

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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I think he is here to tell us that our latest movie has hurt the sentiments of geese all over the world!

Tall tales

We seem to live in touchy times. At any given point, someone out there is feeling hurt or picked on, demanding apologies, grumbling about the general rot in society's foundations.

This constant demand to tread lightly is especially tough on those in high visibility professions.

Like scriptwriters, for instance. Looks like they can't move a step these days without stepping on someone's particularly tender toes, forcing them to either move around like ballerinas dancing on fragile eggshells, or choose formulae over creativity.

There are entire brigades, mostly self-appointed, slinking around, armed with huge magnifying glasses, ready to pounce on the slightest hint of 'incorrectness'. Those who use their art to hold a mirror up to society had better choose one that reflects only acceptably pale versions of life, its passions and colours, because, hey, anything else is too close for comfort.

No wonder some of them wish they had taken up safer professions, like bull-fighting, or studying king cobras.

The brigades are quite reasonable – they merely request that filmmakers avoid all home truths, realities, and even the mildest attempt to laugh at ourselves. Anything else is fine.

You know what, guys? Stick to fairy tales, to perfect larger-than-life characters who never have to deal with shades of grey. Bad is bad, good is good, and there's nothing in between.

We like being lied to – it's easier.

Ranjitha Ashok

Can Cooum River be cleaned?

(By Shobha Menon)

"About 150 years ago, the richest man in Madras, Pachaiyappa Mudaliar, then a very prosperous *dubash* (and later the benefactor of the Pachaiyappa's College) would take his bath in the Cooum every day before his morning pujas. You can imagine how clean the river was!" says C.S. Kuppuraj, former Chief Engineer, PWD. "Till 1965 people used to bathe in the Cooum. Then began the discharge of sewage".

At Otteri Nullah where the Buckingham (B) Canal joins it, the waterway is full of refuse, dismantled debris, and direct sewage. An official confirms, "At Virugambakkam and Arumbakkam, people add to the already degraded river's woes by dumping in it every day the rubbish bags from their homes. A 6 ft parapet wall on the Otteri Nullah Bridge to prevent this is now in place." And to think this used to be a clean waterway once upon a time!

The River Cooum, 65 km long, originates from the Satheral Anikkal in Arakkonam Taluk. Within city limits, its 17.98 km length includes the North Arm (of 2.04 km) that diverges around the Central Jail and joins near the Napier Bridge. Says an official in the Directorate of Environment, "The Cooum is basically a flood carrier. Ideally, it must contain water for only 2-3 months after the monsoons, and be dry the rest of the year. At least 100 mld should be discharged into the Cooum to maintain the flow. Over 8000 slum-dwellers encroaching on the bank of the river have to be rehabilitated (by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board) for work to proceed at a good pace. Alternate dwellings have been provided in Semmanjeri, Perumbakkam, Karappakkam, Sholingannalur) at a unit cost of

Rs. 70,000. A sanitation management plan is also going to be set in place for some slum-dwellers."

Work on cleaning the river has been completed only along 2.43 km close to its mouth. The remaining 15.55 km inside the city remains incomplete because the situation is very

(Continued on Page 8)



The shapes trees take!... This one in Anna Nagar proves a new encroacher on the pavement, forcing pedestrians onto the road. (Photograph: REFLECTIONS.)

Heritage Club movement slowly takes off

(By Shobha Menon)

The concept of Heritage Clubs in Chennai schools is just over a year old. It was initiated early in 2003 by the Tamil Nadu Chapter of the Indian

National Trust for Art, Culture and Heritage (INTACH). Over the last year there has been much activity initiated by a few

teacher coordinators across the city, generating more interest and enthusiasm in their endeavour 'to build in a capacity for children to retain their sense of history'. However, positive responses from more schools are definitely needed for this initiative to grow.

Says P.T. Krishnan, Convener, INTACH, Chennai, "In the first workshop we conducted in February 2003 – with support from INTACH Delhi through the Heritage Education Communications Division – about 20 schools attended. Of these, 14 schools formed Heritage Clubs and began to carry out heritage-related activities. INTACH helps by supporting wherever necessary and by providing broad objectives and guidelines to follow. A few Corporation schools did attend our first meeting, but they dropped out thereafter. So far there are no entrants from North Madras, or from the Tamil medium schools. We do have a lot of interesting educational material, but everything is in English. Overcoming the issue of translating the available material into the regional language will

(Continued on Page 6)

At a Heritage Club interaction...

"Open up your imagination. Don't be limited by what is documented knowledge. Let's find connections between mythology, what we call 'mystery' and actual history", was advice from D.K. Hari – a heritage enthusiast and Coordinator, Bharat Gyan – to a group of Sri Sankara Senior Secondary School children while inaugurating the second year of their Heritage Club. His talk on *Vimanam* ('That which measures the sky') presented several fascinating facts:

- NASA has a copy of the *Vaimanika Shashtra* of Maharshi Bhardwaj who lived many centuries ago in India. This book has minute details of many wondrous ideas that still capture the minds of design engineers the worldover, the kind of alloys used in their making, the kind of food and clothing the pilots need, even details of 5,19,800 airways between seven lokas!
- Technical drawings of the *vimanam*-s delineated were done in 1870 in Mysore. And there is an ongoing effort – in last 15-20 years – by scholars in Melkote to make the alloy suggested in this book!
- Zeppelin's Blimp has a similar shape aerodynamically to the *Tripura Vimanam* described.
- The 1950 Soyuz warships look very like the *Rukma Vimanam*.
- A flight was recorded in India in 1895 A.D., earlier than the earliest record set by the Wright Brothers in 1903.

Members of the Club – from classes 7-9 – had a host of questions, which included:

- Was there also research into aliens?
- Weren't the gurukulas meant only for the Vedas and the Upanishads?
- Didn't they have a record of a machine that made oxygen?
- Why should all this be true?

Nevertheless, one initially skeptical 13-year-old concluded, "Some interesting stuff here!"

Whose responsibility is the city?

The Man From Madras Musings is delighted to see a series in the City (Chennai) Express section of the New Indian Express focussing on what is making Chennai an uncomfortable-to-live-in place. It's the kind of look at the city which takes MMM back a couple of decades when Harry Miller was looking at this 'City of Neglect'. But while MMM enjoys looking at city-focussed journalism making a comeback, the thought remains: How do we get all those responsible for this sad state of affairs in the city to move and bring about a change for the better?

Take a few examples of what can be seen in the city every day.

- From its junction with Anna Salai, there's a stone-divider stretching about 100-m down Cenotaph Road, effectively blocking traffic from a feeder road from which vehicles have to turn left. But does that stop anyone? Far from it. The occasional car and almost every two-wheeler coming up the feeder road makes the left turn, then promptly tries to negotiate a U-turn round the barrier to take the right turn that is forbidden. There's been at least one car accident apart from several scooter mishaps that MMM has seen, caused by these irresponsible drivers, but has that stopped anyone? Not on your life.

- Take any major road junction where signal lights have stopped traffic. Weaving their way between the variety of vehicles that are clogging Chennai roads are a host of two-wheelers. Their aim is to get ahead of all the other vehicles and when they get there they line themselves up as though they are at Irungattukottai. And then, seconds before the green comes on, 'They're off!' to weave their way through the traffic that's ahead of them, causing chaos.

