

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS

MUSINGS

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Metrorail threatens *Ripon Building*

Two churches in Broadway, several houses along the way, the Law College buildings, a couple of heritage structures on Mount Road... the list of victims of the Metrorail is long and rather illustrious. The latest to join this select club is *Ripon Building*, the 102-year-old heritage structure that is home to the Corporation of Chennai.

The story has been the same in all cases. As the drilling works progress, old buildings along the way develop cracks. The residents are alarmed, the newspapers report the matter, the structures are evacuated, a team from Chennai Metrorail visits the site and then claims it is not responsible for the dam-

age, IIT Madras is called in to submit a report that is never made public, the cracks are given a temporary fix and then the drilling continues to progress. Surely by now, with

● by The Editor

such a pattern emerging, the authorities should know that some precautionary steps need to be taken when tunnelling for the Metro happens – at least in the vicinity of a heritage building.

The experience with *Ripon Building* has been no different. Even as drilling, tunnelling and excavating happen in its vic-

nity, the edifice has begun developing cracks. These were first reported a month ago and since then they have continued to widen. It must be remembered that the entire structure rests on a series of terracotta wells for its foundation, all of them filled with stone rubble (*Jali*). If these are disturbed by the work in progress, such cracks are bound to happen.

A team from Metrorail has since visited the place and IIT Madras has been asked to prepare a report. This has probably been submitted but has not been made available to the Corporation, which therefore

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Our airport among Asia's worst

(By A Staff Reporter)

Barely a year after we patted ourselves on the back for being the only Indian city to be named among 52 favoured travel destinations by the *New York Times*, and just a month after the success of the Global Investors Meet, our city is faced with a dubious first. Its airport has been rated among Asia's worst. And that may not be surprising to those who have to frequently use the facility.

The survey, conducted by the travel website, 'The Guide to Sleeping in Airports,' talked to over 26,000 passengers during the course of one year, beginning from September 2014. Chennai's terminal, in faring poorly does not have the consolation it did a few years ago when the same survey also included Mumbai and Delhi's airports among the worst. Those have since invested heavily in improvements and in the latest poll have been ranked

among the best in Asia. Not surprisingly, the Airports Authority of India, which manages Chennai's airport, has strongly disagreed with the survey. It has in fact given the facility a rating of 4.3 out of 5. In its ranking, based on the Airports Council International's Airport Survey, Chennai has moved in one year from 114th position to 56th.

The general public does not agree with the latter rating. The travel website's study reveals that our airport scored very badly in baggage handling facilities and toilets. In the case of the former, the slowness in baggage delivery, the creaking carousels and the poor condition of trolleys have all come in for flak. The toilets have also been roundly condemned for being smelly and poorly kept. Though the survey does not mention it, the airport has also had several

other issues – notably the falling of false ceiling panels and the cracking of glass panes. All this makes you wonder how on earth Chennai can claim to be a city of international standards.

From having been in 1948 the first city in India to have a civil airport (the rest were all military bases), Chennai has fallen behind quite a bit. The problems have been accumulating over the years, beginning with controversy over the second runway that necessitated acquisition of land. This saw protests from the residential colonies in the neighbourhood. Thus there has been very little scope for expansion making the airport increasingly congested even as the number of flights and passengers has kept rising. Also, while airports in cities such as Bangalore and Hyderabad modernised through

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Know your Fort better



The Governor's gallery in St. Mary's Church.

● If the exterior and the yard of St Mary's Church are not attractions enough, the interior is a treasure house of memorabilia. Any historian of the Raj can spend a lifetime just going over the gravestones, the memorial tablets and other artefacts in the church. It is also fascinating for the lay visitor, for setting foot inside is to be transported to another era. Time appears to have remained unchanged inside St Mary's.

Among the earliest descriptions of its interior is that of Thomas Salmon, an ensign with the Madras Garrison who wrote of it in 1699 after he had returned 'Home'. "The English church, a pretty elegant building and moderately large has a handsome altar-piece, a gallery of fine carved wood resembling cedar and an organ with which, as one observes, they salute God and the Governor, for when the Governor comes into the church the organ always plays, which is a piece of complaisance we are strangers to in this part of the world. The church as I remember is floored with black and white marble, the seats regular and convenient, and all together it is the most airy lightsome temple that is to be found anywhere, for the windows are large and unglazed to admit cooling breezes, and if it were otherwise the people must sweat intolerably in their devotions; for though in their own houses they are as thinly clothed as possible, yet when they come to church it is always in the European dress; and when I was there, full wigs happening to be in fashion, every time a man visited the church he lost some ounces by perspiration; but to avoid these inconveniences as much as possible, prayers are appointed at seven in the morning and in the evening they are usually comforted with a sea breeze."

Nearly a century later, when Edward, the second Lord Clive was Governor, he suffered as much during service, for his daughter Charlotte noted that it was extremely hot. Clive and family sat apart from the general congregation in the first floor gallery at the western end. Below this was the choir vestry thereby indicating that the gallery was originally built to house the organ. It is today much truncated but till the 19th century, the gallery extended fairly deep into the church. While the organ stood at the rear, the rest of the space was given over to seats for the Governor and Members of Council, and also the first family. In 1761, the two curved stairs on either side were built to provide access to the gallery from outside the church. This was from where the bewigged and powdered Governor accessed his pew. Though the gallery has since

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Metrorail threatens Ripon Building

(Continued from page 1)

remains in the dark as to what has caused the fissures and what needs to be done next. In the meanwhile, the cracks have caused much fear and excitement among the staff in the premises, with the ensuing discussions presumably resulting in less work happening at the civic body's office than usual.

It will be laughable if Metro-rail claims that the *Ripon Building* cracks are not due to the ongoing tunnelling work. The edifice is still in the midst of a Rs 27 Crore restoration activity that has been ongoing for over five years now. If there was indeed a different cause for the damage that has now surfaced, surely the team of architects and conservation experts in attendance would have noticed it and reported it by now. The responsibility for the latest issue is clearly with Chennai Metro and it needs to do something.

What is amazing is the sheer lack of concern and the unwill-

ingness to arrive at a lasting solution for this problem despite such a track record. Added to this is the sheer lack of transparency in the process of finding a solution, assuming that there is such an effort. What is currently in place is surely merely a cover up operation with, no doubt, the hope that people will forget the issue after a while. And then, there is always the winning argument – such losses have to be sustained in the name of development and progress.

Sadly, there appears to be no sense of urgency within the Corporation itself. With a spanking new annex having been completed, most of the offices have probably shifted there or will soon do so. This will result in *Ripon Building* being left as it is, and the pressure to do anything quick will diminish. The home of the oldest Corporation in India will join a long list of public buildings that are now deemed structurally unsafe.

Asia's worst airport

(Continued from page 1)

privatisation, Chennai airport's revamp was entrusted to the Airports Authority of India, which rather predictably completed the job in a fashion that pleased none. Comparisons with other airports have been inevitable with Chennai always coming the worse off. For years there has been talk of a new airport to be constructed at a green field site but this never got off the ground. It is interesting to note that plans for new airports began simultaneously for Bangalore and Chennai and while the former's facility has

been in operation for almost ten years now, the latter is yet to take off.

The latest is that the Airports Authority is planning to spend a further Rs 1400 Crores on Chennai airport but if this is to achieve anything significant, the benchmarks have to be international and not the AAI's own. Another step has been the announcement that the maintenance of the airport will now be privatised. This has been in response to the survey. But will this step in the right direction really suffice? Or is it time to once again look at a new airport facility?

