

Bhaktivedanta Manor: **40** Years of Devotion



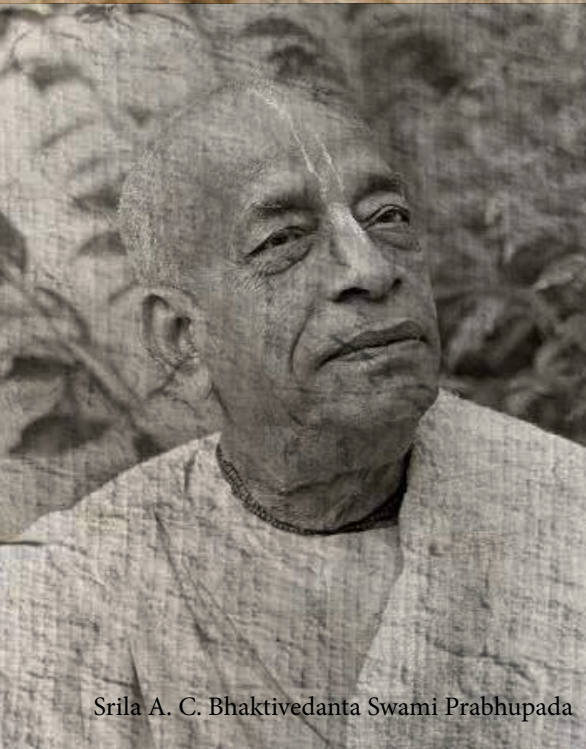
1973-2013



Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada



Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

40 Bhaktivedanta Manor: Years of History

In the days of Queen Victoria, while India was still a reluctant dominion of the British Empire, the great-grandfather of the Hare Krishna movement, Bhaktivinode Thakur, looked forward to the day when the British would discover the spiritual treasure of his land, and worship Sri Krishna themselves. At the time, the British were much more interested in the earthly wealth of India such as tea, cotton, and spices.

One man with connections to the far corners of the British Empire was Mr G W Williams. It was **1884**, and he was retiring, and wanted to spend his money on building a family home in the pleasant surroundings of rural southern Hertfordshire. And so the work began on a grand house that would eventually be named Piggott's Manor, after the ancient name of the site.

In **1932**, the son of Bhaktivinode Thakur, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, who had inherited his father's vision, also wanted the British to have an opportunity to learn about Krishna, so he sent three of his disciples to London. By **1935** he had been promised a piece of land in South Kensington, but a few months later he left the world. It would be **1969** before one of his followers came again to London and established Krishna's teachings there.

That follower, now known as His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, created the first London Radha-Krishna temple in **1969**, but said that London was such a big city that it could easily accommodate at least ten such temples. He asked his student Dhananjaya Das whether he could start another temple in London's Notting Hill, and whether he would like a set of Radha-Krishna altar deities that he knew of in Delhi. It was **1972**.

At the same time, the original London temple was hopelessly overcrowded. The ancient message of Krishna had met with a resounding approval by the young people of Britain and many had moved in to form a large spiritual community

in the heart of the city. Famous musician George Harrison knew of their plight and suggested another option; not another place in the city but outside it, a country estate where there would be enough space; and he would pay for it. The search began.

Meanwhile, over in another part of the former British Empire, an East African dictator was in the process of ridding his country of an entire race of people. A total of 90,000 Indians, descendants of indentured labourers from Gujarat and Punjab, were expelled at 90 days notice. The majority arrived in Britain. They left their homes, their factories, vehicles, jobs, money and their schools. But they didn't leave their religion behind. Many of them had faith in Lord Krishna and prayed to Him to guide them, even as they arrived in a strange, cold land. Thousands eventually settled in north London.

By early **1973**, Piggot's Manor, built almost a hundred years earlier with money from India, was selected to be the new home of Lord Krishna in Britain. Srila Prabhupada himself came to stay there for many weeks and personally invited his Lord in a beautiful welcoming ceremony on the very day that Krishna appeared in this world: Janmashtami. The deities were named Radha-Gokulananda and they were beautiful. Devotees felt especially privileged that their spiritual master was spending so much time with them at the Manor, and that he was entrusting them with the service of Krishna.

The devotees at the Manor had lots of enthusiasm, but very little money. In fact, they had so little money that there was no heating during the winter, hardly any food beyond porridge, cabbage and potatoes; and on some days there were no flowers for the altar. Something had to be done. Under the direction of Hansaduta Das, they started going into the nearby towns and selling incense, books and LP recordings of the Hare Krishna mantra and other songs. By **1974**, Krishna consciousness was regularly being

taken beyond London and into the towns of Britain. Festivals were being staged in large halls and universities, delicious Sunday feasts were held on the lawn, and the first cow was brought to live in the old stables. Bhajahari Das and Prabhavishnu Das were successive temple presidents at this time.

In **1975** the first ever public Janmashtami was staged, as was the Diwali festival, complete with Ramayana drama and fireworks. Srila Prabhupada had come twice since the opening of the Manor, and told devotees that Krishna consciousness would spread in Britain through theatre. Devotees took him seriously and began staging regular dramas, turning one room into a theatre with a stage and lights. The next year there were almost 40 devotees criss-crossing Britain in vans, selling thousands of books every week.

In the Spring of **1976** Jayatirtha Das arrived from the USA, replacing Hansaduta Das as the leader. He set about renovating the Manor in time for Srila Prabhupada's visit later that year. The temple room floorboards were replaced with a new floor, and chandeliers and fresh wallpaper hung. A stained glass effect was created above the new, beautifully carved altar from Bombay, and a large book display cabinet was made by a devotee craftsman for the reception. An orchard was converted into a car park and a rose garden created. That year, a travelling temple – a converted single-decker bus – took to the road, the first of its kind in Europe. Srila Prabhupada was happy to see all the improvements.

Later that year, the devotees were evicted from the London temple, situated in Bury Place, near the British Museum. They all came to the Manor and arrangements were made for a women's group to immediately begin raising funds for a new London location. In eighteen months they raised enough for a six-floor property – a restaurant with a temple on the second floor and an ashram above that.

In spring **1977**, a division of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust was established at the Manor and a new concept launched: "The Art of Living" – three paperback books in a box. Along with another new book, "The Science of Self Realisation," and a new musical record album, it sold well and British people came forward in large numbers

to become members of the "Friends of Lord Krishna", or FOLK. But Srila Prabhupada was unwell and devotees around the world prayed for his recovery. He made his last visit to the Manor for Janmashtami and devotees from all over Europe came to see him and had exceptional kirtan in front of him. There was great grief when he passed away in November.

The new restaurant in London was named 'Healthy, Wealthy and Wise,' and right from the beginning of **1978** it did rather well. People were interested in the relatively new idea of vegetarianism. The new temple was gorgeously decorated and visitors ate downstairs and meditated upstairs. The Manor, however, was overflowing with devotees. Again, there was not enough space for the Hare Krishna community. But Vicitravirya Das was the temple president and things were well organised. Through **1979**, there was an increase in the number of Indian families visiting; they were relieved to be in a place where their spiritual culture was intact. They were able to pray to their Lord Krishna and they offered contributions to help with the Manor's costs. A "Mahabharata Cultural Association" was created, and along with it the "Mahabharata Youth Club" which began attracting the next generation from Wembley, Southall, Finchley, Tooting and Harrow. Children's summer camps were held in the Manor grounds. The "Life Membership" programme began. Bhaktivedanta Manor took a bold move this year and branched out, contributing resources to the purchase of another stately home in Worcester. It would eventually be named: "Chaitanya College at Croome Court." Also in this year, Sivarama Swami came to the country and would hold a variety of leadership positions for the next 23 years.

In **1980**, official ownership of the Manor passed from George Harrison's Material World Foundation to ISKCON. Early on in that year, a small "Commodore" computer was donated, as well as a "Rotoprint" printer. They were only two gifts, but they would help revolutionise how the outreach was conducted. Devotees now went out door-to-door to all Hindu homes in London, and a small home gathering began in Southall at the home of the Murti family. It would be the very first of many.


In the following year there was a grand installation of Sita and Rama. They took their place alongside Radha-Gokulananda and looked resplendent. Television and newspapers began to feature the Manor, and the devotees developed friendships with members of the media as well as the religious establishment. Unfortunately, the local council issued their first enforcement notice to ban public religious festivals at the Manor. It would take another fifteen years and an enormous legal and political struggle before the relationship changed.

The beginning of **1982** saw Jayatirtha Das leaving the Manor and Bhagavan Das becoming the new national leader. That spring, a devotee from Northern Ireland, Akhandadhi Das, became the temple president and remained so for a further thirteen years. The Janmashtami festival was even bigger that year and some major events took place in a large big-top circus tent on the front lawn. But the Manor was restricted to six festivals a year and made to promise not to organise any event likely to attract more than 1000 people. The devotees continued to develop their connections with establishment bodies, including thought-leaders and academics. They also began distributing sacred food, or prasadam, to growing numbers of people, including the homeless and disadvantaged.

