

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Helping hand from 'English Heritage'?

• An oft-repeated excuse for not conserving and restoring well-known public buildings with a heritage is the lack of funds. There is, however, quite a lot of international help available for the more important of such projects, but no one here has taken the trouble to pursue these opportunities and persist with the chase. Calcutta and Delhi have, apparently, met with some success and, through funding from British organisations, have started restoring some heritage buildings and precincts. Why has Chennai lagged behind?

Such important heritage buildings as Chepauk Palace, Senate House, The Town Hall (V.P. Hall) and the Regional Ophthalmic Institute are buildings with a British - and pioneering Indian - heritage significant enough to warrant an appeal for such funds. But no one here has all these years gone looking for help from funding agencies in Britain for the restoration of these and other buildings.

One of the major funding agencies in the U.K. paying dedicated attention to heritage buildings in Britain is ENGLISH HERITAGE. We publish below a report that indicates that English Heritage might soon begin looking at heritage buildings and precincts of British vintage in the erstwhile colonies, with an eye to helping restore them. If that comes about, Madras should be in at the ground floor. And to do that, perhaps the preliminary approaches to English Heritage in respect of the buildings mentioned above should be made rightaway. We wonder which agency will take the lead.

THE EDITOR

Rundown historic buildings in parts of the former British Empire could in the future be restored and maintained by English Heritage. The organisation, which receives more than £100m of the British taxpayers' money a year, is seeking government support to allow it to work overseas.

"England's heritage does not end at Dover," said Philip Davies, a senior director of English Heritage (EH) who believes it could operate commercially in places such as India.

The government is sympathetic, believing that EH, which runs monuments ranging from Stonehenge to Osborne House, Queen Victoria's retreat on the Isle of Wight, could get extra income through its conservation advice and expertise.

"If you look at other countries such as France, which had overseas territories, you find

they still look after their old buildings," said Dan Cruickshank, the architectural historian who presents BBC Television's 'One Foot in the Past'.

Hundreds of overseas buildings and monuments, erected by the British and once the pride of empire, are now decrepit. Many are in India, but others are as far apart as Malaysia and the West Indies.

Calcutta, once the empire's second city after London, has many decaying colonial monuments, including the house occupied by Clive of India. This three-storey building, where the governor of Bengal lived in the middle of the 18th Century, is almost roofless. Upto 20 Indians live in lean-to-shacks beside its crumbling outer walls, and tree roots can be seen through the floors.

(Continued on Page 7)



A picture from out of the past sent to us by a reader. It shows the interior of Senate House in better days, when the University of Madras paid greater attention to its great hall and the rooms where its Vice-Chancellor sat and its Senate met. Why can't this splendid piece of Indo-Saracenic architecture be given new life again and make vibrant scenes like this a reality again. The occasion for this crowd packing the hall is not known, but judging from the clothes, it must have been sometime in the Thirties or Forties. Is it an optical illusion or are the arrangements for the fans something out of the ordinary?

Five years of talking about sewage renovation

(By A Special Correspondent)

The State Government is looking again at plans to build the 'World's Largest Sewage Renovation Plant'.

When first envisaged by the Metrowater Board in 1995, it was planned to be built in Kodungaiyur. The Japanese funding agency, Japan Bank of International Corporation (JBIC), had offered to fund the project, but nothing came of it all. Now, the government is talking to the JBIC again.

The proposed plant is to provide 100 million litres of water a day (mld) to industries in the Manali area, after recycling secondary-treated sewage available from Metrowater's sewage plant in Kodungaiyur.

In 1995, after Metrowater had announced the project and finalised the Japanese loan, the project ran into several hurdles.

The funding agency insisted on finding a foreign consultant to plan and execute the project. American consultant Camp, Dresser and McKee was appointed in 1997.

When Camp, Dresser and McKee quoted the project cost at Rs. 365 crore, some Metrowater officials felt that the project could be completed at around Rs. 250 crore by using indigenous technology and planning. Two such plants were already successfully functioning at Madras Refineries Limited, with a capacity to convert 12 mld of sewage into 10 mld of water, and Madras Fertilizers Limited with a capacity to convert 16 mld of sewage into 12.5 mld of water.

It was argued that the financial burden on Metrowater would be too heavy had it

pursued the project at the exorbitant price.

Nevertheless, in 1999, a French consortium was selected by the consultants to execute the project. The company's name was forwarded to the Metrowater Board but work orders were never issued. And, then, early this year Metrowater announced that the project was being dropped. "The industries which were initially willing to buy water from the project have backed out. There is no demand," the Board said. Later, the Board felt there was a demand for just 50 mld from industries. JBIC was reportedly unwilling to fund the smaller plant.

Metrowater has now called for bids for the proposed 50 mld sewage treatment plant.

Artistic treasure hidden for 200 years

The story of an artist who was Governor General of Danish East India, is one of the best kept secrets in Norwegian art history. (Editor's Note: Norway was a part of Denmark until 1814/15.)

His collections along with letters, diaries and travelogues, depict his encounter with India more than 200 years ago. 130 of his unique paintings were stowed away and forgotten in the store-rooms of Oslo's Ethnographical Museum. This priceless gift was donated to the museum in 1878, but the paintings have seldom, if ever, been shown to the public.

These spectacular paintings were the gateway to uncovering the singular story of a Norwegian governor and artist Peter Anker, the 27th of 36 governors of Danish settlements in India. He served from 1786 to 1807 and his headquarters was Tranquebar (Tarangambadi), from where he



Dansborg today.

ruled his little empire, which included Serampore in Bengal.

