

BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

NEWSLETTER

December 2017



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



Diwali



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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Srila Prabhupada's
Disappearance



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Bhakti Retreat

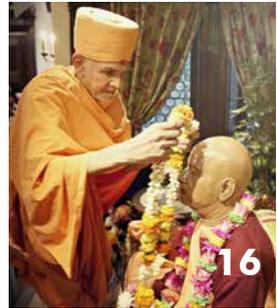
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comments to: Radha Mohan das
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DIWALI FESTIVAL LIVE ON BBC RADIO

Thousands of pilgrims came to the Manor in mid-October to celebrate Diwali, the 'festival of lights', which was covered live by BBC Three Counties Radio. During this joyous occasion, complimentary delicious vegetarian food was provided to each and every one of the visitors, who were treated to a day of colourful drama, dance, face painting and henna, with the festivities culminating in a grand evening firework display.

Diwali celebrates the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness, and relates to the activities of the incarnation

of God known as Lord Rama, the ideal king. Rama was the crown prince in the city of Ayodhya, but due to a plot within His family, He was banished to the forest for 14 years. When Rama finally returned to Ayodhya, the jubilant citizens decorated the city with thousands of lamps to welcome Him. Diwali marks the anniversary of this event.

Among the highlights was the Bhaktivedanta Players' play on the Ramayana, the scripture which describes the heroic activities of Lord Rama. Temple President Srutidharma





Dasa said: "Bhaktivedanta Manor's Diwali celebrations were spectacular this year – the fireworks against the famous Manor building have been an iconic celebration of this wonderful festival. Visitors brought along their friends, family and kids, and everyone had a wonderful time!"

Special guests at the event included The Deputy Mayor of London for Business Mr Rajesh Agarwal, Oliver Dowden MP, Richard Harrington MP, Lord Jitesh Gadhia, the Deputy Mayor of Hertsmere Cllr Brenda Batten and Cllr Sachin Shah and Cllr Navin Shah from the GLA.



A HILL MADE OF DELICIOUS SWEETS

On the day after Diwali, the festival of Govardhana Puja was celebrated at Bhaktivedanta Manor. It recounts when the elders in Krishna's village were preparing food offerings for the demigod in charge of the supply of rain, Indra.

Krishna however convinced His elders to instead give the offerings to the local Govardhana Hill, since it provided grass to all the cows, the lifeblood of the village. Outraged, Indra retaliated with terrifying thunderstorms. For seven days and seven nights the Lord held up Govardhan Hill, providing a giant umbrella to shelter the inhabitants of Vrindavan from the torrential rain. In this way, Lord Krishna demonstrated that we should never become too proud of our position. Krishna was gracious with

Indra and reinstated him.

Lord Krishna gave great importance to the cows and govardhan thus its customary for the cows and bulls to be worshipped on this day, and so at noon the Manor cows were honoured with a ceremony in the cow sanctuary. The Vedic scriptures state that all aspects of divinity reside in the body of a cow. Because she is so dear to Krishna, we attain divine blessings by honouring and protecting her.

The devotees built a lavish replica of Govardhan Hill made of a variety of colourful sweets and savouries offered to Krishna. Lord Krishna is worshipped as the lifter of Govardhan Hill, which in turn is worshipped as His incarnation. The delicious food items were then distributed to the thousands of visitors.





Diwali at Number 10

Pranabandhu das and Srutidharma das were invited to 10 Downing Street for the Prime Minister's annual Diwali event. Srutidharma das lead the prayers and delivered the seasonal message.

Priti Patel MP, former Secretary of State for International Development, attended on behalf of the PM. In her keynote speech she explained, "Education is the forefront of Hindu community's work. In that light, I am glad to see we have students from the Avanti Court in Redbridge here".



Diwali in London with the Mayor

Diwali in London celebrated its 16th anniversary at Trafalgar Square. Once again it was a very successful event and the atmosphere was simply charged with energy with all Londoners uniting to share goodwill of Diwali. Sanjay Gadhvi representing ISKCON, helps with the event along with various diverse organisations working en masse with the Mayor of London.



Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre

Srutidharma das with Zac Goldsmith MP and Gopichand Hinduja at a function in honour of Dada JP Vaswani hosted at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster.



