

HOLOCAUST

MEMORIAL DAY

Millions of people were murdered in the Holocaust under Nazi persecution.

This talk will tell stories of survivors.

Followed by a discussion on genocides in Cambodia, Darfur, Rwanda, Bosnia & of Kashmiri Hindus

MISSING GRANDPARENTS



SANGH MAIL

Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan

FEBRUARY 2023:

Remembering ...

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

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Holocaust Memorial Day



Remembering the victims of genocide



Every year Holocaust Memorial Day is commemorated on 27th January to pay homage to victims of genocide and persecution and especially the six million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust and the survivors of persecution.

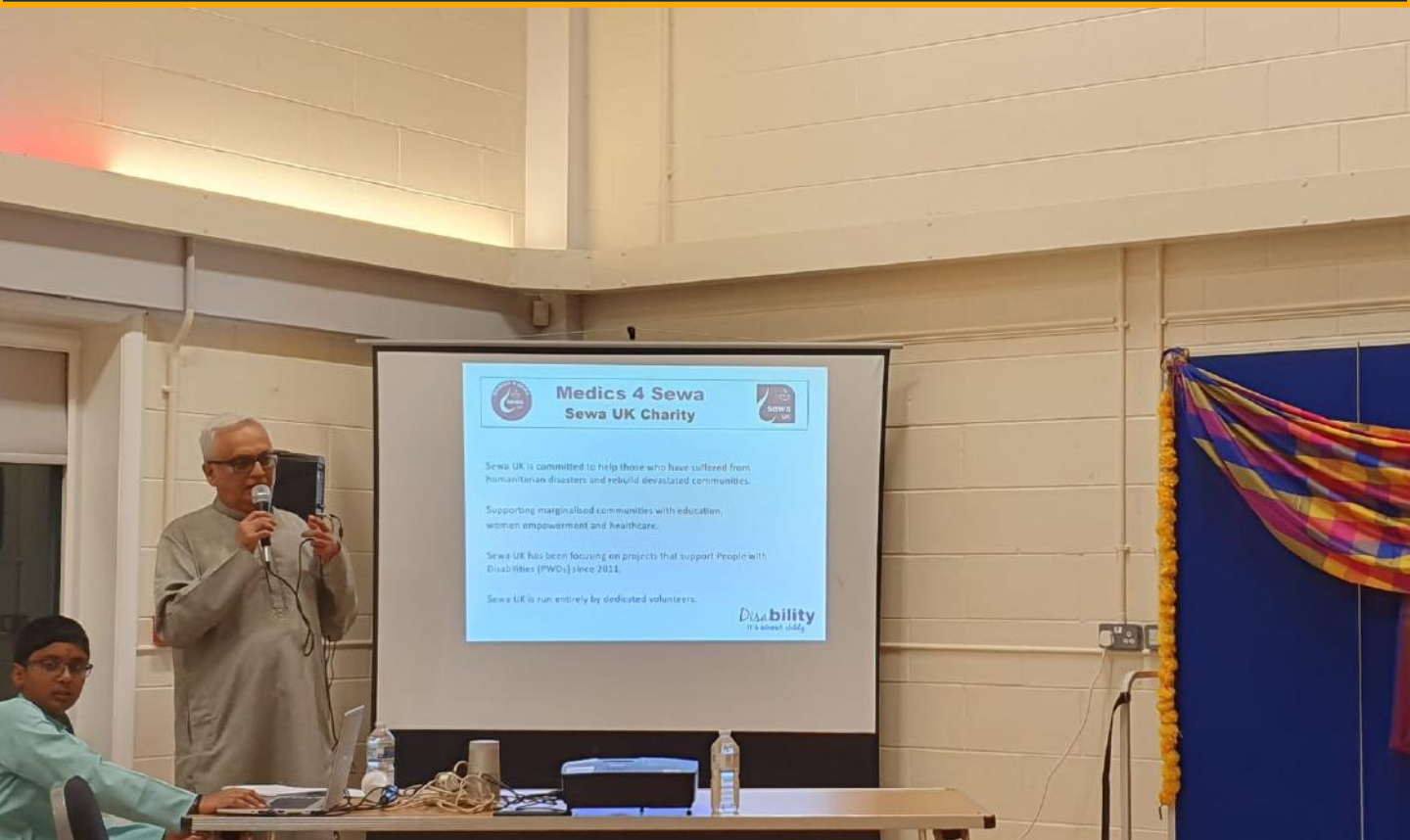
Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) invited Mrs. Noreen Plen, a speaker from Generation 2 Generation, to recount the personal family story of this grim chapter in history. The talk “Missing Grandparents” was a presentation of many family members who were murdered by the Nazis. She opened her talk by saying, “there is no gentle way of saying this, it was brutal, undignified, and inhumane’.