By creating such a vast number of paintings from his beloved India, he created a unique position for himself in India's rollcall of European Governors. His fascination with and affection for

Indian culture is unparalleled.

Peter Anker was the first Norwegian painter to portray India. From both a European and a Norwegian point of view, his work is fully on par with that of his contemporary professional artists.

A television documentary, a historical travelogue that is a journey of discovery in Tranquebar, forgotten ghost town from the era of Danish expansion, is now being made by the Norwegian (State) Broadcasting Corporation. It will feature the untouched but somewhat dilapidated old fort, Dansborg, the Governor's mansion, and the Neo-Classical buildings in a town which at one time housed 150 Europeans. Until a generation ago, the town even had Indian residents who knew Danish! Ships called daily at the port of this important colony in the 18th and 19th Centuries and great wealth passed through the Danish East India Company, which was headquartered in Copenhagen.

Carsten Anker, Peter's brother, was its managing director. Evidence of this flourishing trade can still be found all over



'The Great Bagoda' of Thanjavur - as seen by Paul Anker.



A Paul Anker painting of the lion by the side of the five rathas in Mamallapuram.

relationship with the King of Tanjore but also took keen interest in the life and art of the people around him. He himself was an artist and painted some scenes of interest and collected miscellaneous art objects.

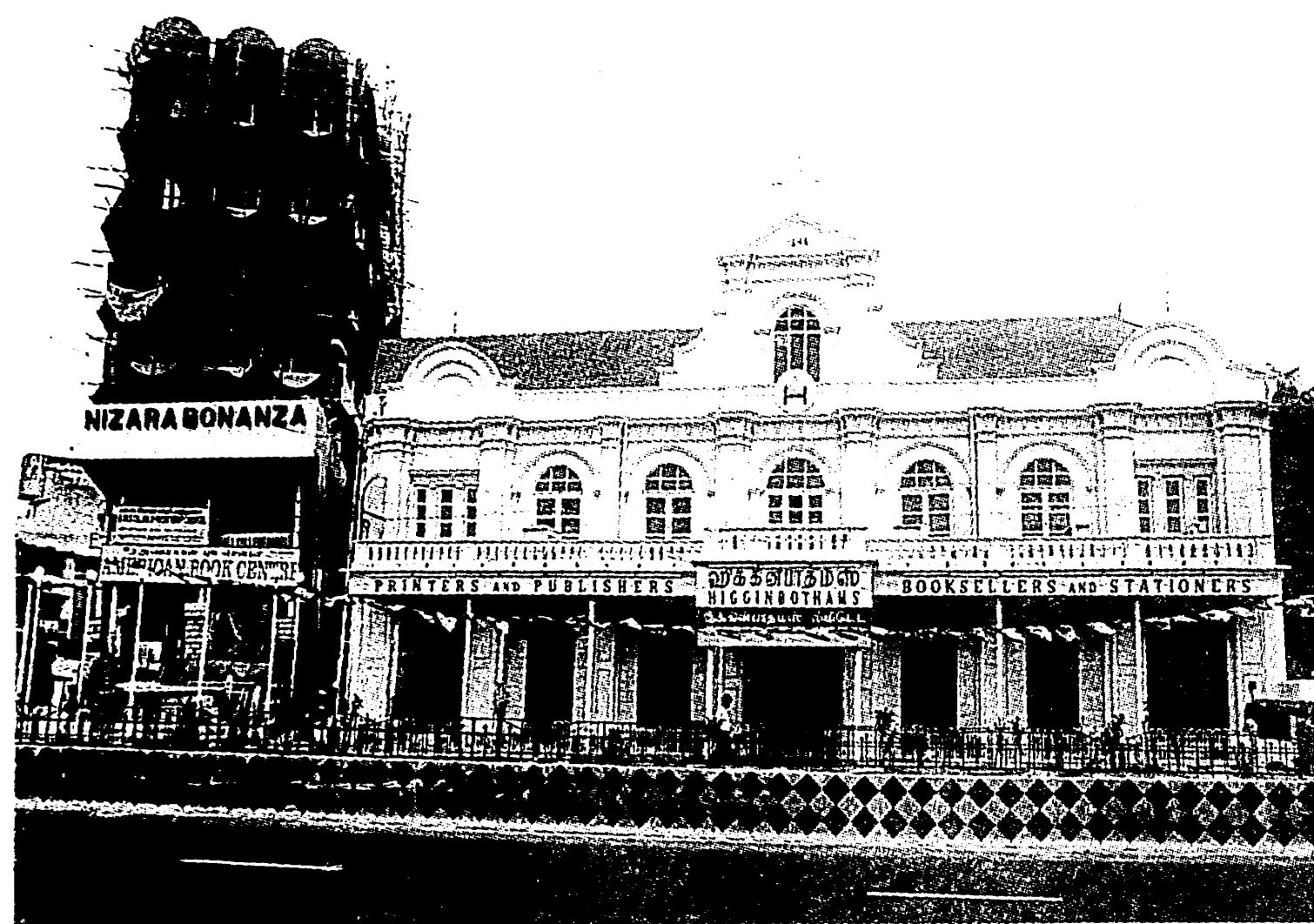
His paintings included the country house of the Governor, the Dansborg fortress, the outskirts of Tranquebar, a resthouse in Mayavaram by the river Kaveri, the monuments of Mahabalipuram etc. Some of the pictures carry interesting captions: for instance one reads "Ruins of the old castle of Madura, the age of which it has not been possible to discover". Another reads, "the Gingee fortress in Karnatik which was the residence of a powerful Indian raja, before it was conquered by the Muslims". Included among them is a painting with a caption, "The big gate of the Bagoda on the island of Seringam in the Cavery river, the largest Bagoda in India."

