

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

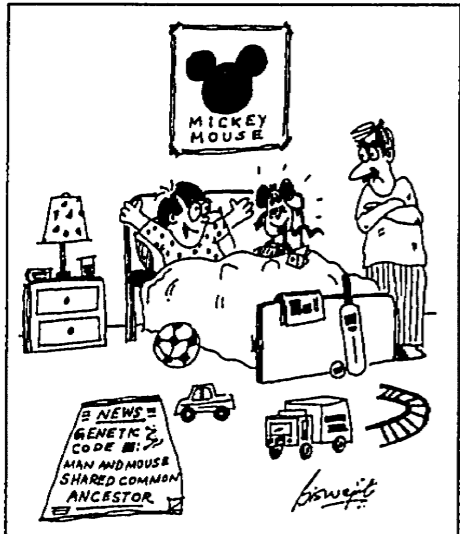
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Whats wrong in having him with me in bed, Appa? He's a relative, isn't he?!

Of Mice & Men

Scientists (there's no stopping these guys, is there?) recently published almost the entire genetic make-up of the mouse, and this, they say, shows the "animal's starting similarity to people", revealing new insights into Humankind's evolution.

This is a slight shock. Just think - while you've been walking around smugly, as befitting those who are supposedly Nature's last word, your close relative has been rushing about your house in Chennai, squeaking, burrowing holes in gunny sacks and being classified as "vermin." (Well, yes, that might remind you of certain close relatives; and, yes, every family has them... but - really!)

Scientists, dead-pan as ever, merely call this "interpreting the book of life".

99% of the mouse's genes have counterparts in humankind, including the one that causes tails. (You know, you can't help thinking that maybe some doors should just stay shut!)

However, we don't need to start throwing the word 'family' around immediately, as our closest mammal ancestor-in-common existed 75 million years ago, which gives a new twist to the term 'cousin-several-times-removed'. We do come close enough to re-think all those pesticide ads, though.

Apropos of this, did you know that a 700-year-old fresco of a medieval rodent, bearing a distinct resemblance to Mickey Mouse, has been found on a wall in Malta, in Carinthia Province?

You think old Walt knew something we didn't?

Say cheese!

Ranjitha Ashok

Threat to another bit of heritage?

(By The Editor)

The Royapuram Railway Station, inaugurated on July 1, 1856 with pomp and pageantry, was South India's first railway station and the country's third. Today, it promises to be the first railway station in Chennai to vanish off the railway map.

Built in the quasi-classical style, with splendid fluted Ionic pillars, it was, to judge by pictures which appeared in British journals of the times, a palatial building, one of the handsomest in the South. It retained this splendour till 1907, when it gave way to the then newly-constructed Madras Central Station, which became the city's chief terminus.

The decline of Royapuram station began then, but it continues to be in use to this day, though only one platform is now being used and the whole building looks in sorry shape, the result of total neglect by the Railways.

Old buildings in sorrier shape than this have been restored splendidly round the world. Why then is the Railways considering pulling it down?

One set of railwaymen seem to think that some repair work is likely before long - and they are looking forward to that happening. But there seems to be a high-level, from what this writer hears, intent on pulling down the building.

A couple of years ago, the Railways formed heritage cells in each zone and announced a commitment to preserving its heritage. In Madras, the cell met INTACH Tamil Nadu and looked forward to INTACH's support in restoring its heritage buildings and other constructions in the South.

What has happened to that commitment? Particularly in the case of the Royapuram Station building? Is there a more historic railway building in the South than this one? Surely, it needs saving and restoration.

If the Railways would prefer - as many in India do - foreign expertise rather than Indian, there is due in Chennai in the next few days one of Britain's leading conservation architects, a specialist in brick buildings. Perhaps the Railways would

(Continued on Page 8)



The Royapuram Railway Station photographed a few years ago - nothing has changed.

Where have the pavements gone?



• This picture of consumer-activist R. Desikan (on right) with a fellow member of the NGO CONCERT (the Centre for Consumer Education, Research, Teaching, Training and Testing) was taken by The Hindu Business Line during the protest walk the two led down Anna Salai. They were protesting against the near total removal of pavements in the city, with the authorities paying no heed to pedestrians. To emphasise the nature of their protest, the walkers wore helmets which had rear-view mirrors attached to them to reveal to them any threat from traffic coming up behind them. The protesters were arrested for their pains - because they had not taken permission to walk on the road in a protest procession. But the arresters had nothing to say about the lack of pavements - nor did they take action against the numerous pedestrians forced to use the service lane (a use clearly seen in the picture) or Anna Salai itself in several stretches. In fact, pedestrians using the road is now the accepted norm in Chennai - because there are NO pavements. The tragedy is that no one in authority is concerned about this situation which endangers the lives of so many.

Multi-storeyed buildings must recycle bath water

By A Staff Reporter

All multi-storeyed and public buildings in the city must recycle and reuse waste water from bathrooms and wash basins, according to a recently issued government order.

Such buildings must have two pipeline systems, one to collect

waste water from bathrooms and wash basins, the other for collecting waste water from toilets. Only the latter pipeline is permitted to be connected to the street sewer.

Water from the former must be treated by organic or me-

chanical recycling, and pumped to exclusive overhead tanks for use of toilet flushing through cisterns.

The buildings must instal these systems within a year, according to the order.

Are these institutions of excellence?

That the Government has the right to hold an inquiry against a Vice Chancellor is there in the books, *The Man From Madras Musings* has been told. But that it has never done so in the 150-year-old history of the University of Madras and that the manner in which the inquiry was ordered was abrupt, to say the least, cannot also be denied. There was not an element of graciousness in dealing with a person of the eminence of a vice chancellor of one of the three oldest universities in the country. And that is sad and not the best example of cultured behaviour.

But even less worthy of an institution that prided itself not so long ago on being an institution of five-star excellence is the cat-and-dog squabble that has followed among the faculty, with some — those who from the first days of his office have done so — seeking his suspension (and even removal) and others giving him a clean chit and wanting him to stay. Whatever the events being inquired into, it hardly behoves an institution of excellence to have its faculty squabbling like this, rushing to the Press with allegations and charges and counter-charges.

In another institution of excellence, the Music Academy too, the same kind of thing is happening, with court cases being filed one after another and reports being made to various authorities by a few members. Surely in institutions of excellence, particularly if they are upholders of cultural traditions, like these two, there is a need to behave with more decorum and not wash dirty linen in public. Surely in a democracy the majority's will has to prevail and the minority's role has to be one of considered opposition in order to bring about reform, not indulgence in wild accusations and scurrilousness that in the end only besmirch the institutions.

The maladies that have affected both once-great institutions makes MMM feel that no longer in their hallowed precincts are the institutions greater than the individuals. Indeed, the unseemly squabbles in the two institutions are not only spoiling their images, but, worse, are bringing down the standards in them, making MMM wonder whether they can still be considered centres of excellence. What a sad pass events in these two hallowed institutions in the city are coming to!

Falling standards

The first mass-level semester exam conducted by Anna University for the 230 colleges the Government put under its wings has resulted in a failure rate of nearly 55% which is why some of those who own these colleges feel the marking should be much more liberal. *The Man From Madras Musings* is astounded to hear the 'boss' of several colleges declare that the an-

cients in Tamil Nadu built wonders without college degrees; the engineers sent out by such colleges as his would learn on the job like those of yore, so why mark them down. But if that be the case, why don't people like him start PRACTICAL engineering or craft-oriented colleges rather than ones which promise courses leading to degree?

If degrees — and from Anna University, at that — are what are wanted, then students, MMM would think, have to reach upto that university's standards of excellence, not bring them down. But that doesn't seem to bother the owners of self-financing colleges making such demands.

What they are not opening their eyes to is the cause for the failure rate. And as far as MMM can see, that is entirely because most of these institutions have poorly qualified staff with little experience. Even if they wanted

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to run institutions offering the knowledge of ancient Thami-zhagam, where will they find experienced faculty, MMM wonders, with craftsmen at a premium in the country.

