

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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"We can have smooth traffic flow only when this technology is upgraded to a fully manual system!"

A switch in time

Chennai Traffic, you've really done it this time.

You've managed to defeat technology.

Especially signal lights.

Apparently, these 'intelligent signals', installed because they're able to 'sense' traffic density and act accordingly, are completely traumatised. Red has faded to a particularly sad shade of violet; yellow's gone a very pasty pastel, while poor green looks positively bilious.

"They keep coming at us," they gibber, shivering, "And they NEVER LISTEN..." the shak-ing increases.

Authority, taking charge, has decided: No more 'automatic mode' at traffic signals.

They're going manual. Apparently, technology works only with sensible, calm traffic, with regular peak hours.

With nonstop 'peak days' – not so much.

Poor traffic cops.

Already battling with heat, pollution, and daft road users, they're now back to flicking switches, deciding which lot deserves clearance when, while other lanes express displeasure with horns... the resulting cacophony reducing even the toughest cop to tears, and going all foetal position right there on the road.

Authorities, not ruling out technology, suggest upgrades... a centralised eagle-eyed Big Brother ...

Now, technology can handle predictables, the one thing Chennai traffic isn't.

So maybe signals need to be imbued with qualities like impatience, intolerance, lane cutting, discourtesy... then they'll be in tune with road-user psyche.

Brainy gizmo tecchies, are you listening?

Ranjitha Ashok

A Marina take-over

Why is Corporation doing this?

(By The Editor)

A new Council has taken office at the Chennai Corporation and among the first steps it has taken is a decision to take over from the PWD the maintenance of Marina Beach. This is at a time when several macro issues such as garbage disposal, public health and hygiene, the condition of the waterways, civic administration, and drainage are all challenging the civic body, with Chennai's ratings fast slipping on all these counts. To what purpose then this decision to take over the Marina which, when compared to the rest of the city, is definitely better maintained, though that is not saying much?

The decision could not have been more ill-timed as the Corporation now needs to focus on its biggest challenge – how to come to grips with its new jurisdiction with an area that is now three times larger than what it was handling earlier and none too well at that. The past track record shows that the authority of the civic body was steadily whittled down only because it could not perform its duties effectively. Thus, the Water Supply and Sewerage Board was formed, several arterial roads were handed over to the Highways Department, and garbage disposal was rather half-heartedly privatised. Several important projects were handed over to specially constituted agencies. And when the private waste disposal agency failed in carrying out its tasks effectively, the Corporation stepped in rather belatedly and it did not improve matters. Contrast this with the functioning of the Highways Department, which is definitely better and which has ensured that the quality of road-laying has been such that principal arterial stretches are at least navigable during the monsoons. And it cannot be denied that the PWD has done a decent job with the Marina, which is arguably the showpiece of this city.

So what does the Corporation want to do with the Marina? It wants to get rid of

(Continued on page 2)



The Governor's Bungalow as it was (above) when INTACH Pondicherry began working on it three years ago, and as it is today when its restoration nears completion. Also see pages 4 and 5. (Photographs courtesy: INTACH Pondicherry.)



With first success, will HCC begin to stir?

The Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC), appointed by the Government of Tamil Nadu following a specific directive of the High Court of Madras, completed one year in July 2011. The occasion warranted a celebration – and it was not long in coming when the Committee was in a position to report its first successful representation. This was to the Chennai Metro Rail Limited regarding the alignment of railway lines and stations that are planned to be in close proximity to heritage buildings in the city. The CMRL has stated it would go along with the HCC's

advice. This is definitely a positive development, but the general working of the Committee leaves much to be desired. A year of functioning may be the right time to critically evaluate what it has done.

• by A Special Correspondent

When the High Court passed its judgement, it had on hand a list of a little over 400 heritage buildings. This was a list prepared for an entirely different matter, a case involving outdoor hoardings and was put together mainly for the purpose of enumerating structures that

ought not to be hidden behind hoardings. It, therefore, largely listed heritage structures on arterial roads and did not look at buildings that are on side streets. But it was still a list, and when the High Court ordered that a Heritage Conservation Committee ought to be formed, it also added that these listed buildings had to come under the Committee's purview.

The Committee when formed largely comprised bureaucrats who toed the official line. It took its own time to send out letters to the owners of the listed properties. It is reliably

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Why this takeover of Marina?

(Continued from page 1)

the stalls put up by vendors on the beach. How does it propose to do it? By constructing permanent shops and leasing them out to authorised vendors. How will this improve the situation beyond bringing in some rent revenue to the Corporation? What we will be left with is a series of unsightly shops, which will become eyesores owing to poor maintenance. And given the lack of civic sense in the average Chennaiite, the area around these shops will become permanent litter dumps. A far better idea would be to retain the temporary shops (at least they are temporary) and improve the cleaning of the sands. In this connection, it is worthwhile pointing out that the Corporation last year bought sand cleaning equipment worth

Rs. 80 lakh and launched their use at a high-profile event with the Mayor driving the vehicle. What happened to these machines and, if they are being used, why is the sand still full of litter?

A supplementary decision taken at the first meeting of the Council was that the Marina, from Anna Memorial to Fore-shore Estate, would be 'renovated'. What then of the recently concluded beautification exercise initiated by the previous regime at a cost of Rs. 25 crore? Does the Marina need any more of these exercises? But such sweeping acts are hardly surprising whenever there is a regime change in our State.

Perhaps what we need is a legislation to the effect that the Marina will be left as it is – a vast open stretch and a vital lung of the city.

THE HCC TASTES SUCCESS

(Continued from page 1)

learnt that several owners of heritage properties never received the letter. The Committee has visited just a few of the heritage sites that were listed. Not even those sites where restoration or major repair work is going on have been visited. It is, therefore, not in touch with what is happening in most cases of threats to heritage buildings.

Taking advantage of the delay in communication, some owners have gone ahead and demolished their buildings. The Government was the biggest culprit, for, in its hurry to build the new (and now unwanted) Assembly, it destroyed five listed buildings, with no explanations being asked. Others were not so lucky. It is reliably learnt that the Church of South India, which demolished the Bible Society Building on Memorial Hall Road, was asked to come up with plans to build a structure aligned to what was done away with. That some action has been taken is small satisfaction, for the old structure is no longer there.

A bigger success was in getting those in charge of St Teresa's Church to give up ideas of demolition. No action was, however, taken in the case of Anderson's Church on NSC Bose Road, where extensive 'renovation' work of its interior was undertaken, without any competent authority overseeing the progress. This is also happening elsewhere in the city too.