During Peter Anker's Governorship, some restoration works were carried to the Dansborg Castle. While digging the ground for this purpose, a group of bronze idols were found. He cherished them as a priceless possession, and took them to Denmark. After his death, the bronzes were sold to Christian VIII of Denmark and are now on exhibition at the National Museum, Copenhagen.

The Danish settlements in India, were transferred to the British East India Company through a treaty signed on February 22, 1845. All the public buildings and crown property were handed over to the British for a sum of 1,25,000 Company rupees. Further, the British were to pay an annual sum of 2,500 gold pagodas (equal to 4,000 Company rupees) to the Marhatta ruler of Tanjore as "yearly payment of the soil". Dansborg Fort, together with 13 brass guns mounted on the ramparts and other stores, became British property.

However, the churches, like the Zion's Church, New Jerusalem Church, the Bethlehem Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the chapel at Tranquebar were excluded and permitted to be under the ownership of the respective congregations and societies.

The treaty also recognised the right of the Danes to trade in the ports of India as before. The treaty was signed by Peter Hansen, the Governor of Tranquebar, and Sir Henry Hardinge, the then Governor-General of India. A copy of this treaty, prepared on January 12, 1887 by one S. David and given to M.N. Chinnaswami Chetty, a cloth merchant, is now preserved in the Dansborg Museum, Tarangambadi.



Our OLD and NEW are something a bit different this fortnight. They are both part of ONE picture taken in the first week of October. The OLD (on right) is that splendid heritage building that is the home of Higginbotham's, the oldest bookshop in the country and the largest (though the new Landmark, scheduled to open any day now in Spencer Plaza, may well be bigger if its non-books space is counted). It is a building that is well-maintained and reflects well the care a heritage building deserves. ...& THE NEW. When the neighbour first took shape a few years ago, it was a two-storey building remarkable for its narrowness and the five-foot or so proximity it maintained to what by any reckoning would have been a listed building. But in the last few weeks, the NEW has become even NEWER, rising several stories and sticking out like a sore thumb. Such incongruous construction marring listed beauty is what a Heritage Act would prevent. Do we need years to decide on a Heritage Act and the benefits it would give heritage buildings and their owners?

HOUSES IN NEED OF SAVING

As I sit at my PC, I can see from my window an old house with yellow limewash, out-houses, gardens, terrace with parapets and a terracotta tiled roof. The enclosed verandah had an asbestos slanted roof until a couple of months ago. This has since been covered by thatch, while the doors leading into the terrace have been converted into paned French doors.

The house, until about 18 months ago, was a decrepit, abandoned mansion. The gardens were maintained indifferently by the heirs to the property, the Jeypore family from Andhra Pradesh. I remember this whole area in the 50s belonging to the family. It had a big dirty wall running around it and a huge iron gate creaking like in the proverbial *bhooth* bungalow. The property covered the distance between Lloyd's Road and Peter's Road, sandwiched between Church Park and the Conran Smith Road Corporation grounds. There were wild trees, snakes and mongoose and a scummy pond known as *kuttai* with dry brush and fallen trees. We used to bring our dogs here to have a good sniff and run. The ramshackle house was the scene of many a story invented by my

brothers as a background for their adventures.

In the 60s, the property was parcelled off and many North Indians, Sardars and Sindhis, bought up the plots and built houses and a couple of apartment blocks as well. The main Jeypore Palace continued to be a wreck. Today, it is a different story. The grandchildren, the Raos, have renovated the century-old colonial house and converted it into a boutique, 'Amethyst', that sells designer clothes, artefacts, antiques, carpets, jewellery and craft items. The mongoose family, though, is still in business, scampering around in the garden, reports Kiran Rao.

This story of renovation is a rare one. Most often colonial bungalows and mansions have been broken down to make way for apartments and parcelled plots among the inheritors of old families. The old home of C.P. Ramaswami Iyer combines both. The old bungalow retains its central *koodam*, that meant meeting place (or the Western notion of drawing room), beautiful wooden pillars and Madras roof going up two stories with paned windows enclosing the upstairs surround verandah. The walls of the ground floor courtyard are

lined with old prints of Ravi Varma's gods and goddesses, the wooden *oonjal* swings on creaking chains. It was the home of R. Pattabhiraman, CP's son, until his death some weeks ago. The office of the foundation also exists in the same building, with



additions made to accommodate a library and conference room. In the same compound, the heirs have built their modern houses. And a school for mentally challenged children is housed in an open plan building here.

S.S. Vasan was the well-known name associated with Gemini Pictures, and his house on Radhakrishnan Salai was a landmark. The typical colonial

bungalow was visited by many, especially during *Navarathri* celebrations, when set designers would imaginatively recreate little brooks and thatch huts to show *Panchavati* as it was described in the *Ramayana*. Today, the house stands aloof and deserted, no gardens or trees, just reflectors and generator vans that operate occasionally when the premises are let out for TV serial shootings.

A whole village on the Avon is dedicated to the Bard. His place of birth, the environs and Anne Hathaway's cottage is maintained as it was centuries ago. But in Chennai I, Vellala Street, Purasawakkam High Road, has been demolished with not even a sign to mark the place where one of India's greatest writers, R.K. Narayan was born in 1906. A lodge with a Saravana Bhavan restaurant in the basement has risen here, after the house built by the prosperous Tahsildar, who was Narayan's maternal grandfather, was pulled down.