So where are they going to find qualified and experienced faculty? MMM sees little hope of their solving their problems in the short-term, but in the long-term, it could possibly be solved if Anna University, the IITs, some of the better engineering colleges in the State and in neighbouring States got together and ran intensive faculty-training programmes that would over a few years lead to higher degrees and upgradation of teachers' teaching and communication skills. If this is not done on a priority basis, and the self-financing colleges urged to improve from it, MMM sees lots of problems ahead. Not the least being an acquiescence by examining institutions to lowering standards.

Death on the roads -

The figures are frightening. *The Man From Madras Musings* finds. In 2001, Tamil Nadu led the country in road accidents, its 52,000 accidents almost a quarter of the 225,000 road accidents in the country and with 40% more accidents than the State with the next highest in number of accidents (Kerala - 36,500). Worse, Tamil Nadu leads in death-on-the-roads too, with 7½% of the 60,000 road accident fatalities in the country. And those Tamil Nadu deaths are nearly 40% higher than fatalities in the State with the next highest number of road deaths, Andhra Pradesh (2800)!

As in the case of poorly trained faculty in the new engineering colleges and the cry to liberalise marking, road deaths too are due to a lowering of standards for driving licences, experts MMM has

spoken to are convinced. Tamil Nadu today is putting on the roads drivers who buy their licences, most of them having not more than a few hours of training. The poor state of the roads in the State are another reason for the accident rate, say the experts; inexperienced drivers find it difficult to manage such roads which even experienced drivers find a problem. The wear and tear caused to vehicles by such roads also make them more difficult to handle and more prone to mechanical failure, again hazards that improperly trained drivers find difficult to handle.

The complete breakdown of law and order on the road compounds the problem. The police, say transport experts, spend more time on checking documents and penalising those who've left those at home than implementing the rules of the road and penalising those who break them. Poor checking of vehicles by indifferent or corrupt transport inspectors is yet another contributory cause. And so is the variety of traffic on the road, ranging from pushcarts and bicycles to the latest limousines and heavy duty vehicles, traumatising inexperienced, improperly-trained drivers.

Unless Tamil Nadu acts fast to ensure its drivers are better trained and better tested BEFORE they EARN their driving licences, unless the roads are improved as permanent ways and not subjected to mere patchwork, and unless there is a more rigorous implementation of the rules of the road by the enforcers, Tamil Nadu will continue to lead the country in road accidents and road deaths. Trying to gloss over these facts by talking of accident RATES and fatality RATES will not solve a problem that an affluent, educated State like Tamil Nadu should be ashamed about.

Popularising music

Chennai may have its Music Season that keeps growing bigger and bigger, but Bangalore has stolen a march on it in trying to make Classical Carnatic more popular, it would seem. *The Man From Madras Musings* hears that for some months now, starting at 7 every Sunday morning, walkers and others gather at the bandstands at Cubbon Park and Lalbagh to hear 90-minute concerts of Carnatic music, both vocal and instrumental. The response has been described as "enthusiastic" to these concerts held on the sites where British military bands used to play on Sunday evenings.

Promoted by the Department of Kannada & Culture, here is something the Departments of Culture & Tourism in Tamil Nadu can do. There's that stage on the Marina or the space beside Gandhi Statue, there's Panagal Park and Nageshwara Rao Park and if we can ever get the Corporation to revive it, why not My Lady's Garden? It's time we made better use of what little space we have left.

MMM

A big 'Thank You' to 206 of you

Chennai Heritage thanks the first 206 persons who have generously sent in contributions to support *Madras Musings* and, more importantly, the causes it espouses. These spontaneous gestures of support have been received from those listed below. We will every month hereafter publish additional lists of those supporting *Madras Musings'* intention to make Madras a better city, one committed to living up to its glorious reputation in the past.

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From a corner outside a cricket field...

Cricket. Seems to be around all the time, doesn't it?

I'm sorry, but I have to confess that this game has absolutely no ...

(I just realised something. I was about to make the sort of statement that should only be made after ensuring that fool-proof arrangements for a quick getaway are all in order, just in case you have to execute one of those sudden "Exit hurriedly, followed by bear" departures once found in old plays... which, given the strong passions that invariably surround this game, might become necessary.)

Whenever a cricket match comes around, a distinct "leave-Ranjitha-out-of-this" policy is adopted by my near and dear, while all those complicated arrangements involving ticket-buying and each-day planning are being made.

My "Ho-hum-and-Huh?" attitude also holds good for all those times the game appears on TV...which, given the appar-

• by Ranjitha Ashok

ently endless 'supply source', is almost every day.

But on one recent evening, for a brief, very brief, while, something changed, proving that even we non-aficionados are only human (although die-hard cricket enthusiasts might want to dispute that) and are capable of "succumbing to its charms", given the right incentive.

And this 'incentive' was provided in ample doses by a certain Ramachandra Guha, who managed, through what can only be described as delightful magic, to make more than a hundred years of the game ebb, flow and shimmer through the room at his command for the space of an hour or two.

Now I'm no 'cricket-baiter', and certainly wouldn't qualify for a mention in the 'Epilogue' chapter in Ramachandra Guha's book, *A Corner of a Foreign Field*. But I have to admit that the chances of me being seen registering cheery enthusiasm amongst the many-headed in Chepauk are very, very slim.

But after listening to Ramachandra Guha speak on cricket that evening, I did get a slight sense of 'the half was not told unto me', and a feeling that maybe my opinions could do with a spot of revising.

There was more than the

usual air of anticipation even before Guha's talk began. Quite natural, when you consider the credentials of the speaker, judged as "perhaps the best of India's non-fiction writers", and, with particular reference to the content of his talk that evening, his standing as a cricket writer.

The participative note was set at the very start when the audience was required to make individual compilations of their version of an "all-time Indian cricket eleven" ... a dream team through the ages.

Those members of the audience who made up the cricket aficionado sections, being the majority, diligently bent over their bits of paper and scribbled away, giving you a fair idea of what they must have looked like way back in school. Those who belonged to the can't tell-a-leg-break-from-a-googly section, for whom 'a flipper' would probably invoke images of performing seals, and a 'Chinaman' was merely a reference to a fellow human being, made themselves useful handing around paper and pencils, collecting lists, and peering over their neighbours' shoulders to see if they had written down names even they knew — like Tendulkar and Gavaskar, perhaps.

It must have come as a shock to many when they realised, as soon as Ramachandra Guha began to speak, that when he said 'through the ages', he really meant it... almost the dark ages.