CHENNAI HERITAGE

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I am already on your mailing list (Mailing List No.....) / I have just seen *Madras Musings* and would like to receive it hereafter.

● I/We enclose cheque/demand draft/money order for Rs. 100 (Rupees One hundred) payable to **CHENNAI HERITAGE, MADRAS**, as **subscription** to *Madras Musings* for the year 2015-16.

● As token of my support for the causes of heritage, environment and a better city that *Madras Musings* espouses, I send Chennai Heritage an additional Rs..... (Rupees). Please keep/put me on your mailing list.

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All cheques to 'Chennai Heritage'. DD/Cheque should be sent by Speed Post only.

Battered by Bharati Nagar

All of you fellow travellers in the *Madras Musings* time machine will surely be aware of the national poet from our city. By that *The Man from Madras Musings* refers to the turbaned and moustachioed figure who has left behind a treasure trove by way of his works, all written within a very short life span filled with tribulations and privations. There are many ways in which our city has honoured this genius (sadly, all of them after his death) and one of these is the naming of various housing colonies after him. At last count there were at least six.

MMM happened to travel to one of these last week and it was an experience that he is unlikely to forget. Firstly, no doubt in keeping with the fact that the poet was persona non grata in our city and had to seek shelter elsewhere for several years, this particular colony bore no signboard announcing its name. MMM had been given a route plan in an email which said that to reach Bharati Nagar he had to drive straight down LB Road (if driving straight down is at all possible on that thoroughfare) and continue till he reached a point where it took a natural turn to

is a bit of a mystery. But MMM perhaps ought to give them the benefit of doubt. After all, they could have guided him to the local bar quite well if only he had wanted to go there.

As for Bharati Nagar, it was in many ways a tribute to the poet. His works, it is often said, lift you to the very heights of joy and then can also bring you to the depths of despair, the latter especially when he portrayed social ills. The roads of Bharati Nagar were exactly the same way, full of dales and hills, the kind that once inspired Tennyson (or was it Wordsworth?) to sing of daffodils. If MMM had a queasy stomach he could have easily been seasick the way his vehicle kept lurching forward and back as it negotiated the area. Besides pitching, there was considerable rolling as well, given that the roads were built for pedestrians but had to make do for cars (two lane) at that. At the end of it, MMM and car emerged at their destination, shaken and stirred. Wonder what the national poet would have made of this experience. Given his world class dreams for our country, he would have perhaps shaken his head despondently.

their sloganeering. The only element that was absent was our celebrities coming away from the polling station with their finger raised, the index digit that is, with an ink marking on it. Given the drama, they may as well have added that element.

At the heart of the whole strife is, as is to be expected in our city, a goodish bit of real estate, in the heart of Traffic/Tangled/Trade/Terrible/T' Nagar. One group, represented by he who rejoices in the name of Autumn Son, has apparently struck a deal with some theatre conglomerate to develop the place into a multiplex so that films can be screened. It is the logic of this lot that the money that will so come in will help the actors' guild in supporting the needy members on its rolls. The other group, led by Broad or Large, is not in agreement and claims that the whole agreement is murky. They promised to rescind the contract if elected. Ultimately the latter group won only to find Autumn Son declaring that he had himself cancelled the agreement earlier. It was almost as though the winning group had won the battle only

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

its right and, hey presto, there was Bharati Nagar, on his left.

Only, it wasn't if you get MMM's meaning. There was a narrow lane which appeared at least like sandy wastes that another national poet from the eastern end of our country once sang of. MMM had to stop his car and make enquiries and this naturally set off a cacophony of blaring horns, all the vehicles at the rear wanting to get ahead. Some drivers wholeheartedly cursed MMM as they passed, but MMM, hardly Chennai-ite that he is, respected them not and let them pass him by like the idle wind.

There was a considerable number of loiterers in the area and this being around 10.00 am, it was clear that they were waiting for the local Tasmac to open up, whereupon their day no doubt became brisk and active, converting all of them into active, contributing men (and some women). Not one had heard of Bharati Nagar, which was perhaps a good thing as far as the poet was concerned. Finally, in desperation MMM had to call the person he had to meet and ask for directions. It transpired, of course, that the narrow lane itself was Bharati Nagar and all MMM had to do was drive further down. As to why the locals did not know of its name

Theatrical polls

The Man from Madras Musings assumed that he was reading a report on general elections, or to be precise, State Assembly polls. The essential ingredients were all there – two groups, charges, counter charges, promise of reforms and a thorough enquiry into deals entered into by the group currently in power, police security, tension caused by supporters and an inordinate amount of media attention. It was therefore something of an anticlimax when MMM realised that it had to do with an actors' guild in our city. Of course, with a film career being but a stepping-stone to the corridors of power in our State (at least that is what most think, though very few have actually made it), this was only to be expected.

Came the day of the polls and almost every newspaper and TV channel worth its salt was covering the event live. Anyone would have thought that the outcome would have an enormous impact on the world political situation. A school in the Mylapore area was almost made into a fortress with battalions of police mounting vigil and chasing away curious onlookers. Busloads of supporters from the mofussil added colour with

to find that there was nothing to win over. But MMM confidently expects further fireworks with much histrionics and melodrama.

What everyone forgot was that the land in question is in the heart of a residential area. MMM shudders at the plight of the neighbours if such a proposal were to go through. Where would the cars be parked? How would homes handle the consequences of loss of privacy owing to the sudden coming up of a commercial theatre complex in their midst? But then that is clearly not the worry of any one of the people fighting this Tweedledum Tweedledee battle.

Tailpiece

The Man from Madras Musings learns that the Corporation is highly miffed with public response to its smart city polls. It had hoped to receive inspirational suggestions from our citizenry on how to make Chennai a digital fortress. What it got was a number of complaints on how garbage was not being cleared or why a particular toilet was in such a mess. Clearly, the problems of here and now need to be solved before we get on to being high, wide and plentiful. ?

– MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



proportion and ornamentation or designed to suit a particular climate.

Objective: Deserves intelligent conservation

Procedure: Development permission for changes would be given on the advice of the Heritage Conservation Committee.

Vistas/surrounding development: All development in areas surrounding Heritage Grade-2 buildings shall be regulated and controlled ensuring that it does not mar the grandeur of, or view from, the building.

Even though there are so many better suited places adjacent to the site, the transformer has been erected on the road blocking the pavement and the MTC bus stop. There is the possibility of buses hitting the transformer and posing a threat to commuters.

On one side of the transformer, there is a very old clinic run by the C.S.I. Tucker Church. It has been functioning for more than 40 years, serving the economically weaker section of society. On the other side of the transformer is the old MTC Minerva bus stop. In case of any fire or any untoward accident, the transformer poses threat to people standing at the bus stop or passing by on the road or waiting at the adjacent clinic.

When so many fire accidents have taken place (Moore Market, Spencer's, Khalsa Mahal, General Post Office, etc.) the positioning of the transformer is a cause for concern to the owners of a building which has so much wood in its roofing, doors, windows and furniture. The constant heat generated from the transformer is surely a threat to the building.

This place is used as place of worship, public gathering and Sunday School for the children from Tucker's Church. Any untoward incident is likely to impact on many human lives. There will also be loss of the original historic fabric of the building and the cultural significance which makes it unique.

We expect responsible action from the TNEB authorities when everyone knows no development activity is permitted up to 100 metres from a heritage building. We feel no proper attention was paid to procure permission from the Heritage Conservation Committee of the CMDA.

We request the authorities concerned to take immediate action to shift the transformer from here.

