

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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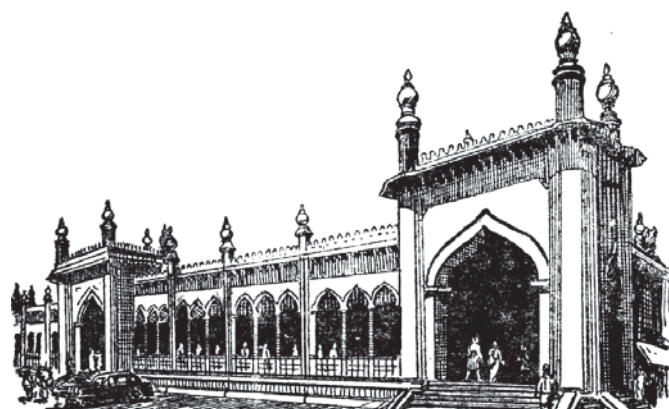
December 1-15, 2014

## INSIDE

- Short 'N' Snappy
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- New look at Alliance
- Christmas in Old Madras
- Forgotten building traditions



## Madras Landmarks – 50 years ago



## A monument to neglect, this memorial to a once-popular X'mas destination

We keep taking note of Heritage Week celebrated every year between November 19th and 25th. But does anything concrete emerge from it in Madras? Do we hear of anything accomplished, anything restored? Year after year, it is only promises of what's going to be done, no mention of anything done. All we find is continuing sagas of neglect, like those seen in reader K. Mohan Raj's pictures featured above taken during Heritage Week. He writes, "When parking my car at Central Station, I chanced upon this miniature of Moore Market, once famous for old books and

knick-knacks. The memorial replica, built where the original was destroyed in a major fire some three decades ago, is now in a sad state of neglect, with shrubs and weeds growing all around it, trees fallen by its side, and the structure itself badly damaged. It is incumbent on the authorities concerned to make it again the prominent memorial it was intended to be, so that it gets noticed by passers-by and travellers, giving them a glimpse into what was a happy slice of Madras history for nearly a hundred years – particularly at Christmas time."

## Whose water is it anyway?

(By A Special Correspondent)

It is just three months since we wrote about how Chennai is liberally sucking water out from the villages in its periphery. The matter has now assumed greater significance with the panchayat of a particular hamlet filing a petition in the High Court of Madras complaining about the indiscriminate drawing of water from wells within its limits, to serve the needs of the city. It is clear this cannot go on forever and that Chennai will have to

take its water conserving and rainwater harvesting schemes seriously in order to be a responsible global city.

The village that has taken on the task of challenging the metropolis is Solanur, near Tiruporur on the Old Mahabalipuram Road. The petitioner has complained that commercial entities are sinking 400ft bore wells in the vicinity. This has resulted in a severe lowering of the water table, thereby

affecting the supply for local needs. Other villages have begun imposing restrictions on entry of tankers and this has caused altercations between local residents and commercial water suppliers as well. Chennai needs 1100 million litres a day (MLD) of which Metrowater supplies only 700 MLD. The rest is made up by private bodies who extract water from the mofussil.

(Continued on page 7)

• One of the most remembered landmarks of Madras, this is an edifice that is still missed, particularly as the Christmas and New Year's season begins. It was the brainchild of Lt Col Sir George Moore, President of the Corporation of Madras in the 1890s. He was of the view that a market at a central location would solve two problems – get rid of the old and insanitary market off Broadway and provide a home for hawkers who sold their wares at a place called Guzili Bazaar between Memorial Hall and Central Station. The foundation stone for the building was laid by Sir George in August 1898 and the completed structure was thrown open to the public by Governor Sir Arthur Havelock in November 1900. The design was by R.E. Ellis and the contractor was A. Subramania Aiyar. The architecture was Indo-Saracenic and the market occupied 40,000 sq ft. It took its name from Sir George Moore. Located as it was between Central Station and Victoria Public Hall, it soon proved to be exceedingly popular.

The Corporation Handbook of 1950 gives us details of how the market looked and was divided: "Quadrangular in shape, with an open space in the centre laid out as a garden and with arcades all around, the market is a great convenience to the middle and upper classes of the population. It is well ventilated and kept in a clean condition. To the east and north of the Market are the supplementary structures called Hawkers' Stalls allotted to the vendors of worn-out and second-hand goods, who formerly vended their wares in what was known as the Guzili Bazar near the Memorial Hall."

But to get an idea of its true colour and chaos you need to read the account of veteran Tamil writer SaVi. This was part of a series that he wrote about popular landmarks of the city in the 1950s under the title Inge Poyirukkirigala (Have you been here?). Moore Market emerges from SaVi's pen as a place of hustle and bustle – there are second-hand goods shops for anything and everything, the central courtyard is filled with fancy goods that attracted women, bookshops abounded as did toy shops, and there was a section devoted to meat and to live birds to be sold as pets. Hawkers surrounded visitors and, unfortunately, so did pickpockets. There were palmists, acrobats and even a proselytiser or two, eager to make a conversion!

It is, however, as a mecca for second-hand books and gramophone plates that Moore Market is chiefly remembered today. It was a must on every tourist's itinerary as much as Calcutta's New (Hogg's) Market continues to remain one. Moore Market's heydays lasted till the 1970s. It thereafter began to go to seed though it remained filled with people and did roaring business.

Pressure on urban space began mounting in Madras in the 1980s. The railways wanted land for expansion. And when the market rather conveniently caught fire in 1985, it was doomed. The railways could have saved the structure and creatively reused it, but that was not to be. The building made way for a tasteless piece of high-rise that is in no way in harmony with what surrounds it. In front of this building, in a small patch of lawn, stands a scaled down model of Moore Market. It is a fine piece in its own way, but its maintenance is shocking, to say the least (see above left).

The vendors in Moore Market were hastily accommodated in a new building, which was built on land reclaimed by filling in the beautiful Lily Pond. But somehow it never caught on. The vendors vanished one by one and those that remain sell gimcrack goods. Strangely enough, Guzili Bazar has survived and continues to function from behind Central Station.

# It's a wholly illegal town – George Town

Early in November, the city woke up to read in the headlines that less than barely one per cent of the buildings in the George Town area are **not** in violation of building regulation rules. The very nonchalance with which the Corporation filed this report exposes what we have said all along – the civic body does not implement most of the excellent rules with which it is endowed.

It took a major fire in the George Town area in July this year for this skeleton to come tumbling out. The conflagration took place in an unauthorised commercial complex in Narayana Mudali Street, killing one person. A public interest litigation was filed thereafter in the High Court of Madras praying for directions to the Corporation on illegal buildings in the area. The High Court then set the civic body a three-month deadline for conducting a survey of buildings constructed in violation of regulations. It also said that these would have to be demolished within two months of submission of the survey report.

The report when submitted revealed that the Corporation had surveyed 11,304 buildings in 449 streets of the district, all of these thoroughfares being less than nine metres in width. A mere 72 structures were found to have complied with the regulations and been built on an approved plan. As for the rest, they have violated rules and are, therefore, plainly illegal. Even when it comes to the 72 buildings that are in conformity, the floor-wise layout has not been verified. This is because the Corporation does not have the approved plans, the excuse being that these structures were built ages ago. Surely the civic body of a city that claims to be world class ought to have digitised the plans in its custody?

