

BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

NEWSLETTER

October 2017



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



JANMASHTAMI
2017



Srila Prabhupada:

Our Hare Krishnaa movement is standing on three principal things: chanting, dancing, and eating prasadam. It is not very difficult. It is very enjoyable to chant, dance, and take prasadam. And if you like, you can hear a little philosophy of this movement.

Ratha-yatra -- London, July 13, 1972



8

The Backbone
of the Manor's Festivals



10

10

Appearance day of
Srila Prabhupada



12

14

Haveli update

18

Mother Kulangana



16

Please send your news, photos and
comments to: Radha Mohan das
newsletter@krishnatemple.com



Bhaktivedanta Manor
Dharam Marg · Hilfield Lane Aldenham · Herts
(for sat-nav only, please use postcode WD25 8HE)
01923 851000 www.krishnatemple.com

© 2017, All articles & photographs
copyright of Bhaktivedanta Manor



A SPIRITUAL WONDERLAND FOR KRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

On the 13th and 15th of August, Bhaktivedanta Manor celebrated its famous Sri Krishna Janmashtami festival, transforming the serene temple grounds into a resplendent festival site brimming with tents.

As Temple President Srutidharma das said, “usually Janmashtami is

celebrated with song and dance and a specially-decorated altar, but here we create a spiritual Disneyland, a day out for the family.”

A large crowd was attracted to the bright and lively Kirtan (devotional music) Tent, which had a band playing a plethora of musical instruments such as guitars, the tabla (hand drum) and mridanga (clay drum). These instruments accompanied the melodious voices of singers from across the UK. It was a common sight over the two days to see the crowd joyfully dancing with devotion.

The tent run by the resident monks showcased a hilarious yet thought-provoking play. It was about a king and his four wives, three of whom





represented different attachments within this world: possessions, family and friends, and the body. The fourth wife represented Krishna who is neglected until it is too late!

The play encouraged people pay attention to the fourth wife by signing up to a course or subscribing to the Back to Godhead magazine.

One of the most innovative contributions to the festival this year was the Pandava Sena tent. The youth organisation put on a clever and mesmerising shadow performance of the Bhagavad Gita. A brainchild of new members of Pandava Sena, the performance gave new light to the traditional wisdom of the Gita.

Science of the Soul, in its second year now, was a relatively new attraction. Led by devotees who are also qualified scientists, it used verified science and



proven logic to explain why the concept of a conscious soul makes sense, without using spiritual terminology or any philosophy.

The “Veggie Steady Cook” tent, much like the similarly-named television show “Ready Steady Cook”, was a barrel of laughs! Two teams of cooks had to prepare a vegetarian dish whilst presenters told the audience about the virtues of a vegetarian diet.

Krishna Land, the children’s area, was bursting full of colour and activity as always. As well as having the opportunity to get face-painting, gopi-dots and henna done, children were also able to enjoy a bouncy castle, swing baby Krishna, and watch some fantastic plays acted out by fellow kids.

As the UK’s foremost centre for cow protection and working oxen, New Gokul farm provided adults and





children alike the opportunity to feed the animals, learn about the poor state of cows in the modern dairy industry and understand the significance of cows and bulls in Vedic culture. Visitors could also purchase dairy products made at the cruelty-free farm.

The mantra meditation garden was a beautiful, quaint escape from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the festival. Set with 108 stepping-stones, Srila Prabhupada's chanting playing in the background, as well as lovely flowers and shrubbery dotting the area, the garden was decorated with visitors taking a moment to chant the Hare Krishna mantra. Over 7,000 pilgrims chanted the Mahamantra.

Meanwhile, the stage programme inside the main marquee was as vibrant as ever, with a variety of kirtan and dance groups. His Holiness Bhakti

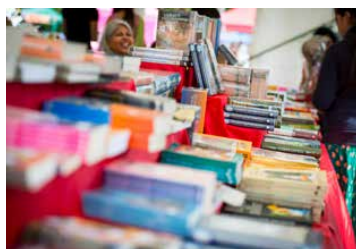


Charu Swami delivered an interactive presentation, while the Bhaktivedanta Players exclusively premiered their "Krishna Kaliya" drama.

