

BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

April 2018



NEWSLETTER

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



An audience with
the Queen



Srila Prabhupada:

happiness of humanity at the cost of the lives of poor animals. That is not recommended herein. This verse clearly says that one should be compassionate to all living entities. Regardless of whether human, animal, tree or plant, all living entities are sons of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Srimad Bhagavatam 6.10.9 purport



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BHUMI PUJA FOR THE SHREE KRISHNA HAVELI

On the morning of Sunday 25th March, a special foundation laying ceremony for Bhaktivedanta Manor's elaborate Shree Krishna Haveli building project took place in the centre of the site. The ceremony included a traditional Vedic Bhumi Shanku Sthapana within the foundation pit, accompanied by the chanting of Sanskrit mantras and the ringing of bells. In the sacred arena, priests were joined by the building's design and planning team, monks adorned in saffron and senior Temple management.

After sacred items invoking auspiciousness were carefully placed deep into the pit, everybody was given the opportunity to add earth, thus working together as a community to signal the beginning of the construction stage of the project.





ENTIRE DAY IN GLORIFICATION OF RAMA

Sunday 25th March was the public festival which celebrates the auspicious Appearance of Lord Rama, called Ramanavami. The weather held out on what was the official beginning of spring in the UK, and the ancient world's perfect king was glorified throughout the entire day. The tent program began with a sweet and devotional presentation by Jayadev das and the children of the Manor School, followed by a class by Kripa Moya das.

Srutidharma das, Pranabandhu das, Gauri das and Vaishnava das then kept everyone up to speed with the Sri Krishna haveli project, including the launch of the sponsored Gita Walk.

Followed by the ceremonial bathing of the Rama Shila (sacred stone), devotees proceeded to the centre of the Haveli site to witness a traditional Vedic ceremony within the foundation pit, to

mark the outset of building work.

Immediately afterwards a core team of devotees descended upon the streets of Watford to continue the devotional celebrations in the form of a harinama chanting procession.

So much had already been done, yet by early afternoon that day pilgrims flocked in and the festivities continued with ever-greater flare. To the delight of the crowds, the flower-covered swan, carrying the ceremonial deities, led a grand procession around the Manor building whilst being serenaded with kirtan. Special guests included Bob Blackman MP, Hertsmere Councillors and Cllr Sachin Shah (Leader of Harrow Council).

Later the day was perfectly rounded off with dance, a Ramayan drama and bhajans.





Enthusiasm for Srimad Bhagavatam

February saw the launch of three study programmes on the Srimad Bhagavatam, a multi-volume Vedic literature, at three different venues. Traditional classroom-based courses now run at Bhaktivedanta Manor and ISKCON London - and a special new course has launched in cyberspace. The latter is proving popular with many around the UK and makes use of video conference technology. Participants and teachers can interact face-to-face in real-time.

Almost 60 students are enrolled on the three courses. The idea of studying Srimad Bhagavatam appeals to many students, who appreciate the chance to explore difficult topics and clarify doubts.

Courses in Progress:

Bhaktivedanta Manor:

Bhaktivaibhava Canto 1

ISKCON London:

Bhaktivaibhava Canto 4

On the web:

Bhagavata Online Canto 1

Queries:

bhagavatam@krishnatemple.com



New handy Q&A books

Have you ever had a niggling question about Krishna devotees' life - but didn't know whether you should ask?

Lost & Found is a new set of small books answering those questions. These 80-page books are intended for three distinct audiences:

- (1)** First-time visitors to the temple who have basic and frequently-asked questions.
 - (2)** Those raised nominally as Hindus but who still have lots of questions about their faith.
 - (3)** Beginners who have taken up the practice and want to know more details.
- The three books, written by Kripamoya das, are deliberately easy to read and are in a Q&A format. Complete with illustrations, and set into a slip-case, they make the perfect gift for an enquiring mind.

The books are available at the reception desk of Bhaktivedanta Manor, or from the online shop.



AN AUDIENCE WITH THE QUEEN

On 15th February, Sruti Dharma das, Temple President of Bhaktivedanta Manor, joined 1000 dignitaries from across the British Commonwealth at Buckingham Palace.