The one and only communication that the Committee ever sent out was vague in the extreme. Beyond stating that

the owner could not demolish or alter the structure, the letter did not have anything constructive to say about what could be done with the buildings. This tied the hands of the owners and lack of maintenance efforts has ensured that at least two heritage structures – the GPO on Rajaji Salai and the Madrasa-E-Azam on Mount Road – have partially collapsed. To what purpose is any action now on the matter when the damage has been done? Added to this is the sheer apathy of other Government departments. It is now understood that the Committee is sitting in judgement over whether the historic Mint on the eponymous street needs to be demolished. The Government, it is believed, is all for it.

It is, thus, in the light of the rather lacklustre performance that the successful representation to Metro Rail appears a major breakthrough. The Committee has managed to get the Metro Rail to prepare revised drawings and plans for its stations at locations near the Law College, Higginbotham's and a couple of other places. It is significant, however, that none of these revised designs has been made public and we have only the Committee's word for it.

Taken overall, the performance of the Committee is below par. But, as we still have a significant bit of heritage left in the city, any improvement by the Committee in its functioning will go a long way towards saving what has survived thus far.

Optional extras, Chennai style

Nowadays, if someone claims that going for long drives is a favourite pastime, *The Man from Madras Musings* takes it with a pinch of salt. After all, given the traffic conditions in our beloved city, all car journeys are long, far too long, and much longer than they ought to be. Under the circumstances, and given the ever-increasing price of petrol, they can only be considered painful necessities, rather akin to a visit to the dentist.

But MMM does have to drive around and whilst at it he looks for what could eventually make it to this column, Chief permitting. And MMM notices that absolute necessities in vehicles abroad are often given the go-by on our roads. MMM is not blaming the car manufacturers for they have done their best. But what about our *makkal*, by which MMM means the sons of the soil (SOS)? The SOS considers certain aspects of the car to be unworthy of use and not befitting his/her image. Some of these are listed below:

a. **SIDE-VIEW MIRROR** – The average car-driver thinks that these have been provided for combing of hair and also for checking that the moustache (always a South Indian macho symbol among males) is trimmed just right. Thus, when a car is parked, MMM notices that the side mirrors are stretched wide so that the Ben Hur inside can admire himself periodically and give his hair the right wave or brush that (in his view) causes many a heart to flutter as he rests. But the moment he starts the car, he makes sure that the side mirrors are hauled in and flattened against the sides. These in his view are nuisances when the vehicle is in motion and rob him of those few extra microns of space through which he is able to manoeuvre ahead. Several pedestrians too are of the same view evidently, for MMM has noticed that when a car halts for a traffic light or is generally held up, those walking along gently fold the side mirror in, very often with the air of someone brushing flies off a sleeping Venus.

b. **REARVIEW MIRRORS** – These can't be folded in and, so, there they remain, dangling rather uselessly above the driver. The driver thinks that the stem of the mirror has been provided for hanging stuffed toys, religious icons, CDs and just about anything else, very often obscuring the rear view. As for the mirror, it is meant to check dental alignments, of course. Those who like to move ahead in a traffic jam put the rear view mirror of the car ahead to good use. They keep switching on and switching off their head-

lights, which, if of sufficiently high wattage, can reflect off the rear view mirror of the car in front, temporarily blinding the man at the wheel and, thereby, making him slow down. The car behind then noses ahead, always provided that every side-view mirror is folded.

c. **SEAT BELTS** – These accessories are like helmets for two-wheelers. There is a law (like for pretty much everything else in our country) that stipulates that wearing of seat belts is compulsory. But this is observed more in the breach. To overcome this, several cars now have sensor alarms that keep beeping in case the belt is not fastened. Those at the wheel are irritated by this noise, though for some reason they appear impervious to the hooting of horns. And, so, to overcome the alarm and also the flashing warning on the dashboard, an ingenious ruse has been devised. The belts are

adopted by those who are entitled to add a 'G' to their number plates, thereby making them immune to all traffic rules. The latest indication of officialdom on the move is a circular brass plate just above the number plate on the front and just below one of the tail-lights at the rear.

Ever since the High Court played spoilsport by refusing to allow every Thiru, Doctor and Manbumigu (the three most common titles and, therefore, being used in place of Tom, Dick and Harry) to sport a flashing red light on their car, officialdom has been perplexed. Some have managed to retain the lights, though they don't switch them on. Others have come up with a more ingenious arrangement by way of these shiny discs, on which are featured prominently a suitable logo of official appearance, a legend in small letters as to the department, institution or agency it represents and, finally, in still smaller type, the designation of the worthy who is travelling in it. And you could have knocked MMM down with a (fairly hefty) feather when he found that some of these travelling panjandrums were Branch Managers of nationalised banks or the heads of Government undertakings.

Talking about the last named, MMM often wonders as to why they are called undertakings. Is it because the Government performs the role of an undertaker? And is that why these undertakings are invariably 'sick' and waiting for the inevitable?

These brass discs have done what the flashing red lights were doing. They grant absolute immunity from traffic laws and also ensure that policemen keep saluting as they pass. And just to make sure, just in case the disc is missed, the letter G continues to remain emblazoned on the number plate. MMM also notices that the size of the G varies with status. Those higher up have it big and as for those in undertakings, they are rather haplessly forced to have it small and, beside it, in smaller type, the legend u/t. Oh, the ignominy of it all.

Safety first

The Man from Madras Musings noticed the signboard seen below during a recent factory visit. No doubt the owner 'louse' his workers.

– MMM

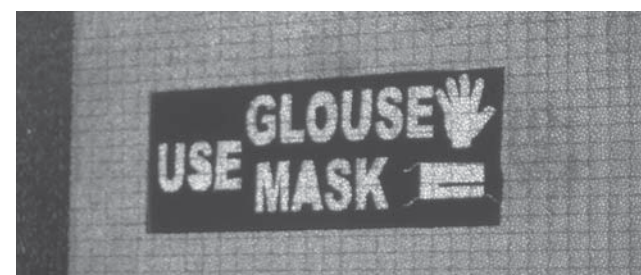
SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

kept permanently fastened. But they don't go around the passenger. They are stretched on the backrest of the seat and fastened into the clasp. As a consequence, the warnings and flashings are silenced. The car is fooled. MMM has also noticed some people who don't even go to this extent. They simply jam a piece of wood into the clasp which creates the same effect apparently, or so he has been informed. And these are the very same people who religiously fasten seat belts while on flights. MMM wonders as to how such an act can save a life at an altitude of several thousand feet above the sea when it is considered useless on the ground.

