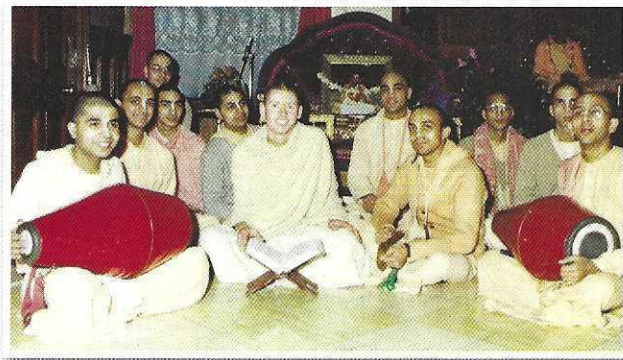


We can become instruments in God's plans

What a momentous occasion for the entire Hindu community here in the UK! Celebrating 20 years since an occasion that changed the direction for not just Bhaktivedanta Manor but much for all faith communities and their places of worship.

The motto I always remember throughout the 10 years of the Campaign to save Bhaktivedanta Manor was from Lord Krishna's own words in the Bhagavad Gita: Mam anusmara yudhya ca... "Always remember Me, Arjuna, but at the same time fight". So I think our principle throughout those many years was based on this that really somehow or the other we all have to remember Krishna through our devotion, through our seva and through our works.



The young men from the Hindu community who joined Bhaktivedanta Manor and helped fight the campaign

How can we remember Krishna? Krishna speaks of this in the Gita: Man-mana bhava mad-bhakto, mad-yaji mam namskuru... Four things He says Man-mana always think of Me, bhava mad-bhakto become My devotee, mad-yaji worship Me and mam namaskuru. Four things that He asks us to do.

Nimitta matram bhava savyasachin, as we would always say in our Campaign days, that Krishna is going to make sure that the Temple remains open, that Krishna will make sure that we do have victory. So all of you, like Arjuna, have a choice to become an instrument. "Do you want to be an instrument in this Campaign to keep Bhaktivedanta Manor open?" we would ask. Krishna is going to do the work but do we want to become the instrument for doing that work.

Early Days: Trouble with the Council begins as Manor popularity grows

I personally met Srila Prabhupada in 1977 and that gave me a deep conviction in Krishna Consciousness from then onwards, so I joined Bhaktivedanta Manor in 1978. I had been coming to the Temple since 1974 and

over the years I'd seen the community grow. During the first few Janmasthanis everyone was on the front lawn, with a stage and couple of burners making chips! We would get a few thousand people maximum and it was therefore manageable. However as the years went by people were really attracted and numbers grew.

I knew there were some problems with the Council whilst the Manor's popularity continued to grow throughout the 1970's and 1980s. Credit must be given that one of our national secretaries in the early days, Vichitra Virya das, had recognised the problem along with Akhandadhi das. So there was a public inquiry that was held in Letchmore Heath village hall.

It was agreed that "OK the numbers are growing but let's restrict things. Let's have 5 festivals over 6 days". That's what we were given at that stage and the numbers could be controlled as well. On any one day we could have a certain number of people but the 6 festivals were unlimited. That was something that was negotiated very well, otherwise we would have had difficulties.

In 1986 the opening of the village shop was something that led to some villagers being alarmed. The local store had become "Krishna's shop" and that made some think "My God there will be more and more of them coming into the village!" After 14 villagers complained, the Council reacted by placing a caravan to record visitors to the Manor. But it was found out later on that they were counting the ethnic visitors separately, so this became a big issue of racial discrimination.

"If the Manor was not a Hindu temple would the Council have been more tolerant?" is a question that was often asked.

Raising Funds

In 1987 the Council hit us hard: They wanted to close the Manor as a public place of worship! So the main Campaign began. As it took off, many funds were



Devotees preparing dinner for Anup Jalota's Diwali Night to

needed and I want to thank all those people who contributed their hard earned money to save the Temple.

We raised fund in a variety of ways: One of the first ways was in 1987 when we had Anup Jalota: we organised a large event including bhajans. Events like that were hard work to organise, they very nice but they didn't make that much money. Yet, they brought a greater awareness of the Campaign to many more people.

Marches to Parliament

One of the main things is that we had many marches but one march was the largest and best remembered. On 16th March 1994, 37,000 people marched and unity was our strength and it represented remarkable support. People took a day off work, people shut their shops at midday and children took half a day off school. What a commitment, a hundred coaches came from throughout the UK!



Protestors making their voice heard outside Hertsmere Borough Council

The march began and we thought perhaps we would get maybe 10,000 people but the police and indeed everyone was shocked when the numbers swelled up to 37,000. So I think it was the first time that Hindus in this country recognized the fact that they had to do something together. A temple could not be closed. It was one of the times that the Hindu community was so united because it could affect everyone in due course of time. Everyone identified with it.

The memories were tremendous where we saw old, young of the faith, and those not of the faith gathering together, all converging. We had the Sikhs at the front supporting us, we had Muslims that had come along, we had Jains and of course we had Hindus from every denomination.

I remember 26th of May 1994 where we planned that we would again be outside Parliament. In addition to the Pandava Sena, the Ram Sena had come along and we all sat on the road outside Parliament! The first

time anyone had ever done that and we did stop the flow of traffic within the area. For nearly 2 hours the whole of central London was chock-a-block! At 3pm precisely the horns blew and everyone sat, as we had planned. A whole array of people were arrested including my wife! Then it was tremendous because Mike Wooldridge from BBC Religious Correspondence had come out because he knew something was going to happen. He reported live that "Hindus have done something that they have never done before...Indian ladies in their saris, elderly ladies are being dragged away!"

Our Leaders

Of course there were many contributors for the whole Campaign to Save Bhaktivedanta Manor. Our General as we called him, was C. B. Patel of Gujarat Samachar / Asian Voice who headed up the Campaign specifically because he wanted the community to be united and he knew that he was in a good position to do it. Other voluntary contributors specifically were Naresh Chadha and Frank Ward of the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement (HKTDM) who worked tremendously throughout.

Rishi Kapoor and Sunil Gavaskar

Rishi Kapoor and Sunil Gavaskar attended our earlier marches and that was a great boost to our Campaign. We had a sponsored walk in which we raised a £100,000. (a great amount of money in those days). Everyone, from young children to elderly took part not just in the walk but people made sure we had sufficient funds. We started at Alperton High School, we registered everyone and we started the walk and of course having Sunil Gavaskar and Rishi Kapoor we had to have bodyguards. Yet despite the fuss it was remarkable because both of them walked all the way. They didn't have to, but they did.



Srutidharma Das & Rasik Mulji making final arrangements for the 11 mile walk to raise funds

I think that was something tremendous that local heroes for the Hindu community from India had come out to support us. It was 13 miles, a long walk, we worked hard and about 10,000 people took part in the procession down Ealing Road in Wembley all the way across to Kinshury, Edaware and making their way up

to Stanmore and arriving at Bhaktivedanta Manor. We had to get everyone fed there was a fantastic atmosphere! I do remember that we said that if anybody would like to sponsor someone to walk all the way back. In response Janak Radia walked all the way back for triple the amount of sponsorship money!

The Pandava Sena

The youth group Pandava Sena was formed around that time and it was actually Ramesh Kallidai who had envisioned that we had to have a name for the youth fighting the Campaign. The youth group was formally known as the Manor Youth Forum but there was a variety of more appropriate names floating about. In the end we all agreed "Pandava Sena" was perfect.

The Pandava Sena at that time was an external body, it wasn't part of the Manor. They organised themselves independently and they had their own office in Edgware. Every week they would be faxing, emailing Councillors and having candle vigils during their public protests.

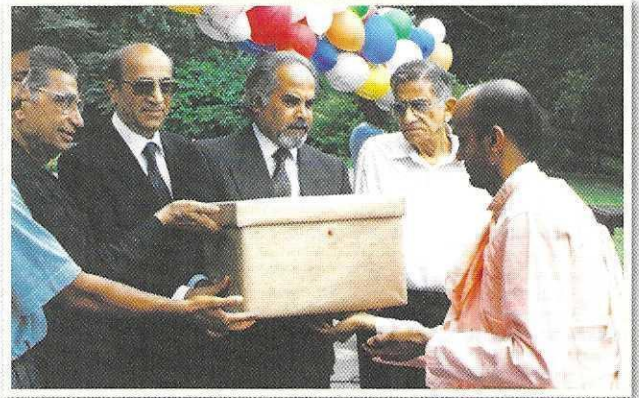
The Pandava Sena used their imagination: every Sunday the Temple would lock the gate and at 7pm everyone would gather outside to have an arti on the Village Green. The powerful message was "either you have us in your village still having the arti every Sunday night, or keep the Temple open and we will go inside the gates".

Political Campaigning and Petitions

The ongoing Campaign needed funding and a couple of million pounds may have been spent with legal and Campaigning fees. The Patron Council really raised that and it was tremendous under the chairmanship of Dilip Patel. He and his dedicated team that worked very hard.



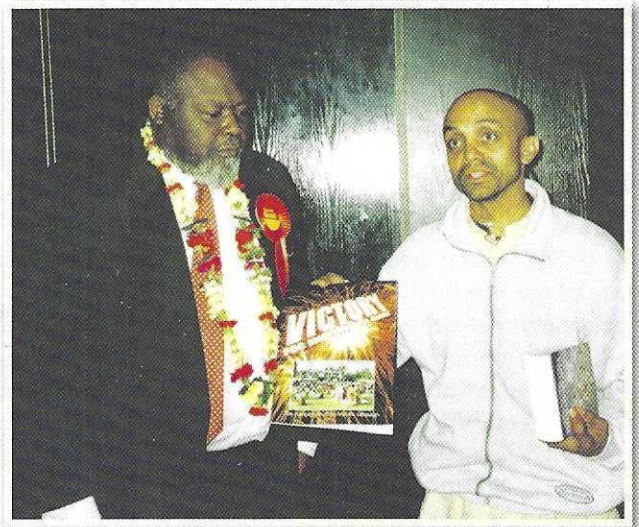
Mrs Glennys Kinnock, wife of the Leader of the Opposition, Neil Kinnock, being shown around Bhaktivedanta Manor by Srutidharma Das on the first day of the Election Campaign



Seeking to explore all options for justice, the temple makes an application to have the temple's case heard by the European Court of Human Rights

In the early days when we originally started, the MP for Hertsmere was Cecil Parkinson MP. He said that "Obviously the people are upset in the village because of noise and traffic but really the issue is property prices. Hence you should have an alternative access. Make a route from the A41 straight on to the site".

The bullock cart ride to deliver a petition to 10 Downing Street was quite a task because we had to get permission to get the bulls into central London. Nearing our destination, a group of devotee children accompanied the bulls. Nalind Joshi, working with HKTDM, helped to organise that spectacle with Naresh Chadha!



Bernie Grant MP for Tottenham who gave his support during the campaign

We had a variety of things going on and there were signatures at every festival, signatures from every individual not just here but from other parts of the world. We also sent a huge petition to the Queen which included 10,000 names in several boxes!

Whether it was the European Court of Human Rights or whatever it was, we backed it up with so many signatures. One highlight I very much recall was the fact that Neil Kinnock's wife, Glenys, was the first person who came to the Manor who received huge media exposure: It reached the front pages of most national newspapers! I was asked to host her nicely and



Naresh Chadha Chairman of HKTDM makes a powerful speech outside BHaktivedanta Manor as we petition the European Court of Human Rights

it was quite tremendous because she was surrounded by many people, especially given that a General Election had just been announced.

The Dharam Yatra

One of my great memories is the Dharam Yatra which was headed up by C. B. Patel, Balmukunda Parikh, Surendra bhai and Bimal Krishna das. Over 4 days, over an Easter Weekend we visited every Hindu temple and centre throughout the UK. It was a great principle of unity. The Temples and the committees and community centres was where the Hindu heart-beat was. We wanted to make sure they knew what was going on at the Manor. Everyone had a sense of belonging and this was a turning point for



Srutidharma Das along with members of the Dharma Ektaa Yatra team visited all Hindu Temples and communities across the UK in 4 days, rallying everyone to join them on the 16th March protest

Hindus in this country.

The person who kept us jovial during our tour was our driver Kuveri das, who made sure that we were all entertained!

It was a great atmosphere; all travelling together in

a coach and sharing our breakfast, lunch and dinner together. What a family atmosphere that was created! Mr C. B. Patel noted that the Dharma Yatra idea worked really well.

Conclusion

Specifically for the Campaign it was fighting for the right of every individual to visit Bhaktivedanta Manor. We were fighting for everyone's right to go here and to establish it as a public place of worship. I think the 10 years struggle is a fascinating story in modern religious history where conviction, deep conviction, determination in the face of impossible odds, showing how a community came



Celebrating Diwali 2013 in 10 Downing Street



Srutidharma Das greeting David Cameron PM

together in a new land, united to defend their faith and they took on the government. It also shows that it was the starting point of how the community has prospered as a result of coming together and being so decisive in what they wanted to achieve.

Srutidharma Das

Temple President of Bhaktivedanta Manor and a Governor of the Avanti Schools Trust. He also sits on an advisory committee for ISKCON's Governing Body Commission (GBC)

The struggle to save the temple

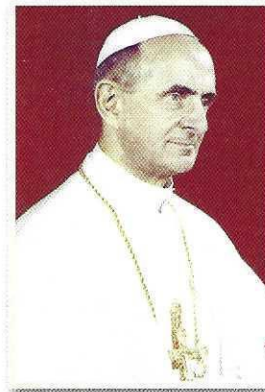
The ten-year struggle to save a British Hindu temple from closure is a fascinating story of modern religious history. It is a tale of deep conviction and determination in the face of almost impossible odds. It tells of how the Hindu community, members of an ancient faith in a new land, became united to defend their faith, took on the government – and how they prospered as a result.

When a lone figure in saffron robes arrived at Heathrow airport in September 1969, no-one would have predicted that the elderly, exotically-dressed traveller, and the message he brought, would one day unite the hearts of tens of thousands of Hindus, Jains and Sikhs in the United Kingdom. The elderly sadhu was A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who, at 73 years old, was arriving in England to begin his mission. He brought with him deep devotion to his Lord Krishna and a lifetime's scholarship of the religious classics read by hundreds of millions in India, the Bhagavad-gita and the Bhagavata Purana. He had little money, and no institutional backing, but he had great inner strength and a deep desire to share the benefits of an ancient faith.

Originally from Calcutta, Bengal, in the east of India, he had first started his mission in another important city on the other side of the world from his birthplace in the sub-continent: New York. At that time the government of the USA had only recently relaxed 45 years of tough immigration laws, allowing him to enter the country. America was experiencing a unique period of its post-war history when prevailing norms were being challenged. The so called 'counter-culture' allowed many people, most of them young, to investigate new ideas and modes of expression, including the 'wisdom of the east.' Meanwhile, the Christian religious establishment was being challenged by the intellectual and theological findings of Vatican II, the three-year long series of council sessions of Catholic cardinals and theologians that resulted in fundamental changes to long-established Church thinking. The Pontiff of the day,



Arriving at Heathrow, Srila Prabhupada is met by hundreds of followers



Pope Paul VI, the first pontiff to visit India

Pope Paul VI, had recently visited India, the second only visit of a pontiff to a country outside Italy for 150 years. A document was issued from the Vatican entitled Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. In its pages the Pope declared:

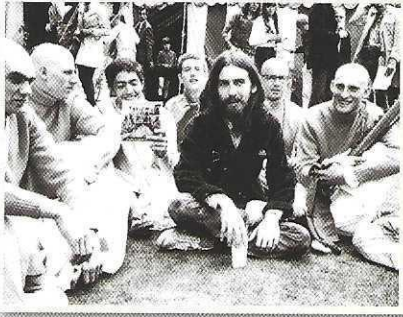
"In Hinduism men contemplate the divine mystery and express it...through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our

human condition either through ascetical practises or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust....The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks in sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, although differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men."

The teachings of Hinduism were thus declared worthy of greater respect by the Church, the young people of the West were interested, and the holy men were, for the first time, being allowed to travel and teach in the English language. Added to this was the not insignificant fact that four particular young English men, collectively known as The Beatles, had started a musical revolution with their popular songs. They were known worldwide and had a decided interest in all things Indian. It was A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's first American followers who met them. The Beatles had heard the L.P. recording of the Swami chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, they liked it and wanted to know more. And now he was in England.

The Hare Krishna Mantra

So it was that John Lennon sent his Rolls Royce car to pick up Bhaktivedanta Swami at the airport, and the swami was taken to Tittenhurst, Lennon's country home near Ascot. He was to stay there with a handful of followers for some weeks, talking to the famous musicians and encouraging them to try the effects of mantra chanting themselves. The result was the recording of traditional Hindu chants to modern music, something of a first in the British recording industry and an overnight success for the group now known as The Radha Krishna Temple. Of all the Beatles, it was George Harrison who took up the devotional practises seriously



George Harrison sits with members of 'The Radha Krishna Temple' who had just released the chant as a single

reciting the 'Hare Krishna, Hare Rama' mantra daily on his wooden beads. He learned from the Swami and wrote songs such as My Sweet Lord based on his teachings. The number of devotees of Krishna, mainly young and English

by birth, began to swell rapidly. It was George Harrison who first suggested that the Hare Krishna movement should have a house in the countryside. By 1972 the devotees had outgrown their London base in Bloomsbury, near the British Museum, and a much bigger house was required, somewhere where they could train new members in traditional puja before sending them out to start new temples around the country. (s03)

The search ended in rural southern Hertfordshire, a place far from the bustle of the city, but just on the borders of London, some 20 miles out, and not far from Edgware and Stanmore. It was a large, Mock-Tudor house built in 1883 and set in seventeen acres of undulating parkland and woods. It had its own lake and Victorian gardens and was situated within the small, traditional village of Letchmore Heath. Little did anyone know that this very location, selected for its seclusion and tranquillity, would become so popular with Hindu families that within a decade they would be coming there in the thousands. But that is another story of the movement of the Indian people and the Hindu faith.

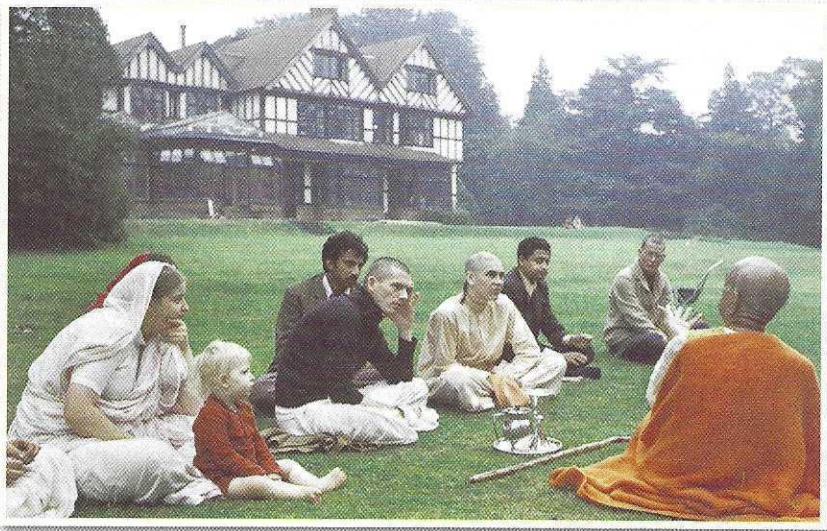
Hindu Exodus

During the 19th century the British rulers of India sent workers from the western state of Gujarat across the Indian Ocean to East Africa, another of their colonies.

