

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
FOUNDER - ACARYA HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

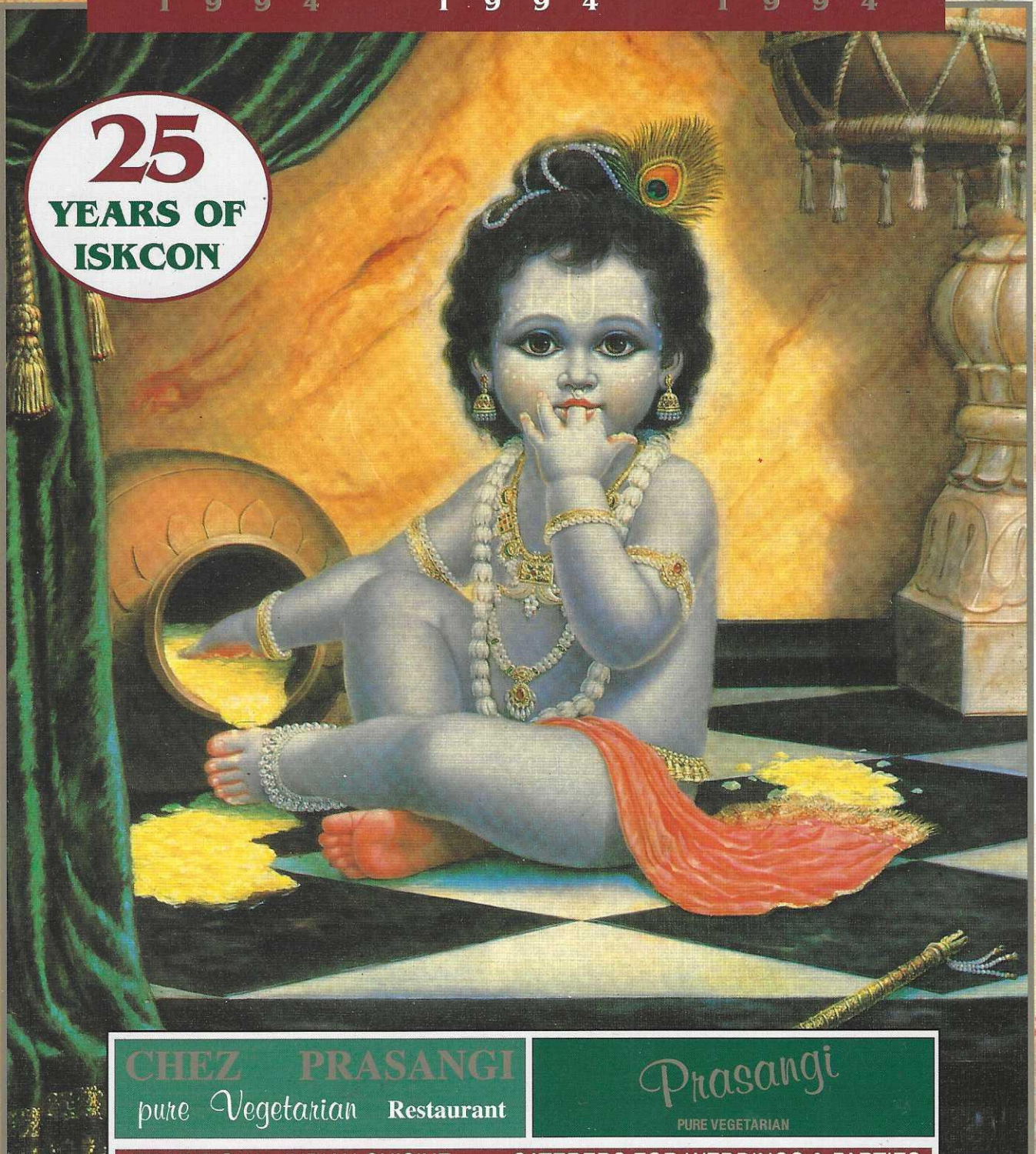
SHREE KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI

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25
YEARS OF
ISKCON



CHEZ PRASANGI
pure Vegetarian Restaurant

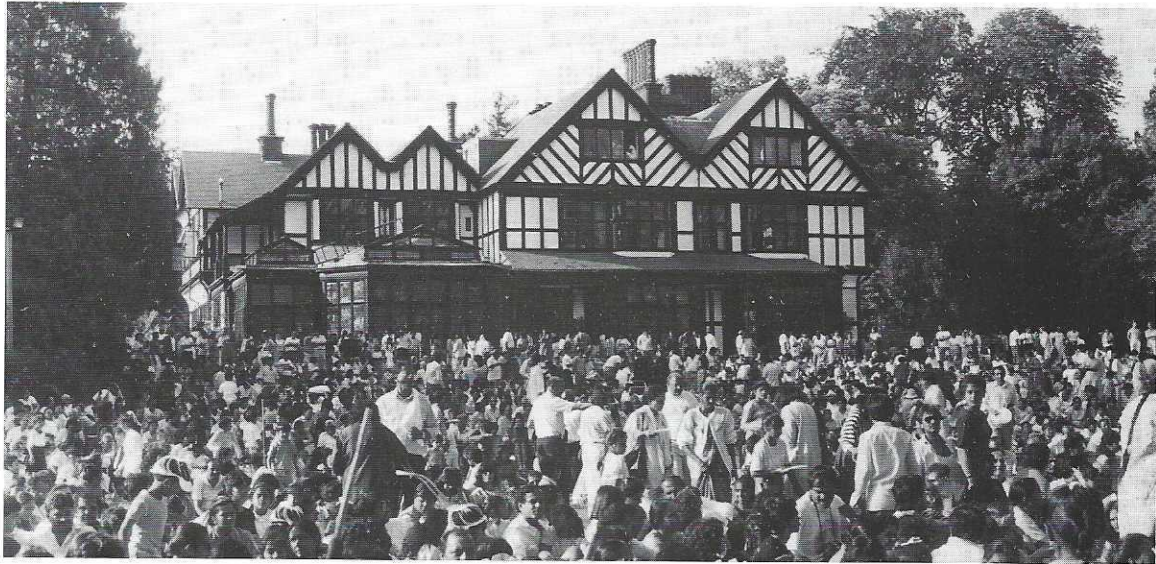
Prasangi
PURE VEGETARIAN

TRADITIONAL INDIAN CUISINE CATERERS FOR WEDDINGS & PARTIES

114-116 STATION ROAD, EDGEWARE,
MIDDLESEX HA8 7BJ

UNIT 2, ABBEY WHARF, ABBEY MANUFACTURING ESTATE
MOUNT PLEASANT, ALBERTON, MIDDLESEX HA0 1NP

THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR FROM CLOSURE TO THE PUBLIC



LATEST NEWS

**At the time of going to press –
HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL HAVE DEFERRED THE DECISION
ON THE FUTURE OF OUR TEMPLE UNTIL SEPTEMBER.**

**A special meeting of the full Council
will decide on the proposal for the
new access drive.**

The proposal asks permission for the Manor to be used for worship and festivals on the basis of a new access and driveway into the grounds. The Council have asked for a lot of information and the temple has provided full traffic and landscape studies, showing that the proposal has no problems but in fact offers substantial benefits.

If they say...

YES – then the dispute can be over forever,

But if, **NO** – the gates of Bhaktivedanta Manor may be closed for public worship, and we appeal to the DoE.

WHAT DOES THE ENFORCEMENT NOTICE MEAN?

Since 1986, ISKCON has been fighting Hertsmere Council's attempt to close Bhaktivedanta Manor to the public. The original enforcement notice banning public worship and festivals has been contested in all the courts of the land, but in March this year it finally came into effect.

Fortunately, the Council agreed not to prosecute while it considered the temple's compromise proposal for a new access drive. However, it is technically a crime to come and pray at Bhaktivedanta Manor.

This is of course an absurd situation as the following pictures reveal...



LEGAL

Hindus worshipping outside the temple in Letchmore Heath.