So much for the safety-critical accessories. But if you ask MMM as to what is considered most essential by those who drive, then it would be the music system. This is usually switched on and kept at a high volume right through the journey, no doubt to drown the abuse of everyone else on the road.

New status symbol

Continuing on the road theme, *The Man from Madras Musings* notes that a new status symbol has been





Another side

In the 1930s there were few magazines and fewer writers in Tamil. And those who wrote did so mainly on domestic situations, porno and unbelievable thrillers. It was at this stage that *Ananda Vikatan* and *Kalki* promoted creative writing. Besides being a great writer 'Kalki' Krishnamoorthy was a successful businessman. He wrote endlessly – stories, poems, political essays and adaptations from Western essays and other Indian languages. The result, both magazines grew sizeably with a plethora to follow suit.

Close friends have vouchsafed that So. Vi., as Pudumai Pithan (MM, November 16th) was also known, was a non-conformist, transforming into a rebel. He rebelled against his father, his editor-bosses and contemporaries who had succeeded in life. This landed him in penury and he died a sad man. Though he attacked *Kalki* with his vitriolic criticisms, it was *Kalki* who came to the rescue of his bereaved family and built for them a house from public donations.

On the other hand, many of his admirers and followers kept up the tempo of attacks, which pleased the arm-chair drones. It is a pity that some little magazines toe the line.

At present when everyone is busy minting money through artificial intelligence, arguments that are pro-So. Vi. and anti-*Kalki* do not serve any purpose.

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No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

THE EDITOR

MADRAS MUSINGS ON THE WEB

To reach out to as many readers as possible who share our keen interest in Madras that is Chennai, and in response to requests from many well-wishers – especially from outside Chennai and abroad who receive their postal copies very late – for an online edition.

Madras Musings is now on the web at www.madrasmusings.com

THE EDITOR

T'Nagar appeals

Worshipful Mayor,

We, as the residents of T'Nagar, would like you to bestow your personal attention to this fast growing but deteriorating business hub. Once a pure residential locality, T'Nagar can now boast of many a textile/jewellery and other showrooms. It is slowly turning into a commercial hub at the cost of its residents, who form the major population. Since this hub is well connected both by road and rail, T'Nagar is besieged daily by people from far and near. Such is its floating population on any normal day that, in T'Nagar, it is Diwali and Pongal every day. Therefore it is not surprising that this hub has as many hawkers/encroachers too.

All available places are either occupied or encroached upon by the vendors/hawkers and there is hardly any place for walking. Though the Chennai Corporation often chants that footpaths are only for the pedestrians, in T'Nagar, footpaths have been completely hijacked by the vendors/hawkers.

Most of the side streets, abutting Usman Road, which are residential, have become parking lots for the shoppers' vehicles. This is due to the fact that the commercial complexes have not provided parking space within their premises to park the vehicles of their clients. As the shoppers park on both sides of the streets close to the commercial complexes, the residents are put to great hardship. Often, residents find it difficult to even come out of their houses and are not able to take their own vehicles out. In certain streets, the auto-stands pose additional problems to the residents.

The [in]famous Ranganathan Street, which is where the largest crowds surge, is the worst in terms of encroachment, violations of building rules/fire safety norms, etc. Here, the commercial complexes/shops have usurped the public space.

Many roads/streets have not been relaid and are in a pitiable condition. In streets where the civic body has taken up the construction of stormwater drains, the work has been progressing at a snail's pace. Besides the slow pace, the very construction of the stormwater drains leaves a lot to be desired. We wonder why

the civic body spends enormous amount on a project which serves no purpose!

Metrowater sewerage lines laid decades ago have become useless as they are not designed to take heavy loads. If bigger capacity pipes are not laid, overflow of sewage will be a permanent threat.

With regard to garbage removal, the less said the better. Everywhere in T'Nagar, uncleared mounds of garbage are an eyesore. The commercial complexes dump a lot of waste on the streets/roads as they do not have any disposal system on their own. Plastic bags form a major chunk of the waste.

Even during normal hours, an ambulance or fire tender would not be able to reach any of the streets/roads fast enough because of heavy encroachment.

We suggest that every commercial complex and all shops of all kinds in T'Nagar must compulsorily shut one day every week. Those who do not fall in line should be taken to task. In doing this, a much-needed breather will be provided to residents and different civic bodies to attend to their work without hassle. The shops and commercial complexes should also be allowed to work only between 9 a.m and 8 p.m. with any extension only during festival days but that too after obtaining prior permission. Garbage dumping by the commercial complexes must be seriously viewed and penalties imposed to curb this abominable practice.

T'Nagar has reached a saturation point and any further unchecked developmental activities will only do more harm than good. Please save the residents who now face the prospect of having to quit T'Nagar due to various problems it faces on all fronts. Considering that the residents are the major stakeholders, they deserve a better deal, free from garbage, pollution, encroachment, hawkers/vendors and congestion.

V.S. Jayaraman

Joint Secretary

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Cost-effectiveness

I refer to 'The drama of sealing illegal constructions' (MM, November 16th). The status of T'Nagar of the 1920s can be achieved only by declaring the area a 'Pedestrian Zone' as is the case in some cities in other parts of the world.

The authorities should not have allowed the construction of such buildings in the first place. But demolition of the structures at this stage will result only in further environmental pollution. And there is

no guarantee that at a future date the constructions will not come up again and bring the area back to what it is now.

Demolishing the structures will affect the local environment through dust, debris and sound pollution. The debris also has to be disposed of by transporting it to a distant place which will affect the ecology of that place. In addition, consumption of fuel by the transporting vehicles will lead to generation of greenhouse gases. Repairs to the partly demolished structures will also need

materials extracted from natural resources. Such an operation may in its totality be considered a squandering of natural resources.

The environmentalists and ecologists should estimate the ecological and environmental cost involved in the whole process of construction, demolition, reconstruction/restoration etc., and must ask themselves whether the demolition is worthwhile. If the authorities intend to enforce the rules, then they may have to demolish almost 75 per cent of the

buildings. This will not only affect the business of their owners but also their cash flow as well as that of their employees. Banks that have given loans to both will be affected too.

It is not unknown for authorities to change the rules. Large chunks of agricultural land are converted to residential areas by authorities, causing a problem of food security. Mining of sand is going on in river beds leading to depletion of groundwater resources.

