

BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

NEWSLETTER

October 2019



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



CELEBRATING JANMASHTAMI

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Srila Prabhupada:

The duty of a brahmana is to culture the quality of forgiveness, which is illuminating like the sun. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is pleased with those who are forgiving
Srimad Bhagavatam
9.15.40

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HAPPY JANMASHTAMI

THE ADVENT OF LORD KRISHNA

All were made welcome to join the remarkable celebrations of Sri Krishna Janmashtami, the advent of Lord Krishna, on Friday 23rd and Sunday 25th August at Bhaktivedanta Manor. The festivities are not only the largest outside of India, but this year also marks a monumental milestone as we celebrate 50 years since ISKCON UK was incorporated.

"Over the last fifty years Janmashtami celebrations have developed a great deal," explained Nila Madhava Das, Senior Manager at Bhaktivedanta Manor. "Many of those who help to put the event together are game changers, talented artists, deep thinkers and thought provokers who share mantra meditation, sacred wisdom and a karma-free lifestyle across the globe with modern relevance.

"We want to not only celebrate fifty years, but also invest in the future now by building on them to offer together, to amplify the wider community's achievements, connect with new audiences and present what is relevant to

people's lives."

Visitors and pilgrims enjoyed complimentary vegetarian food and the opportunity to browse the bazaars selling an eclectic array of delicatessens, books, handmade jewellery, music and organic produce from our New Gokul farm.

The festival gave something for the whole family including a designated children's area full of fun-filled activities including face painting, henna, arts, crafts and games. The festival promotes the importance of love and community in what is today a very diverse society, and is only made possible with the help of 1,500 dedicated volunteers.

The festival field included creative performances, themes and exhibitions organised by the youth, such as The Dice Game, Omnom: Enlightened Eating, 7 Days to Live and Can You Escape.

Notable guests included His Holiness Lokanath Swami, The Secretary of State Theresa Villiers MP, and comedian Russell Brand.







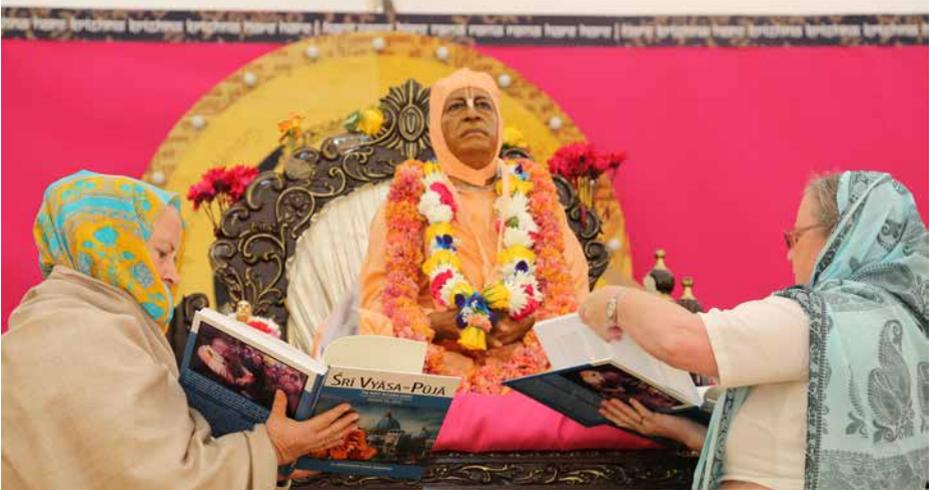
Radharani's birthday cakes

Anuradha Dasi headed up a team of eight ladies, who worked for many hours to make 15 exquisitely beautiful cakes with love and devotion. The cakes, representing a variety of pastimes of Radha and Krishna in the holy land of Vrindavan, were then baked by a team led by Head Pujari Gadadhara Das.

"They are fruit cakes," explained Anuradha Dasi, "which include marzipan and icing sugar, so most of it is edible (apart from the figurines)."

The cakes were made in celebration of Radhastami, the birthday of Lord Krishna's divine consort Srimati Radharani. The cakes were offered on the main temple shrine and distributed later as 'maha prasada'. To the delight of the devotee community, fantastic new outfits were offered to the deities.





