

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

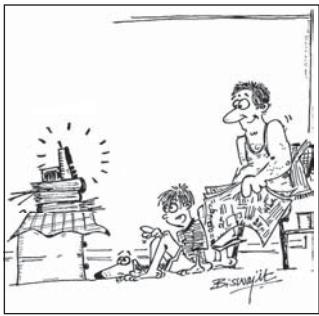
MADRAS MUSINGS

Vol. XVIII No. 3

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"Appa, I still think we should have bought the 42-inch plasma TV instead!"

And now web-o-nama?

If you've just about figured out what that cute little icon on the menu of your mobile phone does, you may as well throw in the towel.

The Knowing Ones are now using terms like 'mobisodes' and 'webisodes'.

Dear God, it is all getting too much and infotainment (yeah, that's right, we know some stuff too) seems to be getting...well, tinier, for one thing.

Imagine being able to access a serial on your cell phone. (As if those things don't do enough to make their presence felt already!)

And, what's more, an entire serial can be run through in under a couple of minutes.

Wait a second - you mean simple-girl-rich-boy-marriage-nasty-in-laws-from-hell-intrigue-treason-maybe-death-all-in-the-blingiest-attire will work in a few minutes? Isn't technology wonderful?

Stuck at a boring event?

No problem - you've brought along your own private entertainment, and info-access.

Who needs company, when the world is just a button away?

Every day, in every way, it takes less effort to live - at one level.

Of course, such relentless connectivity may cause spontaneous combustion in some, thanks to sheer overload of Ooo-how-savvy-am-I, but, hey, everything comes at a price.

So keep going, techies.

Let's shrink the world some more.

Ranjitha Ashok

Can we be hoarding-free?

Will special committee's advice be heeded?

(By A Special Correspondent)

The Chennai skyline has changed for the better, but only marginally so. The hoardings have gone, but their respective supports remain, standing like so many steel skeletons reaching out to the sky. Their continued presence has puzzled citizens, for, while the removal of hoardings has been welcomed by one and all, the standing struts bring to mind the possibility of a return of hoardings.

The grapevine has it that the hoardings might be set to stage a comeback. Apparently the Corporation has informally made up its collective mind to float tenders for fresh hoardings according to guidelines to be



As pretty a sight as you can see in the city today!

stipulated by the Supreme Court. It is learnt that several large business houses in the country, who should know better and be more heritage-conscious, are interested in the revival of hoardings in the city.

This may will be the reason for the hoardings' supports remaining intact in various parts of the city.

In the event of any plan to return hoardings to the city, it is to be hoped that the views of the Justice E. Padmanabhan Committee form an essential part of the guidelines. This special committee was appointed by the Madras High Court to identify places where hoardings should NOT be put up. Even as the Supreme Court gave its decision, the committee submitted its report, which identified places of historical importance (heritage sites), places of aesthetic value, places of worship and education, and parks and natural vistas, and recommended that NO hoardings ought to come up in their vicinity. The places have been graded on the basis of their importance and relevance and the committee has requested the High Court to pass orders to ensure that these structures and spaces are NOT obstructed. (See box left.)

The work. But a full week after the Supreme Court decision banning illegal and hazardous hoardings, only as few as 60 gas-cutters had been roped in by the Corporation. The work involved, however, is dangerous with chances of fire accidents and also the perils of working at great heights. There have been at least three fire-related incidents in the city caused by the removal of hoarding structures due to sparks that flew as oxy-acetylene torches cut through the steel supports.

The decision to remove the hoardings has, by and large, been welcomed by the citizens of Madras that is Chennai. Pedestrians have found more space to walk in; motorists and two-wheeler users can see traffic lights clearly and have fewer distractions to draw their attention from the roads, and life will also be safer during the rainy season when hoardings have been known to crash down causing loss of life.

By far the biggest beneficiaries of the decision to do away with hoardings have been the heritage structures and the few remaining green lungs of the city. Suddenly these have be-

'Save heritage and monumental buildings'

- Justice E. Padmanabhan Committee

Significantly, the Padmanabhan Committee appointed by the High Court to recommend hoarding-free areas has pointed out "with a heavy heart (and) disappointment" that "neither the public nor the administration nor the authorities are conscious of the value in maintaining heritage buildings, places of historical importance or aesthetic value."

It urges that all of them "be educated and informed of the values of such historical and monumental buildings." While stating that the efforts of voluntary organisations in this regard have had "little effect," it calls on the administration "to change its attitude in these aspects by appropriate and stringent measures," and recommends that "enforcing authorities be made aware of the value of heritage buildings, public places etc. and strictly enforce the regulations."

Justice E. Padmanabhan adds, "The committee members are pained to note that several heritage and ancient buildings have been brought down by the public as well as the authorities and they continue unabated. The Hon'ble High Court may be pleased to take note of the situation and pass appropriate orders to save the heritage and monumental buildings and places of public importance in the ancient city of Chennai."

The Corporation, however, has not commented on these views. Instead, it has maintained that it is the shortage of gas-cutters that has hampered

(Continued on page 2)

Can we be hoarding-free?

(Continued from page 1)

come visible once again and stand out in all their glory. The stretch of old bungalows on Poonamallee High Road and the Chetput Lake, the Agri-Horticultural Society gardens and the Adyar River are a few examples.

The outdoor advertising industry, however, has reacted with dismay to the Supreme Court decision and particularly its aftermath, when all illegal hoardings, and many legal ones, were removed. Those who had licences are understandably upset and have also submitted an appeal to the State Government, asking it to regulate the removal and announce the guidelines for putting up fresh hoardings, as almost 200,000 jobs depend on the industry. The Government has not responded to this.

Guidelines are at present awaited from the Madras High Court where an appeal against a set of guidelines framed by the Government in 2003 is pending. It was with a view to deciding on this that the High Court had, in September 2006, ordered the formation of the committee headed by retired High Court Judge E. Padmanabhan.

When the Court takes up the report, passes judgement and lays down the guidelines, it is to be hoped that the outdoor advertising industry will be a better regulated one. While nobody in his right mind would like to do away with an industry that offers many jobs, the question of ethics and public aesthetics is of prime importance and these are what the industry has chosen to overlook all these years. Aiding it has been a largely indifferent administration that allowed the mushrooming of giant hoardings. Now, perhaps, matters will take a turn for the better.

There were an estimated 4500 hoardings in the city before the recent action, most of which had come up in the last few years. According to the Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies' Licensing Hoardings and Levy and Collection of Advertisement Rules, 2003, hoardings on roads wider than 100 feet must be a maximum of 24 feet by 12 feet in size. However, this was never followed.

