

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

FLASH

'Agreement in principle' to Tranquebar restoration

The Danish Government and the Tamil Nadu Government have "agreed in principle" on the restoration of the 18th Century Danish settlement of Tranquebar (Tarangambadi). This agreement was reached during Danish Ambassador Birgit Madsen's farewell call on Chief Minister Jayalalitha on June 13th.

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FREE ISSUE

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Fair winds for new life in Pulicat

Fair blow the winds for the revival of Pulicat through its development as a 'heritage village' with Dutch inputs. But there is still a long way to go before dreams turn into reality.

Those first dreams have over the last two years been expressed

in *Madras Musings*:

- Of how visiting Dutch architects and scholars were keen on this early 17th Century headquarters of Holland's trade from the Arabian Sea to the Pacific being in some way restored to reflect its former importance;
- Of how these visitors had approached the Tamil Nadu chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cul-

inputs would be forthcoming, first for a master plan, and then for any specific project included in the master plan, provided that:

- 1) the people of Pulicat, the local authority and the Government of Tamil Nadu expressed committed interest in the preparation of such a master plan; and
- 2) the master plan was based on the 'heritage village' concept suggested by INTACH-TN and a holistic approach that emphasised the local population's participation was adopted.

The letter of interest that INTACH-TN sought from the Government never material-

● by A Special Correspondent

tural Heritage (INTACH-TN) with their ideas and how INTACH-TN had voluntarily undertaken a study and preparation of a preliminary report over a period of six weeks; and

- Of how this report was given to the Government and the Netherlands' embassy, both of whom expressed verbal interest in the suggestions made.

Little happened after that, till some universities and NGOs in Holland saw the report that had been sent to them by the embassy and were excited by the possibilities. A visiting parliamentary delegation from the Netherlands to whom the report was also shown, made it a point to visit Pulicat during their Indian tour a few months ago. The consequence of both was the Dutch Embassy informing INTACH-TN that Dutch

inputs would be forthcoming, first for a master plan, and then for any specific project included in the master plan, provided that:

ised, but with the recent visit of the Embassy's Cultural Attache, INTACH-TN attempted to galvanise official interest and the winds appear to be blowing favourably. During Dr. Robert Aarsse's visit, he, The Netherlands' trade representative in Chennai and INTACH-TN coordinators met the MLA for Ponneri, A.S. Kannan, who had campaigned in Pulicat promising a revival of the township, and Secretary for Tourism, Ramdoss, I.A.S. A formal communication of a positive reaction to INTACH from both, reflecting an interest in a master plan for heritage and eco-tourism development in Pulicat, is now awaited for the next step to be taken.

In broad outline, the INTACH-TN vision for Pulicat as a 'heritage village' and an eco-tourism centre, focussing

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A Pulicat street, with some of the town's century-old houses. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

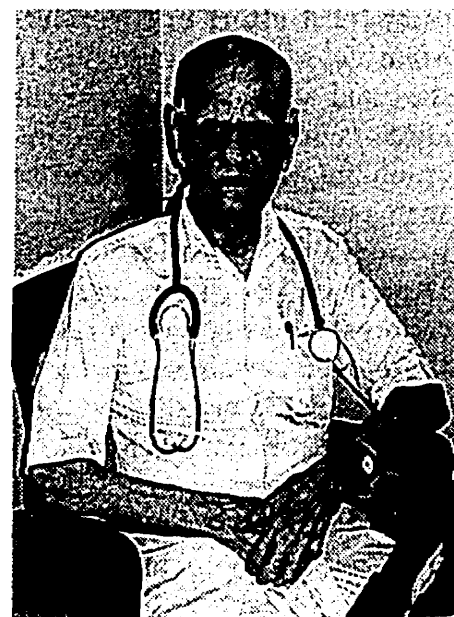
Is 96-year-old doctor setting a world record?

How many doctors can claim the rare privilege of having treated as many as five generations of the same family during their years of medical practice? For 96-year old Dr. Ramaswami Lakshmanan, this uncommon opportunity presents itself almost every day! Among the 40-odd patients who come to his clinic each day, there's inevitably someone whose great-grandmother or great-grandfather he had once treated.

"When I first set up my medical practice in Vellore in 1930, I would treat the parents and grandparents of my friends. Today, the grandchildren and even the great-grandchildren of these same friends continue to be my patients!" he says. Obviously, this is not a claim many doctors anywhere in the world can make, for the Keeper of Records of the Guinness World Records Ltd. has recognised him as being one of the world's longest serving medical practitioners, from 1930 till today.

Born in Namakkal in 1905, Lakshmanan was the youngest of seven brothers. His father was the headmaster of a high school. The family migrated to Vellore in 1920 and

Lakshmanan studied in Venkateswara High School and later in Voorhees College whose distinguished alumni includes India's former President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. In 1924, Lakshmanan joined the Madras Medical College and after completing his MBBS degree continued to work as a tutor in



Dr. Ramaswami Lakshmanan.

Pharmacology at his alma mater. A year later, when the post was abolished, Dr. Lakshmanan decided to move to Vellore to set up his own practice.

During the early years of his practice, Dr. Lakshmanan also worked as the Honorary Assistant Surgeon at the Government Pentland Hospital in

Vellore but had to give up this post in 1937 because of the rapidly increasing number of patients who came to his clinic.

When Dr. Lakshmanan set up his practice in Vellore, he was one of the first private practitioners to do so. Beginning in a clinic attached to his residence on GPH Road, he quickly became one of the most sought after doctors and the list of his patients, which usually included the District Collector and the Superintendent of Police, read like a veritable 'Who's Who' of Vellore. He now occupies a far more modest residence-cum-clinic on Thennamaram Street. And though this narrow congested street is teeming with private practitioners, all of them younger and most of them boasting of more modern clinics, Dr. Lakshmanan still has his own loyal band of patients who will never take their medical complaints to any other doctor, such being their unshakeable faith in his "healing touch" or what Tamilians call *kai raasi*.

Spry, alert and still interested in everything around him, Dr. Lakshmanan is an excellent example of the assertion that while growing older is

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Do Tamil Nadu's heritage towns have a future?

The Man From Madras Musings was delighted to read yet another newspaper report urging the relocation of facilities at heritage sites if the sites are to be better preserved for posterity. But MMM is confident that YET ANOTHER story will be followed only by YET MORE INACTION on such suggestions.

The recent story was illustrated with a picture bespeaking Mamallapuram's heritage wealth. In the context of the story, this was a most appropriate picture, for it is to relocate the facilities in Mamallapuram and clean up the heritage area that report after report has been produced over the last THIRTY YEARS with NO ACTION worth its name being taken on the suggestions made. These reports include reports by UN experts, INTACH Tamil Nadu and private consultants. All of them are agreed on one thing: the heart of Mamallapuram, in effect the present township, needs to be cleared of all vehicular traffic, the bus stand should be shifted and all commercial activity should, ideally, be moved out of the area, but since much of it is well-established it must be very strictly licensed and regulated to ensure friendly integration with the core area. This, MMM repeats, has been talked about for thirty years and, despite Mamallapuram being declared a World Heritage site since suggestions for its greater protection were first made, little or nothing has been done on the lines of the recommendations made. MMM wonders whether the recommendations will ever be implemented.

What strikes MMM as amusing in this context is the plans that have been suggested for the forty or so Heritage Towns that the Town and Country Planning Department wants to offer a modicum of protection and improvement to. In the first instance, the consultants appointed had little or no experience in heritage protection and conservation. The result has been that the plans offer exactly the kind of 'facilities' that have ruined Mamallapuram and have been looked at from the point of view of anticipated 'droves' of visitors and not from protecting and conserving heritage sites. In the second place, most of the consultants have shown little knowledge of the history and the heritage of the Heritage Towns they were commissioned to work on. MMM met a couple of consultants and planners involved with these reports and there could be no better example of this lack of background knowledge than some of the statements they made.

Tranquebar (Tarangambadi) was a Dutch settlement, said one, who obviously knew nothing of the Danish connection. And two others wanted to protect Chettinad township, little realising that the township developed around a railway station established in the Thirties and had little to do with the area of

75 villages that constitute Chettinad and which warrants being declared a HERITAGE AREA. It is the whole multi-village area that is Chettinad that needs conservation, not the new township or the old market town that YET ANOTHER story will be followed only by YET MORE INACTION on such suggestions.

