

February 2018



# THE CONCH

[www.conch.org.au](http://www.conch.org.au)

"Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna blew their celestial conches to rally and enthruse the devotees."

## NEWSLETTER

New Govardhana Community



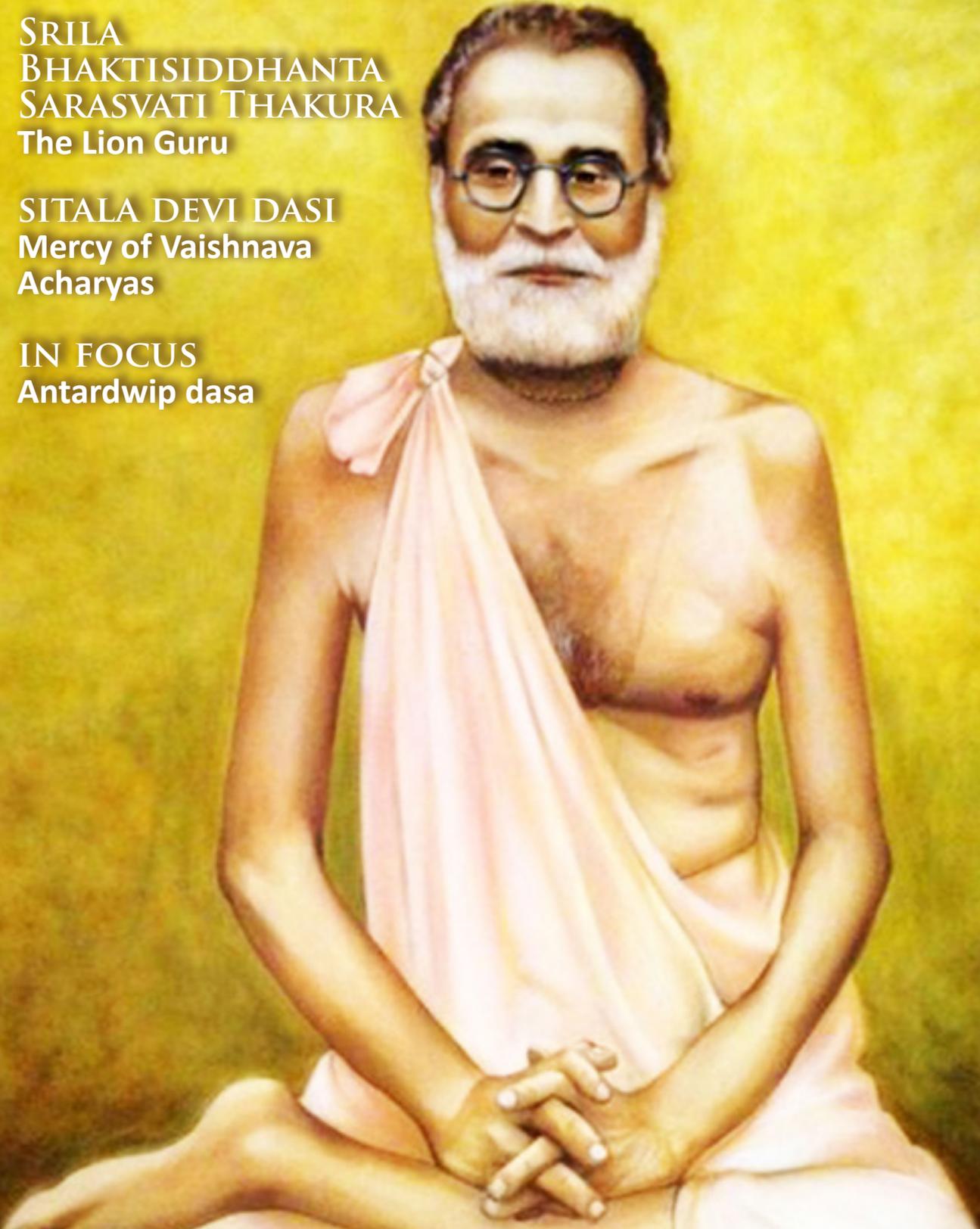
krishnafarm.com

Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

SRILA  
BHAKTISIDDHANTA  
SARASVATI THAKURA  
The Lion Guru

SITALA DEVI DASI  
Mercy of Vaishnava  
Acharyas

IN FOCUS  
Antardwip dasa



GAURA NITAI AND VENUGOPAL DASA + GOSHALLA: BREAKING GROUND

# THE APPEARANCE OF SRILA BHAKTISIDDHANTA SARASVATI THAKURA MAHARAJA

By *Ambika devi dasi*

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura was residing in Jagannatha Puri and serving as Deputy Magistrate, when he and his devotional wife, Srimati Bhagavati devi were blessed with a wonderful son on 6 February 1874. They named him Bimala Prasad.

Six months later, as the grand *Rathayatra* festival took place, Lord Jagannatha's cart rested outside their residence. Taking advantage of this, his mother took him on the cart and placed him at the Lord's lotus feet. Immediately a garland fell from the Lord onto the child, signifying to all who witnessed this that the child was dear to the Lord and a special soul.

By seven years, he could recite the whole *Bhagavad Gita*. As a student, he was exceptional. In later life he was referred to as 'the living encyclopedia'.

As an adult he took initiation from the renounced saint Srila Gaurakishora das Babaji. To the delight of his guru he philosophically defeated many

