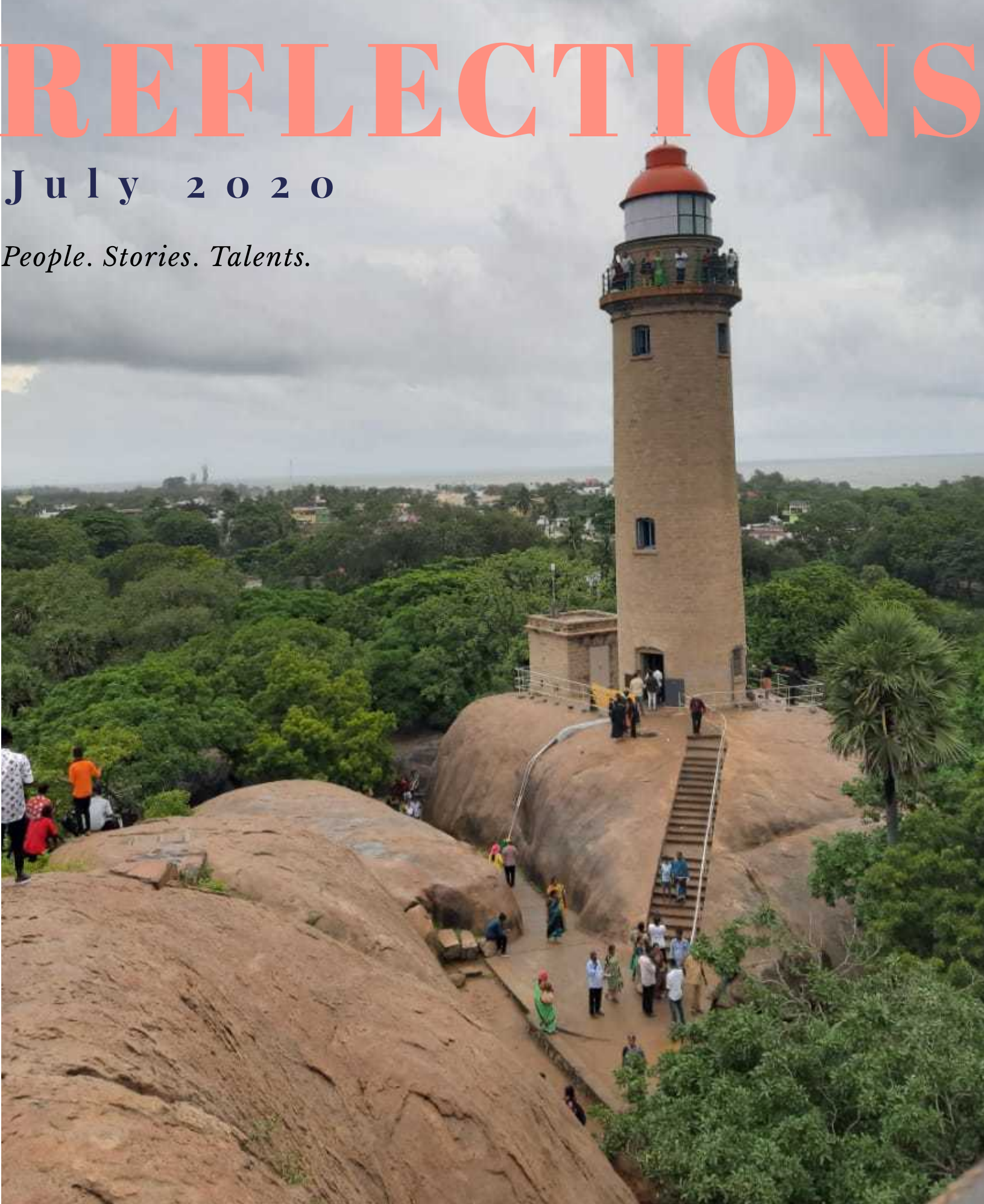


REFLECTIONS

July 2020

People. Stories. Talents.



The Mahabalipuram Lighthouse, which was completed and first lit in 1904. Photo courtesy of Herbert Samuel.

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~

Tell us

What we're doing right and what we're doing
wrong and what you think of this issue. We'd love
to hear from you.

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

A close friend of mine who works at a well-known architecture firm made a video of herself playing basketball, just dribbling and shooting the hoops. At the end of the one-minute video, she had to kick the ball out of the video frame.

This video was prompted by an initiative of her company called Pass the Ball, wherein you had to videotape yourself playing ball and passing it on to the next person. The video begins with one catching the ball, any ball (cricket ball, volleyball, tennis ball) and passing it on to the next person at the end of the video.

What a nice way to connect!

While we're all still navigating uncharted waters in these troublesome uncertain times, flip through the pages and read through some lockdown stories and take a walk down memory lane.

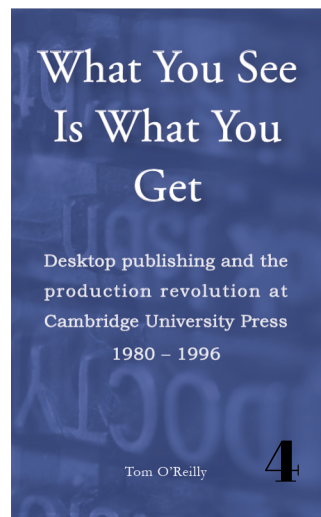
~ Lydia

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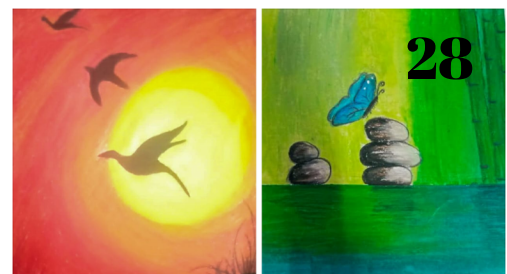


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What You See Is What You Get

Desktop publishing and the production revolution at Cambridge University Press, 1980–1996

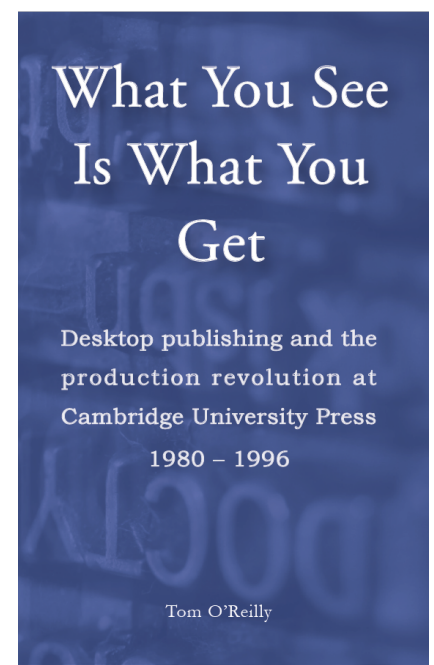
Tom O'Reilly, *Freelance Editorial Project Manager, Newgen UK* ● ● ● ●

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Title: *What You See Is What You Get: Desktop Publishing and the Production Revolution at Cambridge University Press, 1980–1996*

- Published: 2020 (Page d'Or Books); extent: 187 pp.
- Amazon: https://www.amazon.co.uk/What-You-See-Get-publishing/dp/191612979X/ref=sr_1_14?dchild=1&keywords=o%27reilly+desktop&qid=1593165742&sr=8-14