Their principal employment was as supervisors and managers of native Africans engaged in the construction of the railway from the port of M o m b a s a through to Kampala, in what

'the pearl of Africa.' In the railway towns, sugarcane and tea fields, thousands created a new life for themselves, preserving their ancient culture and religion. Many of them were worshippers of Krishna, and right there in Africa they built temples and observed their customary festivals. Three generations passed.

By the 1960's British colonialism in Africa had all but died. It was a new era that saw difficulties as nations unravelled back into fierce tribalism or dictatorial regimes. A military coup in Uganda saw the British-educated Idi Amin seize control. By 1972, in a bid to wrest control from the successful Asian business community, he gave the entire Indian population of Uganda a mere 48 hours to leave, allowing them to take only a few possessions. As British passport holders, a legacy



Srila Prabhupada sits with devotees on the lawn at Bhaktivedanta Manor

of Britain's long rule in East Africa, almost 100,000 people, exiled from the land they knew as home, arrived at a cold and drizzly Heathrow airport. At the time, it was one of the largest man-made movements of people in history. Many of them eventually settled in different parts of England, such as Preston, Birmingham and Leicester, but a large proportion found jobs in London, some finding homes south of the Thames in Croydon, but many more settling in the north-western suburbs of Southall, Wembley and Harrow.



On a cold and drizzly morning, the



The message of the Dharma is honoured by Sikhs, Jains

As they struggled to come to terms with living in a new and colder climate, feelings alienated and dispossessed, and with very little resources or facility for community worship, the news reached them of a country house where the Hindu religion was practised, where their faith was understood and where they could worship at a shrine of Krishna. They could take their children there and at least be able to pass on something of their faith to the next generation. The English converts to Krishna, however, knew very little of Hinduism and had not yet begun to reach out to the local community, let alone the north London suburbs. Yet the two communities, as different as they could be in many ways, but linked by a mutual affection for Krishna, were living only ten miles apart in outer London. It was only a question of time before they met.

In 1975 at Bhaktivedanta Manor, as the donated country house came to be known, the annual celebration of Lord Krishna's divine appearance in this world, the festival of Janmashtami, attracted a mere 240 curious Hindus from the London suburbs of Harrow, Wembley, and Southall. A display of books, some home-made badges and key chains, set up on three dining tables under a few plastic awnings on the front lawn - this was the sum total of the facilities arranged for the guests. However, from this early beginning, the resident



Lord Krishna is invited during the 'Praan Pratistha' or installation ceremony

out to others in their community to share the good news of the Gita. Why were so many Hindus attracted to a group of English converts - relative newcomers to Krishna worship? One reason was the kirtans (singing and chanting in praise of the Deity), the religious dramas, the festivals, and the clear teaching that, although they had been exiled from their homes, Lord Krishna was still available for them, even in this new land. (s07)

A Growing line of Pilgrims

Attendance to the weekly Sunday services and annual festivals continued to climb. In 1979 the attendance at the biggest festival - Janmashtami - reached an all-time record of 3,000 people; but by 1985 the festival attracted some 30,000 worshippers over two days. A large circus tent offered an all-day programme of religious music, traditional dance and theatre, and it was around this time that the festival became known as 'the biggest outside India.' Such a growth in popularity did not go unnoticed, however, not least in the village of Letchmore Heath. 2,500 cars and buses filled with pilgrims passed through in a line that stretched back to Hendon, five miles away.

It was a curiously un-British situation. Although in India pilgrims can visit any shrine they wish, in as great a number as they wish, it is not the same in the British Isles. Laws laid down in the years of religious dissent have created a country where public worship can only be conducted at government-approved sites. And when a non-Christian religious shrine becomes popular in a chocolate-box English village in the middle of the Green Belt it was bound to cause a stir.

And stir they did. Only about fourteen villagers filed the original complaint, but that was enough. By 1986 the local council had hired people to count the number of 'ethnic visitors' coming to the Manor. An official caravan was lodged permanently outside the Manor gates. The wheels of litigation began to turn. The local council agreed with the handful of villagers and forbade public worship at Bhaktivedanta

Manor. No more visitors, no more festivals. The Manor was to be a private monastic dwelling and theological college with worship for its residents only. It was, in effect, an edict to close the temple completely to the public.

By this time - the late 1980s - the Hindu community all over Britain knew and loved the Deities at the Manor. They knew the story of the saint, Srila Prabhupada, who had lovingly installed Krishna upon the shrine and they felt that again their community's aspirations were being thwarted by another heavy-handed government. There had to be a solution.



Ras-Garbha on an English lawn: and early Janmashtami festival

devotees at the Manor continued to reach out to their Hindu neighbours throughout the next few years. They conducted devotional singing and scriptural discussions in their homes and in halls; created newspapers and magazines dealing with spiritual subjects; and initiated successful summer camps and youth clubs for their children. At a time when the Hindu community was just finding its feet, the devotees of Krishna at the Manor were a supportive and trusted walking stick.

Attracted by the happy, enthusiastic atmosphere and gorgeous altar worship, the Hindu community became further involved and offered substantial financial and volunteer support. They in their turn reached

7,000 Hindus walk 11 miles in a show of support



new Enforcement Notice to stop all worshippers attending the temple. The temple appealed to the national government's Department of the Environment. The November appeal hearing adjourned in order to allow time to negotiate a solution based on building a new temple to relocate public worship nearby. On the local Hertsmere Council's suggestion, the Manor applied to build a new temple on land close to the nearby village of Elstree. Yet after suggesting this solution, the council then changed its mind and refused planning permission for it. The Manor had no alternative but to appeal again.

Thousands of Well-wishers

The Manor also came up with a novel solution, a solution that, although expensive, would create a solution that could be a resolution for all: an alternative driveway that would lead all traffic to the Manor from the back of the property. Linking with the A41 the new road would allow the vehicles to bypass the village completely. So the Manor also applied for permission to create this peaceful solution. The council refused this solution. The temple appealed but later withdrew the appeal as the land over which the road could be built had not yet been secured.

In November of 1988 came the first public enquiry on Enforcement Notice appeal, followed, in February 1989, by a second appeal on the council's refusal of the building of a new, purpose-built temple in another location. By this time, the campaign to keep the temple open needed an injection of new funds. Repeated court cases and public inquiries were expensive affairs, so the temple began a series of

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.

But in 1990 the Department of the Environment announced its decision. There was to be no new temple and worship and festivals at the Manor had to stop within two years. The temple had no option but to appeal the decision 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. 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. 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 the temple, 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 sacred images of Lord Krishna and Rama, once installed,



Looking for British Justice: Keith Vaz MP and shine a light outside

moved. The Manor was therefore a holy place.

But in 1991 the High Court turned down the appeal. This was followed in March 1992, by the Court of Appeal refusing to hear the case. It ruled that the Manor had to cease as a public place of worship and a place where religious festivals were celebrated. It had two years to comply and the temple had to close its gates in the spring of 1994. The clock was ticking.

In response to its pressing need for an alternative solution, the Manor decided that a new driveway was still the only viable way to go. It was an ambitious idea, and the road would need to be one kilometre long, but it seemed the only way to achieve a peaceful solution. So it launched the 'Saviours of the Temple' campaign to raise funds for purchase of neighbouring land and construction of a road. In this, the community had great hope. The required land had not changed hands since 1540 and the land was now firmly in the Green Belt.

In February the newly-launched youth group Pandava Sena began Sunday public gatherings for 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. Glennys Kinnock, the wife of the Leader of the Opposition, Neil Kinnock, visited the temple early in 1992. The Labour Party made a very public show of support, and the visit was widely reported in the national newspapers.

An Indian Bullock-cart lumbers through London

On a rainy day in March, accompanied by eight policemen, a traditional Indian bullock cart, pulled by two sturdy oxen and loaded with 30 children, slowly lumbered its way past the Houses of Parliament to Downing Street. There, the children presented a 6,000 signature petition to the Prime Minister.

Sensing that it had to explore all options, the tem-



The protest march begins. 35,000 process through Central London

ple wanted to see if their case could be heard by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Launching its application with speeches and the release of colourful balloons from the front lawn of the Manor, beneath the fluttering flag of Hanuman, the community

made a prayer that at least this court would hear them. On the 17th December, 1993 a planning application submitted to Council for use of Manor for worship and festivals on the basis of the new access driveway.

But on the 16th March, 1994 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, Jains and Sikhs came to London from all over the country to march in protest. 150 coaches were parked all along the Embankment and Red Lion Square, where the march began, was filled to overflowing. The column of protesters stretched over two miles long and wound its way to a park near the Imperial War Museum where the huge crowd was treated to some stirring speeches. The media and the politicians were quick to take note. Something was troubling peace-loving Hindus. Surely there must be a solution.

In April the European Commission of Human Rights claimed it could not accept the temple's case because of technicalities concerning planning laws in the UK.

In May a large march again took place, this time with 10,000 people. Although the numbers were smaller, 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, completely blocking the traffic. It took 127 police over an hour to bring everything under control and get London's rush-hour traffic moving again. Old women singing devotional bhajans were unceremoniously dragged off by the police. It was an image that did not go unnoticed by the numerous newspaper photographers and television cameramen gathered there. BBC Radio 4 broadcast live with their religious affairs correspondent, Mike Wooldridge, stuck in the middle of everything and animated to be experiencing something quite unprecedented. 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.

Prosecution

On the 4th of July an all-party group of MPs visited the Manor, and on the 12th the local Hertsmere Council announced that it had deferred its decision 'until September or October' and the temple could remain open until then. In August the Manor appealed to the Department of Environment on the grounds that the local Council had failed to determine the application for the new driveway. In the same month, 24 Letchmore Heath villagers wrote a conciliatory statement in the form of a letter to the Council. They had had enough and wanted a solution.

In October the BBC's Everyman programme broadcast the documentary The Road to Hare Krishna, choosing the devotee's plight out of 'hundreds of other stories.' It was watched by a large audience of millions

ed the temple's proposal to form a new access drive and decided, instead, to prosecute the temple for holding that year's Janmashtami Festival.

Meanwhile, down in South Africa, a country of 700,000 Hindus, Nelson Mandela addressed a huge Diwali crowd at Bhaktivedanta Manor's sister temple in Durban. Some weeks later, on a visit to India, he again met members of the community from England and asked them to convey his best wishes for a successful outcome to the case. The president's opinion on the racially-charged situation of the Hindu community and the local government was to prove helpful later in the campaign.

On the 17th of January, 1995 a public inquiry began to hear the temple's appeal to the Department of the Environment. It was adjourned after four weeks. The temple president, Akhandadhi Das, appeared in the local Watford Magistrates Court for 'staging a religious festival.' It was decided that, with all the local publicity, there was no chance of a fair trial in Watford, and the court case was moved to Luton. Young Hindus, born in the UK and angry at the very idea of a priest being taken to court for his religion – their religion - staged a defiant protest march through London. In May the public inquiry recommenced. It was to conclude after a hearing of 28 days. Local people, Hindu experts and faith leaders all gave evidence. Academics weighed in and testified that the Krishna shrine was indeed a legitimate Hindu shrine and very important for an ethnic minority in these isles. What's more, according to Hindu religious law, it could not be moved or closed. Christian ministers and members of other faiths demanded that the government practise tolerance; and Asian politicians, barristers, doctors and a host of other professionals all wrote persuasive letters. And devotees everywhere prayed.

Nelson Mandela's 'Surprise and Disbelief'

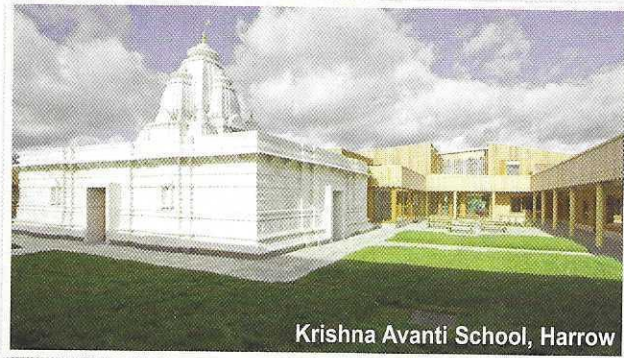
But the Manor could not wait for the outcome. It pressed ahead with plans for the new road and purchased a strip of land from the owners, St Bartholomew's Hospital, plus 36 additional acres of farmland. The South Africa connection continued on the 9th of July as local councillor, Frank Ward, spoke to 6000 delegates at the World Hindu Conference in



Frank Ward meets Nelson Mandela in South Africa and asks for his help to keep the temple open

South Africa. There, he met with Nelson Mandela who again expressed his 'surprise and disbelief' at how the government was treating the temple issue.

On 30th October the case against the temple for holding the Janmashtami festival in 1994 was held at the Crown Court in Luton before a judge and jury. There is a large demonstration outside the court. The following week, the judgement is made: the temple is fined £30,000 plus costs of £7,184 – more than '£37,000 for praying'.



Krishna Avanti School, Harrow

Yet in the same month, the very person who was prosecuted for observing a religious festival, Akhandadhi Das, became the first Hindu representative to make a *Thought for the Day* broadcast on BBC's Radio 4.

In May 1996, in a seismic shift that could easily be interpreted by the Hindu community as being of divine origin, Labour took control of local Hertsmeare Council. Just days later, on the 10th of May, 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. Additional land was purchased and immediately work began on the new road.

But time was short, and building a road, landscaping the new entrance and configuring it with the public highways all had to be completed before the upcoming Janmashtami Festival. An expert was found in Wales who could finish the entire job in time for the festival. Luckily, on examination of the soil, it was discovered that it had a high proportion of sand and clay. An old Roman technique, whereby lime is added to such soil would form a good foundation and a firm footing for the tarmac surface. As luck would have it, the civil engineer working on the A41 was also a Hindu and volunteered to install the traffic lights at the junction with the main road. It was completed in record time and Krishna's birthday was celebrated on the 5th of September with great jubilation.

As a very helpful conclusion to the entire story, the Crown Court reduced the prosecution fine from £37,000 to a mere £5000.

After the Campaign

The media, always sensitive to the swirling eddies in



Tireless campaign that saved the temple

Veteran newspaper editor CB Patel was passionately involved in the campaign to save the temple from the earliest days in 1986. He threw himself into vigorous campaigning and remained tireless in his determination throughout the entire ten years duration. From the outset he identified the situation not merely as a planning issue for one organisation, but as a challenge to the dignity of all Hindus:

"I knew the temple since I met Swami Prabhupada back in the 1970s. He did a great thing. I agreed with their values and they were providing a valuable service for Hinduism in the United Kingdom. I wanted to live in Britain with my head held high as a Hindu. The government threat to close Bhaktivedanta Manor – first by the local government and then by central government - that threat was a sign that the entire Hindu community, and our way of life, was being misunderstood and sidelined. I had to take action."

Using his expertise as editor-in-chief of both the English language Asian Voice and the Gujarati language Gujarat Samachar, C.B. Patel began to appeal to his large, national readership. He informed them of the situation taking place in Hertfordshire, educated them as to the religious, ethnic and legal issues involved, and then spurred them into action. Over the course of the next decade he gave over an entire page in his weekly newspapers to keep the community updated at every twist and turn of the long campaign.

"There were 300 Hindu temples and faith-based organisations in the country at the time. Our community has so many faith tradi-



L to R: CB, Balmukund Parikh and a Punjabi supporter going for public meeting near 10 Downing Street

tions. But the community was not united; it required a process of education, and I saw it as my duty to inform my readers and to ask them to please get involved in saving the temple."

As the most well-known community news editor in the country, CB Patel knew that this one cause – to save a flagship Radha-Krishna temple – was vitally important for the future of the entire community: "I was thinking: 'This cause cannot be lost. We cannot allow this to happen,' and so myself and my staff at the two newspapers did everything in our power to appeal to the British Asian community – Hindus



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Jains, Sikhs, Muslims – to make their voice heard. We asked them to write to their MPs; lobby them in Parliament; write letters to the media; hand out leaflets – whatever they could do."

CB Patel says that the support at Asian Voice was not conditional: "We were passionate about it. We wanted everyone to be united in helping this cause. We knew that if the community had not spoken with one voice there would be little chance of success."

During the many years of the campaign, as the struggle to keep the historical temple open went through its many stages, C. B. Patel used his large network of friends and supporters to gradually garner strength and publicity for the cause. He button-holed faith and community leaders, and local and Westminster politicians. He telephoned Asian industrialists, English civil servants - and even Indian diplomats. No-one in his address book was exempt. The Labour Friends of India group was formed at Bhaktivedanta Manor because of the campaign.

On 3 February 1975, in a letter to Patita Uddharana das, AC Bhaktivedanta Swami acknowledging the on going relationship with Asian Voice and

Gujarat Samachar wrote, "Your column in the Gujarat Samachar is a great way to preach Krishna Consciousness to the Indians there in London. They will become very much familiar with our ideas and goals by reading it regularly."

CB came up with



Dharma Ekta Yatra: L to R: Surendrabhai Patel, CB, local leader of the temple, Chhotabhai

many original and headline-catching ideas to capture the interest of the public. Whether it was the 'Searching for British Justice' with Keith Vaz and fellow MPs holding candle-lanterns in broad daylight outside the House of Commons, or 'Fasting for Justice' outside the offices of Hertsmere Borough Council in a freezing blizzard, the ideas kept coming. And then, when the closure of the temple looked likely, 'C.B.' had his greatest and most heart-stirring idea: the 1994 Protest March. It was a simple idea but curiously, one that the Hindu community had never, ever, done before. Most of the community didn't even know they were allowed to march, let alone protest – in the middle of London.

CB recalls: "So we went on a Dharma Ekta Yatra, a pilgrimage you can call it, around all the Hindu tem-



Supporter and participant of Dharma Ekta Yatra: L to R – Shrutidharma Das, Vipin Aery, Kaveri Das (fourth from left) Chhotabhai Limbachi (Preston), Balmukund Parikh, CB, Neel Madhav Das, Akhandadhi Das and Surendrabhai Pate

ples in the country, asking the leaders to mobilise their members and to bring as many of them as possible to our capital city for a day of peaceful protest. Everyone said 'yes' and I was optimistic, but even I was not really prepared for the overwhelming response!"

