

# BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

NEWSLETTER

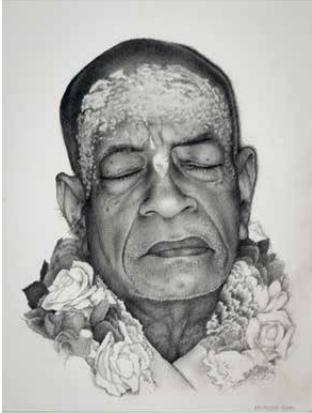
August 2016



International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)  
Founder Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Shree Krishna  
Haveli  
Groundbreaking



## Srila Prabhupada:

So by the grace of Lord Caitanya, this movement is introduced in the Western countries, beginning from New York. Our sankirtana movement was first introduced in New York in 1966. At that time I came and began to chant this Hare Krishna mantra in Tompkins Square. I was chanting there for three hours with a small mrdanga (drum), and these American boys assembled and gradually joined, and so it is increasing.

*Science of Self Realization*



4

Haveli Groundbreaking



6

Garden of Gratitude

10

Battle of Somme



15

Kirtan London at Manor

18



19

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# 50 YEARS CELEBRATIONS

On the 13th of July 1966, 50 years ago, Srila Prabhupada received the certificate stating that ISKCON was officially incorporated. This year devotees around the world gathered on the same day to mark the occasion and express their gratitude to Srila Prabhupada, for changing their lives.

Here in the UK the day commenced with devotees distributing 5,000 cupcakes to commuters in Central London including the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and was reported on by the BBC.

Our appreciation to Ananda Vighraha and team for making the cupcakes, Krsnapurna and team for packing the cakes and Madhvi Mulji and team for distribution.

Yogeshwara Das a senior disciple of Srila Prabhupada and the author of 'Swami in a strage land', was invited to give a talk at Bhaktivedanta Manor. He spoke on the importance of the day and the depth of the sacrifice Prabhupada gave, at the age of seventy, to establish the International Society for Krishna

Consciousness. Srila Prabhupada's incorporation of ISKCON was more than just a gesture of creating a non-profit, it was an act of defiance, a stake in the ground against the atheists to say that this is Krishna Consciousness and it is here to change the world.

Some of the other highlights of the day included a performance about Srila Prabhupada's life by students of the Manor School and an offering of 108 dishes to Srila Prabhupada in his personal quarters.

The day concluded with Yogeshwara Das speaking on the spiritual life of George Harrison and his relationship with Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada was once told by an astrologer that he would build a house for the world. Fifty years on today, we relish this house and the fruits of his labour. In the words of Kripamoya Das, 'the teachings of Srila Prabhupada will live for generations to come!'



## HAVELI GROUNDBREAKING

Bhaktivedanta Manor marked the start of a new chapter in its history on Friday 10th June, as the groundbreaking ceremony for the long awaited Shree Krishna Haveli building was led by UK Prime Minister David Cameron. The ceremony formed part of the Manor's offerings to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ISKCON, upon which Mr Cameron heartily congratulated ISKCON on by praising Srila Prabhupada on his creation of a "global mission".

A reception for over 300 people, including Parliamentary Secretary Under State Shailesh Vara, Oliver Dowden MP for Hertsmere, Richard Harrington MP for Watford, devotees and patrons, was

held in a marquee over the spot where the new Shree Krishna Haveli will be built. Bhakti Charu Swami, Radhanath Swami, Sivarama Swami, Indradyumna Swami and Praghosa Das were also in attendance. Also in attendance were the our local Mayor and fellow councillors.

After being shown the Temple Room and deities of Shree Shree Radha Gokulananda, the Prime Minister went on to garland the deity of Srila Prabhupada, stating "if only he had lived to see what the Manor has become; a mock Tudor country house donated by a Beatle, serving as a hub of worship, celebration and selflessness."

The Prime Minister also congratulated



ISKCON on its 50th anniversary, joking that he too will celebrate his 50th birthday this year. He went on to say: "I look at what you have done in the past fifty years and I think how much you can achieve in the next fifty. In fact, the next half century begins right now as we begin building the new Shree Krishna Haveli, and I'm delighted to be putting the first tool in the ground."