I. Nehru Rajan (97908 58221)
Henry Thomas J. (98411 33998)
Chennai

• This letter in its original form has been copied by the writers to several other government authorities as well. We publish it, suitably edited, because it points out the several ways heritage buildings are threatened.

Chief Engineer,
Distribution Chennai/North,
NPKRR Maaligai,
5A Block, Electricity Avenue,
144, Anna Salai,
Chennai 600 002.

We appeal to you to remove the recently installed (a week back) big transformer in front of century-old C.M.S. Centenary Hall, 165 Broadway (Prakasam Salai, Chennai 108) which is a heritage building classified as Grade-2A by the Heritage Conservation Committee.

Bye-laws in respect of Heritage Grade-2 buildings state:

Definition: Comprises of buildings and precincts of regional or local importance possessing special architectural or aesthetic merit, or cultural or historical significance. Though of lower scale than Heritage Grade-1, they are local landmarks which contribute to the image and identity of the region. They may be the work of master craftsmen or may be models of

affected their business. They said their clients would be cheesed off and that entry to their stores blocked.

Over the years, reason, persistence and understanding has helped us continue with this Fest and make it bigger.

I strongly believe that the temple precinct of Mylapore makes for a wonderful religio-heritage-cultural space, the like this city will be proud of if only the State and the community develops it.

Every year, when hawkers begin to set up earthen dolls for Vinayaka Chaturthi and Navaratri, I imagine a streetscape which is colourful, attractive, automobileless and unique.

The Mada Streets get a festive character and their stalls draw thousands of people from across the city.

If we could bar traffic for a few hours every evening and also create alternate parking spaces for all those who must visit the temple or shop at the local stores, and let shoppers and hawkers enjoy the festival spirit, this Mylapore zone would be the go-to place at this time of the year.

Big, small and street business must live and let live in such zones. They all stand to gain.

If the State can visualise a Central Plaza around Central Station, our city Corporation can also develop real a heritage-cultural precinct around Sri Kapali Temple.

Perhaps Mayor Saidai Duraiswamy and Commissioner Vikram Kapur can take the lead.

* * *

தமிழுக்கு நன்கொடை அளிப்போம்!



<http://harvardtamilchair.com/>

ஹார்வர்டில் தமிழ் இருக்கை அமைப்போம்!

Ancient Tamil Civilization

Tamils around the world may soon expect to have the Tamil language celebrated with a fully endowed Chair at one of the world's premier education institutions, Harvard University, U.S.A.

The Tamil language, spoken by about 80 million people worldwide, is one of the major classical languages of the world. An endowed Chair will facilitate the continued study of this language, one of the oldest in the world.

Tamil Sangam literature, which is over 2000 years old, has many Tamil commentaries, from ancient to the modern. It has also been translated into English by many scholars. Inspired by this literature, and with a view toward disseminating this rich and prolific language, Dr. Vijay Janakiraman and Dr. Sundaresan Thirugnanasambandam, approached Harvard University to establish a Tamil Chair. Comprehensive discussions have led to the approval of a \$6m endowment to fund the Chair. Drs. Janakiraman and Thirugnanasambandam have contributed \$500,000 each toward this endowment. A campaign has now been started to raise the remaining \$5m from the global Tamil community.

Contributions may be made in four convenient ways.

- 1) Write your cheque to "Tamil Chair INC." and send it to the following address:
Tamil Chair Inc., Attn: Dr. Sornam Sankar
4113 Tiber Falls Dr
Ellicott City, MD 21043, USA
- 2) Write your cheque to "Harvard University" and send it to the following address (Please specify "Tamil Chair" in the memo field. Otherwise, the funds could be used by Harvard for other purposes.)
Office of the Recording Secretary, Harvard University
124 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
- 3) Direct payment by bank transfer.
Bank of America, 100 Federal Street, Boston, MA 02110
President & Fellows of Harvard College, RSO account
Account #: 9429263621; ACH ABA: 011000138
Wire ABA: 026009593; Swift Code: BOFAUS3N
Donor: (To be provided by donor)
Purpose: Sangam Professorship in Tamil
- 4) Payment by Credit Card.
For further details: <http://harvardtamilchair.com>



Dr. Vijay Janakiraman



Dr. Sundaresan Thirugnanasambandam

'We must better use public spaces'

Many years ago, when the 'Mylapore Festival' that I curate annually began to blossom, we decided to move the hugely popular *kolam* contest and display to the streets.

North Mada Street was our obvious choice – since it was less populated on the weekend. And, it would create a gateway to the other venues of the cultural fest.

I had a torrid time conducting the *kolam* event. For, on the evening we invited over 100 people to start designing the *kolams*, two sets of people confronted us. They wanted us to stop the event and move out at once.

No amount of reasoning helped. They said they would do all it would take them to get us out. For a cultural event of this kind held on a street space

It was a pleasure to go through pictures of a small celebration that took place at Nageswara Rao Park in Luz on a recent Sunday.

Members of Chennai Weekend Artists (CWA) got together to celebrate three years of their outdoor life and passion. They had a cake made for this occasion and shared it after the morning sketching session. CWA is an informal group – it decides on a venue in the city, members meet there and sketch, draw or paint on the spot.

Semmozhi Poonga, the botanical park on Cathedral Road, and Nageswara Rao Park seem to be the group's favourite 'green' spaces. These public spaces – and many others like them – serve many interests of a community. But we must also take charge of them. Keep an eye on their condition, open lines with the state officers who manage them and talk to them on maintenance and improvement and alert them to degradation and encroachment.

– Vincent D'Souza's Jottings

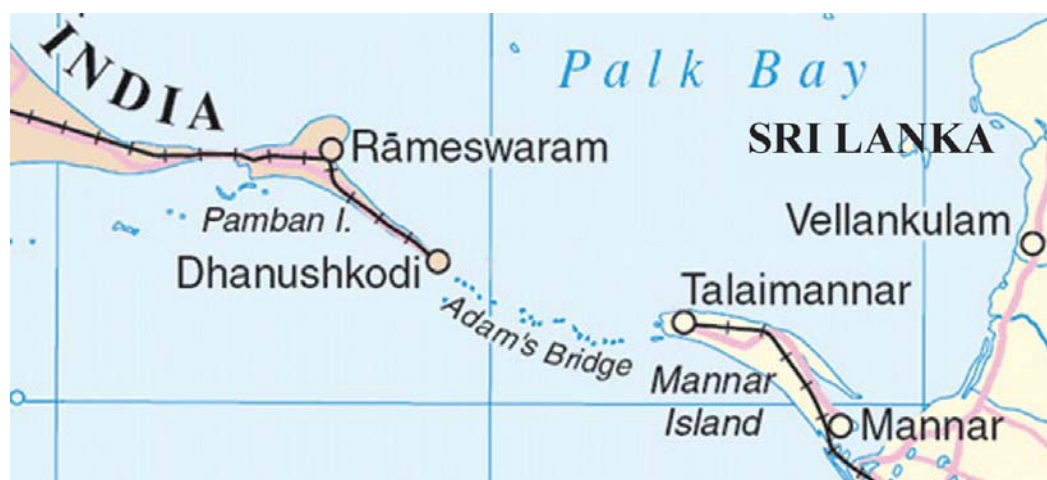
We regret...

... the omission of the author's name in the article *On the trail of old cine musicians* in *Madras Musings*, October 16th. He was Vincent D'Souza.

... the error in the heading *Our birding in the Yelagiri Hills* in the same issue. It should have been 'Out birding...'