The entire Jewish community of a little town was killed. Amongst them was Noreen’s Grandfather who was shot; he was 64. Testimony from Noreen’s father Jan was narrated, “Conditions in the concentration camp was horrendous, in temperatures as low as -45 deg they were given little bread and sugar. Malnutrition was common. Camp clothing and accommodation were inadequate and they had to do heavy building work in miserable conditions”. Family members were separated and even many years on it was impossible to trace loved ones. Several other heartbreaking stories of slave labour and ghetto conditions, killings, and atrocities were told to Swayamsevaks and Sevikas who were visibly moved by the presentation.

Noreen added that amongst more recent genocides we must tell stories of the Kashmiri Hindus genocide of the 1990s, as quite soon there will be no survivors who will be able to tell the world what really happened. Commemorating the Holocaust Memorial Day, we came together to learn from the past and take action to create awareness about atrocities where ever they occur. The talk ended with a Q&A session where we discussed that anti-Semitism and Hinduphobia have no place in modern society. We also learned the interesting fact that during the early 1940s, 1000 Jewish orphans and women from Poland were adopted by Maharaja Jam Saheb in Gujarat. This compelling account was necessary to honor the victims and survivors of Nazi persecution and other genocides.



Sewa and Outreach





Hindu Medical Association

Leicester General Hospital

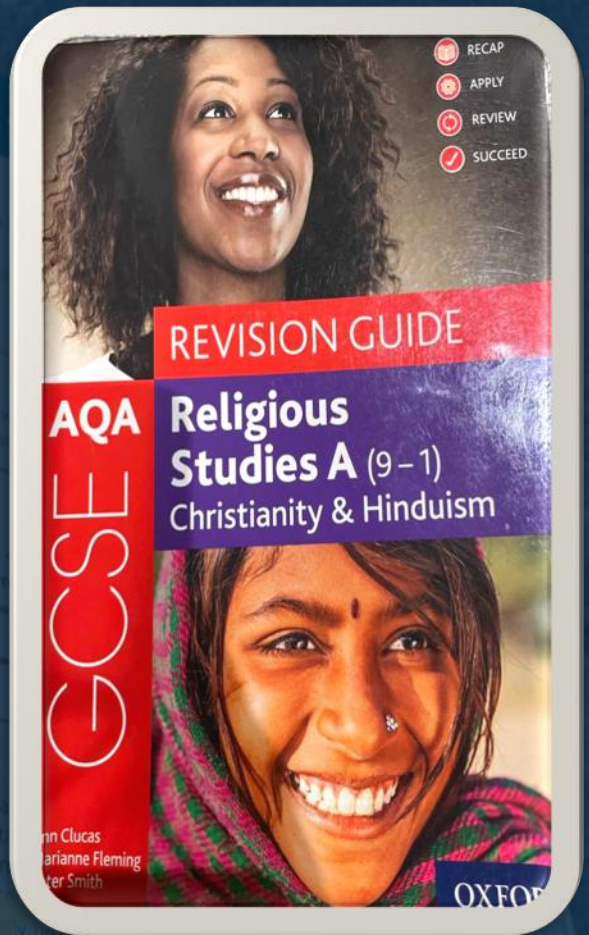


The Hindu Medical Association held a successful networking event at Leicester General Hospital on Saturday, 14 January 2023. This was our first in-person event and was attended by 29 doctors from around the country.

