

# BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR

NEWSLETTER

August 2017



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



FAMILY FUN  
OPEN DAY



### 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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Please send your news, photos and comments to: Radha Mohan das  
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## FAMILY FUN OPEN DAY

Report by Radha Govinda das:

It was the first day of July, but it was still a chilly morning. It would gradually warm up as the day progressed, but for the moment nothing could be said. The devotees had been preparing for months. Almost 10,000 flyers had been distributed, the newspapers had been covering it, shops and restaurants had been displaying posters. Tents were up with bright banners identifying them, food was ready to be served, and volunteers took their positions.

The annual Open Day had always been one of the most exciting events for newcomers to Bhaktivedanta Manor. In the past, there had been Strawberry Open days, Cow athletics Open days and Theatre Open days. The legacy continued, and for at least four years now, the Manor had been organising the Family Fun Open day.

"I come to this one every year" said Helen "It's a fun day for the whole family and my kids look forward to it every single time" as she then walked off to 'try on a sari'. The two kids ran off to have a go on the bouncy castle.

The Open Day featured a variety of activities for everyone. There was a

food stall selling many varieties of food, cooked with love and devotion. There was a Henna tent for ladies to try out various designs made with the soothing traditional herbs. There was also a face-painting tent and a shop selling fresh organic vegetables. Curious visitors could also find out more about Palmistry. Guests also received an ox-cart ride to the farm where they were told about the importance of cows and oxen and how they should be protected.

People went on a tour of the estate and learnt about the history of the movement, as well as the precious contribution that Srila Prabhupada has made to the world. Meanwhile, monks answered guests' questions and other devotees sang kirtan.

The day attracted over 1000 people, over half coming for the first time. Many people signed up to the events and courses that were on offer, including future cooking retreats, kirtan and Mind Body Soul events organised by the Krishna Wisdom team.

A big success, but not without the help of the amazing community of devotees that make Bhaktivedanta Manor what it is today.



## Westminster Interfaith

Over 100 members from six different faiths came to Bhaktivedanta Manor to learn more about Krishna Consciousness and the wider Hindu culture. The visit was part of an 'interfaith pilgrimage' organised by Westminster Interfaith, which included visits to other places of worship across London on the same day.



## Canterbury Tales

The historical City of Canterbury has seen hundreds of thousands of pilgrims over the centuries. But there was a gathering of a different flavour that raised the eyebrows of tourists and visitors! For the very first time, devotees assembled outside the Cathedral gates with their bullock cart to mark the beginning of a five day Walk for Peace to Folkestone. The Very Rev Dr Robert Willis, Dean of Canterbury Cathedral was present for the opening ceremony.



## The Great Get Together

Faith representatives from across the UK met in Westminster to discuss The Great Get Together, a nationwide initiative organised by the family of the late Jo Cox MP. The purpose was to encourage people of all faiths and none to strengthen bonds in the face of adversity. Bhaktivedanta Manor was duly represented.



## Chaplains for the Mayor of Harrow

During her term as the Mayor of Harrow, Cllr Rekha Shah selected chaplains representing no less than five different faiths, in order to reflect the borough's cultural diversity. Her final function carried an interfaith theme.

Photo: (from left): Srutidharma das, Rabbi Kalthleen Middleton, Professor Imam Hafiz Muhammad Akram and Dr Vinod Kapashi.



## Bricket Wood

Senior members of the Jewish community in Bricket Wood had a memorable day out at Bhaktivedanta Manor, which included a fascinating question and answer session.



## Local Faiths Get Together

Local faith leaders opened their doors to the public and to one another in a show of unity.

The Hertsmere Forum of Faiths joined forces as part of the Great Get Together initiative, in memory of Jo Cox MP.

The Mayor of Borehamwood was also in attendance along with a wide representative of local faiths. The initiative was designed to strengthen bonds between congregations, for them to listen and learn from each other, and also to celebrate all that unites them.