- No part of the city has more social clubs than TNagar, their main sporting activity being games of cards and providing spicy table fare with the mandatory drink. All these clubs are patronised mainly by car-owners, but little or no parking space is provided to them by the clubs. So all the lanes in the neighbourhood are taken over for parking without a by-your-leave, totally un-mindful of the residents. There is one narrow dead-end lane in the area with a club at the end of it and two consumer product sales offices on either side of the lane where it turns off from the main road. With the club's patrons parking on both sides of the road, the salesmen of one office parking on one side of what's left of the road and the delivery vans of the other on the other side, all that's available for residents to squeeze their way through is a narrow single lane between all

these parked vehicles. If someone is coming from the opposite direction, there's only confusion worse confounded.

- Coming out of this lane the other day, MMM found himself blocked by a traffic jam occupying the entire main road, even sealing off the lane exit. The main road, on which four lanes could be negotiated with inches to spare between vehicles, had two lanes blocked in one direction, but chauffeurs and auto-drivers blocking the exit adjusted their vehicles sufficiently — and willingly — to let MMM's car through. Only to find the other two lanes also blocked — by vehicles going in the SAME direction as those in the first two lanes, effectively bringing to a stop two-way traffic. The vehicle in the third lane blocking MMM's was owner-driven and in the fourth lane were some autos. While the autos began to adjust themselves to create space, the elderly owner-driver (who was with

In the case of the TNagar example, the CMDA's generosity in zoning half the city for 'mixed' occupancy, thereby allowing residences, clubs, shops and offices all to put down roots next to each other, is surely responsible for this kind of chaos. And so are those responsible for licensing clubs and other gathering places without making sure whether they have sufficient parking space or whether they are liable to disturb the neighbours.

As for freely given permission for building 1 + 3s, MMM suggests that Government at the highest level analyse the latest Census figures. Instead of using valuable time to look at how various ethnic and religious groups are growing or not growing, Government should be looking at how these statistics point to life only worsening for all citizens in urban areas. In Chennai in particular, the growth of population is considerably greater in the CORE of the city than in the periphery. Worldwide, the trend is to move residential populations

A typical scenario

Typical of what is happening throughout the city is what Reach Velachery, a community fortnightly more focussed on the concerns of the community than most other community publications, recently featured on its front page, pointing out what is already happening to one of the fastest developing areas in the city even BEFORE the development has been completed.

The reports highlighted the following:

- Encroachments are swallowing up large parts of Velachery Lake and the dumping of debris and earth in other parts of the lake will soon offer more space for builders.

- While plans are being drawn up on the one hand to make a playground in the area and recreational space for the children, on the other hand residents have begun to use it as a garbage dump!

- A canal being built alongside the 100-foot Bypass, to carry any overflow from Velachery Lake during the Monsoons to the Pallikarai Marsh and thence to the Buckingham Canal, has become a convenient garbage dump for all the occupants of the numerous multistorey buildings that have come up along the road. Worse still, with construction booming on both sides of the road, all the builders' debris is being dumped in the canal.

When the city's citizenry appear to enjoy the freedom of the wild ass, what hope is there for a Singara or Ezhilmitu Chennai, wonders *The Man From Madras Musings* getting more and more disillusioned by the day.

A books' heritage

Where have all those sellers of old books — not merely second-hand books, but also rare books — gone? Once, Moore Market was their home and many a rare book lover, like *The Man From Madras Musings*, would haunt their shops in the market that was so much a part of the ethos of Old Madras. Now, MMM learns, most of the rare books have vanished to College Street, Kolkata, while the second-hand booksellers struggle to make a living in the not-easy-to-approach Lily Pond Market that's taken the place of Moore Market in presence but not in spirit. Meanwhile, referring to the book-selling area of College Street, the Mayor of Kolkata recently said, "This part of College Street is a heritage area. The onus is on all of us to protect this place". When will someone in authority in Chennai ever make a statement like that about a local equivalent of College Street?!

Nay, even an area like the precincts of the Kapaleeswarar and Parthasarathy Temples?!

— MMM



October 6-9: Human Rights Welfare Film Festival featuring documentaries *Discordia* (Canada), *Goodbye Hungaria* (USA/Hungary), *Deadline* (US) and *Repatriation* (South Korea) (at Alliance Francaise 7.00 p.m. every day).

October 11-21: *Faces* by Ravi Shankar whose initial interest was printmaking. He created a unique style for himself by combining intaglio, relief printing, stencil and blind embossing in one plate, applying different colours to each and taking prints in one run of the press. In 1997, he moved to digital paintings and worked for five years exclusively with digital tools. But in the last year, he has begun to shift away from that and started painting, especially using acrylic colours. (At Alliance Francaise.)

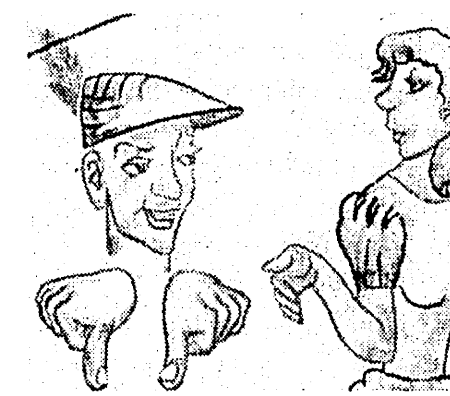
Till October 15: The world of M.X. Susairaj, an exhibition of the work of M.X. Susairaj (1942-2004) who created an astonishing vista of heroes and legends, blazing a new trail in the art world. Painting for over



forty years, he created heroic works depicting scenes of beauty with passion and strength. Creating a unique style for himself, he established himself as one of the greatest artists of Chennai. (At Ashvita Art Objects & Artifacts.)

October 8 & 9: Music Jazz Workshop featuring Madhav Chari, the first modern music outreach programme in India. 8th: Thelonus and the Many Moods of Monk. (At Max Mueller Bhavan, 6.30 p.m.) 9th: Telling a good story (3.00 p.m. at Alliance Francaise.)

October 16-17: *Lire en Fete*, the Alliance Francaise's annual book festival. Films on writers, competitions, a special literature edition of the in-house magazine, *Oranges Bleues*, and exhibition events at the library will all be part of the programme. The Alliance Francaise theatre club will also present *Les Precieuses Ridicules* by Moliere, a play in French directed by Jawahar and enacted by students and teachers of AFM.



On the 21st, Daniel Jayaraj, author of a book on Tamil and French expressions and a professor at Pondicherry University will be present. (At Alliance Francaise.)

OUR READERS WRITE



Gandhi & cricket

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, let us remember that Mahatma Gandhi, when requested for an autograph, 'played with a straight bat', forgetting that he was engaged in a mighty and bloodless revolution, and became "a member of an official England team". Turning over the pages till he came to the MCC team led by D.R. Jardine in 1933-34 he put his name down as the 17th player of the team. This book is one of the treasured possessions of the MCC at Lord's, the headquarters of the World Cricket.

Gandhiji was not only a cricket enthusiast but wielded the willow. Raital Ghelabhai Mehta, a boyhood friend and schoolmate (at Alfred High School, Rajkot), wrote that "it is not commonly known that Gandhi was a dashing cricketer and evinced keen interest in the game. Many a time we played cricket together — there were ding-dong battles between teams Rajkot City and Rajkot Sardar (Camp Area) — and I remember that he was good at bowling and batting, though he had an aversion for physical exercise at school, as he pointed out in his autobiography.