Srutidharma Das, thanked the Prime Minister for attending, and spoke of the important role of the Shree Krishna

Haveli and the need to "promote the spiritual values of tolerance, kindness... we at Bhaktivedanta Manor aim to embody these principles at large."

Speaking about the Shree Krishna Haveli, Gauri Das said: "This is a historic time for the Manor. The Shree Krishna Haveli fulfils the needs of the Temple, respects the concerns of the local village and received full support from Hertsmere Council. It is a profound honour that the Prime Minister has put the first spade in the ground."



## GARDEN OF GRATITUDE

Devotees from across the country, including many of Srila Prabhupada's direct disciples gathered on the 16th of July for a day dedicated to expressing gratitude to Srila Prabhupada. It was an emotional and touching event to say the least.

The celebration began with the abhishek (bathing) of the Srila Prabhupada murti (image) in which many of the assembled devotees partook. Srila Prabhupada's murti was then carried around the temple building to the sounds of cymbals, drums and sweet, joyous chanting. He was then brought into the new garden and placed in his altar, to view the opening. Kripamoya Das spoke about the

aptness of a garden offering, by likening ISKCON to a sequoia tree in the garden, whose seed had been planted by Prabhupada and whose disciples were the branches that spread the philosophy around the world.

The defining qualities of this unique, spiritual relationship between guru and disciple were engraved around the garden and some of Srila Prabhupada's disciples stood on these stones and elaborated on each quality.

A plaque stating the dedication of the garden to Srila Prabhupada and his disciples was then unveiled.

The garden opening was followed by the launch of the book *Swami in a Strange Land*, written by Yogeshwara



Das. The book is a biography on Prabhupada, written not just to be enjoyed by devotees but also teach non-devotees about the life of Srila Prabhupada.

The Garden's theme, design and establishment were by Gauri das, assisted by Sarva Mangala dasi and Visvadevi dasi.



## Commonality in spirituality...

As part of Incorporation Week celebrations, the Manor hosted esteemed members of various religious organisations for a discussion on the interconnection between Hindu-Vaishnavism and Christianity.

The August assembly included Reverend Kumar Rajagopalan from the London Baptist Association and Saunaka Rsi Das from the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies. The Rt Rev Richard Atkinson, the Bishop of Bedford, was also present.

It was a stimulating evening with the speakers really bringing out the deeper aspects of their respective traditions. Reverend Kumar elaborated on the life experiences that led to his identification with the church and the teachings of Jesus Christ. Saunaka Rsi

Das spoke about the desire to become fully immersed in love of Godhead, or Bhakti and the path by which one develops this. He also described how his pursuit of perfection in Christianity led him to Vaishnavism.

In the words of David Hampshire, Assistant Director of the Interfaith Network UK; “events such as this are important because religious people can create a space for dialogue that gives others hope. It is important that we stand up for each other especially when the number of people in each faith increases today.”

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## First Artha Forum in UK

Anil Agarwal of Vedanta plc kindly hosted the first event for the Artha Forum, which has a tagline of 'Ancient Wisdom Modern Business'. The event comprised of a unique interview with Bhakti Charu swami specifically for a corporate audience.



## Festival in Cambridge...

Over 100 people, many of whom are first timers, came along to the Arbury Community Centre in Cambridge for an evening of chanting, dancing, philosophy and delicious prasadam.

## KRISHNAMARRIAGE.COM - uniting two souls

The former ISKCON Marriage Team UK and Sacred Ashram Team have amalgamated to form the Krishna Marriage Team. The members of the team are Visvambhara das, Jagannathesvari devi dasi, Gaura Kishore das, Saumya-radhika Devi dasi, Sunderananda das, Kirti-Radhika Devi dasi, Vrajesvara das and Priya Vadhvania. All team members are deeply committed and well versed in the philosophy of Krishna conscious marriage, are mentors to other married couples and are exemplary householders in their own right. Thus the new team is well equipped to provide devotees with the most comprehensive advice, options and opportunities as they take up this ashram in their lives.

