

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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## INSIDE

- Short 'N' Snappy
- The Leather King
- 4 pages on Madras Week
- Story of Madras Cotton
- A trainer & an umpire

## What's heritage, and what's not...

The past few years have seen a spate of writings on heritage, accompanied by a lot of media attention. This has naturally resulted in a huge amount of interest concerning old buildings, especially among the reading public, though this has admittedly not resulted in much action on the ground. It has, of course, created an enormous dislike among the bureaucracy about what it terms 'heritage activism'. That body of officials would be most happy if there was no opposition to the complete demolition of all heritage structures, to facilitate their replacement with modern high-rise. Unfortunately, this hosti-

lity is only enhanced by those who, even if in a well-meaning fashion, brand any reasonably old structure as heritage and begin questioning its removal. This makes any heritage activity appear obstructionist. The latest in this series is a newspa-

### • by The Editor

per article that mourns the proposed pulling down of the Esplanade police station.

A careful reading between the lines would reveal that the structure in question was built only in 1961. It is a modern PWD building that replaced an

earlier structure even then. It is this 54-year-old structure that the Government proposes to replace with a modern building. What is the heritage value of the existing structure? None probably. And whatever there was earlier probably vanished with the demolition in 1961.

What cannot be denied, however, is that a police station has existed in the area since 1856. This needs to be commemorated. The Tamil Nadu Police has in the past displayed a sense of history – it has not only preserved its headquarters by the beach, it has also retained the old bungalow in

(Continued on page 2)

## ...but must people live in fear of it?

There are three reactions to heritage – some love it, and these are most often those who have no stake in it; the second variety is completely indifferent, this is largely the Government that sadly controls most of it; and some would rather wish it away, these are the private property owners who find themselves saddled with something they do not want and, more importantly, something they cannot profit from. Last month saw matters coming to a head at Pallavaram where residents protested against the heritage status that they feel has been imposed on their neighbourhood. A lot can be done by the Government to dispel any fears, but by keeping silent, it is only flaming discontent with heritage being the ultimate victim.

This matter in Pallavaram has been pending for over seven years now. It was in 2007 that plots of land were sold to people, all of them having purchased properties with the intention of developing them for

residential purposes. The sale deeds were all registered as per due process. But when the purchasers began making plans to construct houses, they were asked to get No Objection Certificates (NOC) from the 'appropriate authority' which in this case is the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as the land falls under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amend-

### • By A Special Correspondent

ment and Validation) Act 2010.

The entire area, according to the ASI, is a centrally protected site, with 'megalithic cairns and cists, showing clear structural postures'. However, as to what this actually implies has not been spelt out clearly by the ASI and the organisation has done precious little by way of actually protecting the place.

The owners on approaching

the ASI were informed that the issue of NOCs could be considered only after the ASI conducted a joint survey of the area along with the revenue officials of the Kancheepuram District. A date was fixed for this in 2011 but matters made no headway as the residents, not understanding clearly as to what this implied, protested and prevented the survey from happening. Matters have been hanging fire since then and the residents approached the High Court of Madras, which in March this year ruled that it was necessary for the joint survey to be done. The Court directed the petitioners to file a request before the Collector of Kancheepuram who, on receipt of such a request, was to organise a meeting of the revenue officials and the ASI. This has not happened thus far.

It would appear that the Government is missing a golden opportunity to promote private participation in heritage. What

(Continued on page 2)

## Know your Fort better



The ECHS Hospital (Picture: Ramakrishnan Mohan).

• We have in the last two episodes focussed on two principal buildings on Charles Street – the *Great* aka *Admiralty* aka *Clive House* and *Wellesley House*. This extremely broad thoroughfare has very few buildings on it today. Between Clive's and Wellesley's houses is a large edifice belonging to the army and accessed through an arched gateway. This must have in its time been an important building. On the opposite, i.e. the eastern, side runs a long colonnaded building for most of the street's length. This is today the Ex-Servicemen's Contributory Health Service (ECHS) Centre of the Fort, but in its long years of existence has served several functions, most notable of which is that of the Town Hall for Madras. This was where the important residents of the Fort met to discuss and decide on important matters concerning the city. But this was not the only building to serve this role in the Fort. It was also till recently the embarkation headquarters for the Southern Command of the Indian Army.

Charles Street ends at the San Thome Gate of the Fort, an arched structure with alternating bands of white and black. This is today closed to the public but gets its name from the fact that it is the southern entrance to the Fort, the pathway from it leading along the sea to the once Portuguese settlement on San Thomè. In its time it must have been a busy thoroughfare with much comings and goings between the two settlements, of which, of course, San Thomè was the older and bigger. But by the time Fort St. George began growing, this once prosperous Portuguese settlement had seen better days and many of its residents began moving into the British town where they settled at the northern end, a place that came to be called Portuguese Square and which we shall deal with in detail later. Others commuted from San Thomè every day to work in the Fort or visit relatives. This influx of people must have happened via the San Thomé Gate.

Today there may be only so many visible reminders of the historicity of Charles Street, but in its time this was a very busy thoroughfare. While we wander along it, it may be worthwhile to pause a while and reflect on the various buildings that do not exist. But before that the broad width of the street also has a history. This was once two parallel streets running north to south, from Parade Square to the San Thomé Gate. The western one was Charles Street and its eastern counterpart was James Street. These, and the easternmost street of the Fort, named after St Thomas, were all connected at the northern end by the church of St Mary's and at the southern end by road across which lay San Thomé Gate.

(Continued on page 12)

# What's heritage, and what's not

(Continued from page 1)

Egmore that served as the Police Commissioner's Office even after a multi-storeyed building came up alongside for the same. It is to be hoped that when it constructs a new police station at the Esplanade, the department will put up a plaque commemorating the history of the place. That would be more than sufficient.

While on the subject of new buildings for old, it must be pointed out that the Police has a chequered history when it comes to their stations. The one at Flower Bazaar made way for a tasteless piece of modernity. The Mount Road station was demolished but replaced by a new structure that vaguely recalls the architecture of the old Spencer's showroom. The Grame's Road station was retained in full, as there was sufficient space to the rear, where a new building has come up. The most fortunate among all of them is the Triplicane Station on Wallajah Road. This heritage structure, once the *langarkhana* of the Nawabs of Arcot,

has been splendidly restored, ironically when all heritage buildings surrounding it – *Government House*, *Cooum House*, the bandmaster's house, *Gandhi Illam* and *Kalaivanar Arangam* – were all demolished!

Hanging fire is the fate of the Royapettah station which was also slated for demolition but has not yet gone under. Also facing an uncertain future is the Harbour station. Both these buildings are undoubtedly heritage structures that date to over a hundred years. They certainly need to be preserved. If the Police needs to expand its activities in these two stations, it would be better off looking for new buildings in the surrounding areas rather than demolish these two to make way for highrise. While the Royapettah station is in use, the Harbour one is at great risk. It has been cordoned off and is now devoid of maintenance for over five years. The media would be better off highlighting the plight of these buildings rather than raising a hue and cry over structures that are of dubious heritage value at best.

# BEING AFRAID OF HERITAGE?

(Continued from page 1)

is happening is that the owners are getting increasingly frustrated over the continued stonewalling. What is on the other hand required is a public meeting to be called so that the process of the joint survey and what it proposes to find can be explained to the stakeholders. This is to make the latter a part of the survey, which ought then to be undertaken without delay. The findings of this need to be published immediately thereafter.

What is likely to emerge from this is that not every property owner is sitting on a megalithic cairn or cist. Those that are not affected ought to be allowed to get on with their con-

struction. The affected owners – whose interests need to be met with and their concerns assuaged – can either be offered land elsewhere or they can be permitted to construct on parts of their properties that do not have these remains. Lastly, the entire colony ought to be taught the importance of the pre-historic finds and how they need to be proud of what they possess. The residents can be made a part of a committee that administers these sites and helps promote tourism in the area. Revenues from such activities can be used for improving the locality and maintaining the relics.

All this calls for some enlightened thinking. Can we expect this from our Government – and citizens?

## MADRAS MUSINGS ON THE WEB

To reach out to as many readers as possible who share our keen interest in Madras that is Chennai, and in response to requests from many well-wishers – especially from outside Chennai and abroad who receive their postal copies very late – for an online edition. *Madras Musings* is now on the web at [www.madrasmusings.com](http://www.madrasmusings.com)

THE EDITOR

# Looking back on Mad Rush Week

Yet another successful edition of Madras Week has wound to a close and everyone is singing its praise. From Ambattur to Zion Colony, Madras Week is the buzz. *The Man from Madras Musings* also joins in this raucous chorus of joy.

MMM and his good lady (also known as She Who Must be Obeyed) did the rounds of the events and it must be acknowledged that the audience numbers are growing, year after year. While MMM restricted his role to chiefly gubernatorial tasks – shaking hands, smiling graciously and, if strictly demanded by duty, occasionally kissing babies – his good lady was more the careful observer and possessing as she does an eye like Mars, to threaten and command, little escaped her attention.

Chief among these was the behaviour of some of the people who came to eat at the lectures that ye olde journal *Madras Musings* organised. As to their eating habits and plate grabbing tactics MMM will say little, as he has waxed eloquent on the subject in the past to very little effect beyond a letter or two from irate readers who consider such mass feedings to be among the publication's activities. If the highest in the land can offer subsidised food in their names, why can *Madras Musings* not give it free is their opinion. MMM does not wish to quarrel with them on this and respects them for their views.

But to get back to the point at issue, namely what the good lady saw. Hovering around the food riots that were happening at a venue, she found one attendee doing rather well with the liquid refreshments. And by that MMM does not mean the bar, for we at *Madras Musings* stay clear of the stuff that cheers, but plain water bottles. The hotel that hosted that evening's programme had opted to put out bottled water instead of filling glasses and one of the guests had decided that this was where he should stock up a month's supply. He was loading the bottles into a rather capacious bag while MMM's good lady chanced upon him. Not a word was exchanged as MMM was later given to understand by those present, but such was the power of MMM's good lady's eye that the man meekly put all the bottles back on the rack and sauntered off, no doubt to focus on the knives and forks.

The next evening featured yet another event, at a different venue. This time, too, MMM and his good lady were in attendance. And this time, she caught another man, stuffing his bag with tea bags!

These too were disgorged after the good lady had bestowed her X Ray vision on the modern day Raffles.

Sad though such occurrences are, MMM would go with the Chief's point of view, namely that such events are organised for everyone, irrespective of their table manners, to participate and so it cannot be just for those who know how to behave like gentle folk. And let MMM tell you here that some of the latter too are not above helping themselves to a coaster or two when it takes their fancy.

## Other stories

Who would have thought our own stinky river would emerge the hero of Madras Week? Yet, this was undoubtedly so. Journalists jotted entries on it, talkers talked, walkers walked and cyclists cycled along its banks,

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

all with a view to bringing focus on its pathetic condition. It only now remains for a film star or two to adopt parts of it. Success will then be assured in its clean up. Presently, *The Man from Madras Musings* is of the view that it was those who were tasked with the clean-up who cleaned up big. How else do you explain the complete lack of results as far as the river is concerned?