C.K. Subramaniam
A101, Syndicate Bank Quarters
Plot 28, 29
Sector 17, I Floor
Vashi 400 705.

Cleaning-up started

The temple tank of Parasuramalingheswarar Aalayam in Ayanavaram mentioned in the temple tank list in MM, August 16th, was in a sorry state with stagnation of sewage and garbage and was also infested with aquatic

K. Ramadoss
Secretary
AWA — Civic Exnora
4/1, P.E. Koil West Mada Street
Ayanavaram
Chennai 600 023.

Why we fail?

Eric Prabhakar (MM, September 16th) and others have written about China. I had been there and posed the question to them. They told that they selected talented children when they were around five and trained them with a single-minded goal of becoming champion sportspersons. There was strict discipline, which we are incapable of as a country — as our traffic itself indicates. For instance, they have also eradicated their age-old bad habit of spitting on streets by education, training and strict enforcement as well.

Merit is also the first casualty in India; awards are manipulated, as was the recent case with Arjuna Awards. So, unless our conduct and character change as a nation, resounding success for India will remain an unrealised dream.

Dr. G. Sundaram
(IAS RETD.)
'Burma House'
33/18, 9th Street
Dr. Radhakrishnan Road
Chennai 600 004.

Time Carnatic music made a mark again

Nalinakanti Fine Arts, an organisation promoting Carnatic music conducted a vocal music competition recently, for college students. Though the organisers roped in three judges of fame, the event elicited very poor response, in that only eleven students participated.

A month earlier, Southern Spice Music, more popularly known as SS Music, went out for a mega voice hunt. Despite the fact that the event was held outside the city, there were as many as 500 participants. Here, the participants had the option of singing in Western as well as in regional languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

Notwithstanding the fact that Carnatic music is the very base and mother of all music in the South, the interest in it among the singers is waning. The reasons are not far to seek. The present Tamil film songs are to be blamed for this sad state of ignoring Carnatic music. Even those singers who have had the opportunity of learning Carnatic music are carried away by present-day film songs which are unfit even to be called songs,

as they are bereft of 'melody' — which was the very essence of Tamil film songs till a decade or so ago.

In this context, it is worthwhile recalling a phone-in programme telecast recently by Doordarshan Kendra, Chennai. The singer of the *Manmatha Raja* hit was the guest on the day. A caller from Thanjavur asked her to name the base raga of the song. To the surprise of everyone, she unabashedly said that she became a singer by virtue of imitating various singers and not by getting trained as a Carnatic singer!

Even though in Chennai we have a number of organisations promoting Carnatic music, and, come December, every *sabha* worth its name is busy organising *katcheris*, roping in the best *vidhwans* in town, it is indeed sad that Carnatic music has not created any impact among the younger generations who are going gaga over the music churned out by films. Film music directors, who owe a lot to Carnatic music for their 'mark' today, should play a role in reversing this situation.

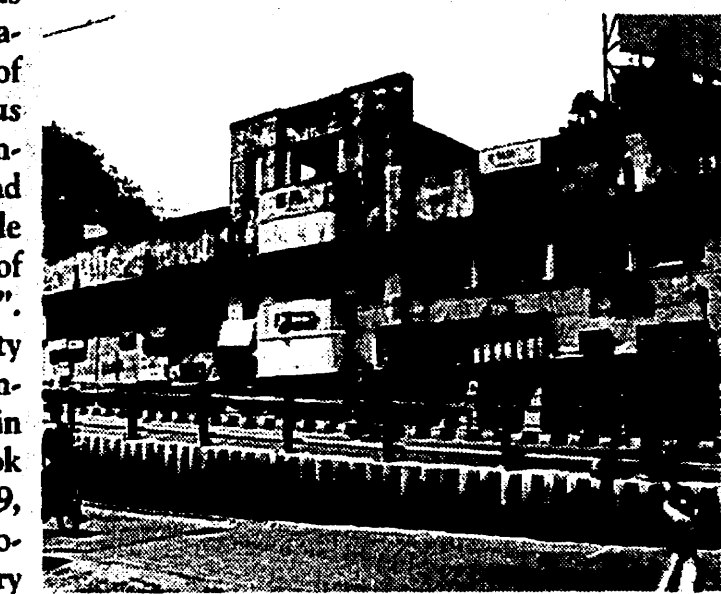
V.S. Jayaraman
31, Motilal Street, Chennai 600 017.

A promise of preservation

M.S. Sundararajan, an advocate, informs us that Dr. Jammie Venkata Ramana, J.V. Ramakrishna and J.V. Raghavendra are the owners of *Jammie Buildings* (that was featured in *Madras Musings*, August 1st issue). None of them has "intended to pull it down at any time," he writes and adds that they have "always cherished their valuable inheritance with the name 'Jammie' and are proud of preserving it even though the cost has been heavy".

We are delighted to hear from a third party source, much as we had heard, that there is no intention to pull down *Jammie Building* and that, in fact, it will be "cherished" and "preserved". We look forward to the building (right), built around 1949, being with us for a long, long time more, commemorating a medicinal preparation that was once very much part of the Madras scene.

— The Editor



Why ten storeys?

The Chennai GPO (MM, September 1st) building was constructed between 1875 and 1884, i.e. in nine years, and when occupied on April 26, 1884 it housed the GPO as well as the Central Telegraph Office. It was destroyed by fire in October 2000 and it has taken four long years for the Department to decide about its reconstruction!

From your report it is seen that a ten storey structure is proposed to be built. Except for the work relating to Small Savings, the functioning of the Postal Department has over the years been slowly usurped by the modern communication technology by way of couriers, e-mail, STD/ISD etc. This has affected the Telegraph wing also which is now a separate entity under Telecom wing. It is years since any worthwhile recruitment of Group C and Group D staff was made by both these Departments and most of their operations, including sorting of mail, are being computerised/mechanised. There is no running section of RMS, it has altogether been abolished. In the circumstances, it is not clear why a ten storey structure is proposed to

T.M. Sundararaman
19, Nallappan Street
Mylapore
Chennai 600 004.

Secretariat questions

If a new Secretariat is still being planned for Kotturpuram, Government will do well to satisfy the following questions:

Is the project of such paramount importance and urgency to claim top priority over many other burning issues which remain unaddressed?

The cost of construction will consume several crores and the completion of work a minimum of three years — huge loans have necessarily to be raised which will increase the indebtedness of the State to an alarming figure. What are the proposals to help clearance of the debts in a reasonable time? What kind of new taxes will be imposed to augment the revenues?

Is the venue of construction found to be the most appropriate one after public debate?

For the Avadi Congress session (1952) S.S. Vasan (MM, August 16th) got Gemini Studios erect the compound wall and other attractive structures. It was a generous gesture widely appreciated.

M.R. Pillai
H-64/5, Central Avenue
Korattur, Chennai 600 080.

Monkeying around

At the Parys end of Broadway, pavement more than two feet high has been constructed. Only athletes can clamber on and jump off such steep structures. Every time I ascend the pavement, there is a sympathetic clicking in my knee cap and when I descend my middle spine does a jig on its own.

