

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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Heritage Act a step closer

(By A Special Correspondent)

Tamil Nadu has moved a step closer to taking a serious look at a Heritage Act, *Madras Musings* learns. A meeting was recently convened by Chief Secretary A.P. Muthuswamy at the Secretariat to take a harder look at the study a committee convened by the Department of Town and Country Planning had been making of heritage issues these past several months.

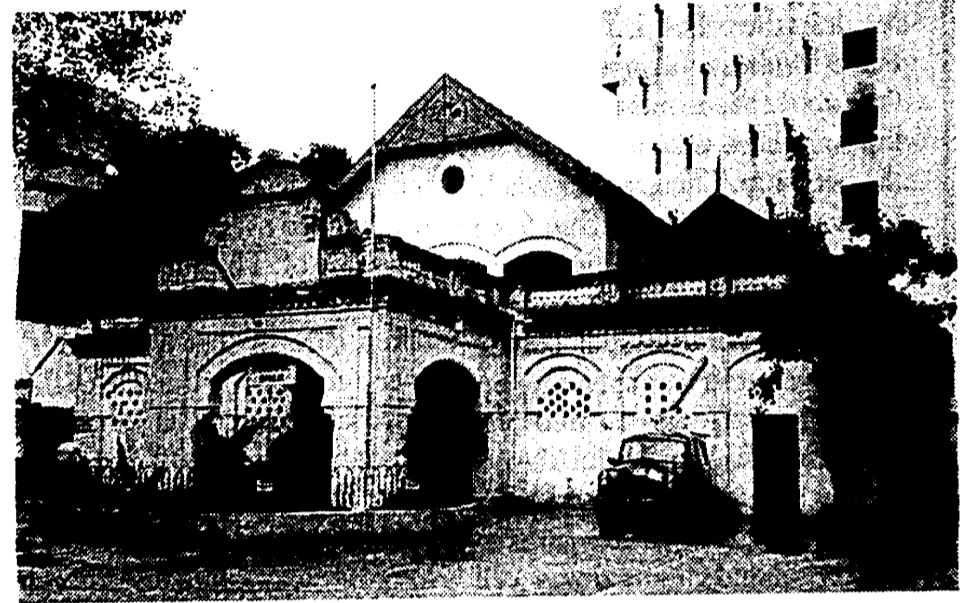
That study recommended a Heritage Act for the whole of Tamil Nadu, focussing in the first instance on all the Corporations and major municipalities, the 38 heritage Towns that the Tamil Nadu Government has conservation and development plans for, and a few other towns and areas that

have been added to this list. It was recommended that the Heritage Act suggested by the Central Government to the States a couple of years ago be the model for Tamil Nadu. The Committee also felt that while the draft was being prepared and the process of legislation being gone through, there could be at the local level a moratorium on pulling down or transforming buildings, artefacts, precincts or natural resources that might be deemed if Heritage Act laid down the necessary guidelines.

Madras Musings learns that the meeting agreed on work getting underway on drafting a Heritage Act for the State with an eye on it being legislated sometime around the middle of

next year. Meanwhile, both the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority and the Department of Town Planning, it is learnt, have agreed to take an immediate look at introducing regulations to prevent the destruction or transformation of buildings of value. Representatives of INTACH, while welcoming the positive approach of the authorities, pointed out that some immediate action was necessary to prevent heritage buildings being pulled down or reconstructed without relevance to the original and to protect the natural heritage which was being impinged on by generous construction sanctions. It hoped the CMDA and the Dept. of T & CP would act fast to ensure preventive measures. Already, during the period of the discussions, several historic buildings had been destroyed.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The progress on the Heritage Act has been slow, but that there has been progress, be it a step at a time, has been the most heartening aspect of this 18-month and more exercise which certainly drew inspiration from the Chief Minister's decision to restore and renovate Police headquarters, not pull it down. *Madras Musings* hopes that that building will today serve as a beacon for the Heritage Act.



Once the Electric Bioscope, Madras's first cinema theatre, now restored and home of the City's Philatelic Bureau. Its grand hall, with stained glass windows illuminating it, is now host to many a philatelic exhibition. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



Philatelic Bureau in restored theatre

A visit to a stamp exhibition on Teachers' Day proved an eye-opener for more than one reason.

In the first instance, it was the venue. Calling it the Philatelic Bureau, Anna Salai, was prosaic. The Bureau may be in a building in the premises of the Mount Road Head Post Office, but it is a building with a history that made former Chief Postmaster General Theodore Bhaskaran give new life to it before he retired.

This quaint building with a sloping, pale turquoise roof was the City's first cinema theatre, Electric Bioscope. It has now been restored, refurbished and embellished with stained glass to make it not only an attractive Philatelic Bureau but more significantly an ideal exhibition centre. A little more publicity for its exhibitions will make it as popular a venue as any of the city's galleries.

I never quite got over the imaginative way the building had been restored, but the quality of the exhibition did succeed in grabbing my attention. Titled 'Philately and Education', it was arranged by Mrs. T. Thomas, a retired foreign language teacher, who displayed about 780 stamps and first day covers on subjects taught in schools. Here was novel way of linking Education with Philately.

English Literature featured stamps based on popular stories, like 101 Dalmatians, Peter Pan and Jungle Book, while Tamil had Shakunthala. Writers, actors, and poets included Mark Twain, Robert Frost, Charlie Chaplin and Tiruvalluvar.

Stamps were arranged to denote addition, subtraction, decimals, division, fractions, set theories, Venn diagrams,

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'OPEN THE LABS TO CONSUMERS'

To enable easier testing for adulteration

(By A Staff Reporter)

With so many colleges, higher educational institutions and other laboratory facilities in the City, apart from Government laboratories, life could be made better for consumers if ways were found to give consumers access to these labs if they wished to test their purchases for adulteration. This was the suggestion made by the Centre for Consumer Education, Research, Training and Testing (CONCERT) at a recent press conference it convened to point out the level

of adulteration of petrol and diesel in Chennai.

CONCERT pointed out that at present there were only a couple of Government institutions in the City that undertook testing of food products and other consultancy and they were difficult to access, responded slowly and were often too expensive for the average citizen. Dr M Anandakrishnan, former Vice-Chancellor, Anna University and Trustee of

(Continued on Page 4)

MADRAS MUSINGS

wishes all its readers A Merry Christmas and A Very Happy New Year

Wasted efforts — not money-making ones

When the Discussion Forum held its monthly meeting early this month (it meets at 6 p.m. on the first Friday of every month on the first floor of Orient Longman's Bookpoint showroom, all welcome), the topic of the day appeared double-headed and that's exactly how the discussion 'by the hope-less of the hopeless' went. 'Making money from garbage' was one part of the title, the other was 'Working towards a cleaner Chennai'. Presumably, doing one would result in the other. But *The Man From Madras Musings* heard as little about these or on any similar lines as there was discussion on the occasion. There were a whole lot of speeches, instead, but from the long to the short, there were few concrete suggestions.

The Corporation spoke of the Rs.300 crore it was spending on clearing garbage and assured everyone that His Worshipful Mayor, a title repeated over and over again, had streamlined garbage collection and Chennai was well on its way to becoming not merely a cleaner city but indeed a CLEAN CITY. An NGO that has been attempting to clean the city, was not particularly interested in taking on the Corporation; after all, it depends on municipal power for the success of its efforts. Instead, it spoke of these efforts and showed several pictures of streets it was proud of. MMM only wished that they would accompany him to those very streets they spoke of; they'd find a rather horrifying picture.

This NGO, however, was the only speaker that spoke of the possibility of making money from garbage. It showed a slide featuring a plan to make compost in every Corporation Ward from the segregated garbage gathered daily in the Ward. Apparently this and similar plans have been brought to the attention of the Corporation over the last year or so, but it would appear that the Corporation finds taking a decision difficult.

The Army apparently had few such difficulties. Discipline, a low population density and Municipal co-operation ensured that its cantonments were the cleanest part of India. The *danda* was necessary, felt the Colonel. Not at all, passionately argued the young Montessori teacher who appeared to place her trust in education creating a cleaner city. MMM wishes he could put as much faith in the education children are getting these days. A corollary to this was the experience the engineering professor had gained in Australia where he had witnessed the success of garbage segregation and collection. What he appeared to forget was the education levels and civic consciousness in Australia; in India, the educated insist that their garbage be put out for disposal by an employee, generally an ill-educated one and, therefore, the Western response could not be expected, pointed out a social historian who took his argument a step further by seeing the roots for such behaviour in the

caste issue. And when someone pointed out that landfill was affecting the quality of water in several parts of Chennai, an environmentalist commented that there was no landfill in Greater Chennai; the authorities were only filling up the land!