A musical highlight of the festival was the performance by the Babaji Reggae Band. They turned the main tent into a concert full of both classical Indian and reggae-style songs, that made the crowd jump to their feet and dance to the beat.

The final show on the day of Janmashtami was a beautifully produced play by the older members of the Pandava Sena, depicting the birth of Lord Krishna. With the conclusion of the play, abhishek (ceremonial bathing) of the deities was performed on the stage and the assembled devotees offered flowers during the midnight aarti (lamp offering).









THE BACKBONE OF THE MANOR'S FESTIVALS

Bhaktivedanta Manor is described aptly as a true sanctuary for the soul, a spiritual haven. And so what better place can there be to volunteer for Janmashtami 2017. His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami (GBC Chairman, ISKCON) describes the Janmashtami celebration at Bhaktivedanta Manor as the best in the whole world. This is only possible because of the sincere commitment from a huge team of dedicated volunteers who take part in all the temple's activities.

In preparation for the festival, volunteers attend a training programme and this year, our theme was "Atithi Devo Bhava" meaning "the guest should be treated like God." The focus was on being very welcoming to guests and serving them nicely.

"This year alone, roughly 1,600 served on both festival days," said Volunteer Care Council (VCC) Team Leader,

Krishna Purna dasi. She heads a team of 22 dedicated VCC members, who helped manage administrative duties, organise volunteer training and registering. They allocated volunteers to various Janmashtami services. Each service was led by a team leader, most of whom have worked in that service for over 20 years. For all volunteers training was mandatory, with VCC members ensuring their assigned volunteers were nicely looked after.

Preparation for Janmashtami started 3 weeks before the festival. The kitchens were busy every day from noon to 10pm. About 200 volunteers came after work to serve every evening. Evening meals of prasadam (food offered to Krishna) were daily provided for volunteers during this period.

There was an air of pure excitement and positive energy during the preparation work, as well as a great degree of



anticipation.

When asked “Why do you like volunteering at the Manor” these were some of the responses:

“Volunteering at the Manor helps me to connect to other devotees.”

“Volunteering is a devotional experience.”

“It gave me a chance to explore new experiences and create beautiful memories.”

“I want to please Srila Prabhupada.”

Volunteers Thank You Evening

The Evening was held on 1st September this year, which was attended by over 1000 volunteers!

The VCC team arranged a fun quiz with some great prizes, with the pizza tent team taking away the first prize!

After an introduction by Farish Lakhani,

Srutidharma das reminded everybody of the importance of serving and that there are no age limits in order to volunteer. He mentioned how the late Mother Kulangana, gave 45 years of continuous dedication in serving at the Temple. Lila Masi was also mentioned, who at the age of 85, is another example of an exemplary role model. Then there was an update on the Sri Krishna Haveli by Gauri das, the brilliant shadow performance on the Bhagavad Gita, by the Pandava Sena. Finally, Krishna Purna dasi, the volunteer coordinator thanked everyone for their hard work and enthusiasm in helping to make Janamashtami so successful this year.

If you are interested in volunteering for Bhaktivedanta Manor, contact: volunteer@krishnatemple.com



Radhashtami: Festival of the Supreme Goddess

The birthday celebrations of Lord Krishna's consort Radharani, known as Radhashtami, is always the sweetest of events. It is described that She is the chief associate and devotee of Lord Krishna, and the origin of all goddesses. Apart from being the topmost worshipper of Krishna, She is also an expansion of His energy. Since She is also an extension of Krishna, She is the feminine aspect of God. Thus, the followers of Lord Chaitanya's teachings understand God as both male and female: Krishna expands into two, Himself and Radharani, for divine pastimes.

On Radhashtami, twenty beautifully decorated cakes were offered on the shrine, which was adorned with over a thousand flowers. As well as devotional songs and an informative class by Kripamoya das, there was a play about the pastimes of Radha and Krishna. The performance had the audience beaming with smiles.

Later there was an abhisheka (bathing ceremony) for the deities and a special musical procession in Watford.





Appearance Day of Srila Prabhupada

ISKCON's Founder-Acharya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada was very pleased with Bhaktivedanta Manor and its extensive grounds. He would especially take time out of his global itinerary to spend time in his quarters upstairs at the Manor. They are to this day maintained as they were in Prabhupada's physical presence. The exchange of love between Prabhupada and his followers is very tangibly experienced there.

