

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

Vol. XVII No. 15

November 16-30, 2007

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Must be the overuse of sms... the kids are slowly mutating into 'Emoticons' themselves!

Smiley!

Are we getting lazy?
Let's see.

It's Deepavali – an ocean of family, friends, festivity and feasting.

Or so you thought.

Then – they begin.

No, not visits or phone calls – but SMS-es.

And some msgs (Sorry, 'messages') go 'hpy depli'.

Not only do some people have no time for visits; they obviously don't even have time to spell – or use capitals.

The importance of any relationship is now judged by the answer to the simple, terse question: "Visit, phone call or SMS?"

Feeling charitable, you say, "Oh well, at least they got in touch."

True.

If only they had taken the trouble to stretch each word out though, instead of creating the impression that you're receiving some weird code from an alien in outer-space.

As for punctuation...!

Once defined as "the use of marks and signs to clarify meaning in writing", punctuation seems to have replaced words, even smushed-up ones.

Imagine if you had had this information way back in college.

All you'd have needed to categorise tragedies or comedies was a simple :- (or a :-).

If it's that easy to convey emotion, you can't help brooding a bit over the future of the greetings-card industry.

As for the question?

You choose 'Yes', since looking for the shortest cut is now obviously a way of life.

Ranjitha Ashok

Adyar Riverfront a la Sabarmati?

(By The Editor)

The presentation that Chennai Heritage recently organised on the work being done under the auspices of the Sabarmati River Front Development appears to have had an impact. *Madras Musings* learns from Government sources that a team has been put together and it has already visited Ahmedabad to see what is being done there. It is understood that the Adyar River is being considered for a similar exercise.

Returning from Ahmedabad the team lost no time in travelling along 11.5 kms of the Adyar River. Discussions are now going on among various Government departments concerned and a plan is likely to be evolved shortly. It is understood that the Government is keen that the public be involved as in the Sabarmati exercise and, so, the details will soon be shared with the public for fuller understanding and subsequent discussions. In a state where Government policy changes with parties in power, it is good that public participation is being encouraged from the beginning. This will ensure that interest in the project is sustained irrespective of changes in political fortunes and alignments. It must also not be forgotten that many plans have been announced in the past to clean up the rivers and nothing much has happened even after heavy expenditure. Any new plan is bound to be met with scepticism if its viability is not explained to the public at large. There will also have to be greater accountability on how the funds allocated will be spent.

It is hoped that while this new exercise gains momentum, the earlier plan to restore the Adyar Creek is not lost sight of. Both these projects are intertwined and any development along one is bound to affect the

other. It is equally important that the other water-bodies, namely the Cooum and the Buckingham Canal, are also not forgotten. Chennai will emerge as a world class city only if all its waterways are cleaned up and such activities are not restricted to South Chennai alone.

Madras Musings and Chennai Heritage are delighted that some action is emerging out of the meeting that was organised. It is of course early days and such a move by the



A typical riverfront in Chennai.

Government may take a long while before it sees the light of the day but, at the same time, it

is heartening that the powers that be are responsive to public initiatives.

Metro for Madras

Deepavali eve saw the Tamil Nadu Cabinet giving the nod to the Metro Rail project for Madras that is Chennai. The go-ahead has come a full four years after the idea was first mooted.

The proposal, now estimated to cost Rs. 9757 crore, aims at providing metro rail service over 46.5 km, parts of which will be underground. The funding will be provided by the State and Central Governments with a Japanese Bank also being involved. Chennai Metro Rail Ltd. will be the implementing agency and the work is expected to commence by 2008 end. The project will involve two corridors. The first will be from Washermanpet to Trisulam (airport) via Egmore, Mount Road, Teynampet, Saidapet and Guindy. The Mount Road-Saidapet section will be underground. The second route will be from Fort Station to St. Thomas Mount via Poonamallee High Road, Aminjikarai, Anna Nagar, Tirumangalam, Koyambedu, Ashok Nagar and Alandur. The Poonamallee High Road-Alandur section will be underground.

The Metro project has been one of many, where successive State Governments have had conflicting views. It was first suggested in 2003 and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation was asked to prepare a feasibility report in 2005. The cost of the entire project was then estimated at Rs. 5085 crore. In 2006, however, the entire plan was given up as unsuitable after Chennai was classified under the seismic risk zone. A mono-

• by
A Staff Reporter

rail project was then thought of. But by February 2006 the project was challenged in the High Court and the Government was restrained from awarding a final contract for the monorail. The succeeding State Government went back to the Metro proposal and now this appears to be on its way to becoming a reality. The decision of the Central Government to chip in with a 20% subsidy no doubt helped. The ready availability of funds will also be a major factor in ensuring speedy completion.

However, the success of such projects will always be measured by how well they serve the public needs. And this will, to a considerable extent, depend on the availability of feeder services (both bus and rail) connecting the various points. The Mass Rapid Transport System which is already servicing parts of the city (mainly towards the south) has seen only lukewarm response so far, mainly owing to difficulty in accessing its stations and also lack of connectivity with other forms of transport. The success of Metros in cities abroad is because they are very well linked with surface transport services. The Metro project in Chennai will do well to look at this issue at the design stage itself, failing which it will remain an isolated service with limited benefit to the people. Towards this end, it will be good if the powers that be consult the report brought out by the Metropolitan Transport Corporation in 2006 which identified 490 kms of principal roads in the city and suggested the formation of an integrated transport network. It had then planned to have the monorail
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A suffragette in Madras

Perhaps the two best known European women to spearhead the feminist movement in India in general and Madras in particular were Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins. Annie Besant is still well remembered. Margaret Cousins is far less known.

Margaret Cousins was born in Ireland on November 7, 1878. A women's rights activist and educationist, she studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, got her University degree in music and became a music teacher.

In 1903, she married James Cousins, a poet, artist and author. Her life changed when, by chance, she attended a meeting that was organised to propagate women's suffrage. There she took a decision to devote her

● by
K.R.A. NARASIAH

life for the cause of women, both in her country and elsewhere. She joined the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association. During the course of her work with this organisation, she was imprisoned, which made her firmer in her resolve.

It was about this time that she and her husband joined the Theosophical movement. Annie Besant who was on her way to India, invited them to join her in Madras, and they duly arrived in 1915. After seeing the work going on in India, she said, "Within my first year of landing on Indian soil, I was dedicated to the service of India - its womanhood." She became the first non-Indian member of the Indian Women's University in Poona in 1916.

The next year, she was back in Madras, helping found the Women's Indian Association (1917). Among the 70 founder-members were Annie Besant and Dorothy Jinarajadasa, the former becoming the founder-president and the latter, the founding secretary. Dorothy M. Graham, who was to marry Jinarajadasa, a Ceylonese Theosophist, in 1916, had come to India with Besant and Margaret

Cousins. Others who served as honorary secretaries included Malati Patwardhan, Ammu Swaminathan, Mrs. Dadabhoj and Mrs. Ambujammal. When Margaret Cousins came in contact with the Independence movement, one of her main points was to see that women's suffrage was on the agenda of the movement.

Margaret Cousins and Dorothy Jinarajadasa guided the WIA and publicised its work through the official journal, *Stri Dharma*. Some early WIA members were Muthulakshmi Reddy, Mangalamma Sadasivier, Herabai Tata, Dr. Joshi, Malati Patwardhan, Begum Hasrat Mohani and Sarojini Naidu, all representing various Indian regions.

In 1922, Margaret was appointed the first woman magistrate of Madras. While working as a magistrate, she joined the satyagraha movement and was arrested in 1932. She was sentenced to one-year imprisonment. She was lodged in Vellore jail where she went on a hunger strike, in support of Gandhiji's call. He was himself in jail at the time. She was released in October 1933 and renewed her campaign for women's rights. She was elected the President of the All-India Women's Conference in recognition of her contribution to the cause.

