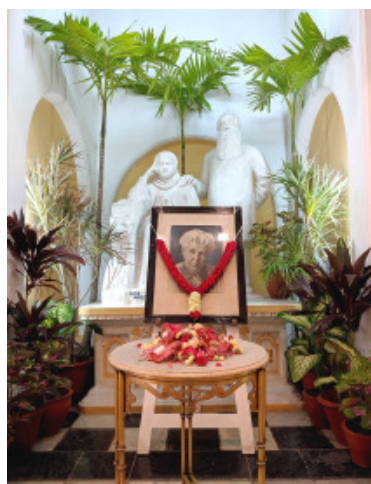


## ANNIE BESANT'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

On 1 October this year, Dr Annie Besant's 172nd birth anniversary was celebrated at the Headquarters Hall. At the start of the function, there was beautiful chanting and singing of songs, including the famous Adyar song, by a group of talented musicians from the Shamkaram group, Chennai. Ms Marja Artamaa, international Secretary, gave the opening remarks, in which she touched upon the meaning of birth in ancient civilizations. The international President, Mr Tim Boyd, spoke on Dr Besant's character and what it takes to build a good character. He also narrated an incident which revealed her indomitable courage and willingness to face all manner of danger. Dr Besant and her colleague, Mr Bradlaugh, had published a pamphlet on birth control, even though they were aware that to talk about birth control in Victorian England was bound to cause problems for them. They informed the police about their decision to sell the forbidden tract

at a particular place and time and when the police duly arrived, they were arrested. To be always in the front, in the line of fire, was Annie Besant's strongest character trait and we see a repetition of this many times during her life. The function came to an end with the offering of flowers by those present.



Offering of flowers to Dr Besant

## FOUNDATION DAY

This year's Foundation Day celebrations at the Headquarters Hall started with a music and dance performance by the Shamkaram group of musicians. Vignesh Ishwar's song, in his reverberating voice, highlighted the notion that all manifestations are the reflection of the Divine Being. This was followed by five vibrant classical dancers performing a sloka and an *alarippu* (a classical Bharatanatyam piece). After this beautiful presentation, Ms Nancy Secret, international Treasurer, introduced Dr Jose Foglia from Uruguay, who had come to Adyar to direct the first session of the School of the Wisdom that was starting the next day on 18 November. Dr Foglia spoke on 'A Universal Language for a Universal Brotherhood'. At

the closing of the function, the participants enjoyed the beautiful chanting of Ms Jaishree Kannan, followed by the customary offering of flowers to the Founders.



Dr Jose Foglia from Uruguay and Ms Nancy Secret, international Treasurer, seated in front of the statues of the Founders

## PUJA CELEBRATIONS AT ADYAR

The Puja (also called *Navaratri*) festival spans ten days during September-October every year, and is rich in meaning. It symbolizes an aspect of the culture of India and the progress of a spiritual aspirant. However, it is significant for people leading a worldly life too.

In the Adyar campus, Ayudha Puja was celebrated on 5 October 2019, in departments such as the Treasury, General Manager's office, Editorial Office, Maintenance Department, Vasanta Press, the Theosophical Publishing House, Garden, and Housekeeping.

Saraswati Puja was performed in the Adyar Library and Research Centre as usual on 7 October 2019, the day of Vijayadasami. This function was attended by the international President, Mr Tim Boyd, international Secretary, Ms Marja Artamaa, campus residents, Library members, and others. The puja was performed by Mr Shankara Iyer, a researcher in the Library, and ended with the distribution of *prasadam*.



Mr Shankara Iyer performing Saraswati puja at the Adyar Library

A novel event this year was the *vidyarambham* (beginning of school) function at the Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA), the recently started school in the campus. The auspicious event began with a tree-planting ceremony. The President, Mr Tim Boyd, planted the *peepal* tree which symbol-

izes wisdom. A chanting session followed, that charged the pupils, their parents and the campus, with positive energy. Mr Boyd then shared his vision for the school and what it embodies. The talk focused on what was missing in the current educational system and the need for a school such as the ATA, which is a centre for transformative education. This gave the parents a feeling of confidence that the ATA would nurture their children into sensitive and thoughtful individuals with a bright future. After the Saraswati Puja, the new students got to write their first letters on the sacred day of Vijayadasami.