British Community Honours

Congratulations to Councillors Charles Kelly & Morris Bright of Hertsmere Borough Council, who received the British Community Honours award at a ceremony at the House of Lords in October.



BBC Radio 4

Vishva Samani from BBC Radio 4 interviewed Gauri das as part of a feature about vegetarian and vegan principles in the British Hindu community in response to Dina Aherne's online petition against temples using dairy from the dairy industry. "If temples honour the cow should they be buying such milk"?



Diwali at the Watford Palace Theatre

At this year's Diwali seasonal showcase at the Watford Palace Theatre, the audience were treated to a variety show which included a premier version of The Ramayan by the Bhaktivedanta Players. This new play, which was 45 minutes long, was staged by a dedicated team of over 25 devotees. On the same night the Pandava Sena performed the popular shadow play about the Bhagavad-gita.



Nainika Allergy Safety Campaign

As thousands gathered for the Diwali fireworks at Bhaktivedanta Manor, the temple leaders and a host of community and political leaders took to the stage to launch the Nainika Tikoo Memorial Trust's allergy awareness campaign. Lakshmi Kaul and Vinod Tikoo spoke of the tragic loss of their beloved 9-year-old daughter, Nainika, who lost her life this year due to a massive allergic reaction.

As the number of allergy-sufferers increases in the UK, temples need to be aware, and make others aware of the ingredients and allergens in food. Managing Director of Bhaktivedanta Manor Gauri das announced: 'we are honoured to become partners of Nainika's Trust. We need to make places of worship safe for allergy-sufferers. We need to do this for Nainika'.

The Nainika Gold Standard can be achieved once a set of criteria, such as correct labelling, warnings, and first aid response, are put in place.

If you would like to sign up to the #NainikaAllergySafety campaign or know more about the #NainikaGoldStandard please write to: nainikatikoomemorialtrust@gmail.com



40th Anniversary of Srila Prabhupada's Disappearance

23rd October marked 40 years since Srila Prabhupada passed away in the holy land of Vrindavan in India.

In 1977, Bhaktivedanta Manor and ISKCON-London temple were the last two temples Srila Prabhupada visited before returning to India.

On his Disappearance Day, a team of devotees headed by Sarvamangala dasi decorated the top landing, stairwell and Srila Prabhupada's rooms with memorabilia photos, candles and flowers. The palanquin that was used to carry Srila Prabhupada during this visit to the Manor in 1977 was beautifully decorated and displayed on the top landing. Meanwhile, the sound of Srila Prabhupada chanting Hare Krishna Mantra was playing throughout the day. In the temple room, Srila Prabhupada's murti was decorated with a beautiful backdrop, which added to the mood of the day which included remembrances, abhikseka (bathing) of Srila

Prabhupada's image and pushpanjali (flower offerings).

The Manor community youth made a special effort this year, by making 256 different food and drink offerings to Srila Prabhupada in his room.

"As the team was setting everything up, we discovered and utilised a variety of creative skills for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada," explained Sarvamangala dasi.

"Often it seems as if Srila Prabhupada left us so recently, but actually it was 40 years ago, which is a long time. I find it almost inconceivable that it has been that long, time has flown by. It is intense not to have seen someone you love so much for 40 years. Yet if we enter the top landing and Srila Prabhupada's darshan rooms in the right mood and etiquette, we can immediately sense his presence there, as if he were physically with us today."

Celebrating Yashoda's love for Krishna



From early October to early November, the Manor celebrated the month of Kartik. Lord Krishna is famous for attracting us by His enchanting activities. One such enchanting activity was performed by the Lord when He was a small child in the month of Kartik. The mischievous Krishna stole butter and proceeded to feed it to the village monkeys. Mother Yashoda punished Krishna to make sure He would learn not to act so mischievously again. To remember this wonderful loving exchange, during this month, devotees daily offered candles in the morning and evening to Mother Yashoda and child Krishna. While candles were offered, devotees sang the Damodarastakam, a beautiful eight-verse poem about

Dussehra – Victory of Lord Rama



Hundreds of festival-goers braved the grey, gloomy skies to attend the Dusshera celebration at the Manor on the first Sunday of October. The rapt audience was then treated to a production of the Ramayana by the Pandava Sena, which culminated in Lord Rama firing the arrow which set the evil ten-headed Ravana alight. Cheers of victory, “Jaya Lord Rama” and delight rose from the crowd as the effigy of Ravana was engulfed in flames. Temple President Srutidharma das invited everyone to look internally to seek and blot out their own ‘Ravana-like heads’ of bad qualities such as anger, which hamper progress in spiritual life.