That not being the case, the Corporation has said that it has asked the owners of these 72 buildings to submit the approved plan in their possession so that it can go through the same. In short, it is

By A Special Correspondent

up to the owner to provide the plan. If they do not, then the Corporation is helpless. Is that not a sorry state for a historic civic body to be in?

As for the illegal buildings, what is amazing is that the Corporation has chosen to remain silent while they were being constructed. An entire district has come up in violation of rules and the officers in charge have turned a blind eye. If this is not dereliction of duty, then what is? It is no wonder that the PIL petition claimed that the “officials of the Corporation have chosen to remain silent for reasons best known to themselves.” If electricity and water connections are to be issued to a building only after Corporation officials have confirmed construction according to the approved plan, how did these structures manage to get sanctions? The quality of life in the entire area has been destroyed and many lives continue to be at risk thanks to such official negligence.

Since January 2014, only 607 building owners of George Town have been asked to submit their planned layouts, only 162 structures have been issued seal notice, and a further 26 been asked to empty their premises prior to sealing. A mere 12 buildings have actually been sealed. A day after the report was submitted, a five-storey illegal building (it cannot get bigger than that) was sealed amid high drama.

In its report the Corporation has said it cannot do anything until it receives guidelines under Section 113-C of Tamil Nadu Town and Country Planning Act of 1971, which are to be framed by Government for exemption of illegal buildings completed prior to July 2007. That matter has been subjudice for quite some time now and is a convenient cover for what was constructed before that year. But what about illegal buildings built thereafter. Is it too much to expect of the Corporation to at least ensure that buildings constructed from now on will be according to plan?

## Tale of a new toilet



**The Man from Madras Musings** expresses his apologies upfront for putting up this photograph of a broken urinal. But what with all the Swachh Bharat talk in the air, MMM feels that the plight of this particular urinal has to be highlighted. (Chief – please do not reject. By publishing this you will be doing the nation a favour.)

The featured urinal is part of the modern series that is placed at random spots across the city. These are very simple and, if MMM may say so, rather elegant

however, then took matters in hand. Probably considering a toilet in its vicinity to be infra dig to its social status and preferring the garbage dump, it is continuing to throw all the refuse and litter in the area around the toilet. That naturally prevented the few who wanted to use it from even accessing it. They joined the others who continued using the canal anyway.

It was then that a few like MMM feebly protested to those who littered the place and suggested that they could probably put their rubbish into the bins that the Corporation had placed not much further away. This was not received well. One local tough said that the spot had been a dump from before the time the MRTS even made its appearance. As for the toilet, it was a mere Johnny Come Lately. So where was the question of shifting the rubbish? Complaints to the Corporation's local office helped to an extent – the garbage was cleared twice a day thereby keeping the toilet accessible.

quickly noticed and for reasons best known to the circus management, a rescue party set off on an elephant to get the camel back. If you knew Calcutta as well as MMM does, you would know that such a decision would be considered a very practical one there, it is something in the air that makes you feel that way. Anyway, to cut a long story short, the elephant and its riders soon managed to catch up with the dromedary. All should have been well had not the tusker, whether out of joy or relief or whatever else it was, trumpeted loudly, thereby terrifying the camel which shot off like a bullet from a gun. The rescue party had to follow in pursuit. All traffic came to a complete halt till the two animals met up once more. MMM is unable to recollect now, but he does vaguely think that schools declared a holiday. Or was that when the skylab fell unexpectedly from the sky? Calcutta was like that, full of unexpected developments.

### SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

structures – two partitions with swinging doors, and a urinal inside each cubicle. The doors feature a chubby child in the act of relieving itself, rather reminiscent of the Manneken Pis statue in Brussels. It is MMM's view that the Corporation has featured this image to make us all feel that Chennai is truly world class. It is also MMM's opinion that the picture is the closest that we will ever get to being an international city, at least as far as hygiene and civic sense is concerned.

But to get back to the photo. The toilet was installed next to the MRTS station that is close to a city district named after a business baron who was also into education and was given a knighthood and the Indian title of king. The station actually stands on the Buckingham Canal! MMM is not certain if the premises have toilets, but that would have never made any difference to the commuting public who happily relieved themselves in the canal. The area near the station is (but naturally) a garbage dump.

This is where the Corporation placed its urinals. For two days all went well. Some commuters actually used them while the rest continued their patronage of the canal. The neighbourhood,

That was until a local corporate technology giant found this an ideal spot to park its buses. These vehicles completely hid the toilet from view. Not that it mattered any more, for, by then, everyone was using the canal anyway. Matters remained thus till a couple of days ago, when MMM while driving by noticed that the buses had gone, but the garbage was back. And what else should MMM see but that one of the urinal pans was broken. Someone had obviously worked hard at it, for it is only with considerable force could the porcelain be broken this way. From here, as MMM envisages it, it is all steadily downhill. The pans will fall off, the doors will be stolen, and then the shell will remain, to be put to other use. It may even become a shelter for squatters.

But why worry? We have the canal anyway.

Where was she?

And so the tigress is back in her cage. And all's well in Vandalur.

All of which reminds MMM of the time when he was a Cherubic Child of Calcutta. A circus had come to town and one morning, the camel in the menagerie decided to take a tour of the city. Her disappearance was

Chennai, on the other hand, appeared to take the missing tigress in its stride. Perhaps our citizens felt that she would eventually go back home. But what transpired in between is what is intriguing MMM. Where exactly did the tigress go? What did she see? It is MMM's considered view that these were some of the places that she went to before deciding that the Zoo was the best place for a wild animal to be in – the metrorail works, the Kodambakkam flyover at peak traffic time, a political meeting or two and, of course, T Nagar's shopping area. These creatures are easily intimidated, at least that is what MMM is given to understand.

Not a polite city

Driving by in the Royapettah area, *The Man from Madras Musings* saw this sign. The parking wars are clearly just beginning.

– MMM





### Keeping it clean

As Englishmen put it pithily, "If you do not make it dirty, you need not clean!"

We have the ingrained habit of littering homes and surroundings blithely. Instead of returning them to the shopkeeper or re-use, we throw away priceless plastic bags and, worse still, burn them, risking our and others' health with the toxic fumes.

The Prime Minister has better business than wielding the broom. There are a host of officials and men paid to maintain the surroundings clean, starting from Panchayats to Corporations.

**N. Dharmeshwaran**  
Plot 21, Kumaran Nagar  
Guduvancherry 603 202

### Lord Muruga complex

Adyarists learn (from MM, November 16) of the sad demise of Algappa Algappan in New York.

With the blessings of Kanchi Paramacharyal he had developed the temple complex of Lord Muruga (Arupadai Veedu) on the sea shore of Besant Nagar, enlivening the Murugan Street of Kalakshethra Colony, a godforsaken lonely place, a decade ago.