But let us pigeon-hole the Cooum clean-up for the nonce. What MMM wanted to write about was an event that was held at one of the oldest libraries of the city, which also stands on the banks of the river. The speaker for the evening was a person whom MMM had known practically from the cradle, and so MMM too was present. The weather was sultry and during much of the presentation MMM's friend sweated profusely. At the end of it all he asked the audience if they had any questions when an elderly gent, who had all along been rather restless, stood up and launched into what promised to be a long story on the life of a famed dubash who after death became a philanthropist. It almost gave MMM

the feeling that there were two speakers that evening. It was in vain that the organisers tried to catch the pretender's eye and get him to sit down. But he, like the Ancient Mariner, was

immune to it all. On and on he went. This was until someone dropped something or the other with quite a loud noise in the vicinity. The speaker paused and MMM, realising that this was where he did some good to society at large, prised the microphone from the budding Demosthenes, thanked him profusely and brought the event to a close.

A similar situation was witnessed by MMM at another event, which focussed on the Emergency of the 1970s. Here too was a heckler of sorts, into whose soul the iron appeared to have entered in a big way. Halfway through a rather erudite summing up of the Emergency by two senior journalists, he stood up and began to deride them for not mentioning anything about the death during the Emergency of 'Sitty Babu, sitting yumpee'. It took quite a while before MMM realised that the man was referred to a sitting legislator who died under rather strange circumstances during the Emergency.

But all this paled into insignificance besides the behaviour of the wife of a retired bureaucrat. One of the programmes, involving a famed actress, who was present in person to hear an actor-turned-film historian speak on her film career, was scheduled to begin at 7.00 pm. The hall had filled up by 6.30. The better half of the retired bureaucrat walked up to MMM and demanded that the event begin at once. She had to go for dinner she said at 7.15 and so it would be good if MMM advanced the starting time so that she could hear a good part of the presentation and yet be home in time to receive guests when they arrived. MMM refused politely and the event began as scheduled. What intrigued MMM was that the lady in question stayed on till 9.00 pm when the programme ended. What happened to her guests is what MMM would like to know.

## T'Nagar style

The banner reproduced below was put up with good intentions, but MMM was amused by the Madrasian English.

– MMM



● An occasional column by a British freelance writer on her eight years in Madras

It's early morning in Kotturpuram and the residents of my street are beginning to stir. Security guards, roused from sleep, drag reluctant pedigree pooches around the block, watched by street dogs who raise a desultory eyelid, and then return to slumber. The dawn mosquitoes square their shoulders in preparation for the first walkers and from the nearby mosque the muezzin proclaims the greatness of his god.

Babblers, little birds that fly in tightly packed groups, twitter and follow each other like insecure teenagers flitting from hedge to lawn as the sun rises on another pile of garbage in our street. Unperturbed, a cow on the corner grazes on plastic bags and crisp packets from the pile of litter cascading out of the bins.

A man wanders the street crying "Peepers!" For many years I thought he was selling something until I realised that he collected old newspapers and was calling out 'Papers' in the local accent. This is recycling Indian style, and one man's rubbish is another man's living.

Likewise, a barefoot old crone sifts through the contents of the bin extracting cardboards which she folds into neat bundles and carts away on her head. A skinny urchin picks out plastic bottles and, packing them into a tattered jute bag, strolls off to find the next rich pickings.

But things are changing. The more affluent inhabitants of our street are fed up with the piles of litter, the cows, the smells, the crows and the recycling urchins. The idea is that all the houses have bins, a blue one for 'dry goods', and a turquoise one for 'wet goods'. These are put out early in the morning and collected daily. The head of the project tells me:

"It is the big houses that are the worst offenders, they leave it to their staff to do the segregating and put out the bins and the staff do not understand so they do not do it."

But all improvements start with education. It is good to hear that children in Madras are now being taught about harm of littering and the impact it has on the ecosystem, but thwarting those improvements



# Street Life

is a government that is not prepared to pay the price for a clean city. The steady decline in cleaner streets was obvious when one cleaning firm's contract was terminated in exchange for a cheaper deal some years ago.

Time moves on and the overture of car horns begins, gradually reaching a crescendo as the school opposite opens its gates. Impatient drivers and harassed parents late for work hurry to drop off children. What was once a large house and lush peaceful garden is now the concrete school playground where instructions are barked out through a loudspeaker and the children are marched into class to the accompaniment of a bass drum and whistle blowing.

Next door to our house, the *mali* sweeps the leaves from an immaculate, verdant lawn and washes the dust off the mock-Grecian statuary that adorns the luxuriant garden. For many years this was a field where people relieved themselves and the only inhabitants were a family of cobras. It is now a super swanky pad, the inhabitants of which are rarely seen; its Le Corbusier style concrete blocks dominate the skyline.

Down the road another empty plot develops into a block of flats. Adjacent to a slum around the corner, so-called "dream apartments" are mushrooming. Houses are no longer financially viable when land is so valuable and I hear that, eventually, when we leave, our house is destined to become a casualty of development.

All these expansions begin to take their toll on the environment. More people need more electricity and water. Although we regularly have recourse to our generator, for the first time in nine years our well has run dry and we are forced to buy water from tankers.

Progress has been slow in other less financially remunerative areas. The street we live on is still a mass of potholes and has never been properly made. In the monsoon the drains overflow and the road becomes a small lake and a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

In 1989, a dreamer called M.B. Nirmal founded a non-government environmental service called Exnora. The word derived from Excellent, Novel and Radical and it was designed to solve environmental and civic problems by involving those who caused them. There is no longer an Exnora in my district. As always in India, sustainability became an issue. I imagine that enquiries to local government councils would be a bumpy road in itself!

As the morning progresses, the heat rises. Two girls stroll down the road carrying tiffin boxes in a basket. They are dressed in beautiful pink and orange sarees, their hair adorned with jasmine. A street dog jogs jauntily past them. Taking care to avoid the cow, the dog has a quick sniff at the garbage and enjoys the freedom its pedigreed descendants behind gates might envy.

The *chai* seller comes on his bicycle, stops for a chat with a security guard, and gives the old lady sitting half naked on the curb a paper mug of tea. Children from the slum around the corner contrive to turn a rag into a blindfold and play at pirates with the inventive creativity of the poor. The paper collector takes away a pile of our newspapers and bottles to recycle somewhere and keep his family fed. The day drifts on.

I love this street, this district, and this crazy city. For all the physical changes, good and bad, it is still Madras and its people, the essence, steeped in tradition, will, I think, be slow to change.

OUR READERS WRITE



### Question of identity

Greek history started with the City-States of Athens and Sparta and the birth of Madras is as good a reference point as any to celebrate the history of our city including the older villages which it comprise. The slur on Madras Week, targeted as anti-national has more to do with identity than with history. Identity and self-respect are closely linked, hence the creation of linguistic states after Independence or, for that matter, the creation of Pakistan.

The history of colonial Madras, what some see as an un-

healthy fascination with all things British, from forts to buildings to erstwhile rulers, is seen as a threat not so much to national identity, as to regional identity. The renaming of cities and now of streets is an attempt to reinforce this identity.

The danger lies in the fact that while history is non-threatening, a sense of identity can get narrower and narrower, breaking down into caste, sub-caste, community, language, etc. When this happens the regional and, in extension, a national identity, and the Indian psyche itself, gets fragmented and it is not the celebration of history that is a threat to nationalism.

Dr. Beatrix D'Souza  
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## Such men should be remembered...

*Forgive me for saying this: I feel dejected that our fellow citizens of Madras take pride in celebrating the birthdays of movie stars. I do not wish to find fault with that. But in that process they forget and even ignore the immense and prolific contributions made by great men and women, such as M.S. Swaminathan. At least journals like Madras Musings must think of such great men and remember them with gratitude.*

A scientist of remarkable calibre, a distinguished son of India, a great and clear thinker and most importantly, a Madras resident, Monkombu Sambasiva Swaminathan (b. August 7, 1925), completed 90 years of age recently. Scientists all over the world have celebrated, and are celebrating, this event by showering tributes and encomiums on this peerless agricultural scientist of India.

It will be too hard to recall all of Swaminathan's achievements in this space. Most of us know that he is one of the few men of science who made great impacts on the science and management of Indian agriculture. It is a great fortune for us – citizens of Madras – that he decided to live in Madras and establish his research institute.

Born in Kumbakonam, the son of M.K. Sambasivan and Parvati Thangammal, Swaminathan made great strides as a student of crop genetics in the late 1940s-early 1950s. He earned a B.Sc. (Agriculture) as his second degree studying at the Madras Agricultural College (now Tamil Nadu Agricultural University), Coimbatore, and subsequently moved to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, for his Master's. Swaminathan expounded the genetics of *Solanum* (potato is a *Solanum*) for his doctoral degree at the University of Cambridge. He returned to India soon after to accept the

position of an academic-research scientist at his *alma mater*, the IARI, and was closely associated with the internationally famous rose enthusiast and geneticist Bipin Peary Pal, whom Swaminathan sees as his mentor-teacher. The rest of Swaminathan's story is well known to most of us.

He rose to be the Director of IARI, subsequently the Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), concurrently holding the position of Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Government of India. Later, he moved to the International Rice Research Institute, Manila, as its Director-General. As the Director-General of ICAR, he pioneered reforming and enabling ailing Indian agriculture by marshalling and extending Norman Borlaug's concept of the Green Revolution, teaming with the dynamic Central Minister for Food, Chidambaram Subramaniam, and his Secretary, Sivaraman. This association indeed changed the complexion of Indian agriculture dramatically in the next few years.

After his stint on Manila, he decided to establish the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation in Madras, which, since then, has been rendering yeoman service to Indian farmers and farming by spreading the message of eco-friendly farming tactics and offering education in no small measure.

The whole world salutes this gentle giant for his substantial contributions to Indian agriculture. We need to take pride in the fact that Swaminathan is a fellow citizen of Madras, whose presence and work have added an inimitable sparkle to the city and the State. Let us salute Swaminathan wishing him many more years of achievement.

– Dr. A. Raman  
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### CHENNAI HERITAGE

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# The Leather King

The book\* is a fitting celebration of the legacy of A. Nagappa Chettiar, a pioneer of the leather industry in India.

Nagappa Chettiar, it is surprising to find, was not even a matriculate and “spoke haltingly in English”, to quote retired IAS officer Dr. G. Sundaram, and yet was a trailblazer of the leather industry. The distinct look of Chettiar, always clad in white shirt and white dhoti, even in the presence of suited-and-booted foreign visitors, subtly speaks of his conviction to stick to his roots.