If anyone (from the Medical establishment) would like to join, please visit:
www.hindumedicalassociation.org.uk



SEWA International
has been featured
in the AQA GCSE
Religious Studies
syllabus textbook,
for promoting
women's rights.



A charity promoting women's rights

Sewa International

- Sewa International is one charity working to improve the status of women in India. One of its aims is to enable women workers to have full employment.
 - The charity organises a women's festival called Fyunli Kauthig, which takes place in Uttarakhand in northern India on 8 March each year (International Women's Day).
 - The festival has brought together women from various socio-economic backgrounds who are able to share the same platform.
 - Sewa International has also honoured women who have done exemplary work in the fields of environment conservation, empowerment of women, education, health, public welfare and sports.
- The charity has also spoken out about the significance of women in society and what more needs to be done in the future to empower women.

Promoting wellbeing, justice and social inclusion

dharma. This can be done by:



Sewa UK – Chitrakoot Project

Cumbria Hindu Association



Shri Bharat Vadukal (Secretary Sewa UK) and Sewa UK Team including Shri Damjibhai Tank and Dr. Naresh Sharma were invited to Cumbria to present the work of Sewa UK and the opportunities to do Sewa at Chitrakoot Project and various other SEWA initiatives. The audience gave a standing ovation at the end. The team from Cumbria Hindu Association sponsored the event.

IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE TO DO A SIMILAR EVENT IN THEIR AREA, PLEASE VISIT WWW.SEWAUK.ORG



Outreach with the Daman Community

Leicester

The Leicester Mahila Sevika team has been working with the Daman Community women's group, to help them with any difficulties they are currently facing. They also are raising awareness of basic British rules/regulations and women's rights in general.

An evening of games and fun was organised for them on 18th December. Our Sevikas presented three performances, on the theme of Sanskar, Sewa, and Sangathan, representing our HSS(UK) values.

The women from the community have been invited to join the Mahila Milan that takes place every 2nd or 3rd Monday of the month.



Junior Citizen Award



Swara Dasarwar from Bharati Shakha Newbury received the Junior Citizen of the Year Award for 2022, from a list of many other deserved contenders. Swara raised an amazing £1650 for a school project, which clearly stood out from the rest of the candidates.

THE AWARD WAS PRESENTED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL, CLLR RICK JONES.

HAS ANYONE IN YOUR SHAKHA RECEIVED AN AWARD, COMPLETED A CHALLENGE OR OBTAINED AN ACHIEVEMENT? LET THE SANGH MAIL TEAM KNOW!



Rudra Shakha, Reading

Karyakartas were invited to Abbey School, Reading for lunch as part of a Sampark (outreach) activity. We had an interactive session with the Headteacher, Deputy Head - Ethos and Pastoral, Head of Philosophy & Theology together with Diversity & Inclusion prefects as well as students who created the Diwali assembly, last year.

This was a follow up session from last year when our young Sevikas delivered a Diwali presentation, with a group of students, to the whole school, explaining the meaning of Diwali and how it is celebrated within the Hindu, Jain and Sikh communities.

We shared information about HSS (UK), Hindu Education Board (HEB) UK, as well as our outreach events such as Holi, International Day of Yoga and discussed potential future collaborations.

The school was gifted with a book titled "Hindu Dharma", to use as a resource for their Religious Studies sessions.





Shakha Events





10 Year Celebration!

Adarsh Parivaar Shakha, Liverpool

2022 marked the 10th year HSS (UK) has been running in Liverpool. Thus, on the occasion of Vijayadashmi, the opportunity was taken to to a community Sampark (outreach) activity and invite everyone to see what we do in Shakha. The main objective behind this celebration was to demonstrate the development and aptitudes that have been ingrained in our Karyakartas over the last decade. We decided the best way to show this, was to conduct a mega Shakha!

After months of planning, and practicing in our weekly Shakha, every member of our Shakha was involved in a pradarshan (performance). Primary school children performed a play, describing the ten heads of Raavana and how to convert those ten negativities into positivity. Secondary school children, did a Niyudh and Dand pradarshan, perfecting their learnings from Sangh Shiksha Varg. Finally, the adults engaged in a Samata and Vyam Yog pradarshan. Several weeks of shakha was dedicated to practicing and perfecting these pradarshans, whilst online registrations collected 300 registrations. A total of 275 people attended the programme, including 67 Swayamsevaks/ Sevikas.



