

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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## • Changing skylines

# An insensitivity everywhere

(By The Editor)

The whole story has déjà vu written all over it. The builders' lobby constructing huge structures in all available spaces... heritage under threat... the public remaining insensitive... a few people lodging protests... an appeal in the Courts of Law... judgement given in the absence of any law protecting skylines... In case you thought that was something that happened only in Chennai, relax, for you are in august company. London has the same problems.

It may be the city with maximum protection for heritage and with the highest number of footfalls seeking out history, but it is no different from Madras! Late last month, some of the city's most influential names in arts, academia and politics began a campaign to protect the city's skyline which they say is under grave threat. This was after the Courts gave the go-ahead for a £600m develop-

ment on South Bank which, according to UNESCO, poses a grave threat to Westminster's world heritage status. On the other hand, with England still in the midst of a grim recession, this could do wonders for the economy.

Not so, say the intellectuals. And some of the language they have used sounds very familiar to us fighting the same battle in Chennai: "It is shocking that such a profound change is being made to a great city with so little public awareness or debate. There is also a startling lack of vision from the city's leaders. These towers do not answer the city's housing needs, but respond to a bubble of international investment in London residential property. A short-term financial phenomenon will change the city's skyline forever. Over 200 tall buildings, from 20 storeys to much greater heights, are currently consented or proposed.

Many of them are hugely prominent and grossly insensitive to their immediate context and appearance on the skyline.

"This fundamental transformation is taking place with a shocking lack of public awareness, consultation or debate. Planning and political systems are proving inadequate to protect the valued qualities of London, or provide a coherent and positive vision for the future skyline. The official policy is that tall buildings should be 'well designed and in the right place', yet implementation of policy is fragmented and weak.

"Too many of these towers are of mediocre architectural

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## Madras Landmarks – 50 years ago



• Everest Hotel is one of the best known occupants of Jaya Mansions, a classic art deco building constructed in the late 1930s by S.P. Jayarama Nadar, Mercant and Councillor of the Corporation of Madras, to serve as a commercial hostel for students of the Madras Medical College. By the mid-1940s it had become commercial premises with a number of shops and establishments renting the rooms in the ground floor. Everest Lodge, as it was known, the creation of Sundaram Iyer, took the upper floors.

Located as it was midway between Central and Egmore stations, it became a very popular place of stay. There was a rooftop restaurant as well, which also functioned as the premises for the Muthialpet Sabha. It was here on a full moon night that Tiger Varadachariar is said to have performed a pallavi in Raga Poornachandrika.

Sundaram Iyer married a well-known dancer Swarna Saraswathi en secondes noces as the expression is, and the couple later moved to Delhi where they lived till their passing.

The hotel changed hands and continues to function from the same premises though ill-advised attempts at modernisation have robbed the facade of all vestiges of art deco.

An interesting aside is that Everest also ran Zoo Café, which, as the name suggests, was a restaurant at the Zoo which at the time was just behind Ripon Building, barely a stone's throw away.

## Of 'official' slums and 'unofficial' ones

How many slums are there in Chennai? Officially, 1219. But unofficially there are 444 more. What is being done for the residents of these slums? Very little, apart from persistent and misguided attempts to relocate them to the periphery of the city, thereby simply shifting the problem to where the upper-class citizenry cannot see it. All this and more are some of the highlights of a study done by an NGO, Transparent Chennai, in 2013. Excerpts from this study were published in *The Hindu* and the figures quoted here are from there.

Slums, which were initially under the control of the Madras Corporation, were transferred to the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board in 1971 when that

body was set up following legislation. The TNSCB had under its purview only the officially recognised slums, which then were 1202 in number. In 1985, a further 17 were added to the list. And the tally stopped there.

● by A Special Correspondent

What we hear now is that there are at least 444 more in the city and these do not have any form of governance, as the TNSCB claims it can only handle the approved ones.

Some of the statistics quoted is truly frightening. As many as half a million people reside in the unofficial slums which occupy just 4.8 sq km of Greater

Chennai – the congestion can only be imagined. Periodic eviction drives are the only strategy that the city's administration has towards these slums. The residents return after a while and the cycle continues. What is often forgotten is that it is this fringe population that provides most of the service in the city.

Coming to the official slums, the city had one of the best possible methods of handling them. Ever since the late 1800s when Charles Gower first mooted the idea of reconstructing slums *in situ* with better planning, access to water and ventilation, the Corporation had been doing just that. That way, the slums continued to remain where they were, but they were a lot cleaner

(Continued on page 7)

### Madras Eye



"With these new arrivals, you won't be affected by the 2,500 MW power shortage in the state!"

# Save our heritage

– a call of despair  
in the UK too

Their stones, bricks, brooks and glades ring with the sounds of our history. But we seem to have stopped listening.

A shocking report on England's iconic landmarks reveals that one in 12 are under threat from neglect, decay and vandalism.

English Heritage, which compiled the register of more than 6,000 threatened sites, recently called on Britons to wake up to the damage being done.

One in five scheduled monuments, registered battlefields and protected wreck sites are in danger, while one in 30 Grade 1 listed buildings are being neglected.

Lord Lockhart, chairman of English Heritage, said: "Everybody must live near, walk past or know of a heritage treasure at risk near them.

"We believe that our Heritage At Risk register will galvanise the nation into doing something about this before it is too late and help us save the best of the past."

The register includes Victorian schools and town halls, derelict railway stations, unstable remains of abbeys, eroded iron age forts and overgrown country parks.

Other at-risk sites include crumbling World War II pillboxes, neglected 1960s tower blocks and battle sites threatened by housing.

Many of the threatened sites are known only to locals. But others – such as the Eleanor cross outside London's Charing Cross station and the Civil War site of the Battle of Newbury in Berkshire – are world-famous. Some sites are threatened by ploughing and erosion.

Others are at risk because of neglectful owners, poor development, and lack of maintenance.

The report assessed England's 30,000 Grade 1 and Grade 2 listed buildings, all 20,000 of the most important archaeological sites and monuments, all 1,500 registered historic parks and gardens, 43 battlefields and 45 wrecks.

## Top ten threatened sites

**Birkkrigg Stone Circle, Cumbria:** A prehistoric circle of 31 stones between 1700 and 1400 BC overlooking Morcambe Bay. Also known as the Druid's Circle, the isolated site is a frequent target for paint-spraying vandals.

**Uxbridge Lido, London:** A Grade 2 listed lido built in 1935, the only remaining 12-sided "star" swimming pool in the UK. Abandoned in 1998 and covered in graffiti.

**Battersea Power Station:** Built in the 1930s, the former coal fired power station is the largest brick building in Europe. It has distinctive Art Deco towers. Closed in 1983, its future remains uncertain.

**Newbury, Berkshire:** Site of the first Battle of Newbury in 1643 when Roundheads prevented a large Parliamentary army from marching on London. Under threat from housing developers.

**Eleanor Cross, Charing Cross, London:** The crumbling Victorian cross stands outside the busy London railway station. Fragments of stone are falling off and it is desperate need of repair and restoration.

**Bowes Railway Incline and Springwell Colliery, Gateshead:** Part of the 1826 Stephenson rope-hauled colliery railway – one of the world's first modern railways – it is suffering from severe erosion, storm damage and vandalism.

**Lowther Castle, Cumbria:** Empty since 1942, the once spectacular 19th Century Gothic castle – is now a derelict shell surrounded by 3,000 acres of grounds.

**Snodhill Castle, Herefordshire:** Dating from the 11th Century, the castle is a victim of extreme neglect. The castle has been 'effectively abandoned' by its owners and parts are in danger of collapse.