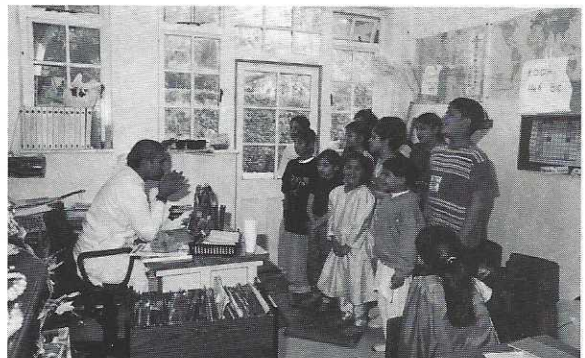
ILLEGAL

Hindus worshipping inside the temple.



LEGAL

School children visiting the temple to learn about another religion.



ILLEGAL

Hindus children at Sunday school in the temple



LEGAL

Hindus getting married using a school hall in Hertsmere.



ILLEGAL

Hindus getting married in the temple.

IF HERTSMERE BOROUGH COUNCIL HAVE TURNED DOWN OUR APPLICATION FOR THE NEW ACCESS, THEN IT WILL BE ILLEGAL FOR YOU TO COME TO THE TEMPLE AND TAKE PART IN THE WORSHIP. THE TEMPLE AUTHORITIES REGRET THAT FOR NOW (HOPEFULLY ONLY A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME) WE MAY BE UNAVAILABLE FOR SUCH WORSHIP.

FASTING FOR JUSTICE

On February 14th, one of the coldest days of the year, a dozen devotees and supporters of the Hare Krishna Temple embarked upon a campaign to save their temple from closure. Claspng their hands amidst a wild blizzard, well wrapped in their woolies and melodiously chanting the Lord's holy name, they gathered to begin the 'Fast for Justice' outside the Hertsmere Borough Council offices. Everyday a fresh group of fasters would stand outside the offices and pray that the councillors would have a change of heart and grant the new access drive. With March 16th being the day the temple was officially to close for public worship, many people, both young and old, came forward to sacrifice a day for the protection of Bhaktivedanta Manor.



The fasters would begin their day with worship of the Lord Nrsinghadev Deity, praying to the Lord for protection. One man who had joined the team of fasters was Mr Chatwani. He flew all the way from Tanzania when he heard that the fasting was going to start. "I'm a great believer in justice. Not only do I believe in it, but I will fight for it." Mr Chatwani came out to take part in the fast on a number of occasions.

Mrs Kalpana Dave of the Academy of Vedic Heritage joined the fasters on 22nd February. She commented, "Some passers by asked me why I was doing this. I told them that it's for the benefit of our children. Not all of us can open a temple; but this one we have, the largest one, and we should work together and co-operate to keep it open and maintain our heritage."

The chief of all the fasters was Mrs Sarla Bhatia, an 83-year-old grandmother. Her husband had taken part in Gandhi's civil disobedience movement. She said, "When I heard the Council were going to close the temple I felt I had died. Most of my life has now gone, so I will spend the rest of my years fighting for dharma, even if I have to die!"



THREAT TO THE TEMPLE

What is the history?

1973 - 1982 – At various times, some local residents complained to Hertsmere Council about Hindus coming to the temple.

1981 – Council issue first Enforcement Notice to ban festivals

1983 – Temple signs Agreement with Council not to organise events likely to attract more than 1.000 devotees, except on six festival days. Enforcement Notice withdrawn.

1985 – Two devotees purchase properties in Letchmore Heath. New wave of complaints to Council.

1986 – High Court refuses Hertsmere request for an injunction to enforce Agreement.

1987 – Council issues new Enforcement Notice to stop all worshippers attending the temple. ISKCON appeals to DoE. Appeal hearing adjourned to allow time to work out solution.

1988 – On Hertsmere's suggestion, ISKCON applies to build a new temple near Elstree. Then Hertsmere refuses it. ISKCON appeals again.

1988/89 – Two appeals heard by DoE.