– The Editor

While photographer VIJAY SRIRAM shoots at the 'ghost town' of Dhanushkodi at one end of Pamban Island, SUNAINA MANDEEN visits sacred Rameshwaram at the other end of the island. This is what they found...



Not quite the southernmost tip of India, this island town is separated from the mainland by nearly two kilometres of the Palk Straits. The Pamban bridge, named after the island on which sits the town of Rameshwaram, is a railway bridge, the first sea bridge in India, completed in 1914. It was damaged during the devastating cyclone of 1964 which wiped out the town of Dhanushkodi, a thin strip of land at the southern tip of the island, pointing to Sri Lanka. The bridge

built in 1988, it remained almost mythical, tucked away in a time zone all its own, not quite connected with the 20th century nor really with the rest of the country. It has always been and continues to be one of the most significant places of pilgrimage, with pilgrims, *sadhus* and the devout coming from all corners of the country. At every step someone will tell you a tale. And most often it is about Rama and Sita and Lakshmana and Hanuman. While some people will tell you

Himalayas; but Sita, as she waited for this perfect *linga* to appear, built one of sand with her own hands and, the story says, it is this *linga* around which the temple was built.

You will be taken to places where they stayed, to the pond in which she bathed and where she worshipped, and as you hear these tales, the whole island comes alive and you feel as if you had stepped into the lives and times of Rama and Sita. This was the last stop of Rama and his



Pamban Island's mainland connection – rail, road and sea... and the famous connecting bridge.

was repaired, but Dhanushkodi has remained a ghost town.

Once met an old woman, who kept me entertained with her tales of working on the construction of the Pamban bridge, when she was a very young girl and her whole family to worked on the bridge. She had to carry materials on her head while wading through water. She was very proud of her contribution to the only lifeline the island has to the mainland.

Rameshwaram is a land of legends. Until the road bridge was

confidently how the Shiva *linga* in the famous Rameshwaram temple is supposed to have been installed by Rama, who wanted to have the blessings of Lord Siva before going to conquer Lanka, others will recount, equally confidently, how Rama put down the *linga* after returning victorious from Lanka, in order to pray to Lord Siva for atonement for having killed the Brahmin Ravana *Brahmahatya*. This story goes on to say that Rama wanted a very special *linga* and Hanuman was despatched to find it from the

army as they advanced to lay siege to and conquer the kingdom of Ravana, Lanka, and bring Sita back. Devotees say you can still see the stones of the bridge laid by Rama's loyal *vanarasena* led by Hanuman.

According to Wikipedia, "The Ramsetu bridge is a chain of limestone shoals between Rameshwaram and Mannar Island, off the north-western coast of Sri Lanka. Geological evidence suggests that this bridge is a former land connection between India and Sri Lanka. The bridge is 30 kilometres

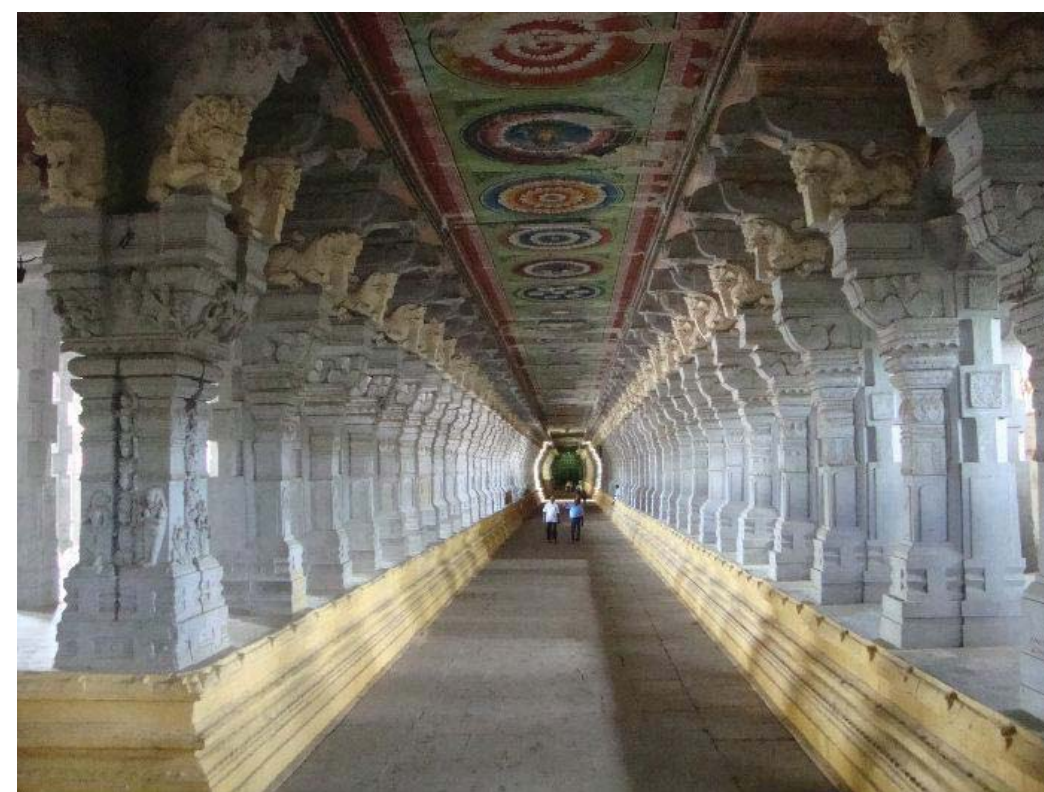
long and separates the Gulf of Mannar (North East) from the Palk Strait (South West). It was reportedly passable on foot up to the 15th Century until storms deepened the channel. The temple records record that Rama's Bridge was completely above sea level until it broke in a cyclone in 1480 CE."

If you are standing at the tip of this island, Talaimannar in Sri Lanka is just 29 kilometres away. In Dhanushkodi, the local fishermen are ready to take you for a boat ride to experience the mystic merging of the Bay of Bengal with the Indian Ocean. They say you can see, at the spot where they merge, a patch of water of a totally different hue from that of the waters of either the Bay of Bengal or the Indian Ocean.

The moment you cross the bridge and enter the island of Pamban, you enter a completely different landscape than that of the mainland. The shores of the island are dotted with fishing boats and, nearby, are the fishing hamlets. The boats come in all sizes from fairly good sized trawlers to simple catamaran-type artisanal fishing boats. And there is sand everywhere. First it is just sandy beaches, then come the dunes, with their thorny scrub bushes and almost till you reach the town of Rameshwaram this slightly desolate landscape continues. The wind blows the sand steadily through the open train windows. The huts of the little villages along the way, with the two- or three-storeyed school with its small courtyard that is ever present in our rural landscape, pass by quickly and all of a sudden you are at the bustling Rameshwaram station, people waiting for their trains, and the arriving trains emptying out a mass of humanity, all eager to visit one of India's holiest places.

To the devout Hindu, Rameshwaram is the Kashi of the south. On par with Varanasi, it is one of the four most holy pilgrim centres in India, once amongst the *Char Dham* pilgrimage sites as defined by Adi Shankara. Rameshwaram is the southern point, with Badrinath in the Himalayas in the north, Puri in Odisha in the east, and Dwarka in Gujarat in the west. Rameshwaram is the only Saiva site among them, the other three being Vaishnava sites. Rameshwaram is also one of the twelve *jotirlinga*'s across the country. It is believed that Lord Siva manifested in each of these twelve *lingas*, in the form of a fiery column of light.

