

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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No hi-tech answer to thirst?!

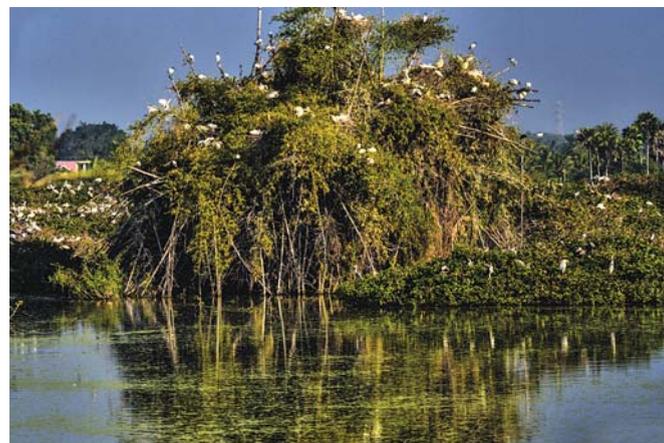
(By A Special Correspondent)

The newspapers recently were full of how the strike by water tanker operators had brought Old Mahabalipuram Road aka IT Corridor to its knees. The much-vaunted hi-tech area, with offices developing high-end software solutions for companies abroad, is pretty low-tech when it comes to that precious commodity – water. It just needed three days of no supply for the trouble to assume crisis proportions.

The statistics are mind-boggling. *The Economic Times* has it that three-fourths of Tamil Nadu's Rs 50,000 crore software exports happen from the IT corridor. A day's shutdown would mean a loss of Rs 100 crore. Several *Fortune* 500 companies depend on this stretch for their IT solutions and some of India's biggest software names operate from here. And believe it or not, they all depend on tankers for their supply of water! Strange though it may seem, Metrowater does not cover the area and so, the companies, IT Parks and other precincts here are left to their own devices. And these are the most ancient techniques possible – tapping water from wells nearby and getting them supplied by tankers.

This has worked well for almost a decade now. However, the rural wells that hitherto catered to the needs are now under a lot of stress. Villages are becoming wary of the water being sucked out and many have lodged protests at the way they are being exploited. In 2014, the Panchayat of Solanur on the OMR filed a petition seeking restrictions on commercial establishments in the vicinity sinking bore wells. These were being drilled to a depth of 400 feet, the complainants said, and were depleting the groundwater in the area quite rapidly. The matter is still sub-judice but it is indicative of what could become a trend.

(Continued on page 2)



Birds that flock to Vedanthangal

• The first rays of sunlight dramatically capture the roosting flocks... and this (on left) is what they look like during the day, in the midst of the tank. Pictures were taken by Murali Narayanan during the Annual Waterbirds' Count at Vedanthangal. (Courtesy: Madras Naturalists' Society.)

For peace in troubled waters...

The recent death of a Rameswaram fisherman in Palk Strait waters has once again brought to the fore the thorny problem of Indian Tamil fishermen fishing in these waters and, many of them, ending up in Sri Lankan jails if not worse. These Indian fishers have continued to fish in Sri Lankan waters – which they claim are traditionally also theirs – despite both India and Sri Lanka agreeing to stop fishing in each other's waters. The violations continued because fishermen know no boundaries and go where the catch is best.

The problem has assumed disturbing proportions from 2009 when peace returned to the Island after the ethnic conflict and Sri Lankan, predomi-

nantly Tamil, fishermen of the Northern Province found themselves free again to fish in the Palk Straits for their livelihood. They claim that they are affected by more than 500 trawlers from Tamil Nadu crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line and fishing in the Sri Lankan side of the Palk Bay, threatening their livelihood. It is also pointed out that

• by The Editor

Indian mechanised trawlers have, after severely damaging marine resources and the sea bed on their side of the Palk Strait, are now doing the same on the Sri Lankan side. It is further stated that most of the trawlers from Tamil Nadu are

owned by private interests, turning several traditional fishermen from owners to labourers. The trawler lobby certainly plays a role in seeing that the present fishing practices in the Palk Bay continue.

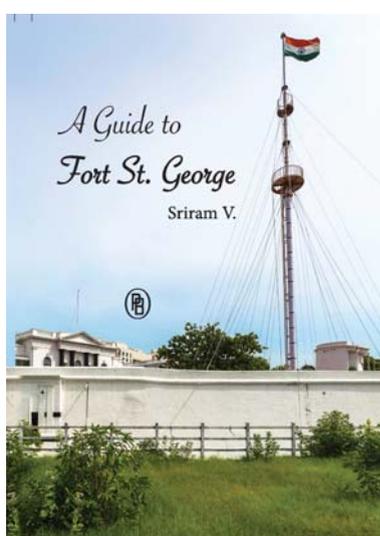
To get fishermen to give up trawling and consequent destructive practices in the sensitive waters between India and Sri Lanka, getting Tamil Nadu fisherman to take to deep-sea fishing has been suggested. This kind of fishing in the open ocean requires different skills and better-equipped vessels capable of spending many days out of harbour. The fishers need to be trained for such fishing.

The then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, J. Jayalalithaa,

(Continued on page 2)

A guide to the Fort

Madras Musings celebrated its 25th year and Fort St. George's 375th year with a year-long series in 2015-16 titled Know Your Fort better. It was a fact-packed series by **Sriram V** of the Fort's 30-plus major sites which has now been brought out as this guide by Palaniappa Brothers. A slim, easy to handle book, a visitor to the Fort can walk his/her way around the Fort with this alone as guide.



What's the answer to IT thirst?

(Continued from page 1)

During the height of the water tanker strike, with much of the IT corridor left high and dry, representatives of the software industry met up with the Government and demanded a solution to their water problems. If the current trend persists, they are of the view that the OMR may become untenable by 2021. It is to be remembered that many of the office and residential complexes in the area are yet to be fully occupied and so, the demand for water has not yet peaked. The Government, it is understood, has promised to look into the matter – which is the usual bureaucratise for pigeonholing.

What the Government has not asked is as to how many of these companies/parks/complexes have water-recycling facilities in place. The chances are that very few, if at all, have thought of such arrangements. Asking the Government for a solution is one thing, working out a sustainable answer is

something else altogether. Considering that this is the IT hub, where the world's most creative people are working, surely the problem can merit some attention and solution. Modern toilets that consume less water could be a start. Meaningful use of grey water could be another. Achieving zero liquid discharge could be a third. Many sophisticated solutions are now available across the world for minimising the use of water. Certainly, wastage of water is something that hardly any developed nation indulges in today. The IT Corridor ought to be showing others the way and not demonstrating that it is backward in the extreme.

The current crisis is not the first to hit the IT Corridor by the way. Water shocks have hit the area in 2011 and 2013. These have seen predictable responses – delegations waiting on Government and an assurance that the matter will be looked into. 2017 promises to be no different. Well, 2021 is not all that far off.

Troubled waters...

(Continued from page 1)

outlined in 2014 a proposal which envisaged a processing park, mother ship for receiving catches, pre-processing them before conveying them to the on-shore processing park, and mini vessels with mechanised trawling facilities for frontline fishing operations. Training the fishermen was also a part of the plan. The Chief Minister had asked for Rs. 1,520 crore from the Central Government to help make this feasible.