1990 – DoE announce decision. No new temple. Worship and festivals at Bhaktivedanta Manor to stop within two years. ISKCON further appeals decision to High Court,

1991 – High Court turned down appeal.

March 1992 – Court of Appeal refuses to hear the case.

July 1992 – Full application lodged for European Court of Human Rights.

August 1993 – "Saviours of the Temple" raise funds for buying the land for the new driveway.

Nov/Dec 1993 – Agreement reached on purchase of driveway land. Planning application submitted to Council for use of Manor for worship and festivals on the basis of the new access.

16th March 1994 – Enforcement Notice takes effect! 36,000 Devotees march in London. Hertsmere hold off while considering new access application.

April 1994 – European Commission of Human Rights claim they can't accept our case for hearing because of the technicalities of planning laws in the UK.

12th July 1994 – Council defer decision on new access until September. Temple remains open for worship until then.

MASS LOBBY



27th February - Resurgence in Hindu community

A massive demonstration of support for Bhaktivedanta Manor brought 10,000 Hindus from around the country, including members of the Swaminarayan Mission, the Vishva Hindu Parishad and Vallabh Nidhi, to march defiantly through Wembley. Prominent among the protestors was Mrs Sarla Bhatia, 83 year-old grandmother, whose husband marched with Mahatma Gandhi during India's struggle for independence.

The procession was led by a huge effigy of a demon representing Hertsmeire Borough Council. A large contingent of the demonstrators consisted of the Pandava Sena, an Asian youth group. Dressed in black uniforms, waving banners and sporting orange headbands, they chanted slogans of defiance against the Council.

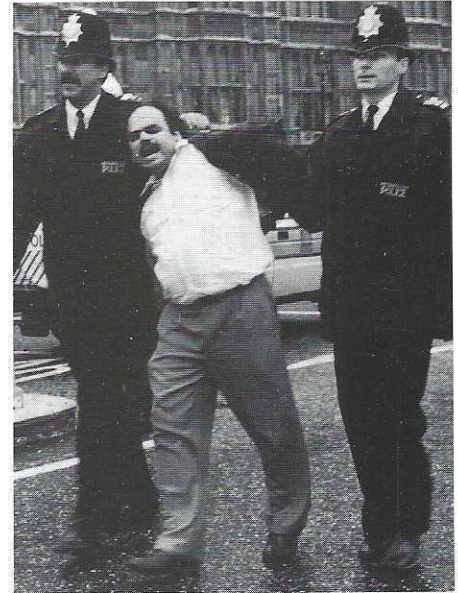
The protest was boosted by the presence of leaders from the Sikh community, who marched in line with their swords. Bhyan Singh of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha of Southall called the Enforcement decision "a crime against humanity," and called for the Asian community to demonstrate their muscle-power through the electoral system. Ravindra Chauhan, former Mayor of Slough and President of the India Overseas Congress, said the entire Hindu community was united against Hertsmeire.



A PRAYER TO PARLIAMENT - 26th May

Was it possible to repeat the success of the 16th March protest? Yes! How? With 10,000 devotees - young and old bringing the capital to a standstill. Waving banners and chanting slogans of defiance, the committed supporters of the Hare Krishna temple blocked the street outside Parliament for over an hour in protest at the closure of the temple. This day was the final session of Parliament before the mid-summer recess.

Hundreds of policemen arrived to cope with the protesters as authorities fought to clear one of London's busiest roads. Chaos ensued as the peak afternoon traffic ground to a halt, causing a massive 3-hour disruption to drivers in the capital. Many were dragged away and others threatened with arrest as they refused to abandon the struggle for what they see as their democratic right to worship without hindrance or persecution. Serious complaints of vengeful policing have been sent to a special enquiry committee.



There was no violence or malice on the part of the crowd and passers-by were impressed with the colourful chanting of "We want justice! We want justice!" and "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna." Eyewitnesses maintained that at all times, the crowd remained calm, but that the police tried to provoke them, especially they allege "... by dealing most roughly with old people and picking on women." "They're nothing but bullies - imagine arresting a 69-year-old stroke patient for assault. It's ludicrous!" said one man.

