

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

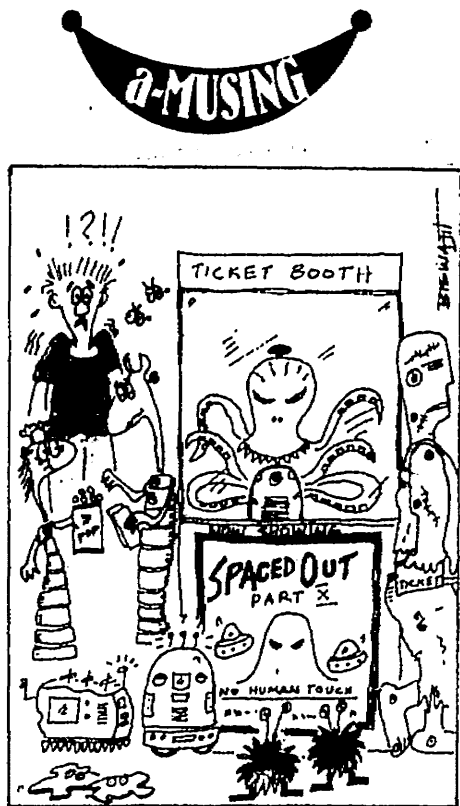
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FREE ISSUE

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My God! Is this real life or 'reel' life?

Once Upon A Time

What's happening to the movie moghuls from the land far, far away?

Over the past few months, Chennai has been assailed by hobbits, good wizards, bad warlocks, elves, schools of magic, knight errants from distant galaxies who appear to think nothing of hopping from one star to the other, and even by a gentleman who has had the doubtful felicity of being bitten by a certain member of the insect community, leading him to developing sticky fingers... literally.

The 'English' movie world is on a roller-coaster ride into fantasy land, a process which also has the rather gratifying side-effect of making oodles of money.

The movie-world, always perceived as hard-bitten and cynical, is going dreamy and soft. It is like a whole bunch of people in closed rooms decided: "Away with gun-toting violence peppered with both Eastern fighting techniques and an occasional dash of Eastern wisdom, the sometimes schmaltzy feel-good comedies or true-life disasters."

The cry went out: "Let's think Never-Never Land".

It's fascinating watching the actual process of a developing trend.

Adults the worldover are tired and frightened, overwhelmed by the dark, disappointing world they helped create. They now want to return to a more innocent time, where evil was easily defined and solutions were simple. They want magic to come back.

A sign of the times we live in?

Ranjitha Ashok

A heritage lesson for

US

— *The Mumbai example*

Failed experiments at restoring the magnificent Gateway of India and the Gothic splendour of the CST (Victoria) Terminus have had an unlikely effect: the State has finally woken up to the need to correct the slap-dash techniques used by government agencies to maintain finely crafted heritage buildings in the metropolis.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA) has initiated plans to teach conservation techniques to about 30 engineers from the BMC, PWD and Mumbai Port Trust, who will oversee the work in the 660-odd heritage buildings and precincts on which repairs are carried out periodically.

The MMRDA has requested the Delhi School of Planning and Architecture to devise a month-long syllabus which would involve practical training along with visits to sites.

While the School has submitted a proposal for Rs.25 lakh, the Authority feels it is too expensive to spend approximately Rs.1 lakh per engineer considering all of them have transferrable jobs.

S.P. Pendarkar, Secretary of MMRDA's Heritage Committee, said, "We have therefore asked the School for a revised proposal to present to the committee. As to the question of transfers, we are trying to find a via media, so that the officials remain in the posting for some time and use the knowledge to preserve heritage sites."

Heritage lovers have welcomed the plans, which they say were long overdue. According to conservationist Abha Narain Lambah, engineers/contractors are currently unaware of techniques to use for repairs on Mumbai's historic architecture

(Continued on page 6)



The tree of life... and this intricate ink drawing truly reflects the theme of the exhibition now on at Manasthala, 'Trees in our Lives'. (Also see Page 6.)

Heritage for the tourist

By Arvind Singh Mewar
(HRH group of hotels, Udaipur)

Rajasthan's heritage is indeed the main attraction for foreign visitors today. But till recently, heritage was the poor end of the hospitality industry. The term 'heritage tourism' was used to describe hotels that had inadequate facilities. Today, there's a total makeover – heritage hotels are laying down the highest standards in the hospitality sector, especially in Rajasthan. Heritage has given Rajasthan its USP. Heritage doesn't mean only old palaces and *havelis*; it also means natural heritage. This, too, Rajasthan has in plenty.

in Rajasthan are upmarket tourists. Earlier, when the state was marketed, no specific audience was targeted. But now, with the development of a huge number of heritage hotels – many of them converted palaces and even hunting lodges – the message is clear: Rajasthan has made a mark as an upmarket destination. But the budget traveller is not shut out.

We also have economy hotels in the heritage category. There are numerous smaller properties, mostly stand-alone ones, which have their own distinct flavour and ambience. In fact, Rajasthan caters to the top-end, middle and bottom-end tourist. We have also acquired a niche market that goes in for luxury tourism. But smaller properties, too, are doing equally well.

Both Kerala and Rajasthan have optimised their strengths. If Kerala is renowned for stress-

busting holidays, Rajasthan has its rich historical heritage. Each one has optimised its own home-grown strengths. Both states are stand-alone destinations abroad: This is evident from the way India has been showcasing itself largely through these two prime destinations.

HRH Hotels' intent is not to deprive owners of the title to their properties. In the case of heritage properties, most are anxious not to be known as having sold off ancestral property. We respect those sentiments. Those we've acquired – Bikaner and Bijnor, for instance – have been taken on long lease. While still retaining the ownership, the property-holder does not have to expend much. Capital investment and development are taken care of, without compromising on ambience.

Because of this approach, HRH has established a certain credibility among heritage

(Continued on page 8)

Most of the heritage tourists

A step or two more to save Senate House

It's good to hear that the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras has got the Syndicate to back him in the restoration of Senate House. The Man From Madras Musings looks forward to not only the restoration of the ancient hall but to its revitalisation as well; MMM would be even more delighted when it throbs with life the year-round.

To get the work underway, the PWD has been approached and MMM welcomes the composition of the Senate House Renovation Committee that will plan, supervise and monitor the work. The Committee, under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chancellor, will include the Chief Engineer of the PWD, the Head of the PWD's Research Wing that will be entrusted with the work, the Head of the Archaeological Survey of India (South Zone), the Convener of INTACH-Tamil Nadu, and the Founder-Convener of INTACH-TN and the present head of the Madras Craft Foundation. They as a team will, MMM is sure, ensure the restoration is done on as close to classical lines as possible and that such 'criminal' restoration as painting the bricks will not be indulged in.

Once the Heritage Renovation Committee comes up with its plan of action, Fr. Ignacimuthu would like to get the work started with the Rs. 65 lakh that was collected some years ago. MMM does not intend to open a can of worms, but it has been recorded that something more was collected under Vice-Chancellor Sathikh's fundraising scheme and this was used for non-Senate House purposes. It would be nice if the University returned what it had 'borrowed'; then, perhaps, restoration could start with over a crore in the kitty.

Be that as it may, if restoration starts with the money available and the bricks (of original specifications) already paid for, the very fact that work is seen as getting underway could well stir corporates and alumni to contribute generously. But to make that more likely, something like every constituent college and student contributing his mite — as in the Sathikh scheme — should be launched.

The Vice-Chancellor and his Renovation Committee should also grab the opportunity of getting the hall ready, at least to a presentable state, for the international annual Skal Congress to be held in Chennai in October 2003 when 1500 persons connected with the travel and tourism industry will convene in Chennai from around the world and all parts of India. That will be a glorious opportunity to use the Hall to showcase Chennai's once-famed Indo-Saracenic architecture which set the style for such construction elsewhere in India.

In return for making the Hall available by then, the University could request both the local Skal

organising committee and the CII's Heritage and Tourism Committee, which is working closely with the former, to generate generous support from their membership to make the restoration possible in time.

Only a joint effort by the University, its students (as Fr. Ignacimuthu said, Rs.100 from each will go a long way), its constituent colleges, its alumni, the Government — State and Central — the UGC, heritage lovers and the private sector teaming together will make the restoration of Senate House possible. A lead by CII and the travel industry might set the ball rolling.

Training engineers

The Editor of Madras Musings showed MMM the other day the story he planned to lead this issue with. It's a story that reports that Mumbai is planning to get a cell of PWD engineers trained in restoration work so that much of the restoration of heritage buildings in the public domain will be restored or, at least, maintained in a conservation-friendly manner.