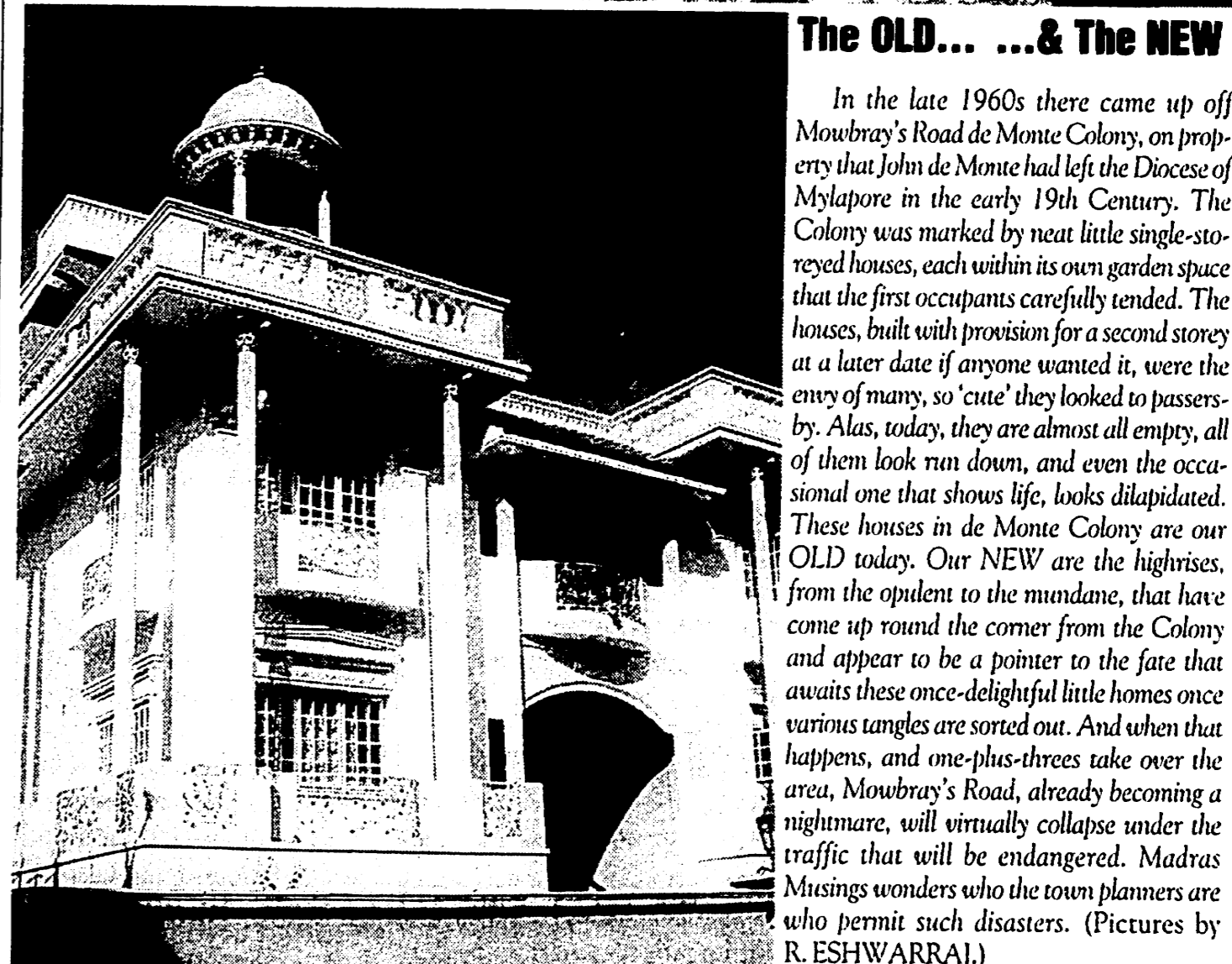
The first mention of cricket in India dates, I learnt, to 1721. While I don't think we went that far back that evening, we certainly slid all the way back to the late 19th Century.

"In 1890 (or thereabouts)," Ramachandra Guha began, much to the consternation of those who had not gone back further than the 1940s or 50s while making up their lists.

"Don't worry," reassured Guha, noting the crinkling foreheads. "This list is not permanent. We'll change the names and order as we go along."

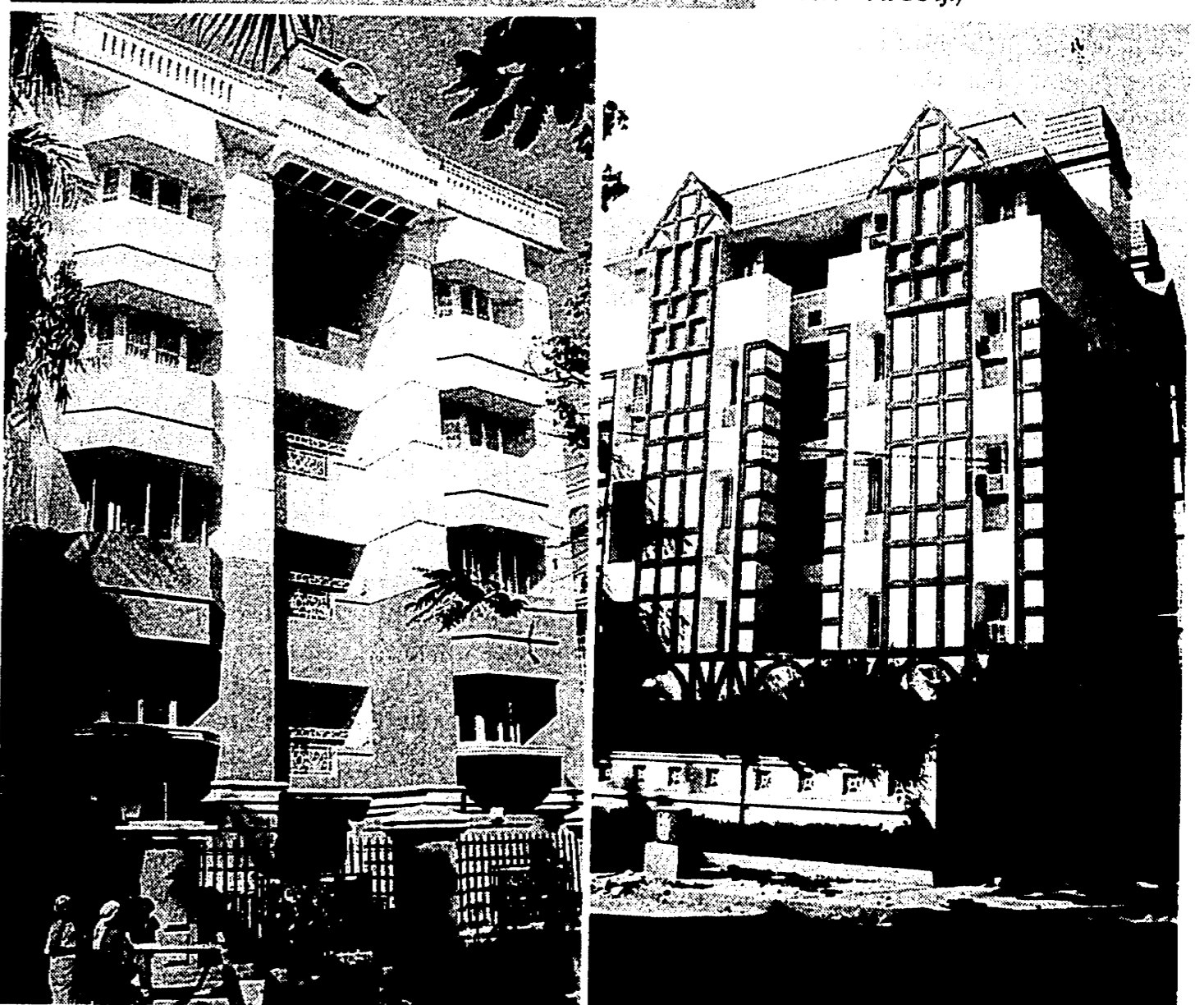
The names flew back and forth, creating some amount of awe in the non-cricket-fan section of the audience, who couldn't but be impressed by the knowledge and analytical skills being displayed. The sense of surprise was even more when it concerned people you thought you knew quite well. As one spouse pointed out, "He

(Continued on Page 8)



The OLD... ..& The NEW

In the late 1960s there came up off Mowbray's Road de Monte Colony, on property that John de Monte had left the Diocese of Myslapore in the early 19th Century. The Colony was marked by neat little single-storied houses, each within its own garden space that the first occupants carefully tended. The houses, built with provision for a second storey at a later date if anyone wanted it, were the envy of many, so 'cute' they looked to passers-by. Alas, today, they are almost all empty, all of them look run down, and even the occasional one that shows life, looks dilapidated. These houses in de Monte Colony are our OLD today. Our NEW are the highrises, from the opulent to the mundane, that have come up round the corner from the Colony and appear to be a pointer to the fate that awaits these once-delightful little homes once various tangles are sorted out. And when that happens, and one-plus-threes take over the area, Mowbray's Road, already becoming a nightmare, will virtually collapse under the traffic that will be endangered. Madras Musings wonders who the town planners are who permit such disasters. (Pictures by R. ESHWARAJA.)



Stray dogs no menace...

dogs AND children, as against dogs OR children

I refer to Theodore Baskaran's article "The menace of urban dingoes" (MM, December 16th).