The unique feature of this temple complex is that it has all the *shrines* dedicated to Lord Karthikeya, viz, Tiruchendur, Palani, Swamimalai, Tirupparrangundram, Tiruthani and Pazhamudhircholai.

**Bhilai Gopalan**  
1/6, Sankara Flats  
1, 6th Cross Street  
Adyar, Chennai 600 020

### Errors and omissions

● Reader Sriram V. points out that the correct answers for questions 12 and 18 in 'Quizzin' with Ram'nan' last fortnight are:

12. The *Ulsavar* is Lord Parthasarathy; the *moolavar* goes by the name of Venkatakrisnan.

18. E Conran Smith was not the first ICS Commissioner of the Corporation. When that post was created in 1919, it was H H Burkitt ICS who was appointed Commissioner. Conran Smith was Commissioner from 1928 to 1930.

● In the tribute to 'Mandolin' Shrinivas last fortnight, the headline should have read 'Was his best yet to come?' NOT 'Is'.

● In the material published last fortnight from the Cupertino High School monthly journal, the article and images for the feature titled 'Arangetram' were put together by Anisha Dangoria (a senior) and the cartoon, 'The Great Trips to Mars', was done by Joyce Ye (a junior).

# Is there any real growth in advertising in Chennai?

Sitting in New York on a cold and blustery autumnal evening, after wading through a 100-plus page Sunday edition of *The New York Times*, I swung into the sunny climes of Chennai on the Net and had my enjoyable fortnightly tryst with *MMM*, I later zeroed in on R.V. Rajan's concluding instalment on the growth of advertising in Madras.

Having had my fill of the advertising industry, courtesy *The Hindu*, in the four Metros over four decades during the same time as Rajan, the doyen of the advertising industry in Madras, I have some thoughts on why Madras/Chennai did not rise to the level of its peers in the West and North of India. Calcutta had its days of glory when it boasted the likes of Satyajit Ray (yes, indeed, he was Commercial Art Director at D.J. Keymer's), Subhas Sen, S.N. Bannerjee and Subrata Sen Gupta in one group pitted against the great Subhas Ghosal at the other end of the spectrum. Later, when Calcutta's glory faded, even Ghosal had to move to Bombay which quickly established its credentials as the Mecca of Indian advertising. Delhi was constantly breathing down its back as a close second. Came a stage when younger leading lights, like Dilip Sen and Tara Sinha, found greener pastures in Delhi. Madras too had its great moments when R.K. Swamy, the enfant terrible of Indian advertising, moved out of J. Walter Thompson and, through his own outfit, added a new dimension to corporate/institutional advertising and public sector PR print campaigns. At one stage, he sent tremors down the foundation of JWT in Chennai.

Many years later, the young and dynamic Rajan rose like a Phoenix from the chawls of Mumbai and taught the world what a Madras lad could do if given an opportunity to blossom in this corporate jungle. After his peregrinations through the country in the early part of his career in advertising, Rajan was bitten by the entrepreneurial bug and he decided to pitch his tent in Chennai. Anugrah Marketing blazed a new trail in Rural Advertising and caught Mumbai napping! It caused even the CEO of India's largest independent media agency, Madison, Mumbai, to forge an alliance with Rajan and piggy-ride on his rural expertise!

Apart from these occasional flashes in the pan, it needs to be reluctantly admitted that advertising agencies in Madras/Chennai have not been able to make it to the big league. They themselves are not responsible for this strange phenomenon, given the fact that there has always been a wealth of creative talent, originality and imagination as is revealed in the output in the various arms of the media and in brand development and corporate image building exercises.

One of the main reasons for this indifferent growth is that the handful of large industrial groups that rule the advertising

scenario in Chennai/Madras have been traditionally very conservative and resorted to advertising which was entirely need-based. Not for them the trappings of an impactful campaign burst and bombastic image-building exercises which their competitors in Bombay and Delhi excelled in, much to the delight of their advertising agencies!

Realising that their bristling talents were kept under a bushel and not allowed to see the light, many adventurous advertising professionals have been migrating from Madras/Chennai to Bombay and Delhi where their flamboyance found its niche! The brain drain in advertising has been moving further even into other centres like Dubai and Muscat, as I discovered when running into some of them during my own business tours! On another occasion, I had the pleasant experience of being accosted by a smart executive at one of our (*The Hindu*) presentations to an agency in Bombay who smilingly remarked: "Sir, perhaps you do not remember me, I had attended one of your lectures at the advertising course conducted by Advertising Club, Madras." When queried as to why she chose to move to Bombay, she mentioned that she was not encouraged to join any of the local agencies when she approached them!

The increasing numbers of multinational advertising agencies have been quick to identify India as the new powerhouse of growth in Asia, next only to China. They swoop down on Mumbai or Delhi but content themselves with having just a liaison office in Chennai whose importance they realise but they know that these very branches fall back on their main offices in the North or West for their various projects and exercises. To add insult to injury, many of the Chennai-based clients who pick on these global agencies insist that their senior officials have to come down to Chennai to make presentations, work out strategies, provide avant garde ideas on brand activation programmes, and spell out media selection!

Within their restricted ambit, the Chennai-based agencies have been churning out remarkable work in some of the leading categories like real estate, education and retail. Unfortunately, the appropriations made available to these advertising agencies are nowhere near the levels prevailing in Mumbai or Delhi, though in terms of wealth of talent they are on par!

No wonder Rajan, in his concluding remarks, has expressed the hope that "the Chennai advertising world will soon bounce back to its glorious past!" A vision or a mirage?

V. Kalidas  
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### The student from Besant Theosophical School

Dr. A. Alagappan (MM, November 16th) was a student of the Besant Theosophical School. He wrote at length in his contribution to the book *South of the Adyar River*, compiled by me and K. Ravi Menon in 2007. His senior, Vasant Nilakanta, now 93 years old, brother of Radha Burnier, wrote in his article about Dr. Alagappan, "There was one student, Alagappan, who ignored all distractions and achieved a very high standard of academic excellence." Radha passed out of the school in 1939, a year earlier than him.

Alagappan had joined BTS in June 1937 and was a hostel student throughout his stay. He later graduated from Presidency College with a B.A. (Hons) first class, first rank (1945). He was a Candeth medallist and was automatically awarded the M.A. He became a Barrister-at-Law (Middle Temple, 1949), garplus M.Sc. (Econ) London University (1951) and his Ph.D., with a thesis on Article

101 of the U.N. Charter from New York University (1966).

Dr. Alagappan was a Kasturi Iyengar Scholar and was on the editorial staff of *The Hindu* (1947-49), Assistant Editor, *The Bharat*, Bombay (1951-52), and Research Officer with The Association of Trade and Industry, Bombay (1952-53). Dr. Alagappan joined the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East in Bangkok (1953) and was transferred to UN HQ in New York in 1961. He became the Head of the Water Resources Branch and Mineral Resources Branch. He retired in 1983.

