brandishes his walking stick at the son and delivers a resounding whack or two on his shoulder and chases him out of the house — causing huge excitement for us primary schoolboys in the audience……. .

RIGHT: Here Uncle Suku as the young man, is in dalliance with the 1st young woman to whom is either already betrothed, or meant to be betrothed. He is aided and abetted in this by some of the townspeople, whilst fiercely criticised and opposed by others.

I forget the name of the Uncle who played this female role.

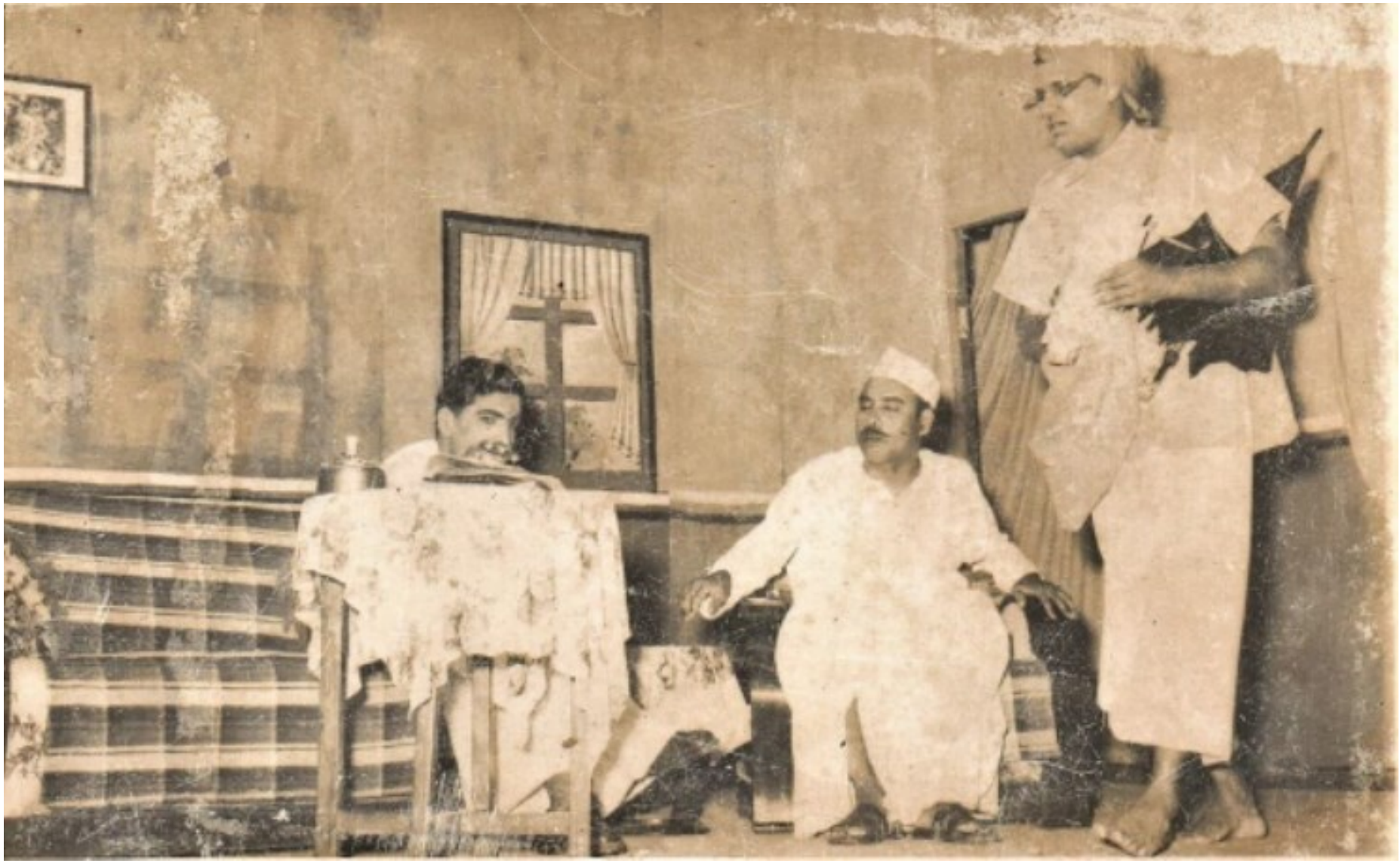


RIGHT: Uncle Joseph Kamicheril (Molly' Abrahams and Jopan's Dad), was often onstage in plays , skits and dramas. On this occasion, he was a shady character in the drama, but I can't recall whose side he was on….Here he is seen busy fuelling himself from a bottle of whisky whilst hatching some plan.

BELOW: Uncle Unni Saar (Uncle MG Nayar, one of our favourite teachers at Azania Secondary) had a role to play - he was connected to Vilasini in some way. Here he sings "*Aandhi murrayambol, ambili pongambol*" as he plays the harmonium. Although, I have forgotten his role in the drama, I still remember his song, and the melody runs in my head to this day.

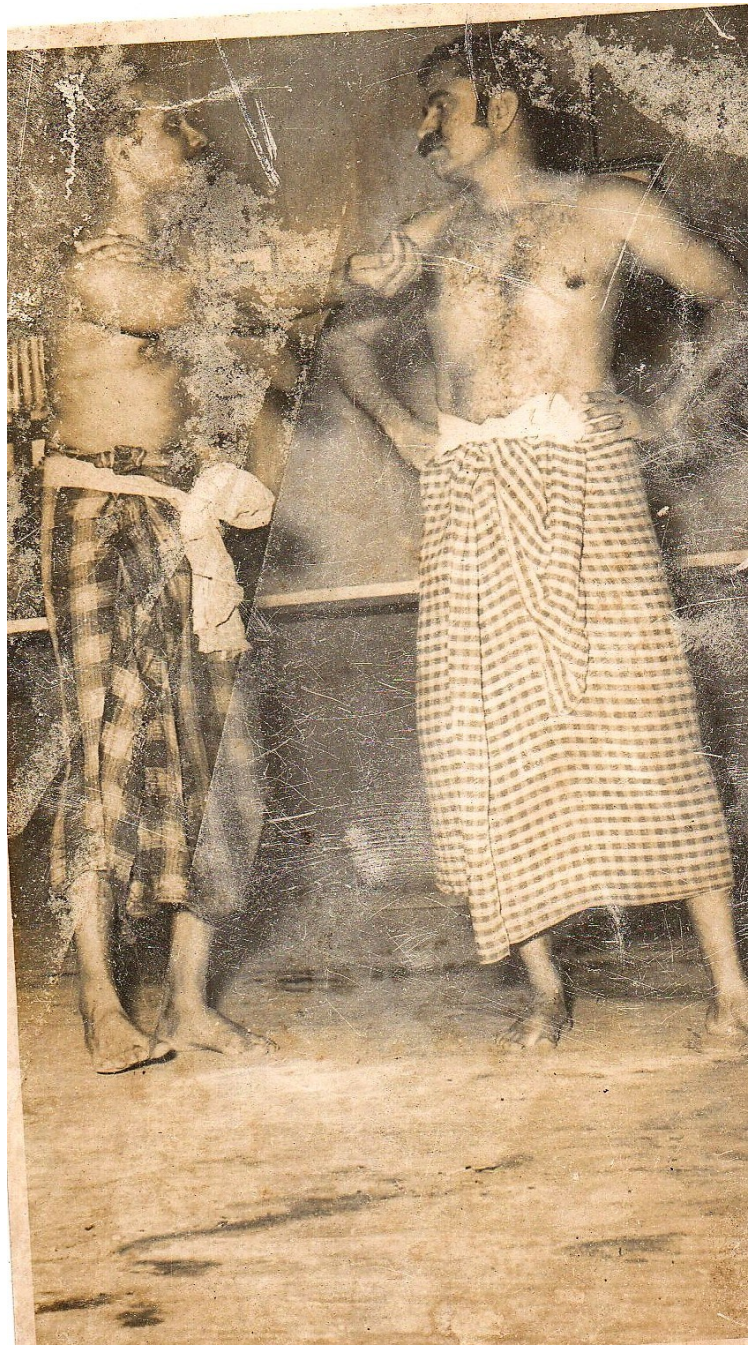
BELOW: Here is Vilasini, sitting on the right, looking very sad. She is being consoled by…... her elder sister …? or is it the housemaid? (see the torn right sleeve of her blouse…). I can't remember who acted as the woman on the left.

BELOW: Here the postman, carrying his umbrella and postbag, walks in when Uncle Kamicheril is warning Uncle MG Nayar about something. I don't remember who acted as the postman.



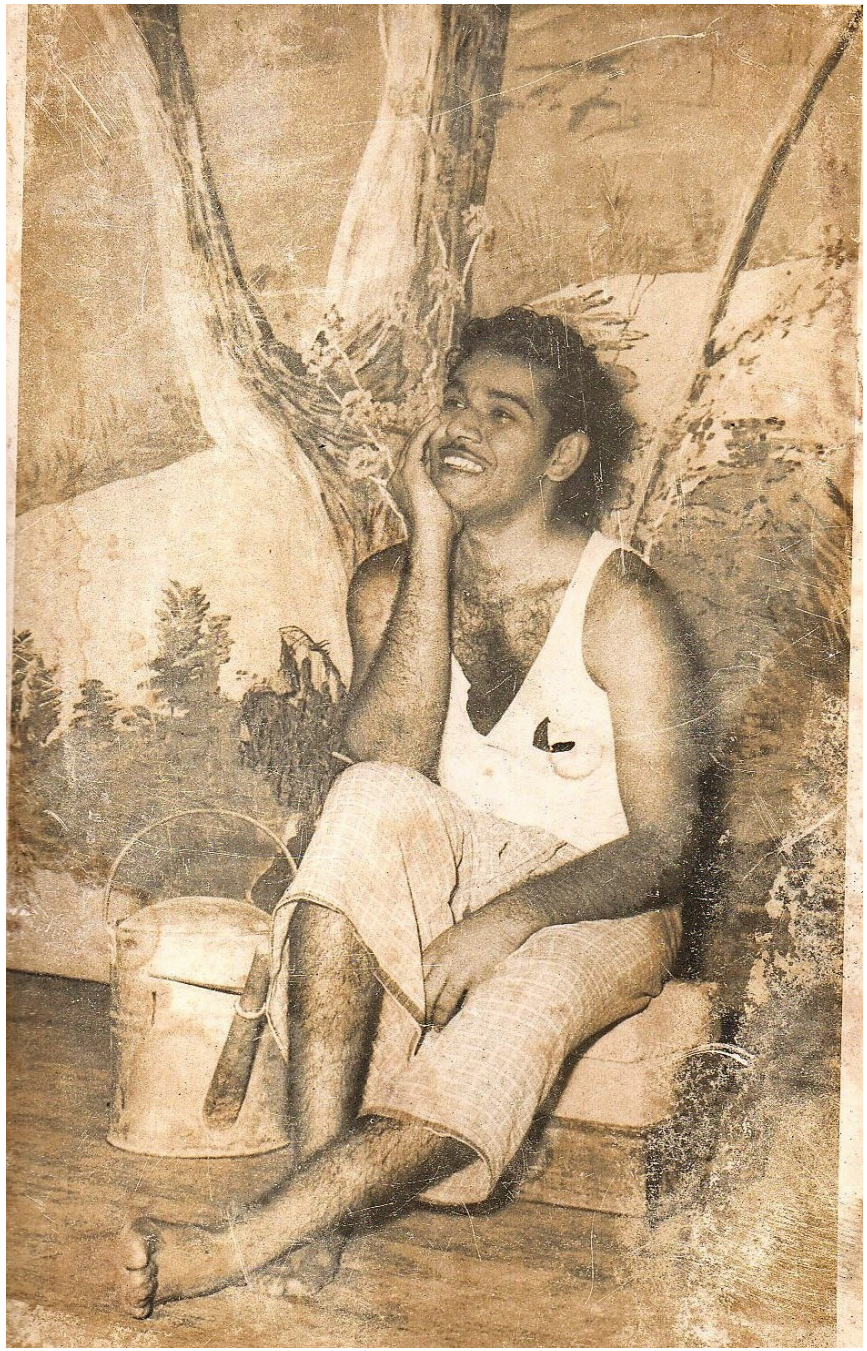
RIGHT: These are 2 village men who get into an argument about the lovers and the whole issue.

I don't remember their names although I can recall that the fierce goonda-like Uncle on the right was a great hit with us boys that night.



RIGHT: When the young man's father hears of the love affair, he is furious and chases his son out of the house.

The young man has to work as a labourer. Here he is dreaming sweet dreams about his Vilasini.



RIGHT: Later when the young man learns of Vilasini's death, crazed with grief, he takes to drink which he sees as his demon.

I think he poisoned himself with drink and dies….. Or did he use a knife on himself??.....strange how I can't recall that particular point….because I do remember a knife being used in one event; it had a concealed spring so that the blade retracted into the handle, and from a strategically-placed concealed bag, red ink and diluted tomato sauce would spill out as the gory deed occurred.

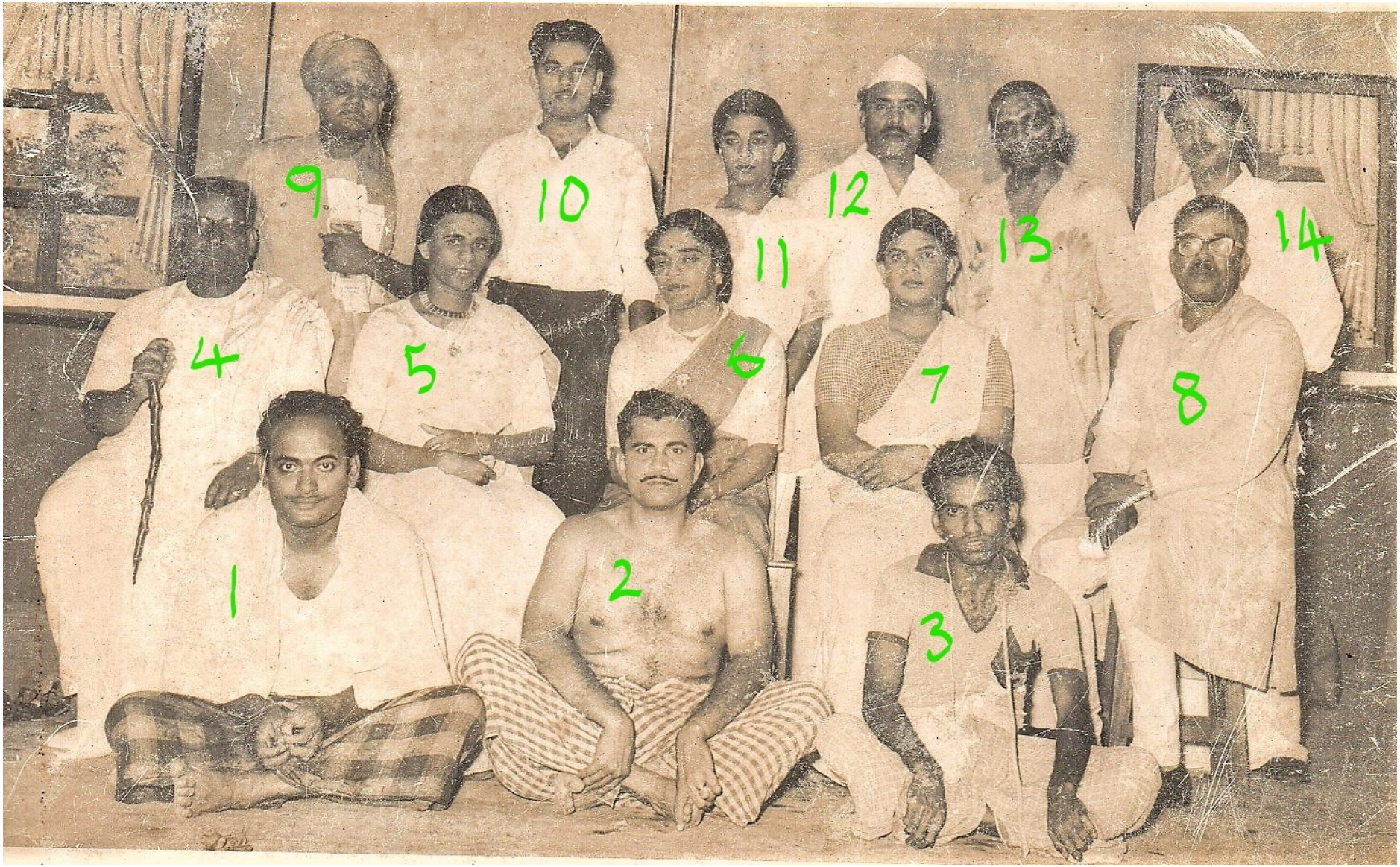
Also, the more I think about this drama, I seem to think that Vilasini was killed by a madman, probably her estranged brother, acted by Uncle Bhasi. Uncle Bhasi's face comes into my mind, and I can see the scene where he is wielding a dagger.

RIGHT: Here is Vilasini (Uncle GV Nair) With him is his wife Aunty Pankjakshi, (Anand's, Asha's, and Usha's mother).

I think Aunty did the make up for Uncle that evening.

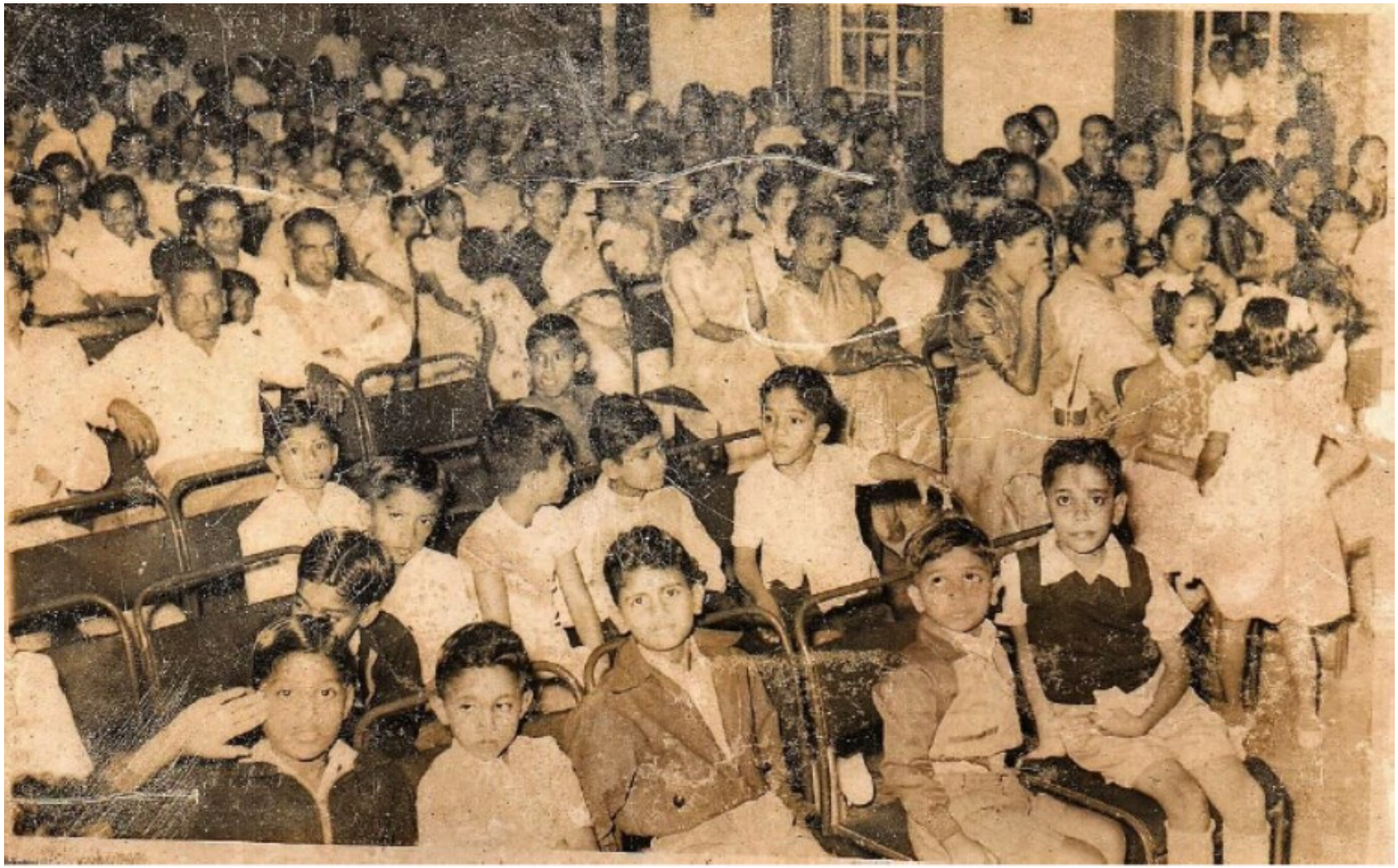
BELOW: The Cast. I have named those whom I remember.

1. Uncle Vijayan, 4. My father TM Sebastian as the "Father", 6. Uncle GV Nair as Vilasini, the tragic heroine, 8. ??Uncle Pannikar??, 9. the Postman, 10. Uncle Suku as "the Romeo", 12. Uncle Joseph Kamicheril, 13. Uncle Bhasi, as Vilasini's mad brother??... 14. Uncle Unni Saar



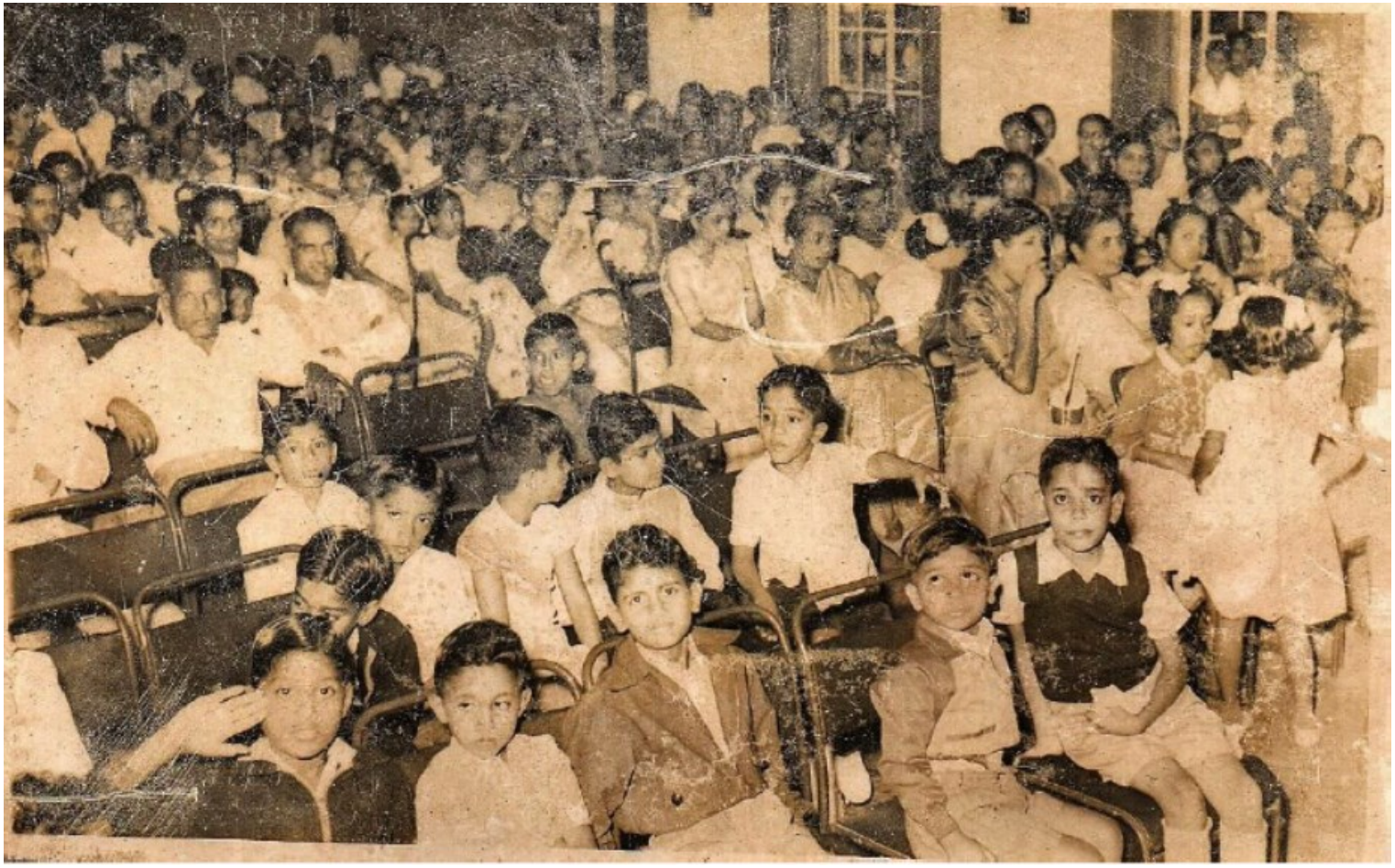
BELOW: The audience that evening.

In the front row is me, in the dark half-sleeved pullover, looking at the camera. Sat right next to me is my cousin Benny, looking upwards. Next to him, looking at the camera, is a boy in a jacket whose face I recall, - but who he is, which school he went to, whose son he was, I have no idea now. The little boy next to him in white shirt, is my friend Kuttan's younger brother Sharan. Next to Sharan, wearing a dark jacket and saluting, is another boy whose face I vaguely remember, but again I have no other recollections. Who are these boys? I had hoped that someone in the EAMM Group could enlighten us….



Directly behind me, pointing at me in animated conversation, is my friend Anand Nair. He is busy talking to my friend Prakash Raghavan, who looks a little sceptical about what Anand is saying. I had thought that the 3rd boy looking on there is Venu Gopalan, Uncle M Gopalan and Aunty Shakunthala's son, but Jitender Balakrishnan pointed out, in feedback, that it was not Venu. I don't recall the other boys. Does anyone know who they are? (Anand's parents were Uncle Vellappan Nair (Mr GV Nair) and Aunty Pankajakshi. Prakash's parents were Uncle Karimjee Raghavan and Aunty Sulu).

Sat on the women's side, in the front row is my cousin Betty, wearing a dark cardigan patterned with flowers. I can't see my sister Libby there, nor can I see my Mum. The Aunty behind Betty, who is yawning, is someone I vaguely recall – does anyone know who she is? Further in, the 3rd lady, (looking at the camera,) is Aunty Jyothi Pillai, whom I have referred to before. Uncle Narayana Pillai (Mr MN Pillai) & Aunty Jyothi Pillai were among the dearest friends that my parents had.



RIGHT:

During that drama, there were 3 or 4 acts, and many scenes in between, with stage scenery and sets having to be shifted. So, there were gaps when the audience was waiting patiently. During one of those intervals, the curtains parted slightly, and out came this figure, prancing and dancing, with some Caribbean music playing in the back-ground.

The crowd fell dead silent, and then simultaneously burst into laughter and thunderous applause. It was my Dad. He had dressed up as a Seychellois village woman out on a stroll. In a couple of minutes, he had vanished back inside, but the laughter went on and on. The boys were absolutely besides themselves. They never knew that Uncle Sebastian had this clownish streak in him. The Malayali Aunties laughed and laughed and ribbed my mother. She was absolutely mortified. Little did she know what lay in store.

About an hour later during another such interval, back he came on.

He wore an upturned basket on his head as a hat, a Hawaiian beach shirt and beach shorts, an alarm piece strapped round his knee, and in his hand, he jingled anklet bells. The clamorous applause was accompanied by deafening cheers and much whistling.

That was a memorable evening……

***Footnote** — after I had posted this episode on our Group site, Jitender Balakrishnan clarified that the boy whom I had identified as possibly being Venu Gopalan was in fact someone else, but not Venu Gopalan.

Pratapchandran was in touch to give me sad news about his brother Sharan who is no more.

We still need others identified.

1958 continued — THE AGA KHAN,…. THE CORONATION SAFARI,… MOVIES, CINEMA THEATRES … AND SO ON….

1958 onwards signalled a change in my interests somewhat – I think a combination of various circumstances. Secondary schools have a different atmosphere from those of primary schools as all of us know, but I also think the move of home to a new location and the new friends in Changombe contributed towards that. The focus was on getting home from school and waiting for the late afternoon games with them. Some of the things I recall are clear, and others not quite so. It seems like a hotch-potch collection, somewhat jumbled and not always in chronological order.

One of the things that comes back to me was, sometime after my mother's recovery from illness in 1957, and before our move to Changombe in 1958. The leader of the Ismaili Khoja Community, the old Aga Khan had died. He had 2 sons, dashing young men, Prince Aly Khan and Prince Sadruddin Khan. Prince Aly Khan had over the years built up a reputation as a playboy. Amongst his many affairs with duchesses and film stars, the one best known to us as school-boys was his fling with the glamorous and famous Rita Hayworth, a top Hollywood star. The old father seeing his son's decadent lifestyle determined that Aly Khan was not fit to be a religious leader. Instead, the succession went to Aly Khan's son, Prince Karim, thus bypassing a generation. The coronation event occurred in Dar es Salaam at Mnazi Moja. It was a very grand affair with many East African dignitaries attending. Ismailis from all over the world congregated in Dar es Salaam. The town was lit again as for a royal festive occasion. All Khoja houses were illuminated with strings of light bulbs. We were keen to see who these royal luminaries were. The easiest way to do this was to go near the Jamat Khana in town where they would attend for ceremonies and worship. And so that is what we did.

Uncle John Saar and Aunty (Rajan's and Ivy's parents), lived fairly close to the Jamat Khana. They became hosts one evening to a number of Malayali families. From their place all of us walked to get a good place on the pavement. Rajan and Jopen were among the boys, Ivy was with the girls, but my sister Libby had to stay with my mother, her hands firmly held so that she would not run away to join the other girls. Big sister Betty had now gone, and so also Benny, returning to Kilosa before they came back to join Boarding School at St Joseph's.

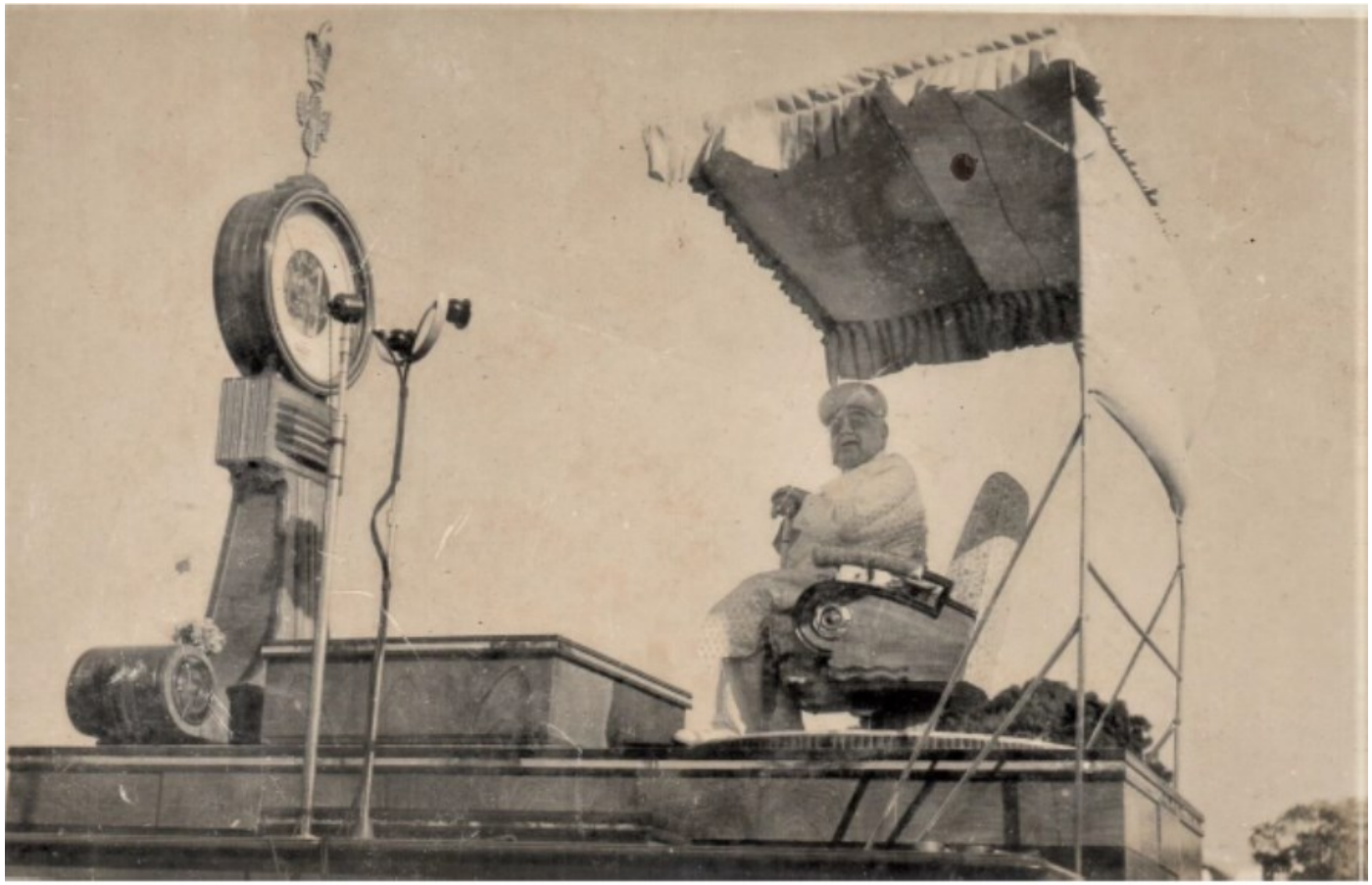
The Jamat Khana was a splendid sight, brightly illuminated and with the red and green flags and coat of arms of the new Aga Khan decorating lamp posts and the roof top. After a while, a procession of cars started arriving, following a fleet of policemen on motorcycles. As each car passed, the crowd craned their necks to see who was sat in it. That way people got to see the Begum Aga (the dowager widow of the old Aga Khan, and grandmother of the new Aga Khan), and then the 2 princes, Aly Khan, the naughty chap, and his much better-behaved younger brother Sadruddin Khan, and then finally the new young Aga Khan himself.

The Ismailis / Khojas were a tight-knit community, prospering mainly as traders and property owners. They had been in East Africa long before British rule. They revered their leader the Aga Khan.

My father used to relate the account of the old Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee back in 1945. This event had taken place in Bombay and repeated in Dar es Salaam. The town had been transformed with the arrival of thousands of Ismailis from other parts of Africa, and from India and the Middle East. A ship had been specially commissioned to bring Ismailis from India. The community, to show their love and respect for their leader, had decided to gift him with diamonds matched to his body weight. The old man was endowed with ample girth and proportion, and so a huge amount of diamonds were gathered. Apparently, the scales were tipped at 245lbs. The Aga Khan had graciously accepted the gift, and then returned it to the community, setting up a Trust Fund for charitable purposes. The proceeds from the sale of those diamonds raised huge sums of money that went towards building more Aga Khan schools, while plans were laid for Aga Khan hospitals to be built in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi.

RIGHT: Looking through some old photos of my father's collection, I came upon this one. It is a postcard from Kanti Printing Press, sold as a souvenir.

