

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

# MADRAS MUSINGS

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## Some old rules for new areas

By The Editor

Smart Cities are the in-thing, at least as far as Government's planning mechanisms are concerned. The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) is no different, and we learnt that it is preparing itself for taking up the planning required in the newly added area to the city's metropolitan limits. But, given its track record, as far as the old areas are concerned, is the CMDA going to function any different when it comes to the new?

On paper it all looks fantastic – sustainable environment

policy, enforcement measures to bring down noise, air and water pollution, recycling of water, environment management, tree plantation, decongestion, necessity to regulate development, strengthening satellite townships, strict enforcement of development regulations, ensuring open space regulation land, implementation of road width norms and requirement of completion certificates for buildings for them to get electricity and wa-

ter connections. What more could a smart city ask for? It is all there on paper. By reading this you would not be far wrong in thinking that the newly added areas to the city are one lucky lot – so many wonderful regulations awaiting them.

Now let us look at how the old areas of the city have fared under the same laws. The Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, noted last year that while particulate matter in Chennai may be lower than other metros, and that is largely thanks to the sea breeze, there has been a rapid escalation of particulate matter, a 193 per cent jump between 2007 and 2013. The CSE attributes this to the continued building of car-centric transport mechanisms – flyovers and zero signal one-ways which are becoming emission traps. As for water, while we may be the first city in India to formally implement rainwater-harvesting (RWH) schemes, a recent study has revealed that more than 100,000 government buildings are yet to implement it, more than 18 years since the programme was made compulsory in the State. In fact, the much touted completion certificate of the CMDA is supposed to be withheld in case RWH is not in place in a building, and yet these Government departments have been happily functioning, with electricity and water supply!

As for green cover, as our readers are aware, environmentalists are fighting the Government's plan to reduce the buffer zone around the Guindy National Park so that neighbours can build without restriction. And that brings us to the vexed issue of illegal constructions in the city. Various ordinances and legislations between 1999 and 2007 were passed to regularise them, which just goes to

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## Madras Landmarks – 50 years ago



• Lt. Col. G.S. Gill was among the first of the prominent Punjabis who settled in the city and made important contributions to it. Born on September 16, 1893, Gurdial Singh Gill was from Faridkot, Punjab. Sent to England to study law in 1912, he opted for medicine and moved to Edinburgh University from where he graduated in 1919, throwing in, for good measure, a few months' service in the Indian Field Ambulance Training Corps during the World War I.

Dr. Gill and his Scottish wife Rena Lister Gill set up his practice and home in Bolton near Manchester for a while and raised a family of four sons. In 1923, they came to India where he joined the Indian Medical Service (IMS) and became Lt. Col. G.S. Gill, IMS. With the IMS being abolished in 1930, he moved to prison service and became Inspector General of Prisons, Madras, which meant all gaols in the Presidency were under him. Most Madras-based Congress leaders arrested during the Quit India movement became his wards and there developed a close affinity between them and the warm-hearted Sikh.

Post-Independence, Gill opted to stay on in Madras. He and other prominent Punjabis settled here at that time were to make important contributions to the city. The Punjab Association had been founded in 1937. The body was to be tested to the hilt in 1947 when it invited, with the backing of Premier C. Rajagopalachari, who had become good friends with Gill while in gaol, scores of Partition refugees to settle in Madras, most having no idea about the city to which they were making their way.

Lt Col. Gill would invariably meet them at the station. A 'sharanagat rahat punarvas' (refugee rehabilitation) committee was set up and with money obtained from donations it helped them put down roots. The enterprising newcomers soon became successful entrepreneurs and professionals.

Lt. Col. Gill was a close confidante of Maharani Vidyawati Devi Sahib of Vizianagaram, a princess from Keonthal near Shimla, who had married into a princely Andhra family and had, like him, been transplanted to the South. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan had been an early protégé of hers. In her, Gill found a powerful patron and supporter. In 1949, when the Punjabis in Madras felt the need for a gurudwara, Gill led the committee that founded the Sri Guru Nanak Sat Sangh Sabha in T'Nagar. It was the Maharani who helped in making the dream a reality, donating generously for the building. Work began in 1952, with Gill personally supervising the construction. Lt. Col. Gill died in May 1982. One of his sons was the celebrated Lt. Gen. I.S. Gill, PVSM, MC, whose life was documented in *Born to Dare* by S. Muthiah.

The gurudwara seen above has been completely renovated, modernised and expanded in the last decade, but has retained its traditional character and stands a landmark off GNC Road, T' Nagar.

## Swachh Chennai – Can it work?

(By A Special Correspondent)

The Prime Minister's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Programme) was launched with much fanfare recently in the national capital. The move is most laudable, as garbage and filth have become the most visible symbols of our country, commented most often on by visitors from overseas countries and by international media. There was scarcely a ripple in Chennai, however, probably because the city had much to occupy its mind in the last ten days. However, it would do well to ponder over its garbage problem and arrive at a suitable solution.

At 4900 metric tonnes of garbage a day, even though the Corporation's web site claims it is only 4500 metric tonnes, Chennai is the fourth largest producer of rubbish in the country. That it has not been able to handle this volume is more than evident from the way the streets and thoroughfares are littered with refuse. The

collection/disposal mechanism, whether by the Corporation's conservancy staff or by the private operator contracted for it, is seriously flawed both in collection and disposal. What is the solution in sight? Sadly, there appears to be none.

That the Corporation believes that what it is presently doing is the ideal solution is evident from the fact that it is planning to privatise garbage collection in four of the newly acquired zones – Alandur, Sholinganallur, Valasarawakkam and Perungudi. It is reliably learnt that some firms from the Gulf region are in the fray. Also, incredibly so, given its poor track record, is the firm that currently handles garbage clearance in Adyar, Kodambakkam and Teynampet. The usual plans have been trotted out – there will be no common garbage bins in street corners, each household/office unit will be provided with two differently

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# Old rules in new areas

(Continued from page 1)

show that such violations were not viewed seriously. The matter has since become sub judice. In 2012, a leading newspaper of the city showed that, according to the Government's own admission, more than 50 per cent of the buildings in the city have violated rules! There is no reason to imagine that the situation has improved since then. Last year, a grand plan was announced that the city would follow Ahmadabad (it is amazing how that city is considered the font of all wisdom these days) and appoint a 200-member panel to monitor illegal buildings. That scheme has remained on paper.

With this background, how does the CMDA imagine that it can convert the newly included areas into Valhallas where nothing could be less than ideal? And what about the mess that is prevailing in the older suburbs, not to mention the city? Have these been abandoned as a bad job leaving the residents to manage in whatever manner they can? Unless the city's top planning body overhauls its current manner of working when it comes to implementation of its laudable rules, there is no way that any of the newer areas are going to be any different. And there's going to be nothing smart about that.

# Can we clean Chennai?

(Continued from page 1)

coloured bins – one for bio-degradable and the other for non-bio-degradable waste – and that collection will be from door to door. It is worthwhile pointing out that these were the same plans that were put out when garbage collection was privatised in the three zones mentioned above. Despite 18 years having gone by since the contracting out of rubbish collection, segregation at source and collection door-to-door have remained dreams. How then is the Corporation going to handle this effectively through its contractor in the new zones?