Born in Melsivapuri in Pudukottai district on August 6, 1915, Nagappan lost his father very early. As was usual with Nattukottai Chettiars, he joined the banking business of M. Narayanan Chettiar in Ceylon, when he was just 15. In 1937, he launched out on his own into leather trading. A tannery was operated from rented premises in 1938. The leather industry was in a nascent stage in Ceylon at the time and Nagappa Chettiar and his partner adopted a scientific method of processing leather using vegetable tanning with wattle bark extract to save cost and time. Building on quality and timely delivery, the firm created an export market demand for its products. The rise of his business was meteoric and, by 1943, a new tannery was built in Himbutuwelgoda near Colombo. During World War II, his firm supplied raw material to be used in boots for the Army.

Acting on the suggestion of the then Indian Agent in Ceylon, M.S. Aney, to set up operations in India considering the future political scenarios, Nagappa Chettiar, along with other directors, established an agency, Palaniappa Chettiar & Co. in Madras and also tanneries in Pallavaram and Dindugal.

At that time, East India tanned hides and skins (known as EI tanned leathers), produced through tanning using vegetable materials and indigenous barks and, later, wattle extract, were in high demand by the British for export to the UK from India. After Independence, sensing that the demand for tanned leather from India would grow considerably, Nagappa Chettiar along with other directors from his community established the India Leather Corporation Private Limited (ILC) in 1948. Under this company's name, many tanner-



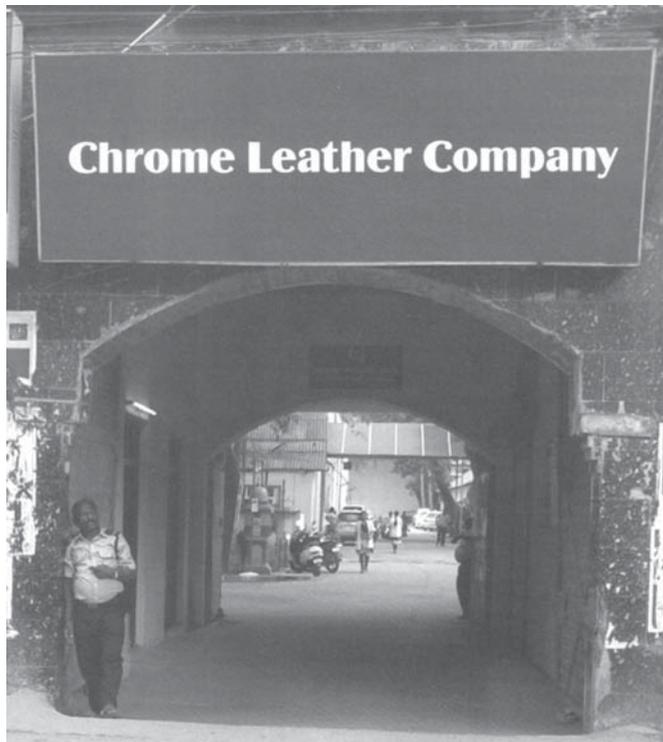
A. Nagappa Chettiar.

ies under the independent management of its directors were established in Salem, Pallavaram, Vellore, Trichy, Madhavaram and Red Hills near Madras and Gudiyatham. ILC also bought a transport company in Bangalore to meet its transportation needs.

The first major breakthrough that Nagappa Chettiar, as Managing Director of ILC, achieved was convincing the Japanese to buy higher grade of leather in place of their low grade imports. This was during his visit to Japan in 1953. As a result, ILC was supplying one-third of all Japanese leather needs in the 1950s. He also visited the UK and Europe to es-

moved into its own building in 1958, the India Leather Mansion at Davidson Street. The office also housed an electric baling press, electric hoists, a testing laboratory, an exhibition of products of EI tanned leather, a technical library and a canteen. Nagappa Chettiar appointed agents for ILC in France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, USA and Japan. ILC offices were opened in London, Paris, Milan, Madrid, Frankfurt, New York and Tokyo. The company's activities also expanded beyond Madras state into Colombo, Calcutta and Cuddapah. He was hailed as the 'Leather King' by his customers abroad.

Next, in a bold move, ILC in 1965 bought the ailing Chrome Leather Company (CLC), which had a large estate and an integrated leather centre. This company of repute had been started by the British and was being managed by Ida Chambers, an Australian and a member of the founding family. He turned around the company, but due to Reserve Bank of India's policies, lines of credit for the company began to expire



A historic institution Nagappa Chettiar acquired.

establish direct contact with buyers. Buyers in Europe were getting their leather through auctions in the UK. What Nagappa Chettiar did changed the fortunes of the leather industry in India. Instead of going through the auction system, he directly reached out to the buyers. ILC's exports exceeded Rs. 2.5 crores by 1957 and ILC became the largest single foreign exchange earner in the Southern Region in the 1950s.

As export market demand for leather increased, ILC

by 1972. Nagappa Chettiar nevertheless sustained the company.

Nagappa Chettiar was closely associated with the Central Leather Research Institute since its inception in 1948. He was Chairman of the Institute's Governing Council and also a member of the research council at various time periods. He enjoyed a good rapport with its illustrious director, Dr. Y. Nayudamma, in the 1960s, and the directors who followed him. His lasting contributions to the



Nagappa Chettiar with R. Venkataraman at ILC Stall, Paris.

Institute are visible even today. It was he who mooted the idea of International Leather Fair in Madras and was successful in organising the first fair at the CLRI premises in 1964 with able support from Nayudamma. The Tanners' Get-Together, which started at the fair, has become the Leather Industry Get-Together (LERIG) from 1991. The international fair and fashion show, which is a part of the fair, has since 1986 been organised by Indian Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), Government of India.

Chettiar donated Rs. 51,000 to set up the Footwear Research Centre inside the CLRI campus in 1972. It has morphed into the shoe Design and Development Centre (SDDC) today and undertakes consultancy services to the industry. He also donated Rs. 1 lakh to set up a Leather Museum inside the CLRI campus. Although the building is complete, it is yet to see the ideal of Nagappa Chettiar fulfilled. But it is fitting that his statue was installed in the Institute's premises near the museum in 1988.

His significant contribution to the leather industry is changing the paradigm from exporting wet skins and hides of lower quality and semi-finished leather into fully finished leather and value-added leather products to other countries. His collaboration with academia enabled him to look for innovative ways to improve the quality of leather. He was awarded Padma Shri by Government of India in 1967 for his contributions to the leather industry.

Apart from product innovation, Nagappa Chettiar was also instrumental in bringing the leather industry together. He, along with his colleagues in the

industry, persuaded the Government of India to institute a Leather Export Promotion Council (LEPC) which took shape in 1956 at Marble Hall in Periamet, Madras. Dr. G. Sundaram, IAS, was Secretary of LEPC from 1971 to 1974. He pays handsome tribute to Nagappa Chettiar who was Chairman of LEPC at that time, pointing out that Chettiar had a sharp mind despite lack of formal education. Many important changes took place when the Chettiar-Sundaram combine encouraged switching from semi-finished leather to finished leather for export. Necessary clearances for acquiring machinery were also streamlined.

Despite his towering achievements, Chettiar remained humble. Always clad in khadi an a true Gandhian, he always recalled Mahatma Gandhi's lament in *The Harijan* as early as 1934 – that hides worth Rs. 9 crore exported from the country returned as manufactured articles, representing a material as well as intellectual drain. This inspired Chettiar to look for ways to improve the situation. He donated liberally to educational causes and also to temples.

A postcard from Buenos Aires to his daughter (addressed as Miss Yegu Nagappan) in 1961, featured in the book, reveals his concern for her and his wife from far afar when instant communication was star years away. In the Foreword to the book, Yegammai says his father always found time for the family despite his pressing business interests. This pioneer of leather trade in India breathed his last in 1982, aged 67. His death was a great loss to leather industry in particular.

– K. Venkatesh

\* J. Prasad Davids, *Leather King Padma Shri A. Nagappa Chettiar: Inspiring Legacy of His Success – in Management, Public and Personal Life*, Nagappan Foundation, Chennai, 2015.

# A 4-page special feature on Madras Week

## The Justice Party in Triplicane

– A walk during Madras Week

It was documentary filmmaker and photographer S. Anwar who first introduced me to Govi Lenin of *Nakkeeran* publications and his associate Prince Ennares Periyar. They were greatly interested in doing a walk connected with the Justice Party, he said, and wanted to know if *Madras Musings* would lend its name to it. I had a meeting with them and found that they had two routes in mind – one around T’Nagar where many of that party’s leaders are commemorated by name, and the other through Triplicane, where much of the party’s history actually took place. After a brief discussion we decided on the latter route for August 16th and agreed that it would be one of the walks done by *Madras Musings* for Madras Week.

The morning of the walk saw a fine drizzle, which kept many

of the registrants safely in bed. But a few of us made it and were glad that we did, for the tour led by Govi Lenin brought to light several nuggets of Madras history, long forgotten. We began at the City Centre Mall, Radhakrishnan Road. This was once Raju Gramani Thottam and it was here that the Non-Brahmin Manifesto of the South Indian Liberation Front aka Justice Party was released in 1916. This year, therefore, marks the centenary of Dravidian politics, for it was with that party that the movement began.

We walked down Natesa Mudaliar Road, which connects Mylapore to Triplicane. This is named after Dr. C. Natesa

Mudaliar (1875-1937), the founder of the Non-Brahmin movement. He was a prominent medical practitioner of the city and in 1912 helped found the Madras United League that focussed on improving the literacy of non-Brahmins in the Presidency. Though sidelined in

• by  
Sriram V.

later years, it cannot be denied that much of the initial impetus for the movement came from him.

Natesa Mudaliar Road leads to Irusappa Gramani Street, a



Lenin (second from left) at the Subramania Bharati’s house.

thoroughfare that commemorates the Gramani community, several of whose members were followers of the Justice Party. Ma. Po. Sivagnanam (1906-1995), the Tamil scholar and also a Gramani, lived here. He played an important role in the agitation that led to Madras being retained as part of Madras State (later Tamil Nadu), during the linguistic division that led to the formation of Andhra. Ma Po Si was a Gandhian but in 1967, successfully contested the Assembly elections on a DMK ticket, winning from the T’Nagar constituency.

Our next stop was the house of Subramania Bharati (1882-1921), on Tulasinga Perumal Street. Now a well-maintained museum, this was an apt place to consider Bharati’s view of the Justice Party movement. Though he was a revolutionary in his strong dislike for the caste system, Bharati opined that the Justice Party, focussing as it did only on the local political movement, diverted attention from the greater good – the nationalist movement and the freedom struggle. The Justice Party when it came to power in the mid-1920s, would ban his works, a proscription that would end only in 1948.