1983-85 were what the politicians of today would term 'years of austerity,' as devotees everywhere raised funds to pay for the newly mortgaged buildings. Sales of incense, books, hand-carved candles, oil paintings, silk paintings, flowers and fruit-and-nut bars were developed and a successful income was achieved, though not always without some effect on ISKCON's cardinal mission: the spreading of the teachings of Krishna. At the same time the English devotee population – now swollen to over 3,000 – were served through dedicated newsletters, Back to Godhead magazines, 'mangalarati sweets' posted to their homes, as well as the occasional visit from a roving Vaishnava or two. Added to that was the large mail-order department, Bhaktivedanta Books Ltd, which served customers with books, posters, beads, and all the paraphernalia the budding devotee would need. The Patron Membership scheme was launched in this period, as was the Patrons Council, a representative body that gave practical assistance in finance, festivals and the ongoing campaign.

But the funds raised were insufficient to maintain the stately home in the Midlands. It closed and the devotees returned to the Manor after an interval of five years. Caravans and Portakabins sprung up overnight, and the gurukula school was relocated to the Manor. Some homes were purchased in Letchmore Heath, one being the former newsagent and post office. It wasn't too long before complaints were lodged by the villagers about developments at the Manor. A large Janmashtami that year, with a line of cars backed up all the way to the London borough of Hendon – six miles away – ensured that something in the future would have to change.

By **1986** the local council had hired people to count the number of visitors coming to the Manor. An official caravan was lodged permanently outside the Manor gates. The wheels of litigation began to turn. But inside the Manor there was a new kitchen and the devotees began to make a name for themselves with like-minded vegetarian organisations. The good work with other religions continued, and there was a grand public debate with the National Secular Society.



By March the following year the Manor had featured on the popular BBC children's television programme Blue Peter, certainly a mark of acceptability for some. But not for the local council which issued an enforcement notice to stop all worshippers attending the temple. It was, in effect, an edict to close the temple completely to the public. On the council's suggestion, the Manor applied to build a new temple in a nearby spot they'd indicated. The council then refused planning permission, so the devotees appealed again. The fight was truly on.

Meanwhile, the spreading of Krishna's messages with Bhagavad-gita, kirtan and prasadam went on at increasingly diverse venues and in all manner of ways. Devotees from the Manor catered backstage for Nelson Mandela's huge 70th birthday party at Wembley Stadium; the London Rathayatra was a grand summer festival culminating in a big feast and kirtan for thousands in Battersea Park; the first ever Janmashtami souvenir book was produced; and a Diwali concert featuring famous Indian singer Anup Jalota raised much needed legal funds.

Thousands of well-wishers and old friends began to hear about the campaign to save the Manor from closure. Internationally famous cricket hero Sunil 'Sunny' Gavaskar and Bollywood film actor Rishi Kapoor headed up an 11 mile sponsored walk from Wembley to the Manor. Thousands of pounds were raised for legal fees that day. Later the same year a youth group was launched: The Manor Youth Forum, or MYF. Once a month on a Friday they had plays, debates, discussions and lots of fun. They also went on trips to the Manor's sister temples in Ireland, France and Belgium. They also produced a magazine – the MYF Magazine – that was later titled Chakra.

But in **1990** the Department of the Environment announced its decision: no new temple, and all public worship and festivals at the Manor to stop in two years. The clock was ticking towards closure. Again the Manor appealed – this time to the High Court. 2,000 attended a demonstration held in Trafalgar Square. Politicians came out in support of the Manor. The Manor was getting national attention. Temple president Akhandadhi Das was invited by both BBC and ITV to sit on a broadcasting consultative body monitoring standards of religious broadcasting.

Popular singer Boy George released his Bow Down Mister in the spring of **1991** and the devotees made numerous television appearances. But the High Court thought that no-one should bow down at the Manor by turning down the appeal. The Manor's QC, Sir Graham Eyre, argued in the High Court that the original enforcement notice was 'ambiguous,' and in October the devotees protested at the Conservative Party Conference, again attracting media attention. Meanwhile, a 65 year-old Gujarati member of the congregation made history by taking sannyasa, becoming His Holiness Mahavishnu das Goswami.

Three fire engines attended a serious blaze that took place in the women's ashram one night in November **1991**. They were able to bring the fire under control after some hours, but much of the upper floor, above the old stable block, was destroyed. It would be some months before repairs were completed.

Around the same time, devotees at the Manor were taking

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stock of ISKCON's now more than twenty year history. They held the first of many meetings about further education of the Society's members and ultimately gaining accreditation for courses in Vaishnavism. Eventually, some years later, that would bear fruit in the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and the Bhaktivedanta College in Belgium, both centres of academic excellence.

The academics who knew about religious issues were not slow to come forward to help. Together with faith leaders they came to a London conference to defend ISKCON, saying that it was the first time in 300 years that a government had threatened to close a place of worship. According to the Hindu tradition, the deities, once installed, and particularly by a saint, cannot be moved. The Manor was therefore a holy place. In response to its pressing need for an alternative solution, the Manor decided that a new driveway – one kilometre long – was the only viable way to go. So it launched the 'Saviours of the Temple' campaign to raise funds for purchase of neighbouring land and building of a road. In February the newly-launched youth group Pandava Sena began Sunday public worship outside the Manor on the village green. The local villagers suddenly experienced what could happen if the Manor was closed to the public: that people would continue to come, just to be close to their shrine.

But on the 16th March, **1994** the 'slumbering Hindu tiger' woke up. The 'two years' was up and a shrine to Lord Krishna had effectively just been closed by the British government. Incensed by the underhanded treatment of its faith, 36,000 Hindus came to London from all over the country to march in protest. The media – and the politicians – were quick to take note. Something was troubling peace-loving Hindus. Surely there must be a solution.

In May it happened again, this time with 10,000. They came in small groups

to lobby their MPs and then at the stroke of Big Ben they all sat down in the road outside Parliament. It took 127 police over an hour to bring everything under control and get London's rush-hour traffic moving again. The next day the newspapers had stories, and photographs, of frail, elderly Indian ladies being taken away by burly policemen. The media loved it and the publicity ran for two days. In October the BBC's Everyman programme broadcast *The Road to Hare Krishna*, choosing the devotee's plight out of 'hundreds of other stories.'

Early in **1995** a Public Inquiry started to hear the Manor's appeal to the Department of the Environment. It was adjourned, then concluded in June after a total of 28 days in which evidence was contributed by academics, faith leaders, villagers and many others.

In August a grand total of £1,000,000 was raised in just one night in the 'Srla Prabhupada's Dream' appeal. Funds went towards

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the land, the road and legal costs. But because the devotees held the Janmashtami festival in **1994**, a court case found them guilty and they were fined £30,000 plus costs. There was a demonstration outside the court in Luton. Meanwhile, Akhandadhi Das was invited to give his first Thought for the Day on BBC's Radio 4. He would still be giving his thoughts in 2013, 137 broadcasts later.

In the summer of **1995**, the Pandava Sena youth group began two enduring projects. The first was the annual spiritual retreat, an innovation that would ultimately see up to 130 youth travel to a European temple every year to give everyone a taste of volunteering, a mini-course in Vaishnava teachings, and a chance to savour the local sights and culture. The other was 'Jammins,' monthly gatherings that drew together many youth in entertaining and innovative presentations of Krishna consciousness. In August that year, Damodara Das became president of the Manor while Akhandadhi continued to focus on the campaign to save public worship.