**Boston Manor House, Hounslow:** Three-storey Jacobean manor built in 1623 and surrounded by parkland, parts are in danger of toppling over and are being propped up by scaffolding.

**Tynemouth Station:** Built in 1882, it is one of the North East's most impressive Victorian stations. But parts of the station are now unused and its decorative iron canopies are rusting. – (from *The Daily Mail*, London).

# On Election Duty, Immediate

These days, you amount to nothing if you don't have the above statement stuck on your car windscreen. *The Man from Madras Musings* notices that with this notice strategically positioned so that all can read it, you can get your vehicle to do anything that James Bond did with his, and more. The 'On Election Duty, Immediate (or Urgent)' is the current equivalent of the red beacon light that was so hated by an emerging political light before it somewhat extinguished itself (by which MMM alludes to the political light and not the beacon light which is going strong). With that notice pasted on, no matter if it is just a newspaper with the message scrawled in red ink, you can jump traffic signals, park your car anywhere, overtake on bridges and, above all, still get policemen to salute you.

There is apparently a class hierarchy in this. With just a red beacon, you can still get by, but that is just about all you can do. Having the 'On Election Duty (OED)' sign means you have climbed to stratospheric heights. If you have both, then chances are you don't read this paper. Probably someone else reads it out to you and only those bits that please your ears, which is very likely to be very little.

'OED' has also given rise to another caste division, though ours is technically a casteless society, at least on paper. MMM was made painfully aware of this when he was walking along with a group of well-heeled citizenry. MMM had let his mind wander and he came back to earth only when he heard a business baron suddenly say rather proudly, "Twice". To which a mega magnate rather disdainfully replied, "Four times". Whereupon the biz baron looked abashed and turned around to MMM and asked how many. MMM was stumped for an answer. For one, he did not know what was being talked about. Were they enumerating daily bowel movements or divorces or coronary bypasses he wondered. His confusion only increased when another moneybags interjected saying, "Three and always by the Gemini Flyover". Clarity came when he added that a thorough search was made but nothing was found.

They were it transpired counting the number of times their vehicles had been stopped by the OED men and searched for cash, without which, so MMM has been given to understand, political parties feel the poll process is incomplete. Apparently, the OED brigade also feels the same way and hence stops all and sundry by the wayside and counts their cash. Hang on, did MMM say all and sundry? Well, he was mistaken. To be searched you need to have a

certain type of vehicle – it has to be closer to a bus in length, breadth and height than a car. It should also have tinted glasses, though that is really not on as per law. But then when you go around in these uber-sized vehicles, you really are above the law and so such trivialities make no difference. Then, and only then, will you be searched by the OED gang. And going through this ordeal is the new ticket to high society. It reminded MMM of his days in Delhi when businessmen considered Income Tax raids to be badges of honour. The more, the better.

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

MMM had to rather sheepishly confess that he had not been stopped and searched. Whereupon the others looked pityingly at him and moved on. MMM now has two options before him to shore up his fallen prestige – he either gets a large car or he goes around in his current one with a huge stash of currency notes, hoping that it will be noticed by the OED lot. But as he has no hopes of either – a new car or disposable wads of cash, he has to reconcile himself to being on the fringes of society.

## Chaos, set in concrete

The Corporation of Chennai is no doubt patting itself on the back for having embarked on concretising its roads. The idea was originally to do this only for streets and thoroughfares that are not easily accessed by road-laying equipment. But, as *The Man from Madras Musings* can see, it is now done for whichever stretch takes the Corporation's fancy. There comes a day when a roaring behemoth that spews concrete arrives in your neighbourhood and settles down for a long stay. The road is cut off to all traffic and the concrete pours forth. It is allowed to set and then the crew vanishes, behemoth and all.

But, as is usual with anything that our Corporation does, there is no concept of planning beforehand or anticipating the consequences of any action. Thus, houses that were all along an inch or two above the road, find themselves a foot below overnight, thanks to thickness of the concrete and there is nothing anyone can do about it. Secondly, the CMWSSB (MMM assumes he has got

all the consonants correct and in order), which deals with our water and sewerage, has not shifted its manhole covers or elevated them or whatever it was supposed to do. And, so, the smooth concrete surface is marked here and there with deep craters below which the manholes lurk. Vehicles plying on these roads keep jumping in and out of these depressions which, in the good old tar days, were just a few inches deep but now go down by at least half a foot.

And then, what about the edges? The concrete is not spread up to the footpaths (if they exist) and quite a deep rut now runs between the sidewalks and the road proper. Vehicles going in and out of residences have quite a challenge and as for those who park along the sides (remember that Chennai follows a strict "No parking for visitors cars" policy) they just cannot get to the edge. They now simply park on the concrete, thereby narrowing road space still further. So, it is chaos as usual.

Makes you want to hark back to the days of good old red earth and bullock carts, does it not? MMM is quite confident that we will eventually get there, given the way we are going about modernising. When our Corporation is with us, why worry?

## Tailpiece

Civilisation appears to have come at last to Chennai going by the modern convenience installed by our beloved city's beloved civic body, just outside Express Avenue Mall. *The Man from Madras Musings* took a photo which appears alongside hopefully, provided the silhouetted nudity is allowed by the Chief. But who will inform our citizenry that they need to go inside and not behind the structure? You only need to see their behaviour when it comes to any tree, pillar or post.

– MMM



**OUR  
READERS  
WRITE**



**Big-hearted hotelier**

Your story on K. Seetharama Rao, (MM, April 1st) reminded of an incident that happened in April, 1968. That was the year Central Valuation of Public Examination Answer-scripts was introduced. I was a Chief Examiner in English I Paper and the center was the newly constructed office of the Commissioner for Government Examination. A separate Directorate came later. The canteen in the D.P.I.'s Complex could not provide meals for over 1000 teachers assembled for valuation. Many went without food and a rebellion was imminent. The officers of the Department did not know how to meet the problem. At 8 p.m., the teachers gathered to announce boycott of valuation.

S. Narasimha Iyengar, renowned Headmaster of M.Ct. Muthiah Chettiar High School, appealed to the teachers to give him just 12 hours to make alternate arrangements. He took me with him to knock at the doors of K. Seetharama Rao at 10 p.m. With folded hands he requested Rao to help them tackle the situation. Rao was deeply touched and said, "You are a guru. You should not beg but order. Everything will be done."

The next day, in the open grounds, a makeshift kitchen was established and the *verandahs* were converted into dining halls. A variety of snacks, meals and drinks were made available. No person needed more than two minutes to get what he wanted. Masala Dosas of which Modern Cafe was famous were available hot and crisp from 8 a.m to 8 p.m. The lunch was excellent. When he learnt that the daily allowance paid to the teachers was just Rs 4/-, he instructed that the full lunch, morning coffee, evening coffee with some snacks-bonda, bajji or vadai-be charged only Rs 2/- much much below the rates in his hotel. Other items were also priced lower.

When we wanted to thank him at a function on the last day, he said it was he who should be thankful for he got business of over Rs 50000/- and he refused to go for the func-

tion. Seetharama Rao emerged as a Hotelier with a big Heart.

Those who came for valuation would not forget his hospitality and generosity. The managerial skill of Seetharama Rao was evident throughout. It was a unique experience that I have never forgotten.

**S.S. Rajagopalan**  
30 Kamarajar Street  
Chennai 600093

**Evoking memories**

Your picture and write up of the Modern Café (MM, April 1) evokes some old memories.

As children in the early 1950s, we were taught to swim in the Marina swimming pool. This was a sea water pool. Afterwards, we would be taken for a snack (or lunch, if we were lucky) to the adjoining Marina Canteen as it was called.

This was run for a time by one Pattabhirama Reddy and his beautiful wife Snehalatha, who were good friends of my parents. They subsequently were active in Ram Manohar Lohia's Praja Socialist Party.