In his contribution to *South of the Adyar River*, Dr. Alagappan wrote:

"I have always thanked God for placing me in BTS during my formative years. We had excellent role models to draw upon. Their idealism and internationalism taught us a great deal. Our School was shaped and moulded by Rukmini Devi day in and day out. She made it

into a great centre of arts and culture. Our Principal, Sankara Menon, was a towering personality. The adjacent Theosophical Society and its grounds were a great place to visit, I used to love to go and see the Banyan Tree, one of the largest in the world...

"Kanchi Paramachariar, who was on a walking tour at Gulbarga, met me and in the course of conversation said that if the six temples of Lord Murugan, representing the six battle houses, were all assembled in one complex, devotees would be able to worship them all at the same time in the same place. He smiled and asked me to undertake the construction of the project. He also said that he would secure the needed land for the project. At his request, the Government of Tamil Nadu headed by M.G.R. allocated 26 grounds of prime land in Besant Nagar. During the course of twenty years all six temples in stone have been built...

"Prof. Joanne Punzo Wag-

horne, Syracuse University, in her book *Diaspora of the Gods: Modern Hindu Temple in an Urban Middle Class World* (Oxford University Press, 2004), drew special attention to the Palamudirsolai temple in the Arupadai Veedu Temple complex. Here for the first time Jyothi Shakti Vel has become Swaroopa Vel. A radiant Balammbika is at the head of the Vel. Murugan's sister Saravanabhavayai has taken form at the request of Lord Agastaya and Lord Nandi Deva to directly bestow Anugraha to devotees in the forthcoming difficult years of Kali Yuga."

Dr. Alagappan and his family have built at Mayiladuparai, between Kundrakudi and Pillaiarpatti, two beautiful stone temples; one of these is for Saravanabhavayai in the new form as Swaroopa Vel and the other, a Saraswati temple, is in honour of Rm. Alagappa Chettiar, the great educationist.

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## Century-old Alliance gets a new look

The century-old Tamil book publishing house, Alliance Company, demolished its old home, where it had been doing business for over a hundred years, and replaced it with a new building. But that is not my focus; what it has done with much of the past is.

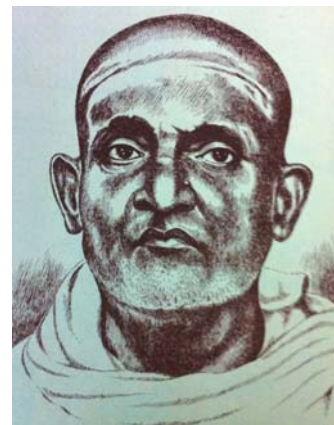
None of the elegant wooden pillars which were seen in the old book house has been destroyed or thrown out. They have been meticulously cleaned and chemically treated so that they can survive for many more years. Similarly, the floral design of two of the ceilings has been cleaned and retained in the new showroom. "I do not want to discard them, just because they were old. I would like to preserve them not only from the point of view of architectural beauty, but also to maintain the heritage left behind by my grandfather Kuppusamy Iyer," says Srinivasan, the third generation owner of the bookshop. The glistening pillars, as well as the ornamental flower design, add old world charm to the new building.

Several heritage pieces too have been utilised in the new building. Srinivasan points out a number of articles which have sentimental value to him and his family and which have found a place in the showroom. Conspicuous among them are the rosewood book-rack gifted by the Tamil scholar P.Sri and the almira given by the novelist 'Anuthama', both freshly polished. Srinivasan says, "These are witnesses to the love, affection and regard these writers had for my grandfather!"

Srinivasan had used the puja stand of his grandmother Meenakshi Ammal innovatively. He has made a stand of similar design and attached it below the old one, upside-down! It looks a different ornamental stand with identical curves both on top and below!

Even now, the metal blue nameboard of the company made in 1910 hangs at the entrance and Srinivasan is in no mood to change it to a modern one.

The old wall clock, the 'Sardar' brand cycle lamp, paperweight, black leather purse, ink and pen stand, have been showcased in the main hall. "I have not discarded the racks too that we bought in 1946. After a couple of coats of varnish, look



The founder V. Kuppusamy Iyer.

at their majesty! They remind me every moment of our old bookshop and serve as the symbol of our continuity in the same premises," says Srinivasan.

Narrating the story of Alliances, Srinivasan relates how V. Kuppusamy Iyer, who migrated from Komal, a village in Tanjore district in 1896, opened General Supplies Company to sell stationery items.

His patriotic fervour got him publishing Tamil books, then considered a risky business. His monthly journal *Viveka Bodhini* (1908) touched a circulation of nearly 30,000 copies and covered a variety of subjects, besides short stories. Many budding writers used it as a stepping stone for their writing careers. Writer Lakshmi, who needed money to continue her medical studies, sought Kuppusamy Iyer's help to bring out a book of her short sto-

ries. He agreed and the royalties helped her financially. Similar stories are a legion.

In the 1930s, when Alliance was in the red, Rajaji provided Kuppusamy Iyer with the opportunity to publish his books, giving him the copyright free. Alliance turned the corner. This was followed by publication of books of Ta.Na. Kumarasamy. A huge government order for books to be sent to Tamil soldiers was another chance to swell the coffers of Alliance. Later, in a difficult situation, Cho gave the rights of his books to Alliance and there has been no looking back.

● by  
**Charukesi**

In 1934, Subhas Chandra Bose's two books, *Pudhu Vazhi* and *Ilaigan Kanavu*, which were banned by the British, played a role in a large number of Tamil youth joining Netaji's INA. The letter signed by Subhas Bose authorising Alliance to publish these books is still preserved carefully by Srinivasan.

Alliance's record of publishing the translations of Tagore, Bankim Chandra, Sarat Chandra, V.S. Khandekar (from a brilliant translation by Ka.Sri.Sri) and other popular novelists of Bengal and Maharashtra is un-

paralleled. Later, books by SVV, Devan, Marina, B.S. Ramaiah, Ki.Va.Ja., Anuthama and Ra.Ki. Rangarajan came out and the finances of the company got stabilised. Srinivasan has organised a gallery of pictures of well-known Tamil writers in the main hall of the building. "It is to remind me that they were the ones behind the success of Alliance!"

"Mahatma Gandhi visited our stall during a visit to Chennai," says Srinivasan. "Next to our building, a meeting that helped found Congress was held and we have installed a slab at the entrance. This contains important landmarks of Alliance!" he adds.

Well-known critic SVK's 'Know Your Thyagaraja' series and his father and novelist-writer SVV's collections of humour articles are some of the English language publications of Alliance Company. "We propose to bring out Bharanidharan's father T.S. Seshachalam's *Kambaramayana Araiichi*, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri's *En Ilamaikala Ninaivugal* and *Enathu Vazhakaiyin Amsangal*, and Veer Savarkar's *Hindu Samrajyam*, says Srinivasan about future plans. He signs off relating the story of Alliance's logo.