And, in the name of disciplining traffic on Wall Tax Road, the authorities have built a huge median in the centre leaving two nar-

row ribbons on either side for the traffic to get jammed. I suppose the only people who are happy with these monstrosities are the contractors.

I get this overpowering feeling that the chaps who do these road works in North Chennai are not engineers but *anjeneeyers* (monkeys).

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

Boats again?

Reader Ranganathan (MM, July 1st) hopes for revival of the Buckingham Canal by whoseover is in charge of environment concerns.

We are involved in a project of reviving an ancient canal (since 'developed' into a stinking sewerage drain) in Pondicherry, hoping to introduce boating. After 15 years, we have not been able to locate any effective 'in-charge of environment concerns' and have to struggle for every inch.

All the same, we pray the Buckingham Canal will have better luck in overcoming the obstructions of pollutory vested interests.

Shyam Sunder
Sri Aurobindo's Action
Pondicherry 605 002.

OUR ADDRESSES

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3) On editorial matters: The Editor, MADRAS MUSINGS, C/o Lokavani Hall-Mark Press Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

— THE EDITOR

PS chalks up a century

Pennathur Subramania Aiyar, an Attorney-at-Law of the High Court of Judicature, Madras, died on March 1, 1901, dedicating to charity, by his last will and testament, the shrotriem of Minjur and Ariyanvoyal, a permanently settled estate in the Ponneri Taluk, Chingleput District, fetching an average annual income of Rs.4,000. The form of the charities, he left to his executors, A. Sitarama Aiyar, retired High Court Judge of Travancore, and P.S. Ganapathi Aiyar, Deputy Collector, Saidapet, and his friend Sir S. Subramania Aiyar, to decide. The income from the estate, it was decided, would be devoted, among other objects, to the establishment and maintenance of an English High School with feeder branches to be named after the generous donor.

The regulation and conduct of the charities were vested in a Board of Trustees consisting of nine influential Hindu gentlemen of Mylapore. It was decided by the Board that the imparting of Hindu religious instruction on approved lines, and the gradual enforcement of Sanskrit as a compulsory subject of study, should be made the special features of the new High School.

Instead of creating entirely a new school from the First Form to the Sixth Form, it was thought advisable to build upon the existing institutions of the locality, the most prominent of which was

the Native Middle School, Mylapore, owned and managed by Sir V.C. Desikachariar, who gifted it to the Trust. The Primary Department of the Native Middle School, and another primary school previously under the management of the charities, were amalgamated and made a feeder under the name of the P.S. Primary School. With these institutions under the management of the Board, it was not difficult for them to open the High School Forms.

The opening ceremony was conducted on January 13, 1905, under the presidency of Sir S. Subramania Aiyar, in the building known as *Athenium*.

The Upper and Lower Secondary Forms were located in a commodious building called *Sarada Vilas* and the Primary Classes in *Krishna Vilas*, with a spacious garden attached to it, three acres in area, affording space enough for gymnastics and all kinds of sports and games. Recognition of the Upper Secondary Forms for the Matriculation exams was got on August 29, 1905, placing the school in the temporary section of the general school list.

After the recognition, the Furniture, the Laboratory and the Library were added to.

A. Panchapagesa Aiyar was the first Headmaster of the school.

* * *



The P.S. School's main block today.

P.S. Higher Secondary School was started as a Primary School in a small building in North Mada Street, Mylapore. In 1919 the Board acquired the site of 36 grounds where the school is now located and completed the construction of the present main building in 1928. In the same year the Board secured on lease a large open field of about 80 grounds adjoining the school from the authorities of Sri Kapaleswarar Temple for use as playground for the children.

In 1916, a branch school was established in North Mylapore in Mundahakkanni Amman Koil Street which was upgraded as a High School in 1962. In 1976, a Senior Secondary School affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education was established by the side of the main school. In 1988 a Matriculation School was established adjoining the main school and its own building was completed in 1997. A Sanskrit Pataasala is also functioning under the management of P.S. Charities from 1974.

Pennathur Subramania Aiyar, the donor, began life as a Sub-Registrar in an out-of-the-way place in Madurai District. In 1885 he came to settle in Madras, having taken the bold step of resigning his post. He got himself apprenticed to an Attorney,

Eardley Norton, Sir Mohammed Usman and Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar.

P.S. Aiyar was a great lover of nature and maintained a very beautiful garden. He often won prizes in the garden competitions conducted by the Madras Horticulture Society.

Being a very bulky person, he used to take vigorous exercises to shed his excessive weight. One such exercise was horseriding. It was a very familiar, though unusual, sight to see him galloping on horseback on the four Mada Streets around the Kapaleswarar Temple.

Two or three years before his death, he purchased the Shrotriem Estate at Minjur on the northern outskirts of Madras City. The ryots in the village were a rather turbulent lot. But with his tremendous negotiating skills, he was able to get effective possession and control of the Estate.

In 1890, he entered the Madras Corporation as a Commissioner for the Mylapore Division, which seat he retained till he died in 1901. He was only 40. It was at his instance and through his influence that the underground drainage works were begun and completed in the Mylapore Division, replacing the open drains that had existed before. Having no sons to inherit his fortune, he left his fortune, after various requests to other members of his family, to be used for charitable purposes. The P.S. institutions, now seven in number, were the result.

(From the first issue of the P.S. High School Magazine, August 1906)

and the Golden Jubilee Souvenir.)

MARKING TWO ANNIVERSARIES

From nurses' institute to charity foundation

It all began as The Lady Amphil Nurses' Institute on July 7, 1904. The Institute's object was "the supplying of fully trained and experienced nurses for cases of illness, both among Europeans and Indians, in Southern India." Its location was No.3 Harrington Road, Madras. The telephone number was "295".

The wife of the Governor of Madras was the Lady President, the Surgeon to the Governor the Honorary Secretary and Treas-



The frescoes being restored at Senate House as part of the restoration supported by the Chennai Willingdon Corporate Foundation.

urer. Among life subscribers were the Rajah of Pithapuram, the Maharaja of Bobbili, the Rajah of Kollengode, the Raja of Vizianagaram and others, besides the Governor and foreign nationals, each paying a fee of Rs. 200.

During the early years, the nurses were foreign nationals from the U.K., Australia and South Africa. The Institute had persistent problems in securing and retaining its strength of about a dozen nurses. In 1913-14, the fees for nurses' services were Rs.3 a day for ordinary diseases and Rs. 4 a day for infectious diseases for subscribers. For non-subscribers, the fee was Rs.8 and Rs.9, respectively. Nurses were deputed to attend cases in 20 towns of the then Madras Presidency. A branch functioned in Ootacamund for six months each year from April 1st.

In October 1920, the South Indian Nursing Association (founded by Lady Willingdon in May 1920) was amalgamated with the Lady Amphil Nurses' Institute. The new name was The Lady Amphil Nurses' Institute and The South Indian Nursing Association. This Association acquired the Hyde Park Nursing Home from Sir

Gordon Fraser the same year and this became The Lady Willingdon Nursing Home. After the amalgamation, the Home moved from a rented bungalow in Kilpauk (to which it had shifted from Harrington Road) to *Western Castlet*, off Mount Road, purchased and leased to the Association by the Government. *Western Castlet* was eventually acquired by the Association but sold in 1949 to purchase a land on Pycrofts Garden Road.

