

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

INSIDE

- The tower & the alumni
- Treasure off Madras coast?
- 2 pages of letters
- Millennium thoughts
- Voices of the Season

Vol. IX No. 17

FREE ISSUE

December 16-31, 1999

Heritage Act: Why the delay?

*One of the several concerns expressed
at conservation workshop*

(By The Editor)

The delay in introducing heritage legislation was one of the several heritage concerns expressed by your Editor

A helping hand from 'Chennai Heritage'

(By a Special
Correspondent)

When 'Chennai Heritage', which ensures that *Madras Musings* comes out every fortnight, sponsored the recent Indo-German Workshop on the 'Conservation of Heritage Monuments' it was undertaking its second project within six months of its formation.

The first project to which it offered support was a study of the Tiruvanmiyur Tank and its surroundings, being undertaken by an INTACH Tamil Nadu team. The results of the study will be presented to representatives of the Rotary Club Main, who had initiated work on the Tank some years ago, and they will consider taking it further.

The Indo-German Workshop was organised by the Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Madras, and INTACH Tamil Nadu.

A two-day workshop jointly organised by the CMDA and INTACH Tamil Nadu to consider the problems faced when heritage laws are implemented is also to be sponsored by

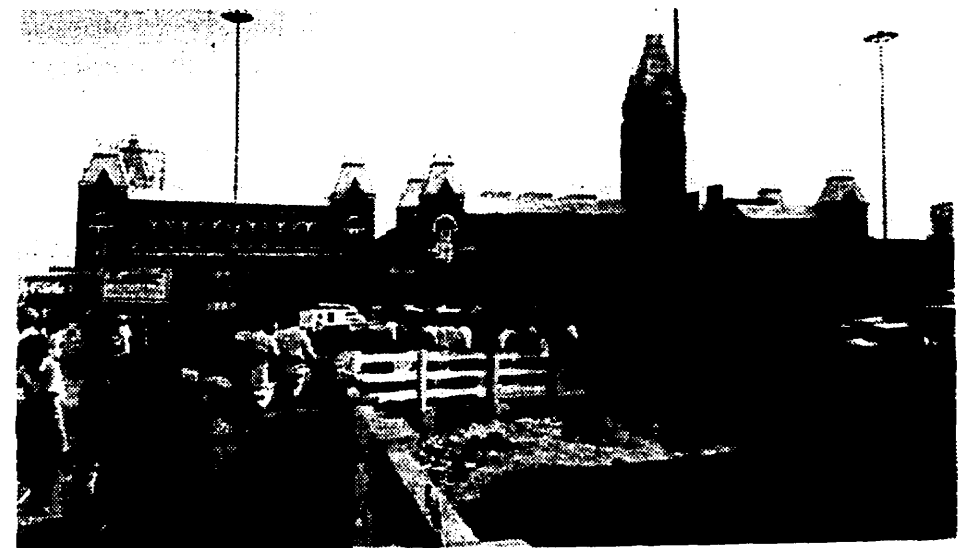
(Continued on page 6)

when he welcomed the participants and invitees at an Indo-German workshop held recently at IIT Madras. The Workshop on 'Conservation of Heritage Monuments', organised by INTACH Tamil Nadu and IIT Madras, and sponsored by Chennai Heritage, featured an all-day exchange of views between a team from the University of Karlsruhe, Germany, and a team of conservationists from Chennai.

Your Editor, in his welcome address, drew the attention of the audience to the following concerns of those in Chennai connected with the heritage movement:

— The delay in getting a Heritage Act for Tamil Nadu. It was about two years ago that the need for such an Act was agreed on by representatives of Government and INTACH and a draft Act

(Continued on Page 6)



A 'no hoardings' era ahead?

● The Corporation of Chennai has resolved that the putting up of hoardings in 47 places in the City will NOT be allowed. Trying to get hold of that list has proved an impossible task, with all the officials *Madras Musings'* representative approached fighting shy of providing the information. However, we understand that the places listed include Government offices, hospitals, colleges, railway stations, the precincts of the High Court, Town Hall, Ripon Buildings, the American Consulate-General and specific places on Anna Salai, Kamaraj Salai, Rajaji Salai, E V R Periyar Salai, Binny Road, Pantheon Road and several places of worship.

Madras Musings looks forward to that happening as the first step towards banning hoardings everywhere in the City. Meanwhile, long before the resolution was passed the Railways acted and had all hoardings hiding the Central Station removed. What a difference that has made to the appearance of the building! Once the landscaping and garden-development of the station's surrounds gets underway, this will indeed become a landmark in the City. Would the other Government institutions follow this lead. (PICTURE AND STORY BY RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

CONCRETE FOR ANNA SALAI

The entire 28 km stretch of Anna Salai, from Port to Tambaram — barring the two service lanes — is to be concretised at a cost of Rs. 150 crore.

The work will be done in two phases, the first from the Port to Kathipara junction (12 km) at a cost of Rs. 69 crore and the second from Kathipara junction to Tambaram (16 km) at a cost of Rs. 80 crore. The feasibility study has been sent to the Centre for funding. According to Abul Hassan, Secretary, State Highways Department. Government will take up the second phase first, as it doesn't involve much work in shifting utility lines.

Concrete roads, though initially costing 25-30% more than bitumen roads, work out cheaper in the long run as their average life span is 25 years.

Meanwhile, Government is considering restructuring the State Highways Department as recommended by consultants Booz Allen and Hamilton in their preliminary report. "This

is a World Bank condition for funding road projects," Hassan stated.

The report has suggested reforms in the technical, financial, legal and institutional setup, leading ultimately to corporatisation of the Department. The report has also recommended complete compu-

terisation of the department.

In order to enable road builders to use the machinery, the State Government plans to set up a joint venture equipment leasing company soon. Tidco and Tamil Nadu Road Development Company Ltd will be the promoters. Speaking at a recent Confed-

eration of Indian Industries (CII) conference on 'Road Development in Tamil Nadu' Hassan had stated that the draft legislation for setting up a dedicated road fund is under consideration by the State Law Ministry. This dedicated cor-

(Continued on page 6)

National highway improvement

C. Ekambaram, Project Director, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), detailing the projects funded by his organisation, told *Madras Musings* recently that Phase-I of the Chennai Bypass, connecting NH-45 and NH-4, will be completed before next August. The project, which was to be completed by the end of this year, was delayed by land acquisition problems.

Phase II of the Chennai Bypass is to be taken up shortly and

the Namakkai Bypass on NH-7 will be implemented during the first quarter of next year.

Civil work for four road projects under the Prime Minister's plan, to link the four metros, in a Golden Quadrilateral express highway network, has commenced, Ekambaram stated. The four projects are:

- 4-laning of the Athipalli-Hosur Section on NH-7
- 4-laning of the Thoppur Ghat section

— 4-laning of the Salem Bypass on NH-7

— 4-laning of the Karur Bypass, including the road-overbridge

As for projects that NHAI has identified for implementation under the BOT scheme, preparation of a feasibility report for four-laning the Chengalpattu-Tindivanam section of NH-45 is underway and the process of acquiring land has started.

V.J.

Madras Musings wishes its readers a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year

Could we take a second look at 'Chennai'?

When Madras in 1989 paid little attention to its 350th birthday, Calcutta spent the whole year following celebrating the 300th year of its founding, not once during these celebrations recalling Madras's contribution to that putting down of roots. While regretting the latter, many in Madras pointed to Calcutta's much greater appreciation of its heritage, be it of British origin. The year-long celebrations in Calcutta during 1990-91 were marked by no one requesting the city to be named after the village, Kolkata, from which it grew.

It therefore came as a bit of a surprise to *The Man from Madras Musings* that the West Bengal Government that had with a sense of history celebrated the tercentenary of its capital was now seeking to rename Calcutta as Kolkata. The State also wanted to change its name to Bangla from West Bengal.

MMM is glad to find the Central Government asking questions and reminding the West Bengal Government that it is not desirable to go about changing the name of a place unless there are very special reasons for it; changes, the Centre states citing the procedure that has been laid down for geographical name changes, should not be made merely on grounds of local patriotism or for linguistic reasons. A detailed justification for a name change should be furnished to the Centre for consideration, the procedure states.

The change of Madras to Chennai and Bombay to Mumbai had no greater justification than the request to change Calcutta to Kolkata. In this context, MMM wonders whether the Centre will advise Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra Governments to have second thoughts about the changes they have made, particularly in consideration of the fact that in an increasingly globalised village, Madras and Bombay remain the preferred names. MMM, as in 1996, requests that our city remains Madras in English and Chennai in Tamil or that it once and for all be changed to Mylapore with its 2000 years and more history if change there must be. Any takers?

Extra-close focus

A workshop and a panel discussion *The Man from Madras Musings* attended in recent weeks were marked by rather heated debate when floor participants zeroed in on just one point on each occasion from the many that had been made each day.