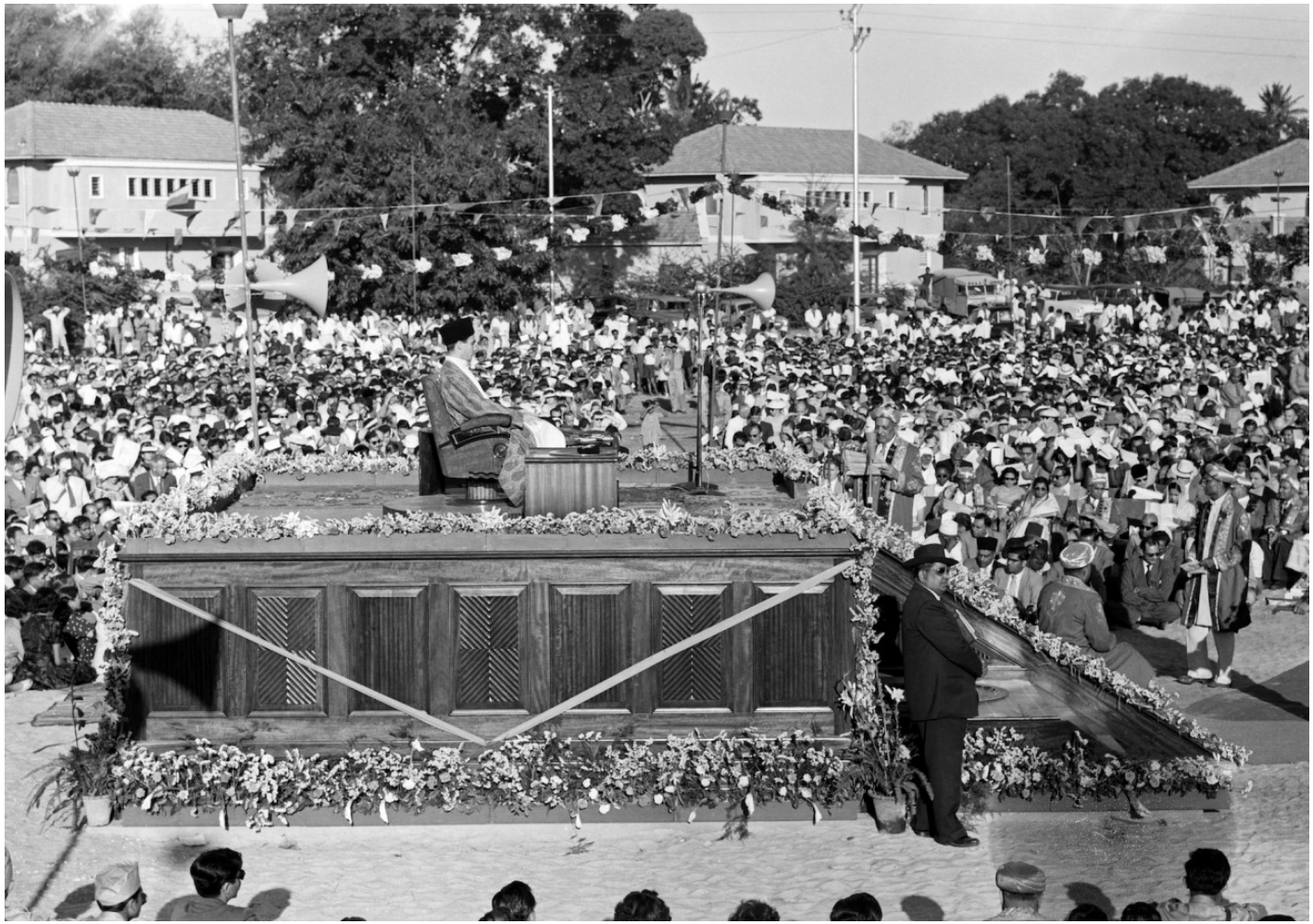
It shows the old Aga Khan being weighed on scales in Mnazi Moja.



ABOVE:

The young Prince Karim Aga Khan.

Courtesy of The Ismaili.



RIGHT:

The Installation ceremony,

Dar es Salaam 1957.

Courtesy of The Ismaili.

Another thing I recall about the late 50s was something that had actually been going on for some years before, but now, as we grew older, it became a major interest. This was the annual East African Coronation Safari Rally. It actually started in the year 1953 to celebrate the Queen's Coronation. It was considered then, and still remains, a classic event, a test of driving prowess and skill just as much as a car's endurance and reliability. This was a gruelling car journey, over 3000 miles, that set off in Nairobi, went through Kampala, and worked its way south into Tanganyika, turning round on itself at Dar es Salaam, and looping back into Kenya and Uganda, and finishing off in Nairobi.

At the time of the Coronation something else had happened. News that broke on Coronation Day – apart from the fact that Queen had been crowned, - that a man from New Zealand, Edmund Hillary, together with a Nepalese *sherpa*, Tenzing Norgay, had ascended the peak of the mighty Mt Everest. It seems that this had occurred a few days before, but the news had just trickled through and reached the outside world on the BBC World News. My father used to have the radio on every evening to get the news and he picked this up there. It appeared in the Tanganyika Standard the next day, and there was a lot of excited talk at school. So, the excitement which had been building up over the Coronation Safari got rather overshadowed by this Everest event.

All that I can recall from the first 1953 rally was that a VW Beetle was the winning car. The VW Beetle was a loveable little car with its engine at the back where the boot should be, while the boot space was in front, under its comical flat nose.

However, the years passed, and by 1958 the Coronation Safari was becoming a more important annual feature in what was then British East Africa and began attracting attention from other countries. The types and models of cars and the drivers were steadily increasing in number. For years together the German VW Beetle and the Mercedes Benz dominated the field, but the French Peugeot 404 gave them a good run for their money. The British-made Fords (the Zephyr, the Cortina) all started appearing, and then later on the cute little Mini. Swedish cars like the Volvo and the Saab, which we had not seen previously, started making an appearance. The rally used to be run at Easter weekend. It ran through really tough terrain:- cross-country over dirt roads and tracks, notoriously difficult to negotiate during the seasonal heavy rains, where it was commonplace to get stuck deep in mud, and to have to ford across swollen rivers. In the early years of the rally no alterations, nor strengthening of the axles or suspension were permitted. This was in order to assess the true state of the car's endurance and reliability. There was always the additional frisson of encountering wildlife on the roads, and drivers had to be careful not to collide with wild beasts.

The top drivers were always from Kenya. Bert Shankland was the Tanganyikan driver famed for his mastery in driving, partnered with his co-driver Chris Rothwell. Though we used to listen to the radio and cheer when we heard their names,

LEFT: April 1958 - the Coronation Safari rally across Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika — the Mercedes-Benz 219 won the class prize

Courtesy of the Mercedes Benz Archive collection

ABOVE & BELOW LEFT: The German Volkswagen Beetle - a feisty little car that proved itself as tough as any of its bigger class competitors and gamely fought its way through pouring rain, mud, and flooded rivers, to successfully finish the course, year after year.

Picture Above - Courtesy Classic Velocity
Picture to Left - Courtesy Overdrive

ABOVE & RIGHT: The 1965 winners - the famed Kenyan brothers Jaswant Singh and Joginder Singh drove a Volvo P544 to victory. The pair were a force to reckon with in the 60s.

The Coronation Safari had been renamed East African Safari by now.

Pictures from Wikimedia Commons.

they never actually won during my time there. I gather that some years later, after I had left Tanganyika, they actually did win the 1st prize. In 1962, a lady entered the scene. This was Pat Moss, the sister of the legendary racing driver, Stirling Moss. She came 3rd and came back for more after that. Indian Punjabi Sikh drivers started appearing in the driver list, and that made it a big fun event for the Indian communities in Dar. Two brothers from Kenya rapidly ascended as driving stars - Joginder Singh and Jaswant Singh. They became household names among Indian boys.

In later years, after the countries gained independence, the word Coronation was dropped, and the rally became known as the East African Safari Rally. It was at that time, and still remains, the most difficult car rally in the world. In later years, many imitator events sprung up in different places in Africa, but the magic and mystique of the East African Safari rally remained.

Anand was THE EXPERT on cars – a veritable walking Encyclopaedia Britannica on Automobiles and their Technology. The rest of us just accepted his supremacy in knowledge. Looking back now, I haven't the faintest clue where any of us picked up all this car information from, for there were no auto magazines or journals lying around at school or home, but it must have been picked up from somewhere.

(***This is an ASIDE - Talking of Encyclopaedias - one evening on a visit to Prakash Raghavan's place, I found him leafing through a large beautifully illustrated book. Beaming proudly, he held up a pristine copy of Odham's Encyclopaedia for Children. No wonder he was such a fund of knowledge I thought to myself! – that was just one among his many reading interests. Not to be outdone, I made sure that I dropped sufficiently broad hints at home, so that it came to me beautifully wrapped package on my birthday later that year. Soon Koshy and Sam had acquired one too, shared between the brothers. It was a hefty tome - not the sort of thing that you could lug around borrowing from friends. Having the encyclopaedia made no difference to my intellectual abilities or capacity. Not one bit. Prakash held firm to his top place).

For us Malayalis, cultural events were largely centred around activities at the Malabar Club and at the Kerala Kala Mandalam. Besides those, the cinema was a major attraction. The main theatres in town used to be the Empire, the Odeon, and the Avalon. Those were all located in the main town centre. However, somewhere on Ring Street, some distance from where we lived, was a smaller theatre called the Azania. I think it got renamed the Chox at some later stage. In later years, after I had left, I learnt from my parents and sister that a Drive-in Cinema got built.

One of the theatres was close to St Joseph's Cathedral. …This was confirmed later on, by Jitender Balakrishnan and Shoba Rani, as the Avalon—thank you to them.....

Some years later, a new one appeared, the Empress. This one was on the way to Prakash's house, and Lillu's house. It

was much nicer, a little posher than the rest. It was here that in 1956 or 1957 we went to see the famous Biblical epic "The 10 Commandments". Charlton Heston as Moses was a striking personality whose acting was gripping and quite unforgettable. The parting of the waters of the Red Sea created a stir of excitement in the audience. A few years later, I think 1959 or 1960, Charlton Heston became talk of the school again. This time it was another magnificent movie - "Ben Hur". The famous chariot race sequence was absolutely riveting and unforgettable. The 21st century remake of Ben Hur is not a patch on the original 1950s version I saw in Dar. - It's lame. Limp. Vapid. Not worth the price of the ticket.

Way back in 1955, I can remember "The Robe" – it was billed as the 1st CinemaScope movie. I think I have mentioned it previously. I think it was screened at the Avalon. The Roman soldiers and their swords excited primary schoolboys.

For our parents, there were loads of Hindi movies that used to grace the silver screens. The songs of those 1950s Hindi movies were absolutely captivating, and to this day they remain ever fresh in my mind and bring back memories of life on Ring Street. After each movie had come and gone, Dad used to buy the records and play them at home on his much-treasured gramophone. Mum was a really good singer and would quickly learn all those songs and sing softly to herself during her daily housewife work. But she would never ever admit to it and would choke with embarrassment and rather die if we ever asked her to sing when family friends visited us. In later years, from my father, I gathered that in the early days of her marriage after coming to Dar es Salaam, the older aunties, including Aunty Achuthan and Aunty Kunjamma, would try and persuade her to sing for groups of friends but she wouldn't budge. Sometimes she and Aunty Pereira, Aunty Thankamma, and Aunty Marykutty, used to go for the Matinee shows in the afternoons as a troupe of ladies. The names of movies I remember from that time are *Azaad*, *Boot Polish*, *420*, and *Mother India*. The names of the stars I recall are Nargis, Raj Kapoor, Sunil Dutt, and the nightingale voice of Lata Mangeshkar.

However, there were other activities too. In later school years I recall attending with my parents and sister some English plays and dramas staged by the Dar es Salaam Little Theatre. Macbeth was one of them. I think the Little Theatre used to be near the Gymkhana.

Visiting artistes from other countries used to present their performances, usually in the cinema halls, and sometimes at the Arnatoglou Hall (so named after its Greek donor). Among these visitors there used to be artistes from India too. These visits from India were usually co-ordinated and arranged through the auspices of the Indian High Commissioner for British East Africa.

The post of Indian High Commissioner for British East and Central Africa was set up in 1948 by the newly independent Indian Government. Going by what I learnt in later years from my father and my uncles (Dr Joseph and Uncle Sebastian of Kilosa), it seemed that new-fledged India, emerging on the international scene, felt she had a major political interest in the East African countries. The main reason for this was, of course, the presence of the large Indian communities

that existed not just in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, but also in both the Rhodesias and in Nyasaland, and to a smaller extent in Somaliland. Ostensibly, the purpose of the post was to oversee, and assist in, the welfare of Indians living and working in these countries, but there was also a major matter of commerce and trade, which from India's side was now free of British shackles. Running alongside that objective was also the issue of remittances from these workers reaching the Indian foreign exchange coffers. (Today's remittances from the Middle East, the US, the UK and Western Europe weren't even in gestation, let alone born).

My Uncle Dr Joseph seemed to hold a different perspective about this matter. According to him, even way back after the 1st World War when he had been a medical student in London, there had been meetings of university students from India in relation to British rule in India. There had also been mutterings about Indians in East Africa, getting side-lined by the British Government in their effort to placate local African tribes, whose lands were being taken by White settlers. At that time, among Indians there was an undercurrent of resentment at the way in which Indian labourers, who had suffered hugely (many of whom had even given their lives), in building the railway networks, principally across Kenya, but also the other East African countries, had suffered a raw deal. There was discontent, for similar reasons, among Indians in Guyana, Trinidad, Fiji and Malaya. When he was recruited to the British Colonial Medical Service, he was conscious he could be posted to any of these destinations. When he learnt that he was being posted to Tanganyika, he engaged in conversations with people who had relatives in East Africa. When he arrived in Tanganyika in 1923, the large bulk of Indians were traders and businessmen, and a small phalanx of Government administrative officials. He found that the Indians were more interested in improving their circumstances rather than engage in politics.

Whatever it was, the Indian Government's initial enthusiasm and concern of 1948 did not seem to last long, and the Government policy soon turned towards guiding and assisting the advancement of Africans in their freedom struggles. Anyway, by 1954 Mr Pant was moved to another ambassadorial post and the replacement High Commissioner apparently showed less interest in local Indian residents. The Indian Government's initial interests in their welfare had begun to wane also because they realised that local Indians were now acquiring British citizenship rights which the British had begun holding out as some sort of peace offering towards a better future.

Scholars of Indian diplomacy and diplomatic history will, I am sure, have a far more informed view than what my Uncle had taken away in his memories.

Anyway, to come back to what I remembered -…. It could have been 1956 or 57……

One visiting Indian troupe remains in my memory even today. It was a performance of Indian dances. I think it was presented at the Avalon theatre near the Cathedral. There were a number of dances, with both male and female

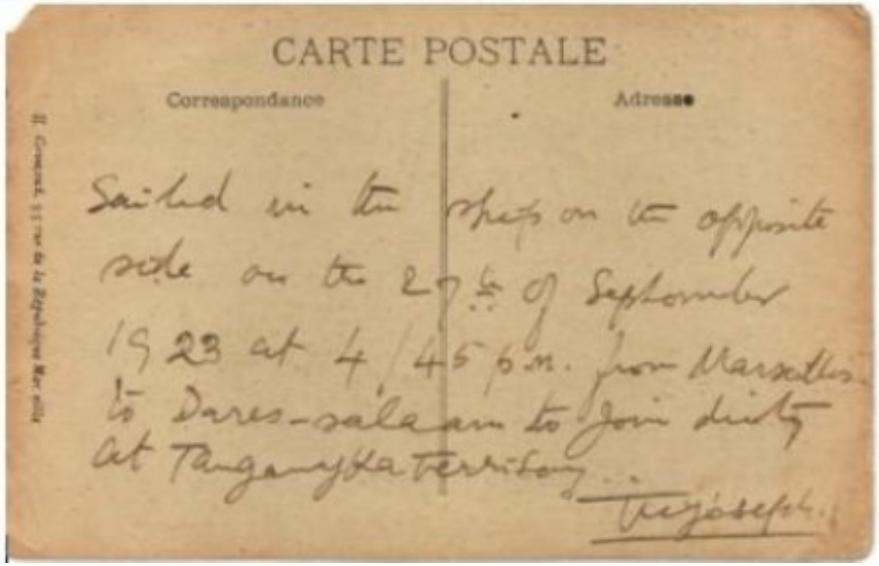
dancers, but it is the final one that utterly captivated me. A man came in bare chested, but wearing an Indian dancer's coloured silk pantaloon trousers, and a gorgeous bejewelled broad belt. From the back, he trailed a long tail of feathers. The music began, and drums beat out a soft pitter-pattering sound – the sound of rain. The dancer moved round in circles, but as the music and drummer's tempo grew faster, his choreographic movements became swifter, more elaborate, intricate and deft. Flashes of light and corresponding drum rolls represented lightning and thunder as the dancer started leaping gracefully across the stage. Suddenly there was a huge flash of light, a tremendous burst of drums, and in one electrifying moment the dancer leapt up high, landed on his feet, and simultaneously his tail of feathers sprang upright in full-fledged splendour – a huge dazzling peacock's tail. This was the Peacock Dance. The dancer was Uday Shankar.

In 1958 my Uncle Dr Joseph and Aunty decided to return home to India. Uncle was very keen to return to his rural hometown where he planned to render GP service, much the same way as he had in Dar. He wanted to devote his remaining years to India. When Aunty mentioned these plans to the Aga Khan Girls' School Board in preparation for her resignation, they were crestfallen. A delegation came from the Khoja community to meet Uncle. The brand-new Aga Khan Hospital in Nairobi had just reached completion, now they were going to embark upon building a similar hospital in Dar. They wanted "their" Dr Joseph to be involved, to be heading the project from a medical advisory point. Uncle thought over it and politely declined. This delegation then headed my father's way. They liked him because he had always been helpful to their community. They felt sure that he could persuade his elder brother to change his mind and accept their offer. My father had already been aware of these approaches to Uncle. He knew Uncle's heart was not in it. So, he had to wriggle his way out of it by saying that once his brother had decided on something, that was it.

Uncle had set his heart on returning to India. As far as he was concerned, he had put in 35 years of service for Tanganyika and now he wanted to do something for his local townspeople. The older children had already graduated in medicine, and the 3rd was now enrolled in Calcutta to do the same. Now for him and Aunty it was a question of settling the older 2 in marriage – typical of parents in those times and, - I would hazard, - still a major consideration for Malayali parents even today. Just as well that he went then because the Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es Salaam could not open its doors until 6 years later in 1964. In Pala, he set up a GP clinic adjacent to his home, and a branch clinic in our village, and was known for often treating poorer people free.

The Malayali community in Dar gave him and Aunty a big send off. It was held at the Patel Brotherhood Hall.

They left a few weeks later, sailing on the Kampala. My mother felt their going with a sense of dread and loss. Uncle as a big brother had saved her life. Aunty had been a big sister.



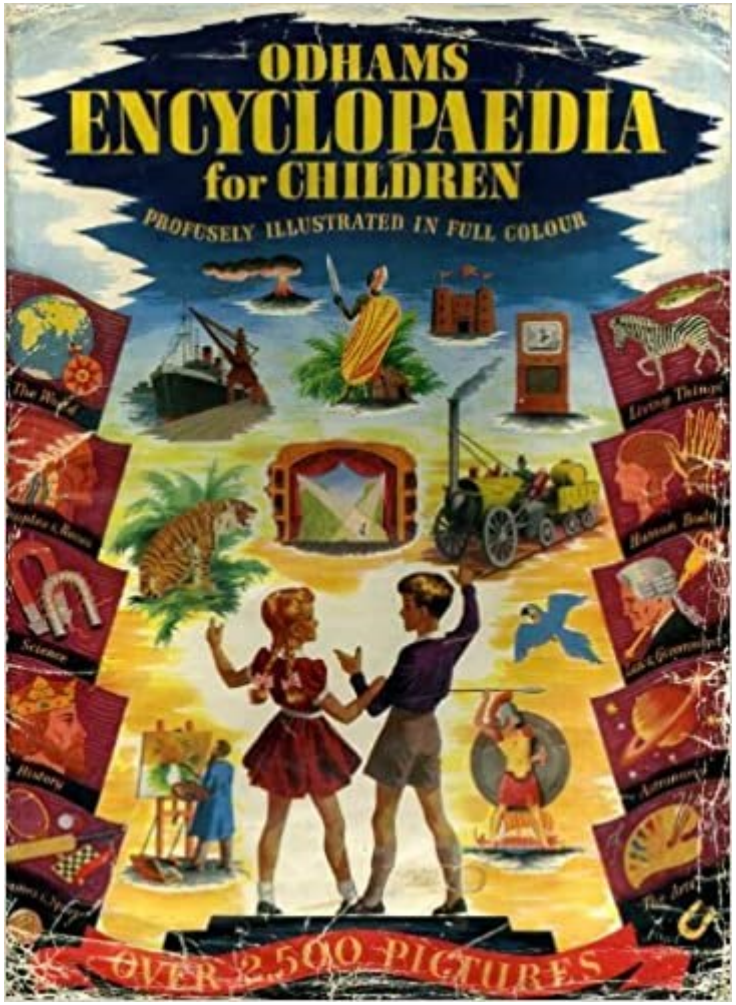
ABOVE: Dr TM Joseph Thalanany & Mrs Thankamma Joseph Thalanany, my Uncle and Aunty, prior to their departure from Dar es Salaam in 1958.

RIGHT: This postcard was enclosed in a letter from my Uncle to my father in 1923. My father was at that time a schoolboy, boarding at the St Thomas Boarding School for Boys in Pala. It sparked his imagination – …. sailing over the seas and oceans to distant lands to adventure in a dark and unknown land…..

BELOW:

The Odham's Encyclopaedia for Children

The colourful jacket of this one volume tome of knowledge for children was instantly recognisable in those days and was a promise of the profusion of coloured pictures inside



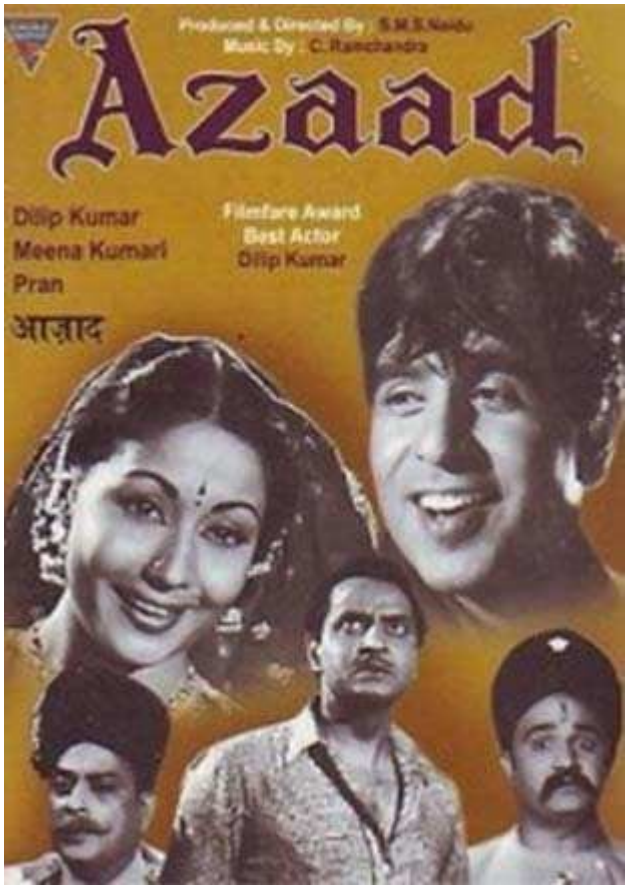
ABOVE:

The inner cover pages of the book were a delight to behold. There, - decked out in the finery of their respective national dress, - were peoples from all over the world. The names of countries from where these people came from were as exotic as the pictures — Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Mongolia, ….distant faraway lands that led childhood imaginations run riot.

Inside was storehouse of information on various things, presented in a captivating way on page after page, each lavishly illustrated with colourful pictures — just the thing to gain the attention of young minds. Full page pictures of battleships, of planes, of birds, of fishes, and so on.

A far cry from the IPads, tablets and game consoles of today.

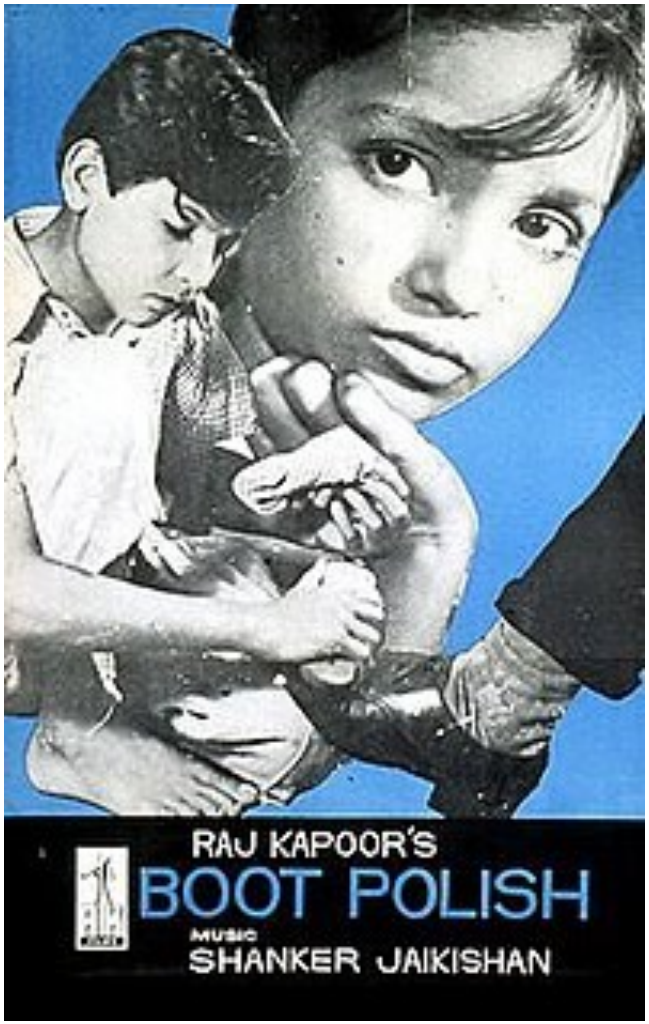
Pictures from: Children's Bookshop.com and Worth Point



ABOVE & RIGHT:

Posters from Azaad and Boot Polish, hit Hindi movies of the mid-50s.

Pictures from IMDB



ABOVE:

The legendary actress Nargis Dutt acted as Radha in the 1957 Hindi movie 'Mother India' - a movie that became a classic, an all time great.

Picture from India New England News

1959 - (..probably...).....THE MUSIC SCENE...SEASIDE PICNICS....& PLANES.....

I'll continue with the 1950s and do a little "time travel cha-cha-cha" – stepping forward in time, dwelling 3 steps on the spot, then stepping back in time, dwelling 3 steps on the spot, then forward again and so on……annoying, isn't it..?..

Western singers were very much in vogue among the school-going generation of the later 50s. "Top of the Pops" stood Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard, and everyone waited eagerly to learn their new songs. Word got round that Cliff Richard was actually an Indian, then that changed to Cliff was an Anglo-Indian, then that he was born in Calcutta, and so on…. he became sort of "adopted", as it were, by Indian boys. When his sister Donna got married there was a big picture of him in the Tanganyika Standard.

Prashanth Achuthan was our local Malayali Elvis. Elvis's "Wooden Heart" was one of the songs he sang for us one evening at a Kerala Kala Mandalam function. Another one that he sang that night was "Jailhouse Rock". Elvis' deep voice contrasted with that of the fresh voice of Cliff Richard who was relatively much younger. Prashanth favoured singing Elvis' songs, and he regaled us also with old Western campfire songs like "Old Macdonald had a farm", and "She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes". Later on, Indian adaptations occurred – "She'll be wearing 2 silk sarees when she comes", "She'll be wearing *salwar khameez* when she comes", "She'll be wearing anklet bells when she comes"….

But there had been other English songs and singers that had been popular even before my move to Azania. Jim Reeves had been a favourite as also Pat Boone. Their mellow voices were very soothing, nostalgic and often carried an undertone of sadness. And among women singers Doris Day singing "*Que sera sera*" still rings in my ears.

Moving back even further in time, maybe 1954 or 1955, I remember once when my older cousin Dolly Joseph had come home from Bombay for a holiday, (Dollammama as we called her) she taught Betty, Libby, Benny and I to sing "Down in the Valley", another sweet, and yet sad song. Gene Autry's "Red River Valley" was in similar vein.

Her elder brother, Toby, (Tobychayan), (also a Dr Matthew Thalanany – ?remember that thing I wrote about some weeks ago about Syrian Christians naming 1st born sons after the paternal grandfather, and the 2nd born after the maternal grandfather…??.....it's a habit that has died out I think in modern day Kerala maybe because it's no longer seen as fashionable….well…mmmm…I think it's a pity....). Anyway, he had come home after graduation from Stanley Medical College in Madras. He bought records of "O Bernardine" by Pat Boone, and "Volare" and "Sway with me" by Dean Martin to take back to India. Harry Belafonte's "Down the bay, where the nights are gay" was a firm favourite with all of us.

In complete contrast to those sad sorts of songs was "Jambo! when you say Hello!", a catchy cheerful song, from "West of Zanzibar", a movie actually shot in Kenya, but supposedly connected to Tanganyika. I don't remember seeing the movie, but it was supposed to be great fun, a spiffing adventure.

Way back even further, when I was quite small, I remember a few songs that my mother used to sing to me or sing along with Aunty Pereira from upstairs – some of those still remain my favourite songs – "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine", and "Whether skies are grey or blue", and Gracie Fields' wartime classic "Wish me luck, here I go, on my way…."

Anyway, coming back to the late 50s, Rock and Roll dancing hit the scene. It became so popular among the older youth and there was a competition one weekend. I think I've previously mentioned how, if my memory serves me right, Uncle David's brother's daughter Norma danced (..was it with Ravi Kuldas?..). She won the 1st prize that evening – with the Tanganyika Standard carrying a big picture of them dancing. Fast forward a couple of years or so, towards the early 60s, rock n' roll got supplanted by the Twist, and hula hoops became a fashionable thing for girls to twirl around their waists.

By this stage Betty and Benny were in the boarding at St Joseph's. They came home for weekends. My sister Libby and I eagerly looked forward to those weekends. So much fun! So much playing together again!

Now and again Dad used to take us children out for picnics, to Msimbazi Mission Farm or Kunduchi Beach. We loved the farm but preferred the beach even more. Mum used to pack her large, multi-tiered, stainless steel tiffin full of warm *porotthas* and '*motta roast*' curry, cutlets and *samosas*, and other stuff, and there would be '*kikappus'* of soft drinks – Coke, Fanta, Portello – drinks which we were only allowed on occasions like these and certainly not every day. The time was filled with splashing in the water, collecting a variety of seashells, (whilst shouting out "She sells sea shells on the seashore" at the top of our voices. The beach was practically ours – not a soul in sight. At low tide we would go out a fair distance, but I remember once, when we had lingered too long, being hauled back by an angry Dad who had been keeping an eye on the distant tide gradually creeping in. I was the eldest, at around 10 or 11,…. - didn't I know better?! Shouldn't I have been more responsible for the younger ones under my charge?!.....(Useless to try and interject that Betty was just as old as me, just 3 weeks younger, and could be/ should be included in the scolding – no point – you see Dads always have a soft corner for their girls, never a finger is laid on them or voices raised in anger… – it's the boys who get the whacks!....). It was a delight catching small crabs, getting nipped by some, upon which you hurriedly dropped them, and they scurried off sideways into their burrows, or catching little fish and putting them into empty glass jam jars, and taking them home and feeding them breadcrumbs. Then, out of great loving concern, to give them a change from the stale sea water, we changed it to tap water, and the poor little things promptly went belly-up,

circling wildly in the jar, and died in a few hours.

Betty and Benny told us of a new Goan male teacher they had. I forget his name, but he was apparently a rather odd character and not much liked. He soon got pejoratively nick-named "Poonk" by the boys. He got married and the poor lady promptly got labelled "Poonkess", and then in due course of biological time, "Poonklet" arrived on the scene. It then became a fashion among the boys at St Joseph's boarding to sing (out of earshot of the nuns, of course), "O when the Poonk, O when the Poonk, O when the Poonk comes marching in, Poonkess and Poonklet follow, O when the Poonk comes marching in…." – all this sung to the tune of "O when the saints, O when the saints, O when the saints come marching in". Some years later, after I left for India, the song "O When the Saints" became more popular and famous when Louis Armstrong ("Satchmo"), visited Dar in 1964. His raspy bass voice singing this song was an international hit.

One evening after collecting Betty and Benny from the boarding, we paid Uncle & Aunty Sukumaran a visit. Nirmala, ever cheerful, asked what latest songs we knew……and then proceeded to sing "Why am I so Starry-eyed", made popular at that time by Michael Holliday with his smooth baritone voice. Ever since then when I hear that song, I remember Nirmala, who was otherwise more renowned for her dances at the Kalamandalam and Malabar Club evenings.

My sister Libby was to start school, but she was not going to St Joseph's. The Goan community had, over the years, scrimped and saved to put up a primary school for the needs of the Goan community in Changombe. It was actually open to all communities, but I only remember seeing people of Indian origin there. It was on the way to Temeke, on the left-hand side. Being Goan in its conceptual origins, it was, of course, dedicated to St Francis Xavier, the missionary priest who had brought Christianity to Goa – and thus it was named St Francis Xavier's School. It was more colloquially known as the Goan School. The building had been designed by the renowned local Goan architect, Tony Almeida, (Mr Anthony Almeida), who knew my father and used to consult Dad on matters pertaining to the electric supply and the distribution network for the school. The building was quite distinctive, brown and cream, standing out against the grassy fields and trees that served as a backdrop, and set in a little from the main road. To me it looked like a giant Hohner's mouth organ. The teachers were largely Goan, and quite a few had previously taught at St Joseph's. The boys wore a uniform of coffee brown shorts and blue shirts, and the girls were attired in blue blouses and similar brown pinafore dresses, with brown sash like belts at the waist. They didn't have extensive playing grounds like Azania had, and were fairly restricted in what games and sports they could indulge in. After all, it was a primary school, not a secondary school.

On the ground floor was a large verandah, held up by pillars and columns. The verandah space was used for school assembly and, for a short period, was used as a venue for celebrating Holy Mass for Changombe Catholics. The Goans had also contributed heavily to the setting up of a mission station in Temeke, where priests from the cathedral were

posted. In course of time, it became a regular parish, and the next phase was the building of the church further down the years. Once the mission building was built, and the clergy were in place, the parish hall was built, and temporarily it became the parish church. So Holy Mass and other services now moved from the school verandah to the new parish hall. The Goans were not a very wealthy community, working mostly as clerks and secretaries in Government service and in company offices, but it was a matter of honour and pride for them to set up a place of worship for their community in Changombe, dedicated to St Francis Xavier. A few years more of hard savings on their part, supplemented by mission funds from abroad, and quite substantial contributions from the rest of us parishioners, would eventually see the establishment of a proper church in Temeke, set in the heart of the African quarter.

In the latter half of the 50s, a new airport was constructed way outside town. The old airport of the 30s and 40s, located in Kurasini, and whose outskirts came close to Changombe, was closed down. It was on the periphery of that old airport that we, Uncle & Aunty Morais, and Uncle Daniel and family lived.

From my memory, the road to the new airport of the 1950s ran towards Pugu, and towards the prison, and it had the railway track running alongside on an embankment. What I remember of this new airport is a single terminal building, a few hangars, and the air control tower standing by the terminal in proud isolation. When it had opened, there had been an aerial display from fighter jets (probably the RAF, thinking back now), which gave us a lot of pleasure and excitement. Those thundering flying machines, swooping down and up! and this way and that! – o what a marvel !!.....

With the opening of the new airport, air traffic to and via Dar es Salaam opened up more than it had done in the previous decades. The two major airlines that operated then that I recall, were BOAC, the British Overseas Airways Corporation, and EAA, East African Airways. Dar es Salaam was now capable of receiving large commercial jet liners. The first of these that landed at the new airport was the Comet 4. Up until then we had only seen the humble prop-driven Dakotas that had served as the workhorse of the skies for decades. It always stood at an angle as if poised for instant take-off. On rare occasions, I remember in the early 50s, we would see seaplanes in Dar es Salaam harbour. They were indeed a very rare sight. The only ones that I can remember were the Latham and the Saunders Roe. These would fly in and land in the Kurasini Creek, the propellers circling just above water level, and make their way into the harbour, skimming and swishing across the waves. I once had a chance to go and see one with Dad and Mum and some office friends of his (….no idea who they were…). It was very luxurious inside, laid out like a lounge and dining room, but not many seats. I thought all planes were like that – No, not at all I discovered many, many years later.

The Comet 4 was a very different creature. The thunderous roar of its 4 mighty Rolls Royce turbo jet engines brought a real thrill to schoolboys. It's beautiful, elegant outlines as it soared effortlessly through the African skies could captivate and fire up the imagination of any boy's heart. Sadly, it didn't last long and was withdrawn from service a decade or two

later for engineering design faults. It was one of the most beautiful jet liners designed to fly the skies, and some of that beauty was later inherited by the French-made Caravelle jet liner, with its sleek outlines and rear-mounted Rolls Royce engines, later exchanged for Pratt-Whitney engines. These used to fly across Bangalore when I was a student there – don't remember whether these were Air India or Indian Airlines flights. The Caravelle was not quite as sleek and elegant as the Comet 4. The only other passenger plane that I really liked, though I never flew in it, was the Anglo-French Concorde of the mid-70s. It was another beauty queen of the skies, but it too was withdrawn from service after the terrible crash at Charles De Gaulle Airport, Paris, in July 2000.