- Blurb: With the arrival of PostScript page description and raster-image laser printing came a revolutionary change to the methods by which books were produced at Cambridge. This was the time when the tools of content production became fully digitized, the workflows were revolutionized, and when the leaders of the Press sought to innovate in preparation for an uncertain future in academic publishing. This book reflects on the content-production processes of the academic publishing industry



between the years 1980 and 1996, and provides an account of the design, composition and prepress workflows in place at Cambridge before and after the integration of desktop-publishing technologies. Included are the indexed, verbatim transcripts of interviews with the period's Publishing Operations Director; the Production and Design Manager of STM; an Academic Books text designer; the Managing Director of the Technical Applications Group (TAG); a prepress technician; and the first desktop-publishing typesetter to be employed by the Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Tom O'Reilly has worked freelance for Newgen Publishing since 2015, following a nine-year period working in the Academic and Education divisions of Cambridge University Press. In 2012, he completed a Masters in Publishing Studies at Anglia Ruskin University and focused his dissertation on how desktop publishing changed the production processes at CUP. As part of the research, he conducted interviews with key Press personnel from the period (1980–1996), recording first-hand accounts of the design, composition and prepress workflows in place at Cambridge



before and after the integration of desktop-publishing technologies. In April 2020, Tom independently published his dissertation along with the verbatim transcripts of the oral histories he recorded.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:



I started working at CUP long after XML, LaTeX, off-shore typesetting and CTP printing had become the standard in academic book production, and I was impressed to discover that CUP had in fact pioneered the XML publishing workflow back in the early 80s, years before the Internet and eBooks existed. At that time, OUP and CUP were organizations of similar size (both in staff levels and output), but by 1989, when OUP sold its printing operations to focus on Reference content (a very successful decision, as it turned out!), CUP had invested heavily in in-house typesetting and generic markup (GML) systems: there had been an understanding at the Press of the importance of generically encoded content, despite there not being publishing media other than print at the time. It was truly innovative thinking, considering where content is today, but the cheap production and prepress costs that desktop publishing afforded meant that the (CBML) project was eventually dropped in 1996. I became interested in just how radical a change it was to go from mechanical to digital prepress and thought it would be a good topic to look at in my MA. I started working on the book in March 2020, initially as an InDesign learning project for which I needed some relatively complex content. I then reread the essay and interview transcripts and realized that some people might actually be interested to read about this aspect of publishing history in which CUP played such a significant part, and I decided to publish it through my own imprint www.pagedor.co.uk.

~



Kolam (Rangoli)

Sumalatha, Books Copy Editing Team ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

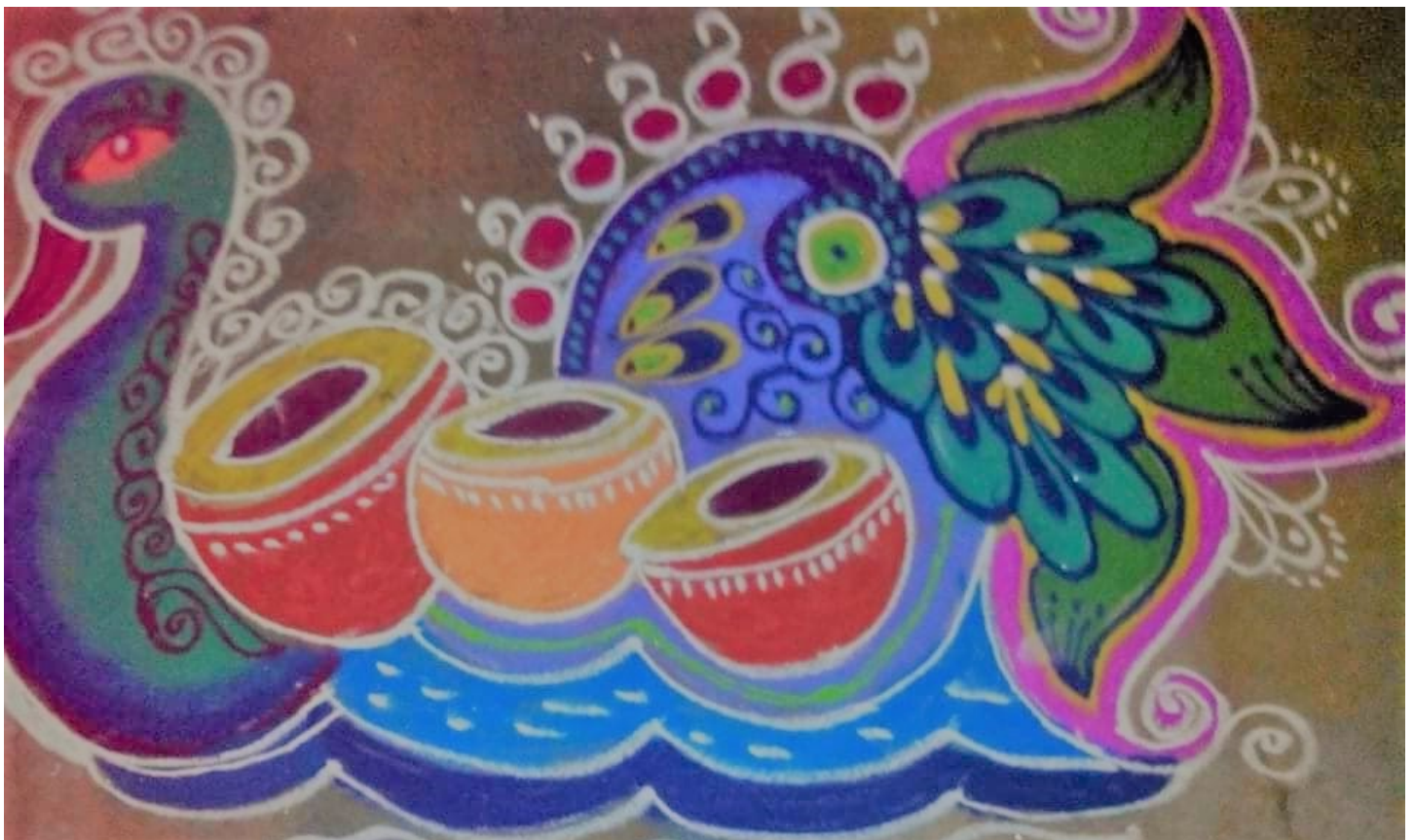
Kolam, also known as a rangoli, is an art form in which patterns are created on the floor or the ground using rice flour, chalk, chalk powder or rock powder, colored sand or flower petals. For the people of India, this beautiful art is a reflection of the culture and tradition, something very close to their heart.

We frequently visit our village during festivals. This is the time when *kolams* are out in all their splendor and glory, colorful, artful and beautiful all at the same time. The houses are neatly washed, the front courtyard cleared and watered and a beautiful *kolam* drawn at the entrance of each house, making it a welcoming picture. This is said to portray a sign of prosperity.

Creating *kolam* is a very good morning exercise; sweeping the front of the house

is good for the waist and back, where we sweat as if we have run a marathon. Sprinkling water is good for the hands and arms. While putting *kolam*, we squat many times, and this is good for our legs and back, almost like a yoga ritual. It also keeps the environment clean when every house has a *kolam*. We make sure that a *kolam* is put at the entrance before family members leave for their jobs or schools. It is believed that the aishwarya *kolam* rendered particularly on Fridays brings wealth and prosperity.