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It may not be a Centre of Excellence, but certainly a plan of excellence that deserves to be implemented as though it was indeed a Centre of Excellence is the proposal to collect and archive all material about the University since its founding in 1857 - and, MMM hopes, from the time higher education as we know it today was first thought of in Madras, which would take us back around 160 years. MMM wishes the Departments of Mass Communication and Library Science and the Library good luck with their joint effort but wonders when and where they are going to start and whether they have the kind of computerisation and microfilming equipment at hand for such a major project. MMM also wonders whether the Departments of History and Education should not have a role in the project. Certainly as members of the steering or advisory committee they might well be able to offer suggestions on several leads that would need to be followed if a comprehensive archival collection is to be developed.

While the archival project might well be considered an indicator of a sense of history possessed by this 'University of Excellence', what is more important is how the archive is maintained if and when it is created. The monument to neglect that Senate House is a standing example of, does not redound to the credit of a 'University of Excellence'. Nor does the walkabout from the library of valuable books, like the four volumes of the first edition

of *Vestiges of Old Madras*, as well as many lesser ones. To MMM, restoring Senate House and ensuring the Library has a strong old collection would not only demonstrate a greater sense of history but they would also be a demonstration of intent to make the new archives as well-stocked and well-maintained as them.

Making a difference

Easier than establishing these Centres of Excellence and setting up archives would be changes of curriculum and new looks at old subjects by our universities. This was a thought that struck *The Man From Madras Musings* recently while reading a book by Norman Cousins who for more than a quarter century was editor of the *Saturday Review*, that leading American weekly on ideas and the arts. This journalist-thinker exchanged the world of public affairs for academia when he retired from the weekly. But what he joined was the faculty of the School of Medicine, University of California in Los Angeles, one of the most prestigious medical institutions in the world. Yet no doctor was he. But he felt medical students needed to be exposed to the world of humanities if they were to adopt more human and caring approaches than purely medical

ones. MMM can do no better than reproduce excerpts here from *The Healing Heart* to stress to our engineering, medical and management institutions the need to introduce the Cousins' way in their curriculum:

"One day in 1978, I received a letter from Dr. Sherman Mellinkoff, dean of the School of Medicine (at UCLA), inviting me to join the faculty of his school..."

I thought it might be fun to try to teach literature and philosophy to medical students. As Dr. Bernard Lown points out, young people going into medicine tend to bypass the liberal arts. In their undergraduate education they concentrate on the sciences in an attempt to present impressive credentials to the admissions committees of medical schools. Once having been admitted, they become even more preoccupied with the sciences. They find even less scope for liberal education than in undergraduate school.

The result is that many medical students are superbly trained but poorly educated. One of the frequent observations made in this connection is that, when they become physicians, they know more about disease than about people. Technology dominates the stage.

Dr. Mellinkoff said that some medical schools, UCLA included, were attempting to stress the importance of the humanities in the medical curriculum...

Again, I wondered whether a course on the physician in world literature might fit in with this new emphasis. The impact of serious illness on people was a recurrent theme in many novels. The physicians in these novels usually had important roles. What was the perception of the physician by the great writers? These attitudes had much to say to young people starting out on a career in medicine. How the great writers saw doctors might be both interesting and instructive.

The dean spoke of the profound impression made on him by writers like Flaubert, Dostoevski, Tolstoy, and Sinclair Lewis. He liked the idea of a course on physicians and writers...

The first course I taught at the medical school was "The Physician in Literature," a subject enabling me to build a natural bridge between running a magazine that began as a review of literature and my new career in a medical school. Dean Mellinkoff had decided to open my course to non-registrants... My role was a relatively minor one. The students themselves led the discussion, talking about their reactions to the way doctors were perceived by writers and other doctors... The students responded enthusiastically to the ideas of writers like Somerset Maugham, Anton Chekhov, and Arthur Conan Doyle, themselves physicians. Out of this exchange came my book *The Physician in Literature*...

The rationale for the course was clear enough... Literature helps the medical student to analogise the patient, to make connections between the experiences of the race and the condition of the individual, and to fit the individual into a world that is less congenial than it ought to be for people who are more fragile than they ought to be. What the world's great literature tells us about medicine is that few things are more important than the psychological management of the patient..."

"In joining the faculty of a medical school, I thought I would have to brace myself for all the shocks that go with a new career, but I quickly discovered that the physician, like the writer, is dependent on communication skills. In journalism, you live or die by your ability to use words. In healthcare, the words used by the physician have a profound effect on the well-being of the patient..."

The wrong words can produce despair and defeat or hinder the usefulness of whatever treatment is prescribed. The wrong words can complicate the healing environment, which is no less central in the care of patients than the factual knowledge that goes into the physician's treatment.

Being able to diagnose correctly is a good test of medical competence. Being able to tell the patient what he or she has to know is a good test of medical

artistry. I recognise the problems involved for the physician in proper communication. There is not only the problem of language itself - how to use words that will not confuse or mislead...

I pray that medical students will never allow their knowledge to get in the way of their relationship with their patients. I pray that all the technological marvels at their command will not prevent them from practising medicine out of a little black bag if they have to...

Making the teaching of humanities and communication to students of science and technology, medicine and management is the greatest contribution a university could make to excellence, MMM has always felt. To do that in its existing faculties is something the University of Madras can do more easily than plans for new Centres of Excellence. To improve the existing departments, to make its existing facilities better is what this 'University of Excellence' should be thinking of, not adding new disciplines and new buildings. MMM hopes that Norman Cousins' words published here would help inspire some such thinking at the University of Madras.

Delayed service

Till a couple of months ago, *The Man From Madras Musings* kept hearing how efficient Metrowater was, how not only it managed well the trickle of water Madras was getting but also how efficiently (albeit a slight bit dangerously) it distributed water through its tankers. Now MMM keeps hearing a completely different song.

Not only has the trickle of water that Metrowater has been serving citizens in their homes dried up, but its promises are also not being kept. Once, if you paid your local Metrowater office a draft for water, the water would be delivered by tanker WITHIN THREE DAYS as promised. Today, the promise remains but when the water will turn up no one knows. MMM knows of at least a couple of homes that had not received their promised water THREE WEEKS after the draft was paid in - neither has the money been refunded.

There was also a time when a complaint about pipes to Metrowater would bring the repair team to your house within a couple of days. MMM knows of some families who have been waiting for two weeks, as these lines are written, for the repair team to come to ensure even the trickle that is now said to be flowing.

MMM wonders what's happened at Metrowater? Is it true as some officials at depots say, that their water tankers for home supply are being hijacked by local politicians and local *thalavars*? Is it true that the repair gangs feel there's no use carrying out repairs when the trickle has no pressure behind it and that even that trickle will dry up? MMM wonders, whither Metrowater?

MMM



Ridiculous marks!

At the Tamil Nadu State Board Higher Secondary Examinations, ridiculously high marks are being awarded in various subjects. The number of students scoring 100% in subjects like Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology is steadily increasing. Even in subjects like Tamil and English, many students score more than 95%.

This has obviously been done to ensure that students of Tamil Nadu stand a good chance of being selected on an all India basis (where selection is on the basis of marks). But what is actually happening is different. At the IIT entrance exam or IAS or CAT (Common Admission Test) for IIMs very few Tamil Nadu State Board students get selected. Because of the inflated marks in the Higher Secondary, the students go about thinking they are very bright. Yet they fail in IIT, CAT or IAS.

The Tamil Nadu Board of Secondary Education needs to review its marking system. It is making a mockery of the examination system which is being ridiculed by other states.

V. Chandrashekar
B 12/4, 25th Cross Street
Besant Nagar, Chennai 600 090.

Getting together

Almost every day, newspapers carry complaints about civic problems from citizens of Chennai, "requesting the concerned (!) authorities to take suitable steps" to set things right. It would appear that only the citizens are concerned, NOT the authorities.

