

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

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What the Demolition of Beach House teaches us

Beach House, the historic bungalow inside Queen Mary's College campus (see *Heritage Watch* for further details) has been demolished. It is making way for a 'world-class auditorium' and so you cannot blame the authorities for thinking futuristic, and therefore sacrificing something of the past. The college was careful enough to consult the Justice E. Padmanabhan Committee Report to make sure the building was not listed there. And since it was not, it was not worth preserving. The building was dilapidated and the Public Works Department cleared its demolition so that the lives of students and faculty would not be endangered.

And so, nobody is to blame really. Except the building perhaps?

Each of the above precau-

tions that the authorities took before going ahead with the demolition needs scrutiny. That the building was dilapidated was well known. It was manifest to anyone who even walked or drove by the beach. But that it was on the verge of collapse is doubtful. And before we go into that, we need to enquire as to why it became dilapidated. It did so owing to prolonged

● by **Sriram V**

neglect. As long as the place was being used for classes, and many an alumna has written reminiscing about having lessons there, it was in reasonable shape. It was only when it was abandoned that it presented a derelict appearance. Since at least the 1980s, we know

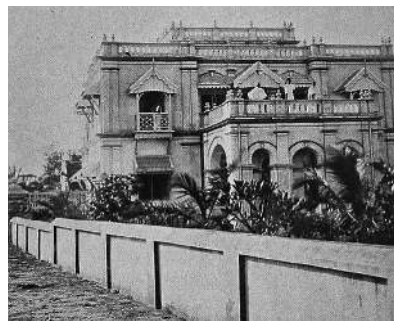
that when authorities plan to demolish a heritage structure, they do not do it in a hurry. They abandon it first, starve it of maintenance and then approach the PWD for a demolition certificate. The mills of the government grind slowly, and small.

Next comes the reliance on the Justice Padmanabhan Committee report. It is a very valuable document in that it was the first of its kind as far as built heritage in the city is concerned. It was however put together with a completely different purpose in mind – it was meant to list buildings before which large outdoor hoardings could be erected. It thus focused only on facades and did not go into details of historic structures within campuses.

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HERITAGE WATCH

Beach House – A Marker of the Freedom Struggle



The Queen Mary's College authorities may have deemed it fit to demolish Beach House 'as it had no heritage value' but we beg to differ. Built in the 1880s, it was one of the few residences facing the Marina. It served as the residence of S Subramania Iyer, legal luminary, who in 1895 became a judge of the High Court of Madras. He was the first Indian to serve as acting Chief Justice

of the High Court as well. While on the bench, he sat in judgement in landmark trials such as those of Arbuthnot & Co and the Tirupati Mahant case – trials that shaped modern Indian thought. He served as Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras.

He was a founding member of the Indian National Congress and after retirement, became a champion of India's freedom, aligning with Annie Besant's Home Rule League. When he was chastised by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India in 1917 for writing to President Woodrow Wilson of the US, stating that that country should not aid a colonial power such as Britain in WWI, he surrendered his knighthood in protest. This was before Rabindranath Tagore did it in 1919.

So much for the historicity of *Beach House*, which like *Beach House* itself, was forgotten just because it did not find mention in a listing of heritage structures in the city.



Tackling Super El-Nino 2026

The El Nino global weather phenomenon this year has been one of the most severe ones in recent times and has had a great impact nationally, with the country's primary rainfall season, the Southwest monsoon being erratic and largely below-normal till date. This has in-turn had a cascading effect leading to several attendant issues, including a direct impact on the agricultural season (raising concerns of food inflation risk), unseasonal soaring temperatures, increased power consumption etc. For Tamil Nadu, the biggest impact has been the delay in the opening of the Mettur dam thanks to the inadequate storage lev-

els in the catchment areas of the dams in the neighbouring state of Karnataka. With global weather models and agencies expecting the El Nino phe-

● by **Karthik Bhatt**

nomenon to turn into a Super El-Nino (where sea-surface temperatures rise by more than 2 degree Celsius) soon, it is time to take stock of our state's preparedness.

Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in climate change mitigation and adaptation, with

initiatives such as the Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company, a nodal agency to lead and coordinate the state's climate action and sustainability strategies, the recognition of heat waves as a state-level disaster, the establishment of the first State-owned Green Climate Fund with a corpus of Rs 1000 crore etc. Following on from this commendable track record, it has recognized the threat of Super El-Nino and is putting in place measures to tackle its effects. While presenting the Agricultural Budget last week, the government has announced the implementation of the District Agricultural Contingency Plan setup by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in 12 districts such as Namakkal, Vellore, Dharmapuri, Perambalur, etc that are expected to be impacted the most according to an assessment by the Government of India.

(Continued on page 2)

What the Demolition of Beach House teaches us

(Continued from page 1)

This was recognized in Justice Prabha Sridevan's judgement concerning Bharat Insurance Building and Gokhale Hall in 2010 when the report was recommended to the government as the basis on which it could make its own assessment and list of heritage buildings, prior to forming a heritage conservation committee. That very little action has since happened is known to all *Madras Musings* regulars. Those in possession of heritage structures therefore make use of this report one way or the other. You cannot blame them in the absence of anything better. But to rule out historicity based on this report is a grievous mistake.

Did the college really need a world-class auditorium? Will it be able to use such a structure regularly or will it be a showpiece that is locked up on most

days? Would it not have been better off with a renovated heritage structure in its midst that it could use as an office or as a set of classrooms? It seems that practical wisdom has been traded away for the sake of cosmetics.

Anyway, the building has come down. That it happened quite some time ago and several people apparently knew about it but chose to remain silent even when consulted at the proposal stage, makes it doubly shocking. The close scaffoldings erected for Metrorail work came in handy for the demolition to proceed apace without outsiders noticing. Once the matter became public, the college claims that it plans to name the proposed auditorium after S Subramania Iyer, the stellar occupant of *Beach House*. We can take some small satisfaction in that, if and when that happens.

TACKLING SUPER EL-NINO 2026

(Continued from page 1)

The constitution by the government of an expert advisory committee comprising members drawn from diverse fields to advise the Tamil Nadu Disaster Risk Reduction Agency (TN-DRAA) is yet another step in this direction. Chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary and Commissioner for Revenue Administration, it comprises members drawn from institutions such as Anna University (Centre for Climate Change and Disaster Management) and IIT Madras, besides climate-centric research institutes such as the World Resources Institute, India. Pradeep John, popularly known as the Tamil Nadu Weatherman too is part of the committee, whose tenure runs for two years, 2026-27 and 2027-28. Amongst its key reference terms is a continuous assessment of drought and rainfall conditions and offer solutions to ensure adequate preparedness.