She was a highly talented lady and an accomplished flamenco dancer. During Indira Gandhi's emergency she was imprisoned and this took its toll on her health.

They had a daughter and son – Nandana and Konarak.

**Ramu Dorasami**  
Shanthinamara, Glasbolie  
Ballintra, Co. Donegal. Ireland

**How long?**

This refers to the article 'An Indo-Ceylon dream of the 20th Century (MM, March 1st) where Pamban island is described as 70 to 80 km long. I wonder if that is correct. The railway time table shows the distance from Pamban to Rameswaram as 11 km. Comparing the distances on the satellite image roughly, the length of the island can at the most be about 30 to 40 km, if at all.

**K. Balakesari**  
3/1, Kesari Kuteeram  
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**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**

## An embodiment of total illegality

This refers to the report 'Legalising the illegal – will Court ruling stop it?' (MM, March 1st).

T' Nagar is an area which is the embodiment of total illegality due to almost every commercial building violating safety norms as well as building and development control rules, while the CMDA and the Corporation turn a blind eye to the situation. The area which used to be a peaceful residential neighbourhood has been converted into a commercial hub with indiscriminate development arising out of an unholy nexus between government officials, law enforcement agencies and the commercial establishments. This has turned the entire residential neighbourhood into a concrete jungle making life miserable for the residents in the area.

The Association has been making attempts to collect information on the extent of the violations and has found that virtually none of the commercial buildings comply with building rules, fire safety regulations, etc.

With the rules given a go-by, the inevitable result has been a shortage of water and electricity, choked roads, and ecological and environmental imbalances causing serious hardship to every resident of the area.

With observance of fire service regulations in the breach and without adequate setbacks, God forbid if a fire accident takes place. If this is the situations with respect to Usman Road it is far worse in Ranganathan Street due to high pedestrian movement. If a fire accident happens on Ranganathan Street, the casualties would run into hundreds or thousands, as there is no way for an ambulance or a fire engine to get in or get out. And in the event of a fire accident during a festival season, the tragedy in terms of human lives lost would be phenomenal.

Information on the adequacy of fire safety norms was obtained by the Association under the Right to Information Act in July 2011 and a part of the response from the Director of Fire Safety is reproduced below:

*"As per the safety audits conducted by this department in Ranganathan Street, 90 per cent of the buildings have violated the building norms, including fire safety. As these matters are subjective and further because of lack of fire and life safety*

*measures we are unable to issue fire license. Instead we decided to inspect all the buildings which are in violation of fire and life safety norms and to issue show cause notices, to implement the fire and life safety system. In the absence of stringent legal provisions, the traders/ builders are not spending few lakhs rupees for creating fire safe environment in T' Nagar and in particular Ranganathan Street...*

*"To partially address some of the problems in most of the commercial buildings, we have taken various measures to prevent fire and minimise the response time in this congested commercial hub.*

*"Some of them are:*

- New fire station was opened at T.Nagar on 4.12.2010 with one fire unit and 17 fire fighters.*
- Show cause notices were issued (and), Fire Audit conducted regularly to create safety awareness among the shop owners.*
- Trader Association/shop owners meetings were conducted on fire safety aspects...*

*"With no response to the show-cause notices, the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Department has no power to seal the buildings of those defying the rules. Only the Chennai Corporation and CMDA can take action to seal or demolish buildings in cases of violations..."*

The other result of this indiscriminate development is the high pollution levels and the air pollution levels, which are much higher than the normal permitted levels.

As regards compliance with building rules, information obtained by the Association under the Right to Information Act shows 'NIL' compliance and no approvals in the case of most of the multi-storey buildings.

In a nutshell, the entire business in the T' Nagar shopping hub is being carried on by all the commercial establishments violating every norm. This has converted a residential area into a commercial jungle.

The Association has gone to the courts and obtained orders, but these are never complied with. Representations to the custodians of the law have not been taken note of.

**T' Nagar Residents' Welfare Association**  
30, Rangan Street  
T' Nagar, Chennai 600 017

**Marina Mayhem**

It was disturbing to read that the authorities plan to convert the already beleaguered Marina into a Baywatch scenario (MM, March 16th) minus the bikini-clad babes. Many contractors and their political patrons will doubtless be

salivating at the prospect of the Government largesse this will throw up. In Chennai, people's outcry usually ends up in the wilderness. But for a change, can it get the authorities to put a stop to the proposed malafide extravaganza and leave the Marina's sands severely alone.

Why berthing facilities for yachts when thousands of poor pregnant women do not have decent birthing facilities in our Government hospitals?

**C.G. Prasad**  
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## AN INSENSITIVITY EVERYWHERE

(Continued from page 1)

quality and badly sited. Many show little consideration for scale and setting, make minimal contribution to public realm or street-level experience and are designed without concern for their cumulative effect and impact. Their generic designs, typical of fast-growing cities around the world, threaten London's unique character and identity."

You just need to replace London with Chennai in the above text and you could use it here.

The city, by which we mean Chennai, has already lost much of what was once a great skyline. Rajaji Salai was once home to Indo-Saracenic, Gothic and

the Neo Classical. Much of that still remains but you can see what it is likely to become by noticing what is coming up here and there on that road. NSC Bose Road and the Esplanade was once home to an unbroken Art Deco facade as was the stretch between Egmore and Central Stations. Much of that has vanished or has been irretrievably transformed thanks to the use of Al-Cu bond tiles and other such quick fixes. The greatest tragedy has been Mount Road, which from a great and fashionable downtown has become a long stretch of multi-storeyed buildings with no harmony in design anywhere. If at all there is still a sole survivor, it could be the Kamaraj Salai (South Beach

Road), which still retains much of its grandeur. There too, we have seen threats to the DGP Headquarters, Queen Mary's campus, the Lady Willingdon Institute and Wenlock Park. And let us not forget, this is without bringing in residential areas such as Gandhi Nagar, T Nagar and Mandaveli which have completely lost their skylines.

Cities such as Barcelona, Miami, Shanghai and even our own Mumbai have made much of their skylines and converted them into tourist hotspots. Why can this not be done in Chennai as well? Perhaps it is time for the intellectual community to come together. Would Madras Week 2014 be a good time for this?

## Drawing with Mano –3

# Seeing scenes in perspective

In the late 1970s, my daughter Suja and I enjoyed the hospitality of the Appasamys at Kodaikanal each summer. Paul, their son, and I would go on mini on-the-spot sketching expeditions. In 1978, early one morning, each of us did a sketch of the boat house with its reflection in the very still waters of the lake. That evening, we reflected upon this subject. Paul said that the reflection of the boat house was identical to the real one, only it was upside down. I told Paul that there were many subtle differences between an object and its reflection in a piece of artwork. I shared with him my own 'knowledge' and then went on to talk about other aspects relating to perspective and architecture. Paul, who was at the time a student of the School of Architecture of Madras University, could grasp immediately what I was trying to convey. It was he who first suggested that I should record my learning processes and insights into perspective and publish the collected material as a book. I talked about this with Mahema, who also felt that a book from my perspective was an excellent idea. It has taken me three decades to eventually do what my cousin suggested and my wife recommended.

I reproduce here, my on-the-spot ink drawing of the boat house at Kodaikanal.



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Among the finest entities still existent within the Thirumalai Nayak Mahal in Madurai is the *Nataka Sala*. The squat pillars support a complex of foliated arches, with ornate entablatures, high corridors, and windows topped by an elaborate arched roof 70 feet above the floor.