Women get competitive on seeing their neighbors' *kolams*. They get ideas like, “How come her *kolam* is bigger than mine? . . . Tomorrow I will put a bigger one than this,” which brings out the competitive spirit. Being creative in drawing *kolams* means it doesn't get repeated. But the fun part is when a neighbor has kept a tab on what *kolam* you had put on which date and with what color combination and also makes it a point to mention it to you. They seem like detectives spying on the piece of land in front of your house. But all said and done, it sure is super fun, especially during Sankranti (Pongal)—waking up early in the morning and



plunging headlong into the competition of whose *kolam* will be the best in the neighborhood. Grannies of the neighborhood are the deans of the *kolam* college. Let me tell you why: They inspect the *kolam* and decide the characteristics of the person who draws it:

1. Big *kolam*: A patient person who completes things on time and is healthy too.
2. Colorful *kolam*: A creative person who presents everything artistically.
3. *Sikku* (knots) *kolam*: Someone who can solve problems through experience and knowledge.
4. Abstract *kolam*: An out-of-the-box thinker.
5. A combination of all the above makes for a perfect human being.

Nowadays, with a spurt in tall apartments and hectic work schedules, all these traditions are either passed on to maids, a permanent *kolam* is painted on the floor, or worse still, a sticker of a *kolam* is stuck on the floor . . . so much for not repeating *kolams* everyday! Different gadgets are also available to make instant rangolis. The art of *kolams* has sadly taken a back seat.



~

Balcony Days

Asish Krishna, *Executive—Production*

Manager, OUP Acad US



I was sprinting to my dreams and juggling two jobs at a time in a food joint and at a local newspaper company as an editor, which was not feasible at times. On a busy midday at work, I was assigned to publish a report on how people in EU countries were kept under lockdown and were fighting the dreadful COVID-19. Little did I realize that I would be in a similar environment in the coming days.

A week passed and the lockdown was announced. I wanted to make my way back to my hometown, but there was no transportation. I was engulfed in fear—fear of losing the jobs, fear of contracting the disease, and mainly a fear of losing my income. Hours passed, and the phone rang. “We’re closing the production from tomorrow and I will notify further,” said my manager, followed by my other manager from the food joint. Just like others around the



globe, I was confined to my 485 sq. ft. apartment, with a balcony overlooking Old Street Avenue. Days passed, and unknowingly, I spent most of the time in the balcony gazing at the empty roads, open drainages, children playing in their own balconies, cats meowing to be fed, and sometimes drones in the sky. My balcony sometimes felt bereft. Therefore, I wanted to do some gardening in the balcony. I had always wanted to harvest passion fruit as it's the only plant where you get both the flower and the fruit. Along with that, I cultivated soybeans, pomegranate, and coriander. This added up an additional duty in the balcony, to water the plants regularly. 'Clap your hands' was an initiative to boost the morale and salute frontline workers all around the globe. On a sunny spring afternoon, all of us gathered in our balconies and clanged cymbals for the next five minutes, and it was electrifying.

Passing the days, I could see the sprouts and tiny seedlings in the mud pot; I was delighted and excited for the budding stage. By eventide, I was having my cup of tea on the balcony when I spotted a greyish cat meowing to be fed. I remember noticing the same cat over the past few days on the street. Ergo, I wanted to give shelter and feed the cat. Now, I have a companion to overcome my loneliness. I fabricated a jogging path of 5 metres in my L-shaped balcony. One hundred and fifty to-and-fro rounds of the bespoke jogging path allowed me and my cat to cover a range of 2 kilometres. Day by day, it became habitual for us, and we were ecstatic and joyful.

Four weeks later, to illustrate that the nation is united in the fight against coronavirus, most of the citizens switched off all lights for nine minutes and lit up lamps or cellphone flashlights on their balconies. This moment, felt amid the darkness spread by this pandemic, inspired the thought that we must continuously progress towards light and hope. On a windy night, I stare at the glowing moon and the twinkling stars, waiting for the dark times to come to an end so that we can get back to our busy work life.

*As I gaze at the sky,
The heavy winds playing with my hair,
I close my eyes, I dream.
However near or far.
Just hold on to it, the sun will rise before it's too long.*

During these days, I have learned the value of time, and to practice self-restraint, to pursue a passion, to be nimble-witted, and to adapt to any environment. This catastrophe has confined and shackled 1.3 billion people in their homes and other places; during this time, the discipline and spirit of service exhibited was unprecedented. Amid the darkness, all the essential service staff and government officials stood at the front and displayed immense support and gratitude. India was extolled around the globe for its unity in the fight against the virus.

Stay at home. Stay safe!

~

கொரோனா காலங்கள் (Corona Days*)

கரோனா -- நீ
இறந்து விடு -- இல்லை
மறந்து விடு -- எங்கள்
மருத்துக்கு பலியாக வேண்டாம்!

உறவை அறுக்கும் நீ -- உனை
சுமந்த அன்னை
யாரோ...?

முக மூடியில் சுவாசிக்கிறேன்
அகத்தில் வாழ்கிறேன் -- உனக்கு
பகைவர் எவரோ...?

பூமியைச் சுற்றிப் பார்க்க
இடம் தருகிறேன் செயற்கைக் கோளில்
நீ சுற்ற வேண்டாம்!

இறைவன் படைத்த உலகத்தில்
அவன் உரிமையை -- நீ
பறிக்காதே!

மருத்துவருக்கு விடுப்பு கொடு!
ஒருவரையும் குழியில்
தள்ள வேண்டாம்!

மறு ஆய்வு செய்வாய் -- நீ
மருத்துவர்கள் ஆய்வு செய்முன்
கரைந்து விடு!

சோறு போடும் சுத்தமாய் இருந்தால்
வருமுன் காப்போம் நல்லதுதான் -- உன்
வருகைக்கு நன்றி!

கருவறையில் நீ முடிவெடு!
'மறுபடியும் பிறவியா' என்று -- உன்
உறவினரிடம் சொல் -- நாமும்
இறந்து விடுவோம் என்று!

.....

A poem on the coronavirus by Deivanayagam, WKD & Peter Lang.

Sketch by Jayakumar VS, Artwork Team





Herbert Samuel and his friends against the backdrop of the Mahabalipuram Lighthouse

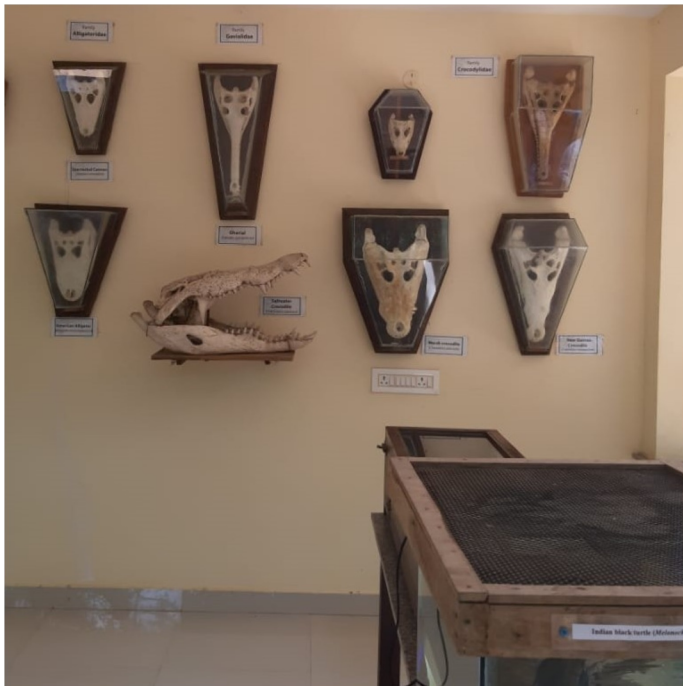
Mahabalipuram: Memories of a Trip before COVID

Herbert Samuel, WK-D, Project Manager ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

As per our plan, on 30 November 2019, Anitha, Ajitha, Herbert, John Britto, Mehar, and Vinod from the PL-Team gathered in our office campus at 10 am and started our journey to Mamallapuram (aka Mahabalipuram). The weather was so nice on that day with some breeze and a light drizzle. On our way, we

enjoyed the beauty of the coastal area alongside the East Coast Road (or ECR, as it is famously known).