International President, Mr Tim Boyd, addresses the gathering at the ATA



A child traces her first letters on grains of paddy, sitting on her mother's lap

## MUSIC IN THE PARK



A series of open air concerts have been organized by SPIC MACAY under the banner, 'Music in the Park' in different locations across the country, with the support of the SRF Foundation. On 19 October 2019, the venue was in Chennai, in the verdant and lush TS campus, where two veteran maestros — Pandit Jasraj and Vikku Vinayakram — came together to provide divine and soul-stirring music to the enraptured Chennai audience. The concert, performed against the backdrop of the South West monsoon, with cloudy skies and bursts of rain, was a thrilling experience for all who attended the concert. To protect the audience from the rain, a white marquee was erected. Thickly cushioned mattresses were laid out, with bolsters placed all over for the audience to sit back and savour the music.



The well-lit Adyar theatre

The well-lit stage stood out in the darkness of the surroundings and the silence was broken by Vikku Vinayakram's resonant ghatam beats. The precision and vibrancy in his playing showed his passion for the instrument that he had elevated from being just an accompaniment, to occupying a prime position in cross-genre settings.

The ensemble, featuring his son, *ganjira* exponent, Selvaganesh, N. Ramakrishnan on the *mridangam*, and A. Ganesan on the *morsing*, offered insights into the intricate rhythm structure of the Carnatic system.

After the ensemble's power-packed show, the evening moved into a meditative phase, with Hindustani music by the 89-year-old Hindustani vocalist, Pandit Jasraj, who walked on to the stage in his characteristic manner — wishing everyone '*Jai Ho*' with his hands raised. He appeared frail and tired, but once he began to sing, one realised that his voice had remained untouched by time. There were quite a few moments, when he scaled with ease, the *taar saptak* (high octave), leaving the audience awestruck.

During the concert, the veteran was accompanied by Ramkumar Mishra on the tabla, Sridhar Parthasarathy on the mridangam, Tripti Mukherjee on the harmonium, and Rattan Mohan Sharma, and Ramesh Narayan on vocal support.



Pandit Jasraj performing at the concert



## TIM BOYD'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

On 22 October 2019, Mrs Lily Boyd invited all the staff and workers of the TS to Bhojanasala for a tea party to celebrate President Tim Boyd's 66th birthday. The children from Olcott School sang birthday songs to mark the occasion. Mrs Sarojini Kannan, one of the oldest residents at TS Adyar, gave a short speech in English, praying for a long life for the President and his wife, Lily, and good health for carrying on his work for the TS. Then, she followed it up with another speech — this one in Tamil directed towards the workers and staff of the TS — in which she urged everyone to work together tirelessly, much like the President himself, towards attaining the theosophical ideals.



Mrs Sarojini Kannan wishes the President

## YOGA CLASSES FOR RESIDENTS AND WORKERS

For the past couple of years, yoga classes have been conducted twice weekly at the Youth Lodge. The Krishnamachari Yoga Mandiram (KYM), a premier centre for Yoga in Chennai, has been kind enough to assign a senior teaching faculty to conduct yoga classes free of charge for the benefit of the residents and workers of the TS.

We have been fortunate in having a wonderful yoga teacher, Mr Arul Perumal, who has been assigned to us by the KYM. Arul has been with the KYM for ten years and is an expert in classical *Yogasana* and *Vinyasa* techniques. Besides being a great practitioner, he is also a skilled Yoga Therapy teacher, and his expertise lies in simple practices to groups across the globe, giving a holistic yet personal touch.