In 1952, the Home moved to its new building on Pycrofts Garden Road. It was then a fullfledged nursing home with 20 air-conditioned rooms, operation theatres etc.

Dr. B. Krishna Rau joined the Committee in 1967 and took over as the first Indian Resident Medical Officer in January 1968. In 1981, M.K. Kumar was elected the first Indian President and continued till 1991.

In 1989, construction work began on expanding the hospital and in 1991 the expanded Lady Willingdon Nursing Home was re-named the Willingdon Hospital.

In 1991-92 a Board of Governors was formed with A.M.M. Arunachalam as its first Chairman, but in 1993-94, the Articles of Association were changed,

From the Willingdon records

- The nurses worked at: Ootacamund, Kodaikanal, Kotagiri, Yercaud, Bangalore, Hubli, Cochin, Hutti, Masulipatam, Waltair, Vizagapatam, Tuticorin, Trichinopoly, Alwaye, Travancore, Madras.
- Until 1941 the General Committee members were all British, except in 1924-25 when Dewan Bahadur Parankusam Nayudu was a lone Indian Member.
- Dr. P. V. Cherian, well-known surgeon, Mayor of Madras, and later Governor of Maharashtra, was the lone Indian Member on the General Committee which he joined around the year 1950 and served actively until his nomination as Governor.
- In 1957, Lt.Col. J.A. Hamilton, Hon. Resident Medical Officer, lamented that "there are more than one occasion when a large number of visitors, upto 16 at one time for one patient, were in the premises and using the lavatories which have not the capacity to cope with such large numbers...It was decided that no more than four visitors, including the attendant, be allowed to visit one patient at one time during visiting hours.
- In 1958, it was minuted. "Sanitation: The present custom of sweepers carrying bed pans etc. in full view of all visitors was not in keeping with the standards of the Nursing Home. With immediate effect the Registrar shall provide suitable basket or other receptacle for the carrying of bed pans, etc."
- In 1961, the Hon. Secretary reported that due to the behaviour of the bookseller on the premises, he had to be banned from selling books. It was therefore resolved that a sum of Rs. 15 p.m. be allocated for the purchases of paperback books for use by the patients - the same to be written off to revenue.
- A new cook appointed in May 1964 ought to be able to make idli, dosas; or else it was decided to purchase them from Hotel Ashoka for Indian patients.

vesting general management of the Association in the Board of Governors.

Because of mounting pressure from financial institutions for payment of interest and for repayment instalments, and lack of funds to buy equipment and introduce new departments in the Hospital, the Board of Governors decided in 1996 to sell the Willingdon Hospital as a going concern and use the net balance for serving a wider and larger section of society in the areas of healthcare, medical research, education, etc. through donations from interest income.

Eventually, it was 1998 before a Sale Agreement was concluded with Medical Research Foundation (Sankara Nethralaya), Chennai. The total sale value was Rs.23.50 crore. On August 28, 1998, the Association's links with Willingdon Hospital came to an end and in 1999 the old Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association were altered extensively and the name, The Lady Amphil Nurses' Institute and the South Indian Nursing Association, was changed to Chennai Willingdon Corporate Foundation. The new name retained the long connection with the Lady Willingdon Nursing Home and reflected the participation of leading corporate bodies in Chennai in the enhanced social welfare programmes of the Foundation. There are 53 leading corporates who are shareholders of the Foundation today.

Looking back over the 100 years, there's the story of the early merger, the change of Head of Management from Lady Governor to Chairman of General Committee (always a British national), then to Indian Chairman and an all-Indian Management Committee, to a new Board of Governors formed by corporate promoters and, finally, to a shareholder-type constitution with an elected Board of Directors and new Articles of Association and Memorandum of Association.

The Foundation, registered as a non-profit institution, today uses the interest income from its corpus to help non-profit institutions engaged in social welfare activities such as Medical care, Care of senior citizens, handicapped, Nursing schools/colleges, Medical education, Medical Research - all systems, Social welfare, Disaster relief, Public service activities - environment, heritage, road safety, etc.

Among the noteworthy donations are funds provided to Sankara Nethralaya, Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Cancer Institute and the Childs Trust's Centre for Preventive Perinatology for research studies in Glaucoma, Prevention and control of Diabetes, Hereditary cancer and prevention of birth defects. The Foundation has also made a major contribution towards the restoration of the University of Madras's Senate House.

A Special Correspondent

LOOKING BACK OVER THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

The School building (in 1906) was an old residential house at the western end of Kapaleswarar North Mada Street, now occupied by the Indian Bank (with an improved frontage and other alterations). The higher Forms were upstairs with several wooden partitions. The Headmaster was A. Panchapagesa Aiyar who served the school in that capacity right from January 1905 till his death in 1922.

It is no exaggeration to state that Headmaster Panchapagesa Aiyar lived and died for the school. His two great ambitions were to have a nice building of its own for the school and to raise the school to a college. The former ambition was fulfilled within a few years of his death and the latter practically fulfilled by the starting of the Vivekananda College in Mylapore.

* * *

P.N. Srinivasacharyar, who was the History and Geography teacher in the school, would work with clay on big blackboards laid flat and make relief maps of the various continents and of India. He would show with tumblerfuls of water how the big-rivers starting from their source fell into the sea. This method impressed the students so well that they never forgot their geography lessons.

M. Balasubrahmanya Mudaliar
President, P.S. High School Old Boys' Association

* * *

One fine day in 1905, when I (V.C. Gopalaratnam) was in the II Form of my father's secondary school known as 'Native Middle School', at the end of the day our class teacher P.N. Srinivasachari told all of us that from the next day, we should all attend school

at the building known as 'the Old Athenian Building' in North Mada Street. That was how I became one of very first batch of students with which the P.S. High School started off with a swing on its momentous career.

E.V. Anantharama Aiyar, great Tamil scholar and Pandit, speaking the purest Tamil and not knowing a single word of English, was an authority on the language, who later on contributed not a little to the production of the Tamil Lexicon.

V. Sama Rao lived only for the school and also in the school. He could be seen even late at nights with flickering candle or smoky light helping some poor student or the other over his studies. He had no love other than the school—no family other than the students—no interest other than his teaching nor the

• These reminiscences of distinguished old boys of P.S. High School are excerpted from the Golden Jubilee Souvenir and paint a vivid picture of what school life was like between 1905-1955.

more pain than himself. Discipline never had a sturdier champion than this Headmaster. To say that he was feared might have been sometimes true; to say that he was respected would have been mostly true, but to say that he was loved was always true.

V.C. Gopalaratnam
Advocate, Mylapore

* * *

For Vadhiar Sundaram (R. Sundaram Iyer), teaching in the school looked almost a part-time job. Getting up from bed very early in the morning, his bath and pooja would be over by the time you see the sun rising from the San Thomé sea. With a towel round his chest he would be in Luz Church Road to wake up his aristocratic wards from their beds and hurry them to their toilet and their study. His jurisdiction extended to Sir C.P.'s in the west and to L.A.G.'s in the north. I

Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period September 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Tamil Nadu and Chennai.)