who deviated from the path of pure Krishna Consciousness with his strong, direct and uncompromising evidence from Vedic scriptures.

His extensive preaching eventually resulted in the establishment of 64 temples throughout India, as well as the staging of many theistic exhibits throughout the country. These exhibits and dioramas depicted Lord Chaitanya and Krishna's pastimes.

He initiated hundreds of disciples, all of whom chanted 64 rounds of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra daily.

He established a printing press and wrote many articles and books, even publishing a daily newspaper on the activities being eternally performed in the spiritual world.

He encouraged his disciples to preach Krishna Consciousness far and wide.

His glorious disciple, Srila Prabhupada, took this instruction as his life's mission, and thus this knowledge of how to love Krishna is spreading and expanding continually throughout the planet.

When Srila Prabhupada was asked about his guru, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja, he said: "What can I say? He was a Vaikuntha man."

His divine Appearance Day this year will be celebrated on 5 February. There will be a program at the temple in his honour. 🙏

Photo: theharekrishnamovement.org



ISKCON Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

## *Srila Prabhupada Uvaca*

### PURPORT

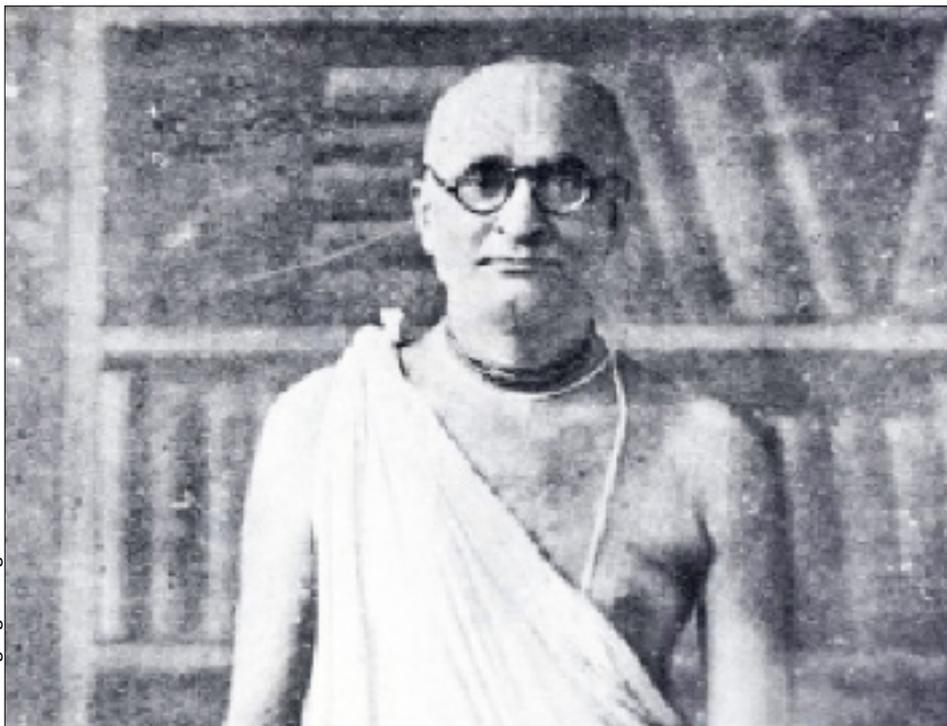
Sri Isvara Puri was a resident of Kumara-hatta, where there is now a railroad station known as Kamarhatta. Nearby there is also another station named Halisahara, which belongs to the Eastern Railway that runs from the eastern section of Calcutta.