The former Chief Minister's proposal if implemented, will certainly remove a major irritant to the relationship between India and Sri Lanka. What, then, is holding up the implementation of this scheme?

The State Government continues to seek a Central grant. The present Chief Minister has asked for Rs.1650 crore. It is obvious that with its own finances not in particularly good shape, it is waiting for a helping hand. But must it always seek Central help even as it doles out freebies without limit?

To correct a livelihood problem and the safety of its citizens as well to ensure it is not the cause for an irritant in an international relationship, it is up to the Tamil Nadu Government to get the Jayalithaa plan underway on a war footing and show its commitment to it by not

awaiting a dole from the Centre.

There are other options. Norway was responsible for training Kerala and south Sri Lankan (mainly Sinhalese) fishermen to go deep sea. It also helped set up boat-building facilities for such fishing in both territories. The five Nordi Ambassadors – all representation of countries with deep sea fishing expertise – were the first foreign VIPs to interact with the present Chief Minister. Did he ask them – particularly Norway with its South Asian experience – for help?

Another avenue is the Mudra Bank, which is meant precisely for funding small entrepreneurs, like fisherfolk, who are otherwise unable to meet the capital cost of trawlers and related equipment. To ensure speedy release of funds by this source, the State Government could extend its guarantee, if necessary. The State Government must also chip in its share of meeting the capital and operational costs from funds saved by re-ordering its priorities, cutting down or cutting out the freebies.

The new Government must seize this opportunity and win the goodwill of the fishing community, the people of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lankan people – thereby enhancing its own image.

Communicating in Govt. ishtyle

Have you ever noticed that Hour Government is stuck in the 17th Century or thereabouts when it comes to its communication style? Or, rather, ishtyle, as it is pronounced by brethren from up North? This aspect was brought home rather forcefully to *The Man from Madras Musings* recently when he was at his desk with nary a thought in his head, other than this column, of course.

The phone rang and on MMM answering it he heard an obsequious voice asking if this was Saar speaking. Experience has taught MMM that such beginnings usually mean a Governmental voice is speaking at the other end, at the peremptory ordering of a higher-up, usually a Saar from the I Am Superior cadre. MMM replied that indeed it was and enquired as to what he owed the pleasure of this call. Whereupon the voice said that it had been instructed by its Saar to call Saar and that its Saar would be happy to know if Saar was free on some forthcoming date as Saar wanted Saar to come to Saar's office and address some other Saars

at the other end was standing up. Of course, said the voice. Saar had been invited and what they needed was a second Saar, which is why the phone call. At this MMM caved in and said 'yes'. The voice then rung off, no doubt in order to go and confabulate with its Saar.

The letter duly arrived a day later. In this time and age an email would have done the job, but not so in Government. They had spent Rs 20 on sending the letter by speed post. It was in a cover that was so thoroughly pasted all over that it took quite a while for MMM to cut it open without damaging the paper inside. The envelope had all the forbidding stamps and seals that make Government correspondence so disliked. It had the appearance of a summons or, at the very least, a tax demand.

The letter inside was no better. It had several reference numbers filled with hyphens, obliques, dots and dashes – something like gobbledegook no 111/balderdash 323/245237b. And it began with the words "I am to inform you..." The tone improved considerably as the letter pro-

had displaced the Lord as the principal attraction. Touching them, it was once believed, absolved you of all sins. Now, apparently, the story is that by touching them you make a killing in real estate. And so the throng at the lizards' sanctum far outnumbers those wanting to see the Lord.

Where are the lizards was the question that was asked in just about any national language as the faithful charged past MMM. He had not really planned to see the two reptiles, but with a crowd that resembled the migration of the wildebeest MMM really did not have a choice. He was pushed into a long cage through which the queue was being channelled towards the lizards. This being the season when the black-dhotied and bare-bodied pilgrims are to be seen everywhere, MMM had the pleasure of being rubbed against by plenty of hairy chests, sweaty underarms and outside paunches in the push into the long vestibule. Thereafter MMM kind of gave up and was borne along by the crowd, rather like the strange device Excelsior. The women,

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

on heritage. To this MMM wanted to know the name of the Saar who had expressed this desire for MMM's company. In his experience, not many Saars in service have any affection for MMM, they having labelled him long ago as Mischievous Meddlesome Man. But the moment they lay down office and untangle themselves from the red tape that makes them stiff and standoffish, they develop a great love for MMM and grapple him to their hearts with hoops of steel. They then tend to buttonhole MMM at all available occasions to tell him unprintable stories about ministers and colleagues and how they did all they could to save heritage but "you know how vested interested were against it".

But to get back to today's story. On being asked to name the Saar, the voice sucked in its breath in a shocked manner. It was like asking a traditional housewife to name her husband. After some silence it repeated its query – Saar would like to know if Saar was free on a particular date for a presentation concerning heritage. If so, Saar would receive a letter of invitation. If not, could Saar recommend some other Saar. To this MMM asked if the Chief had been invited. The voice took on a reverential tone at this. MMM was quite sure that the speaker

ceeded and the last words indicated that civilisation was here at last – a reply had been requested by email! The mail ID was of course as confusing as the letter reference. The misssive ended with the terse legend- Forwarded/By Order. MMM wondered if a simple invite for a presentation needed to be worded like a sentence of transportation for life.

MMM scrolled down to see the name of the Saar who had signed it. Something struck him as not quite right as he read it. He then went and looked into that day's newspaper. On reading it, MMM realised that the Saar who wrote the letter had been transferred from this department the previous day. We understand MMM decided to accept the invite, he hope, it will provide him some long-awaited amusement.

The Lord & the Lizards

Have you visited the ancient temple to the Lord of the elephant hill in neighbouring silk town? *The Man from Madras Musings* had visited it as a child and now was doing so after a long while. He vaguely remembered that this beautiful shrine had a couple of stone carvings of lizards on a ceiling somewhere. What he did not know was that in the four decades since MMM last visited the temple, the lizards

who were in a similar steel cage on the other side, did not have it any easier he noticed. It was all rather extraordinary, like a passage to a gas chamber during the Holocaust.

The chamber of the lizards arrived after what appeared to be an eternity. The authorities had thoughtfully provided a set of steps for the faithful to climb up and touch the reptiles, one encased in gold and the other in silver. MMM found himself hoisted up the steps by those that came behind him. Once at the wobbly top, MMM tottered for a moment, his hand raised up to touch the lizards. It was then that the man behind decided to lunge thereby bending MMM's knee as well. However, the crowd ahead of MMM was so dense that there was no stampeede ending with MMM's quick departure to the Land of the Lord. The man behind was apologetic. He was trying, he said by way of explanation, to reach for his cell-phone which was in his pocket, for a selfie with the lizards and had bent inadvertently. He had he said, promised his mother that he would send her a photo of the lizards so that she could e-touch them. Coming down, MMM looked up at the two lizards. Something told him that they were chuckling.

– MMM

LOST LANDMARKS OF CHENNAI – SRIRAM V



The grounded-into-the-ground Pilot

And so the theatre has been demolished. A flex banner at the entrance to the vast compound has it that “Pilot Theatre is demolishing” and then adds, “Trespasser will be prosecuted,” thereby indicating that groups are most welcome. But the groups or crowds have long ceased coming to Pilot.