The wily editor also knew people in radio and cajoled them into rallying their listeners to demonstrate in one large public display of their feelings: "Before the day of the big march, Sunrise Radio was advertising for people to come and join us. The messages were in Hindi, Punjabi and Gujarati – and the listeners responded in their thousands. Shopkeepers and business people just shut their shops and put a sign in their window 'Gone to protest the closure of our temple. Back tomorrow.' Even a bank shut, the Equatorial Bank, just closed up for the day. So many people – all over the country – just stopped what they were doing and came to London."

The editor says, smiling, that he doesn't know who was responsible for the idea of the subsequent event. Several weeks later, when hundreds lobbied their



CB, Keith Vaz and other leaders with lanterns

MPs and then, at the stroke of Big Ben, 10,000 sat down in the road, bringing traffic to a standstill in Parliament Square!

"But, you know, eventually, at the end of 1995, everything was against us and most opportunities had been exhausted. We had used up all our legal avenues and had done as much publicity as anyone could have done. However, that was not the time for giving up; that was the time for another big push."

What was the secret of persuasive journalism? C.B. Patel shared his secrets of the campaign: "We appealed to people's sense of pride: this is your religion in trouble here, the religion that your forefathers followed and protected through all kinds of situations in India and Africa. It is something you want to preserve for your children. Let's all preserve it together and hold our heads up in this country. Secondly, we appealed to their sense of fear. If the government do this – which temple will be next? What temple will be safe? We were

not trying to frighten anyone needlessly; this was a dangerous situation where the Hindu community was in dire need of protecting itself from a threat. Finally, we had to appeal to their sense of responsibility: 'If you do not become involved in this campaign, and support it with your united hearts and voices, support the campaign financially, and show your faces and be counted – it will not succeed.'

Ultimately, thanks to the tireless work of C.B. Patel and the many people he inspired along the way, the campaign was a success and the Bhaktivedanta Manor remained open for public worship. It has gone on to become one of the most famous temples in Europe whose annual festivals attract many thousands from all over the country. Hindu families throughout the nation join in offering a vote of thanks to a tireless

campaigner, and his famous newspapers.



Protest near Big Ben on 16th March, 1994

Kripamoya Das

He became a devotee of Krishna in 1974. He has served the community since that time and currently sits on the temple board of Bhaktivedanta Manor.

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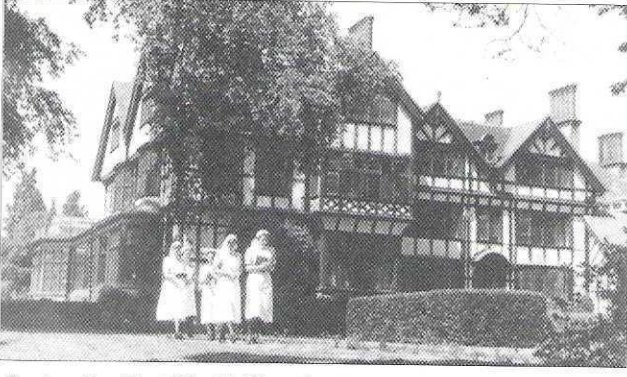


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GLIMPSES OF THE CAMPAIGN 1986



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.

પ્રથમ વિશ્વયુદ્ધ વખતે મેનોરનો ઉપયોગ કેટલાક સૈનિકોની સંભાળ માટે થયો હતો જ્યારે બીજા વિશ્વયુદ્ધ વખતે મેનોર રોયલ એરફોર્સના મુખ્ય મથક બેન્ટલી પ્રાયોરીની નજીક આવેલું હોવાથી મેનોરનો ઉપયોગ અધિકારીઓના આવાસ તરીકે કરાયો હતો.



After the Second World War the Manor became a training college for nurses and remained so until 1972. બીજા વિશ્વયુદ્ધ પછી મેનોરનો ઉપયોગ નર્સોની તાલીમ માટે કરાયો હતો જે છેક ૧૯૭૨ સુધી ચાલો રહ્યો હતો.



This shop in Letchmore Heath was purchased by devotees and became 'KRISHNAS', a food and devotional items store. The expansion into the village was to prove unpopular with some of the local residents, one of whom was a local councillor whose grandfather had owned what was now Bhaktivedanta Manor. Although the 'Letchmore Stores and Newsagents' was replaced by 'Krishnas,' much to the concern of some villagers, the former proprietor explained: "I don't know why they're complaining, they never bought anything at all from my shop." Indeed, so poor was the support for the little shop, the proprietor was forced to sell. લેચમોર હીથ ખાતે આવેલી આ દુકાન ભક્તોએ ખરીદી છે અને તેને 'ક્રિષ્ના' નામ અપાયું છે. આ દુકાનમાંથી ખાદ્ય અને ભક્તિ સંબંધિત વસ્તુઓનું વેચાણ કરાશે. જોકે, સ્થાનિક કાઉન્સિલર સહિત રહેવાસીઓ દ્વારા દુકાન ખરીદી સામે વિરોધ કરાવામાં આવ્યો હતો.



An Early Photo of the deities at Bhaktivedanta Manor. ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોર ખાતે રાધાકૃષ્ણની પ્રારંભિક પ્રતિમાઓ.



The public Janmashtami at Bhaktivedanta Manor in 1975 attracted 250 people. It would never be that size again. By 1986, the crowds had grown to 25,000. ૧૯૭૫માં ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોર ખાતે ઉજવાયેલ જાહેર જન્માષ્ટમી પર્વ પ્રસંગે ૨૫૦ લોકો ઉપસ્થિત રહ્યા હતા. તે પછી આટલી સંખ્યામાં ક્યારેય ભક્તો ઉપસ્થિત થયા નહોતા પરંતુ ૧૯૮૬થી ભક્તોની સંખ્યા ૨૫,૦૦૦ને આંબી ગઈ હતી.



The local council sited a caravan outside the gates of the Manor. Inside it, staff counted and recorded the numbers of visitors. It was discovered later, from the council's own records, that 'ethnic' visitors had been counted separately. સ્થાનિક કાઉન્સિલ દ્વારા ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોરની બહાર કેરેવાન રખાઈ હતી. સ્ટાફ દ્વારા મેનોરના મુલાકાતીઓની નોંધ અને ગણતરી કરાતી હતી. નવાઈની વાત એ છે કે, વંશીય મુલાકાતીઓની અલગથી ગણતરી



While visitors to the temple periodically increased the traffic through the village, it was not beyond toleration for the majority of villagers.

સમયાંતરે મંદિરના મુલાકાતીઓની વધતી સંખ્યા સાથે ગામમાં ટ્રાફિક વધ્યો પરંતુ વધુની અસહ્યતાને કારણે તે હતી અસહ્યતાને કારણે



The first of many fund-raising events was this Diwali Nite with Anup Jalota held in the rooftop ballroom of a Kensington Hotel. The popular singer from Bombay supported the campaign, and the crowd loved him. કેન્સિંગ્ટન હોટેલના રુફટોપ બોલરૂમ ખાતે અનૂપ જલોટા સાથે દિવાળી નાઈટનું આયોજન ભંડોળ એકત્રીકરણ માટે કરાયું હતું. મુંબઈના આ લોકપ્રિય ભજનિક - ગાયકે અભિયાનને ટેકો આપ્યો હતો અને મેદનીએ તેનો પ્રેમ વહાવ્યો હતો.



Anup Jalota kindly agreed to help fund the Bhaktivedanta Manor campaign's growing legal costs by performing a one-off special concert. He even auctioned off his famous harmonium!. Each of the nights were accompanied with a dinner 1988. Hundreds of people attended the Fund raising events to.

ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોરના અભિયાનના વધતા કાનૂની ખર્ચાઓને પહોંચી વળવામાં મદદ કરવા અનૂપ જલોટાએ વિશેષ કોન્સર્ટ રજૂ કરવાની સંમતિ દર્શાવી હતી. તેમણે પોતાના પ્રસિદ્ધ હાર્મોનિયમની પણ લીલામી કરી હતી. દરેક કાર્યક્રમ વખતે ડીનરની વ્યવસ્થા કરાઈ હતી હજારો લોકોએ આર્થિક સહયોગ માટે યોજાયેલા કાર્યક્રમોમાં ભાગ લીધો હતો.



Frank Ward Addressing A Press Conference In Bombay in regard to the situation at Bhaktivedanta Manor.



CB Patel addressing the attendees
ફેડ રેઘર્મીંગ કાર્યક્રમને સંબોધતા સીબી



Mr. John Watts, MP - Slough
ફેડ રેઘર્મીંગ કાર્યક્રમને સંબોધતા તત્કાલિન એમપી જહોન વોટ્સ (સ્લાઉ)



Although not a Hindu himself, Frank Ward saw the patent injustice of the situation and became a tireless campaigner for keeping the temple open to all. Frank travelled to India, Nepal and South Africa, meeting with politicians, media, faith leaders, and presidents of many Hindu and Sikh organisations. Here, he speaks at a press conference accompanied by Trikalajna Das (left).

હિન્દુ ન હોવા છતાં ફ્રેન્ક વોર્ડે અન્યાયને પારખી લીધો હતો. મંદિરને તમામ માટે ખુલ્લું રાખવાના અભિયાનના ચૂસ્ત સમર્થક બની તેમણે ભારત, નેપાળ અને દક્ષિણ આફ્રિકાની મુલાકાત લીધી હતી. ત્રિકાલંજન દાસ (ડાબે)ની સાથે પત્રકાર પરિષદ સંબોધતા ફ્રેન્ક વોર્ડ.



At the instigation of His Holiness Krishnadas Swami, local Labour councillor Frank Ward was awarded the name Arjuna Das. A ceremony was held at the temple as Frank (centre) dedicated himself for what would be a ten year-long battle to save the temple for public worship. Here, Sivarama Swami (left) gives a forehead blessing while Atmanivedana Swami looks on.

માન્યવર કૃષ્ણદાસ સ્વામીની પ્રેરણાથી મંદિરમાં આયોજિત ખાસ સમારંભમાં અભિયાનને સમર્પિત સ્થાનિક લેબર કાઉન્સિલર ફ્રેન્ક વોર્ડને અર્જુન દાસ નામ અપાયેલું હતું. શિવરામ સ્વામી (ડાબે)એ આત્મનિવેદન



Everyone knew Rishi Kapoor, the famous Bollywood film actor, and in 1989 millions had watched him along with Sridevi and Vinod Khanna in Yash Chopra's blockbuster movie Chandni. The Save the Temple Campaign was delighted when he agreed to take part in a fund-raising sponsored walk.

યશ ચોપરાની બ્લોકબસ્ટર ફિલ્મ ચાંદનીના પ્રસિદ્ધ અને લોકપ્રિય અભિનેતા રિશી કપૂરે 'સેવ ઇ ટેમ્પલ કેમ્પેઇન' માટે લંડન એકત્ર કરવાની વોકમાં ભાગ લેવાની સંમતિ દર્શાવી હતી.



Surrounded by a throng of fans who'd just been moved by his stirring speech, Rishi Kapoor (centre, with sunglasses) moves off at the very start of the walk.

લાગણીપૂર્ણ સંબોધનથી આનંદિત પ્રશંસકો દ્વારા ઘેરાયેલા રિશી કપૂર (મધ્યમાં સનગ્લાસીસ સાથે) વોકના આરંભે બધાની સાથે ચાલ્યા હતા.



People came in hundreds to register for the walk to raise funds.

હજારોની સંખ્યામાં લોકોએ પોતાના નામ 'સ્પોન્સર વોક' માટે નોંધાવવા લાઇનો લગાવી હતી.



The 11 mile sponsored walk winds its way through the suburbs of north-west London, alerting thousands of bystanders along the route to the plight of the temple.

૧૧ માઈલની પ્રાયોજિત વોક નોર્થ-વેસ્ટ લંડનના ઉપનગરોના માર્ગો પરથી પસાર થઈ હતી. રાહદારીઓને મંદિરની મુશ્કેલીઓથી માહિતગાર કરવામાં આવતાં હતાં.



Thousands of walkers, each of whom had been sponsored by friends and family, form a mile-long procession down Ealing Road in Wembley. The chanting of Hare Krishna, Hare Rama rang out and the sun shone brightly



At the front of the throng of 7,000 walkers, the murtis, sacred temple images of Chaitanya and Nityananda, are borne aloft in a palki.

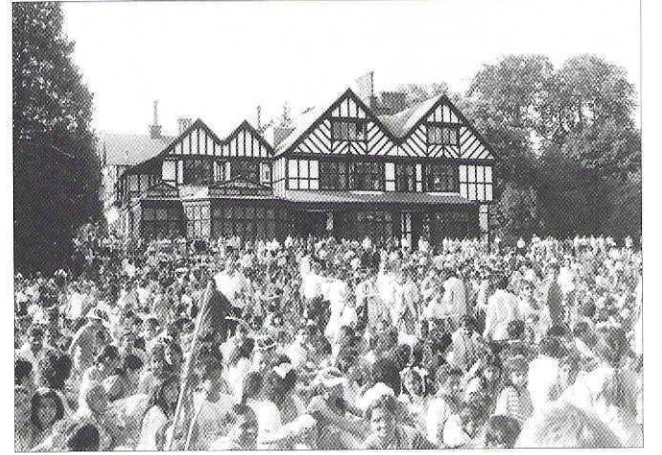
૭,૦૦૦ વોકર્સની મેદનીની આગળ મંદિરની ચૈતન્ય મહારાજ અને નિત્યાનંદની પવિત્ર મૂર્તિઓને પાલખીમાં બેસાડી લઈ જવાઈ હતી.



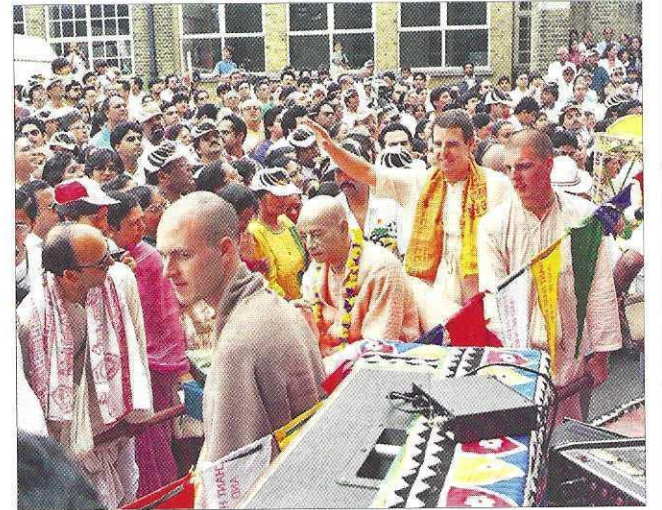
It turned out to be a very hot day, and the sun beats down relentlessly, but the walkers are happy and carry on singing. They stop halfway at a park in Kingsbury and are refreshed with cold drinks provided by Rubicon.

ભારે ગરમીને સહન કરીને પણ ભક્તો ચાલતા રહ્યા હતા. તેઓએ કિંગ્સબરીના પાર્કમાં રુબિકોન દ્વારા પૂરાં પડાયેલા નાસ્તા અને ઠંડા પીણાંનો આસ્વાદ માણ્યો હતો.

On the lawn at Bhaktivedanta Manor, Rishi Kapoor gives a rousing, later afternoon speech to the tired but happy walkers at the finish line. ફિલ્મ અભિનેતા રિશી કપૂરે ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોરની લોન પર ફિનિશ લાઈન પર થાકેલા છતાં ખુશ વોકર્સ સમક્ષ લાગણીપૂર્ણ સંબોધન



7,000 walkers – and their families – relax on the lawn after walking 11 miles. They listen to speeches and bhajans, and are delighted to hear the news that the walk has raised £100,000. ૧૧ માઈલ ચાલ્યા પછી ૭,૦૦૦ વોકર્સ અને તેમના પરિવારોએ લોન પર હળવાશ અનુભવી પ્રવચનો અને ભજનો સાંભળ્યા હતાં. આ વોકર્સથી ૧૦૦,૦૦૦ પાઉન્ડ એકત્ર થયાનું સાંભળી તેઓ આનંદમાં આવી ગયા હતા.

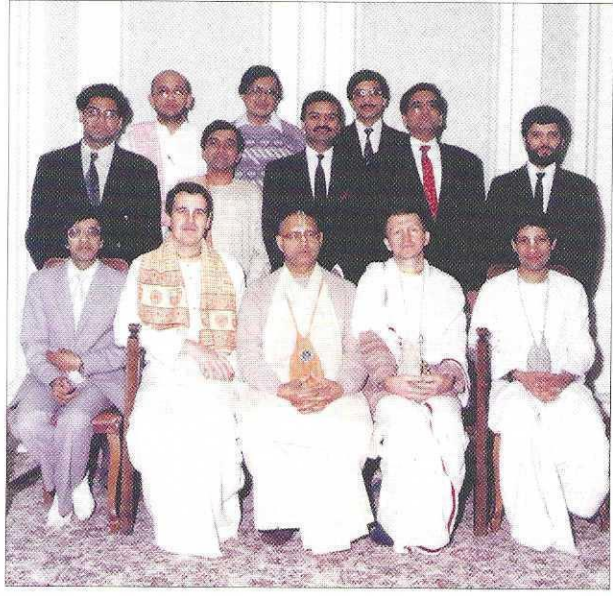


A murti of the founder of Bhaktivedanta Manor and the worldwide Hare Krishna Movement, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, was carried by the devotees along the entire 11-mile walk. Temple president Akhandadhi Das (right) urges the crowd on with raised arm. સમગ્ર ૧૧ માઈલની વોકમાં ભક્તો ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોર અને યૈશ્વિક હરે કૃષ્ણ આંદાલનના સ્થાપક એ.સી. ભક્તિવેદાંત સ્વામી પ્રભુપાદની મૂર્તિ સાથે લઈને ચાલ્યા હતા. મંદિરના પ્રેસિડેન્ટ અખંડાધિ દાસ (જમણે) લોકોને અનુરોધ કરી રહ્યા છે.

Sunil 'Sunny' Gavaskar, one of the most successful batsmen in the world, and beloved by Indian cricket fans everywhere, proudly displays his own sponsorship form for the 1989 walk. The double-century cricket star kindly agreed to walk the entire 11-miles. His participation, and that of film star Rishi Kapoor, attracted many new supporters to the campaign.