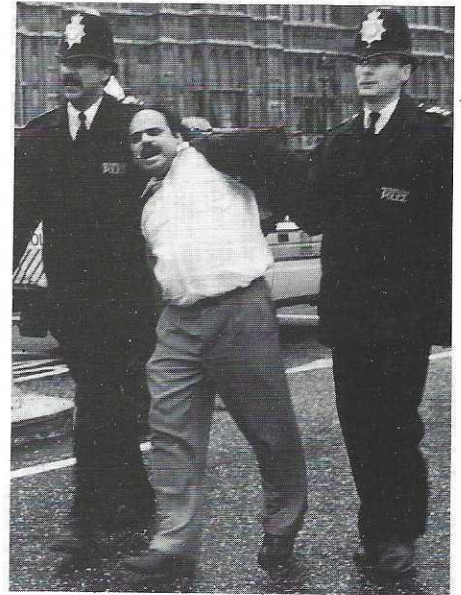
The day's events ensured that the fight to keep Bhaktivedanta Manor still remains fresh in the minds of people. "We want the MP's to go home with our demand for justice ringing in their ears," said Naresh Chadha of the HKTDM.



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PADAYATRA

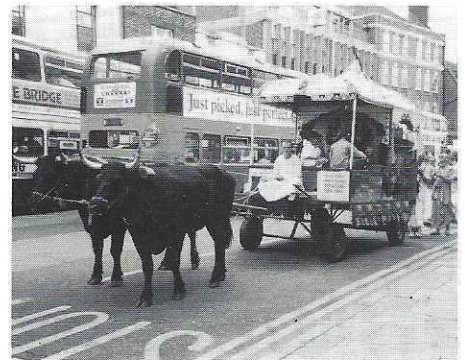


As part of our campaign to save Bhaktivedanta Manor from closure and to increase public awareness, Parasurama dasa and a group of devotees went touring throughout the UK. They didn't use a car, vans or caravans but went on foot accompanied by two bullocks.

On 6th April the Padayatra left Bhaktivedanta Manor for a three week tour of London. Two large oxen, Jai and Dharma, pulled the beautifully decorated chariot of Sri Sri Nitai -Gaurasundar. The Deities were to benedict all the visitors who greeted the Padayatra. Nine devotees braved the winds and rains in April to walk 210 miles with the oxen around London.

Each night they stopped off at a local Hindu temple for a festival consisting of puppet shows, dances, a slide show and bhajans. Srila Prabhupada wanted his disciples to chant the maha-mantra, distribute prasadam and books, and Padayatra followed closely to that formula. 10,000 packets of prasadam were distributed to the amazed on-lookers. Many schools were visited and the children enjoyed the Ramayana puppet show.

On seeing the oxen one policeman exclaimed, "I will never eat meat again!" Each day, thousands of on-lookers were brought closer to Krishna. Padayatra will travel throughout the Midlands, then on through Europe and Russia, where we will train oxen and establish cow protection.



DHARMAYATRA



Nine devotees - Dharma Yatri travelled over 1000 miles during the Easter weekend, and visited 28 Hindu temples throughout the United Kingdom. Their aim was to muster support from the Hindu community leaders in various parts of the country. The response was far beyond what was expected.