These complaints relate to specific civic problems like water

The toll of hidden currents

This eye-witness account of the tragedy at sea on May 23, 2001, is totally at variance with the many news stories that have appeared in the dailies. It happened at a beach about 2 km north of the Mahabalipuram rock-temples. The witness is my nephew Immanuel (Immy), the younger brother of 18-year-old Livington (Livy) who died, risking his life to save a drowning boy aged 10. This is Immy's account:

"The church priest of the 'Christ The King CSI Church', Adambakkam, on May 23rd took around 25 of us, young members of the church, for an outing on the seashore on the way to Mahabalipuram. After lunch we went to the beach. There was no plan to go for a

swim, but some boys did not heed the warnings and went into the sea. The priest and 10-year-old John were standing on the shore in below-knee-deep water, looking at the sea. Livy and I were standing with others on the sand. The sea looked calm, like a lake, with hardly any waves. Suddenly the priest and the boy went down straight as though the bottom had given way. The priest vanished with a cry and John was seen struggling.

Livy, who had completed one year of study at the YMCA College of Physical Training and had swum only in pools, jumped into the water. The shallow sea where the priest and the boy had been standing was now a deep and dangerous sea with an unseen current raging underneath.

In about ten seconds, I saw my brother coming out of the water pulling the boy by his hand. The boy walked out, but Livy collapsed in a heap in shallow water. He was barely breathing and his pulse was very weak. Apparently his lungs and windpipe were filled up by water and sand which choked him. Efforts were made to revive him, but to no avail. Livy died on our hands. The priest who disappeared has not been traced till the time of writing, May 29th.

On hearing our cries, a nurse, some foreign tourists and others came running from the buildings some 150 metres away. On seeing five more boys struggling in the sea 30 feet away (now there were some waves), they went after them and

brought them to shore. The semi-conscious boys were revived after resuscitation. But for this help the death-toll could have been higher."

How did it happen? Are there such violent currents here that remove the sand from under people's feet with such suddenness as to drown them? Can our scientists throw light on the fury of the Bay of Bengal currents which are ready to swallow people whole? Should not Government warn the public about the furious currents underneath the seemingly placid sea waters of the Bay? What steps should Government take?

D. Francis Theodore
New 5, Kumaran Nagar
7th Cross Street
Peravallur, Chennai 600 082.

shortage and supply, conditions of roads, garbage dumping, manholes (missing or projecting in the middle of the roads), speedbreakers, encroachment of pavements, power breakdowns, traffic congestion, drainage overflows, hoardings, graffiti, crime, jay-walking, sex-joints, open fuse boxes, auto-rickshaw meter tamperings, air and noise pollution and neglect of heritage buildings.

There are several non-governmental institutions and agencies that focus on many of these problems. It is necessary that all these institutions and agencies that now work independently should network and come together under an umbrella. They should list out all civic problems, areawise, and place them before the "concerned authorities" and seek remedial

action, to be carried out under the supervision of the citizens' groups to be set up in each area.

Perhaps, such pro-active citizens' groups can make the respective authorities realise that the people are vigilant and demanding and their complaints cannot be ignored.

It is time Vigil, Fifth Wheel, Catalyst, Consumer Forum, Consumer Action Group, Exnora, women's associations, Blue Cross and other such organisations got together to form an apex citizens' organisation to dialogue with the government and civic authorities.

S. Radhakrishnan
16, Krishnapuri
R.A. Puram, Chennai 600 028.

Editor's Note: *Madras Musings* has made this suggestion several times, but the organisations appear

to prefer individualism rather than unity. We hope reader Radhakrishnan's plea will fall on more open ears and minds.

Minerva, not Mylapore

Ram Singh (Reader K.N. Prabhu stated in MM, May 1st) played for the M.R.C. (Mylapore Recreation Club). This is not correct. He was an active member of the Minerva Cricket Club and played regularly for them.

The league matches between Minerva and T.C.C. used to be watched by large crowds much as the MRC-TCC matches were.

K. Kalyan Raman
25, Bishops Garden
Chennai 600 028.

Answers for water

The water situation in Chennai is becoming more acute. Due

to insufficient storage capacity in the reservoirs, precious water has had to be let into the sea more than one occasion. In order to increase the storage capacity, it was proposed to raise the bund of the reservoirs at Poondi, Sholavaram by about 5 ft. Has this been done?

Conversion of sea water into fresh water economically has also to be considered, to meet the demand of the increasing population.

K. Krishnaswami
31, Vaidyarama Street
T. Nagar, Chennai 600 017.

For, not against, them

To my mind, the heading "People Vs. Mosquitoes" (MM, May 1st), should read "People FOR Mosquitoes"! For, by our non-hygienic habits, we provide sites for and encourage mosquito breeding. Judged by our actions, we are for mosquitoes and do nothing even by default to inconvenience their life style.

Thanks to municipal apathy and unhygienic surroundings of the poor, mosquitoes get another push. Not only are we for mosquitoes, but a substantial segment of our population also lives off mosquitoes, namely those who manufacture and sell creams, tablets, coils, electrical gadgets, all purportedly against mosquitoes.

N. Dharmeshwaran
21, Kumaran Nagar
Guduvancherry

Dirty platforms

The railways spend lakhs every year to ensure cleanliness of its platforms. Several voluntary organisations also regularly rope in school and college students for cleaning campaigns. But all to no avail. The railway station walls are dirty, pasted over with all sorts of Railway Union posters of varying sizes and colours. Even platform signboards and important notice boards are not spared.

The various Railway Unions must confine their poster campaigns to their offices or to a particular place specially designated for the purpose, not on platforms meant for the public.

Dr. S. Shanker Dev
"Rylas"
6, Giri Road
T. Nagar
Chennai 600 017.

Nostalgia Those days...

The Binny building (MM, May 16th) is as prominent a landmark of George Town as SBI Main Branch to its east and the St. Columban's School on Mclean's Street to its west. It would be a heartache for old Madras to find a steel and chromium structure in its place in the future. It was my neighbour in a way, as I had studied at St. Columban's School in the early fifties. Our car, a monstrous Hudson, used to be parked on Mclean's Street or Sembudoss Corner. Today, I wonder how on earth the driver manoeuvred it. Columban's, bless its red brick soul, is just as it used to be, touch wood. Externally, that is...

Names remembered

One of my favourite customers when I was the Branch Manager of the SBI at Kodaikanal during 1983-85 was R.T. Parthasarathy, former Rajya Sabha member, former cricketer and famous comen-

tator. I once asked him who was the most explosive batsman he had seen. I thought he would say Lala Amarnath, Miller or Mushtaq Ali. Instead, he said, it was Sathasivam, the Sri Lankan batsman, was his choice. I met and befriended a number of prominent Sri Lankan Tamils who came to Kodaikanal in 1983 to escape the ethnic strife. One of them, A.E. Pararajasingham, a Sri Lankan rubber tycoon and cricket enthusiast, also plumped for Sathasivam, but he also named Clive Inman. Another visitor, Muruganandam, a son of a business tycoon, the late Kadirvel Chettiar, told me there was a cricketer called Kannayiram who played cricket for India and settled in Madurai. He learnt his cricket in Sri Lanka, it seems. This was news to me at the time. I note *The Corner Flag* made mention of this in MM of June 1st.

C.G. Prasad
9, C.S. Mudali Street
Kondithope, Chennai 600 079.

English and M.C.C.

In the 1940s, English was taught in Madras Christian College by Scottish stalwarts like the legendary Rev. A.J. Boyd (MM, May 16th), Rev. Martin, Rev. MacPhail and Rev. McNicol and Indians like Deacon Joseph and Prof. Asirvadam.

While Rev. Boyd and Rev. Martin concentrated on syntactic exactitudes, Rev. MacPhail emphasised pronunciation. He used to ask each student to read a passage from the textbook and correct the way each word was pronounced. Rev. McNicol was a born clown resembling the thinner of the Laurel-Hardy pair. He kept the students' interest alive with his Scottish wit and humour. Deacon Joseph had just entered the teaching profession. He was a bit self-conscious but otherwise a good teacher. Prof. Asirvadam was somewhat burly, dark and had white brows and moustache. Since he reminded us of the image in a negative photo film, he earned the sobriquet 'Negative Professor'. He was a jolly man, always ready to share a joke with students.

It used to be a pleasure to

learn English from these superb teachers. They were a dedicated lot and their sole purpose in life was to make better persons of the students who came under their tutelage.

M. Sethuraman
'Sankrithi'
New No. 6,
Second Cross Street
Mahalakshmi Nagar
Adambakkam
Chennai 600 088.

Who was Todhunter?