The T'Nagar buildings have come up due to officialdom's inefficiency or connivance with the real estate promoters who ignore the rules. Stuck with the buildings, it might be advisable to regularise the contravention of the town planning rules by imposing a heavy fine on the defaulters to meet the needs of improved facilities in the area and convert the area as a 'Pedestrian Zone' rather than causing further damage and cost to the environment by demolition of the built structures. If amenities are lacking, the shop-owners must be asked to provide them. T'Nagar is considered a shopper's paradise for the people of not only Tamil Nadu but also of adjacent States and countries. Let's benefit from that by retaining it as it is by making it more user-friendly for which shopkeepers should pay by way of hefty fines.

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Tamil-Tambul

K.V.S. Krishna who wrote 'India, largely a country of immigrants' in MM, October 16th, sends us a letter from a friend of his in Papua New Guinea. Sriram's letter states, among other things:

I arrived in PNG in mid-May to act as a Consultant for the Institute of Business Studies in Port Moresby. I later joined the Institute as a Manager – Systems.

Recently, I was talking to my co-staff, Steven Korowa, who hails from one of the villages (Kagul) in the Highlands. Our conversation drifted towards language and I was surprised to find that we had a lot in common in this area. Does this mean that there is a link between our two civilisations? If anyone who can share more about this, I will truly appreciate the effort.

Dialect	Tamil	Steven's native language (Tambul)
Anna	Elder brother	Brother
Appa	Father	Father
Thatha	Grandfather	Grandfather or any old person
Tha	Give	Give
Veriva Vaa	Come quickly	Come quickly
Atthai	Aunt	Aunt
Patti	Grandmother	Grandmother
Kai	Hands	Hands

I was also intrigued to find that a lot of places and people are named after characters in the *Ramayana*. For example, Sita, Rama, Bali, Laxman, Manus are some of the names of places as well as people.

Heritage destination – Pulicat

Will it ever happen?

One recent lazy Sunday afternoon, a couple of friends and I took off on a drive to Pulicat (Pazhaverkadu in Tamil), to explore the sights of a fishing hamlet that was once home to the Dutch East India Company.

At the end of a 2-hour, and a fairly comfortable, drive on NH-5, we reached Pulicat. We had established contact with a local there to take us around and he was on hand to receive us.

Our first stop was at an exquisite temple dating to the Vijayanagara period dedicated to Adinarayana Perumal. A locked wicket gate welcomed us. Awed by the sight of the main entrance to the temple, we were disappointed that we would be denied the opportunity to witness what lay beyond. We decided to ask around to see if someone could guide us to the person who would have the keys to the temple and so, off went one of my friends and the local contact. They returned 10 minutes later with the good tidings that the priest was on his way and, sure enough, he appeared not long after. The priest unlocked the main entrance and a huge temple greeted us.

Though a magnificent temple, it was in complete ruins. Huge roots had literally torn it apart at various places. After returning from the visit, a little research on the internet revealed that the entire construction was of laterite stone, a material seen used in Kerala palaces and commonly seen in Malabar and the Konkan coast, but not seen in Tamil Nadu. So it was the type of construction that made this temple unique.

The area leading to the sanctum sanctorum was surprisingly neat and well maintained. The priest explained to us that it had been spruced up when some basic work had been undertaken in 2009 and 2010. He also mentioned that there was talk of HR & CE aid forthcoming but that nothing had come out of it so far. We could gather from him that a feud between Pazhaverkadu and another village, the name of which we couldn't catch, had led to this temple being neglected. We could not even complete the circumambulation as the path was full of thorns.

After leaving the temple, our next stop was the Dutch cemetery. Pulicat was the principal trading post of the Dutch East India Company, whose factory was established there in 1610.

Where the Dutch & the Danes stayed



The Dutch Cemetery at Pulicat.

Legend has it that they first established contact with the local Muslim traders and that it was they who helped the Dutch get a trading grant from Queen Obayama, the wife of King Venkata II, the Vijayanagara ruler. It was from Pulicat that the Dutch successfully carried out much of their trading operations for the next 200 years, before surrendering the settlement to the British East India Company in 1825.

All that remains today signifying that it was once a Dutch enclave is the cemetery. Fort Geldria, the fort built by the Dutch around 1615 as a means of protection, had been demolished, first by Hyder Ali and later by the British when they took control of Pulicat.

Maintained by the ASI, the cemetery was open, but there was not a soul in sight. Once we entered, it was so quiet that it was hard to believe that we were just a minute away from the main market of Pazhaverkadu! Two beautifully sculpted skeletons greeted us at the entrance. Inside the cemetery were well maintained graves of various Dutch



The Adinarayana Perumal temple of the Vijayanagara period and the roots of a tree tearing its walls open.

residents and officials of Pulicat. We could also see a couple of English tombstones in a far corner, obviously sited after 1825.

Coming out of the cemetery, we made brief stops at a couple of old churches. The older of them, called the Our Lady of Glory Church (said to date to the Portuguese period), had been demolished and was being reconstructed. The other church, a small, beautiful one called the St. Anthony's Church, was closed and we could only get a glimpse of it from the outside. We then drove over the bridge across the lake connecting one side of this fishing hamlet to the other. This bridge, which has been recently opened, has improved connectivity with the mainland for the many villages on the other side of the lake. It was twilight and the lake presented a pretty sight in the fading light.

Our last stop for the evening before we drove back was to

catch up with a bit of Muslim history. Pulicat has a long association with the Muslim community, with Arabian traders settling there nearly 800 years ago. Two prominent mosques, both nearly 300 years old, are the main places of worship. The smaller of the two mosques, the Chinna Pallivasal, has an interesting feature, a sundial that was installed in 1914 to show the time based on which the people would assemble for prayer. A Madrasa also functions in the vicinity, where the children receive Islamic instructions. The Arwi language, a blend of Tamil and Arabic, is another interesting feature of the place. Dating to the time the Arabs first settled in Pulicat, this language today has very few takers amongst the Muslims of Pulicat, with only a handful of people amongst the local population having a knowledge of it. Essentially Tamil written in Arabic, the script has certain special symbols as Tamil has more consonants and vowels than Arabic. Arwi was used during the freedom struggle as a means of secret communication, as the British translators could understand only the Arabic script.

It was soon time for us to make the two-hour drive back to the city. We were left ruing the fact that we had mistimed our trip, as the three hours we had in Pulicat offered only a glimpse of the local culture and nothing more. We had also missed out on visiting the Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary.

