R.N. 53640/91

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

THE RESERVE TO THE PARTY OF THE

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 **L** 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?

No Government interference, please!

o Government inter- for "the rehabilitation and recla-ference and we'll create a mation of Chennai's waterways". Singapore here in 20 years, a bureaucrat said at the summing up debates that marked the end of the week-long University of Madras-University of Waterloo workshop that The Man From Madras Musings referred to at some length last fortnight (MM, March 1st). While waiting for the final conclusions from Martin Bunch and Dr. Subbiah — due likely in April — MMM this fortnight records a few more such words of wisdom offered on that last day of debating the Cooum in the University. In continuation of the 'no

interference Government thought' it was stressed that only an independent Chennai Waterways Authority would be able to implement the many solutions local bureaucrats and engineers have for revitalising the waterways of the City. It appeared that there was local knowhow to generate wealth out of the effluents in the waterways, there was knowhow to grow teak on both banks of the Cooum and the Advar and make the venture a success, and there was knowhow on a herb that would depollute the Cooum.

But the general impression both MMM and the organisers got from the deliberations was the fear of 'the biggest polluters' of the waterways, the slums along their was only to remove the effluents added to the waterways of Chennai by built-houses; there the blueprint is prepared, Governwas money earmarked for that. was to pay for removal of their effluents, he wanted to know.

Such issues arose because all the agencies involved were disconnected. A waterways Authority would solve the problem of coordination and would face minimal governmental interference. many felt. To help such an Authority and other bodies connected with improving civic amenities, a Geographical Information System (GIS) is vital. The CMDA, teaming with Anna University, had done an experimental System for one area of the City; when, wonders MMM, is the GIS for the rest of the City to be completed?

The Govt. way

While this show of confidence in local knowhow was being exhibited in the portals of the University of Madras and while many other suggestions for better waterways in Chennai were being aired and debated, Government appeared to be going its own way to find a solution for the whole issue for which it had earmarked over Rs.300 crore. While already sitting on three or four reports by major names in the U.K. and while having access to a plethora of local suggestions, not the least being the findings of the Madras-Waterloo workshops, it has now decided to seek a new blueprint new thinking.

What strikes The Man From Madras Musings as amazing about Government's latest exercise is the felt need for an outside agency to evaluate the offers made by a dozen Ams to prepare such blueprints and the bid documents to go with them. This may be meant as an indicator of transparency, objectivity or competent judgement, but MMM sees it only as an indication of Government's belief that it has NO people in government service in whom it has faith and whose competence it can trust. Is there any reason to believe that the advisory service chosen, no doubt at a handsome fee, is any more competent to judge what is needed for the waterways of Chennai than officials who've known these waterways for years? MMM finds that hard to accept.

MMM hears that some of the fundamental issues in formulating the blueprints that Government seeks are keeping the mouths of the Adyar and Cooum clear of sandbars, desilting the waterways, beautification of the riverbanks, making the waterways commercially viable, keeping them free of sewage and, no doubt, free of slums. Many of these issues deserve public debate, even more wideranging than the small Madras-Waterloo Universities' effort, for the advisors to be even aware of what there is to evaluate and how banks. One official pointed out the evaluation needs to be done. that Government felt that its duty But there has been no public debate at all.

ment will look for private sector But not for slums, as they were participation in the implementaconsidered encroachments. Who tion. That sector must demand a tive to the whole issue. But what positive view on these issues and public debate on something it has not been consulted about nor on which citizens' views have been sought. Only a couple of weeks ago, Madras Musings published a major feature on how the Chambers of the City stopped a rail service being built along the Marina. At that time, the Madras Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Govern-

MMM understands that once

THE CHAMBER WOULD RE-SPECTFULLY URGE THAT IN MATTERS OF SUCH IMPOR-TANCE AN OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE TAKEN OF ASCER-TAINING PUBLIC OPINION AT AN EARLY STAGE. MMM respectfully urges the

Chambers of the City to make such a request again to Government and have the whole issue discussed, among at least the officials, the Chambers and the City's leading NGOs involved with slums, environment and heritage, in order to give the proposed advisory service a chance to better understand the issues involved. By not doing so, we well have the opportunity of another situation like the one that resulted in the Metro being built in the middle of the Buckingham Canal in one stretch to the later discomfort of the public! Will the Chambers rise to the occasion and see that they have a civic role to play as well, not merely a business role? MMM looks forward to that

Big Brother

India as the Big Brother of the South Asian region has not exactly been the favourite of any of the nations in the area The Man From Madras Musings has known for decades through his travels in some of these countries and his meetings with representatives of the others. But now the Big Brother who is no one's favourite seems to be on course to becoming the Ugly Indian. The Ugly American was the good guy, but the phrase passed into the language to mean the big, bad American. Now we seem to be getting ready for the Indian to be looked at in the same way in South Asia.

MMM may be stepping beyond his bounds in discussing the subject of the Indo-Sri Lanka trade pact that is in danger of being consigned to the same place where the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord is, this time because Big Brother is the one inclined to treat it as just another scrap of paper. But MMM only a trade agreement, does no

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

adds his bit to the debate because four of the commodities involved in the discussion, tea, rubber, coconut and spices, are Tamil Nadu commodities and the State's stake in tea is a major one. There is therefore a Tamil Nadu perspec-

From all reports — many of them hedging on the issue — India apparently wants to go back on its agreement with Sri Lanka by now placing tea and rubber on the "negative list" where coconut and spices already are — that list of products that will not receive any tarriff concessions. It was these four products and garments that Sri Lanka looked forward to benefitting most from if they were put on the concessional duties list. with the concessions going up to no duty at all in time. Apparently India had agreed to put tea and rubber on the concessional list but has now decided to go back on that decision after the lobbying of

the planters' associations. Apart from such reneging being in bad taste and sending out all the wrong signals to the smaller brothers in SAARC, there is more positive thinking needed to be done by the Big Brother and the planting lobby before a final 'Nay' is said. For one thing, are Sri Lanka tea, rubber, coconut, spices and garments REALLY such a great threat to the respective Indian industries? Are we SO WEAK that we cannot face competition? A few years ago, when Sri Lanka opened up its tea plantations for Indian investment. several South Indian companies rushed in. MMM at that time said that they wouldn't like the way

Sri Lanka runs its tea industry. Today, only Tata's has come to terms with the ground realities and is doing well there, even expanding. The rest have returned home. And when MMM spoke to many of them, they saw no future in Sri Lanka tea, particularly as, they said, labour and cultivation practices there were not conducive to productivity. MMM finds it strange that those who felt so disparagingly of Sri Lanka tea production now see it as a threat and that their association is in the forefront of seeking what in effect

Be that, however, as it may be - and there has been considerable debate in India itself with conflicting views being strongly expressed — there's the international political angle that needs to be looked more closely at. India needs all the friends it can get and keep — and here was one way of building bridges. To renege on what may well have even been good for a country's honour, especially when it is Big Brother's.