Could any reader furnish through the columns of *Madras Musings* further information on Charles Todhunter ics? He was Commissioner of Excise in (old) Madras Presidency (which of course extended till Ganjam district of today's Orissa!) sometime in 1917 or so. His name appears in the records of the Madras Cricket Club.

There is a locality called Todhunternagar in Saidapet. Is there any connection between the two?

S. Nagarajan (SMIEEE)
Flat 5C, Cambrae East
Dr. P.V. Cherian Crescent
Egmore, Chennai 600 008.

Cleaning up the thermal power act

June 1, 2001 was the deadline set by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) for thermal power stations located in environmentally sensitive areas to mandatorily use coal with ash content not exceeding 34 per cent. This is particularly relevant to Tamil Nadu where thermal power is greatly depended upon. But who, if any, is complying with the order?!

The deadline set was the result of a study commissioned by the World Bank in 1998 (as well as similar other studies) which had estimated that if the ash emission levels continued at the same rate, by 2014-15, India's thermal power plants would be spewing into the atmosphere three times the ash they produced in 1998. As a consequence, there would be a huge increase in land requirement (in excess of 1,000 sq. km.) for disposal facilities

per cent, moisture content is 4-7 per cent, sulphur content 0.2-0.7 per cent and volatile matter content 25 per cent. The availability of good quality coal with low ash content is limited to certain coal mines in Eastern India where underground mining is carried on.

Coal companies have the responsibility of producing high grade coal for blending. However, that responsibility exists only on paper. For one, Coal India Ltd., a public sector organisation and the largest supplier of coal, is a monopoly. Although private companies in the coal business have recently been allowed to operate, none of them has yet been able to deliver high quality coal.

Another problem is that of logistics. Coal in India is transported by rail, road and sea and often a combination of routes. The Railways carry over 200 million tonnes of coal a year, nearly 50 per cent of the total coal traffic in the country. Since it is in Eastern India that most of high grade coal is produced, railway line capacity from this region has to be strengthened to ensure better movement of this coal to other parts of India where it is required.

Several other things have to be ensured as well — the availability and adequate deployment of rakes, planning of capital investment in rolling stock, loading and unloading arrangements to prevent traffic bottlenecks and delays, proper weighing, sampling and testing facilities, and the existence of legally enforceable commercial fuel transportation agreements.

Indian ports, too, handle a sizeable amount of coal traffic — around 15 per cent. Haldia, Paradip and Visakhapatnam (load ports) and Chennai and Tuticorin (discharge ports) handle most of the thermal coal transported by sea. Haldia has to make do with the problem of poor draft in the Hooghly River, which means that large-size vessels cannot be loaded at the port, a problem that needs urgent redressal, as high grade coal is loaded at Haldia.

Paradip suffers from poor railway infrastructure. What is required there is enhancement of track capacity and construction of bridges. Visakhapatnam is situated away from feeder coalfields and, therefore, thermal coal handling operations at the port are not very economical.



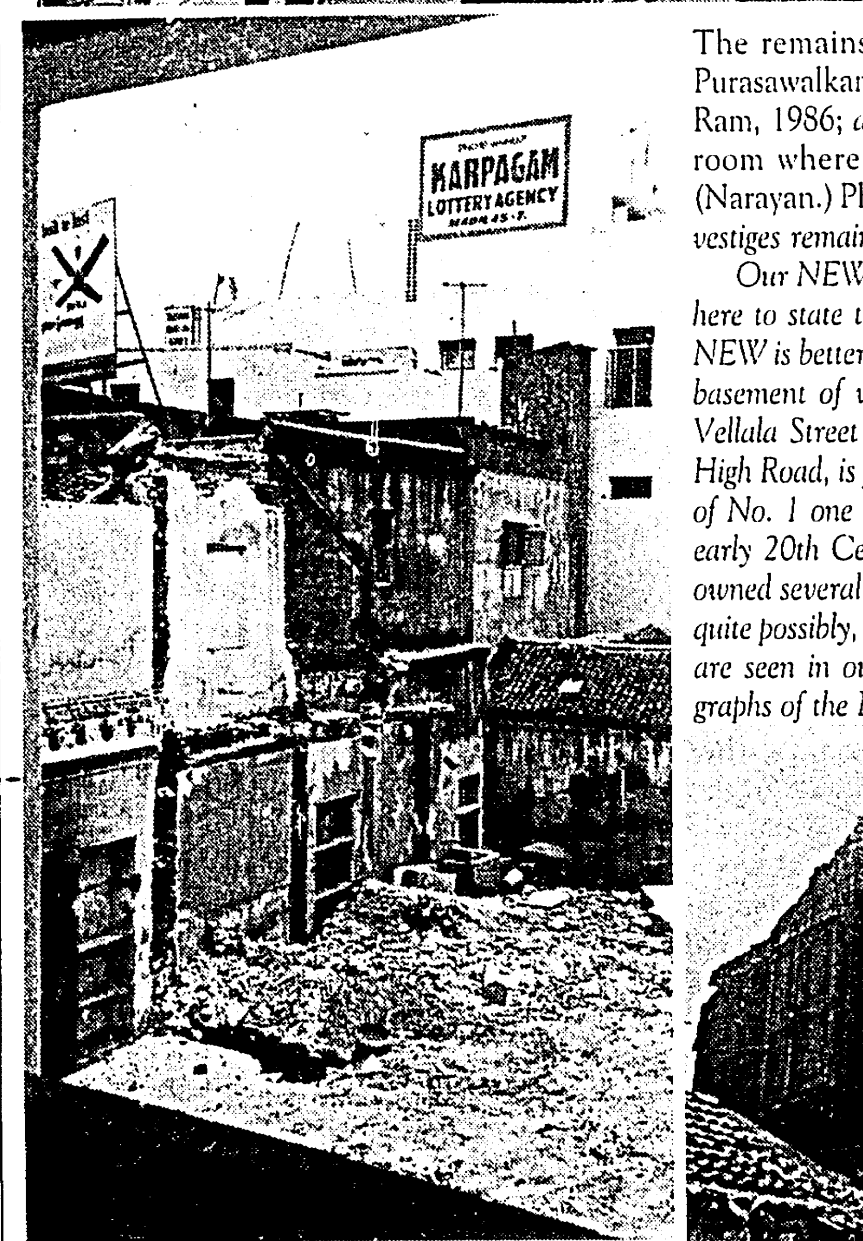
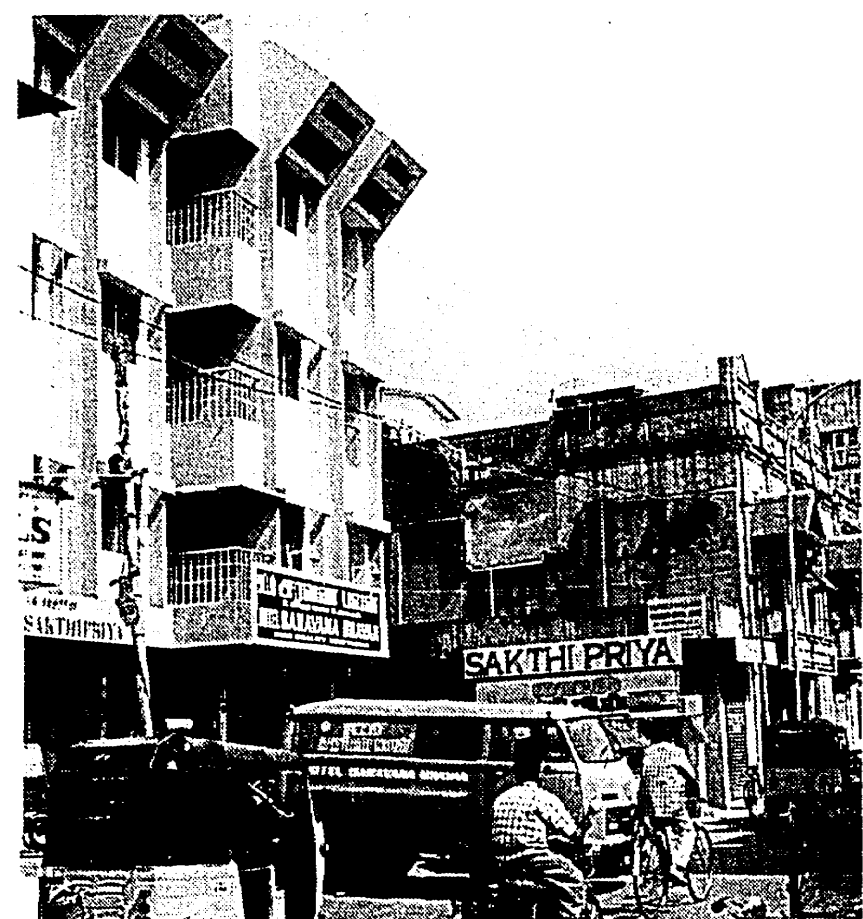
The OLD... ..& The NEW

Our NEW this fortnight is a building to which few are likely to attach any significance, historical, architectural or as a landmark, while our OLD features a building that no longer exists, only vestiges of what it was remaining at the time the pictures for the OLD were taken. Both, however, are of 1, Vellala Street, Purasawalkam. And that's an address that should be remembered but which few do.

