

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

INSIDE

- No Government interference
- Ah, for an Ambi
- Indian ophiology's history
- Bharata Natyam's revival
- The golf that cheers

Vol. VIII No. 23

FREE ISSUE

March 16-31, 1999

Who will save Senate House?

(By A Special Correspondent)

The focus was meant to be on the Heritage of Chennai. The focus was, in fact, much greater on the University of Madras's *Senate House*. There was hardly any one who visited INTACH's 'Heritage of Chennai' who did not wonder at the end of his/her visit when the splendour of this magnificent building would be restored. There was, unfortunately, no one who could give them an answer. In fact, the word on the campus appeared to be that even the faint winds of hope that had recently been stirred had died down.

Speaking to visitors, many of them potential donors and several of them persons who had received their degrees in this building when it glowed with a special cathedral-like aura, this correspondent came

away with certain very distinct impressions. They were, ONE, if donations are to be received for the restoration, they must go into a separate *Senate House* account for use only on the restoration and subsequent maintenance; they should not become a part of the University's general account, as in the past.

TWO, monies subscribed earlier for *Senate House* restoration should also go into that account after a statement of receipts is drawn up and satisfies the Committee!

THREE, disbursement of monies from such a fund must be by an official appointed for the purpose by the Senate House Restoration Committee, who must act according to restoration norms and not Governmen-

tal norms. It has to be realised that specialised skills for such work — for instance, old-style masonry — cannot be valued at the going PWD rates today. It has to be accepted that restoration will be costlier than building anew. Rates therefore will have to be fixed by an expert committee and negotiated with the tenderers, after which disbursement of monies will be only a formality.

FOUR, the Senate House Restoration Committee will have to continue as a permanent body even after the restoration to ensure maintenance and proper use of the building. In fact, *Senate House* after restoration should be treated separately from the University and
(Continued on Page 7)



Before the hoardings were removed... and after. Clipping the branches does little to show off the handsome building and what is needed in such cases is more imaginative horticulture which will have trees that enhance the building yet provide shade. (Photographs courtesy the writer of the accompanying letter.)



A bouquet to the Corporation

We have become used to constantly blaming the poor Corporation of Chennai — literally poor — as the funds

needed to keep such a large city of ours are wanting. But here is one instance where the Corporation acted.

One of the problems we face is the problem of hoardings being erected in unbelievable places. I pointed out one such instance to the Mayor and Commissioner of the Corporation by sending them faxes regarding two hoardings that had come up bang opposite our beautiful National Art Gallery.

In no time at all I got a letter acknowledging my faxes and informing me that my complaint was being looked into.

Imagine my surprise when one morning I saw that the two hoardings had been cut down and removed!! The Corporation staff had also taken the trouble to trim a few branches of the trees that were obstructing the view of the building, which made me all the more happy.

I send you two photographs of the scene 'Before and After'. The 'After' photograph is not really as beautiful as it should be but it does indicate how clean and beautiful the place looks after removal of the hoardings.

Samuel J Prabhakar
8, II Cross St, Mahalakshmi Ngr
Adambakkam, Chennai 600088.

Nuclear safety institute none too soon

A Safety Research Institute (SRI) has been set up by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) at Kalpakkam, the second such institute in the world after France's regulatory authority.

The SRI's main objective will be to conduct and promote safety-related research and analysis in areas relevant to regulatory decision-making. Its first academic activity will be a workshop on gamma ray shielding.

"A large number of safety related codes are being used by designers, operators and regulators. It is essential to build up a library of such codes. Validation of codes, establishment of benchmark problems, development of user friendly interfaces and training of personnel will be important activities of this group," said the Atomic Energy

Commission (AEC) Chairman R Chidambaram, while laying foundation stone for the SRI.

Placid Rodriguez, Chairman of the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), said that Kalpakkam was the right place for the Institute, as

from breeder reactors in the next two years, according to Dr Rodriguez.