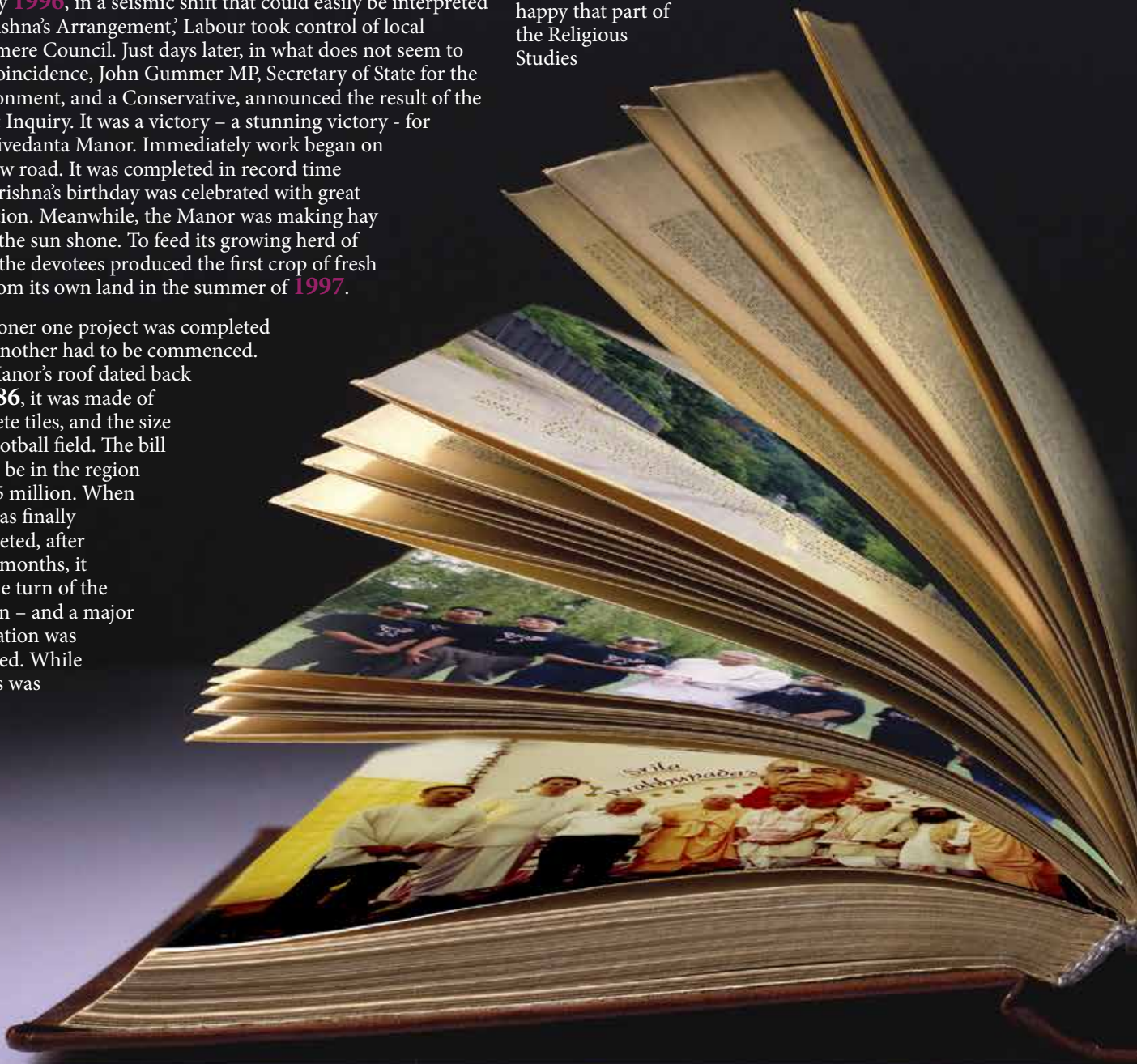
In May **1996**, in a seismic shift that could easily be interpreted as 'Krishna's Arrangement,' Labour took control of local Hertsmere Council. Just days later, in what does not seem to be a coincidence, John Gummer MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, and a Conservative, announced the result of the Public Inquiry. It was a victory – a stunning victory - for Bhaktivedanta Manor. Immediately work began on the new road. It was completed in record time and Krishna's birthday was celebrated with great jubilation. Meanwhile, the Manor was making hay while the sun shone. To feed its growing herd of cows, the devotees produced the first crop of fresh hay from its own land in the summer of **1997**.

No sooner one project was completed than another had to be commenced.

The Manor's roof dated back to **1886**, it was made of concrete tiles, and the size of a football field. The bill would be in the region of £1.5 million. When that was finally completed, after many months, it was the turn of the kitchen – and a major renovation was required. While all this was going on, one

of the Manor's enduring projects was launched: The Sanga Programme. Meeting in each other's homes was nothing new for Indian families, but the Manor helped to coordinate it and to teach Srila Prabhupada's messages and perform Kirtan in hundreds of homes. By 2013 there would be 45 sangas, each meeting regularly with 20 to 50 in each. It would be the equivalent of starting 45 new temples all over London.

In April **1998**, after helping to introduce new attitudes to organisational changes in keeping with the growth of the Manor, Damodara Das moved on and Vipramukhya Swami became the temple president. The Manor now had a herd of 24 cows and oxen. The cows gave a total of 12,254 liters of milk that year, much of it turned into the most artistic, delicious and devotional milk sweets such as pera, burfi, rabbri and khir. The oxen ploughed the land and took passengers in a specially-designed ox-cart. By this time, and particularly with the Manor's identification with the Hindu community, many school groups were coming to the Manor. The teachers and their pupils were happy that part of the Religious Studies



curriculum could be covered in a pleasant day out. Numbers of young visitors would continue to swell, eventually reaching 25,000 children and teachers each year.

The new millennium saw the Manor – now an organisation of some 40 residents, 60 staff and 350 volunteers – get to grips with astute budgeting, employment law and generally upgraded financial governance. It also saw a group started for the deaf: The Radha-Krishna Deaf Association. The deaf and hearing-impaired members came together and supported each other, then produced their own, unique vocabulary to add to British Sign Language.

Then in **2001** came the sad news that George Harrison, singer, songwriter, musician and devotee of Krishna, had lost his battle with cancer. He was to be permanently remembered at the Manor with the dedication of a garden in a spot he liked.

Young people like to go on a 'gap year,' often in an exotic location where they can broaden their experience of the world, make new connections and perhaps do some voluntary work. So why not do it with the devotees? It began in **2002** and was called The Sabbatical Programme. Six months at the Manor and then six months in three locations in different parts of India: Mumbai, Vrindavan and Mayapur, Bengal. At the end of it they would be trained in Krishna conscious living and would hopefully carry memories of it with them for a lifetime. In January of the same year, Vipramukhya Swami

returned to the USA and Gauri Das became president of the Manor.

2003 was to prove an eventful year. For a start, it was the Manor's 30th anniversary. There must have been special blessings available that year because every festival was a success – in planning, weather and attendance. And so much was accomplished that year. Nine Victorian chimney pots were replaced with especially hand-made terracotta pots, and new Tulasi greenhouses constructed. The renovation and building work continued with the altar being covered in gold leaf; the reception and dining room, library and main stairs sanded and varnished; and the Victorian oak wall panelling rejuvenated. Extra shoe storage was created along with an entirely new, high specification toilet block. A bride and family room was created to host wedding parties, and Srila Prabhupada's room was entirely re-done. On top of all this, Prime Minister Tony Blair attended a Diwali function at the House of Commons which was jointly organised by the temple.

The Manor has a very strong contingent of brahmachari monks, and they like to study, travel and teach others. **2004** saw 'Meet the Monks' travel to 14 towns throughout the country. Five monks dressed in identical saffron robes and singing the Hare Krishna mantra was an irresistible attraction for the people who attended the evening events. Back at the Manor, the restoration continued with refurbishment of old plaster, timber and leaded windows. Devotees taught regularly in private schools such as the local Haberdashers Askes, and Channel 4 featured a short documentary of the devotees in a peak time religious programme, Tempting Faith.

With new rules coming in from Europe, 'Health and Safety' was a subject on everyone's minds during this period, and the Manor was no exception. With 1500 visitors every Sunday and 30,000 at the largest festival, it was something that had to be taken seriously. Working with local police, fire and ambulance and food hygiene teams, the Manor put together manuals of procedures to make each event as low-risk as possible. But the Manor was a base for delivering Krishna consciousness through, amongst other things, the chanting of kirtan in the high street.

So **2005** was the year that devotees joined together to go out to local towns to sing to the public, invigorating a once-strong tradition. Many had their first sight of the devotees



of Krishna through this 'Harinam Party.' Others wanted to sell books and hand out sacred food – prasadam – to members of the public, and they wanted to do it with friends in their local London suburb. Five people became ten, then twenty and sometimes thirty. Collectively it became known as 'The Weekend Warriors' and is still going strong years later in the name of 'Sacred Street Party.'

In March the Chief Rabbi of the UK invited a Hindu delegation to his home for the first time and fed them. Manor devotees were among them. A new centre for the movement in the inner city opened in King's Cross, London. Named Matchless Gifts after the original storefront temple in New York, it was to offer shelter to many hungry and lonely people for years to come; first 300, 600, then 900 free hot meals every day for more than a decade.

From the first brown and white cow – with only three teats – back in 1974, the herd of the Lord of Gokula had swelled to 43. They needed a new place to shelter during the winter, a well organised milking parlour, and a place to recover when they were sick. Plans for a new Goshalla were duly submitted. And with so many children coming to the Manor, what about a playground for them? Funds were raised, plans were submitted, approved, then the playground was built, much to the delight of children ever since.

Again Channel 4 took an interest in devotees at the Manor and followed devotees for an entire year, producing a documentary titled Preachers To Be which was seen by 3 million viewers. After becoming the leader of the Conservatives, David Cameron MP visited the temple and spoke to businessmen and community leaders. He had second helpings of prasadam, met the brahmacaris, and placed a flower garland on Srila Prabhupada. He was blessed.