The All India Women's Conference was founded in 1927 through her efforts as well as of those like the Rani Saheb of Sangli and Maharani Chimnabai Sahib Gaekwad of Baroda. The AIWC worked on various issues such as getting the Sarda Act prohibiting child marriage and the Hindu Code Bill passed. Dedicated women such as Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Renuka Ray were some of the prominent workers of the Association. Women such as Muthulakshmi Reddy of the WIA, Mrs. Hamid Ali and Rani Rajwade from the AIWC, together with Sarojini Naidu, sought universal adult franchise in the Indian context. Active leftwing members of the AIWC

(Continued on page 8)

A big 'Thank You' to 9 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.10.07 and 15.11.07, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

— Chennai Heritage

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Canines & Crackers

The *Man from Madras Musings* is of the view that despite the economic boom, the bursting of crackers was rather muted during the Deepavali just gone by. Are people becoming more sensitive to the sufferings of infants, the aged and the sick from the noise caused by crackers? MMM thinks not, but it does appear that the emphasis has begun to shift from mere noise to firework displays. Incidentally these displays are much more expensive and perhaps that does reflect an increase in spending power.

Animals suffer too. MMM has read somewhere that dogs have a hearing power that is very sensitive and so they suffer the most. On Deepavali day a friend of MMM's woke up early in the morning to deafening howls. On rushing out he discovered a dog, no doubt terrified of the noise from crackers, had tried to escape through the gate and had got its head stuck in it. It was struggling valiantly but each time it twisted itself in order to escape it was suffering terribly.

were distributed, songs sung and the children had a hearty meal. As the sponsors left the place, they had a sense of satisfaction. May their tribe increase.

Central pre-paid autos

The system continues to be as badly managed as ever, according to an acquaintance of *The Man from Madras Musings*. Apparently, those manning the counter have now introduced a down payment of Rs 2. A ticket with the full fare on it is given and then the passenger boards the auto. There is plenty of confusion as the place is very poorly lit and auto-rickshaw drivers pick and choose their passengers depending on where they are bound. As a result, several passengers are made to board autos and then wait as the vehicles in front, with no passengers in them, need to be moved to enable the autos behind to come out of the queue. Once the auto leaves the station, the driver begins exhorting the passenger to pay

that appear to have petrified into stone and some of the most hideous fences have made their appearance. The latest excrescences to make themselves manifest are two ornamental lamps flanking the Mahatma Gandhi statue. From afar they resemble bunches of grapes and when seen closeby they look like the flowers of a banana plant. Whatever they are supposed to resemble, their place is more in cinema sets and not on the beach. But who is to explain it to those in charge? *The Man from Madras Musings* feels that it is a pity that beautification must involve such alien ideas.

Yet another sad development is the continuous move to evict hawkers from the beach. MMM and his ilk, who have grown up on a steady diet of 'pattani-sundal', feel that the beach will not be the same without these vendors. But what is puzzling MMM is the blind eye being turned towards the increasing encroachment of the sidewalk from Kannagi statue onwards till the Triumph of Labour sculpture.

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

Neighbours swung into action. Some came and fed the dog and gave it water while others tried to calm it down. An attempt was made to extricate it after covering its neck with a piece of sack but to no avail. The Blue Cross was contacted but there was no response, no doubt owing to it being a holiday. A doctor in the neighbourhood offered to sedate the dog so that it could then be pulled out. By then a couple of men from the Exnora came around and they offered to help. Apparently, they applied soap around the neck of the animal and then gently folding its ears in, they managed to pull it out. The dog ran away for dear life, but there was much cheering and backslapping among the neighbours. After all nobody likes to see suffering. The next day, MMM's friend was amazed to see the dog return to the gate, inspect and sniff it closely and then trot away. No doubt it was thanking its stars.

The other Deepavali

There are many ways to celebrate Deepavali, or so *The Man from Madras Musings* learns. The members of the Rotary Club of Madras South decided to spend it with orphans who are afflicted with HIV. MMM learns that crackers are a strict no-no for such kids as they have a detrimental effect on their health. New clothes

more and this harassment continues till destination. In short, it is a nerve racking experience.

Rain filled potholes

The rains lasted a day and a half. But the extent of destruction they have left behind on our roads has to be seen to be believed. The poor quality of road-laying, which is evident for everyone to see even when the work is going on, ensures that the roads resemble moonscapes as soon as the smallest drizzle happens. The Corporation has announced 'patchwork', whatever that means. *The Man from Madras Musings* suspects that it means filling in the potholes with large stone pieces and then quickly topping them up with a thin layer of tar. No attention will be given to whether these patchworks are at the same level as the rest of road. As a result, many two-wheeler riders will be thrown off their vehicles when they drive at high speeds over such bumps. And, thanks to the helmet rule being observed more in the breach, many casualties are bound to happen.

Beautifying the beach

Whoever is in charge of beautifying the Marina obviously has plenty of money to spend, but suffers from a bankruptcy of aesthetic ideas. As a consequence, all kinds of rockeries, stone birds, deers

are closing in on this space thereby preventing those who want to walk along this promenade from moving freely. MMM is of the view that there must be a place earmarked for vendors where they can ply their wares in peace.

Newspaper headlines

The *Man from Madras Musings* sometimes wonders at those who decide on headlines in our city's newspapers. There is one that said "Rice attacks Kurds". Someone was reading it out to MMM and for an instance he thought it was about a culinary battle. Then, what did this other newspaper mean by saying that "Benazir states that Musharraf is acceptable without his uniform"?

Printer's devil

In the last issue, *The Man from Madras Musings* had written about the errors those in charge of road signs make. In it he had said that he thought "Pycrafts Garden Road" took the cake. MMM was besieged with phone calls asking what was wrong with the spelling. He had no answer till he checked the issue and found that those in charge of typesetting had carefully corrected Pycrafts to Pycrofts. It happens to the best of us.

— MMM

**OUR
READERS
WRITE**



Governance failure

The brief write-up by MMM on *The Driving Challenge* (MM, October 16th) describes how it is impossible to drive any vehicle in Madras. Since I travel a good deal, I know the situation is the same in Coimbatore, Trichy and Madurai. There is, however, a much larger and shocking failure of the public authorities on the one hand and the general public, on the other. I will mention two points.

Firstly, the complete failure of the police to mobilise the Home Guards (both men and women) is surprising. When I was younger, I often saw the Home Guards in uniform on duty at festival times, etc. Where I live in Adyar, crossing the road is difficult most of the time because traffic is heavy. Community policing is merely on paper. I do not see a single person from the Scouts and Guides, the Home Guards, the National Cadet Corps, schoolboys, schoolgirls or anyone else helping the traffic police. We just do not have enough traffic constables. Madras is becoming another Bangalore so far as traffic is concerned. At Kathipara junction, I hope the Sethu will come up before the Sethu Samudram Project.

Secondly, we are completely losing control over our cities in every way — housing, sanitation, water supply, public health problems, unregulated political processions, bad roads, water stagnation and complete marginalisation of the community. It is this larger picture which people overlook. We are missing the wood for the trees. Throughout India, our urban areas have been destroyed and are unlivable. This is due to

nexus between greedy politicians, officials and a group called property developers. There is a lot of money which can be made on urban lands and what is called “development”. That is it!

Go on ECR towards Mahabalipuram. Can you see the magnificent ocean even for five minutes during a 90-minute road journey? Why is it so? The problem is complete failure of governance throughout India.

D. K. Oza

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Who'll act?

I refer to the article by Shobha Menon on Pallikaranai dumping (MM, October 16th). It is the duty of the Chennai Municipal Corporation to attend to the demands made by the Save Pallikaranai Marshland Forum, especially the one for strictly implementing the “guidelines and rules under the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules 2000.” Apart from this, it is the duty of Corporation to find out who among the residents are responsible for throwing hazardous wastes.

The Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules 1989 applies to the management and handling of 18 categories of wastes including cyanide, metal finishing, phenols, asbestos. This Central Government Notification under Environment (Protection) Act 1986 directs that the hazardous wastes “shall be collected, treated and stored and disposed of only in such facilities as may be authorised for this purpose”. Chapter XI of the Tamil Nadu District Municipalities Act, (V of 1920) with subsequent amendments deals with instances of nuisance conferring powers on the Executive Authority to take steps to prevent them.

What's happening in Pallikaranai also attracts the provisions of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and its Rules. Will someone act on the basis of these Acts?

P.S. Subrahmanian

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Garbage then & now

The saying ‘the old order changeth, yielding place to the new’ often does not work out. From our forefathers’ time all streets in Madras, especially George Town, used to have

Conjunctive use of groundwater source

A large section of urban residents are not aware that the groundwater they extract almost daily from their open and borewells is available in two disconnected layers. The top layer, also known as the shallow aquifer, is what is available above the rocky strata; the other, the deep aquifer, is the one within the rocky strata.

By and large, the quality of water in the former will be better than in the latter, which is some kind of trapped source and not very easy to sustain. Tapping water from the deep aquifer is of a recent origin, when the shallow aquifer went dry and residents were desperately looking for an alternative source to meet at least their non-potable needs. In Chennai, rock is encountered at a depth of 50 ft in some localities and at 200 ft in other areas (except in Little Mount and Velachery, where rocky strata starts from 4 ft below ground level), implying that the shallow aquifer is at least that deep.

Residents, while switching from tapping the shallow aquifer to the deep aquifer in the last few years, have completely neglected the shallow aquifer. They have also failed to realise that it is the shallow aquifer, which is replenished and sustained through the rainwater harvesting done in their respective premises complying with the law that in 2003 made RWH mandatory. This neglect has resulted in an artificial scarcity of groundwater, viz. the shallow water sources. On the other hand, while open wells and shallow tubewells, despite water in them, are not being tapped, the deep borewells go dry, no longer yielding water.

In order to overcome this situation, the Rain

Centre is involved in creating awareness among residents about the conjunctive use of aquifers. This terminology, often used in irrigation management, is meant to convey the idea of utilising the surface water (in ponds, tanks and lakes) first, till it gets exhausted and then switching to the groundwater source. The same idea, instead of surface and subsoil sources, is used here for the two layers of groundwater, viz. exploit the shallow aquifer immediately after the monsoon (when it would have got enriched) till it gets exhausted and then switch to the deep borewell.

For more efficient groundwater management, residents are advised to consider the following suggestions.

1. If a shallow source in the form of an open or borewell (yielding or defunct) is available within the house or flat complex, try to retain or repair it and keep it ready or create one. These shallow sources, which would have got replenished by RWH, could be used for a few months immediately after monsoon.

2. When the shallow aquifer gets exhausted, start exploiting groundwater from the deep borewell.

3. Find out from the borewell digger whether he has used plain or slotted casing pipe in the alluvium region (top layer). If it is a plain pipe, then get it replaced by a slotted pipe to facilitate recharge of the deeper aquifer from the harvested rainwater.

Sekhar Raghavan

Director, Rain Centre, 4, 3rd Trust Link Street
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kuppathottes (street litter receptacles) into which people used to throw garbage (mostly the plantain leaves after meals) which would be cleared by the *kuppa karans* (now euphemistically known as Conservancy Staff).

Suddenly, the powers that be demolished all the *kuppathottes* and instructed citizens to parcel their garbage and hand it over to the visiting conservancy carts. This arrangement worked well, especially when a small tip was added. The Corporation supervisors used to inspect the streets and pull up those who threw litter on the streets. Unfortunately, the present dispensation is not strict and people have started throwing litter all over the street. Maybe, the *kuppathottes* should be brought back.

C.G. Prasad

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Not so rosy

Madras Musings, whether by design or by coincidence, has dealt with the traffic problems as well as the M.T.C. in its issue of September 16th and October 1st. The traffic congestion, increasing air pollution, wear and tear of the roads, increase in the number of private vehicles, consequent increase in use of fossil fuel, and the greenhouse effect, all could be remedied if only our public transport system is streamlined.

It would appear that in keeping with the increase in the number of road-users, the public transport system has aug-

mented its fleet. However, quite contrarily, it has reduced its operations. It has woefully neglected its public duty by not keeping pace with the increase in the number of commuters. The result is that public transport having become quite unreliable, people have had to resort to owning their modes of transport.

Several well-patronised and well-established longstanding routes, for instance in Mylapore, 3, 3A, 4-E, 4-F, 12-F, 23-B, 5K, 23-A, 23-E, 23-G etc. have all been unceremoniously withdrawn. The list is only illustrative and not exhaustive. I am sure that this will be the condition in other areas also.

Without ensuring proper services to the travelling public, it is most unfortunate, the M.T.C. is indulging in grandiose schemes like A/C buses, Volvo buses etc. for the cost of which more number of ordinary buses could have been added to the fleet.

While it may not be possible

to ‘increase road space’ (since almost all the pavements have been done away with for broadening the roads), increasing the number of MTC services is the only alternative. But with the bus routing diminishing, how do the M.D. and the P.R.O. of MTC assert that their services are quite satisfactory?

In MM (September 16th), a reader had suggested reintroduction of trams. In the present scenario it is quite impossible. The position was entirely different half a century ago. That leisurely pace of life can only be imagined. Though trams were nonpolluting, they were a slow mode of transport. Besides, you cannot be sure of uninterrupted power supply. The M.E.S. is another Government department which has failed to keep pace with the growth of the city by modernising its equipment.

T.M. Sundararaman

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READABILITY PLEASE

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more **hand written** letters, many of them in a hand so small and illegible or large and scrawled as to be unreadable. Often this leads to our discarding a letter, particularly if some part of it is unreadable.

If you wish us to consider your letter for publication, please type it with enough space between lines or write it using a medium hand, clearly dotting the ‘i-s’ and crossing the ‘t-s’.

Many readers also try to fill every square centimetre of a postcard space, making reading or editing impossible.

Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us.

— THE EDITOR

Our Addresses

For matters regarding subscriptions, donations, non-receipt of receipts etc.: Chennai Heritage, 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, West Cott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 600 014.

For non-receipt of copies, change of address, and all other circulation matters: MADRAS MUSINGS, C/o Lokavani Southern Printers Pvt. Ltd., 62/63, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006.

On editorial matters: The Editor, MADRAS MUSINGS, C/o Lokavani Southern Printers Pvt. Ltd., 62/63, 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

From Lincolnshire to Pallavaram

At last there seems to be some interest in the cemeteries of Madras, places not of maudlin sentiment but repositories of history and a record of the people who lived here. The British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia (BACSA) does its best to keep some of these memorials alive (how else does one put it?) with visits from members and financial incentive to the curators.

On a recent visit to England, I spent a good deal of time with a cousin and her husband, Joan and Geoff Wild, who have been of invaluable help to me in my research at the British Library and the National Archives. Geoff is an avid collector of military medals associated with British India and Joan, whose mother was a Mascarenhas (my grandfather's sister), collaborates with me in tracing the family history. The very successful methods we employed, the fruits of which amply backed up the oral history in the Mascarenhas family, provide enough material for a substantial article. But first to an individual whom I met via one of Geoff's medals.

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 was the theatre of much violence and cruelty, bravery and decoration. We might be forgiven for assuming that medals were awarded to 'great' men for doing 'great' deeds. And so it was. But great deeds are usually done by ordinary people in extraordinary situations. It is their response to these unusual and challenging circumstances that earns them praise and honour. Victoria Crosses are considered by the British the pinnacle of valour, but they are not the only acknowledgement of bravery in battle. A campaign medal I examined was given to Bombardier Anthony Rickett for service during the Indian Mutiny. It carries one bar and the inscription 'Central India Malwa'. The Malwa Field Force came from Bombay and changed later into the Central Field Force commanded by General Rose. The Saugor Field Force came from Madras.