In spite of the thrill of those wonderful flying machines that go up to the up, up, and come down to the down, down, I still have a longing for the old ship travel. In those days going by ship was a routine form of travel for us, -- today you have to pay thousands of pounds for the sort of voyage that we took for granted in those days. The comfort, the luxury, the amount of fun that we had,-- all unforgettable, - can never be replicated in air travel. Of course, yes, admitted, - air travel has made things very convenient for us all in terms of time saved, and ease and speed of travel, and it has shrunk the globe to an extent unimaginable to my grandparents and their generation of their era. But sitting for long hours, cooped up in a metal tube, with your elbows digging into the flanks of the person next to you, as you struggle with plastic cutlery to down the pre-heated food served on board, is not very pleasant in my view, -- unless of course you are rich enough, or employed well enough to qualify, to travel 1st Class or Business Class all the time.

I don't know why, - but suddenly, - in the context of writing all this, I remember 3 or 4 other Dar es Salaam children. (….''The Railway Children''…!!...does anyone remember that title…?....). If you turned left at the T junction where Kandala Building was, (I forget the name of that main road, whatever it was), you came to the house (ground floor flat) of Uncle and Aunty Koshy. From my recollection, Uncle worked for the Railways. They had 2 children, Rajan Koshy and Rajamma Koshy (I forget their actual Christian names). Rajan was just a little junior to me. He could have been at Azania, but I don't remember. Many years later, while I was at Loyola, I met Rajan Koshy in Bombay, where he was studying at the Elphinstone College for his degree. The other family I remember was the Johnson family. Uncle Johnson worked for the Railways. They lived in area called the Railway Quarters – I forget the area and location. They had a number of children of whom I remember the eldest son, (I think he was called Thampi or Thamban), and then Raju Johnson, who was my age. Raju was at Azania; I think in the same year group as me but in another class stream. I met Raju Johnson once, (again when I was in Loyola), and he was studying at Madras Christian College in Tambaram.

[*A Happy Footnote** — A few weeks after I had posted this piece, in which I had mentioned Raju Johnson and his brother Thampan, I was happy to see Jeevan Thampi's message letting us know that Raju Johnson had joined the EAMM Group. Today he is Professor Ninan John in Chennai and we have reconnected since**]**.

Talking of Railway Quarters brings back to mind a lovely-natured, really pleasant girl by name Margaret Vincent whose father also worked in the Railways Department. I think she stayed throughout at St Joseph's or maybe she moved to Jangwani – I can't remember now – she was around my age…..

At some stage during this period my father was invited to join the Dar es Salaam Cultural Society. This was something of a high-brow group in Dar es Salaam. My father never fancied himself as particularly high-brow, - no, not by a long shot, - but he liked the evening events they used to present on varying themes. These ranged across law, politics, engineering, scientific discovery and innovation and so on. They often invited speakers from abroad.

Once he came back saying how impressed he had been by a high-ranking United States judge who had addressed the issue of black civil rights in the US. The man's name was Thurgood Marshall, - he later rose to become the 1st African-American to sit on the bench of US Supreme Court Justices. On another occasion he told us of a talk given by Professor Louis Leakey who entertained the assembled audience with a scintillating discussion of palaeoanthropology while displaying the skull of *Zinjanthropus* that he had discovered in Olduvai Gorge.

Then one evening, I think in 1959, my father asked us to join him in going to town - the Society had invited a distinguished guest whom, he said, we might be interested in seeing, even though we couldn't actually join the meeting. We could go to church and then wait at the harbour front. This function was to be held at the Avalon cinema theatre near the Cathedral.

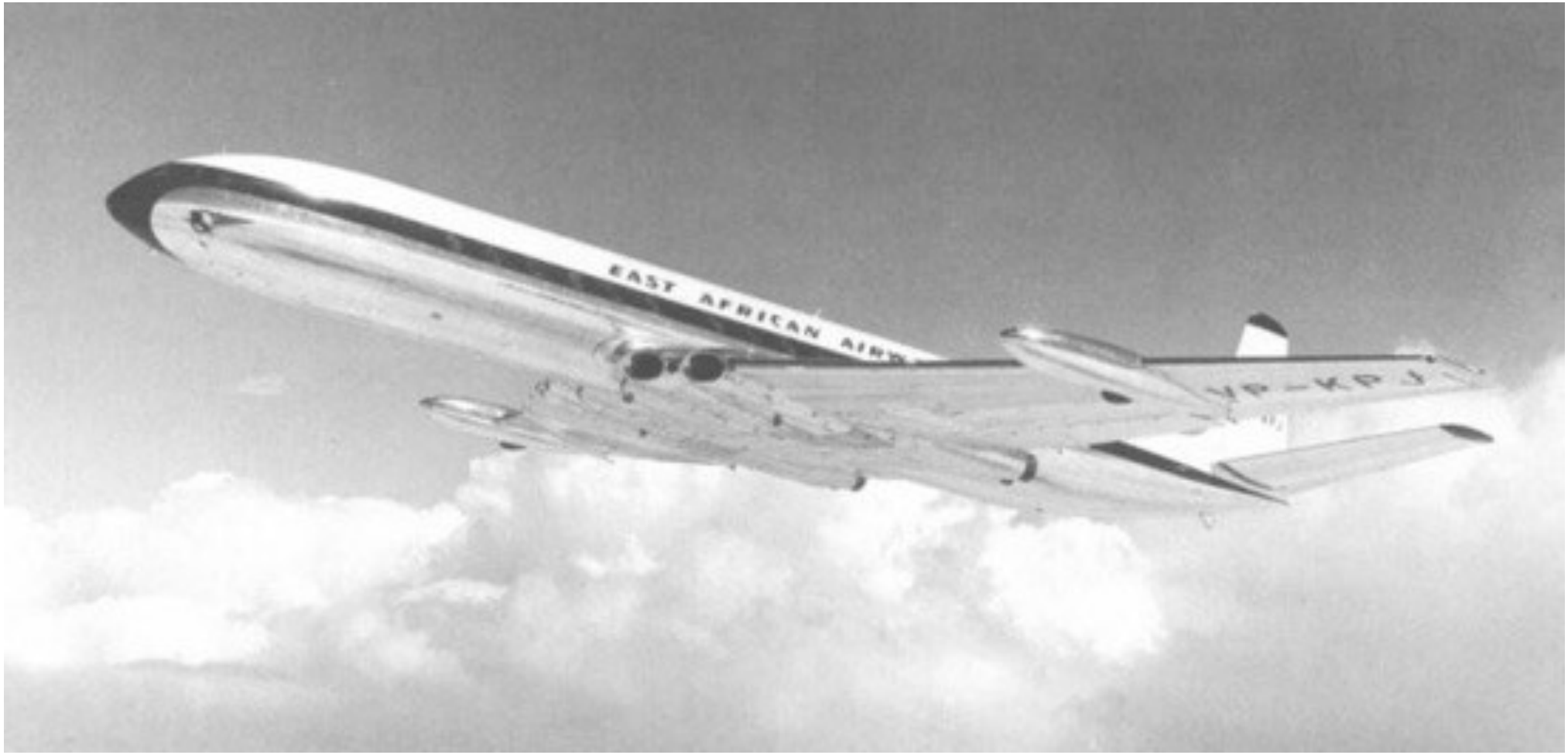
When we arrived, there was already a large crowd waiting on the pavements and across the road, including a huge number of Indians and press photographers and reporters. The limousine arrived, and out stepped a graceful figure, clad in a sari, who raised her palms in *Namaste*, and was escorted up by the Indian High Commissioner for British East Africa. Down the steps came a slim African man to welcome her and greet her. My mother pointed him out and said that this was Julius Nyerere, the leader of the TANU Party. The lady was the President of the Indian National Congress, Indira Gandhi.

When my father drove us home that evening, he spoke with immense pride of how this small highly articulate Indian woman had utterly captivated and enthralled the entire audience of Africans, Indians, and Europeans with her commanding presence, her wit, her fluency, her eloquence and her breadth of knowledge, not only of Africa but of international affairs, as she spoke of justice, freedom, emancipation and self-sacrifice – points that resonated with the Africans in the audience and particularly with the up and coming Julius Nyerere.

****

ABOVE: The sturdy old Dakota that used to be the mainstay of air travel in East Africa during the 40s and 50s.

Picture courtesy of East African Airways



ABOVE: The De Havilland Comet 4 which started flying in East Africa in the late 1950s

Picture courtesy of East African Airways

ABOVE: An Indian Airlines Caravelle of the late 60s

Picture courtesy of Jimmy Wadia

RIGHT: The 'new' Dar es Salaam airport built in the 1950s

BELOW: A BOAC Boeing 314A - this was somewhat similar to the Saunders Roe that I vaguely remember seeing as a young boy in the early 50s.

Picture: Courtesy of Poole Flying Boats Celebration

LEFT: A BOAC Empire C-Class flying boat or seaplane, the Cleopatra, which used to fly in and out of Dar es Salaam harbour on a regular basis in the 1940s.

Picture Courtesy: Poole Flying Boat Celebration

G-AFRA Cleopatra was relocated from Poole to Durban for ops on the Horseshoe Route… and became once more the Queen of the River Nile

When I wrote to the Poole Flying Boat Celebration Club, requesting permission to use their picture of the Boeing 3414A on the previous page, the secretary responded with courteous assent but pointed out that none of BOAC's Boeing 314As had ever landed in Dar es Salaam. The only one that had, had been a Pan Am 314A. She kindly sent me two more pictures, of which one was that of a plane that used to regularly land in Dar es Salaam harbour. This was the Cleopatra, which used to land regularly on the Nile en route from Durban to Poole.

From: Poole Flying Boats Celebration <info@pooleflyingboats.com>
Sent: 17 November 2021 18:11
To: Matthew Thalanany
Subject: RE: requesting permission to use a picture from your website

Dear Matthew

The Photo of the flying Boat (named as Cleopatra) will follow by a separate email asap…

This Photo is in front of St. Joseph's Cathedral… (my memory of it as St. Basil's failed me) !

Dear friend Capt. James Peers is the left of the trio of the BOAC Captains who is pointing.

Very best wishes

Aimee

ABOVE: Email I received from the Secretary to the Poole Flying Boat Celebration Club providing some information on seaplane flights in Dar es Salaam harbour.

RIGHT: BOAC Flight Captains who used to fly through Dar es Salaam harbour. On the left, Captain James Peers, who later became the Air Commodore for the Poole Flying Boat Celebration Club. The outline of St Joseph's Cathedral can just about be seen in the background.

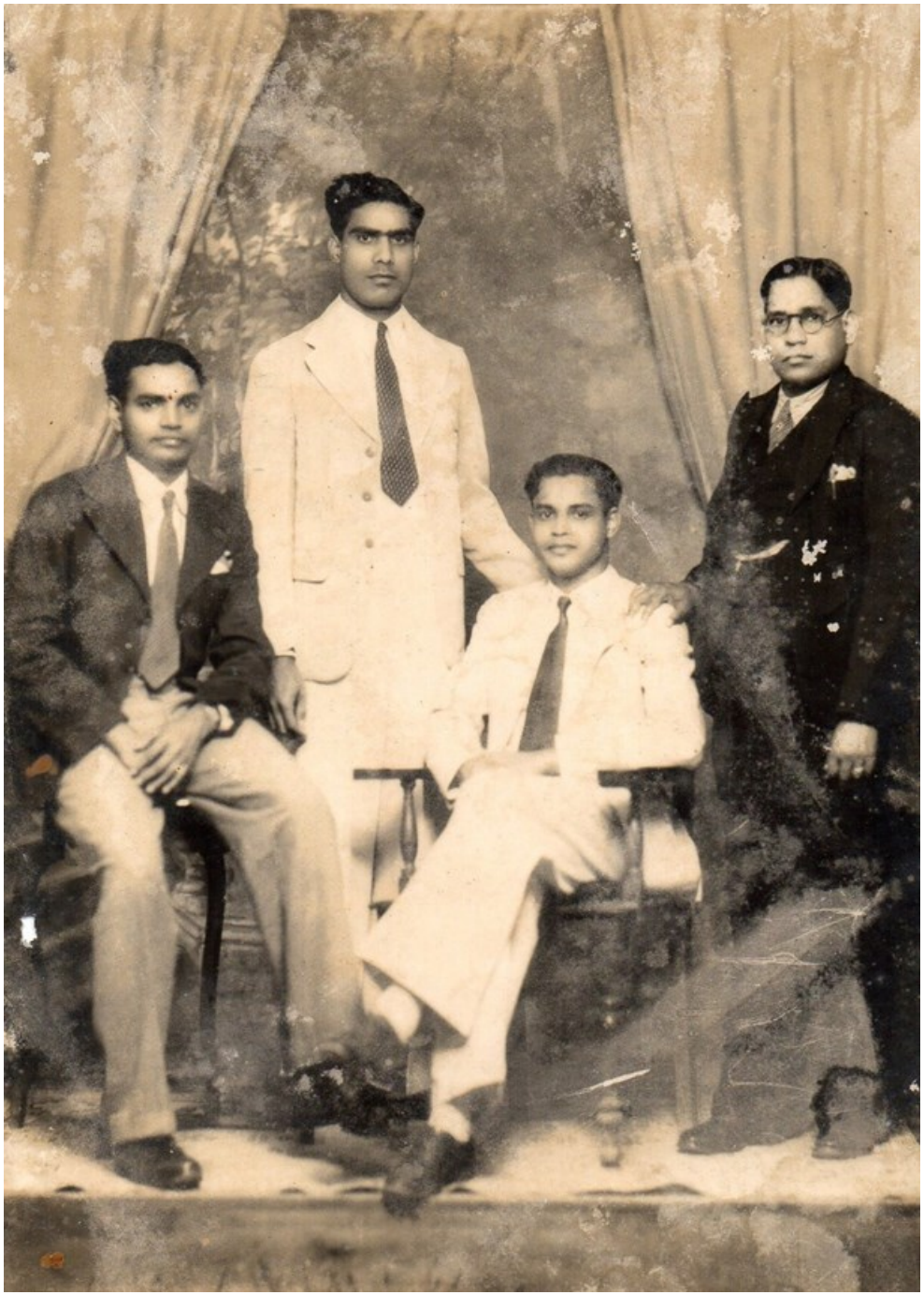
Courtesy: Poole Flying Boat Celebration Club

A WALKBACK TO THE 1940s.....

My father and some of his fiends who used to live in Mani Bhavan as bachelors in the early 40s. My father is sitting on the extreme right in a dark suit and wearing spectacles.

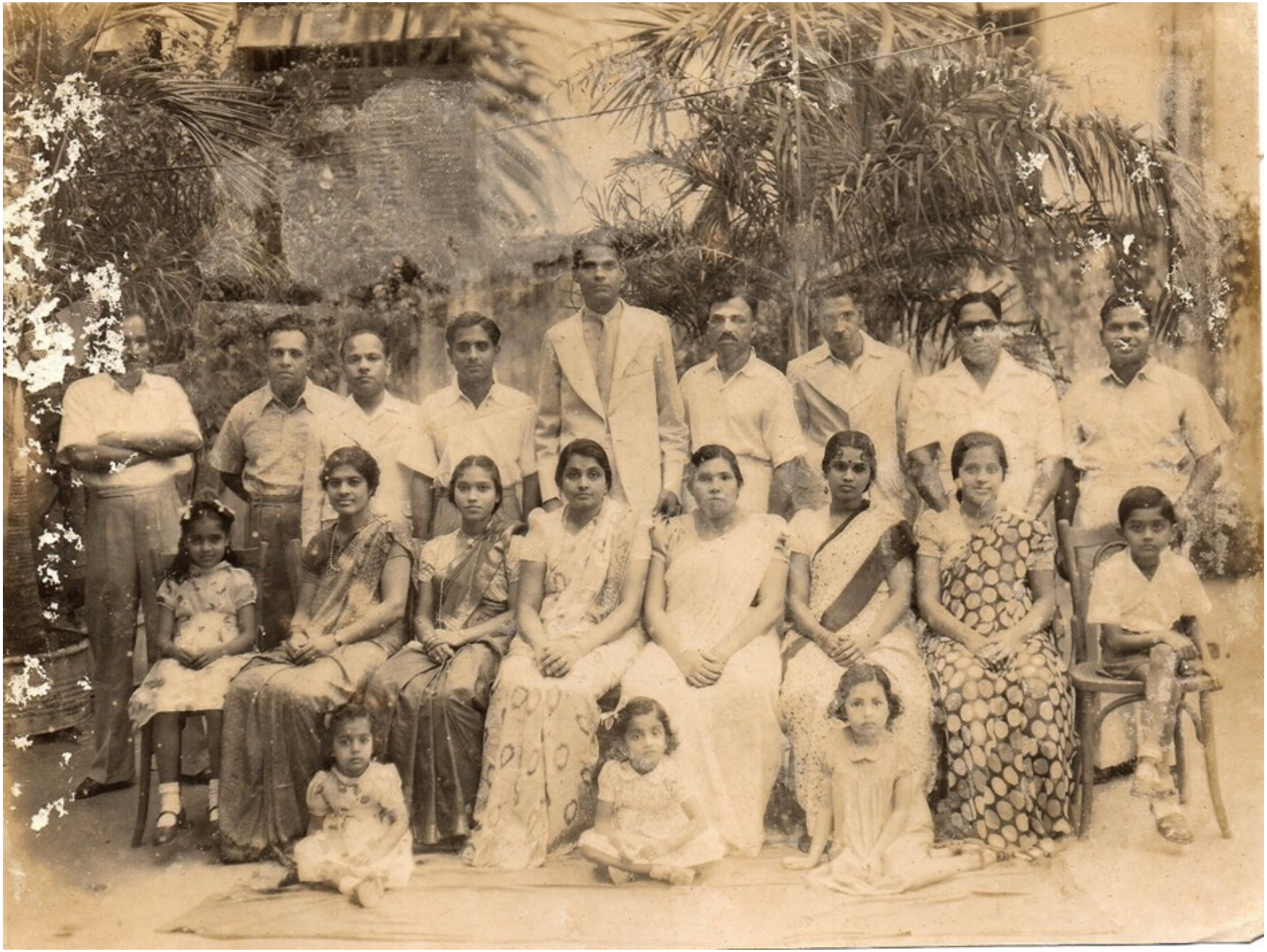
I didn't know who the other gentlemen were, but after I posted this picture on the What's group site, Molly Abraham (neé Kamicheril) identified the gentleman in the middle, wearing the white suit, as Mr Kurian Alapatt. Mr Alapatt moved to Nairobi later, but prior to his retirement and return to India, he visited his friends in Dar es Salaam one last time in 1956 or thereabouts. He was given a grand send-off. I have mentioned that event somewhere in an earlier chapter.

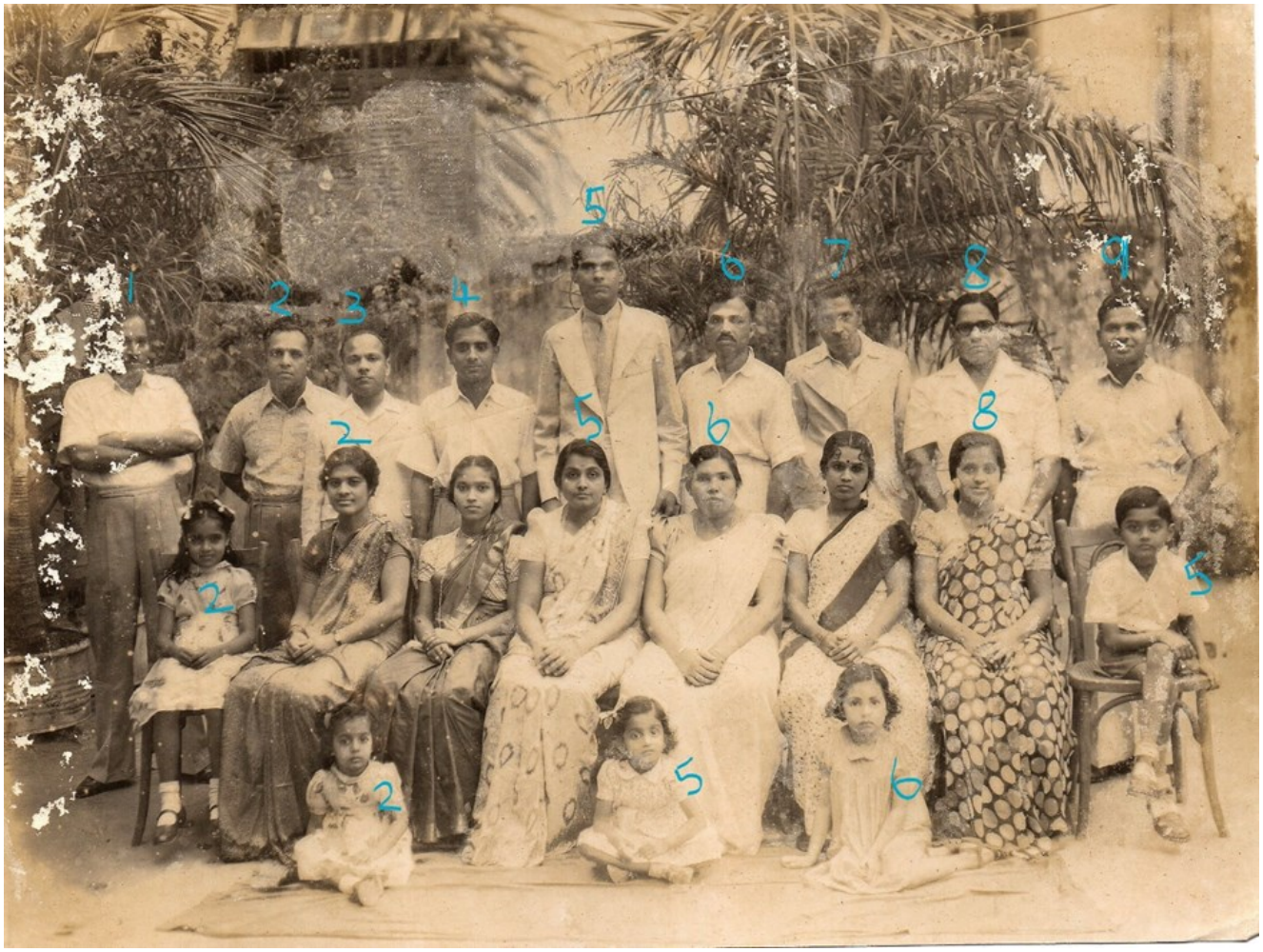
In that I had described how, at the send-off party at our flat in Ring Street, my mother had served 36 small chicken , stuffed and roasted, as the main dish of the evening for the crowd of guests. Yes! Thirty-six!!...She was a great host-ess in those days. All that party activity ceased when she became a very sick person within an year or so after that.



From Left to Right – seated, Uncle Ipe in dark jacket; standing, Uncle Philip Kamicheril (Molly Abraham's Uncle) in white suit; seated, Uncle Idiculla, who later moved to Nairobi; in dark suit at extreme right, my father.

This picture was taken at "shambaa" house sometime in late 1946 or early 1947. I have posted it twice here: one with numbers (overleaf) and this one here, without. The numbers refer to the couples and families and not just individuals.





Names of the Uncles & Aunties/ families whom I know: **Left to Right-**

No 1. Uncle Shivaraman Pillai – I do not remember Aunty.

No 2. Uncle Chackochan (Mr Jacob Mathew), Aunty Kunjamma, Monsy sitting next to Aunty, with double bows in her hair (they are Aunty Grace Samuel's relatives – Monsy is Dr Annie Samuel, lives in Sheffield UK), on the ground, is Gertie (Rebecca), now in Las Vegas. The 2 little ones, Flossie and Lettie are not yet born.

No 3. …?...

No 4. – Aunty Grace Samuel's uncle, Mr Cherian, and his wife sitting in front of him.

No. 5. -Uncle Kunjunny Nayar (Uncle MK Nayar), Aunty Susheela, Lillu sat in front of Aunty, and Vasu sitting to the extreme right.

No. 6. – Uncle Raman Pillai, Aunty and Vijaya. Vijaya's younger sister Girija was not yet born at this stage.

No. 7. ?? Uncle Damodaran Nair / Uncle Govinda Pillai ?.., and I think it is Aunty sitting in front of him, but I cannot remember her well..

No. 8. My father and my mother – I am not in the picture—I had not yet appeared on planet Earth.

No. 9. I think this is Uncle Krishna Pillai…

1960 - LIFE AT SCHOOL, LIFE IN CHANGOMBE….

In 1960 my sister Libby was ready for her First Holy Communion. In contrast to the very grand affair that Betty and I had experienced at the Cathedral in 1955, this was a rather scaled down event. There were far less children overall, and I don't think it was held at the Cathedral, I think it was at the temporary church in the parish hall in Changombe. Of course, Uncle Kilosa and Aunty Pennamma came down from Kilosa – they were Libby's godparents. Betty and Benny came from the boarding. Their youngest brother Tommy was only a little boy then, but nowhere as mischievous as Benny used to be at that age. Uncle Morais and Aunty Tessy from next door were like family members, helping out hugely in all the home celebration preparations. Aunty Pennamma and my mother had as usual turned out a big repast for Uncles and Aunties who came to visit and wish Libby well. As in Betty's case some years ago, Libby's Communion dress had to be tailored by a Goan lady in Changombe whose name I forget. She was a kindly soul, very skilled in stitching and embroidery. In later years I have always wondered at the fact that these are only one-time occasion clothes – well no, no quite right, - 2 times, 2 occasion clothes, – because it was the same outfit, both boys and girls wore to their Holy Confirmation a couple of years later. After those occasions, my mother would give away these special clothes, through the local parish priest, to poor African families where there was a child waiting to receive First Holy Communion. There is often an innate desire to honour the Almighty, even in the matter of one's apparel – I remember how our mothers made sure that we always wore our best clothes to church on Sundays and at Christmas and at Easter. I suppose that these simple little acts of human faith and humility contribute in their own way to a fuller human existence.

…..

One thing that I remember about the normal school day in Dar es Salaam was how we would start early around 7.30 or 8am and finish off by 1pm. It gave us time to come home, rest a little, finish off homework, and then by 4pm, dash out to play. In the evenings, our interest in cycle rides began to supplant the volleyball and badminton games, and as soon as we could, we would scramble and dash off to each other's houses. Sometimes it would be the simultaneous ringing of cycle bells at the front door which would alert me – Koshy, Sam, Bonnie and Arif would be waiting there, poised for take-off. Sometimes, an English boy Charles Dalton would be there too. My mother would insist on them coming in, and she would set out plates of "*ethakkappam*", or "*vadda*" or "*bonda*" or "*suhiyan*", whatever it was that she had prepared that afternoon as "*Naahllu mani palaharam*". All of us would hurriedly gobble those down, put 1 or 2 in the shirt pocket, where it would then leave a slight oil stain, and with cries of "Thank you Aunty, ….Bye Aunty Mammykutty, ….Bye Mummy", we would shoot off. It used to be the same at Aunty Daniel's place the following day – Aunty Chinamma was an expert in baking different sorts of cakes, and biscuits and in making puddings. They were lovely and we used to scoff quite a few before setting off.

Our house and the Daniel house were the 2 assembly points for the simple reason that these were the 2 households closest to the old airport. Cycling at great speed along the old runway, in a race was the first thing, and then, when tired from that, the rides became more exploratory. We found places in the bush, off the beaten track, where we could get mangoes in season, or cashew fruits, all apparently growing wild, belonging to no one, and wanted by no one. In 1960 we began to see construction activity beginning at the extreme far end of the airport, way beyond the end of the runway and field, and soon we realised that this is what we had heard of in the news, the building of the new stadium in preparation for the independence celebrations. It was the National Stadium, later re-named Uhuru Stadium. We would cycle to the periphery to see the work, and then ride on again, sometimes aimlessly, and then get back home as dark began to fall.

Around that same time, Uncle Daniel embarked on a construction project. The Daniel family was in close fraternity with English missionaries of the Brethren Mission. Mr John Dalton and family and Mr Martin and family lived in Changombe and used to lead the prayer services which were held, turn by turn, at the residence of one of these 3 families. But as the numbers of children attending grew, more space was needed and a new chapel was built, financed largely by Uncle Daniel, who gave his time and energy free, as well as procuring the materials. It was named the Dar es Salaam Chapel. It was built on the right side of the road where Damas Road curved round on its first bend. The chapel was very modern in styling, with a pentagon shaped front, and a slender spear-like concrete shaft, affixed to one side of the façade, rising perpendicularly to the sky. The interior was very plain and simple, with an organ and rows of benches and a lectern. It struck me that there was no altar, and there were no adornments and ornate features like statues and candles and so on, which I was accustomed to in Catholic churches. Invitations went out to all heads of households in the neighbourhood for the Inaugural Day service.

Later on, I used to go sometimes and sit with Koshy, Sam Bonnie and the other chaps to listen to their music and hymn practice. Quite a few Malayali boys and girls started attending. Among them were a brother and sister, cousins of Mabel and Melville Ipe – they were Cecily and Prince George. I think their dad was Uncle Samuel George, but I don't remember more, except that Prince joined our school and was junior to us. Cecily was at Jangwani Girls. Uncle TO George's son, Prince, used to attend too sometimes. There were 2 other Uncle Georges in Dar es Salaam , but I forget their initials. Both of them were very cheerful loquacious gentlemen, one short, one tall. Aunty Kambil has previously mentioned, in one of her episodes, how people were given nicknames just to distinguish them from others. Both these Uncle Georges had nicknames to distinguish them from the other Georges. One because he was loquacious, the other for his short stature. The taller Uncle George had 2 children – Leela and her younger brother, whose name I forget – it might have been Ronnie. Leela was at Jangwani. She was a really cheerful girl, a good sport. She was junior to us - by 1 year, I think. Little were we to know then, that in a year or two, she would leave us.

Transportation to and from school was a shared task between parents, but soon our Malayali teacher Uncles in Changombe devised a solution. Koshy, Anand and I would join Uncle Sathyanathan and Bonnie in his 2-tone coloured Hillman Minx. Reggie I think was at St Joseph's and Lambie (Lambert), was still a very small boy, but tall for his age even then. At other times it would be lifts with Uncle NM Pillai. Uncle NM Pillai never taught our class but was ever obliging, giving us lifts in his light grey Peugeot 203. Aunty would come out in the morning with their little baby son, whose name I forget, to bid us farewell. He soon learned to speak, and would say "Anand, come soon, come soon". Leela would sit in front. Anand and I would sit at the back and pontificate over everything under the sun, while Bonnie sneered at us. Sometimes we went beyond the limit that Uncle could tolerate, and he would shut us up with a stern rebuke. This would give Leela great glee. Now and again, when the teacher Uncles couldn't manage those runs, Uncle Daniel used to send his company Peugeot pick-up and driver. We would sit in the back, having a whale of a time. Drop-off point was near Mr Texeira's nice bungalow set in an equally nice garden. From there we would walk our respective ways home where lunch would be waiting.

At school, at recess time, Swahili hawkers would sell slices of cucumber sprinkled with salt and red chilli powder alongside roasted peanuts and *mandazi*. To supervise them was one of the watchmen, an ageing old chap called Pengo, in khaki shirt and shorts and wearing a red fez cap. He had a wide grin on his face always and when his lips parted, it revealed a largely toothless mouth, but a striking feature was one large protruding yellowed tooth in the centre of that smile. Sometimes the *mandazi* would have a hole in the centre to resemble doughnuts. Kulwant Singh, a tall already bearded youth in our class, good at hockey, would jokingly say that Pengo had been up all night, puncturing holes in the *mandazi*, to make it look like a doughnut. That still did not put off people from buying and eating them. Collecting Coke bottle tops became a fad, because you could collect a certain number, exchange them at certain shops, and in return, collect a small white plastic replica of every large animal of East African wildlife. It used to be advertised in the Tanganyika Standard, with a collection of these little replicas shown picturesquely arranged in a backdrop of the wild East African countryside. The advert said they were made of "ivorine", which to my clueless, ignorant mind (yes - in spite of reading encyclopaedias…), meant it was made from ivory. Imagine the deflation on discovering that they were nothing more than mass-produced white pieces of plastic. Nevertheless, I kept on collecting them, just as I collected picture cards of exotic wild birds and wild animals from packets of Brooke Bond Tea.

In 1960, at the end of Standard 9 some of us in the class were selected and offered the chance of going next year into a special stream of Standard 10, called 10R. The mooted advantage of entering this sacrosanct stream was that we would get the opportunity to shoot up straight to Standard 12 at the end of the 10R year. The coaching would be quite intensive, and the students would have to work harder than before. Kuttan, Anand and I were among those who were promoted to 10R at the end of that year.

By 1960, TANU, the political party led by Julius Nyerere, won elections and Nyerere became Chief Minister. He pushed

the British Government hard and wrested agreement from them to grant independence by the end of 1961.

As secondary school boys, we were gradually becoming more aware of government and politics and so on, looking at the daily newspaper and listening to the evening news. It was clear that the local Tanganyikans wanted to see change in the way they were governed. Among the illiterate and the half-educated there arose an erroneous notion that gaining independence somehow meant the freedom for them to automatically move into the houses occupied by British and Indian people, and the freedom to take over their shops and companies. Nyerere dispelled this notion by emphasising that self-governing, and freedom from British rule, would actually mean the need for Tanganyikans to work very hard, very hard indeed and to work together with the non-Africans to overcome the three big problems that he had identified – ignorance, poverty and disease. When he used to give speeches in English, I remember him talking of these 3 factors as the major obstacles to progress in Tanganyika – ignorance, poverty, and disease. He also made efforts to placate the anxieties and resentment felt by British and Indian people who had devoted their working lives in the country, that they were not just pocketing money for themselves, but had actually, in the course of their work, contributed to the development of the nation. I'm not sure that he succeeded in convincing even his own party people, let alone the illiterate and the half-educated…….because the wishful thinking and talk among Tanganyikans was all about jobs being dished out to local people when the foreigners would leave on Independence Day.

Aunty Grace and Aunty Nirmala have already written about the feelings of the Indian community in Tanganyika during that period. I could sense the questions, the uncertainties and anxieties that my parents and our Malayali adults felt as the political developments progressed. When Uncles and Aunties came to visit, invariably the topic of conversation would turn to "What would happen after Uhuru", and whether we should all think of packing and leaving and return to India. Somehow, the feeling was that things would not get completely out of hand. And, as history shows us, the scale of Indians having to leave Tanganyika was nowhere anything like what happened some years later in Kenya, from where they were 'smoked out' by economic policies hostile to them, and Uganda, from where they got ejected in droves, by Idi Amin's brute political force.

Around this time, I began to hear of the Malayali Uncles who were in Government service forming an Association to negotiate and win the rights to compensation and pension. I think the association was called the Asian Association. The British were too busy looking after their own affairs in the same respect, but never sparing a thought for the Indians they had recruited over the years and who were entitled to similar rights and benefits that they were claiming and winning for themselves. At some stage, I recall, Uncle Thampan Zachariah became one of the leaders of the Indian / Asian employees and he led a delegation to the UN to plead the cause of the Indian government servants. He was successful in winning agreement on pensions and came back jubilant to be fêted as a hero. It was a great victory, and a great moment for Indians in the Government service, and a proud moment for Malayalis as it had been one of their own who had led the

delegation. I remember how happy my father felt for them, - but he himself unfortunately, did not benefit from any of these hard-won rights because Tanesco was a parastatal, a company in which the Government held shares, but provided no Government benefits to employees.

Uncle Thampan and Aunty Thangam lived in Upanga. Their daughter Prem was around my age, and their son Binoy, was I think around Benny's age. Prema and Binoy had another sister too. Some years after I had left Dar, Uncle passed away. Aunty left Dar and settled in Bangalore where I was so happy to see her and Prema again whilst I was a student at St John's. I think Binoy had gone off to Germany…..

At my graduation ceremony some years after that, my parents were unable to come. They wrote to Aunty Thankam, and Uncle David and Aunty Sharada, requesting them to attend on their behalf. I was so proud to have them, Dar es Salaam Uncle and Aunties standing in for my parents, as my guests that evening to the grand graduation ceremony and the dinner that followed. I never got to see them again after I left Bangalore for Kerala. Many years later, after I had left India, Aunty Thankam, Prema, and Prema's husband came down to Kerala, and took the trouble to come and visit my father and mother in their remote rural village home. Dad and Mum were overjoyed to have them as their guests.

May Uncle David's, Aunty Sharada's, and Aunty Thankam's souls rest in eternal peace.

[***__ANOTHER HAPPY FOOTNOTE__** – After many decades I was able to reconnect with Prema (Zachariah) Lalji in 2021 after joining this Group].