There can be no argument that rabies must be controlled and, preferably, eradicated. However, it must be understood that, firstly, rabies can be transmitted by any warm-blooded animal. In the cities, in the majority of cases of rabies, the dog is the vector and a large number of rabies cases are caused by the bites of pet dogs and not street dogs. Secondly, the killing of dogs by the Corporation of Madras for over 130 years has not resulted in any reduction in the number of dogs on the street. This is because the number of street dogs in any area is directly proportional to the availability of food and breeding grounds. This is known as the 'carrying capacity' of the area.

If dogs in any area are removed (read killed), the area may remain free of dogs for about three weeks till the scent of the original dogs disappears. Dogs, being territorial in nature, tend to stay in well-defined areas where each is subject to a certain pecking order. However, nature abhors a vacuum and, hence, the dog-free areas are soon filled to a certain extent by dogs from surrounding areas. These dogs which are fewer in number than the original lot, have access to the same amount of food that the original lot had. Let us assume that 80 dogs replaced the original 100. Each of these dogs will get about 25% more food than the original lot. With more food and, hence, better nutrition, each female will produce far more puppies per litter which survive and within one breeding season the number of dogs in the area comes back to its original carrying capacity.

In 1964, the Blue Cross of India started its first free Animal Birth Control clinic. With the help of Dr. I.D. Mantramurthi and Dr. F.D. Wilson, all owners were encouraged to have their pets sterilised free of charge. All dogs picked up by the Blue Cross after accidents were also sterilised and vaccinated before being given in adoption or returned from where they came. Only about 50 dogs a month were operated on till 1995, with the numbers killed by the Corporation running to many times this figure. It must be understood that in most urban areas, dogs on the street (except for those left

by irresponsible owners) are in effect "community dogs". While these have no single owner, they are fed by the people in the area.

In the early 1980s, WSPA and WHO brought out a series of studies confirming that killing dogs is not an answer and that a sustained spay/neuter, vaccinate and release programme was the only way to go. It also showed that, for best results, an Animal Birth Control (ABC)-Anti Rabies (AR) programme must be coupled with a sustained garbage removal programme. In 1995, the Corporation of Chennai decided to give ABC and vaccination a try. In 1996, killing of all but the very sick and overly aggressive dogs was stopped and ABC-AR began.

Has the ABC-AR programme been a success? Since 1920, the number of reported cases of human rabies had been steadily increasing annually till 1996. Starting with about 4000 sterilisations and vaccinations in 1996-97, about 11,000 were done in 2001-02. From 120 rabies deaths in 1996, the figures for the following years are 107 in 1997, 44 in 1998, 24 in 1999, 17 in 2000 and 35 in 2001. In Jaipur, which started its ABC-AR programme the same year as Chennai, the figures are even more impressive; this is the third straight year when the number of cases of human rabies in Jaipur has been zero.

Figures cited by Theodore Baskaran, such as a pair of dogs producing 400 dogs in three years and 7000 in seven years, are based on purely hypothetical mathematical models which in no way reflect real life conditions. Also his statement, quot-

ing a veterinarian, that "50% of the strays operated die due to lack of post-operative care," is totally wrong - the true figure is less than 1% on an all-India basis and far less in the case of good NGOs handling the operations. This figure can be confirmed from the Surgery Department of the Madras Veterinary Hospital who have been doing spaying for over fifty years.

Baskaran has also stated that all animals must be sterilised in one go for ABC to succeed. This would be an ideal solution. However, results become very obvious even when about 70% of the dogs are sterilised and vaccinated. Again, about revaccinations: in a rabies endemic area, more frequent vaccinations may be suggested. However, the modern tissue culture vaccines universally used for animals today, with a potency of 2.5 IU, give protection for about three years. Yet, by way of abundant caution, the Blue Cross and the Pfa, who currently carry out about a thousand sterilisation operations in Chennai every month, try to re-vaccinate dogs area-wise more frequently.

Baskaran closes by stating that "when the choice is between the life of a poor child and a stray, I know for whom I will put my hand up." Without exception, almost all of those working for animals, if required to make the choice, will also do likewise. Fortunately, this choice is not required because for us the question is not children or animals; it is children and animals.

S. Chinny Krishnan
Chairman
Blue Cross of India
Chennai 600 020.

TOWARDS 'ZERO RABIES'

Several of the averments in Theodore Baskaran's article (MM, December 16th) are not ground realities and can mislead Chennaiites. The current status regarding stray dog reduction procedures and the occurrence of rabies is highly encouraging.

For nearly ten years now, the excellent arrangement between the Corporation of Chennai and the leading animal welfare organisations (Blue Cross of India, SPCA, People for Animals) has yielded substantial reduction of the dog population by performing Annual Birth Control (ABC) surgery and relocating the animals in the same area. In addition, the animal welfare organisations have also been en-

gaged in the intensive anti-rabies vaccination of stray dogs.

A baseline study (done by the author) clearly indicates that the occurrence of rabies in dogs in Chennai has significantly dropped in the past ten years. In fact, the current efforts must be intensified to achieve zero status of rabies in Chennai. However, the Chennai model of stray dog population control is worthy of emulation by other cities and towns in India.

Reviewing the rules of the past has no relevance to the current status and they need to be updated, based on the epidemiological features and socio-economic and political factors far different from 1919. Today, ex-

'Not correct' about a friendly animal

Theodore Baskaran seems to have a pathological hatred for stray dogs. This is the same kind of thinking that makes us feel that 'our' children are better than 'their' children. An unvaccinated pet dog is as susceptible to contracting rabies and spreading it as is the stray dog. The answer to the issue of rabies and stray dog control lies in the mass vaccination of street dogs. Contrary to the writer's assertion, the cost of a dose of effective vaccination is Rs. 16 per dose, not Rs. 80 as mentioned by him.

It does concern me that India has a large number of rabies cases. I am also aware that the current Corporation of Chennai's drive, started about five years ago, has been responsible to a large extent in drastically lowering the incidence of rabies in human beings from dog bite.

Paul Regis
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* * *

describing the loveable stray dog as an "urban dingo" and a "menace" (MM, December 16th) is totally emotionalising the issue. Without wishing to trivialise the danger of rabies, it must be recognised that the sterilisation programme which has replaced the barbaric cruel electrocution done by the Corporation of Chennai earlier, has been very successful, in controlling the number of stray dogs in South Chennai.

The average street dog is a most friendly animal and it is surprising that Baskaran has described it in terms used to describe the wild Australian Dingo.

B. Pushpalatha
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Ekkattuthangal
Chennai 600 097.

* * *

As a veterinarian, I am surprised to read Theodore Baskaran's statement on post-operation mortality. If any veterinarian causes 50% post-opera-

tion mortality, he is not fit to be a veterinarian. It is also wrong to state that each year about 3.5 million get bitten by rabid dogs and go in for anti-rabies shots. Very, very few of the bites are by rabid dogs, but in view of the nature of the disease, it is advisable to begin the anti-rabies shots if the animal's vaccination history is not known or it cannot be kept under observation. Further, the anti-rabies vaccine is produced in sufficient quantities by Government bodies in our country.

The RSPCA in the United Kingdom does not put animals which remain unclaimed for two days to sleep, least of all by an Inspector. Most animals which come to them are nowadays given out in adoption. This is true not only of the RSPCA, but also of the Battersea Dogs Home and the National Canine Defence League, which handles more dogs than the RSPCA. Even San Francisco became a no-kill city in 1995 and many cities around the world have realised the folly of trying to keep cities dog-free by killing.

In 1997, the then Chairman of the Animal Welfare Board, Gen. A.K. Chatterjee, after years of study, suggested to the Central Government that in view of the obvious failure of conventional catch-and-kill methods, animal birth control, coupled with an anti-rabies campaign, should be adopted as the official policy. It has taken the Government five years to draw up the regulations for this. In the meantime, several municipalities including Chennai, have taken the lead in introducing sterilisation and vaccination programmes with a great deal of success. Last June, after the Lokayuktha of Karnataka directed the Police and Municipal Commissioners to draw an action plan for stray dogs, the Bangalore Municipality decided to go in for an accelerated sterilisation and vaccination programme, which is in the process of implementation.