## Watford Interfaith

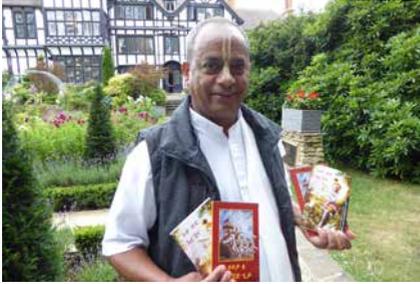
Gaura Hari was pleased to meet Dr Harriet Crabtree, Director of the Interfaith Network UK, at the Watford Interfaith Association's 40th anniversary event.



## 750th Anniversary of Aldenham Church

In celebration of the 750th anniversary of the Church of St John and Baptist in Aldenham, there was a weekend of special events culminating in a multi-faith service. Srutidharma das was among the invited guests which also included Rev Vernon White who is Canon and theologian at Westminster Abbey.

Photo: Srutidharma das with Rev Robert Fletcher (centre) and Oliver Dowden MP at the Church of St John the Baptist.



## Manor devotee brings ISKCON to Ethiopia

Mahaprasad das has translated a number of Srila Prabhupada's books from English to Amharic, the official working language of Ethiopia. 10,000 copies of Introduction to Bhagavad Gita and On the Way to Krishna are currently in the UK and will soon be shipped to Ethiopia. Easy Journey to Other Planets, The Teachings of Prahlad Maharaj and Sri Isopanisad will follow.

This is a major accomplishment because at present none of Srila Prabhupada's books are available in Amharic and ISKCON has no presence in that country.

"This is a huge breakthrough," explained Mahaprasad das, "Ethiopia is a completely new pasture and it has the second highest populations in Africa. I give credit to Bhaktivedanta Manor for that, because that is where I was trained in outreach."

Mahaprasad was born in Ethiopia and after joining ISKCON in Kenya, for 21 years he was part of the community of Bhaktivedanta Manor. He is now based in the UK and working in the Middle East within the field of I.T Governance.



## Vedic Astronomy

Motivated by debates within ISKCON relating to Vedic astronomy in the light of the construction of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium in Mayapur, Radha Mohan das has made a series of YouTube presentations on the subject.

His presentations are mainly based on the works of Sadaputa das (Dr Richard Thomson), and are presented in an accessible way that can be appreciated by devotees as well as those familiar with modern astronomy.

As well as drawing upon remarkably consistent data between the Surya Siddhanta and modern calculations, he explores connections within the 5th Canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam.

His YouTube presentations can be found under the titles:

The Astronomy of the Bhagavat Purana  
The Surya Siddhanta: Parallels with Modern Astronomy

The Solar System in the Vedic scriptures  
Alien Identities in the Vedic scriptures



## New home for Ahimsa Foundation

As featured on the BBC, the Ahimsa Dairy Farm has moved to a new permanent home where it hopes to provide a model for other farms around the UK to copy.

In the Dairy industry, cows are usually culled when they get older and their male calves are sold for meat almost immediately.

Yet, just like Bhaktivedanta Manor's dairy farm, the Ahimsa Dairy allow their cows to live out their natural lifespan. Indeed, the organisation was inspired by New Gokul, and Sita Rama das is their Co-Director.

The Ahimsa farm was previously on rented land in Leicestershire but has secured its future with land bought in Manton.

Nicola Pazdzierska, the other Director of the Ahimsa Dairy Foundation, explained that while their milk was more expensive, many people were willing to spend the extra because they know the cows are in good care.

The Ahimsa Dairy Foundation was founded in 2011 and originally produced milk in partnership with an organic farm in Kent.



## Gokul Café

Every Wednesday evening at the Gokul Café in Watford there are spiritual programmes, including Bhagavad Gita class, music and vegetarian food.

Parasuram das, who has now taken over the running of the first vegetarian café in the town, explained, "After the renovation of the café is complete, we will need devotees to volunteer their time and energy to make this a success. Available services include cooking, serving and helping to develop the Wednesday programme, as well as services at any other time - whatever you feel you can contribute for this dynamic initiative."