With so much of rich history in Pulicat, not to mention the placid waters of the lake and the beach beyond, it is a place that offers an opportunity to be developed as an exciting tourist destination. Though tourists do visit the place for joy rides on the lake and enjoy the bird sanctuary, its potential needs to be harnessed much more.



Tranquebar Crafts Resource Centre, Tranquebar.

Heritage destination – Tranquebar

(By A Special Correspondent)

Tranquebar, the Tarangambadi of the singing waves, is unrecognisable today. I last visited it in 2006 in connection with the tercentenary celebrations of the arrival of Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and the establishment under leadership of the Danish Halle Mission, the first Protestant mission, not church, to put down roots in Asia. Not only was it then recovering after



The town gate.

the 2004 tsunami which had swallowed much of its coast and taken a heavy toll of life and property, but several non-governmental organisations had begun to team together to resurrect Tranquebar as a Heritage Town, a status it got like Chettinad/Kanadukathan got only on the insistence of INTACH Tamil Nadu (as INTACH Chennai was then) who had been asked to review the list prepared by the Department of Town and Country Planning, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Historically the Poompuhar (Kaveripoompattinam)-Tarangambadi-Nagapattinam coast has been a signally important one, for it is from here that the Chola and, later, Pandya fleets sailed to South and Southeast Asia between the 10th and the 14th Centuries. Muslim and Nayak influence left its mark on the small port town between the 14th and 17th Centuries. And then, in 1620, it was granted by King Raghunatha Naik of Thanjavur to the Danes to establish a trading settlement. Dansborg (the Danish fort) was completed in 1624 and in 1701

the Zion Church was built to serve the Fort. In 1645, the Danish Government, which had taken over the settlement and 15 surrounding villages after the Danish Asiatic Company had been dissolved in 1732, sold the territory to the British East India Company for Rs. 12.5 lakh and it remained British till Independence when it became part of Madras/Tamil Nadu State. The influence left by all these rulers has long been reflected in the town, but the interest in doing something about this 'treasure' began only in the new Millennium when a few Danes working on a schools' project in the Arcots visited Tranquebar and caught up with its history. Initial attempts by this group to spruce up a couple of the historic buildings with coats of paint led to the founding, on their return to Denmark, of the Danish Tranquebar Association. It now has a membership of over 300 and has been able to get the Bestseller Foundation (the CSR wing of a major Danish conglomerate), the National Museum of Denmark and some NGOs to work with the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department, the Government of India's Tourism Department, the Archaeological Department, Tamil Nadu, the Archaeological Survey of India, the HR & CE Department, Tamil Nadu, the Lutheran & CSI Churches, the Pondicherry and Chennai chapters of INTACH, Upasana, a design centre in Auroville, the Crafts Council of India, St. Joseph's Development Trust, Tranquebar, and the Neemrana Group to work together and breathe new life into the dying town. What I saw on my recent visit was a work in progress. But there has been sufficient progress to make this a heritage destination worth visiting – for a weekend and, perhaps, more particularly with good accommodation now available. The Neemrana

An association determined to revive Tranquebar

In the last decade there has been considerable interest in Tranquebar in reviving memories of a 200-year-old Indo-Danish connection. This interest started when a few Danes who were involved in a school project in Tamil Nadu visited Tranquebar and saw how badly preserved the old Danish fort, Dansborg, was and felt that both the fort and the rest of Tranquebar deserved restoration. At first they planned just to paint the main building where the Danish Governor had his residence during the first centuries of Danish presence in India. They got permission from the Government of Tamil Nadu for this and, investing their own money, made the building look presentable – only to find it deteriorate in the years that followed. The Government of Tamil Nadu then restored the fort, completing the work by 2002 and developing with the help of the Danes a museum in it. During this restoration period, the old Danish Land Gate was restored by the Archaeological Sur-

vey of India (ASI). Both have now deteriorated.

Meanwhile, to further push for the restoration of Tranquebar, the Danish Tranquebar Association was founded in 2002. At present it has more than 300 members. The Association undertook the cleaning and restoration of the cemetery in New Street (Riverbank Street). Before the end of this work, the tsunami of December 2004 hit Tranquebar.



The Danish Cemetery

After the tsunami the Association collected money in Denmark to help the hard-hit fishermen's community to get new boats. But at the request of the fishermen's leaders, the

Group of heritage hotels has restored the Collector's Bungalow on the beach as an upmarket property. It has restored two old Tamil houses, the Gate House and the Naik Bungalow, as mid-level properties, and runs Tamil Nadu Tourism's Hotel 'Tamil Nadu' as something much better than the usual such hostellers.

The Fort, on which some restoration work was done in 2002, and the Museum set up in it need a considerable amount of work and more to be done by the Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department and by those it might be willing to team with. So does the 'Land Gate', the gateway to what was a walled town. It was first reconstructed in 1792. After Independence, it has been little looked after by the Archaeological Survey of India after every renovation by it. And the CSI's Zion Church needs restoration.



Masilamaninathar temple.

Elsewhere there is much positive work.

Reconstruction of the Tamil Nadu Tourism-owned Governor's Bungalow is nearing completion (it will probably be ready for the Tamil New Year) and is to house a Tranquebar Cultural Centre in which the National Museum, the Bestseller Foundation, Tamil Nadu Tourism and the Chennai and Pondicherry INTACH Chapters have all promised to play leading roles. And to which, it is hoped, will be added inputs from the Lutheran Church on the ever-so-important Zienbalg-Tamil Nadu connection. The Bestseller Foundation has restored five Tamil houses on Goldsmith Street. One is now a guest house, two of them house INTACH Tranquebar's office and an exhibition on Tranquebar's history, and the other two are home to the Tranquebar Craft Resource Centre where local craft is being revived with the help of Upasana and the Crafts Council working with the St. Joseph Development Trust self-help groups.

The Danish cemetery has been restored and so have been several old buildings in the Ziegenbalg complex, including



Fort Dansborg.

money was instead used to construct a huge granite coastal sea wall with permission from the Tamil Nadu Government.

Partly as a consequence of the work of the Association, the Bestseller Foundation (the corporate social responsibility wing of a large Danish conglomerate) became interested in helping with development work in Tranquebar. The foundation established a mason training programme for women that



Opening Tranquebar Maritime Museum

would help in the restoration of Tamil buildings and, it hoped, the preservation of Tamil cultural heritage. Bestseller also started some programmes to strengthen traditional craft skills, established a nursery for plants suitable for coastal protection, and developed a public park by the shore. The Foundation also funded a bank for micro credit loans to help people establish their own businesses.