Bhakti Shastri Course

Another cohort of Bhakti Shastri students graduated in early October. The course is now in its successful 11th year at the Manor and this tranche of students studied according to ISKCON Board of Examination guidelines, thereby becoming eligible to receive an ISKCON recognised certificate. The Bhakti Shastri course is a wonderful opportunity to systematically study Srila Prabhupada's books in the association of devotees. Students not only develop a good knowledge of the scriptures, but crucially also learn how to apply it to their daily lives.

bhaktishastri@krishnatemple.com



Social Media Training

Though temples and devotees do have a solid presence on social media, the big question remains, how effective is that presence? To examine this question, devotees from across the UK came together at Bhaktivedanta Manor for a weekend of social media training.

The invited speaker was Avelo Roy (Ajita das), entrepreneur, investor, educator and motivational speaker. Over the two days, Avelo was both entertaining and full of abundant information from his experience of social media.

"ISKCON needs to be on people's phones, tablets and TVs" said Avelo. www.aveloroy.com



Ceremonial Welcome for Ayurvedic specialist

Saurabh das and Narayan das ceremoniously welcomed Dr Vasant Lad to Bhaktivedanta Manor, to mark the outset of this year's annual Ayurvedic Retreat. Dr Lad is an author, Ayurvedic physician, professor and director of the Ayurvedic Institute in Albuquerque in New Mexico, USA.



Deity-welcoming at Avanti House Primary

On Saturday 21st October, Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda deities were welcomed to Avanti House Primary School in Stanmore. The ceremony was conducted by His Grace Kripamoya das, while His Grace Pranabandhu das and His Grace Srutidharma das spoke inspirational words for all present. The audience comprised of some staff, pupils, parents and volunteers of the school community. The welcoming of the deities marks a very special occasion at the school, and will give the chance for the children to be able to perform their collective worship in front of the deities.



Outstanding results for Avanti House School

Avanti House Secondary received its first set of GCSE results. The school opened in 2012, with only year 7, and has grown year on year. The school is very proud of the students and staff for achieving fantastic results. The overall results have so far indicated Avanti House having the second highest results in the borough of Harrow. The new government measure of 'progress 8' places the school in the category of the 'top 12% in the country.' The school saw extraordinary results in maths, with all students sitting Further Mathematics attaining A*- A grades. Though the government indicated that only 2-3% of students across the country were expected to attain the new grade 9 measure, 14% of AHS students acquired this rare grade in Mathematics. Results were strong across other subjects as well.



Fifty devotees from the College of Vedic studies courses (CVS), had a spiritually stimulating few days in the form of a retreat at the magnificent Buckland Hall. Nestled somewhere in the beautiful, charming emerald valleys of Brecon Beacons in Wales, it was the perfect opportunity for devotees to take stock of things, think outside the box and spiritually recharge themselves.

The grand old mansion provided the perfect opportunity for devotees to go deep into their Krishna consciousness. As well as learning from and encouraging each other, devotees were able to enjoy the gorgeous scenery. The gathering was also graced by the presence of a plethora of distinguished speakers; most notably His Holiness

Candramauli Swami.

There was an array of fantastic, devotional activities set up for the attendees, relished by all.

“This retreat was one of the best experiences of my life! For me, the great thing was that it perfectly catered for new devotees and what they need to really experience Krishna Consciousness in a practical, deep and fun way. A wonderful way to spend a few valuable days. These retreats happen throughout the year and are available to anyone who wants to sincerely practice Krishna consciousness. I would encourage everyone to go for it. You’ll be glad you did!”

Asha Bhimji





Golden Avatar Retreat

Although His Holiness Jayapataka Swami's health condition is quite delicate at the moment, he nonetheless made a special effort to visit the UK for the retreat as well as an initiation ceremony at Bhaktivedanta Manor. Special guests included Bhakti Purushottama Swami, Revati Raman das & Sri vallabha das. The 3 day retreat was held at the Krishna Avanti School in Stanmore. The theme was sharing the message of Lord Shri Chaitanya, especially during the holy month of Kartik.