On February 2, 1847, young Anthony Rickett, aged 18, of Falkingham, Lincolnshire, enlisted for service in the Madras Artillery. What drove or inspired English youths to volunteer for a job in a hot, dusty country half-way around the world? The prime reason was poverty or, at best, bleak prospects of local employment. The streets of London were certainly not paved with

gold, as Dick Whittington found out the hard way, and life in rural areas was even more difficult, especially when the harvest was poor. The Industrial Revolution was taking a terrible toll of human life, much as it is doing to many people in India today, even while providing them with an income. Many young men were dazzled by exotic tales and the call of adventure, not to mention the lottery syndrome whereby they would hope to make a fortune and retire to a life of comparative ease back 'home'.

Before leaving England, Rickett would have been given a quick training at dilapidated barracks near the East India Docks, and then put on a ship. Grasping sergeants would have deprived him of his last penny, making him pay for cracked panes of

● by SIMEON MASCARENHAS

glass and chipped china, a ruse that had long been a source of income to the unscrupulous sergeants. Once on board, a recruit like Rickett was obliged to maintain all the observances of class and rank, despite passengers being in close proximity to one another in the small ships of the day.

Rickett arrived off the coast of Madras in 1848, to be met by clamouring natives who were keen to take him ashore on either a masula boat or a catamaran, each boatman trying to convince him by dint of physically dragging him towards his boat. His experience is probably best described in the words of Lieutenant Walter Campbell who, on reaching Madras in 1830, was immediately "beset by hawkers, jugglers, snake-chamers, 'coolies' and mendicants begging for coppers... After standing on the beach for upwards of an hour, braving the fury of a tropical sun and keeping our assailants at bay as best we could, the debarkation of the troops was completed and we were marched up to Bridge seven miles from Madras where we found tents pitched for our reception, and where we are to remain ten days or a fortnight to make the necessary preparation for marching up country to Bangalore."

During the Mutiny, Rickett's company was attached to the Saugor Field Division and was engaged at the attack and capture of Banda on April 19, 1858. At a later action on March 4,

1859, he was slightly wounded by a blow from a battle axe. He remained in India and some time before January 1865 was discharged and transferred to the European's Veteran Establishment in Pallavaram. He remained there until his death on April 14, 1893 and lies buried in the Pallavaram Cemetery. His name is mis-spelt "Rcikett" on the medal he was awarded, but that might not have mattered: Anthony Rickett might well have been illiterate, as were so many others at that time.

I have not been able to find out if Rickett married and whether a family by that name was known in recent times in Pallavaram. If he did marry, his wife could have been a local 'country-born' Englishwoman, an Anglo-Indian or an Indian

woman. However, it is highly improbable that, had his wife been Indian, he would have been granted quarters in a European establishment, especially at the end of the Victorian era when British superciliousness was at its peak. His birth is recorded in the National Archives at Kew. His marriage/s (if any) and death are certain to be recorded in the India Office collection at the British Library. Readers are invited to send in any genuine information that might throw light on this matter.

My cousin, Barry Mascarenhas, now in the USA, who lived with his parents in the Veteran Lines in the 1960s, does not "recall a family named Rickett when I lived at Veteran Lines in Pallavaram. There were two areas where retired military personnel lived: Officers' Lines and Veterans' Lines, separated by a field - "the Maidan" - where we played cricket. You seem to remember our house well - square, sloping tiled roof and veranda. Excellent memory!"

The European Veterans' Establishment is better known to the many Anglo-Indians who lived there as Veteran Lines. Laid out on a very continental grid pattern, it consists (or used to consist) of tidy little cottages with sloping tiled roofs, trellised verandas and charming little gardens. By the 1980s, several were in a state of disrepair, like so many heritage Madras dwellings, and others had been horribly

Lift-off

The glitter hits you in the eye the minute you walk in. Chandeliers dangle from ceilings, while slightly (but only very slightly) smaller versions dangle from human ears. There's shimmer everywhere - on ensembles, on footwear...

Even the chairs are haute-coutered.

For one devastating moment, you think you've wandered, plainly uninvited, into a Page Three party.

And then you realise - no, there's been no mistake. The invitation has not deliberately been mailed to you.

It is indeed a book launch, as declared.

It's this new *ish-shlye* that's got you all mixed up.

Across the milling sea of glitterati, you discover a few old (really old) timers propping up the walls, some with drinks in hand, mumbling about the days when a book was a book; not a minor prop in a mega-event.

"How about...? Or ...? Did they need all this to be successful, or be acknowledged great writers?" they snap.

You shrug your shoulders. What do they know?

They are the kind of people who still believe that only talent matters.

How quaint, when everyone knows that it's the splash that counts.

A nice large splash, that will say everything about you and, more important, tailor what the world will say about you tomorrow.

If you are still holding on to the clichéd image of books being only for socially-challenged geeks, or still seeing authors as remote, shy creatures with large brains, think again.

There are still some large brains around, no question, but the packaging has changed.

And how?

This world is no longer structured for shrinking violets or the let's-underplay brigade.

'renovated' to look like ghastry, cheap, novelty biscuit tins. St. Thomas' Mount and Pallavaram were important military centres in British India, as they are today, and contain a wealth of history. There is also a significant amount of colonial architecture, much in dire need of serious restoration, if it still exists. The handsome old building at the western end of the Parade Ground, once used as the Officers' Mess and later as offices and stores, is an imposing example of colonial neo-classical architecture, with substantial Doric col-

umns and massive pediments. About 15 years ago it was deemed unsafe and vacated, its fate dependent on an official decision. Rickett was no officer and certainly no hero in the noble sense of the word: the Mutiny medal he got was one for just "being there", not a campaign medal for bravery. Geoff Wild confirms that "the man who stormed the battlements and the man guarding the baggage both got the same medal!" We can safely assume that Bombardier Anthony Rickett, like so many

Some cynics go so far as to say that image matters much more than content these days.

(But that's probably just sour grapes, and best ignored.)

Author or Organiser - be warned...the planning of marketing strategy is even more demanding than the actual process of writing.

It begins, not with the book, but the venue which, apparently, calls for something rich, exotic, or both.

Then, the guest list...starting with the Chief Guest.

Now, there's very little point in inviting the intellectual giant who is a complete social dud.

Choose celebrities instead, even pocket-sized (in terms of worth, not girth) ones.

Of course, such choices can cause some amount of befuddlement. Let's say your book is about the slow socio-economic disintegration of a little known country, and you've chosen an understandably bemused soul known for talents that have little to do with reading books. (Not that there's anything wrong with that. Don't be so horribly presumptuous and judgmental.)

Anyway, rumour has it that your Chief Guest does know that the said country is a little on the left of the globe...if you face it with a certain nation on your right, that is. In any case, your celebrity guest displays the prescribed gauntness, so you're that much ahead already.

Next - hospitality...especially food. You can go aggressively ethnic or cutely innovative. Either way, just make sure you make a statement.

Media presence is of paramount importance - even those publications that draw heavily on social shenanigans to fill their paper. Remember, a single lousy picture can ruin many thousands of words.

If you've decided to pepper your guest list with random celebrities...a little like 'drizzling' salad oil before serving to ensure

other soldiers who set out to earn a living in a faraway place, lived a life of relative comfort in India compared to what he might have experienced in his native Falkingham. He saw service in one of the bloodiest periods of recent Indian history, the Mutiny, and helped to keep an uneasy peace in the years that followed. He witnessed the demise of the East India Company and the birth of Britain as a great colonial power, with far-reaching consequences for Indian and Briton alike. He lived long enough to see the growth of

that special touch... then do prepare your team. You must explain to excitable shutterbugs that abandoning senior celebrities in one fell sweep and rushing off to greet a younger, brasher entry who just happens to be more in the news is such a no-no. Abandon the has-beens, by all means...fame is, after all, fleeting...but try for some subtlety, please!