Madras Musings and MMM have been urging exactly this for Chennai over the last several years. MMM hopes the opportunity to restore Senate House will be used to create just such a conservation cell in the Tamil Nadu PWD, which will thereafter work with building heritage renovation committees.

What afterwards?

Restoring Senate House is one thing, but what use is to be made of it afterwards in order to ensure that it is maintained properly? With proper maintenance it will go another hundred or so years without the need of further restoration — but use and maintenance are essential.

The Senate House Renovation Committee should begin thinking and talking about this right-away and evolving plans. It should not leave room for a situation like the one now facing the Railways. It is only as the extent of the MRTS begins to extend further and further that those concerned have begun to talk about the necessity for links co-ordinated with the train services, with passengers using a common ticket. That should be easy enough to do, but not only does it appear not to have been thought of when the MRTS work was launched a decade ago, but even when it cropped up after the first stage was completed, nothing was evolved either for that stage or the subsequent stages. And the Railways and the Metro bus service have still not found a solution — though straws in the wind appear to indicate that they are at least talking to each other.

Sadly, that kind of uncoordinated development is only to be expected in a situation when the State's leadership is more interested in settling scores with opposing regimes, when any

good, or ANYTHING, done, for that matter, by a previous leadership must be sunk and the wheel reinvented, when the symbols and perks of office are more important than doing a day's work, and when bureaucrats blindly follow their masters' lead.

The University has an opportunity to show the way that, as befits it, it can think ahead. And so MMM hopes the Renovation Committee comes up with a plan for use, maintenance and care in the future. And for this MMM suggests that a Senate House Foundation be set up, with private sector involvement, to see that the hall is not only put to regular use but also generates funds. Those plans, MMM hopes, will include the Vice-Chancellor moving his office into the building.

Meanwhile, good luck to all concerned with the restoration of Senate House; MMM hopes that it will be in at least a suitable state to host the Skal convention.

Blocking the public

A recent Supreme Court order stated that "No District Collector or Police Commissioner shall permit any main road or street to be blocked for the purpose of meetings, processions etc."

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Now that's a most welcome ruling, but will it be enforced?

For years *The Man From Madras Musings* has watched a corner, where two Mada Streets meet a couple of lanes in Mylapore, regularly being blocked by a huge stage and supporting equipment erected for public meetings of a political party. Once the meeting gets underway, no traffic at all is possible. Before and after the meeting, if you can get your car to twist and turn and contort itself, you might get round the narrow, single-lane U-turn the straight two-way crossing has been converted into. In another area MMM frequents, stages for political meetings are regularly put up across half the road, making a busy two-lane road into a single-lane one — that often becomes a no-lane one, taken over as it is by the crowd, if the meeting is a successful one, or by two cars coming up nose-to-nose at a quieter meeting and refusing to give way.

The harassment of the general public by political parties, whether it is by

- the stages set up, on thoroughfares, or by
- loudspeakers blaring out speeches and raucous music before them, or by
- plastic bunting flying dangerously loose after meetings (MMM wonders why the Pollution Control Board does not ban such buntings or, if they

are banned, why no action is taken against the political parties, in front of whose headquarters dangerously hanging political plastic streamers can be seen), or by

- crowds and processions blocking thoroughfares,

all show a total indifference to the public-at-large. If the political leaders have any concern for the people, surely they will not force them to suffer such inconveniences. But if they do not show that concern, surely the law must take its course. Will we at least see that happening after the recent Supreme Court judgement?

All for free

The East Coast Road tollgate dispute appears to have taken a turn in favour of the residents. But that turn allows the residents to use the road totally for free. And that is not something *The Man From Madras Musings* particularly welcomes.

Roads, especially roads of the class of the ECR, costs money and their maintenance also costs money. And every user of the road should pay something towards the comfortable ride he gets and the ensuring for years thereafter, through regular maintenance, that smooth ride. The issue here should be the quantum a resident should pay as against the casual user — and the solution is not what's been obtained by the educated following the mob and winning an 'all for free' bit of largesse.

- With Whites it's just verbal rudeness that often becomes a surly go-slow if the White gets on his high horse.
- In the case of Browns, the rudeness can descend to abusiveness and papers being thrown at the applicant or, worse, accepted and lost.
- In the case of Blacks, it is abusiveness from the start and if the applicant responds angrily to the vituperation, it can lead to assault by the security and worse.

MMM knows of not one single person who has enjoyed his or her visit to this office where the women are often worse than the men. It's an office that's a disgrace to the country, making as it does those dealing with it want to shudder.

When, O, when, wonders MMM, are citizens of all colours and all ethnicities going to be treated politely by officialdom in Chennai?

Built-up Marina?

There's a lot of talk these days that *The Man From Madras Musings* hears about beautifying the Marina. Sadly, part of this beautification seems to involve building on the Marina — political and bureaucratic beautifiers refusing to accept that what Nature has given us is many times more beautiful than anything man has wrought.

One of the 'beautification' plans includes building a Maritime Museum, near what's already a sore thumb that sticks out and defaces the Marina, the lighthouse, and installing a gift from the Navy, a submarine, by the side of it for walk-through viewing. Now MMM is all for a Maritime Museum, particularly if it throws light on the maritime history of the Tamils, but is the Marina the spot for it? Surely by the river and behind the beach memorials might be a better place for it? Or why not the San Thomé Beach after doing a clean-up of the tenements and restoring that beach to its original beauty?

Surely the solution to the problem of cost of frequent travel would be to negotiate a reasonable rate for a pass, say something like Rs.300 a month per car or something like that. And if negotiations were not successful and taking to the streets — like the processions these complainants protest about when they bring traffic to a halt in the city — was felt to be the only answer, surely when they were told they could have transit for free, they could have said that, as responsible citizens, they would pay a reasonable rate. But it's only in dream worlds that there are responsible citizens, isn't it?

— MMM

Question of politeness

Most people by now would have read about a police officer who had been rude to Test cricketer Srinath and how Karnataka police officials were going out of their way to apologise to him. Would they be doing that if it was an unknown citizen, wonders *The Man From Madras Musings*. Certainly not.

In fact, the bureaucracy and officialdom appear to think that being rude to the citizenry is a God-given right of theirs; after all, they're doing you a favour, aren't they?!

MMM has heard numerous complaints of such rudeness from people visiting various Government offices or who are hauled up by the police even for minor traffic offences. But the worst office MMM has heard of is one where there are degrees of rudeness based on the colour of your skin.

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OUR READERS WRITE

Holding certificates

This is the season of college admissions in Tamil Nadu. All private colleges insist on students surrendering their original certificates (like marksheets) to the college at the time of admission. These are returned to the students only at the time of their leaving the college. No acknowledgement is given. Sometimes when the certificates are returned they are mutilated, moth-eaten or torn. It is a herculean task for the students to get a duplicate certificate from the university. Sometimes careers are ruined.

This practice of retaining original certificates is unethical, unjust and illegal. No other State in the country follows this obnoxious practice. Will the Tamil Nadu Government please stop this illegal practice and save the careers of thousands of students.

V. Chandrashekar
Chennai 600 090.

Parking menace

The residents of Motilal Street are one of the worst victims of the parking menace on streets abutting Usman Road in T.Nagar (MM June 16th). This parking by shoppers is due to the major shopping area in Ranganathan Street and the hotels and textile showrooms in the area. Unable to bear the menace, the residents rallied under our Association and staged a road-roko to draw the authorities' attention to the plight of the residents. It did the trick to the extent the authorities met us for a discussion and made certain arrangements. But though the traffic authorities are taking good care of our street, we still experience difficulties as shoppers still continue to park their vehicles.

It may not be out of place to wonder why, though new complexes are being allowed to be built, the authorities do not insist on the builders to constructing appropriate parking places for their clients. At some places on Usman Road, you can see 'No Parking' board displayed by textile showrooms, hotels etc. When they do not permit parking of vehicles of their own clientele, why should nearby residents bear the brunt?

To avoid streets abutting Usman Road being used as a parking area by persons who have busi-

ness elsewhere, we suggest that the whole of Usman Road be declared a 'No Vehicle Zone'.

One side of Usman Road can be used as a parking lot and the other side can be used by pedestrians. The parking of vehicles should be monitored by the Corporation and charges collected. The CMDA should not give permission for new buildings to come up on Usman Road and if it does so, such buildings should have in-built parking place.

S. Ramalingam
Chennai 600 017.

Time to move

There cannot be a second opinion on the Government of Tamil Nadu's considering a new, less-congested site for the Secretariat (MM, May 16th).

But it is thinking of a 2000-acre site on the way to Mahabalipuram. Whether it is Chennai or Mahabalipuram, it is too far for the people of the southern districts like Nagercoil, Kanniyakumari and the like to come and transact business. It would be in the fitness of things if the capital is at a central point in the State for early and quick access and if waste of money and time be avoided.