It was in 1 Vellala Street, a home built by a Tahsildar who had become prosperous, that his daughter gave birth in 1906 to a boy who was named Narayanaswami. The boy was to spend his first 15 years here before moving to his parents' home in Mysore... where, in time, he was to become known worldwide as R.K. Narayan, a pioneer of the novel in English written by an Indian and a nominee for the Nobel Prize for Literature. Our OLD are photographs of what was left of that home in 1986. They are from Susan and N. Ram's 1996 story of R.K. Narayan's early years, 1906-1945, and were captioned in the book, with reference to the pictures on lower left and below, so:

The remains of the old house at No. 1, Vellala Street, Purasawalkam soon after demolition. Photograph by Susan Ram, 1986; and "You see that crowd. Below that there's the room where I was born — where all of us were born." (Narayan.) Photograph by N. Ram, 1986. Today, not even those vestiges remain.

Our NEW shows what's come in their place with nary a sign here to state that R.K. Narayan was born at this address. The NEW is better known for the Saravana Bhavan restaurant in the basement of what is now the Sakthi Priya lodge (upper left). Vellala Street as it is today, leading north from Purasawalkam High Road, is featured in our NEW above and shows to the right of No. 1 one of the last remaining houses in the area reflecting early 20th Century 'South Indian' architecture. The Tahsildar owned several houses in this locality and this may have been one; quite possibly, the house that was pulled down and whose remains are seen in our OLD may have been in similar style. (Photographs of the NEW by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



Both the Chennai and Tuticorin ports cater exclusively to the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board. Only a small portion of the coal handled at these two ports heads towards other destinations.

There is a shortage of berths at Chennai Port and equipment handling facilities are also not quite sophisticated. Ennore, however, should help improve this situation.

Import restrictions on coal have been removed. But import of coal can at best be only a short-term remedy. The logistics and commercial formalities involved in import are complex. Also, India has huge coal reserves, enough to meet domestic demand, and it would be a case of carrying coal to Newcastle — merely on account of lack of infrastructure.

That infrastructure certainly could not be developed by the

deadline, makes compliance with the order impossible. But that the work on it should start immediately is essential if areas around the power stations are to remain pollution-free. This is something Tamil Nadu in particular should be concerned about because, thermal plants being its major source of power, it is one of the states most environmentally affected by the production of thermal power.

The re-discovery of India's flora

The British who discovered India in the late 18th Century and in the 19th Century, came as amateurs; by profession they were soldiers and administrators. But they returned home as giants of scholarship, re-discoverers of India's priceless historical, cultural and natural heritage.

Nearly a hundred years before the English East India Company gained control over India, Henry van Rheede, the Dutch Governor of Malabar, had ordered the undertaking of a great work on plants called Hortus Malabaricus. The specimens were collected by Brahmin priests between 1674 and 1676 and sent to Cochin, where drawings were made by the missionary Mathoetus and descriptions in Malayalam were translated into Latin by Hermann van Doulop, the Secretary to Government in Cochin. The work was published between 1686 and 1703 in Amsterdam and comprised 12 folio volumes, with 794 plates. The English were to take this work further.

That great pioneer of Indological Studies, including India's flora, Sir William Jones (1747-1794) founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in January 1784. In his inaugural address, he eloquently outlined the objectives of the Society in the following words:

"You will investigate whatever is rare in the stupendous fabric of nature, will correct the geography of Asia...will trace the annals and traditions of those nations, who have peopled or desolated it; you will examine their methods in arithmetic and geometry, in

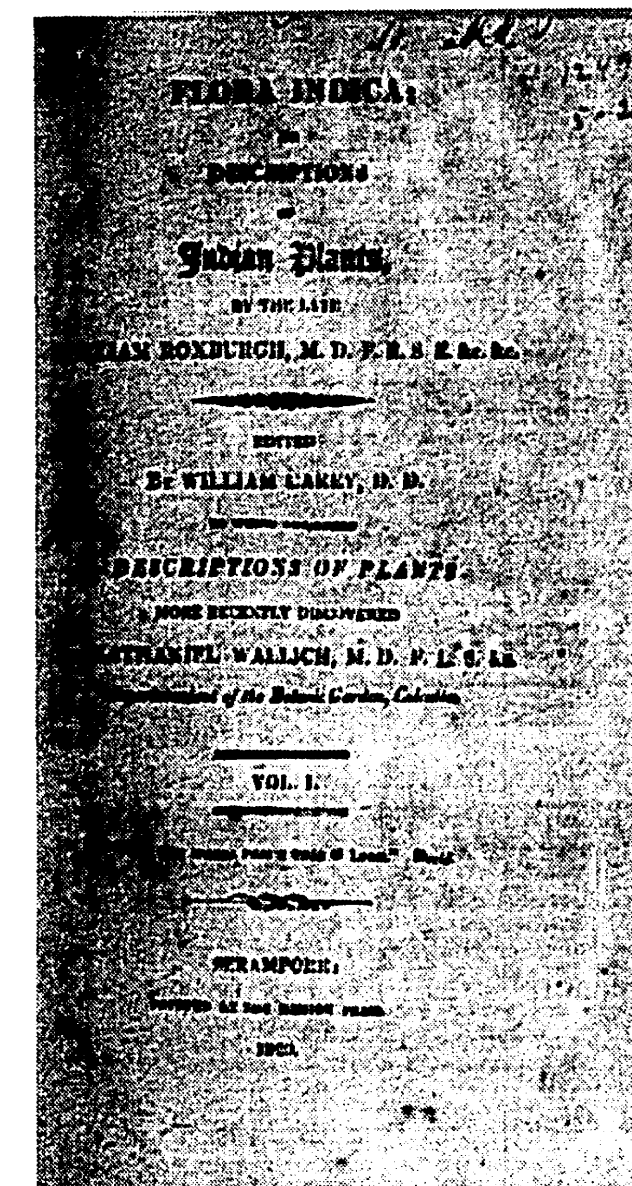
trigonometry, mensuration, mechanics, optics, astronomy and general physics.... in morality, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic; in medicine....anatomy and chemistry. To this you will add researches into their agriculture, manufacture and trade....music, architecture and poetry. If now it be asked what are the intended objects of our enquiries, within these spacious limits, we answer MAN AND NATURE, whatever is performed by the one or produced by the other." (Emphasis is the author's.)

dreds of plants, which are yet imperfectly known to European botanists, and with the virtues of which they are wholly unacquainted, grow wild on the plains and in the forests of India; the *Amarakosh*, an excellent vocabulary of the Sanskrit language, contains in one chapter the names of about 300 medicinal vegetables and the *Dravida-bhidhana* or the *Dictionary of Natural Productions*, includes, I believe, a far greater number, the properties of which are distinctly related in medical tracts of approved authority. Now the first step, in compiling a treatise on the plants of India, should be to write their true names in

● The Voluntary Health Education and Rural Education Society, Madras, recently organised a two-day seminar on 'Medicinal Plants and Quality Standardisation'. V. SUNDARAM, an adviser to the Society, here looks at the re-discovery of India's flora in the 19th Century when the British began to look at the prospects for herbal medicine.