The property’s history begins with Pilot, that popular brand of fountain pens that many of us grew up with. The Pilot Pen Co (India) Pvt Limited, founded by Paranjothi Arockiasami Sanjivi, a local entrepreneur, was established in 1952. It manufactured pens in Madras, under licence from Pilot Corporation of Japan and hence the name. The corporate office of the company was at the Catholic Centre, Armenian Street. The Sanjivi family being devout Roman Catholics and the progenitor contributed generously to church-building activities in Madras. Legend has it that the first factory for the Pilot Pens, when it was more an assembly operation, stood at the site of the Pilot Theatre in Royapettah. But even as early as 1961, the works had shifted to Puzhal, where even now a vast premises goes by the name of Pilot Compound and is rented out by other commercial entities.

Under Sanjivi, Pilot Pens prospered. He then decided to get into cinema screening and put up the Pilot Theatre. Completed in 1968, it was India’s second screening facility with Cinerama technology, the first being Bangalore’s Kapali. In this innovation, three projectors simultaneously ran three strips of the film, all of which synchronised on a giant arced screen thereby making for an awesome visual effect. This was, however, not a success and Wikipedia has it that just two films were ever made using Cinerama. It is not

clear whether the same projection could be used for conventional screening but it would appear that Pilot retained the same projection facilities. The first screening was on November 15, 1968, the film being *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*.

Sadly for Sanjivi, his pen company did not long outlive him. It went into liquidation in 1978. By then, the pens were no longer what they had once been – leak-proof and with excellent steel or gold-tipped nibs. Cheaper plastic had come in and most Pilot pens were known to leave ink stains – on fingers and clothes. The arrival of the ballpoint hastened the company’s demise. As for Pilot Theatre, after being a facility where only the best of English films were shown, it slowly settled down to vernacular films and, later, reruns. Its vast compound was however a great attraction for film shoots. It was also a popular venue for film festivals.

Inheritance issues led the successors to seek the assistance of the High Court of Madras and a settlement was reached sometime back. The theatre stopped screenings in 2014 and with that it was clear that the curtains were coming down.

Pilot will live in public memory via Pilot Lane, an impossibly narrow thoroughfare running along the theatre’s northern bound. This links Gaudia Mutt and Royapettah High Roads and was once a space through which water supply was made to eastern Royapettah. A couple of years ago, a signboard painter’s error had led it to being named Polite Lane and caused much mirth. The residents however were not amused. They now have little cause for cheer for the lane is a convenient rubbish dump, a urinal and is forever filled with traffic.

OUR READERS WRITE



T’ Nagar has its Season, too

While Mylapore may be the main hub of the December music and dance festival, T’Nagar and surrounding areas are also active players. In addition to leaders, Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (at the Nalli Gana Vihar hall) and Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha (at Vani Mahal), Mudra conducts its festival at the Infosys Hall, Chennai Cultural Academy (earlier Nungambakkam Cultural Academy) at Rama Rao Kalyana Mandap, Bharat Kalachar at the PSBB School, and Meenakshi Sounderarajan Fine Arts Academy at Meenakshi College in Kodambakkam. The Thyaga Brahma Gana Sabha (1944) and Sri Krishna Gana Sabha (1953) are the oldest *sabha*-s organising annual music and dance festivals.

I have always felt that the concerts at these *sabha*-s receive poor media coverage even though all leading artists perform here, and the quality of music offered is often superb.

The Refurbished Vani Mahal – with its comfortable seats and Bose speaker system – offers an enhanced listening experience.

Over the last 22 years, Mudhra has experimented with varying formats like four-hour concert, one-raga one-kriti concerts, and thematic concerts. Its free webcast of concerts through Paalam TV has attracted a large number of *rasika*-s.

Grammy Award winning *ghatam* maestro Vikku Vinayakram was awarded the Mudhra Award of Excellence on January 2, 2017. He presented a unique programme called *Talachakram* specially conceived for the day. The maestro played four *ghatams* and many other *vidwans* participated in the percussion ensemble. It was an amazing programme for nearly two hours.

Concerts at Meenakshi College catering to *rasikas* in surrounding areas like Kodambakkam, Mahalingapuram, Rangarajapuram, Trustpuram, and Ashok Nagar, besides some students and teachers, always draw full houses. The acoustics are good and the concerts are of three hours’ duration allowing sufficient time to present quality music.

C. Ramakrishna
Sntu

Waterways sought

There is a busy blame game regarding encroachment of water bodies for human habitation. With the expanding population, this space is the obvious option for housing as it has been vacant for decades with repeated droughts and occasional heavy rainfall causing floods. These spaces had virtually become unauthorised dumping yards and breeding grounds for insects.

Wanted a Pied Piper

I walk on the Marina on the well-paved road meant for pedestrians who want to go for long walks. It is a recent habit. The road is beautifully laid out, straight in long stretches and gently curving at others to relieve the monotony. The architects have done a splendid job.

I reach there a little before the sun sets. The sea is green and light and dark blue in some places and the few clouds above it are in shades of orange and pink. It is a glorious sight and since the sea is on the east coast, I don’t face the sun directly. The cool breeze keeps blowing all the time. I am told this is the second largest beach in the world and, as the sun sets, traffic lights on the road come up, a circle of emerald green, breathtakingly beautiful. There is no other city in the whole of India I would rather be in than Chennai because of this wondrous gift of Nature to us.

BUT

the well paved road meant for pedestrians is strewn with plastic covers which are blown by the wind from wherever they were thrown. You have to avoid cow dung patches (mercifully not fresh, otherwise you could skid on them). As you walk, a plastic cover might just get wrapped around your foot or fly into your face. People eat chips, ground nuts and fried stuff and throw the plastic covers as soon as they have finished eating. Dustbins kept at several places are ignored. Coffee, you can have with milk or black, and throw the plastic cup where you want to.

On one side of the walk, grass struggles to grow on what perhaps was meant to be flower beds. Big holes in the ground reveal that rats are having a merry time multiplying in hordes with all the leftover food strewn around. If one rat can produce 75 rats a year, the number of rats living on the Marina is mind boggling. If a Pied Piper could be found to entice them to the sea to drown, what a sea of rats would be following him!

It is not the poor who dirty the place, but we, the middle class, who come there to enjoy the breeze and the ambience. And make a picnic out of the outing. The poor have no money to buy coffee, sundal and groundnuts.

I am too old to try and do something about this. Will the readers of MM?

Radha Padmanabhan
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What should have been thought of was the digging of new channels and lengthening the existing ones without hindering the existing infrastructure to enhance storm water drainage.

Buckingham Canal played its humble role despite its poor maintenance during last year’s floods. It was dug in the 19th Century as a famine relief measure. Planners should now think of creating more such canals just as they think of coming up with ring roads, by-pass roads and highways to accommodate the growing volume of traffic.

Engineering technology has grown by leaps and bounds. Tunneling under a live city, bridges over the seas, and recla-

mation of land from the sea have all become a reality.