He was then invited to have a private audience with the Queen and other members of the Royal family.

Upon meeting Her Majesty, he discussed her visit to the Krishna Avanti School in 2015, which she remembered well. She also confirmed that the tapestry of Lord Chaitanya gifted to her hung on one of the walls of the Palace.

Sruti Dharma then spoke to Prince Charles about all the activities at Bhaktivedanta Manor, especially

organic farming and its reliance on ox-power. The Duchess of Cornwall, Camilla Parker Bowles, was particularly impressed with the humanitarian work of ISKCON.

Further meetings were with Prime Minister Theresa May and the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson. Boris recalled his student days when he used to visit the ISKCON-London temple. He would go there for a vegetarian lunch and simultaneously learn about the Hare Krishna mantra. Boris then requested for some prashadam (temple cooking) to be delivered to him at Parliament, and for Sailesh Vara MP to help him organise a special visit to the Manor.

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



Radha Govinda das describes some of the highlights from when he organised a pilgrimage to India for thirty 'first-timers':

Feb 17th – 18th, Haridwar: It's a land of mystical experiences and host to the Kumbha Mela. We take cable cars to go up one of the hills on the Southern Himalayan range to visit an ancient temple, and in the evening attend the famous River Ganga arati (ritual offering of light). Most are fascinated by the atmosphere!

Feb 19th, Rishikesh: We visit Vasistha Gufa – caves where the great sage Vasistha meditated for years. We all sit and meditate in there to have a feel for what it's like to sit in peace in the Himalayas! We then bathe in the water of the sacred Ganges.

Feb 20th – 23rd, Vrindavan: The spiritual potency of Krishna's hometown is such that they later declared was the best part of their trip. Over the next 3 days, many participated in the

temple's full morning program and we all visited many places of Krishna's activities. Many are inspired to chant the Hare Krishna mantra every day and those who are already chanters greatly increased their usual quota.

Feb 24th – 26th, Agra and Jaipur: After stopping at the Taj Mahal for a couple of hours we headed off to Jaipur to see the famous Radha Govinda deities, as well as other deities worshipped by the great followers of Lord Chaitanya. The pilgrims love the cultural and spiritual mix, and some observe fasting days. Elephant rides and a zoo are thrown into the mix!

Feb 27th – Mar 1st, Delhi: It's time to head home. Everyone's bonded so well and they don't want to go back! The trip's been a life changer for all. Krishna's worked His magic!

The pilgrimage was organised by the Krishna Wisdom team, which focuses on introducing Krishna consciousness to those completely new to the culture.



The Pandava Sena Mentorship Retreat 2018

The Mentorship Retreat 2018 lived up to its “hype” once again! 160 devotees from the mentorship system went to the beautiful Buckland Hall in the Brecon Beacons for an enlivening 3-day retreat, on the theme of “Inspired! How to live an empowered life as a devotee”

The Retreat was full of inspiring talks by Sacinandana Swami on the Srimad-Bhagavatam. His insights were truly eye-opening and gave attendees the opportunity to delve into the topics thoroughly.

Sucirani dasi spoke about the power of books and how best to utilise them to progress in our spiritual lives, and Q

and A sessions with Prana and Sruti Prabhu that enabled them to gain clarity on key topics. As always, the speciality of the retreat was gaining association with the multitude of senior devotees who took out time from their busy lives to spend with us. This gave them opportunities to associate with them in the sessions that they ran, which were interactive and provided practical tools.

The last day was full of festivities as always, including a fabulous mrdanga drum show, a play by “The Holy Skit” and a collaborative “mind-map” of the future of Pandava Sena, PS Alumni and other extended projects.





CELEBRATING LORD CHAITANYA'S ADVENT

At the beginning of March, devotees at Bhaktivedanta Manor celebrated the anniversary of the advent of Lord Chaitanya. The snow blizzard known as “the beast from the east” was in full force, although that didn’t stop the determined devotees from attending the festivities. They were virtually joined by a large audience watching online.