In the case of the Indo-German Workshop on 'Conservation of Heritage Monuments' organised by INTACH (TN) and IIT Madras at IIT, the strong difference of opinion was over whether cement could be used in restoration work in place of traditional lime mortar. K.T. Narasimhan of the Archaeologi-

cal Survey of India was categorical: Cement should NOT be used to replace lime mortar if the latter had been the original material. In Indian conditions, lime mortar was superior because of its longer lasting qualities, he pointed out. Others felt a combination of the two could be used, while protagonists for cement felt the restoration to the original grandeur was what was important, not what was hidden under the lime finish or paint. The only answer that emerged was that perhaps another workshop should be organised just to debate the merits and demerits of both materials. MMM suggests that before such a workshop, IIT's Civil Engineering Department, which initiated the recent workshop, undertakes a couple of research projects to test the materials and come to some conclusions that could be presented at the proposed workshop.

The other subject of close focus cropped up at a panel discussion organised by the British Council and the Association of British Scholars on 'Contemporary Culture: A Global Perspective'. Here too the focus of the presentations and discussion got derailed and MMM found a vocal young lady taking on the newly

on this day, in fact, to open the innings.

The panel was expected to consider what "shaped the established culture of the 1900s and reflect on the ways in which these influences may help to (de)form the new millennium". The discussion was seen as a "Janus-faced event which marks an ending and a beginning of a millennium". MMM heard more about an ending without any end than much hope for the 2000s. Consider some of these quotes:

PROF. KUNTALA JAYARAMAN of Anna University's School of Biotechnology: "TV is almost entirely used for chitra-horror..." "Fundamental science had died".... "Not a civil engineer worth his salt is being produced in a country where IT alone is seen as the future".

NIRMALA LAKSHMAN, Joint Editor, *The Hindu*: "Modern technology could do so much to reach out to the disadvantaged... but consumerism is the focus."

K.HARIHARAN, filmmaker: "The films being made today are what the public want... Liking a film has nothing to do with a film being good or

The market, it strikes MMM, is undoubtedly deciding on the changes in many of the cultural centres of the foreign missions in the City, but one change at the British Council, obviously a market-driven one, is one that MMM had least expected. MMM had been looking forward to the teaching of English for a variety of purposes, but setting up a centre for management studies came as a major surprise.

Several British universities have been teaming with Chennai institutions and offering distant education degrees in management. Humberstone set the ball rolling with a private educational institute established for the purpose, ACME which had dreamed of establishing an IIM clone in Chennai decided to tie up with the British Open University with its own programme delayed, Loyala has tied up with South Bank, yet another private institution has forged links with Harriet Watt and the British Council is not only helping Durham University but has become a partner of Bradford. This focus on management by an institution established for cultural promotion —

Department of Dance, Institute of Aesthetic Studies, University of Kelaniya (a suburb of Colombo). Though the student presentation did make MMM think the University of Madras — and other universities in Tamil Nadu — would do well to follow this example and establish such an Institute, the programme also revealed a certain amateurishness for all its colour and drumming excellence. Having accepted the limitations, MMM sat back to enjoy the show. But then there came the 'Tea Pluckers' Dance' that, MMM was told, was the result of "extensive research in the Tamil areas of the highlands" where tea carpets the hillsides and Tamils with 150-year old roots in southern Tamil Nadu pluck the two leaves and a bud. The parody that troupe head Prof. Mudiyanse Dissanayake made of both the costuming, choreography and the bastard dance form created is hardly likely to "strengthen ties between the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups". Why, MMM wonders, didn't he take the kummi and the kolattam of the Tamils in Sri Lanka hill country and adapt them for his all-Sinhalese group? That would be integration; this was inflection.

★ Whether *Madras Musings* focus (December 1st) on Neurosurgeon Dr. B. Ramamurthy's campaign to make helmet-wearing compulsory for two-wheeler riders had anything to do with it or not, *The Man from Madras Musings* does not know. More likely, the mention of the subject at the seminar *Madras Musings* reported had everything to do with it. But whatever the case, MMM was delighted to hear City Police Commissioner Kalimuthu insist that police personnel MUST wear helmets when riding two-wheelers. This, the Commissioner hoped at a meeting on December 9th, would set an example to others. Sadly, MMM continues to see many a Police motor-bike user observing this compulsion more in the breach than in regular practice. What's the next step Commissioner Kalimuthu is going to take, MMM wonders.

★ The announcement of a recent seminar on 'Liberalisation under WTO', organised by the Industrial Economist to discuss the preparedness of Indian Industry, promised answers at the sessions to the following questions:

- Can Taiwan or Hong Kong send India a shipload of colour television sets each costing just Rs. 5,000?
- Can Singapore trade urea in Punjab at \$ 80 a tonne (around Rs.3,440) when new generation fertilizer plants are paid around Rs. 10,000 a tonne?
- Can South Korea land cement at Chennai Port at Rs. 80 per bag, where it is currently being sold at Rs. 185?

Sadly, MMM has not seen any specific answers anywhere to these questions and issues. Were there any at the seminar?

MMM

Market decisions?

The Man from Madras Musings is probably taking it entirely out of context, but one phrase Utley used that evening stuck in mind. Speaking about cultural changes possible in the new millennium, he said the market will decide many of them.

In brief

★ When the Indian Council for Cultural Relations invited *The Man from Madras Musings* for a 'folk dance programme' by the Western Province State Dance Ensemble from Sri Lanka, MMM hoping to see a professional troupe in action. Instead, the performers were from the

The fall of the tower and the rise of the alumni

Along the Esplanade, now called NSC Bose Road, the impressive facade of Madras Christian College graced the city for about 100 years. In November 1885, while new buildings were nearly completed, a serious accident occurred that changed the course of the College. The beginning of November brought a cyclone and heavy rains that caused the upper part of the new large tower to fall. The staircase remained standing, and the engineers found it to be safe. Then, in the middle of the month, excessive rains and heavy winds soaked the turret and it collapsed on the new hall below. Damage included half the roof, four steel trusses, the teakwood floor and the rooms below. The engineering was not at fault. According to Mr. Chisholm's report, the problem was that "the mortar does not set till many months after it has been built". Indeed, he pre-

attended, in addition to guests, students and volunteers, bringing the total attendance to 680. The proceedings were chaired by Professor C. Ramachandra Row Sahib, B.L. It was decided to establish a College Day Fund in order to be self-supporting and to hold the get-together annually near the close of December.

This meeting marked the establishment of the first Alumni Association in India. Also on that day in 1891, the first Calendar of the Madras Christian College was released, containing *Historical Sketch of the College* written by Rev. Miller. In his speech he referred to the College having overcome difficulties sometimes caused by enemies, sometimes by "want of adhesion between bricks and mortar". He said that while the winds may have been too strong at times, overall he found them favourable, and although the

• An anniversary feature by ANNE DAYANANDAN of the College Archives

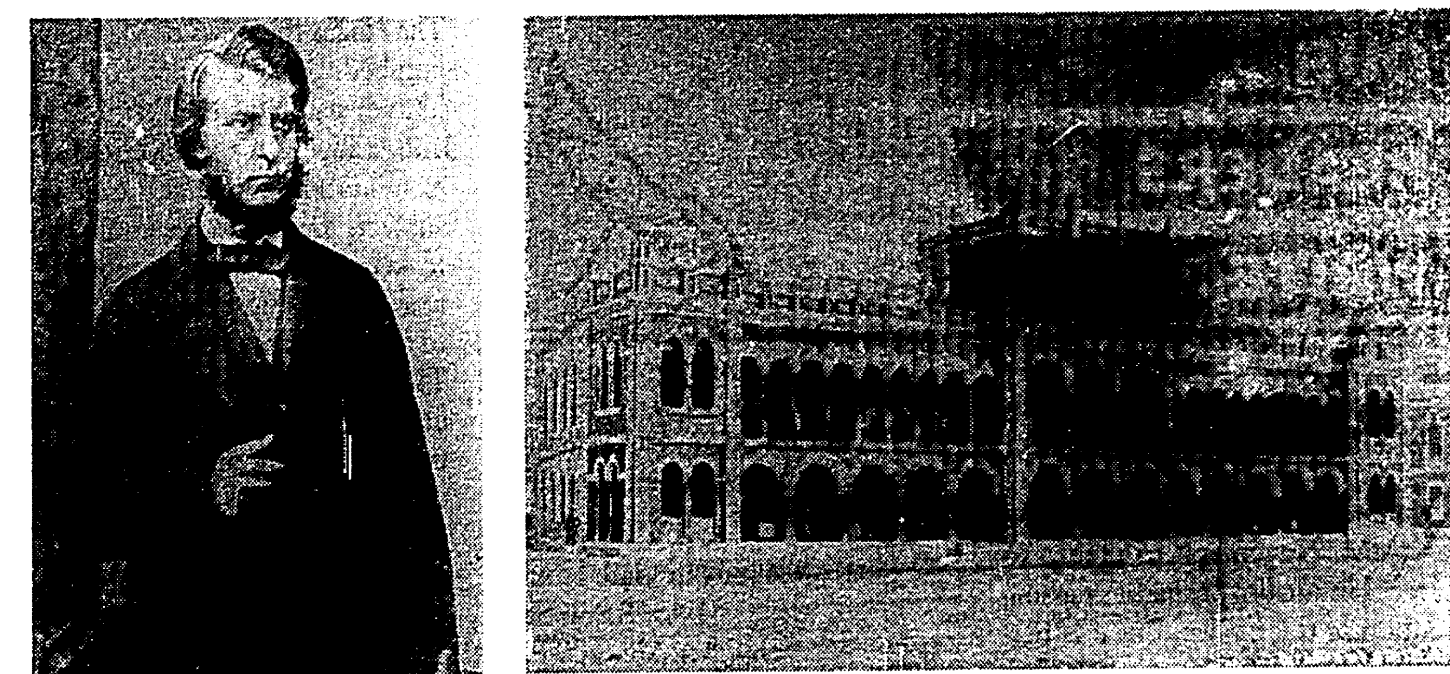
dicted that the tower and turret could have stood for centuries. Rather, the force of the monsoon was blamed but, as Principal William Miller reported, the "accident evoked widespread sympathy".