Talk of the Sethusamudram

is a protected market.

project being revived — once seen as a way to stifle Colombo harbour and to provide employment for Indian labour repatriated from what was Ceylon, thereby threatening its plantation as well as transport sectors — and this talk being followed by a Tamil Nadu-based organisation in the vanguard of the 'no concessions' movement is hardly conducive to improving already uncomfortable Sri Lanka-Tamil Nadu relations. Tamil Nadu would gain much, MMM is inclined to think, if it took a more made the right vocal gestures instead of keeping mum. As for India, it might do well to consider that what it loses on the swings of plantation fortunes it might well gain on the roundabouts of scores of other products.

Birthday memorial

A arking Rukmini Devi IVI Arundale's birthday on February 28th was the inauguration of the Rukmini Devi Cultural Centre and its auditorium and exhibition hall in West Mambalam, next to the Kasi Mutt. It also marked the day on which she gave her first public performance at the Theosophical Society in 1936 as part of that organisation's Golden Jubilee cel-

ebrations, it was stated. The man behind keeping the memory of Rukmini Devi alive is C Nachiappan of Kalakshetra Publications, which is itself celebrating its fiftieth year of making an art of letterpress printing. Nachiappan has today shed those happy-go-lucky days of dance, drama, photography and printing-as-an-art-form and is now known as the Koviloor Adhinam Sri-La-Sri Nachiappa Gnana Desiga Swamigal, the head of a Nattukkottai Chettiar Mutt near Karaikudi, which he is determined to develop into a deemed university of the traditional

Tamil arts. But midst his busy schedule he found the time to complete the RD Cultural Centre. with Ganapathi Sthapathi contributing inputs for the traditionally pillared facade and Gayathri Krishnaswamy coordinating the activities within. The Centre hopes not merely to encourage music and dance performance and debates and conferences on cultural subjects, but also looks forward to when it can establish training facilities for classical music and dance.

Remembered on the occasion

was Rukmini Devi's contribution to making Kalakshetra a great centre of dancing, weaving and printing. Her interest in vegetarianism, animal welfare and Thevaram were recalled by N Mahalingam, who inaugurated the Centre and promised to use it for conclaves on all three subjects. He particularly remembered Rukmini Devi using the Thevarams, those 1300 sacred Tamil songs set to temple music, for some of her dances. And Prof. Chandrashekar, one of her best pupils who went on to head the Dance and Music Department of the MS University, Vadodara, remembered how she could spot talent at a glance, possessively nurture it and encourage the most diffident. He recalled how he was teased in school for being a dancer and how she told him, "Why do you walk like a girl? Walk like a man! A man does not have to be

girl-like to be a dancer!" But it certainly helps, thought The Man From Madras Musings looking at the splendid exhibition of Rukmini Devi that was hung in the exhibition hall. All black and white portraits by Nachiappan and his Dutch guru, Theosophist Conrad Woldring, they not only revealed how spectacular good black-and-white photography can be but they also showed what a beautiful woman Rukmini Devi was and how such feminine beauty and grace can help the dance form.

The exhibition was opened by British sculptor Stephen Cox who has now made Mamallapuram his second home and wears a iibba and vershti as to the manner born.

* At least one local newspaper, The Man From Madras Musings finds, calls Tuticorin 'Thoothukkudi', which it is in any case called in Tamil. But MMM is rather curious to know whether the name-change is official and whether that final acceptance necessary, by the Survey of India. has come through if it had ever been sought. Could someone please enlighten MMM on this? And while on the subject of name changes, the Southern Railway seems to be more 'Tamil name'conscious than even the guardians of Tamil. For instance, their Metro stations are called 'Tirumailai' and 'Tiruellikeni' whereas the Corporation of Chennai seems quite happy to live with Mylapore and Triplicane.

— MMM

OUR READERS

Urdu origin

WRITE

D eference to C.A. Reddi's letter In MM, February 16th, 'Chut-Put' is neither a Tamil word nor a Tamil colloquialism like many Urdu words which have crept into the Tamil language after the spread of Muslims in the South. The Urdu word 'Jhat-Pat' meaning "in quick time", has changed in course of time to 'Chut-Put'. And then to Chetpet. It is common knowledge that words from one language cannot be spelt properly in other languages due to nuances which are

distinct in each language or dialect. Readers will agree that many of the sweets sold in sweet shops have Urdu names, such as Laddu (means round or plump), Gulab Jamoon, Jahangiri, Badam Kheer, Halwa (amalgamation of various ingredients), and paal khoa (half Tamil and half Urdu). Khoa is made out of milk only and there is no necessity to add paal before it. But then it is a colloquial way of saying things like "nadu-centre" or "kannadi-

There are many Urdu words which are in day-to-day use in Tamil with slight variations such as bandobast (means to arrange mainly used by the Tamil Nadu Police), samaan (things), sumaar (actual Urdu word is shumar meaning 'not bad' or 'average'). Mehandi (henna) became marudhani, and tappa (post) became tappal. And there's Round Tana (Round is English and tana from thana in Urdu means 'Police Station' or 'police checkpost'). The list is endless.

Anwar Hussain Khan Lodi 25A, Griffith Street Pallavaram Chennai - 600 043.

'Beach' not 'coast'

This refers to the letter 'How second longest?' (MM, February 16th)

I have always understood 'beach' to mean an area of sand beside the sea. If so, there is no doubt that the Marina in Chennai is a long beach, whatever its standing among beaches in the world. Forget for a moment its uncleanliness.

'Beach' is not to be confused with 'coast', which is merely land bordering the sea.

> R. Radhika A5, Madhurima 20-21, Conran Smith Road Gopalapuram Chennai - 600 086

Heard, not seen

When Dr. Manmohan Singh **W** received the Kanchi Paramacharya Award for Excellence and Integrity from the hands of the former President of India, there was indeed a rush and a crush.

There was a three-deep wall of photographers, TV crew, video people and so-called admirers. Out of a crowd of about 2500 people, hundreds who were outside the hall could see the events more clearly on close circuit TV than invitees. The latter could see only the 'iron backs' of our devoted photographers who stood like a Rock of

Gibraltar or refused to move like "Casabianca" in the old song.

It is very timely of MMM to have given a call for a code of conduct for these people who create a strong wall at all important functions. But I have my own doubts whether his call will fall on recep-

It is a real pity that, thanks to these adamant people, no one in the audience could get a glimpse of the 'Future Prime Minister' (RV's choice) of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh. Dr. Singh said that of the many awards he has got so far, he considers the Kanchi Paramacharya Award the greatest. We heard him, but could not see him.

> K.Venkatasubramanian Former Vice Chancellor Central Unversity Pondicherry.

Madras Tramways

When the workmen of the Madras Tramways went on strike in 1952, the Company decided to close down. Apart from the Egmore tramshed (now occupied by Periyar Thidal, Dina Thanthi and Hotel Peacock) there was another one, at the corner of the Royapettah/Edward Elliots Road function, now occupied by TUCS and TNEB.

Tramway track lines and posts

Is the bull sacred?

If the Hindu scriptures venerate Lows, the bull is no less sacred. It is the mount of Lord Siva. But, do we treat these animals with the respect with which they are expected to be treated?