Newly created water channels using this technology could well provide intra-city water transport systems for ferrying cargo and rides for tourists. A canal-cum-sea cruise to Mahabalipuram could emerge as a tourist attraction. Water transport is enormously cost efficient, fuel efficient and less polluting, besides being less accident prone. A long sea coast has the potential to serve as a source for water during lean periods. Can Chennai take the lead?

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The Gods of the Holy Koovam

The Cooum river means many things to us in Madras, but none are complimentary! Some may remember the filth, and others the smell. Old-timers talk about boat-rides and even baths, but it's hard to conjure up these images seeing a dried-up or, even worse, stinking waterway.

Priya Bhaskaran, based on a chat with Venkatesh Ramakrishnan, thought otherwise and over 18 months, with the members of 'The Cooum - A Cultural Mapping Group' traced the river's path and the temples on its banks. What she found is now a slim volume, seeking to inspire the reader to visit the sites armed with information. Cooum now has a good guide that none of our other rivers have!

We start with the Thiruvirkolam village which has a temple for Thiruvirkolanathar. The large tank from where the river originates has been famous from Chola times. In the 12th Century, the tank was renamed Tyagasamudranallur. Nallur here indicates a large, agriculture-based settlement. In 1057 CE, the tank was called Tribhuvanmahadevi Pereri and a feeder canal was dug into it. In 1112, the temple took fishing and paddy taxes from the community to keep the tank in good repair. So clearly, in the time of the imperial Cholas, the tank was a large one and the Cooum must have been an important water source for all villages on its banks. The temple is older for it finds a place in the third Tirumurai of Sambandar, who is dated to the 6th Century. In his



A Buddha sculpture from an agricultural field in Koovam village, once exhibited in the Madras Museum.

song number 23, he confines himself only to mythological incidents but does mention Buddhists and Jains. The book tells us that a sculpture of Buddha was discovered here and is held at present by the Government Museum, Madras.

A total of 113 temples are covered in the book. I record a few of the other important ones, The Deivanayakeswara Swamy Temple in Elumiyankottur has a unique Dakshinamurthy image with his hand on the chin mudra close to the knot on his sacred thread. An inscription here as well as in a few other temples in this area mention the role of the

Chola kings in the 12-13th Century of converting brick temples into stone temples. Such inscriptions are important, since they tell us that the banks of the Cooum were an important and prosperous part of the Chola empire when it was at its height. The temple at Sivapuram is built entirely out of stone and has an early inscription of Raja Raja Chola. It was called Urogadam in those days and must have been one of his earliest all-stone temples. Mappedu has a rare image of Hanuman playing the veena.

Pillayarkuppam has a unique ritual called the Vetrilai Kappu, where an eight feet metal arch (Prabhavali) is stuffed with betel leaves and then taken inside and installed within the sanctum.

Chitrambakkam's Selliamman temple is important for Tamil Nadu and epigraphy. The temple has a small slab bearing the earliest evidence available for a structural temple (as opposed to a cave temple) built by the Pallavas during the first regal year of King Parameswara



Evidence of the earliest structural temples seen at the Selliamman temple in Chitrambakkam. (All pictures courtesy Aalayam Kanden).

Varman (669-70 CE). It is to be hoped, this slab is well protected and not cemented over in a future restoration. It could have been on the wall once and is on the floor now, which means there is greater wear and tear and its only a matter of years when the writing now get completely eroded. The book mentions a rare Pallava image of a seated Vishnu in Aranvoyal that also needs better protection and the Janamejayswara temple in Cenji that is in danger of collapse soon.

Temples within Madras are also covered in the book: Koyambedu, Arumbakkam, Chetpet, Kilpauk, Mount Road, Chintadripet, all find a place in

it. Komaleeswaranpet, we learn that the other name for Cooum was Vriddha Ksheera - Ancient river of Milk. It has rare bronze lamps, and sculptures including one of Kannagi. The Hazrath Syed Moosa Dargah is mentioned in Mount Road. The book ends with what is probably the newest temple, the Muthu Karumari Amman temple, under Napier Bridge where the Cooum joins the Bay of Bengal.

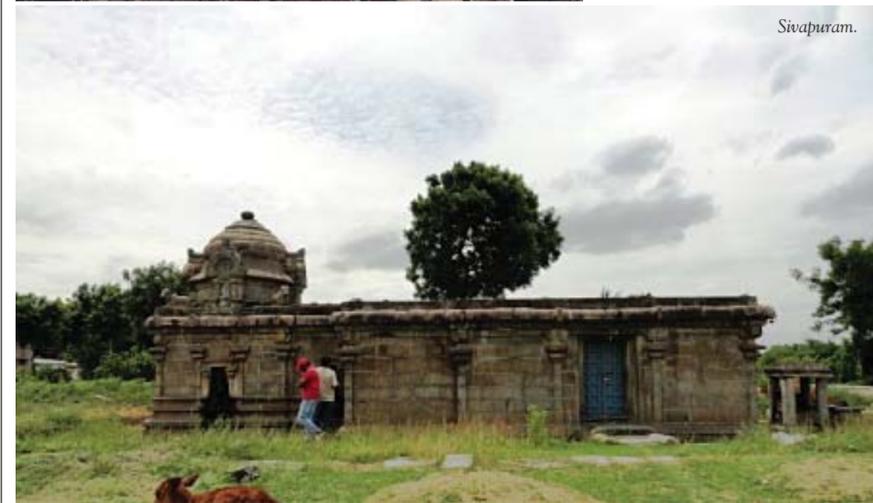
The book has short, well written notes on all aspects of the temples. Serious history lovers will find valuable epigraphical summaries of findings in each temple and lovers of mythology will find details of the sthala puranas of each temple. Most entries have a small photograph and useful information at a glance - the name of the deities, the location with a Geo tag, timings, the name and phone number of the priest and a speciality. I hope the author and her team will soon publish the Koova Puranam as a companion volume.

- Pradeep Chakravarthy

"The Gods of the Holy Koovam - Aalayam Kanden Trust, Flat A, Nutech Apts, 36, Kripashankari Street, West Mambalam, Chennai 600 033. aalayamkanden@gmail.com



Senji.



Sivapuram.

Rambling in our museums (1) ... with N.S. Parthasarathy

In a recent interview, Vinod Daniel, internationally known senior conservator and specialist in museum management, has highlighted the community's responsibility in preserving the irreplaceable historical and cultural links with its past. Enthused by this interview, N.S. PARTHASARATHY visited some of the city's museums and recorded his experiences. This is the first article in this series. As people do not generally make repeat visits to museums, or at close intervals, these articles, we hope, will be of some use in evoking recollections and inspiring a visit once again.

Ramanujan remembered

Among biographical museums, the one focusing on the life and achievements of Ramanujan fires a visitor's imagination and curiosity the most for his stranger-than-fiction rise from abject poverty and social rejection to lasting fame as a mathematician. It is but fitting that a museum dedicated to him should be located in Chennai where he spent his early years working for the Port Trust as a lowly clerk earning him just enough to avoid starvation so he could pursue his life's passion exploring the abstract world of mathematics and its mysteries.

Established in 1993, the Ramanujan Museum and Math



P.K. Srinivasan with Dr. Bruce C. Berndt.