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Onyx and the public's perception of it

A closer look at Onyx operations (MM, September, 1st) in the areas they have been operating over the last two years - Zones 6, 8 and 10 - revealed many issues that need serious attention. Also needed are more awareness among the public, more communication with the service-providers and community participation for a cleaner Chennai. Feedback from a cross-section of the public in these zones and an Onyx spokesperson's rejoinder are given below.

* * *

"An Onyx staffer instructed us that garden rubbish be kept within the garden, and to inform Onyx on the toll-free number so that they can

arrange to send a separate vehicle. But when I did, the concerned Onyx vehicle operator told me that they would not come inside the garden. I was instructed to put it on the road. I am under the impression that Onyx is here to keep our roads clean; instead we are forced to make them dirtier."

We apologise for the wrong information given by the LLC (Loose Litter Collector). On principle, an Onyx staffer is not to go inside any premises or compounds (exceptions are only when there is a particular cleaning contract within a commercial or huge residential complex or kalyana mandapam). Our contract with the Chennai Corporation is for clearing garbage from the road. Members of the public are encouraged to register all complaints, suggestions or feedback at our toll-free number 1600-33-44-66, where each call is recorded and handled by the Customer Service Department, who pass on information to the concerned supervisors. These services are available from Monday through Saturday from 7 am to 6 pm, and from 7 am to 3 pm on Sundays and national holidays.

Regarding garden rubbish, we welcome representations from the concerned resident associations or groups to coordinate with the Onyx staff to decide a particular day and time in the week, convenient for both parties, for the vehicle to collect garden rubbish, which can be kept inside the respective gardens and deposited outside as and when the vehicle arrives.

* * *

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Chennai 600 017.

Editor's Note: This correspondence is now closed, with both sides having had their say.

"Most of the Onyx bins I see on

the roads are in a very bad condition. They add to the rubbish on the road because they are broken and cannot hold the rubbish thrown inside adequately. In some places, there are not enough bins. Why can't there be an optimal placement and why aren't faulty bins being replaced?"

We admit that many bins are under repair and there are not enough bins right now. In fact, the bins used in Chennai are used all over the world in our operations and are made of very thick plastic, that is supposed to be unbreakable and burnproof (except

• by
Shobha Menon

in the most extreme conditions). But we've found these bins, which are supposed to last for at least 6-7 years on an average, remain in good condition only for 6-7 months in Chennai. Generally, problems happen because big volumes of rubbish, like tree trunks and demolition debris that are not meant to be thrown in the bin, damage or break the bin that is meant to cater to smaller, less heavy volumes.

Sometimes the debris and rubble are thrown inside, and the domestic waste deposited above it. The Onyx staffer who arrives with his compactor doesn't expect the contents of the bin to contain such objects, and when the bin is lifted as usual by the compactor, it breaks! We also face the problem of bins burnt because some careless individual has thrown a lighted cigarette butt into a bin

(that could already contain a lot of dry rubbish). Sometimes the action might be totally unintentional. The person probably didn't want to litter the road! But a bin is lost. We've already asked for bin replacements (that have to be procured from France) as quickly as possible. We promise things will improve soon.

* * *

"Stray cattle delving into and toppling bins is an all-too-common occurrence. And, again, the rubbish is all over the road. What can we do about this?"

Stray cattle are a major problem. We have been trying out in the last 2-3 months in the Mylapore area a method to solve this problem. The bins are attached/tied to metal poles. This is so they cannot be toppled down.

We plan to introduce this system in other areas too. Since another complaint we face is of traffic obstructions being caused by bins being moved around - by residents who have their own reasons or Onyx staffers themselves who do not replace bins in their original positions - it will also serve a dual purpose.

Actually, the bins are never to be kept open. Our early stickers on the bin emphasised this. But we've found that no one follows this instruction. And if one person closes it, another following feels reluctant to open the lid again. So, the problem crops up again and again. The objection that the lid is heavy to handle is not true.

* * *

"The bins on my street are extremely unclean. It there no periodic maintenance?"

OUR READERS WRITE



Oh, Chennai!

I have just got back from a holiday in Hyderabad, with which I have been in touch for the last thirty years. I have lived in Chennai for many many years, settling here after my husband's retirement, as we felt this was the best possible city to be in. I still love Chennai, but how sad it is to see it decaying! What a contrast it has become to Hyderabad.

When we talked of Hyderabad in the past, it was of twin cities and the cantonment area, Secunderabad, was what was spick and span. Now you have to search for garbage in Hyderabad. Excellent roads for miles, miles that are litter-free and with trees planted, not just planted but taken care of for five years, named and numbered by the Hyderabad Urban Development Authority, which apparently is under the surveillance of the Chief Minister. Here is a city which has a man with a vision at the top, willing to put

into action what he has learnt from his travels around the world.

I visited the Handicraft exhibition, which has an ambience like DakshinaChitra. The grounds were clean in spite of the crowds, with women employed to pick anything that was dropped and put it into the garbage bin. This, I found, made the visitors conscious of what they should do, and they, in turn, made it a point to drop their refuse in the bins, which were not cast in concrete but were metal frames covered with eco-friendly and bio-degradable palm or bamboo mats, which could be replaced. There were no plastic bags or plastic plates, the plates were made of leaves called Geru (I guess the tree has the same name) which had apparently been boiled, mashed and die-pressed.

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.

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contractor's responsibility to remove it. It used to be!

With garbage lorries appearing rarely, many citizens, whether through Exnora or private arrangement, are trying to solve the problem. But there's no comparable help from the government. Only door-to-door collection of garbage, if not daily, on two specified days in the week, is necessary with fines imposed on those throwing litter on the road.

I love Chennai, though my children keep asking me why we settled down in such a city! They haven't experienced the Chennai that was! I just mourn 'Iago, Iago, the pity of it Iago'.

Anna Varki
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Kilpauk Garden Colony
Chennai 600 010.

The New Year

May I share my thoughts on looking at and reading a-Musing (MM, December 16th).

Oh, yet another New Year. As the poet says,

We ring the bells we raise the strains
We hang up garlands everywhere
Feast and frolic and then we go back
To the same old lives again

— Anon

"Kalakridati Gacuchyayu," "Time plays and lifetime bows out," says Adisankaracharya. A timely warning.

Today we have everything a man needs for a comfortable and fairly happy life. Still we are unhappy on account of man-made problems. Like unwanted sounds, unclean air and water, adulterated food and pollution everywhere. As someone said, "Make yourself honest and there will be one rogue less". There is another quote, "Want to serve mankind? Plant a tree."

May I conclude with
The old year is bowing into the past
The New Year is ringing in
Old opportunities are done and gone
And new realms of service begin
Let us not turn our eyes to days gone by
But get our faces ahead
Let us not regret things left undone
But turn to new tasks instead

— Anon

It is not enough to clean up the East Coast Road and building Five Star Hotels. We must look at the little things as well. In our colony, 24 saplings were planted with nothing to protect them. Now just one survives, presumably "the fittest". A fortnight away and when I came back, there was a pile of rubbish on the pavement which had already been dug up. Why? In an effort to improve the road to the Jayalalitha Stadium. Isn't it the