During the stewardship of late Chief Minister MGR, it was almost decided to move the capital to a 'Capital District' developed on the banks of the Kaveri between Tiruchirappalli and Thanjavur. The vast extent of red soil on both sides was a plus point for greening the proposed Secretariat area.

Fresh Kaveri water can be had nearby and this would help in developing prestigious satellite city.

Government should now find the means to relieve the congestion of Madras by moving the capital out.

G. Kanakasabai
Lalgudi 621 601.

Our traffic chaos

I fully endorse the feelings expressed several times by MMM on Chennai motorists, both the educated (presumed to be so!?) and the semi-educated, ignoring road rules. It has been rightly observed that those who ignore traffic signals and road rules, are the first to swap roles when it comes to complaining about indiscipline on the road. Here I include myself too!

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The Information Highway

As a resident of Chennai, I can't help but notice the taking over of our skyline by hoardings. As for the hoardings, gone are days when painters had to work on them. Today, ad messages complete with visuals can be printed and have to be just put up on the hoarding space. Stunning visuals attract attention of the city's traffic from vantage points.

A novel advertiser — along the Loyola College wall — has put up a hoarding with sloping tiles to get his message across. A consumer durables company has scored by advertising its huge banner across a multi-storied building under construction near a main traffic junction in Nungambakkam. Chetput bridge has hoardings on either side of it. A great levelling of our national highways with the information highway!

Now the flip side. The good old trees on our roads have to yield to the huge iron-girded structures. And for those who let out their space for the erection of such hoardings, how can they trade off precious sunlight and air?

T.K. Srinivas Chari
Chennai 600 030.

Don't we have laws to punish those who

- Jump signals;
- Cut lanes recklessly;
- Ride / drive against the flow of traffic;
- Alight from buses on the middle of the road;
- Stop / park in 'No Parking' areas;
- Cross the road at any place of their choice;
- Tamper with the engine to rattle fellowmen;
- Honk with horrifying horns;
- Overtake on the wrong side;
- Speed at the peril of other riders;
- Drive monstrous cranes / earthmoving machinery without warning;
- Drive in the dark without switching on the head/tail lamps or without having anything of the sort;
- Merrily walk on the road without any sense;
- Fishcart at flashy speeds;
- Hoist flags of different hues, criss-crossing the roads, but never bother to remove them once the festivities are over;
- Keep speaking on cell-phones, while at the steering!

The answer is a big YES. Then why are we a party to any or all of these.

Our traffic is chaotic only because we do not obey the rules. We lack in self-discipline. But this survives because we lack enforcement. If a person disobeys rules/laws, there should be a definite punishment. In our system, this process is slow. What we require is on-the-spot rewards for disobedience.

Why is the traffic so smooth and less cumbersome in US, Singapore and Europe? There, both the authorities and the public obey the rules in the true spirit. Here we don't even bother to learn the rules

before we hit the roads! You can obtain a driving licence, even without knowing where the brake-pedal in your vehicle is.

It is time we obeyed the rules and became intolerant of delinquency. Only then can we call ourselves civilised.

V. Rajagopalan
Chennai 600 088.

A comfortable start

I recently had to visit the Reservation Office at Mambalam Station to cancel train tickets.

I was welcomed by the serpentine queues before the various counters there. The entire hall was jam-packed with men and women of all ages, literally on their feet for hours together, sweating it out in the maddening summer heat. Fortunately, there were several ceiling fans, which provided some relief to the harassed crowd.

The following suggestions may be considered by authorities in order to ensure that the Railways' motto, **Happy Journey**, does not begin woefully from the time of booking itself.

Persons wishing to book or cancel tickets should not be made to stand for long hours on their feet. Instead, they could be given tokens at the entrance point itself (much akin to banks).

The automatic caller could call the token-holders by turn. In the meanwhile, several rows of chairs could be provided so that the multitude could comfortably await their turn, without cursing, sweating, pushing or grumbling. (This wonderful arrangement was experienced by me back in 1991 in New Delhi.)

This will eliminate crowding at the counter, as well as provide relief to the young, old, aged, disabled alike.

Provide a special Ladies only counter which is very much in vogue even in a remote place like Jodhpur.

Surely these are not costly suggestions. The only cost involved would be that of chairs, a set of tokens and an automatic caller, which is again a one-time investment.

In spite of the abysmally low cost, if the Railways (or even the Telephone Dept., the Electricity Dept. or wherever the waiting public is subject to serpentine queues etc.), can't afford this, they can solicit the support of generous sponsors.

Hemant M. Nahar
Chennai 600 017.

Initial fun

The Southern Railway's saga (MM, May 1st) reminded me that the Union Railway Minister (or his deputy) at the time of formation of the Southern Railway was Mr. Santhanam, a veteran Congress leader, and the first General Manager of the Southern Railway was Mr. Ramanujam. So the then nickname for the newly formed S.R. was Santhana Ramanujam Railway.

The M.S.M. and S.I.R. combinations were also liberally used to identify the most backward (in studies, of course) students appearing repeatedly for University exams and then getting into their shells after not succeeding: March September March, Success Impossible Retreat!

M. Radhakrishnan
Thiruvallur 14.

PLEASE NOTE

• All letters for The Editor's attention should be addressed to The Editor, c/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 62/63, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

• All business correspondence should be addressed to The Director, Chennai Heritage, 260-A, TTK Road, Chennai 600 018.

• Madras Musings does not accept letters by e-mail.

Claiming the past

Just a few weeks ago, a fascinating, new archaeological attraction opened in Britain. It is situated under the Guildhall, in the heart of the City of London, and displays the recently discovered Roman amphitheatre. By all accounts the exhibit is superb and promises to be hugely popular.

Those of you who have seen the film *Gladiator* will know the function and, yes, the attraction of amphitheatres where wild beasts fought each other and where men killed each other, as it were, for a living. That such an arena existed in London demonstrates how even in Roman times it was a thriving commercial and political centre.

But wait a minute: Why are the British people taking such pride in a place where men (and, amazingly, it seems a woman) attacked and killed each other for the public enjoyment of people who had invaded and occupied their country for over four hundred years? Indeed, some of our own

England and we still recall King Alfred who fought and contained them. We also remember the Saxon King Harold who fought so bravely against more invaders, the Normans led by William the Conqueror, as well as Hereward the Wake and Robin Hood who fought a guerrilla war against them.

And so it goes on. Invaders come, are resisted but prevail; and they in turn resist new invaders who eventually prevail. And so, in a strange fashion, those who were once feared as intrusive foreigners are seen in retrospect as somehow English. And so they are.

I am deliberately not including the Scots, Welsh and Irish here as the invasions did not affect them to the same degree and in the same way, which is why the four nations of Britain are so distinct from one another. Indeed, it could be argued that whereas those three nations can to some degree be defined ethnically or even racially, the English can be characterised by their heterogene-