'I don't know'

The only bit of candour that was expressed at this discussion of garbage was by two surgeons, one heading a leading hospital in Anna Nagar, the other associated with General Hospital. The former said that his hospital segregated waste carefully and today's major problem, medical plastic disposables, was handed over to a contractor to take care of. The contractor faithfully reports regularly that he has taken care of this waste. But as everyone knows, the fate of these disposables is not as terminal as might be expected. "I don't know what the contractor does and I don't know what I can do to ensure the contractor keeps his word," the doctor candidly confessed.

The GH man, on the other hand, pointed out that much of medical disposables can be reclaimed and reused after CAREFUL sterilisation. What is necessary is meticulous sterilisation — and that is what they try to ensure at the cash-strapped General Hospital where re-use of some disposables is necessary. Perhaps in countries like ours such procedures are inevitable, *The Man from Madras Musings* is inclined to think. Provided the precautions can be ensured.

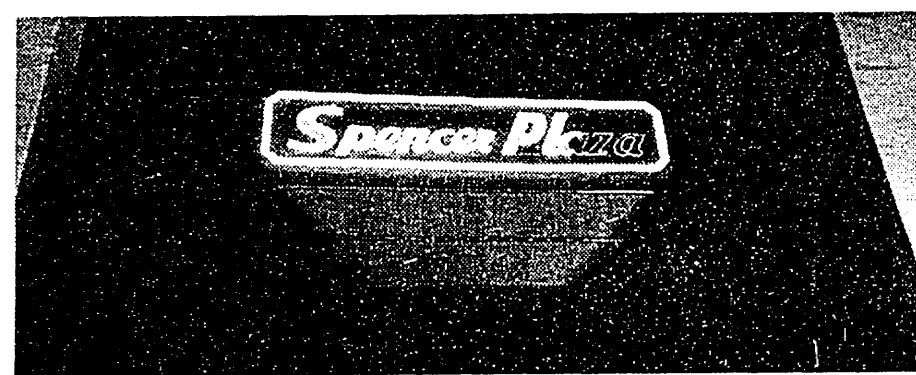
SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

The Law today

The Central Government brought in legislation in July and, thereafter, the law called the Biomedical Wastes (Maintenance and Handling) Rules, 1998, came into force. Every State is expected to implement these rules. That calls for: segregation of biomedical wastes according to specific items and categories; placing them in special colour-coded bags; and following the guidelines on transporting, storing, treating and disposing the different wastes.

Under these guidelines, incinerators are no longer favoured and autoclaves (for steam sterilisation) and shredders for disposable plastics and sharps are recommended. Whether all this is practicable in India, considering the cost of the equipment, is worrying many concerned about the problems.

Meanwhile, an investigation in Mumbai confirms what the Anna Nagar surgeon had to say. A Tata Hospital doctor says they segregate all their waste, "but the contractors who come to pick up the waste simply hand it over to the ragpickers".



MM's view of sustainability in India, particularly in Chennai (MM, November 16th) prompted RAJIND N CHRISTY to wonder whether this picture of his reflects some of those remarks. The real estate developers who are busy building on Anna Salai what they see as perhaps the biggest shopping mall in India, wanted to raise a building that would be as impressive a "landmark" as the old Spencer building was. And when the first phase was completed, up there went over the main entrance the neon sign proclaiming 'Spencer Plaza'. Somewhere along the way the last two letters of the name vanished — Christy says they faded out well over a year ago. When the second phase of the Plaza was completed and inaugurated a couple of months ago, this sign was moved from the first block to the entrance of the second and there it continues to keep us in the dark about a couple of letters. What price sustainability, when even landmarks find it difficult to maintain themselves, wonders Christy in a note to MM. (Picture taken December 7th)

And the ragpickers' collection is recycled by the *dadas* of Mumbai's slums in as primitive a way as possible, repackaged and sold on the pavements of the city. The gloves are popular with hairdressers and cooks, the vials with the drug trade, and the syringes and needles are favoured by the drug addicts, says the investigation.

What can we do, ask the hospital authorities. Not much, it would seem to *The Man from Madras Musings*. And that is tragic. Are laws and all such discussions as the Chennai one wasted efforts?

The ideal teacher

One of the most entertaining, articulate and instructive speakers in town is Dr. K.P. Mishra, the eminent cardiologist. He not only believes that humour is a splendid palliative but he also feels anecdote is the best way of getting a message across. The way he quotes from the scriptures of the different religions and from his wide reading to emphasise the points he makes on whatever subject he is speaking on has constantly amazed *The Man from Madras Musings*.

He did it once again as Guest Speaker at the inauguration of 'Child on '98', a conference organised by the Alpha to Omega Learning Centre "to help identify learning difficulties and offer remedial education to the needy". His subject on the occasion was the ideal teacher. And it was patent that he had been considerably influenced by one, his village headmaster, and had never forgotten him.

He recalled this guru from a village in a backward part of Orissa who had prepared a class of 20 for their final examination. Prepared them not merely to pass but to top the State in the school finals. For a month he had hosted them in his little house and there he had fed their bodies, minds and spirits with food, knowledge and love. Not one of the boys let him down.

His guru was the ideal teacher, remembered Dr. Mishra. His

qualities should be emulated by others, Dr. Mishra urged. An ideal teacher, he said, should love to teach, should remove fear from the minds of students, should show them compassion and should give them courage. The teachers in institutions helping the handicapped and the backward particularly should do all this and in even greater degree if possible, he advocated.

If attention paid to words ensured results, Dr. Mishra would not be in vain, felt MMM after watching him cast a spell on his audience.

In brief

★ *The Man From Madras Musings* has heard several versions of this "experience in India" that in its latest avatar was related by an American in Chennai, Don Wood, in the house journal of relocation service 'Global Adjustments'. Wood narrates the story of the empty Coke bottle he found next to an executive's door. He asked the secretary to remove it and put it where it should be. She went and called a security guard, who came, inspected the bottle and left, to call an office boy. He brought a boy back with him to the secretary who pointed to the bottle and the boy took it away. "Speak of compartmentalising jobs!" comments Wood. As in all such narrations of similar incidents, MMM wonders why the executive who drank the Coke did not put the empty bottle "in the appropriate place" in the first instance or why Wood noticed it didn't do it when he noticed the bottle. Perhaps they too had got used to the Indian way of doing things.

★ Sankara Nethralaya, twenty in September, is busy celebrating by renovating the Willingdon Hospital which it acquired a few months ago, shortly after what had once been Madras's most exclusive nursing home had closed down, a new block having proved too much for it. *The Man From Madras Musings* understands that the Willingdon cost

the City's leading eye hospital Rs.23 crore, a substantial part of it a donation from the Ambanis of the Reliance Group through the efforts of one of their Chennai kin. Sankara Nethralaya's new wing will, when operational, provide spot surgical appointments for advanced cases. Needy patients will not be charged for surgery and Sankara Nethralaya anticipates that fifty per cent of the cases at the Willingdon will fall into this category. MMM notes with regret that the affairs of the Child's Trust Hospital have not come to a similar satisfactory conclusion.

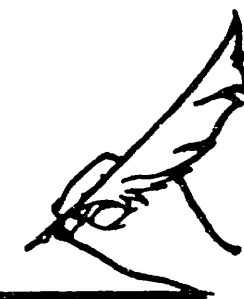
★ Sankara Nethralaya in 1998 celebrated another event in an imaginative way. To mark India's fifty years of independence, the medical professionals of the institution had pledged on August 15, 1997 that they would in the year ahead submit 50 research papers to national and international journals. *The Man From Madras Musings* is delighted to hear that they submitted 107, of which 31 have been published and 28 await publication. That's commitment being honoured.