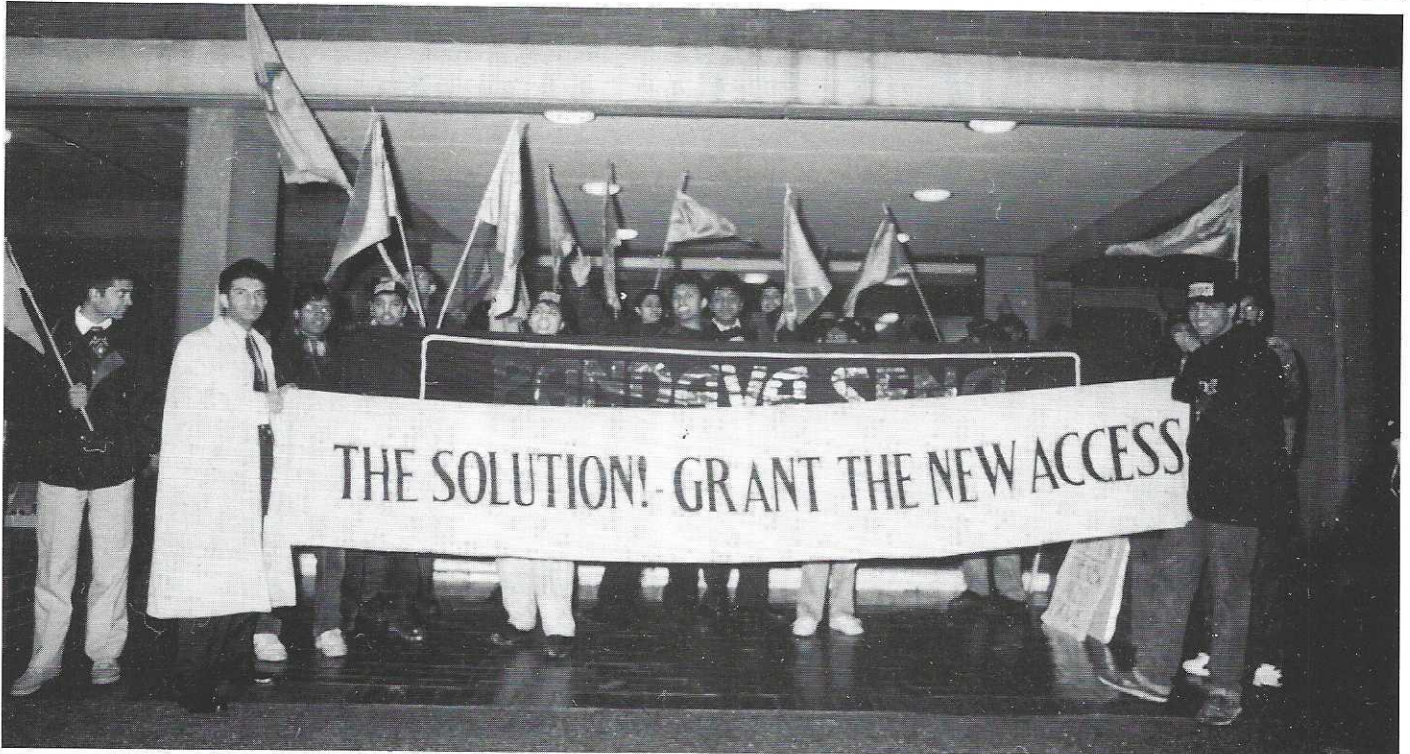
The "Dharma Ekta Yatra" or the mission to unite and safeguard the freedom of religion was the brain child of CB Patel, editor for Gujarat Samachar, and one of the Dharma Yatri. The whole programme was organised by Chotabhai Limbachia, the president of the Hindu Council North. Other people who joined the Yatra were Surinder Patel from Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan and Balmukund Parikh, a prominent Hindu. The Hindu leaders unanimously gave their support to the cause of the tour and said they will do everything in their power to keep the temple open to the public.



The devotees held kirtan and showed a special video portraying the work of Bhaktivedanta Manor. On returning home, the Dharma Yatri felt great inspiration and encouragement from the community's commitment. "We have to keep this enthusiasm running in everyone - it is required for maintaining the integrity of our culture and educating our young ones to continue this wonderful work into the future," said Sruti dharma, the head priest on the Yatra.

PANDAVA SENA

Youth Movement upholding the rights of British Hindus



The Pandava Sena is a youth movement working to uphold the rights of British Hindus. At present their work entails campaigning to save their beloved Bhaktivedanta Manor. In the last 6 months they have been extremely active in the campaign peace vigils in the village, increasing public awareness in prominent areas such as Wembley, Southall and East London, visiting local churches, regular letters to the councillors and taking an active role in the rallies and protest marches held in the last few months.