As for garbage disposal, it remains in the dark ages. There is no scientific method beyond the continued use of landfills. The Corporation of Chennai is under severe pressure to identify new landfills, as the present ones in Perungudi and Kodungaiyur have already reached capacity. The new landfill is to be according to the Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) Rules 2000. Space for this was identified at Kuthambakkam, but no con-

tractor has come forward for the construction of the landfill. In the meanwhile, the proposal is under the scrutiny of the National Green Tribunal following complaints from local residents that the construction of a landfill in their area will affect the quality of their life. That the space is currently a grazing area has lent credence to their claims.

For that matter, even the national scheme does not speak of waste disposal. In its current form, the plan appears to be more of a photo opportunity, asking the people to identify garbage accumulations, photograph them, clean them and then photograph the spaces once again. This is praiseworthy as a way of bringing the community together to work on a common cause, but it would be most effective only if a solution is worked out till the last aspect – the effective disposal of waste. Chennai, as part of the national drive, needs to think of its solutions as well – for collection, transportation and disposal of garbage. It would do well to begin now.

## A big 'Thank You' to 14 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16-09-14 to 15-10-14, added to the support Chennai Heritage and its voice, *Madras Musings*, have already received. We thank all of them for their support for the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

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# Making space at Central Station

*The Man from Madras Musings* has always had a fondness for the Central Station, though his heart has always belonged to Egmore. MMM still recalls the vast emptiness of the latter station, its wooden staircases and the drive-in platform. But all that is gone and Egmore now exasperates more than pleases. But leaving that aside, MMM having committed to writing on Central will do just that.

There may have been a time when this station was a vast emptiness too, giving you the impression of having entered a particularly cavernous church. Certainly, the Chief's book on *olde Madras* confirms that view though MMM has never ever seen it that way. To MMM, it has always been a place of chaos, noise, hustle and bustle, thereby encouraging people to spend minimum

test even then, but to no avail. When lit up, this created the illusion of having several fronds, some dates hanging down, and was supposed to make us believe that our city had become a second Dubai. But then the dates vanished, and after some time, the fronds stopped being lit up and, finally, the trunk alone stood illuminated. Then, that too gave up the ghost.

Next, do we still need a memorial for Moore Market? MMM would be the first to admit that the scaled down model is a wonderful reproduction of the original but now that its inner courts are used as makeshift bedrooms and toilets, can we not do away with it altogether?

A substantial part of the old jail was given to the General Hospital but there is still a sizeable piece of land that can be

Government officials can get on with more pressing business on hand, namely attend endless meetings. Sometimes the odd miracle does happen and the call gets answered. Here again, you can have two results – the first one being that the person at the other end says that this is not the relevant number and if he/she is in a good mood gives you a different number. When you try that number, you find that it is either not in existence or keeps ringing or is engaged. In desperation you call back the first number in the hope that the kindly voice will give you another number, only to find that that number too now rings away to glory with no response.

The second result is not meant for those with weak hearts – the call is answered and then the person at the

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

time in it – you are better off rushing home or jumping into a train. That way, it admirably fulfils the purpose for which it was constructed.

But of late, getting in and getting out of the station has become such a nightmare that MMM despairs at the very thought of it. The entrance and the exit are probably what the good book meant when it spoke about the eye of the needle. Add to this the natural tendency of our brethren and sororities towards indiscipline and mayhem, and you have a rich mixture. To add local colour you also have the excellent vocabulary of those thwarted in overtaking, parking, entering and leaving. Family relationships are called into question and the blush of shame mounts MMM's cheeks when he thinks of it all.

The Railways have blamed it all on Metro Rail, saying that this is the best that can be done considering the situation. What MMM would like to question is this attitude. There are actually acres of wasted space all around the station that can be put to good use if only someone had the imagination to think differently. Who needs, for instance, a scrap of a lawn which only serves as a resting place for vagrants? What about the largish area occupied by a hideous fountain unveiled by some minister-or-the-other for some-event-or-the-other? Do we really need it? After all, far more aesthetic buildings, statues and monuments have bitten the dust in the name of development. Next, do we still need an artificial palm tree that does not work? This was installed a few years ago and MMM remembers putting up a spirited pro-

used as parking space. Those wishing to reach the station need to only use the underpass and through it the subway. But for that, we need to clear the settlers there and stop people from using it as the largest public toilet in the world.

All this, if removed, can make for some additional space in and around the station and thereby ease up the chaos a wee bit. Easier said than done?

### Talking to Govt.

Have you ever tried calling any Government office? *The Man from Madras Musings* has, and he can assure you that it is a fun activity, particularly if you have plenty of time and no particular agenda on hand that requires immediate attention. These being days of telecom revolutions and high-speed connectivity, most Government departments feature telephone numbers on their web sites, letterheads and circulars. They exude the image of desperately wanting to be in touch with the likes of MMM and every one of you out there. The responses that you get are quite typical and MMM has classified them under various heads for your convenience.

LANDLINES: These will give you one of two results – either a recorded voice will tell you in a bored manner (it is only on Government telephones that even recorded voices can sound bored) that the dialled number is not in use, or the phone will keep ringing till eternity. Sometimes you will find that it remains engaged till eternity (bored recorded voice – dylled number is busy, please duyal later) which simply means it has been kept off the hook so that our

other end offers to transfer the call to the intended respondent. But be of good cheer, for nothing further will happen – most Government officials do not know how to transfer calls and will simply hang up. Otherwise they will tell you that the respondent is not, er... responding (sir/madam is not in seat) and ask you to call later. When you do that you know that the number will be either continuously busy or will just keep ringing.

CELL PHONES: Some departments publish cell phone numbers of key officials. These are strictly one-way instruments – the officers only make outgoing calls on them to juniors. All senior bureaucrats have a second and private cell phone on which they receive calls from their spouses and children or receive transfer orders. That number is never disclosed to the underserving general public.

### Tailpiece

*The Man from Madras Musings* did not fail to notice this Freudian slip while on a saunter down Purasawakkam way. The police never said a truer word – after all, walking is a strain.

– MMM



**OUR READERS WRITE**



**Recalling early history**

**'The Forgotten Harbour'** (MM, May 16th) made interesting reading. However, the traditional theory mentioned in the article requires re-investigation.

The original *firman* or *cowle* granted to the British in 1639 certainly mentions Madraspatam. Hence, it would be tenable that Madraspatam already existed before the so-called founding of it by Francis Day. Same was the case of Chennapatam. S. Krishnaswamy Ayyangar, a noted authority on Vijayanagar history, citing a Telugu source, has mentioned (1919) that Damarla Ayyappa founded Chennapatam in memory of his father Chenna Nayaka. This information is provided by Ankabhupala, son of Chenna Nayaka, in his poetical work *Ushaparinayam*. Ayyappa Nayaka was the half-brother of Ankabhupala. Ayyappa Nayaka was also a distinguished soldier who in later years led a military expedition against Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar of Mysore and fell in the battle at Erode around 1670. These details demonstrate that Madraspatam and Chennapatam were clearly distinct localities. N.S.Ramaswami, an erstwhile chronicler of Madras, opined (1977) that Chennapatam must have been developed later than Madraspatam. It is also on record that Ayyappa interposed this "town" Chennapatam between the Por-

tuguese at Mylapore and the Dutch at Pulicat to prevent their constant skirmishes on this boundary.