At this juncture, it is also worthwhile to remember that we are hardly a couple of months away from the onset of the Northeast Monsoon, whose performance has a direct bearing on the water prospects

of North Coastal Tamil Nadu, particularly the region colloquially referred to as KTCC (Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur, Chennai and Chengalpet) districts. The Super El Nino phenomenon is also associated with higher risk of uneven rainfall distribution. Experts have warned that this erratic pattern is likely to continue this El Nino year as well. It is also worth recollecting that two prominent flooding episodes in recent memory, that of 2015 and 2023 were both triggered during El Nino years, with man-made factors playing a part in the substantial damages that followed and any possibility of a repeat (though ultimately how things pan out will depend on multiple monsoon drivers other than El Nino as well) could already be a cause of worry for Chennai. But that is for another day.

In short, this Super El Nino year may well be the first stern test for the newly-elected government and its ministers, many of whom lack major political experience. Given that climate change is increasingly influencing policy changes, governance, economic prospects worldwide, how well the current situation is handled at the ground level may well be a defining point in their political careers.

Yet another (Not) Madras Day

Chief, wherever you are, *The Man from Madras Musings* is certain that you are receiving your copy of *Madras Musings*. Or perhaps you are reading it on the computer as you always called it no matter that it had transitioned from being a mainframe to a desktop to a laptop to a tablet and then to a cell phone even while you were in our midst. Something tells MMM that you are reading it only in physical format, no doubt managing to get your personal copy in whichever cloud equivalent of the Madras Club you happen to be at this moment.

MMM can hear even your impatient snort at that preamble and your muttering that you wish that MMM would get on with the core of the matter. And so MMM will Chief, knowing as you do that your word is law to MMM. You would have

MMM: But if you say that the British did not found Madras and we agree, then what is it of the colonial past are we celebrating?

At this point N slunk away no doubt to resurface next year in the month of August. We on the other hand, do not need August for celebrating. Be of good cheer Chief, we are attending to the matter and as you will read in the next issue of this magazine, we would have celebrated Madras Day in the manner in which it should be celebrated.

Caught in a maze of approvals

'Tis that month of the year when everybody gets caught up in a fever of heritage walking, talking, (sadly) mocking, rocking, hawking – in short, the many ways in which they can celebrate the city. This is also that

would need to get permission from. MMM was rather taken aback for surely one department of the government ought to know other departments? But apparently this was not so and so MMM had to find out and pass on the information. The caller thanked MMM and said that he would soon be back. Days went by and MMM forgot about the matter completely till the evening before the heritage walk. It was then that he decided that he would call the caller, not with much hope for as you may all know from experience, no government official ever answers a phone call but always expects you to answer when they call. Miracles however do happen and MMM was blessed with a response, but in the negative. The caller said that try as he might the department that was in control of the

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

realized by now Chief that yet another Madras Day has come along and we are planning to celebrate it in the usual fashion, with talks, walks and other such programmes. You will also be happy to know Chief that the number of naysayers questioning as to why Madras Day or Madras Week even needs to be celebrated seems to be on the wane. Or perhaps they have moved on to complain and carp about other things. However, MMM hastens to point out that one or two specimens still survive and they have not been consumed by bears like those who made fun of Elisha in the good book.

And so it was Chief that MMM was confronted with one such and the conversation went as follows:

Naysayer: Madras was not founded by the British.

MMM: I agree

N: it was not founded on August 22, 1639

MMM: I too have my doubts

N: Therefore, Madras Day should not be celebrated on that day.

MMM: Why don't you then suggest another day to be celebrated as Madras Day?

N: Hmm, let me think about it. Anyway, celebrating Madras Day is a colonial concept.

time of the year when people suddenly wake up to the existence of *The Man from Madras Musings*. And his phone never stops ringing or buzzing or vibrating – in short, the many ways in which a cell phone can make a nuisance of itself. Thus it was that MMM received a call which he initially ignored and then on perceiving that the caller was perseverant, realized that it could only be a government department and therefore made haste to answer.

The caller wanted to know as to how his department could associate with MMM's heritage walk. MMM replied that the caller and his department would be more than welcome to join in and be present when the walk was conducted. This the caller accepted with grace and added that he also wanted to know whether MMM needed any help. It was then that MMM decided that he ought to seek permission to enter a monument that is out of bounds and which, if given access to, would give his proposed walk that extra edge which makes all the difference. The caller at the other end said that certainly it would be done and hung up.

A day later the caller was back, this time wanting to know as to which department of the government he

monument had behaved like the proverbial deaf adder and had refused permission.

This to MMM was something of a disappointment but he decided to think it over and sure enough he was rewarded with a brainwave. In Madras that is Chennai, you always know someone who knows someone who can put you in touch with the man-in-charge and that is exactly what happened. A couple of calls later MMM had secured the permission which was beyond the scope of a government department!

The walk went off very well with the monument being the icing on the cake and everybody very happy. That very afternoon however, MMM noticed that the man-in-charge and at the end of the line of contacts from someone who knew someone who knew someone else had been transferred from the department that gave the permission. Of course this was a mere coincidence, for it was one among many transfers in the bureaucracy that day but it just gives you an idea as to how governments work.

Oh, by the way, Happy Madras Day!

– MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



L.M. Menezes

The writeup on L.M. Menezes in Madras Musings (July 16-31) was quite informative. I have had the good fortune of knowing and interacting with Mr. Menezes.

A Vacation in Several Stages of Dryness

There is a particular kind of chaos that arrives before an Indian family vacation. Not the cinematic chaos of missed passports or forgotten tickets – though we have managed those too, but those dramatic stories can wait for another day. Ours is almost entirely fabric-based.

A week before our trip to Singapore, our house looked as though a small textile cyclone had swept through it and settled permanently in the living room. Folded clothes waited to be ironed. Freshly dried, sun-kissed clothes waited to be folded. Ironed clothes sat crumpled in one corner making me wonder whether they needed one more hot treatment. Properly ironed clothes sat triumphantly inside suitcases. Another set of equally ironed clothes sat outside the suitcase because I suddenly felt I had packed too many blues.

At one point, I sent a message to family declaring, “The house is a mess like a hurricane tore through here,” accompanied, appropriately, by a laughing emoji that concealed the quiet despair of a woman who had been sorting garments by weather, occasion, duration and possible food spills for a whole week and then some extra “just in case” days.

Meanwhile, my husband and daughter

the sort that made you wonder whether you were becoming wetter from the weather or from simply existing outdoors in tropical humidity.

And yet, despite these dramatic downpours, the city somehow continued functioning with suspicious efficiency while we struggled to remove dripping ponchos without accidentally hitting fellow tourists in crowded queues.

By the time we returned, we fully expected to land in a gloriously rain-soaked Chennai.

Instead, the city greeted us with sunshine and humidity.

Not a drop.

Only evidence.

Puddles lingered in corners. Apartment corridors carried that unmistakable damp smell of recently retreated rain. Clotheslines across balconies displayed rows of half-dry garments — towels hanging heavily in resignation, jeans refusing cooperation, socks attempting optimism.

The rain, it appeared, had just left before we arrived.

Soon after, we drove to Bengaluru to drop our daughter off at my parents’ home for the summer holidays, another sacred ritual of Indian parenting. Summer vacations in our

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wandered through the house with the relaxed confidence of people who believed holidays happened naturally.