From Tulasinga Perumal Street we went to the Triplicane Tank. The waters of this tank and their maintenance was to see a bitter debate in the early 1900s in the Madras Corporation. In his capacity as Councillor for Triplicane, Dr. T.M. Nair (1868-1919) ordered that washing of clothes in the tank should be stopped forthwith and that the locals be taxed for the maintenance of the water. This was strongly opposed by Sir Pitti Theagaroya Chetty (1852-1925) and in the vote that ensued, Dr. Nair was defeated. He resigned from the Corporation and this was to embitter his relations with Sir Theagaroya. Matters would have remained thus and there had not Dr. C. Natesa Mudaliar brokered peace between the

two in the interests of the non-Brahmin movement. The two came together by 1914 and, from then on, worked closely in the Justice Party. Dr. Nair went to England in 1919 to represent the non-Brahmin interests at the Houses of Parliament and died suddenly during his travel.

One of the earliest moves by the Madras United League under Dr. Natesa Mudaliar was the establishment of a hostel for non-Brahmin students. There had existed no such facility prior to this and its creation was to greatly encourage many non-Brahmins from the mofussil to enrol in the colleges of Madras. We, therefore, travelled next to Akbar Sahib Street, where Natesa Mudaliar’s hostel once existed but is untraceable now.

A coffee break en route at Adyar Ananda Bhavan was a good spot for a discussion on the electoral fortunes of the Justice Party. It came to power following the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms that allowed for a limited electoral franchise for the Legislative Councils. The Congress opted to stay out, citing Mahatma Gandhi’s non-cooperation principles but it spawned several outfits such as the Swarajists who contested the elections. The Justice Party came to power in 1920 with A. Subbarayulu Reddiar becoming the first Premier of Madras. He resigned shortly thereafter, making way for the Rajah of Panagal under whose leadership several landmark legislations were to be passed. The Communal GO of 1921 introduced proportional reservation of jobs on the basis of caste and religion and can be considered the beginning of the reservation policy in the whole of India. The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Board was set up and took over the administration of all temple lands. This was opposed by the orthodox elements but received wholehearted support from the Paramacharya of Kanchi. The

(Continued on page 6)



‘Mylapore and the Freedom Movement’ was the theme of a walk led by Sriram V during Madras Week. The walk included stops at C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar’s residence in Alwarpet (top) and the Andhra Mahila Sabha campus where the walkers paused at the statue of its founder Durgabai Deshmukh.



The Kelambakkam walk ... in the rain.

## The Justice Party in Triplicane

(Continued from page 5)

party, though outside office but lending support to Dr. P. Subbaroyan's ministry in 1927, played a crucial role in helping Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy table her anti-nautch Bill in Legislature.

We then moved to what is today Sangeetha Café on Bharati (Pycroft's) Road. This was once Murali Café that proudly sported a board that claimed that entry was only for Brahmins. Those of other castes could take away food but could not eat there. This was where we remembered the role of Periyar E.V. Ramaswami Naicker (1879-1973) in the history of the Justice Party. He left the Congress in 1925 and by 1934 was firmly in the Justice Party's fold. By then the party's great days were over. It was steadily losing to the Congress and it was Periyar who transformed it into the Self-Respect movement, launching the Dravida Kazhagam. The Justice Party faded away thereafter. In the 1950s, Periyar was to get his followers to agitate against the Brahmin tag of Murali Cafe. A year-long legal battle, picketing and violence was to follow. It was the Paramacharya of Kanchi who finally convinced the owner of the hotel to remove the offending word. That ended the matter.

Our next stop was the house of Chinna Kuthoosi aka R. Thyagarajan (1934-2011) at Vallabha Agraharam, opposite the erstwhile Star Talkies. Though a Brahmin, he was to be a staunch member of the Self-Respect movement. He was a journalist and ideologue, who was widely respected by all elements in Dravidian politics. We ended the walk outside *The Hindu's* old office at 100 Mount Road. From there, you get a good view of Periyar's statue and also that of C.N. Annadurai (1909-1969). The latter, a staunch follower of Periyar, would break away from him and his DK on account of Periyar's decision to marry Maniammai, a woman several years his junior. Anna's split would see him launch the DMK

in 1949 and become Chief Minister of Madras in 1967. He would legislate to have the State's name changed to Tamil Nadu and the rest is a story we all know.

Periyar may have been an atheist but this was something that many of the Dravidian politicians chose to be ambivalent about. It was perhaps appropriate that our breakfast, which saw an animated discussion on the future of Dravidian politics, was at Saravana Bhavan, where we ate surrounded by pictures of Murugan, the Tamil deity, and of his – ardent devotee Kripananda Variyar.

## A walk in the rain at Kelambakkam...

The Madras Naturalists' Society's Kelambakkam Nature Walk, a part of Madras Week 2015 celebrations, provided participants sightings of 43 different birds: Despite heavy rain before and during the first half of the Walk, there were 21 'bravehearts' who thoroughly enjoyed both the rain and the sightings, the big bonus being the three Greater Flamingos in all their glory. Sivkumar Hariharan led the walk: The Bird List of sightings is:

Spot-billed Pelican; Painted Stork; Asian Openbill; Little Grebe; Spot-billed Duck; Fulvous Whistling-duck; Common Coot; Large Egret; Little Egret; Cattle Egret; Grey Heron; Black-crowned Night Heron; Striated Heron; Black Bittern; Whiskered Tern; Black-headed Ibis; Glossy Ibis; Greater Flamingo; Green Bee-eater; Purple Swampphen; Pied Crested Cuckoo; Eurasian Curlew; Snipe sp.; Common Redshank; Little Stint; Black-

winged Stilt; House Crow; Large-billed Crow; Red-wattled Lapwing; Ashy Prinia; Common Myna; Indian Pond Heron; Common Moorhen; Black Drongo; Pied Kingfisher; White-breasted Kingfisher; Red-vented Bulbul; Spotted Dove; Blue Rock Pigeon; Little Cormorant; Great Cormorant; Shikra; and Tailor Bird.

Vijay  
Madras Naturalists' Society

## ... & on a search for butterflies



The 'Butterfly Walk' at the Adyar Tholkappiar Poonga during Madras Week was the first one ever conducted by the Madras Naturalists' Society. It was led by Dr. R. Bhanumathi, Environmental Educationist. The walk began with an introduction on butterflies, morphology, role in our environment and tips on watching in the wild. The 25 participants were taken around the Poonga in small groups and introduced to spotting butterflies with their identification marks, wing patterns and flight behaviour. The two-hour walk resulted in spotting and identifying 24 species of butterflies (listed below) including the not-so-common ones like

## Winners all!



### ... at the Tamil Medium Quiz...

The annual Madras Quiz for Tamil medium city schools was held on August 22nd at a hall in the P.S. School campus, Mylapore. The quiz master was R. Revathi. The first prize was won by the team from Rani Meiyammai Girls' School, R.A. Puram – S. Aishwarya, M. Suganya. The second place was the team from St. Antony's Girls' School and 3rd was the team from Raja Mutiah School, R.A. Puram.

### ... and at the power point presentation...

Kombai S. Anwar, documentary film-maker and photo-journalist, presented the first prize to the PSBB, T.P. Road, T. Nagar team, which won the annual Madras Day Power Point Presentation Contest at Sastri Hall, Luz. The theme this year was *Heritage Churches of Madras*. Mylapore Times organised this event too.



Black Rajah. Common Grass Dart.

the Black Rajah, Common Grass Dart and Bush Hopper. The butterflies spotted were:

Common Mormon (*Papilio polytes*); Lime Butterfly (*Papilio demoleus*); Crimson Rose (*Atrophaneura hector*); Small Grass Yellow (*Eurema brigitta*); Common Emigrant (*Catopsilia pomona*); Small Salmon Arab (*Colotis amata*); Common Albatross (*Appias albino*); Psyche (*Leptostia nina*); Blue Tiger (*Tirumala limniace*); Striped Tiger (*Danaus genutia*); Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*); Common Crow (*Euploea core*); Black Rajah (*Charaxes solon*); Tawny Coster (*Acraea violae*); Common Leopard (*Phalanta phalantha*); Common Sailer (*Neptis hylas*); Chocolate Pansy (*Junonia iphita*); Lemon Pansy (*Junonia lemonias*); Forget-me-not (*Catochrysops strabo*); Lime Blue (*Chilades lajus*); Common Banded Awl (*Hasora chromus*); Common Grass Dart (*Taractrocerma maevius*); Bush Hopper (*Ampittia dioscorides*); Parnara Swift (*Parnana bada*)



At the Madras Christian College exhibition... explaining exhibits and interacting with the visitors ... and the crowd to see how the trains run.

# Vestiges of Madras at MCC

The Department of History, one of the oldest department in Madras Christian College, organised a two-day exhibition, "Vestiges of Madras", to celebrate Madras Week. Taking place in early September, the exhibition helped make it what may be called a Madras Month. Exhibits, diverse in character, showcased the growth of Madras from its founding. On display were personal collections of maps, portraits, stamps, rare books, etc. of Dwaraknath Reddy, Managing Director, Nippo Batteries, D.H. Rao, Winston A. Henry and Roland Nelson.

The Archaeological Survey of India – Fort Museum, Chennai Circle – Chennai Port Trust, Department of Archae-

ology, Government of Tamil Nadu, Department of History, MCC, Government Museum, Chennai, Indian Air Force Station, Tambaram; Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, MCC Archives, and Madras Veterinary College, Chennai, all had contributed a variety of exhibits. The most attractive features of the exhibition were a running model from the railways, a model of a Mirage 2000 from the IAF, a speaking canon from the Fort Museum, and ship models from Port Trust.

Special lectures were delivered by D.H. Rao and Winston Henry on Buckingham Canal and Tramways in Madras, respectively. A food court with a variety of traditional cuisines was also organised.

Nalli Kuppaswamy Chetti, Chairman Nalli Silks, while inaugurating the exhibition, shared with a sense of nostalgia, his experiences of the city, particularly of T'Nagar. S. Muthiah delivered the valedictory address and hoped the exhibition would have made visitors proud of Madras's history.

The target group of the exhibition was students and, as expected, it drew a lot of visitors from schools in the neighbourhood. Student from over 20 schools (about 2000 students) enjoyed the exhibits which some called a lifetime experience. Students and staff from Madras Christian College and other city colleges also had the same view.



## On the trail of nuns & temples

A walk themed on the 'Irish nuns in George Town' (on right) was led by Vincent D' Souza (in cap on right) during Madras Week.

Andhra Bank, Mylapore branch, organised a 'Seven Sivan Temples' tour in the Mylapore area to mark Madras Week (below).

**தலைமை காவல் நிலைய கட்டிடம்**

சென்னைவின் தலைமை காவல் நிலைய கட்டிடம் ஒரு மாபீசம் (தெரரிடெட்) கட்டிடம். 1839-ல் இக்கட்டிடம் கட்டப்பட்டது. ஆர்ஞ்சுரா நிர்மாப்படி இக்கட்டிடத்தின் மதிப்பு ரூபாய் 25,000ம் மட்டுமே. மரணக் இயக்கத்தின் கலையாப்படி கட்டப்பட்ட கட்டிடம் இது.