Isvara Puri appeared in a brahmana family and was the most beloved disciple of Srila Madhavendra Puri.

Sri Isvara Puri was the spiritual master of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, but before initiating Lord Caitanya he went to Navadvipa and lived for a few months in the house of Gopinatha Acarya. At that time Lord Caitanya became acquainted with him, and it is understood that he served Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu by reciting his book, *Krsna-lilamrta*.

To teach others by example how to be a faithful disciple of one's spiritual master, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, visited the birthplace of Isvara Puri at Kamarhatta and collected some earth from his birthsite. This He kept very carefully, and He used to eat a small portion of it daily. This is stated in the *Caitanya-bhagavata, Adi-lila, Chapter Seventeen*. It has now become customary for devotees, following the example of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, to go there and collect some earth from that place.

*Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 9.11*



Photot: google image

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura - "The living encyclopedia"*

## KADAMBA KANANA SWAMI'S VISIT

By *Parama Karuna dasa*

We had an impromptu Summer Festival with Kadamba Kanana Maharaja, full of rocking kirtans, during his recent stay.

After a health crisis nearly 2 years ago, Maharaja is stronger than ever in his travelling and preaching. He gives practical guidance on applying the Vedic scriptures in everyday modern life, drawing liberally on humorous examples from his personal life.

Maharaja has served for 17 years in the holy dhams of Vrindavan and Mayapur. His services have included management and strategic planning, temple president of Krsna-Balarama Mandir in Vrindavan and overseeing the construction of the Puspa Samadhi of Srila Prabhupada in Mayapur.

Maharaja brings a wealth of experience and is much loved for being approachable and straightforward. He has had a connection with the 'Aussie' yatra since his time in management at New Gaudadesh, a farming project near Mildura in the early 1980's.



Photo: Trevor Gore

*Kadamba Kanana Swami leads a blissful New Year's Eve harinama.*

This year marks 40 years of enthusiastic service within ISKCON and over 20 years in the renounced order, after taking *sannyasa* initiation from Jayadvaita Swami in 1997.

His recent visit was full of classes at the temple and at the Surfers Paradise Bhakti centre.

The Krishna Village also hosted a program during Pizza night, which we suspect will have to be renamed "dance night" when Maharaja visits in future. The fast paced *kirtana* and dancing certainly made it an unforgettable experience for those who attended.

The New Year's Eve *harinama* was another massive highlight where Kadamba Kanana Maharaja and Mahavishnu Maharaja sang and danced for 7 consecutive hours! We were able to witness the extraordinary vibrancy and attachment with which these senior *vaishnavas'* chant the Holy Names, which is their life and soul.

Yet another highlight was the kirtan that blew the roof off Rupashram on 2 January, making for another very memorable program. Byron Bay *harinama* the next day saw Maharaja leading kirtan for over 2 hours, attracting many souls. 🌸

## SITALA REVEALS MERCY OF ACHARYAS

By *Kisori devi dasi*

In the early 1980s, Sitala devi dasi spent some time serving at the Institute for Vaishnava Studies in Delhi, which focussed on acquiring and translating ancient texts and gathering biographies of *vaishnava* saints. It was through this service that she developed a keen interest in the lives of saintly predecessors of the Gaudiya line and desired to remain immersed in these histories as well as share them with everyone.

