

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

Vol. XXIV No. 11

September 16-30, 2014

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There appears to be hope for the Canal

(By The Editor)

Given up practically as a lost cause with talks of revival being merely ministerial pronouncements, the Buckingham Canal may see better days with the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and Andhra. Among the first announcements of the new Andhra Government is that it would be interested in making the Buckingham Canal a tourist destination and a navigable waterway once again. Much will depend on how this idea pans into reality, but if it did, it would be wonderful and perhaps something that the Tamil Nadu Government could then extend to what is there of the canal within its jurisdiction.

It may be the longest canal in the country starting off in

Orissa and ending somewhere after Cuddalore, but it cannot be denied that we have done precious little to protect this valuable waterway. In our city, it is nothing more than a foul gutter, its condition being just about marginally better in areas outside city limits. In certain stretches it still is a navigable waterway. Indeed, it was navigable till the 1960s, with boats plying down the canal carrying produce of various kinds being a normal sight. Consistent neglect and a cyclone that destroyed its banks in the late 1960s sealed its fate.

Within the city, the canal has had other problems. The first of these has been the historic practice of letting in untreated sewage. The second,

and perhaps the more serious issue, has been the construction of the MRTS all along much of its bed in the city. Pillars for the transport system are actually in the waterway and have effectively ensured that navigation is next to an impossibility even if water were to flow once again.

Rather interestingly, even as the Andhra Government has made this announcement, there is talk of the Tamil Nadu Government looking at how it can revive the canal in the stretch that runs south after Chennai city limits. It is reliably learnt that the State Government is examining Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) stipulations to see how this can be done. It will be recalled that the farmers of

(Continued on page 5)

Time to stop Chennai losing industrial edge

(By A Special Correspondent)

The latest report on the competitiveness of Indian cities, released by the World Economic Forum, classifies Chennai as a city that is not "easy to do business in". Ahmadabad is now ranked the best location to set up an enterprise. That may reflect the current political situation, but there is no denying that our city, which was holding second position four years ago, has slipped several rungs.

The reasons are not far to seek. The continuing power shortage is considered to be the biggest and most visible issue, but there are several others. One of these is the inordinately high price of land in the city and its environs. The second is the failure in providing infrastructure in most locations. The last

and, perhaps, the most important is the inaccessibility of decision-makers in the Government.

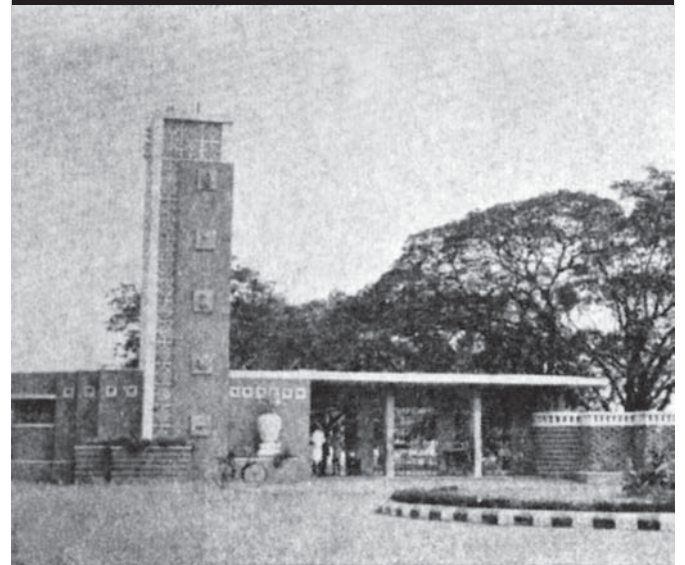
That Chennai has been unable to provide land at reasonable rates for the setting up of industries may come as a surprise to many. After all, this was where the concept of industrial estates first came up, with the Tiru Vi Ka Estate in Guindy having been set up in 1958. Since then, several others have come up in and around the city, but all of them have long lost their original character. Most have turned IT Parks, vehicle servicing centres, and newspaper offices. As for the feasibility of new estates, forget it. The Government has long stopped creating land banks for such purposes and can now do so

only by expensive acquisitions. A solution for this can be the encouraging of industries to move to Tier II towns in the State. But the lack of infrastructure in such places is daunting, to say the least.

Not that the infrastructure is any better in the city. Expatriates have, by and large, expressed their disappointment at what is available. When the IT Expressway was first planned, it was touted as a model of what civic services ought to be. But when it was developed it delivered hardly anything of what was promised. Six lanes yes, but nothing more. And as for the surrounding 'colonies' that came up, despite most of them being set up newly and, therefore, not having any of the prob-

(Continued on page 3)

Madras Landmarks – 50 years ago



• Today it may have shifted to a sprawling, verdant and much deserved campus in Vandalur and may be called the Arignar Anna Zoological Park but, for at least three generations, the Madras Zoo was behind the Ripon Building, occupying one end of the 116-acre People's Park.

The Zoo, of course, is older than that; it is, in fact, the oldest zoo in the country. It was begun thanks to Edward Green Balfour, Director of the Government Museum, Madras, who in 1854 persuaded the Nawab of Arcot to hand over his menagerie to the Museum. The Zoo was founded officially a year later in the Museum premises. Its specimens expanded to 300 in number within a year. In 1863, the Zoo was shifted to People's Park, where it was to remain for almost 125 years. Together with the Lily Pond, My Lady's Garden, Moore Market and VP Hall, it helped to make Park Town a tourist attraction.