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1960 – My sister Libby's First Holy Communion Day

Left to Right: at the back — my cousin Betty, then my sister Libby in her First Holy Communion gown, myself (still wearing those hated 1956 Alleppey-stitched shorts — see where they have reached by now), my cousin Benny.

At front left, the little boy is Betty's and Benny's younger brother, Tommy.

KERALA KALA MANDALAM IN THE EARLY 60s……

Kerala Kala Mandalam shows continued to entertain the Malayali community during the early 60s.

I vaguely recall many performances - short plays, dances, tableaus and humorous skits – pieces of variety entertaiment that were laid on in the subsequent years, probably 1959 or 1960.

In one of them I remember Uncle Joseph Kamicheril (Molly's father) acted as a Muslim gentleman with a harem of 4 wives, one of whom was my father.

I forget the story, but here are some pictures. They have deteriorated pretty badly in the humid climate of Kerala.

RIGHT: Uncle Ousepachan (that is how I used to call Molly's and Joppen's Dad) is lecturing his 4 wives. One of them lifts the veil, perhaps to argue, or force a point of view.

I have previously referred to 2 Uncle Georges in Dar es Salaam, both given nicknames for certain characteristics they possessed; one noted for his short stature, the other was renowned for his good humour and loquaciousness. (He was tall, and a very cheerful man, who made people laugh a lot. May his soul rest in peace).

In the picture below, my father, one of the wives, is being harangued by the tall Uncle George (father of our school friend Leela George) – goodness alone knows for what. Now why on earth has this wife removed her veil completely to talk to another man?...!! …. As I said, I've forgotten the story……..

I’m not sure whether my father had a dual role in that drama – (that did happen sometimes – and an understudy had to take the place of someone who couldn’t turn up) – well anyway, here he is again, and once again listening to Uncle George, but this time as an unwitting street vendor.

On another occasion, Dad was a scholar or sage or something. Here in the picture below, wearing a white turban, he sings, while another Uncle (whose name I have forgotten) acts as a lady accompanist keeping 'thallam'.

Children too, took part in performances. Once there was a short play in Malayalam performed by us schoolchildren.

It's about a family of 5 living in some town in Kerala. Father, mother, son, younger son, and daughter, and their servant boy Paramu. Shangu Ammavan comes for a visit, uninvited, and makes himself at home. He has nothing but criticism about everything in the household, including the food. Father of the household maintains a dignified silence. Mother is driven to distraction. The children resent this Uncle and his behaviour, especially his constant harping on about their manners, their intelligence, and what have you. Eldest son devises a plan with his younger siblings, and with the help of the hapless servant boy Paramu, they start pulling pranks, one after the other, on unsuspecting Shangu Ammavan, who ultimately realises that he is being made a butt of tricks and storms off back to his home town, muttering imprecations as he goes. Here is a scene where the mother is scolding elder son for the mischief he has created and badly influencing the younger siblings.

From Left to Right (looking straight on) –

Shangu Ammavan (my class-mate Anand Kumar Nair – now in this Group),
Younger Son (I forget his name),
Older Son (Me – the mischief maker – looking truly contrite, - but not feeling contrite),
Daughter (I forget who it was),
Mother (Leela George – daughter of tall Uncle George who acted with my father),
Father (Joppen – Joe Joseph Kamicheril, Molly's younger brother, and my classmate)
Servant boy Paramu is not in this scene, and I forget who played that role.

Once there was a short piece taken from the life of Christ.

It was the famous scene where a prostitute, Mariam of Magdala (Mary Magdalen), comes begging at the feet of Christ, seeking forgiveness for her sinful life. As she weeps in contrition, her tears cascade on to Christ's feet which she wipes away with her hair, and then anoints His feet with precious ointments. I think it was Aunty Easow who acted as Christ.

How this narrative got woven and enacted further on that evening I forget, ….but in this picture we see Uncle Kaimal acting as Judas of Kerioth (Judas Iscariot) after betraying Christ by delivering him into the hands of the Jewish authorities and armed forces. Remorse-filled, guilt-driven, grief-crazed, he prepares to commit suicide for his betrayal.

Some of the costumes worn that evening were actually priestly garments worn by the Franciscan Capuchin priests at the Cathedral. My father had requested and borrowed them. For instance, the brown cassock worn by Uncle Kaimal was an actual cassock used by the Franciscan Capuchin Fathers at St Joseph's.

Two of the Franciscan Capuchin priests were invited that evening as a courtesy. One was Fr Alfred Menezes, a Mangalorean, and the other was Fr Celestine Bauer, a Swiss priest. Goodness knows what they made of the performance in a language they didn't know, but I'm sure they must have followed the gist of it anyway as the story was known to them.

I think one of the evenings was around Onam time. At Malabar Club we would have had the "sadhya" on plantain leaves, but at the Kala Mandalam, we had a variety entertainment evening but no Onam "sadhya" that I can recall..

One evening a memorable item was a representation of a coxswain and crew in a boat, participating in the annual "vallam kalli". It was done quite artistically with a very scenic backdrop and moving waves of blue water. Uncle Kamicheril was the coxswain. He led the singing, with his raucous crew joining in tandem:

Annu annangil nanaam venda, thai thai thakka thai thai tho!
Annu annangil nanaam venda, mukhathu oru misha mathi,
Annu annangil nanaam venda, mukhathu oru misha mathi,
Haiiiii - Jaiii thaiiii thaiii - thai thai thai tho!
Thio thitho thayom thakkarthom thi !

My mother was absolutely delighted – it had transported her back to Thathampally 'kayal'. Her family, the Malayils, had for long owned the land through which ran the lane that led down to the water's edge, and as a girl, she had been used to seeing the boat races every year, with boats and crews coming in Champakulam, Pullinkunnu and from all over Kuttanad – long, long before the Nehru Trophy was even dreamed of.

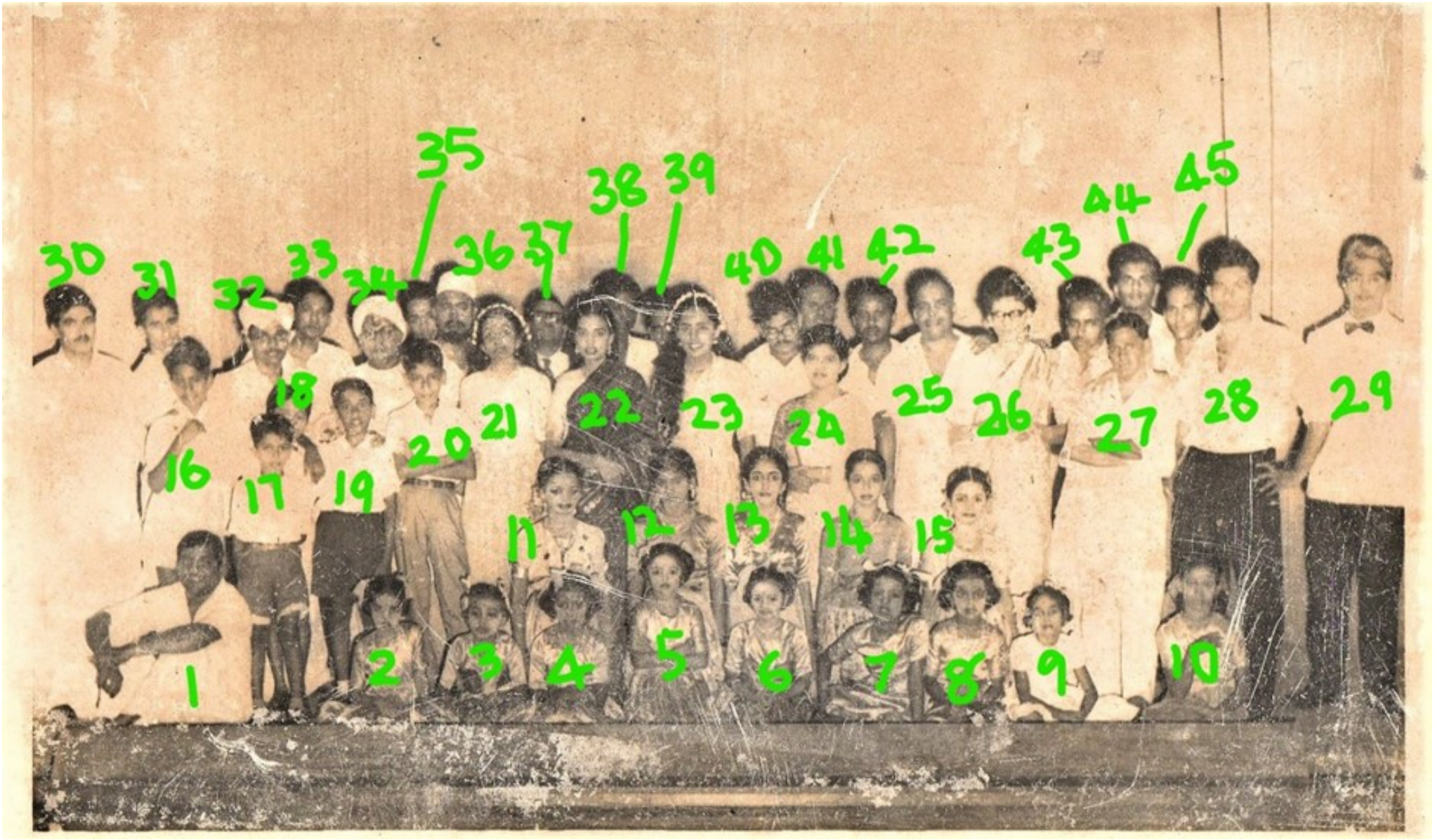
I remember seeing the races as a boy and then again as a college student staying at the "tharavadu". Today the Thathampally boat race has become so famous that as an annual event in Kerala, it draws thousands of spectators and tourists. Stands have been built that allow people to sit and watch, and the whole place gets packed for the Nehru Trophy Boat Race. Over the years various cousins parcelled off the land to outside buyers and it no longer remains the preserve of the Malayil family.

Anyway, let's get back to 1950s Dar and the Kala Mandalam.

There was a sinister story once. I vaguely recall Uncle Bhasi in it. There was a woman who had stained her reputation, and had her nose cut off as punishment. In the scene below, 2 travellers come across the slain body of some-one in the forest. The slain person is Uncle GV Nair (father of Anand, Asha, and Usha).

And now for the Cast and Supporting Cast – here they come... -

I have duplicated the picture, and have numbered one of them. I shall name those whom I remember:



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: FRONT ROW SITTING:

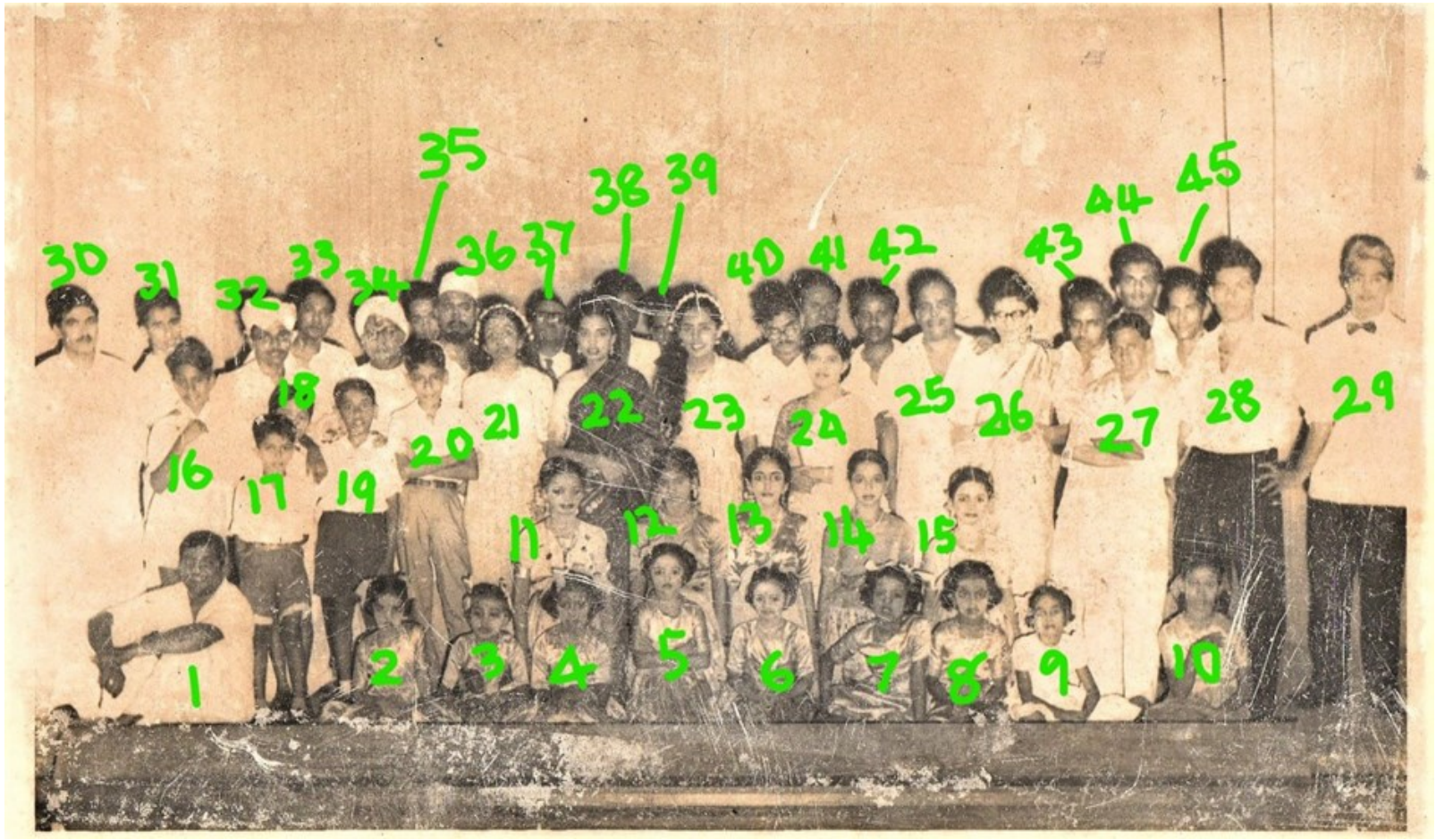
1—Uncle Chachen 5- Asha Nair, Anand's sister, 7- Molly Mathen, 8- Ivy (John) Jacob, 10—Leela George.

2ND ROW SITTING: 11– Hema Ramachandran, 12– Vinita Balakrishnan, 13– Nirmala Sukumaran, 14– Padma Panniker.

LEFT TO RIGHT: 3rd ROW: STANDING: 18– Anand Nair, peeping out over my shoulder , 19—Me, 20– Jairaj Sukumaran, Nirmala's brother, 21– Lillu—Leela Chandrasekharan, Uncle MK Nayar's daughter, 22– Vijaya Raman Pillai (sister of Jalaram in this Group), 23—Molly (Kamicheril) Joe Abraham, 24– Aunty Subhadra Ramachandran (Hema's mother),

25—Uncle George (Leela George's father), 27– Uncle Kurup, 28- Uncle Suku (father of Mala in this Group), 29– Babu Achutan (Prashanth Achutan)

LEFT TO RIGHT: 4th ROW STANDING: 30– Uncle MG Nayar (teacher at Azania School, Scouts Master father of Deeta Nair in EAMM), 31– Ramesh Panniker, 32- Uncle GV Nair (father of Anand, Asha, Usha), 33– Uncle Kaimal, 34– My father in a white turban (TM Sebastian), 36– Uncle Joseph Kamicheril (father of Molly and Jopen in this Group).



1961 - EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE,.....CIRCUS AND CIRCUSES,..... TANGANYIKAN INDEPENDENCE....AND AN ECCLESIASTICAL VISITOR.....

In 1961, Kuttan, Anand, and I together with some other boys entered Standard 10R.

Lessons were taught at a faster pace as there was more ground to cover because of the projected skipping of a year at the year end.

Hey – so what! I took it all very airily in my stride, - ever confident, ever cool.

I am not sure whether it was in that year or not, but there was a 2nd Indian Naval Visit to Dar es Salaam around that time. There was a joint evening party by Malabar Club and Kerala Kala Mandalam. I have mentioned this 2nd visit at some earlier stage

Whether it was on that occasion, or on another occasion, I can't remember – but there was to be a special tableau presentation. My father's help was sought by our Kala Mandalam Uncles. He arranged to have a massive hardboard cut-out of the map of India made to his own specification. My father, being the kind of man that he was, flatly refused to see his beloved India with arms amputated, and so the cut-out map made according to his direction was a politically completely inaccurate map - because it showed India with the original Punjab and Sind and Baluchistan (West Pakistan) and East Bengal (East Pakistan). The cut-out's outline was bordered with the tricolour of India, saffron, white and green, and then a wider border of blue in the lower half, representing the seas and oceans.

Some of the Kala Mandalam Uncles went along to see the work in progress. They were rather taken aback by what they saw, querying the accuracy of the political borders. My father refused to budge. They were good-humoured and understanding enough to accept his point that India, Indian culture and Indian traditions had preceded the onset of Britain, and British rule by thousands of years, and that was that. The cut-out map of India was most gratefully accepted for the tableau.

What I remember of the tableau itself was that Vijaya Pillai, much senior to me, was the main actress. She stood in regal splendour as Mother India. The cut-out of India, its outline illuminated by lit bulbs, formed the backdrop. Vijaya was the daughter of Uncle Raman Pillai (.....– after joining the EAMM I came to realise that she is the elder sister of Jalaram in this Group).

I seem to recall that Molly Kamicheril had played a similar role as Mother India at some stage.... But it is possible that I could be mixing up Vijaya's performance with another similar performance.

Anyway, following on from the function, the cut-out map of India was to be disposed of, but my father rescued it, and brought it home.

He then asked the people who had made it, - (a Gujarati firm whom I forget now), - to make a cut-of figure of Mahatma Gandhi. This figure was attached on to the map, and the whole set was subsequently used not only at Kala Mandalam, but also by the Patel Brotherhood for some of their functions.

Later on, the cut-out figure of Gandhi was detached and brought into our sitting room, while the map remained securely fastened in the car shed outside. I don't know how what happened to the map in course of time, but I do recall my mother saying how the Gujarati family who lived behind our house in Changombe (Popat…somebody……) had received the cut-out of Gandhi most gratefully from my father when my parents eventually left Dar left to return to India.

At school, during recess time we had moved from active play to more "scientific" and "geographical" pursuits - we would wander around the school grounds. From the very rear boundary of the Azania school grounds, perched on a slope, you could see down a steep drop to the flat plain below, across which the Morogoro road ran, and you could see cars, buses, people, goat herds and their goats, moving around, all looking quite miniature. After gazing at that for a while, if you then wandered a little further around you could peer through the thick hedges and fence to see the Jangwani School girls out at play having the same recess time. Soon it became a practice to wander around at recess time, ostensibly to enjoy the view of Morogoro Road and to discuss geographical features such as escarpments, ridges, canyons, plains, and so on, but in the course of all that very serious and scholarly geographical discussions, the wandering around would continue to the left so that, very soon by peering through the hedges, one could observe and study the scientific and sociological aspects of female behaviour of the human species. Very scholarly …….o yes, hmmm…very scholarly indeed……

Later that year, a circus came to town.
Aaah! that was exciting news!
First time, - (that we knew of anyway), - that a circus had come to Dar es Salaam. It was called Circus Brazil, and apparently it did come from Brazil. Everyone wanted to go and see it. One weekend, with Betty and Benny having come in from the boarding, my parents took us to see it. It was the first time that we had seen trapeze artistes, and clowns, and elephants, lions and a lion tamer, all performing under the glare of spotlights, with a big blaring brass band in full action. It was great fun. After the show my father mentioned that he felt circuses in India were of a higher standard. As we had not seen any other circus before, we were quite satisfied with this one.

Soon after, at school recess time, some chaps managed to bring in photos of the circus. The ones that aroused the most interest were those of the female trapeze artistes in their tight and skimpy bathing-dress like costumes. One particular artiste, named Galatea, a buxom curvaceous blonde, was the most popular. Her photos kept passing round and round

from hand to hand, until they were almost worn and frayed at the edges, to be gazed at by enormously fascinated popping-eyed pimple-faced adolescent youths.

Word about all this "scientific" activity at the school fence hedges and the almost forensic examination of circus photos somehow crept back home. The days of the "fimbo" on the legs had long gone. Instead, a new era had dawned - the occasional, - but even more powerful and stinging, - Maternal Tongue Lashing.
On this occasion it was:-
"Edda NANNUM KETTAVANNE!! Pennangallude vai nokkan anno ninne okke school illu vidannathathu??.!.!.."……and so on and so forth it went…..

Well – here is a secret that most adolescent boys know: – if you try hard enough, you can actually develop a small tunnel that runs through the skull and connects both ears. Unwanted sounds and words can be made to enter in at one end, and very smoothly glide through and slide out at the other end. Tunnel maintenance is a must. Because if the tunnel wall gets breached by momentary distractions, then those unwanted words can seep through those breaches in the wall and into the materials of the mind causing searing damage and burns. So, the trick is to stay focussed, not get distracted, and also ensure that the tunnel walls are thick and always in a state of good repair and maintenance so that no leak or seepage occurs. In that way, overall internal harmony and wellbeing of the mind is assured.

To my relief, I found that in this matter, unlike in the past days in Ring Street, my father now seemed quite disinterested, distant and rather lofty-mannered when my mother brought all this to his attention, and he did not consider that his presence or input was required at all…..

With the mind so busily engaged and focussed on such extra-curricular interests, my performance in the termly class exams, and then in the annual exam, was predictable…….

A rather dismal end of year report saw me still capable enough of skipping the year and moving onto Standard 12……

BUT I had no say in it…….

My parents decided that I would go through mainstream Standard 11 before I ever set foot in Standard 12.
They went and saw the principal Mr GT Johns.
No skipping a year for me. That was that.

O well, you win some, you lose some….
For me, the more important focus now was on the Independence Day celebrations coming up shortly, - hmmph.....who cares about skipping a year – who would really want to do that - weird people!!..(…..in other words, - a true sour

grapes moment……)..

Our afternoon and evening cycle rides to the rising stadium continued unabated and we could see it now more or less finished. But now there were askaris around the wire fences who didn't look very pleased with our coming too close to the precincts, so we used to keep a safe distance, and then cycle away elsewhere. Later on, after independence, the stadium became the Dar es Salaam pit-stop for the East African Safari Rally, making it easy for us boys to go and watch the rally cars coming and going.

By around now, we got an African teacher at the school – the first time we had an African teacher. He taught us the rudiments of Swahili, and we enjoyed learning the newly composed national anthem for Tanganyika, "Mungu Ibariki Afrika!" In later years I learnt that the melody of the anthem was actually composed in the late 1890s by Enoch Sontonga, a South African Xhosa clergy man, for the anthem that he had written – "Nkosi sikelel i'Afrika". A century was to pass before South Africans could sing "Nkosi sikelel i'Afrika" as the national anthem of South Africa. But meanwhile Tanganyika had already adopted the melody for its anthem.

As the months grew closer, preparations for Independence Day celebrations stepped up. It was announced that the Queen's husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, would himself represent her at the ceremonies and celebrations. Street decorations started being put up, as on previous occasions. The Africans were feeling buoyant, looking forward to a better tomorrow.

Somehow the mood among Indians, including Malayalis, was more muted. There seemed to be an unspoken and barely perceptible tension among our folk about how things would unfold.

For the older generation like my father and his peers, there were memories of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya, and the troubles in Ghana in the early 50s. In addition, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's desire to get rid of the African colonies had become almost palpable after the speech he gave the previous year in South Africa about "Wind of Change", which had been reported with great prominence in the Tanganyika Standard. He probably wanted the UK and its colonies to be spared the type of bloodshed going on in Algeria at that time, with France up to its neck in trouble dealing with the rebellions there.

However, the most troubling memory had been of the previous year, 1960, when the Belgian Congo had become an independent nation, but had collapsed into a terrible civil war soon after. Horrible atrocities were committed. Thousands of people had been killed. Missionary nuns had been raped and slaughtered. We in Dar es Salaam saw the arrival of

hundreds of Belgian people, refugees fleeing from what had once been the Belgian Congo. There was an appeal from the local parishes for aid and assistance. I remember my mother packing sugar, coffee and tinned milk to donate while my father brought tins of canned meat from Tanganyika Packers. We saw these refugees when we went to deliver the food - some were in camps hurriedly erected at the other end of the old airport towards Kurasini side, but most were at some location far out of town. They were all eventually taken safely back to Europe by air and sea. The refugee nuns were temporarily accommodated at St Joseph's before they returned to Europe. No one saw them, not even the boarders.

(***THE CONGO - Much has been written elsewhere of the White misrule that led to the Congo collapse and destruction. The pent-up anger and frustrations of the people finally exploded in mid-1960 following independence. The names Joseph Mobutu, Joseph Kasavubu, Moise Tshombe, and the shock assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba were often first page or headline news in the Tanganyika Standard of that period. A country that was once so rich in natural resources, mercilessly plundered through greed and made the object of terrible destruction by the great powers manipulating and puppet managing the country's violent dramas.....).

(***TANGANYIKA PACKERS - This was at that time a major canned food industry in Tanganyika. My father had been involved with electrical installations when it had been built in the late 1940s. He used to say that almost all the tins went to England which had suffered from post-war rationing, and that it had been Kenya, Tanganyika and other British East African countries and Australia that sent food to the ruling country at the time. Once or twice, he had brought home their tinned stuff, but we never liked the taste or the smell of it. When driving past it you would get a most unappetising smell sometimes. Well, whatever I might think, Tanganyika Packers used to be a real money spinner for the country).

Anyway, what I recall about 1961 as we approached independence in Tanganyika, is that the general mood among Malayalis, and among Indians and Europeans as a whole, did not seem so ebullient and ecstatic as it did for the Africans.

I also became very conscious then as to how very racially separate we were as communities, ….how segregated Tanganyika actually was – with little mixing, cross over and social interaction between the different races.

Our houseboys remained as loyal as ever, and the talk of "Uhuru" seemed to pass over their heads. At home, loyal, dependable Yusuf, quiet-spoken, and hard-working, came walking in everyday from the Ilala Kariako area. Some years before, at the time we had moved to Changombe, considering the distance involved, my father had added the cost of the monthly bus fare to Changombe to his wages. Within a few weeks my mother found out from Yusuf that he was just saving that money and getting up extra early in the morning to come walking to work….!!!....He would arrive on time, promptly change out of his good clothes and don a torn vest and shorts – his work clothes. My mother would give him money to get new shorts and a proper shirt – no use - the money would just go home to Rufiji……When she then

stopped giving him money and gave him cloth instead to get clothes stitched, that too ended up being sent to Rufiji…!.!...She would tell him that he should not dress like a "maskini". He would laugh and say "Mamaah, no one can be a maskini if they work for you."….

Good, loyal, dependable Yusuf. He was a tall and muscular chap, physically built like a KAR soldier, always rather serious-faced, but a gentle soul.

Talking about Yusuf and Changombe reminds me of something else –

(Dear Readers, - Permit me to rewind a little, - a quick rewind - - to go back in time maybe to 1959 or early 1960……) -

….A year or so after we had moved from town to Changombe, Dad started getting a gardener's "itchy fingers" – he started planting a few vegetables in the back garden area, and that was a resounding success. So, he planted more, ….and then more, ….and yet more. All those precautions about plant pollen seemed to have been forgotten in this flush of success. Fortunately for us all, that phase of severe allergies and asthma that my mother had suffered seemed to have reduced. He acquired proper spades and farming tools, and with Yusuf, dug up the soil. He, Yusuf, and I would go to Msimbazi Mission farm. There the Sisters would chat to Dad and then he would collect cow manure in sacks and 'kikapus' to bring home and spread in the dug-up soil. The little patch of earth was watered with wastewater channelled from the outside washing area. He ensured that no pooling or puddling occurred, to prevent mosquitos breeding. Papaya, plantains, pineapples, 'pavekka', 'kovekka', and 'cheymbu' all grew in profusion. He was particularly pleased with his "Kariveppala" plants – curry leaf plants – which grew bushy and very tall.

Visiting Aunties would love gathering armfuls of the leafy 'Kariveppala' to take home. Some Aunties told my mother that the profusely growing 'Kariveppela' plants should be trimmed back. They should not be allowed to grow as tall as the house because that was supposed to bring bad luck. So, Dad went out and put more manure at their bases so that they would grow EVEN taller……

There had already been a large drumstick tree at the back when we had moved in, yielding plenty of long, large "murinjekka". Malayali Aunties, who used to regularly visit, used to take these "murinjekka" home with them. Some of them convinced my mother of the health benefits of using the leaves, and the flowers too, as vegetables. They would take basketfuls of those also, along with the drumsticks. From then on began a battle between Mum and myself on eating those wretched flowers as vegetables at dinnertime – they had an astonishingly peculiar flavour, and were the most dreadful, nauseating form of vegetable to my mind and my palate at that time….

Then to top it all, Dad planted a row of cashew plants along the fences. In 3 or 4 of years or so they had grown and were yielding cashews and cashew seeds which we would roast outside on an open fire to get the nuts within. Betty,

Benny, Libby, I, and my friends and I, used to have a gala time climbing those trees, and staining our clothes with sweet cashew juice. It left a sweet cloying smell.

Around this time, or maybe a little earlier, Uncle PG Mathews and Aunty Thankamma started paying more frequent visits to Dar from the sisal estates in Mauzi / Kimamba where Uncle worked. Uncle was moving to a different job in Dar es Salaam.

In Mauzi, Aunty Thankamma was skilful in raising poultry – White Leghorns, Rhode Island Reds, Black Minorcas, and a large number of turkeys and guinea fowl too. She used to collect the eggs every afternoon from the shed, getting about 7 or 8 daily. The chickens and eggs tended to attract unwelcome visitors to the shed. One day, some years previously, as she got in she heard a strange hissing and sizzling noise. She looked up at the wooden rafter above her. Coiled around it was a black spitting cobra. It took aim and spat. The next thing was Aunty was running out of the shed with venom streaming out from one of her eyes. She was rushed to Kimamba clinic and from there Uncle Mathews took her to Kilosa Hospital. I vaguely remember her, with a square piece of gauze and cotton wool strapped over one eye, being brought to Dar es Salaam European Hospital to see the eye specialist. Her eye took quite a few days to heal. You could always be guaranteed of tasty large fresh eggs at breakfast, and delicious chicken curries, when you stayed with her at Mauzi. With so many eggs available, cakes, biscuits and puddings were a constant in Aunty's kitchen. Aunty used to give away eggs to the church, friends, and servants.

Once, during one of those visits to Dar, she brought a basketful of eggs for my mother, together with a broody Rhode Island mother hen. Using one of the 2 outdoor storerooms as a base, my father and Yusuf strung up chicken coop wire around it on wooden poles to make a chicken run. Inside the storeroom they put up wooden beams, crisscrossing the room. Boxes of straw were put into a corner, and into one of those boxes went the brooding hen and her set of eggs. To our great delight, 3 weeks later we were rewarded with the sight of cheeping little fluff balls of yellow darting in and out under Mother Hen's wings. Soon, on further visits from Aunty Mauzi, other hens joined the family, including a big stately Black Minorca hen who walked around with a most superior and matronly air, - AND THEN came the master of the flock, a big snowy white Leghorn rooster whom my father had acquired from one of the office colleagues. A proud creature, his eyes glinted threateningly, as he strutted proudly around the run. He sported a magnificent scarlet-red comb, fleshy red ear lobes, and large scarlet-red wattles hung under his chin – a magnificent fellow. He got named 'Archbishop' for his white and red appearance, but that was a mouthful, and soon got shortened to 'Roostie'. He was forever busy, courting the females of his harem. From then on, no morning timepiece was required as he commenced his loud crowing at the first crack of dawn and answered by similar calls from neighbouring chicken runs in backyards.

Now, let's Fast forwards towards the end of 1961…….-

The weeks flew by, and once again street decorations started appearing. Big banners were affixed to electric light poles on all the main streets and avenues. This time they were in the green, black and gold colours of the newly designed Tanganyikan flag — green for the country's agriculture, black for its people, gold for its mineral resources. The date for Independence Day had been set for 9th December 1961. Houses were lit up with light bulbs on the rim of the eaves, and hung with green, black, and yellow bunting.

Sometime in late October, my father got called to the Archbishop's House. Archbishop Edgar Maranta had received communication that a brother Archbishop from Kerala in India was passing through Dar, the day after Independence Day, on his way back from a meeting in Mauritius. Archbishop Maranta felt crestfallen. The Archbishop's House would already be full, with other East African Bishops coming for the occasion. He dearly wished to receive and entertain the Indian Archbishop here with him. But seeing that he could not, he had arranged to accommodate the visiting Indian Archbishop at St Francis Xavier's Mission House in Changombe. Would Mr Sebastian please help with the further arrangements for the Indian Archbishop's visit.

Actually, my father had already been tipped off earlier. The visiting Indian bishop was none other than Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorius, of Trivandrum. His secretary, Fr Pantholil, had already written to Dad, and to his own brothers, Uncle Police Zachariah and Uncle PC Jacob, about this intended visit. Fr Pantholil had been a very good friend of my father when he used to live and work in Dar es Salaam, prior to his return to India to train for the priesthood. It is through Fr Pantholil, that my parents became close friends with the other Pantholil family members in Dar es Salaam, - Uncle Police Zachariah, Uncle PC Jacob, Uncle Simon Saar, and other relatives.

Now, during the evening bicycle rides to the stadium, we would hear the sounds of the KAR band. Peering through the gaps in the fence we could see soldiers, who had come all the way from Colito Barracks, marching in drill formation. They were practising for the military tattoo that would be presented on Independence Eve. Soon we were not the only ones coming to look. African boys from Temeke would cut across the bush paths behind St Francis Xavier's School to join us in looking. Sometimes some of the more relaxed guards would let us in for a while to take a look.

Then it was announced that there would be a full rehearsal evening at the stadium and that the public would be permitted entry to watch. We went, on that evening, as a group of Malayali friends from Changombe. Many Malayali families took the opportunity to attend this preliminary function. They did not feel comfortable attending on the actual night itself. There still was an unstated fear that some hostility might be shown towards Indians. I wonder whether any in this EAMM Group of friends were there that evening ??..... Anyway, we went as a group, many families together.

The military tattoo was very impressive, the soldiers marching to and fro very smartly, hoisting and downing the rifles

at the appropriate moments, the band played very well, (some of those tunes still remain in my memory), and there were several Ngomas – with different tribal dances from different parts of Tanganyika. Although the flag hoisting sequence was practised, no actual flag unfurling took place…..it was being reserved for the real day – or rather, the real night. Also, there was no rehearsal of the fireworks display from what I can recall.

Uncle & Aunty from Kilosa arrived in time for the Uhuru celebrations, but also because of the Archbishop's visit. This time they had brought one of their houseboys with them – Ernestie. My parents had offered to host lunch for the Archbishop on the 11th. My mother was busy planning with Aunty Pennamma.

On the 7th of December, the Duke of Edinburgh arrived. His motorcade was cheered by hundreds of people at several strategic points on the route from the airport into town including at the junction of the main road to Changombe, at the T-junction of what was, I think, called the Pugu Road. He looked very smart clad in his white naval uniform, standing ramrod straight in an open-topped car, and holding his right arm raised, flexed at the elbow, in the stiff royal wave. He was followed in a stately old Rolls Royce by the Governor, Sir Richard Turnbull and Lady Turnbull, and then a large number of European and African dignitaries.

On the night of the 8th the atmosphere was a bit tense in some communities. The talk about entering and occupying the homes of the 'Wahindi' and the 'Wazungu' had diminished somewhat but not entirely disappeared. It seemed that Nyerere's influence had helped somewhat to abate the hostile anti-foreign feeling among some local African people. However, there were members in his own party who harboured such views, and who had made speeches along the lines of foreigners leaving after independence – I can't remember the names of these people but some of them became Ministers under him.

Anyway, that evening there was a large number of Malayali Uncles & Aunties and children who gathered at our house in the front yard. The reason being that we had an unobstructed view of the old airport grounds. I do not remember all who had come from town. I do remember Uncle Mauzi Mathews, Aunty Thankamma, Nirmala and Kunjmol were there, Uncle Narayana Pillai and Aunty Jyothi Pillai (Uncle & Aunty MN Pillai), were there. Of course, from next door were Uncle Louis Morais and Aunty Tessy Morais. At the pinkish coloured bungalow on the left side behind our house there had recently moved in a Malayali family whose name I have forgotten, (– I remember that Uncle was rather tallish, a very jovial person, and Aunty was always warm and friendly, a very good biology teacher. She had curly hair and wore black-framed specs) - they were there too, of course. …… After reading some posts from other EAMM friends, I had begun to wonder whether this couple could have been Uncle & Aunty "Mtwara Mathews". Although I knew they had children I couldn't remember the children being in Dar es Salaam..