Apropos Francis Day, larger than his alleged role in the erection of Fort St. George is the role that seems to have been played by Andrew Cogan. It was actually Cogan who transferred the seat of the agency of the Company from Masulipatam to Fort St. George on September 24, 1641. Cogan made it the chief factory of the Company on the East Coast. Francis Day, on the other hand, had his own problems with the Company. The Company took Day to task for some of his projects and also entered its charge in the Black Book in 1642. However, Day did not seem to have suffered thereby.

The British, after their abortive attempt to set up their base at Pulicat, opted for Masulipatam. But they continued to be unhappy there and started looking for other settlements. Pollocheere or Pondicherry, Conimeer or Kunimedu north of Pondicherry, and Covelong, north of Mamallapuram, were contemplated before Durugarayapatnam was chosen. Fascinatingly enough, Pulicat Lake, which once extended upto Durugarayapatnam, was known by the name Pralaya Kaveri. This reference also propels the need to probe further into the history of pre-British Madras and its surroundings extending



The Fourbeck monument.

**While I sourced information for 'Bridges of Madras'** (MM, September 16th and October 1st) from the State Archives, other information on bridges was serendipitously found in unexpected places.

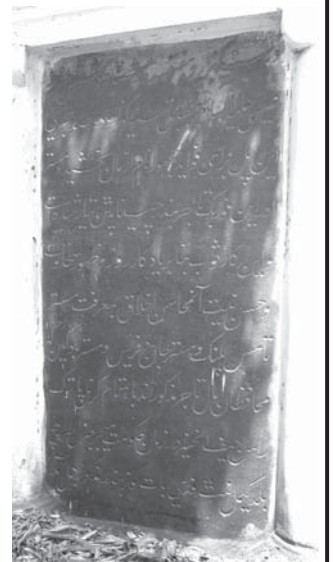
During 'Madras Week' I visited an exhibition in the Armenian Church to learn more about the story of the Armenians in Madras and elsewhere in India. I suspected my subject would be there – the great "Marmalong Bridge" of 1726, built by Peter Usan. Yes, it was there – with images of two famous paintings done by famous painters. I had seen these images before, but what caught my eye was a comment by a naval officer and explorer, Dumont D'

# On the trail of bridges

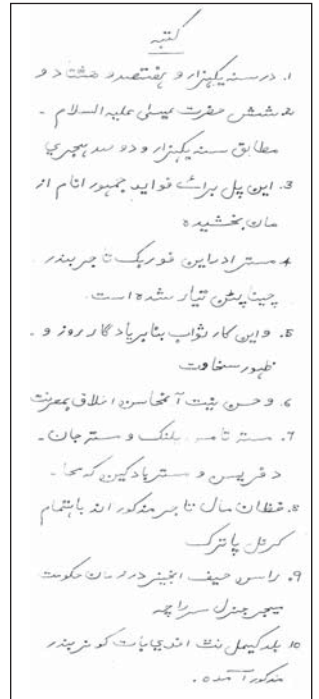
Urville. During his circumnavigation, he arrived in Madras in 1829 and wrote, "(in Madras) an entire neighbourhood is reserved for Muslims. We go there by the Armenian bridge built on the river Mylapore; this bridge is 365 metres in length with its roadway (and has) 29 arches of various sizes."

This was the first time I had come across the length of this bridge and the number of arches it had. Also of the name of the river being the 'Mylapore River' and not the 'Adyar River'.

After 'Madras Week', I was back at the Archives. A scholar from the University of California, doing research here, sat across from my table. For nearly a month, we did not speak to each other. Then, one day, a journalist dropped in to meet me about my interest in the bridges of Madras. After she left, this scholar, Hannah, spoke to me and told me of a Persian manuscript in the Oriental Manuscripts Library at Madras University which talked about a bridge built in 1786.



The Persian side...



...from a translation copy.

far beyond the contours of the banks of fisherfolk and their settlements.

The antiquity of Madraspatam with its probable Muslim links is also worthy of being explored. Seethakaathi, that great patron of Islamic Tamil literature (a "Donor par excellence even in his demise") is believed to have operated a prosperous trade guild from the neighbourhoods of what is now Chennai. Is it plausible that he also ran a "Madrasa" there? The Arabs also were known to have had active trade contacts with the East Coast from the 11th Century onwards.

With reference to Dr. Raman's query (MM, June 1st), and Prof. Sanjeeva Raj's note (MM, May 16th), the etymology of "Armagam" remains a puzzling one. A 1926 reference to this place calls it "the station of Armagam" (a slant towards Arumugam!). Hayavadana Rao, a well known Mysore historian, states that Armagon was the first place fortified by the English in India. Within four years after its establishment in 1626, it was found to be insufficient to supply their commercial needs after a disastrous

famine hit the place. Subsequently, Armagon was made one of the five factories of Masulipatam under Henry Sill.

Historically speaking, in earlier times, a more strategically located trade station was found at Pulicat on the Madras Coast. The Armenians were in occupation of this post in the 1500s. Later, the Dutch established their settlement here in 1609, built a fort and named it *Castel Geldria*. An early Protestant Mission archival note contains the following description about Pulicat. "It was once a flourishing place of commerce, excelling in the manufacture of a peculiar kind of handkerchiefs, in great demand among the Malays of the Eastern Islands; and at one time, highly esteemed even in Europe".

Celebrating the birth of Madras from the British period is certainly objectionable, but the much earlier history of Madras should be traced.

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**Editor's Note:** Please refer to the Editor's Note in MM, September 16th, page 5.

This bridge, the 'Marmalong Brook Bridge', was built close to the Marmalong Bridge by the executors of a wealthy merchant, after his death. Adrian Fourbeck, an old resident of Madras, had left a legacy to build a bridge on Mount Road across a surplus channel of the Long Tank near Saidapet.

The work was carried out by his executors, Tomas Pelling, John De Fries and Peter Bodkin. There is a small monument to this bridge in the Highways Department's vehicle depot near Nandanam with inscriptions in English, Persian, Latin and Tamil on its four faces.

I had photographed this quite some time back and showed Hannah the pictures. She introduced me to a Professor of Persian languages who showed me the translation by another scholar of the Persian plaque on the Fourbeck monument.

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# Observations on a 'troublesome insect'

Amora-born Ronald Ross's discovery of the developmental stages of *Plasmodium* (Protozoa: Haemosporida: Plasmodiidae) in the gastrointestinal tract of an anopheline mosquito, when he worked as general-duty medical officer at an army station in Begumpet, Secunderabad, in 1893-1895, led to the finding that malaria is transmitted by *Anopheles*, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology in 1902. This finding led to launching mosquito-management measures to combat the deadly disease not only in India, but also elsewhere. Ross was led to consider mosquitoes as a possible agent in the transmission of the malarial parasite by the work of a Dr. Manson.