As a result, former students of the College rallied round and joined to raise money to repair the damage which cost an additional Rs.22,000. (They raised Rs.4,400; Government contributed Rs.9,710; friends made up the rest.) Within a month a committee of 14 old students had met and already raised Rs.1,600. The movement started spontaneously and continued with its own momentum. The College and Dr. Miller provided hearty sympathy only. The Association decided to become a permanent one calling it the College Day Association. The first meeting was held on December 24, 1891 in the morning at Rajah Sir Savalai Ramaswami Mudaliyar's Choultry, and in the evening at the Victoria Public Hall. About 340 alumni of the school and the college

sea had been rough at times, gales of prosperity had wafted the College along. (Spoken like the seacoast Scottish highlander from Thurso that he was!) He appealed to the alumni of the College to stand by the institution in future difficulties. Altogether, 17 speakers graced the meeting, and a committee of 12 trustees was named to carry on the annual get-together.

At the close of the meeting, an old student of MCC, Mr. C.R. Chinnvesavali Naidu, B.A., proposed that a statue of Dr. Miller be erected and promised to subscribe liberally. The proposal was immediately seconded and supported by Mr. C. Runga Chariar, B.A.B.L. The bronze statue was made in England by J.H.M. Furse and erected in front of the College buildings. Unveiling the statue was the first public duty of Governor Lord Ampthill after assuming office, to mark the new century on 1st January 1901. It was moved to the MCC Higher

(Continued on page 7)



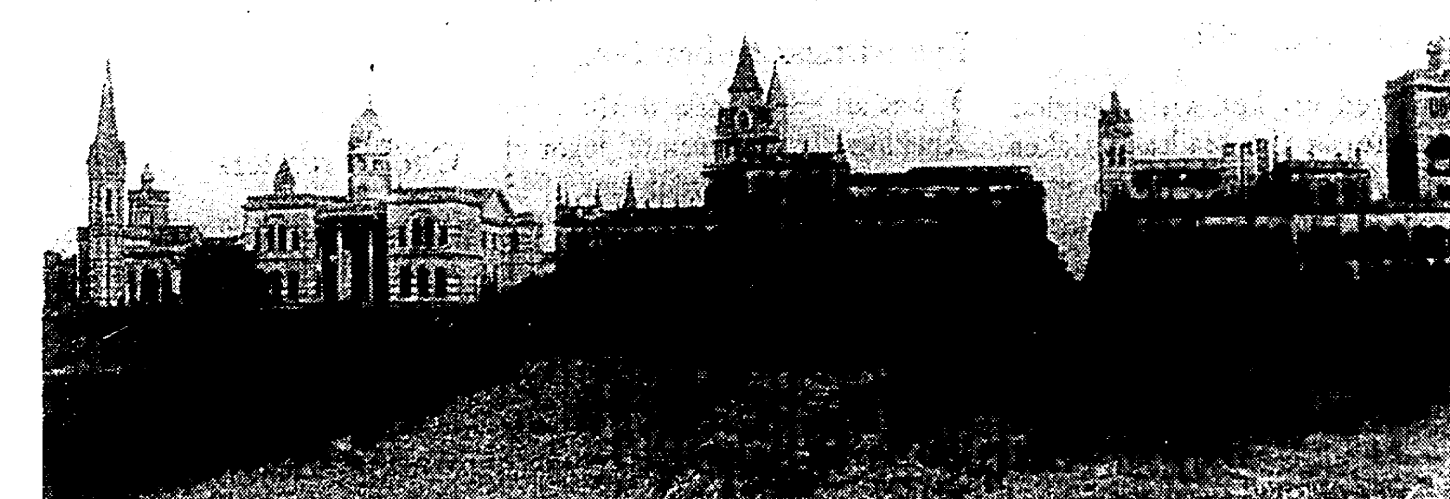
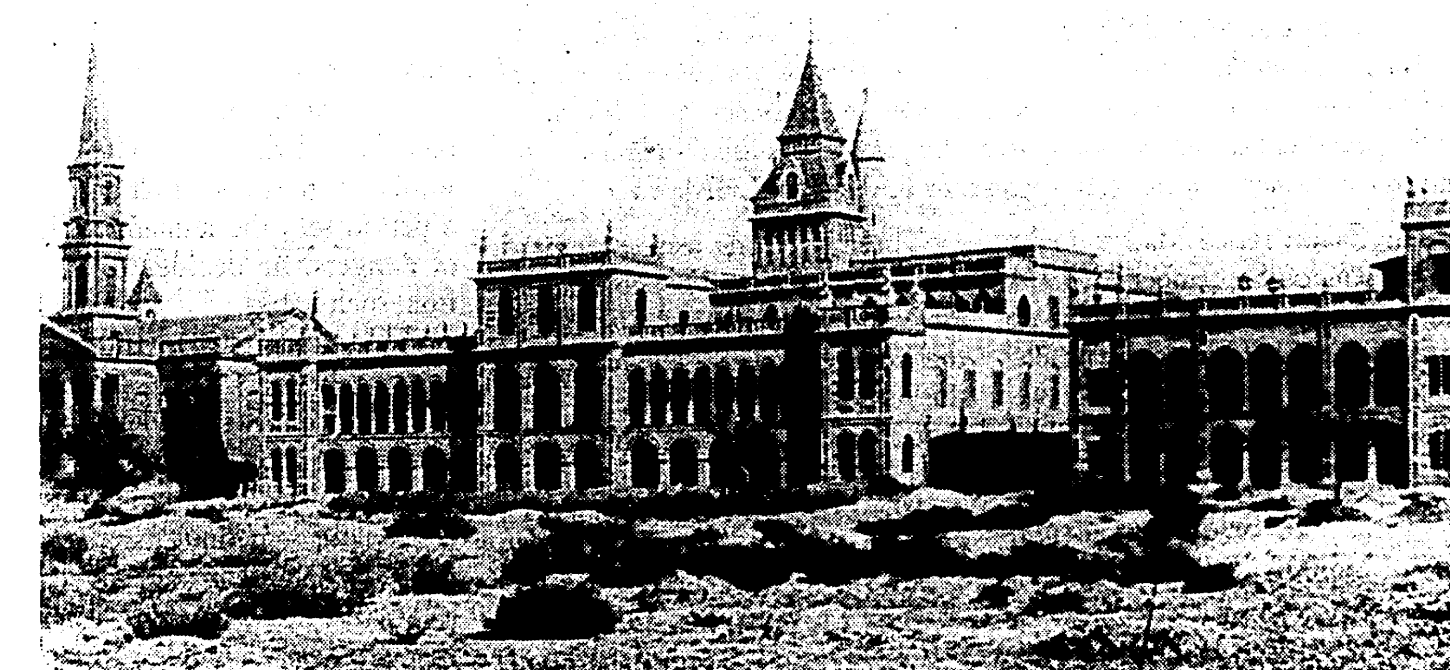
Our OLD shows the development of the building of the Madras Christian College and School on what was Esplanade Road, George Town, from the time Dr William Miller arrived in Madras in 1862. The picture of Miller, above left, was taken about the time the picture above right was taken. This building was the only one belonging to the institution at the time and housed only a school. It had been bought in 1846 and the school moved in January 1847, shifting from the rented house it occupied in Errabatu Chetty Street. It had cost Rs. 25,000, and over ten times that amount was spent in the 1860s to get original building into the shape seen in the picture, the earliest picture of the Christian School in George Town.

The picture below shows the Esplanade in the foreground and, so, would date to before work began on the High Court here. The original College chapel, Anderson Church, was built in typical St. Martin-in-the-fields manner (extreme left) and consecrated in 1859. The College Tower — as the further improved central block was called — was finished by 1887. So this must be a picture dating to sometime after then but before work began on the High Court in 1889/90. The third of the OLD pictures shows the landscaped

High Court gardens and, from left to right, the new Anderson Church that still survives, the old church after modification to serve as Anderson Hall, College Tower, and on right College House, where Dr Miller and other faculty lived, with hostels to the rear. With Anderson Hall in use from the end of 1895, this picture undoubtedly dates to not long after that. The adaptations to Church to create Anderson Hall, the College and School's assembly hall, cost Rs. 38,000.