Not that it lacked some gory history as well. In 1942, following the fears of bombardment of Madras, the city was evacuated. All the dangerous animals of the zoo were shot dead. The harmless ones were taken to Erode and brought back to the city in 1944. Another gruesome record was that for years the stray dogs of Madras were rounded up by the Corporation, killed, and the meat used to be given to the carnivores in the zoo! This was given up only in the 1970s following protests by animal lovers when the sterilisation rather than the culling of strays was adopted.

Located as it was in just 11 acres of land, the zoo began to get congested even in the 1940s. Around the time of Independence, Governor Sir Archibald Nye offered around 100 acres of the Guindy Raj Bhavan Estate for the zoo. While this eventually developed as the Guindy Park, the zoo stayed put. Nye's successor, Krishnakumarsinhji Bhavsinhji, the Maharajah of Bhavnagar, was an animal lover and it was thanks to him that the zoo got several specimens, including lions, tigers and macaws. The centenary of the zoo was celebrated with élan in 1955 with a special souvenir and a new entrance in art deco style – the Darwin Gate, which is seen in today's picture.

Right through the 1940s, '50s and '60s, the zoo was a favourite cinema setting. Perhaps its best representation was in the otherwise poor film Kakkum Karangal (1965) where the entire song 'Alli thandu kaal eduttu' was set in the zoo. A decade earlier, the American film director Ellis R. Dungan did a whole photo feature of the zoo for the Corporation.

In 1976, with increasing traffic noise, and the demand for People's Park land for other services, the zoo had to shift. The Forest Department generously gave 1265 acres of land in the Vandalur Reserve Forest. Work began in 1979 and was completed in 1985 when, on July 24, the then Chief Minister M. G. Ramachandran declared the zoo open in its new location and named it after his mentor C.N. Annadurai.

With a further 230 acres land being added to it subsequently, the zoo is one of the largest in Southeast Asia and is a great attraction in the city.

Memories ever green of Madras

Beautiful Madaras! Then Singara Chennai! Now?

Years ago, when we moved from our home town Trivandrum to Madras, the city unfolded itself in its magnificence. Good clean roads flanked on either side by huge majestic trees with the branches extending beautifully to provide some sort of a canopy to the road. It was such a beautiful feeling to be walking down the road with a green cover above you accompanied by a refreshing breeze.

The main roads had only bungalows then, big and small, on either side. Roads with shops were mostly in residential localities and were confined to certain parts of the city like Mount Road, Luz Corner, Triplicane High Road, Armenian Street, Thambu Chetty Street, some pockets in T'Nagar and in streets round a temple in each area. Shops with sparkling brass and copperware made many a shopper stare and buy. I remember there were only a few saree shops with traditional Kanchipuram sarees and bits. The jewellery shops had limited variety of gold, diamond and stone jewels tempting the women and girls to buy and to cause a dent in the men's money-purse, as a wallet was then called.

Good educational institutions were few, like P.S. School, Madras Christian College School, Church Park Convent, Holy Angel's Convent, Vidyodaya, Good Shepherd. The colleges were Queen Mary's, Presidency, Loyola, Madras Christian, and Women's Christian besides other colleges like the Madras Medical, Stanley Medical and Guindy Engineering.

My sisters, my nieces and I never missed a chance of watching the various drama troupes staging serious plays as well as troupes like Cho's which provided political satire and which sent us into splits of laughter. The T.K.S. Brothers, S.V. Sahasranamam, Sivaji Ganesan and K. Balachandrar and others made the audiences sit up and watch performances of meaningful stories with mythological, historical and social themes. Sometimes, the plays were staged even on a

stage erected in an open ground. As I go down memory lane, I can still recall some scenes of T.K.S. Brothers' *Raja Raja Cholan*, S.V. Sahasranamam's *Therotti Magan* – a theme revolving round the famous Karnan character of *Mahabharatham*, particularly the scene where Karnan discovers that Kunti Devi is his mother, and the emotional meeting when the mother and son meet. It was acted so powerfully that I, as a little girl, saw tears trickling down many a face. Cho delighted the audience with his humour; so did Balachandrar's stage plays with social themes, which conveyed a message and made people think.

● by
Lakshmi Sundaram

On the music side, the few *sabhas* staged top singers like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Musiri Subramanya Iyer, G.N. Balasubramaniam, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Madurai Mani Iyer, M.S. Subbulakshmi, and D.K. Pattammal, M.L. Vasanthakumari and others, accompanied on the violin and *mridangam* by proficient artistes who regaled the audiences. Though I did not much understand classical music then, we youngsters listened with rapt attention as the *raga alapana*, *sahityam*, *swarams*, etc. profusely filled the auditorium. These *kutchis* were all held in modest buildings with no trappings. Whatever discomfort the hall had was forgotten in the melodies from the musicians. The other fine arts – dance team led by Balasaraswathi with her technical proficiency, Kumari Kamala's aesthetic Bharata Natyam performance and a medley of dances called Oriental dances staged by the beautiful Travancore sisters, Lalitha, Padmini, Ragini among others – were all a feast to the eye.

We in the family enjoyed all these different facets of Madras life at the time. My father had built our house *Burma House* in a colony off the then Edward Elliot's Road. From the terrace of our house, we could see the sea and the blue waters. Our home being not very far from

Marina Beach, we, after school and college, would go almost every evening with my father to the beach. The two hours spent there playing on the sands and getting our feet wet with the waves were the most delightful moments of our lives. The cool refreshing air and playing on the clean sand made us return home glowing with happiness. Only a few vendors came to the beach to sell *pattani sundal* and occasionally a Mysore Cafe van was parked there and we youngsters used to go to the small tea stalls there. Even after years, thoughts of these things remain green and firmly etched in my memory.