Inaugural Kirtan London 'Bhakti Immersion' Retreat

Kirtan London had its first Bhakti Immersion Retreat, at Buckland Hall in Wales. It was really a heart-warming experience, mostly because of the lovely people that came to take part, but also thanks to the uplifting surroundings and hard work of all the facilitators and retreat centre staff. Kripamoya das also attended and delivered some dynamic talks.

There are plans to hold retreats annually, with shorter long weekends and day retreats throughout the year.

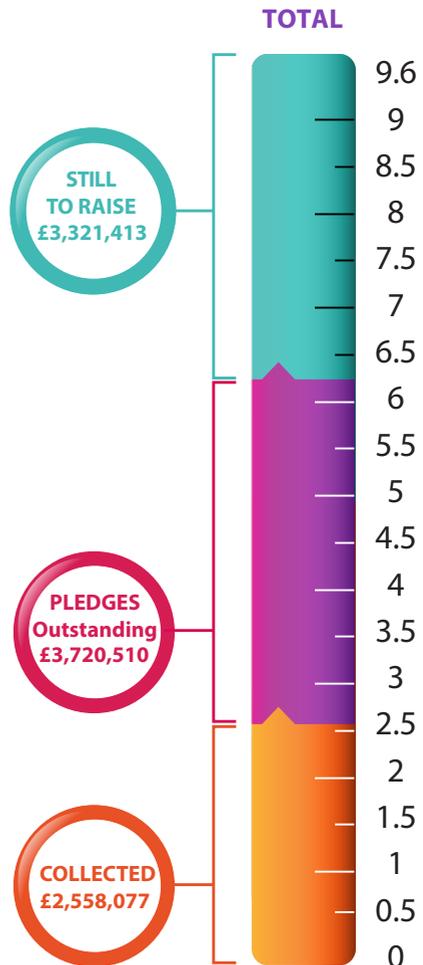
For more information about Kirtan London, visit www.kirtanlondon.com

SRI KRISHNA HAVELI PROJECT UPDATE



After many months of looking at tenders from over 6 different companies, we are now working with Vascroft Contractors on valued engineering. Vascroft Contractors have over 40 years experience in construction, and have built many such projects for our communities around the UK.

- Enabling works have begun
- Poly tunnels for Krishna’s flowers have moved
- New access roads to the car parks are complete.
- The resident ladies ashram has been relocated for the construction period.
- The Pre-School has been relocated for the construction period.
- The construction of the interim facilities for the Manor Primary School is complete.
- New Tulsi green house is almost complete.
- Value engineering to make sure the costs stay within budget are being carried out before the full work commences.





**Our Heartfelt thanks to all
who have pledged their support.**

A further £3.3 million is required.

**We need another ~~265~~ 222 families to
give £4 a day for 10 years.**

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





Bhakti Unites Us

Following a visit to the BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Neasden, Srutidharma das invited the BAPS international spiritual head His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj to the Manor. Despite the Swami's tight schedule, the invitation was duly accepted.

Mahant Swami Maharaj, along with Atma Swarup Swami and BAPS European head Yogvivek Swami, were received with mantras, lamps and a shower of flower petals. In the temple, Mahant Swami prayed to the

presiding deities Shree Shree Radha Gokulananda and offered a garland to the murti of Srila Prabhupada. Sitting in the sacred rooms of Srila Prabhupada, Mahant Swami address the gathering of ISKCON and BAPS leaders:

"From the moment I received your invitation, I had decided to accept. Bhakti has brought us together. Bhakti unites us, when embraced with das-anudas bhava (the spirit of unconditional love and service)."



The Pioneering spirit of Africa

As part of a global ISKCON initiative to support worldwide centres, and simultaneously expose preachers to new environments, Sutapa das was assigned to visit Nigeria and contribute to the preaching there. During the two weeks, Sutapa conducted a variety of seminars and classes for the temple devotees. He also went out on harinam and book distribution to support the expansion

of outreach in local areas. There were also two television interviews and radio programmes where the topic of “inner peace & world peace” was discussed. Reflecting on his visit, Sutapa said: “it was a wonderful opportunity to travel and serve there. I actually received so much inspiration by meeting devotees who have been serving with tremendous dedication for so many years.”