[****After I had posted this episode on the EAMM What's App site, Aunty Nirmala Kambil posted a picture of the

family — and, behold — indeed they were the couple I remembered from those days as our neighbours. Raji (Rajalekshmi in our Group) also sent me the same picture. Their children had the same names as my cousins, Betty and Benny. A nice coincidence].

Koshy, Sam, and the Daniel family were at their own place as they had a terrace upstairs, and a lot of families had gathered there too, including their friends the British missionaries and families. My mother and Aunty Pennamma had prepared a large number of choice items which were passed around for people to have off paper plates. The stadium lights could be seen afar as a glow in the night sky. We could hear the drums and band of the military tattoo in progress. At midnight the lights went off, and then came back on to the distant tune of 'Mungu Ibariki Africa'. Tanganyika had become an independent nation. The Officers and soldiers of the KAR (King's African Rifles) transitioned into the Tanganyika Rifles.

From the distance we could hear the crowds roaring. From our attendance at the rehearsal some weeks before, we knew that the women would join in by ululating in shrill high-pitched voices. I gather that this rather strange and unique form of vocal expression is a custom among some Arab women too, signalling joy at celebrations.

Within a few seconds after that, spears of flame shot up piercing the night sky, then exploded into a series of sunbursts and dazzling umbrella shapes from which showered down a brilliant cascade of bejewelled stars - a dazzling display of fireworks. It went on for what seemed like hours but must have been only 15 or 20 minutes.

As children we had not seen many large displays of fireworks in Dar es Salaam. One that I could remember was at the Queen's Coronation in June 1953, when specially outfitted boats and pontoons in the harbour had been used as the stage from which to launch the display. It had ended with a glowing outline of the monarch's face and head, wearing the crown – a static display from some kind of a stand – I think it was rigged up on the mast of an anchored ship.

Another fireworks occasion was in 1956 when Princess Margaret had visited Dar es Salaam. Once again, the display was in the harbour setting. The royal yacht 'HMS Britannia' had been a splendid sight bedecked with lights, as had been all the other ships in the harbour during that royal visit, but at the time of the firework display all those lights had been dimmed and then switched off to allow the fireworks to be seen in all their glory.

My other recollection of fireworks displays was also from 1956, not in Dar, but when we had gone to India. My maternal grandfather had been the elected celebrant of the annual Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Alleppey, for that year. My boyhood memory was that there had been FAR MORE variety in India, far more dazzling, colourful and brilliant, at the firework display in Alleppey at the Holy Cross Church grounds on the last 2 nights of the festival – much better than

I ever saw in Dar es Salaam. I really enjoyed seeing it there in Alleppey, and again at Athirampuzha.

Anyway - Coming back to Dar es Salaam: -
On the morning of the 9th we heard the news that young Lieutenant Alex Nyirenda had ascended the peak of Mt Kilimanjaro at midnight, had hoisted the Tanganyikan flag and planted the Uhuru torch as a beacon of hope and freedom. It was a proud moment and the gallant young man, Sandhurst trained for the KAR, became a true folk hero. He was the first African Officer in the KAR, and in the subsequent Tanganyika Rifles.

The following day, December 10th, my father, Uncle Police Zachariah, Uncle Simon Saar and a few others went to the airport to meet and greet the visiting Archbishop of Trivandrum, His Grace Benedict Mar Gregorius, the successor of Mar Ivanios. Archbishop Maranta and his Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Dar es Salaam, were there, and took Archbishop Gregorius to St Joseph's Cathedral for a Welcome, and from there my father and the Malayali Uncles brought him to stay at the Changombe St Francis Xavier's mission presbytery as arranged.

On the 11th morning we all attended Mass said by the Archbishop. It was recited, - rather, it was chanted, in Syriac / Aramaic, but in a rite quite unfamiliar to us, the children. Very elaborate and very, very long in duration. The Archbishop's headgear was completely different to the small circular red skullcap that our Dar es Salaam Archbishop normally wore (– although at major services Archbishop Maranta would wear that odd-looking triangular mitre, which would be taken on and off all the time at various points in the service. Later on, at St John's we learnt during our anatomy lessons that one of the heart valves is called the mitral valve because, apparently when it opens, it looks like a bishop's mitre – hmmmm……I think you need to stretch the imagination a little on that one….).

Apart from our families, the other families I remember there at that Mass were Uncle Zachariah, Aunty, and children Lalitha, Sunny, Babu and Tony, and Uncle & Aunty Philip (Changanacherry) with their children Nirmala, Shanthamma, Floma, and the little son. [I now realise that the little boy I vaguely remember is the gentleman named Bobby in this Group today. I think Uncle Jacob & Aunty, Roy Jacob and his sister were there too. Although my father and my Uncle knew the Aramaic liturgy and Aramaic chants and hymns in the traditional Syrian Catholic rite, they did not know the Syro-Malankara rite which the Archbishop led. I vaguely recall Uncle Zachariah's younger brother Uncle George serving as the altar server because, I think, he knew the liturgy, the chants and responses.

My mother and my Aunty did not attend. They were busy in the kitchen getting the lunch ready. It was to be an eclectic combination of Indian and Western cuisine. We did not have a separate dining room, so temporarily the bedroom where I used to lie was converted into one. My mother had asked us children to lay out the table with the fine damask table-cloth and damask table napkins that she had brought from India. The best porcelain and fine cutlery had to be laid out -

just so, - with the knives and forks and spoons correctly placed in order, either side of the dinner plate – soup spoon, fish knife and fork inner most, meat knife and fork next. The wine glasses and water tumblers had to be washed and cleaned and wiped so that they gleamed, and had to be placed to the right of the dinner plate, - no, no, NOT to the left… and what not and what have you.…….pheew.!...Centrepiece was a cut glass bowl of fresh and sweetly fragrant roses from Msimbazi Mission.

Mass was over. We went home - Uncle Zachariah and family all came. Two Dar es Salaam Cathedral priests were also guests that afternoon. One was Archbishop Maranta's Secretary, Fr Alfred Menezes, a Mangalorean. He used to live and work in Dar, prior to going off to Switzerland to enrol with the Franciscan missionaries, and to train for the priesthood. He had known my parents very well during his days as a layman in the 1940s, and had been one of the priests regularly visiting our home when our mother had been seriously ill in 1957. The other was his younger brother Fr William Menezes, a diocesan priest recently arrived from Delhi, (a diocesan priest is one meant for parish life, not belonging to any Congregation or Order, but rather comes under the direction of the local bishop where he serves).

The 2 ladies of the house came out briefly, greeted the Archbishop, and then delved back into the kitchen, followed by Aunty Baby (Zachariah). From the kitchen could be heard the frantic calls and instructions being given to Yusuf and Ernestie, and various appetising aromas were also wafting in. Dad and the Uncles tried to drown out those kitchen sounds by loud rapid conversation.

In between play, we children were summoned in to talk to the Archbishop. In those days it was a fashion to collect autographs, and so all of us had our books and pens poised ready for the Archbishop to sign. Writing from right to left he wrote in what looked similar to Urdu and Arabic script, then underneath that in English: "Alaha mbarekh" (God bless you). Silver-haired bespectacled Mr William Pereira of AC Gomes Studios arrived to take a group photograph. Uncle Zachariah took his family home, although my parents and Uncle & Aunty begged them to stay for lunch. Aunty Baby Zachariah had the evening tea in mind as they had invited the Archbishop to briefly call at their place to bless the house.

Then the 2 hostesses appeared and announced that lunch was ready.

The Archbishop seemed rather taken aback, almost a little embarrassed at the style in which everything had been done and presented for his sake. He recalled the quiet words that Christ had spoken to Martha, one of the 2 sisters of His friend Lazarus, when they had invited Him to dine with them. Christ had said "Martha, Martha, only one thing is necessary"……. What Christ meant was to advise Martha, that time spent on listening to His teaching was as important as, or more important than, Martha's sincere and well-intentioned hostess anxieties about the food preparation and

presentation, which was like my mother and Aunty.

Betty and I were "assistant waiters", pouring out water when needed, and bringing dishes and taking them back to the kitchen – meanwhile Benny and I just wanted all this to end, and everybody to go, so that we ourselves could get some of this nice food.

Later on, when we got round to having lunch, there was no doubt that the 2 hostesses had outdone themselves in preparing the meal. The fish course was absolutely delish. I don't remember what the dish is called in Malayalam, but it comes from the Alleppey-Kuttanad area, and has a rich dark brown gravy – and tastes superb. Only large fish lend themselves to this preparation. But for me it was the entrée - Dad's pork chops - that took the supremo position – the absobloominutely tops 1st prize. He had bought the chops from Dewhursts, the British butchers on the Azania Front. They used to sell fresh viands sourced from the White farmers in Tanganyika and Kenya. Of course, in the manner of a top chef, he had done the initial marinating with selected spices and a brief sautéeing, and then left the further braising and glazing to my mother and Aunty, with clear instructions on the steps to completion. – I have never tasted anything as good as that and he never bothered to make it again, except once, at my repeated requests, just before I was leaving Dar for college studies in India. When asked where he had learned to cook this, he said from a Goan cook, - of all places, in Karachi, - when he used to be a university student there. Of course, these were the pre-Partition Empire days, and so all kinds of food were available there, at that time.

The Archbishop left the following day for Nairobi, from where he flew to Bombay. (Many, many years later, when my parents visited him once in Trivandrum, he came down straightaway from his office to meet and greet them, and jokingly remarked, in Malayalam, to people in the main office and lobby "These are my friends from Africa - Devasiachen and Mammykutty, - if you are very lucky you will get invited to their home and will be given an excellent feast").

Meanwhile, Uncle & Aunty returned to Kilosa a few days later, but we did not go up country with them, and I was quite disappointed on missing out on Kilosa that time.

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LEFT: Independence Day, Tanganyika
9th December 1961

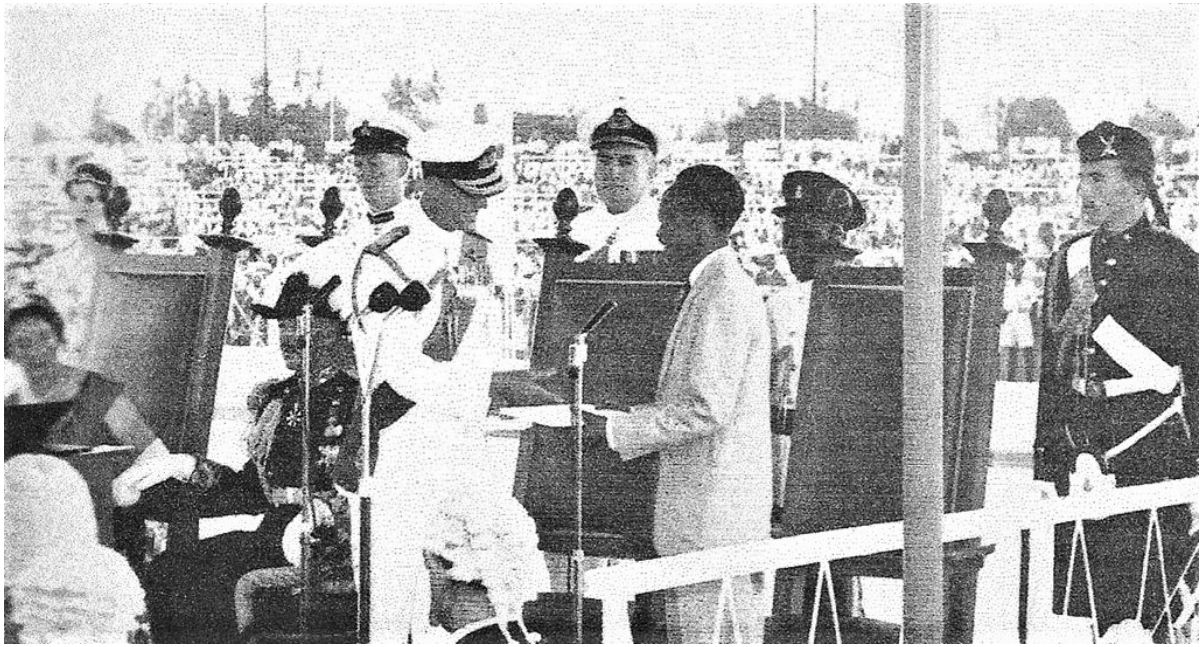
Left - Prince Philip, Duke Of Edinburgh,

Centre - Mr Julius Nyerere, the new Prime Minister of Tanganyika,

Behind and Right - Sir Richard Turnbull, Governor General of Tanganyika

RIGHT: Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, hands over the Constitutional Instruments which formally granted independence, to Prime Minister Julius K Nyerere.

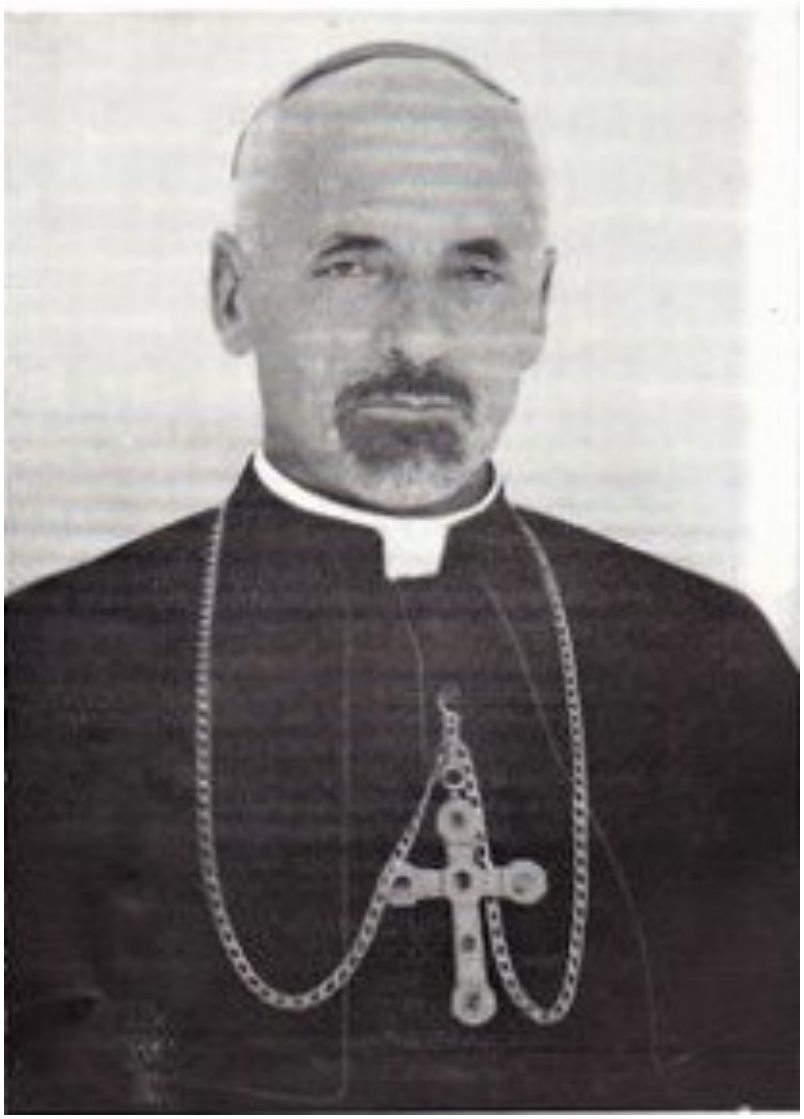
Pictures Courtesy Tanzanian Affairs www.tzaffairs.org



ABOVE: Julius Nyerere is carried by the jubilant crowd through the streets of Dar es Salaam

RIGHT: Lt Alex Nyirenda hoists the Tanganyikan flag on Mt Kilimanjaro.

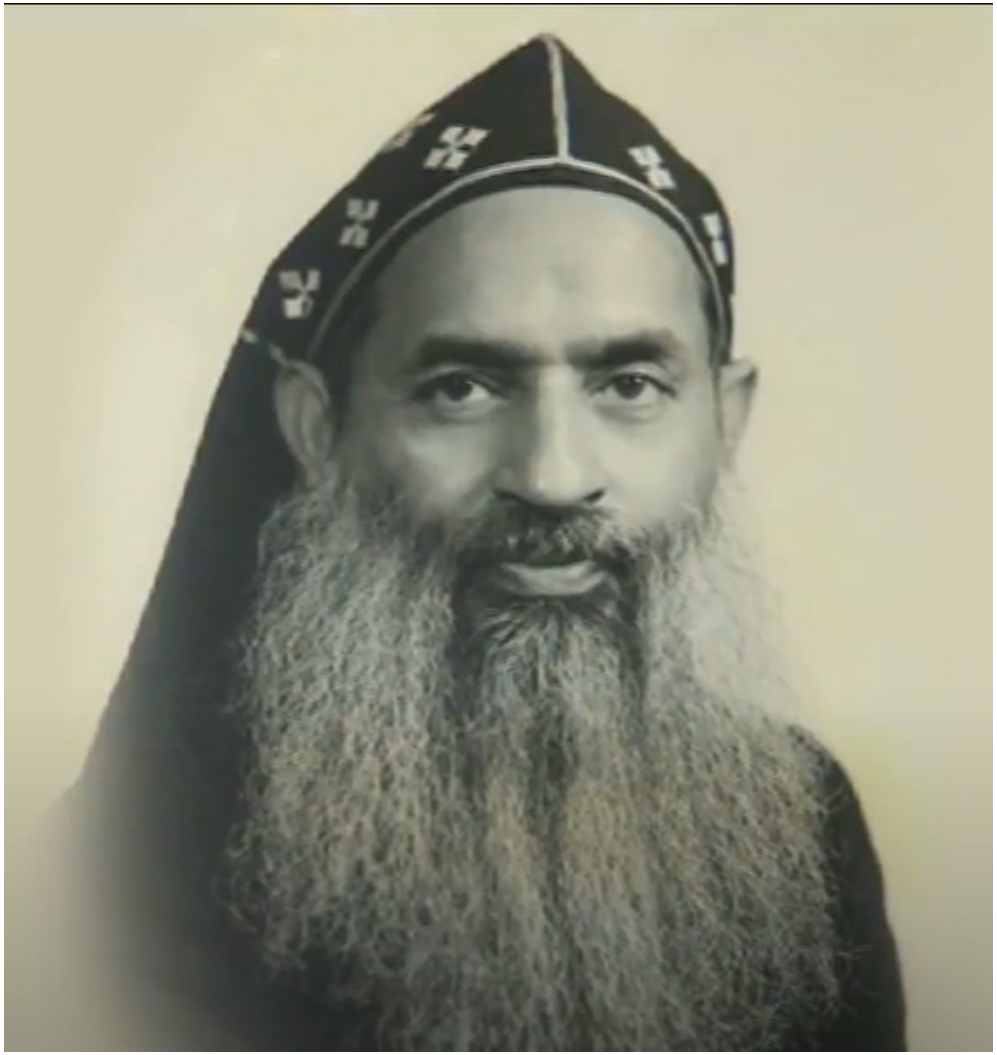
Pictures Courtesy Tanzania Information Services



His Grace

Archbishop Edgar Maranta

Archbishop of Dares Salaam 1953—1968



His Grace

Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorius

Archbishop of Trivandrum 1955—1994

Aunty Nirmala Kambil

Sunny, enjoyed reading your posts witth vivid descriptions of your student life. Especially liked your well maintained tunnel and how succeeded in pushing off the words of your mum. Made me laugh.
You are right the couple must be Matwara Mathews and wife Achamma. They have two children Betty and Benny and both live in Trivandrum. The parents are no more.

7:50 pm

Matwara Mathews, Achamma, Benny and Betty

7:59 pm

Picture Courtesy of Aunty Nirmala Kambil

1962 - LIFE AT SCHOOL….OUR TEACHERS…..AND A PARTING….

1962 saw me move into Standard 11A as my parents had determined. I was very glad that Anand had decided to skip the chance to go straight to Standard 12, and instead had joined me in Standard 11A. Kuttan had moved on to Standard 12, but Joppen was with us. I can remember Joppen as an excellent football player playing in the school team.

We got to know some new boys, all rather tallish chaps. Jaffer Kassamali was class monitor, and our school football champion. He played for Dar es Salaam. He was a real leader, and we soon became fond of him and all of us respected him. He came from Baluchistan, and he had a relative also in our class whose name I've forgotten. The name Baluchistan intrigued me and conjured up all sorts of visions of camels and desert and desert bandits. He was made a school prefect later in the year. Tall, lanky, and humorous Surinder Bhandari, his face ever wreathed in smiles, was full of fun, ever cracking jokes, and a skilled batsman as well as bowler. Kulwant Singh, a hockey player, was also a monitor. Sanat Patel, gifted in drawing and maths, was my desk mate. There was Makbul Tapya, bespectacled and always very earnest. There were 2 Punjabi brothers, Ashok Kumar and Pradeep Kumar Dhir Madhenla. Ashok, the elder, was a very nice, pleasant easy-going chap, Pradeep the younger, seemed to carry a chip on his shoulder, (…goodness knows what or why or wherefore…), and he could be quite waspish and acerbic from time to time. They had been up country. Their father worked for the Police force. A Khoja boy from Changombe, Ameen Kanji, joined us. He had done much of his schooling in Britain until then, but had moved back to Dar es Salaam with his parents for family reasons which I can't recall. Ameen was the epitome of good manners, pleasant and cheerful, and very clever to boot. Also from Changombe was Raghubir Singh, very friendly, bright and inquisitive by nature. He used to translate the meaning of Hindi songs for me.

Among our immediate seniors Koshy and Bonny were getting ready for their final year, as also our previous classmate Kuttan who had leapfrogged from 10R to 12. The year before had seen the departure of Rajan (Mathew John - Uncle John Saar's son, Ivy's elder brother). Rajan had been a Prefect and a 1st class badminton player. He was a bright and cheerful lad, full of fun, and who excelled in bringing honour to the school, collecting sporting trophies as he went.

By 1962, following on from Independence, many people started leaving to return to Britain or to India, and so did a few Malayali families. Most of them were approaching retirement age anyway, and did not see any merit in prolonging their stay in the newly independent nation with so much uncertainty still being felt by non-Africans. Among them was Uncle Police Koshy, who had spent many years serving upcountry. He was the brother to my Aunty Thankam Joseph, (Uncle Dr Joseph's wife). They stayed with us and it was a busy period for my parents as there was lots of shopping for them, and arrangements to be made for Uncle to ship his car to India, and there were many old friends visiting to say goodbye.
It was from Uncle Koshy that I first heard about the Royal Automobile Club. He was a member. A member in those days had a lot of privileges which included insurance cover for travel abroad in the car, huge discounts at luxury hotels, and the cover extended to India. A handsome steel badge was mounted on the front and rear bumpers to signify that these

were members cars. That was then, - today is now - I don't know whether that same kind of membership still exists in Tanzania today, - if it does, one may have to pay through the nose for the privilege. Anyway, in the UK the breakdown assistance service component of the Club got sold off to a separate company called RAC today. The RAC competes with other providers like the AA and Green Flag and so on – it's just a breakdown service - and in no way the same thing as what Uncle Koshy had described in 1962.

Now, even though a number of Malayali Uncles & Aunties from the 1940s and 1950s had begun leaving at this time, concurrently there had been many fresh arrivals – families from Kerala – coming to take up jobs.

However, I never got to know these new Malayali families or their children - I was just engrossed with school life and the friends I had, and I just knew the old Uncles and Aunties I had always known.

It was now time for Uncle Kilosa and Aunty to go on home leave. Benny was approaching the end of primary school and getting ready for secondary school. They decided that Benny would continue his further schooling in Delhi where Uncle's younger brother, Delhi Uncle, (Mr Thomas Thalanany) worked as a high-ranking civil servant. His sons attended St Columba's. They were more or less Benny's age, and Benny would have their company. Betty would continue as a boarder at St Joseph's, to finish her secondary schooling, coming to us at weekends as before. All 4 of us felt very deeply disappointed, - Benny felt crushed. I remember one afternoon my father took Uncle, Aunty, Benny and Tommy to Choitram's and Teekays for Benny to be outfitted with smart new clothes in preparation for his move to Delhi. When he came back, Aunty asked him to try some of them on, upon which he kicked up a tremendous tantrum, yelling and screaming he didn't care about the new clothes, and he was NOT going to leave St Joseph's and Dar es Salaam….. HUH-HUH …is that so…?.....Oh yes…… we'll see about that.

A few weeks later they were on board ship sailing for India, while Betty stayed back. We went to Magogoni ferry point to see them waiting at the port side rails, waving at us, as the ship sailed past and out into the open ocean.

Over these episodes, I have written in some detail about how the 4 of us children grew up together in the 1950s into the early 1960s. Benny's going broke that union. After leaving Dar es Salaam the 4 of us transitioned through teenage into adulthood in different locations, and we never got to live together again. This had been our first taste of what growing up really meant – separation from loved ones - and it tasted sour.

The tail-end of the 50s dawning into the 60s had rolled by at school. Fresh teachers arrived from Britain, and we started getting some of them in our class. We had an excellent array of British and Indian teachers.

I have previously mentioned the Malayali Uncles who were our teachers. There were many fine non-Malayali Indian teachers too.

Rolling back in time to the early days at the school – 1958….1959……I had forgotten to mention this earlier: -
I remember Mr GS Phadke, our class teacher in Standard 7, very avuncular and making sure that we all understood what we were being taught, and set us a lot of classroom exercises. Mr NU Dave was very prim and proper, although I've forgotten what he taught us.

Well-dressed Mr LN Bhagwat, always in a light-coloured suit, taught us Science – it was such fun. He would bring all sorts of apparatus to the class and demonstrate experiments to us. Once he brought a large circular glass bowl of water and a jar containing lumps of substances. He carefully withdrew a lump and threw it into the glass dish of water. The lump sizzled, made an alarmingly huge bang! flashed up in a burst of orange fire, and swizzled and sizzled round at great speed in the water until it burnt itself out. He told us that this was SODIUM. On another occasion, a similar lump produced a similar bang and a beautiful violet blue flame. He said this was the element POTASSIUM.

Mr JD Dave used to teach Gujarati to the Gujarati boys. He had a stentorian voice, in which, on certain days, he sang in Gujarati rhyme to impart knowledge through song. He also took us for Book-Keeping classes – but all that I remember from his valiant efforts are the words 'credit', 'debit' account, 'profit-and-loss account' – so much for that.
There was another teacher who taught Urdu. I forget his name.

In later years we didn't see these teachers again, as we had other teachers took over for the more senior classes.

I think it was maybe in Standard 11, we had a very sincere and gentle-mannered class teacher whose name I have now forgotten. I think he was also a Mr Patel. He took English Composition. I recall his face pitted with smallpox scars. He was a genuinely nice man, a humble one, and a good and patient teacher. I feel quite bad having forgotten his name.

I am one of those lesser mortals who, most unfortunately, is heavily influenced by a teacher's teaching skills – a teacher who can grip my attention and explain things in a fascinating way can be guaranteed of lifetime adulation from this devoted disciple, - me - but woe unto the teacher who makes things dry as dust and difficult to comprehend – I never want to know them again, see them again or their wretched subjects.

So, this may seem rather unfair, - but there were two teachers whom I disliked. One was Mr Jhaveri. (Standard 9 and 10R). He was actually quite a nice cheerful man in himself, but he had this most peculiar gift of making the simplest of things become utterly complicated, abstruse, abstract and confusing. For the life of me, I just couldn't make out head or tail of where he was coming from when he taught us arithmetic. What made matters even more galling was that Kuttan and Anand had absolutely no problem understanding him and they would always come sailing in with full marks. My parents, sensing something wrong, made the effort to go and see Mr Jhaveri – and they came away convinced that the problem was not Mr Jhaveri, but my head, -- my attitude…..
The other teacher was Mr Somabhai Patel whom I truly and actively disliked. (He used to sometimes help out with the

facial make-up at the Kala Mandalam events). He took us for drawing and art lessons. We started off with using tracing paper, outlining pictures with lead pencil, then reversing and transferring them onto clean white pages, and filling in the tracing with Staedtler colour pencils and wax crayons. Later on, water colours, paint brushes and so on became de rigeur. I don't know why, but I simply loathed the man. My art skills soon dwindled and shrank to, - shall we say, - less than rudimentary, and I became the object of his scorn, - which I reciprocated in feeling, but didn't dare to exhibit to his face. At the end of Standard 9 we had the option to drop Art. I promptly dropped it.

Years passed, and as I walked down the corridors of time, I found myself staring and gaping at architectural wonders like the monolithic temples on the shores of Mahabalipuram, the pearlescent beauty and grace of the Taj Mahal, and the stunning engineering marvel of the rock-hewn below-ground churches of Lalibela. I wondered, as I circled round and round it, at the strength of emotions conveyed in sculpted stone - terror, power, and grief-stricken grace all simultaneously conveyed in Giambologna's renaissance marble sculpture 'The Abduction of the Sabine Women', just as I circled round another sculpture, wondering at the anatomical accuracy, the power, the strength, the restraint all simultaneously conveyed in Michelangelo's David. The huge carved bronze-cast doors of the mighty Duomo as locals affectionately call the Cathedral in Milan, and its grand façade gripped me in wide-eyed wonder. The wonderful detail in Jacopo Robusti Tintoretto's huge, wall size, mind-stupefying, painting 'Paradise' in the Doge's Palace in Venice, that beautiful slowly sinking city on the shoreline of the Adriatic, held me transfixed. The grief, resignation and grace conveyed through marble stone on the Madonna's face in the Pieta at St Peter's in Rome, Bernini's rich dark spiral columns over the altar, the magnificent interior of that Basilica, and the sculptures and paintings in the Vatican Museum, all evoked within me a sense of awe and wonder.

I realised, shame-facedly, that my petty dismissal of Art as a subject in Standard 9 had been just that.....- sheer immature, boyish pettiness.....and that innate in every one of us is a desire to see, to know and to appreciate beauty – whether it is crafted by the skills of human hands and imagination, or whether it is endowed on us in the grace and wonder and beauty of nature created by the Great Artist, the Creator Almighty.

Mr GT Johns from Bedfordshire was our Principal, a dignified and highly respected man, but we were never taught by him. Nor were we ever taught by Mr Knight, a well-known respected teacher to our previous seniors.

Instead, it was bespectacled, auburn-haired senior lady, Mrs Marsh, who was our much-loved English Literature Teacher, and who instilled in us a true appreciation for drama and Shakespeare.

Young blue-eyed blonde Miss Irene Betts made gallant attempts at teaching us English Grammar but her efforts were

hopelessly thwarted because of the half-unconscious state of the boys, unable to grasp anything because they were so dazed just looking at her and overcome by her beauty.

Dear sweet old silver-fluffy-haired, granny-like, Mrs Ellen Watts taught us English. She was an old dear – a really soft and kind-hearted person.

Mr JCH Simms, the Deputy Head, was a short tubby dour character who surprisingly succeeded in making Geometry a truly fascinating subject, regardless of the canings that he administered whenever Mr Johns was on leave. I began gaining confidence that I could tackle these problems.

Youngish Mr Peter Woods made Physical Geography riveting, and even enticed us into building models of escarpments, ridges and ravines using plaster of Paris on a foundation of layered plywood.

Poor Mr Percy Shuttleworth brilliantly succeeded in getting me to opt out of history the moment I got the chance. You see, the thing was that Mr Shuttleworth was so obsessed and so enamoured of dates – yes, dates - Battle of Hastings 1066, Magna Carta 1215, Battle of Bannockburn 1314, Battle of Agincourt 1415, and so on and so monotonously forth…..

I, on the contrary, was more interested in knowing more about the ***facts and stories*** of what had happened, for instance, ***who*** shot that arrow into Anglo-Saxon King Harold's eye that killed him, and thus paved the way for William the Conqueror from France to take over the British Isles…….***what really*** happened to the Princes in the tower, and so on…

To make matters worse, Mr Shuttleworth then made us copy drawings from the textbook into our notebooks. I mean, - I say, - who in their right minds would want to look into the textbook and spend a whole period copying a picture of that pompous pratt, Louis XIV of France, parading himself pretentiously as Le Roi Soleil…!!…..On another occasion we had to copy a picture of the old medieval Houses of Parliament before they got fire in the early 1500s, and before the new one was built (the building was also called the Palace of Westminster because it is officially one of the royal palaces that used to serve as a royal residence).

That was it. At the end of the school year when we had the chance to choose subjects, I dropped History straightaway. What I had spurned and turned down with such mindless adolescent ease, came back to haunt me……

Years later in College I developed a curiosity and then a thirst to know more about the mysterious past. It just couldn't be all about dates of dreary battles…. I found that it **WASN'T** such a dead boring subject, - it could be made to come **ALIVE** by skilful writers…..people who have been able bring back well-researched facts from the past and cast them alive in the thousands of minds of their readers. I have subsequently had to fill that gap in knowledge by my own reading whenever I

could – fun in one way, but it misses out on the active debate and discussion engendered in colleges where it is taught.

It is rather alarming that there are so many games played with the subject of history – embellishments and grandiose additions on the one hand, and on the other, the suppression, and worse, the distortion and twisting of facts to suit a particular ideology or school of thought. Even more alarming is the complete erasure of facts from the past, from records. For instance, there have been attempts in recent years to downplay the scale and extent of what was done during Hitler's Holocaust of the Jews in the 2nd World War, and even nefarious attempts to deny that it ever took place.

There is also the vanity that ignores and bypasses the oral tradition of history that has been in use in many cultures, and the exclusion of knowledge handed down by word of mouth, because documentation is lacking – such as occurs in tribal cultural systems where written language does not exist. This traverses continents – as with African tribes from the past, the Aborigines of Australia, and the First Peoples of the Americas. My apologies - …….I am digressing……

At some stage during this period Miss Janaki Kushalappa arrived from India, and became one of our teachers. Tall, gentle, soft-spoken, and always very elegant, she captured our attention and our hearts.

For a while during that period at recess time, the small boys in Standard 7 wanted us to watch their new thrill – short races (as Standard 11 students suddenly we had become seniors). What inspired this sudden burst of interest had been the news that from neighbouring Kenya a Goan chap named Seraphino Antao had won Golds Medals in the 100 Yards and 220 Yards races at the Commonwealth Games in Australia.

One day some unknown mischief mongers let out the air from the tyres of all the cars belonging to the teachers. The prank was discovered when we came out to go home at around 1 o' clock in the afternoon. The teachers stood by their cars, totally unamused, while secretly we couldn't help grinning. Uncle Satyanathan's Hillman, Uncle NM Pillai's Peugeot 203, Uncle V M John's Consul, Mr JCH Simm's car, Mr Knight's car, all had deflated tyres. The lady teachers didn't escape either. The notable exception was that of Mr G T Johns whose car was left untouched.

Much later on, - in 1963, our final year, - young Mr Joseph Molloy, an American Peace Corp teacher, joined the teaching team. His American twang was in stark contrast to the clipped accents of our British teachers. He proved to be very likeable and soon became a popular figure in classes where he taught. With the characteristic unreserve of Americans, he told us life in America, and that he came from San Jose in California but when he said it, to our ears it sounded like "San Hoshay in Kyaaalliffohnyeea". He taught English, and we discovered to our relief that he could actually spell things correctly even though he pronounced them rather oddly. He told us a little of his youth, his parents and his home life in the States, an unravelling of personal life and information – a refreshing change - we could never ever dream of getting

that from our very reserved British teachers. It made everyone think a little more about the US and the reputed easy-going nature of their people.

The building of the new St Francis Xavier's Church was completed in 1962. It was consecrated at a major function by Archbishop Edgar Maranta. It was built in modern style reflecting a change from the traditional Gothic, Norman and Baroque styles of ecclesiastical architecture to the modern era of the 20th century. And who was the architect? – yes, you guessed right – Mr Tony Almeida.

I remember the very grand ceremony at the consecration of the church. A large number of dignitaries had arrived, both local and from abroad, political and ecclesiastical. Commencing with prayers in Latin, Swahili and English, the Archbishop led a whole procession of clergy and altar 3 times around the perimeter of the church, praying, and sprinkling water on the walls, higher and higher at every round. Each time he would stop at the main entrance, and he would symbolically strike the giant wooden doors with his crozier, the long staff that bishops carry in their right hands. At the 3rd round, the doors swung inwards and he led the clergy and the entire congregation in. I gathered later that this ritual of walking round the outside before gaining admittance, and entering, is symbolic of many other religions also where a new site is being cleansed and dedicated to the sacred purpose of turning it into a place of worship. I gathered it is also meant to relate to the Jews, many thousands of years ago, wandering through the desert, led by Moses, after they had fled from Egypt, seeking admittance to the designated land.