The town is built around the



The famed corridor of Ramanathaswamy Temple. (Courtesy: Wikipedia.)

Ramanathaswami Temple. The temple is mentioned as one of the 275 temples that are revered as the greatest Shiva temples in the country, in the verses of the Saiva Nayanars, the 7th Century Saiva poet saints. The temple, in more or less its current structure, was built by the Pandya Dynasty during the 12th Century. As Rameshwaram came under many rulers over the next several centuries, each of them made his contribution, giving to the temple the particular touch of their period. The Chola King, Rajendra Chola had control over the town for a short time. The Jaffna kingdom had close ties with Rameshwaram and was considered its custodian. In the early 15th Century it was part of the Pandya kingdom, and even came under the rule of the Vijayanagara empire. The Sethupathis, a breakaway from the Madurai Nayaks, finally took control of the island as part of their kingdom of Ramanathapuram during the 17th Century and took a personal interest in the temple, an interest that continues right up to the present. It is they who largely gave shape to the temple as it is today. The inner shrine is surrounded by three corridors, the inner corridor, the second corridor, and the outer covered corridor in the world. According to the official website of the temple, the total length of

this corridor is 2169 feet (616 m), and it has a height of 22 feet and 7.5 inches (about 7m). It has 1212 pillars in all and is quite something to behold. The second corridor was made of limestone and was closed to visitors for years as it was literally crumbling and falling apart. Repair work was taken up during 1961-1985 to replace the limestone pillars with intricately carved granite ones, but due to lack of funds, the work is only partially completed. Efforts are now being made to complete the work.

During the 1970s, I spent many a fascinating moment watching the master sculptors painstakingly and lovingly work with their hammers and chisels on the large granite pillars. The *Shilpashastra* master was always nearby with his well-worn book, ensuring that all the work was being done according to ancient guidelines laid out in that volume. All the measurements had to be exact. There were still a few such master craftsmen around then and they took great pride in their work. For them it was not work, but a form of worship, as one of them explained to me.

Before the road bridge was made, local transport on the island was the *jhatka*, the one-horse car that took people around when it was not convenient to walk. They created their own special atmosphere, and were one more thing in

Rameshwaram that took you back in time. A visit, on foot or with a *jhatka*, without which a stay on the island remained incomplete, was to the Gandhamadana Parvat. About 3 kilometres from the main temple and the town, it is a little hill looking over a vast expanse of the island, dunes on all sides, and the sea on the far horizon. This used to be a relatively uninhabited part of the island, with only its famous thorn trees lining the paved road. Over the years, the huts have been replaced by *pukka* buildings, with even a makeshift movie theatre blasting out songs. The peace and quiet of this special place is fast disappearing and along with so-called 'progress', ever-present inorganic waste is making life difficult in the town. But the charm of Gandhamadana at sunset remains unparalleled. Once you are out of habitation, all you feel is the cool evening



One of Dhanushkodi's survivors.



The fishing boats of Dhanushkodi, which, together with others, keep fishing in the Palk Bay in troubled waters.

breeze, gently sweeping from the sea, and all you hear is the sound of your footsteps. Let us not at this point be disturbed by the honk of the autorickshaw which has now almost completely replaced the *jhatka*. After a stop at the Hanuman temple at the base of the hill, with its gorgeous orange red Hanuman, and the tasty boiled green gram, handed out by the young dedicated priest as Hanuman's *prasada*, you walk up the last stretch of the hill. The path is lined by an ancient temple tank and by some very old and dilapidated structures, taking you even further back in time. At the base of the stairs leading up to the Gandhamadana temple, you are often greeted by the tender coconut vendor's wizened old face with sparkling eyes and a ready smile on his lips.

The temple is known especially for the impression of Rama's foot print, and pilgrims flock here after a visit to the Ramanathaswamy temple in town. The place is alive with other legends too, of yogis and of *siddhas* who passed this way. One such story I have heard is of a young *siddha* who came from faraway lands sometime in the 19th Century. His fame was great and everyone went to the temple where he was said to be, to catch a glimpse of him. A young priest, unaware of all the excitement, was quietly doing his work at Gandhamadana temple above on the hill, when he suddenly saw, on the top of the temple, in a locked room, with no walls, only bars, a yogi sitting in *padmasana*, in deep meditation. Bewildered as to how anyone could have entered the room without breaking

the lock, he was even more astonished when he noticed that the man was not sitting on the floor but hovering above it in levitation. As he ran out of the temple and down the hill towards the town to alert the townsfolk of this great wonder, he saw a crowd of people coming up the hill from the Ramanathaswamy temple. They told him about the wonderful man they had just seen there was now on his way up the hill to Gandhamadana: it was the same man that the young priest had seen in deep meditation. The story goes that this great *siddha* spent some time in Rameshwaram, and imparted knowledge to those drawn to such matters, and then suddenly one day, as mysteriously as he had appeared, disappeared. This too is Rameshwaram.

The pilgrims who come to Rameshwaram are from all over India, young and old, rich and poor, highly educated and completely uneducated. And along with the pilgrims come the *sadhus*. They come from various orders, some staying for long periods, while others just make a regular stop on their way to other pilgrimage centres. It was always fascinating to see them. They generally kept to themselves, had special places designated for them to stay, and only on special festive occasions did you see them mingling with the other pilgrims. One such occasions was the Maha Shivaratri festival which generally falls in March. It is always a tremendous celebration that goes on for days. Every night, one of the temple deities is taken around the temple in procession, riding in a chariot and mounted on his or her particular *vahana*. Preceding the procession would be the musicians, the *nadaswaram* players, and the drummers. At the end of the procession, late into the night, there would be wonderful music concerts, with great musicians from all over South India performing for the people of and visitors to Rameshwaram. I have heard some of the finest Carnatic masters here, be it the *veena* or the violin, or vocal. All these festivities lead up to the final night of Shivaratri, where everyone gather on the inner corridor of

the temple which surrounds the inner sanctum and is lined with multitudes of *Siva lingas*. It seemed that anyone could just install themselves in front of one of these and start a *pooja* that would go on well past midnight. It is probably the only time in the year when the temple remains open almost all night long.

An interesting fact about Rameshwaram is that the priests who do the *pooja* in the temple are from Maharashtra. One version as to why this is so says that some 400 years ago the king of Kandy (Ceylon), who had commissioned the inner sanctum of the temple, brought 512 families of Karmakand Brahmins who were well versed in the recitation of the Vedas to Rameshwaram. Others hold the Raja of Ramnad responsible for bringing these families from Maharashtra sometime in the 17th Century. But the fact remains, that they have been there for generations and are there still today. They are fluent in Marathi and Tamil but the younger generation have forgotten the Marathi language even though they carry on many of the customs. I was also told that a similar tradition exists in Badrinath where the priests are Brahmins from Tamil Nadu. This could well have been inspired by Adi Shankara, who travelled the length and breadth of India, back in the 8th Century, sowing the seeds of national integration which continue to sprout and grow.

Yes, Rameshwaram is truly a place where all of India comes together. It is no surprise then that India's most loved President, APJ Abdul Kalam, hailed from this land of legends.

In the quiet of the early morning, pilgrims are at the beach taking a holy dip in the clear shallow waters and greeting the sunrise with the Gayatri mantra. The outside world is left behind in this moment of an inner communion with something far beyond, or deep within. (Courtesy: Sri Aurobindo's Action).

Note: All pictures, unless otherwise stated, are the copyright of Dr. VIJAY SRIRAM.