It has officially stated at the function that two 220 MW atomic power projects — Kaiga-I in Karnataka and RAPS-III in Kota, Rajasthan

● by A Special Correspondent

all three stages of the country's nuclear power programme were being implemented there and, therefore, provided the best material for research and development. The three stages include Uranium-233 (Kamini), U-235 (MAPS), and U-239 (FBTR). Meanwhile, a Lead Mini Plant was getting ready at Kalpakkam. This would be cold commissioned in June and hot commissioned in December, paving the way

— would go critical in July, while two more 220 MW units — Kaiga-II and RAPS-IV — would go critical by the year end. With this, the total atomic power generation in India would go up by 880 MW and the installed capacity of nuclear power at present is 2.5 per cent. He expressed the hope that by 2020, another two per cent would be added, taking the capacity from 8000 MW to 9000 MW.

A matter of concern, however, is that by 2020 there would be a coal crunch and a transport crunch, affecting conventional power generation, Dr Chidambaram indicated. But Government appears to be preparing for it, budget allocation for nuclear power projects going from Rs.170 crore to Rs.900 crore from 1993 to 1998. Dr Chidambaram also told reporters that the Centre had sanctioned the simultaneous construction of two 500 MW units in Tarapur, on which work began in October.

With such nuclear power growth, the SRI would certainly be necessary. But would it be looking into environmental issues — like what would happen to fish along the Coromandel Coast?



In 1948 a great event took place in Madras, affecting the private lives of many, including in particular that of the GOLFER. I refer of course to the introduction of PROHIBITION in the State of Madras. The Secretary of the Bangalore Golf Club wrote to his opposite number in Madras, that it would be quite impossible for him to raise a team for their Annual Match in Madras, if their players — in that hottest of climates — were to be denied the opportunity of quenching their thirst in a proper manner.

He suggested, therefore, that instead of the usual home and away fixture for the Inter Club Challenge Cup, played for every year since 1872, with the exception of the two periods of war 1914-18 and 1940-45, that both fixtures be held in Bangalore, a land at that time still flowing with milk and honey, and where there was no Prohibition Act in force. That on one of these occasions The Madras Gymkhana Club would act as Host Club and on the other Bangalore Golf Club.

Madras, although too happy to be able to visit Bangalore twice a year, were not over-enamoured by the idea as it would mean the loss of a time-honoured fixture in January and with all the social activity that was associated with it. It was then that I offered to raise a team selected from

Upcountry players, fully equipped with 'Liquor Permits', which could in case of need take the place of the annual visit by Bangalore.

In actual fact the occasion never arose. We managed to persuade Bangalore to give it a trial and make one more visit, under what might be described as 'under prohibition rules'. In

those early days permits were restricted to the Club a member was registered with, they were not inter-changeable, while temporary permits for non-residents were a thing of the future: we promised however to do the best for our guests. Entertainment was therefore out of the 'Hip Flask' or in private Bungalows. Bangalore loved it. The cheapest trip they had ever experienced. Not one could sign a chit! The question of the transfer of this fixture to Bangalore was shelved sine die. The subject was never broached again. Later, of course, rules were devised by the Prohibition Authorities to cover the issue of temporary permits to those members of visiting teams entitled to receive them.

It appeared therefore that my early endeavours were to be entirely wasted. Then from this background came the idea of forming a South Indian Golfing Society, and so the seeds for the formation of the ADDICTS GOLFING SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN INDIA were formed, and the Society came into being in June 1949. The name of the Society was quite appropriate to the background from which it was created, while of course all were 'Golfing Addicts'. The crest we chose from an actual palm tree, which used to lean somewhat drunkenly by the fairway of the

4th hole (now the 3rd) at Guindy. The colours 'Green on a Desert background' faithfully described the Guindy Golf Course for nine months in the year.