The Binny building and red brick St. Columban's in George Town are other landmarks, as are Chepauk and the Presidency College buildings on the Marina. The Amir Mahal Palace in

Triplicane and the Chettinad Palace on the Adyar Estuary are being well maintained by the Arcot Nawab and the Chettinad family. The GPO on Anna Salai has had a facelift, but the old brick buildings of Spencer's has given way to a shopping mall. The Khaleeli Mansions are hiding beyond hundreds of billboards and office signages.

The Ice House on Marina has also been renovated and a great library of Swami Vivekananda is housed in it. The police headquarters on Marina was under threat of disappearing under the bulldozer. Better sense prevailed and it has been beautifully renovated to its original colonial beauty. The Central Station has also been saved and a new extension has been added in keeping with the style and looks of the old building. This is the case with Egmore railway station as well.

The Moore Market building is still remembered, with its round building and treasure-trove shops for books, geegaws, all kinds of this and that and what-nots. It was destroyed in a fire and its replacement on the Lily Pond is a monstrosity.

Meanwhile, blocks and blocks of concrete and glass line the

main roads of the city. Black has become the in thing in granite facades or paned/mirrored glass. The structures scream modernity. But with no water, electricity and other infrastructure facilities, and with potholes with patches of roads choked with traffic binding them, living conditions still lag behind other cities.

Many old buildings, colonial and typical South Indian style, have given way to modern apartment blocks. Old houses on G.N. Chetty Road, Gandhi Nagar, Nungambakkam, Mylapore are being reduced to rubble. Buildings that are structurally in a bad shape should give way to more modern utilitarian edifices. Properties split amongst family members have caused many good structures to give way to shared land and developed apartment blocks that have satisfied the itch of the palm of many a contractor/builder. As a result, the ubiquitous ground plus three floors are mushrooming all over the city.

Political leaders' houses have been converted into memorials in their names. Kamaraj Illam, and MGR Ninaivu Illam are landmarks in T.Nagar. The world watched the high walls of Sivaji Ganesan's house breached by cameramen and hordes of fans who flocked to Chevalier Sivaji Ganesan Salai to pay homage to that great actor. There is talk of a monument in his memory. The house that Sivaji built is a huge three-storied mansion. We will have to wait and watch what his heirs will do when it is time to split the inheritance.

An active movement is on to create a Heritage Act and guidelines have been drawn up to make this a viable proposition. But enactment is proving a problem.

Scandinavia, in the shape of furniture, textiles, silver works and decorative items. The most extensive collections are found at the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen, the Danish Museum of Decorative Art in Copenhagen, Clautholm Castle of Copenhagen, and the City Museum of Gothenburg.

The documentary will be based on the letters and pictorial descriptions that Peter Anker sent home.

The Ethnographical Museum of Oslo is planning a major exhibition featuring the collection of Peter Anker, for March 2002. The National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen and Gothenburg's City Museum are also likely to host the exhibition.

Beate Arnestad
Dorthea Hysing

R. Nagaswami the former Director of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu, writes:

Tarangambadi, 15 km south of the celebrated ancient port of Kaveripoompattinam (Poompuhar), was referred to as Kabaris Emperion in the works of classical geographers like Ptolemy. 15 km further south of Tarangambadi is another ancient port, Nagapattinam. The whole coastal area from Nangur to Nagapattinam was an active international commercial and cultural centre from about the 3rd Century B.C. onwards.

The Portuguese settled in Nagapattinam, but they also

seem to have frequented the port of Tarangambadi before the Danes arrived.

The Danish East India Company was established in 1616. A Danish Admiral, Ove Gedde, was sent by the King of Denmark as his Ambassador to India with two ships. Gedde had the help of a Dutchman, Captain Roeland Crape, who had spent his early days in the Nayak Court at Tanjore. Crape was sent to negotiate with Raghunatha Nayak, King of Tanjore. Responding to those overtures, the Nayak wrote a letter to Ove Gedde, extending his friendship to the King of Denmark. The letter was written on a golden leaf resembling a palm leaf and is in Tamil. This golden letter of friendship is also preserved in the Royal Archives, Copenhagen.

Later, Ove Gedde went to Tanjore and negotiated a treaty, which was drawn up in Portuguese and signed by Ove Gedde and the King of Tanjore. The treaty with the Tanjore King's signature, signed on November 19, 1620, is preserved in the Royal Archives, Copenhagen.

Vijaya Raghunatha agreed to give the town of Tarangambadi (Tranquebar) on the same terms he gave Nagapattinam to the Portuguese, but Gedde persuaded him to cede the town for two years without these terms.

Among the subsequent Governors of Tranquebar, Peter Anker, deserves special mention. He not only maintained cordial

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Questions 1 to 9 are from the period September 16th to 30th. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai. Questions 13 to 20 relate to Tamil Nadu.)

1. What was September 18, 2001 designated as by the Union Government?
2. Which newly launched model of car does Sachin Tendulkar endorse?
3. The Films Division recently launched a two-hour film titled *Forever a Legend*. Who is the film about?
4. What is the price put by the U.S. for information leading to the arrest of Osama Bin Laden?
5. Which two Indian reserves have been added to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves?
6. Who are the new FIFA World under-17 football champions?
7. Where did the epicentre of the moderate 'quake, which rocked parts of South India on September 24th lie?
8. Which variety has, through an ordinance, been declared an IIT?
9. What does a food item with 'brown filled circle within a square' label indicate?
10. Who is the M.D. of Metropolitan Transport Corporation, Chennai?
11. Total trivia. How many Corporation schools are there in the city?
12. Name the three companies involved in Optic Fibre Cable-laying work in the city.
13. Name the judge appointed to hear Jayalithaa's appeals in two politically significant cases.
14. Which Freedom Fighter from the State was called *Chekku Izhutha Semmal*?
15. What is the name of P. Chidambaram's new political party?
16. What percentage of jobs in the State's government departments would be reserved for the disabled, as announced in the Budget?
17. Where was the State's first web-camera and gas analyser-incorporated emission checking instrument inaugurated recently?
18. Who is the new DGP of Tamil Nadu?
19. Where, near Madurai, is the Madras High Court Bench coming up?
20. From which constituency does the new State Chief Minister hail?