Hoardings were permitted to be erected by private individuals and companies since 1970 by various GOs and laws passed by the State Government. In June 1979, the Government decided to auction all the sites and began dismantling the existing hoardings. This was challenged by the hoarding owners and was disposed of by the High Court

on January 25, 1980 after taking an assurance from the authorities that the hoardings would not be removed or demolished except in accordance with the law. The Government decided not to renew the leases of these sites and the Corporation began efforts to remove the hoardings for non-payment of taxes when leases expired. This was again challenged in court on the basis of the 1980 order. In 1985, the Government passed the Tamil Nadu Acquisition of Hoardings Act, whereby it provided for acquisition of hoardings in private and public places. The hoarding owners went to court on the issue. The court upheld the validity of the Act and the matter went on appeal to the Supreme Court. While the appeal was pending, the Government passed Ordinance 2 of 1996 (later Act 51 of 1998) which sought to change the laws relating to erection of hoardings on road sides and public places. The new tax structure was not acceptable to the hoarding owners and this matter joined other petitions concerning hoardings in the courts.

In 2001, all the writ petitions filed by hoarding owners came up for hearing and were dismissed by the High Court. The Supreme Court, passing judgement on all the appeals, upheld the validity of the 1998 Act but added that hoarding owners must be given a reasonable timeframe to file applications for renewal/grant of licences. It also declared that hoardings that impeded free flow of traffic must be removed. It asked the Government to issue licences by inviting applications from those interested in putting up hoardings. Over 3600 applications were received, but the Government suddenly put off the licensing.

In the meanwhile, in 2002, there were half-hearted attempts by the Corporation's flying squad to remove some unauthorised hoardings. This was condemned by the Tamil Nadu Outdoor Advertisement Association which alleged that several illegal hoardings were being protected owing to their political backing. In 2003, the Tamil Nadu Municipal Laws (Amendment) Act was amended, transferring the powers to license hoardings from the Municipal Commissioner to the Collector. The guidelines for hoardings were set out in June 2003 and were immediately challenged in the High Court by the Tamil Nadu Outdoor Advertisement Association. All these were settled with the High Court judgements of early September 2006. In its judgement,

Infirm of purpose was how Lady Macbeth described her Lord and Master, if he could be called that. And those are the very words that *The Man from Madras Musings* would like to use to describe the Postal Department. Now, this fortnightly publication which has so kindly given two out of the three words that go into MMM's name is largely dependent on the services of the Postal Department or, more precisely, the postman. These obviously come in different varieties. The Chief has allowed MMM to see the correspondence that goes on between him and those that preside over the fates of those who send and receive letters and MMM realises that troubled times are nigh.

Let's face it. *Madras Musings* (MM) is delivered to many addresses in the city. Some of the addressees change home and forget to inform MM. In such cases, the postman returns the issue with a terse "Left" on the address slip. But some go a step further. They do painstakingly find out where the recipient has moved and write it down on the slip. This is the type of postman who is more an angel in human shape and whom MMM mentions in his prayers. Then there is the second variety who, so MMM thinks, and he could be wrong, simply finds a door locked and assumes that the recipient has gone away forever. This causes enormous confusion at the MM HQ. On receipt of these "Left" notings, our despatch section (a glorified army of one or most often none) deletes these names from the record so that no further copies of *Madras Musings* are sent out to them, thereby saving on paper and on trees and, therefore, trying to reduce global warming, El Nino, La Ninia and other such threats.

Then, a week or so later, we get a letter from those who had "Left", or did not really go away. Where is our copy, they ask and the Chief, MMM and the rest of MM's large staff are puzzled and disconcerted. So back we go to our database and update our records with the names of those who did not go

the High Court had ordered the formation of a committee for identifying and enumerating places of historical importance or aesthetic value and popular places of worship in and around Chennai (educational institutions were later added). While the committee went about its work, the Corporation began dismantling the illegal hoardings only to be stayed by a Supreme Court directive following an appeal against the High Court Order. After the Supreme Court gave its judgement in April 2008, most hoardings, irrespective of their legal status, have disappeared. We now await the next act.

A delivery problem

away but had just stepped out on an errand when the postman knocked.

There is a third variety of postmen and this is the kind which gets MMM's goat. They just don't deliver the publication. Where do these copies of MM go is beyond MMM, but he thinks there is a secret society of admirers of the Chief, which collects these issues on the sly. Or it could be the Smithsonian, carefully collecting these issues on the cheap. Or, to come down to a more mundane level, the issues of MM are simply thrown away. To cut a long story short, these issues don't reach their recipients causing untold distress. Fans of MM write back on postcards, by e-mail and even call up and their cry is heartrending. Where is our copy of MM, they ask, and MMM wishes he had an answer. MMM has, however, made up his mind. Next week,

**SHORT
'N'
SNAPPY**

he plans to call on some of those who have been reported as having "Left" and check whether they had really "Left" or not.

Now, if these are the travails of those in the city of Madras that is Chennai, MMM can only imagine the plight of *Madras Musings'* outstation subscribers, particularly those abroad. Apparently, they receive their issues only once a year and call it their annual number. Naturally, these people are irritated and would not like to renew their subscriptions. Even MMM's legendary charm has failed to work. Some have written to the Postal Department. But no replies have come. Perhaps the letters have not been delivered! Perhaps whoever was to reply has "Left"!

Dare to post!

The Man from Madras Musings has not exhausted himself on the subject of the postal authorities yet. As is well known, the Chief wrote a book *Born to Dare* which is a biography of Lt. Gen. Inder Gill. A celebration of the book, under the auspices of The Madras Book Club (MBC) which, like *Madras Musings*, is an institution of the city that has miraculously survived, was planned on a Wednesday. The MBC's vast secretariat of one had sent the invitations by post the previous Saturday. This vast secretariat of one, being a canny soul, had taken the precaution of posting the invitations at various locations in the city, so that the laborious task of collecting and sorting 350 invitations did not devolve on any one post office.

All this, however, did not work. The invitations were be-

ing delivered on the day of the event, the day after the event and into the following Saturday. For instance, an invitation stamped April 18th at the Anna Salai Post Office was stamped April 22nd at the delivery office, Tiruvanmiyur, and delivered on the 23rd, the day of the function. The addressee should consider himself lucky. Some never got theirs. Those that did constitute a narrow creamy layer. As a result, the MBC has become an OBC (Offended Book Club). The Chief has declared himself an ST (sick and tired). The Lord of the MBC (not our Chief) has shot off an irate letter to the Post Office (PO), but all the reply says is the invitations have been sent for delivery. Perhaps the RLO (Return Letter Office) will soon swing into action.

These are all mysterious happenings and MMM hopes that the postal authorities will soon wake up to their responsibilities and realise that their word ought to be their bond. However, MMM would also like to assure the postal authorities that the courier services are no better. It is really a case of Tweedledum or Tweedledee.