In recent years these animals have become an object of entertainment during Pongal and a few days thereafter. These animals are tortured in the name of Jallikattu. This is a bloody sport which any civilised and right thinking person should shun.

existed upto 1959, even though trams no longer plied. In 1959, a rrial run between Rovapettah Tramshed and Luz took place.

The late GD Naidu of Coimbatore purchased the Egmore Tramshed for 11/2 lakh rupees or so, when the MES declined a Madras Tramways offer. The Madras Tramways stop on PH High Road, Egmore, still exists, since it could not be demolished. GD Naidu sold a portion of the area he bought to EVR, his rationalist friend.

> C A Reddi 57, Rundalls Road Vepery, Chennai 600 007.

A menace: Noise

The noise menace through L loudspeakers continues unabated. With the authorities failing to enforce the prevailing rules for their operation, horn/cone type speakes blast continuously for hours together.

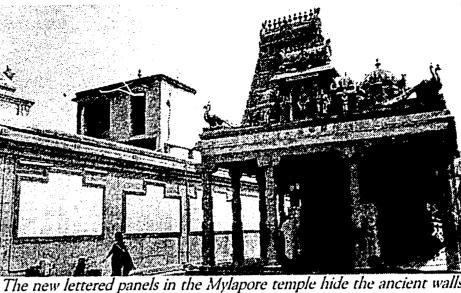
Since "silence is golden", and the people long for peace, the authe noisiest city in the world, having overtaken Bangkok. The mind-tearing rattling noise

from autos, heavy vehicles, MCVs and LCVs without silencers (including several Corporation and Govt. vehicles), fish carts and several other such vehicles make road use a nerve-wracking experience. It is strange nobody is perturbed enough to wake up to this manmade nuisance and take steps to give peace of mind where it is possible. Indeed, it is amazing how a city can be degraded by its dwellers!

> Veena Prasad 'Gangadeep', 7B 43, Jambulingam Street Chennai 600 029

'Bridge-building'

T had written earlier in MM on the Imisuse of the old Thiru Vi Ka Bridge in Adyar and suggested that it be converted into a small park with benches for people to come and sit there. Nothing concrete has happened even though it is more than six months now.



— and possibly have harmed them in the process of installation. Must munificence be at the expense of heritage? (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY).

inscriptions are for the benefit of

Sri ▲ Kapaleeswarar Temple is one of the most beautiful temples in the city.

Temple authorities and devotees have for the benefit of worshippers engraved holy hymns and slokas in white marble stone and affixed that on the granite walls of the prakarams. This spoils the original look and beauty of the granite structure. Though these

the devotees, they could be put on the cemented walls and not on the original granite structures. The Archaeology Department also does not permit any new

structure to be put on or added to the original Now, in the Singaravelar

Sannadhi, a white marble stone with some inscription has been put on the pillars recently totally

the 'eyesore' into a neat park. I am

willing to give a helping hand. This

damaged bridge near Foreshore Es-

tate, past Sreenivasapuram which

was washed away in the last floods.

MM even carried a picture of the

bridge, urging the Government/

PWD to intervene. But our govern-

ment is too busy doing other things;

such citizens needs as travel

I had also written in MM on the

bridge needs urgent attention.

K.S. Hemanth Kumar 171 Luz Church Road Mylapore, Chennai 600 004. Rotary/Lions Clubs should turn

them eisewhere.

thorities should, for the sake of the majority of law-abiding citizens, restrict the usage of "cone/horn" type speakers by the operators.

> K.S.K. Moorthy 54, MGR Road Chennai 600 090

Chennai rattlers

W]e moved to Madras a year **W** ago. We are totally shocked it does not have time to attend to at its noise levels. It must now be

This sport is peculiar to Tamil

Nadu, but the neighbouring states

are catching on fast. This has also

become a tourist attraction. This

type of sport should be banned in

the name of kindness to animals. It

is strange that animal activists are

M. Sethuraman

8, Second Cross Street

Mahalakshmi Nagar

Chennai 600 088.

Adambakkam

silent over this matter.

Flat No.1, Sea View Apartments Leith Castle Road San Thomé, Chennai 600 028

Why this spelling?

Roompanies, Sundaram Clayton media. and Sundram Fasteners makes you wonder why the Company that makes fasteners is spelt Sundram. Is there an interesting story behind

P.S. The State Government must issue a G.O. (Government Order) making MM compulsory reading for all I.A.S. officers, other Government Officials etc.

B. Gautham 122 Wallajah Road Chennai 600 002

A any articles have been IVI written about freedom fighters. But little is remembered about regretted. one man from the South.

Forgotten freedom fighter

Barrister George Joseph, who gave up a lucrative practice in Madurai in the Thirties, edited Gandhiji's Young India for a while, was in prison with Pandit Nehru, and was turned back from Gibraltar when he was on his way to England to present India's case for Home Rule. He was interested in the uplift of untouchables in Kerala and fought for the backward classes in Tamil Nadu.

marring the beauty of the carved

granite pillars. Its projection

beyond the pillars also poses a

danger to the devotees moving

around. It would be wise for the

Temple authorities to remove

them immediately and relocate

He was Kamarai's mentor. He and his wife housed, fed and cared for Subramanya Bharati in his days of penury. His wife Susan once recalled how Bharati rose in a trance and then shouted "Kottada Kai Kottada", after which he went on to sing as he composed Viduthalai. Yet neither on the 50th Anniversary nor the 51st Anniversary have D eading about the two TVS—we come across the name in the

He played an important part in the Vaikom Satyagraha, harbinger of temple entry for all. Unfortunately he passed away soon after he was elected to the Legislative Assembly.

> Anna Varki "Aalil", No.9, Central Street Kilpauk Garden Colony Chennai 600 010

Corrigendum

In 'One Small Step — Towards ▲ Heritage Awareness', the name of Dr. S. Suresh was inadvertently left out from the list of Core Group members mentioned. The lapse is

— The Editor

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Ah, for an Ambi!

— If only HM cared!

Dear Hindustan Motors.... T.C.C.C.??? Yes, this is India's **L**Car Capital, Chennai, — ICCC for short-talking. 1999 seems to be the year of the Car, to borrow a manner of expression from the Chinese; and we at Chennai seem to be at the hub of things with the Fords, Daewoos, Mahindras and, of late, even the Tatas moving Chennaiwards. So when Chennai-based yours truly decided it was time to buy a new comfortable car" he had even car, our old faithful Premier Padmini having served us well for nine long years, we had a really good ringside view of the car scene before deciding what to go in for.

availability and sturdiness. No one can give you that sense of security; the Ambi is like a solid battle tank. And to borrow from a popular ad, you get more care per car for the money you pay. Mind you, we are not the first to make this decision. An English doctor colleague of ours who was here on sabbatical bought and shipped across an Ambi all the way to the UK because he felt it was "the most sat in. The family goes to church in it every Sunday!

So when I read the other day that the production of Ambi was being rolled back at their Uttarapara factory

THE

• by Hiramalini Seshadri

get in and out, for the back-seat is sort of at a mezzanine floor height compared to the front. But if you're travelling long distance with family, forget it; no luggage space; no facility for a carrier either.