1. Simple one to begin with. Who is the inaugural 'ICC Player of the Year' award winner?
2. The 400th anniversary of the installation of which religious text was celebrated on September 1st?
3. In which Russian town did gunmen lay siege to a school leading to global condemnation?
4. Who are the new U.S. Open tennis champions?
5. Name the space capsule that crashed after doing in-depth studies of the Sun.
6. Al-Muhtadee Billah Bolkiyah, who got married recently in a lavish ceremony, is the Crown Prince of which very prosperous Asian country?
7. How did an industrialist, Guru Swarup Srivastava, create a flutter in the Indian art circles recently?
8. What is the latest car from Tata Motors?
9. Name the Iraqi group that released the three kidnapped Indian truck drivers after 41 days of captivity.
10. What distinction did Puneeta Arora achieve in the armed forces of the country?

11. Which 150-year old school is located on Ritherdon Road in Vepery?
12. What was the outcome of a speech, delivered by a political leader of the State, at Tirumangalam near Madurai on June 29, 2002?
13. *Suvarilladha Sithirangal* was the debut directorial venture of which multi-faceted film-maker?
14. What is the purpose of the 'Turbo Energy Chennai Heritage' project?
15. What is the real name of the Pallava king called 'Mamalla' after whom the historic-archaeological town is named?
16. What distinction does Indian Bank, which began operations in 1907, have as regards banking in Chennai?
17. Which landmark near Pudukkottai commemorates the victory of the British over Napoleon?
18. Vedaranyam is the place where Shiva and Parvati are said to have appeared before which sage?
19. Lakshmi won a National Best Actress Award for the lead role in a film based on a Jayakanthan story. Which story?
20. Which vibrant city in the State was founded by Kulasekara in 6th Century B.C.?

(Answers on page 8)

From hot water baths...

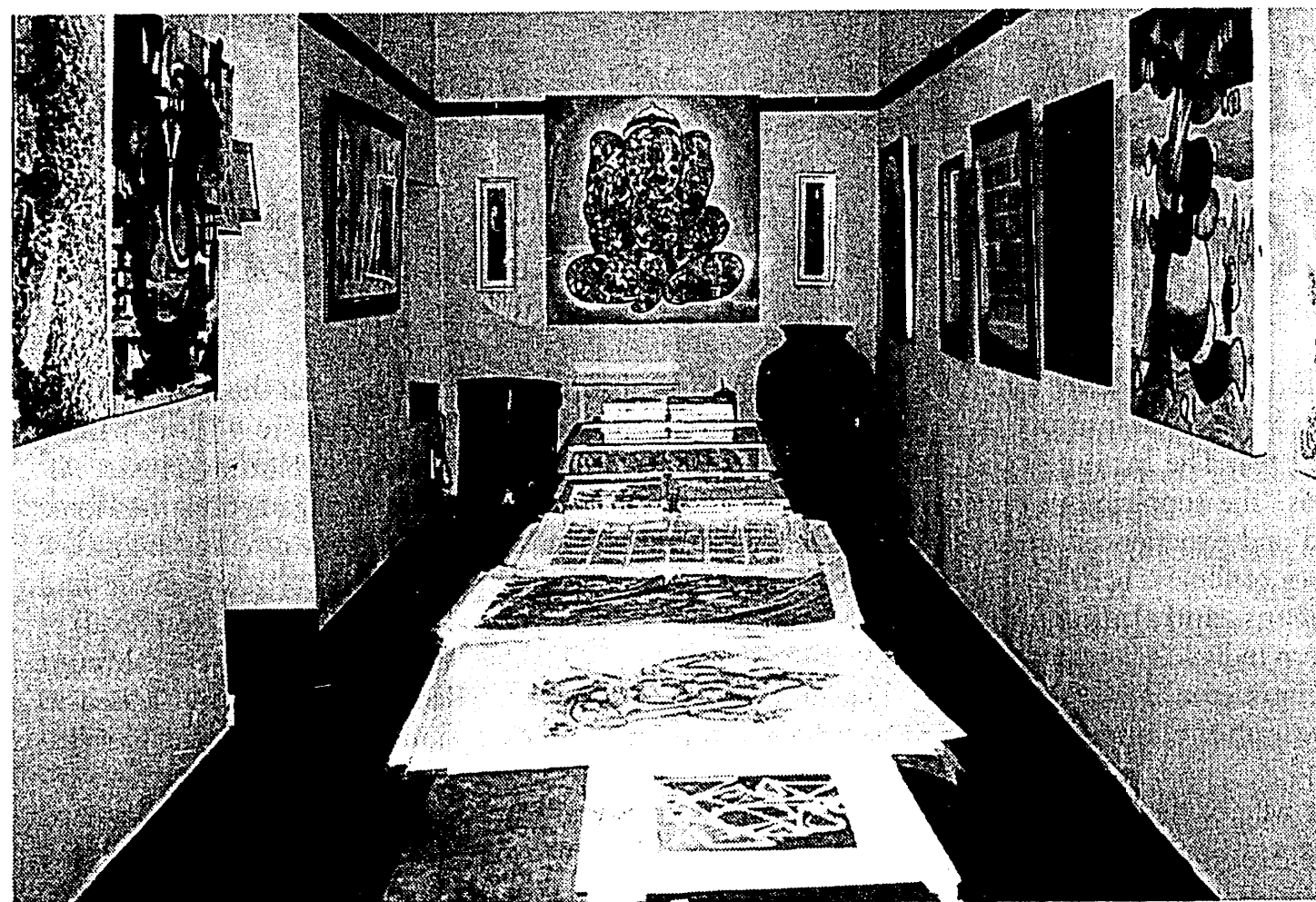
(By A Special Correspondent)

The C.P. Art Centre's new airconditioned art gallery is in an ancient steam bathhouse in the 200 year-old Grove, which belonged to the ancestors of Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar. The old *venneerul* is exclusively for paintings and a traditional open *mitham* and *thaavaram* for the display of crafts.

A *venneerul* (literally, the hot water room) traditionally contained a huge *andaa*, or copper container, on a brick stove fuelled by wood, producing both hot water and steam throughout the day. Later, a coal-fired water boiler was used to produce the same effect.

In the Tamil month of *Margazhi* (December-January), a few drops of eucalyptus oil were added to the water to prevent coughs and colds. After the rains, a few drops of citronella oil kept the mosquitoes away.

The bath was a long-drawn and luxurious affair on Tuesdays and Fridays for women and Thursdays and Saturdays for men. It was quicker on other days, but no less luxurious. First came the oil, which was massaged into the body and hair.



... to relaxing with Art

Oiling the hair is an ancient ritual which maintains the natural colour, promotes luxurious growth and cools the head. Oiling the body softens the skin, removes the heat of the body, increases suppleness, prevents ageing, and provides

protection against extreme temperatures.

The oil used in Tamil Nadu was generally *nallennai* (sesame seed oil), which was a natural dye and prevented greying. To it were added several herbs,

dried flowers, leaves and roots, including a small piece of dried red chilli, and the whole boiled. After straining the oil, it was applied all over the body and hair, after which the person would sit in the steamhouse and sweat it out, not unlike a Turkish bath. After some time (depending on the commitments for the day), the person would have a hot water bath, using the water from the same *andaa* which generated the steam. The

(Continued on page 7)

HERITAGE CLUBS SLOWLY TAKE OFF

(Continued from page 1)

facilitate our access to Tamil medium schools."