(Answers on Page 8)

How the aeroplane came to Madras



It is a warm, sunny day in March. The right day for a picnic outing.

The locale is Island Grounds, Madras. It looks as though the whole city is gathered there.

The rich and the poor, the sophisticated and the simple-minded, they are all there, coming in an endless stream to a vast enclosure cordoned off from curious eyes by man-high palm-leaf thatching held together with stiff bamboo poles.

The vast enclosure has several gates: entrance is by fee, varying from two annas to five rupees. The poor squat on the bare ground, while chairs are provided for the affluent, the officials, the sahibs.

A band is in attendance and plays western tunes that reminds you of a circus show.

What is it that has brought all this crowd together?

A real aeroplane that flies! The wonder is not that it flies, but that it has been made in Madras itself!

The vast concourse eagerly looks in the direction of a big, kite-like machine, its two small wheels touching the ground, two horizontal wings of cloth, a body narrowing towards the rear, a small engine and a fan blade in front.

The band suddenly strikes a loud note. A tall white man, dressed in polo attire - jodhpurs and a fullshirt, with a peak cap on his head - briskly walks towards the contraption grounded in the distance. Acclamation greets him. Acknowledging the cheers with a wave of his hand, he jauntily approaches the machine, checks this lever and that button, goes round it once or twice, eyes everything and, satisfied that it is all in good order, waves his hand and jumps into the seat in the body of the machine. His head shows above the opening, and every movement of his is visible. He puts on his goggles and, with the turn of something, sets the engine into motion. It starts with a purr and the blade in front starts rotating.

His assistants move away from the machine, and the plane starts moving on the ground. Slowly it makes a circle, so that everyone can have a clear view of the plane and its occupant, and then with a deafening increase in noise starts running fast on the ground.

Running like this for about a furlong or two, the machine slowly leaves the ground and goes up in the air!

A rousing cheer goes up from the crowd at the miracle they have all witnessed.

Now the aeroplane is high in the air, "more than three or four palm-leaf trees' height", and continues to ascend. It is moving fast in the direction of the sea eastward, and is becoming visibly small.

About half an hour later, it is on the way back, first a small bird-like thing, then gradually becoming bigger. Approaching Island Grounds, it is seen losing height. At the edge of the grounds, it is almost on level with the earth, and in a few minutes it touches land, ploughing lightly into the grass and throwing off dirt and dust. With a bump, the aeroplane runs some distance and slows down and stops almost at the place from where it started.

The "driver" of the plane, still visible, is all smiles and waves his right hand in jubilant exhilaration. The crowd roars its acclamation.

The assistants rush to the plane, check everything, and pour petrol into the plane's tank

minutes is off the ground. The crowd gapes in amazement. The plane goes out over the sea. Then they are back. The plane touches the ground with a bump and after a short run comes to a stop. The white man jumps out, unties the belt of the boy and lifts him out of the plane. The lad joyously joins his friends.

The next day, the Madras dailies are full of reports on the public demonstration of flight by a plane built in Madras and flown by a Madras man. There is even a lead-cut picture of the plane in one of the papers.

The white man who flew the plane is D'Angeli, a French hotelier of repute in Madras.

The year and date: March, 1910.

This first-hand account of the first plane flight in Madras I owe to a contemporary Madras report, supplemented with a detailed personal account by P.R.S. Vasani, the boy who flew in the plane.

Vasani retired as a Foreman of the Kolar Gold Fields. He was

● *Going through our old clipping files, we came across a series of five articles R.A. PADMANABHAN, a veteran journalist, wrote for the now sadly defunct Indian Review. Today, the subjects of these articles have become commonplace or have vanished, but we publish the series as a reminder of their beginnings. This is the fourth article in the series.*

— The Editor

from tin cans. The plane is ready for another flight.

After a few more of these flights, the white man leaves his plane, comes briskly towards the crowd and says, "Come on, some of you! I will take you for a free ride!"

The plane, it seems, can carry a passenger besides the driver, but there are no volunteers. Turning to the people squatting on the ground, he says, "Come on, one of you! Are you too afraid of death? No risk, absolutely none. Come!"

At this, a boy stands up, but immediately those around him try to pull him down. "You'll be killed!" someone hisses.

But the white man, noticing the brave lad, silences them and advancing towards the boy calls him to come out of the crowd. The boy jumps forward and in a minute stands by the white man. They walk towards the plane, the white man lifts the boy and places him in a seat behind the driver's seat and then gets in himself. Fastening the boy with a belt to the seat, he starts the engine and in a few

from Tirunelveli District and was a boyhood friend of the poet Bharati. Bharati's *India*, the Tamil weekly, published from Pondicherry, in its March 1910 issue reported the Madras flight.

D'Angeli, the Frenchman, owned a hotel in Madras named after him. It was among the best hotels in the city; many years later, it changed hands and became Hotel Bosotto, then Airlines Hotel. It was located in the big corner building on Mount Road near Round Tana, where the Bata shoe shop is.