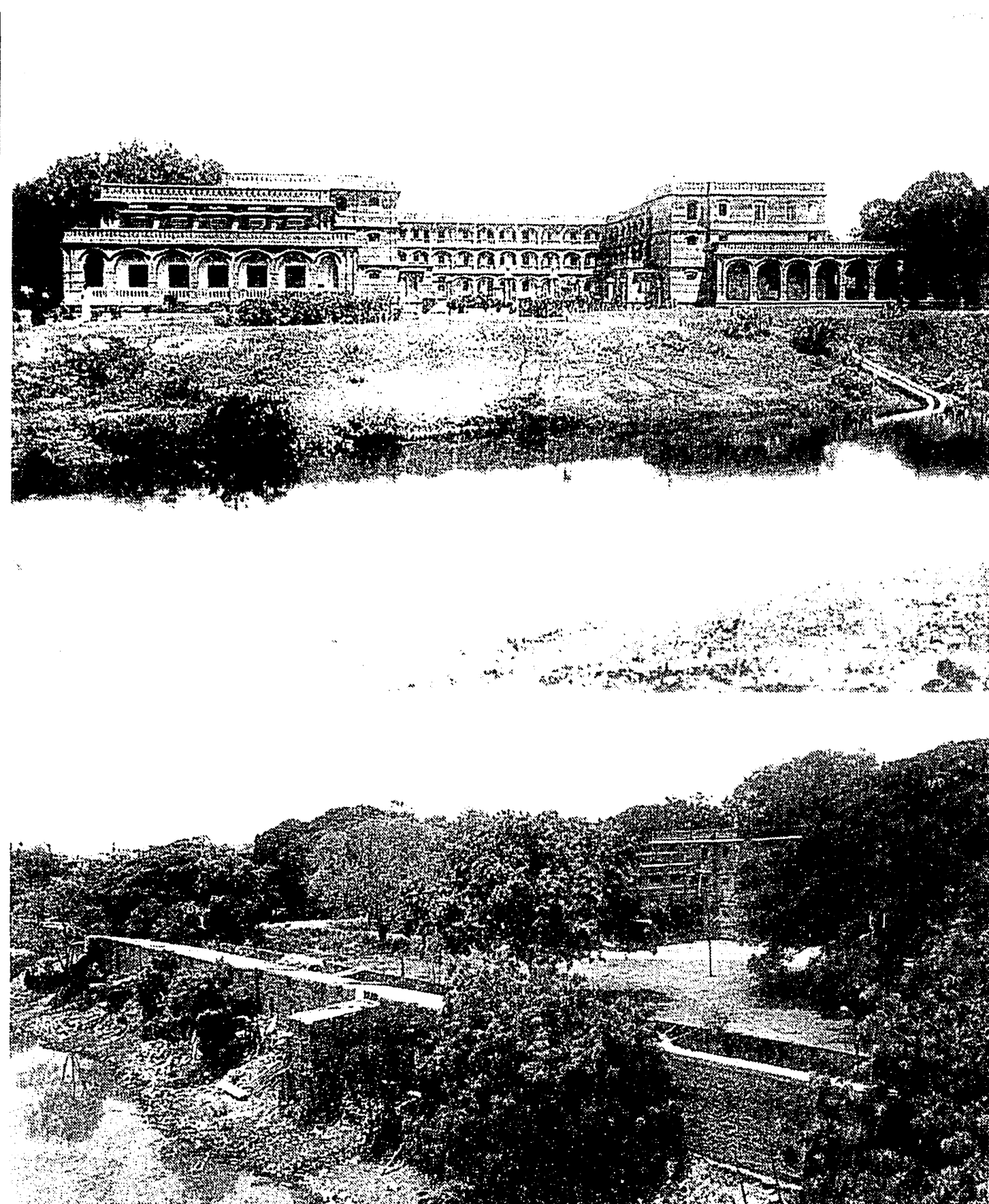
ity. It is for this reason that the present move for devolution in Britain meets problems when it comes to the English, who appear to be defined by what they are not rather than by what they are!

We saw examples of this paradox during the football World Cup when supporters of the English team, displaying the English flag from their house windows and car aerials, came from any number of ethnic backgrounds.

In short, to be classified as English is not a matter of race or religion but of self-selected identity. And that is because we have adopted previous invaders as our own. Romans, Saxons, Vikings, Normans — they are all part of what goes to making the English, as are those who first came to these shores as refugees — Flemings, Huguenots, Jews and so on. Their genes are now our genes.

And that is why there is nothing strange in seeing a church built by invaders as English or in celebrating a Roman amphitheatre as part of the English cultural heritage or in having a man born in Madras as the captain of the English cricket team.

By now it must be clear that what I have said has strong parallels with India. During my

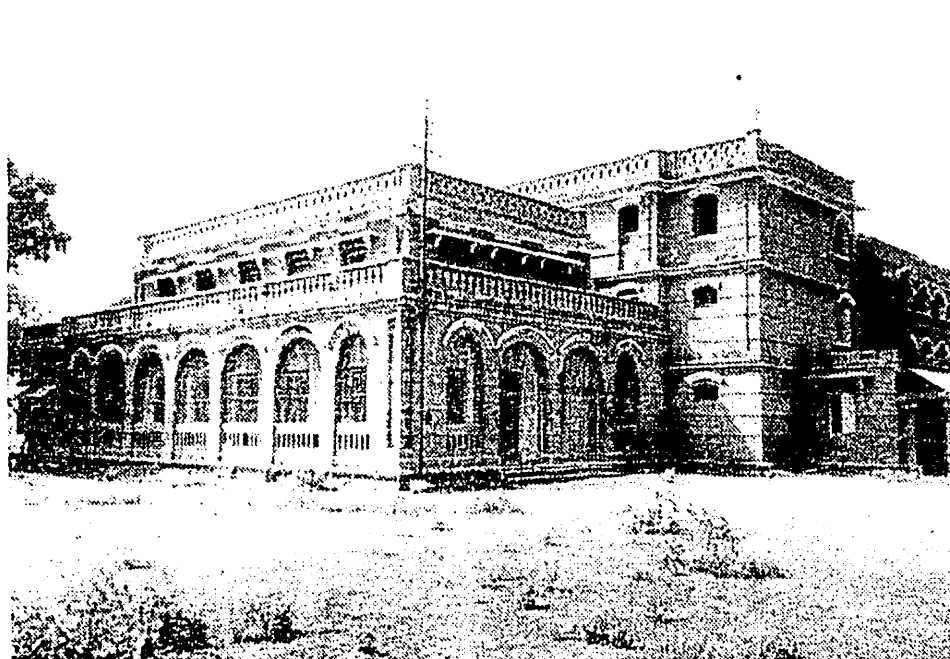


THE OLD...

Another picture from that collection of old photographs and engravings that fortuitously came our way is our OLD today. It shows Victoria Students' Hostel, opened in 1900, across the way from the Madras Cricket Club grounds and behind the Chepauk Palace complex. In the OLD, the handsome construction is visible to all looking at it from across the Buckingham Canal. In our NEW, a welcome growth of tall trees hide it from the same view, but go beyond the trees and you still see the handsomeness of a building which remains in modest shape a hundred years after its construction — and the left hand corner unchanged (see right).

At its opening, Governor Sir Arthur Havelock, paid warm tribute to its builder, saying, "Mr. Nambur-mal Chetty will have his name

..& THE NEW



recorded in Madras in connection with many large and beautiful buildings in stone, brick and mortar. It should be a proud remembrance for him and his descendants that he has had much to

do with the beautifying of the city". Unfortunately, though his buildings still stand proud and tall, like this one, he has been little remembered in the city to which he contributed so much.

time in Madras, I spent many happy hours finding and examining old forts, battlefields, churches, trading posts and graveyards. Most of these dated from the early years when foreign powers were establishing a foothold. Whether it was Tipu's fort in Seringapatam or Fort St. David in Cuddalore, the synagogues in Cochin or the ruins of Vandavasi, the Dutch graves in Pulicat or Fort St. George in Madras, all these stirred my interest and yet, at the same time, stimulated a faint sense of guilt. Was I not ignoring the 'real' India and was concentrating only on 'foreign' imports?

India, too, has over the centuries suffered from and, yet, at the same time, been shaped by invaders who ended up being

assimilated into and integrated with the previous inhabitants. Where are Alexander's kingdoms? Where are the Sultans of Afghanistan? Where are the hordes of Tamburlaine? Where are the Mughal Emperors? Gone. And yet, not gone. For their genes are still among the populations and their monuments can still be seen mouldering in the undergrowth. And the Taj Mahal, possibly India's proudest relic of the past, was built by an alien dynasty. Where are the Dutch, the French and the British? They are gone, too, but like the Romans in England, they never stayed and so were never assimilated. Nevertheless, their monuments and institutions have contributed to the shaping of modern India.

Lutyens' New Delhi is as Indian as the Taj. India, too, is an amalgam of all the invaders that over the past have been lured by its fabled riches only to become themselves part of that wealth.

So, just as the English are now celebrating the rediscovery of London's Roman amphitheatre and treasure their Saxon, Viking and Norman past, so, too, should India continue to preserve its own heritage. The efforts of *Madras Musings* to sustain interest in and the preservation of Madras's buildings should continue to be supported. For the monuments and buildings of the past are no longer Greek or Mughal or British, but Indian.

• by JASPAR UTLEY

Celtic ancestors may well have been executed in this barbaric fashion on this very spot. Should we not be reviling the place as a hated colonial relic?

One answer came to me as I took my daily walk down to the seashore. This takes me past Warblington Church, which has stood there for well over a thousand years and where my grandfather and grandmother were married over 120 years ago. The building is originally Saxon with later Norman additions, but also incorporates bricks from a Roman villa that once stood in a field nearby. Most visitors would regard the church as quintessentially English, yet the Romans, Saxons and Normans were all invaders of Britain.

The Romans invaded and defeated the Britons, Celts who had themselves entered Britain from the Continent. Even today, we commemorate Boadicea who for a time rose up against the Roman conquerors.

The Saxons invaded when the Romans departed and more or less exterminated the male Celtic population. Today we still remember the shadowy figure of King Arthur who for so long stood out against the Saxons.

The Danes also invaded and settled in the eastern half of

The paper and the promise

Financial instruments, especially bills of exchange known as *Hindis*, have a venerable history in India. However, paper money, in the modern sense, traces its origins to the late 18th Century with the note issues of private banks. Such circulation was, however, restricted to a very small class of privileged users.