વિશ્વના સૌથી સફળ બેટ્સમેનોમાં સ્થાન ધરાવતા સુનીલ 'સની' ગાવસ્કર ૧૯૮૯ની વોક માટે પોતાનું સ્પોન્સરશિપ ફોર્મ દર્શાવી રહ્યા છે. બેવડી સદી કરનારા ગવસ્કરે આ માટે સમમત આપી





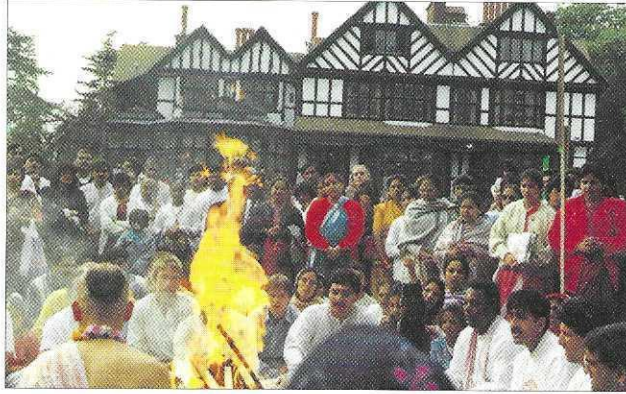
The Patrons Council helped with finance, festivals and the ongoing campaign. The dedicated support of the Patron Members of Bhaktivedanta Manor was gratefully acknowledged in the annual Patrons' Gathering.

ઘ પેટ્રોન્સ કાઉન્સિલે ફાઈનાન્સ, ઉત્સવો અને અભિયાનને મદદ પૂરી પાડી હતી. ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોરના પેટ્રન સભ્યોના સમર્પિત સપોર્ટની પેટ્રન્સ ગેઠરિંગ (નીચે)માં કદર કરવામાં આવી હતી.



An unusual sight for central London: This Indian-style bullock cart lumbers its way along the capital's streets pulled by two pure black Kerry oxen.

મધ્ય લંડનના માર્ગો પર તદ્દન કાળા રંગના બે બળદ દ્વારા ભારતીય શૈલીના ગાડામાં લાકડાં ભરીને લઈ જવાનું દૃશ્ય કલ્પનાતીત બની રહ્યું હતું.



On 8th of April 1991, dedicated temple campaign supporters formed themselves into a new movement: the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement (HKTDM). A ceremonial fire sacrifice was held on the front lawn to focus the team's determination and to petition the blessings of Lord Krishna.

મંદિર અભિયાનના સમર્પિત સમર્થકોએ ૮ એપ્રિલ ૧૯૯૧ના રોજ 'હરે કૃષ્ણ ટેમ્પલ ડિફેન્સ મૂવમેન્ટ (HKTDM) નામના નવા અભિયાનનો આરંભ કર્યો હતો. દીમની મક્કમતા દર્શાવવા અને ભગવાન કૃષ્ણના આશીર્વાદ મેળવવા હવન પણ કરવામાં આવ્યો હતો.



Conservative member for Hertsmere, James Clappison MP (centre) took an active interest in Bhaktivedanta Manor and remained a supporter throughout the ten years of the campaign until the present day. Here, he walks with Naresh Chadha (left) temple president Akhandadhi Das (right) and Srutidharma Das (behind).

હર્સમીઅરના કન્ઝર્વેટિવ સભ્ય જેમ્સ કલેપીસન, એમપી (વચ્ચે)એ ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોર બાબતમાં સક્રિય રસ લીધો હતો અને ૧૦ વર્ષ લાંબા અભિયાનમાં સમર્થક બની રહ્યા હતા. તેઓ નરેશ ચઢ્ઢા (ડાબે), મંદિરના પ્રેસિડેન્ટ અખંડાદિ દાસ (જમણે) અને શ્રુતિધર્મ દાસ (પાછળ) સાથે



Pop singer Boy George recorded a song, Bow Down Mister in January, 1991. It reached number 27 in the singles charts in the UK, 6 in Germany and 2 in Austria. The record provided the devotees of Krishna, who sang in the chorus, many radio and TV appearances, and indirectly helped to put the temple into people's conversations.

પોપ સીંગર બોય જ્યોર્જ દ્વારા બાઉ ડાઉન મિસ્ટર' ગીત જાન્યુઆરી ૧૯૯૧માં રેકોર્ડ કરાયું હતું. આ ગીતે કૃષ્ણભક્તોના જુસ્સાને જાળવી





Throughout the campaign, the Labour member of Parliament for Leicester East, Keith Vaz MP, offered his complete support and active involvement. He tabled an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons which was signed by more than 100 MPs of all parties. Here, he addresses a rally in Wembley on a chilly 31st January, 1991. સમગ્ર અભિયાન દરમિયાન લેસ્ટર ઇસ્ટના એમપી કિથ વાઝે અભિયાનને પોતાનો સંપૂર્ણ ટેકો અને સક્રિય સાથ સહકાર આપ્યો હતો. તેમણે 'હાઉસ ઓફ કોમન્સ'માં અર્લી ડે મોશન મૂકી હતી જેને તમામ પક્ષોના ૧,૦૦ કરતા વધારે એમપીઓએ સહીઓ કરીને સમર્થન આપ્યું હતું. પ્રસ્તુત તસવીરમાં ૩૧મી જાન્યુઆરી ૧૯૯૧ના રોજ કડકડતી ઠંડીમાં વેમ્બલી ખાતે રેલીને સંબોધતા નજરે પડે છે.



Mr. Vidhya Anand giving information to the chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits.
વડા રબ્બી લોર્ડ જેકબોવિટ્સને માહિતી આપતા શ્રી વિદ્યા આનંદ.

The motto of the HKTDM – 'Remember Me and Fight' – was Lord Krishna's battlefield instruction to His friend Arjuna. It was to prove the guiding light of the campaign throughout the years.

ભગવાન કૃષ્ણે તેમના સખા અર્જુનને યુદ્ધક્ષેત્રમાં 'મારું સ્મરણ કરી યુદ્ધ કર'ની સૂચના આપી હતી.

HKTDM દ્વારા પણ આ સૂત્ર રખાયું હતું, જે વર્ષો સુધી અભિયાન માટે માર્ગદર્શક બની રહ્યું હતું.



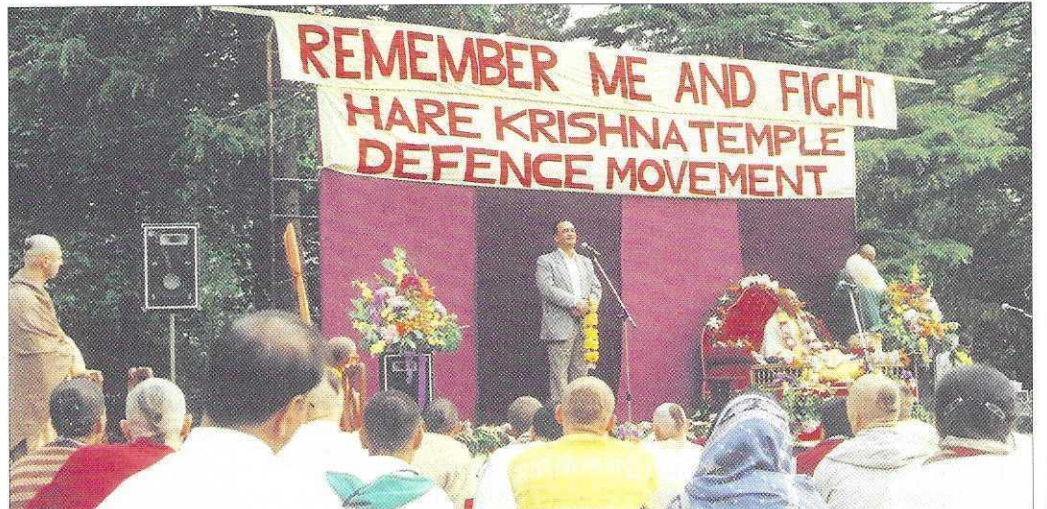
The team that spearheaded the campaign to keep Bhaktivedanta Manor for public worship. From left to right, back row: Chandrakant Raniga, Mahendra Parmar, Dabinder Tah, Dr Ravi Kumar. Front row: Praful Shah, Cllr Frank Ward, Naresh Chadha, Dr Ashvin Shah, Jugdev Ramful, Rajni Chande. Also present were: Atmanivedanam Swami, Nainesh Desai, Mrs S Barrote, Bimal Krishna Das, Raj Mehta.

ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોરને જાહેર પૂજાર્થળ તરીકે જાળવી રાખવાનું અભિયાન ચલાવનારી ટીમ. (ડાબેથી જમણે) પાછળની હરોળ: સર્વશ્રી ચંદ્રકાન્ત રાણીગા, મહેન્દ્ર પરમાર, દેબિન્દર તાહ અને ડો. રવિ કુમાર તેમજ આગળની હરોળમાં બેઠેલા સર્વશ્રી પ્રફુલ શાહ, કાઉન્સિલર ફ્રેન્ક વોર્ડ, નરેશ ચઢા, ડો. અશ્વિન શાહ, જુગદેવ રામફલ, રજની ચાંદે નજરે પડે છે. આ ટીમમાં આત્મનિવેદનમ સ્વામી, નૈનેશ દેસાઈ, શ્રીમતી એસ બેરોટ્ટ, બિમલ કિશન દાસ, રાજ મહેતા પણ જોડાયા હતા.



A Delegation consisting of Sydney Bidwell MP, Vidyanand, Akhandadhi Das, OP Sharma (NCHT), and Cllr Frank ward handed in a letter to 10 Downing street, asking the prime Minister to intervene in the dispute over the use of Bhaktivedanta Manor as a place of public worship. A Large flower arrangement in the shape of SOS (save our shrine) was also given.

ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોરને ધાર્મિક સ્થળ તરીકે માન્યતા આપવાની માંગ સાથે એમપી સીડની બિડવેલ, વિદ્યાનંદ, અખંડધિદાસ, ઓપી શર્મા (NCHT) અને કાઉન્સિલર ફ્રેન્ક વોર્ડના બનેલા પ્રતિનિધિ મંડળે વડાપ્રધાનના ૧૦ ડાઉનિંગ સ્ટ્રીટ ખાતે આવેલા કાર્યાલયે જઈને એક પત્ર અને 'સેવ અવર શ્રાધન - SOS' લખેલ તાજા પુષ્પોથી બનાવેલ બેનર અર્પણ કર્યું હતું.





Flanked by eight police officers, a decorated bullock cart from the temple passes by the House of Commons on its way to Downing Street. Singing on board were 30 children with a petition for the Prime Minister.
આસપાસ આઠ પોલીસ અધિકારીઓની સાથે શણગારાયેલું બળદગાડું મંદિરથી ડાઉનિંગ સ્ટ્રીટ જવા માટે પાર્લામેન્ટ હાઉસ પાસેથી પસાર થયું હતું. આ ગાડામાં વડા પ્રધાનને આપવાની પિટિશન સાથે બેઠેલાં ૩૦ બાળકોએ હરિદ્યૂન મચાવી હતી.



A petition of 6,000 signatures is handed in to No. 10 Downing Street, residence of the then Prime Minister John Major.
તત્કાલીન વડા પ્રધાન જહોન મેજરના નિવાસ ૧૦, ડાઉનિંગ સ્ટ્રીટ ખાતે ૬૦૦૦ સહી સાથેની પિટિશન સુપરત કરવામાં આવી હતી.



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. Six leading national newspapers carried the story the following day. લેબર પાર્ટીના ચૂંટણી અભિયાનના આરંભે પક્ષના નેતા નીલ કિનોક્ની પત્નીએ મેનોરની મુલાકાત લીધી હતી. આ મુલાકાતથી મેનોર અને તેના ધ્યેયનો ઘણો પ્રચાર થયો હતો. 'ધ ટાઇમ્સ' અને 'ધ ઇન્ડિપેન્ડન્ટ' સહિત છ અગ્રણી રાષ્ટ્રીય અખબારોએ બીજા દિવસે આ સમાચાર લીધી હતી.



As the European Court of Human Rights application is despatched to Strasbourg, the balloons are released to the sky. They float up, passing by the orange Hanuman 'flag for justice' on the way. યુરોપિયન કોર્ટ ઓફ હુમન રાઇટ્સ માટેની અરજી સ્ટ્રાઝબર્ગ રવાના કરાઈ ત્યારે રંગબેરંગી ફૂગા આકાશમાં ઊડવામાં આવ્યાં હતાં. ન્યાય માટેના હનુમાન ધ્વજ પર થઈને ફૂગા ઊંચાઈએ



The boxed-up application beside him, and before an arch of brightly coloured balloons just set for release, Akhandadhi Das speaks to the crowd of the latest efforts in the campaign to save the temple from closure. મંદિરને બંધ થતું અટકાવવા કરાયેલાં પ્રયાસોની માહિતી મંદિરના પ્રેસિડેન્ટ અખંડાધિ દાસ લોકોને આપી રહ્યા છે.



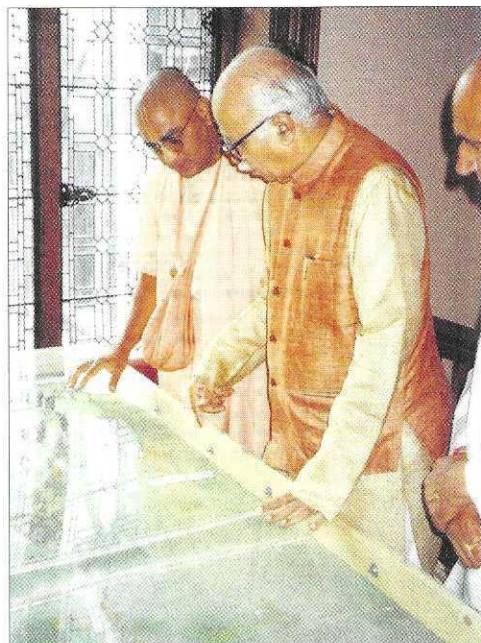
Surrounded by a scrum of photographers, Mrs. Kinnock stops to look into the Tulasi greenhouse. Srutidharma Das explains the significance of the sacred plant to Hindus. ફોટોગ્રાફરોથી ઘેરાયેલાં મિસિસ કિનોકે તુલસી ગ્રીનહાઉસની ઝાંખી મેળવી હતી. શ્રુતિધર્મ દાસે હિન્દુઓ માટે આ પવિત્ર છોડનું મહત્ત્વ સમજાવ્યું હતું.



Walking the Road." The residents and supporters of Bhaktivedanta Manor take the altar Deity along the proposed path of the new access driveway – a proposed peaceful solution to the needs of villagers and worshippers alike.
ભક્તિવેદાંત મેનોરના સમર્થકો અને નિવાસીઓ મંદિરની મૂર્તિને સાથે લઈને નવા શાંતિમય સૂચિત માર્ગ પર ચાલ્યા હતા.



Campaigning in India, January 1993, HKTDM president Naresh Chadha meets with several influential persons: Bal Thackeray, Lal Advani of the BJP; with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Salman Khurshid; and with Chief Minister of New Delhi, Sheila Dixit. Pictured: Naresh Chadha meets with Sheila Dixit in Delhi, and on the march through India's capital.
HKTDM પ્રમુખ શ્રી નરેશભાઈ ચઢ્ઢા જાન્યુઆરી ૧૯૯૩માં ભારતના પ્રવાસે ગયા હતા અને સર્વશ્રી બાલ ઠાકરે (શિવસેના), લાલકૃષ્ણ અડવાણી (ભાજપ), દિલ્હીના સીએમ શ્રીલા દિક્ષિત અને એક્સટર્નલ મિનિસ્ટર સલમાન ખુરશીદને મળ્યા હતા. પ્રસ્તુત તસવીરમાં દિલ્હીના સીએમ શીલા દિક્ષિત અને લાલકૃષ્ણ અડવાણી સાથે નરેશ ચઢ્ઢા અને બાલ ઠાકરે સાથે ફ્રેન્ડ વોર્ડ નજરે પડે છે.



Atmanivedanam Swami giving information about the Campaign to BJP leader Lalkrishna Advani
ભાજપના નેતા શ્રી લાલકૃષ્ણ અડવાણી વોટફર્ક મંદિરની મુલાકાતે પદાર્થ ત્યારે મંદિરની મુશ્કેલીઓ સમજાવતા



Hundred of participants took part in a march through New Delhi. The procession was joined by people who could not walk or were on wheelchairs, being pushed around by willing relatives. Everybody whatever their physical state, came together to celebrate one cause વ્યુ દિલ્હીની રેલીમાં ભાગ લઈ રહેલા ભક્તો. ધર્મ યાત્રામાં જેઓ ચાલી શકે તેમ નહોતા તેવા અને વ્હીલચેર વાપરતા લોકો દેશના ચારેય ખુણેથી જોડાયા હતા. ચાહે તેમનું શરીર સાથે જાપાન હોય કે અમર હોય, એ લોક એક થિયા તેમને આ કરવા સખામાં આનંદભરે કિચડી

Dharma Ekta Yatra

Headed up by Asian Voice and Gujarat Samachar editor C. B. Patel, a team visited dozens of religious organisations and Hindu community centres around the country. The aim was to alert all Hindu leaders to the situation of the threat to the temple and to ask for their support in the coming months. The Dharma Ekta Yatra succeeded in unifying the disparate Hindu community as they had never been before.

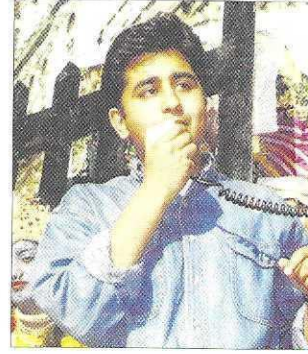




The Hindu youth were British-born and angry that Hinduism, their faith from birth, was being designated a 'second-class religion.' So the Pandava Sena took shape – and immediately took to the streets.
 હિન્દુ યુવાનો જન્મે બ્રિટિશ હતા. તેઓ હિન્દુત્વ માટે જન્મથી જ શ્રદ્ધા રાખે છે અને તેને દ્વિતીય કક્ષાનો ધર્મ ઠેરવતા તેઓ નારાજ છે. આથી પાંડવ સેનાનો જન્મ થયો અને આ મુદ્દાને શેરીઓમાં લઈ જવાયો.

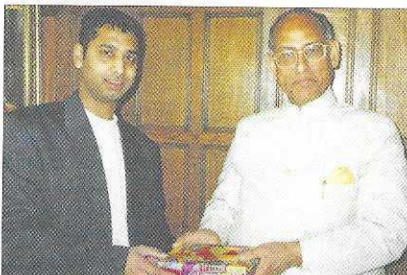


With their distinctive black shirts and Hanuman emblems, the Pandava Sena - the Pandava Army – campaigned throughout north London, making time to meet with important dignitaries from India. Here they talk with Mr. Ashokji Singhal, Head of Vishva Hindu Parishad.
 દેશુમાનજીની છાપવાળા બ્લેક શર્ટ સાથે પાંડવ સેના કે પાંડવ આર્મીએ સમગ્ર ઉત્તર લંડનમાં ઝુંબેશ ચલાવી અને ભારતથી આવેલા વિશ્વ હિન્દુ પરિષદના વડા શ્રી અશોકજી સિંઘલ સાથે મુલાકાત પણ કરી.