At the first Annual Heritage Meet convened by INTACH, Tamil Nadu, and held at the Sankara Vidhyasram, Tiruvanniyur, teacher coordinators and INTACH members reviewed their initial year in the heritage movement. Some key issues that came up included the need for:

- Private schools initiating the concept in Corporation schools by getting over language issues.
- Schools spreading the concept more proactively among other schools and within the community.
- More inter-communication between Heritage Clubs of different schools in Chennai.
- Greater interaction between schools in South and North Madras.

A project done some time ago by children of a school in South Madras looked at schools in North Madras and found that children in that area even "thought differently".

Also pointed out by one speaker was the imperative need to look at not only the

'glorious past' but also the better recorded last 500 years of our history and the contributions they have made to modern India. Creating biographies of individuals who have contributed to diverse fields over the last 200 years could be a valuable exercise for students and provide a wealth of documentation. As a start, one teacher suggested, the children could collect information on the history of their respective schools and create a school archive. Listening sessions for children - music, different dialects and so on - could be encouraged as part of Heritage Club activities, said another.

One interesting initiative during the first year was the artificial archaeological excavations organised by teachers of some schools. Tours to villages enabled some clubs to learn about village lifestyles, traditional celebrations of religious festivals, and the historical significance of places of worship. Other schools organised heritage quizzes, visits to heritage sites, like the Fort St. George Museum, and generating a 'Directory of sorts for Ambattur' by involving students to collect information about the relevant

features of the area through 'Project Ambattur'. Archaeologist Dr. Suresh suggested ways to initiate interest in archaeology, with particular reference to Tamil Nadu, through books on the Sangam and Pallava Ages and with activities that could be related to their daily lives.

With 500 Heritage Clubs - formed over a couple of years - in Delhi, and 150 in Calcutta, why is Chennai lagging way behind with only 15 over one year? Says K. Kalpana of INTACH, "Most teachers we've approached feel they're overloaded, and so there is not much scope for any such kind of extracurricular work. CBSE schools, I find, are more open to project activity in the curriculum."

The 'universality of human culture' and the need 'to be holistic in our appreciation of heritage and culture, to go beyond symbols of heritage if you really want to understand heritage' were reiterated in the ensuing discussions. Says Krishnan, in this context, "It is imperative to make sure that teachers themselves understand the meaning of 'heritage' in the right context. We've seen that quite a few Heritage Clubs lapse into

the 'religious' perspective alone. Activities connected to religion are one way of initiating interest, but there is a need to realise that 'heritage' actually goes beyond this context and covers a broader spectrum - from man-made to natural. Cross-cultural views of heritage are required, not close parochial views. On our part, we intend to set a vision that will guide teachers and students to understand the holistic view of heritage. It might take some time, though."

The good news, however, is, as one teacher enthusiast felt, "Initially I had to run around to answer the children's questions. Now they find answers and make the connections. We teachers only coordinate their activities. And it is wonderful to see children rediscovering their interest in their common heritage - the age of heritage buildings, their history and so on. The Heritage Club initiative may be slow to take off in Chennai, but it is definitely a sure movement!"

Schools interested in forming Heritage Clubs can contact: The Convener, INTACH, 1, Second Street, Wallace Gardens, Chennai 600 006. Ph: 28331759.

A pre-historic site, an outing from Chennai

Chennai has been a place of habitation for pre-historic hominids (early man) millions of years ago. This conclusion was reached after several explorations that started when Robert Bruce Foote, a British Geologist, accidentally found a stone tool at Pallavaram in May 1863, followed by the discovery of an enormous number of artefacts in and around Poondi, near Madras. These discoveries pushed back the antiquity of man in Tamil Nadu to more than half a million years and placed the region firmly on the world map of pre-historic culture.

The Poondi reservoir, from

where the city derives its water supply, and the Korttalaiyar river basin have proved important for archaeologists and geologists around the world.

Stones and rocks, sharpened and tied to sticks with animal hair to form spears, were Man's first tools. With these, he could dig out roots or kill an animal. Some of those tools have been unearthed in the area and are kept in Poondi Museum.

Most of the stone implements discovered in the Korttalaiyar River Valley in and around Thiruvallur have so far been collected from the surface, but some are from the terraces of the river. Scholars have di-

vided the stone tools of this Palaeolithic age (old stone age) into two groups: 1. Sohan (Punjab) Industries, 2. Madras Industries. Hand axes and cleavers are the main components of the Madras tools. The most important characteristic in the industry of this region is the presence of cores, i.e. the stone used for making implements.

Gudiyam is about 10 km from the Poondi reservoir and is reached by walking 3 km from the foothills. The huge cave is known to the local villagers as Manachamman cave and is visited by them on Chitrapurnima day to worship



Models depicting the lifestyle of Early Men, at Poondi Museum.

the Goddess. The cave is about 110 feet tall and 200 feet broad and 200 people can be accommodated at a time. Sixteen similar rock shelters are there at Gudiyam. Of them, six were inhabited by early man. The rock shelter was excavated in 1963 by the Archaeological Survey of India and some stray tools were collected from the site.

The Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu, has conducted extensive surveys of the area and identified 17 villages where pre-historic tools have been found in plenty. The Department established a small site museum at Poondi in 1985 and many artefacts, such as hand axes, cleavers, hammer stones, discoid and core materials found in and around Poondi are exhibited here. Apart from pre-historic tools, the megalithic burial potteries, fossil remains of wood, snail and leaf are the other exhibits in this museum. Four life-size models of early hominids and a rock portion with pre-historic paintings were also created in the open space in front of the museum in 1993. The site museum at Poondi is the only museum of its kind in India, featuring the pre-historic heritage of the region.

Poondi is 60 kilometre from Chennai and about 12 kilometre northwest of Tiruvallur.

T.S. Sridhar, I.A.S.
Special Commissioner
Department of Archaeology
Government of Tamil Nadu.

Subscriptions and contributions

• As readers are already aware — and hundreds have responded positively — we have no other alternative but to price *Madras Musings*. From April 16th (Volume XIV, No.1), *Madras Musings* has been priced at Rs.5 a copy. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: Rs.100/-. Please make out your cheque only to 'Chennai Heritage' and send it, together with the COUPON BELOW, to CHENNAI HERITAGE, 260-A, TTK ROAD, CHENNAI 600 018 or C/O LOKAVANI-HALL MARK PRESS PVT. LTD., 122, GREAMES ROAD, CHENNAI 600 006.

An ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION of just Rs.100 covers only a part of our costs. Corporate support and YOUR support will continue to be essential for Chennai Heritage and *Madras Musings* to play a greater role in creating awareness about the city, its heritage and its environment. We therefore look forward to your sending us your contributions IN ADDITION to your subscriptions.

If in the coming year Chennai Heritage receives repeated support from those of you who have already made contributions, and if many more supporters join the bandwagon, we will not only be able to keep *Madras Musings* going, but also be able to continue awareness-building exercises on on-going projects as well as undertake one or two more such exercises.

Therefore, please keep your contributions coming IN ADDITION TO YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS. If, say, you send in a cheque for Rs.500, we will treat Rs.100 of it towards subscription to *Madras Musings* for 2004-5 and the remaining Rs.400 as contribution towards the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

We look forward to all readers of *Madras Musings*, and those newcomers who want to receive copies, sending in their subscriptions. We are indeed sorry we can no longer remain a free mailer.