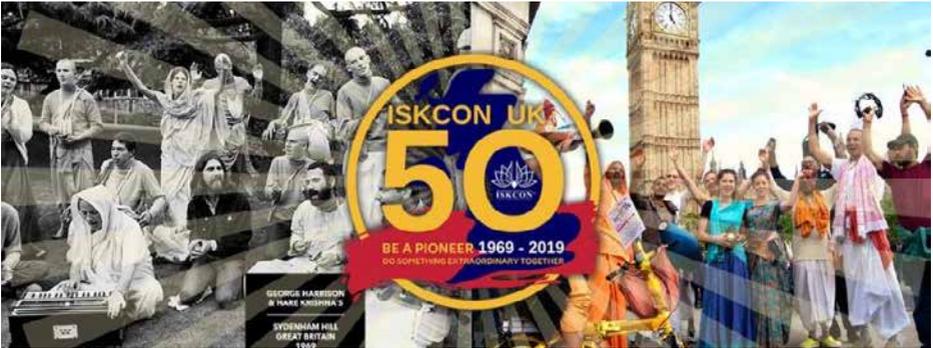
Srila Prabhupada honoured on that very special day

This year's Vyasa-Puja of ISKCON's illustrious Founder, Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, was the most highly attended ever. That was most befitting as it is the 50th anniversary of when he first set foot in the UK after the release of the 'The Hare Krishna Mantra' and 'Govinda' by the original three pioneering couples, produced by George Harrison.

On Vyasa-Puja day, Moksa Laksmi Dasi led proceedings as fellow disciples and followers recited heartfelt readings of their homages. That is followed by a Maha Guru Puja, or grand worship of Srila Prabhupada, including flower petal offerings and abishekha (bathing of his image).

Meanwhile, community youth teamed together to prepare more than 108 food offerings, which were offered to Srila Prabhupada before being distributed to everyone.





15th September 1969 was the official incorporation of ISKCON in the UK, exactly 50 years ago. In that light, Temple communities across the country have been celebrating in a variety of imaginative ways!

On Saturday 7th September, ISKCON Leicester hosted a street festival in the city centre which included a stage show and cupcake distribution, and organised an incredible photo projection of Srila Prabhupada in the city to mark the day he landed in the UK for the first time.

Over 500 cupcakes adorned with the specially designed 50th logo were distributed by a huge team of devotees, and passers-by had the opportunity to take part in Harinam, watch a stage show and learn more about our

philosophy through book distribution.

An image of Srila Prabhupada dancing at Bhaktivedanta Manor was beamed on a hotel in Leicester City centre.

At Bhaktivedanta Manor there was a special presentation by Praghosa Das, a video presentation, cake cutting and pushpanjali to Srila Prabhupada. The Temple Management plan another event scheduled to take place in November.

Ragini Radhika Dasi was featured on BBC One's Sunday Morning Live to talk about Faith and Fashion on 15th September.

ISKCON UK shared some great photos taken of four bramacaris at ISKCON London at the world famous Abbey Road studios, which has reached an





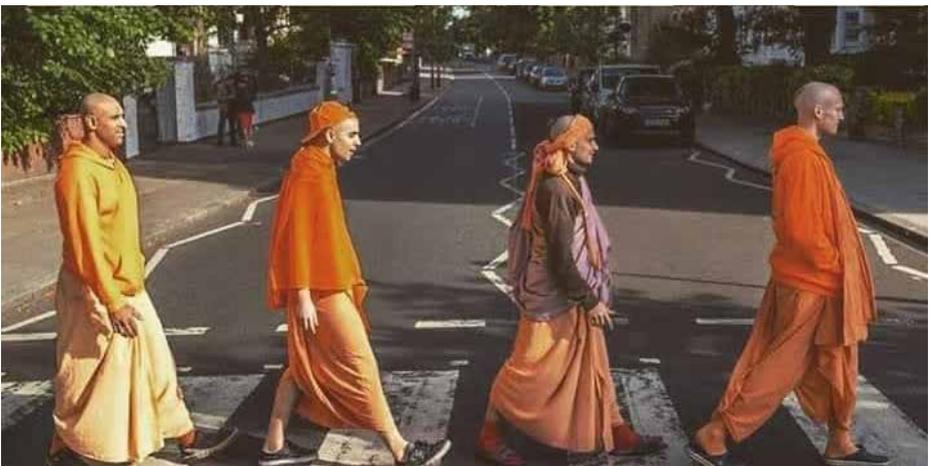
audience of tens of thousands! The initiative was organised by devotees from ISKCON UK and ISKCON London.