The Navarathri season brought joy and colour into everyone's house as it was time for *kolu*, arranging dolls on steps. At that time there was a lot of bonhomie amidst social visits. North Mada Street by the side of Kapaleeswarar Koil in Mylapore had vendors selling and displaying the colourful dolls, and people happily buying new ones every year to add to their collection. Our small colony wore a festive look as we young girls in Kancheepuram *pattu pavadais*, and blouses, with a *kunjalam* at the end of each one's plait and flowers in the hair enjoyed arranging our *kolu* and visiting the *kolu* displays in nearby houses.

Life was easier to live then, the city was less crowded and you could walk in peace except in some parts of the city, like the town-side, as they used to refer to them, where all the wholesale markets and shops were located. The crowd was much less in every other place. There was no vehicular aggression unlike now; it was easy to go shopping to Luz or T'Nagar by state transport buses. Of course, there were the rickshaw-pullers for short distances and you did not have to depend on cars.

Madras in those days was beautiful, fairly clean, and commercial institutions were not so interspersed with residential buildings as they are now.

Today, the transformation is very noticeable. Beautiful independent houses, big and small, have been razed to the ground and, instead, high-rise buildings have come up, with the city growing vertically, with pressure on urban land and the migration of people from towns and villages to the city in search of jobs. Haphazard growth of commercial buildings, shopping malls, money splurged and

● Two pages of nostalgia brought

I yearn that I

Madras that is Chennai has just celebrated another birthday. And I can't help getting all nostalgic and hark back on the Madras of my childhood. From my parental home in Egmore, known as the bungalow to relatives, to Church Park Convent on the arterial Mount Road would be one dash and took just under ten minutes. You could even manage to stop by at Dawn Stores and pick up some urgently needed school supplies. Cars could drive right into the school compound, unlike today where many traffic pile-ups happen at school times thanks to schools not allowing cars in.

School admissions were never a problem as opposed to today when you have to start planning it even before the birth of the baby.

Three times a week my music teacher would come home and take *veena* lessons. Many of us learnt for the sake of exposure to the art and not to be performers or professionals and that was joy enough. The tuition teacher too would come home and one had to carefully choose people who knew their job and who were safe to be around with. Had I been as well-clued about child abuse at age nine as I am today, some of those guys and the obnoxious driver could have been slapped with charges.

When you drove into a place like the Madras Gymkhana Club, the colonial overhang was palpable. There was exclusiveness about it. The members were the who's who of the city and since everybody was somebody everyone knew everyone else. Fish and chips and tartar sauce, chocolate gateaux, and baked corn were made to perfection and were tempting to die for. The Saturday movie and live band, the weekly children's movie – just the thought of it all – transports me to a different era.

Eat-outs and hotels (one hadn't heard of five star ones) were few but I remember my father talking about a Coimbatore Krishna Iyer and his *badam halwa* besides the tram and the much-feared plague. Madras had changed even in his time.

In the city, homes were far apart and there weren't too many people



Never to be forgotten... Balasaraswathi... M.S. Subbulakshmi... Cho Ramaswamy.

increasing cinema houses have all played havoc resulting in inability to maintain old buildings. Of course, a few heritage buildings remain, but the entire city now has more stereotyped buildings. The Madras of then, with houses and buildings with architectural beauty, has given place to a city of high-rises. Rather, Singara Chennai now is a flattened city, a city of flats. Earlier, in spite of lack of modern vehicles for removing garbage, carts with men would come and clean streets. Now with modern methods of removal, the dustbins are overflowing with garbage, the rubbish strewn all over the place.

I admit there is no point in complaining. This is the price a citizen has to pay for urbanisation, commercialisation, globalisation taking place in all metropolitan cities and Chennai is no exception.

But, for people who have seen Madras in its glorious days in all its splendour, memories will always remain green.

After the rigours of Madras Week that became a Madras Fortnight, MMM is off on a well-earned busman's holiday. His column will resume on his return.

about by Madras Week

for the Madras once knew

if really necessary would you get referred to someone else. With excellent and dedicated doctors, institutions like GH and Stanley (Kanji Thotti hospital) and Royapettah GH, not to forget Maternity at Egmore and Gosha (Triplicane), served a large population. The street corner 24x7 dispensary hadn't showed up back then. Supermarkets too hadn't made their appearance and the local grocer would home-deliver stuff packed in paper cones and secured with twine. Yes, home delivery was a value addition even then.

Everything from eggs to ghee to Kanchipuram sarees to Venkatagiri sarees to the Sholapur sarees and bangles would come right home to your doorsteps and big brands were few and far between. We had an old tailor who would come home and do the unimportant stuff – inner wear, boxer shorts, chemises, etc. while we went to Town or someplace else for the dressy jobs. The barber too would drop by and a makeshift salon would be created. The knife sharpener with his stone and the sparks flying, now part of a vanishing breed, was a familiar figure then. The idiot box hadn't arrived yet and movie theatres like Casino and the Safire complex with its popular Blue Diamond, where shows ran back to back, bring back warm and happy memories – not to forget Elphinstone (can Jaffer's ice cream parlour be far behind – never mind if it sometimes made you sick) and Minerva. Of course, if you wanted to catch a Tamil film, the gaudy Gaiety, Paragon and the posh Shanthi for die-hard fans of Sivaji Ganesan were the places to go to.

As Madras gets another year older, I yearn for the city of yore (whoever dared call it a village) and wonder where and whether I will ever find some traces of it.

