



SANGH MAIL

Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan

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Sangh Mail is a monthly publication showcasing the activities of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) for circulation to it's members and well-wishers.

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Vijayadashmi Celebrations

Shubham BalaGokulam, Cumbria & Aryabhat Shakha, Aylesbury

Shubham BalaGokulam (Cumbria) celebrated Dussehra Utsav with Samuhik (collective) Saraswathi Pooja performed by the children. The meaning of some of the rituals in the pooja was also explained. The event also had cultural programs, a dharmic quiz, various Khel and delicious Prasadam (food offerings) brought by the families.

For some families, who recently arrived in the UK from India, this event helped them understand how the BalaGokulam works and to get to know the wider Samaj (community). With the support from everyone, BG Cumbria has now been re-established as a weekly gathering.



Aryabhat shakha, Aylesbury celebrated Vijayadashmi Utsav on Oct 7th. West London Vibhag Sanghchalak Shri. Bharatiji Mistry attended. In his baoddhik, he talked about why the utsav is celebrated and the importance of the activities conducted in shakhas. The purpose of HSS(UK) and it's activities were also introduced to the attendees.

The children in Balgokulam performed a skit based on Ramayana, after which the kids got an opportunity to aim at Ravana effigy. This is called "Ravana Dahan", which symbolises the destruction of evil and represents the continual efforts needed to overcome the bad we come across in our everyday lives.



Vijayadashmi Celebrations

Kesari Parivar Shakha & Shiva Shakha, Birmingham

Kesari Parivar Shakha, Cheltenham celebrated their Vijayadashmi festival on 9th October 2022.

We started with Deep Prajvalan (candle lighting) to mark this auspicious occasion. This was followed by warm-ups, khels and a Yogchap pradarshan (performance). Finally, we had amrut vachan (inspiring messages), geet (motivational songs) and a very inspiring bauddhik session on the importance and significance of Vijayadashmi. The three pillars of Sanskar (values), Sewa (selfless service) and Sangathan (togetherness) were discussed. It was a great opportunity to celebrate this important occasion together and everyone went home highly motivated and energised.



On the special occasion of Vijayadashmi, our Shakha was renamed, Bhagawan Shiva is Adi Yogi meaning first Yogi and first Guru. He is also warrior purusha, known for his martial arts ability, which he gave to Bhagawan Parshuram, who passed it on as martial arts called Kalaripayatu. This gave way to all other forms of martial arts as we know it today. Thus, Shiva is a symbol of strength and a Guru, will be an inspiration to us all in our Shakha, ensuring we continue to grow and stay strong.

**Eklavya Shakha (Birmingham)
was renamed as
Shiva Shakha.**





Gurudwara Visit & Diwali Karyashala

Durga Shakha, Reading

GURUDWARA - THE RESIDENCE OF THE GURU

On 5th November 2022, Durga Shakha arranged a **Gurudwara visit on the occasion of Guru Nanak Jayanti**. The main purpose of this visit was to understand the Sikh faith, ethics, customs and traditions. The meaning of the word Gurudwara is 'the residence of the Guru'. The presence of the 'Guru Granth Sahib' gives the Gurudwara its religious status.

Around 55 people from Reading Nagar visited the holy place. We learned greeting people by saying 'Sat Sri Akal', meaning 'Truth is the name of God'. Everyone was offered langar (prasad) and had an opportunity to do Sewa (selfless service) by helping with the washing up afterward. Sikhism encourages Sewa to help the community.

DIYAS - THE ESSENCE OF DIWALI

To bring out the creativity of Sevikas and Kishoris, to celebrate the festival of light - DIWALI, the bauddhik team organised a karyashala on 21st October 2022.

Diwali is incomplete without the use of 'Diyas'. Diyas were, are and will remain, a significant part of the Diwali festival. They symbolise the supremacy of brightness over darkness. Every Sevika and Kishori decorated a clay diya with colours and glitter. It was an absolute pleasure for Durga Shakha for making this karyashala (workshop) a huge success.





Diwali Celebrations

Durga Shakha, Reading & Coventry

THE FIRST EVER READING DIWALI PARADE

was organised by an arts charity - the Kala Arts in association with Reading Council and the Arts council of England. Reading Nagar Swayamsevaks volunteered for various duties including manning the first aid station, marshalling, guiding the puppeteers, carrying the idols and supporting the lanterns.