On the way, we visited the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust & Centre for Herpetology. It is a reptile zoo with different breeds of crocodiles, Komodo dragons, and various lizards and snakes. In there, we were struck with wonder at





the size of the crocodiles. The Nile crocodile gave us goosebumps as it jumped into the water and splashed water all over us. That gave us a shock for a minute, and laughter from the people around us!

While we were roaming around the park, we found a small crowd of people. With curiosity we went there and saw an officer holding a big rock snake in his hands and speaking to the crowd. He explained about the crocodile bank's history and behaviours of the reptiles. He briefed us about the most venomous and non-venomous snakes living around Chennai and about identifying the snakes by their body colour, size, and pattern. Very importantly, he explained about the first aid for a person who has been bitten by a snake. All the children, however, had eyes only for the rock snake, which wound around the officer's hands and neck. Just as we finished our sightseeing, it started raining. We jumped into the car and drove towards the 2,000-year-old town of Mamallapuram.

First, we were eager to see the Shore Temple. We enjoyed the slight drizzle and sea breeze on the way there. We were awestruck by the architecture of the 1,300-year-old temple of Lord Shiva, which was built with blocks of granite. For a while, each of us was lost in our imaginations, wondering about how this temple was built. We went around the temple and took some photos. Next, we moved to the Pancha Rathas (Five Chariots), which is a monolithic Indian rock-cut architecture. It was carved 1,400 years ago during the reign of King Narasimhavarman I. We gazed at the monument complex, carved over a single,



long stone of granite, and admired the architecture of ancient India. Afterwards, we went to the Olakkanesvara Temple, perched on the rock above the Mahishasuramardini Cave Temple. In there, we had some fun with the monkeys which were roaming around.

On the way back home, we had our lunch at Hotel Grand Karaikudi in ECR. By nearly 4.30 pm, we reached the office and shared all our fun experiences with our colleagues for some time. By the end of the day, we went to each of our homes with sweet, unforgettable memories. That day, we had a weird thing happen to us. All along the trip, there was heavy rain, but only when we were in our car. That was unforgettable. This trip was very fun and relaxing, and it was refreshing to take ourselves away from the day-to-day busy life.

K. V. Raghavendra, a.k.a. Raghu

Written by Krishnaa Lakshmanan,

Books Copy Editing Team



Raghavendra lives in Alwarthirunagar, Chennai, and though he likes that it is a well-connected area, it takes him 1.5 hours to travel to the office. Working from home, however, has changed that, and he is spending the extra time dancing with his son! His parents inspire him the most. “In the eventuality of rebirth, not having the same parents, brother, wife and son is something I am scared of,” he says, when asked what his biggest irrational fear is. He says that his happiest memory was when he saw his newborn son.



Raghu’s claim to fame: “When I fail or get put down, I come back with extra vigor.” He likes that he has the ability to laugh at himself, but he admits to being unable to control his anger at times. He would love to have the superpower of detecting lies. His pet peeves are being lied to, put-downs, and when someone doesn’t keep their word. Raghu says that he is an open book, but here are a couple of things no one at Newgen knows about him: As a kid, he wanted to

enroll in the Indian Army as a commissioned officer. And he was talkative and mischievous in school. He says, “I never finished my homework from class I to XII. I was punished in several ways at school and had the reputation of not crying even once for any of those punishments. I was known as someone who couldn’t cry, which was not true. I was just adamant.” Learning a new skill, going on a long family vacation, and learning the art of mindfulness are the top items on Raghu’s bucket list. He loves unwinding by going out with his wife and his son. If he didn’t have to sleep at all, “I would spend that time with my son and wife,” he says. If time and money weren’t an issue, he would like to pursue acting in stage dramas.

Raghu would love to live in the movie universe of Doctor Strange. He likes watching films in theatres, and his favorite genre is the thriller. One movie he refuses to watch is *The Revenant*. He is quite proud of his collection of books, and

the best book he has read is *Man’s Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl. If a movie were to be made on his life, Raghu wants Rowan Atkinson (the talented Mr. Bean) to play his role. People usually come to Raghu for help with savings and investments. He is usually early, and he can give a 40-minute presentation on habits, with absolutely no prior preparation. The first thing he notices about people is their body language. Something he thinks everyone should do at least once in their lives is to donate and help feed a hungry family.



Raghu says, “Young and poor girls are prone to abuse, and our society is still unsafe for women. We should do something about it. But with higher intellect and stronger mind, time has come for women to lead from the front.”

If he had to change his name, it would be Bhagiratha (a mythological character who brought River Ganges to Earth). “When someone carries out a herculean task unflinchingly, he is believed to have Bhagiratha’s qualities,” he says. “A decade ago, Jose used to call me by this name for my tenacious nature!” When asked about the nicest compliment he has received, Raghu says, “We were in a conference at Melbourne, and our president asked me to go on stage on his behalf and say a few words. That has been the nicest compliment so far.”

~

Lockdown Stories

Vicki Ammundsen, *Director, Trust Law Ltd*



I thought that I would share my New Zealand experience of lockdown. I share the care of a special needs boy and lockdown meant that I could not see him, which was very hard for him. To address this I started a Zoom story time at 7 pm each night. Other children have joined, and although we are out of lockdown now in New Zealand, I have continued story time as the program we started has so far to go. We started off with pictures and videos of the planets in the solar system, stars and galaxies and now we are working our way through the periodic table and looking at fun science experiments. We also do reading and riddles (the 8-year-old members love these!).

Ashok Lakshmichandran

Written by Krishnaa Lakshmanan,

Books Copy Editing Team



Ashok is the founder and CEO of Futurenet Technologies (India) Pvt Ltd, which provides IT-related services to Newgen. Born and raised in Chennai, he considers himself a proper Chennaiite. “I enjoyed growing up in Chennai, especially as a student traveling in Pallavan Transport, which was real fun with friends.” Ashok is happily married to Raji, who loves



gardening and is an excellent cook. His daughter, Harini, is graduating this year, and she will be going to the US for her higher education.

“I got a reference to meet Prabhakar way back in 1998, followed by an email hosting order. Newgen’s first email domain, newgenimaging.com, was created and hosted by us,” Ashok recalls. “We have been fortunate to partner and grow with Newgen. We were able to co-create much open-source innovative

architecture to optimize cost versus performance. Newgen's operation is highly mission-critical and has a high demand for the availability of IT resources. This has made us evolve as a reliable support service provider." He says that there have been several interesting experiences in his line of work. "Specifically and recently, there was a sense of satisfaction when we worked as a team to enable everyone to work from home during Lockdown 1.0." The photo of his team (*below*) was taken in March 2020 when he and his team made work from home possible for Newgen staff.