Quick, tell me... which book are we launching today?!"

No, not you, author. The book. Oh, the book sits quietly on a table placed discreetly, but obviously, and watches. Books who've come this far have done their job, carved out their destiny. They've sought out their creators, coaxed form and shape out of them. Now, they wait.

● by RANJITHA ASHOK

Choose your speakers wisely, to avoid disconcerting surprises. Remember, not everyone can pull off urbane humour, and there's nothing worse than the gag that gasps and dies.

And do learn to handle those eternal question-askers. There's a huge difference between the words 'question' and 'speechifying'.

As for you, the author, do decide on your look. You have lots to choose from - the Earthy Ethnic; the Suave Urbanite; the Deliberately Unkempt; or Subtle Simplicity...but the last one's only for the truly self-confident amongst you. Remember, several promising careers have been destroyed by bad hair, and remote, brooding intensity or painful shyness is so, so over and passé.

Meanwhile, where's the star of the evening?

For the reader to open that first page, and breathe life into each letter.

The learned once spoke of the 'implied reader'. That seems to have changed now to the 'assumed buyer'. Do some of you still believe that the word is the word is the word - it's got groove; it's got meaning...and it's all about the way you are feeling? And do some of you readers believe that you may still find a gem hidden within the hoopla - quietly, but bravely, shining, confident of discovery? Maybe you are both right. Seek, and you both shall certainly find. But for the rest, it's the packaging that counts, the sort that can create the illusion of content.

Suggested trees for Chennai

Nizhal, the NGO spearheading a Grow More Trees drive in Chennai and its suburbs recommends the following trees for planting:

Sandy soils/coastal areas

- Alexandrian Laurel or Pinnai (*Calophyllum inophyllum*)
- Cashewnut or Mundiri (*Anacardium occidentale*)
- Sausage tree or Siva kundalam (*Kigelia pinnata*)
- Portia tree or Poovarasamaram (*Thespesia populnea*)
- Coconut or Thennai (*Cocos nucifera*)
- Palmyra palm or Panai (*Borassus flabellifer*)
- Pongam (*Pongamia glabra*)
- Neem or Veppam (*Azadirachta indica*)
- Mast tree or Nettiingam* (*Polyalthia longifolia*)
- Alangium or Alangi (*Alangium salvifolium*)
- Indian Badam or Naattu Badam* (*Terminalia catappa*)

Small/medium trees

- Pongam (*Pongamia glabra*)
- Indian Laburnum or Sarakonrai (*Cassia fistula*)
- Indian Coral tree or Kalyana murungai* (*Erythrina indica*)
- Drumstick tree or Murunga maram* (*Moringa oleifera*)
- Temple trees or Perungaali (*Plumeria species*)
- Yellow bells or Thanga petti* (*Tecoma stans*)
- Peacock Flower tree or Mayil Konnai (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*)
- Govardhanam (*Gardenia species*)
- Coral jasmine or Parijaatham (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*)
- Orchid flower or Mandarai* (*Bauhinia purpurea*)
- Oleander or Thanga arali* (*Thevetia nerifolia*)
- Red Cordia (*Cordia sebestena*)
- Chalta or Shenbagam (*Michelia champaca*)
- Curry leaf tree or Karuvepilai (*Murraya koenigii*)

Large trees

- Neem or Veppam (*Azadirachta indica*)
- Bulletwood tree or Magizham (*Mimusops elengi*)
- Silk Cotton tree or Sevvilavu* (*Bombax ceiba*)
- Persian Lilac or Malai Vembu (*Melia azadirach*)
- Wild Almond or Pinari* (*Sterculia foetida*)
- Kapok tree or Ilavan panji* (*Ceiba pentandra*)
- Wodier tree or Odhiyamaram* (*Lannea coromandlica*)
- Siris or Vaagai (*Albizia lebeck*)
- Siris white or Kondavaagai (*Albizia procera*)
- Copperpod or Iyalvagai* (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*)
- Vathanarayanan (*Delonix elata*)
- Soapnut tree or Boondi kottaimaram (*Sapindus indicus*)
- Gongstick tree or Mavukkai (*Parkia biglandulosa*)
- Al dye tree or Nuna (*Morinda tinctoria*)
- Scholar's tree or Paalai (*Alstonia scholaris*)

- False Rudraksha or Thenpuchi maram (*Guazuma ulmifolia*)
- Lasora tree or Mukusheli maram (*Cordia obliqua*)
- Rain tree or Toongumoonji* maram (*Samanea saman*)

Fruit bearing trees

- Jamun or Naval (*Syzygium cumini*)
- Amla or Nellikai (*Emblica officinalis*)
- Jackfruit or Pala (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*)
- Bel or Vilvam (*Aegle marmelos*)
- Mango or Manga (*Mangifera indica*)
- Mahua or Ilupai (*Madhuca indica*)
- Manila tamarind or kodukkapuli (*Pithecolobium dulce*)
- Guava or Koyya* (*Psidium guajava*)
- Wood apple or Vilam (*Feronia elephantum*)
- Sapota (*Achras zapota*)
- Indian Jujube or Elandai (*Zizyphus jujuba*)
- Custard apple or Seetha (*Annona squamosa*)
- Pomegranate or Madulai (*Punica granatum*)
- Star Gooseberry or Araneli* (*Cicca acida*)
- Carambola* (*Averrhoa carambola*)
- Tree Sorrel or Bilimbi (*Averrhoa bilimbi*)

Bird attracting trees

- Guava or Koyya* (*Psidium guajava*)
- Curry leaf tree or Karuvepilai (*Murraya koenigii*)
- Mast tree or Nettiingam* (*Polyalthia longifolia*)
- Indian Coral tree or Kalyana murungai* (*Erythrina indica*)
- Singapore cherry or Nei Pazhamaram* (*Prunus salicifolia*)
- Mulberry or Kambli* (*Morus alba*)
- Mahua or Ilupai (*Madhuca indica*)
- Sapota (*Achras zapota*)
- Agasta or Agathi* (*Sesbania grandiflora*)
- Fig or Athi* (*Ficus racemosa*)
- Alangium or Alangi (*Alangium salvifolium*)

Trees with beautiful flowers

- Soapnut tree or Boondi kottaimaram (*Sapindus indicus*)
- Pride of India/Poo marudhu (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*)
- Ashoka (*Saraca asoca*)
- Orchid tree or Mandarai* (*Bauhinia purpurea*)
- Bauhinia yellow or Thiruvatchi (*Bauhinia tomentosa*)
- The Flame of the Forest or Palash* (*Butea monosperma*)
- Indian Cork Tree or Maramalli* (*Millingtonia hortensis*)
- Indian Laburnum or Sarakonrai (*Cassia Fistula*)
- Cassia Siam or Manja Konnai* (*Cassia siamea*)
- Cassia Java (*Cassia javanica*)
- Gutel or Naikunjil* (*Trewia nudiflora*)
- Gulmohur or Neruppu konrai* (*Delonix regia*)

* indicates fast growing species

Note: Trees like the Peepul or Arasamaram (*Ficus religiosa*) and Banyan or Aalamaram (*Ficus benghalensis*) have not been included in any of the above categories. Since these are big trees that require large spaces to grow and spread well, they can be planted only in large open spaces.

As the Germans saw Tamils 300 years ago

For nearly 250 years from 1706, Germans were sent as missionaries to Tamil Nadu as, first, the Danish servers, and then by British missions. Their mission, the conversion of the natives into the Protestant faith, was, however, soon overshadowed by their interest in other facets of native society. Almost all of them were fascinated by the multifaceted socio-economic, medical, cultural and other features of the Tamils, and some Germans even set aside their missionary zeal and their unresistive curiosity impelled them to learn more about the flora and fauna, medicines, diseases, etc. of the tropical Tamil Nadu, which were unknown in Europe till then.