After restoration of the Danish cemetery, the Association got the Danish National Museum interested in the Danish Governor's Bungalow, owned by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department. The Department agreed to the Danish National Museum funding the restoration of the building teaming with INTACH's then Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry chapters. The restoration of the building has now been done by INTACH Pondicherry and will be completed by March 2012, when it will become an Indo-Danish Cultural Centre managed by an Indo-Danish Committee and maintained for an initial period by the Bestseller Foundation.

The Danish Tranquebar Association has for some time now been drawing up plans to restore the former Danish Commander's Building next to the Governor's Bungalow. It has procured the necessary funding but has to reach agreement with the local Lutheran Church authorities who own the building. The Association has also renovated the roof of Ziegenbalg's Prayer House in Admiral Street. And has offered to help with the renovation of the early 14th Century

Sri Masilamaninathar Temple, badly eroded by the sea.

With fishing playing such an important role in the history and culture of Tranquebar, the Association decided to establish a Tranquebar Maritime Museum. An exhibition about fishermen and their history was inaugurated in February 2010 by the leaders of the fishing community and representatives from the Association. The museum was to be situated in Van Teylingen's House in King Street, the former residence of a Danish doctor, but because Van Teylingen's House is to be totally restored, the museum is in a rented space at present. The museum has a department for marine archaeology, the object of which is to explore the sea bed along the coast of Tranquebar where sailing ships used to anchor in the Danish period from 1620 to 1845. "We have knowledge of a number of shipwrecks in the Tranquebar area," the Association says.

It is also planned to have a historical type of boat, the Selling, on exhibition in the museum. This boat, locally known as a Masula, was used to bring goods to and from the big sailing ships that had to anchor out at sea. It was handled by 8 or 10 rowers. It was also used for fishing. What makes the Masula so special is that its planks are sewn together. In this way the boat gets a high elasticity that makes it extremely suitable to pass through the strong surf of the Coromandel Coast. It is planned, as a part of the new exhibition, to assemble the boat in the presence of visitors, making the museum a living museum.

Meanwhile, a Restoration Development Plan has been drawn up by INTACH Pondicherry, the Tamil Nadu and India Tourism Departments, and the local Panchayat. Under the plan, beautifying the square in front of the fort has begun and it will be possible to walk around the square on a granite walkway, to sit for a while on the benches under shade trees, and see the environment lit up by traditional Danish lamps at night.

Tranquebar has been designated by the Government of Tamil Nadu as a Heritage Town. Such a town will need Government to provide it better water supply, much improved roads, a more reliable system of electricity supply, and an effective sewage system. This the Panchayat need to press for.

(Continued on page 8)

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period November 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Who was recently ranked the richest Indian by Forbes, with a net worth of \$22.6 billion?
2. Name the two men of science honoured by having Elements 111 and 112 named after them?
3. Name the former Olympic and undisputed World Heavyweight boxing champion, nicknamed 'Smokin' Joe', who passed away on November 7th.
4. According to the latest annual index produced by the United Nations, which are the top three countries to live in?
5. Which is the first Asian country to join two space vehicles together in orbit for the first time?
6. Who have been named the 'World Athletes of the Year' by the IAAF?
7. How did an image of the Rhine by German artist Andreas Gursky make news recently?
8. Which Pacific island nation, with Yaren as its capital, saw three Presidents in a week?
9. Name a much read and respected cricket writer (and a columnist for *The Hindu*) who committed suicide recently.
10. Name the two eminent sportspersons who were made honorary Lt. Colonels in the Territorial Army on November 1st.
11. Which publication is considered the first general interest Tamil magazine to attain a circulation of one lakh?
12. Where in Chennai can you see a chronogram, engraved in stone, considered unique for being perhaps the only work by a Hindu in a mosque in Tamil Nadu?
13. The HQ of which bank is now on Lloyd's Road where *Lalitha Sadan*, a huge property, stood?
14. Which 225-year-old institution has also functioned in what is now the Fort Museum, then at 'Garden House' on Popham's Broadway, before it moved to its present location in 1884?
15. Where is the largest Cornwallis Cupolas in Chennai?
16. Where in Nungambakkam is the State Government planning an Integrated Knowledge Park?
17. Which specific art form features in 135 Tamil Nadu temples?
18. Where is the Trevelyan Fountain that was raised to mark the contribution of Governor Charles Trevelyan, towards providing Madras with adequate drinking water?
19. Which industrial suburb of Chennai, once called Tiruvalidayil (or Tiruvalidayam), has a 7th Century Siva temple?
20. If it is Arthur Conan Doyle for Sherlock Holmes, then who is it for Thuppariyum Sambu?

(Answers on page 8)

A pioneer in hoteliering in Madras – D'Angelis



HOTEL d'ANGELIS

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**SYLK'S HOTEL
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- ✦ Continental Cuisine under a European Chef.
- ✦ Smart Service. ALL Electrical conveniences.
- ✦ A beautiful Parisian Garden within the Hotel.
- ✦ Band twice a week. Reasonable Rates.

PROPRIETORS:

G. d'ANGELIS & SON, MADRAS.

An advertisement for D'Angelis hotels in the 1920s.

(Continued from last fortnight)

A 1913 description of Hotel D'Angelis by Somerset Playne states:

"The hotel occupies a central position in the European quarter of Mount Road, the leading thoroughfare in the city. It is near *Government House* and the *Madras Club*, and within a few minutes' drive from the Central and Egmore railway stations.

"A very fine reception-room is noticed on entering the building, whence visitors are transferred to the upper floors by an electric lift, the first in Madras. Too great praise cannot be given for the excellence of the sanitary arrangements, as each sleeping apartment is provided with a bath and toilet-room, in which there is an unlimited supply of hot (another first) and cold water.

"All the ceilings are fitted with embossed steel, which is not only a preventive against undesirable insects, but is also a practical safeguard against fire. Wide passages and verandahs ensure the circulation of an abundance of fresh air, but additional comfort is derived from electric fans, which are to be found in every room (yet another first). Every inch of flooring is covered with Minton tiles, the utmost cleanliness being thus ensured.