“Did you pack slippers?”

“Yes.”

“Which slippers?”

A pause.

“Did you keep an extra pair of clothes in cabin baggage?”

Another pause.

My daughter, of course, had concerns of her own.

“Can I take this hat?”

“No.”

“Why?”

“Because it won’t protect you from the sun.”

“But it matches my outfit.”

This led to lengthy discussions on whether hats were meant to prevent our heads from getting fried under the Singaporean sun or merely to coordinate aesthetically with photographs that would later be uploaded with suspiciously casual captions.

This is how vacations are prepared for in Indian homes. Not through travel brochures or itineraries, but through negotiations involving footwear, chargers, unidentified cables and mysterious pouches nobody opens but everybody insists are essential.

Singapore, meanwhile, had its own ideas about rain. It arrived suddenly and without warning, usually when we were furthest from shelter, carrying backpacks stuffed with ponchos, umbrellas and water bottles that somehow never made us feel prepared enough. The rain there was not the cool, cinematic kind. It was warm rain against already sweaty tourist bodies,

childhood had involved entire train journeys and steel tiffin carriers. Today they involve carefully planned road trips, snack bags that multiply mysteriously and strategic discussions about the cleanest possible washroom stop along the highway.

They also involve trying to hold conversations with teenage daughters whose head-phones create an invisible but highly effective force field. Every now and then she would suddenly laugh at something on her tablet while we exchanged curious glances in the front seat, entirely uninvited into the joke.

Bengaluru too seemed to be recovering from recent rain. Fallen gulmohar flowers plastered themselves against wet pavements. Muddy edges clung stubbornly to compound walls. Auto drivers discussed rainfall patterns with the authority of meteorologists personally consulted by the clouds.

One evening, while visiting a friend, our cab driver appeared determined to locate every pothole the rain had created. Each wobble sent pain shooting through my lower back until I began to suspect Bengaluru’s roads were trying to find the perfect fit, Cinderella-style.

Everywhere we went, we encountered signs of rain but never the rain itself.

It became almost personal.

The rain seemed to move through cities minutes ahead of us, leaving behind damp staircases, reluctant laundry and dramatic weather discussions before disappearing quietly around the next corner.

Back in Chennai, the laundry situation had evolved into something between science and emotional warfare. Clothes hung indoors under

By the way, the byline of the author of the piece says “Professor (Retd.) Loyola College”. To the best of my knowledge, there are no posts of professors in colleges in India. The posts in colleges are mostly that of assistant professor and associate professor. Even the principals of colleges are at best associate professors.

Dr. M.A. Kalam

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The article about late L.M. Menezes IAS (July 16-31) was a deserving tribute to the great soul who is no more with us. I had the opportunity to meet him once which is still lingering in my mind. He was then the Special Officer of the Madras Municipal Corporation (there was no Corporation Council). I was the president of the Residents’ Association in Ayanavaram and faced many problems from the Corporation for commencing the work of extending civic facilities.

Many a time I had been to the Corporation office which ended in futility. Finally, I decided to meet the then Special Officer. The meeting was exceptionally remarkable. I met L.M. Menezes in his cabin where he called the officer concerned, gave instant instructions to expedite the matter and reminded him that attending to the residents’ grievances, solving them to the satisfaction of the concerned residents and their happiness should be the Corporation’s priority. Subsequently, the matter was solved expeditiously.

Menezes was an officer who blended authentic authority with humility.

Alas! A great, responsible bureaucrat well known for swift action is no more but he has left a personal impact.

K.Rajendran

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Nip it in the bud

Island Grounds (the “lung space of Madras” as described by Rajaji), has been in the news, often for the wrong reasons.

The latest salvo is the thinking of the bureaucracy to shift the Secretariat to Island Grounds/ Madras Race Course Grounds, Koyembedu.

Madras City is already bursting at the seams as a result of the population explosion growing density leading to traffic bottlenecks and its management, not to speak of the increasing dog menace!

If there is some vacant space available, the powers that be start thinking of how to concretise it not withstanding the disastrous consequences. Whether it be monsoon, drought, or cyclones, the city is not capable of meeting it, adding insult to injury.

Why should all the departments be concentrated only in Madras City, causing people travelling back and forth from one end to the other? We need to make railway reservations a month earlier to get the seats!

Why not shift the HRCE department to the Tanjore area where temples are concentrated? Why not fisheries to Mandapam area, and the forest range to Coimbatore/Ooty/Tenkasi? Can not the Tamil Development be shifted to Madurai, the cradle of Tamil sangam? There are several such similar instances. This way we can decongest Madras City, develop other areas in the State, and avoid problems like travel bottlenecks.

Creating many sub secretariats at different places in the State should be the order of the day!

More importantly, the remaining departments can function from Fort St. George itself, obviating the necessity of occupying the few existing vacant areas in the City! The deficit budget need not to be further bloated!

Hope the powers that be will seriously look into the matter and prevent further degrading of Madras City.

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fans in various stages of recovery. Some garments felt dry until folded, at which point hidden pockets of moisture revealed themselves like betrayal. Others acquired that faint smell that announces they are technically dry but spiritually still wet.

The great irony, of course, was that the carefully packed vacation clothes had behaved impeccably throughout the trip. The real battle began only after returning home.

Perhaps that is the nature of summer rain in our cities. It does not arrive grandly with thunderous declarations. It slips in mischievously, interrupts laundry schedules, creates philosophical potholes and disappears before you can properly witness it.