From the mid-1980s, I entertained the idea of capturing a view of this hall in ink. But I felt intimidated. The structure of the hall was complex, my eyesight was poor even at the time, and the level of illumination within was low. However, in 2002, when Mahema saw the hall from her wheelchair, she felt strongly that inclusion of a drawing of this hall would enrich *My Madurai*, the book I was working on at the time. So, I visited this hall many times and pored over photographs taken especially for me, from different angles by Jayantha from Aravind Eye Hospital. Those were to help me three-dimensionally 'grasp' the structure. I chose what I thought was the best angle for my artwork. Jayanth carefully made dark ink lines on a 'paper enlargement' of the chosen photograph. This enabled me to see the structure. I extended the angular lines to determine the vanishing point. To my utter astonishment, the lines did NOT converge to a single point. Besides, the repeating patterns were not in alignment. The reason for this anomaly suddenly flashed across my mind.

If the hall is still standing today, it is perhaps largely because of the vision of one man, Napier, the Governor of Madras in the latter part of the 19th Century. He provided the impetus, skilled man-power and the funds for extensive renovation work, which in turn was executed under the leadership of Blackburne, the then Collector of Madurai. Due to the weight of the arched roof, the ornate walls above the supporting pillars began inching irregularly outwards. In order to arrest the walls from moving further, horizontal iron stay rods were periodically provided. From the point of view of perspective, the hall as a result continues to have imperceptible imperfections. But my

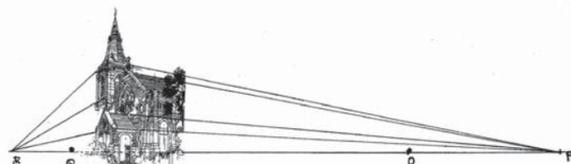
drawing follows the laws of perspective and eliminates the stay rods.

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In early 1958, when I was 21, I moved from the ancient temple town of Madurai to live in the relatively modern metropolis of Madras. At that time, though I was not very religious, I liked attending services at the Wesley Church at Egmore with a new-found British friend, Ken Wade, or my cousin, Damayanthi. I enjoyed the majestic sounds of the pipe organ there, played by a cousin, Ebby, and the harmonious singing by the choir and the congregation. I enjoyed even the sermons by the learned British pastor. Above all, I enjoyed the ambience and the elegant beauty of the brick-and-mortar church. Four decades later, I decided to create an ink drawing of this edifice.

I chose what I considered the best angle to capture the elegance of the church in ink. Unfortunately, however, at the chosen angle, I was too close to the building. I could not move backwards because the parsonage was at my back. Were I to capture a two dimensional image of the church at such close quarters, a certain level of distortion would have crept in. I used a simple but effective method to minimise the proximity problem thus:

I used the northeast corner wall junction of the church as the reference vertical line (Z axis). I moved the vanishing points farther for both X and Y axes. In the drawing below, point O on X axis is the true vanishing point, while point P is the chosen one. Similarly, Q is the real vanishing point while R is the chosen one on the Y axis. I kept all the relevant vertical lines where they really belonged. The horizontal lines of the real building that were at higher levels would have had steep inclines, had I used the authentic vanishing points O and Q. But as I used the 'doctored' points P and R which are farther, the incline of the top lines are far less steep, thus softening the distortion due to the closeness.

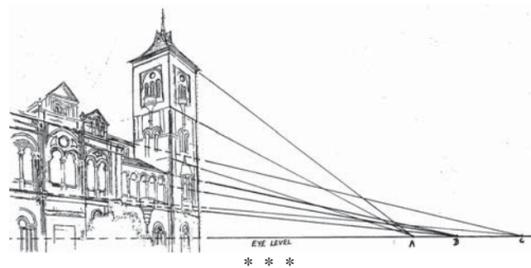


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When my friend Suresh Krishna became the Sheriff of Madras in 1990/91, he initiated some renovation of the impressive Victoria Public Hall (VPH), a heritage building which was in a state of neglect. At this time, I decided to make a set of drawing, featuring this noble edifice.

One of the views that I chose for an ink drawing posed the same problem as that of Wesley Church – only, in this case, the situation was worse, as V.H.P was far larger and taller. In the very angular view, at close quarters the vanishing point is relatively close. The roof line would have been rather steep, its left end becoming dominant, making the tall, tile-roofed tower appear less significant. In order to minimise this unsatisfactory visual aspect posed by a 'true' perspective drawing, I planned with impunity a carefully calculated error in its perspective. I divided the building into three blocks. I allowed the first, right side block with the tower, to retain its natural vanishing point (A), moved the vanishing point of the middle block a bit farther (B), and that of the third block (left) still farther (C). On account of this, my drawing had three discrete vanishing points instead of a single one. By this, the tower maintained its integrity and dominance, while the roof at the left end was kept under control.

Using this drawing – like many other drawings – Mahema designed a greeting card, with a relevant text briefly describing the history of the hall. These cards would have been seen by many thousands. That this drawing had a 'planted error' in it was obvious to none. On the other hand, had I created the drawing with a single vanishing point, as I should have, then, perhaps, people might have thought there was something not quite right about the piece!



Yaanai Malai (Elephant Hill) is a dominant landmark in the northeastern outskirts of Madurai. When approached from Madurai, this monolith has a certain resemblance to a seated elephant. Dotted with starkly beautiful palmyra trees, this part of rural Madurai once had a character of its own. The paddy fields nourished by monsoon rains receive supplementary supplies of water from large, squarish, irrigation *yeatram* wells. A *yeatram* has a long pole with a rope and a large bucket at one end and a counterpoise at the other with a fulcrum in between. *Yeatram*, which have all but vanished from the rural scene today, were extensively used during my boyhood to draw volumes of water from these wells.

In the early 1950s, on a cool October noon, a school friend and I took a cross-country trek towards Yaanai Malai. Suddenly, an idyllic rural scene presented itself. We saw water-logged fields being ploughed. There was a large square *yeatram* well from which a wiry old man was drawing water. Yaanai Malai formed an imposing, peaceful backdrop. Monsoon clouds began to gather, darkening the upper sky and softening the light falling on the austere scene. The landscape was placid but the sky was in turmoil and yet there was perfect harmony between land and sky. The sky became darker and light played games on the hill.

Over the years, many of those paddy fields, though not all, have vanished forever. Houses have cropped up where the paddy fields were. But I carry an image of what I once saw in my head and in my heart.

As I grew older, my eyesight kept diminishing. In 1986, when I could not clearly see such scenes, I decided to capture on paper, in ink, the magic of the scene that I had witnessed more than three decades earlier. I could not, of course, reproduce the scene exactly as it was but I did my best to capture the mood and the moment of beauty that was etched in my memory. So I diligently began an assembly job. I remember a distant banyan tree and a few typical rural houses of the time. I included these in the drawing. There were scattered rows of palmyra trees and a few thorn trees with tiny leaves. I included many palmyra trees and one thorn tree in my drawing.

A *yeatram* well, of course, had a significant place in my artwork. I integrated two farmers ploughing the wet fields. Yaanai Malai, the dominant central aspect captured in ink, was set serenely where it should be. The monsoon clouds which enhanced the beauty of the scene many years ago, enhance the beauty of my later artwork.

This is one of my drawings that has been especially appreciated by many friends. Some talked about the stunning realism of the drawing. I could not have appreciated this piece of artwork without my deep grasp of perspective. When I assembled this drawing, three aspects came into play: Firstly, the rich memory of the rare visual gift that I enjoyed, secondly, whatever artistic skills have been granted to me and, finally, the effective application of the deep knowledge on perspective that I had accumulated.