\*கிட்டிடம் கலாச்சாப்படி நிர்மாபடி உயர்ந்த தரக்கலாபடி கட்டப்பட்ட இத்த கட்டிடத்தில் 1858ம் வருடம் முதல் ஊடகக்கு ஁ந்தித்தகொண்டு இயங்கிய காவல் துறை ரின்னல் ரூபாய் 20,000 கொடுத்த வாங்கிக் கொண்டு தரது சொத்து கட்டிடமாக ஁லிக்கித்தக் கொண்டு. தித்தித்தி மதிப்பு இம்மரண கட்டுமான செலவு மட்டுமே கணக்கில் ஁ந்தித்தகொண்டு திணல் இது சாத்தியமாபிற்று.

\*இதனை தெகட்டுத்து 1906-ல் காவல் துறையின் குற்றித்திணை இலாகா இத்த கட்டிடத்தை மேலும் அழகுணக்கியுடன் கிிபுபுத்தி கட்டித்தகை சலையின் இன்மும் இயக்கி வருகிறது.

\*1993-ல் மேலும் இம் தேவைப்படுகிறது ஁ந்தி காரணத்தித்தகை இத்த அழகிய கட்டிடத்தை முழுமறமாக இயத்தகிட்டு 10 மரபடி கட்டிடமாக கட்டி ஒரு திம்மணம் கொண்டுமரப்பட்டது.

\*ஆணல் இத்த நடவடிக்கையை ஁ந்தித்தி மாபீசம் (தெரரிடெட்) கட்டிடக்கணை பழகக்கும் திணைக் கொண்டு திணைக் கொண்டு உயர்ந்தித்தித்தி மறுதகக்கக் கொண்டு செழிது செழிது கட்டிடத்தை கட்டித்தித்தி.

\*1998-ல் இத்த கட்டிடத்தை பழமண குணையாமல் சீரமைத்து இன்மும் கட்டித்தகை சலையின் இது கம்பீரமாக நித்தித்தி.

\*பழமண கிடுக்கிணைல் காப்பற்றப்பட்ட இத்த கட்டிடம் இதுவே மேலணகில் பிண்கிணக்கில் ஁மியில் அழகாக ரிசாக்கிப்பணை இன்மும் காரணம்.

Clubs of Inner Wheel District 323 care for

SANMIA MALEAS

SANMIA MALEAS

## Highlighting built heritage

The billboards on the Marina with which Inner Wheelers 323 highlighted the city's built heritage during Madras Day.

**Senate House**

- Situated on Wallajah Road along the Beach the Senate House was built in the years 1875 - 1879 by the father of Indo-Saracenic Architecture of India, Robert Chisholm.
- Considered to be a harmonious blend of the Indo-Saracenic and the Byzantine, this magnificent monument was built on the grounds of the Nawab's artillery park.
- The Senate House consists of a two-floor high grand central hall held by six stone pillars, with corridors on the ground floor, six porches, beautiful porticos, a parapet, four sky reaching towers standing at each corner and three segmented arch openings in the east, west and the south side, bulbous domes and tiny cupolas giving it a very stately look.
- With a capacity to seat 1600 people this architectural marvel was built at a cost of Rs. 3 lacs.
- In its glorious years this venue was sought for various luncheons and tea parties, including one hosted for Queen Elizabeth II, this venue was home to Madras Music Academy during its infancy, was used as the first lecture rooms of the University. It was used for convocations, offices of the Vice-Chancellor till the centenary.
- Yet another instance of historical significance associated with this heritage monument was the meeting of the first Madras Legislative Council in the year 1930.
- Restoration efforts by an enterprising Vice-Chancellor and enthusiastic corporate sponsors helped it attain its original glory in time for the 150th year celebrations of the university.

Clubs of Inner Wheel District 323 care for

SANMIA MALEAS

SANMIA MALEAS



## Exhibiting the past

Students and faculty of the Sociology Dept of Sri Kanyaka Parameswari Arts and Science College for Women, Audiappa Naicken Street, George Town, hosted a half-day Madras Day exhibition of old photographs and home accessories used in years gone by. It also featured photographs of Kotwal Chawadi and the Sowcarpet/Mint area shot by the students. A few traders from the Moore Market/Lily Pondy complex also displayed old coins, gramophones, vinyl records, etc.



# The Story of Madras

The Marina was indeed the perfect setting for the screening of the documentary *The story of Madras...Chennai* on the evening of August 22nd. As the waves lashed the shore and the stars twinkled that night (the rain Gods were merciful) history came alive for the duration of the film. For wasn't on an extension of this sandy stretch that Francis Day of the East India Company arrived 376 years ago to found a new settlement. After braving the arduous journey by ship and an even more treacherous *masula* boat ride, Day arrived in what journalist, author, and well-known chronicler of Madras S. Muthiah calls no man's sand!!!!

The film, which has been produced by the INTACH Chennai Chapter was an idea conceived by its Convenor Architect Sujatha Shankar a few years ago. The major highlight of the film is the commentary by S. Muthiah. It encapsulates over 300 years of history deftly and neatly, tells us about the many firsts that Madras scored, its institutions, its buildings and its glorious heritage and much more. No matter how many books on Madras you read there is simply nothing like hearing it from Muthiah, a man who knows the city best and who has history at his finger tips. Bringing to bear his knowledge and expertise honed by years and

years of research Muthiah speaks as well as he writes and narrates the commentary in a chatty, conversational style. For someone like me who had been a Journalism student of Muthiah at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan it was a throwback to those days when he would hold students in thrall with his lectures and have them hanging on to his every word. It was a wealth of information that he recalled so effortlessly that left many a viewer dumbstruck. "Imagine he has put in more

## ● By A Special Correspondent

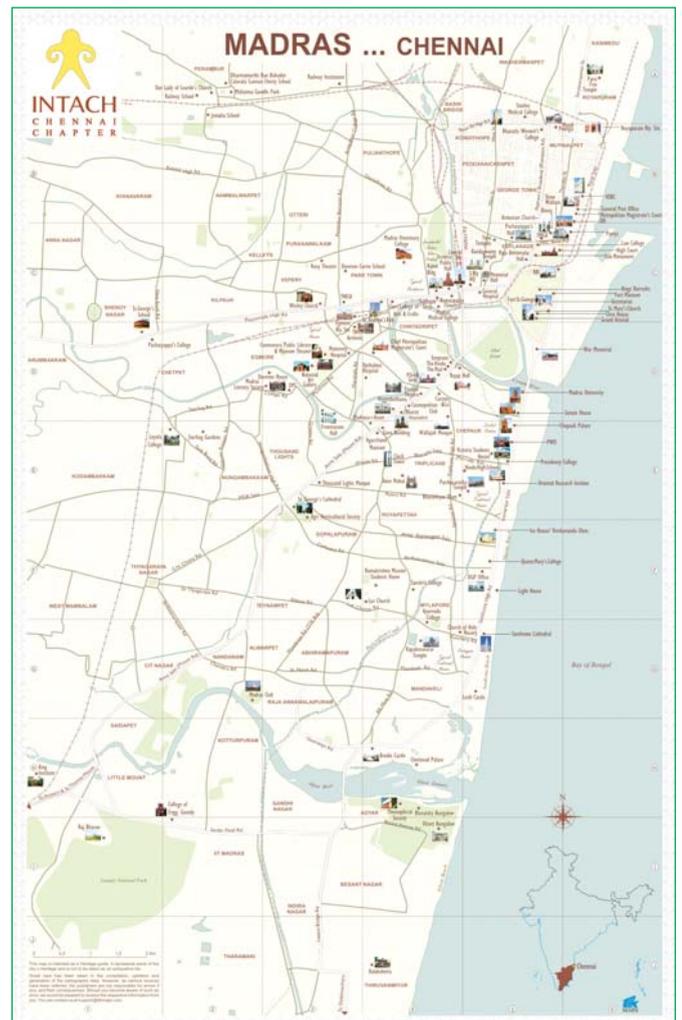
than thirty years of research to give us this and that in a day and age when there were no computers, no Google, no internet, gushed a viewer. A motley crowd of history buffs, heritage lovers, architects, students, bureaucrats and other VIPs happily sat cross "Clegged on the sands and watched the film.

Talking about the making of the film, Sujatha Shankar discloses that the original plan was to record the commentary in a studio, but Muthiah preferred to talk to a live audience. Thus it was that the talk which was delivered at Madras Club to its members was seamlessly converted into a documentary by Sujatha with intelligent interspersing of visuals map draw-

ings, old images, photographs and portraits to make the story come alive. Although it was released last year on Madras Day at the *Amir Mahal* by the Prince of Arcot, Mohammed Abdul Ali (the first copy was received by Mrs Y.G. Parthasarathy, Founder, Dean and Director Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan Senior Secondary School, and copies distributed to several schools) the film has unlimited shelf life and is a great watch at any time. The visuals (Bhagat Singh and R Murali) and the music blended neatly and added value and meaning to the film.

Talking of the crowd response Sujatha Shankar describes it in one word, "awesome. Around seven hundred people watched it during the screening on August 22nd, and inspired by the overwhelming response a second screening was also held the same evening. Since copies of the film had been to several schools, those institutions too screened it for their students.

A Heritage map of Madras designed by Sujatha Shankar was also released on the occasion by Dr Rani Vedomuthu Chairperson, School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University, and the first copy was received by the Prince of Arcot, Mohammed Abdul Ali. The map which was made possible by TTK Healthcare is a foldable, pocket-sized map. "When you are somewhere in



Madras that is Chennai and have some time to spare, the map will help you explore the vicinity, Sujatha says

The film is a must watch for heritage lovers, history buffs, students of architecture and history and anyone who cares about Madras that is Chennai..

It gives plenty of reasons to let our hearts swell with pride for, after all, wasn't it in Madras that the seeds of modern India were sown. Such initiatives are indeed laudable as they help to keep alive, preserve and protect our natural heritage and built heritage.

**MADRAS...CHENNAI**  
Heritage Map

Madras, Queen of the Coromandel Coast is today Chennai. Earlier the capital of Madras Presidency, Chennai is now the capital of Tamilnadu, the historic land of ancient culture.

Francis Day and Andrew Cogan of the East India Company with the Dubash Beri Thimmappa, negotiated a grant of 3 square miles of land in 1639 that was to grow into Madras.

It is bisected by the Cooum river in the centre, the Adyar river in the South and vertically divided by the Buckingham Canal.

The metropolis today with its layers of modernism, still retains much of its wealth of architectural heritage and fascinating historic past.