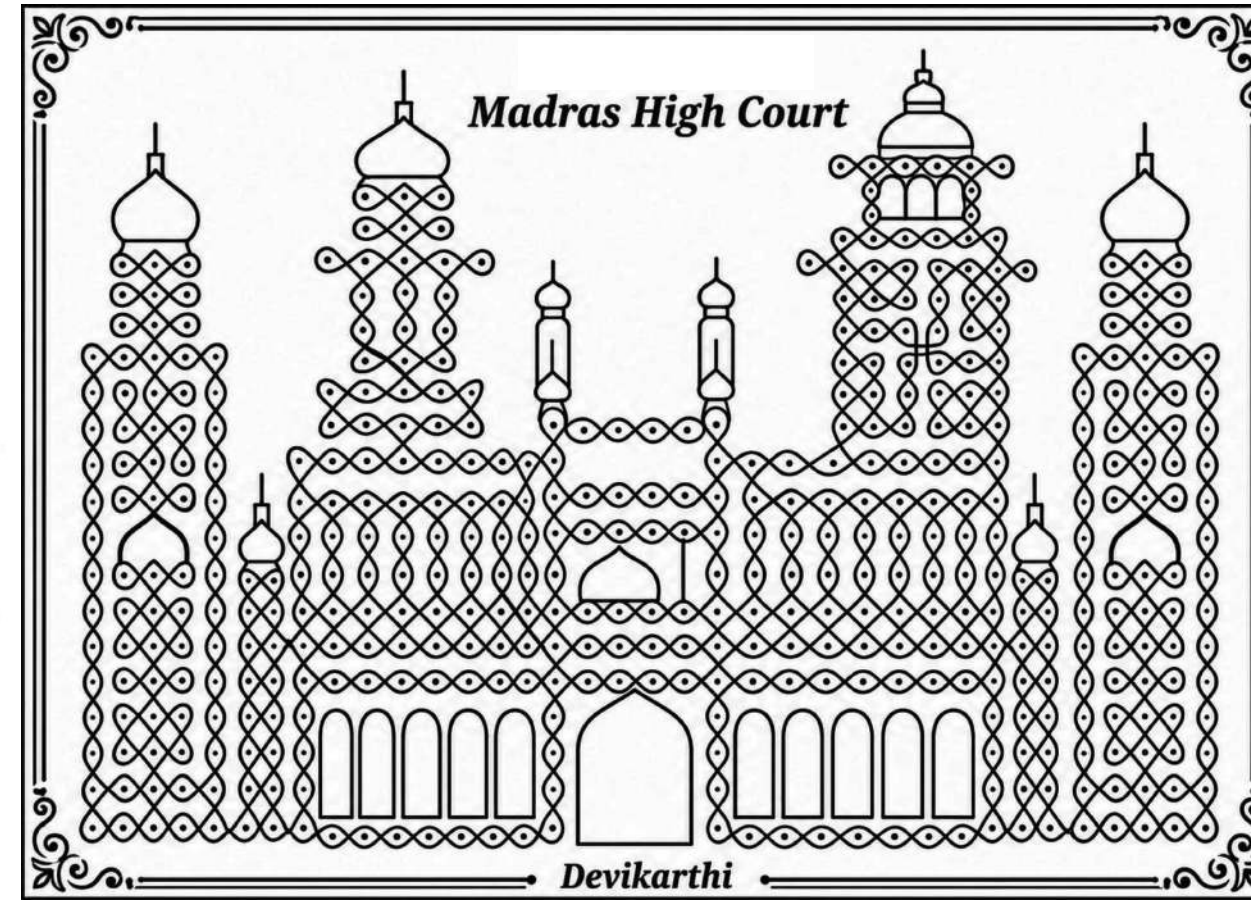
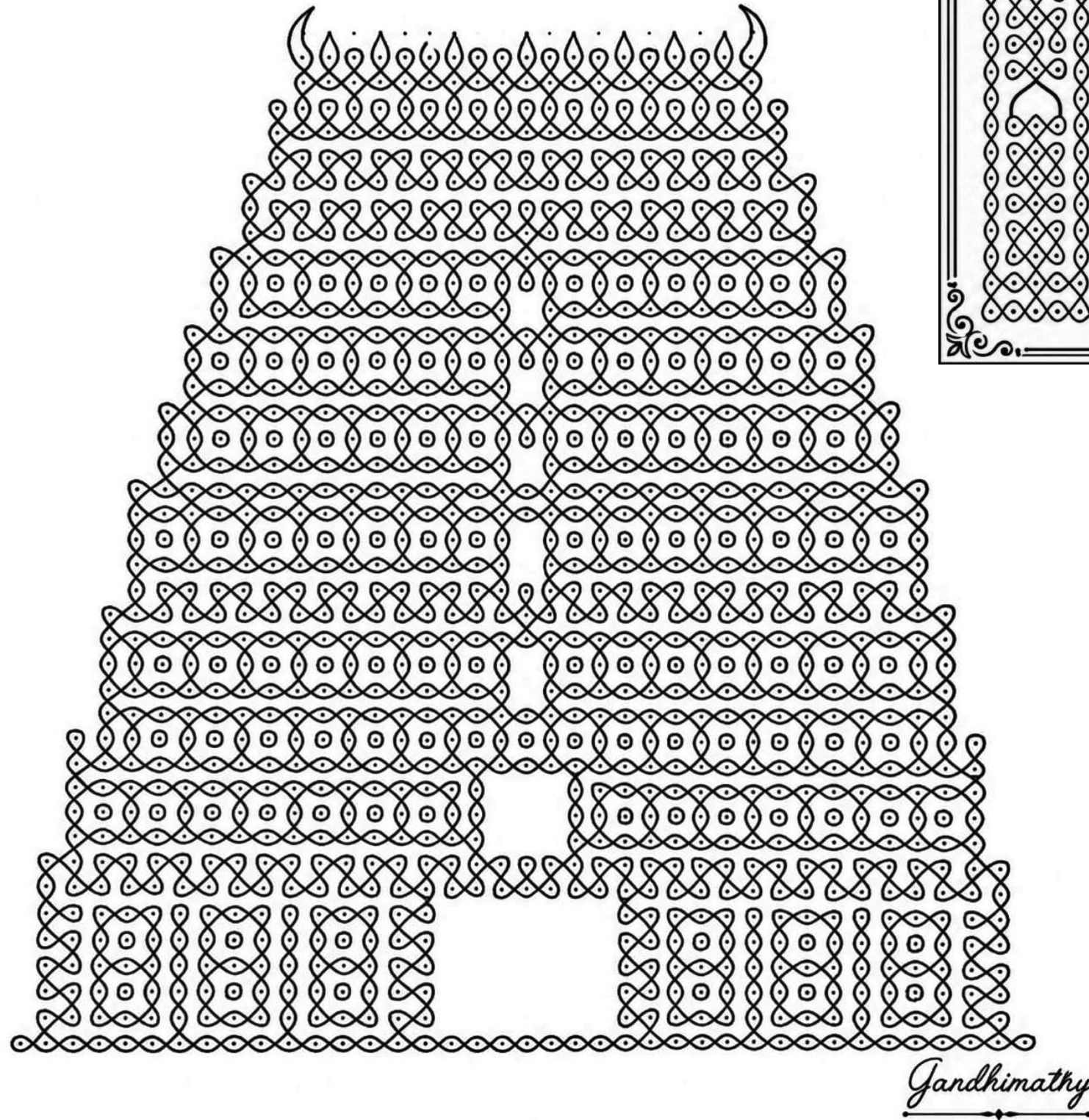
And somewhere in homes across Chennai and Bengaluru, mothers continue standing before overflowing clothes baskets, holding up slightly damp T-shirts to the light, wondering whether they need just one more hour under the fan.