Among the VIPs that day were Julius Nyerere, leader of the TANU party, and the Prime Minister, Rashidi Kawawa, and their respective spouses. (Mr Nyerere, in a surprise move, had stepped down from Prime ministership in January that year, and had driven agreement between the TANU Party and the new Government for Mr Kawawa to succeed him).

The Prime Ministerial party and the Governor General, Sir Richard Turnbull and Lady Turnbull, left after the church doors were opened. Also present that day was the Chief Justice, Sir Ralph Windham, but this time looking very plain in a grey suit, shorn of his long wig and lacking his magnificent scarlet robes that he used to wear on ceremonial occasions and on certain days in court. Nyerere, being a Catholic, remained for the entire duration of the service.

I think that it was that year that at a Kerala Kala Mandalam evening there was a presentation of "The Bishop's Candlesticks" based on Victor Hugo's world-famous novel "Les Miserables". I recall Uncle Kora acting as the Bishop. I can't remember now the name of Uncle who acted as the convict. He was someone not generally familiar to me although his face is etched in my mind. The Malayalam script was admirably translated to grasp all the subtle nuances of the plot, and the actors played their roles so well that they received huge applause.

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1963 - CURTAINS FALL ON SCHOOL LIFE ….CLOUDS GATHER AND A PALL OF GLOOM DESCENDS……..

Things began to change for me - ……my schoolboy life was now marching on to an end.

This was my final year at school. I couldn't quite figure out whether to feel excited about new prospects soaring in from the future or whether to be a bit glum about losing friends and school.

My close friends Koshy and Sam left Dar es Salaam – Koshy to go to England for higher studies, having finished school, and Sam went off to join St Michael's & St George's, Iringa. These had been the two brothers who had lived close by, and through our cycling pursuits, we had built up a bond of friendship. It was from them that I had learned how to repair a punctured tyre, replace cycle chains, how to remove a wheel when needed and fix it back, and even do weird upside downs of the handlebars. The junior Daniel boys were too far removed in age for us to have anything in common – Benji (Benjamin), Jose (Joseph), and Mathew the youngest hardly 2 or 3 years of age.

Bonnie Satyanathan left for India for higher studies. Arif Nasser left, but I can't remember where he went.

Our Changombe cycling group just evaporated. The 4pm Trrriinng! Trrriinng! Trrriinng! of bicycle bells at our front door ceased.

At school Kuttan Nair had finished school a year ahead of me (the 10R gambit…) and left to go to India.

Melville Ipe who had returned to Dar at some stage, became a closer friend. (I had always known him as Melvin as a little boy before he had gone to India following Aunty Susan Ipe's death). His elder sister Mabel was my age group. They had a younger sister Molly, who was closer to my sister Libby's age group. Melville was a great entertainer, and always had a fund of jokes. He had a younger cousin at school, a bespectacled boy by name Prince, (Prince George, coincidentally the same name as the brother of Pamela, and son of Uncle TO George and Aunty Ammukutty) who was junior to us. Prince had an older sister, Cecily, more or less my age group, studying at Jangwani, and Melville's elder sister Mabel, also my age peer, had joined there too.

And then something sad happened.

Leela George, who used to accompany us in the car rides to and from school, fell ill. Soon she was under the care of hospital specialists. And then came word that she had developed "Blood Cancer" – what we know as leukaemia today. My parents went to visit when she was out of hospital, and I went to see this friend of mine. The always cheerful and

chatty Leela now looked ill. She had lost weight. She had lost her hair from the chemotherapy she had been given, and head was covered by a scarf. But she could still muster a brave smile and we spoke a little remembering our car trips, our jokes, and the drama we had taken part in, laughing over Shangu Ammavan.

I never saw her again.

Some weeks later her parents and her younger brother left for India. She was being taken to the famous Christian Medical College in a place called Vellore in South India.

We got news that she died some months later. Even sadder, we learnt a few years on, that her younger brother too had died of leukaemia. Later on, I heard that Aunty and Uncle also passed away. No one in that ex-Dar es Salaam Malayali family remained. May their souls rest in peace.

My parents were friends with Mr & Mrs Muthaiah Pillai. Mr Gregory Muthaiah Pillai was a lawyer in Dar es Salaam. He and Mrs Pillai were a Tamil Catholic family from Madras. Mr Pillai had been one of the senior generation, in Dar from the early 30s, and a close friend of my Uncle Dr Joseph. I can only remember vague details of the family, mainly by the pet names of the children. The eldest son, Ambi, was I think more or less the same age as my cousin Tobychayan, Dr Joseph's eldest son, and I just vaguely recall that he went off to England in the 1950s. He went before Sunny Achutan did, as far as I can remember. The next was Gnanakumar, (Xavier Pillai), followed by their sister Bala, and then Anthony Pillai – more or less my age, and I think there was another boy too. I recall Xavier Pillai leaving HSC in our school around the time I joined Azania Secondary. I can't recall where Anthony went during secondary school, - I think he stayed on at St Joseph's. They had their own house, but I forget where it was now.

Mr Pillai suffered a heart attack and was admitted to the private Queensway Nursing Home. Unlike today when thrombolytics and stenting have become commonplace, in those days treatment was nothing more than oxygen, morphine for the pain, and strict bedrest, with visitors prohibited for 7 days. From the past I remembered also, faintly, my Uncle saying that if the heart began to fail, he used something called digitalis, an extract of a flower called the foxglove. Mr Pillai, a man who loved talk and company, was soon receiving visitors and entertaining them in his customary hale and hearty manner, much to the annoyance of the British Nursing Staff.

My parents wisely desisted from visiting, but were shocked to learn one day that Mr Pillai had suddenly passed away in the midst of conversations with friends. I recall my mother asking us then, during our usual evening family prayers, to say additional prayers for the grieving widow and her children. She pointed out to me that Anthony, more or less my age, could undergo difficulties with his high school education so seriously disrupted. The family left for India soon after.

It was around that time that we read and heard about the great American heart surgeon, Dr Michael De Bakey, who had invented a special heart pump that could save the lives of people with heart disease. It made us think of Mr Pillai. And it made us think of America….

Our new teacher from the US, Mr Joseph Molloy, made things quite interesting in class and we started liking him more and more, even though we agreed privately that these Americans could never really speak proper English, or at least that they needed proper lessons in pronunciation. We became more aware of the new American President, young looking John Kennedy, and his beautiful French wife Jacqueline Kennedy. We also became aware of the American Black Civil Rights Movement, and of a new Black preacher by name Martin Luther King. Soon we became familiar with the lyrics and tune of "We Shall Overcome".

"We Shall Overcome" was not the only song we came to know about. In the UK a group of teenage lads had begun capturing people's attention with their crazy lively looks and new songs. Now Ameen Kanji, our ex-England classmate, had previously told us about crazy groups called the "Mods" who always fought with another group called the "Rockers", each group claiming superiority of one form or style of pop music over the other. But this group was something completely different. These 4 lads were from Liverpool in England, a singing group whose songs were not exactly 'Rock' style or the usual Mod 'Pop' style. Their songs and the tunes were vey catchy, and soon they were sweeping across the world – they were of course, the Beatles. (Later on, at Loyola in Madras, and at St John's in Bangalore, all this newfound musical knowledge of mine expanded and intensified).

It was during that year – ….I think it was that year, - I vaguely recall that it was on Easter Sunday,……. – that a tragic accident occurred in Dar es Salaam. A group of Goan families arranged a picnic. Among them were young Mr Texeira, an administrative officer at Tanesco, and a friend of ours. Photographer Mr Pereira of AC Gomes & Sons and his family, including his grown-up daughter who was betrothed to Mr Texeira, were also in the group. They were to cross the pontoon at Magogoni Ferry. By some mischance, one of the cars slid off the pontoon and sank. Among the lives lost was that of Mr Pereira's daughter. It was a terrible shock for many in Dar es Salaam. Mr Texeira and the Pereira family took many grieving months to recover from his shock.

In 1963 our trustworthy servant Yusuf left service. He had joined us when he was a teenage lad, brought to replace Juma. His uncle, Hassani, now looking quite aged and venerable, came as usual in his long clean white kanzu and white embroidered skull cap, (kufiyah) to conduct the discussions. His submission was this - Yusuf had reached marriageable age and was now ready for marriage. He would have to return home to Rufiji. The bride price had been paid, and a small palm-leaf thatched roof dwelling (makuti house) had been built with the wages he had been sending home all

these years.

My mother felt sorry to lose him and gifted him with many new household things and with the colourful textiles that African women wore called khanga material as a gift for his bride-to-be. He had served us for almost 9 years. Hassani brought another boy, but he didn't last long, then came another, and another, - but according to my parents none wereany longer as dependable or as hard working as the older generation.

One teenage boy was sent by his father who was a "fundi" in Tanesco. He was a nice and amiable lad, but was a penny short of a shilling,……..AND… - he wasn't accustomed to the strange ways of the Wahindi. In Changombe, because of the fresher and breezy environment we hardly had any flies compared to our old Ring Street flat, but in the hot season they used to fly around into the kitchen. My mother used to use those old dome-shaped metal-gauze dish covers to keep the flies off. She used to keep telling this poor dim-witted lad about keeping the flies away. One day he just could not contain his curiosity and bewilderment anymore. He stammered out in Swahili "But Mamaa, why are you so worried? They are so small. They eat so little, there is still so much left for everybody to eat"……!....!....!!....

My mother said later that she tried very hard not to laugh so that he would not lose face, and she tried to explain that there were small tiny invisible creatures on the legs of flies that could get on to the food, spoil it and make us sick. She wasn't sure that he had understood any of that, or that he even believed her. Anyway, he didn't stick on and went off soon.

During this revolving door period of house servants, because of having scant domestic assistance, my mother made it clear to us the children that from now on we would wash and launder our own undergarments.

Way back in the 50s during the Ring Street days, I remember my father used to bring home long bars of mottled blue soap. It was cut into blocks and was used for washing the laundry. For white clothes, my mother used to do some chemical magic. She would dissolve a small square inch size block of something called Reckitt & Colman's Blue in a tub of water. Juma, or Yusuf, would then dip the freshly washed white clothes into the tub. I remember the square blue lozenge came wrapped in a waxed piece of paper that had the picture of a bird on it. After that the clothes would be dipped in a pail of starchy solution. Hoooomph! What a palaver! Thankfully at some stage in the 50s something new had hit the scene – washing powders – Tide, Omo, Surf and so on, became household words and the process of washing became simplified.

My sister Libby and I did our newly allocated task grimly, muttering under our breath that it would have been better to be in the Boarding where Betty didn't have to do any of this stuff – it was all taken care of by the Sisters and their staff.

The Sisters in the Convent laundry wore blue-checked aprons, and would roll up their sleeves and just get on with their work, using some weird looking hand-driven wheels and machines – really weird contraptions that looked as if they would mangle the clothes and finish them off to pieces, and made you think of medieval instruments of torture. Once or twice, I had seen Sr Salvina also in the blue apron, sleeves rolled up, getting on with the work.

Anyway, our maternal-enforced childhood labour paid off dividends. We discovered just a few years later in India that this much-disliked training actually began to serve us well in our college days - because we found to our consternation that much of our stuff was often getting pounded and frayed to pieces by college dhobis – and so we began to do things for ourselves.

In order that my mother would have some domestic assistance, my father enlisted the support of his old 'mpishi' Salim.

Salim had served my father during my father's bachelor days in the 1940s. Salim was a good cook, and he knew it. His ambition was to work in a European hotel. He kept asking my father. My father knew the manager of the New Africa Hotel at that time. Salim was taken on for a trial as an underling to the main chef there, but soon proved to be so good that over the course of years he had worked his way up. Now he returned to help his Bwana who had done so much for him.

He came one or twice a week. He had largely forgotten our ways of doing things, but with my mother's guidance, was soon back on course. In addition, he displayed his hotel cook's talent by baking tasty pies and cakes, and jam tarts. He treated us to mishkaki kebabs which he prepared on the charcoal stove. Another thing he did was to scoop out aubergines, mix the creamy white flesh with fried minced meat and refill the hollowed out aubergines, and then bake them to perfection – very nice……

The months flew by, and much of schoolwork and attention now focussed on the school final exams in December - the Cambridge School Certificate Exams. In those days, the question papers were set in England and flown out to the territories and colonies. The answer papers were flown back to England to be marked there by teaching staff at Cambridge University. The results used to be announced sometime in January/ February the following year.

One evening, just a few weeks before the exams, we had a number of family friends at home. Uncle & Aunty Morais, Uncle Mauzi Mathews, Aunty Thankamma and family, Uncle Narayana Pillai and Aunty Jyothi Pillai remain in my mind, I forget the others who came that evening…..

Uncle Pillai had a few good things to say to me and wished me well in the forthcoming exams. We started serving some food items and Uncle how tasty they were. Then suddenly, while we were in the middle of handing out savoury items,

he said that he was developing a severe headache. This was unusual for him. He had been to the dentist earlier that week. He rubbed his temples. My mother went in and brought out some painkilling tablets. He took them gratefully. The pain worsened. Someone suggested applying Amrutanjan ointment to the temples. My father brought a small jar of the ointment. Uncle applied it, said 'Thank you'. Then suddenly he rose up, his face flushed, and obviously in terrible pain. He said that it had become unbearable. Saying so, he grasped my father's forearms, and then with a terrible shudder he collapsed on to the floor.

In the pandemonium that ensued I remember Aunty – her face creased with worry and pain, and yet maintaining calmness and composure.

Someone went to fetch a doctor – he arrived after what seemed like an interminable wait, but it was probably only 20 minutes or so. He walked in, took in the scene at a glance, froze, then got his stethoscope out of his bag, felt the pulse, listened for the heart and lung sounds, then stood up slowly. "I am very sorry" he said. "He is no more".

Someone went to fetch Uncle Police Zachariah, someone else went somewhere else, ….things are now just a blur in my mind today as I struggle with my thoughts and memories……..

What I DO recall is Aunty, continuing to remain calm, a face of grace endowed with sorrow and tears, lost in contemplation as she gazed at a picture on the wall – a picture of the Mother of Christ.

A young Uncle, whom I only knew as Madhusudhan Nair, and who was their nephew, arrived and took her home.

As she left, she turned round to me and with tear-filled eyes she said quietly in Malayalam "Sunny unnam pedikkanda, worry cheiyarathu. Sunny-ikke thirchayatum First Class kittum. Mon poi paritsha nnannaittu ezhuthu".

….This is a blessing that I have never forgotten……..

Later on, I learnt that the Indian doctor who had come that evening had given a diagnosis of 'Cerebral Haemorrhage'.

Much went on in the subsequent hours of that evening involving my parents and Aunty, Uncle Sivaraman Pillai, Uncle Madhusudhan Nair and others, as also in the subsequent days and weeks until her departure, right to the moment we accompanied her to Princess Margaret Quay to embark on the SS Kampala to return home to India.

I have stated this much here only because I am aware that there was, at that time, and probably there still is even today, a lot of speculation on what had happened that evening.

However, I shall not dwell any further on this matter.

Aunty is now gone, -- but she remains in my heart. May her soul and that of Uncle rest in eternal peace.

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Uncle Narayana Pillai and Aunty Jyothi Pillai

(Mr & Mrs MN Pillai)

1964 - NEW SHORES BECKON, ...NEW HORIZONS OPEN.....

In January 1964 I had finished school, and was awaiting the results of the Cambridge Exams. My father had an old Royal typewriter sitting pretty in its black leather-bound case. Uncle PC Jacob, elder brother of Uncle PC Zachariah, (and related to Daly Oomen in the EAMM Group), used to run a typewriting Institute in town. He suggested that I could spend my time usefully teaching myself typing, and sent across manuals, and that is what I found myself doing as the new year commenced.

Meanwhile Tanganyika was getting on with its program of development and was developing friendships with Eastern bloc nations, in keeping with Nyerere's socialist thinking.

The island of Zanzibar lay offshore the coast of Tanganyika. It had a romantic and Arabian tale-like quality to it, with its famed reputation as the world's leading source of cloves. It had a long history of being a trading post for slavery, with slaves from mainland Tanganyika being exported to Arabian countries. Ivory was also another highly sought-after commodity, sourced from the mainland.

At some stage in the 1700s it had come under the rule of Oman and a Sultan was deployed to the island to run it. And then of course, the usual villain of the piece, the British East India Company, turned up and it soon became a British Protectorate, but still under the jurisdiction of Oman and the rule of the Sultan. The Arabs had brought cloves to Zanzibar, and used the island and adjacent Pemba Island, for growing them to take home to Oman.

During our Regional Geography classes Uncle Archie Sathyanathan had taught us that it actually comprised a small archipelago, the main island being called Unguja, another one lying close by called Pemba, and then some much smaller islands dotted around. I still remember getting the fragrant smell of cloves when we used to sail past Zanzibar and Pemba during our sea voyages to India.

Anyway, the years had passed, and the local African population wished to gain independence like Tanganyika, their big sister next door. Zanzibar gained independence in December 1963, more or less at the same time as Kenya. There were all sorts of political factions there is what I can remember from the Tanganyika broadcasting newscasts and from the Tanganyika Standard.

And then, suddenly on Sunday 12th January 1964, a political explosion shook the island. The Sultan was deposed and fled his palace with his family and retinue. A revolution was in progress. In succeeding days, we learnt that Arabs and Indians had been treated with violence, tortured and killed, a group of Goan children had been killed on their way to school. Arab and Indian women were raped. A fellow by name John Okello, a politician from one of the local disaffected

parties, had proclaimed himself as Field Marshal and had taken over the island. The British and other Europeans in Zanzibar were left untouched. Then it was announced that a man named Abeid Karume was in charge.

Nyerere, by then President of the Republic of Tanganyika, allowed the Sultan, his family and entourage to come to Dar es Salaam for refuge, because Kenyatta had refused them permission to land in Mombasa. The Sultan was eventually given asylum in Britain from where he made has way back to Oman.

A whole group of Eastern bloc countries – the USSR, Cuba, East Germany and China - rushed in to recognise the new regime. Apparently this man Okello had been trained in Cuba. It felt almost that this was an extension of the Cold War between the US and the USSR being enacted in the Indian Ocean zone. Nyerere hesitated to recognise the new regime. It seems that he had been genuinely shocked by the violence and bloodshed that had occurred there, something he abhorred.

Soon we heard that the new politicians in Zanzibar, unable to quell the growing violence and mayhem on the island, and feeling out of their depth, came scurrying to Dar es Salaam to meet President Nyerere to seek police force assistance to restore control. Apparently, a large contingent of Tanganyikan police, including the famed Field Force, was therefore despatched to the island.

In Dar es Salaam, the Indians, including Malayalis, felt worried. Some also felt rather disappointed that the High Commission of India did not seem to be more proactive in its stance to reassure the local Indian communities, were the same thing to spread to the mainland. Today, one could argue, of course, that it was not the business of the Indian High Commission anyway to provide any protection to those who had taken up British Citizenship. However, not all Indians had British citizenship, many had retained their Indian passports, and a good number of them felt aggrieved.

The week passed by with many people feeling tense.

On Monday 20th January morning, my father left for work as usual. The houseboy had not yet turned up, which was unusual for him. He was a punctual and dutiful lad. We had now acquired a new house servant – Aunty Jyothi Pillai's servant, Juma. He had been distraught at Uncle's death, and distressed that Aunty was soon going, but she had reassured him that he would have a good place to go to work, and she liaised with my mother to take him on to serve our household.

The newspaper had not been delivered, which was also unusual.

Then soon after 8.00am Aunty Tessy Morais returned home and came to our house. Aunty used to teach, but I forget at

which school. She used to get a lift, and if I'm not mistaken it was from Uncle Mtwara Mathews & Aunty who stayed at the pink bungalow on the left-hand side to the rear of our house.

Anyway, it was highly unusual for them all to have returned that early from work. Then Aunty Morais explained. They had been stopped on the way to town, by soldiers bearing arms, at the main T-junction where Pugu Road and the Changombe Road. They had been asked firmly to return home. No other explanation was given. Almost immediately after that, Uncle Morais returned, and gave a similar account of being stopped and sent back, but this had occurred where Riddoch Motors and the old Morris car showrooms used to be. This unsettling news caused my mother to worry, wondering where my father was. Uncle Morais switched on our radio. The TBC station only produced a growl and crackle of static, instead of the usual morning programs. The BBC Overseas Service Program did not carry any news about this new development.

Around 10 o'clock my father's car appeared over the horizon and my mother breathed a huge sigh of relief. He had been allowed to get through the military cordons going in to work. The soldiers had seen his Tanesco uniform and Tanesco Engineer's Identity Badge, and allowed him to pass. On reaching the Office he had seen the doors were open. Mr GD Stringer, the General Manager was in the main lobby meeting the assembled staff. He had explained what he knew.

Dar es Salaam was in the grip of a lightning military coup. All shops, offices, and normal business were at a standstill. President Nyerere's whereabouts were unknown. The airport and harbour had been seized as also the Tanganyika Standard and the broadcasting station. Only essential services were being maintained which included the Police, Fire Service, Tanesco, some sections of the PWD and so on. The GM advised the Tanesco employees to return home as soon as possible and await further information. Only a skeleton crew of staff and officers were required to maintain the power station and the distribution functions on a shift-and-rota basis. My father was asked to report for duty on the Wednesday.

On his way back my father had been stopped again at checkpoints, but he noticed that the numbers of soldiers and checkpoints had diminished. He halted at St Joseph's Boarding to collect Betty and bring her home. The convent gates were closed, and it took him a while to get through. He noticed groups of African men loitering around street corners where there was no military presence. He said that this had made feel uneasy, and that it carried ominous tones.

In the absence of further news, my father felt intensely irritated with himself for having given up our home telephone a couple of years ago, as a cost saving measure, and now he felt lost without that mode of communication with friends and colleagues and the office in town.

Around 1pm the radio crackled into life. Oscar Kambona, one of the Government Ministers, came on to explain that there had been an Army uprising by the soldiers against the British Officers but that matters had been settled and the soldiers had returned to their barracks. There was no mention of the President.

Uncle Daniel came across in his pickup. He had been to his construction office that morning and, after learning of what was happening, had stayed back, locking away important documents and things. On his way home he had encountered bands of marauding men, rioting and looting in town. He warned us not to leave the house and to ensure that doors were safely cross-barred with steel bars (a precaution that most of us even otherwise took). He had a telephone at home and any news he got, he promised to bring across.

Uncle Morais, who was a radio buff, tried picking up news from abroad. Although the situation in Tanganyika was on the airwaves, there was hardly any detail. That evening's BBC broadcast carried the news that the British High Commissioner had been seized by the mutinying soldiers but later allowed to go. The President was in hiding, and his whereabouts unknown. The American news channels strongly suspected interference from Zanzibar and the Communist bloc as the cause of what was going on.

For me, bored out of my wits all these weeks after school had closed, and nothing to do other than the self-taught typing lessons, there was absolutely nothing better than this to get all excited about. Unfortunately, the chaps with whom I could enjoy all this excitement had long since left Dar as I have previously explained. Betty was just too scared about the whole thing for me to derive any enjoyment over discussing what was going on with her.

The next day, Tuesday 21st, my father stayed at home as he had been advised. By now more news was coming through on the radio. There had been serious rioting with much violence and looting from the shops in town. The army soldiers had returned to restore order with the town police.

That afternoon President Nyerere emerged from hiding and gave a radio broadcast. He sounded subdued, almost tired. He expressed the shame and disgrace that had been brought on Tanganyika by this attempted coup and the subsequent rioting, looting and killings. It was only then, when he said this, that we realised with shock that this peaceful town that we had lived in for so long had suddenly become a venue of wanton bloodshed.

Uncle Morais and Uncle Daniel came across to make sure that everything was OK. All our neighbours came out briefly into the front gardens to exchange, over the fence, whatever news we had and to make sure that we had essential supplies. These included having candles and kerosene lamps in case power supplies failed. In spite of all this, all that we had seen was an army Land Rover or two with armed soldiers that had passed our way on Damas Road towards Temeke;

otherwise, things were quiet. From Uncle Daniel's house my father phoned Kilosa to check that Uncle and Aunty were safe.

On Wednesday, my father went to work as had been agreed on the rota. My mother watched with real fear and trepidation as he went, and praying fervently, she left a candle burning throughout the day. Nothing untoward happened to him, and he returned safely early in the afternoon. He said that things seemed quiet in town, and that there were cars and people going about resuming normal business. Many shops had had their plate glass windows smashed and broken where the looting had occurred.

As more news filtered out, we came to know that, just as in Zanzibar, Indians in town had been badly assaulted, and Arabs had been killed. Indian shops had been vandalised; Arab shops burnt down. And this was not just in Dar es Salaam but upcountry too. In Tabora, Indian teachers and pupils at the Indian secondary school had been badly bullied and assaulted by local soldiers stationed there. White British people had been left almost completely unharmed, barring those very few who had tried to argue with the soldiers and had been meted out rough treatment.

On Friday 24th Uncle Morais brought the news that the British Government was sending in a Royal Navy aircraft carrier and a destroyer, despatched from Aden, and that these were speeding their way across the Indian Ocean. My parents and he, and soon all the neighbours, were buzzing with excitement and relief. It seemed that Nyerere had turned to the British to help restore political control over the capital and the country.

Early on Saturday morning we woke up to the thundering sound of huge battle guns. It went on and on and on for what seemed like a very long time, but in reality, was probably only 10 or 15 minutes. We knew at once what these were. The Royal Navy had arrived. That afternoon President Nyerere came on radio again. He explained that he had asked the British Government for help, and he announced the immediate dismissal of the entire Tanganyikan Army. A new army would be formed.

That afternoon we saw a convoy of heavily armed British soldiers in combat fatigues and boots, wearing red berets, standing erect in armed cars, going past our house on Damas Road, towards Temeke. Later on, I came to find out that these were the Royal Marines. The following day we saw jeeps and armed vehicles going up the old airport road towards the Stadium. The British soldiers were camping there. Our nearby Malayalis, and we, and other Indians, went up to see them. Some of them were quite friendly and chatty, curious to know what life had normally been like before all this had happened. We drove up to the harbour and then on to Oyster Bay, and we saw the huge grey aircraft carrier anchored offshore. It looked massive and threatening. It was called the HMS Centaur. It was simply too huge to enter the harbour. To our parents' generation it was a symbol of protection and there was a huge feeling of relief overall among Indians.

In subsequent days and weeks more news unfolded. It transpired that originally the army mutiny had been by a small section of disgruntled soldiers who had wanted to become officers and replace the white British officers – a sort of "Africanisation of the army"... But then, it seemed, that the initial revolt had developed into some sort of plot or conspiracy, between the ring leaders of the mutiny and leftist trade union leaders, to depose the Government. Grapevine information was that it was this that had triggered Nyerere's decision to call for British help. But it wasn't just Tanganyika, - apparently Obote in Uganda and Kenyatta in Kenya had also quickly followed suit in reaching out to Britain. The much-disliked British were now suddenly being seen as saviours of their fledgling democracies. ….Of course, this was the kind of information that I picked up by snooping in on conversations between my father and Malayali Uncles – …….I had no wit in figuring all these things out for myself.

There was much political activity and discussions behind the scenes. The papers carried stories of lots of discussion with Zanzibar, and all sorts of boring facts about those discussions which did not interest me at that time.

Law and order were restored. The British military presence withdrew, and life in Tanganyika returned to a semblance of normal. However, the Indian community was left feeling badly unsettled.

A few weeks later, another rumour began floating around, among Catholic circles in town. The mystery of Nyerere's whereabouts during the mutiny was now being explained. He had apparently sought refuge in the Catholic Church, and Archbishop Maranta had given him sanctuary. Some versions of this story said that it was at the Msimbazi Mission, others that it was in Pugu. This rumour remained like that, just rumour, and then faded away. The actual facts were never revealed. But, given that Nyerere was a devout and God-fearing Catholic, the rumour did seem plausible. Nothing of this sort ever crossed the lips of Archbishop Maranta – he was the soul of utter discretion.

One day, late in January, Uncle John Saar sent word that the exam results were imminent and could be expected within a day or two. Two mornings later, gazing out of the window, I noticed Aunty Chinnamma Daniel walking in a real hurry towards our house. Little Mathew was not with her. It was a little unusual, because she generally popped in to have long chats and say some small prayers with my mother in the afternoons, and she used to bring Mathew with her. On this day she was rushing, breathless, beaming with smiles and joy. She gasped out that Uncle John Saar had just telephoned with my results. I had done well.

Joyful prayers of thanksgiving were offered at home that night.

Dear, dear Aunty Chinnamma Daniel, a wonderful, gentle, warm and affectionate motherly soul. May she rest forever in eternal peace. Little did I know then as a teenager, that many decades later, I would be speaking to her as she lived in a

flat in Windsor, Ontario, and then even later, when she was in a Canadian nursing home, and how I laughingly would reminisce with her over the cakes, biscuits and puddings that we hungry cycling lads would wolf down at her place.

Once again, I pay tribute to our Malayali Uncle teachers. In the beginning, when I had joined Azania Secondary in Standard 7 at the start of 1958, I had unfairly harboured suspicions against them, - that they would go and carry tales to my parents about me and my activities. They never did.

Uncle John Saar, (Ivy's father Uncle VM John, and Rennie's Uncle), had been our class teacher twice in the course of those years at school. He had made Biology a great subject to learn, and even managed to get us to deal with, and dissect, frogs and earthworms in the lab. His quiet sense of humour made him a delightful class teacher.

Uncle Avarankutty, (Mr VA Zachariah, cousin of Mr VM John), short in stature but brimming and bouncing with energy and high spirits, was a really jolly character, absolutely gifted in making maths so understandable, - so easy, so every day, - so utterly common sense, - with nothing to get uptight about, - just there for you to enjoy – I will never forget him. I owe my distinction in maths to Uncle Avarankutty, and to some extent to Mr Simms, our Deputy Head.

Uncle Unni Saar (Mr MG Nayar, father of Deeta Nair) had taught us Trigonometry, and occasional Physics lessons, and he too was so gifted in making the rather abstruse subject seem quite down to earth and interesting. I just remember him as being a superb teacher, and a warm friendly one at that.

Tall good-humoured Uncle Satyanathan Saar, (Mr Archibald Sathyanathan), father of my friends Bonnie and Reggie, and uncle to Pushpa David, had taught us Regional, Political and Economic Geography, opening up our thinking to a world bigger than Dar es Salaam, and issues larger than rock and roll, cricket, cars and girls. He could be strict, though.

In one of my earlier episodes I had mentioned the teachers I had disliked. Thinking back on it years later, I recalled the ancient proverb : "When the pupil is ready, the teacher appears; when the pupil is truly ready, the teacher disappears".

As the decades passed, I have often looked back with true gratitude on my teachers and mentors - all the way through school, college, medical college, and professional career. Like my parents, and uncles and aunts, they too have helped to shape and mould my way of life and thought.

One of my really pleasant memories after the exams was the party laid on by Uncle Kunju Govi and Aunty at their residence. I think it was on a Saturday evening. We Malayali teenagers who had just passed our Cambridge exams were the guests of honour. The other guests were our peers, mostly those a year group or two below us. Earlier, in my recollections of 1953, I had mentioned Uncle, Aunty, and their 2 daughters whom I remembered as "…nice, smart friendly girls, the elder of whom was named Geetha." - **[I was delighted to find out that it is Geetha Viswanathan in EAMM today].

It was a teenagers-only party, the first one that I had ever been to. Thank heavens, at long last, I had "graduated" by now from my mother's Alleppey family-tailor's-stitched 1956 shorts, into proper long trousers. O boy, wasn't I glad to see the end of those….. I sported a smart 'Tootal' tie, a Teijin Teteron-cotton long-sleeved shirt to wear, with proper cufflinks. (Teijin was a Japanese company that had first come out with the textile called tetoron, similar to today's polyester cotton. It was purported to be a great thing, because unlike simple cotton, it wouldn't crease, and would thus save on ironing after washing. I don't actually think that that particular claim is entirely true). I even had a super brand new watch — a Roamer, a gift from my Aunty Pennamma of Kilosa.

We had such fun that evening. All our pop favourites were playing in the background, but I think we were all a little too shy to dance. Uncle had organised a lot of party games and ran the show, ably backed by Aunty Jaya, and assisted by Geetha and Sashi, who kept feeding us nice titbits and served up a good meal after that. Towards the end, just as our parents arrived to collect us, Uncle gave a little speech, congratulating us, reminding us that we had just started out on the next big step in our lives, that we would be leaving home, maybe for the first time in our lives, and that we should not forget what our parents had taught us, and should work hard to do well in life. He mentioned Jaipal Anandan and my cousin Dolly Joseph, both of whom had excelled in studies and had been sterling in sports, as shining examples. He then gifted each one of us with a shiny new Parker Pen, very smart in its case. I treasured mine for a long while after, writing my Uni exams, entrance exams and numerous letters home to my parents, with it……

[***Dolly Joseph – Dr Joseph's daughter, my cousin Dollamamma – had been a medical student at Grant Medical College in Bombay and captain of the Bombay University Women's hockey team in the 1950s. Among one of the first Indian girls from Tanganyika to be accepted for medical training in the late 1940s / early 1950s, she had, at that time, been met and greeted enroute at Nairobi Airport by the then Indian High Commissioner to British East Africa, Mr Apa Pant. Apparently, reported in the Tanganyika Standard and known to the Malayali families of that time……well, I don't remember any of that – I was just too small then].

What all of us remember with such aching love about our parents is, I think, always matched in equal measure by the pride of what they accomplished in raising us up to be who we are today. We were so fortunate, so lucky, that in addition to our parents we had such sincere and well-meaning Malayali Uncles & Aunties in Dar es Salaam during that era who furthered that process of care.

May Uncle Kunju Govi & Aunty Jaya be for ever blessed.

Now, during the previous year, - 1963, my final year at school, - my parents had already been busy discussing the next phase. Tanesco had held out a glimmering prospect for their employees' children – free higher education in the UK if the

person would obtain good grades at the Cambridge exams. On further enquiry, the offer turned out to be like this – fully funded education in electrical engineering, and then return to work for Tanesco 5 years. However, the scheme was offered only for electrical engineering. Hmmm, it was a nice and interesting proposition.....there would be familiar friends..... Koshy was already in England, Sam would soon be heading that way, Ameen Kanji was already returning there....I toyed with the idea quite a bit, ...but eventually I gave it up. My future career interests were set elsewhere...in the arts and sciences of healing....

So then had begun a whole series of airmail letters. Lots of letters had been exchanged between my parents and my uncles in India. Colleges run by the Jesuit Fathers were top of the list and St Joseph's Trichinopoly was the favoured option.

Dr Joseph's younger son, Rennie, (my cousin Rennichayan), was by now a medical student in Calcutta. He waded in. A letter arrived from him. He had heard that Sunny was going to packed off to St Joseph's Trichy. He implored my parents not to, - simply not to, - send me to that stink hole. It was a junk place for a Dar es Salaam boy. That's where he had endured an year just because that was where his parents, Uncle and Aunty had sent him, and THAT was simply because that's where my doctor Uncle and the other Thalanany uncles had gone. Please would Uncle Devasiachen and Aunty Mammykutty NOT send Sunny there.

More letters went to and fro between uncles in India and my parents, and my parents talked to our Malayali Uncle teachers at Azania.

Eventually a compromise had been reached, which satisfied Rennichayan also. A big city, and a Jesuit college with a good reputation to boot, that attracted foreign students – Loyola College, Madras.

To me who knew nothing about Madras, nor Trichonopoly, it was all a bit abstruse and abstract. No internet in those days, no Google, to find out more about these places and more about these proposed colleges, and I lacked the common sense to at least search for some books about these places from the school library or the British Council Library in town. Madras and Trichonopoly were not exactly limelight cities that attracted attention on the BBC, or in the Tanganyika Standard – so I just sailed along with whatever was being proposed. All that I knew, and felt, was that it was going to be very different from the cosy life I had led all along so far. Exciting on the one hand, - new people, new friends, new experiences, ... but a little perturbing on the other to be departing from the familiar haunts. Other friends were going to other destinations – Bombay, Nairobi, Trivandrum, Makerere, the UK,.....I seemed to be the only fellow destined for Madras.