"There is a very handsome dining-hall on the first floor, in which more than one hundred guests can be accommodated with meals at separate tables,

and adjoining this are several private dining-rooms and a banqueting hall, which will seat sixty persons. The drawing-room is designed after a Swiss chalet, and decorators and furnishers have vied with each other in producing a cosy retreat amid most delightfully artistic surroundings.

"Billiard players have a choice of three excellent tables,

which have been fitted up by J.W. Roberts, of Madras, in a spacious hall measuring 80 feet in length and 30 feet in width, and there are comfortable reading and writing-rooms for ladies and gentlemen. No fewer than four verandahs overlook a charming Parisian garden, which is not equaled in South India for its wealth of shady trees and palms, and here a visiting guest may be served with light refreshments while listening to the captivating strains of a first-class band of music.

"Messrs. D'Angelis & Son are renowned for the excellence of their English, French, and Italian cuisine, and their lengthy experience in catering is a guarantee that the most fastidious customers cannot find fault. An indispensable adjunct to the culinary department of a large hotel in the East has been provided in the shape of a refrigerating and ice-making plant



Marianna of Sylk's.



Hotel D'Angelis' reception room.



Hotel D'Angelis' roof garden.



The Parisian Garden (above and below) with its bandstand on left (above).



Italians never considered India as a final destinations; the country was simply regarded as a land which offered certain business opportunities. The majority of Italians never settled in India permanently, and used to go back home at the age of retirement, or even earlier, handing over their businesses to younger members of the family or relatives-in-law. They always perceived their stay in India as temporary. An exception was represented by those who married non-Italian women in In-



View of the Parisian Garden from the second floor.

to run the hotel in Madras and, later, managed Sylk's in Ooty. Marianna was the only one who continued her father's business after Carlo and Giacomo D'Angelis' deaths. Giacomo D'Angelis died in Turin (Italy) in the early 1930s during one of his many 'holidays' from Madras. Marianna left India after selling her properties and settled in London in 1965 with her third husband, F. Penn, who was the proprietor of a brewery in Bangalore.

Dawson's Hotel, which opened in Ooty in 1841, was sold to C. Sylks in 1868 and became Sylk's Hotel. Giacomo D'Angelis acquired Sylk's Hotel, it is believed, shortly after the Great War (1914-18) and by 1925 renamed it the Savoy. He first ran it as a summer hotel but, later, made it a year-round one. He transferred ownership of the Savoy to Marianna in 1925.

* * *

dia. Generally speaking, Irish and French girls were preferred because of their Catholic backgrounds. But even Italians who married non-Italian women in India used to take their 'Indian' families back with them to Italy when they retired. The links with Italy were always overwhelmingly strong. They were proud of being the nationals of a recently unified country, to build which they had contributed.

Giacomo D'Angelis and his family in India did not fit well into this picture. During the years he and his family spent in India, he did not maintain any close link with his family in Italy and this was rather atypical of his Italian background.

The absence of direct links with Italy culminated in the D'Angelis family moving to different countries, one of them to as far away as Chile. Giacomo D'Angelis was multilingual and

• Once, D'Angelis was the best hotel in town. Giacomo D'Angelis himself was known, apart from his confectionery and hospitality businesses, as being the first resident of the city to fly an airplane. Suddenly, a couple of years earlier, out of the blue, a great-grandson of his, Jefferis Donald Evans D'Angelis, got in touch with me from, of all places, Santiago, Chile. We have kept in touch since and he has over time sent me a heap of pictures of both hotel and family. A few of them appear in these pages and others had appeared in the last issue. Accompanying them is a text put together from a paper that Dr. Antonella Viola of the Universidade Nova, Lisbon, Portugal, published – *Migration across Three Continents: The D'Angelis Family* – and which Jefferis D'Angelis sent me, as well as from information my correspondent contributed, and from other published sources.

– THE EDITOR



a highly cosmopolitan man; he liked to travel and he felt at ease in an international environment. Giacomo's personality, the colonial context and the mixed marriage greatly influenced the development of his children's identity. Further, Giacomo D'Angelis' contacts with France resulted in the children receiving a French and English education, and being bereft of any direct contact with Italy and Italian culture. But from a letter written to Louis D'Angelis we learn that Marianna, and probably also Carlo and Louis himself, knew Italian. However, there is no evidence to confirm that they used to speak Italian in their everyday life.

On the other hand, a picture that Giacomo D'Angelis sent to his son Louis, who had already moved to America, suggests that he preferred to talk English rather than Italian to his children. The photograph was taken in Algiers during a vacation and contains a few lines in English written by Giacomo D'Angelis himself. It is very likely that communication within the family was conducted almost exclusively in English, particularly as they spent much of their lives in an English-speaking environment.

It must also be noted that the Giacomo D'Angelis who lived in Madras till his death

was considered by many to be French. Giacomo, in fact, was thought to be Corsican. This was most probably due to the fact that Giacomo arrived in India from France. But Giacomo did not seem to have been particularly disturbed by the fact that he was considered French rather than Italian. Connections with France had a great influence on the family. When asked about his grandfather Louis D'Angelis, Jefferis D'Angelis said that he remembered him as a "true Frenchman." Louis D'Angelis migrated to Chile in 1923.

* * *

Giacomo D'Angelis sold Hotel D'Angelis to another Italian confectioner in Madras, Bosotto, who renamed it Hotel Bosotto Brothers. In 1950, when Bosotto returned to Italy after World War II, he sold the hotel and confectionery business to Musulipa Chaudhary, who had been his dairy products supplier, for Rs. 15,000.

(Concluded)



After D'Angelis became Bosotto's

(another first) and there are, in addition, cool chambers for preserving meat, butter, and other provisions.

"A motor-bus is sent to meet the principal trains and steamers, and this vehicle is available for parties desiring to visit places of interest in the neighbourhood.

"Not the least important recommendation of this hotel is a fact that the proprietors take an active interest in securing all possible comforts and attention for their visitors, although an expert European manager has direct control over the small army of servants."

Giacomo D'Angelis expanded these operations by signing a man-



Hotel D'Angelis' Dining Room.

agement contract to run Sylk's Hotel in Ooty. He eventually purchased and refurbished the hotel and handed over its management to his daughter Marianna.