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Quizzin' with Ramnan

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

1. Name the new Chief of Army Staff who took over on December 31st.
 2. In which country have such Indian traditions and names like *Veda*, *Ayurveda* and *Gayatri* been registered as trademarks?
 3. Why is a baby girl named 'Eve', said to be born in the U.S., in the centre of news and controversy?
 4. Which Indian film is ranked Fourth by *Time* magazine in the Top 10 films of the world, in 2002?
 5. Who is the new Chief Justice of India?
 6. What is Reliance Infocomm's much-anticipated digital mobile service, launched recently, called?
 7. Where was India's second Metro Railway started on December 24th?
 8. 'Cauvery' was 'gifted' by India to Afghanistan on December 23rd. What is 'Cauvery'?
 9. Name the Indian sports administrator decorated with the prestigious Olympic Order recently.
 10. Why were Cynthia Cooper of WorldCom, Sherron Watkins of Enron and Coleen Rowley of the FBI in the news recently?
 11. Business history. In South Indian commerce of 19th Century, who were described as ABP of Madras commerce?
 12. Name the Chennai-based chess player who became India's latest Woman Grandmaster.
 13. A commemorative stamp on which Chennaiite, who not only was a Union Finance Minister but also set up a famous business house that is known by his initials, was released on December 31st?
 14. Against which high-profile MP from the State was a charge-sheet filed on December 30th, 172 days after he had been remanded to custody under POTA?
 15. Name the veteran character actor and comedian, popularly called VKR, who passed away on December 24th.
 16. Which was Madras City's 'first native bank', opening its doors for business on August 15th, 1907?
 17. Name the founder-editor of *Sruvi*, the popular English monthly devoted to Indian music and dance, who passed away on December 23rd.
 18. Name the two structures from Tamil Nadu that are now in UNESCO's World Heritage Sites list.
 19. Name the German ship that shelled Madras during World War I.
 20. Which public position in Chennai did P.R. Shampati, T.N. Ramanathan and Mutia Kalaiyavan occupy during 2002?
- (Answers on page 8)

A walk to discover Mylapore

Exploring a neighbourhood whose history is centuries-old is daunting. This is the case with Mylapore, which was one of the two ports of the Pallavas (the other was Mamallapuram). But a start had to be made in an age when people of Madras that is Chennai know little of their heritage.

Over the years, we at *Mylapore Times* (the free weekly English community newspaper) have been thinking of Heritage Walks in our beats for quite some time now. This year we started our First Walk on January 4, 2003, timing it to be part of the Mylapore Festival.

Twentyfour people gathered at Luz Church, which nestles midst greenery, old houses and narrow streets across from Nageswara Rao Park, to set out on the first walk. The chill of *margazhi* was just right for the occasion and so was our guide, Dr. Amarnath, a heritage enthusiast who is a lecturer of history at the Government Arts College in Krishnagiri and a Mandavelipakkam resident.

As the parish priest began the celebration of Holy Mass at 6.30 a.m. inside the church built by the Portuguese in 1516, outside, the walkers listened to the history of the church which was built in what was then a densely wooded area of Mylapore. The reason why the church is still referred to as *kaattu kovil*.

Luz Church, though renovated many a time, still retains Portuguese architectural features and since the Mass was on, the walkers could not get too close to examine the ornately decorated altar. The group then walked east, stopping at the gate of a huge gardenhouse that still stands proud at the end of Karpagambal Nagar. This was where the successful Brahmin lawyers built their grand houses and relaxed at the Mylapore Club which was created by a few of them who were miffed at the attitude of their colleagues who loved to rub shoulders with the British at the Cosmopolitan Club on Mount Road.

Campuses here, like that of the Amrutanjan balm company, offer a heritage buff the architectural splendour of a different age, but entry to such private houses will become easy once promoters of the Walk get formal permission.

There wasn't problem to walk into what remains of Luz

House, which is off Luz Church Road. The house has been renovated but has what is said to have been the biggest porch in Madras. The house was owned by the family of Buchi Babu who is credited with being 'the father of Indian Cricket in Madras'. Ranjitsinghi and the Nayudu brothers played cricket in the garden here.

Mylapore's streets and roads get busy early in the morning and make a walking tour of the area difficult. So the walkers took vans to the areas where they could walk around.

From Luz, the group moved north on Royapettah High Road. The Thanithurai market, next to the Sri Anjaneya Temple here, goes back to probably the early 20th Century when farm and other produce was unloaded from boats plying in the Canal that originates near Nellore and empties into the Marakkanam water body (you can see this on a drive down to Pondy from Mamallapuram).

The market was as busy now as it must have been a century ago. Sugarcane was being unloaded for the Pongal festival. The group also got a glimpse of the Sanskrit College campus where many other Sanskrit-study organisations were started in early 20th Century. The vans crossed the dirty, stinking and polluted Canal and stopped at a temple dedicated to Saint Thiruvalluvar (who wrote the *Kural*), the only one of its kind, since it is a secular person who is worshipped here. Many Mylaporeans are unaware of the temple's location: clearly, there is need for proper signage to identify the heritage sites of the city and how to get to them.

The temple isn't an architectural beauty, though a small band of citizens who swear by the *Kural* hold meetings here regularly to celebrate the saint-philosopher's works and keep the place abuzz.

As the vans negotiated the small lanes and streets of the area, passing by the Sri Madhava Perumal Temple and the aghraharam colony that is no more a Brahmin preserve, we got to see rows of tiled houses that retain the architecture of a hundred years ago. And as we passed temple after temple, the thought occurred that a Mylapore Temple Walk held distinct possibilities.

We now made our way



A part of the group which went on Mylapore Times' first heritage walking tour of Mylapore that enabled two score and more to take a close look at several aspects of one of the oldest parts of the city. Here they are seen leaving Luz Church.

down Bazaar Road, early enough to escape the dozens of hawkers who set up shop here, and stopped at the sprawling bungalow of the Navanmull family. Chandraprakash's great-grandfather and his family walked with other Marwari families all the way from Rajasthan taking six months to reach Madras and new business pastures.

Navanmull branched into Mylapore to start a money-lending business. Many Marwari families live in the area and some houses they own are more than 100 years old. Today, there are about 1000 Marwaris in this part of Mylapore and their numbers prompted them to build the Jain temple that now stands on Kutchery Road.

Chandraprakash took the visitors through the many grand portrait-filled rooms on the ground floor (the house was built on land where a stable for horses and coaches used by the Marwari businessmen stood). The hall at the far end has been rented out to a Brahmin caterer, and as a huge meal was being readied, the visitors were stopped to be served steaming coffee in the open yard where the late Congress leader K. Kamaraj used to hold Congress workers' meetings when he visited this end of Mylapore. (Chandraprakash's father Manicklal was a south Madras Congress leader.)

Kutchery Road hums with activity that has deep roots — one is 'Dubba' Chetty (founded in 1885) which sells 'native medicines', the other is Rayar's Cafe which used to be on this road and has moved elsewhere in the neighbourhood, but continues to be a big draw for those who swear by authentic Madras tiffin.

At the Luz end of the road is the Mylapore Police Station, which recently celebrated its centenary.

The group halted at the west end of the tank of Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple to gaze at the monstrous block of apartments called *Vishva Mahal*. Back in 1884, 17 men had gathered at the bungalow that stood

here and came up with the idea of starting a 'national movement'. That is when the seeds of the Congress came to be sown. Sadly, not even a plaque commemorates that significant event. Fewer still know of the role Mylaporeans played in the freedom movement.

The group was supposed to walk down North Mada Street to take in the view of the tank and the houses alongside, but skipped it and got down on the eastern side of the temple.

After a glimpse of the Sri Kapaleeswarar Temple, the group walked down to Lady P S Sivaswamy Girls' School, one of the first for girls. It was started by the Maharajah of Vizianagaram in 1869 in rented premises. The present campus was developed in 1910.

The group then crossed over to the Rasika Ranjani Sabha which is now 90 years old. R R Sabha has an old world charm, inside and outside. The small snacks shop built into the wall still exists as does the statue of Lord Krishna that welcomes guests.

The acoustics are still good and the group climbed up on the stage and were surprised at the accessories used by theatre groups to change backdrops and introduce props!

The men who manage R R Sabha would like to renovate the hall if they get generous sponsors, but heritage buffs are likely to be unhappy with this development.

The group then walked down Pitchu Pillai Street — a narrow street, not far from the Bharatiya Vidy Bhavan. Little has changed here over the last 100 years. Our host Nagarajan was happy to invite the walkers into his house. Small but airy rooms filled with all kinds of bric-a-bac music instruments, vessels, photos of families and relatives and a display of the wedding invitation cards of every member of Nagarajan's extended family!