To draw up such a comprehensive scheme was an achievement in itself. But Jones was also the only man of his generation who could himself make a distinguished contribution in all these fields. Among his numerous contributions on all these subjects were learned papers on Indian botany with special reference to medicinal plants. In his paper entitled *The Design Of A Treatise On The Plants Of India*, Jones observed: "Some hun-

Roman letters, according to the most accurate orthography, and in Sanskrit preferably to any vulgar dialect; because a learned language is fixed in books, while popular idioms are in constant fluctuation, and will not, perhaps, be understood a century hence by the inhabitants of these Indian territories, whom future botanists may consult on the common appellations of trees and flowers... When the Sanskrit names of



lects, have been selected for their novelty, beauty, poetical fame, reputed use in medicine, or supposed holiness; and frequent allusions to them all will be found, if the Sanskrit language should ever be generally studied, in the popular and sacred poems of the ancient Hindus, in their medical books and law tracts, and even in the *Vedas* themselves."

Inspired by the message of Sir William Jones, the East India Company in the 19th Century took a lot of interest in the discovery of India's flora. To a trading concern like the East India Company, the

Indian plants have been correctly written in a large paper-book, one page being appropriated to each, the fresh plants themselves, procured in their respective seasons, must be concisely but accurately classed and described; after which their several uses in medicine, diet or manufactures may be collected, with the assistance of Hindu physicians, from the medical books in Sanskrit, and their accounts either disproved or established by repeated experiments, as fast as they can be made with exactness."

Apart from writing several learned articles on the ethnobotany of India, Sir William Jones also prepared *A Catalogue Of Indian Plants, Comprehending Their Sanskrit And Many Of Their Linnaean Generic Names As Could With Any Degree Of Precision Be Ascertained*. In another paper entitled *Botanical Observations On Select Indian Plants*, Jones observed, "The plants described in this paper by their classical appellations, with their synonyms or epithets, and their names in the vulgar dia-

natural produce of India and the extent to which they could be improved and augmented, were matters of vital concern. Botanical studies thus had a great practical and commercial value as well as the purely scientific, and they were funded accordingly. The pioneering botanists of Indian flora who followed Sir William Jones rose to the challenge.

The first of them was Dr. William Roxburgh who came to Calcutta from Madras in 1793 to develop the nascent Calcutta Botanical Gardens. Roxburgh, known as the 'Indian Linnaeus', was the father of Indian Botany. A Scot, he had originally been a surgeon in the Company's navy. His interest in botany was no coincidence. The best medical schools of the time were in Scotland and herbalism was still an important part of medicine; medical botany was, in fact, included in the curriculum.

Roxburgh was Superintendent of the Calcutta Botanical Gardens for 21 years. He transformed the Calcutta Garden into the most extensive and scientifically organised one in Asia, enlarging its collection of 300 species to one of 3500 species. He established a herbarium and trained a number of Indian artists to produce scientific plant drawings, portraying minute details. Roxburgh caused 2500 coloured drawings of plants to be made, 300 of which were published between 1795 and 1816 by the East India Company in three large volumes titled *The Plants of Coromandel*. The plants selected for inclusion were mainly chosen for their useful qualities and included several medicinal plants. Roxburgh's *Flora Indica* (3 volumes) was published between 1820 and 1832.

Asha Nehemiah

(To be concluded next fortnight)

Is 96-year-old setting a record?

(Continued from Page 1)

inevitable, aging is not. He continues to be very active and independent, starting his day at 6 a.m. by making his own cup of morning tea. He also insists on washing his own clothes. He writes out his prescriptions in the sort of neat, firm handwriting that would be the envy of people several decades his junior. Dr. Lakshmanan doesn't require spectacles for his normal activities or for examining his patients. He once wore reading glasses, but "when the price of spectacles rose to over Rs.200 for a reasonable pair" he gave them up in favour of a simple hand-held magnifying glass. "I

used to enjoy reading *The Hindu* and *The Indian Express* every morning. But I've had to give up reading *The Hindu* recently because, he complains, "the print used is too small, making it very tedious for me to read it even with my magnifying glass. I continue to read the *Indian Express* though." There is a twinkle in his eye when he boasts that he still possesses all his own teeth and shows off an amazingly good set as he smiles impishly and says "No dentures!"

He refuses to watch television and doesn't own a set. His only hobby is to listen to Carnatic music on the radio when he gets the time. Contrary

to what one might imagine, time rarely hangs heavy on Dr. Lakshmanan's hands. A popular figure with friends of all ages, he gets enough visitors to ensure that he never has to leave his house in search of good company. "Also, my knees are not what they used to be," he confesses, "And when I do leave my house these days it's only to attend weddings or other important occasions in the homes of family members or very close friends."

Two of Dr. Lakshmanan's children live in Madras while his grandchildren reside in different parts of the world. He, however, prefers to live in

Vellore, determined to continue with his medical practice as long as possible.

His clinic hours are 8-10 in the morning and 4-6 in the evening and he makes it a point to be seated at his desk punctually. "From the day I started my practice, I have always been particular never to be late to my clinic," Dr. Lakshmanan asserts with justifiable pride. There's one more aspect of his practice that's remained unchanged for years — the professional fees he charges. They've remained at Rs.5 for a child and Rs.10 for an adult for at least the last two decades.

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 9 are from the period May 16 to 31. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu.)

1. Where in Gujarat have marine archaeologists found Harappan-like ruins?
2. What decision has CBSE taken as regards biology practicals in schools?
3. What colour is the cloth Hindus in Afghanistan have been asked to sport, for identity purposes, by the Taliban?
4. Which global record company is buying the controversial mp3.com for \$ 372 million?
5. Name the MD of Air India who was suspended recently by the Government.
6. A portrait, done by one John Sanders in 1639, and whose existence was revealed recently, may be the only original of a famous literary figure. Who?
7. What distinction have Temba Tsheri and Erik Welhenmayer achieved as regards scaling Mt. Everest?
8. Who won the prestigious European Cup, the symbol of supremacy in European Club soccer?
9. Which popular Hindi filmmaker, insured for Rs.18 crore, has become the largest ever sum-assured policyholder of LIC?

- * * *
10. Who is the new Police Commissioner of Chennai?
 11. What is also called 'Rajullah Ship' and 'Sweeper' by its users?
 12. Name the Chennai bureaucrat who won the National scrabble championships recently.

- * * *
13. Who is the new Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly?

14. Where is the proposed Tamil Nadu Police Academy to come up?

15. The decision by the present State Government to close what non-functional community markets has led to widespread protests?

16. What have all the schools in the State been asked to do from this academic year, as per a Government directive?

17. Officially, what top spot has A.C. Arun of SHNB HSS been given?

18. What is the *Sripaada Parai* in Kanniyakumari?

19. The deity of which temple is also called *Sabhanayakan*?

20. Connect current Tamil Nadu politics with the film *Vennira Aadai*.

(Answers on Page 8)

Play your part to save energy

'Save Energy, Save the Country' is a folder issued in the public interest by PERT (Public Expenditure Round Table Trust), Chennai. It offers a wealth of valuable information to save precious energy and *Madras Musings* urges readers to pay some heed to suggestions.

How to use electricity economically & efficiently

- Turn off lights, fans, TV, geyser etc. when not needed. This costs you nothing! Saving potential is as much as 10% of your electricity bill.
- Dust the bulbs once a month. Dusty bulbs give less light, clean bulbs last longer due to less heat build-up inside.
- Dust fan blades once a month. This will result in a fan running at its full speed.
- Ordinary incandescent bulbs waste 80% of electricity in heat and are, hence, less efficient. Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFL) now freely available, are more efficient, consume less electricity and give more light (see Table 1).

Why you should prefer CFL bulbs

- Consumes 80% less electricity than ordinary bulb.
- Cost of the CFL can be recovered in one year.
- Environmentally friendly, due to less heat radiation.
- From the information in Table 2, you will see that there is a saving per year of Rs. 202.84, or Rs. 33.80 every two months, on one CFL.

CFLs are ideal for areas like living rooms, bedrooms, kitchen, study and portico where light is required for long hours. They also produce very little heat and are therefore highly suitable for AC rooms.

Tube lights

The conventional tube light chokes of the electromagnetic type consume 75 watts of electricity for a 40 watt lamp! This is due to heat produced in the choke. The modern electronic choke consumes only 25 watt for the same tubelight of 40 watt!