RAJIND N CHRISTY's picture of the NEW shows what stands in place of these buildings on what is now NSC Bose Road. Anderson Church is still there, much as it was. Next is the State Bank of Mysore's main office in Chennai. Work on it began from February 1954 and it was opened in September 1957. Next comes the Bombay Mutual Insurance building, opened in July 1955, and then the headquarters of the Tamil Nadu State Cooperative Bank. Work on the last mentioned building started in 1970 and went on till 1974 when the Bank, which in a previous avatar had in 1936 bought College House, moved in.

The picture shows how we've changed on this stretch from Indo-Saracenic and Classical to Art Deco and modern functional.



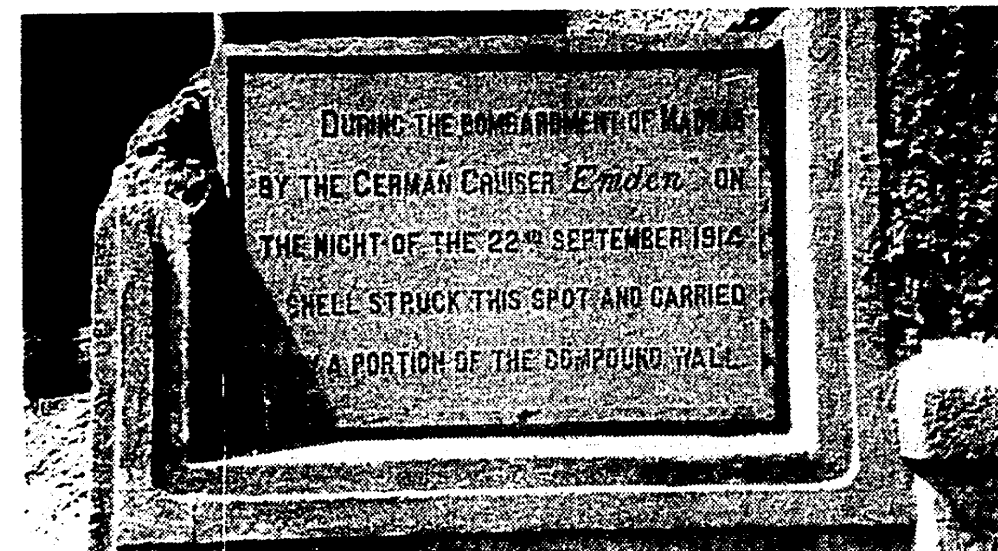
OUR READERS WRITE



The Emden episode

Ramachandra Guha's 'footnote' (MM, November 16) seeks to correct Hiramalini Seshadri's passing mention of the *Emden*. But it is neither the year 1917 as given by her nor 1915 as corrected by him!

I have researched and written a book entitled 'A Maritime History of India' (Publications Division, Govt. of India). The book devotes eight pages to the *Emden* episode. It gives the track of the *Emden* in the Indian Ocean and the names of six ships captured and 17 ships sunk, with dates and the time they were hit or sunk.



The plaque on the east wall of the High Court compound marks the stretch of wall hit by shells from the German cruiser *Emden* in September 1914. It's rare to see the plaque visible and cleaned up as in this picture; it is usually plastered over with posters or their remains. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

The *Emden* raised Madras Light at 8-00 p.m. on September 22, 1914 and fired 125 rounds at the giant oil storage tanks not far from the beach. Two oil tanks caught fire and two more were punctured badly.

Rear Adm.

K. Sridharan (Retd.),
G-001, "Farah Residency",
234, Defence Colony,
4th Main, 6th Cross,
Indiranagar, Bangalore - 560038.

A Wild West rifle

I played cricket with Derrick Jeffares at the Madras Cricket Club (MM, November 16) on many occasions but more than cricket, I have very vivid memories of the many Sundays we went shooting snipe in the paddy fields on the outskirts of Madras. He was quite a good shot and was one of the few who did not blame the sun or the wind when he had a bad day.

Derrick was of Irish origin and his great grandfather, who emigrated to America, left him his rifle. It was a .44 Winchester which was used to shoot buffalo in the Wild West of America. It had a ring near the butt, enabling the rifle to be kept in the saddle of the horse.

Sadly, Derrick never used it in his lifetime. When he decided to take it back to Ireland on his retirement from Binny & Company the Irish laws of the time required a hole to be punctured in the barrel to prevent its use, in view of the IRA problems. Derrick could not bear to let his ancestor's rifle be mutilated and so he presented it to me. I still have the rifle with me. After so many years, it is still in a pretty good shape, as my

son Arvind found several years ago when he used it while out shooting.

C.D. Gopinath
"Harbour Gate House"
44-45, Rajaji Salai
Chennai - 600 001.

Engineers and Marathas

It is unlikely that Major Jeffares (MM, November 16) served with the "S/S Royal Marathas". It should have been the S/5 (Royal) Marathas. His unit most likely supported that battalion at sometime. The 4.2 inch mortar was provided as a chemical warfare (gas) weapon and was used for firing high explosives, smoke ammunition etc., as gas was not used.

The *Hindu* the news of Madras being bombed. Being a senior NCO in the University Officers' Training Corps and studying for a Military Science examination as one of the subsidiary subjects for the degree course, I used to keenly follow the progress of the war. I picked up a bicycle and rushed to see the damages of the bombing. There were just two small craters on either side of the railway line between the Park and Fort stations. It could be that the target was the road bridge over the railway track. The streak of lights I saw was caused by 'tracer bullets'. When an anti-aircraft gun is fired at night, the magazine is loaded alternately with real ammunition and tracers which when fired are luminous and would indicate whether or not the target is hit.

I heard that a merchant ship berthed in the harbour had fired its anti-aircraft gun at the planes, but did not hit them.

S.D.A. Sunder Raj
Hogg Villa, Professors' Colony
11, Agaram Road
East Tambaram
Chennai - 600 059.

Self-realisation best

Referring to the report 'A helmet law is essential' (MM, December 1), I would like to narrate a true incident. A person, whom I know and who was a chain smoker, suddenly fell ill and required a prolonged treatment. Even when he was sick, he indulged on his pet habit, smoking much to the annoyance of the doctors attending on him. All of a sudden, one day, a sort of 'death scare' befell on him and he immediately kicked the habit. The point I would like to stress is that only when a person sees the immediate threat of dangers, he decides to abstain from such habits.

This holds true in the case of wearing helmets too. Considering the differing views and opinions, the decision to wear a helmet or not is best left to the discretion of the riders. Making something mandatory or imposing something does not cut the ice. Self-realisation is the best solution to any given problem.

Lt. Gen. I.S. Gill (Retd.)
31, South Bank Road,
Madras - 600 028.

Eye witness to bombing

I was an eye witness to the happenings on that eventful night of October 12, 1943. From June 1943 till April 1945 I was a student of the Presidency College, studying for my B.Sc. degree, and living in the Victoria Hostel just behind the college.

As already mentioned, Madras was flooded and there was no electricity for several days. Strangely, it used to rain during the day, but the sky used to clear up in the evenings exposing the moon in all its brilliance. As there was no electricity, we in the hostel were served food at dusk, when there was still some daylight. Dinner over, we wandered in groups on the Marina (not on the sands-out of bounds, guarded by troops) till late night.

That night, I had just returned to the hostel when one of our number excitedly pointed to a streak of red lights in the sky towards the harbour. In a minute or two, two small planes flew right over our heads and disappeared seaward. They could not have been flying more than two or three thousand feet high.

The following morning I saw in

larger interests of the public, heeding the reasoned arguments calling for immediate legislation.

Will *Musings* have enough decimals to draw the attention of the powers that be?

M. Aswin
2, Karian Ponnann Street
Venkatesa Nagar
Puzhuthivakkam
Chennai - 600 091.

Information wanted - I

As a resident of a suburb of Madras, I feel some importance should be given to certain temples in the suburbs and included in the Heritage list. One such place is the dilapidated Dhenupuriswarar Temple at Madampakkam near Nuthancherry.

Secondly, Heritage must also include the intellectual and scientific accomplishments of people. In a recent article in *The Hindu* on the 'Founders of Mathematical Logic', one Master Ramachandra's 'A Treatise on Problems of Maxima and Minima' has been quoted. Most of us know about the mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujam but we know very little about Master Ramachandra. I wonder whether any reader of *Madras Musings* could throw some light by writing on Master Ramachandra.

But look at our record; today despite achieving independence, nobody has so far cared to execute his master plans for Sethusamudram project or the linking of the rivers in our country. While one part of the country suffers from heavy floods, the other part suffers from severe droughts. What an irony!

At least the rivers in the South could be linked and earnest attempts made to execute this project in the interest of the people. Instead, we spend crores of rupees for flood and drought relief every year.

K.S. Shanker
208, Ganesh Nagar
'Sowbhagya'
15, Chitapakkam Main Road
Selaiyur, Chennai - 600 073.

T.M. Sundararaman
19, Nallappan Street
Mylapore
Chennai - 600004.

