



SANGH MAIL

Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan

MAY 2023:
The Big Help Out

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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THE BIG HELP OUT



In this month's edition, Shakhas across the country got involved in 'The Big Help Out'. The Big Help Out is a huge public engagement campaign to promote, champion and showcase volunteering to mark the King's Coronation. Engaging in such activities for the benefit of the community, is also one of the pillars of our organisation – Sewa (selfless service). It was great to be able to support the objective of The Big Help Out, volunteering to make a change in the local community, which is common with the ethos of HSS (UK).



BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham Shiva Shakha and Radhe Krishna Balagokulam had a big turn out for the Big Help Out today at Shree Hindu Community Centre (SHCC). Many people old and young got there hands dirty and got stuck in to do some gardening to make our local SHCC look greener and tidier. Mukeshbhai, the SHCC president, was very pleased with work carried out and is very happy the outside of the centre looks greener and pleasing to the eye.





MANCHESTER

Volunteers of HSS Sewa from Manchester supported the Big Help Out appeal, by hosting a Sewa stall, acting as a food donation collection point. They also helped with litter picking in the park, at a Coronation party event.





MILTON KEYNES

Swayamsevaks and Sevikas from Ekata Shakha helped at the Milton Keynes Hindu Association, clearing out their stores and tidying the gardens,





CHELTENHAM

Cheltenham Kesari Shakha carried out gardening at Ganley's Care Home and also cooked a fresh meal for all their care home nurses.





Reading HSS volunteers teamed up with Sewa Day to help serve tea and food, and shared banter, at a local tea party for the elderly.





Pratap and Shakti Shakha participated in the BIG HELP OUT at the 104-year-old Finchley Victoria Bowling and Croquet Club. The elderly members of the club appreciated Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh's help in clearing up the bowling club ditches, clearing the paths, cleaning the benches, and clearing the weeds on the grounds.

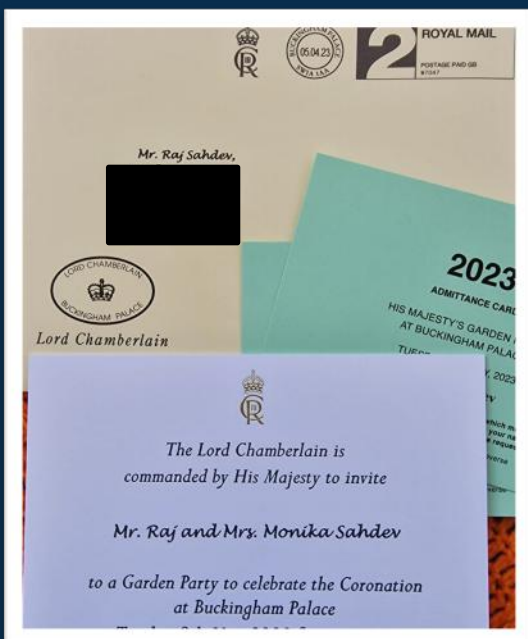
Gary, Club President commented, 'What a remarkable group at HSS (UK), helping us at the Big Help Out, giving up their time to serve the community',





THE ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

Our South West England HSS(UK) Sewa Pramukh, Shri Raj ji Sahdev, along with his wife, Smt Monika ji Sahadev, were invited to Royal Garden Party. He represented Sewa Day and all the volunteers who have been tirelessly giving time and energy to give selfless Sewa.





WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE A FEW OF OUR KARYAKARTAS BEING AWARDED THE 'CORONATION CHAMPION' FOR SERVICES TO THE COMMUNITY.

Deepak ji Pathak was presented with an awards, as he guided a large team of Sewa Day volunteers in over 28 regions of the UK, during the Covid period, to support food banks, food kitchens, frontline workers support and the most isolated.

Madhu ji Basudev from Halesowen, a Sewa Day Karyakarta was also awardee of the 'Coronation Champion'. Madhu ji has been a shining light during the Covid lockdown and continues to serve the community.