1970s had builders like Southern Investments made their entry and highrise apartments were few and far between. The fourteen-storeyed LIC building had remained the tallest building for a long time. Down Mount Road, Spencer's was a landmark with its unique facade, its beautiful driveway, and its wooden floors – very sadly now replaced by a mall.

Many Sindhi businessmen had set up shop in Madras, and India Silk House, Chellaram's, Parsuram's and Lilaram's were notable examples. They were ever so solicitous – addressing most woman customers as sisters and young children as babies plying them with coffee and cool drinks. One even came away with a key-chain or paper weight or some freebie most of the time.

Corporate hospitals were unheard of and one went to the friendly family doctor and only

neurs and businessmen and sorting out the problems they face. As a consequence, Tamil Nadu and Chennai are faced with a very piquant situation – in the last two months, Chief Ministers from States up north have begun coming here to make presentations on their respective territories and the helpful concessions they are prepared to offer companies setting up plants in them. It is, of course, well known that at least three major organisations that have manufacturing facilities around Chennai have already announced that their second phase of development will be in States in the northern part of

India. One of them has rather pointedly stated that they would prefer to be where they are "closer to decision-makers."

The State Government has been promising a Global Investors Meet for long. The latest we have heard is that this has now been postponed to March 2015. The timing could not be worse – March is the financial year-end for majority of companies and most of them will be scrambling to close what has been a tough year. All this does not bode well for a city that was once touted as the best location to do business in. We hope the administration wakes up and reads the signs.



Spencer's that as a landmark. (Courtesy: Vintage Vignettes.)

in sight. The only crowded areas were Triplicane and Parry's Corner (in the Kandaswamy temple/Rasappa Chetty Street vicinity). Even Ranganathan Street hadn't quite

● by
Sudha Umashanker

come into its own and wasn't the nightmare it is today. I wasn't as familiar with Mylapore as I am today. So I can't say much about it, but for the Kapaleeswarar temple which I had visited as a child.

There were just about twenty postal zones and places like Madipakkam and Moulivakkam were not heard of. Anna Nagar had just had the World Trade Fair and commuting to that area seemed like going on a long-distance trip.

Only in the late 1960s and early

City losing its industrial edge?

(Continued from page 1)

lems that are traditionally faced by older neighbourhoods, they followed the same patterns of development. Narrow roads, infrastructure FOLLOWING land development and not the other way round, and a plethora of violations, all together put further stress on the environment.

The last and, perhaps, the most serious issue is the inaccessibility of those in power to industrialists. It is reported that with decision making being strongly centralised, very few Ministers and Secretaries are interested in meeting entrepre-



The Indersains.

Remembering Royapettah

The Indersains (MM, June 16th) lived at 17 Royapettah High Road (opposite where the Pilot Theatre was) till recently from 1933. The house had a large playground and high walls allowing four boys and one girl to play cricket with a regular cricket ball and stumps in position, and a shuttlecock court of right dimensions, well measured and marked with a place for a regular net. The house had a mango tree with many mangoes.

Remembering those times I recall trams plying on both sides of the road, some going towards Mylapore, Luz and the Temple, others in the direction of Parry's Corner and terminating at the High Court.

The nearby Sultan Market opposite Royapettah Police Station was where the family got its fresh vegetables. Next to the Police Station was Malabar Bakery, which sold fresh bread, pastries and buns that tasted as good as those from Bosotto's or MacRenett's on Mount Road.

Opposite the Royapettah's Government Hospital was a 'hotel' that served non-veg and vegetarian food. Named Hotels Cheap, it was well patronised.

City Printing Press started by a Mr. Iyer and assisted by Amaji helped children from the Corporation school on Royapettah High Road, particularly with book-binding when needed. Rates were reasonable to encourage all those who lived in the area, among whom was 'Ammani', now Dr. Mathangi Ramakrishnan.

Never will you see again in Royapettah Bus No. 13 whose route covered from Triplicane to T'Nagar via the Bazaar Road. Going to MCC College in Tambaram in 1943 was from Mambalam Station by local trains and a quick march, left, right, to the College. During the rains, Royapettah would be flooded and wearing half-pants to College was not uncommon.

Further down, on the left corner, which slowed down the tram, was Dr. Rangaswamy Nursing Home where three children of the Indersains were born (now opposite Swagath Hotel), and the Provident Fund Office. Next to this was 24 Royapettah High Road where the Punjab Association began a shuttle court opposite the Burma Bamboo furniture shop. Here there came and lived in 1947 refugees from Pakistan. Down the road was Kali Mark bottling company. At Lloyd's Road corner was the house of V.P. Raman, the famous lawyer, where Rajaji formed the Swatantra Party. And what about Raja Iyer, another well-known lawyer, and Ajantha Guptas Hotel? Then there was the tram shed on the way to the YMCA.

How can we ever forget going to Church Park School near Thousand lights with rickshawman Chellappa, and the barber shop opposite today's Hotel Amin?

– Bharat Hiteshi

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



(Current Affairs questions are from the period August 16th to 31st. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Which popular film actor recently became the first Indian ambassador of Interpol's Turn Back Crime campaign which highlights how everyone can play a role in preventing crime.?

2. The Prime Minister has set up the Ramanujam committee to identify what in an effort to help jurisprudence?

3. Name the Oscar-winning actor and acclaimed director of *Gandhi* who passed away recently.

4. The Union I&B Ministry recently held the release of Punjabi film *Kaam de Heere* (Diamonds of the Community). Why?

5. In which Chinese city was the 2014 Summer Youth Olympics held?

6. Which Indian was the Man-of-the-Series in the ODI series that India won 3-1 against England in England?

7. Name the new domain recently launched by the Union Government aimed at people who are non-English-speaking.

8. Name the ambitious scheme for comprehensive financial inclusion launched by the Prime Minister on August 28th.

9. With which online giant has the Ministry of Textiles signed an MoU for the welfare of handloom weavers?

10. Where in Maharashtra were India's first ever Ethanol-run, environment-friendly public buses introduced by Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari?