Information wanted - II

I have an old sandalwood box with bits of ivory tracing work which commemorates the granting of a knighthood by the King of Portugal to Sri Prakasam Mudaliar in June 1900.

This is engraved on a silver shield

A pedestrian issue

Getting across a road even at a manned pedestrian crossing in Madras can be a nightmare. For instance, at the TVS stop on Mount Road, the lone policeman — whenever present — can have only limited success in stopping the flow of traffic even in one direction. If he stands at the median and beckons, only foolhardy or desperate pedestrians will dare to dart across, because of the uncertainty that speeding vehicle drivers will respond to or even notice his arm-waving. Such locations would require three persons to ferry people across safely, but no doubt, VIP safety and smooth vehicular traffic flow will always be accorded greater priority. And some fools like me still labour under the notion that even a chicken has the right to cross a road with dignity.

The future mini-fly-overs (today's major-crawl-throughs and go-roundabouts) have made life especially difficult for those having to get about on foot or by city buses. Making LB Road in Adyar one-way has resulted in major route diversions with no additional stops, so that the pedestrian has to wander far afield to locate a bus stop, or trudge a mile back along the route traversed after alighting.

Since getting worked up about all these *fait accompli* issues will

only lead to ulcers, the only sane attitude for an individual is to accept the inevitable by lying back and enjoying it. Which is just what the 'authorities' are banking on. As always.

One may have heard about aggressive behaviour by motorists being referred to as 'road rage'. If that can be accepted as a respectable disease and a subject of sociological research, there is another phenomenon we may soon have to contend with, which could perhaps be termed 'pedestrian rage'. I can foresee a time when civilisation comes full circle and frustrated bipeds may resort to carrying sticks or clubs to the detriment of headlamps or wind-shields — or simply find handy projectiles among the broken stones from erstwhile pavements or other rubble so liberally provided along every thoroughfare. When that happens, it will be the lumpen elements who can best exploit the situation, unless by that time all the lumpens are already moving around in vehicles adorned by flashing roof-lights, screaming sirens and armed escorts.

Thomas Tharu
4-A-7, Kasyap
Nehrunagar IVth Street
Adyar
Chennai 600 020.

rific incident some eight or nine years ago.

At that time, a young college girl had been picked up by one of these very same 'mendicant' elephants and was bashed against a compound wall. By a miracle and the grace of God, the girl survived the trauma. This incident happened in broad daylight in front of many onlookers in an exclusive residential area in Kilpauk.

Public memory — and perhaps the law enforcers' too — needs to be prodded into immediate action in order to stop this dangerous roadside circus.

Noel Jason,
6/7, Vepery Church Road
Chennai - 600 007

Invalidation's importance

The problem of Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan — Whom do I vote? (MM, October 16) — raises an issue that has already been discussed in MM. But it is such an important issue that it is perhaps worthwhile to discuss it again. The low voter turnout (less than 60 per cent) in the last few elections indicates that she is not the only one with this problem. A huge chunk of our population is simply fed up with our politicians and political parties. Consequently, many people simply do not bother to vote. Conscientious people like Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan who realise the importance and responsibility of voting have necessarily to go through the agony of the kind described by her. All that such people can do is to vote for the 'best amongst the worst,' much against their will and conscience.

It is for this reason (when no candidate/party comes up to one's expectation) that, in an earlier letter, I suggested casting an invalid vote as an expression of one's disapproval of all contestants. This is possible in the case of a paper ballot but not so in the case of the electronic voting machine. Since the latter is going to become the norm, this issue assumes importance.

It is my contention that the right to vote includes the right to reject all candidates. Unfortunately the Constitution does not give us this right. Since the political parties are unlikely to act in this regard, it is for the people to make themselves heard and get the Constitution amended to give us this right.

What good will come out of voting in such a manner, you may ask. Let us look at it this way. Suppose 30 per cent of the votes cast reject all the candidates, will not some good come out of it? Surely political parties will wake up, take note, do some introspection and soul searching, improve their performance, put up better candidates etc. This is one way to get a better government.

B. Gautham
122, Wallajah Road
Chennai - 600 002.

Plea for cloth bags

Though I currently live in California, I am a 'Chennai girl' at heart. During my recent visit to the City, I was shocked to see the use of so much thermocol and plastic. Even the flower seller in front of Nilgiris, Mylapore, was packing his flower lengths in small plastic bags. What happened to good old plantain leaves?

All these years, despite a large

Is there treasure off the Madras Coast?

Michael Herridge, the British Deputy High Commissioner in Chennai adds a bit more information about the East Indian *Admiral Gardner* (MM, November 16) and encloses 'brief details of three East India ships lost off Madras' which he came across on the Internet. Anyone wants to hunt for these ships? They may prove as profitable as the *Admiral Gardner*.

1809 was an unlucky year for many connected with the *Admiral Gardner* (813 tons). Not only was the ship lost, but later *Admiral Gardner* (the man after whom the ship was named) also died, as did Matthew Boulton, whose cargo the ship carried.

The *Admiral Gardner's* fatal voyage was her fifth to the east. She was named after Alan Gardner, the first Baron Gardner (1742-1809), who had a distinguished naval career before he became a Member of Parliament in 1796.

For most of the trading life of the East India Company, the ships were between 300 and 800 tons, although there were some larger

vessels employed at the very beginning in the early 1600s, such as the *Trades Increase* and the *Royal James*, which were about 1000 tons, and very much later, some vessels of 1200 tons were used, mostly for the China trade.

However, the sailing qualities of these sometimes proved to be difficult, so the tonnages were reduced to about 500 tons by the 1640s and continued about this level until around 1700. From about 1708 the majority were between 300 and 400 tons, but new vessels taken on were larger as the trade grew.

The English Company did not, for the most part, build its own ships. It chartered them on long term contracts from shipbuilders and shipowners. The role of what we would call today the Principal Managing Owner (the person who looked after the ship's interests, arranged the terms of its charter and fitting out) was called by the seemingly quaint name of Ship's Husband. The *Admiral Gardner's* husband was John Woolmore, who had risen from the ranks of seaman to captain in

the service of the East India Company.

In 1809, after the *Admiral Gardner* sank, some items were salvaged from the wreck, but the valuable cargoes deep in the hold were not reachable.

Around 1984, 175 years after the ship sank, a local fisherman reported that he thought he was snagging his nets on the *Admiral Gardner*, the fate of the ship being well-known locally. Some salvage was carried out in the summer of 1984, but due to weather problems and the special difficulties of working four miles offshore, the results were minimal.

In 1985 the wreck was listed as being of historical interest, and a licence to dive on the site was granted to Richard Larn of Cornwall, the original discoverer of the wreck having formed themselves into a syndicate known as The East India Company Divers.

In June 1985, professional divers from a company called SAR Diving, who were working with the EIC diving group, succeeded in recovering a large quantity of copper coins, which were

passed to the legal authority for such finds, the Receiver of Wreck. The most impressive find was an intact barrel which underwent preservation treatment at Portsmouth and was estimated to contain 28,000 coins.

The other East India ships Herridge refers to are:

— *Borneo Merchant* (600t) lost on her maiden voyage (Bengal to UK at Fort St George, Madras) on October 4, 1687. She carried a cargo of precious stones.

— *Duke of Atholl* (755t) was "burnt" on April 18, 1783 at Madras. She was on her maiden voyage from UK to Bengal. Her cargo is listed as 'specie' (coins).

— *Dartmouth* (400t) lost on November 14, 1721 at Fort St. George, Madras. She was on her way to the West Coast. Her cargo included 20 chests of silver.

Are there any enterprising persons in Chennai who might be tempted to dive in search of these three cargoes?

konam is held up since August this year for want of Rs. 5.00 lakhs.

2. The Satiyaageeswarar Temple at Kalakkad, Tirunelveli, is awaiting completion of its *Kumbabishekam* for want of Rs. 1.5 lakh since last year.

3. Sri Valleswarar Temple, neighbouring the Kapaleeswarar shrine in South Mada Street, has been enshrouded in scaffolding for the past six months. We are told that the work is slow due to lack of funds.

4. The renovation of the tank in front of Kapaleeswarar shrine and the Chitra Kulam.

All this and more could have been safely accomplished with Rs.75 lakhs said to have been spent on the

chariot. What is the purpose of spending money on a temple which is already doing very well and is inundated with offerings? There are so many shrines all over the state under the HR&CE management where not even one 'velai' worship is currently done. It is high time that a serious rethink takes place. Perhaps, rich temples can take over the management of the poorer shrines.

However, such suggestions, if implemented, will neither attract publicity nor will they bring in votes. Sensation triumphs over sense.

Sriram Venkatakrishnan
73, Kamarajar Salai
Srinivasa Avenue
Raja Annamalaiapuram
Chennai - 600 028.

A pack of cards

Of late, many finance companies (NBFCs) are falling like a pack of cards, one after another, and the affected people are mostly old and retired persons belonging to the middle and lower middle classes who solely depend for their sustenance on the interest they get from company deposits. There seems to be no chance of the revival of these NBFCs, although tall promises are made.

All these sad happenings are due to the ineffectiveness of RBI's directives. The question now arises, to whom should all these affected persons look for protection of their interests.