Ashok's interests range from cricket to reading books on metaphysics. He also has a long-pending desire to visit Rishikesh. If he won the lottery, he would first pay the tax to the government and then split the money toward various social causes. Rajinikanth and Jyothika are his favorite movie stars, and if a movie on his life were to be made, he would like Vijay Sethupathi to play his role. Ashok is most inspired by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and his humility. One life-altering experience that Ashok recalls is from 2013: "I took the guidance of Maran to



Clockwise from the top left: Ashok with the Ambassador of Qatar, his team at Newgen, in his favorite attire, and with his wife and daughter.

change my lifestyle, which resulted in shedding over 15 kg. Now my entire family has moved to this new lifestyle.”

The coolest thing Ashok is working on right now is blogging. If he could have one superpower, it would be the ability to fly. When asked about his biggest irrational fear, he says, “Knowing fully well that we have no control over external changes, I still fear the same.” Ashok is a first-generation entrepreneur, and he also has a secret talent of writing short stories. He loves wearing dhoti and cotton kurta “simply because it suits our climate and is very comfortable.”

Ashok’s claim to fame is when in 2019 he was the chairman of the Infotech Software Dealers Association and organized an international event in Qatar for 120 business owners. He tries to be on time, and is usually early. People come to him for help with money and advice on career planning. Many leaders have impressed Ashok: “In science and technology, Dr APJ; in business, Jamshedji Tata; in management, Jack Welch; and in marketing, Philip Kotler.” The art of living is something Ashok likes doing the old-fashioned way, and he relaxes by reading books and meditating. Robin Sharma’s *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari* is the best book he has read. The most heartwarming thing he has seen is a video of a rat chasing a snake when it tried to eat her baby. If Ashok had to give a 40-minute presentation without any preparation, it would be one about technology, people, and ways to live well. The first thing he notices about people is their body language, and he doesn’t get the point of the obsession with nightlife. If there were a fire in his house (God forbid!) and all his loved ones were safe, he would save the most important books from his collections. When asked what he would like to be called if he had to change his name, he





says, “Doesn’t matter; it can be anything.”

Setting up a school that helps others manage stress (“After I achieve it myself first,” he adds) and pursuing studies in Jainism are the top items on Ashok’s bucket list. If time and money weren’t an issue, he would like to set up a factory that

innovates new things to solve simple day-to-day issues. If he didn’t have to sleep at all, he would spend the extra time reading and finding ways to discover and better himself. The nicest personal compliment he has received: “When everyone (Rotarians, teachers, and parents) complimented me for completing a 10,000 sq. ft. school building that our Rotary Club built and donated to a government school.” On the official side of things: “When I heard the remark that we are like corona warriors, supporting our customers during the pandemic.”

International Yoga Day

Sreekarthikeyan’s son

Kalyan doing a King Cobra
(*Poorna Bhujangasana*) pose
on International Yoga Day,
June 21, 2020.

Sreekarthikeyan is a senior
executive in the R&D team.



K. Banu

Written by Krishnaa Lakshmanan,

Books Copy Editing Team



Banu believes that skills blended with genuineness and hard work will earn name and fame. She was born and brought up in the Neyveli township, a calm place



with a lush green canopy, and initially the honking of trains day and night used to keep her awake in her Villivakkam apartment in north Chennai. “However, as the days grew, this honking became a lullaby,” she says.

Marina Beach makes Chennai her favorite place. “This city embraces everyone, the rich and the poor, with its warmth. The station road shops in Villivakkam and Ranganathan Street lure me into buying *jhumkas* (bell-shaped earrings like the one she's wearing) and earrings, which I am

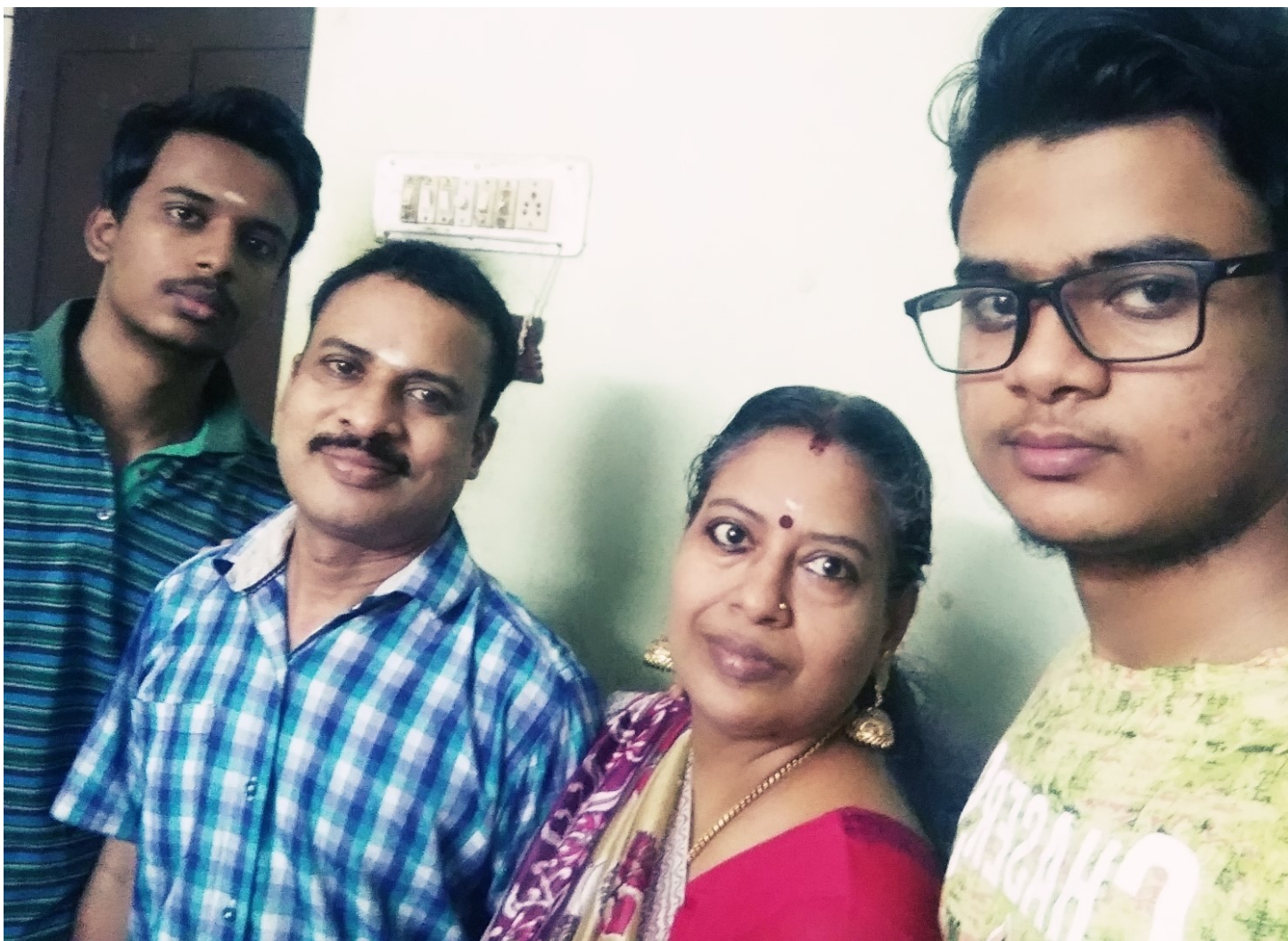
crazy about. The libraries in this city are always amazing, with their variety and volume. There's so much enchanting about this city, but equally frustrating is the condition of the drainage systems and roads. One thing that I miss here as against the Neyveli quarters we lived in is the green trees, chirping of birds, squeaking of squirrels, and hooting of owls. I feel sick of my apartment. I wish I had a bungalow amid trees and flowering plants."