Under his expert guidance and care, his students at the TS have learnt simple movements, including variations and modifications of postures like *Tadasana*, *Dvipada Pitham*, *Apanasana*, *Urdhva prasarita padasana*, *Janu*

*Sirshasana*, *Trikonasana*, *Paschimottanasana* and *Salabhasana*, combined with breathing techniques. They have also been exposed to the integration of chants, visualising the various elements of Nature, surrounded by greenery and fresh air. Simple meditative practices on aspects of the sun, moon, and water are also incorporated in the practice sessions.

On a personal note, Arul is a highly spiritual person, and regularly treks in the Himalayas every year. Thank you, Arul Sir!



Yoga class in progress

## THE BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY (BMAD)

### Celebration of *Kukur Tihar* festival

While for centuries, dogs have been labelled as 'man's best friend', offering companionship and loyalty to their human counterparts, in Nepal however, this cherished and special bond between dogs and humans is celebrated with a unique festival, *Kukur Tihar* (meaning worship of dogs). As most of the caregivers at BMAD are from Nepal, it is only natural that this festival is also celebrated at BMAD with great joy and enthusiasm. On Diwali (the Hindu festival of lights) day, which also happened to be the day of *Kukur Tihar*, the caregivers and volunteers draped flower garlands around the necks of the dogs, applied *tilak* (a powder made from red colour and rice flour) and gave them special food and lots of loving care. And needless to say, both dogs and humans enjoyed themselves immensely!

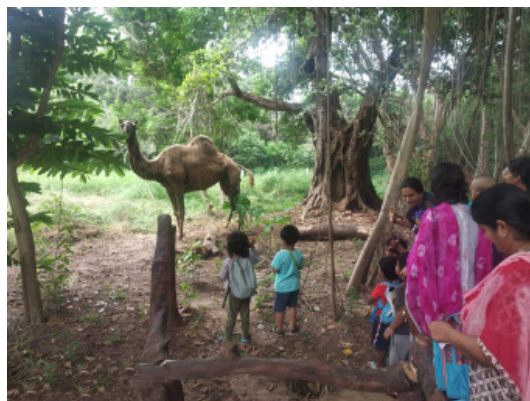


*Kukur Tihar* celebration at BMAD

### Naachi, the camel, goes to school!

Among the many different animals which have found a safe and happy refuge at the BMAD animal shelter, is Naachi, the camel,

which was rescued about a year ago. Like a wise elder (she is around twenty years of age), she towers over her companions — consisting of dogs, cats, donkeys, goats, bulls and calves — and is a striking figure. With her benign and endearing disposition, and friendly curiosity about everyone and everything around her, she is a much-loved member of the BMAD family. Recently, she received a special invitation to spend a day at the Adyar Theosophical Academy (ATA) which she did with her customary aplomb! Tethered to a banyan tree on the grounds, with plenty of luscious green grass to feast on, she was the cynosure of all eyes as the entire school (staff and children) came out to welcome this gentle giant and marvel at her awesome size and shape!



Naachi at the ATA

## RETURN OF THE JACKAL

Notable among the wildlife present on the TS estate, are a few packs of jackals, with around four to five individuals in each. They prey on the abundant rodent population, small mammals and birds, and have coexisted peacefully with the human inhabitants over the decades. Though their population has waxed and waned over time due to inexplicable reasons, they have always been around, with a high level of visibility and their howling during moonlit nights and at dawn were a common feature. However, last summer, their population was decimated by a virulent epidemic of canine distemper and it was feared that all the jackals on the estate had been wiped out. Much to our joy however,

they were heard howling on the riverside path by a resident who was taking an early morning walk with her cat! And we are hopeful that this beautiful animal, the top predator in our ecosystem, will return to the campus, in significant numbers.



Indian jackal photographed on the campus

## ADYAR NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT CENTRE (ANEC) FILM SHOW

In a slight departure from its usual practice of screening nature documentaries, ANEC screened a beautiful nature-themed movie, *Fly Away Home*, for the members and the interested public. Based on a true story, the film depicts the soaring adventure of a 13-year-old girl, Amy, and her estranged father, who learn what family is all about when they adopt an orphaned flock of geese and teach them to migrate before the onset of the harsh winter.