As the walkers took in the street and its morning life, other residents were only keen to invite the walkers into their homes!

(Continued on Page 7)



The Mylapore Festival

Success limited sans cooperation

The Mylapore Festival this year was much more than just a *kolam* and *kutcheri* festival. East Mada Street, with the Kapaleeswarar Temple providing the backdrop, saw most of the action, offering music, dance and drama, exhibitions, handicrafts, antiques and traditional North and South Indian food.

Abaswaram Ramji's *Isai-Mazhalai* children's troupe was a hit with visitors providing vintage Tamil music — Carnatic as well as film songs of the 1950s and 60s. So were the *Koothu-patirai* performances and street theatre by *Pralayan* and *Chennai Kalai Kuzhu*. And standing or sitting on the steps of some of the old homes to watch and hear all this, audiences got to experience the special ambience that such festivals offer. You could partake of it as much as you wanted, walk around and come back for more.

Vidya Anand, who runs *Chaata Ke Dekho*, a North Indian eatery in Adyar, had with great enthusiasm set up a food stall on East Mada Street. "Actually, I was expecting much larger crowds. Most people seem interested in quickly grabbing something to eat and walking away rather than soaking in the ambience," she reacted to the Festival, adding, "The chaotic traffic is not helpful either and, would you believe it, vehicles were parked in the space allotted to us when we had come to put up the stall."

Not many would have disagreed with Anand's view about the traffic anyway. While the *kolam* contest was going on, North Mada Street was closed to incoming traffic. Vehicles were, however, allowed to approach the Mada Streets from the San Thome-Kutchery Road side. No sooner had the contest got over, than the 'No Entry' barricade was swiftly removed and what followed was something as close as you could get to 'might is right', the law of the jungle. With TTDC buses carrying visitors to the Kapaleeswarar temple parked at the East-North Mada corner,

traffic moved at a snail's pace and there was hardly any elbowroom to walk.

For those who did finally manage to wend their way through, the effort was worth it. Housewives thronged the Karpagambal Hall where there was a wonderful display of Rajasthani and Marwari saris, Kanchipuram silks, dress material, bedsheets, and Chettinad crafts and antiques, all collected from old Chettinad homes. Sivakami Subbiah agreed that the Festival was more elaborate this year. "It's been fairly good business too. But more than that, it's the kind of exposure visitors get when they come to a fair like this that is important," she felt.

On East Mada Street, craftsmen displayed their wares and one showed fascinated audiences the ease with which he produced masks. The Karpagambal Hall also had on display and for sale some striking photographs, reasonably priced, of classical musicians and dancers, such as MS Subbalakshmi, Balamuralikrishna and Mala-



The second Annual Mylapore Festival was organised once again by Mylapore Times and was, this year, bigger and better than last year. But traffic played spoilsport and there was a noticeable lack of cooperation from the bigger shop-owners, who did not seem to realise that in the long run they would benefit. Nevertheless crowds turned up to sample the food offered by foodcarts, watch the craftsmen at work and buy their wares, and play spectator at the numerous entertainments arranged during the five days of the Festival as these pictures by R. ESHWARRAJ show.

vika Sarrukai. While at the PSV Kalyana Mandapam off North Mada Street, there was a photography exhibition on 'Mylapore' and the 'Heritage of Madras', some of the photographs, especially of a roadside bookstall and of a group of boys playing cricket on the dry bed of the Chitrakulam tank, were eye-catching.

This year, the Festival kicked off on New Year's Day with a children's procession that went around the Kapaleeswarar Temple singing songs and *bhajans*. There were horse carriage rides for children. A toy-maker's corner sold colourful kites, and clay, paper and balloon toys. Outside the Bharatiya Vidy Bhavan, young painters of the College of Arts displayed their artwork and did on-the-spot portraits of people who wanted them.

In spite of all this, visitors were unhappy about a few things, most of all the traffic. If the idea of festivals like this is to attract more crowds, regulation of traffic, enforcement of traffic rules and provision of ad-

equate parking space have to be given priority. The quality of some of the food also left a lot to be desired. Though there were announcements of some sort, there was no information booth or kiosk and as a result visitors were not too sure which way to go and whether there was anything left to be savoured.

If the crowds were an indicator, then the Festival was a moderate success. "The whole idea is to build up the Festival and make it an eagerly awaited yearly event. It is a different kind of festival — it promotes the traditional arts and crafts and attempts to tell people a lot more about the city's heritage than a story in a newspaper, for instance," says Vincent D'Souza, Editor, *Mylapore Times*, which had organised the Festival. "It was not an easy exercise at all. For example, shopkeepers were not willing to allow regulation of traffic for even an hour during the *kolam* competition. There was also not an iota of support from the State's Tourism Department", D'Souza added.

Yes, the State Government's support would certainly have lifted the Festival to another level. But, what was perhaps most disconcerting was the attitude of the Chennai citizen. Shopkeepers were not ready to cooperate for even a couple of

hours and drivers and pedestrians exhibited a 'I care a damn' attitude. Sadly, the intricate *kolams*, painstakingly drawn on North Mada Street, died young. They were literally wiped clean by a stream of vehicles within an hour of the contest getting over.

If Chennai is to make a success of such festivals (Pantheon Road, Cathedral Road and the Marina beachfront are excellent venues for such festivals), the attitude of people must change. Neither the passion shown by the organisers of the festival nor the striking displays of art, craft, music and dance, as was evident here, can add up to provide a recipe for success without people's participation. And perhaps, more than anything else, it is this important aspect that the Mylapore Festival highlighted this year.

Sashi Nair

A WALK TO DISCOVER MYLAPORE

(Continued from page 6)

The vans then breezed past Sri Ramakrishna Math (it was founded in 1897 in a Mylapore house and it moved to the present location in 1907) and the P.S. School for boys, which has among its alumni a galaxy of well-known personalities.

At the far end of R.K. Math Road is Brodie's Road that leads to the campus of the Madras Music College. *Brodie's Castle* on the banks of the Adyar River was one of the first houses to be built by the East India Company as they moved out of the Fort and the Choultry Plain of Teynampet.

We were stopped at the gates of the Music College — permission had to be sought from Government to explore it — so we had a long look at the 'castle' and swung past *Underwood Gardens*, which is also another sprawling gardenhouse of the Raj era and

is now the residence of the Chief General Manager of State Bank of India.

The stop-over at the Quibble, Island Cemetery was next. Still in good condition there are about two dozen gravestones of English families and of foreign missionaries (nuns and priests).

In this area, the Adyar Estuary, there existed a few islands including Quibble, the whole area and it should have been declared an ecological preserve, but has become a highly polluted and encroached area.

It is believed that the southern gate of the fort of the Portuguese whose walls extended from the area near St. Bede's school in the north and along the Canal in the west, were at the Foreshore Estate. Near here, existed the port of the Pallavas.

There is little evidence for walkers of the Portuguese

settlement, save for some houses behind San Thomé High School and in the Dooming Street areas of San Thomé High Road.

But a fascinating piece of architecture is the St. Thomas' English Church (consecrated in 1842) where Pastor Vijaykumar took the group inside and explained the special features of this English-looking church set inside in a garden.

Next stop was Archbishop's House — the residence of the Rev. Arul Das James who heads all the Catholic churches of the Madras-Mylapore region. A peep into the chapels where the Bishops residing here pray in private and a look at the portraits of all the foreign and Indian Bishops who have headed the Diocese, were made possible by Fr. Jude.

Next door is the St. Thomas Cathedral (built in 1896), one of the few built over the tomb

of an apostle of Jesus — St. Thomas. For over 19 centuries there has been some church or other in this area and the apostle is said to have been buried near here after being killed on St. Thomas Mount in the First Century A.D. The small museum in this campus has some stone, wooden and other relics that illustrate the fascinating history of San Thomé known as *Betumah* to the Arabs who stopped here to trade.