* * *

11. Three narrow roads connect North Mada Street and Kutcheri Road in Mylapore. One is Kutcheri Lane. Name the other two.

12. Which Tamil Nadu cricketer and squash star were recently awarded the Arjuna Award?

13. Who was the first Indian Governor of Madras?

14. Which most-recognised name in its business was named after a lawyer who became the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court in 1924?

15. *Bombay Mutual Building*, *Dare House* and *State Bank of Mysore Building* in Parry's are examples of which type of architecture?

16. Who composed 'Satatmu brovumayya chakravartini' in honour of King George V?

17. What was started in 1917 by Annie Besant, Dorothy Jinarajadasa and Margaret Cousins?

18. How many Pagodas would 16,800 Kaasu get you?

19. To acknowledge what effort was the Trevelyan Fountain raised in the grounds of *Victoria Public Hall*?

20. Which famous cricket club was the first winner of the Madras Championship (for the Rajah of Palayampatti Shield) in 1932-33?

(Answers on page 10)

Discovering the digitised archives on Google of *Triveni*, the literary journal, has been like opening a time capsule: the pre-independence issues take you on a journey into the past with the best guides you could ask for the thinkers, movers and shakers of those heady times. The first issue appeared in 1928 and the last in 2008. You can now digitally access the issues of *Triveni* for the entire term of its natural life. The mass of writing from 1928 to 2008, between 30,000-40,000 pages, is an impressive collection.

The journal celebrated twenty-five years of publication in 1955, its Golden Jubilee in 1997 and its Platinum Jubilee in 2007. In these and other issues, M. Chalapati Rao, Dr. P. Tirumala Rao and D. Anjaneyulu, colleagues and friends of the founder, fondly remembered 'old *Triveni* Days' and much of what follows is based on their writings.

The magazine was the brain-child of K. Ramakotiswara Rao (1894-1970) of Guntur, a lawyer by training and a journalist by inclination. Established in 1927 at *Malabari House* in Purasawalkam, the first issue set out to dazzle the public in 1928. This was about 150 pages "on fine feather-weight paper, with a number of rare plates for reproduction of sculptures and paintings."

The name *Triveni* was chosen because it indicated a 'triple stream'. In the first issue, the Editor, Ramakotiswara Rao, explained that the three streams were to be 'Art, Literature and History' and elaborated that the journal's "main function (would be)... to interpret the Indian Renaissance in its manifold aspects." In this respect the journals of the late 1920s, 30s and 40s are especially enlightening. Inevitably for those times, politics became a fourth stream.

In fact, the triple stream swelled to encompass more than the first three or even four. Social commentary, economic analyses, political debate, philosophical musings, personal reflections, stories, poems and much more are found in these pages. The scope is not only pan-Indian, writers ventured further afield to critique world events, review international writers, thinkers and philosophers. There are pieces on the rise of Fascism in Europe, discussions of the Kellogg Pact post-World War II and the uncertain future of Czechoslovakia.

Nilakanta Sastri, doyen of South Indian history, wrote on 'The Ramayana and Valmiki Abroad', V.T. Lakshmi on 'Ancient South Indian Commerce', Sir S. Radhakrishnan spoke for common sense in 'Religion: a Plea for Sanity', and Jawaharlal Nehru flexed his planning

Recalling TRIVENI

— The journal of the Indian Renaissance



K. Ramakotiswara Rao, Founder-Editor, *Triveni*.



muscles on what 'Social Welfare' should mean in the Indian context. There were discussions on problems of franchise, linguistic states and federalism in a future post-Independent India.

On a personal note, Khasa

Andhra, and in close touch with the literary and art movements of Andhra Desa. But he is anxious to publish detailed accounts of similar movements in other parts of India. He makes an

• by
Ganga Powell & John Powell

Subba Rao, later to be an eminent editor himself, pondered on the meaning of friendship. And B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya recollected the first motorcar in Madras when he was an undergraduate student: "...an alarm was raised following a hoot emanating from ... Parry's Corner." It was the Hon. A.J. Yorke's car, who then was the Chamber of Commerce Representative in the Legislative Council. There are also early poems by Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, short stories by Raja Rao, S.K. Chettur, translations of Kalki's work, critiques of the fine arts, and much, much more.

With great foresight the Editor saw a need to bring together, through translation and publication under one banner, the many cultural flowerings taking place across the linguistic boundaries of India.

"*Triveni* seeks to interpret the Renaissance movement as reflected in the various linguistic units of India. The Editor is an

earnest appeal to scholars in other linguistic areas to write about the literary and art movements with which they are familiar. *Triveni* will thus lay the foundations for that inter-provincial harmony and goodwill which is a prelude to a federation of Indian cultures."

True to this intent there are innumerable translations from regional languages such as Oriya, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil and Urdu.

As Anjaneyulu succinctly points out, "His was the role of a one-man academy of art and letters. In the event, he anticipated the work of the national Akademis of free India by a full quarter century or more. He was able to do single-handed what the Sahitya Akademi seeks to do with infinitely larger resources."

The reproductions of paintings by contemporary artists continued to be a distinctive aspect of *Triveni*. Looking through the old hard copies one

finds exquisite reproductions of paintings by Nandalal Bose, Mukul Dey, Subba Rao and many others. These are not yet in the digitised version although efforts are being made in this regard. O.C. Gangoly and G. Venkatachalam, the eminent art critics who brought the appreciation of Indian art into the public domain, also wrote for *Triveni*.