Srila Prabhupada was born on Nandotsava, the auspicious day after Janmashtami. After the last guests left the Janmashtami darshan (viewing of the deities), devotees worked till dawn decorating Prabhupada's temple room vyasasana (seat of the spiritual master) and quarters. From 4.30am devotees gathered at mangala arotik (the first service of the day) to celebrate the Appearance of Srila Prabhupada.

The festival was attended by residents, congregation and guests, who heard glorifications of Srila Prabhupada by

his disciples and followers. Kirtan and ceremony enlivened all who observed this joyous day, and Manor School graduates prepared and offered first class food preparations. It was an extraordinary day on which devotees acknowledged their debt to Srila Prabhupada by honouring and celebrating his life. The overall message of the festival was that we should simply try with love and devotion to assist Prabhupada in his mission to the best of our ability.





Kirtan London attracts hundreds to Barefoot in the Park

In July, the historic Hyde Park bandstand, built in 1869, hosted “Barefoot in the Park”, a unique participatory musical experience attended by over 450 kirtan-lovers. Spiritual seekers from all over London and beyond eagerly immersed themselves in 7 hours of singing the Hare Krishna mantra in a range of beautiful melodies.

The enthusiastic crowd meditated, danced joyfully or laid on the grass listening intently as the July sunshine flooded the bandstand. The sound vibrations attracted curious passers-by to enquire about the melodious music from the smiling volunteers who stood by the entrance, ushering members of the public in, to experience the power of kirtan.

The event also featured beautiful “gopi-dots” face painting, a delicious free vegan lunch, and an “Ask a Monk” area where philosophical questions could be answered. Also, copies of the books Bhagavad Gita “As it Is” and “Chant and be Happy”, as well as a variety of kirtan CDs and t-shirts were available to purchase.

Guests left feeling spiritually charged, donating generously and eagerly awaiting the next event.

Kirtan London events are specifically tailored to meet the needs of those new to Kirtan/Bhakti Yoga. For more information, visit www.kirtanlondon.com



College retreat at historical Belgian castle

The College of Vedic Studies (COVS) organised a bank holiday retreat to the scenic Radhadesh castle temple in Belgium.

Kadamba Kanana Swami held talks on humility and the “Srimad-Bhagavatam” scripture, while also leading lively kirtans.

Sutapa das conducted an interactive seminar entitled ‘Conspiracy 108’, about how the illusory energy called Maya can take us off the spiritual path. Then Gurudas joined him to host a Q&A-style talk show.

On the last day, Santonu held a seminar focussing on the pitfalls of false prestige and expecting respect from others, before closing proceedings with

Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s teachings on the three essential elements of life: spiritual cultivation, holistic wellbeing and contribution to others.

Other members of the men’s residence performed dramas, which were both entertaining and educational.

Responses:

- Many of the 72 attendees promised to increase their sadhana (spiritual practice) and follow other aspects of Krishna consciousness.
- Some newcomers signed up to the “Explore” course and expressed interest in ISKCON’s house programmes held in the UK
- Feedback from the retreat was very, very positive!





Hospitality

The hospitality team have been taking special care of guests from a wide range of different backgrounds and organisations. Between May and September this year they have facilitated more than 1000 first-time visitors, giving tours, serving food and drinks and making them feel welcome.



Chairman of Goldman Sachs (India)

Sonjoy Chatterjee made an informal visit to Bhaktivedanta Manor where he met Temple representatives.

Mr Chatterje is the Chairman and Co-Chief Executive Officer of Goldman Sachs (India).

Velvet Jay Productions

Velvet Joy Productions spent a day filming at Bhaktivedanta Manor for an artistic documentary about the life of the late singer known as Poly Styrene. She was resident at the Manor during the 1980s and became known as Maharani dasi. Her daughter, Celesta, attended the Manor School at that time.