San Thomé's heritage is fascinating and calls for an exclusive walk. But for the tired walkers of January 4, the Cathedral was the last stop, three hours after they started out. The next Mylapore Heritage Walk has been planned for January 26th morning. Those who wish to register can call *Mylapore Times* on 2498 2244 or 2467 1122.

Vincent D' Souza

Outside a cricket field...

(Continued from page 3)

can't remember where he left his glasses; he can't remember how old his children are — but look at him now... 'the number of catches X took in 1945, indeed'. The fact that her old bit of trouble had actually got the answer right appeared to add insult to that particular injury.

You remember those little books filled with little figures that appeared to move as you rapidly flipped the pages? This was something like that — a history of cricket delivered with speed, accuracy and humour, while the spirits of cricketers, past and present, surged around you.

The names kept coming — Seshachari, (the only 'Tambaram' on the Dream Team for a brief while), Vittal, C.K. Nayudu, Amarnath, and the pace bowlers, Mohammed Nissar and Amar Singh; Vijay Merchant the mill owner from Bombay, who found a mention in the Dream Team as a bats-

man. And one name that stood out for the poignant history associated with it and for the sheer fact that it was the first time many in that room were even hearing it — Palwankar Baloo.

Ramachandra Guha eschewed the mike, preferring to move about freely with boyish enthusiasm, brandishing a thick marker pencil which he used lavishly on a board, striking poses to explain certain shots, rapidly reeling off vignettes of cricketing and social history through more than ten decades, and bringing home one rather valuable lesson. Nothing happens in isolation. Not even 'just a game'. For the history of cricket is inextricably linked with the social and political history of the nation, and some strange forces have influenced team selections over the decades.

"Prasanna, Chandrasekar, Viswanath, and Kirmani", Ramachandra Guha intoned deliberately, with a distinct twinkle in his eye.

"V.V. Kumar," shot back some members, grimly determined to keep their State's flag flying.

"Choosing a Dream Team brings in many factors," said Guha, adding mischievously, "including languages and States."

Passions ran high and voices rose during a debate, an example of a fascinating generational divide, over the rival merits of Vijay Hazare and Rahul Dravid. Ultimately, Hazare made the Dream Team captaincy, the clinching argument being that Rahul Dravid is still young in terms of cricketing

years. For those of us who can only remember soft drinks ads that speak highly of the 'Cute Men in Blue', such detailed discussions were intimidating — especially when very young voices, some that haven't even broken yet, spoke such words of wisdom, leaving us adults feeling heavy and dull. The youngsters displayed knowledge of history that would have astonished their teachers in school. And the presence of cricket luminaries like C.D. Gopinath, V. Sivaramakrishnan, and V. Ramnarayan appeared to egg the audience on to greater heights of argument and discussion.

There was further tumult over the Sardar and the Indian All Rounder — Bishen Singh Bedi and Vinoo Mankad, respectively. There were cries of "Left Arm Spin" which for the non-initiates sounded more like a painful disorder rather than an art. Mankad pipped Bedi as he was the "better all rounder".

The divide between the Knows and Don't-Knows surfaced repeatedly. Like when Guha quoted Robert Menezes as having said that 'Mid-on is the last refuge of Mankind', the audience responded with knowledgeable laughter. Only the small section that has habitually giggled at terms like 'silly mid off' appeared puzzled.

And who finally made the Dream Team? The names (Please Note: This is according to the crowd, along with Guha, that evening,) were roughly as follows: Vijay Hazare, (Capt.) Sunil Gavaskar, Vijay Merchant, Sachin Tendulkar, G.R. Viswanath, Vinoo Mankad, Syed Kirmani, Kapil Dev, Prasanna, Chandrasekar, Mohammed Nissar.

Time stood baffled as its rules about years and generations were casually dismissed and for a while cricketers who had taken wickets or scored



Till January 20: DakshinaChitra has co-ordinated the 'Enjoy East Coast Road' festivities on behalf of CII's Chennai Fest. 21 organisations have been successfully brought together on the ECR for this.

Till January 24: Exhibition of Paintings by Joydip Sengupta. (At Artworld.)

January 19-27: International Tribal Artists Workshop, a collaboration by the Madras Craft Foundation and the Boras Museum of Art, Sweden, entitled "Sites of Recurrence". There will also be an exhibition from January 22nd until February 15th. (At DakshinaChitra.)

January 20: Thierry Arensma exhibits black and white images of Sri Lanka and Rajasthan. (At Alliance Francaise.)

January 23: Documentaries by Pankaj Rishi Kumar of Mumbai. "The play is on ..." and "The Vote", both international prize-winners. (At Alliance Francaise, 6.00 p.m.)

January 24: 'Beyond the Natural 5' Ghost story reading. (Amethyst, 8.15 p.m.)

Travelogue, a monthly rendezvous with remarkable people who have displayed rigour, passion, courage, humility, honesty, reliability, respectability, approachability and, most importantly, the will to dream and turn them into reality. A different speaker each month. (At the Alliance Francaise, 6.30 p.m.)

From January 25: Exhibition of sculpture in bronze and installation by Dimpy Menon. (At Forum Art Gallery.)

Exhibition prints and lithographs by runs thirty, forty or even one hundred years ago stood side by side with 'contemporaries' whose faces appear on TV today.

Ramachandra Guha pulled off a time-travel exercise the audience would never forget. And that's not just cricket.

That's rather cheekily close to genius.

William Hodges and others. (At Prakrit Art Gallery.)

From January 27: Film festival celebrating 50 years of French cinema. (At Russian Cultural Centre, passes available at Alliance Francaise.)

Students of College of Arts and Crafts exhibit their paintings and sculpture. (At Lalit Kala Akademy.)

January 28: John McLaughlin and his band Shakti. (At the Music Academy.)

January 30: *Condemned to Die*, a play by Adi Theatre, Delhi, that's a finale of the bi-centenary celebration of Victor Hugo. Directed by S. Somasundaram and starring Asad Hussain. Though Victor Hugo is popular for texts like *les Miserables*, very few know that he was also a politician who led the fight for the abolition of death penalty. Written in 1829, when he was only 26 years old, the text is still relevant. It is the story of the last 24 hours of a man who is condemned to die. (At the Alliance Francaise, 6.30 p.m.)

February 1 & 2: *Hannah and Hanna*, a powerful and moving play of culture clash and young people's experience of displacement. (At Sivagami Pethachi Auditorium. For details, British Council.)

February 3-March 3: *Vasantha Vizha* — a craft mela designed specifically for school children. Special everyday activities such as bullock cart rides, cycle acrobats, puppet shows, as well as traditional games. Also, a craft bazaar. (At DakshinaChitra.)

THREAT TO HERITAGE

(Continued from page 1)

like to take Dr. Patrick Campbell around the station and get his advice on the possibilities of restoration. If they would, they could get in touch with him through *Madras Musings*. But whether they would like to or not, it would be nice if the Railways — which so proudly announced its Heritage Cell — saved the building and decided to give its Heritage Cell the go ahead to restore this bit of history.

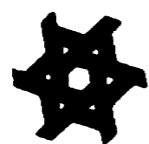
Answers to Quiz

1. Gen. N.C. Vij; 2. Germany; 3. She is being touted as the first cloned human baby; 4. *Devdas*; 5. Justice V.N. Khare; 6. India Mobile; 7. New Delhi; 8. The second Air India plane to be given to Ariana Afghan Airlines; 9. Ashwini Kumar; 10. They have been chosen as *Time* magazine's 'Persons of the Year' for 2002.

* * *

11. Arbutnot, Binny and Parry's; 12. Aarthie Ramaswamy; 13. T.T. Krishnamachari; 14. Vaiko; 15. V.K. Ramaswamy; 16. Indian Bank; 17. Pattabhi Raman; 18. Brihadeeswara Temple at Thanjavur and the rock-cut temple at Mamallapuram; 19. *Emden*; 20. The Commissioner of Chennai Corporation.

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