On the surface, we can understand Lord Chaitanya to be a God-conscious saint who appeared in India during the fifteenth century. However, the devotional Vedic literature further explains how He inaugurated the movement of bhakti (devotion to God). It also boldly asserts that He is the original supreme person, the absolute truth.

The festival included a delightful skit by the Bhaktivedanta Players depicting Lord Chaitanya’s advent, speeches by Chandramauli Swami and Srutidharma das, and 24 hours of kirtan (sacred musical chanting). The festival

participants also braved the intense cold to go out and perform kirtan in London’s West End.

A large tent was also erected for the celebrations, with the Bhaktivedanta Players performing a classic drama entitled, “The Age of Kali”. The drama shows how Lord Chaitanya’s advent has brought positivity and joy to a world otherwise adversely affected by quarrel and hypocrisy.

The deities of Lord Chaitanya and His brother Nityananda were ceremonially bathed to the accompaniment of kirtan, before being dressed in a vibrant yellow and white outfit beautified with flowers of the same colour. Vishvambhar das also sang a beautiful song he had written about Lord Chaitanya.

The visitors then gladly forgot the beast from the east to focus on the “feast from the east”, a wonderful feast of food items offered to Lord Chaitanya!





The Senior Rabbi of Reform Judaism UK

Laura Naomi Janner-Klausner, who serves as the senior rabbi to Reform Judaism in the UK, visited Bhaktivedanta Manor to learn more about Krishna Consciousness. Her visit was facilitated by Krish Raval, head of Faith in Leadership.



Herts Police Officer visits the Manor

Sergeant Ricki Vaughan, the new Community Safety officer for Hertfordshire Constabulary, made a special visit to Bhaktivedanta Manor to learn more about its community. He was hosted by the Temple Manager, Trinadasi das.



Royal Military Academy consults leading devotee

Kripamoya Das was invited to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst to attend a workshop staged by the British Army's Centre for Conflict Research. The event, attracted participants from the fields of religion, academics and the Army. The day featured panel discussions with serving British Army officers as well as practitioners from a wide range of faith traditions in the UK.



ISKCON Leadership Sanga

Devaki dasi represented Bhaktivedanta Manor at this year's ISKCON Leadership Sanga (ILS) meetings in Mayapur, West Bengal.

The ILS provides a unique opportunity for a cross-pollination of thoughts and a chance for devotees to observe the ISKCON world from a global perspective.



EastEnders star visits Manor

EastEnders' new star Madhav Sharma, who plays the part of Arshad Ahmed, paid a visit to the Manor. He discovered that he shared the same school as Srila Prabhupada, namely the Scottish Church College in Calcutta. Madhav, a Royal Academy trained actor, enjoyed standing on the Manor theatre stage and decided to recite a portion of one of William Shakespeare's plays!



First Aiders

Tutorcare, a vocational training provider, awarded pass certificates to 12 community devotees who they trained in basic first aid skills. The training included procedures in case on a medical emergency on site, recognising symptoms and appropriate initial treatment, calling for help, minimalizing infection and resuscitation.



Pilgrims from Canterbury

Mantra Caitanya das, one of the leaders of the Krishna Conscious Society of Kent University, brought a group of twelve students for a special day-trip to Bhaktivedanta Manor. "Each of them fell in love with the place and they are desperate to return," he explained, "It was a wonderful follow-