Members of the royal household, the staff at Buckingham Palace and Windsor, came on a visit to the Manor. They enjoyed the hospitality and found

it a pleasant surprise to be waited on at table for a change. At that year's Janmashtami festival, a newly formed, volunteer-based communications team hosted guests in their own dedicated tent. It was a gear shift up in hospitality and a total of 350 VIPs were offered hospitality. Sadly, that December, while devotees were still at their morning prayers, the RSPCA came unannounced and killed a cow they deemed was suffering. It sparked one of the biggest negative campaigns in their history. The cow was named Gangotri and she lent her name to a task force which worked with the government's DEFRA, legal experts and the Archbishop of Canterbury's office to ensure similar incidents would never happen again. At the end of it all, the laws on animal welfare had a codicil added that safeguarded 'protected cows on Hindu farms.' The RSPCA admitted their fault, apologised and donated a new cow. She was pregnant and when the calf was born she was called Gangotri.

New beginnings were also in order for the first of what would be a number of schools, all government funded, in which the educational ethos was based upon the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita. The ground breaking ceremony (Bhumi-puja) for the first school was held in Harrow. Rather appropriately, considering events of the previous year, the new Goshalla opened with a blaze of colourful ceremony and publicity. It was a large complex of buildings, featuring sturdy green oak timbers, and would go on to attract many newcomers interested in alternative farming methods.

Devotees expanded their interfaith activities by participating in Mitzvah Day, a joint Jewish-Christian initiative. They found their manpower strength and service attitude very welcomed by the local faith communities. Christians and Jews also joined together with the devotees in the Manor kitchen a few months later in the 'Feed the 5000' project which did just that in Trafalgar Square. Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, gave a hand in serving the prasadam.

It has now become an annual event.

Later in **2009** the Krishna-Avanti School opened and achieved national publicity. The school became so popular it was over-subscribed. Manor community members took part in a sponsored climb of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, eastern Africa that raised necessary funds for the new school. After an interregnum of several months, Srutidharma Das became the president of the Manor.

New building for young students seemed very much in the air as the Brahmachari ashram at the Manor was given the most extensive renovation job - ever. It took several months, but when finished the monks found they had a setting in which they could enthusiastically practise their spiritual life and also where they could bring serious new candidates for the ashram.

For the first time ever, fresh cow's milk was delivered to the London temple from the Manor's cows. Curiously enough, it would mark the beginning of a new period of fresh cooperation between the two temples. From the Manor being the overspill temple from London, through taking its own individual path, other events signposted that much more cooperation was to come.

In **2011** a major theatrical event took place as the Bhaktivedanta Players staged a production of Ramayana at nearby Watford's Palace Theatre. Opened in 1908, the famous 600-seater theatre was packed for the play. Both the theatre managers and the Players were delighted with the evening. Weeks later, a senior spiritual leader, Radhanatha Swami, became the first sannyasi to speak at a major corporate event in Canary Wharf. In the same month he addressed members of Parliament at the House of Commons.

In the Queens Diamond Jubilee year, **2012**, Her Majesty chose to visit the Krishna-Avanti School in Harrow. Devotees could hardly believe it when she sat before the Krishna and Balarama altar with

the Duke of Edinburgh and listened to the children singing a traditional bhajan by Narottama Das Thakur, a great devotee of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. "That was wonderful," she remarked afterwards, with a smile. Later that year it was the London Olympics and one of the devotees who organises the Janmashtami festival at the Manor, Ajay Kumar, was selected to manage the 300-strong hosting team for the opening ceremony. In September, the Bhaktivedanta Manor Mentorship System was officially launched, after months of preparation and trials. The initiative would help to create a supportive network for all members of the congregation. Then the previously unimaginable happened: the local Council - in their own Planning Brief- gave planning permission for a 2000 square meter, two-floored building in the grounds of the Manor.

2013 opened with fresh optimism and enthusiasm, with devotees reflecting on the past forty years, but looking forward to the future. The anniversary year of celebration began with a large, four-fire puja attended by hundreds. The Ramanavami Day was celebrated in grand style with a swan boat festival on the Manor's lake, and a permanent tribute to the Manor's benefactor, George Harrison, was inaugurated as 'A Garden for George' was opened.

Bhaktivinode Thakur, his son Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, and the founder-acarya of ISKCON, Srila Prabhupada, must surely be satisfied that Krishna consciousness has indeed come to the British people and, in its first 40 years at Bhaktivedanta Manor, is firmly established and set to grow throughout the British Isles.

May we take this opportunity to thank each and every devotee, friend, supporter, volunteer and well-wisher for all your valuable time, practical help, prayers, expert advice and contributions over the years. May Lord Krishna and all His saintly devotees bless you and your families now and in the many happy years we will spend together at Bhaktivedanta Manor.

The Years Before



During the First World War, the Manor was used to care for wounded soldiers. During the Second World War, some RAF officers were stationed here, close to their HQ at nearby Bentley Priory.



After the Second World War the Manor became a training college for nurses and remained so until 1972.



Srila Prabhupada first came to London in September, 1969. His 'Hare Krishna movement' was immediately popular.



In 1972, at a series of mass public gatherings in Delhi, Srila Prabhupada spoke daily to many thousands. Presiding over the event were Radha and Krishna that would soon become Radha-Gokulananda at Bhaktivedanta Manor.



After a year in the first temple at 7 Bury Place, Bloomsbury, there was hardly any room for devotees to live.



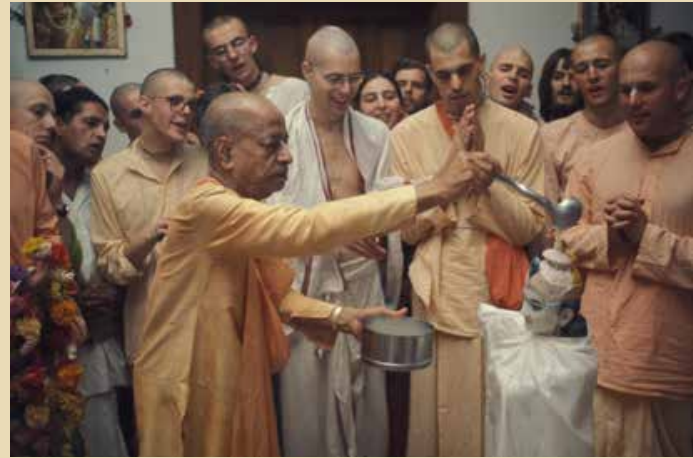
George Harrison was one of the most famous musicians in the world. He wrote songs about Krishna, and offered to help the devotees buy a new temple.

UK Timeline

1973-1974



The pure devotee of Krishna looks on as devotees position the Deities.



Janmashtami Day 1973, and Srila Prabhupada invites his Lord to reside at the Manor.



Summer afternoons on an English lawn: Srila Prabhupada spent hours with his disciples during his extended stay at the Manor.



The 1973 London Rathayatra was a grand affair, and Srila Prabhupada danced along the route. Later, he mentioned the cart in his Caitanya Caritamrita.



The very first cow at the Manor. A brown and white Ayrshire with only three teats – but she gave milk for Krishna and the devotees.



Hamsaduta Das (pictured) introduced the selling of kirtan recordings. These helped to raise needed funds, to distribute books, and introduced many thousands to kirtan.



A great Hare Krishna tradition: the delicious Sunday Feast.

1975-1976



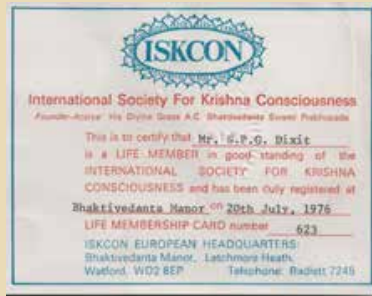
Chaitanya's Instant Theatre (CHIT) would perform short plays in schools and universities – and sometimes at music events. This is Bhumadeva Das dressed as 'King Arthur' making an entrance at the Stonehenge Festival in southern England.



The 'Travelling Temple' was an aluminium-bodied, Swedish public transport bus converted into a Krishna Mandir. It travelled all over the country and people could come inside.



This record album, a vinyl 'L.P.' of songs based on the teachings of Bhagavad-gita, sold tens of thousands of copies and the funds raised helped to publish books and restore the Manor.



Many Hindu families began to support the Manor by becoming Life Members. Early membership cards like this were owned by many.



The first public Janmashtami at the Manor in 1974 attracted 150 people. It would never be that size again. By 1976 the crowds had grown to many hundreds.



Sunday afternoon at the Manor and the Deities are taken for a procession around the grounds.



The Manor residents. Although the community was small, each member was dedicated, and helped lay the foundations for many years to come.

UK Timeline

1975 ● Margaret Thatcher becomes leader of Conservative Party ● Parliament broadcast for the first time ● Racing driver Graham Hill dies in air crash in Barnet, Hertfordshire ● First female rabbi ● New equal pay legislation for women ● First female BBC news presenter appointed ● 1976 ● Heat wave creates driest year since 1772. Water rationed. ● Concorde flies first commercial flight ● James Callaghan becomes PM ● The Apple Computer Company is formed by two young men in a garage ● The Ford Fiesta is launched ● First laser printer introduced by IBM ● Race Relations Act is passed

1977-1978



During his last visit to the Manor, devotees carried their spiritual master on a home-made palanquin.