Their leadership played an extremely important role in galvanising the cadre to step up during a challenging period. Their charisma and energy percolated right through the organisation, so much so that all volunteers who selflessly gave their time and energy, always felt appreciated and part of a one big family.



Madhu Basudev, from Halesowen, has been named a Coronation Champion Image: Handout

Volunteer has concert invite

A DEDICATED volunteer from Halesowen has been recognised by The King and The Queen Consort as part of the official Coronation celebrations.

Madhu Basudev, who has been volunteering for more than 20 years for organisations including Sewa Day and Durga Bhawan Mandir, Smethwick, has been invited to attend the Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle.

The 72-year-old is one of 45 volunteers from the West Midlands and 500 nationally to have been recognised for their contribution and crowned a Coronation Champion.

This follows a call out to the nation to nominate their volunteer heroes. Almost 5,000 nominations were made nationally for individuals aged 14 up to 103.

By Helen Attwood

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Madhu volunteers several times every week with her roles ranging from helping a team cook 200 meals for the community (giving to 1,000 meals on religious occasions) and supporting older people, to collecting food from supermarkets, to take to the food bank and arranging food parcels to ensure children don't go hungry over the school holidays.

After seeing how the Asian community were struggling during the pandemic, Madhu set up Sewa Day craft groups to help combat social isolation and lift the community's spirits.

Nearly 15,000 knitted items have

been donated to hospitals and shelters.

Madhu impressed judges with her ability to inspire and rally volunteers from all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds to support her activities.

She has even encouraged her nine young grandchildren to get involved.

All Coronation Champions, including Madhu have now been invited to attend one of the official Coronation celebrations.

They will also receive a specially designed, official Coronation Champions pin and a certificate signed by Their Majesties.

Madhu said: "Becoming a Coronation Champion is a deeply personal and rewarding achievement and one of which I am hugely proud."



Shibirs & Vargs





Scotland Shibir 2023: Prakruti



The second Scotland Shibir this year was held on 6th and 7th May, with 114 people staying over night and total of 190 joint during the day. The theme for the Shibir this year was 'Prakruti' (Nature).

We also had attendance from local community leaders, the armed forces and the Indian Consulate Edinburgh, who joined in with the games and activities.

Everyone engaged in activities such as Yoga, Niyudha and games, and performances in the evening around the camp fire.



The Shibir also helped develop karyakartas in Scotland and build better connection between the Shakhas.



Sampark and Prachaar Varg

National Event



The Interactive Sampark and Prachaar Varg in Borehamwood, London was a huge success with over 80 attendees coming all the way from Cardiff to Middlesbrough. It was an eventful day full of diverse workshops covering everything from content creation and social media, poster designing, photography and videography tips, planning Sampark Abhiyan, to developing effective interpersonal skills to influence people to widen our Hindu Samaj network.



The event has given a platform and tools to promote HSS both locally, regionally, and nationally. An 'Introduction to HSS' presentation was also shared with attendees and can be used to share our good work with teachers, inter-faith groups, MPs, and councillors as well. Furthermore, we would encourage those to attend to share the workshops and learnings at the local level as the best way to learn is to teach.



More News!

संगठन में शक्ति है!

Sangathan main shakti hai!

LEAMINGTON SANSKAR SHAKHA PRESENTATION AT KING EDWARDS SCHOOL



When we share our culture with pride, good faith and invite the world to celebrate it, it is reciprocated with awe and resonates with togetherness. It builds relationships with mutual trust and respect. Leamington Shakha invited school teachers for the 'Shikshak Vandan Diwas' event last year and spoke about principles of Hindu culture of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam'. In return, the Head Teacher of King Edward VI School, Stratford upon Avon, invited our Sanskar Shakha Leamington to present at it's 'Multi cultural evening'.

Our presentation included several aspects of Bharat – rapid development in Arts to Science (Bollywood to Mars mission), and vibrancy of Food to Economy. It highlighted how humanism, an important aspect of our culture, is still key to Bharat's view towards world. Also cultural, science and maths, arts , music and so much more was showcased. Several dance performances of Kuchipudi, Gujarati dance, Rajasthani folk dance, Kannada folk dance, Maharashtrian dance were presented, as well as a special dance performance to the Oscar winning song "Naatu Naatu", from the film RRR!

