

BY HEMANTA KUMAR SARMAH ('78 CIVIL)

The Dridge

One of the many *chota* stories from our Pilani days. Nutan, BC, ANC... add this one to your BITSian vocabulary. A story about a bull, although this one's not quite the Wall Street kind.

The name Dridge sounds absurd, doesn't it? But being a BITSian, this is a part of a very common vocabulary created by groups over the years in Pilani. This term was known or rather dreaded by some of the '78 batch students of VK, Bhagirath, and RPA messes.

There was a branch of UCO bank near the RP Bhavan and the post office was nearby too. The bank had an open canteen, naturally named the bank canteen or BC for short. There was a small passage way near the BC through which we could go to *Nutan*. A retired army *Jat* opened a *chai* shop in the lane, near the hockey field, in between *Nutan* and BC. We used to frequent this place only in the evening and at night because for us VKites C'not was too far and there was the added danger of being ragged while the BC was hardly visited by seniors! We named this joint IC or intermediate canteen. The owner used to make the best tea around campus.

The Dridge loomed large across that area especially near the BC

gate, mostly at night. Any guesses as to what it was...?

It was actually a fully grown bull! It used to reign supreme



among the cows in the area during the day but at night it chose to stroll about in the vicinity of the BC as the latter was deserted at night. Its name, *dridge*, was the contribution of one of my classmates who always had this habit of exclaiming "Hoosh" when he was surprised by anything or, for that matter, anyone. One night when we were returning from a movie at *Jayshree*, we encountered the bull at its *musth*. It charged us and our friend, as usual, exclaimed

"Hoosh! It's dridge, run, *bhai*, run!".

'Dridge' was a term given for 'degenerating' in hobbies like playing cards (bridge), smoking(!?) etc. The name became an instant hit and the bull became known as Dridge among us for years to come. Whenever we used to cross BC at night, we first checked to see whether *dridge* was around. The less brave among us chose to take the longer route via the main entrance to go to *Nutan* at night. Memories of *dridge* and its charges still rake up roars of laughter during our get-togethers and it will be remembered by us for long.

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Hemanta is a '78 batch Civil engineer from Guwahati, Assam and. He is an active member of our '83 batch. At his last reunion at BITS in 2003, he, not surprisingly, found a lot of changes on campus as well as in the students. This in his words is a "chota story about one of those nostalgic moments". He can be reached for comment at hksarmah@yahoo.com