As part of the service, a new website has been launched to facilitate

registration and everyone who registers will get to choose either their own personal matchmaker, who will suggest possible matches for them, or a team of administrators who will share multiple profiles that they can choose from. As well as matchmaking services, the team will be developing training courses for marriage, and offering pre and post marital counselling on request.

For information about the service and team, as well as access to helpful resources for devotees changing ashram. [www.krishnamarriage.com](http://www.krishnamarriage.com)





## Remembering a critical moment in history

Srutidharma Das joined dignitaries from across Britain and France, including six members of the Royal family, the French President Francoise Hollande and Britain's former Prime Minister David Cameron MP to commemorate 100 years since the Battle of the Somme. The event was in remembrance of the one million British, French and German soldiers who were killed or badly injured in that fateful battle. It took place at the Thiepval Memorial in northern France.



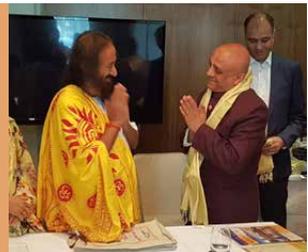
Srutidharma das with the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis.

## A pilgrimage of a different sort

A party from Wisbech Interfaith Forum joined hundreds of other pilgrims who come to visit the Manor every week. The visit was arranged by Bharat and Pritty Khetani who are regular visitors to the Manor and on the day, the group was warmly welcomed by Godruma Das and Ravindra Das. The visit was all about seeking better understanding of each other's spiritual traditions and building long term relationships.

## Transcendental meeting

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, of Art of Living, met with Sruti Dharma Das in London during his UK tour. He acknowledged the 50th anniversary of ISKCON's celebrations and spoke highly of Srila Prabhupada's influence across India.





## Doves of Peace

Radha Mohan Das joined community leaders, local Counsellors and other faith representatives for the Muslim community's Eid celebrations in Watford.

After a cultural stage show set amongst a field of stalls and children's sports, everyone gathered around the special guests, who set loose 25 doves symbolising a prayer for peace and unity in the world.



## Chaplain to the Mayor of Harrow

Following the multi-faith inauguration ceremony of the new Mayor of Harrow, Cllr Rekha Shah, Srutidharma Das joined a host of special guests at Harrow School where he was once again selected as the Mayoral Chaplain for Harrow!

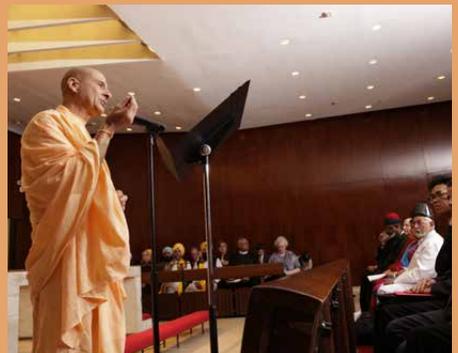


## Sanskrit vibrations emanating from the County Council

For the first time, Srutidharma Das recited Sanskrit prayers and shared words of wisdom in Hertfordshire County Council's main chamber. A wonderful way to elevate the atmosphere of such an important institution.

## GreenFaith

Radhanath Swami joined faith leaders from around the world at Church Center of the United Nations in New York City to encourage world leaders to sign the Paris agreement on climate change. The event (The Interfaith Climate Change Statement To World Leaders Handover Program) was mainly organized by GreenFaith, in partnership with a number of faith-based organizations.





## Departure of a great soul

His Holiness Krishna Das Swami has recently passed away in the holy place of Vrindavan, India. Bhaktivedanta Manor owes a great debt of gratitude to him for many years of determined service. He selflessly worked to save the temple from closure and he lived in the temple ashram for over ten years. He now lives on in the memory of his service to Srila Prabhupada.



## Nourishing the soul

The Manor recently was graced by the presence of Jayapataka Swami and Sivarama Swami; both gave beautiful discourses on immersing oneself in devotional love for Krishna as well as leading soul stirring kirtans that certainly left a mark in peoples hearts.