Sitala undertook much detailed research and fact-finding from a great variety of sources and finished writing "The Glorious Life of Srila Narottama das Thakura" 25 years ago, but did not get it published till 2017 for various reasons.

Her main motive in distributing this

knowledge of previous *acharyas* is to make them more relatable and relevant to one's spiritual growth as sources of inspiration and shelter rather than being perceived as mere historical figures.

This book is simple and easy to read, yet full of profound meaning that is very spiritually nourishing. It is highly appreciated by all who have read it. Copies are available from Kisori dasi.

During her stay at New Govardhana, Sitala gave a series of classes on the Six Goswamis of Vrindavan and Srila Narattoma das Thakura as well as *Srimad Bhagavatam* classes. Her deep and sincere realisations and attachment for these personalities shines forth, inspiring many.

She also gave classes at the Gold Coast Bhakti Centre and Brisbane temple, drawing many devotees.

Devotees are eagerly awaiting the series of books on the *vaishnava* saints which Sitala hopes to write and publish in the near future. 🌸



Photo: Travellingmonk.com

*Sitala devi dasi shares years of research and realisations.*

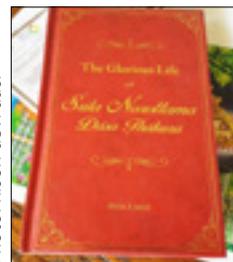


Photo: Kisori devi dasi

*The unforgettable devotional life of Narottama Dasa Thakura.*

# THE LORD NEVER FORGETS HIS DEVOTEE

By Manjulali devi dasi

For 15 years while travelling on the bus party, Venugopal dasa was the main pujari for their Deities Gaura Nitai. After touring for all this time, they decided to open a centre to cultivate people at a fixed location, finally settling on Cairns.

They had hired a shopfront that was in between a doctor's clinic and a solicitor's office. They used to receive hundreds of visitors per day for *prasadam* and *kirtana*. After 4 months they were asked to leave.

Venugopal became friends with an Italian real estate agent who found a building with a restaurant downstairs and a living quarters upstairs that was previously used as a hostel. In exchange for cheap rent she asked devotees to renovate the place.

Govinda's restaurant was opened and Gaura Nitai became the presiding Deities there and the bus party crew ran the centre for five years. After that Govinda's was taken over by Yogamaya devi dasi and Mandana dasa and after running it for some time, they closed Govinda's down.

Gaura Nitai continued being worshipped by Yogamaya, who moved with Them to the desert town of Warwick, where she worshipped Them privately in her home for 15 years.



Photo: Travellingmonk.com

*Present day pastimes of the Lord.*

Yogamaya had a bad experience once when a devotee asked to take Gaura Nitai to India to get new clothes and ornaments for Them. The devotee became very attached to Gaura Nitai and never returned Them. She had to steal Them back after a year and a half, so due to this she was particularly protective of Them.

Over the years, Venugopal had tried to locate Gaura Nitai many times but had always been unsuccessful.

In September 2017, Yogamaya began to have a recurring dream that Gaura Nitai were asking her to take Them to Venugopal, but she kept dismissing it. This was even before Venugopal was aware that he was sick.

A short time later, Yogamaya's daughter, Radha Kunda dasi, who would usually make a yearly visit to her mums home in Warwick, called her mother and informed her she would only be able to go as far as Murwillumbah this trip.

Yogamaya decided to take the opportunity to meet her daughter and at the same time bring the Deities to see Venugopal. Arriving there she finally understood why They had been wanting to see him, as she heard of his terminal illness.

Yogamaya had definite plans of taking the Deities back with her after Their weekend of visiting Venugopal BUT Gaura Nitai had another plan! Venugopal had been discussing with his wife Nikunja Seva Devi Dasi his hopes of the Deities staying longer, but he didn't want to ask Yogamaya as she had been looking after them so nicely.