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Mahema grew up in Madras. From her early girlhood she was fond of jasmine. By the time she was a student at Stella Maris College, she realised that *gundu malligai* (globular jasmine) from Madurai was very special indeed. As my bride, she wore a tightly knit large strand of globular jasmine from Madurai in her hair. A few months after our marriage, we visited Madurai. She wished to see a jasmine garden in rural Madurai, which we did. She could relate very well to the jasmine pickers, who gifted her a bunch of freshly plucked jasmine which she strung together and wore in her hair.

Later in life, every time friends came from Madurai to Madras, Mahema's only request was that they bring her a strand of Madurai jasmine. So, when I worked on *My Madurai*, I naturally decided to include an ink drawing on a jasmine garden in rural Madurai though this was going to be a challenging piece to create.

One early morning in 2003, Chitra of Aravind Eye Hospital and a horticulturalist took me to a jasmine garden. We studied the bushes, the arrangement of the leaves, the hardy straight stems, the cluster of buds and blossoms. We spoke to the jasmine pickers too. I made rough sketches and took photographs.

One could see jasmine buds in nearby bushes which hid much of the buds in the bushes that were beyond. Therefore I chose the horizon line at a higher level which, in turn, enabled me to 'expose' the

(Continued on page 7)

# The multi-faceted Edward Balfour

Edward Balfour sparkles in the science history of colonial Madras as a multi-talented person. He came to India to join the army medical service. He later featured prominently in various academic and administrative arenas of the Madras Presidency: from an army-surgeon to a diplomat, from chief administrator of the Madras Medical Department to contributing significantly towards the development of science. In whatever work he undertook, he achieved the best outcomes. His profundity in meticulously documenting his observations on diverse aspects of science, be it medicine, biology, agriculture and forestry, and even astronomy, is stunning. This article remembers the contributions of this Scot to Indian science. But there were so many other facets to Balfour, that each could do with a separate article.

During his stay in Madras, Balfour supported granting Independence to India, although it materialised only in 1947, long after his return to Britain. In high likelihood, his mother's brother Joseph Hume (1777-1855), a medical doctor and a radical British parliamentarian, influenced Balfour in this direction. Allan Octavian Hume (1829-1912), son of Joseph Hume, who too trained as a medical doctor but served as an Indian Civil Servant, who was also an avid ornithologist and horticulturist, was his first cousin. Many readers will recall that Allan Hume was a founding pillar of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the concept of which was conceived at a private meeting held during a Theosophists' convention in Madras in December 1884.

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Edward Balfour, who retired as the Surgeon-General of the Madras Presidency, was born the second son of George Balfour and Susan Hume in Montrose, Forfarshire, Scotland, on September 6, 1813. He received his early education at the Montrose Academy. He qualified for the licentiate of the Edinburgh Royal College of Surgeons (L.R.C.S. [E.]). Motivated British youth enrolled in medical training early in their lives, therefore it is not surprising that Balfour qualified for his L.R.C.S. (E.) at 20.

Balfour arrived in India and entered the medical department of the Indian army in 1834. He was commissioned as an assistant surgeon in June 1836. After serving as a medical officer with the European and native artillery, the native cavalry, and the infan-

try of the Madras and Bombay armies, then as the staff surgeon in Ahmadnagar and Bellary in the Ceded Districts, he became a full surgeon in 1852. In 1850, he was the acting government agent at Chepauk and the paymaster of the Carnatic stipends.

During his early years of service, Balfour learnt different Indian languages and achieved mastery over Hindustani and Persian. Balfour translated and published in 1851 *Gul-dastah-i-Sukhan* (the Bunch of Roses), a lithograph of a series of extracts from Persian and Hindustani poets. He established the Mohamadan Public Library in Madras, an institution that included books in English and the Oriental languages. This service to Muslim literature and culture in India, was gratefully acknowledged on his departure, in a Persian address presented to him by the leading Muslim citizens of Madras. For further notes on this

General, heading the Madras medical department, in 1871, a post he held until his retirement in 1876. During this period, he drew the attention of the Government of Madras in 1872 to the need for qualified women doctors, as local social customs restricted women from receiving treatment from male doctors and attending public hospitals. The Madras Medical College opened its gates to women in 1875. Balfour's service in this context was commemorated with the establishment of the 'Balfour Memorial Gold Medal' in 1891 at the University of Madras with the singular object of encouraging women studying medicine.

Balfour returned to Britain in 1876, after 42 years of residence and service in India. He died in Hyde Park, London on December 8, 1889, at the age of 76. He had married the eldest daughter of Dr. Gilchrist of Madras on May 24, 1852. His portrait was



Edward Balfour.

Wellington, the Nilgiris. He seems to have been seriously interested in the epidemiology of cholera which is supported by two of his publications, the *Statistics of Cholera* published at Madras. In 1850, he published *Remarks on the causes for which native soldiers of the Madras Army who were discharged the Service in the five years from 1842-3 to 1846-7*.

## Economic biology

In 1849 he received the thanks of the Madras Government for his report '*On the Influence exercised by Trees on the Climate of a Country*' and by publishing in Madras a work on *The timber trees, timber, and fancy woods, as also the Forests of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia*, which ran a second edition in 1862, and a third in 1870.

## At Govt. Central Museum

In 1850 an offer made by Balfour to the Government to establish a museum in Madras was accepted, and the Government Central Museum came up with Balfour as its 'superintendent', with no remuneration, till 1859. While holding this appointment, he issued, besides several catalogues and general reports on the work of the museum, several publications relating to special branches of scientific study. These included a *Classified list of the Mollusca* (Madras, 1855), a *Report on the iron ores: the manufacture of iron and steel, and the Coals of the Madras Presidency* (Madras, 1855), and *Remarks on the gutta percha of Southern India* (Madras, 1855). He also wrote a preface description of the districts dealt with in *Barometrical Survey of India* issued in 1853 under the editorship of a committee, of which Balfour was chairman, and he published *Localities of India exempt from cholera*.

(Continued on page 7)

• 'Pages from History' by DR. A. RAMAN (araman@csu.edu.au)

subject, refer to S. Anwar, *Madras Musings* (XIX, 2010).

Between 1858 and 1861, Balfour was commissioned to investigate the debts of the Nawab of the Carnatic (earlier, the Nawab of Arcot), which were owed to many of the British in Madras. Some notations on this assignment refer to Balfour as a 'political agent' at the Court of the Nawab. For a short period, he officiated as the Assistant Assaymaster at the Madras mint, and the Madras Examiner of Medical Accounts in the Army Finance Department of India. He joined the administrative grade of the Madras medical staff in 1862. He was the Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals during 1862-1870. During this period he also served as the Deputy Surgeon-General in Burma, the Straits Settlements, and the Andamans, twice in the Ceded Districts, twice in the Mysore division, and for four years with the Hyderabad subsidiary force and Hyderabad contingent. While displaying an enormous level of administrative acumen in these roles, he continued to sustain his interest in science and in the promotion of science. One dazzling example is the establishment of the Madras Museum in 1851, the Madras Zoo in 1855, and Mysore Museum in 1866 through his committed efforts.

Balfour became the Surgeon

placed in the Government Central Museum, which is the Madras Museum of today. Balfour was a Fellow of the University of Madras, and a corresponding member of the Imperial Royal Geological Institute of Vienna.

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## Balfour's contributions to Indian science

Balfour displayed a variety of interests in science. He came to India as a medical doctor. His adeptness in writing on a range of subjects is astonishing. He wrote over 30 major publications on Astronomy, Biology, Climatology and Forestry, Geology, Medicine and Public Health, and Museology, not to mention work he did in Persian, between 1845 and 1863. In this article, I refer to some of his major works and treatises, for want of space and time.