The address of the cafe is: Gokula Vegetarian Café, 65 Market Street, Watford WD18 0PR

For more information, email Parasuram das: [foodforalluk@gmail.com](mailto:foodforalluk@gmail.com)



## End of Term Showcase

On a summer's evening at the end of June, the Bhaktivedanta Manor School and Manor Preschool hosted their End of Year Showcase in Letchmore Heath's Village Hall.

Guests included Bhakti Rasamrita Swami, Temple Management and many parents, friends and well-wishers. The

audience was entertained with Krishna's pastimes including the Aghasura demon, the lifting of Govardhan Hill, the appearance of Lord Jagannath, the Shyamantaka Jewel and also The Ramayana by the Pre School. There were also songs, "Battle of the Slokas" and lots of laughs and cheers!



## Vaisesika das

Recently Vaisesika das visited the UK to deliver a series of seminars about the study and distribution of Srila Prabhupada's books.

Soon after receiving a "Back to Godhead" magazine from a friend in the spring of 1973, Vaisesika das

moved into the ISKCON temple in San Francisco in his teens, and with the blessings of his parents, became a disciple of Srila Prabhupada and a full-time monk. He lives in the San Francisco Bay with his wife and together they have developed an ISKCON spiritual community of three hundred families in Silicon Valley.



## Celebrating Krishna's fearsome lion incarnation

In May, the Manor community celebrated Narsingha Chaturdashi, the advent of Lord Narsingha. Narsingha is God in a fearsome form of a half-man, half-lion. Millions of years ago, Prahlada, an endearing 5-year-old devotee, was regularly punished by his demoniac father, King Hiranyakashipu. Hiranyakashipu was outraged to learn that Prahlada was worshipping Lord Vishnu. He tried many times to arrange for Prahlada to be killed, but Prahlada was always unharmed. Finally, Vishnu appeared in Hiranyakashipu's palace as a half-man, half-lion to protect Prahlada and kill his evil father.

The festival included a dramatic re-enactment of the story of Prahlada, and a fire sacrifice comprising sacred chants calling on Lord Narsingha to protect Krishna's community. There was a jovial musical procession in a local town, and the ceremonial bathing of a deity of Lord Narsinghadev. Visitors to the Manor of course concluded proceedings by partaking in a sumptuous evening feast.





## Volunteers unwind at uplifting mountain retreat

The Volunteer Care Council at Bhaktivedanta Manor annually organises a spiritual retreat at Buckland Hall in the heart of the beautiful rural Brecon Beacons mountains of Wales. This year's edition in late March saw a record number of attendees, including the management team and residents. There was a total of 170 attendees who were all enthusiastic to immerse themselves in topics about Krishna for the weekend. The theme was 'Looking back, to move forward', centred around our meditation for 2017, namely, how to afford godly hospitality to guests.

During the retreat, visiting guest speakers delivered thought-provoking seminars. Vraja Bihari das, a monk from Mumbai, emphasised the importance for us to all stop, pause and take time to reflect on our past actions. We can thus learn lessons on how to move forward positively rather than lament about the past.

Gaur Gopal das continued the theme of insightful learning, conveying the message of 'Experience over Convenience'; the process of tolerating inconveniences to concentrate on

improving our consciousness.

Sutapa das explained how life is like a jigsaw puzzle: to solve it, we first need to put down the corners (understand the overall picture).