The Paper Currency Act of 1861 conferred upon the Government of India the monopoly of note issues, bringing to an end the banknote issues of private and Presidency Banks. The issuance of paper money witnessed its first surge between 1910-20. This could be attributed to the 'universalisation' of notes, i.e., notes being encashable across the country; one rupee notes being issued for the first time; and considerations arising from the First World War.

Paper currency was managed by Government till April, 1935, when the Reserve Bank of India was established as the central bank of the country. The Reserve Bank took over the function of note issue from the Office of the Controller of Currency. Notes issued by the Reserve Bank were termed bank notes. The one rupee notes, however, continued to be issued by the Government through the Reserve Bank and continued to be termed currency notes.

When the Reserve Bank took over the function of note issue from Government, the value of notes issued amounted to Rs.186 crore (Rs. 1.86 billion); at the end of the millennium, i.e., on December 31, 2000 their value amounted to Rs. 2,07,912 crore (Rs.2 trillion). In the 1990s, lower denomination notes of rupee one, rupees two and rupees five have gradually been replaced by coins.

* * *

The Beginnings

The genesis of Paper Money is generally attributed to the token money evolved around the 10th Century in China when merchant guilds issued a kind of paper money termed *Jiao Zi*. These could be deposited, circulated and encashed. In such a system temptations for abuse were great and the disputes and problems these instruments gave rise to led the Government to take over the issue of paper money as a sovereign prerogative around the 11th Century. Governments, too, could not resist the temptation to raise

resources by issuing tokens and by the 13th Century, the paper issues led to considerable economic disruption in China.

In India, the experiments of Muhammad bin Tughluq (14th Century) to issue token money and replace the silver tanka with copper tokens ended in disaster, largely due to the enterprise of counterfeiters. The experiment was abandoned and the tokens withdrawn. Though Tughluq, to his credit, redeemed all tokens tendered in specie, the experiment so scared the Indian psyche that it took another five hundred years to venture into matters abstract in monetary matters. In as much as Tughluq's experiments were

the gold Star Pagoda and the silver Arcot Rupee in the Madras Presidency. These promissory notes which were convertible into coin on demand, were referred to as bank notes. There were free entry and exit of banks and few restrictions on reserve requirements as well as on the deployment of funds. Consequently, this was a period where there were few restrictions on banks to compete with each other to issue and supply bank notes — in essence an era of free banking.

Among the known early issuers of bank notes in India, the Bank of Hindostan (1770-1832), the General Bank of Bengal and Behar (1773-75),

• by Basil Shaikh and Sandhya Srinivasan
(Text and pictures from The Paper & The Promise, courtesy Reserve Bank of India, Mumbai)

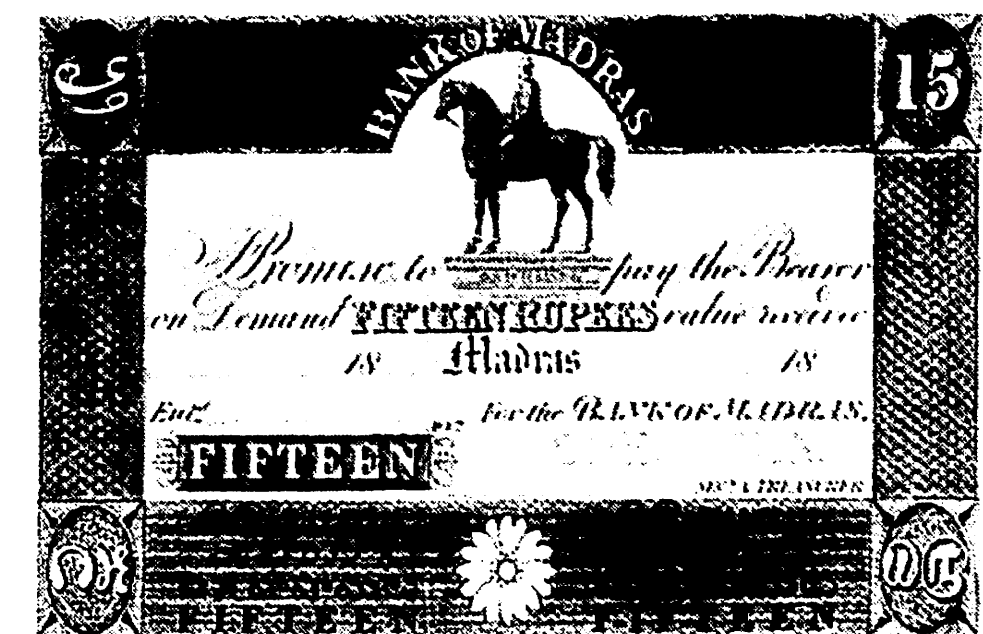
not dictated by the compulsions of a bankrupt treasury, they could be considered genuine monetary experiments.

The West evolved paper money, as we know it today, around the 17th and 18th Centuries. In India, this was a period of intense political turmoil and uncertainty in the wake of the collapse of the Mughal Empire and the advent of colonial powers. The power struggle that ensued and the uncertainties and disturbances it gave rise to in the 18th Century were not conducive to domestic bankers and local financial systems evolving to meet the challenges of the day. It was thus that institutions of the ascendant power were better equipped to deal with innovations and introduced notes payable to bearer on demand. These were in the printed format incorporating security features, which today are evocative of currency and banknotes.

* * *

Free Banking Era

The period prior to 1861 could be alluded to as the Free Banking Era in India. From the late 18th Century upto 1861, banks in India were not only free to issue cheques but also free to issue promissory notes which were payable to bearer on demand. These notes were convertible into the current coin of the region. For example, in the early nineteenth century, the silver Sica Rupee and the gold Mohur were the current coins in the Bengal Presidency, and



A Bank of Madras note depicting Thomas Munro.

The second Presidency Bank was established in Bombay and commenced operations on 15th April, 1840. There was considerable demand for the shares of the bank and the capital was raised from the proposed Rs.30 lakhs (Rs.3 million) to Rs.52.25 lakhs (Rs.5.22 million).

Bombay then was different from Calcutta; its culture was essentially commercial and as a city it was the melting pot of cultures and nationalities who participated in the commercial boom in the 1830s, spurred largely by the opium and cotton trade. The Bank of Bombay had a large number of Indians as Directors, notably Framji Cowasji Banaji, Jamsheji Jeejeebhoy, Cowasjee Jehangir, Seth Premchund Roychund, etc. The Bank experienced a run in the second week of November 1848, following the discovery of some forged notes in the bazaar. Between 7th and 13th November 1848, notes in circulation fell from Rs.51.65 lakh to Rs.25.46 lakh. Notes in circulation fell once again in February 1851 following a robbery at the Oriental Bank, where notes of the Bank of Bombay amounting to Rs. One lakh were stolen. The crisis of 1861 resulting from the end of the speculative cotton boom led to the liquidation of Bank of Bombay in 1868. It was, however, reconstituted in the same year.

The Bank of Madras, the third presidency bank, commenced business on July 1, 1843. The bank was set up on the lines of the Bank of Bengal and the Bank of Bombay with a capital of Rs.30 lakh.

The Bank of Madras replaced the Government Bank, which had been set up in 1806. The Government Bank was a profitable bank and had an average daily banknote circulation of Rs.23 lakh. The Government Bank closed business simultaneously with the opening of the Bank of Madras. It would be interesting to note that of the 52 employees of the Government Bank, 20 were offered employment with the Bank of Madras, 18 were retained temporarily in the Treasury and 14 were deemed redundant. The Bank of Madras had the smallest issue of banknotes, which were not accepted by the Government for revenue purposes. Its management left much to be

desired and was "twice placed in circumstances of serious embarrassment." The notes of the Bank of Madras bore the vignette of Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras (1817-1827).

* * *

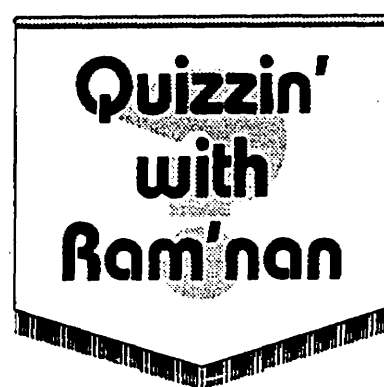
A Central Bank

The three Presidency Banks were at the centre of various proposals to establish a central bank in India. There was a proposal as early as 1867 to merge the three Presidency Banks in anticipation of the failure of the Bank of Bombay. However, there were fears that the amalgamated bank would become too powerful for the Government. The suggestions for amalgamation were revived from time to time. The banks themselves agreed to merge in 1919. This proposal was accepted and the Imperial Bank of India was formed in 1921. The bank combined commercial banking functions with quasi central banking functions. On the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India, the Imperial Bank of India was divested of many of its central banking functions and repositioned itself as a commercial bank. In 1955, by an Act of Parliament it became the State Bank of India.