Education Centre was founded by the late P.K. Srinivasan, educationist. The founder approached several people for space to exhibit the collection. It was Bose, the present Secretary's father, who offered space in his building in Somu Chetty 4th Street, Royapuram and became its co-founder. More by compulsion of circumstance than for its suitability, the museum came to be housed at this location, not very far from Saiva Muthia Mudali Street off Broadway where Ramanujan lived when he was working as a clerk in the Port Trust. It is a narrow street in a crowded section of north

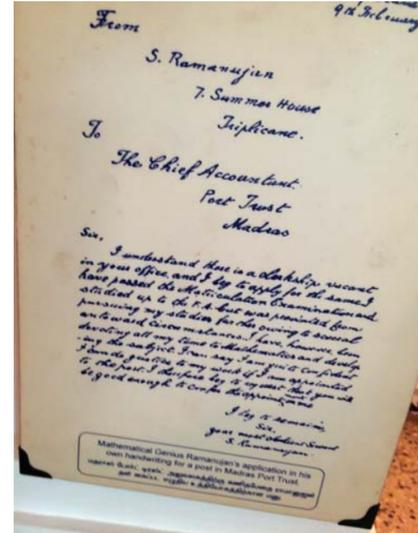
Chennai. The approach lanes and by-lanes to reach this location are not wide enough to permit even one-way traffic but do allow two-way chaos. You can, with patience, a couple of gashes to the car and damage to the headlight, just about manage to crawl through the congestion to the museum. A more central and prestigious location would have done greater justice to the memory of one so distinguished.

The main collection of artefacts, documents and photographs are on a first floor non-airconditioned hall measuring about 600 square feet. On this floor there are over two hundred exhibits and quite a few of them originals, 'preserved' in glass frames and a few displayed bare.

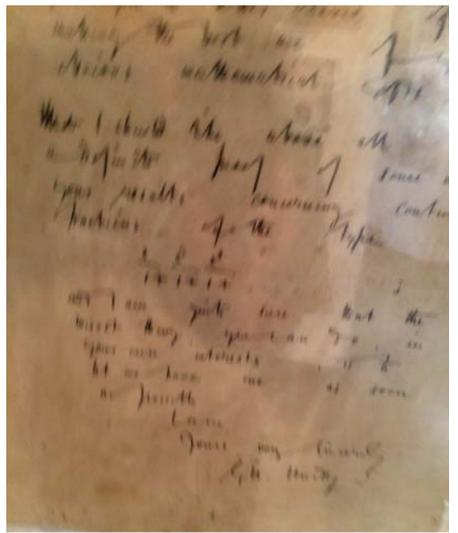
Among them are Ramanujan's horoscope in original, his handwritten letter from England, in Tamil chain script to his elder brother - Anna - couched in traditional respectful language with an opening invocation seeking the blessings of Sri Ramanujacharya, and a large framed grainy black and white portrait photograph showing him in formal dress

looking down on his memorabilia stored in an unknown, unrecognised corner of the city symbolising his own early struggle for recognition of his extraordinary mathematical insights.

The photo of the Town High School reminds the visitor of how, while still in school, Ramanujan came across a copy of Carr's Synopsis, a compendium of numerous basic theorems and results in pure mathematics. There being no display of a replica of this book is a significant omission. For it is this book and its concise style that affected Ramanujan's mode of presenta-



Ramanujan's letter - his application for a post in the Madras Port Trust. And on right, one of Hardy's letters to Ramanujan. Both of them are exhibits in the museum.



tion of his theorems, leapfrogging several logical steps to final results and not explaining the proof that scientific rigour demanded to merit acceptance of the validity and originality of his discoveries.

The display of a specimen of the front page of the Journal of the Indian Mathematical Society reminds us of Ramanujan's brilliant research paper on Bernoulli numbers in 1911 published in that journal. That was the very first milestone of his becoming well-known in Madras circles as a mathematical genius despite lack of university education.

Ramanujan's handwritten application - I beg to apply for clerkship - to the Madras Port Trust stating that he had passed the Matriculation examination and was prevented from pursuing "studies beyond F.A." (Fellow of Arts, in those days) owing to "several untoward circumstances", is a moving piece on display. His biography says that he was recommended to the job on grounds that "he has a natural aptitude for computation and is very quick at figure work!"

Hardy's letter is another interesting piece on display. He and Littlewood studied



Inside the Ramanujan Museum.

Ramanujan's letter enclosing the long list of unproved theorems and pleading only for a sympathetic recommendation which would help him get a scholarship either from the University or the Government for the reason that "to preserve my brain I want food". Hardy and Littlewood first suspected that all this might be a hoax but on rummaging through the papers they realised that the author was "a mathematician of the highest quality, a man of altogether exceptional originality and power". They found that

Ramanujan had re-discovered many theorems not being aware of their having been discovered already, some a hundred years earlier. They also found a rare collection of new ones which "exceedingly" interested them. He was at the doorstep of fame. But Hardy wanted verifiable proofs step by step for the scientific community to accept Ramanujan's findings as genuine. Robert Kanigel, Ramanujan's biographer, highlights this peculiar situation, of great discoveries with no proofs to substantiate them, humorously as follows: "Ramanujan said: The Butler did it. Hardy was convinced: The Butler indeed did do it. But said Hardy: There is no proof that the Butler did it!"

Apart from celebrating the genius of Ramanujan, the Centre has special programmes to spread awareness of mathematics among children to enable them "to seek and understand the world around them in the stance of numeracy". To make this



Kelly and Mary Johnston, visitors from the U.S. to the Ramanujan Museum.

(Continued on page 7)

Dates for Your Diary

Till March 30: Group show by Puducherry artists, L. Candappane, A. Soucoumarane and Gopal Jayaram (at DakshinaChitra).



Volunteers come to the Madras Literary Society every Saturday to clean up the library. Cognizant has been sending volunteers (minimum 30 of them) every Saturday. With their help, a lot of books which were not in the catalogue list and not accessible to members are now available. Join the Saturday volunteers.

Quizzin'
with
Ram'nan

(Current Affairs questions are from the period February 16th to 28th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Vikas Swarup, India's new envoy to Canada, is famous for writing the novel 'Q&A' that was made into a multiple Oscar-winning flick. Name the film.

2. The new long-distance, fully unreserved, superfast train service to be operated on dense routes, was flagged off with a service between Ernakulam and Howrah on February 27th. What is it called?

3. What was the theme for National Science Day 28.2.2017 ?

4. Which movie won the Best Picture award at 89th Academy Awards?

5. Which State is set to become the first Indian State to have a public registry of sex offenders?

6. Why did a dwarf star named Trappist-1, 39 light years away, make news recently?

7. Name the world's first interoperable payment acceptance solution, to enable digital payments without card-swiping machines, launched by the Government.

8. Geologists have announced discovery of a 4.5-million sq km submerged continent beneath the SW Pacific Ocean of which only New Zealand and New Caledonia are visible. What's it been named?

9. According to a recent announcement, which Asian nation has chalked out plans to build the first city on Mars by 2117?

10. Following the elevation of N. Chandrasekaran as Chairman, Tata Sons, who's is the new CEO of TCS?

* * *

11. The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court recently directed the State Government to enact a special legislation within the next couple of months to eliminate which offending green foliage from the State?