The first German Lutheran missionary Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg was also the first to see that the European notions of the Indians were wrong. He wrote:

"Most Christians in Europe suppose the Malabarians to be a very barbarous people, but this arises from the Europeans who have been amongst them not understanding their language, so that they have not been able to read their books, but have drawn their conclusions from outward appearances. I must acknowledge that when I first came amongst them I could not imagine that their language had proper rules, or that their life had the laws of civil order, and took up all sorts of false ideas on their actions as if they had neither a civil nor a moral law, but as soon as I had gained a little acquaintance with their language and could talk to them on various subjects, I began to have a much better opinion of them and, when at last I was able to read their own books, I found that the Malabarians discussed the same philosophical subjects as the Savants of Europe, and that they had a regular written law, wherein all theological subjects were treated of and demonstrated. This surprised me extremely..."

German observations on feasts and festivals, legends and fables, customs and ceremonies, manners and habits, rituals and fastings of the Tamil people 300 years ago were all recorded. From elephants to ants, from banyan trees to tiny grass, from centenarians to new-born infants, from the rich riding in palanquins to the poor walking barefoot, not a single observation escaped the watchful eyes of those Germans, who recorded all their observations in thousands of diaries. While the Portuguese, the Dutch, the En-

glish and the French fought against each other for political and commercial gains, the Germans showed great interest in the Tamil language, literature, medicine and culture.

Ziegenbalg watched the customs and ceremonies of the Tamils and also studied them from a particular book, *Ashara Kowei*. About this book, he observes:

"*Achara Kowei*, a book of hundred poems or verses, deals with all kinds of ceremonies found to be practised among Malabarians in their association with Gods and fellowmen. The author is called Kankattu Maraignana Pandaram... He is venerated by the Malabarians as he has authored, besides this book, still many more moral books..."

Ziegenbalg quotes from it on dining habits:

"One must wash the body, clean the feet and also rinse the mouth before eating. The eating place should be cleaned with water before and after eating. While eating, one should at first look at the sky (at the noon position), watch

no person, speak with none, should not divert and hover the thought anywhere and concentrate body and soul in the food. The husbandsman should not eat before feeding his guests, the elders, the cows, the servants and his children. One should not eat while lying, standing, on the bed, or below the tree. In a feast, one should not start eating before the elders, should not sit close to them, should not get up before them even if one had finished eating. When one ate, should one drink only thrice, should not spill the food either on the ground or on the lap. All food items, that taste bitter, are good for health; and all sweet food items are bad for health. One should not insert the fingers in the mouth more than the first section, while eating (every finger has three sections). One should not blow the nose, rub the eyes with fingers, touch the food with the left hand..."

Benjamin Schultze, another German, was the first to found a mission in Madras. Schultze wrote *Madras Stadt*, published in 1750. In it can be gleaned the lifestyle of the people in Madras from 30 dialogues. A few of Schultze's observations are quoted: Some people in Madras moved about in palanquins. These transport vehicles were

available for hire at the rate of four fanams per day. Schultze says: "...making a new palanquin will cost 40 pagodas, including bamboo, couch beds, pillows and Tossels...Six boys were required to carry each palanquin at the rate of 5 pagodas per month per boy and this according to the Company's order..."

In the 13th dialogue, Schultze says that an ordinary house had a big garden. In such gardens 25 kinds of trees, 24 kinds of flower plants and 14 kinds of vegetable plants were grown.

In the second dialogue he reports that Egmore and Triplicane were like thick jungles. A few wild animals were seen at 4 in the afternoon near "Ekkimore Castle and Trepplekane" villages.

Schultze describes a wedding celebrated in Madras:

"The groom was 15 years old and the bride, 12 years. The total for the wedding feast was merely 900 pagodas (= 2700 Rs.). The guest ate Mad-apples, bitter fruits, young figs, carrots, Samebeets, Kurfara-bulbons plants, Nikkubar

Knolls, Rampions, goards, chitterlings, fluffing Horns, cucumbers, peases, French beans, Bencouli thorn, berries, round berries, round bitter berries, colescabbages and, besides these, pap, pepper potage, ricepap, with butter, salt cakes, sugarcakes, sugar bowls, sugar tarts, cream and potherbs."

Schultze then gives a list of fireworks and crackers used for this marriage. He says, "Torches, oil-rockets, sky rockets, tail-weeding sky rockets, flower casting fireworks, star-rockets, knick-cracking crackers, fire-belching tree, bone-fire tree, match of brimstone light, match of stars, little flower rockets, star-casters all these were used on the day of the marriage feast." Schultze also makes a bill for the expenses of fireworks. He says that 100 sky rockets cost 1 pagoda; 200 star rockets cost 1 pagoda; 12 knick-cracking crackers cost 1 pagoda; 2 Bonfire trees cost 1 pagoda; 8 Viss of match of Brimstone-light cost 1 pagoda and finally 50 star casters also cost 1 pagoda. Besides, 700 torch bearers were employed at the rate of 2 douddas per head. There was also a music party, observes Schultze, which consisted of i) a Shalmpipe and its Bass, ii) two large drumming Barrels, iii) one

Cards for the season

Manohar and Mahema Devadoss are no strangers to the regular readers of *Madras Musings*. Each year, despite her quadriplegia of many years, Mahema designs greetings cards using Manohar's detailed pen and ink drawings, which he continues to work on despite being near-blind owing to retinitis pigmentosa. And the proceeds from the sale of the cards go to service-minded institutions such as the Sankara Nethralaya and the Aravind Eye Hospital.

This year there are six cards. Three are based on Madras that is Chennai with the University Centenary Building, the High Court and the Kapaleswarar Temple being the subjects. The other three feature the Chitra Gopuram, the Pudu Mandapam and a jasmine garden from Manohar's native town of Madurai about which he has recently brought out a book, *Multiple Facets of My Madurai*.

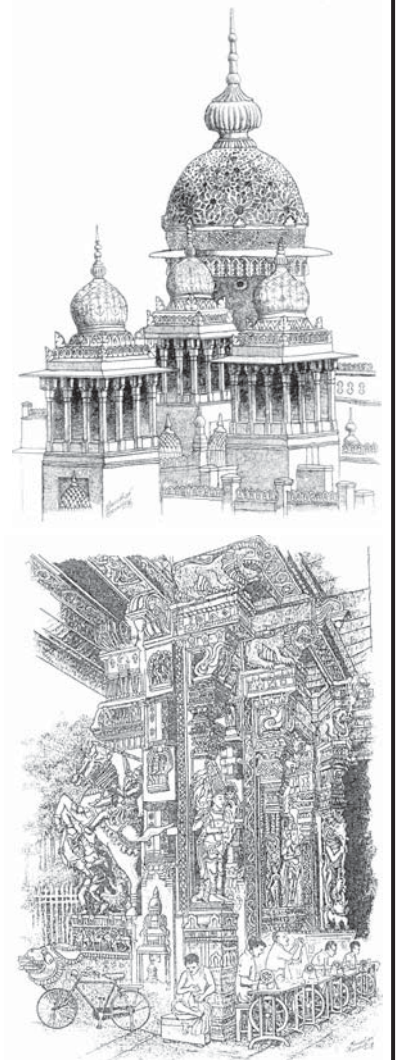
The cards are priced depending on the quantity ordered, details of which are:

1-499	-	Rs. 16.00 per card
500-999	-	Rs. 14.50 per card
1000-1999	-	Rs. 12.50 per card
2000 and above	-	Rs. 12.00 per card.