10 Year Celebration!

Adarsh Parivaar Shakha, Liverpool



On this occasion, members of the local community were also invited to present their talents alongside the program. Throughout the programme, we engaged the audience by encouraging their participation in khels exclusively for them. NHSF (UK)'s exhibition "The Hindu Journey in Britain", was also displayed to emphasise the importance of our community in Britain. Children were also encouraged to engage with the posters through quizzes and colouring activities. Finally, as it was Vijayadashmi, we ended the program with Raavan Dahan (burning effigy of Raavana). The HSS (UK) Karyawaha Shri Raveendra ji Surange was also present and gave a short session on the importance of Sangh work in the UK. Representatives from Merseyside police also attended the program and were impressed by the pradarshan.

The highlight of the program was the presentation of the last 10 years of Liverpool and it's journey from Balgokulam to Adarsh Parivaar Shakha. Photographs were presented and we all had a good laugh looking at everyone in their younger days, whilst cherishing the memories collected over the years. The audience appreciated the talent and discipline showed by our shakha and joined us for Bhojan (food) at the end.

In the last five years, Liverpool has hosted two Balgokulam Shibirs (2017 and 2018) and a Sangh Shiksha Varg (SSV, 2019). A number of Sevaks/ Sevikas have also taken up various Nagar, Vibhag and Kendriya level responsibilities over the years and as the younger members have progressed to University, there is also strong participation from our Sevikas in NHSF (UK). Whilst the journey of a decade appears a long route, it is a small step in our extensive voyage ahead of us. As a Shakha, we continue to grow and learn things together, however now with the experience of the past decade, we are well aware of the challenges and now know how to convert these challenges into opportunities. We are all looking forward to this new beginning for our Shakha.





A New Shakha!

Bracknell Parivaar Shakha



DUE TO OVERWHELMING INTEREST FROM THE BRACKNELL COMMUNITY, A NEW WEEKLY SHAKHA HAS RECENTLY STARTED!

On Jan 29, Bracknell Parivaar Shakha hosted an outreach event showcasing the work by HSS (UK) and its guiding principles of Sanskar (Life values), Sewa (Charity work) and Sangathan (Community Unity). Attendees got to learn about a variety of activities conducted by HSS (UK); sample some games, yoga, view an exhibition on Hinduism and much more. Karyakartas from Hounslow, Slough and Reading Nagars helped to organise and support the event.

MP FOR BRACKNELL, JAMES SUNDERLAND ATTENDED TO ENGAGE WITH THE HINDU COMMUNITY OF BRACKNELL.



Parivaar Milan

Colchester Parivaar Milan

Colchester Parivaar Milan opened on Sunday 29th January 2023. The inauguration event was whole Vibhag team effort. Swayamsevak and Sevikas from Redbridge, Newham, South-end-on Sea and Chelmsford all worked together for this successful event.

The total number of attendees was 94, including participants across all ages.. All enjoyed warm-up exercises together, before splitting out into groups by age, to engage in games and a Bauddhik session.

This high number of attendees did not happen just by magic, it happened with communications via social media and networking with local communities. But most importantly personal communications with key Karyakartas in the local community. There is good potential of starting local Hinduism and Sanskrit classes.

It is hoped that with Hindu Awareness Campaign in future, more local people will be aware of this Parivaar Milan, we may be able have Swayamesevak and Samiti soon!



Rugby Nagar's Annual Challenge



RUGBY NAGAR'S 8AM CHRISTMAS DAY SHAKHA WAS BACK AFTER A 2 YEAR COVID ABSENCE!

It had a huge turnout with 55 attendees, to join the football challenge. Some Karyakartas did a walk. It was nice to have the Swayamsevakas who have moved out of town, back at Shakha to participate, as it helped create a bonding atmosphere.