"We were extremely upset at the senior members of our community. We didn't feel that much was going on to save this temple. It was time for the young blood to boil and take things a little more seriously. We organised our first event - 500 people attending the peace vigil in the village. We have no reason to hurt or disturb the villagers, in fact we wish to share our love for Letchmore Heath with them. The peace vigil was to demonstrate that if we can't enter the temple then we will follow the ancient tradition of worshipping the Lord by offering our prayers outside," said Nitesh Gor, Chairman of the Sena.

The Pandava Sena feel hurt by the threat of closure. They feel that the importance of this shrine for young people has not been considered. *"No doubt, many politicians and leaders will use the term British Hindus in their pep talks and election speeches, but they haven't helped in this cause. We are strong believers in action speaking louder than words and there is no time as crucial and precious to us as the present. It is time for action and we call upon the government to give us the recognition of being British citizens."*

Bhaktivedanta Manor has become an important place for young people. They have derived immense benefit and embraced the sanctity it provides. *"Being younger members of the community, we can tell you about the temptations afforded by modern living, temptations that can drag us from sanity. Intoxication, sexual abuse, suicide, are some of the obstacles we face. Many young people have found great relief and solace at Bhaktivedanta Manor. We have been providing the warmth required to once again tread the path of normal living but with deepened realisation. Is such a temple not worthy of protection? We strongly feel that the case of Bhaktivedanta Manor taken up by Hertsmere Borough Council has failed to appreciate the community that has developed around this holy shrine. We are British and want that recognition. We will protect our temple - it is the home of our cultural heritage."*

BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR – THE SOLUTION

The dispute involving Bhaktivedanta Manor has lasted over eight years. Now a solution is in sight.

On December 17th 1993, the College authorities at Bhaktivedanta Manor made a full application for planning permission for public worship and religious festivals at Bhaktivedanta Manor on the basis of a new access and driveway. The society has bought options on two pieces of land, forming a strip which will connect the Manor with the main road network. We are seeking planning permission to construct an estate driveway on this land.

Traffic would be directed to the temple from the A41 trunk road along the short and uninhabited Sandy Lane to Hilfield Lane. The access to the driveway would begin near the junction of these two roads.

Some locals in the village of Patchett's Green, which is further along Hilfield Lane, have expressed concern that the drive may lead to extra traffic through their village. Traffic studies have shown that 95% of all traffic to Bhaktivedanta Manor does not come anywhere near Patchett's Green, and has no reason to because of its use of the A41. Analysis shows that the driveway will mean less traffic for Patchett's Green. The village will be further protected by a traffic regulation island built at the access point, which will direct cars away from the Patchett's Green direction.

The local Aldenham Parish Council have raised the objection that the new driveway will become a "rat-run" for commuters at peak times. This is a groundless fear, as the driveway will terminate at the temple there will be no through-route.

Letchmore Heath villagers have doubted the college's intention to close off the present access which brings traffic through their village. The proposal laid before the council includes closing off the present access so that all traffic, including service vehicles, will go through the new access. A pedestrian-access will be maintained.

Other fears have been expressed about an expansion of worship and religious festivals brought on by the new road. There is no reason why this should be the case. Attendance on all occasions at Bhaktivedanta Manor has remained steady since the mid-eighties. The Manor has been established within the Hindu community for over 20 years, and there is no reason why it should burgeon because of a new access.

The local planning committee at Hertsmere Council deferred the planning application on July 12th to the full Council in September. We believe that the offer to construct a new access and driveway to alleviate the perceived problem of the locals, at our own cost, is a generous one which should be treated with proper consideration. We have tried to anticipate local fears as far as possible and believe that the access drive provides a fair solution for all parties.

The Council's planning officers have now recognised the need for the temple to be open for public worship and that the new driveway is acceptable. But they do not want festivals to be held at the temple. However, the Conservative group of councillors disagree with this halfway position and oppose the temple in all ways.

Should the local planning committee turn down the application, we fully intend to appeal to the Secretary of State for the Environment. A public enquiry will then be heard in six to nine months.