★ The Traffic Police Commissioner's Office in Egmore, another century and more old building, is due for restoration — taking its cue from Police Headquarters — *The Man From Madras Musings* hears. And it will be even better restored, appears to be the determination of all who occupy the building, according to what MMM was told. Meanwhile, MMM also hears that there is need for those who occupy Police Headquarters to pay a little more attention to keeping a building they are proud of in a state which permits continuing pride. The engineer who did the work has done a good job on the whole, so it might be worth their while for the occupants of DGP Building to consult him before doing any interior decoration, improving the lighting, adding equipment etc. They should remember that damage done by unsupervised artisans can prove irreparable and will damage a building that needs constant care and attention.

★ A mother's experience in bringing up a Down's Syndrome daughter over the past 17 years is the subject of a moving book written to help other parents with Down's Syndrome children. Rekha Ramchandran's *Life Begins at Sixteen — Down's Syndrome* was recently released in Chennai and is both a moving account of life with Babli as well as a valuable manual of the do's and don'ts when bringing up other children with similar problems. With one in every 800 children affected by the Syndrome in varying degrees, the book is a much-needed publication that draws additional strength from Rekha Ramchandran's experience of running 'Mathru Mandir', the only shelter for Down's Syndrome children in the country, *The Man From Madras Musings* is told.

MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



A threat indeed!

While our ever-expanding and 'developing' metropolitan cities engulf pristine nature on their outskirts, it should be remembered that only by maintaining reserves for the underprivileged indigenous people and for the nature and biodiversity around them that we can balance the ecological health of our fast-deteriorating urban ecosystems. The Guindy Park and the IIT Campus are unique and good examples of such eco-balancing sanctuaries, right in the midst of Chennai City.

Kaattupalli Island, (MM, December 1st), north of the Ennore Creek, is a very rare combination of coastal (inshore), estuarine (brackishwater), mangrove, scrub-jungle, sand-dune and agricultural multi-ecosystems, and has characteristic indigenous people like fisherfolk and other weaker sections of society.

This island is also strategic, being on the southern border of the ecologically sensitive Pulicat Lake, on whose fisheries and other resources nearly one lakh fisherfolk and under-privileged have been depending for the securities of that livelihood for generations. About 50,000 migrant water-birds, belonging to sixty species, feed and breed in the northern regions on this lagoon every winter. Remnants of mangrove patches exist in these backwaters near Karungaali, at the northern border of Kaattupalli Island. I have been researching these ecosystems for the past 36 years.

Apart from all these diverse ecosystems, the scrub-jungle biodiversity which Kaattupalli ecosystem harbours is a rich repository of plant and animal (chiefly insect, reptile and bird) diversity which has been ecobalancing the northern regions of the Chennai City. In fact, the whole Kaattupalli Island ecosystem is a 'sacred grove' by itself, whose serenity could be seen only through the visionary eyes of the late Kanchi Paramacharya, who is said to have spent nearly six months on this island in 1965.

A vast scrub-jungle bird sanctuary, butterfly and honey-bee sanctuaries, medicinal farms and biodiversity gene-pools could be developed on this island, with the added assets of diverse aquatic and mangrove ecosystems native to the island. It could be a natural history centre for environmentalists and students from Chennai. They should, in fact, conduct a biodiversity survey and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to advise against any short-sighted encroachments on this island, by 'development' agencies. Kaattupalli could be a 'people's sanctuary'.

If on the other hand, all the developmental threats that MM is apprehensive of come true, extensive beach-erosion in the most vulnerable regions of this island, from the Chinthamani Log right upto the Korakuppam village on the coast, will bring about major geographic changes, converting the Pulicat Lake into a wide wing of the Bay of Bengal. Who will then be prepared

to be accountable for the habitat and livelihood securities of one lakh fisherfolk and the under-privileged here? Moreover, through the routine northward and southward alternating coastal currents in the Bay of Bengal, the chemical pollution from the proposed petrochemical complexes would only make the whole coast of Chennai, its beautiful bathing beaches, its coastal fisheries and the Pulicat Lake a sad memory.

Prof. P.J. Sanjeeva Raj
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Anna Nagar West
Chennai 600 040.

Rainwater harvesting - I

The article on the importance of rainwater harvesting by K.R. Gopinath (MM, November 16th 1998) was informative and timely. I would just like to add the following comments to an otherwise complete article:

● In rural areas, rainwater harvesting has been part of an age-old tradition. Rainwater was conserved as surface water in irrigation tanks (also known as *eris*), ponds (*kuttais*), temple tanks etc. These are at present in a state of disrepair and all that has to be done is to revive them and make them fit for harvesting rainwater.

● In today's urban areas (which are nothing but a conglomeration of villages), rainwater can be conserved, by and large as groundwater. This requires that sufficient space be left unpaved all around house/flat complexes.

● Rainwater harvesting assumes greater significance in suburbs located within say 1 km. from the coast line — Besant Nagar, Valmiki Nagar, Kottivakkam etc. The soil in these suburbs being sandy, is highly permeable. In view of this, they are bestowed with certain advantages namely, 1) the quality and exploitable quantity of groundwater is good to start with, 2) good groundwater is available at shallow depths, 3) the efficient recharge capability of the soil make rainwater harvesting a very simple affair.

In order to create an awareness regarding the importance of rainwater harvesting among the residents of Besant Nagar, I have been involved in a door to door campaign for the past four years.

Sekhar Raghavan
D15, Bayview Apartments
Kalakshetra Colony
Besant Nagar
Chennai 600 090

Editor's Note: A copy of Dr. Sekhar Raghavan's appeal being distributed, highlighting the importance of sustaining the quality of groundwater in coastal suburbs, is published in the box above.

Rainwater harvesting - II

In the early 70s, when the scientific process of harvesting rainwater was technically non-existent in Madras (probably, in In-

An appeal by a water harvester

Among the residents of Madras City, those living in Besant Nagar are the most fortunate. They don't buy drinking water nor run behind tankers. They have been bestowed with a huge underground tank as big as Besant Nagar itself. This has been made possible by the soil in this part of the city which is sandy in nature. Of course, this is true of any place which is close to the sea. Every drop of rain that falls on the ground gets absorbed into it and goes to fill the big underground tank.

In spite of all this, the groundwater in this part of the city is also depleting fast and there is constant fear that salt water will be struck soon, causing massive problems. There are two reasons for this depletion. First, our consumption has increased and there is a lot of wastage of water through flush toilets and wash basins. Secondly, we have failed to take enough precautions to recharge our groundwater. The lat-

ter has become more serious with the construction of more and more multistoried residential complexes. The courtyards around these complexes are paved, thus preventing rainwater from seeping into the ground. This amounts to closing the lid of a vessel when it is being filled. (Paving the courtyards may not be such a serious offence in other parts of the city as in Besant Nagar, where seepage is such a natural phenomenon that paving has to be reduced to a bare minimum).

If this trend continues, then salt water from the sea will start seeping into our ground. This change is irreversible and if we allow it to happen then for the rest of our life we may have to buy water from outside.

Let us all wake up and prevent any further deterioration by utilising to the maximum the rainwater to recharge our ground. The scheme that has to be implemented as for residential com-

plexes with paved courtyards all around is as follows:

- Pits have to be dug in the paved portions of the compound area, preferably in places where the pipe meant to remove water from the terrace ends.
- The total area which has currently been paved be reduced and in such places quarry dust must be used to bind/strengthen the soil. If for some reason the paved portions cannot be dug, then attempts should be made to collect the water from the terrace in a sump and not allowed to run into the street.
- All attempts should be made to prevent further paving of courtyards and residents must insist on sufficient open ground being left on both sides while laying tarred roads.

For any assistance and help in implementing water harvesting schemes in your residence/residential complex Please contact: Tel No. 4918415

— Sekhar Raghavan

Fr Sebastian was a shy and silent person. I believe such extraordinary efforts as his (worthy of classifying as appropriate technology) need to go into the records of the history of Madras. Indeed, we seem to have had people — contrary to GBS's observation — who not only taught, but also 'did'!

A Ramam
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Round Tana - I

The explanation regarding use of the term 'Round Tana' could be traced to the 'Tamilisation' (if I may use the word) of English words. The circular roundabout could have been called a 'Round Turn'. As usual, most people in Tamil Nadu tend to add a question to a phrase and while referring to the 'Round Turn' would have called it 'ROUND TURN AA?'. This over a period of time could have resulted in the word 'ROUND TANA'. Logical enough?

Round Tana - III

The place where four roads meet is called *chowaha* (in Hindi). A circular fence was erected and some flowering plants were grown there. Traffic had to go around this fence (even today it is seen in some places).