In 1928, writing on Mukul Dey, Gangoly lamented the inordinate attention paid to political events by the public, while happenings in the newly resurgent art world were ignored. "The third eye of our artistic vision, it appears, is not destined to open before the auspicious dawn of political autonomy, and the red-letter day of a cultured Swaraj." G. Venkatachalam's early essays on Rajput painting first appeared in *Triveni*. Music was not ignored. Ragini Devi and others wrote on traditions of Indian music and on composers like Tyagaraja.

The triple stream morphed into a wide, all-embracing river, capturing and carrying within it the ebbs and tides, the highs and lows, of that Indian Renaissance that the Editor wanted to reflect, as well as the ups and downs of the politics and social changes sweeping through those historic times.

Even public speaking was undergoing transformation, old style oratory being replaced by new. P.R. Ramachandra Rao begins an article on Jawaharlal Nehru as a speaker with the startling assertion, "The Congress President is not an orator." He compares him to Chittaranjan Das who "spoke with the voice of a giant." Nehru, in contrast, insisted on a microphone. "He will not brook the outdated expedient of bellowing to the multitude." Nehru began slowly. "As he speaks, the thought-sequence opens out for him. It is as if the trickling rills should collect and slowly awaken the avalanche which sweeps with a thundering suddenness. Beneath the surface of his modulous words roars the current of thought. It bubbles, it boils, it overwhelms."

Words like 'motherland', 'sacrifice', 'destiny', even the weighty term 'renaissance' ring true, used in those days with newfound pride, confidence and genuine idealism. Today to our somewhat cynical ears such grandiose vocabulary might seem *passé*, even ironical. But they ring true and shine like newly minted coins when used by these old stalwarts. For this reason alone, if nothing else, dipping into the rarer air of these journals is as refreshing as a dip in a mountain stream.

Madras Week for the young

YOcee (www.yocee.in), a Chennai-based news website for children, organised events for schoolchildren over two weekends recently to celebrate Madras Week. Two photowalks – one inside the restored Adyar Poonga and the other in Kottur village – a ‘Walk & Make Scrapbook’ session after a short walk from Luz Church to the Children’s Club close to Jammi Buildings in Mylapore, and ‘A day at Fort St. George’ were the events that attracted around 50 children at each event while they explored the city in parts.

The children found the Adyar Poonga, now open to the public twice a week, fascinating. Guided by the Interpretation Executive of the poonga, the children learnt a lot about the flora and fauna of the creek. Looking at the variety of plants, colourful butterflies and various insects, the children clicked away and saved much information and many memories.

A forenoon spent at Fort St. George had the children taking home much knowledge and heaps of photos, maps and activity sheets. Hugely supported by the Archaeological Survey of India, the morning offered the young a variety of activities. Thanks to Dr. G. Maheshwari, Superintending Archaeologist, ASI, Chennai Circle, who showed great interest in getting children involved in the city’s heritage and who offered all possible assistance and hospitality, the children delved into the history of Chennai.

The Assistant Archaeologist Vetri Selvi and the Fort Museum Curator Nidhi led the children on a heritage walk inside the Fort and the Museum respectively. Kalyani Narayanan of ‘Snapshot Memories’ guided the children in making scrapbooks of the places they



During the Adyar Poonga walk.



During the Kottur walk



Walk and make a scrapbook



At St. Mary’s in the Fort.

Other Madras Week events



Vidwan R.K. Sriramkumar and Latha Nathan sang about tree species at The Musical Tree Walk in Kotturpuram Tree Park organised by Nizhal during Madras Week.

visited inside the Fort. The children enjoyed a short map-reading session and a fun word-game.

The walk in Mylapore, looking at historical spots like Luz Church, Vivekananda College, Madras Sanskrit College and unique neighbourhood sites such as the *dhobi khana*, a shop making percussion instruments, roadside shops and statues, ended at the Children’s Club and brought the children back to the present.

Walking in the Kottur area, which still has the characteristics of a village, including a few tiled houses, a temple for a *grama devatha* and a Perumal

Coil probably 500-years old, was a joyful way of learning for the children.

N. Ramaswamy of Chennai Daily Photo blog led the walk. From the facades of buildings to the spinach-seller on the pavement, who had at least ten varieties of greens, they were interesting sights to talk about for curious children.

The walks and the activities only proved that the city has much to offer children outside the classroom. I do wish parents will encourage their children to participate in more such outdoor learning.

– R. Revathi



Participants at ‘Living Statues’ walking tour organised on the Marina by the World Storytelling Institute.



Madras Naturalists’ Society conducted several programmes for children during Madras Week.

Quizzing with Murugappa's

At the Madras Quotient Quiz 2014...



Rushing (left) to get into the auditorium (right).



The audience gets into the act.



First prize winners from nearly 300 teams – Maharishi Vidya Mandir.



...and at The Madras 375 Quiz

Three of the finalists in The Madras 375 Quiz, an open event sponsored by the Murugappa Group and organised by Mylapore Times. The 260 quizzers included T.K. Balaji, one of the winners of the Madras 350 Quiz. This is how the love for Madras brings people to the city's celebrations again and again!