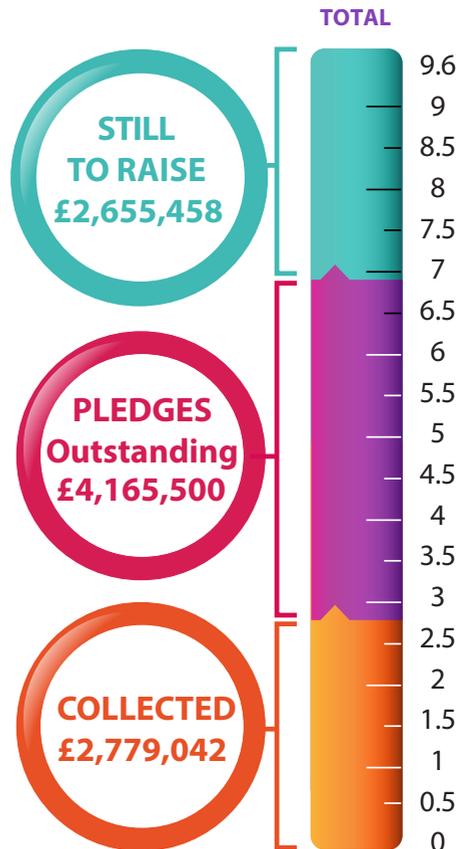
up event to what we are doing at the university. Some students had seen us doing harinam processions, some had come to our recent festival, some had received Srila Prabhupada's books and some had received prasadam which we distribute on campus after our weekly program.

SRI KRISHNA HAVELI PROJECT UPDATE



Now that the relocations works have been completed, construction on the Shree Krishna Haveli has started. To ensure the continuation of the works, we have secured a loan of £7 million which will be serviced by the donations raised through all your contributions.

- New access roads to the car parks are complete.
- New Tulsi Houses are complete, and Tulasi Devi has moved in.
- Radharani’s Bakery and Gift Shop have been relocated.
- The Manor Primary School & Nursery has been relocated.
- Children’s Playground will not be available during the construction period.
- Foundation laying ceremony complete.
- The Haveli site has been handed to the contractors.
- Please be mindful of construction vehicles and work.





- Our Heartfelt thanks to all who have pledged their support for this historic project.
- A further £2.66 million is required.
- We need another ~~265~~ 177 families to give just £4 a day for 10 years.
- Alone we can do little, together with Krishna's grace we can do so much.

Make a Difference
give £4 per day, to get us rest of the way

To contribute towards the Shree Krishna Haveli, Contact Vaisnava das:
haveli@krishnatemple.com - 07907 809 006 - www.krishnatemple.com/haveli



SACRED TULASI PLANT GRACES HER NEW HOME



In early February, all the sacred Tulasi plants were carefully transferred from their former greenhouses into their impressive new ones on the Manor site. The Tulasi plant is manifested by the goddess Vrinda-devi, who makes arrangements for Lord Krishna's activities to occur in a way that is pleasing to Him.

Soon after Tulasi was transferred, the deity of Vrinda-devi was then ceremoniously escorted into her new home with pomp and ceremony.

After traditional songs and prayers, the devotees honoured the plants by

walking in a circle around the new greenhouses, an activity which is said to bestow great spiritual benefit. During the speech which followed, Gauri das commented, "Importantly, we must all thank Lilavati dasi for her many years of serving Tulasi, with such care and dedication".

Lilavati dasi would like to thank all those who came to offer service in the transferring of Tulasi devi from one house to the other it went wonderfully smooth. and special thanks to Prahlad Dainton for the numerous services he rendered to help move Tulasi.





Radharani's Bakery Relocates

Radharani's Bakery has been relocated on site to allow for the building of the new Haveli community facility. It is now situated next to the main kitchen, where the Manor School used to be.

"We will be working under the guidance of Dalshuk and Vijay Jetani," explained Purushottama das. "They run Namaste,

a chain of successful veggie/vegan restaurants in Norwich. They will be working hard with the devotees here to push forward new exciting menu ideas, and helping to improve the quality of our products.

"Please all come along, we look forward to serving you all soon!"



Down on the Farm

On the auspicious day of Sankranti, one of New Gokul's cows Gangotri gave birth to a baby calf. Sonal, a volunteer who has done enormous service in the farm named her Gita. Gita initially suffered from pneumonia due to the cold weather, but she is doing fine now. Artificial insemination is not practiced at New Gokul. To widen the gene pool New Gokul acquired another 6-month-old bull calf for breeding purposes. The donors Snehal and Emma named him Hari. Hari was not comfortable with

humans when he first arrived but with the love and affection he's settled down nicely.