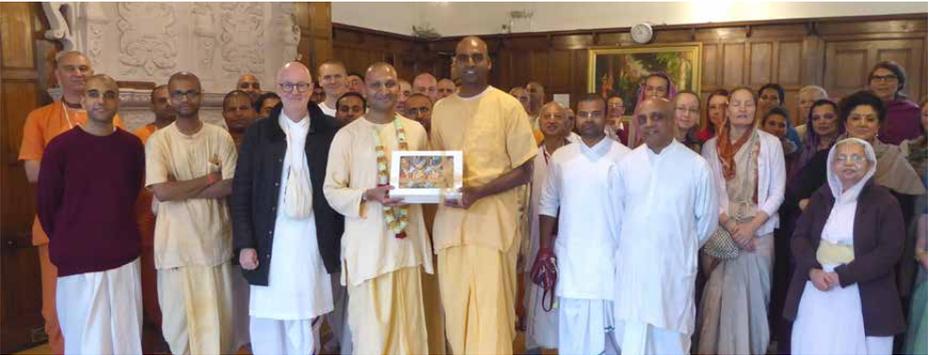
## Going back to where history was made!

In between their sterling performances for the New York's ISKCON 50th Celebrations, the Bhaktivedanta Players made a special pilgrimage to 26 Second Avenue, the humble storefront where Srila Prabhupada founded the movement and the magic began!



## Renowned musician visits the Manor

Famous singer and music composer, Bappi Lahiri visited the Manor recently. He spoke about his appreciation for Srila Prabhupada, and was grateful of his experience.



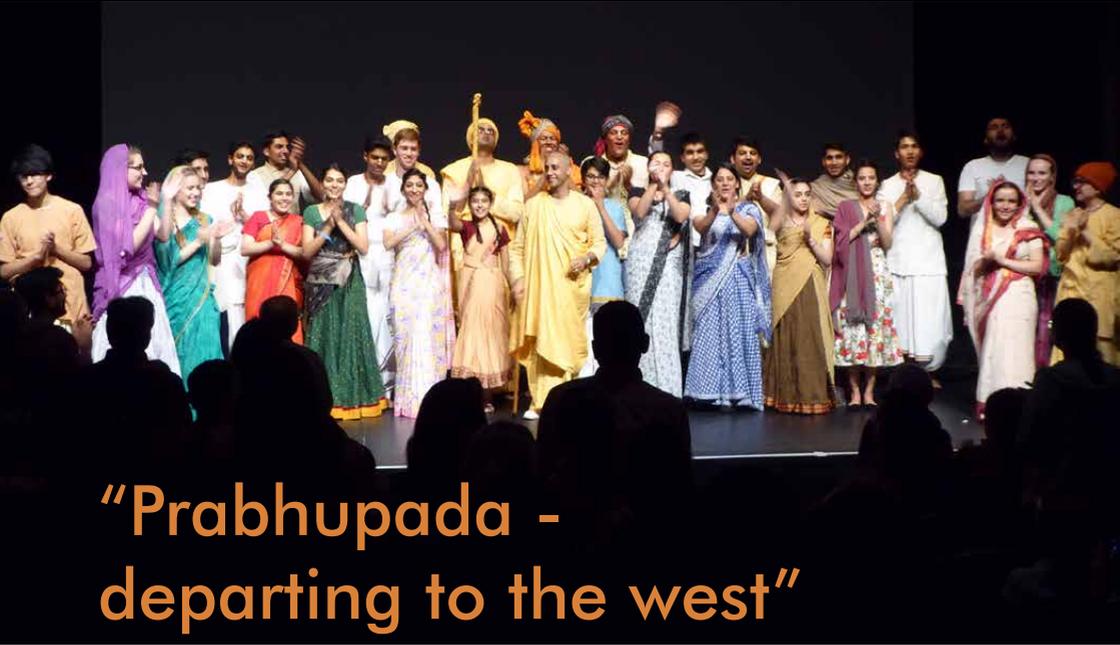
## Embarking on a new adventure....