## Public health & medicine

In 1845 Balfour published the *Statistical data for forming troops and maintaining them in health in different climates and localities* (Madras) and the *Observations on the means of preserving the health of troops by selecting healthy localities for their cantonments* (London), which brought him into prominence as an authority on public health. These two publications were key drivers in establishing the military hospital at



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

1. On March 17th-18th, which new Republic came into being after months of civil war and subsequent secession from the world's largest country?
2. Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz Al Saud was recently confirmed as second-in-line to the throne of which Asian country?
3. According to a study by University of Vienna scientists, which marine predatory creature is, technically, half-plant and half-animal?
4. Which Indian sports-based community project won the Laureus Sport for Good Award on March 26th?
5. According to a recent WHO report, which is the 'biggest environmental health problem' now?
6. Which very popular sitcom, about Ted Mosby and his Manhattan friends, had its final episode on March 31st?
7. Where in Russia did Chennai's Viswanathan Anand win the Candidates Tournament to become eligible to challenge Magnus Carlsen for the World chess crown in November this year?
8. Japan's Shigeru Ban has been awarded the 'Nobel Prize of architecture' for his unique approach in using materials like paper tubes and bamboo. Name the honour.
9. What is special about the weapon 'Nirbheek' launched recently?
10. In which country's education curriculum was Tamil, along with four more Indian languages, reinstated as official subjects in State-run schools after a gap of 20 years?

\* \* \*

11. Name the author of Kaviri Mainthan, the sequel to Kalki's acclaimed Ponnaiyan Selvan.
12. Name the IPS officer who has been appointed by the Election Commission to oversee election work in Tamil Nadu.
13. The Ministry of Shipping has, ..... little regard to environmental concerns, decided to develop which place near Pulicat, as a port and shipbuilding centre spread over 5000 acres?
14. Name the author of Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life: She is considered the first Indian woman novelist.
15. Which bustling area, named after the practitioners of a certain art/profession, is considered the first planned colony within the bounds of Madras?
16. Which walkway in Fort St. George is also known as 'Snob's Alley'?
17. Fill in the missing names in the name for this park in the metropolis: Desodharaka Kasinadhuni \_\_\_\_\_ Pantulu Park.
18. Which legendary English woman was the moving force behind Madras's efforts to get a drainage system in the second half of the 19th Century?
19. If R. P. Sethu Pillai was the first recipient in 1954 and Joe D'Cruz the latest, what honour am I talking about?
20. What was the 'Gold Leaf Agreement' dated April 1620, now in the possession of the National Archives in Copenhagen, about?

(Answers on page 8)



Visharda Hoon in retirement

Just being nostalgic is one thing. Reminiscing about your life and weaving events taken from diary jottings and publishing a book is quite another. Visharda Hoon's *Lahore to Chennai, a journey called life* is in the latter bracket. N. Vaideeswaran, a colleague of the author, infers in his foreword that anybody who is somebody, and not necessarily the high and mighty, can write their biographies. This sets the tone for this hardbound book which includes black & white and colour pictures. A recent picture of the author in the front inside jacket sleeve of the book reveals a woman who doesn't show her 87 years.

Written by hand beginning in 2010, the author portrays herself as a revolutionary student in pre-partition Lahore, wife and mother, teacher-administrator in Madras between 1954 and 1986, a social worker and a philosopher. Mrs. Hoon's life in Madras runs concurrently with the Punjabi community putting down roots in the city. "Almost 63 years have passed since I left Model Town, Lahore, in 1947..." begins Mrs. Hoon, a semi-retired Chennai Gill Nagar resident today, and ends her story of 430 pages saying, "...As I sit in the veranda and listen to the *bhajans* that my grandson Aditya has loaded into my i-pod for my 85th birthday, I think life has been good, I could not ask for more."

Providing an outsider's view about Madras, Mrs. Hoon writes, "We had heard many stories about Madras from my cousin, whose husband was an Air Force officer, and posted in Madras in the 1940s. She told us that the people of Madras were simple and walked barefoot, that their food and customs were strange. She said it was like going to 'Kala Pani' (exile in Andamans)... she described the sea and liked the openness of the place. I remembered what she used to tell us and was a little apprehensive. She said older women wore nine yard sarees and young girls half sarees." To this city there came by train in 1953 Mrs. Hoon, her husband Ranjit, their three children Vinoo, Vineeta, and Varuna, and their major-domo Munshi. They settled into a bungalow on Bishop Waller's Avenue, near Edward Elliot's Road. The monthly rent for the single-storeyed dwelling with a large terrace, where the family slept during the summer, was Rs. 150. A local maid, Jeelani Begum, who spoke Urdu and Tamil, was the Punjabi family's

# The Principal from the Punjab

interpreter. To get into the know of things, the Hoons were regular spectators at the Carnatic music and Bharata Natyam concerts held on the open-air stage in Hotel Woodlands near their house.

Mrs. Hoon started her long career in education in the South at the Children's Garden School as an observer. Being at the "right place at the right time," Mrs. Hoon, after a Masters in Psychology, was selected as the founder principal of the Punjab Association's Adarsh Vidyalaya inaugurated on July 11, 1954. The school was established in a house set in about seven or eight grounds in Peter's Road, Royapettah. The school was a natural choice for Punjabi, Marwari, Gujarati and Hindi speaking children. In 1957, Mrs. Hoon took a year off to study for a Bachelor's course in Teaching at Lady Willingdon College in Triplicane. Among the many incidents she recalls, there is one about how she and her friends, pretending to be reporters, walked past the watchman into the Travancore Sisters' house. But their consciences pricked, and they



Visharda Hoon as Founder - Principal of Adarsh Vidyalaya

The author joined the Kendra Vidyalaya Sanghatan in 1965 and, like history repeating itself, took over as Principal of the fledgling Adarsh Kendriya Vidyalaya. The Punjab Association had been instrumental in starting this school too. It was initially managed out of Adarsh Vidyalaya itself, then moved to Royapettah High Road and in July 1968 to Gill Nagar. Mrs. Hoon was fully involved in the construction of the new school buildings in a developing locality. After five years at K.V. Gill

visory board member for social sciences in NCERT, New Delhi, and Mother Teresa Women's University and as an honorary correspondent of Adarsh Schools for ten years from 1986.

Her pen portrait of life in Lahore provides a wealth of detail about the pre-Independence British Raj, her ancestral home built in 12 *canals* (1.5 acres), growing up in a Manglik family, her school and college education, the 1946 summer meetings at the hill station of Murree in Rawalpindi District with Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, who wrote *God is Love* in her autograph book, Pt. Nehru, who wrote her a thank you note from Srinagar for her cash donation, and Jai Prakash Narayan, listening to leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose and Maulana Azad at Bradlaw Hall, Lahore, seeing the movie *Sikandar* eight times, hearing of the announcement of Partition in June, descriptions of the communal outrage, 'Kafilas', the massive caravans of people on foot moving from either sides of the border, fleeing to Dehra Dun, celebrating Independence there, moving to G.B. Road, Delhi, and living as refugees albeit with the self-reliant pride of the Punjabis, her wedding in January 1948, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on the same day, less than a couple of hours later, and writing her Master's exam while expecting her first child.

Here is a book that tells not only her story, but recounts the life and events that surrounded her over eight decades. Few educationists have had the record she has. But at the end of it all, she is best remembered for her contributions to the Punjabis settling in Madras and to Geography.

• by T.K. Srinivasa Chari

blurted out the truth. The sportive Ragini and Padmini not only briefed the teacher trainees about their just-concluded tour abroad, but also served the girls coffee.