Head of the National Hindu Students Union, Manoj Ladwa, & Dipa Dhokia speak to the crowd and explains why it is the duty of all Hindus to join together to protect their religion from unfair treatment.
 નેશનલ હિન્દુ સ્ટુડન્ટ્સ યુનિયનના મનોજ લાડવા અને દીપા ધોક્કિઆએ લોકોને સંબોધન કર્યું હતું અને તેમણે હિન્દુઓને એક થઈને તેમના ધર્મને થઈ રહેલા અન્યાય સામે રક્ષણ આપવા સમજાવ્યું હતું.

Demonstrating that the youth of the Hindu community would worship outside the temple if they were locked out, the Pandava Sena begins holding worship services on the Letchmore Heath village green. Here, Pradip Gajjar offers an arati lamp, while Paresh Patel (behind) plays the drum.
 હિન્દુ સમાજના યુવાનોએ મંદિરની બહાર પણ પૂજા-અર્ચના કરીને દેખાવો કર્યા હતા. પાંડવ સેનાએ લેચમોર હીથ વિલેજ ગ્રીન ખાસે સેવા-પૂજા પણ કરી હતી. પ્રદીપ ગજજરે આરતી ઉતારી હતી, જ્યારે પરેશ પટેલ (પાછળ) ટોલક વગાડે છે.



Ajay Kumar - member of the Pandava Sena meets Indian High Commissioner Dr. L M Singhvi ભારતના હાઇ કમિશ્નર ડો. એલ. એમ. સિંઘવીને મળતા પાંડવ સેનાના સદસ્ય અજય



Flags and banners held aloft, and with the rhododendron hedge of the Manor as their backdrop, the Hindu youth continue their temple worship outdoors, pictures of the altar Deities behind them.

ધજા અને પતાકાઓ ઉપર રાખવામાં આવી હતી, હિન્દુ યુવાનોએ મંદિરના પવેશદાર પાસે સતત તેમની ભક્તિ ગણાવવા ચાલી હતી. તેમની પાછળ

THE PROTEST MARCH

On the 16th March, 1994, the two years 'stay of execution' given by the government was completed. Bhaktivedanta Manor would be forced to close. It was more than the Hindu community could tolerate. A protest march through London was called and they came in their thousands.

सरकारे अमल सामे जे वर्षनो आपेलो मनाईकुक्रम १६मी मार्च पूर्ण थया पछी लकितवेदांत मेनोरने जलजलरीथी बंध करायानुं हलुं. हिन्दु कोम्युनिटी आ केवी रीते सडन करी शके? लंडनमां थईने आगल वधेली विरोधकुयमां हजरु लोको सामेल थयां हतां.



A protest over one of Britain's 'most important shrines' deserves the support of those who believe in liberty

Let Hindus share all our freedoms

Last Thursday evening I was walking past the Liberal Democrat head office in Cowley Street, a quiet Queen Anne street just behind Westminster Abbey. There were two Hindu monks standing outside the office, and some yellow posters placed against the railings. I stopped to talk to them, to find out why they were conducting a hunger strike outside the Liberal Democrats' building. The protest was held not with any hostile intent but in the hopes that the Liberal Democrats on Hertsmere District Council would support Bakhthivedanta Manor's planning problems. There was a larger demonstration of Hindus outside Parliament earlier in the week.

As we talked, one of the monks continued to pray, while the other acted as spokesman. The scene was a peaceful one: the spokesman argued his case with gentleness and moderation, showing understanding for those who are opposed to the Hindus. The planning question now has a 20-year history. In 1973 the Bakhthivedanta Manor was bought for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness by George Harrison, who had been one of the four Beatles. The house is a large mock-Tudor building, built about 100 years ago. It is now a Hindu temple and a theological college for 50 student priests. The Hare Krishnas claim that it is now "the most important Hindu shrine in Britain" and on certain festivals it attracts congregations of 20,000 people or more.

The founder of this shrine of Radha and Krishna was the Bakhthivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who had been instructed by his spiritual master in 1922 to take the message of Krishna to the West. Although he died in India in 1977, his rooms at the manor are themselves regarded as a separate shrine and attract many visitors. The work of the manor as a theological college is important to Hindus

throughout Britain. Most British temples have to bring in priests from India, but these priests do not always find it easy to communicate with young Hindus who have been born in this country. The primary function of the manor is similar to that of an Anglican theological college or a Roman Catholic seminary.

The success of the manor has, however, created the planning difficulties: the shrines have become a magnet for Hindu worshippers. In 1973 Watford Rural District Council decided there was no need for a change of planning consent as the manor had previously been used as a training lodge for nurses. In the late 1970s the growth of the outside congregations, particularly on festival days, led to discussions with the new Hertsmere council, and a large car park was built inside the 17-acre grounds in 1983. At the same time a Section 52 planning agreement was signed, "allowing the use of the manor for public worship and festivals under certain conditions. On six festival days unlimited congregations were allowed, while the Society for Krishna Consciousness agreed not to arrange ceremonies likely to attract more than 1,000 people on any other day.

This Section 52 agreement became the cause of the dispute. One might think that the Section 52 agreement was itself oppressive. No Christian shrine, established before the planning laws came into effect, is subject

to such an agreement. In 1986, Hertsmere district went to the High Court for an injunction, alleging breaches of the agreement. It had employed private detectives to stand outside the manor to count how many people entered, in one case dividing them into "coloured persons" and "white persons". There was of course nothing in the Section 52 agreement which referred to the ethnic origin of the congregation.

The council lost its case: the court found that there had been no breach

William Rees-Mogg

because the authorities at the manor had in fact scheduled no special event on that particular day. Thereupon Hertsmere council unilaterally revoked the Section 52 agreement and issued an enforcement order prohibiting all festivals and public worship. That, on the face of it, was a thoroughly undesirable use of the planning powers to restrict the freedom of public worship at an established religious centre.

Worse was to come. In 1987, the society appealed to the Department of the Environment, and that appeal was rejected. Attempts were made to

find an alternative site for a temple in the same area, but they failed on planning grounds. The society then proposed to draw all the traffic away from the local village of Lechmore Heath, where there has been considerable congestion, particularly on festival days, by developing a new access route at the rear of the property.

Tomorrow Hertsmere District, which is now a houn council, will be considering this application for a new route, which would solve the worst part of the congestion problems. If it does not accept this route, the enforcement order will come into effect. Public Hindu worship at the manor is already technically illegal, and it would then become so in fact.

One can understand the resentment in the village at their manor attracting more than 20,000 Hindus on six festival days in the year, and large numbers on other days. There are similar inconveniences caused by such events as the Glastonbury festival or the Epsom Derby, both of which attract large crowds. The local authority would certainly have been justified if it had insisted at an earlier stage that a route to the manor should be developed which bypassed the village. Yet the balance of public sympathy should lie with the manor and the Hindu community.

The original Section 52 agreement was an interference with worship. It was abrogated after the council had lost an application to the courts. The

society has offered an alternative route which would greatly improve the traffic situation. The manor is an important training college for Hindu priests. If it attracts very large congregations on festivals, that demonstrates its importance to Hindu life in Britain. It is a centre of worship and deserves to be respected as such.

Apart from quite legitimate concern about traffic and numbers, there has been colour prejudice, which may have influenced the council. It is regrettable that the Department of the Environment, which should take a more detached view, has contributed so little to resolving the problem.

The council should now make every effort to overcome any difficulties about the new access. During the period when the council's conduct was most open to criticism, it was under Conservative control. The Conservatives ought to take the lead now in trying to remedy past failures. Before the 1994 council elections, the council had negotiated approval of the new entrance at the rear of the grounds. The elections deferred that but the Liberal Democrats should support the new plan, even though local opinion is divided.

There are always practical problems to be worked out, although British planning rules tend to be stifling and obstructive. The principle, however, is clear. Freedom of worship is part of the tolerance which is a core belief of British life. The Hindus are one of the largest non-Christian communities in Britain. Their freedom to worship demands not only our tolerance, but our active support. It would be an outrage if Canterbury Cathedral were to be closed to worship because it caused congestion in the narrow medieval streets of that city. It will not be less of an outrage if Bakhthivedanta Manor is closed to worship and it will incidentally do particular damage to Britain's reputation in India.

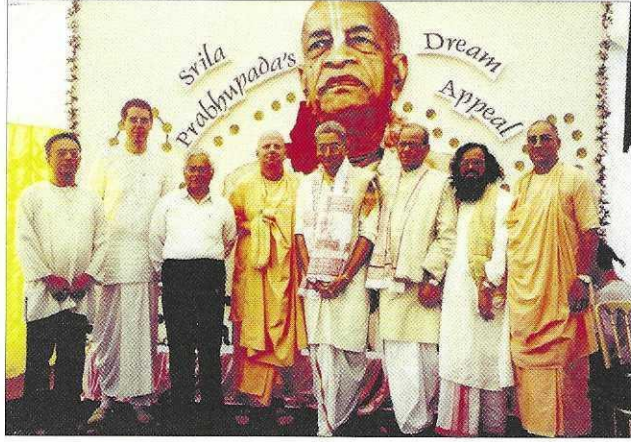


During the HKTDM, devotees were on a hunger strike outside the Liberal Democratic Party headquarters. Well known English journalist Mr William Rees Mogg was passing through the area, who felt compelled to enquire about the protest. Impressed with the perseverance of the devotees, he later wrote an article about it in The Times. First picture: L to R- Pranbandhu Das, Ramesh Shah and Aniruddh Das.

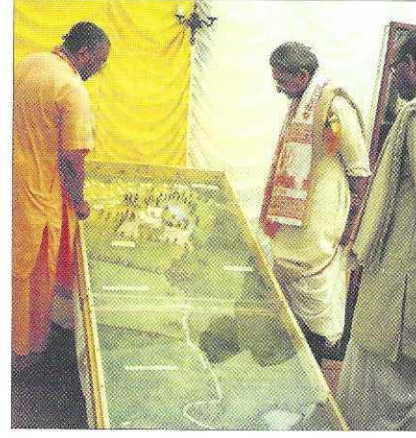
भक्तोअभियानने विजयी बनाववा लिबरल डेमोक्रेट पार्टीना वडा मथके लूण हडताण आहरी मळमता दर्शावी हती. उपवास दरमियान, २० वर्ष सुधी घ टाईम्सना अडिटर रहेला विलियम रेस मोग त्यांथी पसार थया हता अने तेमळे लूण हडताणनुं कारख पूछ्यु हतु. तेमना साथा ध्येयथी प्रभावित थर्ध तेमळे घ टाईम्समां आ विशे नोंध लणी हती. तसवीरमां (डाबेथी) प्राणबंधु दास, रमेश शाह, अनिरुद्ध दास.



Devotees promoting the meeting announcement at Blackpool beach. व्हेक्युलनी ग्राण्ड होटेलमां योजयेली मीटिंग माटे वीय पर जहेशत करता मीटिंगे



A special fund-raising dinner in August 1995 succeeded in raising a staggering £1 million in just one evening for the Final Fighting Fund
 ઓગસ્ટ ૧૯૯૫માં આખરી લડત માટે વિશેષ ભંડોળ એકત્રીકરણના ડિનર દરમિયાન માત્ર એક જ સાંજમાં ૧૦ લાખ પાઉન્ડનું ભંડોળ એકત્ર થયું હતું.



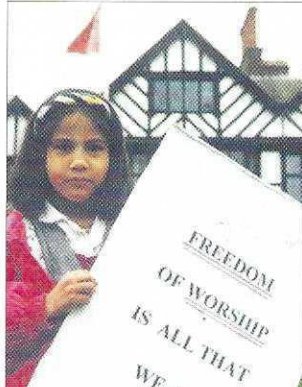
Protest outside of Hertsmere council office and in second picture: 83 year-old grandmother, Sarla Bhatia, fasted all day in a blizzard outside the Hertsmere Borough Council's offices in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. Her grandfather, she said, had protested British rule in India and had walked with Mahatma Gandhi's salt march. It was her pleasure to be able to now make her own contribution to the cause of freedom of religion.

હર્સમીયર કાઉન્સિલની બહાર દેખાવો કરતા ભક્તો. હર્ટફોર્ડશાયરના બોરહામવૂડ ખાતે હર્સમીયર બરો કાઉન્સિલની ઓફિસ બહાર ૮૩ વર્ષના દાદીમા સરલા ભાટીયાએ ભયાનક ઠંડીમાં ઉપવાસ કર્યા હતાં. સરલાબહેનના દાદાએ ભારતમાં બ્રિટિશ શાસનનો વિરોધ કર્યો હતો અને મહાત્મા ગાંધી સાથે મીઠાના સત્યાગ્રહ દાંડીકૂચમાં ભાગ લીધો હતો. પ્રસ્તુત તસવીરમાં જમણેથી સરલાબેન અને તેમના પુત્રવધૂ પ્રમિલાબેન સુદર્શનજી ભાટીયા (સાઉથોલ વિશ્વ હિન્દુ મંદિર)

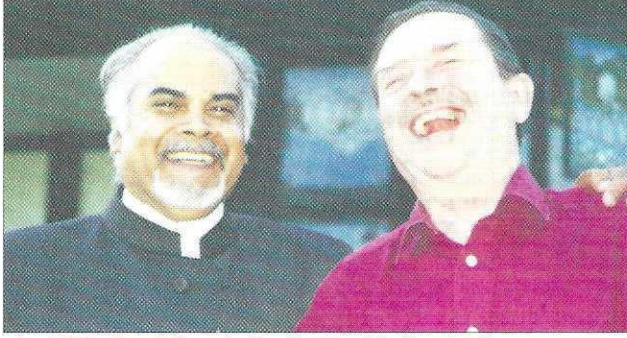


After being fined £30,000 for celebrating Janmashtami in 1994, the devotees protested outside the court in Luton.
 ૧૯૯૪માં જન્માષ્ટમીની ઊજવણી બદલ ૩૦,૦૦૦ પાઉન્ડનો દંડ કરાયા પછી ભક્તો લુટન કોર્ટની બહાર વિરોધ પ્રદર્શન કર્યું હતું.

Youngest hunger striker: 5 year-old girl fasted for one day to protest against the temple closure. It was one of the winter's coldest days and some of those entering and leaving the Council's offices were not temperate in their remarks to the child. સૌથી નાના ઉપવાસીએ મંદિર બંધ કરવાના વિરોધમાં ભારે ઠંડીમાં પણ એક દિવસનો



In search of British justice: MP Keith Vaz and other leader with lanterns.
 ચારેય તરફથી ન્યાય મળતો ન હતો ત્યારે સીબીને અનોખો નુસ્ખો સુઝાયો હતો. નાટ્યાત્મક રીતે ઘોળે દિવસે ફાનસ પ્રગટાવીને પાલમિન્ટની ચારેય તરફ વિવિધ અગ્રણીઓ ફાનસ સાથે કર્યા હતા અને નાળા, ખાંચાઓમાં સામે ફાનસ ધરીને અમે સૌ બ્રિટીશ ન્યાયને શોધવા નીકળ્યા છે તેમ જણાવ્યું હતું. આ નાટકીય વિરોધને તમામ રાષ્ટ્રીય અખબારોએ તસવીરસહ પ્રસિધ્ધી આપી હતી. પ્રસ્તુત તસવીરમાં એમપી કીથ વાઝ



Frank Ward and Naresh Chadha, by this time battle-weary, were jubilant at the news. After ten years of hard struggle all their efforts and that of the many groups of supporters and campaigners had been rewarded in full: the public were free to worship at the temple, the road could now be built; and the dignity of the Hindu community in the United Kingdom and the practise of its faith had been preserved.

ફ્રેન્ક વોર્ડ અને નરેશ ચદ્ધા દસ વર્ષના સંઘર્ષ પછી તેમના તમામ પ્રયત્નો સફળ થયા તેનો આનંદ માણે છે. મંદિરમાં લોકો મુક્ત પણે પૂજા-અર્ચના કરી શકે છે. હવે ત્યાં રોડ પણ બની ગયો છે. ચુકેમાં હિન્દુ સમાજનું ગૌરવ અને તેની શ્રદ્ધાની જાળવણી થઈ રહી છે.



July 1996: Before construction of the road, an auspicious ground-breaking ceremony known as a shila-ropanam, takes place. Seated (left to right) are C. B. Patel, Atmanivedana Swami and Frank Ward.

જુલાઈ-૧૯૯૬: રોડનું નિર્માણ થયું તે પહેલા ત્યાં ભૂમિપૂજન કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું. તેમાં બેઠેલા (ડાબેથી જમણે) સી. બી. પટેલ, આત્મનિવેદના સ્વામી અને ફ્રેન્ક વોર્ડ



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

અને પછી મે-૧૯૯૬માં પર્યાવરણ મંત્રાલયે આશ્ચર્યજનક સમાચારની જાહેરાત કરી અને ભકિતવેદાંત મેનોરનો વિજય થયો



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.

એક કિલોમીટર લાંબાં રસ્તા માટે સફેદ ચૂનાના પથ્થર પાથરવામાં આવ્યાં. સાથોસાથ નવા પ્રવેશદ્વાર પાસે હાથવે લેન્ડસ્કેપીંગ અને રસ્તાનું કામ વિક્રમ સમયમાં પૂર્ણ કરવામાં આવ્યું.



Rishi Kapoor opens the road.
રિશી કપૂરે રસ્તાનું ઉદ્ઘાટન કર્યું હતું.



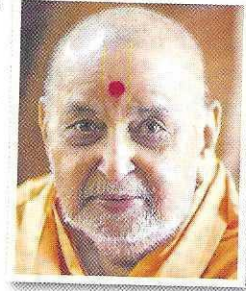
Heavy machinery lays the hot tarmac to seal the limestone-rich foundation. The road was completed just before Janmashtami, on the 5th of September.

ભારે મશીનો દ્વારા રસ્તાને મજબૂત બનાવવા ડામર અને કપચીનું ગરમ મિશ્રણ પાથરવામાં આવ્યું. આ રસ્તાનું કામ ૫ સપ્ટેમ્બરે જન્માષ્ટમી પહેલા પૂર્ણ થયું. મંદિર પાસે બગીચા અને અન્ય સપાટી સરખી કરવાનું કામ થઈ રહ્યું છે.

Messages from the Campaigners

It gives us great pleasure to write on the 20th anniversary of the campaign to save Bhaktivedanta Manor in Watford.

The famous march on 16th March 1994 saw over 35,000 British Hindus, Jains and Sikhs united in their support of the famous ISKCON place of worship. It was an emphatic demonstration of solidarity and brotherhood, and peaceful persuasion. Scores of devotees and volunteers from our various mandirs and centres had also made the journey from around the country to join the peaceful march to Westminster. Thankfully, our combined efforts focused the minds of the decision-makers and an amicable solution was eventually reached.



It showed: Like the Pandavas, though we may be few in number, but if we are united in our faith and obedience to the righteous will of God, then no challenge is insurmountable.

We pray now that the ISKCON congregation at the Manor continues to grow from strength to strength in spreading the good work and teachings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Bhaktivedanta Prabhupadaji.