Around the end of 1870-early 1871 Patrick Manson settled in Amoy, a port town in China, where he had occasion to treat several people suffering from elephantiasis. Towards the end of 1874, Manson returned to the UK and explored the causes and the spread of elephantiasis. He developed the theory of mosquito transmission of the disease. Ross, who had got interested in malaria in 1892-1893, met Manson in England in 1894, and was shown the stained blood smears that included malarial parasites. This was when Ross saw malarial parasites – for the first time – through a microscope. Manson impressed on Ross about the possibility of the mosquito being the carrier and intermediate of organism. These conversations with Manson stimulated Ross to tackle the malaria challenge in earnest. In 1898, Ross showed that the mosquito was the malaria vector.

But before Ross established the mosquito's role in malaria-parasite transmission, there appeared in the *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* an article by one W. Gilchrist (July-October 1836 issue), that is nearly six decades before Ross established the link between mosquitoes and malaria. Robert Cole of the Madras Medical Establishment and the editor of volume 4 of the MJLS wrote:

"... several observations are perfectly original, as far as we are able to ascertain, and would entitle the paper to admission into the pages of any Journal devoted to matters of science. Moreover, whether novel or not, the highly intelligent author is entitled to the full credit of independent observation, not having access to books on the subject, in the retired station (Hoonsoor) at which he is resident; and we gladly, therefore, give a place to the article not only on account of its intrinsic value and interest, but as an incentive to others, to institute observations and inquiries in the wild field of nature, spread out before them on all sides, and inviting their attention."

William Gilchrist was a Glasgow MD & CM\* who worked with the Madras Medi-

cal Establishment. From 1850 to 1855, he was the Professor of Medicine at Madras Medical College.

Besides being a surgeon by training and practice, Gilchrist seems to have been an enthusiastic veterinarian as well, because he has documented treatment methods for diseases afflicting the elephant, camel

provide any detail of either the scope or the power of the objective pieces he used. He estimates the number of eggs he saw under the scope ('...not fewer than one hundred eggs...'), but has measured the size of the egg cluster ('... did not exceed three-twentieths of an inch in length, and about one-twentieth of an inch in

**● On the metamorphoses of the mosquito by William Gilchrist, a medical officer attached to the Madras Medical Establishment, Madras, was published in the Madras Journal of Literature and Science in 1836. Gilchrist's observations were made in Hoonsoor (now 'Hunsur', Karnataka), a remote village in the Madras Presidency in the 1820s, when magnifying optical instruments were crude and primitive even in Europe. Gilchrist made the observations approximately six decades before Ronald Ross established the connection between the mosquito and malaria and 70 years before papers on Indian mosquitoes were published in the early 20th Century by George Giles, who started his studies with Ronald Ross in Calcutta at the turn of the 19th Century.**

and bullock. In addition, there are two papers by him on self-registering barometers published in MJLS (Gilchrist 1837, 1838), which indicate his scientific versatility, extending beyond his medical knowledge and interest.

At the start of his note on the mosquito, Gilchrist refers to it as a 'troublesome insect', implying it is a nuisance. His observations were made at one time – with no replications. He alludes to using a microscope to observe the eggs, but does not

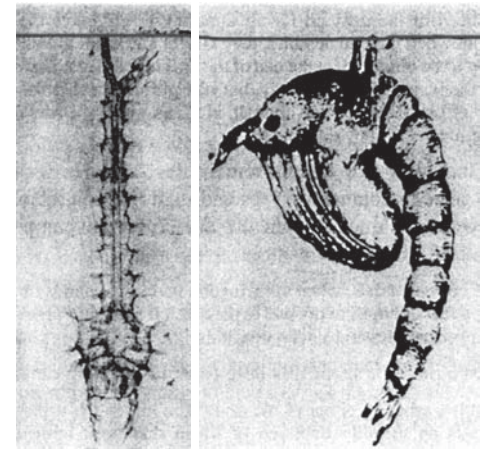
breadth.'). He also provides measurement of each egg ('... 1-40th of an inch long ...') and provides details of the gross morphology of the eggs.

He also describes some of his 'experiments'. He introduces eggs (referred as 'ova') into a 'tumbler' of water and refers to the colour changes he saw. In 2.5 days, he saw swarming *animalculae* (the larval forms). He includes a line sketch of the larval form – described by Gilchrist as 'newly hatched insect'.

Gilchrist later refers to his trials to feed the larvae with vegetable crumbs ('vegetable matter') which were 'consumed voraciously'; he also offers another useful remark: 'They did not, however, entirely confine themselves to a vegetable diet.'

Gilchrist indicates that insects remain in this stage for 48 hours. Then, his words offer an impressive reading.

"This, in due course, bursts, when the winged mosquito draws itself out, stands on the surface of the water a few minutes, to dry and expand its wings, on which it



From larval form to 21-day growth, as sketched by Gilchrist. (Note: the horizontal line is the water level in the glass.)

presently proceeds to a dry situation. I observed several undergoing this change."

We go on to learn from him that the mosquito is the most prolific insect and that far away stagnant water, such as that of tanks etc, is necessary for its propagation. All such stagnations ought to be kept as far away as possible from dwellings; thereby we are more likely to enjoy "an immunity from their annoyance."

Gilchrist's note in the MJLS (1836) excitedly made me think that his note was the earliest public documentation of the developmental stages of mosquitoes, but that excitement was short-lived. As I dug into the literature on the history of mosquito biology, I found that the earliest recording of details on the egg, larval and pupal stages, supported by elegant sketches, was that of Johannes Swammerdam in Utrecht (Holland) in his magnum opus, *Historia Insectorum Generalis* (1669). American mosquito-ologist Harry Stage has chronicled historical searches done in mosquito biology in a global context and refers to the work of the Italian Jesuit Filippo Bonanni (1638-1723) and to that of René Antoine Ferchault de Reaumur (1683-1757).

Notwithstanding the fact that the Gilchrist note does not outline anything new, the effort made by Gilchrist is appreciable, given that his observations of mosquito development were made by examining them in extremely modest conditions and facilities. On three scores, Gilchrist's note is worthy of remembering: (i) the insect he observed appears to be an

anopheline taxon, whereas much of the European work done prior to him refer to culicine taxa, (ii) Gilchrist provides reasonably accurate details of time lengths of developmental process durations and (iii) his notes pertain to an Indian mosquito taxon, reiterating the biology of a subtropical-tropical species.

In the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, at least three

**● 'Pages from History' by DR. A. RAMAN**  
Charles Sturt University  
Orange, New South Wales  
Australia

British medical officers of the Indian Medical Service shine in the chronicles of mosquito biology: George Michael James Giles (Lieutenant Colonel, 1853-1916), Sydney Price James (Lieutenant Colonel, 1870-1946) and William Glenn Liston (Lieutenant Colonel, 1873-1950). Giles started mosquito studies in 1899 with Ronald Ross; he published 18 papers on mosquitoes in India and from nearby countries.

