

## KB Ugadi Celebrations, May 2007 (Part 2)

### Day 2



#### *Hard as rock*

By the time I arrived at the hall next morning, half-groggy, the sound of pooja mantra was reverberating round the room. The Royal Priest from Mysore Palace Shri Raghavan was performing pooja as per Karnataka tradition, his *askhalita* Sanskrit rendering transformed me into another world. After that any breakfast would taste good, whatever the consistency of *idli* or *vada*! Then it was time for the main function starting with a beautifully evocative invocation number sung by Smt Asha Bagevadi: *Shilegalu sangeetava haadutive* (stone sculptures are singing).



The president of KB formally invited the members and the guests of the day on the podium. The Mayor Stuart Drummond in turn welcomed us to 'his' town explaining the rich tradition and explaining why the Hartlepudlians got the (sometimes derogatory)

nickname as "monkey hangers". The only survivor of a shipwrecked French ship during Napoleonic wars was a monkey in French uniform. Suspected as a French spy, he was interrogated by the locals and on getting no satisfactory answers convicted him as a spy and hanged him! Who better to tell this story than the mayor (no stranger to controversy) who was H' Angus and a monkey mascot in his previous *avatar*!



(Link:

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/mayorquestion/story/0,,1470604,00.html>)

#### *Mirji vs Veerappan*

It was hair-raising to hear from the 'horse's mouth' the spine-chilling story of the demise of the notorious 'brigand' and murderer Veerappan, who killed his own child like silencing a dog! IGP Mirji, who happened to be in UK came to the meeting as an invited guest and shared his experience. It was electrifying to shake hands with the 'nemesis of Veerappan'. A modern *Purandara Dasa* will sing: "ಅಮ್ಮ, ವೀರಪ್ಪನ ಕರೆಯದಿರೆ" instead of *gumma*!



IGP Mirji (centre) with KB members

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#### *Variety entertainment*

Dance and music that followed was a treat to eyes and ears. Vidya Shamasundar, Mona Lisa and Sujata enthralled us with their accomplished dances. One didn't need to crack Da Vinci code to enjoy Mona Lisa, a dancer from Kolkatta, as she was not just smiling, but also dancing and showing many emotions from 'nava rasa'.

#### AGM – “dharmakshetre, kurukshetre”

Lunch was followed by the Annual General Meeting, which lived up to its expectation: controversy, disagreement and confusion! As in the epic holy battle ground *Kurukshetra*, the battle lines were drawn and the debate started. And went on too long, according to some of the members. But ours is a registered charity with paid membership. We have a constitution and got to have an AGM with members' input and the office-bearers should be the guardians and implementers of the rules. Therein lays the dispute, according to those generating heat. Suffice it to say, put to dust the meeting ended in the usual way, with the two teams looking forward to the minutes of the next meeting where the Phoenix will rise again from the ashes! Lord Krishna said: *Sambhavami yuge yuge!*

#### *Entertainment by KB team*

Now it was time for the young and old of the *Balaga* to entertain us with songs, dance and drama. The youngest was 3 years old, and the oldest? It is better left without a mention! The variety of talent in the group was impressive –vocal and instrumental (keyboard, electric guitar, saxophone

and piano). Some of the dances were extra-ordinary.



Vidya Shyamsundar

Karuna did a splendid job as a compère not withstanding the audience at the back talking and making noise! The invited Reading group also participated in the programme, singing, joining the debate and dancing (disco).

#### The drama: *Kalaya namaha* or मैकाय तस्मै नमः !

Once again, as in the previous meetings, the playwright Jaya Puranik and her team made us laugh all the way to the end of time (*kaala*).based on events from her own experiences it touched a chord in every NHS junior doctor's heart. I savoured many interesting vignettes: an immigrant doctor trying to make the two ends meet (how can a single NHS mug serve two ends and two purposes?); India time stands still for the immigrants whereas the motherland is progressing fast and finally accepting that we are all pawns in this game of chess played by *Time* (*kaala*). It was enjoyable, but alas, despite the use of radio mikes, the sound system left room for improvement next time.

After dinner it was time to dance the night away. It was a successful conclusion for another KB meeting. I certainly enjoyed it.

Shrivatsa Desai  
June, 2007.