The Abbey Road zebra crossing was made famous by one of the The Beatles' album covers. Shortly afterwards, the Hare Krishna Temple devotees had recorded an album at Abbey Road studios with The Beatle George Harrison and were performing their hit single Hare Krishna Mantra on BBC's Top of The Pops. In September 1969, days before The Beatles released their eponymous Abbey Road album, ISKCON UK was incorporated.

Praghosa das said: "The Abbey Road

studios are steeped in history, where some of the world's most famous artists recorded their hits. The recording sessions with the Hare Krishna devotees in 1969 are part of the magic of the studios and testament to the story of the great friendship between George Harrison and the Temple.

"Fifty years later, we have temples in every major city in the UK, including the world famous Bhaktivedanta Manor in Watford which was gifted by George Harrison to the devotees. People from all walks of life form part of our vibrant communities across the country and the fiftieth anniversary has been celebrated across the UK to commemorate this momentous event."





Devotees share the Holy Name with thousands at The Great North Run

Devotees were out in force on Sunday 8th September at The Great North Run, the largest half marathon in the world, sharing the Holy Name with 57,000 runners – including Sir Mo Farah.

Joined by UK GBC Praghosa Das, around thirty devotees took part in the harinam during the race, which was also held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of ISKCON UK.

Speaking about the experience, Caitanya Vallabha Das said:

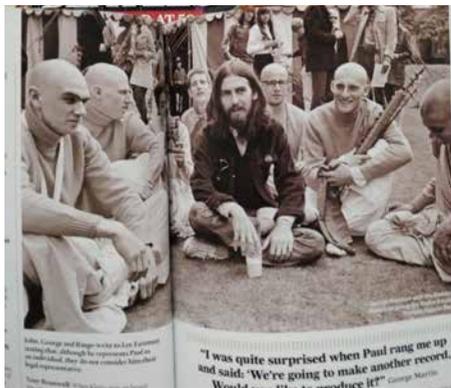
“The response from the runners was fantastic! Some waved, some danced, some clapped their hands, some did a pranam gesture, some smiled and laughed, some did a double-take, not quite believing what they were seeing and hearing, many did a ‘high-five’ and some even chanted Hare Krishna too!”



Holi festivals at ISKCON Scotland

Holi festivals have become a popular and regular feature at Karuna Bhavan, the ISKCON Temple in Scotland. The events, combined with live music and Open Days for the family, also attract many students from Glasgow University.

The most recent Holi bonanza was officially opened by their local MP and good friend, Lisa Cameron.



Classic Rock magazine

The August edition of the Classic Rock magazine included a large photo of George Harrison chanting with pioneer ISKCON devotees on the roof of Abbey Road Studios. It was part of the editions main feature article about the creative tendencies of The Beatles.



Brighton Ratha Yatra

Brighton Ratha yatra is traditionally the last festival of Lord Jagganath to take place in the UK annual calendar. This year was extra special because the

weather held out nicely and the Deputy Mayor of Brighton, Cllr Alan Robins officially opened the procession and even swept the street in front of the huge chariot.



Mini Police Initiative and Delrow

The children in Year 4/5/6 of the Manor School took part in the Mini Police initiative run by Hertfordshire Constabulary.

As part of the course they were invited to Delrow House, a local residential community for adults with learning difficulties, to hold a presentation about Krishna Consciousness.

Whilst there, the children met with the residents and staff and distributed food,



sang prayers, and gave a short talk.

At the end of the course, the children were presented with their certificates of participation by PCSO Leon James and the Deputy Mayor of Hertsmere, Councillor Cynthia Barker, during a special assembly at the Manor School.

The police officers who trained the children said that they enjoyed working with them and hope to return to the school again.



10 days, 109 people from across the UK, New Mayapur. What. A. Trip.

In the summer 109 students, youths, and adults made the long and exciting journey to the beautiful New Mayapur, a European castle in the heart of France.

For ten days we were able to immerse ourselves in wonderful kirtans (music) by Agnidev Das, as well as hear some truly inspiring and insightful talks by H.H. Kadamba Kanana Swami, Visakha Dasi, and Vraja Bihari Das alongside many others.

There were a variety of different activities and services we were able to get involved in, including clay pot making, attending to the Goshala cows, gardening and painting. Serving alongside our dear friends was a truly enriching experience!