During her stay in Murwillumbah, Yogamaya had a dream of Gaura Nitai again. In the dream she was trying to take them off the altar to take Them home with her. Each time she tried, she felt excruciating pain in her head and had to stop. After a third attempt she felt so much pain she almost left her body and realised that They wanted to stay with Venugopal. She called Nikunja and said she no longer had any intention of taking Them and that They could stay as long as necessary.

Such was the determination of Gaura and Nitai to stay by Their devotee.



Photo: Travellingmonk.com

*Venugopal dasa, the recipient of Gaura Nitai's mercy.*

## IN FOCUS: ANTARDWIP DASA

By *Kisori devi dasi*

### 1. Please tell me a little about yourself

I joined ISKCON in 1990 while studying at the University of Queensland after I found Srila Prabhupada's books in the university library. I began reading *Bhagavad-gita* and then *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. After a number of months I found out about the temple in Brisbane and started attending.



From right to left: Antardwip's wife- Mangala-gopi devi dasi, Antardwip dasa, eldest daughter Madhavi-lata devi dasi and her husband Sakhi Caran Ray dasa and youngest daughter Dulali Radha dasi.

### 2. What happened after you joined the temple

I continued to study medicine and was a *brahmachari* living in the asrama. I would go to various hospitals and the medical school during the daytime. As such, my engagement was a bit different from the other *brahmacaris*. Nonetheless, they all accepted me as one of them.

### 3. When did you become involved with the Gurukula initially?

Shortly after my marriage I ceased working as a doctor and began teaching in the New Govardhana gurukula. For a number of years I taught the grade 3, 4, 5 & 6 class. At that time there were only two classes in the school. I served there between 1998 and 2007.

In 2007 my family and I relocated to Mayapur. I became involved in teaching and curriculum development at the Bhaktivedanta Academy.

### 4. Please tell us a about your involvement with the TOVP.

In 2008, I became involved with the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, working with other devotees

on the cosmology of the Srimad Bhagavatam to develop a model for the temple. The model that we have put together is faithfully based upon the instructions of Srila Prabhupada and will be hung in the main dome of the temple. It will be a grand display providing an overview of the material and spiritual realms.

### 5. What are your current services?

My main service at present is for the TOVP. I am still involved in developing the main dome display.

I am also part of a group of devotees planning and developing the displays for the western dome of the TOVP. There will be a Vedic Science Centre that has three levels of exhibits and displays and a fourth level with a dome theatre. The purpose of these exhibitions is to bring people closer to Krishna by showing the Vedic concept of life and the universe. In doing so, we will also point out the inherent weaknesses of any atheistic science or philosophy.

At New Govardhana I plan to be deeply involved in temple activities.

New Govardhana warmly welcomes Antardwip dasa and his family. 🙏

## HARINAMA RUCI'S HARINAMA TOUR

By *Yamal Arjuna dasa*

Lord Chaitanya has written in His *Sri Siksastakam* that this *sankirtana* movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon.

We can see by their overwhelming enthusiasm and focus on *harinama sankirtana* that Mahavishnu Swami and Harinama Ruci are undoubtedly one of the rays of Lord Nityananda's benediction moon.

They have been coming to the Gold Coast and New Govardhana for six years now and have been travelling around the world performing *harinama sankirtana* on every continent of the planet. To soak up the nectar, devotees flood to the Gold Coast from Queensland and Northern New South Wales and as far as Melbourne and New Zealand. These devotees know that the nectar



Photo: Trevor Gore

*Harinama Ruci spreading the rays of the benediction moon.*

for which we are always anxious is available in bucket-loads on *harinama* with Mahavishnu Swami and Harinama Ruci.

The Bhakti Centre Gold Coast has been accommodating them these last six years but as accommodation is very hard to find around New Year, they sometimes live in very austere circumstances. Nonetheless, they still manage to have a full morning program of hearing and chanting and spend endless hours on the street engaging everyone they meet in the

*yuga dharma harinama sankirtana*, while remaining smiling and blissful.