Depiction of City's heritage buildings through Kolam

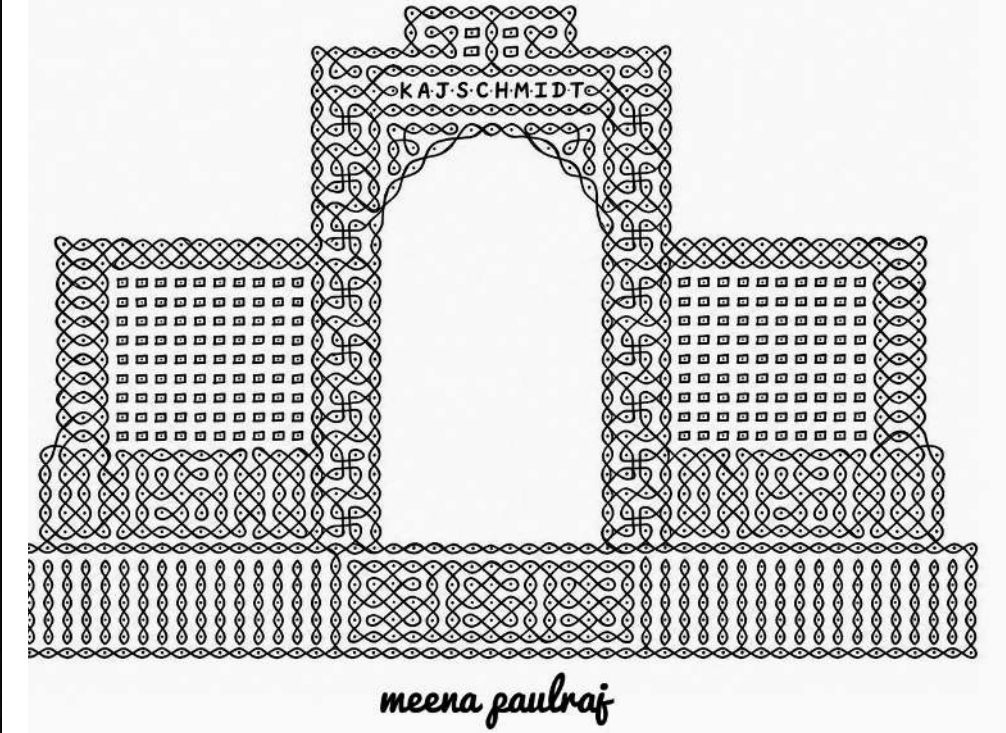
Kolam Enthusiasts is a community dedicated to preserving and promoting the traditional art of kolam through learning, innovation, and cultural initiatives. As part of the upcoming Madras Day celebrations, the community has created a special Madras-themed kolam that pays tribute to Chennai's rich heritage, culture, and identity. Its Founder and Mentor Vins Raj, tells *Madras Musings* that "through this artwork, we hope to celebrate the city's traditions while showcasing how kolam continues to be a living cultural art form. Here are some photographs of the kolam. We believe this initiative will inspire readers to appreciate and preserve one of Tamil Nadu's most cherished traditional art forms."

– Vins Raj

கபாலீஸ்வரர் கோயில் கோபுரம்

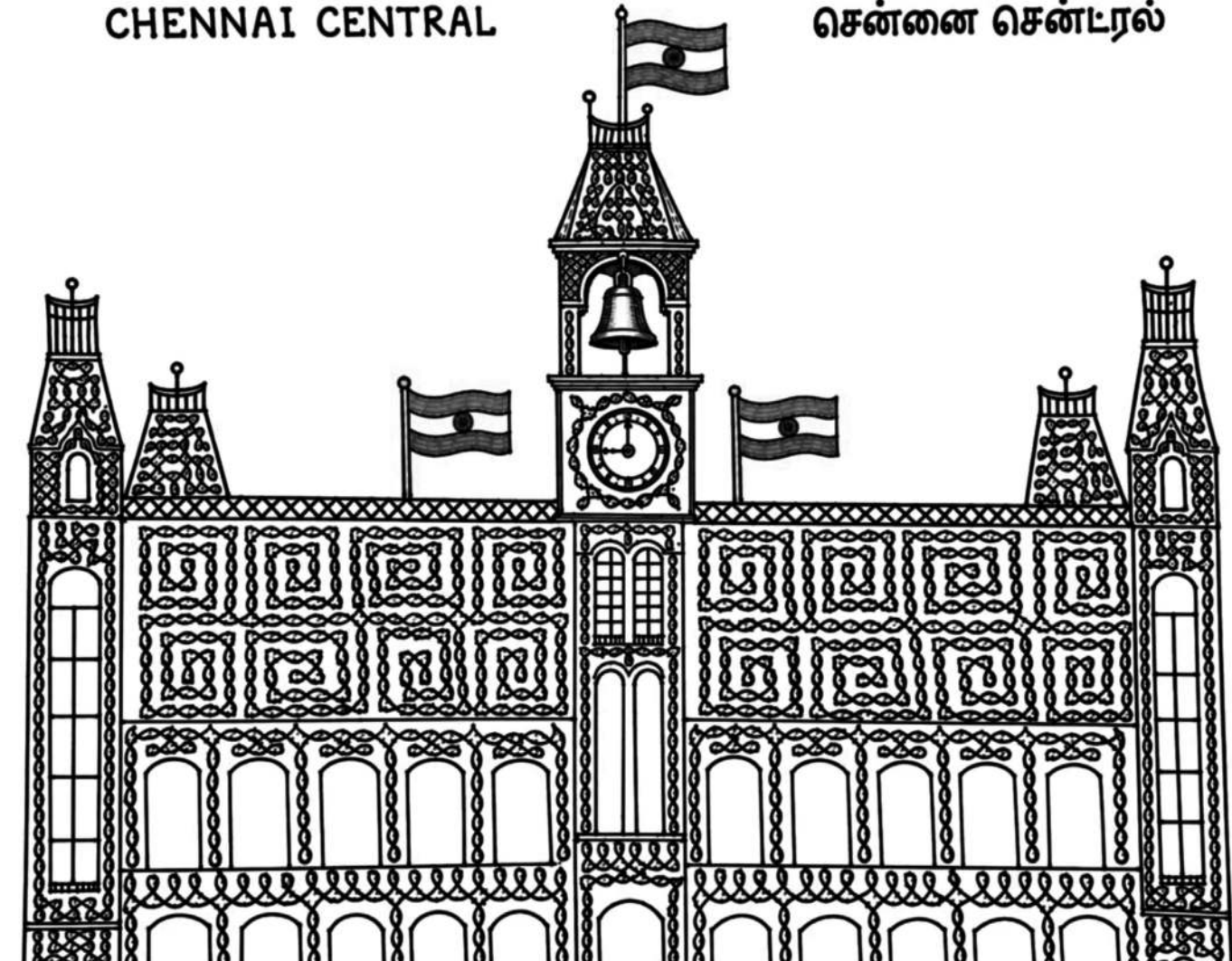


Besant Nagar monument



CHENNAI CENTRAL

சென்னை சென்ட்ரல்



Dentistry in Madras in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries

Chronicles of dentistry and dental education in Madras city (presently Chennai) and the presidency (presently, Tamil Nadu) speak of two private dental colleges in Madras in early 20th century: one established by Venkata Rao and another by HM Rao. Both ceased operations in the 1940s. These chronicles also speak of the appointment of a Royal-Army Dental Assistant to help in treating dental problems of the people of Madras city and presidency. Our present article establishes that there was no Royal-Army Dental Assistant. We show with clear evidence that a qualified British dentist, Horace John Gould, was the first dental (civil) surgeon, who held a conjoint role of the professor dental surgery in the Madras Medical College – Madras Government General Hospital (MMC–MGGH) complex in 1883. Gould taught dentistry to the then medical (MBCM, later modified as MBBS) students in MMC–MGGH. From the early 1900s, we the authors – bring the appointment of another British-qualified dentist, Christopher Frampton Badcock, to light. We also disclose details of efforts made by Badcock along with Alfred Miller, Principal of MMC, to develop a formal dental education programme, while this programme was to remain within the administrative ambit of MMC. Our article also unveils a hitherto unknown effort by the Government of Madras to shift the department of dental surgery from MMC–MGGH to the then refurbished Government Royapuram Hospital (the Stanley Medical College & Hospital from 1934) in North Madras.