So many political parties have surfaced, for the elections. Instead of trading charges against each other, will one public spirited political party among them take up the cause of the poor depositors and ensure that they retrieve their lost deposits? That will be real service indeed!

P.V. Rama Rau
No.2, Crescent Street
Seethamma Colony
Alwarpet
Chennai 600 018.

Remembering trams

As I wrote in my letter on trams I would like to add the following:

There was a tram service running through Triplicane High Road, past Ice House Police Station and after crossing Edward Elliot's Road (as Radhakrishnan Salai was called then) terminating Hamilton Bridge (corrupted in local parlance to Ambattan bridge. I have seen this name displayed on the destination boards of the trams that plied on that route). This is the short tram service referred.

Opposite *Dare House*, near the High Court compound, there was a loop and a siding in the tramline so that trams could either turn back at Parry's Corner instead of proceeding to Harbour to Royapuram or stay in the siding for rest and then take the return direction. Because the track was narrow gauge, trams would often get derailed or would straddle two tracks, creating a fine spectacle but causing worry and strain to the Maintenance Staff setting right the situation!

In 1951, there was an island in the road junction opposite Elphinstone Cinema in which cars were parked. A circular public

convenience existed in the middle of the island.

V. Narayanaswamy
Flat No.2E, Coral Arch
5, East Mada Street
Srinagar Colony
Chennai 600 015.

Speeding up mail

The following tips supplied by the Department of Posts, Government of India, help make our mail machinable and gain extra speed at no extra postage.

For mail to be processed in the Automatic Mail Processing Centre, please remember:

- Use envelope of length less than 25.5 cm.
- Always use gum to close the flaps.
- Avoid using staplers for closing envelopes.
- Use white or light colour envelopes.
- For Book Post, use top-open covers.
- Use thick quality covers i.e., 70 GSM and above.
- Do not print or write in the barcoding area, i.e., leave 15mm space from the bottom edge.

S. Ramesh
32/33 Sripuram IST
Royapettah, Chennai 600 014.

Clean air, when?

There is absolutely no improvement in the vehicular pollution scene in Chennai, unlike in other cities of India, where sincere and serious corrective measures have already been in place for the last few years. In Chennai, the half-baked measures have not even been implemented whole-heartedly.

When do we get effective results and breathable quality clean air?

Mukesh Kumar
131 Broadway
P.B. 1586
Madras 600 108.

Quizzin' with Ram'nau

(Questions 1 to 12 are from the period November 16th to 30th. Questions 10 to 12 pertain to Chennai and Questions 13 to 20 are general questions pertaining to Tamil Nadu.)

1. Which former Indian official has been selected, by the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, for the International Man of the Year award for 2000?
2. Who has been chosen as Reuters' Sports Personality of the Century?
3. Name the two part-time members whose retirement from the Prasar Bharathi Board caused an outcry recently
4. Who has been chosen for the Gandhi Peace Prize for 1999?
5. Why would the date 19.11.99 be the last one with a peculiar feature for a long time to come?
6. Who is the new Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India?
7. Name the new models of cars launched by Maruti and Ford in India recently
8. What great breakthrough in the field of genetics has the Sanger Centre, Britain, achieved?
9. Where was the World Trade Organisation meet held amid massive protests?
10. Which famous Chennai-based retail chain does B.A. Kodandarama Setty and family own?
11. Which chain of shops headquartered in Chennai has a name similar to that of a fictional character in a Morris West novel?
12. In Chennai, where would you be served by baristas?
13. Name the popular satirist and senior journalist from Tamil Nadu nominated to the Rajya Sabha recently
14. Name the former Union Finance Minister, and the founder of one of the most respected industrial houses of Tamil Nadu, whose birth centenary was celebrated on November 26th?
15. Where would you find the country's second largest monolithic Nandi?
16. Which pilgrimage centre is believed to be the place where Siva and Parvati are said to have appeared before Sage Agasthya?
17. What is the anglicised name for Kodikkurai?
18. Which place is also known as Thillai after a forest of *thillai* (*Excoecaria agallocha*) shrubs?
19. What is the presiding deity at Palani called?
20. About which thriving city of Tamil Nadu have the likes of Megasthenes, Pliny, Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta written?

(Answers on Page 8)

What was hardly on our lips till a few months ago, this ten-lettered word, has become the most uttered one, throughout the world as 1999 gets ready to pass into history.

Government agencies and corporate houses, MNCs, airlines, hotels, restaurants and clubs are all loudly proclaiming their plans to greet the arrival of this great and epochal moment in the ongoing history of the world. All the hype tickles your pride and vanity that, in a few days from now, you will be occupying a moment in time that some 20 generations of your forebears went without.

With the countdown in glittering lights, at P.Orr & Sons on the Anna Salai and in a conservative club or two as well, reminding us constantly of the number of days still left for the mega moment, those fortunate to be alive on that day will witness the eclipse of a millennium that carries in its bosom a whole lot of recorded history, from when Ericson discovered North America, exactly a thousand years ago (AD 1000), right till the events of December 31, 1999.

We have already had a foretaste of the events that will ensure a niche for that last day of the first Millennium in history. In late October, a grand splash, acclaimed as a run-up rehearsal

Thoughts of an Octogenarian on the Millennium

to the oncoming millennium, fireworks and lasers illuminated the Houston skyline, during the "Radiant Energy Power of Houston Sky Power And Beyond" show that featured 2 million watts of lighting and 50,000 pounds of explosives and which was watched 2 million people. Again, billed as the most spectacular millennial event anywhere in the world, there will be the 'Millennium Dome' that can house 13 Albert Halls or two Wembley Stadia, in Greenwich, London. These two events are just a foretaste of the things to happen on M-Day.

When the clock begins the first strike at midnight on December 31st, multiply Houston and Greenwich a zillion times, since similar events and splashes will occur in every other city of the developed

world. It will be an event, which will involve 6 billion members of humanity and as they shout themselves hoarse at that great moment (time differential to be kept in kind), the cumulative noise and sound at the moment will go down in history as the loudest non-violent explosion in a thousand years!

The much-awaited great moment will then vanish in a jiffy, having lasted just 60 fleeting seconds, and will yield place to the dawn of a new millennium, that is to last the next 1000 years. And once the revelry and frenzy of the crowds draws to an end at daybreak, slowly, there'll come realisation that the next millennium will be no different from the previous one. Problems and maladies that hitherto dogged humanity — wars and pestilence,

hunger and poverty, greed and avarice, rape, murder, robbery and theft, would continue in the new millennium too. Periodic earthquakes, cyclones and hurricanes and other natural calamities will make no distinction between one millennium and another. The misery and abject poverty of the several billions of poor, not assured of a single square meal a day, will continue to pose a mighty challenge to society. Continuous progress in the field of science may usher in new discoveries, medicine and cures, yet new types of diseases, new health problems, new dangers will emerge. As near or as far as I can see, a world free from ill-will, diseases, fears and anxieties of an angst-ridden humanity is just a pipe-dream. The new millennium will make no difference in the life of man.

Instead of aiming for the stars, if only we worked towards modest and achievable targets, a new and better world order may emerge. As a wise Chief Minister said, let us not hope for wild beasts to eat and live in peace with tame lambs; but if, at least, lambs will live in peace with lambs and man with his fellowmen in a spirit of harmony, it will begin a new and much better world order than man had witnessed so far.

Heritage Act: Why the delay?

(Continued from Page 1)

was ready almost a year ago. What's delaying its introduction in the Legislature?

— Even while the Act was being drafted it was decided to draw up a list of landmark buildings and ensure their temporary protection till the Act was in place and assured their preservation. Little was done about such a list till a few months ago and we are still far from any kind of notification of landmark buildings even though a list is under scrutiny.

— Government's reluctance to commit itself wholeheartedly to heritage conservation. A recent GO did not ban the pulling down or alteration of any building that might be considered a heritage building; it only asked the Corporation/CMDA to advise and negotiate with owners who might put under threat any such building.

— The reluctance of Government to offer even moral support to any heritage conservation project. An INTACH request for an expression of official interest in a detailed study (at no cost to Government) of the Pulicat area, in order to

develop it as a heritage town, was turned down.

— When restoration of heritage buildings is occasionally undertaken by Government or other institutions and individuals, the lack of discussion with even the few in the State who have had specialisation in modern conservation techniques is the rule. The result is the little conservation work that is done is often not true to

pristine conservation techniques.

— PWD and other Government fiscal procedures do not work in the case of conservation projects; they only stall the work as in the case of Senate House. There has to be greater flexibility in dealing with the rates sought by master craftsmen.

— Even if a building is saved and restored, how do you

ensure regular synergetic use and maintenance of the building in a city where maintenance is the least priority?

— What needs to be done to ensure protection of our natural heritage and cultural heritage?

How, asked your Editor, do we rid ourselves of these concerns and make sure we protect the symbols of a heritage that we should take pride in?

CONCRETE FOR ANNA SALAI

(Continued from Page 1)

pis will be raised from toll charges, share from sales tax collected, cess on diesel, motor vehicles tax, road tax etc. Government intends to make Neelangarai — Mamallapuram on the East Coast Road a toll stretch in line with these plans.