Raj hangover

Some of those who read *Madras Musings* have told *The Man from Madras Musings* that the journal is overly conscious about heritage. To borrow a colloquial phrase, "We are like that only." But you just have to look at some of the cricket teams that are participating in the IPL tournament. Rajasthan Royals, Deccan Chargers, Kolkata Knight Riders, Chennai Super Kings, Royal Challengers Bangalore and Kings XI Punjab. Who said the Raj was dead? It is still very much alive in the minds of some. And MMM cannot claim to be a part of that set, can he?

Cheerleading

The Man from Madras Musings was extremely depressed after the demolition of *Government House*. His good lady decided that enough was enough, given that her friends call up to convey their condolences each time a heritage building passes away from the Chennai skyline. And as this happens almost every day, a certain pall of gloom hangs over the MMM household. So, in order to cheer himself up, MMM has decided to hire a team of cheerleaders. These will now stand (suitably clothed), dance and cheer each time a heritage building is demolished. This will hopefully attract media attention and thereby public attention as well. Even if that does not happen, everyone would have had a good time.

— MMM

OUR READERS WRITE



Stirring reading

Written with both passion and style, the article on the *Government House* made stirring reading. The supporting photograph of the building itself – dignified, noble, helpless – had an elegiac quality which added to the mood of the whole piece.

I congratulate your Special Correspondent. His has a special affinity for old buildings, which we all share.

Mini Krishnan
No. 1, 2nd Street
Wallace Gardens
Chennai 600 006

Historicity of Sethu project

Some wonder how an archaeological study can ascertain whether the Sethu can be declared a national monument in the absence of evidence of its historicity. This view is not correct as there is enough evidence that when the sea level was some 300 feet below the present level, Sri Lanka and India were one land mass, with a huge submerged freshwater lake in the Palk Bay – at least this is what the bathymetric map of SSCP shows.

The geo-morphological marvel which is now dotted with some 200 islands/islets, Adam's Bridge, was a continuous, broad land bridge, over which the Veddas of Sri Lanka walked into Sri Lanka some 10,000/12,000 years back. The ASI has not done any search for historical artefacts.

It would not be wrong to assume that there is a lot of Dravidian pre-history to be un-

earthed dating to even before the Harappan and Mohenjodaro civilisation. Why has ASI not thought of this? When the world's shipping industry is introducing ships of 2-300,000 tonne capacity, the Sethu project is trying to make a success with 30,000 tonners. Experts are of the view that the Sethu project is a techno-economic failure.

K.V.S. Krishna
2A, Parkland Apartments
Kamalabhai Street
T Nagar
Chennai 600 017

For a Singara Chennai

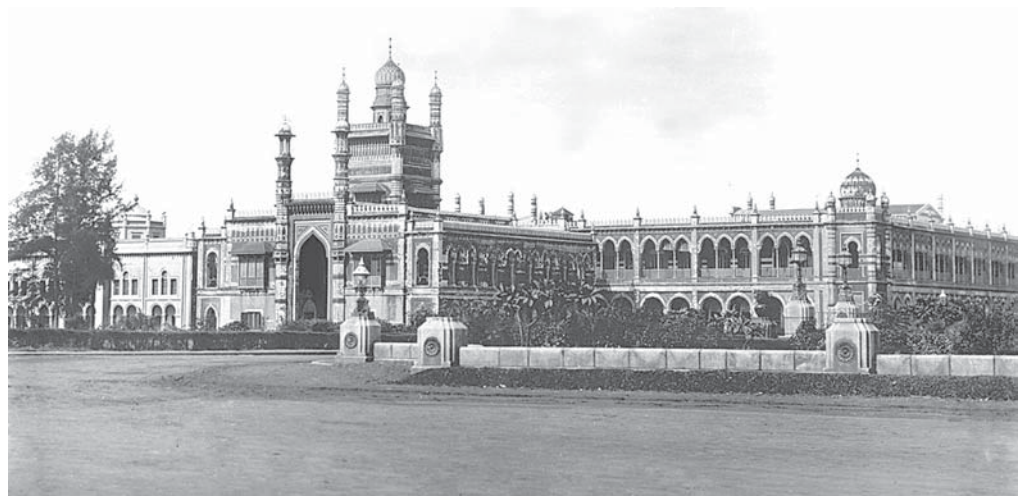
Whatever prompted the Government to bring down the hoardings in Chennai, we, the residents, are happy to see a trim Chennai with the greenery around visible. Just one look at the kilometre-long Cathedral Road, Mylapore, is enough to make the point. The stretch, shorn of hoardings, is now beautiful.

A few more small steps... and we can truly see a Singara Chennai:

- Cutting away the crisscross TV, broadband cables across streets.
- Removing posters on the walls and in public places.
- Some discipline on political messages on walls.

More than Government, corporates and business houses should come forward to do away with this hoarding craze.

Y. Dandapani
2, Chandrabagh Avenue
Mylapore, Chennai 600 004



(Courtesy: Vintage Vignettes.)

Chepauk Palace: The Old & The New

(Where's Chepauk Palace?)



Will it be facelift or restoration?

The State Government a few weeks ago announced that it proposes to restore *Chepauk Palace* at a cost of Rs. 3.5 crore. While this is a welcome step, the modalities of the restoration have not been spelt out and that is worrying conservationists and institutions like *Madras Musings*.

The latest step to restore the Palace may be nothing more than a facelift if proper experts in conservation and preservation of old buildings are not called in. Left to itself, the PWD may not think twice before simply coating the cracks with concrete, covering gaps left by broken stained glass with coloured plastic, and re-laying the floor with granite or vitrified tiles, of which material it appears to be inordinately fond. Instead, it is hoped that the Government will set up a Restoration Committee which will go through the building and submit a report, as in the case of *Ripon Building*, before any action is taken.

Amongst the many reasons

for the necessity to properly restore *Chepauk Palace* is the pre-eminent one that, in all probability, it represents the beginning of the Indo-Saracenic architectural style in India which culminated in Lutyen's and Baker's New Delhi. Most heritage enthusiasts and architects date the Indo-Saracenic style to

• by The Editor

Charles 'Mad' Mant and Chisholm. But *Chepauk Palace*, very likely the work of Paul Benfield, is a century older!

Chepauk Palace, the oldest building on the Marina, was built for the Nawab of the Carnatic, Mohammed Ali Wallajah, and taken from his descendants on specious grounds by the East India Company's Council in the 1800s. Since then, it has been the home to a variety of Government departments; at present, the major occupants are the Land Records Office, the Department of Social Welfare which rather appropriately is in the women's quarters of the old

palace, and the Revenue Offices which occupy the *Humayun Mahal*.