We also spoke about principles of Sanskaar and Sewa, at core of our Sanghatan. The interest of audience could be witnessed by the pin drop silence throughout the event. Many volunteers had also prepared and brought in special Indian dishes from home for the audience to try out. We would like to thank KES Stratford for giving us this opportunity.



LEAMINGTON NAGAR TRIP TO THE MALVERNS

In April, Leamington Nagar Shakha organized a trek to Malvern Hills in Worcestershire, in preparation for the Yorkshire 3 Peak Challenge. Malvern Hills is a range of hills and a designated area of outstanding natural beauty in the UK.

A group of around 40 people, ranging in age from 6 to 55 years, gathered for the trek. The first part of the trek was quite steep and challenging, but the group supported each other, and successfully reached the top of the peak. The views from the top of the hills were stunning, with vast landscapes and beautiful scenery.

The group had lunch midway, sharing a variety of home made Indian cuisines, after which we headed towards the endpoint, which was a beautiful lake.

Overall, the trek to Malvern Hill was a great success, with the group building their endurance and stamina. Day trips like this provide the opportunity for everyone to bond and support each other, reflecting the values of the HSS (UK).





MAATRU POOJAN AT LEAMINGTON SHAKHA

When it comes to experiencing bliss, nothing can beat the mother's love; and when it comes to Pooja Bhaav (pure devotion), nothing can match the respect and reverence of parents. Leamington Nagar Shakha experienced the love, respect, and bliss on this International Mother's Day by performing 'Maatru Poojan'.

At the regular weekly shakha, the mothers were invited by the children. A learning session was aptly chosen to explain the importance of mother /motherhood in the Hindu Sanskriti (culture). It explained the five things given motherly status – The God/Goddess (Maa Shakti), ancient Hindu scriptures, Dharti Maa (Earth), Cow (Gau Maata), and the biological Mother (apni Maa).

The session also focussed on the importance of the Hindu Sanskar of touching the feet of parents and elders – the physical, emotional, and scientific (energy flow) aspects and benefits of the same. It concluded with the importance of caring and respecting parents forever with a strong feeling of gratitude.





RUNNING LONDON MARATHON FOR SEWA UK

On 23rd April 2023, Vishal Shah (Kendriya Sampark Pramukh) and Tushar Shah (Kendriya Sah-Sampark Pramukh) joined three other runners, Saikumar Unnikrishnan, Upendra Bhanderi, and Anita Bhanderi to take on the challenge of the London Marathon raising funds for Sewa UK.

It was a very wet day, but that didn't stop the thousands of people that came out to cheer on the runners. The atmosphere was electric, with the sounds of choirs, full orchestral bands, bagpipes, drummers, DJs, and the echoing of huge cheers of encouragement, applause, and arms out ready to high five. Probably the most iconic of marathons around the world, this year attracted 45,000 participants, and a number of records were broken. With a split starting point in Greenwich and Blackheath, the 26.2-mile course weaved its way around the docklands, canary wharf, crossing over Tower Bridge, across the embankment, and finishing on Pall Mall.



The sheer determination of all those that participated was awe-inspiring. Some were wearing large costumes, and some even carrying additional weight, one in fact carried a refrigerator on his back for the whole run. Despite all difficulties, umpteen blisters and legs cramping, runners were determined to finish at all costs, and the tremendous volunteers that took their day out to support were a huge pillar of support to help encourage and keep everyone on track towards this ambition. When the legs were getting tired, this became a test of mind over matter.

THE COLLECTIVE EFFORT OF THE PARTICIPANTS RAISED BOTH AWARENESS AND AROUND £20K FUNDS FOR SEWA UK.

More Hindus Taking Active Interest in Local Politics



Following sustained encouragement through various activities of the HSS(UK), we are now beginning to see green shoots in our members taking an active interest in local politics and resulting in some success, being elected as councillors in the recent local council elections.