New Year's eve is the biggest event of the Harinama Ruci group's tour. This year Kadamba Kanana Swami joined Mahavishnu Swami and Harinama Ruci for what has been hailed as the biggest *harinama* party on the Gold Coast ever. They were supported by New Govardhana community, Bhakti Centre Gold Coast community, Govinda's Surfers Paradise and Cardamom Pod Restaurants. 🙏

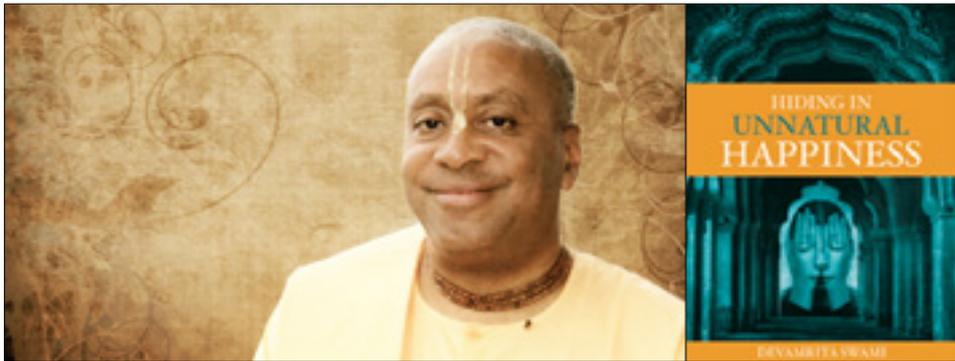
# DEVAMRITA SWAMI- A POTENT PREACHER

By **Dandakaranya dasa**

Devamrita Swami is an educator, author and spiritual mentor. Originally from New York, he graduated from Yale University in 1972 and became a student of AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada. He became a *sannyasi* in the Hare Krishna movement in 1982, and has spent the last forty years travelling to every continent, sharing the teachings and lifestyle of bhakti yoga.

His latest book published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust is called 'Hiding in Unnatural Happiness.' The book presents a refreshing perspective on the quest for

Photo: Dandavats.com



Devamrita Swami and his new book 'Hiding in Unnatural Happiness'.

happiness in our contemporary consumer driven society. Interweaving the latest research in neuroscience, social science and psychology, the book shines a beacon to the happiness science presented in the timeless bhakti yoga texts.

Devamrita Swami visited New Govardhana in January and along

with the thought-provoking morning Srimad Bhagavatam classes, he gave a presentation on his cutting edge book at the Krishna Village yoga hall which was very well attended. The books are available from Dandakaranya dasa or Suratanatha dasa. The website for Devamrita Swami is [www.devamritaswami.com](http://www.devamritaswami.com)

# FARM DEVELOPMENTS

By **Ajita dasa**

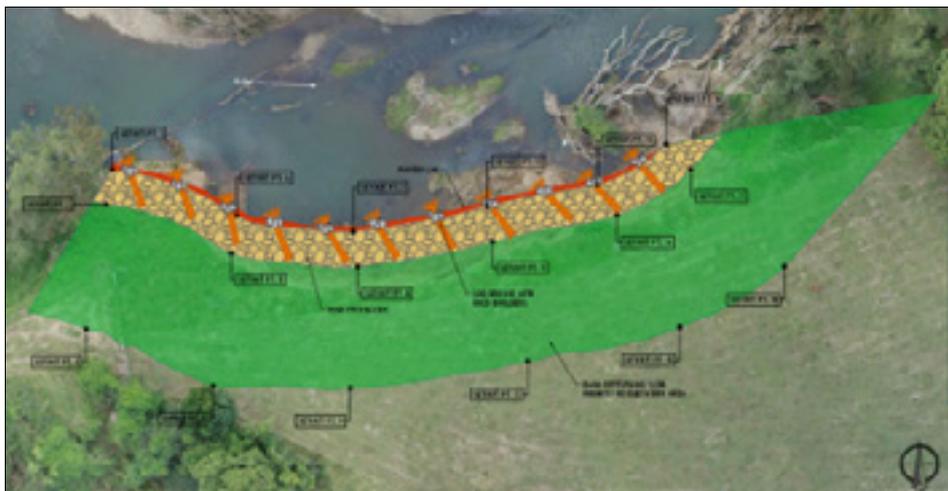
Our latest restoration project was earth works on the Oxley River, Krishna farm side, beginning December 2017. The first stage, consisting of battering banks, placing 40 tons of rocks and 60 logs at the toe of the bank, was completed just before Christmas. Planting of 800 native trees and bushes for regeneration and erosion control will begin as soon as fencing to prevent entry of neighbouring cows is completed.