Hassan told *Madras Musings* that the government plans to strengthen as well as widen highways and major district roads at an outlay of Rs. 2,575 crore. P. Balakrishnan, Chief Engineer, State Highways De-

partment added, "The road sector needs a budget allocation of at least 15% of the Net State Domestic Product. But what we get today is just 2-3%, which results in shortfall in road maintenance and the laying of new roads. Rs. 6,380 crore is needed to strengthen and widen single and double lane roads". According to him about Rs. 14,500 crore would be needed during the next decade for road maintenance and road building.

Venkatachari Jagannathan

A helping hand from 'Chennai Heritage'

(Continued from Page 1)

Chennai Heritage. This educational workshop with speakers from Mumbai and Hyderabad, where heritage regulations are already in place, is to be held on December 22nd and 23rd.

Chennai Heritage is committed to helping seminars, workshops, symposia and exhibitions on heritage, environment and a better Chennai. Proposals seeking assistance should be sent to Tara Murali, 260A, TTK Road, Chennai 18.

Some voices of the Season

As the music season begins in Chennai, we record today some excerpts from interviews *Mudhra Bhaskar* and *Radha* had with various artistes who will grace the Season this year.

Prof. T.R. Subramaniam, vocalist, says:

When the music college started, Musiri Subramanyam was the Principal. Now a days Government recruits through interviews, but at that time, the authorities personally requested Musiri to take over as Principal.

All my music was learnt at the College. We used to practise long after college hours. Musiri used to even take us to his house in the evenings and give us coaching. When Musiri was in form, he used to teach for about 8 hours at a stretch...

A teacher should be a constant source of inspiration to the student. Many students with extraordinary talent have remained at the mediocre level due to want of good teachers. The talent of students is very high... (but) the talent of teachers is not matchingly growing... Parents are in a hurry to make their children perform. It is the duty of teachers to inculcate discipline and also direct the attention of students towards the higher values of music.

Cine Music Director Ramani Bharadwaj says:

I have been exposed to Carnatic, Western and Hindustani Music. The point I would like to emphasise here is that I never made any attempt to specialise in any of these forms of music as I felt the application of this knowledge to suit film music was more important than the absolute knowledge of any particular form of music per se...

In 1987 I started composing for jingles. I did one for EC TV which won the national award for the best jingle that year...

Jingles or no jingles, what I would like to re-emphasise is that music in any form attempts to convey something. It's a medium of communication. The minute we say communication, the purpose has to

be clear. If the objective is not clear, the output would not have the desired effect.

Now with this background, if we try to understand jingles, it would dawn on us how difficult it is because all the communication we were talking about has to be achieved in a maximum of one minute. Within this time-frame, our communication should be clear. The second thing to know while producing a jingle is the target audience you are addressing — whether it is AIR or FM, whether it is Star TV or local TV, whether it is for a cosmopolitan crowd or for a rural population. The market segment in which we are operating needs to be understood in no uncertain terms...

There are three stages in the recording of a song — melody, arrangement and recording. It is only in recording that computer plays its part. Computer essentially facilitates the process. It is not an end in itself. It's only a means to achieve an end.

A computer cannot ever replace the human brain as far as music is concerned. A computer cannot produce words. It cannot produce emotions. A computer can only help in better synchronisation. Let us get this very clearly...

The scope of music in the film industry is tremendous today. It's appreciated so much that the cassette sale of cine songs, a by-product of the film industry, is overtaking the main business itself, to the extent of covering the production cost of the songs in the film. As a result of this healthy trend in music, there is intense competition in this industry. But surprisingly, so far I am yet to come across someone who feels comfortable in choosing music direction as a profession...

Some aspects of cinema music make it difficult compared to classical Carnatic Music. First of all, cinema music needs a good strong voice, for Carnatic Music it is not a must (that is my perception!). Secondly, cinema music needs a special skill of being able to adjust with a variety of instruments and sing in gaps. Carnatic Music does not have this constraint. Thirdly, cinema music involves frequent change of scales during the course of a song, Carnatic Music does not encounter this challenge. Fourthly, cinema music needs expression; for Carnatic Music this is not a

necessity. All these characteristics make cinema music a very difficult proposition.

P. Unnikrishnan, vocalist, says:

I was certainly not a prodigy. There was some music in me that had to be brought out and moulded the right way. Fortunately, I got it through my teachers...

Light music is quite tough to produce. But my foundation in Carnatic Music helps me to be more creative and improvise accordingly. In the past, a good voice was not an important requisite but now things have changed. Music has attained transformation in terms of polish and people are looking for melodious music. They have a ear for good sound, so if it is not pleasant, they don't relish it...

Balancing between film and classical music is really strenuous as the two systems are totally different...

Lyrics are definitely essential to reach out to a large audience, abstract music can be understood by a limited audience only...

The quality of sound has improved a lot due to technology. In fact, with proper acoustics, 50% of the success of a concert is taken care of. There is also less strain on the voice now. Of course, some organisations do not take much care about this and when singing with all earnestness for 3 hours, at the end if some people from the audience come and tell you that they were not able to hear you, it can be really frustrating...

Music is a tricky profession and there is stiff competition. So, for any beginner, it is always safe to have a back-up in terms of a job till he gets a proper break in the music line. Pursuing two professions simultaneously will definitely involve tremendous hard work.

* * *

K.V. Prasad, mridangist, says:

In Kerala, the sense of rhythm is very strong and pronounced, probably because of the temple culture. So, rhythmic instruments like *chenda melam*, *pancha vadyam* contributed a lot towards promoting this sense of rhythm amongst the people. Thus, it is no surprise that I, as a youngster brought up in this atmosphere, took a liking for a rhythmic instrument like *mridangam*. The *chenda melam* especially has got a lot of rhythmic intricacies and it requires a keen, exploring mind to appreciate this art...

When I play as an accompaniment, I feel professional integrity prohibits an accompanying artiste from superseding a main artiste. However much I may try doing that, I cannot be recognised as a main artiste. Then why do that and spoil the concert? Also, this is not required...

* * *

Raji Gopalakrishnan, vocalist, says:

In 1976, I got married and went to Bahrain. We have the Indian Fine Arts Society there. Last year I had performed for its silver jubilee celebration. All leading musicians participate in its yearly programmes, and we have 2 or 3 major programmes every year...

The music culture in Dubai is quite good. They too have an Indian Fine Arts Society and I have performed there...

I don't believe music is in-born. You need strenuous practice. I have done hard work over the years...

In my opinion, a good concert should be a balanced combination satisfying both the mass and the class...

The theory that if you sing for films, you spoil your name in the classical field is certainly not something I subscribe to. There are any number of people who have done extremely well in both forms of music. MLV, DKP, MS, Balamurali-krishna, GNB are a few...

(Courtesy: *Mudhra*)



Till December 20: 'Indigo Ideas', an exhibition and sale of natural indigo-dyed garments, fabrics, rugs and linen work by master craftsman Guruppa.

• Christmas sale.
• All-India crafts mela, 'Margazhi Magic'

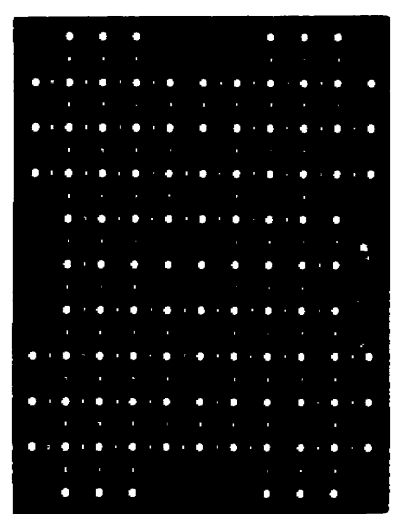
• *Tappattam* demonstration
Till January 1: Exhibition of Christian ikons.

December 25: Indigo tie and dye workshop conducted by Mini Nageswaran.

Compositions of Thyagaraja sung by Sushila Raman (4 p.m. to 5 p.m.)

December 21-January 1: *Kumatti* demonstration.

(All the above at DakshinaChitra.)



December 17-19: COINEX 99, the annual exhibition of the Coin Society. (10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Centenary Exhibition Hall, Government Museum.)

January 1: Closing date for the "All-India Poetry Competition 2000", sponsored by The British Council and The Poetry Society (India).

1st Prize one excursion ticket to Britain and other prizes. Special prize for the best poem in translation

Age Groups: Young poets — 12-17 years; New Millennium poets — 18-35 years; and general category.

Entries may be in the form of either original poems in English or translated from any Indian language into English.

For entry forms contact: The British Council 737, Anna Salai Chennai 600 002.

Till January 12th: Exhibition of the work of A. Balasubramaniam. (At the Apparao Galleries.)

Till January 15th: 'The All India Artists Show', an exhibition of paintings and sculptures (At the Vinyasa Art Gallery.)

THE TOWER & THE ALUMNI

(Continued from Page 3)

Secondary School premises in 1985. Miller reportedly protested its erection, and preferred to stay away from it.