Once one of the largest single landholdings on the beachfront, the entire complex has from the 1950s been completely hemmed in by a series of constructions which include *Ezhilagam* and the TWAD Board. Indeed, there are purists who believe that the palace fell on bad days even as early as the 1860s, when R.F. Chisholm, the well-known architect, and Lord Napier, the then Governor, embarked on new construction projects, beginning with the PWD Building (1865), the tower that links the two wings of the palace, and the Revenue Board building cheek-by-jowl with the *Humayun Mahal*. The *Khalsa Mahal* became the home of the Engineering College, which later shifted out. INTACH's *Madras, the Architectural Heritage* by K. Kalpana and Frank Schiffer states that "with unfortunate enthusiasm

(Continued on page 7)

READABILITY PLEASE

Dear Readers,

As letters from readers increase, we are receiving more and more **hand written** letters, many of them in a hand so small and illegible or large and scrawled as to be unreadable. Often this leads to our discarding a letter, particularly if some part of it is unreadable.

If you wish us to consider your letter for publication, please type it with enough space between lines or write it using a medium hand, clearly dotting the 'i's' and crossing the 't's'.

Many readers also try to fill every square centimetre of a postcard space, making reading or editing impossible.

Please help us to consider your letters more favourably by making them more legible for us.

THE EDITOR

A big 'Thank You' to 45 of you

We publish below the list of donors who have, between 16.4.08 and 15.05.08, 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.

— CHENNAI HERITAGE

- Rs. 50:** Aaqib L. Mizaan; S. Kailasam. **Rs. 100:** Sreenivasan; V.E. Arunachalam; P.S.V.Chari; R.K. Sridharan; K.V. Lakshmi Narayan; G. Sundaram; S.V. Venkatachalam; K. Narayanan; S. Rajalakshmi; J. Balasubramaniam; K.J.M. Shetty; V. Ramamoorthy; T.A. Sampath Kumar; T.V. Sivakumaran; V.V. Jayaraman; K. Santhanam; Lalitha Zachariah; Pradupa George; Yegneswaran Dandapani. **Rs. 101:** Gita Gopalakrishnan; S. Krishna. **Rs. 150:** K.M. Vedapuri. **Rs. 151:** R. Ravindranath. **Rs. 200:** T.V. Ramanathan; Cdr. R. Ganapathi; S. John Gnanasundaram; Ram; K Rangarajan; M. Sampath Kumar; P. Selvarajan. **Rs. 300:** R.C. Narayanan; S.A. Narayanan; S. Ponnusamy. **Rs. 400:** S.A. Bhatt; Jaiboy Joseph; K.V. Ramanathan; Prof. M.A. Kalam; R. Varadarajan. **Rs. 401:** Krishnamoorthy Srinivas. **Rs. 500:** M.G. Balasubramanian; K. Radhakrishnan; K.P.S. Menon. **Rs. 900:** K.V. Srinivasan

As reported in *The Madras Mail*

The Buchanan-Stanley Wedding in Madras

BRILLIANT SCENE AT St. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL

A Harmony of Music, Colour and Sentiment



The bridegroom.



The bride.

This afternoon at St. George's Cathedral, Madras, there was solemnised the marriage of the daughter of His Excellency Sir George Stanley and Lady Beatrix Stanley to Cap-

tain Sir Charles Buchanan of the Highland Light Infantry. To have seen such a wedding take place is to have seen the last page of a fairy tale dramatised with no single detail omitted.

The sun shone as it should on every bride and there were laughing children on the lawn in front of the House to greet this bride and speed her on her way as she set out for the church with His Excellency. There were crowds to cheer her along her road and for some time before she was due to arrive eight sowars of H.E. the Governor's Bodyguard had been waiting at the entrance to the Cathedral. Inside, the Cathedral had been decorated until it was like one of the loveliest of flower shows. Great square glass vases were filled with mixed flowers, with giant sprays of blue delphinium and palest pink stocks, with sweet peas in pastel shades,

From the pages of the past

When Hugh Buchanan, grandson of former Madras Governor Sir George Stanley (1925-34), visited Chennai recently, he presented your Editor with a treasure trove of old photographs and clippings. Amongst them were two pages from *The Madras Mail* of April 23, 1932. Coverage of the type that filled the two pages was a bit before your Editor's time, but when he was starting out in journalism he cut his teeth on similar but, fortunately, briefer coverage. Christenings, weddings, balls, parties, dinners and deaths were still reported, clothes worn and VIPs present (though no presents) were still recorded, but all in less space. Nevertheless, woe unto you if you got the styles and materials wrong or forgot a name!

The Buchanan-Stanley wedding report in *The Madras Mail* had one page filled with a description of the wedding, a 45 cm long list of 272 guests, and a 110 cm long list of 328 presents and donors, the other filled with pictures. To give readers a flavour of those times past we give here the description but spare you the guest and gift lists, though the latter included such gems as Mrs. Cecil Bates' petite point pochette, The Rani of Bobbili's orange & silver sari and jacket, Sir Philip & Lady Chatwode's shooting stick, Mr. R.B. Carrick's bitters bottles, Dog Boy T. Gnanam's two glass dishes, Mr. A.F. Minchin's silk socks and silk stockings, Bearer Palayam's silver tot measure, The Reptile House's green crocodile handbag, The Rev. H. Scotter's book of Common Prayer, Mr. & Mrs. D.P. Roy Chowdhury's painting by Mrs. Chowdhury, The Viscount and Viscountess Goschen's set of poker chips in case, Mr. and Mrs. R.C. Hill's bridge set and Mr. and Mrs. C.P.S. Palmer's Kodak, besides cheques, gemstones & jewellery, tableware and table linen, office aids, etchings and paintings.

— THE EDITOR

with white lupins and white and blue agapanthus. At the entrance to the choir were banks of foliage plants with cool green moss as a foundation and more of the same beautiful flowers but now with lilies interspersed among them. Beyond, the colour gradually faded until canons of cream and deep ivory prepared the way for the white lilies on the altar. But the blue had encroached a little and had found a place for itself among the white hydrangeas, the frail watsonias and the lilies.

These things were for the eyes of all the wedding guests assembled and for their ears there was music with Mr. F.E. James at the organ and Mr. Martin conducting His Excellency's orchestra. The orchestra alone played to begin with the Minuet from *Berenice* by Handel and later the organ joined with the orchestra in playing the *Bride Song* from the *Country Wedding Symphony* by Goldmark and a *Rondino* on a theme by Beethoven arranged by Kreisler. For an organ solo Mr. James chose a *Fantasia* upon the *Plainsong Melody, Ad Coenam Agni* by Healey Willan. It is rarely that the climate of Madras makes it possible to listen to a harp and its liquid notes filled and completed as only they could the combination of violin, cello, flute and organ which rendered

the *Bach-Gounod Ave Maria*. There followed, again played by the orchestra and organ, Wagner's *Procession of the Meistersingers*.