Accidents are likely to occur in such places. Hence, police were posted there. So, police meaning 'Tana' (in Hindi), and the circular fence together might have given way to 'Round Tana'.

S. Srinivasa Ramanujam
24/A, IInd Main Road
R.A. Puram Chennai 600 028

Sleepy patrol

On 17.11.98 at around 2.15 p.m. in Teynampet, just opposite SIET Women's College, a Chennai Motor Police Patrol was parked to prevent eve-teasing, but the policeman in the vehicle was fast asleep even though a lot of buses, two wheelers, cars, autos were sounding off loudly to clear the road. What use of such sleepy patrols?

T. Subramanian

No. 34, Nermai Nagar
Balaji Nagar
II Cross Street Extension
Kolathur, Chennai 600 099

Round Tana - II

In my school days in the 1940s, there were trams running in Madras. Trams from Mylapore, Luz and Triplicane terminated in Mount Road near Elphinstone Theatre. There used to be a round circle in the place where now stands C.N. Annadurai's statue. The incoming trams make a round and came to the onward track. From the centre of the circle the lines were changed by operating the lever system, similar to train tracks.

The trams were later withdrawn

Cocking a snook at Viagra

Industry may seem impotent in its efforts to raise spirits depressed by the recession, but one group of manufacturers appears buoyant. They are the domestic drug manufacturers who appear ready to cock a snook at that international success, the magic pill Viagra, by developing sildenafil citrate, the vital ingredient of Viagra, through a different process.

Following the lead of Chennai-based Orchid Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Ltd., several pharma majors in the country, like Ranbaxy, Cadila, Kopran, Cipla and Torrent, have filed applications with the Drug Controller of India (DCI) for sildenafil citrate exports and domestic marketing. The Centre's decision to ban export of new molecules has dampened the enthusiasm of the companies, but they are hopeful ongoing discussions will unshackle the rules that constrict.

Cadila has named its product 'Penegra' and will be pricing the pill around Rs.80, while Orchid Chemicals has invited the public to suggest a suitable name for its product.

One or two of these players and several others in the organised sector are already eyeing the ayurvedic potency drug market. They include Ranbaxy, (with Revital), J.B. Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (Fitovit), Microlabs (Biovital) and Lyka Labs (Gintona) — all with ethically promoted (doctor's prescription needed) products and others like Ajantha Pharma (Thirty Plus), Medimix brand soap manufac-

turer Sowparnika Herbal Extracts (P) Ltd. (Strongnite), J.K. Ansell Ltd. (Nirvana - the company makes Kama Sutra condoms), Yogi Pharmacy (Spy) and Amrutanjan Ltd. (Agni) with products sold over the counter (OTC).

It is estimated that this market is about Rs.30 crore at present. But it is growing at the frenetic pace of 25-30% per annum. Significantly, 65% of the sales are of ethically promoted products.

TTK Pharma, manufacturer of 'Big Boss', estimates that the real market — including the sales of *lehyams* by the

● by Venkatachari Jagannathan

unofficial sector — could be as high as Rs.250 crore. It is this potential which has forced all manufacturers to position their brands as sex stimulants rather than as energiser capsules, which was the approach of the pioneer brand, Thirty Plus.

Except for a few brands, like Fitovit, Revital, Biovital and Gintona which are promoted ethically, almost all others are sold over the counter (OTC) since that is where the money is. While ethically promoted drugs are sold for less than Rs.50/ter capsules (for instance, Fitovit — Aswagandha content 760 mg — is sold at Rs.44/ten capsules), OTC brands like Agni (Aswagandha content 100 mg), Nirvana (500 mg), Big Boss, Spy etc., are sold at Rs.100-140/10 capsules.

R.Kalyanaraman, Regional Manager, J.K. Ansell, says, "There is virtually no brand loyalty to these products. The demand is also irregular. Sales depend on the kind of push the retailer gives the brand and, hence, margins have to be high". According to him, the retailer's margin is around Rs.7 per capsule, accounting for the huge price differential between OTC and ethically-promoted herbal potency capsules.

Another striking difference between OTC and the doctor-prescribed brands is that the latter are largely Ginseng-based, while the former are Aswagandha-based. Though both are root extracts, Ginseng has a narcotic effect if taken regularly and is not recommended for children. On the other hand, Aswagandha is an adaptogenic and anti-stress drug which relieves anxiety in cases of psychogenic impotence and strengthens nerves, says Dr. Ajit, Director (Technical), Sowparnika Herbal. The other popular ingredient is Shilajit, an exudate of rocks from the Himalaya, said to contain rare minerals. Some brands claim exotic inputs like Pon Amber, found in the Baltic Islands.

The Indian Drug Review categorises these capsules as drugs for stressful condition/general tonic/restorative therapy during illness and convalescence! But many in the field disagree. And add that while Viagra may have side effects, herbal potency drugs have no adverse side effects.

across the City and in a few suburbs. The random sampling method was used to collect samples and these samples were tested at two major scientific institutions in Chennai, who responded to CONCERT's request for such help.

In the case of milk, sachets of milk from seven suppliers were tested at the King Institute's Food Analysis Laboratory and the good news is that all samples "conformed to standards prescribed". But the picture was just the opposite in the case of petrol and diesel.

Samples were drawn from 21 petrol and diesel outlets chosen at random from the 143 outlets in the City and suburbs.

The 19 petrol samples and 13 samples were coded and given to the Regional Sophisticated Instrumentation Centre of the

IIT, Chennai, for testing. The results were shocking. Every sample showed evidence of adulteration.

Two of the better known petrol bunkers in the city, both with good reputations, did not crop up in the random sample list produced by the computer. Samples from these two outlets were tested subsequently. Both petrol and diesel from these two outlets showed NO adulteration.

CONCERT plans to continue such surprise checking of other consumables. But, says R Desikan, Trustee, these checks can only publicise a problem. Consumer opinion will only build up if consumers can find out for themselves, whether their purchases are adulterated or not, by having easy and inexpensive access to testing.



Our OLD-and-NEW this fortnight is a complete departure from the usual. Indeed, it is on a story that has all the elements of the unusual.

When Harry Miller sent Madras Musings the pictures carried with this story, he had wondered whether we would be interested in an unusual story about people rather than on buildings and places. Harry never got around to writing the story after being invited to do so. But the brief note he had written about it to Musings has remained on file and provides the facts for today's story.

A few weeks back, the Madras Book Club held a meeting to remember Harry's work in fields as diverse as writing, photography, nature, astronomy, history and inspiring the young. One of the speakers referred to this story and Madras Musings fills in the rest of the gaps from these notes on file. Sadly, the story will not be as full of the human warmth Harry would have given it if only he had been able to write it.

THE OLD... & THE NEW

Harry's second book, *Climb, Boy, Climb*, was all about his days as a teenage midshipman aboard cargo vessels that steamed their way from England to U.S. and back during World War II. In it he mentions a voyage in July 1941 that ended in the US where he and his shipmates were entertained by American families in Maine on July 3rd and July 4th when they all celebrated American Independence at a lakeside picnic. His host's daughter, the teenage Jackie, was Harry's 'date' for both dance and picnic. And our OLD is of the two teenagers Harry and Jackie, taken in 1941.

Nothing unusual about all that. But the NEW did come about in quite fascinating circumstances. A friend of Harry's, an American with Madras connections, read this story in *Climb, Boy, Climb*, got an address out of Harry and promised to trace the 'girl'. She had left Maine, was traced to several other addresses and finally found living in retirement in Florida. And when Harry went to the U.S. in 1995, he decided to go and see her. And that was when the NEW was taken. "But she did not remember me at all," Harry plaintively ended his note to Musings.