All that had been then, - last year, 1963, - but now the months had passed, the results were out, and matters had to be

finalised. A letter arrived from Fr Jerome D'Souza, outgoing Principal at Loyola, and a former Principal at St Joseph's, Trichy. It carried a whole sheaf of forms which had to be duly filled in, copies of certificates and testimonials attached, and then despatched by Registered Air Mail to Madras. The Cable & Wireless Office used to be on the other side of the street where the Post Office was, and for good measure, my father sent a cable to Fr D'Souza saying that the application had been despatched.

Talking of copies of certificates reminds me of office machines at that time. We are all familiar with the photocopier of today, descendants of the Xerox machine. Photostat machines of the 60s were a different type of machine from the photo copier of today, and the copies were printed out on a special type of paper. I had seen these in the school office. There was also another type of machine called the cyclostyle machine produced by a firm called Gestetner. Class exam papers used to be typed on a kind of stencil, and then run through this machine which produced multiple copies. I guess that there must be few of these still lurking around in some forgotten corner even today.

We were going together as a family. My mother was pregnant, carrying her 3rd child, (my youngest sister-to-be), and she longed to be in her paternal home for this one. My father was taking the 5 yearly overseas leave. He was granted only 3 months leave. The last one he would get, and one of the last granted in Tanesco. The 5-year accumulated leave scheme was being phased out under the new regulations for employees in Tanesco. Soon it would cease altogether and be replaced by just an annual leave of 1 month, to be taken every year without accumulation.

With the increasing focus on "Africanisation", it was a period of uncertainty about continuing employment prospects in Tanganyika, and my parents decided that my mother should stay on in India for a while with my sister to see how things transpired over coming months. They packed a lot of their household effects. Huge timber boxes arrived at home, beautifully crafted, with proper lids and bolts, and hoops for padlocks, and massive rope handles on the sides. My mother did not seem too impressed. She said that it would take an "Aanaah" to lift each one of them. My father's short answer was that if she wanted all her stuff safely transported across the oceans and by rail and road, then this was the thing to go for. Over the subsequent days and weeks, it was my task to paint these boxes a distinctive blue, and then paint on the box numbers, the names, and destinations in white – COCHIN VIA BOMBAY – and to assist my mother in packing them to the brim with her kitchen things. No plastic bubble wrap in those days, so the packing material was an oddment of shredded paper from my father's office, straw that he brought from somewhere or the other, rags from torn up old clothes, and torn up newspaper. I remember my mother making a number of visits to Stewarts Stores for crockery and homeware stuff. There were 7 massive boxes in total.

Smith Mackenzie, the Tanganyikan branch of the old Mackinnon Mackenzie Company which ran the British India Steam Navigation, issued the tickets for early April. Mackinnon Mackenzie used to have a freight wing which they had wound up in India and the business had been taken over by a Parsi firm called Buhariwala & Sons.

Uncle PG Ramachandran and Aunty Subhadhra, close family friends right from our 1950s Ring Street days, had been in touch with my parents in the preceding months. Hema, their eldest daughter was destined for India, for college studies too. Would my parents be good enough to be her guardians on board ship for the voyage until we reached Bombay, where an uncle of hers would come to collect Hema. My mother was utterly delighted. She and Aunty Subhadhra had always been close friends. Hema would be an ideal older 'big sister' companion for my sister Libby, allowing my mother to take rest. So, when Hema's tickets were booked they were booked at the same time as ours.

Soon the rounds of visits began, visiting to let family friends know that we would be leaving, and then closer to time, their visits bearing gifts for us, and good wishes for a safe journey.

The sailing departure date was meant to have been on the 6th of April, but then news came that the date had been postponed by a week to 13th April. The Kampala was not going to be sailing as it was in dry docks at Bombay, undergoing refurbishment. The steamer that would carry us would be one that was much smaller than the usual SS Amra or the SS Kampala. It would be the SS Daressa.

Panic…. Smaller ship !...Would we still get our places on board…?....

To the relief of my parents, our tickets and cabin were assured, and in equal relief Uncle & Aunty Ramachandran were assured of Hema's place on board.

As time grew closer, I began to feel quite mixed up in my feelings about leaving – sure it was exciting to be entering college life, and all that it entailed, but there really was a part of me hankering to stay on, and not leave, and wanting all my familiar friends back. They had all gone, - except for Anand, and he too would soon be leaving for India.

On the 13th we left home. All the non-cabin luggage and the huge boxes, all 7 of them, had gone on to a lorry the previous day to a go-down at the harbour. I just can't remember who gave us a lift to the harbour. Uncle Ramachandran and family joined us there. We went through Customs and Port Health and out onto the quay.

This time we boarded the ship at the Princess Margaret Quay, straight up the gangway ladder, from the dock……no l onger having to precariously swing over deep water, at every step on the dangling accommodation ladder, as we had done in mid-harbour on previous voyages.

On board, my father checked in with the Purser and Assistant Purser, showing them the tickets and necessary documentation. We were ushered to our cabin, but my father and I swiftly went back upstairs to the deck to check the boarding of our luggage. We watched as those huge blue painted boxes got swung on to the ship and lowered into the caverns of the hold below deck by the cranes, deftly operated by the African crane operators. About an hour and a half later bells rang, the purser announced the impending departure over the loudspeaker and asked all non-passengers to leave. Uncle Ramachandran, Aunty Subhadhra, Prema and Sudha left. Hema smiled bravely, but couldn't help a few tears trickling down her face. My mother kept her close to her own side, soothing her and comforting her.

The sirens sounded, the Pilots launch appeared, the tugboats began pulling, and the vessel began moving slowly. Soon we were moving out of the harbour, gliding through the Magogoni ferry channel and then out of the harbour, sailing past State House (as Government House was now called). I left the railings to see whether there were any lads I knew on board – no luck.

It was a small ship. We had good meals, but the extent of entertainment was far less than what I had remembered from our previous voyage which I had described earlier in my recollection of 1956. There were movies alright, every evening, usually Hindi or Westerns, but no concerts and no live entertainment that I had looked forward to. Western and Hindi songs used to be played over the loudspeakers intermittently during the daytime.

One song particularly captivated me. It was in French, and it had a really catchy tune. I asked some older chaps who were humming it what song it was and by whom. They said it was a European Christian song sung by a nun. I found out that this was "DOMINIQUE" sung by "Souer Sourire" – The SINGING NUN. Decades later I learnt that she was Jeanine Deckers, and I read of her unhappy life and sad ending. Even today, when I hear the song being played, I recall that 1964 voyage, - of leaving behind life in Dar es Salaam, and life in Tanganyika.

Hema was a nice companion on board. Now and again, I would play ring tennis with her and my sister, and any other young passenger whom we would collar to join us. But most of the time I just ensconced myself in the library, reading up this that and the other.

The days passed by and soon we were in the greyish brown waves and waters of Bombay Harbour.

Hema's Uncle came to collect her. The plan was for my mother and sister to fly to Cochin while my father and I would follow by train with all the luggage. Meeting Hema's Uncle proved fortuitous. He worked at Santa Cruz. On the day my mother and sister left for Cochin, he obtained special permits for my father and myself, and took us around the airport

and then up to the control tower. It was a most interesting experience to see how the air traffic controllers, very smoothly and efficiently, guided the traffic through the skies. Today I doubt that I would get such a chance again. But then, these were the days before, Leila Khaled, and the Munich Olympic massacre, and the Entebbe hijacking and so on.

Meanwhile back in Tanganyika, after we left, the government discussions between Tanganyika and Zanzibar continued.

It was decided that the 2 countries would unite. After he returned to Dar es Salaam, my father wrote to me that the name of the country would change in October that year to the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. That change of name did not last long, and by the end of October the name was shortened to Tanzania.

Before returning to Dar, my father had accompanied me to Madras to enrol me at Loyola. He had met with Fr Principal – Fr Gnanapragasam Francis, who was very efficient, forthright, just back after working 15 years in the US in the field of education, and whose almost first question of me was whether I could play tennis. I fumbled about, and mumbled something about playing badminton. I don't think he was mightily impressed…..

Life at Loyola was a startling change from the cocooned schoolboy life at home in Dar. Suddenly you were left to fend for yourself. There was a whole load of new situations, new people, new experiences – the languages, the studies, the food, the new friends and classmates, the teaching staff, - to get used to, and then the stern, almost military, discipline for which the Jesuits were renowned. The 100-acre campus stretched out in Nungambakkam, with hundreds and hundreds of trees lining every avenue, path and corner affording cool relief from the blazing hot sun.

The College buildings were very grand and imposing, built in 1925 under the supervision of a French missionary Jesuit, Fr Francis Bertram. One of the buildings was a very fine hall, named Bertram Hall after Fr Bertram, that could easily seat 2000 students, and served as an auditorium for concerts and for the regular Friday evening movie shows, but also as an exam hall. The story from the seniors was that it was a "Fine Hall", built out of the fines collected from students for every possible misdemeanour, such as missing a class, handing in the weekly assignments late and so on…!..

There were around 15 hostel blocks. We had single rooms, but these were bare, really spartan, almost monastic cells, with whitewashed walls, in-built shelves, a thick tough wooden table and chair that could withstand the antics of young male energy, and a plain bare folded canvas camp cot. On the table was an oval water container, an earthen clay pot that served to keep water cool. There was a shuttered window in the outer wall, looking out onto quadrangle gardens. It was matched with a shuttered window, fixed in the middle of the door, opening out on to the verandaed corridor, so that, after the 3rd curfew bell went at 8.45pm, the patrolling night warden could see through and verify that each occupant was indeed inside each room and studying as they were meant to be.

There was a choice of cuisines, with 5 large kitchens serving different styles of food in 5 different Mess Halls. The food was plentiful, good, and nutritious, but inevitably after a few weeks began to get boring, and led to grumbling from dissatisfied hungry young males. Therefore, at the end of every month, students had the option to change to one of the other Mess Halls. The Mess rotations reduced the levels of grumbling – typical Jesuit strategy in action.

At 6.30 every morning the Catholic students were summoned to morning Mass. Following Mass, there was 'Work Time', and then the bell rang promptly for breakfast at 8.30. From every hostel block, fellows would be seen streaming towards the Mess Halls from where the appetising aromas of masala dosais and chapathis and puris wafted out.

Fresh water was provided by the block servant who would gather the earthen clay pots, "goojas", left at every door, and take them down to the tap in the garden quadrangle in front of each block. There from a tap in the centre, its mouth covered by layers of cloth, there would trickle forth Corporation water which was collected in the goojas and brought back to the doors of the students' rooms. Once in a way we would go to look at the taps, and decide whether some fellow whom we didn't like very much could be served "Non-vegetarian water". It was easy to slip off the layers of cloth on the mouth of the tap, and out would come tumbling tiny wriggling little creatures, some sort of larvae, probably mosquito larvae, - who knows, who cared…..they just tumbled into the gooja of the hapless fellow. I took to having a piece of blotting paper as a filter, over my tumbler – you know.. - just in case…..

The class sizes were enormous, the lecturers excellent, but we had to learn to write fast and take down notes at the same time they spoke – something we had not had to do at school. The lads were all a friendly bunch, not all of them very fluent in English. Some of them sported tufts of hair from the back of their heads. I learnt that they were Brahmins, and were very high caste people and very clever…..OK…..Good.

In a few weeks I was beginning to settle in quite well. Soon, during inter-collegiate games and matches, we began making the acquaintance of the other men's colleges in Madras, and equally soon we also learnt what each set of students were called:

"Princes of Presidency, Gentlemen of Christian, Slaves of Loyola, and Rowdies of Pachaiyappas".

'Slaves of Loyola' presumably because of the strict rules we had to observe and abide by.

In the evenings the tennis courts were always busy. These were grey clay courts. Now and again Fr Francis, the principal, Fr George Thottungal and Fr Vincent Thampy would be seen, changed out of their white cassocks into white tennis gear, playing away merrily. One of the really skilful players there was an Andhra chap, a senior student from the

2nd year degree classes. Watching him play was a treat. Playing with him often was one of my own classmates, a tall Tamil chap named Anand. This was another Anand. I learnt that the Andhra senior's name was Bhupathi. One day he came forward to talk to me. He said that he had learnt that I was from Dar es Salaam. I said yes. He said that he was part of a junior team going on a courtesy tour of East Africa to play friendly matches with local teams. He was going to visit Dar. Did I know tennis people there? I had never wielded a tennis racquet in my life, though we used to play shuttlecock badminton in our front courtyard, and at Uncle Daniel's place. I said I'd write to my parents as soon as he could give me more details. However, things moved much faster than I thought.

Within a couple of days, I got a summons to see Fr Francis (Fr Principal). I wondered what I had done wrong. I was not aware of having done any mischief or engaged in any misdemeanour. It turned out to be quite innocuous. One of the Loyola star pupils was going on a trip to East Africa as part of a visiting Indian tennis junior team. His name was CKG Bhupathi. Fr Principal was going to write to my father requesting friendly support and assistance in the rare event that Bhupathi required any when in Dar. Would I be so good as to write to my parents too?

My father spoke to Uncle John Saar, who we all knew was an avid tennis player and a tennis club member. Things were sorted out in preparation. My parents met Bhupathi in Dar, and he was courteous enough to ask them if they wanted to send anything with him for me. Knowing that this was probably his 1st visit abroad, and knowing how thrilled he was likely to be to carry things home for his own family and friends, my parents did not burden him with anything, but rather gave him a small gift of their own. On his return he sought me out to express his thanks. I lost touch with him after he left college. Many, many years later I learnt that his son Mahesh Bhupathi became an excellent tennis player, and that CKG himself had opened up a training club in Bangalore.

His friend was my tennis-playing classmate, Anand. I used to see Anand with his parents and family at Sunday morning Mass in the College Chapel. The 2 tall, statuesque brothers coming in together and walking up the aisle would make people's heads turn to look at them. One day after Mass he saw me and introduced me to his father and mother. The younger brother was equally tall, muscular and well-built, a schoolboy at Don Bosco's Madras. His name was Vijay. I learnt that their father's name was Mr Amritraj.

I don't need to say more - The two brothers went on to become international tennis stars and part of Indian tennis history as everyone knows.

Letters used to be delivered to the rooms by the block servant who would collect them from the hostel office, and I would read any letters after lunch, before the afternoon lecture sessions commenced.

It was sometime in August I think …that one day I received a letter from my Dar es Salaam friend Anand. He began with the usual courtesies. Then came the next paragraph:

"Sunny, I don't know whether you've already heard. There was a terrible accident recently in Morogoro in which our friend Koshy died".

Everything froze - Time stood still.

More details followed – but nothing registered…...

On a neem tree outside the window, a small black capped mynah bird called.

I put down the letter and went to class.

****

A FURTHER TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE……PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORABILIA FROM THE 50s AND THE EARLY 60s…..

These are further pictures from that period.

The first two pictures are not from my father's collection. They were posted on the EAMM Group earlier in 2021 by other Members, soon after I had joined. The 1st picture is of the Azania Secondary School teachers and the 2nd one is of the school's Boy Scouts Group.

Joppen, Anand and I were thrilled to see these, but all three of us felt that the pictures were definitely not taken during our time at the school, because very many of our teachers whom we clearly remember are not in there.

We saw many other teachers whom we did not recognise at all. I have numbered the persons in the pictures, but I was only able to identify and name some of them.

***I am grateful to to Preetha Mary George and Ninan John (Raju Johnson) who helped with missing information.

1. Mrs Leela Titus—(aunty to Rennie, Ivy, Biji and Preetha Mary George)

3. Uncle John Saar (Mr VM John, - Ivy's Dad) – our class teacher and Biology teacher

6. Mr CD Patel, our Chemistry teacher

7. Mr GT Johns, the Principal

8. Mr JCH Simms, the Deputy Head. He taught us Geometry. (This is NOT Mr GT Johns).

11. Uncle Archie Satyanathan, our Geography teacher (Bonnie's father).

12. Uncle Unni Saar, (Mr MG Nayar), who taught us Physics and Trigonometry.

13. The Health Science teacher – whose name I have forgotten…..

17. A teacher in 10R – whose name I have forgotten.

18. The Urdu teacher.

19. Mr Nagar Singh Dhami – who taught us Maths – I think Algebra…in Standard 9 and again in Standard 11.

20. Mr LN Bhagwat, our first Science teacher during our Standard 7 days.

32. Mr Nachappa from Coorg

33. Mr VT Mathew, (uncle to Rennie, Ivy and Preetha Mary George).

34. Mr RD Patel (brother of Mr CD Patel, both cricketers)

Many of the memorable teachers whom we had are missing from the photo – Uncle Avarankutty, (Mr VA Zachariah), Maths teacher, and Uncle GP Nair, Physics teacher in Standard 11 and Standard 12 (Kuttan's Dad), Mr GS Phadke, (our class teacher in Standard 7), Mr NU Dave, Mr Jhaveri, Mr Somabhai Patel, (the arts teacher), all our British lady teachers – Mrs Marsh, Mrs Watts, Miss Ivy Betts, Miss Janaki Kushalappa, the other British men teachers (Mr Peter J Woods, Mr Percy Shuttleworth), our American teacher Mr Joseph Molloy, and many others whose names I have forgotten.

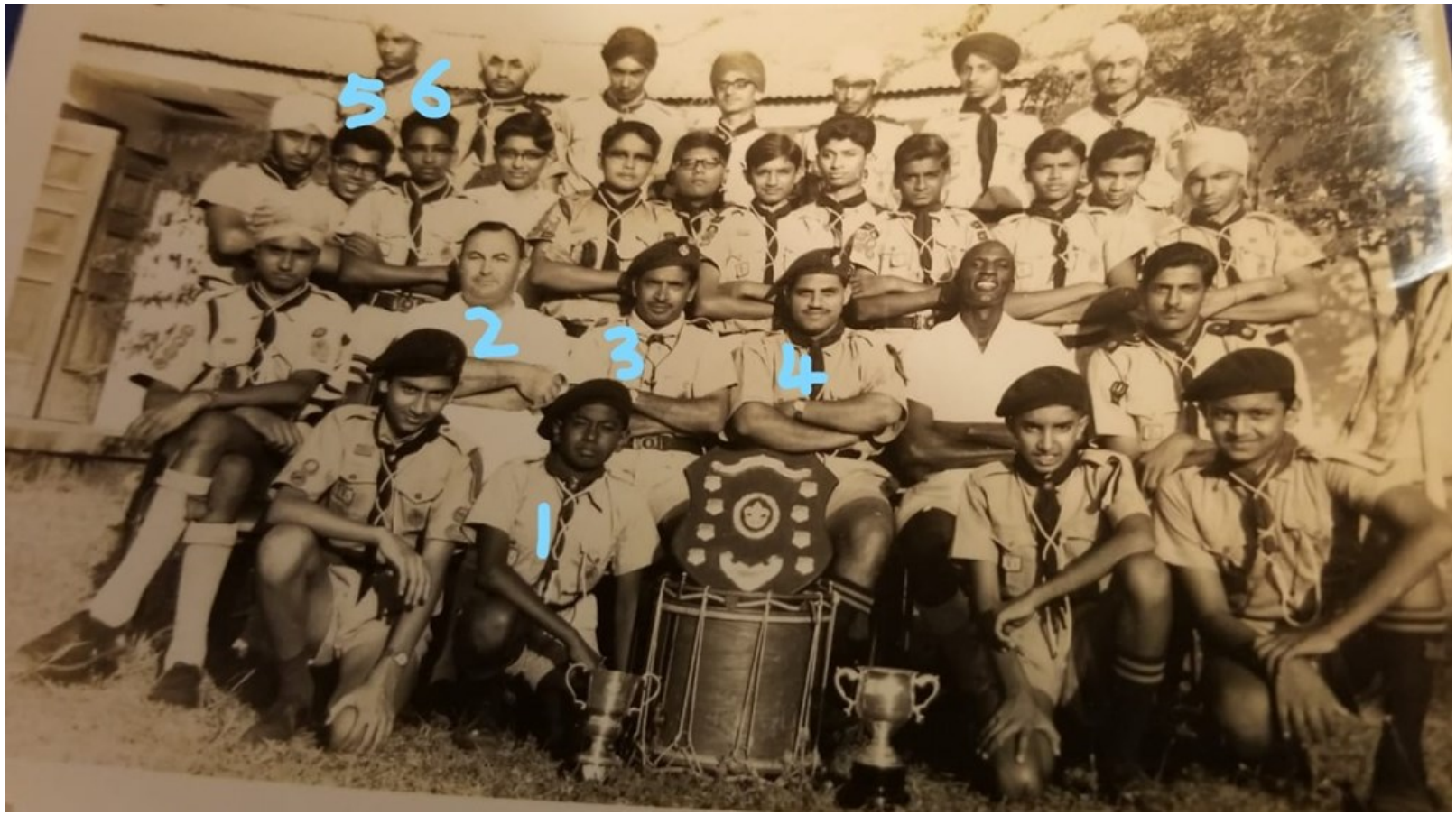
The 2nd picture, the one below, shows the school scout group. In this picture I numbered only those whom I could clearly remember.

1. Joy Philip, ex-Kilosa (Mathew Philip in our Group).
2. Mr JCH Simms, Deputy Head, and who used to teach us Geometry;
3. 3. Uncle Unni Saar Mr MG Nayar — father of Deeta Nair in this Group)

4. Mr VT Mathew

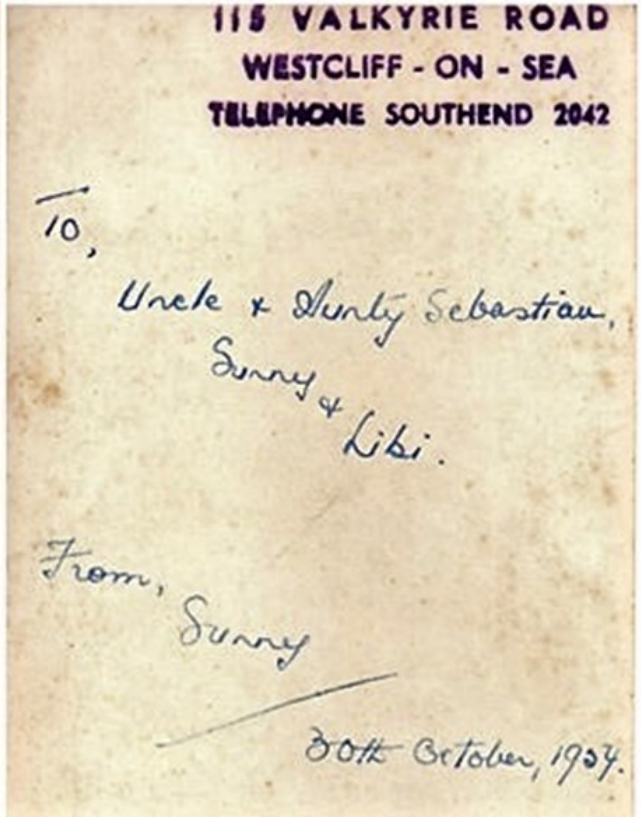
5. Prince George, our junior, and brother of Cecily (George) David in this Group, and cousin of Melville Ipe.

6. Sunny Johnson — I'd thought at first that this was Raju Johnson, but later on Raju (Prof John Ninan in the EAMM Group) pointed out that it was his brother Sunny, who now lives in Texas.



BELOW LEFT: PRASHANTH ACHUTAN (Babu) – sings Elvis Presley's "Wooden Heart" at a Kerala Kala Mandalam show - late 1950s

BELOW RIGHT: PRASSANAN ACHUTAN – Babu's older brother, Sunny, sent my parents this picture of himself after his arrival in the UK, where he had gone for further studies – October 1954 as the inscriptions shows.



The PAREL FAMILY – in the 1960s

Uncle and Aunty Mauzi Mathews & family – a truly loving, warm and affectionate family. I feel proud to have known them. Uncle worked on the sisal estates at Mauzi, near Kimamba. I have written of them in an earlier episode.

Picture shows Uncle PG Mathews, Aunty Thankamma, Achenkutty (George Parel), Nirmala (Nina) at the right, and Kunjmol (Susan) in the middle.

I have written previously of Achenkutty. As a boy I thought he looked like Harry Belafonte, and because he walked with a slight hint of a cowboy swagger, I would also think of him as Buck Jones or Roy Rogers. I loved the tractor rides he would give me and my cousin Benny when we went to Mauzi.

He was a fantastic tractor and heavy machines mechanic, a boon and an asset to the East African Sisal Plantations in Kimamba and Kilosa. He really had a natural in-born ability with large machines. He moved later to the Middle East, where he was highly sought after for his skills.

After his retirement he, and Sophy, his wife, migrated to the US, where their 3 sons were settled in Philadelphia. Unable to keep still, he was soon driving schoolchildren around in those yellow school buses. Good old Achenkutty – he passed away some years ago, as also his sister Nirmala. Only Susan is with us today.

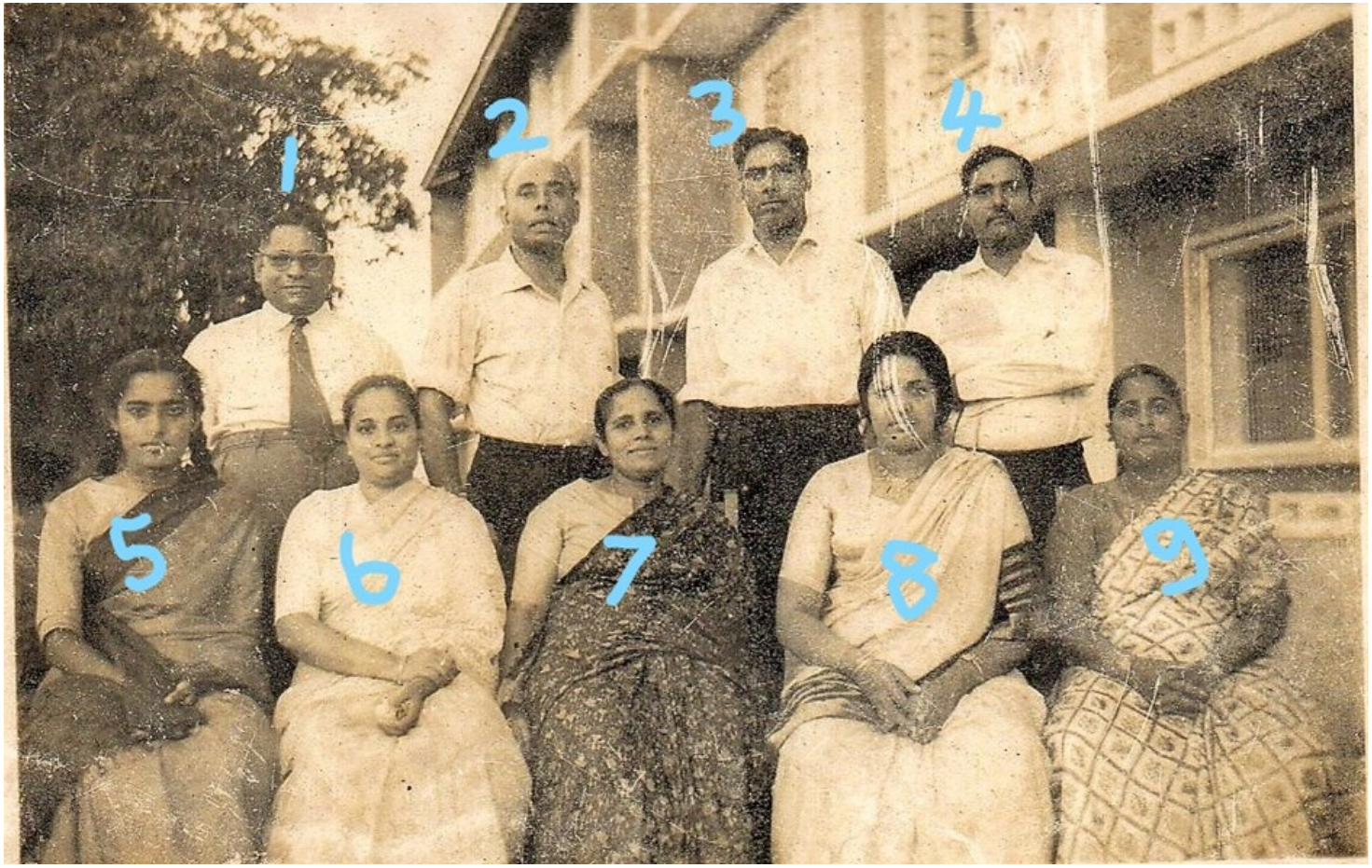
I had the good fortune to see Uncle and Aunty when I visited them at their home in Kozhencherry in 1973, and saw them once more, a few years later, as guests at my wedding.

Picture with VASU & LILLU – taken some time in the mid-1950s

STANDING: Vasu, Lillu, (Uncle MK Nayar's children),

KNEELING: myself – (Sunny) – Matthew Thalanany, my sister Elizabeth (Libby), my cousin sister Alice (Betty) - at Uncle MK Nayar's house, sometime in the mid-1950s.

We with the KAMICHERIL FAMILY members in the 1960s — No. 1



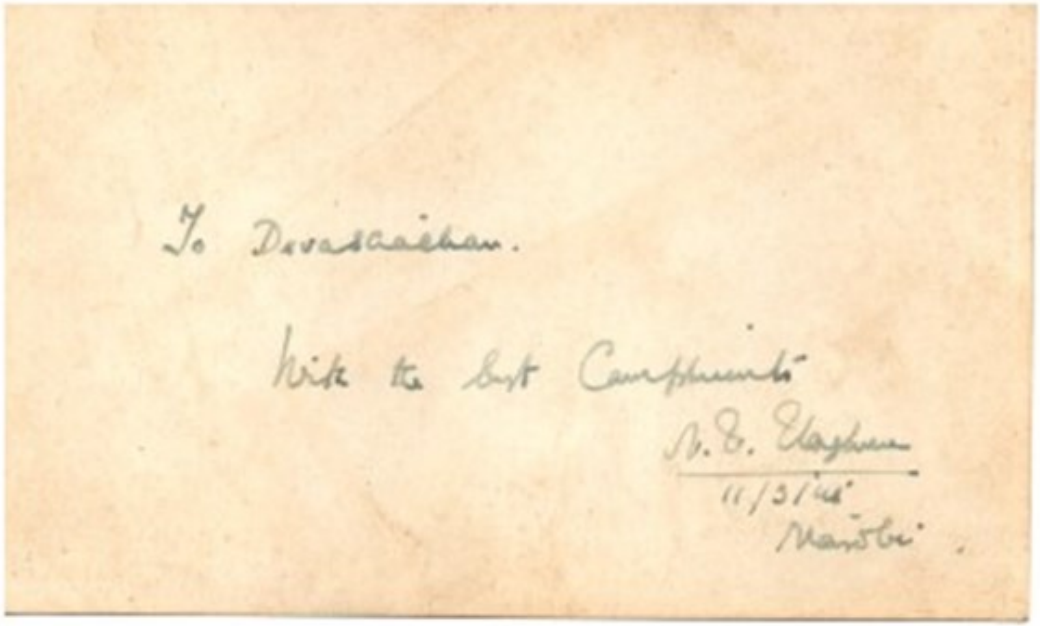
1. My father, Mr TM Sebastian
2. Uncle Ousepachen, (Mr Joseph Kamicheril father of Molly Abraham in our Group) and of my classmate Joppen (Joe Kamicheril).
3. Uncle Philip Kamicheril – Uncle Ousepachen's younger brother – he had moved to Kenya at some stage in the 1940s
4. Uncle Kurian Kamicheril
5. Molly Abraham, Uncle Ousepachen's daughter (in our Group)
6. My mother, Mrs Mary Sebastian.
7. Aunty Marykutty, Molly's mother.
8. Aunty Chinnamma Philip Kamicheril
9. Aunty Sossamma Kurian Kamicheril.

****Thank you to Molly (Kamicheril) Abraham** for information on the first names of her Aunties

We with the KAMICHERIL FAMILY members in the 1960s — No. 2

1. Joppen, Molly’s brother
2. Uncle Philip’s daughter - …? Valsa..?..
3. Can’t remember, but I think she was also Uncle Philip’s daughter
4. My sister Libby (Mrs Elizabeth Mathews)
5. Jayan, Molly’s and Joppen’s younger brother
6. Grinning me

MR NV VARGHESE & FAMILY, Nairobi, February 1945.



Mr & Mrs Varghese were my father's friends in Dar es Salaam but moved to Nairobi in the 1940s. The date of the inscription on the rear of the picture shows that it precedes my father's marriage to my mother later that year.

When I had posted this picture in the Group in August 2021, I had asked people for more information about them.

In response, Molly Abraham (Kamicheril) let us know that Mr & Mrs Varghese had been close family friends and were her godparents. Their son Basil was her peer in age. Molly's parents, Uncle Ousepachen and Aunty Marykutty, were Basil's godparents.

Mr Kuttan Nair from this Group let us know that the family moved to Mombasa and finally settled in Australia.

UNCLE CHACKOCHAN (MR JACOB MATHEWS) & FAMILY – 1952

Sitting L-R – Aunty Kunjamma holds baby Lettie, my little friend Flossie in the middle, Monsy (Dr Annie Samuel today), Gertie (Rebecca)

Standing – Uncle Chackochan, and a nephew Uncle Johnny

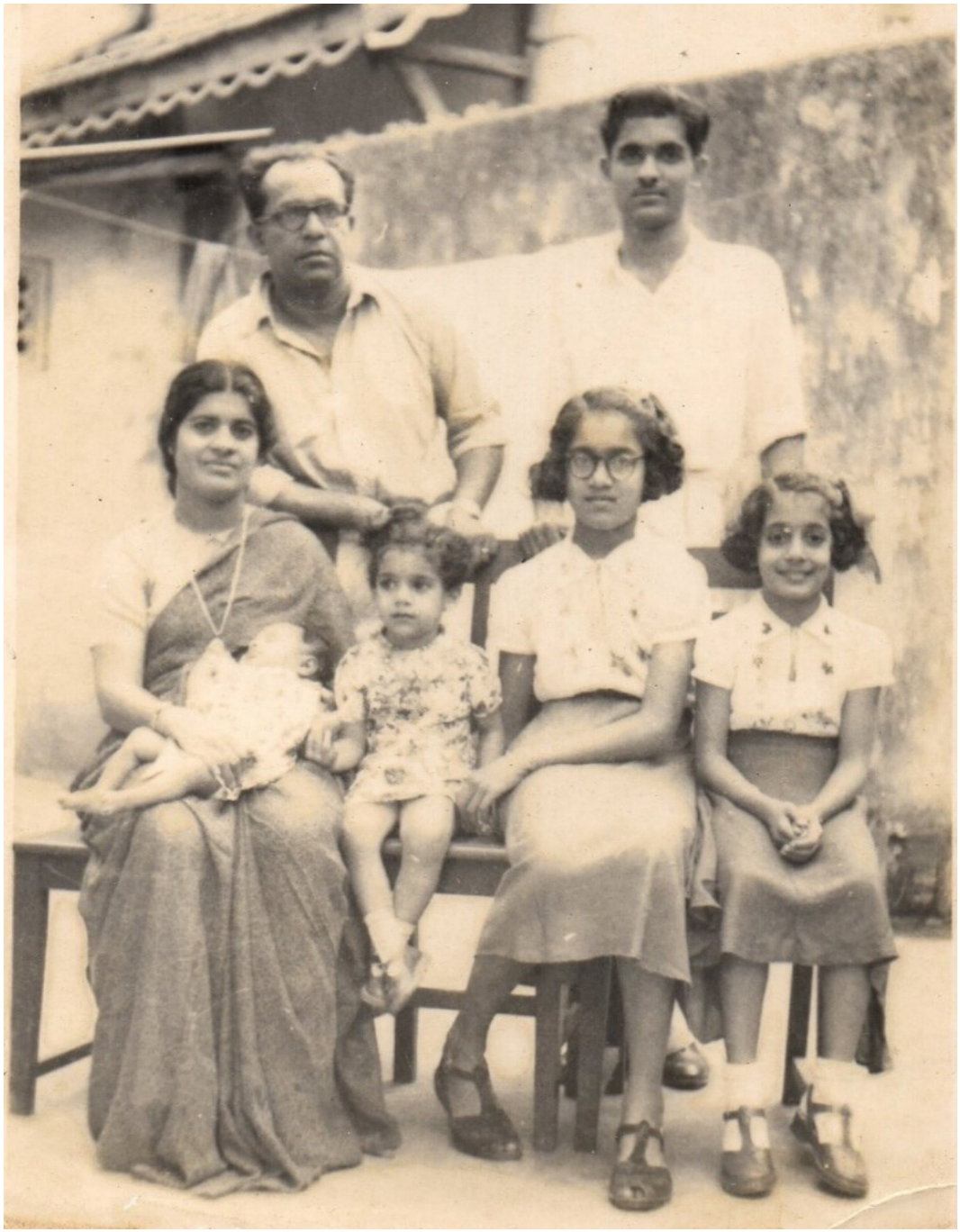
In my episode of '1953', I have already written of the very close bonds of loving friendship that tied my parents to Uncle Chackochan and Aunty Kunjamma.