A story of three major triumphs

● **V Krishnamurthy's *At The Helm – A Memoir* traces his tenure at the top of three major corporates – Maruti, BHEL and SAIL. He narrates in detail his steering these companies to great success and his charting new management concepts.**

It was just after the launch of *Industrial Economist* in March 1968 that we carried in its 'Glimpses' column a short note on BHEL-Tiruchi. We wondered why the sprawling unit, manufacturing industrial boilers, had failed to win an order from Madras Fertilizers Ltd. Within days, I received a two-page letter, which provided an outline of the issue. The writer invited me to visit the temple town and have a look at the facilities. One V. Krishnamurthy (VK) had signed it. He was the Company's General Manager.

When I visited the production facilities a week later, I was deeply impressed with the passion and involvement of the workforce and their ability to produce sophisticated equipment to strict time schedules. What impressed me most was BHEL-T winning an order for boilers from Malaysia – three years before the first BHEL boiler was fired at the Ennore thermal station!

● by
S. Viswanathan

My fascination for BHEL, which started in 1968, has continued through these past 46 years during which I have visited the various plants of BHEL in different parts of India and the several sites where BHEL equipment was installed and had been operating effectively. The visits to Tiruchi have been like pilgrimages undertaken at least once a year to keep myself updated on the expansion of facilities and to report on the progress.

I had expressed my amazement on the utilisation levels of equipment supplied by Czechoslovakia on identical terms and comparable costs at two different plants – one at Tiruchi and the other at the Bharat Heavy Plate and Vessels Ltd. (BHPV) at Visakhapatnam. While the former has grown into a highly sophisticated plant that accounts for a turnover of over

Rs. 15,000 crore, the BHPV plant, attached to the Ministry of Fertilisers, did not do well, turned sick and was later taken over by BHEL. While BHEL-T expanded output manifold by path-breaking development of ancillary industrial units and constantly upgraded technology through collaborations, BHPV declined.



BHEL.

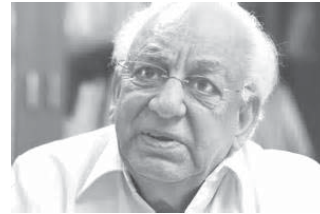
In 1972, VK successfully convinced policymakers in Delhi to merge the much older Heavy Electricals (India) Ltd with BHEL and form a single large power equipment manufacturer, BHEL. It was a herculean task bringing about a synthesis of cultures of the two different units. The initial doubts and resistance by senior managers were tackled by making them work in much higher positions at the different plants.

In quick time BHEL emerged a leader not just in the field of power equipment manufacture but also in the public sector. I remember the vibrant media campaign of BHEL designed by R.K. Swamy of HTA to highlight the commanding heights reached by the public sector. Particularly fascinating was the record of the giant company to expand its range of products by ramping up the capacities of the individual plants in different parts of the country.

The best proof for the success of BHEL through the 1970s was the ability of the Company to supply top talent for high managerial positions. From the earlier practice of such talent being largely supplied by multinationals like Hindustan Unilever, ITC and the Indian Railways, from the 1970s we witnessed BHEL supplying chief executives both for the public sector and for private enterprises!

In 1977, I was in Delhi around the time when VK was

appointed Secretary in the Department of Heavy Industry. When I dropped in to offer my congratulations, he suggested my visiting Hyderabad to see the facilities there. I joined VK and other directors on the flight to Hyderabad and we went to Ramachandrapuram. Over time, the Hyderabad unit has taken up a spectacular diversifi-



V. Krishnamurthy.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi then requested VK to build the Maruti factory in the aftermath of Sanjay Gandhi's death. VK describes in great detail the initial challenging years at Maruti. He held to his promise on delivering the first vehicle by the end of 1983, within less than three years of taking charge.

I met him in 1984 and asked how he was confident that the market would be able to absorb 100,000 cars at a time when total size of the market, fed by three Indian manufacturers was just around 40,000. VK's reasoning was grand: "The Maruti 800 is a state-of-the-art product. It promises a saving of Rs. 1000 per month on maintenance. Thus, in four years the saving will be around



Maruti.

cation: new product lines for manufacture of oil rigs to meet the requirements of ONGC at Bombay High, which was then reaching peak production, and a vast range of industrial equipment and switch gears were introduced. A separate division was also set up for R&D.

The waning success of BHEL for several years post-1970s, when both VK and S.V.S. Raghavan left, was marked by this giant corporation losing its prestige and clout. We witnessed a re-bounce only during the boom years in the new millennium. The UPA I government gave high priority for power development. BHEL was ready to grab the opportunity and in quick time became once again a true leader in the public sector.

lous story by itself, worthy of a global case study. It marked a Hanuman jump over obsolete technology adopted by the exiting manufacturers, Hindustan Motors, Premier Automobiles and Standard Motors, who were also beset with low volumes of production and restrictions on capacity. VK describes the phenomenal care bestowed by him in selecting the collaborator, his top management team and in quietly adopting several of the salutary practices he had introduced in BHEL.

The advent of Maruti was a watershed in upgrading not just production technology in the engineering sector but in the introduction of a vast new work culture. These were later adapted to great profit by hundreds of manufacturing concerns.

Of course, there was no dearth of sceptics. I remember my discussions with a few captains of industry involved in the manufacture of automobiles and components in Madras. They were content with the volume of business offered by Telco (Tata Motors) and were not quite impressed with the promise of Maruti to raise production to 100,000 cars in quick time. But once VK established the capability to walk his talk, they rushed to register with Maruti as suppliers.

It was not just an engineering marvel; it was financial engineering at its very best. In the initial years, Maruti opened bookings requiring a deposit of Rs. 10,000 per car for registration and adopted a system of allotment that was transparent. The first bout of registrations saw the Company garnering Rs. 130 crore by way of deposits. The Company paid seven per cent interest to the depositors. The second bout garnered another Rs. 140 crore. The opening for Omni received an



SAIL.