Introduction

KSGA Nasser, ex-Principal of the Tamil Nadu Government Dental College and Hospital (TNGDC&H, previously, the Madras Government Dental College and Hospital, MGD-C&H) speaks of dentistry in Madras, tracing the history and growth of the MDC&H presently the TNDC&H in Park Town, Chennai. Nasser briefly refers to the growth of dentistry as a western-medical science in Madras city and presidency (now, Chennai and Tamil Nadu, respectively). He indicates that an institution named the Madras Dental College & Hospital (MDC&H) existed in Madras between 1935 and 1942, established by one H Venkata Rao, a private dental practitioner. Rao's MDC&H was first established in Bezvada (presently Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh) in the composite Madras Presidency, sometime before 1935 and later shifted to George Town, Madras. A general-medical practitioner, HM Rao, after qualifying the Doctor of Dental Surgery from USA, established one other private teaching institution named the American Dental College (ADC), in Madras in 1940. Due to HM Rao's sudden death, the ADC closed shortly after.

Unfortunately, we know nothing further about either Venkata Rao and the MDC&H or HM Rao and the ADC. Except these privately run and poorly chronicled MDC&H and ADC, no government-sponsored, public-funded dental college and hospital existed in Madras in the early years of the 20th century. In the section

'Origin of dental department in General Hospital', Nasser says that a department for dental surgery existed in the Madras Government General Hospital (MGGH) from 1883, when the MGGH was administered by the Education and Health Department of the presidency government headed by Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff (Governor of Madras, 1881-1886). Nasser indicates that a 'Royal-Army Dental Assistant' attended to patients needing dental assistance. Nasser adds, but disjointedly, that a Civil Surgeon's post -- designated 'dental surgeon' -- was sanctioned by the government some years later that was to function conjointly as the 'professor of dental surgery' in the Madras Medical College (MMC). A government order issued in this regard required the appointees for the post of 'dental surgeon and professor of dental surgery' to attend to duties called for in the MGGH at the rank of a dental (civil) surgeon and to teach basic dentistry to senior-class medical students pursuing MBCM title (changed to MBBS in the 1920s) in MMC at the rank of professor of dental surgery. Nasser mentions 'Chinoy' and 'Udham-Singh Malik' in passing, indicating these two men held this conjoint role in later years, possibly between 1940 and 1947. No other details of either Chinoy or Malik could be traced by us, except that we have found that both were qualified dentists with 'Licence in Dental Surgery' (LDS) issued by the Royal College of Surgeons.

In the present article, we

determine the missing links in Nasser and complete the segment of the narrative, as much as possible, chronicling details of dentistry and the people associated with it in Madras between 1880 and 1930.

The first, formally qualified dentist in Madras

A government memorandum dated 17 September 1883 signed by the Director of Public Instruction, Madras (Henry Bidewell Grigg) addressed to the Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Madras (Edmund Foster Webster) refers to the arrival of a dentist holding a recognized diploma from London to take on the role of the professor of dental surgery in MMC (see Box 1). Details reproduced in Box 1 adequately clarify that the person, who arrived in Madras in 1883 to take on the chair (i.e., professorship) of dental

surgery was not an Army-Dental Assistant, but a qualified Dentist holding a Licentiate in Dental Surgery (LDS) issued by the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS). See box below:

2. Dental Surgery.—Mr. Gould having joined the college, a course of Dental Surgery was delivered to the outgoing students of the Second department who were also taught practically at the General Hospital. The introduction of regular instruction in this branch of surgery under a competent Professor is a new and satisfactory feature in the history of the college.

Dentistry-teaching in M.M.C. by Gould.

We could determine the full name of Gould as Horace John Gould. Unfortunately, all available government of Madras documents, including the annual reports of MMC only refer to him as 'Gould'. Hence, we struggled to obtain his full name through various documents archived in Britain. Gould qualified the LDS RCS (London) diploma in 1882; his

by one 'CF Badcock'. In this article, Badcock indicates his professional affiliation as 'lately professor of dental surgery, Medical College, Madras'. The 'Medical College, Madras', is unquestionably MMC. The term 'lately' suggests that he must have recently retired from MMC.

We could determine the full name of CF Badcock as Christopher Frampton Badcock of Endsleigh Garden, London. He qualified LDS RCS (London) in 1891. The same register also indicates his postal address as 'Casa-Major Road, Egmore, Madras' from 1892, which confirms that he was in Madras from the specified year. What is unclear is whether he replaced HJ Gould as the professor of dental surgery at MMC at some point of time. Most likely he was a private dental practitioner in Madras. Many British-medical personnel practiced medicine in Madras as private practitioners from mid-19th to early 20th centuries. One example will be Joseph William Turner Johnstone, a British-qualified physician with an MD and LRCP, who practiced medicine as a private practitioner on Pantheon Road, Egmore, Madras in 1840s. In a publication titled *pyorrhea alveolaris*, Badcock identifies himself as 'dental surgeon, General Hospital, Madras' – the post of a full surgeon with the government of Madras. From another publication – communicated as a short letter to the editor of IMG, he speaks of pyorrhoea in the late 19th and early 20th centuries – a common oral problem in India in the 1960s as well, recorded to continue in the 2000s. He also published the paper *The prevalence of supernumerary and supplemental teeth among the natives of India: note on models showing supernumerary teeth in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, most likely after his return to England.

We will now go briefly into

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surgery was not an Army-Dental Assistant, but a qualified Dentist holding a Licentiate in Dental Surgery (LDS) issued by the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS). See box below:

Dental Professor.—The Surgeon-General has informed me that the Professor of Dental Surgery will leave London on the 7th August next. He will probably arrive at Madras about the middle of September. The recommendation of the College Council that the lectures on Dental Surgery be delivered in the Summer of the second Collegiate year of the Second Department was sanctioned by Government in their Order, No. 18 (Educational), dated 16th January 1883. Arrangements will be made in the curriculum for the course.

Arrival of a dentist at MMC from London. 'Surgeon-General' referred here was William Robert Cornish (1880–1885).

James Keess, Principal, MMC (1873-1884) clarifies Gould's teaching schedule to students of senior-class MBCM at MMC. See box below:

4. Dental Surgery.—A course of dental surgery, consisting of twenty-one lectures, was for the first time delivered to the outgoing students of the Second department by Professor Gould, who also taught them practically, twice a week at the General Hospital, how to deal with the more ordinary affections of teeth.

Gould's teaching schedule in MMC.