D'Angeli had been following the papers from Paris describing the attempts by Bleriot and others. Getting enough clues and technical data from these reports, he was spurred to build a plane of his own in Madras.

Simpson, coach-builders for decades, seemed the natural choice for workshop facilities. It was a simple structure, a light open body, an open cockpit, wings of canvas stretched taut on wire frames, an ordinary motor car engine fixed in front to rotate a propeller.

According to the *India* weekly, D'Angeli's plane had been preceded three months earlier by another flight in Calcutta, which was said to be the first aeroplane flight in India.

The news report in *India* starts with the statement that, because of poverty, there is no initiative among the Indian people to create new inventions. It goes on to say:

"We reported some time back the flight of a plane built in Calcutta and flown. Now another plane is being built in Madras. The work is going on in the English workshop of Simpson's. Designed by D'Angeli, owner of the wellknown hotel on Mount Road, the machine is being built by Tamil workers. The Manager of Simpson's is supervising the work.

"Initially, the plane was tested with a 12-horse power engine. The testflight near Madras city proved successful. Now, they are going to test it installing a 20-horse power engine.

"The total weight of this aeroplane, including the engine and driver, is only 700 pounds. "Later, the plane will be fitted with a 25-horse power engine and then shown to the public.

"We hope that our Indian people too would soon enough take interest in such things."

It was typical of Bharati to bemoan the lack of Indian interest in such innovations, but added that the Madras plane though designed by a Frenchman was being built by Tamil workers.

D'Angeli was elated when the trial flights in Pallavaram proved successful. Improving the plane with more and more powerful engines and, these too being successful, with a showmanship second-nature to Frenchmen, arranged the public demonstration at Island Grounds, charging an entry fee.

According to the *India* weekly, D'Angeli's plane had been preceded three months earlier by another flight in Calcutta, which was said to be the first aeroplane flight in India. The Calcutta plane is said to have been built by an unnamed Punjabi and flown by him in Calcutta on December 30, 1909.

This would mean that India had its first plane within exactly six years of the world's first flight. And Madras had its plane three months later.

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The Island Grounds demonstration by D'Angeli in March 1910 marks the dawn of the age of modern aviation in Madras city.

Travails of a maidservant in Chennai

I wish to share with your readers the travails of a maid-servant in Chennai, as told to me and my wife.

"My name is Parvathy. I work as a maid-servant in several houses in Chennai. I am 30. I have been working as a maid-servant ever since I can remember. I do not know who my father is. My mother was also a maid-servant.

I have my husband who is a drunkard. He does nothing but drink the entire day. Everyday he beats me. For no reason at all. He beats me when drunk. He beats me when he is not drunk. He expects me to give him money every day for his drink. If I don't give him money, he beats me more.

I have three children. All girls. They are 8, 6 and 5. I live in a slum. I had a small hut. It was burnt a few months ago. Now I don't have a roof over my head.

We live on the pavements near Velankanni Church.

I have left my last child with my relatives in our village. My other two children go to Olcott Memorial School. Thanks to a kind lady (in whose house I work), I could get admission for my children in a good school. The school is really very nice. They take good care of my children.

They give them food. They give them uniforms and books. I work to provide them dinner. I want them to be educated. I do not want them to be maid-servants like me.

They have to be in school at 9 a.m. I find it very difficult in the morning to send them to school on time. There is no food in the house. There is no water. I have to walk a long way to fetch water. I have to wait in a long queue for a pot of water. Somehow, I manage to send them to school.

Since I have to work in four houses, I leave as early as possible. I finish the morning work in one house - washing vessels, mopping the floors - and then come back home to see my children off to school. I give my children a slice of bread or some leftover rice if my first employer has been kind enough to give me something. Sometimes they are tense and then they give me only tea. Their children have to go to school. Sometimes, when I go late, they get upset.

After I see my children off, I go to the other houses. It is the same tension everywhere. Washing vessels, washing

clothes and mopping floors. After finishing the morning work, I come back home with whatever food my employers have given me. I share it with my drunkard husband. Sometimes there is nothing left. I don't mind. But I worry about my children. They have to remain hungry when they come back from school.

I go back to the houses in the afternoon to clean the vessels, mop the floors and fold the dry clothes. If I am lucky I get some snacks. I bring them home for my children. If I don't get anything, I never ask, for my employers sometimes get angry. They say, "We are giving you money, why don't you buy food with that?" What they don't understand is I have to buy food, clothing, medicines with the money. We also have to pay 'mamool' to the local 'dada' to sleep on the pavement.

When one of us is sick I have to go to the Government Hospital. More than half a day goes in that. Then my employers get angry. They sometimes sack me and I am left without a job.

I have to borrow heavily to buy food. The interest keeps

(Continued on Page 8)

What a flat owner needs to know

The Tamil Nadu Apartment Ownership Act, 1994, deals with the various rights and responsibilities of the apartment owner.

In it, Sec. 11 details the way the 'deed of apartment' must be registered under the Registration Act, 1908.

Deed of apartment

The 'deed of apartment' requires the following information:

- Description of the land on which the building is located;
- Whether such land is freehold or leasehold (period of such a lease);
- Description of the building, stating the number of storeys, basements and apartments and materials used for such construction;
- Statement of location of each apartment, including plinth area, number of rooms, description of the common areas, including details as to the undivided interest of these areas and facilities;
- Total plinth area of the building and each apartment, along with details of the owner (this information is important for several purposes, including voting).
- A statement that the apartment and such percentage of

undivided interest are unencumbered on the date of execution of the Deed of Apartment.