In 1965, the author's love for Geography prompted her to get a P.G. Diploma in the subject from the Madras University. Till today, Mrs. Hoon's old students remember her more as a Geography teacher than as a principal. With colleagues like Geography teachers M.P. Rajagopal of M.Ct.M. School and Dr. Irawathy of Queen Mary's College, she helped to start the Association of Geography Teachers of India which conducted periodical conferences and workshops for teachers, drafted the subject syllabi and made the topic more interesting for students through visual presentations and conducted off field trips, talent tests and quizzes. Fittingly, as a Geography teacher, Mrs. Hoon narrates her experiences travelling all over India, then in the USA as a Fulbright scholar to study school administration, and globe-trotting to China, Japan, U.S.S.R., Europe, and the Scandinavian countries as a member of the Indo-Soviet Friendship Society and Indian Federation of University Women's Association.

Nagar, she was transferred to the school in the Air Force Station, Tambaram, a commute of 30 km, by cycle rickshaw and EMU trains. Her next posting was as Principal of KV IIT which included a primary school in the C.L.R.I. Campus. This was followed by a three-year sojourn at the KV in Kathmandu. She then returned to KV A.F.S., Tambaram, and KV C.L.R.I. After two decades, she retired as Education Officer of the KV Sanghatan, South. Mrs. Hoon also served as an ad-

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# Seeing scenes in perspective

(Continued from page 5)

bushes that were behind the frontal ones. I began working on my drawing with large buds in the nearby bushes making them progressively smaller but in larger numbers. This would lead the eye to a group of typical tile-roofed village houses, flanked by coconut palms, with the distant Western Ghats as the backdrop.

No photograph of the jasmine garden – or any jasmine garden for that matter – would resemble my artwork, which gives the illusion of floating above the blooms. Here, I tried to capture the essence of the garden rather than aim for photographic realism. When I completed the drawing in 2003, I experienced a special sense of fulfilment that I had been granted the grace to create such a piece of artwork with my severely impaired vision.

● Mahema told me on the phone that we were to go to Cottingley to survey and take pictures of the building for Mano to sketch. She added that it was the official residence of the British Deputy High Commissioner, whose wife wanted an original ink drawing of the house by Mano. Be early, Mahe told me, because the soft early morning light is a little less harsh on Mano's eye.

We reached Cottingley well on time. It is a sprawling colonial-style house, with a gracious portico, surrounded by waving palms and lots of lush greenery. Understandably, Mano requested Mahema to suggest the right location and angle for the artwork. We clicked several pictures and left.

After a week or so, we went again to Cottingley on another sketching expedition. Acute tunnel vision is a part of Mano's visual problem. He could see unclearly only a tiny portion of the large house, through the narrow cone of his vision. With all the greenery surrounding the building, he had difficulty comprehending the complex shape of the edifice. So, Mano wanted to get a feel of the building. I explained, as best as I could, its prime architectural features. Mano gave me a piece of paper and asked me to fold it in the shape of the facade. Holding it in his hand, he directed me to lead him close to the house. I did this as much as the cacti and palms would permit. I held his hand and made him touch the building wherever possible. He asked such penetrating questions that I looked at Cottingley in a new light. We then left for breakfast.

It took me two days to print the pictures on A5-size paper. Well before I could send the photographs to him, a letter arrived for me. It was a copy of a letter from Mano to Dr. Venkataswamy (Chief of Aravind Eye Hospital), describing our recent foray and enclosing a sketch of Cottingley as Mano had seen it in his mind's eye. To my utter astonishment, the quick sketch (below) was a very good replica of the building – a building he could hardly see.



To this day, I am never tired of recounting this tale. To me, it was just one more instance of Mano's and Mahe's amazing ability to triumph over disabilities

and stubborn refusal to let them get in the way of their enjoyment of life and art. I realised that he did the sketch, not so much using his eyes, but more from his inner vision and a deep sight into perspective in art. As he explained in his letter, once he was able to visualise anything three dimensionally inside his mind, he could put it on paper using his deep knowledge of perspective. The fact is that he cannot see your face even at close quarters, but the reality is that he can draw a building based on touch, feel and sketchy descriptions. That is Mano.

Mano and Mahema, of course, shared with me the final ink drawing of Cottingley (below). I was very happy that I had made my contribution towards the creation of this and other drawings by Mano.

– Joan Rajadas  
(who often helps Mano)



(Concluded)



**Till April 20:** *Prana* – an art exhibition by the students of Visual Arts (Painting Specialisation), Stella Maris College (at Lalit Kala Akademi).

**Till April 26:** *Alphonso* – A retrospective of senior artist Alphonso Arul Doss (at DakshinaChitra).

**Till April 28:** Art exhibition by Dhan Prasad on the theme *Fortune Teller* (at DakshinaChitra).

**April 19:** *Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra*, featuring:

Anton Webern: Six Pieces for orchestra Op. 6B; Ludwig van Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat major "Emperor"; Ri-

chard Strauss: Ein Heldenleben (7.00 p.m. at Digital Concert Hall, Goethe-Institut)

**May 1-31:** Art exhibition by Anthony Raj and Ramu (at DakshinaChitra)

Art works by Veera Santhanam – 'Museum collections make connections' (at DakshinaChitra).

**June 4-30:** Art exhibition by Brijesh Devarreddy (at DakshinaChitra).

**June 5-30:** Photographs by Kushboo Bharti – art in public spaces of Jaipur. (at DakshinaChitra)

\* \* \*

## DakshinaChitra Workshops

- For adults
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  - May 10, 11 & 17: Terracotta jewellery making
  - May 17 & 18: Kerala Mural on duppatta
  - May 31: Paper Quilling jewellery
  - For Children (8-14 years)
  - May 1-4: Studio Pottery – Four types of pottery
  - May 10: Activity Camp One
  - May 17: Miniature Heritage house models
  - May 24: Activity Camp Two
- To register please call 98417 77779

# OF 'OFFICIAL' SLUMS AND 'UNOFFICIAL' ONES

(Continued from page 1)

and more habitable. The best examples of such activities were in the 1930s when Ayodhyakuppam was transformed. Work then continued sporadically with another burst of commendable activity in the years immediately after Independence.

Rather ironically, the setting up of the TNSCB was to see the decline in such efforts, though the sheer inaction in recent years is inexplicable. The TNSCB has to just look all around its rather shabby headquarters by the Marina to see several glaring instances of slums – behind Simpsons, near the Bodyguard Lines and, of course, all along the Cooum.

What has however been happening is the spending of huge amounts of money obtained under schemes such as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and the Rajeev Awas Yojana (RAY) to build resettlement colonies for the slum dwellers.

These serve no earthly purpose whatsoever, as the residents of slums need to be near their places of work.

There have in the recent past been attempts to relocate the age-old fishing hamlets by the Marina in places far removed from the sea, such as Maraimalai Nagar!

As a consequence, many of these new settlement colonies

have remained uninhabited. In some cases, people have taken possession, rented out the space to others and moved back to their original location. To what purpose then the huge amounts spent?

It is high time the TNSCB woke up from its sloth and began looking at creative solutions for improving the conditions of people living in slums. It cannot take cover under the fact that the Act that saw its creation mandates it to handle only 'approved' slums and the rest can fend for themselves. And it should also remember that even in the case of the so-called 'official' slums, it can afford to do a lot more than what it is doing.

# The multi-faceted Balfour

(Continued from page 5)

## His masterpiece

In 1857 appeared the 4-volume work by which Balfour is best known: *The Cyclopaedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia, Commercial, Industrial, and Scientific*. This book embodied profound experience, extensive reading, and indefatigable effort. A second edition, in five volumes, appeared in India in 1873, and between 1877 and 1884. Balfour revised the book for publication in England. After the first edition, the word 'cyclopaedia' was substituted in the title for 'encyclopaedia'. The third edition, which was published in London in 1885, was at many points superior to the earlier impressions. Balfour's outlay on it was lavish

and ungrudging, but the usefulness of the work was soon generally recognised, and the whole expenditure was met within two years. While working on the updated and third revision of his *Cyclopaedia of India* in London, he published *Indian Forestry* (1885) and *The Agricultural Pests of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia, Vegetable, Animal* (1887).