Arrivals from Government House

While the music was in progress Lady Beatrix Stanley accompanied by the Countess of Derby had arrived at the Cathedral. Lady Beatrix had orchids pinned in the corsage of her gown of white and navy blue patterned chiffon with a hat of navy blue straw trimmed with white ospreys. The Countess of Derby was in black and white georgette with a black hat and wore a spray of orchids also.

Other cars meanwhile had brought the Earl of Derby with Mrs. Page who, with other guests staying in Government House, His Excellency's Staff and Honorary Staff, were all seated on the North side of the aisle. Behind the Government House Party seats were reserved for the personal friends of the bride and bridegroom and the south side of the Cathedral was occupied by Members of H.E. the Governor's Council, Ministers, Officials and their ladies. Princes and Rajahs of Southern India were seated among the other guests.

It was a very stately gathering which filled every seat in the big church and as if to make the balance perfect, in complete contrast to all the rest was the group of children assembled near the door. These were the page, Master Greig, an upstanding little figure in Highland costume, and the little bridesmaids, Miss Platts, Miss Greig and Miss Conran Smith, who stood there in frocks of blue organdie, made with full skirts and frilled bodices and in caps of lace and net with long blue ribbon bows, and who were carrying blue delphiniums.

The Bride arrives

There came a moment when the Choir and the Clergy passed down the aisle and when the



The bride and bridegroom leave the Cathedral in State after the Ceremony. Note 'Susan', Risaldar Sher Bahadur Khan astride, just behind the carriage, to the right.

Bishop of Madras moved forward to meet His Excellency and the bride. As she paused for a few seconds while her page and her maid were guided into their positions it was seen that Miss Stanley's lovely wedding gown was made of soft cream satin. Its train was of net and it was trimmed with a flounce of Brussels lace which had been worn by her mother on her own wedding day. Orange blossoms decorated the gown and its train and were worn as a wreath under the veil of Brussels lace lent by Lady Isobel Gathorne Hardy. Lilies, like the lilies in the great bowls in the chancel, with love-in-a-mist among them were carried by the bride and her blue shoes picked up the note of colour in the frocks of her bridesmaids. The procession moved up the Cathedral during the singing of the hymn "Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost" and was met by the bridegroom, Captain Sir Charles

Buchanan and the best man, Captain Goschen.

The ceremony

The Ven'ble the Archdeacon of Madras read the opening exhortation and the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Madras conducted the marriage ceremony. While the Psalm "God be merciful unto us, and bless us" was being sung the clergy, followed by the bride and bridegroom, proceeded to the altar rails when the Rev.H.J. Edmonds, Cathedral Chaplain, sang the versicles and intoned the prayers. Before the address, which was delivered by the Bishop, the hymn "Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven," was sung to Dr. Goss' dignified setting and after the address came another hymn, "Now thank we all our God". The Bishop pronounced the Benediction and the service concluded with the short hymn "May the grace of Christ our Saviour" which was

sung kneeling. In the vestry behind the Bishop's throne, the Register was signed by His Excellency and Lady Beatrix Stanley, by the Earl and Countess of Derby and by the Chief Justice of Madras while, very gently, the Band played the *Faery Song* from Rutland Boughton's "Immortal Hour" and afterwards the *Londonderry Air*. And then with a great volume of sound came Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* and to its strains the bride and bridegroom led through the Cathedral the procession of the small page and the little maidens, of His Excellency with the Countess of Derby and of the Earl of Derby with Lady Beatrix Stanley.

A stirring climax

Much of the ceremony had seemed very real but now the fairy story was resumed. There were standing near the porch two Pipers from the bridegroom's regiment and after the Royal Salute from the Bodyguard had been taken, they began to play their pipes and continued to do so until most of the guests had left the Cathedral. But the State carriage was waiting now for the bride and bridegroom and waiting too was Susan, the hunter, who had come from home with Miss Stanley and who is to go home again. Immediately behind the State Carriage Susan took her place, ridden by Risaldar Sher Bahadur Khan and through the north-west entrance to the Cathedral garden, down the Mount Road, with the sun still shining, the crowds again cheering and clapping, the Cathedral joy bells ringing and with her lovely lace veil blown by the wind drove Sir Charles and Lady

Buchanan to the reception in the Banqueting Hall.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Earl of Derby was Sir George's elder brother and, as befitting a member of the Derby family, the Stanleys had a rich collection of horses and dogs. In 1932, one of Sir George's horses won the then Blue Riband of the South Indian Turf and, in effect, the Governor had to present himself the gold trophy that was the Governor's Cup.

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THE EDITOR



The bridal party arriving for the Reception at Government House.



The Bridal Group: left to right: Seated, Lady Beatrix Stanley, the Bride, the Countess of Derby; Standing: the Bishop of Madras, H.E. the Governor, the Bridegroom, Capt. Goschen (best man), the Earl of Derby. The Bridal attendants are (left to right): Miss and Master Greig, Miss Platts and Miss Conran Smith.

Quizzin'
with
Ram'nan

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

1. How many satellites, a record number, did ISRO put into orbit on April 28th?
2. Who smashed the fastest century in the IPL, as of April 30th, and against whom?
3. Name the Swiss scientist, called the father of LSD, who passed away at the age of 102.
4. Which candy maker is to buy Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co., the world's largest chewing gum maker, for \$23 billion, becoming in the process the world's biggest candy maker?
5. Name the 'missing' fourth element of transistor circuitry that was 'discovered' by scientists at HP Labs recently.
6. Which party won more than a third of the seats in the Nepal polls recently?
7. Alina Kabaeva, a former rhythmic gymnastics world champion from Russia, was in the news recently. Why?
8. Name the Indian Hockey Federation secretary who resigned, following a 'sting operation' by a news channel, and hastened the suspension of the Federation.
9. What far-reaching decision is being taken to beef up security at the country's nuclear power stations?
10. Which U.S. 'minister' created a controversy by stating the world food crisis is a result of an "improvement in the diets of people in India and China"?
11. Where in Chennai did a 109-year-old post office close down on April 30th?
12. The Tamil Nadu Football Association has made a request to the State Government for a 10-acre plot to avail of a FIFA grant of about Rs. 4 crore. Where is the plot it seeks?
13. Name the former Tamil Nadu Ranji player and father of an England cricket captain who passed away on April 26th.
14. Name the Hollywood and Bollywood stars who graced the audio release of Kamal Haasan's *Dasavatham*.
15. Which actress was removed as the Brand Ambassador of Chennai Super Kings?
16. Which library on Mount Road in Chennai celebrated its diamond jubilee recently?
17. Name the National table tennis champion about whom a TV series titled *A(Si)rai En 306*, the room number of the hospital where he had surgery, is to be shown from June?
18. Rule 255 was invoked in the Rajya Sabha on April 24th for the first time since 1989 when an AIADMK member was evicted for disorderly behaviour. Name the MP.
19. On April 23rd, four children in which district died after administration of a measles vaccine, forcing the Centre to recall the vaccine?
20. How many chapters are there in each of the three *atikaram* in the *Tolkappiyam*?