— Statement of the purposes for which the building and each of the apartments are intended and those that are restricted.

— Provisions that shall determine the percentage of votes that decide on the approval of policy matters (policy matters include rebuilding, repairs, restoration, or sale of such property).

— Any other provisions that the person executing the Deed of Apartment wishes to include.

These particulars shall all be registered under the Registration Act, 1908 and filed with either the Registrar of Societies or the Regional Registrar of Co-operative Societies.

Owners' Association

Within a period of three months after such registration, the apartment owners shall form a society or an association, with the object of maintaining all communal facilities. These facilities shall be in furtherance of the interests of the flat owners.

The association shall also be registered under either the Tamil Nadu Co-operative Soci-

eties Act, 1983, or the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, 1975.

The minimum number of people required for forming such a society shall be five members. These members shall be deemed to act on behalf of the various apartment owners. This means that the association can take action on behalf of, and also against, an apartment owner.

The nitty-gritty of the association must be specified in the bye-laws. These bye-laws must also be filed with the authority. The bye-laws must provide for issues like what constitutes a quorum; maintenance, repairs and replacement of common areas and facilities and payment thereof; collecting of share of common expenses and keeping of books and accounts; procedure for convening a meeting; restrictions on the use and maintenance of common areas and amenities etc.

The Act is binding on all apartment owners, their tenants and employees, and any other person who uses the property or part of the property. — (Courtesy: CAG Reports)

Swetha Ballakrishnan

HELPING HAND FROM 'ENGLISH HERITAGE'?

(Continued from Page 1)

The West Bengal State Assembly recently passed a law to preserve the House and renovate some of Calcutta's other famous structures such as St. John's Church, where there are plans to build flats in the graveyard.

There is very little money in India for restoration. But Davies, who has written about Calcutta, said: "For a fraction of the money we spend on one British lottery project you could transform the centre of Calcutta. It is as much a British town as any that is in Britain."

Davies would like to see money from the national lottery, as well as EH funds, used to restore former colonial buildings. "It would be a good thing if some of the money were ringfenced to be used on overseas buildings," he said. So far no cash from the heritage lottery funds has been spent overseas.

Colin Amery of the World Monuments Fund said: "Our heritage is pretty well looked after, but many countries don't

have the same framework for funding. We should forget nationalistic boundaries."

Banani Kakar of Calcutta's preservation society and Mrinal Sen, a leading Indian filmmaker, argued for British expertise and cash. "Why not take money for restoration since Britain in the past has taken a lot from India," said Sen in an interview for 'Restoring the Raj', a Radio 4 programme to be broadcast on Friday. — Richard Brooks and Mark Macaskill (of the *Sunday Times*, London.)

Julian West of *The Sunday Telegraph*, London, adds:

The most potent and colourful symbol of British rule in India, King George V's 1911 coronation *darbar* site in Delhi, which once hosted a glittering array of princes and potentates, is to be rescued from decay.

Restoration is to get started on the site where King George V, the only reigning British monarch to visit India during the Raj, announced his coronation and received "the dutiful homage and allegiance of the government, princes and people

of India in person". The project, part of a facelift of Delhi's parks and public places, is expected to cost more than £400,000.

"It's a very important historical site and it should be properly developed," said Kush Raj Singh, the director of the Central Public Works Department. "There are a number of statues of interest to visitors and we would like them to come to the site."

Britain first adopted the Mogul custom of holding ceremonial court assemblies, or *darbars*, in Delhi in 1877, when Queen Victoria was declared Empress of India. The first British *darbar*, a dazzling extravaganza intended to demonstrate imperial magnificence and might, was not attended by the Queen, however. A second *darbar*, held in 1902 to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII was not attended by the monarch, either. As a result, George V's *darbar*, held six months after his coronation in Westminster Abbey and the first to be attended by a monarch, was by far the most extravagant.

Some years later an obelisk commemorating the event was erected at the site and a small park created around it. Then, soon after independence, the marble statue of George V which had originally stood under the sandstone canopy beside India Gate, facing President's House, was brought there, along with statues of various Viceroy's. About 40 sandstone plinths were also erected to receive other Raj-era statues from elsewhere in India, with the idea of creating a British memorial park, but they never arrived.

Instead, the site was abandoned. Now, conservationists believe that enough time has elapsed to turn a site once viewed as a relic of colonialism into a worthwhile memorial of India's past.

"These places are a part of our history, whether they are Mogul or British," said Rupika Chawla, a leading member of the Delhi conservation movement. "And it's time we worked on preserving them before they're gone."

My Choice

Asked to pick a team to meet Don Bradman's XI, I've decided to play it safe and go by the book. And the Good Book says Gavaskar is number one. Ted Dexter called him "the broadest bat in the game". And in his time he played the fastest bowlers in the game, Hadlee and Imran, Marshall and Holding.

To partner Sunil I would pick Vijay Merchant, not merely on the ground that I have seen the great man bat, but on what I heard from Raj Singh Dungarpur the other day. Alec Bedser, the best fast medium bowler of the pre-war years, is said to have told Raj in his husky voice, "He's the best overseas batsman I bowled to. Arthur Morris included..."

For number three, I would pick George Headley, the 'Black Bradman' though in the West Indies the knowledgeable thought Bradman should have been called the 'White Headley' and Neville Cardus considered him the "best on all wickets in the inter-war years".

For captain there can be none other than Sir Frank Worrell the parfait knight, who restored our faith and interest in cricket when it was at the point of no return. And down the middle there will be Isaac Vivian Richards to ensure the innings is in full song.