One serious weakness in Gilchrist's note is that it does not refer to any of the earlier publications on mosquito metamorphosis; it is presented as a note based on casual observations; MJLS editor's note was, in high likelihood, intended to justify the publication of a casual, unreferenced note from Gilchrist – (Excerpted from a paper in *Oriental Insects*)

\* Medicinæ Doctore et Chirurgiæ Magistrum: Doctor of Medicine and Master of Surgery.

## Heritage workshop held for Corpn. teachers

DakshinaChitra, along with the Education Commissioner's Office of the Chennai Corporation, has started a series of workshops for the teachers of the schools in Chennai. Two such workshops have been conducted and teachers from the various zones of Chennai have been participants. The one-day workshop introduces topics such as heritage, culture, craft, folk performances, etc. to the teachers. It also aims to give know-how on practical implementations of ideas such as conducting heritage clubs in schools, puppets as teaching aids, etc. Dr. Suresh from INTACH was the external resource person for the first two workshops which are conducted free of cost. The workshop also includes lunch, refreshments and a guided tour of DakshinaChitra.

## OUR ADDRESSES

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*Madras Musings* now has its own email ID. Letters to the editor can be sent via email to editor@madrasmusings.com. Those who wish to intimate change of address can also do so provided the subscription number is quoted. For non-receipt of copies, change of address, and all other circulation matters: Madras Musings, C/o Lokavani Southern Printers Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006. On editorial matters: The Editor, *Madras Musings*, No. 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 600 014.

– THE EDITOR

# Encounters with mongooses

Despite living in an urban jungle, there is plenty of wildlife all around, if we were but to tune our ears to listen and open our eyes to see. True, there may not be foxes and jackals which were common a few decades ago, but there are plenty of small animals – squirrels, shrews, bandicoots and, of course, rats. Anywhere there are trees, you can hear the shrill *kiik kiik kiik* of squirrels. Others are rarely seen and, so, we often do not realise their existence. Therefore, when you sight such an animal, even if briefly, you wonder whether you really saw it at all, but the memory remains.

Across from where I live in Chennai is a park with a fairly large pond. Till a few years ago, the park's walkways were mostly blacktopped with the usual ups and downs, and there were fairly large patches within the park that were overgrown with bushes. There was even an island in the pond with a couple of trees. The pond was not all that well maintained but it was a haven for waterbirds. Not just herons and cormorants but kingfishers and moorhens too. Tailor bird nests nestled in the trees in the island, away from human intrusion while the sound of warblers and sunbirds was all around. The walkway around the pond was well kept but the space between the path and the edge of the pond was not very accessible, overgrown as it was with weeds and shrubs. Aesthetically, it may have looked a trifle unkempt but it provided excellent natural habitat for a variety of creatures.

One sunny morning, while walking in the park, I noticed a small movement near some

bushes and slowed down. Perhaps it was a rat that had overstayed its nightly outing and was scrambling to get into its hole. But no, this was something larger, standing on its haunches and appearing tawny in the dappled light from the trees. Bright beady eyes, a slightly pointy snout and a bushy tail. Definitely not a rat but...

*"He was a mongoose, rather like a little cat in his fur and his tail, but quite like a weasel in his head and his habits. His eyes and the end of his restless nose were pink; he could scratch himself anywhere he pleased, with any leg, front or back, that he chose to use; he could fluff up his tail till it looked like a bottle-brush, and his war-cry, as he scuttled through the long grass, was: Rikk-tikk-tikki-tikki-tchk!"*

• by  
**Ahana Lakshmi**

Rikki tikki tavvi! An instant recognition thanks to Rudyard Kipling's description from the story that I had read again and again for it featured two of my favourite birds – the tailor bird and the coppersmith barbet. Nag and Nagaina were part of our childhood too; we were told always to be alert for snakes as we lived in a township full of trees tending to jungle. Not only had we heard stories about snakes slithering into bathrooms but my sister even had an occasion to find one sleeping on her bookshelf. Fortunately, before anything untoward happened, the security guard was called in and the snake was sent back to its natural habitat. But I don't recall seeing mongooses



then! Not in the wild anyway. So this encounter in the park in Chennai was, to say the least, exciting!

Mongoose are carnivorous mammals found in Eurasia and mainland Africa. They belong to the sub-order Feliformia which includes animals as varied as hyenas and the cats. The Indian gray mongoose is *Herpestes edwardsii*, found mostly in the Indian sub-continent. It is found everywhere, in open forests, scrub jungle, cultivated fields and even close to human habitation. It is considered sacred in India and is found de-

*nakula*, the name given to the fourth Pandava brother.

Another, more leisurely, encounter was in the Anna University campus in Chennai. Though it is full of buildings now, there are many sections where old buildings have been left unoccupied for years and now have been overtaken by the jungle. Cheetals wander around, having trotted across the road from Guindy National Park. Troops of monkeys play in the open spaces in front of the buildings or leap from tree to tree with their young ones hanging on. And stormwater drains, when not maintained, are perfect hiding spaces for small animals. So, it was not surprising that I saw a mongoose sitting calmly outside the entrance to one such drain, dry but full of used paper cups and plates. This particular specimen looked quite healthy and well fed. But then, a study in India about a decade ago indicated that the Indian gray mongoose is more common in disturbed areas, near garbage bins, garbage dumps, scavenging on carrion, and on roads! Yet their greatest threat is man who likes to capture them for their soft furry skin and bushy tail from which paintbrushes are made.

The mongoose is a skilful hunter and plays an important role in keeping under control pest species such as rats and mice. In fact, they have been preferred as house pets, as described by Kipling, though, according to Tim Wrey in his

book, *Footsteps in the Salad*, "Anyone thinking of having one around the house should know that they can be very destructive. They seem to find as much pleasure in attacking cushions and furnishings as they do in slaughtering chickens, once they get into the mood!" Of course, they are best known for their ability in killing snakes and snake-charmers have made use of this characteristic in their mongoose-cobra mockfights to arouse people's curiosity. Here is a description that Sherlock Holmes aficionados should recognise:

*The man leaned over and pulled up the front of a kind of hutch in the corner. In an instant out there slipped a beautiful reddish-brown creature, thin and lithe, with the legs of a stoat, a long, thin nose, and a pair of the finest red eyes that ever I saw in an animal's head.*

*"It's a mongoose," I cried.*

*"Well, some call them that, and some call them ichneumon," said the man. "Snake-catcher is what I call them, and Teddy is amazing quick on cobras. I have one here without the fangs, and Teddy catches it every night to please the folk in the canteen.*

– From *The Crooked Man* by Arthur Conan Doyle.

(Courtesy: Sri Aurobindo's Action)

## MADRAS MUSINGS ON THE WEB

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

THE EDITOR



**Till October 31:** Art exhibition by S. Arunagiri. All his works are figurative, based on Indian mythology, temple motifs and religious icons (at DakshinaChitra).  
**Till October 31:** Solo exhibition by Hufreesh titled *Mysterious Unknown* (at DakshinaChitra).  
**Till November 2:** Exhibition by Shelly Jyoti titled *Salt*. As a tribute to Gandhiji, Jyoti shows artworks in Khadi fabric and garments using traditional Ajrakh printing.