- The advantages of electronic chokes are:
 - 66% saving in electricity

TABLE 1

Ordinary bulb	CFL	Light in Lumens	Price of CFL
40 watt	8 watt	400	Rs. 215
75 watt	14 watt	900	Rs. 235
100 watt	18 watt	1200	Rs. 545

TABLE 2

Bulb used	Watt/ Hour	Hrs/ day	Days	Unit/ Month	*Rs./ Year
Ordinary bulb	40	8	30	9.6	253.44
CFL	8	8	30	1.92	50.60

*@Rs. 2.20/Unit

FAIR WINDS FOR PULICAT

(Continued from Page 1)

on involving the local people in both, envisages the following:

- With weaving and fishing, which had made old Pulicat flourish, now in the doldrums, rehabilitation of the underemployed in tourism-related activities, reviving textile and basket weaving etc. to meet present-day demands.
- The moat, what was left of Fort Geldria and the old bridge to be restored.
- Historic places of worship to be restored.
- The cemetery older than the ASI-protected Dutch cemetery to be restored.

Public areas, like the marketplace, to be made more congenial and eco-friendly places.

Facilities to watch the wealth of birdlife in the area to be developed and local guides to be trained.

Facilities for using the lake for recreational activity to be examined.

Portions of old village homes (many are over 100 years old) to be developed as guest rooms, where visitors would be guests (paying) of the owners and allowed to experience everyday rural life.

Measures to be suggested to

prevent pollution and environmental degradation.

Maintaining the village layout as it has been from the 17th Century.

The MLA, A.S.Kannan, welcomed the ideas and agreed to call within six weeks a meeting of Pulicat's local leadership to discuss the INTACH-TN outline and, if broadly in agreement, make a formal request to INTACH-TN to produce in six months a master plan with Dutch inputs for local and governmental consideration. If local initiative supports a 'heritage village' development along the lines suggested, fair stand the winds for new life in Pulicat.



Your geyser

Why not think of a Solar Water Heater? Because...

- Its life is about 20 years.
- It uses clean and freely available solar energy.
- There is no running cost and its maintenance cost is negligible.
- It gives 100 litres at 60°C — adequate for two bathrooms and kitchen.

Note the cost benefit analysis:

- Cost of solar water heater — (Rs. 14,000 approx.)
- Electricity saved per annum — 4 units x 335 days of sunlight = 1340 Units (Assume 2KW geyser used for two hours daily).
- Cost of energy — bimonthly, upto 600 Units, 1340 units x Rs. 2.20 = Rs. 2948 per annum.
- Cost of energy — bimonthly, above 600 units @ Rs. 3.10 = Rs. 4154 per annum.
- Pay back period 3½-5 years.

Your washing machine

- Use the machine to its full capacity. Using it for washing a few clothes is a waste of energy.
- Prefer a washing machine without a drier.

Electricity your domestic appliances consume

Room AC (1.5T)	2200 Watthr.
Washing machine	300 Watthr.
Ceiling fan	65 Watthr.
Micro oven	900 Watthr.
Music system	150 Watthr.
Refrigerator	100 Watthr.
Colour television	65 Watthr.
Water heater	2000 Watthr.
Electric iron	1200 Watthr.
Mixer grinder	500 Watthr.

What you do by saving electricity

- Save money for the family.
- Save money for the nation — in terms of huge capital investment and tax payers' money.

For every unit saved, that much coal/oil is not burnt.

Save the atmosphere from poisonous gases, emitted due to burning of coal/oil which

- Pollute the atmosphere.
- Act as green house gases that cause global warming and rise in sea level.
- Cause drastic climatic changes.
- Affect rainfall adversely.

When you save electricity

- You contribute to the nation.
- You also contribute to environment.

A sterling retreat

Thimmakudi is a sleepy little village near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur District. But when you turn into a shady but rather insignificant-looking driveway from the dusty main road, nothing quite prepares you for the breath-stopping effect of the unique ambience of the heritage resort that you enter. For Sterling Swamimalai still carries the memories and the traditions of the Thimmakudi Zamindars, whose families lived here from as long ago as 1886.

It is as if you have walked into a period in time. The floors are old-fashioned and red-tiled. Beautiful teak pillars line the verandah that's punctuated casually with elegant easy chairs, a *pallankuzhi* board by the side of one. A beautiful life-like bronze statue of a smiling Swamimalai Murugan greets you at the entrance. And you are surrounded by courteous and friendly staff, all of them clad in spotless white *khadi* shirts and *veshtis*.

Situated in the midst of a coconut grove on a six-acre plot, on the banks of a canal of the River Kaveri, Sterling Swamimalai opened in 1995. Conceptualised as a heritage resort, the ambience of a tradi-

tional *agraharam* was re-created around the original century-old Brahmin house. Tremendous commitment goes into maintaining this ambience even today.

All the guest rooms with high-tiled roofs held by bamboo poles, are a picture of elegant and uncluttered comfort. Care has been taken to keep all rooms plastic-free in almost

etable and fruit gardens (smelling delightfully of ripening jack-fruit), watch squirrels scurrying animatedly all over a massive haystack, or simply laze by the lotus pond listening to the tinkle of cow-bells in the balmy summer breeze. You can enjoy an exhilarating ride in a bullock cart or, as the in-house potter demonstrates his ingenuity on the wheel, try your hand too! And amid the darkening gloom of the evening you will observe an old man bowing to the stately Ayyanar-like figures in the compound, before moving around fanning fragrant *sambrani* smoke in front of all the rooms. Later in the evening, there are cultural performances, both music and dance, in the traditional *muttram* (courtyard) of the main building, that serves as the amphitheatre. A beautifully fashioned fibreglass Siva serves as a striking background.

It is, however, the little touches that make this heritage resort stand apart. From the intricate *kolams* that are lovingly drawn at dawn by a local resi-

dent (outside the main entrance and also each individual cottage), to the ritual lighting of the shining *kuthuvilakkus* at the daily morning *pooja*, or the traditional experience of yoga and

• by
Shobha Menon

evening respect — from the tiny bronze bells that serve as calling bells to the copper *sombu* for drinking water or the heavy brass buckets to store water in the bathrooms. The rooms are air-conditioned (since Swamimalai can be oppressively hot during summer months), but even the incongruity of an airconditioner in this rural setting is cleverly masked by *khush* screens on the outside.

Evenings here are an experience apart, with a fascinating variety of choices. You can swing on an *oonjal* (the tiny bells attached provide soothing music) under a sprawling mango tree, or stroll around the veg-



A hotel with a charming rural ambience, front and rear.



meditation in the early hours (interested novices are guided through the experienced). There are even grandfather umbrellas thoughtfully and strategically positioned at the en-

trance for walking enthusiasts. For those who would like to unwind with a traditional Ayurvedic massage, trained masseurs and therapists (from the Arya Vaidya Chikitsalayam in Coimbatore) use traditional stress-relieving procedures in comfortable private cubicles.

Four 10-day Ayurveda conferences are scheduled to be held here between June and September this year to benefit from the expertise of the Ayushman Ayurvedic Trust (founded by Aryavaidyan P. Rama Variar). Time seems to stand still here... well almost! As one guest said to me — "just like an old, modern village".

The hundreds of foreign tourists, mostly from Germany and Switzerland, who visit the heritage resort, respect the sentiments behind the decision not to prepare or serve non-vegetarian food inside the premises. Despite the pressures of commercialisation, Sterling Resorts felt the need to respect the traditions of the original Brahmin inhabitants of this *agraharam*, which the late Kanchi Sankaracharya regularly used as a base for his pilgrimage.

An ornate plaque outside the resort says, 'We understand hospitality and above all we understand you as our guest and therefore our King... difference of opinion, contradiction and unhappiness are not part of this ambience. We wish every guest departs from our resorts with *confounded happiness*', (italics, mine). And, so may it be, for every guest, as it was for me, a truly sterling experience in a sterling retreat.

The TNPCB has banned the use of plastic cups in all the *kalyana mandapams* of the city, she stated.

The TNPCB has started eco-clubs in some schools and colleges to create awareness.

The TNPCB has asked all autorickshaw owners in the city to replace their air-horns and repair their silencers, the primary contributors to the noise pollution in the city. However, it is impossible to implement such programmes without active voluntary participation. (Courtesy: *The Word*, Lab Paper of the Asian College of Journalism, Chennai.)

Eco-Notes Endangering the Gulf of Mannar

Adivi Sen Gupta writes: The damage caused to the flora and fauna in the Gulf of Mannar by Sterlite Industries, a copper-smelting unit in Tuticorin, is an example of the lack of effective pollution monitoring mechanism and government apathy towards environmental hazards, says B.K. Prakash, a lawyer specialising in environmental cases.