What was originally started 'in a lighter vein' is now an important institution in the South Indian Golfing World. Annual Meetings are held in Bangalore, the Nilgiris and Kodaikanal as well as at the Society's headquarters in Madras, while the Society owns some very fine trophies, headed by the Johnnie Walker Vase, and the Players Bowl, which are competed for at our various meetings. A small section continues to be run in England, where those retired from India and anyone on home leave meet 3 times a year — for the Spring and Autumn Meetings at Piltown, and our main two-day meeting in the Summer at Seaford Gold Club, East Blachington. It rather looks however as if the days for this small section are numbered. The average age of competitors must now be well over 60, and we cannot expect many recruits to swell our ranks from India these days.'

So ran a letter F C Paterson (Fat Pat) wrote on 15.1.71 to the Addicts Golfing Society that was thriving in Madras. Recalling the founding on its 50th Anniversary, K.R.N. Menon writes:

Prohibition was introduced in Madras State; by the Congress. Sometime in 1948, while sipping a cup of tea in office with his colleague, K.S. Vaidyanathan, R. C. Paterson (Fat Pat), was filling out his application form for a Liquor Permit. The Prohibition Act allowed self-confessed addicts, i.e. those partial to liquor, to be given permits for consumption of otherwise banned booze. At the time, this required a declaration by the applicant that he was an addict, which, as can be imagined, was not something an honest social



Our Founder, R.C. Paterson (FAT PAT to his friends), sporting the Addicts tie

ADDICTS SONG

*I'm a Member of the Addicts
And Golf is my Game,
I cannot chip, I cannot putt
But I play it just the same.*

*I play not for the glory,
I play not for the Cup,
I play for what's inside it,
I hope there'll be enough.*

drinker could comfortably accept. For the Westerner, a drink or two taken socially, was not to be considered an addiction, and Fat Pat rather resented having to declare himself an Addict. However, he and other applicants had no choice, if they wanted their customary *chota peg*.

Fat Pat, as he filled in the form, mused that he was as much addicted to golf as he was supposed to be to alcohol. Golf would also not be the same convivial sport, if the 19th hole was restricted to *nimbu pani*. Why not, then, all those who had to declare themselves, under the Prohibition Law, to be Liquor Addicts, form a Society of Golfers addicted to the Royal & Ancient Game. Thus was born the Addicts Golfing Society of Southern India.

The Founder Members were: R C Paterson (Paterson

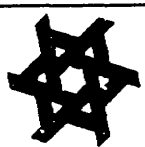
& Co., Stock Brokers); L.D. Miller (King & Partridge); W.P. Blakesley (Thomas Cook & Son); A.B. Spencer (Peermade Tea Co., Travancore); T.B. Lawrence and J. Jackson (Kanan Devan Tea Co., Munnar).

Fat Pat was born in Bromley in Kent in the United Kingdom, schooled at Uppingham Public School, came out to India in 1926 — and settled in Madras. He started out as an Assistant in a firm of brokers, M/s. Hewson & Tod, and later, in 1935, founded Paterson & Co. He retired in 1960 as Chairman of Consolidated Coffee Ltd. He remained the quintessential bachelor, wedded to golf and the good things of life till he died in 1985.

(To be concluded)

(Excerpts courtesy: *The Addicts' Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1999*)

Madras Musings is supported as a public service by the following organisations:



Amalgamations Group

APCOM
Apcom Computers Ltd.

HongkongBank
The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited
Member HSBC Group



Sundaram Finance
Limited



Ashok Leyland

INDIA
CEMENTS
LTD.



Spencer &
Co. Ltd



A V Thomas
& Co. Ltd.

KASTURI &
SONS
LTD.



Sundram Fasteners
Limited



Bank of Madura Ltd.



The KCP
Group



The Taj Group
of Hotels



Murugappa
Group



Thiru Arooran
Sugars Ltd



Pond's



Rane Group

TVS-SUZUKI

TVS Suzuki
Ltd.

EIH ASSOCIATED
HOTELS LTD.

HDFC

Housing Development
Finance Corpn. Ltd.

SANMAR

The Sanmar Group



Park Sheraton
Hotel & Towers