NOSTALGIA

Memorable Kilpauk

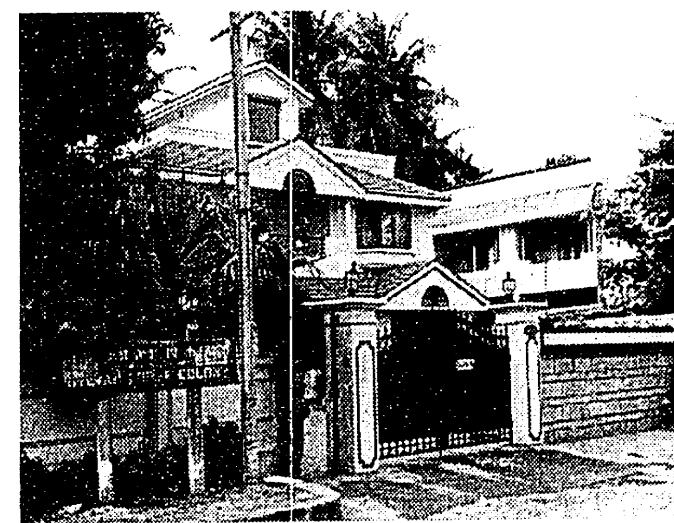
Once, I lived in Kilpauk. In those days it had the distinction of being quietest and loneliest location in all Chennai. Sparsely populated, with some ten well-formed roads and elegant bungalows in specious compounds amidst greenery of a variety of trees — mango, woodapple, guava, lemon and several others — it was peaceful and quiet. The dronish hooting early in the mornings and late in the evenings of the steam-driven trains passing nearby Chetput and the howling, now and then, of jackals around midnight from jungles on the outskirts, chilling the spines of young children like us were the only irritants to the pervading placidity. The daily boom of the gun from the ramparts of the Fort signalling four in the evening was another mild interruption.

About a dozen automobiles and ornate horse-driven carriages of the affluent, a few jukkas serving others and several bicycles constituted the entire traffic. Thanks to a bus service that was sporadic and uncertain, Kilpauk was immune from noise-pollution. The suburban electric train service started in the 30s and passing through Chetput was getting popular by the day. But the serenity and quiet elegance of Kilpauk deterred the growth of commerce and services. Not a single school was there, just one provision store, the TUCS, no vegetable shop, no restaurant, no theatre and, stranger still, not one temple, church or mosque except an Amman temple in the outskirts. Residents used to trek all the way for these services, to Purasawalkam and Egmore, our two bustling neighbours.

With so little activity, gloomy were the nights, with street lighting poor, provided by manually lit, oil-fired lamps mounted on ill-shaped wooden pole. A relief from the daily gloom was the newsdaily, *The Hindu*, then an evening of just four pages, reaching us in tail-end Kilpauk well into the dusk.

Quiet haven that it was, it inspired the top British officials to set up residence there. Soon thereafter followed the affluent locals.

Landon's Gardens (now the RBI Staff Quarters) was the abode of the British heavy-



Sylvan Lodge in Kilpauk is no more... but on its site and in its gardens has come up Sylvan Lodge Colony with houses like these.

Philatelic Bureau in theatre

(Continued from Page 1)

rectangles, triangles, circles etc, to draw attention to Mathematics.

There were stamps showing scientific experiments, inventors, application of science in various fields and health care. Biology featured animals, prehistoric animals, insects, medicinal plants, and flowers. History offered leaders like Churchill, Tippu Sultan, Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi and Annadurai. Geography featured maps and landscapes. There were stamps on Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism in the Religion section. Physical Training showed sporting activities. And Computer Sci-

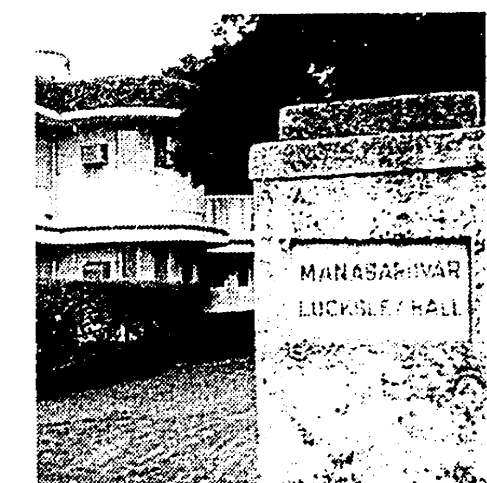
ence its application in satellite and space technology. Here was a commendable effort to make education interesting and fun.

Speaking to Madras Musings Mrs. Thomas said her interest in stamps started when her grandfather presented her his collection when she was 13 years old. Since then, she has been a dedicated collector, and today she has stamps from 330 of the 370 countries that have issued stamps. Her ambition is to catch up with the 40 countries that have eluded her so far.

The oldest stamp in her collection is an 1806 King Edward, and the earliest Indian stamp is



Locksley Hall (above), located behind a newer building close to the large property. To the left of these buildings has come up Breeze Hotel, in what were Locksley Hall acres.



weights. British businessmen lived elsewhere, in bungalows in different parts of Kilpauk. Vast land adjoining Landon's Garden's bungalows was brought by the early local settlers and became known as Landon's Gardens Colony. This colony was a lovely spot, made scenic by a circular tank at the centre with a large cluster of mango trees on one side. The absence of street-houses and with most of the roads having bungalows only on one side of the road created a spacious and elegant ambience.

Quiet haven that it was, it inspired the top British officials to set up residence there. Soon thereafter followed the affluent locals. Landon's Gardens (now the RBI Staff Quarters) was the abode of the British heavy-

just a few samples of English influence that dominated the area.

Kilpauk had another great distinction. The stretch of Poonamallee High Road, from the Western end up to the Kilpauk Police Station, was popularly known as the Harley Street of Madras, home as it was to many medical 'greats'. Dr. Guruswamy Mudaliar (a leader among physicians), Dr. Ranga Chari (a stalwart among surgeons and a legend) — both immortalised in statues adorning the two gates of the General Hospital — Dr. Arcot Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar, a gynaecologist of world renown and the first Indian Principal of the Madras Medical College, Dr. Pandalay, a stickler for medical ethics and discipline, were among those who shed medical lustre on this road. The Kilpauk Hospital for indigenous medicine, purveying the Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani systems at Hyde Park, and Dr. Rama Rao's X-ray clinic, the earliest of its kind in the city, were part of the medical culture on this road. The notional Harley Street ran beyond the Kilpauk Police Station, in fact upto the Tram Shed of yore, but this stretch belonged to Egmore. It used to be the boast of Kilpauk that if Mylapore had its legal giants, Kilpauk had its medical greats.

Several other well-known personalities made Poonamallee High Road their home. Sir Savlai Ramaswamy Mudaliar, a dubash and a philanthropist, P. Ananda Charlu, a President of the Indian National Congress in the early years, the Isphahanis of Iranian origin, prosperous businessmen who made Madras their home, two leading Gujarati families, Jumnadass Gokuldas (founders of the Vaishnava College) and the Khushaldas family, three Vaisya families living in three adjacent bungalows — the Soora and Calve families and the third the present owners of

the Ega Theatre — all lived in palatial bungalows on Poonamallee High Road. On Flowers Road and Barnaby Road, lived Ethirajulu Chetty (of the well-known Hoe & Co.) and the Naidu brothers of Harrison's, pioneers in catering. T.V. Seshagiri Iyer, a respected judge of the Madras High Court, lived on Taylor's Road which also housed Sir Samuel Ranganathan, a Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University and later Indian High Commissioner to the U.K. Also on Taylor's Road was a well-known Naidu family, the owners of Appah & Co., in those days a prominent medical stores in China Bazaar. A scion of this family was a member of Rajaji's Cabinet.

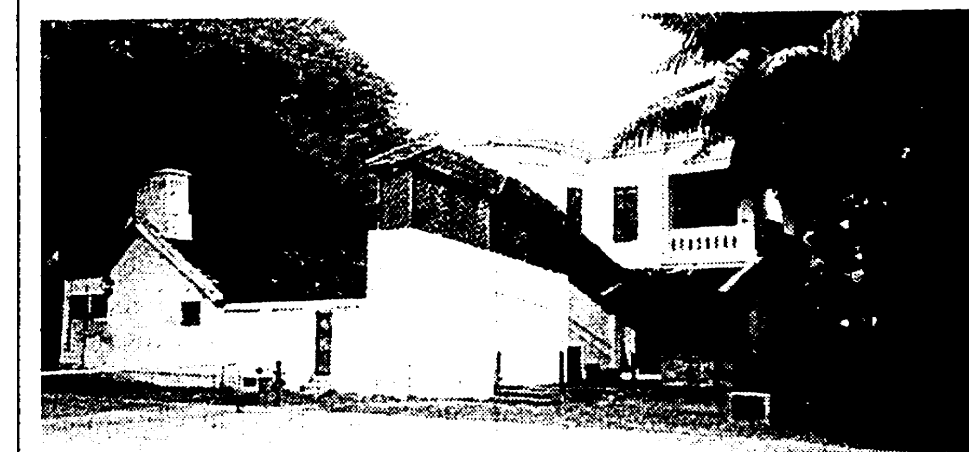
Barbican, a huge bungalow with a sprawling garden skirting Taylor's Road and Kilpauk Garden Road, was said to have been an East India Company bungalow. At the time I first discovered it, it was owned by the Zamindar of Chunampet, a colourful personality, simple in habits and who would often times be seen bare-chested, as he talked easily to the greatest personalities of the day.