The celebrations included cultural dances such as Kathak, Odissi and dandia performances by school children. This was followed by a parade through the town center with giant puppets of Sri Ram, Sita Mata, Jatayu bird as well Ganesh and Hanuman which were beautifully lit up. The procession was accompanied by Dhol players, music and children holding hundreds of lanterns with the public joining in the dancing and enjoying the carnival atmosphere.



Coventry Nagar held a Manoranjan event to celebrate Diwali on 28th October. A talent show was held, where participants aged 5 to 70 took part and showed various skills ranging from classical dance to how to solve a Rubix cube. Bhajans/Prarthana were recited in many different languages, highlighting how incredibly diverse Coventry Nagar is. The event helped young children to overcome their shyness in presenting their talent in front of the public.

Remembrance Day

Leamington Sanskar Parivar & Wellingborough Shakha



Leamington's Sanskar Parivaar Shakha took part in the remembrance day commemoration and were one of the official groups to lay a wreath at the war memorial. We remembered all the brave service personnel of WW1 and WW2 and also all the Indian soldiers who fought in the British Army in both wars.



Wellingborough Shakha remembered Hindu Soldiers from WW1 & WW2 at Broad Green in the presence of Pravasi Adhikari Shri Rajkamalji Patel who gave an excellent thought-provoking Baudhik in our Shakha, before going to the Epitaph.

They laid a wreath there and said a prayer for the departed soldiers. Also present was our Jyeshtha Swayamsevak Veteran, Retired Major Dr Balmukund Bhala, and other families of the shakha.



Coming together



Shiv Shakti Parivar & Bristol Parivar Shakha

Shiv Shakti Parivar Shakha was fortunate to have Bristol Parivar Shakha visit them for a joint Shakha. Loughborough University Hindu students also attended. It was a great energetic morning, meeting our sisters & brothers and playing Khel together. Planning is already underway for Leicester Nagar to replicate the courtesy in the new year.

Sanghatan Mein Shakti Hai!





Interfaith Week

Amersham & Newbury

On the occasion of World Peace Day, an organisation called Beyond Difference held a 'Peace in the park' event on 17th September. Beyond Difference works in the Chiltern and South Bucks area, in attempt to connect different faiths and beliefs, promoting harmony and understanding between the communities. One of the events held every year is an interfaith dialogue between various faiths including; Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam respectively.

This year the topic was 'How your religion teaches us, about actively working for peace?'. Amersham Shakha was invited for the second consecutive year and was given the opportunity to talk on the topic of 'How Hinduism works actively for peace'. This was a really exciting experience sharing the Hindu perspective amongst the wider community.



Bharati Shakha Newbury was invited to take part in Interfaith Week celebrations. Swayamsevaks and Sevikas decorated a corridor with posters on Hindu Dharma. A presentation on "What it means to be a Hindu?" was delivered for Year 8 students during their assembly. For the first time this year we were invited to participate in the Interfaith Panel, to represent Hindu Dharma, for a discussion on World Faiths. The other panelists included a Muslim, a Humanist, a Christian (Baptist and Church of England), and a Buddhist Monk. The hour-long event had an audience of students from Year 9 and Year 13, who asked some interesting questions at the end.

The discussions were conducted by our Karyakarta Shri Gautham Ji Kamath and were received well by all the students. All in all, it was a great experience for all Swayamsevaks and Sevikas, with all-around positive feedback.





Anniversary & Pilgrimage

Leamington Sanskar Parivar Shakha

SYDNI CENTRE, LEAMINGTON CELEBRATED IT'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY.

Leamington's Sanskar Parivaar Shakha showcased a display explaining the purpose of HSS (UK), along with Sewa booklets. We demonstrated the use of dumbbells, yogasanas, and laughter yoga. The audience was impressed by the confidence and participation of the children. Approximately 100 people attended. It was a great sampark (outreach) event!



UK PILGRIMAGE

Many of our Swayamsevaks, Sevikas, and their families set off on a holy 'pilgrimage' to three very special sites for Hindus in the UK.

It was a great pleasure to take darshan at ISCKON Bhaktivedanta Manor in Watford. We then proceeded to the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, it was amazing to see its beautiful architecture. Lastly we visited Shri Sanatan Hindu Mandir, with its amazing sculptures and murtis.

This allowed us to understand what it means to be a Hindu in UK. The trip also served as a whole Shakha Parivar Milan.