Ananda Caitanya Das graduated from Cambridge University with a degree in Economics and secured a lucrative job in investment banking. He left all that behind and joined the Manor and donned the robes of a monk!

He soon established himself as one of the biggest book distributors in ISKCON, and the head of the College

of Vedic Studies. Under Ananda's leadership the College has become a key factor in educating the community about Krishna consciousness.

After eight years of dedication at the Manor, he has now decided to move to Hungary for a year where he is keen on replicating what he did at the Manor, with special focus on expanding book distribution and congregation development. The Manor wishes him all the best in his bold new step.



# “Prabhupada - departing to the west”

## – Something Spiritual Production

On the Evening of Saturday 2nd July in the outskirts of London, a cast and crew of 65 young people who are part of an upcoming performing arts group known as ‘Something Spiritual’ came together to put on a spectacular production depicting the life and struggles of Srila Prabhupada as an offering for ISKCON’s 50th anniversary. A night that captured hearts, moved people to tears and transformed the lives of many had only one complaint: why there were no tissues given out to stop the tears from flowing. Attended by over 400 people, the audience included close followers of the special personality to whom that night was a tribute, and also included many who had never met Srila Prabhupada in their life. Regardless of the relationship that people had, every

soul who came was blown away by the production.

The planning took 3-4 months including script writing and reviewing, soundtrack making, casting, promoting, rehearsing and organising. Many of the team members had sleepless nights just so that they could deliver a tribute of real value as. Something Spiritual began at the end of 2015 with a goal of bringing together people who have amazing talents and engaging them in the service of something bigger than themselves – in the service of Krishna. So far, they have put on four small plays, launched a music album, and have reached a milestone with this production. They say that this is just the beginning for greater things to come.



## Kirtan London at Manor

Kirtan London held their first 'Bhakti Day Retreat' at Bhaktivedanta Manor, bringing guests not only from London, but from across South East of England - with most of them coming for their first time.

They toured the manor grounds and temple building including an ox cart ride to the Goshala and introduction to Srila Prabhupada's life and contribution in his rooms.

They also had a Q&A session with Kripamoya prabhu and Jahnvi Harrison in the theatre room. The day concluded with kirtan by Jahnvi

Harrison and Madhva Anderson. This kirtan evening was a collaboration with the Saturday evening Soul Expressions program, so the prasadam room was very full and the kirtan, loud and lively.

Kirtan London is a London wide platform that offers accessible and relevant experiences of kirtan culture. It continues to grow with requests from Yoga studios, organising Kirtan for fundraisers for help of refugees, and even guests inviting them to come into their homes.



## European Communications

A team of devotees from Bhaktivedanta Manor and ISKCON-London attended the annual European ISKCON Communications Seminar, this year at the Villa Vrndavan Temple in Italy.

Topics covered ISKCON and interfaith, how to deal with sensitive issues, reports from communities across Europe, workshops on Religious Freedoms and the 50th Anniversary.



## A 'Right Royal' appreciation !

Children and staff of the Manor School were thrilled to receive a special letter from the Queen. It was in response to the School's letter to Buckingham Palace which included a splendid 90th birthday message for the Queen, complete with children's artwork.



## Students reunion...

The College of Vedic Studies welcomed 46 previous students for a wonderful and heartfelt reunion. It provided an opportunity for the spiritual seekers to share progress on their spiritual journeys, catch up with their lecturers and mentors and rejuvenate their devotional practices and the friendships they made along the way.



## Avanti Schools Shine at the Southbank

The Royal Festival Hall on the Southbank was home to the magical rendition of the Mahabharata by the Avanti Schools children. The musical, entitled, 'I'll Be There', conveyed the essence of the Mahabharata and the special relationship between Lord Krishna and his friend, cousin and disciple, Arjun. A melange of Western and Eastern musical traditions – 'I'll Be There' was an enthralling tribute to the unbreakable bond between the human soul and the divine. The awe-inspiring musical drama was performed by a massed choir of 150 children and a troupe of actors and dancers from primary and secondary schools. An eclectic mix of pop, Bollywood, choral and gospel music, dance, mime and words retold the classical story.