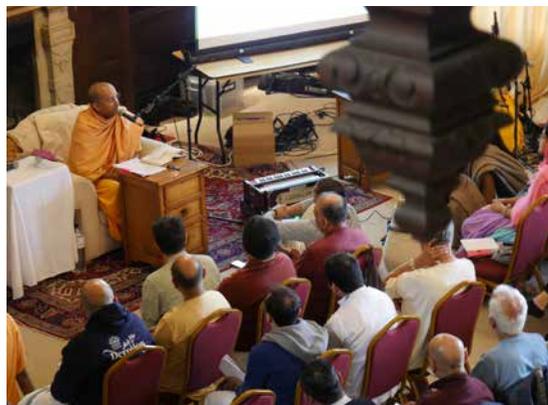
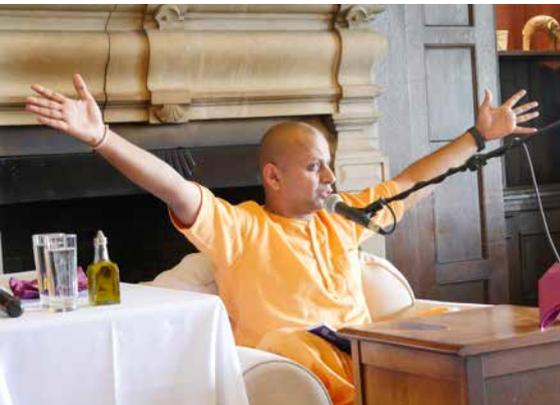
The children had a fun time going on an organised treasure hunt, as well as taking part in many other activities especially arranged for them.

There was also an incredibly heart-touching drama based on the history of Lord Ramachandra and His wonderful devotees.

Buckland Hall director Akhandadhi das said, "The whole weekend had a wonderful atmosphere where Srila Prabhupada's Krishna consciousness family came together to support one another and learn in harmony, sharing the same goals in reviving our relationship with Krishna."

Harish Baldi said, "The experience was excellent!"

Haridasvarya Das and Sundari Gopika devi said: "We feel spiritually charged. It was a great opportunity to walk in beautiful country surroundings."





## The Krishna Wisdom, 'Spiritual Wellbeing Retreat' at the Brecon Beacons.

In mid-April, regular attendees of Krishna Wisdom events went on a wonderful retreat at the Brecon Beacons of Wales. Although it was at times exhausting, it really gave attendees the opportunity to focus their minds on spiritual life, which is really a journey within.

After breakfast, there were workshops on Bhakti-yoga, as well as a "Spiritual Survival" seminar led by Kripamoya das. It emphasised the need for a spiritual practitioner to regularly examine

one's intentions and re-evaluate one's determination and enthusiasm to reach the goal of self-realisation.

The retreat included sumptuous hot meals, served to delight hungry stomachs! Not to worry, as this was balanced out with energetic nature-walks, visiting national parks and waterfalls.

Finally, the evening ended with a music band, complete with a singer and musicians. Everyone enthusiastically chanted and danced all night long.





## Historical Yajna

The first ever full scale Maha Vishnu Yajna has taken place outside of India. The London venue included no less than 55 sacred fires (kunds), each with a priest simultaneously performing ritualistic offerings. It was conducted by the famous South Indian priest Bashyakarasannidhi Vangepuram Nambi Ramapriya. The event was organised by the Gurukul Parivar (UK).



## EU Communications

This year's European Communications Seminar, which was attended by eight representatives from Bhaktivedanta Manor and ISKCON-London, was held in the Villa Vrindavan community near Florence. Devotees from across Europe and beyond attended lectures and participated in seminars on subjects including the necessity for political engagement, interfaith dialogue, media and religious freedom, and how to improve on one's presentations.



## Save Yamuna Campaign

Sritidharma das and Parasuram das had a meeting with Radhapriye ji of Barsna who is part of the team heading the Save Yamuna Campaign. The Save Yamuna campaign is trying to bring Yamuna back to Vrindavan, which is the most important river for all worshippers of Krishna.

Did you know that Yamuna River disappears after Hathani Kund Barrage in Haryana?

97% water of Yamuna river is sucked in by canals just before Hathani Kund barrage. Rest evaporates after running few kilometers. Around 150 kilometers of Yamuna bed is completely empty.

What flows in Delhi and after that is nothing BUT untreated filthy dirty drain water from various drains dumped into Yamuna bed.