Quizzin'
with
Ram'nan

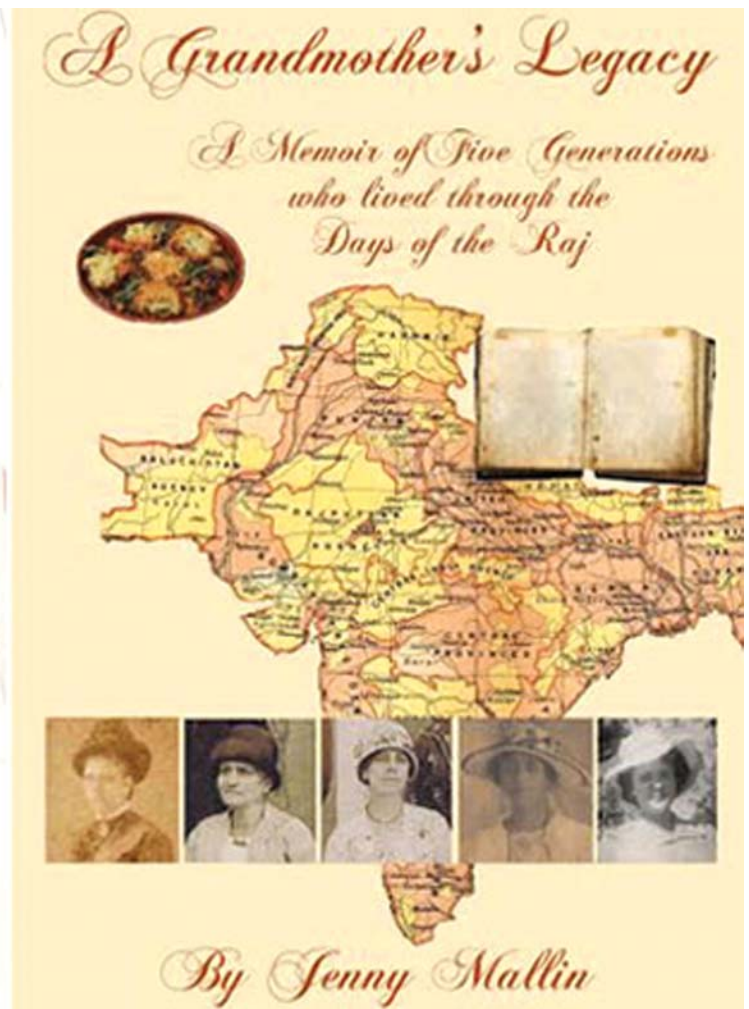
Jenny's journey of love

(Current Affairs questions are from the period October 1st to 15th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. After whom has the Defence Research Development Organisation's (DRDO's) Missile Complex in Hyderabad been re-named?
2. The Union Govt. has decided to observe November 26th as..?
3. Which company did computer maker Dell acquire for \$67 billion in the biggest tech deal in history?
4. Name the work that won Marlon James the 2015 Man Booker Prize.
5. Where have scientists from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) discovered a new distinct global species of banana with unique green flowers and fruit bunch lux (axis) thrice the size of a regular banana species?
6. In the inaugural list of Forbes' 50 richest families in Asia, apart from the Ambanis (at No. 3), which are the other two Indian families in the top 10?
7. Which African combine has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for this year?
8. Where in New Delhi will the National War Memorial and Museum come up in the next five years at a cost of Rs. 500 crore?
9. According to a recent revision by the World Bank, what is the new international poverty line?
10. It was recently announced that Earth is not the only planet with a blue sky. Which other 'planet' is said to have a similar-coloured sky?

11. To protect which critically endangered animal has the State Government banned Ketoprofen, a non-steroid anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)?
12. How was the legendary film personality Gopishanta, who passed away recently, better known?
13. Name the eminent flautist and Sangeeta Kalanidhi who passed away on October 9th.
14. A.R. Rahman has been appointed the Cultural Ambassador for which of these Indian Ocean islands: Madagascar, Maldives or Seychelles?
15. What is the traditional name for 'Allingal's Pagoda'?
16. The once-residence of Kysamballi Chengalraya Reddy, the first Chief Minister of Mysore State, in T. Nagar is now known as...?
17. What important academic position does Dr. R. Thandavan hold in the State?
18. Whose bi-annual publication is *Hamadrayad*?
19. What is the other name for the Bharata Kalakshetra Auditorium in the Kalakshetra complex?
20. Which film pioneer set up the Gaiety, Crown and Globe theatres in Madras?

(Answers on page 8)



“*Rai, jeera, huldi...*” my mother would whisper under her breath whilst counting out the ingredients on her fingers. Cooking came naturally to her, but occasionally she would open the pantry door and out would come this huge ledger book, whereupon she would leaf through the pages until she found the recipe she was looking for.

Hidden high in the pantry, this unglamorous-looking book, with its ochre, faded pages bespattered with sundry sauces and flavourings, revealed handwritten copperplate recipes dating back to 1850. Turning the pages of the book, you can see the handwriting style change over time, showing evidence of over five generations as each of my grandmothers have passed this on to the next generation. As a result, these pages offer us a glimpse into a fascinating time in history known as “the days of the Raj”, when India was under British rule.

We know the very first pages of the book have been written by my great-great-grandmother Wilhelmina Hardy, who was born in 1828. For a memsahib, it was an overwhelming and exciting adventure for those settling in India. It's quite possible that Wilhelmina felt it good sense to write all her recipes in one book which could then be given to

● **Jenny Mallin's earliest memories are of her mother in the kitchen, tapping a wooden spoon against the side of the metal *dekshi* and then tasting her curry sauce, checking the seasoning. From that moment, Jenny was hooked and her mother continued to nurture her love of cooking throughout her childhood. The kitchen, a wonderfully warm and intoxicating environment, became an indoor playground filled with new experiences, challenges, and the end result – something delicious on a plate. She took such pride in helping her mother that it wasn't seen as a chore, but as a special time together. Consequently, that love of cooking coupled with a desire to please someone with her food has never left her.**

With her passion for cooking, India, research and writing, the outcome has been a labour of love – a memoir that mingles the history of her family when they lived in India, with her grandmothers' recipes that were prudently passed down through the generations. Each recipe has been lovingly researched, leading Jenny on a road of discovery about her ancestors, with her grandmothers' legacy continuing to assist in providing clues to their rich and eventful past. All that is blended skillfully together in this story of a search that has led to a book.

the cook to follow. The book provides us with so many clues as to my family's lifestyle that it can almost be considered a time capsule. Generations of writing have not only chronicled events, but inadvertently thrown hints to us. When catering for large numbers, proportions of ingredients are upscaled and reveal to us a picture of entertaining on a huge scale; perhaps an open house party for neighbours, an elegant tea party, a special birthday event

or, of course, the largest event, Christmas.

Unknowingly, each one of my grandmothers has given me so much more than recipes. They allowed me an insight into their lives, where they lived, how they entertained, what kind of food they regularly ate, but, more importantly, why there were changes in their recipes and how they came about. It's as if the pages of their recipe book reveals chapters in their lives.

Life for them in India all started with an ancestor of theirs, Benjamin Hardy, a Yorkshire-born British Army soldier who went out to fight in India in 1799, fell in love with India and ended up settling there for the rest of his life. Benjamin and his wife Frances bore a son, named Joseph Hardy, in 1816. At the age of 30, Joseph married Wilhelmina Sausman. It was thanks to Wilhelmina's foresight that her recipes are the very first pages of the book.