In the report of the academic year 1883-1884, Keess explains that the teaching programme in dentistry to outgoing (i.e., final year) students of the Second Department (i.e., Senior Department that included students preparing to sit the final MBCM examinations held by the Faculty of Medicine, University of Madras. The University of Madras was fully operational from 1857. Practical classes for the senior-de-

partment students were conducted in the allocated wards of MGGH. Keess, as the head of MMC compliments Gould as a 'competent professor' and the teaching of dentistry was a new and satisfactory feature in the history of the college. See box below:

formal professional registration was completed on 12 August 1884. His postal address shown in the same register is 'Madras'. As the 'dental surgeon' at the MGGH, he must have treated people with teeth and gum problems, because his role is not

The second British dentist in Madras, with an affiliation to MMC–MGGH

The 62nd volume of the *Indian Medical Gazette* (IMG), published from Calcutta (pres-

(Continued on page 7)

what Christopher Badcock says in his article that consists of two parts: (1) a critical but suggestive commentary on the need for professionally trained dentists in India and the need for setting up new dental schools, (2) the efforts made by the department of dental surgery of MMC-MGGH to establish a teaching institution (referred as 'school' by him, which would be a 'college' in the present Indian context; therefore, in the present article we use 'college' instead of school).

Christopher Badcock's article in *Indian Medical Gazette*

Badcock's article is based on his work experience in Madras, specifying the imperative need for a formal academic programme in dentistry in India. He speaks of the pressing need for trained and licenced dentists, mainly because many untrained, unqualified persons ('quacks' according to Badcock) practiced dentistry in India then.

This section relates to Badcock's thoughts, comments,

and remarks. At the start, he mentions that no university-affiliated college for dental surgeons, no recognised dental hospital, where trainee dentists could gain firsthand practical experience, and no registrable diplomas conferred by the presidency governments and/or recognised universities in Madras, Bengal, and Bombay existed. He recounts how Britain had regularised and monitored dental profession with the 'Dentists Act 1921' aiming at quality. The British Dentists Act 1921 mandatorily required new dentists to register with the UK Dental Board and restricted the use of titles such as either 'Dentist' or 'Dental Surgeon' only to those who were appropriately trained and qualified. However, a 'Dentists Act' existed in Britain from 1878, which obviously was not strong enough to monitor the profession and practitioners. Badcock alludes to how the revised and stronger Dentists Act 1921 of the British Government was quickly followed in the dominions and colonies of Britain, promulgating similar Acts. He

specifically laments that such an action was not initiated in India. According to him, India was the haven for quacks in dentistry.

Badcock then speaks of other contextual aspects, justifying the need for a robust training in formal dentistry for Indians. He enumerates many reasons why a trained-human power in dentistry was critical. Wide prevalence of diseases of teeth and their skilful treatment for the larger-Indian population was the key. He vehemently and repeatedly criticises that the discipline of dentistry and its practice in India severely lacked pertinent regulatory Acts in restricting the practice of self-declared dentists. He speaks of the creation of a 'chair (i.e., professorship) in dental surgery' at MMC and its conjoint role as the 'dental surgeon' in the rank of a 'civil surgeon' at MGGH in addition to proposals developed (by him?) for an exclusive dental college and hospital, and issuance of diplomas to trainees, supplemented by formal registrations. Importantly he refers to the movement of the then department of dental surgery in MMC-MGGH to another site within Madras-city limits. The last-referred element has been totally lost in the pages of medical history of Madras.

Badcock articulates a strongly worded grievance that public services in general in India, and particularly those pertaining to the practice of medicine, surgery, and other sub-specialties, such as radiology, dermatology, nursing, hygiene, and sanitation, were reasonably regulated for long; but he wonders how and why dentistry had escaped such a public-service monitoring and regulation. That, according to him, was glaring, given that dentistry -- a surgical branch of medicine -- was widely exploited by quacks. He adds on that the British-qualified dentists practising in India regarded this exclusion from the scope of and regulation by the Indian Medical Act specially referring to dentistry, as a gross injustice to their professional training and qualification.

At that point of time, the government of Madras did not go beyond teaching basic dentistry to senior university-level students of general medicine and surgery (MBCM, MBBS) and establishing a dental department within MGGH. From the end of World War I, a few general-medical practitioners (holding MBCM or MBBS or LMP or LMS titles) working as civil-assistant surgeons in government-funded public hospitals in the districts of Madras presidency were trained in dentistry for a 'short' period ('short' -- not explained) in the department of dentistry, MGGH. The trained civil-assistant general surgeons also practiced den-

tristry and treated people with dental ailments in different district hospitals of the presidency. Importantly, Badcock openly accuses that the government of Madras in 1920-1930 (George Joachim Goschen II, Governor 1924-1929; Panaganti Ramarayaningar, Premier, 1921-1926; Paramasivan Subbarayan, Premier, 1926-1930) preferred to ignore the need of creating well-trained dentists and a regulated dental profession.

According to Badcock, a clearly structured professional training leading to a university diploma in dental surgery was on the table in India from the 1910s. The limitations -- both perceived and real -- of traditional medical practices in India, coupled with the increasing influence of Western-medical practice and its rapid-pain-relief philosophy (René Descartes's Cartesian Dualism) and the convictions of the then ruling masters of India greatly influenced Indians to actively seek support and advice from Western-medical practitioners. For several years the Government of Madras approved teaching of basic dentistry to students pursuing MBBS (previously MBCM) in MMC. The maximum the government preferred to do was to offer a training in dentistry to selected civil-assistant surgeons practicing general medicine and surgery from different district hospitals.

Badcock provides details of how the teaching department of dentistry and dental wards functioned. The professor of dental surgery at MMC was appointed in 1883 (i.e., Horace John Gould). In 1888, a dental clinic was started at MGGH for practical instruction in basic dental-surgical procedures to students of MBCM (MBBS) class. This clinic formed the foundation for a better-organised dental department in MMC in later years, which included a full professor and five assistant professors of dental surgery in 1956-1957, which subsequently evolved into the independent MGD-C&H. For the remainder of the story of this college moving out of MMC-MGGH precinct to nearby Muthuswamy Road, opposite to the Fort suburban train station, refer to Nasser.

Lectures in dental anatomy and surgery were delivered as part of teaching to medical students. A dental clinic was open for patients in the mornings of three week days, managed by the professor of dental surgery, who was also the conjoint dental (civil) surgeon. The patients who came for treatment were mostly from economically marginalized families in Madras; occasionally soldiers of the Madras Army's station hospitals (i.e., small hospitals and infirmaries within military cantonments) were also referred for

better treatment. Badcock indicates that the department of dentistry was located in a room in the MGGH (not traceable). One ward-boy assisted as the subordinate medical staff. No patient and treatment records are available between 1883 and 1894, although records from 1895 are: 900 patients treated in 1895; 2200 in 1916-1917. In July 1918, a second dental surgeon was appointed to assist the first dental surgeon and the numbers of in-coming patients gradually increased. The total number of patients treated in 1924 was 4585.