Partha, a popular oxen, left his body due to heart attack early this year at the age of 12. During his life Partha served no less than 800 hours of ox-work, included giving cart rides for visiting school children, ploughing, harrowing, hay making etc. He was also part of the team which carried the Temple's utsav (ceremonial) Radha Gokulananda deities on special occasions.



Ombudsman Programme for ISKCON UK

It's one thing for an organization to say they care for its members, and another to act on such statements. ISKCON UK is establishing an Ombuds program so devotees can raise concerns, dealing with interpersonal conflicts and find clarity on ISKCON policies and practices.

Vraja Vihari das from ISKCON Resolve, has been training up a team to work in this capacity. They are from different parts of the UK and are a diverse group of devotees, including His Holiness Dayananda Swami, Prabhupada Prana dasa, Chandra dasi, Gomati dasi, Guru Carana Padma dasi and Ananta Vijay dasa.

The idea is to work towards "zero barriers"- so that members of ISKCON should be able to raise, in good faith, concerns they have, and discuss how they can be addressed.

ISKCON UK Ombuds are totally confidential (except imminent risk), independent of management in their capacity of Ombuds, neutral, and informal (conversations are off the record).

iskconombudsuk@gmail.com



Mayor honours 5th Anniversary of 'Gratitude'

On 14th March Gratitude celebrated its 5th Anniversary with a three course vegetarian feast. Special guests included the Mayor of Hertsmere Cllr Charles Goldstein Hertsmere and the former Mayor of Borehamwood, Cllr Clive Butchins. After inspirational speeches and a film about the charity by a BBC composer, there was a community cooking workshop and live music by Paul Lomax and friends.

Gratitude saves fruit and vegetables from waste and use it to benefit people in need in the community, via social gatherings that are educational in terms of healthy life style.

Photo: The Mayor of Hertsmere Cllr Charles Goldstein with the founders of Gratitude, Shantasya dasi dasi. and Japa Yajna das.



NEW FOOD FOR ALL CHARITY KITCHEN

The Food for All (FFA) charity team are now able to double the daily quantity of meals they prepare.

Considering the growth demands on both FFA and the Manor, Bhaktivedanta Manor contributed £50,000 towards the cost of establishing FFA's very own purpose built kitchen in the City of London.

The FFA team are now distributing over 1200 plates of free prasad (vegetarian food) to the homeless community and university students every day.

FFA director Parasuram has called the new premises "Krishna's Castle" due to its internal décor. "It is located in a great spot," he explained, "and already

we've had a number of people from nearby banks coming forward to help out in their free time! We plan to supply prasad to all the day centres and night shelters in London.

"The Castle is located in the heart of the student area, so we are planning to have four cargo rickshaws full of prasad going to SOAS, UCL, LSE and Kings University. We have built a rickshaw book exhibition complete with dioramas and video presentations. We also have an all-day Thursday Harinam and an evening program in the Castle's temple room!"

The address is Krishna Castle, Plumtree Court, 30 Holborn Viaduct, EC1A 2AT





Deputy Lord Lieutenant

Vinay Tanna, the Head of Communications Operations at Bhaktivedanta Manor, has been duly appointed as one of the Deputy Lord Lieutenants of Hertfordshire.

Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, Mr Robert Voss, first met Vinay during his visit to the Manor's Janmashtami festival last year, and felt he was "perfect for the role" and recommended him to the Secretary of State.

Mr Robert Voss represents the Queen at various events throughout Hertfordshire. The function of the Deputy Lieutenant is to attend any function on behalf of the Lord Lieutenant, whenever the need arises.



Conscious Leadership

Radhanath Swami was invited to speak on the subject of 'Conscious Leadership' at the Houses of Parliament last month. The event was sponsored by Shailesh Vara MP and attended by representatives of all Parties, including the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Faith and Society, Mr Stephen Timms MP.

Radhanath Swami's presentation was preceded by a more intimate meeting in Shailesh Vara MP's office, which also included Lord Dholakia, Baroness Warsi, Seema Malhotra MP, Oliver Dowden MP and the Prime Minister's Special Adviser on faith and communities, Mr Jonathan Hellewell.