A stern-looking Englishman who on his morning walks, wore a sun-top and held his walking stick upside down to allow him to hit at stones and pebbles with the curve of the stick, was Sir Ower Beasley, the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court. He lived in Landon's Garden bungalow.

T. Vasu Naidu, another dubash, a well-known cricketer, a spin bowler and a Presidency player, had different mannerisms. During his walks, he would keep rolling his right arm all the time with the left moving in unison. His spacious garden on Landon's Road had a cricket net and pitch where some of the great cricketers of the day practised. Vasu Naidu was not just a cricketer player and patron, he also pioneered the growth of the Landon's Garden Colony.

T.P. Rajalakshmi, possibly the first Brahmin woman to take to film-acting, lived on Rajarathnam Road. An actress in the top-bracket, she was the heroine of *Valli Thirumanam*. The picture, one of the earliest Tamil talkies, ran to crowded houses at Gaiety Theatre.

(To be concluded next fortnight)



Magdala, another of Kilpauk's old houses... this one retains all its quaintness of another age. (All photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Rajind N Christy

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Quizzin' with Ram'nan

(Quizmaster V.V.RAMA-NAN'S questions are from the fortnight November 16th to 30. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

1. Where was the recently concluded 20th French-African summit held?
2. Which Sri Lankan athlete will be seen in action at the Asian Games after she was cleared of drugs charges recently?
3. Name the American euthanasia pioneer who was recently charged with murder for helping a patient take his own life?
4. Who has been crowned Miss World 1998?
5. Which two trains were involved in the accident in the Punjab resulting in the death of more than 150 passengers?
6. Who won the world men's and women's junior world chess titles at Kozhikode recently?
7. Who has been sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Goa?
8. What were successfully used for the first time in six constituencies in Delhi and five in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in the recently concluded assembly elections?
9. Who is the first Asian to take over as the world president of The Textile Institute, Manchester?
10. What is the name of the newly constructed airport in the Palestinian town of Rafah in Southern Gaza?
11. Who has been awarded this year's Indira Gandhi prize for peace, disarmament and development?
12. Who became the first Swiss premier to visit India when he landed in Mumbai recently?
13. Which Chief Minister of an Indian State has been included in the 'dream cabinet' for 1998 put together by *World Link*, a magazine published by the World Economic Forum?
14. Which regiment of the Indian Army celebrating its 225th year of raising was presented the President's banner and a silver trumpet?
15. Name the comet whose show-ers of sparkling meteors, seen all over the world, were dubbed as the Leonid Showers.

16. Which Chennai-based hospital is joining key international centres for a study on retinoblastoma, a cancerous eye disease?
17. The centenary celebrations of which violin maestro are being held this year?
18. Which city hotel bagged the 1998 Days Inns 'International Hotel of the Year' award?
19. What is unique about the recently inaugurated Temple of Peace in the city?
20. Where in the city was the second reverse osmosis plant commissioned to supplement Chennai's water supply?

(Answers on this page)

People in focus

Tales of Banaras

Banaras is a photographer's delight... but can also be a nightmare if you go unprepared, says T.S. Nagarajan, one of India's best known photographers who is exhibiting at Manasthala till the 19th.

My first encounter with Banaras was in the mid-sixties. It was an unforgettable one. Banaras was everything I had expected. I wanted to capture every situation that moved and impressed me... be it grotesque and forbidding or peaceful and enchanting. But to photograph Banaras is no mean task.

I remember the day my wife Meenakshi and I were at the Durga Temple, fascinated by scores of monkeys that were fleeing in and out of it. Meenakshi was standing a few feet away watching me trying to focus on a particularly beautiful architectural element of the temple. Suddenly, I heard a scuffle behind me and turned around, I was horrified to see two monkeys tugging at her saree, while one was perched on her shoulder trying to snatch the camera bag from her. She stood there motionless, choked with fear and helplessness, too frightened even to scream.

Four generations of dentists

In the Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani systems of medicine it is common to find vaidas and Hakims practising their professions over generations. One of the few such cases among practitioners of Allopathic medicine is a remarkable family of Dentists, the Fernandeses of Vepery.

Dr. Joseph Fernandes, the son of advocate from Mangalore, was the first to come to Madras. He set up his dental practise in Broadway and became very successful. He made allowances for the weaker sections, of society, yet never fleeced the well-to-do. This principle is followed by his descendants even today.

The surgery was later shifted to the front portion of a sprawling bungalow in Perambur Barracks Road, which, at the time, was not the traffic snarl, that it is now. The near portion was the residence of the family. With its spacious green garden, where we could find cats, dogs, a stray goat, fowls and turkeys at Christmas time, the place gave join the feeling of entering a farm. Here, Dr.

I stood there aghast, trying desperately to think of how to save her from this predicament without aggravating the situation. Fortunately, one of the priests of the temple, seeing the situation, deliberately dropped a metal container on the floor. The loud noise unnerved the monkeys and they bolted from the scene. And we breathed again.

The priest later told us that the safest thing to do when attacked by monkeys (which incidentally is quite common) is to distract them with a loud noise, and they will leave you alone. And if you wish to photograph them, wield a stick in addition to the camera. While they are curious about the camera, they prefer to stay away from the stick.

Years later, I too was made a monkey of. I had stopped for a cup of tea on the ghats and had kept my camera beside me. Before I could say 'Hello', a monkey had made off with my camera and clambered up to the top of one of the temples. Would he leave it on the wall, walk away or drop it into the holy Ganges? I waited with bated breath. He looked me straight in the eye and after

Harry Fernandes took over from Joseph Fernandes.

His air of bon homie, his terrific sense of humour and his anecdotes galore made Dr. Harry very popular with his patients. Particularly as he was fluent in all the languages spoken in Madras. Though his mother tongue happened to be Kankani.

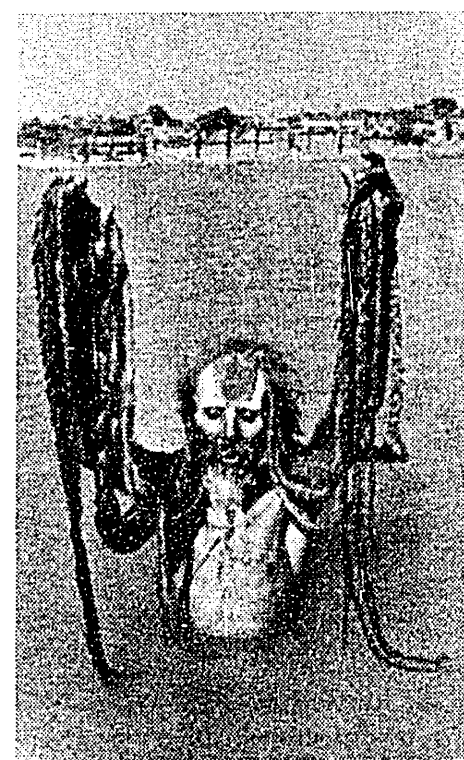
The surgery later moved into a new building constructed in the open space in front of the old bungalow.

The third generation, Dr. Frank Fernandes, a conscientious doctor now runs the surgery and patients from all walks of life dallor in his reception room.

His son, Deepak Fernandes, has his clinic and surgery in the same building. He has his own patients, and you can hear him too speaking in several languages with ease.

May this wonderful family of dentists increase to serve generations to come.

S. Rajagopal (Mrs)



On the banks of the Ganga... with T.S. Nagarajan's camera

serious deliberation, walked away, leaving the camera behind. The lesson is, never leave anything unattended. There is always someone interested in your belongings and not necessarily a monkey.

Few photographers in India have done as well in black and white, as Nagarajan has. On the banks of the Ganga' is evidence of that splendid work.