Matiz are stylish but cramped, if you, like me, stand at five foot eight plus. Besides, all these doll-like beautiful cars looked too dainty and fragile Ambi still comes in dreary fufor the rough, pot-holed strips of asphalt that pass for roads in most of India.

All the fancy top-of-therange new ones, like the Opel, Honda, Ford, Mitsu, Esteem etcetera etcetera, seem too high string for the purse and too lowslung for comfort. I felt I was sitting on the road and if you're too tall, you have to hook your knees over your ears, a la sports car style. Another important deterrent is the fact that if you want to drive out into the country in these new fancy mobiles, you have to cart your fuel as well. Unleaded petrol simply does not exist in rural India. So, with our propensity to drive out to God-forsaken places and to give lifts to family and friends to bhajans, from bhajans, cart musical instruments and the like, we finally settled for — Yes, a diesel Ambassador.

Nothing to beat good old Ambi when it comes to comfort, space (you can take your pet elephant in it if you want), availability of spare parts (this is very important; when our Sumo's fan-belt snapped at Thada, we were grounded till a mechanic AND fan-belt arrived from Chennai!), fuel trying to tell us that the "door tucked firmly into place before

Santros are nice and easy to Hindustan Motors, I was really dismayed. Reading further, the article informed me that the new fancy toys in the car market had really dented Ambi sales etc. etc. Why does such a great car lose out to these new itsy bitsies? Let me

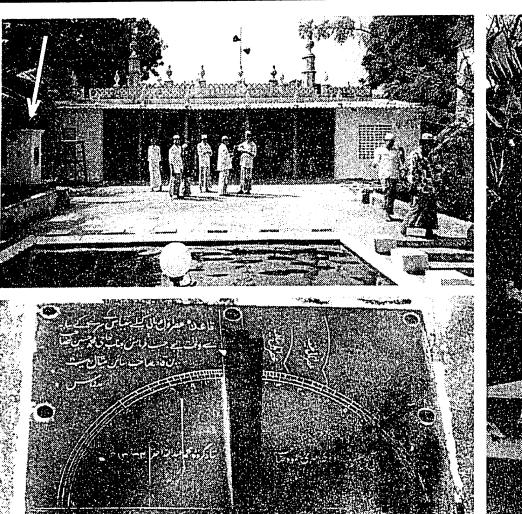
answer from our own experi-

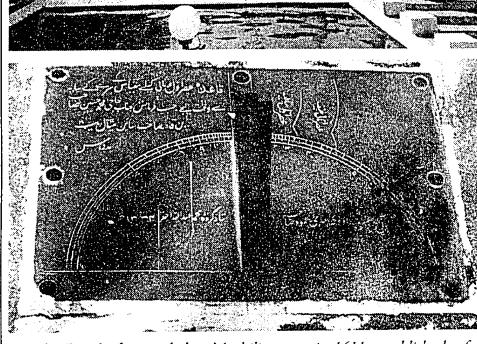
ence. Hindustan Motors, I

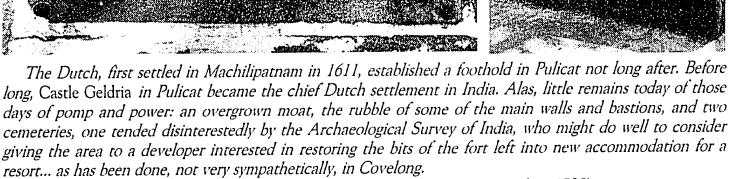
hope you are listening.

A car has to look good. neral black, plain, white, sicky yellow-brown and dull dark blue. Why not some better colours? Next, the inside. Our noo-noo car came with grease (!) or some kind of grease-like muck on the ceiling near the back glass etc (it is still there; you can see it). The beading is appalling; badly fitted and chipped in parts; and that bit of car between the rear and front doors which is covered with plastic takes the cake; the plastic is of abysmal quality. Take a look, H.M., at the interior of another very Indian car, the Maruti. So sleek and stylish. Surely the Ambi can be done up inside similarly? Why, every workshop round the corner is able to do up the interior of an Ambi so tastefully! Why not you then, H.M., the maker of

Next, the doors. The locks and window levers are so stiff and arthritic, we need to use TWO hands to open the doors or raise and lower glasses. And what is more, in our Ambi, when the doors are closed, sitting inside we can see the sky between the car's closed door and the car's body! The other day, a scooterist was frantically

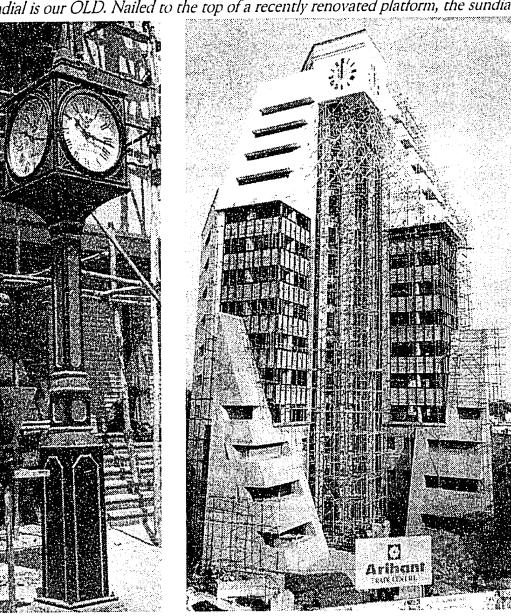






The Dutch during their years in India (the fort became British in 1795) were friends with the captains and generals of the Golconda Kingdom and ____& THE Pulicat has an ancient Muslim settlement as a consequence. The old Masudae Mussaraf ('the small mosque') here has a treasure in its premises, a sundial which dates to 1913 and which is still used. This semicircular

sundial is our OLD. Nailed to the top of a recently renovated platform, the sundial is divided into segments and numbered in Persian. In the middle is a style and



was not shut properly". It was shut properly alright; but such is the door alignment. At the 6000 km overhaul we expect H.M. will fix all this; but if only a little effort was put in during manufacture and the pre-delivery stage, such congenital defects could be eminently prevented. H.M. needs to develop a good pre-delivery antenatal care system, as we would

say in medical parlance. Next, the rattles. Garr-Whrrr, ta-da...ta-da... our new car was at its voluble worst a few days ago; one proper refixing of spring leaves at ACT, and now she purrs like a kitten. Surely the leaves or whatever should be checked and

giving the car to the unsuspecting customer! A little more concern for the poor customer's nerves would be in order.

tragic to hear that H.M., instead

of pulling up its socks and im-

The Indica — the one-tocome — is selling most because The engine and other invisible machinery — no problems. The new Isuzu engine and our very own Indian Trekker engine are all hugely popular with drivers. And what is more, any me-Time was when Cal used to be chanic anywhere in the country knows the inside of an Ambi in-India's Car Capital. Well, it is side out; get stuck anywhere Chennai now. So dear H.M. you'd do well to pay heed to our and help is at hand. So, surely, words. With best wishes and if a little effort is put in to setting right the interior and its honks from our dear Ambi, we looks, the Ambi will reign once more, the undisputed king of our Indian roads. With every-(India's Car Capital thing going for her, it is really

she is the one "nearest to an Ambassador" in comfort. It is a real shame; that the duplicate should beat the original, as it were. Come on, H.M.! Take on the challenge; you can do it!