Right now, Banu is trying to prepare some new dishes (from YouTube videos) for her sons, although she's not a person who loves "exploring" cooking. She is most inspired by her mom, "who shouldered the responsibility of the family single-handedly, without any grudges, upon the demise of my dad when my brother and I were at school. She used to be cool and calm despite adverse happenings, and that magic still evades me. She had an easy way of mingling with friends, relatives, and neighbors and winning their hearts."

If she could have one superpower, Banu would like to attain a heavenly healing power that can cure all illnesses and pains.

Her biggest irrational fear is being alone in the house, especially during the night. "I've never stayed alone at home," she says. Being a confident, bold, and humanitarian person is the most favorite quality of hers, while she criticizes her own tendency of being straightforward and striving for perfection as troublesome. Self-centered people who take credit for other people's work and dishonest people who blame others for their follies are her pet peeves. "I can't stand deceitful people," she says.

When asked what she is most proud of, Banu is humble in replying, "I don't feel proud of anything as I believe that everything is because of God's grace. Anything good done by me is because of God's blessings, including the desire to worship Him: *avan arulale avan thaal vanangi* [By his grace, I bow at His feet]." Her happiest memory: "The moment in the operation theatre when the doctor told



me that I have given birth to a baby—that feeling is unexplainable!”

What many at Newgen might not know about Banu is that she has written poems and stories during her college days and been a part of a “Tamil Mandram.” She is also an all-India first-rank holder in Plastics Processing Technology—“a PG course in which I did not pursue my career at all!”

Agra is the farthest place she has ever been from home, and she points out that she has not yet visited all the states in India. Visiting foreign countries, learning a musical instrument, and publishing a practical guide on copy editing are the top 3 items on her bucket list.

Banu recharges by reading books and magazines and listening to melodious songs. “Watching television or browsing is not my cup of tea,” she says. “I love

the Tamil novel *Veera Yugha Nayagan Vel Paari* penned by Venkatesan. When I feel down, reading about Paari shifts me into a different world altogether where I become dumbfound at the humanitarian nature of Paari. For me, the word ‘Paari’ symbolizes unconditional love toward all creations in this world. There is *no* preaching in this novel, but there are many lessons to learn the natural way.”

“On the official front, there has been appreciation from many customers,” says Banu. “The appreciation from Maki Watanabe of Thomson Reuters (Australia) for being authentic, energetic, and dedicated was a nice compliment.

On the personal front, I’ve received compliments from my relatives and team members for being a moral source of support. ‘We can share anything with you without fear of being judged,’ they’ve said to me. People derive solace and comfort from me when they express their problems. A few words of affection and more words of motivation is what they look for.”

If she didn’t have to sleep at all, Banu would be reading Tamil stories the whole time. “However, I am famous (or rather ‘infamous’) for my sleeping. Therefore, I wouldn’t compromise sleep for anything!” She would like to pursue gardening over a large area if she had the time. A good cup of coffee, teasing her sons, and listening to Sudha Ragunathan’s Kannan Songs series are some small things that make her day better. Horror movies are not for her, but romance, humor, family dramas, and women-centric themes are her favorite genres.

If she could save one thing from her house, it would be the photo albums of her kids. “I want to show those to my grandchildren and spin many reels of the nostalgic stories of my sons to my grandchildren. I love seeing my sons as babies with those charming and naughty smiles.” If she had to change her name, she would love to be called “Varshini,” the rain goddess.

Banu does not understand the big deal about social media or gaming. “I am shocked at people playing games throughout the night. I don’t think I can become

that attached to/obsessed with anything.” On a more serious note, Banu feels that people need to interact with people with mental challenges without any stigma, bias, or judgment, and must help them.

On women’s place in today’s society, Banu has this to say:

“Women have broken gender stereotypes and evolved to a great extent in this modern era, but there is a long way to go for women in certain sectors of the society. I am not a feminist, as I believe that there is some ‘woman’ in every man and some ‘man’ in every woman, which is to be cherished and accepted *as is*.”

~

Nandavanam’s Journey during COVID Times

Written by Ujwala Vaidyanathan, *Books Copy Editing Team* ● ● ● ●

Nandavanam Center of Excellence for Children with Developmental Challenges is a center dedicated to the healing and education of children with developmental challenges and learning difficulties. It promotes humane and traditional practices in the field of rehabilitation for people with special needs. With the COVID-19 pandemic playing havoc in the education system, Nandavanam too faced challenges in its pursuit of healing and educating children with special needs. Following are some views of the staff on how they are dealing with the crisis.

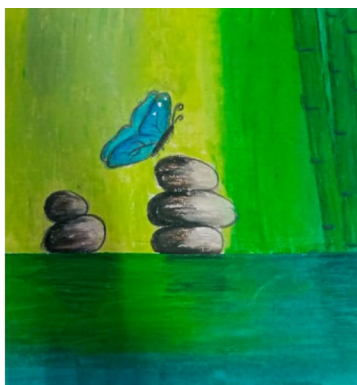
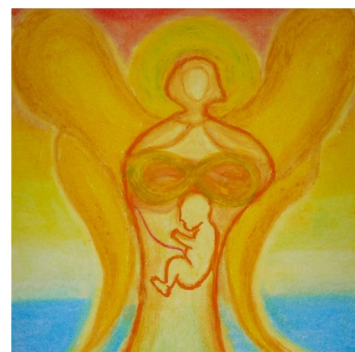
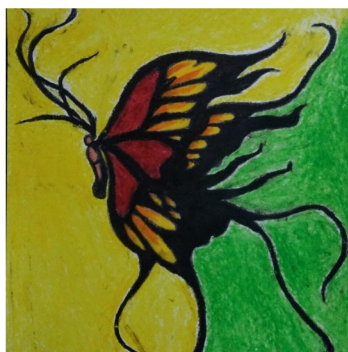
Arthi Srinivasan, Teacher, Nandavanam Center for Learning

The journey of a teacher has been ever so exciting and full of surprises; a teacher improvises all the time. If there is no classroom, we teach under the tree or use

the parking space; if there is no blackboard, we use the floor for writing; if no playground is available, we use the road; if there is a dearth of notebooks and textbooks, we come up with some other innovative tool; and the list goes on. In all these improvisations, teachers and students are a constant. So, one can imagine the biggest surprise to us as teachers, who need to teach and conduct school without school, classrooms and children. This is the challenge and the gift of COVID-19 pandemic to the teachers. The above was the dilemma for Nandavanam Center for Learning (NCL), which provides full-time schooling for children with learning disabilities and after-school support to underprivileged children from nearby communities. As a teacher, I was forced to look for answers to many fundamental questions: One was, is it possible to run a school virtually? Can we really provide any value addition with virtual schooling? However, the most important question was, is it really possible to provide a sense of normalcy to children amidst this pandemic? The answer to the first question is a yes. The school analysed its vision and priorities and came up with questions like, what does school mean to a child in the real sense? Is it merely a place for learning or is it much more? What does learning entitle? Can it be done remotely? How will the children embrace technology? It is in the face of adversity that I realized the significance of having core values for the school and a culture that nourishes them. Fortunately for me, starting from teachers' development to conducting of lessons to multiple other issues, everything is aligned to our core values, which is child-centric education, and our strength lies in an individualized plan catering to each child's needs. The child feels



empowered at NCL, which is a place where they are accepted for both their strengths and weaknesses and are shown love and care and they flourish in a non-judgemental space. The challenge was to translate the same into a virtual classroom without losing the essence. To translate the above, there were other basic logistical issues like the availability of devices and Internet bandwidth to connect with children remotely. This proved to be a major stumbling block as most of our children are from economically underprivileged backgrounds. After many rounds of discussion with parents and teachers and hours of planning and preparation, we rolled out our online school program for our regular school children and educational support program for our after-school program children.