The major concern of banks issuing notes was the danger of forgeries. Most early notes were registered notes and the peer group within which these notes circulated was limited and this was the most effective deterrent against forgeries. As note issue became more widespread, the dangers of forgeries became more manifest. In 1806 itself, steps were taken to make the stealing of bank notes a punishable crime. Forgeries in the notes of banks, which enjoyed a larger circulation, e.g., the Bank of Hindostan and the Bank of Bengal, kept recurring from time to time. In 1811, the Directors of the Bank of Bengal decided to pay any person who came "fairly to be possessed" of forged notes, as they felt that a failure to do so would be injurious to the circulation of bank notes and to the reputation of the bank.

Forgeries were the cause of much panic in the financial markets. Precautionary mea-

(Continued on page 6)



(Questions 1 to 10 are on Current Affairs. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. A simple one to begin with. Name the two main candidates in the Indian Presidential elections.
2. Name the disgraced former South African Cricket captain who was killed in a plane crash on June 1st.
3. What Royal event did the British celebrate on June 4th?
4. Which Indian medium-pacer called it a day from Test cricket recently?
5. Name the former Indian Vice-President and acting President who passed away on June 6th.
6. Heather Mills recently married a singing legend in a wedding that attracted the global media attention. Name the singer.
7. Who are the new French Open tennis champions?
8. Name the Rolling Stone who has been awarded knighthood.
9. In the world of computers, name the new strain of virus, capable of infecting digital photographs, that was unleashed recently.
10. Why did the Star 55 Cancri attract the attention of astronomers recently?

* * *

11. After which Freedom Fighter is Esplanade Road now named?
12. Name the latest film star to get elected to the State Assembly (Hint: from Saidapet).
13. Name the most famous peak in the Kurudimalai range on the Coimbatore-Ooty route that is named after a man who conducted what many have described as the greatest scientific project of the 19th Century.
14. What new law, as regards the holding of elected posts, came into force from June 5th?
15. Name the hillock, near St. Thomas' Mount, that is being readied by the State Government for hang-gliding.
16. What mobile pollution prevention measure was launched in Chennai on June 7th?
17. On September 24, 1746, a battle was fought between French reinforcements and Mahfuz Khan of Arcot. This is considered the genesis for the founding of an Indian militia. Name the battle.
18. Who is the Chennai Corporation Commissioner?
19. Of the six pillars marking the boundary of the Esplanade in Madras, three were at Badrian Chetty Street, Kondi Chetty Street and Popham's Broadway. Name the other three.
20. Name the Twin or Sister city of Chennai in the U.S.

(Answers on page 7)

Tales from a city

Two Tamil books (published by Kavya and edited by Shanmugasundaram) on Chennai were released recently at a function in Madras Christian College. One was on urban folklore, based on the scene in the city, the other, *Chennai Sirukathaikal*, was a collection of thirty Tamil short stories, published over the years in various magazines, with Chennai as the backdrop. Though a whole range of writers from Ku. Azhagirisamy to Dilip Kumar feature in this book, it cannot be described as a representative collection.

The short story as a literary form is comparatively new to Tamil and it is the modern writers who have attempted it. Anyone who aspired to a career in writing moved to Chennai, including Bharathi, and most of them spent their years in the city in penury. The city that gets reflected in their stories is coloured by the light of their own individual life experiences. For instance, Pudumaipithan looks at Mount Road as if it is a cemetery and Sujatha, in his futuristic science fiction, describes an Anna Salai that throbs with life, a symbol of things modern. Some of the features of the city get frozen in these tales. Ku. Azhagirisamy writes about the verandah, now almost disappeared, as a limb of a middle class house. Horseracing fascinates the protagonist in Su. Samuthiram's story. Sezhiyan and Vannanilvan deal with one intriguing characteristic of the people of Chennai... their obsessive engagement with cinema. There are other writers who paint a detailed pen picture of certain parts of the city. Dilip Kumar, writing about a family in Chennai, provides a vivid portrayal of one of the Gujarati enclaves near Wall Tax Road. Some stories trap the ambience of what the writer experienced in the city. Ku. Pa. Ra. and Pichamurthy deal with the travails of people who live in small rented portions. In the story by Krishangini, water shortage is epitomised in the harrowing predicament of an old woman, a migrant from a village on the banks of the River Kaveri, trying to observe Aadi water festival. Of course you have vintage Jayakanthan and Ashokamithran in the collection.

The anthology reflects many dimensions of life in the city, aspects that are normally missed as we rush through our own frenzied lives. I could not help noticing that all the stories are set in the time contemporaneous with the authors' period, except that of Sujatha. There is not a single historical. In fact there are very few historical works in Tamil set in the British period. Why? Absent also are descriptions about the geographical Chennai... the beach, the rivers, the hills and the sky over it. The external world somehow seems to elude our writers.

S. Theodore Baskaran

A heritage lesson for us

(Continued from Page 1)

which covers styles as varied as the Art Deco of Marine Drive, English Gothic of Mumbai University and Indo-Saracenic motifs of the GPO building.

"Take, for example, the Gateway of India where to prevent water leaking from the roof, waterproof cement was used. This is wrong, this material can only be used on RCC structures. Fine, using this cement gives a shiny appearance, but layers of stone are now coming off, giving the Gateway somewhat of a jaded look," said Lambah.

Similar complaints are cited about restoration work on CST Terminus. INTACH conservationist Anita Garware said, "Look at the rotten iron grilles they've put at VT. Accepted, the station is meant to cater to 1600 trains, but this is not the way such a beautiful building is conserved."

The concern for heritage conservation has grown in the last two years since a fire caused by a short-circuit gutted the elegant municipal hall designed in the 1850s.

Writer-conservationist Sharada Dwivedi says, "Mumbai, after Miami, has the highest number of Art Deco buildings in the world. But, as authorities are unaware of the importance, one finds buildings all along Marine Drive with enclosed balconies. This goes against the tenor of the precinct. This needs to be rectified". (Courtesy: *The Times of India*, Mumbai)

Rajshri Mehta

Editor's Note: INTACH Tamil Nadu's representatives at the CMDA's Heritage Committee have been suggesting this for the last three years at commit-

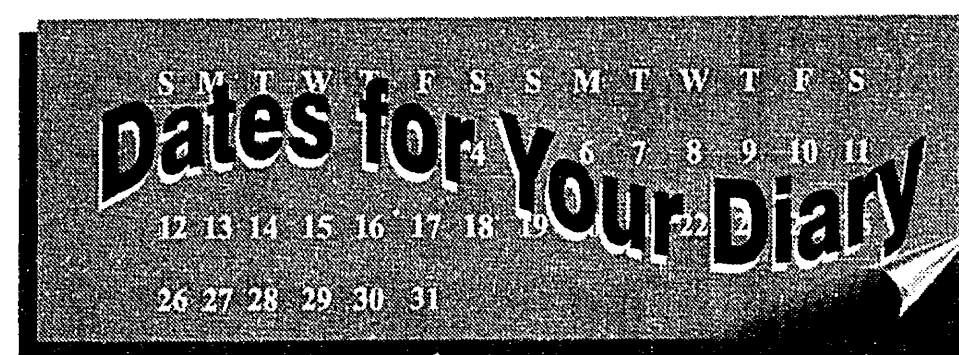
The paper and the promise

(Continued from Page 5)

tees by the Bank of Hindostan to announce the security features of its notes in 1819 led to a run on the bank, which it successfully weathered. The news of the detection of some forgeries of the Bank of Bombay notes

led to the mass encashment of the notes of the bank when over half the outstanding notes were encashed in a week's time in 1848. The Paper Currency Act of 1861 divested banks of the right to note issue bringing an end to the era of free banking in India.

tee meetings. *Madras Musings* and MMM have also advocated this several times over the years. INTACH-TN has also suggested this at various meetings with the Government, particularly requesting PWD to consider this in respect of the restoration of *Senate House*. At the last meeting held a few months ago, it was suggested that the PWD interact with INTACH-TN to explore how this training could be provided. Nothing has been heard of this proposal so far. Once Madras used to lead India in virtually every field. Hopefully, we'll at least follow Mumbai now.



July 20 to August 10: The ABK - AOTS DOSOKAI Tamil Nadu Centre, Chennai, will conduct a "Talk Your Way to Japan" contest in English and Tamil for students in Tamil Nadu. The first prizewinners will be sent to Japan by the institution on a totally free two weeks sightseeing and cultural exchange programme. Second and third prizes will be given in kind. The details of the competition are as follows:

July 20: Speech Contest in Tamil for the students of XI & XII Standards studying in Corporation Higher Secondary Schools in Chennai (three students per school).