It was on Thursday 13th August 1953, during a holiday upcountry, that having missed the train at Moshi, they sped by car towards Arusha to catch it there. The car was driven by a relative, Uncle Philipochan, (Mr Philip) who lived locally.

In the deep dark night, an oncoming car's twin head-lights dazzled Uncle Philipochan. The car sped right on, crashing into the back of a stationary lorry that had been left jacked-up overnight on the road. Uncle and baby Lettie, whom he was holding, died at the scene. Aunty and Flossie passed away soon after, within a few hours at the hospital.

When my parents were alive, every year on 13th August, they used to arrange for a Holy Mass to be offered for the souls of their loved departed friends.

That memorial of prayer service continued even after they retired and returned home to India, and almost to the very end of my father's life in his late 90s.



With Members of the PANTHOLIL FAMILY.

Taken around 1951.

The occasion is the Baptism — Christening — of Uncle PC Zachariah's 1st son, Jacob (pet name same as mine, Sunny).

My parents were Sunny's godparents. In the photo my mother can be seen holding the baby, which it was the privilege of the Godmother to do at the Baptism.

As children we used to call Uncle Zachariah as Uncle Police Zachariah, as he was a high ranking officer in the Police. He was trained for CID work at Hendon in London.

Standing L-R Uncle PC Jacob and daughter, my father TM Sebastian Thalanany, Uncle Simon Saar (PC Simon), Uncle PC Zachariah, Uncle TK Oomen (father of Daly Oomen in the EAMM Group).

Sitting L-R Aunty Jacob, my mother Mrs Mary (Mammykutty) Sebastian Thalanany, (holding infant Sunny), Aunty Baby Zachariah, Aunty Oomen. The baby is dressed and draped in white, to signify its innocence.

Sitting children - L-R Roy Jacob, myself, Lalitha, eldest child of Uncle Zachariah & Aunty Baby, and then a little girl, whom I don't remember, but is probably Uncle Jacob's daughter.

At Msimbazi Mission Farm — probably 1958 or 1959……

My mother and Aunty Tessy Morais.

My mother is in the floral print sari.

Aunty Tessy Morais, in the white sari, is the mother of Jaya (Morais) Jaise in the EAMM Group.

Uncle Louis Morais and Aunty used to be our next door neighbours in Changombe for some years before they moved into town. Uncle worked for the PWD, a charming and witty man who loved music. Aunty was a gentle soul, a maths teacher, and was an excellent cook.

PWD = Public Works Department.

UNCLE MK DANIEL & FAMILY, AND THE DAR ES SALAAM CHAPEL CHILDREN'S GROUPS

Here are two pictures of my friends Koshy and Sam (Thomas) Daniel. Koshy used to be called Raju at home, but for some reason or the other I just used to call him Koshy. He passed way tragically in car accident in 1964 during a visit home from the UK, returning from a wildlife safari. I have alluded to this in my episode of '1964'.

ABOVE: This is Koshy in 1963

RIGHT: This is Sam, with a tethered ball.

BELOW: Koshy & Sam in Trafalgar Square, London - 1964

As I have explained earlier, our families lived close to each other in Changombe, on the periphery of what used to be the old airport grounds.

We moved from the heart of town to Changombe in 1958. At first Uncle Daniel and family were the nearest Malayali family living nearby, but soon after Uncle & Aunty Morais came to occupy one of the flats in the building next to us.

Koshy and Sam were Uncle & Aunty Daniel's eldest sons, the others being Benjamin (Benji), Joseph (Jose/ Joe), and Matthew. A 5th boy was born after I had left Tanganyika, and unfortunately I can't recall his name.

We came to know them originally through my Uncle Dr Joseph who used to provide the medical care for their family. Uncle Daniel worked for a construction firm, but later established his own construction company, with his brother Uncle Varghese (Mr MK Varghese). I think it was called UNICCO, and became quite a successful company, providing gainful employment to a number of local people.

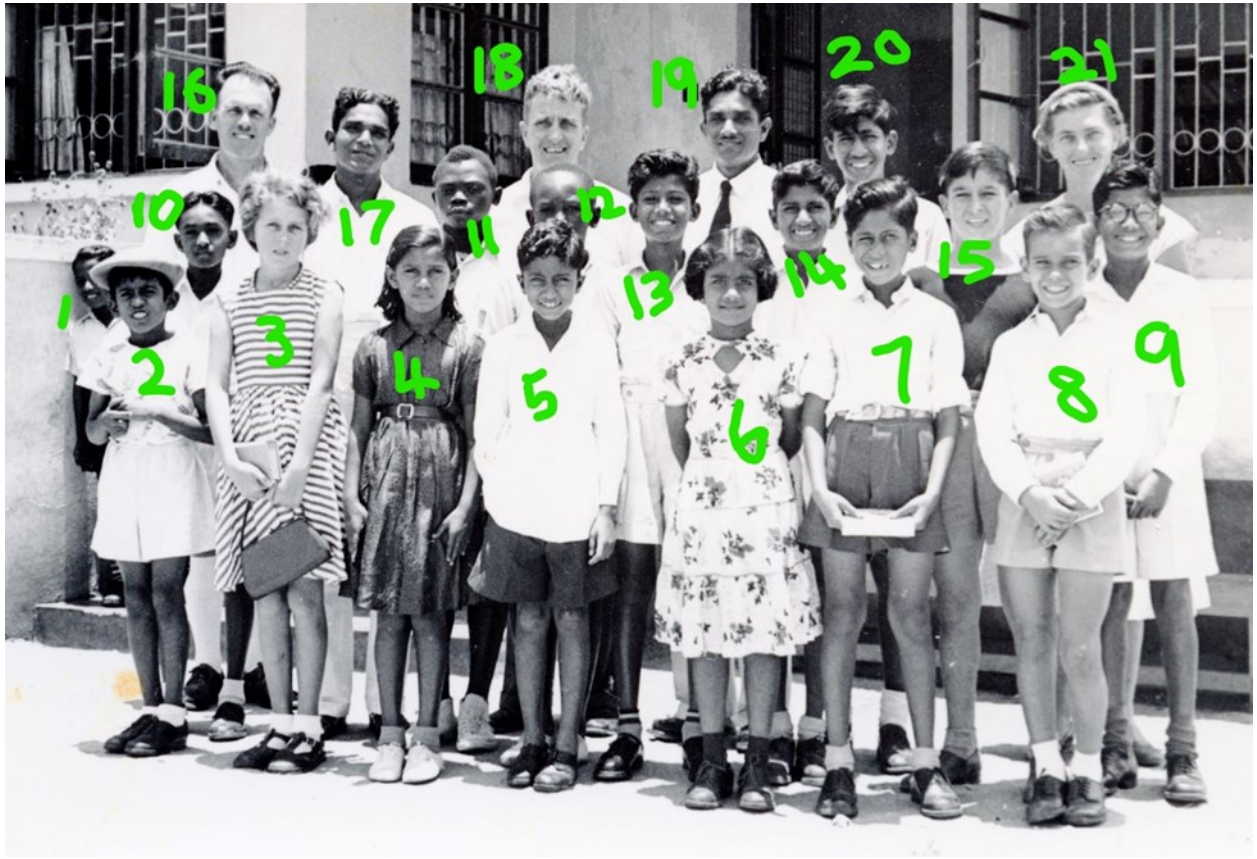
His house was the setting for prayer meetings where many children, Malayalis and non– Malayalis used to attend. They had a few missionaries working with them — from Britain mainly, but also from the US.

At some stage in the 1960s Uncle built a chapel on a plot of land that stood on the bend of Damas Road, as it curved past from where our house was and worked its way towards theirs. It was named the Dar es Salaam Chapel. It became the setting for many children and young people to assemble in prayer and worship.

There are several members in the EAMM What's App Group who used to attend services at Dar es Salaam Chapel in Changombe.

There now follow a series of photos of children's groups attending the chapel services. When I first posted these pictures on the What'sApp Group, I had asked for help in naming some of the individuals whose names I'd forgotten.

******I am grateful to have received responses from Prakash Pillai, Bonnie Satyanathan and Cecily David to name some of those in the pictures.**



SUNDAY SCHOOL GROUP -1

The names are:

5 – Sam (Thomas Daniel)

7 – Arif Nasser

8 – …?..Jimmy Holmes..?...

9 – Koshy

10 - Raju Johnson (Ninan John, son of Uncle Railway Johnson)

13 – Bonnie Satyanathan

15 - Charles Dalton..?...

16 – Mr Dalton

17 – Uncle Daniel's younger brother, Uncle MK Varghese

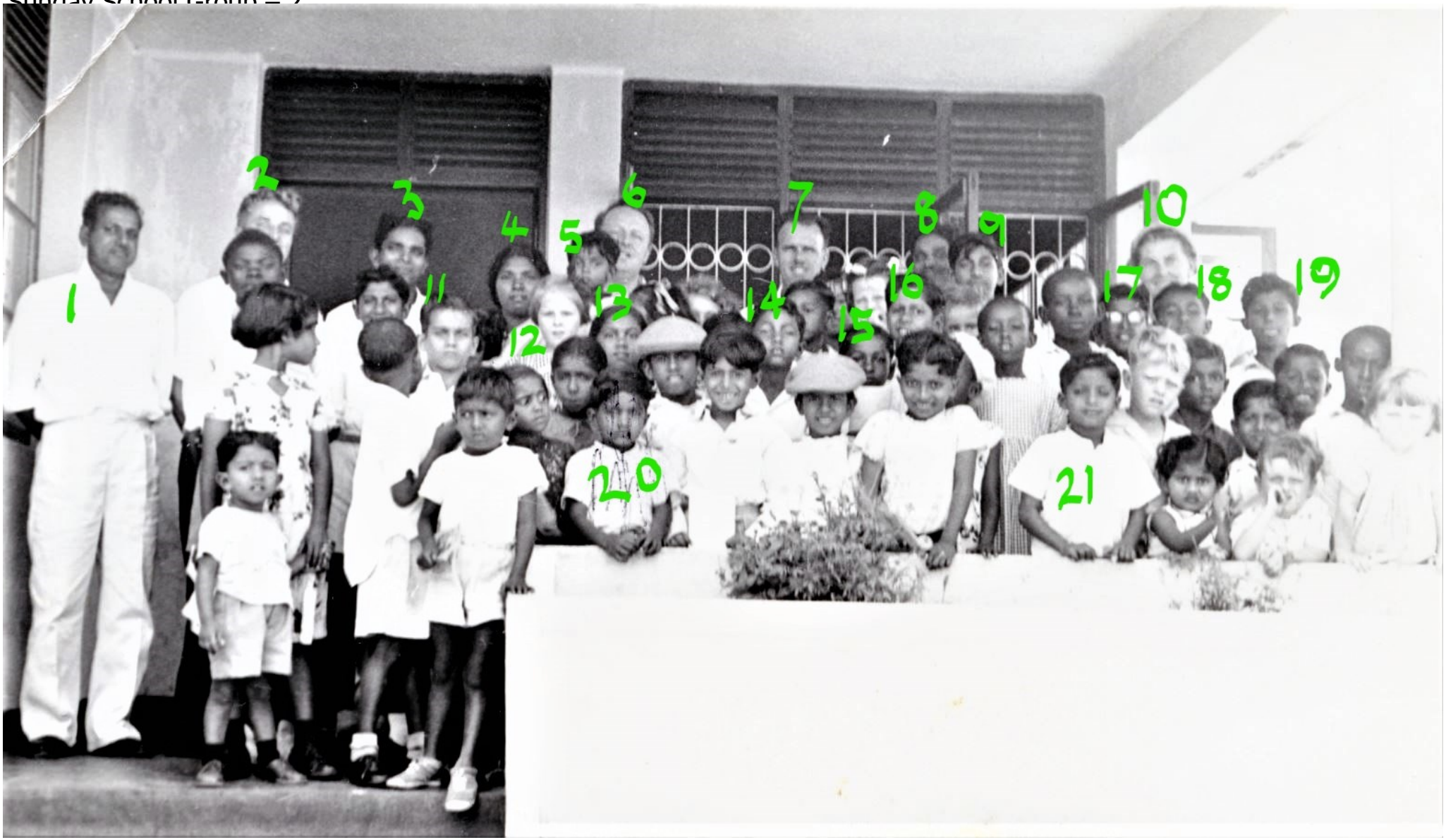
18 - Mr Oliver…?..

19 - Uncle MK Daniel

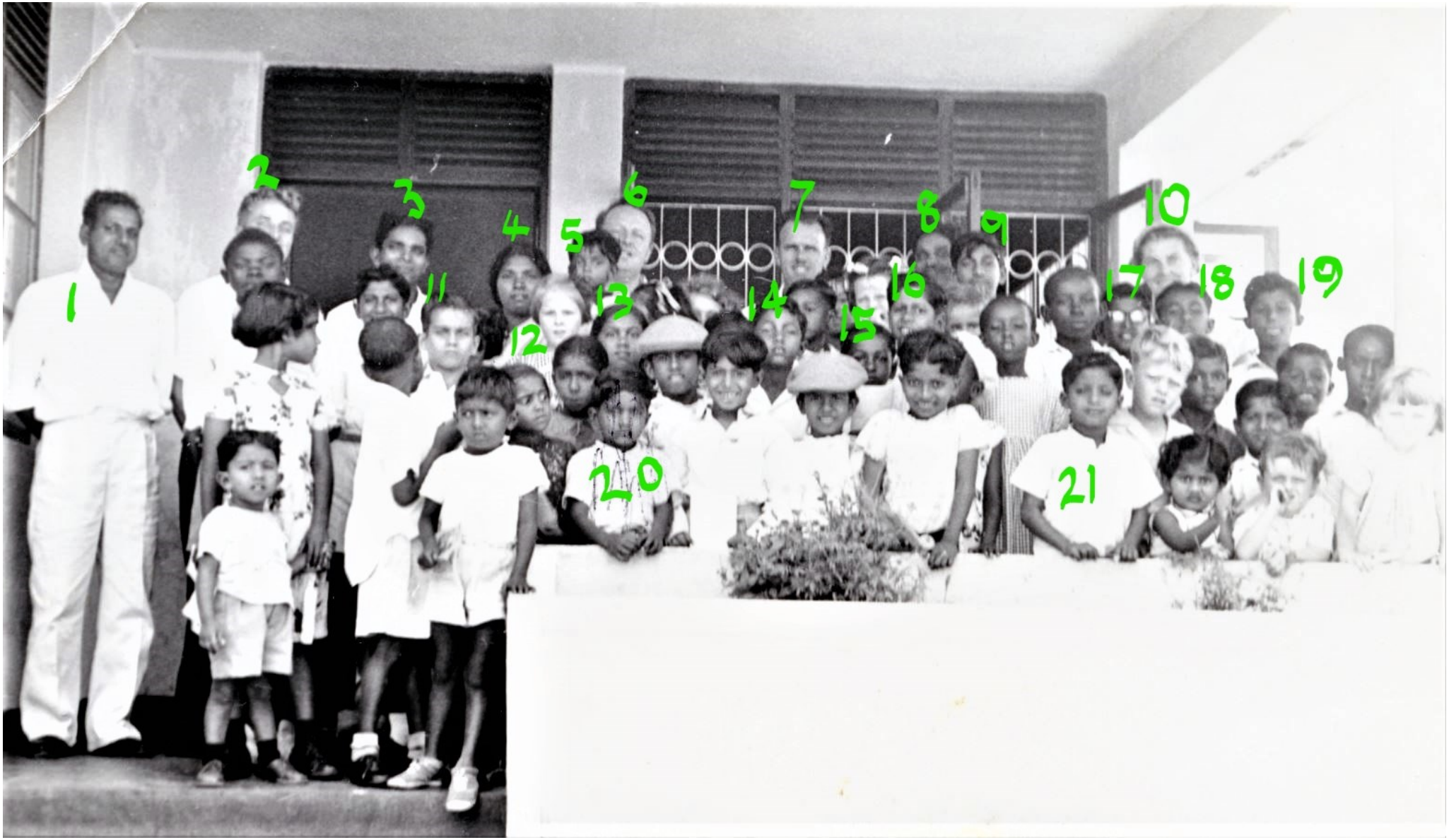
20 - Parvez Nasser

21 - Mrs Oliver

Sunday School Group – 2



1. Uncle TO George
2. Mr Banzhaff…?..
3. Uncle MK Varghese
4. Aunty Chinnamma Daniel
5. Aunty Daniel's 5th son, Matthew Daniel
6. Mr Oliver
7. Mr Dalton
8. Uncle MK Daniel
9. Parvez Nasser
10. Mrs Oliver
11. Jimmy Holmes
12. Hazel Dalton



13. Shantha Kumari Pillai
14. Sam, (Thomas Daniel)
15. Sunny Johnson
16. Arif Nasser
17. Koshy Daniel
18. Raju Johnson (Ninan John)
19. Boniface Satyanathan
20. I think it's Benji (Benjamin - Uncle Daniel's 3rd son)
21. Prince George (Uncle TO George's son)

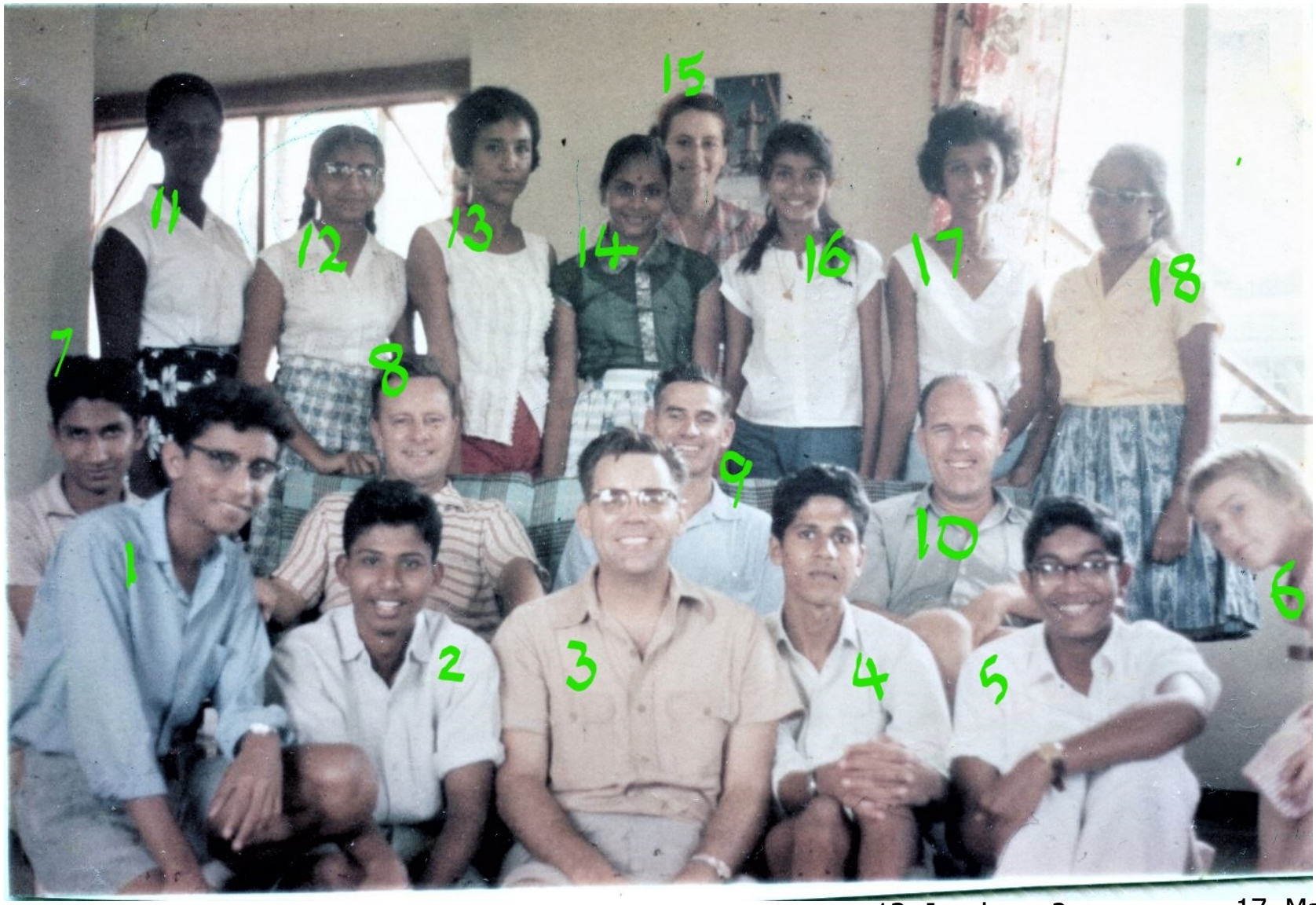
Sunday School Group – 3

The 3 boys in the centre of the backrow in this picture below, are Sam Daniel, Prince George, and Koshy Daniel. This Prince is not Pamela's brother Prince, but the brother of Cecily David in this Group, and cousin of Melville Ipe. He was a pupil at Azania Secondary, junior to me by about 3 or 4 years.

I could not see, or maybe failed to recognise, Jose (Joe/ Joseph) Daniel, Uncle and Aunty's 4th son in any of these pictures. Jose was an aeronautical engineer here in the UK, working for Westland Helicopters. He moved to Canada after the Daniel family migrated there. He was the 1st Malayali to become a Member of the Canadian Parliament.

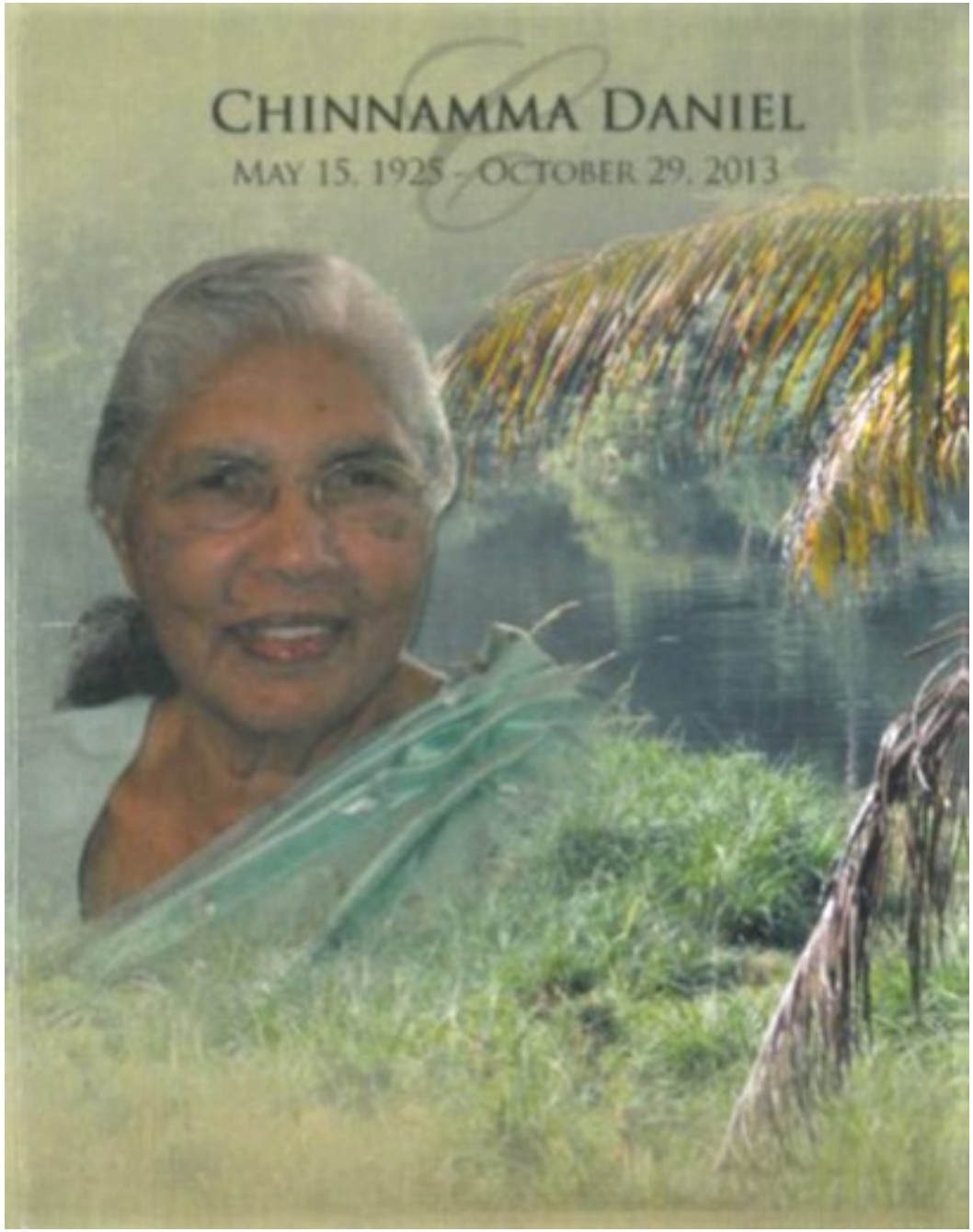
There are many faces that are familiar, but I have forgotten who they are…..

Sunday School Group – the Teenagers Group



1. Francis …? surname..
2. Bonnie Satyanathan
3. Mr Banzhaf
4. Arif Nasser
5. Koshy Daniel
6. …….
7. Azar Nasser
8. Mr Oliver
9. Mr Martin
10. Mr Dalton
11. ……
12. …….
13. Jocelyn …?surname….
14. …….
15. Mrs Banzhaf
16. Neeru ..?surname….
17. Mary, sister of Jocelyn
18. Cecily (George) David

AUNTY CHINNAMMA DANIEL



EPILOGUE

I returned to Dar es Salaam in mid-1966, for the last time, during college holidays.

I stopped over in Bombay for a few days, staying with my cousin Fr Mathew Thalanany, a Salesian priest working and ministering at Antop Hill, deep in the heartland of the slums of Bombay, accompanying him as he went around. A most amazing man. Treading my way gingerly across the pavements so as not tread on sleeping women and their babies, and so as not to tread in excrement, I watched as people, mainly Tamil labourers, goondas, and wagon breakers, surrounded him, to talk to him and ask him for his advice on variety of things. Forty years later, I did the same rounds again, and I simply could not believe the transformation that he had quietly wrought and brought about. In the UK he would have been awarded a Knighthood for his work and accomplishments, but there he just went about, unassuming, self-effacing, quietly getting on with his work. Today, in his 90s, his faculties have begun to decline, as he waits patiently, in good humour, to make his exit and departure from this world…..

By a stroke of good luck at that time, I was able to meet Rajan Koshy, son of Uncle Railways Koshy. He was studying then at Wilson College. I think his parents had already returned to India by then, and I can't remember now where his sister Rajamma (Rachel) was studying at that time.

The voyage from Bombay to Dar was uneventful and unremarkable, except for a young European woman, with a hang-dog-like long-haired bearded boyfriend in tow. (The Hippie era was on its way). She, to the amazement of the young Indian male and female passengers, never seemed to sport anything other than a very, very skimpy bikini, which, - much to everyone's utter disgust, - she would wear even to the dining room. Although everyone muttered imprecations under their breath, no one bothered to challenge her or question why…….

As the ship passed through the channel at Magogoni Ferry I saw the much-loved picturesque harbour, the familiar skyline now distorted with the jutting height of the new Kilimanjaro Hotel.

My father had changed his car. The cream-coloured Morris Minor 1000 with its green glass sun visor had given away to a green, more spacious, Opel station wagon / estate car. Not that Opel was a mighty brand or anything like that, it was just a 'good bargain' 2nd hand car, and spacious. ….Little did I know then that that car too was on its way out, and in a couple of years or so would be replaced by his General Manager's aircraft-like Chevrolet Biscayne.

I re-visited old haunts. The harbour, Oyster Bay, Kunduchi, - they all looked good as before, but somehow things had changed, and I was restless.

A visit to the old Cosy Café, the corner restaurant in the heart of town, was a pleasure – the same hot crisp samosas, and luscious ice creams, and other good things.

The old shops like Stewarts Stores, TK's and Choitram's were all still there, but the British ones seemed to be rather depleted compared to past years. I gathered that a lot of British people had left the country and that these shops were heading to the end of their days.

New cafes and restaurants were opening up, and a Chinese presence was apparent in town. A visit to the Kilimanjaro Hotel restaurant was nothing remarkable – just OK - but costly, - well, that's what I thought of it. There seemed to be an upbeat swing in the air. ……and, - there seemed to be little reference to the army mutiny and the disturbances in town of two years ago.

[****Recently, when I was recollecting the events of the army mutiny and subsequent disturbances in January 1964 in Dar, I began to think of what a dangerous situation my father had placed himself in, when he undertook to serve duty on the roster. Remembering my mother's prayers for him, and the candle lit all through the hours he was away, made me feel that it was because he was under the Protecting Hands of the Almighty that he managed to get way without being beaten or killed. ……

I do hope that others in the EAMM Group who had been there at that time of the 1964 mutiny, and were old enough to remember those events, will share their recollections with us in the EAMM columns. It would be so interesting to get information from an adult perspective, a different and perhaps fuller, and more mature perspective than that of mine, as a schoolboy. So far, it is only Aunty Grace Samuel and Aunty Nirmala Kambil who have mentioned those events***].

I remember one thing that was a new experience for me – a visit to the new Drive - In Cinema. The actual movie shown was some desultory thing from Hollywood which I have forgotten. The novelty was the gigantic screen and being able to watch from the comfort of your own car, while waiter boys brought snacks and ice creams to the car windows, serving the food on trays that they latched on to the car door and pivoted the trays inwards through the open windows.

Uncle & Aunty Morais had moved away from Changombe to somewhere in town, making it easier for Aunty to reach the school where she taught. Their little daughter Jaya was 2 years of age, same as my little sister. I called her Jayamol. Uncle had a grey Volkswagen Beetle now, and they visited us almost every other day.

Uncle & Aunty Daniel had moved to a new home somewhere in the Oyster Bay area. They donated their Changombe home for the use of the Brethren Missionaries. Uncle sent his chauffeur one day to take me to his new house and I was

thrilled to ride in the new Mercedes Benz car.

The days passed by,…. but ……- I don't know, - ….. somehow, I was just no longer interested anymore. ……. My Dar es Salaam friends all gone. My cousin Betty had already left for India the previous year and was studying at the Holy Angels College in Trivandrum. Aunty had gone off to India. Uncle was finishing off in Kilosa but wished to linger longer in Tanganyika, and my father arranged for him to meet up with the Manager at Tanganyika Packers, and Uncle stayed on in a short-term contract.

It was almost with a pang of guilt, and a feeling that I was being disloyal, that I realised that I just wanted to get back to college and my college friends, and college life.

What I found really good was the chance to be again with my parents and sisters. I was able to get to know and spend time with my little sister Molly who had been born in Alleppey in 1964, and whom I had last seen as a new-born babe prior to her voyage to Dar es Salaam with my mother and my sister Libby. She and Jayamol vied for my attention during their visits home.

I managed to get new Kitenge shirts. When I returned to Loyola after the holidays, these shirts proved to be such a hit, that for quite a while I had requests from college friends and hostel friends and others whether I would I sell these shirts to them - at 3 or 4 times the shilling value.

Dimwit that I was, I never recognised the small 'side-business' opportunity that this presented at that time …..in later years I thought to myself - just imagine – if I had asked my father to send me 2 or 3 Kitenge shirts with each Uncle & Aunty coming on home leave – I could have made a pretty little packet…..The Malaysian chaps at college did it all the time…..

Well, there you are - ….dimwits are dimwits…..and will lose out on spotting business opportunities …..and……. sometimes also miss other opportunities in life maybe….?..?…..

****

College life was a very different experience and whilst it was tremendous fun, it lacked the spontaneity and sparkle of schoolboy life in Dar. I think growing up was probably the underlying factor to make me feel that way. Gradually my friends from Dar receded into the background as I met and formed friendships with new chaps.

But there were people that I continued to meet during college life whom I had known in Dar, or had connections with East Africa.

At Loyola there were very few East Africans. Jairaj Sukumaran from Dar was my senior - a day scholar doing his degree course. We met purely by accident one day, and had a nice chat. Uncle & Aunty Sukumaran had decided to settle in Madras after Uncle had retired. One day Jairaj came searching for me. He was bearing the invitation from Uncle & Aunty for me to attend Nirmala's wedding. It was held at the plush Woodlands Hotel.

Cyril Alapatt from Nairobi was in my year group. His dad was a cousin of Uncle AK Kurian Alapatt. Uncle AK Kurian (Valia Kuriachan), used to be in Dar during the 30s / early 40s I think, and then moved on to Nairobi. (I have mentioned Uncle Valia Kuriachan in one of my earlier episodes). Cyril went on to do engineering. He later went to the US and we lost contact.

I remember one year at Loyola, it could have been 1965 or 1966, that on College Day, I invited 4 girls from Stella Maris as my guests at the Garden Party. It made my college mates, especially the hostel mates, utterly green with envy when they saw me escorting these 4 young damsels to my reserved table where I had carefully selected the friends who would sit with me.

The 4 young ladies who were such a focus of attention were Hema Ramachandran, and her younger sister Prema, and sisters Libby and Lisa from Tanga, whose parents were old friends of my parents, and were relatives of Aunty Grace Samuel in the EAMM Group, as well as of Uncle Chackochan and Aunty Kunjamma who had passed away in that terrible, tragic, car accident on the Moshi-Arusha Road on 13th August 1953.

It was a very pleasant evening as we sat and talked of life in Dar and Tanga. We lost contact after I moved to St John's. I gathered later on from my mother that Lisa had gone on to join JIPMER Pondicherry as a medical student.

Later on at St John's it was great to be able to revive acquaintances and friendships with chaps I had known in Dar es Salaam, all students from St Joseph's: Noel D'Souza, Jeremy (Jerry) Dias a Changombe boy in the batch above me, Orlando D'Silva who became my classmate, and Philomena Pereira (Mina) who was Betty's classmate and became my junior, in the batch just below me. Noel and Jerry were good footballers. Orlando formed a guitar group with some Bangalore chaps he knew and they used to sing and play at the Blue Fox on MG Road, and similar venues. Don't know whether those restaurants even exist anymore…..

The star at St John's was an East African Malayali - Mary Eapen of the 1st Batch - 1963, the daughter of Uncle & Aunty B K Philip Eapen of Nairobi. Uncle & Aunty Eapen had been in Dar - in the 1940s I think, - before they moved to Nairobi. (My paternal grandmother and Mary's maternal grandmother were cousins). Mary was an excellent exponent of Bharatanatyam dance, a superb basketball player and a hockey player on the Bangalore University women's teams for those games.

And of course, being brilliant in academic performance, she was always a distinction holder through every stage of her exams, ultimately winning the coveted Pope Paul VI Medal at her graduation. When most of us left the College and moved on to build our careers further afield, Mary stayed on, working as a Tutor, then a Senior Lecturer, and then Professor. She went on to become the 1st lady Dean and the Chief of Medical Services of St John's.

Mary (Eapen) Ollapally passed away in 2019. May she rest in peace.

****

The 1964 episode brings me to the end of my recollections of Dar es Salaam and Tanganyika, and my life as an Indian schoolboy living there, through the British colonial times that transitioned through to the era of African independence.

Readers of my articles may have noticed that, over several months during 2021, what I tried to do was to cover, year by year, the period from 1951 through to the 1st quarter of 1964, - giving an account of ordinary everyday life as seen through the eyes of a schoolboy of that time.

It is an account that's laden with the typical weaknesses, drawbacks, and short-sightedness that the memories of a mere schoolboy are bound to portray….

It has been a pleasure sharing my memories with all of you.

****

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to all those in the EAMM Group who responded to my requests and helped to identify Uncles and Aunties from the past.

I have attributed, wherever I can, the ownership and source of the pictures that I used which are not from my father's collection.

I am deeply beholden to those friends and members in the EAMM Group who gave me supportive feedback and encouragement at the end of every episode that I had posted, as I went through the course of laying all these memories down on to paper. That feedback, and the conversations that occurred in the chat group, actually helped to uncover and resurrect deeply forgotten facts from that past boyhood.

Any errors and omissions I attribute to my failure in recollection.

It has been a real pleasure to reconnect with a number of my friends from my boyhood days and to get to know the wider EAMM Family.

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