(Answers on page 8)

NOSTALGIA

Life with Grandfather

● **K. Ramunni Menon of the Madras Education Service was twice Registrar of the University of Madras and Vice-Chancellor from 1928 to 1934. In 1927 the University's first Science Department, Zoology, was founded with Ramunni Menon as Honorary Director. It was at the time called the Zoological Research Laboratory. It was housed in what had been the Nawab of the Carnatic's Marine Villa by the Cooum River.**

Last night I dreamt that I was in *Lakshmi Sadan* again. I opened the green gate and, passing through the garden and long verandah, entered what had once been the drawing room. The beautiful floor with its terracotta tiles forming a lovely mosaic was still there, but my grandfather's easychair, portraits, official and family photographs, which had once cluttered the wall, were all gone. I parted the long bead curtains and peeped into what was once called 'Grandmother's room', and then entered the courtyard with the covered hall and Grandmother's pooja corner at one end. The hall looked just the same, with its yellow paint peeling off and patches of grimy grey here and there. Standing lost here, with memories of the past flooding my mind, I suddenly felt I could hear the sound of Grandfather's footsteps as he came down the stairs, and waited as it were to see Grandmother emerge from the bathroom, fresh after her bath, holding the flower basket and chanting the verses that I had heard so often. "Ya Devi, *Sarvabhootheshu mathruroopena samsthitha, namasthasyai, namasthasyai, namasthasyai namo namah*".

But Grandfather, I slowly realised, was no more; nor was Grandmother. They died years ago and many others after them; but standing there in the familiar surroundings, I felt time spin back on its axis, taking me back to the years I had spent in *Lakshmi Sadan* in their loving care.

Grandfather ruled the household with an iron hand; his word was law. He had started his career as a lecturer in Zoology at Presidency College, had risen to be Head of Department and made his way to become the Registrar and, later, Vice-Chancellor for two terms of the University of Madras. Being one of the first

Malayalees to have gone abroad for higher studies – and that too at prestigious Christ's College, Cambridge – many thought he had brought name and recognition to his State. But instead of being honoured for his achievements, he earned the displeasure of the Cochin Maharajah for crossing the seas, and was excommunicated and debarred from entering any temple in Kerala.

Grandfather always prided himself on being a self-made man and tried to instill some of these virtues in his children and grandchildren by advocating a hard life and strict discipline. Junior members could never sit in his presence. The house was unusually quiet and everyone talked in subdued tones as Grandfather did not like noise of any kind. If ever we wanted

● by
KALYANI DAMODARAN

to talk freely we would run to the garage at the back of the house, but even there, force of habit prevented us from shouting or raising our voices. If anyone broke this unusual silence by inadvertently dropping something, there'd be Grandfather calling from upstairs "Who is this, who is making this abominable noise?" Grandmother would reply, "It's not from here, maybe from the next house", and Grandfather would loudly grumble, "There is no peace for me in this house. Every day, somebody or the other is dropping or breaking something."

Anything that he considered fanciful, distracting or indulgent, like listening to the radio or gramophone, or going out to a picture or wedding, was ruled out of our lives. He never failed to impress upon us how lucky were we to be provided with all comforts, pointing out in contrast the case of a certain eminent person whose name I forget, who studied under the street light in his childhood and rose to become a distinguished high court judge.

The only celebrations I remember were at Onam and Vishu, when Grandfather would have his meal with us. The kitchen would hum with activity from early morning and Lakshoma and the odd-job man were recruited to cut veg-



K. Ramunni Menon

etables, grate coconut and grind *masalas*. The banana leaves were trimmed, washed and laid out in front of mats in the central hall, with a *kindi* placed near each leaf. All the various *kootans* – *sambhar*, *kalam*, *olan*, *erisseri*, and *thoran* – together with pickles and *pappadam* were doled out into their respective vessels and kept in a room adjoining the hall.

Onam was a special day, as it was also Grandfather's birthday, so, in front of his leaf was placed a special leaf and a lighted lamp. We would then line up, dressed in our *mundus*, each carrying a dish to be served, my sister leading, followed by me, our uncle and the rest. After serving Grandfather, we would sit down and Kochu Krishnan Nair would serve us rice, *dhal* and *sambhar*. Grandfather ate in the customary style – first rice with ghee and *dhal*, and then rice and ghee made into a ball and dipped in *sambhar*. My sister and I watched him in amazement as he ate, making lovely green balls of rice, ghee and cooked spinach (a vegetable we heartily disliked) and popping them into his mouth with the greatest relish. Grandfather, on his part, surveyed our leaves, from time to time, to see we did full justice to the meal.

* * *

Grandfather was a member of the Council of States and made two trips to Delhi every year. About a week before he would leave, he would instruct me to write a letter to my parents, giving the dates and times of his departure from Madras and his arrival in Delhi. These were then to be underlined and no other subject was to be referred to in the letter – probably to avoid distracting the reader from the main purpose. A similar letter was dispatched again, two days before he left, and copies of both letters handed over to him.

A very busy atmosphere prevailed prior to the date of depar-

ture. Narayanan Nair, the majordomo, went about with a preoccupied look, taking our Grandfather's suitcase, cream-coloured silk suit and warm clothes to air them. I watched fascinatedly as he neatly spread out the clothes in the box and deftly folded a coat all smooth and wrinkle-free. On the day of departure, Grandfather would come down two hours earlier. He believed in starting early in case of last-minute contingencies, like a car breakdown or any such mishap. We on our part also got ready and assembled in the drawing room to hear his last-minute instructions, "Remember to help Grandmother – do your copy writing every day – and do not forget to eat *nellikka* at lunch," etc. He would then get into the car and we would watch it glide till it disappeared down the road. Many a strange feeling of elation enveloped us. We would stare at each other in glee and scamper upstairs to what had till then been forbidden territory.

The long room with tinted glass windows was our favourite. We would stretch out our hands before the windows, watching in fascination as the glass took on hues of ruby red, grass green and deep purple, and imagine we were in front of the stained glass windows we had seen in pictures. There was also a study lined with glass almirahs full of books. It also had an array of clocks of different designs, Daniell's prints and prints of famous European paintings, which enchanted my sister and me with their beauty. In Grandfather's absence we carried out our normal routine, though in a more relaxed way. The only forbidden thing I remember doing – if you could call it that – was going to see the film *Ramrajya* with my aunts and my sister. I liked it very much and wished Grandfather did not have such an aversion to films, banishing them from our young lives altogether.