12. Which respected institution, whose centenary celebrations were inaugurated recently by the President, was founded in May 1917 by women's rights activists such as Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins, and Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy among others.

13. Which religious text is said to have originated at Tirupperunthurai or Avudaiyarkoil?

14. Former police officer K. Vijay Kumar's recent book detailing his capture of Veerappan is titled...?

15. Thirupachethi village near Usilampetti is known for making which item of weaponry?

16. Name the left-arm seamer who made news after being picked up for Rs. 3 crore by Kings XI Punjab at the recent IPL auction.

17. Of the three thoroughfares in Mylapore that connect North Mada Street and Kutcheri Road, two are Kutcheri Lane and Mathala Narayanan Street. Name the third.

18. In which respected institution of Chennai can you spot a bas-relief of eight truncated-tusked elephants?

19. After which musical giant is Palace Road in San Thomé now named?

20. Which legendary singer had his debut when the famous Musiri Subramania Iyer cancelled his performance at the Mylapore Kapaliswarar Temple?

(Answers on page 8)

NOSTALGIA



– A forgotten corner of a suburb

So many people have the fondest memories of the Anglo-Indian pockets of old. The list of such places is pretty long, but the ones that stand out in Tamil Nadu are Madras, Golden Rock, Madura, Trichinopoly, Villupuram, Arkonam, and Podanur.

Almost all these places have strong connections with the Indian Railways, many as an Anglo-Indian pocket has fallen by the wayside, for there is minimal Anglo-Indian presence in the railway today.

Still hanging on, but only just, is the non-Railway Anglo-Indian colony known as Veteran Lines in Pallavaram, suburban Madras. Tucked away between the Chennai Airport runway on the southern and western side, and the hill overlooking Trisulam Railway Station, the newly commissioned Metro and the modern Airport beyond, on the opposite side, stands Veteran Lines, a haven of peace and tranquility and one of the last bastions of Anglo-Indian community life.

The name of the locality is, in itself, quaint. Adjacent to the Grand Southern Trunk Road on the Airport side, almost all the way to what is known variously as English Electric, GEC, Areva, and Alstom, in Pallavaram, the area known as 'Officers' Lines'. Behind this row of large bungalows, beyond the barracks and the parade ground, is what could be heaven on earth – Veteran Lines. Perusing the records of the iconic St. Stephen's English Church, I discovered that the Cantonment area was the hub of the EAV Company, EAV actually expanding to 'European Artillery Veterans'. Did Veteran Lines get its name from this military company? The 'Officers' Lines' in the immediate vicinity lends weight to this assumption, and the area was probably peopled by European under-officers and NCOs, as well as those from the mixed race – the Anglo-Indians.

St. Stephen's English Church in Veteran Lines came

up in 1935, but the records go way back, since it was originally attached to St. Thomas' Garrison Church in the Cantonment area of St. Thomas Mount. Four Anglo-Indian women, Mrs. Lightfoot, Mrs. Drinkwater, Mrs. Gomes and Mrs. McKenzie, were instrumental in collecting funds for the construction of the Church, and, much later, the school was developed around it. There were a few



St. Stephen's English Church rebuilt in 1935.

Protestant families among the AIs of Veteran Lines, and there are some even today, but the Church has a special place in the hearts of worshipers, especially because, even now, it has a serene, homey atmosphere.

Veteran Lines today comprises some sixty to seventy, fairly big-sized houses, a few spanking new, most of the others in varying degrees of decay. I would not be far off the mark if I say that, until Independence, there weren't any other communities living in the area. Of course, some properties changed hands, but the buyers were mostly Anglo-Indian. My own home, long before my time, was sold to the milkman to settle his dues, but until the 1950s at least, most properties were owned by Anglo-Indians. Today there are just a dozen families from the community who live in and sometimes own properties here and the number has fortunately remained stable since the late 1980s.

Imagine a small (big enough for us, though), compact community living its own life, at its own pace, in its own inimical way, and you have the essence of life in Veteran Lines in the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s and



The author's refurbished house in Veteran Lines.

even the 1980s. Imagine neighbours coming and going freely, sharing a cuppa here or a glass of OT or wine there, or even a bottle of Cowl Bazaar's famous home-brewed arrack with a tickle of beef fry or vindaloo to aid the process of imbibing such a potent drink. Imagine weekend parties, Sunday-morning fishing adventures at the nearby river, the Bingo evenings, the sing-along nights that went on till early morning, the songs becoming louder and smuttier as time rolled by. Imagine the Devotions to the Mother all through May, in a different home each day. Imagine the whole community in and around Pallavaram meeting

tried its best to take its place. But, as the super-seniors and seniors will tell you, and even a late-comer like I could, the passing of the PRC was felt by the old and the young alike. These experiences are now memories, and even these are fading fast because most people nowadays do not know how to unwind, or "chill", or even just hang out. Anyway, all you Veterans, wherever you are, take heart: a revival is on the cards.

Veteran Lines was a great place for the young. In those days when TV and computers held little or no attraction, boys (and sometimes girls) trooped off to the huge military well in the colony, or went to the abandoned quarry that was always filled with water. Pallavaram hill often beckoned, the more adventurous choosing a direct climb up the hill, rather than using the road to the top. Mango season lasted at least two months and since the mangoes next door always tasted better, midnight raids were fast and furious and very seldom did any of the raiders get caught. If the night offered no real entertainment, there was always recourse to the old 'Kottai' or cinema-house situated in noman's-land, as seasoned 'Veterans' will describe the tract of land between the colony and Pammal beyond. The cinema-shed has disappeared, but many Anglo-Indians, including myself, rejoice because its place has now been taken by a booze shop.

The heyday of Anglo-Indian life in Veteran Lines had almost vanished when I arrived in the late 1980s. Even our very own bus – Route 52-G – has been taken from us; it plies another circuitous course. And even the formerly famous (or infamous) 'Loafer's Bridge' next to the School Bus-stand is gone, just a piece of the culvert's brick-work standing mutely by. The nearby mini-hockey field is in a mess now, abandoned by everyone today, but it used to be bustling with Anglo-Indians, young and old, eager every Sunday for a game, not too long ago.

We always take pride in our musical talents, and Veteran Lines has had its share of musicians. There was Cliff Phillips, the lead-guitarist, and Shad Bronkhurst, the excellent jazz-

(Continued on page 7)

Government Press – 185 years old

The Madras Government Press was started in 1831. Prior to that date, Government printing, by the order of Lord Edward Clive in 1800, was produced by the Madras Male Asylum Press, which also published, under special arrangement, an official and general newspaper called the *Government Gazette*. In 1831, the monopoly of the Asylum Press was terminated and Government printing was divided amongst various private firms. The Fort St. George Gazette Press was at the same time opened in the Fort, and the first number of the new *Gazette* issued on January 4, 1832.

In 1859, the press which had been run by the Board of Revenue to print its proceedings was amalgamated with the Fort St. George Gazette Press.

A Commission to investigate public establishments found that better economy was shown by printing work in the Government press, and from then work was gradually withdrawn from private firms. Surplus work which could not be handled was, in later years, entrusted to the Male Asylum Press, which eventually amalgamated with the Lawrence Asylum Press.