— I.C.C.C

Chennai)

proving the Ambi, is simply giv-

ing up without a whimper.

NEW

when the style casts its

shadow as the sun moves,

the time can be read. The

first reading is taken at 7

a.m., then every hour on

Our NEW shows two

new clocks that have been

positioned in the City to

give Chennai's citizens the

time. The more delicate,

fancier one is a chiming

clock in South Usman

Road, put up by the

iewellers Nathella Sam-

paththu Chetty. The large

one trying to compete with

Big Ben is on Arihant

Trade Centre's pyramidal

peak and adds to the height

of a building which will

undoubtedly show the way

for higher rise in a city that

doesn't need it. Conser-

vative highrise will ensure

that our City remains open

to the skies. (Photographs

y RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

the hour till 5 p.m.

ence, Beni Charan Mahendra, an authority on Indian snakes, describes Russell as the first

'Tanjore Pill' made from mer-

cury, arsenic, pepper and some

In an article in the Decem-

ber 1935 issue of Current Sci-

herb extracts.

March 16-31, 1999

I flora and fauna of India

commenced only in the last

quarter of the 18th Century. It

owes a great deal to the pio-

neering work of, mostly, the

British. Ancient India did have

some literature on these sub-

Just as Alan Octavian

Hume (1829-1912) is de-

scribed as the 'Father of Indian

Ornithology', Dr. Patric

Russell (1726-1805) has been

described as the 'Father of

Indian Ophiology'. Dr. Russell

came to India in 1781 to work

1785 he was appointed botanist

and naturalist to the Company.

He took a particular interest in

the study of snakes though

plants and fishes were also his

concerns. He conducted ex-

tensive experiments on the ef-

fect of snake poison on animals

and birds and on the local rem-

jects, but much of

this was not scien-

tific in the accepted

sense of the

A history of Indian Ophiology

The scientific study of the Two of these volumes are

person in India to distinguish the harmless from the poisonous species. Russell's important contributions were An Account of Indian Serpents collected on the Coast of Coromandel (1796) and A Continuation of an Account of Indian Serpents (1801—09)

A contemporary of Russell was Maj. Gen. Thomas Hardwicke who came to India in 1778 and spent 25 years in the country. He employed local artists to draw and paint pictures of plants and animals. These valuable sketches were compiled in 35 volumes and are now with the British Museum.

From Russell

to Whitaker

Joseph B. Fayrer (1824-

1907) was the first person to

distinguish between the effect

of the poison of the elapine

snakes and the viperine spe-

cies. In 1864, Albert Gunther,

published the most

extensive account

of Indian herpet-

ology till then,

The Reptiles of

British India.

mainly on snakes.

As many as 180 species of snakes are described in this book. Yet Gunther never visited India and based his authoritative work entirely on the collection of preserved specimens kept in the British Museum from 1860. for the East India Company. In In 1878, Joseph Ewart, the

Surgeon Major of the Bengal Army and Principal of the Calcutta Medical College brought out a limited edition of a book bearing the rather curious title The Poisonous Snakes

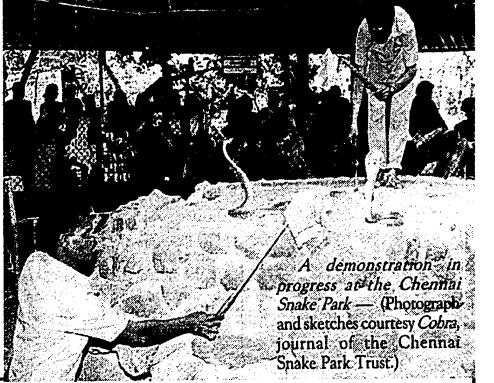
Systematics in Indian heredies for snake bite, chiefly the petology made a

> great leap forward with the publication in 1890 of the volume on reptiles and batrachia in the famed Fauna of British *India* series by George Albert Boulenger (1858-1937). Like Gunther, Boulenger too had never visited India. Boulenger was the first person to prepare exhaustive keys for the identification of Indian snakes.

Frank Wall (1868-1950) born in Colombo where his father George Wall was managing a plantation company, arrived in India in 1894 as a member of the Indian Medical Service. For 30 years, he worked in different parts of India and took the opportunity to study snakes. His main interest, unlike in the case of most of his predecessors, was the living snake in its natural surroundings. Col. Wall's main publications were Snakes of Ceylon (1921) and The Poisonous Terrestrial Snakes of our British Indian Dominions. He con-

tributed over 88 papers on In-

dian snakes to the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society. His series on Indian snakes accompanied by beauti-



Snakes in the Park

The Chennai Snake Park Madras Snake Park as it was known till recently) has, at present, 31 species of Indian snakes, all the three species of Indian and four species of exotic crocodiles, one Aldabra tortoise, three species of Indian turtles/ tortoises and five species of lizards.

Many species of reptiles including endangered species like the Indian python (Python molurus) and the reticulated python (Python reticulatus) have been captively bred in the Snake Park. The offspring, surplus to the Park's requirements, have been either released into the wild or made available for exchange with other zoos.

The Park owes its origin to the pioneering work of Romulus Whitaker, an American-born naturalised Indian. Whitaker, who as a schoolboy in India developed a deep fascination for snakes, had his skills honed during his two years' work in Miami Serpentarium, Florida, U.S. He returned to India in 1967 and, in 1970, established a small snake park in Selaiyur village on the outskirts of Chennai. This elicited the interest of a group of naturalists from Chennai and with their help, Whitaker set up the Snake Park at Guindy on a piece of land obtained on lease from the Forest Department of the State Government. This was

to manage the Park's affairs. The Park went through a bad patch during 1986-88 because of conflicts between two groups among the trustees leading to litigation. The case was ultimately settled by mutual consent in April 1988. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees today is also the Chief Executive and he is assisted by a Secretary. Both are honorary and part-time. The whole-time staff is headed by a Director, assisted by a Dy. Director with twenty employees under them. Seven out of the nine animal keepers are Irula

in 1972. A Trust was constituted

tribals who have been weaned away from their traditional occupation of catching snakes.

The Snake Park received statutory recognition from the Central Zoo Authority as a medium zoo in 1995.

In addition to its live collection, the Park has a museum of preserved specimens of reptiles and amphibians. There is also a good library of literature on snakes and other reptiles. Semiscientific popular books and other materials on snakes and other reptiles are displayed at the Snake Park and are on sale. The Snake Park arranges talk shows in schools, colleges and other institutions in Chennai. It also conducts special training programmes for school teachers and so far, 231 teachers have participated in these.