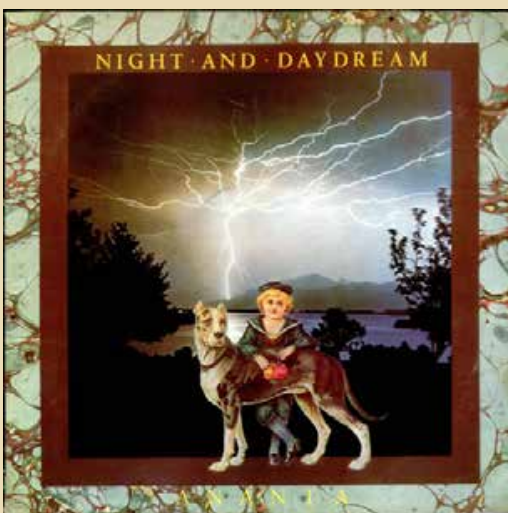
When the London temple in Bury Place closed, Jagannatha was worshipped at the Manor



In their distinctive white saris, members of the Women's Sankirtan Party, who raised the funds to purchase the London temple, bathe Jagannatha during the Snana Yatra Festival.

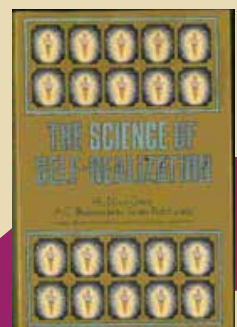


Ford Parcel vans were converted into a fleet of travelling ashrams for the brahmacharis, who loved their life on the road.



This music album of English songs was produced entirely in Britain and sold very well, helping the book distribution reach new heights.

This one book, a compilation of Srila Prabhupada's writing, classes, letters and conversations – would help to attract thousands in the late 1970s.



1979-1980



Devotees continued to reach out to other faith communities explaining a tradition entirely new to Britain. Sripati Das, Ranchor Das and Krishnadas Swami stand with a group of Christian clergymen.



Mahabharata Youth Clubs and Camps attracted many young people from Indian homes. Parents were grateful that their children could understand the culture of Sanatana Dharma.



The Manor raised enough funds to purchase a large stately home near Birmingham, Croome Court, and also invested in another travelling temple which they named 'Lord Chaitanya's Palace on Wheels.'



The new temple restaurant in Soho Street, London, was named Healthy, Wealthy and Wise and the devotees brought it, along with the 'Palace on Wheels,' to the Mind, Body and Spirit Festival.



The numbers of English people taking to Krishna consciousness in their homes continued to grow. 10,000 of them received the Friends of Lord Krishna (FOLK) magazine.



A small school was established at the Manor in 1979 and the children celebrated their own Rathayatra every year.



In 1979, five baby boys were born within six months at the Manor.

UK Timeline

1979 • Airey Neave and Lord Mountbatten assassinated by the IRA • Margaret Thatcher becomes first female Prime Minister • 'The Winter of Discontent' • largest number of days lost through strikes since 1926 • London's Jubilee Line inaugurated • Price of milk up by 10% • Sebastian Coe runs a record mile in 3 mins 48 secs • Government announces Docklands development • Housing Bill gives tenants the right to buy their homes • 1980 • Robert Runcie becomes new Archbishop of Canterbury • SAS storm the Iranian Embassy • John Lennon is shot dead • Alton Towers begins

1981-1982



Due to popular request, Sita-Rama, Lakshman and Hanuman were installed in 1981. Jayatirtha Das conducts the ceremony.



Janmashtami attracted so many visitors that a 'Big Top' circus tent was needed to accommodate them.



The decor outside Srila Prabhupada's rooms in 1982: Jayatirtha Das left the UK and Bhagavan Das Goswami replaced him as the spiritual leader.



The Manor was given this fresh perimeter path of red tarmac

(Above left) The resident brahmacharies now included many young men from Indian homes. They were to prove successful in encouraging thousands of other Hindu families to join the Manor's activities.

1983-1984



Old seats from a redundant cinema in Leicester, and a few stage lights, transformed the Manor's old book room into a proper small theatre.



The children's school at Croome Court continued to flourish, but by 1984 the stately home had been sold, and the community returned to the Manor.



When a temple in Florence, Italy, was being inaugurated, over 200 devotees made the long journey there by train. It was a grand festival.



This shop in Letchmore Heath was purchased by devotees and became 'KRISHNA'S', a food and devotional items store. The expansion into the village was to prove unpopular with some of the local residents.



Devotees gather to make their vows at a large initiation ceremony in France.



A printing press produced all the small publications needed by the Manor: leaflets, pamphlets, forms and magazines. The press was housed in what is now the school classroom.

UK Timeline

1985-1986



A new Victorian-style Tulasi House was constructed in the Manor's walled garden. The pre-school now stands on this spot.



Krishnadas Swami unveils the display board honouring those families who had become regular contributors to the Manor as part of the new Patron's Membership Scheme.



The London Rathayatra parade concluded with a grand festival at its new site on the south bank of the Thames: Battersea Park.



The Bhaktivedanta Players, a new theatre troupe, was launched by Jaya Krishna Das and Dwaraka Puri Das.

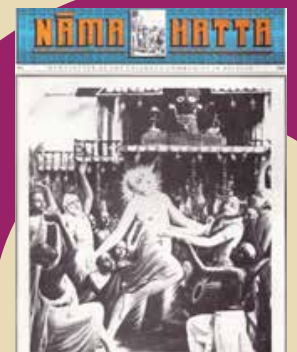


The local council sited a caravan outside the gates of the Manor. Inside it, staff counted and recorded the numbers of visitors.

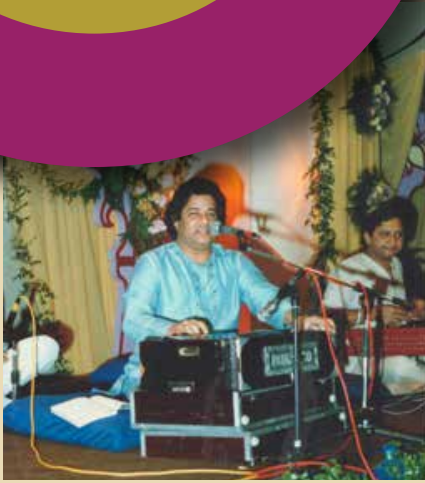


Hollywood director Steven Spielberg invited the devotees to act in his new production Young Sherlock Holmes being filmed in nearby Elstree. Here they are dressed as members of a mysterious Egyptian fellowship in Victorian London.

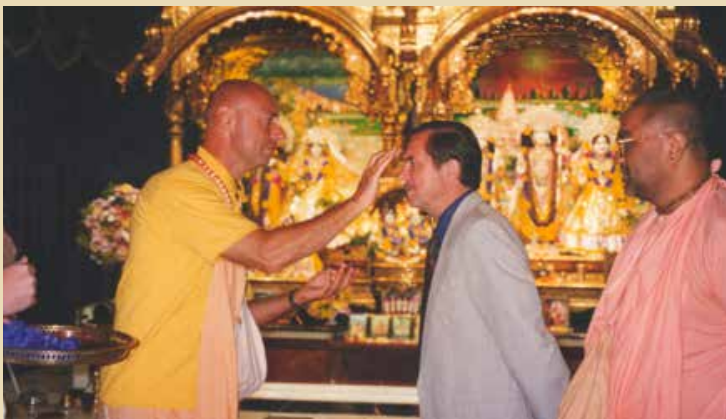
FOLK magazine changed its name to Nama Hatta, honouring the early sankirtan movement of Lord Chaitanya. Nama Hatta groups began appearing around Britain as members joined together for kirtan.



1987-1988



Famous singer of traditional Indian bhajans in 'Bollywood style', Anup Jalota, helps to raise funds for growing legal costs to keep the Manor open to visitors.



Before his 'Save the Temple' campaign tour of India, Nepal and South Africa, Labour councillor Frank Ward is ceremonially blessed by Sivarama Swami, receiving a new name: Arjuna Das.



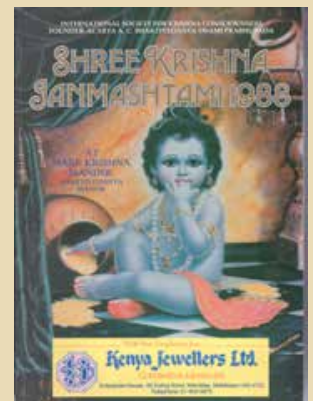
As part of a concerted campaign to save the Manor from closure, Councillor Frank Ward (Arjuna Das) and Trikalajna Das (left) tour India speaking with media, politicians and religious leaders.



Under the auspices of its original leader, Tribhuvanatha Das, the Hare Krishna Festival team again went on a tour of many cities around Britain.



A mail-order department was formed to service the many congregation members around the country. Thousands of items were stocked to supply everything required for practising Krishna consciousness at home.