The 'UK Parliament Week' conducted in most HSS (UK) branches/nagars throughout the UK, together with the social and civic engagements has been the most effective in creating interest and active participation in the democratic processes.



Many Swayamsevaks and Sevikas contested and won in local elections



Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash

Essential Reads

“**Intelligence** is the capacity to perceive the essential and differentiate right from wrong (*Viveka*) ; and to awaken this capacity, in oneself and in others, the first step is **education**.”





SEWA, SANSKAAR AND SANGATHAN

The Gayatri Mantra, set out in the Rig Veda, is one of the most well-known chanted by Hindus of all ages and from all backgrounds today. It has lived on to the twenty-first century despite having been composed at least five thousand years ago. In a world torn apart by intolerance and strife, Hindus today return to concepts set out over many thousand years ago such as *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (the whole world is one family), and *sarve amrutasya putraha* (all living beings have within them the element of the divine). Even in the changed circumstances of our contemporary life, we Hindus continue to follow customs and rituals and uphold time-tested values as representatives of the oldest surviving civilisation on this planet, and one which over its long years has contributed so many profound ideas to the world.

Amongst this ever-flowing stream of values is one based on action, that of *Sewa*. It is based on the Hindu principle *ātmavat sarva bhūteshu*, that because our essence is consciousness, we must recognise that each of us are connected to all other living beings. *Sewa* is thus a process of breaking beyond the perimeters of our egos, motivating us to offer a helping hand to anyone in need, regardless of their colour, creed, gender, or religion. It prompts us to act not out of pity or charity, but because we are one with everyone and everything around us. Recognising this oneness prompts us not only to provide help at the time and place of our convenience but rushing in to help at times of grave urgency, even amid a conflict zone, as members of HSS (UK) did during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the ongoing war in Ukraine. It is thus our deepest sense of ourselves as Hindus that shapes how we interact with the world around us, for the benefit of all within it.

When these eternal values that have been at the core of our civilisation for so long become internalised in our personal lives, these become *Sanskāar*. This is not simply to hold good character traits, but to practise these in everything that we do, such that acting in this manner becomes part of our very character and make-up. To internalise these values in this way does not only contribute to the ethical development of the individual, but the holistic development of the whole society. Whilst personal *sanskāars* of education, hard work and wealth creation are by and large hard-wired into the Hindu community today, recent events have shown us that more efforts are needed in building a community consciousness, a *sāmuhiik sanskaar*, around important matters. Unless we Hindus have a cohesive voice, we will struggle to effectively speak up for the victims of injustice. Without a collective sense of our values, our efforts to propagate the profound thoughts and universal values that stem from our scriptures will remain, at best, patchy.



Hindu **dharma** encompasses a commonwealth of religions, cultures and philosophies that originated and have flourished within India since time immemorial. The Hindu community has evolved organically over millennia and is not a rigid group where one size must fit all, and everyone *must* sign up to the same narrow set of commitments. While the immense diversity of faith systems, languages, and traditions is our unique strength, it also poses a challenge when it comes to creating synergy within the various folds of the Hindu community. HSS (UK) has taken up this challenge and invested 56 years of efforts in creating that Hindu community spirit, the **Sangathan**.

During our activity sessions, we come together as Hindus to play and learn together to naturally develop the **sāmuḥik sanskaar** that will generate synergy amongst the community whilst not only preserving but celebrating its diversity. Over time, as **sanskaar** is imbibed at the individual level, each person starts on their journey from self to selfless, from 'I' to 'we', from 'mine' to 'us' and 'ours'. This process of coming together and learning together creates inspired leaders with the mentality to achieve the social changes they desire, and through seeing the recognition of the oneness within all, take on the challenges of society as our own so that all may reap the benefits.

It is these three streams of Sanskaar, Sewa and Sangathan continue to empower the transformational journey of HSS (UK).

**- By Dr. Raveendra Ji Surange
(FRCS Urologist and General Secretary of HSS(UK))**



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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