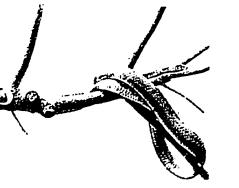
The Snake Park attracts over seven lakhs of visitors a year, of whom one-fifth are children.

fected others with his enthusi- Ayurvedic and Unani drugs re-

asm and love of the subject and puted to be specifics against

it is due to him more than any snake bite, he came to the con-

— В.V.



ful colour plates appeared in the Journal between 1905 (Vol. 16) and 1909 (Vol.26). It is a great pity that this was never published in book form. Malcolm Smith says in the preface to his volume on snakes in the Fauna of British India series, "Indian herpetologists owe Col. Wall a great debt of gratitude for his work on snakes. During his 30 years'

Fr. Jean Ferdinand Caius (1877-1944), a distinguished bio-chemist of French origin. came to India in 1895 as a

other man that our knowledge

of Indian snakes today is so

complete".

scholastic in the Society of lesus. He joined the Madura Mission and was subsequently attached to St. Joseph's College, Tiruchchirappalli, where he started a natural history museum. He later joined the where he worked until his retirement in 1932. After long and laborious research on

Plant Remedies used in Snake Bite (co-authored with K S Mheskar) is in Sanskrit! A landmark in Indian ophiology was the publication of the volume on *serpentes* by Malcolm A. Smith. The manuscript had been completed in

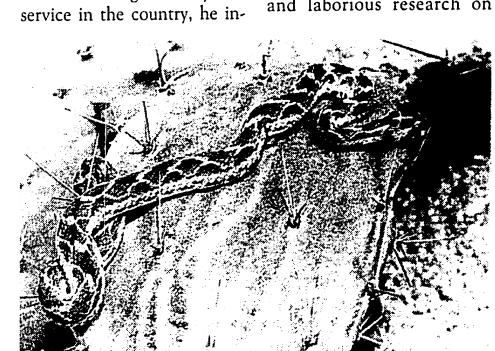
clusion that they were comple-

tely ineffective. His *Indian*

1938 but the book was published only in 1943. This is, to this day, the most quoted reference book on Indian snakes. Haffkine Institute (in 1924) His Monograph of the Sea Snakes was another valuable contribution.

> With the departure of the British from India in 1947, there was a lull in the study of snakes. This is in sharp contrast to the fact that other branches of natural history, particularly those relating to mammals, birds, fishes and plants, continued to receive a great deal of attention at the hands of Indian scientists and scientific organisations. This is not to convey the impression that there were no contributions on the study of snakes

> > (Continued on Page 7)



Sahitya Akademi Award for the

'Best Play in English', and as a

tribute to his prowess as a writer.

a playwright with Where There's

a Will in 1988 and turned out a

play a year till 1993. He then

commenced scriptwriting for

cinema, television and radio,

while his plays were getting

published, translated and staged

in Indian cities, while touring the

UK as well. Dance Like a Man,

Night Queen, Do the Needful,

Tara... all instantly won acclaim

for the sensitive manner in which

gender relations were explored

and for the bold proclamation of

themes that were hitherto

closeted. Most recently, Mahesh

won critical acclaim with his play

Final Solutions, being awarded

Mahesh Dattani

the Sahitya Akademi Award for

Dattani's themes spotlight is-

sues that concern the 90's gen-

eration. The world he depicts is

typically middle-class; the char-

the Best Play in English, 1998.

Dattani started his career as

Faust-Mephisto theme to mark the Goethe Centenary, 1999.

March 23 & 24: Shakespeare's Vil-

renowned actor,

writer and director holds the

stage alone with

his exploration of

Shakespeare's

most villainous

characters — Iago,

the Macbeths,

Shylock, Richard

III... Characters who

evil, others Steven Berkoff,

tion leads them Shakespeare's

to evil deeds villains alive.

Incisive insights into the psy-

che give way to Shakespeare's

own words in this presentation,

written, directed and performed

by Berkoff. This intriguing blend

of performance and analysis is yet

another landmark for this mav-

erick of British theatre who is

whose situa- bringing

the mercy of evil society...

are inherently

and others at

Berkoff.

lains — A masterclass in evil —

a one-man show by Steven

(Quizmaster V.V.RAMANAN'S questions are from the fortnight February 16 to 28. Questions 16 to 20 pertain to Chennai.)

- 1. Which Indian has been appointed Human Development Adviser for the United Nations Development Programme?
- 2. Which Indian film was awarded the 'Network for Promotion of Asian Cinema Award' at the Berlin Film Festival?
- 3. Where in Pakistan did the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, disembark to meet the Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, at the conclusion of his 'historic' bus journey on February 20th?
- 4. Where in India was the world's second (after France) Safety Research Institute, promoted by Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority, inaugurated on February 20th? 5. Name the Tamil Nadu boxer who tragically died at the National Games in Imphal.
- 6. The 'Cradle of Warriors' cel ebrated its Golden Jubilee at Khadakvasla recently. Name this hallowed institution.
- 7. Name the Pakistani fielder whose accurate throw led to Sachin Tendulkar being dismissed in unusual circumstances at the Calcutta Test, followed by crowd unrest.
- 8. The new VC of Tamil Nadu University is.....?
- 9. 22-year old Subhra, who died in the Nandan Kanan Zoo recently, was the biggest contributor to the gene pool of what rare species?
- 10. Which hip-hop star picked up five Grammys at the latest edition of the awards?
- 11. Who were the recipients of this vear's Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Awards....?
- 12. Which South Indian law firm became the first in Asia to receive the coveted ISO 9002 certification? 13. Name the Kurdish rebel leader whose arrest by the Turks sparked unrest in that part of the world.
- 14. From which institute did the Adyar Cancer Institute in Chennai get Rs.10 lakh, as first instalment, for research etc. in leukemia?
- 15. Why was the musical work Through the Darkness of the Ages by a church cleaner, Ms. Hilary Jolly of Camkbridge, in the news."
- 16. What innovation, a first for the country, has been incorporated in Tamil Nadu's laminated driving licences to record traffic violations? 17. Which advertising agency claimed the 'Agency of the Year' award at the annual awards ceremony of the Advertising Club Chennai, recently?
- 18. Where in the city was the first Close Circuit Television camera installed to monitor traffic flow?
- 19. What new feature to aid the visitors, was introduced at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park on February 22nd?
- 20. CHENOLIPS, the first of its kind by a municipal body in the country, was inaugurated in the city on February 16th. Expand CHENOLIPS.

(Answers on Page 7)

● The Sruti Foundation conducted programmes in Delhi and Chennai late last year to celebrate the birth centenary of the late E. Krishna Iyer (see MM, September 1 and 16). Two seminars were the highlight of these celebrations. In this issue and subsequent issues several historical aspects of Bharata Natyam which were discussed at the seminar, will be presented. The presentation is also topical in the light of the new memorial to Rukmini Devi Arundale and what she did for Bharata Natyam's revival. (See page 2.)

The mid-19th Century was **I** a nodal point in the historical continuum of dance in the South. It was being performed inside the temple and outside by the devadasis.

The Isai Velalar, a community of traditional dancers and nattuvanar, were virtually the sole practitioners of the art of the dance then known variously as Sadir, Dasiattam and Karnatakam.