A peek in the past

Veer Abhimanyu Shakha, Croydon



Croydon Veer Abhimanyu Shakha invited various teachers from four different schools to take part in our Shikshak Vandan Divas. With an attendance of over 70 people, it was a fantastic event that developed good relationships with schools. It also gave an understanding of the importance of Saraswati Mata (Goddess of Learning) and Guru (Guide) in Hindu culture.

Following that, members of Croydon Parivar Shakha have done school workshops on Diwali and other important Hindu festivals. Some Sevikas, have also started Hindu clubs at their school with 15 attendees weekly.



As part of Raksha Bandhan outreach, Swayamsevaks and Sevikas, visited the elected Mayor of Croydon - Jason Perry, with hand made cards and flowers for the Mayor. We explained the significance of Raksha Bandhan, and the Mayor was pleased that we inculcate these values. His office tweeted about the festival and mentioned HSS Croydon. We visited the Croydon Fire brigade - to tie rakhis to several firemen and a firewoman.

Swayamsevak and Sevikas got a chance to climb aboard fire engines. We thanked them for their services to the community, and they appreciated our visit and festival message. Overall it enabled the Shakha Parivar to see the wider impact we can have beyond the weekly shakha.



Bonding with the team

Finchley & Northampton and Bedford



Finchley Nagar - Shakti and Pratap Shakha, received a warm welcome from Friern Barnet Ambulance Station (FBAS) during our visit to celebrate Raksha Bandhan. In this fifth year of celebrating Raksha Bandhan and showing gratitude to FBAS, Everyone enjoyed a talk about the challenges faced by Ambulance staff during the Covid pandemic. First responder Sophie said 'it is so nice to be appreciated by HSS(UK) in a spiritual manner. Also present were Cllr. Gaurang Lacchya and Harshaben Jani of HSS(UK).



A group of 12 consisting of all age groups, from Northampton and Bedford, decided to take the challenge of walking up Mount Snowdon in Wales. Unfortunately, the conditions got worse as we started our ascent. The rain increased and conditions became extremely foggy, limiting visibility. We all kept going battling the cold weather. 7 made it to the summit and 5 of the groups reached past three-quarters of the way up. This was an excellent effort by all. We had a tremendous team bonding, a sense of achievement and great appreciation for mother nature.



Schooling made flexible with Yog Club

Leamington Sanskar Parivar Shakha

From lack of support from teachers, to unavailable rooms, to lack of interest, and struggles with self-confidence: establishing the yoga club didn't come without its challenges. In fact, when I first pushed to start the club last year, it failed completely; with just one participant in my first session before my teacher told me that the room was no longer available. I then turned to a different teacher, who squeezed in a slot on Monday before lunchtime for me in the Drama Studio, where I ran 20-minute yoga sessions for Year 11. I am very happy that I did it! I continued the club this year, and it is now open to Years 10-13.

TEEN MEMBER LEADING TRADITIONAL YOGA CLUB IN SECONDARY SCHOOL UTILISING SHAKHA LEARNINGS

Namaste, my name is Priyanshi and I started a yoga club in my school in September 2021. My motivation for this was from SSV; the thought had been brewing in my mind to start a yoga club in school for a long time, but I never had the courage to pursue it! Then, one day, I decided that I was going to overcome my mental obstacles and just go for it. The aim of the yoga club was to teach people at my school the roots and intention of yoga, which has been westernised and commercialised a lot recently.

The club was structured to have a warm up, asanas, pranayama, and 5 minutes of relaxation at the end. I used proper Sanskrit terminology throughout, explaining the meaning and benefits of all of the exercises. Another aim for the yoga club was to provide a relaxing environment for people in my school, who often suffer from anxiety, backaches and burn out.



Some feedback given by participants:

- 'a calming and relaxing experience'
- 'it helped me focus on just being there in the moment'
- 'it was a great break from exam stress and lots of fun too!'
- 'helped me prepare for the rest of the day'
- 'my favourites were cobra pose because it was so good for my back, especially after the weeks of hunching over doing revision'



Year 11 Yoga
with Priyanshi

Mondays @ 1:15 - 1:35PM in the Drama Studio

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WE LOVE HEARING FROM YOU!

To help with the publication, here are few points to consider when submitting news items:

- Provide a summary - keep articles down to 100 words or less, highlighting the best bits.
- A picture tells a thousand words - select your best photos to go with your article.
If you have more photos, share a google link so we can pick the best ones.
- Don't forget to include your shakha name!

Send it to sanghmail@hssuk.org