Location : 13.08389°N, 80.27000°E  
State : Tamil Nadu  
Local Language : Tamil  
Time Zone : + 5:30 hrs GMT

Emergency Numbers  
Police : 100  
Ambulance : 108  
Tourist Enquiry : 1-800-4253-1111

**FORT ST. GEORGE**

Hailed 'A work of Genius', the Senate House within the Madras University campus is one of the finest works of architect Robert F. Chisholm. Completed in 1879, it serves as an examination hall and offices of the University. Inspired by the Byzantine and built in the Indo-Saracenic style, the Senate House is the ultimate manifestation of this style. Chisholm's high regard for Indian craftsmanship can be gleaned from its integration into various elements of the structure. Towers with bulbous domes articulate the composition. Fine brickwork, woodwork, murals, stained glass and painted ceiling panels are part of this stately structure. The gigantic hall which can seat 1600 has seen several convocations and even the first conference of the Music Academy.

**SENATE HOUSE**

The High Court and Law College buildings create a striking, rhythmic silhouette of domes and minarets. Inspired by Gothic Law Courts of London, this landmark structure was designed as a celebration of the Indo-Saracenic style by Henry Irwin on the initial designs of Brassington. Beginning in 1889, it was built by Namburumal Chetty at a phenomenal cost of Rs.13 lakhs. The central domed minaret once housed the lighthouse with kerosene-fuelled light visible 32 km away at sea. Also within the campus is an older lighthouse, Hymer's obelisk and a statue of 'Manu Neerthi Chozhan'. On the eastern wall is a plaque, commemorating the bombing by 'Ender', the German cruiser in 1914.

**KAPALEESWARAR TEMPLE**

Kapaleeswarar Temple, about 300 years old, is the hub of Mysapore. Earlier located on the shore and mentioned in 7th Century songs of Salivite Saints, it was rebuilt in its current location with the 'Mada streets' planned around the temple. The towering Gopurams form the visual focus and have mythological legends depicted on it in the Vijayanagar style. The temple, its pillars, capitals, floors and slabs are constructed in stone and is a study in light and shade. The tank on the west was created in the 18th century on land donated by the Nawab of Arcot. In a gesture of gratitude, the tank is still offered for use by Muslims. Replete with history, the temple maintains its religious importance and its annual festival adds to the exuberance of the neighbourhood.

**MADRAS HIGH COURT**

The Museum Theatre, Connemara Library and National Art Gallery comprise a fine ensemble of structures. The Theatre is a splendid piece of tallanate architecture. The sweeping curve of the arcaded colonnade adds to the imposing quality of this majestic, richly embellished structure. 'Connemara Library' designed by Henry Irwin was a National Library in the 1850s, where the books were shipped from Haileybury College and the India Office in England. The natural lighting through the stained glass gives a magical glow to the Reading Room. The National Art Gallery built to commemorate the 50th year of Queen Victoria's reign, is distinctly Mughal and Rajasthani in style.

**STATE BANK OF INDIA**

Designed by architect Henry Irwin, the State Bank of India was built in 1896 to house the Bank of Madras. Symmetrical and rhythmic, this Indo-Saracenic masterpiece is inspired by Mughal architecture. Its skyline is characterised by large and small domes atop cantilevered bases tied down with intricate stone brackets. Subtle contrast of colours of red brick walls and grey stone-trimmed arches enhances the beauty of this structure. The interior is a fine composition of spaces and in no way less inspiring in architectural detail and splendour. The double-height Banking Hall has exquisite woodwork and intricate stained glass.

**MUSEUM COMPLEX**

The Museum Theatre, Connemara Library and National Art Gallery comprise a fine ensemble of structures. The Theatre is a splendid piece of tallanate architecture. The sweeping curve of the arcaded colonnade adds to the imposing quality of this majestic, richly embellished structure. 'Connemara Library' designed by Henry Irwin was a National Library in the 1850s, where the books were shipped from Haileybury College and the India Office in England. The natural lighting through the stained glass gives a magical glow to the Reading Room. The National Art Gallery built to commemorate the 50th year of Queen Victoria's reign, is distinctly Mughal and Rajasthani in style.

**CHEPAUK PALACE**

**CONNEMARA LIBRARY**

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ñ THE EDITOR

# Story of Madras Cotton

Cotton (qut'n, qujun – Arabic, cotoun – Anglo-Norman, coton – old French, *karparsa* – Sanskrit) has been a part of Indian heritage for long. The earliest reference to cotton occurs in the *Srauta Sutra* of *Asvalayanā* (estimated 8th Century BCE), in which the cotton fibre is compared with other fibrous materials used by humans, such as silk and hemp. Herodotus (c. 450 BCE) indicates that cotton material is the customary wear of Indians: 'India has wild trees that bear fleeces as their fruits ... of this the Indians make their clothes.'

Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller who travelled in India in the 13th Century, refers to Masulipatnam cotton material as the finest and most elegant fabric known in any part of the world.

The bulk of the cotton fabrics imported into Europe from India in the 18th Century bore hand-printed floral designs. White cotton materials with prominent floral motifs particularly were popular, especially among the wealthy. Floral 'sprig' designs with tiny motifs on pastel backgrounds were cheap and, therefore, were popular among the less wealthy Europeans. In France, these printed fabrics were generally called 'les Indiennes' ('the Indians'). In England and in the American colonies, similar terms prevailed: calico, derived from Calicut, was a general name for Indian cotton fabric, including plain, printed, stained, dyed, woven with coloured stripes or checks, and chintz was from the Hindustani 'chint'.

Historical references to cotton in India speak of 'tree' cotton, which should be *Gossypium arboreum*. Throughout the world, three other economically useful species of *Gossypium* are known: *barbadense*, *hirsutum*, and *herbaceum*. From the early decades of the 19th Century, from the time of the governorship of Thomas Munro (1761-1827), the Government of Madras was determined to cultivate *G. barbadense* (the bourbon cotton) in Salem and Coimbatore, and entrusted the responsibility to J.M. Heath, Commercial Resident in Coimbatore. Heath communicated with George Arthur Hughes in Tinnevely who had been engaged in the cultivation of *G. barbadense* there for long. Heath, having obtained instructions from Hughes, succeeded in growing *G. barbadense* in Coimbatore.

Four cotton farms of 400 acres each were established in Tinnevely, Coimbatore, Masulipatnam, and Visakhapatnam. The produce from Coimbatore, 500 bales of 300 lb each, shipped by Heath to England, were sent to China for sale.

One vital issue for Indian cotton was its inability to match American cotton in quality. Because the cotton wool produced in India included seeds, the Court of Directors of the East India Company obtained patents of the most popular machines that were in use in Georgia and Carolina in America for separating cotton wool from seeds. They engaged an American, Bernard Metcalfe, in 1813, who for some years had worked as a cotton-cleaner in Georgia, to work on this, but Metcalfe, after working in the southern districts of Madras Presidency (Tinnevely?) for some time,



The traditional 18th Century Indian method of deseeding.

found that his efforts to encourage Indians to use American machines were futile and returned to America.

The Northern Circars (modern districts of Godavari, Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, and Ganjam in Orissa) on the Coromandel Coast was long the seat of extensive production of cotton fabric, which was popularly known as 'calico' (the 'Madras' long cloth) until the 1830s. In Masulipatnam, dyed handkerchiefs and scarves were produced for sale in Africa and in the West Indies. The dyed fabric from Masulipatnam suffered a setback in the 1830s, because of the finished cotton that was mass produced in Manchester and Glasgow. Because the cotton grown in the Northern Circars was neither abundant nor good, the weavers depended on raw material brought by the nomadic people from the Mahratta land (modern Maharashtra), where better quality raw cotton of better staple length grew. The East India Company had established

factories for the spinning of long cloths and salampores in the southern districts of the Madras Presidency. Unreliable rain pattern in the southern parts of Madras Presidency influenced the price of finished cotton to rise and, therefore, cotton materials from southern Madras Presidency were dearer than those from the northern districts (the Circars). *Gossypium barbadense* and Brazil cotton were cultivated by East India Company servants and by a few private residents in Tinnevely.

By the late 1830s the demand for cotton fabric was intense in Britain; in the words of the Minute writer, importers were "almost bent on storming India House unless a supply of cotton were immediately obtained from India."

The Court of Directors of the East India Company, because of repeated previous fail-

ures with cotton cultivation in Madras (and after other parts of India), decided that the introduction of American cotton and procuring information on the cultivation of cotton in the Southern States of America was the solution. They deputed Captain Thomas Bayles of the Madras Army, who was then on furlough in Britain, to proceed to America to secure cotton seeds and details of cultivation, with an intent to engage people qualified for the purpose of instructing and superintending Indians in the cultivation of cotton and the proper methods of cleaning it by machinery. This mission entrusted to Bayles was committed to secrecy. Bayles was instructed to recruit 8 planters and 12 supervisors (for cleaning and packing) from America and they were to arrive in India no later than December 1839. One of them was Thomas James Finnie. The outlay for this project was £100,000. The Tasmanian newspaper *Courier* of October 13 (1840) reported



Shrub Cotton (*Gossypium Barbadense*)

that the boat *Great Western* had aboard seven experienced cotton planters from South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi, who had been engaged by Bayles and were proceeding to India. The same newspaper also indicated that three more were to follow with cotton seeds, gins, and agricultural implements.

Between 1848 and 1858, the soil types suitable for cotton cultivation were scientifically established in the Districts of Cuddapah, Madura, Tinnevely and Coimbatore. A general consensus was reached that the North and South American varieties were of superior quality in terms of staple length and softness of fibres. While referring to the highly-prized long stapled *G. barbadense* (South Sea Island variety), Talboys-Wheeler re-

cotton in the Madras Presidency. After his return to the UK in 1853, Wight published a series of short articles in *Gardener's Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette of London* referring to his cotton experiments in Madras, and also a book referring in detail to his Madras experiments in 1862. Fierce scientific debates occurred between the American cotton planter Thomas Finnie, then located in Tinnevely, and Robert Wight in Coimbatore.

Although I have referred here to Wight's experiments with cotton, we need to recognise that a significant section of these experiments was carried out by the American farmers (planters, seed cleaners), who were recruited for this purpose by the East India Company. During the governorship of Lord Elphinstone, cotton experimental farms were established in Madras. American cotton was cultivated and American saw gins were trialled for their efficiency, under the superintendence of Wight at the Coimbatore experimental farm. Finnie, in Tinnevely, continually evaluated the reactions of local farmers to his cotton cultivation trials and interpreted how each year's crop performed. He concluded that the American cotton varieties would never perform desirably in this part of India. On the contrary, Wight considered the climatic factors of Mexico, the original home of the New Orleans cotton. He could see a substantial level of similarity in climate between Mexico and India. Hence he strongly advocated continuation of experiments. Nevertheless the yields were unimpressive and the farmers could not be convinced to grow American cotton.

These unsuccessful outcomes matched with the succession of Henry Pottinger to

## • 'Pages from History' by DR. A. RAMAN

Charles Sturt University  
Orange, New South Wales  
Australia

marks: "...very beautiful muslins are still manufactured by the native weavers at Dacca and Arnee." Whereas Dacca muslin is well-known, a note on Arnee would be in order here. Arni (Arnee) is a township in Tiruvannamalai District about 140 km southwest of Madras. From the days of James Anderson in Madras, who experimented with silkwork production and mulberry cultivation in Madras in the 18th Century, Arni has been in the limelight for the manufacture of silk fabrics, which were of a unique quality, known popularly as Arni silk and this township retains its reputation to this day.