With blessings,

Shastri Narayanswarupdas

[His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj]

Hindu Council Brent Chairman Bhagubhai Patel, Vice Chairman Mahendrabhai Pattni, Secretary Hariharbhai Patel, and some of the officers Venilalbhai Vaghela, Bipinbhai Patel, Ashwinbhai Galoria with many of our affiliated organisation Presidents, Secretaries with their members joined the march to show our solidarity to save Bhaktivedanta Manor. It was so good to see young children, youths, women and men young and old marching together.

The atmosphere was electric and vibrating as the march progressed with singing Hare Krishna, at one point it felt that Lord Krishna had arrived to give his blessings and show the British Government we Hindus will stand shoulder to shoulder for our Hindu Cause.

Most of us took afternoon off from work to join the march as it started in the afternoon.

When we reached near House of Commons where we met Keith Vaz MP and at this point, our secretary was arrested for shouting and taken away in a police van. It took us time to find which police station he was taken to.

With Lord Krishna's prayer we finally we were able to trace him and got him released without any charges.

If we all Hindus show the same solidarity and unity today then I am sure the British Government and local Borough Council will listen to us to give Hindu Communities the Equal Rights as other ethnic communities are getting.



Long live Lord Krishna.
Jai Shree Krishna

Mr Ashwin Galoria
Secretary

The beautiful Bhaktivedanta Manor has a special place in my heart. During the General Election in 1983, I contested The Hertsmere Parliamentary seat which covered Letchmore Heath where the Manor was situated. Every morning I would visit the Temple and pray before going campaigning. It meant so much to me even though I was not a Hindu. I was welcomed and treated with great kindness.

As a Zoroastrian I knew sanctuary had been given to my ancestors fleeing from religious persecution in Iran by the Hindu community in Gujarat, for which we are eternally grateful. So when the issue of the survival of the Manor arose I was privileged to play a small but I hope important part in alerting constituents, the Liberal party and the media for the need to protect the Manor.



I still have an article where I challenged those in power and with unfounded prejudice to look at their action. If they had given planning permission to a hypermarket (a Temple of consumerism) nearby, then surely a Temple of God should be allowed to flourish and continue to bring blessings to all communities.

Messages from the Campaigners

The campaign was my first ever political act. I was at University reading Politics and because of the CB Patel campaign realised that politics is not just for other people, not just for studying, but about each of us, real and impacting our lives. My grandmother taught me that if you don't get involved in politics then don't complain when the laws harm you.

How dare someone attack my faith, my places of worship. Did not the Gita teach me courage to fight for truth. I recall writing to Asian Voice, I finished my article about 3am and they published it. It was the first ever article I had published in any paper. Dharma looks after those who look after Dharma. That one act, led to a career in writing for me. Whenever I have sought to protect my Dharma, my Dharma has changed my life immeasurably. Always.

To this day CB Patel reminds me of the letter I sent. That one letter re-united CB with my family. You see he was my uncle's business partner before Gujarat Samachar even began. So it was that Dharma united not just the community, but long-lost relationships too. If in doubt, always do your duty; always be a defender of the faith.



Breaking the law on religious grounds

20 Years ago, almost to the day, they tried to tear down a Temple. My first ever political act was to write in the Asian Voice newspaper in defence of the mandir in reply to a resident who said we were breaking the law. I was a student. I wrote to defend the faith against the attack on it from residents of Letchmore Heath who did not want a mandir there. And why if we were breaking the law, then it was our duty and the right thing to do. I was well aware as a trainee Barrister this may well have hampered a legal career before it began.

From this one act of faith, for faith, I wrote for the Financial Times and 18 books. Faith gave me courage to stand up and be counted. One simple political act of faith that changed everything in my life.

That article from 20 years ago:

Dear Editor,

I write in response to the anonymous letter (25th March 1994) of a resident of Letchmore Heath.

I too, like him am British, and like him I consider being British a fact, however I consider being an Indian an ideal. And an essence of Indian idealism is surely civil disobedience in the face of unfairness.

The writer, a Christian, raised many issues including the violent nature of Hindus. The writer places great emphasis on the obedience of the law as a duty related to citizenship. His thoughts exhibit a confusion between the concepts of the state and the nation. To acknowledge the authority of the established system of government and obey its laws is one thing; but to ask that one accept the prevailing form of life and values is quite different. The obligations of full citizenship confer the privilege to shape the nation, and its laws.

Given, the writer's emphasis on planning permission I remind him the issues involved here are cultural, social, political, and legal and include the freedom of religion, association, assembly and the freedom from undue control. It is far easier for a hundred men to build a by-pass than for one man to change his religion. However, if I was thinking of changing my religion, I can think of none better to change to in Britain than Protestant Christianity, given the existence of a legally Established Church, favorable blasphemy laws and emphasis in social teaching, a right to the House of Lords of some bishops and the hope of becoming Monarch.

The current dispute is a symptom of the incorporation into our laws of the values and traditions of the dominant culture. The enactment of laws carries with it the sanction of the state and ultimately the legitimate deprivation of personal liberty for non-obeyance. Given the power of the State authority and sanctions at its disposal, it is vital for the citizens of a nation to be able to shape those laws, particularly by means of public protest and civil disobedience if those citizens constitute a minority.

Civil disobedience is very different from ordinary criminal activity monitored by greed or cruelty. Moreover, those engaging in civil disobedience act to acquit their duty as citizens not to deny it; they do not challenge the legitimacy of the government or the authority of the state.

Let us remember for those who want maintain the status quo, Goebbels' declaration to the German churches was, "You are at liberty to seek your salvation as you understand it, provided you do nothing to change the social order".

Yours sincerely,

Alpesh Patel

Barrister-at-law, currently reading in the Honour Schools of Philosophy, Politics and Economics at St. Anne's College, Oxford University.



Messages from the Campaigners

On the day of the big march in 1994, we all gathered at a park in Holborn in central London. We had organised many many coaches to come and although we were expecting a lot we were not aware of how exactly many would turn up.

Coaches were picking people up from all over London, especially those people who could not access public transport very easily. We had organised 40 coaches by ourselves, but many more came from across the UK. So the total number of people that arrived at the starting point was huge and more than expected!

As the coaches drove in from all directions to drop their passengers off, the Square quickly filled up with protestors. The young, the old, and people from numerous different communities. Observing the sheer numbers I thought "Great! After all our endeavours people have come out to support us!"

A protest march on the scale of tens of thousands requires a lot of careful managing. We had organised 50 volunteer stewards who therefore had an important role. Once empty, the coaches drove off to the Embankment along the north bank of the Thames, waiting to collect their passengers after the march. I remember there was more than 3 miles of our coaches parked along the Embankment, with many more parking much further along due to lack of space. After the protest march had come to an end around Whitechapel, over 35,000 people made their way home at roughly the same time! As stewards, it was our job to direct people to the right coach. Coaches were marked on the front window according to town, temple and so on. To be honest it was very chaotic trying to get everyone home...It admit it was a shambles! Even when all the coaches had eventually left, our day wasn't over! Some people had got left behind, stranded. We had to lend people money to use taxis or public transport to get home.

Some of the Patron Council members, including myself, went to the local police station to help protestors get released. About 6 had got arrested that day outside Parliament. We had to make sure they got home safely. Some were released early, but others much later on at about 10.30pm. We waited till the very end.

That day I felt that at last our community was standing up for its rights, and I was encouraged that so many people gathered together and spoke with one voice. The Campaign had been going on day in day out for years before hand, but with huge support I felt that March 1994 was really the turning point.

Dilip Patel

Chair of Bhaktivedanta Manor's Patron Council and Member of Bhaktivedanta Manor's Festival Committee



There is nothing wrong with defending one's rights and one's faith. In the beginning, just like Draupadi, during her unfair torture in the court of King Dhritarashtra, we initially had faith in the judicial process and we thought we will win our case against the ban unfairly placed upon Bhaktivedanta Manor by its local Council. But we lost our initial battles and there were difficult times.

We lobbied inside and marched and protested outside Parliament, but the politicians alone could not help us.

In such situations, there is only one thing devotees can do and, just like Draupadi, we turned to Lord Krishna. With even stronger faith, we continued to worship the Manor deities of Sri Sri Radha Gokulananda. We illegally celebrated the festival of Janmashtami and were heavily fined.

Our prayers for protection from the Lord increased. The Hindu community had faith in the Bhagavad gita: 18.78:

"Where there is Krishna, the master of all mystics, and whenever there is Arjun, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power and morality..."

His Holiness **Krishna das Swami**,
Sannyasi, international preacher and guru



It is hard to believe that it is 20 years since the march to save the Bhaktivedanta Manor. I remember clearly when I was asked if I would participate in a charity walk to highlight the necessity to preserve the heritage of the Temple. I was only too happy to oblige! Mind you I had never walked such a distance before, but the enthusiasm and good humour of all the other like-minded participants made it feel like a walk in the park. It did what it was set to achieve and the authorities understood how much Bhaktivedanta Manor meant to the believers.

While celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Campaign marches and complimenting all those who participated in it, is important to once again convey to today's violent world the message that the Campaign was wholly peaceful and did not cause any inconvenience to anybody.



Sunil Gavaskar

Former cricketer who played during the 1970s and 1980s for Bombay and India. He was widely regarded as one of the greatest opening batsmen in cricket history



Messages from the Campaigners

When the Hare Krishna Temple Defence committee was first formed, very few people knew about the Manor's troubles. On 16th of January 1994 things took a turn as the Pandava Sena was formed with the blessings of Akhandadhi das. Among those present were Pradyumna das, Romapad das, my son Nitesh, Manoj, Joshna, Bhaskar, Ajay and Sejal. Quickly things moved from the meeting rooms and onto the streets.

More people started coming to the Manor as the Campaign became a major issue for the Hindu community. It united the community as never before. CB Patel made Gujarat Samacher and Asian Voice the Manor's media voice. The newspaper spread the news like wildfire.

When the Pandava Sena held the first ever arati on the Letchmore Heath Village Green in protest. Jitesh Thakrar had arranged for a group of Sikhs to come as guard the event!

During the demonstration held in May 1994 participants were told to block the roads when Big Ben struck 3pm. Police were taken by surprise and reinforcements arrived. Many were arrested, many wanted to get arrested! It was considered a very successful day!

Once again, Gujarat Samachar lent it full coverage. BBC and other national media outlets also covered the demonstration. The Manor had reached international news. Then more demonstrations followed, outside Hertsmere Council's offices in Borehamwood.

While the Pandava Sena were busy on the streets, Akhandadhi das was busy and making progress with the Council. He managed to get approval of the Manor as a place of public worship. Now for so many the Manor had become the temple of their hearts.

The land was bought, the road was built and the temple was saved. Hindus who believed in their religion played their part in saving the Manor and other communities also gave their support. It is impossible to name all those who helped in the fight. There were so many.

Krishna acts in mysterious ways. Had the Council recognised the Manor as a public place of worship in the 1970's then maybe it would still be a 'small' temple. We must congratulate the Council...Krishna had His plan!

Bipin Gor

First visited the Manor in 1975 and later became a regular volunteer, along with his family. He currently serves as a volunteer in the Manor shop.



I remember when I was a teenager my parents would host meetings in our house in Slough. People like Naresh Chadha would speak passionately about the Manor's plight. I along with everyone else would get very upset indeed. The Manor was our life, after all.

Whilst the Patrons were in India, Pradjuma das, and a handful of us sat on the Manor landing talking about our anger and deep upset. We were desperate to do something to save the Manor. We wanted our voices to be heard by the Council. That night the Pandava Sena was born. We wanted the youth to come together and fight. For us it was the biggest crisis in the world...So we masterminded imaginative ways of protesting and raising the profile of the Campaign.

We would sometimes get together at my house: write press releases and plot schemes. We had so much energy! One member of the then small Pandava Sena drew an image of Hanuman on a flag, printed it on black shirts and hats: that became our logo. We wore those T-shirts and hats everywhere.

We worked hard and tried to fit things in between our exams. Some members may have sacrificed their exam results to fight for the Manor. Doing a retake seemed acceptable as we knew there may have been no second chance or retake to save Bhaktivedanta Manor.

We were rather radical but most of us also had our heads screwed on! At one point I was made spokesperson for the Pandava Sena. One highlight of that was when Nitesh Gor and I were invited to a local police station for "talks". They were worried about some of our tactics, but actually we were quite peaceful!

But it's true we had no fear whatever. We would go out in all conditions. For example, we would sing kirtan on the streets in Wembley for hours, sometimes in the freezing cold. Locals would come out and serve us food and hot tea. It touched our hearts and brought the community together.

There was a phenomenal amount of unity at that time. The Manor and ISKCON was forefront in everyone's minds. We felt like a small cog in a very big machine working for a noble purpose – be it a very loud cog! I was very grateful to be part of it.

Looking back, many of us have a lifetime connection with the Manor which cannot be described. Love of the Manor cannot be replicated.



Dipa Dhokia

Former Pandava Sena. Accounts Director for IT Company and runs her own interior

Messages from the Campaigners

"We were in a meeting and were told that the Liberal Democrats were not willing to support us. Their vote was crucial at local government level, so we were discussing how to change their minds. So I suggested that I would go on hunger strike outside their party headquarters in downtown London. We wanted their support nationally, and felt that some verbal or written endorsement from Paddy Ashdown might help influence Lib Dem councillors locally. But one of our team protested: 'Are you mad? You won't be able to do it and then they'll laugh at you!' but then he added: 'But it is certainly a unique idea.' So I asked who else was willing to join me, and Aniruddha Das and Rameshvara Das stepped forward. So early the next morning we were dropped off in Westminster, right outside Lib Dem party H.Q.



The first two days of complete fasting from any food were very difficult. We were only drinking water. You get a painful headache and your stomach goes into a cramp. But we found the determination to keep going because we didn't know what else we could do. So we sat there on the pavement holding quite provocative banners while, day after day, the party members came in and out of work. A man from LBC Radio came along and conducted an interview, further helping to create widespread awareness of our situation. Lord Dholakia, the Lib Dem peer, had also been alerted to our hunger strike.

One day Sir William Rees-Mogg came by; I think it was en route to his home, and he asked us: 'Hello, what's going on?' So we explained everything to him. By that time we'd been fasting completely for five days. It was a Saturday when we met him, and on the following Monday a totally supportive half-page article appeared in The Times entitled: 'Let Hindus share all our freedoms.' It was brilliant and we know for sure this it took many people by surprise that such an establishment figure could so strongly speak in our favour. Whether it was this article, the radio interview, our persistent fasting, or a combination of all of them, we received the news that the Liberal Democrats had changed their minds. We had been fasting for eight days straight. Not one crumb.

I think the message that this and other episodes sent out was that the Hindu community was frustrated and becoming slightly more militant – and no government wanted that. I think the campaign definitely brought into the collective Hindu mind that westerners can indeed convert to Hinduism and that the values are something that anyone can find helpful to their life – even those not born of Indian origin. The campaign also showed that even though they were by nature peaceful, when there was an attack on their faith the Hindu community really came together to defend their culture.

Pranabandhu Das

I was delighted to hear that you achieved victory in keeping Bhaktivedanta Manor open for public worship. I strongly supported the Campaign and wish you all the best.

Lord Hugh Dykes
(MP for Harrow East from 1970 - 1997)
(originally published 1996 in 'Victory')



I was only a child when I took part in the Campaign marches. Those were the days before I became actively involved in ISKCON. My father took me along to a few of the marches and demonstrations but being so young I wasn't sure what to make of them - I had never experienced anything like it before. I remember there were countless people taking part and that there remained a generally pleasant mood, perhaps due to the sense of unity everyone had. I remember seeing high-spirited individuals with Hanuman logos on their t shirts and jumpers in a park where the protesters were gathering. Again, I was too young at the time to understand what they were, I just went wherever my parents took me.

After the Manor's fight my family continued to take me to the Temple. A few years later I saw the same logo again - when I became a member of Pandava Sena!



Vishal Merai



Messages from the Campaigners

I came to UK in the 1960's and in those days there was always a sense of not belonging in this country. There was no community centre of Temple to go to. My first few years of all religious and cultural activity was celebrated within the home only.

Then one day, in the late 1970's some ISKCON devotees came knocking on our door collecting money. "My prayers are answered explained Dwarka Puri das. "Come and pray, Krishna will take care of you and your children".

When I first saw Bhaktivedanta Manor I was completely gobsmacked. There was something completely unique there: the atmosphere, the knowledge of the devotees, everything. When I first saw the beautiful Temple deities I just froze!

Regarding the Campaign to save the Manor my husband and I helped in all sorts of ways. For example, in Slough we got in touch with our local MP and community leaders. I fasted on fruits for one month and collected sponsorship money of £4000, which was a lot of money in those days.

All my three children joined us on the big march. I was one of those who sat on the road outside Parliament. There were hundreds of us blocking London's traffic! Quite a number of police vans appeared and the police angrily arrested and threw many of us inside, and drove us off to the station. That was my first ever encounter with the law. We felt so strongly about keeping the Temple open that we crossed our usual boundaries.

We were cautioned, accused of 'breaching the peace!' We replied "we will keep coming back. We will not stop until our temple is allowed to remain open".

Later interviewed by the BBC I said "I will keep going to Bhaktivedanta Manor even if I am threatened with imprisonment!"

I remember cooking huge pots of prasad and bringing it all the way to Hertfordshire to feed all the devotees who had attended the various Public Inquiries. I was even distributing prasad to people who were in opposition as well. I did not mind, I was happy to do it. That is the culture.

Winning the Campaign has given my family a meaning in our lives. My faith is deeper and indeed faith was needed to win the Campaign.

Now my children are all grown up. I see my grandchildren go to Bhaktivedanta Manor. If we hadn't stood up and fought, today so many young people would not be able to experience the divinity of the Temple and what it is offering. It represents an assurance of the survival of our culture.



Lila Shakti dasi

Works for the Mental Health Department within the National Health Service, Counsellor and Pujari at Bhaktivedanta Manor

In the 1980's, when the Campaign started, the Hindu community was quite fragmented as a whole. But on the day of the biggest march it was simply amazing. Everyone in the community came together. I remember thinking, "how did so many people turn up?"

I don't think even we actually realised the great sense of injustice people felt when they heard about the threat of the Manor's closure, even though many of our supporters had not even been to the Manor. It was the principal of it. The community had the feeling of being exploited, and everyone felt it was relevant to them: "If nothing is done then the insensitivity expressed by the Manor's local Council might also happen to other Hindu communities across the country".

Among the inner circle of activists we gave each other a lot of inspiration. We didn't have much political clout, especially in the beginning, but we had each other to give each other strength and energy to carry the Campaign forward. The leaders of the Campaign were inspirational, such as Akhandadhi das. Because of that I always had the confidence that we would win.

It was a just cause and I had faith that eventually justice would prevail. We had faith in Lord Krishna but also I had faith that at the end of the day the British legal system is fair.