By the beginning of the 20th Century, social disapproval of the dance of the devadasis and the system of dedication of girls as devadasis to temples, began to emerge, especially in the ur-

Bharata Natyam's revival

ban centres. This was linked to the perception of the devadasi system as an envelope for prostitution, exploitative of

This was the context in this event, Dr. Reddy renewed which Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, a medical doctor and herself the daughter of a devadasi dancer, conducted a crusade for social reform for the emancipation of women and particularly for the abolition of the devadasi system and the practice of dance by devadasi (and non-dedicated dasi) women.

move altogether. As the Founder-Secretary of The crusade reached a clithe Music Academy, Madras, max in 1932, following the staging of Nautch as part of the Krishna Iyer had already pre-

celebrations conducted in con-

nection with the assumption of

the office of the Premier of the

Madras Presidency by the Ra-

jah of Bobbili. Condemning

her call for the abolition of the

devadasi system. E. Krishna

Iyer hailed the beauty of Sadir

as an art-form and argued that

'the baby' (the dance) should

not be thrown out with 'the

bath water' (devadasi system).

At the same time, leading

devadasis, musicians, and

dancers opposed the reform

prominently, in the latter half

of this century, in the study of

Indian snakes and widespread

dissemination of knowledge of

our snakes and crocodilians is

of Romulus

the Academy's programme in 1931, but the response had not been particularly enthusiastic. Nevertheless, after a discussion of the dance as part of the Academy's conference in 1932, EKI arranged, with the support of his colleagues, performances of what had been as part of the Academy's annual festival each year, in the subsequent years. During a two-week period from December 1935 to January 1936, Bharata Natyam performances by leading devadasi dancers presented by EKI as part of the cultural programme of the All India Khadi & Crafts Exhibition in Madras, attracted large audiences — of whom the majority were women — and also offers of sponsorship for repeat performances. EKI could not have succeeded without the help of the devadasi dancers who demonstrated the beauty of the art at these performances.

sented the dance, alongside of

music performances, part of

After seeing a Bharata Natyam performance at the Music Academy on January 1, 1935, Rukmini Devi Arundale

(Continued on Page 7)

A HISTORY OF INDIAN OPHIOLOGY

(Continued from Page 6)

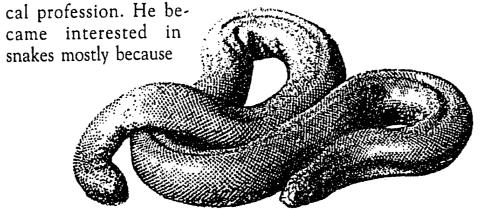
after 1947 — but these were certainly not of the same intensity or spread as in the pre-1947 period.

Among the early Indian ophiologists, the two names that deserve special mention are those of Beni Charan Mahendra, a Zoology professor, and K.G. Gharpurey. Mahendra's magnum opus was the Handbook of the Snakes of India, Ceylon, Burma, Bangladesh and Pakistan published only in 1983, but the culmination of a project initiated in

Boulenger's volume on snakes, published in 1890, contained 264 species inhabiting the Indian subcontinent. Malcolm Smith's volume described 389 species and 17 subspecies. But, he had extended the geographical area to cover the Indo-China sub region. Mahendra who had adopted the same geographical coverage as Boulenger, dropped from Malcolm Smith's list 70 species as not belonging to the Indian subcontinent but to the Indo-Chinese subregion and relegated 21 of Smith's species to synonymy or subspecific rank and consequently, described 298 species as belonging to the Indian subcontinent.

K.G. Gharpurey's (1880-1956) *Snakes of India* (1935), later published as Snakes of India and Pakistan, was a popular scientific book largely instrumental in ushering many Indi-

ans of recent generations into a study of snakes and teaching them the rudiments of identification of snakes, their habits and their habitats. Gharpurey, like some of his British predecessors, belonged to the medical profession. He became interested in



that

of the heavy mortality from snakebite that used to come to his notice in the course of his professional work.

It took 30 more years for the next popular scientific book on Indian snakes to appear. This Snakes of India by P.I. Deoras of the Haffkine Institute, Bombay. A distinctive feature of the book is that half of its 135 pages are devoted to general information on snakes and one whole chapter is on

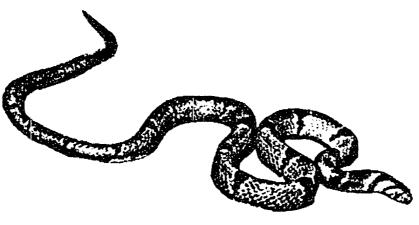
'Snakes in Indian Culture'. M.V. Rajendran (1916-1993) who started his life as a member of the faculty of St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu, was an accomplished herpetologist. Rajendran established a snake park at Palayamkottai. In 1967, he published a book on common Indian snakes in Tamil which was of great help in the popularisation of the study of snakes. Rajendran was a founder-trustee of the Madras Snake Park and a Director.

Whitaker (b.1943), a naturalised Indian of American origin.

Whitaker's Common Indian Snakes, first published in 1978, and currently being revised by him, is, by far, the best and the least expensive introduction to the subject notwithstanding that it describes only 30 spe-

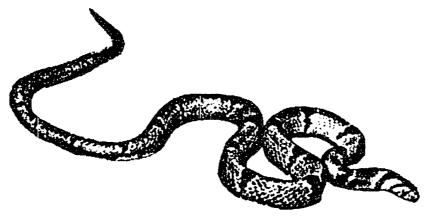
Another useful book on Indian snakes for the layman is The Book of Indian Reptiles (1983) by J.C. Daniel, longtime Curator and Hon. Secretary of the Bombay Natural History Society. The book covers not only 49 types of snakes but also crocodiles, lizards and

- B. Vijayaraghavan



One name that stands out turtles and tortoises. It provides detailed descriptions and illustrations. T.S.N. Murthy of the Zoological Survey of India has authored the Snake Book of India (1984). And a book titled Snakes in India has very recently been published by B.D. Sharma, a professor of Zoology in Jammu & Kashmir.

In the preface to his Snakes of Ceylon, Frank Wall wrote: "The reader of these pages will soon discover that our knowledge of many of the species referred to is fragmentary or even nil..." Nearly eighty years later, we cannot say we have done enough to fill the voids. The contributions of any significance made by even professional ophiologists - not to mention amateurs — during this long period have been few and far between. As a hobby for laymen, ophiology, no doubt, stands no comparison with, say, ornithology, for various reasons. But the very fact that there are few who venture into this field gives those who enter abundant opportunities to explore and to discover.





Till March 20: Paintings by Seema Ghurrayya. (At Apparao Galleries)

March 22: 'Faust as a literary theme — from old stories to Goethe' by Prof. V. Ganeshan, Central Institute for English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad.

Germany's greatest author, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, was born in 1749 in Frankfurt/ Main. From 1775 till to his death in 1832 he lived and worked in the small city of Weimar/ Thuringen, the European City of Culture 1999. Goethe's 250th birth anniversary being celebrated throughout the world to commemorate the universal genius, the famous poet and author of Faust and Werther. The Goethe Institutes, named after him, foster the German language and promote international cooperation in cultural affairs in more than 100 countries. In India the Max Mueller Bhavans are branches of the Goethe Institute.