## Miscellaneous publications

Before leaving India Balfour wrote two pamphlets -under the general title *Medical hints to the people of India*, of which one was *The Vydian and the Hakim, what do they know of Medicine?* and the other was *Eminent medical men of Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, who have advanced medical science*. Both were published in Madras in 1875,

and ran into second editions in the following year. He also translated J. T. Conquest's *Outlines of Midwifery* into Hindustani and procured and printed at his own expense translations of the same work in Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. He also translated Tate's *Astronomy* into Hindustani; he prepared *Statistical Map of the World* (1854) in both Hindustani and English, which was also printed in Tamil and Telugu.

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Balfour amazingly linked science, science administration, and human values, while serving in India. Quite appropriately, this remarkable Scot is remembered today in Madras in Balfour Road, Kilpauk.

The hiring of foreign coaches by India and other cricket playing countries has been the subject of much debate in the last decade or so, but English and other coaches from abroad have done duty in India, South Africa, New Zealand and West Indies at the first class and other levels of domestic cricket for well over fifty years.

Albert Frederick Wensley (1898-1970), a veteran Sussex all-rounder, was among the earliest to coach in India, after he came to assist Nawanager in the Ranji Trophy in the 1936-37 season. He played a stellar role in Nawanager's title triumph that season, with eight wickets in the final against Bengal. He also played an equally crucial role scoring 67 in the second innings of the final against Hyderabad next year, which Nawanager lost by one wicket, with Hyderabad succeeding in a thrilling 310-run chase. Eddie Aibara, another coach of repute post-retirement, made an unbeaten 137 for Hyderabad. Wensley took 2 for 38 and 1 for 48 in the match. Amar Singh and Vinoo Mankad were among his Nawanager teammates in what were perhaps the sunrise years of professional cricket in India.

Bert Wensley was the Sussex professional from 1922 to 1936, taking 1,135 wickets and scoring 10,735 runs. He achieved the cricketer's double in 1929, scoring 1,057 runs and dismiss-

ing 113 batsmen. In each of four other years he took 100 wickets and performed the hat-trick against Middlesex at Lord's in 1935. As a professional in New Zealand, he returned the best bowling analysis of his career with nine Otago wickets for 36 for Auckland in 1929-30.

The highest of his five centuries in county cricket was his 140 against Glamorgan. Three times he completed 1,000 runs in a summer for the county. Strong in driving and pulling, he hit 120 in 110 minutes against Derbyshire at Horsham in 1930, when he and H.W. Parks added 178 for the ninth wicket, a Sussex record. A reliable close-in fieldsman, he twice held five catches in an innings and in the second Warwickshire innings at Edgbaston in 1932 he had a hand in the dismissal of nine of the ten batsmen, returning bowling figures of six wickets for 73 runs. This was the player who came out to coach in Madras in the 1940s.

Organised coaching in Madras was first arranged in the BS Nets, a facility the Madras Cricket Association established in 1944 in memory of B. Subramaniam, Buchi Babu's faithful

# A.F. Wensley and other coaches



Albert Frederick Wensley.

lieutenant. The much loved 'Pattu', V. Pattabhiraman, and the respected cricket writer S.K. Gurunathan were the two-member committee entrusted with the task.

Very soon, BS Nets, which opened at the northeastern corner of Chepauk, and later expanded to include such bran-

## • by V. Ramnarayan

ches as the Bhat Nets at MUC, became the hub of official coaching activity in the city. Wensley was imported by the Madras Cricket Association largely through the efforts of Pattu, and he was instrumental in the development along proper lines of many a promising Madras cricketer.

Wensley made quite a few trips to Madras, even into the 1950s, when many young cricketers enjoyed his benevolent guidance.

A direct beneficiary of Wensley's coaching skills was A.G. Ram Singh, who, first assisted him and, in time, became a much-respected coach himself. In turn, Ram Singh was assisted by such devoted coaches as K.S. Kannan and N.J. Venkatesan, who served Tamil Nadu cricket very well for years.

Another veteran coach to distinguish himself was S.E. Audhi Chetty, while the much younger P.K. Dharmalingam was a fixture in official TNCA coaching efforts for many years. Dharma, in addition to coaching State teams at various levels, also had the distinction of assisting in coaching camps for the Indian team, besides being a pioneer in coaching women cricketers.

To go back to 'MCA' days, the BCCI-constituted Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur scheme enabled the association to avail itself of the services of many coaches under the scheme. Some of them were Ram Singh, Hemu Adhikari, C.K. Nayudu, and M. Rehmat Baig. There were a few English coaches as well, coming to India during their winter to run short camps. Frank Tyson, Eddie Paynter and Mike Goodwin were some of the more prominent imports. Goodwin and T.S. Worthington, a very popular figure in the early 1960s, coached in Madras.

An unforgettable foreign coach was the West Indies fast bowler Roy Gilchrist who was in Madras in the 1960s under a special dispensation of the Board, coaching our young fast bowling prospects and also playing for South Zone in the Duleep Trophy. Known for his unorthodox, even eccentric ways, Gilchrist was a tough taskmaster, and sure enough some of the fast bowlers in his camp started playing truant after the first few days of his camp. Some of us were witness to the

spectacular sight of Gilchrist chasing a recalcitrant young paceman on Mount Road when he caught him trying to slip away, while watching a cricket match at the Government Arts College.

Syed Mushtaq Ali, the most exciting Indian batsman of the pre-War era, Ramnath Kenny and Joe Kamath were some of the coaches from other States to do duty in Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu has also been an important contributor of coaches to the National and Zonal Cricket Academies of the BCCI. An impressive number of Tamil Nadu coaches have qualified as Level I, II and III coaches. Today, every district of the TNCA has a coaching programme run by qualified coaches.

The MRF Pace Foundation was started by the tyre major MRF Limited two decades ago. The Foundation's coaching programme to unearth and train fast bowlers was spearheaded by Australian fast bowling guru Dennis Lillee, assisted by Tamil Nadu and India fast bowler T.A. Sekar. Today, Glen McGrath and M. Senthilnathan have taken Lillee's and Sekar's places.

Another premier coaching establishment of Madras was the MAC Foundation's Spin Academy, supported by the AC Muthiah-led MAC group of companies. The first spin bowler of calibre to head the academy was V.V. Kumar.

Private enterprise has also been responsible for a veritable boom in coaching activity in Chennai, with coaching schools and clinics galore being established. There is certainly no dearth of coaches and coaching in Tamil Nadu, though the skeptics may ask to what effect, going by the poor performance of the State team in recent years!

## Answers to Quiz

1. Crimea; 2. Saudi Arabia; 3. Sea anemone; 4. Magic Bus; 5. Air pollution; 6. 'How I Met Your Mother'; 7. Khanty-Mansiysk; 8. Pritzker Prize; 9. It is a 6-shot cylinder revolver that is being marketed as India's first gun for women to defend themselves; 10. South Africa.

\* \* \*

11. R. Venketesh; 12. Anoop Jaiswal; 13. Durgarayapatnam (known as Armagon in the 17th century); 14. Krupabai Sathianadhan; 15. Chintadripet; 16. St. Thomas Street; 17. Nageswara Rao; 18. Florence 'Lady with the Lamp' Nightingale; 19. Sahitya Akademi Award winners for Tamil writing; 20. It was the agreement between the ruling Raghunatha Nayak and the Danes inviting the latter to trade from Tarangampadi (Tranque-bar).

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