Recalling capturing these evocative pictures, Nagarajan writes:

'Over the years Banaras has become my favourite haunt. And the best pictures there happen at dawn.

The dawn over the river is poetic. Planning to shoot birds in flight, I took up position one morning on the ghat. I threw a handful of grains and called the birds the way the bathers do. So far so good. But the pigeons did not respond — they passed up the first course, the second and the third. Disappointed, mystified, I wondered what my next move should be. Then I saw the birds flying towards an old man. He gave them their feed and they returned for a second helping. Why had they turned away from me? The old man explained: "I have been following this ritual for over 30 years. The birds know me and wait for me. I bring them their favourite feed — pulses. They love Bengal gram. They're off the wheat you offered," he observed.

Photography is officially prohibited on the ghats. In all these years I have never been stopped for taking pictures. Candid shots? Be discreet, use a zoom and try not to catch your subject's eye. If you are caught clicking, the best thing to do is own up and you will often end up shaking hands.'

(Courtesy: The Manasthala Newsletter)

Himalayan expedition that was different

'Real Men Don't Pick Peonies' (On an Alpine-style Ascent) by 22 year-old Sirish Rao and illustrated by Rathna Ramanathan, is an unusual novel for adults and inaugurates a new genre in contemporary Indian writing in English. The book is about a Himalayan expedition from a rare non-Western point of view.

Real Men Don't Pick Peonies combines adventure with a lyrical feel for nature and a quirky sense of character and situation. Says Rao:

'Two years ago, I was on an expedition to a 6,000 metre peak in the western Himalayas. We were a strange bunch of people. The experience really changed me, and I came back with a different feel of the mountains.'

'It also left me with a lot of questions — about myself, other people, the mountains and the way climbers related to them. I started reading stuff written by early Himalayan explorers, before the sport became a macho thing, and what they said made sense to me.

'My novel *Real Men...* is not just about climbing. It is also about the way I saw people and situations, the things I recorded, things I puzzled over, and the choices I had to think about.'

In conjunction with the launch of *Real Men Don't Pick Peonies*, there will be an exhibition at the British Council dedicated to the memory of Frank Smythe, an early British Himalayan explorer, writer, photographer and botanist.

To *All Who Enjoy the Hills*, by Tara Publishing, is a tribute to the pioneering spirit of Frank Smythe, an explorer best remembered for his discovery in the 1930's of the stunning Bhyunder valley, which he called the Valley of Flowers.

To Smythe, mountaineering was a means to an inner journey, which he recreated in lyrical prose and through evocative photography. Sirish Rao's book echoes the same passion.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Paris; 2. Susanthika Jayasinghe; 3. Dr. Jack Kevoorkian; 4. Linor Abargol; 5. Sealdah Express and Frontier Golden Temple Mail; 6. IM Darmen Sadvaksov and Women's GM Hoang Thanh Trang; 7. Luizinho Falerio; 8. Electronic voting machines; 9. Dr. Jayavarthanavelu of Coimbatore; 10. Ararat International Airport;
11. Mohamed Yunus; 12. Flavio Cotti; 13. Chandrababu Naidu; 14. The President's Bodyguard; 15. Temple Tuttle.
16. Shankara Netralaya; 17. Kumbakonam Rajamanicam Pillai; 18. GRT Grand Days; 19. It is unique as it has no idol and light is worshipped instead; 20. Velacherry.

• As the Music Season begins, a look at...

The artist of attire

He is the busiest and most sought after dressmaker for dancers in the contemporary Bharata Natyam scene in Chennai.

His work spot is a small unassuming shop in a row of similar shops at 5 Bharatidasan Road (SIET College Road). Though small (15' x 10'), it is airconditioned.

As we enter the shop, we hear the sounds of rapid pedalling of machines and the whirring of wheels — sartorial music as it were. They draw our attention to the attic where men are at work. A small three-foot step ladder leads to them. Sitting on the floor before a foot-high cutting board and tacking a newly cut blouse is the owner, master tailor Aiyvelu.

He asks us to take a seat. There are no chairs, but small folding seats for customers and visitors are fixed to the wall; these have no arms or backrests. We wait for him to finish the tacking, and then he invites us to the trial room, a small cubicle behind a four-foot partition with a door. A big mirror is fixed on the wall and there is a ceiling fan. The trial room also has the same seating arrangement as in the front working space. Aiyvelu sits on the floor and talks to us.

His signboard reads D.S. Aiyvelu. He explains the initials — 'D' for Devaraj, his father's name, and 'S' for Sanjeevi, his personal name. In his family, everyone calls him Sanjeevi. Now about 69, he started his career as a tailor some 52 years ago. He was 21 when he moved to Madras from Olakur, near Vishnupuram, in North Arcot district. His maternal uncle, Narayanaswami, a tailor in Triplicane, initiated him into the trade.

Ambedkar, Das and Chellam Pillai were the leading dance dressmakers of Madras at the time. While Ambedkar was employed in the costume department of Gemini Studios, Das had his own establishment in Mylapore, which he called Ranjani Tailors after his daughter. Chellam Pillai was with Amarjyoti Tailors, Luz. All three were experts in making dance costumes, but Ambedkar concentrated on cinema dresses. Aiyvelu joined Ambedkar and learned all the techniques of the trade during the three years he spent at Gemini Studios. In 1950, he started out on his own, but when Vyjayantimala founded Bharata Natyam — her academy for Bharata Natyam — in the late Fifties, she asked him to work for her. Aiyvelu remained with



The shop of D.S. Aiyvelu, master tailor, with its invitation asking you to "admire kits industrious". He's tailor to most of the leading Bharata Natyam dancers of Chennai. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

her school for the next 10 to 12 years. During that period, Vyjayantimala gave several solo dance recitals, trained many students and choreographed many dance-dramas. For all these events, Aiyvelu was the costume-maker and was given due credit.

In the early Sixties, Aiyvelu left Vyjayantimala and established his own business and started stitching costumes for several front-ranking dancers like Srividya, Hemamalini, Padma Subrahmanyam, Sudharani Raghupathy and Swarnamukhi, to name a few. He did not confine himself to Bharata Natyam costumes alone. He also stitched costumes for Kuchipudi dancers like Sobha Naidu (when she was with Chinna Satyam), Bala Kondala Rao and Manju Bhargavi. He made costumes for Sanjukta Panigrahi (Odissi) and later for Alamel Valli and Malavika Sarukkai. He stitched a few Kathak dresses also, but that was quite some time ago. Now, he says, the demand is not much for costumes for other forms of dance.

In his early years, Aiyvelu the costumer was not only cutter, tacker and tailor but also selector of dress materials. In those days it was necessary for him to guide both the young dancers and their parents in choosing the right fabric. Nowadays, most of his regular clients have a good aesthetic sense and choose tasteful fabrics for the costumes to be made by him.

The cutting of a costume takes two hours and then he has to tack the pieces. These two chores are personally done by Aiyvelu. The sewing is left to his machine men. Aiyvelu has six sewing machines, three in the main shop, the rest in a branch in an adjoining street. He has a woman assistant who is learning the job. Though he has a son and a daughter, they have not been initiated into this trade. His long-standing clients say he is a perfectionist



Till December 19: 'On the Banks of the Ganga at Banaras (30 years ago)' — An exhibition of black and white photographs by T.S. Nagarajan (at Manasthala, Cenotaph Road, 10 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. daily)

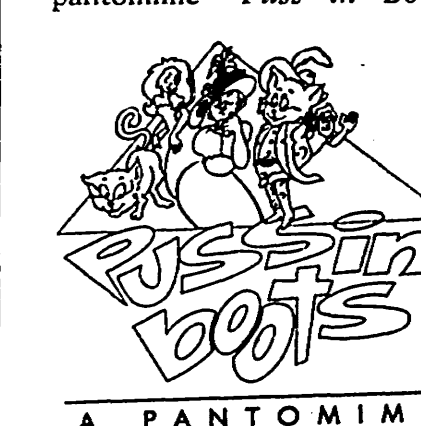
Till December 30: Tamara Malmstrom exhibits her works on canvas and paper (at Artworld)

Till January 9th: Oil paintings by Alphonso Doss, former Principal of the Madras College of Arts & Crafts. (At the Easel)

December 20: Bharata Natyam by Vyjayantimala Bai (at Narada Gana Sabha, 8 p.m.)