"The logo for Alliance Company was a suggestion by none other



Inside Alliance – the old wooden pillars gleaming afresh, the rosewood book-rack, the old entrance door to the owner's office room, amongst other features, are all part of the refurbished main hall.

than Ramana Maharishi," says Srinivasan. Kuppusamy Iyer had paid a visit to Ramanashram during the Deepam and met Ramana Maharishi. Ramana asked him, "Did you see the Deepam on the Arunachala Mountain?" "Yes, I did see," replied Iyer. "What did you understand from it?" was the next question from the sage. Kuppusamy Iyer could not reply. Ramana smilingly said, "Go home. You will understand!"

Iyer returned to Chennai and called on Ta.Na. Kumarasamy and narrated the conversation he had with the Maharishi. "Oh, he was referring to your idea of preparing a logo for your book publishing company. He had drawn your attention to the lamp on the top of the mountain meaning *Arive Vilakku* – Knowledge is Light. Now, go ahead and prepare your logo with a lamp on the hill and *Arive Vilakku* on the base," advised TNK.

Moore Market was the other place where you felt the X'mas spirit. Thanks to Universal Book

## Christmas in old Madras

Soon it will be Christmas and memories of old Madras during X'mas come flooding. What stands out in my memory is the countdown display put up at lovely old Spencer's. 25 days to X'mas, 24 days to X'mas ... the display would read as the time shortened. It wasn't as if you couldn't do the math yourself, but somehow this display captured your imagination and made you look out for it. Once past the beautiful driveway leading to Spencer's, you alighted at the portico leaving behind the then busy Mount Road traffic and walked past the pharmacy (where Polio drops would be administered) and cafe and entered a different world altogether. The store would wear a very Christmassy look and was well stocked with plum cakes, chocolates, streamers, gifts and baubles that anyone celebrating Christmas would need.

House, Moore Market used to be a regular stop for me, going with doctors in the family who would shop for medical textbooks. You could walk through its corridors and shop for books, old and new, clothing for adults and infants, footwear, bags, birds to keep as pets, tools and just about anything. What a landmark we have lost!

As for X'mas and New Year cards, the joy of receiving handwritten greeting cards from loved ones and sending them likewise was unrivalled. Lists of friends were drawn up and hardly anyone was taken off the list unless, of course, he had passed away. There were Higginbotham's, CLS (Christian Literature Society) and ELS (Evangelical Literature Service) where you could buy cards much before Side Ef-

● by  
**Sudha Umashanker**

fects in Eldorado, Landmark and the Archies' stores set up shop. Even pavements opposite the High Court and Purasawalkam sold cards that were easy on the pocket. Some cards here were even recycled only with the message on the inside replaced.

To reach overseas friends and family in time, people would go to the main post offices to weigh and have stamped their gifts and cards. With almost a dozen pen pals, this was a fun thing to do – choosing light weight but typically Indian gifts that could be easily mailed in those days before the private couriers.

As for bakeries, Mount Road had McRenett's, Bosotto's and Universal Bakery, Purasawalkam, home to many Anglo-Indians, had many others. (I don't remember having seen the Bangalore Iyengar Bakery back then.) Whitefield in Purasawalkam was from where our bread was home-delivered by a cyclist with a tin box on the carrier and what a scramble there would be for that crisp, square crust decorating the top. Back then, bread was part of a hospital diet and something that people usually ate when they were sick. Sliced bread hadn't become so commonplace and some of us had bread slicing machines at home to do the job. Purasawalkam was also full of footwear shops, like Bellino, and shops selling readymade garments for a complete Christmas shopping experience.

Those of us who went to convent schools learnt a lot of Christmas carols (at Church

Park Convent from no less a maestro than Handel Manuel). 'O come all ye faithful', 'Little Jesus sweetly sleep', 'Silent night', 'Christmas is coming, the geese are getting fat, please put a penny in the old man's hat', 'Jingle Bells', the list is long. There would be a clamour to hold and turn the page for Mr. Manuel who could sight read. His fingers would fly over the piano and he would almost conduct an orchestra as he signalled with a wave of the hand or a nod of the head making the class a lively experience. Younger students often visited the crib that was set up in the Assembly Hall and remained completely charmed by it.

Clubs like the Madras Gymkhana Club had a Children's Xmas Party (they still do), fancy dress contests, the Boxing Day Dance, Carols Night (for which event there was and is a strict dress code and members didn't complain!) and the New Year's Eve party which were all looked forward to. Gifts would be bought, wrapped, labelled and sent to the Club office in advance – to be distributed by Santa Claus who arrived minus his reindeer and sleigh but in modern transport. A merry-go-round, Punch and Judy, besides games like coconut shy and ring throwing upped the fun quotient.

There weren't too many hotels advertising bashes for New Year's Eve, so the ones at the clubs were looked forward to. Tamil New Year was in April (sic), so Hindu temples weren't as busy as they are now on January 1st.

Elsewhere, organisations like the Madras Musical Association would sing carols in the run-up to Christmas. Small groups of local residents would go around singing in different localities and collect money. Christmas was also the time for charity and to remember organisations like the Friend-in-Need Society. Churches like the St. George's Cathedral, St Mary's Church and other churches of a certain vintage twinkled as they were lit up colourfully and had well-attended services.

Today, as elsewhere in the world, X'mas has become somewhat commercial, and Madras has become overcrowded, more pan-Indian (we are not all Mad-rasi, we are all *padosi*), but somehow the spirit of the festival and memories of Christmas in a Madras of times past still remain fresh.



## Christ on the Cross – as Nature sees it

Not from Madras... but a contribution for the Christmas Season from K.V.S. Krishna's photo album is the picture above. He narrates:

This bit from a Liana woody creeper, moulded by nature, resembles Jesus Christ on the Cross. The forest undergrowth at Pakenam division at Carady Goody Estate, Vandiperiyar, Kerala, where I worked was being cleared to plant Cardamom around 1973 when this rather tall and intricately entwined creeper with two feet long beans was spotted by me and stirred my imagination with its natural grace and structure. I felt called to work with it to produce the symbol that has captured the hearts of people for centuries, a symbol of Jesus Christ's sacrifice to redeem mankind. Motivated and energised by what I saw, I got down to debarking and polishing the creeper with transparent varnish dipped in turmeric. This was a quick process for nature had done all the hard work, and all that was required of me was to bring forth its majestic beauty.

I gifted the creeper to the Carady Goody Tea Estate Church in 1975. The cross was dedicated to A.V.T. Thomas, founder of AVT Company, and his son J. Thomas. Tea prunings also can offer pieces of art that call us to respond to nature's creativity. I had done more than a hundred of them.

K.V.S. Krishna  
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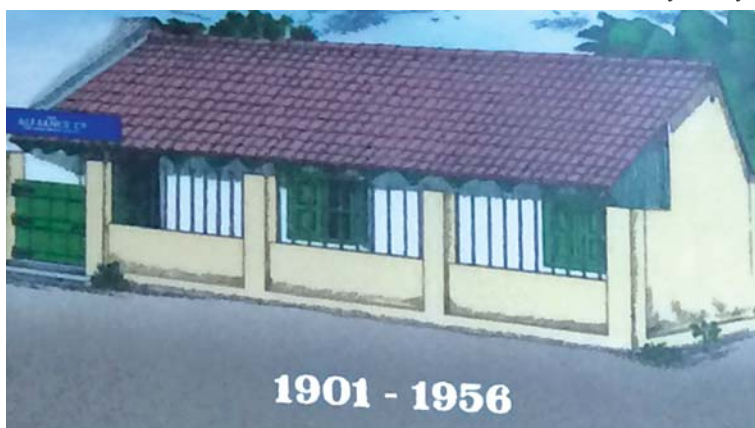
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The Alliance home – yesterday and today.