Marianna married an Italian, Aldo Palazzo Palazzi, who had come to India to work in the hotel business. He was 42 and she was 29. It has been stated that Palazzo was the chef at Sylk's. In spite of Giacomo D'Angelis' opposition, the couple married in November 1920. Aldo Palazzo was Marianna's first husband. They lived in India and she actively helped her father

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December 6: Release of *Christian Themes in Indian Art* by Prof. Dr. Anand Amaladass and Dr. Gudrun Lowner. The book is a pioneering work, showcasing Christian themes in Indian art from the beginnings of Christianity in India till today. Special emphasis is given to artists who as Hindus, Muslims and Parsees have chosen to paint Biblical themes. Philosopher and theologian Anand Amaladass teaches at Satya Nilayam Jesuit Faculty of Philosophy in Chennai, now part of the Loyola (Autonomous) College (at Goethe-Institut Auditorium, 6.30 p.m.).

December 9-11: *DRAMA-Log* (in cooperation with Masquerade) a first of its kind Theatre Festival promoting the inherent potential of dramatic arts for students in leading colleges in Chennai. Conceived by Goethe Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan and curated by Masquerade, there will be six short public performances over three evenings (at Goethe Institut Auditorium, 7.30 p.m.).

Till December 10: Exhibition of photographs by Nicholas Vreeland taken over the 26 years he has been a Buddhist monk (at Gallery Sumukha).

Till December 10: *Leaving a*

Mark, an exhibition of paintings and photographs by Melissa Enderle. An American who has taught in Mali, Tunisia, Serbia, and India, she portrays the culture and life of everyday people through photography, watercolours, colour pencil, and pastel (at Forum Art Gallery).

From December 11: *Between Strangeness and Familiarity*, an exhibition of paintings, drawings and sketches by Ruth Bisping (at Indigo and Laberum Galleries, 6 p.m.).

December 17-26: Madhya Pradesh Festival with folk performance, crafts and exhibitions (at DakshinaChitra).

December 18: *Eastern Flowers*, in cooperation with MusicUniv, 'Eastern Flowers', presented by Jarry Singla, is an ensemble whose members all have a close cultural connection to the Indian subcontinent in their music. Like Jarry, double-bass player Christian Ramond is also of Indo-German origin and the trio is complete with the addition of Ramesh Shotham, a musician from Madras (at Sivagami Pethachi Auditorium, 9.30 a.m.).

December 27-31: Marghazhi Festival. Kurumba artists' tribal performance from the Nilgris (at DakshinaChitra).

Answers to Quiz

1. Mukesh Ambani; 2. Wilhelm Roentgen and Nicolaus Copernicus; 3. Joe Frazier; 4. Norway, Australia and the Netherlands; 5. China; 6. Usain Bolt of Jamaica and Sally Pearson of Australia; 7. At \$4.3 million, it has become the most expensive photograph ever sold; 8. Nauru; 9. Peter Roebuck; 10. Abhinav Bindra and M.S. Dhoni.

* * *

11. *Dinamani Kathir*; 12. Wallajah Mosque; 13. Indian Bank; 14. Madras GPO; 15. At the Collectorate (where once *Bentick Building* stood); 16. At the DPI campus; 17. Frescoes; 18. In the grounds of the Victoria Public Hall; 19. Padi; 20. Devan.

Heritage Destination – Tranquebar

(Continued from page 5)

his home. A Ziegenbalg Museum has been partly developed here and a printing museum awaits development in the premises where Ziegenbalg's printing press, the first in Asia after printing died out in Portuguese territories, was located, a promise of the Madras Printers' Association still to be fulfilled. The *Commander's House* next to the Governor's Bungalow, the colonnaded *Rehling's House*, *Van Teylingen's House* and Zion Church (1701) are all to be restored by INTACH Pondicherry with the Bestseller

Foundation's help. The Sivan Temple is being restored by the HR & CE Board and suggestions have been given to them to restore the Masilamani Nathar Temple dating to 1306, a rare coastal temple that has to a great extent been swallowed by the sea. The 1350s old mosque, later renovated, has had a newer mosque built neighbouring it and there has been restoration of the latter.

Under a Destination Development Scheme drawn up by INTACH Pondicherry and the Tamil Nadu and Government of India Tourism authorities,

the local Panchayat and the Bestseller Foundation, the Parade Ground, a 'brown', has been converted into a 'green' with a granite walkway separating it from the *Governor's Bungalow* and its neighbours. The 'walkway', with its new row of old Danish lamp posts could pass for a promenade. Similar lighting will illuminate the 'green' to be developed around Dansborg, some of which will reflect the positioning of the moat that once surrounded the fort. With the whole area to be made 'pedestrians only' – a welcome thought – it tends to give an impression of a contrived, deliberately created bit of heritage, rather than truly reflect the past. But then many a heritage destination in different parts of the world has followed this route – and who are we to crib when so much has been done to bring Tranquebar alive again.

The Danish Tranquebar Association has established a Danish Maritime Museum, at present in rented premises but to be moved to *Van Teylingen's House* on King's Street after its restoration. The Association also contributes to Tamil, English and Danish road signage, a cleaner Tranquebar and prevention of coastal erosion while beautifying the road along the coast.

Taken altogether, the efforts of all those working together to restore Tranquebar has resulted in what is without doubt the best re-creation of a heritage town in the State, perhaps even in South India.

December 31: Last date for submission of DVDs for *Moksha Moola*, a video film competition in cooperation with LV Prasad Film & TV Academy. Open to anyone living in Tamil Nadu and under 23 years. 'Seeking a Space called Peace' is the overriding theme and the video should not exceed 60 seconds in duration, excluding the titles (For details: Max Mueller Bhavan, Chennai).

* * *

DakshinaChitra Workshops

Children's workshop

December 17: Pottery and Clay modelling.

December 23-24: Residential Winter Camp.

Adult workshop

December 10 & 11: Card modelling

December 21-January 31, 2012: Exhibition of children's literature by Arts management students. (For details: 27472603/27472783)

* * *

Nizhal Marghazhi tree walks

These are family walks, and Nizhal would like every adult to bring at least one child below 15! Each walk will last about an hour, and participants will be introduced to the different trees, common in our city and their stories told.

Note: Guindy Children's Park and Semmozhi Poonga charge an entrance fee, and participants must buy their own tickets. The walks are otherwise free. For further details and for registration, please contact 90030 11372 or 98400 16872 between 10 am and 5 pm.

Semmozhi Poonga – RK Salai
December 17, Saturday 10.30 am
December 25, Sunday 10.30 am
January 7, Saturday 10.30 am

Children's Park – Guindy
December 18, Sunday 10.30 am
December 31, Saturday 10.30 am
January 8, Sunday 4 pm

Panagal Park – T'Nagar
December 24, Saturday 4 pm
January 1, Sunday 10.30 am

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