According to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, 23 islands in the Gulf have been declared a National Park on account of their rich diversity of marine life. The Act specifies that no industry can be situated within 25 kilometre of this area.

However, Sterlite is operating within 16 kilometre of this area in violation of the Government order, Prakash points out.

Sterlite's smelting unit started in May 1995, but in early 1996, the National Trust for Clean Environment voiced the apprehensions and objections of the residents of Tuticorin about the setting up of the unit. The difference of opinion on pollution in the Gulf continues.

A case filed against the Centre, TNPCB, MoE&F and

Sterlite by the National Trust for Clean Environment is pending in the Madras High Court.

Satya Reddy writes: The Connemara in pursuit of eco-friendly policies, has installed a water treatment plant in its premises.

Explaining the water treatment process, an engineer at the hotel says that wastewater from bathtubs and the kitchen is recycled by the treatment plant and is then used for watering the lawns. After further treatment, the recycled water could even be consumed, but this is not done because "people might not accept it", he adds.

Other eco-friendly policies of the hotel include avoiding plastics in all departments, using cloth laundry bags and placing memos in rooms urging guests to comply with the eco-policy.

The Savera, too, has turned eco-friendly, with a policy of recycling water and avoiding plastics.

All rooms in the hotel have an "Eco fact file". Guests are

also given the choice of getting their towels and sheets laundered every day or on alternate days, thereby reducing energy and water consumption. The hotel also utilises energy from solar energy panels that it installed about a decade ago.

Kasturi Banerjee writes: It is possible to have all the conveniences of modern life in a pollution-free environment but to achieve this both government and the people have to work together, said Sheela Rani Chankath, chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB).

Improper use of modern amenities, like cars, by people causes pollution, she pointed out. Thus, it is important to make people aware of the danger of over-dependence on the conveniences of modern life, she added. People should also be educated about the use of available resources such as rainwater and domestic waste which can solve water shortage or fuel crisis problems, she said.

Water recycling may, however, be difficult, she said, but it is possible for everybody

Boxing crusaders enjoy revival

Dion Brass, a policeman in the Madras Police Force, was an amateur boxer. He had always nursed the idea of forming a boxing club with the objective of promoting boxing, especially amongst the Anglo-Indian boys. In 1978, he founded the Crusader Boxing Club.

Dion and Geraldine had four daughters and a son, Rocky. Dion's fervent prayer was that his only son should be a successful boxer one day. Dion's prayers were answered and Rocky became a successful boxer.

Rocky had his education at St. George's School, Madras where, as good fortune would have it, Tony Rodrigues was the coach at the time. Rodrigues had led the Indian boxing team as coach-cum-manager to Ceylon in 1955. He also used to referee boxing matches held on Boxing Day behind Moore Market. He was an efficient goalkeeper and represented the Madras State Hockey Team. Later he qualified to referee hockey matches. Tony, a qualified Physical Training Instructor (PTI), regularly trained students of the YMCA and Madras Christian College and St. George's (where he was the P.T. instructor and coached all sports) in boxing. St. George's produced quite a number of boxers who represented the State. Another of them was Herman Caster.

In 1979, Rocky won the Bantamweight at the State meet. In 1980 and 1981, he won the Featherweight at the same meet.

In 1979, 1980 and 1981, he won the Nat Terry Rolling Trophy in the Featherweight conducted by the All India Anglo-Indian Association, Tamil Nadu. The bout in 1979 is well remembered as it was fought between Rocky Brass and Herman Caster.

In 1980, Rocky was pitched against the then Cassius Clay, now known as Mohammed Ali, in an exhibition bout, when Ali visited Madras.

In 1981, the All India Anglo-Indian Association conducted a boxing tournament at

President, Melford Terry as Vice-President, Dion Brass as Secretary, Rocky Brass as Joint Secretary and Georginna Brass as Treasurer. The club held its first tournament appropriately on December 26, 2000, Boxing Day, at the Doveton Corrie School.

The Tamil Nadu State Amateur Boxing Association-approved tournament had bouts for boys, women and men. Gerard Brass, Rocky's youngest son, of Laidlaw Memorial School and Junior College, better known as St. George's Home,

● by A Special Correspondent

Secunderabad. Errold Rodricks of South Central Railway and Rocky Brass of Southern Railway fought a bloody bout before Rocky was awarded the Frank Antony 'Best Boxer' title.

The Crusader Boxing Club conducted its first tournament in its very first year. The chief guest was Eric Stracey, then Inspector General of Police, Madras State. The club functioned from 1978 to 1985, during which time it turned out quite a few excellent boxers who were able to get jobs in the Madras Port Trust and in the Southern Railway.

During the 15 years of subsequent inactivity, Rocky, now an 'A' grade guard with Southern Railway, had always thirsted to revive the club that his father had started. In 2000, he got his chance, backed by a committee consisting of Freddie Hall as

Ketti, was adjudged Best Boxer and awarded the Tony Rodrigues Memorial Rolling Cup, donated by Tony's children.

Rocky says that with sports quotas in government services available for boxers, he felt that by reviving the club and passing on his knowledge of the sport to the young he could open these doors to the talented. Melford Terry, who boxed for the Fonseca Boxing Club, and won the Light Welter Weight Title in Tamil Nadu State in 1976, would also be able to offer members insights into techniques.

Interested persons may contact the club for further details: Crusader Boxing Club, 13, Aryan Lane, 1st Floor, Vepery, Chennai 600 007, India. Freddie Hall 91-044 6427736, Rocky Brass 91-044-6610586. — (Courtesy: *Angels in the Wind.*)



Rocky Brass today.



From June 18: Lalit Kala Akademi. Exhibition of oil paintings by Geetha Anantha-krishnan. (At Lalit Kala Akademi.)

June 22: The National Association for the Blind, Tamil Nadu, and the Madras Round Table No.1 present a musical extravaganza by Comagan and his blind orchestra, 'Raagapriya', supported by Unnikrishnan, Harini, Devan and Nithyashree. The evening will be compered by Swarnamalya and Uma Padmanabhan, and will also feature Anita Ratnam. (At Kamaraj Memorial Hall, 6.30 p.m. Donor passes from the Hall.)

June 23: 'Music Day' or 'Fete de la Musique'. (At Alliance Francaise, 6.30 p.m.).

Answers to Quiz

1. Gulf of Cambay, near Hazira; 2. Banning the dissections of animals for experiments; 3. Yellow; 4. Vivendi Universal of Paris, the company which beat mp3.com in court!; 5. Michael P. Mascarenhas; 6. William Shakespeare; 7. Youngest and first visually handicapped climbers of the peak; 8. Bayern Munich; 9. Subhash Ghai.

* * *

10. K. Muthukaruppan; 11. The vestibule buses plying in the city; 12. Mohan Verghese Chunkath.

* * *

13. K. Kalimuthu; 14. Omana-nchery, near Vandalur; 15. *Uzhavar Sandhais*; 16. Start primary sections; 17. State first in State Board Plus Two exams (1175 marks); 18. It is a rock close to Vivekananda Rock from where you can view Land's End; 19. Shiva at Chidambaram; 20. The Chief Minister made her Tamil film debut in the film.

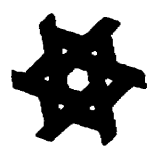
FLASH

(Continued from Page 1)

Denmark has offered to fund the restoration of the Tranquebar Gateway and the Governor's House during the first stage, carry out repairs in Dansborg, the fort, help improve the museum and provide archival material. It has also agreed to provide any technical expertise, particularly as it would like to make sure that restoration work is carried out according to established principles and the ambience of the old Danish areas of the town are not changed. If the first phase is completed as envisaged, Danish help could well be forthcoming for subsequent phases.

The Chief Minister, enthused by the offer, is believed to have stated that she would like the first phase completed in a year's time. Work is expected to start as soon as formal letters of agreement are exchanged. And that is likely to be within the next month.

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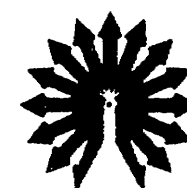
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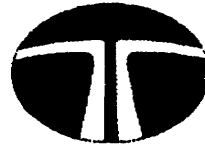
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