1901 - 1956



1956 - 2011



# Losing out on a paid housemanship

(Continued from last fortnight)

A very significant event in January 1946 was Mahatma Gandhi's visit to South India. He stayed in the Hindi Prachar Sabha in Madras, and Madras Medical College was assigned the task of looking after the sanitation arrangements in the entire campus, including his apartment, the grounds where he conducted his prayer meetings, and establishments such as stalls etc. As the Class Representative of the Final Year batch, I was chosen to be the deputy leader, the chief being a prominent doctor. The MMC team was specially complimented for its work.

\* \* \*

In March, Balakrishna Shetty and S.V.K.S. Thangarajan contested for the post of Secretary of the Association. Balakrishna Shetty was very popular with the students, being a very jovial person and a sportsman. There was hectic campaigning by the supporters of both of them. For some reason, the student electors had a prejudice against a girl who campaigned for Balakrishna Shetty and he lost by a narrow margin. But the perfect gentleman that he was, he not only accepted his defeat gracefully, but also arranged a tea party to felicitate Thangarajan. Such was the camaraderie in those days, there was not a trace of hard feelings or personal animosity. In fact, Balakrishna Shetty worked very hard for the success of ensuing college functions even though Thangarajan was the elected Secretary.

The graduates' reception was held in August and preparations for the entertainment went on for three weeks. I was in charge of the orchestra. The orchestra accompanied me on the song *Chupana*, which was from a recording of Pankaj Mullick. On the morning of the function I had a laryngeal problem and suffered from hoarseness of voice. I was not sure whether I could sing at the function. Dr. Leelavathy, Assistant to Dr. P.V. Cherian, Head of the E.N.T. Department, put me on tincture benzoin inhalations and 'Surets' throat pastilles. Thangarajan was also

concerned about my problem and about two hours before the function he suggested that "a small dose of brandy" would be of help in clearing the throat. So we went to Spencer's at Central Station and had a drink. The inhalations, 'Surets' and the 'stimulant' all came to my rescue and the song was a hit.

The instrumental combine in the orchestra comprised *veenas*, violins, *sitar* and *bulbul-thara*, apart from the harmonium as the lead and played by my classmate G.V. Ramani. GVR was an expert on the instrument and he had the distinction of being part of the orchestra in the film *Satyavan Savitri* when it was filmed in Calcutta. M.S. Subbulakshmi had acted as Narada and Shante Apte, a very famous actress of the time, as Savitri. A

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● **Madras Medical College, 73 years ago – as recalled by Dr. S. Ramaswamy, Professor of Anatomy (Retd). He was a 1941 batch student of MMC.**

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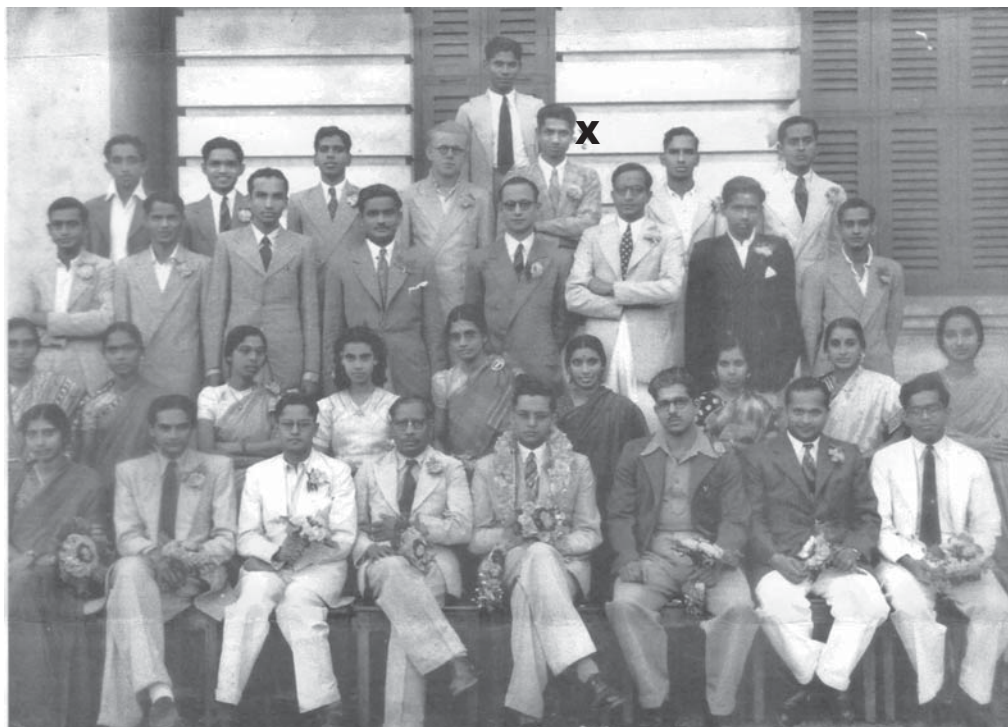
prominent Telugu actor had played the role of Satyavan.

It was customary those days for the participants in the entertainment programme and office-bearers of the Association to go on a day's trip to Ennore on a convenient day soon after the function and enjoy the day out as reward for their contribution in making the event a success.

\* \* \*

A cricket tournament open to the three Government Medical Colleges was to be held in late September in Vizagapatnam. I was also invited to go with the College team but was very reluctant to undertake the trip as I had spent considerable time on the training of the orchestra, three hours from 4 pm to 7 pm every day for nearly three weeks and had to make up for the lost time as the examinations in the major subjects of Medicine, Surgery and Midwifery were due in the first week of December. In order to "escape" from the situation, I insisted on being the one-down batsman. Surprisingly the captain agreed. But, eventually, I decided to stay back.

The night the team left for Vizag, I found, after I had had a snack, that I was in discomfort, suffering from pain in the lower part of the abdomen on the



The ward "breakup" social of the Graduating Class, March 1947. Chief guest Dr. U. Mohan Rao. (X) S. Ramaswamy

right side. I thought all the signs and symptoms indicated appendicitis. M.S. Ramakrishnan, my classmate and room-mate in the I.O.A., telephoned the General Hospital for an ambulance and accompanied me, reaching the hospital around 9 p.m. Dr. Sathasivam, Assistant to Major

(very painful) every 6 hours. The long acting Procaine Penicillin had not been developed at the time. I recovered from the fever quickly but had a relapse and so my discharge was delayed further. Ultimately, I had to remain in hospital for nearly three weeks, being discharged only in mid-October. I returned to the I.O.A. but was advised rest for at least fifteen days more and to avoid travelling by public transport. But there was no option to academic classes and ward postings. Dr. K.S. Sanjivi came to my rescue, picking me up in his car every morning and dropping me in the college for nearly a fortnight, till I became fit again.