Featured are a large khadi fabric with Sanskrit calligraphic print as a site-specific installation, two sculptural installations of khadi yarn (*aatis*) and pipe cleaners, twentyfive contemporary artworks with *ajrakh* dyeing/printing incorporating needle work on khadi fabric and multimedia spoken poetry (at DakshinaChitra).

**Till November 25:** *Pop Culture: Forest Fantasy* – an exhibition of

paintings by P.G. Dinesh and Pravin Sawarkar. Dinesh explores the urban culture in a tongue-in-cheek manner, using various elements of popular culture and urban kitsch. Pravin Sawarkar, on the other hand, leads you into a dream-like space of naive fantasy with almost fairy tale hues (at Apparao Galleries, Sandy's and Wallace Garden).

**October 24-29:** Heartbeat Foundation, an NGO, and Gallery Sri Parvati present an exclusive show by artist Udaikumar. The show will feature 50 works of art, and will support the artist who suffers from muscular dystrophy. Proceeds from the sale will go towards the artist's

medical needs (at Gallery Sri Parvati).

### DakshinaChitra Workshops

#### Workshops for Adults

November 8-9: Macrame

November 15-22: Terracotta Jewellery

November 29-30: Kalamkari

\* \* \*

#### Workshops for Children

November 22: Design the Waste (10-14 years)

December 20: Pyrography-wood painting (8-14 years)

December 27: Decoupage (7-14 years)

December 28: Activity Camp (8-14 years)



(Current Affairs questions are from the period September 16th to 30th. Questions 11 to 20 pertain to Chennai and Tamil Nadu.)

1. Name the new Chief Justice of India.
2. What does the logo launched on the occasion of Prime Minister Modi's 'Make in India' campaign, to make India a manufacturing hub, feature?
3. Name the Hindi feature film that has been selected as India's official entry to the 2015 Oscars' Awards.
4. Name the elite club of three that India joined by successfully putting 'Mangalyaan' around Mars on September 24th?
5. The largest IPO in history happened on September 18th with a Chinese giant listing on the New York Stock Exchange. Name the firm.
6. Ashraf Ghani is the new President of which embattled SAARC nation after the country's first democratic transfer of power?
7. Which former Premier did Narendra Modi emulate by addressing the UN General Assembly in Hindi?
8. After whom is the Antyodaya Yojana, the rural and urban skills development programme, launched on September 25th, named?
9. Which global organisation recently issued 'Maharaja Bonds' worth \$100 million to help develop infrastructure for the domestic capital markets in India?
10. In which southern India city were National Academy for Athletics and National Golf Academy recently inaugurated?  
\* \* \*
11. Who was Aranganathan after whom the subway in Saidapet is named?
12. What did the legislature building, that was inaugurated in May 1952 by Governor Sri Prakasam, first metamorphose into?
13. Which notorious character from Madras' history features in Sir Walter Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter*?
14. The 1956 film *Vana Ratham* saw the debut in Tamil films of which Bharat Ratna awardee?
15. Name the two Chennai girls who recently made history by becoming the first Indian women to win a sailing medal at the Asian Games?
16. Name the 91-year-old Gandhian, the chairman of the Sakthi Group and three-time MLA, who passed away on October 2nd.
17. Which legendary son-of-the-soil's latest literary endeavour is titled *My Journey: Transforming Dreams into Actions*?
18. September 22nd saw the centenary of which incident from WW II that had an impact on Madras life and gave a word to Madras-bhashai?
19. Which popular chain was started by N.K. Mahadeva Iyer in 1948?
20. On which temple's well can you see a stone inscription that mentions how the then Collector of Madras, Francis Ellis, dug 27 wells in 1818 to overcome acute drought?

(Answers on page 8)

## • Media & Advertising

# When Radio, Film & TV arrived

In this part I look at more recent media in which advertising has played a significant role.

### Radio

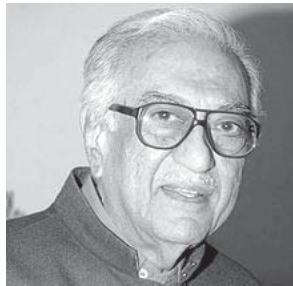
Until the early 1960s only print and outdoor advertising was popular. But then came Radio Ceylon which started offering commercial services to Indian advertisers, something All India Radio did not allow. Radio Ceylon was represented in India by Radio Advertising Services owned by the Sayani brothers (Hamid and Amin) with headquarters in Bombay. S.V. Venkatraman (father of actor S.V. Sekhar) was the manager of Radio Advertising in Madras. L.R. Swamy & Co was also allowed to canvass advertisements for Radio Ceylon.

Thanks to the wide coverage of Radio Ceylon across the length and breadth of India, Mayilvahanan, a popular Tamil voice, and Amin Sayani of *Binaca Geethmala* fame, became household names in the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the memorable radio spots of the time were for brands like Gopal Tooth Powder, Ponvandu Soap, and Woodward's Gripe Water, apart from Tamil versions of the advertisements of well-known multinational brands like Colgate Dental Cream, Lifebuoy Soap, Lux, etc.

Though *Vivid Bharathi* was started by AIR in 1967 as a commercial service to counter the popularity of Radio Ceylon, it never reached the heights of Radio Ceylon as an advertising medium because of the restrictions Government imposed on the duration and frequency of commercials.

Radio broadcasting in Madras started in 1930 from a radio station in the Corporation's *Ripon Building* and then shifted to All India Radio's own premises in 1938. But it was the starting of FM stations by AIR and opening the radio medium to the private sector that has favourably impacted this medium. FM radio stations operating out of Madras offer, 24x7, interesting programmes aimed at attracting a wide spectrum of audiences, especially the youth which is moving away from the print medium. However, radio is more popular as a mobile medium as people listen to it while they are commuting. The extensive reach of mobiles with radio listening facilities has certainly made radio more popular. Because of the focussed target audience it offers, radio as an

(Continued from last fortnight)



Amin Sayani.



A.V. Meiyappa Chettiar.



S. Krishnaswamy.



Jayendra Panchapakesan.

advertising medium is bound to grow, as evident from the growing popularity of many of the FM channels in Chennai.

### Film/TV

Madras entered the film industry producing only Tamil cinema, but before long it was

having been translated by writers in Bombay who had moved out of Madras decades earlier. On this scene, there entered in Madras S. Krishnaswamy of Krishnaswamy Associates, the well-known documentary producer, and his brother S.V. Ramanan who began creating

Alone), Regal (Sottu Neelam) is well-known in the industry. At one stage, they were flooded with assignments from all the leading advertising agencies from Bombay who handled a host of multinational brands.

Over a period of time, the team split and Jayendra started Real Image, India's leading provider of technology in the film, video and audio domains. He also launched QCN – a digital out-of-home advertising solution provider with central monitoring and control facility. Real Image also represents several global players in the field in India and abroad.

Another Madras-based advertising film producer who caught the imagination of the Bombay advertising world was Rajiv Menon who is also well-known as a cinematographer and director. He produced some memorable ad films for Asian Paints and Titan watches.