For further details, those interested can contact Manohar and Mahema at 2498 2484. The couple has been bringing out these cards for the past 42 years and did not break the practice even during the year when Mahema met with her fateful accident. Over the years their cards have become a part of Madras tradition. Sadly, physical limitations have made the couple decide that this will be the last year of their greetings cards project. So this is your last chance to get the cards which have become collectors' items. It is also your opportunity to toast the unflinching spirit of the couple which has made them bring these cards out for so many years.

lesser drumming Barrel, iv) a guitar, v) one tingling Orb and vi) one tabred. With all this pomp and merriment, the marriage party went out on a procession and the local custom was that many of their friends and relatives offered presents and gifts to the married couple in such processions. After calculating the expenses for the marriage and the income through presents and gifts, Schultze says that both would have been equal.

The prices of many commodities, right from the cartage charges of palanquins to the prices of fuels and grocery, are to be found in Schultze's *Madras Stadt*. A first quality water was sold at 4 douddas per pot and the second quality water at 2 douddas per pot. The making charges for the dresses by the tailors are also given. Two fanams was the making charge for ordinary shirts and three fanams for "handsome work" for making shirts. For making a



handsome waistcoat, the tailoring charge was 6 fanams and for an ordinary making of the same 4 fanams. The making charge for a cap was 4 douddas.

Regarding the items imported into Madras, Schultze says: Ships that arrived here from Bengal brought mainly wheat. Ships from Pegou brought in "rice, elephant-teeth, tin, quicksilver, vermilion, wax, copper and musk." These import items were sold for the following rates: 8 markall of rice was sold at one pagoda; one bag of wheat containing 10 markall was sold for one pagoda. It is also written that "two garss of nellu will be enough for a family for a year" and some people used to store a year's requirement of paddy in granaries of the houses.

We also have the prices of certain grocery items sold in the 18th Century Madras. One viss of pepper cost only 5 fanams.

(Continued on page 7)

● by Dr. C.S. Mohanavelu

A Lawyer and a Gentleman

S. Govind Swaminadhan was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth. His father, Dr. S. Swaminadhan, a leading barrister of Madras, specialised in Criminal Law. He also served as Principal of the Madras Law College. Govind's mother Ammu was a leading social activist, later becoming a member of the Constituent Assembly of India and later an MP. Govind was born on October 9, 1909. Govind had two sisters one of whom is the eminent dancer Mrinalini Sarabhai. The other sister is Capt. Lakshmi Sehgal who was a leading light in Netaji Subash Bose's INA. She also contested the previous Presidential election, but without success. Govind's brother S. Krishna Swaminadhan was a senior corporate executive.

Educated initially at St Paul's, Darjeeling, Govind was sent to England at the age of 12, where he took his Bachelor's degree from Brighton College, his Master's from Christchurch College, Oxford, and the Bar-at-Law from the Inner Temple, Inns of Court, London.

Returning to India in 1935, he practised under the eminent lawyer V.L. Ethiraj, who had, interestingly, begun his career under Dr. Swaminadhan. Soon Govind Swaminadhan set up independent practice. In 1939 he married Sulochana Santhanam in Lahore and the couple went on to have four children. Till the 1950s, Govind Swaminadhan was engaged in very many criminal cases and also held the office of Crown



Prosecutor. One of the early cases in which he appeared as defence counsel was the Lakshmikantham murder case. Some of the trials where he officiated as Crown Prosecutor included the Alavandar murder case and the City Gardner murder case. In later years his civil and constitutional law practice became quite substantial.

● by
SRIRAM V.

In 1965, he became a Senior Central Government Standing Counsel. In 1969 he became Advocate-General of Tamil Nadu and held that office till 1976 when he resigned in protest against the Emergency. He resumed private practice and was active in it till the 1990s. In recognition of his work in the legal arena, the International

Bar Association in 1994 conferred on him the title 'The Living Legend of The Law'.

An active and busy practice did not mean lack of other pursuits. Govind Swaminadhan gave cricket commentaries on the AIR, was involved with the Madras Race Club, the Madras Riding Club and was Commandant of the Home Guards. He was an active member of the Madras Players in its initial years and was Founder of the Consumer Action Group. He was also President of the Bala Mandir and Chairman of the Vidyodaya School for Girls.

This eminent personality of Madras passed away on 30th September 2003.

As a fitting tribute to him, a book, *A Gentleman Lawyer*, edited by well-known lawyer Sriram Panchu and Aparna Mukherjee Vasu, has recently been released. The book is a compilation of reminiscences of Swaminadhan himself, several of his speeches, recollections by friends, colleagues and acquaintances and tributes from judges and juniors. The book is a delight to read and a very interesting feature is the inclusion of a collection of drawings by Justice V. Balasubrahmanyam, taking a humorous look at life in law. This collection of drawings, which had been presented to Govind Swaminadhan, adds colour to the book.

Proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the Bala Mandir.



Till November 30: *In Search of Femininity*, an exhibition by Sajitha Gouwry. After her residency programme in Paris, Sajitha comes to Chennai to exhibit her collection dedicated to Chandralekha (at the Alliance Francaise).

Till November 30: Display of digital prints by Dhruva Mistry (at Gallery Sumukha).

Nov. 24, 25, 30, Dec. 1, 2: *Voyageur de Minuit* by Indianostrum Theatre.

The story of the journey of a young man who likes the theatre and who plays Alfonsina – a prostitute in a village in North India. Rejected by his father, he undertakes a voyage to the South... many meetings follow that resemble incarnations of life, of love, of daring, of female emancipation, of poetry, of resistance, of violence and of magic... Here Hindi, Khasi, Tamil, English, French, Malayalam, Kannada mix with the strange lights of the theatre. Story and Direction by Koumarane Valavane (at Alliance Francaise).

November 21-24: Global Adjustments' Exhibition of photographs by expatriates (at Lalit Kala Akademi).

November 26: *Korean National Theatre* — The National Dance Company and the National Orchestra of Korea combine to present a grand

dance performance (at Music Academy).

November 29: *Jungle Bungle* — The children of Ozone theatre group bring you two plays based on the story of animals of the jungle: *Enormous Crocodile* and *Hungry Lion* (at Alliance Francaise, 7.00 p.m.).

December 2-7: Prakriti Foundation presents The Park's New Festival, a six-day festival showcasing new and emerging work in the field of dance, music and theatre (at Museum Theatre).

December 4: *Porcelain*, a dance solo by Preethi Athreya in collaboration with the music of Tobias Sturmer and the artwork of Walter Sturmer, a 45-minutes presentation. (At Museum Theatre, 6.00 p.m.)

December 5-23: An exhibition by Pichaya Manet. His paintings are singular for his exceptional use of colour and movements in depicting the human form and for using the canvas much like a stage to visualise and set scenes. Both these strengths follow his many years of being a Bharata Natyam dancer and choreographer. (At Alliance Francaise.)

WORKSHOPS AT DAKSHINACHITRA

FOR ADULTS

November 17: Handmade Paper Products. Resource person: Malarvizhi.

November 24: Silk Thread Jewellery Making. Resource person: Karpagam.

December 1 & 2: Glass Jewellery Making. Resource person: Srinivasa Ragavan.

(To register, please call 24462435/24918943.)

As the Germans saw Tamils 300 years ago

(Continued from page 6)

One viss of mace cost 12 fanams and one viss of white sugar cost 2½ fanams.

Standard of education of the native Tamils, 300 years ago: The educational standard of the Tamils, even before the arrival of the Germans, was at a high level. Committing to memory whatever they happened to learn was the method of study of the Malabarians.

History records that well before the Nalanda University in the northern India, there had been a "Dichterakademie", the Sangam in the famous city Madurai, where Tamil scholars gathered periodically to exhibit their talent in verse composing, prose writing etc. Tracing the very evolution of the education

of the Tamils will be a fascinating and fathomless phenomenon.