Around the same period, Robert Wight extensively experimented with cultivating

(Continued from page 12)



(Current Affairs questions are from the period August 16 to 31. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. On August 18th, which southern Indian city's airport became the first in the world to operate completely on solar power?
2. Name the respected Kannada writer and Sahitya Akademi award recipient who was tragically shot dead recently.
3. Who was awarded the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna on August 29th?
4. Name the 'Waterman of India' conferred with the prestigious 2015 Stockholm Water Prize on August 26th.
5. The Union Government's new telemedicine initiative, in collaboration with Apollo Hospitals, to provide healthcare facilities in rural areas is called...?
6. According to scientists belonging to various research organisations, gene THSD7A has been identified as primarily responsible for what worrying health condition in Indians?
7. Which famous road in New Delhi, named after a Mughal emperor, has been renamed after a former President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam?
8. Name the micro-finance company that recently became the first in India to start operations as a full-fledged scheduled commercial bank.
9. Who on August 21st was sworn-in as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka for a fourth time?
10. What is the aim of www.vidyalakshmi.co.in launched by the Government recently?  
\* \* \*
11. Which striking edifice in Fort St. George was built by Coja Nazar Jan, a rich Armenian, in the early 18th Century?
12. Where in Mylapore did the Justice Party release its first non-Brahmin manifesto in 1916?
13. Which institution had its genesis in the Madras Handloom Weavers' Provincial Co-Operative Society?
14. Which respected industrialist of Chennai is the author of *T Nagar, Andrum Indrum*, a book on the bustling locality?
15. Which distinctly-coloured structure on Mount Road was once called *Lawley Hall*?
16. What did *Cochin House*, near Egmore, become in the 1960s?
17. What was held for the first time in Spur Tank, Chetpet, between December 26 and 31, 1927?
18. Whose motto is *Swadharme Nidhanam Shreyaha* (It is a glory to die doing one's duty)?
19. If Vippore became Vepery, which was Kiliyur anglicised to?
20. Which church in Madras is dedicated to Our Lady of Health?

(Answers on page 12)

# Committed to creating Champions

• Two pages

It is a long drive to the Parry's Bus Terminus. The buses do not seem so huge out on the road, but there in the neighbourhood, we feel small and helpless as the big guys roll past! Just as one loses hope of finding the destination, a signboard is visible and we enter the compound that encloses the Prime Sports Academy.

It is early in the afternoon and the sun shines straight into the eyes, but some of the young, prospective athletes of India are already at it – some doing short and brisk run-ups alternated with long-stride walking; some hang inverted from bars and do stomach crunches and still others stretch their muscles in preparation for the day's training. The brightly coloured jerseys emblazoned with their team or school names add a splash of colour to the dusty running tracks. It is not noisy and throbbing with energy; quite the contrary, the youngsters work but at an almost meditative pace; then there is a sudden burst of speed and all eyes turn to the clay track in the centre, as two sprinters race, raising a load of dust, and just as abruptly ends with some verbal exchanges, hand-shaking and some good-natured back-slapping. The atmosphere of mentorship and mutual admiration brings a smile to the lips of spectators. There is such joy in sports!

Far enough from the dust and grime is a small cluster of trees under whose shades sits a group of dedicated fathers and mothers. Snacks boxes and coffee flasks do the round, as do tips on healthy diet, fads in running shoes and some snippets of information on the latest in the field of athletics. The one thing that these parents have common is the dream they cherish of seeing their young one competing in various athletic meets and one day representing the country. And the man who has brought together all these people, hot summer notwithstanding, is the founder of Prime Sports Academy – Coach P. Nagarajan.

The St. Joseph's College bus rolls in and we are joined shortly by the coach himself. A few steps behind him is the college Track and Field team and greetings and pleasantries are exchanged. Coach rattles out a few instructions to his boys and then directs his attention towards the non-college trainees. He echoes the same thought, "There is such joy in sports!", but in the same breath rues the fact that India's accomplishments in the Olympic arena do not match the talent that is available.

He has spent every moment



Getting of the blocks...while training.

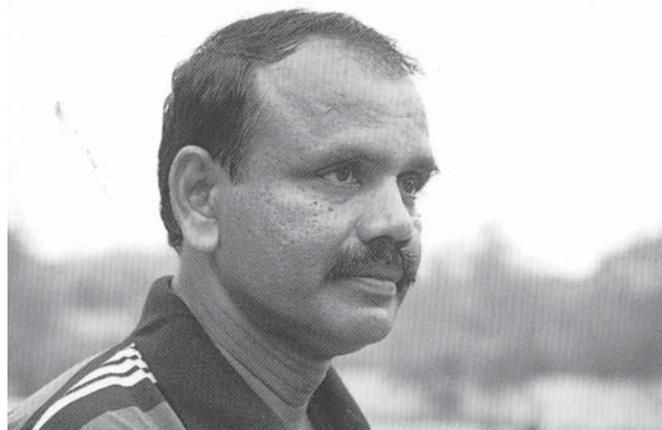
of his last 24 years trying to make the difference and ten of those years were spent here at Prime Sports Academy that he founded. The Academy has seen a few athletes who have held national records and around 40 athletes who have competed in international meets. PSA is a private coaching academy funded entirely by St. Joseph's Engineering College which also pays the rent for the training ground besides maintaining it. Most of the trainees here are from the weaker sections of the society and can ill-afford to pay for the coaching, much less af-

a Superintendent. The passion for athletics soon transformed into a passion for coaching. He formalised this by completing a 10-month Diploma in coaching from the National Institute of Sports, Patiala, and began his career in coaching with the SBOA College and School. He has been a favourite among athletes of schools like Velammal and Pachaiappa's College Higher Secondary School, some of whom continue training with him at PSA. Some of his renowned trainees include K.N. Priya and Revathi of St. Joseph's Engineering College; Shanthi

According to Coach Nagaraj, the most crucial aspect of sports training is understanding the physical attributes and psyche of the trainees and what to expect from them in terms of technique. He begins by saying that the body is a framework related to a certain genetic make-up; the best sport suited to one body type may not be suited to another – "simply said, a middle distance runner cannot hope to be a sprinter." What is of prime importance is the field or category under which one is likely to perform best, and where there is a better likelihood of winning medals. This, he says, requires tremendous understanding. It is now provided by research on human biodiversity. Apart from the information, the athlete must trust his coach who knows from experience! He laments the fact that with the arrival of the internet, information is available to one and all which has led to the deterioration of the coach-trainee trust – in such cases, unhurried diplomacy to communicate with youngsters is another aspect that influences coach-trainee bond.

"Training for athletics and training athletes are two very different things and, believe me, it takes a lot of mental strength to be objective as a coach; body constitutions being different, people perform very differently in varied climatic conditions," he says. Both trainers and trainees need to have a good rapport and trust in one another, in order to give the best. He explains, citing the example of athletes from mountainous regions like Sikkim, having trained under low oxygen conditions even in their peak physical and mental fitness, how they fail to deliver in the plains where the oxygen concentration is high.

In recent years, he has seen cultural differences play havoc with his own athletes. His star



P. Nagarajan

ford high quality running and training gear. Nevertheless, there are those who do pay a princely sum of rupees fifty towards membership. With a fairly large network of talent-hunters, especially in the rural belts, the numbers are ever increasing. The alumni of PSA too play an active part in keeping the academy going – proof of this is seen on the Facebook page of the academy.

Coach Nagarajan was born in Arundavapuram in Thanjavur district. Born into an agrarian community, he did not find too much support among family members, though his sports-skill did fetch him a career in Central Excise where he is now

and Neelaveni were identified from schools in rural belts and brought to Chennai by coach Nagaraj and went on to represent India at the Commonwealth Games. These girls have since passed out of college and are grateful for his guidance. Similarly, Kumaravel Premkumar of Thanjavur too found his way into Coach Nagarajan's fold and has since competed in the long jump event at international meets. He won the bronze in the indoor category at the Asian Athletic Championship in China in 2012 and the silver in the same event last year in Pune. G. Gayathri and Dipika are current favourites in the sprint hurdle events.

## of Sport

hurdler was to train at a camp in Punjab and then in the US. Her metabolism that worked around rice and lentil or, in other words, a moderate protein diet, did not co-operate with a differed protein-rich diet followed by strenuous weight training. Coach Nagaraj says that, though diploma programmes for coaches mention this in theory, sensitisation to these aspects of training is something that takes time to acquire. In this respect, he says that there is need for

### ● by A Special Correspondent

more regional institutes like NIS Patiala so that athletes can work closer home and in more suitable training conditions.

G. Gayathri, who completed her MBA two years ago, has still not found job-placement and says with resignation, "Those who interview me on account of my qualification feel my sport pursuits may overshadow my contribution to their business. Perhaps they are correct!" With regard to this, Coach says that in training centres the world over, there is intense specialisation and technological advancement in the field of Sports Medicine,

Biomechanics, Physiotherapy and Psychology. "Strike while the iron is hot!" he says. Sports persons should also be given performance incentives like aid to study sports-related subjects where they can continue to contribute even after their prime. This is something he is very passionate about and hopes to bring about some positive change with the help of his wife Dr. Mrs. Grace Helina, who is the Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University. His next milestone is to start a sports academy that would offer short term certificate courses in the above-mentioned categories in addition to Sports Administration. "Those who know the pain and tears that go into training will understand the disappointment of rejection at boot-camps on account of poor administration. As for others who have no prospects after their performing days are over, we have to bring about a huge change."

"Each and everyone of us has been put in this world with an intent and purpose. We have been given unique talents to fulfil this purpose. We just need to search within ourselves to identify this and go after it! We can each be leaders in our own right," he says with great confidence and is an exemplar of this. P. Nagarajan, with his unrelenting work as a coach, mentor and one who is trying to bring about a mass transformation in the attitude towards sport, is a fitting champion of Chennai. — Courtesy: *Champions of Chennai*, KSA Trust).

**Till September 30:** *Reflections of An Autumn Sun*: an exhibition of paintings by JMS Mani, known for his impressionistic style and the Badami series (at Apparao Infinity)

**Till September 30:** *Everywhere, Everyday*, an exhibition of artworks by different artists who explore the five elements of nature and its relationship to the five senses of the human body (at The Leela Galleria).

\* \* \*

**September 20-24:** The Park's New Festival 2015 organised by Prakriti Foundation.

**September 20:** Book release: *Until the Lions* by Karthika Nair (at Alliance Francaise, 7 p.m.)

**September 22:** AP Ensemble's *The Colliding Worlds Project*. Musical dialogue between Indian classical and folk with jazz and hip-hop (at Sansara. The Park, 8 p.m.)