The Madras ad world can be proud that it nurtured some of today's celebrities during their days of struggle. Today's icon A.R. Rehman was popular as Dilip in his earlier avatar – he used to compose advertising jingles for many products in his spare time. He pioneered the concept of composing background music for a jingle on his Casio keyboard and recording it with a dummy voice of his own, before calling in a professional singer to sing the jingle – saving a lot of time and money in the process.

Balakrishnan (Balki), National Creative Director of Lowe Lintas, is another contributor from Chennai to the national advertising scene. He is also well-known as a director of feature films, having directed Amitabh Bachchan in *Cheeni Kum* and *Paa*.

Senthil from JWT Madras, who conceived the Cannes Award-winning Naka Mooka commercial for *The Times of India*, is another from the city who is doing well on the national advertising scene.

M.G. (Ambi) Parameshwaran and Ramanujam Sridhar are others from Madras known for their intellectual contribution to the advertising field in the form of books on Branding and Advertising based on their long association with the advertising business.

### Satellite & Cable TV

It was in mid-1990s that the advertising, through cable TV,

(Continued on page 8)

• by R.V. Rajan

(Feedback welcome on rvrajan42@gmail.com)

the hub of Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam cinema as well. Later, it grew into a major industry. Cinema advertising, in the form of one-minute ad films in all cinema halls across Madras State, was started by the founder of AVM Studios, Meiyappa Chettiar, operated under the name of Central Publicity. It was later bought by Blaze Advertising, Bombay. Cinema was a leading advertising medium of the time.

During the 1970s and 1980s, film advertising in Madras essentially consisted of dubbed versions of Hindi/English spots produced in Bombay for famous brands and which had played in cinema theatres there. Many of these commercials did not connect with local audiences in the South because they not only featured North Indian models but also the language translation used was totally outdated,

original commercials in Tamil aimed at the Tamil audience. Krishnaswamy even tried using puppetry animation to promote Madras Fertilizers Ltd.

The Asian Games in 1982 brought colour television with it and TV spots in colour came into vogue. But for quite some time even television commercials beamed on local DD continued to be dubbed versions of Bombay production houses.

Then there came Jayendra Panchapakesan, an ex-copy writer and film-writer, and P.C. Sriram, the well-known cinematographer/director, who together started J.S. Films and changed all that. As a team they came up with some good concepts and executed them to the demanding standards of the Bombay advertising world. Their role in helping create famous brands like Rasna (I love you Rasna), BPL (Home

## • Nostalgia

# During those days of dissection

(Continued from last fortnight)

I entered the first year in January 1942. Dissections of cadavers commenced during that time. From January to April 1942, I stayed in the central YMCA with a large room all to myself. The buildings near the sea and the lighthouse at the eastern end of the High Court were evacuated due to the threat of Japanese bombardment from the sea.

When I returned to Madras in July 1942, Abdul Gafoor, final year MBBS, K.N. Vasudevan, my classmate, and Vijayaramachari, who had first entered Medical College, took up a flat on the second floor of a building in Nainiappa Naicken Street in Park Town on a rent of Rs. 25, shared by four of us. The 'carrier' meal from Mysore Cafe was only Rs. 14 per month and was enough for two persons. On my way to college, I used to have breakfast at Nehru

Cafe in the nearby temple premises abutting the road. The cost of a very tasty *masala dosai* was only one anna.

My clothes collection improved. Double-breasted coat

Colleges led by none other than B. Ramamurthy (later the renowned neuro-surgeon) who was a staunch Congressman with links with the party. Col. McRoberts was the Superinten-

● Madras Medical College, 73 years ago – as recalled by Dr. S. Ramaswamy, Professor of Anatomy (Retd). He was a 1941 batch student of MMC.

was the fashion of the day.

My three lodgemates were from Madurai. Gafoor was an ardent supporter of Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League. This, however, did not come in the way of our friendship. He later migrated to Pakistan. But his brother remained in India and worked in Simpson's.

Once Quit India call was given, there was active participation of students of the Madras and Stanley Medical

dent of the General Hospital. Dr. S.K. Sundaram was his assistant. Dr. SKS used to be always dressed in *khadi* and scrupulously adhered to it. He was a brilliant physician and Roberts held him in great esteem. I had the pleasure and privilege of being posted in Col. McRobert's unit and had the unique opportunity of listening to his lectures and learn the basics of clinical medicine. The Colonel was extremely well-disposed towards his staff and students with no



A penchant for double breasted suits.

rancour whatever even though the agitation was going on against the regime in the form of sit-down strikes on staircases and doorways to prevent normal working of the institutions. During the preclinical years, we discarded the mandatory 'necktie' as a token of protest.

Many students were arrested. They included B. Ramamurthy and Syed Ahmed Kabir. They were released very soon, thanks to diplomatic moves by S.V. Ramamurthy, the Chief Secretary. This was known only after some time. Even while all this was going on, the college and hospital kept functioning smoothly. The advice came from certain quarters that it would be better for students to complete their education and participate in the struggle after qualifying themselves. Besides, the British needed doctors for the army and the course was

shortened to enable the enlisting of medicos.

Dr. A. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras before the 'Quit India' movement and Dr. B.T. Krishnan, Professor of Physiology, became the Principal, and Dr. D. Govinda Reddy, Professor of Pathology, became the Vice-Principal and was warden of the students' hostel. Students in the hostel tried to hoist the Congress flag in place of the Union Jack. Dr. Govinda Reddy, as Warden, had to oppose this and the students were asked to vacate the hostel and find residence elsewhere. The four of us continued to stay in the flat in Nainiappa Naicken Street.

In July 1943, I shifted to the Indian Officers' Association on Royapettah High Road, which was by the side of the tram route, easing our transport problem. In November 1943, there were very heavy floods and the streets were water-logged. Lloyds Road was in knee-deep water. The IOA building escaped being surrounded by water. The college was closed. The bridge near Madras Medical College, Sir Muthuswamy Iyer Bridge, was the only connection between North and South Madras, most parts unaffected by water-logging. Two Japanese planes dropped bombs during night time and it was said that they were piloted by women pilots.

When floodwaters drained off, we were able to see the sites where the bombs fell. One was in Royapuram harbour and the other two were on either side of the Sir Muthuswamy Iyer bridge. We could see the twisted rail tracks behind the 'Red Fort' as the Anatomy-Physiology block was popularly nicknamed. Our fond hopes of the examinations being postponed did not materialise.

Meanwhile we continued with our dissections. For most of the time only a student called Hughes and I used to be regularly present. But very close to the examinations, in November 1943, Hughes, my partner, went missing and we still had to complete the heart part of the dissection of the thorax. Noticing me being alone, Dr. O. Nainan, a tall Assistant Professor, full of humour, came up to me and remarked, "So you have been left alone, 'Robinson Crusoe', What are you dissecting?. When I showed him the heart, he said, "You will take years to complete the dissection the way you are doing it. Come, let me show you." In hardly half an hour, the heart had all its chambers opened and he showed me all, he thought, I had to learn. So, those were my days of dissection.

## The stars in Gandhi Nagar

One of my favourite pastimes is going down memory lane with my husband. We have lived in the days when the word technology had no meaning for us and just did not exist. Those days, in the 1950s and early 1960, catching a glimpse of a film star in person was really exciting, as the media too was very limited.