— The Editor

CHENNAI HERITAGE

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From hot water bath to relaxing with Art

(Continued from page 6)

oil on the hair would be washed off with *shiyakani* (soapnut) *podu* ground with lentils, herbs, dried leaves and flowers. Finally, the hair was dried over steaming incense.

The body was given equal care. *Manjal podu* (turmeric powder) was used by women over the oil on the face and body on Tuesdays and Fridays, milk on other days. The body was washed with a fragrant-smelling powder made of lentils and dried flowers, which nourished the skin and left it smelling sweet. If the stickiness did not leave the body, *kadalai maavu* (Bengalgram powder) would be used to wash off the remaining oil, to ensure that it did not spoil the rich Kancheepuram sarees traditionally worn by the women. Sandalwood paste was smeared thereafter, to cool the body and as a perfume.

The vessels used for this ritual were unique. The water was heated in a copper vessel, for copper has medicinal properties. The flavoured oil was heated in a thick bronze vessel with a long handle and wheel, to push it along the polished stone benches. The powders were placed in flat-bottomed brass vessels.

After the bath, the women went in for their *pooja*, lunch and a nap, followed by a chat session in the adjoining *thaavaram* (pillared corridors) surrounding the *mitham* (open courtyard). The corridors' walls were decorated with frescoes or Tanjore-style paintings.

Senate House Conservation Fund

• The Senate House Restoration and Management Trust appeals to all alumni of the University of Madras and heritage lovers everywhere to contribute to the Senate House Conservation Fund which the Trust is managing for the purpose of restoring Senate House to its old glory by December 2005 and maintaining it thereafter in the same condition.

Cheques should be made out to the Senate House Conservation Account and sent to the Registrar, University of Madras, Chennai 600 005. Contributions are eligible for benefits under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act.

Dear Registrar,

I am pleased, to enclose a cheque for Rs. as my contribution to the restoration and maintenance of Senate House. Kindly acknowledge receipt.

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

I am an alumnus/alumna/heritage lover and wish the project all success. My college was

Date: Signature:

Can Cooum River be cleaned?

(Continued from page 1)

complex – relocation, land acquisition etc. Says a PWD official, "Drainage channels always have to be cleared from the tail end (if you start from the head, silting will happen in between; also, the mouth of the river is blocked). Which is why the Cooum – that was not originally meant to be a drainage channel – is being tackled from the tail end. Of the sanctioned funds of Rs. 19.65 crore, Rs. 2.2 crore has been spent already on desilting and bund-forming along the stretch completed. Concrete fencing has been put up to prevent encroachments. Greening and landscaping measures, providing parking space etc. are going on. A number of private companies, banks etc. are coming forward to sponsor and maintain the area."

"Earlier, the inflow from the Buckingham (B) Canal North at Central Station and Central B Canal (behind Madras University) was stagnant at their meeting points with the Cooum. After desilting, the flow has improved. Also, when Napier Bridge was widened, a lot of debris and sandbags caused blockages; now things are better. Work has been completed upto the Qaid-e-Millath Bridge Junction along the North Arm, and along the main course upto the Periyar Bridge," another official confirms.

The difficulties in undertaking work on the Cooum stretch are many. Though the Sivalingam Committee Report of 1987 maintains that along these riverbanks no land should be rented or leased, there are at present thousands of slum-

dwellers to be relocated. "This could take about 4 years (between the PWD and the Slum Clearance Board). By that time, the slum population would have increased. Issuing demand notices to the leased lands on which shops exist at present needs to be stopped immediately so that they can be evicted. A number of semipermanent structures have been erected by the Slum Clearance Board itself. Others soon come up by the side, proving even more difficult to evict," says an official.

Further, inaccessible locations for both man and machine ensure that desilting the riverbed is a major problem. Boats with dredgers attached (75 HP to 325 HP) are used. 20% of silt goes on banks, 80% is conveyed outside by tipper lorries, which can be only at night to prevent disruption in traffic. Due to water scarcity, even the concrete walling progress was hampered (now it has been completed). Landscaping also runs into problems.

The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) is being consulted on the issue of the sandbar at the sea mouth that causes blocking. A groyne, reaching 170m inside the sea, was built on the southern side in 2000. But it is noticed that the sandbar has only shifted further away, and the problem continues. NIOT, after studying tidal patterns, submitted a report recently – to raise the level of the existing groyne (from 2.8m to 3.5m) within a year and slowly construct another groyne wall on the other side to handle the effects of seasonal changes in currents. Oth-



The 'real' winners — NOT the Under-19s

The mud-covered Chennai Cheetahs looking as happy as can be after they won the All-India Rugby title for the first time, also bringing back the trophy to South India for the first time since 1957. This is the picture that should have appeared in MM on September 16th, but the picture that appeared instead was that of the Under-19 Tamil Nadu Rugby Union team which had been transmitted uncaptioned to us in error together with the Chennai Cheetahs' story.

erwise, about 100 loads of sand need to be removed when the mouth is blocked, which would be about once in three days. At present, it is tackled only during monsoons, with earth-moving equipment or manual labour.

"For the workers involved in the project, it is very dangerous work in almost inhuman conditions. If they work for four days, they fall sick the next day. Sadly, they don't even have a place to stay, leave alone water or toilet facilities. Even the machine driver covers his nose with a towel while sitting in an enclosed cabin, and we expect these people to wade in the river and remove this filth. We've now given them place in the B Canal Wharf, Vasantham Colony, Anna Nagar," says an official.

Grumbings of discontent also surface because "such difficult work is not even recognised as meriting any incentive". And

"the PWD is not actually meant to deal with sewage." In some places where the river has a clay bed, machines themselves go under and need cranes to pull them out. In 1972, the riverbed was harder, with not so many industries discharging effluents and manual desilting was easier. Now, even where to deposit the silt is a big question. The muck that is removed is allowed to dry for a couple of days, then relocated. "But when we go to unload it anywhere in the city, everyone objects, even though everyone talks of wanting a clean Cooum", complains an official.

"The completion of the project could take about a year from now. It all depends on how quickly and effectively the CMDA is able to get its act together and funding problems are ironed out," states a senior official. Hopefully, the vision of a clean Cooum will then be not merely a vision! But is that likely?

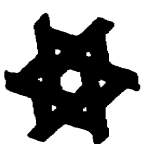
Answers to Quiz

1. Rahul Dravid; 2. The Guru Granth Sahib; 3. Beslan in Northern Ossetia; 4. Roger Federer and Svetlana Kuznetsova; 5. Genesis; 6. Brunei; 7. He has commissioned 100 paintings from M.F. Husain for Rs. 101 crore; 8. Indigo Marina; 9. 'Black Banners Brigade of the Iraqi Secret Army'; 10. She is the first woman to reach the second highest rank in the armed forces.

* * *

11. Doveton-Corrie School; 12. Vaiko was arrested under POTa; 13. K. Bhagyaraj; 14. It's an endeavour to have a photographic archive of Chennai in the early part of this Century; 15. Narasimhavarman I; 16. It was the city's 'first native bank'; 17. Manora; 18. Agasthya; 19. Silanerathil Silamanithargal; 20. Madurai.

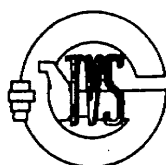
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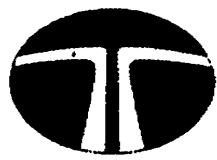
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