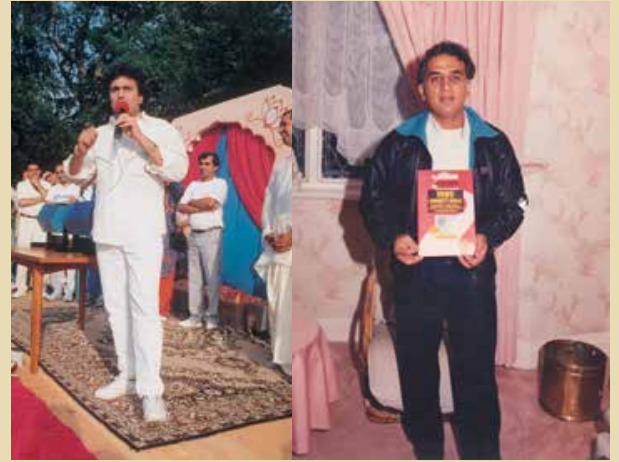
A large souvenir magazine was produced in time for the Janmashtami festival. It contained annual news, feature articles and many pages of helpful community advertising.

UK Timeline

1989-1990



The Manor Youth Forum (MYF) was launched in June 1989 and within one year had attracted 200 regular participants, for friendship, kirtan, debates, dramas and social events.



Cricket superhero Sunil Gavaskar (right) and Bollywood heart-throb Rishi Kapoor (left) headed up 7,000 devotees in an 11-mile sponsored walk from Wembley to the Manor. The sun shone, the kirtan rang out, and £100,000 was raised.



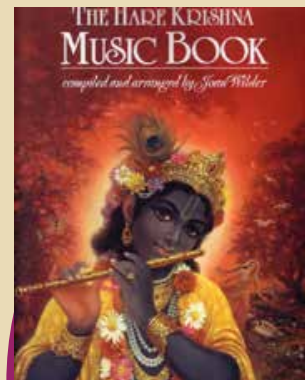
The Patrons Council helped with finance, festivals and the ongoing campaign. The dedicated support of the Patron Members of Bhaktivedanta Manor was gratefully acknowledged in the annual Patrons' Gathering (below)



The Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement was launched in 1990. Chairman Naresh Chadha (left) walks with James Clappison MP, Akhandadhi Das, temple president, and Srutidharma Das.



Composer and pianist Joan Wilder created this book of traditional songs, presented in Western musical notation for the first time.



1991-1992



When Boy George recorded Bow Down Mister in 1991, the single - featuring Krishna lyrics and mantra - became very popular in Britain and even more so in Germany, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland and France.



The wife of Labour leader Neil Kinnock visited the Manor at the very beginning of the party's election campaign. It guaranteed maximum media exposure for the Manor and its cause.



The English Padayatra, or 'sacred walk' began in Newcastle-on-Tyne and ended in London. It highlighted the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita and the Manor campaign to thousands of people around the country.



History was made when, at 65, the first member of the Manor congregation became a sannyasi monk within ISKCON. Taking his initiation from Sivarama Swami he became His Holiness Mahavishnu Goswami.



A fire broke out in the women's ashram . The blaze destroyed the upper rooms of the former stable block and repairs took some months.

UK Timeline

1993-1994



(Above) Academics and faith leaders came forward to defend the Manor's right to stay open to the public in a conference in London.



The newly-formed Pandava Sena youth group, faced with imminent exclusion from their place of worship, began holding community prayer in the village outside the Manor (Far left and above)



When the official 'two years' of pre-closure had elapsed, 36,000 Hindus demonstrated their dismay and anger in the streets of London. They came from all over the country but marched as one. Their single cry: 'Save Our Temple!' (Left and below)



Newspaper editor C.B. Patel campaigned vigorously to help the temple. Here, with members of the 'Dharma yatra' who visited all Hindu temple and centers in the UK to gather their support.



Some months later, 10,000 Hindus came to lobby their MPs in the House of Commons. At the end of their lobbying period they staged a sit-down protest, halting rush-hour traffic for over one hour.



The Happy reunion: George Harrison sings kirtan with early devotee friends in Srila Prabhupada's room during a 20th anniversary event.



The Campaign Years

Saving Bhaktivedanta Manor

From Closure to Public Struggle & Victory

The Success of the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement (HKTDM) 1991 - 1996

The Bhaktivedanta Manor was facing problems from the residents of Letchmore Heath village for a long time since 1973 but the actual struggle started when in 1991 Hertsmere Council issued an enforcement order banning public worship at the Manor.

Prior to HKTDM a great deal of ground work was done by Save The Temple Committee starting in 1987 and it sponsored campaign between 1987 to 1991 in Hague, Kathmandu and in India as well as in UK.

HKTDM was formed on 8th April 1991 and a strong committee of temple members was formed who all took pledge to save the temple from closure. The challenge was to fight for the freedom of worship at the Bhaktivedanta Manor Temple with help of all Hindus and non-Hindus living in UK. Our campaign logo was "Mam Anusmara Yudhya - Remember me and Fight", this is what Lord Krishna's message was to Arjun.

HKTDM had support from numerous societies and organizations throughout Britain and the World and our campaign (to name few VHP, National Council of Hindu Temples) included "Fasting for Justice" – several devotees fasted amidst a wild blizzard. 'Mass lobbies' – at the Houses of Parliament and 10 Downing Street, "Protest Marches" – arranged several marched through Wembley and on March 16, 1994 over 36,000 Hindus from all over UK marched through London to come and stop traffic in front of Houses of Parliament, "Dharmayatra" – devotees travelled over 1000 miles and visited 28 Hindu temples, the whole of HKTDM Committee members solicited assistance and held marches and talks in South Africa and met Nelson

Mandela and to India with late Bal Thackeray in Mumbai, Lal Advani of BJP, Chief Minister of New Delhi Sheila Dixit, Indian Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid and other several Indian politicians.

After ten year struggle, HKTDM assisted ISKCON in securing the rights for all devotees to worship and attend festivals at Bhaktivedanta Manor was successful when British Government lifted and overturned a local government order to close the gates.

The British Government finally accepted and agreed that the Hare Krishna movement's founder with the Manor makes it special, if not unique place that association must continue for "wider public interest".

Our campaign has increased the fame of Bhaktivedanta Manor – the Manor has expanded from 17 acres to 70 acres which is now being utilized for driveway, additional car parking, goshala, pastures and gardens. My special appreciation also goes to Frank Ward (VP HKTDM), HH Krishna Das Swami, Bimal Krishna Das, HH Atmanivedanan Swami, and Trikalajna Das who with the HKTDM worked tirelessly in the campaign with me.

It was a significant victory – a victory that now establishes the direction of Srila Prabhupada desire for Bhaktivedanta Manor.

"If you want to remain in the spiritual world, this temple is the spiritual world. This temple is not in London. It is Vaikuntha ... It is Vrindavan"
-Srila Prabhupada

By,
Naresh Chadha
Founder Chairman of HKTDM
1991 to 1996



31 January 1991(Wembley Keith Vaz MP)



2nd October 1991(Houses of Parliament)



10 June 1991



10 June 1991 (Fire Ceremony)



16 July 1991



16 July 1991(Bhaktivedanta Manor)



January 31, 1993 (10 Downing St)



August 1996 (Road Construction)



12th March 1992 (Mrs. Kinnock)



26 May 1994(Baroness Flather)



Access Road Janmashatmi 1996(Rishi Kapoor)



20th March 1992 Trafalgar Square (Puja Chadha)



26 May 1994(Houses of Parliament)



Janmashatmi 2012(with Philip Marsh)



New Delhi January 1993 (Sheila Dixit)



24 May 1994 (George Harrison – Beatle)



New Delhi January 1993 (Lal Krishna Advani)



26 May 1994 (Houses of Parliament)



New Delhi March January 1993



26 May 1994 (Houses of Parliament)



1995-1996



Devotees demonstrate their determination to win the campaign by going on hunger strike outside the Liberal Democrat Party headquarters.



After being fined £30,000 for celebrating Janmashtami in 1994, the devotees protested outside the court in Luton.



A special fund-raising dinner in August 1995 succeeded in raising a staggering £1 million in just one evening.



And then, in May 1996, the Ministry of the Environment announced the stunning news – **Victory for Bhaktivedanta Manor!**



White limestone formed the foundation of the 1 kilometer long driveway. Together with highway landscaping at the new entrance, the roadworks were completed in record time.

UK Timeline

1997-1998



Every day is an open day at the Manor, but these special Open Days, publicised to the local community, attracted hundreds to sample yoga sessions, ploughing, cooking demonstrations and prasadam tasting, as well as introductory, Ayurveda workshops.