December 19 and 20: 'Objects & Spaces' — Baroda. The work of young artists from the Faculty of Fine Arts at MS University, Baroda. Teachers in Baroda introduced the narrative style and this group has taken the concept further, creating stories about objects and spaces. (Apparao Galleries.)

December 19, 20 and 21: The Little Theatre presents its annual pantomime *Puss in Boots*.



A PANTOMIME

costumes of their choice because he does not want to hurt their budding fancies.

But for his sophisticated senior clients, he is a creative costumer. (Courtesy: Sruiti).

Dr. Arudra*

(Next fortnight Aiyvelu talks about the art of costume making).

* This article was written shortly before Dr. Arudra died.

Directed by Mithran Devanesan, co-directed by S Krishnakumar, scripted and produced by Aysha Rao, costumes designed by Megan Uley, choreography by Jeffrey Vardon and music and lights by Mithran Devanesan.

To fund creative workshops for underprivileged children (At the Museum Theatre, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.)

December 21: *Real Men Don't Pick Peonies*, published by Tara Publishing, Chennai, will be launched with the author, Sirish Rao, reading excerpts. (At the British Council, 6.30 p.m.)

December 22 and 23: *To All Who Enjoy the Hills*: This exhibition, dedicated to the memory of a British climber of the 1930s, Robin Smythe, is a remarkable collection of rare material: Smythe's own photographs, extracts from his writings, contemporary photographs of the Himalaya, installations and maps.

December 23: Dance drama on Lord Ganesha by Anita Ratnam (Narada Gana Sabha, 8 p.m.)

December 25: The Manallapuram dance festival, all weekends till end January. For details: Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corpn.

December 26: The Sikkil sisters, playing the flute, Camatic style. (Music Academy).

December 28: Mandolin Srinivas & Rajesh (Narada Gana Sabha)

December 30: Bharata Natyam by Malavika Sarukkai (Narada Gana Sabha).

January 2 - 10: Haku Shah the artist and Haku Shah the authority on the tribal arts of Gujarat are the same person. The simple folk and tribal forms he has worked with are reflected in the simplistic honest approach to his paintings on exhibition. (At Apparao Galleries)

• *Major sports promoter's appeal:*

Wanted: a home

One of the pioneer organisers of Indian sport is looking for a new home. The South Indian Athletic Association [SIAA] founded in 1901, and now functioning from the Victoria Public Hall [VPH], finds itself in a tight situation as its tenancy in the VPH draws to a close.

Speaking to *Madras Musings*, the Chairman of the SIAA, P.M.B. Sundaram, said the VPH Trust had requested vacant possession. The SIA, for its part, had asked the VPH to allot the vacant site adjacent to Chennapuri Andhra Maha Sabha to put up a building and continue its sport promotion activities. It has also appealed to the Corporation of Chennai to allot it the Nehru Park where it promises to raise a home for its activities. It hopes it will be able to celebrate its centenary in a place of its own.

Few organisations in India promote sports as actively as the SIAA. To promote sports in South India, it today organises various tournaments: Billiards and Snooker [*Abdul Karim Rolling Trophy* and *Jeelani Rolling Trophy*], Ball Badminton [*Jamal Gold Cup*], Carrom [*R.S. Cunnian Trophy*], Chess [*The Rani of Jatprole Cup*], Football [*Jatprole Cup*], Hockey [*Viscount Willingdon Rolling Cup*], Tennis [*Rajah of Kolanka Cup*, *Rajah of Chettinad Cup*, *Rajah of Pithapuram Cup*], Table Tennis [*Mandharam Cup*] and Volleyball [*Narayanan Chetty*

Cup]. The SIAA's cricket team plays in the TNCA League.

The SIAA once had its own premises the 'Moore Pavillion', behind the Nehru Stadium. The foundation stone for it was laid on December 16, 1902 by the then Commission, Corporation of Madras, Lt. Col Sir George Moore. He was the first President of the Association. The building named after him had a well-laid out lawn and a lush green ground, in a 28 ground compound. The two-storied pavillion was built at a cost of Rs. 37,000.

The Railways acquired the pavillion and the ground as a part of its extension programme in 1977 and the SIAA was forced to rent space from the VPH. Today the pavillion is used as a godown-cum-office of the Senior District Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Microwave [Construction]. The lawns and the ornamental pillars with SIAA engraved on them lie amidst greenery running wild. A part of the ground is a garbage dump.

The SIAA was the first promoter of Indian boxing and in 1903 organised the first boxing tournament in the country in which there was Indian participation. Thereafter it played host to many a boxing tournaments, Wrestling and fencing matches were also organised by the SIAA.

The first football league in the city was kicked off in 1902-03, SIAA organising it. An open knock-out tournament

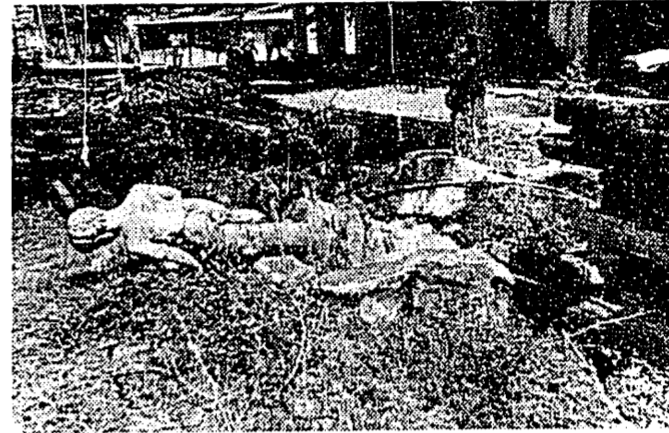


was held in 1904-05. In 1924 the Rajah of Jatprole Football Tournament was organised for annual competition.

Billiards had been popular in the Association from its inception. In 1903, John Roberts, the world champion, played three matches at the association, losing to one Hunt, a member of the SIAA. The All India Amateur Billiards Tournament was started in 1904 and won by Norman Simson of the Madras Cyclist Club. The Association has the distinction of winning the first city league tournament in Billiards and Snooker, organised by the Madras Billiards Association in 1949.

The SIAA first conducted a cricket tournament in 1909. In 1933, the SIAA participated in the Madras Cricket Association league for the first time. SIAA members C.K. Nainakannu, M.S. Gopal, P. Janarthanam, P. Nagalingam and A.G. Ram Singh played for the Indian Cricket Federation against D.R. Jardine's MCC team in 1934. The high point of cricket came in 1936 when the SIAA reached the final of the Buchi Babu Memorial cricket tournament; it lost.

The Association had two tennis courts and to popularise the game, non-members were allowed to use the tennis courts



What's left of the Moore Pavilion, a derelict with its railings broken and much of its ornamentation lying as rubble in the jungle its lawns have become. (Pictures by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

on a monthly subscription of one rupee. An open tournament was conducted for the first time in 1906 and became an annual feature. In 1918, a markers tournament was started with a challenge cup presented by Raja Murali Krishna Rao Bahadur, a member of the association.

The SIAA organised an open hockey tournament in 1922. In 1925, the Rajah of Sivaganga presented a rolling cup, *The Viscount Willingdon Rolling Cup*. The SIAA won the trophy in 1931. The SIAA introduced the first Olympic Hockey team to the city, when it arranged two exhibition matches prior to the team's participation at the Amsterdam Olympics in 1928. A ladies' hockey tournament was started in 1939 for the *Shipneck Trophy* presented by Sea Gulls Association.

Table Tennis was started in 1923 and an open tournament for the Mandharam Cup was instituted in 1933. In 1929,

Haje Mohamed Jamal Ibrahim Sahib Bahadur presented a Gold Rolling cup for the Association's first Ball Badminton championship. Volley ball tournaments commenced from 1934. In 1940, the upper storey of the pavillion was converted to a badminton court. Chess and carrom were started in 1951.

In 1901, the SIAA was entrusted with the task of organising the annual park fair and carnival of sports. This it did till 1977. The fair drew big crowds to watch the *rekla* races (horse-and-open-buggy contests), a famed feature of the Fair.

The first Indian President of the SIAA was Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer in 1924. In the Association's first year, it had nine life members and 69 ordinary members. Today, it has about 440 members. They are members now in search of a permanent home.

Rajind N. Christy

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