At the foot of the Black Forest is the 1200 year-old town of Staufen in the middle of one of the most popular holiday regions in Germany. The inn 'Zum Lowen' in the market square was the home of 'Doctor' John Faust, who died there in strange circumstances around 1540. He was in fact carrying out chemical experiments in the search for gold, but it was said that the devil took him away. The earliest reference to this event, in the Zimmernsche Chronik (c. 1565), became the source of the countless treatments of the Faust-Mephisto theme throughout world literature. (At Max Muller Bhavan, 6.30 p.m.)

(Continued from Page 6)

decided to learn and practise

the dance. EKI helped arrange

for her training by Pandanallur

Meenakshisundaram Pillai, af-

ter she had started learning the

art from Mylapore Gowri

Amma. For her part, and given

her theosophical persuasion,

Rukmini Devi emphasised the

known for the villains he has played in Octopussy, Rambo II, The Krays, and Beverly Hills Cop. (At Rani Seethai Hall, 7.00 p.in. By invitation from the British Council). March 29: An evening of felicitations in honour of Mahesh Dattani receiving the 1998

Bharata Natyam's revival saved by E. Krishna Iyer, with formers was the advent of Kathe co-operation of the devadasi dancers. But her entry helped to encourage girls outside the Isai Velalar community to learn Bharata Natyam, with the approval of their parents. So did the debut of a Brahmin girl called

Kalanidhi — now Kalanidhi

Narayanan — as a dancer.

devotional aspect of the dance. But what enthused numer-By the time Rukmini Devi ous 'respectable' families to enmade her debut as a dancer at a courage/permit their daughters Theosophical Society convento enter the field of Bharata tion on December 31, 1935, Natyam as learners and per-Bharata Natyam had been

B.M.Sundaram, musicologist and The Sruti Foundation panel at a scholar specialising in the histhe New Delhi seminar consisted tory of Isai Velalars; N. of: Dr. N. Pattabhi Raman (chair-Srinivasan, Roving Editor of Sruti man and moderator) who has who has been researching the peen researching the subject of history of Bharata Natyam; Dr. the renaissance of Bharata Natyam; Dr. Amrit Srinivasan of Mamata Niyogi-Nakra of the Kalabharati Foundation o the Indian Institute Montreal, Canada, who has been Technology, New Delhi, who obtracking the spread of Bharata rained a Ph.D. from Cambridge Natyam in the West, and Leela University in England for her Venkataraman, well-known thesis on *Temple 'Prostitution'* and Community Reform: dance critic.

mala. Neither Balaswaraswati nor Rukmini Devi was the 'role model'; it was Kamala, first as Baby Kamala and then as Kumari Kamala, an adolescent but accomplished dancer. The restoration of the respectable image of Bharata

Natyam was accompanied by a revival in the fortunes of several nattuvanars. But devadasis as dancers virtually disappeared, with singular exceptions, when those who were prominent in the field retired or passed away. The reason for this was not the 'appropriation' of the field by non-traditional dancers, as alleged; rather, devadasis themselves lost interest in careers in the field because of other factors like the lingering effects of the trauma caused by the stigma attached to their profession, and their belief that the terms and conditions imposed on them by the nattuvanars — who controlled

acters that inhibit this world are fleshed out, real, speaking a language that rings with the authenticity of middle-class parlance. And the ordinariness of everyday speech echoes the humdrum nature of daily compromises, seemingly unperturbed by the prescriptive norms of society. (At the British Council).

March 31: An exhibition of contemporary Indian art by various artists. (At the Lalit Kala Akademi)

March 31: An exhibition of paintings by Shruthi Nelson. (At Apparao Galleries.)

Till April 9: Faces of India by Alfred Wuerfel. He has spent over 63 years discovering India.

Wuerfel, born in 1911, came to India in 1935, soon after his graduation. He joined the Benares Hindu University as a lecturer of German language and during his four years' stay pursued his main aim at this great seat of Sanskrit learning to continue his studies in India's classical language and also to learn

On his release from war-time internment, he joined the Cultural Department of West Germany's Consulate General in



One of the 'faces' from the Alfred Wuerfel exhibition.

Bombay in 1951. Two years later he was transferred to the West German Embassy in Delhi where he eventually became the head of the Cultural Department, a post he held until he retired in 1976.

During his numerous travels through India Wuerfel portrayed the people of the country. Photographing faces is not like photographing a landscape or architecture; a rapport has to be established, immediate and revealing, between the photographer and the photographed. Alfred Wuerfel has done exactly this. (At the Max Mueller Bhavan.)

Who will save Senate House

(Continued from Page 1)

though University use will be given priority, the Committee will determine other uses for it that will generate the funds necessary to keep the building alive and well.

It was while listening to several visitors stressing the fourth point that it struck this correspondent that an alterna-

most unfavourable to them.

Many who belonged to the

Institutions for teaching

community entered Cinema.

Bharata Natyam now came to

be established. Among the

spin-offs was the undue em-

phasis on the textual tradition,

sourced to the Natya Sastra,

and the attempts at downgrad-

ing the practical performance

tradition as upheld by the tra-

ditional community. (Cour-

the careers of dancers - were

Industry & Commerce consortium to take over the whole project and see it through to a happy end. The last-named arm of this consortium could comprise the heads of the various chambers of commerce and industry in the City and it would ensure raising funds, completion of the work, regular usage and continued maintenance. The Government and University representatives could ensure proper usage of the premises in line with a building first built for scholarship and debate and also see that the way is made smooth for restoration and continued use.

tive might be the appointment

of a Government-University-

Unless some such new thinking emerges, this correspondent cannot foresee a successive conclusion to the Senate House project, the way things are going (or, rather, not going).

(To be continued next fortnight)

tesy: Sruti)

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. Prof. Amartya Sen; 2. Dil Se; 3. In 'no man's land' on the Wagah border: 4. Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research at Kalpakkam; 5. K. Karunakaran; 6. National Defence Academy; 7. Nadeem Khan; 8. C.K. Mahadevan; 9. White tigers; 10. Lauryn Hill; 11. Manoi Kumar and Helen; 12. Surana & Surana: 13. Adbullah Ocalan; 14. The U.S. National Institute of Health: 15. It has been chosen as the 'Millennium hymn' and will be Corporation of Chennai.

sung on January 2nd, 2000 at St. Paul's Cathedral in Landon.

16. Provision to punchmark violations for record purposes; 17. Lintas: 18. The roundabout at Anna Nagar II Avenue; 19. Prams and Wheelchairs to aid babies and the differently-abled visitors; 20. Chennai On-Line Information Processing System, the online information service of the



8

In 1948 a great event took Lplace in Madras, affecting the private lives of many, including in particular that of the GOLFER. I refer of course 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 overenamoured by the idea as it would mean the loss of a timehonoured fixture in January and with all the social activity that was associated with it. It was then that I offered to raise

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 '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

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 Piltdown, and our main twoday 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



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

The Founder Members were: R C Paterson (Paterson

Miris Conting Socies of Both 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.

> & Co., Stock Brokers); L.D. Miller (King & Partridge); W.P. Blakeslay (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 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.)