For my spin bowlers I would choose Bishen Bedi and Subhash Gupte. I may be cussed, but to my mind Gupte made his leg breaks hum like an electric top — if ever there is one. And Roy Marshall who played them both, placed Gupte above Benaud, though he pointed out that Benaud was the cleverer bowler. I would also add Benaud had the heart to keep going though he was collared.

● by K.N. Prabhu
Former Sports Editor
Times of India

For an all-rounder, I would pick Imran Khan to share the new ball with Mohammad Nissar who was rated as the fastest of his time. Jack Ryder who led a team to India in the 1930s told me that he was the quickest he had played — "at least in the early overs." It was Nissar who with Amarsingh's help had fetched an early breakthrough against England in the first ever Test India played at Lord's and inspired Neville Cardus to write those lines about the "news flashing through the Indian bazars, to dusky men in the hills to Gandhi and Ganga Din". As for Imran Khan, his responsible batting and bowling, whenever

Pakistan were in dire need of it, ensures his place.

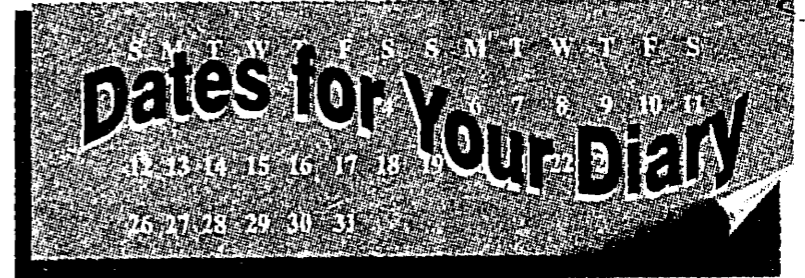
Sir Learie Constantine would not only strengthen the batting, but was a bowler who was quick enough to bowl bodyline at Jardine.

And for a 'keeper I shall be a 'crank' and vote for the unknown S.V.T. Chari. My predecessor in *The Times of India* Nicho Leontzini said he was the best he had seen and Nicho covered the series against Ryder's team. I shall wind this up by picking as my twelfth man none other than Eknath Solkar.

The team then:

1. Sunil Gavaskar
2. Vijay Merchant
3. George Headley
4. Sir Frank Worrell
5. Sir Vivian Richards
6. Sir Learie Constantine
7. Bishen Bedi
8. Subhash Gupte
9. Imran Khan
10. Mohammad Nissar
11. S.V.T. Chari
12. Eknath Solkar

If I've left out someone, all I can do is repeat the Frank Woolley story. When in the 1930s he was asked to pick his world side he omitted Don Bradman. The reaction was immediate. One critic simply dismissed Woolley as "a crank". — (Courtesy: *Straight Bat.*)



Till October 21: Book Exhibition-Cum-Sale with handsome discounts (at The Bookpoint).

October 19 and 20: Tie and Dye Workshop. Tie and Dye is a form of patterning fabric by tying it to resist a dye. Known here as *bandhani*, the word is derived from *bandhna* which means to tie (at DakshinaChitra).

October 20: Indo-Britannia Quiz: a competition for Junior Junction members (10 a.m. to 12 noon at the British Council).

October 22-November 6: Iranna & Pooja Iranna — A two-man show of paintings (At Apparao Galleries).

October 26: A five-day exhibition of Digital Paintings by TCA Gopalakrishnan (at Vinyasa Art Gallery).

October 27: 'Towards Positive Health' a talk by Dr. K.V. Thiruvengadam. A programme organised by the Council's Retirement Association (at the British Council, 6.30 p.m.).

October 28: Young Friends of DakshinaChitra are organising two unusual workshops, a Theatre Workshop and a Puppetry Workshop. Maximum 30 children in the age group of 6-15 years (at DakshinaChitra Tel: 95414-72603).

November 1-10: New Berlin on Process — A solo exhibition of prints by Rm. Palaniappan (At Apparao Galleries).

November 10-20: Titans — A group exhibition of paintings by Vasudev, Muralidharan, Rajasekaran Nair and Douglas (At Apparao Galleries).

Answers to Quiz

1. Solidarity Day Against Terrorism; 2. Fiat Palio; 3. M.S. Subbulakshmi; 4. \$25 million; 5. Gulf of Mannar and the Sunderbans mangrove; 6. France; 7. 50 km east of Pondicherry in the Bay of Bengal; 8. Roorkee University; 9. That it is a non-vegetarian food article.

* * *

10. Swaran Singh; 11. 354 (with 25 added in the last five years); 12. Dishnet DSL, Bharti Telenet and Reliance.

* * *

13. Justice N. Dinakar; 14. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai; 15. Congress Jananayaga Peravai; 16. Three percent; 17. Chennai's RTQ South at Tiruvanniyur; 18. B.P. Nailwal; 19. Ulagneri; 20. Periyakulam.

TRAVAILS OF A MAID SERVANT

(Continued from Page 7)

adding up. My husband's drinking bill is huge. If I don't give him money, he borrows and drinks. I have to repay the money.

My employers advise me to leave my husband. Somehow I cannot dream of it. We have

been legally married. Even if he is a drunkard, he is my husband.

Some employers are good. They give us food and clothes and help us during emergencies. There are many other maid-servants who are in a worse position than I am. At least, I don't have to beg. As long as I can

work, I will work for the sake of my children. I do not want them to become maid-servants.

I go to the nearby temple and pray. I am afraid to go to the big temples. Only rich people go there. I pray in the temple near our slum.

V. Chandrashekhar

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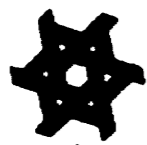
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