A football tournament was played in which the under-30s beat over-30s. It was tough competition, where the under 30's won 4-3. Next year, the over 30's will be back for revenge!

UNDER 30s

OVER 30s

4

-

3



Geeta Jayanti Celebrations

Durga Shakha, Reading

To commemorate the sacred day when Bhagwan Shri Krishna offered his philosophical teachings to Arjuna during the battle of Kurukshetra, Durga Shakha Bauddhik team took initiative to encourage sevikas to chant '**Geeta Shlok Adhyaay - 5**' which is based on '**Karma Sanyas Yoga**'. The Bhagavad Geeta is not just an ancient scripture but also serves as an essential guide based on Dharma. It falls on the Ekadashi (11th day) of Shukla Paksha of the Margashirsha month (Nov- Dec).

The Bauddhik team had arranged a practice session prior to "Geeta Jayanti" and talked through the meaning of each shloka followed by clear uchcharan (pronunciation) of Sanskrit words. On 2nd December, Sewikas celebrated 'Geeta Jayanti' by reciting Geeta shlokas. We hope to make this an annual event.





Manoranjana Karyakram

Pannabai / Shivaji Shakha, Woolwich

On the 24th December, Swayamsevaks and Sevikas and their families got together for our annual Manoranjana Karyakram. This was a great opportunity to mingle with each other, conclude a fabulous year and energise ourselves for the new year. Around 150 people were present.

Fun activities on the day included relay races, quizzes on Sangh, Hindu Dharma and general knowledge as well as roleplays. Team building activities such as bridge building with newspaper and dressing up a Sevika in traditional clothing were conducted. It was fun to watch the outside-the-box thinking.





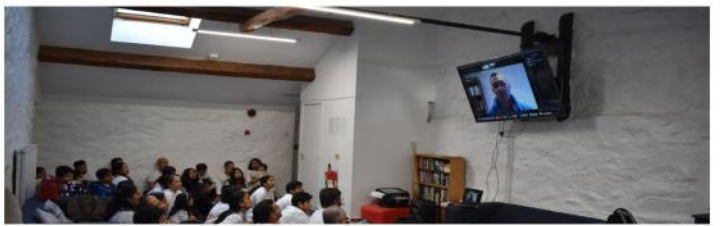
Shibirs





SHIBIR IN SNOWDONIA

On the occasion of KAHO's anniversary, a Karyakarta Varg/Shibir (camp) was organised in Snowdonia in the midst of mountains. More than 60 Karyakartas and their families spent 2 nights and 2 days together. Inspiring bauddhiks by Shri Chandrakant ji Sharma and Shri Raveendra ji Surange motivated all to work for more initiatives. Activities such as Charcha, Mukta Chintan, Desh bhakti Geet (Ratri Karyakrama), and Treasure Hunt helped to create strong bonding among karyakartas.





Leamington Spa Parivaar Shakha Shibir

SHAKHA SHIBIR

Our Shibir (camp) is the most popular end-of-the-year event in Leamington Spa Nagar Shakha. This year was also full of exciting activities and fun, meticulously designed. This was our first physical Shibir after Covid, and there was a great participation of 42 people across all ages.

Over the two days, activities included, role plays on three principles of HSS (UK)- Sanskar, Sewa and Sangathan, a Manoranjan program (entertainment), where many of the youngsters displayed their artistic and musical talents.

For this Shibir, we opted for a hybrid model with a sleepover at home on the floor in sleeping bags. The program continued early next morning, where all the sleepy faces lit up after our Meditation session. The fun continued, as we all remembered our childhood, during the origami session, and flew paper airplanes. Everyone shared their experiences of the Shibir at the end, which was captured and has gorgeously expressed in a poetic way by Venkat ji, on the next page.





Our Shakha Shibir

An awesome weekend for us to remember
At the end of the year, in the frosty December
It's our own Shakha's Shibir, lots to say, so let's hear ...

Dumbbells Khokho Khels galore,
Plenty of moments for everyone to adore
The abundant authentic home made food
Kept everyone in a jolly mood
No one ever wanted it to conclude!