Having lived for 67 years in Adyar from the time I was a little girl, I have known Gandhi Nagar from the time it was a blueprint. My father, Dr. G.D. Boaz, was one of the Directors of the Gandhi Nagar Housing Society and was instrumental in the birth and growth of the colony. Hence, it was the stomping ground for my siblings and me from our childhood days.

Gandhi Nagar became 'home' to many film stars. Living in a neighborhood with 'Stars', provided a lot of excitement for my friends and me! Spotting them was always a topic of animated conversation in our otherwise media-free lives. Our present Chief Minister's aunt (*Chiththi*) Vidhya, who was the sister of actress Sandhya, lived on 4th Main Road opposite the cricket ground and we would see her quite often. Our former Chief

Minister, then an upcoming actor, MGR, also lived on 4th Main Road, opposite the present Gandhi Nagar club, for a short time. We often saw him sitting outside his home with many of his friends, deeply engrossed in conversation. Of course, in those days, he did not wear his characteristic cap and dark glasses.

Actress Jamuna lived in the corner house on 3rd Main Road. The popular B.S. Saroja also lived on the 3rd Main Road

and in it we found T. Suryakumari looking stunning in a *kanakambara* orange georgette saree with a red blouse, when she won the title. Some memories do not fade!

The film *Kathalikka Neramilalai*, directed by Sridhar was a super hit of the time. The estate manager role in the movie was played by S. Prabhakar, son of a Mr. Swaminathan, an engineer, who lived in the corner house on 1<sup>st</sup> Main Road near the temple, where the Parry showroom now stands. Prabha was a good friend of my brothers and was a very talented actor. My mother Daisy Boaz had him act in the small skits that she used to produce for All India Radio during Christmas and Easter.

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One young artiste, a cute looking little boy who acted as the child Lord Murugan in Gemini's *Avvaiyar*, lived on 2nd Main Road, where Grand Sweets is now. This boy is P.N. Kumar, grandson of the Tamil scholar P.N. Appuswamy.

Actress B. Saroja Devi attained fame after the film *Kalyana Parisu*. My friends and I were elated when we heard that she had bought a house on 2nd Main Road, close to where Grand Sweets is now. Of

By Bharati Paul

at a different time. A supporting actress Tulasi, lived in the upper portion of a house on 4th Main Road.

Actor K.R. Ramaswamy was a resident of Gandhi Nagar, almost from the time it came into existence. He was one of the popular artistes of yesteryears, as he could act and also sing. He was a close friend of former Chief Ministers C.N. Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi. Often, they would be seen playing cards in KRR's house. My brother, who was a good friend of KRR's sons, remembers this vividly. KRR's family also used to come to the Ladies' club regularly and that is how

other brother of mine and they were classmates at Guindy Engineering College.

Beauty contests were just beginning to take place in those days. This created a lot of buzz amongst us teenagers. Our excitement knew no bounds when Gandhi Nagar resident T. Suryakumari, who was an actress and a dancer, was crowned 'Miss Madras'. Suryakumari lived on 1st Main Road in one of the houses where the present Titan showroom stands. Since *The Hindu* and *The Mail* were our only source at that time, we searched through other publications to get more information. *Eve's Weekly* was one of them

(Continued on page 8)

(To be continued)

# The stars of Gandhi Nagar

(Continued from page 7)

course, the area was purely residential at the time. One day, my nephews who were riding their bicycles spotted Saroja Devi sitting outside her house on the lawn with some friends. They rushed home excitedly and gave us the news. Like crazy fans, my nieces and I ran as fast as we could to her house, just to catch a glimpse of the beautiful actress. We stood outside and eagerly peered through the gate. On seeing us, lo and behold, her manager walked towards us and invited us to come inside. Our excitement knew no bounds. We were actually entering a famous star's home! Saroja Devi was wearing a dark green saree and looked gorgeous. She talked very pleasantly, but we were tongue tied! Her kindness in acknowledging us will never be forgotten by me.

The famous producer L.V. Prasad lived on 3rd Main Road and his children went to Besant Theosophical High School along with us. Jupiter Soma-

sundaram from Coimbatore rented the house next to ours on 1st Crescent Park Road. Jupiter Pictures was a big film company then. His house belonged to Narasimha Rao, one of the directors of the Gandhi Nagar Housing Society. Soma-sundaram's daughters and I became good friends. S.P. Adhitanar's daughter, who lived in house No.1 on the same street as ours, used to join us. Every evening we all got together in each other's homes and played *nondi* (Hop Scotch). All our homes had lush lawns in front, with a lot of space for our games. The now-famous actor Sarathkumar, a nephew of Mrs. S.P. Adhitanar, grew up in Gandhi Nagar and was a student of St. Patricks High School.

Actress Vijayashree, who was popular in Malayalam films, lived on 2nd Crescent Road, directly behind our house. Vijayashree's brother and my son were not only classmates at St. Patrick's but also good friends.

The memories of life of those days linger on.



AIR's own home on Marshall's Road.

## When Radio, Film and TV arrived

(Continued from page 6)

started penetrating homes in Madras. The Government's decision to allow private channels to enter the TV space, dominated till then by Government-owned Doordarshan, has led to a proliferation of TV channels. From just one TV channel in the early 1980s, there are nearly 700 channels nationally today covering almost every language of the country.

In Tamil alone, there are over a score of TV channels offering a wide variety of programmes catering to the different tastes of audiences.

Almost every political party too has its own TV channel. Leading the TV channels scene is Sun TV operating out of Chennai. It has today become a big multimedia conglomerate. The Sun Network, a Rs. 5000 crore public limited company, is the country's second-largest broadcasting company, in terms of viewership share. Some of its TV shows have generated the highest television ratings in the country. In addition to owning 19 TV channels in all the major South Indian languages, the Group owns FM radio stations in a dozen cities, as well as some Tamil magazines and newspapers.

Sun TV was also a pioneer

in promoting regional and retail advertising which not only helped its own business success but also helped the explosive growth of the business of regional brands advertised on its channel. Sun TV continues to be way ahead of its competition, even today.

Direct-to-home (DTH) is available in Chennai via DD Direct Plus, Dish TV, Tata Sky, Sun Direct DTH, BIG TV, Airtel Digital TV and Videocon d2h.

Chennai is the first city in India to implement the Conditional Access System for cable television.

(To be concluded)

### Answers to Quiz

1. Justice H.L. Dattu; 2. A lion made of gears; 3. *Liar's Dice*; 4. USA, China and Europe; 5. Alibaba Group; 6. Afghanistan; 7. Atal Behari Vajpayee; 8. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya; 9. International Finance Corporation; 10. Thiruvananthapuram.

\* \* \*

11. He was a 'martyr' who self-immolated in protest against Hindi imposition in 1965; 12. It became the Kalaivanar Arangam; 13. Avadhanam Paupiah; 14. Lata Mangeshkar; 15. Varsha Gautam and Aishwarya Nedunchezhiyan; 16. 'Pollachi' Mahalingam; 17. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam; 18. The German ship *Emden* shelled the city; 19. Sri Krishna Sweets; 20. Periya Palaiathamman temple in Royapettah.

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