Extractions of teeth were the main treatment to manage dental caries and their sequelae, impacted lower-third molars. This facility also helped treating pyorrhoëa alveolaris with appropriate dental prophylaxis. Between 60 and 100 fillings were completed each year. Badcock speaks of occasional fixing of Hammond splint (= arch-bar splints, first used in London in 1871; these splints were used in bridging maxillary and mandibular fractures), in addition to dealing with a few regulation cases, treating gingivitis and mouth ulcerations. Only by 1905, the regular use of ethyl chloride as a general anaesthetic started, replacing the widely used chloroform. Badcock specifically mentions the use of ethyl chloride in extractions of caried teeth done on British soldiers. Further to ethyl chloride, occasionally a combination of ethyl chloride and ether, chloroform, and cocaine were also used. Close to 3200 procedures are recorded using the ethyl chloride in these years and Badcock reports of no mishaps. A full-time dental anaesthetist appointed into the department of dental surgery in 1923, strikes as a milestone.

In 1910-1912, dental-surgery classes for students pursuing either MBCM or LMS came under the administration of a newly created Medical-Education Department of the Government of Madras led by two successive 'Secretaries' of the Department of Public Health from Indian Civil Service (Sonti Venkata Ramamurthy and Christopher Masterman). The numbers of contact classes for dental surgery, however, reduced from 30 to 15 -- reasons unknown. Nevertheless, the silver lining in teaching dental surgery in the new format necessitated every student to attend the dental wards for 15 days with no interruption. With the onset of World War I, the dental ward at MGGH remained open every day through the year exclusively for the military personnel.

(To be continued
next fortnight)

TABLE 1. Details of lectures and examinations delivered during the winter and summer sessions of 1883-1884 by Horace J. Gould.

MADRAS MEDICAL COLLEGE.					7			
SESSION 1883-84.								
Subjects.	Meetings.	Lectures.	Examinations.	Proportion of Examination to Meetings.				
Medicine ...	113	62	51	1 in 2				
Surgery ...	156	109	47	1 in 3				
Ophthalmology ...	33	25	8	1 in 4				
Midwifery ...	124	87	37	1 in 3				
Chemistry ...	108	73	35	1 in 3				
Anatomy ...	102	68	34	1 in 3				
Physiology ...	88	45	43	1 in 2				
Material Medica ...	113	79	34	1 in 3				
Botany ...	70	48	23	1 in 2				
Pathology ...	57	40	17	1 in 3				
Hygiene ...	67	50	17	1 in 3				
Organic Chemistry ...	26	20	6	1 in 3				
Comparative Anatomy ...	49	37	12	1 in 3				
Medical Jurisprudence ...	57	35	22	1 in 2				
Histology ...	29	...	...	...				
Elementary Physiology ...	27	18	9	1 in 3				
Elementary Material Medica ...	17	11	6	1 in 3				
Dental Surgery ...	17	13	4	1 in 3				
Practical Pharmacy ...	19	...	...	...				
Practical Chemistry ...	26	19	7	1 in 3				

The 18th row clarifies the number of lectures delivered and practical work supervised in dental surgery for MBCM students in MMC.

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— THE EDITOR

Rising Star in Table Tennis – Nikhil

If there is another popular racquet sport like tennis in which Chennai's talented sportsmen have been leaving footprints, it is table tennis. G. Jagannath, V. Chandrasekhar, Hari, S. Raman, J. Premkumar, Sharath Kamal and G. Sathiyar Anthony Amalraj, R. Balamurugan and R. Akash are some of the talents who shone at the international and national levels.

Tamil Nadu being at the top of this sport along with a few other frontline states like Bengal and Assam, another talented youngster is being seen by coaches as "high rung". He is Nikhil Menon (17), a rising star from the state with significant achievements in national, and a few times at interna-

tional competitions. He avers that he owes his creditable journey thus far in the sport to immense encouragement from his parents.

Nikhil's journey in table tennis began at the age of eight. "We introduced him to cricket. He quickly displayed natural sporting ability and started to perform exceptionally well. Further, to improve his reflexes I introduced him to table tennis as it would also inspire him to develop extraordinary speed and quick decision making to deceive his opponent", Nikhil's father explained while speaking to *Madras Musings*. "But soon Nikhil's TT coach observed that he naturally possessed game intelligence, tactical awareness and the abil-

ity to out think his opponent during a game." "Nikhil chose to take up TT rather than cricket as he wished to be successful in an individual sport rather than in a team game like cricket. He was attracted to the fact that every win in a table tennis singles match depended entirely on his own efforts."

Nikhil, as his father explains, then started pursuing table tennis under the guidance of the well-known coaches, the Rao Brothers – Srinivasa Rao and Muralidhara Rao. They instilled strong technical

brightest young prospects in the sport. His breakthrough on the international stage came in 2024 when he bagged his maiden Bronze medal in the Under-15 Boys singles competition at the WTT Youth Contender competition at Almaty in Kazakhstan. He picked up another Bronze that year in the Under-15 Mixed Doubles at the WTT Youth Contender event at Amman – the Jordanian capital city. This saw him representing India at the WTT Youth tournaments in Philippines, Slovenia, Croatia and

(Tamil Nadu) State Championship in 2025, and reached the quarter finals in the National Championships.

And, as his career progressed brightly, this year saw Nikhil being recognised as one of the worlds leading Junior players as he bagged the Gold Medal in the Under-17 Singles at the WTT Youth Contender at Manama in Bahrain with splendid victories against talented juniors along the way. What's more, he followed this up winning a Silver Medal in the Under-17 Singles at Novisad (Serbia) and Bronze Medal in Mixed Doubles in Under-19 age group in Bulgaria.

At the national level, Nikhil was the Under-12 champion as well as the Sub-junior Champion at Indore in 2021. He won the Gold Medal in the Under-15 Boys Team Event in UTT Cadet and Sub-junior National Championships in 2023. During his school years, after he gave up cricket in favour of table tennis, Nikhil bagged gold medals in the CBSE Inter School Championships in individual and team events in the the Under-14 age group. He also won a silver medal in Under-14 individual and team categories in the CBSE National championships.

● by V. Venkataramana



fundamentals, discipline, work ethics and competitive spirit in the boys.

As his game developed, Nikhil moved to another coach Srivatsa Chakravarthy, who further nurtured his technique and mental balance while facing an opponent. This enabled him to compete successfully even against a few of the "finest Junior players in the world," says Nikhil's father, Shivaji.

And, in the competitive arena, Nikhil's performances at the State and National levels earned him recognition from other coaches and administrators as one of India's

North Macedonia and gaining further experience playing against some talented junior players in those countries.

In 2025 significantly, Nikhil consecutively won Bronze Medals at the first two editions of WTT National Ranking championships in Vadodara and Delhi in the Under-17 Boys Singles category. At the state level, he had an exceptional season that year, when he won in a row four Tamil Nadu State Ranking tournament titles thereby becoming the State's No 1 in the Under-17 Section. He also emerged the Runner-Up in the

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