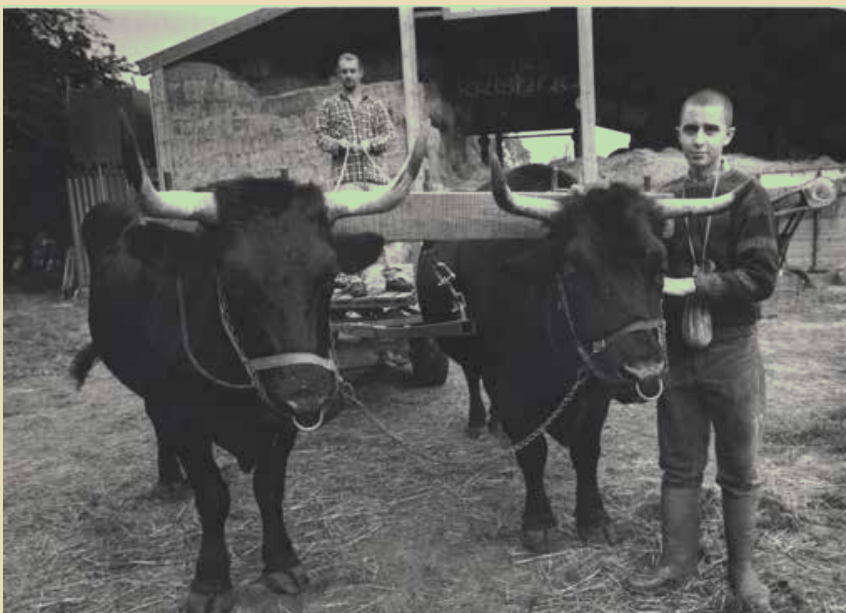


The Manor's well-used kitchen, cooking for over 400 each day and 1500 at weekends, received a much-needed upgrade, with plenty of stainless steel and new equipment.

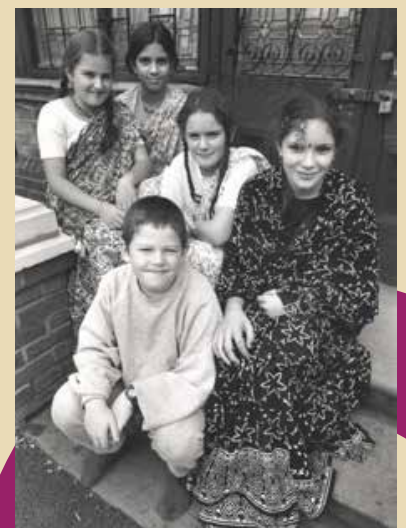
(Right) The life-blood of any organisation is its volunteer force; those who give their time selflessly and for no remuneration. Now the Manor can call upon many hundreds of volunteers for a wide variety of specialised skills and knowledge.



There has been a small school at the Manor since 1979. Now OFSTED inspected, the school provides primary education and a nurturing, spiritual ethos for up to 35 children. Pre-school children are also given the best start in life at the Manor Nursery. In 1998 a small secondary school began at the Manor, continuing to nurture the children's spirituality as well as their academic ability.



Fifty additional acres at the Manor meant more space for cows to graze – and more ploughing!



1999-2000



ISKCON Educational Services (IES) reached out to teachers and pupils, offering classes in Hinduism as part of the Religious Studies curriculum. School parties also came on day visits. By 1999 IES was conducting more than 250 classes a year for more than 22,000 children and teachers.

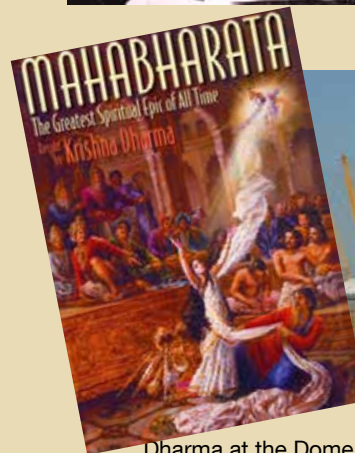
How to become involved in a spiritual movement based on hearing and chanting if you are hearing-impaired or deaf? Deaf devotees did not let it stop them. They formed Sign-On to Krishna, and later, the Radha-Krishna Deaf Association and attracted many other hearing-impaired people to spiritual practise. They also published their own spiritual guidebook with additional words in British Sign Language.



A Council was formed to represent the interests of members who lived some distance from London. The Congregational Council organized events and spiritual retreats, and helped to create a network of devotee friends around the country.



Rain, snow or heat couldn't stop the free, daily distribution of hundreds of hot meals to the homeless and disadvantaged in London. Hare Krishna Food for Life became an independent charity, Food for All, and continued the good work with renewed enthusiasm.



Dharma at the Dome: On display to all visitors to the Millenium Dome's Faith Zone were four books from each faith's tradition. Selected for Hinduism was the Srimad Bhagavatam and a modern re-telling of the Mahabharata by Krishna Dharma Das

UK Timeline

1999 ● The Euro currency launched ● Minimum wage ● Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly ● Midland Bank becomes HSBC ● London Eye ● George Harrison attacked by intruder
 2000 ● Tate Modern art gallery opens ● Last match in old Wembley Stadium ● Queen Mother's 100th birthday ● Nationwide panic-buying of petrol ● Steve Redgrave wins fifth Olympic gold ● Sven Goran-Eriksson first foreign football manager of England

2001-2002



The men and women who travelled to sell Srila Prabhupada's books lived quite simply in motorhomes, such as these devotees who visited cities all around the country .



The new Manor shop provided the entire community with cooked food items, milk sweets, books, music and all types of devotional items imported from India – and friendly service.



The Spiritual Beatle: Long-term friend and generous supporter, George Harrison, loses his battle with cancer. Here he is at the Manor with wife Olivia and friends.



The Panadava Sena youth continue their annual trips abroad to exotic locations. With more than 120 aged 16-25, the week was packed with new sights, old wisdom, and lots of pizza.



Taking their 'Gap Year' at the Manor, these university students help themselves to form a strong, spiritual foundation for life.



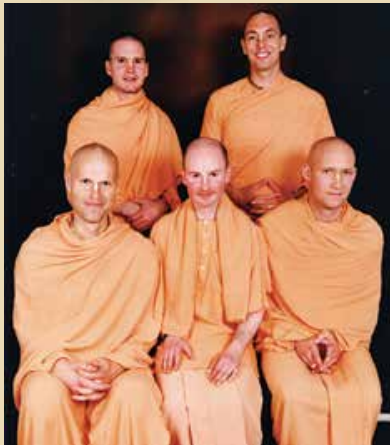
Each morning, the altar is decorated with fresh flowers, many of which are grown in warm tunnels by the Manor's expert gardeners.



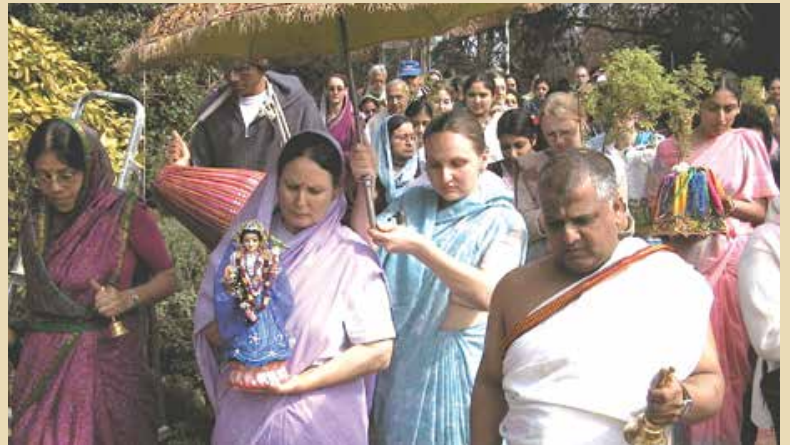
President of Bhaktivedanta Manor, Gauri Das, met with Her Majesty the Queen and talked with her.

2003-2004

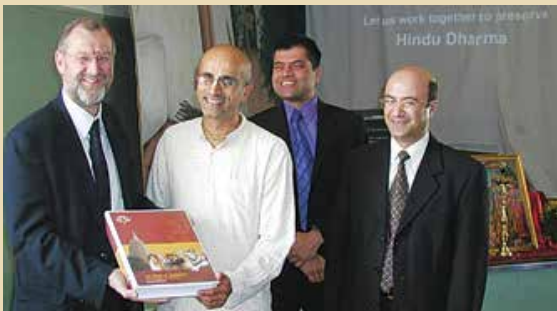
Each of these magnificent terracotta clay chimney-pots was made by hand. Nine new ones were commissioned to replace broken chimneys during refurbishment of the roof.



These five brahmachari monks travelled to fifteen cities, advertised their presence and hired a hall to meet the locals. More than four hundred accepted their invitation to Meet the Monks.



A new home for the sacred Tulasi trees was constructed this year; and a deity of Vrinda, the goddess of Vrindavan, was also installed.



The Heart of Hinduism pack was launched to help teachers present the essence of the faith through bite-sized illustrated chapters; colourful pictures and posters; and even sounds and music.



As Prime Minister, Tony Blair was invited to take part in a Diwali event inside the House of Commons. He happily accepted the invitation and is seen here lighting the flame with temple president, Gauri Das.



The Bhagavad-gita has always been attractive for enquiring young minds, and many students began their own societies on campus. In 2013 the Manor supported 25 university groups. Here, students gather for the first ever joint university day.