Around 2009 a major flood affected the course of the river below the primary school. The situation became urgent when the Oxley River was eroding the pasturing land so much that the main stream was about to merge with the old 1890 river bed. Looking left or right after the new entrance gates, the old river bed that runs in front of Krishna Village and extends below the school can be seen.

After much discussion with Council (approximately 2 years), it was concluded the work must be done urgently, in a way that would withstand major floods.

The critical time for this project to be successful is between the 2 to 5 year period when the trees are

Photo: Ajita dasa



This diagram shows us where how much land we lost. From the orange line of logs to the edge of the green cut (south end) was flat land and it is now cut into a batter. The green area will be re-vegetated with native trees and bushes.

established but not yet big enough to withstand the force of a decent flood. Before the 2 year period, trees are small enough to duck under water and after 5 years they are rooted enough to stay.

Stopping cows from entering the newly planted area is a major concern so please be sure to SHUT THE GATES to protect restoration and investment of \$200,000 to repair the banks.

Council engaged a fencing contractor to re-establish the fences on our boundary including some internal fencing that was affected by the earthworks.



This aerial shot shows the beginning of erosion (orange line) and the yellow line indicates the actual loss of land after earthworks.

## SACHI'S AUSPICIOUS PASSING

By *Sadhana devi dasi*

Sachi devi dasi left her body on January 3. She had a deep love for Krishna and served Him with all her being.

She loved to dress the Deities and would say how beautiful Krishna is. Devotees would know when she dressed as Krishna would be glistening because she loved to massage Him with ghee.

One time she was polishing the bathing plate vigorously and when asked what she was doing, she said she wanted it to be really shiny so that Krishna could see Himself.

Her main service was *prasadam* distribution. With her family, Sachi distributed *prasadam* in many big ways such as the temple shop, restaurants and food vans. She would be happy to cook for visiting *sannyasis* and is reknowned for her Krishna Balarama Cake. No one comes close to how delicious she made it.

She had many skills and intimate services such as sewing petticoats for Srimati Radharani, cultivating *tulasi* plants and gardening.

Sachi was well known for her awesome table tennis skills and would often beat the gents! She had a great sense of humour, a warm heart, a frank nature and close friends who truly loved her and are going to miss her.

She left her body chanting the mahamantra with her son holding her hand. Devotees put maha garlands and tulasi on her soon after. 🙏

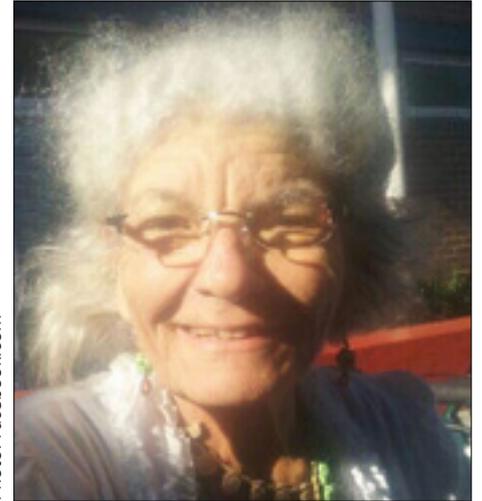


Photo: Facebook.com

Sachi devi dasi.

## WOODFORD AND THE MIGHTY KOFTA

By *Krsna Gana dasa*

The Woodford festival, held from December 26 to January 1, was very successful.



Photo: Krishna Gana dasa

Large queues for prasadam at Woodford festival.

We were given a new location on the festival site for the first time, which we were a little apprehensive about, but as soon as the gates opened our fears disappeared. Amazing souls came in droves to get their Govinda's fix. This year we made over 100,000 *kofta* balls.