Ziegenbalg mentions in 1708, "...that the Malabarian School Boys had learnt several books by heart... This small book (*Uлага Needhi*) is the first one which the young school children learnt by heart..." A Tamil school boy, in this period, was expected to commit to memory *Thirukkural*, *Ulaganeedhi*, *Kondrei Wenden*, *Nal Vazhi*, *Needhi Venbha* and *Aathichudi* and recite them at request. Thus, moral ethics and worldly knowledge were imparted to the Tamil boys first and only then grammatical, lexical, lyrical and other works were taken up for study.

Young Tamil boys wrote on sand with their fingers. Older

boys wrote on palmyra leaves with a metal stylus. Rev. Claudius Buchanan, the Vice-Provost at the College of Fort William, Calcutta, wrote in his diary on 2.9.1806:

"...As Mr. Whitfield, on his first going to Scotland, was surprised at the rustling of the leaves of the Bible, which took place immediately on his pronouncing his text (so different from anything he had seen in his own country), so I was surprised here at the sound of the iron pen engraving the palmyra leaf. Many persons had their Ollas (Tamil word for palmleaves) in their hands, writing the sermon in Tamil short-hand! It is well known that natives of Tanjore and Travancore can write fluently. They do not look much at

their Ollas while writing. The fibre of the leaf guides the pen. This, thought I, is more than some of the students at our English Universities can do. This aptitude of the people to record the words of the preacher renders it peculiarly necessary that the priest's lips should keep knowledge. An old rule of the Mission is that the sermon of the morning should be read to the Schools in the evening, by the Catechist, from his palmyra leaf..."

Written palmleaves, bundled together with a strong string through coaxial and equidistant perforations, formed the notebook of students in those days. The sharp end of the metal stylus, in the student's hand, created a groove-like impression on the palmleaves. To read

them, you had to smear a black paste which filled the grooves.

The 29th dialogue of Schultze's *Madras Stadt* is a fitting conclusion. Schultze points out the ignorance of the Europeans about the culture of the Tamils. "The people in Europe," says Schultze, "thought the people in East Indies live on leaves of trees and roots of bushes..." and adds, "...such talk is to be heard in Europe; but when anybody comes hither, he will presently apprehend the contrary..." Germans like Schultze did much to erase the wrong European notion that the 'Malabarians were barbarians'. — (From a lecture at Max Mueller Bhavan, Chennai, by the author.)

Note: Tamils were referred to as Malabarians.

A young cricketer of promise

From a distance, Shikar Hukku looks nothing special. He is an above average student, happy with his academic performances, watching cricket matches on television and playing hours together with his friends.

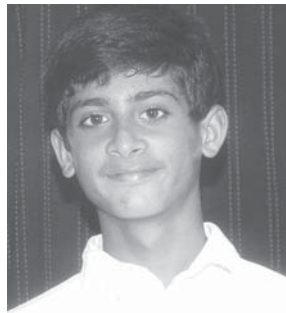
However, given a pair of gloves and pads and a bat, Shikar turns special. Between the wickets, he is a terror. Bowlers from city schools are beginning to worry about their economy rate when they bowl to him. And the streak of worry is not confined only to bowlers.

Hukku causes nightmares even for rival batsmen. Even his medium pace is causing enough trouble. In the past two seasons, Hukku has also proved that he is a multi-talented player with his sharp fielding. His school, St. John's English School, and Junior College, Besant Nagar, have already captured the TNCA inter-school city championships.

All of 13 years, Shikar Hukku, a Delhi-born boy, has already impressed many a cricket coach in the city. "He is turning out to be a run machine," says Harrington, cricket coach of the school. "In my 16 years of coaching experience, I have not seen such an overall talent at this young age," he adds proudly about his ward. That was amply seen when Shikar scored 285 runs in 116 balls during a recent tournament against Ashram School. "More than the runs, the way he played the innings was an example of his talent," says

Harrington. That the innings wasn't a flash in the pan was proved when Shikar led his school from the front in defeating Vidya Mandir's highly rated team, to win the City U-13 School championships. His 126 not out helped his team win the game by just one run. "It was one of the memorable matches for me," says Shikar. That innings helped him to get selected by the TNCA for the Chennai City School team. His run spree continued with his 128 in the Dr. Rajkumar Memorial Cricket tournament.

All this adulation, thankfully, has not gone to Shikar's head. He still takes his practice seriously. He has already been selected to represent the Tamil Nadu School team for the National School Games, to be held in Mumbai later next month. Thanks to his coach's guidance, Hukku is no longer just the slam-bang batsman. "He has been advising me to watch the ball and play it according to its merit," says Hukku.



Shikar Hukku.

Thanks to the total understanding by Hukku's parents, Harrington feels that the boy wonder could be moulded properly. "Unlike other parents, Hukku (Sr.) doesn't interfere with our methods and just lets us develop his son," says Harrington.

As a gen-next player, Hukku is inspired by Sachin Tendulkar's range of shots, though he admits that the lofted straight shots of Robin Uthappa have captivated him. With the kind of prodigious talent that he has, it is better that Shikar Hukku is left to himself to play his own natural game, rather than burning out by comparing himself with international cricketers now. If that is taken care of, Tamil Nadu will be well served.

— Brahmma Raju

Suffragette in Madras

(Continued from page 2)

formed the National Federation of Indian Women in 1954. NFIW worked closely with women from both the rural and urban sectors on social and economic issues. For her service to the women's cause, Margaret Cousins was awarded the Founder's Silver Medal of the Theosophical Society.

Margaret Cousins was instrumental in organising many institutions like the Madras Seva Sadan and Children's Aid Society. She was responsible for organising a women's deputation to meet E.S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, when he visited Madras. It was here that the first demand for franchise for women in India was made. But, when the report of Montagu-Chelmsford was released, there was no mention of women's franchise in it. Cousins did not hesitate to address a letter directly to Montagu, in her capacity as the secretary of the All India Deputation of Women, in which she said that the Commission's question regarding the support of the other organisations had already been

answered by the resolution passed by the Indian National Congress. She was not to leave anything unquestioned!

In 1937, the air was filled with the election process in which Congress was to prove its strength. Margaret Cousins provided an eyewitness account in *The Hindu* of polling in the Shermadevi general constituency where a woman was the Congress candidate pitted against several male candidates. She wrote, "For the past six weeks Srimathi Lakshmi Ammal (the Congress candidate) and her lieutenants have been painting the constituency yellow. Her opponent was a very wealthy man and the President of the District Board. But Lakshmi Ammal has the courage of a lion." Cousins' hard work enabled Lakshmi Ammal to win the election by polling 21,756 votes to 10,278 secured by her chief rival! Cousins later wrote, "In granting women suffrage, Indian men showed great statesmanship and understanding of democratic values, a sympathetic vision of the aspirations of a woman, and the courage to take a step unknown to their previous political history."

She suffered a paralytic stroke in 1943, but continued to work for women's rights in India. *We Two Together*, a joint autobiography with her husband, was published in Madras in 1950. In 1949, the Madras Government presented her Rs. 5,000 in recognition of her services as a political sufferer for Indian freedom and, in 1953, Prime Minister Pandit Nehru sent her a cheque of Rs. 3,000.

She died at the Theosophical Society in Adyar on March 11, 1954.

METRO FOR MADRAS

(Continued from page 1)

service covering around 300 kms. Even if that plan is now abandoned, the study by itself should be worthwhile to go through as it looks at the transport needs of the city. There is a glimmer of hope in this direction with the Union Minister of State for Railways recently announcing that an inter-modal transport system will be devel-

oped for Chennai with bus routes being linked to the MRTS. The expected date of completion of the Metro project is 2014. However, going by the fate of recent projects underway in the city, such as the IT Expressway and the flyovers at Padi and Kathipara, it is quite likely that the completion will depend on availability of road space to carry on the work and

speedy solution to problems associated with land acquisition where necessary. A policy of complete transparency involving the citizens in planning process itself will help in easing such bottlenecks. *Madras Musings* hopes that the State Government will show the way by making this project a "people's activity" from day one.

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