More visitors means more shoes. And along with expanded shoe storage came a new, modern toilet block with changing facilities for babies.



When a million visitors feet walk on the temple floor – even bare-footed – it occasionally has to be renewed. The striking lotus design was part of the latest temple room refurbishment.



Devotees planted 8,000 bushes and trees on the 70-acre estate, helping to enlarge the habitat for local wildlife.

UK Timeline

2005-2006



It is the backbone of the Hare Krishna movement, and the public practise that gives us our name: singing Krishna sankirtan in the streets. In 2005, devotees re-committed themselves to visiting local towns every week with drums and cymbals, singing, flyers and free prasadam sweets. They are still going strong.



In March 2005, the Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth, Lord Jonathan Sacks, invited a Hindu delegation to his London home for the first time. Manor devotees were amongst them. The Chief Rabbi fed his guests and discussed questions of faith with them.



After winning his party's leadership elections several months previously, David Cameron accepted an invitation to visit Bhaktivedanta Manor. He addressed a gathering of Hindu community leaders and local politicians, enjoyed second helpings of prasadam, and placed a flower garland on Srila Prabhupada.



It took some time for planning permission and fundraising, but when it was opened, the playground proved an instant magnet for children and has been in use every day since.



Abhaya Das, later to become Dayananda Swami, begins his doorstep project of meeting local people and introducing them to Srila Prabhupada's books.



Verses from the Bhagavad-gita are a perfect meditation, especially on a country walk. Here, the Gita Walk is opened by sponsor Barry Rickwood and



(Left) Taking its name from the early 'storefront temple' in New York City, Matchless Gifts opened in central London. Glenda Jackson MP helps to carry a suitably large cheque.

2007-2008



A new era began as the two-stage ground-breaking ceremony, or bhumi-puja, of the Krishna-Avanti school took place. On one day, a deity of Ananta was installed below the earth, and on another, a grand ceremony attracted many dignitaries and much media attention.



The killing of a cow by the RSPCA, while the Manor community was at prayer, created a storm of protest. Named Gangotri, her name became synonymous with a vigorous campaign to protect cows. Outside Parliament, these devotees stage a dramatic re-enactment. Devotees also took Gangotri's ashes to the Ganges river in India. The sad chapter ended with the Manor being given special consideration under the Animal Welfare Act, and a gift of a pregnant cow by the RSPCA.



After many long years, Krishna's cows were to be cared for in a spacious new home: New Gokula. The specialist construction involved procurement of many heavy green oak beams from France.



Sign on to Hinduism was launched this year, a big step forward for hard-of-hearing devotees, Hindus, and for the deaf everywhere. The book featured new sign language for divinities, Hindu ceremonies and theological terms.



Seventeen members of the royal household, from Windsor and Buckingham Palace, experienced a reversal of their usual roles as they were waited on at table by the devotees. The Palace staff enjoyed their day out, and said they understood what it meant to be 'servants of the Lord.'



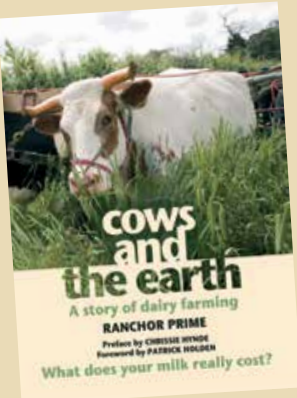
A feast for 15,000 Rathayatra festival-goers is cooked at the Manor and served by the temple's volunteers. This year saw the 40th annual celebration of this now famous London tradition.



Thought for the Day, a short, reflective slot each morning on BBC Radio 4, attracts an audience of 3 million listeners. In 2008, Akhandadhi Das notched up his 100th broadcast.

UK Timeline

2009-2010



To promote the theology and agricultural tradition behind cow protection, a new book was commissioned. Cows and the Earth, a story of dairy farming by Ranchor Prime remains a popular introduction to this important branch of an ancient way of life.



After eighteen months, New Gokula was opened. The facilities included a dairy, a bull pen, a grinding mill and a hospice. Here, temple president Srutidharma Das introduces Dominic Grieve QC MP, the United Kingdom's Attorney General.



This new high street drop-in temple was opened by enthusiastic local devotees in Redbridge, east London. Situated adjacent to Gant's Hill tube station, it saw hundreds of kirtans, classes and other events in the three years it was open. Functions have now moved to a new location.



Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists join the devotees of Krishna in the Manor kitchen as together they cook for 'Feeding the Five Thousand'. Shortly afterwards, the blessed food was delivered and served to grateful recipients in Trafalgar Square. London Mayor Boris Johnson took a turn at serving.



Under the auspices of The Lotus Trust, a Manor sister charity functioning for disaster relief and humanitarian aid, these devotees cook for hundreds in Haiti after the earthquake.



They may not use beds, preferring floor mats, but the brahmacharis still need to live in airy, light, well-organised and somewhat comfortable rooms. Their ashram, up near the roof of the Manor, was refurbished and new storage spaces and a library created.



Celebrations for Krishna's Appearance in 2010 were a grand affair. This photograph was taken from the top of a BBC live television broadcast mast, and reveals the scope of the festival. The BBC featured live coverage on their rolling news channel throughout the entire day, something that had never happened before.

2011-2012



During her Diamond Jubilee, Her Majesty the Queen travelled the length and breadth of the country, visiting a wide variety of communities. Together with the Duke of Edinburgh she visited the Krishna-Avanti School and listened as the children sang a traditional Vaishnava song.



The re-launch of the Hindu-Christian Forum at Lambeth Palace was a perfect occasion for temple president Srutidharma Das to speak with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams.



An unusual sight: A saffron-clad sannyasi monk speaks in the House of Commons. Radhanatha Swami here delivers some words on the inner meaning of Diwali to members of Parliament. During this visit to England, he also became the first sannyasi to speak in an event to a large group of bankers at Canary Wharf.



Solar panels were fitted to the roof of New Gokula. They would help to defray energy costs over the long term.



The Manor contributed to this new Krishna-Avanti school in Leicester. Situated in an attractive Victorian building, the school immediately became popular with local Hindu parents.



Devotees stand on the peak of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, east Africa, as they complete their gruelling, sponsored ascent. Although the sun shines, they freeze and are low in oxygen. The team raised much-needed funds for completion of the Krishna-Avanti School.



The new Ahimsa Dairy produces thousands of litres of milk from protected cows that will never face a dark future - even if their milk-yielding days are over. The brand may cost slightly more than normal milk, but sales continually increase as sympathetic consumers understand the ethical cost of ordinary milk. Ahimsa also now produce cheese, yogurt and paneer.

UK Timeline

2011 • Three former Church of England bishops are ordained as priests in the Roman Catholic 'Ordinariate' • Prince William and Catherine Middleton marry • The Queen makes visit to the Republic of Ireland, first by monarch since 1911 • St Paul's Cathedral completes £40 million restoration • Riots in London and other cities • 2012 • UK celebrates the Diamond Jubilee; events include a pageant of over 100 boats and a pop concert outside Buckingham Palace • Greatest Olympics success since 1908 • Surgeons carry out first ever robotic open-heart operation in Britain • Police and Crime commissioners elected

2013



Veteran seamstress Ramadevi Dasi returned to the Manor to coordinate the sewing of a 40th anniversary Deity outfit. Community members each sewed a few stitches.



Interest and enthusiasm for kirtan continued to grow. In central London, two hundred people met for a continuous kirtan of six hours duration.



'A Garden for George' finally opened in 2013. An attractive, sunken area had been selectively planted, each of eight sections highlighting an aspect of the journey of the soul. Lyrics from George Harrison's songs and a piece of contemporary art draw the viewer into contemplation of a spiritual thought. Television presenters Monty Don and Reverend Peter Owen-Jones.



The Manor lake was transformed as Ramanavami festivities saw a beautiful swan boat transport the Deities in a ride across the water. A kirtan boat accompanied them with melodic singing.

Celebrations for the 40th anniversary year, 1973-2013, got off to a colourful start with a four-fire puja attended by hundreds of devotees. Television news that night covered the event.





It took thousands of people forty years to make Bhaktivedanta Manor the vibrant spiritual community it is today; and every single one of them played a vital part.

It all began with the vision of a pure devotee of Lord Krishna, and it continues today through the good work of those who are dedicated to him. The next forty years of the Manor will be in the hands of another generation: those who are sufficiently inspired by what he created to protect it, and give it to the world.

In these few pages we present a glimpse of the history of the Manor through a selection of photographs spanning four decades. Not every individual gets a personal mention, but we've included all the major events that helped preserve the Manor from its early beginnings and through its many challenges. We look forward to the next forty years and invite all our readers to join together in creating the future of the community.

Helpful Website

Main website of Bhaktivedanta Manor
Mail-order - books and other items
Recordings for download, live streaming
ISKCON Pandava Sena - Youth
Spirituality for beginners
ISKCON around the UK

www.

krishnatemple.com
krishnashopping.com
gokulananda.co.uk
psena.com
krishnawisdom.com
iskconuk.com

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