Amy with the flock of geese  
— a still from the movie

## PLASTICS DRIVE

All the world over, the problem of plastic waste is causing an environmental crisis of monumental proportions. And in the TS too we are not spared. There has been a steady increase in the plastic and non-degradable waste generated in the campus. The building renovation / repair work being undertaken on the estate and the numerous contract workmen recruited from outside have also added to the problem. Plastic waste is also being thrown inside the campus from the

residential colonies adjoining the Alsace Grove and Beach cottages. Rubbish dumped in the Adyar River also gets deposited in the campus during high tide. An attempt was made to address the problem by organizing an awareness campaign among residents and workers, with a simultaneous cleaning operation launched by the housekeeping and sanitary departments. But it is an uphill task and needs to be addressed on an on-going basis.



## PASSED TO PEACE

It is with great sadness that we report the passing away of Ms S. Lucia on 2 October 2019. She worked in the Editorial Department at Adyar for many years. During this period, she worked on doing the layout for *Wake Up India* and the *Adyar Newsletter*, apart from working on many books which were to be reprinted. Despite being a Christian, she was also deeply involved in performing the Bharata Samaj puja with great dedication and sincerity. May her soul rest in peace.



## DONATIONS TO THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY (TS)

1 July to 30 September 2019

	<u>Rs.</u>		<u>Rs.</u>
<b>GENERAL DONATIONS</b>		Mrs G. Subbalakshmi, Michigan	US\$ 251 17217
Mr S. Srinivasan, India	2000	Mr Abhishek H. Kasturirangan, USA	
Mr N. Ramesh, India	2000	US\$ 100 6696	
<b>RENOVATION FUND</b>		<b>LILY BOYD OES FUND</b>	
TS in Spain	Euros 918.00 70687	TS in New Zealand	US\$ 2963 206304
TS in Netherlands	Euros 130181.06 10048363	<b>ADYAR NATURE ENVIRONMENT CENTRE</b>	
TS in New Zealand	US\$ 44157.71 3072013	Ms Nritijuna Naidu, India	500
<b>BESANT MEMORIAL ANIMAL DISPENSARY</b>		<b>ADYAR DAY CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	
Inner Wheel Club of		TS in Ireland	Stg £ 50 4422
Madras Next Gen, India	17000	Gautam Lodge, India	1200
Coco Foundations, India	4500	<b>ADYAR LIBRARY FUND</b>	
Ms Indira Kumar, India	5000	Mr Leora Scullaw, Oklahoma	US\$ 100 6638

## DONATIONS TO THE ADYAR THEOSOPHICAL ACADEMY (ATA)

1 July to 30 September 2019

	<u>Rs.</u>		<u>Rs.</u>
Mrs Bhanumathi Arabindoo, India	20000	Mr Kishore Shah, India	100000
Mr V. Mallaiah, India	1000	Mrs Deepa Padhi, India	50000

## DONATIONS TO THE OLCOTT EDUCATION SOCIETY

1 September to 30 September 2019

	<u>Rs.</u>		<u>Rs.</u>
<b>INDIAN DONATIONS</b>		Brando Communication Basavanagudi, India	50000
Rotary Club of Madras East Trust, India	63545	S & S Foundation Pvt Ltd, India	25000
Dharma Paripalana sabha, India	13000	Tableau Experiential Marketing LLP, India	50000
R. Mira, India	10000		8150

### Cover Picture: A.Chandrasekaran

The Green Jewel Bug (*Chrysocoris stollii*) is also referred to as the metallic shield bug due to its often brilliant colouration. It exhibits a wide range of iridescent metallic hues that change with the angle and light in which it is viewed. It feeds on plant juices from a variety of different species. Closely related to stink bugs, it may also produce an offensive odour when disturbed.

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