Apart from talks, workshops and seminars; we were fortunate enough to go on Harinam (musical processions) in the local town of Torres, partake in a Pushpa Abhishek (shower of flowers) which was truly wonderful, and have a lovely bonfire evening which began with a panel discussion with some amazing Prabhupada disciples. There was also an activity day where we went zip-wiring across a lake!

Although our hearts were heavy to be leaving such a magical place, everyone left feeling empowered and enriched from a trip that gave us so much inspiration, deepened so many bonds between us and will leave us with many unforgettable memories!





Where it all began

During a retreat organised by the Bhaktivedanta Manor's Mens' Ashram, devotees made a special visit to 26 Second Avenue in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York. It was in that humble former shop front that Srila Prabhupada lectured to his early

followers, and where ISKCON officially began.

"it is important that devotees can visit places like 26 Second Avenue," explained Atmanivedana Swami, "from humble beginnings we can appreciate how much Srila Prabhupada achieved since then. The small centre is a place of pilgrimage in itself, in the United States."



Lithuanian yoga retreat

Imagine a long, fine, and silky ribbon of smooth white sand bordered by a sequence of soft and grassy dunes lining the Baltic shoreline. Visualise a deserted morning beach, dream of stunning sunsets, and you have conjured up a flawless setting for a late-summer 5-day Krishna Wisdom-run Lithuanian yoga retreat, where a well-placed platform nestled into Palanga resort's seashore, proving itself to be an ideal open-air yoga-studio, while



offering spectacular views for daily classes led by facilitator Radha Govinda Das.

Partakers also got to stretch and ease their limbs into sacred geometric shapes of yoga while savouring the invigorating atmosphere of surrounding pine forests, which, in turn, set the scene perfectly for an exhilarating bicycle-tour.

Maria Jaworek of Surrey said "I enjoyed each day and will cherish the memories."

Monk provides inspiration

Janikanath Das has been an inspiration, providing hope and direction to many fellow cancer patients.

"In the summer I attended a special music festival called Trewfields. It's like a mini-Glastonbury but for people affected by cancer. The organisers asked me to make a presentation. My topic was, "Understanding the mind using magic, philosophy and meditation. We did kirtan (sacred singing) afterwards too".

"I am pleased to say that my talk at Ted X (reported in the previous newsletter) is now available on YouTube.

"I also spoke at the University of East Anglia on the topic, "There is no such thing as negativity - a monk's perspective." I spoke about the so-called negativities that cancer brought, and what I did to deal with them. There were about 200 attendees".



Interfaith Walk in Bushey

This year's Interfaith Walk organised by Hertsmere Forum of Faiths (HFF) included local Churches, a Synagogue and a recently opened Jain Temple.

"Interfaith walks of this kind are great ways of connecting to the local community and to learn about not only the theologies of other faiths, but about their local history," explained HFF member Radha Mohan das.



**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE**



New Temple President

Bhaktivedanta Manor is pleased to announce the appointment of Visakha Dasi as Temple President. In August, Visakha Dasi spent time at the Manor and met with various official bodies that represent the community, managers, and trustees. The outcome was a unanimous decision that she was most suitable candidate to lead and inspire the temple community. Former president Sruti Dharma Das welcomed the news: "It is an honour to have such a senior Vaisnavi and disciple of Srila Prabhupada now at the helm."

Visakha Dasi is well known in the international devotee community for the time she spent as Srila Prabhupada's photographer and as an avid writer for Back to Godhead magazine. In more recent years she assisted her husband, Yadubara Das, in producing the award-winning film, Hare Krishna! The Mantra, the Movement and the

Swami Who Started It All. Her book Five Years, Eleven Months and a Lifetime of Unexpected Love: A Memoir, which depicts her time spent with Srila Prabhupada, has also won awards and received great reviews.

Gauri Das said, "The Manor is one of ISKCON's largest and most important temples. Gifted by George Harrison and founded by Srila Prabhupada, in spiritual heritage and influence Bhaktivedanta Manor plays a significant role. Visakha Dasi will contribute substantially to this ongoing legacy."

The appointment will begin in January 2020, which is a great conclusion to the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of ISKCON UK celebrations. Chairman of the temple trustees, Navina Krishna Das, said, "...Even though she was invited to apply for the temple president position, her interview process was rigorous. On each level we found what we were looking for: a depth of spiritual understanding and a sobering maturity in Krishna consciousness. We look forward to working with her."