The government has accepted all the demands and has promised action. The task now is to make sure that the government actions the solution which has been passed by the supreme court of India.

<http://saveyamuna.org>

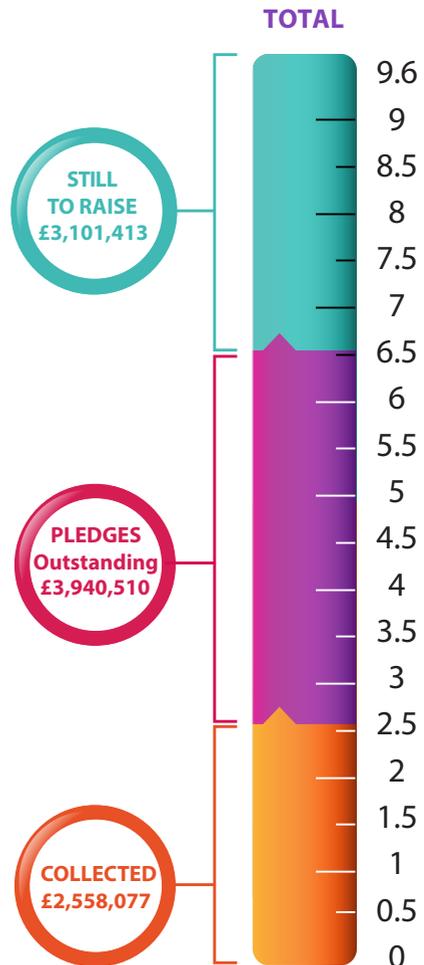
# SRI KRISHNA HAVELI PROJECT UPDATE



After many months of looking at tenders from over 6 different companies, we are now working with Vascroft Construction Ltd on valued engineering with a view to signing a contract soon. Vascroft contractors have over 40 years experience in the construction industry and have built many luxury hotels, private homes and restaurants delivering them on time and budget.

## What happening now:

- The Pre-School has been relocated for the construction period.
- The construction of the interim facilities for the Manor School is ongoing.
- The pre-works to secure the site and provide amenities to construction crew have begun.
- Value engineering to make sure the costs stay within budget are being carried out before the full work commences after Janmashtami.
- The roads leading into the car parks are currently being constructed.





**Our Heartfelt thanks to all  
who have pledged their support.  
A further £3.1 million is required.  
We need another 206 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](http://www.krishnatemple.com/haveli)





# FESTIVALS GALORE



These days there are an incredible number of festivals, carnivals and other events that ISKCON is conducting all over the country.

From doing kirtans with the bohemian gathering at Stonehenge; to having a pop up temple at the cutting edge Mind, body Spirit expo at the plush London Olympia where over 500 BBT books were distributed, and 300 japa meditation lessons were given. From doing kirtans and dramas in villages like Yate, Carmarthen and Borehamwood to Ratha Yatras in large towns like Leicester, Reading and Cambridge; to cultural evenings in cities like Northampton where even the local radio show presenter came to interview devotees to having a massive kirtan tent at a mega festival like Glastonbury.

And of course the piece de resistance

was the world famous Ratha Yatra festival and procession in London attracting thousands of visitors every year. After a procession that goes through some of the most iconic landmarks in the city, the sacred Ratha yatra chariots finally congregate in the heart of the capital, Trafalgar square where the festivities carry on with exhibitions and marquees showcasing different aspects of our wonderful philosophy and culture.

Suffice to say, the spirit of reaching out to everyone is very much alive. After the recent festival in Northampton, one gentleman who'd been depressed for over 30 years, rang his friend the next morning to thank him for inviting him along and said 'I don't feel depressed anymore. I can feel the power of Krishna in my life!'