CEREMONY MARKS THE START OF THE SHREE KRISHNA HAVELI

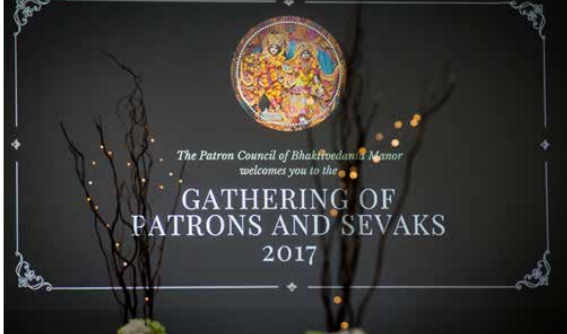
At the end of last July, Bhaktivedanta Manor organised a special event for families who have made generous donations or pledges towards the Sri Krishna Haveli project. In Vedic culture, a “swathi nakshatram” refers to a very auspicious time for receiving blessings and good will for new ventures. So, the event was the perfect opportunity to mark the beginning of the site work of this most exciting project!

There was an abhikseka (bathing) ceremony of the utsav (ceremonial) deities of Sri Sri Radha Gokulananda. That was followed by a sacred yajna (fire sacrifice) which included five separate

fire pits, each supervised by priests who chanted Sanskrit prayers in unison.

On the Temple shrine the sandals of Lord Krishna have been installed on a golden stand. These sandals can be ceremoniously placed on the head of pilgrims, as a blessing and an act of humility and surrender at the feet of Lord Krishna. All participants at the Haveli event were given the opportunity to receive this blessing.

Special guest speakers included Radhanath Swami and Bhakti Rasamrita Swami. The ceremony was conducted by amara das and Kripamoya das



HONOURING OUR PATRONS

This year's annual Patrons Evening took place on 5th August to honour those individuals and families who support Bhaktivedanta Manor through their generous regular donations. These donations go towards the various charitable projects and day-to-day running of the temple.

The Patron Council members greeted the 900 guests, made up of Patrons, their families, alongside invited senior devotees, dignitaries and others. The venue had a cabaret-style dining setup. All the decor plates and cutlery were ecologically sourced with a 'green' theme in mind to support our ethos of ecological living, waste reduction, and recycling.

As attendees enjoyed a three-course meal, Manor Managing Director Gauri das delivered an update on the progress of the Haveli. This was followed by

a classical dance by Shyam Dattani, winner of BBC's 2017 Young Dancer award for South Asian style dance. There was also an encouraging update on ISKCON worldwide, given by UK and Ireland Governing Body Commissioner Praghosa das. The evening was rounded off with a humorous play with a spiritual meaning, called "The Boatman and the Scholar", performed by Jaya Krishna das and Radha Mohan das.

The Manor would like to thank all the attendees and the volunteers who served so diligently to make it happen. Over 300 volunteers took part, and the event would not have been successful without the hard work and dedication of each individual.

If you would like to become a Patron of Bhaktivedanta Manor, please contact: godruma@krishnatemple.com



Initiation: making a spiritual commitment

Initiation is a rite of passage constituting a lifetime commitment to specified codes of conduct and spiritual standards.

The commitment is made before a spiritual master, who, along with all visitors present, encourages initiates on their spiritual journey. The spiritual master who graced the most recent occasion was His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami. 20 candidates took 1st initiation, which requires various important commitments: to daily chant the Hare Krishna mantra at least 1,728 times, to follow 4 rules and regulations. 5 candidates also took 2nd initiation, called Brahmin initiation, a commitment by candidates to strive to take their spiritual lives to a higher level and perform direct service to the deities.



The life of Mohan prabhu

Mohan das, a disciple of Srila Prabhupada left his body on 19th August after suffering from a brain tumour.

After moving into ISKCON UK's first temple at Bury Place when he was young, he served in different places, ready to do whatever practical work was required. He went to Edinburgh to renovate the newly acquired centre in the early 1970s. He served at Chaitanya College during the 1980s, where he made a recording studio

and supported the drama team of Chaitanya's Instant Theatre.

His most recognized service was when he helped to build the ratha (chariot) for Lord Jagannatha to use at the famous Ratha Yatra (chariot festival) where Srila Prabhupada danced the entire route. Mohan was amongst the first residents to move into Bhaktivedanta Manor in 1973. He worked on building Radha Gokulananda's first altar, and during Radha Gokulananda's installation on Janmashtami day he is seen in the videos ecstatically dancing behind Srila Prabhupada.