## Young talents share Krishna Consciousness

Children of the Manor School observed ISKCON's 50th Anniversary with a beautiful performance about the life and mission of Srila Prabhupada at the Ark Theatre in Borehamwood. Viewers have claimed it as being exceptional and revealing some serious thespian talent for the future!



## Seminar for an essential aspect of devotion

A two-day Deity Worship seminar organised by Gadadhara Das and Damodara Krishna Das was attended by some 30 pujari priests. The seminar was conducted by Nrsimha Kavaca Das (ISKCON Deity Worship Minister) and Murli Manohar Das (Head Pujari of ISKCON London) The purpose was to show how pujaris can improve their standards of deity worship, from basic steps of cleanliness internally and externally, the importance of time keeping, to elaborate services such as offering arati and bhoga (foodstuffs) and understanding the mood of dressing the deities.



## Monumental Chariots take London by storm!

Riveting kirtans, a phenomenal procession and the happiest looking deities on the planet! It could only be annual Ratha Yatra chariot. The parade commenced at Hyde Park corner and reached its crescendo at Trafalgar Square. All three of the colossal chariots included the special logo in acknowledgment of ISKCON's 50th Anniversary.



## Walking for Peace

Devotees embarked on a padayatra walk from Hastings to Brighton, complete with oxen! The 40 mile journey along the seafront took five days and was in observance of ISKCON's 50th Anniversary. The walk was aimed to share the message of cow protection, compassion, vegetarianism, simple living with a Krishna conscious thinking.



## Letting the honey flow

Avid bee keepers Narahari Rupa Das and Sanatan, have been caring for the Manor's bee population for a while now. And recently they have invested in a flow-hive. Flow hives represent a breakthrough in hive design technology. They are practical, highly efficient in collecting honey and even comfortable for the bees!



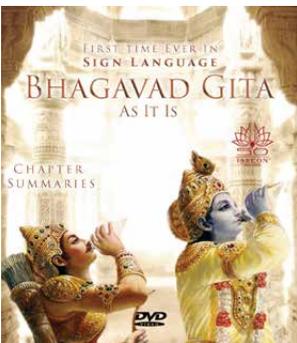
## Vegetarian extravaganza!

Six members of Manchester's Vegetarian Society came down to the Manor to cook for hundreds of people in need across north London. "It was part of this year's National Vegetarian Week," explained 'Food for All' Director Parasuram das, "All the participants had a rewarding day and were inspired by the work we do on a daily basis."



## University of the Third Age

The Manor has become a popular place for many members of the University of the Third Age, an organisation which organises special days out for retired professionals.



## First Ever Bhagavad Gita in Sign language

Displaying great dynamism, The Radha Krishna Deaf Association (RKDA) have released a DVD which includes chapters 1 – 6 of the Bhagavad-gita in sign language.





## Making an impact in Glastonbury

During this year's Glastonbury festival, devotees distributed 15,000 plates of prasada (sanctified vegetarian food). For the festival organisers, the devotees are an integral part of the experience – which sees crowds of almost 200,000 attending each summer. With harinam processions around the site, kirtan and book distribution, the Hare Krishna Festival Team makes a huge positive impact every year. And this year was no different despite the heavy rains and inevitable mud bath!

## Family Fun Open Day

Reaching out to many from the local community, the manor had held an open day as it does annually, and had the largest number of attendees it ever had. The aim was to get people to come and spend an adventurous open day at the Krishna centre and experience the culture and tradition of a spiritual community in the heart of Hertfordshire. A fun day for children and adults alike.



## The Tree of Gratitude

Full of leaves of gratitude for Srila Prabhupada from the devotees at Bhaktivedanta Manor as part of the 50th Anniversary celebration on gratitude day.

## London Mayor congratulates ISKCON on turning 50

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan congratulated ISKCON on turning 50 after Jai Nitai dasa and Bhava Bhakti devi dasi presented him with a box of cupcakes and copies of the 50th magazine.