And then there were Chintans and Geet,
Offering our prayers at the Lord's feet

Everyone who attended
Had their soul ascended
For it was their body and mind both got lifted
We all feel so privileged
To have this event gifted.

- Venkat ji



DHARMA SHIBIR

Shiva Shakha, Birmingham had an overnight Shibir, on the theme Dharma, at a local Mandir. The entire Shibir and the 18-hour timetable were organised by 9 young boys. We had 42 people attend this Shibir.

To make it more environmentally friendly, the boys brought their own dishes and washed them after each meal. The weekend was jam-packed and full of activities, managed by our young Shikshaks (teachers). Team building, Geet (song) competition, Quiz on Dharma, Khel (games) were just some of the activities learned. The Bauddhik and discussions were based on understanding of what Dharma is and understanding the dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna, communicated through shlokas (verses) from the Bhagavad Gita.





Makar Sankranti



LEAMINGTON NAGAR PARIVAAR SHAKHA



This year's Makar Sankranti Celebration was a huge success for Leamington Nagar Shakha. More than 70 attendees were present to celebrate the Utsav. The highlight of the decoration was home-made kites with Sankranti wishes in different languages, as the backdrop.

Yogeshji Bhide, Kendriya Bauddhik Saha Pramukh was present as the guest speaker. He delivered a session about the Sankranti Utsav, with a clear message of "Sankranti is a Utsav of spreading bonds, so we should strengthen our network". **On this auspicious day a new yuvati (female) Shakha has been started as part of Leamington Nagar.**

LEICESTER SHAKHAS



Three Leicester Shakhas - Sindhu Shakha, Shree Ram Shakha and Guru Nanak Shakha, came together to celebrate Makar Sankranti. A record number of attendees came and enjoyed an inspiring Bauddhik given by Dr Akshaya Rajangam. On this occasion, representatives from different communities were present. HSS (UK) activities were introduced to all attendees.



SHIV SHAKTI PARIVAAR SHAKHA / HANUMAN BALGOKULAM LEICESTER



Shiv Shakti Parivaar Shakha and Hanuman Balgokulam Leicester held their first Utsav (festival/celebration) of the year, Makar Sankranti. An inspirational session was delivered by Kajol Desai and different games were the highlights of the program. Strong communications prior to the event helped bring in more than 100 Swayamsevak and Sevikas from all the other Shakhas in Leicester, as well as guests from the local Hindu Community. The Utsav was bright, radiant and powerful, just like Surya Bhagwan (the Sun), to whom this festival is dedicated to.

AUMKAAR BALGOKULAM, MAIDENHEAD



Aumkaar Balgokulam, Maidenhead celebrated Makar Sankranti on January 22nd. An enthusiastic crowd of 100+ people braved sub-zero temperatures to attend the utsav. Makar Sankranti celebrates the sun's journey into the northern hemisphere, bringing renewed optimism and warmth after cold and dark wintery days. It is often celebrated by flying kites and sharing special sweets, made of sesame seeds and jaggery. The program consisted of a warm-up exercise, gentle yoga, a running competition, lots of kite flying, and some poem recitations on a variety of topics, including nature and family values. In the freezing breeze, the kites filled the skies disappearing into the fog. This did not put off the children and adults from having fun!



ARYABHAT SHAKHA, AYLESBURY



Aryabhat Shakha, Aylesbury celebrated Makar Sankranti Utsav, with 76 participants. A video showcasing activities, utsavs and initiatives from year 2022 was shown at the utsav.

Councillor Nidhi Mehta from Aylesbury town council was the chief guest of the event. She spoke about the Makar Sankranti utsav and expressed her appreciation about the work done by the shakha last year. She mentioned importance of inclusivity and helping local community, whilst highlighting some council initiatives and opportunities for volunteering which we hope to engage in this year.

PANNABAI / SHIVAJI SHAKHA, WOOLWICH



SANGH MAIL



Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



When submitting your articles, here are a few points to consider:

- Provide a summary- keep articles short, highlighting the best parts
- A picture tells a thousand words - select your best photos (maximum of 8) to go with your article in the same email
- Don't forget to include your Shakha name and location

Send all articles to sanghmail@hssuk.org