In 1977, while visiting Bhaktivedanta Manor, Srila Prabhupada's health was weak. During this visit, to support Srila Prabhupada's frail body, Mohan made a palanquin from an office chair so that Srila Prabhupada could be carried around the Manor. This very chair now sits in Srila Prabhupada's bedroom.

For the last 15 years, Mohan served in ISKCON Leicester.



MOTHER KULANGANA

a Life and Legacy of Devotion

On Monday 14 August, the eve of Sri Krishna Janmashtami, Mother Kulangana passed away surrounded by devotees chanting Hare Krishna. The next morning her body, draped in sacred items, was carried around the temple in circumambulation. Devotees then gathered to offer their final respects, offering garlands, flower petals and prayers.

A memorial was held on the following Saturday, which was attended by hundreds of devotees of all ages, united in their love and respect for such a very special devotee.

Born in 1932 in Poland as Krystyna, Mother Kulangana was raised in a well-respected family. Growing up in war-torn Warsaw, she witnessed

many atrocities and experienced many traumatic incidents, such as being separated from her mother as a young girl.

She was a lover of animals and often missed class to play with the animals on her farm. Yet still she excelled in her studies and qualified as a Physiotherapist.

After a successful career in both Poland and France, she moved to England for a post in North London. Shortly after this, on a shopping trip in central London, she came face-to-face with the harinam (street-chanting) party, and was so enticed by the smiling and happy chanting that she followed the devotees all the way to the temple.

She quickly found herself drawn to



the devotees' way of life. She loved the singing, the philosophy, the camaraderie and the food. Thus she moved into the temple at Bury Place, and soon after received initiation from Srila Prabhupada.

Mother Kulangana had an affinity for milk products from childhood as cows were kept on her family farm. Thus, she was naturally attracted to cooking the milk sweets the devotees offered to Krishna every day. She quickly became an expert cook, mastering the various recipes, skills and techniques required for milk sweet making. Another gift which gave Mother Kulangana no end of pleasure was painting the sweets with food colouring. Her artistic depictions of Krishna's pastimes and the various scenes of Vrindavan, indicated the spiritual vision that Mother Kulangana was imbued with. Her creative portrayals never failed to please and inspire anyone who saw them.

She resided at Bhaktivedanta Manor for twenty-seven years, during which time she prepared thousands of sweets for the temple deities. She inspired a new generation of sweet-makers, passing on her techniques and recipes so that young devotees could continue her

legacy. Beautifully painted sweets have become the very symbol of the Manor, and a sought after spiritual delicacy.

Mother Kulangana was always known as a kind and gentle soul, with a nature as sweet as her service. She will be missed by many - most of the community cannot even recall a time when she was not present in their lives. Although she leaves this world behind, her legacy lives on. And in every soft mangal arati sweet (the first sweet of the morning) the devotees of Bhaktivedanta Manor offer to Sri Sri Radha Gokulanada, there will reside the memory of Mother Kulangana's soft and sweet devotion.

Her life will remain an inspiration for generations to come. Her dedication to Srila Prabhupada set the highest example. Day and night she read his books and listened to his lectures. In her departure, she only wanted to listen to his chanting. She taught us how to overcome adversity, how to become absorbed in devotional service, how to maintain complete chastity and enthusiasm in our spirituality, and most of all, how to dedicate one's mind, body and words in the service of the Lord.

SRI KRISHNA HAVELI PROJECT UPDATE



What happening now:

- The new access road works have begun.
- The foundations for the Tulsi Glass houses are being done.
- By late October, the road will be complete and two new Tulsi houses constructed.
- Asbestos testing is being carried out now, in preparation for demolition.
- The Pre-school has been successfully relocated from the site
- The School will move later this year, as their new site is not ready and they are working on getting consent from OFSTED for the move.
- Vascroft are working further on plans for Value Engineering, by late November, work on the Haveli main site should be started.



*£4 a day gets us
the rest of the way*

Pledge your support.

Contact Vaisnava das
haveli@krishnatemple.com - 07907 809 006

www.krishnatemple.com/haveli