Rs. 48,000, which is more than the initial price announced of Rs. 47,000. Thus, every buyer of Maruti can easily go for a replacement through the sheer savings involved!"

Maruti's success is a marvel-

equal sum and when Maruti announced bookings for its 1000 cc car there was a mad scramble. Many borrowed money from the banks to deposit the initial fee of Rs. 25,000

(Continued on page 10)

A story of three triumphs

(Continued from page 9)

to avail of profits on re-sale of such vehicles, if allotted. The bookings were for a massive 250,000! This helped the Company garner around Rs. 625 crore! The Company lent this money to other public sector undertakings at an interest of 15 per cent per annum. In the initial years, Maruti earned more income through this financial engineering than from car sales!

There was disbelief over the

ERRATA

The report by Venkatesh Krishmoorthy on the Lloyd's Road Walk (MM, September 1st) had several errors, namely:

1. Semmangudi was to be referred to as Pitamaha and not Pitamaga.

2. It was not G. Subramania Iyer who lived in Lloyd Lane but C. R. Srinivasan who owned the *Swadesamitran* from the 1940s.

3. The *dubash* brothers who owned *Lalitha Sadan* were Ramaswami and Lakshminarayana Iyer and not as reported.

4. The Dewan of Baroda was Sir V.T. Krishnamachari and not Krishnamacharya. His son was the noted Advocate-General V. K. Tiruvengatchari and not Tirumalacharya.

5. *Lalitha Sadan* was not just 18,000 sq ft. That was the built up area of the house.

Sriram V.

phenomenal success of Maruti under the stewardship of VK. The ability to raise production to 100,000, ensure of quality and reliability, and to assure low maintenance costs and comfortable driving had resulted from the country catching up with state-of-the-art technology and management. Maruti set the standard for production, sales and service.

VK's assuming charge as Chairman of SAIL in 1985 at the behest of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi posed him his most difficult challenge. In the case of BHEL and Maruti he had the advantage of building these from scratch and experimenting with many new concepts. At SAIL, a well-established company, it was not that simple. At the time he took charge, SAIL was suffering from low productivity, high costs, poor quality, little customer orientation and low morale of the workforce. VK describes in detail how he took great pains to interact with groups of the large workforce which, at that time, was in the region of 240,000, spread over several plants in different parts of India. He had to take tough decisions. The most sensitive of these related to his bold announcement that there would not be any overtime. Unlike in BHEL and Maruti, VK had to contend with a very large number of trade unions, which were very strong, especially in Durgapur.

In the five years he was at the helm at SAIL, he transformed the company into one that increased productivity manifold. There was a huge focus on quality, and customer orientation was brought about for the first time. I consider the transformation of SAIL as among the high points of VK's tenure at the helm of three major companies.

In *At the Helm – A Memoir*, V. Krishnamurthy describes in detail his approach to industrial organisation and management. For three decades, from the 1960s, VK strode the industrial map of India like a colossus. The country owes him a great deal for the enormous contribution he made during this period.

His very rich experience, was, again, put to good use by the UPA government. As Chairman of the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council, VK brought into focus the manufacturing sector.

His memoir provides deep insights into the evolution of several manufacturing practices. The most significant part of this relates to the evolution of the Indian work ethic. VK almost single-handedly established the Indian model of management, laying great emphasis on communication with the workforce and establishing the capability of the public sector chiefs to manage large enterprises effectively. – (Courtesy: *Industrial Economist*)



Till September 21: *Dussehra Festival* with Dollu Kunita folk performers – Raghavendra and troupe from Karnataka performing every day; display of *golu* dolls in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu houses; crafts and textiles from Karnataka; and Lambani craftswomen displaying their colourful embroidery (at DakshinaChitra).

Till September 30: Group exhibition by Karuppu Art Collective, a new chapter in the Madras metaphor. It is a collaborative effort of nine artists from the College of Fine Arts drawn from three generations (at DakshinaChitra).

Till September 30: Exhibition of paintings by Cynthia Prabhakar (at DakshinaChitra).

DakshinaChitra Workshops

for Adults
September 17-21: Mysore Painting

September 20: Terracotta Jewellery
for Children

September 20-21: *Painting a Dasavadharam* (the ten different incarnations of Lord Vishnu) *Golu set*: This two-day terracotta workshop for children is a part of Dussehra celebrations and will include a storytelling session on the ten different incarnations of Lord Vishnu and the characteristic of each incarnation. An unpainted *Dasavadharam* set will be given to each child to paint and take home to keep in the *Golu* display there. (at DakshinaChitra)

For further information contact: 98417 77779.

Answers to Quiz

1. Shah Rukh Khan; 2. Identify obsolete laws which hamper governance by creating avoidable confusion; 3. Sir Richard Attenborough; 4. It depicts and glorifies the acts of Indira Gandhi's assassins 30 years ago; 5. Nanjing; 6. Suresh Raina; 7. Dot Bharat (in Devanagiri); 8. 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana'; 9. Flipkart; 10. Nagpur.

* * *

11. Chengazhuneer Pillayar Koil Street and Mathala Narayanan Street; 12. R. Ashwin and Anaka Alankamony; 13. Maharaja Rao Shri Krishna Kumarsinhji Bhavsinhji Sahib Gohil; 14. Murray & Co. (named after Sir Victor Murray Coutts-Trotter); 15. Art-Deco; 16. 'Poochi' Srinivasa Iyengar; 17. Women's Indian Association; 18. Five; 19. Governor Charles Trevelyan's initiative towards providing Madras with adequate drinking water; 20. Triplicane CC.

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