* * *

The holidays we looked forward to most were those at Christmas, when music and dance performances went on for two or three weeks. Grandfather was very fond of music and, during the season, all rules were waived and season tickets bought for all of us to attend the concerts at the *Thamizh Isai Sangam*. It was checked that we had fresh skirts and blouses to wear each day. Driver Ranganathan was notified and the flowerseller asked to deliver fresh strands of flowers every evening. Grandfather made it a point to get to the hall well ahead of time, but that did not bother us. We sat in our 'plum' seats looking at the almost empty hall decorated with marigold festoons and portraits

(Continued on page 7)

Bird-watching in Adyar Poonga

It was great to be back at the Adyar Poonga at the end of April, though things were heating up! I was there to participate in a 2-day workshop on birdwatching basics for adults, organised by the Madras Naturalists' Society, along with the Institute of Bird Studies and Natural History, Rishi Valley, and in association with the Adyar Poonga Trust.

Day 1 was an intense introduction to avifauna – bird features, adaptations, calls, behaviour, what exactly to look for when birdwatching and how to make field notes. There was also a session on birding equipment, and it was all interspersed

with short (thanks to the heat) field exercises. On Day 2, all 16 participants went for a 2-hour walk in the Guindy National Park to put to practice all that they had learned the previous day. Except for the fact that it was very hot and sultry, both days were very satisfying as learning experiences for all.

The waterbody in the Poonga, which had lots of water in February, was now reduced to a small pool but still had birds. There were hardly any nesting waterbirds on the Prosopis bushes.

Since the workshop on birdwatching had a classroom component as well, we could

spend only about two and a half hours or so in the field and the morning session was really hot. Yet, I managed to list 35 species of birds.

The most interesting birds seen (though I did not share the sighting with others because the birds were too far off to be seen) were the three spotted-billed pelicans, soaring high above us in thermals. I cannot recall seeing these birds on earlier occasions at the Adyar Estuary. Water birds seen at the edge of the pool included little cormorants, little egrets (about 35), and cattle egrets – two were in breeding plumage – night hereon (including a few juveniles with spotted plumage), pond heron (at least 4 or 5 in breeding plumage), white-breasted waterhen, redwattled lapwings and a blackwinged stilt. We watched for a long time in the wet margins of the pool a lovely greyheaded yellow wagtail in its glorious summer plumage. That was the only migrant around.

A pair of paddyfield pipits was seen anxiously flying here and there with some food in their beaks. It was obvious they were nesting in the open area. Among the other birds seen were a pair of pied kingfishers, shikras, magpie robin, ashy prinias, Loten's sunbird, whitebrowed bulbul, lesser goldenbacked woodpeckers, coppersmith, small green bee-eaters and large pied wagtails.

I hope more birders continue to visit this facility and enjoy the birds and, most importantly, share their findings with others. (Courtesy: Madras Naturalists' Society)

V. Santharam

Facelift or restoration?

(Continued from page 3)

the spate of additions continued, either during or after Chisholm's time. The result has been a confused set of buildings divorced from the earlier attempts of creating a homogeneous whole."

Be that as it may, the Palace is still a historian's and conservationist's delight. The entire complex is constructed with brickwork and lime mortar and the roof is a classic example of Madras Terrace. Both these methods of construction are near-extinct today. There are, in addition, wooden staircases, stained glass fanlights and decorative works in plaster. The roof of the entrance building is rather an unique example of a cross between a Mangalore tile and a Madras Terrace roof, for wooden braces used in supporting sloping tiled roofs here shore up the flat Madras roof. In short, the Palace is in every way an architectural landmark that is crying for restoration and preservation.

Unfortunately, the ways of Government departments are not conducive to such buildings. The main halls and surrounding rooms have been converted into a maze of partitions and cubicles. Stone columns now support aluminium beadings and plate glass, in addition to being convenient places to nail electric wiring. The perceived necessity to build toilets and the use of unqualified plumbers, courtesy PWD, have caused leakages in several parts of the building. The continued re-laying of the road at the entrance has ensured that the ground level has gone up con-

siderably, thereby throwing Chisholm's tower out of proportion. Different colours of paints have been used, the decision most often guided by what is available in stock. Thus, there are parts of the building which are red and white, some in green and some in pure white with blue borders. Woodwork in places has rotted or has simply fallen away. Trees grow from various corners of the building.

In March 2007, a part of the palace collapsed when a wooden beam on the ground floor came crashing down. This was a direct result of storing heavy construction material on the first floor. The Department of Agriculture, which was occupying the affected part, moved out to a new structure built a few years previously in the same precinct. The Government had then announced that it would take steps to ensure that the Palace was listed as a heritage building and that steps would be taken to strengthen it. Since then nothing much has happened. We hope that what will now happen will be an effort to properly restore the Palace, not merely give it a facelift.

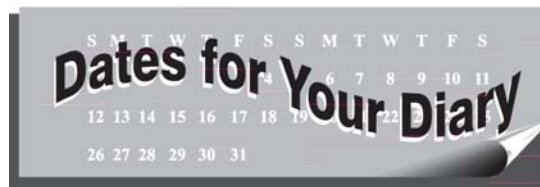
Life with Grandfather

(Continued from page 6)

of well-known composers, juxtaposed with advertisements for HMV records and huge posters urging us to "Buy L.G. Asafotida" and "Drink Ovaltine for health". The hall slowly started filling with women in rich Kanjeevarams and Benares sarees. The fragrance of jasmine wafted in from all sides. Then pin-drop silence descended as the curtains were raised and the concert began.

My sister and I sat mesmerised. We heard the great musicians of the day, Chembai, Madurai Mani, GNB and women artistes like N.C. Vasanthakokilam and M.S. Subbulakshmi. But we'd be woken from our trance at 7.30 p.m. sharp, when Grandfather would get up. We always hoped against hope he would stay a little longer, but he never did. It would be at the peak hour, when the audience waited for the main *kriti* to conclude or the *Ragam Thanam* to start, that we made our departure treading on many a toe and getting a lot of angry looks.

(To be concluded)



Till May 20: An exhibition of *Mother and Child* paintings, sculptures and photographs by AP. Shreethar, C. Ravi Kumar, and Jjay Ppradeep (at Art World).

May 25: Balloon sculpting: A workshop for children to learn the art of sculpting balloons with unique designs and shapes. (At DakshinaChitra.)

June 5th & 6th: A workshop for adults on fusing jewellery using

broken glass. This is an art form that requires patience and concentration. Raghavan, Dakshina Chitra's glass blower, will show you the way. (At Dakshina-Chitra.)

June 21: A bead jewellery workshop for adults, which will encourage creativity and imagination as you experiment with a wide variety of designs. Wooden beads will be available for this workshop to be conducted by Govindaswami (at Dakshina-Chitra).

June 28: A stone jewellery workshop for adults conducted by DakshinaChitra's master soft stone carver who will share with you his expertise in carving wonderful designs on soft stones. (At DakshinaChitra.)