August 3: Speech Contest in Tamil for the students of XI & XII Standards studying in all Higher Secondary Schools in Tamil Nadu (two students per school).

August 10: Speech Contest in English for the students studying in Colleges (including Engineering & Medical Colleges) in Tamil Nadu (two students per institution).

Nominations, through the respective educational institutions, are to be sent to the President ABK - AOTS DOSOKAI, TN Centre, 110, Nelson Manickam Road, Aminjikarai, Chennai 600 029.

July 20: *Abrabesques et Mudras*, a workshop by Patrick and Nirmala Gleyse on Western clas-

sical dance in the Opera de Paris style for both amateurs and professionals.

Nirmala, a choreographer and dancer, was a pioneer in Bharata Natyam in Marseille. She has been a student of V.S. Muthuswamy Pillai, M.K. Saroja and Malavika. Patrick, a choreographer and dancer, a former member of Maurice Bejart's 20th Century Ballet and the Opera de Marseille, is a qualified teacher. He is the only dancer to have devoted himself to Bharata Natyam after having danced ballet with the great names of the dance (at Alliance Francaise).

Till July 27: *Trees in our Lives*, an exhibition will feature Kalamkari, Madhubanni, Pattachitra, Batik, Warli and Hand Embroidery on the above theme. It will also have brass and bronze sculptures of the sacred trees of India. There will also be a set of line drawings of Shalva Vriksha of temples in Chennai. The most important and exciting feature will be the installation of a sculpture of a large Banyan Tree made of metal wire (at Manasthala, 12, Cenotaph Road).

July 29-August 5: *Le salon des cent*, an exhibition of 100 original posters by graphic designers from all over the world paying tribute to Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901). The exhibition is a sequel to a project commemorating the 100th death anniversary of the artist who was among the first to lay the foundations of a graphic design style that is still up-to-date (at Alliance Francaise).

Till July 31: An exhibition of glass reliefs by Sisir Sahana. In Sisir Sahana's work, the images are like translucent fossils in glass. He is one of the few artists in India working in cast glass as a medium (at Apparao Galleries).

July 19-20: Workshop on Terracotta Murals. Terracotta, or once baked pottery, is an Indian tradition and can be perfected with lots of practice. It can be both abstract and representative. Tiles come on border, space-fill and self-contained designs (At DakshinaChitra).

August 2-5: *Vasanthakalam*, an art exhibition-cum-auction to raise funds for 'Vasantham', a Special School for the mentally retarded. Most of the senior artists of the city and many up and coming young artists have come forward to participate in the show; artists from other parts of the country are also contributing their work. The auction will be a confidential one; prospective buyers can note down their offer for the artwork of their choice in the prescribed form, which will be given to them; the person with the highest offer will be informed on the last day (at Amethyst, Sundar Mahal, Gopalapuram).

Looking back on folk

The National Folklore Support Centre, along with DakshinaChitra and the Government Museum, Chennai, recently treated the city to a splendid banquet of India's rich folk culture. The ten-day feast of visual and performing arts was served up in celebration of 50 years of the Ford Foundation in India and 150 years of Government Museum, Chennai. I'll leave it to others to wonder why so few chose to dine at the table — timing, far-flung venues, lack of publicity, language barriers and, one which I refuse to believe, lack of interest, have all been suggested — and, instead, as an appreciative and satisfied guest, I'll savour again the fare I sampled.

Puppet Theatre

DakshinaChitra kicked off its Festival of Puppetry & Animation with an open-air performance of *Janothasava*, John Devaraj's larger-than-life body puppets on Elliot's Beach. To the amusement of the audience and those who just happened to wander by, the puppets assembled and dressed in full view. Very much in the tradition of street theatre, Devaraj courted controversy with his script and visual symbolism. But the performance generated publicity, which helped draw people further down the East Coast Road.

The puppet festival continued at DakshinaChitra in two parts. Four performing spaces were set up, with a rotating performance schedule, so that, ideally, no matter when you arrived at the centre, you could see all four puppet shows. It didn't quite work that way, but never mind, everything I saw of what was on offer was of high quality and played to full audiences made up of school groups, families and individual visitors. Natana Kairali, G.Venu's glove puppets, presented an enchanting *Kathakali* in miniature. In contrast, Purnan Bhatt's Aakar Puppet Group, from Rajasthan, went with a contemporary look, using caricatured body and head puppets to tell the story of a puppet theatre group, acclaimed abroad but unable to find an audience among its own. Shri Ganesh Yakshagana Gombeyata Mandali, with Baskar Kogga Kamath, used marionettes, or stringed puppets, to perform a diminutive but no less colourful and lively version of another traditional Indian theatre form, *Yakshagana*. Dolls Theatre and Sudip Das crafted charming soft

foam puppets for their contemporary lessons about coexistence, set to classical Western music. K.K. Ramachandran Pulavar and his puppeteers from Tholpava Koothu & Puppet Centre captured all the magic of shadow puppetry with their exquisitely cut leather characters and authentic backlighting by a single row of oil lamps. Sadly, Tamil Nadu's A. Selvaraj chose not to participate in the festival this year, but he surely belonged among these nationally recognised troupes and he was missed. It was interesting to see Toonz Animation of Kerala on hand to make its case for recognising digital animation as folk culture.

Folk Art

Based on their past success with workshops on folk art forms, NFSC clearly anticipated tremendous interest in Chennai

● **Madras Musings bids farewell to Pat and Bernie Alter with this review by PAT ALTER. Pat and her husband, the U.S. Consul General in South India, took a great interest in the heritage of South India and were enthusiastic travellers exploring the South's heritage destinations and avid watchers of heritage performances.**

in seeing folk artists at work and in wanting to purchase their paintings at reasonable prices. They invited nationally recognised folk artists. They mounted a curated exhibition of paintings from all the participating artists at the Contemporary Art Gallery of Government Museum, Chennai. Then, NFSC dispersed the artists to six local galleries where they made themselves and their works available for six full days. But, for some reason, the anticipated crowds never materialised. I visited all but one of the venues and found the artists I met eager to explain their paintings and show me what they considered to be their best work.

At Vinyasa Gallery, senior Rajasthani artist, Shree Joshi Lal, was midway through the initial drawing of a very detailed *Phad* painting and when I asked him about similar finished works, he sent me to his son at Little India Gallery. There, Kalyan Joshi, whose family boasts of five generations of artists, explained some of the imagery used in *Phad* painting and the order of laying down the colours, and then proudly showed photos of commissioned works in Germany and an exhibition in Japan. Both venues also displayed *Kishan-garh* miniature paintings.



Mayurbhanj Chhau

At Manasthala, I found three artists sharing a room, all silently at work. I stopped in front of the *Kalamkari* artist, C. Subramanyam, who was sketching variations on the traditional tree of life motif. He pointed to several fine pieces on display, which he had done over 40 years ago, but his more recent pieces were just as expressive. Kiran Devi, a *Madhubani* artist, left what she was working on to walk me around her displayed paintings. With no common language between us, she communicated her joy through the bold colours and wide-eyed

figures I saw in her work. In direct contrast, the *Patachitra* artist from Orissa, Ramachandra Moharana, specialised in very fine detail. One particularly complex painting he showed had taken him two months to complete. Amethyst also exhibited wonderful *Thanjavur*, *Kalamkari*, *Madhubani* and *Patachitra* paintings, but I arrived too late in the day to see the artists themselves.

Both Alliance Francaise and the Art World gallery hosted *Warli*, *Bastar* and *Pithora* paintings. Again, at Alliance Francaise, I was too late to catch the artists at work, but the gallery lights were turned on without my asking, so I could see the striking works on display.

Folk Musical Instruments

At the Museum's Contemporary Art Gallery, I found musical instrument collector Joy Fernandez eager to show me his exhibit. Joy lamented that he could only bring 125 Indian folk instruments from his collection of nearly 2000 instruments from all over the world. The rest were safely wrapped and stored with various family members in Kerala, while he tries to interest someone to build a museum to house them. As I walked through the exhibition of stringed, percussion and wind instruments, I watched him greet



Yakshagana

each one with genuine affection and was delighted to find that he could coax music from each of them as well. On one, he even played an American folk tune for me.