Our crew was awesome, everyone worked so hard and helped each other get through the late nights and hot days. The youth we have in our community are very capable.

We had a team of 18 devotees at Woodford and we also had a team of 7 at Falls Festival in Byron Bay, headed by Suratanatha dasa.

At Woodford there is a special mail service where anyone can write a letter and get it sent to someone else. We had 6 or so letters sent to us, thanking us for being there and making awesome food. A 12 year old girl wrote a sweet letter and was very inquisitive, which Ajita dasa



Photo: Krishna Gana dasa

Letter from favourable a 12 year old girl.

responded to. I will meet her later in the year on my travels to Townsville and hope to teach her how to make *halava* and *kofta* balls.

Thank you to everyone who gave their time and energy to serve at Woodford. 🙏

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*The Conch* is your community newsletter, and we invite you to submit articles for publication. Articles should be 300 words or less and supplied in MS Word via email to [caroleditor@gmail.com](mailto:caroleditor@gmail.com). Photographs must be in JPG format. Please provide the name of the author and

the photographer. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Deadline is the 12th of each month. Occasionally a submission could be held over to a later edition. All submissions will be edited, proofread and may be rejected without notice.



**EDITORIAL BOARD:**  
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**LAYOUT AND GRAPHIC DESIGN:**  
*Urvashi devi dasi and Jhulan dasi.*

**FOR ENQUIRIES, COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS**  
Contact: [www.conch.org.au](http://www.conch.org.au)

# GOSHALLA GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

by Karunamayi devi dasi

After a long 12 months of editing, redrawing and complying with any changes requested, finally the new goshalla plans have been accepted by council.

Mahamantra dasa has already started setting out where the goshalla will sit on the hill opposite the White House. Before any building works commence, auspiciousness was invoked by a Vedic groundbreaking and cornerstone laying ceremony on January 10. The ceremony included a fire *yajna*, conducted by Nrsimhapali dasa and Abhimanyu dasa on the site. Krishna Kirtana dasa and Sri Gandharvika devi dasi brought Abhi and Giri the bullocks to the ceremony adding to the auspicious atmosphere.

Photo: Mahamantra dasa



The auspicious ground breaking yajna.

The occasion concluded with some *prasadam* at the site. All glories to the devotees who endured the heat to be a part of the occasion. This new goshalla symbolises New Govardhana's dedication to protecting the cows to as high a standard as possible.

We also welcomed a new calf on the last day of 2017. Little Gopal was unexpectedly born to Lila who was under the care of Gita Govinda devi dasi in the 'retired' herd. They were moved over to join the milk herd on New Year's day. Both are happy and healthy. If anyone would like to sponsor Gopal, please contact Karunamayi devi dasi on 0455227446.

Photo: Mahamantra dasa



Nrsimhapali dasa and Abhimanyu dasa performing yajna

## FEBRUARY CALENDAR

(from Vaishnava calendar [www.vaisnavacalendar.com](http://www.vaisnavacalendar.com))

5 Mon	Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura – Appearance Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura – Disappearance
11 Sun	Ekadasi (not suitable for fasting)
12 Mon	Dvadasi (suitable for fasting) Fasting for Vijaya Ekadasi Sri Isvara Puri – Disappearance
13 Tue	Break fast 6.26am - 10.49am
14 Wed	Siva Ratri
17 Sat	Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji – Disappearance
20 Tue	Sri Purusottama Dasa Thakura – Appearance
26 Mon	Fasting for Amalaki vrata Ekadasi
27 Tue	Dvadasi break fast 06.36am - 10.51am Sri Madhavendra Puri – Disappearance

Please join us each  
**Ekadasi** for  
*Srimad-Bhagavatam*  
class given by His Divine  
Grace Srila Prabhupada.  
These classes will  
feature subtitles.

**Darshan arati 7am**  
**Class 7.30am**

**HARINAMA**  
**SANKIRTANA KI JAYA!**



**Daily** at various locations  
Contact **Garuda dasa**  
**0423 170 267**

**Sunday Mornings**  
Northern NSW & Gold Coast  
**Visnujana dasa 0498 141 021**