A piece-work scale of pay for compositors was introduced in 1861, the Madras press being the first Government Press to introduce a system afterwards adopted by all the principal Government Presses in India.

Between 1855 and 1859, district presses were established in

the Madras Presidency to supplant manuscript copying at all Collectors' headquarters. *District Gazettes* were issued for the first time in 1856-57. Railway communications having improved, and the printing of forms having been standardised and systematised, the convenience of the district presses diminished. Much of the printing work was ordered to be centralised in Madras, and the kind of materials published in the *District Gazettes* restricted. In 1917, as a measure of economy, twenty district presses were closed, and their work transferred to the Madras Press. But the Collectorate Press in Ganjam continued on account of its distance from Madras City and its singularity in the use of Oriya. The Ootacamund Branch Press, opened in 1905, worked as a district press for the greater part of the year; with the temporary transfer of establishment/annually, it had to deal with Secretariat work while the Government was in the Hills.

In 1868, a small branch press was established in the Penitentiary, convicts being employed. Later Jail Presses were established in Vellore, Coimbatore and Cannanore, employing convict labour.

Up to 1888, the Government Press was located on the ground floor of the Government office in the Fort. More spacious accommodation was found that year in a portion of the old Mint buildings vacated

by the Army Clothing Depot in George Town. Owing to increasing congestion and the inconvenient arrangement of the Mint premises, plans for the construction of a new Government Central Press were prepared and approved in 1912. But about that time, opportunity was afforded to acquire, at a cost of three lakh rupees, the plant and premises of the Lawrence Asylum Press in Mount Road, and this transaction was completed in preference to the construction of a new building. To this Mount Road Branch was transferred the sales depot for books and publications, the book work printing and binding sections, a portion of the forms work and *District Gazettes* to equalise the general pressure and flow of work in the various branches.

In 1912, the Government Press started the manufacture of all rubber stamps required for Government offices. The introduction of the Reforms in 1920 brought very heavy work to the Press, especially in the vernacular sections, and about 15,500 pages of the first electoral rolls, with all other printed election matter, was produced for the first general election.

At the beginning of 1923, the Press was called upon to take over the major portion of the High Court printing, which, from 1862, had been in the hands of a private contractor. This necessitated the engagement of additional staff and the opening of small Branch Press in the High Court buildings for printing daily cause lists.

A well ventilated building exclusively for the Linotype Department was constructed in 1925-26 and this relieved some congestion in the Composing Departments. A costing system was also introduced that year.

Two years earlier, a scheme for the training on Indians in Printing, so that they may qualify for superior posts in the Press, was sanctioned and four apprentices were selected.

The remodelling of the Penitentiary Branch Press, which was contemplated for many years, was finally sanctioned in 1928 and the remodelled press was ready to function by January 1934.

In December 1931, Government Press completed its hundredth year as a Government Department. Its original purpose was almost solely for the production of the *Gazette*. The original plant consisted of some second-hand types, three presses and a staff of about 10 hands.

A fast printing rotary machine was installed in 1934-35 and remodelling of the Govern-

ment Press, Mint, with two-storied buildings, was sanctioned.

The Printing Section of the Mount Road Branch Press was amalgamated with the main press in Mint in 1938-39. The Publication Depot alone, which was intended for the sale of Acts and other publications to the public, continued to function on Mount Road as a separate unit.

Consequent to the decision of Government to discontinue its summer in the Hills, the Branch at Ooty was closed from July 1938, after a small press was installed in the office of the Military Secretary to His Excellency for *Government House* work in Ooty.

A salaried system replaced piecework rates for compositors in the hand and machine composing sections at this time.

In 1941-42, a new section was formed, known as the 'War Section', which took up all work both in English and Indian languages, connected with war propaganda and civil defence. Its principal work was the printing of the weekly *War Review*, the *Monthly Review*, *Victory* and the A.R.P. journal.

In addition to the beautifully illustrated coloured supple-

ments of the *Madras War Review*, featuring the activities of the different armed services, printing was undertaken in 1943-44 for the extensive campaign launched in connection with the Small Savings Scheme and 'Grow More Food' campaigns. The Press was called upon to print enormous quantities of work with a comparatively short time. During these War years, printing of several Control Orders and Ration Cards and forms was also done by this section at comparatively short notice.

In 1948, at the time the author retired, the officer strength was 9, there were 980 permanent employees and 193 temporary ones in the non-composing section, 399 permanent compositors and machine operators, 234 temporary ones, 163 'casuals' and 315 convicts working in the Penitentiary Branch Press, 2293 employees in all.

Editor's Note: We regret we have lost the covering letter to this article but recall it came from a son who found it among his father's papers. The father had retired from Government Press in 1948.

Ramanujan remembered

(Continued from page 6)

programme interesting and meaningful numerous tools have been developed for children, giving full play to their sense of curiosity, to manipulate them in different ways and discover meanings. These "mathematical manipulatives" have been designed and developed by the late P.K. Srinivasan. About 70-80 training camps are conducted by the Centre at various venues where the focus is to teach teachers in use of maths manipulatives. They, in turn, are enabled to teach children, thereby multiplying the coverage. The kits, hundreds of them in various configurations, displayed on the upper floor are colourful, attractive, durable and suitable for sharing among players.

The kits are made and sold by a separate associate body that pays a royalty to the museum which is a registered non-government organisation prohibited from profit-oriented activities. No government aid or support is received and, therefore, the museum is able to supplement the royalty on kits to the meagre entrance revenue, which is Rs. 10 for adults and free for schoolchildren. The average daily footfall is hardly 5-10 with spurts of batches of schoolchildren on periodic conducted study visits. Occasional

donations are an additional source and most welcome. Rising costs of maintenance are a source of concern. The last eminent visitor was Dr. Bruce C. Berndt, Professor of Mathematics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA, in 1990.

The Centre arranges an annual lecture by an eminent mathematician on the occasion of Ramanujan's birthday on December 22nd. Ramanujan's widow's adopted son used to attend the annual function regularly till he passed away recently.

The museum seems to be run more by passion than money. Surely it deserves a better venue and a grander display of the memories of one of the greatest sons of this land. This exhibition in memory of the "man who knew Infinity", is poorly lit, its collections crowded into a small space and amateurishly preserved for want of resources, epitomising the Master's early days of poverty and of his genius craving for the world's attention. For a full-blown modernised exhibition of not only artefacts, photos and rare documents but also for an elaborate demonstration of Ramanujan's mathematical models, large space and scientifically designed show-cases are needed. Can some organisation help with both?

VETERAN LINES

(Continued from page 6)

guitarist – guys who have passed on. We still have the versatile Raymond Julian, singer, guitarist and composer, his brother Reginald who likes to lend a helping hand, Irwin Netto, the connoisseur's lead guitarist, Trevor Starr the bass guitarist, John Fernandez on keyboard and mouth-organ, Eric Edmonds, singer and keyboard-player, Dave Thomas, singer and guitarist, and Gerard D'Nazareth and Kimberley Daniels, drummers. Once, while some of these guys were practising in the house next to mine (where Raymond was then staying), Deb – my wife – and I could not help taking the floor, which happened to be the newly-laid concrete road in front of our homes. Just think, can you dance in public (yet in total privacy) anywhere else in the world? That is Veteran Lines – Heaven, a real Heaven on earth.