Each of my grandmothers experienced life-changing events during their lifetimes, starting with Wilhelmina, whose schoolmaster husband was there at the threshold of the opening of the first English School in Mysore. In 1854, the East India Company promulgated the Halifax Dispatch, which suggested organising education in Mysore based on the Western model. This establishment grew in status and became known as the Maharaja's College – now regarded as one of the oldest in India.

During Grandmother Ophelia's childhood, the rule of the East Indian Company was transferred to the first Empress of India, Queen Victoria, following the Indian Rebellion in 1857.

(Continued on page 8)

The fathers of Tamil children's writing



P. Venkatraman

What Annam Pathippakam in Sivagangai was to a few modern Tamil writers, a place to congregate and discuss literature, Pudukkottai's Kannapiran Achakam was for writers some 70 years ago. Novelist Akilan, film director Pa. Neelakantan, lyricist Ku.Sa. Krishnamurthy were some of the writers who met at the press regularly to discuss literature. Parasurama Iyer, the owner of the press, was responsible for bringing out a few magazines for children, like *Balar Malar*, a fortnightly edited by 'Tamil Nilayam' V.Sp. Natesan, *Damar*, a weekly, and *Sangu*, a



bi-weekly, both edited by Sp. Chokkalingam. They all folded up later. *Ding Dong* was the last magazine the printer-publisher brought out. He did so at the insistence of his son Venkatraman, barely 18 then, whom he asked to be its editor!

Azha Valliappa, Pudukkottai principality, the children's poet, wrote many poems in *Balar Malar*. Young Venkatraman, around seven then, became an ardent fan of Valliappa, the doyen of children's Tamil literature. He shaped several writers and poets to write exclusively for children. (Incidentally, Valliappa is acknowledged only as a children's poet, whereas he was equally facile in writing stories, like *Burma Ramani*, etc. for children.) Azha Valliappa, it is said, was the honorary editor of almost all these children's maga-

zines published from Pudukkottai and inspired a generation of young poets. Muthu Narayanan of *Pappa Malar*, Sakthi Govindan of *Anil and Kuzhanthaigal Seithi* and Rama Thyagarajan of *Pappa* all belong to Rayavaram in Pudukkottai. Thus, Rayavaram in Pudukkottai state (now District) can well be called

the cradle of children's Tamil literature.

Valliappa was appointed editor of *Gokulam* which came out from the *Kalki* stable in 1982 and which successfully survives to this day thanks to 'Punithan' and E.S. Hariharan ('Revathi') who succeeded Valliappa. Arguably, Azha Valliappa, Tamilvanan and Aarvi could be called the Triumvirate of children's Tamil literature.

* * *

Venkatraman, who turned 80 in October, was felicitated by his friends and admirers for his devotion to children's literature and particularly to Azha Valliappa, for whom he installed a statue in the school where the poet studied in Rayavaram. The statue was donated by Vairavan Chettiar.

While he was vice president of the Pudukkottai Children's Writers' Association, Venkatraman had appealed to the then Education Minister, C. Subramaniam, to bring out a children's encyclopedia. This resulted in the Government launching the 10-volume project with Pe. Thooran as its honorary editor.

When Sahitya Akademi organised a seminar in 2012 on 'Children's Magazines in Tamil', Venkatraman was one of the main speakers and pointed out that he had had the opportunity of editing a children's magazine even as a teenager, when he was a student of Maharaja College, Pudukkottai. A recently released book of poems and a CD on road safety reveal his concern for children.

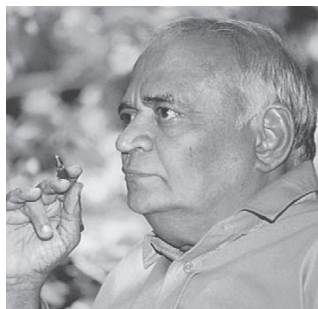
Venkatraman's admirers, fans and friends are unanimous that he has been the person who reached out most to those who serve the cause of children's literature and honoured them. Wherever children's literature is being discussed seriously, Venkatraman will be there. His autobiography, *Diary of a PRO*, published by Manivasagar Pathippakam contains several anecdotes of his 60-year-long experience in the field of public relations. One incident he recalls is the Paramacharya of Kanchi's visit to

• by
Charukesi

Pudukkottai. The Paramacharya was taken in a procession in a flower-decked palanquin, specially made by TVS. When the sage reached his destination, he commented, "In the Madras Presidency, I was the only one who had not travelled in a TVS vehicle – till now!"

* * *

One person who retired from government service in Tamil Nadu and settled in Hyderabad from 2003 but does not mind travelling all the way to Chennai, to meet his fans or to address meetings connected with children's literature, is Ilayavan. That his young admirers run a magazine with an eponymous name, as well as, another magazine *Nirai* is proof enough of his popularity as an organiser, orator, writer and poet.



Ilayavan.

Ilayavan turned 70 recently and there were celebrations in Chennai to hail him as the captain of the movement for the young. What is laudable is that he visits Chennai on his own and encourages his young school-and college-going fans with inspiring talks through his forum 'Ilakkiya Charal'. "He gives opportunities to the young to showcase their talent and motivates them to be responsible citizens," says Kanthalakshmi Chandramouli, the writer. Ilayavan has also established contact with a Telugu literary group in Hyderabad and supports and honours them through his *Nirai* group. His passion, drive and zeal in promoting children's literature are undiminished even today.

The authorities of the Thiruthuraiipoondi temple held a 'Bhajangovindam Namavali' competition for children between the ages 9 and 12. There was one particular 9-year old boy who caught everyone's attention. "Ah, a 9-year old boy singing so beautifully!" mused a mesmerised audience. "It came as no surprise when, at the end of it all, he walked away with the first prize!" reminisces

Tulasi Bhat, in his short biography of Ilayavan.

In the early 1980s, Ilayavan wrote a series of devotional songs and presented them to Kanchi Mahaswami. In 1999, his poems on Mahatma Gandhi were serialised in *Kalaimagal* magazine. In 2006, he composed poems on Kamarajar. *Ilayavan Kavithaigal*, an anthology of his poems, was released in 2010. Ilayavan is closely associated with Bharati Kalai Kazhagam which honoured him with the title 'Kavimamani' in 1984. Kalaimamani Vikraman, who edited *Amudhasurabi* for many years, was Ilayavan's mentor for more than a quarter century.

Maithreyan, MP, is a well-known supporter of 'Ilakkiya Saral' and 'Nirai', founded by Ilayavan. The late 'Aarvi', editor of *Kannan*, was mainly responsible for discovering the talent of Ilayavan and urging him to write poems and serials.

* * *

Kannikoil Raja is relatively young and dynamic. He is in the news because his collection of short stories for children, *Bhoomikku Vandha Kutti Megam*, has won the first prize in the inaugural competition this year, conducted by 'Ezhuthu', a new initiative floated by former minister P. Chidambaram to promote Tamil literature. Dr. Tiruppur Krishnan, currently editor of *Amudhasurabi*, introduced the book to the audience. The stories in this award-winning book meant for children deal with the environment.

Another of Raja's books for children, *Thanga Meengal Sonna Kathaigal*, is to be released in Malaysia later this year as a consequence of the Department of Indian Studies, University of Malaysia, and Kalaigan Pathippakam, Chennai, teaming together.

For a person so young, Kannikoil Raja's output and the number of awards, rewards and recognition he has received so far, are amazing. He was a pioneer in transmitting Tamil Haiku poems through SMS.