Folk Theatre

Perhaps the greatest challenge for the NFSC was finding a way to present folk performances each night for ten nights. They invited 15 performing troupes in all, representing three folk theatre traditions in India: scroll-based narratives, folk theatre and epic singing and dancing. They sent out several well-known photographers to document the folk artists' landscape, lifestyle, and performances. Later, NFSC mounted an exhibition in the Museum's Contemporary Art Gallery of five or six photographs representative of each troupe. I was fortunate to view that exhibit with Ranjan De, a photographer who had documented several of the troupes. Originally, NFSC seemed to envision simultaneous or closely timed performances on three stages in the Museum compound. But the outdoor stage they constructed was well suited for all three types of theatre and audiences weren't initially large enough to share between three venues. Word of mouth and newspaper coverage helped increase the audience, but by then the pattern of follow-on performances at the open-air theatre was set.

The buzz on the Child Artists of Rajasthan was good and then a chance meeting with their patron, Komal Kothari, confirmed they would be something not to

be missed. They fully lived up to their reputation, singing and playing the folk music of the Langa and Manganian musician castes of Rajasthan. But, entertaining as it was to watch the young adults perform, what stays with me is the look of pride on Komal Kothari's face while they were on stage. The next night, *Yakshagana Kendra* from Udipi, Karnataka, re-enacted the twists and turns of the *Lava-Kusha* story in elaborate costumes and makeup and with a commanding musical accompaniment. The *Andhra Patam Katha* from Warangal, being in the narrative tradition and therefore the most reliant on language, was the least accessible of the performances I saw, though I suspect that would have been true for me of all the scroll-based narrative performances. Finally, the *Mayurbhanj Chhau* performed by Mayurbhanj Chhau Nrutya Pratishthan of Baripada, Orissa, was quite simply one of the most electrifying dance performances I've ever seen anywhere. Dessert and coffee all rolled into one!

On the closing day of NFSC's Folk Festival 2002, I sat through several good speeches extolling folk culture in general and this festival in particular. Truly, the NFSC, Government Museum, Chennai, DakshinaChitra and all who facilitated the festival deserve our gratitude. But I thought about the artists and performers too. They need an appreciative audience to help them keep India's folk culture alive. I hope Chennai will welcome them with greater enthusiasm next year. (Courtesy: *Indian Folklore*)

Answers to Quiz

1. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Lakshmi Sahgal; 2. Hansie Cronje; 3. The Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II's reign; 4. Javagal Srinath; 5. B.D. Jatti; 6. Sir Paul McCartney of *The Beatles*; 7. Serena Williams (women) and Albert Costa (men); 8. Sir Mick Jagger; 9. Perrun; 10. They have discovered a planet, with an orbit resembling one of our solar system's planets.

* * *

11. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose; 12. Radha Ravi; 13. Lambton's peak, named after 'The Great Arc' surveyor; 14. An MLA/MP can't hold the post of chief of local bodies; 15. Monkey Hill; 16. Two two-wheelers and jeeps would patrol the city under the title *Pasumai Padai* (Green Army); 17. Battle of the Adyar River; 18. M. Kalaiavanan; 19. Linghi Chetty Street, Stringer Street and 2nd Line Beach or Moor Street, outside *Dare House*; 20. Denver.

S.K. Gurunathan was indeed 'Guru' of many in the country, but one of his disciples, P.N. Sundaresan, was no less noble than him. Both belonged to an orthodox culture and respected traditions when dealing with cricket players, officials, colleagues and the public. Their philosophy, like that of K.S. Ranjitsinhji, was that life was much more satisfying and pleasing if you looked at the brighter side of a man's or adversary's character.

Gurunathan treated cricket as a noble discipline and players sporting heroes. He dealt with them kindly and sympathetically in their hours of despair and failures and he wrote about them guardedly in their times of success.

About Gurunathan, says A. Narayana Murthy, "...He was a typical example of a good scribe. He was a man of amazing industry; he took pains not only over the matter, but also over the manner. He assembled his 'copy' assiduously, missing no minor details and giving a graphic picture of the game. He was our most prolific and proficient cricket writer."

Says Vizzy: "When the Board decided to honour him as its official honorary statistician, it honoured itself, as he is India's almanac as *Wisden* is in England. He is a seasoned writer and a campaigner for the promotion of the game, which has been his one and only thought throughout his life."

When Guru was in the press box, he was a sobering influence on young journalists. When they got excited about certain issues, he guided and counselled them. He was indeed a great soul.

Guru wrote three books; *The Story of Tests — India vs England 1932-59*; *India vs Australia and West Indies 1947-60*; and *India vs Pakistan, New Zealand and England 1961-64*.

Three outstanding cricket scribes

Gurunathan had himself been an excellent wicketkeeper and played for the First Division team Egmore Excelsiors. He was in close touch with the cricketers and if a Test batsman was given out, say caught behind, he would meet the cricketer in the pavilion and would get the truth whether he touched the ball and whether the umpire's decision was correct. He would also ascertain the facts from the wicketkeeper. Based on this, he would write, saying that it was a doubtful decision and it looked clear that the batsman had not touched the ball. For a wrong decision, he could write defending the batsman.

If he liked a batsman, what he wrote on the player would ensure that he was selected for the State team.

* * *

P.N. Sundaresan, the grandson of an illustrious judge, P.R. Sunderam Iyer, was a lawyer by profession before he stepped into the void created by the death of his mentor Gurunathan.

When he joined *The Hindu* he was assigned to the Advertisement Department. He was in a dilemma when he ran into R. Sriram, who persuaded him to join the Sports Department. He distinguished himself so well that he automatically succeeded Gurunathan when the latter passed away.

Sundaresan not only covered cricket for *The Hindu*, but also edited *Indian Cricket*, then and now the cricketers' Bible in

India. He also wrote a lot on tennis. He was a good friend of Ramanathan Krishnan.

Sundaresan, 'Raja' to his friends, was a forceful opening batsman with a penchant for the on-drive. He played his cricket under G. Parthasarathy, the Madras spinner. He almost played for Madras.

• by
K.R. WADHWANEY

After retiring from *The Hindu*, Sundaresan kept busy writing articles for several publications, until failing eyesight brought about his second retirement of sorts.

Sundaresan, who edited *Indian Cricket* from 1966 to 1974, also handled statistical bulletin of the Indian Board from 1975-76 to 1983-84. He was also the Indian correspondent for *Wisden* for several years. He was the founder-publisher of the popular classical music magazine *Sruti*.

* * *

Four decades, about half-a-dozen books and an estimated three million words (most of them as a writer in different newspapers and magazines) were the contribution of Nallathagudi Srinivas Ramaswami. His pen-name was 'Cardusian'. He was indeed an Indian Cardus, as his ardour for the game was as intense as that of Cardus and Jim Swanton.

John Major, England's former Prime Minister and an ardent follower of cricket, has gone on record as saying that Swanton was one of the greatest writers of the last century. So was 'Cardusian', who wrote English prose more eloquently than most English writers could. Many English writers, who read his despatches, ruefully accepted this.

Unlike many modern cricket writers, who throw their weight about without possessing adequate flair for the language or knowledge of the game, he was extremely humble and unassuming. He talked to everyone he met as if he was a commoner. He heard everyone, but seldom expressed his opinion.

Ramaswami winked furiously and ceaselessly. He dressed casually and his personality, on the whole, was far from impressive. But beneath that unimpressive frame was a kind of hidden genius. He deserves far greater recognition than he got in his lifetime.

Ramaswami was a touch art-

ist with his pen. He wrote good and not so good things of players subtly. Some of his despatches were masterpieces.

One of Ramaswami's early assignments was covering the second Test between India and Pakistan in Lahore in 1952.

"Our newspaper is read by young students," was the message to Ramaswami from his Editor in Madras after his first day's despatch. He did not take the message amiss and wrote his subsequent despatches in much simpler English.

Ramaswami would make it a point to reach the ground about an hour before match. He made an effort to talk to players, umpires and also the groundsman. When the day's play ended, he would not rush out of the stadium but stayed to capture events after the play.

Ramaswami began his journalistic career with *The Hindu*, switched to *The Mail* and then to *The Indian Express*. He was an assistant editor and leader writer with all three papers.

Ramaswami played cricket for YMCA and Royapettah in the Madras League. He won a medal in chess.

His contribution to cricket in general and Indian journalism in particular was far greater than that of many stars. But it went unrecognised. (Courtesy: *Straight Bat*)

HERITAGE FOR THE TOURIST

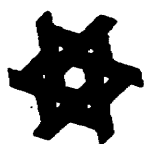
(Continued from Page 1)

property owners. We've received feelers from heritage property owners — from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh.

Post-9/11 and post-sabre-rattling, we have to look for new

markets, especially domestic markets. So far, we've depended too much on arrivals from the West. We are now turning our gaze to South Asian and South East Asian countries, right up to Australia and New Zealand. (Courtesy: *The Times of India*, Mumbai.)

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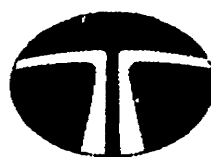
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