As a teacher, it was extremely challenging to navigate through many virtual platforms from phone to tablet to the desktop. The two weeks before the start of the program I felt like I was working in a call center providing technical support for Zoom and Google Classroom. The most difficult part was that the parents themselves are not educated enough to understand basic technology. The next logistical question was how to plan lessons and impart it across virtual space. If ours had been a traditional school of “chalk and talk” it would have been a breeze, but as a non-conservative school with a multi-sensory approach to education, it was extremely challenging. From the learning objectives to the structure of the program to the timetable of every individual child’s lessons, everything had to be vigilantly observed and planned to the smallest detail. On the first day, in spite of hours of meticulous planning, there were some setbacks during the first hour of

school, and it also brought the realization that the virtual classroom does not come close to the actual interaction in a physical classroom. Heartbroken after the experience of the first day, I personally realized the significance of core values because all I had to do was remind myself of that, even if it meant going to each



child's home virtually to help realize their potential and overcome their weakness. For the next few days I looked at the whole experience from a different perspective and in the process realized many wonders of technology, though it is merely a tool. And the role of a tool has always been neutral, which is to make core more efficient.

Today, after more than a month of virtual schooling, our Zoom sessions are filled with children's joyful laughter, bantering and lots of learning. Still, many challenges continue, with many more to come, but that's what makes teaching exciting and full of surprises.

Ragavan R., Physiotherapist, Nandavanam Healing Center

At the very beginning of this coronavirus crisis, everything was unpredictable and we felt quite blank. There was no serious tension about the situation as there was less intensity of the disease in our inner circles. I never expected it to reach this level of seriousness.

The initial lockdown period coincided with summer holidays for children so we expected all would be fine before kids came back from the holidays. But that was not to be. So as the lockdown extended, we continued our staff enrichment program on Thursdays through Zoom video conferences. It was actually bliss as

we could connect with our colleagues at least once a week.



I had a lot of time for revising and researching interventions for improving my efficiency as a physiotherapist by reading many articles. This was also very helpful to develop myself. Having decided to do something meaningful for the society, my friends and I raised funds for donating food to homeless people during this hour of crisis. We spent some quality time

cooking, packing and providing food to the needy and homeless people for 10 consecutive days.

Later on, I started developing my skills in art-related activities. I spent some time reading some of the lectures from the Rudolf Steiner archives. We shared our art and craft creations by reviewing them on Saturdays through our Nandavanam WhatsApp group. It was a very nice experience as we were able to appreciate each other's talents. In the month of June, as the situation worsened, we decided to initiate our virtual education and rehabilitation by connecting with the parents of our students. Initially I was skeptical because as a physiotherapist, this was a completely new methodology for my practice. After the demo session, it felt very satisfying to see our students through video calls after a long time. Now I am conducting online sessions, which are comparatively less effective than working in-person directly with the children; but in this situation, I think it is best to hang in there with the optimism that something is always better than nothing. After 2 months of an unscheduled and uncoordinated lifestyle, I was finally able to get back to a daily routine. Personally, this lockdown has created many mental distractions.

Apart from having a opportune time, there is a lot of chaos in all aspects. Every day brings a new challenge. Mental health has become a major concern, which, added to the other problems in this world, is quite disturbing. But with the strategy of *Ho'oponopono* (a Hawaiian practice of reconciliation and forgiveness), I try not to let my light dim under any circumstance. Let us all believe in the course of nature and pray for all crises to end as soon as possible.

Nandhini E., Teacher, Nandavanam Healing Center

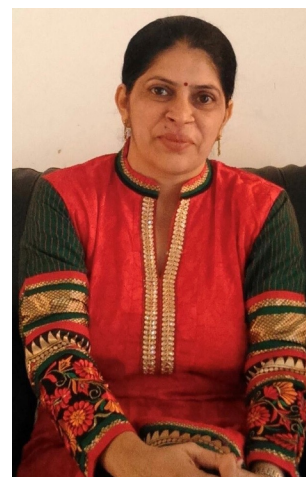
On the first day of lockdown I was happy because I thought it would be a welcome break to take rest. After one week I began feeling very lazy because of no work and I started missing the school and children. I was wondering what I could

do during this lockdown, and after a few days I started doing craftwork. I felt like my creativity got a kick start and began to improve gradually. Finally, we are all back to normal routine work now. We restarted our staff enrichment program and reading books as a part of it was refreshing. We have now started online classes for students. I am having a myriad of emotions: sometimes I am happy, sometimes amused and some other times depressed—all mixed emotions. Overall we are giving our best to the children, and personally, I am learning a lot of new skills.



Usha Rajaram, Volunteer, Nandavanam Center for Learning

To be very honest, I am grateful for what I have been blessed with and I realize that I am facing only a partial brunt of the devastation caused. Only when I talk and listen to a diverse group of people am I able to empathize and understand the actual impact on our daily lives. I have tried to make the best of this time that I have on my hands. I have made efforts to become more tech-savvy and less dependent on my son. This pandemic has brought people from all walks of life under one umbrella, collaborating and fraternizing, in a unified effort to overcome this hurdle. I've always taught my students that nothing is impossible and I truly believe it's only a matter of time before we find a solution to this virus too.



Anna Richard, Teacher, Nandavanam Center for Learning

My experience with COVID-19 has been very difficult. I was 8 years old when my family came to Chennai as refugees from Burma. It was a very traumatic phase of my life, but since I was only a child I didn't experience it much. But today at 63, I am



going through this situation, which is quite distressing. It's very painful and exhausting; my day starts with a prayer and ends with a prayer for my near and dear ones.

~

பூமித் தாய்* (Mother Earth*)

Loganayagi, Senior Executive - XML, ELT

உன்னை அவளால்...

கரங்களை நீட்டி அழைக்க முடியாது...

அரவணைத்து முத்தமிட முடியாது...

மடிமீது ஏந்தி கொஞ்சி விளையாட முடியாது...

பசியின் போது உணவிட முடியாது...

முடியாது என்பதால் அவள் முடமில்லை!!!

காற்றினால் ஸ்பரிசம் தொடுவாள்...

மழையினால் கட்டி தழுவுவாள்...

கண்டுகளிக்க, கொண்டு விளையாட...

தன் எழில்மிகு இயற்கையை தந்திடுவாள்!!!

அன்று உனக்காக எல்லாம் படைத்தவள்!!!

இன்று அவள் நலமாய் இல்லை!!!

நீ மட்டுமே அவளின் பிள்ளை
என்று நினைத்து விட்டாயோ???

அன்று உனக்காக எல்லாம் படைத்தவள்!!!
இன்று அவள் நலமாய் இல்லை!!!