Meanwhile, a fine arts section of the Association was mooted and I was the unanimous choice for Arts Secretary. But I had to decline as I felt I had lost considerable time at the hospital.

\* \* \*

Having lost three weeks' time in the hospital, it was very strenuous preparing for the exams, and so I was advised to postpone my appearance to the April 1947 examinations. But considering that I had been receiving aid (exemption from fees and supply of essential books right from 1942 as my brother was in the army and I was his dependent undergoing the course), I took the risk of appearing in December hoping that I could clear at least two subjects and confident that, if I did fail in one I could handle it successfully in April while still being eligible for exemption from college fees and examination fees, the rules permitting one failure for continuation of the facilities. I got through Obstetrics and Gynaecology, then called Midwifery, with high marks and passed in Medicine, but went down in Surgery.

Dr. Thampan from Stanley

Medical College was the 'external' examiner and he was said to be quite tough with M.M.C. students. Dr. Thomas was the 'internal' examiner and luckily for me it was his turn to examine me in the Obstetrics part. He was very happy with my performance and when the external examiner started questioning me, Dr. Thomas quietly said, "I have examined him, let him go" – this was the same Dr. Thomas whom I had assisted during the caesarean section in March!

In Surgery, Dr. Kanagasabesan examined me in the 'long case' which was the major part of the practical clinical examination. I was hoping I would not get an orthopaedics case for the long case, but it turned out to be a case of tuberculosis of the hip joint that I was allotted.

I fumbled badly, though I could satisfy the other examiner in the 'short cases'. I did fairly well in the operative surgery practical and the viva voce in the afternoon. Dr. Sheppard was the viva voce examiner. But ultimately I did not get through.

At the Gynaecology oral in the morning, the examiners had heard that I had done very well in the Obstetrics part and after a few questions the external examiner asked me, "What are the contents of the umbilical cord?" I gave a very confident answer: "Two umbilical arteries, one umbilical vein and Wharton's jelly." She asked me what was Wharton's jelly but I couldn't get the correct answer at the moment and the examiner said "Get out", but not too harshly! I thought that was it and came out of the examination venue quite diffident. But outside, Dr. E. V. Kalyani said I had done very well! And the marks did match her statement, I saw later.

(Continued on page 8)

**Our Quizmaster V.V. Ramanan is on a busman's holiday. His column will resume on his return.**

# Forgetting our building traditions?

*Building Sense – Beyond the Green Facade of Sustainable Habitat*, published by the Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, is a comprehensive, well-researched study that not only lists and explains the various 'green' statutes that the government has put in place for the building industry but also describes how lack of political will in implementing these laws, plus lackadaisical enforcement and monitoring, has resulted in making a mockery of the mandatory norms that are supposed to reduce the harmful environmental impact of inappropriate design in the construction sector.

We tend to ape the West in everything, including building design, without reference to its appropriateness for our tropical climate and our resource constraints. In the name of modernity, it has become fashionable to build malls and office blocks with liberal use of glass, which shuts off natural ventilation of the kind that our indigenous building traditions specialised in, resulting in the need for air-conditioning which, in turn, guzzles energy. In order to use air-conditioning, buildings need insulation. With insulation norms written into the guidelines for getting a 'green' rating from the authorities, construction design which does not call for insulation, becomes anomalously 'substandard'.

Glass leads to heat ingress (in our hot and humid climate), plus glare. Using artificial lighting and blinds further increases energy use and costs (taking into account not only running costs but also the energy guzzling processes in the manufacture of these components, compared to traditional materials like brick and wood). Besides, working under artificial lighting and poor ventilation causes depression and psychological disorders, as medical studies have confirmed. So why are we abandoning the wisdom that is embedded in our own building traditions that included *jaalis*, *jarokas* and courtyards? Vitrified tiles are highly energy intensive; why are they seen as a 'fashion statement' and something to flaunt?

Compressed bricks are eco-friendly and stronger than ordinary bricks. Builders and buyers do not take such facts into account, partly because there is little information available in the public domain about green measures, environmental costs and paybacks, not to mention the lack of coordination between the different ministries (urban affairs, environment,

town planning). The Minister of Environment does not even have details of buildings and township projects that have got environmental clearance, the book points out.

A few architects have used innovative designs (vernacular architecture, based on Laurie Baker's designs, has shown that it is possible to build very aesthetic and beautiful edifices such as the offices of the CIEDS collective and *Vimochana* in East Bangalore, with plenty of natural lighting and cool terracotta roofing using indigenous materials). Dwellings constructed for the tsunami survivors in Tamil Nadu are another example of innovative design that minimises energy use. Auroville, likewise, offers

● by  
**Sakuntala Narasimhan**

examples of innovative building design that is cost-effective, sustainable, and pleasant to live in, with minimal environmental impact.

The ECBC (Energy Conservation Building Code) does not promote non-AC construction for large commercial buildings. This does not make sense. Buildings that meet the specified norms for energy saving get rewarded in the form of sanction for extra built-up area, fast track clearance, etc. but in the absence of monitoring and

checking that the norms spelt out in the rules, and the pre-certification promises have actually been adhered to by the building, such sops end up rewarding defaulters; imposing a fine or penalty becomes ineffective because once the construction is over, the damage in terms of environmental destruction is already done. (In contrast, when a federal building in Ohio failed to meet standards, a media expose led to a \$5 million law suit against the greening agency.)

Having an Environment Protection Act (passed in 1986), National Habitat Standards, a National Climate Action Plan, a National Green Tribunal, and a Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) becomes pointless if sustainable practices in construction are not enforced, particularly since a whopping 10 per cent of India's GDP goes into construction. The developer can "promise the moon and do nothing," as the report says, once he has got the pre-clearance sanction.

This year's (2014-15) budget mentioned a target of 100 'smart' cities but the way the building industry is booming without adequate checks on unsustainable design and processes, we are surely headed towards a crisis. Poor monitoring also results in builders showing compliance in the proposals they submit but quietly violat-



Abacus School, Chennai, the work of Laurie Baker, building in the traditional way.

ing the sanctioned plan. Since the environmental impact assessment rules apply only to construction exceeding 20,000 sq.m. one builder in Delhi split his proposal into two adjacent plans, each of 19,000 sq.m. and went on to combine the two plans while actually building.

The law requiring periodic reporting of energy consumption (to prove compliance with green norms) is not enforced. In the case of the Lavasa Project in Maharashtra, the mandatory public hearing and assessment of its environmental impact report were bypassed. The government's enforcement authorities, then, are as culpable as builders who cut corners in their pursuit of profits.

Gated communities, the report points out, are extremely inappropriate on several counts – they worsen urban sprawl, flout the guidelines for mixed residential complexes by promoting ghettos, increase commuting times, and increase service delivery costs (water, electricity, roads) over longer distances compared to community blocks within the city. And yet they proliferate.