Today I still see the same sense of unity, and as a community we are going from strength to strength. The Manor remaining open has given the opportunity for so many of our children to participate in our culture. So the Manor is a symbol of upholding the culture, and it promotes good values and creating law-abiding citizens. It gives young Hindus a sense of identity. These days you see the terrible things going on in society and around the world, but it's great that places like Bhaktivedanta Manor offer something very positive, very spiritual. That is the result we were fighting for.



Kaushik C Patel

Bhaktivedanta Manor Patrons Council and volunteer Team Leader

Messages from the Campaigners

I was born in Uganda and came to the UK to live permanently in 1972. Bhaktivedanta Manor opened exactly a year later. When I first arrived I heard about hari namas (street chanting parties) and they appeared part of the social revolution that was going on at that time: young people tended to lean towards Eastern philosophy.

In those days there were not many Vaishnava temples in London. Therefore when Srila Prabhupada and his disciples moved into the Manor, many immigrants from East Africa like myself were elated because many of us were brought up to worship Lord Krishna. There was a vacuum within the Indian community, and the Manor filled that vacuum.

Therefore, when I later found out about the Manor's plight I was totally flabbergasted that such an action could be instituted against a place of worship. Especially a beautiful place like the Manor, situated in the countryside, away from the congestion of urban areas.

During the protests in particular I was touched because all the minority religions came together: Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Jewish and Muslims. ISKCON philosophy respects all religious beliefs and this was evidence of it. Other faiths provided their support, both verbal and practical. It was an endorsement of our non-sectarian belief.

The Campaign was successful because of a lot of devotees were working collectively. There was a unique feeling of solidarity. It brought everyone closer together for a common purpose, whether in times of elation or sadness.

At the end of the day Krishna was behind everything because he wanted us to come together, to serve Him in a harmonious way.

It must be said that had it not been for CB Patel, the case would not have been exposed locally, nationally or internationally. Media support was vital. A lot of media were interested in our plight, including Indian media. This provided a huge platform for us.

Since the Campaign the Manor has conformed to the need of maintaining, in fact enhancing, the historical building and surrounding Green Belt. The rural aspect of the Manor has always been important, in fact one of the Manor's greatest assets. As devotees we believe in the British society's attitude towards the Green Belt, but at the same time we need to pursue our religious heritage. The Manor represents the best of both worlds.

When I see younger generations come to the Temple it gives me great happiness. Lord Krishna plays no part in the lives of most young people we see on the streets today. But it is wonderful that the younger generations have somewhere to come to. They can learn values, learn the culture of Vaishnavism. That is due to the foundation work and sacrifice that was made by the older generations.



Aravind Thakrar

Evening Supervisor and Security Officer at Bhaktivedanta Manor

Following the success of the Campaign to save the Holy Shrine of Lord Krishna from closure as a place of public worship I visited Bhaktivedanta Manor.

As I walked in the grounds the light filtered through the trees dancing in harmony with the rays projected by the late afternoon sun as the branches swayed gently in the breeze.

This peace and tranquillity of nature's bounty was punctuated only by the squeals of children playing with their friends and with their parents had come to make devotional offerings to their Lord Krishna in His home, Bhaktivedanta Manor.

This Holy Shrine had become internationally famous and identified with the struggle to determine the right and freedom of religious worship and practice for Hindus in the United Kingdom.

What form of human intolerance, insanity and depravity would engender even the thought, let alone the desire to close such a piece of Hindu Heaven on earth?

Although I am not of the faith, for ten years of my life I spent tirelessly working with others dedicated to fighting the injustice perpetrated on a defenceless peaceful community that has no modern day equivalent in any civilised society. I was proud to have taken part.

This shameful persecution of the Hindu community in the United Kingdom must not be permitted to slide into the proverbial dustbin of history which is the precise reason I have written my account of the struggle: 'No Time To Slumber For The Hindu Tiger.'



Frank Ward (Arjuna das)

Former Vice-Chairman of the HKTDM and Hertsmere Labour Counsellor.

Today he is Chair of Hertsmere UKIP

Messages from the Campaigners

Pandava Sena owes its birth to the Campaign to save Bhaktivedanta Manor. Not only did the Campaign save our beloved Temple and lead to the creation of the youth group, it also gave life to many young people. Over the years, when we were younger and now 20 years older, Bhaktivedanta Manor has offered comforting shelter. As youth we quickly learned that Srila Prabhupada had an important message - a spiritual revolution, an identity we wanted to be part of. And, Bhaktivedanta Manor was integral to this and had to be saved.

The words of Bhavesh Patel, who was a new member of the Pandava Sena at the time, typified the feelings on the day of the big Campaign March:

"I felt it was the most amazing day of my life...I have never been in such an atmosphere of absolute unity. Everyone had one thing in mind "Deal with and eradicate this travesty of justice!" Everywhere I looked I could see people shouting and screaming, old ladies crying and even confronting the police, not due to any kind of malice, but due to their fear that their place of worship was going to be taken away from them. I feel very fortunate to have been part of history that day."

As a leader of the Pandava Sena during the most vital Campaign days to save the Temple, I continue to hold deep respect and gratitude to all those who took part and served the community with such dedication and sacrifice.

Over the last 20 years the Pandava Sena has continued to grow. It is now active in Britain, India, Canada and the United States. I know that in Britain today there are 1,500 members listed on the database, 147 engaged in preaching services and 140 on the ISKCON mentorship system.

Youth from all backgrounds and ages and those from across 27 university-based Krishna Consciousness Societies continue to benefit from what started as a small group of students who wanted to save Bhaktivedanta Manor. In the end, Bhaktivedanta Manor saved us!



Nitesh Gor (Navin Krishna das)

Former head of the Pandava Sena. Today Chief Executive of the Avanti Schools Trust

There is no doubt that a great many people worked very hard in different ways to keep Bhaktivedanta Manor open to the public. This, of course, included the legal team working hard behind the scenes. Like every team that was fighting to save the Temple, a very noble cause, there were unsung heroes. One particular such individual from the legal side was the late Sir Graham Eyre QC, who led me on the enforcement appeal when Hertsmere was attempting to close the Manor to all forms of public worship. I would like to take this opportunity to tell his story.

Graham first became involved in 1985 when ISKCON turned for assistance to that most quintessential of English barristers. Graham was then aged 57 and one of the recognised leaders of the Planning Bar, having been in silk since 1970.

Although knighted in 1989, he was never elevated to the High Court Bench, a failure that he ascribed to the fact that the Prime Minister of the day disagreed with the recommendations in one of his reports.

Graham was extremely hard working and he required a similar degree of hard work from me, his junior. Staying overnight at an hotel during a long inquiry for ISKCON, he would consume a full dinner accompanied by wine or champagne, and preceded by the inevitable gin and tonic. He would then turn to me and explain that he would take a little rest and would start work again at some impossible hour, usually 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. ISKCON's tenets contrasted strangely with his own habits!

Graham approached ISKCON's case no differently from all the other enforcement appeals that he had conducted throughout his career. He quickly mastered the arguments and immersed himself in the intricacies of the religion, becoming familiar with its terms, practices and philosophy. He formed a close working relationship with Akhandadhi das. The two spent much time plotting tactics, correcting proofs, dreaming up arguments and composing vitriolic letters to the planning authority.

Unfortunately, the enforcement appeal was lost, as was ISKCON's attempt to get planning permission to build a replacement Temple off Dagger Lane. However, the story has a happy ending of course, although Graham was no longer involved.

ISKCON was able to persuade the Secretary of State that, in the very special circumstances of the case, it should be granted permission to construct a road running from the A41 direct to the Manor, thus avoiding the unsuitable country lanes and bypassing the village. I was delighted and honoured to be able to conduct that case on behalf of ISKCON and its successful conclusion is one of the highlights of my legal career.

When the road was built, ISKCON was finally given permission to continue public worship at Bhaktivedanta Manor - a just result if ever there was one.

David Altaras QC

London barrister specialising in planning and consumer law. Chartered Arbitrator, Crown Court Recorder and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators



Messages from the Campaigners

I originally got involved when Cllr Frank Ward came to the Temple to discuss the problems Hertsmere Council were causing. He gave us an idea of what could be done by the community. He advised that we don't rely on one party or another, gather unity across the Hindu community and with enough effort there will be success.

The walk with Sunil Gavaskar and Rishi Kapoor opened up the eyes of the Hindu community across the UK: it caught their attention. Meanwhile CB Patel was like a general in an army, guiding us and giving the Campaign a lot of media publicity. For example, the Dharma Yatra was his idea and it was successful in creating a sense of unity and it gave a positive dimension to the Manor's problem.

I had a feeling that it was a once in a life time opportunity to give support for a good cause. We did all kinds of things. For example, myself, Pranabandhu das and Aniruddha das decided to fast for 8 days in front of the Liberal Democrat Party HQ. Although Hertsmere Council was Conservative controlled, we needed to gain the support of the second most influential party there. I had never fasted before! We were there for the full 8 days and were sleeping in a van parked nearby! By the fourth day we badly required a bath, which we took in Dilip Patel's house!

The civil disobedience during the Campaign march was unbelievable! All that energy! Everyone fearlessly lay on the road right outside of the Houses of Parliament, stopping the traffic. People cautioned by police and later had to appear in court. But it was necessary: We wanted to show how unfair Hertsmere Council had been.

Some of us spent a week 'searching for justice' in another demonstration outside Parliament, crawling on our hands and knees and carrying lanterns!

The Patrons Council was generally working hard in the background, making sure the funds were there to make it all happen. Money was hard to come by so all kinds of fund raising schemes, including charity walks, came about.

Today I feel the cause made me stronger in my faith. I found an energy that I didn't have before. Krishna gave it to us. I fully believe that when people unite we can achieve anything.

But we should not forget: Whether it was a Public Inquiry, court case, protest or indeed any gathering the ladies were always there to feed us. Many ladies such as Krishna Purna dasi, Ananda Vighraha dasi and Krishangi dasi were helping out in the background making sure everyone was fed. That was very important...expect for the fasting demonstration of course!



Ramesh Shah (Rameshwar das)

Chartered Accountant and Property Management

Bhaktivedanta Manor's Patron Council and leading Volunteer at Bhaktivedanta Manor

The Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement (HKTDM) was formed on 8th April 1991 to start the Campaign and awareness of the closure of the Bhaktivedanta Manor all around the World. The challenge was to fight for the freedom of worship with help from all Hindus and non-Hindus living in the UK.

With a just cause, we had support from numerous societies and organisations through Britain and the world. The HKTDM embarked on arranging several marches, petitions, funds raising events. The HKTDM committee coordinated with several Hindu and Non-Hindu organizations to fight the injustice in the "freedom of worship" and with support of all were successful in keeping the Bhaktivedanta continue their worship without the threat from closure.

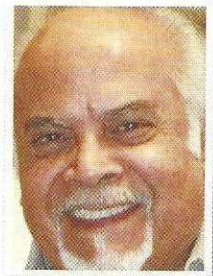
On March 16, 1994 over 36,000 Hindus travelled from all over UK to march through London streets. At one time the traffic in front of Houses of Parliament was stopped for 45 minutes – the Metropolitan Police arrested several HKTDM members and devotees. This march was reported on several TV Stations and newspapers.

HKTDM feels that this was the turning point for the British Government to see a strong front from the Hindu Community which resulted in granting planning permissions to allow the worship to continue at the temple.

Eventually the British Government accepted and agreed that the Hare Krishna Movement's founder, A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, had a special connection with Bhaktivedanta Manor. They concluded that that association "must continue for wider public interest."

It was a significant victory – a victory that now establishes the direction of Srila Prabhupada's 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 Naresh K. Chadha

Former Chairman of HKTDM and US based business professional

Messages from the Campaigners

For a number of us the Campaign March was more than just a day. For years, but from January of that year in particular we created a very active base at the Manor which was churning out all sorts of ideas .

The adrenaline, anticipation and deep feelings were churning through everyone's minds and hearts. We were living each moment of each day for the mission and on the day of the huge march all our feelings became deeper, more pronounced. The day was largely well organised. It was one unit working together for a worthy objective. It will probably never to be repeated, at least not outside of Parliament, but then I hope there will never be another reason for it!

The number of people outside Parliament was a great event not only to Save the Manor but a great event of unity and occasion for the Hindu community as a whole.

This was not just about keeping a building open, which is simply bricks and mortar, but about keeping alive a tradition. We young people at the time needed to create a platform to do something significant for the Campaign. We wanted to take the Campaign as far as we could outside of the immediate community. We wanted to world to know about it.

I was there when the original 10 members of the Pandava Sena met and later I was given the opportunity to guide and steer them.

The Manor was correctly perceived by the youth as a seat of learning and it preserved our culture. The Pandava Sena were mainly British born Hindus and in its early phases many were joining them because of the Campaign. Our plight created an attraction, an affinity, gave them an identity and a cause that deepened their sense of identity.

As young people they had fearless energy and we were emotionally caught in the moment. They had a collective energy drive them beyond their own expectations. It gave them strength.

Some of the most memorable times included the Pandava Sena's first flier, which advertised arti on the Letchmore Heath Village Green. The message was "If we are not allowed to worship inside the Temple building, then there is nothing to stop us from worshipping outside the building in the local village!" I remember hordes of young British Hindus from across England converging on the tiny village!

During that time, every Saturday the Pandava Sena would be drive an open truck up and down the Ealing Road in Wembley and in Southall, shouting down megaphones and telling everyone about the potential Temple closure. That way they attracted many more members!



Pradip Gajjar (Pradyumna das)

Pradip is one of the Directors of Avanti Schools Trust and was Project Director for setting up the Krishna Avanti School in Leicester. He is a Senior Consultant at Transnational Management Associates, a global provider of management development programmes, delivering to some of the world's leading global organisations. Pradip has an MBA from Aston Business School.

It was a fight for a future generation
A cause that united the nation

Fighting for the right to pray
In the honorable Vedic way,

A cause that gathered the young and old,
From different faiths, so unity would hold

From the heart of Bhaktivedanta Manor
Came forth letters, lectures and banner

And with these came a noble plan
And so our fight began

Not with clubs, pistols and guns
But with a mindset that would not be undone

Petitions, promises and hearings
The more we did, the more we were endearing

To the hearts and minds of the many
Who supported us by presence and penny

Uniting many colours under the sun

With megaphones, placards and
prams,
We went to Parliament to fulfill our
plan

Tears and traffic filled the air
Human roadblocks made by those
who cared

Until finally, with hearts and mind as one
Our fight to worship was finally won.

Yet for some it's still like yesterday,
Lest we take for granted the price we paid!

To live to pray another day
At Bhaktivedanta Manor, may justice stay.



Prashant Kotecha

*Freelance Project Manager
Former Manor Youth Forum, Pandava Sena and
Founder of Mantra Therapy.*

Messages from the Campaigners

In 1994 I was only about 7 years old so some of my memories are quite vague. Yet I do recall going out on the big march in London and holding my mother's hand as we walked down the street, surrounded by thousands of others carrying banners.

I don't know how well I understood why we were there and what we were doing, but I remember it feeling very momentous. Something important. Although, from a child's point of view it was not much different in feeling from a regular London Rathayatra procession that I was used to!

I recall more clearly the official opening of Bhaktivedanta Manor's new access road two years later: It was dark that night and I remember torch flames being held. There was such a festive, celebratory mood - one of relief, with the sense of a long, hard struggle being concluded. I remember the happiness on everyone's faces and how we walked all together from the top of the road down to the bottom - a new beginning!



Jahnavi Harrison

Former student of the Bhaktivedanta Manor School

Today a main singer for 'Kirtan London', musician and a leader of Bhaktivedanta Manor's Bhakti Choir.

Krishna solves all our problems . Nothing can stop in His way and He does what He likes, and protects His devotees forever. He is Lila Dhari . Known for His own ways of working.

His Temple of His took long time to be saved ... That was His wish Now one day very soon we all will meet again there to thank him for giving us this divine place to worship Him.

Krishna Bhakta



Anup Jalota

A successful professional musician, international famous for his bhajans and ghazals

Twenty-seven years ago, as fate would have it, I had a heart attack for living in fast lane. In those days, there were only 5 NHS London Hospitals where the bypass surgery was conducted. At the cost of £50,000 hospitals were reluctant to take patients who did not change their mode of living.

Fate would have it that St Bartholomew's Hospital (St. Barts) would choose me to be operated in 1988. Fate would unite the ten patients from all parts of London in a dilapidated ward for an open heart surgery. The dire condition of the Ward, stimulated all of us to form "BARTS HEARTS", a charity to raise funds for the Hospital in general and this Ward in particular.

Fate would have it that with a large influx of Hindus from Uganda and other unstable African countries in early 1990's, a steering Group "Hindus in Britain" was set up under the auspices of National Council of Hindu Temples (NCHT) and with undaunted support of its President Om Prakash Sharma. I became a member of the Steering Group to convey the message to 800 organisations - "Hindus in Britain should be aware of the processes and stages of community development including organisational machinery, constitutional issues including representation, voting, lobbying support in local and regional structures."

It was at a meeting at Wellingborough District Hindu Association, where I first heard the woes of the Hare Krishna Temple, so eloquently explained by Akhandadhi das. It hit my nerve when he mentioned about the land being owned "by St Bartholomew's Hospital". I invited Akhandadhi das to my house for further information. As the Trustee of Barts, I used my influence to convince the management to sell the land to the Temple.

However, the threat of closing down the Hare Krishna Temple in 1994 united many Hindu Organisations. The Hindu Council of UK was formed after a conference in Birmingham in November 1992. Whilst the NCHT remained more of a religious body, HCUK became a more vociferous body. The march to House of Commons in 1994 by over 30,000 people halted the Westminster traffic for several hours and it demonstrated the awesome power exerted by the Hindu community, known for "law abiding, hard-working and positively contributing society to their newly made home - Britain."

Hindu Council UK and its affiliated organisations has directly and indirectly supported and motivated in setting up Hindu Schools and various Hindu Community and Cultural Centres.

Community involvement has become one of the main links through which attempt have been made to provide opportunities for both the established and non-established groups to work with their community of common bond and common purpose.



Messages from the Campaigners

Before moving into Bhaktivedanta Manor I had heard it was facing potential closure to the public, thus likely financial ruin. I was even advised by devotees in other parts of England to devote my life to a place with a more certain future. But I followed my gut feeling and in 1993 I went to stay there long-term. Soon after I was invited to climb aboard one of the coaches which left from Bhaktivedanta Manor to central London for the main Campaign march. Although I knew that much was at stake, being new to the scene I asked if I could bring a copy of the Bhagavad Gita with me on the coach but "remain inside and read".

Pradjumna das declared "this is the largest march so far. Krishna told Arjuna to fight! This IS the Bhagavad Gita!" I was won over and did not regret my decision to join. In fact, it was a privilege to take part in that piece of history.

As our coach pulled up, I was open-mouthed to see so many people pour out of one coach after another somewhere around central London in an unprecedented display of unity behind ISKCON and dharma in general. This was no minority religious group, ISKCON had clearly reached the mainstream: it had received the stamp of approval!