It must be considered that if the Enforcement Notice takes effect (if only on a temporary basis) that there will continue to be a wide range of activities at the Manor with all their natural comings and goings through Letchmore Heath. These activities will include:

- Daily college and community uses.
- Special college and devotee community activities.
- Educational purposes.
- Ancillary public worship.

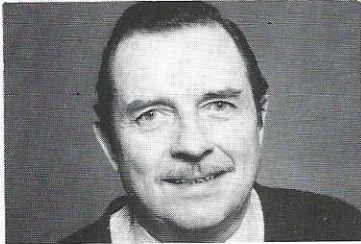
In reality, since all the current uses of the Manor are inter-related, it will actually be quite difficult to identify clearly those activities which will be affected by the Enforcement Notice.

With any breach of the Enforcement Notice, the Council will be able to go to the High Court and seek a remedy. Fines will be imposed, and if not paid, the property could be sequestrated.

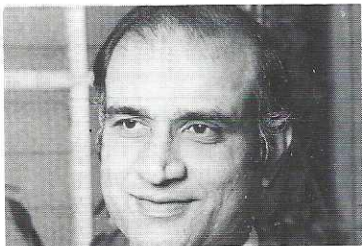
Whatever the situation, ISKCON would wish to carry on making proposals for the Hindu community to have access to the temple whenever the local or general political climate appears sympathetic. It seems increasingly likely that Hertsmere Borough Council will be dissolved in the upcoming local government re-shuffle. We are confident of our ability to keep the temple open for public worship and festivals in due course.

HARE KRISHNA TEMPLE DEFENCE MOVEMENT

SPOTLIGHT ON THOSE WHO ARE FIGHTING FOR THE TEMPLE



CLR. FRANK WARD,
Vice-chairman of HKTDM



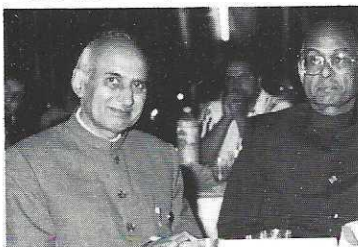
C.B. PATEL,
Editor of Gujarat Samachar



KISHORE RUPERALIA,
Secretary of VHP (UK)

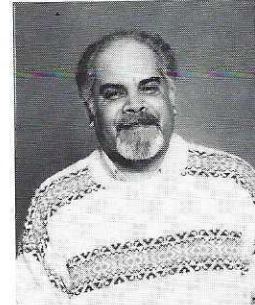


VENILAL VAGHELA,
Vice-Chairman, Hindu Council of



O.P. SHARMA,
President of National Council of Hindu Temples

A message from the chairman:



Dear friends,

As you have read, the work of our community has been one which we can and must view with great pride. However, as chairman of the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement, I would like to see that our community can maintain this pride to accompany the celebrations following the saving of our temple.

This year has been amazing. It's definitely been a test of endurance, but this has made our work more dynamic and created intense energy when most required. The build up to the 16th March deadline will be remembered by everyone. The work of the youth is most commendable and I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the members of our community who have assisted in this campaign - sacrificing their time, money and personal conveniences.

If the decision for the road application is favourable then I welcome you to celebrate. However, if the decision is NO - you have already read what this means - the temple will not be available for public worship and our campaign has to continue. Don't lose heart, we must remain positive and pray to Krishna. Eventually, we will have before us what we have been anticipating for a long time.

I would like to extend my thanks to all the members of the HKTDM committee and all the community leaders around the country who have stood united in this most important hour of need. I would like to extend a special thanks to the ethnic media, especially CB Patel for his coverage in Gujarat Samachar. My deep appreciation goes to the temple devotees for their tolerance and assistance and most importantly the spiritual guidance which has been invaluable, not only for campaigning but for many of us in general. May Krishna continue to bless our endeavours to serve Him.

Jai Sri Krishna.

Naresh Chadha Chairman of HKTDM

THE FUTURE

PROPOSED NEW ACCESS