Raja has written 15 books so far for children, published by different publishers. These include Haiku poems, too. He has compiled another 13 books, which include one of Haiku po-



Azha Valliappa.

ems written exclusively by women poets.

Raja's contribution in the field of children's literature has been documented by Mannai Pasanthi. 'Sollaruvi' Muthu Srinivasan of Pudukkottai has included a separate section on Raja's life in a book. In a compilation of articles for Coimbatore Semmozhi Manaadu, Prof. Aditan has mentioned in detail the Haiku poems created by Raja and sent through SMS.

Some of Raja's poems for children are tuned and taught by Pichayammal of Uratha Sinthanai. Some poems set to music by Karpagamare are sung by Edayur nursery school students.

For the first time in the history of SMS, he ran a magazine in SMS format for six continuous years, from 2005 to 2011.



Kannikoil Raja.

His two collections of essays have been prescribed for academic studies in the women's colleges in Coimbatore and Sivakasi.

Kannikoil Raja is not new to winning prizes. But, he says, "I never write to win awards."

Raja's latest book of short stories is based on the principles propagated by former President Abdul Kalam and will shortly be published by Manivasagar Pathippakam. The book is sure to bring more laurels to Kannikoil Raja.

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

THE EDITOR

KNOW YOUR FORT BETTER

● by Sriram V.

(Continued from page 1)

lost its length, it still retains its carved balustrade, a fine piece of artwork that dates to the building of the church.

Today, you will not find the organ in the gallery. The present one is located at the eastern end of the church, to the left of the altar, a place earmarked for it since 1884. With its moving, the choir, on the rare occasion it performs, does so in front of the altar. The current organ is the fifth that the church has possessed. St Mary's has the distinction of being the first church in Madras to install an organ, that being in 1687. The second one led a most adventurous life, having been taken away to Pondicherry by the French in 1746, only to be brought back in 1761. But a successor to it had already been procured in 1759 and so it (the second) was sent to St John's Church in Calcutta! The third organ has the distinction of being an important part of the first ever concert of sacred music in Madras. This was held in 1794 with Michael Topping of the Madras Observatory playing it and Lady Oakely, wife of the Governor, being among the choristers. The fourth organ wandered all over Madras, or at least George Town, so to speak. When it made way for the fifth one in 1894 it was donated to the Holy Emmanuel Church in George Town. Later, when the organ at St Mark's Church, George Town needed repairs, parts of the fourth organ were cannibalised for the purpose. The fifth (and present) organ at St Mary's fell silent in the 1960s and would have been lost had not the Church of South India in 2004 commissioned Christopher Gray, an organ builder from the UK to restore it. This was completed within a year and pipes pealed again in a special recital by Dr Richard Marlow, Fellow and immediate past Master of the Trinity College of Music, Cambridge University. The organ is sadly not used any longer, probably because there are no trained musicians to handle it.

The altarpiece is another historic survivor. A depiction of The Last Supper in the best Raphaelite tradition, it was for long assumed to have been part of the loot from the sack of Pondicherry in 1761. But art scholar Sir William Foster has since proved it to be the work of George Willison, who did portraits for Mohammad Ali Wallajah, the Nawab of Arcot in the 1780s. It is likely that this painting was also funded by the Nawab. The painting has been touched up by amateurs several times over and cries for a proper restoration at the hands of experts.

Fronting the altar were once rails gifted by a Princess of Tanjore but these have long been replaced. The memorial plaque com-

memorating the original gift is still in place reading – "In memory of her friend Vere Henry, Lord Hobart, this railing is placed in the House of God by the Princess of Tanjore, AD 1877." Hobart, Governor of Madras in the 1870s, died of cholera, an event that led to underground drains being installed in Madras for the first time. He is buried close to the rails but more on that on another day. To the right of the altar stands a lectern dating to 1933 but on it is a plaque commemorating an earlier one, gifted by Mary, Lady Hobart, in memory of her husband.

In the southwest corner of the church, just before the exit to the walled garden, is another venerable relic – the baptismal font. It is made of Pallavaram gneiss, a form of granite that is also known as Charnockite, probably because the tomb of Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, and which stands in St John's Church in that city, is made of the material. What is interesting however, is that three daughters of Charnock, all born to his Hindu wife whom he rescued just as she was going to commit *sati* on the pyre of her dead first husband, were baptised in this font in St Mary's Church. The font cover, however, dates only to 1885.



The baptismal font in St. Mary's in the Fort.

Just behind the font, in an alcove beneath the gallery, is a long display desk. This has under glass one of the church registers, open at the page that records the wedding of Robert Clive to Margaret Maskelyne in 1753. There are more records in the Fort Museum, including those with details of Elihu Yale's wedding and the baptism of Charnock's daughters. Just above this display desk is a photograph of a panoramic view of Fort St George. Dating probably to the late 19th or early 20th century, it is in a bad state of preservation. The church also has a magnificent collection of silver plates, all of which is now displayed in the Fort Museum. The oldest of these dates to 1687 and is an alms dish gifted by Elihu Yale.

Having feasted our eyes on these, we will turn our attention to the tombstones, plaques and tablets on the floor and walls of the church next fortnight.

A GRANDMA'S LEGACY

(Continued from page 6)

Maud and her family enjoyed a privileged status (because of her husband's job as a Permanent Way Inspector on the railways) which allowed them to explore and travel around India in their own railway carriage, on the newly created railway which covered a vast network of 9,000 miles.

Irene came from a comfortable middle-class background. She began married life as the wife of a prison warden on the Andaman Islands at Port Blair, living in close quarters to the infamous cellular jail which held notorious criminals.

For my mother Cynthia, she would be experiencing perhaps the most major upheaval since my great-great-great-grandmother Frances Hardy's days – leaving behind in the 1950s the country she was born in to start a new life half way across the globe, emigrating to Great Britain after India gained their independence, a motherland with all its familiarity and yet in another sense totally alien to her.

* Jenny Mallin is visiting Madras at the end of the month. She may be contacted at jennymallin@yahoo.com

Answers to Quiz

1. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam; 2. Constitution Day (Samvidhan Divas); 3. EMC Corp; 4. A Brief History of Seven Killings; 5. Krishna Nalah forest in the Andamans; 6. The Premji (No. 7) and Mistry (No. 10) families; 7. The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet; 8. Princess Park, near India Gate; 9. \$1.90 (from \$1.25); 10. Pluto.

* * *

11. Vultures; 12. Manorama; 13. N. Ramani; 14. Seychelles; 15. Chennai Arulmigu Ekambareswarar Temple; 16. Anna Illam, the residence of actor Sivaji Ganesan's family; 17. Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras; 18. The Madras Crocodile Bank Trust and Centre for Herpetology; 19. Koothambalam; 20. Raghupathy Venkiah.

Dates for Your Diary

Till November 19: *Plethora of Gods*, an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by A.V. Ilango, K. Muralidharan, M. Senathipathi, Manisha Raju, R. Sundararaju, S. Hemalatha, S. Nandagopal, Shalini Biswajit, Vasantha Raja and Y. Shivaramachary (at Forum Art Gallery).

Till November 25: *Politics of Religion & Religion of Poli-*

tics, an exhibition of paintings by various artists (at Apparao Galleries).

Till November 28: *Everywhere, Everyday* – an exhibition of artworks by renowned artists, exploring the live elements of nature and their relationship to the live senses of the human body (at The Leela Galleria).

Till November 21: A curated series of photographs from The Ostkreuz School of Photography, Berlin, Katarzyna Mazur's work *Anna Konda* and Torben Greeck's work *Anti* (at Goethe Institut Auditorium).

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