Visakha Dasi said, "As the temple president of Bhaktivedanta Manor for many years, Sruti Dharma Prabhu has been exemplary in his service and dedication to Srila Prabhupada's mission. My hope and prayer is that by Srila Prabhupada's mercy I can follow in his footsteps."

**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA
KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA
RAMA RAMA HARE HARE**



Ladies' Book Distribution (Sankirtan) Tour

This year, Bhaktivedanta Manor Ladies Ashram organised a two-month Travelling Sankirtan Tour. Four ladies went to Leicester, Birmingham, Canterbury, Liverpool and Norwich and distributed 763 books.

The experience of Bhaktin Dovile:

'Our Traveling Sankirtan Tour was both a blissful and a challenging experience. Without a doubt, being able to dedicate yourself so much to book distribution was a great blessing and we got a lot of realisations by surrendering in this way. At the same time it was quite challenging. Book distribution is compared to a fire sacrifice whereby our unwanted habits are symbolically burned away. Sacrifice is sometimes a little painful, but all such difficulties ultimately pay off when one is able to experience Krishna Consciousness on a much deeper level and get so many realisations, blessings and the feeling that Sankirtan is real life: a life of adventure, emotions and the Lord's presence in your life.'



New Book Distribution (Sankirtan) Leadership

Divyanama Das, who has been functioning as Congregational Sankirtan Leader, will now become the overall Sankirtan Leader for Bhaktivedanta Manor. He has shown great enthusiasm, dynamism and dedication in expanding book distribution and the future looks very bright as congregational involvement grows. Bhakta Adam, from the mens' ashram, will oversee the temple sankirtan teams and will work alongside Divyanama Das in organising all sankirtan projects, including the annual Book Marathons.

We pray that all devotees will support them and actively participate as far as possible. We wish them all success in expanding this sacred activity of book distribution, which Srila Prabhupada himself established as "our family business."

**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE**



SHREE KRISHNA HAVELI PROJECT UPDATE



We are very pleased to say that construction is moving forward with great momentum. Any time lost due to unforeseeable conditions is being made up by working late and over the weekends. Works now completed include - kitchens and bakery, prasadam seva hall, ramps and stairwell to temple and paving. Gas and water utilities have been connected just leaving the new electric power station to be



connected. Works are in progress on the landscaping, chakra garden, painting and finishing, light fittings, reception finishing, Kirtan Hall roof battens, lighting and floor.

A huge thank you goes to those working hard to complete by November, to all those still raising funds, and to all of you for tolerating the present inconveniences due to construction.



YOUR INVESTMENT NEEDED

PROJECTED COST £9.6 MILLION

**DONATIONS
RECEIVED
£4,984,504**

**PLEDGES
OUTSTANDING
£3,629,229**

**SHORTFALL
£986,267**

WE ARE NEARLY THERE

ONLY 66 FAMILIES NEEDED

INVEST £4 A DAY - HELP BUILD SHREE KRISHNA HAVELI
for 10 years

LEAVE A LEGACY TODAY - MAKE HISTORY

**WE HAVE SECURED A LOAN OF £5 MILLION FROM THE BANK, AGAINST THE TEMPLE
AND IT'S ASSETS, ENSURING CONSTRUCTION DOES NOT STOP**



Boris Johnson

Anand Jatania, who serves in a communications role at Bhaktivedanta Manor, met Prime Minister Boris Johnson at a Hindu Temple in Uxbridge. Boris recalled the many times he had eaten vegetarian meals at the ISKCON-London temple, and looked forward to visiting Bhaktivedanta Manor and Avanti Schools one day. As a token, Anand presented the Prime Minister with a copy of 'In Essence'.



International Gita Seminar

At a huge event held at the University College London, Radha Mohan Das shared how Srila Prabhupada's translation and commentary of Bhagavad Gita As it Is gave him direction, inspiring him to embrace spiritual life 28 years ago. The event was organised by the International Kurusetra Development Board, and locally facilitated by the Hindu Council UK.



BBC1 Sunday Morning Live

Jai Nitai Das, ISKCON-London Temple President, was interviewed on BBC1 Sunday Morning Live, discussing food

and faith. Naturally he appeared in the section about vegetarian food and he presented a beautiful display of cakes offered to the Radha-Londonisvara deities.