**September 23:** *EnFlightment* — A devised piece of physical comedy by Rupesh Till (at Sansara, The Park, 8 p.m.)

**September 24:** *Torobaka* — A dance duet by Akram Khan and Israel Galvan (at Sir Mutha Venkata Subbarao Auditorium, 7 p.m.)

# An elite umpire from Madras

It's been nearly 12 years since an Indian was on the International Cricket Council's (ICC) panel of Elite Umpires. One of the country's, and more specially Chennai's, distinguished cricketers-turned-umpire Srinivas Venkataraghavan was the last Indian on that prestigious panel. Now, coincidentally, a second Chennai umpire has been chosen from India to be on the ICC's elite panel. He is the 49-year-old S. Ravi, a former club and university cricketer.

A post-graduate from Pachaiyappa's College, cricket was always a part of his life. An opening bat and a left-arm spinner, he represented the Universities. He also became a respected cricketer in the TNCA first division league. He first played for YMA, then switched to ICF before moving to Reserve Bank, playing first division from 1983 to 1991. Those were some of the strongest teams of the period.

By 1991, Ravi had qualified as an umpire and was appointed



Umpire S. Ravi.

human being." The one thing that umpiring had taught him was to be humble.

But that does not mean that he meekly submits to senior players on the field. He told a bewildered England fast bowler James Anderson, who had crossed 400 Test wickets at Headingleys, pointedly how he was trading on the "danger area" of the playing surface. Television replays showed how

### ● by A Sports Correspondent

to supervise games in the First Division. "When I umpired in first division here in 1992-93," Ravi recalls, "the standard was so high that it almost matched that of the Ranji Trophy. Umpiring in those matches made my transition to first class cricket easy."

Ravi umpired his first Ranji game in 1999. Along the way, he was guided by two former first class umpires from the city, R. Radhakrishnan and R.V. Ramani.

Ravi has had interactions with Venkat who had taught him to be relaxed while being at the centre of the pitch and advised him to give decisions "with conviction and confidence." This was evident in the Second Test at Headingleys Leeds, when England played New Zealand. Ravi came up with a decision endorsed appreciatively by Third Umpire Marais Erasmus who remarked: "Great decision Ravi!"

Ravi has spent sessions with celebrated Australian umpire Simon Taufel which has also had a huge influence on him. Describing Taufel as his mentor and coach for the last three years, Ravi adds: "He is my idol as an umpire." As an ICC Training Manager, Taufel had advised Ravi that in order to be a good umpire, "you had to be a good

umpire in the recent England-New Zealand Test at Lord's and Leeds "wonderful." He found "so much importance for traditions and values. Umpiring in England can be hard because of the weather and late swing."

Ravi is among four Indian umpires — Vineet Kulkarni, C. Shamshuddin and Anil Chaudhary being the other three — who are serving on the ICC's international panel of umpires, the level immediately below the elite panel. He is now convinced that more people can make the grade and credits the experience of officiating in the IPL over the last few years as the reason for improved umpiring standards. "In the last five-six years, Indian umpires get to work with elite umpires and referees from different countries. They get to interact with international players, coaches, support staff and other stakeholders. All these things have made Indian umpires better. A couple of them (Indian umpires) are now nominated for the World T20 qualifiers in Scotland and Ireland. That's a big tournament for them. If they do well, they can get on to the emerging panel and move up the ladder."

Ravi has stood in six Tests, including the recently completed series between England and New Zealand, 24 ODIs three of which were during the 2015 World Cup — and 12 T20s.

The experience gained from these high-profile assignments has made him realise that intense scrutiny comes with the territory.

"As umpires, who are umpiring at the highest level of the game, we are bound to be scrutinised by the media, the players, and the captains," he says. "We should be prepared for that. If you make an error, it will be highlighted, technology will expose you at some stage or the other. You should be prepared for that, learn from that error and move on. You can't do much about it."

He has a lot of "respect and regard" for the late David Shepherd of England, who officiated 92 Tests and 172 ODIs over his two-decade career. "He was a great umpire and great personality," Ravi says, "The way he conducted himself and had such a good relationship with the players is something fantastic."

On his job commitments, Ravi will now need more time off from his day job as Special Assistant at the Reserve Bank of India, where he has worked since 1989. "The bank has been kind to me so far," he smiles. And what about his dream assignment now that he finds himself among the world's top umpires? "An Ashes Test match at Lord's," he admits — (Courtesy: *Straight Bat*).

### Dates for Your Diary

**Till September 30:** *in/between the i* exhibition of paintings and/Installation by Thryambaka Karthik (at DakshinaChitra Museum).

**Till September 30:** A series of exhibitions by five artists were chosen and curated from the Ostkreuz School of Photography, Berlin, and will be presented at the Goethe Institut in the forthcoming months. The first two artists and their works are:

*Arkanuam* by Aras Gokten, focusing on the relation of human beings to their urban environment and architecture.

*Aus der Nacht tiefdunklem Schatten* by Katharina Ira Allenberg. The work is about dreams, distant realities and memories of them. With the visualisation of these thoughts, she immerses herself into a world which seems to be far from realism (at Goethe-Institut).

**Till September 30:** *Dancing seaweeds*, an exhibition by Catherine Lenior. Featured will be her etchings and paintings on seaweeds and classical dance forms (at DakshinaChitra museum).

# KNOW YOUR FORT BETTER

(Continued from page 1)

Sometime in the 18th Century, James Street vanished – the buildings that separated it from Charles Street were demolished and the two roads became one broad thoroughfare – known in early years as Charles and James Street and, then, just Charles Street. Perhaps this was an early instance of renaming streets, something our city specialises in – in the early 18th Century, King Charles II was revered in public memory but not his successor King James II, who had been deposed in a bloodless coup in 1688!

In the early years, when the Fort was nothing more than the present area occupied by the Assembly and Secretariat, Charles Street had the Elambore River flowing along its western periphery. Difficult though it may now be to believe, there was once a river wharf on this street, with eight small guns mounted on it. This was constructed in 1740, following a petition by the street's residents. The river not being perennial "left shallow grounds," they said and added, "low swamps which, by the heat of the sun, became a nuisance to the Town. Your petitioners, at very great expense and trouble, have effectually prevented and remedied these mischiefs by building a Wharf Wall upon a foundation of brick wells and filled up with lime stones and other materials for cement. Your petitioners have also faced the said Wharf Wall with Iron Stone, and raised thereon Brick Pallisades, to the great Ornamentation of the River and Beautifying the Prospect of the Town."

Today, not a trace of the river or the wall survives. Also not traceable are several prominent landmarks that keep surfacing in Company records. The most curious is 'A Statue of the Goddess of Commerce' which was set up in a rectangle between Charles and



San Thome Gate (Picture: Mukund Vedapudi).

James Streets. It appears to have been there in 1734 and vanished by the 1750s, most probably brought down by the French. The principal cloth godowns of the Company were also on Charles Street, the one at the corner belonging to Thambu Chetty. Another dubash who owned a godown here was Tepperumal Chetty. These buildings were organised by function and bore names such as Calico or Sorting Godown, the Embaling godown and the Import Warehouse. Missing today is also *Jearsey House*, a stately residence with a long history. Built in the 1640s by Agent Greenhill and used as his residence, this was in 1699 acquired by the Company for its Calico Beating Godown and Granary. By then, it had passed through several hands. William Jearsey had bought it from Greenhill and enlarged it. A consortium of which Elihu Yale was a member later owned this building. In 1692, Sir John Goldsborough arrived in Madras to investigate charges against Yale. He was sworn in as President in Council (the equivalent of Governor), and eight months later, after a full investigation, exonerated Yale. He then embarked on a tour of Cuddalore and Bengal, leaving his wife and children as tenants of *Jearsey House*. Six months later he was dead and his family moved out. By the 1710s, the building had become a Charity School. All we know of this house today is that it stood close to the 'Great House on Charles Street'.

Among the most important residents of Charles Street was the Nawab of Arcot himself. In 1758, shortly before the French unsuccessfully laid siege to Madras, Muhammad Ali Wallajah petitioned his friend and Governor, Pigot, for a house in White Town, where he might "lay in a stock of provisions and himself retire thither in case of necessity." The house assigned to him was at the southern corner of Charles Street, once occupied by a Dr. Munro. On the approach of the French in December that year, Wallajah shifted in and remained there for some time. By the 1770s, with *Fort House* being in a deplorable condition, Du Pre, the Governor of Madras, shifted to Charles Street, as did his successor Rumbold.

On the same side as the 'Great House', but shown as standing further south of it, which means it stood where Parade Square is today, was another stately building. This was by the 1790s owned by Andrew Ross, Secretary to the Government. With its front on Charles Street and its rear on Palace Street, it was described as having 'offices, the accommodation of a family, and large spaces of Ground (all of which open into the Back Street where the Arsenal stands, as well as into the street in Front)' and was offered on rent of 80 pagodas a month for housing the new Courts of Justice. This office later moved to the Choultry Gate Street, which then came

to be known as Court House Street.

Standing on Charles Street today, all this hustle and bustle can only be imagined. But in its peace and quiet, we can easily conjure the procession that went down it on July 24, 1727, to the accompaniment of "civic authorities, a foot company and with all English musick." This was to celebrate the firman of the Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar granting the English the continued use of Madras.

– Sriram V

## Madras Cotton

(Continued from page 9)

the gubernatorial position in 1849 and marked disaster to Wight and his cotton experiments in Coimbatore. The Court of Directors of the EIC approved termination of Finnie's Madras contract, but directed Pottinger that Wight be reinstated as the superintendent of cotton trials. Finally, in 1853, the experiment was closed and Wight returned to the UK, retiring from active service. The Madras Government withdrew support to cultivating American cotton and the use of imported machinery (e.g. saw gins). The experiments ceased.

However, cultivation of American seed was not withdrawn completely. In the early decades of the 20th Century, cotton cultivation in Madras Presidency had stabilised with substantial effort made by generating new hybrids, particularly using what was then known as the Cambodia cotton. The most critical weakness in managing the industry was that the co-operative credit societies in Madras were insufficiently developed to take up agricultural work; the envisaged improvement would be if the Department of Agriculture sold selected seeds on credit to farmers.

### Answers to Quiz

1. Cochin International Airport; 2. Dr. M.M. Kalburgi; 3. Sania Mirza; 4. Rajendra Singh; 5. Sehat; 6. Obesity; 7. Aurangzeb; 8. Bandhan Bank; 9. Ranil Wickremesinghe; 10. To help students seeking educational loans and ensure no student misses out on higher education due to lack of funds.

\* \* \*

11. *Admiralty House*, 12. Raju Gramani Thottam near the present day Citi Centre mall, 13. Co-Optex, 14. Nalli Kuuppuswami Chetty, 15. The red Indo-Saracenic building on Mount Road that houses the India Silk House showroom, 16. Asan Memorial School, 17. The All India Music Conference that led to the birth of the December season, 18. The Madras Regiment, 19. Kelly's, 20. Little Mount Church.

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