Advisors to the Malaysian government

A team of advisors to the Malaysian government on contemporary issues and multiculturalism made a special visit to Bhaktivedanta Manor recently. The delegation was part of a month long tour of the UK designed to help Malaysian leaders learn how to best deal with diverse religions and social values in their own country.



Benedictine monks

You never know who will drop into Bhaktivedanta Manor! Radha Mohan das was delighted to warmly greet two Benedictine monks from Ealing Abbey. Brother James Leachman and Father Bernd Leygraf had a series of informal theological discussions and cross-cultural exchanges with the devotees.



Chasing Rhinos with the Swami

Shyamasundar das spent several weeks based at the Manor to launch his captivating new book in the UK. "Chasing Rhinos with the Swami – Volume One" took him four years to write and sales in the UK have been going very well. The book is an engaging and personal account of ISKCON's pioneering days in San Francisco and London, under the direct guidance of Srila Prabhupada.

Shyamasundar das enlivened devotees at the Manor and beyond with his precious memories of Srila Prabhupada's mood in those early days, with humour, honesty and optimism, often using his slogan "It was Krishna's

magic!"

Shyamasundar das was instrumental to the establishment of ISKCON in San Francisco and was amongst the three couples who gained a substantial foothold in London. He was responsible for befriending George Harrison and John Lennon, which led to invaluable assistance from The Beatles in the late 1960's. He remained George Harrison's friend for the rest of his life.

Copies of Chasing Rhinos with the Swami are available at the Manor reception.

www.chasingrhinos.com



Vrajanath das

Vrajanath das recently passed away in Vrindavan during the month of Kartik. From the early 80s, he began to regularly host devotees at his home and quickly engaged his extended family in devotional service at the Manor. Vrajanath das was a pujari for over 20 years, and spent his retirement working in the Manor gardens.



St Albans Cathedral

Godruma das was warmly welcomed during his first visit to the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire's Civic Service at St Albans Cathedral. He and Radha Mohan das met dignitaries from across the county, including the Bishop of St Albans Revd Alan Smith.



The Force is with him

Mark Hamill, the actor known for playing 'Luke Skywalker' in the Star Wars franchise, was glad to receive a few books of Srila Prabhupada. Dharmaraja das met the actor at a convention in Athens.



Inaugural MSF Book Distribution Festival

The first Monthly Sankirtan (Book Distribution) Festival (MSF) was held at Bhaktivedanta Manor on Saturday 7th October, the first day of Kartik.

"MSF is a fun way to distribute books and gets everyone, including the children, involved," explained Bhakta Nikhil, head of book distribution at Bhaktivedanta Manor. "It is a proven way to bring people together for complete spiritual nourishment. These festivals are based on the strategy that it's best to have a lot of devotees each doing a little bit.



"All we are looking to do is 'TOUCH THE PAVEMENT', by just going to the high streets in a mood of compassion to share this 'king of all knowledge' with everyone, and in the process of touching the ground, if any books get distributed, that will be a well-earned bonus.

"We had a team of devotees doing Harinam (singing and playing instruments), a team that set up a table outside with books, and a team that went shop-to-shop, door-to-door."



Krishna Wisdom aired on BBC Radio 2 with Chris Evans

Jahnavi Jivana dasi has been presenting 3-minute 'Pause for Thought' slots on BBC Radio 2 for the last year, broadcast at 9.20am on the Chris Evans Breakfast Show. The same production company that produces these episodes (TBI Media), produces Something Understood, a long running programme on Radio 4. It examines the intersection of spiritual and secular life, through music, poetry, and narrative. The producers invited Jahnavi Jivana dasi to make a contribution, and she

has featured in three episodes so far.

"I wrote a script for a radio programme based on Something Understood in my final year studying English at university," she explained. "So it was amazing to me that 8 years later I actually got to do it for real! So far, I've had opportunity to share through the broadcasts wisdom regarding the holy name, as well as the words of Srila Rupa Goswami, Lord Chaitanya, Srila Prabhupada and the Bhagavatam."

Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

The Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire Mr Robert Voss was so impressed by his visit to the Manor for the Janmashtami festival, that he was eager to come again soon after. This time he brought his wife and was hosted by Kripa Moya das. Robert Voss has been to India many times, and he explained that he found it fascinating.