## UK'S FIRST BHAKTI VAIBHAVA COURSE

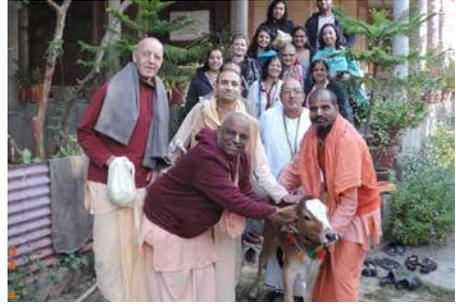
Students at Bhaktivedanta Manor recently completed a five-year journey with the Srimad Bhagavatam. They embarked on the Bhakti Vaibhava course in January 2013, the first to be held in the UK.

While the thought of a five-year course may discourage some, it also has a special appeal. As Jasu Kalan comments "It has become a dependable part of our lives. We are missing it already!" Srimad Bhagavatam, like spiritual life in general, is a long term project.

Devotees understand the importance of developing a deep relationship with Srila Prabhupada's books. In

modern life this often proves difficult. Individuals can therefore benefit from a guided approach which allows many topics to be explored, discussed and debated. Svayam Jyoti das, one of the senior students remarked: "My guru, His Holiness Mahavisnu Goswami, always wanted me to study the Bhagavatam properly and I am grateful to the temple for giving me this in-depth knowledge."

Course coordinator Navadvip Chandra das also teaches Bhakti Vaibhava at ISKCON London. After studying in Sridhama Mayapur, he was encouraged to offer the Bhakti Vaibhava course at Bhaktivedanta Manor in 2013: "The course is run in collaboration with Mayapur Institute and students are



encouraged to complete some modules in Mayapur if they wish. Those who complete the assessments are awarded ISKCON's Bhakti Vaibhava degree. It has been a special period for me, and I could not have wished for a better group of students."

Participants are generally expected to have completed Bhakti Sastri – a study of Bhagavad Gita, Nectar of Devotion, Nectar of Instruction and Sri Isopanisad. With this foundation in place studying the Bhagavatam becomes a rewarding experience.

Harsharani devi dasi developed her attachment to the Bhagavatam during the course. "I appreciated learning how devotees in the Bhagavatam approached difficult situations," she said. "This detailed study helped me

to learn how to react to the difficulties in my own life and to learn how to help others."

A highlight of the course was the "Bhagavatam Trail" – a three-week adventure centred around holy places connected to the Bhagavatam. Students enjoyed visiting Naimisaranya, Sukratal, Haridwar, Hrishkesh, Ayodhya, Dvaraka and many more.

Each canto of Srimad Bhagavatam is taught as a self-contained module and lessons take place once a week. 20 students in total attended the course at the Manor, with many opting to complete homework and assignments to deepen their study experience. The next course is scheduled to start early in 2018.



## NOHO TV

NOHO TV film company were hosted at Bhaktivedanta Manor whilst they filmed scenes for the spoof "The Windsors" in Letchmore Heath village. Famous comedian and actor Harry Enfield plays Prince Charles in the series.

"There were quite a few vegetarians and vegans amongst the group" explained Radha Mohan das who took members of the cast and crew on a tour of the Manor, "Harry Enfield had some intelligent questions, and reminisced on the times he had spent time with George Harrison".

## Russell Brand

During a visit to Bhaktivedanta Manor, Russell Brand (comedian, actor, author and activist) spent time with many community members and received a copy of the Srimad Bhagavatam.

Russell also met with Kripamoya das, Gauri das and Srutidharma das and was given a tour of the New Gokul farm, the George Harrison Garden and attended kirtan in the Temple room.

For the last 3 years Sandipan Krishna das has been working with Bhaktivedanta Manor and ISKCON-London to share cookies and cupcakes for everyone who attends Russell Brands events across the UK.

## The Prime Minister's Faith Advisor

Jonathan Hellewell LVO, Special Adviser on Faith to the Prime Minister, made a special visit to the ISKCON-London Temple, where he met Jai Nitai das and Srutidharma das. Mr Hellewell has been appointed to Downing Street to help the build connections among community groups across the country, understanding the needs of faiths across the UK.