The Christmas season is still welcomed with zest and fervor

every year. On the very first day of December, the Tree comes out to be decorated and the Christmas records leave their storage place. Over the next few days the special delicacies are prepared – plum cake, seed cake, rose-cookies (as we knew them), kul-kuls, diamond-cuts, murukkus, coconut sweets, dhol-dhol, and whatever else. Visitors, from India or abroad, trickle in, to enjoy the company of old friends as well as the festive, yet sedate, atmosphere. The days when dances were organised in Veteran Lines have gone, but a few private parties do take place. In the past, shows at the Shiraz, Abbotsbury, or Hawk-field would be thronging with AIs from everywhere, but even these entertainments have disappeared.

But life goes on, as it always does; and, of course, good things always have a knack of lingering on, at least in the memory. (Courtesy: AITW)

– Bryan Oliver Peppin

A hundred Ranji matches

No reaching of a landmark is an easy achievement. Whether scoring 100 runs or taking 100 wickets is not without pitfalls. The same is true with completing 100 matches. The many who've achieved this landmark have had to go through a lot of sweat and toil.

Tamil Nadu wicket-keeper Dinesh Karthik's completion of 100 Ranji Trophy matches is a case in point. But his 100th game was a memorable one indeed. He scored the winning slot – a straight six – as Tamil Nadu beat fancied Karnataka at Visakhapatnam in a quarter-final Ranji game.

It was in 2002 that Karthik made his debut for Tamil Nadu in the Ranji Trophy in a match against Baroda. S. Suresh was the team captain and Karthik played alongside the likes of Sridharan Sriram, J. Madanagopal, J. Gokulakrishnan and Hemang Badani. Now, they've all become coaches. In fact, Madanagopal and Gokulakrishnan coached Karthik at Albert TUTI Patriots in the Tamil Nadu Premier League.

Karthik came into the lime-light in 2004. He played for India Under-19 in the World Cup that was staged in Bangladesh. Then he scored a fabulous 109 not out in the 2004 Ranji Trophy final at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium. His performance was taken note of.

Of that hundred against Mumbai, Karthik observes: We were 60-70 for 5, and I got 120-odd and we just managed 300. Then, they smashed us. It was a

– *And still going strong in the middle*



daunting task to play against Mumbai in the final then, so it was a good hundred. There have been a few hundreds, but reaching the final on three occasions has been a good thing for me. It's just that we haven't been able to cross the line."

Karthik was a 19-year old when he was selected to play for India in the ICC Champions Trophy held in England in September 2004. A couple of months later Karthik made his debut against the Australians in the final Test at Mumbai played on spinning track. India won it narrowly.

Not many will forget the sight of Karthik, horizontal on the ground, as he stumped Michael Vaughan in 2004. It was his first dismissal as a wicket-keeper for India, but his international career never really took off. Around 2010, despite his churning out runs in domestic cricket, India had M.S. Dhoni at the helm and behind the stumps, so there was very little Karthik could do.

Karthik's best phase playing for India came in 2007 when he scored consistently against Bangladesh, England and South Africa. In England, under Rahul Dravid's captaincy, he opened the innings and scored a couple of fifties. He continued to play for India till 2010 before he lost his place. He regained his spot for the 2014 Asia Cup that was held in Bangladesh.

An unnecessary error against Sri Lanka where he failed to stump Kumara Sangakkara cost India heavily and he lost his place in the team.

Karthik remembers his first hundred. He got it against Railways in 2003-04. "I had to play out the last ball of the day and we were 220 odd for 5 in a tricky situation. I stepped out and hit the last ball of the day for a six," he said. "I just felt that I could not defend, so just stepped out and hit the ball. That was the mindset back then.

• by
Bhaskeran Thomas

"Another hundred was against Baroda when we were trailing and we won. Even against Railways, this season, we were behind the eight-ball and I scored a hundred and we won the game."

It isn't difficult to see why Karthik feels unchallenged. He has all the shots in the book and a few that aren't in there as well. And that has made him a pretty handy limited-overs player.

In a Champions League T20 game between Mumbai Indians and Chennai Super Kings, R. Ashwin went around the wicket, paused in his action, and then bowled a quicker one on middle and leg stump. Karthik, having shuffled outside off, paused as well and then

viciously slog-swept his Tamil Nadu team-mate into the stands beyond square leg. Once, against Sunrisers Hyderabad, Karthik reverse-paddled medium-pacer Darren Sammy for four off the back of the bat for Delhi Daredevils in Dubai.

All that flash has also got him into trouble. In Tamil Nadu's first game of last Deccan's Ranji Trophy, Karthik attempted an ambitious scoop and perished in a tense low-scorer. Mumbai won. Several coaches have tried to wean him off the high-risk-low-reward shots, but those have also contributed to some of his more memorable performances too.

Karthik is now the senior-most player in the State side. While he was disappointed that a finger injury coincided with India's hunt for a wicket-keeper to stand in for Wridhiman Saha in the Test series against England, he has learnt to accept such setbacks are inevitable. He has learnt to move on.

"It was touch and go -between him (Parthiv Patel) and me," he says. "My finger being injured didn't help the situation. That's how life is. Sometimes, I might get an opportunity when nobody is expecting it. I have to take the good with the bad."

In 23 Tests for India, Karthik has scored 1,000 runs and in 71 One-Day Internationals he has

scored 1,313 runs. He has pouched 51 catches in the Tests and effected five stumpings and in ODIs held 49 catches and stumped seven. He has played only in 31 Twenty/20 matches for India. In 152 first class matches, Karthik has scored 8,878 runs, 5,006 runs in 186 List A matches thus far and 3,682 runs in 199 Twenty/20 games. In all he's held 366 catches in first class games and stumped 40 victims. In List A games, he's held 165 catches, stumped 37 victims. In T/20 games, he's held 121 catches and stumped 44.

Karthik made over 1,000 first-class runs in the 2008-09 season, with five centuries, including a 213, as Tamil Nadu captain as they reached the semi-finals. For five seasons since – barring 2010-11, 2013 [when he played only one match] and 2015-16 – he has maintained a batting average above 40. – (Courtesy: *Straight Bat.*)

Answers to Quiz

1. *Slumdog Millionaire*, 2. Antyodaya Express, 3. 'Science and Technology for Specially Abled Persons', 4. 'Moonlight', 5. Kerala, 6. NASA astronomers claimed to have discovered seven new Earth-sized exoplanets that may be able to sustain life, 7. Bharat QR, 8. Zealandia, 9. UAE, 10. Rajesh Gopinathan.

* * *

11. Seemai karuvelam (*prosopis juliflora*), 12. Women's Indian Association for Specially Abled Persons (WIAS), 13. Manikavasagar's *Tiruvachakam*, 14. *Veerappan, Chasing the Brigand*, 15. *Arwal-s* (sickles), 16. T. Natarajan, 17. Chengazhuneer Pillayar Koil Street, 18. Theosophical Society, 19. Papanasam Sivan, 20. GNB.

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