The College Day Association modernised its name in 1963 to the Madras Christian College Alumni Association and it continues to be a lively group that carries out its im-

portant role in maintaining the influence of the College beyond its walls and campus.

The total cost of the new buildings built in 1883-1887 was Rs.1,36,000 contributed by: MCC alumni: over Rs.8,000; other friends in India: Rs.22,000; friends in Britain: Rs.47,000; and Government: Rs.59,000.

The construction was completed in 1887, and the new hall was used publicly for the first time on March 28, 1887, at the prize distribution. Just six days later, on April 3rd, the College celebrated its 50th birthday. The College Tower housed the MA reading rooms and library.

Vignettes from an 'encyclopaedia'

It is one of my regrets that I never toured Sri Lanka. My only visit, if I can call it that, was when I stopped over in Colombo on my way to Australia in October 1958. After the *Iberia* had docked, we had to wait till Peter May's team came on board, for the MCC had flown the players from London to save them a fortnight of the three-week long voyage.

I spent the entire afternoon with Unnikrishnan of the PTI, had my last sample for the year of curry and rice and did a round of the newspaper offices to meet fellow journalists. Then, at sundown, I went on board, sat in the lounge sipping gin and tonic to the tune of a Chopin nocturne, as the *Iberia* weighed anchor and the stars began to twinkle over the Indian Ocean.

But some time in the 40s I had been entertained at Chepauk by cricketers from Sri Lanka and had been fascinated by the music of their names... Kelaart and Gunaratane. Pulle and Jayawickrema. They bowled and batted and fielded with the carefree abandon of players who have not been exposed to the tension of Test cricket.

Memories of that visit are a but hazy and, as I try to sort them out. I can imagine them vibrating to the husky, resonant voice of Bobby Talyarkhan. To a listener in Chennai, he brought to life the mystic magical spin of left-arm Chippa and the dashing strokeplay of 'Peshwa' Rangnekar' all of them now in Elysian fields.

So, for confirmation, I turned to *The Janashakthi Book of Sri Lankan Cricket**. It is a magnificent tome of over 600 pages, as voluminous as only an encyclopaedia can be — and like an encyclopaedia, it covers every facet of the game played in the emerald isle, compiled by that master statistician and shrewd observer S S Perera, under the guidance of S Muthiah, noted editor and author in his own right.

I was reassured that memory did not play me false, for a Sri Lankan team did tour this land in December-January 1940 even while the Luftwaffe was assembling on airfields in France to launch its blitz on London and Pandit Nehru was rejecting Jinnah's claims to represent all Muslims.

In this calm before the storm, the game went on. In the unofficial Test at Bombay, the Lankans had no clue to the bowling of Chippa who took five for 36 in his first big match; another to claim attention on his debut was the debonair, dashing left-hander, Khandu Rangnekar who joined Vijay Merchant and Hemu Adhikari in a run spree. The *Janashakthi* book captures the highlights of this game and, glancing through it. I was reminded of that brief, bright Christmas vacation before the war touched our shores.

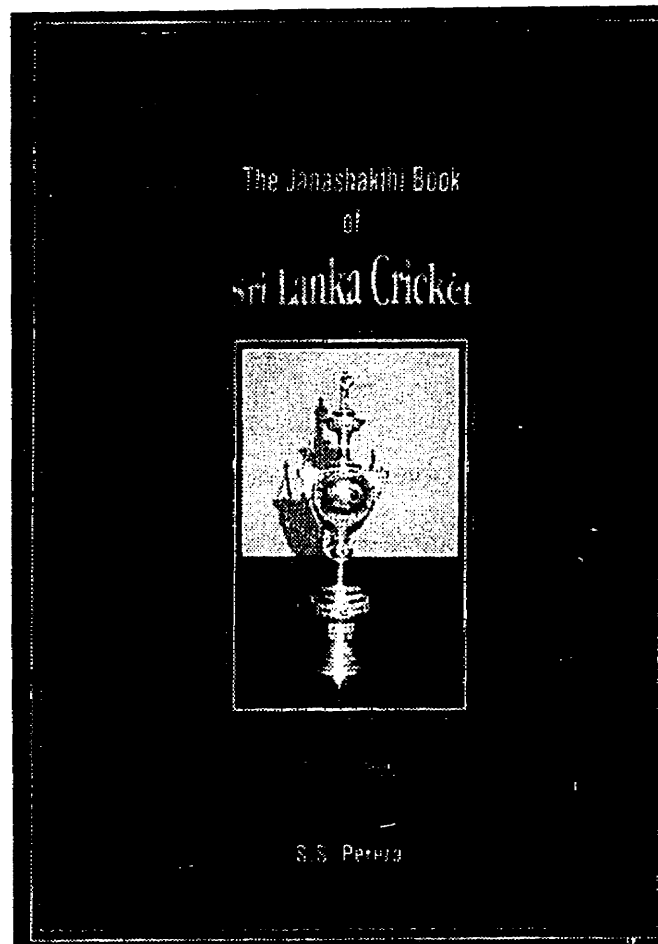
So one had to wait till it was over, after Hassett's Services team had passed through India on their way home to be treated to batting the like of which is rarely seen. Even to this day, the name of Sri Lanka's

A review
by
K.N. Prabhu

Sathasivasam is mentioned with the reverence shown to players the Vishwanath. Weekers and Tendulkar who have graced Chepauk. Sathasivasam made 215 against a South Zone attack which had troubled the Australians. To my eternal regret. I missed this performance, for I had no money for a ticket, having run through my allowance during the visit of the Australians.

It was not Madras alone which went into raptures over Sathasivasam, for his strokeplay had endeared him to the crowds who watched the Pentangular when he turned out for The Rest, though he was not qualified to do so. But it little mattered in those days when the world was starved of cricket...

Perera's *Janashakthi* book offers other vignettes. Douglas Jardine had bitter memories of Sri Lanka. As stuffy as ever. Jardine had the students, who barracked him, removed from the ground. But the protesters had the last word, for they punctured his car and he was forced to miss part of the morning's play.



man out in a side which was dominated by Stan Jayasinghe who in batting and bowling was a host in himself. There was an occrdentall strain about Tissera's batting, as if he was in the direct line of descent from Saram...

Tissera was, in a manner of speaking, born to command, however lightly he may have held the reins. And it showed in his timely declaration in the final Test match at Ahmedabad where Sri Lanka scored their first win over India. It was a pleasure to share in the unbridled feelings of joy which were expressed when Tissera hit Goel to mid-wicket to win the match. Years later, Tissera also showed the stuff he was made of when he made 50-odd runs after Mendis and Wettimuny had been laid low by Jeff Thomson in the World Cup of 1979. To Tissera goes the distinction of having led three Lankan teams to victory. All this is detailed in *The Janashakthi Book*.

A comprehensive record of the game in the island. My problem now is to find a place of prominence for this excellent presentation. (Courtesy: *Mid-day*, Mumbai.)

There is also the interesting bit about Derek de Saram who scored 128 for Oxford against Woodfull's Australians in 1984. Some years later, de Saram got on the wrong side of the government and was jailed. On a stop-over enroute to Australia, de Saram was visited by the MCC manager Billy Griffith and Colin Cowdrey. It is said that he wore his Harlequin tie when he met them. The old school tie meant much to players of his generation.

My pleasantest memories of a Sri Lankan visit concerns Michael Tissera and his men. Tissera seemed to be the old

* Distributed in India by East West Books, Chennai 600 010.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. The former Election Commissioner, G.V.G. Krishnamurthy; 2. Football legend, Pele; 3. Prof. Romila Thapar and Rajendra Yadav; 4. Baba Amte; 5. It would be, for approximately the next 1111 years, the last date with all the digits being odd ones!; 6. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam; 7. Baleno and Ikon; 8. The decoding of the complete make-up of a human chromosome; 9. Seattle, U.S.

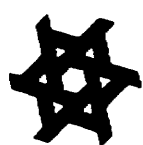
10. Vivek's; 11. Cassidy's; 12. At Qwiky's.

* * *

13. 'Cho' Ramaswamy; 14. T.T. Krishnamachari (TTK); 15. At the Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur; 16. Vedaranyam; 17. Point Calimere; 18. Chidambaram; 19. Sri Dandayuthapani; 20. Madurai

* * *

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



Amalgamations Group

APCOM

Apcom Computers Ltd.



Ashok Leyland



Bank of Madura Ltd.

**EIH ASSOCIATED
HOTELS LTD.**

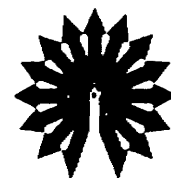
HDFC

**Housing Development
Finance Corp. Ltd.**



India Cements Ltd.

**KASTURI &
SONS
LTD.**



**Murugappa
Group**

Rane

Rane Group

**The
SANKAR
Group**



**Sundaram Finance
Limited**



**Sundram Fasteners
Limited**



**Thiru Arooran
Sugars Ltd**

TVS-SUZUKI

**TVS Suzuki
Ltd.**

**WELCOMGROUP
Park Sheraton
Hotel & Towers**