நீ மட்டுமே அவளின் பிள்ளை
என்று நினைத்து விட்டாயோ???

ஆறு முதல் கடல் வரை...
மண் முதல் மலை வரை...
புல் முதல் மரம் வரை...
எறும்பு முதல் யானை வரை...
அழித்துக் கொண்டு இருக்கிறாய்...
அறிந்தும் அறியாமலும்!!!

தீக்குழம்புகளைப் புதைத்து...

தன்னை வருத்தி...

உனக்காக பசுமையைப் பரிசளித்தவள்!!!

இன்று அந்தப் பசுமையை
இழந்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறாள்!!!

சற்று சிந்தனை செய்...

அவளின் கருணை
கோபமாக மாறினால்????!!!

நாம் இல்லாமலே போவோம்...

நாம் என்றால் நாம் அல்ல...

நம் அடுத்த தலைமுறைகள்!!!

விழித்துக் கொள்வோம்!!!

புதிதாய் கூட ஏதும் செய்தல் வேண்டாம்...

இருப்பதை அழித்து தொலைத்து

விடாமல் இருத்தலே போதுமானது!!!

.....

*The poem is an earnest plea to save and preserve Mother Earth and to be mindful and decisive about protecting the planet.



Feedback for the Apr 2020 issue



It [*Reflections*] provides an interesting reading. But the real delight is that it binds the reader with the Newgen family. The issue is really nicely done. ~ Justice Suhrid Dave, *author, Thomson Reuters – India*

I enjoyed reading it. Lots of talent there. Was good to see the photos of the team. Totally enjoyed all the familiar sights – I am a Chennai girl. All the best and keep the creativity flowing! ~ Reshma Korah, *Wolters Kluwer*

This is brilliant – a very impressive publication! I think it great that your company allows you to work on and share – long may you carry on!

Congratulations on the publication :) ~ Nick Myall, *Oxford University Press*



REFLECTIONS
April 2020

Be virtual ■ Be agile ■ Be well

We help our clients create, manage, and deliver content, and help their customers find it

It was wonderful to find solidarity in reading others' thoughts on the current pandemic situation. I enjoyed the stories from visitors to Chennai, in particular. It reminded me of my past visits, which are filled with cherished memories of the activity of Marina Beach and, of course, shopping with Lydia! ~ Laura Leinbach, Production Manager, *Wolters Kluwer*

It was wonderful to read the articles and poetry

– and to see the photographs. Working virtually across global locations (and during a pandemic) can stymie that human connection, but this magazine recentered the voices making up Newgen in a full and brilliant manner. It allowed me a brief window into my colleagues’ lives and their brilliant minds. I am so grateful for that. Thank you. ~ Meagan Simpson, Acquisitions Editor, *Peter Lang*

I like this in-house magazine very much specially the chapter ‘Visit to Chennai’ and ‘Working from home’. Arnaud’s reflections about Chennai are also very interesting. The same for the Spotlight from Kondappan Sathiaselvan, copy editing manager from the Peter Lang Team.

And, I like very much the photos with Murali, Arnaud, Bianca and Lucy! An insightful and authentic update of recent developments, keeping stakeholders well-informed. A timely publication in these difficult moments. I look forward to reading the next issue! ~ Regina Böhm-Korff, Sales Manager Category Management, *Peter Lang*

Thank you! This is such a lovely magazine. A great idea. Great internal comms, and good external reach to your clients as well. Makes me long for a trip back to Chennai! ~ Lucy Melville, Publishing Director, *Peter Lang*

As usual, a very interesting read – lovely photos. Particularly enjoyed Asha’s piece and seeing her lovely boys! ~ Emma Lonie, Academic Prepress Supplier Manager, *Oxford University Press*

I really appreciate it. Give all my regards to Lydia, who has done a great job besides her normal work. I will think about some nice comments for the next issue. Maybe one of our highlight books about gender studies . . . Best wishes from Bern. ~ Bianca Matzek, *Peter Lang*

Surviving

Bibi Christa Xavier, *Books Copy Editing Team* ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, “When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.” Many of us reading this perhaps have literally and figuratively in the past hundred days or so passed through moments of gnawing fear, felt the blur in the narrow line of sanity as we churned within the confines of our homes, literally the rope-slipping, the heart-skipping-a-beat experience.

Every emotion that humanity has gone through in its many years of the history of evolution has been experienced by the homo digitalis now keying away 24/7 on the World Wide Web. Since horror struck at Wuhan, death in the thousands has been a daily tale, scenes of mass burial grounds aired on television channels

stretching as well-paved farmlands where the named became the nameless, to scenes of lone bodies thrown away in fear. Have we not wondered, did we dare to wonder, or are those thoughts lurking within our beings – for us or for our own?

In such moments of heavy breathing or when our breathing heart seems heavily leaden, we need to breathe out – breathe out those heart-wrenching thoughts, breathe out those images, those images of a thousand people nameless, faceless in their whole body suits, and



breathe in a breath of fresh air from your favourite window, where the sky you see is still blue, from where you see that the leaves are still green swaying in the wind and the flowers still bloom so gracefully. Know that the world outside is still a beautiful world waiting for you. Breathing consciously calms your mind and body. Consciously breathe!

An attitude of gratitude will make us realize that we have been spared to be reading this from the comfort of our chairs. In moments of extreme frustration, sit back for a moment with gratitude for your own breathing self, stretch down and up to a dozen burpees or bow down and stretch back in gratitude to the sun in *surya namaskar* (sun salutations). Pick up the pencil and the colour pencils you left behind in your school days and copy sketch images to soothe your brain. Plant a few grains from your kitchen shelf and watch it grow, as it becomes your own meal after a week or so. An attitude of gratitude will never be enough.

This is where we tie the knot on the rope of our life that seems to slip. Hang on the knot you have strengthened, for our blue world needs our beautiful smiles.

~

Top 10 Tips to Work from Home



- ▶ Plan your working hours. Set a work schedule and stick to it. Create a *To Do* list of your tasks for the day and check them off as you complete them.
- ▶ Dress professionally but comfortably during your working hours.
- ▶ Hydrate. Keep a bottle of water handy. Take a short break every hour and stretch your legs.

- ▶ Log in to meetings on time and finish meetings a few minutes early. Inform your family members of important meetings or calls so you are left alone.
- ▶ Have a designated work space and decorate it thoughtfully. Use a chair that supports your back. Or sit on the floor with your back against a wall and your screen propped up to eye level. Avoid working while sitting or lying down on the bed.
- ▶ Keep the monitor at eye level and your feet flat on the floor. Don't lean in or crouch or strain your neck to see the screen. Use wooden blocks, bricks covered in paper, or heavy books to adjust the height. Set your computer screen to optimal lighting conditions. Remember that the screen is a light source and looking directly at a light source will lead to eye problems.
- ▶ Attend or make calls when on your feet. Walk around when you're on the phone.
- ▶ Spend a few minutes everyday doing simple exercises (yoga, stretching, walking) or meditation, and at least an hour everyday outdoors in the sun. Carve out time for hobbies/interests and pursue them with great passion.
- ▶ Have your meals away from the computer, preferably with someone. Have at least one meal with your family, play group games, participate in

activities like cooking, gardening, household chores, workouts.

- ▶ Create simple daily routines ("Me-Time"; listen to music, call a friend, read a book, walk on the terrace, 4-7-8 breathing, tea with your spouse) for yourself. Use it to ground yourself and find inner peace on a busy day.



~