The atmosphere on the day was surcharged, and I must say for a young devotee it was all rather exciting. Yet it was no where near as aggressive as the anti-Poll Tax demonstration I had attended several years previously.

Overall the Hindus protested in the way they knew best - in a relatively peaceful and tolerant way and through song and prayer. Like Gandhi's movement. That said, the issue was a serious one and when amongst younger participants I did sense a bitterness and confusion: What did it mean to be a British born Hindu? What was their identity? I shared their feelings but from a slightly different angle: What does it mean to be a white Hindu in a western country? (and more importantly, where's the prasada?)

As the procession snaked around Westminster and approached the Houses of Parliament, amongst younger folk I saw old ladies sitting on the road. Obviously some bright spark thought that was a jolly good idea and during the following demo it happened again. A bigger sit-down took place and some protestors were being dragged along by police as the national media clicked away on their cameras. Central London's traffic effectively came to a standstill.

OTO this day I shall never forget the determination of those old ladies in particular, who were more than three times my own age. This is something the younger generations of the community should never forget. Since that day I have had great respect for the senior members of the Gujarati community and their unity and acceptance and sacrifices made for Bhaktivedanta Manor.

My next public spectacle was joining the Pandava Sena and Pradjumna das on a protest rally outside a Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool, when even I sported an orange head-band decorated with Om signs!

Then there was the march in Luton which culminated outside Luton Crown Court. The previous Janmashtami was "illegally celebrated" and thousands came to support Akhandadhi and Atmanivedanam Swami as they gave their legal testaments and brandished an unfair fine. When they emerged from the building, they were hoisted on people's shoulders and honoured like triumphant football stars!

Myself and a few other Temple devotees led a section within that march. Just ahead of us a disciple of Srila Prabhupada dressed up as a comical police officer, carrying a plastic truncheon and wearing a red nose! He walked alongside a cage, inside which sat Ambarish das who was dressed in prison-stripes and a large splash of red kum kum on his forehead!

Over the last few years before 1996 nearly everything at the Manor revolved around the Campaign. Wearing a dhoti and tilak within Council Chambers or on the street was challenging for a young white chap, but I knew I had the support and even admiration of the Hindu community, and that gave me inner strength.

One morning in 1996 Akhandadhi das came running along the corridor of the Manor carrying a wad of pages which was the 1996 Agreement! He quickly gathered together some senior devotees and I was privileged to be around at the time. We all entered Srila Prabhupada's personal quarters upstairs, a most befitting venue, and sat before his murti. With tears in his eyes and with Agreement in hand, Akhandadhi das made the announcement that all the efforts of so many people had been rewarded: the Temple would remain open for everyone!

We cried.

The Campaign days essentially represented my initial impressions of Bhaktivedanta Manor's identity as a community and as a mission. Therefore, the training I received was hugely shaped by this. I believe many lessons were learnt during those years, such as to avoid isolationism. The Communications Team is playing our part to keep the positive elements of the Campaign momentum going.

Religious freedom is a right and privilege not to be taken for granted, but something to be cherished and shared with others, for the betterment of the entire human society.



Radha Mohan das

*Communications Secretary of Bhaktivedanta Manor, author, Bhaktivedanta
Players drama group and Trustee of the Hertsmere Forum of Faiths*



Messages from the Campaigners

Generations Unite for Justice

March 1994 has become historic in the life of Hindus in the UK. On that day thousands gathered outside the Palace of Westminster to protest about the human rights of Hindus that were being trampled on by politicians.

Asian Voice and Gujarat Samachar covered the event and gave it a national resonance that awakened the spirit of the whole community. I remember studying a photograph of an elderly gentleman in a wheelchair, and alongside him was his 7 years old great grand-daughter. In the cold they stayed outside the Palace of Westminster with thousands of others; they supported the cause for it was multiple generations fighting for the very future of their children. This one photograph told the story of countless thousands of Hindu families at that time. For me that photograph was very special. The gentleman in the wheelchair was none other than my grandfather, Shri Amratlal Dudakia. And the little girl by his side was none other than my daughter, Deepika Dudakia.



Insert photo 1 from Kapils photo folder: caption: "Shri Amratlal Dudakia protesting against the closure of Bhaktivedanta Manor"

My grandfather has taken refuge with Lord Krishna and is no longer with us. However my daughter Deepika is all grown up and I asked her about her memories of the day. She said that whilst she was not sure of what was happening, it was clear to her that it was very very important. That iconic image of Hindus marching outside Westminster has stayed with her to date, and on each occasion we visit Bhakti Vedanta Manor – she knows she played a small part in its survival. I remember speaking to my grandfather who was always full of wit and wisdom in equal measure. He said, 'karma, karma, karma' – do that right and the rest will follow automatically. On that day the karma yogis were out in force and their tapasya resulted in a game changing victory for all Hindus.



The journey of the Dudakia family being associated with ISKCON had started and in years to come we were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to do seva and karma in our own way. I recall a more recent event when Gangotri was killed by an RSPCA inspector whilst in the Goshala. It sent shock waves throughout the country, but in that time of utter desperation Lord Krishna found a way forward. The Gangotri taskforce was set up and I was lucky enough to have been granted the privilege of serving on it. Within one year the task force managed to get changes to the guidance on the Animal Welfare Act directly from the DEFRA. The RSPCA apologised and even donated a cow in calf. I was honoured when Gauridas Prabhu and Shruti Dharamdas Prabhu asked me to

name the donated cow – I chose the name 'Aditi'. In the Vedas, Aditi is the mother of the gods.

Insert photo 2 from Kapils photo folder: caption: "Gangotri"

Insert photo 3 from Kapil's photo folder: caption: Aditi, meaning 'mother of the gods'

These are some of the memories of but one family. Thousands of other families played a pivotal part in not only saving the Hare Krishna Temple, but in giving strength and belief that we as a community can unite to achieve much.

From those days of survival, in 20 years ISKCON has made progress beyond recognition. The Temple grounds have increased dramatically in size with the resultant increases in infrastructure and facilities for the devotees. The local population that was so vehemently opposed has now accepted the Temple as the very beacon of positive inter-faith relations. More recently, with the setting up of Krishna Avanti Foundation, for the first time Hindu faith based schools have emerged in the UK. Even OFSTED stand astounded with the quality of education that is available at these institutions.

For the Dudakia family the Temples' journey has also been our journey. On the 20th anniversary of securing the right to have a Temple at Bhakti Vedanta Manor – I say to you all, we are blessed to live in these times of history making.

Hare Krishna.



Messages from the Campaigners

Save the Manor Campaign

I had first come across the Hare Krishna devotees in Nairobi, Kenya. The year was 1970 and I was at the Kenya Agricultural Show when I heard the chanting, 'Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare!'. The chanting and the sound of cymbals and mradanga drums mesmerised me and deeply impacted me! The next time I saw the Hare Krishna devotees was in London in 1974 and gradually my association with the movement grew.

The threat of closure of the Manor started from 1981 when Hertsmere Council issued an enforcement notice banning all public festivals at the Manor. During 1988, 1989 I regularly attended meetings at the Manor. On 1st February 1987 I attended a meeting at the Manor to discuss the feasibility of access road to by pass Letchmore village. Amongst those present were Councillor Frank Ward (the famous Arjun Das!), his friend surveying consultant Graham Aitken, Shantoo Ruparell, Trikaljna Das, Ranti Dev Das, Akhandadhi Das and Sumraminuum Indran. A fringe meeting was held at the Conservative party conference in Brighton on 12th.October 1988. The venue was Norfolk Resort Hotel and the theme was Gandhi and the concept of Justice. I addressed the meeting and said the following:

'History and destiny has bound the Indian and British people. Mahatma Gandhi was a living example of this bond. Even when fighting tooth and nail for the freedom of India, Gandhi remained a firm believer in British democracy and British justice. Those of us of Indian background who have settled in the UK regard ourselves British too and we too have the same faith in British democracy. We hope we will not be let down in our struggle to keep the Hindu shrine in Hertsmere open. As British citizens we want to play a positive role in this society. We want to enrich this society with our unique contribution.

It is felt that there is an urgent need for more moral and spiritual values in society. The new concept being talked about is of responsible citizenship. Citizens who recognize their debt to the society at large. These are the very values that the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Srila Prabhupada has taught us. The followers of the Hare Krishna movement propagate moral values and encourage people to give up drugs and alcohol. It is therefore a great pity that the very people who who have so much in common with the Conservative values are being harassed by the Conservative Hertsmere Council. Not all Hare Krishna followers wear saffron clothes, most lead ordinary lives and for them the Hindu shrine in Hertsmere is of immense importance. I therefore request Mrs.Thatcher at this Conservative party conference to not let down the very people who are at one with her in her concern to create a happy, law abiding country'.

The issue of raising finance to fight for the campaign came up and I suggested that we should organise a Charity walk. It would achieve three goals. It would raise funds, motivate supporters in doing something practical and spread the word as each walker would get sponsorship from many people. On 16th.July 1999 the walk was organised starting from Wembley to the Manor. Around 3000 people took part and a substantial fighting fund was collected. It raised the morale of campaigners sky high!

On 2nd.October 1991 a fringe meeting was organised at the Labour party conference in Brighton. The venue was the Grand Hotel. The theme again was Gandhi and Justice. Labour MPs Paul Boateng, Keith Vaz, K.B.Rajan, deputy high commissioner India, Naresh Chadha and Kumar Rawal were amongst the speakers. Thousands of people gave their all to save the temple. From the media CB Patel played a pivotal role as did all the members of the temple defence committee. My personal opinion is that without Frank Ward we would have not achieved the success that we did.

There were times when the morale of devotees was rock bottom but Frank kept the pot boiling! He knew Hertsmere Council better than anyone. There were many times when we were taken in by Hertsmere Councils promises but only Frank could see through them and galvanised the Hindu community! The international angle that Frank and other members gave to the campaign was also a masterstroke! The 1994 demonstration of over 30,000 Hindus was the turning point and it is an event that will be remembered as the day when according to Frank Ward the Hindu tiger roared! The salient lesson we learnt was that we need to be much more vocal and proactive otherwise you are not taken seriously! The Hindu community came under another attack last year when a legislation was passed making Caste discrimination illegal. It took a little time for us to wake up to the implications of this law and politicians have been left in no doubt that the normally easy going Hindus have been aroused!

Nitin Mehta MBE

animalahimsa@gmail.com

I am the founder of the Young Indian Vegetarians Society. In the 80's and 90's we did a lot of preaching all over the country with devotees. Promoting vegetarianism and Sankirtan. In 1999 I received an MBE for services to the community. During the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Manor last year we did a project of getting 40 people to take a vegetarian pledge. We achieved our objective. I have many articles published in national papers on Hinduism, India and Vegetarianism.



Messages from the Campaigners

Meeting Nelson Mandela and George Harrison

Nelson Mandela



I was a child during the Campaign days but I ended up playing an important role!

I remember I was in Delhi when my father Riddha das met with Ranjit, a well-known ISKCON Life Member from South Africa. My father's idea was that I would present a letter to President Nelson Mandela asking him to write to contact the then British Prime Minister, John Major MP. Ranjit agreed, and he was the one who escorted me to seeing Nelson Mandela. I remember being really nervous! I felt "who am I to talk to him?" Even though I was young I knew who he was and his status.

I remember going through so many security checks: one after another, down corridors and more checks. The security offices studied the list of names and they kept saying "she is not on the list" pointing to me! I thought I would never get to meet Mandela! But Ranjit and another South African businessmen said "no its okay, she is with us!"

We all waited in a room for maybe half an hour before the security finally escorted us through to see Mandela. Then it happened: one of the men introduced me to Mandela! He hugged me, kissed me on my cheek, he put his arm around my shoulder and told me to come closer, I felt very comfortable with him, like he was a grandfather. He asked me my name, where I was from, from how old was I and what I wanted to be when I was older I told him I wanted to be a lawyer!

I then told him the situation in England about the Manor and how the Council was trying to close our temple. He acknowledged my plea listened to me attentively. As it turned out, Mandela later did contact John Major MP and I am sure it had a notable impact on the Manor's Campaign.

George Harrison

In the summer of 1996 the Manor held a Campaign Victory Dinner to celebrate the successful outcome. Me and another Gurukuli (from the Manor School) called Kiki were asked to perform a rasa lila dance to entertain special guest George Harrison.

I remember how when I met him afterwards. He was so sweet and kind, he came across like an old friend. Later the same day I went up to him when he was sitting on his own. As soon as I came near him he said "Haribol, how are you?" I replied "can I please have your signature?" He replied "yeah sure!". With George I felt like he was one of us. He had the presence of a Srila Prabhupada disciple and I treated him with that respect. He never had his nose the air or felt he was above us, He was just a humble sweet soul.

Vrndavanesvari dasi

Former student of the Bhaktivedanta Manor School

"The campaign was the most exciting period for Hinduism in Britain," explains Vipin Aery, then general secretary of the National Council for Hindu Temples. "Over a period of three or four years we worked with Hindu community leaders, politicians, Hindu saints and leaders from all religious communities."

"Most Hindu temples in Britain had begun in the 1960s or 1970s and the campaign served to unite them all nationwide and I think it raised the public profile of Hinduism generally. It was a period of rapid development for the Hindu community – it stamped their authority. Statutory agencies took the community seriously from that time on."

"Other faith communities were also watching the proceedings closely because they suspected that what happened to us could also, just as easily, happen to them, too."

"The Hindu community saw the ISKCON struggle as their own struggle. As a result, many Hindu leaders became closely involved and worked hard to save the temple. The late O.P. Sharma, of course, from Birmingham; and Chotabhai Limbachia from Preston; Ishvara Tailor, Mr. Joshi, and Dr. Nathubhai Jain. From the VHP there were Kishor Ruparelia and Dr. Bhan and Pravin Ruparelia. The Overseas Friends of India was greatly helpful and together we arranged a campaign visit to India with Naresh Chadha, myself and Atmanivedana Swami."

"As a result of this timely trip, Mr. Kamalnath, a minister in the Indian government raised a question on the floor of the House; there was a protest march through Delhi of five hundred people; and many highly-placed Indian businessmen wrote letters of protest to British High Commissions in Bombay, New Delhi and Calcutta."

"It was a tense time, with a great deal at stake, but it was enjoyable nonetheless. Reminiscing about that period, and how unifying it all was for Hindus in this country, I almost wish there could be another campaign!"



Vipin Aery

Doing time for the Manor

My first contact with ISKCON came at the age of 18 from a friend of mine who initiated me into two things: to the Bhagavad Gita and to smoking cigarettes whilst we snuck behind the car park opposite Copland School in Wembley. Since that date he had got me hooked on to both of these things, the smoking and the Philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita. Luckily in time I have given up the less desirable habit, and managed to keep the other one.

My friend had arranged for me to go to the temple in Watford and to meet some of the residents staying there. I had been before when I was very young, but never got a chance to understand the philosophy. This time I had a chance to speak at depth with many of the residents there and got some understanding. I really liked the universal application of the movement. There were no class, race or creed barriers, something which you do not see in every temple, church or mosque. This philosophy could be applied to anyone, and if something cannot be practiced by one and all then it cannot be an absolute truth. If it is dependent on one political stance or background it then becomes something which exists in only a certain realm whether that would be of culture or race; it is based on something which is temporary and superficial. It is not eternal, which is what this knowledge seemed to be, it claimed application to any time or place.



T- Shirt worn at the rally

The philosophy all fell in to place and completed a fragmented picture I had developed through reading and delving into various esoteric subjects, which has been my hobby practically since I could walk. I had always had a deep interest in such matters.

At secondary school a few friends started 'toying' with what is known as a Ouija board, inevitably rumors



**Suresh Vagjiani
Sow & Reap
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spread around the class and school and the whole class got involved. A friend of mine, Glen, and I had even taken a trip to the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain in 33 Belgrave Sq, this was obtained from the Yellow Pages as there was no internet back then to gain advice about what we were doing. We were only 12 years old at the time, and took the tube down to central London; so this was an active interest, not an armchair perusal - we were very experimental in our endeavors into the unknown. We were told not to tamper with a Ouija board by a concerned member of the SAGB, he said 'it's like leaving the front door of your house open, anyone can walk in'. But, hell when you're 12 years old you always do the opposite of what you're told, or maybe that was just me. The building and organization still exist at the same address; I popped in a few months ago whilst passing the area just to reminisce.

During the time I started visiting the temple an active youth group was springing up, which met regularly and was facilitated and encouraged by the Manor. There was a campaign running to save the temple from closure, and this was gathering momentum, the group had been crystallized and named as the Pandava Sena.

As I understood back then the temple was under threat from closure due to opposition from the locals, they were complaining regarding noise and traffic issues, the premises also was registered as a college and not a place of worship; for these reason the temple was facing a real possibility of closure. The proposition from the temple management was to seal off the entrance from the village side and build a road directly from the main road thereby circumventing the village entirely as it is now. However this was met with fierce opposition from the villagers and the local council.

Shortly after we first attended the initial Pandava Sena meetings both myself and my friends who introduced me all became regulars, it seemed we found somewhere where we could channel our energies in a productive way.

This group was used to campaign for the temple to stay open through weekly meetings and running campaigns, as well as protests. Notably, one outside the

With best wishes from



Bhaktivedanta Manor The Freedom that Flourished



Thousands of people on the lawns of Bhaktivedanta Manor observing the celebration of Diwali with lights and fireworks

The campaign to keep Bhaktivedanta Manor open for public worship guaranteed freedom of worship for Hindus, but it also preserved the legacy of a faith tradition now enjoyed by an increasing number of first-time visitors. Everyone is welcome, and thousands now enjoy a unique experience, touring the farm, the rich gardens and the beautiful shrine.

Schoolteachers bring their classes to learn more of Hinduism, and international tourists come to see the place that inspired Beatle George Harrison. The milking cows and plough-pulling bulls attract hundreds of newcomers in the spring; and the hugely popular summer festivals, with their music, theatre and colourful spectacle are very well known throughout the country.

Such a vibrant community is a positive contribu-



Centred around the beautiful Deities the daily worship programme attracts thousands every week. It is led by



Radha Gokulananda the presiding deities of Bhaktivedanta Manor

tion to families, and the Manor school and Sunday school, the varied seminars and the residential training courses, the conferences and youth clubs all play their part in broadening the aspirations of young people. The Manor temple also reaches out to the homeless and disadvantaged in the locality, providing 900 free hot meals every day for the past ten years.

As the size and scope of the Hindu community has increased, so

too has its involvement in the activities of the temple.

Thousands of contributors nationwide now keep it all moving forwards, and more than 2,000 volunteers provide all the necessary practical support and expertise at the



The Deity department tries to please Their Lordships following the ancient yet simple techniques of arcana

busiest times. The good work of Bhaktivedanta Manor, now far removed from its humble beginnings in 1973, has been given a chance to flourish over the past twenty years. The community would like to thank all those who have helped it this far, and request their good wishes for the future.