Waste generated during construction and demolition is another aspect that has received no attention, either from the law-makers or from the builders. Colossal amounts of waste get dumped, sometimes into water bodies (as in Mumbai, where mangroves were flattened with rubble to develop a golf course in Andheri). Debris can also be recycled to reduce the environmental burden of construction. If Singapore recycles 98 per cent of its demolition waste, why can't we?

Discussions about construction invariably assume that the focus is only on middle and upper income strata. No thought has been given to the requirements of the low-income groups and the need for designing dwelling spaces that combine comfort and safety with low monetary as well as real costs.

Every middle class citizen who plans to own a dwelling should become aware of the points raised by this book about how we can 'green' our houses and in the process reach for a better quality of life. (Courtesy: Grassroots)

## Whose water is it anyway?

(Continued from page 1)

With so many buildings coming up all over the city, the demand for water has skyrocketed. This has resulted in more and more borewells being installed, each of increasing depth, to tap water that is fast receding. Many of the housing complexes have more than one borewell and some of these are drying up within one or two years of drilling – an indication of how fast we are using up the water. These complexes have, in turn, begun depending on water tankers, which in turn are bringing in water from wells dug further away. What is clear is that this is a vicious cycle that we would do well to get out of.

The key to that rests with the CMDA, the Corporation and Metrowater. Firstly, they need to begin charging buildings based on water consumption, and this has to be done through the installation of water meters. Secondly, it is time

that the Government cracked the whip on rainwater harvesting. According to a recent survey, over 100,000 Government-maintained structures are without any rainwater harvesting features. In 2004, it was this same regime in power that made a determined and highly commendable effort to get rainwater harvesting implemented in every building. The then Chief Minister appealed to citizens through the electronic media and it paid rich dividends. The Kapaleeswarar Temple tank filled up in the monsoons that followed and groundwater was recharged in most localities in Chennai.

However, that practice has now fallen into disuse. For a start, apart from the Kapaleeswarar Temple tank, most others in the city have gone dry or are having very little water. Most buildings are not ensuring that soak pits and drain chutes are kept clear to divert rainwater to underground sumps. It is doubtful whether buildings that

were constructed after 2007 have even implemented rainwater harvesting. Certainly, the CMDA and Corporation authorities are not attending to this with the diligence that it requires. Public structures, such as flyovers and bridges, certainly do not have any such scheme in place, as is evident from the way run-offs simply stagnate at either end.

Given the way the city is expanding, conserving rainwater appears to be the only long-term solution. Certainly, the freedom with which we have leaned on the surrounding areas will soon be heavily restricted. If Chennai is not to have water wars with its neighbours, it will have to learn how to conserve what nature offers by way of rain.

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# D.K. Pattammal & other masters remembered

Three years ago, the Department of Posts had announced the issue of a set of four commemorative stamps on Indian musicians, including D.K. Pattammal. The issue did not come through. The announcement was repeated the next year, in 2013, adding four more names to the list. Again, there was no issue. Therefore, when the Department included the same list in this year's calendar, without indicating the date, philatelists kept their fingers crossed. Mercifully, the stamps came out on September 3, 2014.

The Department has in the past issued multiple stamps on several themes; however, this is the first time it issued a set of eight stamps on musicians. (The last issue of a set on musicians was on December 3, 2010 – on T.N. Rajarathnam Pillai, T. Balasaraswati and Veena Dhanammal.)

The eight stamps commemorate legends Ali Akbar Khan, Bhimsen Joshi, D.K. Pattammal, Gangubai Hangal, Kumar Gandharva, Mallikarjun Mansur, Ravi Shankar and Vilayat Khan. The main release function was held at *Rashtrapati Bhavan*, New Delhi, where the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, released the stamps. Paying tribute to the eight great music maestros, he said that they not only achieved personal perfection but also made extraordinary contributions, in their respective fields, to the development and evolution of the schools of music in which their talents were nurtured and honed. Their contribution and its enrichment of our cultural heritage were inestimable, and their names would be mentioned with great reverence and their music cherished by connoisseurs of Indian music for generations to come. He described the music of India in all its diversity as one of the greatest gifts to human civilisation. Functions were also held the same evening in Chennai, Bengaluru, Visakhapatnam and Mumbai. In Chennai the function commenced with an invocation by Tanujasree, great-granddaughter of D.K. Pattammal. DKP was the only Carnatic musician among the eight musicians whose stamps were released that day. Nithyasree Mahadevan, grand-daughter of DKP, was a special invitee. The function was followed by a music concert by Vijay Siva, disciple of the late vidwan D.K. Jayaraman, brother and disciple of Pattammal. (Courtesy: *Sruti*)



## Last days at MMC

(Continued from page 6)

The failure in Surgery did not deter me and I put in the maximum effort to gain as much knowledge as possible in the subject. When classes commenced in January 1947. Col. Sangham Lal had taken over as Superintendent of the General Hospital and was Professor of Surgery. Dr. Kanagasabesan was Professor of Operative Surgery.

The operative surgery lectures were in the afterroom and I was very careful in following everything Dr. Kanagasabesan lectured on. He had his own way of presentation of some of the sections in surgery. One such was treatment of a fracture of scaphoid bone in the wrist. He stressed its anatomical configuration saying that "it had a waist", a narrow portion through which the artery supplying it passed and hence liable to be cut in the event of a fracture and resulting in the two parts of the bone getting separated and remaining separate even after the healing process had taken place!

The examinations ensued in April. I went through the theory, clinical and viva voce examinations satisfactorily. This time I was very thorough with orthopaedics but still hoped that my 'long case' would not be from it. Again it was an orthopaedics 'long case' – spinal fracture! This time I was familiar with the surgical anatomy questions usually asked by the examiners. The examiners were Dr. Chandu Nambiar, Dr. C. Raghavachari, Col. Sangham Lal, Dr. Kanagasabesan, Dr. Narasimha Iyer and another. This time I did as well as in the short cases. In the afternoon Dr. Raghavachari was my examiner for the operative surgery practical (amputation of the thumb) and Dr. Kanagasabesan, for the viva voce. I did very well in the practical and faced Dr. Kanagasabesan in the Viva. He gave me a splint and asked me what it was used for. I answered it was for support of the wrist in "Scaphoid fracture". Promptly he asked me about the anatomy of the scaphoid bone and equally promptly I answered exactly the

way he had described it during his classes. He smiled and appeared to be extremely happy as I had used the word "waist", but in the end he said in Tamil, "All that you have said is absolutely correct but what you told in the beginning is wrong." My face fell.

After the examination, as he was getting into his car, he saw me and asked where I was going. I said I was going to my residence at the IOA. He asked me to get into the car and took me to his house, gave me tea and snacks and had me dropped in IOA. It was such a contrast to my "encounter" with him in December 1946! I received the marks later and my MBBS course had a happy ending but the one failure in surgery came in the way of my getting a "paid" housemanship. The rules were funny and unreasonable. Whatever be the number of failures in the other years, a pass in all three subjects, Medicine, Surgery and Midwifery, was necessary for getting a paid housemanship!

(Concluded)

### 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](http://www.madrasmusings.com)

THE EDITOR

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