For further details of Dakshina-Chitra workshops and to register, contact: 24462435 / 24918943 or 9841777779.

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If in the coming year Chennai Heritage receives repeated support from those of you who have already made contributions, and if many more supporters join the bandwagon, we will not only be able to keep *Madras Musings* going, but also be able to continue awareness-building exercises on on-going projects as well as undertake one or two more such exercises.

Therefore, please keep your contributions coming IN ADDITION TO YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS. If, say, you send in a cheque for Rs.500, we will treat Rs.100 of it towards subscription to *Madras Musings* for 2008-09 and the remaining Rs.400 as contribution towards the causes Chennai Heritage espouses.

We look forward to all readers of *Madras Musings*, and those newcomers who want to receive copies, sending in their subscriptions. We are indeed sorry we can no longer remain a free mailer.

— The Editor

CHENNAI HERITAGE

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Chepauk, on another day, and another time

It was another day. It was another time. It was December 1945 and India was playing the Australian Services XI team at Chepauk! There was no Chidambaram Stadium then. Except for the attractive ancient pavilion, there were only temporary galleries all around, erected using casuarina poles and wooden planks about a foot wide well fastened to them to serve as seats. These stands were provided with thatched roof for shade. A few stands were there without a roof (the ticket cost being less) and, you will not believe it, even those stands would be filled to capacity, the spectators braving the Madras sun sporting scarfs, monkey caps or carrying umbrellas for cover! Such was the enthusiasm, since international cricket came to Chepauk only once in so many years in those days!

All season-ticket holders (they would be prepared to watch all the four days of the match) would queue up before the respective gates as early as 6 a.m. to gain first entry and pick the seats with the best view! For those manning the 'duty posts' their friends would arrive

around 9 a.m. bringing their breakfast. Of course, they would have also brought lunch for the whole party. In addition, score-sheets, binoculars, pocket radio sets and musical instruments, cymbals and drums to raise sound and music, were all an integral part of their accoutrement. Apart from the bonafide ticketholders, a few would sneak in by jumping over the low compound walls along Pycroft's Road! Another form of illegal entry was when you managed to enter the stadium without getting your season ticket punched for the day and then threw it over the fence for a friend to gain a 'legal' entry!

Noisy flourishes were made to greet, first, the umpires as they walked on to the field, then the fielding team as they trotted in to take their various positions and, finally, when the batsmen entered and took their stance. Thundering shindigs would be raised when a wicket fell or a flashy boundary was hit, not to mention if it were a sixer, no matter by the visiting team or the home side! This sporting tradition of the Madras crowd is well known in the cricket world and exists to this day!

It was the first time most of us in the crowd had watched Australians at Chepauk. We could not wait to see their captain Lindsay Hassett bat or the speed-merchant Keith Miller in action! Hassett didn't disappoint us, as he played graceful cricket and hit a century on the first day. But with some good seam bowling by Shute Banerjee and spin by Chandu Sarwate, the visitors were bundled out for 339 the next day. That day belonged to the great Lala Amarnath. Coming in at No.3, he played effort-

● by
R. GANAPATHI

lessly, and particularly clobbering Miller and their spinner, Pepper, to reach his century. The Bombay youngster Rusi Modi, who compiled a double century (which was a nice pendant to Amarnath's great batsmanship), dominated the third day. Gul Mohamed and C.S. Nayudu used the long handle to score half-centuries and India finished with a mammoth 525!

Facing a big deficit, the visitors played carefully, the openers Carmody and Whittigton putting on a patient 133 runs. Then their batsmen fell at regular intervals and were all out for only 275 runs against a determined Indian attack. India got the required 90 runs in 29 overs, with the stylish Rusi Modi hitting the winning runs! Thus, India, for the first time, won a 'Test match' and a 'Test series'

Dear Editor,

I recently visited Chepauk to witness the Test match against South Africa and there my thoughts turned to another 'Test' match in another era, the match vs Australian Services team! Life was rather different then.

— The Author

(1-0, the first two Tests having been drawn), though it was an "unofficial Test series".

When we came back and tucked ourselves in bed that night, we had severe body-aches after having sat for four days at a stretch. Many of us lost our voices, as we had cheered ourselves hoarse throughout the match! But when the elders chided us for our mad adventure, we just said, "With Aspirin our body pain will go and our voice will come back, but will such a Test match come again?"

Cricket then was a gentleman's game and sportsman spirit was cherished. The spectators also were disciplined, well behaved and appreciated the finer points of the game.

Those were my thoughts when I was in the Chidambaram Stadium on Friday, March 28, 2008 (i.e. more than six decades later), ready to watch the third day of the first Test against South Africa.

First, the stadium appeared to be immense, obviously because it was brick and mortar and of a capacity to easily seat 40,000 plus, compared to the 20,000 of the "gallery" days! The spectators of the day were interested in the game no doubt, but not the way we were involved with every ball that was bowled or every shot that was played or every piece of fielding! They were involved with their own conversations while the game was in progress and quite a few had their tiffin boxes open and were munching away, looking up only to watch the replays! Of course, very few

listen to radio commentary these days; instead their focus is on TV screens that feature replays. As for me, I was all attention to the game and enjoyed every minute of sitting for 8 hours unmindful of my 78 years!

I still feel that watching a match 'live' on the cricket field is a great experience. No doubt you can witness it on TV in the comfort of your home and see numerous replays and close-ups of the action from different angles and see the finer points like where the ball pitches and moves in to the batsman, how he shapes for it and executes the stroke and so on. But the 'live' excitement, the electrifying atmosphere and the overall view of the ground with total field placing visible, the batsmen and their body language always in full view and the actual effort a fielder puts in as he prepares to field a shot – all these you cannot experience in your TV at home! And the chance to watch your heroes at close quarters, when they are fielding near the boundary line and, if you are lucky, to get their autographs or make appreciative comments are added advantages. But rest of all were Ntini's dance steps and friendliness, and Sehwag's record-breaking effort – seen in person!

Truth to tell, I never felt any discomfort sitting continuously in a chair because I had forgotten all my bodily ailments and just feasted on the run flow! I bet I would not have enjoyed the show half as much, had I witnessed it on TV!

Answers to Quiz

1. Ten; 2. Deccan Chargers' Adam Gilchrist against Mumbai Indians; 3. Albert Hoffman; 4. Mars Inc., backed by billionaire Warren Buffett; 5. Memristor; 6. The Maoists; 7. Vladimir Putin; 8. K. Jothikumaran; 9. They are to be declared No-fly zones; 10. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

* * *

11. San Thome; 12. Coonoor; 13. Jawad Hussain, father of Nasser Hussain; 14. Jackie Chan and Amitabh Bachchan; 15. Nayanthara; 16. The American Library; 17. V. Chandrasekhar; 18. V. Maitreyan; 19. Tiruvallur; 20. Nine.

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